

TANGAZA COLLEGE

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

ST. PAUL AS THE MODEL AND THE  
EXAMPLE FOR MY MISSIONARY LIFE.

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*This is a long paper submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a  
Bachelor of Arts Degree in Religious Studies.*

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## STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material used has not been submitted for Academic Credit to any other Institution. All sources have been cited in full.

*Andrzej Grych*

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Andrzej Grych, SMA.

## Acknowledgment

One of the missionaries, a pioneer to South Africa translated 1 Corinthians 13 putting his life and missionary experience into it. He wrote:

“If I have the language perfectly and  
speak like a native  
and have not His love,  
I am nothing.

If I have diplomas and degrees and know  
all the up-to-date methods,  
and have not His touch of understanding love,  
I am nothing.

If I am able to argue successfully  
against the religions of the people and make fools  
of them and have not His wooing note of love,  
I am nothing.

If I have all faiths and great ideas  
and magnificent plans  
and not His love that sweats  
and bleeds and weeps and  
prays and pleads,  
I am nothing.

If I give my clothes and money  
to them and have not love for them,  
I am nothing.

If I surrender all prospects. Leave home  
and friends and make the sacrifices  
of a missionary career and then turn  
sour and selfish amid the daily  
annoyances and slights of the missionary life,  
then I am nothing.

If I can heal all manner of sickness  
and disease but wound hearts and hurt feelings  
for want of his love that is kind,  
I am nothing.

If I can write articles and publish books  
that win applause but fail to transcribe  
the word of the cross into the  
language of His love,  
I am nothing.”

In the same way I would like to thank all who have taught me how to write in practice my own poem of the love of God and all the people.

In a special way I would like to thank Rev. Fr. Dominic Izzo, OP, for guiding me and for all the help in writing of this essay. I would like to thank my SMA community for the support I received during this time. In particular a word of thanks to Robin Kamemba for helping me by reading draft copies and correcting my English, and a word of appreciation to Fr. Cornelius Murphy SMA, for his wise advice regarding the content of the essay, corrections of language and final remarks.

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## INTRODUCTION.

St. Paul is the most famous missionary in the early Church. It was his dedication to the mission to the Gentiles which brought Christianity from the Jewish to the Greek world. In his zeal and dedication to the mission he wished to go to the ends of the world to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, he never came to Africa. It is now, almost nineteen centuries later, that I am getting ready for the mission on this continent. Thus, I would like to see St. Paul as the missionary who can be the model and the example for my missionary work as a member of the Society of African Missions (SMA) here in Africa.

From the very beginning of his mission St. Paul was very conscious of his vocation as a missionary (the Apostle to the nations). It was something that sustained him in his work. His strong missionary vocation and total dedication to what he was doing challenges my attitudes as a young person. The sense of urgency, which can be seen in his mission, inspires me to reflect upon my own convictions and ideas. What was it at the core of the mission that pushed St. Paul ahead? Where did he find the strength and power to move on? Can I be like him?

His mission was mostly connected with building and forming local communities. It had a deep impact on his life and he himself was changed by what he was doing. He was ever open to the local needs and as he moved from place to place he was leaving behind different active Christian communities. That is something that makes me "jealous"! How did he do it? Was he not afraid that the work he did would be wasted and the community would die? How did he form the communities so that after his departure they would grow and spread? Is there something I could learn from St. Paul about mission for my future?

## CHAPTER I: St. Paul and his Life

### 1. Sources.

We have two basic sources of St. Paul's life and missionary activity. The first one is the story of the Acts of the Apostles. Although it presents us with a part of St. Paul's history, it has to be taken critically, since the author's purpose was not the full presentation of the chronology of St. Paul. The other one consists of Pauline letters.<sup>1</sup> In the past, the authentic Pauline letters were used to support arguments from the Acts of the Apostles. Now we are giving more importance to the information derived from these letters which will be my primary source in looking at St. Paul's life and his missionary activity.

### 2. Who is St. Paul?

When asking for information about a person, we are mainly looking for some details connected with his or her life, for example: the date and place of his/her birth, his/her family background, his/her education and so on.

It is a pity that St. Paul did not start any of his letters using the sentence: "From Paul, servant of Jesus Christ, born on the .....(date)... at .....(place)... from ... (parents)..... to the Church of God at ...". An opening line in a letter like this would solve plenty of problems. Although no one can calculate the precise date of St. Paul's birth, scholars generally agree that he was born between AD 1 and 10.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Most of the Bible scholars agree that the authentic Pauline letters are: 1 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, Romans and Philemon. Deutero-Pauline letters are: Titus, 1 and 2 Timothy, Colossians, Ephesians and 2 Thessalonians.

<sup>2</sup>Jerome Murphy-O'Connor is presenting an even earlier date of St. Paul's birth, about 6 BC, based on Phil 9. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, Paul: A Critical Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 1-8.

Regarding his own ancestry St. Paul writes: “*I too am an Israelite, descended from Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin*” (Rom 11:1); “*circumcised on the eight day of my life, I was born of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrew parents*” (Phil 3:5). These statements point clearly to his Jewish roots.

More information about his ancestry can be derived from his own defence when he was challenged by Jews who came from Jerusalem in 2 Cor 11:22: “*Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I*”. Why did he stress so strongly his Jewish roots? Why did he have to defend himself against accusations of these “true Jews” who came from Jerusalem? Although St. Paul does not give us any clear answers to these questions, we can say, that it is connected with the fact that he was born somewhere in the Jewish diaspora. Where in the Jewish diaspora? St. Paul does not indicate directly this place. The fact, that after his first visit to Jerusalem as a Christian, he goes to “*places in Syria and Cilicia*” (Gal 1:21) can be of help. Of course, Antioch and Damascus are in Syria and there were Christians there already. But why Cilicia? The simplest answer would be, that he had some personal connections with it. In this case Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, could be the place of his birth.<sup>3</sup> This place would help also to support the idea that Paul was a Roman citizen<sup>4</sup> (although he did not claim it in his letters).

Because he was a Jew, he received a religious education. Since he was living in a Hellenistic environment he acquired knowledge of the Greek language, grew up in a Greek culture and could have received some rhetorical training as well (there were very good rhetorical

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<sup>3</sup>It is very interesting, that Luke in the Acts of the Apostles points to Tarsus as the place of Paul’s birth (Acts 9:11,30; 11:25; 21:39; 22:3). If he was inventing the place of St. Paul’s birth, he would choose most probably Jerusalem. Taking into account the theological point: “*You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in the Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the world*” (Acts 1:8), Luke would have preferred St. Paul to be born in Jerusalem and not somewhere in Cilicia. So, this information may be true.

<sup>4</sup>Murphy-O’Connor, op. cit., pp. 39-46.

schools in Tarsus).<sup>5</sup> Although in his letters he claims, that he was sent not to preach using “*purely philosophical arguments*” (1 Cor 2:4) and “*means of wisdom of language*” (1 Cor 1:17), the style of his letters and careful presentation of logical arguments testify to his good education.<sup>6</sup>

After finishing his secular education (he was about 20 years old) he went to continue his studies in Jerusalem, where he was going deeper into the roots of his religion. It is very possible, that he received his education and studied the Torah under Gamaliel I, the son of Hillel. Thus, his words from Phil 3:5 “*in the matter of the Law I was a Pharisee*” are not surprising and they can explain his strict dedication to the Jewish tradition up to the point of “persecuting the Church of God” (Gal 1:13).<sup>7</sup>

### 3. “Conversion”<sup>8</sup> as the most important event in St. Paul’s life.

This experience of receiving “*a revelation of Jesus Christ*” (Gal 1:12) is very important in the life of St. Paul. This one event has changed his whole life. Since it was such an important event, I would like to spend more time on this experience of St. Paul.

#### A. How was St. Paul’s life before receiving a “revelation of Jesus Christ”?

St. Paul describes this period of life in a few lines in the letter to the Galatians:

*“You have surely heard how I lived in the past, within Judaism, and how there*

<sup>5</sup>C. K. Barrett suggests, that Paul living as a Jew in Tarsus could have used the possibility of getting a secular education since Tarsus possessed a very good university and rhetorical schools. See: C. K. Barrett, Paul: Introduction to His Thought (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), p. 8.

<sup>6</sup>Gunter Borkamm, Paul, Tr. D. M. Stalker (London: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 9-10.

<sup>7</sup>Murphy-O’Connor, op. cit., pp. 52-62.

<sup>8</sup>Traditionally we call St. Paul’s experience from Gal 1:12, 16-17 (or Acts 9: 1-19) a “conversion” and we celebrate the Feast of Conversion of St. Paul on the 25th of January. However, this traditional understanding has to be checked against the evidence from Pauline letters.

*was simply no limit to the way I persecuted the Church of God in my attempt to destroy it; and how, in Judaism, I outstripped most of my Jewish contemporaries in my limitless enthusiasm for the traditions of my ancestors.”* (Gal 1: 13-14)

In his own description of his early life, he presented himself as a persecutor of the Church (Gal 1:13; 1 Cor 15:9; Phil 3:6). However, his life was perfect and fully ethical from the perspective of a Jew. He was blameless under the Law as he stresses: *“As for religious fervour, I was persecutor of the Church; as for the uprightness embodied in the Law, I was faultless”* (Phil 3:6). He was perfectly following the Law, what was more, he was progressing in zealotry (enthusiasm) for Judaism and for the purity of faith. The strong commitment to his convictions to Judaism was the most important thing in his life. He treasured it fiercely, served it loyally. It was the highest ideal he knew and he was untiring in its service “being uncompromising in opposition to whatever seemed to threaten the foundations of Judaism.”<sup>9</sup>

As such he was in the line of Old Testament figures, who were zealous for the Law: Phinehas (Num 25:11), Elijah (1 King 19:10,14), Mattathias and his sons in the Maccabean period (1 Macc 2:24,26,27,50).<sup>10</sup> The common factor for all these examples is the same: a zeal to maintain the Israel's distinctiveness from other peoples, a zeal which was ready to use force to maintain this distinctiveness. In the Old Testament this zeal was understood as portraying the zeal of the Lord for Israel, zeal which was jealous and which was safeguarding Israel's covenantal relationship with God.<sup>11</sup> Thus, we could easily put him in the same place as the great servants of God, who dedicated their lives to God. They were like instruments, totally submitted to the will of Yahweh, “*doulos*” (slaves) of Yahweh. The word *doulos* was used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) for those who served Yahweh in a special way:

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<sup>9</sup>T. Bernard Smyth, Paul: Mystic and Missionary (New York: Orbis Books, 1980), p. 16.

<sup>10</sup>J. Daniel Harrington, ed., Galatians (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 59.

<sup>11</sup>D. G. James Dunn, The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Galatians (Cambridge: University Press, 1996), pp. 66-68.

Moses (2 Kgs 18:12), Joshua (Judg 2:8), David (2 Sam 7:5), the prophets (Amos 3:7) and the psalmists (Pss 27:9; 31:17). Then, it is not surprising, that St. Paul uses the same *doulos* in Rom 1:1, describing himself as a slave of Christ - a servant of Jesus, totally submitting his will to Christ Jesus.<sup>12</sup>

St. Paul perfectly suits this picture of a zealous protector of the Law. The way he describes it, does not suggest that it was his duty, but rather something coming out of his inner convictions, something he did on his own. St. Paul does not give us any example of his activity nor does he present us with the way in which he went doing it. Since he does not mention his membership of Sanhedrin and his role as a Judge, it is most probable, that his picture as a person who is “shedding Christian blood” in every place where he appeared, is a part of Luke’s presentation.<sup>13</sup> From St. Paul’s presentation we can see, that in his own way as a Jew, he was doing everything in order to make the life of these enemies of Israel difficult and burning with a real hatred in his heart against the Church which he wished to destroy.

### **B. The meaning of St. Paul’s “conversion”.**

There are a few places in the Pauline letters, where St. Paul refers to the experience which changed his whole life and which we call traditionally “conversion”. In Gal 1:12 he writes about his message: *“It was not from any human being that I received it, and I was not thought it, but it came to me through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”* And in Gal 1: 15-16 he states: *“When God, who had set me apart from the time when I was in my mother’s womb, called me through his grace and choose to reveal his Son to me, so that I should preach him to the gentiles ....”* He

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<sup>12</sup>Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Romans (New York: Doubleday, 1993), pp. 228-229.

<sup>13</sup> “Once it is noticed, that the strongest statements concerning Paul’s pre-Christian activity always occur as an introduction to narratives of his conversion, it becomes obvious that it was in Luke’s artistic perspective to exaggerate certain negative traits of Paul the persecutor in order to set in greater relief the miracle of his conversion and the success of his apostolate.” Murphy-O’Connor, op. cit., p. 66.

says as well: “*Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?*” (1 Cor 9:1) and when in 1 Corinthians 15 he presents the list of those who saw Resurrected Christ in verse 8 he testifies: “*Last of all he appeared to me too, as though I was a child born abnormally.*”

St. Paul’s understanding of this experience is very important. He says: “*When God, who had set me apart from the time when I was in my mother’s womb*” (Gal 1:15a). Using this image he puts forward the idea, that God himself planned all of it. The choice of *aphorizein*, which means “*to set apart*”, even strengthens this idea. In the Old Testament this word was used to describe somebody or something set aside for consecrated service.<sup>14</sup> That was exactly St. Paul’s understanding of what he was to do: he was set apart by God himself for the consecrated service of the gospel of God (cf. Rom 1:1). It was all God’s plan and on his own account St. Paul could not do it. This was a gift from God and St. Paul had to accept it.

The notion of being set apart from his mother’s womb brings forward the idea of the prophetic call of Jeremiah and of the Servant from Isaiah 49. Both of them were called by God before their birth (cf. Jer 1: 4-5a; Isa 49:1,5) and both of them were called to bring God’s message to all the nations (cf. Jer 1:5b; Isa 49:6b). This self awareness of his own call puts St. Paul together with the great prophets of the past. As in the past God chose and sent these prophets with his message to all the nations, in the same way he has called and sent St. Paul for his mission to the Gentiles. So, he sees his ministry as a prophetic call and the Gentiles are the true recipients of it.

God has commissioned him to preach Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and so, there could be no doubt, that this mission was a later development for St. Paul.<sup>15</sup> He himself was fully conscious of this specific commission from God. It was so clear for him, that he even did not need to go

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<sup>14</sup>Harrington, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>15</sup>See the polemic regarding the place of the mission to the Gentiles for St. Paul, Murphy-O’Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

anywhere to confer about the meaning of this experience (cf. Gal 1: 16b-17).

From this reflection on St. Paul's understanding of his own encounter with Jesus it is easy to see, that the term used traditionally to describe this reality - conversion - is narrowing the meaning of this experience. For St. Paul, most important is the whole idea of being called and of receiving commission for a mission to the Gentiles. He stresses as well that this call was a prophetic one and that it was his vocation. Although this experience brought about the change in his life, the change of heart which describes conversion, it is important to see that the primary effect of this experience was in his "new understanding of God and in his new relation with God."<sup>16</sup> Thus, although the term conversion is a prevailing one in the traditional understanding of this reality, more stress should be put on the call, commission and vocation as the results of St. Paul's encounter with Christ.

### C. Consequences of the "encounter with Christ".

This experience was for St. Paul first of all a moment of grace. Although he did not present the whole account of this event, we know that the centre of this experience was Jesus Christ. This experience was like one of the Post-resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ to the Apostles.<sup>17</sup> In the same way as the Apostles were led from unbelief to belief by the appearances of Jesus, so was St. Paul. The only difference was in the fact, that St. Paul never met Jesus during his earthly ministry (cf. 2 Cor 5:16). From that time on, Jesus became the centre for St. Paul; the centre of his life and the centre of his message as it is testified by his letters.<sup>18</sup>

This experience of "*seeing Jesus*" (1 Cor 9:1) brought him to believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This was the most important change in his life - the one who was crucified under

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<sup>16</sup>Barrett, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. Mt 28:9,17; Mk 16: 9-14; Lk 24: 13-31, 36-42; John 20: 11-17, 19-29; John 21.

<sup>18</sup>Smyth, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64.

Pontius Pilate was alive! This fact put a new light on who Jesus was. The teaching of Jesus, this teaching which was carried out by the Christians he persecuted, was true. What is more, Jesus' claim of his Messiahship, which was directly expressed by his followers, was true.<sup>19</sup> With the recognition of Jesus as Messiah, St. Paul had to take on as well Jesus' attitude towards the Law. Law was no longer the ultimate means of Salvation, since the grace which he received in Jesus Christ was offered to all. The Law, which was once an obstacle for the Salvation of the Gentiles ceased to be a problem, since Gentiles could be saved without becoming Jews.<sup>20</sup>

The Christ St. Paul proclaims is the Resurrected Christ. Although for St. Paul as a Jew it was difficult to talk about the crucified Christ, he stressed that this Christ of failure is as well "the power and wisdom of God" (cf. 1 Cor 1: 23-24). According to St. Paul, Christ has a special relationship with all human beings, since we can become the children of God only in Him. It is because of the fact that Christ is so closely related to God and man, that he has to be seen as equal to God and as a true man. From the beginning to the end, the Pauline message is about Christ, uniquely the Son of God, who reconciles all people to his Father and to one another, so that at the end "every tongue should acknowledge Jesus as Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:11).<sup>21</sup>

Another very important consequence coming out of the fact of receiving a "revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:12) is his deep conviction of his apostleship. The fact that he presents himself in the list of the witnesses of the Risen Christ (1 Cor 15:8) testifies to his conviction that he was one of the Twelve. When he recounts the meeting in Jerusalem in Gal 2: 1-10 with those "who are recognised as important people" (Apostles), he stresses the fact that they recognised

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<sup>19</sup>Murphy-O'Connor, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79.

<sup>20</sup>St. Paul come to this understanding by the grace of God. It was not simply maturing in faith but a part of God's revelation.

<sup>21</sup>Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 98-99.

his commissioning and the message he was preaching to the Gentiles.

His apostleship is strengthened by the fact that he was commissioned by God (Gal 1:1) to give testimony of the Son to the Gentiles. As such, his mission is rather a specific one and was directed towards preaching the Gospel (1 Cor 1:17) and towards laying the foundations (1 Cor 3:10) of the Christian community which is a "*temple of God*" (1 Cor 3: 16-17). This deep conviction of being sent enables him to overcome hardships, suffering and other difficulties of this mission.<sup>22</sup> That is why he bears with joy for Christ all the sufferings and persecutions which accompany his ministry (cf. 1 Thess 2:2; 2 Cor 6: 4-10; 11: 23-27).

#### **4. How did St. Paul fulfill God's commission to preach Jesus to the Gentiles (Gal 1:16a).**

In Galatians 1:17 - 2:1, St. Paul mentions a few important events which took place after his "conversion". Straight after encountering Jesus he went to Arabia and then to Damascus (Gal 1:17). Then, after three years he went for the first time to Jerusalem to see Cephas and he stayed there for fifteen days (Gal 1: 18-19). After his return from Jerusalem he went to "*places in Syria and Cilicia*" (Gal 1:21). The next event he mentions is connected with his second visit to Jerusalem after "*fourteen years had gone*" (Gal 2:1).<sup>23</sup> From this presentation of events, that took place in his life, we do not know what exactly he was doing. However, in verse 23 of the letter to Galatians he states: "*They simply kept hearing it said, 'The man once eager to persecute us is now preaching the faith that he used to try to destroy.'*" So, he was not going around to different places but his main purpose was "*preaching the faith.*"<sup>24</sup> In this case, although we do

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<sup>22</sup>A. Joseph Grassi, *A World to Win* (New York: Maryknoll Publications, 1965), pp. 32-32.

<sup>23</sup>There is a discussion regarding the chronology of St. Paul connected with Gal 2:1. For more information see: Harrington, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72 and Murphy-O'Connor, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>24</sup>By preaching of the faith he means the message which is proclaimed and believed; it is almost equivalent to the Gospel. See, Harrington, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

not have any closer account of this initial stage of St. Paul's missionary work, we can say that he was proclaiming the message with which he was entrusted by God.

Romans 15 is important for understanding the way in which St. Paul saw his commissioning. In v. 16 he stresses: "*I was given grace to be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, dedicated to offer them the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an acceptable offering, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*" Further in v. 20 he gives more light on his ministry of preaching: "*And what is more, it has been my rule to preach the gospel only where the name of Christ has not been already heard, for I do not build on another's foundation.*" What was most important for St. Paul, was not just preaching to the Gentiles, but he understood his mission as "primary evangelization" - to the Gentiles who never heard about Jesus Christ. It is the main reason why we talk about some Churches as being found by St. Paul, for example Churches at: Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth and Galatia.

In Gal 4:13 St. Paul tells us, that on the way through Galatia he got sick. It was during this "involuntary stay" there that he founded the Church as a result of his preaching.<sup>25</sup> Then he went to Philippi, where he preached and founded the Church there. In Phil 4:15 he testifies to a special bond which he had with this Church. The next step was Thessalonica, some 100-miles west of Philippi on Via Egnatia, the capital city of Roman Province of Macedonia. The Acts of the Apostles suggest, that he stayed there for only three weeks (Acts 17: 1-10). However, it is difficult to accept it, since he was working in Thessalonica while preaching the Gospel (1 Thess 2:9) and the Philippians twice sent him some money in order to help him in the mission there (Phil 4:16).<sup>26</sup> Then through Athens (1 Thess 3:1) he went to Corinth and stayed there for about

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<sup>25</sup>Borkamm, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>26</sup>Jerome Murphy-O'Connor suggests, that in each of these cities (Philippi and Thessalonica) St. Paul has spent at least one year. See, Murphy-O'Connor, op. cit., pp. 102-104.

one year and a half during his first visit (Spring 50 to Autumn 51).<sup>27</sup> The only place in which St. Paul stayed for a longer time was Ephesus, where he could have spent two years and a half. The mission of St. Paul in Ephesus is in opposition to his principle: “*to preach the gospel only where the name of Christ has not been already heard*” (Rom 15:20), because after his arrival back from Jerusalem to Ephesus, Prisca and Aquilla were already there for more than one year and most probably they started this Church.<sup>28</sup>

Although it could appear that St. Paul was interested in founding his own Churches, it is important to see what he really thought about his work. St. Paul saw himself only as a builder “*laying foundations*” (1 Cor 3:10). This foundation was not of any human kind, since “*nobody can lay down any other foundation than the one which is already, namely Jesus Christ*” (1 Cor 3:11). He connects as well his work with the one of a farmer: “*I did the planting, Apollos did the watering, but God gave the growth*” (1 Cor 3:6). He states that he is doing just a share of the work which is ultimately done by God himself, since he gives growth. Thus, all the pastoral work of St. Paul was done under God - it was God’s work and not his own.

After this presentation a question comes to my mind: Was it St. Paul’s mission to found Churches or to preach the gospel? Preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles who had never heard about Christ was the most important task for St. Paul. He suggests it himself that his main role was not connected with baptising new converts (1 Cor 1: 14-16). The same can be derived from the fact, that he did not stay for a long time in any of his Churches, but he was in a hurry to bring in all Gentiles as the “*acceptable offering*” (Rom 15:16).<sup>29</sup> Organising the communities or

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 171-172.

<sup>29</sup>Borkamm, op. cit., p. 57.

building of the Churches was an outcome of his preaching. He could not be indifferent<sup>30</sup> to the Churches which came up after his preaching, since he was their spiritual father, the one who brought them the gospel for the first time. He was deeply interested in the way they were developing to the point of daily worry and “*anxiety for all the Churches.*” (2 Cor 11:28). This anxiety and worry for the Church is clearly seen in 2 Cor 2: 12-13, where he says, that while preaching at Troas he could have no peace waiting for Titus to come back from his mission to Corinth and so he went to meet him.<sup>31</sup> This testifies to the fact, that because of the worries for “his” Churches he had to change his plans. The recognition of the condition of the community originally founded by him did not allow him to feel free to move on, but he felt the need of staying in contact with it. Thus, his whole activity was determined by two opposing currents, “one driving him onwards” to preach the gospel and another “holding him back” to the Churches he founded.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>As Senior D. and Stuhlmueller C. put it: “The letters we have show that Paul was not content to “plant” and move on, despite some of his comments in this direction. He felt personal responsibility for the communities he had inaugurated and had no hesitation in sending specific directions to them.” Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller, The Biblical Foundations for Mission (New York: Orbis Books, 1983), p. 185.

<sup>31</sup>Ernest Best, Paul and his Converts (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), p. 6.

<sup>32</sup>Borkamm, op. cit., p. 57.

**CHAPTER II: St. Paul and his Churches.**  
*(St. Paul's involvement in the Churches which he founded)*

**1. Founding of local Churches (local Christian communities).**

**A. St. Paul's idea of *ekklesia*.**

Pauline communities came into existence as a result of St. Paul's preaching. They were a direct consequence of his missionary action, since preaching of the message of Christ brought the people into a closer relationship with God. This relationship with God lead to the inner change of St. Paul's converts and then into a personal relationship with one another.

"Acceptance of Christ necessitated acceptance of those whom he had already welcomed (Rom 15:7); reconciliation with God entailed reconciliation with others that exhibited the character of the gospel preaching (Phil 4: 2-3); union in the Holy Spirit involved union with one another, for the Spirit was primarily a shared, not individual experience (cf. 2 Cor 13:14; Phil 2:1)."<sup>33</sup>

According to St. Paul the gospel is not purely a personal matter, but it is a communal matter. Thus it is not surprising, that St. Paul in his letters very often uses the term *ekklesia* which is his favourite way of referring to the communities to whom he was writing.

The word *ekklesia* was widely used in Greece. From the 6th century BC and onwards it referred to a "regular assembly" of citizens in the city to decide matters effecting their welfare. The best known use of the word *ekklesia* was for the voting assembly of free citizens in Athens and other free cities of Greece.<sup>34</sup> As such, this term did not posses any religious meaning. In Judaism, in the Greek Translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) *ekklesia* was used to translate the Hebrew word describing the "assembly" of the people of Israel before God. Although it was used as well for non-religious assemblies (i.e. the gathering of an army in

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<sup>33</sup>Robert Banks, Paul's Idea of Community (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1980), p. 33.

<sup>34</sup>Wayne M. Meeks, The First Urban Christians (New York: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 79.

preparation for war (1 Sam 17:47) or coming together of dangerous crowds [Eccl 26:5]), it predominantly referred to Israel's meeting before God. *Ekklesia* referred both to the gathering of the whole nation and to an assembly of tribal leaders or patriarchal chiefs.

1 Thessalonians is the first letter in which St. Paul used the term *ekklesia* (1 Thess 1:1). He used it in the same way as in Jewish and Greek circles, and yet he made a distinction between the "assembly" to which he was writing and other groupings. Like other gatherings in the city the assembly is described as a "gathering of the Thessalonians", which is marked off from regular political councils by the addition of words "in God the Father" and from weekly Synagogue meetings by both the use of the term *ekklesia* and the addition "in Jesus Christ." It is clear from the closing remarks of this letter, that St. Paul had in mind an actual gathering of the Thessalonian Christians as a regularly-gathering community. He earnestly requests that this letter "*be read to all the brothers*" (1 Thess 5:27) and that they "*greet all the brothers with a holy kiss*" (1 Thess 5:26). This suggests that this term used by St. Paul "could only be applied to *an actual gathering of people*, or to the group which gathering he viewed as *a regularly constituted meeting* and not, as in today's usage, to a number of local assemblies conceived as part of a large unit."<sup>35</sup>

In the greeting at the beginning of Galatians (Gal 1:2), in 1 and 2 Corinthians and in Romans (Rom 16:4, 16) St. Paul uses a plural form, when he has more than one Church in his view. References to: "*the Churches in Galatia*" (Gal 1:2; 1 Cor 16:1), "*the Churches of Asia*" (1 Cor 16:19), "*the Churches of Macedonia*" (2 Cor 8:1) and "*the Churches of Judea*" (Gal 1:22) demonstrate that for St. Paul the idea of unified provincial or national Church was foreign. He did not have the notion of a universal Church.<sup>36</sup> This explains the different form of the opening

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<sup>35</sup>Banks, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>36</sup>Some propose, that St. Paul had a broader idea of the Church (not just a local community) basing their argument on 1 Thess 4:16 (Church as a union of living and the dead),

greeting of the letter to the Romans. St. Paul did not address this letter to “the Church” or “Churches” but “to all beloved in Rome” (Rom 1:7). In his understanding *ekklesia* could not refer to a group of people scattered through a locality unless they all gather together. Thus, he could not refer to Christians in Rome as “a Church” (to do so, he would have to have developed a different idea of *ekklesia*).

These local Churches did not belong to the people who constitute them (1 Thess 1:1) or to a district where they were founded (Gal 1: 1-5) but to God who brought them to existence in Jesus Christ. This underlined St. Paul’s idea, that the local churches are part of God’s own affair.

### **B. Founding of local communities with local structures.**

When we read the Pauline letters, we get the idea that the Pauline Churches needed some kind of organization in order to continue their existence. Yet, their organization differs from the organization of the Church in Jerusalem, where the Apostles<sup>37</sup> were the leaders of the community. Since, St. Paul saw his commissioning<sup>38</sup> as preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, he could not stay in one place to develop the Church around himself. In fact, he did not even try to do so. So, the organization of the local communities had to reflect something with which the people would be accustomed, with which they would feel at home and had to reflect as well in some way the situation in which they were founded. Rooting the local communities in the local context could ensure their stability and continuance after St. Paul’s departure. This demanded from St. Paul some degree of flexibility and discernment of the local situation and needs.

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Gal 4:26 (Church as the heavenly Jerusalem) and Phil 3:20 (membership of heavenly community).

<sup>37</sup>Cf. Acts 1:13; 2:14,42; 4:33; Gal 1: 18-19; 2: 6-9.

<sup>38</sup>Daniel J. Bosh sees this commissioning of St. Paul in line of responsibility (obligation to preach the Gospel) and of gratitude (for the love of God he received through Jesus Christ). David J. Bosh, Transforming Mission (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), pp. 135-139.

**(a). Household organization.**

At the time when St. Paul was active as a missionary, Christianity was seen as a movement which was just developing. As a “new” movement it had to be organized in the way in which other movements at this time were developing. There are some sociological models on which Christianity could base its development. First of all we have the “household” organization, which was more than simply a family as in modern Western Society. “Households” included not only the immediate relatives but also slaves, freedman, hired workers, sometimes tenants and partners in trade or craft, and other dependents.<sup>39</sup> Secondly, there were various voluntary associations (clubs, guilds, associations of all sorts) where membership was established by the free decision to associate rather than by birth, although factors of economic connection, office or profession were often important as a context for these associations.<sup>40</sup> As households, so these voluntary associations were closely connected with the patronage system (the rich person would support the members and provide a place for a meeting). Thirdly, since Christianity was seen as an offshoot of Judaism, Christianity had the diaspora Synagogue as the nearest and the most natural model to follow. This model could provide something that was absent in the “household” organization and voluntary associations - it was a sense of belonging to a larger entity (which for Jews was Israel, People of God, concretely represented in the land of Israel and the Temple in Jerusalem). Furthermore, there were, as well, various philosophical or rethorical schools, that is communities of disciples around teachers (both philosophers and rhetoricians),<sup>41</sup> which could be taken as a model for organization of Christian communities. All of these various models

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<sup>39</sup>Grassi, op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>40</sup>For the evaluation of voluntary associations as a possible model for the development of the early Christianity see: Meeks, op. cit., pp. 77- 80.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., pp. 81- 83.

could be used to describe the relationships and the development of Pauline Churches.<sup>42</sup>

The fact that private houses were meeting places of the Pauline communities could suggest that from the beginning the “household” was the basic context within which most of the Pauline Churches established themselves. The Greek word *oikos* (someone’s house as a place of living or a household which was in someone’s charge) appears in the Pauline letters. The phrase *kat’ oikon*: “*Caesar’s Household*” (Phil 4:22), “*household of Chloe*” (1 Cor 1:11), “*household of Stephanes*” (1 Cor 1:16) or “*household of Aristobulus*” (Rom 16:10) testifies to St. Paul’s use of this word.<sup>43</sup> He did not only distinguish the place where the community met, but rather distinguished these individual household-based groups from the whole Church<sup>44</sup> which would assemble on occasions (1 Cor 14:23; Rom 16:23). Thus, *kat’ oikon* is a basic part of the Christian movement, formed around an existing household. At the same time it does not mean, that the household was enclosed within itself (only members of this particular household could come together), but it was open to receive of new converts. There were as well households whose heads were non-Christian, as testified by Rom 16:10,11,14,15. This would suggest that not all the members of the particular household where the Christians met, would automatically become Christians, as can be seen in the case of Onesimus (Letter to Philemon).

The household organization of the Pauline communities carries as well something what we could call “structures”. In Rom 16:23 St. Paul includes his greeting to Gaius, whom he describes as the host of the whole Church (here St. Paul has in his mind the gathering of the

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<sup>42</sup> “... the manifold of voluntary associations, the special adaptation of the Synagogue to urban life, and the organization of instruction and exhortation in philosophical schools all provide examples of groups sharing certain problems that the Christians, too, had to face.” *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>43</sup> Cf., Rom 16:11, 14-15; 1 Cor 1:14: 16:15,19.

<sup>44</sup> St. Paul does not mean the entire Christian Church, but a full attendance of the local congregation meeting together on a particular occasion. See: William F. Orr and James Artur Walther, *1 Corinthians* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), p. 304.

whole Church in Corinth and not just one of the household meetings). As Erastus (mentioned in Rom 16:23), so Gaius had most probably had an important position as the citizen of Corinth.<sup>45</sup> Thus it would not be surprising, that his house could be spacious enough to accommodate the meeting of the whole Church. As a consequence, we can see most probably the insertion of the Church into an already existing network of relations (internal: kinship, clientele and subordination, and external: ties of friendship), which would create a potential for the emergence of the functions within the Christian body of a city. It set as well a stage for some conflict in the allocation of power and in the understanding of the roles in the community. The structure of the household was hierarchical, thus “the head of the household, by normal expectations of the society, would exercise some authority over the group and would have some legal responsibility for it.”<sup>46</sup> This would help to promote local responsibility for the Church, since the offices and duties already existing in the extended households prepared the way for the responsibilities in the Church (cf. 1 Cor 16: 15-16). It was possible for St. Paul to select the people already approved by others for their natural qualities of leadership and give them new responsibilities and opportunities in the Church<sup>47</sup> (Crispus and Gaius - 1 Cor 1:14; Stephanas - 1 Cor 1:15, 16:15; Erastus - Rom 16:23).

Furthermore, the family nature of the Christianity was easily included within the household organization. New Christians quickly recognised the deep union between members, which had its source in the Eucharistic celebration at home. The unity and equality of all in the new faith, particularly in the celebration of the Last Supper, had as well a far reaching effect in attracting new converts. Master and slave, man and woman, Gentiles and Jew were together at

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<sup>45</sup>Gerard Theissen, The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982), pp. 73-83.

<sup>46</sup>Meeks, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>47</sup>Grassi., op. cit., p. 88.

the same Eucharistic table (cf. Gal 3:28; Philm 16) and this provided the opportunity for the gradual breaking down of all social barriers.

**(b). “Charismatic”<sup>48</sup> organization of the local communities.**

When talking about the Christian community, St. Paul stresses *charisma* (gift) which he refers to the work of the Holy Spirit. The meaning of this word is connected for St. Paul with “the privileges which Israel received at God’s hands and rejected, the saving work of Christ and the acquittal from condemnation that has been extended to many as a result of it (cf. Rom 5: 15-17).”<sup>49</sup> Thus, he has in mind all the gifts received from God: the sonship, the glory, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises which were granted to Israel (cf. Rom 9: 4-5). Then to these gifts he adds as well: justification, faith, eternal life and the gift of Christ as extended to all people by God. Thus he perceives *charisma* (or *charismata*) as the fundamental gift of God which covers up all other gifts which he may give to those who are in relationship with him.<sup>50</sup> Other gifts mentioned by St. Paul have as well God (cf. 1 Cor 12:6,28; Rom 12:3) or, alternatively, Christ (cf. 1 Cor 12:5) as their author, but it is the task of the Holy Spirit<sup>51</sup> to apportion them and to manifest them through individuals for the common good (1 Cor 12:7,11; 14:12). They are permanent features of the Christian community and they do not have simply temporal character. They are not given merely so that the Church got started, but they are main constituents of the Church’s gathering as people who continue to meet.

What are these *charismata*? St. Paul presents a list of them in 1 Cor 12: 7-12:

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<sup>48</sup>Strictly speaking it is not a different way of organizing the community, since the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit are given by God to the community for edification of its members (1 Cor 14:4,12,19,26).

<sup>49</sup>Banks, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>51</sup>Holy Spirit is only a medium of God’s and Christ’s action and the share of gifts is given in accordance with, by means of, through the Holy Spirit and not by him alone. Thus, we can not talk about “gifts of the Holy Spirit” as if he were the source.

*“The particular manifestation of the Spirit granted to each one is to be used for the general good. To one is given the gift of utterance of expressing wisdom; to another the gift of utterance expressing knowledge, in accordance with the same Spirit; to another faith, from the same Spirit; and to another, the gift of healing, through the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another, the power to distinguish spirits; to one, the gift of different tongues and to another, the interpretation of tongues. But at work in all of them is one and the same Spirit, distributing them to each individual.”*

This list of *charismata* shows gifts which are suitable for the practical life of the Church and which the Spirit bestows for the advantage of the whole community. Here St. Paul stresses the fact, that the manifestation of the Spirit which is seen in the possession of gifts is individual only in respect for its diversity and apportionment. However, the purpose of these gifts is the common advantage. Thus St. Paul emphasises the unifying power of the Holy Spirit which is manifested in: wisdom (special insight into the profound implications of the Gospel<sup>52</sup>) and knowledge (understanding of the Old Testament and Christian Traditions and capacity to expand them concretely); faith (with respect not to salvation but to a specific circumstance), healings (presumably of various kinds in view of the plural, and of a miraculous character in view of their distinction from the following gift), and miraculous works (especially exorcisms); prophecy (knowing and speaking God’s mind intuitively rather than, as with the teacher, deductively through the sacred writings) and discernment of Spirits (whether they are of God, from a demoniac source or merely reflect the human opinion, and what their significance is for the community); glossalia and the interpretation of glossalia (speaking and explaining of unknown, non-human languages).<sup>53</sup>

Parallel to these gifts are services or ministries which are to be performed for the good of the community. Although St. Paul did not explain which services are meant here, it is clear that what he has in mind is connected with the services for the good of the Church. All gifts are

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<sup>52</sup>Orr and Walther, op. cit., p. 281.

<sup>53</sup>Banks, op. cit., pp. 95-96; see as well: Orr and Walther, op. cit., pp. 282-283.

apportionments of divine gifts by the Holy Spirit and thus what is reacquired is the execution of these ministries which are made possible by these gifts. These ministries are not descriptive of what happens but of how and why it happens. They exist because God produces all that is to be accomplished in the Church (cf., Rom 11: 33-35; 1 Cor 2: 6-10).

St. Paul gives us some more insight into the service or ministries for the good of the community in 1 Cor 12: 28-30. Presenting us with a kind of list of functions in the community, he writes: *“And those whom God has appointed in the Church are, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers; after them miraculous powers, then gifts of healing, helpful acts, guidance, various kinds of tongues”* (1 Cor 12:28). Here he converts the lengthy list from 1 Cor 12: 7-12 into an application of it, as he lists particular functions that various Church members perform. The apostle’s role is missionary and in some degree an apostle has a position of authority. Prophets speak for God, teachers present Christian doctrine and its ethical application (their roles may overlap with the role of the prophets). In the second part of this list St. Paul makes a shift from specific functions, which specify persons who perform them, to the roles as they are<sup>54</sup> (miracles, healing gifts, assistance, guidance, kind of tongues and interpretation of them).

Rom 12: 6-8 goes in a similar way:

*“Then since the gifts that we have differ according to the grace that was given to each of us: if it is a gift of prophecy, we should prophecy as much as our faith tells us; if it is a gift of practical service, let us devote ourselves to serving; if it is teaching, to teaching; if it is encouraging, to encouraging. When you give, you should give generously from the heart; if you are put in charge, you must be conscientious; if you do works of mercy, let it be because you enjoy doing them.”*

Here St. Paul stresses once more that gifts of the Holy Spirit are to be used to build the body of Christ. However, he makes this list of roles while talking about their application for the service of others. So, there is no place for boasting about most extraordinary manifestations of gifts, but

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<sup>54</sup>Orr and Walther, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

what is required is to use these gifts to serve and to build up the community. “They are also to be fully developed and practised with that complete human involvement which characterises the perfect gift of self” (cf. Rom 12: 7-10).<sup>55</sup>

From the use of *charismata*<sup>56</sup> in St. Paul's writing we can see a kind of development.

<u>1 Cor 12: 8-10</u>	<u>1 Cor 12: 28-30</u>	<u>Rom 12: 6-8</u>
wisdom	apostles (first)	prophecy
knowledge ( <i>gnosis</i> )	prophets (second)	practical service
faith	teachers (third)	( <i>diakonia</i> )
healing gifts	miracles	the teacher
working miracles	healing gifts	the one encouraging
prophecy	assistance	the one giving
distinguishing spirits	guidance	the one in charge
kinds of tongues	kinds of tongues	the one who shows mercy
interpretation of tongues	interpretation of tongues	

From these lists<sup>57</sup> we can see that St. Paul's teaching on the gifts of the Holy Spirit is already developed. In his earlier letters, for example 1 Thessalonians, we find hints referring to the activity of the Holy Spirit (in fellowship, prophecy, merciful sharing with others and so on). However, it is not until his 1 Corinthians, that we find extended teaching on the *charismata*, perhaps “prompted by the particular situation that had arisen there.”<sup>58</sup> This is further developed in the letter to the Romans when the stress is put on the person exercising a particular role.

The variety among the gifts presented on these lists shows, that there was local variation and freedom for the charismatic leadership, depending on the needs of the place. It testifies as well to sensitivity of St. Paul, who purposely plays down (in 1 Corinthians) the status of those

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<sup>55</sup>Grassi, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

<sup>56</sup>There are as well other references to the gifts, though these are not described directly as *charismata*: i.e., apostleship (1 Cor 3:5; Rom 16:17; Phil 2:25), prophecy (1 Thess 5: 19-20; 1 Cor 13:2, 14), evangelism (2 Cor 8:18), oversight (Phil 1:1), teaching (Gal 6:6; 2 Cor 8:7), exhortation (1 Thess 5:14), service (1 Cor 16:15; Rom 16:1; Phil 1:1), miracles (Gal 3:1), faith (1 Cor 13:2; 2 Cor 8:7), the merciful actions (Gal 6:10, 1 Thess 5:14).

<sup>57</sup>Meeks, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>58</sup>Banks, *op. cit.*, p 97.

who exercise particular roles drawing attention to the functions themselves, which come directly as a gift of the Holy Spirit. The fact that prophets and teachers are singled out (and are common for 1 Corinthians and Romans) testifies to the fact that these functions were the most important for the community. Since, St. Paul believed that prophecy was the most important activity that could take place in the Church, it is not surprising that it appears on the list before the activity of the teacher (only later on in the course of history the reverse took place and prophecy was no longer regarded as important). The opening of 1 Corinthians 11 suggests, that women and men prayed and prophesied in the gatherings at Corinth (1 Cor 11: 4-6), similarly his closing reference to the practice in other Churches suggests that this was a custom elsewhere as well (v. 16). Thus, female prophets are significant for the Pauline Churches and this suggests that for St. Paul women had as much freedom in exercising this gift as men. However, from 1 Cor 12:29 it is clear, that St. Paul makes a distinction between the regular ministry of “prophets” and “teachers” and the occasional prophesying and teaching in which all members of the community engaged. At the same time it is still too early to talk about a hierarchical organization unifying all communities, since there was so strong stress on the manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

This stress on gifts shows, that St. Paul put a great stress on the development of the gifts, which God has given to Christians by the Holy Spirit. He had one gift (that of an apostle) but for the growth, proper development and functioning of the Body of Christ, others had necessary roles and responsibilities. Thus, without the gifts which others had, the whole work of building of Christian communities would be for St. Paul impossible. The whole community had a gift of the Holy Spirit and it was dependent on the contribution of each person. The Holy Spirit acted in a special and unique way through each person for the benefit of all. Thus, St. Paul’s way of developing local leaders was connected to the recognition of each one’s gift, trust and encouragement in exercising it and in taking an active role in the community, which was connected with the gift. The good of the community was the objective of all of it, so that all

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things which are done are for edification (cf. 1 Cor 14:26).

### **C. The founding of local communities with the local people in charge.**

One of the features of St. Paul's mission was a tension between the mission of proclaiming the Good News and the responsibility for the community which come into existence as a result of his proclamation. Household organization and the guidance of the Holy Spirit played an important role in that continuance of the community after St. Paul's departure. He did not lay down a form of organization for his Churches, but left them free to develop as they willed. People are very keen at the beginning of a new organization and they are quite quick to devise ways of administering themselves. However, the question of assurance of continuance<sup>59</sup> remains, though for St. Paul it was all the work of God, who was distributing gifts to the individuals, so that the communities could continue their work. Thus the choice of the local leaders did not depend on St. Paul, yet he was in relation with them (he could not remain indifferent to the Churches he founded).

The Pauline letters contain a number of names<sup>60</sup> which are mentioned by St. Paul, when he was addressing his communities. He mentions for example: Archippus, Philemon, Apphia (Philem 1-2), Stephanes (1 Cor 1:16; 16:15,17), Crispus and Gaius (1 Cor 1:14), Fortunatus and Achaicus (1 Cor 16:17), Euodia, Syntyche, Clement (Phil 4: 2-3), Prisca and Aquila (1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16: 3-4), Phoebe (Rom 16:1). Also as he adds a whole list of names in Romans 16.<sup>61</sup> We know little about most of these people. At the same time the fact that these names are

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<sup>59</sup> "Survival and growth" are the main points of concern for Raymond Brown in looking at different Christians communities founded in the Apostolic time. Raymond E. Brown, The Churches The Apostles Left Behind (New York: Paulist Press, 1984).

<sup>60</sup> According to Meeks, the Pauline letters (as well as letters to the Ephesians and Colossians) contain altogether a number of sixty-five names of individuals apart from Paul who are identified as persons active in local communities, as travelling companions of St. Paul or agents of local communities. See: Meeks, op. cit., pp. 55-60.

<sup>61</sup> See, Fitzmyer, op. cit., p. 734.

included in his letters suggests, that these people are well known to the addressed.<sup>62</sup> That would suggest as well, that these people had quite an important role in communities. It would show St. Paul's insensitivity, if he did not greet or mention the local leaders but instead sent his regards to those that were not connected with the community.

From the people mentioned by St. Paul, Prisca and Aquila seem to be closely connected with the local communities. When St. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus, he sent as well greetings to the Church at Corinth from the Christians that gathered in the house Church of Prisca and Aquila there (1 Cor 16:19). The fact that they are mentioned next time in Rom 16:3-4 "implies that they had returned to Rome", so that they would be "undoubtedly St Paul's source of information about the contemporary situation in the Roman Community."<sup>63</sup> They have been rich enough to move from place to place: from Rome to Corinth and Ephesus, and to establish in each of these cities a sizable household. They have acted as patrons for St. Paul and for Christian congregations. In describing their role St. Paul calls them his fellow-workers, thus he implies that they shared in his work of evangelization. The bond between them and St. Paul had to be especially close, since they "*risked their own necks to save*" his life (Rom 16:4).<sup>64</sup> So apart from being dedicated leaders in local communities where they lived (their house was used as a place of meetings of Christians [1 Cor 16:19]), they had a special bond with St. Paul and were his intimate co-workers in the mission of evangelization.

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<sup>62</sup>That is why, St. Paul does not provide his audience with the more detailed description of these persons.

<sup>63</sup>Fitzmyer, *op. cit.*, p. 735; Jean-Marie Guillaume states the same: "Au moment où Paul écrit la lettre aux Romains (en 55-56), ils étaient déjà installés à Rom." Jean-Marie Guillaume, *Jésus Christ en Son Temps* (Paris: Médiaspaul, 1997), p. 153. (However, for those who see Romans 16 as a part of a different letter of recommendation for Phoebe and not written to Rome, this idea is unacceptable.)

<sup>64</sup>Here he may have referred to the help he got from Prisca and Aquila who used their influence, wealth and social position to help him during one Ephesian imprisonment, to which he referred in 1 Cor 15:32 and 2 Cor 1:8-9. See: *Ibid.*, p. 735.

St. Paul's letters testify to the fact, that in Pauline communities apart from men, women had the roles of responsibility. One of the main female leaders we learn from St. Paul is Phoebe (Rom 16:2). Phoebe is recommended by St. Paul in the letter to Romans as a *diaconos* of the Church of Cenchreae. He testifies as well that "*she herself has come to the help of many people, including myself*" (Rom 16:2). Although there is a discussion concerning the position of Phoebe as *diaconos*<sup>65</sup> we can be sure of one thing: in the communities which were founded by St. Paul women played an important role. It was a part of service which they rendered to a community by providing places for meetings (some rich women played an important role in the society<sup>66</sup>), by exercising their authority and leadership in the Church. "In fact, the famous chapter 11 of 1 Corinthians about woman's veil and subjection is rather a hint that some women had gone a little too far in their newly-founded freedom and leadership in the Church."<sup>67</sup>

In his letters St. Paul mentions as well other women, for example: Mary (Rom 16:6), Tryphaena, Tryphona and Parsis (Rom 16:12), Priscilla (1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:3), Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:2). The very fact, that they are mentioned suggest, that they played an active role in the life of Pauline communities. Although we do not have a closer description of their work, St. Paul uses phrases like: "*work hard in the Lord*" (Rom 16:6,12) or "*have struggled hard for the Gospel with me*" (Phil 4:3) which would suggest their close engagement in the work of the communities.

The existence of the people who had responsibility for the local communities suggests,

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<sup>65</sup>There are different ways of understanding of this term in the early Christianity and St. Paul (service, function, role, order), for different views see: Banks, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-136; Fitzmyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 728-731; Roger Gryson, The Ministry of Woman in the Early Church (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1976), pp. 3-7; PHEME PERKINS, Ministry in the Pauline Churches (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), pp. 52-62; Baumert Norbert, Woman and Man in Paul (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996), pp. 205-206.

<sup>66</sup>Meeks, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-25.

<sup>67</sup>Grassi, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

that when St. Paul approached a new community, his first concern was to obtain active collaborators and not passive recipients. The spreading of the Gospel had to be a joint effort and thus a local responsibility as well. St. Paul was not just helping others, but he helped them to help others in turn. As a result he refers to some people in his communities as co-workers. In 1 Thess 5:12 he implores Christians “*to be considerate to those who work so hard*” among them “*as leaders in the Lord and those who admonish*” them. Those working there participate in the missionary enterprise of St. Paul himself which consists in building up the communities. At the same time they admonish, that is they provide some moral guidance for the members, which would suggest that they had some authority. The example from Phil 4:2, where St. Paul addresses a group of people,<sup>68</sup> would suggest, that there were as well teams of devoted helpers working in the Pauline communities (but as we do not find in Pauline letters guideline for choosing the individual leaders, the same is true regarding the teams of co-workers).

The evidence we have suggests, that people were exercising some kind of authority, having some kind of function and responsibilities in the Pauline communities. However, it is still too early to talk about functions, roles and responsibilities as we have them today. Terms like *episcopos* (Phil 1:1) or *diakonos* (Phil 1:1, Rom 16:1) locally used and utilised by St. Paul do not testify to the hierarchical organization of the Pauline communities. St. Paul did not try to invest all the authority in one person or in a group of people over the other members of the community. On the contrary, all participated actively for the development of the Church by virtue of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. For sure, there were significant persons in Pauline communities, but their authority did not come from the ministry which they performed on behalf of the community, from their status or position within the community. Certainly their authority was not absolute. Rather the Pauline communities are examples of “a participatory society, in which authority is

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<sup>68</sup> “These women have struggled hard for the gospel with me, along with Clement and all my other fellow-workers...”

dispersed throughout the whole membership.”<sup>69</sup>

## **2. Working to strengthen already-formed communities.**

One of the most important ways in which St. Paul strengthened his communities was his personal visits. But when it was impossible for him to go and see the development of his Church he always remained in touch with his people by written word (letters dealing with the problems of the community) or by sending his co-workers (people closely related to him and his mission). That was the most important feature of the way in which St. Paul went about taking care of already formed communities.

### **A. Working with Others (St. Paul as a team worker).**

The work of founding new Churches or communities was not an easy one for St. Paul. That is why, he had to organize it in a way that he could also to carry on his mission of preaching of the Gospel where it was not preached. It would be very difficult, if he had to do everything on his own, but from St. Paul’s letters we can see, that he had a whole group of helpers who were engaged with him in this work.

From the letter of St. Paul we can get a few names of his closer helpers. Timothy<sup>70</sup> is one of them. He was sent from Athens to Thessalonica to check on the Church recently founded there and he strengthened it (1 Thess 3:2,6). Together with St. Paul and Silvanus he took his place in establishing Christianity at Corinth (2 Cor 1:19) and was later sent from Ephesus with an apostolic reminder for the Corinthians (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10). When St. Paul wrote to the Philippians (Phil 2:19) Timothy was with him. Titus,<sup>71</sup> who is mentioned less often by St. Paul,

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<sup>69</sup>Banks, op. cit., p.151.

<sup>70</sup>1 Thess 1:1; 3:2; 1 Cor 4:17; 16:10; 2 Cor 1:1,19; Phil 1:1; 2:19; Rom 16:21, Phlm 1.

<sup>71</sup>2 Cor 2:13; 7: 6-16; 8:6, 16-24; 12:18; Gal 2: 1-3.

had a major role in “the tangled relations between Paul and the Corinthian groups”<sup>72</sup> (2 Cor 2:13; 7: 6-16). He was also with St. Paul in Jerusalem, during his visit there, when St. Paul had presented the content of his Gospel (Gal 2: 1-10). Apart from these two, we have: Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke (Phlm 23), Tertius (Rom 16:22), Silvanus (1 Thess 1:1; 2 Cor 1:19) and Epaphroditus of Philippi (Phil 2:25; 4:18).

St. Paul was the one in charge of this group of helpers. He sent his colleagues to engage in different activities (cf. 1 Thess 3:2; 1 Cor 4:17; 2 Cor 8:18; Phil 2:19,23,28; Phlm 12). This suggests that he had authority over his immediate helpers. Yet, he did not act in an authoritarian way, as if his function was simply to command them. He had a very personal relationship with them. He prepared them to do the work and did not just send them without any concern for their pastoral duties. Preparing his co-workers for the mission was a slow process for St. Paul and the only way they could learn it was through the actual experience of his work and of his example. That was the way in which he took on himself the duty of “taking pains in forming of the future leaders.”<sup>73</sup>

The apostolic theme, which he was working with, was very important for St. Paul. Going to preach to the places where the Gospel was not preached before demanded from him to present a visible picture of the Church in action. This was made possible by the way in which he worked with his helpers. We can get a hint of the picture which the “pastoral team” could give to those among whom they were working from the way in which he addressed his companions in his letters. St. Paul says for example: “(we) sent our brother Timothy” (1 Thess 3:2), “a dear and faithful son to me in the Lord” (talking about Timothy in 1 Cor 4:17), “there is nobody else that I can send who is like him” (Phil 2:20) and “working with me for the sake of the gospel like a son with his father” (Phil 2:22). This would suggest, that St. Paul had a very close and intimate

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<sup>72</sup>Meeks, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

<sup>73</sup>Grassi, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

relation with his co-workers, regarding them as his sons (and daughters), close to his heart, those whom he could trust as himself. This kind of relationship was the best witness and encouragement to the people who wanted to follow Christ.

St. Paul was asking his Churches to receive his co-workers generously, as himself and give them the liberty to minister to them.<sup>74</sup> He could do it not because of the fact that they were just his helpers and so shared in the authority he had as a founder of the Churches, but it was coming out of the nature and quality of their work. Although Timothy and Titus, received the positions of authority in the places they went to because they were the helpers of the apostle, St. Paul puts it clear, that they should be respected in the community because they do the Lord's work (1 Cor 16: 10-11a; 2 Cor 7: 13-15). It did not matter that their mission was temporary, they had ministries to exercise on their own right in accordance with the individual gifts they have been given by God. And so, St. Paul stressed the particular contribution they made to advance the work of the gospel and to give assistance to the Churches (cf. 2 Cor 8:17; 7: 13-15).<sup>75</sup>

#### **B. Theology as a way of strengthening communities (The Body of Christ Theology).**

The concept of the Church as the Body of Christ is the result of St. Paul's thinking about community life, as he was faced with different problems. In 1 Thessalonians he did not go beyond the traditional formulations concerning the saving death of Jesus Christ and His anticipated return in glory. He made a step forward in Gal 2:20, where he wrote: "*I have been crucified with Christ and yet I am alive; yet it is no longer I, but Christ living in me. The life that I am now living, subject to the limitation of human nature, I am living in faith, faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.*" St. Paul realised that before the coming of Christ

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<sup>74</sup>1 Cor 16: 10-11; 2 Cor 8:22,24; Phil 2: 20-22, 25-28.

<sup>75</sup>Banks, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-173.

we were all dead through sin and if now we have life it must be that of Christ.<sup>76</sup> He points as well to the love of Christ expressed in the act of self-sacrifice, which is the power through which he himself (and all of us) have been raised from death to life.<sup>77</sup> This self-giving love of Christ drew St. Paul to the conclusion that Christ himself is the Law.<sup>78</sup> A way of fulfilling the Law is presented by St. Paul in Gal 6:2 where he states: "*Carry each other's burdens; that is how to keep the law of Christ.*" He leaves it to each believer to discern how in any given situation the self-sacrificing love of Christ could become a reality. According to St. Paul, in the act of loving one becomes Christ in so far, as he makes present in the world the essence of Christ's being. It is true to all committed believers, since they have "*put on Christ*" and are "*one in Christ*" (cf. Gal 3: 27-28). From this point, the next step led him to acknowledge that the Christian community is an organic unity and its members are the integral parts of the living Body of Christ.

St. Paul developed finally the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ in 1 Cor. 12: 12-26 where he compared a Christian Community (the Church) with an individual physical body. He started off by saying: "*For as with the human body which is a unity although it has many parts - all the parts of the body, though many, still making up one single body - so it is with Christ*" (1 Cor 12:12). From the beginning St. Paul stresses the unity of the body. It is not something extra, given from outside, but an ontological base for the normal existence of the body. In a well-organized body different parts perform different functions and since no one is able to do the work of the other, all are necessary no matter how they may differ.<sup>79</sup> The unity is

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<sup>76</sup>Henry Wansbrough, The Theology in St. Paul (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1968), pp. 32-33.

<sup>77</sup>Murphy-O'Connor, p. 204.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>79</sup>Orr and Walter, op. cit., pp. 285-286.

connected with the fact, that in a physical body all the parts are sensitized by the nerves by which all feelings are registered and the feelings of one part are shared by the whole body through the nervous system.

According to St. Paul, Christ exists as body and all Christians are parts of it. Diversity of race, social class, roles or functions do not prevent incorporation into this body, but simultaneously, the unity of the body does not eliminate the differences among the parts. The place of each member in the Body of Christ is guaranteed by his/her identity as a creature of God and not by any human standards. The effectiveness of the body is determined by the functions of its parts, that is by individual members. This presentation can be seen as opposed to selfish individualism, since no part can become the whole body or function in its place on its own.<sup>80</sup> God has blended the body together thus He eliminated divisions and established mutual care between all the parts, *“so that there may not be disagreement inside the body but each part may be equally concerned for all the others”* (1 Cor 12:25).

By calling the community the Body of Christ, St. Paul identifies it as the presence of Christ in the world. The mission of the Church is proclamation of God’s love manifested in the self-giving love of Christ. This is deeply rooted in the very nature of the Body of Christ which is unity: *“so we, although there are so many of us, are one single body”* (1 Cor 10:17) and *“all of us, though we are many of us, are one single body”* (Rom 12:5). Thus, unity is the core of the Christian community. All members are not merely united by a common purpose, but they share in the common existence. As parts of the body they cannot exist on their own, their existence which is loving necessarily implies a relationship to another person (cf. 1 Cor 13:2b). *“To love one and to be loved is of the essence of the Christian Community and is constitutive of the being of a believer.”*<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 286.

<sup>81</sup>Murphy-O’Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

As in the physical body, so in the Body of Christ the members are differentiated by their various capacities of service. Each one has a different spiritual gift which is necessary for the good of the community. Because the Church is the Body of Christ, it is the Church which ought to be the agent of reconciliation within the world and the maker of peace.<sup>82</sup> In order to pursue this vocation the Church needs to be reconciled within herself, the Church which is divided does not live up to her vocation (cf. 1 Cor 6: 1-11; for one Christian to sue another is equivalent to bringing a case against oneself, because they are both members of the one body!).

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<sup>82</sup>Alan Robinson, The Treasure of St. Paul (Guilford: Biddles Ltd., 1995), p. 185.

**CHAPTER III: St. Paul for Today.**  
*(Relevance of St. Paul and his example for my missionary work.)*

**1. What does St. Paul have to say to me as a young SMA missionary?**

I am just a young missionary finishing my initial formation.<sup>83</sup> Throughout my initial formation I was being prepared for the missionary life in Africa especially among the people who have never heard about Christ and those who are “the most abandoned, the poor and oppressed.”<sup>84</sup> I did a part of my studies in Poland, Ireland, France and in Kenya (Nairobi) and so I received a global picture of the Church as well as of the SMA. I had a chance to live with people from cultures other than my own. For sure that was a great advantage and an important step in preparation for my missionary work. At the same time I am conscious that I do not know everything and that there are so many things I have to learn in life while facing different problems in the missionary field.<sup>85</sup>

I can learn from the example of St. Paul. To be a missionary means that I will be working in Africa in a culture totally different from mine. In order to appreciate something different first of all I have to acknowledge and appreciate my own. I have to recognise my cultural background and my roots as St. Paul did. It is something by which I am formed. Without the realisation and the acceptance of that, I would not be able to change, grow and develop in my understanding. No matter where I will be working I will always be Polish coming from Gumniska. I cannot lose my personal identity.<sup>86</sup> This points as well to the fact, that most of my convictions are part of my

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<sup>83</sup>On initial formation see: SMA Charter of Formation, Rome, 1992, ch. 2, nos. 59-109.

<sup>84</sup>SMA Constitutions and Laws, Rome, 1990, no. 9 (Charism of the SMA nos. 1-11).

<sup>85</sup>That is why in SMA we talk about ongoing formation, see COF, nos. 142-168.

<sup>86</sup>Importance of the personal identity is stressed by Constant Bouchaud as one of the elements of Missionary Formation. See: Constant Bouchaud, “Missionary Formation in Religious Institutes and Today’s Challenges”, SMA Bulletin, 98, 1997, pp. 41-50.

life in my family, culture and education. St. Paul's dedication and convictions regarding Judaism were transformed by his encounter with Jesus into dedication and total self-giving to Christ, so I too can be changed with the help of God's grace.

In St. Paul's experience of mission, the most important thing was his constant relationship with Christ. His personal experience of Jesus changed his way of seeing things and enabled him to grow in understanding. His own experience of Christ sustained him in mission and enabled him to overcome all difficulties. That is the most important for a missionary priesthood. To be in constant relationship with Christ and to share this experience with others<sup>87</sup> is part of my missionary work. The experience of the Risen Christ changed St. Paul. In the same way I need to be constantly changed by the Risen Lord in order to be His witness. This will not take place without dedication to prayer and the struggle for spiritual growth. In all the works and daily duties I will have to set a time aside for prayer. Relationships we do not foster die, so the same is true with my relationship with Christ - the spiritual life.

To be conscious that the mission and the call to the missionary life is a gift from God<sup>88</sup> is vital as well. It sets all in proper perspective. The work which I am doing is not just of human origin but I am doing part of God's work. It is not to my credit but it is my responsibility. The realisation that it is God's work can help me to go through difficulties and discouragement. It is God himself who provides growth and not my purely human efforts. Without this realisation missionary work would not be a process of conversion but indoctrinalization; propaganda and not the work of the Holy Spirit.

The experience of the Risen Lord led St. Paul to proclaim the Gospel where Christ's

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<sup>87</sup>Christ is primarily the Message and the Messenger, he himself is the Good News. See: John P. Brennan, "Evangelization", SMA Bulletin (MISSION AD GENTES: An SMA Vision of Mission for Our Time), 90, 1993, pp. 8-9.

<sup>88</sup>True missionary spirituality is based on Jesus Christ and his mission received from the Father, which is described as: Identification, Transparency, Totality and Going out. See: Luis A. C. Quiroga, "The Core of Missionary Spirituality", SMA Bulletin, 98, 1997, pp. 33-40.

name was not known. This drive to go to new peoples did not stop him from caring for the communities he founded, since he felt responsible for his converts (he was their spiritual father). As an SMA I will be doing the work of primary evangelization<sup>89</sup> here in Africa. However, I do not think that nowadays missionaries have such a freedom in moving from place to place like in St. Paul's time. It is partly connected with the way Church structures are organized now, but still there is a place for seeing and answering concrete needs.<sup>90</sup> It is in this openness to the new needs and challenges that can be compared with the drive which St. Paul had for the preaching of the Gospel where Christ was not known.

St. Paul can also teach me something about the way in which I should approach missionary work. I have to pay attention to the people I am sent to. This demands openness, flexibility, willingness to learn something new, and readiness to change. St. Paul had to be flexible and to discern the local situation in the place he was working and so I will have to do it also. The only difference is that in my case I will have to take much more time, since I will be working in a new culture with a new language. That will be more demanding. There is no point in my coming with some preconceived ideas of missionary work. It is only in openness and dialogue with the people, in respect for their way of doing things that the Christian community for which they will feel responsible can come into existence. Forcing people to do something against their will can be fatal for their development. They have to be free in order to answer Christ's call and to allow the Holy Spirit to work in their lives. They have to experience the need for the Christian way of life, because at the end of the day no one is going to make all the choices for them. That demands constant witness, good example and encouragement from my

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<sup>89</sup>The concept of the primary evangelization was recently discussed in the SMA. For the most current understanding of this concept see: SMA Bulletin (Primary Evangelization), 99, 1997.

<sup>90</sup> "Attention to the movements of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the world, and faithful to the ideas of our Founder, we remain always ready to respond to the needs of the times." SMA Constitutions and Laws, no. 6.

side. Taking time with people, encountering them in their life situation, being for them in the time of problems and difficulties will mean more for them than just my nice words.

As a young SMA I will be working in a team with other SMA's. Pastoral team can be a visible example of what Church is, as it was in the case of St. Paul. A witness<sup>91</sup> to the Christian way of life in a team, appreciation and respect for others I will be working with, may have a great impact on others. At the end of the day, no one can truly demand something from the people while knowing that in his/her own life he/she is not practising it. The pastoral team (or teams) St. Paul was working with had a positive influence on the new converts and I hope that it will be the same in my case. Genuine witness does not need words of explanation but the most beautiful words without witness are just wishes which may never materialise.

## **2. What can St. Paul teach me about building of the Christian community?**

One of the most important developments in St. Paul's understanding of the Christian community was identifying it with the Body of Christ. The Christian community as an actualization of Christ in the world, individual Christians as parts of Body of Christ, Christians as those who had "put on Christ" and are "one in Christ." What else could be added to this deep understanding of the Christian community and the Christian way of life? For sure these concepts have to be properly explained. These ideas are the base for building the Christian community which will be a sign of Christ's presence in the world. This is the basis from which I will have to start myself. I will have to help people understand what is the meaning of: unity, love, brotherhood and sisterhood, understanding, tolerance, sharing, forgiveness... This is the core of Christianity. We do not need to try to "look for it" but just to implement it in daily life. It will

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<sup>91</sup> "The Gospel is the practice of witness", in is not only Word but it is life of testimony to the Spirit of Jesus. See: Raymond Joly, "The Paths of Mission", SMA Bulletin (MISSION AD GENTES: An SMA Vision of Mission for Our Time), 91, 1993, pp. 12-15.

be my role to show people that the Christian community is a Body of Christ<sup>92</sup> and that is why we all have to strive to make it visible by the witness of our lives. It is a part of our Christian vocation and the unity is a visible demonstration that we live up to. If this idea of the Christian community as the Body of Christ was taken seriously and all would properly understand what it means, then I could talk about the existence of an authentic Christian community. It is not something which can take place overnight, but it is a life process of Christian growth. However, it will never happen if no one will point to it, give the example and do something about it. No one can expect full perfection in a short time. There is a need of accompaniment in order to make steady progress. St. Paul was accompanying the Corinthians in their growth by answering their questions and by constantly reminding them of their Christian way of life and so that should be my primary duty as a missionary.

Once the Christians are aware of and dedicated to making present and visible the Body of Christ it is easy to talk about Christian community which witnesses to unity and equality, Christianity which is a family<sup>93</sup> where women and men carry out their roles and responsibilities. This is especially important here in Africa, where Christianity is relatively young and does not carry the burdens of the long developments from the past. Thus, there is responsibility for using this opportunity correctly for the development of the Church. For sure I am not called to build up here in Africa a form of Christianity which will closely resemble the one in Poland. Christianity here has to be rooted in local needs and situations. It is up to the people here to determine this way of development. It can be achieved only in dialogue with the local cultures,

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<sup>92</sup> LG. 8 talks about the Church as the mystical Body of Christ.

<sup>93</sup>The idea of the Church as family was strongly present in the African Synod. See; John Paul II, Ecclesia in Africa (Limuru: Kolbe Press, 1995), nos. 62, 80-85; "Message of the Synod", nos. 24,25,27,28 and "Message of the AMECEA and IMBISA Bishops", nos. 2,3,10. In: The African Synod (Limuru: Kolbe Press, 1994).

in flexibility and discernment of the local situation and respect for their development.<sup>94</sup> The European way of doing things works in Europe. Here in Africa it has to be the African way which will differ according to particular regions and cultures in order to make “Christianity truly African.”<sup>95</sup> That is what I have to be aware of and what I will need to teach people to do.

Even the most beautiful ideas will not work without the people themselves. Thus, from the very beginning all the people have to be engaged in the work of the community.<sup>96</sup> They have to feel responsible for everything that is happening.<sup>97</sup> This will force me to help them to become aware of their responsibility for their community and that they have to take an active role in it. It may be easy to say it but in practical terms it means that I will have to teach people how to be responsible for themselves and for others. St. Paul first of all tried to find active collaborators who would take up responsibilities and not be just passive, dependent recipients. I will have to put stress on the same. I will have to train people how to help themselves and others. At the end of the day evangelization is a shared effort and all have to be engaged in it!

In the struggle to build up the Christian community it is very important to realize that it is the work of the Holy Spirit which gives gifts that are necessary for building up communities

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<sup>94</sup>This is why we talk so much about the need for INCULTURATION: Ulick Bourke, “Inculturation”, SMA Bulletin (MISSION AD GENTES: An SMA Vision of Mission for Our Time), 91, 1993, pp. 55-73; U. E. Umoren, “Enculturation and Inculturation: The Gospel of Liberation and the Culture of African Womanhood”, SMA Bulletin, 102, 1998, pp. 65-78; Ecclesia in Africa, op. cit., nos. 55-71; Message of the Synod, nos. 14,15,18,19 & Message of the AMECEA and IMBISA Bishops, no. 6. In: The African Synod (Limuru: Kolbe Press, 1994); SMA Constitutions and Laws, no. 17.

<sup>95</sup> “Message of the AMECEA and IMBISA Bishops”, no.4 (see as well nos. 3,6 and Ecclesia in Africa, nos. 60-61).

<sup>96</sup>Ecclesia in Africa stresses that all peoples are the agents of evangelisation in nos. 88-98.

<sup>97</sup>Justice and Peace demands from us protection of human rights: “the right of each person to shape the decisions that effect him/her; and the right of each person to participate in developing themselves, their community and the world.” See: Justice, Peace and Environmental Care Charter of SMA, 1995, p.34.

and for edifying them.<sup>98</sup> St. Paul was able to recognize this. Recognition of the different gifts that the people have is the first step. The next one is to enable people to take up roles of responsibility according to these gifts. As St. Paul was stressing all the gifts are given not just for the sake of exercising them but for the good of the community, so I will have to help people become aware of this as well. It is important to ensure, that all should exercise their gifts in a spirit of oneness and in a genuine way (there always may be somebody who would like to use them as an opportunity for getting some personal gain). Thus, service to the community has to be stressed. Those keeping roles of responsibility have to be properly instructed and be conscious that what they do is service and not a private matter. Furthermore, all gifts have to be recognized, trusted and their exercise has to be encouraged.<sup>99</sup> It is very important now, since we live in a time where everything is so highly institutionalised. So, I should try to encourage a shared ministry and not institutionalised roles and functions. To make people aware of what this really means I will have to present it in action by dividing and sharing out my own responsibility. I strongly believe, that it is not my duty to be responsible for everything. Thus, I will need to cooperate with God who himself is providing and choosing suitable people for particular roles. The training and knowledge which they may need will have to be provided and most probably their formation (intellectual and spiritual) will be a part of my responsibility.

St. Paul saw the gift of love as the most important for the community. Without love there is no community or Christianity. Without love there is no sharing in the Body of Christ and making Christ visible in the world. Thus, love has to be stressed all the time. If there is no love in the family it is difficult to talk about love in the community. Thus, I will have to put strong

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<sup>98</sup> LG. 48 states that Jesus Christ “sent his life-giving Spirit upon his disciples and through him set up his Body which is the Church...”

<sup>99</sup>All the baptised have a role to play in the Church, see: Ulick Bourke, “The Nature and Mission of the Laity in the Church”, SMA Bulletin (MISSION AD GENTES: An SMA Vision of Mission for Our Time), 93, 1994, pp. 35-45.

emphasis on good family life,<sup>100</sup> where love would flourish and be shared with others.

Nowadays we often talk about collaborative ministry. It may sound nice but in practice it is very demanding. For St. Paul it was one of the most important features which helped him to fulfill his vocation of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. He was not afraid to allow his Churches to develop as they wanted and to choose their own leaders. Thus, it is important to recognize, that I will need to work with others in order to make the Good News present and active. I can not do it on my own! No one can do it on his own. I will need people who will help me in different areas in carrying out evangelization. I can hardly imagine that all work could be done by me alone in a situation when a parish has a few outstations (most of the SMA parishes in Tanzania have over 15 outstations!). So in fact, I will have to strive to build up a whole network of collaborators engaged in different work. It seems that catechists<sup>101</sup> are the most important in reaching out to the people and in evangelization in the place where they live. At the same time they need some helpers to provide catechesis for children, work with youth and married couples. They cannot be left on their own in their work. Before sending somebody for a particular mission St. Paul took his time to prepare that person. Teaching and personal witness were used most in their formation. They mostly learned out of experience and good example. That was as well a practical way in which St. Paul was able to make the Church visible for others in the concrete situation. So, apart from making it possible for others to take part in evangelization it is equally important to provide a kind of formation which would include a spiritual preparation.

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<sup>100</sup>Bishops taking part in the African Synod were concerned about the welfare of the family, see: "Message Of The Synod", nos. 29-30.

<sup>101</sup>For my view about the role of catechist see my: Reflection Paper on the Formation of Catechists, (Tangaza College, 16.04.1997).

## CONCLUSION

In this essay I was trying to show that St. Paul's missionary method involved building of the local communities. Without any doubt, I can say that, the experience of seeing Jesus had changed St. Paul and made out of a "zealous Pharisee" an Apostle of Jesus Christ who went to the Gentiles to bring the message of salvation. It was out of his encounter with the Risen Lord, that his vocation, call and commissioning came. This was the core of St. Paul's missionary work; the relationship with Christ pushed him and gave him the power to move on.

His proclamation brought into existence live and active Christian communities. The fact that St. Paul could not stay in one place for a long time forced him to organize local communities with the local people in charge. That is why he did not worry about the survival of the Christians communities after his departure. The trust he had for the spiritual gifts, given by God for the development of the communities, enabled him to form communities which could grow and spread after his departure. Even after leaving he was in constant relationship with his Churches and as their spiritual father was helping in their development by advice and encouragement. His team of co-workers was also essential in the work of building up his communities.

From the Pauline letters I could see that there was a development in his way of thinking, that could testify to the growth which came about as a result of his mission. His theological understanding (relation of Christ to the Law, the Body of Christ Theology) grew while he was faced with problems in his communities and tried to advise about them. This suggests that St. Paul was taking seriously into consideration the local situation and that the communities he founded had made a deep impact on his way of life. That is something that challenges me as a young missionary. I can see that there is plenty I have to learn in my life. Now I see it clearly that there is a need to take St. Paul as a model for my missionary work, a model of my personal dedication to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to the people with whom I will share my faith.

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