

# **PAUL'S ENCOUNTER IN GRECO-ROMAN WORLD: METHODOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

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## INTRODUCTION

How to deal with the old rituals, customs and moral in the cross-cultural situation is one of the most serious problems that missionaries face on the fields.

They find rites of passage which are deeply connected with a local religion, such as newborn baby ceremony, initiation, wedding and funeral ceremony. Missionaries face a custom which seems to contradict biblical teaching, and yet which is a deeply rooted part of social structure, such as polygamy, family gods and ancestor worship. They also recognize a great deal of immorality and idolatry on the fields.

It was inevitable for Paul to have religious encounters when he brought the Gospel to the Greco-Roman world. I will present a methodological analysis of Paul's encounter. The point is how to deal with the old rituals, customs and morals in non-Christian culture. In order to understand Paul's encounter, I will examine his messages addressed to non-Jewish people and his teaching to the new Christians in the Greco-Roman world. Needless to say, I will do this analysis through studying Acts of the Apostles and Pauline Epistles.

There are, however, two limitations in this paper. I will deal with only Paul's encounter and not that of other apostles in the New Testament. And I will discuss Paul's encounter with the Greco-Roman world only and not with the Jewish culture and its traditions.

This paper consists of two parts. In the first section, I will introduce some categories for analysis that I have found through my study of Culture change and of the Islamization of Java. Actually, there are eight methods of dealing with the old rituals, customs and morals. And in the second section, I will present several examples of how Paul used these eight methods for his encounter with the Greco-Roman world.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **CATEGORIES FOR ANALYSIS**

In order to do a methodological analysis of Paul's encounter, we need a terminology which is appropriate to explain it. So, in this chapter, I will present a useful terminology based on the research concerning culture change.

Culture is always changing and culture-change is a vast area to be researched. Where does it originate? How does it occur? What is its process? How does it change? There are many questions, and anthropologists have offered answers based on their research and field work.

It is not the aim in this chapter to offer another theory of culture-change, but rather, I will discuss the terminology of culture-change which is used by certain anthropologists. Then, based on the analysis of the mode of culture-change, I will present a terminology which can be adopted to describe culture-change. More specifically I will present a terminology which is appropriate to explain Paul's methodology.

#### **Basic Stages of Culture-Change**

Culture does change, sometimes slowly, other times rapidly. Culture changes in one case only partially, while in another case it changes totally. Are there basic universal stages of culture-change? Anthropologists have explained the basic stages with a variety of terms.

George M. Foster comments about the dynamics of the change process from the point of view of the individual as follows:

At least four points may be noted: 1) The individual must recognize a need and perceive its achievement as possible; that is, it must be a realistic need: 2) The individual must have information on how that need can be met; that is, he must know how to go about achieving his goal; 3) He must have access to whatever materials or services that achievement of his goal requires, and at a cost that he can afford. 4) His society must not impose excessive negative sanctions on him for innovating; that is, the collectivity of barriers discussed in preceding chapters must not be sufficiently strong

to dissuade him (1973: 149–150).

According to Foster's view opinion, there are four stages: 1) recognition of need, 2) information, 3) individual access, 4) acceptance by the society.

H. G. Barnett in his book *Innovation: The Basis of Cultural Change* discerns three aspects of culture change: 1) the incentives to innovation, 2) innovative processes, 3) acceptance and rejection (1953: ix).

Paul Hiebert discusses the work of anthropologists who were interested in what has become known as "acculturation studies":

Students of acculturation were interested not only in the ways cultures maintain their integration in the face of external contacts, but also in the processes by which they accept new ideas. Obviously, the first step is the diffusion of ideas from the outside. These ideas are then evaluated and selected or rejected by the recipients. The final step in the process is the integration of those ideas that are accepted into the recipient's culture (1983: 422).

According to his analysis of "Acculturation studies" there are three steps; 1) diffusion, 2) evaluation and selection or rejection, 3) integration.

Louis Luzbetak categories the basic process of culture change into three aspects:

Culture change can be considered under three distinct aspects: 1) the primary or innovative aspect includes the processes that give rise to or create change; 2) the secondary or integrative aspect refers to the processes that are activated by the primary and which attempt to fit the novelty into the existing culture-whole; 3) the terminal aspect refers to the over-all result of change, e. g., equilibrium or disequilibrium (1970: 210).

Charles Kraft uses with almost the terminology that is very familiar to Luzbetak:

These [processes] can be divided into primary and secondary processes. Among the former we can discern changes that result from origination (i. e. from inside a society) and those that result from diffusion (i. e. "borrowed" from outside a society). As secondary processes we will treat the reinterpretation of an item or concept that occurs when it is borrowed

and the ramifications that result within the culture when new things are introduced (1987: 438).

After analyzing these terms, I have categorized them into four stages as follows:

**The Primary Stage:** This is the same stage to which Luzbetak and Kraft refer.

**The Innovation Stage:** This is the innovation process referred to by Barnett.

**The Interaction Stage:** This is the stage in which interacts between advocate and acceptors take place through various methods in a certain context.

**The Integration Stage:** This is the stage that Hiebert calls the “integration step”. Luzbetak and Kraft title this stage, “Manner of Culture Change”.

According to this hypothesis, I will discuss the main factors in each stage.

### The Primary Stage

Luzbetak observes two forms in this stage. His explanation is simple and clear to understand:

We speak of “origination” whenever the change arises through processes from within the society, and of “diffusion” whenever borrowing from without the society is in question. Origination and diffusion are primary processes inasmuch as they initiate change (1970: 210).

When he says “origination”, its meaning includes both “discovery” and “invention” (221). This is a clear definition. In addition, “the incentives to innovation” by Barnett and “realistic need” by Foster should be categorized in this stage.

### The Innovation Stage

This is the stage that Barnett discussed extensively and in detail in his book. He became interested in how the innovation of new ideas occurs. He says:

Fundamental to this point of view is the assumption that any innovation is made up of preexisting components; and, secondarily, that new combinations are entirely the products of mental activity (1953: 181).

Barnett explains the process of innovation with various terms, such as: configuration, recombination, identification, substitution, discrimination, gain and loss,

prototype and so on. His conclusion is summed up by Robert Bee as follows:

Barnett arrived at two fundamental conclusions:

- 1) That culture traits, whether material or nonmaterial, are not “discrete inflexible wholes” but can be subdivided into qualities of form, meaning, function, and operating principle, any of which can be modified by recipient peoples, and
- 2) That the processes of modification and incorporation are basically mental processes, occurring in the minds of individuals (1974: 173).

The first conclusion that R. Bee points out above is important, when we analyze the mode of culture change, specifically ritual change. I will discuss this point later. Hiebert sums up Barnett’s innovation process into three steps, “analysis”, “identification” and “substitution” (1983: 425).

### The Interaction Stage

After the innovation of new ideas occurs in the mind of an individual, how are these new ideas accepted by the people? Hiebert says:

In many ways, acceptance of innovation follows the same processes. The potential acceptor first analyzes the new idea in terms of his own configurations. He identifies or matches components between the new and the old. And, finally, he decides whether or not to substitute the new for the old (1983: 425).

Then, Hiebert adds:

The chief difference between innovation and acceptance is that the new idea is created by the innovator in the former, while in the latter, the borrower modifies and reinterprets an idea he has received from without (1983: 425).

What are the criteria of the acceptor’s evaluation in this stage? As Bee points out, there are some basic factors to consider in this stage, namely: advocates, acceptors and social cultural context (1974: 179).

In this regard, Philip Kotler, a sociologist, points out the important factors as follows:

In every instance of social action, it is possible to distinguish five elements, which may be called the five C's of social action:

**CAUSE.** A social objective or undertaking that change agents believe will provide some answer to a social problem.

**CHANGE AGENCY.** An organization whose primary mission is to advance a social cause.

**CHANGE TARGETS.** Individuals, groups, or institutions designated as the targets of change efforts.

**CHANNELS.** Ways in which influence and response can be transmitted between change agents and change targets.

**CHANGE STRATEGY.** A basic mode of influence adopted by the change agent to affect the change target (1973: 172).

In our discussion, **CHANGE AGENCY** may be identical with advocate, **CHANGE TARGETS** with acceptors, and **CAUSE** with cultural context. And I will call **CHANGE STRATEGY** and **CHANNEL** "method that advocate may employ". I want to count this "method" or "strategy" as another crucial factor in this stage.

### *Social Cultural Context*

George Foster analyzes this social cultural context in detail, when he discusses the "Dynamics of Change" in his book. He analyzes the context from the negative point of view, that is, "barrier to change" (1973: 76-147). He refers to cultural, social and psychological barriers to changes.

He, then, points out desire for economic gain, desire for prestige and competitive situation as stimulants to change (1973: 148). In regard to cultural facilitators of change, it is worthy to note Nida's points although he is discussing not culture change in general but Christian movements. His headline is, "Circumstances favorable to the development of indigenous christian movements."

The favorable factors are usually: 1) a society in process of change; 2) new social groupings; 3) the recognition of unmet needs, whether for health, social security, or economic welfare; and 4) the novelty of the challenge (1972: 144).

The fourth point above leads us to the next factor in this stage, *Acceptors*.

### *Acceptors*

The new idea occurs, then it is introduced by an advocate, but if the people do not accept it, change does not take place. So, change depends, to some extent, on the presence of adequate desire to try something new. This is the reason why Foster discusses motivation to change. He says:

Motivations are, of course, of very different intensities. In my experience, two stand out far above all others, and these probably are responsible for the great majority of changes that have occurred and are now occurring. The first is the desire for economic gain; and the second is the attraction of prestige and high status. The two motivations are related, since economic gain usually enhances status (1973: 153).

Barnett points out eight considerations by which acceptors may evaluate whether they accept or reject the new idea. They are: 1. Incompatibility, 2. Efficiency, 3. Cost, 4. Advantage, 5. Pleasure, 6. Mastery, 7. Penalty, and 8. Repercussion, (1953: 357–377).

Kraft also mentions the general characteristics of individuals that predispose them toward change. They are, 1. The feeling of need, 2. Interest both in the need and in the solution, 3. Immediacy, 4. Belief in the possibility of a new way, 5. Belief in the advisability of a given change, 6. The desire for economic gain, 7. The desire for prestige, 8. The desire for greater spiritual power (1987: 463–464).

### *Advocates*

Bee says, "To understand these factors [of innovation], it is important to consider the biographical and psychological backgrounds of advocates" (1974: 179). Change agency, using Kotler's terminology, is identical with advocate here, though he uses the word "advocate" as one of leaders in agency (1973: 176). Needless to say, advocate is the basic factor in this interaction stage, but the next factor of "method" is also an important one.



## *Method*

From the point of view of acceptors, what Hiebert says is true:

The borrower [acceptors] never accepts an idea exactly as it is offered by the innovator or bringer of change. The fact is he restructures it borrowing parts of the new idea and rejecting others, reshaping it, and possibly even changing its function (1983: 425).

However, from the different angle of advocate, how to introduce his new idea to acceptors is also crucial. Because methods that are employed by the advocate are inseparably connected with the mode of change, I will discuss these in the next integration stage.

Regarding the basic posture of an advocate, it is appropriate to introduce the basic attitudes of an advocate, presented by Foster. He presents three basic models: 1) The primitive technical assistance model, 2) The anthropological technical assistance model, 3) The donor-culture model (1973: 175–177). Foster considers the first two models to be inferior, and not advisable.

Louise Spindler offers three principles, for the benefit of the advocate who introduces changes. “How do you introduce change?” is his question. And his answer is: 1) with their [acceptors’] support, 2) using the established native system, and 3) working together with a bi-cultural leader (1963: 316–319).

The basic attitude of the advocate can be considered as a part of his method in the macro sense. But I want to discuss this “method” in the micro sense too. As an example of this micro sense, or concrete approach to the particulars, the advocate of change has to face the following two problems: how to introduce his new idea and how to deal with the old. For example, in religious encounters, a missionary (advocate) faces the problem of how to deal with the old religious rituals, customs and morals. I will analyze this methodology after discussing the mode (manner) of change in the next stage. In other words, I will try to derive methodology from the analysis of mode of change.

## The Integration Stage

The major aspect of this stage is the mode of integration of culture change. I have found some confusion of terminology in this regard. I will quote the

terminology and explanations of some anthropologists.

K. Spindler says:

The process of adapting is usually long and slow and occurs through complex processes of *syncretizing, selecting, reinterpreting, and rejecting*. In some cases this process of progressive adjustment results in a rather unique third culture (Emphasis mine 1963: 319).

He calls this third culture which contains both elements "syncretism" (1963: 320).

Discussing "acculturation studies", Hiebert says:

It was found that the integration of new ideas takes place in a number of ways. In some cases, ideas are *added or incorporated* into the preexisting cultural system. In some, they are *substituted* for traditional cultural traits; for example, snowmobiles have completely *replaced* dog teams in many Eskimo villages. In some cases, there is *syncretism*, a *combining* of old and new ideas into patterns that are different from either. This is the case with Voodoo, which is a *mixture* of Catholicism and the traditional religious ideas of the West Indies, and west Africa. And, finally, in some cases, the people accept a new set of ideas but keep the new and the traditional customs separate by *compartmentalizing* their lives. No matter how ideas are accepted, however, they cause changes and *readjustments* in other areas of the culture (Emphasis mine. 1983: 422).

Using his own terminology, Luzbetak explains this process which takes place in secondary aspects of culture change, and he says:

The secondary processes aim to restore balance and to *integrate* the novelty with the traditional design for living... The *balancing and integrating modifications* of which we speak may affect the form, meaning, usage, or function, in fact, the very structure and configuration of the culture may be significantly *altered*. The novelty itself may be *modified* ("re-interpretation"), or *additional* changes may enter into the culture whole ("ramification"), or both processes may take place. The modifications are brought about through loss, *accretion, substitution, and fusion*, and are usually in accord with the "imperative of selection." (Emphasis mine 1970: 215).

The process termed "readjustment" by Hiebert is called here "ramification"

by Luzbetak. As to the manner of change, Luzbetak says, “Change occurs through 1) substitution, 2) loss with no replacement, 3) incrementation with no displacement, and 4) fusion” (1970: 199).

Kraft also mentions manner of change, such as substitution, partial substitution, addition and change that results in fusion (1987: 436–437).

*The First Parameter*

As we have seen anthropologists adopt terms of their own accord. However, we need useful terminology in order to understand and explain both each stage and mode of culture change. It would seem wise to call attention to Hiebert’s cautions:

If we wish to avoid a great deal of confusion in discussion of change, we must specify the parameters of it. These include level of abstraction, mode of time reckoning, units of observation, and locus of observation (1933: 427).

Following his instruction, I will set up the first parameter, in which we see integration of culture change from the view point of manner of change. In the following diagram, I have summed up the terminology that we have presented:

TERMINOLOGY OF CULTURE-CHANGE  
FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF MANNER OF CHANGE

Hiebert	Luzbetak	Kraft	Spindler
rejection			rejection
	incrementation	addition	
	modification		reinterpret
syncretism	fusion	fusion	syncretize
compartmentalize	partial-substitute	partial-substitute	select
substitute	substitute	substitute	
	loss	loss	

The connotation of words such as “rejection”, “addition”, “substitute” and “loss” are rather clear. However, words such as “syncretize”, “fusion”, “compartmentalize” and “reinterpret” should be defined more precisely.

I will examine the exact meaning of these terms according to the authors’ examples.

**ADDITION:** New ideas are added to or incorporated in the pre-existing culture system, and incrementation occurs.

**SUBSTITUTION:** New ideas are substituted for the old cultural traits.

**PARTIAL SUBSTITUTION:** Luzbetak presents an example of this partial substitution: the ball-point pen has partially displaced both the pencil and the pen. In other words, this is a partial acceptance of the substituted traits.

**SYNCRETISM:** The definition by Hiebert is clear. "Syncretism [is] a combining of old and new ideas into patterns that are difference from either" (1983: 422). Luzbetak defines fusion as "the amalgamation of an innovation with an analogous traditional pattern" (1970: 202).

**COMPARTMENTALIZE:** Hiebert presents this example: an African man compartmentalizes his life into two sections, living, on the one hand, in the world of modern city politics, and, on the other, in his traditional African culture (1983: 426).

**REINTERPRETATION: MODIFICATION:** Reinterpretation of form, meaning, usage and function.

### *The Second Parameter*

Until now, I have dealt with culture and culture-change in general, but from now on, I will try to use these terms more precisely and to put ideas into more concrete shape. In order to do so, I will choose rituals as concrete examples. Now I will deal not with culture-change in general but with ritual-change in a specific way.

For instance, Luzbetak's "incrementation" means "introducing additional new element into a certain culture" or "something new like TV is introduced to a certain culture" I call this kind of change "creation or introduction of the new". We know many examples such as: missionaries introduced the Communion service and Baptism to their mission fields. People may create something new by adopting a part of the old or by changing its function. These are "creation of the new".

However, I define "addition" as "a new element (new trait or item) is added or attached to the existing complex such as: a ritual, a festival and a building".

For example, in Japan many ordinary houses are utilized as church buildings by attaching a cross to the roof.

*The Third Parameter*

So, I will set up the third parameter in which we seek to learn the connotation of these words from the viewpoint of the relation between the old and the new. And I will present a diagram through which we can understand this relationship. The following diagram is drawn showing the assumption on which the new ritual or element is based.

**DIAGRAM OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW  
IN MANNER OF RITUAL-CHANGE**

<b>CHANGE</b>	<b>RELATION BETWEEN OLD AND NEW</b>
no change	old ritual is kept, new element is rejected.
partial change	old ritual is kept, new element is added to it. old ritual is reinterpreted, modified.
(coexist)	old element is downgraded, new element is put in higher rank.
(hybrid)	a part of old ritual is substituted.
total change	old ritual is dislodged, new ritual is substituted for the old. old ritual is rejected without replacement.
total	entire new ritual is created or introduced.

Partial substitution in this diagram is not identical with the partial substitution as termed by Luzbetak. This is not “partial acceptance of the substituted trait”, but rather the “trait substituted partially.” The theoretical background of this is the innovation theory of Barnett. He says, “Fundamental to this point of view is the assumption that any innovation is made up of preexisting components, and secondly, that new combinations are entirely the products of mental activity” (1953: 181). In other words, culture traits, whether material or nonmaterial, are not “discrete unflexible wholes” but can be subdivided into qualities of form, meaning, function, and operating principles.

The discussion of Barnett here deals with mental activity, but this process may take place in actual culture change and any trait of the culture, especially when rituals change.

In order to make clear the difference, I will present an example. Following a

religious ritual of Japan, people celebrate the health of their children in a special way. The parents bring their three-year and seven-year-old girls and five-year-old boys to the Shinto shrine on the third of March. There, a Shinto priest blesses the children with a Shinto ceremony. So, Japanese churches have adopted this ceremony and have made a child blessing ceremony. A pastor is substituted for a Shinto priest, Christian ritual is substituted for Shinto ceremony, while the date and the ages and genders of the children and gifts to be given to the children have been kept according to the tradition. Several new ritual elements have been substituted for the parts of the old ritual. This is the “partial substitution” that I was speaking of. In order to avoid confusion, I will call it “exchange.”

#### *The Fourth Parameter*

Here we look at the manners of ritual change from the different angles particularly from the angle of advocate. Before we fix appropriate terminology to explain the methods of Paul's encounter, it is useful to understand the terminology of Christian mission.

Ro Bong says that there are three methodologies for presenting the Gospel in an Asian context. They are the liberal, the syncretistic and the Bible-oriented method. Then he introduces four different approaches: 1) Syncretistic, 2) Accommodation, 3) Situational theology and 4) Biblical-oriented Asian theology (1976: 52-57).

David Hesselgrave also discusses contextualization and the receptors' response to missionaries' presentation. He categorizes their responses: 1) sincere acceptance, 2) situational reformulation, 3) syncretistic incorporation, 4) studied protraction, 5) symbolic resignation, 6) straightforward rejection (1978: 113).

Dean S. Gilliland introduces three types of response by the receptors: 1) rejection, 2) adoption, 3) modification (1987: 7).









Allan Tippett analyzed Christian encounter with Batak culture in Indonesia, and reports six types of responses. According to Tippett, they 1) accept, 2) modify the new element, 3) differentiate (approve) the old element, 4) create the new system, 5) reject the new element, and 6) discard the old element (1987: 299).

Paul Hiebert shares his insights. There is “critical contextualization”

between two extremes responses; Denial of the old, which he calls “Rejection of Contextualization” and Uncritical Acceptance, which he calls “Uncritical Contextualization”. Then he points out several responses between two extreme response. They are: *Keeping, Rejection, Modification, Substitution, Addition,* and *Creation of the new* (1985: 188–189). This concepts are clear and beneficial, and I will adopt and modify it somewhat.

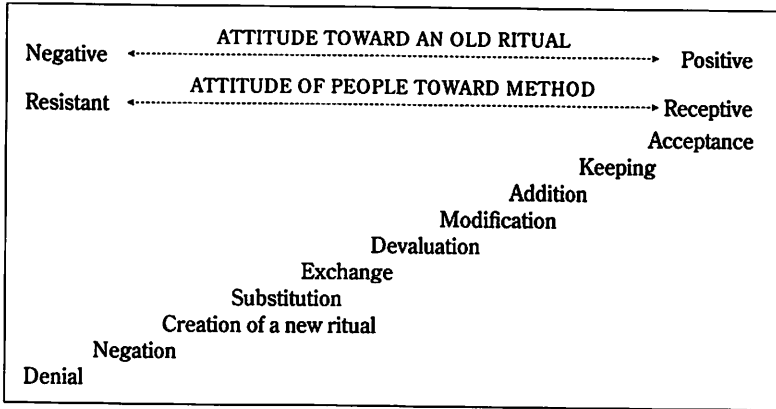
At this point, I have gathered appropriate terminology for the methodology of ritual change. The following diagram shows the degree of ritual change from the viewpoint of an advocate.

**TAXONOMY OF METHODOLOGY IN RITUAL-CHANGE**

RELATION OF OLD AND NEW	METHOD	PICTURE
Old is kept, Nothing is new.	Keeping	
Old is kept, New is added.	Addition	
Old is modified, (reinterpreted)	Modification	
Old is devaluated, New is added in higher rank.	Devaluation	
New element exchanged for a part of the old.	Exchange	
Old is dislodged, New is substituted for the Old	Substitution	
Old is relected without replacement	Rejection	
New is created or introduced	Creation o the new	

With this terminology, I may adequately explain methods employed by the advocate (change agency, missionary), and more specifically, it helps me to explain how Paul encountered the Greco-Roman World.

## Diagram of the Eight Methods



The following diagram explains the relationship between the methods and possible results.

METHOD	INTENDED RESULT	UNINTENDED RESULT
Acceptance	Uncritical Acceptance	
Keeping	Nonreligious	Remain the old
Addition	Coexistence	Fusion of the new
Modification	Reinterpretation	Amalgamation
Devaluation	Arranging	Distortion of the new
Exchange	Exchange	Confusion of the new
Substitution	New system	Transplant/foreignness
Creation	New system	Transplant/foreignness
Negation	Wipe out the old	Antagonism/underground
Denial	Uncritical Denial	



## **CHAPTER II**

### **PAUL'S ENCOUNTER**

In this chapter, I will present several examples in which Paul used these methods in his ministry when he encountered the Greco-Roman world. This is not a comprehensive study of Paul's encounter, but rather gives case studies of how he used the eight methods that I have mentioned.

#### **Keeping**

It is obvious that he never tried to change the political order of Roman empire. On the contrary, he says, "Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God." He, as a Roman citizen, kept his political rights and utilized them for his mission practices. It can be concluded that Paul accepted all kinds of non-religious social orders and customs in daily life.

#### **Addition**

We know the beautiful greeting with which Paul always begins his letters: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom 1:7, I Co 1:3, 2 Co 1:2, Gal 1:3, Eph 1:2, Phil 1:2, Co 1:2, I Th 1:1.) Usually, in the Greco-Roman world, "Grace to you" is the popular greeting in letters. But Paul added another expression, "Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." This is an excellent addition, which does not give any strange feeling to the people, yet give a meaningful new idea to the readers.

#### **Modification**

There are several controversial verses in the Bible. In this section, I have chosen one verse from Acts of the Apostles in order to present the fact that Paul used this method. "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the disease departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them" Acts 19:12

Macgregor says, "These verses leave the impression that they are derived from a less reliable source than the rest of the chapter" (1954: 255). But there is no textual problem in this verse. We cannot shut our eyes to this fact. The interpretation of this verse should be seriously taken account of.

### *Emphasis of the Author of The Acts.*

It seems that the author of Luke and Acts has been well informed regarding the techniques and terminology of Greco-Roman magic. This is most evident in three important passages: Acts 8:9–24, 13:4–12, 19:11–20. The first passage describes how Simon Magus is drawn to the Christian faith by the superior power exhibited by Christians through the Holy Spirit.

The second passage describes a contest between Paul and Elmas or Bar-Jesus, and Paul's power proves superior to that of Elmas.

The last one describes that seven Jewish exorcists or magicians attempt to use the name of Jesus in their exorcism, only to be overpowered by the demoniac whom they are attempting to cure (Aune D. E. 1986).

### *Problematic Verse*

However, here we face a strange verse that describes the event in which people were healed by Paul's sweat-rags and aprons.

It is certainly strange to read of healings occurring through sweat-cloths and work-aprons. Most commentators are uneasy with the account here and either explain it away as a pious legend or downplay it as verging on the bizarre (Longenecker 1981: 496).

This is very near the border line of magic, at least this can be said to be a magical practice. It is correct to assert that Luke's interest throughout this chapter is in emphasizing the supernatural power of the Gospel. And in the following, F. F. Bruce hints at Luke's possible intention:

The healing of the sick by means of pieces of material which had been in contact with Paul is reminiscent of the healing of those who touched the fringe of Jesus's cloak (Mark 5:27, 6:56); there may be also be an intended

parallel here to the healing effect of Peter's shadow (chapter 5:15 Bruce 1954: 389).

However, the problem of the method of healing still remains. Paul or someone else used Paul's materials to heal the sick and to exorcise evil spirits.

### *Magical Method of Healing and his Intention*

Then, some commentators prefer to take it as having been done apart from Paul's knowledge and approval (Longenecker 1981: 496). But this cannot be proved, and it is more natural to imagine that Paul knew the event. The question is, if Paul did not it by himself, why did Paul allow people to use his materials for healing? Macgregor says:

Paul himself comes very close, at least in the minds of the people, to being a worker of magic (Macgregor 1954: 255).

We should note the fact that Ephesus was the home of all sorts of magic and superstition. Longenecker says:

the phrase "Ephesian writings" (Ephesia Grammata) was common in antiquity for documents containing spells and magical formulas (cf. Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 12:548, Clement of Alexandria *Stromata* 5: 242. 1981: 496).

So, it is not unnatural to assume that Paul met his audiences at a point of common ground ideologically in order to lead them on to the Gospel of salvation in Christ, so at Ephesus he acted in the way here depicted (Longenecker 1981: 496).

Paul adjusted himself to the cultural context. He adopted magical use of his materials in order to affirm his message to the people who are acquainted with magic. This can be said to be Paul's contextualization. He established common ground with Ephesians by magical use of his cloths and aprons. He modified the cultural atmosphere to reach the people. I name this method, "Modification".

### Devaluation

This is the most controversial method among the eight methods that I introduce

in this paper. So, I will present three case studies with detailed explanations

*The husband of one wife (1 Tim 3:2)*

Paul says, "An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife,..." (1 Tim 3:2). The meaning of this ambiguous phrase has been debated from ancient times. It has been taken (a) as prohibiting (i) concubinage, (ii) polygamy, (iii) remarriage after divorce, (iv) digamy, i. e., a second marriage after the death of the first spouse; or (b) as (i) insisting that the bishop shall be a married man, or (ii) more generally, that he shall be an example of strict morality, without more specific denotation (The Interpreters. Bible: 410, Lock 1924).

Many scholars tend to interpret this phrase as digamist or the person who remarries after divorce. The Interpreter's Bible comments:

We may exclude as possible interpretations concubinage, polygamy, and remarriage after divorce, as defined by the church, because these were prohibited to all Christians alike (: 410).

However, Alfred Plummer explains the situation behind this phrase as follows:

Divorce, as we know from abundant evidence, was very frequent both among the Jews and the Romans in the first century of the Christian era. ... And after the divorce either of the parties could marry again; and often enough both of them did so; therefore in the Roman Empire in St. Paul's day there must have been plenty of persons of both sexes who had been divorced once or twice and had married again.... In a wealthy capital like Ephesus it would probably be among the upper and more influential classes that divorces would be most frequent; and from precisely these classes, when any of them and become Christians, officials would be likely to be chose (Plummer, Alfred: 123).

I will not discuss these interpretations, as to which is better or best. In any case, one thing is clear: that the person who has more than one wife or who has remarried is admitted to baptism, but he must not be admitted to an official position in the Church.

Paul is giving the conditions for being an official in the Church, but at the same time, by giving the ideal life of an officer in the Church, he is devaluating indirectly the status of such person in the society. Additionally, Paul devaluates remarriage after divorce, digamy and concubinage, polygamy, of course if it can be interpreted, by giving a high privilege to the strict monogamy. Here we can recognize Paul's "devaluation".

### *Baptism for the dead*

"Those baptized for the dead" is a peculiar expression used by Paul in 1 Co 15:29. A great variety of interpretations have been proposed in explanation of this peculiar reference, but nothing altogether satisfactory can yet be said to have been produced (The Imperial Bible Dictionary 1885). Robertson and Plummer introduce three interpretations.

1. The Greek expositors explain the expression as referring to ordinary Christian baptism, "for the dead" being taken as meaning "with an interest in resurrection of the dead."

2. The reference is to some abnormal baptismal rite known to the Corinthians, which would be meaningless without a belief in the resurrection.

3. The reference is to something exceptional, but which may often have occurred at Corinth and elsewhere, and of which the Apostle would approve (Robertson & Plummer 1911: 359).

And Robertson and Plummer conclude:

"Both 2. and 3. have the decisive merit of satisfying the "for the dead" at the end of the verse. These words would be superfluous, or even inexplicable, if St Paul were speaking simply of ordinary Christian baptism."

Bromiley also says:

A first and obvious suggestion is that there was in Corinth an actual practice of survivors allowing themselves to be baptized on behalf of (believing?) friends who had died without baptism. This certainly seems to be the plain meaning of the phrase (1979: 426).

Perhaps, they had feeling that unbaptized believers at the resurrection would not

be so near to their Lord as those who had undergone the rite. Or they may have done it to ensure as far as possible that nothing would be lacking in respect of the eternal bliss of the redeemed. They were baptized for their friends, relatives and perhaps catechumens, who had passed away before they had been baptized and received into the full membership of the local church (Short 1953: 240).

It, however, is true that the practice as such seems inconsistent with Paul's general teaching (Bromiley 1979: 426). Even in his letters to the same congregation, 1, 2 Corinthians, we may find several accounts which indicate that individual commitment and effort before God is inseparable from the condition after his death.

Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work (1 Co 3:12-13).

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord (1 Co 15:58).

For we must all appear before the judgement-seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (2 Co 5:10).

Although such practice is inconsistent with his teachings, it is strange enough to know that he does not indicate whether he approves or disapproves. He is appealing to it only as additional support for his argument about the resurrection of believers (Flemington 1962).

How can we reconcile the discrepancy between his teaching and his action? If we read his letters as if they were theological documents, we can not solve this discrepancy. We should not forget the fact that he sent a letter to a certain congregation at Corinth. it was a letter to the community.

In addition, we should consider this from the methodological point of view. He did not criticize the practice which existed in the community. It means that he did allow for its existence. But neither did he applaud the custom. And in another part of the same letter, he taught that every person was accountable before God,

which was very opposite to his teaching earlier in the letter. He allowed for the existence of baptism for the dead, not commending the practice, but with the hope that it would be eliminated in the future. Here we recognize Paul's method of "devaluation."

### *Slavery*

The twelve disciples of Jesus apparently had no part in the system of slavery. But outside Palestine, where the churches were often established on a household basis, the membership included both masters and servants (E. A. Judge 1980: 1465). Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, faced the problem of how to deal with the system of slavery.

This section is a study of Paul's attitudes toward slavery and not a comprehensive N. T. study about slavery. How Paul dealt with slavery is the main theme of this section.

What was Paul's fundamental approach in dealing with slavery? How did he teach masters and slaves in the churches? How did he handle the runaway slave, Onesimus? And what was his basic strategy against slavery? Finally, how would we deal with his strategy toward slavery in our discipline, missiology? In this paper, I will seek to answer these questions.

Needless to say, we can cover this subject only through study of the Pauline epistles. Basically, I will handle his epistles that contain the portions about slavery chronologically, that means the epistle to Galatians first, then, First Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon. The first epistle to Timothy and Titus will also be considered, although not in great depth.

#### **Paul's Fundamental Posture toward Slavery**

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28).

Paul declares here his fundamental posture, that every human division, whether ethnic, or social or sexual became meaningless in the new community in Christ. No human division exists in Christ. Every person is considered to be free in Christ. This is Paul's fundamental position.

## Paul's statements

Paul states his basic position not only in the Epistle to Galatians, his first epistle, but also in other epistles.

“Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and Yours is in Heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.” (Eph. 6:9)

“For He who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was free man when he was called is Christ's slave.” (1 Co. 7:22)

“For we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and are were all given the one Spirit to drink.” (1 Co. 12:13)

“Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.” (Col. 3:11)

These are the statements in which Paul expresses his fundamental position against slavery. Was Paul against slavery? Yes, these statements contain his posture against slavery, though it is expressed indirectly.

## Significance of the statements in the community

Many commentators look at the spiritual significance of these statements and fail to grasp the social impact that these statements would have raised in the community. Theologians tend to interpret these passages only theologically. They conclude, “Yes, there is no difference before God. Every person can be saved in any situation as they are.”

However, we must not forget the fact that these were not theological papers, but letters to the churches. These were brought to the communities and read publicly by the members of these communities which included slaves and their masters. This fact cannot be stressed too much in order that we may understand the significance of these letters.

Though the condition of slavery was everywhere being steadily mitigated in the N. T. times (Judge 1980: 1465), slaves still had no legal status. Masters had the right to sell their slaves, and while both were in the same church, we can guess that big division existed between them in the community.

Paul sent his letter to such a community and stated, “There is no favoritism



with him". We can imagine emotional reactions which arose on in both sides in a great measure when Paul's letter was read publicly in the community.

The difference between masters and slaves was apparent as was that of Jews and Greeks. The difference of the latter were ethnic and religious, while the former was a social division. Paul, of course, knew both divisions when he states, "There is no Greek and Jew, slave or free". So we can imagine the social impact of his letter being read in the community.

As Paul's statement was not directly against slavery, these emotional reactions and social impact in the community were presumably quiet and not extreme. However, through these statements, we recognize Paul's fundamental posture toward slavery.

#### Paul's Teaching to the Churches in Regards to Slavery

"Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you although if you can gain your freedom, do so." (1 Co 7:20, 21)

From our point of view who live in 20th century, his teaching is remarkably conservative. To understand his intention, we should examine its context.

#### Various introductions

Chapter seven of the First Epistle to Corinthians is special in the N. T., because Paul uses various introductions in each section.

"I say this as an concession, not as a command" v. 6

"I give this command (not I, but the Lord);" v. 10

"I say this (I, not the Lord)" v. 12

"I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgement, as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy." v. 25

"In my judgement, She is happier if she stays as she is — as I think that I too have the Spirit of God" v. 40

Paul is using various introductions properly to give appropriate and applicable

advice concerning each topic. What does it mean exactly when he uses the following introduction: "This is the rule I lay down in all the churches" v. 17?

Firstly, we must pay attention to the sharp distinction between the introductions of verse ten and seventeen. On the one hand he says, "I give this command (not I, but the Lord)", on the other hand in verse 17 he says, "This is the rule I lay down in all the churches". Paul apparently distinguishes his advice and the Lord's command. The advice in verse 17 is his rule in the churches, not an absolute command from God. In other words, this is his pastoral care principle in the churches.

Secondly, Paul says, "all the churches" in this introduction. This is a general rule in the churches but not an absolute rule in which exceptions are not allowed. In fact, Paul adds a controversial sentence to the latter part of this verse. He says, "if you can gain your freedom, do so". It seems to me this is his real intention that is expressed unintentionally.

Archbold Robertson and Alfred Plummer bring forth a beautiful conclusion after they thoroughly discuss a grammatical problem of this verse. Their conclusion is as follows:

The meaning will then be, 'Slavery is not intolerable for a Christian, but an opportunity for emancipation need not to be refused.' The Christian slave is not to revel against a heathen master, any more than a Christian wife against a heathen husband; but if the heathen is ready to grant freedom, the Christian slave like the Christian wife, may take it without scruple (A Critical and Exegetical Commentary 1914: 148).

The liberation of slaves, as reward for good behavior or for other reasons, was so common in the Roman Empire that the case of verse 21 was not unlikely (Joseph Agar 1882: 122). Paul knew the possibility for emancipation which existed in the churches, so he gives this advice: "If you can give your freedom, do so".

### Paul's Ethical Teaching to Both Christian Masters and Slaves

"Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity

of heart, just as you would obey Christ.” (Eph. 6:5)

“And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.” (Eph. 6:9)

“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.” (Col 3:22)

“Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.” (Col. 4:1)

According to Paul’s teaching, Christian slaves are to be obedient and loyal to their masters, giving a full measure of service, while masters are to treat their slaves with justice and consideration.

The Illustrated Bible Dictionary gives a description of the system of slavery in N. T. times as follows;

Greek slavery was justified in classical theory by the assumption of a natural order of slaves. Since only the citizen class were, strictly speaking, human, slaves were merely chattels. While this idea was carried into practice only in the rare cases where common sense and humanity broke down, the fact remains that throughout classical antiquity the institution of slavery was simply taken for granted, even by those who worked for its amelioration (Judge: 1464)

Considering the situation of slavery at that time, Paul’s ethical teaching, especially regarding to masters, should be seen as quite unique. Such ethics was dynamic and revolutionary, and brought transforming energy to change silently the social realities, and to raise quietly the level of public consciousness.

However, why didn’t Paul place himself in more direct opposition to slavery? Why didn’t he try to denounce it everywhere he went? G. Ladd says as follows:

Paul has no word of criticism for the institution as such. In this sense, he was unconcerned about “social ethics” — the impact of the gospel on social structure (Ladd 1974: 529).

## Reasons Why Paul Did Not Criticise Slavery

Why, then, didn't Paul criticise the system of slavery directly? Some reasons can be considered.

1. Paul clearly branded the institution as part of the order that was passing away (Judge 1988: 1466). Paul says just after he advises Christian slaves to remain in the situation which they were in when God called them, "Because of the present crisis," v. 26. And he adds again, "What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on, those who have wives should live as if they had none;" v. 29. In Paul's view social structures belong to the old age that is passing away.

2. Paul introduced the Gospel as the power of God, which can rebirth a person and can transform the society, not as another social structure. Ridderbos says:

The Gospel does not make its appearance in the form of a new social program, and still less does it overthrow the existing order by force. Rather it enters into the existing structure of society in order to permeate it with a new spirit, that of Christ (1975: 316, 7).

3. Paul knew the reality of slavery and that of the Christian community.

Slavery is attested from the earliest time throughout the ancient Near East, and owed its existence and perpetuation primarily to economic factors (K. A. Kitchen 1980: 1462).

It was virtually impossible for anyone to conceive of abolishing slavery as a high economic institution (S. S. Bartchy 1988: 546).

Slavery was a social structure which was integrated with every aspect of the daily life: economical, political, and social. It was a widespread custom at that time.

Who, then, was Paul? He was a man of no worldly influence, poor, and despised, a stranger wherever he appeared. If he had criticised slavery directly, the effect of his direct criticism might have been to throw a barrier in the way of the progress of the Gospel and the community. It was impossible that a system rooted so deeply in the society could be pulled up in a short time.

The preceding fact was the background of Paul's advice in I Timothy 6:1. He says, "All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered." Paul

did not want to lay the churches open to criticism.

Then, does it mean that Paul identifies the existing social order, especially slavery, with the divine order, or regards it as unalterable? Is it true that Paul was not concerned about social structures but only with how Christians should live out their Christian lives within the contemporary social situation? (Ladd 1974: 530). In order to examine these points, we need to look into Paul's Epistle to Philemon.

### Paul's Attitude Toward Slavery In The Epistle To Philemon

The Epistle to Philemon touches upon various important aspects of Paul's attitude toward slavery. First of all, I will make clear the points of the letter.

#### Content of the Epistle

1. Paul sends the runaway slave Onesimus back to his master Philemon.
2. Paul acknowledges in the whole epistle the right of the master to his slave.
3. Paul does not specifically ask for the manumission of Onesimus directly.
4. Paul does not treat the juridical side of the matter.

However, it does not mean that Paul is sending a runaway slave back to his master, asking Philemon to receive Onesimus as a runaway slave according to the law. On the contrary, Paul is asking Philemon to pardon Onesimus, to give him a Christian welcome and to send him back to Paul as his partner. In order to fulfill his purpose, Paul is doing his best to persuade Philemon in this letter.

#### Paul's Persuasion

1. Paul tries to touch Philemon's heart emotionally. He says, "I then, as Paul — *an old man* and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I appeal to you for *my son* Onesimus who became my son *while I was in chains.*" v. 9, 10. Then he says, "I am sending him — who is *my very heart* — back to you." v. 12 (Emphasis by writer)

2. Paul addresses the matter of divine Providence. He justifies theologically Philemon's pardoning and accepting Onesimus as a Christian brother. He says, "Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good — no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as

a dear brother.” v. 15, 16 When Philemon read this portion, “his attention is thus turned from his individual wrongs to the providential economy which has made these wrongs work for good” (Vincent 1897: 188).

3. Paul reminds Philemon of the obligations which Philemon owes to Paul and puts spiritual pressure on him. He says, “although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, yet I appeal to you on the basis of love.” v. 8 Personal intimacy and Philemon’s obligation to Paul for his conversion would warrant the apostle in laying commands upon Philemon in the matter of receiving Onesimus.

Paul says, “I will pay it back — not to mention that you owe to me for your very self” v. 19 Paul obviously, mentions the conversion of Philemon. In this short elliptical construction Paul reminds Philemon’s personal debt to him and ask Philemon to accept his request.

Hemer says:

The relation between the apostle and Philemon was so close that Paul may press him to forgive Onesimus the wrongs he had done to the extent of receiving his repentant slave in a new relationship of brotherhood in Christ that transcended the relationship of master and slave (C. J. Hemer 1986: 831)

The strongest pressure on Philemon should be the next sentence. “So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me.” V. 17 This is a strong expression, since the refusal of Paul’s request would be inconsistent with such a relation (Vincent 1897: 189).

4. Paul reinforces his persuasion by expressing his determination. “If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me... I will pay it back.” v. 17–18 I imagine that Philemon must have laughed at such a promise from a man who was in prison. Probably without any serious expectation that Philemon would demand payment Paul states the promise. Paul could not pay and if the cost was little enough for Paul to pay, Philemon a rich man would never demand it. So, we conclude that in this sentence Paul expresses his determination rather than offering an actual promise to Philemon. And he is confirming his determination by saying “I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand.” v. 19

As I have mentioned above, Paul spares no effort in persuading Philemon to accept Onesimus not as a runaway slave but as a brother in Christ. Was he successful or not?

### Result and Impacts in the Community

It is obvious that Paul expects Philemon to pardon Onesimus and accept him as a Christian brother. Moreover, Paul hopes that Philemon will send him back to Paul as a Christian worker. It is natural to imagine that Paul fully expected the manumission of Onesimus, as Moulder believes:

“Paul requests that Onesimus be sent back to him. Perhaps implying that Onesimus be given his freedom” (W. Moulder 1986: 604).

### Result of the Epistle

Did Philemon fulfill Paul’s request? Yes, he did. F. F. Bruce says, “Otherwise the letter never could have survived... if Philemon has hardened his heart and refused to pardon and welcome Onesimus he could certainly have suppressed the letter” (1977: 406). This letter having accomplished its purpose, Onesimus treasured it as his charter of liberty.

On the basis of Ignatius’ letter to the Ephesians, Goodspeed says, “There is some reason to suppose that Onesimus who was bishop of Ephesus fifty years later may be identical with the slave boy for whom Paul interceded so eloquently in the little letter to Philemon” (1871: 210). Despite the chronological difficulty which exists, this tradition suggests that Onesimus gained his freedom.

### Impacts in the Community

In the epistle to Colossians, Paul calls Onesimus “our faithful and dear brother” (4:9). Again we have to remember that Paul’s letter was not a theological paper but a letter to the community. Onesimus’ conversion and his ministry in Rome is no longer secret in the community.

It is quite natural to reckon that Tychicus and Onesimus visited churches in Europe on the way to Colossae and Tychicus introduced Onesimus as a faithful partner of Paul. Based on the geographic position of Colossae they

should have come through Laodicea. They perhaps met Christians there before leaving for Colossae.

In addition, the Epistle to Colossians is sent and read in the church of Laodiceans later. Philemon is not an unknown person in the community.

Goodspeed discusses the place where Archippus lived, and suggests that “the letter from Laodiceans” v. 16 is identical with the epistle to Philemon. Then he concludes as follows:

But if the Colossian and Laodicean churches are to exchange letters, then the case of Onesimus is to have full publicity among Christians of both places (Goodspeed 1871: 209).

Though “nothing suggests that ‘the letter from the Laodiceans’ was the epistle to Philemon” (a. F. Walls 1980: 1212), I agree with his conclusion that the case of Onesimus is no longer secret among communities in that area.

It would seem unwise to assume that Philemon refused Paul’s request in that situation. If so, then, Philemon pardoned Onesimus and spontaneously sent him back to Paul, manumission based on Christian love took place in the community. A runaway slave was forgiven and given freedom because of a Christian master’s love. This manumission, we have to visualize the situation, must have created a great sensation in the community. If Philemon complied with Paul’s wishes, the whole community of Christian would have approved and applauded his action. And because this kind of praiseworthy deed is usually contagious, other masters would follow such an action later.

Paul was confident of Philemon’s obedience, knowing that Philemon would do even more than he asked. Could not Paul assume that Philemon’s action would have a great impact in the community? Surely he could. Could not he conceive of beautiful developments following Philemon’s action in the community? Yes, he could, because that was his strategy to weaken the evil system.

#### Paul’s Strategy with Regards to Slavery

Paul knew slavery. It was a deeply rooted part of the economy and social structures of the Greco-Roman World. It was a widespread practice with a long



history, and could not be eliminated in a short period of time.

I said that Paul had a strategy. I am sure that Paul had a strategy to eliminate or weaken the institution of slavery as well as lessen its abuse and evilness. Although it is not easy to find his real intention from his letters, I will try to find the essence of his strategy from what he had done in the community.

**Avoid negative reactions by spontaneous action**

Paul asks Philemon to pardon Onesimus, then expects Philemon's spontaneous manumission. Paul says, "I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced" (Phil :14). Again he says, "knowing that you will do even more than I ask" (:21).

Why did Paul expect Philemon's spontaneous action? Because doing so is, of course, lawful, and Paul, a citizen of Rome, knows the law. But Paul, an apostle of Christ, a leader of Gentile churches and a spiritual father of Philemon, could order Philemon to do so. However, he begs instead of ordering him to do so. Paul avoids raising negative reactions not only in Philemon's heart but also in the hearts of other slave owners. He avoids putting the church at risk in secular world.

**Devaluation by relativizing what is relative**

In the previous section, I mentioned Paul's ethical advice to both sides. Paul did not condemn the institution of slavery, but he did condemn its abuse. Paul says, "Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him" (Eph. 6:9). Again He says, "Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven" (Col. 4:1).

By adding the reasons, Paul reminds masters of their spiritual status before God. In other words he relativizes worldly status by reminding them of their spiritual status in God. Paul devaluates the master and slave relationship by relativizing worldly status.

**Devaluation by Good Model**

On the one hand Paul carefully avoids arousing negative feeling in Philemon's

heart and hostility of all slave owners, and on the other hand Paul is trying to persuade Philemon to accept his request, expecting Philemon's praiseworthy action, as we have already seen Paul did it because he knew its result and impact in the community. Paul was eager to show a better model to the community. Paul expected other Christian masters also to follow Philemon's action. Then, the institution of slavery would become little more than a name in the community. Finally, the system of slavery would wither.

Paul wanted to destroy the chain of slavery by showing a manumission based on Christian love. He tried to reduce the power of slavery by giving a better model. In other words, Paul devaluated the bad system by showing a better model. Here we can find again Paul's method "Devaluation".

It is very interesting to know that some controversial verses can be understood clearly from the methodological point of view.

As this method "Devaluation" is controversial, I will add some implications for the cross cultural ministry. In many mission fields, we, missionaries face problems in social structure which include evil, immorality, idolatry, polygamy, family gods and ancestor veneration. How do we deal with such social structures?

Should we speak against them? Should we wage campaign against them? Do we excommunicate members who are still involved in them? Should we expect them to give up these entirely as a condition for being baptized? Or can we utilize Paul's method, "Devaluation" in such situation, especially while Christians are greatly in the minority?

### Exchange

Until now, I have not found any good example of this method "exchange." The reason that I could not present this example is lack of material. Unfortunately in the New Testament, we do not have enough and detailed accounts of local rituals to investigate whether this method has been used by Paul or not. I hope I can present good examples later.

## Substitution

Although this method is the most popular among Western missionaries in recent years, I cannot find any portion that suggests that Paul adapted it. Why did Paul not utilize this method? There can be some assumptions:

1. Paul did not feel the need to substitute the rites of passage in the Greco-Roman world, because they were not so different from his own idea and traditions.

2. Paul did not face the difficulty of encountering the rites of passage, because the most first generation Christians were Jews or God-fearers who were willing to follow Jewish traditions.

3. Or for some reason, Paul chose not to adopt this method, “substitution”, when he encountered the rites of passage in Greco-Roman world?

## Creation of the New

Christians brought many new rituals, customs and morals to the Greco-Roman world, such as the Lord’s Supper, Baptism and new worship style. The Lord’s day was also new for them. So let look at how Paul introduced this new tradition to the Greco-Roman society.

### *The Lord’s Day*

Since the NT gives no evidence that sabbath observation was a cause of strife in the primitive Jewish Christian church, as was circumcision, we may assume that the two days were at first celebrated together (Richardson 1962: 152). In fact, Paul also frequently attended synagogue worship and preached there on his missionary journeys.

Although it is not easy to tell exactly how the new Christians kept the Lord’s Day, and what actually took place, one thing is certain, that they held their service of worship on that day. Acts 20: 7 gives the evidence that Christians gathered and had a service of preaching and the Lord’s Supper. Christians chose the first day of the week for worship undoubtedly because Christ arose on that day.

In Col. 2:16, Paul criticizes the sabbath scrupulously in reference to Gentile converts. Indeed, the observance of the sabbath was no longer important in Gentile churches. For Ignatius, the Christian no longer “sabbatizes,” but lives

according to the Lord's day (Magn. 9. 1 quoted with Richardson 1962: 152).

What is Paul's role on this subject? For the early Christian, Sunday was a regular day of work, just as any other day (Richardson 1962: 153). In such situation, what did Paul do? Paul says:

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come (1 Co 16:1-2).

It is uncertain whether or not a regular community meeting was held on that day. Paul says, "as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also." He is directing the congregation at Corinth. In other words, he is introducing a new tradition to all Gentile churches. He seems that he is trying to connect the meeting and their of Justin (Apology 1. 67. 6) contributions were received at the meetings on the first day of the week (Short 1953: 256). Here we can find Paul's method, "creation of the new."

## Negation

Undoubtedly, Paul confronted some cultural aspects of the Greco-Roman world. In the NT, Luke preserved two messages that Paul addressed to the non-Jewish audience. At Lystra, Paul rejected "deification" that almost take place regarding him (Act 14:8-18). At Athens, Paul rejected "idolatry" in his message (Act 17:16-29).

And in many cases, he opposed immorality, such as:

Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God (1 Co 6:9-10).

Almost the same expression can be found in Gal 5:19-21, Eph 5:5. And the similar categories can be found in 1 Co 5:11, and Rom 13:13. His strong expression, "shall not inherit the kingdom of God", shows his firm negation.

## CONCLUSION

I have finished my analysis of how Paul used eight methods for his ministry in Greco-Roman world. In this paper I have introduced methods and examples in the NT, but limitations of time and space have not allowed the evaluation of each method. I am sure that these eight methods can be used for our critical contextualization. Contextualization is always a risky effort. But we cannot get away from this effort, if we truly want to establish Christ's church in this world.

Contextualization is a process, so education, discipling following after people convert can play the important role in it. "Rejection" does not always produce a vital Christian faith in a given field, as "Addition" does not always prepare the way to syncretism.

If we look at the development of Christian faith in a given context, we recognize the fact that it grows just like culture always changes. In one case, it seemed to be sound and vital, but later it may fall into syncretism. In another case, it seems to be syncretistic at glance, but in fact, it may contains pure allegiance to God and vitality. It means that we should not judge a Christian faith impatiently.

It is obvious that the quality of a Christian faith depends upon the interplay of the method that we employ and the reaction and the cultural context of the accepters. However, it is also true that the method we choose will affect the result of our mission.

Finally, we know and gladly confess that the Holy Spirit dwells in the new believer's hearts will play a vital role in the process of contextualization. So, it is better not to be too afraid of syncretism.

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