

THE LAW AS OUR DISCIPLINARIAN: A CRITICAL STUDY OF GALATIANS 3:24 IN THE DANGME TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

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ABSTRACT: Galatians 3:24 has to do with the function of the law before Christ came. The understanding of the word *paidagōgos* and the phrase *eis Christon* are crucial to the translation, exegesis and interpretation of the verse. The way the verse has been rendered in the Dangme translations of the Bible does not bring out the full meaning of the law as our *paidagōgos* - “disciplinarian,” “guardian,” “custodian,” “trainer” – before Christ came. This may promote antinomianism among Dangme Bible readers. It is being argued that the verse should be retranslated in the Dangme to bring out its full meaning.

Innovations in Biblical hermeneutics in Africa

Ngugi wa Thiong’o has made a strong case for the need of African writers to focus on African audiences and the mother-tongues.¹ Applying his thought to biblical studies means that, there is the need for biblical scholars in Africa to, re-read and interpret Scripture from a predominantly African-centred perspective to break the hermeneutical hegemony and ideological stranglehold of Western biblical scholarship.² This will not be an easy task though, since the mother-tongue Scriptures – the Bible in the indigenous African languages - pose a number of challenges. . But the challenges they pose in terms of interpretation and translation, if handled painstakingly by African biblical scholars, can contribute in a unique way to biblical scholarship and theology world-wide.³

¹ Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Moving the Centre: the struggle for cultural freedoms*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1993.

² Gosnell L. Yorke, *Biblical hermeneutics: an Afrocentric perspective*, Online article, www.unisa.ac.za, accessed 2/4/10.

³ B. Y. Quarshie, “Doing Biblical Studies in the African Context – The Challenge of Mother-tongue Scriptures.” *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 5, No. 1, June 2002, 4-14. (2) “The Significance of Biblical Studies for African Christian Theology,” *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 3, No. 1, June 2000, 17-26.

Biblical scholars in Africa are heeding to this clarion call, doing biblical hermeneutics from an African perspective, using the mother-tongue approach.⁴

Scholars who have done biblical interpretation using the mother-tongue method include Bediako,⁵ Ekem,⁶ Laryea,⁷ Kuwornu-Adjaottor.⁸ Indeed there is enough material in the mother-tongue translations of the Bible to engage the attention of Biblical scholars in Africa.

⁴ A mother-tongue is a person's own native and indigenous language, very much intertwined with a person's identity. The mother-tongue Scriptures are the numerous local languages into which the Bible has been translated.

⁵ Kwame Bediako, "Biblical Exegesis in the African Context – The Factor and Impact of the Translated Scripture," *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 6, No. 1, June 2003, 15-23. (2) *Religion Culture and Human Language* (2004), Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences.

⁶ John D K Ekem, "The Use of *Archierus* 'High Priest' as a Christological title: A Ghanaian Case Study," *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, Vol. XI, No. 1&2, 2001, 57-67. (2) "Translating *Asham* (Isaiah 53:10) in the Context of the Abura-Mfantse Sacrificial Thought," *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, Vol. XIII, No. 1 & 2, 2002, 23-29. (3) "Biblical Exegesis in an African Context: Some Reflections." *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 6. NO. 1, June 2003, 31-34.. (4) "'Spiritual Gifts' or 'Spiritual Persons'? 1 Corinthians 12:1a Revisited," *Neotestamentica* 38, 2004, 54-74. (5) "Interpreting 'The Lord's Prayer' in the Context of Ghanaian Mother-Tongue Hermeneutics," *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 10, No. 2; December 2007, 48-52. (6) "A Dialogical Exegesis of Romans 3:25a," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 2007 30: 75-93. (7) *Krataa a Pôôl Kyerewee Dze Kema Faelimôn: Ne Nkyeremu Fi Griik Kasa Mu Kô Mfantse Kasa Mu* (A Commentary on Paul's Letter to Philemon Based on the Greek Text in Fante), Accra: SonLife Press, 2009.

⁷ Philip T. Laryea, "Letting the gospel re-shape culture: Theological creativity in mother-tongue," *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 4, No.1, June 2001, 27-32. (2) "Reading Acts 14:8-17 and 17:22-31 in Ga: A Critical Examination of the Issues, Meanings and Interpretations Arising from Exegesis in the Mother-Tongue," *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 6, No. 1, June 2003, 35-43.

⁸ Jonathan E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor "A Comparative Study of Mark 1:12 in Some Ghanaian Mother-Tongue Translations of the Bible." To be published in *International Journal of Philosophy and Religion*. (2) "Patronage and Usage of the Mother-Tongue Bibles in Kumasi." To be published in *OJOT: Ogbomosho Journal of Theology*. (3) "Are Sins Forgiven or Loaned? Translations and Interpretations of Matthew 6:12 by Some Dangme Scholars." To be published in *ORITA: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. (4) "A Comparative Study of Matthew 6:12 and Its Parallel in Some Ghanaian Translations of the Bible." *Proceedings of International Conference on Research and Development*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 2010,62-66; to be published in *JPAS: Journal of Pan-African Studies*. (5) "Interpretations of *Mias Gunaikos Andra* [1Timothy 3:2a] in Some Ghanaian Mother-tongue Translations of the Bible". To be published in *JABS: Journal of African Biblical Studies*. (6) "Translating and Interpreting *Anoētoi* [Luke 24:25] in the Context of Dangme Religio-Cultural Thought." To be published in *JABS: Journal of African Biblical Studies*. (7) "Leadership in the Christian Home: Interpreting *Kephalē* [Ephesians 5:22-23] in Dangme Bible Reading Communities." A paper presented at Biennial Conference of the West African Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI), Peki, August 2-6, 2010.

The Law in the Letters of Paul

The apostle Paul uses the word *nomos* (law) in a variety of ways. Most of the time he means the Mosaic Law and sometimes the 'law of God' (Rom. 7:22, 25, 8:17; 1 Cor. 9:9). In Jewish usage the law refers to the Pentateuch, although it came to be used for the whole Scriptures. Both usages are found in Paul. In a general way, Paul sometimes uses *nomos* as a principle of action, example being when he speaks of the 'law of sin' or the 'law of the mind' (Rom. 7:23). Kaiser et al are of the view that since the law is considered the standard of judgment – a legislative provision, and a prophetic voice – there are no cases where Paul draws a distinction between the law (ceremonial and moral law). All is unity.⁹

The dominant message of Paul in both his letters to the Romans and Galatians is that righteousness is earned not by works of the law but by faith. He sees evidence from the Old Testament that faith is the key to righteousness (Rom. 1:17; Hab. 2:4). Paul's teaching about the *nomos* (law) is that it brings the knowledge of sin; it stimulates sin; the law is spiritual; it is burdensome; it pronounces a curse; works of the law cannot earn righteousness; the law is a guardian until the coming of Christ, and as such finds its end in Christ (Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 7:7; 5:20; 7:14; Gal. 5:3; 3:13, 24; Rom. 10:4).

Even though Paul teaches that many of the features of the law no longer apply in Christ, it is worthy of notice that he gives a positive approach to the law because of its value in assessing the nature of Christian liberty. He regards the law as holy, and thus have a different meaning for believers – issue about the law is approached through the Spirit; keeping the commandments is dominated by love; the Christian has an obligation to uphold the law (Rom 7:12; 2 Cor. 3:6, 16; Gal. 5:1; 1 Cor. 7:19; Rom 13:9; 1 Cor. 6:12, 9:21). New Testament scholars are in doubt whether Paul had a theology of the law. This is because they see a disharmony between Paul's picture of Judaism (since he became a Christian) and Judaism as it

⁹ Walter C. Kaiser Jr. et al, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992) 556.

was actually practiced. Sanders says that Paul's interpretations of the law are various responses he gave to various circumstances which threatened his mission of announcing to both Jews and Gentiles the necessity of participating in Christ for salvation.¹⁰ Dunn thinks otherwise. He is of the view that Paul's positive statements about the law are not inconsistent with his negative statements, for the negative statements are directed against nationalistic misuse of the law rather than against the law itself.¹¹ Sandmel says that "Paul's attitude towards the Law is exactly the reverse of the views in all the other surviving Jewish writings" and that the origin of Paul's negative attitude towards the law to a large extent lies in his ideas about the Law which flourished in the fertile soil of Hellenistic Judaism.¹²

It is clear from the discussion above that Paul makes both negative and positive statements about the law, and the way one understands these statements affects one's interpretation of biblical texts in the New Testament that has to deal with the law. One text in the Dangme Bible which is not very clear regarding the function of the Law is Galatians 3:24. The way this verse has been translated does not bring out the "disciplining" aspect of the law before the coming of Christ. The questions are: What is the context of Galatians 3:24? How has the verse been rendered in the Dangme translations?¹³ What does the verse in these translations mean? Which words and phrases in the Greek help to make the Dangme translations clearer? How is the verse translated in the other Ghanaian mother-tongue translations of the Bible? How Galatians 3:24 should be translated in the Dangme, to bring out the function of the Law before Christ came?

¹⁰ E. P. Sanders, *Paul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 84-100.

¹¹ J.D.G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians*, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990), 188.

¹² S. Sandmel, *Judaism and Christian Beginnings*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 320.

¹³ There are three translations of the Scriptures in Dangme. (1) *Ngmami Klôuklôu ô* (The Bible in Dangme), Accra: (Bible Society of Ghana/United Bible Societies, 1999). (2) *Somi He ô* (The New Testament in Dangme), Accra: Bible Society of Ghana, 1977. (3) *Wami Munyu ô ke Laa ame* (The Living New Testament and Psalms), Accra: International Bible Society, 1997.

The context of Galatians 3:24

Galatians 3:24 must be understood in the context of Galatians 1:19-25 which is structured in three parts.¹⁴ The Greek text reads: *ti oun ho nomos*; (what then is the law?, v. 19). This is a major question that demands the purpose and function of the law. *Ho oun nomos kata ton epaggelōn [tou Theou];* ([is] the law then against the promises of God?). This is a supplementary question that requires the relationship of the promise of God. The final section in this segment is verses 23-25 which speaks directly to the issue being debated within the churches in Galatia namely, the call of the Judaizers to a nomistic or legalistic Christian lifestyle in this argument. In this segment Paul brings his argument against nomism to a focus. His main expression here is *hupo nomos* “under the law” (v.23). The trust of his argument is, what it means to live “under the law.” He uses an analogy of a *paidagōgos* (v.24) in a patrician family – an illustration known to his hearers – to express his thought.

Translations and meanings of Galatians 3:24 in the Dangme

a. Ngmami Klôuklôu ô (The Bible in Dangme)

Lô ô heô mlaa a hæwô keya su be newa he læye, konɛ a dla waa kɛ Mawu wa kpeti [So the law held us till Christ came and we believed in him, so that we might be reconciled with God].

b. Somi He ô (The New Testament in Dangme)

Lô ô heô, mlaa a ple wa tsôselô keyaa Kristo ngô konɛ a wô wô nguô nge hemi kɛ yemi mi [So the law became our disciplinarian (leading us) to Christ, so that we might be justified through faith].

c. Wami Munyu ô kɛ Laa amɛ (The Living New Testament and Psalms)

Lô ô ji kaa Yuda bi ômɛ a mlaa ple wa tsôôli nɛ kpaka wô keya si Kristo ba nɛ e ba tsa waa kɛ Mawu kpeti ke gu hemi kɛ yemi nô [That is to say the law of the Jews became our teachers who led us until Christ came to reconcile us to God through faith].

¹⁴ Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians: Word Bible Commentary* Volume 41, (Dallas, Texas: Word Books Publisher, 1990), 137.

The Ngmami Klôuklôu ô renders *paidagōgos*, a noun, as a verb – *m̄laa a h̄e w̄o*, literally meaning, “the law held us” in its hands. *H̄e w̄o* could also mean “led us.” *H̄e* is also used for a driver, when driving: *h̄e l̄e*, literally means “he or she is driving a car.” *H̄e* used in this sense means that, we were in a car bound for a destination, and the law was our driver. This does not bring out the full meaning of *paidagōgos* which means “disciplinarian,” “guardian,” “custodian,” “trainer.”

The Wami Munyu ô *ke Laa am̄e*, a paraphrase, has in an attempt to simplify the text, made it worse. It has rendered *paidagōgos* (a singular noun) plural *tsôli*, meaning “teachers.” But the law was not a teacher. If it were, Paul would have used *didaskalos* (teacher) in Galatians 3:24.

The *Somi He ô* renders *paidagōgos* as *tsôselô*, meaning “disciplinarian,” or “trainer” which is the opposite of *lelô*, a “rearer”¹⁵ – a person who provides food for those under him.

This does not mean that *tsôsemi* (disciplining or training) cannot include *lemi* (provision of food). It may or may not. Technically, *tsôsemi* (disciplining or training) entails rebuking, correcting, guiding, for the purpose of making one grow into maturity, becoming cultured and disciplined. Thus, when a Dangme jokingly asks somebody who misbehaves: *de a lem̄o a loo de a tsôsemo?* [Were you reared or brought up?], it is an insult. *Lemi* implies that the person in question was only reared in the sense of only given food to eat and grow physically, but was not brought up to make him or her disciplined and cultured. So *tsôselô* as used by the *Somi He ô* in the sense of “disciplining” “training,” or “up-bringing,” has all the nuances of *paidagōgos* which basically means “custodian” or “guide.”

¹⁵ The *Twere Konkron* (Asante Twi Bible), (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana/United Bible Societies, 1964); and the *Kyerew Konkron* (Akuapem Twi Bible), (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana/United Bible Societies, 1964), use *yenfoô*, meaning “rearer.” The word *yenfoô* as used in the text comes from the verb *yen* which means “to rear.” In Akan *yen* is used in reference to the rearing of animals, which predominantly involves feeding. The word, *yen*, therefore cannot be used for the up-bringing of human beings which involves a whole lot of processes such as guiding, caring, training and disciplining and merely feeding. *Yen* is expressed in the following Akan maxims; *wôtete nnipa na wônnyen nnipa*, which literally means human beings are trained but not reared. Another one goes like this; *wôtete ôba nyansani na ôkwasia dee wô yen no* meaning, a wise child is trained but a fool is reared. Since the idea in the text is about the law serving as our trainer, the word *yenfoô* leaves room for question as to how human can be reared by the law.

***Paidagōgos* in the Graeco-Roman world**

In the Graeco-Roman world *paidagōgos* was used for a man usually a slave, whose task it was to conduct boys and youths of his owner to and from school; he superintended their conduct generally.¹⁶ The son was under the total care of such an attendant from about age six to sixteen. The *paidagōgos* watched the behavior of the boy at home and attended to him when he went away from home to school. The slave-attendant's duty was to teach the boy good manners and even punish him, when necessary. He walked with him carrying his bag. A special place in the school was reserved for such slave-attendants, where they waited until the school day ended. Then the slave-attendant took the boy home, quizzed him on what he was to have been taught, had him recite his memory work, and the like. Crucial for the boy and his future was the character and previous training of the attendant because the boy would reflect in life the training the slave-attendant gave him.¹⁷ The social setting of the *paidagōgos* in both the Greek and Jewish worlds illustrates Paul's use of the term in Galatians 3:24 which has been translated variously.¹⁸ What Paul is saying by his analogy of *paidagōgos* is that, in term of the progress of salvation history, the Mosaic Law "was intended to function as a temporary, regulatory code which manages our life and hems us in to its direction and judgments."¹⁹ It played a positive preparatory and supervisory role, which presupposes the inferior status of one under such supervision and the temporary nature of such a situation in the cause of salvation history.²⁰

¹⁶ Longenecker, *Galatians: Word Biblical Commentary*, Volume 41, 147.

¹⁷ Stanley M. Horton (Ed.), *The New Testament Study Bible: Galatians – Philemon*, (Springfield, Missouri: The Complete Bible Library, 1999), 5.

¹⁸ "Schoolmaster" (KJV), "custodian" (RSV), "guardian" (JB), "tutor" (NEB), "teacher" (LB), "disciplinarian" (NRSV), "in charge to lead" (NIV). The term is also used in 1 Corinthians 4:15 by Paul to denote the Corinthian Christians' numerous guardians in Christ.

¹⁹ L. L. Belleville, "Under the Law: Structural Analysis and the Pauline Concept of the Law in Galatians 3:21-4:11," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 26, (1986), 71.

²⁰ Longenecker, *Galatians: Word Bible Commentary*, 148.

The scholarly debate on the translation of *eis Christon* in Galatians 3:24

As discussed above, there the Law as *paidagōgos* played a preparatory and supervisory role in reference to salvation history. But there is a scholarly debate as to how the phrase *eis Christon* in Galatians 3:24 should be translated. This debate has come about as a result of the preposition *eis*, which grammatically signifies motion “into” or “towards” something, but also has a variety of uses.²¹

There are three schools of thought as to how *eis Christon* should be translated.²² Some translations render the preposition in a pregnant sense, to suggest a forthcoming result.²³ In this sense, Paul may be understood to be saying that the law functions to bring forth Christ. This understanding is derived from Paul’s teaching in Romans 8:21 where he states that: (*eleutherian*) *apo tēs douleias tēs phthoras* (freedom from the slavery of corruption) has the result of bringing one *eis tēs eleutherian tēs dozēs tōn teknōn tou Theo* (into the glory of the children of God). The last clause of Galatians 3:24, *hina ek pisteōs dikaiōthōmen* (that by faith we might be justified) might suggest such a reading.²⁴ Another school of thought is that, *eis* may be used in a telic or geographic sense to suggest that the purpose of being under the supervision of the Mosaic Law was to lead us to Christ.

The analogy of the *paidagōgos* who brings the young person under his charge to a teacher might suggest this. In this regard Martin Luther (1483-1586), the father of the Protestant Reformation says of the *paidagōgos* which he translates as

²¹ J. W. Wenham, *The Elements of New Testament Greek*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 207. See also George Hadjiantoniou, *Learning the Basics of New Testament Greek*, Revised Edition, (Chattanooga, Tennessee: AMG Publisher, 1998), 49-50. *eis* (into Matt. 8:23) is a preposition with one case. *eis* is occasionally used with the meaning of *en* (Matt. 2:23). *eis* can also be used with the meaning of *en* to indicate instrument through which an action is accomplished (Lk. 11:19-20).

²² Longenecker, *Galatians: Word Bible Commentary*, 148.

²³ KJV, NIV.

²⁴ Longenecker, *Galatians: Word Biblical Commentary*, 148.

schoolmaster: “The law is not a schoolmaster to bring us to another lawgiver who requires of us works, but unto Christ our justifier and Saviour, that by faith in Him we may be justified, and not by works.”²⁵ It is rather unfortunate that Luther translated *paidagōgos* as schoolmaster. As mentioned earlier, Paul would have used *didaskalos* (teacher) if that was what he meant to communicate. Instead of using the functional meaning of the word he used – “custodian,” “guide,” “nurturer” - he used the literal meaning – teacher.

But in the patrician families, the *paidagōgos* was not the teacher; he functioned as a leader or guide, to ensure that the *paidia* (child) got to the *didaskalos* (teacher). This is not to say that the *paidagōgos* did not teach the *paidia* any lesson at home. He disciplined him to make sure that he conformed to the instruction of the *didaskalos*. Barclay brings out this clearly in his translation of Galatians 3:24: “So the law was really our tutor to bring us to Christ so that we might get into a right relationship with God by means of faith.”²⁶

A third group of scholars say that *eis* may be used in a temporal sense to mean that the law’s supervisory reign over the lives of God’s people was meant to be only until the coming of Christ. This rendering will be in line with the use of *eis* in the immediately preceding clause of Galatians 3:23b “until” [*eis*] faith [this coming faith in Christ] should be revealed.”²⁷

***Eis Christon* in the Dangme Translations**

In the Dangme translations of the Bible the phrase *eis Christon* has been translated variously: *ke ya su be ne wa he le ye* [until we believe in him (Christ)]²⁸; *ke yaa Kristo ngō* [to Christ]²⁹; *ke ya si Kristo ba* [until Christ came].³⁰

²⁵ Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians* (Modern-English Edition), (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 2001), 226.

²⁶ William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible: The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians in* (Third Edition), Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster, John Knox Press, 2002, 37.

²⁷ NIV.

²⁸ *Ngmami Klōuklōu ō* (The Bible in Dangme).

²⁹ *Somi He ō* (The New Testament in Dangme).

³⁰ *Wami Munyu ō ke Laa ame* (The Living New Testament and Psalms).

Both the “Dangme Bible” and the “Dangme Living New Testament and Psalms” translate *eis Christon* in a temporal sense. Thus exegetically, both translations are saying that the supervisory role the law played in the lives of God’s people was meant to last until the coming of Christ. This interpretation is supported by other writings of Paul on the law such as Ephesians 2:15 where he sees Jesus as “abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations;”³¹ and Romans 7:16 where he says through Christ, “we have been released from the law” which once “bound us.”³² This implies that now that Christ has come, the law is no longer to be obeyed. Many a Christian who interpret the text this way are faced with the challenge of antinomianism – the rejection of any and all laws and regulations, especially absolute norms, for the moral life.

But is Paul against the law? In answer to the question one can say, not quite. As discussed earlier, Paul has a theology of the law which in spite of its negative comments sometimes, gives a positive approach to the law because of its value in assessing the nature of Christian liberty. In Romans 10:4, he qualifies the conviction that the Mosaic Law has been completed and abrogated with the phrase *eis dikaosunēn*. The preposition *eis* (unto) expresses purpose or goal. Thus, “Christ is not the end of the law in an absolute sense. He does not abolish the will of God expressed in the law. Rather, his coming signals its end with regard to the attainment of righteousness (Rom. 1:17)...His life is an incarnation of God’s relation-restoring action, God’s way of setting us right (Rom. 10:3).”³³ Thus, in interpreting *eis Christon* in relation to the law in a temporal sense one needs to bear in mind that, “it is not the law as a means of approach to God, that which determines relationship with God, that which was perceived in Paul’s Jewish tradition to lead to life on the basis of conformity”³⁴ that has been abolished.

³¹ NIV.

³² NIV.

³³ Walter C. Kaiser Jr et al, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 556.

³⁴ Kaiser Jr et al, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, 556.

The Dangme New Testament translates *eis Christon* in a telic or geographic sense. Thus, just as the *paidagōgos* brings the young person under his charge to a teacher, in the same way, the law brought us to Christ. The implication here is that, now that Christ has come and the law has brought us to him, it has finished its word. This interpretation, like the one mentioned earlier, can also promote antinomianism among Christians in general and Dangme Bible readers in particular, since they may reject any and all laws and regulations in the Bible, especially absolute norms, for the moral life.

Galatians 3:24 in some other Ghanaian mother-tongue translations of the Bible

a. Ewe translations

i. *Biblia* (The Bible)³⁵

Ale se la zu mia nufiala, si kplôa mi yia Kristo gbôe, bene woatso afia na mi to xôse me [So the law became our teacher, guiding us to Christ to save us through faith].

ii. *Nublala Yeye La* (The New Testament)³⁶

Ale se la nô mia kplôm vaseðe esime Kristo va, ale be woabu mi ame dzôdzôewo, elabe miexô edzi se ta [So the law was guiding us until Christ came, so that we shall be declared righteous because we believe in him].

b. Ga translations

i. *Ñmâl Kroñkroñ Lɔ*³⁸

Nohewɔ lɔ mla lɔ etɔɔ wɔwɔɔselɔ kɔ-miya Kristo ñɔ, koni hemɔ-kɔ-yeli mli

Abuw' bem y'. [So the law became our disciplinarian, leading us to Christ, so that through faith we can be justified].

³⁵ *Biblia*, (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana/United Bible Societies, 1931).

³⁶ *Nublala Yeye La*, (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana, 1990).

³⁸ *Ñmâl Kroñkroñ Lɔ*, (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana/United Bible Societies, 1907)

(ii) **Àmale Krônkrôâ Lê**³⁹

*No hewô lê Mla lê etsÿ wôtsôselô kemiya Kristo
âôô koni atsÿ hemôkëyeli nô abu wô bem.* [So
the Law became our disciplinarian leading us to
Christ so that through faith we can be justified].

Fante translations

Nwoma Krônkrôn⁴⁰

*Dem ntsi mbra no ye hen kyerefo dze hen ba Christ nkyen,
ma wônam gyedzi do eebu hen bem.* [So the law
became our teacher leading us to Christ so that
through faith we can be justified].

Ahyemu Fofor No Mu Nwoma⁴¹

*Dem nsti mbra no na ôhwëe hen do na ôyëe hen
kyerekyerefo kepeem aber a Christ bae, ama
wônam gyedzi do eebu hen bem wô Nyankopen
anim.* [So the law was our teacher until Christ
came and we were justified before God].

Asante Twi translations

Twere Kronkron⁴²

*Enti mmara aye yen yenfoô a ekyere yen Krsito
nkyen kwan, na wôafiri gyidie mu abu yen bem.* [so
the law has been our rearer showing us the way to
Christ so that through faith we will be justified].

Nkwa Asem: Apam Foforô ne Nnwom⁴³*Enti Mmara no na na
ehwe yen so kôsii se Kristo baeê sedee ebeyô a woman gyidie so
beka yen abata Onyankopôn ho.* [So the Law guided us until
Christ came so that through faith we can be drawn closer to
God].

³⁹ *Àmale Krônkrôâ Lê*, (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana, 2006).

⁴⁰ *Nwoma Krônkrôn*, (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana/United Bible Societies, 1948).

⁴¹ *Ahyemu Fofor No Mu Nwoma*, Interconfessional (Revised Edition)
(Bungay, Suffolk: United Bible Societies, 1982)

Akuapem Twi translations

*Kyerew Kronkron*⁴⁴

Enti mmara aye yen yenfo a akÿere yen Kristo so kwan, na wôafi gyidi mu abu yen bem. [So the law has been our rearer, leading us to Christ so that through faith we can be justified].

(ii) *Nkwa Asem: Apam Foforo ne Nnwôm*⁴⁵

Enti Mmara no na na ehye yen so kosii se Kristo bae se nea ebe ye a wônám gyidi so beka yen abata Onyankopôn ho. [So the Law took care of us until Christ came so that through faith we can get closer to God].

A new Dangme translation of Galatians 3:24

From the discussions above, a proposed translation of Galatians 3:24 in the Dangme should be: *Lô ô he ô, mlaa a plê wa tsôselô; e tsôse wô ke ya su be ne Kristo ba, ko ne kegu hemi ke yemi miô ô, a dla waa ke Mawu wa kpeti* [So then, the law became our disciplinarian; it trained us until Christ came so that through faith we can be put right with God].

The Dangme word *tsôselô* best translates *paidagōgos*. The verb *tsôsemi* means, disciplining, or training. It entails rebuking, correcting, guiding, for the purpose of making one grow into maturity, and becoming cultured and disciplined. The fact that *mlaa a tsôse wô ke ya su be ne Kristo ba* [the law disciplined us until Christ came (and we believed in him)] does not mean that now that Christ has come, we no longer need *e tsôsemi* (discipline or training). We need *tsôsemi* not based on the law alone but on the entire Bible and as pertains in our Ghanaian/African communities.

Some Dangme proverbs which sum up the importance of good discipline or training are: *He ko be ne a ke bi yi fôô, ne o maa po o bi yaya yi ke ya fô* [There is not another shoulder somewhere on which you can put the head of a child after you have cut it off, and will still be alive]. This means that when a child goes wrong, one should not kill him or her, but rather discipline him or her. *Bi tsôsemi yaya he je ne okpoku bi yeô fi* [It is because of

⁴⁴ *Kyerew Kronkron*, (Accra: Bible Society of Ghana/United Bible Societies, 1964).

⁴⁵ *Nkwa Asem: Apam Foforo ne Nnwôm*, (Accra: International Bible Society, 2000).

bad training that a young vulture eats filthy things]; meaning, bad up-bringing produces poor results. *Ke adu hye ne bui kpakpako ô, a nuu we le wui tso he, a loo zugba a le hi* [If yam does not grow well, we should not blame it; it is due to the soil], meaning, if one does not do well in life, it is due to his or her up-bringing. Another one is, *hye ne be hii ô e hii futufutu* [The texture of yam shows its quality], meaning, the conduct of a person shows his or her up-bringing]. With these proverbs and many others, the Dangme of the Greater Accra, Eastern and parts of the Volta Regions of Ghana – Ada, Nugo, Kpone, Gbugbla, Osodoku, Sɛ, Many Klo and Yilô Klo – emphasise the importance of *tsôsemi* (discipline or training), not just by parents and elderly people, but by the family and entire community.

Conclusion

We have discussed how the Greek term *paidagōgos* has been translated in Galatians 3:24 in the Dangme mother-tongue translations of the Bible. We have contended that *paidagōgos* meaning ‘disciplinarian’ or ‘trainer’ should be maintained as a noun in the Galatians 3:24 in the Dangme translations, to agree with *eis* a preposition meaning “until” *Christon*, a noun. Translating *paidagōgos* and *eis Christon* this way will prevent antinomianism among Dangme Bible readers who may as a result of the interpreting the verse as it is in the translations be tempted to reject any and all laws and regulations in the Bible, especially absolute norms, for the moral life. The study of the text has shown that Bible translation is never done in a vacuum; it is woven with exegesis and hermeneutics. The way one translates a biblical text is influenced his exegetical and hermeneutical methodology. Thus, thorough exegesis of a text leads to a better translation and interpretation. This has an inescapable implication for Bible translation into the numerous mother-tongues we have in Ghana and Africa. A better interpretation of Scripture is based a sound exegesis, which is also based on a sound translation.

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