



# APPLICATION OF PAUL'S IDEOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION

## I CORINTHIANS 16:13-14

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### ABSTRACT

The Apostle Paul is a wonderful example of a successful global leader. His consistent ideology and varied communication practices to people from different cultures and religious understanding was masterful. He was God's messenger and possessed both the passion and resolve to build a scattered Church across many different cultures. Paul varied his tact, but never the message or ideology. Global leaders today can learn a lot from his ideology and approach towards leadership which can be summarized in 1 Corinthians 16:13-14.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Apostle Paul was a man that could not be ignored. He demanded and commanded respect, if not fear, from all he encountered prior to his conversion. In many ways, that did not change after his conversion. Paul's beliefs may have changed, but his means rarely did. His passionate drive either resonated with or alienated all he came in contact with. "Paul was chosen by God to be the chief expounder of the Gospel to the world" (Halley, 1965, p. 584). His ideology and message spread throughout the Mediterranean through both his in-person ministry and his extensive letters to the many Churches. The following defines Paul's ideology through two verses in 1 Corinthians, shows why he was such a qualified communicator of his ideology to Greeks, Romans, Jews, and fellow Christians, and then applies his successful ways to global leadership today.

## METHODOLOGY

Ideological texture analysis will be used as the primary tool in analyzing Paul and his audience for the purposes of gleaning how Paul viewed the process of expansion of the early church across different cultures. Robbins (1996) states that ideological texture analysis begins with the author (Paul) and then "the reader" (the people in the early church themselves) (p. 95). It does not stop with just the ideological understanding of Paul as the author but also Paul in relation to other people. "A person's ideology concerns her or his conscious or unconscious enactment of presuppositions, dispositions, and values held in common with other people" (Robbins, p. 95). What is the common ideology of the time and what did Paul share with it? What was the reader's common ideology and what did that say about how they would receive Paul's expressed ideology through his letters? How did Paul view the right way and the wrong way to expand the church across different cultures? The answers to these questions and more can be explained through ideological texture analysis. Using this methodology, 1 Corinthians 16:13-14 will be used as the primary summation of who Paul is as a leader and the ideology that he professed in both a compelling and passionate manner. From this, application to leadership will be identified for today's global leaders to apply as an example when promoting their own ideology to their own unique and culturally distinct followers.

## PAUL'S IDEOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION

Paul's ideology can be summed up in two verses: "Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love." (1 Corinthians 16:13-14). In these straight forward verses, we learn about five key components of Paul that frame his ideology that are laid out clearly in the verse: first – "be watchful," second – "stand firm in the faith," third – "act like men," fourth – "be strong" and fifth – "let all that you do be in done in love". First Corinthians was written about three years after Paul established his ministry through the church there (Halley, 1965, p. 593). At the time of his writing, he was in Ephesus about 200 miles away from the busy seaport of Corinth and had been alerted of "very serious problems and disorders that had arisen in the Church" (Halley, p. 593). This compelled Paul to layout his ideology in letter or epistle form while tapping who he was as a Greek, Roman, Jew, and Christian.

Paul loved to communicate through conversation in his letters and this is part of the Greek tradition dating back to Aristotle of which he associated (White, 1983, p. 435). Paul intended for his letters to be read aloud and were longer than most in those days (White, p. 437). This was important as it allowed Paul to control the audience from afar by first gaining their attention, then hitting them with his ideology, and then charging them to act before sending them on their way. Paul made best use of the opening, body, and closing of his letters to communicate his ideology and his authority in the Church (White, p. 438). The stoic Roman characteristics that made Paul's message direct were successfully communicated by his mastery of the Greek tradition of letter writing.

Paul's epistles detail his "concept of the character and work of a Christian leader" (Hiebert, 1976, p. 213). His epistles describe in detail what characteristics are required of leaders. In many ways, they are summed up in 1 Corinthians 16:13-14. Leaders must be a diligent teacher, willing to fight for what they believe in, have perseverance, possess a strong work ethic, and filled with good moral character (Hiebert, pp. 213-228). This framed the basis of Paul's ideology on leadership. Likened to a Roman soldier, they did not "entangle himself in the affairs of everyday life," but rather avoided them at all cost so as to be free to focus on the "spiritual battle" that was most important (Hiebert, p. 217).

To display his ideology to his varying unbelieving audiences, Paul called upon, depending on the situation, his Roman, Greek, and Jewish cultural identifications. “He appears as anomalous as he does- sometimes a prophet, an apocalyptic seer, a philosophic pedagogue, a Jewish homilist, even and apostate – because of the context in which we see him” (Perkins, 2011, p. 2). As an example, Paul uses his Roman citizenship to get himself out of trouble when he can and to assist him in his quest to remain true to his faith as evidenced in Act 22:22-29 (Minnen, 1994, p. 46).

Being a leader to Paul meant to be able to endure a lot of pain for the greater good just like a strong Roman soldier. Paul’s audience was often amazed by the many striking, fundamental similarities between Paul’s moral teaching and Roman stoic ethics (Thorsteinsson, 2006, p. 140). In addition, Paul spread his ministry out like a conquering Roman army. There was not less than 80 specific persons called out as actively serving in ministry with Paul (Meeks, 1982, p. 269).

Paul was every bit a Jew. However, when he found Christ, he spoke “against the law and in favor of ‘justification by faith,’ he is a new man in a new covenant” and this put him at odds with the Jews “who still insist on adherence to the old model of salvation” (Jacobs, 2006, p. 259). Paul would often identify himself with Greek-speaking Jews and their belief in the present world and the future coming age (Kerekes, 2015, p. 30). This was important in Paul’s ideology because the present would help set-up the future. Thus, accountability and how to be a leader in the present mattered to Paul.

Paul valued greatly his qualifications to serve Christ. Paul did not fear confrontation as evidenced by his relationship with the other Apostles and he was quick to state he was qualified to preach as justified by them (Aus, 1979, p. 252). Paul was qualified (if only in his own eyes) whether in the company of Greeks, Romans, Jews or Christians. Thus, for him his ideology was right (and those who would disagree were wrong) and it was just a matter of time before he fully conquered the world with the Gospel.

# APPLICATION FOR TODAY'S GLOBAL LEADERS

Paul, as the qualified leader and masterful communicator of his ideology has five key leadership lessons that can be gleaned from 1 Corinthians 16:13-14. The successful global leader would do well to master these lessons regardless of the cultures or challenges they face on the global scene. Paul first won his ideology, and then learned to communicate, by justifying his existence to his audience regardless of their own cultural background. As Paul proved, global leaders “can build value by building and tapping global networks” (Cabrera & Unruh, 2012, p. 99). Paul never wavered and stood firm, but he did alter his approach depending on his audience. Here are the five global leadership lessons that also align succinctly with his ideology and were so effectively communicated to the Church in Corinth.

## *Lesson 1: “Be watchful”*

Being watchful is a deliberate choice. Global leaders that are most successful have made the decision to be both “motivated” and to “self-initiate” engagement with those they are trying to influence or lead (Caligiuri, 2012, p. 74). This engagement creates a sensitivity in the leader to be tactful when communicating for maximum effect and to be aware of difficulties or even danger in the cultures they are engaging. The goal of the successful global leader in communicating their ideology is to be effective in delivery and this requires feedback from their audience to tailor the message for both understanding and influence. Paul masterfully watched his audience and pivoted his tact making sure that he communicated his ideology for maximum impact.

## *Lesson 2: “Stand Firm in the Faith”*

Leaders that waiver will eventually fail, and this is also true of “Christian” global leaders. Faith should help to drive ethics; but for Christians “there is little statistical difference between the ethical practices of the religious and the nonreligious” (Hughes, 1991, p. 121). Paul knew this and knew that faith helped define integrity, ethics, and character. Standing firm with one’s ideology and character is extremely important for a global leader especially when they may be tempted to falter for ease or expediency sake to avoid conflict.

### *Lesson 3: “Act Like Men”*

Global leaders need to practice both steadfastly and with maturity. Lingenfelter (2008) states “I have come to understand that my weaknesses significantly affect my leadership” (p. 22). To combat this, both Paul and Sherwood Lingenfelter rely on God and accountability with others to act like the men God desires them to be (Lingenfelter, p. 22). Acting like men means that one knows their strengths and weaknesses and does not allow those weaknesses to keep them from fulfilling their leader’s charge. They get things done by pressing on, staying focused, and being accountable to others for their actions. No excuses.

### *Lesson 4: “Be Strong”*

It is often said that strength comes from within. For Paul and faithful Christians, this is not the case. Strength comes from God. However, when going from one culture into another perceived strengths can now become weaknesses on the global stage as leaders “underestimate the importance of underlying cultural differences” (Bains, 2015, p.56). Strength for the “strong” global leader can be juxtaposed into different cultural settings just as Paul proved as he admonished the Corinthian Church through a letter while sitting 200 miles away in Ephesus (Halley, 1965, p. 593). Paul had strength from God that overcame any cultural boundaries.

### *Lesson 5: “Let All You Do Be Done in Love”*

First Corinthians 16:14 at first glance is out of character with Paul who was the educated Greek, tough Roman citizen who happened to be a converted Jew to Christianity. However, his strengths and passionate defense of his ideology is no less diminished because of this verse. It is actually enhanced. Paul modeled Jesus’s leadership characteristics most closely when he loved those he encountered. “Jesus Christ is the epitome of leadership characteristics, the source of their origination, and the ultimate expression of them in ministry” (Cole, 2003, p. 182). Followers will follow a leader who loves them. Paul knew this as he studied Jesus and how he led. Global leaders who truly love those they are leading have a much better chance of succeeding as evidenced by Paul.

## CONCLUSION

Paul's passion, conviction and commitment to his ideology was the epitome for any aspiring global leader. His understanding of the many cultures that made up the Mediterranean region empowered him to effectively communicate with the scattered early Church. Global leaders who take note of Paul's means to mobilize across cultures and organizations can also unleash the leadership strengths that made Paul so effective. He used his cultural diversity as an advantage and tactfully ensured his ideology was communicated effectively regardless of his audience. Today's global leader can learn a lot by studying Paul – one of the earliest examples of a masterful leader on the world stage.

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