BEHIND THE MASK OF RHETORIC:
2 CORINTHIANS 8 AND THE INTRA-TEXTUAL
RELATION BETWEEN PAUL AND THE 
CORINTHIANS

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ABSTRACT
The article examines the textual strategy that Paul follows in 2 Corinthians 8 in order to involve the Corinthians in his ecumenical collection for the Christians in Jerusalem. In this regard the respective roles of the encoded author and readers within the intra-textual discourse, the statuses which they hold within this relationship, the religious integrity of the intended readers, the sequence and manner in which the subject matter is presented throughout the chapter and the prudent phraseology from the author's verbal repertoire are discussed.

2 Corinthians 8 provides a particularly interesting example of the intra-textual roles that Paul (as encoded author) played as part of his strategy to involve the Corinthians in his ecumenical collection for the Jerusalem congregation,¹ as well as the clearly defined role that he assigned to his intended readers. The concept 'intended readers' here comprises both the implicit readers (as a textual construct, implicitly encoded by the sender — cf Schenk 1989:55-82), as well as the explicit readers (the directly addressed readers). As ‘textually defined’ readers they do not stand in a one-to-one relationship to the extra-textual readers, but rather refer to the anticipated role a potential reader is expected to play in order to actualise the text (cf Lategan 1989:3-20). The encoded readers could also be typified as the 'ideal portrait' which the real author entertains of his flesh-and-blood readers. In the text he (as encoded author, according to the image he projects of himself through the different textual indicators) then enters into discourse with these ‘idealised figures’.

¹ Up to the present no consensus with regards to the literary unity of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, which both refer to the Pauline collection, exists among New Testament scholars. Cf Bornkamm (1965), Betz (1985), Martin (1986), Wolff (1989) and Stowers (1990) for a discussion of the most important arguments raised for and against the unity of these chapters. However, within the parameters of this essay it is unnecessary to enter into a lengthy discussion of these problems. 2 Corinthians 8 is used in this context only as an illustration of the distinct roles which Paul assigns to himself and his addressees within a given intra-textual rhetorical situation in order to elicit a desired response from the extra-textual readers with regards to the topic under discussion.
An examination of the nature and function of the roles of the author and his readers and the different textual strategies in 2 Cor 8 cannot be undertaken in isolation from an analysis of the form of this chapter; that is, the rhetorical situation in which the interaction between the interlocutors took place (cf Vorster 1990). Form and contents are not two different, completely separable entities, since the form or structural matrix of any text affects its meaning in respect of the constraints it places on certain interpretations thereof, while at the same time legitimising others. But before considering these aspects, it will however be necessary to make a number of introductory remarks regarding Paul’s roles in the Corinthian letters, which will serve as the framework against which the rhetorical situation in 2 Corinthians 8 will be analysed.

1 PAUL’S APOSTLE- AND PATRIARCHAL ROLES IN THE CORINTHIAN LETTERS

In the praescriptio of 1 and 2 Corinthians Paul explicitly presents himself to his audience as: ἀπόστολος χριστοῦ θεοῦ (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1). This formal intra-textual role which he, as well as the addressees as: ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ (1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1) play, reflect, and at the same time also determine their status and respective positions in the epistolary discourse. In this respect Paul figures as the superior party with the highest status and most power since he has direct access to the revelations of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:10-16). Paul further demarcates and legitimises his authority as apostle by stating that he acts in complete obedience to God’s commands (1 Cor 4:1-5; 2 Cor 1:12-24). Due then to his role as normative mediator of the ἀδικία τοῦ θεοῦ(1 Cor 2:1), he expects total obedience to his commands from the Corinthians (1 Cor 7:8; 16:1-4).

Although Paul makes explicit use of his apostolic authority, he often alternates this role in the course of the Corinthian epistles by (at times explicitly, but more often implicitly) presenting himself in an intimate way as a typical ‘father-figure’ towards the intended readers as his ‘children’ (1 Cor 4:14-15; cf also Meeks 1983:86; Best 1988:29-58). This father-child image which Paul borrowed from the social sphere of the family, the primary social institution in the first century Mediterranean world (Malina & Neyrey 1991:25-66), is now metaphorically applied to the relationship between him and his audience, while the role expectations associated with this relationship are frequently applied to the interlocutors in the course of the intra-textual discourse.

As ‘father’ Paul expects a specific code of behaviour from his ‘children’: They must obey him (2 Cor 2:9), trust in him (2 Cor 12:11) and not cause him any grief (2 Cor 2:1). Furthermore they must realise that they are not in a position to judge his actions (1 Cor 4:5) and, in view of their ignorance with regards to the correct Christian conduct (1 Cor 3:1-2), should imitate him as the ideal example in this regard (1 Cor 11:1). Paul in turn, as spiritual father of the congregation,
instructs them (1 Cor 4:17; 7:1-40), admonishes them (2 Cor 2:8) and regulates their general conduct (2 Cor 13:11). As a typical father-figure, he also boasts about their good conduct to other congregations (2 Cor 9:2), loves them (1 Cor 16:24), explains the motives for some of his actions to them so that they would not doubt his 'bona fides' (2 Cor 1:12-24), is cheered by their good behaviour (2 Cor 7:16) and prays for them continually (2 Cor 13:9).

From the afore mentioned cursory remarks it appears that Paul in his role as patriarchal figure still holds the leading position in the intra-textual discourse. The role conferred upon the intended readers in this regard (which obviously serves as an identification medium for the extra-textual readers) is one of obedience, but also of child-like trust in Paul. By adopting the role of father-figure, Paul does, however, in anti-structural fashion break through the very strict hierarchical relationship that should actually exist between him as apostle and the congregation. Of course he does not deny his structural role as apostle, but only acts less strict than expected in this regard (cf Petersen 1985:161). However, this intimate father-child relationship places much more implicit pressure on the readers to conform with their 'father's' wishes. In the words of Holmberg (1980:79):

we find in all letters, except Romans, the conception of apostolic fatherhood and imitation, which, as a description of the relation between the apostle and the local church is milder and at the same time more demanding than a list of rights and obligations. It is milder because it signifies an affectionate relation, but it is also more demanding - when are you free from the obligation of respecting and obeying 'father', and when have you repaid the debt of gratitude to the person who has given you life (eternal)?

2 THE 'WIRKUNGSGESCHICHTE' OF 1 COR 16 AND THE NEW ROLES THAT PAUL AND HIS AUDIENCE FULFIL IN 2 COR 8

Corinthians 8 represents a relatively late stage in the correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians. Since the apostle's previous discussion with them with regards to the collection (1 Cor 16:1-4), a number of events took place which not only influenced the relationship between Paul and them, but also seriously hampered the completion of this project.

Paul's textual strategy, style and role, as well as the role which he confers upon his readers in 2 Cor 8, differ noticeably from that of 1 Cor 16 (and with that of 1 Corinthians in general). This difference in style and roles indicates that 1 Corinthians 16, as well as the rest of the letter, did not have the desired effect on the extra-textual readers that Paul had hoped for. In other words: the congregation did not completely identify with the intended readers in the text, as well as with the contents of the letter. For this reason Paul mentions in 2 Cor
1:15-2:1 that he had to change his itinerary in order to visit the congregation. During this visit he and a member of the congregation apparently clashed (2 Cor 2:5; 7:12), whereafter Paul left 'in Betrübnis' (Lang 1986:8. Cf also Hafemann 1989:325-44), and according to 2 Cor 2:3-4 then wrote the so-called tearful letter (the present 2 Cor 10-13? Cf Pesch 1987:62-70 and Becker 1989:232-233) from Ephesus, which was delivered by Titus. To his joy the reaction to this letter was positive, so that he could send Titus back with a 'Versöhnungsbrief', that is the present 2 Cor 1-9 (Klauck 1986:8-9. Cf however Pelser 1991:219).

Due to the fact that the collection project in Corinth probably also came to a halt because of the disturbed relations between the apostle and his congregation, Paul now once again finds himself in a persuasive situation in 2 Cor 8 where he has to change the negative attitude of his readers with regards to this project, and also towards himself. In order then to successfully negotiate his readers towards these objectives, an (ideal) intra-textual rhetorical situation is created where effective communication between the interlocutors can take place. Although Paul's intra-textual arguments and persuasive strategies in 2 Cor 8 obviously then proceed from premises that would be acceptable to his intended readers, the extra-textual context is the crucial determinant not only of his rhetorical choices, but also of his and his audience's intra-textual roles. To view the encoded interlocutors and the intra-textual rhetorical situation only as auto-semantic textual constructs without any reference to reality, albeit indirect, is to neglect the crucial role of the pragmatic context in the creation of meaning. In the words of Du Toit (1989:197):

if within the textual construction the real readers do not recognize themselves as well as the real author (as far as they know him), they will experience the argument as unconvincing. The exercise will lose its credibility and fail.

As part of Paul's strategy in 2 Cor 8 he does not emphasise the hierarchical distance between himself and his audience anymore, as is the case in 1 Cor 16:1-4. In 16:1 he supplies an 'autocratic' answer to a question from the congregation with regards to the practical organisation of the collection, which not only underlines his apostolic authority, but also points to the hierarchical distance between them: As 'immature' believers they are ignorant as to the 'correct' behaviour in this regard, and therefore ask Paul's advice as apostle and religious expert. Paul also asserts himself in 1 Cor 16:1-4 as being in a position to give direct orders (cf the imperatives: πολιτιστε in verse 1 and: τιθέτω in verse 2), to admonish (verse 2b), to give directions to other congregations such as the Galatians (verse 1), and to exercise complete control over all aspects (and phases) of the Corinthian collection effort (verse 4).

However, in 2 Cor 8 Paul creates a much more intimate bond between himself
and his audience. The intended readers in fact now fulfil a new role as responsible, mature believers who need not be ordered and directed as before. Paul also shows a high regard for them: he only mentions their positive attributes (8:7), he hardly issues any explicit orders to them, he refers to their earlier diligence with regards to the collection (8:10), he acknowledges their spiritual maturity (8:8-9), and he introduces his co-workers as people who are equally positive towards them (8:17).

Paul bridges the hierarchical and ideological distance between himself and his audience by, in anti-structural fashion, adopting a very mild patriarchal role in 2 Cor 8. Although he explicitly calls them ádeo (8:1) and recognises their maturity as believers, he (implicitly) plays the afore mentioned role throughout this chapter: instead of issuing direct commands with regard to the collection, he now instructs them by pointing to the self-sacrificing behaviour of the Macedonian Christians (8:1-5) and that of Jesus (8:9), he emphasises his abundant love for them (8:8), he offers his advise to them in their own interest (8:10), he is concerned about their socio-economic position (8:13), he boasts to others about them (8:24), etc.

3 PAUL'S TEXTUAL STRATEGY IN 2 CORINTHIANS 8

In order to prepare his audience for a favourable disposition towards the collection and to elicit their adherence, Paul creates an ideal intra-textual rhetorical situation where a "meeting of minds" can take place. Not only does it involve the adaptation of new roles by the interlocutors (cf section 2, above), but also the use of a specific textual strategy (cf Egger's discussion of this term — 1987:138). In 2 Cor 8 this strategy involves the systematic selection of particular words and phrases from the author's verbal repertoire and the arrangement of these in such a way throughout the chapter as to enunciate the premises and values acceptable to the audience. In the course of the intra-textual discourse Paul then draws deductive conclusions from these premises and values (cf Kennedy's discussion of deductive argumentation — 1984:16).

Paul does not consider it his task to change the primary religious convictions and values of his readers in this 2 Cor 8. He rather wants to convey the message that the collection project, as a religious event, fits within their 'normal' religious behaviour. Therefore the whole epistolary discourse is an endeavour to broaden the audience's convictions in this regard. Differently phrased: the author's objective is to impress upon the readers that their concrete involvement in the collection project is an important sign of their adherence to the Gospel of Christ.

Paul starts the discourse by an elaborate narration of the successful collection effort of the Macedonians in verses 1-5. According to him the pro-active χάρις του θεού (8:1) enabled these believers to contribute even beyond their means towards the διακονία as this project is called in verse 4. Instead of using the techni-
cal term ‘logeía’ for the collection as in 1 Cor 16:1-2, Paul here refers to it as δακοντά, whereby he focusses on the Macedonians' service rendering by way of financial support for the Jerusalem congregation. According to Furnish (1984:401) this term was also used as a technical term for the provision of material goods to the poor in Hellenistic Judaism. In verse 2 Paul refers to the results of the kindness which God had showed to the Macedonians when he says that, in spite of one or other form of serious oppression or suffering, they still experienced abundant happiness. Within this paradoxical situation of happiness in the midst of sorrow and trial (which Paul understood as a test for their faith — cf also Rom 5:4; Phil 2:22), God's mercy made the Macedonians, in spite of their extreme poverty, rich in their generosity. As a matter of fact, they insisted on having a part in the collection for Jerusalem.

After Paul's narration of the positive attitude of the Macedonians, he mentions in verse 6 that he sent Titus to the Corinthians to complete the collection. Although this sudden reference to Titus and his mission seems somewhat out of place, Paul does this because he is of the opinion that already at this early stage of the discourse two important occurrences had taken place:

(i) During the narration the readers experienced conflict on account of their own perception and conduct with regards to the collection which differed from that which had been presented to them in verses 1-5;
(ii) A certain degree of identification with the conduct of the Macedonians took place on their part (that is, on the part of the encoded readers in accordance with the role Paul conferred upon them). This identification had to take place to 'dissolve' the dissonance which they experienced thus far.

Paul's reference to the Macedonians' exemplary conduct, which according to his comment in verse 5 was in accordance with God's will, serves as an important identification model for the audience. They should in other words, on the analogy of the Macedonians, give themselves to God and also to his apostle (verse 5). Identification with the Macedonian believers, however, implies more than a mere repetition or a superficial echo of their conduct, since the bestowal of God's grace presumes a distinctive reaction in each new situation on the side of the receivers thereof. This reference to the Macedonians' successful collection project in verse 1-5 is thus a very effective introduction to the discourse, since it places the audience under implicit pressure to conform with this exemplary conduct of their fellow believers right from the beginning.

It is conspicuous that Paul in verses 6, 7 and 19, refers to the collection as χαράς, a 'Stichwort' in this chapter (cf Wolff 1989:165). Thereby he places this project within the framework of God's overall χαράς or kindness (cf 8:1), which emphasises its true nature as a religious 'Gestalt'. The collection is not a humani-
tarian fundraising project! At the same time Paul’s careful application of these two complementary meanings of χάρις in 2 Cor 8, as marked and defined by the context, is rhetorically very effective: Due to the positive religious meanings attached to this term, it not only explains the true meaning of this project, but also contributes to the creation of an intimate discourse situation.

From verse 7 onwards Paul focusses on the role of the readers with regards to the collection attempt. But in 7a he first of all points out that his readers, as mature believers, excell in spectacular spiritual gifts such as faith, utterance, knowledge and zeal. In the same sentence he also makes a sidelong reference to his patriarchal function when he emphasises that the Corinthians also excell in his love for them. This presumably ‘innocent’ and out-of-place remark serves a twofold function:

(a) it functions as an (anti-structural) ‘bridge’ between the interlocutors,
(b) it applies implicit pressure on his readers to conform to his views.

On the grounds then of the intimate relationship between the ‘mature’ readers and the ‘affectionate’ Paul, he can now request of them: ἵνα καὶ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ χάριτι περισσεύητε (7b). Instead of using an imperative, Paul, however, mitigates this ‘command’ by using a ἵνα-clause. He also makes use of subtle wording (amongst others the repetition of περισσεύειν in 7a and b and the reference to the collection as χάρις in verse 6 and 7) as part of his textual strategy. At the same time the audience’s point of strength, namely their excessive spiritual gifts, are used as a leverage against them, since Paul wants them to broaden the scope of their faith by also excelling in the collection. In other words: they who already share in God’s gifts, must now furnish concrete proof thereof.

In the event that the camouflaged command in verse 7 created the impression that Paul again begins to dictate to his readers, he immediately ‘corrects’ himself in verse 8a by remarking: οὐ κατ’ ἐπίταγήν λέγω. Although verse 7 on the surface structure seems more prescriptive than Paul’s apparent mild remarks in verse 8, the opposite is true when its rhetorical function (on the deep structure) is analysed: In verse 8b he namely mentions that he is busy testing a crucial aspect of his ‘children’s’ Christian behaviour, to wit, their love. This remark brings the integrity of the readers to play as the onus is now placed on them to manifest their love for God and their fellow Christians in a concrete manner. Paul’s linkage of the collection with the audience’s basic value sytem, which becomes involved if they do not contribute to the collection, obviously places much greater pressure on them than any explicit command in fact would. Paul in verse 8b also makes use of the (ancient) rhetorical technique of comparison (cf Talbert 1989:359-370) when he says that he doesn’t want his children to be outdone by the manifestation of the Macedonians’ spiritual gift of liberality.
In verse 9 Paul introduces a second example when he holds Christ up as model who in his kindness (χάρις!) exchanged his heavenly glory for a humble earthly existence. Whereas Paul in verse 1 referred to the: χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ, he now in verse 9 refers to the: χάρις τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Christ's kindness in this context refers to the voluntary abandoning of his heavenly existence and his complete identification with a frail humanly existence (cf Georgi 1965: 61; Talbert 1989:363; Dietzfelbinger 1991:121). This christological statement, which points to Christ's preexistent heavenly glory and incarnation for the sake of the readers, is, according to Paul, the only ground for the spiritual affluence in which they already share (9c). Due then to the fact of Christ's sacrifice the Corinthians are now: υπὸ χάριν (cf also Rm 6:14) At the same time the collection project finds its most profound meaning within this framework of God and Christ's kindness. By drawing the collection yet again into the scope of the basic belief system of the readers, Paul implicitly, but very forcefully, conveys the message to them that participation therein is an important visible symbol of their adherence to the Gospel.

After Paul's brief, but rhetorically and theologically important reference to Christ's sacrifice, he in verse 10-15 returns to the collection project in Corinth. In verse 10 he stresses the fact that he only wants to provide his readers with advice with regard to the collection because it is to their advantage, whereby he implies that the 'mature' Corinthians now only need his fatherly advice to complete this project. But then in verse 11a, against the course of the intratextual discourse, Paul uses an imperative (ἐπιτελέσατε) when he commands the readers to complete the collection. However, he does this because he is of the opinion that the discourse progressed to such an extent (eg, an intimate relationship already exists between them and the hierarchical distance between them has been sufficiently bridged) that he can now act more prescriptive. Yet he immediately qualifies this command by pointing out that for some time already a willingness existed amongst the Corinthians with regards to the collection (11b), which now only had to be rounded off with a concrete act.

With regards to the Corinthians' contributions to the collection, Paul does not expect the same 'excessive' behaviour from them as the Macedonians. They only have to contribute ἐκ τοῦ ἐχεῖν, that is, according to their means (verse 11). In verse 12 he expands on this remark by pointing out that God himself approves when believers contribute according to their financial means. He does not demand an excessive amount from the Corinthians which may cause them financial loss at a later stage (verse 13-15).

In verse 13-14 Paul stresses that the purpose of the collection is to create equality (ισότητας). In other words, believers who at present experience περίσσευμα with regard to financial means, must help those who experience material need (υπότητημα). In future the afore mentioned could then again be of service to
those who presently possess sufficient financial means. Within the context of 2 Cor 8 this remark refers to material matters, and not, as is the case in Rm 15:27, to spiritual blessings which the Jerusalem community could provide the Corinthians with (cf also Lang 1986:320).

It is noticeable that Paul develops the principle of equality from verse 11-14. In verse 11 he expects that equality should exist between ‘eagerness/willingness’ (προθυμία τοῦ θέλειν) and the ‘accomplishment’ itself (ἐπιτελέσαντα), but in verse 12 he mentions that there should also be proportionality between believers’ possessions (καθό ἐὰν ἔχει ξην) and their quantitative contributions (οὐ καθό ous ἔχει). Finally in verse 14 Paul makes it clear that there should also be equality between the various congregations with regards to material needs in the present as well as in the future.

In verse 10-15 Paul accentuates the fact that the Corinthians are under no obligation to contribute more to the collection than they can afford. The probable reasons for this emphasis are threefold:

(i) The Corinthians were afraid that this project would place a heavy financial burden on their shoulders. Paul then reacts by pointing out that God, and he!, do not expect more of them than is physically possible.

(ii) Paul reacts to his own over-zealous accentuation of the Macedonian believers’ behaviour in verse 1-5. These remarks could have created the impression that his audience had to slavishly imitate the Macedonians’ behaviour. In order then to place matters in perspective, he now explains that they do not have to do themselves short in order to help the impoverished Jerusalem community.

(iii) A third, and within the context the most probable, possibility is that Paul follows a specific textual strategy whereby he deliberatively creates a tension between verse 1-5 and 10-15. Whereas he in verse 1-5 points to the practical effect of God’s grace on believers when they become aware of the physical needs of fellow believers, Paul in verse 10-15 spells out the underlying (mild!) Christian principles that they have to follow under these circumstances.

Paul undoubtedly knows that his mention of the admirable conduct of the Macedonians in the first five verses has created a measure of anxiety on the part of his audience. And even though he anticipates the question in their hearts ever since the narration of this episode, to wit: ‘How much should we actually contribute to the collection?’, he keeps them in suspense until verse 13. In verse 13-15 he then stresses the fact that God does not expect excessive offers from them. However, the readers also know that in spite of extremely difficult circumstances the Macedonians did in fact do more than what even God expected of them! This tension
between principle and practice, between what God demands and what certain believers are prepared to do, is purposely created by Paul. Through this strategy he wants to convey the message to his readers that the above mentioned principles are not unattainable ideals; in fact they could even be surpassed in practice. But it depends on the readers to determine when they have complied with God's expectations and principles with regard to the collection. Paul thus leaves a gap in the text which, in this case, must be actualised by mature readers.

From verse 16, which, with the recommendation of Titus and his two helpers, who are to assist with the collection in Corinth, inaugurates a new pericope, Paul now addresses the more practical aspects pertaining to the collection. After thanking God for the diligence which He created in Titus towards the Corinthians (verse 16), as is obvious from the fact that he, out of his own free will went to Corinth to complete the collection (verse 17), Paul also refers to two anonymous helpers who accompany Titus on this mission. In an eloquent manner he gives a very positive description of their attributes and moral qualities which will enable them to complete this project (χάρις): πρὸς τὴν αὐτοῦ τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν (verse 19). The first of these persons is noted for his involvement in the preaching of the Gospel (verse 18). He was appointed by none other than the Macedonian congregations to help with the collection. Likewise the second person also possesses the necessary spiritual qualities and eagerness to partake in this project (verse 22) — and was also ‘officially’ appointed by the Macedonians (verse 23).

According to verse 20 the presence of the delegates from Macedonia serves as a precaution that no one can blame Paul for any form of maladministration of the collection funds. In support of this remark Paul, in verse 21, quotes Proverbs 3:4. Through this citation he implies that he takes notice of people's views because his integrity as apostle and ‘father’ of the Corinthians is at stake. If he should be mistrusted in the handling of the collection, it will have a detrimental effect on his proclamation of the Gospel. Paul, in this recommendation of Titus and his helpers, thus still maintains an intimate relationship with his readers. He presents himself as someone who is deeply concerned about the correct course of events. Therefore he does everything possible in order that his readers should not doubt his bona fides or be embarrassed by his behaviour in any way.

In the light of the positive attitude of Titus and his helpers towards the Corinthians, and due to the fact that the helpers were appointed by the exemplary Macedonian congregations, Paul in verse 24 requests his audience to furnish proof of their love for the delegates. Paul here implies that he had already boasted to his helpers and the Macedonians about the positive attitude of the Corinthians. The enthusiasm with which Titus departed to Corinth, as well as the trust the other delegates have in them, reflect the practical consequences of his boasting. Therefore, the Corinthians do in fact have no other choice than to comply with
Paul's request (= demand) to show goodwill towards the church's delegates. And of course, when they do this, which they as 'spiritually mature believers' at this late stage of the discourse cannot refuse without seriously implicating their moral integrity, they also commit themselves to the practical completion of the collection. And that is precisely the response that Paul wishes to elicit from his readers. Verse 24 thus forms a logical conclusion to the intra-textual discourse, since Paul implies that the encoded readers have identified with the role he conferred upon them, as well as with the views he put across to them. Within the narrative time of chapter 8 they in other words 'changed' into spiritually mature believers who would now act responsibly with regard to the collection.

4 CONCLUSION

The roles which the author and readers fulfil in the intra-textual discourse, the respective statuses which they hold within this relationship, the sequence and manner in which the subjectmatter is presented, and the prudent phraseology from the author's verbal repertoire all contribute to an intimate discourse situation in 2 Cor 8. These aspects, together with other rhetorical skills and techniques, are used by Paul as part of his textual strategy to move his audience from one position to another with regard to the collection.

Within the rhetorical situation of 2 Cor 8 Paul's main aim is to communicate the message to his readers that the collection project is a religious undertaking. And in order to get his 'mature' audience involved in this project yet again and to alter their preconceived perceptions, Paul constantly brings implicit pressure to bear on them. Should they, however, refuse to get involved in the collection, their religious maturity and integrity will automatically be brought into question. The Corinthians' own excellent religious qualities are thus used as a leverage against them to compromise them into the required response. Within this intimate discourse situation the pressure on the readers to complete the collection is thus far greater than within an explicit authoritative situation where direct commands and prescriptions are frequently used to attain the desired effect. In this regard Paul's fatherly role forms a bridge between him and the 'mature' Corinthians along which the message is conveyed that they who already abundantly share in the grace of God cannot but visually illustrate it by their active participation in the collection for the Jerusalem congregation.

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