



The Actualization of the Principles of Missionary Work According to 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

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ABSTRACT: The issue of Christianity and the local culture has been a discussion that continues to flourish. The issue of the challenge of preaching the Gospel, which was considered incompatible with the spirituality of the local community, has been contested since the first century. Paul, as an apostle, faced the challenge of preaching the gospel because of the exclusivity of early Christianity. This article is aimed at explaining Paul's teachings in 1 Corinthians 9:1-23 from a missiological point of view. This article is aimed at describing how Paul carried out his missionary work in a society of diverse cultures and spiritualities. The author intends to explain it through an exegesis that emphasizes the passage's historical, grammatical, and contextual aspects. Missionary work is a noble task from God. Cultural diversity requires missionaries to be flexible with cultural conditions without compromising the values of biblical theology. The mission does not have to uproot a person from his or her culture but can provide a new interpretation of that culture according to Christian truth. While giving new meaning to culture, the material of the mission must be Christocentric. Flexibility to local culture can reduce the level of resistance from local communities.

Key words: Culture, Bible, Missionaries, 1 Corinthians, and Missionary work.

Article History:

Submitted: Nov. 09, 2021

Revised: Jan. 22, 2022

Published: July 29, 2022

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INTRODUCTION

Christian mission work is always in touch with the culture and spirituality of the local community. Before being sent to a place as a target for mission work, a mission worker is equipped with information about the local culture. Understanding the concept of local culture becomes an important reference for a missionary worker in carrying out God's mission. Nieburh (2006) describes the relationship between evangelism and culture. There are many challenges between the interface of gospel preaching and culture (Mawikere, 2018, 2021; Tanuwidjaja & Uda, 2020). However, it has to be understood that no matter how many challenges may exist, culture is still important for mission and preaching.

This article discusses the relationship between missionary work and culture. The author

will discuss Paul's perception of the missionary method he used concerning the culture in which he carried out missionary work. The author is going to scaffold his research based on the Bible in 1 Corinthians 9:1-23, because it is the center of God's mission described by Paul.

There are New Testament scholars who understand the text of 1 Corinthians 9:1-23 as an apologetic text of the apostle Paul against the Corinthians who doubted the apostleship and implementation of God's mission through Paul (Fee, 2014, p. 392). The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-37) had involved God's church in preaching the gospel. The idea of missionary development was initiated in Acts 1:8 and confirmed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The event of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit became an influential marker of the birth of a church that

continued Jesus' mission, namely preaching the gospel to all nations (Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:7; Acts 1:8). Unlike the Great Commission mandate, Christians in Corinth were still centered on the apostleship of Jesus' disciples. Paul corrected the Corinthian misunderstanding with three rhetorical questions, "Am I not a free man? Have I not seen Jesus? Aren't you the fruit of my work?" to ensure that he was an apostle involved in the mission of God. Paul emphasized his defense with the words "this is my defense against those who criticize me" (1 Cor. 9:1).

Not many New Testament interpreters consider the text of 1 Corinthians 9:1-23 as a missiological text. Some interpreters only focus on the purpose of writing the Corinthian letter, namely the correction of the wrong practices of the Corinthian life. However, it is interesting to note that Paul inserts the principles of mission in the Corinthian letter. This proves that Paul's heart is a missionary heart (Andi et al., 2020; Arifianto et al., 2020; Zaluchu, 2019). This article aims to examine the principles of missionary work expressed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:1-23. The author intends to explain the principles of Paul's missionary activities based on *historical*, *grammatical*, and *contextual* principles to explore the missiological truths contained in the text. 1 Corinthians 9:1-23 is the essence of the topic of preaching the gospel in 1 Corinthians 8-11:1. Chapter 8 states the service to the weak or non-Jews, whereas chapters 10-11:1 implies the records of preaching the Gospel to the Jews. Paul emphasized that the purpose of his missionary ministry was to save as many people as possible (1 Cor 10:33). The passage of 1 Corinthians 8-11:1 is understood as the universality of God's gospel. The religious were represented by the Jews and the adherents of the Torah, and the non-religious were represented by the Greeks who were later called the weak. Considering the observations above, the formulation of the problem in this article was what the principles of missionary work were according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:1-23 in relation to the spiritual diversity of local communities.

METHOD

The research was qualitative. It was conducted by examining religious documents in the form of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*, the standard academic Greek-Critical text form. The research finding drawn from the research was expected to respond to missiological issues, especially addressing issues related to the culture and spirituality of local communities and missionary work. The research procedures carried out by the author were as follows:

First, conduct the text study and observation. As commonly done in theological research, the observation of the selected text was the first and most important step. At this stage, the writer was to examine important grammatical elements in the text which contained the main idea of a text.

Second, conduct both intra-textual and inter-textual observations. The intra-textual observation was an observation of the text and examines the relationship with each text in a book. The intra-textual observation was a development from an observation of the text.

Third, construct the outline of the exposition. Based on the information from the data collected from the first and second observations, the writer was to formulate an outline of the research. The outline was prepared with the framework of the topic of missiology. Yet, the preparation process still considered the principles of the preparation of biblical theology.

Fourth, formulate the principles of missionary work according to 1 Corinthians 9:1-23. This stage was the culmination of the research. The principles of mission work found were formulated in an implementable idea.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Text Observation

This section is intended to detail the results of observations of the text of 1 Corinthians 9:1-23. The author observed each important passage or verse in the passage. It was expected that the result

of the observation would be useful in compiling the outline of the exposition. The results of

observations drawn by the author are described in the table:

1 Corinthians 9:1-23	Observation Result
Verses 1-3	<p>The sentence “<i>Οὐκ εἰμι ἐλεύθερος; οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος; οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἑώρακα;</i>” was a rhetorical question that confirmed that Paul was an apostle who also bore witness to Jesus Christ. The use of perfect, active, indicative tenses described past events whose impact occurs in the present (Maryono, 2016, p. 141). The use of rhetorical questions in New Testament literature confirmed the existence or nature of the speaker. Paul met Jesus. The impact of that meeting was that Paul became an apostle. Therefore, in this case, Paul asserts that he was an apostle and had been a witness of Jesus Christ.</p>
Verses 4-10	<p>4-6 explains that Paul and Barnabas had the same rights as the other apostles. Paul compared himself to Cephas (leader of the apostles). This passage confirms that he was equal to Cephas in apostolic status and rights. The word "right" used the word “<i>ἐξουσίαν</i>” (<i>exousian</i>) which means "authority". Paul had full authority to start a family (even though he didn't) and got the right to accommodation in missionary work.</p> <p>In verse 7, Paul stated that he had had the right or power to earn a living from the missionary work carried out in Corinth. In his argument, Paul used illustrations of soldiers, farmers, and shepherds. This illustration was used to emphasize that he was worthy of receiving rights as a missionary worker, cultivator of God's fields, and shepherd of God's sheep. Paul provided a very clever illustration of identifying himself before the Corinthians.</p> <p>In verses 8-10, Paul quoted Deuteronomy 25:4. Paul re-appropriated certain aspects of Moses' preaching to the second generation of Israel. This section contains inter-textual relationships. Paul quoted the phrase “<i>וְשִׂיבָה רֵשִׁי מִבְּרֵית־אֵל</i>”. The context of Deuteronomy 25:4 was the consequences one receives in court. Paul applied this text to the rights he had as an apostle. . particularly the word "ox" in Deuteronomy 25:4. It was used to confirm himself as plowing God's field, namely the church in Corinth. The Corinthian church was the field, Paul was the ox that plows the field. So, Paul had the right to eat or drink in his work as a cultivator of the Lord's field.</p>
Verses 11-12	<p>In verses 11-12a, Paul explained the meaning of the illustrations in verses 7-10. Paul concluded that he was the one who sowed spiritual seed (the gospel) at the church in Corinth. Therefore, the Corinthian church should pay attention to Paul's needs. Paul explained that the church in Corinth should have paid more attention to Paul's needs as a person who contributed to them than the other apostles.</p> <p>Verse 12b is a transitional sentence to explain the next part. Paul says “<i>ἀλλὰ πάντα στέγομεν, ἵνα μὴ τινα ἐγκοπὴν δῶμεν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ</i>”. The word <i>στέγομεν</i> can be interpreted as "to bear all the difficulties" (Louw & Nida, 1989, p. 176). That is, Paul had experienced financial difficulties while serving in Corinth and was trying to overcome these problems so as not to become an obstacle to the gospel of Christ. At this point, it seems that Paul anticipated that financial problems could be an obstacle in preaching the gospel (<i>μὴ τινα ἐγκοπὴν δῶμεν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ</i>). So, the focus in verse 12b is Paul's intention to bear the financial problems he was experiencing to keep preaching the gospel.</p>

Verses 13-14	<p>Paul develops the principle of "those who serve to earn their living from the service they do". In verse 13 the word <i>serves</i> in the Greek text uses the word “ἐργαζόμενοι” which is often translated as "to work". So, Paul is saying that people who served as gospel ministers deserved to be compensated like people in any other field of work.</p> <p>Those who preached the gospel had to live by preaching the gospel. Chapter 14 continues as an affirmation that Paul, as an apostle who preached the gospel, had apostolic rights; namely, that he could be paid for the preaching of the gospel as he did to the church in Corinth.</p>
Verses 15-18	<p>Paul never exercised his right to be an evangelist because he felt that the privilege of preaching the gospel itself was enough. In addition, by not taking on the rights of an apostle, he was freed from the accusations of the people in Corinth.</p> <p>Paul became a missionary, not of his own free will, but God's (16-17). Paul assumed that the impetus for preaching the gospel was from God himself. In verse 16 there is an oath expressed by Paul "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel". In the Old Testament books, an oath was usually taken by someone in affirming a commitment. So, motivated by God's will, Paul committed to preaching the gospel.</p> <p>The reward of an evangelist was a God-given opportunity for evangelists to be able to preach the gospel in a certain area. This passage is very interesting, that in his journey as an evangelist before arriving in the city of Corinth, Paul had experienced suffering and rejection from both Jews and Gentiles.</p>
Verses 19-23	<p>Paul developed the principle of “free men” to win people over. The word “Ελεύθερος” in the context of 1 Corinthians 9 can be translated as “independent” or not bound by a particular community (Gingrich, 2007). Furthermore, the phrase “τοὺς πλείονας κερδήσω” in verse 19 expresses Paul's hope and goal to win many people not only from a particular community but the entire community where he was preaching the gospel.</p> <p>This passage is central to the mission of Paul's writings. The principle that Paul developed was to devote oneself to the cultural context of the local community to win over the local people. To the Jews, Paul lived like a Jew. To the Greeks, Paul was like the Greeks. To those who were weak in faith, Paul tried not to be a stumbling block to them.</p>

Table 1. Results of Observations

The text of 1 Corinthians 9 1-23 states the intra-textual relationships with other parts of the book of 1 Corinthians. For example, the phrase *weak people* in verse 22 was explained by the author in chapters 10-11. Paul identified that *the weak people* are likely Gentile converts whose consciences were still very sensitive to pagan customs and traditions, particularly in relation to eating food sacrificed to idols and participating in temple activities that often involved interactions with the temples idols. The context of the life of the Corinthian church was to live together with a pagan

society that connected the offerings of idols with the food they ate (Bailey, 2011, p. 229).

For Paul, the prohibition of eating from the results of pagan offerings was not essential but only emphasized ethical actions. In 1 Corinthians 10:23-33, Paul gave ethical teachings so that one did not need to impose his culture on the local culture, but maintained the ethics of the local community so that the life of believers did not become a stumbling block for the local community. So, the Corinthian believers who were free to eat anything could not impose their concept of freedom on those who did

not feel free to eat. The goal was not to become a stumbling block for weak people, causing believers to be filled with doubts or even apostatize. So, the intra-textual relationship between 1 Corinthians 9:22 and 1 Corinthians 10:22-33 was to explain ethical actions that had to be carried out by believers or missionaries towards people with different cultural backgrounds.

In the literary context of 1 Corinthians 8-11, Paul emphasizes the limitations of Christian freedom and self-control as missionaries or Christians in the context of Jewish and Gentile cultures. Talbert (2020, p. 73) describes the literary structure of chapters 8-11 as follows:

- A. Two Issues, concerning meat sacrificed to idols (1) and knowledge (2) (8:1-13)
 - B' Paul's Example (The Apostle's Freedom and Self Servitude (9:1-23)
 - B' The Example of Paul and Israel (Self-control) (9:24-10:13)
- B. Two issues, concerning knowledge (2) and meat offerings (1) (10:14-11:1)

Based on the pattern above, it can be concluded that the core of chapters 8-11 was Paul's example in preaching God's mission and the example of Paul and Israel in limiting freedom as believers. The writer believed that this was the central part of God's mission which Paul wrote about in the Corinthian letter. This means 1 Corinthians 9:1-23 is the theological center of the 1 Corinthians.

Another pattern used in developing the missiological argument of 1 Corinthians 9:1-23 is to

examine the inter-textual relationship of verses 8-9 with Deuteronomy 25:4. Paul cited truths from the Old Testament to confirm his argument regarding the concept of wages. In addition, in affirming his apostolic rights, Paul also quoted from the book of Deuteronomy 18:1. The use of the Old Testament in the New Testament is common in Paul's writings (Adiatma, 2019, p. 1).

The context of Deuteronomy 25:4 quoted by Paul was rules regarding agriculture to protect animals as agricultural tools. Then Paul said, "The valley that God cares about," which is an ironic statement. In the context of 1 Corinthians 9:1-23, Paul wanted to explain the wages of a missionary worker. Paul utilizes irony to attract empathy from the reader. Paul wanted to point out that the Corinthian people did not understand or were ignorant of the wage or stipend that should be given to a gospel worker. The theology that Paul was developing was that God cares for the mission workers even though the church did not pay attention to the missionaries.

Likewise with the quote from the book of Deuteronomy 18:1. The genre of the book quoted was the law. The laws or statutes written down by Moses were understood to be strict rules imposed on the Israelites. Paul quoted books in the legal genre to make the reader understand his argument in the context of the Torah. Thus, they were required to obey the law or the arguments he wrote.

Priests and Levites (Deuteronomy 18)	Paul 1 (Corinthians 9:1-23)
Priests and Levites were set apart by God to serve God (18:1)	Paul was set apart by God to be God's missionary worker (9:1-3)
Have no income from the promised land (paragraph 2)	Not working and earning income to meet their daily needs (4)
Earning income from the offerings of the Israelites (3)	Should have had the assurance of life from the church he had founded (5-18)

Table 2. Comparison of Priests and Levites with Paul

The context of Deuteronomy 18:1 was about the regulations governing the income of the priests and Levites. The author intended to convey Paul's thoughts by comparing himself to the priests and Levites.

In conclusion, the use of inter-textuality in 1 Corinthians 9:8-9; 13 was to sharpen Paul's argument that missionaries deserved a livelihood. In the Jewish religious culture, priests and Levites who ministered earned income from their temple service. Paul explained that the roots of Christianity were Old Testament teachings. Although not fully applied, there were some truths or teachings that could be applied in the context of the New Testament. The teaching of appreciating those who served at the altar of God was still relevant in the context of the New Testament. Those who worked as missionaries deserved the right of livelihood from the congregations they served. This was one aspect of Old Testament culture that was used in the New Testament.

The Outline of the Exposition of 1 Corinthians 9:1-23

This section outlines an exposition of the principles of missiology in 1 Corinthians 9:1-23.

A. The legitimacy of missionary work is Jesus Christ (1-3)

1. Missionaries have an apostolic pattern of life (1a)
2. Having the belief and testimony of Jesus as the message of the Gospel (1b)
3. God ordained the work of evangelists (2)

B. God's missionary work is honorable (4-18)

1. God's missionary lives by preaching the gospel (4-14)
2. God's missionary work is God's will, not man's (15-17)
3. The reward of God's missionary workers is the opportunity to do missions (18)

B. Principles of Missiology (19-23)

1. Letting go of one's own culture to accept the culture of other tribes (19)

2. Missions has a purpose. Repetition of "win" four times (verses 19-22)
3. Free to use or not use apostolic rights (23)

Principles of Missionary Work in 1 Corinthians 9:1-23

In this section, the author will describe the outline that has been compiled. The author explored in-depth the meaning of the text through the standard grammatical-historical exegesis. The discussion includes the legitimacy of the mission, the work of the mission, and the honor of the work of the mission. Through ascertaining the meaning of the text more in-depth, it was expected that constructive missiological principles could be identified about the culture of the local community.

The Legitimacy of Missionary Work Is the Lord Jesus Himself (1-3)

The word *eoraka* in verse 1 explains that Paul had an experience with the Lord Jesus. The word *eoraka* means seeing, but the emphasis of this word was on physical, mental, and spiritual experiences. This meant that in starting his argument, Paul explained that he was a person who had a personal experience with Jesus Christ (Arndt et al., 2001, p. 140). The emphasis of this word was on Paul's experience of meeting Jesus while on his way to Damascus and receiving a commission to preach the gospel to the nations (Acts 9:18). In this verse, Paul did not use the word martyr as it was usually used to describe "witness." Paul asserted that he had a living testimony of Jesus Christ the basis for preaching the gospel. After his conversion, Paul's worldview turned upside down – it was now aimed at understanding the person of Jesus Christ as the center of the outworking of God's salvation plan. Jesus was the Messiah promised to Israel, the Son of God, and the almighty God. (Kostenberger & T.O'Brien, 2001, p. 258). These facts confirmed that he had an apostolic vocation.

A missionary gets the legitimacy for his calling from the Lord Jesus. God's servants work for their master who redeemed and delivered them from

slavery to sin. Believers, especially missionaries, have experienced the redemption and deliverance of Jesus Christ. They are no longer working for sin and darkness that brings death, but are working for a new master, Jesus Christ. Servants or missionaries have a new identity, namely Christ's servants. Therefore, they have the authority of Christ in carrying out God's mission to preach the gospel. This truth is very clear in the commissioning and sending of the apostles, and by extension, all believers (Acts 1:8).

Paul had a legitimate vocation as an apostle of Christ himself (Acts 9:15). Indeed, God had ordained the apostles and their disciples to spread the gospel from Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria to the ends of the earth. But in Acts 9, God called a special apostle to proclaim God's name to the nations. The record of this event confirmed that Paul's apostleship could not be doubted. In his ministry, Paul had set an example of the apostolic life for the church and the readers of his letters.

The most important argument for proving apostolic legitimacy was the fruit of Paul's ministry. The people he guided came to believe in God and experienced spiritual growth. Paul as an apostle had the right to take a wife and received a reward for his ministry, but he did not take advantage of his rights for so that the gospel ministry could advance. The church at Corinth misunderstood him because he was unmarried and unpaid causing them to doubt his apostolicity. Indeed, Paul did not marry and did not take advantage of his rights as a gospel worker for the sake of the advancement of the gospel.

In a broader context, Paul asserted that the way in which he lived out his apostolic call was worthy of being followed by the believers in Corinth (11:1). Talbert argues that this passage shows Paul's example in the area of being a free person and the social responsibilities he accepts (Talbert, 2020, p. 77). In line with Talbert's theory, the author argues that the context of 1 Corinthians 11:1 follows the previous context, namely Paul's apostolic call. Thus, it can be concluded that Paul showed himself as an apostle that could be imitated.

A missionary worker of God had to have an apostolic pattern of life (1a). The phrase "the fruit of my work" referred to the Corinthian church as a result of preaching the gospel. This phrase showed that the church in Corinth realized that its existence as a church could not be separated from the missionary work carried out by Paul. Through this phrase, the apostle opened the eyes of his critics to recall the apostolic life of Paul who had been a midwife for the birth of the church in Corinth. Paul stayed longer in Corinth than in any other city. (Barclay, 1975). A missionary had to have an apostolic heart, mind, and spirit in preaching the gospel. The pattern of apostolic life encouraged missionaries to focus on the work of preaching the gospel and the fruits that were produced in preaching the gospel.

Paul emphasized that one of the proofs of the apostolic life was bearing fruit (2). Paul used the term *seal* to emphasize his apostleship. The seal or sign described the fruit of the service produced. A missionary worker of God proved his apostolic life through the fruits of the gospel they bear. Some churches in Corinth did not understand the concept of apostolicity so they questioned Paul's apostolicity based on the status and rights he had. Paul refuted (*apologia*) the critics' attacks by asserting that the church's presence in Corinth was the result of his life as an apostle.

At first glance, reading 1 Corinthians suggests that there were two different topics brought addressed. First, the critics at Corinth doubted Paul's apostolate because he was not married and did not take his rights. Second, Paul emphasized that the Corinthian church was the fruit of Paul's apostolic ministry. Two seemingly unrelated ideas. From these two different topics, one could ascertain that the life of an apostle would be thoroughly highlighted by the congregation or other people. The life of missionary work would continue to be monitored closely by the congregation in a comprehensive manner. Spiritual life, personal life, finances, and so on would be indicators of assessment for the congregation or people outside the congregation. In

addition to paying attention to the focus on preaching the gospel, a missionary worker needed to pay attention to other aspects of life.

A missionary had to have the belief and testimony of the Lord Jesus as the material of missionary work (1b). The rhetorical sentence "have I not seen the Lord Jesus?" emphasized that Paul had faith in the Lord Jesus and made the Lord Jesus as material or a source of testimony in the missionary work carried out by Paul. In Paul's writings, the most common themes were mission and Christology. This seemed to be central to Paul's writings. So, belief and testimony to the Lord Jesus were the center or core of Paul's ministry.

Paul's missionary work and the church focused on proclaiming God's salvation in the crucified and risen Jesus who is the Messiah (Straus, 2003, p. 470). The message about God the creator and judge who gives salvation to sinners through Jesus the Messiah was the core message of the Gospel. This message was not a philosophical or hermeneutical theory. This was a reality that related to everyday life. Justification by faith in Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected was a message that Paul described as a reality in the lives of believers who lived in the power of the Spirit of God (Rom. 6:1-8:39). (Schnabel, 2010, p. 145)

A missionary worker ordained by God (2). God establishes, protects, and gives the legitimacy of the call of a missionary worker. The word strategic was used by Paul to emphasize that the legitimacy of his apostolicity was not based on humans or the choice of the apostles (Acts 1:15-26), but on God himself who determined its legitimacy. There is a tendency for missionary work in churches to be relegated a small department and to receive little attention. This passage makes clear that the church has to pay attention to mission work because mission is the heart of God.

God is the mover of the mission. His heart was moved with compassion for the nations so He set His mission into motion (Blanchard, 2003; Lumintang, 2009; Snyder, 2013; Wright, 2011). Mission workers were part of the means used by

God in carrying out His mission to the nations. They as the body of Christ were submissive and had the heart of Christ in reaching the nations. Mission workers together with the church today need to build an identity as a church with a mission. This means having God's same interest in reaching the nations as the main task of the church and the essence of the existence of the church.

Missionary Work Is Honorable Work (4-18)

God's missionary work is lived out by the preaching of the gospel (4-14). There were church members in Corinth who doubted Paul's apostleship so that they did not consider him unworthy of the apostles' rights of life. Some interpreters take this section as the main issue in this passage. Many interpreters expend energy on the topic of the rights and duties of the apostles. This section does not concern Paul because the focus of Paul's discussion was on the missionary work he did. This section concluded with the words "those who preach the gospel must live by the preaching of the gospel."

Paul argued that he did not take advantage of his rights as an apostle so as not to become a stumbling block to the preaching of the gospel. Paul should have had more rights than the other apostles because he planted the Corinthian church (12). The author believed that the Corinthian church was questioning Paul's apostleship by bringing up financial concerns such as in verse 18 when Paul uses the term wages. The word used in the Greek text is *mistos* which means the wages of a job. Also in verse 10, Paul used the terminology of threshing and plowing which describes the work and wages that should be received. There was no background research behind this text on whether the Corinthian church objected to providing financial assistance to Paul or was only concerned with Paul's apostleship. Paul's response to this issue was his belief that his calling as a missionary would be nurtured by God who was the master or giver of missionary work (14).

Missionary work was the will of God, not the will of man (15-17). Paul emphasized that his missionary calling was the will of God. The phrase

“I did it against my own will” reminds the reader of the story of Paul's repentance and calling (1 Cor. 1:1). In the opening of his letter, Paul identified himself as chosen by God's will (*thelema thou*). Paul's apostolic calling had been ordained by God.

All missionaries depend on God's grace and the missionary role is a privileged position that should result in an outpouring of gratitude on the part of the missionary and even those served for being part of God's cross-cultural mission (Straus, 2003, p. 470). In Paul's description it does not appear that he is feeling burdened; he continually expresses his gratitude. Paul's knowledge of his duties is expressed in the form of thanksgiving.

The obligation Paul felt is not considered a burden that stood in his way. It seems that the recognition of this obligation is equated with thanksgiving. When missionaries are involved in their ministries and begin to feel burdened with this duty, the first thing they can do is remind themselves of the biblical basis for their vocation – for Paul, it was the sense of God's grace and desire for the reconciliation of the world for the glory of Christ (Rom 1:14; 2 Cor 5:11-15).

Having the opportunity to share the gospel is a noble reward for missionaries (18). Paul considered the opening of a place or area to the gospel a pleasant reward for him. Paul felt joy at being allowed to do ministry in Corinth. In Paul's mission work, there were many places with high resistance. Paul's focus was on winning souls, not on the material rewards he received from his preaching. This provides profound teaching that the highest happiness of a gospel worker is the opportunity to share the gospel and bring lost sheep back to God.

Paul wanted to stay in Corinth and Ephesus for a long time to mature the church. But he also wanted to do pioneer church planting, such as in Gaul, or modern day Spain. When he moved, he still followed the general principles of not building another foundation. Pioneering in unreached areas was at the heart of Paul's strategy with the astonishing results of congregations being planted

in the Eastern Mediterranean and the astonishing benefit of fulfilling God's ministry to him.

The opportunity to share the gospel is a gift from God to missionaries. Paul felt joy when God allowed preaching the gospel to the nations. Paul responded to the prophecy from God in Acts 18:9-10 by staying in the city of Corinth for 18 months. Paul took advantage of the opportunity by preaching the gospel and winning many souls. So, missionary workers should regard fertile soil as God's gift to mission workers in planting the seeds of the gospel.

In 1 Corinthians 9:17 we see Paul using the concept of wages in relation to gospel ministry. In the context of this passage, Paul taught that gospel workers were entitled to compensation of some sort. Paul was entitled to compensation for the service he did, but Paul did not take advantage of that right, because he understood that the real reward of missionary work was the fruit of preaching the gospel, namely the church.

Paul's apostolic life was emphasized by his argument “Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16). Paul felt that neglecting the opportunity to preach the gospel was foolishness. Paul would be a fool if he did not take advantage of the God-given opportunity to preach the gospel. With this argument, the reader can see that the blessing of being an evangelist was being allowed to preach the gospel offer the fruits of evangelism as a fragrant offering to God.

Principles of Missionary Work According to 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

A missionary worker had to be able to free himself from his cultural confinement and his right to enjoy his own cultural comforts at the expense of adjusting himself to cultural practices different than his own (19). Paul declared himself to be a free man. Regarding the phrase “free people,” Paul felt free to preach the gospel in Corinth because of his apostolic role. Second, Paul called himself a free man in a particular cultural context. That is, Paul was not bound by strict Jewish cultural norms, so that he could accept the presence of non-Jewish cultures.

The Jewish culture that looked down on the Gentiles made it possible to build a wall of separation between Paul and the Gentiles. This cultural wall would have prevented the gospel from being communicated to the Gentiles. A missionary worker

had to be able to accept as many foreign cultures as possible that could be used as a bridge to spread the gospel of God.

Here are some cultural facts that Paul faced and the strategies he developed to win them over:

Group of People	Strategies	The Results
Judaism (Torah) Acts. 8; 21:20-26	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paul stayed for a long time in Corinth. The data showed that Paul stayed in Corinth longer than most other places. 2. Paul spoke with the Jews in the Synagogue every Sabbath. This pattern was commonly used by Paul because he mastered the teachings of Judaism. Paul adopted the custom of the Jews studying in the Synagogue (Acts 18:4) 3. Paul used the teachings of Judaism as a bridge to convey the gospel. Paul presented the teachings of Judaism through a Messianic lens (Acts 18:5). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The head of the Jewish synagogue in Corinth and his family believed in Jesus and were baptized (Acts 18. 18). 2. God confirmed Paul's call so that he stayed 1 year and 6 months in Corinth.
People who are not under the Law.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussed the teachings of Judaism, Epicurianism, Stoicism, and Athenian culture. 2. Utilized the concept of divinity already present amongst the Athenians to lead them to true knowledge of God; namely, that there is only one God as the source of all human civilization. Greek philosophers had a different understanding of the origin of the universe, believing that the universe, like Thales, thought that everything started from water. There are also those from fire, etc. 	Several men became believers including Dionysius, a member of the Aeropagus, Damaris, and several others (Acts 17:34)
Gentiles living under the law	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to a common meeting place to have conversations. Adherents of the Jewish religion (proselytes) had a habit of gathering on the banks of the river as a place of worship. 2. Paul talked about the gospel in the women's company. Perhaps, these women had more open hearts. 	Lydia and her household were baptized and invited Paul to stay in her house (Acts 16:14-15).
The Weak (1 Cor. 8:1-13)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not to be a stumbling block for the weak. Paul did not eat meat that the weak believed was an offering to idols so that Paul could win their hearts. 2. Understand the culture of the local community, adapt, and even become part of the local culture. 3. Not uprooting the weak from the culture they have held so far. 	Paul wins the weak (1 Cor. 9:22)

Table 3. Paul's Missionary Strategies

A missionary worker had to be able to give up his rights for the advancement of the gospel. Paul had rights like the other apostles, but he did not take advantage of his rights so that the preaching of the

gospel so as not to become a stumbling block that hindered the spread of the gospel. By giving up his rights, he became a free man. He was also free from the accusations of critics who doubted Paul's

apostleship. This teaching taught that a missionary worker needed to deny himself so that he and his message could be accepted by the local community.

A missionary worker had to have a clear goal (verses 20 and 23). Paul's goal in preaching the gospel was to win over people who both belonged to the same culture as well as different cultures. The goal was clearly expressed in the phrase "to win them over." This phrase was central to God's mission in the New Testament. The goal of the mission was to win as many souls as possible to God. Without a clear goal, mission workers would work haphazardly. Even though the mission was God's grand plan, mission workers also need to set targets to determine the right strategy and goals.

Missions also has as its goal of seeing people come to faith in Christ and mature in Him. The mission's ultimate message was that of God saving humanity through Jesus Christ. This was conveyed to all human beings and eventually leads to seeing a mature fellowship in which those who believe then reach out and evangelize the lost.

Mission workers had to be able to reinterpret local culture with the gospel message (23). In his various writings, Paul used Old Testament quotations to explain the Gospel. (Adiatma, 2019) Apart from using the Peshet pattern of interpretation, Paul also often used interpretations with a Messianic lens. Its purpose was to confine the Jews to understand the Old Testament texts to the level of understanding that it was Jesus Christ who was prophesied. In addition, in the Acts of the Apostles narrative, Paul explained the concept of godliness through the medium of the Greek concept of godliness which was given a new meaning and led to faith in Christ.

Uprooting believers from their cultures risks causing culture shock. Culture in general is the result of the power, creativity, and initiative of a group of people (Tanuwidjaja & Uda, 2020). The culture of the local community existed before the gospel came in. If a missionary worker attempts to uproot a regenerated person from his or her culture, there is a risk of causing a culture shock. The local

people would feel betrayed and would isolate the new believer. Finally, the Bible would be seen as a provocateur betraying the culture.

Believers who are isolated by their community could not be a bridge for further preaching of the gospel. The believer would be separated from his culture and therefore would not have access to the community. Thus, the gospel would be rejected by the community who suspected the gospel was destroying cultural heritage that had been carried out for centuries.

An evangelist has to be able to communicate the gospel message to people in new contexts (Harming et al., 2020; Tomatala, 1993, 2003, 2007). In Paul's case with the Athenians, Paul tried to give new meaning to his concept of divinity with the gospel message. Paul's ingenuity paid off when several people from Aeropagus joined to believe in God. The importance of an evangelist to understand the culture of the local community was to be able to give new meaning to the culture of the local community by seeing it through the lens of the gospel.

Paul became a missionary worker who did not take advantage of his rights and want to stay comfortable within his own culture. The principle of being a free missionary worker was repeated several times. Paul was free from the culture that held the Torah. Paul was free from the culture of people who did not keep the law, Paul was free from Jewish culture as well as Greek culture. The author observed that Paul looked like a mimicry of each culture. Mimicry is the chameleon's ability to adapt its skin color to its surroundings. This concept explains how well Paul was able to live within various cultures. This ability made Paul acceptable in various cultures so that he was able to win them over.

What Paul communicates in 1 Corinthians 9:23 is central to God's mission. This section describes the principles Paul used in his ministry of evangelism. Paul was able to enter into various cultures without losing his identity. He still identified as a servant who preached the gospel to

win souls in various cultures. (Schnabel, 2010; Zaluchu, 2019). An evangelist had to be observant of the cultural changes that occurred around him. In addition, a missionary worker had to also free himself from the thoughts and culture that imprison him so that he cannot adapt to the new culture.

God is the mover of the mission. His heart was moved with compassion for the nations so He set the mission. The church is part of the means used by God in carrying out His mission for the nations. (Tomatala, 2020; F.I. Widjaja & Boiliu, 2019; Fransiskus Irwan Widjaja et al., 2019) The Church as the body of Christ is submissive and has the heart of Christ in reaching the nations. The church today needs to build an identity as a church with a mission; that is, to consider God's interest in reaching the nations as the main task and the essence of the existence of the church.

Paul was one of the people specially sent by God to preach the gospel; yet this is also duty for all of God's people (Matt 28:19-20) (Darmawan, 2019; Hartono, 2018; Subekti & Pujiwati, 2019). God's call to the Gentiles also opened the paradigm that all believers had to also do the same thing as Paul did. That was preaching the gospel to all people in all places and throughout the ages. The principles of an evangelist that were free from culture as practiced by Paul could be applied by the congregation and the mission team.

Paul became a servant to the people to win over as many of them as possible. The phrase "win as many people as possible" is repeated twice, namely in verses 19 and 22. In verses 19-23, Paul organized his argument with a hypothetical pattern. The hypothetical pattern was a pattern in which the writer places words, phrases, and sentences under other grammatical units, usually, this was influenced by his way of thinking (Maryono, 2016, p. 199). This pattern was repeated twice. The pattern was described as follows:

I became a free person

To win as many people as possible

I'm everything to everybody (free)

To win some of them over.

Paul's mindset was to win people who were within the scope of his ministry. From this pattern, the interpreter understood that the price that had to be paid to win people in the scope of Paul's ministry was himself. He freed himself from the cultural practices that bound him to win over the people he served. Paul sacrificed his cultural identity just to win over the people around him.

Paul developed the principle of "living like" the people he served. The concept of "living as" is repeated three times in 1 Cor. 9:19-23. The writing style was antithetical to parallelism (Maryono, 2016, p. 199). In the parallelism writing pattern, the second idea was the main idea conveyed by the speaker. In 1 Cor. 9:19-22 the main idea conveyed by the speaker is; 1) I am like a Jew (20a); 2) I am like a person under the law (20b); 3) I am like one who is not under the law (21); 4) I am like a weak person (22). These four main ideas summarize one main truth, namely that Paul tried to live according to the various cultures he encountered with the goal that he had stated, which was to win people over.

A missionary had to be able to adapt to the various cultures around him. In the context of a pluralistic society, missionary work had to be able to take advantage of diversity as a medium to convey the gospel of the kingdom of God. The plurality that occurs in society had to be seen as an opportunity to give the gospel to various ethnic groups or ethnic groups (Citra & Sagala, 2016; Noti & Darmawan, 2016; Stevanus, 2018). So, the mission principle according to 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 was based on the principle of being free to adapt to any culture (within certain limits) and win souls.

Although in the New Testament it had been recorded that certain people had an apostolic vocation and had the gift of being evangelists, the task of preaching the gospel applied to all believers. The church had to participate in the missionary activities that God had ordained from the beginning. The mission principles that had been formulated above need to be developed and taught to the

congregation so that they are motivated and involved in missionary activities.

The Bible is the embodiment of God's mission to the world. The presence of the Bible as a source of valid and reliable teachings could not be separated from God's thoughts and hearts for the world. The church was advised to understand the Bible in terms of the perception of God's mission. Thus, the church would be involved in the activities of God's mission either through prayer, power, or funds. The union of a church that supported missionaries would greatly contribute to creating an atmosphere of the kingdom of God in the world by supporting missionaries.

Mission workers had to recognize that society had cultural diversity. In the context of the relationship between each church in Romans 14:1-12, Paul commanded that the church accepted one another's cultures. The phrase "accept the weak" in Greek uses the term *προσλαμβάνεσθε* (*proslambanethe*) which was a strong command (imperative), not an appeal or choice (optative). That is, mission workers had to be able to accept, adapt to the cultural life of the people they serve, and mature the community they serve in for the growth of their faith without unduly belittling the cultures they serve in.

CONCLUSION

Christian theology, especially theology built on New Testament concepts, emphasized that Christians have been liberated from the worldly laws that bind them. Many Christians thought that Christ's death had redeemed them from cultural slavery. Some Christians chose to live lawlessly (*antinomian*) in light of their new-found freedom in Christ. For these people, culture was considered a negotiable aspect of life; so they tried as much as possible to release themselves from certain aspects

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of their culture. Christians did not need to judge a culture based on their own thinking, but try to give the culture a gospel color. Mission workers need to study the culture and then sort out the elements of that culture that have to be abandoned so that that same culture could be used to bridge the preaching of the gospel. Missionary work had to be firm and possessed zero tolerance for cultures that were contrary to the truth of God's word. However missionaries help in preserving what is good in different cultures culture with the gospel message. One must realize that the presence of Christianity gave birth to a new culture, namely the preaching of the gospel. By realizing this fact, the evangelist needed to use local culture and the culture of preaching the gospel as a point of contact.

An evangelist or missionary worker was a person who was freed from his cultural confinement to enter and accept another culture. The principle of being free from culture made someone an open evangelist of the diversity of cultures around him. The paradigm of the local culture in which they preached the gospel could be integrated into the culture of the evangelist. Thus, culture was not another dimension that was transcendent for missionaries or evangelists. The culture of the local community would continue to coexist with the culture of Christians, namely, preaching the gospel. If the two could go hand in hand, then it was good if the culture of the local people was interpreted in the light of God's gospel. Thus, an evangelist or missionary worker needed not to deprive someone of his or her own culture. Jesus, Paul, and the apostles died as Jews whose teachings and culture had been interpreted in Messianic and Missionary light. Likewise, today's Christians, evangelists, or missionaries should interpret culture from a gospel perspective.

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