

The Strategies of Paul the Missionary

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Among all the New Testament writers Paul is highly regarded as a Christian theologian. James Dunn, for instance, observes, ‘From the perspective of subsequent generations, Paul is undoubtedly the *first* Christian theologian.’¹ However, as P.T. O’Brien observes, the missionary dimension of Paul’s theology has not duly been recognized. He cites N.A. Dahl and M. Hengel who rightly comment that Paul was the first Christian theologian precisely because he was the first Christian missionary.² In similar vein, E. J. Schnabel maintains that Paul the missionary cannot be separated from Paul the theologian, for missionary work and theological reflection about the gospel are mutually dependent.³ However, S.C. Barton, in his socio-political reading of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, concludes that Paul was not a missionary, but an ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ (see 1 Cor. 1:1). He concludes thus by seeing the danger of the socio-political dimension of Paul’s work becoming submerged under the assumption-laden word “missionary”.⁴ While it is necessary not to ignore the socio-political setting against which 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 can be interpreted, it would be hasty to conclude on the basis of a selected reading of a single passage that Paul was not a missionary. The very word ἀπόστολος, meaning a “sent one”, carries in it the missionary tone.⁵ The epithet “missionary” does not give narrowly the religious and theological connotation alone, as Barton assumes, but it has a wider connotation including the socio-political and economic factors.

Luke, who joined Paul at Troas during Paul’s second missionary journey to be his travel companion, records that Paul, the missionary, undertook three missionary journeys,⁶ before he journeyed finally to Rome, and founded churches in key cities of Asia and Europe within a span of about twelve years (AD 46-57).⁷ How was it possible

¹ J.D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 2.

² P.T. O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books / Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1995), p. xi.

³ E. J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, Vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press / Leicester: Apollos, ET 2004), p. 1473.

⁴ S.C. Barton, “‘All Things to All People’: Paul and the Law in the Light of 1 Corinthians 9.19-23”, in J.D.G. Dunn (ed.), *Paul and the Mosaic Law* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1996), p. 284.

⁵ See K.H. Rengstorff, “ἀπόστολος”, *TDNT*, Vol. I, p. 422; C.F.D. Moule, “A Note on ἈΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ”, in idem, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Cambridge: University Press, 1962), esp. p. 157.

⁶ The popular phrase ‘three missionary journeys’ may not sufficiently bring out the whole of Paul’s missionary praxis, for Paul definitely undertook on his mission more travels than just three missionary journeys – see Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission* 2, p. 1445.

⁷ The historicity of Luke, particularly historical reliability of his presentation of Paul and his missionary journeys, has been a bone of contention in the NT scholarship. The German scholarship, the Tübingen School in particular, has questioned the historical accuracy of Acts of the Apostles written by Luke. An analysis of the evidence produced and the substance of arguments posed in modern scholarship prove beyond doubt that Luke’s picture of Paul and his mission shows historical accuracy and his faithfulness to the received tradition, although there are points of tension between the Paul of Acts and the Paul of his own epistles. The points of tension cannot be taken as contradictions - see the brief, but pointed, discussion in I H Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press / Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, reprint 1984), pp. 34-44; see also idem, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), pp. 470-488.

for Paul to plant and nurture churches in such an impressive way? What strategies, if any, did he adopt to reach out both the Jews and the Gentiles? To what extent is he a model for missionaries in our time? Our study will investigate primarily these questions.

Strategy: Is It Imperative?

What do we mean by “strategy” first of all? “Strategy” is a combination of two Greek words στρατιά (“an army”) and ἄγειν (“to lead”), and thus it denotes the leadership of an army. *The Oxford Reference Dictionary* gives a secular meaning: a plan of action or policy in business or politics. Schnabel maintains that “strategy” is concerned with the planning of an engagement and with the question of how plans can and should be realized in specific operations.⁸ In relation to Christian mission, “strategy” means a well organized plan of action or policy to be followed in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and consolidating the believers in their faith. It implies an order or discipline with which the missionaries are to be led in order to accomplish their mission. G. Van Rheenen defines mission strategy as “the practical working out of the will of God within a cultural context”, because, for him, all missiological decisions must somehow be rooted in theology and take into consideration the cultural context in which the mission is carried out.⁹

Question is often raised as to whether we need to adopt a strategy at all in Christian mission. It is asked with reticence, “Is it important to have an organized plan of action?” The reason for such scepticism is the misunderstanding that following a strategy means to perform a military exercise and that it will not fit into the church’s mission that is entirely dependent upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If ‘strategy’ is essential in army, in games and sports, and also in political or business circles, then it is hard to believe that it is not needed in Christian circles? Missiologists insist that it is wiser to do some strategic planning. H.R. Cook, for example, indicates that there is a need for having personal strategy and so also for having mission strategy.¹⁰ Van Rheenen argues that there is no missiology without theology, the study of the cultural context, and strategy. However, he cautions that strategy must be a servant, and never be a master, to the mission of God.¹¹

If strategy is accepted as an integral part of Christian mission, then the question arises: had Paul, the first Christian missionary, worked with some strategies? If so, what are they? An inquiry into these will help us to find ways in which the contemporary missions could be made more productive. Even a cursory reading of the Book of Acts and Paul’s epistles will show that Paul worked with some strategic plans and that they were governed by the Holy Spirit (cf. Act. 16:6-10; 19:21; 21:11-14; Rom. 15:18-19).

⁸ E.J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, Vol. 1 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press / Leicester: Apollos, ET 2004), p. 500. He differentiates strategy from “tactics” which deal with the phase immediately before the operation as well as with the actions and reactions on the battlefield.

⁹ G. Van Rheenen, *Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies: Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), pp. 138-140.

¹⁰ H.R. Cook, *Strategy of Missions: An Evangelical View* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1963), pp. 25-38.

¹¹ See Van Rheenen, *Biblical Foundations*, pp. 137-140

Paul's Purpose in Mission

Mission strategy is generally determined by the objectives we set and our ultimate purpose.¹² Paul had a definite aim in his mission and thus he was enabled to set out strategies that will fulfil that aim. He outlines his purpose in Romans 15:15-16 as to offer the Gentiles to God as “an acceptable sacrifice sanctified by the Holy Spirit”. So saying, he identifies his mission as a “priestly service of the gospel of God” (cf. Act. 9:15-16; 26:16-18; see also Act. 20:24 and Phil. 3:13-15a for other kinds of purpose statement of Paul). He had received God’s call for Gentile mission directly from Jesus who revealed himself to Paul on the road to Damascus (Act. 26:16-18), and got it approved by the apostles reputed to be “pillars” (Gal. 2:9). As far as Paul is concerned, his Damascus experience was his *Berufungsvision*. Therefore he worked with the purpose of leading people, especially the Gentile nations, to God’s salvation that is in Jesus (see also below the section on ‘First to the Jews and also to the Gentiles’).¹³

Paul links his mission to the Gentiles with the Old Testament quotation drawn from Isaiah 52:15b, as he writes, “As it is written, ‘they shall see who have never been told of him, and they shall understand who have never heard of him’” (Rom. 15:21). This quotation implies that in the coming of Jesus, the Messiah, the eschatological blessing of God’s salvation, promised to the Jews, has come also to the Gentiles who had not heard of Jesus, the Servant of the Lord. What was expected in future when Jews and Gentiles will equally share the salvation of God has come now. That Gentiles will be included in the blessings of Israel is a recurring theme in the Old Testament (for example, Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 28:4,14; Isa. 49:6; 55:4-5; 56:6-8; Zeph. 3:9-10; Zech. 8:22-23; 14:9,16-17). Isaiah’s vision that the Gentiles will be gathered in along with the Jews in the restoration of Israel in Zion has come to be realized even now. Paul sees his call to bring the Gentiles to God (who is Light) from the power of Satan (who stands for “darkness”) and to enable them to have a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus as the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies (Act. 26:16-18). His mission in general, and his mission strategy in particular, is thus motivated by his vision for the eschatological gathering of Gentiles with the Jews to worship the one God, Yahweh.

Paul's Strategies in Mission

(a) *Choice of Principal Cities for Evangelization*

Paul identified in each region the key cities such as Antioch of Pisidia, Paphos of Cyprus, Philippi, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Macedonia, and Caesarea to carry out his mission. Finally he landed as a prisoner in Rome, the capital of the Mediterranean world, where he was teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unhindered for two whole years (Act. 28:30-31). Thus Paul was engaged in mission by journeying from one

¹² See Cook, *Strategy*, p. 36.

¹³ For Paul ‘salvation’ is an experience of redemption and reconciliation with God that was possible in the past (Rom. 8:24,30), is possible in the present (1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 2:15), and will be in future (e.g., Rom. 5:9-10; 13:11; 1 Cor. 3:15) in and through Jesus – see C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Vol. I (ICC; London/New York: T & T Clark, reprint, 2006), pp. 88-89.

place to another and taking the gospel to the whole eastern half of Roman Empire, from Jerusalem as far around (κύκλω) as Illyricum.¹⁴ He also planned to evangelize the western half of the empire, particularly Spain (Rom. 15:19,23-24).¹⁵ In line with Philo's choice of venues to teach his philosophy, Paul chose prominent cities which provided him such strategic locations as the market places, synagogues, lecture halls and houses to reach out easily both Jews and Gentiles with the gospel of Jesus and to expand his mission to the neighbouring towns and regions. He also chose Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire, as a centre of strategic importance for his new Western mission.¹⁶ In all centres he faced both acceptance and rejection. Where he found good response there he stayed a little longer, but whenever opposition was intensified, he moved to another key city. Paul thus was constantly on the move.

(b) First to the Jews and Also to the Gentiles

In many cities Paul approached the synagogue first where he could present the gospel to the Jews. R. Hedlund appreciates this as a good strategy, for by reaching out first the Jews, the people of the covenant, Paul was acting in accordance with the theological principle that "salvation is from the Jews".¹⁷ He had a deep concern for the salvation of the Jews, for his heart's desire and prayer to God for the Jews was that they must be saved (Rom. 10:1). Although some Jews did accept Paul's message, often it was the Gentiles (mostly the Greeks), the "worshippers of God" or God-fearers, the devout converts to Judaism or the proselytes, and many others who had been attracted to Jewish monotheism who accepted the gospel preached by him (Act. 13:43; 14:1; 16:14; 17:4; 18:7).¹⁸ On most occasions the Jews rose against Paul, persecuted him and also rejected his message (Act. 9:20-25; 13:45,50; 14:2,19; 17:5; 18:12; 21:27; 23:12; cf. 1 Cor. 16:8-9; 2 Cor. 1:5-10; 11:23-33; 1 Thess. 2:2). At Lystra, the Jews who came from Antioch and Iconium incited the people to stone at Paul and drag him out of the city (Act. 14:19), and in Corinth they opposed and reviled him (Act. 18:6). Therefore in the very early stage of his mission, Paul, along with Barnabas, firmly decided to turn to the Gentiles, as Luke shows in the programmatic statement of Paul and Barnabas, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you (i.e., the Jews). Since you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles" (Act. 13:46; cf. Rom. 1:16; 2:9; 11:7-31 where the priority of the Jews in the divine plan of salvation is implied).

Paul had realized his indebtedness to preach the gospel to the Gentiles even from the time of his call and therefore he called himself to be ἔθνῶν ἀπόστολος (Rom. 11:13) and λειτουργός of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles (Rom. 15:16). However, his missionary commitment to the Gentiles was merely a part of his universal vision. He had concern for the whole world, both for the Jews and Gentiles, to bring salvation to them

¹⁴ See Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, Vol. 2 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press / Leicester: Apollos, ET 2004), p. 1295, who thinks that Paul's statement in Rom. 15:19 shows that Paul worked with a geographical "order" which could be described as a "plan" of his missionary strategy.

¹⁵ See F. Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, ET 1965), pp. 95-96.

¹⁶ See R. Hedlund, *Mission to the Man in the Bible* (Madras: Evangelical Literature Service, 1985), pp. 241-242.

¹⁷ Hedlund, *Mission to the Man*, p. 240.

¹⁸ Hedlund, *Mission to the Man*, p. 240.

alike. This is known from his statement, “I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish” (Rom. 1:14). He was convinced that since the gospel has universal claim, the mission should be to all human beings including the “Greeks and barbarians”.¹⁹ In his letter to the Romans Paul boldly speaks of the equality of Jews and Gentiles in their status as sinners before God and in their need to receive divine salvation equally (e.g., Rom. 1:16-17; 3:23; 5:12-21; 9:1 - 11:36). In a broader sense, Paul’s call was to be a witness for Jesus before the “Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel” (Act. 9:15) and thus to “all men and women” (Act. 22:15; “to all the world” - NRSV); and hence he declared the message of repentance both to the Jews and Gentiles (Act. 20:21; 26:20). It is within this world-wide horizon that one should understand Paul’s commitment to be an apostle to the Gentiles.²⁰ Perhaps Paul, as A. Segal puts it, “wanted to be an apostle of all the church, for his vision was for a new community formed of all gentiles and Jews (1 Cor. 9:22; cf. Eph. 3:1-6).”²¹

In fact, Paul adopted the strategy of “Jews first and also Greeks” so that God’s purpose of bringing into the blessings of Israel the full number of the Gentiles might be fulfilled (Rom. 11:25).²² He laboured for the salvation of the Gentiles so that his fellow-Jews may be provoked to jealousy (Rom. 11:11). That is, the coming-in of the Gentiles will provoke the people of Israel to repent and participate in the final salvation. David Bosch argues that Romans 11:25-27, which forms the punch line to Paul’s argument in Romans 9-11, delineates God’s salvific “strategy” in three “acts”:

- (i) Israel’s hardening and
- (ii) opposition to Christ gives rise to the Gentile mission which finally leads to
- (iii) Israel’s salvation (cf. Rom. 11:30-31).²³

God has permitted a temporary blindness to the Jews so that the Gentiles might receive God’s mercy and that they might be evangelized and received into the church. This would arouse the jealousy of the Jews (cf. Deut. 32:21). When Israel, God’s special possession, sees others becoming the recipients of the mercy and goodness of their God, they will begin to understand what they are missing and to desire that salvation which they have been rejecting. Those whose hearts were hardened, thus, will receive mercy and divine salvation.²⁴ In other words, God permitted the temporary rejection of some so that he might have mercy on all. Paul’s mission strategy of “first Jews and also Gentiles” is thus in line with God’s strategy that serves a double purpose: it causes eventually the repentance and salvation of the Jews; and at the same time warns the Gentiles against their self-complacency and superior attitude toward the unbelieving Jews.

¹⁹ Hahn, *Missions*, pp. 99-100.

²⁰ See the most recent work of James C. Miller, “The Jewish Context of Paul’s Gentile Mission”, *TynBul* 58 (2007), pp. 101-115, who defends Paul’s strategy of preaching first in a synagogue, even though he was the ‘apostle to the gentiles’, so that he might be faithful to his call to fulfil God’s purpose of forming “one people drawn from all nations”.

²¹ A. Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 265; see also quoted by Barton, ““All Things to All People””, pp. 284-285.

²² “The full number” (πλήρωμα) need not mean a particular number. It could mean “the number intended by God” (Barrett) or the equal number of the Gentiles to that of Israel (Dunn) – see J.D.G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (WBC 38B; Milton Keynes, et. al: Word Publishing, UK edition, 1991), p. 680.

²³ D.J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 1992), pp. 160-165, esp. 161-162.

²⁴ See C.E.B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, reprint, 1995), p. 274.

Paul's mission strategy seems to have been motivated by his intention to bring both the Jews and the non-Jews into the eschatological salvation that has become available now in Christ. This confirms D. Senior's thesis that Paul's strategy was directly related to his mission theology that was rooted in his concern for the world and in his conviction about the eschatological implications of Christian mission.²⁵

(c) *Paul's Holistic Concern for the Churches*

Paul's mission was not narrowed only to preaching the gospel, but it included a demonstration of pastoral care and concern. He was not satisfied with just planting churches, but he was keen on constantly nurturing them with the Word of God through teaching, counselling, and writing letters of ethical exhortations (cf. Act. 15:36,41; 18:23). O'Brien rightly argues that Paul does not use the word εὐαγγελίζεσθαι and its cognates to refer only to the initial evangelism, but that he employs them to cover the whole range of evangelistic and teaching ministry – from the initial proclamation of the gospel to the building up of believers and grounding them firmly in the faith. The preaching of the gospel makes the initial experience of salvation possible, and also the whole Christian life is created through the same gospel that is preached (cf. 1 Cor. 4:15; Phil. 1:27; Col. 1:5-6).²⁶

The phrase, “to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ”, in Ephesians 3:8 cannot simply mean communicating Christ's unsearchable riches of Christ by a brief and one-time proclamation, but it includes a careful teaching, instruction and application, for only then the unfathomable riches in Christ could better be understood and appropriated by the Gentiles.²⁷ This observation is reinforced by Colossians 1:28 where the verb καταγγέλλομεν, translated “we proclaim”, is used to refer to the proclamation of Christ whose presence within the believers is the glory of God's mystery. This verb is explained and developed further in the following words, “warning every one and teaching every one in all wisdom”, with the aim of presenting every believer mature in Christ. This means that the proclamation mentioned in Colossians 1:28 includes admonition and instruction, and the broad range of missionary activities carried out by Paul until the members would grow to the perfection of Christ Jesus.²⁸ Similarly, in Romans 1:13-15 Paul's eagerness to preach the gospel to those who were in Rome is focussed on the goal that he may reap some “harvest” (καρπός) among them as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. This means that Paul's preaching of the gospel in Rome will result not simply in conversion, but in Christian virtues, the final product of the desired evangelism there.²⁹

²⁵ See D. Senior and C. Stuhlmüller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 6th print, 1995), pp. 171-185, esp. 182-185; Cf. Hahn, *Mission*, p. 108 n.1.

²⁶ O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, pp. 62-63.

²⁷ O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, p. 63.

²⁸ O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, p. 64.

²⁹ In the context of Rom. 1:13-15 where Paul speaks of his obligation to preach the gospel in Rome, it is unlikely that καρπός could mean just ‘material support’. The reference to Paul's desire to visit Rome is to have καρπός also among the rest of the Gentiles makes this meaning highly improbable.

Paul's purpose of visiting the Romans does not seem to be for their initial salvation, but all the more for strengthening them spiritually and for mutual encouragement (Rom. 1:11-12). This would not have been possible for Paul unless he had sought for, with a pastoral concern, a holistic growth in churches. His apostolic activity covered strengthening of the churches in faith, leading them to obedience through his exemplary life as well as his letters of exhortation and admonition. Hence he identified himself as a δῖάκονος of the churches (Col. 1:25).

J.P. Dickson has denied that εὐαγγελίζεσθαι in Rom. 1:15 and in other Pauline texts refers to the ongoing instruction in the church. For him the εὐαγγελ- terminology definitely denotes an act of proclamation, but it is only "news" to the hearer without bearing the sense of 'broad-ranging' missionary activity.³⁰ However, Dickson downplays the context in which the word εὐαγγελίζεσθαι occurs in Rom. 1:15, for Paul is speaking of his obligation to preach the gospel "both to Greeks and to barbarians" (Rom. 1:14) and of his eagerness, and not of his fixed plan, to preach the gospel in Rome. At the same time, we have enough evidence in Paul's writings where he links εὐαγγελίζεσθαι with his pastoral ministry, which involves sacrificial life and instruction, in order to make the churches stand firm in faith and be fully saved (e.g., 1 Cor. 9:16-27; 15:1-2; 2 Cor. 11:7-11). Therefore it is not impossible that Paul thought of teaching and confirming the Roman Christians in faith by proclaiming the gospel to them (see also below the section on 'Not to Build on Another's Foundation').

Paul worked to bring spiritual wholeness in three ways:

- (i) Paul, along with his companion(s), made pastoral visits to the churches he planted, for "the heart of Paul's strategy was the Church".³¹ Luke narrates that after their work in Derbe, Paul and Barnabas went again to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia in order to strengthen the disciples in their faith (Act. 14:21-22). Paul visited these churches again during his second missionary journey to encourage them to abide in the decisions of the apostles made in Jerusalem. As a result, these churches were strengthened in the faith and they increased in number daily (Act. 16:1-5). Paul gave pastoral care also to churches which he himself did not plant. For example, he accepted Barnabas's invitation to go and teach in Antioch of Syria even though he himself did not establish that church (Act. 11:25-26). He was anxious to visit the church in Rome, although he himself had not evangelized there (Rom. 1:10-15; 15:21-24).
- (ii) Paul appointed πρεσβυτέρου in each church to give pastoral care and teaching to the new converts (cf. Act. 14:23; 20:17). He regarded the local congregation members as his partners in the gospel and that is why he thanks the Philippian Christians for their partnership in the gospel (Phil. 1:5). Appointment of πρεσβυτέρου would have been impossible for Paul unless he had earlier trained them during his mission. Luke seems to have known that

³⁰ J. P. Dickson, "Gospel as News: εὐαγγελ - from Aristophanes to the Apostle Paul", *New Testament Studies* 51 (2005), pp. 212-230.

³¹ Hedlund, *Mission*, p. 241.

Paul was keen to equip the elders of Ephesian Church to carry on the pastoral work after him (Act. 20:17-38). In that meeting, Paul motivated them that they should look after the “church of God” with great care and diligence (Act. 20:27-32). The work of training nationals for leadership is surely a part of strategic planning in mission,³² and this will pave the way for establishing indigenous churches - an aspect which is often sidelined in Christian mission. Paul’s principle was to replace the “foreign” mission with the “indigenous” mission so that Christian faith may rightly be communicated to the people by using their own language and in their own culture.

- (iii) Paul followed the strategy of contacting young churches by writing letters of instruction and admonition. He kept in touch with Christians, even with those who had not seen him, through epistles, an effective mode of communication at that time. Some churches to which Paul sent letters had been established by his fellow-workers. For example, he had not personally evangelized the Lycus valley in which Colossae was situated. He had not even visited the church nor had he known personally any Christian communities in that area, including Laodicea (Col. 2:1; cf. 1:4). Most probably Epaphras, who was with Paul and who was a native of Colossae, had carried the gospel to Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis (cf. Col. 4:12-13) at the time when Paul was based in Ephesus for a period of two or three years (Act. 19:10; 20:31). Yet, Paul, in his zeal to edify the churches and to present them mature in Christ, wrote letters to these churches by addressing the problems they faced and giving specific directives on practical matters.³³

Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians is a typical example of his dealings with them through letters to answer their questions and tackle their problems. He addresses wide-range of issues faced by the Christians in Corinth such as party-spirit, immorality, litigation, marital issues, eating the food offered to idols, idolatry, disorder in public worship and the Lord’s Supper, and, above all, lack of love among them. His theological teaching through epistles helped the first Christians to grow in faith as well as in number, and also enables us today to draw lessons from the first Christians. There is no wonder, then, that Dunn recognizes Paul as one of those Christians who were conscious of their calling to articulate their faith in writing and to instruct others in their common faith.³⁴

³² Cook, *Strategy*, p. 31.

³³ True, the epistle to the Colossians, as we have it now, might not have been literally composed by Paul the missionary. However, in view of the fact that the epistle shows similarities with the epistle to Philemon and that Colossians fits well into the life and ministry, particularly the imprisonment, of Paul, scholars argue that Paul outlined his thoughts to one of his companions, probably to Timothy (cf. Col. 1:1), who composed and published the epistle, as Paul approved what was in the event written in it. Therefore, although the theology expressed in Colossians could be Paul’s theology as understood and interpreted by Timothy, the strategy of letter-writing to confirm the Church in Colossae in faith and Christian conduct is obviously Paul’s - see, in particular, J.D.G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans / Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), pp. 35-39; M.M. Thompson, *Colossians and Philemon* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2005), pp. 2-6.

³⁴ Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, p. 2.

Paul, the missionary, was interested not merely in the spiritual wholeness of the churches, but also in fulfilling their physical needs. Throughout his mission he promoted a sense of *κοινωνία* among the churches that belong to different cultural and ethnic background. He encouraged the members to share their economic resources with other churches that are in need with genuine love. Paul was aware that divine salvation, which is for all human beings, is concerned with all aspects of human welfare - physical, spiritual, emotional, and psychological. Dunn is justified in his observation that “salvation” for Paul denotes the wholeness of the healthy person.³⁵ One can say, then, that Paul’s strategy was governed by his commitment to a holistic mission. Paul took poverty seriously, because it takes away the human dignity and divine identity of the poor. Therefore he was eager to remember and help the poor long before the instruction to do so came from the apostles in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:10).³⁶

In his effort to tackle poverty, Paul was engaged in collecting money and other material things from Gentile churches to be taken to the needy in Jerusalem. He inspired the Gentile churches to contribute liberally (see, for example, 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:1-9:15) by instructing that they, who have been sharing in the spiritual blessings of Jewish Christians, have obligation to serve them by sharing their material blessings with them (Rom. 15:27; cf. 1 Cor. 9:11; Phil. 4:15-17). He not only made collections, but he himself carried the aid package to the church in Jerusalem by appealing to the believers in Rome to stand with him in prayers that his service (i.e., his mission of delivering the contribution) may be acceptable to the saints in Jerusalem (see Rom. 15:25-28,30-32).

Paul’s attempt to help the poor had a long-term goal. That is, the collection was made not merely to meet the physical needs of the receiving churches, but particularly to bring spiritual unity and equality between the churches with Jewish background and those with the Gentile background (cf. Rom. 8:14). On the part of the Jews, by accepting the gift of the Gentile churches, they need to fully receive the Gentiles into the family of Israel without placing on them any burden such as circumcision, food laws, strict observance of Sabbath and other legal demands of Judaism; on the part of the Gentiles, they need to express their gratitude by offering them material benefits in return to the spiritual benefit of being joint-heirs to inherit God’s promise made to the fathers of Israel (Rom. 15:25-29).³⁷ Paul was very eager to see that the Jews would get rid of their prejudice against the Gentiles, and the Gentiles appreciate the central role played by the Jews in bringing the eschatological blessing of God’s salvation to the world. It is precisely this eagerness that prompted Paul to appeal to the Roman Christians to “strive together”³⁸ with him in prayers (Rom. 15:30), for Paul had the fear that the collection might be refused and that the unity between the churches might be thwarted.

³⁵ Dunn, *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, p. 329.

³⁶ See the useful study on “Collection as an aspect of Paul’s mission strategy” in K.F. Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul’s Strategy* (London: SCM Press, 1966), esp. pp. 13-32.

³⁷ It is in this sense that the collection done by Paul, as Schnabel notes following Joachim Gnilka, is more than simply a pious work or a social deed and it is an act of faith that connects with salvation history – see Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission 2*, pp. 1001.

³⁸ The Greek *συναγωνίσασθαι* means “to fight or contend with someone”, though generally it means “to help or assist someone” (See Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 783). The *ἀγων-* root suggests that Paul had something more forceful in mind (see Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, p. 878).

Paul's holistic mission had a definite goal and a plan to achieve that goal. It was not simply fulfilling the spiritual and physical needs of the people, but, more than anything else, the mission seeks to fulfil the purpose of God for humanity. In our mission today, we must follow strategies that are dictated by our zeal for a holistic mission – a mission that eventually fulfils God's plan of salvation for humanity, even while it seeks to meet the total needs of the people.

(d) Paul's Strategy of Working as a Team of Men and Women

As a missionary, Paul never wanted to be alone in fulfilling God's mission, but to work as a team. His strategy was to recruit men and women into mission with him.³⁹ Luke shows that Paul took along with him one or more of his fellow workers in all his missionary journeys: during his first missionary journey, which started and ended in Antioch of Syria (ca. AD 46-48), he was accompanied by Barnabas and John Mark (Act. 13:1 – 14:28); in his second missionary journey, which too started and ended in Antioch of Syria making in-roads into Macedonia and Achaia in Europe (ca. AD 49-52), Paul took Silas along with him (Act. 15:36 – 18:22);⁴⁰ and in his third missionary journey, which started in Antioch and ended in Jerusalem making two to three years of work possible in Ephesus (ca. AD 53-58), Paul took, perhaps along with Silas, Timothy, Erastus, Gaius, Aristarchus, some Macedonians and others (Act. 18:23 – 21:16; see esp. 19:22,29; 20:4). When he took the collection from the Jewish and Gentile churches to Jerusalem, it seems he was accompanied by twelve of his travel companions as the representatives of the churches that he had established.⁴¹ Paul wrote the epistles to the Thessalonians with Silvanus and Timothy (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1) and the epistle to the Galatians with all the "brothers" who were with him (Gal. 1:1-2). He makes references in his epistles to several persons, including Luke, as his co-workers (see Rom. 16:21; 2 Cor. 1:19; 8:23; Col. 4:7,10,14; Philm. 24).

We have already noticed that Paul earnestly sought to work in partnership with other Christians, particularly with the elders of local churches. He also worked in partnership with the apostles in Jerusalem who readily approved his mission among the Gentiles as well as the gospel he preached to them (Gal. 1:18 - 2:10). At Corinth Paul teamed himself with Priscilla and Aquila who by profession were tent-makers as he himself was (Act. 18:1-4) and who were Paul's "fellow-workers" in Christ Jesus (Rom. 16:3). They gave leadership in the church that gathered in their own house both in Rome and in Ephesus (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19). They travelled with Paul from Corinth to Ephesus where they had the opportunity to lead Apollos, a learned man, into deeper faith by expounding the Scripture accurately to him (Act. 18:18-19,26). Paul was working so closely with them that they even put their lives into danger to save Paul's life (Rom. 16:3).

³⁹ Hedlund, *Mission*, p. 241; see the useful section "Teams of Missionaries and Coworkers" in E.J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission 2*, pp. 1425-1445.

⁴⁰ True Paul was alone when he preached the gospel in Athens, but it took place accidentally while he was waiting there for Silas and Timothy to join him (Act. 17:15-34).

⁴¹ Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission 2*, pp. 1445-1446.

Paul accommodated women in his team of missionaries, although the major portion of responsibility was borne for the Pauline mission by men.⁴² Romans 16⁴³ lists about ten women (“eleven”, if we consider Olympas in Rom. 16:15 as a woman, as Köstenberger does) who worked with Paul, and most of whom could have been trained and empowered by him. They are Phoebe, Prisca (or Priscilla), Mary, Junias, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, the mother of Rufus, Julia and the sister of Nereus (Rom. 16:1-16).

There is some uncertainty about “Junias” in Rom. 16:7 as to whether or not it is a female name, because both Andronicus and Junias are described as “apostles”, and some think that a woman could not have been an apostle. However, as early as the fourth century John Chrysostom identified Junias as a female apostle. There is evidence in inscriptions that a female Latin name Junia was known in Rome. The Greek word Ἰουνιᾶν, which is in accusative, could be a feminine singular accusative. Thus, scholars nowadays increasingly interpret the name “Junias” as the feminine Junia. She could be a freedwoman or a descendant of a slave freed by a member of the Junian clan.⁴⁴ Cranfield thinks that Andronicus and Junia were probably husband and wife and that the epithet “apostles” should be understood in wider sense as denoting the itinerant missionaries who were distinctively involved in the work of spreading the gospel.⁴⁵ At Philippi Paul made special use of women as lay apostles. Lydia, for example, who was Paul’s first convert in Europe, was faithful to bring her household to the Lord and make her house as a centre of the new church (Act. 16:12-15,40). Paul speaks of two women, Euodia and Syntyche, in Philippi as those who laboured with him and other missionaries in the advancement of the gospel. Paul takes liberty to admonish them to sever the disagreements they hold between them (Phil. 4:2-3).

Why did Paul hold a missionary policy of working as a team? Paul knows that God’s mission is to be performed in and through his church, the body of Christ, which consists of many members. The gifts of the Spirit have been apportioned by God to each member as he wills (1 Cor. 12:11) and they need to be exercised collectively as a team. Moreover, as J.A. Grassi observes, a group of apostles form the church and this will enable the new converts to see a picture of the church in action. For Paul “to believe” is

⁴² Köstenberger gives from the Pauline epistles a statistical information that about 55 men and 17 women were associated with Paul in mission – see A. J. Köstenberger, “Women in the Pauline Mission”, in P. Bolt and M. Thompson (eds.), *The Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul’s Mission* (Leicester: Apollos / Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), pp. 221-247, esp. 222-225.

⁴³ The argument that chapter 16 was not originally a part of Romans has rightly been rejected by scholars – see, for example, Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, pp. 884-885; Cranfield, *Romans 1-8*, pp. 1-11.

⁴⁴ See B.J. Brooten, “Junia”, in Carol Meyers (ed.), *Women in Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2000), p.107. Recently Linda Belleville, “Ἰουνιᾶν . . . ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις: A Re-examination of Romans 16.7 in Light of Primary Source Materials”, *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 51 (2005), pp. 231-249, by using the Hellenistic Greek literary works found in the computer databases, papyri, inscriptions, and artifacts, has confirmed that Ἰουνιᾶν was a female name and that this name is found on tombstones in and around Rome. She convincingly argues that Ἰουνιᾶν was a female apostle and that ἐπίσημοι ἐν, followed by the dative plural, gives the inclusive meaning “notable among (the apostles)” and not “well-known to (the apostles)”. See also Eldon J. Epp, *Junia: The First Woman Apostle* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005).

⁴⁵ Cranfield, *Romans*, p. 377. Cf. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, Vol. 2, pp. 1432-1434. They can even be considered as the siblings.

not just an individual exercise, but it involves union with Christ along with others who have already been joined to him (cf. Act. 17:4,34).⁴⁶

(e) Not to Build on Another's Foundation

Paul made it his ambition to preach the gospel not in the places where Christ had already been named (i.e., proclaimed, acknowledged, and worshipped), lest he builds on the foundation already laid by other missionaries (Rom. 15:20). By “laying a foundation”, he means the initial proclamation of the gospel on which the church is built up and established (1 Cor. 3:10-12). That is, Paul’s desire is that he would preach Christ where he had not yet been preached. Paul states this in the context of his reference to the mission among Gentiles and to his completion of the work in the eastern part of Roman world (from Jerusalem to Illyricum) before he moves on to the western part (to Rome and then to Spain) (Rom. 15:15-19,21-24). To stress his point he quotes in Romans 15:21 the LXX version of Isaiah 52:15b, which speaks of the right perception and acceptance of the suffering Servant of the Lord and his message by many nations (ἔθνη) and kings who had not heard him (cf. above the section on “Paul’s Purpose in Mission”).⁴⁷

But the question is: what does this scriptural verse attest? The conjunction ἄλλα in the beginning of verse 15:21 connects the quotation with the previous clause which has ἵνα followed by the negative particle μή, indicating Paul’s purpose not to build on another’s foundation. When ἄλλα is preceded by a negative particle οὐ or οὐκ (also μή, as we have it in Rom. 15:20b), the meaning is: “not so much...as” in which the first element is not entirely negated, but only toned down.⁴⁸ Thus, the OT quotation endorses Paul’s purpose not so much to go on proclaiming Christ in the eastern part where other missionaries have already been doing it (cf. Rom. 15:23) as to move on to the Gentiles who have never heard of Jesus. Paul sees the words of promise in Isaiah as being fulfilled even now in his mission of proclaiming Christ, the true Servant of Yahweh, to those who have not yet heard of him.⁴⁹

Other related questions are: did Paul consider his task of not building on another’s foundation as his *strategy* or missionary *policy* at all? If yes, how is this to be reconciled with Rom. 1:15: “so I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome”? Paul is writing the letter to the church in Rome which he himself had not founded, but he was longing to see them and have fellowship with them (Rom. 1:9-13; 15:22-24,28-29). He writes to the believers whose faith had become a matter of proclamation in all the world (Rom. 1:7-8). If so, how can he say that he is eager to preach the gospel (εὐαγγελίζεσθαι) to “you also who are in Rome”? Is this eagerness set against Paul’s strategy of preaching the gospel not where Christ has already been named?

⁴⁶ J.A. Grassi, *A World to Win: The Missionary Methods of Paul the Apostle* (New York: Maryknoll Publications, 1965), p. 74. Grassi also gives three more reasons for Paul’s team-work.

⁴⁷ The OT quotation found in UBS 4th edition and Nestle-Aland 27th edition fully follows the Septuagint reading. However, Cranfield dismisses this reading as fully an assimilation to the Septuagint. He prefers the reading that takes ὄψονταί at the beginning of the first line rather than at the end – See C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Vol. 2 (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979), p. 765 n. 1.

⁴⁸ See F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 233 §448 (1).

⁴⁹ See Cranfield, *Romans 2*, p. 765; O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, p. 45.

The Greek verb φιλοτιμέομαι in Rom. 15:20 means basically “to love or seek after honour” and thus it bears a negative tone, but with the infinitive εὐαγγελίζεσθαι it has a positive sense, “strive eagerly, endeavour earnestly, aspire”.⁵⁰ The same verb is used in 2 Cor. 5:9 with the meaning “to make it one’s aim” (cf. 1 Thess. 4:11). Hence Paul’s eagerness to proclaim the gospel not in places where Christ has already been proclaimed and acknowledged can be treated as his strategy adopted to achieve his aim of evangelizing the Gentiles who had not yet heard of him. This is reinforced in 2 Cor. 10:12-18, where Paul defends his apostolic mission against his rival preachers who were encroaching on his work (cf. 1 Cor. 9:1-2; 2 Cor. 3:1-2), by saying that he never boasted of work already done in another’s field and in others’ labours (2 Cor. 10:15-16).⁵¹

O’Brien recognizes the statement in Rom. 15:20 as Paul’s pioneer *policy* that is endorsed by the OT and Cranfield too identifies it as Paul’s missionary *policy*. However, Cranfield goes on to say that what Paul says in verses 20-21 is not a statement of an “absolute rule to be followed irrespectively of all other considerations, but a statement of Paul’s own earnest desire and endeavour”, grounded in God’s call for him to work as a pioneer missionary rather than as one who builds upon others’ foundation.⁵² In similar vein, O’Brien, by citing W.P. Bowers, observes that Paul spells out “a principal aspiration that guides the overall direction of his mission”, not a definitive law or a restrictive canon of his apostolic commission.⁵³ Paul never felt that he should refrain himself from ever visiting a church which had been founded by other missionaries.

We have already noticed that Paul not only preached the gospel and planted churches, but also visited them, whether founded by him or by others, and wrote letters to them in order to strengthen them in faith and lead them unto Christian maturity. Indeed there was daily pressure upon him on his anxiety *for all the churches* besides the hardships he faced as an apostle (2 Cor. 11:28). Therefore we may say that Paul had a strategy that came out of his conviction not to encroach the territory of other missionaries and build on their foundation. However, that strategy was flexible and adaptable to the need and given opportunity in churches. Although Paul did not see any necessity to lay another “foundation” upon the foundation already laid by others, that did not stop him from giving concrete teachings to the churches in need. We should note that he undertook teaching ministry in other churches always in cooperation with the local congregation and the apostles who had been working among them. Paul never allowed his strategies to master him in his missionary involvement. Paul’s strategy of “not building on another’s foundation”, thus, was a flexible strategy with the aim of bringing the Gentiles, indeed both Jews and Gentiles, into the salvation of God. No wonder, Grassi describes Paul as a

⁵⁰ Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, p. 865.

⁵¹ Although Paul’s strategy of not working in another’s field occurs in 2 Corinthians 10 as his attack against his opponents, it is not clear whether similar contention is to be read in Romans 15. Nevertheless, Dunn (*Romans 9-16*, p. 865) argues that the emphatic position of οὐχ in Rom. 15:20 indicates Paul’s antagonism against his rivals. Against this argument see Cranfield, *Romans 2*, p. 764.

⁵² Cranfield, *Romans 2*, p. 765.

⁵³ O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, p. 44.

“man of flexibility” who always followed the leading of the Holy Spirit who worked through him in the present needs and problems of the people.⁵⁴

This leads us to consider the question as to whether Paul’s eagerness to preach the gospel to the believers in Rome is inconsistent with his policy of not building in another’s foundation. We have already answered this question (see above the section on “Paul’s Holistic Concern for the Churches”), by saying that “to preach the gospel”, for Paul, is more than mere initial evangelism. We have agreed, against J.P. Dickson, that the Greek word εὐαγγελίζομαι, for Paul, covers broadly the whole range of evangelistic and teaching ministry. Just as people are converted by the initial proclamation of the gospel, so also they grow in obedience and faith by hearing the same gospel.⁵⁵ As Schnabel observes, the theological, ethical and spiritual consolidation of the churches was a fundamental concern of Paul.⁵⁶ Paul’s eagerness to visit Rome is not simply to convert the Romans, for they were already believers whose faith was being proclaimed ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ (Rom. 1:8), but it was to enable them to show Christian virtues and to have mutual encouragement (Rom. 1:11-13). Thus, Paul’s eagerness to preach the gospel in Rome was with a pastoral heart and it can hardly be interpreted as his plan to lay on another’s foundation or to give the basic teaching again.

(f) Paul’s Strategy in Hostile Situation

A notable aspect of Paul’s mission strategy is his use of hostile situation that arose in the churches as an opportunity to make the gospel known clearly and to consolidate his teaching. Soon after Paul left Corinth after his first visit, there came certain false teachers who claimed to be “apostles” and who questioned Paul’s law-free gospel and the genuineness of his apostleship. They seem to be Jewish Christians who insisted that the Gentile converts should accept circumcision and follow all aspects of Jewish law in order to be fully saved. They also criticized Paul for his failure to carry to Corinth letters of commendation perhaps from Jerusalem authorities, as they themselves were carrying (2 Cor. 3:1). Paul calls them the “superlative apostles” who were preaching ἄλλον Ἰησοῦν than the one he had preached and εὐαγγέλιον ἕτερον from the one the Corinthians had received (2 Cor. 11:4-5). Paul defends himself against the claims of these intruders in 2 Corinthians. He does this by bringing out the glory of the ministry based on the new covenant and the future glory of all believers. He argues that the ministry of false apostles belongs to the old covenant made up of written code that leads to death, whereas Paul’s ministry belongs to the new covenant that is based on the life-giving Spirit (2 Cor. 3).

Similar picture emerges in Paul’s letter to the Galatians in which he identifies the false teachers as those who trouble and unsettle the church by preaching ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον (Gal. 1:6; cf. 5:10-12). Paul teaches the Galatians that to submit oneself to this kind of false teaching is to turn away from God (Gal. 1:6), to be severed from Christ, and to fall from grace (Gal. 5:4). By emphasizing that one can attain the status of

⁵⁴ Grassi, *A World to Win*, pp. 115-121.

⁵⁵ For the convincing argument that the telling of Jesus story belonged to Paul’s missionary strategy see D. Seccombe, “The Story of Jesus and the Missionary Strategy of Paul”, in Bolt and Thompson (eds.), *Gospel to the Nations*, pp. 115-129.

⁵⁶ Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission 2*, p. 1418.

righteousness and receive the Spirit not by the merit earned by fulfilling the Law but by believing in Jesus Christ, Paul teaches that the requirements of the Jewish law such as circumcision, observance of special days, food-restrictions, etc. have no place in the “new creation” (Gal. 2:15-21; 3:1-14; 6:15). He addresses the problems faced in the church by defending Christian truth, but at the same time he looks beyond the problems to see opportunities to teach the new converts and confirm them in faith.

Conclusion

Our study on Paul’s strategies has given us only a glimpse of the policy with which Paul the missionary operated. First of all, he had a target of reaching both Jews and Gentiles with the gospel. Within this overall objective, he laboured to reach the Gentiles with an awareness that he was called by God to be ἔθνῶν ἀπόστολος so that they too may come to know and worship the one God, Yahweh, and share in his eschatological blessings promised to the Jews. Thus, Paul’s vision had two dimensions: global and local. It was this vision which motivated him to follow some strategies in his mission. It is important for those who are engaged in mission to select the area, place, whether urban or rural, and the target group among whom they are called to work, but they should operate with a universal vision. Both universality and particularity should go hand in hand in Christian mission.

We have also observed that Paul’s use of the Greek verbs, εὐαγγελίζεσθαι and καταγγέλλειν, are not confined just to the initial proclamation of the gospel, but they also include other categories of missionary activity such as pastoral care and counselling, admonition, and teaching which would lead the congregation to maturity in Jesus Christ. Paul’s work also was not confined only to verbal proclamation, but it did include several pastoral visits and letter-writings, tackling theological and practical issues in the churches, whether or not he himself established them.

Paul was careful enough to train, equip and install local leaders in each congregation and thus facilitated indigenous leadership in churches so that they may communicate the gospel more relevantly in their own language and in their native cultural set-up. Identifying potential leaders within local congregations and training them is vital to Christian mission.

Paul, as a missionary theologian, was concerned about the spiritual wholeness of the churches and equally about meeting their physical needs. He instructed the churches to share their resources with each other as a mark of κοινωνία prevalent among them. He exercised “give-and-take” policy in his mission: the Gentiles who have come to share in the spiritual blessings of the Jewish Christians, ought to be of service to them in material blessings. He made such exchange of blessings as an obligation fallen on the churches that had been spiritually benefited (Rom. 15:27; 1 Cor. 9:11). Paul, thus, may be treated as a paradigm of holistic mission that seeks to accomplish the plan of God for total salvation of humanity and to meet their total needs. Paul’s holistic concern for the churches is two-fold: First, he sought their spiritual wholeness. That is, he brought people to faith in Christ and established them by his doctrinal teaching and ethical instruction.

Secondly, he sought their physical, psychological and socio-economic soundness by motivating people to give aid and by himself carrying it to the needy churches. The word “missionary” must be understood in such a holistic term.

Paul considered that any form of Christian work, particularly the missionary undertaking, is entirely a team work – a team of women and men who would work in partnership with one another. Koestenberger’s statistics have shown that about the one third of Paul’s missionary colleagues were women. For Paul the church, as the body of Christ which consists of men and women from different culture, language and religious background, can grow if only its members work collectively and in collaboration with each other. Mission organizations need to recruit men and women who can promote team-spirit among the missionaries. Women, in particular, should be given due place in mission teams. The churches should not hesitate, for example, to theologically train women and ordain them, after properly equipped, to be deaconesses, pastors, and bishops, and to give opportunities to them to exercise leadership in relevant ministries.

We have also dealt with the question of whether or not Paul’s principle of not building on another person’s foundation was strictly followed as his mission strategy. If yes, why did he intend to preach the gospel in Rome, for example, even though there was a Church already founded in Rome by other missionaries? Our study shows that Paul did have the missionary policy of not building on another’s foundation, but that it was a “flexible strategy” in order to fulfil God’s purpose of bringing both the Jews and the Gentiles together as one people of God, who, without discrimination, would partake in the eschatological salvation of God. In other words, although Paul was not prepared to carry out his missionary work in the places where others have already worked and established churches, he did not shrink from undertaking teaching ministry in all churches, whether they were founded by him or not. He performed his teaching ministry always in partnership with the local congregation and missionaries with the aim of providing pastoral care to the churches and of encouraging and strengthening them in Christian faith. Paul never allowed his plans and strategies to govern him as a master, but he subordinated them to his passion for preaching the gospel to every human being.

Christian mission often faces stiff resistance in many parts of the world. Opposition comes both from inside and outside the church, and often from fellow-Christians who, like the Judaizers of Paul’s time, give more importance to doctrines and rituals than to Christ and his life-giving word. Paul was diligent enough to convert such unfavourable situations into opportunities to clarify Christian truth and to consolidate and edify the churches. False teachings and any confusion created by them in churches should not be allowed to go un-addressed. On the one hand, the “trouble-makers” and “intruders” should be confronted firmly and Christian truth should be taught in churches in its right perspective.