

Paul, Education, and Mission: Reflections on English Theological Education in Korea

Steven S. H. Chang

Torch Trinity Graduate School of Theology, Korea

The people of Tarsus have devoted themselves so eagerly, not only to philosophy, but also the whole round of education in general, that they have surpassed Athens, Alexandria, or any other place that can be named where there have been schools and lectures of philosophers. But it is so different from the other cities that there the men who are fond of learning are all natives, and foreigners are not inclined to sojourn there. Neither do these natives stay there, but they complete their education abroad. And when they have completed it, they are pleased to live abroad, and but few go back home. . . . Further the city of Tarsus has all kinds of schools of rhetoric, and in general it not only has a flourishing population but also is the most powerful, thus keeping up the reputation of the mother-city.¹

The birthplace of the apostle Paul was well known in the Greco-Roman world as a center of education. It is intriguing that Paul should call home a city that prides itself on the education of its citizens. As Strabo tells us, Tarsus “surpassed” Athens and Alexandria in academic reputation, an extraordinary comment even if hyperbolic. What is more, the reputation did not come about because of the foreigners that were drawn to the city, but rather because of the “fond of learning” that all natives of Tarsus shared. They were so enamored with a good education that they “complete their education abroad.” In today’s global world, such a description fits Seoul, Korea surprisingly well.

Seoul has come of age as a global city, ranking ninth in the 2008 Global Cities Index.² It ranks high due to its advanced information connectivity and business activity, and also because of the large percentage of citizens with university degrees.³ Indeed, South Korea is among the

1. Strabo, *Geography* 14.5.13. Cited from J. Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 35.

2. Hee Sun Kim, “Seoul Ranks 9th in Global Cities Index,” Korea.net. http://www.korea.net/News/News/NewsView.asp?serial_no=20081022004 (accessed October 31, 2008).

3. The World’s Most, “The World’s Most Global Cities,” World-most.

top ten most educated nations in the world.⁴ Since Seoul is the educational capital of South Korea, Seoulites are probably one of the most educated populations in the world. The statistics speak for themselves. The number of South Koreans studying in the United States is the largest of any nation on earth reaching well over 100,000. At the post-secondary level, Korea ranks third behind population giants China and India with some 69,000 according to the latest statistics.⁵ The *yu-hak* (overseas education) trend continues to rise. The economic implications of such a large number of South Koreans in American universities, the majority of which fund their education from sources at home, are staggering. The statistics roundly demonstrate that Seoulites, like ancient Tarsans, possess an intense “fond of learning” and a penchant to “complete their education abroad.”

Further, it is well known that English education is something of a boom in South Korea. The latest government initiative promotes English-language instruction in public schools and promises the hiring of thousands of native English teachers. Korean students now visit “English Villages” that offer short-term English immersion and promote everyday English usage.⁶ Everyday activities, and not just instruction, are carried out in English. In addition to these domestic English learning opportunities, many Korean children are sent abroad at increasingly younger ages to the United States, Canada, Australia, or other English-speaking countries, either to live with host families or with their mothers, creating a whole class of fathers without families (known as *gi-lug-gi ap-pa*, lit. “daddy geese”).

In 2008, Torch Trinity Graduate School of Theology in Seoul, Korea, celebrates its tenth anniversary. The uniqueness of Torch Trinity has many dimensions, but one that stands out is its insistence on English as the primary medium of instruction.⁷ It was natural for Torch

blogspot.com. <http://world-most.blogspot.com/2008/11/worlds-most-global-cities.html> (accessed November 15, 2008).

4. South Korea ranked 10th in 2007 according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). See their website, www.oecd.org.

5. Shin-woo Kang, “Koreans Studying in US Continue to Rise,” *Korea Times*, November 20, 2008. According to the news article, the order of nations sending the most number of students to American universities is: 1) China with 94,500; 2) India with 81,000; 3) Korea with 69,000; 4) Japan with 34,000; and 5) Canada with 29,000.

6. For example, Gyeonggi English Village in Paju City, Gyeonggi province has one-day, one-week, and one-month live-in programs for students. See <http://english-village.gg.go.kr>.

7. In 2005, Torch Trinity added the Master of Divinity program in the

Trinity as a mission-focused seminary to insist on English instruction since it is de facto the worldwide language of commerce and academics. The forward-thinking founders recognized that in order for the Church of Korea to participate more effectively in mission and global leadership, theological training in English was essential. In spite of its short history, Torch Trinity enjoys a promising reputation for English theological education in Korea.

At the ten-year mark, I believe some reflection on the future of English theological education is in order. I propose to do this through a study of the apostle Paul's educational background because there are remarkable parallels between our setting and his. Paul and his education then may serve as a model for twenty-first century Korean and Asian Christian missionaries. In this study, I shall focus on 1) Paul's social status and his accessibility to education; 2) Paul's education in the Jewish and Greek patterns; and 3) Paul's mission and how his education prepared him.

Paul's Social Status

Before considering the details of Paul's education, the question of accessibility is crucial. On the one hand, whether or not Paul was well educated depends on his social status in the Greco-Roman world because social status determines one's accessibility to educational opportunities. On the other hand, education level itself serves as an indicator of social status. In the Greco-Roman world, as it is in many societies today, good education and high social status go hand in hand.

In the culture and society of his world, was Paul's social status relatively high or low? Scholarly opinions vary widely. At one extreme, Adolf Deissmann suggests, "It appears to me to be certain, that Paul of Tarsus, although his native city was a seat of Greek higher education, was not one of the literary upper classes, but came from the unliterary lower classes and remained one of them."⁸ At the other, Ben Witherington reasons that Paul was among the well educated and that "he would have been identified with and received by the well-to-do."⁹

In addition to education, the discussion of Paul's social status considers two opposing aspects of his life: his citizenship and his manual labor.¹⁰ Generally speaking, Paul's citizenship tends to place him in the

Korean language, but especially catered to professionals working full-time.

8. A. Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History*, 2d ed. (New York: Harper, 1927), 48.

9. B. Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 21.

10. Deissmann, *Paul*, 50, would add to this list, "language" as does R.

upper strata of society while his manual labor or occupation pushes him into the lower strata. Each of the three aspects of his life—citizenship, occupation, and education—needs to be examined carefully before we can assess his overall social status and educational accessibility.

Citizenship

Acts presents Paul as a citizen both of Rome (Acts 22:25-29; 23:27; 25:25) and of Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia (Acts 21:39; 22:3, 34). Some scholars doubt the veracity of the Acts portrait, especially since Paul nowhere in his letters admits to being a Roman citizen.¹¹ J. C. Lentz, for example, argues:

The evidence suggests that Luke was highlighting, if not creating, Paul's high social status and moral virtue. By the end of Acts, the Paul who has been described is, quite frankly, too good to be true. . . . Christianity could no longer be perceived only as the faith of the uneducated masses. To Luke, Paul was the one character who could be held up as an example of those of high social status to imitate and for those of low social status to claim. From now on Christians could be found in the upper circles of the Hellenistic world and belief was now a mark of social distinction.¹²

Understandably, Paul's dual citizenship coupled with his Pharisaic background is extraordinary when we consider, as some argue, that Jews could not become citizens of a Greek city or of Rome without first committing apostasy. But is Paul's dual citizenry that unlikely? On the contrary, Brian Rapske convincingly argues that there is ample evidence of faithful Jews, like Paul, holding Greek or Roman citizenship.¹³ Further, Martin Hengel contends that Acts is consistent overall in terms of pro-

Hock, "Paul's Tentmaking and the Problem of his Social Class," *JBL* 97 (1978): 555-564.

11. E.g., W. Stegemann, "War der Apostel Paulus ein römischer Bürger?" *ZNW* 78 (1987): 200-229, suggests that Paul was not in fact a Roman citizen, since Paul himself does not mention his Roman status in his letters. This, of course, is an argument from silence. Furthermore, Stegemann suggests that if Paul were in fact a Roman citizen, he would not have been flogged. However, Paul seems to have appealed to his Roman status only as a last resort (Acts 16:37). Cf. R. Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

12. J. C. Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul*, SNTSMS 77 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 171-172.

13. B. M. Rapske, *The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody*, BAFCS 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 72-90. Dual citizenship was possible by the time of Claudius (p. 83).

cedure and privileges granted to Paul as a Roman citizen,¹⁴ attesting to the essential accuracy of the Acts accounts.

In addition, evidence independent of Acts supports Paul's Roman citizenship. First, Paul's letters by themselves verify his ability to travel extensively and freely,¹⁵ which would have been difficult without Roman citizenship. Second, "Paullus" was a well-regarded *Roman* cognomen and Paul's acquisition of the name as a Jew requires explanation.¹⁶ The best explanation is that he acquired the name with his Roman citizenship.¹⁷ Thus, he was known by the dual names, Saul and Paul, indicating both Jewish origins and Roman citizenship.¹⁸ Interestingly, "Saul" is never used in his letters. Third, Paul in his letters demonstrates awareness of Roman civic procedures,¹⁹ and is seemingly sympathetic to Roman government.²⁰ Fourth, Paul does not mention his Roman citizenship in his

14. M. Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul* (London: SCM, 1991), 6-15. On p. 7, he argues "Had Paul been a mere *peregrinus*, he would very probably have been condemned in Judaea without much fuss and would not have been sent for the verdict of the emperor in Rome."

15. This can be deduced from the range of places mentioned in the letters of Paul. The geographical area would stretch from Jerusalem and Arabia in the East to at least Corinth with plans for Rome in the West. Cf. W. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897).

16. Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of Cyprus, is an example of this *cognomen* in Acts 13:7. It is also attested as a *praenomen*, but only rarely. As a *cognomen*, Paulus was associated with great Roman senatorial families such as the Aemilii, the Vettenii, and the Sergii. It may not have been common among Romans, and extremely rare among non-Romans. Cf. C. J. Hemer, "The Name of Paul," *ΤηνΒ* 36 (1985): 179-183; Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 8; F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Free Spirit* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1977), 38; Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul*, 41.

17. It was common practice for Jews to take on Roman names after obtaining Roman citizenship. If Acts 22:28 is considered, Paul seems to have been born a Roman citizen, thus suggesting that his family had earlier obtained citizenship. There are numerous possibilities, some more likely than others, which are finally inconclusive. See Rapske, *Paul in Roman Custody*, 86.

18. A biblical example may be found in his companion Silas/Silvanus who was also a Roman citizen according to Luke in Acts 16. A. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 153, suggests that the Latin *Paulus* was chosen for its similarity with the Jewish Saul. However, the existence of a Greek equivalent of Saul (Σάυλος) speaks against this suggestion. Bruce, *Paul*, 36 n. 11, offers another example in Marcus Aurelius Alexander, also called Asaph from a Greek epitaph at Hierapolis in Phrygia from the second century AD. He was a citizen of Hierapolis and a Roman citizen. See Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 8-10.

19. E.g., 1 Cor 6 for legal action against another.

20. Rom 13:1-7 is exceptionally sympathetic to civil authorities who were, in his view, God's servants (v. 1-3) and ministers (v. 6). Therefore, the Roman

letters for a number of good reasons: 1) he had no occasion to reveal his citizenship,²¹ 2) he emphasizes heavenly over earthly citizenship (Phil 3:20), and 3) he does not want to boast in himself.²² There are then compelling reasons to accept Luke's portrait of Paul both as a citizen of Tarsus and of Rome.

According to Acts 21:39, Paul explains to the Roman tribune who mistook him for an Egyptian rebel, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people." This statement shows that Paul was most likely a Tarsian citizen by birth²³ and that Tarsian citizenship was highly regarded. Jewish colonists were brought to Tarsus in the second century BC and their presence is well attested into the first century AD.²⁴ Paul was likely a descendent of such colonists and thus born into Tarsian citizenship. More than correcting the tribune's misconception, the assertion of Tarsian citizenship was designed to earn credibility.²⁵ The tribune must have been impressed since Paul was indeed allowed to address the hostile crowd at significant threat to the peace.

The description of Tarsus as "no ordinary city" is significant for both the economic and the educational levels of its citizens. Tarsus was

Christians ought to be subject to them (v. 5) and faithfully pay taxes (v. 7). Most striking is Paul's statement in v. 2: "he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgement," a judgement presumably from God.

21. G. Lüdemann, *Early Christianity According to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary*, trans. J. Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 240-241, suggests that there was "nowhere any occasion" to reveal his citizenship, even in such texts as 2 Cor 11:25.

22. "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." (1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17).

23. Not much is known about Paul's family background except that his parents were "Hebrews" (Phil 3:5), living in Tarsus. They were also Roman citizens since Paul was born a citizen (Acts 22:27-28). Paul's family apparently, despite their location in the diaspora, retained their mother tongue, namely Hebrew and/or Aramaic. C. J. Hemer, "Tarsus," in *ISBE*, 4:735, suggests that Paul's family had been in Tarsus for quite some time, settling there under Antiochus during Seleucid rule, the only likely explanation for Paul's citizenship in a Greek city. Hemer writes, "It seems probable that Paul's family had been long established as leading citizens in Tarsus." Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 10-14, is not certain, but sees emancipation of Jewish slaves as the likely source of Paul's citizenship.

24. W. M. Ramsay, *The Cities of St. Paul and Their Influence on His Life and Thought: The Cities of Eastern Asia Minor* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907), 159-161. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul*, 33 n. 12, cites Luke (Acts 6:9) and Philo (*Legatio ad Gaium*, 281) for the presence of Jews in Cilicia. Specifically for Tarsus, he cites Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*, 6:34.

25. Rapske, *Paul in Roman Custody*, 72.

a prosperous town from early in its history²⁶ and in the first century, Dio Chrysostom called Tarsus, “the capital of all the people of Cilicia.”²⁷ F. F. Bruce believes that Tarsian citizenship by itself “implied a certain level of wealth.”²⁸ Further, Rapske considers the description, “no ordinary city,” to indicate the intellectual primacy of Tarsus,²⁹ suggesting that Paul is essentially saying that he was well educated. In the light of the above considerations, Paul’s Tarsian citizenship places him above most of his Jewish peers with an above-average social status.

In addition to Tarsian citizenship, Acts thrice describes Paul’s legal status as a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37-39; 22:25-29; 25:7-12).³⁰ All three descriptions portray something of the respect which accompanied Roman citizenship in the East. In Acts 16, the magistrates in Philippi are struck with fear when they hear that Paul as a Roman citizen was mistreated. They promptly apologize to Paul and Silas. In Acts 22, the Roman tribune’s surprise and envy show that Paul’s Roman citizenship was admirable. He, too, is struck with fear when he realizes that Paul is a Roman citizen. In Acts 25, Paul makes a legal appeal to Caesar that governor Festus is forced to comply with even though he desired to appease the Jews by handing him over to them (Acts 25:9). These references show that Roman citizenship commanded respect, even from the elite of provincial and Roman governments.

Awards of Roman citizenship especially in the East were rare,³¹ explaining the tribune’s surprising response in Acts 22. Roman citi-

26. E.g., Xenophon in the fourth century BC called Tarsus “a great and prosperous city.” Cited by Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul*, 33.

27. Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses*, 33.17. For other ancient sources, see Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 90 n. 11.

28. F. F. Bruce, “Paul in Acts and Letters,” in *DPL*, 681, marshals evidence from Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses*, 34.23, who states that the requirement of Tarsian citizenship was 500 drachmae. Cf. Hemer, “Tarsus,” 4:736.

29. Rapske, *Paul in Roman Custody*, 74, suggests that Paul may have had the intellectual primacy of Tarsus in mind when describing the city as οὐκ ἄσημος. Cf. H. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Herm. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 184; Hemer, “Tarsus,” 4:734-736. W. M. Ramsay, “The Tarsian Citizenship of St. Paul,” *ExpTim* 16 (1904), 18-21; Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul*, 33-35; Bruce, *Paul*, 35.

30. Acts 22:28 records Paul as claiming Roman citizenship as a birthright. How Paul’s family attained Roman citizenship is debated. Given the importance of Tarsus in Cilicia and consistent Roman interest, it is not surprising that Paul’s family might have been granted Roman citizenship during some conferring of rights and privileges to the city under Julius Caesar, Anthony and Augustus. See Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 4-6; Bruce, *Paul*, 34; Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul*, 34.

31. H. C. Kee, *To Every Nation under Heaven: The Acts of the Apostles* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 201.

zenship secured certain rights and privileges³² which Paul sometimes evoked.³³ In terms of social status, however, while it was not necessarily a prerequisite for access to the ranks of the privileged, Paul's ability to appeal to Caesar goes hand in hand with his respectable social status. Social status was intimately tied to one's chances for justice in the Roman courts.³⁴ Others suggest that Paul Roman citizenship is evidence of his high social status. Ramsey, for example, places Paul's family among the provincial aristocracy because of his Roman citizenship.³⁵ Even Deissmann recognizes, "The very fact that he was born a Roman citizen shows that his family cannot have lived in absolutely humble circumstances."³⁶

Tarsian and Roman citizenships together strongly make a case that Paul is from the upper strata of provincial society. This means that he, like others of high social status, had access to uncommon educational opportunities. However, that Paul was a manual laborer speaks against this assessment.

Manual Labor

Several Pauline texts make clear that Paul was a manual laborer and worked "with his hands" (1 Cor 4:12; 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:8).³⁷ Further, Luke tells us more precisely that Paul was a *skeēnopoios* (Acts 18:3) or "leather-worker," which does not necessarily mean a "tentmaker" as is commonly believed.³⁸ Paul probably worked with tanned leather gener-

32. See A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973). Especially noteworthy is P. Garnsey's article on appeal to Caesar of Acts 25:10f, "The *Lex Iulia* and Appeal under the Empire," *JRS* 6 (1966), 167-189. Citizenship did not always guarantee justice, however. See Rapke, *Paul in Roman Custody*, 47-56.

33. Acts 22:25-29; 25:10. See the short summary by Bruce, *Paul*, 37-40.

34. P. Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (London: Clarendon, 1970); Rapske, *Paul in Roman Custody*, 46-62.

35. Ramsay, *Paul the Traveller*, 31; idem, *Cities of St. Paul*, 227. Others have followed: G. Bornkamm, *Paul* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971); Bruce, *Paul*, 37-38. Cf. Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul*, 25; Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship*, 273.

36. Deissmann, *Paul*, 50.

37. This is assuming authenticity of authorship of 2 Thes which has been contested. See W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), 264-269.

38. σκηνοποιός in Acts 18:3. For a more precise definition of this word, see R. F. Hock, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 20-21. Cf. Bruce, *Paul*, 35-36; Rapske, *Paul in Roman Custody*, 106-108.

ally, sewing together pieces for many applications, including temporary enclosures like tents.

With reference to Paul's social status, manual labor appears inconsistent with the evidence of citizenship.³⁹ Thus, Deissmann believes that Paul's manual labor necessarily relegates him to the lower classes.⁴⁰ The prevailing attitude of the Greco-Roman elite was the manual labor was only fitting for slaves. "The chief stigma attached to the trades was that they were regarded as slavish," writes Hock.⁴¹ Furthermore, working with your hands was regarded as harmful to the body.⁴² To the Roman observer, Paul's social status could not have been high if he had to ply a trade for living.

Because manual labor seems so inconsistent with Paul's Roman citizenship, other reasons why Paul may have worked with his hands must be explored. Some argue that labor was part of normal practice for training to be a rabbi.⁴³ If true, Paul engaged in manual labor as part of his religious practice. However, this suggestion is not compelling.⁴⁴ Ronald Hock presents a more compelling alternative: Paul *intentionally* engaged

39. Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul*, 19, suggests that conversion to Christianity made Paul status inconsistent. Similarly, Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 21, points out that Paul was also a person with "considerable status inconsistency." With regard to other variables such as wealth, political influence, and family, Paul did not noticeably fare as well. In the eyes of the Corinthians, he was in some respects not impressive. But judging from his self-debasement, namely in taking up a trade, his status inconsistency seems self-imposed. Cf. Rapske, *Paul in Roman Custody*, 111.

40. A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, trans. L. Strachan (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1911), 103-104. This interpretation is as old as that of John Chrysostom. See Hock, "Paul's Tentmaking," 557.

41. Hock, *Social Context*, 35. As Hock suggests, such attitudes originated from the fact that it was slaves who usually worked the shops. Cicero believed that the work of an artisan was degrading, saying that "there is nothing noble about a workshop" (*De Officiis*, 1.42.150). Cf. R. MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 115.

42. Hock, *Social Context*, 36. A. J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 69-70, finds a parallel thought in Musonius Rufus, who worked the land during exile and offered it as an example to follow. Many philosophers considered this practice ideal but normally did not follow it. Paul seems to have gone beyond the ideal.

43. The rabbis learnt a trade while devoting themselves to Jewish law in order to maintain independence. M. Dibelius and W. Kümmel, *Paul* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), 37; J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 112-113, 234.

44. However, Hock, "Paul's Tentmaking," 557, suggests that evidence of this practice is hard to establish before the mid-second century.

in labor to appeal to those of lower status. He argues further that Paul's own attitude toward labor is essentially negative, much like the prevailing elitist attitude.⁴⁵ There are two important points to Hock's thesis: 1) Paul was not born a manual laborer and 2) Paul had evangelistic reasons for working a trade. The first point is well supported by Paul's dual citizenship and education. It is unlikely that Paul's father was a manual laborer that he should be able to educate his son in Jerusalem at considerable expense or leave him the right of Roman citizenship.⁴⁶ Rather we would expect that Paul's family enjoyed a higher social status given Paul's citizenships and educational background.⁴⁷ The second point, that Paul had evangelistic motives, is supported by three considerations: 1) Paul's desire to be an example; 2) Paul's refusal to accept financial support; and 3) Paul's desire to be accessible to all.

First, Paul worked with his hands in order to be an example for the believers. In 1 Thessalonians 2:9, Paul endures "toil" or "hardship" in order not to be a burden to his hosts.⁴⁸ His "righteous" and "blameless" conduct (1 Thess 2:10) before them included working with his hands. In 2 Thessalonians 3:8, Paul seeks to set an example for the believers to imitate by working with his hands. Correcting those who would be idle, he exemplifies independence through manual labor so as to avoid social conventions that would unnecessarily obligate him as a client.⁴⁹

Second, Paul's labor is consistent with his refusal to accept financial support as an apostle.⁵⁰ In 1 Corinthians 9:19, Paul writes, "For though

45. 1 Cor 4:12, 9:19; 2 Cor 11:7; 1 Thes 2:9. See Hock, "Paul's Tentmaking," 560-561. Todd D. Still, "Did Paul Loathe Manual Labor? Revising the Work of Ronald F. Hock on the Apostle's Tentmaking and Social Class," *JBL* 125 (2006): 781-795, opposes this view.

46. Hock, *Social Context*, 35, states, "artisans generally and Paul in particular could not avoid experiencing the hostility and contempt directed toward them by representatives of the dominant ethos. Indeed, these experiences must have been doubly difficult for Paul, who, though he shared the life of artisans, was by birth a member of the socially elite, the very circles that maintained this social world." However, the evidence of Prisca and Aquilla may suggest that "tentmakers" could be well to do, since the couple could support church meetings in their house (1 Cor 16:19), support Paul, and travel to different parts of the empire.

47. Paul education will be discussed in detail below.

48. Hock, *Social Context*, 29-31. Hock suggests that social conventions of hospitality meant that guests could not normally stay over a week without becoming a burden.

49. B. W. Winter, "If a Man Does Not Wish to Work...': A Cultural and Historical Setting for 2 Thessalonians 3:6-16," *TynB* 40 (1989): 303-315, suggests that the social system of patronage is behind Paul's injunction.

50. The social motivation for Paul's refusal has been suggested by P. Mar-

I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them.” In the context of receiving support, his use of *douloō* (made a slave) could easily be a reference to his workshop experience. In the preceding verses, Paul vehemently defends his apostleship, his freedom and right to receive support. Thus, he explains his behavior as a desire to win more converts. Sometime later, Paul addresses the same issue again in 2 Corinthians 11:7, where Paul defends his practice of not accepting support from the Corinthians. In the words, “in humbling myself,”⁵¹ Paul either reflects attitudes toward manual labor that one would expect from the upper strata of society or is simply repeating in ironical fashion the expressed attitudes of the outspoken Corinthian members who were themselves from the upper strata of society. In the case of the latter, however, it would be difficult to explain Paul’s inclusion of his labor in the *peristasis*-catalogue of 1 Corinthians 4:11-13, where Paul is by choice a “fool of Christ.” Further, a similar catalogue in 2 Corinthians 11:22-28 refers to his manual labor twice, using the words *mochthos* (v. 27) and *kopos* (labor, trouble; vv. 23, 27). Here, manual labor is a matter of ironic boasting about foolishness and weakness. In both catalogues, Paul seems to view his work as something undesirable, yet something which must be “suffered” for the sake of the gospel.⁵²

Third, Paul sees his labor as a means to have access to more people for evangelistic purposes. As Hock writes:

By entering the workshop and plying a slavish trade he had made himself available to all people, rich and poor, more in any case than had he accepted support and stayed in a household. The personal loss of status in the eyes of others was worth the gain in converts.⁵³

Hock convincingly argues that Paul intentionally plied a trade to make himself more accessible to the lower strata of society. In this light, Paul’s manual labor actually enhances his social status because Paul would not otherwise be received by the lower classes.⁵⁴ Hock’s intriguing argument

shall, *Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul’s Relations With the Corinthians*, WUNT 2.23 (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1987). Marshall argues that Paul did not want to incur the burden of friendship where the giving and receiving of gifts entailed strict social conventions. Where he received such support from the Philippians, his reaction was somewhat ambivalent. See G.W. Peterman, *Paul’s Gift from Philippi: Conventions of gift exchange and Christian giving*, SNTSMS 92 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

51. ESV; Gr. *emauton tapeinōn*; “to lower myself” NIV.

52. Cf. 1 Thess 2:9

53. Hock, “Paul’s Tentmaking,” 560.

54. Hock’s reading has recently been challenged by Todd D. Still, “Did Paul Loathe Manual Labor? Revisiting the Work of Ronald F. Hock on the Apos-

makes sense in the backdrop of his citizenship and education. Having considered citizenship and manual labor, we now turn to Paul's education.

Paul's Education

Paul's relatively high social status meant that he had access to a good education.⁵⁵ Without a doubt, his scholastic credentials were noteworthy in much the same way his dual citizenship was. That is, he had two distinctive educational backgrounds, Greek and Jewish. What is more, the quality of education appears to be extraordinary in both categories.

Jewish Education

In his autobiographical statement in Philippians 3:5-6, Paul primarily identifies himself as a good Jew and particularly as a Pharisee.⁵⁶ Pharisees of Paul's time were wealthy and socially privileged.⁵⁷ Further, Acts 22:6 records Paul as claiming to be "a son of Pharisees." He is most likely speaking of his upbringing in the pharisaic traditions in Jerusalem more than that his father was a Pharisee. In Acts 26:5, Paul speaks as one who "lived as a Pharisee" from his youth. The Christian Paul does not fail to mention his pharisaic identity when it aided his mission and witness. In the context of Philippians 3, his credentials are something that afforded "confidence in the flesh," which he counted "a loss for the sake of Christ." In Paul's own mind, his Jewish education and background ought to be highly regarded by his audience, and this education makes him stand out in Jewish circles. His speeches in Acts where he mentions his pharisaic training are designed to impress his Jewish audience and gain a hearing. Paul is given some extraordinary opportunities by the "rulers of the synagogue" in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14-16). They are impressed with Paul's credentials and invited him to bring a

tle's Tentmaking and Social Class," *JBL* 125, no. 4 (2006): 781-795.

55. I use "good education" generically without qualifying what this is. Surely, opinions would have varied in Paul's time as it does today as to what exactly is a good education.

56. Bruce, *Paul*, 51. There seems to be some discussion as to whether Paul was in fact a diaspora Pharisee, and to what extent he remained faithful to Pharisaism throughout his life. Cf. Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul*, 54 and Rapske, *Paul in Roman Custody*, 95-99.

57. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 246; A. J. Saldarini, "The Social Class of the Pharisees in Mark," in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in tribute to Howard Clark Kee*, ed. J. Neusner et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 69-77.

“word of exhortation” after the reading of “Law and the Prophets.” Such extraordinary access demonstrates that Paul’s Jewish educational credentials as a Pharisee are well above average.

As one who was educated in the highly regarded Jewish pattern of the Pharisees, Paul would have been well versed in Jewish methods of biblical interpretation and a legal scholar in his own right, perhaps reflected in his letters and speeches. As a “Hebrew of Hebrews” (Phil 3:5) raised in the pharisaic traditions, his mother tongue was likely Hebrew.⁵⁸ Certainly, in Acts 22, the Jewish crowd “became even more quiet” when they heard Paul speak “in the Hebrew language” (Acts 22:2).⁵⁹ The pharisaic education Paul received further stands out in that it was under Gamaliel in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3), the most influential and well-regarded pharisaic teacher in Paul’s day.⁶⁰ Paul’s discourse in Acts 22:1-5 is designed to add credibility to what he was about to say to the Jewish crowd, and perhaps even admiration of his personal credentials. Based on these credentials, it is likely that Paul was “a prominent Pharisee and a full member of the Sanhedrin.”⁶¹ In Jewish circles, Paul as a Pharisee who studied under Gamaliel and a member of the Sanhedrin ought to be counted as one of the educated elite of Jewish society. His Jewish education allowed Paul access to the highest levels of Jewish society.

Greek Education

As remarkable as his Jewish education was, Paul’s Greek education may be even more noteworthy, especially for a Jew. That Paul was born in Tarsus, a center of Greek culture and learning, places him in a privileged situation. While Tarsus enjoyed a fertile land-base and commercial success in the first century,⁶² it was the eagerness of the native residents

58. Bruce, *Paul*, 42-43, interprets Paul’s words in Phil 3:5, “a Hebrew born of Hebrews,” as a reference to the language spoken in the home and synagogue.

59. Many hold that the Greek *Hebrais* refers to the “Aramaic” (NIV; NET) spoken in Palestine of the first century or simply “in their own language” (NLT; REB), a “Hebrew dialect” (NASB), or a “Hebrew language” (ESV). Given that Paul was a Pharisee and knew the Scriptures, he likely knew and could speak “Hebrew” (NRSV; NJB).

60. Rapske, *Paul in Roman Custody*, 94, 105. Gamaliel may have been the son or grandson of Hillel, one of two heads of leading schools during Paul’s time. Gamaliel may have succeeded Hillel as leader of his school, or created a school of his own. Gamaliel may have also been the president of the Great Sanhedrin, and Paul’s association with Gamaliel would have enhanced his social status within Jewish circles. See Bruce, *Paul*, 49-50.

61. Rapske, *Paul in Roman Custody*, 103.

62. Bruce, *Paul*, 32-36. Tarsus was the principal city of the fertile plain of

for education that caught the attention of Strabo.⁶³ Strabo notes that Tarsians were so “fond of learning” that many chose to complete their education abroad. Paul himself could have been the poster boy for this popular trend. Strabo also notes the many schools of rhetoric and the educated people who resided at Tarsus. This competitive atmosphere likely influenced Paul and his family.

Some doubt whether Paul was much influenced by the Tarsian environment and received a good Greek education. For example, Hengel argues that Paul does not display the hallmarks of a classical Greek education. He writes, “we find virtually none of the knowledge of the classical Greek literature which formed part of the general canon of education in his letters. . . His language shows no trace of any knowledge of Greek poetry, i.e. of epics, drama and poetry.”⁶⁴ Thus, Hengel contends that Paul’s Greek education is still an open question.

However, Murphy-O’Connor argues that in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, the normal course should be presumed, namely that Paul would have had a Diaspora Jewish elementary and secondary education with emphasis on both Semitic and Greek languages.⁶⁵ And many suggest that Paul’s language and skill reflect his earlier experience

East Cilicia and stood on the river Cydnus. It also lay on a major trade route, linking Asia Minor and the West with Syria and Egypt. Note Dio Chrysostom’s testimony about Tarsus: “Your home is in a great city and you occupy a fertile land, because you find the needs of life supplied for you in greatest abundance and profusion, because you have this river flowing through the heart of your city; moreover, Tarsus is the capital of all the people of Cilicia” (*Discourses* 33.17). Cited by Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul*, 33. Tarsus was also know for its fine linen. In any case, the economic success of the city may explain how Paul’s family was able to educate him in Jerusalem.

63. See the quotation of Strabo, *Geography*, 14.5.13 above.

64. Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 2-3.

65. Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul*, 49-51, writes, “Was Paul formed in such techniques [rhetorical and oratory]? His social position argues in the affirmative, but he himself appears to deny it.” Paul’s letters are “weighty and strong” (2 Cor 10:10), while he was not impressive in person (2 Cor 10:10). Paul himself concedes that “I am unskilled in speaking” (2 Cor 11:6). However, Murphy-O’Connor sees this as Paul’s putting aside his rhetorical training in his preaching of the gospel “that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God” (1 Cor 2:5). Indeed Paul asserts, “my speech and my proclamation were not in persuasive words of wisdom” (1 Cor 1:17), as if he might have been purposefully avoiding rhetorical persuasion. To say that Paul did have rhetorical training, but chose to put it aside, is impossible to prove. There are others who would doubt his rhetorical training altogether. Cf. D.A. Campbell, *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Roman 3:21-26*, JSNTSup 65 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 75-76.

with Greek philosophy and rhetoric in Tarsus.⁶⁶ Indeed, Malherbe writes, “There can no longer be any doubt that Paul was thoroughly familiar with the teaching, methods of operation, and style of argumentation of the philosophers of the period, all of which he adopted and adapted to his own purposes.”⁶⁷ In the light of these positive assessments, we may conclude that Paul was very much influenced by the education-driven environment of Tarsus and probably received a good Greek education in Tarsus or later in Jerusalem.⁶⁸ Such credentials in the Greek mode of learning would have given Paul unusual social advantage in Greco-Roman circles.

Paul’s education overall reflects the best of two worlds, both Jewish and Greek. It is difficult to see how someone of low social status could attain such a high level of education, as unique as it was, and be at home both in the company of the Jewish elite (the Pharisees, the Sanhedrin and Gamaliel) and of the Greek philosophers and rhetoricians. Paul’s educational background places him in the upper strata of Jewish society while making him broadly accessible to most levels of Greco-Roman society, even the elite of provincial cities.⁶⁹

66. See Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 95 n. 31; Rapske, *Paul in Roman Custody*, 92 n. 126. It is however tentative to suggest in any precise fashion the level of rhetorical training, and furthermore to conclude from this his social standing. See P. H. Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul’s Epistle*, SNTSMS 101 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1-6.

67. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, 68. Stoic and Cynic affinities are found in his letters.

68. Acts 22:3 suggests that Paul “grew up” in Jerusalem rather than in Tarsus. Bruce, *Paul*, 43, suggests that Paul’s early education was based in Jerusalem, judging from “the most probable punctuation of Acts 22:3.” Thus, it is uncertain whether or not Paul received his Greek education in Tarsus. Further, W.C. van Unnik, *Tarsus or Jerusalem: The City of Paul’s Youth* (London: Epworth, 1962), makes a sharp distinction between Jewish education in Jerusalem and pagan education in Tarsus. However, Tarsus or Jerusalem as the city of his youth would have equally given Paul ample opportunity to receive a Greek education. In either case, Paul had ample opportunity to receive training in Greek rhetoric. M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, one vol. ed., trans. J. Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1981), 65-83, points out that Jerusalem itself was thoroughly Hellenized by Paul’s time. Thus, a Greek education was also accessible in Jerusalem, if only for apologetic purposes. Cf. Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul*, 46; Rapske, *Paul in Roman Custody*, 93.

69. Cf. Acts 13:6-12; 17:19-34; 19:31 for those among Paul’s contacts and converts who are seemingly of high social stature.

Reflections on Paul's Mission and Ours

In terms of social status, citizenship, manual labor, and educational background, Paul was well suited for the mission to the Gentiles in the Greco-Roman world. Paul's education undoubtedly contributed a great deal to the mission and allowed him far-reaching access to all levels of society. In the light of Paul's mission setting and ours, we shall reflect upon the global context of today and suggest that English theological education in Korea is profoundly and providentially necessary for the future mission of the Korean Church.

Paul's Mission and Education

In Galatians 2:1-10, Paul describes his second visit to Jerusalem (Acts 11:30). There, he and the "pillars" adopt an important mission strategy. James, Peter, and John would focus on the Jews while Paul and Barnabas would go to the Gentiles (Gal 2:9). In the mission landscape, this was a significant division of labor and perhaps good strategy was reason enough for the split. However, it is also worth asking whether or not Paul and Barnabas possessed special qualifications that suited them to the Gentile mission. After all, they too were Jews. Their connection to the church of Antioch, the first church to include Gentiles, may have influenced the decision because, in a sense, Paul and Barnabas were already going to the Gentiles. However, the Jerusalem apostles probably recognized that as diaspora Jews, Paul and Barnabas possessed advantages that they did not as Palestinian Jews. The cultural experience in the diaspora made Paul and Barnabas more adept for the Gentile mission. Thus, a more telling reason for the division of labor may be in the abilities of Paul and Barnabas as diaspora Jews.

Barnabas⁷⁰ was a Hellenized Jew who, like Paul, had strong connections to his Jewish roots as a Levite (Acts 4:36). He owned land in Jerusalem that he sold after conversion, giving the proceeds of the sale to the Jerusalem church (Acts 4:37). He was well regarded by the apostles, no doubt thanks to his generosity and commitment to the church. Beyond the borders of Palestine, however, Barnabas may have enjoyed a positive reputation as well. Judging by the reception he received in Lystra, where he was mistaken for Zeus by the locals (Acts 14:11-13), Barnabas must have been an impressive figure to the Greeks. The priest of Zeus

70. Barnabas is actually a nickname that means "son of encouragement," which speaks of his character and evaluation by the apostles. His other name is Joseph from Cyprus (Acts 4:36). He is also described by Paul as the "cousin" of John Mark (Col 4:10) whose mother, Mary, was resident in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12).

brought sacrifices, which Barnabas promptly rejects. While Paul, mistaken for Hermes, was the “leading speaker,” Barnabas also spoke Greek as a diaspora Jew.

As for Paul, his Greek language abilities, particularly his Greek education, made him an accessible figure to the Greek-speaking Gentiles. This accessibility is well illustrated by Paul’s exchange with the Athenians in Acts 17. Noteworthy are his “dispute” with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers and subsequent invitation to address the famous meeting of the Areopagus (Acts 17:19, 23). Such open access is highly improbable without a Greek education. Further, Paul’s quotation of an Athenian poet (Acts 17:28) demonstrates his knowledge of Greek literature, probably reflecting his earlier Greek training in Tarsus. His previous Greek education gave Paul access to the Hellenized populations even in Athens, the heart of Hellenistic culture.

Paul enjoyed remarkable access not only in Athens, but also in the rest of Greece (Corinth and the Macedonian cities) and the entire Greco-Roman world. Providentially, Paul was advantaged by his place in history. The Mediterranean region east of Carthage was thoroughly Hellenized before the Romans began their conquest. As Lionel Casson summarizes, “The Mediterranean world, bound together as it had never been before by language, trade, and similar way of life, developed an international, cosmopolitan culture.”⁷¹ On the cultural and linguistic foundation of Hellenization, the Roman Empire was built. The imperial domination managed to unite the politically fragmented regions. The vast domain of the Hellenized world was brought under a common political structure, affording unparalleled opportunities for travel, commerce, cultural interaction, and education. This Roman domination, as brutal as it was in reality, eventually came to be known as the *pax Romana*.⁷² The extent of freedom under the *pax Romana* is no less exemplified than in Paul’s own missionary journeys, interaction with people from vastly different regions,⁷³ and education in both the Jewish and Greek

71. L. Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1974), 117. For an overview of this unifying effect, see the entire chapter, “One World,” 115-127.

72. The *pax Romana* of course was a form of domination. E.g., K. Wengst, *Pax Romana and the Peace of Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), has argued that much of the so-called “peace” was initiated and maintained by violence. He contends that the *pax Romana* was beneficial for those who were on top, namely the Romans and their favoured classes. For the rest, it essentially meant servitude and violence

73. Prisca and Aquila in Acts and Paul’s letters are located in Rome, Corinth and Ephesus. (Acts 18; Rom 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19. Cf. 2 Tim 4:19)

modes. The Roman world was united by a common culture and language and Paul's various credentials seem perfectly suited to such a world.

At the same time, Paul's abilities are a product of this unique situation. The unity of the Roman world had great significance for Paul's education. Without this unity, Paul would not have been educated in two distinctive modes, in Tarsus and in Jerusalem. More significantly, however, Paul would not have been able to travel on his journeys, proclaiming Christ to the Gentiles. His language of mission was Greek; Alexander is to be thanked for that. But it was the Romans who made his Greek education and later his Christian message in the Greek language practical and effective. Paul's education *within* the Roman setting made for a potent combination that enabled him to have the impact that he had in the first-century world.

Mission-Focused Education

Today's globalized world is far larger and more complex than the Roman world that Paul knew. Yet there are interesting parallels that are worth pondering. Distinct from the political unity of the Roman world, unity today is more commercial and economic. World markets prosper or decline in unison. Technology has enabled instantaneous communication so that what happens today in Asia will affect the markets in New York or London tomorrow. Perhaps the new uniting powers are economic development and free trade. Whereas in the Roman world political unity drove and facilitated developments in economy and trade, in today's world, it is the reverse. Economics and commerce are driving the initiatives for greater political unity as with, for example, the European Union and NAFTA. The results are similar and comparable, however; the world is increasingly united.

Another intriguing analogy is language. The common language of the Roman world was Greek. Whether in Rome, Alexandria, Antioch or Jerusalem, the language spoken in the markets was Greek. This explains why all the New Testament letters were written in Greek. *Koinē* (common) Greek, the language of the New Testament, was spoken throughout the Roman Empire out of necessity and convenience more than anything else. Similarly today, the language of commerce and globalization is English. Business on an international scale is usually conducted in English. Further, English has also become the international language of intellectual discourse, and thus of education, fueling the English craze in countries like Korea. English has become a worldwide common language much like Greek was in Paul's day.

The unity of the world today coupled with the prevalence of English as a global language presents an analogous opportunity for mission,

it seems to me. Like Paul, we have a window of opportunity, to be educated globally for a global mission. If Paul had grown up and were educated in today's world, I suggest that he would be competent in English, conducting business, teaching, and preaching in the global language. Further, his letters would probably be written in English for maximum dissemination. Without training in English, I would argue that he would not be well prepared for the mission.

The churches of Asia must be prepared to support the worldwide Christian movement in this century. Already, many are predicting a shift in political, cultural, and economic power from the West to Asia. It is not inconceivable that the nexus of Christianity will also shift as the numbers of Christians in China and India, for example, explode. The missionaries of this century then will primarily come from Asia. How must we prepare them for the mission?

As the world's number two missionary-sending nation, South Korea has a strong church and many higher-education institutions for theological training. Yet very few offer English-language programs or prepare graduates with English language training, presumably because they will be ministering to locals. I believe this is shortsighted, however. Thankfully, some seminaries are catching the English frenzy in Korea, offering classes in English and hiring English proficient professors. This is a necessary development in Korean seminaries and from the perspective of mission readiness, all such efforts must be applauded. It is providential that the English boom should come now as Korea itself prepares for the twenty-first century setting and seeks to play a greater role in the global economy. God may very well use the economic motivations for learning English and the intense "fond of learning" to prepare today's Korean children to become tomorrow's English-proficient missionaries. In other words, we must ready the next generation of Korean Christians to take the Gospel to the world, like present-day Pauls who grew up in today's Tarsus and can competently proclaim the Gospel in the common language.