

Edgar Ebojo: the letters of Saint Paul

Edgar, a PhD student from the Philippines, discusses his research into Papyrus 46 - the oldest surviving manuscript of St Paul's letters - at the Institute for Textual Scholarship and Electronic Editing.

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I'm Edgar Ebojo from the Philippines. I work with the Bible Society in my country and I have been fascinated with the texts of the New Testament, in particular the letters of St. Paul. So when the opportunity came for me to pursue postgraduate studies, I applied at Birmingham University to be supervised by David – Professor David Parker because he has the expertise and the experience that can guide me to my research as well. I'm working on a manuscript called Papyrus 46. This is the oldest surviving manuscript we have witnessing to the texts of St. Paul – St. Paul's letters. It has nine excellent letters and this is very important in terms of our study and analysis of the regional wordings of the letters of St. Paul. This is not only the earliest surviving, but this is also the most extensive manuscript we have. But particularly my interest in this manuscript is establishing the habits of the scribe who produced it. So I'm looking at the scribe but also the scribe in the context of the community from which he emerged and what it tells us about our being users of the New Testament and the letters of St. Paul. The importance of understanding the sociology of book production in antiquities can give us a lot of information and also guidance on how to address issues that are commonly asked by modern people like us. So that's the focus of my research.

I went to the University of Birmingham because of the staff, particularly David Parker, and also the Institute – ITSEE – because it has resources unparalleled in many countries of the world and it focuses on the texts of the New Testament. Not only are the resources so much, there is also the environment, the whole environment of the community is very conducive for learning, especially for an international student like me. It's very supportive, it's helpful and I enjoy staying here at the University of Birmingham