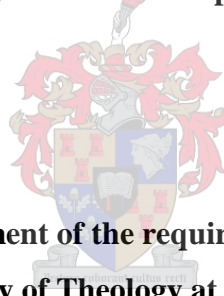


**The Enslaved Paul in an Imperial Context:**

**1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1**

by

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**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Theology in the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University**

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## **Abstract**

In 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, I attempted to address Paul's response to his Corinthian audience concerning their eating of meat sacrificed to idols in temples. The main concern Paul addresses is the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' misuse of their Christian freedom. As a response to their misuse of their Christian liberty, I argued that Paul presents himself as an example of the proper use of Christian freedom. In a strategic action of self-denial, I posited that Paul's example is that of one who uses his Christian liberty to become a slave to others in order to save many. Various scholars consider Paul's example as limited to attractive Christian ethical conduct, and not an example that functions as a strategy for evangelism. I attempted to solve this problem by showing that Paul exhorts his Corinthian audience to imitate his approach of slavery which includes an admonition to evangelism and mission, and not an approach limited to the responsibility of embodying attractive Christian ethical conduct. The method I used to address this research is that of rhetorical criticism. In particular, I investigated Paul's use of deliberative rhetoric as he persuades the strong Corinthians Jesus-followers to follow a strategic action of evangelism and mission. I attempted to show that Paul's example of Christian freedom is to be viewed in the context of evangelism and not limited to a lifestyle of attractive Christian behaviour. In conclusion, I challenged individual Jesus-followers and the Church to adopt Paul's use of Christian freedom in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 as a model for evangelism and mission in contemporary contexts to partake in the spreading of the Gospel.

## **Opsomming**

Ek het, volgens 1 Korintiërs 8:1-11:1, probeer om Paulus se reaksie te ondersoek oor die Korintiërs se opvatting i.v.m die eet van vleis wat in tempels aan 'n afgod geoffer is. Die belangrikste kommer wat Paulus aanspreek, is Jesus se volgelingen in Korinte se misbruik van hul Christelike vryheid. In reaksie hierop, beskou ek Paulus as 'n voorbeeld van wat ware Christelike vryheid werklik behoort te wees. Ek gaan ook van die veronderstelling uit dat Paulus juis sy Christelike vryheid gebruik om vir ander diensbaar te wees en om sodoende menige lewens te red. Vele geleerdes beskou die voorbeeld wat Paulus stel as beperk tot uitnemende Christelike etiese gedrag, en nie 'n voorbeeld wat funksioneer as 'n strategie vir evangelisasie nie. Ek het probeer bewys dat Paulus die Korintiërs aangemoedig het om sy benadering ten opsigte van slawerny te volg en dat hy hulle ook attent gemaak het op evangelisasie en sending én ook onder hul aandag gebring het dat sy benadering nie beperk is tot die verantwoordelikheid om uitnemende Christelike gedrag te beliggaam nie. Die metode van ondersoek wat ek gebruik het om hierdie probleem na te vors, is die retoriese kritiek-

metode. Verder het ek ook in diepte Paulus se gebruik van beraadslagende kritiek ondersoek tydens sy poging om die groot aantal volgelinge van Jesus te oortuig om 'n strategiese aksie van evangelisasie en sending na te volg. Voorts het ek ook gepoog om Paulus se voorbeeld van Christelike vryheid binne die evangeliese konteks te plaas en dit nie te beperk tot 'n leefstyl van uitnemende Christelike gedrag nie. Ten slotte daag ek individuele volgelinge van Jesus en die Kerk uit om Paulus se gebruik van Christelike vryheid, soos in 1 Korintiërs 8:1-11:1 uiteengesit, te aanvaar as 'n model vir evangeliese en sending in die hedendaagse konteks, ten tye van die verspreiding van die evangelie.

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my beautiful mother, wise father, and loving brother - Chrystal, Hilton and Larnelle Spies. Thank you for all the sacrifices you have made to ensure that I receive the best possible education. I cannot express how thankful I am for your enduring presence in my life. Thank you for being my pillar of strength throughout my journey at the University of Stellenbosch. Your prayers, inspiration, and motivation have made me the man that I am today. I hope I make you proud.

“May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering” - Leonard Dober

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Motivation and aim

The aim and motivation for undertaking this research is to explore the Apostle Paul's approach of slavery (1 Corinthians 9:19-23; 10:31-11:1) as expressed in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, and how this approach functioned as an evangelical mission strategy within the context of Corinth. When I am referring to Paul's 'approach of slavery', I am not referring to Paul's approach to slavery but rather how Paul takes up slavery as a metaphor to distinguish, what I see, as his distinctive approach to evangelism and mission. Furthermore, when I am referring to Paul's approach of slavery functioning as an "evangelical mission strategy", I am referring to Paul's approach of slavery functioning as "a strategy for evangelism and mission". I use the word "evangelism" in this research to refer to the verbal proclamation and preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Given that the word mission can be defined in various terms, I use the word "mission" in this research as a term that is inextricably connected to evangelism with the purpose of proclaiming and preaching the Gospel Jesus Christ for the salvation of all.

One has to understand that the radical nature of Paul's approach of slavery is hardly something to be overestimated. According to O'Brien (1995:100), "slavery in contemporary society pointed to the extreme deprivation of one's rights, including those relating to one's own life and person". Furthermore, Galloway (2004:9) states, "it may be that the social reality of slavery was sufficiently pervasive and repugnant to provide the impetus for embracing the ideal of freedom". Patterson (1985:13) based his survey of slavery across several cultures, came up with the following definition: "slavery is the permanent, violent domination of naturally alienated and generally dishonored persons". I discuss the concept of slavery in early Christianity more extensively in Chapter four in order to survey the background against which Paul employed his positive use of the metaphor slavery in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22.

However, in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, Paul employs a metaphor of slavery to denote his example of self-denial. In this research, I argue that Paul's missional example of self-denial is employed as a strategy for evangelism and mission, and not just for an attractive Christian ethical lifestyle as a limited responsibility for his Corinthians audience to undertake. In Chapter four, I discuss what influenced Paul's positive use of slavery in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. Furthermore, in Chapter four, I attempt to explain the purpose of Paul's self-denial and its function. Through the exegeses of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, I

argue that Paul's exhortation to his Corinthian audience to follow his approach of slavery includes an admonition to evangelism and mission.

Literary works including Dale Martin's (1990) *Slavery as Salvation*, Peter Garnsey's (in Rawson & Weaver 1999:101-121) *Sons, slaves and Christians*, Jennifer Glancy's (2002) *Slavery in Early Christianity*, and P. T. O'Brien's (1995) *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul* have intrigued me and resulted in a special interest of accounts of slavery contained in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul's approach of slavery in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 is of particular interest, especially investigating how this approach is reflected in his calling and mission to preach the Gospel. In addition, autobiographical situations have played an important factor in motivating me to follow the approach of self-denial as a strategy for evangelism. As a Jesus-follower, Paul's approach of slavery in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 has shaped my approach to mission. In Chapter five, I outline not only how autobiographical situations motivated me for following Paul's strategy of evangelism, but also how key Jesus-followers of the past embodied his missional strategy that serves as a model for today's Church and for individual Christians to emulate.

In addition, key verses within the scope of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 provoked within me an exploration of Paul's missional example and served as motivation to write this thesis. These include 1 Corinthians 10:32-33: "Give non offence, either to the Jews or to the Gentiles or to the Church of God, just as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, so that they may be saved". Historically, Martin (1990:51) relates Paul's approach of slavery to the assumption that, in the Patronal ideology of Greco-Roman society, "slavery was commonly defined as living for the benefit or profit of another". However, one must note that for Paul, the purpose or end of living for the benefit or profit of another had a soteriological significance: "so that they may be saved" (10:33). In other words, I argue that Paul's approach of slavery is a model he exhorts his Corinthian audience to imitate as a strategic approach to evangelism that serves for the purpose of the salvation of many.

Given that Paul's purpose of his approach of self-abasement is for the salvation of others, I posit Paul's approach of slavery as a strategy, or, a means, that functions within an evangelical mission. It is for this reason that my exegesis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 includes an historical analysis of the text in question. Martin (1990:61) states that, "once we have placed slavery (and its different perspectives) in its full Greco-Roman context, we can see its possibilities (within 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1) for use as a salvific image".

As a Christian partaking in the spread of the good news of Jesus Christ, I am most interested in the statement Paul made in 1 Corinthians 9:19: “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might gain the more”. This is a portion of text from which one could analyse Paul’s approach of slavery - that is his proper use of Christian freedom - as an evangelical mission strategy.

In order to achieve the aims I set out in this research and to make it more understandable to my reader, the following needs to be made clear.

The use of the word ‘proper’ as in proper Christian freedom refers to Paul’s missional example as a response and in contrast to the potentially harmful behavior of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers. The use of proper as in proper Christian freedom refers to Paul’s evangelical and adaptable use of his Christian freedom as a strategy to advance the Gospel of salvation in the lives of others (Jews, Gentiles and the weak brother or sister). This is supported by MacArthur (1997:1742) when he explains how Paul is an example of proper Christian liberty in the context of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 where he, “within the bounds of God’s Word, would not offend the Jew, Gentile or those weak in understanding. Not changing Scripture or compromising truth, he would condescend in ways that could lead to salvation”.

The use of the term ‘weak’ as in weak Corinthian Jesus-followers in the context of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, refers to those newly converts who did not understand eating food offered to idols being a matter of indifference. MacArthur (1997:1741) argues that the weak Corinthian Jesus-followers are those newer converts whose consciences “were still accusing them strongly with regard to allowing them to eat idol food without feeling spiritually corrupted and guilty. They still imagined that idols were real and evil”. The weak Corinthian Jesus-followers refer to the brother or sister who has the risk of having a defiled conscience when seeing the strong Corinthians Jesus-followers attending temples to eat meat sacrificed unto idols. A defiled conscience, according to MacArthur (1997:1741), “is one that has been violated, bringing fear, shame, and guilt”.

The use of the term ‘strong’ as in strong Corinthian Jesus-followers, according to Fotopoulos (2005:616), refers to a “faction that argued in favor of consumption of food sacrificed to idols”. With their theological assertions (1 Corinthians 8:4b-4c), the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers “could justify their consumption of sacrificial food in the presence of pagan statues, since the deities represented by these images had no real existence” (Fotopoulos 2005:625). In other words, the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers were well taught that idols were nothing, but they did not consider what eating meat sacrificed unto an idol in temples could do to a

sensitive Gentile believer who once worshiped in such temples. The strong Corinthian Jesus-followers are the faction Paul is warning that “causing a brother or sister in Christ to stumble is more than simply an offence against that person; it is a serious offence against the Lord Himself” (MacArthur 1997:1741).

I analyse Paul’s use of Christian liberty within the exegetical units of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1 in more detail when I expound the views of a few scholars who hold different opinions regarding Paul’s missional example. Nevertheless, Paul’s approach of slavery within 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 admonishes and motivates all Jesus-followers, in all capacities, including Christian leaders, disciples, and missionaries to imitate his evangelical example (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:32-33; 1 Corinthians 11:1).

Having considered the motivations for the writing of this thesis, I seek to achieve certain aims pertaining to this research.

The first aim is to do an exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 in order to explore the nature, scope, and meaning of Paul’s approach of slavery as an evangelical mission strategy, and determine the purpose such an approach of self-denial had on the Corinthian community Paul addressed. By an ‘exegetical analysis’, I refer to the analysis of the rhetorical situation of the textual unit; its literary structure; and its theological dimension. The term rhetorical situation is defined by Bitzer (in Hitt 2013:1) as follows:

Rhetorical situation may be defined as a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence.

In Chapter three I discuss more extensively the concept of the rhetorical situation.

The second aim is to specifically focus, exegetically, on the rhetorical nature of the sections of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1. Such an exegeses of these sections attempts to construct Paul as a model - in light of his voluntary self-enslavement in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 - for Jesus-followers to imitate in whatever capacity they may find themselves (1 Corinthians 11:1) within a given context. In light of the second aim, a certain question raised by O’Brien is of critical value in addressing my hypothesis: “Does the exhortation to imitate Paul include an admonition to evangelism and mission” (O’Brien 1995:89)? I explore this question extensively in Chapter five with the different problems and

possibilities one might come across concerning the emulation of Paul in his use of Christian liberty.

The above-mentioned aims are the central two concerns guiding my exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1; and also my specific rhetorical analysis of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 in conjunction with 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1. In the following section, I survey some of the literature studies that will be explored to further develop the topic of the analysis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 in an attempt to analyse Paul's strategy of evangelism.

The hypothesis of this research is that Paul's exhortation to imitate him includes an admonition to evangelism and mission as asked by O'Brien (1995:89). The hypothesis of this research argues that Paul's call for his Corinthian audience to imitate his approach of slavery is not a responsibility limited to a call to Christian ethical reform, but it includes a call to evangelism.

## **1.2 Literature study**

For the literature study, literature is investigated within the domains of New Testament studies as well as within Missiological studies.

### **1.2.1 New Testament studies**

Martin's (1990) exposition on slavery gives one a particular understanding on slavery in early Christianity, but also on his analysis of Paul's approach of slavery in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 and how his approach has missional and soteriological significance. For my purposes, it leads one to specifically look at Martin's interpretation of slavery within 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 and how his interpretation influences Paul's positive use of the metaphor of slavery. In addition to the analysis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, Glancy's (2002) book offers a somatic (bodily) approach to slavery. In Chapter four of this research, I survey Glancy's (2002:150) perspective on slavery in the New Testament, and argue how she negatively or positively influences the analysis of Paul's approach of slavery in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. Garnsey (in Rawson & Weaver 1999:101-121) gives an understanding of Paul's positive use of the metaphor of slavery not only in terms of the nature and meaning of the metaphor, but also in its function as a strategy for evangelism and missional outreach.

The following commentaries are of use in the exegetical focus on 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, and on 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, in particular. These commentaries include: *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The First Letter to the Corinthians* by Roy

E. Ciampa & Brian S. Rosner (2010); *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* by Anthony Thiselton (2000); and, *The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament VII 1-2 Corinthians* by Gerald Bray & Thomas C. Oden (1999). The commentary of Bray and Oden (1999), for example, allows one to investigate the reception history of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 involving significant figures such as Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine. In addition, for example, Origen briefly explains what he thinks 1 Corinthians 9:19 communicate:

The fact that he is completely free makes Paul the exemplary apostle. For it is possible to be free of immorality but a slave to anger, to be freed from greed but a slave to boasting, *to be free of one sin but a slave to another* (Bray & Oden 1999:84; italics added).

Origen's pattern of thinking as seen above regarding the use of his juxtapositions concerning the notion of slavery in the text is a pattern worthy of consideration (Bray & Oden 1999:84).

Rhetorical criticism is the methodological approach in exegetically analysing the text for this current research. Central works that I use are that of Margaret Mitchell's (1991) *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation* and Rollin A. Ramsaran's (1996) *Paul's Use of Liberating Rhetorical Maxims in Words*. Other works such as Stephen M. Pogoloff's (1992) *Logos and Sophia the Rhetorical Situation in 1 Corinthians* and Ben Witherington's (2009) *New Testament Rhetoric* provide additional aid for my methodology. The above-mentioned commentaries, inter alia are also able to support the methodological purposes to aid the thesis.

### 1.2.2 Missiological studies

As previously mentioned, Paul's approach of slavery within 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 is exegetically analysed as an approach that does not limited to responsibility of ethical reform, but as a strategy for evangelical mission. Hence, because I am taking a missional approach to the text of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, literature from the missiological domain aids my analysis concerning the function of Paul's use of Christian freedom. Christopher J. H. Wright's (2010) *The Mission of God's People*, illumines one's understanding of mission by considering the letters of Paul in a new way. His work through this book is to rehabilitate what has been considered the mission of the Church in a global context (Wright 2010). This piece of work explores the meaning of the Christian mission, the contemporary context for mission work and new forms in which the church has engaged - and should engage - in its missional task.

Other literature worth investigating is that of David. J. Bosch's (2011) *Transforming Mission*

and O'Brien's (1995) *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul*. O'Brien (1995:91) argues that Paul's mission was intrinsically connected to his identity as a Christian. In his exposition on the unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, he states that, "one is forced to question whether this purpose of Paul's, namely: his seeking the good of others so that Jews, Gentiles and weak Jesus-followers may be saved, should be the Corinthians' objective as well, thereby serving as a motivating factor for their behavior" (O'Brien 1995:89). In other words: "Does his (Paul's) exhortation to imitate him include an admonition to evangelism and mission?" (O'Brien 1995:89). Through the research findings, the latter question is the central question I attempt to answer.

Not all scholars agree on one single interpretation of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, especially in their understanding of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1. By implication, not all scholars are in agreement with my understanding of Paul's positive use of the metaphor of slavery in the text. Hence, it is necessary to scrutinise the problems and possibilities that arise through the diverse interpretative positions that various distinguished New Testament scholars hold. In the following section, mention is briefly made of some of the problems that I discuss in more detail in Chapter four.

### **1.3 Problems and perspectives**

My exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 as a unit and 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1 in particular, is to analyse Paul's approach of slavery as an evangelical mission strategy within an imperial context and how such an approach is called upon by Paul for his Corinthian audience to emulate. Therefore, it is important in this research to consider the different perspectives on slavery in early Christianity and New Testament literature that either differs from or enhances my analysis of Paul in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 as one living to be a partaker of the salvation of others. Furthermore, not only does one have to consider the different perspectives on slavery, but there are scholars who differ in interpretation in whether Paul's approach of slavery in the context of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 functions as a strategy for evangelism or not. In other words, some scholars disagree with my hypothesis that Paul's exhortation to his Corinthian audience to imitate his approach of slavery includes an admonishment to evangelism and mission.

The term or concept of slavery has multiple references throughout the New Testament documents, a few examples of which are depicted in Paul's letter to the Romans. In Romans 6, Paul's perspective on slavery is related to sin and righteousness in possessive terms, for example: 'slaves of sin' (Romans 6:17); 'slaves of righteousness' (Romans 6:18). In the same

chapter, the perspective on slavery is depicted in positional terms in relation to God, for example: ‘enslaved to God’ (Romans 6:22).

One can argue that Paul used the imperial system of slavery as a linguistic reference to explain in Romans 6 his perspective on slavery in relation to sin, righteousness, and God. What it meant to be a slave in the imperial system of Rome would have not been difficult for Paul’s Roman addressees to understand, nor for the Apostle Peter’s addressees. In 1 Peter 2:18-25, we find that Peter’s exhortations are directed to actual physical slaves in the imperial slave system, slaves who are subjected to their masters in the flesh. One can note that in New Testament literature, the concept of slavery is not just related to religious thought (for example, the concepts of sin, righteous, and God), but also to the imperial system itself. A wider understanding of slavery in early Christianity I discuss more extensively in Chapter four.

In Paul’s perspective on the concept of slavery in the unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, he uses slavery in a positive way as a metaphor for behavior that functions for the profit of others, that is, the salvation of many (1 Corinthians 9:19-23; 10:31-11:1). O’Brien (1995:99) comments that, “Paul makes himself a slave (ἐδούλωσα) to everyone for the purpose of winning as many as possible”. The enslaved Paul’s denial of self-interest within 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 reflects his use of Christian liberty in the context of evangelism. The key text that illustrates Paul’s positive use of the metaphor of slavery is in 1 Corinthians 9:19: “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might gain the more”. The rhetorical thrust behind the notion of Paul’s approach of slavery leads one to investigate of how Paul’s positive use of his metaphor of slavery would have been received by Paul’s Corinthian audience. Furthermore, Paul’s positive use of the metaphor of slavery raises the concern on what influenced his positive use of the metaphor.

Considering the differing perspectives on slavery, it becomes very important to discuss its influence and nature within 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 - especially when it is used in a positive and strategic way. Therefore, it requires one to address an important issue as it concerns Paul’s approach of slavery in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. This current research involves Paul’s positive use of the metaphor of slavery in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1. The key concern in this research is Paul’s positive metaphorical use of the term ‘slave’ (1 Corinthians 9:19, 22; 10:33). It raises the question as to what influenced Paul’s positive use of his metaphor of slavery. In other words, what lies behind the positive connotation of



slavery in the context of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1? I discuss this issue extensively in Chapter four when I exegete the two pericopes.

In aiding the analysis on the particular concern of Paul's positive use of the metaphor of slavery, Glancy (2002:51) gives an account on how slaves were treated as surrogate bodies for their Christian owners. Glancy (2002:52) observed that in early Christianity, it was as likely for Jesus-followers to be slaveholders rather than slaves. Glancy's (2002:52) notion of slavery is that the slaves of Christian owners served as surrogate bodies so that their owners could gain insight from their slaveholding souls. An important notion for the analysis would be her assertion that in the household codes of Pauline Christianity, slavery was reinforced.

Furthermore, in addressing the concern of what influenced Paul's positive use of his metaphor of slavery, I consult the work of Martin (1990:26) concerning his view on the household code of slavery especially in relation to the analysis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. In Martin's (1990:26) analysis of 1 Corinthians 9:16-18, he explains how Paul, as a slave of Christ, operates within his vocation as a steward of the household of faith. Martin (1990) also offers his view on what influenced Paul's positive use of the metaphor of slavery in 1 Corinthians 9:19. Another author worth mentioning is Garnsey (in Rawson & Weaver 1999:101-121) who stresses a few critical arguments as it concerns the issue of what influenced Paul's positive use of the metaphor of slavery. With the focus on Paul's metaphor of slavery, I investigate what influenced his positive use of this metaphor and its function within the textual unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1.

In Chapter four, I consider these critical arguments on the notions of slavery in the New Testament and thereafter offer my argument concerning what influences Paul's positive use of the metaphor of slavery within 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. The above-mentioned arguments concerning Paul's metaphor of slavery aid the analysis on the notion of Paul's approach of slavery as strategy for evangelism within 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1.

The main problem to address in this research is the concern of whether Paul is exhorting his Corinthian audience to evangelism or is his exhortation limited to the responsibility of Christian ethical reform that is more attractive and appealing. To mention again, my hypothesis is that Paul's exhortation to imitate him as depicted in 1 Corinthians 11:1, includes an admonition to evangelism and mission and Paul's approach of slavery functions as a strategy for evangelism. Therefore, when Paul exhorts his Corinthian audience to imitate him as he imitates Christ, I argue, Paul includes an admonition to evangelism. However, various

writers disagree with this interpretation, two of whom are writers I address as representative figures in the counter argument.

The first is David Bosch who discusses the theme of mission in Pauline writings. Bosch (2011:139) claims that, “the apostle expected believers to practice a missionary lifestyle so that their behavior would be exemplary and winsome and that they would draw outsiders to the church like a powerful magnet”. The second writer is Bowers (1991:108) who concluded as part of a wider examination into Paul’s understanding of his mission that, “an energetic, mobile missionary initiative of the sort prosecuted by Paul himself is not described, expected, or enjoined for his churches”. Bowers (1991:108) rejects a concept of Paul at mission in that he argues it fails to take any distinct shape in Paul’s thinking. Concerning 1 Corinthians 10:33-11:1, Bowers (1991:108) concludes that, “Paul is not a model for evangelistic outreach to unbelievers but for voluntary renunciation within the life of the community of one’s rights in Christ”.

In Chapter four, I address the problem these two writers pose and treat them as representative figures that opposes an evangelical reading of the given text. My address involves the question raised by O’Brien (1995:89): “For what purpose is Paul a model to his converts?” The answer to this question will be reflected in my hypothesis where I argue Paul to be a model of self-denial for his converts in evangelism and mission for the purpose of bringing many to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

In the next section, in response to the above-stated problem raised by the two distinguished missiologists, Bosch and Bowers, I offer my hypothesis as a counter argument for Paul’s approach of slavery as an evangelical mission strategy. Paul admonishes his Corinthian audience to imitate his model of self-denial not as a limited responsibility for attractive Christian ethical conduct, but as an admonition that includes evangelism and mission.

#### **1.4 Hypothesis**

As mentioned earlier, the hypothesis of this research is to argue that Paul’s exhortation to this Corinthian audience to imitate his approach of slavery includes an admonition to evangelism and mission. In light of the hypothesis of this research and in response to the differences in interpretation and problems, I propose an analysis of Paul’s position of Christian liberty in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 - a position which functions as a strategy for evangelical mission (1 Corinthians 9:19-23; 10:31-11:1). Rhetorical criticism is the chosen method that undergirds my exegetical analysis on 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 with the aim of analysing Paul’s proper use

of Christian freedom as a strategy for evangelism within the imperial context in which he lived. However, not only is my analysis of Paul's self-giving service analysed in relation to the rhetorical situation in Corinth or a model only to be followed by Paul's Corinthian audience, but also how Paul's model of self-denial is applicable to the evangelical mission of Jesus-followers in various other historical and contemporary contexts and situations. The latter analysis I discuss more extensively in Chapter five.

The question is how Paul's approach of slavery serves for the purpose of salvation in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. What significance does the soteriological portrayal have for modern readers and those who call themselves disciples of Jesus Christ? One of the reasons for this research is to challenge Jesus-followers all around the world who engages in evangelism, to consider Paul's missional model as someone who understood the use of Christian liberty in a strategic way. Paul used his Christian freedom to enslave himself to seek the profit of many, with the singular goal of saving people. Paul's self-enslavement was inspired by his servant, Lord, and example par excellence, Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:1). My hypothesis, therefore, attempts to offer a challenge and exhortation to all Christians to be committed to the spread of the Gospel just as Paul and Jesus were. The same way Paul exhorts his Corinthian audience to imitate his example in evangelism and mission, so all Christians are admonished likewise.

In the next section, I explain the method I use to exegetically analyse 1 Corinthians 8:1:11:1 in Chapter three, and also my exegeses of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31:11-1 in Chapter four. The method I use is rhetorical criticism which helps exegetically analyse Paul's approach of slavery within 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 as an authentic approach for an evangelical mission strategy in which the Lord Jesus called his followers to be fishers of men (cf. Mark 1:11).

## **1.5 Methodology**

Rhetorical criticism is the exegetical method I use in this research to exegetically analyse the unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. Through this method, I argue that the kind of rhetoric Paul uses to address his Corinthian audience is that of deliberative rhetoric. Paul's perspective on slavery has key concepts related to it that help one understand its function more clearly in his address, namely: freedom, rights, and knowledge. I attempt to explain how these concepts correlate and function within Paul's rhetorical discourse in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 and within his missional agenda.

Rhetorical criticism allows one to analyse Paul's language and argument within 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 in socio-historical, literary, and theological terms regarding the concept of slavery and its function. For example, Martin (1990:49) argues that, socio-historically, "the terminology of slavery meant different things for different people because the social institution of slavery functioned differently for different people". He observed that the social institution of slavery was commonly defined as, "living for the benefit or profit of another" (Martin 1990:51).

I undergo a rhetorical analysis of Paul's approach of slavery within 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 by means of Paul's use of deliberative rhetoric. By this rhetorical method, I analyse the various texts that convey the notion of self-giving service as seen in Paul's words, "Give non offence, either to the Jews or to the Gentiles or to the Church of God, just as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, so that they may be saved" (1 Corinthians 10:32-33). The method of rhetorical criticism arguably proves to be sound in investigating Paul's position of self-denial in terms of its function as a strategy for evangelical mission. The methodology of rhetorical criticism helps one understand the relationship between Paul's assertion of himself as a slave of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 7:22-23) and how Paul, by placing the welfare of the other before that of himself takes Christ as his pattern (Thiselton 2000:796). The methodology of rhetorical criticism arguable serves to analyse Paul as a model of self-denial and to treat his exhortation to his Corinthian audience to follow his pattern not as admonishment that is limited to the responsibility of Christian moral reformation that is appealing, but admonishment that includes the responsibility to evangelise.

In conclusion, to follow the rhetoric of Paul helps argue Paul's approach of slavery as an evangelical mission strategy within 1 Corinthian 8:1-11:1 - a mission that has a soteriological goal: "I have become all things to all men, so that I might by all means *save* some" (1 Corinthians 9:22b; italics added).

The nature and operation of the concept of rhetoric in early Christianity is discussed more extensively in Chapter two. The reason for devoting an entire chapter to the methodology that I use bears reference to the complexity of Paul's rhetoric in the text. In order to argue that Paul's approach of slavery (that is, his proper use of Christian freedom) functions as an evangelical strategy in the unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, one has to explain the nature and operation of rhetoric in general. I also explain Paul's use of deliberative rhetoric and its different characteristic elements. Using an entire chapter to do so helps one understand more adequately how Paul's use of deliberative rhetoric explains not only his position on Christian

freedom but also his call for his Corinthian audience to imitate his self-denying example in evangelism.

Paul presents himself worthy of emulation - someone who embodies the use of Christian freedom in Christian evangelism (1 Corinthians 11:1). He explains how he uses his Christian liberty by stating that he becomes a slave to all in order to gain the more (1 Corinthians 9:19). I argue that, Paul's self-denial in the Corinthians texts is not limited to the responsibility of functioning as an attractive Christian ethical lifestyle. Rather, its function serves as a strategy for evangelism. In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul exhorts his Corinthian audience to emulate him as he emulates Christ. Various scholars disagree with my argument, therefore, as mentioned previously, the fundamental two interrelated questions I answer in this research are: a. For what purpose is Paul a model to his Corinthian audience? b. "Does the exhortation to imitate Paul include an admonition to evangelism and mission" (O'Brien 1995:89)?

I concede, there are no easy answers to these questions, but through the application of the methodology of rhetorical criticism, I hope to give more perspective on Paul's exhortation to his Corinthian audience to imitate his approach of slavery in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1.

## **1.6 Chapter discussions**

In Chapter two, I discuss the concept of rhetoric, and in particular deliberative rhetoric with its characteristic elements. In Chapter three, I provide an exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. In Chapter four, I argue that Paul's approach of slavery in the text unit functions as an evangelical mission strategy. Therefore, in Chapter four, I argue for my hypothesis that Paul exhortation to his Corinthian audience to imitate his model of self-denial includes an admonition to evangelism and mission. This I argue by doing an exegeses of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1. In Chapter five, I attempt to apply Paul's model of evangelical mission to autobiographical accounts and to central figures of the past who embodied Paul's use of Christian freedom as a strategy for evangelism. Hence, I show how Paul's model applies in a number of contexts, yet his model should not be limited to these contexts. Finally, in Chapter six, I conclude my research findings and discuss the challenge for the Church in applying Paul's model of evangelism in our contemporary society.

## CHAPTER TWO

### RHETORICAL CRITICISM: PAUL AS RHETOR IN THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF CORINTH

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I outline my research methodology used to do an exegesis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 in its socio-historical context. The concept of rhetoric is very complex, especially considering its functional nature in the period of Paul's Gospel mission. Through implementing the methodology of rhetorical criticism, it becomes essential to provide an analysis on the nature of rhetoric in Paul's time and in particular Paul's use of deliberative rhetoric to persuade his Corinthian audience to follow his missional example. For these reasons, it becomes imperative to elaborate on the importance of rhetorical criticism for understanding Pauline letters.

#### 2.2 Rhetoric in the Greco-Roman context

In an attempt to understand the complex methodology of rhetorical criticism, the focus is first on the concept of rhetoric, and how it was perceived in ancient Greco-Roman antiquity. Additionally, the focus is then on how the historical world and its perception of rhetoric influenced Paul as a rhetor in his writing of 1 Corinthians. For any analysis of a concept, one must first define the concept.

According to Witherington (2009:ix), to the 21 century person, the word rhetoric is understood to be politics or verbal eloquence that is full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Witherington (2009:ix; italics used), however, stresses the importance of rhetoric in its historical form in first century Christianity, because it "provides us with an abundance of clues as to how the documents of the New Testament work, *how they seek to persuade people about Jesus the Christ*". In other words, the term rhetoric refers to "*the art of persuasion used from the time of Aristotle onwards through and beyond the NT era in the Greek-speaking world to convince one audience or another about something*" (Witherington, 2009:ix; italics added). Though rhetoric includes the use of various rhetorical devices, the thrust lies in its ability to convince an audience about a subject. The methodology of rhetorical criticism involves the study of the different uses of Greco-Roman rhetoric, and how it influenced the rhetorical address of Paul to his Corinthian audience in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 (Witherington 1995:40-41).

After one has defined the concept of rhetoric, it shifts the attention to the different kinds of branches that grow from its root definition. The *kinds of rhetoric* that were used in the Greco-Roman imperial context are important for one to grasp how rhetoric was constructed within 1 Corinthians' socio-historical context. Witherington (2009:ix) stresses that there were three primary kinds of rhetoric and explains their usage in the Greco-Roman society. The first is *deliberative rhetoric*; the second is *epideictic rhetoric*; and the third is *forensic rhetoric* (Witherington 2009:ix; italics added). Witherington (1995:40-41; italics added) states that, “*deliberative rhetoric* was used in the assembly when it freely debated what the proper course of action for the polis is in the future; *forensic rhetoric* was the form used in law courts; and *epideictic rhetoric* was most often used in funeral oratory or public speeches when some person or thing was being lauded or lambasted”.

Furthermore, Witherington (1995:41; italics added) distinguishes between *micro-rhetoric* and *macro-rhetoric*. From a literary perspective, micro-rhetoric refers to the rhetorical devices within the New Testament - those devices the New Testament authors themselves employed within the New Testament documents themselves. A few examples of micro rhetoric would be the use of devices such as rhetorical questions, dramatic hyperbole, personification, amplification, irony, sarcasm, enthymeme (for example, incomplete syllogisms), and *maxims* (I use maxims to exegete the literary structure and argument of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1) (Witherington 1995:41; italics added). This also refers to the devices authors of ancient speeches employed in their various writings. The macro-rhetorical element consists out of divisions and categories that were used in the ancient speeches; these divisions are: exordium, narration, proposition, probation, refutation, and peroration. All micro - and macro rhetorical devices function within the kinds of rhetoric mentioned above.

It is plausible to say that New Testament scholars who have explored the details of the concept of rhetoric and its application to the New Testament documents, concluded that micro-rhetoric is found most anywhere in the New Testament, including in genres such as the Gospels and Revelation. Macro-rhetoric, however, only reveals itself in letters, homilies and speech summaries (as in Acts).

The reason for outlining the concept of rhetoric in the ancient Greco-Roman world in Paul's time is to understand and identify the rhetorical components that influences my analysis on the role of rhetoric in the rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. The rhetorical situation in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 shaped Paul's rhetorical response to his audience.

In the next section, I discuss the function and importance of what is meant by situational rhetoric, especially considering how it has influenced Paul's use of deliberative rhetoric in 1 Corinthians.

### **2.3 Paul's deliberative rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1**

Pogoloff (1992:80) explains that, "the concept of rhetorical situation not only helps us construct an implied context, but also offers us a bridge between that context and the situation of the modern reader". The text is actualised and its world created only in the act of reading. A reader constructs an implied author and implied reader who are not identical as the actual author and actual readers. The implied author becomes the dynamic core of norms and choices who the reader constructs as the source of perspective of the text, whilst the implied reader becomes the self who is foisted upon the actual reader; a self whose directive is to enter the normative world of the implied author if the reader is to understand the text.

This directs one to ask the question whether this means that such an interpretation leads to an ahistorical perspective of the text. Heil (2005:6) argues that, "neither the implied author nor the implied readers are fictional characters divorced from the actual author or reader". Pogoloff (1992:80) concurs with Heil (2005:6) stating that, "they are distinguished from the actual writer and reader not by dichotomy of fact and fiction, but by the phenomenology of writing and reading".

In terms of the author of 1 Corinthians, "the Paul we meet in his letters is not the same as the historical Paul, for in this letter we encounter only the self he presents as relevant to a given historical situation" (Pogoloff 1992:80). In other words, the relevance of Paul's message to the Corinthians is that it is both confined by his relationship to his audience and by the rhetorical situation prevalent in the community. In terms of the implied reader's perspective, Heil (2005:6) stresses that, "determining the responses of the authorial audience (that is, the implied reader) is not a matter of reconstructing or speculating on how the original, historical audience at Corinth, or any other 'real' audience, may or may not have responded". Rather, the determinative aspect of the responsiveness of the audience is dependent upon the analysis of the rhetorical strategies within the text of the letter of 1 Corinthians.

Moreover, in contrast to an ahistorical interpretation of the text, the concept of a rhetorical situation takes seriously the socio-historical (and cultural) dimension of 1 Corinthians within the context of both Paul - as the Jewish apostle to the Gentiles - and his implied readers of Jews and Gentiles in first-century Roman Corinth. The possible influences on Paul's rhetoric



can be found in the Hellenistic culture that was above all things a rhetorical culture, and its typical literary form was the public lecture (Witherington 1995:44). The same can be said about the Greco-Roman culture. Witherington (1995:45) observes that, “letters in the hands of a Cicero or a Paul became surrogates for and extensions of oral speech, especially of dialogues, and the rhetorical conventions of public speech and discourse were carried over into such letters”.

In extension to Witherington’s (1995:40-41) notion that rhetoric gave Paul the means to relate to and impact his Corinthian audience, Pogoloff (1992:83) states that, “if the letter had not at least been provocative and/or persuasive, it is difficult to imagine why the Corinthians would have preserved it”. Paul did not hesitate to use various kinds of persuasion to achieve his aims; the kind of rhetoric he used in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, as mentioned, is widely argued by many scholars to be that of deliberative rhetoric. The argument for Paul’s use of deliberative rhetoric in 1 Corinthians has plausible historical validity, as argued by Mitchell (1991:20). Given the 1 Corinthian’s rhetorical situation, deliberative rhetoric was used by Paul because he wanted to persuade his Corinthian audience to embark another course of action in the future. He wanted his Corinthian audience to undertake an action that would be advantageous in their context (Mitchell 1991:26).

Mitchell (1991:20) provides us with an insightful analysis on the concept of deliberative rhetoric in antiquity, and how one can discern Paul’s use of this kind of rhetoric within 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. Undoubtedly a letter genre, 1 Corinthians, Mitchell (1991:20) argues, “consists of constituent and characteristic elements of deliberative rhetoric which can be found in extant sources within antiquity”. By comparison, according to the extant sources on deliberative rhetoric preserved from Greco-Roman antiquity in the form of prescriptive texts (the rhetorical handbooks) and actual rhetorical works, we note that as in 1 Corinthians, deliberative rhetoric was commonly employed within epistolary frameworks in antiquity. Hence, Mitchell (1991:20) argues that, “Paul’s use of deliberative rhetoric is not anomalous in ancient literature, and is fully appropriate to both epistolary and rhetorical elements which combine in this way”.

Mitchell’s (1991:23) investigation of these extant sources demonstrates that deliberative argumentation was a prominent form of rhetoric used by political rhetors in order to persuade their audiences to undertake an advantageous action to the benefit of the community. Such a form of argumentation is characterised by four elements, namely: “a) a focus on *future time* as a subject of deliberation; b) employment of a determined set of *appeals or ends*, the most

distinctive of which are *advantageous* (τὸ συμφέρον); c) proof example (παράδειγμα); and d) appropriate subjects for deliberation, of which *factionalism and concord* are especially common” Mitchell’s (1991:23; italics added). All four elements are to be found in antiquity, as well as in 1 Corinthians. I now briefly give some examples that display some comparisons of the four elements as used within 1 Corinthians.

Firstly, the time frame of deliberative rhetoric, according to Aristotle, presupposes that to deliberate about the future, “for the speaker, whether he exhorts or dissuades, always advises about things to come” (Mitchell 1991:25). For example, we see future-directed statements within the epistolary framework of 1 Corinthians at the beginning and ending of the letter: “Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς... ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες, καὶ μὴ ἦ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα...I urge you...to all say the same thing and let there not be factions among you...” (1 Corinthians 1:10) and the imperatives ἐδραῖοι γίνεσθε, ἀμετακίνητοι, περισσεύοντες ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ Κυρίου πάντοτε, εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ κόπος ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔστιν κενὸς ἐν Κυρίῳ. ... be steadfast, immovable and abounding in the work of the Lord always, knowing that your work is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58). The sections that intervene in the epistolary beginning and ending of the letter are concerned with specific behavioral patterns and actions that the Corinthians should undertake or abstain from in the future. The letter, being enveloped in past (referring to examples that are used as appeals to persuade or dissuade the Corinthians from the same conduct), present (referring to the unloving conduct) and future terms, are primarily concerned with the futuristic element of Paul’s discourse. It is concerned with the future, “because it is, appropriately, a letter which gives advice about behavioral changes in community life, and it indicates that deliberative rhetoric is the only one of the three species of rhetoric that befits 1 Corinthians” (Mitchell 1991:25).

The focus on future time in Paul’s deliberative rhetoric is important in answering the question posed by O’Brien (1995:89): “Does his (Paul’s) exhortation to imitate him (Paul) include an admonition to evangelism and mission?”

Secondly, Mitchell (1991) investigates the Corinthian letter’s appeals and the purpose of its deliberative argumentation. Having in mind the futuristic dimension of deliberative rhetoric as recently mentioned, we find an intertwining element that characterises deliberative rhetoric. Aristotle rightfully observes that this element is *the telos*. The end of the deliberative speaker is the expedient or harmful. However, “the handbooks besides Aristotle are sometimes ethically uneasy with his description of τὸ συμφέρον (the expedient) as the only forceful argument for a deliberative discourse, and wish the orator to point out not only that a course

of action is advantageous, but also that it is just, honorable, or praiseworthy” (Mitchell 1991:26). Hence, Cicero attempts to qualify Aristotle: “In the deliberative type (*deliberativum*), however, Aristotle accepts advantage (*utilitas*) as the end, but I prefer both honor (*honestas*) and advantage (*utilitas*)” (Mitchell 1991:27).

Mitchell’s (1991:28) discussion on the appeal to advantage in deliberative rhetoric derives from the notion that if one was to convince an audience to pursue a particular course of action in the future, such an action must be posited as advantageous to the audience. The same notion also accounts not only for persuasive purposes, but also for the dissuasion of the audience from an action that is not expedient. In short, deliberative rhetoric can be defined as rhetorical discourse that focus on the τὸ συμφέρον which refers to the advantageous action that the orator persuades his audience to follow in the future.

With respect to an exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 and to the argument of Paul’s approach of slavery functioning as an evangelical mission strategy (1 Corinthians 9:19-23; 10:31-11:1), it would also prove to be helpful to consider Aristotle’s observation and analysis on τὸ ἀγαθόν. Mitchell records Aristotle’s observation (in Mitchell 1991:28) where one find that, in the deliberative argument that is dependent upon stated or unstated assumptions of what is good, many people have different perceptions on what is good, and therefore they have their own perception on what course of action to take that will be the most expedient.

In 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 we see Paul and the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers having different views on how to use one’s liberty as a Jesus-follower. For this reason, Mitchell (1991:28) observes that in times of the process of deliberation, “one must often argue for the greater good or greater expediency of the proposed action over another”. Hence, since one deliberates not about the end, but the means to the end, the choice of action taken will largely depend upon the deliberative orator’s ability to modify the concept of *telos* or final purpose which guides his audience’s actions (Mitchell 1991:28). In 1 Corinthians, Paul produces such a modification where he, as Mitchell (1991:37-38) puts it, “redefines the Corinthian’s assumed goal from self-interest to community interest in order to persuade them to work for the common good”. In Paul’s appeal in 1 Corinthians 11:1, he argues for a Christian use of freedom on the grounds that it will be expedient (τὸ συμφέρον) and that this common good can be defined as, the salvation of many (1 Corinthians 10:33).

In the exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, one follows that, like most deliberative authors, Paul “also employs some other appeals to different positive aspects of the specific courses of action which he advises” (Mitchell 1991:38). Nevertheless, this intertwining

element called the *telos* (purpose or end), is a rhetorical key in answering the question of whether Paul's example as expressed in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, is the example he is exhorting his Corinthian audience to follow as an admonition to evangelism and mission.

Thirdly, the analysis of the use of appeals in deliberative argumentation now moves to the dimension that strengthens the very core of a rhetor's appeals to imitation - this can be known as the characteristic forms of proof (πίστις) examples. The proposed appeal by deliberative speakers to an advantageous, or in some cases a harmful action, is supported by the use of examples. These examples are examined - whether of the past, persons or situations - and brought forth by the deliberative speaker to function "with an implicit or even explicit appeal to imitate the illustrious example (or avoid the negative example)" (Mitchell 1991:42). In extant sources within antiquity, one can find how deliberative rhetors, such as Isocrates and Plato, present their listeners with a *παράδειγμα*, and then exhort (*παρακαλεῖν*) the audience to imitate the given example in their future actions (Mitchell 1991:42).

In the exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, I specifically look at 1 Corinthians 11:1 that concerns Paul's appeal to emulate his missional example. Paul presents himself as the example who his audience (and the modern individual Christian and the Church, as we see in Chapter four) should imitate. Paul's discourse on proof by the use of example plays out in his overall argument in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, especially in reference to how his model of mission is patterned upon the example of Christ. What could be asked is whether Paul, through his deliberative discourse, is making a call for the church in Corinth to be focused strategically on mission and evangelism; a call he also issues to the modern Church today.

Lastly, the fourth element of deliberative rhetoric which constitutes the basis of all the series of arguments employed by Paul in 1 Corinthians is the subject of factionalism and concord. This is an element which political entities treated through the use of deliberative rhetoric in antiquity. Paul's call for his Corinthian audience to unify in the midst of division strengthens my argument for Paul's call for the exercise of Christian liberty as a strategy for evangelism. In Chapter four, I discuss the significance and the relationship between Paul's missional example, and his call for Corinthian Jesus-followers to unify and how this unity relates to Paul's admonition to his Corinthian audience to evangelise and mission. This point, combined with Paul's use of deliberative rhetoric, plays a key role in answering the question on Paul's appeal of imitation to his Corinthian audience to spreading the good news and thus not just to imitate him as a call for ethical living. The subject of factionalism and concord as a

characteristic element in Paul's rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, arguably addresses the relationship of Paul's call to his Corinthian audience to evangelism and unity.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

Until now, I created a framework for understanding Paul's deliberative rhetoric as his language of discourse within 1 Corinthians. Paul, who used deliberative rhetoric, was influenced by the rhetorical culture of the socio-historical context he lived in. In Chapter four, I illustrate how Paul employs deliberative rhetoric to posit my argument in my hypothesis that Paul calls his Corinthian audience to imitate his approach of slavery as an admonition to use their Christian freedom as a strategy for evangelism and mission (1 Corinthians 9:19-23; 10:31-11:1).

Paul's rhetorical discourse is arguably essential in determining the function of his voluntary enslavement as expressed in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1. Throughout the unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11, he uses key examples (past or present), proof examples, and key rhetorical techniques to persuade his Corinthian audience to follow a future action that functions for the purpose of the salvation of many. The pressing issue of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' behavior is proving to have the potential to be destructive to the faith of their fellow weak believers in Christ. Paul, then, as a missionary and one who uses deliberative rhetoric in this letter see this issue and responds to in a persuasive manner.

In the next chapter, I venture to argue for my hypothesis by doing an exegesis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. As discussed in Chapter one, what I mean by doing an exegesis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, is that I discuss the rhetorical situation of the textual unit, its literary structure and argument, and the depicted theological concepts embedded in the unit.

## CHAPTER THREE

### AN EXEGESIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-11:1: RHETORICAL SITUATION, LITERARY CONTEXT AND THEOLOGICAL THEMES AND CONCEPTS

#### 3.1 Rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1

Before I venture to analyse the rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, it would be helpful to first explain what is meant by a ‘rhetorical situation’. As mentioned above, the importance of the concept of the rhetorical situation has been thoroughly analyzed by Bitzer (1968) as a distinct subject in rhetorical theory. Bitzer’s (1968:2) analysis of the rhetorical situation is a response to major theorists who have not treated the rhetorical situation thoroughly; instead, many ignore it. According to Bitzer (1968:2), none “has asked the nature of the rhetorical situation”.

There are three important constituents that form part of the rhetorical situation. First is exigence. Bitzer (1968:6) writes, “Any exigence is an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be. ... An exigence is rhetorical when it is capable of positive modification and when positive modification requires discourse or can be assisted by discourse”. The second constituent is audience and the idea that rhetorical discourse only initiates change when it positively influences an audience (Bitzer 1968:7). And inextricably connected to audience, then, argues Bitzer (in Hitt 2013:1), are the constraints that “constrain decisions and action needed to modify the exigence,” such as beliefs or acts.

In general terms, the rhetorical discourse is produced *in response* to exigence, that a situation requires a “fitting” response, and that the situation ultimately controls the response (Bitzer 1968:6). Hitt (2013:1; italics added) further argues that, for Bitzer (1968), “rhetoric occurs when a speaker responds to exigence by addressing an audience that is capable of *acting upon* that urgency. Because the response is prescribed by the situation, this leaves very little - if any - agency for the rhetor”. Hitt (2013:1) stresses that, for Bitzer (1968), “rhetoric occurs when a speaker response to the perception of exigency”.

In counterargument to Bitzer (1968), Richard E. Vatz argues that rhetoric creates exigence (Vatz in Hitt 2013:2). The position of Vatz (in Hitt 2013:2) is that objective events does not produce exigence, but rather exigence is a matter of perception and interpretation. Hence, the agency is more with the (subjective) rhetor than the (objective) situation. Vatz (in Hitt 2013:2) very clearly distinguishes himself from Bitzer by stressing how it is the rhetor, not the

situation, that makes choices and constructs rhetorical meaning. Vatz (in Hitt 2013:2) conclude:

I would not say “*rhetoric is situational*,” but situations are rhetorical; not “*exigence strongly invites utterance*,” but utterance strongly invites exigence; not “the situation controls the rhetorical response,” but the rhetoric controls the situational response; not “rhetorical discourse ... does obtain its character - as - rhetorical from the situation which generates it,” but situations obtain their character from the rhetoric which surrounds them or creates them.

The main view from Vatz (in Hitt 2013:2), then, is that, “meaning is not discovered in situations, but created by rhetors”.

So, to summarize: Bitzer (in Hitt 2013:2) argues that the situation (and exigence) prompts and produces rhetorical discourse. Vatz (in Hitt 2013:2) opposes against this idea, arguing instead that rhetorical discourse creates exigence.

Barbara A. Biesecker enters the frame by offering another alternative argument to the concept of rhetorical situation. As the third thought, Biesecker (in Hitt 2013:2) argues that, by granting the rhetor seemingly autonomous agency Vatz flattens the role of rhetor, situation, and audience by granting the rhetor seemingly autonomous agency. According to Hitt (2013:2), Biesecker seeks to engage in more complicated understandings by introducing “deconstruction” as a way to reimagine the rhetorical transaction and the identities of both audience and the rhetor. Through the approach of deconstruction, Biesecker (in Hitt 2013:2) borrows Derrida’s notion of *différance*, offering deconstruction as a way to read “symbolic action in general and rhetorical discourse in particular as radical possibility”. For Biesecker (in Hitt 2013:3), it is not asking whether rhetoric creates exigence (Vatz) or whether exigence produces rhetoric (Bitzer) but rather looking beyond binary constructions of speaker/situation, looking instead in the “differencing zone”.

The third thought offered by Biesecker prompts one to reconsider the audience as unstable, shifting. What this means, for the rhetorical situation, is this: “If the subject is shifting and unstable (constituted in and by the play of *différance*), then the rhetorical event may be seen as an incident that produces and reproduces the identities of subjects and constructs and reconstructs linkages between them” (Biesecker in Hitt 2013:3). In other words, neither is the event created by audience, nor is audience created by event. Instead, the rhetorical situation makes possible the production of identities and social relations.

That is, rhetoric is not a “simple linear process by which one individual attempts to influence others, but a rather complex interactive process whereby persons and collectivities articulate their shifting identities to each other within changing historical circumstances” (Biesecker in Hitt 2013:3)

The three thoughts regarding the rhetorical situation represented by Bitzer, Vatz and Biesecker are worth analysing when looking at any rhetorical discourse or event. However, I argue Bitzer’s (1968) view as the applicable thought to analyse the rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. The rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 consists of a complex of persons, events, objects and relations that present a potential exigence that Paul, as rhetor, attempts to remove so to constrain human decision or action as to bring about an advantageous change. The potential exigence that permeate 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 is the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers’ unloving use of their Christian freedom. Therefore, it is the actions of the audience and the situation created by the audience that prompted the rhetorical discourse of Paul.

In the rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, Paul addresses the Corinthian community’s behavior as it concerns *εἰδωλόθυτα*, food sacrificed unto idols, within the social setting of the Greco-Roman Empire. The issue that has long posed difficulties for modern interpreters is whether Paul is addressing the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers for their participation at the temple meals, or to eating idol food sold in the market place. With reference to these conflicting stances of *εἰδωλόθυτα*, O’Brien (1995:92) observes that: “traditionally it has been claimed that Paul is responding to an internal difficulty within the church at Corinth between weak and strong Christians over the question of market place food”. However, Fee (2001:113-119) has recently challenged this consensus raised by O’Brien.

In his exposition on the stance on *εἰδωλόθυτα* in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, Fee (2001:113-119) outlines the various interpretations of scholars regarding the question of whether the problem of eating meat sacrificed to idols refers to the participation of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers at temple meals, or whether *εἰδωλόθυτα* refers to idol food sold in the market places. Fee (2001:113-119) argues that Paul is not referring to idol food sold in the market place, but to participation at the temple meals. Fee (2001:116-117) does recognise the account of Paul’s argument surrounding market place food in 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1. Three possible arguments can be given for Paul’s concern of the eating of market place food.



Firstly, according to Fee (2001:116-117) , Paul is not addressing the eating of market place food as the initial concern in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, rather he is only using the example of participation of market place food to give a practical qualification on his stance on the use of Christian liberty as a strategy for evangelism (1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1).

A second possibility for Paul's argument surrounding market place food (1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1) can be in view. Historically, the Greeks and Romans were polytheistic and polydemonistic (MacArthur 1997:1740). They believed that spirits can attach themselves to food and then would try to invade human beings. According to MacArthur (1997:1740), the only way the spirits could be removed was by the food's being sacrificed to a god. Such a sacrifice was meant to cleanse the food from demonic contamination. The decontaminate meat, according to MacArthur (1997:1740), was offered to the gods as a sacrifice. The meat that was not burned on the altar was served at pagan feasts (MacArthur 1997:1740). What was left of the meat was then sold in the market place (MacArthur 1997:1740). Paul's argument concerning market place food is arguably not only for a practical qualification of his position on the use Christian liberty in evangelism and mission. MacArthur (1997:1740) argues that, "after conversion, believers resented eating such food bought out of idol markets, because it reminded sensitive Gentile believers of their previous pagan lives and demonic worship (MacArthur 1997:1740).

Lastly, the third possibility regarding Paul's address on market place food in 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1 is an indication that Paul's missional example is applicable not only in the context of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' participation in eating meat sacrificed unto idols in temples, but that his evangelical example is applicable to all contexts - including a context where it concerns the consumption of market place food (see 1 Corinthians 10:31- "...whatsoever you do..."). In Chapter five, in my discussion of different central figures and autobiographical accounts, I show how Paul's missional example can be applied to various contexts and situations - though not limited to them.

However, Jewish and Christian sources that support the traditional view of εἰδωλόθυστα as referring to eating market place idol food, argue that it is common to understand that Jews forbade the eating of temple food (Fee 2001:115). Since there was no danger of the Jews' going to idol temples, εἰδωλόθυστα could have only referred to market place food<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> It can be argued that support for the traditional view derives from the apostolic decree in Acts 15:29, which forbade εἰδωλόθυστα, along with blood and things strangled.

Fee (2001:115), however, posits a counter argument against New Testament scholars who hold the traditional interpretation of εἰδωλόθυτα as referring to market place food. Fee (2001:115) qualifies his interpretation and concludes:

The problem with this as a solution to 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, however, is the non-Jewish character of everything in the text. The offended person, whose conscience is weak, is not a Jewish Christian but a Gentile convert (8:7). Moreover, there is no hint in the text that his anxiety over idolatry has an outside source that it is related to contaminated food; rather it is inherent to his former pagan understanding of idolatry in light of his Christian conversion. And finally, his (the Gentile Christian) 'fall' in 8:10-12 does not rest on his being 'offended' by a brother's [sic] eating of market place food nor in that person's 'idolatry'; rather, it rests in his seeing, and thereby being encouraged to imitate (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:1), a brother's [sic] going to the temple meals.

Furthermore, in the religious/ritualistic Greco-Roman context, we find that many allusions can be made to the phenomenon of worship in both Jewish and pagan antiquity concerning eating a meal in the presence of gods/God. For example, as Fee (2001:115-116) argues, important events such as marriages, good fortune, and especially in death, worshippers from each of the pagan and Jewish worldviews would invite people to join them in the temples or shrines. In times of these seasonal feasts, the worshipers would sacrifice food unto the deity hailed in the temple. Sometimes the foods were functioning for the purpose of a burnt offering to the specific deity, but, according to Fee (2001:115), mostly the food was purposed for consumption in the presence of the deity. Specifically, in terms of the Jewish worldview, we find references of such festival worship activities of food sacrificed to idols within the Old Testament (Exodus 24:11; 1 Samuel 9:13; 1 Kings 1:25; Hosea 8:13). Places for such worship can be found in the Jewish first temple (Jeremiah 35:2) and probably also in the second temple (Nehemiah 13:7-8); cf. Ezekiel 42:13). The nations that surrounded the borders of Israel also practiced such sacred feastings. Ethnic groups such as the Canaanites (Judges 9:27) and the Babylonians (Daniel 5:1-4) practiced feasting; and Egyptian practices included sexual overtones as one shall note in Exodus 32:6 (cf. Numbers 25). The surrounding feasts and especially its inclusion of πορνεία led to the ever-present attraction and temptation to idolatry for Israel. It is argued that, by the first century C.E., because of the presence of πορνεία, feasting before the God of Israel was forbidden. Instead, worship in the Jewish temple consisted of the elements of prayer, singing, and reading Scripture in the synagogue (Fee 2001:116).

However, the tradition of meals sacrificed unto idols in temples continued in the Hellenistic way in Corinth, in contrast to contemporary Judaism. Fee (2001:116) argues that, “it is because of the commonness of such meals in a city like Corinth, with their meals sacrificed to idols in temples to gods and lords, over against the lack of ‘Jewishness’ in the text of 1 Corinthians 8-10, that argues strongly for temple attendance as the real concern of the passage”.

The argument that the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers had fellowship with idols in pagan temples by eating meat sacrificed in the midst of deity is supported, as mentioned above, by the notion of *πορνεία*. Just as in Exodus 32:6, so does 1 Corinthians 10:7-8 give reference to the frequent combination of sexual immorality and eating sacred meals in the temple. Fee (2001:117) argues that this is an indication that temple attendance is in view of Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 conveys. One of Fee’s (2001:117) arguments involves New Testament and Old Testament references where *εἰδωλόθυτα* is accompanied by *πορνεία* (NT: Acts 15:29; Revelation 2:14, 20; and here; OT: Numbers 25:1-2 and alludes to Revelation 2:14). According to Fee (2001:117), it is highly probable that these two sins exist together, as they did in the Old Testament and pagan precedents. Thus in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, the sins of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:12) are probably not the eating of sacrificial food sold in the market place, but rather the eating of sacred meals accompanied by the presence of sexual immorality in the temples of idols. Therefore, though Paul employs an argument surrounding market place food in 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1, I argue, together with Fee (2001:113-119), that the central address of Paul to his Corinthian audience is their participation in temples eating meals in the presence of idols.

However, the above exegetical analysis concerning the meaning of *εἰδωλόθυτα* in the context of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, though important, only serves as a secondary focus concerning the rhetorical situation of the text. The primary focus of the rhetorical situation would be, as Mitchell (1991:126) asserts: “the treatment of the issue of idol meats, not just as a behavioral issue, but as a case which requires the proper definition of Christian freedom...”. Sisson (1994:2) argues in his socio-rhetorical interpretation of 1 Corinthians 9 that, “the ‘freedom’ (*ἐλευθερία*) or ‘license’ (*ἐξουσία*) to eat meat sacrificed to idols is the issue Paul addresses”.

In the exegeses of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, I discuss in Chapter four, how Paul’s proper definition of Christian freedom is not limited to the responsibility of embodying Christian ethical behavior, but how it also functions as a strategy for evangelism. The actions of Paul’s Corinthian audience revealed the basis on which they defined their

Christian liberty. They held to a definition of unrestrictive freedom which led them to go to temples to eat meat sacrificed unto idols which could possibly also have led to destruction of the faith of others, especially that of their weak Gentile brother or sister in Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:9; 12). In response, Paul addresses their negative definition and use of Christian freedom, by offering his own definition and use of Christian liberty as an example for his Corinthian audience to follow (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:1b; 11:1).

In the following section, I move to the literary structure and argument of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1.

### **3.2 Literary context 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1**

In the discussion of the structure and argument of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, I use the work of Ramsaran (1996) to account for the literary structure of Paul's deliberative argument in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. His use of maxims and the rhetoric of refinement is the micro-rhetorical tool I use to exegete the textual unit. It is appropriate to give the definition of the terms 'refinement' and 'maxim' and briefly state how they function in Paul's deliberative rhetoric in the literary structural argumentation of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1.

Sampley (2001:785) defines the concept of a maxim as a "pithy distillation of generally accepted truths". Maxims are "by nature allusive; they invite hearers to engage them and to fill out the larger picture that they evoke only in broad stroke" (Sampley 2001:896). A few examples of maxims can be found in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, with the maxim in 8:1b "knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" being central as it reveals the basis of Paul's missional example over against the example of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers. 1 Corinthians 8:1b, for example, is an indication where Paul uses his own maxims to open up and correct the assumption worlds of his hearers concerning the exercise of one's Christian freedom.

Furthermore, Sampley (2001:920) defines the concept of refinement as "dwelling on the same topic while seeming to move into new material; it usually involves a degree of repetition and a finding of alternative ways to make and elaborate the same point". An example surfaces in the section on Paul's practical qualification of his use of Christian liberty that is seen in 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1. In this passage, one finds a classical example of where the maxim rhetoric of refinement operates. The passage is structured around the maxim, "All things are permissible" (10:23), which is a near replication of 1 Corinthians 6:12 - just without the "for me" part in 6:12. Refinement is part of Paul's struggle to help his Corinthian audience to

understand that they belong to Christ, and therefore the exercise of one's freedom in Christ becomes essential in the life of the Church community.

Using Ramsaran (1996) as a framework, I attempt to demonstrate in the exegesis the broad direction of Paul's, but due to the size and scope of 1 Corinthians, the textual unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 focuses on the use of Christian freedom in evangelism. The broad direction of Paul's argument is demonstrated in the exegesis, but it is impossible in this research to issue a full exegesis and commentary of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 and all its corresponding particulars. The use of Paul's maxim rhetoric of refinement within the rhetorical situation of the textual unit, gives one a structural understanding of Paul's definition and the use of Christian freedom. Furthermore, this rhetorical technique helps one to understand the meaning of Paul's use of Christian freedom as a missional example and strategy of evangelism (1 Corinthians 9:19-23; 10:31-11:1).

### 3.2.1 1 Corinthians 8:1-13: Paul's definition of Christian freedom

#### *1 Corinthians 8:1-3: Christian freedom: Knowledge (γνῶσις) vs love*

The rhetorical unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 starts with the introduction of maxims. The basis of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' justification to support their behavior or right to eat εἰδωλόθυτα, namely, temple meat sacrificed unto idols, is their perspective on γνῶσις. Perkins (2012:114) defines γνῶσις in this section (8:1-3) as a "fascination with wisdom and rhetorical sophistication". Such a predication can be identified in the three maxims which Paul presents with a formula, οἶδαμεν ὅτι (we know that), as self-evident truths. These maxims are used in a manner by which the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers position themselves to support their unrestrained liberty to eat temple meat sacrificed unto idols. The maxims are: "all of us possess knowledge" (8:1); "no idol in the world really exists" (8:4); and "there is no God but one" (8:4). An analysis of these three maxims confirms Fee's (2001:119; italics added) analysis that, the problem for the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers is not so much their misunderstanding of idolatry as to allow participation in the temple meals, "but that they have *misunderstood the basis of Christian ethical behavior*". The impetus behind the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' behavior is their notion of unrestrained freedom predicated upon their γνῶσις.

Paul's response to their position of unrestricted freedom is in the form of an antithetical maxim which serves as a correction to such a misguided perspective: "knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (8:1b).

The content of 1 Corinthians 8:1b is the maxim that provides us with Paul's definition of Christian freedom. The sound definition of Christian liberty is not based on puffed-up knowledge, but on love. Furthermore, the maxim in 8:1b provides one with the paradigm through which one can follow Paul's structural argument throughout the chapter. Firstly, Paul deals with the first part of his antithetical maxim which concerns the possession of knowledge. In 1 Corinthians 8:1-3, Paul attempts to clarify his stance on the possession of  $\gamma\tilde{\nu}\tilde{\omega}\sigma\iota\varsigma$  in response to the Corinthian's maxim in 8:1a. Paul does so by countering "the possible ambiguity of this initial maxim (8:1a - "all of us possess knowledge") with his antithetical maxim of ethical import (*moral sententiae*): 'Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up' (8:1b)" (Ramsaran 1996:49). By further elaboration in 8:2-3, Paul makes two statements that qualify his stance on one's possession of knowledge; that is: knowledge accompanied with pride and arrogance can lead to self-deception and haughtiness (8:2). It is not by the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers'  $\gamma\tilde{\nu}\tilde{\omega}\sigma\iota\varsigma$  that they have come to know the love of God, lest they should boast. Rather, they have come to know the love of God because God has known them - in other words recognising and electing them (8:3; see 1 Corinthians 13:12b).

Paul's maxim in 8:1b does not deny the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' cognitive theological position of freedom, but he does critique their resulting behavior that might lead to a stumbling block for their brother or sister that is weak (8:9) and ultimately the breaking down of their faith. This kind of behavior bears reference to the inflating nature of that knowledge. Paul's view states that any cognitive position advanced by these strong Corinthian Jesus-followers should "not be based on  $\gamma\tilde{\nu}\tilde{\omega}\sigma\iota\varsigma$ , but on love" (Fee 2001:119). Ramsaran (1996:49) further issues a similar notion that any cognitive theological position of freedom advanced by these strong Corinthian Jesus-followers, "must find its basis in the love of God that is demonstrated in God's redeeming act in Christ in behalf of all (8:11)".

*1 Corinthians 8:4-6: Christian freedom: Paul's view on cognitive theological truths vs strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' view on cognitive theological truths*

In 1 Corinthians 8:4-6, by explicating the Corinthian maxim in 8:1a ("all of us possess knowledge"), Paul extends his rhetorical argument concerning his stance on the possession of knowledge by supplying it with substantial theological content. Campia and Rosner (2010:379) argue that Paul resumes his argument after "having first broached the subject and undermined any 'knowledge' that was not consistent with the love of God or others that is foundational to Christian ethic". By resuming his argument and offering quotations of the second and third maxims from the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers', Paul affirms his

common agreement with them regarding their monotheistic belief (8:4): “an idol is nothing at all in the world (it does not really exist); and there is no God but one”. However, though they might share a common agreement, Paul’s perspective of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers’ second and third maxim differ in terms of the behavioral implications it holds for a Christian. From the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers’ view concerning their second maxim, their knowledge frees them from “so called gods in heaven or on earth” (8:4). They hold to this maxim to justify their unrestrained freedom that leads to loveless behavior, for example, eating meat sacrificed unto idols that can potentially lead the fellow brother or sister to offend. Paul, however, counters their perspective by introducing a third maxim which states that: “there is no God but one” (8:4). By knowing this monotheistic belief, Paul calls for a proper definition of Christian freedom that will lead to the responsible use of that freedom. The counter-perspective of Paul is found in the reason why he inserted the monotheistic worldview. It is well described by Ramsaran (1996:49; italics added) when he reflects on Paul’s position concerning the matter of the sound embodiment of Christian liberty, by referring to Paul’s explanation on the third Corinthian maxim:

Paul explains that knowledge of ‘one God’ in the believing context (‘for us’) implies a dependence (‘for whom we exist’) on ‘one God, the Father,’ and ‘one Lord, Jesus Christ’ (8:6). Freedom from all human conventions and norms of value<sup>2</sup> is not unbridled freedom (see 6:12) but freedom in believing community marked by one God as source and *one Lord as exemplar of weakness leading to power*. This continues Paul’s refinement of the Corinthian freedom position.

In analysing Paul’s view on the definition of Christian freedom, it would be helpful to draw on the work of Perkins (2012:115) who raises a question concerning the monotheistic slogan in 8:4. This slogan pertains to “the unique lordship of Jesus Christ which is central to Paul’s theology in general and to this letter in particular” (Campia & Rosner 2010:383). A valuable contribution is made by Bousset (1970:8-9,147) where he highlights the multiplicity of “kyrios-cults” which characterised the Greco-Roman imperial context in first century Corinth. Bousset’s (1970:8-9, 147) observation yields the perspective that the emphasis on these cults fell on practical devotion and worship, and in this respect, the practical or existential dimension of the confessions and contrasts of 8:5 and 8:6 comes forcefully to gain attention for understanding their meaning in the Corinthians context.

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<sup>2</sup> By referring to “human conventions and norms value” Ramsaran (1996:49) is conveying the notion of that type of γνῶσις (vain imaginations) that exalts itself above the (epig-) γνῶσις (divine knowledge) of God (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:5).

The question is: “What is the basis for incorporating the Lord Jesus into the creative activity of the one God?” (Perkins 2012:115). Various possibilities arise in answering this question. One possibility is stressed by Dunn (1995:165) where he depicts the early identification of the exalted Christ with God’s pre-existent wisdom. Another possibility arises from scholars who attribute cosmological significance to the incorporation of the Lord Jesus as the mediator of the first creation. Furthermore, the possibility that Murphy-O’Connor (2009:252) provides has a *soteriological significance* to the role of the Lord Jesus in the slogan. He argues that τὰ πάντα does not denote the first creation in Christ, but denotes primarily the new creation in Christ over which ‘the powers’ hold no sway. This confession, he concludes, has more to do with soteriology than with cosmological belief; indeed, it has “an exclusively soteriological meaning” (Murphy-O’Connor 2009:253). I support the possibility given by Murphy-O’Connor. The interpretation given by Murphy-O’Connor draws one to consider the role Paul himself plays in salvation, as someone who follows the pattern of Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:1). The latter notion I discuss more elaborately in Chapter four as a notion that forms part of Paul’s purpose for his metaphorical enslavement and his call for his Corinthian audience to imitate the example of Christ.

In the form of maxims, Paul has thus far explained in 1 Corinthians 8 that if knowledge is devoid of love, then such knowledge serves no purpose but building the pride and haughtiness of the one who holds it (1 Corinthians 8:1-3). Subsequently, Paul refines the Corinthian’s position on freedom in 8:4-6 by clarifying the key theological content of their knowledge in an attempt to persuade them to take a different course of action in the future. For Paul, the proper definition of Christian liberty is not based on cognitive theological truths but upon love and a total dependence on God. Such a definition of Christian liberty does not deny the cognitive theological truths the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers hold; rather, it results in the responsible use of that Christian freedom.

*1 Corinthians 8:7-13: Christian freedom: The practical qualification of Paul’s rhetorical maxims*

In Paul’s practical qualification of his three maxims in 8:7-13, he addresses the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers’ use of their Christian liberty in the situation of eating temple meat sacrificed to idols. Their actions have the potential to break down the faith of a fellow weak brother or sister in Christ. Paul, then, in 8:13 presents his missional example of someone that uses his Christian freedom in love for his brother or sister in Christ.



Having clarified that freedom from human conventions, norms, and values is not unrestricted freedom but a freedom that finds its reference in believing in one God and one Lord Jesus, Paul now moves to 1 Corinthians 8:7-13, as Fee (2001:120) states, “by way of the practical qualification of the content of their γνῶσις given in 8:4-6”. The practical qualification stems from a consideration of what Paul’s maxim in 8:1b implies: proper moral reasoning is based not only on cognitive or theological truths but also on care demonstrated for one another in human interaction” (Ramsaran 1996:49-50).

In the context of 1 Corinthians 8:7-13, Thiselton (2000:626) observes that, “the kind of ‘knowledge’ which ‘the strong’ use manipulatively to assert their ‘rights’ (cf. ἐξουσία, 8:9; 9:4; and ἔξεστιν, 6:12; 10:23) about temple meat associated/sacrificed unto idols, differs from an authentic Christian process of knowing which is inextricably bound up with loving”. Derived from the same notion, one could argue that such contrast involves more than the difference between theory and practice, rather that each kind of ‘knowledge’ has contrasting sets of practical consequences as depicted in 8:7-13. This type of knowledge possessed by the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers’ who assume that they have unbridled Christian freedom as it concerns eating meat sacrificed unto idols, can lead to the defilement of the faith of the weak brother or sister in Christ (8:9 and 8:11).

The behavior Paul wants his strong Corinthian Jesus-followers to follow is based on his understanding of Christian liberty based on love. For Paul, authentic Christian freedom entails a stance of actively loving one’s weak brother or sister by not wounding their weak conscience. As a free apostle, Paul’s approach of slavery, that is, his voluntary enslavement to his weak brother or sister reflects true Christian freedom based on love. It is an approach that seeks the advantage of one’s brother or sister, so that they may be saved (1 Corinthians 9:22; 10:33). In Chapter five, I discuss how autobiographical situations and central figures of the past sought the advantage of others as such situations and figures emulated the missional example of Paul.

*1 Corinthians 8:7: Practical qualification: Considering the weak conscience of one’s fellow believer in the use of Christian freedom*

In a more detailed analysis of the practical qualification of the Pauline maxims (8:7-13), Paul starts with 8:7 claiming that the knowledge of cognitive or theological truths is not in some individuals. These individuals, according to Ciampa and Rosner (2010:386) are those Jesus-followers with a weak conscience still accustomed to idols. They believe that “when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god”. Hence the behavior of the

strong Corinthian Jesus-followers by going to eat meat sacrificed to idols in a temple, is threatening for the conscience of the weak brother or sister in Christ. In Fee's (2001:121) view, the behavior of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers can potentially lead to the defilement of a weak brother's or sister's conscience (8:7) and the breaking down of their faith (8:11).

The weak conscience of the brother or sister has to do with idols, namely: idolatry, and not food (8:7). The problem then is not so much what one eats, but where one eats, that is, the food's association with idol worship in the temple. The new converts still think of an idol being a reality. Ciampa and Rosner (2010:386) stress that, "there may be Christians whose lengthy experience with idolatry and idol food makes it difficult to distinguish between the two".

Furthermore, because the weak Gentile believers might not be able to distinguish between the idolatry and idol food, if they eat or see their fellow Jesus-followers eat food that they know has been offered to an idol, "it is with a conviction (rejected by the strong Corinthians Jesus-followers) that they are committing an idolatrous act" (Ciampa & Rosner 2010:386). Hence, Fee (2001:122) argues that the defilement of the man with the weak conscience occurs when "he sees the 'gnostic's' action and is thereby encouraged or pressured<sup>3</sup> to imitate it". The weak brother or sister would find himself transgressing as an idol worshiper when eating temple meat offered to false deities. Perkins (2012:116) elaborates on the notion of defiling and destroying the weak brother's or sister's conscience. Hence Perkins (2012:116) states, when one insists on one's right to eat at a sacrificial meal, one's example actually leads to the "endangerment of the faith of the weak brother [sic] and therefore his relationship with God".

*1 Corinthians 8:8: Christian use of freedom that commends one to God- a motivating factor*

It is to the threatening behavior of the Corinthian audience that Paul responds to with a maxim in 8:8. The strong Corinthian Jesus-followers base their moral reasoning on their ἐξουσίαν, or "right" (8:9), "to act in freedom as an expression of their wise, spiritual power" (Ramsaran 1996:50). The maxim in question displays, as Fee (2001:122) observes, that food, "originally speaking about ceremonial food, is a matter of indifference to God" (Fee 2001:122). Though

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<sup>3</sup> The word 'pressured' is used by Ciampa and Rosner (2010:386) to signify that the 'weak' Christian might actually go and partake in eating the meat sacrificed to idols, not because they have a strong moral consciousness like those supposed strong Corinthian Jesus-followers claim to have, but their action "is a testimony to the social 'pressures' within the Corinthians society, which, rather than being lessened in within the Church of Corinth, were intensified since even brothers [sic] in Christ were participating in and justifying such activities".

this is true for Paul, the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers were arguing that food eaten in a temple can also be justified by a similar notion, since food is a matter of indifference and an idol has no reality. However, Fee (2001:122) stresses the error in their use of ἐξουσίαν quite profoundly: “Food as a matter of indifference is true about *what* one eats; it is not true about *where* - first of all of what it can do to a brother [sic]”. Hence, Paul argues that it is considering and loving one’s brother or sister which reflects commendable behavior. Such behavior is the expression of the righteous use of Christian freedom.

The first part of Paul’s maxim in 8:8 “Food will not commend us to God,” as Ramsaran (1996:50) claims, “is an invitation to reflect upon what kind of behavior, based on one’s freedom, will indeed commend one to God” Ramsaran (1996:50) states that freedom’s purpose “is not the indiscriminate exercising of one’s rights but the eschatological ‘commendation’ of God”. In the context of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, I disagree with Ramsaran’s (1996:50) notion in terms of the *telos* (purpose or end) of the Christian liberty he postulates. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, to view one’s freedom with a purposeful end that will commend one to God is one of the motivating factors of exercising responsible freedom as a true missional example. In other words, Paul exhorts the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers to exercise their Christian freedom through love (8:1b) with the motivation that such behavior will indeed commend one to God. In such a way, the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers would not be basing their behavior on achieving God’s approval or praise, but basing it on love for one’s brother or sister, and consequently being motivated that such behavior pleases God.<sup>4</sup>

Paul’s view on the use of a Christian liberty (that is, his approach of slavery) has a soteriological end (1 Corinthians 9:22; 1 Corinthians 10:33). If one argues that the eschatological commendation of God is the purpose or end of Paul’s view on the use of Christian freedom in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, the function of Paul’s approach of slavery as an antithesis of the strong Corinthians Jesus-followers’ behavior, is not given its due focus - a focus which is soteriological.

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<sup>4</sup> The motivation behind one’s expression of freedom is not based on one’s knowledge of cognitive theological truths but on one’s knowledge of what commends one to God, which is freedom exercised based in love.

*1 Corinthians 8:9-13: Christian use of freedom without love (strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' missional example) vs Christian use of freedom with love (Paul's missional example)*

The following section, 1 Corinthians 8:9-13, is an extended version that elaborates on Paul's maxim in 8:1b: "...but love builds up". Ramsaran (1996:50) explains this elaboration "to be in a form of a negative hypothetical (but probable) example of love's absence contrasted with the hyperbolic positive example of Paul".

In 8:9, Paul reiterates the notion again that the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' behavior is not commendable when only based on one's cognitive theological truths, but rather when it is based on loving one's brother or sister in Christ. By means of a transitional warning statement, Paul ties together the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' knowledge leading to their behavioral use of ἐξουσία ('right') and the negative consequences that occur when love is neglected.

*1 Corinthians 8:10-13: The two contrasting examples of the use of Christian freedom*

In 8:10-13, Paul posits his argument with reference to two contrasting examples. The first example in the Corinthians' context specifically mention the behavior which the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers exemplify and the derailing effects it has on their weak brother's or sister's faith when eating temple meat sacrificed unto idols (8:10). The second contrasting example is where Paul's depiction of his missional example not only reveals how he will approach, in love, the same situation the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' find themselves in, but also how his approach to eating temple meat sacrificed to idols has a timeless component: "I will eat no flesh while the world stands" (8:13).

*1 Corinthians 8:11-12: Soteriology as theme and telos (goal)*

The place of 8:11 becomes very important to understand Paul's deliberative rhetoric, especially when he exhorts his Corinthian audience to imitate him as he imitates Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). The second indication of the theme of soteriology appears in the text of 8:11: "And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother [sic] for whom Christ died".

In 8:11, Paul's is probably exhorting the knowledgeable believers to re-evaluate the purpose of their behavior. They should re-evaluate their use of Christian freedom, whether they are walking *κατά ἄνθρωπον* (according to worldly standards; 3:3-4; see 3:21; 7:23) or in the true

wisdom of the crucified One (according to love). This wisdom, as Ramsaran (1996:50; italics added) states, is the “work of love extended by God through Jesus’ death to every believing person regardless of distinction - *to bring about their salvation*”. The cross is the norm through which all Christian behavior should be examined. Hence, one can argue that 8:11 states that unloving behavior by Jesus-followers - motivated through ‘puffed-up knowledge’ (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:1b) - is in stark contrast with the work of salvation (namely, the work of love) the Lord Jesus Christ embodied in his incarnation - especially through His death on the cross (cf. Philippians 2:5-11). Perkins (2012:112) argues that, “Christians cannot permit convictions to bring about the loss of the brother [sic] for whom Christ died”. Such an exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 8:11-12 supports the notion that Paul’s approach of slavery has a soteriological end because Christ died for the weak believer to have a saving relationship with him or her.

Moreover, Paul defines strong Corinthian Jesus-followers’ misuse of their Christian liberty as sin. By sinning against one’s brother or sister in wounding their conscience through one’s participation in eating meat sacrificed unto idols, the knowledgeable believer has sinned against Christ. Paul is not so much using this negative example of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers to depict what sort of sinful behavior does not receive commendation from God (though it plays a motivating role for such behavior). Rather, Paul argues that the misuse of their Christian freedom is sinful because it goes against the very *telos* (purpose or end) Christ died for, and that is for the salvation of the weak brother or sister, which provided a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, the Lord.

The following section concerns 1 Corinthians 9 and Paul presents himself as the apostle who uses his Christian freedom responsibly. What is important to note in this section is that Paul is not defending his liberty as an apostle, but he is presenting himself as a model for the proper use of Christian freedom. Therefore, Paul is not employing forensic rhetoric as a defence of his Christian liberty or his apostleship, but he is using deliberative rhetoric to persuade his Corinthian audience to follow his example as someone who truly exercises his Christian freedom in love.

### 3.2.2 1 Corinthians 9:1-27: Paul as an example of Christian freedom

#### *Rhetoric: Forensic (defence) vs deliberative (example)*

Martin (1990:77; italics added) makes the following point regarding Paul’s rhetorical argument in 1 Corinthians 9:

When read within Paul's overall argument, 1 Corinthians 9 functions as a *digression*<sup>5</sup> that advocates a certain kind of behavior rather than as a real defence of Paul's freedom.

Many scholars, however, argue that Paul's *telos* (purpose or end) in 1 Corinthians 9 is to defend his freedom and independence as an apostle. The argument for such an assumption can be found on Paul's Corinthian correspondence and moral philosophy of the early empire. As argued concerning 1 Corinthians 8, the debate between Paul and the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers concerns Christian freedom and its use in evangelism. Martin (1990:69) alludes to the example of scholars agreeing that Paul is echoing Corinthian slogans when he says repeatedly that, "all things are permitted" (1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23). The echoing of such slogans pre-supposes that the Corinthian Jesus-followers were familiar with the Cynic and Stoic (traditional moral philosophy) conceptions of the wise man (*Sophos*). Martin (1990:69) observes that: "The *Sophos* was the only true free person, the only true king, therefore, everything was permitted for the wise man because his will was perfectly attuned to reality and the good". Hence, then, many scholars, would view 1 Corinthians 9 as a straightforward defence on Paul's behalf as his right to be included among the free, the wise, and the apostles.

Arguably, Paul's response is not at all a defence of his freedom or apostleship, as Martin (1990:69) asserts that, "the primary issue in 1 Corinthians, therefore, is not simply Paul's freedom or apostleship but the connection of that freedom by means of his self-support by manual labour". In light of this notion, Paul's initial questions in 9:1, I argue in support of Galloway (2004:151-152; italics added) who "reflects not the defence of his apostleship but a rhetorical move that will permit him to *establish his ethos*". Witherington (1995:203) observes that: "in spite of the technical term, *apologia*, Chapter 9 is not forensic discourse but material which serves the larger deliberative purpose of presenting Paul as an exemplum". Mitchell (1991:249-250) has the same view in mind when taking 1 Corinthians 9 as a *digressio*, which suggests that the chapter is connected to its context, and functions as a means of comparison or amplification. Mitchell understands Paul to present himself as an *exemplum*.

Furthermore, the connection of Paul's freedom with his means of self-support is a deliberative rhetorical attempt by Paul not only to present himself as an *exemplum* of Christian freedom but to present himself as someone who use his Christian freedom in his evangelical mission. As *digressio*, Galloway (2004:151-152) states, 1 Corinthians 9 is Paul's creative invention;

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<sup>5</sup> Paul's digression here does not connote a break in relationship from the previous chapter, 1 Corinthians 8.

his own attempt to reflect on freedom as a concept that incorporates his call; and his work/toil, as a rhetorical technique to connect to and provide amplification of the παράδειγμα which Paul has signaled in 8:13<sup>6</sup>.

1 Corinthians 9 is the chapter where Paul, as an *exemplum* of Christian freedom, shows his Corinthian audience on how to deal with rights and knowledge (γνώσις) in their use of their Christian liberty. Furthermore, and more importantly for the hypothesis of this research, 1 Corinthians 9 is a comprehensive account of Paul's example of the use of Christian freedom in evangelism.

*1 Corinthians 9:1-14: Paul's use of Christian Freedom: His ἐξουσίαν (right) and γνώσις*

In an elaboration of his missional example in 1 Corinthians 8:13, Paul presents himself in 1 Corinthians 9 as an apostle who uses his Christian freedom in a way that does not renounce his rights or liberty as an apostle, but “he voluntarily leaves his rights unexercised” (Ramsaran 1996:51). Paul is not just only appealing to his missional example in terms of his abstinence from idol meat, which he advocates in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. Rather, as Sisson (1994:3) argues, Paul “illustrates in Chapter 9 the necessity or value of a general disposition towards self-denial”. Hence, in 1 Corinthians 9, Paul focuses on his example of self-denial primarily in the context of his labour as an apostle commissioned by God to preach the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:19-23; 10:31-11:1).

In contrast to the example portrayed by the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' behavior that can potentially lead to the destruction to the weak (8:11), Paul starts his general disposition towards self-denial - his “enslavement to all” (9:22) - by first establishing his freedom as an apostle (1 Corinthians 9:1-14). He will come back to the issue of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' ἐξουσίαν to attend temples (1 Corinthians 10:1-22). But first, he responds to them who calls his own ἐξουσίαν (‘right’) and ἐλευθερία (‘freedom’) into question. Paul's response is in the form of an example, not defence, to the objection the Corinthians made to his position of freedom in 8:13. Kistemaker (1993:284-285) provides an additional possibility for the basis of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' criticism of Paul. This basis falls on the argument that “an apostle had to have followed Jesus from the time of Jesus from the time of his baptism in the River Jordan to his ascension at the Mount of Olives and had to be a

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<sup>6</sup> Paul's example in 1 Corinthians 8:13 is the basis for the entire discussion in 1 Corinthians 9” (Ramsaran 1996:51). Paul states in 8:13 that if his freedom to eat meat causes his brother or sister to stumble “I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother [sic] to stumble”. Paul's example of Christian of freedom is the central message in 1 Corinthians 9.

witness of Jesus' resurrection (Acts 1:21-26)" (Kistemaker 1993:284-285). He further states that "Paul was not numbered among the Twelve and he lacked the instruction Jesus had given them" (Kistemaker 1993:285)

"Am I not an apostle?" Paul begins (9:1). "Am I not free?" (9:1). Paul begins by answering the second question because his behavioral example for his mission is based on his position of freedom. His answer in the form of rhetorical questions (9:1b), "is based on his own criteria of having seen the risen Lord and having founded the Corinthian church" (Fee 2001:122). The criteria offered through a series of four rhetorical questions (9:1b-2) refer to Paul's γνῶσις that supports his claim to be free because he is an apostle (1 Corinthians 3:10; 4:14-15). Thus, Paul's argument parallels that in 1 Corinthians 8:1-13: freedom comes from what is known. It is evident that the rhetorical questions issued by Paul reveal the lack of perception on the part of the interlocutor as it concerns their definition of Christian freedom, but it also reveals Paul's freedom as an apostle. The rhetorical questions, as Paul's response to his interlocutors, portray the following notion: "apostles are free (assumed) and Paul is an apostle (9:1b-2); therefore, the implicit conclusion is that Paul is free" (Ramsaran 1996:52).

#### *1 Corinthians 9:3-14: Paul's ἐξουσία*

In the further elaboration of his example of the use of Christian freedom, Paul moves his general disposition of self-denial by illustrating his γνῶσις of his right as a free apostle (9:3-15). One could ask in what terms Paul is free as an apostle. The answer is: In terms of his rights and his knowledge of those rights (Ramsaran 1996:53). Perkins (2012:118) states that, "before Paul can use his own conduct as an example of the principle that those who have authority (freedom), insight (γνῶσις), or advantages, might choose not to act on them, he must establish the rights of an apostle". In 1 Corinthians 9:3, Paul responds by what can best be taken as a restatement of 9:1a to those who examine his qualifications for freedom. In his argument, Paul proceeds that he has all the rights as a free apostle (food, drink, and similar support for a wife), and both he and Barnabas share them. Paul establishes these rights in his argument through rhetorical questions that reveal "the example of other apostles as reinforced by gnomic maxims<sup>7</sup> (9:4-7); the quotations from the scriptures from Israel as reinforced with a gnomic maxim (9:8-11); and the example of temple servants as reinforced by an unspecified commandment of the Lord (9:13-14)" (Ramsaran 1996:53).

Paul starts the establishment of his rights with three rhetorical questions (9:4-6) in an attempt to state to the Corinthians that, he and Barnabas, are not to be regarded differently from other

<sup>7</sup> Gnomic maxims are maxims that are expressed in a short and often in ambiguous form.



apostles (that is, Cephas [Peter] [and the] brothers of the Lord); they too have the right to expect and receive material support from the communities in which they worked as missionaries. The right of the apostles to receive material support is established further by three gnomic maxims in 9:7. Perkins (2012:119) calls them “three commonplace examples - serving in the army, cultivating a vineyard, and shepherding sheep - that show individuals are entitled to food in exchange for their labor”. These commonplace examples convey the notion that every kind of labourer is within their right to receive subsistence.

To further his persuasion of the Corinthians concerning his ἐξουσίαν to expect and receive material support from the Corinthian community in which he labours/missions, Paul alludes to the Old Testament text - in specific the Law of Moses (9:8-11). Paul does so to demonstrate the same point he did with the three gnomic maxims in 9:7. The demonstration starts with Paul reiterating a quotation from Deuteronomy 25:4: “You shall not muzzle the mouth of the ox while it is threshing the ground”. The quotation does not denote the specification of animal rights, rather “Paul contends that it indicates what is owed to the labourer” (Perkins 2012:119). Paul uses the concern for the labouring ox as an analogy for the labouring apostles - of whom he is one of them. The hermeneutical use of this analogy is made more explicit when Paul answers his own rhetorical question (9:10a) with a gnomic maxim in 9:10b: “You shall not muzzle the mouth of an ox while it is threshing the ground,” was written for our (any labourer in the Gospel, especially an apostle) sake, because “whoever plows should plow in hope and whoever threshes should thresh in hope of a share in the crop”. In this analogy, Paul’s right to receive material support from his Corinthian audience is authorised by God’s scriptural law given through Moses (9:9-10).

In 9:11, Paul further establishes his ἐξουσίαν by expanding on his Old Testament agricultural metaphors of plowing and threshing in terms of sowing and reaping. Heil (2005:140) goes on to say that, “the audience (implied reader) is to affirm that if we, Paul and Barnabas, have sown spiritual seed, that is, the Gospel, for you, then it is no great thing, but to be naturally expected, that these apostles will harvest material things from you (9:11)”.

The Corinthian audience, therefore, is compelled to admit that since other apostles have this right over them for material support, all the more Paul as their founding apostle, shares in it more so (9:12a). As per Paul’s example of the use of Christian freedom being the main concern in 1 Corinthians 9, Heil (2005:140) argues the following notion with regards to his apostolic right over the Corinthians:

The apostolic right over you (τῆς ὑμῶν ἐξουσίας) reminds them of your right (ἐξουσία ὑμῶν), the right that some among them think they possess to eat meat sacrificed to idols based on their knowledge of the meaningless of idols, but that Paul urges them not to exercise so as not to become a stumbling block to the ‘the weak,’ those who do not have this knowledge (8:9).

Verse 12b is a deviation from the diatribe style. In 9:12b, Paul is not establishing his rights as an apostle anymore, but thematically posits his example of Christian liberty as it relates to his apostolic right. Nevertheless, as 9:12b relates thematically with 1 Corinthians 8:9-12 we can deduce the notion that Paul had warned the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers not to allow the exercise of their rights to become a stumbling block (πρόσκομμα) to those who are weak (8:9). In response to their negative example, Paul is presenting his sound exercise of Christian freedom as he indicates that he does not use his right to support in a way that places a hindrance upon the advance of the Gospel (9:12b). Verse 12b also serves as a summary that anticipates the self-denying example of Paul within the discussion of 9:15-18.

In 9:13-14, it is not clear whether Paul’s establishment of his right to solicit support “needs any further support, especially since he said that he has no intention of exercising that right” (Sisson 1994:66). However, it may seem that, “Paul brings forth an example from temple cultic norms that is clear both to Jews and to Gentiles” (Ramsaran 1996:53). The example from temple cultic norms, Perkins (2012:119) describes, as an “example of priests and those engaged in sacrifices dividing the offerings that brings the discussion close to the problem of sacrificial meat posed in 1 Corinthians 8”. Nevertheless, it is an example that once again establishes Paul’s right as an apostle to solicit support from his Corinthian audience. The rather lengthy list for Paul’s right to expect and receive support from his Corinthian audience concludes with a reference to a command of Jesus that is presumably familiar with the community. This saying or command in 9:14b can be noted also as a maxim: “they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel”. This maxim of Jesus can originate from a proverb written in Luke 10:7: “The worker is worthy of his wages”.

In 1 Corinthians 9:1-14, Paul’s maxim argumentation plays a key role in the establishment of his rights as a free apostle. He has used maxims at specific and significant places that were employed as counter-responses familiar to the diatribe style. The maxims that are used by Paul work in conjunction with examples (agricultural metaphors) and quotations (from the Mosaic Law) to produce an emphatic establishment of Paul’s (and Barnabas’) rightful claims for material support. Nevertheless, 9:12b serves as a summary that anticipates Paul’s self-

denial. Paul's self-denial in terms of his right to solicit material support is an indication of his example as someone who uses his Christian liberty for the sake of the advancement of the Gospel.

In the following section, one finds that the Gospel of Christ sets the agenda for Paul's self-denial.

*1 Corinthians 9:15-18: The Gospel mission takes precedence over ἐξουσίαν (right)*

In 1 Corinthians 9:12b, the plural 'we' refers to Paul and Barnabas, the two apostles, who did not demand the material support that they expected to receive from the Corinthian audience. Rather, as free apostles, they chose to "suffer all things" (9:12b) so that the spread and advance of the Gospel mission could take precedence over their rightful claim to support. The same thematic renunciation of one's rights is reasserted now in 9:15 where Paul states his example of Christian freedom of his own practice in Corinth, in the first person singular 'I', in having not used his right to material support. However, in the form of a disclaimer, Paul states to his Corinthian audience that he is not establishing his ἐξουσίαν as an apostle for them to provide him with material support. Such an argument would defeat the purpose of his example of Christian liberty within 1 Corinthians 9, in particular, and in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 as a whole. The Corinthian audience should not misinterpret Paul's establishment of his rights as a rhetorical ploy to inaugurate a shift in his relationship to them. Perkins (2012:120) states on this matter that, "Paul interjects a caveat that he is not attempting to secure any kind of Patronage of them: I would rather die [that] - no one will nullify my boast".

Paul's commission to preach the Gospel is of such immense importance that he described it as an activity he performs under compulsion: "for necessity it is laid upon me" (9:15b). This might sound like an amplification or exaggeration of Paul's position regarding the Gospel, but for Paul his commissioning is without choice. As Perkins (2012:120) states, "since he has no choice in the matter, Paul cannot claim any credit for doing his work (9:17)". Paul further goes on to assert that the nonuse of his right to support gives him a greater boast: that is, in his mission he has loved well (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:1b), and that he has advanced the Gospel. In Corinth, "Paul's boast is that he makes the Gospel free of charge; Paul does not exercise his right to material support, and he therefore leaves himself open to express love fully, without worldly of the Patron-client relationship" (Ramsaran 1996:54).

*1 Corinthians 9:19-23: Paul's self-denial for the sake of the Gospel*

The following passage, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, along with its reiteration in 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, serves as the two passages that illustrate Paul's missional way of acting that he claims is worthy of example because he imitates Christ. In Chapter three, these two passages will provide us with the function of Paul's example of Christian freedom as it concerns the use of Christian freedom in the spread of the Gospel (that is, evangelism).

The structural argument of the passage shows us that Paul, "illustrates the use of individual rights in community through the example of his missionary practices" (Ramsaran 1996:54). In 1 Corinthians 9:19, Paul defines his use of Christian freedom by voluntarily enslaving himself to all people. He asserts that, "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might gain the more" (9:19). He explains this enslavement in 9:20-22 as the appropriate behavior that fits the ultimate purpose of his freedom: "so that I might by all means save some" (9:22b).

Paul's exercise of his Christian freedom has a behavioral component attached to it; and that is to enslave himself (or to have an approach of slavery) to those who lack his knowledge. Ramsaran (1996:54-55) states that, "the mention of the weak in 9:22 is a sure indication that Paul is tying his mission example to how community practices in Corinth should proceed".

However, Paul's approach of slavery is not only identical to his adaptability to the weak brother or sister in Christ, but also to Jews, Gentiles and to all kinds of people (9:20-23). The purpose or end of Paul's enslavement does not only mean that Paul's approach of slavery is focused on the salvation of a weak brother or sister in Christ. Paul's proper use of Christian liberty also functions as a strategy to evangelise the all kinds of people. Hall (1990:138) points out that, "the parallel feature of Paul's enslavement of himself to these various groups can be found in the exegetical καὶ which indicates that the two actions, linked by the simple and are parallel to each other". In 1 Corinthians 9:20, Paul becomes a slave to the Jew. Limited by God's word and his Christian conscience, Paul, according to MacArthur (1997:1742), "would be as culturally and socially Jewish as necessary when witnessing to Jews (cf. Rom. 9:3; 10:1; 11:14)". MacArthur (1997:1742) further comments that Paul "was not bound to ceremonies and traditions of Judaism. All legal restraints had been removed, but there was a constraint of love<sup>8</sup> (cf. Rom. 9:3; 10:1; 11:14)"

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<sup>8</sup> For more examples on Paul's accommodation to Jews as he was constrained by love, see Acts 16:13; 18:18; 21:20-26

In 9:21, Paul illustrates his position on Christian liberty to the Gentiles. Paul's qualifications of his enslavement to Gentiles as a free person understood through the words, "(not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ)" (9:21), is an indication to those strong Corinthian Jesus-followers that his accommodating behavior towards others irrespective of religion, ethnicity or culture, does not mean that his liberty is renounced. Rather, as Sampley (2001:907) asserts, Paul's freedom serves "for the sole purpose of winning, and gaining for the Gospel the ones to whom he accommodates". From this view, Paul's position on freedom is that believers maintain their freedom in whatever capacity they have it, but what takes precedence over their freedom or rights is the advance of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:23). In other words, God calls believers to use their freedom responsibly to ensure that no aspect of their freedom hinders the advance of the Gospel to achieve the ultimate soteriological purpose, that of the salvation of all kinds of people. In Chapter five, I further discuss how historical figures and autobiographical situations emulate and reflect Paul's missional example as a strategy for evangelical mission in various contexts.

*1 Corinthians 9:24-27: Paul as an athlete and boxer*

In this section, Paul describes himself as an athlete. He uses the athletic metaphor to describe how he uses his Christian freedom for the soteriological end he desires. MacArthur (1997:1742) states that "the Greeks enjoyed two great athletic events, the Olympic games and the Isthmian games, and because the Isthmian events were held in Corinth, believers there were quite familiar with this analogy of running to win".

Off the field, athletes are people who exercise self-control with respect to their rights (ἐξουσία) in order to compete excellently in the race they have entered. They knew that self-control is crucial to victory. They exercise their self-control over their right to eat junk food, their right to sleep at any hour of the day. On the field, without excellent training athletes for example, risk being foolish by straying from their own lane on the track and field. Their non-use of their rights shows that athletes use their freedom responsibly to win a certain prize. Not only do they do it for themselves, but they do it for their community. Athlete knows that such behavior on and off the track is commendable in the eyes of their coach.

In the same way, "Paul resumes his maxim argumentation in diatribe style in 9:24-27 by explaining more precisely to the Corinthian audience his own example of freedom" (Ramsaran 1996:55). The maxim in 9:24a "in a race where all runners compete, but only one receives the prize" relates to 9:23b "that I might share in its blessings. The following

exhortation of Paul to the strong Corinthians Jesus-followers, “So run in such a way, that you may obtain the prize”, expands on the focus on 9:23a: “I do all for the sake of the Gospel”.

Paul’s maxim in 9:25a, “Everyone that strives for mastery (like athletes) is self-controlled in all things,” is interwoven with Paul’s argument and missional example as seen in 1 Corinthians 8 and 1 Corinthians 9 as a whole. In light of this notion, Ramsaran (1996:55) states that “self-control with respect to one’s ἐξουσία brings about the imperishable wreath (9:25b) or commendation from God, that is, what really matters (see 8:8)”. In 9:26b Paul changes the metaphor to boxing “to illustrate the point that he was no shadow boxer, just waving his arms without effect” (MacArthur 1997:1742). Perkins (2012:121) states that without rigorous training, “Paul would risk being foolish as the runner who strays from his lane on the course (that is, run aimlessly) or a boxer punching at air (9:26-27a)”.

In short, the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers saw Paul’s life as one who had no freedom, or was demeaning. Paul, however, invited them to consider his postulated missional example in a form that represents self-control. Winter (1997:169) argues that, “no one can suspect him [Paul] of preaching the Gospel for personal advantage”.

By further expanding on the same notion in revealing Paul’s missional example as someone who was an embodiment of his own teaching, Perkins (2012:121; italics added) stresses a view that can be argued of 1 Corinthians 9:27b that states: “if the apostle was not careful to see that his way of life authenticates the Gospel he preaches, (2:1-5), *he may fail to attain the salvation that he preaches to others (9:27b)*”. At question in 9:27b is what has long been known as a topic of debate among Christian circles: In 9:27b, does Paul imply that he is able to lose his salvation if he doesn’t discipline his body?

The word ἀδόκιμος (translated: disqualified) in 9:27 might suggest that Paul has the possibility and fear of losing his salvation. It is possible that some could read the 9:27 as suggesting that Paul’s attempt to be self-disciplined and subject his body is to ensure that he does not lose his own salvation - a salvation he also preaches to others. Those who view 1 Corinthians 9 as Paul’s defence of his apostleship, Storms (2006:1) stresses that Paul’s concern is that, “he not becomes slack or indifferent in his ministry lest he forfeits God’s approval on his apostolic endeavors (and perhaps the power of the Holy Spirit that energised his work)”. Storms (2006:1) argue that the Greek word ἀδόκιμος (translated: disqualified) “does not pertain to the test of faith but to the test of apostleship”. He further expands on his argument by stating that, “in 2 Corinthians Paul applies the terminology of testing (ἀδόκιμος

and its cognates) to himself as an apostle, not as a professing Christian (see 13:6-7; cf. 1 Thess. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:15)".

Gundry Volf (1990:247) holds a similar view and contends that Paul disciplines himself, not out of any concern for his salvation, but in order to ensure he is not disqualified in his apostolic ministry. Gundry Volf (1990:247) argues, "according to the proposed interpretation...Paul's rigorous efforts in apostolic ministry do not serve to secure his own salvation but to make him the Gospel's partner in fulfilling his calling". So, she stresses, "Paul does not want to lose this divine approval of his ministry" (Gundry Volf 1990:347).

Though Storms and Gundry Volf refute the view that Paul's fear of being disqualified meant he feared his salvation being lost, they hold to the view that Paul is defending his apostolic calling. In other words, they view that Paul used forensic rhetoric in 1 Corinthians 9. Just like some authors, I argue that they misuse and exaggerate Paul's singular use of the word *defence* (apologia) in 1 Corinthians 9:3 so that the whole of 1 Corinthians 9 becomes a defence of Paul's apostolic ministry. But, says Schreider and Caneday (2001:180), "this remarkably misses the continuity with both Chapter 8 and 10".

If Gundry Volf (1990:247) adopts the view that 1 Corinthians 9 is an apology for Paul's ministry (in Schreider & Caneday, 2001: 180), then 1 Corinthians 9 "is an intrusion into an otherwise coherent argument. To sustain her interpretation, she finds it necessary to regard Chapter 10 as loosely following Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 9:27 rather than to explain why the apostle includes his own model of self-limitation on rights and freedom in Chapter 9". I agree with Schreider and Caneday (2001:181) that Paul does not use forensic rhetoric to defend his apostolic ministry, but uses deliberative rhetoric to postulate his own model of the loving use of Christian freedom in his evangelical mission.

Moreover, Schreider and Caneday (2001:181) continue by saying that, "Paul presents himself as a model to be followed by all, for if Paul the apostle, who preaches the Gospel, is concerned to relinquish his rights and freedoms in order that he might partake of the salvation he proclaims, how much more should the Corinthians be cautious in how they behave?". Though Storms' (2006:1) and Gundry Volf's (1990:247) respective views on *αδόκιμος* refute the notion that Paul had a fear to lose his own salvation, they do so by viewing it as a defence of Paul's apostolic ministry instead of Paul calling his Corinthian audience to follow his missional example. However, with Paul's use of deliberative rhetoric, one ought not to see *αδόκιμος* relating to Paul's defence of his apostolic ministry, but presenting his missional model to his Corinthian audience calling them to be fellow partakers with him in evangelism.

Therefore, to understand what Paul means by ἀδόκιμος in 9:27, one must examine the close connection with Paul's words in 9:23. Both 9:27 and 9:23 express Paul's central concern. Note the parallel nature of the verses.

Now this I do for the Gospel's sake, so that I may be partaker of it with you. (1 Corinthians 9:23)

But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified (1 Corinthians 9:27)

The context explains that ἀδόκιμος (disqualified) should be seen as opposite to being a "partaker of it with you" (συγκοινωνός) of the Gospel (9:27). The question then on ἀδόκιμος would be: Does Paul discipline and subject his body in fear of not being a partaker of the salvation of others or in fear of not attaining that salvation himself? I argue that the predominant concern for Paul's use of ἀδόκιμος is in relation to his partaking in the conversion and complete (eschatological) salvation of others. It is arguably the case within 1 Corinthians 8 and 9 that Paul has the salvation of the Jew, the Greek, the weak and all people in view, and not his own. The emphasis of Paul's use of ἀδόκιμος should rest on Paul's attempt to portray himself as an example of self-denial as an evangelical strategy to attain the salvation of others. Therefore, if Paul is not self-controlled in his calling, he will relinquish the privilege of being used by God as a partaker to attain the prize, that is, the salvation, of those he evangelises.

In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul presented himself to his Corinthian audience as the example of the proper use of Christian freedom as a strategy for evangelism and mission. The summary of his use of Christian liberty is found in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. Paul enslaves himself to all kinds of people for sake of the Gospel and the salvation of many (9:19-23). He now returns to the issue of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' right to attend temples (1 Corinthians 10:1-22).

### 3.2.3 1 Corinthians 10:1-22: A warning against idolatrous behaviour

*1 Corinthians 10:1-22: Paul addresses the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' knowledge or lack thereof ("ignorance") as it concerns idolatry*

In ancient antiquity, examples are seen as a valid standard of proof just like quotations from authoritative ancient sources and authorities. Paul, having established himself as a missional example of a free person who sacrificed his rights for the greater good of all, now draws on biblical examples to argue more directly against the issue of eating meat sacrificed unto idols.



Paul calls the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' participation in pagan temple activities as participation in idolatry. Fitzmyer (2008:377) states that, in 1 Corinthians 10:1-22, "one sees that the eating of idol meat has assumed a broader perspective; it is no longer simply a problem for those whose conscience is weak (8:7), but one related to idolatry, which a Christian must shun".

A detail worth mentioning is that the issue of idolatry addressed in 1 Corinthians 10:1-22 is still part of Paul's missional example. Through his use of deliberative rhetoric, Paul is using this warning section of Israel's experience in an attempt to dissuade his audience from a course of action that will not be advantageous - both to the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers and the Corinthian community as a whole.

*1 Corinthians 10:1-13: Qualifying their content of γνῶσις by a Biblical view of idolatry: The example of the Exodus*

In 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Paul maps the Israelite experience in the wilderness as analogous to what the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers are experiencing in Corinth. The overarching concern for Paul in this section is the question on idolatry. Paul starts off with the negative example of the Israeli experience in the wilderness with what Collins and Harrington (1999:366) call, "the five positive statements of the rehearsal of events (10:1-4)". Before the five positive statements occur, Paul warns his Corinthian audience in 10:1a that they should not be ignorant of the nature of idolatry and its consequences. The use of this disclosure formula is important for Paul as he moves from the digression on his apostolic freedom and rights to the topic at hand, eating meat offered to idols. In this opening discussion of 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, we find that knowledge or γνῶσις is again at the heart of the matter (8:1-3).

According to Fee (2001:123), for the whole argument of idolatry in 1 Corinthians 10 to make sense, two things must be true: "Firstly, the Corinthians really thought they were secure because of a somewhat magical view of baptism and the Lord's Supper". Arguably, this is the knowledge that Paul addresses as ignorance (10:1a). "Secondly, from Paul's perspective the Corinthian Jesus-followers were in real danger of 'falling away'" (Fee 2001:378).

This warning of 'falling away' given by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:12 could have three possible renderings. Firstly, this 'falling away' should not be seen as losing one's eternal salvation, but the falling away, on account of their own unloving behavior, to partake in the advance of the Gospel of Christ. Secondly, this falling away could arguably be described by the judgment of

physical death as also seen in the analogy of Israel where apparently 3000 were killed by the Levites (Exodus 32:28) and 20 000 died in the plague (Exodus 32:35) because of the sin of idolatry. Lastly, a possible rendering of 1 Corinthians 10:12 could be an admonishment to his Corinthian audience, in light of their temple attendance, to examine themselves whether they have true saving faith (cf. 2 Corinthians 13:5). It is possible that those Israelites who fell could have had experienced salvific experiences but never had a true saving faith and relationship with God. This could possibly be the case with the Corinthian audience, or at least for some of them. Hence Paul warns his Corinthian audience in the first person singular: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he falls” (1 Corinthians 10:12). In other words, the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers are each warned to examine themselves whether they are in the faith unless their faith should be found wanting on the eschatological day of judgment (cf. Matthew 7:21-23). Arguably, all three renderings can be possible interpretations for the dangers that face the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers in light of their temple attendance and activities.

Paul starts off his argument by alluding to the wilderness generation of Israel who enjoyed five privileges, namely: God protected them under the cloud of His presence; God took them through the Red Sea when the Egyptians were pursuing; God lead them through Moses; God always provided them with food; and always gave them water to drink (10:1-4). The focus of this argument is on the Israelites baptism into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. Paul writes the baptism of the Israelites then, as Collins and Harrington (1999:368) assert “in terms that recall Christian baptism”. In 10:1 is an indication, as Ramsaran (1996:56) puts it, where Paul’s intention is to “pattern the experience of the wilderness community as analogous to the believing community in Corinth”.

Nowhere in 10:1 is Paul alluding to baptism, but the significance of the cloud and the Red Sea finds its reference in 10:2 where, “all were baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the Red Sea”. In this verse, Paul interprets the baptismal desert experience of the Israeli wilderness generation by analogy, comparing it to the salvific baptismal experience of the Jesus-followers. Fitzmyer (2008:381) argues that, “as Christians are saved by being “baptised into Christ Jesus” (Rom 6:3; cf. Gal 3:27), so Israel of Old was related salvifically to Moses by the cloud and the sea; he brought them to deliverance and safety”. The cloud as seen in the Exodus, serves as the privileged sign of God’s salvific presence that serves as guidance for the Israelites as they wander through the wilderness with Moses their leader, as it guides them to the land of milk and honey. The sea refers to the Israelites deliverance from pursuing

Egyptians - a deliverance orchestrated by God. All of these privileges have a soteriological theme in its narrative.

In 10:3-4, we find the word ‘spiritual’ three times (of food, drink, and rock). Fitzmyer (2008:382) offers two possibilities on why the food is called, spiritual. The first possibility Fitzmyer (2008:382) offers is that, “the food is spiritual mainly because it was given to them by God in a wondrous way that sustained their natural lives and it symbolised His presence among them through the gift of the Holy Spirit”. Secondly, Fitzmyer (2008:382) argues, “it may also be spiritual, because Paul sees it prefiguring the Eucharistic bread, which probably also explains why it is said to be the same food for all; as he prepares for the *κοινωνία*, he will introduce in verse 16”.

Furthermore, in terms of why the drink is called spiritual, again Fitzmyer (2008:342) offers two possibilities. The first possibility Fitzmyer (2008:382) offers is that the drink, “is spiritual because it is God-given”. The second possibility Fitzmyer (2008:382) stresses is that, “perhaps it is pre-figuring the sharing of the Eucharistic drink”. Moreover, Keener (2005:85) states that the rock of the Israeli wilderness generation, “corresponds to Christ as the source of life for his followers (10:4)”.

Fitzmyer (in Collins & Harrington 1999:365) does account for the fact that: “the summary rehearsal of the Exodus events with which Paul begins his exposition (10:1-5) sets the stage for what proves to be an actualising interpretation of the biblical narrative”. In other words, the stipulated past events are not rehearsed to get a better understanding of the past per se, but they have been retold so that the pressing issue of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers concerning eating meat sacrificed unto idols, can be understood. Adeyemo (2006:1388) views the Israel event as reference to “refer to the current circumstances, like the Corinthians’ misuse of their Christian liberty in attending pagan feasts”.

Employing the rhetorical advantage of surprise, Paul starts with the conjunction *ὄλλ’* as a discourse marker in 10:5 to prove the ignorance (10:1) of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers in terms of eating meat sacrificed to idols. The question is then: “What is the basis of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers’ ignorance? Before I answer this question, it is appears fitting to firstly analyse the rest of the unit of 1 Corinthians 10:1-22.

The rhetorical advantage of surprise continues where Paul suddenly shifts to an emphasis that God destroyed the Corinthian Jesus-followers’ spiritual predecessors (10:5-10) as an example to God’s people, in particular the Corinthian Jesus-followers who later read these examples.

The example reflected in the idolatry and the consequent destruction of the Israelites in the wilderness is marked by five negative statements which are in contrast to the five positive statements in 10:1-4. These negative statements are characterised by the use of a negative particle and a construction that makes use of simile: "...we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Do not be idolaters, as were some of them...Let us not commit fornication, as some of them committed, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. Let us not tempt Christ as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Let us not murmur, as some of them also murmured, as were destroyed by the destroyer" (10:5-10). As Paul ends his list of negative statements he affirms that, "these things happened unto them by way of example; they were written for their and our admonition" (10:11).

In the conclusion on the section of 10:1-13, Paul deals with a warning and a word of hope in the form of a promise (10:12-13). In 10:12, it conveys the notion, according to Fee (2001:142) that, "the one who thinks he stands, in this case, one who has a false security, should take heed lest he fall (10:12)". Ramsaran (1996:57) conveys it in different phraseology but conveys the same notion when he says that the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers should "self-test 'properly' and not overestimate what their so called unrestricted freedom can lead to". This is related to the Corinthian freedom position (8:9) and its contribution to the endangerment of the faith of one's weak brother or sister. However, Fee (2001:124) argues, "it is difficult for Paul to end his argument here on a negative note, or on a note that suggests they were to stand firm in their own strength". Thus, Paul reminds the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers that God will provide by his grace (empowerment and strength) a way of escape even in the time of testing (= a strong desire or encouragement from friends to attend temples?) (Fee 2001:124). The conclusion could be summed up in short: "Take heed, but remember God's grace" (Fee 2001:124).

*1 Corinthians 10:14-22: Qualifying their content of γυνῶσις by a Biblical view of idolatry: The Lord's supper*

The following section, 1 Corinthians 10:14-22, builds on Paul's dissuasive argument in 10:1-13. Conzelmann (1975:70), however, suggests that the train of thought in this section is self-contained; it is hardly possible to discern a strict connection of thought with the preceding section, in spite of Διόπερ (therefore). A contrasting argument would be to stress that Διόπερ is especially important in this case. In 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Paul has used Israel's εἰδωλολάτραι in the wilderness and their subsequent destruction by God as an example for the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers that convey the seriousness of their ignorance and

admonishes them to abstain from eating temple meat sacrificed unto idols. Therefore, having warned the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers about their ignorance as it concerns idolatry by the eating of temple meat sacrificed unto idols, Paul concludes the argument - “therefore, flee idolatry”. Fitzmyer (2008:389), however, posits a clearer argument in this case: “The connection of this verse (verse 14) to what immediately precedes is not the most logical, but the introductory conjunction Διόπερ, ‘therefore’, is really a connection of the following verses (15-22) with verses 1-13 (cf. 8:13)”. The view of Fitzmyer (2008:389), arguably, is most logical because in both sections, 10:1-13 and 10:15-22, Paul addresses the ignorance of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers as it concerns idolatry.

The concern for Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:1-22, is stated well by Keener (2005) to highlight the important rhetorical arguments used by Paul to address the ignorance of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers. Keener (2005:87) states that:

...his concern here is not so much an intrinsic problem with spiritually contaminated food or the material substance of idols (10:19) but with the symbolic compromise with idolatry that idol food communicated in a polytheistic social context. What others perceived as compromise with idolatry was important, because the spiritual entities involved in genuine idolatry were real, and few would dissociate the symbol from the reality.

Given that Paul is addressing the ignorance of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers (10:15), firstly, his address could have a rather sarcastic tone attached to it. Sarcastically, it could read like this: I, Paul, am addressing your ignorance concerning idolatry, but since you claim to be wise, what I am saying can only be received and followed by wise believers, so you judge what I am saying and thus prove yourself to be wise or not. Or, secondly, Paul’s rhetoric in 10:15 could have an affirming tone attached to it. Affirmatively, it could read like this: I, Paul, am addressing your ignorance concerning idolatry, but I do know that you are wise, and are able to receive and follow what I am saying even though you have not been aware of your ignorance. If love is the supreme ethic that Paul is appealing his audience to base their behavior upon, then as their example, Paul’s rhetoric would have an affirmative tone attached to it in 10:15. However, I agree with Fitzmyer (2008:389) that, “Paul is not being ironic”. Rather, he is affirming their ability to judge wisely in order to recognise the soundness of his counsel.

I agree with Collins’ and Harrington’s (1999:375) interpretation of the experience of the Eucharist introduced in 1 Corinthians 10:16-22 that, Paul is not teaching about the Eucharist

in this section, “but he is drawing rhetorical arguments (the augment from *pathos*) from the Corinthians’ experience of it...”. Collins and Harrington (1999:375) further argue that Paul “alludes to the Eucharistic ritual in reference to the cup of blessing and the bread that is broken (10:16)”. The Eucharist, as Paul interprets it through the concept of *κοινωνία*, communion, is the sharing of the cup and bread where the community of Corinth participates in the death of Christ. In addressing the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers’ ignorance (10:1) concerning idolatry, Paul rigorously seems to state that, “sharing the Lord’s Table through cup and bread creates a situation of radical incompatibility with sharing the table of demons, that is, participating in the ritual meals of idol worship” (Collins & Harrington 1999:376).

It is typical of Paul to use imperial rhetoric that reflects the socio-religious experience of the Corinthian audience. In this case, the term *κοινωνοὶ* is used and can be commonly found in cultic meals (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:10; 9:13; 10:20-21). Nevertheless, such eating of meat sacrificed unto idols is incompatible with life in Christ, because, as Israel ate of the sacrifices and are partakers of the altar, so the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers are partakers of a demonic altar. As Collins and Harrington (1999:377) posit, “Paul’s argument makes effective use of comparison and contrast. The Corinthian Jesus-followers’ eating of food offered to idols in temples is juxtaposed with Israelite priests’ eating food offered in sacrifice. The Lord is contrasted with demons and the cup of the Lord with the cup offered to demons”. This is precisely why Keener’s (2005:87) concern in this section is the symbolic compromise with idolatry that idol food communicated in a polytheistic social context.

In coming back to the original question: “What is the basis of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers’ ignorance that Paul is addressing?” In other words, why did Paul have to qualify the content of their *γνώσις* with a biblical view of idolatry? The answer to these questions I discuss in the following section.

*Paul addresses the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers’ γνώσις/or lack thereof: A soteriological significance*

Fee’s (2001:124) notion of Paul’s qualification on the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers’ *γνώσις* is that, as Paul “qualified the Corinthians way of knowledge in 8:1-13 (in particular 8:7-13) by the way of love, so now he (Paul) qualifies the content of their knowledge by a biblical view of idolatry”. In other words, in 1 Corinthians 10:1-22 Paul addresses the ignorance of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers’ position concerning their idolatrous behavior in temple rituals. Moreover, he not only addresses their ignorance concerning their

idolatrous behavior, but he implicitly addresses the basis of their ignorance which has a soteriological significance.

Collins and Harrington (1999:377) do not adequately investigate the basis of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' ignorance, but their view is a departure point for my analysis. Collins and Harrington (1999:377) stress that, in light of Paul's allusion to the Israelite wilderness experience, "the fate of some who had shared in the common experience of salvation should serve as a warning to the Corinthians who themselves share a common experience of salvation". Paul introduces the common experience of salvation of the Corinthian Jesus-followers not by the salvific representative terms of the Exodus experience in the wilderness such as spiritual meat (10:3) and spiritual drink, but by salvific representative terms of the death of Jesus Christ. These representative terms are symbolised in terms of the bread (his body) and the cup (his blood). Paul's analogy of the Lord's Supper, then, indicates that the common experience of salvation by the Corinthian Jesus-followers should be an indication that they ought not to have "fellowship with devils" (10:20). Therefore, Fee (2001:125) states, "εἰδωλόθυτα finally is prohibited because it is totally incompatible with Christian existence as it is experienced and expressed at the Lord's Table".

Furthermore, in addition to the soteriological basis of their ignorance, the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers, one can argue, believed that food and drink is a matter of indifference because of the nothingness of an idol. Hence, Paul's rhetorical questions and his subsequent response to it (10:19-20), suggests that for him eating thing food may be counted as a matter of indifference, but demonic powers have a real effect in temples where food are offered to idols. Fee (2001:124) argues that, "since they are real, to eat at the table is to expose oneself to, indeed to with, the demons. Such eating is not a display of one's rights, but to test the Lord (1 Corinthians 10:22)".

Paul has sufficiently addressed the ignorance (their lack of true γνῶσις about idolatry) of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers as it concerns fellowship with idols that occurs in their eating of temple meat sacrificed unto false deities. His address proves to have again, as seen in 1 Corinthians 8 and 9, a soteriological significance. Paul now concludes his example in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 by continuing his maxim argumentation in 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1.

*1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1: Paul's missional example applicable in all settings*

This section continues Paul's argument that he advances in 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, especially in 1 Corinthians 8:7-13. Vocabulary used in 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, such as "build up" (8:1b),

“conscience” (8:10, 12), “offence” (8:9, 13), and Paul’s argument about concern for others in the community are present in this portion of the text. However, the concern for Paul in this section is not εἰδωλόθυτα being forbidden, but that Paul had eaten market place idol food and been judged for it. The Pauline missional example at display within the section is one that is ruled not by the Law nor by rights, but by ἐλευθερία (freedom) “set in a context of benefit (advantage) and edification (up-building) on the one hand (10:22-23, 32-33), and the glory of God on the other (10:31). This advantage Paul defines as seeking “the profit of many, so that they may be saved” (10:33). This suggests that the *telos* (purpose or end) of Paul’s appeal to his advantageous missional example (11:1) - as would be argued in Chapter four - is salvation and then its function, therefore, evangelical (see 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; 1 Corinthians 10:33-11:1).

The two maxims that govern Paul’s personal missional example within 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1, are depicted within 10:23a and 10:31. The first maxim (10:23a) is composed of a restatement of 6:12a (“all things are permissible”) with an antithetical qualification (“but not all things are beneficial”). In both these cases Paul (in 10:23a and 6:12a), according to Ramsaran (1996:38), “places the Corinthian maxim within the deliberative context concerning the most profitable (συμφέρειν) and his qualification resembles the position of the stoics who argue for responsible freedom”. The second maxim is depicted in 10:31: “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God”. The second maxim reflects the conclusion to the issue of eating meat sacrificed unto idols; and it suggests that the argument of the *telos* (purpose or end) of Paul’s exercise of Christian freedom, “the salvation of many” (10:33), can be a restatement of “bringing glory to God” (10:31). This argument is revisited more extensively in Chapter four.

The first core maxim which, “all things are permissible” (10:23a) is antithetically qualified. Paul then restates the same core maxim in 10:23b, but with a refinement and change of its antithesis in 10:23b. Paul thus refines the antithetical maxim from, “but not all things are beneficial” (10:23a; cf. 1 Corinthians 6:12-20) to, “but not all things build up” (10:23b, cf. 1 Corinthians 8:1-3). Further we see the refinements made in 10:23a and 10:23b, again being refined in 10:24: “Let no one seek their own profit” (10:24) to, “but that which builds up the other” (10:24). The use of Christian freedom in Paul’s missional example is not to focus on how it can be beneficial for oneself, but for the whole community of believers, as well as unbelievers. Paul’s missional example is not primarily focused on, or limited to the responsibility of displaying his ethical conduct as an attractive missional lifestyle. His exhortation to his Corinthian audience to undertake his approach of slavery is not limited to



the call of an appealing Christian conduct. Rather, his primary call to his Corinthian audience, as argued in my hypothesis, is that Paul's missional example of self-denial is a model he expects his Corinthians to follow *as a strategy* for evangelism and mission. Modelling Paul's missional example in order to evangelise the weak brother or sister in Christ as well as the unbeliever, would then be the beneficial action the Corinthian audience should undertake for the benefit (that is, the salvation) of the whole faith community in Corinth as well as unbelievers.

Furthermore, the practical form of Paul's statement in 10:25, ("Whatever is sold in the marketplace, that eat, asking no questions for consciousness sake"), and the basis on which such a practical application is grounded in 10:26 ("For the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof), is a restatement of the maxim core in 10:23a: "All things are permissible". The basis of the restatement reinforces the idea that cognitive theological content about the food and drink is a matter of indifference. Paul restates the practical application in 10:25 to a more vivid and more identifiable practical application in 10:27 - such as having dinner at the house of an unbeliever. In 10:28-29b, a common device in the rhetoric of refining is introduced, namely, dialogue.

The dialogue is introduced now in the setting of 10:27 where it further refines the antithetical supplement to, "all things are permissible" (10:23a), but now around the dinner table of an unbeliever's home. The restatement occurs both in 10:28 and in 10:29a. In the process of dialogue, Paul states in 10:28 that, if the unbeliever should offer the Corinthian Jesus-follower food, and the unbeliever disclose that the food has been sacrificed unto idols, the Corinthian Jesus-followers (weak or strong) should not eat the food for the sake of the conscience of the person that informed them. In this case, the reason the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers do not eat the food offered, is for the sake of the unbeliever's conscience so that they do not hinder the Gospel in the unbeliever's life by becoming a stumbling block to them. Furthermore, since there might be confusion as to whose conscience Paul is referring to, Paul clarifies this through 10:29a: "Conscience, I say, not your own, but of the other".

For Paul, eating and drinking was a matter of indifference. He justifies this claim by stating in 10:28: "For the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof". But, why does he do so? He does so, arguably, to emphasise that not only when one eats, but also when one does not eat, food and drink remains a matter of indifference. However, what is important is that the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers use their freedom responsibly so that it does not offend anyone. In

this case, not eating will display a concern for the conscience of the unbeliever who informed the Corinthians Jesus-follower about the food being sacrificed unto idols.

The following two rhetorical questions situated in 10:29b-30 is again an affirmation of the maxim core: “all things are permissible”. The functioning of the rhetorical questions is summarized by Fee’s (2001:125) analysis: “...Paul does not allow the other person (ἄλλης συνειδήσεως = another conscience) to judge him on this matter, for he has said ‘the grace’ and eats with thanksgiving. Therefore, he (Paul) affirms that he may still eat with impunity, even though he may have refrained from doing so for the sake of the conscience of the one who informed him”. The strong Corinthian Jesus-followers thought Paul not to be free because he refrains from eating at certain contexts. In contrast, Paul reaffirms through the two rhetorical questions that he has the freedom to eat such food. However, Paul reaffirms that he is free to eat such food, but it is not the primary concern on why he does so. He does so as a rhetorical thrust to posit his missional example in the context of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. This is precisely why Paul concludes the unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 with 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, to explain why he refrains from eating and drinking if it should offend or violate the conscience of someone he intends on saving.

The refinement of the first maxim in 10:23a can be found in two ways according to Ramsaran (1996:60): “the restatement of the maxim in a new form (10:31) and the appeal again to his personal example (10:32-11:1)”. The new form of maxim in 10:31 introduces something arguably important concerning Paul’s missional example: It is an example that is not restricted just to the situation of eating and drinking in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, but it includes all behavior in all contexts concerning one’s proper use of Christian freedom (“...whatsoever you do...”). In 10:32, Paul restates the scope of his missional example. It is not just the church of God’s (that is, the weak brother or sister) advantage that he is seeking, but he is seeking the advantage of the Jews and Gentiles - by implication, the whole world (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:20-23).

The evangelical language and Paul’s missional example seen in 1 Corinthians 10:31-33, Fee (2001:126) states, “recall 9:20-23 that one can be confident that this is the example he is referring to”. In Chapter four, I argue Paul’s missional example to be his approach of slavery as an evangelical mission strategy. 1 Corinthians 11:1 is the verse by which to address one’s attention in order to answer the central question whether Paul’s exhortation to his Corinthian audience to imitate him includes an admonishment to evangelism and mission. After answering this central question of this research in Chapter four, I then, in Chapter five,

discuss the universal scope of Paul's missional example and by mentioning how his use of Christian freedom is imitated by central figures of the past and through autobiographical accounts.

In this section, I analysed the literary structure and argument of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. In the following section, I provide a summary of the research findings concerning the historical and literary dimensions of the text.

### **3.3 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1: A summary of the rhetorical situation and the literary context**

#### **3.3.1 Rhetorical situation summary**

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. The argument whether Paul is addressing the eating meat sacrificed unto idols in the market place (traditional view) or of eating meat sacrificed unto idols in a temple, has been widely addressed by scholars. The latter view is more plausible to the situation in 1 Corinthians 8. I argued that I agree with the position Fee (2001:113-119) holds regarding the validity of the latter view. The lack of Jewishness in the text and the presence on sexual immorality in temple attendance is the central indicators that Paul is addressing the Corinthian audience for eating meat sacrificed unto idols in a temple. However, the function of Paul's missional example is not restricted to the pressing issue of meat sacrificed unto idols. Paul's missional example is arguably applicable in all historical, present and future contexts (see 1 Corinthians 10:31 "...whatsoever you do..."). The proper use of one's Christian liberty can occur not only as it relates to food and drink, but in all situations of human interaction. In Chapter five, the mentioning of autobiographical situations and the lives of central figures of the past illustrate exactly this - that Paul's self-efficacious example is applicable in various contexts and situations in the context of evangelism and mission.

#### **3.3.2 Literary context summary**

In the discussion of the structure and argument of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, I find that Paul's use of maxims and the rhetoric of refinement as micro rhetorical devices for his overall argumentation in the Pauline unit, offers a structural understanding of the meaning of the passage. The use of Paul's maxim rhetoric of refinement within the rhetorical situation, gives one a structural understanding of Paul's missional example.

In 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, Paul responds to the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' position of freedom (unrestricted freedom) based on knowledge and how their resultant behavior can lead to the derail of the faith of a weak Gentile believer. The strong Corinthian Jesus-followers justify their participation in eating meat sacrificed to idols by claiming unrestricted freedom to do so. Their position of unrestricted freedom and their resultant behavior is predicated upon their perspective of their cognitive theological knowledge. Paul responds by offering his maxim in 8:1b as a counter argument against their position of freedom based on knowledge: "knowledge puffs up, but love edifies". This maxim serves as the basis of his argument which advances as he elaborates and qualifies individual maxims in 8:1 and 8:4.

In the first section, 1 Corinthians 8:1-3, Paul has explains that, if knowledge is devoid of love, then such knowledge serves no purpose but contributing to the pride and arrogance the one who possesses it. Subsequently, in continuing his elaboration and qualification of his maxim in 8:1b, Paul refines the Corinthian's position on freedom in 8:4-6 by clarifying the key theological content of knowledge. Paul asserts that such cognitive theological truths in the form of a monotheistic slogan convey the notion that, the correct application of one's Christian liberty is determined by God, and His Son being the example as the Lord in whom we live and have their being. I further analysed that the incorporation of the one Lord, Jesus Christ, has a soteriological significance in the overall mission of Paul, especially in the role that Christ plays in salvation. I argue that the theme of soteriology is the key to understand the *telos* (purpose or end) of Paul's example.

In the final section, 1 Corinthians 8:7-13, Paul provides the practical qualification of his rhetorical maxim in 8:1b: "knowledge puffs up, but love builds up". In his practical qualification, Paul adds an additional maxim in 8:8. Concerning eating meat sacrificed unto idols, "the position of both the strong and the weak is indifferent, but one's behavior towards others is not" (Ramsaran 1996:51). Hence, Paul states two contrasting examples to illustrate that preferred actions should reflect the qualification of his two maxims: whether the action is done in love (8:1b) and whether the action is motivated by that which one considers to be commendable in God's eyes (8:8). By implication, the action of eating meat sacrificed unto idols by the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers, I argued, is an action Paul is arguing to be sinful because it goes against the very *telos* (goal/end) Christ died for, and that is for the salvation of the weak Gentile believer (8:11-12). Therefore, Paul offers his own example where he states that he would not exercise his right to eat food if it will offend his brother or sister in any time or in any situation (8:13).

In 1 Corinthians 9, I used Ramsaran's (1996) maxim of refinement approach to illustrate how such maxims function in Paul's argument as supporting proof in the diatribe style of Greco-Roman rhetoric. To posit his example as a free apostle, Paul uses maxims with the help of examples and drew on conduct of other apostles in 9:4-7. Paul's use of maxims to illustrate his right to solicit material support from his Corinthian audience, are used in an argument for the establishment of his right as an apostle. Paul further uses maxims now drawing quotations from the Old Testament in 9:8-10 (9:10b, in particular), in order to persuade his Corinthian audience of his right as an apostle to solicit material support from them.

Furthermore, Paul uses maxims to employ his own personal example in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 to emphasise that the aim of his example is to live a life that is motivated by what is commendable in God's eyes (24b), and that is a life lived through love for one's fellow believer. Moreover, such an example of love is posited in 9:25 as freedom under control (*πάντα ἐγκρατεύεται*) which is contrasted with freedom without restraint (*πάντα ἔξεστιν*).

In 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, one finds the overarching expression of Paul's example in the use of his freedom. Paul has the freedom to exercise his right as an apostle to solicit material support from his Corinthian audience. This right Paul claims on the knowledge he holds of his apostolic rights (that is, the legitimate claims he holds to those rights). Paul, however, chooses not to use his right to receive material support from the Corinthian Jesus-followers, but to exercise his freedom in humble service for all. The purpose or *telos* (goal/end) of his self-denying service is arguably important to understand why Paul desires the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers to imitate him (1 Corinthians 11:1). It is important because in Chapter four, I argue for my hypothesis that Paul's call for the Corinthian audience to follow his example in humble service, is not limited to the responsibility of attractive Christian ethical behavior, but a call to follow his example as a strategy for evangelism and mission.

Finally, in my exegetical analysis of the two sections of 1 Corinthians 10:1-22 and 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1, I argue that Paul is addressing the ignorance (10:1) of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers concerning idolatry in 10:1-22. In 10:23-11:1, Paul posits, in conclusion, his missional example to the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers.

In the first section, Paul, Fee (2001:124) states, "qualifies the content of their knowledge by a biblical view of idolatry". Paul presents a warning from Israel's history in the wilderness and makes clear, "that he does not want to confuse eating meat sacrificed with idolatry itself" (Ramsaran 1996:63). Paul, then, in further addressing the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' ignorance, alludes to the Eucharist as an analogy to understand their eating of meat sacrificed

unto idols. According to Collins and Harrington (1999:376), Paul seems to rigorously state that to share in the Lord's Table through cup and bread is radically incompatible with sharing the table with demons in ritual meals and idol worship. Such eating of meat sacrificed unto idols is incompatible with life in Christ, because, as Israel ate of the sacrifices and were partakers of the altar, so the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers are partakers of a demonic altar.

After qualifying the content of their γνῶσις concerning idolatry, I asked the question: What is the basis of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' ignorance that Paul is addressing? In other words, why did Paul have to qualify the content of their γνῶσις with a biblical view of idolatry? The answer to this question, again, concerns a soteriological focus. The salvific baptismal experience of the Israelites in the wilderness did not stop God from destroying some of them because of their idolatrous behavior. The strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' eating of meat sacrificed unto idols can potentially break down the faith and defile the conscience a weak brother or sister in Christ. Therefore, Paul uses the experience of the Israelites in the wilderness as a warning to the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers to examine their actions and rely on the grace of God for a way of escape in times of temptation (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 does not, however, suggest that the strong believer is self-determined in losing or not losing their salvation. Rather, Piper (1976) argues, the focus of these two verses is that, "there is only one thing that provides 'escape' from endurance of temptation, namely, some kind of evidence that God is preferable to the sin we are being tempted with".

The focus on 10:12 could raise the concern of a believers' assurance of salvation and the possible loss thereof. One could argue that 10:12 implies the believer is self-determining, therefore, his or her perseverance in faith and consequently his salvation is ultimately determined by himself or herself. However, such a view of 10:12 raises implications when compared with the rest of Scripture. For example, Piper (1976) argues, the argument for the believer's self-determination makes Philippians 2:13 false. Paul says there that "it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). This assurance of God's sovereign control of the believer leads to Paul expression of confidence in Philippians 1:6 and to command believers to work out their own salvation (Philippians 2:12). Note well, argues Piper (1976), "it is not the believer's work which grounds and initiates God's work. The very opposite is the case: you work, for God is already at work to accomplish what he wishes".

Furthermore, the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers believe that eating food and drink is a matter of indifference. Though that is true, for Paul, according to Fee (2001:125), “demonic powers are real...and at work in the present age (2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 2:18; Ephesians 6:12) until they are completely defeated at the *Eschaton* (1 Corinthians 15:24). Since they are real, to eat at the table in the idol temple is to expose oneself to, indeed to fellowship with, the demons”.

Finally, in 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1, Paul recalls his example that he has posited throughout 1 Corinthians 8 and 9. In this section, Paul reaffirms that he does not renounce the freedom or rights of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers, but he calls them to use their Christian liberty responsibly. He does so by refining the first antithetical maxim in 10:23a (“All things are permissible, but not all things are beneficial”). By presenting a practical form of his refinement of the first maxim, Paul lists two hypothetical examples that concern the eating of market place food in one’s home or a neighbour’s home - because “the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” (10:26,28). One is free to eat, only if such eating does not offend others and thus hinder the advancement of the Gospel in the lives of others.

Nevertheless, in Paul’s final attempt to appeal to the implied readers in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 to emulate his missional example, he reaffirms his freedom to eat at any time and not allowing any person to judge him on his freedom to eat food sold in the market place. Paul states that in such matters, the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers should follow his example (11:1).

As Paul has the freedom to eat anything, he will not exercise that freedom if it makes a believer or unbeliever to offend and therefore hinder the work of the Gospel in their lives. Paul’s self-denying example finds its expression in the second and final maxim depicted in 10:31: “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God”. This maxim reflects a sound conclusion to the issue of eating meat sacrificed unto idols and the use of Christian liberty in human encounters. The argument of the *telos* (purpose or end) of Paul’s example, “the salvation of many” (10:33), can be a refinement or restatement of “bringing glory to God” (10:31). In other words, what brings glory to God is the salvation of many. Lastly, the maxim in 10:31 reveals that Paul’s example is applicable in any situation, not just to the situation of meat sacrificed unto idols (“...whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God”).

In the following section, the theological themes and concepts in the unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 are discussed. These themes and concepts serve as the prelude to the extensive exegetical

analysis of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 in conjunction with 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1 to argue for my hypothesis.

### 3.3.3 Theological concepts and themes

#### 3.3.3.1 *Freedom*

One of the central concerns Paul is addressing in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 is the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' misuse of their freedom. As a response, Paul presents himself as an example of the proper exercise of Christian freedom. In 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, Paul presents himself as an example of someone who uses his freedom to voluntarily enslave himself to others. In the following chapter, I seek to argue that Paul's approach of slavery, that is, his use of Christian freedom, serve as a strategy for evangelism. Therefore, Paul admonishes his Corinthian audience to follow his self-denying example as a strategy for evangelism and mission.

The following concept is important in understanding the function of Paul's approach of slavery and thereby arguing for my hypothesis. The concept is called, Gospel.

#### 3.3.3.2 *Gospel*

In the following chapter, I discuss the importance of the Gospel in relation to Paul's approach of slavery. The Gospel serves as the central motif that guides the function of Paul's approach of slavery. Paul's use of Christian liberty as expressed in his approach of slavery, I argue, functions in the dynamic spread of the Gospel. Paul explains to his Corinthian audience that he enslaves himself to others "for the Gospel's sake", that he might be a partaker with them in it (9:23). Paul is not passively involved in the Gospel, but he is an active evangelist in bringing the good news (9:16). In fact, he claims he has no choice but to preach the Gospel (9:17). He exhorts, therefore, his Corinthian audience to do model his example in the Gospel.

The term Gospel comes from the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον, which literally means, 'good news'. To understand what Paul means by "gospel" in 1 Corinthians 9:23, one is informed by its meaning within 1 Corinthians 15. Paul's definition of the Gospel can be found in a summary format within 1 Corinthians 15:1-8. The content of 'good news' that Paul describes in 15:1-8 is revealed in the life, death resurrection, and person of Jesus Christ. However, the Gospel is only 'good news' when one understands its function, not only its content. For Paul, the Gospel functions for the purpose of salvation (1 Corinthians 15:2; Romans 1:16). The Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia defines the function of the Gospel in the following phrase: "The



central truth of the Gospel is that God has provided a way of salvation for men through the gift of His son to the world. He suffered as a sacrifice for sin, overcame death, and now offers a share in His triumph to all who will accept it” (Pfeiffer *et al.*, 1975). MacArthur (1997:1691) argues concerning the Gospel that, “its message that God will forgive sins, deliver from sin’s power, and give eternal hope (Romans 1:16; cf. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4) comes not only as a gracious offer, but also as a command to be obeyed (Romans 10:16)”. MacArthur (1997:1691) further states that, in light of 1 Corinthians 9:23, “Paul was consumed with this message”.

Therefore, since the function of the Gospel has a soteriological significance, it states that Paul’s approach of slavery functions for the purpose of salvation. Furthermore, when Paul exhorts his Corinthian audience to emulate his approach of slavery, his exhortation includes and admonition to evangelism and mission

#### *3.3.3.3 Soteriology: Salvation as the telos (purpose or end) of the Pauline missional example*

The theme of soteriology permeates the unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. In 1 Corinthians 8 it is closely related to Christ’s role in salvation, sin and His incarnation (8:6, 11). In 1 Corinthians 10:1-22, the theme functions as the basis of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers’ ignorance concerning their idolatrous behavior. However, for my purposes, the theme of soteriology’s most important function appears in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and in 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, where it functions as the purpose or end of Paul’s approach of slavery. The study of salvation is important in arguing for my hypothesis that argues Paul’s exhortation to his Corinthian audience to follow his strategy of self-denial for evangelism and mission. In Chapter four, I argue that, understanding soteriology as the purpose of Paul’s self-denial will also indicate the function of his voluntary enslavement.

#### *3.3.3.4 Christology: Principle of incarnation*

The theme of Christology founded in the unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 is interconnected with the theme of soteriology. In other words, wherever Paul discusses Christ, the concept of salvation is present (except in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23). The first indication of Christology is the incorporation of Christ in the monotheistic slogan (8:6) which reflects the role of Christ in salvation. The second indication of Christology is within 8:11: “And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother [sic] for whom Christ died”. I argue that this verse implies that the behavior of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers - motivated by “puffed-up

knowledge” (8:1b) - is in contrast with the work of salvation (that is, the work of love) the Lord Jesus Christ embodied in his incarnation.

However, the knowledge of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers cannot lead to the loss of a weak brother - and sister’s salvation. The word “destroyed” in 8:11 does not connote the loss of salvation, but can be understood as a word opposite to “build up” (8:1b). In other words, the faith of a brother or sister can potentially be broken down by the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers - the same faith that ought to strengthen their relationship with Christ. Their relationship with Christ is harmed because of the potential breaking down of their faith, but it there is no sufficient evidence to verify that it means they will lose their salvation. MacArthur (1997:1741) argues that this word is better translated “ruined,” with the idea of “come to sin”. The same word “destroyed” can be found in Matthew 18:14. The word here (and does in the context of Matthew 18), MacArthur (1997:1426) argues, “refer to spiritual devastation rather than utter eternal destruction”. MacArthur (1997:1426) further argues that, “this does not suggest that God’s children ever could perish in the ultimate sense (cf. John 10:28)”. The same understanding, I argue, should be applied to 1 Corinthians 8:11 in the interpretation of the word “destroyed”.

The third and final indication of Christology, and most importantly for my hypothesis, is Paul’s appeal to the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers that they should imitate him as he imitates Christ (11:1). Arguably, Paul’s approach of slavery is an imitation of the Lord’s Jesus’ work of salvation (that is, the work of love) He embodied in his incarnation. This principle of incarnation that both Paul and the Lord Jesus’ share in their missional example (1 Corinthians 9:19-23; 10:31-11:1; cf. Philippians 2:5-11) is central to my hypothesis concerning Paul’s call for the Corinthian audience to emulate his example of self-denial as a strategy for evangelism and mission. The theme of Christology found in the unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, is important in answering the question of whether Paul’s imitation of Christ functions as an evangelical missional strategy and whether Paul admonishes his implied readers to follow the same principle of incarnation.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

In the next chapter, I attempt to discuss the concepts of *freedom* and *Gospel* as key to understand the function of Paul’s voluntary enslavement. Not only is Paul’s authentic use of Christian liberty an example to his audience to emulate, but also to every Christian or Church engaging in evangelism. The themes of *soteriology* and *Christology* also play an equally important role in my hypothesis. The theme of *soteriology* functions as the locus by which I

determine the *telos* (purpose or end) of Paul's approach of slavery. Lastly, the theme of Christology functions as a means to analyse Paul's appeal to the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers to imitate him as he imitates Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).

The two concepts and the two themes under discussion are key focuses in answering the important exegetical question: Does Paul's voluntary self-enslavement to all function not as an attractive Christian ethical missional lifestyle, but as a strategy for evangelism? I attempt to answer the question of whether Paul is exhorting and admonishing his Corinthian audience to follow his example of Christian freedom in order to partake in Gospel evangelism by analysing the four characteristic elements of Paul's deliberative argumentation, namely:

- A focus on following an advantageous action in the future;
- The employment of a determined set of appeals or ends, the most distinctive of which are advantageous (τὸ συμφέρον);
- The proof example (παράδειγμα); and
- The appropriate subjects of deliberation, of which unity and division are especially common.

These four elements I analyse as it relates to the two theological concepts, freedom and Gospel, and to the two theological themes, soteriology and Christology, as mentioned in the next chapter. I discuss how these concepts and themes function specifically within the texts of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PAUL'S APPROACH OF SLAVERY AS AN EVANGELICAL MISSION STRATEGY: EXEGESES OF 1 CORINTHIANS 9:19-23 AND 1 CORINTHIANS 10:31-11:1

#### 4.1 Structure of exegetical analysis

In this chapter, I exegetically analyse the two pericopes, namely: 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1. In both these text units, Paul presents himself as an example of someone who properly uses his Christian liberty. In the first text, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Paul rather implicitly calls the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers to follow his example of a metaphorical self-enslavement<sup>9</sup>. The strong Corinthian Jesus-followers did not consider the potential destructive consequences both for themselves (10:1-22) and for their weak brother or sister in Christ that see them go to temples to eat meat sacrificed unto idols. Paul then, in 1 Corinthians 9:23, implicitly exhorts them to follow his example of self-denial in order to be partakers of the spread of Gospel and not to hinder the Gospel's work in both their own and someone else's life.

If it is not clear in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 that Paul expects his Corinthian audience to follow his example, I argue, it is appears to be clear in the second pericope, 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1. By means of a practical qualification of his example of metaphorical self-enslavement regarding the eating of market place idol food, Paul explicitly exhorts his Corinthian audience to follow his example in 1 Corinthians 11:1. Paul portrays his approach of slavery as someone who does not become an offence to anyone in any situation, but rather as one seeking the profit of all (10:33). Paul ends off 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 with an exhortation to his Corinthian audience to imitate him as he imitates Christ (11:1). This leads one to question whether Paul's call to imitate him includes a call to strategic evangelism and mission.

I focus on the two texts of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, separately. At the end, I explain their significance as two interrelated units. The distinction between my exegeses of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1 is of concern as both of these text units illustrate in a succinct fashion Paul's approach of slavery and its function within the overall unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. Both text units expound the function of Paul's use of Christian freedom as a strategy for evangelical mission.

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<sup>9</sup> Here, self-enslavement is used in a metaphorical sense referring to Paul's ability to identify with or condescend to his fellow believer and unbeliever through accommodation.

#### 4.1.1 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

In the exegesis of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, I firstly focus on the *futuristic element* of Paul's deliberative rhetoric as it concerns the course of action Paul implicitly exhorts his Corinthian audience to follow. The key areas of focus will be on Paul's deliberative technique to use past negative examples to dissuade or to persuade his implied readers to follow his example.

Secondly, I will discuss the nature of Paul's approach of slavery by means of analysing what influenced his positive use of the metaphor of slavery. The theme of Christology brings the theological significance to my argument concerning the nature of Paul's positive use of slavery.

Thirdly, in order to persuade the Corinthian Jesus-followers to follow his way of using one's Christian freedom, Paul, using deliberative rhetoric, has to state the *advantages of that action*. Not many will follow a course of action in the future if it is not advantageous to do so. One questions whether Paul's advantageous action is restricted to a limited responsibility of Christian ethical behavior, or, whether his example of self-denial functions in relation to an ultimate purpose. To determine the advantage of the action depends upon the ultimate purpose of the action. Thereafter, in light of my analysis of the nature of Paul's approach of slavery and its ultimate purpose, I argue for the function of Paul's approach of slavery, which is, a strategy for evangelism. Here I attempt to show that Paul, as rhetor, is exhorting his Corinthian audience to follow a certain course of action that functions as a strategy for the dynamic spread of the Gospel. The theme of soteriology and the concept of Gospel is the locus through which one can understand for what purpose and function Paul voluntarily enslaves himself.

In light of the findings of my exegesis of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, I address the two writers of Bosch and Bowers who both disagree with the notion that Paul's voluntary enslavement functions as an evangelical mission strategy in the text.

#### 4.1.2 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

In 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, I discuss the third element of Paul's deliberative use of rhetoric: an *appeal to imitation*. Paul picks up the language of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 again and presents himself as an example of the proper use of Christian freedom. This time - by means of a practical qualification of his example - Paul explicitly exhorts his Corinthian audience to imitate him (11:1). However, Paul presents himself as a model only as far as he emulates the example of Christ. Hence in my exegesis of 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, I focus on Paul's

deliberate use of Christ as a proof example of someone who voluntarily enslaves himself to others as a strategy of evangelism. In his final exhortation, Paul conveys the notion that he is not the only one to follow the self-enslaving example of Christ, but his Corinthian audience ought to do so as well.

In a final analysis, I discuss Paul's final element of his use of deliberative rhetoric, which is his quest to call for unity in the Corinthian church community, and how Paul's call for his Corinthian audience to strategic evangelism serves as a unifying factor for the Corinthian Jesus-followers.

## **4.2 The proper use of Christian freedom - A call to a future action: 1 Corinthians 9:19-23**

### **4.2.1 Past negative example**

To dissuade his audience, Paul references the past by means of Israel's misuse of freedom that led to their destruction. Barton and Muddiman (2001:1123-1124) state that, "Paul recounts the story of Israel's disobedience in the wilderness because it illustrates precisely what he wants to warn the Corinthians about: that even those chosen by God can go badly astray; and if they do, whatever their privileges, they are liable to destruction. In 1 Corinthians 10:6 and 10:11, Barton and Muddiman (2001:1124) show that, "Paul explains the principle by which he interprets the Israelite's story: these events are an example, and were written down as a warning, indicating the dangers awaiting God's people if they entertain evil desires". The main problem the story of Israel is addressing, as we have seen in Chapter three, is the ignorance of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers concerning idolatry. The basis of their ignorance has a soteriological significance. As argued in Chapter three, Paul's use of the Israel example in the wilderness is a warning to his Corinthian audience that, "the fate of some who had shared in the common experience of salvation should serve as a warning to the Corinthians who themselves share a common experience of salvation" (Collins & Harrington 1999:377).

One asks how Paul's reference to Israel's past not only attempts to dissuade them from a course of action, but persuades them to follow his example of the responsible use of Christian freedom. I argue that, through the warning revealed in the idolatrous experience of the Israelites in the Exodus, Paul is exhorting his Corinthian audience to follow the way of love (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:1b). The way of love, Paul states, always protects (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:7) and seeks the advantage of others (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:33). Through this warning, Paul not

only admonishes the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers to examine the authenticity of their own salvation, but also to revere the One who died for the salvation of their fellow brother and sister. Therefore, they ought to build up the faith of their fellow weak believer, rather than break their faith down by becoming a stumbling block to their weak brother or sister.

Paul offers his own example in 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 in an attempt to show his audience what the way of love practically means in the context of eating temple meat sacrificed unto idols. Since the weak brother or sister comes from a background of having fellowship with demons in the same idol temples the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers are attending to dine, Paul sees the danger of the weak believer's conscience being harmed. Therefore, Paul offers his own example by stating that, "...if food makes my brother to offend, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother to offend" (8:13).

#### 4.2.2 Present negative example

1 Corinthians 8:13 is the practical basis for Paul's example of the proper use of Christian freedom in the rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. Paul defines such a practical use of Christian liberty as voluntarily enslaving himself in service of his brother or sister in Christ, and to others (9:19). Starting in 1 Corinthians 9:19, Paul presents his own example of the proper use of Christian freedom over against the example of his Corinthian audience.

Paul is addressing the unloving behavior of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers. As I argued in Chapter three, the first basis of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' unloving behavior and their right to eat εἰδωλόθυτα (temple meat sacrificed unto idols) is their perspective on their γνῶσις. The basis of their misuse of Christian freedom is predicated upon their puffed-up knowledge. Such γνῶσις is identified in the three maxims which is presented by Paul with a formula, οἶδαμεν ὅτι (we know that), as self-evident truths that support the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' unrestrained freedom to eat temple meat sacrificed unto idols. The use of their Christian liberty has the potential to be an offence to their fellow new Gentile convert in Christ (8:9) and even to the breaking down of their faith (8:11). The new Gentile convert, by seeing his fellow mature brother or sister of Christ enter into an idol temple, has the potential to feel obliged to follow their example and run the risk of harming his or her relationship with Christ.

Therefore, in 1 Corinthians 9:19, as one who uses deliberative rhetoric, Paul is attempting to persuade his Corinthian audience to follow his way of Christian freedom. Their negative example was to the potential disadvantage of their fellow weak brother or sister in Christ.

However, it begs the question, what makes Paul's use of Christian freedom, as illustrated in 1 Corinthians 9:19, an advantageous action to follow? Furthermore, in answering this question, how do we understand the function of this profitable action in the context of the entire 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1? Before I answer both these questions, I turn to the analysis of the nature of Paul's approach of slavery. This analysis helps determine what influenced Paul's positive use of the slavery metaphor in 1 Corinthians 9:19 to account for the nature of his example of self-abasement.

### **4.3 The nature of Paul's approach of slavery: The influences on his positive use of the metaphor of slavery**

In this section, I discuss what influenced Paul's positive use of the metaphor of slavery in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. However, in order to appreciate the impetus behind Paul's positive usage of the metaphor, I first discuss slavery as a concept in Greco-Roman –and New Testament thought. In doing so, it is not the purpose of this section to discuss every topic which might be thought pertinent to a full explication of the institution of slavery in the first century Greco-Roman period. Rather, I discuss only those aspects of slavery which are necessary for understanding the situations from which Paul was speaking and the situation from which he employs his positive use of the metaphor of slavery in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22.

#### **4.3.1 Slavery: A New Testament and an imperial concept**

In Greco-Roman antiquity, there was one basic assumption about slavery, namely, “that it was a necessary institution and that a slave class was an indispensable part of any well-ordered society, even where the labour of the slave might only play a negligible role in the general economy” (Combes 1998:29). However, it is well commented by Bartchy (1973:38) that, “no single definition has succeeded in the historical varieties of slavery or in clearly distinguishing from other types involuntary servitude”. A debate on the meaning of slavery, J.A. Harrill (in Combes 1998:21), however, distinguishes two approaches to the definition of slavery: “the ‘chattel hermeneutic’ of such as M.I. Finley, who sees the essential nature of slavery as lying in the status of slaves as property; and the ‘social death hermeneutic’, most clearly espoused by O. Patterson, who sees slavery as the destruction of all meaningful elements of an individual's life and connection with society” (Comes 1998:21).

According to the chattel hermeneutic, a slave in the Ancient Greco-Roman world was, in legal terms, the property of his or her master. According to Ferguson (1987:46), “the legal status of a slave was that of a ‘thing’. Aristotle defined a slave as “living property” (Politics I.ii.4-5,



1253b)". Ferguson (1987:46) further comments that, "the slave had no legal rights and was subject to the absolute power his master". In Roman law, Bartchy (1973:38) comments, "the slave is a 'thing', a 'chattel', a 'mortal object'". In this law, Bartchy (1973:39) continues, slavery is defined as an institution in which someone is subject to the dominion of another person contrary to nature". Such a definition would spark the idea of the origins of slavery. Even though slavery was taken by all as being an inevitable fact of life, there was some debate as to its origin. According to Combes (1998:33), as for the origins of slavery, "Plato asserted that the institution derived from the fact that there were those who, being incapable of a full use of reason, were best suited to a life under the mastership of others". Aristotle, according to Combes (1998:33), developed Plato's theory of natural slavery more fully, arguing that, "there existed certain people whose very nature, physical and intellectual, had so fitted them for a life of servitude that they could neither be happy nor useful outside such a situation, just as others were naturally masters and in need of slaves so that, freed from the drudgery of daily life they might devote themselves to the pursuit of virtue appropriate to their station".

The social death hermeneutic conveys the notion that, "the essential feature of slavery in any culture is not the legal status of the slave, but his or her position as a 'socially dead' outsider" (Combes 1998:22). "The slave is one who figuratively died at the hand of his or her master, but continues to exist, for the benefit of the master alone, in a state of social death" (Combes 1998:22). Furthermore, in opposing the view of slavery being a natural state, according to Combes (1998:34), the Cynic/Stoic tradition argues that, "slavery was a social institution, not a natural state, as summed up most famously in Philo's statement that 'no one is a slave by nature'". The Stoic tradition lay claim on the spiritual equality of all people regardless of their station in life, and asserted that "true slavery is more a state of mind than a physical occurrence" (Combes 1998:34). For this reason, Stoics "confine themselves to the recommendation that a master treat his slaves kindly and take an interest in their well-being, showing respect for the inner freedom<sup>10</sup> and regarding them as fellow human beings, 'humble friends' and, indeed, as fellow slaves considering the power that fortune has equally over all".

Conditions of slavery, according to Ferguson (1987:46) "might result from war, piracy and brigandage, exposure of a child, sale of a child or self to pay debts, condemnation in the law courts, or birth to a slave mother. An individual acquired slaves by purchase from slave dealers, by inheritance, or by home breeding (a child took the status of his mother)". By and

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<sup>10</sup> However, the main intention, as Brunt (1993:210-43) stresses, is to prevent the master falling into the vices of anger and loss of self-control. The well-being of the slave was merely a side effect.

large slaves were part of the Greco-Roman civilization. Ferguson (1987:46) comments that the Greeks defined four characteristics of freedom, which were denied to the slave: “the right to be his [sic] own representative in legal matters, to protection from illegal seizure, to work where he pleased, and to freedom of movement”.

The conditions of slaves varied from the privileged imperial slaves to the criminals sentenced to the mines. Of course the quality of life of one slave differed from the next depending on the kind of master they had. For example, the quality of life for household slaves and their daily lives was perceivably better than what the legal theory convey. Slaves of the state, of townships, and of the emperor did the work that fell to civil service, “including some of the highest administrative functions in the bureaucracy” (Ferguson 1987:46). Their inscriptions show that the imperial slaves were proud of their status for the credible functions they administer as ambassadors of the empire. Some of the administrative machinery developed from within the institutions of the Republic and some in the household of the emperor. On the other side of the social scales were the slaves in the mine. According to Ferguson (1987:46) they suffered under perilous conditions and long hours of toil. Ferguson (1987:46) further stresses that in between the extremes there were temple slaves who took care of “sacred precincts and assisted in the ceremonials of religion; agricultural slaves working on the estates of wealthy Italians; domestic slaves who attended to household chores and the care of children; pedagogues and teachers; industrial slaves who were skilled craftsmen; agents of their masters in widespread business and commercial transactions (for slaves could be managers in agricultures, business, and trade as well as workmen)”.

Taking into account the two approaches distinguished by Harril (in Combes 1998:21) - the chattel hermeneutic and the social death hermeneutic - and the conditions of slavery and slaves interrelatedly, I concur with Combes (1998:24) that in the Greco-Roman imperial context, “the most useful definition of slavery is one that combines both approaches, taking the simple reality of the slave as an item of property in conjunction with the psychological burden of the slave as an outside”. Combes (1998:24) further argues that, “the alienation might in some cases seem moderated or blurred, but it holds over slaves the unalterable fact that no relationship or personal dignity of theirs could ever have the same security and social assurance as that of a free person”.

In the New Testament, the concept of slavery is discussed in metaphorical ways. A few examples in Paul’s letter to the Romans in Romans 6, offers a perspective on slavery as it relates to sin and righteousness in possessive terms, for example: “slaves of sin” (Romans

6:17); “slaves of righteousness” (Romans 6:18). In the same chapter, the perspective on slavery is depicted in positional terms in relation to God, for example, “enslaved to God” (Romans 6:22). In Galatians 3:28-4:7, Paul discusses the concept of slavery in relationship to sonship. In 1 Peter 2:18-25, we find that Peter’s exhortations are directed to actual slaves in the imperial slave system; slaves who are subjected to their masters in the flesh. Arguably, one can note that in New Testament literature, the concept of slavery is not just related to the imperial system of Rome (the material and the physical), but also to religious thought as it relates to spiritual, theological, and metaphorical categories (for example: the concepts of sin, sons, righteousness and God).

Having briefly discussed the slavery in Greco-Roman antiquity and the metaphorical use of slavery in the New Testament, what influenced Paul’s positive use of the metaphor of slavery in 1 Corinthians 9:19b? In answering this question, one can attest to the nature of Paul’s approach of slavery and its overall function and purpose within 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1.

#### 4.3.2 Martin and Garnsey

Considering the complexity of the concept of slavery, clarity is needed on how the New Testament assists one in understanding what influenced the advantageous use of Paul’s metaphor of slavery. Bartchy (1973:58) stresses that, although it is difficult to give an accurate account of how many persons were in slavery in Greece during the early Empire, “it is safe to conclude that at least one-third of the urban Corinthian population in the first century A.D. were slaves. According to Bartchy (1973:59), “the best evidence we have that a number of these slaves were among the first members of the Corinthian congregation in Corinth is provided by Paul’s reference in 1 Cor. 1:16 to his baptizing the “household of Stephanas”. In 1 Corinthians 16:15 Paul refers to these people as “the first fruits (converts) of Achaia”. Although it is not specifically stated that amongst this group of converts were slaves, “the terms translated “household” (*oikos, oikia*) in this context refer naturally not only to the immediate family but also to the other persons of the house, including slaves” (Bartchy 1973:59).

Another example of the high probability of slaves being in the Corinthian congregation would be the slaves of Crispus and Gaius (1 Corinthians 1:14). They are amongst the first persons belonging to the Corinthian congregation. Bartchy (1973:59) comments that Crispus is commonly identified with the ruler of the synagogue in Acts 18:8, and Gaius, quite probably the one mentioned in Romans 16:23, was not only Paul’s host but he hosted the whole church in Corinth. Nevertheless, however uncertain one might be to cease from firmly concluding the

presence of multiple slaves in the Corinthian congregation, it is plausible to conclude that there were indeed slaves in the congregation.

Does the presence of slaves in Paul's Corinthian congregation give a convincing reason to argue that Paul was influenced by the socio-historical context of the Greco-Roman context thereby having the social upward mobility in view when using a positive metaphor of slavery in 1 Corinthians 9:19b? Since Paul's approach of slavery is seen as an example of self-denial that follows the pattern of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1), it will be helpful to see how the example is related to the pattern set by Christ.

In answering the question of whether Paul is influenced by the socio-historical context in his positive use of the metaphor of slavery, two arguments by two New Testament writers are of importance, namely: Martin and Garnsey.

Garnsey (in Rawson & Weaver 1999:106) raises a few critical arguments in response to this question. He states:

What lies behind the positive connotation given to slavery in some contexts by Paul, involving the apparent elision of the slave-free and slave-son distinctions, his proud self-styling as 'the slave of Christ', and his encouragement of Christians to be slaves to one another? Is this 'pure theology', or was he moved by the ideological considerations (always supposing that this is a valid distinction)? Briefly, I do not believe that where Paul is presented in a metaphorically favorable light, he was influenced by the socio-historical context, specifically, the phenomenon of upwardly mobile slaves in contemporary Greco-Roman society. Still less do I think that Paul saw himself as advancing the cause of social reform.

Rather, Garnsey (in Rawson & Weaver 1999:107) argues that, "Paul as a Christian was moved by the humiliation, the self-enslavement of Christ, as shown in his birth as a man, his life of service, and his death in the manner of a slave (cf. Philippians 2:6-8)". Hence, he continues, "slavery became a key metaphor, with highly favorable overtones, for describing the demands, and the rewards, of Christian discipleship". Garnsey (in Rawson & Weaver 1999:107) concludes his view by claiming that, "an implication of accepting that the source for Paul's view does not lie in the socio-historical context is that any benefits that Christianity brought for real, physical slaves were to be enjoyed on the spiritual rather than the material level. No knock-on effects of the legal status of slaves were entailed".

So in Garnsey's (in Rawson & Weaver 1999:107) view, the nature of Paul's approach of slavery is expressed by the humiliation and self-denial of his example par excellence, Christ. In this view, when Paul uses his freedom to voluntarily enslave himself, he is inspired by the example of Christ's servanthood in His birth, life, and death.

Martin (1990:26) however, argues that Paul's positive use of slavery is influenced by the phenomenon of the social upward mobility of slaves. Martin (1990:26) accounts for such an interpretation by insisting that, "in order to understand the dynamics of Greco-Roman slavery...we must recognise that it functioned within the dynamics of Greco Roman Patronage". A slave or slaves who are connected to a person in power gave them the opportunity for a sort of upward mobility, whereby they can grow in their own status and power, albeit the probability of this was very unlikely. Martin's (1990:51) focus, in more particular terms, turns to the two ways Paul employs the metaphor of slavery in 1 Corinthians 9: "Firstly, the use of 'slave of Christ' as an authoritative title of leadership, and secondly, the use of slavery to Christ as symbolic to Christian salvation based upon upward mobility and power by association".

In Martin's (1990:51) view, when Paul positively uses the metaphor of slavery in 1 Corinthians 9:19, he is not presenting himself as an example of following the pattern of Christ's self-giving service in his life and death like a slave. Rather, for Martin (1990:51), what influenced his self-lowering was not to be an example of humility, but to establish his authority and leadership as a slave of Christ. Therefore, by enslaving himself, Paul establishes his own authority by virtue of his Patron, appeals to the weak or lower status Jesus-followers for whom slavery to Christ would mean a social step up, and critiques those with high status for whom slavery to Christ would feel like a social step down.

In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul not only depicts himself implicitly as a 'slave of Christ' but explicitly as a 'slave to all' (9:19-23). In Martin's (1990:89-91) image of an enslaved leader, he differentiates between two important models of leadership that occurred in Greco-Roman rhetoric: the populist model and the benevolent patriarchal model. According to Martin (1990:89-91) the populist model is where the leader attempts to identify with the common people, by socially lowering himself. The benevolent patriarchal model is a model where the leader rules benevolently, but from a secure, firm position of social superiority. In contrast to the model of a leader that is depicted as a kind superior father in the writings of Aristotle and Dio Chrysostom, the populist leader, according to Martin (1990:89-91), is a leader that has the ability to accommodate his speech and life to any situation by lowering himself for the

benefit of all. There are critics such as Plato and Philo, who claim such a leadership to be manipulative and driven by self-interests (Martin 1990:89-91). The populist, however, can claim that he is acting on behalf of the many for their well-being. For Martin (1990:89-91), this is exactly the action Paul undertakes in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, and he exhorts his Corinthian audience to follow the same action. According to Martin (1990:52), if salvation is the purpose of Paul's positive use of the metaphor of slavery, then salvation means the upward mobility of lower status Jesus-followers and non-Jesus-followers by virtue of knowing that they are slaves of Christ - a powerful patron.

For Martin (1990:26), then, the nature of Paul's approach of slavery is expressed in his authority and leadership as a social upward slave in the household of Christ. Subsequently, Paul's use of the metaphor of slavery was symbolic for Christian salvation, which was based on upward social mobility by power of being associated with Christ.

#### 4.3.3 Socio-historical context (social upward mobility) or Christ's humiliation and self-giving service?

There is no clear-cut answer to what influenced Paul's positive use of the slavery in 1 Corinthians 9:19, but I am tempted to go to the side of Garnsey. Martin's (1990:26) view that presupposes Paul's use of slavery to Christ as symbolic to Christian salvation based upon upward social mobility raises the question whether he sufficiently had taken into account Paul and some of the New Testament writers' view of slaves. Glancy (2002:150) uses Colossians as an example of a letter that urges physical (or material, to use Garnsey's terms) slaves to be obedient and wholehearted in their service to their owners. Glancy (2002:150) asserts that in the household codes of Paul's Christianity, slavery is reinforced. Though this is a rather strong statement, it poses the possibility that, in early Christianity, there might not have been much of a possibility for slaves to be free from their physical slave owners. Therefore, it raises the concern whether Paul's use of slavery as a symbol for Christian salvation meant social upward mobility. Osiek and Balch (1997:190) invite one to consider the guidance from 1 Peter in the context of options available for first century slaves. They argue that:

Slaves are in the vulnerable position of having no recourse when abused. Their conformity to the suffering Christ, therefore, is meant to be comforting and encouragement in suffering that they are powerless to avoid, nor the legitimization of the oppression of slavery...1 Peter offers grounds for condemning the system of slavery by inviting comparisons between the abuse of slaves and the passion of Jesus.

Furthermore, Martin argues that Paul's approach of slavery depicted in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22 has a political agenda. According to Combes (1998:90) the 'weak' Paul identifies are those who are of lower economic strata. Therefore, Paul, as the argument goes, align himself as a populist demagogue who lowers himself among the low status people to lead them. However, though Martin omits to mention the parallel passage in Romans 14 which indicates that 'weak' to Paul's mind is a reference to those who have spiritual anxiety (Romans 14:1-4). In 1 Corinthians, Paul has taken the part of those who do not eat, here he seems to take the part of those who do eat (Romans 14:5-6). There are various parallels to the language in 1 Corinthians in Romans 14 (cf. Romans 14:7, 13-14).

Granted that these are two different letters written to two different congregations, it yet seems unlikely that, even in these circumstances, Paul would render different meanings to such similar words. There is a "simpler explanation for the language of 1 Corinthians than the argument that Paul is creating himself as a subversive demagogic leader and using these sentiments to urge a lowering of the upper classes according to his example" (Combes 1998:90-91). For Combes (1998:91), as well as for Garnsey, "Paul is simply following in the already established pattern of early Christian teaching on mutual service and humility". The excellent expression of mutual service and humility was reflected in the example and pattern of Christ as seen right through the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John.

Therefore, it is more plausible to agree with Garnsey's argument because it leaves one with fewer vacancies to fill in. According to Garnsey (in Rawson & Weaver 1999:107), Paul was not moved by the socio-historical context when employing his positive use of the metaphor of slavery in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, but he was moved "by the humiliation, the self-enslavement of Christ, as shown in his birth as a man, his life of service, and his death in the manner of a slave".

I argue, therefore, in favor of Garnsey (in Rawson & Weaver 1999:107) that Paul, using deliberative rhetoric, is persuading his Corinthian audience to follow an action in the future that is modelled upon the pattern of Christ's self-denying and humbling sacrifice in His incarnation. Paul's positive use of the metaphor of slavery then, in 1 Corinthians 9:19, should be seen as Paul presenting himself as an example of self-denying and servitude for the benefit of all. Hence, Paul as a 'slave of Christ' and a 'slave to all' was not establishing his authority by virtue of his Patron, but presenting himself as an example of self-efficacy and humility to his Corinthian audience. In Chapter five, I bear reference to missionaries of the past who

modeled their life upon the pattern of Christ's self-denying and humbling service for the purpose of the salvation of others.

In the next section, I discuss why Paul's use of Christian freedom is an advantageous action for strong Corinthian Jesus-followers to follow. Their behavior of going to eat temple meat sacrificed unto idols, does not seek the advantage of one's brother or sister in Christ. Therefore, Paul, using deliberative rhetoric, attempted to persuade them to follow another course of action that is beneficial to all.

#### **4.4 The advantage of the future action: The purpose and function of Paul's voluntary enslavement**

Paul's positive example is a response to the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' negative example. Paul's response includes an exhortation to his Corinthian audience to undertake an advantageous action in the future. In determining the ultimate purpose or end of Paul's example in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, the futuristic element of Paul's deliberative rhetoric and the intertwining element called the *telos*, becomes key characteristics of our analysis of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

Before I move to the *telos* (purpose or end) of Paul's example, it is helpful to revisit again his example of his use of Christian freedom as expressed in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22.

In 10:19a, Paul presents his position or status that he is "free from all [people]" (9:19a). This position or status is after he has established his apostolic right as a response to those strong Corinthian Jesus-followers who doubted his apostolic freedom. Paul is not employing forensic rhetoric to defend his freedom. Rather, Paul uses deliberative rhetoric to present himself as an example to be followed as someone who uses his Christian liberty responsibly. The word ἐξουσία is etymologically related to the word ἔξεστιν. According to Galloway (2004:4-5), the use of ἔξεστιν in the phrase Πάντα μοί ἔξεστιν- translated "I have the right to do all things" - (1 Cor. 6:12) "has been regarded as evidence that members of the Corinthian community used popular slogans in their assertion of their ἐξουσία". In reference, then, to the future action that Paul is exhorting his Corinthian audience to follow, Galloway's (2004:5).observation is worth considering:

If the Corinthian principle is "I am free to do anything," then Paul must now associate it with an appeal to what is advantageous or beneficial - in this context of the common good. This is not an entirely unfamiliar appeal. The speaker must appeal to the



audience to move from personal interests to a concern for the common advantage - Πάντα μοί ἔξεστιν ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει (1 Cor. 6:12).

Moving away from their interests to eat temple meat sacrificed unto idols, Paul implicitly exhorts his Corinthian audience to follow an advantageous action that will be to the common interest of all. Paul exemplifies the advantageous action by presenting himself as one who is free, but enslaves himself to all (9:19b).

#### 4.4.1 Soteriology

I argued that Paul's enslavement, or in other words, his use of Christian liberty (9:19) is for the goal of spreading the Gospel so that many may be saved. Therefore, I argue, Paul's voluntary enslavement to all serves as a strategy evangelical mission in the context of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. To focus on the central point of the investigation of this research again: Is Paul, by using deliberative rhetoric, attempting to persuade his Corinthian audience to follow his missional example for the goal of spreading the Gospel to gain many for Christ, or is his exhortation limited to the responsibility of exemplifying attractive Christian moral conduct? In other words, to present the central question of my hypothesis: "Does Paul's exhortation to imitate him include an admonition to evangelism and mission?" (O'Brien 1995:89).

Paul's self-enslavement as a missional example in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22, does not merely have the responsibility of an appealing Christian moral conduct in view, because his advantageous action functions in relation to an ultimate goal. The purpose of Paul's voluntarily enslavement is for the advantage of the many - which he defines as the salvation of others. Barton and Muddiman (2001:1123) argue that Paul's ultimate purpose of denying his right in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 "is not self-gratification, but the interest of the Gospel, and in particular the desire to "win' converts". Seven times in the pericope of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Paul expresses his Christ-like example of enslavement with a purpose construction introduced by the conjunction ἵνα, or, "so that" (9:19-22). The final purpose clauses are very significant in our analysis. However, many interpreters bypass the final purpose clauses in 9:19-22 or give it very little significance.

I concur with O'Brien (1995:92) that, "because 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 is a unity and the language of 10:32 deliberately picks up what has been said in 9:19-23 in relation to Jews, Gentiles, and weak Christians, it is arguably important to examine in detail Paul's statement about his missional stance (9:19-23) before directing our attention to 10:31-11:1".

The first five clauses contain the missional term κερδήσω (gain): Paul's ultimate goal is to gain the salvation of the Jews, the Gentiles and the weak Jesus-followers he evangelises. In the final clause, where Paul summarises the four preceding clauses, he uses the common synonym σώσω (save). It becomes, therefore, arguably imperative that one analyse the function of these terms if one is to argue that Paul's approach to slavery is a strategy for evangelism.

The verb κερδήσω (to gain) is also a well-known missional term. Daube (1956:352-361) indicates that the Hebrew equivalent of the verb κερδήσω (to gain) had already been taken over into Judaism as missional language. Here in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, as O'Brien (1995:95) claims, κερδήσω (to gain) "has been taken to refer to Paul's goal of converting 'as many as possible' (verse 19), including Jews and Gentiles (verses 21-22)". This claim of O'Brien is in agreement with Garnsey's (in Rawson & Weaver 1999:107) view that, salvation is to be enjoyed on a "spiritual level rather than the material level". The missional term κερδήσω speaks then of the activity whereby Jews and Gentiles comes to faith in Jesus Christ. However, 9:22 suggests that the missional term cannot only refer to conversion since Paul also has the aim of winning the weak which are those who are already followers of Christ. The missional term, then, refers to the goal of winning Jews, Gentiles, and weak brothers and sisters completely as it concerns full maturity in Christ. Such a winning of them completely signifies eschatological salvation. It would be helpful to state Hays' (1997:155) argument concerning eschatological salvation to gain a better understanding of Paul's overriding theme of soteriology in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23:

Sometimes it is suggested that 'the weak' in 9:22 cannot refer to the weak Christians at Corinth, because Paul speaks here of winning or saving them. Therefore, it is alleged, he must be referring to non-believers. This is, however, to make too sharp a distinction, as though Paul thought his converts were already saved as soon as they professed faith. We should remember that in 1:18, Paul referred to himself and other members of the believing community as those 'who are being saved.' For Paul, conversion is a process of having one's life reshaped in the likeness of Christ, and salvation is the eschatological end for which we hope.

Furthermore, the verb σώζω ('to save') in 9:22 is normally used in Paul's letters in the futuristic sense and it is, as O'Brien (1995:95) argues, "best understood as meaning to save from the coming wrath on the final day, and so to save [completely], not simply to convert". In a concluding fashion, O'Brien (1995:95) further argues that win or save then speaks not

only of the initial activity whereby a person comes to faith, “but the whole process by which a Jew, a Gentile or a weak Christian is brought to glory”.

According to Fee (2001:201), “Paul’s theological thinking, as well as the goal of God’s saving event, is eschatological”. This understanding of salvation is essential because it allows one to consider more carefully the dynamic nature of the Gospel. For Paul, the proclamation of the Gospel ranges from the proclamation of the kerygma to the building up<sup>11</sup> of believers and establishing them in faith, hope and love. Paul was indeed committed to be a partaker in evangelising women and men not only for the purpose of conversion, but also to bring them to spiritual maturity in Christ Jesus. Paul, using deliberative rhetoric, implicitly exhorts his Corinthian audience in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 to follow an action in the future that is expedient; which Paul defines as the salvation of many (9:22).

Understanding the function of Paul’s example, within the unit 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 not only concerns the presenting situation of eating idol food, but more specifically the motif in which Paul, using deliberative rhetoric, appeals to the Corinthians to follow his example. I argued in Chapter three that Paul is addressing the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers’ behavior as it concerns εἰδωλόθυτα, temple food sacrificed unto idols, within the social setting of the Greco-Roman Empire. I agree with the view of Fee (2001:113-119) that, Paul is not referring to the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers’ behavior in eating idol food sold in the market place, but to their participation in the temple meals. Fee (2001:116-117), however, does account for Paul’s argument by addressing their behavior as it concerns market place food in 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1, but this is not the central concern for Paul. Paul’s use of the example of market place food - whether eaten at home or in one’s neighbour’s home - is to illustrate that his missional example is applicable to all contexts (see 1 Corinthians 10:31-“...whatsoever you do...”).

However, understanding the function of Paul’s example is not limited to the present issue of eating idol meat in temples, eating market place food, or any other specific context for that matter. Rather, understanding the function of Paul’s example is to analyse the motif in which he presents his example, namely, the Gospel. The motif can be found in 1 Corinthians 9:23.

#### 4.4.2 For the Gospel’s sake

Paul starts his example in 1 Corinthians 9:1 as an apostle who has the freedom to use his right to solicit material support from his Corinthian church. He does so by employing rhetorical

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<sup>11</sup> See 1 Corinthians 8:1b: “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up”.

moves not to defend his apostolic freedom (forensic rhetoric) but to present himself as an exemplum of apostolic freedom (deliberative rhetoric). However, the function of Paul's example, in 1 Corinthians 9, as a digression connected to 8:13, is not limited to the rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 as it concerns eating meat sacrificed unto idols in temples. The function of Paul's example primarily involves Paul's, "own attempt to reflect on freedom as a concept that incorporates his call, his work/toil, and his *mission*" (Galloway 2004:152; italics added). In other words, Paul's exemplary use of his freedom has a responsibility in view for his Corinthian audience to follow which is primarily related, as O'Brien (1995:86) states, "to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus which is so dominant in Paul's life".

As an epilogue to Paul's example, 1 Corinthians 9:23, Collins and Harrington (1999:356) indicates that the Gospel has been an important motif in Paul's example. I would go further to say that the Gospel is the primary and central motif in Paul's example presented within the unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. The function of his example is related to the Gospel mission God has called him for. Malherbe (1987:54) explains that whenever Paul presents himself as a model to be emulated, he makes a close connection with his life and the Gospel.

Furthermore, claiming that Paul, when presenting himself as an missional example does not have the limited view of Christian ethical conduct that is attractive to believers and unbelievers, but the spreading of Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, O'Brien (1995:89; italics added) is suggesting that, "his behavior and personal example, could not finally be distinguished from the *message he preached*: his life authenticated the Gospel". Dunn (1995:62-63) argues that for Paul, spending much of his time in trade and a leatherworking shop, "it is probable that he used the time also to forward his missionary work". Dunn (1995:63) further admits that the notion might be speculative, "but failure to ask how Paul's evangelism was related to his financial support simply promotes an unrealistic ideal of Paul as an apostle".

Hence, Paul's appeal to his Corinthian audience to follow him as he follows Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1), is to suggest that the Gospel should set the primary agenda for their attitude and behavior towards others, in order to be partakers with him in the advance of the good news (9:23b). I agree with Ramsaran's (1996:54-55) argument that, "the mention of the weak in 9:22, is a sure indication that Paul is tying his missional example to how the community practices in Corinth should proceed". Paul is tying his example with the Gospel mission in an attempt to admonish and exhort the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers to imitate the same self-denying behavior towards one's weak brother or sister in Christ, and towards unbelievers.

This they must do for the purpose of being partakers in their salvation through carrying out the Jesus-followers' mandate to evangelise and mission.

The motif of Gospel indicates to us that the function of Paul's self-denying example is closely connected to the preaching of the Gospel. However, this does not mean that living in a manner worthy of the Gospel is exactly the same as preaching (kerygma) the saving message of the Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. It does provoke one to consider the close concurrence between Paul's self-denying example and the preaching of the Gospel. It is, therefore, my argument that Paul's approach of slavery is not evangelism in itself, but it is a *strategy* for spreading the content of the good news of the Gospel.

For Paul, the word Gospel comes from the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον, which literally means, good news. As mentioned in Chapter three, the content of the Gospel can be identified as: "The central truth...that God has provided a way of salvation for men through the gift of His son to the world. He suffered as a sacrifice for sin, overcame death, and now offers a share in His triumph to all who will accept it" (Pfeiffer *et al.*, 1975). The definition of the word "Gospel" indicates that the function of the good news of Jesus Christ follows towards a soteriological end. For this reason, Paul's exercise of Christian freedom as expressed in his metaphorical use of slavery functions as a strategy in the dynamic spread of the Gospel.

Paul illustrates this to his Corinthian audience that he enslaves himself to others "for the Gospel's sake" that he might be a partaker with them in it (9:23). In 1 Corinthians 9:23, the argument closes with Paul's example presented in the context of spreading the Gospel. "All these things" (9:23), Collins and Harrington (1999:356) argues, "summarises Paul's rehearsal (verses 19-22) and forms an *inclusio* with 'all' of verse 19. The Gospel Paul preaches is the Gospel of Christ (9:12); that is, it is the good news about the Christ who died for us (8:11)". Paul is not passively involved in the Gospel, but he is an active evangelist in bringing the good news (9:16). In fact, he claims he has no choice but to preach the Gospel (9:17). In his quest to evangelise others, Paul presents himself to the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers as someone who strategically enslaves himself to all people for the purpose of their salvation. One ought not to assume that Paul's enslavement effect the salvation of others. It is God who ultimately regenerates the heart of the unbeliever and sovereignly causes the complete salvation of those God calls (cf. Romans 8:30; Philippians 1:6). The self-denial of Paul is an act of love, an act that best befits the exercise of Christian liberty for the advancement of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In an unmistakable assertion, this means that Paul is a partaker in the salvation of others, not the cause.

The function of the advantageous action Paul exhorts his Corinthian audience to undertake in the future is determined by the final goal or purpose that guides the audience's actions. In 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Paul presents himself as someone who is free but enslaves himself to all. Paul's self-enslavement is expressed by his self-denial of his right to solicit material support from the Corinthians as someone who uses his apostolic freedom for the advancement of the Gospel. Paul was committed to evangelism inasmuch that he would make the Gospel free of charge, not making full use of his right in the Gospel (9:18). Paul's great desire, described as his boast (9:16), has nothing to do with anything that will hinder the Gospel committed unto him (9:12). O'Brien (1995:93) further makes a point about Paul that, "in offering the free Gospel 'free of charge' his own ministry becomes a living paradigm of the Gospel itself" (O'Brien 1995:93). Hence, Collins and Harrington (1999:352) argue that, "Paul's overriding motivation is surely the Gospel". Therefore, Paul has voluntarily enslaved himself in for the purpose in advancing the Gospel to save many and he exhorts his Corinthian audience to do the same. As Collins and Harrington (1999:352) argue

The Christian paradox of slavery and freedom must be seen in light of the Gospel and all that the Gospel entails. Paul has adopted his style of life, that of a slave of Christ and a slave to all, because it allows him to share in the proclamation of the Gospel. Furthermore, Paul's self-enslavement has one ultimate goal in mind: the salvation of others.

I argued that Paul's approach of slavery functions as a strategy for evangelical mission, and that his exhortation to his Corinthian audience to imitate him includes an admonition to evangelism and mission. I now proceed to Bosch and Bowers, two writers and representative figures who reject the notion that Paul's exhortation included an admonition for evangelism and mission. I address their concerns in the next section.

#### 4.4.3 David Bosch and Paul Bowers

According to Bosch (1991:138), in discussing the theme of Paul's mission in general, and in particular 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, the apostle expected believers to practice a missionary lifestyle so that their behavior would be exemplary and winsome and that they would draw outsiders to the church like a powerful magnet. For Bosch (1991:138) Paul expected ordinary Jesus-followers' primary responsibility to not go out and preach or evangelise, but "to support the mission project through their appealing conduct and by making "outsiders" feel welcome in their midst".

I do not deny that Christian godly and exemplary behavior is undeniably a Pauline concern in his letters, especially when it is for the Jesus-followers' own sake but also the winsome effects it would have on others. Wright (2010:95) argues that, "the ethical dimension of our mission is always linked to the effectiveness of our mission". Wright (2010:93) further argues that, "ethics...is the basis of mission". Christian godly and exemplary behavior is a notion Paul himself held when he expressed his voluntarily enslavement in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1. However, in our exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, and in particular the two interrelated textual units, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:11, I find that in Paul's missional example, he did not *limit the responsibility* of the Corinthian Jesus-followers to have appealing Christian ethical conduct as a necessary element for them to follow Paul's missional example. Rather, O'Brien (1995:106) argues, Paul, in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, "demonstrated that the Corinthians as Christian men and women were to be committed to the Gospel just as Paul was". The Corinthian audience of Paul had given everything for the sake of the Gospel, because they were just as Paul *responsible* for the dynamic spread of the Gospel. The Corinthian audience was exhorted by Paul to be committed to seek "the profit of many", that is, their salvation (10:33). The strong Jesus-followers were expected by Paul to abandon their temple visits in order not to hinder the salvific work of the gospel in the lives of others. They were to enslave themselves according to the model set by Paul; a model that is based on the self-enslaving model of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Philippians 2:5-11).

Concerning Paul's approach of slavery in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, Bosch's argument that Paul calls believers to support the mission by their winsome lifestyle might be limiting in the sense of the Corinthian believers' *responsibility* in following Paul's missional example. Appealing and winsome ethical Christian conduct is *not the only active responsibility* Paul had in mind when he exhorted the Corinthian audience to follow his missional example. It might arguably be limiting because, in agreement with O'Brien (1995:106), "it fails to take into account of the Pauline teaching about the dynamic of the Gospel, and the goal of saving others which the Corinthians are to have in *everything they do* as a necessary element in following Paul's example". Therefore, I argue, the responsibility Paul admonishes his Corinthian audience to take is not limited to appealing Christian conduct as Bosch argues. Rather, Paul's approach of slavery serves as a strategy for his Corinthian audience to evangelise.

Bowers (1991:108), also having just appealing moral conduct in mind when it comes to the *responsibility* of the Corinthian audience in following Paul's missional example, argues that, "Paul is not a model for evangelistic outreach to unbelievers but for voluntary renunciation

within the life of the community of one's rights in Christ". I do not, however, argue that Bowers (or Bosch) neglect the missional component of Paul exhortation to his Corinthian audience to follow his approach of slavery. Bowers (1991:94) does have a missional view of the Corinthian texts, for example:

“That recognized, it is nevertheless also important to notice, in the interest of precision, that what is involved here is not an incentive to active witness, to an evangelistic campaign, but an incentive so to shape one's conduct that it does not prove a hindrance to the attraction of unbelievers. A particular aspect of the Pauline mission is to be imitated, but imitation of the mission itself is not here”.

Rather, I argue that Bowers (just as Bosch) do view Paul's approach of slavery as a missional example to follow, but his view of Paul's example concerns a *limited responsibility* for the Paul's Corinthian audience to undertake. This limited responsibility Bowers (1991:94) view as “shaping one conduct” so to embody an attractive Christian ethical conduct. That is why I argue that Bowers only has an ethical vista in view with regards to the responsibility Paul expect his Corinthian audience to undertake pertaining to his missional example, and not include the responsibility of evangelism. .

However, in my exegetical analysis I argued on a particular issue that indicates that Paul's concern was not only for believers, but also for unbelievers. In the exegeses of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, I concluded that the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers are to have the same purpose as Paul their exemplum, which is the salvation of others. Bowers has failed to sufficiently treat the purpose clauses in each pericope (1 Corinthians 9:19-23, 10:31-11:1) that introduces the soteriological end of Paul's example. For the apostle Paul, his own understanding of mission corresponds with his theology of mission in general. The link between Paul's missional task and that of the Corinthians is arguably very important to analyse. Though Paul did expect his Corinthian audience to partake in the Gospel mission, he also stressed that they do so “in his or her own way and according to their personal gifts” (O'Brien 1995:106). However, the common goal that Paul and his Corinthian audience have is one goal driven by the same ambition - and that is to seek the profit of many in any situation in order to save many. Paul illustrates this notion at the very end of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 when he uses his last deliberative technique: the appeal to imitation.

O'Brien (1995:92) claims that, “it is generally recognised that Paul is instructing his readers to be imitators of him (and ultimately of Christ), so that they will (a) do everything to the glory of God, and (b) give no offence to Jews, Gentiles, and Christians”. However, I argue,



Paul is also calling his Corinthian audience to follow his example of seeking the good of many in order that they may be saved.

#### **4.5 An appeal to imitation**

Hays (1997:179) states that, “it is regrettable that the chapter division (introduced centuries later) has caused many readers to miss the connection of 11:1 to the foregoing argument”. Hays (1997:179) claim that, “the entire treatment of idol food (8:1-11:1) should be read in the light of this closing call for imitation”. The two exhortations that immediately precede Paul’s exhortation to imitate him become very important in determining the ultimate goal of Paul’s missional example. These two comprehensive exhortations to the Corinthians is firstly, eating and drinking are to be done to God’s glory (10:31), and secondly, at the same time they must give no offence to anyone: Jews, Gentiles or the church (10:32). According to O’Brien (1995:91), it is generally agreed that the second exhortation deliberately picks up the language that is depicted in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. Paul further claims that he seeks not his own profit, but the profit of many, so that they may be saved (10:33).

The purpose clause introduced by the conjunction ἵνα in 1 Corinthians 10:33, helps one to understand that Paul does not only have an ethical concern in mind when referring to the behavior and responsibility of his Corinthian audience to follow his example. Paul’s ultimate goal was not primarily the denying of one’s rights in the believing community as an attractive way to draw outsiders, as Bowers would argue. Rather, Paul’s voluntary renunciation of his rights has a soteriological end in view: the salvation of Jews, Gentiles and the church (weak brother or sister) (9:20-21). According to O’Brien (1995:91), one is therefore forced to ask whether the purpose for Paul’s proper use of Christian liberty, namely, seeking the salvation of Jews, Gentiles and weak Jesus-followers, should be the Corinthians’ objective as well, “thereby serving as a motivating factor in their behavior”. In similar terms, does Paul’s appeal to imitate him as he imitates Christ (11:1) not also include the call to evangelism and missional outreach?

#### **4.7 Subject of factionalism and concord: The future advantageous action modelled upon the pattern of Christ will bring unity**

Paul’s use of deliberative rhetoric also addresses the prevailing issue of disunity by employing the characteristic element of *factionalism and concord*. How does Paul’s call for unity in the Corinthian church relate to Paul’s approach of slavery as an evangelical mission strategy?

According to Mitchell (1991:144), Paul, using deliberative rhetoric, is addressing factionalism as, “a problem of self-interest placed above the common interest”. Therefore, Mitchell (1991:144) states, Paul as orator is attempting to persuade the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers “to forsake their individual interests and together strive for the common good (*τὸ κοινὴ συμφέρον*)”. The common good which is defined here, as throughout the letter, is that which builds up the community (10:23), specifically love (8:1; 13:5). However, Mitchell fails to go further by noticing that the building up of the church, as Martin observes, is further defined “as the salvation of many”, the *οἱ πολλοί* (10:33). In Martin’s case, as we have noticed, salvation meant the upward social mobility of the weak believers and unbelievers. In the case of my research, salvation means bringing a person to conversion and ultimately to complete maturity in Christ.

Upon further study of the text, salvation in terms building up the body of Christ not only means to convert non-believers through positive self-denying behavior, but also to be a slave to others so they are fully and completely built up in Christ for the purpose of their complete salvation at His second coming. Hence, I reject Martin’s (in Mitchell 1991:147) specific argument that “Paul’s overriding concern is...the unity of the church body”. Paul’s overriding concern is the spreading of the Gospel, the good news that unites all in Christ, and therefore, evangelism and mission. Unity is the fruit generated as the result of a unified concern for the salvation of all. For Paul, the expression of unity is embedded within his quest to seek “the profit of many, so that they may be saved” (10:33).

#### **4.6 ...as I imitate Christ: 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1**

In the concluding summary of Paul’s extensive argument in the unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, Paul presents himself and Christ as a *παράδειγμα* to his Corinthian audience whom he had begotten in the Gospel. Paul illustrates this presentation when he appeals to his own example and exhorts them to imitate himself in the same way that he has imitated his Lord: “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (11:1). Paul, according to Hays (1997:179), concludes this section, “leaving the word ‘Christ’ hanging in the air, without explanation or elaboration” However, since we have argued that Paul’s example is that of self-denial, and the goal of his enslavement is for the salvation of all, I argue that the Christological insertion is an indication of two roles of Christ embodied in his mission on earth: a. His self-denial/self-emptying; and b. His commitment to the salvation of all. I argued that, according to Garnsey (in Rawson & Weaver 1999:107), Paul’s self-enslavement was moved by “Christ’s humiliation and self-enslavement as shown in his birth as a man, his life of service, and his

death in the manner of a slave”. As Hays (1997:180) argues, “believing that his own life was in fact conformed to the self-sacrificial example of Christ, Paul was willing to offer himself as a role model”. Ramsaran (1996:61) phrases this example: “In his behavior Paul acts as the crucified one, and, once more, he invited the Corinthians to imitate him (11:1; see 4:16 and Philippians 2:5-11)”.

Paul also follows the example of Christ, not only in reference to Christ’s self-enslavement, but also in Christ’s commitment to the salvation of many. Implicit references of Christ’s example can be found in Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. The first indication of the relationship between soteriology and Christology in the unit can be found in 1 Corinthians 8:6 where Paul explains, in the form of a monotheistic slogan, the third maxim in 1 Corinthians 8:4. I concur with Murphy-O’Connor’s (2009:59-75) observation that, the incorporation of Christ in this monotheistic slogan reflects “the role that Christ plays in salvation”.

The second depiction of the soteriological relationship with Christology is in 8:11: “And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother [sic] for whom Christ died”. I argued in Chapter three that this monotheistic slogan implies that the temple attendance by the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers, motivated through “puffed-up knowledge” (see maxim: 8:1b), stand in contradiction with the work of salvation (that is, the work of love) the Lord Jesus Christ embodied in his incarnation, especially through his death on the cross. These two indications contend on an implicit basis for the relationship between salvation and Christ’s role in it.

Paul, then, in the third indication offers us an explicit illustration of Christ’s example (and Paul’s own example) in 10:33: “Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the [profit] of many, so that they may be saved”. Paul, then, follows with an exhortation to the Corinthian audience in 11:1: “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ”. Just as Christ sought the profit of many which Paul defines as, “so that they might be saved”, so Paul followed the example of Christ in this way. The statement to “please all men in all things” (10:33) is a profound statement, since Fee (1987:490) notes that pleasing people in the context of evangelism is “otherwise anathema to Paul”. In this interpretation of the text, following the example of Christ means to be committed to the profit of others - which is defined as their salvation. Therefore, I argue that Paul’s exhortation to imitate him does include the admonition to evangelism and mission.

I argue that Paul does exhort his Corinthian audience to seek the profit of many so that they might be saved (10:33), but how is one to understand the other two comprehensive

exhortations in light of Paul's appeal to imitation: a. "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God" (10:31); and b. "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God" (10:32)?

Paul's rhetoric of refinement in his deliberative argument is helpful to understand the function of the two exhortations. It is arguably important to note O'Brien's (1995:104) observation where he argues that, "the negative expression 'to give no offence' is now spelled out positively (in terms similar to verses 23-24), as Paul affirms 'I try to please everybody in every way'". In this way, Paul is refining to "give non offence" (10:32) to "please all men in all things" (10:33). In the same way, yet in a contrasting manner, Paul refines the positive expression of "therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God" (10:31), and spelling it out in a negative way in terms of the expression to "give non offence" (10:32). Paul, then, exhorts his Corinthian audience to "seek the profit of many so that they may be saved" (10:33). To do "all for the glory of God" (10:31), and to "please all men in all things" (10:33) meant for Paul to not offend anyone but seek "the profit of many" (10:33) - for the ultimate *telos* (purpose or end) of the salvation of many (10:33). The context of 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1 suggests that, as Collins and Harrington (1999:353) argue, "effectively the norm of one's conduct in the matter of eating and drinking ought to be concern for the salvation of others (cf. 8:11-13)".

All three exhortations are part of Paul's appeal to his Corinthian audience to imitate his approach of slavery as strategy for evangelism. Paul did not deny the freedom of his Corinthian audience, but he is calling them to exercise their Christian freedom in any situation for the profit of many, so that they may be saved (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1). The glory of God is thus displayed in the salvation of others.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

In his appeal to his Corinthian converts to follow his example, Paul never assumed that his attitude and behavior in the Gospel mission has originated with or is grounded in him, but Paul himself followed an example, and the example he follows is that of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1; cf. Philippians 2:5-11). O'Brien (1995:84) states, "the apostle tells his implied readers at Philippi that Christ Jesus is the example par excellence (Philippians 2:5-11) and that their attitude and behavior should be like his".

Paul was a positive example to follow only as far as his example reflected the self-humbling and self-enslaving example of the crucified One. This is consistent with his statements to the

Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, stating that he is very mindful on how he uses his Christian freedom and behavior in relation to his fellow human being.

In analysing and determining the *telos* or the ultimate purpose of Paul's example, I applied the four characteristic elements of Paul's deliberative rhetoric to 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1 that characterises his whole attempt to persuade his Corinthian audience to follow his example of Christian liberty.

In the section of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Paul, as an example of the sound use of Christian freedom, expresses his reason for the nonuse of apostolic right to solicit material support from his Corinthian audience. Paul's reason is for the sake of the advance of the Gospel (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:13; 9:15-18). Collins and Harrington (1999:353) note that, "as to the positive purpose of his exercise of freedom, Paul affirms that his self-enslavement is not without purpose". In 9:19, a general statement introduces the first of seven purpose clauses (20-22) in which Paul "spells out why he, a free man, has willingly enslaved himself". Seen in light of the seven purpose clauses embedded in the periscope of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, the central motif for Paul's enslavement is the Gospel and its purpose which is the salvation of many. Sampley (2001:907) argues that, "winning and gaining people for the Gospel... is the governing focus of Paul's life in response to his call. Paul depicts his evangelical efforts, his voluntary slavery to all involves a fundamental and exemplary accommodation to people as and where he finds them (9:19-23)". However, all of this is not for the limited purpose of an attractive missional lifestyle to draw others to the church, but for "the sole purpose of winning, gaining for the Gospel; the one whom he accommodates (9:20-21)" (Sampley 2001:907). Paul, therefore, had a strategy to evangelise, and that was to live an incarnational life by identifying with all people in all situations. Whether he becomes like the Jew, Gentile or the weak, Paul's purpose was to win them as a partaker with Christ in their salvation - and win them completely (9:19-23).

Therefore, in 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul exhorts his Corinthian audience to imitate him which includes an admonition to evangelism and mission. In Chapter five, I illustrate how autobiographical accounts and missionaries of the past reflect and emulate the incarnational example of Paul and Christ.

The language of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 is picked up again in 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1 where Paul restates his example of self-enslavement. In his practical qualification of his example in 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, I argued that Paul's appeal to imitate him as he imitates Christ was

an exhortation to his Corinthians to “seek the profit of many” (11:1). The profit of many is an expression that characterises the function of slaves. Therefore, it is a refinement of Paul’s example of making himself “a slave to all” in 1 Corinthians 9:19. Furthermore, through Paul’s rhetorical use of refinement, “seeking the profit of many so that they can be saved” is a refinement of: “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God” (10:31) and, “give non offence, neither to Jews, nor to Gentiles, nor to the Church of God (10:32). All three exhortations are part of Paul’s appeal for his Corinthian audience to imitate his approach of slavery as an evangelical mission strategy.

Paul presenting himself as the model to his Corinthian audience is not limited to the responsibility of attractive Christian ethical conduct, but he has in view the Gospel of the Lord Jesus who influenced most of his life (11:1). When Paul presents himself as an example to be imitated, his life cannot be separated from the *dynamic spread* of the Gospel. The motif of Gospel, as depicted in 1 Corinthians 9:23, indicates that the function of Paul’s example inseparable to his preaching of the Gospel. This, however, does not indicate that living a life of servitude and adaptability to the needs of one’s neighbour is, in principle, equivalent to preaching (*kerygma*) the saving message of Christ’s crucifixion. Rather, living a life of servitude and adaptability serves as a strategy for evangelical outreach whose purpose is the salvation of many.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL EVENTS AND CENTRAL FIGURES IN HISTORY

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss some autobiographical accounts where Paul's model of self-enslavement as a strategy for evangelism was at play in my life. I also look at central figures in history who, as disciples, followed the example of Paul and Christ who voluntarily enslaved themselves for the sake of the Gospel and its salvific power. I only venture to recall accounts where I either imitated or did not emulate the example of Paul as illustrated in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1. Though the exigence in the respective events are not the same as the exigence in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, Paul's example of his use of Christian freedom as a strategy for evangelism has both been challenging for me and for central historical figures.

According to the methodology of rhetorical criticism, as Pogooff (1992:80) stresses, when one emphasises the rhetorical dimension of the text, one "shares that dimension with the implied author and the implied intended (that is, the presumed original) reader". Furthermore, Pogooff (1992:80-81) rightfully argues that, "a text which functioned rhetorically in the original situation will continue so if the reader interprets it as addressing his or her attitudes or actions within a new situation". However, the situation is not entirely new; rather, as stressed by Bitzer (in White 1980: 35-36), the situation is related to the original situation in the following way:

Many [rhetorical] situations grow to maturity and are resolved; others disintegrate. A few situations persist because the exigences are deeply embedded in the human condition. War and peace, triumph and tragedy, slavery and freedom, life and death, guilt and innocence - such universal or archetypal exigences are ever present and account for situations perpetually forming. When a speaker responds to one of these he may speak to a double but complementary situation; ... second, to a situation generated in a particular place and time by a specific threat to freedom. Milton's *Areopagitica* was a rhetorical response to a particular threat to freedom during his own time. However, for us and for people of all time his work is a classic response to the universal situation.

In Paul's case we note that 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 was a rhetorical response to a particular threat. This particular threat, however, was not freedom as in Milton's *Areopagitica*; rather, it

was a particular threat of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' [miss-] use of freedom which had the potential of breaking down the faith of one's weak brother or sister in Christ. The misuse of their freedom also had the potential to hinder the work of the Gospel in the lives of unbelievers. Paul defines this work of the Gospel as, the salvation of many. In a rhetorical response to the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' misuse of their Christian liberty in the present rhetorical situation (the imperial context), Paul presents his own example as one who uses his Christian freedom in love (cf. 8:1b) by enslaving himself for the telos/goal of saving others. For us and for Christians of all time, Paul's example is a classic response to the universal situation of Jesus-followers' evangelism in a world where Christ grants us the privilege of being partakers in saving the souls of those He gave his life for. Zimmermann (2012:7) agrees with this notion by arguing that, "since Paul's behavioural justification explicitly functions as an example for the conduct of the Corinthians in the conflict concerning meat sacrificed to idols, one can also conclude that the particular arguments have appealed to a broader, and in a certain sense even universal, validity". Zimmermann (2012:7) further states that, "this fact is also significant for the evaluation of mission".

In the following two sections I discuss: a. Autobiographical accounts of my personal experiences as a Christian with two practical examples. The first is an example of when I misused my freedom that hindered the Gospel and the second as an example of a Christian who used freedom responsibly seeking the salvation of others. b. I also discuss central figures in Christian evangelism that followed the self-denying example of Paul in their missional endeavors.

## **5.2 Autobiographical accounts**

In the following autobiographical accounts, I discuss two examples: a negative example and a positive example. The negative example portrays my misuse of Christian liberty as a friend to a Muslim friend, using the example of the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers as a reference for an example that hinders the spread of the Gospel. My positive example portrays the use of Christian freedom as it functions in evangelism, using the Pauline/Christ example as a reference for an example that advances the salvific work of the Gospel.

### **5.2.1 Negative example**

Adeyemo's (2006:1388) analysis on the periscope of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 states that, "Paul's example shows us how we should do evangelism. The recipients of our witnessing must have a sense that we identify with them".



In my encounter with a Muslim friend, I have become, as Paul would say, a stumbling block by failing to identify with her perspective on the physical nature of the Bible. The negative example was in the form of a dialogue between two people of different faith groups. As a Christian my γνῶσις (knowledge) suggests that the Bible, as a physical book, is not the source of life and holiness. God alone is the source of life and holiness.

One beautiful evening in Stellenbosch, South Africa, I went to have dinner in a shop nearby my residence. As time went by, my Muslim friend walked and saw the Bible on the floor next to me. She asked me: “Why is the Bible on the floor? It is holy, do not put it in on the floor”. Immediately I stopped eating and thought of a way to use this opportunity to evangelise. For a Muslim, the physical book of the Quran is holy. According to Wagner (2008), it states that only the pure and clean are allowed to touch the sacred text of the Quran: “This indeed a Holy Qur’an, in a book well-guarded, which none shall touch but those who are clean...” (56:77-79). Some argue that this concept of cleanliness or purity is with reference to Muslims who are clean in heart, and only they can touch the Qur’an. However, some argue, like my Muslime friend, these verses to mean also physical purity and cleanliness. It is therefore obvious, I argue, by my Muslim friend’s response that her understanding of the Qur’an influenced her understanding of the Bible, when she made that statement towards me. Clearly, she saw something holy to the physical nature of the Bible and therefore it cannot be lying on an ‘impure’ floor.

Knowing that I do not share the same understanding as my Muslim friend, I responded somewhat foolishly in trying to spread the Gospel. I said: “The Bible as a physical book is not holy, only God is. If I burn this Bible or put it on the table in a ‘dignified’ manner, it wouldn’t make me less of a Christian nor will it hinder my view of Christ”. What I said might have been true, but I misused my freedom based on the knowledge that I held, rather than using my Christian freedom in love. What I should have done was voluntarily enslave myself to my Muslim friend by responding in a way that would be in accordance to her understanding of the dignity of the physical Bible. I should have sought her profit by denying my view on the physicality of the Bible by picking the Bible up, and apologising for putting it on the floor. As a result, I became an obstacle to her whereby she might never take the Bible seriously again. In this way, I potentially hindered the spread of the Gospel in her life by not seeking her profit so that my Muslim friend might be saved (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:33). To take Paul’s example in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 as reference, I should have become like a Muslim (by this I mean in her understanding of the physical form of the Bible) in order to gain the Muslim.

### 5.2.2 Positive example

In the context of Stellenbosch University, alcohol abuse has been a big concern among students. Alcohol has an increasing negative connotation in my student community. One can argue that some associate alcohol with sin, and that the use of alcohol more often than not leads to deeds of unrighteousness. Therefore, the problem is not necessarily drinking alcohol, but its association with sin.

For this reason, I decided that I will not drink a drop of alcohol in any context (especially in the context of Stellenbosch University) for the sake of the Gospel and its salvific work in others. As a Christian, just like Paul, I am free and I have the right to drink a glass of wine for example, but I have taken a strategic approach to evangelism by not drinking wine ever again if it means that it becomes a stumbling block to my fellow weak brother in Christ or unbelievers (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:13). I therefore, being a Christian and an example in the community, use my Christian liberty to deny myself of consuming alcohol. I do this because of alcohol's association with sin, and for the sake of the weak brother or sister who came from a life of excessive alcohol consumption. I do it also not to offend unbelievers who are yet to be saved. I use my Christian liberty in order to be a partaker with the salvific advance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Imagine if a recovering alcoholic saw me as an example of faith in Christ, and he/she sees me drink a glass of wine? He/she might be too weak to consider that drinking wine is not a sin, and as a consequence fall back into alcohol addiction. Drinking alcohol then, has the potential to harm the conscience of a weak brother or sister, and even hinder the work of the Gospel in their lives and also in the lives of unbelievers. Therefore, I enslave myself - just like Paul, though in different situations - by becoming like an alcoholic (by this I mean understanding and being empathetic towards their condition, and their need for Christ) with the aim to proclaim the saving message of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the purpose of salvation.

Of course, I am not suggesting that the conversion of an alcoholic is couched in micro-ethical terms such as abstinence from alcohol, nor do I intend to evangelise in that way. Bosch (2011:427; italics added) makes a compelling argument concerning inauthentic evangelism, “which couches conversion only in micro-ethical terms, such as regular church attendance, *abstinence from alcohol* and tobacco, and daily bible reading and prayer, or limits the evangelistic message to an offer of release from loneliness, peace of mind, and success in

what we undertake”. This so-called evangelism is only aimed at satisfying people rather than aiming to transform them through the salvific power of Christ.

The previous autobiographical accounts reflected two examples, both positive and negative. These examples illustrate how puffed-up knowledge (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:1b) has the potential to function as a hindrance to the advance of the Gospel. More positively, the autobiographical accounts show how important it is to follow the Pauline example of enslavement (self-denial) when one seeks to preach the good news of Jesus Christ to people of different religions or worldviews, and to those who are weak when it comes to the presence of sin and addictions (such as alcohol) in their lives.

### **5.3 Central historical Christian figures following Paul’s example**

#### **5.3.1 Saint Francis of Assisi: A life of poverty**

In addition to the autobiographical examples, one historical figure followed the Pauline example of self-denial as a strategy for evangelism: Saint Francis of Assisi. He is renowned for his self-imposed poverty to life and evangelising the poor and marginalised of society. Saint Francis of Assisi, born in the late 1181 or early 1182, is a well-known Italian man and a Roman Catholic friar and preacher. According to Jordan of Giano (in Wolf 2005:1), a bibliographer of Saint Francis, Francis heard a sermon that changed his life forever. The sermon was on Matthew 10:9 in which Christ commands his disciples to go forth and proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom, and doing it without taking money with, or even walking shoes or sticks for the road. Therefore, Francis, as a Christian, was inspired to live a life of poverty. There are many elements in Francis’ ministry and life that I do not mention here<sup>12</sup>, however, I mention Francis’ life of poverty, and how his life is an imitation of the Pauline example of self-denial as a strategy for evangelism.

Wolf (2005:20) identifies that the life of Saint Francis is a life that “conformed himself to the poor in all things”. As a son of a rich merchant, Francis *il Poverello* “grew up surrounded...by all the amenities that people of his rank enjoyed” (Wolf 2005:19). Francis, however, rejected the worldly riches that constituted his patrimony and deliberately embraced poverty. Arguably, Francis’ holy poverty is a kind of voluntary poverty that imitates Jesus as the practitioner of voluntary poverty par excellence.

Scholars offer various arguments that suggest the saint, in terms of poverty, diverged from his Gospel-based model. One of the arguments is that, “the mendicancy that played such a key

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<sup>12</sup> For example, Saint Francis loved the creation and poetry.

role in Francis' conception of holy poverty is not scripturally based" (Wolf 2005:43). Wolf (2005:43) further highlights this argument by stating that, "there is nothing in the Gospels that suggests that Jesus and the apostles ever begged for food". This argument is significant not because it refutes the authenticity of Francis' voluntary life-style of poverty, but because it points one to Francis' ability to discern the context in which he lived.<sup>13</sup> In other words, though Francis was inspired to imitate Jesus in terms of poverty, what Francis' poverty looked like, was likely shaped by his own personal experience with the poor people he met on the avenues of Assisi. Wolf (2005:43) observes that it was likely Francis' "own empirical observations of the activities of the Umbrian poor that taught him how to become poor".

According to his biographers, Francis at first followed what is known as the low road to salvation. This means that Francis, as a rich man, first followed the way of tending to the suffering of the poor and marginalised. However, Francis finally opted for the high road, which was to follow in the way of Jesus in His self-imposed poverty by disposing of his possessions and living and relying totally on God. Cunningham (2004:21) puts it this way: "It is a reiterated theme in the Franciscan tradition that Francis linked the life of poverty, under the rubric of self-emptying, with the cross as the *παραδειγμα* (example) of dying in humility and poverty. It did not escape those who studied the life of Francis to view his passion for poverty within the framework of the passion of Christ".

By becoming poor, Francis imitated Jesus as one who reached out to the poor and downtrodden, though in a new but not very different context. Francis' voluntary impoverishment (or as Paul would view it as his voluntary enslavement) functioned well in his efforts to evangelise and gain those who were seen as the outcast of society. Strategically, Francis both communicated the truth of the Gospel of Jesus verbally and non-verbally. The self-impoverishment of the evangelist emulates the Pauline model of the use of Christian liberty to preach the Gospel to the simple in simple, concrete terms, so that the lay people and lowly of his time could hear and understand the Gospel for the purpose of their salvation. As evangelist, Francis, in his self-impoverishment, like Paul, calls those so called strong followers of Jesus (in Francis' case, they are the rich Catholic church-folk) to "repentance and detachment from the things of this world..." (Wolf 2005:84).

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<sup>13</sup> Another argument that supports the saint's divergence from his Gospel-model stems from the notion that voluntary poverty is not the only kind of poverty in the New Testament. Wolf (2005:43) observed that "the Gospel also contain explicit references to the plight of the involuntarily poor and to its alleviation, both as an eschatological promise and as a moral duty".

Saint Francis was an evangelist, who like Paul, followed the self-emptying example of Christ. He conformed himself to poverty in all things, not only for the sake of imitating Jesus' self-impoverishment through the incarnation, but also to identify with the poor and bring the Gospel of salvation to their lives. However, the example of Saint Francis should not lead to an uncritical celebration of contextual and often mutually exclusive theologies. Bosch (2011:437) argues that, "this danger of relativism...gives one the impression that each scriptural text is viewed as being so deeply shaped by its context that it actually constitutes an isolated theological world in itself". The example of Saint Francis should lead us to assess his example critically as it functions in his evangelical mission. One therefore - along with affirming the essentially contextual nature of evangelism - also have to affirm the universal and context-transcending dimensions of evangelism. For this reason, Spoto (2002:108) argues the following:

With specific regard to Francis, we may not, finally, be drawn to him because we want to imitate him. Imitation of his extreme, literal manner of following Christ would be, in our time, both impossible and frankly undesirable. What matters, rather, is Francis's abandonment of himself to God and his offering of himself for the good of the world - a dedication that was itself a definition of conversion.

In the following section, I discuss the missional journey of Carl Hoffman, a German missionary ethnographer who came to evangelise in South Africa. Hoffmann gives us an example on how inculturation ought to function in an evangelical mission. In addition to Saint Francis of Assisi's self-impoverishment, Hoffmann now, in terms of culture, followed the example of Paul's self-sacrifice in Paul's illustration of his chief characteristic of his mission, "his cross-cultural adaptability (1 Corinthians 9:20-21)" (Barton & Muddiman 2001:1123).

### 5.3.2 Carl Hoffmann: Inculturation

The life of Hoffmann and most of his missionary work is recorded in the book, *Ethnography from a Mission Field*. Hoffmann was born in 1868, in Zielenzig, district Ost-Sternberg. He was a mission superintendent and before his retirement, he was the president of the Berlin mission in South Africa. He is still hailed as one of the key pioneers in the days of German mission work in South Africa. What made Hoffmann one of the most authentic missionaries in history was his cross-cultural adaptability in bringing the Gospel to North Sotho, South Africa. "Hoffmann was a missionary who, with the specific tasks he set himself, combined a deep interest in African customs and traditions with a profound understanding of the distinctive character of his African parishioners" (Kähler-Meyer in Joubert *et al.*, 2015:1045).

In his evangelical mission, typical of Hoffmann's style, "he first seeks out the position of the person he wishes to engage with" (Joubert *et al.*, 2015:32). Typical of the cultural philosophy he had been trained in Berlin, Hoffmann instead claimed that the Africans, such as those in Northern Sotho Transvaal, should be able to "translate the Christian Gospel into the metaphor of their own culture..." (Joubert *et al.*, 2015:32). Hoffmann's view of spreading the good news of the Gospel meant that the African had to appropriate the Gospel in his/her own terms and principles. The bringer of faith, therefore, draws from the wisdom of fairy tales and the fables, on "how to use the language correctly and how to find the correct tone" (Joubert *et al.*, 2015:33). For Hoffmann, "it is the African who has to appropriate the Christian (not European) principles and adapt those, make them work, in order to fit them into his mindset" (Joubert *et al.*, 2015:32).

Hoffmann's example of cross-cultural adaptability in his evangelical work, though not entirely uninfluenced by the colonial powers of the time, is close in imitating the Pauline model of the use of Christian liberty as illustrated in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. Although Hoffmann could have been an agent of the colonial state, he did not impose his "European culture" on his Northern Sotho friends. Instead, Hoffmann "would not have asked the African to abandon his spiritual world, because then he would have had to embrace Christianity on foreign (European) terms, and the European culture was not the African's to assume" (Joubert *et al.*, 2015:32).

Tinker (1993:5) discusses a few examples of different missionaries who intentionally, or unintentionally, contributed to the cultural genocide of Native American peoples. Lemkin (2010) gives us a clear definition of what cultural genocide is: "Cultural genocide is a term used to describe the deliberate destruction of the cultural heritage of a people or nation for political, military, religious, ideological, ethnical, or racial reasons". In terms of religious reasons, Tinker (1993:33) uses the example of John Elliot as a Puritan missionary to the Indian peoples in Massachusetts who accomplished the Indian's subjugation through the, "naïve imposition of the language of Puritan theology and ecclesiology".

For the Puritans, conversion, baptism, and church estate, "were built upon a narrow level of orthodoxy" (Tinker 1993:34). The pre-requisite of coming to the Christian faith is to hold sound doctrine and to confess one's sin had to be done in theologically appropriate language. The point is, as Tinker (1993:35) argues, "the imposition of confessional theology is de facto the imposition of culture and values, even when it is a generally unsuccessful imposition". One can just imagine how such an imposition of cultural values, according to Tinker

(1993:35-36), lead to “unmentionable pain, namely: self-hatred, alienation, and rejection, that have never really received attention in historical analysis of the period or in discussions of the contemporary context of Indian people”.

I argue that most of the Puritans in history made a positive impact to Christian doctrine and Theology today. However, such pain caused by missional examples of evangelical missionaries such as Elliot and many others in the colonial past, is incompatible with the example of Jesus and Paul in their quest to seek the profit of many, so that others might be saved (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:33-11:1). Zimmermann (2012:8) argues that, “the teleological and altruistic ethic of Paul is not conducive for militant evangelisation strategies”.

In contrast, however, Hoffmann, through his cross-cultural adaptability in the Northern Sotho cultural context, followed the cross-cultural adaptability Paul implicitly exhorts in 1 Corinthians 9:20-21. To Northern Sotho people, Hoffmann became like the Northern Sotho people, to gain the Northern Sotho people. Like Paul, Hoffmann’s evangelical mission strategy was for the sake of the Gospel and its salvific power, so that he can be a partaker of the Gospel with his fellow Northern Sotho parishioners.

Our final two examples included in this discussion are the products of the Moravian missional movements in history. In addition to the self-impooverished Saint Francis and the cross-cultural adaptability of Hoffmann, Leonard and David Nitschmann followed Paul’s model by literally volunteering to become slaves to save a people on a slave island.

### 5.3.3 Leonard Dober and David Nitschmann: The Moravian Missionaries

August (2015:iv) writes a dedication to fellow Moravian brothers and sisters in Christ, in which he says: “To all the heroes of the faith throughout the ages in the history of the Moravian Church who kept the simple faith in Jesus Christ by sacrificing their lives in staying true to his calling in the world - GENS AETERNA DIESE MÄHREN!” Amongst these heroes are the names of two missionaries who embodied the Moravian impulses of transformation through evangelism. The two were Leonard Dober and David Nitschmann. As a vibrant Moravian missionary, Dober, was the first to be informed on 29 July 1732 that there are Negro slaves on a far island called St. Thomas in the West Indies. Reidhead (2014) provides an account on what the owner of the slaves, a British atheist, said concerning Christian occupation on his island: “No preacher, no clergyman, will ever stay on this island. If he's shipwrecked we'll keep him in a separate house until he has to leave, but he's never going to talk to any of us about God, I'm through with all that nonsense”. Three thousand

slaves from Africa were deported to an island in the Atlantic with the possibility of never hearing the Gospel of Christ.

Weinlick (1966:92) recalls an incident where Dober's missional leader responded upon the news of the Negro slaves in St. Thomas: "there are among these brethren messengers that will go forth to the heathen in St. Thomas...". As a response, Dober was strengthened in his resolve to volunteer for the mission service. After Anthony, a Negro, painted a picture of the conditions in St. Thomas, it was "necessary for the missionaries themselves to become slaves in order to reach the Negroes" (Weinlick 1966:92). Though a few was very faint-hearted upon hearing such news, Dober was enthusiastic to follow through with the mission. Upon request by Dober, Nitschmann joined his fellow Moravian missionary to the island of St. Thomas to preach the Gospel to the Negro slaves.

Nitschmann was the only one of the two who left a wife and a child behind. Upon their departure by ship, their families, especially that of Nitschmann, was very emotional. According to Reidhead (2014), as the ship slipped away with the tide and the gap widened, the young men linked arms, raised their hands and shouted across the spreading gap, "*May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering*". Dober and Nitschmann were more than willing to become slaves and preach the Gospel to the Negro slaves. When Hutton, a courtier in Copenhagen, asked the two young missionaries in blank astonishment, how they intended to live, Nitschmann replied: "I will work with the Negroes and my friend, who is a potter, will help me" (Hutton 1895:151). Hutton states that (this carpenter and potter), "they won the hearts of the slaves, and made them clap their hands for joy" by identifying with the suffering of the Negro slaves (Hutton 1895:152). Their evangelical mission to the island even "aroused the anger of the brutal slaveholders, who complained that the Negroes would become better Christians than their owners [who probably converted to Christianity themselves]" (Hutton 1895:152).

In this story, one witnesses two evangelical missionaries who used their Christian liberty as white free Moravian missionaries to enter into the territory of black slaves in order to preach unto them the Gospel. However, they did not do so by the manner of imposition or force lest they themselves should become a stumbling block to the slaves. Rather, they used their Christian freedom to work with - and amongst the slaves as a strategy to be partakers in saving the many. They were willing to identify themselves with the suffering of the Negro slaves on St. Thomas Island in order to advance the salvific power of the Gospel in their lives. These two Moravian heroes followed the incarnational example of Christ through adapting to



the needs and sufferings of the Negro slaves, “so that they may be saved” (1 Corinthians 10:33).

One could argue that the evangelical strategy of Dober and Nitschmann influenced August (2015:44) to state that, “a missional ecclesiology is contextual”. August (2015:44) further argues that all ecclesiology is developed within a particular context. There is but one way to be church, and that is incarnationally, within a specific concrete setting (August 2015:44). By adapting to the realities of the slaves to gain them for Christ, Dober and Nitschmann are classical examples of those who followed Paul’s example as Jesus-followers who voluntarily enslaved<sup>14</sup> themselves for the salvation of others.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

The Pauline approach of slavery as a strategy for evangelism (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; 10:31-11:1) has been imitated by many central figures of the past in various new, but not entirely different, situations. Evangelists such as Saint Francis of Assisi, Hoffmann, Dober and Nitschmann have all embodied the incarnational example of self-denial in their mission fields.

For Saint Francis, self-enslavement meant to literally become poor in order to share the Gospel with those who are the marginalised and outcasts of society. For Hoffmann, the use of one’s Christian liberty meant a cross-cultural adaptability to a Northern Sotho people, so that the truth of the Christian faith could be received not by imposing one’s own cultural values on the other, but to translate the Christian faith into their language, customs and traditions. For Dober and Nitschmann, self-denial meant the willingness to physically enslave themselves on an island called St. Thomas. Their intention was to identify and suffer with their fellow Negro-slaves with a strategy to win their hearts that led to great joy. In this way, all the central historical figures intended that their actions serve as a strategy for the advancement of the salvific power of the Gospel by seeking the profit of many so that the evangelised might be saved (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:33).

Furthermore, the autobiographical accounts illustrate that the Pauline example of self-enslavement can be imitated in contexts of interreligious dialogue, and in the context of where a brother or sister struggles with an addiction or is sin-conscious about certain actions, such as drinking alcohol. Through organised missionary outreaches or practical day-to-day encounters with others, adopting the strategy of Paul is an evangelical mandate for the Church to fulfill

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<sup>14</sup> The term here is again used as a metaphor even though Dober and Nitschmann, arguably, became slaves. They did embody the incarnational example of Paul by identifying and sympathising with the Negro slaves.

the salvific mandate of Christ - not as ones who cause salvation, for the cause of salvation one attributes only to the powerful working of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Rather, adopting the strategic strategy of Paul is to assert that all Christians are to be *partakers* in the salvation of others, and such partaking involves a certain loving behavior that does not break down, but builds up.

As opposed to appear just a tiny bit too good so that people will feel that one is altogether a transcendental being, Spurgeon (1995:66) defines Paul's missional strategy as seen in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22 as being "men among men, keeping yourselves clear of all their faults and vices, but mingling with them in perfect love and sympathy". In light of Paul's missional strategy, Spurgeon (1995:66) further argues that one should "feel that you would do anything in your power to bring them to Christ".

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

#### 6.1 Introduction

The overarching aim of writing this research was to analyse the purpose and function of Paul's positive use of his metaphor of slavery in the rhetorical unit of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. In the exegeses of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11, I argued that Paul's approach of slavery in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, is not limited to the purpose of attractive or appealing Christian ethical reform, but it functions a strategy for evangelism and mission for the purpose of the salvation of many. Therefore, in particular reference to the exegesis of 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, Paul's final exhortation, "imitate me and as I imitate Christ" (11:1), is an exhortation to the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers that includes an admonition to evangelism and mission. Paul calls his Corinthian audience to emulate his incarnational example and be partakers with him in the advancement of the Gospel in the lives of Jews, Gentiles and their fellow believers (see 9:20-22).

#### 6.2 Paul's rhetorical method

In Chapter two, I discussed the significance of rhetoric in Paul's time and how he was influenced by the rhetorical linguistic system in Corinth. I further outlined the importance of Paul's use of deliberative rhetoric within 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1.

The complex notion of rhetoric as perceived within the socio-historical context of Corinth, gives a clearer understanding of why Paul uses key elements such as analogies to negative examples (10:1-22); a call to imitate his positive example (11:1); and to persuade the Corinthian audience to follow an action that is advantageous to the whole community. Paul's use of deliberative rhetoric is essential in determining the function of his example of the exercise of Christian freedom (see 9:20-22). His rhetorical techniques are essential tool for use, so that one can understand how he attempts to persuade his Corinthian audience to follow a future action that functions for the purpose in bringing many unbelievers to Christ, and also believers in to spiritual maturity and completeness in Christ. One of the rhetorical tools Paul used to posit his overall argument concerning the proper use of Christian freedom in his mission was the maxim rhetoric of refinement.

### 6.3 An exegesis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1

In Chapter three, I did an exegesis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 as a whole by using Paul's rhetorical tools of maxims and his rhetoric of refinement. Using these rhetorical tools, I argued that Paul uses his Christian liberty by applying it based on his motivation to love others (cf. 8:1b) rather than basing it on puffed-up knowledge. Through the usage of these tools, Paul explains to his Corinthian audience that their position on Christian freedom ought not to be unrestricted by the knowledge that they hold, but their Christian liberty ought to be restricted by love in the context of the advance of the Gospel for the salvation of others.

Furthermore, I did exegetical analysis on Paul's flow of argumentation in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. Firstly, central to the analysis was the argument surrounding the rhetorical situation that gave rise to Paul's response to the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers. The issue of εἰδωλόθυτα in the text has led me to argue that the issue Paul addresses is not the strong Corinthian Jesus-followers' eating of idol food sold in the market place. Rather, the issue Paul addresses is the strong Corinthians Jesus-followers' justification of their freedom to attend temples where idol food is served. However, Paul does treat the issue of eating sacrificed food in the market place in the last section of the rhetorical unit 1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1, which I argued, only gives the indication that Paul's use of Christian liberty can be applied in all situations of human encounter. Adeyemo (2006:1389) illustrates this point further by referring to 10:31 as an indication that Paul's example of Christian liberty is to be followed "in all circumstances and in dealing with anyone, regardless of race or religion (see 9:19-22)".

In Chapter five, I expressed that the reader can share in the rhetorical function of the text in its original situation by interpreting his or her own actions in a different (though not entirely different) situation. The interpretation of autobiographical accounts and the actions of historical figures gives an indication to the universal significance of Paul's evangelical strategy and example in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1.

Proceeding from my analysis on the rhetorical situation, I extensively discussed Paul's argument and flow of thought in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. However, though I addressed the broad direction of Paul's argument, it was impossible to issue a full exegesis and commentary on 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. Therefore, due to the size and scope of 1 Corinthians, the text only focussed on the use of Christian freedom as a strategy for evangelism. Through the use of micro rhetorical devices such as maxims and refinement, Paul, using deliberative rhetoric, not only provided his Corinthian audience with the sound definition of freedom that is based on love (8:1b), but he also gave them an answer on the way of freedom. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23;

10:31-11:1) For Paul, as illustrated in his first maxim (8:1b), true Christian freedom is not based on mere cognitive theological truth, but it is based on an inherent love for one's brother or sister in Christ. The way of freedom, for Paul, is to voluntarily enslave oneself to others for the purpose of their salvation (1 Corinthians 9:19-23). The exercise of one's Christian liberty in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, for Paul, is more than assuming the responsibility of exemplifying attractive Christian conduct that attracts others, but it is intrinsically bound up with the function of the Gospel – to preach the Gospel and bring everyone to the knowledge of Christ for the purpose of salvation (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; 9:17-18).

Finally, as an introduction to Chapter four which contains my main argument concerning the function of Paul's approach of slavery, I concluded Chapter three with two theological concepts and two theological themes. The two concepts are *Gospel* and *freedom* and the two themes are *soteriology* and *Christology*. I argued how significant these themes and concepts are in following Paul's overall argument concerning the use of Christian freedom in evangelism. The Gospel is the central motif that sets the agenda for Paul's position on Christian freedom. Paul's use of his Christian liberty is not limited to a form of missionary lifestyle centred on the limited responsibility of exemplifying attractive ethical conduct, but it functions as a strategy for the spread and the advance of the good news of Jesus Christ. Salvation, then, is the goal for Paul's self-denying example functioning as a strategy for evangelism. He asserts his example as one that emulates the incarnational example of Christ as a strategy for evangelism, and he exhorts his Corinthian audience to imitate him as he follows the example of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).

#### **6.4 Exegeses of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1**

As mentioned above, for Paul, the Gospel is the central motif everything he does. Paul is willing to deny his right to solicit material support from his congregants if it meant that it would potentially hinder the Gospel in the lives of others (9:1-18).

In the exegeses of the texts of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, I applied the four characteristic elements (futuristic element; advantageous element; proof examples; unity and division) in conjunction with the theological themes (soteriology and Christology), and concepts (Gospel and freedom). My findings indicated that Paul's proper use of Christian freedom has a certain *telos* (purpose or end). Paul's use of his Christian liberty, which he defines as enslaving himself for others, has a soteriological purpose. By introducing seven purpose clauses in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Paul indicated that his self-denying and self-giving service was not just merely for good Christian conduct to attract others, but for the purpose to

win many for Christ (9:20-22). Various scholars like Bosch (2011) and Bowers (1991) disagree with an evangelical reading of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. I use the words “evangelical reading” to refer to my argument that Paul’s self-denial functions as a strategy for evangelism. However, in light of the application of these four characteristic elements of Paul’s deliberate rhetoric, I found that an evangelical reading of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 is possible, though with its limits.

## **6.5 Conclusion: Paul’s missional example applied: Autobiographical accounts and central figures of the past**

I outlined autobiographical accounts together with central figures in history who embodied Paul’s missional example as illustrated in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1. They followed the pattern of Christ’s self-denial as a strategy to spread the salvific power of the Gospel.

Through their examples, I illustrated that Paul’s model of self-enslavement - especially if the Gospel sets the agenda for self-denial - functions as a strategy for evangelical mission. Through their lives, these central historical figures pose a challenge to every Christian and Church congregation today to become incarnational in their service to spread the Gospel to the world. Paul’s use of Christian freedom becomes essential as the Church spreads the truth of the Gospel to people who hold different faiths, to the poor, to cultures and to friends. Christians are not the cause of salvation but indeed partakers. Therefore, Paul calls Christians to imitate his example illustrated in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. Paul’s exhortation to the Corinthians to imitate him includes an admonition to do evangelism by using their Christian freedom to become slaves for others with the purpose to saving many. In doing this, Christians are bringing Christ great glory for the atoning sacrifice He has made upon the cross of Calvary.

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**ADDENDUM****Greek Text: 1 Corinthians 9:19-23**

- 19 Ἐλεύθερος γὰρ ὢν ἐκ πάντων πᾶσιν ἐμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα, ἵνα τοὺς πλείονας κερδήσω·
- 20 καὶ ἐγενόμην τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὡς Ἰουδαῖος, ἵνα Ἰουδαίους κερδήσω· τοῖς ὑπὸ νόμον ὡς ὑπὸ νόμον, μὴ ὢν αὐτὸς ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον κερδήσω·
- 21 τοῖς ἀνόμοις ὡς ἄνομος, μὴ ὢν ἄνομος θεοῦ ἀλλ' ἔννομος Χριστοῦ, ἵνα κερδάνω τοὺς ἀνόμους·
- 22 ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν ἀσθενής,  
ἵνα τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς κερδήσω· τοῖς πᾶσιν γέγονα πάντα, ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω.
- 23 πάντα δὲ ποιῶ διὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ἵνα συγκοινωνὸς αὐτοῦ γένωμαι.

**My Translation: 1 Corinthians 9:19-23**

- 19 For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might gain the more.
- 20 And to the Jews I became as a Jew that I might win Jews, to those who are under the law as under the law, so that I might gain those who are under the law.
- 21 To those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), so that I might gain those who are without law.
- 22 To the weak I became as weak, that I might gain the weak: I have become all things to all men, so that I might by all means save some.
- 23 Now this I do for the Gospel's sake, so that I may be partaker of it with you.

Greek Text: 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

- 31 Εἴτε οὖν ἐσθίετε εἴτε πίνετε εἴτε τι ποιεῖτε, πάντα εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ ποιεῖτε.
- 32 ἀπρόσκοποι καὶ Ἰουδαίοις γίνεσθε καὶ Ἑλλησιν καὶ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ,
- 33 καθὼς καγὼ πάντα πᾶσιν ἀρέσκω, μὴ ζητῶν τὸ ἑμαυτοῦ σύμφορον ἀλλὰ τὸ τῶν πολλῶν, ἵνα σωθῶσιν.
- 11:1 μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε, καθὼς καγὼ Χριστοῦ.

My Translation: 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

- 31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.
- 32 Give non offence, either to the Jews or to the Gentiles or to the Church of God.
- 33 just as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, so that they may be saved.
- 11:1: Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.