Paul's Ways of Community Building

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Abstract: The author shoes in this article that Paul was the genius behind the evangelizing mission of the early Church, not only because of the fact that he founded and built up many communities, but also because of the vision and strategy he provided to carry on this movement. Soon after the Jerusalem Council, he moved into Gentile territories, established and nurtured the communities (cf. Acts 15; Gal 2:9-10). His theology, methods and strategy grew out of his concrete experiences. *He was both an active missionary-pastor and an insightful pastoral theologian.*

Once he experienced the risen Lord, there was an inner urge and contagious enthusiasm to share that experience with others by proclaiming Christ (1 Cor 9:16). Nothing could separate him from Christ and nothing could stand in his way of proclaiming Him (Rom 8:31-35). Christ, and only Christ mattered and everything else was a waste in comparison with 'the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ' (Phil 3:7-8a). His enthusiasm to proclaim Christ resulted from this conviction.

He concludes by affirming that Paul's methods of building communities can provide very useful insights for developing a relevant missionary-pastoral theology and praxis. Pastoral presence and availability, adaptability, a Word-centred ministry and Christ-centred spirituality, peacemaking, participatory leadership with focus on team ministry, building up the local Church by developing contextual theologies and inculturated forms of worship, and communion model of the Church, are some of the aspects that have special relevance for India.

Keywords: Damascus experience, apostle, community-builder, proclamation by example, contexualising, empowering communities

Introduction

Paul was the genius behind the evangelizing mission of the early Church, not only because of the fact that he founded and built up many communities, but also because of the vision and strategy he provided to carry on this movement. Soon after the Jerusalem Council, he moved into Gentile territories, established and nurtured the communities (cf. Acts 15; Gal 2:9-10). His theology, methods and strategy grew out of his concrete experiences. *He was both an active missionary-pastor and an insightful pastoral theologian.*

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Preliminary Considerations

1.1. The Damascus Encounter and Beyond

The event that was most decisive and that had a determining influence on Paul was his encounter with the risen Lord on the way to Damascus.[1] In this revelation of God's Son, he was converted, called and sent to the Gentiles.[2] He considered his conversion and the call to preach the Gospel as inseparable.[3]

This event marked a change from commitment to a religious system (Judaism) to commitment to the PERSON of Jesus Christ.[4] Phil 3:4-11 speaks of the radical nature of this experience in which his value system was reversed, his understanding of the saving significance of the law was changed and his life took on new directions. Since then, his life was centred on Christ alone (Phil 3:7-9). This new belongingness is described by him as 'being possessed by Christ' (Phil 3:12) or 'possessing the Spirit of Christ' (Rom 8:9). *Paul thus experienced in his own life the gospel that he was to proclaim.*

Gal 1:11-17 brings out *two important points*. (a) The distinctive manner in which Paul received his commission and the gospel was a personal disclosure of Jesus Christ or revelation of God, and Jesus Christ, crucified and raised from the dead, was its content. *He felt that God had 'set him apart' from his mother's womb like Jeremiah* (Gal 1:15; cf. Jer 1:5), and *the Servant of Yahweh* (Isa 49:1, 6). (b) He also understood that this gospel was meant not only for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles (Eph 3:1-13; Rom 15:16).[5] He linked his preaching of the Gospel with the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham according to which blessings would be extended to the Gentiles as well (Gal 3:8; cf. 3:14-19, 29; 4:28).[6] The universal and eschatological dimensions are presented in a way that suggests that he was fulfilling the salvation historical work of the Servant (cf. Isa 40-55).[7]

1.2. 'Called to be an Apostle'

The title that Paul claimed for himself more often and that he used to describe his ministry, is, "Apostle."[8] He describes himself as 'apostle by vocation' (Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1) or 'apostle by the will of God' (2 Cor 1:1 Eph 1:1; Col 1:1). He is "an apostle not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead" (Gal 1:1). He viewed his suffering as an authenticating sign of his call as an apostle (1 Thess 2:1; 1 Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 4:8-12).[9] It is important to note the semantic affinity between the words *apostle* (*apostolos*) and *missionary* (*missio*). The Latin equivalent of 'missionary' stands for the Greek *apostolos*: one who is sent. Paul considered himself first and foremost an apostle, one invested with a mission.[10]

Paul, the Builder of Communities

2.1. Commitment to Jesus and his Mission

Paul shared the conviction of the Jews that the followers of Christ were undermining the foundations of Judaism. He understood that any threat to the Temple and to the Law was a deathblow to the very existence of Israel as the chosen people of God. Such was his zeal that he began a fierce campaign to destroy everyone who professed the name of Jesus, the Christ (Acts 8:3).

Thus we find in Saul a man who is clear in his mind, zealous, committed to a cause and persevering till the end to achieve the set goals.

Now Paul, after the Damascus experience, directs these qualities to the realization of his new ideal. He vigorously confronts the opponents of the Gospel (Acts 13:10). His presence was commanding and his words carried conviction (Acts 14:2; 16:18). His courage to speak the full truth (Acts 20:20, 27), enthusiasm (Acts 9:21) and fearlessness (Acts 20:23) are proverbial. He courageously stood up to Peter for being an obstacle to the 'law free' Gospel (Gal 2:11-14).

The realization that the Son of God loved him and sacrificed himself for him was indeed the compelling force behind his zeal (Gal 2:20). 'The love of Christ' (2 Cor 5:14-15) was an absolute value, and nothing could 'separate him from this love' (Rom 8:35, 39). He was *passionate* about Jesus and this passion overwhelmed everything else in his life. To preach his Gospel, therefore, was for him a 'love-obligation' to be fulfilled with single-mindedness and urgency: "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel" (1 Cor 9:16). He considered this responsibility a grace to be accomplished with joy and gratitude (Rom 1:5; 15:15-16).

2.2. Dependence on God

2.2.1. Apostolic Prayer

Paul's prayer was related to his ministry.[11] In the silence of Arabian deserts he deepened his experience of the risen Lord before launching his mission (Gal 1:17). L. Cerfaux characterizes him as an "Apostle in the presence of God."[12] What we hear about him after the Damascus encounter is what the Lord said to Ananias, "At the moment he is praying" (Acts 9:4).[13] In prayer Paul found the strength for his mission; in prayer he also recognized his own fragility and vulnerability (2 Cor 12:8-11; Phil 4:13). He was aware that his vocation and mission were wholly dependent on divine grace (Rom 15:15; Gal 1:15; 2 Cor 4:1; Eph 3:2).[14] This awareness directed him further to prayer as an expression of gratitude to God.

As Jesus prayed for the disciples and the world (Jn 17) Paul prayed for his communities' growth in Christ: "... so that your love may

grow ever more *in the knowledge and every kind of perception*"
(Phil 1:9; cf. 3-11).[15] Paul's missionary prayer was like Jesus'
prayer). He asked Timothy to pray for his community (1 Tim 2:1).
As he found strength in prayer, he exhorted others to do the same
(Rom 12:12). So he commended himself and his ministry to the prayer
support of the Christians (Rom 15:30-32; 1 Thess 5:25; 2 Cor 1:11).
Luke presents Paul surrounded by the prayer of the community.[16]
His own prayer (1 Thess 1:2; 3:10; 1 Cor 1:4; Phil 1:3-4) and his
exhortation to others to pray (1 Thess 5:17-18; 1 Cor 7:5; Phil 4:6;
Col 4:2), bring out the importance of prayer for the effectiveness of
ministry.[17] By means of prayer he cultivated communion as it
united him and his churches in their relations "both with each other
and with their heavenly Lord." [18]

2.2.2. Guided by the Spirit

According to Acts, *Paul was entirely at the disposal of the Spirit*,
and was guided by the Spirit (Acts 16:6; 19:21).[19] Every decisive
step was taken by the early Church under the guidance of the Spirit
(e.g. Acts 2; 6). The Spirit demanded that Paul and Barnabas be set
apart for the work for which they have been called (Acts 13:2). The
Spirit set a seal of approval on the admittance of the Gentiles (15:28).
It is the same Spirit who intervened in their journeys (16:6-10). Paul
went into captivity as a prisoner of the Spirit (20:22; cf. 21:4, 11).
The new horizons of mission were opened up to Paul by the Spirit
(Acts 16:6-10). It is the Spirit who bestowed greatness on him and
whose creativity even surprised him as he went into 'endless ecstasies
over this mystery.'[20]

2.3. The Power of the Word

From his Jewish background Paul had understood that the word
of God is effective and laden with power (Isa 55:10). So he declared
that the Gospel, as the word of God, is the power of God for salvation
(Rom 1:16; cf. 2 Cor 2:4-5; 1 Thess 1:5).[21] He knew that the
Scriptures are able to instruct people for salvation because it is
inspired by God (2 Tim 3:15-17). So convinced was he of the
necessity of communicating the Word that he considered it an
obligation 'under the pain of death' (1 Cor 9:16). He even dared to
say that he was sent primarily to proclaim the Word than to baptize
(1 Cor 1:17). He considered preaching the Gospel as a *priestly cultic*

act (Rom 15:16).[22] He urged Timothy to "preach the Word in season and out of season" (2 Tim 4:2). He was truly a *servant of the Word*.[23]

What he proclaimed was what he believed (2 Cor 4:13). His gospel was a lived experience of the person of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:6-9). Because of this conviction he could write, "Faith comes from what is heard and what is heard comes through the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17; cf. vv. 14-17). He made sure that he handed down the correct tradition (1 Cor 15:3-8). His knowledge of the Old Testament was of great help to him to present Jesus as the fulfilment of the messianic hope, to interpret his own experience of salvation and to present his teaching (Rom 15:4).

2.4. Building up Communities: An Ongoing Process

In his letter to Christians at Thessalonica, Paul states the purpose of sending Timothy was to build them up by strengthening their faith, and encouraging them to live accordingly (1 Thess 3:1-5).[24]. This was seen as necessary because of external threats, internal problems, and also because of the ongoing nature of building up communities. In order to describe this ministry, Paul used *images* or *metaphors* instead of terms such as missionary or pastor.[25]

The paternal images focus on the generative dimension of ministry (1 Cor 4:14-15; Phlm 10) whereas the maternal images emphasize the nurturing aspect (1 Thess 2:6-8; 1 Cor 3:1-2; Gal 4:19). [26] In 1 Cor 3:5-17, Paul elaborates the images of *field* and *building/temple* (*agricultural and architectural Images*). [27] *First*, Paul sees Church as *God's field* and *building* where he and other ministers are called to labour. *Second,* community-building as an on-going process involves continuous nurturing - watering // planting, and laying the foundation // building upon it, demands long-term commitment and requires a team of ministers. *Finally*, as the one who planted and laid the foundation, Paul emphasizes his *unique initiatory role* and *authority*.[28] The expansion of the building image into that of temple (1 Cor 3:16-17; Eph 2:21) highlights the goal of his ministry as building up the community as the dwelling place of God (1 Cor 6:19-20; 2 Cor 6:16) and the household of God (Gal 6:10; cf. Rom 8:14-17; Eph 2:19).

2.4.1. Generative or Foundational Role

As an apostle Paul thought of his work as founding communities. The father image allowed Paul to communicate to his churches that his relationship with them was reciprocal but unequal. It shows that leadership and exercise of authority need not be opposed to love. He considered himself a mother in birth-pangs to form Christ in his 'little children' (Gal 4:19). The foundational role of Paul is also emphasized by means of the agricultural and architectural images (1 Cor 3:5-17).[29] He planted and as a master builder laid the foundation, the foundation itself being Jesus Christ. He was a pioneer, and wanted to remain so (Rom 15:20; 2 Cor 10:16).

2.4.2. Nurturing Function

Paul understood that his task was also to nurture them until they grew into maturity in faith. His parental responsibility clearly included nurturing his 'children' through instruction, admonishing, urging behavioural change and encouraging (1 Thess 2:11-12). It is a gradual process of growth from childhood to adulthood (1 Cor 3:1-2). The image of a nursing (mother) taking care of her children (1 Thess 2:6-8) was helpful to soften the authoritarian edge normally associated with paternal image.[30] He told Timothy and Titus to guard the faith of the community by handing down the apostolic tradition, teaching sound doctrine and ensuring observance of the customs. He reminded the elders of the church at Ephesus of their duty to build up the community (Acts 20:28-32). The parental images bring out qualities of devotion and responsibility, tenderness, total self-giving and personal attention, which are required to found and nurture a community (2 Cor 12:14-15).

2.4.2. 1. Personal Visits and Sending Emissaries

As a ground-breaking missionary-pastor, Paul travelled extensively (Rom 15:19; Acts 27:14-20).[31] An important aspect of his strategy was pioneering, that is, after founding a community and preparing local leaders, he would move on to another place. Though his work was very demanding, he made it a point to visit his communities or at least expressed his earnest desire to do so (1 Thess 2:17-3:5; 2 Cor 2:12-3:4). It was necessary because his stay in a community was rather short and he had very little time for the much

needed nurturing of faith.[32] He considered that *personal presence* was *necessary and effective* (Acts 18:11; 1 Cor 4:19; Phil 1:24-26).

When Paul could not visit the communities he continued to strengthen them through his trusted emissaries. They were to make him present in the communities and as such their visit was seen by them as that of the apostle himself: *apostolic presence (parousia)*.[33] It was not just a second best, but was at times a pastoral strategy to keep his distance by sending an emissary.[34] Therefore, he took utmost care in the choice of his emissaries. Two of them deserve special mention: *Timothy* and *Titus*. Timothy, his 'beloved son' had played an important role in the mission of Paul in founding Churches (Acts 16:1-3). His visit to Corinth was to teach them Paul's 'ways in Christ' (1 Cor 4:17) and to Thessalonica to strengthen them in faith and to prevent them from false teachings (1 Thess 3:1-3). Titus, called Paul's 'brother' (2 Cor 2:13; 8:22-23), was sent to Corinth to deal with a very difficult situation which went to the extent of questioning Paul's apostolic authority (2 Cor 10-13; 7:13b-15), and to organize the collection (2 Cor 8-9).

2.4.2. 2. Correspondence

Though he was more concerned with 'founding communities,' Paul considered that his work was incomplete until he formed mature and settled communities. Understanding the permanent value of the written word, he sent them letters.[35] They show how integral was nurturing the communities to Paul's ministry. They are in fact an extension of his preaching (Gal 4:20).[36] Through them his churches had access to basic Christian traditions. They deal with almost all important aspects of Christian faith and life, though some of them only seminally.[37] Being essentially a pastoral theologian, he approached theological issues with pastoral orientation.

The first letter to the Corinthians is a typical example of how Paul, wanting to see their growth in faith (Gal 4:19; 1 Thess 3:1-5), handled various questions with love, pastoral prudence, sensitivity and firmness. Of great significance is the way he dealt with moral issues. Rather than presenting legal solutions or indulging in casuistry, he approached them pastorally. He built up strong theological arguments from which he could draw practical conclusions: from the *indicative of being a Christian, to the*

imperative of its ethical demands (1 Cor 6:15-18.19-20; Col 3:1-3). He focused on the essentials, never compromising on the fundamental truths, even at the risk of becoming unpopular.

2.5. Suffering and Ministry

Suffering as the characteristic mark of the ministers is a constant theme in Paul's letters. He shows that it is integral to the Gospel (1 Cor 1:23-25; 2:1-2) and links it with its proclamation (1 Thess 2:1; 1 Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 4:8-12).[38] It "validated and legitimated his message."[39] He had to undergo opposition and persecution from his communities (including companions), from religious and political authorities[40] and to face threat to life itself from natural calamities.[41] They were not only physical but was also mental like the accusations made by the Corinthians (1 Cor 2-4; 2 Cor 10-13) or indignity associated with tent-making (2 Thess 2:9; 2 Cor 12:13-14).[42] But he told the Corinthians that it is his suffering that commended him as a true and authentic *ambassador of Christ*.[43] He saw that his ministry was a corollary of Christ's suffering inasmuch as it was the 'intended means by which the Gospel was brought to the Gentiles' (2 Cor 11:2-4).[44] In this way the ministers imitate Jesus, by actualizing the gospel of the Cross, and they in turn become models of imitation (1 Cor 11:1).[45]

Paul's ministry was to fill up in his body the suffering of Christ on behalf of the church (Col 1:24).[46] He made it clear that his suffering was for the community (2 Cor 1:6; Phil 1:7).[47] He also considered suffering a minister's destiny (1 Thess 3:3) and accepted it as part of his parental role: 'to spend and to be spent' (2 Cor 12:14-15). Further, suffering was a way of manifesting God's power in the midst of human weakness (2 Cor 12:9-10; 1 Cor 1:25). In a special way, suffering and weakness reveal that ministry is rooted in and is carried out by God's power. The power of God can be revealed only when the messengers and the message (of the Cross) are consonant with each other (1 Cor 1:18). The communities too became models and witnesses of the gospel of the Cross (1 Thess 1:6-7; 2:14).

2.6. Proclamation by Example

The parental responsibility required of Paul that he nurtured his 'children' through personal example for imitation (1 Cor 4:16). As

their 'father' he tried to embody Jesus in himself and give visibility to Christian life for his 'children' to see and to imitate.[48] So he would say that the ministers were 'carrying in their body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in their bodies' (2 Cor 4:10). Hence, he could make a genuine claim that he was mediating Christ and appeal to the communities, "Become imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1; cf. 1 Thess1:6; Phil 3:17) and ultimately 'become imitators of God' (Eph 5:1).

As he thought of himself not only as a teacher, but as a father and mother he could say with some personal authority that his communities should take him as a model. According to him, this is what distinguished him from other teachers and guides (1 Cor 4:15; 1 Thess 2:6-8; cf. 2:1-12). He proposed his hard work and financial self-support as examples to be imitated (2 Thess 3:8).[49] He presented himself as a model to the church elders at Ephesus (Acts 20:18b-35) and to Timothy (2 Tim 4:10-11), who himself was projected as an example (Phil 2:19-23). His message was effective because of the kind of the person that he was (1 Thess 1:5). The messenger was the message.

Paul proposed his co-workers too as models. He commended them for their integrity of life.[50] Understanding the importance of personal credibility, he warned Timothy regarding the choice of leaders (1 Tim 3:1-13; 4:12; 5:22). The communities also were models.[51] The churches in Judaea were models for the Thessalonian community (1 Thess 2:14), who in turn became example of Christian life for those in Macedonia and Achaia (1 Thess 1:7-10). Their authentic lives bore witness to the power of the Word already at work in them (1 Thess 2:13; 2 Thess 1:4, 11). The Christ-like life of Paul (Gal 2:20; Phil1:21) and others contributed to a large extent to their pastoral effectiveness.

2.7. Building up the Local Church

Paul exercised his mission beyond geographic boundaries or ethnic groups. He was one who 'thought globally, but acted locally.' The local Church was at the centre of his Ecclesiology: the Church of God in Corinth, Thessalonica, and so forth. According to him the universal Church comes to life in the local Church.[52] He shared

the global vision of Jesus (Acts 1:8), but was committed to the task of building up the *local* church.

The house churches served as the nucleus of the local church, and bringing them together contributed further to building up a local church in a city.[53] Household baptism was rather common in Paul's time.[54] He appointed house church leaders as community leaders and promoted collaboration among the local churches by sending missionaries to various churches.[55]

2.7.1. Flexibility and Adaptability

Paul is often pictured as a person with strong convictions and uncompromising positions on issues. But adaptability characterized his pastoral strategy, particularly because he was dealing with varied and diverse areas, peoples and situations.

Ways of keeping in touch. After founding a community and preparing local leaders, Paul would move on to another place. But he kept in touch with them in *different* ways: through re-visits, through emissaries and correspondence. This made possible mobility, essential for a wider mission, and contact with the already existing communities.

Choice of setting for preaching. Paul had no fixed setting. Every situation provided a setting for the proclamation of the Good News. [56] But usually he would look out for a synagogue in the new town where Jews gathered for worship and discussion on matters of faith.[57] Basing his discussions on the Scriptures, he would demonstrate that Jesus was the promised Messiah (Acts 17:11; 18:5). He would further elaborate that in the crucified Messiah was revealed God's true wisdom and power (Acts 17:32; 1 Cor 1:18-2:5). He chose also religious / cultural centres (e.g. the Areopagus – Acts 17:16-34) or private houses (Acts 17:5; 18:7).

Mission at work-place. Paul had learned a common trade, tent making (Acts 18:2-3), which enabled him to provide for his own support (Acts 20:34).[58] As a skilled tentmaker he would never have been out of work. His workplace was a centre of evangelization since the Greeks used the work place as an arena for philosophizing.[59] As is clear from Acts and his letters, Paul would

never have missed the opportunity to speak about life in Christ, while earning his sustenance.[60]

Choice of Centres. While it is not so clear whether Paul had a definite plan for his journeys, there are some indications to this effect with regard to the second and third journeys.[61] He targeted two or three hub cities in a province that opened up wider networks through trade, transport, presence of intellectual activity, and strategic location (e.g. Corinth. Pamphylia and Lystra) which naturally brought together a large cross-section of the people. In general, they were places under the influence of Greek civilization or with considerable Jewish presence.[62] The residents of these centres were influential people, educated, socially accepted and financially sound.[63] But in Macedonia he chose Boroea, not the more important Pella. He combined the methods of the itinerant teachers, the Jewish rabbis, and Greek philosophers. He was creative and always open to the Spirit.[64] Because flexibility itself was a strategy, the centres became strategic points.[65]

Personal Life. Adaptability is reflected in his lifestyle, and in his responses to the socio-cultural and religious situation of the people (1 Cor 9:19-22). He could identify himself with every type of social, ethnic or religious group, as he was guided by the principle of becoming "all things to all in order to save some at any cost" (1 Cor 9:22). His concern for the 'weak' made him to adapt himself to avoid scandal (1 Cor 8:13). He expected the same from others too (Rom 14:1-4; 1 Cor 8).[66]

Teaching. Similar approach was shown by his readiness to adjust his teachings if circumstances demanded it. He circumcised Timothy, but gave the reason, though he did not consider it necessary for salvation (Acts 16:3). He made a distinction between his opinion on the one hand, and the teaching of Jesus and the tradition of the Church on the other (1 Cor 7). He was non-compromising on the fundamentals (Gal 4). But there are instances where he seems to have changed his views though this might have caused some confusion. His guiding principle was: "Whatever I do, I do for the sake of the gospel" (1Cor 9:23).

2.7.2. Contextualizing the Gospel

Paul knew that he was trying to communicate a message that far surpassed human comprehension (Rom 11:33). It was not easy to communicate the Gospel in philosophical concepts of his time. He had to make it intelligible to the people in relation to their socio-cultural and religious situation. His letters are more like theological conversations between him and his communities. It may be better to speak of an *interactive theologizing* than contextualized theology as a product. He was 'becoming all things to all people' through *this theologizing process* (1 Cor 9:19-23). He used:

(a) *Literary Forms*. There are numerous literary forms in Pauline writings which are functional in nature – thanksgiving, greetings, liturgical hymns, summaries, exhortation and sayings.[67] (b) *Images*. Paul used abundantly images and metaphors drawn from Jewish and Graeco-Roman sources.[68] In that way he was able to communicate the Gospel by relating it to the thought patterns of his readers. They reflect mostly the life in the great cities – games of the stadium, military affairs, the theatre, sea voyaging, etc...

© *Theological Language and Vocabulary*. His creative adaptability helped him to develop a *theological language* to express the message of the Gospel. Though he had recourse to both the Hebrew and Greek Old Testament (LXX), and the religious language of the Greeks, they were still inadequate to explain the unique mystery of Christ. His experience of the risen Lord could not be transferred literally into Greek.[69] His use of vocabulary points to both the inexhaustibility of the event, and the limitedness of human expression and formulation.[70] He went beyond standardized forms of speech and used a language that would bring out the meaning better for the community.[71] (d) *Style of Argument*. His use of *midrash* (Rom 4; Gal 3:6- 18; 4:1- 31) and *rhetoric* in building up his arguments, and the letter writing style of the Graeco-Roman world deserve attention. In his arguments he used more frequently the Septuagint (LXX) than the Hebrew text.[72]

2.7.3. Dialogue Approach

Paul was a pioneer in the area of religious and cultural Dialogue. The *Areopagus* speech is an attempt towards understanding mission as dialogue, but not the only one (Acts 17:22-34. cf. 14:13-17). He showed genuine appreciation of their longing for God, but challenged the cult of pagan gods. He took a positive stand towards the Greek religion when he said echoing the thinking of the Greek poets, "in him we live and move and have our being, for we are all his offspring" (Acts 17:28). He was prepared to express the message of the Gospel in the categories of the culture and history of the receivers. In this *Kerygma* and *Sophia* meet each other. Jerusalem and Athens begin to understand and dialogue with each other.'[73] In whichever situation he was or whatever he did, he was creative and innovative.

2.7.4. Self-supporting Communities

Paul's trade provided for his support without being a weight on the Churches (Acts 20:34-35; 2 Cor 12:13-14). He tells the Thessalonians quite proudly, "We worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you" (1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:8). This made his longer stay in a place possible and he could be free from the accusation that he was preaching in order to make a living (1 Thess 2:3-6).[74] However, he gratefully acknowledged the material support of the Philippian community which he saw as 'a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God' (Phil 4:15-18; Rom 15:25-28). Besides, there were house church leaders and individuals like Lydia, a trader in purple (Acts 16:14) and Epaphras, probably a textile dealer (Col 1:6-8). But he refused to be controlled by others on account of financial needs (2 Cor 11:8-9). He was not one who would take undue advantage of others' generosity (1 Thess 2:5; Acts 20:33-34). As a rule he wanted himself (1 Cor 9:6-7, 12b-18) and the communities to be financially independent (Gal 6:6; Acts 20:34-35).

At the same time, he was concerned for the needs of others as is illustrated by the collection project organized among the Gentile churches for the poor in Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1-4; Rom 15:25-28).[75] But it was meant not only to meet the material needs of a

community (Gal 2:10), but also to serve as a sign of gratitude that the 'daughter churches' owed to their 'mother church.' He made sure that it became an expression of fellowship between the Jewish and Gentile Christian communities (Rom 15:25-28) and an act of missionary support and partnership among the local churches (2 Cor 8:4; 9:13). 2 Cor 8-9 describes it by terms such as grace (*charis*) service (*diakonia*), fellowship (*koinonia*) and worship (*leitourgia*).

2.8. Ambassadors of Reconciliation

Jesus made commitment to the cause of peace and reconciliation an essential feature of Christian community, as they imply a new type of relationship with God and with others (Mt 5:9). Though God is the source of reconciliation, mediated by Jesus Christ, the task is now entrusted to the ministers as his *ambassadors* (2 Cor 5:18-6:2).[76] God's love initiative (Rom 5:6-9; 2 Cor 5:14) became a reality in the self-emptying love unto death of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 5:21; Phil 2:8; Gal 3:13). It is God himself who is at work in them as they are His ambassadors (2 Cor 1:18; 5:20; 6:1). Their task is to re-present Christ's once- and-for-all reconciling death (2 Cor 4:7-12; Rom 15:16). This was Paul's model of the ministry of reconciliation.

The reconciling death of Jesus unites all in the one commonwealth of God (Eph 2:12-13), thus reversing the disintegrating process that was at work due to sin. This reflects the horizontal aspect of reconciliation. Though Paul was not a peace-negotiator, he worked towards unity in and among the communities. The accommodating spirit that he manifested at the Jerusalem Council is an indication of the spirit of dialogue and reconciliation. His insistence that irrespective of social, cultural and gender distinctions all form a new unity in Christ illustrates the point (Gal 3:26-28; Col 3:11). The collection project too was intended to bring about fellowship among the Jewish and Gentile Christians and among various churches (Rom 15:27).

2.9. Community Participation

Paul is often presented as a solitary genius who went about proclaiming the Gospel and founding Christian communities.[77] That he had many co-workers has been recognized. But his vision of ministry itself as participatory requires greater attention. Paul was

a team-man, and ministry was team-work. His understanding of the Church as the body of Christ,[78] his use of 'we' as a real plural,[79] teaching on charisms and ministries, the designations for the ministers and use of agricultural and architectural images are indications of his vision and praxis of participatory ministry.[80] They demonstrate diversity and complementarity of functions, unity of purpose and inclusiveness, and highlight the possibilities which diversity offers for building up communities.

2.9.1. House Church Leaders

Paul ensured that the communities were actively involved in his ministry, particularly through house churches. The gathering in private homes for worship created an environment for the coming together of the believers as a family, and personal relationships developed. The members shared responsibilities. *From this model of the Church emerged local leaders, especially lay leaders, and even more notably women leaders*.[81] The head of the household was usually a prominent person of the place, well-known, trusted and with financial means, and had considerable influence in the society. Therefore there would be some sympathetic ears to hear the presentation of the Gospel. The house churches provided *the much needed networking* for ministry as they provided a base and ready-made set of contacts, and *Paul built this into his mission strategy*.[82] They were not only self-supporting, but could also provide for the needs of the travelling missionaries (1 Cor 16:5-12; Rom 15:22-24).[83]

2.9.2. Individual Co-Workers

The long list of co-workers mentioned in Rom 16, provides a wide spectrum of participatory ministry, variety of scope and areas of ministry. Paul selected his co-workers carefully, who were known for their integrity and commitment (1 Cor 4:17; Phil 2:19). Of circa 100 ministers mentioned by Luke (Acts) and Paul, some 36 are named with special titles of recognition. They belong to the Jewish and Gentile communities, ordained and lay ministers, women and men. These designations indicate their special role in building up and strengthening the communities. Their functions included hosting

a house church, instructing the believers, offering hospitality to travelling missionaries, working as emissaries and establishing local contacts. It was to Paul's credit that he was able to ensure effective collaboration of so many. He planted, others nurtured; he laid the foundation, others built upon it (1 Cor 3:5-15).

It was *Barnabas* who introduced Paul to the apostles (Acts 9:27) and guided the latter in the first phase of their missionary journey (Acts 9:27; 11:25-26; 13:50). Both of them went to the Jerusalem Council to present the case of the Gentile Christians (Acts 15:2; Gal 2:9).[84] He is named among the apostles and teachers along with Paul (cf. Acts 13). *Silvanus* (Silas) was Paul's companion during the latter's second missionary journey (Acts 15:40).[85] He was so closely associated with Paul that he is mentioned as co-sender of some of the letters.[86]

2.9.3. Empowering Lay Leaders

There were *lay people* too among his close co-workers (Rom 16:1-16). The renowned couple – Prisca (Priscilla) and Aquila are among the more prominent lay leaders (Rom 16:3-5a).[87] They corrected Apollos on certain theological points and instructed him in faith (Acts 18:26). Some other outstanding lay leaders were Epaphroditus, who is qualified as co-worker and fellow-soldier (Phil 2:25) and Epaphras who evangelized the Lycus valley (Col 1:6-8; 4:13; Phlm 23).

Paul understood the power and effectiveness of feminine genius. Among the prominent women collaborators of Paul we find *Phoebe*, *Prisca* and *Junia*. *Phoebe* (Rom 16:1-2) is mentioned as an active community leader as *diakonos* [88] like Paul himself (1 Cor 3:5). He also calls her *prostatis*,[89] thereby reaffirming her leading role in the church of Cenchrae. *Prisca* was Paul's generous hostess, during his prolonged stay at Corinth and Ephesus.[90] With the addition of 'in Christ Jesus' to her work he wanted to emphasize her participation in the service of the Gospel like her husband even by risking her life.[91] She may be considered the first woman theologian who instructed the learned Alexandrian Apollos. Paul presents *Junia* (Rom 16:7) as a fellow prisoner more in the sense of 'being prisoners together for the same cause,' than being in the same place.[92] She

is designated as *outstanding among the apostles*.[93] She along with her missionary team member (Andronicus) received high praise.[94]

Considering certain tendencies to relativise their mission on the claim that Paul subordinated the role of women, it is significant how he esteemed them as his colleagues in mission and recognized their leadership role like their male counterparts.[95] What was seen as a barrier (e.g. male-female distinction) was considered by him as complementary roles for building up communities. He was just putting into practice his vision of humanity in Christ where religious, social and gender discrimination does not exist (Gal 3:26-28).[96] Thus, he shared the vision of Jesus who re-defined radically the place and role of women in his community.

2.9.4. Inspiring Leadership

Paul's leadership role should not be reduced to some sociological phenomenon. Though he had a wide circle of co-workers at various levels, he exercised leadership *as apostle par excellence* (1 Cor 9:1-2; Gal 1:1.15-16), father and founder of communities (1 Cor 3:10; 4:15). The participatory dimension of ministry helped him to understand that ministers are only *servants* (1 Cor 3:5; 5:20), and ministry is *diakonia* and grace (1 Cor 3:5-6).

He understood leadership as empowering others. He exercised his authority in order to inspire, encourage and to build up as he himself states: "for building up, and not for tearing down" (2 Cor 13:10). He trusted his co-workers, delegated power and commended them for their significant contribution as is indicated by the titles and the type of ministry they were engaged in (Rom 16:1-21). He not only wrote about diversity of charisms and ministries (1 Cor 12; Eph 4), but also put this insight into practice.

2.9.5. Promoting Relationships

Paul understood that leadership is a relationship. One should not consider Pauline model of collaborative ministry merely from a functional point of view, i.e. for the sake of effective management and results. He worked through his relationships. His co-workers were not mere instruments and agents. He cultivated deep and sincere relationships both with his communities and individual ministers. This personal attention qualifies him to be a transformational leader.

Many of the terms that Paul used to qualify his co-workers emphasized this relationship dimension and indicate his genuine appreciation of them. An experience of communion led to a ministry of building up communities for communion. In other words, he was creating the social capital that would contribute to the success of his mission.[97]

But there were also instances of strained relationships e.g. between Paul and Barnabas with regard to John Mark (Acts 15:36-41). Later, Paul seemed to have made up with Barnabas (1 Cor 9:6) and Mark (Col 4:10), and wanted to welcome him back (2 Tim 4:11). He appealed to Euodia and Synteche to bury their differences and to be reconciled with each other for the sake of the Gospel (Phil 4:2-3). He was gracious in commending Apollos to the Corinthian community (1 Cor 16:12) in spite of their earlier disagreement (1 Cor 1:10-17). Even though he had serious differences with Peter, Paul submitted himself to his authority (Gal 2:6-14). He was respectful in dissent, magnanimous in the face of opposition, forgiving and caring in the face of rejection. He had the ability to look beyond personal interests to wider horizons of mission. For the sake of the Gospel, he could transcend differences and transform them into opportunities (Phil 1:18).

Paul, Then and Now

Though the situations and circumstances then and now are different, Paul's vision and practice can throw up insights that are helpful, particularly in the Indian context.

3.1. Witnessing to the Gospel

It is said that faith cannot be taught, but can only be shared as a lived experience. This was the starting point of Paul. He emphasized this experiential dimension in all his teaching: "For me to live is Christ" (Phil 1:21) or "It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). He was not just imparting knowledge about Christ. He insisted on personal integrity in his own life and that of his co-workers for effective witnessing (I Cor 4:15-16; 11:1). Paul outlines certain features that should characterize the life of those who proclaim the gospel: commitment, basic convictions, sincerity, honesty and

integrity, love of justice, transparency in life, perseverance, adaptability and flexibility. They are necessary for *responsible stewardship and credible witnessing*. There is no better way of mission than the witness of a transformed life (see 1 Jn 1:1), as Pope Paul VI has it so well formulated in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."[98]

3.2. Ministry of the Word

The mission of the Church is to be grounded in the *word of God*. One of the priorities of the missionary task proposed by the first Asian Mission Congress is "a deeper study and living of the word of God in such a way that the power of Jesus' story transforms our life."[99] Prophet Malachi pronounces a condemnation on all those who neglect this ministry (Mal 2:8-9). The temptation to abandon the ministry of the Word, for other more visible and measurable forms of ministry is an ever-present one (Acts 6:2), and the cry of the Ethiopian seeking an interpretation of the Word is felt even more strongly today (Acts 8:31).

The role of the ministers of the Word is to help the community to see life against the backdrop of God's plan. Thus ministry of the Word becomes telling a story that is both "Good" and "News", giving life to the Scriptures. What is needed today is a *meaningful interpretation* of the Scriptures that can recreate the Emmaus experience of the disciples (Lk 24:13-35), or a *prophetic proclamation* of the Word, as Jesus did in the Synagogue of Nazareth (Lk 4:16-21) that can provide a vision for the future and help people to see it as challenging and energizing their lives.

3.3. Relationship Model

Paul attached great importance to personal relationship as can be seen by his use of a set of terms and expressions which are very personal. His personal approach is evident in relation to his co-workers and to the communities. The way he described the communities gives a clear indication of his personal relationship with them (1 Thess 1:2-10; 2:17-20; Phil 1:3-8). Small Christian Community (SCC) model is a viable and practical model to promote personal relationship and fellowship within the community. In this

way, community-building becomes a life-giving activity and creates in the people an awareness of 'belonging to each other.' Personal relationship in building up communities has become all the more necessary and requires urgent attention as Pentecostal groups/sects are making inroads into established churches.

3.4. Participatory Leadership

Paul's idea that a minister is co-working with God (1 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 6:1) implies that all ministers are fellow-workers among themselves (1 Cor 3:9). The leadership has to support and empower the co-workers. The beauty and fruitfulness of the vine is in the beauty and fruitfulness of its branches (Jn 15:1-10). When Jesus noticed that the people had no food, without intervening immediately, he empowered the disciples: "You give them something to eat" (Lk 9:13).

The task of the leaders is to facilitate the emergence of various ministerial gifts in the communities, particularly of the lay faithful. Leadership is exercised in such a way that people are challenged to go beyond themselves. Following the house church model, the Small Christian Communities can help to identify talented community leaders and provide opportunities for participatory leadership.

The vision of the intellectuals, the generosity of women, the dynamism of the youth and the resourcefulness of lay movements offer immense possibilities and can be of great assistance. But it calls for creative approaches, openness and readiness to collaborate. It may be a worthwhile to think of *relevant and functioning models of participatory structures and leadership*, particularly where participatory decision making is a constituent element of society particularly in the tribal societies of North-East India.

Paul provided the theological basis for understanding the *role of women in the Church* in terms of "reciprocal partnership and inclusive leadership."[100] The concluding Statement of the 28th Plenary Assembly of the CBCI can be considered a reflection of an awakening in the Church.[101] The Bishops, after reaffirming the pain expressed in their 1992 Assembly Statement, commit themselves to more purposeful action.[102] A meaningful celebration of the Pauline Year

provides an opportunity to initiate such a mission. Let us hope for the days when the 'Priscas' in the Church are given recognition, so that they can instruct and guide the 'Apollos' of our time.

3.5. Involvement in *Peace-efforts*

In the world and in India particularly, there are conflicts at various levels: social, ethnic, economic and even religious. Fear and suspicion characterize modern society. But there is also a deep desire for peace. The ministry of peacemaking responds to this longing for peace. Reconciliation precedes peace. Ultimately it should lead to harmony and communion. The prophetic mission of the Church should include efforts to usher in peace and harmony among various groups of people, by promoting justice, cultivating appreciation of others, and initiating structures for communion and fellowship. This also means freeing human beings from selfishness and isolation, from fear and threat (real or perceived) and opening up new possibilities for harmonious co-existence and meaningful collaboration. This can be done by facilitating constant interaction and creative and meaningful dialogue within the Church and in relation to others. The Church as the bearer of the *Good News* must offer it in such a way that it truly becomes so.

3.7. Inculturating the Gospel

Pope John Paul II presented Paul as a model of cultural and religious dialogue.[103] Images, metaphors, symbols and terms existing in the socio-cultural and religious context of the people can communicate better than what is expressed through literal translation.[104] They have a more effective evocative and communicative power, and as they are drawn from the life of the people, they experience some kind of connaturality with them.

Knowing the people requires total insertion which includes knowledge of their language, culture and religious beliefs, traditions and practices, myths, stories and folklore, and above all the values that are embodied in them (EA 20*f*). Inculturation has to help the integration of the Christian experience of the local Church into its cultural ethos, in such a way that this experience not only expresses itself in elements of a culture, but becomes a force that animates

this culture. This can also contribute towards the promotion of a 'peoples' theology.'[105] Inculturation of the message has to "bring the power of the Gospel in the very heart of culture and cultures."[106] The cultural sensitivity and creativity that Paul showed can serve as a model for communication of the Gospel without compromising its non-negotiable aspects.[107]

Conclusion

Paul's methods of building communities can provide very useful insights for developing a relevant missionary-pastoral theology and praxis. Pastoral presence and availability, adaptability, a Word-centred ministry and Christ-centred spirituality, peace-making, participatory leadership with focus on team ministry, building up the local Church by developing contextual theologies and inculturated forms of worship, and communion model of the Church, are some of the aspects that have special relevance for India.

Notes

[1]   A discussion on the two types of texts i.e. from Acts (9:1-19; 22:3-16; 26:4-18) and from Paul (Gal 1:11-17; Phil 3:7-12; 1 Cor 15:8, 44-45; 2 Cor 4:6) or distinction between Acts 9 which is a third person narrative and Acts 22 & 26 which are speech narratives, is beyond the scope of this paper.

[2]   See F. Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament* (ed.) Frank Clarke (London: SCM, 1965) 68.

[3]   P. T. O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul. An Exegetical and Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids, MI/Carlisle: Baker Books/Paternoster Press, 1995) 5. Opinions are divided whether or not Paul's experience on the road to Damascus can appropriately be called a 'conversion.' Kreister Stendhall argued that we should speak, not of Paul's conversion but rather of his call. Paul receives a new and special calling in God's service... Paul was called to a specific task – made clear to him by his experience of the risen Lord of apostleship to the Gentiles. However, the Jewish scholar Alan Segal insists that Paul was both converted and called. As cited by D. Horrell, *An Introduction to the Study of Paul* (London: Continuum, 2002) 26-27.

[4]   His conversion was not a mere change of religion. He was neither tormented nor guilt-ridden because of his sins; nor did he experience an

inner conflict from which he needed to be delivered. Therefore he was not just rescued from a life of aimless dissipation to a life of Christian virtue. See F. Pereira, *Gripped by God in Christ: The Mind and Heart of St Paul* (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 1993) 32.

[5] Crossan and Reed discuss the question whether Paul was primarily focusing on Gentiles as a whole or the devout Greeks and semi–Jews or pagan *sympathizers*. See J. D. Crossan & J. L. Reed, *In Search of Paul: A New Vision of Paul's Words and World* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2004) 34-41.

[6] O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 11.

[7] This is the *eschatological* dimension of his ministry in so far as his preaching is meant together the Jews and the Gentiles. O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 12, 45-46.

[8] It is the title by which he introduces himself in his letters the exception being 1-2 Thess. Crossan and Reed think that for Luke, "Paul was not an apostle and could never be one" because he insists on 'presence with earthly Jesus' as a criterion and considers the Twelve as a closed group, whereas for Paul "Apostolicity derives from revelation and vocation by the risen Lord" (Rom 1:1; Gal 1:1, 15-16; 1Cor 1:1; 9:3; 15:8-10; 2 Cor 1:1). See, *In Search of Paul*, 28-30. He is less an apostle as he was not an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry and did not belong to *numerus clausus* of the Twelve, but is a great apostle as *servant of the Word and the Spirit and a pioneer of inculturation*. See L. Legrand, *Unity and Plurality. Mission in the Bible* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988) 111.

[9] *Theologia crucis* was central to his understanding of the gospel. In a way he makes it as a characteristic that distinguishes him from his rival 'apostles' who believed in 'signs, wonders and mighty works' (2 Cor 12:12). See C. Roetzel, *Paul: The Man and the Myth* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999) 54-60. In Gal 1-2; 6:11-18 1 Cor 9 as well as in 2 Cor 10-13 he defends at length his right to this title.

[10] In his early letters the term apostle was used in the sense of missionary (1 Thess 2:7; Phil 2:25). Though he did not consider himself as one of the twelve and he did not have contact with earthly Jesus, he defends himself and the mandate he received from the Lord (Gal 1:1.11-16; 2:7-10). See Legrand, *Unity and Plurality*, 117-118. Crossan & Reed, *In Search of Paul*, 28-30.

[11] L. M. Bermejo, *Paul, Missionary, Mystic, Martyr* (Anand: Gujrat Sahitya Prakash, 2007) 310 -319; F. Pereira, "Prayer in St. Paul," *Bible Bhashyam 5* (1979) 40-62. See also J. Varickasseril, *Prayer and Min-*

istry: A Harmonious Spirituality of Contemplation and Action in the Acts of the Apostles (Studies in Spirituality - 1; Shillong: Vendrame Institute Publications, 2007) 328-365.

[12] As cited by Legrand, *Unity and Plurality*, 129.

[13] T. d'Aquino Sequeira, "Prayer: A Pauline Perspective," *Jeevadhara* 33/104 (2003) 148-149.

[14] O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 30.

[15] Rom 1:8-10; 1 Cor 1:4-5; Eph 3:16-19; Col 1:9-11.

[16] Acts 16:25; 20:36; 21:5, 20; 27:35; 28:8, 15.

[17] Most of his letters begin with a prayer e.g. Rom 1:8-12; 1 Cor 1:4-9; 2 Cor 1:3-5; Phil 1:3-11; 1 Thess 1:2-4; 2 Thess 1:3-5; Phlm 4-5; Eph 1:3-13; Col 1:3-11. See L. Legrand, "St Paul the Missionary," *Vaiharai* 12/2 (2007) 13.

[18] S. C. Barton, "Paul as Missionary and Pastor," in J. D. G. Dunn (ed.) *Cambridge Companion to St Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 46.

[19] Legrand, *Unity and Plurality*, 111.

[20] Rom 11:33-36; 1 Cor 2:6-10; Eph 3:1-12, 20-21; Col 1:25-29. See Legrand, *Unity and Plurality*, 127.

[21] J. Murphy- O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 124.

[22] Rom 15:15-16 presents him as a liturgical minister (*leitourgos*) and his ministry of the Word as priestly service (*hierourgein*). O'Brien speaks of a *new type of cultic act* that takes place 'out in the world' rather than in the Temple, thereby transcending the cultic barrier between sacred and secular. O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 30-32, 39-41. Barton, "Paul as Missionary and Pastor," 39.

[23] Legrand, *Unity and Plurality*, 111.

[24] T. Manjaly, "Missionary as Builder of Communities: Mission Strategy in 1 Thess 2, 1-12," *Indian Missiological Review* 18/3 (1996) 83-96.

[25] See T. Manjaly, "Missionary and Pastoral Images in 2 Tim 2, 1-26," *Indian Missiological Review* 19 (1997) 81–90, especially pp. 82-89; T. Manjaly, *Collaborative Ministry: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Synergos in Paul* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2001) 39-48.

[26] Beverly Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2007) 6.

[27] For the following images see Barton, "Paul as Missionary and Pastor," 37-38.

[28] Paul's role is referred to as evangelism in the sense of sowing the seed of the Gospel through preaching (cf. Mk 4:1-20; 4:34-38): planting (1 Cor 3:6-9; 9:7, 10, 11), laying the foundation (1 Cor 3:10; Rom 15:20), giving birth (1 Cor 4:15; Phlm 10) and betrothing (2 Cor 11:2). See O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 42.

[29] See above section on images of community building. See also T. Manjaly, "Mission as Mothering," *Bible Bhashyam* XXV/3 (1999) 165-185.

[30] Roetzel, *Paul: The Man and the Myth*, 52. According to Gaventa, paternal and maternal images are not interchangeable. Whereas the former emphasizes the singular act of begetting, the latter focuses on nurturing over a longer period of time. Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul*, 12.

[31] Barton says that Paul may have travelled as much as ten thousand miles. See "Paul as Missionary and Pastor," 40; R. Jewett, *A Chronology of Paul's Life* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1979) 59-61.

[32] The exceptions are Corinth about two years and Ephesus for about three years (during the third journey).

[33] R. W. Funk, "Apostolic *Parousia*, Its Form and Significance,' in W. R. Farmer, C.F.D. Moule & R.R. Niebuhr (eds.) *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies presented to John Knox* (Cambridge: University Press, 1968) 249-268, especially 252-255.

[34] Barton, "Paul as Missionary and Pastor," 46.

[35] Of the 260 chapters in the New Testament, Paul has some 87 of them, which constitute nearly a third of the New Testament.

[36] Titus was sent to Corinth in the midst of tension between Paul and the Corinthians. Barton, "Paul as Missionary and Pastor," 46.

[37] Paul presents theological issues such as justification by faith and redemption (Rom-Gal), Christology (Phil-Col), mystery of the Church (1 Cor-Eph-Col), baptism (Rom 6) the Eucharist (1 Cor 11), resurrection and eschatology (1 Cor 15; 1-2 Thess) or ethical and moral questions (1 Cor 5-7), and pastoral issues such as Eucharistic gathering (1 Cor 11) diversity of charisms (1 Cor 12-14).

[38] Roetzel, *Paul: The Man and the Myth*, 53.

[39] T. R. Schreiner, *Paul Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Downer Grove, IL / Leicester: InterVarsity / Apollos, 2001) 88.

[40] Paul faced opposition from Jews and Gentiles (cf. 2 Cor 11:24-26). See Crossan & Reed, *In search of Paul*, 39-40.

[41] Gloria Patmury, *The Disappointments of St Paul in his Missionary Endeavour* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1992) 28-93 for details.

[42] See R. F. Hock, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) 31-37.

[43] 2 Cor 4:10-12; 6:4-10; 11:23-28; Phil 4:10-13; 1 Thess 2:1-12. His credentials – suffering and hardships - are hardly ambassadorial credentials (2 Cor 4: 8-12; 6:4-5). But he wanted to make it clear that he is an ambassador of the sinless one who through his death reconciled the world to God. Barton, "Paul as Missionary and Pastor," 36-37.

[44] Schreiner, *Paul Apostle of God's Glory in Christ*, 99, 102.

[45] I Thess 2: 1-4; 3: 3; 1 Cor 1:18-25; 2 Cor 4: 10-11; Col 1: 24. In 1 Cor 4:9-13 Paul presents *theologia crucis* along with a *theologia gloriae*.

[46] Schreiner, *Paul Apostle of God's Glory in Christ*, 102.

[47] Paul refers to the suffering of the ministers as their actual living out of the suffering of Christ (1 Cor 4:10-13a; 2 Cor 4: 8-9; 6: 4b-5; 6: 8-10; 11:23b-29; Rom 8: 35; Phil 4, 12).

[48] Barton, "Paul as Missionary and Pastor," 45.

[49] For details see the section on *self-supporting mission*.

[50] *Timothy* - 2 Cor 4:17; Phil 2:19-23; 1 Thess 3:1-2; *Titus* - 2 Cor 8:22-24.

[51] The Philippian community is proposed a model of authentic Christian life and missionary collaboration (Phil 1:3-7; 4:14-18). Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life*, 124.

[52] W. Kasper, "On the Church: a friendly reply to Cardinal Ratzinger," *Furrow* 52 (2001) 326 - 328.

[53] Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life*, 236. See also V. P. Branick, *The House Church in the Writings of Paul* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989); D. Birkey, "The House Church: A Missiological Model," *Missiology* 19 (1991) 69-80; H. Hendrickx, "The "House Church" in Paul's Letters," *Theology Annual* 12 (1990-91) 154-166.

[54] E.g. Lydia - Acts 16:11-15; Crispus – 18:8. The household was more than a modern nuclear family: it included members of the family, slaves,

hired labourers, tenants, business associates and more distant kinsmen. The house church of Stephanas (1 Cor 1:16; 16:15), Gaius (1 Cor 1:14; Rom 16:12-13), Phoebe (Rom 16:1-2), Prisca and Aquila (Rom 16:3-5; Acts 18:2) Philemon (Phlm 2) and Nympha (Col 4:15) were prominent among them.

[55] 'To send someone on' was a technical term in the NT to offer support for a missionary journey (Rom 15:23-24; 1 Cor 16:6.11; 2 Cor 1:16; Tit 3:13; Acts 15:3).

[56] Paul did his preaching in houses (1 Cor 1:16; Acts 16:15, 40; 17:5-6 18:3, 7), while recovering from sickness (Gal 4:13-15), or from persecutions (1 Thess 2:2), or in prison (Phil 1:12-14; Phlm 10).

[57] Synagogues in Antioch of Pisidia: Acts 13:13-49; Iconium: Acts 14:1; Thessalonica – Acts 17:1; Beroea – 17:10; Athens – 17:17; Corinth - 18:4; Ephesus – 18:19; 19:18. See Crossan & Reed, *In Search of Paul*, 35-40.

[58] See also 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:8; 1 Cor 4:11-12; 9:6-7, 12b-15, 18; 2 Cor 12:13-14. Prisca and Aquila provided Paul place for practising his profession of tent making. See R. F. Hock, "The Workshop as social setting for Paul's missionary Preaching," *CBQ* 41 (1979) 438-450.

[59] Even 1 Thess 2:1-12 does not conclusively show that he preached while working. It is only an inference, mostly based on the practice of Greek philosophers (e.g. Socrates in the house of Cynic Simon). If he actually did, that would have provided him with an opportunity to reach out so many people, as he seems to have practiced his trade in many places. Hock, "The Workshop as social setting," 438, 444-450.

[60] K. J. Hanlon, *Paul: Pastor of Communities for today* (Middlegreen: St Paul, 1991) 12.

[61] R. Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983) 10-12.

[62] Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 14-17.

[63] The business contacts of Lydia, or Prisca and Aquila could provide useful missionary network.

[64] Legrand, "St Paul the Missionary," 10.

[65] Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 17.

[66] J. Patmury, "Concepts and Strategies of Paul's Mission" in J. Kavunkal and F. Hrangkhuma (eds.) *Bible and Mission in India Today* (FOIM Series 1; Mumbai: St Pauls, 1993) 157.

[67] G Soares-Prabhu, "The New Testament as a Model of Inculturation," *Jeevadhara* 6 (1976) 269-270.

[68] For a very exhaustive treatment of metaphors in Paul, see David J. Williams, *Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999).

[69] The Torah is much more than *nomos*; *Dikaiosyne* is more than legal justice. *Mysterion,* as used in Greek mystery cult, could not explain adequately the mystery of Christ.

[70] For example, the meaning of the death of Christ is expressed as reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18-20; Rom 5:10-11; Eph 2:16), sacrifice (Rom 3:25; 8:3), redemption (Rom 3:24; 1 Cor 7:21-23; Gal 4:5) self-giving/emptying (Gal 1:4; Phil 2:7), etc. D. Fleming., *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns of Theology and Mission* (Downers Grove: IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005) 106.

[71] Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament,* 107.

[72] E.g. 2 Cor 4:13 = Pss. 114:6 & 115:1; Phil 2:8 = Ps 114:6-9.

[73] L. Legrand, "The Missionary Significance of Areopagus Speech," in G Gispert-Sauch (ed.) *God's Word among Men* (Delhi: Vidyajyoti, 1973) 69-71; cf. T. Manjaly, "Gospel – Culture interface: A Biblical approach," *Omnis Terra* 36, no. 324 (2002) 68.

[74] Barton, "Paul as Missionary and Pastor," 42.

[75] 1 Cor 16:1-4; Gal 2:10; Rom 15:25-27; Acts 20:16.22; 24:17.

[76] Barton, "Paul as Missionary and Pastor," 36-37.

[77] D .J. Harrington, "Paul and Collaborative Ministry," *New Theology Review* 3 (1990) 62.

[78] Rom 12:3-8, 27; 1 Cor 6:15; 10:16-17; 12:12, 27; Eph 1:23; 4:11-16; 5:22; Col 1:15-20.

[79] Traditional interpretation considers Luke as Paul's travelling companion. But there are difficulties e.g. Chronology. E. Stourton, *Paul of Tarsus .A visionary Life* (Mahwah, NJ: Hidden Spring, 2005) 80-82.

[80] Paul began his ministry at the invitation of Ananias. Later on, Barnabas became his mentor and presented Paul to the apostles. As a team Barnabas and Paul were sent to Antioch (Acts 11:30). When the two separated (Acts 15:37-40), he started a new configuration of co-workers: first Silas, later on Timothy and Titus, gradually inducting new members, such as local and house Church leaders including women.

[81] T. Manjaly, "The Pauline House Church: Some Pastoral Reflections," in G Kottuppallil and J. Varickasseril (eds.) *He Taught: A Festschrift in Honour of Sylvanus Sngi Lyngdoh,* SDB (Shillong: Vendrame Institute Publications, 1996) 12-41.

[82] Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life,* 234-235. Prisca and Aquila were in Rome (Acts 18:1), in Corinth (1 Cor 16:19) Ephesus (2 Tim 4:19) and again in Rome (Rom 16:3-5a). Through business Epaphras too had wide contacts.

[83] The travelling missionaries made use of such occasions for deepening the faith of the house church members. It is perhaps for this reason that the early Church considered refusal to provide for the needs of itinerant missionaries as equivalent to working against the gospel (3 John 1-10).

[84] Paul seemed to have had three categories of co-workers: the inner circle consisting of Barnabas, Silas, Timothy and perhaps Titus; independent co-workers like Titus, Priscilla and Aquila; ad finally local community leaders like Epaphroditus, Epaphras, Gaius, Euodia and Synteche etc... W.-H. Ollrog, *Paulus und Seine Mitarbeiter. Untersuchungen zu Theorie und Praxis der paulinischen Mission* (WMANT 50; Neukirchen Vluyn: Neukirchner Verlag, 1979) 119-125.

[85] In Philippi (16:19-40), in Thessalonica (17:1-9), in Corinth (1 Cor 1:19).

[86] In the section on emissaries we have referred to Timothy and Titus. They are given Paul's favourite title for co-workers: *synergos.* The largest use of *syn* compounds in the NT is in Paul, circa 120 words. See T. R. Glover, "A Preposition of St. Paul's," *Exp. VIII* Series 12 (1916) 292; McGrath, "Syn Words in Saint Paul," *CBQ,* 14 (1952) 219; Manjaly, *Collaborative Ministry,* 49-58.

[87] P. A. Sampathkumar, "Aquila and Priscilla: A Family at the Service of the Word," *Indian Theological Studies* 34/1-3 (1997) 185-201.

[88] In the light of 1 Tim 3:8-13, where Paul lays down qualities for a deacon *(diakonos),* Phoebe can be considered a minister in the Church. See, R. Bieringer, "Women leadership in Romans 16: The leading Roles of Phoebe, Prisca and Junia in Early Christianity," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 44 (2007) 228-230. Susan Smith, "Women Coworkers and Apostles with Paul," *The Bible Today* 46 (2008) 93-98; Mary Ann Beavis, "I Commend to You Our Sister: Women in Romans 16:1-16," *The Bible Today* 46 (2008) 227-232.

[89] The term as applied to Phoebe probably means 'benefactor' or 'patron-ess', underscoring her protective role towards those under her care, by offering financial support to travelling missionaries, social networks and probably defending Christian causes before secular authorities. The use of *prohistemi* in Rom 12:8 & 1 Thess 5:18 indicate this. See, Bieringer, "Women leadership in Romans 16," 230-232; J. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1993) 731.

[90] In four of the six references to the couple, Prisca is named first (Acts 18:18, 26; Rom 16:3; 2 Tim 4:19), and in Acts 18:2 & 2 Cor 16:19 after Aquila. The leadership role of Prisca is significant. She is called *synergos*, Paul's favourite title for co-workers like Euodia and Synteche. See Manjaly, *Collaborative Ministry*, 256-258 & 282-291.

[91] See Acts 18:2-3.18.26; Rom 16:3-5; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19. In the Acts there seems to be a tendency to play down their role to that of being hosts and fellow tentmakers, may be in an attempt to give greater importance to Peter and Paul. See Bieringer, "Women leadership in Romans 16," 320-321.

[92] For a discussion on the gender of Junia see Manjaly, *Collaborative Ministry*, 259-260 and footnotes 72-75, Bieringer, "Women leadership in Romans 16," Part II, 322-325 and E. J. Epp, *Junia: The first Woman Apostle* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005) 69-81.

[93] Bieringer concludes that Paul was speaking of a woman Junia, that she was prominent among the Apostles because of her role in the mission of the church (not just considered eminent by the apostles) and that he was speaking of her as apostle in the real sense because of her leader-ship role. Bieringer, "Women leadership in Romans 16," 328. See for discussion, ibid. pp. 325-328.

[94] Epp thinks that Junia and Andronicus were probably a missionary couple. See *Junia*, 69-81.

[95] There were other women co-workers: Tryphana and Tryphosa (Rom 16:12); Persis (Rom 16:12); Mary (Rom 16:6), and Julia (Rom 16:15); Nympha, who hosted a house Church (Col 4:15); Euodia and Synteche, Paul's close co-workers in his struggles for the Gospel (Phil 4:2-3); Apphia, a missionary colleague (Phlm 1-2) and Eunice, mother of Timo-thy who served the missionaries in journey (2 Tim 1:5).

[96] Paul applied titles to his women co-workers just as he did to his male co-workers.

[97] R.S. Ascough & Sandy Cotton, *Passionate Visionary. Leadership Les-sons from the Apostle Paul* (Indian Edition; Mumbai: St Pauls, 2006) 79.

[98]   Pope Paul VI, Address to the members of the *Consilium de Laicis* (2 October 1974): *AAS* 66 (1974) 568 as cited in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) no. 41.

[99]   Chiang Mai, 18-22 October, 2006. See *L'Osservatore Romano* (English Ed. 24 January, 2007) 9.

[100]   R. Chennattu, titles her recent article, "Reciprocal Partnership and Inclusive Leadership." See in S. J. Puykunnel & J. Varickasseril (eds.) *Learning from St. Paul. Reflections for the Pauline Year* (Shillong: Vendrame Institute and DBCIC Publications, 2008) 139, 141-146.

[101]   At Jamshedpur on 13-20 February, 2008 on the theme "Empowerment of Women in the Church and Society." See Vidyajyoti 72/4 (2008) 301-305 for the Statement, and 72/6 (2008) 402-475 for the Keynote Address and the Responses.

[102]   "With a sense of sorrow we must admit that the women feel discriminated against, even in the Church" quoted in the *2008 Statement*, 302. "We commit ourselves as a body to evolve within a period of one year from now, a gender policy developed by each Regional Bishops' Conference with time bound action plans for their region with monitoring mechanisms." See *Statement*, 304.

[103]   The Pope says, "Evangelizers can take heart from the experience of Saint Paul engaged in dialogue with the philosophical, cultural and religious values of his listeners." See Post-Synodal Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* (EA), no. 20. He encourages narrative method and relational, historical and cosmic perspectives, which are akin to peoples' cultural forms in order to present Christ (no. 20).

[104]   Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) no. 63; EA, no. 20*g*.

[105]   The process of genuine inculturation calls for *an attitude of openness, a cultural metanoia* and *creativity*. See Manjaly, "Gospel-Culture Interface," 71-73

[106]   John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979) no. 53. T. Menamparampil, "Becoming All Things to Men," *Word & Worship* 36/2 (2003) 93.

[107]   D. Fleming, "Contextualizing the Gospel at Athens: Paul's Areopagus Address as a Paradigm for Missionary Communication," *Missiology* XXX/2 (2002) 207; T. Menamparampil, "Know the People you serve," in P. Haokip, T. Manjaly & K. Poovathumkudy (eds.) *Know Your People. Cultural Sensitivity in Formation* (Shillong: Oriens Publications, 2005) 37-51.