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MISSIONARY MOTIVATION IN PAUL:

THE JEWISH ENVIRONMENT

Donald P. Ker.

Saul of Tarsus was a Jew. Even when he became a Christian he never denied his Jewish identity. It is therefore natural that, when we start to consider his motivation to mission, especially among the Gentiles, we should first consider the attitude of his native Judaism to Gentiles, particularly because the Judaism of Paul's time is noted for its outreach to non-Jews.

1. The Old Testament Basis. Ferdinand Hahn notes that a fundamental element of missionary thought and action is a universalist understanding of God. Such an understanding may be traced throughout the Old Testament. It is true that at its outset the faith of Israel was particularly concerned with the relationship between Yahweh and his people. But even where the existence of the celestial deities in Canaan is not denied we quickly see that the superiority of Yahweh is asserted and his exclusive claim as the jealous God of Israel is stressed.²

An enigmatic hint that Yahweh offers the nations not only judgment but salvation can be found in the account of the call of Abraham, in which comes the promise of blessing to all the nations of the earth.³ The Yahwist author gives no precise interpretation of how this blessing is to be achieved, but it is to be mediated through Abraham and the chosen people whose history is now beginning.

Throughout their history the people of Israel lived, not in isolation from the non-circumcised, but rather with the עַרְבֵי in their midst. In the book of the Covenant we see legislation in favour of the גֵר and a reminder⁴ to the Israelites that they were once עַרְבֵי in Egypt.⁵ At the same time the גֵר is required to keep the Sabbath.⁵ It is therefore understood that he stands in a specific relationship to Yahweh as the God of the people and tribe among whom he dwells. On occasion we can see that the דַרְבָנִים⁶ were particularly involved with the cult service. Hence the Gibeonites were allowed to live among the Israelites as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the Lord' (Josh.9,27) while, later, Ezekiel protests bitterly about the admission of uncircumcised foreigners who are noted as keeping charge of the sanctuary. (Ezek.44,8).

It is, however, in the post-exilic writings that the relationship between Yahweh, Israel and the nations (as distinct from the resident aliens) is most thoroughly explored. Deutero-Isaiah, in writing of the Servant, outlines his mission in ch. 49vv1-6. As J.L. McKenzie comments, '... the mission of the Servant is clear.... it is to restore Israel, but this is said to be the lesser part of the mission. The servant is a means of light and salvation to the nations....The fullness of Israel and the fullness of the nations both lie beyond the historical present, and it is to this fullness that the Servant's mission must look.'⁷ Once again in Isaiah 56,1-8 both eunuchs and 'foreigners who join themselves to the Lord' are promised full membership of the Israelite community.

In Isaiah 60 we find envisaged a pilgrimage to Zion by the nations, which takes place because the community of Israel has been faithful in bearing witness. It is, however, in ch. 66, 18-21 that we find what C. Westermann describes as '.... the first sure and certain mention of mission as we today employ the term - the sending of individuals to distant peoples in order to proclaim God's glory to them.'⁹ Once again this outward thrust is seen as the prelude to a pilgrimage by the nations to Zion.

Hahn objects that this passage cannot really be considered as mission insofar as it is the 'survivors of the nations' themselves rather than the people of Israel who are commissioned by Yahweh to bear witness.¹⁰ This is a valid comment, and yet the increasing incorporation of such 'survivors' within the Covenant people (v.21) lessens the thrust of Hahn's distinction.¹¹

It must, however, be recognised that the post-exilic thrust of the Old Testament is not entirely in the universalist direction. There seems to have been a long struggle, which was to continue through later Judaism, between segregationists and assimilationists. Thus the works of Ezra, Nehemiah and Haggai, for instance, are concerned with the reformation of both cult and city. In contrast the leaders of assimilationist opinion attack the theory of segregation through works such as the book of Jonah, which is 'a satirical portrait of a

segregationist, a petty person devoid of human feeling, who would prefer the destruction of a city to the loss of his reputation, and be no less angry at the death of a vine than he was at Yahweh's refusal to kill all the people of Ninevah.¹²

Thus the book of Jonah is more than simply a work to underline the 'freedom of divine dealings with the Gentiles',¹³ and yet it cannot be used to construct a thorough-going scheme of mission in the Old Testament.

We must content ourselves, therefore, to say that in the Old Testament the seeds of missionary work are present, but that they do not bear fruit in any thorough-going manner.¹⁴ We note too the conflict between 'assimilationist' and 'segregationist' which appears again in our studies of later Judaism.

2. The Nature of Judaism, and its Relationship to Hellenism. We are wrong to imagine that Judaism prior to and during the time of Paul's missionary work can be described simply. Within it were not only the tensions already noted but also strong elements of apocalyptic and mysticism. The influence of Hellenism, not only in the areas of the Diaspora but also in Palestine must be taken into account.¹⁵

Towards the close of this chapter we shall ask the question regarding Paul's place of upbringing, which may help us to assess something of the elements of Judaism which were most influential for him, but since we are first concerned to outline something of the Jewish Mission among Gentiles we must try to assess the extent to which Hellenistic values were being absorbed by Judaism.

Language is one means for judging the amount by which one culture has absorbed another, although it is not a decisive proof. Hengel notes that it can be demonstrated from the Zeno papyri that the Greek language was known in aristocratic and military circles of Judaism between 260 and 250 B.C. in Palestine.¹⁶ He further suggests that even in the later victorious freedom fight of the Maccabees, Greek would not have been suppressed. Hengel does, however, note that after the construction of a Gymnasium in Jerusalem in 175 B.C. there developed a counter-movement among the scribes whose aim was the introduction of the whole people to the Torah. This

movement had explicitly anti-Hellenistic tendencies but, suggests Hengel (without further elaboration) the methods and forms of Greek educational theory were adopted.

J. Goldstein suggests that Hengel has far over-¹⁷ stated the opposition between Judaism and Hellenism. He offers, not a definition of Hellenism, but some distinguishing features, which include the implication that some Greeks are present, the knowledge among some of the Greek language, the development and spread of rational philosophies, high emotional epic, drama and lyric poetry, the educational pursuits of the Greek gymnasium and identifiable architectural designs. Goldstein notes that none of these features are specifically forbidden, and that some Jews would hold from the Torah that all were permitted. Goldstein further notices that the Jews invented no term of abuse for Hellenists equivalent to the Latin 'pergraecari' or 'Graeculus'. Whether we can go as far as Goldstein in his estimate of the acceptance of Hellenism in Palestine we do have to take Hengel's point that 'from about the middle of the third century B.C. all Judaism must really be designated 'Hellenistic Judaism' in the strict sense, and a better differentiation could be made between the Greek-speaking Judaism of Palestine and Babylonia.'¹⁸

We may approach this question from another angle if we consider factors which were common to all Jews. W. Föerster comments on some of them.¹⁹ The Jews had, he notes, been welded together by a common history, and their understanding of history as it had been moulded by the scriptures was vital. Those scriptures themselves were, since they contained both the history of this people and the Law to which it was subject, the chief reason for its existence. Circumcision was the external token of incorporation into this race.

Naturally there were those within Judaism who wished that tighter definitions than these might apply, but in general it can be seen that there was room for a variety of relationships with Hellenism which did not transgress these general principles. Yet it should not be imagined that Judaism was deeply fragmented. Rather, as W.D. Davies notes, the synagogue in Palestine and the Diaspora gave to Judaism an unmistakable unity and coherence.²⁰

We are accustomed to the thought that in the Diaspora Judaism had to exist side by side with other religions, and was thus open to scrutiny by them. But, as we are reminded in Schurer, Palestine was also a centre of paganism. 'For the Jew was in almost daily contact with pagan affairs, whether with persons or with commodities and objects which found their way into Palestine by way of trade and commerce. Thus the greater the subtlety with which cases of direct or indirect defilement through Gentile ways were settled, the more frequent was the risk of such defilement.'²¹

Schürer makes this comment in the context of the steps which the Pharisees and rabbis took to prevent pagan inroads. In particular stress was laid by them on the Mosaic prohibition of images and the notion that Gentiles were unclean because they did not observe the purity laws; but while Palestinian rabbis would have erected a 'stout dividing wall' against Gentile customs and thus defended Judaism against pagan religion they failed to check Graeco-Roman culture which was²² in course of time, increasingly assimilated by the Jews.

By way of contrast Schürer, in an appendix on Gentile participation in worship in Jerusalem, suggests that Gentiles, who were not proselytes or those who held any continuous interest in Jewish religion, nevertheless offered sacrifice as an act of courtesy towards the nation. He further thinks that the Jews and their priests had no reason to reject such gifts. While his evidence for this seems at times less than convincing his conclusion contains an important insight; 'In a sense, therefore, even the exclusive Temple of Jerusalem became cosmopolitan; in common with the renowned sanctuaries²³ of the Gentiles it received the homage of the whole world.'

We are thus presented with a picture in which attempts by Jews to win over Gentiles to their persuasion were entirely likely, given the social setting in which they were placed. While there was undoubtedly a school of thought that was concerned first of all to maintain and develop the pietistic practices of Judaism in isolation from outside influence there was also an openness to interaction which in turn led to proseletisation.

3. Evidence for Missionary Attitudes from Events and Non-Jewish Sources. One of the first hints which we receive from non-Jewish literature as to the extent of proselytising efforts comes from Valerius Maximus who reports that in

139 B.C. Cn. Cornelius Hispalus, praetor peregrinus, '.....compelled the Jews who had tried to infect Roman customs with the cult of Jupiter Sabazius, to return to their homes.'²⁴ It would seem that 'Sabazius', a minor Phrygian deity identified with Dionysius, is a confused rendering of 'Sabaoth'. An interesting insight into the way in which Jewish behaviour was perceived by some can be found in an extract from Horace's satires: 'When I have a moment to spare, I amuse myself with writing; this is one of those minor peccadilloes. If you don't excuse it a big band of poets will come to my rescue; for we are much more numerous and like the Jews will compel you to join our gang.'²⁵

Horace is writing a generation after Pompey had brought considerable numbers of Jews to Rome in 62 B.C. following his eastern campaign.²⁶ Even before this influx there seems to have been an increasing Jewish community. Philo later claims that, under Augustus, 'the large district of Rome beyond the Tiber was owned and inhabited by Jews.'²⁷

Josephus offers us both an estimate of the size of the Jewish community in Rome in A.D. 19, and also the influence which it had in the ruling classes. At that time 4,000 members of the Jewish community were conscripted for military service, and the rest were expelled from the city. Josephus notes the reason for this as being a confidence trick which was played by some Jewish scoundrels on a wealthy Roman lady of high rank who was also a Jewish convert.²⁸ Although we need not trust Josephus' reason as being the complete explanation for this event it does demonstrate that, even in this period, Judaism was attracting the Roman upper classes. Tacitus, in referring to the same event, mentions an escape clause to the exclusion order if one rejected faith.²⁹ His description of the conscripts as 'tainted with that superstition' would also suggest proselyte involvement. It seems, therefore, that the Roman authorities had by this time become alarmed at the success of Jewish influence among Roman citizens, and may have seen it as a threat to security. It is worth noting, however, that although this expansion took place the act of proselytising was not condemned at this time.³⁰

Josephus offers us other insights into the extent of proselytising in his account of the attempt

on Damascus in A.D. 66 by Cestius Gallus. The Damascenes had herded the Jews into the Gymnasium. 'However they were afraid of their own wives who, all but a few, had adopted the Jewish cult.'³¹ In Antiquities he represents the Empress Poppaea as sympathising with the Jews, although she was hardly a proselyte herself. Josephus terms her a 'worshipper of God', but her moral behaviour was not appropriate to Judaism.³²

Later Roman references to Jewish influence include a comment by Juvenal on the corrupting influence of parental example. A father, who is a god-fearer, in turn has a son who goes further and becomes a full Jew by circumcision. Juvenal does not approve! Epictetus also refers to both god-fearers and proselytes in his attempt to encourage Stoics to live up to their profession,³⁴ while Dio Cassius, following Suetonius, suggests that Domitian put to death his own cousin, Flavius Clemens (who was consul), and kinswoman, Flavia Domitilla, on a charge of atheism, 'a charge under which many were condemned who had drifted into Jewish practices'.³⁵ It would seem unlikely that either were full proselytes, but their execution once again underlines the manner in which Judaism had affected the Roman ruling class, and also the threat which it was perceived to present.

Beyond the city of Rome one of the most famous conversions was that of King Izates II of Adiabene on the upper Tigris, together with his whole household. Josephus was especially proud of this triumph of missionary endeavour, which incidentally serves to show the various approaches which existed in Jewish missionary work regarding circumcisions.³⁶ In discussion with the Jewish merchant, Ananias, Izates wished to be circumcised, but was advised against this step by his mother, herself a Jewish proselyte, for fear that it might not be acceptable to all in Adiabene. Ananias concurred with this advice, commenting that Izates might worship God without circumcision if he would simply follow the liturgical practices of the Jews which were much more important than circumcision. It may be that Ananias was fearful for his own position had he advised circumcision which might later prove to be unpopular, but his comments may well represent the opinion which was

expressed on the subject throughout much of diaspora Judaism. In later contact with R. Eleazer, however, Izates underwent circumcision, and only then was properly considered a proselyte.

G.F. Moore comments that, rather than sending out missionaries, the Jews simply settled themselves in certain areas and thus exerted their influence.³⁷ They appropriated the language of those around them for trading reasons and then through the synagogue, which did not seem greatly unusual in the ancient world, won considerable interest. The success of this 'mission' must be seen in the light of a deep dissatisfaction with the State cults which was evident throughout the Roman empire at the time of Jesus. Judaism appealed, for it was a reasonable religion which at the same time demanded a total allegiance. Not that total allegiance was always possible. Collins suggests that 'strict monotheism would have been virtually impossible for anyone engaged in Roman public life'. He continues 'The Jews, in turn, did not always demand strict monotheism from the Gentiles', but it must be noted that such flexibility³⁸ hardly extended to those who became full proselytes.

As well as the evidence in Acts for Gentiles who had association with the Synagogues two other New Testament references to Jewish proselytising may be noted here. In Matt. 23, 15 Jesus refers to the activities of the rabbis who cross land and sea to make one proselyte. There is considerable discussion on this verse. On balance it is best understood as an authentic saying which refers either to the tremendous insistence of Palestinian Judaism on keeping the law (and thus opening the way for hypocrisy), or to the possibility that some further privilege or requirement³⁹ was made for proselytes which was not in the law. At any rate we need not doubt that Jesus noted the efforts which the Pharisees were investing in proselytising ventures.

In Romans 2, 17ff. Paul offers a critique of the Jewish missionary. His major point is that Jewish propagators of the faith are unable to live up to their own words. If this is taken to mean that in fact Jewish missionaries were living morally reprehensible lives,⁴⁰ then Paul's criticisms are, as far as we know, unfounded. He

may be quoting from the report or slander of another, or even giving an extreme example which he himself knew. Perhaps he is best understood as stressing the missionary's need of grace. But, and this is the point, the verses introduce us to possible approaches among Jewish preachers and suggest that at some point Paul had argued his case with them in person.

We have no way of estimating statistically the results of Jewish propaganda. But such evidence as we have adduced would suggest that it was considerable, that it provoked a degree of anti-semitic reaction in the Roman world, and that it did provide a setting for the expansion of Christian Missionary work. To corroborate this evidence we turn now to consider some of the attitudes which we find towards proselytes in Jewish literature.

4. Evidence for Missionary Attitudes from Jewish Writings

The variation in approach to the question of mission among the Gentiles is as wide in the writings of later Judaism as it was in the Old Testament. Hahn notes correctly that, 'for wide circles of later Judaism there was no missionary inclination', and in particular that, 'we find no evidence, either in apocalyptic or in Qumran writings of winning over and converting the Gentiles'.

In Rabbinic Judaism we do receive a number of insights into the manner in which Gentiles were, or were not, admitted to Judaism, but even here our sources offer us difficulties. Since the Rabbinic writings are all collections which are dated after the fall of Jerusalem and the anti-Jewish legislation of 135 A.D. they may well reflect a harsher attitude to proselytes than that which actually prevailed at the time of Paul's ministry. Furthermore, as D. Daube points out, rules which originally had regard to missionary activities did in the course of time lose their specific character, and thus sayings which seem to have a general moral import may have in fact been intended as instructions in a missionary methodology.

Schoeps suggests that in Rabbinic Judaism there may have been a whole 'Derekh Eres' literature, although opinion on this varies.⁴³ Certainly the short tractates Derekh Eres Rabba and Derekh Eres Zuta contain enthusiastic

appeals from the school of Rabbi Aqiba to the Gentile world. Daube suggests that in these works the maxim 'A man should not be joyful among the weeping nor weep among the joyful...' might come direct from a missionary setting where it meant 'accommodate yourself to any type of people, in order to convert them'.

This principle of accommodation can be traced in the approaches which come from Hillel's school of thought. He is seen advancing the basic principle 'Be of the pupils of Aaron...loving men and bringing them to the Torah'.⁴⁵ In marked contrast to the attitude of Shammai he is reported to have been ready to receive a Gentile as a proselyte in spite of his deficient readiness to learn the Torah. Along the same lines is the Mekhilta on Ex. 22,21 which speaks of Abraham, who once had described himself as a גר and was thus now the father of all proselytes. Had he been circumcised when he was a young man then it would be possible to convert to Judaism only at a young age. For this reason God delayed the conclusion of the covenant with him until he was ninety⁴⁶ nine years old so that the גר would not be excluded.

In Rabbinic Judaism the term גר comes to acquire a meaning different from that already noted in the Old Testament. Now the גר תושב may be identified with 'the alien who dwells in the land' although Schoeps notes, I think correctly, that later the term tended to be identified with the 'half proselyte'.⁴⁷ For them the more usual term is יוני פגיו described by Schoeps as the mass of Gentiles won over by missionaries and expected to keep the most important commands. They are generally identified with the $\text{ἑτερόθνητοι τοῦ θεοῦ}$ in Acts. Clearly to be distinguished from both groups is the גר תושב who is a full proselyte. There was some discussion among the rabbis regarding the proper form of initiation for such, - in particular whether circumcision was necessary in addition to baptism, - but eventually the view of Eliezer ben Hyrcanus that⁴⁸ circumcision was required became the settled view.

Although the approach of the school of Hillel, that proselytes were to be welcomed and accommodated, was probably the favoured view of Rabbinic Judaism at the time of Paul we do receive strains of another approach.

Eliezer ben Hyrcanus expresses reluctance in thinking of proselytes because, he suggests, they are by nature bad, with their minds always inclined to idolatry. Commenting on Proverbs 14,34 he claims that all the charity and kindness done by the heathen is in fact counted to them as sin, because they only do it to magnify themselves.⁴⁹ More extreme rejection of proselytes may be found in the later Rabbi Helbos, who claimed that they were as troublesome to Israel as the itch.⁵⁰ However this appears to be an isolated opinion. In general true proselytes and native-born Israelites were equally defined as those who accepted the covenant, intended to obey the commandments and performed them to the best of their ability.

Rabbinic Judaism was in general only interested in full proselytes, and does not have a clear-cut opinion concerning the fate of those Gentiles who were 'God-Fearers'. Sanders notes that there were those who took both a positive and negative approach. He sums up the situation thus; '.....there is no one view of the situation of Gentiles which prevailed throughout the Tannaitic period. The general impression is that the Rabbis were not ungenerous except when special circumstances moved them to view Gentiles with bitterness. Even those who were of the view that righteous Gentiles would have a place in the world to come do not specify what a righteous Gentile is.'⁵¹ Sanders develops the point, I think correctly, by stressing that the question which really animated the rabbis was 'How can we obey God who redeemed us and to whom we are committed?', and that there was relatively little concern with how one who was not born in the covenant enters it, or with the fate of those remaining outside.⁵²

If we move from the world of the Rabbis to that of Diaspora Judaism we find a totally different type of literature, written with Gentiles particularly in mind. We know little of the religious or literary production of any Jewish community in the Diaspora outside Alexandria, and so conclusions may only be drawn with caution, but in the work, not only of Philo but also in the Sibylline Oracles and other writings,⁵³ we have a literature designed to present Judaism to the Gentile world in an understandable and favourable light.

Kuhn comments that, in defining a Proselyte, Philo notes that he is one who has left country, friends and relatives, also patriarchal customs, and set himself under the Jewish constitution.⁵⁴ That circumcision is implied here would seem obvious. But while Philo does not depart from Jewish practice he does display the interest which we have noted to be lacking in the rabbis, in those who are content to express belief in one God without becoming fully absorbed into Judaism. Indeed Schoeps notes that the 'missionary propaganda of the time' was aimed, not at making Gentiles complete Jews 'but rather Noachides or God-Fearers, who retaining their distinctive position should be annexed to the Jewish communities.'⁵⁵

It is most noticeable that Philo, while not denying that obedience to Jewish law could be dispensed with, continually laid more emphasis on the attitude of the believer. A fragment quoted by Kuhn explains this well, where it is expressed that the true proselyte is one, 'who is circumcised not merely in the foreskin but, in lusts and desires and other passions of the soul.'⁵⁶

V. Tcherikover has questioned whether in fact the Jewish Alexandrian literature was used for apologetics and missionary propaganda, as has generally been assumed.⁵⁷ He firstly suggests that the habit of reading books and preserving them grew only slowly, and that the very method of publication of literature, especially by Jews in a Greek world, meant that a widespread literature campaign for Judaism, as has at times been assumed, is impossible. Commenting that, for Greek readers, the Jewish material would only make sense if they were interested in the Greek Bible itself Tcherikover then notes that we have no record of the Greeks reading the Bible before the Christian period. Regarding the content of such literature, while agreeing that polemics against paganism and the praise of Judaism are the main contents, Tcherikover believes that these are directed, not so much to the pagan community as to the Jewish community itself, since 'those Jews who approached Hellenistic civilisation by all possible ways and were influenced by it in their way of life and thought, found it easier to cling to Judaism as long as they knew that Judaism stood on an equal level with Hellenism.'⁵⁸ The polemical passages in particular are

couched in language which would speak to Jew rather than to Greek, insofar as they represent a Jewish misunderstanding of paganism. Through examining the place, the time and the historical conditions of Alexandrian literature Tcherikover concludes that it was created not in order to exhibit certain ideas to the outer world, but to give expression to the intricate problems which were developing in the Jewish community itself and which attracted the interest of its members.

While these insights are of value, and in particular make us question the extent of the use of literature and knowledge of the Bible among non-Jews the fact remains that Judaism spread in the Hellenist world. It can be argued that the Septuagint itself has a missionary slant. Schoeps points, for example, to Proverbs 4,27 where the translation reflects the Hellenistic image of the 'two ways' as possibilities of human existence. We may not speak as confidently as Schoeps about 'the chief representatives of the missionary idea' whom he finds in the authors of Judaic Hellenism, nor need we deny any missionary interest there.

5. Paul's origins within Judaism.

We have attempted to trace the attitudes to mission among the Gentiles which can be found in the Judaism of Paul's day, and noted that they varied. There were some discussions on the value of circumcision, while interest in Gentiles was more dominant in some areas than in others. Nevertheless we take it as an established fact that there was considerable mission among Gentiles in First Century (A.D.) Judaism, albeit of a non-systematic nature.

This very lack of system makes it difficult for us to assess how far missionary attitudes which Paul may have met in his Jewish upbringing were in themselves important motivating factors. But even as we attempt any tentative answer to this question a further issue arises. We have noted that, while every part of Judaism was influenced to some extent by Hellenism, there was a difference between 'Diaspora' and 'Palestinian' Judaism. We must ask in which broad area of Judaism Paul's own upbringing took place.

C.G. Montefiore introduces us to this debate with the assertion that Paul was a Jew of the Diaspora unacquainted with the best Rabbinic Judaism of Palestine and familiar only with a Diaspora approach, 'which was colder, less intimate, less happy because it was poorer and more

pessimistic'.⁶⁰ While Montefiore's analysis of the relative merits of Palestinian and Diaspora Judaism need not detain us, other than to say that the contrast between them is drawn with unfair sharpness, his assumption that Paul's upbringing was influenced most heavily from Tarsus is important. Tarsus was a typically Hellenistic city, favourably situated for trade and commerce. It was the intellectual centre of a flourishing stoic school and it was a place of religious syncretism where Judaism was a minority. An upbringing in such an environment would not only have coloured Paul's attitude to Judaism. Even more it would have been influential in his attitudes to Gentiles, although we may not necessarily presume for Tarsus the relationships which took place in Alexandria.

An entirely different position in the discussion regarding early environmental influences upon Paul is stated by W.C. Van Unnik.⁶¹ Noting forcefully, and validly, that there is very little hard evidence in this debate he bases his case on ἀνατετραπμένος in Acts 22, 3 which, he asserts, refers not only to schooling but to Paul's home life from an early age. Van Unnik suggests that this interpretation is confirmed by Acts 26, 4 & 5. It is, of course, difficult to build a firm case from three verses in Acts. Bornkamm suggests that 'this all too clearly reveals Luke's inclination to make Paul an out-and-out Jew and connect him with Jerusalem as closely and early as possible'.⁶² Bornkamm further comments that, had Jerusalem been Paul's place of upbringing he would 'certainly' have mentioned it in his account of himself in Phil.3,5. But these objections to Van Unnik's thesis are both unconvincing. Is it not just as likely that the speech of Acts 22 at least reflects a known tradition concerning Paul while Bornkamm's comments on Philippians constitute a particularly weak 'argumentum ex silentio'.

The case is not proved, because it cannot be. Nevertheless Jerusalem seems quite possibly to be the more likely environment in which Paul's early attitudes were shaped. Because of the interpenetration of Hellenism and Judaism even in Palestine we may not presume that Paul had any particular attitude to Gentiles before his conversion, but we may not ascribe to him the approach of one like Philo.

One further question remains. Was Paul already a

missionary before his conversion, taking part in a Jewish proselytising campaign? Among those who suppose this to be the case are Schoeps⁶³ and Bornkamm.⁶⁴ Once again the evidence is somewhat elusive. In part it consists, I think, of the unspoken presumption that the Christian Paul could not have taken such an overwhelming interest in the Gentiles if, before he met with Christ, he had not also been concerned about their fate. More substantial evidence may be found in Gal. 5, 11 where Paul asks *ἐἰ περὶ τομῆν ἔτι κηρύσσω τί ἔτι διώκομαι*. From this E. Barnikol assumed that before his Christian baptism Paul had practised the calling of a Jewish preacher of circumcision.⁶⁵ However the juxtaposition of two *ἔτι(ς)* means that this interpretation is not necessarily implied. It would be tempting to draw a picture of Paul being heavily involved before his conversion in a Jewish proselytising campaign. This would certainly help us to see his later struggles with circumcision and the law in a new light. But we simply do not have enough evidence to draw any conclusions. No doubt Paul himself was fully aware of the variety of approaches in his native Judaism to the question of Gentile salvation. That he undertook his own work surrounded by this debate is surely significant. But we may not be more precise than that.

Notes

1. F. Hahn, Mission in the NT, London 1965, 18
2. eg in Ps 82
3. Genesis 12.3
4. See eg Exodus 22.20f
5. Exodus 20.10; 23.12
6. Deut 5.14; 16.10f; 16.13
7. J.L. McKenzie, II Isaiah, Anchor Bible 1968, 105; cf also P.R. Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration, London 1968, 136
8. As McKenzie notes, this is in contrast to efforts by some in the community, notably Ezra and Nehemiah to preserve themselves from religious and cultural assimilation.
9. C. Westermann, Isaiah, London 1966, 425
10. F. Hahn, op.cit. 20
11. Cf Westermann, op.cit. 426

12. M. Smith in the Cambridge History of Judaism Vol 1, ed. Davies and Finkelstein, Cambridge 1984, 248
13. Hahn's opinion seems unnecessarily dismissive (op.cit. 20)
14. Cf Hahn's useful note on J. Blauw, Gottes Werk in dieser Welt. Grundzüge einer biblischen Theologie der Mission 1961 (op.cit. 20)
15. Cf espec M. Hengel, Judaism and Hellenism, London 1973
16. Hengel, op.cit. 103
17. J. Goldstein, 'Jewish Acceptance and Rejection of Hellenism' in Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, Vol II (ed E.P. Sanders 1981 65ff
18. op.cit. 104
19. W. Förster, Palestinian Judaism in NT Times (ET) 1964, 141ff
20. W.D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, London 1948; see also IDB, N York 1979 Vol 4, 81
21. E. Schürer, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, (rev and ed by G. Vermes, M. Black) Vol 2, Edinburgh 1979 81
22. ibid, 84
23. ibid, 309-313
24. "Memorable Deeds and Sayings", 1.3,3
25. "Satires" 1.4. 139-143 (from M. Whittaker, Jews and Christians: Graeco Christian Views, Cambridge 1984)
26. See M. Smallwood, The Jew under Roman Rule, Leiden 1976, 27f
27. Leg.155
28. "Jewish Antiquities", xviii, 65-84
29. "Annals" ii, 85.5 30. M. Smallwood op.cit. 602
31. "Jewish War", II,ii,20 32. "Antiquities", X vii 11
33. "Satires", 14, 96-106 34. "Epictetus" 2.9,19-21
35. ""Epitome of Xiphilinus" 57.14, 1-2 36. "Antiquities" XX 34-48
37. G.F. Moore, Judaism (Cambridge 1927), Vol 1, 323ff (espec N.324)
38. J. Collins, Between Athens and Jerusalem (NYork 1983), 167
39. See ch.2.21 for this discussion 40 Cf C.K. Barrett, Romans London 1957, 56
41. Hahn, op.cit. 21 42. D. Daube, The NT and Rabbinic Judaism London 1956, 336ff
43. H.J. Schoeps, Paul, the Theology of the Apostle in the light of Jewish Religious History, London 1961, 223
44. D. Daube, op.cit. 339-340 If this is the case then Paul, in being made "all things to all men" (1 Cor 9.20f) is simply following Jewish missionary practice.
45. Quoted by Moore, op.cit. 342 from Abct.1.12

46. Quoted by Schoeps, op.cit.228
47. 226f
48. On the discussion see N.J. Eleney, "Conversion, Circumcision and the Law" NTS 20, 1974 328-333; and J. Nolland, "Uncircumcised Proselytes", JStJ 12, 1981, 173-194
49. Cf E.P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, London 1977, 208
50. b.Jeb. 47b, quoted by K.G.Kuhn, "Proselyte" (TDNT VI, 1968, 738)
51. E.P. Sanders, op.cit. 210
52. ibid, 211
53. Cf OT Pseudepigrapha, ed. J.H. Charlesworth, London 1983, 322
54. Kuhn, op.cit. 732
55. Cf H.J. Schoeps, op.cit. 225
56. Kuhn, op.cit. 732
57. V. Tcherikover "Jewish Apologetic Reconsidered", Eos, Comentarii Societatis Philologae Polonia, Vol 48, 1956, 169ff
58. ibid, 180
59. Schoeps, op.cit. 223
60. C.G. Montefiore, Judaism and St. Paul, London 1914, 93
61. W.C. Van Unnik, Tarsus or Jerusalem - the City of Paul's Youth (ET) 1962
62. G. Bornkamm, Paul (ET), London 1971, 3
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