

Instructions: Answer both of the following two questions. Each question allows you some choice as to the topics discussed, so read the questions carefully. Be sure to support your general claims with specific facts, details, names and references from the readings and class discussions. Good luck.

1. "Paul was the ultimate pragmatist, adapting his message to the needs and interests of a given audience."

Discuss this quotation by means of a commentary on the varying ways Paul presents any **two** of the following topics in any **two** Pauline letters that we have read: faith and the law; circumcision and/or other ritual practice; the role of women; government and the state; Paul's use of language; and Paul's discussion of himself (i.e. his own credentials).

For each topic chosen, you should discuss specifically: (a) if and how Paul's views differ from one letter to the other; and (b) how these differences might and/or might not have been explained by Paul's pragmatism.

2. "The views adopted by the Orthodox Church in the first three centuries of Christianity were often less a reflection of theological argument and insight than of institutional needs--social, political and organizational in nature."

Comment on this paraphrasing of W.T. Jones's perspective by examining the reasons behind the Church's adoption of its orthodox position on any **two** of the following issues: the bodily crucifixion/resurrection; monotheism; church membership; the role of women in the Church (including "The Acts of Paul and Thecla"); the afterlife (including Origen); and the substance of Christ (including Arianism).

For the topics selected, you should discuss: (a) the view adopted by the Orthodox Church; (b) alternative ("heretical") view(s); and c) the factors that led to the success of the orthodox view.