

# PLATO'S REASONS WHY A PERSON SHOULD NOT DISOBEY THE GOVERNMENT

## 1. Introduction

Plato postulated three explicit reasons for why any person must remain obedient to ones government as well as two implicit reasons. These reasons is said by Plato to be respected and followed even if the government ruling the country seeks to put you to death unjustly. (Joubert, Rostoll, Esterhuizen & Coetzee, 2012:41)

## 2. Plato's Reasons

The first reason given by Plato is that the government is ones parent. He uses the description of how people prepare for the arrival of a new baby and states that government has spent many years in preparation and maintaining the society and its infrastructures to make a civilized birth possible for all. (Moreland & Geisler, 1990:124)

The second reason as postulated by Plato is that man is educated by his government. His reason for this reason is that just like government provided the means for birth they also provided schools and other institutions of learning and therefore he drew the conclusion that government is mans educator and it does not only precede the individuals life but also has precedence over it. (Moreland & Geisler, 1990:125)

Thirdly Plato argues that we as citizens whom are governed by the government of our country has the duty to obey the government. Plato states that the individual who decides to live in the country gives consent to the laws of the country and is therefore compelled to obey government even if it sends you to war. (Moreland & Geisler, 1990:125-126)

The fourth reason and the first implicit reason as given by Plato is that all the residents in any country is free to leave the country if he or she is not satisfied with the country or the way in which the government governs it. If the individual decides to remain in the country he enters into an implied contract with the government which says that he will obey the government. (Moreland & Geisler, 1990:126)

The fifth reason and the second implicit reason Plato gives of why we should obey our governments states that in the absence of government and laws set out by government there would be total chaos. This chaos will be due to the fact that every citizen will act in a way which is personally acceptable and will therefore do just as he or she pleases. Therefore in order to prevent chaos the individual must obey the government and all of its laws. (Moreland & Geisler, 1990:126)

### **3. Conclusion**

Plato's reasons makes a clear and logical argument with regard to the role the government plays and the function it has in ensuring the welfare of society. We as Christians are instructed by God in His Word that we should obey the governments under which we stand even if they may oppress us. It must be noted that government and its laws may be disobeyed if it calls for any action which is against the Christian belief system such as the worship of foreign gods or if it calls for the banishing of certain Christian uses such as prayer. A clear example will be that of Daniel when he refused to obey the law which said that Christians were not allowed to pray to their God anymore.

### **References**

- Joubert, N.L., Rostoll, U., Esterhuizen, E., Coetzee, Z., (2012). *Christian Ethics 2B*. Unpublished Study Manual, Germiston, ICP
- Moreland, J.P., Geisler, N. L. (1990). *The Life And Death Debate: Moral Issues Of Our Time*. USA:Greenwood Press