PAULINE‟S PEDAGOGY ON CHRISTIAN FREEDOM IN 1 CORINTHIANS 9:19-22 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

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Abstract

This study showcases Paul‘s perspective to Christian freedom, emphasizing adaptability, flexibility and selflessness. Paul, an apostle with rights, voluntarily relinquishes them and builds relationships, in order to preach the gospel effectively. He becomes ―all things to all people‖ (1 Cor. 9:22), demonstrating a pedagogy of contextualization and sacrificial love. This approach prioritizes the gospels advancement over personal interests illustrating a nuanced understanding of freedom in Christ. Paul‘s pedagogy offers insights into navigating complex social dynamics, promoting unity, and embodying the gospel‘s transformative power. The methodology for the study is the exegetico-contextual study of the text, focusing on Christian freedom, rights and responsibilities. The paper is discussed against the backdrop of Berlin‘s two concepts of liberty, namely negative and positive freedom. It argues that Christians must seek to have ―freedom from‖ the mundane as their ―freedom is for‖ service to God and others. It recommends the virtues of adaptability, flexibility and contextualization they navigate the shores of ―freedom from‖ to ―freedom for‖ service to God and humanity. This serves as the magna carta for the African Christian.

Key Words: Christian Freedom, Negative Freedom, Positive Freedom, Restrictions.

Introduction

There is no gain denying the sacred fact that freedom in general terms is a fundamental human right incentive for humanity. The right to Freedom is variously expressed in many fora as; freedom of religion, freedom of movement, freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly among others, (Doss Eric 2020). Broadly speaking, freedom is a state of being unhindered, of not being imprisoned or enslaved or being under restrictions (Oxford dictionary 593). The scope of this paper is on Christian freedom, and thus it is not to be understood from the prism of freedom from political, philosophical, social or economic encumbrances. In context, Christian freedom is defined as the liberty gained form all restrictions and interferences that would impede service to God, the church and humanity. Christian freedom is essentially a central concept in Christian theology referring to the liberation from sin, death and the law that comes from faith through Jesus Christ. The concept Christian freedom has a two pronged dynamics. This is ―freedom from‖ and

—freedom to/for.‖ Freedom from incorporates the freedom gained from the power and penalty of sin (Rom 6:7,14; 8:2), and freedom from the bondage of the law, enabling believers to live by the Spirit (Gal 5:1, 13; Rom 8:14-15). Freedom to/for on the other hand involves the freedom in Christ which believers are set free to live for Christ and serve others (Gal 5:13; 2Cor 5:15). This freedom enables believers to approach directly through faith in Christ without the assistance of intermediaries (Eph 2:18; Heb 10:19-25). The notion being that those who engage in service to God, the church and humanity must be —freed from all‖ interference arising from socio-cultural and religious hindrances in order to serve the Sovereign God.

It is not an overstatement to posit that freedom of religion and worship is a major requisite to all adherents of the various religions. This argument underscores the import of Christian religious philosophy. In other philosophies such as political philosophy, it is argued by some scholars that human nature is inclined on self-interests and rational reason, and that freedom can only be achieved when there is a sovereign who is authorized by the citizens to be the author of freedom (Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651; repr., Manlok: 2018). However, in Christian religious philosophy, it is the Sovereign that authorizes and dictates freedom to the citizens. It is the prerogative of the Sovereign in whose domain freedom lies to first cause the citizen to act for the receipt of this cherished virtue. What this connotes is that it is the Sovereign who first initiates or causes the freedom value chain for secondary causes to evolve. In other words, it is the Sovereign that causes the citizen to will and to act for the reception of freedom. If there is no cause from the Sovereign, the action taken might be retrogressive, destructive as opposed to the expected progressive and constructive action. This freedom is achieved through metaphysical interferences leading to sacrificing natural individual freedom for servanthood to the Sovereign.

Theoretical framework

Isaiah Berlin‘s two concepts of liberty undergirds this study. Berlin, one of the twentieth century‘s most significant intellectual defenders of liberty and liberalism, postulates what he terms as positive and negative theories of liberty. Berlin interchangeably uses the terms liberty and freedom as synonyms. He avers that while negative freedom is —freedom from,‖ control others, positive freedom is —freedom to‖ control oneself (1969: 118-124). Negative freedom specifically involves being free of the coercive will of external people. Berlin further opinionates that coercion is a deliberate interference by external forces; mostly humans within the domain of activity one could otherwise act, and, thus, the wider the area of non-interference, the wider the degree of freedom. On the flip side, Berlin argued that to be positively free is to be in control of oneself, by thinking rationally, while taking rational decisions and choosing responsibly in line with one‘s interests (1969: 118-124). Unarguably, the desire to control oneself to the extent that no one else controls one is uppermost in humans. All humans crave to be in full control of oneself, to be the first cause and not to be caused by any other.

Pauline Corinth and the Corinthian church

Scholars agree that Paul came to Corinth in 51 CE, and as the known capital of the province of Achaia, the city was five times as large as Athens. Corinth was founded in the 10th

Century BCE, and having been the richest port it was the largest city in ancient Greece.

Corinth was strategically located on the narrow Isthmus separating the Mediterranean Sea and the Aegean Sea, connecting the Peloponnesus, also known as southern Greece to the mainland. It was a powerful commercial center near two seaports and only 4 miles apart. On the western axis was the port of Lechaeum, with a harbour in the Corinthian Gulf which served as the trading port to Italy and Sicily. On the eastern axis was Cenchreae, whose harbour in the Saronic Gulf was the port for the eastern Mediterranean countries. A path was constructed known as the diolkos which separated the west and the east and ships were pulled across this narrow stretch of land, the isthmus. Corinth was a multi-racial Greek city and culture that was under Roman rule. It was made up of many different races and people groups. As a port city, it was a center of trade and commerce for its region with many local religions and gods worshipping the Greek Pantheon.

The philosophies of the city took after the Stoic philosophies of Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle. Sexual immoralities of all types abounded in Corinth as idol worship of false gods saturated the city. It was into this great commercial city with abundant wealth with many gods that the Apostle would bring the light of the Gospel to drive out darkness. For where there is stupendous wealth and many shrines for the gods, there is the possibility that Satan would make such a habitat his dwelling abode.

The Corinthian Church

Capes, Reeves and Richards wittingly submit that the Corinthian Church was by all standards and purposes reminiscent of the New Testament Church (143). Accordingly, internal problems in the Corinthian Church included; divisions in the Church (1Cor 2:14-3:1); leaders‘ arrogance (1Cor 4:6-7); incest (1Cor 5:1); immoral idolaters, revelers, drunkards, debtors (1Cor 5: 9-12); court issues (1Cor 6: 1-8); and the teaching that Old Testament laws against immorality was like the laws against eating ―pork.‖ Thus, the thinking was that these laws did not apply to Christians (1Cor 6:12-13). Against all these odds in the Church at Corinth, the apostle believed in one Church, by being adamant that the body of Christ should be united despite the Satanic forces that were tearing the Church apart. Added to the internal problems in the Church at Corinth, Paul reckoned that there were external problems in the city of Corinth. Some of these external problems were idolatry and sexual immorality. Idolatry was the order of the day in the city of Corinth with so many gods, goddesses and cult worship. Garland agrees that the cosmopolitan city of Corinth was a religious melting point with older and newer religions flourishing side by side (9). Corinth also had a Jewish community as evidenced by O‘ Connor (798). By the turn of the first century, the Jewish community in Corinth had synagogues for worship as well as other temples dedicated to the cults of the emperor.

Religious freedom was apparent as many worshippers could accommodate all gods and goddesses into their religious behaviour and they could choose from a great cafeteria line of religious practices. Worshippers believed that the more gods‘ one had, the better. Garland summarized the worship life of the people in their catch phrases thus; ―I pray to all gods‖, and ―we magnify every god‖ (9).

Pauline‟s Freedom *didache* in 1Corithians 9:19-23 and Berlin‟s two Concept Theory

Berlin‘s two concepts theory of freedom, i.e. negative and positive freedom provide valuable insights into Paul‘s teaching on Christian freedom. First, Berlin‘s negative freedom is what Paul refers to as ―freedom from.‖ This understanding is in agreement with Paul‘s discourse in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, where he essentially deals with the concept of *eleutheria* ―freedom‖ of the Christian for the service to God. In context, Pauline teaching in Corinthians 9:19-23 on freedom is in sync with Berlin‘s negative freedom, where the Christian seeks to be free from external constraints of sin, death and the law requirements for attaining right standing with God. This perspective emphasizes the importance of individual autonomy and limited or no state intervention, thus allowing Christians to pursue their faith without external coercion. In Christianity, negative liberty is reflected in the idea of being set free from the power of sin and being able to live life of obedience to God without external restraints from worldly attractions.

Caution must however be observed in the exercise of negative freedom. While negative freedom stands in opposition against external restraints and controls from humans, the same external restraints, and controls are permissible from the Holy Spirit for the benefit of spiritual growth of the believer. The existence of negative freedom is imperative for the life of the Christian for true service to God. If Saul of Tarsus was not restricted by the Holy Spirit while on the road to Damascus for the arrest and persecution of the ―followers of the way,‖ he would have continued with his killing game of members of Jesus‘ movement. This would have impeded the expansion and growth of the early church. The argument here is that if the goal of negative freedom is constructive for the growth of the church, then interference is necessary because these restrictions are geared towards the positive conduct of the Christian. However, destructive restrictions or interferences are to be discarded. It is also imperative to note that Berlin‘s positive freedom aligns with Paul‘s ―freedom to,‖ and the concept resonates with the Christian concept of being empowered to live the life that honors God and serves others. This perspective highlights the imperative of establishing conditions necessary to enable believers achieve their potential in pursuance of faith. In Christianity, positive freedom is reflected in the notion of being empowered by the Holy Spirit to live a life of love for all and sacrificial service to God and humanity.

However, Berlin‘s positive freedom dynamic must be cautiously analyzed and applied by the Christian. Berlin captures his positive freedom as ―the wish to be what one wants, the wish to be the instrument of oneself, not of other men's, acts of will, the wish to be a subject, not an object (1969: 24). For the Christian, the interpretation of Berlin‘s positive freedom should be in tandem with what God wants, the wish to be the instrument of achieving God‘s will, and the wish to make God as the object of worship even as one is a subject of the Creator, God. Berlin‘s positive freedom should be contextualized from Paul‘s argument and perspective that no man had any part to play in his calling, and that the gospel he taught did not originate from any man, rather that he received it by revelation from Jesus Christ as the Object. (Gal 1:11-12).

If, however, the Holy Spirit has no part to play with his positive freedom, then the Christian has no part from Berlin‘s positive freedom. If everyone wants to be whatever he wants, to be an instrument to oneself, and to be free to do whatever he desires, then one will not be living

the Christian life of service to God and others.

Christianity is for Paul the religion of liberty. It is Christ that sets a believer free; this idea is resonated in different cognate words, and may almost be taken as the central motive of Paul's message. Paul thinks of the Christian as released from all earthly bonds. There can, indeed, be no true liberty which is not founded on Paul's conception of man as a spiritual being, who lives in this material world, but is subject to another, and who cannot, therefore, accept any earthly authority as final. Baird posits that Paul's idea of freedom is anchored on spirituality and can be summarized by the phrases —freedom from‖ and —freedom for‖ (1960: 153). These terms imply that Christians are delivered from (freedom from) wrath, sin, law, and death, and that their —freedom is for —service to Christ. It is Paul's teaching that Christians are freed from wrath, sin, death, the powers of darkness, and the devil.

Paul's argument that he is free from all men is in sync with Berlin's negative freedom, even as he continues that he is a servant of all. This is a huge paradox. He asserts his freedom paradox when he said: —though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to everyone‖ (1Cor 9:19). The Apostle was indeed a free-born, a citizen of Rome. As a free citizen, Paul was in bondage to none. He did not depend upon anybody for his living; yet he became a slave to all, that he might gain the more for Christ. As a subject; servant, he labored for the good of all, being careful to please his Object, the Lord Jesus. Paul acted as if he had no privileges, so that he might gain the more for Christ. He became himself a servant, that they might be made free from the bondage of the law and sin. Because Christ freed him from the yoke of Jewish legal requirements, he was free to proclaim the Gospel to all. Nobody could own Paul, not the Gentiles, not the Jews, except the One who sent him, the Lord. Paul was able to serve all groups of people; Jews and Gentiles alike. He did not restrict himself to a particular group. He used his freedom to serve as he was not self-centered but others-centered. He renounced his rights for the sake of the Gospel. In order to achieve this, Paul surrendered his Judaist overzealousness to the calling of the Lord Jesus by making himself a slave to all (*emauton edoulosa pasin*). Paul's primary motive for making himself a slave to everyone was ‗to win as many as possible' to Christ. Thus, the Apostle enslaved himself to all for the sake of the Gospel by forfeiting his all rights.

Thus, freedom gained means freedom to serve God, humanity and God's creation. Bruce notes that for Paul, this meant that he would succinctly declare his freedom from all things and all men not only from the Corinthians, but also, elsewhere, in order to proclaim the Good News of the free grace of Christ (1977: 18). The free grace which Paul proclaimed was free in many perspectives; it was free, sovereign and unfettered, it was presented to all for their acceptance by faith alone, it was the source and principle of their —liberation from‖ all kinds of inward and spiritual bondage including the bondage of legalism and the bondage of moral decay. Paul did not think of freedom as a right, but as a renunciation of his right for the sake of others so the Gospel would be preached to them. Paradoxically, when Paul got his —freedom from‖ all, he enslaved himself to all in order to win as many as possible for Christ. Paul was categorical on how he enslaved himself to all people. He began with the Jews, his brothers. First, to the Jews he became like the Jews.

Luke provides several examples of how Paul who had earlier declared his freedom from the Jews on account of his encounter with the Risen Lord, and therefore now a new person in

Christ, still engaged Jewish religious tradition by requesting that Timothy be circumcised in preparation for his Jewish assignment in Ephesus, for the Jews would not accept an uncircumcised evangelist in their midst, whose father was of gentile parentage, (Act 16:3). In the same vein, the cutting of his hair at Cenchreae because of a vow he had taken was only in keeping with Jewish religious rites for the sake of the gospel (Act 18:18). Grosheide explains Paul's relationship to Jewish law by stating that even though —Paul is free from the ceremonial law through the work of Christ, he does not consider it a sin to observe the law provided this was not done to acquire righteousness (2012: 211). Paul also adapted and was flexible to the gentiles on several occasions (Acts 14:15, 17:22, 24:25). He however made it clearly known that he was not lawless but was indeed in the law of Christ. In essence, Paul told the Corinthians that his freedom did not make him to be without the law for he was in the law of Christ. Thus, it was for the sake of the gospel of Christ that the apostle par excellence assumed this paradoxical status of being —free from all' only to be —free for all‖ for the sake of the gospel.

Paul does not imply —all‖ to be a stand in opposition against God's law. He says —Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible‖ (1Cor 9:19). Brown agrees that Paul is not subject to the —constraints of the financially dependent, because he assures his own livelihood‖ when he announced his freedom from all men (2007: 807). Accordingly, Paul defines freedom to both Jews and Gentiles to include among other things, the love and service to others as he encourages the Galatian Jewish Christians. Bruce avers that for Paul, this means that he declared his freedom from all things and all men that impede the conduct of mission in order to proclaim the Good News of the free Grace of Christ (1977: 45). The free Grace which Paul proclaims is free in many perspectives; it is free, sovereign and unfettered, it is presented to all for their acceptance by faith alone, it is the source and principle of their —liberation from‖ all kinds of inward and spiritual bondage including the bondage of legalism and the bondage of moral decay. Fee observes that Paul is concerned about the new concept of *eleutheria* _freedom,' he has found in v.19, and subsequently he is prepared to trade away his *exousia*, rights, in vv. 1-18, for the sake of the Gospel (1987: 23). Since as Christ's *doulos* (slave), he trades away the issue of wages (vv17-18), so as to be free from all things for mission work to thrive among the Jews and Gentiles. It takes great courage to have anointed people of God deemphasize the issue of wages, rights and monetary gains while in the ministry for the Lord.

Christian Freedom not Philosophical Ideology

Christian freedom is caused and driven by the love of the Sovereign Lord for sinful humanity (Rom 5:8). It involves the abdication of —inclined self-interests and rational reason‖ for the interests and will of the Sovereign Lord. It is freedom necessitated by the death of Christ on the cross. His death is messianic, atoning, sacrificial, substitutionary, eschatological and above all it was planned by the Father (Palmer 2012). The motivation of Christian freedom is premised on God's sufficient love for fallen humanity which was manifested in the messianic, substitutionary, and sacrificial death of his Son. God's freedom sufficiency is however efficient and only available to the willing heart that believes, loves and obeys the Son and it is given by the Holy Spirit of God, not based on self-righteousness (Eph 2:8-9). The Christian has to be mindful of the assertion by political philosophers, who emphasize good virtues, and argue for greater freedom for individuals without external interference

(Locke 1698, repr 1960). This is because external interferences from the Divine God contribute in shaping the freedom narrative of the Christian. Kant for instance argues in his theory of freedom rooted in moral philosophy, the importance of autonomy, moral law, and categorical imperative that freedom is not just the absence of external constraints, but rather the ability to act in autonomy guided by reason and moral law (1758). Kant's theory of freedom rests solely on the self's rationality and this should be taken with circumspect for the Christian. Kant promotes the use of one's own intelligence to develop autonomous reasoning and criticizes the tendency of people to rely on external authorities (Kant repr 2007). The challenge with Kant's autonomous reasoning is that it completely negates God's solemn invitation of ‗coming to reason together with Him' (Isa 1:18). Kant's argument here is in tandem with contemporary fads such as; ―believe in yourself,‖ and not in Supreme Being, thus displacing divine wisdom and reasoning for human rationality. While human reasoning is important, it must be collaboratively carried out with divine assistance.

The concept of autonomous reasoning sprang from the era of modernism when God was dethroned and man was assumed to have usurped God's position. So, reliance on God was no longer the needful, but on self, as God was said to have died (McGrath 1994: 97-102). Omoregbe rightly pointed out that modernists such as Nietzsche believed in the death of God and that ―with the death of God, humanity was now free, and that man was now liberated from the slave morality through which God was destroying him,‖ (1989: 244). While modernism planted the seed of liberalism and freedom for humanity, postmodernism catapulted freedom for humanity to the level of relativism, subjectivism, religious pluralism, equality and tolerance where moral absolute were replaced with relativism (Partridge, 1987: 461). There is however the danger in replacing moral absolutes including absolute truth with relativism, because this can in no way lead to true freedom. True freedom can only be traced to absolute truth, and Jesus is that absolute truth. Jesus himself in a discourse with his disciples told them, ·ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸρ καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωή· "I am the way and the truth and the life… (Joh 14:6). Knowledge of this truth sets one free. So, then those who desire Christian freedom must seek to know Him, and when they so do, they are certified to be free (John 8:32, 36). The fallout of freedom arising from modernism and postmodern is the manifestation of all manner of vices including; sexual revolution, homosexuality, lesbianism, prostitution, pornography, liberalism in the church, feminist theology, queer theology, criticism of Christian dogma, radical biblical criticism and ethics among others.

Secondly, Kant's notion of freedom resting on self-rationality can only be applied in certain situations, where there is no superior argument or reasoning. This is because, one's self-rationality is limited to the level of one's exposure, learning, and experience, thus one needs the complement of superior reasoning, if one is to grow even spiritually. At the level of superior reasoning, reasoning itself is limited and deficient, until human reasoning incorporates Sovereign reasoning. God himself knew the limitations of human reasoning and invites his children to כָּחַח e. . *w eniw·wakechah,* that is, "come and reason together with Him, (Isa 1:18). This verb is a conjunction, imperfect cohortative plural taken from Hebrew word יָכַח *yakach* meaning, to plead, convince, judge or to reason. This verb is also used when Job desires to ‗*yakach'* reason with God (Job 13:3; 23:7). No one has the monopoly of reasoning. It is only God who has the monopoly of knowledge, power, presence and all reasoning. We all need to avail ourselves to constructive superior argument and reasoning that is in sync with God's will and purposes.

Thirdly, clarification has to be made on the implication of Kant's criticism of ―the reliance on external authorities‖ on Christian freedom. The explication of Paul, Peter and Titus' command to the Roman Church and other believers on the imperative of citizens' submission to government as ‗external authorities' comes handy. Paul while addressing the church at Rome in Romans 13, used the subjunctive; ―let every person be ὑποηαζζέζθω *hupotassestho,* i.e., subject to the governing authorities, for all authorities are established by God, (Rom 13:1-2). This charge was shared by both Peter and Titus (1Pet 2:13; Tit 3:1). On the face value, Paul's command concerning loyalty to government authorities appears to be without problems. However, what if the ‗external authorities' are evil, and are controlled by principalities and the powers of the rulers of the darkness (Eph 6:12)? Paul warns that the Christians' battle is against the ἀπσάρ, ππὸρ ηὰρ ἐξοζζίαρ, ππὸρ ηοὺρ κοζμοκπάηοπαρ ηοῦ ζκόηοζρ ηούηος, ππὸ ρ ηὰ πνεζμαηικὰ ηῆρ πονηπίαρ ἐν ηοῖρ ἐποζπανίοιρ and not against flesh and blood, (Eph 6:12). While it is true that God established the governments of the world (Dan 4:17; Acts 17:24-28), God is not however responsible for tyrannical rule or bad governance. For the reason of evil governance, Nebuchadnezzar's punishment was severe, (Dan 4: 25, & 32.). Paul's command for the obedience of external authorities was for the sake of good conscience of Christians (Rom 13: 5-7). All citizens can obey the law because of fear of punishment, but a Christian ought to obey because of good conscience. Of course, if the government interferes with their good conscience, then the Christian must obey God rather than external authorities (Acts 5:29). But when the law is right, the Christian must obey it if he is to maintain a good conscience (1 Tim 1:5,19; 3:9; 4:2; Acts 24:16).

Paul's use of the word ζζνείδηζιν, i.e., conscience in Rom 13:5 presupposes that there is a perceptive awareness within oneself, a moral consciousness or awareness by which moral judgments relating to right and wrong are made (Blomberg 2006: 260). Third, it was for love's sake that Paul charged Christians to obey external authorities (Rom 13: 8-10). Paul went further to include other people besides government authorities. The command to "love others‖ is the underlining teaching of the Christian life. The motive for obedience to God and caring for others is the love of Christ in the hearts of believers. Fourth, it was for Jesus' sake (Rom 13: 11-14). The Lord's servants, ought to be faithful as they serve Him till He returns by obedience to authorities. It was anathematic if these conditions were put in place by the government and yet there was disobedience from the people. The argument being made here is that submission to an authority depends on the kind of leadership it provides; whether such leadership is God fearing, and secondly, whether the leadership has a human face. This submission is not a blind check, but that depends on the conscience and morality of the issues at stake from authorities put in place by God (Togarasei, Lovemore 2004).

Blomberg's position on government authorities who do not fear God, believe in God or even love Him is very instructive. He observes that to submit to an authority does not in any way imply total obedience to that authority (2006: 259). A tyrannical government is an anathema to the governed. The governed may choose to disobey a tyrannical government policy so long as it is anti-people and violates God's higher laws. When Herod the Great asked the wise men from the east to go find out where Jesus was born, so he too would go and worship him, they ἐνεπαίσθη, outwitted, tricked him (Mat 2:16). The wise men chose to obey the weightier matters of law; namely, loyalty to God rather than the lesser matters of law; loyalty to Herod. This submission is in tandem with Hodge's defense of ―graded absolutism‖ where he posits that ―truth is absolute, based on God's very nature. Hodge agrees that it is sometimes right to

intentionally falsify by disobeying for a just cause (2010: 98). Fact is that truth is all times sacred, because it is one of the essential attributes of God, so whatever militates against or is hostile to truth is in opposition to the very nature of God. A second scenario for the application of graded absolutism is the case of Pharaoh commanding the Hebrew midwives; Shiphrah and Puah to kill all Jewish baby boys but spare their daughters. The midwives in their right consciences chose to obey the ―weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy‖ (Matt 23:23), against Pharaoh's command to murder of innocent Hebrew babies (Matt 23:23). They feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them (Exo 1:15-17). Thirdly, Daniel's refusal to worship the king of Babylon for Yahweh, even when he knew that his refusal to observe the edict of worship to the king would cost him his life is a good testament of graded absolutism (Dan 6:3-13). However, as Togarasei observed, in the event that the governing authority is morally right, a God fearing one, then the observance of this command becomes an imperative (2004:73-80).

Christian Freedom: A Pedagogical Philosophy for the Church in Africa

The concept *of ἐλεσθερια εκ πανηων*; i.e., ―freedom for all‖ to *ἐλεσθερια προς παζιν*; freedom for all, presupposes that the practitioner is free from all worldly encumbrances that hinder the propagation of the Gospel. Such encumbrances include; freedom from sin, freedom from the law, freedom from cosmic powers and from death etc. This implies turning away from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light of God. This is the idea behind Paul's success in his work. African Christians, scholars, and theologians ought to free themselves from all forms of impediments such as religious doctrines, monetary gains, social norms and cultural traits that are not relevant to Biblical teachings in order to focus on undiluted teaching of the word of God. Paul valued the opportunity cost of the gain (freedom) he made, as loss to (Judaism forgone) for the sake of Christ (Phi 3:7-10). His profit from this opportunity cost was _preaching the word voluntarily free of charge, and by not making full use of his rights as a preacher of the gospel. This strategy served as an incentive for the weak members of the church; both Jews and Gentiles (1Cor 9:17-18).

Paul taught ―freedom from‖ the law, sin, cosmic powers, and death in order to have for ―freedom for‖ Christ. His teaching on freedom was like that of Christ (Luke 4:18). For the African Christin, theologian, missionary and scholar, there has to be a balance between the rewards, or profit he gets and the service to God. While acknowledging the fact that a worker deserves his wages, (1Cor 9:9-14), earthly gains should not just be the driving force for service.

Paul the Apostle, had to fight the battle for freedom on two fronts. On the first front were the Judaizers, who tried to impose the ritual demands of the law upon Christian converts. Paul categorically explained that Christians did not have to be subjected to the demands of the law for their salvation but by the free grace of God through Jesus Christ, (Rom:3:20, Gal 3:24). On the other front, Paul's first letter to the Corinthians indicted the Corinthian Christians who believed they were filled with the Holy-Spirit, as a result, they felt they had the freedom to do anything without restraint, moral or otherwise. They abused their newfound freedom in Christ because they misunderstood what freedom for Christ meant. African Christians need to be watchful of the freedom they have in Christ.

Conclusion/Recommendations

Paul's doctrine of freedom asserts that in Christ, one is truly liberated. But ―freedom from‖ is only half of the truth; ―freedom for‖ is the other half, without which the first half is invalid. This was Paul's great difference from the Greek idea of freedom. It is this freedom that propelled the Apostles and much later the missionaries to take the Gospel to Asia Minor and even parts of Africa. It is this timeless strategy of teaching and reaching out with the gospel that African Christian ministers, scholars and theologians ought to adopt as they work in their various capacities of service. This should be done without the primary monetary motif of exploiting church congregants, but by emulating Paul‘s idea of balancing the scale of rights and benefits for the sake of the gospel. This strategy if adopted will booster the unity of the church as both the economically and spiritually weak members are carried along for the rapid growth and development of the church.

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