

Sympsychos.

Coexistence

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1. Introduction

The understanding of the human body is fundamental in every culture to organize the economic, the family, institutions, governments.

In Western civilization, the idea of the human body as an autonomous entity separated from its social, community and ecological environment prevailed. This led to the emergence of diverse cultural understandings such as, for example, Human Rights, medical science or private property. Likewise, the development of capitalism had in the idea of the autonomous body a fundamental tool for its profound development.

At the same time, in several native American cultures that coexisted with the Western one, the human body has been understood in a divergent way.

Considering biblical interpretation as an intercultural dialogue, we usually tend to establish such a dialogue with the text by imposing our worldview on it. Thus, as far as the idea of the body is concerned, our own culture invades the text, leaving us without the possibility of listening to other ways of experiencing corporeality. Taking this into account, we will take some notions of the body in native cultures in Argentina that dialogue with the New Testament culture. It is an exercise in interpretation from the moment we include in the interpretive conversation not only our worldview but that of other cultures contemporary to ours and that have often been silenced.

Our topic of conversation will be the body in the letter to the Philippians, as a written witness to a culture in which bodies are present in their community dimension.

Usually, 1 Corinthians has been taken to record Paul's prevailing focus on the body. Certainly, it is in this letter that the theme of the body seems to show the Pauline vision from the beginning.

However, the place of the body in other Pauline letters seems less evident and less studied. And certainly, it also occupies a place of preponderance. With this in mind, from the letter to the Philippians¹ we will delve into Paul's prison existence and review how this situation stirs Paul's reflection and feeling about the body.²

Paul, from prison, writes to the Philippians and recognizes his body as something communal. At the same time, through this letter we find the mention of several bodies that are understood to be interrelated.

¹ It is interesting that in the book *Bodies on the Verges* it happens that all the Pauline letters are worked except Philippians. This is noted by one of the commentators within the same book, on p.326

² We take into account and adhere to the hypothesis of two or three letters gathered in Philippians.

This idea will crystallize into different actions, strategies and horizons. For example, we can note that the community of Philippi helps Paul in several ways. This help is entirely driven by the recognition that Paul's body is part of the Philippian community, as well as other communities.

Acknowledging interdependent corporeality in the letter to the Philippians can be a strategy for rethinking what paths might help us heal ourselves in this time of deep contempt for bodies.

We will also try to include in the intercultural interpretive conversation something of the Wesleyan worldview about the body. This worldview in its beginnings seeks to move from the local parish (as a small body) to the holistic parish (as a community body).

This dialogue as a form of interpretation invites us to have a sensitivity between bodies that inhabit the times of Philippians, the original cultures, the times of Wesley and our current Western culture.

2. Some received ideas about the Pauline conception of the body.

One of the first issues we have to take into account is that we have received a body of Pauline texts that have been read primarily from our specific Western bodily conception.

We have already mentioned that 1 Corinthians seems to be the text par excellence in which the idea of the body is worked on.

This view of the body in 1 Corinthians, especially, is explored for example by Peter Brown in *The Body and Society*. In this text he tells us the following:

Paul's use of such a brutally dualistic image is the clearest expression he ever gave, in any of his epistles, of his perception of the terrible darkness which he has gathered in his heart before the splendor of Christ's resurrection.

The notion of the antithesis between spirit and flesh was a particularly ominous "theological summary" [...]

[...] But we must remember that Paul was an educated Jew with a culture similar to that of Philo and Josephus. Whatever its cause, the painful conflict between body and soul was a fact of life: many of the sins that were most repulsive—particularly lasciviousness and drunkenness—undoubtedly came from surrendering to the demands of the body.³

Peter Brown understands the Pauline vision of the body while sustaining the dualism of the modern era. In fact, for this author it was Paul himself who initiated this dualistic vision in the Christian world:

³ Brown, Peter, *El cuerpo y la sociedad*, pp78-79

... it is possible to weigh, in the repeated exegeses of a mere hundred words of Paul's epistles, the future course of Christian thought on the human person.⁴

Although we take Peter Brown to show a clear example of the understanding of the biblical text from a Western dualism, it seems pertinent to us to emphasize that he is not the only one or an isolated case. We believe that it is from this interpretation that a hegemonic reading of the biblical text is established.⁵

But just as we take this author as an example of the modern vision of the body inserted in the understanding of the biblical text, we cannot fail to point out a critical current, perhaps a minority, to this mode of interpretation.

A text that worked a lot on this is Dale Martin's already classic, *The Corinthian Body*. From this text, and others like it, we can critically access the Pauline corporal interpretation in Corinth that determined a marked line. This text by Martin made it clear, at the time, that the ontological division between soul and body, between material and immaterial, is a construction that can be evidenced in several sociocultural forces that have Descartes as an example.⁶ Martin points out that, although the division between body and soul existed in ancient times, it did not imply a disconnection between the two spheres. This disconnect is built in the modern era.

Dale Martin's text sustains the diversity of philosophies that reigned in Paul's time. Not only was there the Platonic one that could be dualistic, but there were others that remained valid and with more circulation. The Stoic and the Epicurean did not propose a duality but a more or less dense materiality of the different principles of nature. In fact, Platonism in the Pauline era is quite filtered by Stoicism so that it did not have a strong imprint on the cultural understanding of the body.⁷

For the different philosophical conceptions that circulated in roman imperial times, the entire universe was a body that was crossed by different principles, and all of these had a certain materiality. Part of that universe was human bodies.

Dale Martin has a summary that we are interested in highlighting since it contains a concept of individual, or human being, that we will be working on in this writing:

Rather than trying to force ancient language into our conceptual schemes, we would do better to try to imagine how ancient Greeks and Romans could see as "natural" what seems to us bizarre: the nonexistence of the "individual," the fluidity of the elements that make up the "self," and the essential continuity of the human body with its surroundings.⁸

3. Idea of the body in the Qom people

⁴ Brown, Peter, *El cuerpo y la sociedad*, p. 78

⁵ An itinerary of the concept of body can be found in Citro, Silvia, *Cuerpos Significantes*.

⁶ Martin, Dale, *The Corinthian Body*, p.3-6

⁷ Martin, Dale, *The Corinthian Body*, p. 8-15

⁸ Martin, Dale, p.21

The interest in the study of body perception in the letter to the Philippians arises in my case from learning about corporeality in the original Qom culture, in northern Argentina. These people, as well as others in Latin America, conceive the body from a perspective that led me to rediscover other ways of dialoguing with the biblical text. This Qom worldview led me to think that our readings were "vitiating" by a Western approach quite far from what the Pauline idea could be. I found that this conflict in biblical science happens in anthropological science as well, in researchers like Paul Wright:

All this generated a series of obsessive questions that haunted me for a long time: "Are these entities of power only inside the shaman's body, or can they also be outside?" Also: "What is a person?" The inside-outside equation will be analysed later. In the meantime, I must confess that dualism was obscuring my approach to the Qom notion of person⁹

Like Pablo Wright, other researchers were able to recognize in the idea of the Qom person a different way of understanding and experiencing the body. I share, at least, some of the research that has been done on this aspect. Florencia Tola is an Argentine anthropologist who worked a lot on the idea of the body in this Qom people. Here is a quote from her, somewhat extensive, which works as an excellent summary of her research on the corporeality of this native people:

"The person is conceptualized as an extended person in which his body does not represent a border between beings or a barrier that would contain the elements that constitute him. The skin is thought of as porous and open in such a way that it is difficult to think of the existence of a bodily inside and outside. The term *l'oc* is generally translated as body but defines more precisely the bodily boundary marked by the skin in the case of human persons, by the body in the case of animals, by the bark in the case of trees and by the peel in the case of fruits. If *l'oc* is used to translate what we call "body," this term does not include the whole body: it does not include flesh (*lapat*) or fluids or organs. The skin and body are not conceived as a barrier that separates one from the other, an exterior from an interior. The body is thought of as permeable and interactive throughout a person's existence..."¹⁰

When she speaks of the soul, an idea that we will be working on when we see the term *psyche*, Florencia Tola will say the following in relation to the Western anthropological interpretation of the Qom world:

"... For most of them (anthropological scholars) the *nqui'i* is the soul that animates the body. Not questioning the soul/body opposition, the authors consider the body as the seat of the soul. However, projecting onto Qom notions the meaning of this opposition peculiar to the West only obscures the way in which the Qom conceive of the person. The terms that refer to *nqui'i*

⁹ Wright, Pablo, *Ser en el sueño*. P.157

¹⁰ Tola, Florence, p.161

(soul, spirit) do not account for the way in which the person and the body are conceived. The person is not constituted by a fixed body and a volatile spirit that animates him. What makes an entity become a person is the fact that it is an embodied *nqui'i*. The *nqui'i*, the capacity for subjectivation proper to all beings, imprints a specific character on each body based on specific appearance and personality. The combination of physical appearance and *nqui'i* gives rise to the specificity of a person who is susceptible to adopting different bodily regimes according to the combination of the attributes of other person-bodies, human and non-human..."¹¹

As we can see, there is a strong difficulty in finding in our culture a word that serves to translate *nqui'i* giving it a meaning similar to Qom. Our word "soul" or even "spirit" does not have the same understanding as *nqui'i* in the Qom world. Becoming flesh of that *nqui'i* would be a good way to study, in future opportunities, the incarnation of the word in the Gospel of John.

We should remind ourselves that in the Greek case of *pneuma* and *psyche* we encounter a similar difficulty when we work on the translation and interpretation of the New Testament text.

Possibly we have in this Qom culture, as in other Amerindian cultures, a possibility of understanding from other perspectives the New Testament culture and terminology.

As for the latter, we have another anthropologist, Silvia Citro, who studied groups of the Qom people who participated in Christian churches. It is interesting to note how they assimilated Western Christian concepts into their body worldview. I cite an example:

The power of the non-human, here according to the Christian worldview of God or the Devil, defines the corporeal dimension of the person, one can be close and full of divine power and experience states of joy and contentment or, on the contrary, move away, empty oneself of that power and fall into the nets of the other. in sin. The first situation is associated with health, while the second with disease. [...] In short, corporeality is traversed not only by what we usually identify as biological and natural factors, but also by thought and the relationship with the divine, all mutually intertwined factors.¹²

We notice how the body does not end in what we see but is totally related to the other, to divinity.

She goes on a little further, pointing out the connection that occurs between bodies:

These interrelations between body and world (natural, human and non-human) – which from our ontology we tend to separate but which are

¹¹ Tola, Florence, p.155

¹² Citro, Silvia, Representación de lo corporal entre los Tobas, pp.7-8. We want to clarify that the name "toba" for this Qom people is external. It was imposed on them from the perspective of surrounding peoples. Toba is a derogatory name that means "broad-foreheaded". The proper name of this people is Qom, which means people.

presented to us here as dimensions of the same existence or event – not only occur around the beliefs of the Gospel, but are evidenced in practices that come from the history of the Qom themselves.¹³

It seems that this understanding is very close to what we can read in the text of Philippians. The coexistence of bodies in Paul is perhaps not so far from this Qom understanding.

We want to highlight by way of summary, to the extent that this can be done with an anthropology as complex as that of the Qom culture, some points about the body and soul in the Qom people that I think would help us to enter the conversation with the text of Philippians.

First, the body is not an isolated entity but rather a porous one, interconnected with the environment that surrounds it. That environment includes divinity.

Second, the dualistic soul/body divide is not found in the Qom world. Instead, the soul is an active entity, interrelated or interwoven with human bodies, between human and non-human bodies.

Third, the soul is an entity that is embodied. This corporeality of the soul distances it from the immaterial Western concept. The soul in the Qom world is body or is part of the body. That porous, interconnected body.

Fourthly, the coexistence of bodies also occurs in the environment. The environment is deeply attached to bodies and bodies to it.

4. The Body in Wesley

Seeing the world of the New Testament text as we did with Martin's perspective and the Qom world in relation to corporeality, we wonder if Wesley's world is anything like what we have seen. Certainly, Wesley is at the beginning of a development of mechanistic Western culture that will transform the idea of the body to international levels. Being part of the Wesleyan tradition, we wonder if we have inherited something of Wesley's perception of the body when interpreting biblical texts.

How does Wesley and his idea of the body come into our conversation?

Something of his bodily understanding can be found in a sermon in which he precisely reflects on the limitation of human knowledge.¹⁴ I quote the part in which it refers to the knowledge of the human body:

13. Well, but if we don't know anything else, don't we know ourselves? To our bodies and our souls? What is our soul? We know that it is a spirit. But what is a spirit? Here we are totally stopped. Where is the soul housed? In the pineal gland? In the whole brain? In the heart? In the blood? In any part of

¹³ Citro, Silvia, Representación del cuerpo entre los Tobas, p.9

¹⁴ Sermón La imperfección del conocimiento humano, Obras de Wesley, Volumen IV, Sermón 69

the body? Or (if anyone can understand these terms) "all in all, and all in every part"? How is the soul united to the body? A spirit to a clod? What is the secret and imperceptible chain that unites them? Can the wisest of humans give a satisfactory answer to any of these simple questions?

And as for our own body, how little we know! During nighttime sleep, a healthy man, when he sweats, perspires a quarter of what he sweats when he does not sleep. Who can explain this? What is meat? And in particular that of the muscles? Are the fibers that compose it of a certain size, so that they can be divided up to that point and no more? Or are they solvable in infinitum? How does a muscle work? Does it inflate, and therefore fall shorter? But what does it inflate with? If it is bloody, how and where does the blood come from? And where does it go after the muscle relaxes? Are the nerves permeable or solid? How do they work? By vibration or by transmission of animal spirits? Who knows what animal spirits are? Are they electric fire? What is sleep? What does it consist of? What is dreaming? How can we distinguish dreams from waking thoughts? I doubt anyone knows. Oh, how little we still know about ourselves! What can we expect to know about all of God's creation?¹⁵

Reading this excerpt from the sermon "On the Imperfection of Human Knowledge," we wonder how Wesley himself read some texts that spoke of the soul and the flesh. Undoubtedly, not in the same way as us, not in the same way as the Qom people. Although some questions about the "mechanical" functioning of the body would be expected to be answered by future research (as is the case of the functioning of the muscle in this small fragment), we find extremely interesting the part that works the relationship between the soul and the body. The impossibility of knowing where the soul is housed is one of the many questions that will not be answered. We can observe that this soul could be understood as something united to a body and housed somewhere in that body. At least it is a doubt that one of these answers may have.

Leaving this short text, we can find in another of Wesley's writings an idea of the body that we can rescue as a surviving idea of a somewhat more holistic corporeality.

We refer to the text *Primitive Physic*. In this text Wesley recovers a large number of natural remedies. Convinced that the growing research and pharmaceutical industry was keeping humble people away from the possibility of access to medicines that were known to cure diseases, Wesley is dedicated to recovering ancestral memories of natural remedies.

In this text we read at the beginning, a preface in which we can find a series of interesting theological, ecological and anthropological affirmations for what we are reflecting on the body today. How is the body conceived in this small text?

We can recognize that the perception of the body in this writing lies at a hinge between conceptions of individual bodies and interconnected bodies. Medical and pharmaceutical

¹⁵ Sermón La imperfección del conocimiento humano, pp.40-41.

science, through the development of remedies and theories about diseases, will gradually give way to a mechanistic conception of the human body. Wesley will rescue the idea of a body that is part of other bodies, whether human or environmental. The interrelationship of these human bodies and with the environment will be the key to Wesley's reading.

Let's look at some affirmations of the body as something porous. Wesley underlines the idea of health as a balance with the environment where the person is. Already at the beginning of the text he understands soul and body as the same garment:

When man came first out of the hands of the Great Creator, clothed in body, as well as in soul, with immortality and incorruption, there was no place for physic, or the art of healing.

This original state, before sin, will be lost. But Wesley will understand that God-given nature provides means of healing for those bodies. Air, food, and interpersonal relationships will all be variables that are understood as factors of health or disease. I quote the part that has to do with emotions as fundamental when it comes to health:

1. The passions have a greater influence upon health than most people are aware of.
2. All violent and sudden passions dispose to, or actually throw people into acute diseases.
3. Till the passion which caused the disease is calmed, medicine is applied in vain,
4. The love of God, as it is the sovereign remedy of all miseries, so in particular it effectually prevents all the bodily disorders the passions introduce, by keeping the passions themselves within due bounds; and by the unspeakable joy and perfect calm serenity and tranquillity it gives the mind, it becomes the most powerful of all the means of health and long life.

As we can see in this paragraph, the body is something that is related to divinity, to the air it breathes, to the interpersonal relationships that certain feelings propose. Health, that is, the well-being of the body, is understood in a holistic way. The body is understood as something totally porous through which the environment enters and exits. The porosities of the body extend to interpersonal relationships in the understanding of feelings. Finally, the love of God is considered here as part of medicines, as part of the forms of balance of that body connected with divinity.

5. In prison...

We have listened to the different voices that propose us to approach the intercultural interpretation of the text of Philippians. We hear, certainly in a limited way due to the length of the writing, about the different ideas of the body in the first century and the reception of New Testament texts from a post-Descartes Western culture, we hear about the ideas of the body in the Qom people and also briefly in Wesley. It will be time to bring them into conversation now focused on the letter to the Philippians.

To read Philippians we find it of the utmost importance to highlight Paul's life situation when writing the letter. His prison, surely one of many he lived,¹⁶ this time makes his interconnected corporeality notice. He experiences his body as a meeting space. He lives his body taking into account other corporalities that at that moment of imprisonment are recognized as part of his own existence.

Because of the prison situation, this corporeality (or as we will suggest later, life, *psyche*) is isolated from the others that at the time provided a completeness to its existence. However, Pablo will notice a coexistence of lives, of bodies, at the time of being in prison.

This is where we have to stop to think that the concept of corporeality that appears in Philippians surpasses what we understand by body in the West. And the fact is that the reflection to which Philippians invites us would lead us to a corporeality that is not reduced to mere "materiality" but encompasses other spheres of life as we have seen above.

Thus, a first element that we can notice when we begin the conversation from the Qom and Wesley world is that Paul is not conceiving the body in the way we interpret it today. Pauline corporeality now reveals itself to us holistic, from the moment it includes the divine, the other. We will be able to recognize that the other will always be present in that Pauline corporeality. And that "other" is deeply felt at the time of prison. The other may encompass both the presence of the divine in that corporeality and also the presence of other corporeal existences and the presence of memory as a constitutive part of the corporeal. The other will grow in Pauline corporeality.

So extensive will this corporeality be that it will not be enough to name it as *soma*, but will use the word *psyche*. It is for this reason that we do not understand the word *psyche* as a reality separate from *soma*. *Psyche* includes one's own *soma*, and the divine *soma*, the *soma* of others, the *soma* of creation in short.¹⁷

We can note this coexistence in various ways in the letter to the Philippians. We will look at some passages by way of example. In the first place, the greeting will already be an example, then we can note a terminology typical of Philippians and in the third place we will find records of community life that testify to the praxis derived from this shared corporeality.

I. Corporeality in the greeting of the letter.

The evidence of another way of understanding the body appears to us already from the opening greeting, 1:3-8

3 I thank my God whenever I remember you, 4 always interceding with joy for all of you in every prayer of mine, 5 because of your participation in the

¹⁶ In this case we are inclined to think of a prison in Ephesus rather than in Rome.

¹⁷ The word *soma* in Philippians occurs just three times: 1:20 and 3:21 twice.

gospel from the first day until now; 6 And I am convinced of this, that he who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.

7 It is right for me to feel this about all of you, because I have you in my heart. Both in my prisons and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you are all partakers with me of grace. 8 For God is my witness how I long for you all with the deep love of Christ Jesus.

In this first encounter with the Philippian corporeality, we are faced with a greeting that manifests a clear worldview of intertwined lives.

At first, the verb *phroneo* is striking. This verb occurs 10 times in Philippians. It will be in this case, in 1:7, that it will make its first appearance in this card.

As for the Pauline use of the verb *phroneo*, the letter to the Romans follows in number of apparitions with 9 apparitions. We note the number of occurrences of this term in Philippians (followed by Romans) considering that it appears 26 times in total in the New Testament. We consider this account by understanding only the verb. We clarify this since, for example, nouns with the root *phron-* (as in Rom 8:6, *phronema*) appear several times in Romans, as well as compound verbs (Rom 12:13, e.g. *hyperphronein*)

Why point to a verb like *phroneo* which is usually translated as think, feel, consider? The first appearance in Philippians (1:7) is deeply framed by a communal interrelationship. How we translate this verse:

Likewise, it is right for me to feel this about all of you, because I have you in my heart, both in the chains and also in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, being partakers with me of all grace.

It is remarkable that there is something that unites existence through the verb *phroneo* that we choose to translate as to feel. That feeling is a coexistence with those who are in Paul's heart. This coexistence is marked by the denomination of those who share this being together *synkoinonos* (co-participants). Notice also that the presence of others is in Paul's body when he says, "I have them in my heart."

It is in this greeting that we begin to find body and life extended, porous, pierced through feeling.

In Philippians this verb is found, in general, marking the interrelation of lives, of feelings (2:2.5, 3:15.19, 4:2-10)

In this aspect of the use of *phroneo*, we want to note the idea of the porous body so present in the ancient world. The idea that the human body is not an isolated and separate extension of its environment, but rather, it is part of its environment and communicates for better or worse, for balance or imbalance, with its entire environment. In ancient medicine this idea of channels, or *poroi*, through which this interdependence worked, will be practically the basis of human health. By this porosity, the balance of the internal of

the body with the external was achieved, with the internal and external being parts of the same extensive body.¹⁸

Taking into account this idea of porosity is that we dare to think of the Pauline body in prison, greeting, with a clear idea of porosity that unites it to those who are not physically (a term or idea also to be reviewed) with him.

There is a game between being present (*parousia*) and being absent (*apeimi*) (Phil 1:27, 2:12). And yet this game does not "disarm" coexistence. Coexistence is lost by starting with Christ, one ceases to be in the flesh, *en sarx*, (Phil 1:24). As has already been said in several studies, the Greek preposition *en*, in Paul, is of paramount importance in understanding their relationship in Christ. But notice that the same preposition is used, for example, in 1:24 to consider that one abides in life. And also in 1:27 the idea of being in a spirit (*pneuma*), in a life (*psyche*) is worked on. Perhaps here we need the idea of the Qom "soul" that is embodied for the existence of the person.

In this way we conclude the first conversation focused on the greeting of the letter and some subsequent verses. Let us now look at something about terminology.

II. Corporeality in Philippians' terminology

In this section we will work on some terms as an example. We have already seen something with the verb *phroneo*.

It is noteworthy that in this letter there are some New Testament hapax legomena and that they are related to being in common.

See:

2:2 *sunpsyjos*

2:19 *eupsyjé*

2:20 *isopsyjée*.

As we can see, they are possible Pauline neologisms (we have not carried out research at the socio-cultural level in other writings from the time of Philippians, but it would be interesting to do so later).¹⁹ As in many cases, Paul constructs words by prefixing prepositions. In this case, the word that is the substrate for these annexations is *psyche*. And we emphasize again that our common translations of *psyche* as *soul* do not do justice to the idea of this term in those times.²⁰

¹⁸ Martin, Dale, The Corinthian Body, pp. 17-18

¹⁹ We were able to read the very interesting article by Schoemaker in which he states, among other things, that Josephus uses the word *psyche* more than 200 times against approximately 28 times for *pneuma*. Likewise, he works a lot on the evolution of the concept of *pneuma* from the Old to the New Testament, passing through non-canonical writings.

²⁰ Martin, The Corinthian Body, p.XIII del Prefacio.

The translation of *psyche* as *soul* would lead us to the Cartesian ontological division between body and soul. However, *psyche* in the Greco-Roman world could not be a body-soul division but a coexistence of these modalities of the human being.

It would not be possible, in the first century, to conceive of an immaterial soul (*psyche*) versus a material body (*soma*).

It is for this reason that we speak of corporeality. For Philippians, corporeality is a term that is not defined by *soma* but by an extension interconnected by elements of creation. We understand that this interconnection occurs through the *psyche*.

Thus, in chapter 2 we find the use of *psyche* as something common, something shared, as we see in the hapax we have just mentioned:

2:2 *sunpsyjos*

We see that in this verse the term appears in a certain way framed by *phroneo*:

Complete my joy so that you may be of the same mind (*phroneo*), having the same love, with the same life (*sunpsyjos*) and the same feeling (*phroneo*)

We already see how the *verb phroneo* is functioning as that energy that interrelates lives.

2:19 *eupsyche* y 2:20 *isopsychee*.

Then in verses 19 and 20 the other terms involving *psyche* appear:

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I too may be revived (*eupsyjo*) when I hear of your condition; for I have no one who cares for you with the same mind (*isopsyjo*) and sincerity.

In the use of these two terms, we can access what we have been sharing. Paul's life in prison is linked to the lives of other beings so that his well-being also depends on knowing about the well-being of his companions.

III. Corporeality in the Records of Philippian Community Life

This intertwined corporeality will certainly not be Paul's own. It is a way of being in the world not only of Paul and the Philippians but of a large part of Mediterranean culture. And as for the specificity of the community of Philippi, we note that some situations that we read in the letter denote this bodily conception.

The Hymn of Philippians 2:6-11

A well-known text that we understand is a piece that records a community song. We can find in this song a bodily idea that we can also read from the perspective we are proposing.

The word that would condition us in v. 7, we could say, is *morphé*. This word has traditionally been read from the philosophical conception of form and matter or form and content.

However, we can read it in the light of the conception of different corporalities. One will be the divine body with its extension (which seems to us better to translate *morphé*) and the other the human body with its extension. Thus, the Messiah leaves the divine bodily extension to assume the human bodily extension. And that human bodily extension is understood in the song as belonging to a humanity, and within it to a social stratum such as slavery.²¹

That body of the Messiah became a body when it metamorphosed with humanity, with human corporeality. The emptying of a form of being a body (the divine) is then a filling of other corporalities, the human ones, those of the lower socioeconomic sectors.

Financial aid

Paul is grateful for the financial help received from the Philippians. Interestingly, we can also read this action as a record of extended corporeality.

It will be in 4:10 where the verb we worked on earlier will appear twice: *phroneo*. And in the same way that we work on it: that is to say that thinking, feeling (*phroneo*) is an energy that links the Philippians with Paul:

I greatly rejoiced in the Lord because at last your concern for me (*phroneo*) has been renewed. You always thought (*phroneo*) of me, but you lacked the opportunity.

In this traditional translation of Philippians 4:10 in the 2015 Reina Valera Version, the idea of *phroneo* as a thought or a worry is repeated. In our Western culture this action is something merely ideal or spiritual. However, as we have worked on in the conversation, *phroneo* will be that energy that unites bodies and that union will end in an action of caring for some Philippian bodies to Paul's body.

Verse 14 will close this idea of the action of *phroneo* by proposing that it produced *synkoinonia* in the tribulation.

6. Conclusion

We tried to talk. We try to interpret through dialogue. And not only by incorporating ourselves into that conversation from our own culture but by moving out of place. We listened and put other voices in the conversation. Surely several more voices can be added to this game of interpretations. Possibly, an interpretation is always a conversation and

²¹ The opposite movement is seen in 3:21

the problem is to consider it as such and to elucidate who is in it. The latter is not always obvious.

We wanted to bring in some way into the conversation voices that have generally been silenced in the vast majority of dialogues. The native peoples.

Concluding a conversation may not be appropriate. A conversation usually leaves us with ideas, thoughts, recognitions, ignorance. It usually opens up new questions and new answers. But above all, a conversation is a relational event. We did not want to make an analysis to extract a truth from the text but to enter into a relationship with the text, with our Methodist tradition and with the Qom people.

And it seems to me that this way of interpreting, through dialogue, is of the utmost necessity in our times. I would say that it is urgent. Today the dialogues are generally broken. Or in many cases deeply polarized or directed. Today we have greatly lost the ability of conversation as a mode of relationship. Retelling each other our perspectives, our stories, may not end in a conclusion but in a relationship.

And we have chosen to discuss a topic that we understand has been considered in many conversations, at least in the biblical area. The human body has been the subject of interpretation numerous times in biblical research. From numerous perspectives, with more or less explicit intentions.

Our methodology of interpretation is closely related to our conception of the body presented here. It is porous, it is not limited by one or another worldview but is interrelated. It goes in and out of the ideas of each body. It does not seek precision or accuracy of definitions but rather to recompose relationality.

I deeply believe that this relationality has been broken in our times and recovering it will help to heal the bodily experience of entire creation.

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