

PAUL'S USE OF *KALEIN*: A PROPOSAL

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The theological concept of God's "call" or "calling" is deeply embedded in our creeds and doctrinal affirmations, particularly in reference to the subjects of salvation and election. But what really is meant by God's "call" to salvation? In particular, what is Paul's concept of the calling of God? It is the thesis of this paper that some traditional understandings of "calling" may not be adequate in light of the linguistic evidence. Thus the paper will employ a linguistic/semantic approach to analyze Paul's use of *kalein* to provide more precision to his understanding of "calling to salvation."

For a long time scholars have recognized the technical status of the "calling" paronyms (*kalein*, *klēsis*, *klētos*) in the Pauline¹ corpus.² Though Paul's use of *kalein* is not particularly great compared with the other NT writers,³ what makes the term significant for Paul is that in fully thirty of this thirty-three uses there is a divine agent of the action of the verb. Paul uses *kalein* to describe a divine activity. Even a cursory reading of its occurrences in the NT reveals two basic senses in the uses of *kalein*. The first is "name, designate, give a title to." A simple illustration in English would be: "We called her Alison." She was given the name (or designation) Alison. The second sense is "summon, invite." It could be exemplified in "We called her, but she did not come." Both these senses can be amply illustrated in the writings of the NT. Yet Paul's uses immediately raise some vexing questions: What is the significance of his predominant use of the divine subject? Does the fact that God is the agent affect the basic senses of the word shown above? Do Paul's uses correspond to the pattern of other writers when they employ the divine agent? Taking the last question, it is interesting to note how infrequently the other NT writers do employ God as agent. God does give names or, more accurately, commands that names be given (cf. Matt 1:21; Luke 1:13, 31). As well, Jesus as a divine agent calls disciples (only at Matt 4:21; Mark 1:20) and says that he has come to call sinners (Matt 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32). John says that God calls his own sheep. Aside from the several uses in Peter's epistles and Hebrews that seem to follow the Pauline pattern, that is all. It is Paul who takes this relatively common word and uses it in a unique way.

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¹We will sidestep the entire "deutero-Pauline" debate in this present study. Whatever one's conclusions about authorship concerning, e.g., Ephesians and the pastorals, their linguistic character is sufficiently Pauline and our use of them small enough to warrant our use of the traditional Pauline corpus for this study. This author believes them to come from Paul's pen.

²See, e.g., K. L. Schmidt, *TDNT* 3, 487-496.

³Paul employs it about twenty-two percent of its NT occurrences.

In analyzing Paul's uses of *kalein* we can put to one side several occurrences. First, in Romans 9 we find three quotations from the LXX: 9:7 (Gen 21:12), 9:25 (Hos 2:23), 9:26 (Hos 1:10). We pass by 9:7 since, though it has some "elective" significance, the issue of eternal salvation of individuals is absent. At 9:26 Paul employs a human agent of the action. Transforming the passive we obtain "(some ones) will call them sons of the living God."⁴ We can also eliminate 1 Cor 10:27 and 15:9 from consideration since they clearly involve human agents. In addition we can remove Rom 4:17. Though it does involve God as agent, Paul does not here discuss the issue of God's election and salvation. It is a more general statement of God's power and sovereignty. It may provide some information about Paul's use of *kalein*, but it does not follow the pattern of his more technical usage as we will find elsewhere. We are left with twenty-eight potentially significant contexts where God is the agent of the action and there is a human object (the one who is called).

What patterns emerge from these contexts? First, we note that two do not fit the pattern of the other twenty-six. The first is the occurrence at Rom 9:12 in which Paul's use is essentially "one place." He seems to be saying that the accomplishment of God's purpose in election rests not in (human) works, but in the God who calls. Paul's bare statement is *theos/kalein*, "God/calls," or, in semantic terms, agent/action. Nothing precludes our understanding Paul to mean that "God calls human beings." His purpose is to stress the divine basis for Jacob's place as patriarch of Israel rather than Esau's. God was responsible for this elective choice. Paul does make it clear that God called Jacob, and when we supply this object, then this fits in with the other significant uses. All this being true, we still note (as we did earlier) that the situation here does not involve the call of Jacob to eternal salvation. Of course this is not to say that an important principle is not being taught about God's calling. This is evident in the contrast expressed in the *ek* ("out of") prepositional phrases. Paul places two approaches in opposition to each other. The one is "works" while the other is the "call of God." This opposition cannot but remind us of Paul's continuing contrast between "works" and "faith." Certainly we can conclude that God's call of Jacob was not on the basis of any works he had performed.

The other nonconforming occurrence is at Rom 9:25. Here Paul employs a double accusative with the clear sense of "name" or "designate." In essence Paul says that God names certain people as "my people." This would seem to be parallel to such uses as in Matt 23:43, 45: "David calls him Lord." However, there is a key difference. David's designation of the Christ as "Lord" does not make him Lord. It is a form of address. David calls the Christ "Lord" because he is Lord, and David recognizes this fact. However, when God calls a certain people (who are not his people) "my people," this is certainly more than a mere form of address. Is it not the case that in the action of "calling" they become his people? In other words, does not *kalein* here imply "cause to become"? We could try the second sense suggested above (viz., "invite, summon"), in which case the statement becomes: "I summon those who are not my people to be my people." The context makes it clear that it must be an effectual summons, not a mere

⁴Here it is conceivable that we have a divine agent, and if so it fits in with Paul's other uses in this context: God / calls // them // sons. This is similar to 9:25, which we discuss below.

invitation, for they do become his people. But it would seem that this second sense is less likely, especially in light of the use of the double accusative here.⁵ As well, an effectual summons must contain a causative component, making it roughly equivalent to "designate as" anyway. To cause someone to respond to an "invitation" to be something (if that be an acceptable use of language) seems to be very close to designating that one as that something. To conclude, Paul's use of *kalein* in Rom 9:25 implies God's causative, effectual action in bringing a people from the condition "not his people" to the condition "his people." "Designate as" or "cause to be" become the best English glosses in helping to convey what Paul seems to be stating. It is not just a recognition on God's part that they are his people whom he then calls (or addresses as) "my people." No, it is distinctly causative—God causes them to become his people in the act of *kalein*. Paul's concern here is not the question of God's choice of who will be his people but rather the action of God in designating some as his people, his beloved.

Though we dismissed Rom 9:26 as irrelevant due to its human agency, we can draw from its use further corroboration of the "naming" or "designating" sense of *kalein* here. Because God causes them to be his people (v 25), other men (or God) can justifiably refer to them as *huioi theou zōntos*, "sons of the living God." God has given them the name (and, in fact, has caused them to be) sons of God. The sense of "summons" is clearly impossible in Rom 9:26.

All of Paul's remaining uses of *kalein* fit into the basic pattern: *theos* (agent)/ *kalein* (action)// human (object),⁶ to which is attached, with a few exceptions, an axis configuration.⁷ In the four axis-less exceptions, Paul merely states: "God calls people." Let us list the precise statements.

(1) Rom 8:30 *theos / kalein // toutous* "God / calls // them"

(2) Rom 8:30 *theos / kalein // hous* "God / calls // whom"

⁵Consider the parallel, "We called her Alison," or the use in Matt 23:43, 45. The double accusative suggests the naming sense.

⁶In all these evaluations we have made explicit what we believe is semantically present in the deep structure of the statement, though it may not be present in the literal surface structure of the text. The semantic analyses are all represented in a basic standard form, agent / action // object or, in traditional terms, subject / verb // object. To arrive at such a configuration we have applied what E. A. Nida and others have called the process of "back-transformation." In the glossary of *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), Nida and C. R. Taber define a back-transformation as "a grammatical process by which the surface structure of a discourse is analyzed, by the application of rigorous rules, into its underlying kernels in the same language" (p. 197). Thus we have back-transformed the Greek of the Paulines into what we believe are the underlying kernels, the basic semantic structures of each statement. Thus, for example, all passive verbs are rendered as active and the appropriate slots are then filled (e.g., the unexpressed subject of an activated passive) by resorting to the context. (See the discussions below.)

⁷This is E. Nida's terminology (*Exploring Semantic Structures* [München: Wilhelm Fink, 1975] 46-47). It refers to a basic semantic relationship between constituents in a sentence. Axis configurations express relationships such as position, instrument, time, reason, purpose, condition, means, *et al.* In terms of traditional grammar, prepositions and conjunctions usually express these relations.

(3) Gal 5:8 *hē peismonē / einai // ek # S #*⁸
theos / kalein // hymas # "God / calls // you"

(4) 1 Thess 5:24 *theos / einai // pistos*
theos / kalein // hymas

The uses are fairly straightforward. In Rom 8:30 the ones whom God foreknew and predestined he then called. In (3) and (4) it is God who has called the Galatians and the Thessalonians respectively. In each of these four instances we have supplied the divine agent from the context, and there would seem to be no doubt that this is a valid conclusion. We will argue that these simple, unadorned statements provide evidence that for Paul *kalein* is a technical term. Without specifying (at least on the surface) an agent or goal, or any other information, he could employ the term in a meaningful way.

In the remaining occurrences of *kalein* in Paul he attaches some axis configuration to the basic "agent/action/object" format. We now set down these contexts in abbreviated form on the basis of the different types of the axes.

I. AXIS OF SOURCE OR ORIGIN

(5) Rom 9:24 *theos / kalein // hēmas /// ex Ioudaion kai ex ethnōn*
 "God / calls // us /// from the Jews and from the Gentiles"

Only at Rom 9:24 is there a clear reference to a source from among whom God calls. God's calling has been operative not only among the Jews but also among the Gentiles. The succeeding verses (viz., vv 25-26) make it clear that Paul extends his reference from what has been up to this point a discussion of the special role of Israel and God's choice of that nation to the broader issue of salvation. Those who become "my people" (v. 25) and "sons of the living God" (v 26)—that is, those who attain salvation—do so because of the "calling" of God. And this calling is not limited to the Israelites but comes to certain ones both inside and outside the confines of the Jewish nation. Paul does not entertain the issue of the extent of this calling. Is there a prior choice of some to whom the call is then extended? That is not Paul's concern here.

Another question presents itself: Are we to understand the sense of *kalein* here as (a) "name, designate as" or (b) "summons"? Most interpreters are agreed that sense (a) must be seen in 9:25-26, as we have shown. But when they look back to 9:24 they revert to sense (b).⁹ But is the first sense of "name" precluded by something in the structure? That which supposedly precludes the naming sense is the absence of the double accusative in 9:24, which is present in 9:25-26. But is that a necessary and sufficient reason to disqualify the naming sense here? If (and here we would like to propose a hypothesis that we will con-

⁸This convention (# S #) shows that the constituent is actually a "sentence unit," which is then unpacked below.

⁹Refer e.g. to J. A. Bett (*A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902] 273); Sanday and Headlam (*Romans* [ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1896] 263-264).

tinue to test) *kalein* is for Paul a technical term—"call to salvation"—then perhaps the second "accusative"—that is, the content of the naming or designation—is understood and in fact included within the sense of *kalein* itself. What precisely is the content of that naming or designation? Is it not found in 9:25-26—*laon mou* ("my people"), *hēgapēmenēn* ("beloved one"), and *huiōi theou zōntos* ("sons of the living God")? *Kalein* would then have as its basic sense "to designate as God's people, his beloved ones and his sons," or simply "to cause to be Christians." Rather than some kind of "effectual summons,"¹⁰ does it not make better sense to see "naming" as Paul's point here? He is saying, "God has named people as Christians—even us—from among the Jews as well as the Gentiles". Paul's point is that "God has caused us all to belong to him."

II. AXIS OF INSTRUMENT

(6) Gal 1:6 *theos / kalein // hymas /// en chariti Christou*
 "God / calls // you /// in the grace of Christ"

(7) Gal 1:15 *theos / kalein // me /// dia tēs charitos autou*
 "God / calls // me /// by his grace"

In group II we find the instances in which Paul specifies an instrumental axis. To these two we must also add (24) below, where in addition to a goal axis there is an instrument. It seems to be evident from the context in Galatians 1, and the bulk of Paul's usage, that *theos* is the agent of the calling.¹¹ It is hardly necessary for us to raise that question again.¹² In (6) the preposition *en* ("in") could conceivably mark out the goal of the "calling," but Paul's clear use of *dia* ("by") in (7) makes us suspect instrumentality in (6) as well. In addition, nowhere else does Paul speak of Christ as the goal of the action of this verb, and so we doubt that this is Paul's focus here. Yet we would not want to totally exclude the idea of

¹⁰The whole idea of an "effectual summons" may be problematic. A summons seems implicitly to contain some tentativeness. It is a request, an invitation, albeit a commanding one. To add a /causative/ component to the sense of "summons" must result in either, e.g., "God caused Paul to be summoned" or "God caused Paul to respond positively to the summons." It seems that the first does not really say anything different from the simple "God summoned Paul." But the second also seems problematic. Here the summons becomes such as to be unrefusable. But if this is the case, must we speak of a summons? If God is unquestionably causing some one or ones to become his own children—to attain salvation—that is an act of fiat designation or appointment. He is causing them to be his own. "Calling" here is the application of, not invitation to, salvation.

¹¹Interpreters almost universally agree. See e.g. J. A. Bett (*A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1885] 18); E. Burton (*The Epistle to the Galatians* [ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921] 19-20); J. B. Lightfoot (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* [London: Macmillan, 1876] 76).

¹²Calvin seems to be one of the few who attribute the calling to Christ in Gal 1:6. See his *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians* (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society [1854] 30). D. Patte (*What is Structural Exegesis?* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976] 66) claims that the structure of the theological argument in Galatians demands that Paul as apostle be the one who calls. Here is one of the dangers of structuralism as an ideology coming out. We must heed the context and Paul's other uses.

goal from (7), which must be reckoned with on the basis of Paul's use of *en*. Furthermore this lends support to the hypothesis suggested above that Paul's use of *kalein* has a technical meaning, "to designate as a Christian." How can such a designation be achieved? Certainly through Christ and what he has done. But the *en* axis in (6) almost functions as the elusive second accusative "required" for the naming sense. Paul seems close to saying, "God names you 'in Christ'." Or, "God has designated you (to be) 'in Christ'." Admittedly the alternative "God summoned you in (or through) Christ" is also possible. Unquestionably (7) is instrumental, though the instrument is ambiguous. Who does Paul mean by *autou* ("his"), which modifies *charitos* ("grace")? Though it might refer back to Christ, it makes most sense to see here a reference to God's grace. Paul is stressing God's initiative—God is the one who has called him, a call coming on the basis of God's grace.

It would seem that the technical sense suggested above (*viz.*, to designate as a Christian) is in keeping with Paul's uses in this section II. Gal 1:15-16 appears to make most sense with this understanding. However, here Paul adds further content to the designation. God not only designated him to be a Christian, but he also appointed him to proclaim that gospel—*i.e.*, to be an apostle. Paul seems to coalesce the two designations.¹³ God selected or set Paul apart before he was born. Then at some historical point in Paul's life God's call came to him. He became a child of God, God's beloved one. In essence, God's setting apart of Paul and his calling of Paul become God's instruments for revealing his Son in Paul. Again, though it is possible to speak of an effectual summons it would seem to be more in keeping with Paul's intention to see here God's causative action in designating Paul as his own child.¹⁴ If we may draw the distinction, *aphorizein* ("set apart") points to God's electing choice, pre-temporal for Paul, while *kalein* refers to the historical realization and application of the choice.¹⁵

¹³This is the conclusion of Lagrange who says, "*Kalesas* doit être la vacation à l'apostolat . . . D'autre part *kalein* indique ordinairement dans Paul la vocation efficace au christianisme; cf. Rom 8:28. Ici les deux notions se confondent, car pour Paul il n'y eut pas deux appels divins. Il fut apôtre en même temps que converti" (*Saint Paul Epître aux Galates* [Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1918] 14).

¹⁴We note here that the object of action of *kalein* is singular: It is Paul. This is extremely rare in Paul's uses of *kalein*. In addition to this location, Paul employs a singular object only at Rom 9:7 (which is a quotation from the LXX), the unique context in 1 Cor 7:17-24, and 1 Tim 6:12 (a reference to Timothy's acceptance and ratification of God's call, perhaps at his baptism). In all other uses the object is plural. It is difficult to say whether this has any particular significance. If *e.g.* in Gal 1:15-16 Paul does coalesce his concepts so that his "call" is both to be a Christian and an apostle, then that provides an explanation for the singular here. The apostolic appointment is certainly individual; it does not come to the corporate body. Perhaps a similar explanation could be lodged in the 1 Tim 6:12 occurrence. Timothy is also a man under special appointment, though the case is weaker without its apostolic content. On the other hand, the 1 Corinthians 7 context is open to no such explanation.

¹⁵The question of where Paul's response of faith enters into this sequence is something with which he is not concerned. As we shall continue to see, Paul's uses of the technical *kalein* place emphasis upon God's action.

III. AXIS OF CIRCUMSTANCE

- (8) 1 Cor 7:17 *ho theos / kalein // hekaston /// en*¹⁶
 "God / calls // each one /// en . . ."
- (9) 1 Cor 7:18 *theos / [interrog.] kalein // tina /// en peritetmēmenos*¹⁷
 "Did God / call // any /// in circumcision?"
- (10) 1 Cor 7:18 *theos / [interrog.] kalein // tina /// en akrobystiq*
 "Did God / call // any /// in uncircumcision?"
- (11) 1 Cor 7:20 *theos / kalein // hekaston /// en tē klēsei*
 "God / calls / each one /// in the calling"
- (12) 1 Cor 7:21 *theos / [interrog.] kalein // se /// en douleiq*¹⁸
 "Did God / call // you /// in slavery?"
- (13) 1 Cor 7:22 *ho kyrios / kalein // auton /// en douleiq*¹⁸
 "The Lord / calls // him /// in slavery"
- (14) 1 Cor 7:22 *ho kyrios / kalein // auton /// en eleutheriq*¹⁹
 "The Lord / calls // him /// in freedom"
- (15) 1 Cor 7:24 *theos / kalein // hekaston /// en tē klēsei*
 "God / calls // each one /// in the calling"

It is significant that all of Paul's uses in category III occur in the context of 1 Cor 7:17-24. First we must mention the issue of agent. Verse 22 clearly points to the Lord, or God the Father. Certainly each context is best understood with the divine agent. Then we note that in every case Paul attaches an axis that appends some attendant circumstances to the action of the verb. The clear insertion of *en* in vv 10, 11, 15 shows this locative sense. In other words God calls them while they are *in* some particular circumstance. Here is no discussion (as we shall see in IV) of the goal *to* which God has called these Christians, but rather of the situation *in* which they find themselves when the calling of God comes. Barrett concurs, saying, "These verses show that Paul is not thinking primarily of a vocation *to* which a man is called, but the condition *in* which a man is when the

¹⁶This circumstantial slot is left unfilled through Paul's use of *hōs*. It is the general statement, the specifics of which are provided in the ensuing examples.

¹⁷This of course is a participial phrase embodying an action that could be further unpacked. We leave it here in the "unnatural" state of object of the preposition *en* to show its parallelism to the following *akrobystiq*.

¹⁸The text literally has just *doulos* ("slave"). We have transformed it into a more recognizable axis form to show its relationship to *kalein*.

¹⁹The text has *eleutheros* ("free"), which we have transformed as with (12) and (13).

converting call of God comes to him."²⁰ These circumstances are readily identifiable: the condition of being circumcised, (9); the condition of uncircumcision, (10); in some vocation, (11) and (15); slavery, (12) and (13); and the condition of being a free man, (14).

Since no goals or instruments are specified by Paul in these uses, we may be tempted to conclude that we can arrive at no further information about *kalein*. But it is precisely the absence of any further specifications that is significant in this section. Here is convincing evidence that *kalein* is indeed a technical term. Paul could merely say, "You were called," and, omitting any instrument or goal, or even—through using the passive in the surface structures of (11), (12), (13), (14)—any mention of the agent of the "calling," he knew that his readers would understand just what that call entailed. Through his use of *kalein* they would know he meant to say "called to become a Christian."²¹ In this section Paul is concerned with the implications of being a Christian in various difficult circumstances. In this diverse chapter Paul could use *kalein* and know that his meaning would be transmitted. Surely in this context in which Paul is not particularly concerned about discussing salvation—its source, recipients, instruments or goals—the simple use of *kalein* has great significance.

IV. AXIS OF GOAL OR PURPOSE

- (16) 1 Cor 1:9 *theos / kalein // hymas /// eis koinōnian tou huiou theou*
"God / calls / you /// into fellowship of the Son of God"
- (17) 1 Cor 7:15 *ho theos / kalein // hymas /// en eirēnē*
"God / calls // you /// in peace"
- (18) Gal 5:13 *theos / kalein // hymas /// ep' eleutheriā*
"God / calls // you /// to freedom"
- (19) Eph 4:1 *theos / kalein // hymas /// tō klēsei*
"God / calls // you /// to a calling"
- (20) Eph 4:4 *theos / kalein // hymas /// en miq. elpidi tēs klēseōs hymōn*
"God / calls // you /// to one hope of your calling"
- (21) Col 3:15 *theos / kalein // hymas /// eis tēn eirēnēn /// en heni sōmati*
"God / calls // you /// to peace /// in one body"

²⁰C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: A. & C. Black, 1971) 168.

²¹Here we have avoided any distinction between "summon" and "name" since presumably either would fit. Yet we do emphasize that both do fit. Paul could be asking, using (12) as an example, either "were you a slave when God summoned you to be a Christian?" or "were you a slave when God designated you a Christian?" The point is: In what circumstances were you when you were converted? Clearly *kalein* stands for the act of entering into the sphere of salvation, and so, it would appear, the sense of "designation" is closer to the meaning.

(22) 1 Thess 2:12 *theos / kalein // hymas /// eis tēn heautou basileian kai doxan*

“God / calls // you /// into his own kingdom and glory”

(23) 1 Thess 4:7 . . . *ho theos / [negative] kalein // hēmas /// epi akatharsia — alla*

ho theos / kalein / hēmas /// en hagiasmō

“God / did not call // us to impurity — but

God / calls // us /// to holiness”

(24) 2 Thess 2:14 *theos / kalein // hymas /// dia tou euangeliou hēmōn*

Goal₁: *eis sōtērian*

Goal₂: *eis peripoiesin doxēs tou kyriou hēmōn*

“God / calls // you /// through our gospel

Goal₁: to salvation

Goal₂: to possession of the glory of our Lord”

(25) 1 Tim 6:12 *theos / kalein // se /// eis aiōnion zōēn*

“God / calls // you /// to eternal life”

(26) 2 Tim 1:9 *theos / kalein // hēmas /// klēsei hagiō*

“God / calls // us /// to a holy calling”

Finally we come to the last section, IV, which lists those instances in which Paul appends some purpose or goal axis to *kalein*. As noted above, (6) might also be included in this section since it is uncertain whether the phrase *en chariti Christou* (“in the grace of Christ”) should be taken as an instrument or goal. There is some ambiguity as well about several other of the environments we have listed in IV. Most of them clearly point to a goal or purpose to or for which the calling of God is extended. The frequent use of *eis* (“to”) must be analyzed in this sense. Clearly, for example, in 1 Cor 1:9 the end or goal of God’s calling is fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ. Goals indicated by *eis* occur in (16), (21), (22), (24), (25). In several instances the goal or purpose of the calling is given by means of an *en* axis. As we saw with (6), this might be ambiguous. Yet in the contexts of (17), (20), (23) it seems evident that Paul intends a goal in each case. In 1 Cor 7:15 many interpreters agree about the goal orientation of the *en*.²² C. F. D. Moule notes that “the preposition may be used ‘pregnantly’: perhaps God has called you into a peace in which he wishes you to live.”²³ Likewise in Eph 4:4 God’s call results in hope. It is the goal, the property obtained when the calling of God comes. Robinson says, “‘Your calling’, i.e., His call of you, makes you sharers in the one common hope.”²⁴ In 1 Thess 4:7 the phrase *en hagiasmō* (“in holiness”) is placed in opposition to *epi akatharsia*, (“to impurity”). Obviously Paul is con-

²²See e.g. F. F. Bruce (*1 and 2 Corinthians* [London: Oliphants, 1971] 70); Barrett, *Commentary* 166.

²³C. F. D. Moule, *Idiom-Book of NT Greek* (Cambridge: University Press, 1971) 79.

²⁴J. A. Robinson, *Commentary on Ephesians* (London: Macmillan, 1903) 178.

trasting possible life-styles. The goal that God had in mind when he called the Thessalonians was *hagiasmos*, not *akatharsia*. The goal orientation of the *en* here is further substantiated by its parallelism to *epi*, which we also find in (18): Gal 5:13. In speaking of the force of *epi* used with the dative, Moule observes: "This primarily designates movement ending in a definite spot."²⁵ Hence at Gal 5:13 he sees the sense as "You were called to (or with a view to) freedom."²⁶ Finally, we have two similar occurrences at (19) and (26). In Eph 4:1 Paul's statement is the simple (after we reconstruct it transformationally) "God called you *tē klēsei*," while in 2 Tim 1:9 he says, "God called us *klēsei hagiā*." Here we are faced with the options of goal or instrument. Did God call "to" or "by means of" a (holy) calling? Further research seems to show that when Paul uses the noun form *klēsis* he seems to think in terms of a particular state or situation more than the process of arriving at that state.²⁷ To be in a given state, in possession of a "calling" (*klēsis*), does involve the action of "calling" (*kalein*), and Christians, having been called, can be said to have a calling—as Paul does, e.g., at 1 Cor 1:26; Eph 4:4. Hence when Paul in Eph 4:1; 2 Tim 1:9 uses both terms, is he not intending a distinction between the two? We think so and conclude that we have goals in these instances. Therefore in Eph 4:1, "Walk worthy of the calling to which God called you." And in 2 Tim 1:9, "God saved us and called us to a holy calling."

Having established that these axes point to the goals of God's action of *kalein*, to what conclusions do we come? Cataloging the various goals makes an impressive list. God called his people to—or for the goals of—fellowship with Jesus Christ, peace, freedom, a holy calling (or a calling to be holy), hope, God's kingdom and glory, holiness, salvation, obtaining the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and eternal life. It is clear from this list that those who are called are Christians. Being a Christian has future results or benefits, and it has present results, benefits and goals. At times Paul uses the fact of God's active calling as an incentive or motivation to act in accordance with the goals God had in mind in calling. At other times he simply exults in the positive benefits of being a recipient of God's calling.

May we again raise the issue of "summon" versus "designate as"? We conclude that both senses do "fit" in each instance in section IV. Yet does not the "name, designate" sense fit better? As is so evident from the goals Paul lists, to be "called" is to be appointed a Christian with all its attendant benefits and responsibilities. There is no tentativeness, there is no hint of any need for response envisioned, which presumably would be necessary if we were to understand *kalein* in the sense of "summons." Why is no response involved? Perhaps we cannot answer that question satisfactorily. But one answer might be that in using *kalein* Paul is not dealing with an action viewed as some divine-human synergism. *Kalein* is strictly God's action, an action that seems equivalent to "cause to become a Christian." Therefore we again conclude that the sense "des-

²⁵Moule, *Idiom-Book* 50.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Cf. K. L. Schmidt, *TDNT* 3, 491-492.

ignate as a Christian" is the most appropriate understanding of Paul's technical use of *kalein*.

Where does *kalein* fit into the sequence of God's salvific acts? Paul gives us few hints. Certainly at Rom 8:29-30 Paul locates God's action of "calling" as subsequent to *proginōskein* ("to foreknow") and *proorizein* ("to predestine") and prior to *dikaion* ("to justify") and *doxazein* ("to glorify"). In Gal 1:15 he locates *kalein* as subsequent to *aphorizein*. Then in 2 Thess 2:13-14 he locates God's calling as a concomitant to his choosing (*haireisthai*). In this latter context the goal of God's choosing becomes the goal of his calling. He chose them to salvation, and he called them to salvation. It would appear that Paul uses *kalein* to mark the concrete and historical realization in a person's life of God's foreordained plan. It is the point at which God's purposes become actualized in the life of the person. In God's mind, his purposes on behalf of a person may be foreknown and predestined. But it is not until the action of "calling" that the person actually becomes a recipient of and participant in God's purposes for him. As we noted several times above, the issue of that person's response of faith is not in view when Paul uses *kalein*. It focuses upon God's action in bestowing upon a person the gift of eternal life.²⁸

Another observation we must make concerns the human objects in each of the analyses given in (1) through (26). In (7), Gal 1:15, Paul specifically notes his own calling, to become a Christian and to proclaim the gospel. Then in (25), 1 Tim 6:12, he reminds Timothy that God called Timothy to eternal life. Outside of section III these are the only instances where Paul employs a singular object of the calling of God. In all the other occurrences in sections, I, II, and IV, Paul speaks in the plural, and most often, "God called you" or "God called us." In section III the evidence is skewed. In this one context of 1 Cor 7:17-24 where Paul uses *kalein* eight times, his concerns are not so much with the content of "called to be a Christian" as with how to handle the sticky issues of marriage, circumcision and slavery now that one is a Christian. These issues have to be confronted individually. In each instance Paul speaks to individuals using the singular by means of such terms as *tis*, *hekastos*, *se* and *auton*. So whereas Paul seems to prefer to speak of "calling" in plural terms—God called you Christians—when the situation warrants it he does not hesitate to speak in the singular. God has not only called the Church. He has also called individuals (to be) in the Church.

By way of summary, in surveying the instances where God is the agent of the "calling" we have attempted to argue for a consistent technical sense throughout. We maintain that Paul uses *kalein* as a technical term that carries the content "God designates as (or causes to be) a Christian." It is God's action of bestowing upon a person eternal salvation. We have also attempted to show that the "naming" sense fits the contexts as well as or better than the other basic

²⁸We disagree with J. A. Robinson who equates "calling" with "choosing." He believes that when Paul says "you were called" he is in effect saying that "God chose you" (*Commentary on Ephesians* 90). Though it may well be true that all who are called have been chosen, it would seem that these sequences suggested by Paul point to a pre-temporal choice (e.g., *aphorizein* ["set apart"] in Gal 1:15) that is subsequently applied or made operative by the action of *kalein*.

sense of "invite, summon." The causative component present in the sense of the term seems to stress the act of "appointment to salvation," irrespective of any considerations of human response, rather than "summons," which implicitly includes some response. Only one Pauline usage seriously gives cause to question this analysis. The one instrument axis configuration we have not yet discussed occurs at 2 Thess 2:14. Here Paul clearly states that the call of God comes for the goals of salvation—a life of sanctification and faith—and obtaining the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. How does that call come? Paul says it comes *dia tou euangeliou hēmōn*—through our (preaching of the) gospel. By means of the historic, even physical, space-time proclamation of the gospel by human preachers, God calls people to these goals. It could be argued that to insist upon a strict "name, designate" sense here would pose certain problems. Yet it might be possible to posit some response of faith in the instrumental axis: "God designated you as Christians on the basis of (your positive response to) our gospel." God named you as Christians when you believed.²⁹

Is *kalein* truly an elective term? Not, as we noted above, in the sense that it is coincident with God's election to salvation. But it is "elective" in that it marks the individual application in the life of the believer of God's elective purposes. It would seem from the evidence that *kalein* refers not so much to God's choice of individuals to salvation as to his action in naming or designating some to be Christians. It describes God's active role in assigning, applying, or bestowing salvation to those who are the elect. As such it is a technical term and can be used alone without further specification. And because it carries all this freight, Paul can exhort and challenge Christians to act in a certain way because God has designated them as his own.

²⁹Certainly here it could be argued that it is better to take the simpler "God summoned you by means of our gospel." In fact, more than one hundred years ago H. A. Meyer suggested that both these two senses are united in *kalein*. He said, "In this word to call and to name form a single notion" (*Epistle to the Romans* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1874], 2.155). Just perhaps for Paul it was possible to summon (remembering that it is the sovereign God who is the Agent), and in so doing designate or appoint to eternal salvation, as long as we insist that all who are called are in fact appointed as Christians. Never in Paul's writings is there any hint of a rejected call (though Paul does speak in Gal 1:6 of a turning away from God, he does not intimate that the Galatians had rejected or annulled God's call).