

God and Church under crisis

1 Corinthians 1:1-10



Temple of Aphrodite
(Venus)

Temple of Aphrodite

Corinth was a wicked city even as larger cities in the empire went at this period.

The very term “Corinthian” meant a profligate (wasteful), and the verb “to Corinthianize” meant to have sexual relations with prostitutes. The temple of Venus in the old city boasted that a thousand female slaves were kept there who were free to strangers.

R.C.H. Lenski

Believers were like a little island surrounded on every side by a sea of idolatry; they had come so newly into Christianity; it was so difficult to unlearn the practices which generations of loose living had made part of their lives; and yet, if the Church was to be kept pure, they must say a final goodbye to the old ways.

three-step model for applying the Bible

Jack Kuhatschek

- understanding the original situation,
- determining the broader principles that the biblical application reflects, and
- applying those general principles to situations we face.

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At the ORIGINS of CHRISTIAN WORSHIP



THE CONTEXT AND CHARACTER
OF EARLIEST CHRISTIAN DEVOTION

LARRY W. HURTADO

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Religious life throughout Roman Empire

- **Universal** (everywhere in everything)
- **Prominent** (visible temples, processions)
- **Diversity** (all deities were acceptable, renunciation was not necessary)
- **Sacred places**
- **Images**
- **Rituals and meals**

Visibility of temples



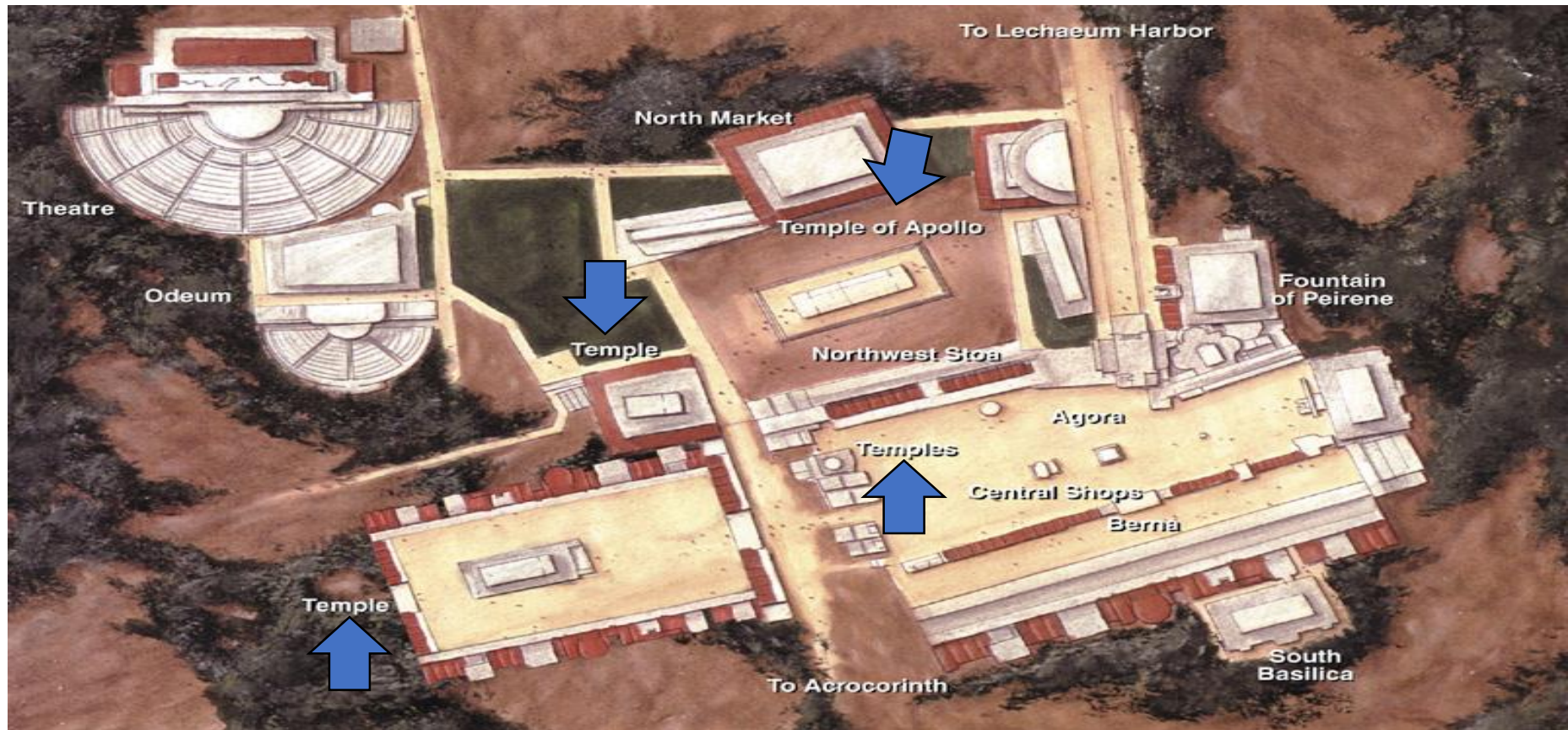
temple of Aphrodite



Forum at Corinth

Temple of Isis (submerged)

Many temples in Corinth



To complete the picture of religious centres constituting also cultural centers, with zoological parks, birdcages, museums, concerts, art galleries, and public lectures, or the equivalent of all these things provided nowhere else in most cities, we must add botanical gardens ...

(MacMullan)

¹⁶Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send greetings [Romans 16:16](#)

²⁰All the brothers and sisters here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss [1 Corinthians 16:20](#)

¹²Greet one another with a holy kiss [2 Corinthians 13:12](#)

²⁶Greet all God's people with a holy kiss [1 Thessalonians 5:26](#)

¹⁴Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ [1 Peter 5:14](#)

⁴⁵You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet.

Luke 7:45

²⁸There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. [Galatians 3:28](#)

¹¹Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. [Colossians 3:11](#)

³ But there is one thing I want you to know: The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. ⁴ A man dishonors his head if he covers his head while praying or prophesying. ⁵ But a woman dishonors her head if she prays or prophesies without a covering on her head, for this is the same as shaving her head.

[1 Corinthians 11:3-5](#)

Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? ² Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? ³ Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? ⁴ For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

[Romans 6:1-4 \(NLT\)](#)

²Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body-whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free-and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

[1 Corinthians 12:12-13](#)

²¹ And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, ²² let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

²³ Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. ²⁴ Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.

²⁵ And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

[Hebrews 10:19-25](#)

²⁶What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.

[1 Corinthians 14:26](#)

18 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ² There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, ³ and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. ⁴ Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. ⁵ When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. ⁶ But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

Acts 18:1-6

⁷ Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.

⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

⁹ One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. ¹⁰ For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” ¹¹ So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

Acts 18:7-11

IMAGINE A CHURCH wracked by divisions.

Powerful leaders promote themselves against each other,
each with his band of loyal followers.

One of them is having an affair with his stepmother, and,
instead of disciplining him, many in the church boast of his
freedom in Christ to behave in such a way.

Believers sue each other in secular courts;
some like to visit prostitutes.

As a backlash against this rampant immorality, another
faction in the church is promoting celibacy—complete
sexual abstinence for all believers—as the Christian ideal.

Still other debates rage about how decisively new Christians should break from their pagan past.

Disagreements about men's and women's roles in the church add to the confusion. As if all this were not enough, alleged prophecies and speaking in tongues occur regularly, but not always in constructive fashion. A significant number of these immature Christians do not even believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ!

⁸He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our LORD Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our LORD.

1 Corinthians 1:8-9

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