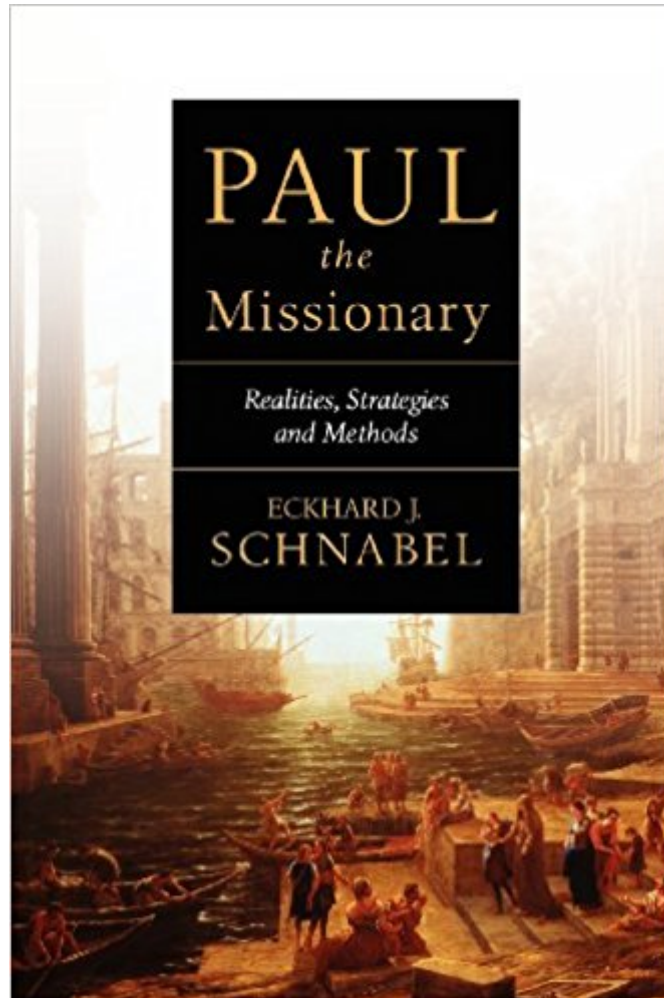




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Paul The Missionary: Realities, Strategies And Methods



Synopsis

Eckhard Schnabel's two-volume *Early Christian Mission* is widely recognized as the most complete and authoritative contemporary study of the first-century Christian missionary movement. Now in *Paul the Missionary* Schnabel condenses volume two of the set, drawing on his research to provide a manageable study for students of Paul as well as students and practitioners of Christian mission today. Schnabel first focuses the spotlight on Paul's missionary work--the realities he faced, and the strategies and methods he employed. Applying his grasp of the wide range of ancient sources and of contemporary scholarship, he clarifies our understanding, expands our knowledge and corrects our misconceptions of Paul the missionary. In a final chapter Schnabel shines the recovered light of Paul's missionary methods and practices on Christian mission today. Much like Roland Allen's classic *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* of nearly a century ago, Schnabel offers both praise and criticism. For those who take the time to immerse themselves in the world of Paul's missionary endeavor, this final chapter will be both rewarding and searching.

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Customer Reviews

"Paul the Missionary is a joy: rigorous in its scholarship, clearly written, and relevant. It is a welcome antidote, first to those studies of Paul that focus exclusively on his theology while totally ignoring the fact that he was a missionary and, second, to all missiological methodology that is rooted in pragmatics rather than in theology and Scripture. Twenty-first century missionaries, students, New Testament scholars, pastors, and all thinking Christians would profit from this book." (Keith

Ferdinando, Theological Book Review, 2009)"Invaluable to pastors, teachers, students, missionaries, and missiologists that see their work as closely related to that of Paul." (Thomas M. Anderson, Religious Studies Review, March 2010)"Schnabel invites the reader to a biblical feast that is both academic and spiritually refreshing. Should prove to be influential in ongoing Pauline and mission studies." (Edward L. Smither, Criswell Theological Review, Fall 2009)"Schnabel succeeds admirably. Paul the Missionary is an excellent resource that I will be recommending for years to come. I know of no other book that provides such a comprehensive, biblically faithful, and nuanced understanding of Paul and his missionary work." (Robert L. Plummer, Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, September 2009)"This information-filled book draws richly on the author's exhaustive (nearly 2,000-page!) prior study of early Christian missions. Writing as a mature biblical scholar and former OMF missionary in the Philippines, Schnabel honestly acknowledges the complexity of the hermeneutical and pragmatic task facing the contemporary practitioner. Perhaps that is why his concluding chapter contains so many judicious and valuable insights." (Richard Schultz, Evangelical Missions Quarterly, July 2009)"A reliable guide to students of Paul. A fresh study of Paul's mission work with the stated aim of understanding the goals that the apostle had and the methods he used." (Greg Goswell, New Life, May 28, 2009)"The reader will find much solid information in this substantial work." (Donald Senior, C.P., The Bible Today, July 2009)"Although Paul the Missionary is not a quick read, it is a rewarding one. New Testament scholars, missiologists and missionaries, and local pastors like me will profit from Schnabel's focused attention on Scripture. And ministers of the gospel will profit through extended reflection on the theology and praxis of Paul, whose example is well worth imitating." (George P. Wood (www.georgepwood.com), February 6, 2009)"In this magisterial work Schnabel carefully and thoroughly plumbs the New Testament data to develop a comprehensive picture of Paul's approach to mission. His understanding of Paul as a missionary together with his application to selected issues in contemporary missiology provides an invaluable foundation for evaluating our contemporary approaches to mission ranging from the influence of cultural values (such as effectiveness and efficiency) to the latest fads (from church growth to people group thinking to communication theory to short-term missions). Missionaries and missiologists alike owe Schnabel our thanks for this penetrating work which will play a significant role in missions studies for years to come." (A. Scott Moreau, professor of intercultural studies, Wheaton College, and editor, Evangelical Missions Quarterly)"While Professor Schnabel modestly claims merely to bring some of the benefits of the last one hundred years of New Testament and Greco-Roman sociological insights to Roland Allen's work, he does so much more. Here is the new textbook for mission

methodology. While technically limited to Paul, Schnabel covers the vital topics: goals, message, methods. The missions classroom has long needed this resource. Current and aspiring missionaries will benefit from what this scholar/missionary/teacher has to say." (E. Randolph Richards, dean, School of Ministry, Palm Beach Atlantic University)"Following his landmark volume *Early Christian Mission*, Schnabel has written an equally useful volume on the missionary work, message and method of the apostle Paul. This work will prove invaluable to all serious students of Scripture and in particular to all missionary practitioners. A former missionary to the Philippines, Schnabel brings to this task the mind of a first-rate New Testament scholar and the heart of a disciple committed to help fulfill the Great Commission. Fittingly, the volume is dedicated to Peter O'Brien, who has likewise contributed significantly to the scholarly exploration of the Pauline mission. Highly recommended!" (Andreas J. Köstenberger, founder of BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS®, editor of *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, and professor of New Testament and director of Ph.D. studies, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary)

Eckhard J. Schnabel (PhD, University of Aberdeen) is Mary F. Rockefeller Distinguished Professor of New Testament Studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts. He has taught previously at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Deerfield, Illinois), Freie Theologische Akademie (Giessen, Germany), Wiedeneß Bible College (Bergneustadt, Germany), and Asian Theological Seminary (Manila, Philippines). His books include *Early Christian Mission* (volumes 1 & 2), *Paul the Missionary*, and *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*. He is the author of numerous articles, including "Luke" (with David W. Pao) in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* and contributions in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* and *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments*.

This recent book by Schnabel follows on from his two volume work *Early Christian Mission* and hones in on Paul as a missionary. It is a goldmine for missionaries as they seek to look at Paul and then apply his methodology today. After an Introduction which deals with how this book is going to approach relating Paul and missionary work, it has five major sections dealing with Paul's missionary work, task, message, goals, and methods. Then the sixth chapter deals with "The Task of Missionary Work in the Twenty-First Century" and thus relating what has been dealt with to present day missionary work. This is no short book to be breezed through easily. However, working through this book could produce a better understanding of missions and, in particular, church planting. This whole book is of value to church planters and there is help all along the way. However,

church planters would do well to read section 6.3 on "The Proclamation of the Gospel and Church Planting." This is no simple book on Paul's methods and ministry as a help to us today but it will pay the church planter in encouragement and depth to work through Schnabel's book.

Great Book! I like the author's approach and thoroughness.

great to read as devotional. Walks through Paul's life in several dimensions. Lots of application to life today esp. for "M's"

Good book. I am reading it for a dissertation paper that I need to complete. Paul is an interesting study.

Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008). \$32.00, 518 pages. As a pastor, I am constantly in danger of getting so caught up in the maintenance of my church that I forget its mission. To avoid this danger, I read widely in theology, biblical commentary, and spirituality rather than in leadership and management. Leadership and management are important disciplines, of course--spiritual gifts, even. But American society is so permeated by consumerist assumptions and management techniques that pastors must be wary lest in their stewardship of the church, they become conformed to the world rather than transformed by the renewal of their minds. The renewal of pastoral minds, and through them the renewal of the church, requires focused attention on Scripture. What does it say about the mission of the church? How should the church go about accomplishing that mission? In *Early Christian Mission* (2 Volume Set), Eckhard J. Schnabel set out to study the theology and praxis of Christian as it is portrayed in the literature of the New Testament. *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods* narrows its focus to see what can be learned about Christian mission from the career and theology of the Apostle Paul. This entails a close reading of Paul's missionary journeys in Acts as well as of his thirteen canonical letters. In the Preface, Schnabel tips his hat to Roland Allen, who published *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours* in 1912. Like Allen, Schnabel exegetically mines the biblical text for contemporary application. Unlike Allen, however, he has a better understanding of Second Temple Judaism and Greco-Roman culture. He also draws different conclusions here and there and applies his learning to a radically different contemporary social context than did Allen. Schnabel works with several assumptions that some New Testament scholars will disagree with. First is the basic historical reliability of Acts. Second is the authenticity of

Paul's canonical letters. And third is the factuality of Paul's release from Roman imprisonment and mission to the West. Each of these assumptions is defensible, although Schnabel does not engage in a defense of them. No scholar can reconstruct the history of early Christianity without relying on Acts. Schnabel's close reading of Paul's missionary journeys in that book seem to me to confirm Acts historicity (unintentionally) by providing a plausible account of the social background of the events in Acts with reference to extrabiblical information. And while critical New Testament scholars typically do not consider Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, and the Pastorals as authentic, a plausible case can be made that they are based on Paul's admitted use of an amanuensis, the changed circumstances under which he was writing, and the personal details offered in the Pastorals, which are too incidental and unimportant for a forger to fabricate whole cloth. Schnabel's supposition of Paul's release from Roman imprisonment and mission to the West follows from the good reception Christians received from Roman hands in Acts as well as from the authenticity of the Pastorals. There is slight extracanoncal support for Paul's mission to the West, so this third assumption is Schnabel's weakest, from the standpoint of historical evidence. In the Introduction, Schnabel asks a basic question: What is mission? Here's his answer: "The term 'mission' or 'missions' refers to the activity of a community of faith that distinguishes itself from its environment in terms of both religious belief (theology) and social behavior (ethics), that is convinced of the truth claims of its faith, and that actively works to win other people to the content of faith and the way of life of whose truth and necessity the members of that community are convinced." For Schnabel, missionaries are concerned with three realities: (1) They "communicate the news of Jesus the Messiah and Savior to people who have not heard or accepted this news"; (2) they "communicate a new way of life that replaces, at least partially, the social norms and the behavioral patterns of the society in which the new believers have been converted"; and (3) they "integrate the new believers into a new community." If you are familiar with current missiological debates, you will recognize that Schnabel's definition of mission and enumeration of missionary realities firmly place him on the good news side of the good news/good works continuum. (I borrow this terminology from Ron Sider.) The mission of the church is to evangelize and disciple people within the context of an ecclesial community. This does not mean that Schnabel discounts poor relief and humanitarian works as an integral part of Christian life. It does mean, however, that there is no mission without conversion. Chapter 1 outlines the missionary work of Paul, based mostly on Acts, beginning with his conversion and call on the road to Damascus and ending with a mission on Crete, which arises from evidence in the Pastorals. Schnabel's close reading of Acts situates Paul's actions and speeches within the religion, culture, and politics of each city Paul is reported to have visited. Chapter 2

outlines the missionary task according to Paul's articulation of it in his letters. If Acts describes Paul's actions, Paul's letters describe his self-understanding of those actions. Chapter 3 outlines Paul's missionary message, returning largely to Acts. Schnabel shows how Paul presented the gospel differently to Jewish and Gentile audiences, based on their differing background assumptions. He also shows what great care Paul took not to run afoul of the law when he presented the gospel in civic settings. Paul's presentation of the gospel nonetheless included an element of ideological and cultural confrontation with his audiences. But much of his presentation also aimed at pastoring new converts and providing an apologetic for the gospel. Chapter 4 outlines Paul's missionary goals. For Schnabel, Paul's goal was to convert individuals, establish churches, disciple converts, and train church leaders, including new missionaries. Chapter 5 outlines the missionary methods of Paul. For me, this was the most interesting chapter in the entire book. As a pastor, I struggle with two big questions: Where do I go to find people who need to hear the gospel? And how do I present the gospel to people who do not currently believe it? Schnabel refutes Allen's contention that Paul focused on provinces rather than cities. Indeed, according to Schnabel, Paul had no "geographical strategy" at all, instead going to whatever city or village presented an open door for ministry. In each city, he sought out whatever venue he could use to accomplish his goals: synagogues, the agora or forum, lecture halls, and private homes. How does the pastor find people who need to hear the gospel? Go wherever they are. How should the pastor present the gospel to unbelievers? In the ancient world, rhetoric was a highly prized discipline. Unfortunately, the rhetorical strategies of Greco-Roman thinkers were useless to preachers whose message centered upon a crucified Jew. Reading 1 Corinthians 1-4 with classical rhetoric in mind, Schnabel notes how Paul self-consciously rejected rhetorical strategies in order "to know nothing among [the Corinthians] but Jesus Christ and him crucified." The theology of the cross determines which methods are and are not appropriate for Christian mission. Chapter 6 outlines "the task of missionary work in the modern world." Schnabel applies the learnings from his study of Paul's theology and praxis of mission to current questions. Among other things, he rejects the "homogeneous unit principle" of the Church Growth Movement. And he warns about the tendency of evangelical missions to expect that the right methods will produce results automatically. If Paul rejected classical rhetoric as a method inappropriate to the proclamation of the gospel, modern Westerners need to be cautious in their use of reproducible methodologies, whether Willow Creek-style seeker sensitive churches or Purpose Driven models. God converts people. Our role is prayer, proclamation, and authentic living. No method assures conversion results. The book concludes with an extensive bibliography, author index, subject index, and Scripture index. Together with a

three-page table of contents, these tools make it easy to find Schnabel's conclusions on particular topics and his discussion of particular Scriptures. Although *Paul the Missionary* is not a quick read, it is a rewarding one. New Testament scholars, missiologists and missionaries, and local pastors like me will profit from Schnabel's focused attention on Scripture. And ministers of the gospel will profit through extended reflection on the theology and praxis of Paul, whose example is well worth imitating.

Like Schnabel's two volume magnum opus *Early Christian Mission*, this book is loaded with sound exegesis of the salient Pauline texts. In a nutshell, the message of this book is that Paul didn't follow cleverly devised strategies or use rhetorical and emotional speaking techniques. He simply preached that Jesus died for our sins and was raised from the dead, and he was willing to preach anywhere the Spirit led him. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 is a key text for Schnabel: Paul has become all things to all men so that by all possible means he might save some. In the introduction, Paul defines mission or missions as the activity of a community of faith that tries to win people over to the content of their faith and to their way of life. In chapter one, Schnabel discusses Paul's missionary work. Rather than the time tested division of Paul's work into four distinct missionary journeys, Schnabel cogently argues for 15 distinct phases in Paul's ministry, beginning with his conversion and preaching in Damascus and ending with ministry in Spain (phase 14) and in Crete (phase 15). During this section, Schnabel argues that when Paul went into Arabia (Galatians 1), he wasn't going there for training or preparation. He was going there to preach the gospel, though we have no record of the result of this ministry, or of any ministry that Paul did from 33 AD to about 42 AD, though we know he spent a number of years ministering at the church in Antioch before the fifth phase of his ministry in Antioch and his departure with Barnabas for Galatia, Lystra, and Cyprus. The second chapter describes Paul's missionary task. He describes his call in Galatians 1 with similar language to the calls of Jeremiah and Isaiah. In 1 Corinthians 3:5-15, he describes his ministry task as watering seeds, but that ultimately, God is the One responsible for conversions, not the preachers. In chapter three, we have a discussion of the missionary message of the apostle Paul. Before Jewish audiences, he let them know that everything in the Hebrew Bible pointed ahead to Jesus the Messiah (Acts 13:16-46), and to Gentile audiences, he described the need to turn from idols to the living and true God (1 Thess 1:9-10), and to believe in Jesus and in His resurrection (Acts 17:16-32). In chapter four, there is a discussion of Paul's missionary goals. His goals were simply to preach the gospel to the poor and the privileged, to Jews and Gentiles, to everyone who would listen. His goal was also to establish Christian communities, to teach new disciples, and to

train new missionaries. The next chapter is a description of Paul's methods. He ministered in cities, regions and provinces. He preached in synagogues, marketplaces, meeting houses, lecture halls, and theatres if he could. But in reality, he didn't have a planned strategy. He simply did whatever was necessary at the time to communicate the gospel of Christ, relying on the Spirit for guidance and power and results. The last chapter deals with the ramifications of this study for 21st century missions. This is the most controversial section of the book, because Schnabel critiques the Purpose Driven Movement, the signs and wonders movement, and the spiritual warfare movement and says that in some ways, they emphasize their methods over the sovereign work of the Spirit. Paul's life and ministry reveals that it's not about methods and techniques and strategies, it's about the supernatural and sovereign power of God at work that causes conversion and growth. The message of the cross is foolishness to Jews and Gentiles, and people receive it only because of a revelation of Christ through the Spirit. This is a great book! Highly recommended!

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