



FHS 3102: PAUL AND PAULINE TRADITION

Handout for Lecture 7
Dr Alex Muir (with Prof. Jenn Strawbridge)
Week 7, Hilary 2025

Paul the missionary

I. Paul as Missionary

Paul as compared to Proteus (Wayne Meeks)

Mission (Martin Goodman):

‘those who believe that as members of a defined group, they should approve of those within their number who might choose to encourage outsiders not only to change their way of life but also to be incorporated within their group’.

Paul’s Journeys

Account in Acts and Account in Galatians

Paul and *apostello* (Rom 10.14–17; 1 Cor 1.17)

Metaphors of Paul as missionary (Stephen Barton):

Representation: 2 Cor 5.18-20; 6.4-5

Agriculture: 1 Cor 3.9

Architecture: 1 Cor 3.10–11, 16

Nurture and Kinship: 1 Cor 4.14-16; 1 Thess 2.7, 11-12

Priesthood: Rom 15.15-16

Paul’s missionary work in practice

With the vulnerable/non-elite: 1 Cor 4.10-13 (cf. 2 Cor 4.7-12; 6.4-10; 11.23-28; Phil 4.10-13 = ‘hardship (*peristasis*) catalogues’)

Itinerant: Acts 27.14-20

Working: 1 Cor 9.12-18; 1 Thess 2.3-6 (*contra* 2 Cor 11.8-9; Phil 4.15-16)

Suffering: 2 Cor 11.24-28; Acts 16.11-40

Involving co-workers and intermediaries: letter openings - Timothy, Silvanus, Sosthenes; Phil 2.25-30 (Epaphroditus); Rom 16.1-2, 21-23 (Phoebe, Gaius)

Priorities

Priority 1: To evangelize non-Jews (Romans 11.13: “Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry...”)

Priority 2: Missionary pioneer and not build on the work of others: (Romans 15.18-21, esp. v. 20: “Thus I make it my ambition to proclaim the good news, not where Christ has already been named, so that I do not build on someone else’s foundation...”)

NB: Paul doesn’t always adhere to these (1 Cor 9.20 where Paul “became as a Jew, in order to win Jews”; Acts where his missionary activity begins in the synagogue in each new place)

Mission and Theology

Christology (Romans 15.23-29)

Holy Spirit (1 Thess 1.5-6; 1 Cor 2.4; Rom 1.1-4)

Soteriology and Reconciliation (2 Cor 5.18-21; Rom 5.9-11)

2. Was Paul the founder of Christianity?

For:	pervasive presence of Paul in the NT; converts and distance travelled; impact on Gentiles and Christianity as a “Gentile religion”; separation from Peter and other apostles
Against:	Christians in Antioch, Rome and Africa; much of NT isn’t “Pauline”; agreements with Peter and other apostles; Paul’s gospel – written from within Judaism?

Gobbet Practice: I Corinthians 3.1-5

And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? For when one says, ‘I belong to Paul’, and another, ‘I belong to Apollos’, are you not merely human?

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each.

Next Week (final lecture!): Arguing with Paul: History of Pauline Interpretation

Some Scripture References from the Lecture

I Corinthians 9.22: I have become all things to all people...

Galatians 1.11-16: For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being...

Romans 10.12-17: For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’ But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our message?’ So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

I Corinthians 4.9-13: For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, as though sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to mortals. We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honour, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless, and we grow weary from the work of our own hands.

When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we speak kindly. We have become like the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things, to this very day.

Romans 15.15-29: ¹⁵ Nevertheless, on some points I have written to you rather boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God ¹⁶ to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁷ In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to boast of my work for God. ¹⁸ For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, ¹⁹ by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ. ²⁰ Thus I make it my ambition to proclaim the good news, not where Christ has already been named, so that I do not build on someone else's foundation (...) ²³ But now, with no further place for me in these regions, I desire, as I have for many years, to come to you ²⁴ when I go to Spain. For I do hope to see you on my journey and to be sent on by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a little while. ²⁵ At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem in a ministry to the saints; ²⁶ for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to share their resources with the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. ²⁷ They were pleased to do this, and indeed they owe it to them; for if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material things. ²⁸ So, when I have completed this, and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will set out by way of you to Spain; ²⁹ and I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

I Corinthians 15.3-8: ³ For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴ and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to someone untimely born, he appeared also to me.

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