PAUL AND CONTEXTUALISATION

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Category: Mission

> *Paul's Gospel, then, is at its heart the powerful narrative of what God has done to redeem and transform the whole world in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul's letters flow out of that gospel, explain it and instruct you Christian churches in what it means to live out the good news. This, as we have seen, is part of the comprehensive task of "proclaiming the gospel." But Paul does not have one pre-fabricated way of telling the story. When he writes to the Corinthians or the Thessalonians, he unfolds the gospel and its significance in ways that are tailored to their particular circumstances and needs.*
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> *Consequently, Paul does not feel compelled to recycle the same images and themes to explain the gospel of Christ in every letter. Rather he draws on whatever language is needed for the gospel to be incarnated in the life worlds of his mission communities. In Romans and Galatians, for example,the significance of the Jewish law and conditions for Gentiles' participation in the people of God are crucial questions. Not surprisingly, the language of "righteousness" by faith comes to the forefront in these letters. In 1 Corinthians he turns to other ways of talking about the good news, such as the cross, wisdom and the body of Christ. Likewise the "weakness" of the cross emerges as a major theme in 2 Corinthians. this emphasis comes largely in response to opponents who say he is too "weak" to be an apostle (2 Cor 10:10, 11:21). the Philippians, he makes use of the political metaphor of "citizenship" which speaks to a Roman colony like Philippi (Phil 1:27; 3:20). In response to a rival teaching in Colossae that shrinks the role of Christ, he exalts Christ's supremacy over all other powers and his reconciliation of all things by the cross (Col 1:15; 2:8-15). In each case, Paul crafts a theological response that fits the context. the one abiding gospel can address different audiences in a whole variety of forms.*

FromÂ Recovering the Full Mission of GodÂ by Dean Flemming p.170-171.

If you haven't bought this book, you really should! A fuller review will follow when I finish it and stop finding quotes that I have to blog!