

2016

## 2016 Faculty Summer Seminar - Meeting Paul of Tarsus: Teacher of Nations

Center for Catholic Studies, Seton Hall University

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**CENTER FOR CATHOLIC STUDIES**

**2016 Faculty Summer Seminar**



**MEETING PAUL OF TARSUS:  
TEACHER OF NATIONS**

*CO-SPONSORED BY THE*  
CENTER FOR VOCATION & SERVANT LEADERSHIP

*WITH SUPPORT FROM THE*  
WILLIAM J. TOTH ENDOWED VISITING PROFESSORSHIP

MAY 24–26, 2016



CENTER FOR  
CATHOLIC STUDIES

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

## 2016 FACULTY SUMMER SEMINAR

CO-SPONSORED BY THE CENTER FOR VOCATION AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP  
WITH SUPPORT OF THE WILLIAM J. TOTH ENDOWED VISITING PROFESSORSHIP

TUES	WED	THURS
MAY 24	MAY 25	MAY 26
9:30 AM-12:30 PM Chancellor's Suite		

### ABOUT THE FACILITATOR

**Monsignor  
Anthony Ziccardi**  
Vice President of  
Mission and Ministry

Msgr. C. Anthony Ziccardi has been a faculty member in the Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology and a former Associate Dean. He received his licentiate in Sacred Scripture (S.S.L.) from the Pontifical Biblical Institute and his doctorate in Biblical Theology (S.T.D.) from the Pontifical Gregorian University. His dissertation was on the kingdom of God in Luke-Acts. Known for his keen insight, he serves as the facilitator of the University Seminar on Mission.

## MEETING PAUL OF TARSUS: TEACHER OF THE NATIONS



Next to Jesus, the Apostle Paul is the most significant figure in the history of Christianity. Fully at home in Jewish, Greek, and Roman environments, Paul felt himself obligated to teach "Greeks and barbarians." Effectively developing and bringing the Christian message to diverse peoples, he became "the teacher of the nations in faith and truth." This seminar will explore Saint Paul's background, activity, thought and legacy. Come discover how this powerful and controversial figure still influences us and much of the world today.

Since 1998, the Center for Catholic Studies has provided the opportunity for faculty to reflect in depth on topics central to the purpose of teaching and learning at Seton Hall. This seminar is open to all administrators and faculty. Faculty participants who write a short response-essay will receive a stipend of \$300. These essays will be collected and made available online at <http://scholarship.shu.edu/catholic-studies/>.

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**Center for Catholic Studies**  
**2016 Faculty Summer Seminar**

**MEETING PAUL OF TARSUS: THE TEACHER OF NATIONS**

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Note:

Article by Anthony Elliott Grobes-Lee

"St. Paul and the Spread of the Vision of the *Agni Dei*, Christ the Risen One" has been added to this publication. The article can be found after the "Contributors" section.

### **Paul of Tarsus: Targeted, Misinterpreted, Misunderstood, but Highly Influential**

Regardless of the angle one chooses to study Apostle Paul from, the outcome may vary according to one's interpretation and belief. Paul, the most prominent figure in the New Testament after Jesus, has contributed significantly in spreading God's Word and Christianity across the world primarily via his thirteen letters constituting a major part of the New Testament. His writings, however, have often been judged as controversial, inconsistent, and occasionally misleading. The difficulty in fully understanding the meanings behind Paul's writings is a stepping stone for his critics. As the Apostle wrote in his second letter to Romans: "There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do with other scriptures."

Paul was a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, under the name of Saul. He received a full Jewish education and became a Pharisee; by definition a chief rival of Jesus. In fact, Paul's confession that he had prosecuted violently the Church of God is prominent in all three accounts in Acts.<sup>1</sup> Despite having never met Jesus in person, the life, sacrifice, and resurrection of our Messiah led to the very significant conversion of Apostle Paul from Pharisaic Judaism to Christian Judaism. Upon his change, Paul's self-stated policy was to proclaim the good news of Christ to non-Jews in places where there was no Church and where the gospel had not yet been preached (Romans 15:14-29).

The Christian messages that Apostle Paul passed through his letters of the New Testament are remarkable and lie in the foundations of our religion. In his letter to Thessalonians, Paul encourages Christians to "live like Christ" and hold hope in their salvation through his second coming. In Galatians, he asks for faithfulness in Christ and enjoy "freedom" through Him. For the first time he raises caution to the "desires of the flesh" and encourages Christians to pursue "the fruit of the spirit" (Holy Spirit). In Corinthians, Paul exalts the "wisdom of the cross" and how it is, undoubtedly, the core of our faith. He asks Christians to always act out of love and avoid disputes within the Church. In his letter to Romans he spreads the good news of the Gospel and how Christians should rejoice in it despite all of the adversities. Paul himself suffered greatly during his missionary and pastoral work, proving the worth of sacrificing all the shortcomings of the flesh in the name of the Gospel and our Christian faith.

The authorship of his second letter to Thessalonians, his letters to Colossians and Ephesians, his two letters to Timothy, and his letter to Titus has been questioned by theologians and other scholars, mainly due to their writing style and potential dating of the manuscripts.<sup>1</sup> Regardless of authorship though, the contents of these letters are still considered Christian scripture and thus, highly influential. The blessings we receive from God daily are evident in most of these Deuteropauline letters. We are informed that God has adopted us as his children, forgiven us of all our sins, and has promised us eternal life. We are prompted to exalt God's wisdom, avoid

temptation, and live through Christ. We are also warned of Christ's second judgment (second coming), which will be sudden and arrive with no warning. Finally, these letters ask Churches to become more structured and hold a specific order but for functional purposes rather than causing social divisions among Christians, leading to unnecessary disputes.

In his frequent writings, Paul made it obvious that the rigid structure of the Mosaic Law was essentially challenged by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In his letter to Galatians, Paul makes it clear that through the right relationship with Jesus, Christians can be saved; something that the Mosaic Law alone could no longer deliver. In some ways, the first coming of Christ had made the Mosaic Law redundant. Unsurprisingly, this caused significant ripples among the missionary Jews of that time and the Apostle has been targeted by the Jewish community to this day. Paul's writings have been characterized by Jewish scholars as "conflicting" and "contradicting." According to such manuscripts, Paul's work ranges from traditionally Christian to Gnostic, implying that the Apostle questioned the very existence of Christ through his writings ("non-historical Jesus," "the Jesus within"). In fact, even modern Jews have accused Paul of changing Jesus' religion to the Gentiles, essentially *creating* Christianity! Paul, influenced by Greek ideas and the Greek mystery religions, *invented* the "myths" of Jesus divinity and sacrificial death and was also the creator of the Eucharist.<sup>2</sup>

Anti-Paulinism was evident among renowned philosophers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well, during a time of heightened interest of process of development and change, accompanied by a tide of suspicion directed towards received tradition that began to swell early during the Enlightenment period.<sup>3</sup> Overbeck, a radical skeptic, asserted that Christianity had abandoned its world-denying character as soon as it started accommodating itself to the surrounding culture. He believed that all the beautiful sides of Christianity were associated with Jesus and all the "ugly" ones with Paul.<sup>4</sup> The philologist Paul de Lagarde claimed that Apostle Paul, even after his conversion, remained a Pharisee "from top to toe" and he considers the glorification of Jesus' death a Jewish perversion that negates the vigor of his life and teachings by introducing an alien theory of atonement. Furthermore, Friedrich Nietzsche, highly influenced by Lagarde, has stood out as a heavy critic of Paul from all German philosophers of that century. In his writings in the *Antichrist*, Nietzsche claims that Apostle Paul falsified the life and death of Christ, essentially creating Christianity in an attempt to link the decadent East with the decadent West and gain power and control over these regions.<sup>5</sup> Of course it should be noted that Nietzsche had frequently expressed his distaste towards Christianity as a whole by quoting it as "the one great curse" and "the one immortal blemish of mankind."

To this day, Apostle Paul's teachings have been misinterpreted. Many people of the modern world casually assume, or assert, that the Apostle was a misogynist, based on his writings concerning the relationship between men and women at Church and within their marriage. In various parts of his letters, Paul suggests and expects Christian women to dress appropriately and be particularly attentive to their husbands. Of course, reading this statement through the lens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century would cause a rise among the feministic echelons and beyond. However, careful study of Paul's letters reveals that the Apostle also asks men to love their wives sacrificially ("just as Christ loves us..." – Ephesians) and that in the eyes of God, we are all equal; husbands and wives alike. In Corinthians I, Paul wonders: "why should women always wear veils on their heads?" and "why should women adorn themselves only in modest apparel...?" In actual fact,

everywhere New Testament Christianity has gone, the status of women in society has drastically improved. Hence, Paul's writings, as a major part of the New Testament, presents the greatest pro-feminist movement in history until well in to the 20<sup>th</sup> century!

As Christian history evolves, Apostle Paul remains a significant figure, not only of the past, but also a guide for the present and future of the Christian Church. His writings are often complex and accompanied by a defensive, sarcastic, and occasionally nasty style. This can create an element of distaste towards the Apostle, leading to intentional misinterpretation of his words to fulfill religious and social agendas. Studying Paul's letters though through an objective lens and with an open heart does nothing less than reveal the true beauty and hope that Christianity gives us.

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<sup>1</sup> Harrington, D.J., *Meeting St. Paul Today*, (Loyola Press: Chicago, 2008), p. 3-15, 21, 88.

<sup>2</sup> Maccoby, H., *The Mythmaker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity*, (Harper Collins: New York, 1987), p. 15, 113, 204.

<sup>3</sup> Grey, P., *Paul as a Problem in History and Culture*, (Baker Academics: Grand Rapids, 2016), p. 43-46.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43-46.

<sup>5</sup> Nietzsche, F., *The Antichrist (The Atheist Viewpoint)*, (Arno Press: Open Library, 1972), p. 106-108.



BETH BLOOM

### **Christianity and Courage in the First Century**

It is not often that one can study people historically and identify with their humanity. This is particularly true in the study of St. Paul and others those who lived during Jesus' time, whose manifestation might vary between shadowy and superhuman, through the lens of documents that remain from that period. However, Monsignor Ziccardi's lectures, along with 2016 Faculty Seminar's accompanying readings, disputed that assumption by adding depth and context to our understanding of Paul and the people in his life. Much to my disappointment, it was clear that those who lived during the first century after Jesus' life and death suffered jealousies and conflicts similar to our own. But my disenchantment in their humanity was superseded by admiration of the courage embraced by their choice to embrace Christianity.

I wondered how we would react if Jesus were to appear today, to claim that he was here to show us the way to salvation. Would we consign him to a mental hospital? Or would we be able to accept someone who made us confront and challenge our way of life as did Jesus in his time on earth? Were factions among the Greeks, Romans, Pharisees, Saducees, and the Jewish Christians really different from ethnic and political groups in today's world? The Pharisees believed in "eternal life and resurrection for those who keep the law"<sup>1</sup>—in a coming messiah, while the Saducees argued against that tenet<sup>2</sup> (Acts 23:8). Other early Jewish Christian congregations suffered internal disagreements as well. Dissention among the ranks or between groups could foster persecution or even murder. Yet in today's world, two millennia of technological advances do not seem to have eclipsed petty jealousies enjoyed by 21<sup>st</sup> century groups with differing political, religious, and philosophical leanings, as they still embrace and express conflict through subterfuge, betrayal, and even the horrors of war.

Historically, Gentiles (Romans, Greeks), Jews (Paul and the Pharisees, the Saducees, and the Essenes) all were steeped in their own traditions and religious beliefs—Paul, no exception. It is well known that Paul was not the first Jewish Christian. That group provided him fodder for persecution in advance of his own conversion to Christianity. A Hellenistic Jew and Pharisee, he was well versed in Jewish scripture, "dedicated to exact observance of the Mosaic Law,"<sup>3</sup> and was "violently" persecuting early Christians: "...how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God and wasted it And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1:13-14). However, on the way to Damascus, his conversion changed his life and created in him a calling to extend the recognition of Jesus as the messiah to Gentiles as well as Jews.

Paul now understood that he needed to find a way: a) to convince the Pharisees and other Jewish groups, that Jesus indeed was the Christ; b) to help the Gentiles, who had not experienced the traditions of Israel, understand the "words and deeds and mystery of Christ."<sup>4</sup> Consequently he journeyed from Jerusalem to Damascus to Caesarea, Tarsus, Judaea, Galilee, Samaria, Lydda, and on (Acts 9:26-32) in order to spread his "good news."

What led Paul to accept the idea that salvation came, not from observance of the laws articulated in the Old Testament, which included circumcision and kosher rules, but devotion to the belief that God raised Jesus from the dead, and that Jesus was indeed the very messiah for whom all Pharisees had awaited? Paul's receiving, understanding, and accepting his charge from God while confronting a new age must have required a great deal of courage, because this forced him to turn his back on a tradition that for him was comfortable and familiar—to say nothing of the people he left behind.

According to the OED, **courage** is defined as “That quality of mind which shows itself in facing danger without fear or shrinking; bravery, boldness, valour.”<sup>5</sup> What does it require for a person to question or challenge one's own values and beliefs in order to change? Paul's faith in God proffered in him tremendous courage to make the choice to follow and love Jesus—and to accept him as the messiah. Paul's passion to spread the word of God, in turn, called upon the courage of others to challenge their own beliefs in order to accept a new reality. “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I may live unto God” (Gal. 2:19). In other words, Paul, a devout Jew, was willing to convert Gentiles to Christianity without requiring them to follow Jewish traditions. “But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:23-25).

A number of Jewish-Christian missionaries disapproved of this message. However, he prevailed that a common faith in Christ eclipsed the need to adhere to old Jewish laws: “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. 3:3).<sup>6</sup>

Paul's ministry spread Christian ideas throughout the Middle East as we know it today, and many Christians were tortured or killed for their love of God and Jesus. But Paul's powerful message embraced all people—all humanity under one god—and gave them the courage to persist. “Now I beseech you, by the name of our lord Jesus Christ, that ye speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you;” (Cor. 1:10). “For ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26).

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<sup>1</sup> "Pharisees." In *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, (Columbia University Press: New York: 2016).

<http://ezproxy.shu.edu/login?url=http%3A%2F%2Fsearch.credoreference.com%2Fcontent%2Fentry%2Fcolumency%2Fpharisees%2F0>.

<sup>2</sup> "Resurrection." In *Chambers Dictionary of the Unexplained*, edited by Una McGovern, (Chambers Harrap: London, 2007).

<http://ezproxy.shu.edu/login?url=http%3A%2F%2Fsearch.credoreference.com%2Fcontent%2Fentry%2Fchambun%2Fresurrection%2F0>.

<sup>3</sup> Harrington, D. J., *Meeting St. Paul Today: Understanding the Man, His Mission, and His Message*, (Loyola Press: Chicago, 2008), p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Wilkens, J. D., “Who is Jesus of Nazareth? Insights from Lonergan's Christology.” Lecture given at Seton Hall University, (January 2015). Please see also Wilkens' further explanation on this topic, *Loc. Cit.*

<sup>5</sup> "courage, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2016).

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/43146?rskey=LuW6jc&result=1> (accessed June 16, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> Harrington, D. J., p. 10.

## **Paul's Perspectives on the Relationship Between Food and Faith**

### *Introduction*

St. Paul, a Jew and former Christian persecutor, was called by Jesus to a tremendous mission, that of principal apostle to the Gentiles. Paul is described as “next to Jesus ... the most prominent figure in the New Testament.”<sup>1</sup> Paul ministered to Gentile communities (e.g. Corinth) and to mixed congregations of Jewish and Gentile Christians as in Rome. As Gentiles began to convert from paganism to Christianity, debate arose as to whether they needed to observe all the tenets of Jewish law, particularly *kashrut* food/dietary laws.

As a food scientist I am interested in issues Paul faced concerning the food consumption of the new Christians, including whether the converts should: 1) consume a strict vegetarian diet or eat a mixed diet of meat and vegetables and 2) eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols.

### *Vegetarian Diet versus a Mixed Diet.*

Paul encountered believers in the congregations he established who insisted on a vegetarian diet (Rom 14:2). Jewish Christians “had scruples about eating certain foods that were considered non-kosher (common/unclean) and therefore not to be eaten [vegetables were always considered kosher]. Paul taught that all foods were kosher or clean. No Christians (whether Jews or Gentiles) were obligated to observe the kosher laws because they were nothing” (personal communication, Msgr. Anthony Ziccardi, June 1, 2016).

Paul's teachings to potential Christian converts bids us to look back on Jesus. Jesus and the apostles it appears were not vegetarians since they ate animal flesh. Their followers then would not be expected to insist on vegetarianism. Jesus ate fish (Lk 24:42-43) and lamb (Lk 22:8-15), and miraculously fed the “five thousand” fish and bread (Mt 14:17-21).

God gave plants and animals to every living creature for food (Gen 1 and 9). Reflecting on meat consumption, Professor Norman Wirzba states: “A refusal to eat meat may reflect a refusal to come to terms with the life and death that characterize creation. It may signal an inability to appreciate appropriate death as a movement into and constitutive of life.”<sup>2</sup>

Jesus followed Jewish Law, and so did Paul. However, both gave freedom to believers regarding food choices. Paul believed that food should not get in the way of following Jesus Christ. Paul writes to the Romans: “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of food and drink, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the holy Spirit ... For the sake of food, do not destroy the work of God” (Rom 14:17,20 NAB)<sup>3</sup>.

In Peter's dream in Acts 10 God tells him, “Get up, Peter. Slaughter and eat” (Acts 10:13). Professor Stephen Webb addresses this point as follows:

[It] is not that God desires the killing of animals. The point is that Peter realized that God did not want the Jewish dietary laws to prevent the spread of Christianity. Peter dreamed

the distinction between clean and unclean animals had been overcome, just as the distinction between the Jews as the people of God and the Gentiles as outside the covenant had been overcome by a new covenant, more universal and inclusive.<sup>4</sup>

According to Paul, one's dietary intake can be an indication of the strength or weakness of a person's faith. Paul writes to the Romans, "One person believes that one may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables" (Rom 14:2). Those eating "anything" were the Gentile Christians and those eating only vegetables were the Jewish Christians. Paul describes the Gentiles as strong of faith and conscience while the Jewish Christians (scrupulous) were weak of conscience (keeping kosher) (personal communication, Msgr. Anthony Ziccardi, June 1, 2016).

Bible commentator, Dr. Colin Kruse, reflects on Romans 14:2:

Faith that allows a person to eat anything is a faith based upon a proper understanding of the gospel. Such faith is strong and frees the conscience from scruples. Faith that allows a person to eat only vegetables is a faith based upon an inadequate understanding of the gospel. Such a faith is weak and leaves the conscience bound to scruples.<sup>5</sup>

Commentator William Barclay gives two reasons why a scrupulous person is weak in the faith:

i) He has not yet discovered the meaning of Christian freedom; he is at heart still a legalist and sees Christianity as a thing of rules and regulations. ii) In his heart he believes that he can gain God's favour by doing certain things and abstaining from others ... [He] has not accepted the way of grace, still thinking more of what he can do for God than of what God has done for him.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to note that Paul did not see observance to the Sabbath and keeping kosher incompatible with loyalty to Christ. According to John M.G. Barclay (referencing *The Letter to the Romans*):

That 'the weak in faith' are to be welcomed (14:1), within the welcome of Christ (15:7), indicates that Paul regards their faith as genuine: they are to be treated with respect (out of respect to Christ) as believers, the product of God (14:20). Moreover, Paul reckons that their kosher- and Sabbath-observant practices are performed out of loyalty to Christ: their decisions on food are made 'to the Lord', and are undertaken in thankfulness to God (14:6).<sup>7</sup>

### *Eating Meat Sacrificed to Idols*

An issue related to the previous one of meat versus vegetables is one which arose in the Gentile community in Corinth (1 Corinthians 8, 10): the problem of whether the Christians should eat meat which had been offered to idols before being offered for sale in the marketplace. Webb addresses this issue:

Eating is such an intimate act that, for many Christians, eating pagan-sacrificed meat was identical to consuming and internalizing the gods (which they took to be demons) of the pagan religion. ... [But] Paul argues that since the pagan gods do not exist, Christians should not worry about meat being contaminated by idols.<sup>8</sup>

Paul told his followers to “Eat anything sold in the market, without raising questions on grounds of conscience ... If an unbeliever invites you and you want to go, eat whatever is placed before you, without raising questions on grounds of conscience” [1 Cor 10:25,27]. Paul is saying here do not abstain because it is wrong to eat meat sacrificed to idols or a non-kosher meat like pork, but rather because of the unbelievers’ conscience (personal communication, Msgr. Anthony Ziccardi, June 1, 2016). William Barclay states, “Paul bids the stronger brethren to welcome a [weak] person and not to besiege him with continual criticisms.”<sup>9</sup>

So, Paul asks the ‘strong’ to forego certain foods that they would typically eat when apart from the ‘weak,’ to avoid scandalizing the ‘weak,’ who consider eating it a sin. “It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother or sister stumble” (Rom 14:21).

### *Conclusion*

St. Paul ministered to both Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians and respected their particular food traditions. Paul preached that food should not interfere with one’s embrace of the Christian faith. However, if food can increase one’s faith, then all the better. Whether ‘strong’ or ‘weak’ in the faith each should accommodate the other with regard to food selection so as not to be a cause for scandal.

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<sup>1</sup> Harrington, D.J., *Meeting St. Paul Today: Understanding the Man, His Mission, and His Message*, (Loyola Press: Chicago, 2008), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Wirzba, N., *Food & Faith: A Theology of Eating*, (Cambridge University Press: New York, 2011), p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> *The New American Bible*, (Catholic Bible Press: Nashville, 1987), pp. 1278-1279. All scripture quotations are taken from *The New American Bible*.

<sup>4</sup> Webb, S.H., *Good Eating*, (Brazos Press: Grand Rapids, 2001), p. 121.

<sup>5</sup> Kruse, C.J., *Paul’s Letter to the Romans, The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids, 2012), p. 511.

<sup>6</sup> Barclay, W., *The Letter to the Romans, The Daily Bible Series*, (Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, 1975), p. 180.

<sup>7</sup> Barclay, J.M.G., “Faith and Self-Detachment from Cultural Norms: A Study in Romans 14-15,” *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche*, 104(2), (2013), p. 200. [Retrieved 6/8/2016 from Durham University Research Online, <http://dro.dur.ac.uk/12674/1/12674.pdf?DDD32+vxlk57+d700tmt>]

<sup>8</sup> Webb, S.H., pp. 121-122

<sup>9</sup> Barclay, W., p. 180.

MAUREEN BYRNES

### **On the Road with Saint Paul – A Reflection on Universality, Diversity and Inclusion**

This summer, as I prepare for my upcoming ‘road trip’ to Rome with Seton Hall University’s Praxis Program, I had the opportunity to attend the 2016 Faculty Summer Seminar “Meeting Paul of Tarsus: Teacher of Nations.” The depth and breadth of what I have learned is profound. Yes, I have learned much about St. Paul and St. Luke but I have learned even more about the timeliness of the lessons contained within the Acts of the Apostles and myself. I did not realize how important attending the Summer Seminar on St. Paul, just prior to leaving for Rome, would ultimately become for me. I hear readings from Acts of the Apostles differently now. I now stop and listen to discussions about St. Paul, especially those pertaining to the Acts of the Apostles, when prior to attending this seminar I very well may have simply walked out of the room!

As I prepared to write this paper, I quieted my mind and asked for inner direction on where and how to focus my experience and thoughts. It became clear to me that the universality of St. Paul’s mission in preaching the gospel included a discussion about diversity and inclusiveness as well. St. Paul is an apostle of great relevance for our time! We are all journeying the ‘road trip’ toward diversity and inclusiveness, in my opinion. Our church, our country and our educational institutions are all considering the many perspectives within this topic. Just like St. Paul, we are on a ‘road trip’ to a new understanding and destination regarding diversity and inclusiveness.

Monsignor Anthony Ziccardi covered the conversion of St. Paul, as written by St. Luke within the Acts of the Apostles, in three different ways, from three different perspectives, for three different groups. St. Luke’s narrative of the story of St. Paul’s conversion is contained within Acts of the Apostles 9:1-19,<sup>1</sup> recounting the journey from Saul...to Paul! In Acts 9:3, Saul is said to have been “...going along.” I began to question, in a deeper way, what it means to “...go along.” Acts 9:1 opens with Saul beginning this part of his journey “...still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord.” In verse 2, Saul is said to have requested the necessary paperwork needed by the synagogues of Damascus “so that if he found any who belonged to The Way...he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.” Now, in verse 3, as Saul “was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.” Saul was going along, doing what he was supposed to do, to an unusual extent. He was persecuting those different from himself. In verse 8, “Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open he could see nothing.” Suddenly, Saul is no longer “going along” the road!

All the while, the Lord was working in Damascus where Ananias was listening to his internal ‘call’ and he responded to the Lord’s request. In Acts 9:11, the Lord said to Him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight...and look for a man of Tarsus named Saul.” Ananias sees in a vision what the Lord Jesus is requesting of him! The Lord told Ananias, in Acts 9:15 that Saul “...is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and

before the people of Israel.” St. Luke recounts with some detail in Acts 9:17-28 how Saul regains his sight and how, while ‘going along the road,’ he had seen the risen Lord, converted to follow Christ’s teachings and ultimately being accepted by the disciples.

Paul’s encounter with the risen Christ ‘along the road’ and subsequent conversion was felt to be a mystical identification<sup>2</sup> with Christ as an apostle sent to proclaim the gospel, especially to non-Jews. This was the heart of Paul’s spirituality and calling. I am compelled to look a little further back ‘...along the road’ as I consider where this road began. What is the context for Paul’s conversion and calling which took place within Acts 9? I simply looked back to Acts 8:1<sup>3</sup> and began reading about the road that Saul was actually traveling. Acts 8:1 announced, “And Saul approved of their killing him.” Saul approved of Steven’s stoning and he continued to ravage the church, committing its members, both men and women to prison. The road that Saul is traveling is one of persecution.

I continue reading Acts 8 and encounter Philip, the evangelist, being directed by an angel in Acts 8:26 to “...go to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza,” where Philip meets a eunuch! Eunuchs were excluded from the Temple by the restriction in Deuteronomy 23:1<sup>4</sup> “No one whose testicles are crushed or whose penis is cut off shall be admitted to the assembly of the Lord.” Yet, this eunuch was not just *any* eunuch; he “was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury.”<sup>5</sup> He had come to Jerusalem to worship yet he would have been excluded and restricted from entering the Temple. He has had an experience of religious dogma. The eunuch is reading, or is having Isaiah 53: 7-8 read aloud to him, while riding in a chariot back to Ethiopia: “He was oppressed and he was afflicted...In his humiliation justice was denied him.”<sup>6</sup> Perhaps Isaiah is referring both to Jesus Christ and, in a fuller sense, the excluded of the world...eunuchs and other groups of dispossessed seekers. Although the eunuch has had an experience of a religion, the eunuch’s real breakthrough happens ‘on the road’ during his journey!

Philip is on a mission, and directed by God in Acts 8:29 to “Go over to the chariot and join it.” He chased down the eunuch in his chariot ‘on the road’! The chariot is perhaps symbolic for the eunuch’s problem, his pain and his uncertainty. Philip catches the eunuch at the place of his uncertainty, not in the temple! The eunuch invites Philip to ride with him to guide him in understanding his reading of Isaiah. Philip got ‘on board’ the chariot and gave the eunuch revelation for uncertainty. In Acts 8:35-36, Philip “proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water!”<sup>7</sup> There was nothing preventing the eunuch from being baptized! They went down to the water together and Philip baptized the eunuch. Philip was then ‘snatched away’ by the Spirit of the Lord; “the eunuch saw him no more and went on his way rejoicing.”<sup>8</sup>

The baptism of this eunuch may be the first Gentile convert to Christianity from a sexual minority (because of his physical condition), a different race, ethnicity and nationality and calls all Christians to be radically inclusive and welcoming. Saint Paul, Philip and the eunuch inspire us on our journey ‘along the road’ of universality, diversity and inclusion within our faith. As Saint Paul requested in Philippians 3:13-16 “...forgetting what lies behind...press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God which is Christ Jesus. Let those of us then who are

mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.”

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<sup>1</sup> *New Revised Standard Version Holy Bible*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1989), p. 132-133.

<sup>2</sup> Harrington, D., *Meeting St. Paul Today*, (Loyola Press: Chicago, 2008), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131-132.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 759.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.



JOSEPHINE M. DeVITO

## The Influence of Saint Paul on Christianity

Jesus' death is at the center of Paul's religious worldview. God raised the crucified Jesus to a new life and this was the paramount interest of Paul.<sup>1</sup> The idea that we "belong" to the risen Jesus has been expressed in the writings of Paul. His writings offer a glimpse into the dynamics of the people around the Mediterranean. It is thought that Paul was from the city of Tarsus in Asia Minor. He does not tell us about his family or friends. It is further suggested that Paul's family may have had Roman citizenship. Paul's writings indicate he had a good education perhaps with the Pharisees but he was not educated in Jerusalem. He was a Hellenized Jew, located in the Diaspora and spoke Greek.

Paul identified himself with the Pharisees and his conversion was a shift from one Jewish party to another, from the Pharisees to a Messianic group, the Jesus followers. His conversion can be called a mystical experience of the risen Jesus in which he was called to extend God's offer of salvation to the Gentiles. He claimed apostolic status on the basis of this experience, he had seen the risen Jesus. Paul was convinced that the death and resurrection of Jesus signaled the beginning of the "end time" which was God's end to the reign of evil that distorted creation. He lived an intense spiritual life, apparently as a Pharisee early on and then as a Jesus follower. His writings reflect a deep experiential insight into the human condition and into the meaning of divine redemption.<sup>2</sup> Bernard Lonergan must have been influenced by the writings of Paul as he developed *Insight*.

Paul became an evangelist in the Jesus movement, traveling through the Roman Empire. His preaching was exclusively directed toward non-Jews, Gentiles. Some scholars believe these Gentiles were "God-fearing." Paul had an uneasy relationship some followers of Jesus because he was opposed by Jesus followers who disagreed with his position that Gentiles do not have to become Jewish to share in Israel's salvation. Some of the letters attributed to Paul were actually written several decades after Paul's death. Without Paul's own letters, we would not have a glimpse of Paul's missionary life or a sense of what belonging to Christ meant to him. To show the way in which belonging to Christ entails suffering, Paul gives a description of his life on the road to the Corinthians as follows:

Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked. And, besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches.<sup>3</sup>

Many generations of Christians have found Paul's letters powerful and insightful. His influence has not been without problems. While some have found his words liberating, others have

experienced them as oppressive. On his authority, the church defended the legitimacy of male rule, slavery, and Christian religious exclusivism.<sup>4</sup>

Male rule is described in several letters attributed to Paul which appropriate the structures and norms of the patriarchal culture in which the early church took root. Women were instructed to be subject to their husbands, submissive, and silent. The patriarchal household provided the model for the “household of God.”<sup>5</sup> The primary value in the hierarchical structure of the household, whether as the empire itself or the individual patriarchal family, is obedience by subordinate members. All members have their designated place in the household. Until the late nineteenth century, the Catholic Church upheld the legitimacy of slavery as part of the order of creation. The Pauline texts provided the basis in revelation for the justification of the social institution of slavery.<sup>6</sup> In the Pauline letters theologians could find the elements of both an inclusionary and exclusionary theory of salvation. The assertion in 1 Timothy that God “desires everyone to be saved” is grounded the inclusiveness of salvation.<sup>7</sup> There has always been a literary question about the authorship of all the letters ascribed to Paul. Even in the early church, the questions were raised about the authorship of the New Testament writings.<sup>8</sup> It was in the nineteenth century that authorship of individual Pauline letters was questioned. Differences in language, style, and theological perspective have led scholars to designate six of the letters as inauthentic, attributed to Paul but not written by him, and seven as authentic, attributed to and in fact written by him. What is further suggested was that the image of the church as the household of God and the justification of male and class privilege appear in the inauthentic letters. Paul did not authorize slavery. It was further suggested that the Paul of the authentic or undisputed letters as the “historic Paul” and the Paul of the disputed letters as the “attributed Paul.”<sup>9</sup> The writers of the disputed letters remain anonymous but have been compared throughout history.

What was discovered is that Paul was deeply committed to the God of Israel and embarked on a passionate journey of faith. Paul inspires us to be transformed by the experience of belonging to Christ. Paul was not a part of Jesus’ inner circle. He had not even known Jesus or followed him during his ministry. His conversion and desire for all people to welcome Jesus into their hearts continued throughout his turbulent life. Paul was imprisoned several times and his life ended in prison. He was killed in Rome by the imperial government, perhaps at the direct order of the emperor, Nero. The contributions of Saint Paul continue to be an enriched part of Christianity.

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<sup>1</sup> Wiley, T., *Encountering Paul*, (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc: New York, 2010), p. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Brondos, D., *Paul on the Cross: Reconstructing the Apostle’s Story of Redemption*, (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor II:25-28.

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius, P., *History of the Church*, (Kregel: Grand Rapids, 1999), 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> Eph 2:19; 1 Tim 3:15.

<sup>6</sup> Garnsey, P., *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1996).

<sup>7</sup> Timothy 1 2:4.

<sup>8</sup> Eusebius, P., 3-4.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

MARTA DEYRUP

### **Conversion Through Literacy: The Antecedents of Written Common Slavic**

In 863 Saint Cyril, who, along with his brother Saint Methodius, is referred to as the Apostle of the Slavs, was instructed by Prince Michael III of Byzantium to travel to Greater Moravia, a vast area that encompassed what is now the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and parts of Germany and Poland. The Slavs, herdsman, who had settled in this region in the sixth century CE, were nominally Christian but they were illiterate and unschooled, and their ruler, Prince Rotislav, had requested that Michael III send an individual who could translate the Latin liturgy, which the Slavs used, but which they could not understand, into the vernacular of Common Slavic. It is not clear why Rotislav turned to Byzantium and not Rome for help, however, his request, was granted. St. Cyril was accompanied by his brother Methodius, who would eventually write the first Slavic civil law code. The two brothers set up a school to train seminarians in Moravia and it was these disciples who continued to proselytize and spread the Christian faith and literacy throughout Eastern Europe and Russia after their deaths. This narrative of literacy and conversion is the fundamental story of all Slavic peoples and is the one with which they begin their literary history.

Born in Thessalonica, Cyril was bilingual in Slavic and Greek, and spoke at least two other languages, Hebrew and Aramaic. A protégé of the Byzantine archbishop Photius, Cyril had served as a diplomat and as the chief librarian of the Imperial Library in Constantinople before undertaking the Moravian Mission. He translated the liturgy, most likely from the Latin text the Moravian Slavs were using, but he went well beyond this, creating a new alphabet that reflected Slavic phonology, and preparing Slavic translations of the Greek Gospel and the Psalter. St. Cyril also was an iconophile, which meant that he believed that artistic media, such as icons (paintings of holy figures) music, and poetry could serve as windows into the divine. This was the position of most Eastern Christian theologians of the mid-ninth century and it is possible to see parallelisms between iconophile thought and Cyril's approach to language and translation.

This translation project was quite bold in the sense that it established a group of canonical texts that had no secular past, as did Greek and Latin. Cyril adopted a Pauline approach to language, which is reflected in his hagiography and in the prologue to the Slavic translation of the Gospel that is attributed to him. Below are excerpts from the Prologue which draw directly from Corinthians I:14.

Hear, all you Slavic people,  
Hear the Word, for it comes from God,  
The Word which nourishes men's souls,  
The Word which strengthens hearts and minds,  
The Word which prepares all to know God.

For just as there can be no joy without light  
For the eye seeing all God's creation,  
But instead everything is neither beautiful nor visible,  
So, likewise, every soul without letters  
Does not see God's law well,  
The sacred law of the Scriptures,  
The law revealing Paradise...

And listening to the Word in foreign tongue,  
You hear it like the voice of a copper bell.  
For Saint Paul, in teaching, said this:  
'In offering my prayer up to God  
I would rather speak five words  
That all my brethren understand,  
Than a multitude of incomprehensible words.'  
Now what man doesn't understand this?  
Who will not make use of wise parables  
Telling us right counsel...  
It falls in the same way on the hearts of men  
Which need the rain of God's letters  
So that the divine fruit may grow.  
Who can tell all the stories  
Which expose nations without books,  
Speaking in an unintelligible voice...<sup>1</sup>

A Pauline approach to language meant that Cyril believed in the following propositions and their corollary: if an individual cannot understand what is being preached, that sermon serves no purpose; if a nation is illiterate and its people cannot read the Bible, they are ignorant of God's law and cannot receive divine grace; every individual therefore, has the right to worship God in his own language. The last was extremely important in the struggle of Slavic ethnic groups to preserve their language (in particular Polish) under foreign occupation.

Although St. Cyril's work was praised as miraculous, it contradicted a prevailing linguistic theory, referred to as trilingualism. This conservative doctrine stressed that only three languages could be used to worship God: Latin, the language written on Christ's cross, New Testament Greek, and Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament. This debate still continues today. St. Cyril squarely aligned himself with St. Paul's views on the role of language, as expressed in his epistles. Ultimately, because of internal quarrels within the Latin Church, opposition to this newly created "holy" language of the Slavs led to the dismantling of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission in Moravia and the scattering of their disciplines.

The establishment of a Slavic alphabet is well-known, but more importantly Cyril gave the Slavs the beginning of a corpus of literary texts that quickly grew as his disciples, after his death, established a scriptorium in what is now Bulgaria. In doing so, they created a particular dynamic within the Slavic languages (Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian in the East; Czech, Polish, Slovene and Slovak in the West; and Croatian, Serbian, Macedonian and Bulgarian in the South) that

emerged in the fourteenth century. This consisted of periodic language recensions in an attempt to get back to the purity of original literary language St. Cyril had created. In the case of Russian (the richest and most diverse of the Slavic languages) there are two languages always at play: a vernacular “low” language and a Church Slavic “high language”, each with its own separate vocabulary.

This Pauline notion of language was at the heart of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission and at the core of this translation project. Its influence on the development of Slavic literatures and literary languages, while only briefly addressed here, show the possibilities of conversion through logos as conceived by St. Paul.

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<sup>1</sup> Butler, T., ed. and translator. Prologue to the Slavonic translation of the Gospels in *Monumenta Serbocroatica: a Bilingual Anthology of Serbian and Croatian Texts from the 12th to the 19th Century* (Michigan Slavic: Ann Arbor, 1980), pp. 7-15.

KATHLEEN S. DODDS

### **St. Paul: Teacher of Nations**

The Apostle Paul develops a theology of faith as he writes to the communities he established, and later to the Romans. Primarily in the letters to the Galatians and to the Romans he addresses the idea that “a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ” (Gal 2:16) which can also be the faith of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> He uses Abraham as the example of faith saying, “Abraham ‘believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness’ (Gal 3:6-7). Is this faith to which Paul refers in Gal 2:16 the faithfulness of God to His covenant with Abraham and the people of Israel, the faithfulness of Christ to accomplish God’s plan through his self-sacrifice, or is it our faith in Christ by which we are justified? How does Paul use the Genesis story of Abraham to explicate his belief that not only the Jews but also the Gentiles are justified by faith in Jesus? If faith in Christ is the means to our justification, then what is the purpose of the law? We will examine Gal 2:16 – 3:29 and Rom 3:28 – 4:25 to try to answer these questions.

First, when Paul says, “And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ” (Gal 2:16), his words have been translated either to say that we are justified by faith in Jesus, or by the faith(fullness) of Jesus. The former relates to our belief in Christ as our Savior; the latter applies to the faithfulness of Jesus in following through His mission to die upon the cross and to be raised from the dead by the Father so that through his taking on of our sins, and redeeming them on the cross, we too might be raised with Him. This description of God’s plan both for his Son, and for us, is a description of both the faithfulness of Jesus to God’s plan, and of the necessity that we have faith in the Son and his redeeming sacrifice for us.

In Gal 3:11 Paul writes, “Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for ‘the one who is righteous will live by faith.’” Paul continues discussing faith in Gal 3:22, saying, “But the scripture has imprisoned all things under the power of sin, so that what was promised through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.” Again, the translation may be faith of Jesus Christ, but it is clear that we will receive the promise as a result of our own faith in the Lord God who made the promise and in the Lord Jesus Christ whose sacrifice makes the promise possible. “But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith” (Gal 3:25). The law was given as our disciplinarian until Christ came; if we have faith in Him, we “(are) baptized into Christ (and) have clothed (our)selves with Christ” (Gal 3:27). By the act of believing in Him we share His baptism and are “one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28).

Paul takes up his discussion of faith in Romans 3:21, saying again that “the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ (is) for all who believe” (Rom 3:21). Not only is there “no longer Jew or Greek...slave or free...male or female..., (we) are (all) Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise” (Gal 3:28).

To prove this notion that the one God is the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, Paul cites the example of Abraham. In Gal 3:17 he states that as the law was given four hundred thirty years after God's covenant was ratified with Abraham on account of Abraham's faith, the law cannot supersede that promise and exclude Gentiles. Barnett says that "the case of Abraham... was critical ...to Paul's argument. (Abraham's) 'faith' was 'reckoned to him as righteousness...before he was circumcised'" (Rom 4:9-10).<sup>2</sup> 'Righteousness of God,' then, is possessed only by those who believe God's promises, not by those who attempt to fulfill the law (including circumcision).

Now that we understand the gracious gift we have in being reckoned as righteous if we have faith as did our ancestor Abraham, we must answer the question Paul poses in Gal 3:19, "Why then the law?" We began with Gal 2:16, "We know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ," and Rom 3:28, "For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works of the law." Paul angrily addresses the "foolish Galatians" in Gal 3:2, asking them if they "receive(d) the Spirit by doing works of the law, or by believing what (they had) heard," when Paul preached the Gospel to them. Paul reminds them that "all who rely on the law are under a curse" while the "righteous will live by faith" (Gal 3:10-11). Paul teaches us that "Christ became the curse for us" by "hang(ing on the) tree" (Gal 3: 13). By becoming the curse for us, Christ opens to all the blessing that was given to Abraham who was faithful.

As we have seen, because Abraham had faith before he was circumcised, the promise is open to Gentiles as well as Jews. The promise was made to Abraham four hundred thirty years prior to the coming of the law. Consequently, the law cannot "annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise" (Gal 3:17). By the same logic, Paul later argues that just as the giving of the law four hundred thirty years after the promise cannot nullify the promise, neither does the principle of justification by faith nullify the law. (Paul will argue in Romans 3:31 that instead of "overthrow(ing) it...(faith) upholds the law,"). Paul completes his argument based on the faith of Abraham saying that Abraham is father of the Gentiles because he had faith before he was circumcised, and that he is father of the Jews because he had faith and was also circumcised. In this sense, faith upholds the law.

Moo posits that "Christian faith, far from shunting aside the demands of the law, provides (and for the first time!) the complete fulfillment of God's demand in his law."<sup>3</sup> Moo ponders whether Paul might even be "anticipat(ing) (Rom 13:8-10) where the command to love is set forth as the fulfillment of the law."<sup>4</sup> Christ's faithfulness demands that we are faithful to Him as expressed in love for one another according to His command in Jn 15:12, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." In his speech to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, Paul assures them that he "has endured the trials that came to him through the plots of the Jews," but that he "did not shrink from doing anything helpful," (Acts 20:19-22). Paul, teacher to the nations, lives as an example of the love of Christ for us, and of the love we should have for one another, doing all that we can for each other. As he says in Gal 2:19-20, "For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." The Apostle Paul thus teaches us that

this self-sacrificing love of Christ for us inspires in us faith in Him by which we are saved, and not only love for Him, but also love for our fellow humans as Christ has loved each of us.

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<sup>1</sup> Attridge, Harold W., ed. *The HarperCollins Study Bible*. (HarperCollins: San Francisco, 1989). *All subsequent Bible references are from this edition.*

<sup>2</sup> Barnett, P., *Paul: Missionary of Jesus*, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids, 2008), p. 193.

<sup>3</sup> Moo, D., *The Epistle to the Romans*, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids, 1996), p. 255.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 254.



NANCY ENRIGHT

### **Justification by Faith—For Paul, for the Church, for Each Believer**

The 2016 Faculty Summer Seminar “Meeting Paul of Tarsus: Teacher of the Nations,” led by Msgr. Anthony Ziccardi (May 24, 25, 26, 2016) covered an impressive and fascinating array of teachings by and about St. Paul and perspectives on him and those teachings. I learned a lot and enjoyed it enormously. As the sessions progressed, it became quite clear that a key point of focus and discussion was Paul’s teaching on justification by faith, a doctrine that is, I would argue, central to Christianity, but which, as we all know from history, has proved controversial among Christians. What exactly is this doctrine of justification? And, more importantly than how it links with various denominational splits and shifts, how does it connect with our lived Christianity? A study of Paul’s letters, along with various other texts, shows that this doctrine miraculously links law and grace in a beautiful consummation, rooted in Christ’s love and made possible by His death and resurrection, and the experience of this love and faith in Christ’s death and resurrection lead to a powerful transformation for a believer.

Justification by faith was a central tenet of the Reformation, which Martin Luther insisted came through “sola fide” (faith alone) and was learned about through “sola scriptura” (scripture alone). An Augustinian monk, Luther broke with the Roman Catholic Church, in large part, it would seem, on this doctrine of justification. Would Luther not have been surprised when his name was mentioned at St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican on Good Friday 2016? On this day sacred to all Christians, the Holy Father, Cardinals and bishops, priests, and Catholic faithful listened to Fr. Raneiro Cantalamessa, Preacher to the Papal Household, give the Good Friday sermon, as tradition gives the task to the priest fulfilling this role. He said,

There is a danger that people can hear about the righteousness of God but not understand its meaning, so instead of being encouraged they are frightened. St. Augustine had already clearly explained its meaning centuries ago: “The ‘righteousness of God’ is that by which we are made righteous, just as ‘the salvation of God’ [see Ps 3:8] means the salvation by which he saves us.”... Luther deserves the credit for bringing this truth back when its meaning had been lost over the centuries, at least in Christian preaching, and it is this above all for which Christianity is indebted to the Reformation, whose fifth centenary occurs next year. The reformer later wrote that when he discovered this, “I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates.”<sup>1</sup>

Fr. Cantalamessa went on to quote immediately from St. Paul, first from his letter to Titus: “When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy” (Titus 3:4-5). And then he quoted from St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians: “God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our own trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved,” (Eph 2:4-5).<sup>2</sup> Clearly, Fr. Cantalamessa was linking what had been at one time seen as an essentially Lutheran understanding of justification with a biblical one, outlined here and elsewhere by St. Paul, and applying it to all Christians today.

Though Luther surely would have been surprised to hear these words spoken in this context before such an audience, anyone who has read some of the writings of Pope Francis would not be. In the first Apostolic Exhortation of his papacy, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis clearly says, “The salvation which God offers us is the work of his mercy. No human efforts, however good they may be, can enable us to merit so great a gift. God, by his sheer grace, draws us to himself and makes us one with him.”<sup>3</sup> In *The Name of God Is Mercy*, the Holy Father says, “Jesus forgave even those who crucified and scorned him. We must go back to the gospel....No human sin, however serious, can prevail over or limit mercy.”<sup>4</sup> It is evident that Pope Francis wants to teach the church, once again, to recover a sense of the lavishness of God’s grace and mercy, the fact that salvation is freely given, not to be earned by legalistic works done out of fear.

An understanding of God’s mercy gives the key to understanding justification by faith. It is in this context, that we avoid the two pitfalls of legalism and antinomianism. Going back to the gospels, as Pope Francis suggests, we say that Jesus clearly illustrated in his actions and expressed in his words a consistent teaching that God’s love is available to sinners, something freely and lavishly given. The three parables in Luke 15 (the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son or lost son) all testify to God’s seeking of the lost, who are welcomed back without “earning” anything. Jesus forgives public sinners who repent, such as the woman who knelt at his feet and washed them with her tears (Luke 7:36-50) and Matthew/Levi, the tax collector, called by Jesus to be an apostle (Matt. 9:9 and Luke 5:27-32). In fact, Jesus specifically challenged the Pharisees (religious leaders of his day) by saying that harlots and tax-gatherers (considered impure, outside the law) would get to heaven before them (Matthew 21:31-32). The ultimate example of Jesus’ love and mercy is shown on the cross, where, as Pope Francis mentions, Jesus forgives his enemies; he also forgives yet another public sinner, one of the two thieves crucified with him, telling him, “This day you will be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:39-43). Though there is no overt teaching about “justification by faith” in the gospels, Jesus’ great mercy toward sinners coupled with his denunciation of self-righteousness surely shows a lavishness, a grace-filled mercy toward repentant sinners.

However, it would be wrong to see Jesus’ denunciation of the Pharisees as suggesting anti-Jewish sentiment. Jesus, speaking as a Jew to almost entirely Jewish followers, was denouncing a tendency among the religious leaders to rely on legalism, instead of trusting God’s love. Jesus never says the Jewish law is bad or to be rejected. In fact, he says just the opposite, as we see in Matt. 5:19 or Matthew 23:1-12. The Pharisees were sinning, not by their devotion to their Jewish faith, but through an emphasis on law over love, through trusting in their own righteousness, as exemplified in Jesus’ parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector praying in the temple, where Jesus says the latter, not the former, would leave the temple *justified* before God (Luke 18:9-14). Experiencing this kind of forgiving love through faith will lead to the love that fulfills the law. Self-righteously and proudly trying to earn God’s favor through legalism does not lead to love. And, clearly Jesus shows in countless acts and in his teaching that living a life of love *matters*, as in Matthew 25 in the parable of the sheep and the goats. Those who showed love to “the least of these” get into heaven, but, far from seeking to earn God’s favor by these works of mercy, these blessed souls have served the needy without even realizing that what they did to them was to be counted as having been done to Christ.

Love fulfills the law, as St. Paul says in Romans 13:8, and salvation occurs when through being justified as a free gift by God’s grace, we enter into a loving relationship with God that

results in our transformation, so that we are freed, by grace, to love and to live in the Spirit. As Daniel Harrington says, “Paul was convinced that justification had already occurred through Jesus’ death and resurrection. That means that the new relationship with God hoped for in the last judgment is already available through Christ in the present for persons of faith.”<sup>5</sup> This justification leads to a new life in Christ, “a new beginning,” as Harrington describes it, and St. Paul depicts this new life in the Spirit in Romans 12-15<sup>6</sup> and elsewhere. For example, in Galatians 3, Paul contrasts the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit, clarifying that the latter is a result of grace: “You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’” (Gal. 5:13-14). Paul is here specifically countering the argument of his fellow Jewish Christians, some of whom were saying that converted Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the entire Jewish law in order to be saved. Like Jesus, Paul is not being anti-Jewish when he resists this thinking. As Fr. Ziccardi pointed out, he is speaking as a Jew with love for his people, but he is countering the tendency toward legalism prevalent even in the early Church.

It was this tendency, developed later on within Catholicism that Luther was countering in the Reformation. As Cardinal Walter Kasper says, “The insight that God’s justice is not a punitive justice, but rather a justice that justifies the sinner, counts as the great Reformation discovery of Martin Luther, a discovery that also liberated him personally from anxiety about sin and from a troubled conscience.” However, Cardinal Kasper says, as Fr. Catalamessa also noted, “Luther’s discovery is fundamentally a rediscovery. It has older roots in the common tradition of the early church. We find these roots in Augustine, for whom Luther had high esteem, and in Bernard of Clairvaux,”<sup>7</sup> and, as we have seen in the writings of St. Paul and in the gospels. In fact, in 1999 Catholics and Lutherans signed a document affirming their common understanding of justification by faith (Common Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation, a document cited by both Cardinal Kasper and Fr. Catalamessa). Fr. Catalamessa goes on to explain the radical nature of Christ’s sacrifice:

God was not satisfied with merely forgiving people’s sins; he did infinitely more than that: he took those sins upon himself, he shouldered them himself. The Son of God, says Paul, “became sin for us.” What a shocking statement! In the Middle Ages some people found it difficult to believe that God would require the death of his Son in order to reconcile the world to himself. St. Bernard responded to this by saying, “What pleased God was not Christ’s death but his will in dying of his own accord”: “*Non mors placuit sed voluntas sponte morientis.*” It was not death, then, but love that saved us!<sup>8</sup>

This saving death of Christ is the root and source of our justification.

But, does this liberating experience of justification through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus lead to such a relaxed conscience that we can slide into presumption, to the idea that “it doesn’t matter what I do, because I’m saved”? This idea is strongly countered by St. Paul in the letter to Romans, where he asks one of those rhetorical questions mentioned often by Fr. Ziccardi, “Shall we continue to sin that grace might increase? May it never be!” (6:1-2). Rather, through the free gift of justification, we are saved for a life of love and good works, done in the Spirit, as St. Paul explains: “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. . . . For sin shall no longer

be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace” (Romans 6:8, 14). It is this life of love that Paul praises so beautifully in the famous passage in 1 Cor 13. This kind of love flows out of the justified soul, because it is Christ living in the soul, loving through him or her.

This truth makes up the essence of Augustine’s conversion. Just before his complete conversion, Augustine has a vision of Contenance, which concludes with her reassuring words: “Why are you relying on yourself, only to find yourself unreliable? Cast yourself upon him, do not be afraid. He will not withdraw himself so that you fall. Make the leap without anxiety; he will catch you and heal you.”<sup>9</sup> It was this vision that prepared Augustine for the experience shortly following, in the Milan garden, where he “takes and reads,” as instructed by the child’s voice he interprets as a word from God, and reads from St. Paul’s letter to the Romans: “Not in riots and drunken parties, not in eroticism and indecencies, not in strife and rivalry, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in its lusts,” (13:13-14). Putting on Christ – this is the key – is made possible only through justification by faith in God’s great and saving love, not through striving in one’s own power. This life is what Paul refers to when he talks about “Christ in you, the hope of glory,” (Col. 1:27). Only Christ can perfectly fulfill the law of God, which is ultimately a law of love, so we can only be fully justified when he lives it through us.

This paradoxical idea of God being “just and the justifier” (Rom. 3:26) is resolved if we realize that God’s grace, received by humanity through justification by faith, not only saves us from damnation (the punishment from sin) but also from sin itself; as Fr. Cantalamessa says, “The apostle says God is ‘just and justifying,’ that is, he is just to himself when he justifies human beings; he is in fact love and mercy, so for that reason he is just to himself—he truly demonstrates who he is—when he has mercy.”<sup>10</sup> In fact, God’s righteousness “does not enact justice but makes people just.”<sup>11</sup> Along similar lines, Cardinal Kasper points out that God reconciles himself with us, “But he does that so that we, as a result, become a new creation in Christ,” referring to 2 Cor. 5:17—19.<sup>12</sup> In other words, our transformation results from the grace entering our lives through faith. Therefore, we can truly say, “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:26) without in any way suggesting that we can earn God’s approval legalistically, in a Pelagian fashion. No, we are transformed by the grace of God working in our hearts, and as a result we fulfill the law through love: “Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment,” (James 2:12-13).

So, what does this mean in terms of our own spiritual life? What has Paul’s teaching (as well as the gospels) said to us personally about justification by faith? As we saw with the religious leaders of Jesus’ time, they had taken a faith rooted in trust in the loving word of God, as expressed to Abraham, and made it a form of legalism. This was not, of course, true of all Jews at that time, but this type of legalism was the problem criticized by both Jesus and Paul. But it is also the same problem that crept into the Catholic Church in the middle ages, and which was addressed – rightly or wrongly – by Luther. Despite the grace-filled teaching at the heart of the Christian faith, at that point in time, teaching on this subject was not always clear, and to some believers, the life of faith may have seemed like a series, once again, of rules. This was not the *true* teaching of the church, but for some – like the young monk Luther – the teaching of mercy was getting lost. However, this problem can develop and has done so in many, if not most, churches that claim their origins

in the Reformation, in a belief in salvation by faith alone. Rules and customs develop, supposedly based on the Bible alone (“sola scriptura”) but soon developing into human expectations and, in fact, rules and traditions that can take the place of a life of love, rooted in faith. In fact, any human institution can turn from grace to law all too easily.

I am not saying that all rules are bad! We need some rules, in fact, to guide us in varying ways through life. However, there is a problem existing in the human heart that moves us from trusting in God’s loving embrace and responding to it in faith-filled obedience to a cold and rigorous legalism that seeks to earn his favor by following a series of laws. Whether those laws are not eating grain on the Sabbath or washing ritualistically before meals (like the Pharisees of Jesus’ time), or saying Rosaries or making novenas (as Catholics, including myself, do – good practices in themselves), or avoiding drinking and smoking and never missing a Wednesday prayer meeting (as would be the expectation in many evangelical or Pentecostal churches), the fact is that doing (or not doing) any of these things out of a sense of fear and obligation instead of love after having been loved and saved by God is to rely on the works of the law, not grace. It is an easy temptation to fall into, a temptation of the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15. We work so hard that we miss the fact that the Father loves us and all that he has is ours. He longs to shower love on us, but we are so busy trying to earn it, that we miss its many manifestations and the still small voice of love speaking to our hearts.

In closing, I think of an analogy that is quite simple, but conveys what I mean. Two women are making a meal for their families. One does it out of obligation, afraid the members of her family will resent and perhaps love her less or not at all if she does not make it. Perhaps she is mistaken about this idea, and they love her whether she makes the meal or not. She does the task out of fear and duty, with no love or joy. Another woman, loved by her family and loving them in return, makes a meal for them out of this love overflowing in her heart for them and in response to their love for her. The work is joyously done and served in a spirit of celebration (think of Babette serving the people in the film *Babette’s Feast*)<sup>13</sup>. There is no sense of fear that her family will love her less if she does not make the meal. There is little awareness of obligation, though there may be some sense of duty in the task but it is joyously fulfilled. The two tasks are exactly the same, but the first woman represents the works of the law, of legalism, and the second represents a life of grace. All of us, whether Catholic or Protestant, Evangelical or Pentecostal, can fall from a life of grace, similar to the experience of the second woman to the drudgery of the first. But as St. Paul says, “Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has set us free, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage,” (Gal. 5:1). In Romans 8, Paul describes the life of love that is a result: “For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord,” (Rom. 8:38-39). Far from being a dry point of contested theology, justification by faith, rightly understood, leads to the experience of that everlasting love. It is living in this love that is the freeing, grace-filled calling that is at the heart of the gospel.

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<sup>1</sup> Cantalamessa, R., “*Be Reconciled to God.*” *Good Friday Sermon*, (St. Peter’s Basilica: Vatican City, March 26, 2016), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Pope Francis, citing John Paul II, *Propositio 4, The Joy of the Gospel, Evangelii Gaudium*, (US Conference of Catholic Bishops: Washington, D.C., 2013; first printed Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013), p. 57.

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<sup>4</sup> Pope Francis, *The Name of God Is Mercy, a Conversation with Andrea Tornielli*, trans. By Oonagh Stransky, (Random House: New York, 2016), pp. 50-51.

<sup>5</sup> Harrington, D. J., *Meeting St. Paul Today*, (Loyola Press: Chicago, 2008), p. 83.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>7</sup> Kasper, W., *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life*, translated by William Madges, (Paulist Press: New York and Mahwah, 2014; originally printed 2013), p. 89.

<sup>8</sup> Cantalamessa, R., 4.

<sup>9</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, translated by Henry Chadwick, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 1998), Book VIII, section xi, 27, p. 151.

<sup>10</sup> Cantalamessa, 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>12</sup> Kasper, W., p. 80.

<sup>13</sup> Axel, G., *Babette's Feast*, Film, 1987.

ROBERT FARACI

### **First Thoughts on St. Paul and the Art of Rhetoric**

As a GEM (General Empirical Method) Fellow, a participant in the Praxis Program that has grown out of the Seton Hall University Mission Seminars, I write this essay as an exercise in the arduous discipline of developing awareness of my internal cognitional activity and processes, which is essential to the lifelong project of “self-appropriation” promoted by the philosopher Father Bernard Lonergan, SJ. Before attending this summer’s faculty retreat on St. Paul, my acquaintance with the life and work of St. Paul was the product of my participation as an ordinary lay person in the liturgical life of the Catholic Church and in the prayer, study, and liturgical practices of a small community within the Church. Almost the whole of Msgr. Anthony Ziccardi’s introduction to the scope and depth of Pauline studies was novel to me, and this afforded me with an opportunity to focus attention on how I processed some of this new material, with an emphasis on being attentive to the data of experience. This meant monitoring and processing not only the external data of the readings, the presentations, and the discussions, but also the internal data of my awareness of myself and of the thoughts, feelings, and questions the experience of the retreat evoked.

I was particularly struck by the kindling of curiosity about the art of rhetoric, which was never a part of my formal education, apart from a little coaching on a high school debate team. The spark was ignited through pondering the fact, discussed during the retreat, that St. Paul was unsuccessful in convincing the great majority of his Jewish listeners that Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled the prophecies and expectations regarding the office of Messiah. Why did he fail to convince so many of his fellow Israelites? This question has perhaps most famously been answered from an apologetic angle. But because we devoted attention during the retreat to St. Paul’s sophisticated use of rhetorical devices, I began to approach this question in terms of the rhetorical challenge of bridging a gap between arguing a position and convincing an audience of the correctness of the position.

As an aside, I acknowledge that, however much preparation and effort he put into his writing and preaching, St. Paul, by his own testimony, did not put much stock in his skill at rhetoric. He attributed the effectiveness of his preaching to the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit to convince and saw even in the rejection of his preaching the providence of God. St. Paul’s assertions in this regard naturally carry weight with a believing Catholic like myself. Nevertheless, he employed rhetoric with undeniable human skill albeit in the context of a supernatural mission, and his skillfulness justifies study of his utilization of the art. Moreover, the mixed results of his labors naturally trigger questions about the dynamics and pitfalls of persuasion on a strictly human plane. I am also motivated to pursue the question by the prospect of applying Lonergan’s cognitional theory to the development of a project of evangelization.

Here are some of my salient thoughts and the questions they provoked:

(1) St. Paul came to the task of preaching already persuaded of the identity of Jesus and may not himself have been convinced without his prior persuasion of the merits of the very arguments he advanced. Thus it seemed to me that his personal intellectual appropriation of those arguments would have differed substantially from that of his hearers, many of whom were being exposed to the content of his preaching for the first time. How did St. Paul's established belief in Jesus as the Christ condition his assessment of the persuasive power of his arguments or his expectations of success in converting his audience? Alternatively, how might he have been equipped instinctively and/or reflectively to take the perspective of his hearers and tailor his presentations accordingly?

(2) Jewish and Gentile Christians both inherited the Hebrew Scriptures (primarily in Greek through the Septuagint) as Christian texts, but had to have appropriated them in somewhat distinct ways. Gentile Christians did not inherit the full patrimony of historical Judaism, which included not only scriptures in Greek, but also the scriptures in Hebrew, non-scriptural literature, oral traditions, traditions of interpretation, the Hebrew language, Hebrew culture, historical memory, internally- and externally-conditioned group identity, political-cultural aspirations, and a tradition of messianic expectations conditioned in part by historic-political events and power relationships. Gentiles, of course, had distinct religious-cultural patrimonies. Evidence of St. Paul's sensitive adaptation of his preaching to the religious-cultural patrimony of his hearers, as in the famous case of his address at the meeting of the Areopagus depicted in Acts 17, underscores his appreciation of the relevance of their background to his task. Differences in religious-cultural patrimony suggest differences in conditioned patterns or modes of intellectual appropriation among St. Paul's audiences. Given his relative success in converting Gentiles (though not at the Areopagus), might differences in patterns or modes of thought have contributed to a receptivity differential between Jews and Gentiles regarding St. Paul's attempts at persuasion? What would the differences be, and how would they have brought about a differential?

(3) Imagine someone reading or hearing St. Paul's writings as he first experiences an opening to faith and belief in Christ. Imagine alternatively someone who already believes listening to St. Paul to deepen her faith and develop her understanding of her beliefs. How might these distinct stances differentially condition the modes and patterns of thinking involved in appropriating the content? Is it possible that a particular text that might fail to persuade one who is entertaining belief might, even in the same person, be effective in furthering understanding of or verifying belief, once accepted, and deepening faith? How might this work? What are the modes and patterns of thought involved, and how do they interact with the strategies of persuasion that St. Paul employs?

The thoughts and questions discussed above prepare me to return to the materials introduced in the GEM Praxis Program by and about Lonergan's General Empirical Method and his elaboration of functional specialties in theological method, both in order to understand cognitional theory better and to explore the art of rhetoric as a tool of evangelization.



MARIAN GLENN

### **Paul's Letter to the Ecologists**

In response to the global ecological crisis, the cultural historian, and Passionist priest, Thomas Berry, issued a prophetic message that continues to attract the attention of eco-theologians.

The Earth is mandating that the human community assume a responsibility never assigned to any previous generation. We are being asked to accept responsibility commensurate with our greater knowledge. We are being asked to learn a new mode of conduct and discipline. This is preeminently a religious and spiritual task, for only religious forces can move consciousness at the depth needed. Only religious forces can sustain the needed effort. Only religion can measure the magnitude of what we are about. Our task at this critical moment is to awaken the energies needed to create the new world, to evoke a universal communion of all parts of life.<sup>1</sup>

Berry's New Age response to this critical moment in history was to put aside the Biblical scriptures, and work across disciplines and religions to construct a new cosmology based in scientific understanding of the universe's 14-Billion-year evolution. As we learned about Paul of Tarsus's apostleship, I thought about Berry's conviction that our present era needs "a compelling vision that will capture the imagination and commitment of people, evoking sufficient energy to meet the great challenges of this time in history."<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, in his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, brings Biblical scripture into conversation with scientific knowledge. In this essay, I imagine Paul writing a letter to the community of planet activists working to save the Earth, incorporating his theology of salvation through Christ along with the passages in *Laudato Si'* that refer to Paul's scripture, and eco-theology as expressed in the Green Bible project, an edition of the NRSV with relevant passages printed in green ink, accompanied by theological essays.

In the Bible, the mortal life of Earthlings is contrasted with a spiritual existence in the sphere of God. Messengers from the spiritual realm visit Earth, and Earthlings, when they die, go to the spiritual realm to wait for the end time when the two kingdoms will be united. Paul's earthly life was turned around by an unexpected spiritual encounter with Jesus, broken through to Earth from God's sphere. Paul recognizes Jesus as the anointed Son of God, who bestows upon Paul the spiritual gift that propels his apostleship. Paul of Tarsus's apostleship for a Christ-centered theology of redemption arose during an era of cultural upheaval and religious innovation. His influence has resonated across two millennia of Christians seeking answers about how to live. Paul's letters abound with soaring pastoral language and sophisticated theology aimed at the lives of Earthlings awaiting the return of their Lord Jesus Christ to fulfill God's promise to join together the Earthly and the Heavenly realms. How might Saint Paul address a community of Christian ecologists in our day to evoke sufficient energy to meet the great challenges of today's ecological crisis? Here is an imaginary letter.

## Salutation

Paul, writing from Heaven, among the saints, awaiting the joining of Earth and Heaven, the completion of God's New Creation. To the Earthlings called to be God's co-workers in caring for Earth. Grace, mercy and peace to you from God and our Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to God, for you, loving stewards of God's creation. *I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.*<sup>3</sup>

Blessed is God who watches over all of us in Heaven and on Earth, rejoicing in the Earthling saints doing God's work among the living. Blessed is God who began a new creation with the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and who is waiting patiently and enduring Earth's groaning in bringing forth his plan for joining together the realms of Heaven and Earth. *Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers – all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*<sup>4</sup>

You ask me for guidance in healing the distress of God's Earth. You have easy access to the best of the letters that I and my co-workers wrote to guide believers seeking salvation, but your world is filled with marvels unimagined by any of us ancients. Is this ancient writing then unrelated to your current mission to save Earth from your industrial pollution? By no means! Francis, bishop of Rome, explains this in his letter on care for your common home.

In the Christian understanding of the world, the destiny of all creation is bound up with the mystery of Christ, present from the beginning: "All things have been created through him and for him" (Col 1:16). ... From the beginning of the world, but particularly through the incarnation, the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world as a whole, without thereby impinging on its autonomy.<sup>5</sup>

God loved the world into being, and wrote the book of nature. You ecologists, studying God's handiwork scientifically, are discovering that the too-heavy hand of human editors are badly constraining God's narrative. Be courageous like Francis, and allow the mystery of God's wildness to break through into your lives.

Saint Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness, "his eternal power and divinity have been made known through his works since the creation of the world" (Rom 1:20). For this reason, Francis asked that part of the friary garden always be left untouched, so that wild flowers and herbs could grow there, and those who saw them raise their minds to God, the Creator of such beauty. Rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise.<sup>6</sup>

## Resurrected Christ initiates God's New Creation

Christ Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, *on Earth* as it is in Heaven." The Son of God, as Earthling, identified himself as the Son of Adam. Taking on Adam's inheritance, Christ suffered, died and was laid in the earth. Miraculously, He was raised and returned for a time among the living! He bestowed the gift of the Spirit, redemption

from the sin of Adam's disobedience, and a renewal of God's promise to Abraham. *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are Children of God ... You have received a spirit of adoption*<sup>7</sup>. As Children of God, you, Ecologists, first among equals, inherit God's ancient covenant with Abraham, that all peoples of the Earth would be blessed through Abraham.<sup>8</sup>

As Jesus Christ was raised from an earthen tomb, God's new creation was born from Earth's womb, painfully gestating since the fall of Adam. Those who first believed in Christ felt the inward spirit of Grace as the first fruits of God's New Creation. They waited patiently and worked lovingly to welcome the Kingdom of Heaven, awaiting Christ's return. As I wrote to them, I now write to you: *I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the appearance of the Children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of the one [God] who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory [stewardship] of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now, and not only the creation, but we, ourselves, who have the first fruits of the spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.*<sup>9</sup>

The family of Earth and Heaven awaits the fulfillment of God's new creation, where with resurrected bodies, those created in the divine image, rule wisely over creation. *Therefore, my Beloved, be steadfast, immovable, and always excelling in the work of the Lord, because, you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*<sup>10</sup>

Francis, bishop of Rome, echoing his namesake Francis of Assisi, brings much wisdom to you as he laments the present suffering of our Sister, Mother Earth.

This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (Romans 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.<sup>11</sup>

Mother Earth now groans not with the birth pangs of a redeemed Adam, but with the sickness brought on by your irresponsible stewardship. Earth is enslaved as you plunder her goods, as the Israelites were enslaved by Pharaoh. The redemption of our sister, Mother Earth calls upon your strength and courage, Earthlings, to overcome this lawlessness. As God guided the Israelites through the wilderness to their promised home, *"the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words."*<sup>12</sup> God's intention over and over has been to renew the Earth by glorifying the creatures who bear the divine image, guided by the spirit toward becoming stewards of creation.<sup>13</sup>

You ecologists in your scientific studies of Earth's realm of growth and decay have illuminated cycles of a dynamic equilibrium among the plants, animals, and microbes that sustain Earth's fruitfulness and her hospitality toward life. But alas, you have also discovered human activities that are tipping the balance of God's created order. Jesus Christ is calling you to renew your stewardship of creation.

‘For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross’ (Col 1:19-20). This leads us to direct our gaze to the end of time, when the Son will deliver all things to the Father, so that “God may be everything to everyone’ (1 Cor 15:28). Thus, the creatures of this world no longer appear to us under merely natural guise because the risen One is mysteriously holding them to Himself and directing them towards fullness as their end. The very flowers of the field and the birds which His human eyes contemplated and admired are now imbued with His radiant presence.<sup>14</sup>

The Earth is mandating that you assume a responsibility never assigned to any previous generation. You are being asked to accept responsibility commensurate with your greater knowledge. You are being asked to learn a new mode of conduct and discipline to bring forth a renewed Earth.<sup>15</sup>

*With all wisdom and understanding, God has made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time—to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*<sup>16</sup>

Francis, the bishop of Rome, gives you and all of us waiting in heaven a hopeful glimpse of the joining of Heaven with Earth when Jesus Christ again breaks through into the Earthly realm and completes God’s plan.

At the end, we will find ourselves face to face with the infinite beauty of God (cf. 1 Cor 13:12), and be able to read with admiration and happiness the mystery of the universe, which with us will share in unending plenitude... Eternal life will be a shared experience of awe, in which each creature, resplendently transfigured, will take its rightful place and have something to give those poor men and women who will have been liberated once and for all.<sup>17</sup>

## **Benediction**

*Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.*<sup>18</sup>

*Let your speech be always gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.*<sup>19</sup>

*Live in peace and the God of love and peace will be with you.*<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Berry, T. remarks delivered at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City, as quoted in Hull, V. Ch. 7: The New Age: The Movement toward the World, in Ferguson, D. S. *New Age Spirituality: An Assessment*. (Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, 1992), pp 121-122.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 121-122

<sup>3</sup> Phi 1: 6

<sup>4</sup> Col 1: 15-17

<sup>5</sup> *Laudato Si’* paragraph 99.

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<sup>6</sup> *Laudato Si'* paragraph 12.

<sup>7</sup> Romans 8: 14.

<sup>8</sup> Gen 12: 1-3.

<sup>99</sup> Romans 8: 18-23.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Cor 15:58.

<sup>11</sup> *Laudato Si'* paragraph 2.

<sup>12</sup> Romans 8:26.

<sup>13</sup> Wright, N. T. "*Jesus is Coming – Plant a Tree!*" *The Green Bible*, (Harper One: San Francisco, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> *Laudato Si'*, paragraph 100

<sup>15</sup> Adapted from Berry, *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Ephesians 1:8-10.

<sup>17</sup> *Laudato Si'* paragraph 243

<sup>18</sup> 1 Cor 16:13.

<sup>19</sup> Col 4: 5

<sup>20</sup> 2 Cor 13:11.

ANTHONY L. HAYNOR

### **Paul, The Sociologist?**

Monsignor Ziccardi in his most impressive presentation emphasized how Paul and his writings can be examined from multiple perspectives: theological, historical, literary, rhetorical, feminist, political, psychological, and social scientific (social historical, sociological, cultural anthropological). Given my formal training, it is the sociological dimension of Paul that I will focus on in this short essay. (It is interesting to note that Msgr. Ziccardi was himself a sociology student at the undergraduate level, and he readily acknowledges how the sociological view of the world has informed his thinking about theological texts and the emergence and evolution of Christianity).

Drawing on Bernard Lonergan's Generalized Empirical Method, students of religion begin with "data" to which they are attentive, and then generate insights that could possibly account for and explain the data.<sup>1</sup> With respect to Paul, we can say that he was painfully aware of the need for "solidarity" in religious communities, in particular, in the one grounded in the New Covenant inaugurated by Jesus Christ. If there are sociological questions that can be teased out of Paul's writings and ministry, they are these: "Under what conditions is religious solidarity achieved such that the religious community remains a viable and vital entity?" and "Under what conditions is religious solidarity compromised or undermined to the extent that the very sustenance of the religious community is jeopardized?" Can we make any inferences from Paul's writing as to what he thought those conditions (on both the positive and negative side) might be given his obvious interest in constructing new Christian communities? If so, are the conditions that Paul seemed to point to the ones that sociologists have also pinpointed in their attempt to understand both the strengthening and weakening of community?

Arguably the most influential sociological theorist of community is Emile Durkheim. He studied the forms that "solidarity" can take. One kind of solidarity, "mechanical," is based on resemblance—shared beliefs, values and practices. The other, "organic," is grounded in difference and interdependence, stemming from a pronounced division of labor and specialization of function.<sup>2</sup> In either scenario, community is maintained through "collective representations," but the nature of them differs in the two cases. In communities grounded in "resemblance," the object of worship is the social group itself, whereas in communities grounded in "interdependence" the object of worship shifts to the parts and their individuality. For Durkheim, community is buttressed by collective sentiments of sacredness (in contrast to the "profane") characterized by "effervescence," the elevated experience that members feel that they are part of something much larger than themselves.<sup>3</sup> "Collective consciousness" for Durkheim brings human existence to its most meaningful peak, while egoism (too little attachment to groups) and anomie (too little regulation from group participation) impoverishes it. (Durkheim did acknowledge that too much attachment and too much regulation were also debilitating). According to Durkheim, human life

is “religious” to the degree that collective effervescence is present; it is not necessary that the object of sacred interest around which that sentiment coheres be a Divine Being.

That Paul was sensitive to the issue of cohesion within the fledgling Christian community is obvious from his writings. Harrington states:

In Paul’s drama of salvation history, there are three major entities: Jewish Christians, like Paul, Gentile Christians, and non-Christian Jews. Jewish Christians served as the link between Israel as the historic people of God and the Christian movement (which Paul regarded as the fullness of Judaism). Jewish Christians are the “remnant” mentioned in various biblical texts. Paul could not imagine the church without an organic connection to historic Israel as the people of God.<sup>4</sup>

Paul sought to forge a collective Christian consciousness rooted in a New Covenant. He argued that “the old covenant is read through a veil, but Christ has set aside the veil and allows us to see the glory of God with unveiled faces.”<sup>5</sup> Paul advocated a Christianity with a big tent. He was appealing to Jews to convert to Christianity, to follow in Paul’s path (Paul having been a Hellenistic Jew, a Pharisee, and a member of the Jewish Diaspora). Those who accepted the invitation became part of the fullness of Judaism, a fullness that only Christianity could provide. But, there were obviously many, the non-Christian Jews, who did not heed Paul’s invitation to convert (nor that of others who came before Paul or were contemporaneous with him), and they by their own choice were excluded from the new covenant.

But, most of Paul’s missionary zeal was directed toward bringing the Gospel (the “Good News”) to the Gentiles. A key question in this connection had to do with whether or not Gentile Christians would be obligated to follow Mosaic Law, in effect they walk the same path as Jewish Christians. On this question Paul is clear: while the “organic connection to historic Israel as the people of God” was passionately affirmed, it was not necessary that Gentile Christians conform to Mosaic Law in order for them to become part of the new Christian community. What was necessary for *justification* was the total embracement of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, the internalization of the full cosmic meaning of His Incarnation, death, resurrection, and impending Second Coming.<sup>6</sup> This is at the core of the “symbolic universe”<sup>7</sup> that undergirds the New Covenant. While the Old Covenant clings to the letter of the Law, the New Covenant is based on “the Spirit of the Living God.” Jews and Gentiles (women and men, people from all cultural backgrounds) are welcomed into this New Covenant in so far as they affirm this central truth. The New Covenant (and only the New Covenant) makes human freedom possible, and enables us to break the shackles of slavery (sin and death) that had prevented our liberation.<sup>8</sup>

While Paul’s “sociology” focuses on a new Christian collective consciousness based on “resemblance” (a shared affirmation of a Christo-centric symbolic universe), there is at least one clear reference to solidarity through “interdependence” (Durkheim’s “organic solidarity”). Paul recognized that the new Christian community was composed of human beings with very different gifts, each contributing in his or her own way to the one body of Christ.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lonergan, B., *Method in Theology*, (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1990), Chapter 1.

<sup>2</sup> Durkheim, E., *The Division of Labor in Society*, (Free Press: New York, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Durkheim, E., *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, (Free Press: New York, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> Harrington, D., *Meeting St. Paul Today*, (Loyola Press: Chicago, 2008), p. 84.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73 (based on “Second Letter to the Corinthians”).

<sup>6</sup> Letter to the Galatians. See Harrington, pp. 34-43.

<sup>7</sup> Berger, P. and Luckmann, T., *The Social Construction of Reality*, (Doubleday: Garden City, 1966).

<sup>8</sup> See Second Letter to the Corinthians, Romans 5:1-7:25; Harrington, pp. 72-73.

<sup>9</sup> First Letter to the Corinthians, 12:1-11; Harrington, p. 52.



ROSEMARIE D. KRAMER

### **The Sociology of St. Paul**

St. Paul has always been understood and even analyzed through the perspective of religion. He is known as the Saint of the Gentiles; has been called a friend of Jesus; has made Christianity a universal religion; been seen as a major organizer of the early Church and his letters have formed the basis of the liturgy of the Catholic Church as well as being seen as the spark that started the Protestant Reformation. In fact, St. Paul looms large in the religious worldview.

But, how would Paul fare if viewed from a different perspective? How would his actions be explained from a sociological perspective? This paper will assess some areas of St. Paul's life from that worldview. I will be applying the Sociological Imagination to St. Paul's persecution of the early Christians, his conversion to Christianity and his role in making Christianity a universal religion. While doing this, I will also be using the concept of marginality. And finally, I will compare an excerpt from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians to Emile Durkheim's sociological image of society.

The Sociological Imagination was conceived by C.Wright Mills. In his book published in 1959 under the same heading, Mills describes this concept:

The Sociological Imagination enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals...

The first fruit of this imagination... is the idea that the individual can understand his own experience and gauge his own fate only by locating himself within his period.<sup>1</sup>

To apply this concept to St. Paul's life, one must look at the era in which he lived, how it affected him and the role he played in it.

At the beginning of the Christian era, there were two types of Jews - the Hebraic and Hellenistic. Paul was a member of the Hellenistic group. These were the Jews of the Diaspora who lived among the gentiles of Greece and who "read, spoke, thought and worshipped in Greek...Many Jews in the Diaspora had taken Greek names and they had incorporated much of the Greek enlightenment into their cultural views...Moreover, many Hellenized Jews had embraced some elements of pagan religious thought. In short, large numbers were no longer Jews in the ethnic sense and remained only partly so in the religious sense."<sup>2</sup> In addition, these Jews were not fully accepted by the Greeks because of their adherence to Jewish Law. In effect, the Hellenic Jews were a marginalized group in Hellenistic communities.

Not only were these Jews marginalized in the Hellenistic world, they were viewed in a similar way by their co-religionists in Palestine. These Hebraic Jews were the ones who had

lived in Palestine since the time of the Patriarchs; not only did they strictly observe the Mosaic Law but also had access to and could worship in the temple.

So, Paul was marginalized in both worlds. According to this concept in sociology, a marginal person must either find a way to escape this condition or find some way to resolve it. At first, in my view, Paul sought to resolve it—to eliminate the stigma of marginality by becoming a Pharisee. In Daniel Harrington's book, *Meeting St. Paul Today*, he defines the Pharisees as "a Jewish sect...dedicated to exact observance of the Mosaic Law...They were often trying to adapt Jewish practices to both the letter of the Law and the changing realities of everyday life."<sup>3</sup>

As a Pharisee, Paul would most likely enforce the first of the Pharisee mandate and enforce the Jewish Law to the fullest. This would explain his persecution of the Christians, especially since most of the early Christians were Hellenistic Jews.

With regard to Paul's conversion, his easy assimilation into Christianity was also a sign that he wanted to escape his marginality. In fact, by joining the Christian sect, Paul utilized both aspects of being marginal—he escaped from being an outsider to Hebraic Judaism and resolved the issue by being totally accepted by the Christians.

Following this train of thought, it is not surprising that Paul promoted total acceptance of the Gentiles who wanted to become Christians without the necessity of their becoming Jews first. He knew the burden of being marginalized and wanted to help others to avoid that stigma.

Furthermore, by insisting on eliminating the need for conversion to Judaism before becoming Christian, St. Paul was an important element in the spread of Christianity. Rodney Stark, in his book, *The Rise of Christianity*, supports this premise, although he doesn't credit St. Paul as the initiator:

In my judgment, a major way in which Christianity served as a revitalization movement within the empire was in offering a coherent culture that was *entirely stripped of ethnicity*. All were welcome without the need to dispense with ethnic ties...Indeed, as I argued in Chapter 3, many Hellenized Jews of the diaspora, found Christianity so appealing precisely because it freed them from an ethnic identity with which they had become uncomfortable.<sup>4</sup>

Using the Sociological Imagination, one could see that St. Paul lived in a society consisting of many diverse groups. As a Hellenistic Jew, he was aware that he was considered an outsider to the two groups that were relevant to his life. To resolve this dichotomy, St. Paul first opted to identify with an outsider sect (Pharisees)<sup>5</sup> and then after his conversion, put all his beliefs and efforts into another "outsider sect," Christianity.

Finally, the content of many of Paul's letters are in themselves sociological. As an example, his letter to the Corinthians seems to form the basis of the Functional Perspective. A highlight from that letter is in Harrington's *Meeting St. Paul Today*:

Paul insists that each Christian has a gift that all these gifts are from the Holy Spirit, that there is a variety of gifts, and that all the gifts are meant to be used for the common good, especially in

building up the body of Christ...Paul's strategy was to remind the Christians that they are all members of the body of Christ and thus they must all work together for the common good.<sup>6</sup>

Paul's words are echoed in a paragraph in a sociological text describing Functionalism, one of its major perspectives and adding a statement from Emile Durkheim:

The central idea of functional analysis is that society is a whole unit, made up of interrelated parts that work together...Emile Durkheim also viewed society as being composed of many parts, each with its own function. He said that when all parts of society fulfill their functions, society is in a "normal" state.<sup>7</sup>

Not only is it possible to do a sociology of St. Paul, it is also possible to conclude that Paul possessed a Sociological Imagination.

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<sup>1</sup> Mills, C.W., *The Sociological Imagination*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1959), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Stark, R., *The Rise of Christianity*, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1996), p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> Harrington, D.J., *Meeting St. Paul Today*, (Loyola Press: Chicago, 2008), p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Stark, R., pp. 213-214.

<sup>5</sup> Boadt, L., *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction*, (Paulist Press: Mahwah, 1984), pp. 522-523.

<sup>6</sup> Harrington, p. 52.

<sup>7</sup> Henslin, J., *Essentials of Sociology: A Down-To-Earth Approach*, (Pearson Publishing: New York, 2015), p. 15

MARIANNE E. LLOYD

### **Getting Comfortable with Being Uncomfortable: How a Faculty Seminar Makes It Clear that the Liberal Arts Matter**

The faculty seminar on St. Paul promised to “explore Saint Paul’s background, thought and legacy.” It absolutely achieved this goal. However, it also made a number of broader notions readily apparent. First, unless one seeks additional knowledge it is easy to remain unaware of just how much information is unknown. Second, the seminar did a wonderful job making connections across theology, history, culture, politics and religion. I came into the seminar as a practicing Catholic who would have distilled her knowledge of St. Paul into a few pieces – 1. He writes a lot of those second readings at Mass. 2. He is responsible for the nearly universal 2 Cor reading at weddings. 3. His conversion story involves blindness and a horse. Perhaps there were a few other memories stored in my brain, but these pretty much covered what was readily available. As anyone in the seminar, or with better knowledge of any of the disciplines I mentioned above could tell you though, this is an almost comically poor understanding.

Over the course of the 3 days of seminar, I furiously scribbled 30 pages of notes. I had to often ask my table mates (a theologian to my left and philosopher to my right) how to spell words that were novel. Because I study memory as my research area, I felt as if I were conducting my own experiment. Whereas one with little base knowledge is simply trying to record information to refer to later, my colleagues with a stronger foundation could use the time to *think*. They asked questions and made inferences and tied various ideas together. My questions, on the other hand, were at a much more basic or clarifying level because I was at that level of understanding. What was remarkable about the seminar though, is that everyone was gaining something of use. For me, that was a lot of clarification and perspective whereas for others it was a richer understanding. At one point, I even started a list of all the things that I was hearing about for the first time. Here’s an excerpt:

- a. Facts about Greek culture
- b. Facts about Roman culture
- c. Factions of Judaism
- d. High/low Christology and perhaps middle as well
- e. Heaven as intermediate step in new heaven and earth
- f. Are we redeemed by death alone or because of works?

Clearly some of the items on this list are of importance to understand whether in regard to my own faith or for having perspective as to why things are the way they are. Certainly they matter for teaching courses like Journey of Transformation more effectively.

During the seminar, my psychological state was a mix of excited and uncomfortable. Realizing how little I know about this important figure in my own faith and as a strong influencer of other faiths and consequently cultures and history, is not pleasant. It made me wonder what other holes are in my memory and whether or not my own faith is based on faulty knowledge. But

it also was an extraordinary reminder of what it is like to be a student. Because I primarily teach the dreaded and required statistics class, I am well aware that my class is a lesson in discomfort. Many students have a troubled relationship with math and the logic of hypothesis testing is not simple to grasp. I ask students to spend 200 minutes a week chipping away at this critical, at least for their chosen field, concept. It has been quite some time since I have done the same for myself on a cognitive level and for that I am most grateful for the experience.

As my title suggests, I felt the seminar also made a very strong case for why the liberal arts matter and we should be fighting for a place for them. Without understanding perspectives in theology, philosophy, history, and politics, only one's own experience comes to bear on information. This can easily lead to inaccurate conclusions or perhaps even to an arrogant belief that all opinions are equally valid. When advising students, I often discourage them from taking more psychology courses than needed because there is just so much more to learn. This seminar will have me only increasing my fervor in this sentiment because now I have lots more examples of the kinds of knowing that are worthy of pursuit.

I also found the seminar to be a fine example in support of Dr. Cronin's April lecture on the value of the liberal arts. She made the argument that the Core should be the foundation of what makes a Boston College education valuable but that we often instead treat the Core as something to be finished instead of cherished. At Seton Hall, I can agree that my own advising is guilty of this. I discuss what courses fill each line on Banner but not why it matters. I now feel I have some answers for the why and an authentic enthusiasm for each category as a meaningful part of the college experience.

Finally, as a psychologist, I would be remiss if I did not comment on that particular value of the experience. By putting all of us together with a shared goal of increased understanding, surely something greater is achieved than if each of us were to be emailed a copy of the talk to read on our own time. There is benefit in working through material together and a chance to hear not just our own and the author's perspective but those of the other attendees. In the learning literature, the idea of *desirable difficulty*<sup>1</sup> has been gaining traction. This is the idea that one is ready to grow just past the level at which one is already existing. However, this does not require that all are on the same point in a knowledge journey. That is, each of the participants in the seminar or the students in my class are able to grow a bit from where they were at the start of the day's material. Much as Paul seemed to have a knack for adjusting the prose to the needs and desires of the audience for whom the letters were written, Msgr. Ziccardi made space for a variety of points in our intellectual journey and I am glad I agreed to take part.

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<sup>1</sup> Bjork, E., Bjork, R., *Making Things Hard on Yourself, but in a Good Way: Creating Desirable Difficulties to Enhance Learning, Psychology and the Real World: Essays Illustrating Fundamental Contributions to Society*, (Worth: New York, 2011), p. 56-64.

JOSE L. LOPEZ

### **Saint Paul – Preacher, Teacher, and Builder of Christian Communities**

Some argue that next to Jesus, the most influential and important figure in the history of Christianity is Saint Paul or the Apostle Paul. Of the twenty-seven writings that make up the New Testament, thirteen are attributed to Paul. In addition, more than half of the Acts of the Apostles are dedicated to the life of Paul from his conversion to his subsequent missionary work performed in spreading the gospel of Jesus throughout the known world.

Of all Jesus' contemporaries, early followers, and eventual Apostles, Paul was the most unlikely given his initial defiance of Jesus and His message of good news. Paul, or Saul of Tarsus as he was initially known before his conversion, was a strictly conservative Pharisee and to a strong extent a non-believer of Jesus as being the Son of God and even to an extent a persecutor of early Christians. He was extremely passionate about his Jewish faith which led to his commitment to getting rid of supposed Jewish cults like Christianity. It is said that, Saul set out on the road to Damascus to imprison or kill any Christians he found there but he was completely and dramatically converted by an encounter with the Christ after His resurrection. Saul's encounter with the living Christ was so profound that Saul the persecutor became transformed to Paul the Apostle, one of the greatest Christian preachers, teachers, and builders of Christian communities.

Paul possessed three unique attributes that made him an ideal early missionary of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was a very devote Jew, who had a very deep understanding of the Jewish faith through understanding the Torah or Old Testament. Secondly, Paul was highly educated not only in Judaism, but in classical Greek culture and knowledge which afforded him great facility to think deeply, orate, and write out his developed understandings and revelations. Paul's theology developed out of his missionary work in founding various early Christian communities.<sup>1</sup> Paul is quite often classified as a pastoral theologian since his understandings of the Revelations of Christ came directly from his work as a missionary, founder, and pastor to early Christian communities. Thirdly, Paul's very fortunate attribute as a Roman citizen allowed him an exclusive privilege to move throughout the Roman Empire, which was somewhat unusual for a Jew.<sup>2</sup>

All of Paul's unique personal attributes led Paul to be an extremely effective missionary in spreading the gospel of Jesus. Paul's ability as a preacher or better described as an effective communicator of Jesus' teachings through not only the auidial media of oration, but most importantly through written communication were extremely important contribution to the success of the establishment and spreading of Christianity. Paul's three, now legendary, missionary journeys were extremely important in allowing him to spread the news outside of Jerusalem and the core of Israel. Paul took his message throughout the Ancient Roman Empire to the modern-day territories of Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, and finally even to the heart of the Roman Empire in Rome.

Paul's effectiveness in spreading the good news of Christ stemmed initially from his understanding and eventual revelation that God bestows His Love and Righteousness not only to the Jewish people, but also to non-Jewish people or as they became known Gentiles. Paul's

talents for communicating Jesus' teachings by his abilities as not only a preacher, but also teacher of the Christ Revelation were essential seeds to the establishment of the early Christian communities. Further, once Paul established these new communities of believers, he did not abandon them. Paul believed that both the community and the individual form together.<sup>3</sup> This belief in the importance of mandating a personal or individual touch with the established communities where of course Paul's various letters that encompass the large portion of the New Testament. Paul's continued communication with the Christian communities he helped found and establish kept him pastoring and rooted there while allowing him to continue his traveling missionary work and continued spreading of the good news of the Christ Revelation.

In essence, the Calling by God of Saint Paul was undoubtedly due to the various personal gifts given to Paul from the very beginning. The Revelation of Jesus Christ that led to Paul's conversion were a result of choosing the right man for the needed job. There is of course no doubt that Paul's attributes as a devote Jew, uncommon level of education, and status as a Roman citizen were extremely important for his selection. However, Paul's ability to understand the evolving Revelations of Christ and his ability to spread them through constant communication to the Christian communities were what led to his great success as an Apostle and builder of Christianity.

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<sup>1</sup> Harrington, S.J., D.J., *Meeting St. Paul Today: Understanding the Man, His Mission, and His Message*, (Loyola Press: Chicago, 2008), p. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ziccardi, S.T.D., A., 2016 Faculty Summer Seminar: Meeting Paul of Tarsus, (Seton Hall University: South Orange, NJ, USA, 2016), quote and notes from seminar.

RAFFI MANJIKIAN

### **St. Paul: His Impact and Importance**

After having been a part of this Faculty Seminar series, a participant concludes that St. Paul is one of the most influential figures of the Catholic community. His teachings and ways of life assist contributions in many different perspectives, fields, and disciplines. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that his lessons are still being preached and used to influence people today. Conversely, St. Paul remains a controversial figure, too. There are people who agree with his knowledge and wisdom, while there are others who do not understand it, and thus disagree with it. Consequently, arguments ensue and people can become numb to the education that St. Paul provided. This numbness could also happen to a professor for any discipline at any university. Professors need to stimulate student interest and conduct research that can lead to controversial findings; this is especially palpable in the disciplines of natural science. As a result, St. Paul's impact and importance consists in how disciplines develop and how a professor should be an influential figure.

It is said that St. Paul was “the teacher of the nations in faith and truth.”<sup>1</sup> This description showcases how St. Paul spoke out and tried to educate other people. Professors have to do the exact same thing. A professor must try to convey information and knowledge to his students any way possible. A professor must adhere to as many learning styles as possible and must try his or her best to always be available for the student. This in turn will help the professor spread knowledge among students, which will hopefully spread to others around the nation and around the world, for knowledge is contagious. Aside from teaching, a professor should also try his or her best to conduct research that will help stimulate student and collegial interest and provide new findings and material that will help contribute, enhance, and maybe even change the discipline that he or she teaches in.

Research is necessary in creating and developing new ideas toward a discipline. This is especially true in the fields of natural science. Natural science provides a means of continually developing new ideas and advancing current knowledge and approaches. St. Paul did what he could do to engage community by developing new things and justifying themes; scientists try to do the exact same thing. Scientists use research to develop community and foster collaboration and professional relationships. Research is presented at seminars and conferences as well as published in articles to inform others about new findings and developments. St. Paul did his best to try to stay in touch and maintain relationships with the communities that he reached out to and was a part of. “For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan blocked our way.”<sup>2</sup> Even though he was not physically able to go back to all the communities he influenced, St. Paul made sure to stay in touch with them, by consistently writing to them. “I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write.”<sup>3</sup> Writing to the people he helped influence allowed St. Paul to let others know of the justification of themes that were being developed. This was also his way of letting others know



how well he was doing. Scientists have the same mindset and do what they deem necessary to try to do the best job that they possibly can.

“Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up.”<sup>4</sup> St. Paul preached that people should not forget to do the best that they can and help others while being as good as they can be. This, in turn, is the same way that professors, especially professors of science, should act. Professors of science should always try to lend a helping hand to students. They always should try to help students achieve whatever goals and aspirations they may have. Sometimes, professors can even provide students with a new perspective on life that allows the student to choose a different career path. Whatever the case may be, a professor should feel good to help others and want nothing more than for his or her students to succeed, as well as try to become a better and more influential individual. Helping others obtain achievement is the reward that professors strive for and when they accomplish this feat, the feeling is absolutely gratifying.

St. Paul’s impact and importance lies in how his teachings foster new specialties and teach a professor to be an influential figure. The purpose of St. Paul’s findings was to let others know about how branches of learning developed and how themes were justified. Conducting research allows professors, especially those of natural science, to do the same thing. In addition, St. Paul always tried to do what he felt was advantageous for others. Professors also have the unique opportunity to do that by helping students become successful both in the classroom and in life.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Timothy 2:7

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thes. 2:18

<sup>3</sup> 2 Thes. 3:17

<sup>4</sup> Galatians 6:9

ROSEANNE M MIRABELLA

### Charity in the Christian Tradition: “And the Greatest of These is Love”

The roots of organizing for communal needs— what today we would call the voluntary or nonprofit sector— go as least as far back as the Second Temple period (530 BCE through 70 CE), when care for travelers and the poor that had been provided through informal responses proved insufficient. Lowenberg noted that these early Judaic voluntary associations “emphasized the principle of egalitarianism as well as the principle of communal responsibility”<sup>1</sup> and included soup kitchens, shelters or hostels provided by synagogues, and the earliest forms of cash assistance for food or shelter. Likewise, following in the footsteps of these early Jewish associations, early Christian communities organized themselves to provide for the needs of the poor in response to the teachings of the Apostles. John in his Gospel proclaims,

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life...This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.<sup>2</sup>

As the voluntary sector grew in the West, differences in outlook began to emerge between organized religion and organized philanthropy, with the former understanding voluntary action as “walking the footsteps of Jesus,” embracing the spiritual over the worldly and the latter resting on ‘quantitatively based concepts of efficiency... (where) values of philanthropic investments were to be calculated in terms of their measurable effectiveness... (necessarily shifting) their attention from the symptoms of poverty to the causes.’<sup>3</sup> As Hall argued, the religious and community spirit of voluntarism “succumbed” to “the capacity of neutral experts to find technical solutions to complex problems”<sup>4</sup> within an economic framework. I would argue that we can reclaim the religious understanding that has been somewhat abandoned in our modern world, by embracing Paul’s understanding of charity, i.e., love. From the teachings of Jesus, Paul formed the central message to early Christian communities which is one of charity (love) towards the other, “whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”<sup>5</sup>

The charity of Paul is a selfless love, not a love of siblings or friends, or a romantic love that is sentimental; rather agape for Paul is the kind of love we have for the other for the *other’s* sake. “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love.”<sup>6</sup> He encourages us to “walk in the footsteps of Jesus” for “Christ’s voluntary submission to death is (to be) taken as a model for other-regarding actions and attitudes.”<sup>7</sup> Michael Sherwin has posited that “Calvary is the school of charity.”<sup>8</sup> God so loved the world that he sent his only son. Charity is *that* kind of love.

In his letters, Paul provides instructions to the early Christians on ways to improve their lives so that they might love one another. For example, in First Corinthians they are instructed to

take up a collection for the Lord's people. "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income."<sup>9</sup> To test the sincerity of each individual's love (charity), he compared it with what others have done in earnest.

Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, as it is written: The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little.<sup>10</sup>

Paul was troubled by the gulf between the classes that was common in early Christian communities, for it "would not have been at all out of the ordinary... for early Christian to make distinctions in the food he (sic) provided for those of his own social level and those who were of lower rank."<sup>11</sup> When he learned that some in Corinth were first having private dinners for those of the same social class before opening their homes for Christian gatherings, he chastises them.

For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I comment you in this? No, I will not.<sup>12</sup>

The status relationships among those in the Christian communities in their everyday lives "stood in tension with"<sup>13</sup> the life of equality and care for each other that Paul instructed them to lead. In his letters, Paul encourages Christians to look upon Christ, "the crucified savior (as) an antidote to the anxiety and loneliness in a society in which social position was usually rigid."<sup>14</sup> Further, love of neighbor in the Pauline tradition extends to enemies as well as friends. Charity is not friendship; it is much more.

If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty give him something to drink. In doing this you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.<sup>15</sup>

And Christian communities the world over responded to Paul's teaching by opening a wide variety of charitable institutions on a larger scale than had existed before—hospitals, shelters, schools, and food pantries—revolutionizing the ideas of pagan societies which had often exterminated the poor, sick and needy as there had never before been such a broad understanding of common human dignity in the ancient world. This idea finds its origins in the Judeo-Christian theological tradition and in Paul's writings, which argue for charity and communal responsibility for the other based on our being created in God's image and likeness, the identity of which was more profound than previously held ideas and helped Christians overcome differences between class or social status.

By returning to an understanding of charity as communal responsibility—capturing charity as understood by Paul in his teachings—we may find the antidote for the anxiety and loneliness many of us feel in our lives today. "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lowenberg, F. (1994) On the Development of Philanthropic Institutions in Ancient Judaism: Provisions for Poor Travelers. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. 23(3), p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> John, 3:16.

<sup>3</sup> Hall, P.D., "The History of Religious Philanthropy in America" In *Faith and Philanthropy in America: Exploring the Role of Religion in America's Voluntary Sector*, ed. Wuthnow, R. and Hodgkinson, V.A., (Jossey-Bass Publishers: San Francisco, 1990), p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> Romans, 13:9.

<sup>6</sup> Romans, 12:9.

<sup>7</sup> Meeks, W.A., *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, (Yale University: New Haven, 1983), p. 181.

<sup>8</sup> Sherwin, M. S., *By Knowledge & By Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*. (Catholic University of American Press: Washington, D.C., 2011).

<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians, 16:2

<sup>10</sup> 2 Corinthians, 8: 13-15.

<sup>11</sup> Meeks, W.A., p. 68.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Corinthians, 11:18-22.

<sup>13</sup> Meeks, W.A., p. 191.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>15</sup> Romans, 12:20.

<sup>16</sup> 1 Corinthians, 13:13.

MELINDA D. PAPACCIO

*Eimai Prisca*

**(I Am Prisca)**

I am Prisca, wife of Aquila, tent-maker, Roman citizen and Jew by birth, Christian by God's Grace, dedicated to the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Messiah, and co-worker in Christ with Saul Paulus of Tarsus. I write this from my present home in Ephesus to record some of my time with him in Corinth and to speak of my conversion to The Way of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is fitting that we tell our own stories, just as we tell our Lord's story, to bring others into communion with us. We are each part of that body of Christ as Paul taught: "We, being many, are one bread, one body; for we all partake of the one bread" and as such each of our stories are intertwined, connected as are the lives of members of a family. We are a family. Paul is my brother in Christ.

After many missionary visits to places like Damascus, the Antiochs of Syria and Pisidia, Cyprus, Pamphylia, Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra, Paul went to Corinth and we met there. Like many other Roman Jews, Aquila and I moved there when Claudius expelled a number of us because the constant tension between those of us who believe and those who don't was too disruptive. Not all Jews were expelled, only those who were most vocal and zealous in their beliefs. Aquila and I fell into that category. In truth, I was glad to be free of the constant trouble, even if I do long to be back in Rome once more. We chose Corinth because it was a good place to do commerce, very hospitable to craftsmen of all kinds. Actually, Corinth is very reminiscent of Rome in its structure so it soon became like home for us. This city, teeming with former slaves and freedmen, Roman refugees, sailors, and merchants of many types, was the perfect place for our trade. Here freed slaves could make a name and a fortune for themselves, a near impossibility in Rome. Even Erastus, who became Director of Public Works, did well enough to donate a road to the city.

Corinth's location on the isthmus of Achaia positions it between the two port cities of Lechaeum and Cenchrae, ensuring a continual stream of travelers going to and from Rome. Rather than circle around the isthmus, they cross it and pass through Corinth taking the Lechaean Way to reach the other side. The city is always alive with people from many places who worship many different gods. Here we found it possible to worship and spread the Gospel of our Lord without so many of the impediments we faced in Rome. Hearing of the Christian community developing here, Paul came. This was all very fortuitous for us. When he arrived he saw that there were problems, for in Corinth many were seduced and deceived by their newfound freedom and fell into licentious behavior. Even women and men of modest means would give themselves over to debaucheries that only the elite of Rome would permit themselves back in the homeland. The message of temperance of Stoics like Musonius Rufus and Seneca had little effect; their precepts praised but not followed. But we who follow The Way, walk a different path. We understand this

“freedom” to do as one pleases actually results in enslavement to the appetites. Our Lord provided us with a different set of values founded not simply on laws of right and wrong but on the greater law of love that not all are able, or willing, to fully embrace.

And so we found ourselves in Corinth. The Isthmian Games, second only to the Olympic Games, would be held there that year so we thought the timing was perfect. This is a city of craftsmen who, because so many were slaves and freedmen, were used to hard work. Aquila and I are such people although we were both born free. When I met Aquila, he was a maker of tents. We had one child, Philomel, who died of fever in her first year. I was never to conceive again. While I could have remained in the home, I chose to join my husband in work. Our business grew and thrived in Corinth, even more than it had in Rome. Paul was a tentmaker too so it was fortunate, or as he says, foretold to him by the Lord, that we would find each other and join forces in this city. With Paul’s help we soon took on much large-scale work making tents to sell for temporary housing during festivals, canvas awnings for open air market stalls, sun shades for balconies of private homes. But the more important work was done in our community of believers. I embraced this work with the greatest joy and zeal. As in Rome, I opened our home to our community in the Lord and we walked The Way together, meeting to break bread, pray, and prophesy. Our rented home on the Northwest Stoa, near both the Temple of Apollo and our synagogue, was perfectly located and large enough to hold both our workshop and a dining area above which accommodated our community for the breaking of bread. When Paul joined us, he preached so powerfully that our numbers quickly grew. He also preached in the synagogue and was eventually thrown out, but not before he had added many more to our number, which was, of course, why he was thrown out. We then met with the faithful in the larger quarters of Titus Justus who lived next door to us. With Paul, our community was growing beyond our expectations.

The Lord’s message is revolutionary and the people are hungry for it. But, for a population distracted by so many indulgences and entertainments, he understood that his message had to be simple and so he said in a letter written to the community while he was in Ephesus: “I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” Brilliant – the seed of the Essential Truth needed to be planted first, it needed to be simply stated. Determined that this was the most effective approach, Paul’s considerable energy found its full expression in his preaching. Truly guided by the Holy Spirit, he was unafraid of the trouble he might be inviting. Jew and Gentile, equal before the Lord! No male or female, free man or slave -- who but our Lord could inspire such thoughts that would turn the order of things upside down, or rather set them right side up! Paul’s greatest strength, I believe, was his ability to preach in a way that invited us to think. Of course this was so much a part of Achaian culture it’s no wonder his word caught on in this city. Perhaps this is why he found the Gentiles so stimulating to work with. They enjoyed, needed, debate, argument, and analysis of their lives. The response to his controversial message was received in Athens with curiosity rather than the calls for blood often proclaimed by his fellow Jews. The Gentiles, especially its women, had an openness to the message.

Yes, we Jewish and Gentile Roman women of The Way found this message especially compelling since, so much of our lives are determined by laws to preserve male power in both Judaism and in the Empire. The *Lex Julia*, even in its amended form, works to control and restrict our rights, even though we are better off than the Greek women of ages past. For us the Lord provided a new way, a freedom never before seen -- not the illusion of freedom that so many Roman women believe they are exercising when they neglect their families, indulge in obsessive

attention to their appearance, paint their faces, dye and curl their hair, throw money away on the latest styles, and all to attract illicit lovers! Free women they fancied themselves to be, unafraid of the laws against adulterous wives! This loss of self-control is so dangerous and pernicious. Believing they were no longer oppressed by the force of male authority, they oppress themselves under this enslavement to appetite and neglect. They violate all that matters, raising children that can't help but come to live as dissolutely because they know nothing else. While Paul knew this was a tricky problem to address he did not shy away from it and wrote in no uncertain terms to correct it.

But as a follower of the One True God, I, a woman of The Way, know differently. Our Lord came with a message that runs counter to the culture of our day, a message that invites us to think about how we live our lives. I thank Him each day for the Grace that opened my heart to His message. And I thank Him for giving us Paul who helped us understand how to live as Christ's people. Christ came to free us from our chains. Paul wanted us to think critically about the Lord's message and what he himself preached. He would tell listeners to "test everything" and they would stare. They were not used to such advice when obedience was the rule of the day in both the synagogue and the empire. He helped us see that the Lord Jesus came to call all of us to Him equally. He did not seek to put women in the traditional places that Roman culture required we occupy. The story of Martha and Mary shows us that the "better part" of our attentions are spent in learning what He came to teach us. The Lord cherished His female disciples as well as the men who followed Him. And Paul does the same. He values all of the many women who serve to make way for the Gospel. Paul carried this message forward helping us women to better understand the Messiah's will for us. While Roman culture, and even our own Jewish culture, impels us to marry, holding the unmarried woman a pariah of sorts and a burden to her family, Paul explained that a woman has value in herself, married or unmarried. The unmarried woman can undertake a life of service to the Lord. The widow need not rush to remarry but can also serve and be supported for her basic needs by our community. Perhaps Roman culture cannot be transformed in a short time but, through Christ, we women have experienced a transformation in our own sense of self-worth. The fact is that Paul has helped women gain a level of protection from the whims of men in power and from our culture that elevates men above women. We are freer than before, freer in ways that mattered. Yes, he says we should comply with certain cultural ways so not to fall prey to accusations of immorality, because the enemies of The Way are always watching and waiting for an opportunity to pounce. So when we gather, it is necessary for women to cover their heads, not as a sign of submission, but as a sign of the dignity allowed the married Roman woman. Adulteresses and prostitutes cannot wear the stola veil but must wear a toga as a sign of their sin, their heads uncovered. Since so many Gentile women here in Corinth have adopted the habit of not covering their heads, whether as a sign of liberation or defiance, Paul thought it necessary to assert the need to observe this cultural tradition to avoid representing us as lawless and dissolute. In his innate practicality and shrewdness, Paul understands that there are more important battles to fight.

Paul believed in me and in my understanding of The Word. He respected the fact that my husband and I were actively proclaiming the Gospel before we met him. Since I am naturally more gregarious than Aquila, Paul encouraged me to prophesy and explicate for others. He appreciated my gifts, and the fact that I was female was not a deterrent for him. He said I was an equal in Christ and I know he truly believed this. Thus, he built my confidence and strengthened my faith

so that when Aquila and I encountered the silver-tongued Apollos preaching the baptism of repentance in the name of John the Baptist we tactfully, and in private, explained his mistake to him and he was very grateful. When word of this got to Paul, he too was grateful for he has encountered some who had been similarly mis-educated in Ephesus as well. This was an important moment for us, but it was one of many moments in which I felt truly a co-worker in the spread of the Gospel alongside our beloved Paul. We pray for the safety of Paul as there have been riots in Phillipi, and here in Ephesus, that were started by idol merchants who were fearful that Paul's preaching is converting pagans and thus stealing customers away from them. The enemies of The Lord are many, but we have faith and will continue the fight. We, women and men, together co-workers in Christ, shall do as Paul exhorts us to do. We will "be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord [our] labor is not in vain."

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### **Insights from a Health Professional Educator on Paul of Tarsus: Teacher of the Nations**

As I began to reflect upon the 2016 summer seminar on “Meeting Paul of Tarsus: Teacher of the Nations,” I found myself retreating back to Harrington’s text titled “Meeting St. Paul Today.” Harrington provides a clear, concise and meaningful description of Paul’s spiritual journey, his writings and the world around him. Harrington invites us, the readers to revisit the meaning of Paul’s writings and to see these writings from our own perspectives, in relation to the world as we perceive it today. As a direct result of the seminar discussions and readings, I see Paul as a true student-centered teacher. A student-centered teacher puts the learner’s interest first by acknowledging their voice and using their life experiences as central to promoting learning. Paul in his writings, engaged communities to be active participants in their learning process. He helped communities to see the actions that must be taken by discussing key life experiences. Yet, Paul allowed them to journey at their own pace.

The concepts and ideas explored in Paul’s writings and the student-centered approach used were not only relevant to the population during his lifetime, but are relevant today as the messages are salient and timeless. In this essay, I hope to share my new found insights on a well-known and often over used letter by Paul to the Corinthians. In reading 1 Corinthians 13:4-13, we are led to understand that as we journey along our life abiding by faith, hope and love that we begin to see more fully ourselves, others and our actions, but not until we come face to face with our maker will we know fully as he knows. Today, more than ever, one might argue that mankind does not embrace the words spoken by Paul, “and now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love,”<sup>1</sup> based upon the negative actions we take against one another in our communities. As I began to try and understand why still today we are not seeing and acting with faith, hope and love, I found myself rereading Paul’s writings on spiritual gifts. In 12:1-14:40, Paul suggests that all Christians have a gift which comes from the Holy Spirit and that these gifts must be used for the common good.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, as Christians, Paul suggests it is our responsibility to use these gifts in building up the body of Christ by abiding by faith, hope and love.<sup>3</sup> So if today’s Christians truly embrace the gift of faith, hope and love and understand our responsibility to use these gifts for the common good why would we take negative actions on others along our journey to knowing our self as God knows us. For me in trying to reconcile this issue, the answer seemed to be that we are inactive Catholics. Paul, recognizing this inactivity during his time, tried to address this issue head on by developing parish missions to involve and engage the inactive using what might be considered a student-centered approach to learning. I would suggest that while parish missions can support ones awakening and assist us to be active Christians, each of us must be responsive to this awakening and be active learners.

To be responsive to this awakening we must actively embrace our gifts of faith, hope and love and show them in our actions. As I began to think about how I might begin my awakening I found myself rereading Paul’s writing on the Cross of Christ. By embracing the cross of Christ

as the revelation of God's true wisdom for humankind, I believe we can build a sound foundation to begin our awakening. The cross of Christ is the criterion for all kinds of wisdom and what is important is for all humankind to belong to Christ and God. By unity through diversity we must recognize and embrace, as Paul says, the "varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord" (12:4-5).<sup>1</sup> Overall, Paul's letters speak to the importance of unity, the importance of freedom of consciousness within certain moral boundaries and unity through diversity.

Paul's hope that love will bind communities together despite their differences, and ultimately lead people to achieve faith and godliness, is still key today and offers mankind insight that can help them to decrease their inactivity. However, Paul in his student-centered teachings does not reflect a willingness to compromise religious faith, but offers a stern, yet loving voice that seeks to engage and guide the communities' development. Thus, to me Paul is the truly the teacher of nations.

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<sup>1</sup> Harrington, D.J., *Meeting St. Paul Today*, (Loyola Press: Chicago, 2008), p. 44-53

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p 44-53

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p 44-53

JON RADWAN

## **Meeting Paul as *Rhetor*: Creation, Nature, and the Law Written in the Heart**

The 2016 Catholic Studies Seminar *Meeting Paul of Tarsus: Teacher of Nations* provided a wealth of material for reflecting on one of the most persuasive and influential authors in world history.<sup>1</sup> Cicero's traditional three functions of rhetoric, to teach (*docere*), delight (*delectare*), and persuade (*movere*), are all enacted in Paul's letters and I am grateful for this opportunity to write about *meeting* Saint Paul as a *rhetor*. As our seminar title makes clear, terms of "meeting" mark a central theme throughout the New Testament.<sup>2</sup> The synoptic Gospels relate the story of Christ's incarnation and personal contact with humanity, and as an energetic missionary Paul lives the Gospel frame of interpersonal encounter and embodied love, but he is not an authoritative narrator like Luke. Instead he is a leader within a movement, a co-worker writing to inspire specific distant communities. Even when his letters are read aloud the letter form makes Paul's writing thoroughly personal. Rather than present more or less objective stories about events these letters are subjective and relational acts.

After a brief overview of Paul and the rhetorical context of his letter to the Romans, this essay shows how Paul unites Jewish Creationism and Greco-Roman Natural Philosophy with Christian love in his teaching on the "law written in the heart" (2:15).<sup>3</sup> In chapters 1-3 he explains that God created a lawful universe, as creatures we all inherently know God's law, and the good news is that we are saved through faith in God's love, not only in attempting to know or follow Laws. In this move toward belief, knowledge and justice are made important and at the same time they are both transcended by love. As personal direct address the letter form helps him demonstrate the loving relation he advocates. The Romans will meet a man who understands the nature of morality and preaches truth and justice with fire, but in writing an appeal for interpersonal communion with his audience Paul makes a divine call to love and shows the inspirational power of the Christian ethic.

### **Rhetorical Context: Paul and his letter to the Romans**

Paul is an extremely important Biblical author, responsible for nearly half of the documents in the New Testament. His letters historically precede the rest of the New Testament and constitute, in concert with his missionary journeys, a key engine driving first century expansion of Christianity. Born in Tarsus around the same time as Jesus, Paul was a product of the Jewish diaspora within the Roman Empire. In his early life as a Pharisee he was a devout expert in Jewish law and actively persecuted Christians, but in his 30s he experienced a mystical encounter with Christ that inspired him to convert and bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. For the next three decades he dedicated his life to this mission, which brought him into conflict with authorities and eventually lead to his martyrdom around 67 A.D. Paul's death certainly does not mark the end of his impact.<sup>4</sup> The influence of Christian thought on the development of Western culture is immense, and without

Paul's efforts Jesus' message may never have reached beyond the Mediterranean. In short, across thousands of years of history, it is difficult to find a more successful *rhetor* than Paul.

All scripture is of inestimable value, but even when placed next to profound documents like John's Gospel or Jesus' Sermon on the Mount Paul's letter to the Romans still stands out. Widely considered his masterpiece, Romans differs from most Pauline letters because it addresses a composite Gentile and Jewish Christian community that he did not found and had never visited. In 55 A.D. Rome was the center of the geo-political world and had largely adopted Greek religious and philosophical traditions. In addition to Polytheism and Platonism, Cynic, Stoic, and Epicurean ideas were common and several philosophical schools of thought had reached a high level of sophistication. Socially, Roman Christians led a tenuous existence. Jewish members had been banished in 49 A.D. and only recently re-joined their Church.<sup>5</sup> Paul had already met key leaders of the congregation, and warmly salutes them by name in his closing, but the majority of his audience is composed of strangers. As fellow Christians they likely knew of Paul's earlier letters, and the critique of the law Romans shares with Galatians suggests a need for clarification and reinforcement. Finally, Paul's overt purposes in this letter are to testify, and to plan a mission trip to Spain by way of Rome. His hope for support *en route* to Spain comes through as a devout and sincere request for help, and at the same time his desire to testify and share spiritual gifts with strangers lends a sharp focus to his message. Paul writes as a mature evangelist who has developed an understanding of Christianity distinct from competing preachers; here he is "presenting the body of his teaching in one letter" so that when he meets the Roman congregation they will know precisely what theological ideas he stands for.<sup>6</sup>

### **Creation, Nature, and Love in Romans 1-3**

In his opening chapter Paul greets the faithful and gives thanks, states his thesis that "the just shall live by faith" (1:17), and then launches a strong diatribe against the faithless because they sin despite knowing God's truth. The targets of his invective include both hypocritical Jews, who have had the advantage of hearing God's law, and corrupt Gentiles, who have not been taught Mosaic prohibitions but still *naturally* know right from wrong because of divine "law written in their hearts" (2:15).

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. (1:18-20)

With fiery language of divine wrath Paul tells Rome that God's truth is manifest *in* humans. The Creator's law is clearly shown to, seen, and understood by all creatures because it is a part of them.<sup>7</sup> Failure to live by the law written in our hearts has extreme consequences. The ungodly and unrighteous turn away from the Creator's truth and in their hubris tell idolatrous lies, using corruptible images to represent divine perfection. In return for their lies God gives them up; with vile and unnatural affections they take pleasure in misuse of their bodies even as they *know* it condemns them. Loving creatures instead of the Creator leads the faithless directly to homosexuality and a host of other social sins.

At its opening Paul's teaching is severe; almost half of chapter one attacks the ungodly and unrighteous. Speaking from both his Greek (Tarsus is a Roman city) and his Barbarian (Paul is Jewish) heritage, he unites the Stoic reverence for natural law with Hebrew creationism to explain how God is angered by humans who know but refuse to recognize His role in creation.<sup>8</sup> They choose to corrupt themselves instead of live in accord with their own natural dignity, and God does not stop them.

If Romans stopped at Chapter one Paul's divine-human drama would parallel the angry God dynamic of Genesis or Exodus. Instead chapter two draws a much broader conclusion – "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things" (2:1). Paul opens with a judgmental diatribe and then immediately announces universal condemnation of all judges. This is because all humans are sinners, "there is none righteous, no, not one" and only God will make the last judgement. None can boast, and faith in Jesus is available to all, so the path to salvation is to hold the truth in love.

In chapters 2 and 3 Paul uses the image of circumcision, an intimate yet external, ritually public, and formerly permanent physical mark of belonging to God, to develop his point about faith. When Jews inevitably break Mosaic law they become "uncircumcised," and righteous Gentiles count as circumcised. By discounting circumcision of the flesh Paul moves away from a focus on lawful acts and social rituals, important but guaranteed to fail, and toward internal virtues of faith and love. This is achieved by combining his heart imagery with his circumcision imagery. Earlier God's uncompromising natural law was written in the heart and known to all, and now internal self-circumcision, Paul's circumcision of the heart, explains how faith and a spiritual commitment to love are the true mark of God's people. "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." (1:29)

### **Conclusion: Terms for meeting Paul**

This brief essay on the letter's opening argument shows how Paul sets up theological terms for meeting the Romans. Justification by faith is a major Pauline theme, and he chooses to orient the Romans to it by connecting natural law to a loving Creator. Believers who want to establish a right relationship with God must strive to follow His law written in the heart, establishing an internal and spiritual connection more than an external ritual. This idea is developed with the image of circumcision to show how following even a fundamental law of the flesh does nothing for the salvation of hypocrites. As Romans continues Paul explains Abraham's faith and develops his teaching on Christian unity via an organic grafting metaphor. The circumcision image returns in Chapter 15 as Paul nears his conclusion, and this time Jesus is the agent – "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the Fathers" (15:8). This is Paul's central gospel message, that Jesus is the Messiah, and here at the close of Romans he connects His ministry to divine truth and circumcision. The truth is that God created a world where there is right and wrong, that humans fail to live up to their true nature, and that faith in Jesus' saving grace is the path to unity and salvation. Truth and knowledge are real and important, but faith in Jesus means ceding judgement to the Lord and holding the truth in love. Internal circumcision for these truths sets up an attitudinal rather than a legal social dynamic,

so the strong in faith shouldn't please themselves and judge degrees of ritual perfection; they are to bear the weak with a unifying spirit of joy and love (14:1).

Meeting Paul is intense, but he undercuts praise and takes no credit for his letter-writing skill. He is a servant, an instrument of God (Galatians 2:20). This mystical subject position attributes persuasive power to the message itself. In this sense meeting Paul, as with meeting all scriptural authors, is meeting God and reading His Word. It is not Paul that inspires the Romans, it is God that holds all of the power. This position demonstrates Paul's faith in the inherent natural power of the truth, truths that all creatures know – that flesh and nature and right and wrong are real, *and*, at the same time, that human understanding is inevitably limited and human judgment usurps divine privilege. In Romans we meet an intense person seeking a relationship of mutual comfort and support growing from shared faith in God's love, a love that creates unity by transcending knowledge and judgment.

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<sup>1</sup> Ziccardi, A., *Meeting Paul of Tarsus: Teacher of Nations*, (Seton Hall University 5/24-26/16). Most of the first half of this essay derives from Father Ziccardi's excellent lectures.

<sup>2</sup> Teilhard de Chardin, P., *Christianity and Evolution*, (Harvest: San Diego, 1969), p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Thompson, F., *Chain Reference Bible*, (Kirkburne Bible Co.: Indianapolis, 1964). All subsequent Bible quotations are from this edition.

<sup>4</sup> Harrington, D., *Meeting St. Paul Today*, (Loyola Press: Chicago, 2008), p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas, C., *Reading The Letters of St. Paul*, (Paulist Press: Mahwah, 2002), p. 112.

<sup>7</sup> The prophets and the Law are witness to God's righteousness. They are not right in themselves. See Romans 2:14-15 and 3:21

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

## JUDITH CHELIUS STARK

### **St. Paul Meets the Platonists: Thank You, St. Augustine**

In the enormous stewpot of the ancient Mediterranean world, a mixing and blending of ideas, thoughts, and practices occurred for many centuries. This was the milieu in which Christianity arose and took hold and it was the milieu in which Paul embarked on his task of spreading Christianity beyond the borders of Judea and Galilee. Schools of philosophy were well-established throughout the Roman world by the time Jesus did his preaching and by the time of Paul's conversion. In contrast to Jesus who lived a geographically limited life in the remote Roman province of Palestine, Paul was very much a citizen of the wider Mediterranean world whose training as a Jewish Pharisee did not preclude knowledge of the wider currents of thought of his day. In the Acts of the Apostles Paul is shown using the theological skepticism of his Athenian listeners to identify the "unknown god" for whom they had constructed an altar. Paul identifies this "unknown god" as "the Lord of heaven and earth" and his son Jesus Christ who has been raised from the dead (Acts 17: 22-33). As befitting the philosophers, these Athenian listeners wanted to discuss his ideas further, even though some of them mocked Paul about the claim of the resurrection of the dead. In particular, the Stoics and Epicureans are mentioned in this part of the Acts of the Apostles, but they seem more interested in further philosophical conversation rather than conversion to Christianity.

There is ample evidence in Paul's Epistles that he had more than a passing knowledge of the currents of the Greek philosophy of his day. As a pupil of the prominent Pharisee named Gamaliel, Paul would have learned many of the tenets of these philosophical schools and in fact his home city of Tarsus was known to have excellent schools of philosophy. A few examples will suffice here. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul develops a Christology tinged with Platonism by calling Christ the "new Adam" in whom all can be saved. But in powerful contrast to Platonism, Paul also preaches the resurrection of the body which for any good Platonist would not only be unintelligible, but abhorrent. In Romans 5 Paul reiterates this Christology in terms redolent with hints of Platonism. Moreover, 1 Corinthians 13:12 at the end of his great paean to love, he avers a very Platonic sentiment that, "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood."

### **Paul, the Platonists, and Augustine**

Even though it is clear that resonances of Platonic philosophy can be found in some of these texts in his Epistles, Paul's goal was to "preach Christ crucified" as the way to salvation. Nonetheless, Paul understood the claims of the philosophers as he noted in 1 Corinthians 1:20-25, "For the Jews demand signs and the Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles." Beyond Paul and his time, Christianity had a complex relationship with other systems of thought and belief in the time up to Constantine. By any measure, the Edict of Milan (313C.E) had enormous effects on the still struggling religion. After all the last great persecution of Christians had only occurred a few years (303-10 C.E.) before

the Emperor Constantine issued his famous edict of toleration of Christianity. Into this radically changing environment steps Augustine of Hippo (354-430 C.E.) whose life and work would have deep-seated and lasting consequences for western Christianity. Two of these consequences will be addressed here: Augustine's use of Platonism as the philosophical-theological framework for Christianity (until the time of Thomas Aquinas's appropriation of Aristotle in the 13<sup>th</sup> century) and the centrality of Paul's Epistles in Augustine's conversion.

### **Augustine's Uses of the Platonism of his Day**

In Book VII of the *Confessions*, Augustine recounts the intellectual transformation that formed the first act of his culminating conversion to Christianity at the age of 32. Long a seeker of truth (at least from the age of 19 when he read a work of Cicero and was "converted" to philosophy), Augustine had been a Manichaean and a skeptic until an associate gave him a Latin translation of one of the Neoplatonic philosophers (either Plotinus or Porphyry). At the time Augustine was struggling to understand the nature of God, material reality, the origin of evil, and the role of the human will—all among the great philosophical questions. By a powerful juxtaposition of texts from Scripture (including Paul's Epistles) with principles from Neoplatonism, Augustine comes to understand that reality is both spiritual and material (against the Manichaeans), that God's nature is spiritual, and the origin of evil is the human will.<sup>1</sup> Not only does Augustine come to a deep intellectual understanding of these principles, he describes a Platonic ascent to "a trembling glance of that which is" which he immediately follows with a reference to Romans 1:20: "At that moment I saw your 'invisible nature understood through the things which are made'."<sup>2</sup> In a masterful stroke in these two sentences Augustine manages to both appropriate Platonic methodology and challenge its denigration of the material world. In so doing, he uses Platonic philosophy for his own theological purposes and makes Scripture (especially Paul's Epistles) the standard to evaluate Platonism. We see Augustine interweaving philosophical principles into Christian theology to create a framework that was to hold sway in the west for a thousand years.

The other example of Augustine's use of Paul's Epistles occurs at the culminating moment of Augustine's conversion to Christianity in the garden of his residence in Milan (386 C.E.). In *Confessions* VIII we find Augustine deeply distressed and highly agitated about his inability to make the final move to accept Christianity. Earlier in the chapter he recounts a series of conversions and, in contrast to these, berates his indecision and inability to act. He rushes into the garden and, in an outburst of tears, throws himself on the ground under a tree. From there he suddenly hears the child's voice singing, "Take and read; take and read." Augustine takes this as a divine sign to open the Scriptures at random and be instructed. The book that lay nearby was Paul's Epistles to the Romans. Here is what he sees, "Not in reveling and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and indecencies, not in strife and rivalry, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh and its desires" (Romans 13: 13-14). The effect on him is dramatic and instantaneous. Light and relief engulf him and "all shadows of doubt were dispelled."<sup>3</sup> What Augustine did was open himself to God intellectually, morally, and spiritually and God did the rest: "You [God] converted me to yourself so that I no longer sought a wife or ambition in this world."<sup>4</sup>



Many more examples can be given of the ways Augustine was influenced by Paul, including a number of commentaries that Augustine wrote on the Epistles. Augustine was the major architect who brought in Platonism as the philosophical language of Christianity. Moreover, Paul and Augustine are complex and fascinating figures in the early centuries of Christianity. It is difficult to imagine the course of western Christianity without their work and their writings. Luckily, we don't have to.

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<sup>1</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*. Trans. Henry Chadwick. (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1992), VII, xv, 21- xvii, 23, pp. 126-27.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> *Confessions* VIII, xii, 29, p. 153.

<sup>4</sup> *Confessions* VIII, xii, 30, pp. 153-54. It would take more space than is available here to explore Augustine's conversion to **celibate** Christianity with all that entailed for him personally and for western Christianity, in particular Christian views on women and sexuality. See for reference: Judith Chelius Stark, ed. *Feminist Interpretations of Augustine* (Pennsylvania State University Press: University Park, 2007).

TODD J. STOCKDALE

### **Paul as a Practical Theologian**

Practical theology, at first glance, seems to be a fairly straightforward endeavor. Practical theologians focus their efforts on the theology that is embedded within the everyday language, symbols, and practices of ordinary individuals and communities. And yet, how practical theologians (and other theologians for that matter) ought to go about the task of engaging in this form of inquiry has generated robust discussion. As a formal discipline, practical theology has long been self-reflective when it comes to these matters. Since the appearance of practical theology in the academic curricula of German universities in the eighteenth century, practical theologians have made repeated attempts to define themselves in relation to their counterparts in the other distinct disciplines of philosophical and historical theology.<sup>1</sup> In efforts to better argue for the unique contribution of their discipline, contemporary practical theologians have been quick to point to instances of practical theological reflection that occurred in first century Christian communities—casting suspicion on the notion that “practical theology” originated in the post-Enlightenment/post-Reformation efforts of German universities. Indeed, as Helen Cameron and others point out, “the Christian community has, in some sense, never been without ‘practical theology’.”<sup>2</sup> That the earliest gathered Christian communities were engaging in some form of practical theology certainly seems to be the case, and Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward make this claim explicit in outlining the historical periods of practical theology, arguing that the earliest period of practical theology developed within Christian communities during the first two centuries of Christianity as “members were inspired by a concern to build up one another in the faith.”<sup>3</sup>

There is little doubt that the Apostle Paul would be numbered amongst those early members of the Christian community concerned about the building up of others members in the faith, and so to count him in the ranks of practical theologians seems easy. Yet, making sense of the diverse field of practical theology today represents a formidable challenge—much less trying to give an account of the earliest periods of practical theology. Swinton and Mowatt acknowledge that practical theology has always been an intricate and complex enterprise that includes practitioners from across the theological spectrum, occupying a diversity of methodological positions.<sup>4</sup> Edward Farley supports this further, arguing that “practical theology never was a single, unified theological science,” and even when earlier manifestations of the discipline took the form of “applied theology,” it was still “a *collection* of studies pertinent to the discrete tasks of ministry.”<sup>5</sup>

On one hand, given the radically diverse and uncategorizable nature of practical theology as a discipline, the task of placing Paul somewhere in this field of study seems fairly simple. Yet, on the other hand, given the radically diverse and uncategorizable nature of practical theology as a discipline, making the simple claim that, “Paul was a practical theologian” says very little. In what way can one distinguish Paul as a practical theologian that might differentiate him and his writing from any other early Christian thinker and his or her writing?

One helpful approach in addressing this question is found in the above-mentioned work by Graham, Walton, and Ward. In this text, these practical theologians outline the prevailing methods in their discipline—demonstrating how both past and present Christian thinkers have appropriated these forms of inquiry. In a chapter sketching the narrative approach to theology, Graham et al. place Paul, and Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, as the leading example of this particular method. Positing that the theological task of the narrative approach is “to discern how contemporary experience can be interpreted through the story that the Church tells about Jesus and to identify forms of practice that are coherent with this narrative,” the authors argue that Paul’s instructions on the Eucharist in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 accomplishes exactly this.<sup>6</sup> According to Graham et al., Paul, in these verses, is doing more than simply laying out the proper instructions for an ordered communion celebration. Instead of simply providing procedural instruction, Paul is taking up the work of a practical theologian by forging a connection between the central act of worship in the early Christian community and the narrative of Christ’s passion—whereby believers are able to “pattern their own lives around the sacred events of the life of Christ” (p. 82). Graham et al. likewise note that, “Paul intends the words ‘this is my body that is for you’ to refer to more than the broken bread. The way Paul has constructed this phrase allows his readers to infer that it is the community which shares this holy food that is the body of Christ” (p. 81). Thus, Paul’s instruction surrounding the Eucharist invites the Christian community not only into a weekly re-enactment of the drama of Christ’s passion, but also a profound participation in that narrative as the very body of Christ. Clearly this effort to forge a connection between Christian practice and the narrative of Christ’s life, death, resurrection, and ascension places Paul alongside countless other Christians who, over the centuries, have sought to both tell the story of Jesus, and to live it out in their worship practices as well. But it also links Paul to the growing ranks of contemporary practical theologians, who likewise seek to discern how forms of Christian practice can cohere with the story of Jesus as told by the Church.

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<sup>1</sup> German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher is conventionally recognized as ‘the father of practical theology’ due to his categorization of theological studies into these distinct disciplines of philosophical, historical, and practical theology. See: Graham, E., *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty*, (Mowbray: London, 1996), p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Cameron, H., Bhatti, D., Duce, C., Sweeney, J., Watkins, C., *Talking About God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology*, (SCM Press: London, 2010), p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Graham, E., Walton, H., Ward, F., *Theological Reflection: Methods*, (SCM Press: London, 2005), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Swinton, J., Mowat, H., *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, (SCM Press: London, 2006), pp. v-vi.

<sup>5</sup> Farley, E., *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education*, (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, 1983), p. 106. Emphasis added.

<sup>6</sup> Graham, E., Walton, H., Ward, F., pp. 77-82.

GLORIA J. THURMOND

## **Oh, Rock-a My Soul<sup>1</sup>**

*(Pauline Theology and the Yoruba Religion Syncretism in Negro Spirituals)*

The evolution of traditional *Negro Spirituals* within the early nineteenth century African American slave communities in the southeastern area of the United States bears witness to the communities' hearing, acceptance, and adoption of the apostle Paul's teaching and interpretation of the all-inclusive spiritual fatherhood of the Hebrew patriarch Abraham.

Through God's covenant with Abraham, Paul taught Gentile Christian converts the primacy of faith over the Law, of grace over works, and of the counsel of the Holy Spirit over religious ritual. Through this theological teaching, the door was opened to the African American slaves through which many would embrace Christianity, thereby becoming inheritors of the spiritual legacy and promise contained in the covenant between God and Abraham.<sup>2</sup>

The convergence of historical, diverse cultural and cultic factors that identified the slave communities in which Pauline theology was preached provided the context from which a unique African American Christian spirituality would emerge.

The African American slave Christian community in the southeastern region of the United States was an outgrowth of Protestant Christian proselytization by Methodists and Baptists. However, the Christian spirituality of the African American slave reflected a blend of Christian beliefs with cultic beliefs and practices of several West African tribal religions, primarily those of the Yoruba religion.

Traditional features of the Yoruba religion include the belief in one almighty God, the belief in *orishas* – or divine intermediaries, messengers, spirits or aspects of the almighty God. Religious practice includes singing, dancing, drumming, spirit possession, ritual healings, the veneration of ancestors and divination.

The Yoruba-influenced Christian spirituality of the early nineteenth century African American slave communities “linked them with their traditional past.”<sup>3</sup> Being religious included “viewing spirituality as a means of communal harmony, solidarity and accountability.”<sup>4</sup> These particular features “sometimes superseded, and sometimes coexisted, with Christian influence.”<sup>5</sup>

According to author Joseph Holloway, “the slaves converted Christianity to their African world view, using their new religion to justify combating oppressive forces, to collectively perpetuate community culture, and to assert their claim to freedom. Freedom was a continuous topic of conversation among them and it was expressed often as a principal theme in *Negro Spirituals*.”<sup>6</sup>

The twentieth century African American poet, mystic, philosopher and theologian Howard Thurman stated emphatically that “the ante-bellum Negro preacher was the greatest single factor in determining the spiritual destiny of the slave community. Although his ministry was greatly restricted as to movement, function, and opportunities of leadership, he himself was blessed with one important insight: he was convinced that every human being was a child of God. This belief included the slave as well as the master.”<sup>7</sup> The “Negro” preacher’s constant message to his enslaved people was: “You are created in God’s image. You are not slaves, you are not ‘niggers’; you are God’s children.”<sup>8</sup>

Thurman continued by asserting that “it is out of this sense of being a child of God that the genius of the *Negro Spirituals* is born. The biblical stories, with their captivating imagery and their powerful cast of characters, captured and fired the imagination of the enslaved people, which, in turn, elicited a musical response from the enslaved people reflective their new awareness and consciousness.”<sup>9</sup> The lyrics of the *Negro Spirituals* embody the slaves’ response to their newly acquired identity as children of Father Abraham, to their trust in a God of justice who was on the side of the oppressed, and to their celebration of the Holy Spirit.

In addition to the Old Testament and New Testament sources, the world of nature and the personal experiences emerging from the slave’s inner life also provided raw materials through which the creation of *Negro Spirituals* were inspired.<sup>10</sup> Traditional West African/African American folk music, which includes the *Negro Spiritual*, is characterized by the presence of short, simple melodies, call and response patterns, a strong, repetitive underlying rhythmic pulse, hand clapping, foot tapping, shouts and moans among other vocal effects, syncopated rhythmic patterns and improvisation.

The *Negro Spiritual* “Rock My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham” is a response and an affirmation by the enslaved African Americans to Paul’s preaching that “... if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.”<sup>11</sup> Reflected through the lyrics of the Spiritual is the celebration of the soul’s journey to the “bosom of Abraham,” and that of bearing witness to the overwhelming power and majesty of God.

#### *Rock-a My Soul*<sup>12</sup>

Refrain:       Rock-a my soul in the bosom of Abraham  
                  Rock-a my soul in the bosom of Abraham  
                  Rock-a my soul in the bosom of Abraham  
                  O rock-a my soul.

Verse:         My God is so high, you can’t get over him,  
                  he’s so low, you can’t get under him,  
                  he’s so wide, you can’t go around him,  
                  you must go in through the door. (Refrain)

(An alternate final phrase)

                  you must come in, by and through the Lamb. (Refrain)

The imagery of “the door” or “the gate” in the Yoruba religion and in the Christian spirituality of the enslaved African American population symbolized the beginning of the spiritual journey and

spiritual protection. Within the context of their Christian identity, Jesus is the door that leads to salvation. Jesus is also the guardian, or protector, of the gate to the sheepfold.

While a conscientious, purposeful connection with the Yoruba religious beliefs and practices did not occur collectively among the early nineteenth century slaves of the southeastern United States, there probably existed a subconscious collective memory of the Yoruba *orisha*, *Elegba*. As an emissary of *Oloduare* – that is, God almighty – *Elegba* is the guardian of the doors, gates, and the crossroads in this world. Particularly, *Elegba* stands at the crossroad of the human and the divine as the messenger between two worlds.<sup>13</sup>

In the spiritual *Rock My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham*, the familiarity and comfort of the cross-cultural archetypal image of the “guardian of the door” that represents itself as *Elegba* in the Yoruba religion, and as Jesus or, the Lamb, in Christianity, provided a pathway of association and spiritual connectivity between the Yoruba religion and African American Christian spirituality within the slave community.

The presence of Yoruba spirits, ancestors, divine guardians, messengers, counselors and guides at the core of the belief system in West African life strongly positioned the slave community for receptivity to Paul’s introduction to the work of *Holy Spirit* in his epistle to the *Romans* where he writes:

*Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*<sup>14</sup>

The *Negro Spiritual* that was born from Yoruba-Christian syncretism where the Spirit is affirmed as the intercessor between believers and God is entitled *Every Time I Feel the Spirit*. The song lyrics blend imagery from the Old Testament and the New Testament that ignited the imagination and devotional fervor of the enslaved people:

*Every Time I Feel the Spirit*<sup>15</sup>

Refrain: Every time I feel the spirit, moving in my heart I will pray.

Verse: Upon the mountain my Lord spoke, out of his mouth came fire and smoke.  
An’ all around me look so shine, I asked my Lord if all was mine. (Refrain)

Verse: Jordan River, chilly, cold, chills the body, but not the soul.  
Ain’t but one train on this track, runs to heaven and right back. (Refrain)

In African American slave Christian spirituality, Spirit is a “fire” that is invoked and expressed through praying, singing, shouting, dancing and moaning which is a manner of praying in the Spirit without words. The words of prayers and songs oftentimes were slurred, blurred, and interspersed with moans and humming so that “the devil would not know what you were talking about.”<sup>16</sup>

Death in traditional West African religion was viewed as “a journey into the spirit world – not a break with life or earthly beings. It was believed, therefore, that life was a continuum.”<sup>17</sup> Once the transplanted West Africans learned English, this belief found reinforcement in the

Christian teaching that everyone possessed a soul – apart from one’s human form – with its own destiny. “Thus death was not the end of life nor the cemetery a final resting place; it was a door (*mwelo*) between two worlds. Using the natural imagery of the sun, death was understood to be the transition from midnight on earth to where the sun is shining on the world of the dead. In that place, rebirth takes place.”<sup>18</sup>

It may come as a startling revelation to most Christians – black and white – to discover that the lyrics to the well-known spiritual *Where the Sun Will Never Go Down* do not evoke a Christian metaphor for the afterlife. But rather, the lyrics reflect the Yoruba religious view that upon earthly death one is reborn into a world where the sun is always shining.

*Where the Sun Will Never Go Down*<sup>19</sup>

Where the sun will never go down,  
Where the sun will never go down,  
Where the flowers will be blooming on the other shore,  
Where the sun will never go down.

This beautiful Yoruba imagery of life after earthly death was preserved in the collective memory of the African American people and, through the oral tradition, passed into African American Christian spirituality.

It was into this exotic religious and cultural mix that the Pauline theology of resurrection was introduced. Paul writes:

*Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality.*<sup>20</sup>

There are many *Negro Spirituals* that reflect strong belief in Paul’s theology of resurrection by the enslaved African American community. Among the many is the following:

*In That Great Getting Up Morning*<sup>21</sup>

(Selected verses)

Refrain:                    In that great gettin’ up morning,  
Fare you well, fare you well;  
In that great getting’ up morning  
Fare you well, fare you well.

Verse:                      The Lord spoke to Gabriel, fare you well ...  
Go look behind the altar ...  
Take down the silver trumpet ...  
Blow your trumpet Gabriel... (Refrain)

Verse:                      Then you’ll see the Christian rising... fare you well ...  
Then you’ll see the righteous marching...  
See them marching home to Heaven...  
Then you’ll see my Jesus coming... (Refrain)

Although many contemporary African Americans have inherited and retained many of the expressions and beliefs of the Yoruba influenced Christianity of the early slaves as observed and preserved in the early *Negro Spirituals*, they are largely unaware of the religiously syncretic nature of their Christian spirituality.

As “Teacher of the Nations,”<sup>22</sup> the Apostle Paul opened the door to salvation to an enslaved people who, through their acceptance of Abraham as their spiritual father, became a new, free people spiritually. For his teaching and pointing to the Abrahamic Covenant as the door to salvation for all, Paul very well could have a place among the elite spiritual “guardians of the door” that leads to everlasting life.

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<sup>1</sup> Chenu, B., *The Trouble I've Seen, partial refrain from the traditional Negro Spiritual, Rock My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham*, (Judson Press: Valley Forge, 2003), p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> Bible, *Genesis 17:4-7*, NRSV.

<sup>3</sup> Holloway, J., *Africanisms in American Culture*, (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1991), p. 71.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 71.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 71.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 74.

<sup>7</sup> Thurman, H., *Deep River*, (Friends United Press: Richmond, 1990), p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Bible, *Galatians 3:29*, NRSV.

<sup>12</sup> Chenu, B., pp. 263, 271.

<sup>13</sup> Karade, B., *The Handbook of Yoruba Religious Concepts*, (Samuel Weiser, Inc.: York Beach, 1994), pp. 29-30.

<sup>14</sup> Bible, *Romans 8:26*, NRSV.

<sup>15</sup> Chenu, B., p. 242.

<sup>16</sup> Bohlman, P., Blumhofer, E., and Chow, M., Editors, *Music in American Religious Experience*, (Oxford University Press: New York, 2006), p. 45.

<sup>17</sup> Holloway, J., p. 81.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p. 82.

<sup>19</sup> Chanticleer, *Where the Sun Will Never Go Down*, recorded by Teldec Classics, 1994.

<sup>20</sup> Bible, *First Corinthians 15:51-53*, NRSV.

<sup>21</sup> Chenu, B., p. 256.

<sup>22</sup> Faculty Summer Seminar, *Meeting Paul of Tarsus: Teacher of the Nations*, (Seton Hall University: South Orange, NJ, 2016).



JOHN P. WARGACKI

## The Conversion of St. Paul: An Allusive Cornerstone for Literature

Throughout Western Literature, English and non-English speaking alike, the dramatic portrayal of the conversion of St. Paul as depicted in the 2 Chapter of St. Luke's Acts of the Apostles has provided a literary cornerstone that has long-served to demonstrate a character's radical conversion from one state of being or frame of thinking to another.<sup>1</sup> Often this mental, physical, or even spiritual conversion signals the maturation of the character in which St. Paul's transformation from Saul of Tarsus serves as the integral framework and foundation for this insight.

As such, it is vital to establish that my intent is to chronicle a particularly iconic example of Paul's conversion as allusion in a manner that engages the episode from Acts as another literary text—in this case, a biblical text. Thus it is necessary to avoid, especially in a relatively short study, digressions in exegesis of the Biblical narrative, historical authenticity, or any of the controversies about Pauline scholarship that had been so well-illuminated throughout the seminar as such claims are beyond my scope as a scholar of literature. Rather than privileging one of the three versions of St. Paul's conversion in Acts or, for that matter, whether Acts hold more or less weight than the canonical letters of Paul, etc., my thesis will then posit that St. Paul's Conversion, whether presented as fact or myth, remains among the most powerful and referenced episodes in either the Hebrew or Christian Bible, and it stands in literary strength among episodes from Genesis, Exodus, and even the four Gospels. Apparently, the intensely dramatic, well-detailed, and ultimate result of this turning point in Paul's biography—and, one might argue the early Christian Church—has left a unique impression upon the strongest authors of literature since the story was first related. Among these many authors in the West are no less than Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Dickens, Austin, as well as modern writers such as Stephen King, Alice Walker, and playwright August Wilson.

As such, I will focus on the icon, 20<sup>th</sup> century modernist James Joyce, and the integral relationship between Paul's conversion narrative and his construction of the "Joycean Epiphany," which he uses to conclude all of the 15 short stories in the 1915 collection *Dubliners*. Indeed, the very term, as it has become widely known in literary studies, relies on Joyce's understanding of both St. Matthew's telling of the Magi's visit to the Christ child in his Gospel in conjunction with the imagery of "light," "blindness," and a "voice" so familiar from St. Paul's conversion.

Born in Dublin, James Joyce (1882-1941) had a "traditional" Irish-Catholic upbringing through the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, heavily influenced by a Jesuit education. However, his family, church, and homeland left Joyce feeling stifled as a literary artist, much like his semi-autobiographical protagonist, Stephen Dedalus, the protagonist in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and, later, a major character in his epic novel *Ulysses*. Stephen yearns to soar to the heavens untethered by what he views as familial, religious, and patriotic constraints and

constructed obligations. Hence, as an adult, Joyce would ultimately migrate to Europe, becoming an ex-patriot writer, though virtually all of his fictional subjects would concern the cultural life and times of the Dublin he was reared in. His great accomplishments in literature are not only the product of his ingenuity as a writer, but also grounded in his vast consumption of great literature, from Greek classics to the Bible to his literary contemporaries (Eliot, Pound, Woolf, among others). Consequently, he was well-versed in both the Old and New Testament despite living in a time when Catholics were not reading the Bible, by and large, on their own. Hence, in defining Joyce's unique application of "Epiphany," one must be familiar with the episode of the "wise men" ("astrologers" or "magi"), in Matthew, Chapter 2, as well as St. Paul's conversion narratives in Acts, in order to grasp the ways in which Joyce parallels his narrative conclusion with images and details of these central New Testament texts. Before isolating these characteristics, however, it is necessary, as a point of information, to note that Joyce is not interested in the religious (specifically, "Christian") interpretation of the Bible but primarily in its literary (or "secular") significance.

Briefly sketched, the "Joycean Epiphany" is defined then as a transformative episode in the life of a character, and always accompanied by the following features that align it with these two biblical stories:

- 1.) The central character undergoes a metaphorical, internal, or "psychological-emotional journey" of sorts. This is usually joined to a short, literal journey that serves to underscore the concept of movement or "transformation." (e.g., the boy in "Araby" travels to the bazaar, Greta and Gabriel Conroy travel from his aunts' holiday party to a local hotel in the collection's final story, "The Dead"). The literary journey is comparatively meaningless in relation to the psychic alteration that will change the central character forever. Indeed, the events have often been described as "casual incidents," seemingly "insignificant" experiences and are never planned or intended.
- 2.) Unlike the wise men in Matthew or St. Paul in Acts who are in the midst of literary journeys that will climax dramatically and positively by a direct and life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ, Joyce's "Epiphanies" are dark, disturbing, and emotionally painful, but necessary thresholds of maturation. As with both the Magi and St. Paul, there is no return from this encounter to the previous state of being – the characters are changed, for better or worse. In Joyce, the change is not from one sort of belief system, or lack of one, to another, but rather from earthly, human innocence to experience, however upsetting the revelation may be.
- 3.) Finally, as with the wise men who "see" and "follow" a star and St. Paul who blinded by a heavenly "light," the Joycean Epiphany is always internal, not external, and paradoxically structured in terms of its imagery. In *Dubliners*, the transformative insights occur in physical "darkness" and are accompanied by a character's "seeing" his or herself fully. Hence, in both the biblical texts and Joyce, physical sight and insight are, indeed, inter-dependent.

For a specific application of these ideas, I will use the conclusion of "Araby," the third short story in *Dubliners*, in which a young boy (likely named "Jack" and whose precise age is not clear) becomes infatuated with his friend, "Mangan's Sister," an older girl (again, Joyce never

provide their ages).<sup>2</sup> Highlighted by counter images of sight vs. blindness throughout the text, and story is narrated by the chief character, now an adult, recalling this pivotal moment in his boyhood. The boy's altered attitude, obsession, as well as Joyce's keen use of images are lucidly illustrated in this central paragraph:

Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance. On Saturday evenings when my aunt went marketing I had to go to carry some of the parcels. We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of labourers, the shrill litanies of shop-boys who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs' cheeks, the nasal chanting of street-singers, who sang a *come-all-you* about O'Donovan Rossa, or a ballad about the troubles in our native land. These noises converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes. Her name sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises which I myself did not understand. My eyes were often full of tears (I could not tell why) and at times a flood from my heart seemed to pour itself out into my bosom. I thought little of the future. I did not know whether I would ever speak to her or not or, if I spoke to her, how I could tell her of my confused adoration. But my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires (Joyce 82).

Joyce's oxymoronic phrase, "confused adoration," brilliantly demonstrates the narrator's painful and baffling recollection of his first "crush," so to speak, which consumes him so totally and foolishly. As he sees all else in life, other than the young woman, to be "monotonous child's play," he plans to go to the traveling bazaar and buy "something" to give her. This plan to gain her attention and, so he believes prior to his epiphany, win over her affections, comes to him after a very brief conversation in which she notes she would have liked to go to the bazaar but cannot because it conflicts with a retreat she must attend. From the mature, present-day voice of the narrator, this idea is described in a tone of self-deprecation; for the same boy in the text, however, it makes perfect sense as he is unable to remove his intellectual objectivity from his obsession passion. In the second half of the tale, the boy's infatuation is conflated with his need to get to the bazaar (the literal journey) before it closes. It is worth noting that the story's title serves as the name of the bazaar, hence the mysterious enchantment of the "Arab" world at this time is used by Joyce as the framing mood and objective of the text. Like the bazaar itself, the boy desires to become "Arab-y," or "Arab-like," hoping to redefine himself in her eyes from her younger brother's unnoticed playmate into a romantic and attractive suitor.

Only when he finally arrives as the bazaar is closing does the Joycean Epiphany descend, metaphorically, upon the young narrator, a proverbial "Ah, ha" moment that is at once stark, embarrassing, and emotional devastating. Again, we note the images of light and darkness that bring St. Paul's conversion to the minds of his readers. Thus, to best empathize the connection and contrast of imagery, I quote the first version from Act 9, followed by the conclusion of "Araby."

Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came. 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' The men who had been traveling with him stood speechless because they had heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes

were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him to Damascus. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. (Acts 9.3-9)

Joyce's "Araby" concludes:

Remembering with difficulty why I had come, I went over to one of the stalls and examined porcelain vases and flowered tea-sets. At the door of the stall a young lady was talking and laughing with two young gentlemen. I remarked their English accents and listened vaguely to their conversation...

Observing me, the young lady came over and asked me did I wish to buy anything. The tone of her voice was not encouraging; she seemed to have spoken to me out of a sense of duty. I looked humbly at the great jars that stood like eastern guards at either side of the dark entrance to the stall and murmured:

'No, thank you.'

The young lady changed the position of one of the vases and went back to the two young men. They began to talk of the same subject. Once or twice the young lady glanced at me over her shoulder.

I lingered before her stall, though I knew my stay was useless, to make my interest in her wares seem the more real. Then I turned away slowly and walked down the middle of the bazaar. I allowed the two pennies to fall against the sixpence in my pocket. I heard a voice call from one end of the gallery that the light was out. The upper part of the hall was now completely dark.

Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger (Joyce 84-85).

Like St. Paul, the boy is forever marked, however the boy's revelation is purely secular and internal. Nevertheless, the repetition and redefinition of the central, contrary images remain central: Light vs. Darkness, Truth vs. Illusion, Innocence vs. Experience. Irony and reversal is additionally noteworthy since St. Paul's conversion brings him to Christ and leads him on a second earthly journey toward his ministry and personal salvation. The boy in "Araby," conversely, at last "saw" himself while "Gazing up into the darkness," but what his introspective gaze reveals is not a "new creation" in Christ, but rather "a creature driven and derided by vanity;" the virtual opposite of one made whole or "Holy" by Christian conversion.

Joyce's "Araby" is one of innumerable instances in literature of the astonishing allusive power of St. Paul's conversion at work in classic works of fiction and non-fiction alike. The ending of "Araby" not only follows the pattern Joyce establishes for all of the 15 short stories in *Dubliners*, but it also affirms the enduring attraction of this text—a landmark moment in the early Christian Church—as an allusion of enduring import for so many literary masters from around the globe for the past 2,000 years. Whether the author or readership regards it as a mythic tale or an historical and spiritual reality, St. Paul's conversion has a well-established, ever-potent, and perhaps unmatched place in the universe of story-telling via the written word.

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<sup>1</sup> *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, ed. Michael D. Coogan. (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Joyce, J., "Araby" in *Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry & Drama Fifth Edition*, ed. Robert DiYanni, (McGraw Hill Publishers: New York, 2002).

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## **St. Paul and the Spread of the Vision of the *Agni Dei*, Christ the Risen One**

### **A Man on Fire**

Paul of Tarsus was knocked from his horse and blinded on the road to Damascus to continue his persecution of the early Christian which he had begun at Jerusalem when he held the coats of the stoners of Saint Stephen. He came hither with a writ from the Sanhedrin to follow through with his violence against believers and to then bring them back for trial and legal processing. The zealot was stopped dead in his tracks with God proclaiming “Saul, Saul, why persecutes thou me? And he said, who art thou Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutes: it is hard to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished Said Lord, what wilt thou have me do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the City, and It shall be told thee what thou must do.”<sup>1</sup> Here is what I call the beginning of Paul’s electrical training, to wit Saul of Tarsus morphs into Saint Paul the electrifier of Christendom and strong saving voice to the heathen. Until silenced by Nero and his chopping block a guiding spirit to the Gentiles and Christ advocate to his fellow Jews who needed his encouragement to maintain a forward movement to Heaven’s gate.

### **On Alexander’s Empire Road**

After recovering his sight and being baptized Paul preached Christ to the Jews in the synagogues that He was the Son of God.<sup>2</sup> It was first at Antioch that they were called Christians. During Pentecost the disciples began to speak in tongues and all understood the others. These were previously considered unlearned, ignorant men who now lit fires with their tongues. Paul became the fiery example of these new prophets of the Messiah come down to the non-Hebrews who spread the word to all the Roman world. The Alexander phenomenon which was the precursor to Rome made it possible for this explosion of the Christian ethos. Rome’s roads and infrastructure made it possible for the transportation of the gospel throughout the known world and for Saint Paul to advance it to people outside the boundaries of civilization. Paul the electrifier created a sensational platform for the spread of the word about the crucified savior outside the bounds of the Holy land. He brought the gentiles directly into the glorious light of the Galilean who was sent to redeem mankind from Adam’s fall and bring them to a state of grace with God the Father. This high purpose could only be accomplished by the ultimate sacrifice of the Son of God, the *Agni Dei*, the lamb that was slain for mankind. As Isaiah predicted in chapter 53, 1-7: “Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and a root out of dry ground: he hath no comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows; and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, as we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, he was

bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”<sup>3</sup> This reference brings Paul in line with both the Old and New testaments in keeping with his practice as a Pharisee and a citizen of Rome. Paul is within the stricture of the new Revelation theology of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost= Spirit. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost/Spirit is the glorification of the crucified Lord, the Christ who was prophesied by the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New and spread by the a tent maker from Tarsus who was the John the Baptizer to the non-Hebrews. This man Paul was a lion of the faith and the proclaimer of the word to the gentiles.

### **Jerusalem and Rome: the Incarnate Fulfillment**

Paul’s journeys to Jerusalem and Rome signify a kind of culmination of his ministry one that led to a realization of his destiny and the so-called end of his race for spreading Christ to much of the Roman Empire. Alexander and later Rome subjugated the lands and Paul the hearts of much of the known World. What was the message that was so vital to be imparted to the waiting world: That the Savior, The Christ was born to save mankind from their sins. To be the propitiation for original sin, the second Adam. “The First man Adam became a living soul,” but the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.<sup>4</sup> This proclamation from Corinthians 15 is highly suggestive. It declares what Paul found compelling About the Christ: his transformative act in dying to grant eternal life. Man on his own could not fully atone for his original sin. A righteous and all powerful God would only be assuaged by the ultimate blood sacrifice: the Agni Dei, Lamb of God. Only then could the scale be ultimately balanced. Only with Christ’s death could man gain eternal life.

Paul gave the ultimate adieu in Romans 8:18 and 35-39: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Who shall separate from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Scofield, C.I., *Scofield Study Bible, KJV*, (Oxford University Press: New York, 1998) pp. 1378.

<sup>2</sup> Scofield, C.I., *Scofield Study Bible, KJV*, (Oxford University Press: New York, 1998), pp. 1378.

<sup>3</sup> Scofield, C.I., *Scofield Study Bible, KJV*, (Oxford University Press: New York, 1998), pp. 898-899.

<sup>4</sup> Wills, G., *What Paul Meant*, (The Penguin Group: New York, 2006), p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Scofield, C.I., *Scofield Study Bible, KJV*, (Oxford University Press: New York, 1998), pp. 1429, 1431.

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