

The Apostle Paul . . . “Rejected”

Dear Mr. Paul:

I have before me your letter of application to be considered for the missionary work we have proposed to undertake. Concerning your qualifications, I will be as frank as possible. We have to be very careful in choosing our missionaries, and rest assured that we have reviewed your case thoroughly. We have decided that it would be unwise to send you to the foreign field for the following reasons:

1. It has come to our attention that you are doing secular work on the side. We do not feel that making tents and full time ministry go together very well. [1 Th 2:9] It seems that you do not have enough experience in trusting the Lord for your income. You should make up your mind whether you want to preach or continue your profession.
2. Your previous actions have been very rash and unseemly for a minister. We learned that in a public meeting you opposed Simon Peter, an esteemed minister with a high reputation. [Ga 2:11-14] We also hear that you argued so violently with some of our ministers that a special council meeting had to be called at Jerusalem to prevent a serious split in the churches. (Ac 15:1-30) We frown on such radicalism. For your own good, I am enclosing a copy of Daius' Carnegus book on “How to Win Jews and Influence Greeks.” [Gal 1:10, 1 Th 2:4-6]
3. You have conflicted with mature Jewish brethren in nearly every city you have visited who simply want to encourage the converted pagans to be properly circumcised. Mr. Paul, what were you thinking? You must know that these men are our most learned sages with a deep sense of the roots and history of our faith. As well, and more importantly, these men control the synagogues you could be ministering in if you would simply tone down your dialog into a more friendly and respectful exchange. [Gal 5:2-12]
4. In checking back, we discovered your Christian education consisted of a three year course in Arabia. [Gal 1:15-20]. We find that the Arabian school has not been approved by the accreditation board we most prefer.

5. Further, you admit to being an unskilled public speaker. [2 Co 10:10; 11:6] Paul, surely you must know that people expect fine locution from men of God, and that as a church we stand for the highest levels of excellence in the pulpit. Yet , instead of going to much-needed-oratory classes, you spend your time making tents instead. From your correspondence, you also appear to be spending a considerable amount of time writing letters to insignificant little “churches” that meet in homes. [1 Co 16:19] Honestly now, do you really think that such misguided activities are what will lead to your success in the world of religion? We strongly suggest you put down you tools and set aside your pen, and instead practice hand gestures, facial expressions, and voice modulation in front of a mirror for sever hours each day until you come up to par.
6. We also hear a rumor that you are a snake handler. We don’t have all the details on that episode at Melita, but such a reputation could only hurt the true cause of Christ and the Church. [Ac 28:3-6]
7. It has come to our attention also that you often emphasize the “power of God” and “the Gifts of the Spirit.” 1 Co 2:3-5; 12:1-7] Also that you speak in tongues a great deal [1 Co 14:18] Surely your realize that such as this only drives off the better class of people, and attracts only the riff-raff. It would be better to tone down those more sensational forms of worship. You sound as though you are “off the deep end.” [1 Co 3:18]
8. It has been proven to our satisfaction that you had hands laid on you at Antioch with prophecy going forth, [Ac 13:1-3] with none of the Apostles present to conduct this ordination service in the prescribed manner.
9. We see that you have a jail record in several places. [2 Co 11:23-27] If this is true, it puts you in a bad light, for our congregations have always stood for a high standard of civic responsibility, I fear it would damage our reputation to have someone representing us that had served time in jails and prisons. Frankly, Mr. Paul, we seriously doubt you could have been innocent and the judge so wrong in so many cases. It’s just doesn’t look right.

10. It seems that you are a troublemaker, Mr. Paul. Several business men of Ephesus have written us that you were the cause of sever loss of business to them and even stirred mob violence. You must learn to cultivate the friendship and influence of such men such as these. [Ac 16:16-22]
11. We also have some details of a shameful “over the wall in a basket” episode at Damascus, [2 Co 11:30-33] plus a stoning at Lystra, and several other violent actions taken against your ministry. [2 Ti 3:11] Haven’t you ever suspected that conciliatory behavior and gentler words might gain you more friends? We have never condoned such sensationalism in the ministry. This is just not the type of missionary that we send out.
12. We have learned through channels that following some trouble with a preacher on the island of Cyprus, you began to allow yourself to be known by the Gentile pronounciation of your name rather than the proper Hebrew. [Ac 13:4-11] Yet another conflict, and then a name change. This does not seem to us to be conduct becoming to the ministry.
13. You admitted in your application that in the past you neglected such needy fields as Bithynia, just because “the Spirit didn’t lead that way,” and that you undertook a hazardous journey on the strength of the dream you had at Troas. [Ac 16:6-10] Mr. Paul, surely you don’t expect us to go along with such flimsy and fantastic excuses for your seemingly purposeless wanderings.
14. Many times you did not stay long enough, in our opinion, to get a church established. You left your converts many times without even a minister to guide them, and without setting the church in order according to some established religious standards. [Ts 1:5]
15. We hear also from Troas that you preached too long, one sermon lasting so late, even to the extent that a young man fell asleep and was seriously injured. [Ac 20:7-12] We understand that you claim to have restored his life and raised him from the dead by falling on him and embracing him. What nonsense! We need practical men in the ministry, Mr. Maul, not high strung emotional radicals. Our advice is for you to shorten your sermons considerably. We find that about twenty minutes is the longest a minister

can hold the attention of his audience these days. Our motto is :Stand up, speak up, and shut up.”

16. It is reported from your home church that you could not get along with your fellow ministers; that John Mark, a commendable young man and nephew of one of our leading ministers, had t leave your traveling group in the middle of a journey; and that you had a sharp quarrel with gentle, good natured Barnabas. [Ac 15:36-40] Now these men are well thought of in Jerusalem and we wonder why you are always having trouble withy our fellow workers?
17. We have notarized affidavits from four very popular and influential preachers: Diotrefes, Deman, Hymenaeus, and Alexander; to the effect that it is impossible for them to cooperate with either of you or your work.
18. From what we hear, you seem to think that you have some direct sanction from on high boasting about your revelations and that God has chosen you to reveal some “Mystery.” [Ep 3:3-4] Can’t you realize that any truth that is to be revealed would come through established brethren, and that after it had been checked by our Procedure and Doctrine Committee that we would distribute in on to the ministry?
19. Finally, we hear that you claim to be an Apostle. We know nothing of this being passed upon by the proper authoritative channels and wonder how you could back that claim up, when the last Apostle was selected in Jerusalem [Ac 1:26] Now that the Church is firmly established, why do you image there would be any need for God to continue the Apostolic gifting?

As you see, Mr. Paul, we feel definitely that after close scrutiny of your case, that you are undoubtedly the most unqualified applicant we have ever seen, and my advice for you is to find a congregation where you can work in harmony, and use your past education as perhaps a Sunday School teacher.

I hope I have prevented you from making a terrible mistake in your life.

Most sincerely yours,
Foreign Missions Committee

