

Implications of **קְרוֹן** in Prov 10:4 for Economic Management in Nigeria

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Abstract

*The book of Proverbs introduces its core message as the fear of Yahweh (Longman II and Dillard 265). The book sets this fear of Yahweh as the foundation of knowledge and wisdom (1:7; 9:10). The author(s)/editor(s) expatiate on this theme by articulating certain value systems, which individually and collectively portray the use of this knowledge and wisdom in real-life situations. In other words, the poet/poets of Proverbs used words, terms and expressions, which vividly describe some of the ancient societal values that were ultimately, linked back to the fear of Yahweh. These values include but not limited to wisdom, knowledge, righteousness, diligence, justice, integrity, faithfulness and love etc. The Poets hoped that if these values were appropriated by their audiences, there were to be harmonious relationships and a progressive Israeli society to the glory of Yahweh. Derivatively, this article uses literary and grammatical exegesis to examine the Implications of **קְרוֹן** (diligence) in Proverbs 10:4 for Economic Management in Nigeria in the following sequence. First, a brief historical background of the book of Proverbs is considered. Second, the meaning of the term **קְרוֹן** is examined. Third, the author highlights how **קְרוֹן** functioned in the context of its original audience for economic management; and finally the researcher encourages the adoption and appropriation of **קְרוֹן** for Economic Management in Nigeria and by extension Africa.*

1. Introduction

In this article, the author uses literary and grammatical exegesis in discussing the Implications of the term **קְרוֹן** (diligent) in Proverbs 10:4 for Economic Management in Nigeria. Literary Criticism is the quest to understand the text as literature, while grammatical analysis is the quest to understand words, idioms, grammatical forms and the relationship



among these items according to the norms of usage at the time the text was produced (Gorman, *Elements*).

The author will therefore, examine briefly, the historical background of the book of Proverbs, the meaning of the word חָרוֹץ, and how it functioned in real life situation as portrayed in the Old Testament. The researcher encourages the adoption and appropriation of חָרוֹץ for economic management in Nigeria and by extension in Africa.

2. A Brief Historical Background to the Book of Proverbs

This section discusses the structure, authorship, purpose, setting and genre of the book of Proverbs. This is treated in order to obtain a wider understanding of the book before the kernel will be considered and appreciated on how it fits into the bigger picture of the book.

2.1 Structure

The book of Proverbs is structured variously among scholars (cf Clifford, *Proverbs* 1-2; Archer 515-516). However, two types of structures which are closely related to each other and have appealed to my conscience are described in what follows. First, it is the structure identified by Greg W. Parsons which contains seven sections (1:1; 10:1; 22:17; 24:23; 25:1; 30:1; 31:1) (153) and second, it is the one which was developed by Tremper Longman III and Raymond B. Dillard that also contains seven sections (1:1-7; 1:8-9:18; 10:1-22:16 & 25:1-29:27; 22:17-24:34; 30; 31:1-9; 30:10-31) (268). Specifically, Longman III and Dillard note certain distinctive features of the book of Proverbs as follows:

- i. Preamble (1:1-7)
- ii. Extended Discourses on Wisdom (1:8-9:18)
- iii. Solomonic Proverbs (10:1-22:16; 25:1-29:27)
- iv. Sayings of the Wise (22:17-24:34)
- v. Sayings of Agur son of Jakeh (30)
- vi. Sayings of King Lemuel (31:1-9)
- vii. Poem to the Virtuous Woman (31:10-31) (268).

The idea readers may get is that the redactors or editors of the final form of the book provided certain captions, clues or signals to their

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audiences at the beginning of each of the identified sections that distinguishes one unit of thought from the other. For instance, Proverbs 1:1 begins by saying: **יְשׁוּבֵי אֱלֹהִים בְּיָדָיו יִשְׁאַלְמֵשִׁי**. The “Proverbs of Solomon the Son of David, the King of Israel”. Similarly, Proverbs 1:8 reads: **שְׁמַע בְּנִי מוֹסֵר אָבִיךָ וְאַל-תִּטֹּשׁ תּוֹרַת אִמֶּךָ**: “Hear, my son, the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the teaching of thy mother”. In the opinion of the editor, this section contains the instructions and teachings of parents, the father and the mother. The editor(s)/redactor(s) reversed back to Solomon in Proverbs 10:1 by stating that: **מִשְׁלֵי שְׁלֹמֹה** “The proverbs of Solomon.” These few examples illustrate the point that the redactors/editors did not leave their readers or audiences in doubt about the beginning and end of each document as well as the authors or editors responsible for such materials within this anthology.

2.2 Authorship

The book of Proverbs as we have alluded to from the above discussion has been acknowledged by scholars of various persuasions as an anthology, that is, a collection and documentation of various literary and oral poetic traditions to form a single book as we have it in the Hebrew Bible (Longman III and Dillard 266; Archer 517-518). In other words, there are various literary units, sections, chapters and or booklets which may have been authored by certain individuals and groups within and outside ancient Israelite society, as alluded to in the book itself. Some of these authors include: the wise (22:17; 24:23), Agur (30:1), King Lemuel (31:1), and Solomon (1:1; 10:1; 25:1) etc. But the authorship of Proverbs 1:8-9:18 and 31:10-31 is still shredded in debates (Archer 517-518).

King Solomon had more than three thousand Proverbs, but it appears, a large part of them were not included in the Hebrew Bible (1 Kings 4:32; *BHS* 1 Kings 5:12). It is also noted that a given collection of the Proverbs was published by a committee, which was appointed by King Hezekiah around 728-697 BC (Archer 517-518). The final editing of the book is thought to have occurred between sixth and fourth century BC by certain temple scribes and priests (Clifford, *Proverbs*6).



2.3 Purpose

The individual authors of Proverbs collected certain instructions, sayings, poems and proverbs, from their daily life experiences and folktales, rearranged, reshaped and codified them as units of thoughts as portrayed in the Hebrew Bible (Clifford, *Proverbs* 2). Meanwhile, the authors who worked on the final form of Proverbs were believed to have been scribes, clerics or clerks of the royal courts. These scribes and or clerics brought the various poetic strands together in the form of an anthology for use in temple and royal court services (Clifford, *Proverbs* 8). The book of Proverbs itself introduces its purpose in 1:2-6 for its readers:

²To know wisdom and instruction, To discern the sayings of understanding, ³ To receive instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice and equity; ⁴ To give prudence to the naive, To the youth knowledge and discretion, ⁵ A wise man will hear and increase in learning, And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel, ⁶ To understand a proverb and a figure, The words of the wise and their riddles (*The New American Standard Bible*).

The above purposes of Proverbs have also been summarized succinctly by Archer who notes that Proverbs were written in order to be used to instruct in the principles of wisdom in the context of a family, royal court and or temple court settings (516).

Meanwhile, Clifford notes three assumptions of Ancient Wisdom which Proverbs are a part of. These assumptions were that first, Wisdom was practical; second, it was mediated through a hierarchy of agencies; and third, it was institutional. The first assumption means, wisdom refers to practical knowledge, knowing how to do something, as opposed to a theoretical knowledge. The king who was considered wise was someone who knew how to wage war effectively, made right decisions and knew the art of governing etc.

The second assumption was that wisdom belonged to the gods or deities/divinities and was mediated through a succession of agents to human beings. Any person who acquired wisdom was thought to have been given to him or her by the gods or deities. This explains why the poets hinged their core message on the *Fear of Yahweh as the beginning of wisdom*. Yahweh was therefore, considered as the source of wisdom. In view of this, his fear will ultimately appeal to him to provide wisdom to

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the person who fears and seeks him. From this frame of reference, there was a strong religious connotation to wisdom.

The third assumption was that divine wisdom was mediated to human beings through the instrumentality of lower deities, sages, prophets, kings, scribes, and heads of families (Clifford, *Proverbs* 8-9). Derivatively, respect for such and the willingness to learn under their tutelage became necessary in ancient societies. It should therefore, be noted that the overall purpose of Proverbs was to instruct its readers about how to fear Yahweh and live in a right relationship with him, neighbours and the rest of creation.

2.4 Setting

It should become obvious by now that Proverbs were developed over a long period from various religious, cultural and social settings such as temple courts, royal courts, family home settings, and daily life experiences etc. In other words, individual proverbial sayings were not a product of a one-time fiat activity. Rather, Israelite and non-Israelite sages, kings, prophets, elders, priests and events intersected on a daily basis. This means, Proverbs, pithy sayings, riddles, songs and other practical life occurrences were developed from these social and religious interactions. The poets composed their respective literary works from what was useful for the stability and progress of the ancient society. After a reasonable period of successful oral and practical usage, proverbial sayings were codified, for continued use in the ancient Israelite and neighbouring contexts.

2.5 Genre

More than 90 % of the content of the book of Proverbs is written in a poetic form. In other words, the genre of the book is poetry, riddles, parables, pithy sayings, maxims, laws and songs etc. The variety of the genre is revealed throughout the book. This literary variety has made the book relatively very complex to organize the sequence of thought in an outline form. But the genre also reveals the richness of the content of the book and the message it conveyed to its original audiences.



3. The Meaning of the term חָרוֹץ

3.1 Translation of Proverbs 10:1-5 from Hebrew to English

פּ מְשָׁלִי שְׂלֵמָה	¹ Proverbs of Solomon;
בֶּן חָכָם יִשְׂמַח־אָב	a wise son makes a father glad
וּבֶן כְּסִיל תּוֹגַת אִמּוֹ:	but a foolish son is a grief to his mother
לֹא־יִזְעִילוּ אוֹצְרוֹת רָשָׁע	² Treasures of evil do not profit
וְצִדְקָה תַצִּיל מִמָּוֶת:	But righteousness delivers from death
יְהוָה לֹא־יִרְעִיב יְהוָה נַפֶּשׁ צַדִּיק	³ Yahweh will not cause to hunger a righteous soul
וְהוֹת רָשָׁעִים יִהְדֹּף:	But the desire of the wicked he will crush
יָד אִשׁ עֲשֵׂה כְפָרְמִיָּה	⁴ a hand of slackness/laxness/deceit makes poor
וְיַד חָרוּצִים תַעֲשִׂיר:	But a diligent hand makes oneself rich
אִגָּר בְּקַיִץ בֶּן מִשְׁכִּיל	⁵ He who gathers fruit in summer is a prudent son
נִרְדָּם בְּקַצִּיר בֶּן מִבֵּישׁ:	He who sleeps in harvest is a disgraceful son

3.2 Teaching by Contrast or antithetic parallelism (10:1-5)

One of the major characteristics of the book of Proverbs is its mode of teaching which is known as teaching by contrast or *antithetic parallelism*. This is a teaching which one term or word is contrasted with its direct opposite in order to encourage the audience to embrace a certain value and abhor its opposite. This antithetic parallelism is very prevalent in the book of Proverbs especially in chapters 10-15 as may be briefly considered in Proverbs 10:1-5 below. This text is selected for analysis as an example of antithetical parallelism because it has been identified as a complete unit of thought (Hildebrandt, *Proverbial Strings* 173-174, 184).

In the first verse following the superscript, *a wise son* (בֶּן חָכָם) is contrasted with *a foolish son* (בֶּן כְּסִיל) and the effect of their individual actions on their parents is also contrasted. The *wise son* makes his *father glad* (יִשְׂמַח־אָב) while a *foolish son* makes his *mother grieves* (תּוֹגַת אִמּוֹ). Wisdom is therefore, upheld far above foolishness because of its positive impact on the parents (Ted Hildebrandt 437). A son who appropriates this

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teaching would want to make his parents *glad* (Parsons 156). He would therefore be willing to learn and appropriate wisdom teaching. It is noted that, adult children especially sons, in the ancient Israelite culture, represented the family to the larger community, so, their moral life in the family social unit project the image of the family to the larger society either positively or negatively, which in turn produce happiness or grief to the parents, depending on the nature of their projected moral life and actions (Clifford, *Reading Proverbs* 249).

In the second verse, *evil/wickedness* (רשע) is contrasted with *righteousness* (צדקה). The treasure of *evil* does not *profit* (לא יועיל) any person, but *righteousness delivers from death* (תציל ממות). The poet paints a glaring picture of evil by showing that it does not benefit anyone. This means, the evil-doer, his parents, his other family members and the larger society could not profit from any evil action. But the poet also makes his contrast clear that a righteous action delivers oneself from death. In the mind of the poet, righteousness by implication delivers not only the individual person projecting it but also his parents, other family members and the society from perishing.

In the third verse, the action of Yahweh to the righteous person is contrasted with his action towards the wicked person. To the righteous person Yahweh will *not cause to hunger* (לא ירעב יהוה) which means Yahweh will provide enough means of sustenance to the righteous. But to the wicked, he will *crush his desire* (והנת רשעים יהוה). This means that Yahweh will target the means of sustenance of the wicked person and eventually destroy it.

In the fourth verse, which is where the main topic of this article comes from, a *slack/lazy hand* (כף רמה) is contrasted with a *diligent/strict or sharp hand* (יד חרוצים). *Laziness* is contrasted with *diligence*. The product of laziness/deceit or slackness is *poverty* (ראש עשה), while the product of diligence/strictness/sharpness is *riches* (תעשיר). The person who is lazy or deceitful makes himself poor, while the one who is diligent, sharp, strict or disciplined makes himself rich. The implication derived



from this poetic text is that poverty is a self-inflicted condition which every wise person should guard against.

In the fifth verse, the action of a prudent son (בֶּן מְשֻׁכֵּל) is contrasted with that of a disgraceful son (בֶּן מְבִישׁ). The poet notes that a prudent son is discerned by the kind of action he exhibits, and among such actions is the gathering of fruit in the summer (אָגַר בְּקַיִץ). But a disgraceful son sleeps during the harvest period (נָרְדָם בְּקַצִּיר). In the context where agricultural produce was the main source of income and sustenance, harvest was one of the key components of the production chain. If one cultivates crops and it produces very well, it necessary requires that the farmer would need to harvest the crops and store it for consumption and also for economic purposes. So, children who grew up in such homes were required to contribute to the economic activities of the family which also included harvesting what was planted when it was ripped. In view of this, a prudent son would gather the fruit from his parents' farm but a disgraceful son will sleep and would not care to go out to the farm and gather the fruit during the harvest time.

The above contrast or antithetical parallelism has revealed certain important values which were to be upheld in ancient Israelite society and those that were considered inimical to the individual, family and societal cohesion and well-being. The description below provides a good picture of the values contrasted (Cf Hildebrandt, *Proverbial Strings* 174).

- vs. 1 (a) Son → Wisdom → Gladness → Father
- (b) Son → Foolishness → Grief → Mother
- vs. 2 (a) Evil → Treasure → No Profit
- (b) Righteousness → delivers from → death → therefore life
- vs. 3 (a) Yahweh → Not cause hunger → a righteous soul
- (b) Yahweh → will crush → a desire of the wicked
- vs. 4 (a) A lazy/slack/deceitful hand → makes oneself poor
- (b) A diligent/strict/sharp hand → makes oneself rich
- vs. 5 (a) A Prudent son → gathers fruit → in summer
- (b) A disgraceful son → sleeps → in harvest period

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From the above contrast, wisdom, righteousness, diligence and prudence etc were values the poets encouraged their audiences to appropriate in their daily living so that happiness, profit, life, riches and bounty harvest would be achieved in the ancient Israelite society. In contrast, the poets encouraged their audiences to shun or abhor foolishness, evil, wickedness, laziness and prolonged sleep etc so that they would not experience grief, loss of profit, death, Yahweh's crushing, poverty and disgrace etc in the ancient Israelite society (Michael V. Fox 622). Parsons also summarized the purpose of antithetical parallelism saying that: "This type emphasizes the importance of choosing correctly to avoid the fate of the fool. It contributes greatly to the teaching of "the two ways", setting before the reader the choice between the wise and profitable way versus the foolish and disastrous way." (155-156). Proverbs assumes that the physical and moral universe operates by cause and effect. Good behaviour is rewarded and bad deeds are punished (158).

3.3 Thematic Analysis of the term חָרוּץ

BDB Lexicon provides series of meanings associated with the word חָרוּץ. It is used as an adjective to mean *sharp* or *diligent*. The word חָרוּץ is also found in Proverbs 12:24 using a similar contrast: "The *hand of the diligent* will rule but a *slack hand* will be put to forced labor". In this context, the position of leadership is conditioned on a person's ability to make use of his hands diligently. However, someone who is lazy will not have access to leadership positions. Rather, he will be forced to do labour work for others. Similarly, the term is contrasted with the sluggard in Proverbs 13:4 which says: "The soul of the *sluggard* craves and gets nothing, But the soul of the *diligent* is made fat." (*New American Standard Bible*). The poet moves from hands to the soul. What the soul of a person will acquire depends on whether he is a sluggard or a diligent (חָרוּץ) person. Proverbs understands life/soul as an action and describes this action in the form of the functioning of the eyes, ears, mouth (tongue and lips), heart, hands and feet etc. The poet believes that a proper use of these body parts or organs of life/action would enhance the life of an individual, family, community and the larger ancient Israelite society to the glory of Yahweh (Clifford, *Reading Proverbs* 253). This, in my view, explains why



the Poets of Proverbs used a lot of bodily images to inculcate moral teachings to their audiences especially the young adults.

In other biblical texts *קרוץ* is used to refer to many other activities. In 1 Samuel 17:18 it is used to refer to the activity of *cutting*. In 2 Kings 21:19 it is used as a *name of a person*. In Job 4:14 it is used as *strict decision*. In Psalm 68:14 *קרוץ* is used as *gold*. Daniel 9:25 uses *קרוץ* to mean *wall*. In Amos 1:3 *קרוץ* is used as a *sharp pointed instrument*.

But the word *קרוץ* or *יד קרוצים* a *diligent/strict/sharp hand* is used in Proverbs 10:4 to contrast with *כף־רמייה* a *slack/lazy hand* in order to show the consequences of each one of them. The poet encourages his audience to adopt a *diligent hand* which will pay off with riches. But a slack or lazy hand will yield poverty. In other words, the decision to be rich or poor is vested in the hands of each person. One may choose to be rich or to be poor depending on whether he uses his hands *diligently* or fails to use them, that is, laziness which will lead him to poverty. So, the state of riches or poverty is a deliberate choice of an individual and not any other contributing factor. “Someone who neglects to take care for one’s own prosperity becomes a burden to the community one lives in” (Andreas Scherer 69)

4. How *קרוץ* Functioned in the Context of its Original Audience

4.1 Original audiences and context

The original audiences of Proverbs appeared to have been diverse. These audiences included court officials, Israelite youth, the wise and the simple, sons and daughters, and Yahweh’s covenant people (Waltke, “Fundamentals part 3, 263-265). It is the opinion of some scholars that Proverbs in its canonical form was an instructional manual designed for the consumption of young men in Israelite society during their training for positions of leadership (Parsons 153-154). Apart from that, it is also believed that certain individual sayings in proverbs reflect the family or clan wisdom of centuries past which were handed down from father to son through generations in ancient Israelite society (L.D. Johnson 30; Parsons 154). Certain Proverbs are believed to have foreign origin such as the

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Sayings of Agur son of Jakeh (30) and the Sayings of King Lemuel (31:1-9). These were thought to have been Ishmaelite converts from northern Arabia (Gen 25:14). Some Proverbs seemed also to have affinity with the general Ancient Near Eastern literature such as the Mesopotamian and Egyptian Proverbial sayings (Parsons 161-162; Bruce K. Waltke, *Fundamentals* part. 4, 387).

There are three basic presuppositions or principles that undergird the development of wisdom literature which Proverbs 10 is a part of. The first principle is that the world is orderly and is ruled by Yahweh, its wise creator; second, that knowledge of this order is possible to the person who opens himself to wisdom; and third, that the wise man who thus aligns himself with Yahweh's order will experience good things, while the fool will suffer for his folly (Alan W. Jenks 44). This explains why wisdom saying points to the fear of Yahweh as the beginning of wisdom (Prov 1;7; 9:10). The fear of Yahweh therefore, is the core teaching which was advanced by wisdom poets of ancient Israelite society. חָרוֹץ is therefore a product of the fear of Yahweh.

4.2 Economic Management in the original context

The concept economy or economic management is understood as “any system by which goods are produced, distributed and consumed” (Ferdinand E. Deist 143). This economic system was varied based on individual societies both in ancient Israel and the surrounding regions. Some of the economic ventures available in the ancient Israelite society and their neighbours were hunting, gathering, agriculture of which crop production and livestock breeding was a part of etc. In other words, farming of different sorts was the main economic system while artisanship was a subsidiary economic system (qtd. in Deist 143).

Deist provides a vivid description of the indices of the economic systems available in ancient Israelites and their Near Eastern neighbours that will be considered here as a background picture to the text of Proverbs 10:4 where *diligent hands* are praised against *lazy hands* (143-188). Deist notes that during the 8th century BC, two types of farming systems were known and practiced in Israel. These systems were agricultural produce and livestock breeding.



Accordingly, Farmlands were owned by the communities and this explains why land was referred to as the “common land” because it belonged to villages and cities (Josh 21:12; Neh 5:3). In certain circumstances, the common land was shared or redistributed to family households by the casting of lots so that individual households could cultivate the land. When land was distributed in a manner like this, markers were erected at boundary points so that no family household could interfere with the boundary marker. These boundary markers were sometimes large stones or trees erected at strategic locations to differentiate between one piece of land from the other (Deut 19:14; 27:17).

Since land was owned by a community, village or cities, even when it was allotted to individual households, it was not meant to be sold out. It was a communal inheritance. No household or family was to sell their allotted piece of land or inheritance in any circumstances (Lev 25:34). It was during the Persian and Hellenistic periods that land could be sold out by deed and for money (Jer 32:44). During this late post-exilic period, the households had legal rights or inheritance to dispose the land but it was to be confined within the kinsmen, and not to be disposed to foreigners.

The idea of a right to an allotted land started far back from Joshua’s period when he distributed the land of Canaan to the twelve tribes of Israel following the conquest. Each tribe considered their allotted land as its inheritance. Theologically, this was where the idea of Israel becoming Yahweh’s inheritance or portion and vice-versa originated. The mythological ancient viewpoint was that the god *El* shared nations to the various existing deities and Israel’s nation was allotted to Yahweh as his inheritance or portion. In other instances Yahweh also was considered as Israel’s portion (Deut 32:9; Num 18:20; Jer 10:16).

The implication of this concept of land inheritance was that a household’s share or portion of land became its source of livelihood. What was allotted to the family or individual household served as the means of subsistence, sustenance or livelihood (Deut 14:27). As a consequence, if an individual or family was removed from their inheritance, it meant that the household or family was removed from their source of livelihood or sustenance. It was as a result of this type of economic system that necessitated for the establishment of the law for Israel’s households, families and individuals to cater for their religious leaders such as Priests,

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Levites, Temple servants, and foreigners because, these groups of people were not allotted any piece of land which could have served as a source for their sustenance.

A portion of land granted to individual households was on an average of 10 hectares in size. Out of this, 40 to 50% was set aside for agricultural purposes by the household. The household erected a central structure that could accommodate 20 to 30 persons on the farm land. The major source of labour force, that is, the farmer and his family members lived in these central houses. Labour conditions were very challenging because of the harsh climatic conditions and topography of the country.

An average farmer together with his household or family members had to go through vigorous processes of clearing the farmland for agricultural purposes. The household would have to remove certain original plants or trees, thorn bushes, weeds and stones from the farmland preparatory to the planting of crops. The household members would also build terraces and water supply cisterns and channels on their farm land. After clearing the land, the household would move to the process of ploughing, sowing, weeding, pruning, harvesting and storage of the produce. Apart from the agricultural crops production, the farmer was also to cater or look after their sheep, goats, cattle as well as certain animals that assisted the labourers such as donkeys, oxen and camels, etc.

There were various ways by which agricultural produce and proceeds from animal breeding were consumed or economically disposed for the benefit of the household and the community. Deist classified these processes as generalized reciprocal economic system, balance reciprocity, negative reciprocity and market exchange system. In a generalized reciprocal economic system, goods of equal value were regularly exchanged between households in a community. In Genesis 14:10 when Abraham sent his servant to get a wife for his son Isaac from his kinsmen, he gave his servant all kinds of choice gifts to be given to his kinsmen so that their daughter could be given in marriage to his son Isaac. Jacob did a similar thing to his elder brother Esau (Gen 32:14-15).

A balanced reciprocity was an economic system of more sporadic gift-giving with strings attached to it. Once an individual receives a gift from a person, it was expected that the beneficiary should also respond promptly with a gift or service of equal value, otherwise the person may



risk disturbed social relations. When Saul called for the help of a seer or diviner to determine where the strayed donkeys of his parents were, he was worried about what could be given to the man of God (1 Sam 9:7). Similarly, Abigail saved the situation when she noticed that her husband Nabal did not reciprocate for what David had done to his servants, she quickly acted by bringing so many gifts and food to David and his soldiers which eventually turned David's anger away from harming the household of Nabal (1 Sam 25:15-16; 25:3-21).

Negative reciprocity operated between people belonging to different communities. It was an economic system whereby an individual secures for himself one's desirable goods belonging to someone else. One of such instances was bargaining in a market place. The giver and the receiver did not necessarily share the same goals, so, it involved competition and bargaining. Abraham bargained for a piece of land with Ephron (Gen 23) and Yahweh (Gen 15:1-4; 18:23-33). Ehud also bargained with the elders of his city (Judg 11:5-11).

Market exchange was another type of economic system whereby producers bring their goods to market places and exchange them for what they need. The market place was not only designed for the exchange of goods but also for exchange of ideas, news and to socialize. It was possible that the ground of religious centres also could serve as market places for religious, economic and social interactions in ancient Israel and their neighbours. Prophets could also deliver their messages in such places such as Prophet Amos (Amos 7:10-17). (Deist 143-188).

In attempt to describe the economic system of the ancient Israelite society, it is observed that, subsistence farming, livestock breeding and artisanship were the available economic ventures for families, households, communities, villages and cities. It was their sources of livelihood and sustenance. Hard labour in this type of context was not an option but a necessity for the well-being and stability of the household. Sons, daughters, and servants had to contribute their time, energy, and expertise in order to produce enough means of sustenance. It was in this context that Proverb 10:4 hails the son who uses his hands diligently to enrich not only himself but the entire household. However, the son who was lazy and who failed to use his hands for labour activity in the family was despised because he would endanger his family and that of the larger society through abject poverty.

4.3 The use of קָרוֹץ for Economic Management

It has already been observed that the word קָרוֹץ has several meanings and is used in diverse biblical contexts. Apart from Proverbs 10:4, the term is used in Proverbs 12:24, 13:4; 1 Samuel 17:18; 2 Kings 21:19; Job 4:14; Psalm 68:14; Daniel 9:25 and Amos 1:3 etc. It is used to mean diligent, strict decision, sharp pointed instrument, and cutting etc. In each of these uses, the emphasis is placed on the commitment of an individual to an assigned duty or function especially for a good cause. In Proverbs 12:24, the poet points to a staggering reality that leadership is attained through the use of *diligent hands*. A son who participated in household chores with diligence, deep heartfelt commitment and affection was preparing himself for a leadership position in Israelite society. So, leadership was not to be attained by manipulation or suppression of the community but by careful commitment to the household/family as well as societal values and ideals. In agricultural environment, labour force was highly valued and children who were being prepared for adult life and leadership functions in society were to appropriate certain values of which diligence was one of such.

In Proverbs 13:4 the soul of the sluggard or lazy person gets nothing but that of the *diligent* is richly supplied. The consequences of choosing to be either a sluggard or a diligent person is also laid bare in this verse. This passage also encourages productive venture so that one's inner soul or being would prosper. The contrast between the sluggard and the diligent soul necessary compels an individual to opt to be a diligent member of the household or community. These few examples should suffice to say that, the word קָרוֹץ as opposed to כְּרִימָהּ was encouraged explicitly and or implicitly in ancient Israelite society given the nature of their existing agricultural economic system and management (Deist 233). A *sluggard hand* in a given household necessary led to disgrace if not doom for the family. But a *diligent hand* in a given household necessary led to respect, riches, leadership, household sustenance, stable family life and long life etc. If Solomon was the author he was a living example of son who is wise and had appropriated *diligence* and achieved a wonderful state of being for the family and as a leader to the glory of Yahweh their covenant God.



5. Implications of תְּרוּחָה for Economic Management in Nigeria

The term economy or economic system has already been defined as the process whereby goods and services are produced, distributed and consumed in any given society for its healthy development and stability. But one important function which must be put in place in this process is how to properly manage the economic system especially here in Africa using the concept of תְּרוּחָה as discussed in the book of Proverbs. Let me admit that Africa as a whole is too big to be discussed in a paper like this so, I have opted to limit my discussion on the economic management in Nigeria and by extension in Africa.

Taking a cue from what was discussed in Proverbs concerning תְּרוּחָה, the tasks in this section is first, to determine the economic ventures available in Nigeria and the processes of production, distribution and consumption. Second, it is to highlight certain challenges faced in producing, distributing and consuming these goods and services for the healthy living and progress of the Nigerian citizenry. Third, the author will examine the implications of תְּרוּחָה for economic management in Nigeria and by extension in Africa.

5.1 Economic ventures and the processes of production, distribution and consumption in Nigeria

There are several economic ventures, through which goods and services are produced, distributed and consumed, in Nigeria today. Some of these economic ventures include but not limited to crude oil, agriculture, industries, micro, small and medium scale enterprises and human resources etc. It is in public domain that crude oil is the major commodity which is produced and exported from Nigeria to other countries to generate the largest income for the country (CBN *Modeling the Real Sector of the Nigerian Economy* 17; “Nigeria Economy 2017”). In view of this important function of oil, there appears to be a scramble for access to oil industry and its proceeds. This is part of the reasons why Nigeria has gone into recession because of the down fall in oil prices at the global markets and also the recurrent destruction of oil facilities in the oil region, coupled with corruption and other attendant factors (Celestine Bassey and Felix Akpan 14, 16-17).

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Another economic resource variable in Nigeria is agriculture. Apart from crude oil, Nigeria's agricultural sector is a major alternative way for the sustenance of its citizenry. More than 70% of the population in Nigeria are dependent on subsistent agricultural economy. It is rather unfortunate that proper attention was not given to improving the agricultural sector so as to yield more income for the country through export earnings. This state of affairs is recently beginning to change because both the government and the private sectors are beginning to invest heavily in the agricultural sector (Oji-Okoro Izuchukwu 192-194, 199).

There are other economic ventures such as textile industries, iron and steel companies, plastic industries, cement factories, small, medium and large scale businesses are also springing up in Nigeria which are beginning to add value to the sustenance of Nigeria's citizenry (CBN, *Modeling v*).

In terms of human resources and manpower, Nigeria has established various institutions of learning at various levels where a lot of its citizenry receive training for various job opportunities. Nigeria is also beginning to introduce technical and entrepreneurship education at the lower levels of her educational system in order to boost its human resource base. This is a welcome development because it will prepare many of our teaming youth to become entrepreneurs rather than job seekers.

In view of these various economic ventures and job opportunities available in Nigeria, quality life and progress are still a mirage to a large population because of several challenges affecting the country (Akanbi and Du Toit 25). In what follows, I will briefly discuss some of the challenges that have affected the progress and viability of these various economic ventures in Nigeria and by extension in Africa.

5.2 Certain challenges faced in the economic system in Nigeria

There is no doubt that despites Nigeria's potential to become the largest producer of all kinds of economic commodities, several challenges have affected the country for so many decades. These challenges have been acknowledged by seasoned economists and scholars as factors affecting the development of Nigeria. These challenges include but not limited to corruption, inconsistent government policies, lack of a stable



power, poor road network, a lack of commitment to providing quality education, unemployment, insecurity, religious and ethnic crises, agitations for regional resource control and issues of kidnapping and human trafficking etc. These have militated against the progress and stability of Nigeria and by extension Africa (“Nigeria Economy 2017”; (NBS *Economic Outlook* 5; AEO, *Nigeria Economic Outlook*; Okpara, “Factors Constraining” 156-171). This state of affairs yearns for how 70% of the population living below the poverty line in Nigeria would be lifted up to a better economic life.

5.3 Implications of חָרוץ for economic management in Nigeria

It has already been attested that Nigeria has the potential to become not just one of the largest economies of the world but also to translate that into improving the quality of living for more than 90% of its citizens but on the contrary 70% of the Nigerian population are living in abject poverty (Godwin I. Emefiele 7). This state of affairs is a tragedy or to put it simple is a national disgrace. Why are things so bad the way they are in Nigeria? This is where implications of חָרוץ from Proverbs 10:4 and by extension from the ancient Israelite society may be drawn for authentic economic management in Nigeria.

Recall that the ancient Israelite society used various wisdom sayings to inculcate important values in their youth in order to prepare them for a better workforce and leadership positions in the society. All types of wisdom and knowledge acquisition were linked ultimately to the fear of Yahweh, their covenant God (Prov 1:7; 9:10). Children were necessary made to learn, embrace and internalize practical values as well as appropriate them in the home, community and in the wider settings for the glory of Yahweh. Some of these ancient Israelite values were *wisdom, knowledge, righteousness, diligence, justice, integrity, faithfulness and love* etc. The Poets hoped that if these values were appropriated by their audiences, there were to be harmonious relationships and a progressive Israeli society to the glory of Yahweh. King Solomon the author of Proverbs 10 was a living testimony to this.

Similarly, it is not just enough to have religious institutions and justice systems to mitigate cases but how to translate these religious, moral and other important societal values into every facet of the Nigeria society is the biggest challenge today. Individuals and governments have not been

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faithful to certain basic religious and moral values. Once someone occupies any position in government or in the private sector, the important and necessary societal values are seen as ordinary daily rhetoric, so, what is actually being carried out practically leaves much to be desired.

In view of this, Nigeria needs to adopt, internalize and or appropriate these important values projected in the book of Proverbs for its use in individual home life and in every segment of its society. Lip services and religious pretence have never been helpful to the country rather the values advanced in the book of Proverbs such as *wisdom, knowledge, righteousness, diligence, justice, integrity, faithfulness and love*, etc, if genuinely adopted, internalized and made use of, in practical and daily life situations, both in private home settings and public domain to the glory of Yahweh, Nigeria's economic woes will improve and by extension the same thing will apply to Africa.

6. Conclusion

This paper uses literary and grammatical exegesis to examine the Implications of קָרוֹן (diligence) in Proverbs 10:4 for Economic Management in Nigeria in the following sequence. First, a brief historical background of the book of Proverbs is considered. Second, the meaning of the term קָרוֹן is examined. Third, the paper highlights how קָרוֹן functioned in the context of its original audience for economic management; and finally the author discusses how the term קָרוֹן may be adopted and appropriated for Economic Management in Nigeria and by extension in Africa today.

The paper suggests that certain ancient Israelite values should be adopted, internalized and appropriated in order to address the current economic challenges being faced in Nigeria. These values include but not limited to *wisdom, knowledge, righteousness, diligence, justice, integrity, faithfulness and love* etc. The Poets hoped that if these values were appropriated by their audiences, there were to be harmonious relationships and a progressive Israeli society to the glory of Yahweh. The poet King Solomon was a living testimony to this.

Derivatively, it is hoped that the economic conditions of Nigeria will improve if it adopts, internalize and appropriates the values projected by Proverbs for the ancient Israelite society. I therefore concur with



Hildebrandt who notes that, “Proverbs calls those seeking order, meaning and wholeness to its sayings leading those listening through the isolation, fragmentation and confusion of empirical reality to the crafted integration and wholeness of the fear of Yahweh” (*Proverbial Strings* 185).

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Exegesis of Leviticus 25: Lessons for Socio-Economic Justice in Nigeria

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Abstract

Social-economic injustice is one of the problems that are threatening human existence in Nigeria in recent years. Leviticus 25:1-55 address the issue of social-economic justice in ancient Israel. This article is an exegesis article 25, which contains jubilee regulations for socio-economic justice in ancient Israel. The author examines the implication the text has for social-economic justice in contemporary Nigeria. As a consequence the researcher adopts a synchronic approach, which mainly considers a text as it is in its final form today, in order to examine the jubilee laws for social-economic justice in ancient Israel (lev.25:1-25) and the relevant of these laws for enhancing social-economic justice in Nigeria. Though there is no evidence that the ancient people of Israel did adequately adhere to the jubilee laws, the researcher argues that if the jubilee laws are applied rightly in any modern society they could serve as antidote to socio-economic injustice, and therefore, recommends that the laws could be adopted by Nigerian in her quest for socio-economic justice.

1. Introduction

“Justice” simply means fair treatment for all people. Justice seems to be lacking in almost every human society instead, it papers there is a high level of injustice globally. As a consequence, almost every society has laws for regulating justice in human relations. The Bible contains laws for regulating justice in the socio-economic sphere of life in ancient Israel. These laws are found centrally in the Jubilee portion of the law in Leviticus 25:1-55. This exegesis of the text is meant to justify the assumption that the laws were designated to regulate justice in the socio-economic life of ancient Israelites.

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49 אוֹרְחוֹ אוֹ בְרִדְוֹ אוֹ יִמְשָׁאָהּ בְּשָׂנֵהוּ מִמְשַׁפְּחוֹ תֵּאָלֵם אוֹיְהִישִׁינָה יוֹ וְנִגְאָלִי:

50 וְחֹשֶׁב עֲשִׂינְהוּ מִשָּׁנָה הַמִּכְרָה לוֹ עַד שָׁנַת הַיְבֵל וְהָיָה כֶּסֶף מִמְכָרוֹ בְּמִסְפַּר שָׁנִים כִּתְמֵי שְׂכָרֵי יְהוָה עִמּוֹ:

51 אִם יִקְרָה רַבּוֹת בְּשָׁנִים לְמִירָהוּ יִשָּׂב וְאֵלֶּיָהּ מִכֶּסֶף מִקְנָהּ:

52 וְאִם יִשְׁלֹט נְשָׂאִי בְּשָׁנִים עַד שִׁשָּׁנָה הַיְבֵל וְחֹשֶׁב לוֹ כֶּסֶף שְׁנָיִם יִשָּׂב אִדְרָאֲנָלְהוּ:

53 מְטָבִיר שָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה יְהוָה עִמּוֹ לֹא יִרְדֹּף בְּפִדְיוֹ לְעַבְדֵּי:

54 וְאִם יֵלֵךְ אֲחָלָה בְּאֲחָלָה וְיָצָא בְּשָׁנַת הַיְבֵל הוּא וּבְנָיו עִמּוֹ:

55 כִּי־לִבְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדִים עִבְדֵי הֵם אֲשֶׁר־הוֹצֵאתִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

(49) or his uncle or his cousin may redeem him, or a near kinsman belonging to his clan redeem, or if he becomes rich he may redeem himself.

(50) And he shall count with the one that bought him from the year that he was sold to him to the year of Jubilee, and the price of his release shall be according to the number of years; the time he was with his owner shall be rated as the time of a hired servant.

(51) If yet many years remain, he must pay for his redemption, a greater share of the price paid him.

(52) If there are only a few years remaining until the year of Jubilee, he shall then count with him and pay the money for his redemption accordingly.

(53) He shall be with him as a yearly hired servant. And the owner shall not rule over him in your sight.

(54) And if he is not redeemed in these means, he shall go out in the year of Jubilee, both he and his children with him.

(55) For the children of Israel belong to me as servants; they are my servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

Though, the Bible does not indicate whether that the Jubilee laws for socio-economic justice in Leviticus 25:1-55 were strictly kept as a national consensus or not. However, the laws forever remained as a manual on socio-economic justice in ancient Israel and a reminder to all individuals of their duty to keep the laws. This paper therefore discusses several aspects to include, occasion, authorship and dates, literary context, movement of the text, detailed analysis, identification of theoretical motifs and implications for contemporary Nigeria. This article also is a call to all Nigerians to draw from the Jubilee laws for socio-economic justice in Leviticus 25:1-55 some principles for evolving a just socio-economic society.

2. Translation from Hebrew to English

3. An Outline of the Text

A. Introduction; A Sabbath to the Lord v. 1-7.

B. The Jubilee v. 8-55

1. The concept of Jubilee v. 8-10
2. The characteristic stipulations for the Jubilee v. 10-55
 - i. Returning property and persons held to ancestral owner of family v.10, 28, 31, 54.
 - ii. Land be left fallow v.11
 - iii. Granting of right of redemption v. 24.
 - iv. One year duration for redemption right for city houses v.29.
 - v. Levite cities houses ever redeemable and released in Jubilee v.32-33.
 - vi. Fields belonging to Levites in their cities are not be sold v. 34
 - vii. Field care for poor Israelites v.35-36



- viii. Interest free loan for fellow Israelite.
- ix. No Israelite should be treated as a slave (v.39-44).
- x. Slaves be bought only from sojourners v. 44-46.
- xi. Poor Israelites who sale themselves to sojourners could be cared for and be redeemed v. 47-55.

4. Occasion of the Text

Though a situation of social and economic class differentiation which warrant injustices would hardly arise among the people of Israel in the land of Egypt and during their wilderness experience, God had enacted socio-economic laws such like contained in Leviticus 25:1-55 in order to address the problems of socio-economic injustice that would occur in their subsequent settled life in the promise land (Brouwer 14; Harbin 687; Dillard and Longman III 40). God in his fore-knowledge, foresaw that when his people would receive and settle in the land, the next thing that would follow the division of land and possession of ancestral inheritance or property would be economic differentiation, which would arise as a result of the noble and the rich, exploiting the humble and the poor. So, in view of the foregoing, it is suggested that what occasioned the laws of Jubilee was the need to forestall the problem of injustice. There was cheating, exploitation and oppression of the poor and the less advantaged, over the use of both human and material resources, especially land which was the basic economic need in the ancient time (Brouwer 14).

The view that the laws of Jubilee were given to the Israelites long before their occupation of the promise land gained much popularity among proponents of the mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch in which these laws appear prominently. They argue that Moses wrote down these laws, like other laws (Deut.31:9, 24), in anticipation of the settled life of the people of God in Canaan. However, proponents of thea-mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, who assert that the laws of Jubilee are the products of exilic and post exilic periods on the other hand, cast doubt upon the argument for the pre-conquest time of Moses. (Dillard and Longman III 74; Daudu and Kwala 10). However, considering the simple fact that the entire legal document including the Jubilee commandment would long since assumption of nationhood of Israel had been the basic regulator of conduct in the life of the people of God, it is more convincing to give some degree of support to the view that the laws of Jubilee are the products of Moses

or his time than to support the claim that they are the products of the exile or post exile period.

5. Authorship and Date

The questions of authorship and date of Leviticus 25:1-55 are intertwined because generally all human authors existed or exist at a certain time period or date. Leviticus 25:1-55 also has a human author or authors who existed physically in history. So the questions of the authorship and date of Leviticus 25 will be treated together with the exegesis of the passage. A discussion about the authorship and date of Leviticus 25 will be done in the context of the book of Leviticus as a whole (because the periscope is part of the book) and in the context of the Pentateuch in which Leviticus is located.

In order to avoid the usually long debate concerning the traditions of Mosaic authorship and non-mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, this author chooses the former because it is widely acclaimed in the Christendom. Moreover, in line with the conservatives, the non-mosaic elements of the Pentateuch are too few to disqualify it for being the work of Moses (Dillard and Longman III 39-40). To speak of Moses as the author of the Pentateuch is not the same as saying every word is the result of his work. Since they are what appear to be obvious later additions, many conservatives speak in terms of the essential authorship of Moses (40). Now granting that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch, it emerges clearly that the book of Leviticus including the Jubilee periscope is predominantly the work of Moses.

The books that bear the name of Moses as the author must be dated in his life time. Biblical chronology and archaeology are of immense help in assuming the historical time period in which Moses received God's revelation in Egypt. They place Moses activities in between the fifteen century BC, during which time Thutmose III (1504-1450), the probable Pharaoh of Exodus, ruled Egypt and thirteenth century B.C; during the reign of Ramses II (1301-1234), another probable Pharaoh of Exodus, who allegedly assigned to the Israelite the responsibility of building the store cities of Pithom and Ramses (Okwueze 45-46). Therefore, the book of Leviticus which contains the laws of Jubilee might have been written by Moses alongside with the rest of the Pentateuch at any time between his revelation and the Exodus or the wilderness.



6. Literary Context

In a larger context the laws in Leviticus 25 are part of the entire body of laws which God handed to Moses on Mount Sinai. For example, “The Lord said to Moses on Mount Sinai” (Lev. 25:1). And in a less-larger context the laws are related to other socio-economic laws in the Pentateuch in general for examples:

For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield; but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lay fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the wild beasts may eat. You shall do likewise with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard (Exd. 23:10-11 RSV).

The above quotation can be compared to Leviticus 25:6-7:

Whatever the land use during the Sabbath year will be food for you:—For yourself, your manservant, and maidservant, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces shall be eaten.

Deuteronomy 15:18, which J. Brouwer interprets as follows:

All debts which had been incurred to fellow Israelite were to be cancelled during this year (Deut. 15:1-11). Both the year of remission and the Sabbath year were to be regular cyclical events. Israelites who had acquired fellow Israelites as slaves were to treat these people as hired servants and release them after six years of service (Deut. 15:12-18) (9), is also implicit in Leviticus 25. The deuteronomist might have decided to sum up the socio-economic commandments which are scattered all over the Pentateuch in Leviticus 25.

7. The Movement of the Text

The periscope begins with a brief discussion about the Sabbath regulations as an introduction to the year of Jubilee (1-7), and moves to a brief conceptual statement on the Jubilee (8-10) and to a relatively long discussion on the requirements undergirding the year of Jubilee institution

(11-55). Reward for obedience and punishment for disobedience in Leviticus 6 mark a departure for the Jubilee text.

8. Detailed Analysis

8.1 Introduction – A Sabbath to the Lord v.1-7.

The periscope begins with the Sabbath as an introduction to the Jubilee. This is so likely because the idea of the Jubilee springs from the Sabbath and the stipulations for the Jubilee have some affinity with the Sabbath. The שַׁבָּת (Lev 25:2 WTT) (*Sabbath*), put in various Hebrew forms carries different but similar meanings. For instance, *savath*, a verb form denoting “rest”, “desist”, “cease”, “exterminate”, “cause to fail” and *seveth*, a noun form implying “cessation”, “on seventh day”, “deliverance”, “God’s rest”, “day of atonement”, “Sabbath year” (Lv. 25:4), “week” (seven Sabbath of weeks) (Lev. 25:8), “produce in Sabbath year growing without cultivation” (Lev.25:6); We cannot exhaust the meanings of Sabbath, but the above catalogue of meanings is long enough to enable us see the connections of Jubilee with Sabbath.

The idea of Jubilee dovetails from Sabbath as one can see some variants of Jubilee cognizing with some various meanings of Sabbath listed above. This is clear in verse eight of Leviticus 25, which marks the departure from the Sabbath discussion (1-7).

The variants of Jubilee are: “Seven Sabbaths of years” “Seven times seven years” “Forty-nine years”

Prior to the arrangement of the time period of seven weeks or seven years as we have above, we have seven days in other texts of the Pentateuch connecting with Sabbath. See for example, in Exodus 20:10-11; 23:11-12. This implies that central to the idea of the Sabbath are the cardinal time-periods: day, week and year. Probably “Sabbath”, understood as “rest”, or “time of rest” is allocated to periods of days, weeks and years. Seven days mark a distinctive Sabbath (Ex. 23:12), seven years mark another distinctive Sabbath (Lev. 25:8), that is Jubilee (10).

One can differentiate between Sabbath and Jubilee only conveniently by virtue of noticing the differences in time of observing them, but hardly in terms of the stipulations that characterize them. Both the Sabbath and Jubilee share few or more stipulation in common with



each other as part of Israel's covenant code. For example, the injunction prohibiting cultivating of land in the seventh-year-Sabbath (v.4) applies also to the Jubilee the seven-times seven years of Sabbath (v.11) So the most glaring evidence to their unity is the galaxy of the similarities between their respective meanings and stipulations.

8.2 The Jubilee vv.8:55

8.2.1 The Concept of Jubilee

As it is clear from the foregoing section (A), the writer uses some cognates of Sabbath in verse 8 (seven Sabbath of years and seven times seven years) to introduce or usher in the discussion on Jubilee, thus connecting the two terms in terms of meaning. Since we have already seen much of the similarities between Sabbath and Jubilee we need not say much about the definition of jubilee over again. Verse nine has made it clear at the outset that the “seven weeks of years”, or the “seven times seven years”, which amount to “forty-nine years” beckon to “the fiftieth year”, which marks “a Jubilee” v.10)

Jubilee by etymology is known to have come from the Hebrew word יָבֵל (Lev 25:10 WTT)(*Yovel*), meaning trumpet, or ram's horn or ram. *Yovel* can also be borrowed to imply the occasion for blowing ram's horn for signifying the 50th year – the year of Jubilee (BDB 285). But a Jubilee must first of all be proclaimed by blowing “the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month” (v.9). Whether “the tenth day of the seventh month” is in the forty-ninth year or the fiftieth is not clear, but it is clear that it is on the Day of Atonement. Atonement signifies that the Jubilee is an occasion for the sins of the people to be forgiven them “so that their God will renew the relationship of blessing with his people (Brouwer“*The year of Jubilee*”). In the same vein, the Israelites are mandated to forgive the debts of their creditors.

Worthy of notice is the proclamation of “Liberty” (v.10) in the Jubilee, for that points to the main objective of the Jubilee. Liberty in this context means freedom to regain property once lost to somebody or to be released from bondage to ancestral home. Inherent in the term jubilee therefore is liberty. This liberty is focused to the poor and needy in relationship to the rich and affluent: for the poor are vulnerable to the rich who can oppress them, or at the mercy of the rich who can alleviate their

poverty. So, jubilee is instituted and ingrained in the covenant code as one of the commandments in favour of the poor in Israel's society not only because poverty of the poor is always caused by the rich, but poverty in Israel, like anywhere in the world and at all times, was caused by many other dehumanizing factors.

The Jubilee and other socio-economic related commandments are to be understood in the light of the בְּרִית (Gen 17:11 WTT) (*berit*), English "covenant", since the covenant demands the Israelites to be faithful through keeping all the laws. In fact, the covenant makes promise of land to Israel, and for them to have the land and really enjoy it the covenant must be obeyed. The "commandments formed an integral part of the covenant and, consequently, an examination of the covenant's development will set the commandments, including the Jubilee institution, within its intended context" (Brouwer, 2). However we may not examine the development of the covenant in details as does Brouwer. In a nutshell, we can say that the covenant promises a land for the Israelites and the realization of the promise cannot be possible without the availability of land. But laws need to be enacted in order to appropriate the use of land upon final occupation of the Promised Land, hence, the important of the year of Jubilee.

8.3 The Characteristic Stipulations for the Jubilee v. 10-55.

8.3.1 Returning property and persons held to ancestral family (v.10, 28, 31-33, 54).

The above stipulation begins in verse 10 but it is replicated in other subsequent verses. In this stipulation, God requires that those Israelites who as a result of extreme poverty cannot fend for themselves should be obliged to pledge or sell their landed property or sell themselves to others as slaves in order to earn a living. However, in the Jubilee, the property sold to one must be returned to the ancestral owner (v.10) and persons who sold themselves as slaves must be released to their ancestral family homes (v.39-41). This is the basic and important stipulation for the Jubilee.

8.3.2 Land be left fallow (v.11)

On the Jubilee God commanded that all Israelites must allow the land to rest by not cultivating any crops or trees on the land. We can find the same stipulation in the seven Sabbath (v.4), an indication that the



Sabbath and the Jubilee have much in common. Both the Sabbath and the jubilee see the importance of the land having rest. For land's automatically warrant, man's rest so all men and women, including slaves, can rest from labour, land laying fallow also enables the land to rest and regain its fertility.

8.3.3 *Granting of right of redemption v.24ff*

The Jubilee makes provisions for the right of redemption of property and slaves or hired servants. After verses 13-23 specify the procedures and technicalities of observing property transfer and selling or buying slaves, verse 24 and following state the right of redemption for "next of kin" (v.25 RSV) or near kinsman" (v.49 (RSV) or "blood-relative" (v.49NIV) or "goel" (Hebrew). The ancestral owners can also redeem themselves or their property if they earn enough by paying back according to the number of years remaining before the Jubilee (25ff).

8.3.4 *One-year duration for redemption right for city houses (v.29ff).*

A person holds the right to redeem or buy back city houses only within one year after been bought prior to the Jubilee. Inability to redeem or buy back grants the buyer the right to hold property in perpetuity since land in the walled city cannot be used for farming in order to make gain (v.15-17).

8.3.5 *Levites city houses ever redeemable and releasable in Jubilee (v.32-33)*

With exception of one year-redeemable right, Levites city houses that can be sold to buyers are ever redeemable and could be reverted to them in the Jubilee. This is because houses in the town of the Levites are their permanent portion among the Israelites.

8.3.6 *Fields belonging to Levites in their cities not be sold (v.34)*

Fields belonging to the Levites in their cities are not to be sold for the Levites hold perpetual right of ownership over them.

8.3.7 *Free care for poor (v.35-36).*

The poor called variably in Hebrew including "yamuk", "ebhyon", "dal" and "misken" (Mlaga 21-22) is one or persons who, as the text describes (v.35), cannot maintain their lives unsupported. Such class of people is required to be cared for by those who have enough. Such a class of people needs not also be charged any back payment by

their fenders (v.36). the inclusion of this law in the jubilee laws is clear because, the jubilee institution as a whole demands care for the poor.

8.3.8 Interest-free loan for fellow Israelite (v.37)

Here the interest-free loan, which in Exodus and Deuteronomy is directly enforced among all people as a means of prohibiting the dehumanizing interest loan, is designated only for the poor. This might be because the poor are too vulnerable to the more impoverishing effect of interest loan. Also food is to be given to the poor without seeking gain from it. For looking for gain from food given to the poor is tantamount to interest loan, which is against the interest of the jubilee.

8.3.9 No Israelite be treated as slave (v.39-44)

On no account should an Israelite be treated as slave even though poverty may induce him to sell himself to one as slave. This is because all Israelites are servants of God. An Israelite slave should therefore be treated “as a hired servant and a sojourner” (v.40). In the same vein, an Israelite slave may not be ruled over harshly and should be restored to family property or house in the year of Jubilee.

8.3.10 Slaves be bought from Sojourners (v.44-46).

Israelites are free to buy both male and female slaves only from the surrounding nations or strangers among them. Foreign slaves can be adopted as one’s personal property or sons with inheritance right. Only such class of people as above is to be treated as slaves. For God says the Israelites are his servants so they must not be sold as slaves (v.42).

8.3.11 Poor Israelites who sale themselves to sojourners could be cared for and be redeemed (v.47.55).

An Israelite who becomes poor may sell his service to a rich stranger or sojourner, but he has the right of redemption as his protection, and other fellow Israelites also have the right to supervise his tenure of service under a foreigner until Jubilee. If an Israelites man should treat his fellow Israelites who is under his service with mercy and care, a reach sojourner is demanded by the jubilee to an Israelites servant even better.

9. Identification of Theological Motifs from the Text

First, holiness occupies a prominent place in the theology of the Jubilee. In fact the Jubilee provides laws that reveal the holiness of God or God’s justice and his intention that his covenant people should share with



him the same attribute of holiness by keeping strictly the laws. For the people to enjoy the fruit of God's covenant relationship with them they must be holy just as he is holy (Johnstone 234; Guthrie 143).

Second Mercy: The intention of the laws of Jubilee is to demonstrate God's mercy to the poor and therefore, to enjoin his covenant people to show mercy to the poor as well (Kizhakkeyil 27). It is due to God's mercy that he redeems people from bondage and atones for the sins of his people.

Third, Love: One of the attributes of God is "Love". The Jubilee laws demonstrate God's love. The rules of fair distribution and charity, especially to the poor, are good examples of God's love. God is just and merciful by showing generosity to all human kind (Matt. 5:45). He therefore enjoins all people to show love by doing good to all people, even to their enemies (Matt. 5:44).

Fourth, Sincerity or Faithfulness: One can also find the idea of God's sincerity in the jubilee. The requirements to sell land to a buyer according to the numbers of years remaining before the jubilee (v27) is a demonstration that God is sincere and he therefore, wants his people to be sincere too by selling and buying land according to the number of years remaining before the year of jubilee.

10. Implication of the Text for the Contemporary Nigeria

Though by virtue of their antiquarian context the Jubilee commandments cannot be applied to our contemporary culture, we can extrapolate from them some basic principles for enhancing our sense of economic justice and social concerns for the poor. First and foremost, we should learn from the laws of Jubilee that those who have must realize that what they have is only gift from God the creator, and they have the right not to use it selfishly but to share with those who have none.

The situation in Nigeria where some privileged people accumulate wealth from exorbitant wages and huge public resources under their custody while an overwhelming majority of the average working class and the unemployed hardly earn enough to meet the basic human needs is a disheartening sort of injustice. The land tenure system which does not place limit to the buying and acquisition of landed property by the rich and highly placed public office holders, whereas a great percentage of the ordinary people cannot afford the cost of a plot, can only place the latter

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at a great socio-economic disadvantage. This poor system of land acquisition prevails most especially in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), where a good majority of people from a low economic class are homeless because they cannot afford the relatively high cost of land. As if that is not enough, in the FCT which we have just mentioned, even the indigenes' land has been taken over by the Government and they themselves are being pushed to the outskirts of the territory.

Like it was in ancient Israel, land remains a basic socio-economic means in Nigeria. Despite the striving of scientific and technological economy, the people of Nigeria are dominantly farmers. High premium is therefore placed on the availability of land for farming. But in some parts of Nigeria, especially in the Niger Delta area, vast land masses are taken over by oil companies which cannot pay adequate compensation to the indigenes. Worst still is the fact that the land and water areas which have not yet been occupied by the oil companies are polluted by the industrial waste and cannot be used for crop cultivation or for fishing. Since the oil companies or the Government do not provide enough means of livelihood to replace the earnings from the indigenes' mother land, the average man in the Niger Delta area is subjected to untold hardship. The increasing cries of the people of the Niger Delta testify to the injustices they suffered (Johnson 5-6).

Though the phenomenon of ancient slavery is obsolete in our present society, some groups of people are being reduced to slavery in Nigeria today in the situation whereby the gap between the wages of highly placed public officers and the wages of low cadre officers is incredibly too wide. In this situation, the low earners who usually do the most difficult task cannot afford the cost of living, while their counterparts who earn large income live in luxury. Also thousands of people in Nigeria are being reduced to slavery in the situation that many of our youths are victims of offenses prohibited by the National Agency for Prohibition and Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) such like importation and exportation of persons, procurement of persons for political or sexual exploitation, recruitment of persons under the age of 18 for pornography or brothel or foreign travels; procurement and recruitment of persons for organ harvesting and buying or selling of human beings for any purpose (TPPEA acts 2015).



Using the socio-economic laws of Jubilee in Leviticus 25:1-55 as guide, the people of Nigeria and the government can re-orientate themselves more to just and fair socio-economic practices with which everyone will be happy. Individual who are in possession of the basic means of livelihood should give to those who do not have. The structure of our society and the socio-economic policies which put abundant resources in the hands of some few privileged people should be revisited in consideration of the masses who earn below subsistence level. In corroboration with Mosman, using the laws of Jubilee as a guide, the Government should provide structure and all people with economic freedom necessary to enable them exercise responsible economic stewardship of their God-given resources (3). In other words, the jubilee laws are demonstration of God's attributes of holiness, mercy, love and sincerity or faithfulness for his people to imbibe and practice; we can learn from the laws some principles for building a just socio-economic, which is our expression of holiness, mercy, love and sincerity or faithfulness in our own contemporary cultural context.

11. Summary and Conclusion

That the Jubilee and its associated Sabbath commandments be considered as a integral part of the Israelite covenant code is clearly evidence in the mention of Sinai at the beginning, "The LORD said to Moses on mount Sinai, speak to the Israelites and say to them" (Lev.25:1 NIV). This implies that the Jubilee has everything in common with all other portions of the law that Moses received on Mountain Sinai. The Jubilee like other aspects of the law deals with the way in which people are to relate to each other and the land in the context of their relationship to God (Brouwer 7). God wants his people to behave well according to his own will in every aspect of life including in the socio-economic. The survey of the text above shows that Leviticus 25, particularly the Jubilee portion, has commandments that speak much in favour of the poor than the rich or affluent. In fact the poor are a class of people that are by nature so vulnerable and therefore susceptible to the injustice by the rich. But also the poor are the most weaker who demand the mercy of the rich. This paper therefore, calls on all people in Nigeria to learn from the Jubilee laws to enhance their sense of justice and to act justly in the socio-economic

sphere of life. We may in conclusion highlight the major points of the Jubilee commandments as follows:

- i. An Israelite, hired, pledged or sold into slavery whether to an Israelite or an alien is to regain his or her complete freedom in the Jubilee. This is demonstration of God's love and mercy.
- ii. All lands or property transferred to another during the previous years of the year of Jubilee are to be redeemed under redemption right. This is demonstration sincerity and faithfulness.
- iii. No work is to be done on the field during the Jubilee year. This is demonstration of God's holiness.
- iv. Since the land is not to be sold outright, property transfer can only take into account the number of harvest remaining until the next Jubilee year for the determination of price. This is a demonstration of God's faithfulness.
- v. There shall be no interest loan. This is a demonstration of God's mercy.
- vi. Both the poor and the hired servants should be treated kindly. This is a demonstration of God's love and mercy.

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Prophetic Ethics in Ancient Israel: Implications for the Nigerian Context

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Abstract

Prophecy is a divine oracle delivered by a Prophet to a particular audience. A prophet is a person that has been divinely appointed and inspired to communicate the mind of God to a specific individual or group. In most cases a positive response is expected from the recipient of the oracle. Gleaning from the biblical literature, we discovered that whenever people respond positively to prophecy what follows is blessings. To some people, prophecy is prediction of the future. However, a deeper study of the Old Testament prophetic books reveals that prophecy is forth-telling and fore-telling. Forth-telling is preaching, teaching and encouraging while fore –telling is prediction. The intention of this paper is to show the place of Ethics in prophecy in ancient Israel and the Nigerian context. In other words, what is the place of forth-telling in prophecy? Historical method was used in this research. It was discovered that forth-telling is deeply rooted in ethical teachings and it covers a larger percentage of prophetic words. It is therefore recommended that people should give more attention to forth-telling for us to build a virile nation.

1. Introduction

Scholars are agreed that prophecy is a social phenomenon (Dada 179). This is because prophecy is an activity carried out by man in a particular society and to a large extent guided by the societal norms. The society will always tolerate intermediaries (prophets) who respect norms. This suggests that the prophet was to operate his ministry in conformity with the acceptable norms in the society. Where this expectation was not met the prophet stands the risk of losing the support of the society. Prophecy is forth telling and fore telling. But our focus in this paper is forth telling which is deeply rooted in ethical teachings. The question is: what is the place of Ethics in prophecy? How should a prophet conduct



himself before his audience for his oracles to be accepted? These and other relevant questions are answered in this write up.

2. Prophet and Prophecy in Ancient Israel

Prophets in ancient Israel were perceived as Yahweh's messengers. They were accorded respect and honor by the society in which they lived. Wilson asserts that prophets were often seen as inspired individuals who had the responsibility of maintaining Israelite traditional religious institutions (Wilson 9). According to him prophets were divinely chosen to reform all aspects of human society. He claimed that for a prophet to fit into a society he may be required to undergo formal training and as such prophets are taught the necessary speech and behaviour pattern and uniformity in professional behaviour is assured (Wilson 52-53). The prophets of Israel held a unique place in the history of Israel and their writings and influences had been of prime importance in world history. They were persons who had experienced special call and as such they were courageous and great men who continually guide the people to conduct themselves properly in accordance with the Law of Yahweh. According to T. W. Overholt prophecy was a dynamic social process which is a set of interaction among three groups. They are the supernatural, the prophet and the audience to whom the prophet's message was addressed. (Overholt 24). He believed that this interaction takes place within concrete historical – cultural situation that reflected the prophet's message.

The prophets were great leader whose influences were felt in every facet of the lives of their audience. It is viewed in some quarters that prophets had direct links to God and as such always caught something which they shared with the people of God (Gangi 30). For instance, in the 5th century B.C., prophets like Amos came up with a powerful message from God to reform the nation and eventually purify Israel from most of her wicked acts like idolatry, injustice, corruption, and immorality so that she might change. Amos spoke to an oppressed society and his concern for the poor and the oppressed made him a prophet for all times. The prophet stands as a watchman for the nation because they could see what people did not see and God does not speak to them as a one in the same council, also stand in the gap between the nation and the God of Israelite so these give the prophet a notable role in shaping the religious, economic

and social life of their people; they called for reform and transformation in the land (Griffin 15).

The communicated word from God through the prophet is regarded as prophecy. Generally speaking, some people view prophecy as talking about what will happen in the future and as such define prophecy as a statement that something will happen in the future, especially one made by somebody with religious or magical power or the power of being able to say what will happen in the future (Hornby 11655). This assertion suggests that prophecy is fore-telling- prediction. However, going by the contextual usage of the term in the Old Testament, prophecy is fore- telling and forth- telling. A careful study of the Old Testament prophetic books revealed that prophecy is more of forth- telling than fore- telling. According to Awojobi, forth- telling covers 75% while fore- telling covers 25% (Awojobi 309). Every prophet will first preach and teach on the situation on ground before predicting. In fact most of the predictions of the prophets are based on the people's response to the message of the prophet that came first in the form of exhortation. Lindblom maintained that the prophet was not only concerned for future events, but also for contemporary affairs (Lindblom 1). Most of the predictions were based on their observations of the present (Hills 6). They saw beyond the coming calamities; with faith in God they expressed hope. That is why prophecy is defined as the revealed word of God (Douglas 15). Prophecy is the revealed truth that came from God. It is the word of God delivered to man by a divinely chosen channel- the prophet (Douglas 15).

As far as the Jews were concerned, prophecy was seen as a gift of the Spirit of Yahweh. That is why, the spirit of prophecy (*ruach nebula*) and Holy Spirit (*ruach quads*) are used almost interchangeably to translate biblical references to God's Spirit in various texts (Offo 143).

3. Ethical Teachings in Biblical Prophetic Literature

Ethics is defined as "the philosophical examination of such concepts as good and bad, right and wrong, virtue and vice." (Oyedepo 15) In other words, ethics is about what is expected. As observed in our previous discussions, prophetic oracles were designed to change the behaviour of the people. Every prophetic message was meant to reveal the mind of God to the people. The attitudinal change of the recipient was expected on the reception of prophetic oracles. The attitude of the people



and social groups are fundamental in ethics. A prophetic declaration was meant to sharpen man's behaviour. The Old Testament writers did not see ethics as a philosophical or theoretical system, but as a tradition handed to Israel by Yahweh, in which she was expected to act accordingly (Barclay 14). A high ethical standing was a necessary pre-requisite for the realization of the salvation promised by Yahweh.

According to G. L. Lasebikan, the whole structure of Israel was strengthened by the force of faith in Yahweh, the God of covenant (Lasebikan 85). The existence of the people depended very much on their obedience to the words of Yahweh that came to them through the prophets. Ethics was to alert and awaken the sense of faithfulness and loyalties in Yahweh. Ethical behaviour was expected from prophets who are messengers of Yahweh. Prophets were expected to practice what they preach and teach. As the mouthpiece of Yahweh, the prophets were to live exemplary lives.

In the Old Testament, religion and conduct are closely related. True faith in God must be accompanied by practical commitment that shows itself in right living (Routledge 239). The scripture condemned the attempt to separate religion from lifestyle (Isa. 1:11-17; Hos. 8:12-13; Amos 5:21-24). The true basis of ethical behaviour in the Old Testament is the nature and character of God himself. The qualities God requires from man are what he displays in his relationship with him (Jer. 9:24). Wright asserts that "biblical ethics assumes the existence of the one living personal God, who sets the whole of human life in response to him." (Wright 117). To him, ethics is primarily a response to who God is and what he does. He argues further that ethics cannot be separated from worldview, alongside one's relationship with God. He identifies community and land as key elements in Israel understands of herself and the world.

One of the emphases of the prophets was to call people back to the ethics of the covenant faith. It must be understood that although prophets before Jeremiah made relatively few specific references to the sinaitic covenant, the relationship between God and Israel was a central concern of their preaching (Bright 41-42; Clements 16-19). Even where they did not use the term *berit*, their theology was deeply rooted in Israel's covenant traditions. Prophet Micah summed up God's requirements for his people thus: "He has shown you, o man what is good. And what does the

LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Mic. 6:8; c/f Hos. 12:6). The Hebrew word *hesed*, meaning mercy, can also be translated right conduct within a relationship. It should be noted that God’s people have been brought together into a covenant relationship with Him and so have an obligation to one another and society as a whole. *Hesed* in this context is closely related to faithfulness, loyalty and dutiful action.

Besides, the ethical imperative is the revelation of the character and will of God. Right conduct in the society is the evidence of walking with God. Living in covenant relationship with God results in a felt obligation towards his people, and in the practical outworking of that obligation in social duty and responsibility. (Routledge 247). Ethics is a factor governing the social life of communities (Eichrodt 316-322). Moral and ethical norms arise from the experiences of a community, which are passed from one generation to the next to ensure the survival and well-being of that society. He stresses that ethical conduct in the Old Testament is primarily theological. Morris observes that Yahweh never for one moment relaxes his high ethical demands (Morris 75). He opines that what actually makes the religion of Israel to be distinguished among others were the ethical demands which was so rigid. It was the standard that the people could not reach. He further observes that their failure led to the New Covenant which was a renewal of the old one. It was also not without ethical demands. In fact, under the new arrangement, the terms were not written on tablets but on their heart.

4. Ethical Teaching as Prophecy

As mentioned earlier, Prophecy is both forth-telling and fore-telling. Fore-telling is prediction while Forth-telling is preaching and teaching the truth of God’s word. The ancient Israelite prophets were forth tellers. They pointed out the evils of their days and called people to repentance. They warned them that while the covenant brought many privileges, it also brought many responsibilities, including justice, righteousness, and holiness. Preaching motivates listeners to act while teaching tells the students how to act. Teaching is believed to be an extension of preaching. The object of teaching is to bring clear understanding. In teaching, the teacher is expected to dig deeper on the issue at stake. The teacher brings his audience to the point of proper understanding of the subject matter in



order for them to respond appropriately. Teaching should tell the listener or student how and why to stop sinning or committing crime and be a responsible person. Gleaning from the Old Testament prophetic books, we discovered that most of the oracles of the prophets are ethical issues. They are either on relationship between God and man or between man and man. God will always express his displeasure to the prophet on how the nation of Israel has disappointed her. The prophet while delivering an oracle appeals to his audience to turn a new leave to God to escape the wrath of God (Isaiah 55:6-13). Every prophet has the responsibility of teaching his audience.

Ethical teaching is teaching that tells a person or group what should be done and not done. Ethical teaching places emphasis on standards of conduct based on moral judgment. Teaching means educating or inculcation of needed value or virtue or both in a person. Ethical teaching is characterized by knowledge, empathy, reason, appreciation, courage, and interpersonal skill (Lynch 15). Ethical teaching emphasizes right conduct, acceptable behaviour in the public places.

From the biblical records, we discovered that the prophets in ancient Israel displayed adequate knowledge in the transmission of their teachings to their audience. They had a good understanding of the time in which they lived and the nature of their assignment. These prophets were courageous and very skilful in the discharged of the duties of their office. Courage is necessary to teach and inculcate ethical lessons to all and sundry (Ayantayo 12). According to Asaju, the factors responsible for prophetic teaching are:

1. Gross disparity in wealth distribution among the citizens of Israel. There was a wide margin between the poor and the rich. The wealth of the nation was in the hands of a privilege few who use them to oppress the poor.
2. Abuse of vulnerable individuals such as widows, orphans, strangers, women, etc. The government of the day had no meaningful program for these groups of people in the society. They were denied access to the good things of life.
3. The poor are cheated, oppressed, and exploited and their rights ignored. They were not considered as bona fide members of the society. They were treated as outcasts, strangers and second class citizens.

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4. Drunkenness, adultery and self-indulgence were the order of the day among the people (Asaju 50-51).

These factors deeply affected the moral fiber of Israel nation during the prophetic era. The prophets informed their audience that obedience to the law of God will attract blessing while disobedience will attract curses and punishment. The prophets taught the people to be truthful, faithful, and trustworthy in their relationship with God who is always faithful to them (Jer 11:7-8; 18:7-10).

Also, prophets in ancient Israel addressed the issue of Social Justice in their days. Amos and Isaiah were good examples of prophets who were concern with Justice in their time. Justice was taught as the basis of the Law and the pillar of Israel society. Socio-ethical concern reflected in all the oracles delivered by prophets in the Old Testament. According to Finley, Prophet Amos is replete with the issue of oppression and the situation of the poor in Israel. He observed that book has become the epicentre of discussion on matters of social justice. He categorized Amos' oracles on social justice into three: nature of God, the role of individual and the role of the social system. (Finley1) A look at the book of Amos reminds humanity, of the importance that God attaches to justice. Justice is one of the attributes of God. God expect that there is a standard of behaviour among human beings, which is premised upon God's own attitude and behavior to mankind. In Amos, we discovered the real meaning of justice (*mishpat*) and righteousness (*tsedeka*) are well entrenched in God Himself (Amos 5:7, 24; 6:12).

It should be noted that the Law of Moses was the foundation for the ethical teachings of the prophets. The prophets confirmed, interpreted, applied and insisted on the observance of the Law of Moses (Orgu 25). The Law stipulates the protection of the weak and defenseless members of the society. This include the poor, widows, orphans, and foreigners (Ex. 22:26-27; Lev. 23:35, 37; Deut. 15:1-2). The prophets taught that God is just. He will always vindicate the poor and the needy and punish the oppressors

Amos did not only speak about the Issue of injustice in ancient Israel, he spoke on how it can be death with. This was done through the provision of a court system. The judicial system consisting elders in the community especially when they were in the wilderness (Exo. 18). During the settlement period the system was expanded to include kings and



advisers at all level in the society (2 Sam 15:3-4; 1 Kings 3:9; 1 Chron. 23:4; 26:29). Amos was surprised about the breakdown of the judicial system in his days. Bribery, false testimony, unjust ruling and perversion of justice were the order of the day (Amos 2:7-7; 5:12). Despite the preaching and ethical teachings from the prophets the system was terribly corrupt.

Furthermore, prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Amos, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Zechariah, and Malachi taught social concern and justice extensively. For instance, Isaiah in his oracles listed the following vices as Israel's failure before God: Idolatry (2:8); Injustice (5:7; 59:8); Bloodshed (59:7); Rebellion (1:5; 57:4); Neglect of widows (1:23; 10:2); Heavy drinking (5:11; 28:1-7) and oppression of the poor (3:14-15; 10:2). The Prophets had strong influence on the theology and religion of Israel through their religious and socio-ethical teachings. The prophets presented God as a universal God who was concerned for all the people irrespective of colour, race, age, status, position, sex, and tribal inclination. The prophets advocated for an egalitarian society (Lasebikan 13). The prophets through their teachings laid a good foundation for true religion and brought to focus and remembrance the moral, civil and religious laws which God had earlier given to the people (Lasebikan 13).

5. Ethical Teachings in the Nigerian Context

Nigeria is a pluralistic society with several religions and religious leaders with varied titles of Prophets, Pastors, Apostles, Evangelists and so on. The contemporary Nigerian religious leaders irrespective of their titles need to learn from the ancient Israelite prophets the skills of holistic teaching exemplified by them. This will purge the Nigerian society of negative and inhuman religious tendencies like cheating, exploitation, swindling, hate speech, crime of all sorts, false teaching, and other vices that pervade the Nigeria's religious and social space. It should be noted that the Prophets in ancient Israel influenced the affairs of the nation greatly (Hinson 32). The intervention of Prophet Samuel is outstanding, with reference to the institution of the Jewish monarchy (1Sam, 9-15). Likewise, the sin of King David, and his reprimand by Prophet Nathan (2 Sam. 11-12) which elicited David's repentance, signified an extremely clear example, regarding the chastising role of prophets in relation to political leadership and public morality, which is rarely the case in Nigeria.

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Like in the ancient Israel, particularly in the time of Amos, there was exploitation of the poor. Amos spoke against the rich who used their ill-gotten wealth to oppress the poor in the land. As it was in the days of the prophets in Israel so it is in the Nigerian society. The rich are getting richer while the poor are getting poorer. The national cake that is supposed to go round is in the hands of few Nigerians. The government has near-zero program for the poor and the unemployed (Adebo 20). There is mass unemployment in the land. Young graduates have no hope of getting jobs years after their graduation from school. The prophets in Nigeria are to address the common wealth of the country that is not evenly distributed among the Nigerian citizens. Prophets are expected to speak out on the issue of mismanagement of the national economy by the ruling class. It is the mismanagement of our economy that is responsible for hunger, looting, killings, withdrawal from school, brain drain, child trafficking, youth unrest, tribal conflict, abduction, kidnapping, raping, and other vices that have bedevilled our nation today.

A Prophet in ancient Israel was an individual with divine call and a message to a people. He or she is expected to deliver the message received without editing. Prophetic messages were kingdom centred for the people to repent and turn to God. The contemporary Nigerian prophets are to emulate the true prophets in ancient Israel by engaging in ethical teachings and prophetic declarations that are received from God for the restoration of the Nigerian nation. The prophets in Nigeria must be bold and courageous enough to direct their oracle to everyone irrespective of gender, class, profession, tribe, religion, and political affiliation. All avenues such as media should be used to declare God's oracles. The Nigerian contemporary Prophet has the obligation to be a moral voice in the public domain, to speak in clear terms on national issues that have brought our country to disrepute in the comity of nations. Like their counterparts in ancient Israel in the light of the frustrations, suicidal tendencies, and poverty that have bedeviled our nation today, the Nigerian prophets should be alive to their responsibility of ministering hope and comfort to Nigerians who are hopeless.

Besides, like the Prophets in ancient Israel, the prophets in Nigeria and their audience are to live above reproach. The fact that we are in the time of grace does not exempt us from the obligation of the law. Ethical demands on our nation denote her obligation to the law of Yahweh. Every



prophet has the responsibility of making God known to the people. Divine oracles delivered are expected to change the behaviour of the audience. A high moral standard is expected of the prophets themselves. The prophets are to be examples in conduct. Their lifestyle should be able to draw their audience to God. The prophets/pastors are to shun unethical behaviours because they will bring their ministry to disrepute. The Prophets must shun inter personal conflicts. Conflicts among the prophets will always break down ethical walls in a nation. Divine oracles will no longer be taken seriously. This will affect the moral and spiritual lives of the people.

As mentioned earlier, attitudinal change is expected from an audience on the reception of prophetic oracles. One of the main aims of prophecy is change of attitude to God and Man. This was stressed by Prophets like Isaiah and Micah. The recipients of Prophetic oracles were expected to turn a new leave to God after receiving oracles. This is not always the case because of the feeling by the audience that the prophets are not living up to expectation. It is like the saying of Jesus: “Physician heal yourself first”. Since ethics is to alert and awaken the sense of faithfulness and loyalty to Yahweh, unethical behaviour among the prophets would prevent this goal from being realized. The Old Testament maintained that the true basis of ethical behaviour is the nature and the character of God himself (Isa. 1:11-17; Hos. 8:12-13; Amos 5:21-24). It is the expectation of the people that a true prophet is the one whose life and behaviour conforms to the character and nature of Yahweh. A prophet would obtain the expected response from his audience when his conduct aligns with that of Yahweh. In other words, a high ethical standard is placed on prophets by his congregation. The prophets are to be examples in conduct. Their lifestyle should be able to draw their audience to God.

Furthermore, the prophets in ancient Israel had the responsibility of calling the nation back to the way of Yahweh by challenging corrupt political and spiritual leaders. They are to preach against immorality, social injustice, oppression and exploitation of the weak by the strong. Like Prophets Isaiah and Amos, one would expect Prophets in Nigeria to speak boldly on injustice the country. Except for very few who recently have dared to confront the government, majority have chosen to fold their arms and watch the nation being thrown into its current state of economic, political and social pandemonium. However, it has been observed that some prophets in Nigeria churches cannot address the aforementioned

because they have been “settled.” Some of them are close to the powers that be and are paid by those in the corridor of power. It is believed that some Prophets in Nigeria are consultants to some corrupt political office holders. Some are also said to be prayer contractors to some corrupt people in the corridors of power. In this situation, these Prophets have, like Amaziah become part of the corrupt system and have been integrated into the cult of the rich, the powerful and political leaders, and as such lost the courage to confront the ruling class. There can be no meaningful change without necessary ingredients like justice, faithfulness, righteousness, true love, peace and holiness. Since religion is an important influence in the lives of the leaders and the led in every nation, these ingredients can come mainly through the practice of the ethical norms propelled by religious virtues been propagated and preached by religious clerics, like prophets and pastors.

6. Conclusion

We considered the place of Ethics in prophecy in ancient Israel and the Nigerian context. We discovered that there exist parallel in both contexts. Nigerian prophets like their counterparts in ancient Israel are to be sure of divine call before dabbling into prophetic ministry. Prophets are expected by God to deliver oracles received to the designated recipients without fear or favour. There is the need for the citizens to hear and obey divine instructions from the prophets. Higher ethical standards are expected of prophets for their oracles to make the appropriate impacts in the lives of their audience. The prophets in Nigeria are to champion the fight against corruption, injustice, oppression, and other vices that have plagued our nation.

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A Modern Scholarly Exploration on Genesis 1-2 with A Particular Focus on the Days of Creation

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Abstract

What the Days of Creation means in the Genesis cosmogony is an enigmatic discussion among scholars of the Old Testament. From the Church Fathers to contemporary times, this subject has not received a consensual interpretation. The various attempts have produced myriads of nuances and heated arguments. This present effort, though being very unassuming, is focused on exploring the various scholarly nuances in the hope of finding an acceptable position for readers of the Genesis account of creation. The methodology adopted by the present author is what is broadly referred to as the synchronic method of exegesis. This system looks at the finished state of the scriptures without paying serious attention to its historical form or development which is under another approach referred to as diachronic exegesis. After a thorough scrutiny of the various positions under the backdrop of lexicography and literary analysis the following summary of findings are gleaned from the study. Majority of scholars before modern times read these days in a literal sense. In modern times the most predominant interpretations are literal days, literary days and the Age-day nuance. While the age-day held sway for a long time there is a recent shift from it in support of the historic-artistic or literary interpretation. Having explored the data on these schools, the researcher has come to the conclusion that the most defensible position is that which sees the days as literal 24-hour days. While it is not completely devoid of problems, on the whole, the other positions have more problems than it and the moreover, bible writers of the New Testament as well as rabbinical interpreters take the days as literal 24 hour days. Therefore, contemporary readers of the Genesis cosmology should stay with the literal interpretation.



1. Introduction

The interpretation of the opening chapters of Genesis with regard to the exact meaning of the days of creation can be described as an enigma. Interpreters from the patristic period to the Reformation epoch did not strike a compromise over this issue. Their methods vacillated between allegorization to historico-literal treatment and sometimes a conglomeration of both positions mentioned above. The

Reformation era temporarily halted this move with its ardent commitment to the literal school of interpretation. This position dominated the debate until early in the 18th century when advances in the natural sciences launched an attack on the Church's doctrine of creation with the claim that mankind originated through evolution (Louis Berkhof 127). The consequence of the postulation by science that we are here by evolution was a reaction in many quarters by different groups of people resulting to a renewal of disagreements over the biblical cosmology. Vern S. Poythress (22-23) in his work identifies four groups with different reactions on Bible interpretation, namely,

- (i) Agnostics, atheists, and deists decided that cases of apparent conflict between the Bible and science were irresolvable (biblical religion was repudiated by them).
- (ii) Orthodox anti-evolutionists decided that the scientific theory in question (evolution) was dubious and poorly supported.
- (iii) Theological liberals decided that the Bible was scientifically primitive and needed to be up-dated theologically.
- (iv) Conservative theistic evolutionists thought that they could re-exegete crucial biblical passages and show that the Bible did not intend to teach anything in conflict with the new theories.

The above reactions consequently gave rise to many schools of interpretations, some of which we intend to review in this article with particular reference to the days of creation.

Our main task in this article is to try and get a clear historical perspective on the biblical cosmology and to clearly explain what the days of creation in Genesis chapters 1 and 2 really mean. To be able to accomplish these tasks, we are going to rely extensively on the synchronic approach to exegesis. For the purpose of this write-up, all post-reformation interpretations are considered as modern contributions to the debate. Of the myriad of schools of thought on the Genesis cosmogony, we shall

briefly review the following: the Visionary, Mythological, Historico-literal, Literary, Gap or Reconstruction theory, the Ideal Time, and Age Day theories. After this, we shall do lexicography of the Genesis cosmogony with particular focus on the days of creation.

2. A Review of some Schools of Thought on the Days of Creation

As has already been stated above, there are myriads of schools of thought on the days of creation in Genesis. However, we have chosen to review some of the very significant ones, which include the following.

2.1 The Visionary Theory

This is one of the most disparaged theories on the creation account. As such it poses no great a problem to modern minds. Henri Blocher identifies it as “the theory of the Jesuit priest, Hummelauer”(40). He adds that the theory was criticized by M.J. Lagrange and that it was defined by P.J. Wiseman in his work *Creation Revealed in Six Days, 1948*. The theory basically holds that in six literal days or possibly in a vision which presented to Moses the whole drama of creation in six visionary days, God described to His prophet the mystery of how He had brought creation into being, and the stages by which He did so.

Those who hold this theory posit that the days are just a matter of logical structuring rather than chronological order. “Either God’s revelation of creation came to Moses in a series of 6 pictures, or the author arranged his material in a logical grouping which took the form of 6 periods” (M.J. Erickson 381). Furthermore an attempt is made at rendering the Hebrew word *asah* as ‘showed’. It is argued that the word could mean both ‘made’ and ‘showed’ and therefore, it would imply that the meaning intended in the original is ‘revealed’ hence the revelation theory (J.H. John Peet 36). This theory is described by Blocher as being ‘too marginal or lightweight’ (40). J.H. John Peet (36) presents the following criticisms on it

- (i) Nowhere, here or elsewhere in scripture, is this mode of delivery implied for the creation account. If God revealed things in this way (as in the book of Daniel, for example), the arrangement would be unambiguous.
- (ii) It would also be strange to reveal just a verse or two a day.
- (iii) The case is based on the argument that the Hebrew word *asah* can be translated ‘showed’ as well as ‘made’. The case is weak in that, though



it can be used this way for ‘showed mercy,’ it never means ‘revealed’. The meaning is always consistent with the translation ‘made’ or ‘did’.

(iv) The context is clear – the 7th day of rest is clearly from the act of creation, not its revelation (Gen. 2:2; Exodus 20:11). The position is therefore rejected by most scholars. In fact, the number of those who would hold it today is rather negligible.

2.2 The Mythological Interpretation

This is the interpretation favoured by many, if not all, liberal scholars. Among this class we have Bultmann, Karl Barth, and Hermann Gunkel to mention just a few. According to this school, the historical narrative of creation as well as the whole idea of creation is to be rejected. The contents of Genesis chapter one are regarded as a myth embodying a religious lesson. A modified view of the same school is that presented by Blocher in his work. According to this “the sacred writer might have taken a pagan myth of origins in order to correct it and purify it in line with his monotheistic faith...” (33). Hermann Gunkel who subscribes to this school says the following about the book of Genesis:

The same result very clearly follows a comparison of the primitive legends of Genesis with the myths of the Orient, especially of the biblical story of the creation and the Deluge with the Babylonian versions of the same subjects. The colossal outlines, the peculiarly brilliant colors which characterize these myths in the original form are lost in a measure in the biblical legends of the beginning of things (15).

Bernard Ramm writing on the mythological principle has singled out Bultmann as its proponent. He also adds that the latter developed a demythological existential principle which teaches that the “first duty of the interpreter is to recognize the mythological character of a passage of Scripture, for such myths are not believable by modern man” (87). Furthermore, the modern scholar must now un-mask the myth and recover the original existential meaning of the myth. According to this school, the myth is a form of theological communication; it presents a truth about man’s religious existence in historical dress. Creation is such a myth for it is a truth about religious existence in historical form. Genesis 1 is not meant to tell us actually how God created the universe. Rather it tells us on the one hand of our creature hood, and on the other of the limits of scientific investigation. Creation really means that eventually science

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comes to the end of the line in its explanation of the universe and must there surrender to truth of another dimension (74).

This theory of interpretation has been criticized and rejected by almost all evangelical scholars. It is argued by them that the passage (Gen. 1) appears to be historical narrative and references like Exodus 20:11, Nehemiah 9:6, and Psalm 33:6-9 do not regard it as a myth. Jesus and the apostles are also said to have treated it as sacred history.

2.3 The Historical/Literal Interpretation

This is the school that is favoured by the majority of interpreters. Henri Blocher observes that “throughout church history, it enjoys support of the majority” (46). As cited before, it was the position adopted by the Reformers. Competent authoritative commentators such as C.F. Keil, E.J. Young, Noel Weeks, J.C. Whitcomb, Chalmers, Buckland, Sedgwick, Dr. Kurtz and Pratt, just to mention a few have given their weight to this position. The position holds that the days and the account of creation are to be taken in the ordinary sense, and that the narrative aims at giving us the chronological account of creation. It postulates that the account is simply history, revealed by God to man.

The objections raised against the literal sense are explained away. For instance,

- (i) The first days without the sun present no difficulty for those who know God’s power. He could produce light from a source other than the sun.
- (ii) On the different order of appearance of creatures in the account of creation in chapter 2 of Genesis, the second narrative is not chronological, or else it concerns simply a local appearance, or else still, it is a detailed account of the beginning of the human race as opposed to the general account of creation of the first chapter.
- (iii) The text contains no indication of figurative language. Weeks says, “... the language of the Decalogue can scarcely pass for figurative language, and the reason given for the divine commandment seems to found the institution of the Sabbath on the week of creation – it would be a reversal of the order if the days of Genesis were made to be a literary reflection of the Israelite week” (48).



(iv) The Old and New Testaments confirm the literal nature of Genesis 1. Reference is made to Exodus 20:11, Matthew 19:4, and 2 Peter 3:15 as confirmation of this. Other evidences postulated by the literalists include the following:

- The repetition of ‘evening and morning’ in the text “shuts us up in the literal meaning.”

- It would be possible for the plants to exist for 1 day without the sun but not long periods of time.

- The primary meaning of *yom* (‘day’) is an ordinary 24-hour day. According to adherents of this school, good exegesis provides that we are not to depart from the primary meaning of a word unless this is required by the context (154).

- Furthermore, where *yom* is associated with a definite number, it is always used to designate an ordinary day. Therefore first day, second day, etc, in Genesis 1 indicate the ordinary day.

- Finally, the evolutionist cannot be satisfied with any number of years that we allow for the days of creation.

Several other criticisms are leveled up against this position the most prominent being that it is not consistent with natural science discoveries about the age of the earth. The literalists however argue that science should not be allowed to play a subjective role in the interpretation of Holy Writ. Others are:

(i) That the creation of the sun on the 4th day could pose problems. The length of the previous days could not yet be determined by the earth’s rotation to the sun, and that plant life could suffer without the sun.

(ii) The 7th day of rest from labours continues up to the present time and therefore must be regarded as a period of thousands of years, since God’s Sabbath never ends. All the criticisms have been answered as indicated above.

One other thing that must be mentioned at this point is the fact that there are variations of views among the adherents of the literal school. The first group is the dogmatic literalists; the second is a relatively new class referred to as “Creationism’, with a young earth and prodigious flood which plays a key part in explaining geological phenomena and fossils” (47). The other group is the concordist literalists who acknowledge that the geologic age of the earth should be reckoned with. However, because of their belief that the scriptures are inerrant, they find an explanation in a

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hypothetical gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 which could be any billions of years. We shall consider this last class in a more detailed form later.

To sum up this section, it would be correct to say that the historico-literal interpretation is the 'orthodox' position of interpretation and the majority of interpreters are drawn to it. It, nevertheless, has some challenges as has been demonstrated.

2.4 The Literary/Historico-artistic View

This position is also known as the framework theory. Blocher claims that it is not modern: that it was held by both Augustine and Aquinas as well as Gersonides (1288-1344). This position on creation is defined by Blocher as follows:

...an artistic arrangement, a modest example of anthropomorphism that is not to be taken literally. The author's intention is not to supply us with a chronology of origins. It is possible that the logical order he has chosen coincides broadly with the actual sequence of the facts of cosmogony; but that does not interest him. He wishes to bring out certain themes and provide a theology of the Sabbath. The text is composed as the author mediates on the finished work, so that we may understand how the creation is related to God and what is its significance for mankind (50).

The position recognizes the days of the creation narrative as ordinary days but takes them in the context of one large figurative whole. This means that the simple narrative of the passage is a mere device used to present doctrine in an artistic form. It also bypasses the issue of original which many think is the *raison d'être* of Genesis. The composition of the passage according to this school is not so much a revelation of God *per se*, but the result of the human author's meditation. The strengths of this school can be counted as follows:

- (i) The difficulty posed by the differences in order of creation between chapters 1 and 2 disappears.
- (ii) The objection often raised as to how day 1-3 could be solar days without the sun is also conquered.
- (iii) The delay in the creation of stars is no more a problem.



(iv) The conflict of the account with the scientific age of the earth is also eliminated.

In addition to the above, Blocher takes pain to show that the genre and style of Genesis 1 provide strong grounds for literary interpretation. He describes it as of composite genre, adding that “it is the fruit of mature meditation” (52). As an artistic masterpiece the passage is said to have a binary structure, which can be seen in 3 forms: (1) places and occupants (2) triads of days – day 1 and 4, day 2 and 5, 3 and 6 being parallel and (3) separation and adornment. He appeals to Genesis 2:1 for a confirmation of this. According to him “the heavens and the earth... and all the host of them” shows the artistic design of populating that which is presented first to be empty and formless. Other points appealed to by the school are:

(i) That the parallel heptads in the book of Revelation are an indication that a seemingly literal passage may after all be a literary device of communication.

(ii) That ‘evening and morning’ does not appear on day 7 which would indicate an unfinished day as argued by Augustine, and

(iii) That Genesis 2:5 where the absence of vegetation is mentioned because of absence of rain would require a sufficient time span for the absence of rain to constitute a cause for the absence of vegetation. As such a literal interpretation here would be contradictory with chapter one, hence, the narrative is a historico-artistic or framework device.

2.5 Gap/Reconstruction Theory

This theory was propounded by Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847). It has been followed by the Swiss theologian, Augustine Gretillat and defended by A.C. Cunstance (1970). Dr. C.I. Scofield put it in his Chain Reference Bible, thus popularizing it. Other eminent men who adhere to this school include Buckland, Wisemann, and Delitzsch. Holdcroft says Pember is a typical spokesman of this theory (2). It is also the school favoured by present-day dispensationalists, according to Berkhof (159).

The theory “holds that the original creation was at some time in the dateless past and that whatever may be needed to explain the geologic eras took place between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2” (2). In other words, as presented by M.J. Erickson,

... there was an original, quite complete creation of the earth perhaps billions of years ago. That is the creation mentioned in

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Genesis 1:1. But some sort of catastrophe occurred. The creation became empty and unformed (1:2). God then recreated the earth a few thousand years ago in a period of 6 days, populating it with all the species. It is this creation which is described in Genesis 1:3-27 (380).

According to proponents of this theory, the original creation of Genesis 1:1 was inhabited by angels with Lucifer as the arch-cherub. He is said to have led a revolt against God, an abortive coup d'état. Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 are appealed to as evidence of this abortive coup by Lucifer. As a result of this coup, there was a catastrophic development which possibly resulted into the state described by Genesis 1:2 as waste and void (*tohu wa bohu*). According to them, the second verse of Genesis 1 should be rendered "And the earth became waste and void". This was followed by restitution when God changed the chaos into a cosmos, a habitable world for man (158).

The theory is clearly an attempt to reconcile the biblical account with the claims of science. As pointed out above, this is one of the variant views of literalism. The school, sure, takes care of the rift between science and Scripture over the age of the earth; however, it is rejected by scientists and has many questions to settle.

- (i) It does not explain the fossils in the rocks.
- (ii) It lacks scriptural support. The Bible does not say that the earth 'became' but it 'was' waste and void. Blocher sees that rendering as taking "in-admissible liberties with Hebrew grammar."
- (iii) No where does the Bible establish any connection between the fall of Satan and alleged cosmological effects. Moreover, Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 do not refer to the doctrine of the fall of Satan; they concern the king of Babylon and the prince of Tyre respectively.
- (iv) Only in defiance of philosophy may the pseudo-translation "the earth became" act as the basis of the theory (43).

In keeping with Von Rad, H. Blocher concludes that the theory must be "quite impossible" because it lacks textual support, brings its framework, digs its own imaginary gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 (43). This, of course, is the verdict of many scholars over the Restitutionary school.



2.6 Ideal Time Theory

This is the theory developed by Philip H. Gosse in 1857. Basically, the theory postulates that God created the world in six days, a short time ago but with the appearance of age. The theory aims at reconciling the scripture with the claims of geology over the age of the earth. Thus in 1857 Gosse published *omphalos: An Attempt to untie the Geological Knot*. Bernard Ramm accounts for this position as follows:

Omphalos is the Greek word for navel. Did Adam have a navel? Of course he did, argues Gosse. He was created at a given point of the circle of life and therefore was created as if he had gone through the entire cycle. If God created a tree, it would have rings in it. God could create a tree only at a point in its natural life cycle... At the moment of creation Adam's real time was zero – actually he did not exist till the moment of creation. His ideal time was, say for purposes of illustration, thirty years old (193-95).

The above quotation illustrates the ingenuity of Gosse. From his argument he shows that the geological age of the earth is simply the ideal age of the earth whereas the real age is a few thousand years. The theory is criticized by Ramm and others. Ramm says the following about it: The weakness of Gosse's theory is not that we can find some indications of real time, but in the thinness of the theory. If the earth were perfectly antiquated then it would be impossible to tell the difference between (i) a world which actually went through long processes of aging, and (ii) a world which was perfectly antiquated. If the two are impossible of differentiation, common sense prefers (i) over (ii) (195). Ramm further points out that Gosse tacitly admits the correctness of geology on the ground that "better sense will state that the ideal time is the real time." As such the ideal time theory, according to Ramm, has failed to offer to us a basis of the reconciliation of geology and Genesis.

Another critic of the school argues that if God created the earth with an appearance of age, this would involve him into unreality, i.e. he would be deceiving us about reality. This can be answered by pointing to the creation activities as a whole. Does God deceive us by creating the world ex nihilo, or is the virgin birth of Jesus Christ a lie? These are all non-commonsensual to man. If they are not lies, then certainly Gosse has a strong point.

2.7 Age Day

This is otherwise known as the Geologic Day theory as well as Concordism. It is the theory that was propounded by Hugh Miller (1869), J. Dana and J.W. Dawson in the 19th century. It was taken up in France by Henri Devaux and today is argued by Daniel Vernet. Derek Kidner approves of it as well as G.L. Archer. Basically, the theory holds that “the days of the first chapter of Genesis were lengthy periods of time equivalent to geologic eras. They were days only in the figurative sense” (L.T. Holdcroft 2). Its main argument is based on the meaning of *yom* (‘day’). It says that although *yom* is frequently used as a 24-hour day, it also means an age or epoch or long periods of time and that is how it should be understood in this context. G.L. Archer presents evidence for the age day theory as follows:

- (i) *yom* is used in Genesis 2:4 to refer to the whole creative process just described in Genesis 1 as taking up 6 days.
- (ii) Genesis 1:27 states that after creating all the land animals on the 6th day, God created man, both male and female. Then a more detailed treatment of Genesis 2 shows that God created Adam first, gave him responsibility of tending the Garden of Eden for some time until He observed that Adam was lonely and eventually put him to a deep sleep. His rib was taken and made into a woman who was presented to Adam. Archer argues that even a whole day would not suffice for all this less a few closing hours of the day, which the text indicates. Based on the above evidence, Archer concludes that the age-day is what is meant by Gen 1.

Wiley and Gulbertson speaking in support of the age day theory say that *yom* is capable of over 50 renderings; therefore it is impossible to dogmatize or to demand unswerving restriction to one only of those meanings (132). Other reasons put forward in support of the age day are as follows:

- (i) The sun was not created until the 4th day; therefore the length of the first 3 days could not yet be determined based on earth’s rotation to the sun.
- (ii) The days referred to are God’s days in the sense of Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8, that a thousand years is like 1 day.
- (iii) The 7th day of rest from labours is said to continue to this present time and therefore should be seen as an epoch.



Objections have been raised against the school. They include:

- (i) That it is simply a theory of geologists, based on unwarranted generalization since only a minute fraction of the earth has been experimented upon (Berkhof 159).
- (ii) The use of the word *yom* in a broad sense cannot be hidden; the context will always reveal it.
- (iii) The numbering of the days and the mention of morning and evening diminish the possibility of such a loose usage here.
- (iv) That *yom* has a figurative sense does not mean that the day is not 24 hours.
- (v) That the evenings and mornings could represent phases of slowing down and then of intense activity in the creation of the cosmos as posited by the adherents of this school simply shows that they have shifted ground.

In concluding this section, we wish to state that modern schools of interpretation have rather defended their ideas rather than solve the problem. My stand on this will be made clear in the concluding part of this article.

3. Selected Word Study/Lexicography on Genesis 1 And 2

Word studies have an inestimable value in exegesis in that they carry us back to the time of the writer and also expose us to other usages of the word/s in other passages. This then helps in determining the meaning of a passage of scripture with due consideration to the context and other parallel studies. We are therefore going to embark on the study of some key words of Genesis 1:1-2:4 with this aim in mind.

- (i). *'bara'* - BDB (135) identifies the word as a Qal verb that can be rendered as “shape”, “create” and “fashion”. Used always of divine activity, its object being “heaven and earth”, ‘mankind’, ‘the host of heaven’, etc. According to the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, the root *bara* has the basic meaning “to create.” It differs from *yasar* which means “to fashion” in that the latter primarily emphasizes the shaping of an object while *bara'* emphasizes the initiation of the object. The root *bara'* is complicated by its implication in the piel of “cut down” (Josh. 17:15, 18). It may have meant to form, ‘to fashion’ in the sense of carving or cutting out. The qal principally means ‘create’.

The word occurs 49 times in the Old Testament primarily in texts dating from the exilic period or later (G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren

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245). The appearance of *bara* in pre-exilic texts is explained as redactional or Deuteronomistic. Based on this line of argument the word is said to have been introduced into Old Testament literature as a theological idea for the first time in the exilic period. It is speculated that the word originated in the cultic language and its occurrences in Deutero-Isaiah, Trito-Isaiah and Psalms is cited as evidence of this. Moreover it does not appear in Job and Wisdom Literature (Botterweck and Ringgren 245).

It is used in the Qal only of God's activity and is thus a purely theological term. "This distinctive use of the word is especially appropriate to the concept of creation by divine fiat" (Harris and Waltke 127-28). It is generally used to denote the initiation of something new, examples are Isaiah 41:20; 48:5-7), creation of new things; Isaiah 65: 17 (new heavens and earth), Exodus 34:10, Psalm 51:10, etc. The word also possesses the sense of "bringing into existence" (Isa. 43:1, Ezek,21;30: 28: 13, 13).

The scope of the word is limited. The only places where it appears in the qal are in relation to divine action. This is aimed at expressing the incomparable creative work of God as opposed to secondary fashioning by men. This then means that when we talk of God as creating in Genesis 1, we are talking of the release of divine action to bring into existence what primarily was non-existent, that is 'creation ex-nihilo'.

(ii). *tôhû wâbôhû* (Gen.1:2): the Reader's Hebrew – English-Lexicon of the Old Testament renders *tôhû* as "formlessness" and *bôhû* as "emptiness." R.F. Youngblood renders *tôhû* as "confusion," "the empty place" (Job 26:7), nothing, nought, vain, vanity, waste, wilderness, without form. He adds that the word has no cognates in other languages; therefore its nuance must be determined solely from its Old Testament contexts. Thus in Deuteronomy 32:10, Job 6:18: 12:24, it points to a desert wasteland; in Isaiah 24: 10 it points to a destroyed city: in 1 Samuel 12:21, Isa. 29:21: 41:29, it points to spiritual emptiness or confusion. *Tôhû* in most of the quoted passages above is used in a negative sense. The phrase *tôhû wâbôhû* has been rendered in various ways. Youngblood says it is because the meaning of *bôhû* is uncertain. It appears elsewhere as "absolutely nothing whatever."

The traditional rendering "without form and void" has been defended ably by Griffith Thomas who sees the phrase as the key to the literary structures of the chapter. Day 1 – 3 refers to the heaven and earth



receiving their ‘form’ while the record of day 4 – 6 talks of the filing up of their emptiness (964-65).

In this wise, *tôhû* in Genesis 1:2 does not make reference to a supposed catastrophe but to the formlessness of the earth before God’s creative hand began the wonderful acts described in verse 3ff. This does not imply that God created the earth in a chaotic state. His work was orderly and step by step, i.e. from one level to another in accordance with His will and not in proportion to His power since He is capable of calling all things into existence at once. The interpretation that there was chaos after the original creation is therefore precarious and erratic

(iii). *râqîâ*: Halliday renders the word as ‘plate’, ‘firmament’ (i.e. vault of heaven, understood as a solid dome). The Reader’s Hebrew-English lexicon renders it as expanse. Payne defines it as ‘firmament’, ‘an expansion of plates’ i.e. broad plates beaten out. He comments in parenthesis on the NASB rendering of the word as ‘expanse’ as being more correct. *râqîâ* may refer to a limited space, such as that of the canopy over the cherubim, under the throne in Ezekiel’s vision (Ezek. 1:22. 26) or it may refer to the broad “expanse of heaven” (Dan. 12:3, NASB), as it does in thirteen of its seventeen occurrences” (Payne 862).

Râqîâ is derived from *râqâ* and it identifies God’s heavenly expanse. The account of creation uses *râqîâ* to refer to the open expanse of the heavens in which birds fly (Gen. 1:20). i.e. the atmosphere. It also refers to that farther expanse of sky in which God placed “the lights... for signs and seasons as *râqîâ*. The idea is that of an empty space (see Job 26:7) and not of a solid mass of material.

It is pointed out that in pre-Christian Egypt, confusion was introduced into biblical cosmogony when the LXX (may be influenced by Alexandrian theories of “stone vault” of heaven) rendered *râqîâ* by *stereôma*, suggesting some firm, solid structure. The Latin Vulgate based on the LXX then rendered it ‘*firmamentum*’ and this was carried over into the KJV as ‘firmament’. The criticism that speaks of the Jews as conceiving of the ‘expanse’ as a “vault” or “firmament” is attacked by Payne. In addition to what has been said above, he points out that the Hebrews knew that rain came from the clouds. The poetic employment of “windows” or “doors” of heaven is said to be a representation of the expanse or empty space. When, therefore God said in Genesis 1:6 “Let there be a *râqîâ*, He was not speaking of a hard dome or vault of heaven,

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rather, He spoke of an empty space between the waters below and the waters in the sky. “hard as a mirror” of Job 37:18 and “like a canopy” of Isaiah 40:22 are pictorial descriptions from the human viewpoint of one standing on the earth.

(iv) *min*: A Reader’s Hebrew- English Lexicon of the Old Testament renders the word as “species”. W.C. Kaiser renders it as “kind”. It occurs 30 times in the Pentateuch and only one time elsewhere. Its etymology is traced to an Arabic root (with uncertainty) meaning to ‘split’ (the earth in plowing), with the resulting idea of dividing (W.C. Kaiser 503).

Barton Payne raises three important grammatical points about the word *min*:

(i) It is always used with the preposition 1^o “to” or “in respect to”, “according to” and thereby provides specification or in Driver’s phrase “technical enumeration.”

(ii) It always occurs in the singular form even though English translators sometimes render it as plural (Ez. 47:10, KJV). But it is in fact a collective noun giving the generic form in each case.

(iii) *Min* , always, is followed by one of five suffixed pronominal endings. Affixation of these endings strongly suggests that each form has his, her, or its own generic group to which it belongs by order of the creator.

The biologist’s word ‘species’ and the biblical word *min* cannot be adequately substantiated to be same in meaning more so that biologists differ considerably in their definition of “species”. This makes the task of establishing whether God fixed species after the creation of *min* a little bit difficult.

Looking at Genesis 1, however, one would observe that there are distinctions between herbs and grasses, members of the same biological class (Angiosperms). This is an indication that in some cases, according to Kaiser, *min* may indicate a broader group, such as an order. It can be surmised that “God created the basic forms of life called *min* which can be classified according to modern biologists and zoologists as sometimes family or order. This gives support to the classical evolutionist view which requires developments across kingdom, phyla, and classes (Kaiser 503).

(v). *‘adam’* BDB renders the word as follows:

(a) Man, mankind, (human being) Gen. 1:26, 9:5:6, 6:1,



- (b) Given as name (Gen. 5:2)
- (c) Adam, first man (Gen. 4:23).

The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament in the same way renders ‘*ādām*’ as man, mankind, Adam. Its etymology is uncertain, but it is speculated that the word relates to the original ruddiness of man’s complexion. The word is distinguishable from *ish* (man as opposite of woman, or as man distinguished from his manliness). Its occurrence in the singular absolute is said to be 562 times. Adam also refers to generic man as the image of God and crown of creation. In Genesis 1-3 it is the word usually used for man.

Mass also translates the word as ‘man’ or ‘Adam’, the proper name (Gen. 4:25: 5:1-5). The implication of the above is that the word ‘Adam’ is not just representative of humankind but refers to a historical man, Adam, who according to Genesis chapters 1 and 2 was the first human being created by God.

(vi) *yôm*: Halliday renders the word as follows:

- (a) Day (daylight hours) Gen. 8:22.
- (b) Day of 24 hours (Gen. 1:5)
- (c) Special days e.g *yôm tôb* – holiday (Est. 8:17).

The Theological wordbook of the Old Testament renders *yôm* as follows:

- (a) The period of light (as contrasted with the period of darkness).
- (b) The period of 24 hours,
- (c) A general vague “time”
- (d) A point of time.
- (e) A year (in the plural, 1 Sam. 27:7: Ex. 13:10, etc.).

‘*Or* (light) and *bôqer* (morning) are other Hebrew words sometimes translated ‘day’. The word, *yôm* has a very wide range of usage. The formal and syntactic manifestations of the singular and plural, according to *The Dictionary of the Old Testament* are analogous. There is, however, a significant difference between the two. *Yôm* (singular) always designates some fixed point in time, while *yômim* (pl) often expresses temporal duration by indicating periods of time of various sorts (*Theological Dictionary of the OT* 21-22).

Yôm in the narrow sense refers to the daylight period in contrast to night. The other meanings are dependent on this in the order of 24 hours, time, age, etc. *yôm* used with numbers always denotes 24-hour days. The

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implication of this on the interpretation of Genesis 1 is that ordinary 24-hour days are meant.

(vii). *Shábbat*: BDB renders the word as ‘cease’, ‘desist’, ‘rest’. Hamilton renders it in the same way (*Theological Wordbook* 902-3). He goes on to observe that “the meaning of *Shabbat* is to ‘rest’ in the sense of repose only when the word is used in a Sabbath context (and this is confined to the Qal stem, (13 out of 27 times)” (902-3). The verb when transitive means “to sever, put an end to,” but when intransitive it means “to desist, to come to an end.” This possibly indicates that the Sabbath is the day which ‘puts a stop to’ the week’s activities. The translation “to cease, desist” appears in Genesis 8:22: Jer. 31:36 and Job 32:1.

In relation to our interpretation of Genesis 1-2:4, we would prefer to render the word ‘*sabbat* in the passage as cessation since it is unlikely that God needed any physical rest. After all, the work of creation which He had done did not strain His energy since He simply commanded and the heavens and the earth were created. Therefore God ceased from the work of creation since there was no more formless thing to be fashioned.

4. The Creative Activities of the Six Days

Looking at the Genesis account of creation, one would humanly expect that the activities described should have required more than 6 ordinary days for their creation. The Bible however presenting God as the Sovereign Power does not hesitate to inform us that the activities so took place in six days. The first day marked the creation of light by God’s commanding word. Consequent upon this light was separated from darkness resulting to day and night. Light was fundamental for the survival of the other things that came later and so it was created first.

The second day marked the creation of an expanse which separated water from water. As already highlighted above, expanse here is the atmosphere or space between the earth and the heavens. On the third day God created the land and seas. The land was made to produce vegetation. Its creation on the third day before the sun poses some difficulties to some scientists. How would the vegetation have survived without the sun? This is answered in favour of the ordinary days thus: it is easier for vegetation to survive only one day without the sun than for a very ‘long night’ that is postulated by ‘age-dayers’. Besides, the light of



the first day could suffice for their survival. Modern science has also proved that the sun is not the producer of light but is just a light-bearer (Field 134-5). Peet defends this thus:

We tend to think in terms of the sun as being the source of light. This verse tells us that light is a more fundamental property. This need not pose any problems for a scientist. Energy (which includes light) is a basic phenomenon. God filled the created order with this energy on the first day of creation. Of course it was essential that this energy be available before the creation of life. Though we know that the writer of Genesis would not appreciate such points unless they were revealed to him (42).

Against the argument that it was only after the 4th day that days could be counted in 24 hours is what J.V. Klotz says, “that the sun had not been created until the 4th day is not a proof against the use of day as 24-hour day. At the North of the Arctic Circle and South of the Antarctic Circle the sun does not appear for periods of time up to six months at the poles themselves. Yet time will still be measured in 24 hours as days and not those six months as one day (85). I would add here that beginning from the first day of creation God separated light from darkness and He called them day and night, the length was not changed after the creation of the sun, moon and stars. These were only to be signs to govern the already measured days. The fourth day witnessed the creation of the sun and moon. On the fifth day God filled the expanse and seas with birds and living creatures respectively. Finally, on the sixth day, God created land creatures culminating with the creation of man in His image. With this, the creative activities of God were accomplished and he ceased (rested) from His work of creation.

5. Synthesis And Conclusion

In this concluding section of this article we synthesize our findings as well as make recommendations and submissions regarding the debate on the days of creation in Genesis.

5.1 Synthesis of Findings

Historical studies on the interpretation of Genesis 1-2 have shown that the passage was allegorized by some interpreters while others gave it a literal interpretation during the patristic era. The Middle Ages closed

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with the literal interpretation as the norm. The Reformers' Period also settled wholly for the literal meaning of the scriptures and consequently of our study passage. If we base our judgment of the correct interpretation on majority opinion from the Patristic to Reformation periods, we would be correct to say that the literal interpretation is the correct interpretation of modern scholars, there are myriads of interpretations ranging from the Visionary to the Age-day interpretations. Those which have strong points of argument are the literal, historic-artistic (literary), and the Age-day theories. There is a recent shift from the age-day interpretation to the historic-artistic view. This development is master-minded by a thorough exegesis of the cosmological passage in plain narrative and not poetic literature. Additionally, the age-day, apart from reconciling the age of the earth with geological claims, has a lot of interpretative problems to grapple with, viz:

- (1) If each day is an age, the creation of the sun on the fourth day would be more of a problem to vegetation than if it were ordinary days. They could survive one day without the sun but not an age (or thousands of years).
- (2) The sun is said to be created to rule the day. If a day was an age, it would imply that the sun shone all that age which is unintelligible.
- (3) Exodus 20:11 shows that the Jews were required to rest for a day not an era, otherwise the allusion to the Sabbath of God after creation would not be appropriate.
- (4) There is no scriptural evidence that God continues to rest through the succeeding time. The work of creation is finished and God is resting from that work, but the seventh day does not extend through eternity.
- (5) The phrase "evening and morning" is a strong indication that ordinary days are intended. If an age, what is going to represent evening in thousands of years as well as morning?

On these grounds, it seems correct to me to eliminate the age-day view. The only options left are the literal and literary viewpoints. The latter can be accepted only if it conceives of the days of creation as ordinary days. However, since the theory conceives of the days as long periods of time and only attempts to remove the evidences for literalism in order to reconcile geology with the Bible, it too has failed the test.



To me, the only viewpoint that passes the test of exegesis is the literal interpretation. It is most natural for the context of the passage. Its only strong difficulty is the argument raised by Archer regarding how long it must have taken Adam to name all the animals that were created by God and that even a whole day (24 hours) would not have sufficed for this. The subsequent making of the wife from his rib and the preceding creation of beasts, Archer cites as evidence of along period of time. Strong as the point is, it does not prove an age-day theory. Judging from the fiat of God in creation and the instant effect that followed, the creative activities preceding the creation of man could take just very little time. The naming of the animals and birds would not mean that every creature was named before it was discovered that none of them could be man's suitable companion. Therefore, a day could suffice for man's creation and the fashioning of his wife for him.

5.2 Recommendations/Submission

My recommendation is going to be based on my observations on the unending debate over the days of creation. I have observed that the issue of the length of the days is mixed up with that of the age of the earth. This to me is a confusion of issues. That God created the world in six ordinary days should not affect the age of the earth. The creation of the world in six ordinary days is not evidence of a young earth. It also does not suggest that the world is billions of years old. God could have accomplished the work of creation in six 24-hour days billion of years ago or a few thousand years ago.

Based on the above observation, I want to strongly recommend that those who would investigate into the age of the earth should base their assumptions on other premises. It is very evident in the cosmological passage of Genesis that the author does not intend to give us information about the age of the earth. Such things as chronological lists should form the bases of such a debate. The issue of how long a day of creation lasted should be that of contextual, syntactic and structural analysis of Genesis 1-2:4. Secondly, it must be borne in mind that natural scientific theories are not supposed to and should not dictate the manner in which Holy Writ is to be interpreted. Scientific theories have changed on a number of occasions with research and discovery: Holy Writ remains true and the same.

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In conclusion, I submit here that the literal meaning of the days of creation (i.e. as ordinary, 24-hour days) is most appropriate and defensible interpretation in terms of sound exegesis. This conclusion is based on the grounds that the Old and New Testaments attest to the literalness of Genesis 1 (Ex. 20:11, Matt. 19:4; and 2 Pet. 3:5). The repetition of “evening and morning” is a strong evidence for ordinary days. In the same vein the primary meaning of *yôm* is an ordinary 24-hour day. Additionally *yôm* wherever it is associated with a definite number designates an ordinary day, and this must be the case in Genesis 1. This position is also clear based on the fact that the text is plain narrative and lacks any trace of poetic cast. The succeeding chapters which are historical look back on it and fit into the narrative structure, hence the literal meaning of Genesis 1-2:4.

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An Expository Study of Leadership Qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 in Relation to Church Leadership in Nigeria

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Abstract

One of the burning issues today in church ministry is what should be the criteria for church leadership. We all have an idea of what a good leader is but a good leader is difficult to find. Despite the fact that Jesus Christ said whoever wants to lead must first be ready to serve, yet nobody is ready to play a second fiddle to anybody. Even in the body of Christ, the church, the reserve is the case. Nobody wants to take the bowl and wash the feet of anybody. The quality of leadership in any church ministry determines to a large extent the success or failure of such ministry. This by implication means that God uses leaders as instruments to direct and care for the people and to lead a group from vision to a goal. Therefore, without good leadership, the church spins on its own wheel rather than progressing. Leadership in the church, however, should not be construed as an oasis or bed of roses. There are potent dangers church leaders do face on a daily basis like pride, egotism, jealousy, popularity and infallibility. The focus of the paper therefore is to examine leadership qualifications according to the First letter of Paul to young Timothy and how leaders emerge in Nigerian churches today. This became imperative because leadership at whatever level is not an avenue to amass wealth. A leader or anyone who aspires to leadership position at any level in the church, should



endeavour to exhibit the personal qualities expected of a leader as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. The data collected was through secondary source of information. However, the major finding of this work was that leadership positions are platforms and positions several men are labouring and clamouring for everywhere today but for a different purpose. The main contribution of this work is that it has been able to show how church leaders can minimize secular leadership's impact on the church and maximize church influence on the society. The researcher adopted descriptive method of research. The work concluded that capable leaders must be put where they can perform maximally. The church leadership is more than mere academic qualifications. As such, the church in Nigeria is in need of leaders who can adapt the gospel message to meet the harsh difficulties facing the people.

Keywords: Church, Leadership, and Church Leadership

1. Introduction

Before the modern day debates of either what true leadership is in the political arena or church leadership, leadership has always been an issue among the disciples of Jesus Christ. Recall that the two sons of Zebedee sought leadership position when they approached Jesus with their demand; Then James and John the sons of Zebedee, came to him, "saying we want you to do for us whatever we ask". And He said to them, what do you want me to do for you? They said to him, "grant us that we may sit, one on your right hand and the other on your left, in your glory" (Mk. 10:35-37).

The above request of James and John of Zebedee sums up the desires of every Christian leader in the church today, that is, leadership for self-glorification and ego enhancement. The sons of Zebedee came desiring an opportunity; they came desiring leadership, which in itself is not bad. Yet, one can see in their prayer how the flesh, the human nature can hijack what is ordinarily a noble platform for advancing the kingdom of God among men, or an opportunity to affect men for God, into a place for self-glorification. Leadership in the church is the noble art of cooperatively planning and unitedly achieving the goals God has set for humankind in the life, teaching, death, resurrection, and the coming back of Jesus Christ.

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In the life of the church, leadership is far more than methods and machinery, techniques or holding an office. In essence, a leader in a church is a Christ-like personality whose wisdom, self-sacrifice, and labour cooperate with others in finding and doing the will of God. When leaders do their best, they challenge, inspire, enable, model and encourage. Good people merit good leadership and the church deserves the best leadership available. The saying “like priests, like people” underscores how people become like those above them. Leaders have power and influence beyond what is written in their job descriptions. For any church leader to steer the ship of the church successfully, such must have Christ-like personality to motivate others.

It is therefore unfortunate to observe that the contemporary experience in Nigeria has shown a sharp departure from the spiritual qualifications for church leadership. The level of understanding expected from both the leaders and the followers is missing in most cases. This as often led to church conflicts particularly among the church clergymen and prominent members of the church.

In view of the above, the intension of this paper is to examine leadership qualifications for any Christian leaders seeking position of authority in the church as stated by Apostle Paul in his letter to Timothy, an elder himself in the church. The work attempted to do an expository study of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 in order to relate contemporary understanding of church leadership what to look out for while choosing a Christian leader.

2. Definition of Terms

2.1 Church

In the Old Testament, the word simply means “congregation”, and the early Christians also made use of it. The word “church” could apply either to all believers in the world or to any local group of them. It simply refers to the total presence of God’s people (Christians) in a given location. Church refers to the community of believers—either all believers or a local group (Fatokun 52).

Irrespective of its various usage in the Old and New Testaments as well as in Paul’s writings, most scholars have come to the conclusion that the term “church” which occurred two times on the lips of Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18; 18:17), means an organic society established as the New



Israel and endowed with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to impact individual lives and the society in general (Mepaiyeda 45). When reading the New Testament, Christians need to be aware of the various ways the word *ecclesia* (church) is used. First, it is any gathering of believers. Second, it is an organized local body, made up of all the believers in any given locality. Third, it is the universal church. This means all believers who have ever been, are now existing and will ever be (Dairo 89).

2.2 Leadership

The Longman English Dictionary defines a leader as someone with a vision and who possesses the quality and ability to lead either a group, an organization or a country (914). Leadership therefore, could be described as the ability to lead and govern successfully a group to a desired destination (Alokan 29-30). However, O. L. Danoye came up with over one hundred definitions of leadership and this suggests that there is no universally accepted definition of the term (43). The *Webster's Dictionary* defines leadership as the ability to lead, to show the way, conduct, guide, and direct the course of others by going before or along with them (11). Leadership is the power of control over a group of people. The working definition, according to Awoniyi is that, leadership is character which can inspire confidence in other people (23). From this definition, one can deduce that a leader's good character inspires a positive response and trust from the led.

Lovett Weems defines leadership as “the development and articulation of a shared vision, motivation of those key people without whom that vision cannot become a reality and gaining the cooperation of most people involved (39). Vision is very important to leadership. Leadership is a shared function or a series of shared functions, any of which may well be performed by any member of the group who shares and catches the vision. In a nutshell, leadership implies that:

The leader gives direction, motivates, reprimands and develops a set objective along with his group and resolves individual or group needs. He represents the group, channeling information and maintaining perspectives. He develops the group, creating the group's ability to change and integrate the group with the environment (Miller 2).

2.3 Church Leadership

Church Leadership refers to all those exercising influence, guidance and direction to those in the church toward fulfilling the church's goals. With this in mind and in order to be effective, each leader needs to be: a person of vision, action, steadfastness, servant-hood and dependence. Church leadership effectiveness requires that these God-given leadership characteristics be developed to the honour and glory of God (Adetunji 3-4). If God in His sovereign design determined that one is a leader in a church, one must develop those characteristics.

However, it is germane to mention that in Nigeria today, church leadership is now more economically oriented than being spiritually minded. Church leaders in Nigeria today are more concerned with how much comes into the church purse every week than how many souls are saved and nurtured in Christ into Christian maturity on daily basis (Mosley 15-17). This explains why Paul dwelt so much on the character of church leaders and set forth to highlight the much needed qualifications for them. This is because in the church today are self-made leaders, lacking in integrity, honesty, and consistency. They may possess a form of godliness but would deny the power of God over material possession, popularity, and power as being displayed in Nigerian churches (Oluwasegun 17).

2.4 Types of Leadership

Leadership styles are identified and classified according to the way authority is used. There are mainly four styles of leadership: *Dictatorship Style*: In this case, the leader operates like a dictator. He makes all decisions concerning what, when, where and how things are done and should be done. *Authoritative Style*: The authoritative leader displays the following characteristics: he seldom lets others make decisions because he feels his experience and expertise make him the most qualified; he rarely gives his employees recognition for a job well done. The greatest weakness of an authoritative leader is his failure to recognize the skills and abilities of his people. *Consultative Style*: This leader focuses on using the skills and ideas of others in formulating plans and making decisions. *Participative Style*: In this type of leadership, the leader gives most of his authority but not all of it to his team. Members of the



team are considered equal with the leader in terms of input and ideas (Habecker 17-19).

3. An Expository Study of 1Timothy 3:1-7

The saying is sure, if anyone desires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task. Now a bishop must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher, not drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed-up with conceit and fall into condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, or he may fall into reproach and the snare of the devil (RSV).

In chapter three of 1Timothy 3:1-7, Paul wrote about specific qualifications of any would-be Christian leaders. He called the chief leader of the church a "bishop" *apiskopos*. In place of the word "bishop", some Bible translations call it "overseer". The meaning is however the same. In the Greek language, "bishop" means overseer. In other places in the New Testament, such a leader is also called an "elder". In modern day, a bishop is sometimes called a "minister" or a "pastor". It is good to desire to be a leader in the church if one has truly been called by God to that task, but it is wrong to seek such a position because of pride. This means that the church of God cannot endorse any person for ministerial work based solely on his desire, education or claim. Rather, it is best to let God choose the leaders for His church. The church today has no right whatsoever to change the spiritual qualifications highlighted by Apostle Paul. They are absolute and therefore must be strictly followed by the church of God (Hale 814). Yet, the question is; what kind of men are suitable to be the church leaders?

First, they must be men who are *above reproach*. In other words, they must be "blameless", *avepileptos*. To be above reproach means there must be no un-repent sin or wrongdoing in their lives. In addition to this, they should have no obvious bad habit or weakness of character (813). Otherwise, they would be subject of accusation by others and this would bring is credit on them and the church of God at large.

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Second, a Christian leader must be *husband of but one wife*. By implication, this means that he must not have more than one wife. He must be a man who has remained morally faithful to his wife (Bratcher 200). The candidate for this office should be a believer who has remained morally faithful to his wife. The literal translation of the Greek *mias yunaikos*, an attributive genitive according to C. Donald (1908) is “*a one woman man*”. This qualification became very important because in Paul’s time, many Gentiles kept more than one wife. When such people became Christians, they were not allowed to become bishops or pastors. It must be emphasized that Paul did not say that people with more than one wife must get rid of their extra-wives and nowhere in the Bible is it stated that such must be done. However, Paul emphatically mentioned that a “man with more than one wife cannot even be a deacon” (v.12).

Similarly, a would-be-Christian leader must be able to *manage his own household well*. This is an important qualification for any Christian candidate that desires the office of an overseer or bishop, that is, faithfulness in marriage and family relationships. If he cannot control his own children and exercise authority properly in his own family, then, such a person is not fit for leadership position in the church, because he will not be able to exercise authority properly in the church (Titus 1:6). The conduct of a leader’s children is a clear indication of his suitability for leadership. Loose and insubordinate children would be a reflection upon the leader’s lack of discipline and inability to guide others. He therefore must take the lead *in his household* (Ishola 5, 7). He must guide, direct, and care for his children in a dignified, respectful and honourable way so that his children submit willfully. In most cases, God often tests potential leaders by first giving them a small responsibility, such as responsibility over the immediate family (Garfield 110). If they were able to successfully achieve their goals over a small responsibility, God further entrusts them with a greater responsibility as leadership in the church.

A candidate for church leadership must *not be a new convert*, that is, one who has only recently become a Christian. A new Christian may view being an overseer a prestigious office rather than a grave responsibility. If a new convert receives a position of leadership too quickly, there is every tendency of pride setting in and fall into condemnation. In the same vein, a new convert does not have adequate



knowledge of Christianity needed to shepherd the flock (Hale 814). He needs to learn how to humbly submit to the authority of others after which he will be ready to exercise authority over others.

An overseer *must not be given to wine, me paroinon*. This means he must not drink intoxicating wine and neither must he be addicted to it. In the Old Testament time, non-addiction to fermented wine was the standard required of kings, princes, and judges (Pro. 31:4-7). The same standard was also extended to all who sought to be close to God (Lev. 10:8-11) (Thompson 23). Judging from this, the church leaders are expected to leave above board, that is, above his standard, because they serve as ambassadors of Christ and intermediaries between God and man (followers). More so, people are easily moved by what they see rather than what they hear. Church leaders must therefore lead by examples.

A prospective church leader *must be well thought of by the outsiders*. In other words, he must have a good name outside of the church. The qualification is more germane because non-Christians are always looking for faults among them; they are quick to accuse them. That is why it is important that church leaders be above reproach. Living an exemplary life is a focus of every church leader. This is because until they become an example of the principle they teach, or believe, they are regarded as fake. Thus, they must give an example of it by their daily lives and living. Their Christian lives and steadfastness in the faith must be worthy of emulation by the followers. They are expected to manifest the highest example of perseverance in godliness, fulfillment, purity in the face of temptation, loyalty and love for Christ and humanity (Oluwasegun 52). Paul said to the Ephesians in Acts 20:18-20 that, “he had shown them publicly and by examples how they ought to work and live”. This shows that his congregation must learn godliness, integrity, and faithfulness not only from the Word he preaches, but also from his character and relationships with others outside the fold—Christian community.

A church leader must *not be quick tempered*. This is a prolonged anger and settled habit of the mind, harbouring the intention to retaliate. For this reason, if a church leader or an overseer is quick-tempered, he cannot properly manage and channel his anger. This will hurt the followers emotionally, destroy their sensitivity, and leave them spiritually sick. In like manner, the growth of the church will be hindered as members will prefer to stay far away from such leaders.

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An overseer must *not be over-bearing nor self-willed*. This means that a church leader should not be stubborn in his own opinions and ungracious towards others that have different opinions (Janvier and Thaba 175). He should not be arrogantly determined to please himself at all cost. He therefore, should be flexible in dealing with others and their ideas. He should not be self-centered and must not try to manipulate his church members to serve him instead of seeking to develop them.

An overseer *must be gentle*. This is one of the fundamental qualifications of a prospective church leader. It is a Christlikeness quality. A gentle man is fore-bearing gracious, equitable and yielding. A church leader must be willing to yield his personal rights and make allowances for the weakness and ignorance of his church members and should not retaliate when wronged by the members. He must be gentle to the unbelievers (Titus 3:2), the carnal believers (II Cor. 10:2) and to those with whom the church leaders may be having conflict with within the church (Phil 4:5).

4. Church Leadership: The Nigerian Experience

The church of God is supposed to be a light bearer to the world but the church itself appears to be surrounded by darkness and in total chaos and conflict laden. This could be attributed to non-compliance to Apostle Paul's qualifications for leadership as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. A church leader's degree of success or failure will be determined by the spiritual growth and quality of the church members (Rosenabah and Taylor 17). Thus, if a church leader displays vision, devotion, and positive energy, his church will grow and prosper. Where he shows lassitude, as often the case among Nigerian Christian leaders and non-compliance upon the Holy Spirit more especially in choosing the right person for leadership position, the church will languish and fail.

Suffice to say that in Nigeria today, many churches are being planted on the platform of false teaching, preconceived idea and human formed regulations that have successfully undermined the operation of the Holy Spirit in the choice of leadership. Many unqualified church leaders are wolves in human clothing; they have nothing to offer the church for her upliftment and edification but they can only offer what they know



best—anarchy, false doctrine and division (Hesselbein 6). The goal of the church is to reach the world and for this to be successfully achieved, right people must be at the helms affair; they must be chosen and fine tuned under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Character and integrity are what a church leader is on the inside. They are the only things he has left even when everything is lost. No man is better than his character and no man can rise above the level of his character. The Bible is more concerned about the character and integrity of a church leader than about abilities (Mish 77). In fact, God will not use a man or woman of faulty character and dented integrity. Since the advent of Christianity in Nigeria and world at large, the church of God is being challenged on daily basis owing to the activities of her leaders. In this twenty-first (21st), the world is calling, ever increasing on the church to account for its authority and its right to be heard. More significantly, the world is demanding a scrutiny of the church's leaders, their values, standards and lifestyles (Fiedler and Garcia 78).

Whatever the reason, there is no doubt that the relevance of the church and the God its represents, that is, what it stands for are being challenged by a world that is thirsting and hungering for the absolute, for the unchanging elements of life. One of the reasons for this could be attributed to lack of integrity, character and commitment of Christians and in particular of the church leaders, not only in Nigeria but world over.

In Nigerian churches today, power is regarded as a prize to be grasped and held on to. As such, power struggles are the root cause of most of the conflicts that breathed disunity (Kalu 19). Jesus Christ instituted his kingdom on earth by renouncing his power and becoming like a powerless slave (Phil. 2:5-11). He once told his disciples; “Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be the first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:26b-28).

It is worthy to mention that the church in Nigeria is making minimal impact on the society. In fact, the society makes a greater influence on the church. The problem of the church in Nigeria is failed leadership. While assessing the problem, Chinua Achebe wrote in his book titled *The Trouble with Nigeria* that:

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The trouble with Nigeria is simple and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal examples which are the hallmarks of true leadership (Achebe 65).

The church in Nigeria needs responsibility, accountability and proper use of power and respect for the followers. Many church leaders have done very little to fulfil their promises for an improved ministry of the gospel. Some leaders are no longer shepherds or stewards of God to their people. The church today needs to take a lesson from God to the leaders of Ezekiel's day;

Therefore, you shepherds, hear the Word of the Lord: As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, because my flock lacks a shepherd and has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals and because my shepherds did not search for my flock, therefore, o shepherds, hear the word of the Lord... I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed them (Ezek. 34: 1-10).

Judging from the above, the work of church leadership is a noble task. Such an office needs the right kind of people to serve selflessly. All church leaders may not possess all the qualities needed for effective leadership in the same measure, but it is expected of them to possess a certain degree of these qualities that others can attest to. Where a prospective church leader is known to be harsh instead of being gentle, intemperate rather than being temperate, disgraceful instead of being respectful, such a person has already disqualified himself from church leadership.

6. Conclusion

The problem associated with church leadership in Nigeria can be attributed to inability or unwillingness to strictly comply with biblical injunction concerning spiritual qualifications for church leaders. Throughout the scriptures and especially in the New Testament, church leaders are expected to qualify spiritually to be in any position. They must



be deeply rooted in the revealed Word of God. Unfortunately, this is not the case with many churches in Nigeria. The spiritual level of a church leader often determines the spiritual growth of the generality of the church membership. This makes it mandatory for them or anyone who aspires for leadership position at any level in the body of Christ to exhibit personal qualities expected of a leader.

Good leaders are so scarce that many people are just following themselves. Christian leadership not only has two directions—God and man, but it also has two responsibilities. A balanced leader has both the people and the task at hand in mind. It is rather disheartening that true leaders, who are living examples in integrity, honesty, and consistency are very few. Self-made leaders who possess a form of godliness, but deny the power of God are everywhere. Where capable leadership is lacking, the house of God suffers spiritually, emotionally, physically and financially. This is the true situation of Nigerian churches. The way out of these difficulties in which the church in Nigeria has found herself is three-folds. One, the church must understand and strictly follow the guild-lines on church leadership qualifications as stated by Apostle Paul. Two, leadership must be practiced the way Christ himself taught it both in actions and deeds. Three, the right people must be put in right positions of leadership of the church.

Recommendations

First, the Body of Christ must develop a correct perspective regarding factors opposing strict compliance to spiritual qualifications as stated in the New Testament, especially in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus.

Second, the church must return to what Jesus Christ teaches in the Bible and seek to apply the new insights under the guiding biblical light. For this to happen, church leaders must humbly admit that leadership is being wrongly practiced.

Third, the Nigerian churches need leaders who can adapt the gospel messages to meet the harsh difficulties facing their members. As such, courageous and faith-oriented leaders are needed to serve the growing churches.

Fourth, the church must also require from its leaders the highest spiritual standard of holiness worthy of emulation, perseverance in

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faithfulness to God and His word. Members on their part should encourage the church leaders in prayers and support them where necessary.

Fifth, the primary goal of every church leader is to nurture people to Christian maturity. This can be effectively done by fulfilling the Great Commission of “making disciples” and “teaching those disciples”. Teaching God’s word must have top priority of all functions in church leadership. Unfortunately, this divine mandate is one of the most sadly neglected areas in the church today.

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Harmagedon: The Victorious Word of God in Judgement as Portrayed in Revelation 19: 11-14

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Abstract

There is a growing interest in Revelation studies today, early twenty-first century, which began in the last two or three decades of the twentieth century and is partly dangerous. It is excited by a new wave of spiritual importance accorded the Book of Revelation by the Dispensational theology. This curiosity is dictated by anxiety about the nearness of the end of the world and the belief that Revelation can explain it all. These prophecy activists are especially captivated by an “any-moment Rapture” doctrine and interpret almost all world political events in the light of the church’s rapture and Israel’s eschatological position in world politics. All those interpretations are so far off point. Trending today is the sensational interpretation of the war of Harmagedon with its far too many fake cries of ‘Armageddon Now!’ which are spiritually and physically destructive. As an inquisitive moral being enmeshed in time, man’s creaturely consciousness excites in him a morality largely psychologically conditioned by his belief in an eschatological judgement. These numerous fake cries of “Armageddon now” can weaken even believers’ faith in the second coming of Christ and water down their moral priorities and values for the present day. This paper theologically analyses the Harmagedon text—Revelation 16-19—from a culture-linguistic hermeneutic, with the objective to decipher its essential character, mode, and time, to help with its interpretation. It discovers that Harmagedon is a symbolic depiction of the final war of God’s cosmic war with Satan at the end of time that does not necessarily deal with Israel’s political state.



1. Harmagedon: The Problem and Background

Interpreting the war of Harmagedon has been elusive to many for two principal reasons. First is the influence of Hal Lindsey's interpretive scheme on present generations of Harmagedon interpreters. In 1970 Hal Lindsey, in *The Late Great Planet Earth*, interpreted the war of Harmagedon image-by-image, identifying modern countries like the Soviet Union with "the King of the North" and Egypt as "the King of the South" leading coalitions of 200 million Oriental hordes and Afro-Arab worlds against Israel (59-77). Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins in their *Left Behind* series (books and videos) have popularised Lindsey's interpretive scheme and through their influence, many today characteristically reduce the symbolic imagery of Harmagedon to futuristic literal political events affecting the Church and or Israel (Hergemöller 180; Intrater 19-20, 191-93; Thomas 424-25). Secondly, this crop of interpreters approach Harmagedon as an isolated event from the cosmic spiritual war that is central in Revelation.

Both interpretive stances are excited by the new wave of spiritual importance accorded the Book of Revelation by the Dispensational theology that is dictated by anxiety about the nearness of the end of the world and the belief that Revelation can explain all that happens. Most of such interpretations however, overlook Revelation's symbolic imagistic character that John employs to depict the situation of his Asian Christian community.

Revelation is a prophetic political tract that John, the leader of the first century AD Asian wing of Jesus' prophetic party, used in criticising Roman imperial system. All the images John paints in the tract address this political concern. John uses them to exhort his Christian community to remain focused in their resolve to follow Jesus as their Messiah in spite of all odds. Jesus succeeded John the Dipper who was the last Old Testament leader of the party founded by Samuel in the wake of Israel's carnal decision to adopt monarchy. Jesus revived the party's royal theology which promotes the government of God—God's running of people's lives; guiding and guarding their ways to conform to God's ways. This royal theology espouses that God is the one and only sovereign ruler of the universe of creation. Every person in a position of authority only has a delegated responsibility of service to God through his fellow humans, in a leading capacity. God's governing of the world system

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“Subordinates the state to God and to the law” wherein the human *leader* and the led “submit to God’s precepts of justice, respect, and neighbour love” (Storkey 127). This prioritises the dignity of the human person and the common good in the ambit of God’s sovereignty as primary concerns of government. It is the idea of living on God’s terms, putting away self-pride and self-referencing royal ideologies.

The government of the day in Asia was a total negation of the above. It persecuted the Johannine Christian community in Asia for refusing to key into the society’s socio-religious activities. The Asian clients of Roman imperial power: Ephesus, Pergamum, and Smyrna particularly, competed for favour and recognition from their benefactor, Rome, through their participation in the imperial cult as a way of demonstrating their level of loyalty to the emperor (Moore 18). They would not want to see anything stand in their way. On a general note, Christians in Asia were required to participate in the religious festivals in the pagan temples as part of their civic duties. Those religious festivals were seen by the society as means of appeasing the gods to bless the land. But, Christians turned down that demand; such activities were against their faith and way of life. The Christians’ attitude was then viewed by society as subversive and had to be resisted.

Throughout his political tract John depicts this state of affairs as cosmic war to replace the kingdom of Christ with imperial power (11:7; 13:7-8, 12; cf. Dan 7:12). Its foundations are laid in the vision of the omniscient and omnipotent Son of Man superintending over his Church (Rev 1-3); the second vision—of the victorious warrior lamb (Rev 4-20)—presents the war in three cycles, using the imageries of seals (Rev 4-7), trumpets (Rev 8-14), and vials (Rev 15-20). One notices that the war takes a variety of forms: the beast out of the sea and the beast from the earth (i.e., Babylon, and the false prophet) employ acted falsehood—miracles of deception (Rev 13:13-14), verbal falsehood—threats of economic exclusion (13:13-17) and even of extinction, etc. The intention is to sandwich the Church and render it dysfunctional. An angel of God fights back with the eternal gospel exhorting the world’s inhabitants to worship God and escape his judgement of Babylon for her immorality (Rev 14:6-



12). It is noteworthy that this moral emphasis saturates the war language (Rev 16:6-7; 17:1-2; 18:3-8, 24).

This suggests that the cosmic war about the person with sovereignty over history that culminates in the war of Harmagedon is a spiritual war that is being fought by either side trying to convince the world's population about who has sovereignty over history, primarily with words and only secondarily using other—socioeconomic and political—means. In that case, the final battle of the war, fought at Harmagedon should be seen in the same light. The campaign at Harmagedon is the last battle of this war that would happen at the end time when the Word of God and his people would destroy their foes as it has always been at what has become a symbolic site called the mound of Megiddo. It means that the numerous prophecy update books and videos that depict the war of Harmagedon as going to take place during the tribulation when the Church would have been raptured are also off point. That this is already happening without the rapture, contradicts the clustering of world forces against Israel that is pointed to in the prophecy updates.

I do not see the war of Harmagedon as referring to a specific historical event, especially involving Israel. The event at Harmagedon is described as *πόλεμον* [*polemon*] (protracted war) rather than *mache* (short scene battle) and should be understood in the light of the cosmic war that Revelation depicts. It seems to me that the interpretation of the war of Harmagedon as a specific historical event is driven by an erroneous viewpoint that sees its features implied in some current world political events. Bible prophecy students are easily dragged into such conclusion when they consider the political events in the light of biblical prophecy in general, but particularly Ezekiel 38:17 which refers to a coalition of forces that will come against the State of Israel in the last days as political events in the Middle East today appear to be doing. From the viewpoint of Scripture, the last days started with the first coming of Jesus two thousand years ago (Heb 1:1). John even calls it “the last hour” (1 Jn 2:18). Russia, which in Biblical texts is called Rosh and heads Meshech and Tubal (Moscow and Tobolsk), has been gathering forces in Syria preparatory to an onslaught on Israel just as the false prophet, the dragon, and the beast are to do (Rev 16:13). Interestingly, this coincides with the period Israel is politically isolated. The Iran deal—the signing of an accord with Iran by its allies—has led nations to cluster around Iran against Israel. This

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isolation of Israel though began much earlier. When European Jews were returning to re-occupy the land of Israel in 1948 no nation helped them. And I think that God deliberately does not want Israel to depend on other nations for their survival so that his glory is not stolen by humans.

Central to all this is Syria which will serve as the base for attacks on Israel. In 2016 Russia built two more army bases and a new air base in Syria and deployed 28 fighter aircrafts there as well as thousands of army to those bases alongside similar numbers of Iranian soldiers being deployed in Syria for the same purpose. With these and similar events taking place, the gathering in Syria seems to be fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel 38-39. Ezekiel writes: “Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Are you the one of whom I spoke in former days through my servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days for *many* years that I would bring you against them?’” (Ezek 38:17). It is however noteworthy that Harmagedon is not mentioned in the Ezekiel text. Revelation 16:13-16 does not seem to echo it as some prophecy students today are so quick to see it in that text (Preacher 22, 57, 189; Intrata 193; Garland 27, 256-57).

It seems that the two texts describe two different events. Ezekiel 38-39 describes the situation of a re-born national Israel (Ezk 36-37; esp. 36:10) in the last days. Sometime after her rebirth a dictator (Gog) from Russia (Magog) will envy Israel and mobilise his allies and come to fight against her. Then, when there seems to be little or no hope for Israel’s survival, the God of Jacob will supernaturally intervene on her behalf and destroy the enemy. Zechariah 14 seems to be the text that more closely refers to this war at Harmagedon. Zechariah’s reference to “the plain of Megiddo” is particularly curious: “In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo (Zec 12:11 NAU; cf. 2 Kgs 23:29).” What is this text saying? Scofield explains in a note at Revelation 19:17, that:

Armageddon (the name itself is to be found only in 16:16) is the ancient hill and valley of Megiddo, west of the Jordan in the plain of Jezreel between Samaria and Galilee. It is the appointed place where the armies of the beast and false prophet will be destroyed by Christ’s descending to earth in glory. (1742)



Although such interpretation is based on shaky grounds many have been drawn into it. They espouse that primary reference is to the northern (European) powers, headed by Russia when the Harmagedon passage is read in connection with Zechariah 12:1-4; 14:1-9; Mt. 24:14-30; Rev. 14:14-20; 19:17-20. The battle described there, though, seems to be that between Gog of the land of Magog (a dictator from Russia) and God's people (Ezek 38-39). "Gog" is the prince, "Magog," his land (Ezk 38:2). The reference to Meshech and Tubal (Moscow and Tobolsk) seems to be a clear mark of identification. By Ezekiel's prophecy, 38:5-6, Russia will mobilise a coalition of forces from Persia (Iraq), Ethiopia, Gomer (Turkey), Cush (Sudan), Put (Libya & Algeria), and Togarmah (Other Islamic nations). Other nations Sheba and Dedan (Saudi Arabia), Merchants of Tarshish (Europe) (Ezk 38:13), are also mentioned by the prophet in connection with that event. These latter three are not be part of the coalition to fight against Israel, but instead of helping Israel, they stand aside and criticise those who are attacking her.

A close reading from the culture-linguistic hermeneutical approach of this study thus yields completely opposite results. The cosmic war against the destroyers of the earth is being fought in phases. Harmagedon (Rev 16-19) is the last battle of that ongoing cosmic spiritual war. In other words, the ongoing cosmic war against the forces of evil is being fought in phases and the very last phase will involve total physical destruction of the destroyers of God's kingdom, the earth. It is symbolically described as the war of Harmagedon. This differs from the attack of Russia and its allies against Israel in Ezekiel 38-39.

Understanding these concerns of John's political tract poses some difficulty because John elected the symbolic-imagistic mould to convey the message he brought to his audience from his principal, Jesus (Rev 1:1). For an informed understanding of these images, one has to pay close attention to the culture-linguistic factor as well as carefully examine a wide variety of factors that formed or underlay the world of thinking of both John and his first readers. Where this is not done and wishful thinking dictates interpretation, misinformation and its dire consequences are the obvious result. With this study's intent to direct Revelation students' attention to this study approach, my first exercise focuses on understanding the imagery of Harmagedon and its symbolism as a battle

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ground. This prompts the question of what I am referring to as images and symbols.

2. Clarification of Terms

By the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery's* definitions which I have adopted as the working definitions for this study, an *image* “is any word that names a concrete thing (such as tree or house) or action (such as running or threshing). Any object or action that we can picture is an image” (30). Ronald W. Langacker describes the same phenomenon as “our manifest capacity to structure or construe the content of a domain in alternate ways” (5). It means that an image, or picture, has a concrete referent in the objective world which we must experience it literally with our senses. Secondly, since an image is a reflection of something, we also have to be sensitive to its connotations or overtones in order to adequately understand it (*Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* 30).

Images could be either mental or real. Real images are pictures that are physically experienced through visual, auditory, and other sensory organs—that is by means of perception or observation. They pose no problems understanding them. Mental images are more difficult to explain. In fact many think they don't exist at all. But, for those who subscribe to their existence, a mental image is the representation of something in the absence of this something itself (9). This is sometimes “colloquially spoken of as “visualising,” “seeing in the mind's eye,” “hearing in the head,” “imagining the feel of” etc. In this understanding, “It resembles perceptual experience, but occurs in the absence of appropriate external stimuli” (*Stanford Encyclopedia* “Mental Imagery”).

Symbol: Greek σύμβολον *symbolon*, from σύν *syn* “together” and βάλλω *bállō* “I throw, or put” yielding the idea of putting things together—“comparing” them to determine if something is genuine.” Hence, *symbolon* came to acquire the meaning of “outward sign” of something. In 1590, Edmund Spencer used it with the meaning “something which stands for something else” which has become the commonplace definition of “symbol” in our time. By this sense, symbols are like pictures. They are representations of other things. James Fowler compares them with editorial cartoons in newspapers (12). We may say that a *symbol*



is an image that stands for something in addition to its literal meaning. It is more laden with meaning—the second level of meaning—than simply the connotations of the straight image which is observed by its literal properties (*Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* 31). This implies that a symbol is prone to have two meanings to it: the surface or ordinary and the hidden or deeper meaning. Thus, to understand a symbol, we must first seek to experience its literal or imagistic side. This requires entering into the world of the originator of the given symbol. That is, to reconstruct the social and historical worlds (the historical and social conditions including the original audience of the symbol) of the originator of the symbol to be able to draw out its meaning. John draws much of the imagery and symbolism of Revelation from both the Old and New Testament Scriptures and even other Jewish literature of his time. Going by the culture-linguistic hermeneutic of this study, I make an analysis of the text on the war of Harmagedon in the light of these background literatures.

3. Analysis of the War of Harmagedon (Rev 16-19)

For us to adequately understand John's symbolism of the war of Harmagedon in Revelation 16-19, we have to understand its key character, the Word of God, by considering its usage in its larger scriptural occurrences. John characterises the Word of God in this text as a royal personage – (v 12; cf. 6:2; 14:14; mimicked in 12:3; 13:1); a warrior who rides on a white horse into battle – (v 11; cf. 6:2); with his heavenly army also riding on white horses – v 14; He is called Faithful and True, a characterisation of Jesus in Revelation (v 11; cf. 1:5; 3:14); the war he fights with a sword in his mouth – v 15; is expressed as his righteous judgments – (v 11; cf. Ps 96:13; Isa 11:4); He rules the nations with an iron rod – v 15 as King of Kings and Lord of Lords – v 16; His robe is dipped in blood – (v 13; cf.). Applying the perspicuity of Scripture, John's main concern is clearly to depict the sovereign ruler of the world in his might, bent on salvaging his creation by destroying those who are destroying it.

In Revelation 16-19, John describes the various steps of the final battle of God's war against the destroyers of the world led by his Prince. At this stage it seems that God decides to join his Prince and finally effect the destruction of the destroyers of the earth (Rev 11:18). John presents the prime actor, the commander of God's troops in that war, as "The Word

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of God” (Rev 19:13). This echoes his theology of the Word as divine self-expression. In his Gospel (Jn 1:1-18) and in his first epistle (1 Jn 1:1) we come across his personification, indeed, hypostatisation of the *logos* which he then associates with God’s creative power. In his characterisation, ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (Rev 19:13 BGT), is explicitly identified as God “καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος” (Jn 1:1 BGT), was with God at the beginning of time “οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν” (Jn 1:2), and is the Word (author) of Life “... λόγου τῆς ζωῆς” (1Jo 1:1 BGT). This addition in the epistle is significant for understanding both the essence and function of the Word so characterised. John seemingly intends to portray the Word of Life as God, the author of life fighting to destroy those who want to destroy the social, political, and even spiritual life of the people of God (Rev 20:9). In Genesis 9:6 God forbids destruction of human life because humanity bears God’s image and spirit. Thus, John is probably influenced by the OT in characterising the leading actor in the war.

What then, does the Title “Word of God” mean? In the world of John, the term “word” had a variety of usages depending on one’s cultural and philosophical context. Etymologically, the term λόγος is from the Greek verb λέγω which means to say or speak” (Thayer “λόγος”). Lexically, λόγος has various meanings that are better understood under two categories of “thought” and the “verbal expression” of that thought (Barrett 152). The understanding of *logos* essentially as “thought” is quite antique. It was already so expressed by a Greek philosopher, Heraclitus (6th century B.C) who, according to Craig Keener, averred that “Thought” guides and orders the universe and six of the surviving fragments of his work refer to the Logos as being eternal, omnipresent, and as the divine cause (341). These were central ideas about the *logos* in Stoic philosophy and later in Gnosticism. In Stoics’ teaching the universe comprises two principles, a passive one which is matter and an active one, Logos, which is God, “the rational principle” that acts upon matter (Barrette 152). In a specific development of Heraclitus’s doctrine (Keener 342) the Stoics taught that *logos* governs men’s lives through *σπερματικός λόγος* (*generative principles*).

In the Gospel of John the λόγος is at once God’s self-expression in speech and in action. In Johannine literature as a whole (Jn 1:1, 14; 1 Jn



1:1; Rev 19:13), ὁ λόγος designates an essential person, Christ; “the personal (hypostatic) wisdom and power in union with God” (Thayer “λόγος”). In this relationship, ὁ λόγος is at once God’s self revelation and his agent in creation and government of that creation. The hypostatized λόγος reveals God by disclosing his essential nature in the person of Jesus Messiah in whom God is seen. Jesus himself declared: “Whoever has seen me has seen the father” (Jn 14:9). John makes the same point where he declares that “No one has ever seen God. The only one, himself God, who is in closest fellowship with the Father, has made God known (NET)” (Jn 1:18). Andreas J. Kostenberger thus rightly points out that Jesus came to show us who God is (revelation; Jn 1:18), including the demonstration of God’s redemptive love for the world (salvation; Jn 3:16) (39). This salvific work is precisely the point at which the λόγος emerges as a warrior. That redemptive act is bound to be opposed as it were by God’s arch adversary, the dragon, and its sanctifying effect is indeed being opposed to-day by Satan’s agents, the beasts from the sea and land and the false prophet; the replication of the Roman Empire and its false religion in subsequent historical epochs of the people of God.

John captures this warfare in his depiction of religious propaganda and harsh social and economic policies against the citizens of the messianic kingdom (Rev 13-14). He describes the redeemer logos as having life in him: ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων (Jn 1:4 BGT) and as the source of life for all creation (Jn 1:4). Life in this usage refers to both its physical and spiritual aspects in human nature with the salvific work of God’s Anointed as its moving cause. As the author and sustainer of the cosmos therefore ὁ λόγος τῆς ζωῆς (1Jn 1:1) cannot fold his arms and watch an impostor destroy his work. Hence he fights this decisive battle at Harmagedon, a likely reference to the mound of Megiddo, to redeem his creation from the usurper and his allies who are bent on destroying it through deceitful propaganda. Megiddo was a historic site for God’s defeat of the enemies of his people. There the stars, fighting from heaven, assisted Jael to humiliate Sisera (Jdg 19-27); there Joram died in battle against the divine minister, Jehu (2 Kgs 9:27); there God destroyed King Josiah by the hand of Pharaoh Neco for defying the word of God and interfering with His programme against Assyria (2 Chron 35:20-23; 2 Kgs 23:29). John therefore may be using “Har Megiddon” symbolically to remind his church community and their enemy of God’s

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past redemptive acts that are bound to be repeated in their own time and any other time. This thus precludes identification of the final battle against evil with a specific historical event at a place called the Mount of Megiddo as is vogue today.

Herein then, is John's messianic theology at its peak. The word of God is the same Lord God (Yahweh) who led his people in the Old Covenant period out of their captivity by the then world power, Egypt. Now, he delivers his New Covenant people from the stranglehold of the world power, symbolically called Babylon who is known as the historic enemy of God's people. The bottom line of this interpretive stance is that John's usage of the Word of God in this war scene is in the sense of his logos theology which presents the Christ as the revelation of God. The Word that was at the beginning with God and was God himself (Jn 1:1-2) became flesh and dwelt among men (Jn 1:14) and "explained" (evxhgh,sato) God (Jn 1:18). This is the task he commissioned the Church to carry out (Mat 28:18-20) which the dragon was opposing from the very first day as is evident in the imprisonment of Peter and John for spreading the gospel of Christ (Acts 4-5). Jesus himself suffered the same fate at the hands of the chief priests and the Pharisees who were disturbed by his growing popularity which John alone reported: "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. If we let Him *go on* like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation" (Jn 11:47-48). The above understanding of the Harmagedon war can be seen even better when it is viewed in its narrative position in the plot of John's political tract that contains it.

4. The Word of God in the Plot of John's Political Tract

The term "Word of God" occurs for the first time in the *Revelation to John* at 19:13 as another title of the Messiah who is called the "Lord of Lords and King of Kings" (19:16). Interestingly this title occurs in the context of the final judgment acts on the foes of the Messiah and his church which begin with Satan being thrown down to the earth (Rev 12) and end with his imprisonment and final destruction in hell (Rev 20). In the



previous judgement acts (Rev 6-11) the overarching concern of the messianic ruler of God's kingdom was to warn the rebellious inhabitants of the earth to repent of their behaviour (Rev 9:20-21). But in the outpouring of the bowls of wrath, God's final judgement is revealed (Rev 12-20). Although there is still room for repentance (Rev 16:9, 11), the time is now ripe to finally physically destroy those who destroy the earth (Rev 11:18), which God redeemed with the blood of his Anointed (Rev 5:9-10; 14:4) and made it his and his Messiah's kingdom (Rev 11:15). Three times over in this framework an angel announces judgement on the grotesque whore, Babylon (Rev 14:8; 18:1-3, 21-24; cf. 16:19). John similarly earlier explained as judgement scenes the opening of the seven seals (Rev 6:1-8:1; see 6:10-11, 15-17) and the sounding of the seven trumpets (8:2-11:19; see 8:13; 9:12; 11:14). This indicates that the events in 4:1-20:15 are connected.

Structurally, this final segment of judgements is woven around the war to destroy those who destroy the earth which is hinted at in the Apollyon pericope (Rev 9:1-11) and is clearly announced during the interlude in 11:18. In John's presentation, Satan will gather a large army from his alliances with the kings of this world, coordinated by Babylon and enter the battles, and indeed win some of the battles during the war (Rev 11:7; 13:7), but "the Lamb will [finally] overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings" (Rev 17:14). John introduced this war motif of his political tract right from its introductory section, the letters to the sevenfold church. The statement, $\tau\tilde{\omega}$ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ ... "To the one who overcomes I will give ..." (Rev 2:7, 11, 17 BGT) and the unfavourable circumstances of the churches which elicited such statements point to a war motif. It is a promise that members of the Christian community who remain resolute in their resistance to the devil's schemes until they win the battle will participate in the new world and New Jerusalem (Rev 21). Early on in the plot of the segment (Rev 5:5) the church community is assured that their much desired victory is indeed already won by the Lamb of God, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah from the line of David.

John emphasises that this Church-State conflict is a continuation of a war that the dragon, "the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan" (Rev 12:9), fought with the hosts of heaven but lost and was thrown down to the earth (Rev 12: 8-12). Having lost that phase of the war he

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turns around to destroy the Church (12:13, 17). He employs the services of his allies—a beast out of the sea (Rev 13:1-10), a beast from the earth (13:11-18), a false prophet (Rev 16:13; 19:20; 20:10), and Babylon the opulent royal woman turned a grotesque whore (Rev 14:8; 17:1-18). A fifth ally may be seen in those who receive the mark of the beast on their foreheads and or on their hands—those who probably acted as informants to State officials about the activities of the Christians. They are presented as the collective enemy of God and his Anointed in the final battle for supremacy over the universe to be fought at Harmagedon.

Hendriksen interprets these characters as anti Christian imperial persecution, anti Christian religious propaganda through false religion, and anti Christian seduction to the lust of the flesh respectively (30). Severally and collectively, these satanic agents unleash terror on the Church to turn members' allegiance away from Christ, the Lord of Lords and King of Kings, to the dragon (13:12). One observes that the beast from the sea (Rev 13:1-10) is most likely the same beast that emerged from the abyss to make war with the two prophets of God (Rev 11:7) since abyss was generally understood as "the deep" and could be used to designate the sea (Cf. TSol 6:6). By the explanations of the guiding angel in 17:8 this beast is the imperial system in John's day, the "Roman Empire." The beast from the earth is apparently assigned to assist that one from the sea. It mimics the Lamb as a ploy to deceive people (13:13-14) in the spirit of the false prophet of Revelation 19:11-21; possibly even the saints of God, to forsake the Lamb and give their allegiance to the beast kingdom. Those who resist this subtle strategy of the war would be coerced into obedience by death (Rev 13:15) or the softer socioeconomic exclusion (13:13-18). John understands all this as a spiritual war to replace the kingdom of Christ with the imperial power (11:7; 13:7-8, 12; cf. Dan 7:12). For John however, this mimicry is parody, for in spite of the great power and authority exhibited by the two beasts, John turns and sees the Lamb standing on Mount Zion with his army adorned in white garments symbolising victory (Rev 14:1). They celebrate their victory with harp music and a new song that they alone could sing (vv 2-5).

In the prelude to the final battle, three angels announce a series of events in the last lap of the judgements on the dragon and his allies: A



gospel is proclaimed to provide the last chance of repentance to inhabitants of the world (14:6-7), the fall of Babylon is announced (v 8) as well as the penalty for those who reject the gospel and follow Babylon (vv 9-11). John is told that with the final judgement fully prepared for the time for the harvest of the earth by the Son of Man and his angels is ripe (Rev 14:15-20). John sees the final lap of the judgement acts through the bowls of God's fierce anger visited upon the earth (Rev 15-16). The seriousness of this activity is sealed by God himself joining the Son of Man in executing them; God took his seat in the temple to supervise the outpouring of his wrath "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished" (Rev 15:8 NAU).

The mystery of the whole scene thus acted out is next explained to John (Rev 17); the beast is at once the imperial political system and its rulers—its seven heads and ten horns (17:7-12)—as well as Babylon, the prestigious woman representing the mother kingdom leading other lesser kingdoms in promoting imperialism at the cost of the wellbeing and even lives of any who dared to resist it. Curiously, John is shown that at God's appointed time and will the lesser kingdoms would turn against mother kingdom and cause its destruction (17:13-17). Their collaborative action would lead to the fall of the great Empire which is explained as penalty for her atrocities against the Lamb and his party faithful (Rev 18). While those who leveraged on her activities weep her fall (18:9-19), the hosts of heaven rejoice for its fall, praising God for his justice (18:20-19:8). Revelation 19:11-21 thus presents the decisive battle that destroys the destroying Empire (19:11-20:3) and the heavenly council that decides its fate (20:4-15).

Going by this plot of the section, John's Church community is in the last circuit of the war it is fighting. Christ is represented in this decisive battle as leading troops against a coalition of enemies and utterly defeating it. He is titled "The Word of God" and "King of Kings" (Rev 19:13). The Dragon lost out again despite his coalition force; a double defeat that a Tiv Christian singer, Ephraim Eryum Zuzu, describes as *agir gba a Ormee*. He is captured and imprisoned (Rev 20:1-3) and later finally destroyed in hell fire (20:7-10). The Church emerges victorious because of the blood the Lamb shed for it (Rev 12:11; 14:1; 15:2) and is seen on Mount Zion with Christ rejoicing (chapter 14) while one by one, Satan and his helpers—

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those who destroy the earth—are destroyed (chapters 17-20). The opulent whore, Babylon, who leveraged on the beast first falls—the beast turns around and destroys it (Rev 17-18); then the two beasts fall—the beast from the sea and the one from the land that represents the false prophet—they rise (13:1-18) but fall shortly (19:11-20); finally, Satan, the arch adversary himself is utterly defeated; he is captured and imprisoned, and later finally thrown into everlasting fire (20:1-10).

The defeat of these enemies of good is what is central to the war of Harmagedon which is announced in Revelation 16:16 but is actually fought in 19:19-21 and concluded in 20:7-10. The Word of God fights that war with the sword held in his mouth, signifying a spiritual war fought primarily with words, but secondarily through physical combat at the end of time (19:11-16).

5. Implications of the War between the Word of God and the Beast

What does all the foregoing say to us? How does it explain especially the nature, mode, and time of the war of Harmagedon? What is its function in this eschatological judgment context? John's concern in all this seems to be to lead the Church to stay alive as soldiers on the battlefield and cultivate patient endurance. This is strongly suggested in the exhortation: “Ὡδὲ ἐστὶν ἡ ὑπομονὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις τῶν ἁγίων” (Rev 13:10 BNT) “Here is the patient endurance and the faith of the Saints” (Rev 13:10). But, how is this to be seen in light of the activities of the beast political system and its leadership in the context of the war of Harmagedon?

First, the characters in the war of Harmagedon are the kings of the earth (Rev 16:14; 19:19) commanded by the Dragon and his General, the beast out of the sea (19:20) on the one hand, and the armies of heaven led by The Word of God (19:11-14). The central symbol here is “The Word of God”. First, we observe that the heavenly troops he leads are spiritual. The weapon that their leader/King, *The Word of God*, uses is justice, which is functionally and characteristically the same as the sharp sword of his mouth (19:11, 19, 21). Secondly, his royal garment is dipped in blood (19:13). This is a symbol of crucifixion and presupposes the spiritual benefits of the sacrificial death of the Lamb of God. These features index



a symbolic usage also of the Harmagedon war as part of a spiritual conflict. Thus, by nature, the war is spiritual and symbolises the Church-State conflict in John's day and in subsequent ages.

Two questions remain to be answered, however, which concern the time and site of Harmagedon. In this regard, notice that demonic spirits gather people from the whole world for the battle "on the great day of God almighty." They perform seductive miracles (Rev 16:14; 13:14) like the lying spirit that seduced Ahab into battle for his destruction (I Kng 22:21ff) (Morris 198). And these functionaries act in the Church-age through rulers and organizations (Rev 19:19f; 20:8). In Revelation 19:17-18 an angel employs similar terminology though as a taunt, maybe better, ridicule. He invites the birds of the air to come and dine on the bodies of those gathered to battle with the all-powerful Lamb (cf. Ps 2:1-4). In this way the demonic spirits are linked to the delusive tact of the Dragon's warfare with the Lamb especially pronounced in this cycle.

In view of all this the time of the war of Harmagedon is probably the last hour of the lifespan of the church. Especially important in determining this time is the expression "On the great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:14; cf. 16:18-21). The usage of the Day of the Lord in this passage has similar features with the day of the Son of Man's Parousia in Mt 24:26-31, 43. Like "the day of the Lord" in Joel 1:15; 2:1f. The time of the war is thus, the end time.

The site of Harmagedon makes an interesting study. It is important to note that Gog and Maggog are represented only as the embodiment of the concept of the nations being gathered all over the world for war against the Church (Rev 20:8-9). It thus becomes more probable that the war zone called "*Har Meggidon*" is a figurative centre for the final lap of the spiritual warfare between Satan and Christ, which has a spill over effect on the believers in this Church-age.

6. Conclusion

In virtue of this cumulative evidence drawn from this study of the nature, time and site of the war of Harmagedon, an informed understanding of the concept arises. From all indications the war motif housing the war symbolizes the outworking, in the Church's daily life, of the conflict that began in heaven between two groups of spiritual powers (Rev 12). Revelation 16 in this light therefore, emphasizes a particular

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feature of that conflict. It is meant to show Satan's rebellion, and that of his followers with him, as being put under the judgment of the Word of God. The devil continually gathers his allies against Christ and his Church in the spiritual realm which usually manifests in the Church's physical experiences. But whenever he does that he is sure to meet his doom, just as God has always destroyed the enemies of his people at the hill of Megiddo. At the war of Harmagedon, a final physical defeat of the forces of evil is decreed. Then the Church of God will finally enter its promised rest.

It is therefore expedient to recommend that for informed interpretation of the war of Harmagedon, we should approach it in the light of the way of thinking and talking of John and his community. Doing so leads us to see in Harmagedon a final phase of the spiritual war against the forces of evil at the end of time.

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Towards Utilizing Consequentialist Ethics for the Development of Nigerian Society

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Abstract

Bad governance has been the bane of Nigerian nation since independence in 1960. The catalogue of these problems is endless and they range from religion, ethnicity, lack of proper federal character, political lopsidedness, maladministration, poor management of natural resources, economic wastefulness, frivolity, corruption to misappropriation of fund and among others. The nascent democracy since 1999 has not been all-inclusive and enduring in terms of democratization process. Governance has since been a tragedy and celebration of mediocrity seems to have taken a prominent place in the body polity. Instead of celebrating democratic dividends, Nigerians are counting their colossal losses. This paper employs historical and ethical methods leading to the fact that from a consequentialist standpoint, a morally right act is one that will produce a good outcome. The paper seeks to posit that consequentialist ethics maximizes the net balances of pleasure over pain in Nigeria. Nigerians should be concerned with setting good outcomes by putting aside personal biases and self-interest to benefit others. Once this is adopted, the development of Nigerian society will be monumental and cheering.

Keywords: Utilizing, consequentialism, Ethics, Development, Nigeria

1. Introduction



In civilized societies, system or system-failure underscores development or underdevelopment as the case maybe. However, Nigerian experience depicts sharp contrast, a catalogue of moral vices, has, like a rock of Gibraltar remained stiff and as a point of fact fingered to be the bane of needed societal development in Nigeria. Watchers in international affairs posit strongly that Nigeria with abundant human and material resources has no business being at the present rung of developmental ladder (Tsendzuul and Ukpe 211). The situation becomes even more worrisome when it is considered from the viewpoint of claims and pretense by Nigerians to be inter – facing with religion in almost all facets of human endeavors. For example, every Nigerian professes to practice at least one of the three prominent religions in the country and instead of improvement, what is paraded is abysmal low grade in national ethical conduct. Consequently, governance becomes a tragedy and celebration of mediocrity. What is freely paraded is a near total collapse of basic institutions such as power, health, education, security, transportation and infrastructural developments. To remedy the current negative trend, this paper seeks to posit that consequentialist ethics maximizes the net balances of pleasure over pain in Nigeria. Nigerians frustration with the present situation and openness to good outcomes make ethical consequentialism a viable option. With this, personal biases, deceit and self aggrandizement at the expense of the overall good of the society are thus set aside. Hence, a reversal of underdevelopment in the body polity and attendant ascendancy to her pride of place in Africa and the world stage.

2. The Nigerian Nation

Nigeria is home to over 250 ethnic nationalities of ancient and indigenous kingdoms of long standing history. The current composition originated from the British with the fusion of Southern Nigeria protectorate and Northern Nigeria protectorate in 1914 (“Nigeria” in Wikipedia 2019). Nigeria is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa. The current population is 201,351,736 (“Nigerian population” in Worldometers), as at Saturday August 3rd, 2019 based on the latest United Nations estimates, covering an area of 923,768sqkm (“Nigeria” in Nation Master 2019). It is the largest population in Africa and the seven largest in the world (The C.I.A World Facts Book 2019). A variety of

customs and traditions among Nigerians, gives the country great cultural diversity. Although, there are multiple ethnic groups, economic factor result in significant mobility of the people of multiple ethnic and religious backgrounds, resulting in the inter-mixing of the various ethnic and religious groups especially in the cities.

The three largest ethnic groups are the Hausa 27.4%, Yoruba 21% and Igbo 14.1%. Most of this is a young population with 42.54%. There is also a very high dependency ration of the 88.2 dependent per 100 non-dependents (“Demographics of Nigeria” in Wikipedia 2019). There are three widely practiced religions in Nigeria namely African Religion (Afrel), Islam and Christianity. There is a great concentration of Muslims in the Northern part while the South is populated by a large number of Christians. A minority of population practices Afrel such as those native to the Igbo and Yoruba ethnicities.

Nigeria is the world’s 20th largest economy as at 2015, worth more than \$500 billion and \$1 trillion in terms of normal GDP and purchasing power parity respectively (“Nigeria Becomes Africa’s largest Economy” in Web. Aljazeera. 2019). The 2019 debt to GDP ratio is 19.03% (“Nigeria” in Data Worldbank.org 2019). Nigeria is considered to be an emerging market by World Bank (“Nigeria” in Data Worldbank.org 2019). It is recognized as a regional power in the African continent, and emerging Global power (Web.archive.org 2013). However, Nigeria currently has a low human development index, ranking 152 in the world. (“Nigeria” in Wikipedia 2019).

3. Concept of Ethics

The meaning of ethics is hard to pin down and there are divergent views expressed about it. This is perhaps due to the usage of the term in almost, if not, all the known fields of study. However, the term belongs more to Philosophy, Theology and Religion. Most disciplines often apply not only the term but also the principles of ethics. It is therefore sound to approach the concept from a varied background.

In etymology, the word Ethics is derived from the Greek word “ethos” which means custom, habit or conduct. It is the basic concept and fundamental principles of right human conduct (“What is ethics” in businessdictionary.com 2018). It includes the study of universal values



such as the essential quality of all men and women, human and natural rights, obedience to the law of the land, concern for health and safety and increasingly also for natural environment (“What is ethics” in businessdictionary.com 2019). Barclay defines Ethics as the science of behaviour and the bit of religion that tells us how we ought to behave (13). Ethics is that branch of philosophy dealing with values relating to human conduct, with respect to the rightness and wrongness of certain action (Imaekhai 95). Imaekhai further states that Ethics are basically the standard for making decisions. He observes that the term is often used interchangeably with morals that refers to human behaviour and formalized codes of conduct (95).

Ethics seeks to evaluate human conduct and the rules and principles used to control it. This lends credence to Barclay’s position that ethics is a science. This science is often treated as a sub-section of Philosophy (Frankera 5). In this regard, Ethics is concerned with conscious and purposeful behaviour and with the obligations and rules that relate to it. It aims to discover the factors that make action good or bad, right or wrong for individual and social groups (Sheilds 566). Ethics also concentrates not only on theory but on practice, thereby living to its bidding as a social science. It theorizes about what ought to be done and then, with varying degrees of success, attempts to show how theories can be worked out in practical terms (Popkin & Stroll 1).

Ethics as a cogent branch of philosophy is further buttressed when considered as a field of value-theory. In this light, Ethics concerns itself with matters of good and bad, right and wrong, duty and obligation and moral responsibility (Omoregbe 154). Ethics refers to a code or a set of principles by which people live or interact with one another (Field, 759). Omoregbe agrees that Ethics has to do with a theoretical study which deals with such questions as “How ought men to behave”? What is the good life for man? And how does man live a moral life(Nzeako 434), among others.

Ethics, in theology is essentially God-centered, power to live good rests entirely on the one who is good, that is God. In Field’s opinion, all ethics has to do with human conduct (Nzeako 434). This theocentric approach then means that doctrine is inseparable from ethics in scripture (Swatos 48). One concurs with Nzeako in the final analysis that ethics deals with morality of human behaviour, whether from the perspective of philosophy or theology or any other discipline including the sciences.

Although, they may differ in their perspectives and approaches, philosophers agree on what constitutes the central issue of human morality.

4. Ethical Theory

Ethical theory is a set of moral principles which systematically link moral beliefs to one another by means of a set of coherent moral principles (Moore 99). As the practice with theories in other disciplines, moral theory offers an opportunity to define terms in uniform ways and to relate a set of ideals to others in a consistent manner. Ethical theories give clear qualities which are germane at the formulation of morality. They equally create criteria or tests of which is right or wrong and are concerned with moral value of character and conducts.

Ethical theories are basically derived from two sources. These are, direct reflection on actual conduct and its consequences and application of conduct of general philosophical theory (Runes 131). Moreover, a few grounds of distinction have been identified between ethical theories. One is their different modes of conceiving the moral idea and the different ways in which human consciousness apprehends the bindingness of moral ideas. This tends to query whether they are prompted by some kind of immediate knowledge or by experience of tendency of actions to bring about the result judged to be good. There are inferences of both intuition and evolutionism from the foregoing which are frequently understood as signifying special views of the ideal.

Second, an area of main difference between ethical theories is the nature of moral obligation or the relation of the moral principle to human's will. This leads to the distinction of autonomous and heterogeneous system, while the autonomous system finds the moral law and conforms with the heterogeneous system, the affinity which the heterogeneous system derives from the law is a distinct motive for conforming to it from some external authority such as the will of God or the law of the society.

Third, is that ethical theories are different on the ground of their motives, which can be recognized in moral life. Ethics dissociates the moral or rational from emotional life. This is a term referred to in ethics as rigorism. An ethical theory is thus determined by the emphasis laid on a specific kind of motive.



5. Consequentialism

The consequentialist moral theory states that the result of an action is the one that determines its rightness or wrongness. Human conduct depends entirely upon the effect which the action has (Akanmidu 35). The consequentialist does not justify the rightness or wrongness of an action by the motive behind it, but only on the result that the action yields. It is only the consequence of an action that has moral credit. Furthermore, consequentialism admits that a good action that yields a good result is a good action and bad action that yields a bad result is a bad action.

In a broad spectrum of consequentialist theories, there are prevalence of general themes such as what determines the value consequences? Who or what is primary beneficiary of a good moral action? The, consequences of actions are prime since they must be directed toward certain persons (objects) if we are to fix the morality thereof. A group consequentialist for instance, may approve war which he feels will lead to the liberation of the nation. When he knows that the soldiers and their family members are put at peril. The action of war is approved because he considers it good for the whole even if it is harmful to the soldiers who in this case, are the agents. In the same vein, politically exposed persons or others who corruptly enrich themselves or even agents of destabilization of societal peace, such as Boko-Haram insurgents and religious extremists, if killed to preserve the unity and peace of the society would be seen as a good conduct.

Yet, on another page, agent neutral consequentialist ignores the specifics of an action. He emphasizes a statement form of x action as valuable rather than x action of an agent as valuable (Scheffer 62). For example, if Joshua falsifies a record to steal #10 million and builds #5 million orphanage to empower the immediate members of his constituency, the action of building an orphanage to empower the immediate members of his constituency is valuable. This is the concern of the agent neutral consequentialist. A non-agent neutral consequentialist conversely demands a total neutrality (Scheffer 66). In the above example, Joshua would be expected to assist his constituents only from his salaries and allowances.

The assumption of consequentialists that value can be adequately defined by some natural property or set of natural properties is a major

weakness. Justification of only a form or parts of an action as exemplified above, would justify abuses that are detrimental to every societal development. Similarly, consequentialism easily falls into the contempt of not valuing individuals at all (Scheffer 66). Whatever that happens to Joshua either by law or shame being consequences of his stealing of #10 million public fund is of less significance to the consequentialist. One opines, this is not at variance with African norms and culture and also in consonance with biblical injunctions. The African culture urges respect for selves and family name and heritage, the onus then rests with each member of the society to ensure protection and sanctity of their names and family heritage. Christianity and Islam equally forbid stealing under no circumstances.

6. Assessing Development in Nigeria through Ethical Consequentialism

The Nigerian situation is aptly captured in the words of Moran that full and complete realization of the self and the consequent development and progress of the human race are lost to view in the scramble for material gains (Moran 6). There is none out of the seven military regimes, from Aguiyi Ironsi to Abdulsalam Abubakar who ruled Nigeria that failed to identify moral lapses as a major national challenge to be checked. Four years into the nine years Gowon spent in office, he said “after promising to intensify the drive against corruption it is still very much with us” (Akinola 13). The functionaries of Murtala-Obasanjo regime were credited for stealing public money, using all sorts of tricks and techniques in anticipation of eventual loss of job (Akinola 14). The fear was as a result of mass sack earlier undertaken by the new administration to sanitize the filthy atmosphere. The fourth military government seized power riding on allegation of wide-spread corruption. Many politicians were sentenced to between 10-21 years imprisonment. However, the government itself got entrapped by self-created moral credibility problems (Akinola 16). Some of its highest ranking officials violated government policies and were not brought to justice. The anti-corruption crusade eventually turned out to be a mere hallow crusade rather than a revolutionary agenda. Under the Babangida administration, the character and institutional integrity of Nigeria highest political office diminished. The depth of the collapse of



the moral authority of the administration was its refusal to account for the gulf war oil proceeds that was estimated to be about \$124 billion (Akinola 16). The Abacha's administration displayed a rare pillaging of national resources. It took five years to repatriate a fraction of the stolen \$500 million kept in Swiss Bank. Abacha was also alleged to have kept more than \$1 billion in various bank accounts in Europe (Soyinka 50).

The Shagari administration in 1979 came in the euphoria of a genuine, people oriented and representative government after a damaging military rule that lasted for 13 years. Nigeria realized a whopping #43.6 billion income from oil alone during his 4-years tenure. But, by the time the administration was sacked, the country had witnessed the worst abuse of political power (Akinola 21). It saw the looting and robbing of the public treasury proceeds with careless abandonment. Nigeria per capital income nose-dived to \$390 from \$590 in 1979. The Civilian government of Olusegun Obasanjo's attempt at laying a solid foundation for development led to the setting-up of two promising anti-graft agencies namely, the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). These agencies were able to expose the Nigerian psyche on matters relating to illegal acquisition of wealth. Few cases of corruption established against some highly placed Nigerians are noteworthy. Governors Joshua Dariye of Plateau state, Diephreiye Alemiesiagba of Bayelsa State and Ayodele Fayose of Ekiti State, Tafa Balogun former, Inspector General of Police, Bode George, former Vice Chairman of the ruling party (P.D.P). Lucky Igbinedion, former governor of Edo State and his Delta state counterpart James Ibori (Isiramen 71), to mention a few.

The Yar'Adua administration was short lived, but a few cases of corruption scandals inherited, went uninvestigated due to lack of political will and poor health ("Corruption in Nigeria" in wikipedia.org). For instance, the Attorney-General frustrated both the local and international investigations of Governors Ibori, Igbinedion, and Odili because they were Yar'Adua's friends ("Corruption in Nigeria" in wikipedia.org). Furthermore, the Supreme Court Justices were bribed to legitimize the corrupt election that saw to his emergence through massive rigging ("Corruption in Nigeria" in wikipedia.org).

Corruption under the Jonathan's administration went unabated. There were missing, or misappropriated \$20 million NNPC revenue in

2015, massive Corruption and kickbacks in the ministry of petroleum, Malibu oil international Scandal, \$2.2 billion illegal withdrawal from excess crude oil account to fund his re-election (“Corruption in Nigeria” in wikipaedia.org). \$ 2.2 billion payment to ministry of health contractor in a disputed invoice and Massive scam in weapon and defense procurement Of #3 trillion under the guise of fighting Boko Haram and several others (“Corruption in Nigeria” in wikipaedia.org).

The situation is not quite different under the Buhari administration. Corruption is still rampant. In 2016, the former secretary to the Government of the Federation was indicted in #200M contract Scandal. He was eventually sacked in 2017. Abdulrasheed Maina head of Pension Reforms task force who was involved in \$5.6M &4.8M euros fraud in 2015, enjoyed governments protection in 2017 (*Vanguard* 27/10/2017).

According to World Bank’s report of 2018, Nigeria has made some progress in socio-economic terms in recent years, its human capital development remains weak due to under investment and the country ranked 152 of 157 countries in World Bank’s 2018 Human Capital Index. Furthermore, the country continues to face developmental challenges, which include the need to reduce the dependency on oil and diversify the economy, address insufficient infrastructure and build strong and effective institutions as well as governance issues and public financial management.

Inequality in terms of income and opportunities has been growing rapidly and has adversely affected poverty reduction. The North-South divide has widened in recent years due to the Boko-Haram insurgency and a lack of economic development in the Northern part of the country. Large pockets of Nigeria’s population still live in poverty, without adequate access to basic services, and could not benefit from more inclusive development policies. The lack of job opportunities is at the core of the highly poverty levels, of regional inequality and of social and political unrest in the country (“Nigeria overview” in worldbank.org, 2019).

7. Possible Ethical Consequentialist Solution

Despite the daunting challenge, the Nigerian ethical situation poses to holistic development, consequentialist ethical theory offers practical answers that are worth considering. As earlier pointed out,



consequentialism judges whether or not something is right by what its consequences are (Stalin in ethicsunwrapped, utexas.edu). Two examples of consequentialism, utilitarianism and hedonism which judges consequences by a greatest good for the greatest number standard (Stalin in Ethicsunwrapped utexas.edu), and consideration of good action on production of pleasure or avoidance of pain respectively are juxtaposed with a few moral issues in the society. These include graft, electoral fraud, religious extremism, theft, raping, and kidnapping.

7.1 Graft

This unethical behavior is described as taking socio-political and economic advantage of others to illegally acquire wealth. This is commonly done with the intent of accumulating enough as security for life after service and for dependants. The consequentialist posits that this is a bad action in the light of reality of death. Death is a leveler, if people in position of authority consider how people are quickly forgotten when dead, the mad crave for wealth accumulation which will be useless at death would wane. Wealth accumulated for dependants impinges on their creativity, hard work and innate potentialities. The natural drive for success in such individuals are drastically reduced because of a false sense of security already created. The consequentialist would see an action that diminish human creativity as a bad action which must not be encouraged at all.

7.2 Manipulation of Electoral Process

It is observed that elections in Nigeria are always characterized by acrimony and rancour. The process which brings pains and disaffection among the majority through manipulation of various sorts cannot be good, therefore rigging, ballot snatching, multiple/under-age voting, and falsification of results are bad actions. The pains they bring outweigh the balance of happiness. A doctored electoral process aids production of bad leadership, decline in output and exposes the nation to international ridicule, therefore, the consequentialist concludes that manipulation of electoral process is a bad action and unethical.

Religious extremism, herdsman – farmers` clashes, kidnapping and rape are moral vices that could be confronted by the consequentialist template. In all the aforementioned, the resultant pains and killings are

quite overwhelming and could not at all be considered to bring happiness to either the victims or the society. According to Stalin, a single death is a tragedy (ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu). The balance of pain over happiness in the above is higher, therefore the consequentialist would consider these actions as bad because of their bad outcomes, hence, unethical and should be rejected by all.

7.3 Recommendations

Arising from the above, this paper offers the under listed recommendations as a way towards having a virile society and a template towards having a National ethical direction that would foster holistic development in the Nigerian society.

The fact of secularity of Nigerian state, infers the independence of Nigerians to practice religion of choice. To a large extent, this freedom is utilized. Nigerians are said to practise either one of the three religions widely practiced, namely; African Religion, Islam and Christianity. None of the religions practiced in Nigeria supports unethical behaviours that are inimical to national development. When ethical teachings of these religions are internalized and are brought more forcefully to the public domain through campaigns, the moral debilitating vices would not only have been curbed substantially but the needed societal change would have been achieved as well.

On the social plane, the Government would be requested to ensure a safe and peaceful society by addressing the myriad of socio - economic challenges currently facing the country. The corresponding benefit of this would be a drastic reduction in frustration, poverty, inequality and insecurity which usually encourage bad conducts.

As often said, no society can rise above the quality of its education system. It is in the light of this that a national educational restructuring that would give a pride of place to the history, religion and societal values of the people must be urgently done. It would be urged that History, Religion and Ethics should be made core subjects at elementary levels of education in Nigeria. The enhanced curricula of these subjects should compulsorily be taken by officers and men of both the Military and Para-military agencies in their various training institutions across the Nation. Other National orientation and policy-making institutions should also be



included. If this suggestion is followed, the problem of national ethical direction would have been tackled. Consequentialist ethics as conversed in this paper supports behavioral patterns that recognize rightness of an action based on the outcome. Hence the nationalistic tendency of think of what you can do to add value to your country than waiting for what the country can do for you is well situated in this ethical conversation for the development of Nigeria.

Lastly, this paper strongly urges a change of attitudes of all Nigerians irrespective of their callings particularly religious and traditional rulers, private and public administrators, political and opinion leaders to embrace virtues of hard work, integrity and accountability as presented from consequentialist ethical perspective.

8. Conclusion

Nigeria as a multi-cultural society, has had her ample portion of national challenges since independence in 1960, ranging from a devastating civil war, armed robberies, corruption, kidnapping, riots, religious insurgencies, hunger, poverty, national insecurity to Farmers-Herdsmen tension among many. At the root of the aforementioned is human factor that are inherently linked to either ignorance or total disregard for ethical values and respect for others. Religion that ordinarily would have offered a reprieve, going by the large spectrum of Nigerians who claim to be religious, has however not lived up to this expectation. Nigerians are daily groaning under excruciating pain because of negative effects of moral problems on national development. The assessment of situation in Nigeria continues to give a great concern. It is the discovery, that Nigerians are disposed to setting good outcomes by jettisoning personal biases to benefit the whole that consequentialist Ethics is investigated in this paper. This is done with a view to present a template that maximizes the net balances of pleasure over pain in the Nigerian society.

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*The Mystery of the Doctrine of Death and the Intermediate State: Panacea for the
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The Mystery of the Doctrine of Death and the Intermediate State: Panacea for the Dilemma of the Unknown

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Abstract

The mystery of the state of soul during the interval between death and the resurrection of the body has been acknowledged in the New Testament canon. It is disturbing that the future beyond the grave holds some rather critical unknowns by way of polarizing mindset. Thus, the nature of this interim period continues to be a matter of dispute. The idea has tempted creative minds to fill the space with imaginative happenings and the tendency to moralize emanated the doctrine of purgatory. The paper adopts grammatico-historical approach to ascertain the original rendering of the texts regarding the doctrine of the intermediate state (purgatory) so as to unravel the mystery behind the position of the soul after death. The research traces the theological underpinnings in efforts to address the intricacy encountered in understanding the phenomenon of life after death. The study discovered that the early Patristic Fathers acknowledged the intermediate state as the sentient existence of the soul following death until its reunification with the body at the resurrection. This view is also common in the modern Christian world especially among the Catholics where a final purification occurs in order to achieve the holiness necessary to enter heaven. This view has been challenged and inexorably triggered criticisms heightening curiosity to ascertain its authenticity. The study preferably vouches for living a life worthy of being at home with Christ after immediate post-mortem existence. However, the doctrine of the intermediate still exist.

Keywords: *intermediate, state, death, soul, resurrection, spirit, body, immortality, conscious and unconscious*

1. Introduction

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In the earliest years of the Christian Church there was little thought of an intermediate state. The idea that Jesus would soon return as Judge made the interval seem to be of little consequence. The problem arose when it became apparent that Jesus would not at once return; “the NT offers no sustained reflection on the intermediate state, and this is probably because the Parousia was perceived as so real and imminent that it would have seemed irrelevant to reflect upon the state of the dead” (Elwell 609). Nevertheless, there is a status quo regarding this gap, between death and resurrection, that unavoidably might be fathomed and the scriptures articulate the unknown. Death is as much a part of life as life itself. Unbelievers see the tragedy in death, while Christians recognise death as a way to usher them into God’s presence. Though, specious dogmas abound to the point of superstition. The terminus of the soul at death is a mystery and diverse theological perspectives struggle to explain its reality. The dilemma of the unknown triggers and shatters our hope in shambles. Consequently, this study will examine the viewpoints concerning death and the intermediate state in order to proffer solution to envisaged clandestine.

2. The Doctrine of Purgatory

In the Alexandrian School the idea of the intermediate state began with a gradual purification of the soul and in a long run led to the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory. However, Gregory of Nazianze, Eusebius, and Gregory the Great championed the notion that at death the souls of the righteous instantly go into heaven. In the Middle Ages the doctrine of purgatory was advanced by the Catholics. The predominant belief was that hell received at once the souls of the wicked, but the righteous were admitted at once into the blessedness of heaven. Those who were in need of additional cleansing were confined in purgatory for a shorter or longer period of time, as the gravity of their outstanding sin might necessitate, and were liquidated from sin by a purifying fire. Another view of the intermediate state was Limbus Patrum, where the Old Testament saints were held in hades until the resurrection of Christ (Berkhof 686-687).

The Reformers rejected the doctrine of purgatory uprightly. They maintained that those who died in the Lord at once entered the paradise of



heaven, while those who died in their sins at once sloped into hell. Amid the Socinians and the Anabaptists there were some who revitalized the old doctrine held by some in the early Church, that the soul of man sleeps from the time of death until the resurrection. However, Calvin wrote a treatise to combat this view. That notwithstanding, the same notion is advocated by some Adventist sects and by the Millennial Dawnists. In the 19th century a number of theologians, chiefly in England, Switzerland, and Germany, hugged the idea that the intermediate state is a state of auxiliary probation for those who have not believed Christ in this life. This view is sustained by some up to the contemporary time and is a preferred ideology of the Universalists (Berkhof 686-687; McGrath 441).

Purgatory invalidates the Protestant concept of Sola Fide (faith alone). Luther, Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley and other reformers rejected it on manifold grounds. However, the Catholics quote convinced passages of Scripture to support the doctrine of purgatory (Isa. 4:4; Mic. 7:8; Zech. 9:11; Mal. 3:2,3; Matt. 12:32; I Cor. 3:13-15; 15:29). Jesus suffered and atone for our sins so that we could be saved. To say that we must also suffer for our sins is to say that Jesus' suffering was insufficient (1 John 2:2). It is proven that by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy (Heb 10:14).

3. Annihilation of the Ethereal Souls of the Wicked

Annihilationism upholds that only the righteous possess an immortal soul and will live eternally. The wicked will suffer the torments of hell for a short period of time, but will finally be annihilated by the fires of hell. More so, man was created immortal, but that the soul which continues in sin, is by a positive act of God deprived of the gift of immortality, and ultimately destroyed, or forever bereaved of consciousness, which is practically equivalent to being reduced to non-existence. They argued that eternal punishment is not a just punishment for temporal sins; the punishment overshadows the criminalities committed. How could God punish sinners with an eternal punishment and still be just? This argument is an attack against God's justness and character.

The advocates of the doctrine of annihilationism are Arnobius, Socinians, Locke and Hobbes. (Berkhof 690; Gordon and Demarest 488). Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists both grasp to versions

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of Annihilationism, along with a few familiar theologians throughout the church era, from early church apologist Arnobius to contemporary scholar Clark Pinnock, but within traditional orthodoxy it is not the conventional position of any single denomination. Terence Nichols hits the core of the issue: “Annihilationism has little or no support in Scripture or tradition (Nicholas 180).” Erickson reaches a decision, “the problem with all forms of annihilationism is that they contradict the teaching of the Bible. Several passages assert the endless punishment of the wicked” (1245). Annihilationist uses Scripture to support their claim that God alone is inherently immortal (I Tim. 6:16). The immortality of the soul in general is not biblical but the Bible represents immortality as a gift of God to those who are in Christ Jesus (John 10:27,28; 17:3; Rom. 2:7; 6:22,23). More so, sinners are threatened with “death” and “destruction,” asserting that they will “perish,” terms which signifies that unbelievers will be reduced to non-existence (Matt. 7:13; 10:28; John 3:16).

In response to annihilationists’ weak claim, is that, God is indeed the only one that has inherent immortality, man’s immortality is derived, but this is not equivalent to saying that he does not possess it in virtue of his creation. Eternal life is the gift of God in Jesus Christ, a gift which the wicked do not receive, but this does not mean that they will not continue to exist. The terms “death,” “destruction,” and “perish” do not in any way denote a reduction to non-existence.

4. Soul-sleep: Unconscious Existence until the Resurrection (Psychopannychy)

Tatian (c. 110 - 172) in his Speech to the Greeks penned “The human soul consists of many parts, and is not simple: it is composite, so as to manifest itself through the body; neither could it ever appear without the body; nor does the flesh rise again without the soul.” This absolute interdependence of body and soul seems to disqualify a state of incorporeal consciousness until their reintegration. This is better designated as a ‘sleep.’ The enquiry of what transpires to the soul in this interim of unconsciousness was not, nevertheless, crystallized into a doctrine of actual soul-sleeping until to a certain degree later, predominantly among



certain Arabian and Armenian sects, however traces of the opinion continually appear in the writings of the Church Fathers (71).

Eusebius, in his *Church History* (c. 265 - 339) speaks of the Arabian Christian sects which were ostensibly predisposed by Origen (c. 185 - 254) who embraced this view. They said that during the present time the human soul dies and perishes with the body, but that at the time of the resurrection they will be renewed together. Nonetheless, they went further than soul-sleep. That the soul had no conscious existence and possibly in fact no post mortem animation at all in the nonappearance of the body (279). It is currently held that there was a strong Jewish impact in these Arabian communities which was to a certain degree accountable for this trend of thought. It is amenably irrational championing the view that the soul without the body was as dead as the body without the soul.

During the Middle Ages, Psychopannychians denied conscious existence of the soul after death, that after death, the soul continues to exist as an individual spiritual being, but in a state of unconscious repose and at the time of the Reformation this position was advocated by some of the Anabaptists. Calvin even wrote a treatise to counter their view. In the 19th century this doctrine was advocated by some of the Irvingites in England, and in our contemporary era the Russellites or Millennial Dawnists championed the doctrine of soul-sleep. Consistent with the latter, body and soul slope into the grave, the soul in a state of sleep, which categorically aggregates to a state of non-existence. In the millennium the wicked will have a second chance, but if they express no noticeable improvement during the first hundred years, they will be annihilated. Supposedly in that duration they show proof of some adjustment of life, their probation will endure, but only to terminate in annihilation. There is neither hell, nor place of eternal torment.

The doctrine of the sleep of soul appears to have an unusual captivation for those who uncomfortably find it difficult to believe in a perpetuation of consciousness besides the bodily organism (Berkhof 688-689). Undeniably, it must generally be a disconcerting view to many people that there should be a long duration of complete "silence" as it were (a descriptive word used in Psalm 115:17) between death and resurrection, particularly since convinced Scriptures obviously assure the believer instantaneous transition into the Lord's presence which recommends a very dissimilar viewpoint. The 20th Century German New Testament

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scholar, Hans Conzelmann, went so far as to assert that “the soul belongs to man’s earthly existence. It does not exist without physical life. It is not, say, freed from death, then to live in untrammled purity. Death is its end” (179). The bottom line is that man can continue to exist according to God’s sovereign preservation of human identity regardless of how one might or might not attempt to understand the nature of man’s existence in the intermediate state. Soul-sleep has become an ever increasingly popular view of the post-death existence of man. Its two major arguments consist of the constitutional make-up of man, and the Biblical records. The anthropology of soul-sleep is monistic, meaning that man is constitutionally one being, not able of being separated into different elements. This would rule out the doctrine of the immortal soul, and the doctrine of an intermediate, conscious, disembodied state.

There are several arguments advanced for a strict psychosomatic, monistic human existence. One such argument observes that there is a “radical interrelatedness between the physical and the psychical.” (Erickson 531). That which occurs in the body greatly affects one’s mind. Our bodily functions even affect human consciousness. Damage to the brain affects one’s memory, consciousness, and conceptual ability. Scientists have even demonstrated that our sensory functions are chemically produced. While it is obvious that our physical and psychical elements are closely related, and what affects one affects the other, does not mean that the two could never exist apart from one another. It has already been demonstrated in the critique of materialism that there is more to being human than physical processes, and more to the mind than the brain itself. Our minds are our self-consciousness, which cannot be viewed or measured by another. It is analysed that, the physical world is not the truly only existing reality, to the exclusion of any non-physical realities. Christianity teaches the existence of God, angels, and a human soul which lives on in heaven or hell after the death of the body (Koukl 2000).

Materialists tend to idolatry the scientific method, relying solely on evidence which can be tested empirically. If it cannot be measured, demonstrated, or proven through examination by the five senses, it is not considered true knowledge, but mere belief. We must question if there is common knowledge of things to which the scientific method cannot be



applied, which are non-physical in nature, and are indeed true. The fact is that there are many things we know of which are non-physical, and yet we confess their existence and truth, and even base our lives upon them (Koukl 2000). The strength of soul-sleep argument is undermined because it is generally attested that ideas, concepts, numbers, motives, and feelings are all non-physical things we know exist, even though they cannot be tested empirically. Seeing that there are many things which we cannot see or test empirically, yet we know they exist, there is no reason to deny the existence of God or a rational soul of man simply because we cannot see them or test them empirically.

Waters also wrote about Soul Sleep, which explains that when believers die in the Lord they go into a state of unconsciousness where they lay in slumber awaiting the resurrection (285). Advocates of soul-sleep doctrine find scriptural proof for their claim where the Bible repeatedly represents death as a sleep, Matt. 9:24; Acts 7:60; I Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:13 or the dead are unconscious, Ps. 6:5; 30:9; 115:17; 146:4; Eccl. 9:10; Isa. 38:18,19. This is contrary to the idea that the soul continues in its conscious existence. In response to the arguments presented, the premise of the view is weakened because, hermeneutically, the passages which give the impression that the dead are unconscious are obviously projected to emphasize the fact that the dead can no more partake in the events of this present physical world. Consequently, it is apparent that, the intermediate state of the soul can be impeccably happy though incorporeal but clothed while in the next breath. The most significant thing is to admit that there is an "interval" of consciousness between death and resurrection. The verb 'sleep' κοιμῶνται (koimasthai), is used about fifteen times in reference to persons who are departed. Does it not imply that in the intermission between death and resurrection the believer's soul or 'inner man' is in a state of adjourned animation, while secure in Christ's presence and possession? This verb koimasthai was a mutual euphemism for the act of dying.

In its nine Pauline uses the sense is fundamentally, if not absolutely, punctiliar ('fall asleep') rather than linear ('be asleep'), while in another place in the New Testament it is only where the present tense of the verb is used, in reference to physical sleep, that a linear sense must be given (Mt. 28:13; Lk. 22:45; Acts 12:6, 1 Cor. 11:30). Christians who die 'fall asleep' in that they are no longer active in or conscious of the

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earthly world of time and space, though they are copiously alert to their new environment (Harris 49).

5. The Intermediate State as Life after Life: Conscious Post Mortem Existence

The post mortem conscious existence of the “intermediate state” as the condition of all mankind between death and resurrection lies between two fixed points; the period of time that elapses between the death of the individual and the consummation of history. It is momentary, in due course being eclipsed by the ‘final state’ of mankind. In arguing for the conscious existence of the soul after death, we place no reliance on the phenomena of present-day spiritualism, and do not even depend on philosophical arguments, though these are not without force. We seek our evidence in the Word of God, and particularly in the New Testament. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus depicts that the deceased are conscious and active as they await the resurrection (Lk. 16:19-31). Although the parable was expressed to demonstrate the danger of wealth and the inevitability of repentance, not to gratify our natural curiosity about man’s anthropological condition after death, it is not unlawful to deduce from the background of the story the basic physiognomies of the post mortem state of the saints and nonbelievers. The destinies of the rich man and Lazarus are fixed and irreversible, yet it is the intermediate, not the final (Harris 48-49). Both groups are conscious of environs, conversing together: Lazarus is in Abraham’s bosom and consoled (vv. 22-23, 25), the rich man is in Hades and tortured (vv. 23-25, 28). There is reminiscence of the past: the rich man is instructed to ‘remember’ earlier state of affairs (v. 25), and he can remember his family and their attitude to ‘Moses and the prophets’ (vv. 27-30). Besides, the whole dialogue with Abraham asserts that the deceased have not only reserved their capacity to reason (v. 30) but also gained a sensitivity of insight (vv. 27-28).

Many who hold to consciousness of the soul in the intermediate state believe it to be a real story, whereas those who believe in soul-sleep generally believe it to be a parable. Soul-sleep contenders argue that ‘since’ it is a parable, Jesus’ story should not be taken literally, because literally it would teach an intermediate state. All of Jesus’ parables are



based on real life events, even if they are not speaking of an actual historical event in particular. There are people who sow seeds, draw nets, etc. None of Jesus' parables were fictitious, so neither should this parable be taken as such. It is portraying reality, even if the characters were tailored for the purpose of making a point. According to Jesus, Lazarus was carried away to Abraham's bosom and the rich man was sent to hell, where he remained in conscious torment. Such a portrayal, again, demonstrates Jesus' belief in a conscious existence of the soul after death. The parable is absolutely instructive and the typical interpretation really finds much of its force in the preview of the state of the soul before the general resurrection, seeing tongue, eyes, ears, finger and bosom belong to a body. Ominously, the same three physiognomies (consciousness, memory, rationality) may be construed from the plea for justification voiced by the martyrs who rest under the altar in God's presence and the souls of the martyrs are said to reign with Christ: 'O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will you refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?' (Rev. 6:9-10; Rev. 20:4.): Otherwise, once more, it would have been inconsistent for Paul to express a preference (2 Cor. 5:8) or a craving (Phil. 1:23) to leave the safeties of earthly animation and reside with the Lord unless that post mortem state involved fellowship with Christ that was even more profound than his experience of Christ on earth. Not only are the deceased believers anodyne in God's hands (Lk. 23:46; cf. Acts 7:59) as they 'rest' from their labours in jubilant consummation (Heb. 4:10; Rev. 14:13); they 'live for God's glory' (Lk. 20:38, *αὐτῷ ζῶσιν αὐτῷ ζῶσιν*) and 'live spiritually, as God does' (1 Pet. 4:6, *ζῶσι δεκατὰ θεόν πνεύματι zosi ... kata theon pneumatī*). (Daalen 76,77, 155-157; Harris 49).

In his Systematic Theology, Geisler stresses that Soul's conscious survival in the intermediate state is rooted in God's Omnipotence, Omnibenevolence and God's image. God is all-powerful and such, He can do anything that is not impossible for someone who can create a soul to also sustain its existence after death, for God is not only the originating cause of all that exists, He is also the sustaining cause. Thus, the necessary condition for the soul's conscious survival has been met in God's omnipotence (1219). However, the analysis is elaborated simply that, God can cause the soul to survive does not mean He will, there must also be a sufficient cause for His doing so. This is rooted in His good will; that is,

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based on His infinite goodness, God wills (purposes) to keep the soul alive after death. It is because of His mercies that we are not consumed (Lam. 3.22), and by His will “all things hold together” (Col. 1.17). In heaven the presently disembodied souls around the throne sing, “You created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being” (Rev. 4.11; cf. Acts 17.28). The soul will consciously survive death because God can sustain it. Without these two roots in God’s nature, omnipotence and omnibenevolence, there would be no conscious survival of the soul. There is also an anthropological reason for soul survival: human beings are made in the image of God (Gen. 1.27). since we are made by God and made like God, God annihilating His image would be an act of God against God, an attack of God on His own reflection. Granted that God freely chose to make creatures in His image, it follows reasonably, that He would want to preserve them (Geisler 1219-1220).

It is evident, “In Matthew every other use of the Greek term ψυχή refers to the entire ‘person’ or to one’s whole ‘life’ or ‘being’ (Gibbs 530). It is significant to concede that the word “soul” is not simply a disembodied entity. In Genesis: God “breathed the breath of life” into Adam, and he became a “living soul” (Gen. 2.7); the NRSV uses the word, “being”). The soul is, literally that which breathes, the breathing substance or being. Swedenborg buttresses this point on life after death, that, when one dies the breathing ceases. But in fact, that person has not died at all. He or she is only unglued from the physicality that was valuable to that individual in the world. The crucial person is truly still alive. Because it is not our bodies that make us human, but our spirits. In any case, it is the spirit inside us that thinks; and thought, along with emotion, makes us human (15).

The Bible demonstrates that the dead are not unconscious (Lk. 20:38; 1 Pet. 4:6). It is also clear that immediately after death the believer is ‘with’ the Lord. When Jesus said to the penitent robber, I solemnly assure you, ‘today you shall be with me in paradise’ reads in Greek; σήμερον μετ’ εμοῦ ἔσθη εντω παραδείσω, (Lk. 23:43), he was not promising a king’s welcome when the gates of paradise were opened at the end of the age but his personal company in God’s presence immediately after death: ‘today, with me’. Nor can there be doubt that in 2 Corinthians 5:8 Paul is



rendering the position and state of the Christian after death. ‘We prefer to depart from this form of embodiment and take up residence “with the Lord” (προς τον κύριον *pros ton kyrion*).’ A temporal distinction can hardly be drawn between the destruction of the earthly house (2 Cor. 5:1) and departure from the mortal body (2 Cor. 5:8). As soon as residence in physical embodiment terminates, so too does absence from the Lord (cf. 2 Cor. 5:6). Similarly, when Paul expresses his desire ‘to depart and be “with Christ”, ‘συν χριστώ *syn Christo*’ (Phil. 1:23), the word ‘and’ (και *kai*) is explicative: to depart from this life is to be instantaneously with Christ. This being or abode with the Lord (μετα *meta*, προς *pros*, συν *syn* *with*) comprises more than unification in Christ or union with Christ, for though such integration and union are as real after death as before, each passage denotes that the post mortem state of the believer is qualitatively higher to his spiritual life on earth. Relatively, just as the depiction ‘live in’, as used of the Spirit’s indwelling of the believer, ‘designates a stable everlasting infiltratory influence’, (Harris 49; Sanday and Headlam 196). Thus, the depiction ‘be with’, as used of the believer’s abode with the Lord, put forward a stable eternal mutual fellowship. The notions of active communion with Christ and of sleep are not irreconcilable if we recollect that Paul regarded death as a ‘falling asleep’ to this world instead of a ‘residing in unconsciousness’ in the presence of Jesus.

There has been some debate over this verse (Lk. 23:43) and the position and understanding of “today.” To shed light, “Some say Jesus said, ‘I say to you today, you will be with me in Paradise.’ Others say Jesus said, ‘I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’ No punctuation is in the Greek, but the natural reading of the verse agrees with the second rendering. “Today” means “this very day,” and “with me” means a beautiful place associated with genuine, close fellowship with Christ (cf. John 17:24).” So the clarification here is that the criminal will be with the Lord in a place called Paradise, and since the resurrection of the dead has not yet occurred, by definition Jesus is referring to the intermediate state. This is the only instance in the New Testament where Jesus uses the term “paradise” “The NT employs παραδείσος three times, to denote the place of blessedness promised to the thief, Luke 23:43, the third heaven, (2 Cor. 12:4), and the location of the promised tree of life (Rev. 2:7)” (Elwell 891).

The traditional view regarding departed believers portrays that they await the second advent of Christ and the resurrection of the body as

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ethereal or incorporeal spirits; only at the Parousia is the veracity of the personality reconstructed, with the reunification of a conserved soul and a transformed body. So Sevenster distinguishes between a maiden ‘being with Christ’ (Phil. 1:23) in a disembodied state instantly after death and the definitive ‘being with the Lord’ (1 Thess. 4:17) in an embodied state after the return of Christ. On the other hand, several scholars hold that death is the period when believers procure their heavenly embodiment, so that the interim state is not an interlude of ethereal existence but a period of fellowship between resurrected believer and risen Lord in expectation of the corporate consummation of the church (Harris 49). Similarly, Eldon Ladd elaborated on Pauline analysis on the mode of existence in the intermediate state. That he has the conviction, beginning to emerge in the Psalms, and expressed by Jesus to the dying thief, that "death could not bring the believer into any situation which meant separation from the Lord. So far as he knows, the death of the body means the survival of the spirit, although in a disembodied, ‘naked’ state” (598). Considering the foregoing analysis, the body is a soul. We are all living souls. At death there is surviving entity called the soul. The soul is not dead; it is immortal. In other words, the soul is simply the person, not a part of the person. It survives death. The person in this state is totally aware of everything that goes on.

One cannot evade the admonishment Jesus offers his hearers in Matthew 10:28: “do not fear those who kill the body (σῶμα) but cannot kill the soul (ψυχή). Rather fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell.” Such a statement would not make sense if man was only a materialistic being who ceased to have any conscious existence upon death. Jesus’ words above nonetheless indicate that there is an entirety of the person who survives beyond death. Such a translation might be, “do not fear those who can kill the body but cannot kill you entirely. Rather fear him who can destroy both body along with your entire being in hell.” Regardless of the precise meaning of ψυχή, here or elsewhere it is clear that Jesus affirms that the destruction of the body does not eradicate the entire human creature. In fact, both σῶμα and ψυχή, frequently denote the entire human person in New Testament use. Schwartz argues that σῶμα is “the most comprehensive term with which Paul denotes a human being”



(Schwartz 14). Schwartz's recent assertion echoes Bultmann, whose identity of $\sigma\delta\mu\alpha$ with the entirety of the human person has already been cited (15). It is attested that, at a funeral we bury something, not someone; it is the house, not the tenant that is lowered into the grave.

Stephen at the point of being stoned said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God". While they were stoning him, he prayed, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit" (Acts 7. 54-56, 59) (Hargreaves 70-71). Can we honestly believe that after seeing Jesus standing to receive him, Stephen, the man of God, then fell into an unconscious sleep? God is not the God of those that are asleep. Souls are separated from the body at the grave, but every person lives beyond death. Scripture teaches that eternity starts for every one of us at the point of departure. That is what Jesus said about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; in the account of the bush, God said to him, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. (Mark 12:26-27).

It is evident that Enoch's spirit went to be with God and Elijah was taken up into heaven to signify conscious post mortem animation (Gen 5. 24, Heb. 11.5; 2 Kings 2.1). In regards to the Gospels, the transfiguration is found in each of the synoptic Gospels (Matt. 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36) and at first glance appears to provide evidence for an active intermediate state. However, the focus of the transfiguration is not on the intermediate state but rather upon Jesus, with Moses and Elijah as witnesses to him (Carson 383-6.). The transfiguration also gives substantial proof that man has a soul which lives on beyond death (Matt 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-10). Moses' body was buried by God, yet the apostles saw Moses. They could not have been seeing His physical body because the resurrection has not yet occurred, so they must have been seeing his spirit. If the human spirit does not survive death Moses could not have been with Jesus. The fact that the apostles were able to identify the man as Moses indicates that he looked like a human person, and would teach us that the human spirit is an incorporeal entity resembling the physical image of the person. Moses and Elijah exist and are conscious prior to a general resurrection, further nullifying the materialist and soul-sleep positions. They have bodies, the disciples saw them as they acknowledged their presence in human form, they spoke with Jesus, and then they disappeared. This event reveals the continued conscious awareness of those who have

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departed this life. Moses' and Elijah's conversation with Christ about His departure confirms their continued ability to think, remember, and communicate.

Samuel's post-death appearance almost a millennium before at Endor (I Samuel 28:3-20), in a desperate effort Saul sought out a necromancer to contact Samuel, God allowed him to actually appear to prophesy through the medium. To the witch's surprise Samuel was summoned to speak with Saul and condemn him for his activities and pronounce judgment upon him (Evans 154). Because it is said that Saul (who was wicked) would be with Samuel (who was righteous) some presume that the dead are in a state of sleep until the eschatological resurrection and judgment of all men. More so, Saul could not be with Samuel if he was in a place of conscious blessedness after death. All such speculations become void, however, when Samuel's statement is understood to be referring to the grave, Saul would soon be joining Samuel in the death of the body. Some have argued that the person the witch subpoenaed was not really Samuel at all, but a spirit of some sort. The text, however, does not support such a rash conclusion. The image of the one brought up looked like Samuel (v. 14), the text calls him Samuel (v. 15-16), and the image prophesied the word of God to Saul which came to pass (v. 19). If the image truly was not Samuel, the text gives no indication that such is the case, or who else it might be. Samuel had a recognizable human form and conversed with Saul. His complaint about being disquieted shows that he was abiding in a state of conscious bliss that was interrupted in order for him to make this appearance. The souls of them that depart this life do neither die with their bodies nor sleep idly. Academics who argue that the souls of the deceased hence do sleep, being without sense, feeling, or perceiving, until the day of judgment, or who affirm that the soul dies with the body, and at the last day shall be raised up with the same, do utterly dissent from the biblical view.

6. The Position and Nature of Soul in Disembodiment: Panacea for the unknown

In our findings, premised on the pericope of the rich man and Lazarus, we have carefully deduced that a human's soul is a person. A



thorough scrutiny reveals that spirit-people possess every outer and inner sense they had in the world. When we move from one life into the other, or from the one world into the other, it is like moving from one physical place to spiritual realm; and we take with us everything we possessed as human beings, to the point that it would be untrue to say that we have lost anything of our own after death, which is only a death of the earthly body.

It is evident that after separation from the body the human spirit is a person and is in a similar form. Thus, people who arrive from this world to spiritual realm are absolutely astounded to find that they are alive and that they are just as human as ever, that they are seeing and hearing and talking, that their bodies still possess the sense of touch, and that nothing at all has changed. In the interim state, human souls are translated into a spiritual form, none of our senses tells us that we are not in the body we inhabited in the world. Swedenborg confirmed this trend thus, “When seen for what we really are, we are spirits, and we also have the same form as our spirits” (10). The dead are very much alive in the spiritual world. When our bodies are separated from our spirits, nevertheless, our personhood continue to be existent.

7. Conclusion

The glimpses of the life after death afforded by the New Testament are premeditated to conciliate our curiosity about the unknown and stimulate religiousness. Jesus unambiguously declares that death is not the end for man (John 5.24; 8.51-52; 11.25-26). The soul continues to exist in a separate disembodied state when the body is dead. There is no reason to take either Jesus' reference to the state ('with Me') or the place ('in Paradise') in any other sense than the literal. This logion of Jesus seems to have been seminal to Paul's understanding of the intermediate state. The Hereafter has been a central theme in the Christian faith. Intermediate state marks the irrevocable destiny for the unrighteous who have died. In the interim, unbelievers are separated from the presence of God, the wrath reverses the grace for the wicked and does not warrant any form of intercessory atonement, therefore repentance is only applicable for the living. The saints are eternally celebrated in the presence of God. Indisputably, the whole idea of intermediate state portrays that those who died in the Lord at once entered into the bliss of heaven, while those who died in their sins at once descended into hell. The soul carries the further

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connotation of being that part of the individual that partakes of divinity and survives the death of the body. The soul is an individual spiritual substance, the 'form' of the body. Both, body and soul together, constitute the human unity, though the soul may be severed from the body and lead a separate existence, as happens after death. The separation, however, is not final, as the soul, in this differing from the angels, was made for the body. The real 'you' is composed of a spirit and soul that "drives" your body. The real person lives on beyond death. There is more to life than just this body of flesh. At a funeral we bury something, not someone; it is the house, not the tenant that is lowered into the grave. Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands (2 Corinth 5:1). The future is determined in the present on how one lives his life in consonant with God. The 'had I known' of the rich man in hades can enable us to reexamine our lives to erode the impending irreversibility when disembodied.

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Martin Luther's Two Kingdoms Theology: Lessons for Nigerian Society

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Abstract

This paper is a historical appraisal of two kingdoms theology within the framework of Martin Luther's writing. This influential and controversial theory was formulated in his 1523 treatise; though it was written long ago taking cue from the writings of St. Augustine and what is in the Bible. It continued to have significant effect on the political and religious realm of society in Germany as well as the present time. Thus, this paper confers on the development of the theology. Two kingdom theology is not a new brand of theology but the original theology handed down by Jesus to the apostles and down through the ages of the church fathers. The theology was re-emphasized by the reformers. It is important to note also that the theology has a long pedigree. Thus, this paper seeks to give a thumbnail sketch of doctrinal emphasis. The purpose of this paper is to appraise Martin Luther's view on the two kingdom theology paying attention to the major trends of Luther's theology for conserving temporal authority in the light of Romans 13 and its relevance for the Nigerian society today. It considers to what extent "temporal authority" should be obeyed against the background that the church had oscillated into a state where, for instance, the compatibility of Christ's doctrine of non-resistance with the laws and customs of the state had become something one would be perturbed over. Therefore this research adopts historical-survey method as its analytical tool.

Keywords: Two Kingdoms; Theology; Temporal authority; Nigerian Society; Spiritual government.



1. Introduction

One of the most theological rich phrase of Martin Luther writings is the “Two Kingdoms doctrine” which continued to shape theological discussion up to this moment. Indeed, his arguments on variety of issues remain the basis for many doctrinal positions in many scholars publication. This paper examine his thoughts on the two Kingdoms theology as it refers to the church and the secular government that is provided for non-Christians, outside the Christian estate and God’s kingdom. This considers to what extent temporal Authority should be obeyed, the divine origin of the temporal authority, its limitation against the background that the church had oscillated in to a state where, for instance, the compatibility of Christ’s doctrine of non-resistance with the law and customs of the state. In this paper the researcher developed an interest with the Martin Luther’s interpretation of the secular authority and the church and state relations in Protestant Reformation. Accordingly it is necessary to understand Luther’s interpretation of the contested two kingdom theology, paying attention on the major trends of Luther theology conserving temporal authority in the light of Romans 13:1-17. Luther tended to talk about the two kingdoms doctrine in three different ways. First, building on Augustine's two cities doctrine, he distinguished between those who serve God and those who serve the devil. Second, he spoke of two governments appointed by God to govern the world in which these two groups of people are mixed together: coercive government by the sword to maintain peace and basic justice in the world, and spiritual government by the word and Spirit to gather men and women into Christ's kingdom. Third, Luther often spoke of two realms, by which he meant the outward realm of the body and life in this world, and the inward realm of the eternal soul. To be sure, contrary to popular impressions, Luther did not believe Christians could live and act as if they were not Christians in the affairs of this world. He believed that believers are to live in love to their neighbors as servants of Christ, though in a manner compatible with their earthly vocations (Tuininga 1).

2. Definition of key terms

2.1 Two Kingdoms Theology: According to Timothy Palmer “is the belief that the kingdom of God is coextensive with the institutional church and

that life outside of the church does not really belong to God's kingdom (14). For the purpose of this research paper, we can see two kingdom doctrines as the two reigns of God which teaches that God is the ruler of the whole universe of the world and delegate some authority to handle the affairs of the world through His command and will.

2.2 Temporal authority is a term of art in medieval and early modern political philosophy to refer to worldly power, as contrasted with spiritual power. The temporal power (simply), the state (polity), or secular authority, in contrast to the church or spiritual authority (Theodore 266).

3. Background to Luther's Two Kingdoms Theology

There is a growing consensus among scholars that, the fundamental issue of the reformation for Luther was the sovereignty of God. Luther was absolutely orthodox in preaching that only God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that creates, redeems and sanctifies man... (Meyer 5). His significant emphasis on God was his sovereignty, rulership of the kingdoms both government and church is recommendable through his word, it will be highly recognized within the two kingdoms. The features of his thought, all have a bearing on his view of the two kingdoms, which the coming of Christ would eliminate or terminate the papal rule of the Roman Empire, and he will established his authority both in the government/state and church.

The historical setting of the two kingdoms doctrine started right from the year 1520 in to the Christian Nobility, Luther denied that the spiritual authority (the church) is exempted from the jurisdiction of the temporal authority (the state). Yet in 1521, at diet of worms, he himself refused to comply with the order of the highest temporal authority, the emperor, to recant the numerous books he had written and published (Theodore 267). He said unequivocal that "It is impossible for me to recant unless I am proved to be wrong by the testimony of scripture ..." (Kuiper 179).

The process of development of the territorial state was under way in Western Europe around 1500, and the princess, both ecclesiastical and the lay were leading. They retained control of "the imperial Diet and at the same time established police powers with uniform justice, administration,



and protection throughout their lands” (Meyer 1-2). By this development they were bringing revolutionary changes. The lesser nobbles were being replaced by the wealthy and influential ones. The growth of capitalism and concomitant decline of their agrarian economy and landed wealth ruined the economy of the knights in Germany. In retaliation, they produced reform pamphlets, calling for re-establishment of the medieval order under a common emperor, and the abolition of church and capitalistic monopolies which has hopelessly divided them by their territorial, economic and religious differences; they revolted and according to Meyer:

The revolts of the time seem often to have been spearheaded by unorganized workers who had failed to find security. They were supported by the free laborers, recent immigrants to most cities, and a floating population of beggars. Preachers of radical religious and social reform gained many followers here; but since a uniform program and plan of action were lacking, the revolts were normally suppressed with relative ease. All classes, in fact, were being compelled to make adjustments which caused widespread dissatisfaction, and the Reformation provided many people with a dynamic hope that their difficulties could be solved (3).

While Luther was in Wittenberg at the castle of Wartburg, serious disturbances broke out, and he responded to it with a short pamphlet ‘Sincere Exhortation to Beware of Revolt and Insurrection’ in 1522 (Meyer 3). In this, Luther started from his experience; he felt that, the word of God was all that mattered; it was the Word that would triumph, not force of arms. If the Word of Christ were preached correctly, if everyone lived a Christian life in obedience to it, the great change would come about at once.

To the illustrious highborn prince and Lord John Duke of Saxony, Landgrave of Thuringia, Margrave of Meissen, my gracious Lord, Grace and peace in Christ. Again illustrious highborn prince gracious Lord necessity is laid upon me, and the entreaties of many, and above all your princely Graces wishes impel me to write about temporal authority and the sword it bears, how to use it in a Christian manner, and to what extent men are obligated to obey it (Lull 655).

The two kingdoms theology, was developed by Martin Luther, because of the confusion in his days about the roles of the church and state.

Both the Catholic Church and the Anabaptist movement were confusing this distinction of the church and state. Theologians at that time, were insisting that, the Roman church had both temporal and ecclesiastical power, while some political leaders were assuming ecclesiastical responsibilities. The separation between church and state was very blurred. While some of the Anabaptist were trying to set up a temporal kingdom on earth, while others were completely rejecting the temporal government, teaching that, the only legitimate government in the world was that of the church. In this regard Martin Luther pick up his pen to developed the two kingdoms theology. Luther ideas or teaching was first set in detail in 1523, in Luther's "Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed" (Palmer 13).

Martin Luther's doctrine of the two Kingdoms or the two reigns of God teaches that God is the ruler of the whole universe and that, He rules in two ways:

- He rules the earthly or left hand kingdom through the secular government by means of the Law that is the sword or force exercised by presidents, governors, kings, judges, and or their representatives.
- God rules in the heavenly or right-hand kingdom (his spiritual kingdom that is Christians and the Church) through the gospel or grace.

Luther's two kingdoms Theology is described as his political ethics. This doctrine was criticized by many theologians; Karl Barth, posits that, this doctrine laid the foundation for Hitlerism, Troeltsch said with this position Luther defended the medieval state, tolerated justice and demanded feudalistic obedience citing as example Luther's position during the peasant rebellion which led to the peasant war. Dietrich Bonhoeffer on his part accused Luther of reducing the New Testament ethics to a majority of quietist inner-worldliness while Reinhold Niebuhr said Luther's political ethics is perverse and tyrannical. However, those who sided with Luther said the political ethics of the two kingdoms doctrine is the best alternative to Christian extremism (Gritsch and Jenson 179).

According to Gritsch and Jenson the critique of Luther's two kingdoms theology can be summarized under two basis points:



- By this doctrine Luther limits the Lordship of Christ by deriving from the gospel only a new attitude to the world of political order, but it is not the Christians task to work for the renewal of such political order to make it conform to Christ's kingdom.
- By this doctrine Luther violated the teaching of the New Testament by viewing the two kingdoms in terms of static coexistence rather than eschatological tension (180).

In responding to these objections to Luther's two kingdoms theology, Gritsch and Jenson argued that, first, Luther did not view Christ at work in terms of orders or structures like family, government or economics, rather he viewed Christ in persons, or fellowships such as parents, princes or congregations who serve as rulers to exercise political power for the sake of equity. He argues that these rulers were put in place by God for the sake of order and equity according to Romans 13 and should not be resisted as long as they lead justly (182).

4. Submission to Civil/Temporal Authorities (Rom 13: 1-7)

Loyalty to the state was a standard literary topic among ancient writers (the Stoic writer Hierocles, *How to Behave Toward One's Fatherland*); it appears in lists and discussions alongside proper treatment of parents, elders and friends. Philosophers and moralists commonly wrote on how government officials should act and also how citizens should behave toward the government. According to Plato, Socrates even refused to escape execution lest he undermine the state with its good laws as well as its bad laws. When Jewish people felt repressed for their ethnic and religious practices, submission to civil authorities was the ultimate example of non-resistance, an attitude that they did not always achieve. Paul is well aware that only roughly a decade before his letter to Romans, the Jewish community had been expelled from Rome, possibly in debates over the identity of the Messiah that Jewish Christians provoked. (Keener 12).

Jewish people had to be concerned about public opinion, especially in Rome, where their maintenance of economic ties with Palestine was viewed with suspicion. Because many people viewed Christianity as a minority sect within Judaism, Christians had even more reason to be cautious. Jews and Christians publicly stressed their good citizenship, against the popular slander that they were subversive. This

emphasis does not mean, however, that they would avoid denouncing injustice. (Keener 12).

Nero was emperor at this time, but he had not yet begun persecuting Christians or repressing other groups. He was always popular in Greece, from which Paul was writing. Although some Palestinian Jews already advocated the revolt against Rome that would take place in little more than a decade, other Palestinian Jews reportedly swore to non-resistance, believing that God had ordained all civil authorities. Jews in Rome certainly upheld this position and would have been embarrassed by any other, unless it involved a conflict with obeying God's law. The Old Testament clearly taught God's sovereignty over earthly rulers (Prov 16:10; 21:1) (Craig S. Keener 12-13).

Though the two kingdoms are distinct in their principle of life and mode of operation, they not only stand under one rule of God but are dialectically related in the life of the Christian who is a citizen of both kingdoms. They belongs to the worldly kingdom and stands under its authority; but his commitment is to the spiritual kingdom. In the modern idea of the church and state relationship, the state stand outside the religious sphere, while the church represents the spiritual domain and God rules in both realms – the spiritual and the secular. Luther drew a line of demarcation between the two realms. The spiritual realm is without external power. Its power is exercised by God Himself through the Word. The secular realm is subject to human reason, and its authority is exercised by men who have the power to enforce laws. It is God Himself who is active in both realms. In the spiritual sphere God works through the Gospel to save men, and in the secular He works through the Law and impels men to live in a certain way, to do good and avoid evil (Meyer 9).

5. Luther's writings and what he has to say about Romans 13:1-7

In 1520 Luther wrote *Treatise on Good Works*. And in this treatise, while discussing the fourth Commandment, Luther makes the following remarks:

The third work of this commandment is to obey temporal authority, as Paul teaches in Romans 13 and in 1 Peter 2, "Submit yourselves to the king as supreme and to the princes as his ambassadors and to all the ordinances of worldly power." For the



task of temporal power is to protect its subjects and punish theft, robbery, and adultery, as St. Paul says in Romans 13:4: “Authority does not bear the sword in vain; it serves God with it, and is a terror to evildoers, but the protector of the good.” (Tappert 173)

He continues to say that, “God ordained two governments: the spiritual, by which the Holy Spirit produces Christians and righteous people under Christ; and the temporal, which restrains the wicked so that they are obliged to keep still and maintain an outward peace” (174).

Solomon Ademiluka looking at the Social Justice in Biblical Perspective supports Luther’s thought that “The Bible copiously indicates that God desires an orderly society where justice reigns supreme (7). In this way, the Bible recognizes that: “... the totalitarian exercise of power always leads to social injustice”. (Markl n.p.)

In Nigerian society today, Romans 13:1–7 in terms of unconditional obedience to constituted authority, seem not be applicable because of the constant neglect and violation of the rights of the citizenry. The context is one in which social injustice is characterized by economic exploitation by the ruling class and their appointees. Employing various avenues, these politicians use their privileged positions ‘to allocate to themselves a disproportionate slice’ of the nation’s resources (Ogunyemi cited in Ademiluka 308).

6. To what extent should temporal authority be obeyed”

In responding to the second objection of Martin Luther’s treatise on “Temporal Authority” “To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed” (1523), Luther discussed the inherent conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world, between believers and the antichrist or unbelievers. He says this world under the rule of Satan we need the law to prevent total chaos; hence God instituted political order to prevent massive sin. He also distinguished between the realm of Satan, the realm of the law (in the sense of good created order), and the realm of the gospel (Gritsch and Jenson 181).

In this world, the Christian lives in the realm of the law and order as well as in the realm of the world and sacrament. This is what Christ means by “you are in the world but not of the world” and “give to God what belongs to God and to Caesar what belongs to Caesar”. Luther says

although Satan may tempt Christians in both realms he cannot take over. The kingdom of this world is no longer under the lordship of Satan; it is under the power of God who works behind the Marks' of the created order and of the re-created fellowship of the gospel (Gritsch and Jenson 181-182). However, leaders who fail in discharging their duties rightly, lose the legitimacy to be obeyed by their subjects.

The true meaning of Christ's words in Mathew 5 [:29] "Do not resist evil," etc. Luther argues it is this: "A Christian should be so disposed that he will suffer every evil and injustice without avenging himself; neither will he seek legal redress in the courts but have utterly no need of temporal authority and law for his own sake. On behalf of others, however, he may and should seek vengeance, justice, protection, and help, and can do as much as he can to achieve it. Likewise, the government authority should on its own initiative or through the instigation of others help and protect him too, without any complaint, application, or instigation on his own part. If it fails to do this, he should permit himself to be despoiled and slandered; he should not resist evil, as Christ's words say" (Luther 297).

He appears to re-iterate the provision of Romans 13 and advocates its activation in the case of Lawyers, Jurists, Hangmen, Constables and others in a similar function and argues, they can also be Christians provided their services are used in a divine service and he proves this by submitting that after all Christ does not interpret his words to mean that he is abrogating the law of Moses or prohibiting the temporal authority (Matt. 5:17).

7. Divine origin of Temporal Authority

The Almighty God recognizes "Temporal Authority"; but human limitations was too intrinsic and stereotypes has brought about a misplacement of what it should be in the society and even in the body of Christ today as well. "Summit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men; whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right" (1Pet. 2:13-14NIV).

In his letter to Lord John, Duke of Saxony on January 1st, 1523. Martin Luther succinctly captured the origin of temporal authority from the divine stand point and he as well reveal the fallacious claims of sophist on what temporal authority is.



He wrote:

You are perturbed over Christ's injunction in Mathew 5:39, 40, 'Do not resist evil, but make friends with your enemies; and if anyone would take your coat, let him have your cloak as well'; and Romans 12:19. 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord'. And argues further, as at the time of writing his letter, "these very text were used long ago against St. Augustine by the prince Volusian, who charged that Christian teaching permit the wicked to do evil, and is incompatible with the temporal sword (Luther 277).

The sophist in the universities have also been perplexed by these text, because they could not reconcile the two things. In order not to make heathen of the princes, they taught that Christ did not commend these things but merely offered them as advice or counsel to those who would be perfect. The kingdom of God is thus the church. Its members are the true believers, and its king is Jesus Christ. Jesus rules by his word not by the sword. He rules by the gospel, not by the law. The Sermon on the Mount typifies the ethnics of the kingdom. Love and non-violence characterize this kingdom. Luther writes, "Christ is king and Lord in the kingdom of God." And he is king over Christians and rules by his Holy Spirit alone without law" (Palmer 14).

In another way, Lull Timothy commenting on the divine aspect, he maintains that, the whole division is in respect of the children of Adam and all mankind into two classes, the first, belonging to the kingdom of God, the second, to the kingdom of the world, but God is real authority, and controller of the these two kingdom. Those who belong to the kingdom of God are all the true believers who are in Christ and under Christ for Christ is king and Lord in the kingdom of God, as Psalm 2: 6, and all of scripture says, for this reason he came into the world, that he might begin Gods kingdom and established it in the world (662). From the above premises it is clear that the kingdom of the world and of God is both ruled by Jesus Christ the only Son of God who is God. The kingdom of the world consist of unbeliever, but it government is ordained by God and comes from God. But the question is, who is the king over this kingdom of the world? For Luther, Christ is the king and Lord in the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world.

8. Limitation of the temporal authority

We come to the main part of this treatise of the two kingdoms theology with the emphasis of the temporal authority a Luther view, therefore how it is to be exercised to what extent and limits a Christian and salutary manner, we must now learn how far its arm intends and how widely its hand stretches, lest it intend too far and encroach upon God's kingdom and government. The key facts about the whole aspect is that in the former case, the temporal authority punishes too much; in the latter case, it punishes too little. To err in this direction however, and punish too little is more tolerable for it is always better to let a scoundrel live than to put a godly man to death. The world has plenty of scoundrels anyway and must continue to have them, but godly men are scarce (Lull 679).

It is to be noted first that the two kingdoms which is the Adam's children- the one in God's kingdom under Christ and the other in the kingdom of the world under the government authority, as was said above have two kinds of the law, without law the kingdom cannot operate effectively. The temporal government has laws which extend no further than to life and property and external affairs on earth, for God cannot and will not permit anyone but himself to rule over the soul (Lull 679). So the temporal authority rules over body and property, but God rules over both body and souls of his children whom are created in his image and likeness.

9. Conclusion

Martin Luther's take on the concept of the two kingdoms and the extent of obeying the temporal authority seems to revolve around some basic principles of natural justice and civil law and he tries to reconcile them through a theological thesis. He painstakingly ferrets out the salient issues around the concepts and seems to project the preponderance of the Holy Spirit's work in the life of a believer to bring a deeper meaning of Christ's words and interpret the submissiveness to the authorities referred to in Romans 13:1-7. The fundamental biblical truth that is expressed in the two kingdoms theology is that the Christian's hope is to be fixed not on the things of this life that we see and experience all around us but on the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we are promised a kingdom that will transform and transcend all of these things.



The Nigerian Church in using the two Kingdoms theology of Luther is call to encourage those that have the gifts and potential for Leadership to go into politics to enable them use their gifts to serve the Nigerian society in the manner that reflects the servant Leadership of Jesus.

The Nigerian Church should encourage political leaders to hold onto Biblical values of honesty, accountability, hard work for the transformation of the Nigerian society from the present corrupt value system that is destroying the society. The two Kingdom theology teaches also that, all the resources of the world belong to God, thus all people are stewards of God's resources placed in our care. This principle of good stewardship is lacking in our Nigerian society today especially in government sector.

The Nigerian Church has a very important role to play in enabling Christians to be effective in the discharge of civil duties to overcome the political challenges we are currently facing in Nigeria. The understanding of the two Kingdoms theology help us to know that God ordained government to safeguard the well-being of the society. Therefore, we are call to commit ourselves for the peace and development of our country Nigeria.

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Prophecy and Inspiration in Christianity: Any Relationship?

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Abstract

Prophecy which is the fore-telling and forth-telling of what is to come has been playing vital role in the society. People do consult prophets to know what the future holds for them. The prophets are also known as seers. They claimed that messages are communicated to them by God. This acclaimed message is known as prophecy. But who is a prophet? How does he receive the message? Often the Prophet claims being inspired to prophesize. This implies that inspiration plays certain roles in prophecy. Therefore, the probing questions are: What is a prophecy? How does a prophet receive the message? What relationship exists between prophecy and inspiration? Can it be separated? These are basically the thrust of this paper. The writers discovered that there is a strong cord relationship between prophecy and inspiration. The methodology adopted in this work was historical. The work recommends that the Prophet who is the medium through which the message (prophecy) is been delivered to the recipients should wait on the Lord and be truly inspired before communicating the message.

Keywords: *Prophet, Mark of a true Prophet, Prophecy, Mode of Prophecy, Inspiration.*

1. Introduction

Prophecy has been playing an important role in the lives of Israelites and Christians as well as community life. Throughout the Church dispensation or history, prophecy has been one of cords and ministries that aided Church growth. The Old Testament is seen to be divine expressions



of God through some selected people known as prophets or seers. Similarly the New Testament is also seen to be divine words of God. Both Old Testament and New Testament are written records of the chosen men of God who declared what God gave to them to pass on. There are Prophets today in our society who also prophesize. But who is the person called prophet? How can we know a prophet? What is prophecy? How does the Prophet receive the message? What is inspiration? Is there any relationship between prophecy and inspiration? These served as the thrust of this work.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the relationship between prophecy and inspiration but this cannot be wholly done without firstly examining the personality of the Prophet who transmits the message. The methodology adopted was historical. The paper gives attention to: Prophet, the marks of a true prophet, prophecy, mode of prophecy, inspiration, and the relationship between prophecy and inspiration, conclusion and recommendation.

2. Definition of Terms

2.1 *The Prophet*

There can never be a prophecy without a prophet who receives and communicates the message to the recipients. The prophet is of great importance when it comes to the issue of prophecy and inspiration. Therefore, it becomes important to look at the person of the Prophet.

Prophecy has to do with fore-telling and forth-telling that which comes from the supernatural source. In the biblical and Christian experience, it designates the situation in which God gives a message to a special recipient for transmission to others. That special recipient is called Prophet, a term which many people are quite familiar with (Lasebikan 41).

In fact, the nature of prophetic calling can be best understood by starting its studies from the name itself. The prophet is known by some titles or names. In the Old Testament, the word *Ro'eh* which means "Seer," is used eleven times to describe the spiritual forerunner of the prophets. The word portrays special powers of insight. Its verb means "to see". In this line we see Samuel as a "Seer who had attained a reputation in the community as one who was singularly successful in receiving mysterious answers from the unknown" (Yates 2). *Chozar* is another word used in the

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Old Testament for the prophets (Terien 664). The word appeared twenty-two times in Old Testament to denote the same idea of gazing or seeing. Example of prophets here includes Balaam, Gad and some of the writing prophets. They are called “Seers” or “Gazers”. The functions of the early prophets merged into that of receiving the truth rather than any quality of delivery or behavior. However, there is another Hebrew word for the prophet which connotes much meaning. The word is *Nabhi* or *Nabi*. It is found three hundred times in the Old Testament.

Though the root is difficult to assess, it is thought to derive from Cognate Akkadian and Arabic word meaning “to call” or “to announce,” or from “naba” which means to bubble as if to say that prophets were people who bubble up with inspiration (Lasebikan 41). This means that prophecy is done under the influence of divine spirit. But in Arabic the word “seem to mean utterance of a special message on behalf of one who has commissioned him to say it”(Yates 2). Here we see Aaron as Moses’ mouth piece (Exodus 7:1). As a result of this the Greek word Prophets is translated into English to mean “one who speaks in behalf of another.”

There are some other several names or terms used to designate the prophet. Among such other names are Man of God (Deut.33:1; 1 Sam.9:6), Watchman (Ezek. 3:17), Messenger of Yahweh, Servant of Yahweh (2 Kgs. 17:3-13), Manager of the Spirit and interpreter. The terms are used according to situation that called for it. Indeed, one of the most appropriate one used is “Interpreter” (Gen. 40:8) which portrays the primary task of the prophet. For “the prophets were primarily speakers or preachers to their own age, witnesses as well as predictors”(Yates 2).

2.2The Marks of a prophet

In the Old Testament, three major tests are used in discerning between the true and false prophet. They are found in Deuteronomy chapter thirteen and eighteen, and Jeremiah chapter twenty-three.

The first one is the theological test. The Lord who brought the Israelites out of Egypt had made His revelation known through Moses to the people. Though the prophet may perform some signs to give validation to what he was saying but if his message goes contrary to Mosaic theology- “the known about the Lord who brought his people out”(Young 826). Such a prophet was not from God. He is a false prophet (Deuteronomy 13:1ff). This implies that the test is theological one which is “the revelation of God



at the Exodus”(Baker 980). A prophet might claim that he spoke in Yahweh’s name but if he failed to acknowledge Moses’ authority and subscribe to the doctrine of the Exodus the prophet was false one.

The second is the practical test. This is emphatically seen in Deuteronomy 18:20ff. It emphasized that the prediction that failed to be fulfilled has not come from the Lord. Young notes that this kind of test is a negative one. Because “it does not say that fulfillment is proof that the Lord has spoken, for that might in fact be the evidence offered by false prophet to vindicate his words”(Yates 826). So what is not fulfilled comes not from the Lord.

The third is the moral test. This is found in Jeremiah 23:9ff. It is attest first to be applied both to the prophet’s life himself and to the tendency of the message he preaches (23:13-14). Are the messages strengthening the hands of evil doers to do more evils? Do the messages assure the evil doers that no judgment is coming thus making them to have no fear (23:17)? Where this occurs it is simply a sure sign that the prophet did not stand before the Lord to hear from him (23:18-19). Baker in referring to the alleges of Jeremiah in chapter 23 notes that “the false prophet is a man of immoral life (vv. 10-14) and he places no barrier to immorality in others (v.17); whereas the true prophet seeks to stem the tide of sin and to call people to holiness (22)” (Baker 980). He makes people trust in lies and leave them without resource when days of trial come. His message is his mark and it has to do with one of peace and swallow optimism (Ezekiel 13: 10-16), and devoid of moral content. The righteous are grieved by his message but it encourages the wicked (Ezekiel 13:22). But the true prophet is the Mosaic prophet. He calls and reminds Israel of their moral requirements of the covenant. His message turns people from their evil way because he receives from the Lord afresh (Jeremiah 23:22).

According to Lasebikan, the prophet is a political activist.

As an authorized spoke man of God, he had an important role assigned to him in warfare (1 Kings 20:13ff) when he had to give counsel in order to save his people. Such is the sense of commitment of prophet to the political independence of nation both from the whims and caprices of wicked and faithless kings and from the claws of oppressions of foreign nations, all at the risk of their own lives(53,54).

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Yates in his book *Preaching from the Prophets* (Yates 5) listed nine good signs or marks through which we get to know the Prophets. The marks range from physical to moral and spiritual.

1. He is always an uncompromising individualist: He cannot be bound by reconvension or by public opinions or be restrained by the caution of diplomats.
2. He is conscious of a divine call that holds him to the task set forth by God. Always he must realize that he is God's mouthpiece. The divine compulsion must be obeyed.
3. He is conscious of the privilege of access to the inner counsel of Yahweh. He is in immediate contact with God. He is the bearer of precious secrets from the throne of God to the needy men.
4. He is usually a man of action with a certain ruggedness of body and character that commands attention in any gathering. Being intense and keyed to a high pitch he will be apt to stir up antagonism and opposition.
5. He is conscious of God's authority and backing in all emergencies. It is usually true that he stands alone against practically all of his contemporaries. Even the religious leaders (priest and conventional prophets), who usually find time for social intercourse, are constantly challenging the strange stands of God's prophets.
6. He is definitely a man of prayer and communion. His lonely, solitary life gives him plenty of time to keep in touch with God.
7. He is clean and consecrated in life and character. In all the long line of genuine prophets we do not find a single breath of criticism of the moral life of any one of them. Each lived a separated life.
8. He is an outspoken critic of specific evils in social order. King, priest, nobles and judges are denounced fearlessly. He does not deal in abstraction. Guided by the will of God he realizes his voice in violent protest against any person or institution meriting denunciation.
9. He is God's agent to reveal the future to the people. It is quite true that his main work is that of preaching to his own age. We must not, however, lose sight of the particular insight into the will of God for the generation yet unborn.



2.3 Prophecy

What is prophecy? *The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* in defining prophecy says it is the power of telling what will happen (Horby et al. 771). Prophecy is a declaration, a description, a representation, or a prediction of that which is beyond the power of human wisdom to discover. According to Jewett, prophecy is

the word used in the OT to describe the message of men who spoke to the people of Israel under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. This message often introduced with a "thus saith the Lord," came sometimes in the form of a commandment; sometimes as a promise of deliverance

either in the immediate or more remote future; sometimes as a word of judgment and condemnation, sometimes as a word of admonition, a lamentation, hymn of praise or the like (Jewett 430).

Prophecy as a declaration involves a formal statement. Declaration is defined in online *Oxford Learner's Dictionary* as an official or formal statement, especially about the plans of a government or organization; the act of making such a statement. It is also a written or spoken statement, especially about what people feel or believe. It is an official written statement giving information (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries.com). This implies that prophecy as a declaration is a formal state about the plans of God for His people or nations. It could also be an official written statement giving such information. Thus we see some written prophecies in the Scripture (Bible) and some prophets being classified as writing prophets such as Minor Prophets like Hosea, Micah, Joel, etc., and Major Prophets like Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, etc.

Prophecy, in its broad sense, could also be a prediction that has to do with future events. A prediction "is a statement that says what you think will happen; the act of such a statement" (Oxford Learner's Dictionary.com). Thus prophecy as a declaration has some measure of prediction. Some prophetic declarations have their fulfillment in the future. Example of such declarative prediction can be seen in Book of Daniel (see chapters 9-21) and Revelation (see chapters 16-21) regarding the end time events. Prophecy is a message claimed by a Prophet to be communicated to him by God. It is "a divinely inspired revelation or interpretation" (Britannica.com). The word has its etymology from the Greek word *pro* "before" plus the root of *phanai* "speak". So

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prophana means “speaking before” or “foretelling”, i.e. proclamation (www.crystalinks.com).

Prophecy always involves some kind of communication with the future or with different realms of existence, which are usually not discernible by or in harmony with empirical science. Therefore, skeptics consider prophecy to be false. Believers, however, claim that prophecy is possible through supernatural means which bypass the natural laws (www.crystalinks.com).

Prophecy, therefore, has to do with fore-telling and forth-telling. It goes beyond prediction of future- “it is a promise about the future”(www.aboutbibleprophecy) and “history written in advance”(STP-15 Prophecy). There are some principles which must be followed in prophecy. H. Orton Willey in his book *Introduction to Christian Theology* presented four laws of prophetic prediction as considered fit by Pope. These include:

- (1) Christ is its witness.
- (2) The law of progression according to which each age is under the sway of some governing prophecy, the accomplishment of which introduces a new order of prophetic expectation.
- (3) The law of reserve by which God has so ordered that in every prediction and every cycle of predictions, sufficient is given to encourage hope and anticipation, and enough concealed to shut up the prediction of faith.
- (4) Prophecy has been constituted as sign to each succeeding generation.

The book of the prophets furnish an inexhaustible elements, and this makes it clear that prophecy was intended to be an abiding credential throughout the whole course of time (Wiley and Culbertson 26).

But it must be noted that there can never be prophecy, if there is no prophet. But how does the prophet receives his prophecy? Or what is the mode of prophecy?

3. Source and Mode of Prophecy

The source of true prophecy is God who reveals His words to His prophets. So a true prophecy always originates from God not man. According to Hale “the true prophets of the Bible received words from



God and the spoke them to the people”(Hale 17). There are false prophecies which do not come from God and men who utter them are called false prophets (Matthew 7: 15; 1 John 4:1). The nature of prophecy is twofold: either by vision or revelatory auditions (i.e. inspired) or by learning the techniques (i.e. acquired). In many cases both are present. A vision is a supernatural revelation of God to a person. It may be in the form of a dream or trance-like state. God declared to the Israelites that “Hear now my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD, shall make myself known to him in a vision I shall speak with him in a dream.”(Numbers12:6). Vision in Greek is *horma* meaning “to supernaturally gaze at an object externally or have an inspired appearance internally”(www.quora.com). Vision is basically the same as dream with the exception that dream occurs whilst a person is in a state of sleep and vision will happen whilst the person fully awake. Someone can have a closed vision when his eyes are closed. He could also have an open vision when the eyes are opened. In either case the person sees something but it is out of his control and inducement. In biblical days, the signs that showed that someone was a prophet was gifts of dreams and visions (Number 12:6). Thus we see that one third of the Bible consists of prophetic revelation. “God likes speaking in this way to His also people”(www.thinkaboutsuchthings).

The goal of learning certain prophetic techniques is to help the prophet reach an ecstatic state thus receives revelations. At the ecstatic state which is also called ecstatic prophecy, the prophet is being taken over completely by the Holy Spirit- body, soul and spirit- and prophesies as an oracle. This often occurs when the prophet is in a worship mood amidst congregation as well as music; songs and dance going on simultaneously in an increasing tempo and violent bodily movement. Then the Spirit of God descends upon the prophet inspiring him to prophesize- i.e. declaring God’s message or will to the people. He may also tell them things to come. Elisha asked for a minstrel so as to help get to the right mood for prophecy (2 Kings 3:15). Ecstatic oracles are usually and generally delivered in the first-person singular pronoun by the prophet and are spoken in a short, rhythmic style (www.olivetree.com). The prophet made known impending judgment because of people’s sin; when the judgment will be accomplished (Adekoya 55).They also “interpreted the course of past history and explained God’s purpose in history”(Awoniyi 7). The prophet

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receives the prophecy after being inspired. It therefore implies that there can never be prophecy (true) if there is no divine inspiration. Then the question is this, what is inspiration?

4. Inspiration

The *Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* gave four different meanings as regard inspiration:

- (1) Influence(s) arousing creative activity in literature, music, art, etc.
- (2) Person or thing that inspired.
- (3) (Colloq) good thought or ideas that come to the mind
- (4) Divine guidance held to have been given to those who wrote the Bible (Horby 511).

Although the direct definition of the term or inspiration cannot be found in the Bible but Bible itself speaks of inspiration. The word inspiration is used twice in the Bible especially in KJV, this is first found in Job 32:8. Its Hebrew derivative is *neshamah* meaning “to breathe”, and the second appearance of its usage is found in 2 Timothy 3:16. Its Greek derivative is *theopneustos* and it literally signifies “the breathing of God”, “God breathed” or “the breathing into”. According to Straham “It is through an experience of the spiritual power of the Bible that the word first comes to have a real meaning”(347). Inspiration in general signifies the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the writers of the books of the Bible in such a manner that their production became the expression of God's will. In the word of Wiley and Culbertson,

Inspiration is that influence of the Spirit of God upon the minds of the Scripture writers which made their writings the record of a progressive Divine and interpreted by the same spirit who inspired them to lead every honest inquirer to Christ and Salvation (48).

It is a “divine guidance; (theology) a special influence of a divinity on the minds of human beings”(Divine:InspirationGoggleSearch). The underlying fact is that inspiration comes through the acting energy of the Holy Spirit and through the Holy Spirit men chosen of God have officially declared His will to us as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Thus we see that through the inspiration by the Holy Spirit, qualified men receive religious truth and communicate it others without error. Indeed, revelation made the writer but inspiration enable them to declare the revelation without mistake.



5. The Relationship between Prophecy and inspiration

There can never be prophecy if there is no prophet. In the same vein, neither can there be a prophet (true prophet) if there is no inspiration. Remove the prophet from prophecy what will be left will amount to nothing. And if you remove the inspiration from prophecy both the prophet and his prophecy amount to zero. The relationship that exists between the two or three characters is so knitted that the removal of one destroys the other. It is like a food web. J. Strahan in quoting Plato says:

God has given the art of divination not to the wisdom, but to the foolishness of man. No man, when in wits attains prophetic truth and inspiration; but when he receives inspired word, either his intelligence is enthralled in sleep, or he is demented by some distemper or possession (347).

A prophet says nothing at all of his own nor does act as if the word he is declaring belongs to him. He acts only as an interpreter at the prompting of another in all his saying. When the Divine spirit enters into him the inspiring power (Spirit) strike the mechanism of his voice thus sounding through it to declare declaration of that which the prophet prophesies. This type of view is held by Philo (Strahan 345) and many other people. Some people are of that view that Divine influence was communicated to the Bible by dictation to its writers. Such people regarded the Bible writers as mere mouthpiece or penmen of Deity. But this is not wholly correct or true of the Bible writers. In fact, as Strahan rightly put it; “Inspiration does not suspend the power and faculties of the souls, but raises them to their highest activity, the supernatural intensifying the natural”(347).

Indeed, the Creator of men may act upon the minds of his creature and extends his action to any level or degree according to his will in order to attain the fulfillment of his desires. According to Orton, it is unreasonable to suppose that God who is the “Father of Spirits” in His omnipotence cannot communicate truth to the minds of men or “to instruct them in those things which concerns their eternal well-being”(Wiley and Culbertson 49). The correlation of revelation is inspiration. Whenever God desires to reveal himself, he does so first by inspiring men. Such inspired men of God receive or communicate the revelation. The tendency in the early days was soothsaying, augury, clairvoyance and divination. Some of

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the prophets that exhibited these characteristics include Samuel who solves riddle, find lost article, pries into the unknown and answer difficult questions. The root of prophecy may be traced to such primitive beginnings but there had been a change of such characteristics during the golden age of Old Testament prophecy. After the days of Elijah the nature of Hebrew prophecy has drastically changed to ethical and religious (Yales 2- 4).

In fact, the opening address of the prophet tells us something about their own awareness. The statement “The word of the lord came...” shows a statement of a direct, personal awareness. This is the prophet basic experience (Exodus. 7:1-2; 4:15-16).” God is the author of people. It is the same experience which Jeremiah had when the Lord’s hand touched his mouth (Jer. 1:9) (Motyer 978). Other are dreams and visions (Jeremiah 23:38; 31:26).But inspiration itself is a miracle and we do not know precisely the way through which God makes the mind of a man to become aware of his word. It is the Spirit of God who acts in prophetic inspiration. There are eighteen passages which associate prophetic inspiration with the activity of the Holy Spirit. The passages include the following:

In Num.24:2 the reference is to Balaam; Num.11:29; Isa.10:6, 10; 19, 19:20,23 deal with the prophetic ecstasy; the plain assumption that prophecy arises from the Spirit of God is found in 1 Kgs.22:24; Joel 2:28-29 Hosea 9:7 Neh.9: 30 Zc 7:12; a direct claim to the inspiration of the spirit is made Mic.3:8; the Spirit’s inspiration of the prophetic word is claimed by 1 Chro12;18;2Chro15:1; 20;14;24;20 and Ezk 11;5. But his evidence is not evenly spread through the Old Testament, and in a particular that of the pre-exilic prophets are sparsely Represented (Motyer 978).

The prophet appeared before their contemporaries as men who have something to offer. Indeed they are men with a word to say because they are inspired men. The spoken oracle is the form in which the word of God is expressed. Although the word is God’s word spoken through His mouth piece, they (The words) are also words of a certain man, spoken at a certain time under certain circumstances. What is so common of the prophets is that they sometime couched their oracle in the form of parable or allegory (e.g. Isaiah 5:1-17, 2Samuel 12:1-7; Ezekiel 16 and 23). The dramatic way of presenting their message was by means of the ‘acted oracle’. According to Motyer “the acted oracle was a movement from God



to man; the word of God, the activity on which God has already decided, was thus declared and promoted on earth. In this, as in every other aspect of biblical religion, the initiative rests solely with God”(979). General inspiration is followed by special inspiration. In fact, behind the inspired prophet and Psalmist of the Old Testament was the inspired Hebrew nation and behind the inspired apostle there as the inspired Christian community. True medium of revelation is not just a book but the man. This is because inspiration is a condition of soul in relation to God (Strahan 347) from who prophecy originates.

Secondly, they were to work for the loftiest ideal of human civilization. If one is to judge their gusto what is to be seen is that their credibility is the highest. All they were pursuing to achieve was the establishment of ethical monotheism as the religion of Israel. In fact, the affirmation of these prophets “regarding the righteous and love, the faithfulness and holiness of God, are today kernel of the world’s faith”(Strahan 347). Therefore, prophecy and inspiration are so knitted that without inspiration no prophecy. Inspiration ignites prophecy and proves the genuineness of a true prophet as well as the fulfillment of the prophecy as coming from God.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Prophecy is a miracle in the field of knowledge. It is forth-telling and fore telling of something that lies ahead. The fore-teller and fore-teller is called a prophet. Different terms are being used for prophet such as *Nabi*, *Chozeh*, *Ro’eh*, etc. Other words including man of God, watch man, messenger of Yahweh, man of the Spirit, an interpreter and servant of Yahweh. The prophet is an uncompromising person who is always conscious of the divine call that holds him to the task set forth by God. He lives clean and consecrated life, dedicated to prayer and communion with God.

His consciousness of God’s authority and backing in all emergencies gives him the courage to deliver the message without fear and firm. He is God’s agent to reveal the future to the people. He is critic of specific evils in social order. In fact, he is political activist. He receives his message through inspiration and thus prophesies. Inspiration is the correlate of revelation. It is that influence of the Spirit of God upon the minds of prophets or the writers of the scriptures. In Greek, it is

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theopneustos meaning “the breathing of God”; “the out breath of God” etc. inspiration is the condition of the soul in relation to God. Whenever God reveals Himself He does so by inspiring men to receive so as to communicate the revelation. This He does through visions, dreams, trances, etc. The influence of the inspiration could also be seen a times through ecstatic movement of the prophet under inspiration as he declares the message or prophesizes.

In fact, the strong relationship which exists between prophecy and inspiration is like food web. The removal of one distorts others. Also between prophecy and inspiration is the prophet receives the message from God, the removal of one distorts the others. It is the inspired word of God spoken by the prophet that is known as prophecy. Therefore, since inspiration plays a key role in prophecy, it is recommended that the prophet should wait on the Lord to be inspired before declaring messages to people. He should also ensure that the message is actually coming from God. He should reaffirm his mode of receiving the message before declaring messages in the name of the Lord. It is not everyone that could prophecy therefore those with prophetic gifts should not boast. The prophetic gift is a gift to serve so it should be used to edify, exhort and comfort the body of Christ (1 Cor. 14:3).



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Strengthening Christianity in Africa: the Place of Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics

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Abstract

The neglect of our Mother Tongue to foreign languages like English and French has posed a great challenge to the preservation of our rich cultural heritage as Africans and to our faith as Christians. Over the years, biblical hermeneutics has been dominated by western or European ideologies, leaving Africans with the choice of reading and interpreting the Bible with western eyes. This long standing domination can lead to Africans not having a proper understanding of the Bible or Africans refusing to open up to Christianity. The researcher adopted historical phenomenology as his methodology. The researcher traced the history of biblical hermeneutics and mother tongue biblical hermeneutics, showing the place of Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics in strengthening Christianity in Africa using Nigeria as a case study. The researcher found out that many for the desire of English language overlook the teaching of our mother tongue language to their children. More so, pastors and theologians end their theological reflections on academic journals and commentaries written in English and fail to translate this to the language of the common masses in the society. Finally, the researcher discovered that most of the translations we have presently as mother tongue bibles, need to be reviewed as some verses are wrongly translated. The researcher recommends that Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics be emphasized in theological training centres and African scholars should be encouraged to develop commentaries and Bibles in their Mother Tongue making the impact of theological discussions felt by all.



1. Introduction

This work attempts to discuss the place of Mother Tongue biblical hermeneutics in strengthening Christianity in Africa. “Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics is the scholarly engagement of the indigenous language translations of the Bible in order to understand what they say and mean to our local readers” (Kuwornu-Adjaottor, Jonathan E. T. 12). Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics has a lot to offer not just to the African populace but to biblical scholarship at large. The neglect of our mother tongue to foreign languages like English and French can be vividly seen both in our primary and secondary schools. Students in most cases, especially in Nigeria, are sanctioned when they use their mother tongue in schools. This wrong trend continues at homes where parents deprive their children the knowledge of their native language. The question is, “how long would we remain foreign in our local environment?” Ukachukwu, Chris Manus observes that “It is no longer sensible for Africans to continue reading the Bible from an alien perspective” (1). He further observes that:

Over the years, biblical hermeneutics has been dominated by western or European ideology, leaving Africans with the option of reading and interpreting the bible with the white man’s ideology and world view. For much too long, African theological education has been integrated into the mainstream European and North America academic tradition, neglecting the norms, values and principles and insights inherent in African culture (1).

As an expression of African cultural heritage, language (Mother tongue) has certain implications for theological reflections in Africa. Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics in particular, remains one of the possible ways of breaking this European hermeneutical dominance. Gosnel, Yorke L explains this thus:

Specifically African Biblical studies, analyzes the biblical text from the perspective of African world-view and culture. It is the rereading of the Christian Scripture from a premeditatedly Africentric perspective, with the aim of not only understanding the Bible and God in the African experience and culture, but also to *break the hermeneutical hegemony and ideological stronghold that Eurocentric biblical scholars have long enjoyed* (145).

To Quarshie, B.Y: “Western theology has been dominant mainly because they are produced in languages that have been dominant; English, French, Portuguese, German and Spanish. It is along these lines that the role of the indigenous language of Africa in theologising in African context must be employed” (7). This concept of Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics, of which Kuwornu-Adjaottor see John D. K. Ekem as a major proponent, will flourish with firm roots if its relevance to biblical scholarship is brought to view for all to see (12). This relevance is part of what this article seeks to address. The missionaries who evangelized Africa knew that without a proper use of mother tongue, Christianity will not penetrate the hearts of Africans hence the introduction of mother tongue Bibles. For a good understanding of the concept of mother tongue biblical hermeneutics which has an ancient origin, we shall first give a brief historical discourse on biblical hermeneutics.

2. Biblical Hermeneutics

The term hermeneutics from which biblical hermeneutics is derived is both philosophical and theological. The Dictionary of Christian Theology defines it as “the science and art of interpretation, especially of ancient writings, which were held to contain divine truths” (154). Ukachukwu has this to say about hermeneutics: “The term hermeneutics has a sacred origin in time. It is derived from the Greek word *hermeneia*-which has special reference to Hermes, the Greek god who was destined to act as a messenger of the gods in Greek” (30). Hence, hermeneutics can be defined as the art and discovery of meaning in every word, phrase or concept. Robison James M. opines that:

The English term hermeneutics only particularly corresponds to the equivalent Greek noun *hermeneia*. The meaning of the Greek term was determined by the Greek verb *hermeneuein*, corresponding to Latin verb *interpretari*, to interpret. Hermeneia meant interpretation so broadly that it could be applied to whatever activity was involved in bringing the unclear to clarity (1).

In analyzing the term hermeneutics from a historical perspective, we must observe that hermeneutics as we understand today, has metamorphosed from traditional to new hermeneutics. “Traditional



hermeneutics which can be seen as a narrow look at hermeneutics was what gave rise later to the new hermeneutics which commenced in part through the three volume works of Joachim Wach on ‘understanding’ (Robinson 20). The new hermeneutics which we must focus on, has to do with something more than understanding of the text in their historical context; it means letting the word speak to our existence in our own historical context. Alan, Richardson observed that when hermeneutical task is concerned in this way, the interpreter of the scripture becomes himself a learner in the language school of faith. At this point, the hermeneutical tasks consist for theology in nothing else but in understanding the Gospel as addressed to modern man (154-155). Stott, John gives a good description of the two hermeneutics thus:

The old hermeneutic put into our hands a set of universal rules of interpretation, which we applied to the text; the new hermeneutic is concerned with allowing the text to apply its message to us. The old hermeneutics concentrated on the text as object; we stood over it, studied it, scrutinized it, applied our rules to it, and almost took control of it. The new hermeneutics, however, concentrates on the text as subject; it stands over us, and we sit meekly ‘under it’, as the reformers used to put it. It addresses, confronts, challenges and confronts us (189).

3. Hermeneutics and Exegesis

For a deeper understanding of the term hermeneutics, it will be important to briefly discuss hermeneutics and exegesis. These two terms are seen by some scholars to be the same or used interchangeably. Ukachukwu has this to say “Hermeneutics in short is the work of an interpreter. In this wise, hermeneutics is not essentially different from exegesis; and quite often the two terms are used synonymously in the academy” (30). However, the view of Patte, Daniel agrees with the understanding of the researcher He says:

The process of interpreting a text - a single phenomenon- can be viewed as including two approaches: exegesis and hermeneutic. Exegesis aims at understanding the text in itself, while hermeneutics attempts to elucidate what the text means for the modern interpreter and people of his culture (3).

Exegesis and hermeneutics must be distinguished from each other despite the fact that the very function of exegesis is to lead to hermeneutic. A text is not a living language: it is a “dead language.” It is no longer a speech. I as a reader cannot enter directly into the text’s dimension of meaning. It is self evident that a speech is directly addressed to me. Not so in the case of the text. The distance which separates the text and the reader should not be overlooked. In order for the hermeneutics of a text to take place it is first necessary that its dead language be brought back to life. Such is the task of exegesis (Patte 6).

In short, exegesis determines the discourse of the text, its nature, and its semantic potentialities. As such, exegesis considers the text as a closed system of signs. Then in a second step, the hermeneutic prolongs the discourse of the text into a new discourse. Hence, when exegesis does not lead to hermeneutic- that is, when exegesis does not bring back to life the dead language of the text, it has failed (Patte 6).

Therefore, from all said, biblical hermeneutics can be seen as a proper understanding of the Scripture or a given Bible text via good exegesis, and the ability to properly appropriate that understood text to our contemporary society without losing its original message.¹

4. Concept of Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics

The term “mother tongue” from which the concept “mother tongue biblical hermeneutics” is derived, means different things to different people. Scholars have different views as regards mother tongue. Amonoo, R. F see mother tongue as “a medium of our innermost feelings and thought (2).” It is that native language into which one is born and in which one grows up (Quarshie 7). Bediako sums it up by explaining that It is a person’s first language as compared to other languages one might learn later in life, for instance, at school. Another-tongue is not the same as a vernacular which is the common language of a region or group, no matter how naturally and well versed a person may be in such a language and its usage. Rather, the mother-tongue is a person’s own native and

¹ Applying all discussed from traditional to new hermeneutic and the distinction made between exegesis and hermeneutics. The researcher therefore gives his understanding of Biblical Hermeneutics.



indigenous language, very much intertwined with a person's identity; it confirms and affirms who a person is, where he comes from and his sense of identity. A mother-tongue is a repository of indigenous wisdom, knowledge, insight, science, theology and philosophy. It is in the mother-tongue that one thinks and dreams, before translating his thoughts to other languages (37).

For the purpose of this article, mother tongue will be viewed from both understandings but with particular reference to local languages. Having defined mother tongue as "a person's own native and indigenous language, very much intertwined with a person's identity; it confirms and affirms who a person is, where one comes from and one's sense of identity" (Bediako, Kwame 37), we can therefore say that "mother tongue biblical hermeneutics is the scholarly engagement of the indigenous language translations of the Bible in order to understand what they say and mean to our local readers" (Kuwornu-Adjaottor 12). The Scholarly engagement of this indigenous language to achieve mother tongue translation takes a process of proper exegesis, and this exegesis, as explained above, needs a good knowledge of many things like the original Bible language, the literary form, the Culture of the first audience, understanding the time gap and so many other issues.

Hence, all these ideas, which must be properly harnessed to birth mother tongue translation or interpretation, make it a concept. The process involved to come up with a good mother tongue interpretation makes it a unique concept.

The end product of mother tongue biblical hermeneutics is the production of mother tongue scriptures, commentaries or general biblical writings. If hermeneutics has to do with interpretation, and mother tongue has to do with one's indigenous language, it can be argued that the concept of mother tongue hermeneutics is as old as the beginning of Scriptural translation. This is because the languages in which they were written were people's mother tongue. The translation into Greek (Septuagint) is all mother tongue interpretation to people's languages. To Quarshie, the first translation of scripture in Africa was the translation of Old Testament into Greek, the Septuagint, during the reign of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus, in Alexandria, Egypt, in the third century BC. The translation of the Bible into mother tongues in Africa, however, became the order of the day during the missionary era of the nineteenth century, when missionary

bodies like the Basel Missionary Society, made it a policy to translate the Bible into native languages (8-9).

The interest of mother tongue biblical hermeneutics is in carrying the original meaning of Bible text from the biblical language to our particular and different mother tongue languages, not changing it. This is never a word-for-word translation, but translating the original meaning of a Bible text in such a way that it agrees with our good African culture and worldview. Mother tongue biblical hermeneutics borrows knowledge from Biblical Studies, Bible Translation Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, Geography and Language Studies – Biblical Languages: ancient Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek, and local African/Nigerian Languages. Therefore, anyone engaging in this process must be well informed with not only the local language, but the culture of the people. He/ she must be thoroughly dipped into the people's philosophy, values, principles and beliefs.

5. Understanding the Process of Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics

The process outlined by Kuwornu - Adjaottor to me, best captures the process or methodology of Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics.

1. Identify a biblical text which you think has been wrongly translated into your mother tongue.
2. Discuss why the translation is problematic in your culture.
3. Do a study (an exegesis) of that text, using Bible Study resources – Dictionaries, Commentaries, Encyclopaedias, Word Study helps, etc.
4. Find out what scholars have said about the text, how they interpret it and reasons for their interpretations.
5. Discuss the usage of the concept in your language/culture; interview indigenous speakers of your mother-tongue for deeper insights into the concept you are researching. Use local terminologies in your writing and explain them in English.
6. Compare the text in your mother-tongue with other local translations you can read and understand.
7. Analyze the mother tongue-translations. What do they mean? How are the meanings of the text similar to that of the Hebrew/Greek? How are



they different? What might have accounted for the differences in translation?

8. Come out with a new translation of the text that fits into your culture (12)

For want of space, the researcher will like to give a simple example of how to follow the procedure stated above. It is important to note that, for want of space, the researcher will not be very detailed especially in the area of the required exegesis. Romans chapter 16:16 reads thus in Igbo Bible “*Werenu isutu-onu din so kelerita onwe-onu...*” meaning “use kiss that is holy to greet one another”

The above text is problematic in my culture (Igbo culture) because it commends kissing as a form of greeting which is not in agreement with the cultural values of my culture. In igbo culture, kissing should not be done in the open even by married couples. It is only during wedding ceremonies in church that couples are asked to kiss in the church. This practice obviously is borrowed from the western way of expressing love which is not in agreement with the core Igbo cultural values. From the above text, the scripture advocates for kissing of one another not even husbands and wives. Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ Ἰασπάζονται ὑμᾶς αἱ ἐκκλησίαι Greet one another with a kiss holy greet you the churches. πᾶσαι τοῦ Ἐριστοῦ All of Christ.

Procedure 3 and 4 would be discussed briefly together (the exegesis of this verse will be limited to the views of some commentators for want of space). Romans chapter 16:3-16 has to do with Paul’s greetings to the Roman Christians. Paul mentioned many by name and ended the section by requesting that all believers be greeted with a holy kiss. Craig S. Keener notes that:

Kisses were common form of affectionate greeting for family members, intimate friends or those who were objects of respect (e.g Gen 33:4; 45:15). The kiss was normally a light kiss on the mouth, readily distinguishable from lovers; passionate kisses. Nevertheless, due to abuses, in subsequent centuries the church limited the practice of the liturgical kiss of fellowship to men kissing men and women kissing women, although this was not the initial practice (456).

From the words of keener above, kisses were common forms of affectionate greetings then. Now, in our Igbo cultural context, kisses are

not forms of affectionate greetings. Also, the early church discovered that it was abused and later limited it to men kissing men and women kissing women. With this limitation, it is even more inappropriate in our culture to see a man kissing a man and a woman kissing a woman. Hale, Thomas has this to say: “Even today it is the custom of the Middle Eastern countries for people to greet each other with a kiss. In 1 Peter 5:14, Peter tells those to whom he is writing to greet each other with a kiss” (592). This practice of kissing is not obtainable in our African culture and should not be brought to the local people as God’s intent. What was advocated for in this text is a true greeting of love from believers not kissing. Therefore, from the views of the above quoted commentaries and my personal understanding, greeting in love was the point and not necessarily kissing.

An interview with Ugwa, James a clergy man from Alayi Item reveals that *Isutu-onu* (kissing) has a negative connotation to the ears of an average Igbo person. He added that it is against our cultural values to encourage kissing in public. Ugwuaja, Chukwuma Nwaka the president general of Ariam community in Abia State noted that “kissing has never been and can never be accepted as a form of greeting in Igbo land”. He noted that hogging which is obtainable today, is a latter adoption. He noted that a woman can bend her back for an elderly man to touch and bless her.

The Efik Bible renders it the same way as “use holy kiss to greet one another.” Therefore, with our knowledge of mother tongue biblical hermeneutics as: the scholarly engagement of the indigenous language translations of the Bible in order to understand what they say and mean to our local readers, we must see the need to present the intent and meaning of the text in ways that are appropriate to our local context. It is on this note, that I recommend that Romans 16:16 should read thus: “*kelerita onwe-unu na ekele di nso*” meaning “greet one another with holy greetings”. Simple errors like that found in Genesis 3:4 can be simply corrected. The Igbo translation reads thus: “*Agwo we si nwanyi, O dighi onwu unu naghaghi inwu*” meaning “The snake said to the woman, there is no type of death you people will not die” The above suggest the following:

- a. They will die every possible form of death
- b. They will die



However, from a simple analysis of the text, the serpent was actually telling them that they won't die if they eat of the fruit; rather their eyes will be opened. The Igbo translation rather said they will die, affirming what God had said which the devil deceitfully thwarted. It should read thus: *Agwo si nwanyi ahu, nezie, unu agaghanwu* or *Agwo si nwanyi ahu, unu agaghanwu, nezi okwu*.

6. The Place of Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics in Strengthening Christianity in Africa

Having discussed at length the concept of mother tongue biblical hermeneutics, tracing it down to the development of general hermeneutics, we shall discuss the place of this concept in strengthening Christianity in Africa using Nigeria as a case study.

First, In a country like Nigeria with over five hundred different ethnic groups and languages, mother tongue biblical hermeneutics will in no small measure help in the assimilation and understanding of biblical texts. Various ethnic groups in Nigeria have their different cultural beliefs and practices, and without a good mother tongue hermeneutics, a particular bible text will be wrongly generalized. This can be clearly seen in the controversial issue of head covering found in 1 Corinthians 11: 2-16. From the text Paul says *“Every man who prays with something on his head dishonours his head but every woman who prays or prophecies with her head uncovered dishonours her head, since that is one and the same as having her head shaved”* (1 Corinth 11:4-5).

Some in the Eastern part of Nigeria question the idea of asking title holders to remove their caps when praying. Some also wonder why Bishops are permitted to put on their skull cap in church but do not allow title holders to put on their red symbolic caps in the same church. An interview with Mahdi, Babayor reveals that the Arabs traditionally believe that he that prays with the cap on his head on Friday has seventy blessings, while the man that prays with uncovered head has thirty blessings only. On the side of the women, most women from the northern part of Nigeria are known for proper head covering, but most women from the east and south-south part of Nigeria cover their heads occasionally. Some do not cover for religious reasons but for fashion. Therefore, a good understanding of mother tongue hermeneutics can settle the presentation of that text in the various mother tongue translations for right practice.

Second, a good mother tongue interpretation will help for a good reception of the Bible by certain communities; this is because, the scriptures will be interpreted from their worldview, and certain strange or wrong cultural practices will be carefully presented for their understanding. It is wrong in Igbo land for a woman to publicly kiss a man. So, when a righteous Jesus is said to have permitted and commended a lady for kissing His feet, then it raises strong questions in the hearts of a typical Hausa and Igbo person about the righteousness of Jesus. This is made worse with the command that we should kiss one another with a holy kiss (Rom 16:16).

Third, Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics will help local readers to quickly understand biblical text. The emphasis here is on quick understanding of biblical text. That is, the time it takes them to understand the English text is usually longer than that of their mother tongue. This will be more glaring if the first language of the person is his mother tongue. Such a person will have to convert whatever he hears from English to mother tongue before understanding. But if it is directly written in his or her mother tongue, there will be no need for conversion, thereby making understanding of Biblical text faster.

Fourth, Mother tongue biblical hermeneutics will also help in the production of not only good mother tongue Bibles but commentaries and other materials that can help in the understanding of the Bible. This is an area that is lacking because commentaries in our various languages in Africa are lacking. What most of our preachers have are Western Bible commentaries which interpret biblical text with certain bias. I must at this juncture appreciate the producers of Africa Bible commentary. More of such is needed in our mother tongues. This will help our mothers and fathers in the villages to understand the Bible better and faster. If our mother tongue Bible has been of help, then mother tongue commentaries will also be of great help.

Fifth, the concept of mother tongue biblical hermeneutics, which is to bridge the gap between the text and the audience (local audience), will help scholars to be careful to follow our system of spellings in our local languages. If this is not done, the goal of bridging the gap will not be achieved. The western writing pattern should not be followed in our local translations when dealing with some English names.



Sixth, the concept of Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics will help eradicate the bad notions attached to our traditional names. Many prefer answering biblical names as against our local names, thinking the new name given after Baptism affects their lives better. This wrong notion can be handled only with good knowledge of the concept under consideration. Most of our African names have deep meanings and should be loved by Africans. However, some of our names that are not good should not be encouraged.

Finally, it will help scholars to, via their interpretation, set the right cultural practice, avoiding Biblicism that is, taking actions in line with the literal expressions in the text. It is only when proper exegesis is done by the biblical scholar and the proper rendering is given that this practice which is fast spreading can be reduced. The present usage of special materials like anointing oil, holy water, and salt by pastors who make reference to certain biblical passages that they quote out of context in most cases will be curtailed. Some of these erroneous practices can be corrected only by scholars' deep engagement with the text.

7. Conclusion

We can, from all said above, suggest that the transformation of a nation, ethnic groups and individuals can come through the sustained use of the Bible in the mother tongue. Our African mother tongue languages are living languages. Therefore, academic curriculum should make space for the transfer of exegetical knowledge from western languages into the African languages and worldview that are used in ministering to the congregation. We shall conclude this work by leaning on the thought-provoking conclusion of Andrew Smith in his article "Mother Tongue Theological Education in Africa: A Response to Jim Harries' The Prospects for Mother Tongue Theological Education in Western Kenya." English and other globalising languages are, and will remain, primary teaching languages in many African pastoral training institutions, but certainly, God values mother tongues and has no reservations in using them for His purposes. I am not the first to notice Acts 2:1-11 in this regard.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and

came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” “Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because **each one heard them speaking in his own language**. Utterly amazed, they asked: ‘Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then **how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?** Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs - **we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!**

On this note, we enjoin scholars to commence engaging our local language translations. Young scholars, who are always afraid of biblical languages and most times see their mother tongue as useless, should be made to understand that it is a necessary tool for effective local ministry. Parents and guardians should also contribute their own quota by speaking and teaching their children their native language. In summary, having assessed the great benefit of this concept to strengthening Christianity in Africa, all hands must come together to promote Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics.

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Tackling Noise Pollution in Urban Benue: the Role of the Church

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Abstract

Noise pollution, especially in developing countries, is a serious problem because of urbanization and industrialization. Unfortunately, other forms of pollution appear to be enjoying more attention, thereby down-playing the harm being caused by noise pollution in urban Benue. With the aim of suggesting a way out of this problem, these researchers have employed a triangulation of the historical, phenomenological, and expository methods to examine the peculiarities of the Benue experience. The researchers also undertook a field study through which they interviewed respondents and had a first-hand observation of the different dimensions of noise pollution within the study area. It has been found that: (i) there are several sources of noise pollution in Benue urban centres; (ii) the Church² is also a major generator of noise pollution; and (iii) by virtue of its high position of influence among the people, the church can lead the battle against noise pollution. Hence, the paper is an exposition of the role of the Church in curbing noise pollution; it also contains recommendations for ensuring an effective performance of that role.

² Within this paper, the term Church refers to all the Christian denominations, sects, church-based organizations, Missions, and Ministries that operate in Benue State.



1. Introduction

What is known today as Benue State was part of the defunct Benue-Plateau State until 3rd February 1976 when it was carved out by the military administration of General Murtala Muhammad. The state derives its name from the Benue River which is the second largest in Nigeria. There are four major indigenous ethnicities in Benue – the Tiv, Idoma, Igede, and Etulo. Also found in the area are several settler groups like the Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Fulani, Jukun, Kuteb, Ijaw, Igala, and many other Nigerian tribes. These different ethnic groups exhibit diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

Most of the Benue people practice subsistence agriculture (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). The state has a population of 4,219,244 and occupies a geographical space of 32,518 sq. km (National Population Commission B52). In less than a decade, increasing rural-to-urban migration in search of better living conditions has become a cause of concern as the few urban centres are burgeoning with population. This upsurge in population has continued to put pressure on already limited infrastructure. One of the impacts of this over-population is noise pollution. Explaining how overpopulation results in noise pollution, Ikoni states that most of the time, people migrate from the rural to urban areas. In the course of this population increase, two or more settlements grow an enmesh into one big city; which in turn, may become overpopulated and congested. With so many people living in close quarters, even their day to day activities tend to lead, unavoidably, to an escalation in noise levels (34). As discussed later in the paper, noise pollution has catastrophic consequences on humans and other animals.

It may be observed that in the absence of major manufacturing or industrial activities, religious activities constitute a major source of noise pollution in urban Benue. Ironically, the same Church exerts an enormous influence on the affairs of the Benue people; which could be harnessed to reduce noise pollution. The paper contains an exposition of noise pollution and its effects, an account of the Benue experience of noise pollution; and current efforts to curb. It also contains an outline of the various ways by which the Church can effectively help to curtail this menace.

2. Noise Pollution and its Effects

As a type of environmental pollution, noise refers to the excessive, displeasing human, animal, or machine-created sound that causes annoyance, stress or damage to the ears, and/or interferes with the activity or the balance of human or animal life (Hart). Noise may also refer to “series of confusion of loud sounds, irregular fluctuations accompanying a transmitted signal” (Ogah 190). Etymologically, the term noise originates from the Latin *nauseas* which is a metaphorical equivalent of disgust or discomfort (“Noise” *Merriam Webster Dictionary*). Although loud and frightening noises have been part of nature for millennia, it is only recently that much of the world has become urban, industrial, and chronically noisy (Hart). The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines noise pollution as “a very loud or continuous noise which is considered unpleasant and harmful to people”. From the foregoing, it is now clear that noise pollution refers to any sound, whether coordinated, harmonious or discordant, which is emitted at high levels, resulting in nuisance, discomfort, or ill- health of humans or other life forms.

Across the world, the main sources of outdoor noise are construction, manufacturing, and transportation systems. Especially in poorly designed urban areas, industrial and residential buildings are not well separated; as a result, residents suffer severe noise pollution (Hogan and Latshaw). In addition, Hart avers that people commonly encounter noise pollution through home appliances, shop tools, lawn mowers, leaf blowers, fire crackers, and some toys. Even music, played at very high volume is as damaging to the ears as a roaring chain saw. Oceans are also becoming increasingly noisy. The engines of ships (especially large vessels) produce very loud sound and increase in sea traffic is also generating noise pollution. Offshore oil exploration and drilling are also a major source of noise emanating from the ocean. So also is the use of very loud, low-frequency sonar signals which are sent through the seas to detect submarines and gain information about water temperatures and global warming.

According to Hart, sound intensity is measured in units called decibels (dB). The decibel scale is logarithmic and climbs steeply such that an increase of about 3 dB is a doubling of sound volume. In the open places like the wilderness, a typical sound level would be 35 dB. Speech runs from 65 dB to 70 dB; heavy traffic generates 90 dB. By 140 dB, sound



becomes painful to the human ear. However, ill effects, including hearing loss, can set in even when sound is produced at much lower levels. From the foregoing, it is noteworthy that, like other kinds of pollutions, almost all the dangerous noise is directly or remotely connected to man's activities.

Noise pollution causes serious problems to both people and animals. In humans; it causes hearing loss (deafness), tinnitus (a ringing sound in the ears); it also makes conversation difficult (people must shout to be heard and strain their ears to listen); noise makes it difficult for people doing some kinds of activities (like reading) to concentrate; and disturbs sleep. Noise pollution is also a source of stress; as a result, it can cause high blood pressure, other cardiovascular conditions, and nervous disorders (Hart). In fact, constant exposure to noise pollution (particularly noise above 85 dB) cause death in humans (Ajayi and Eyongndi 89). Noise pollution affects animals as well, Hart reports that both domestic animals and wildlife can be stressed. He notes that military aircraft often frighten and distress animals. In Alaska, it has been observed that noise considerably shortens the survival rate of caribou calves. Also, noise pollution at sea may confuse the natural sonar that whales use to navigate, communicate, and locate food; this may lead to severe distress and eventual death.

Noise is indeed a major impediment to the quality of life in urban locations (Oyedepo and Saadu 563). According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) exposure to excessive noise is a major cause of hearing loss which affects at least 5 percent of the world globally; out of which 328 million are adults and 32 million are children ("Hearing Loss...". Furthermore, noise has been recognised as the third most hazardous type of environmental pollutant, with air and water pollution coming second and first respectively (WHO "United Nations Road...").

The effects of noise on non-living things, is equally worrisome, intense sonic noise can cause cracks in national and archaeological monuments; high levels of noise can cause hills and rocks to crack; while high calibre explosions (such as those used at mining sites) can cause the glass on buildings to break as well as vibrations (which often results in the cracks) in buildings (Ijaiya 3).

3. Noise Pollution in Urban Benue

Generally, the Nigerian experience of noise pollution in urban areas is relatively the same; “From the irritating and persisting bark of a dog to the blasting of neighbour’s stereo of the insistent blare of a car horn or radio, noise has become the norm” in contemporary Nigerian urban centres (Ikoni 34). In Benue, urban-dwelling people suffer noise pollution from several sources. These, as well as the peculiarities of the Benue experience, are the concern of the following sections.

3.1 Religious Activities

This is the most common source of noise pollution in Benue. In the most literal sense; every town in Benue State has several churches, most of which are located in residential areas. Akinola has stated that in Nigeria, “on every street, churches and mosques spring up daily” (76). Specifically, in Makurdi, Gboko, and Otukpo, it is nearly impossible to find a street that does not have at least one church located on it (Daka). Most churches mount large, high-powered, loud speakers outside their buildings; these are often times targeted at residents of the neighbouring community in the belief that it is a means of announcing the gospel to them (Daka). Most churches hold several activities³ that run through the week; they tend to constitute noise pollution to their neighbourhoods on a daily basis. Night vigils for example run throughout the night (mostly on weekends) and are accompanied by loud singing, clapping, dancing, music, and very loud prayers (Daka).

On the campuses of tertiary institutions within Benue state, noise pollution from religious activities is common place. Tertiary institutions in Benue are saturated with religious groups which gather to worship, praise, and pray to God or simply to create awareness of their presence on campus and possibly proselytize other students into their fold. In all these activities, a lot of noise is generated. And given that one institution can have more than several different religious groups which carry out their activities in lecture theatres, halls, game centres, and parks; every day on campus witnesses one noise-generating religious activity or the other. Most of these activities run late into the night and because they are carried

³ such as choir practice, Bible studies, morning prayer meetings, night vigils, praise/worship services, weddings, singles parties, and crusades



out anywhere and everywhere on campus, they constitute a major source of distraction and nuisance to students intending to study, read, or write (Orhena).

According to a respondent, another source of noise from religious activities is found in market places. Apart from spending up to three hours of certain days for prayer meetings in public markets, there are mobile evangelists who roam the markets, screaming into megaphones. Some mount loud speakers on wheelbarrows and preach as they move around (Okonkwo).

Apart from the noise caused by churches and religious organizations, certain individuals pray in the middle of the night (usually between 12 am and 3 am) while others do so between 4 am and 6 am. Their loud prayers are a source of nuisance to their neighbours and, of course, a form of noise pollution. Such praying is known to make it impossible for their neighbours to sleep well. Hence, some religious activities at both institutional and individual levels are a major source of noise pollution (Orhena).

3.2 Vehicular Traffic

In most Nigerian cities, traffic congestions and vehicle horns constitute a huge source of noise pollution; large numbers of vehicles on roads produce loud noise and people find it hard to cope with the discomfort (Adeyemi). The same obtains in Benue; particularly in places like Makurdi (the capital city) where there is a heavy presence of automobiles, the noise produced is quite alarming. More so, apart from the sound of their vehicles' engines, drivers of commuter buses and commercial motorcycles are known to honk their horns every few seconds as a way of calling out to passengers. Thus, those who work or live near heavy traffic routes experience noise disturbance every day (Daka). This view was corroborated by the findings of Ada et al, that the noise levels in almost all parts of Makurdi metropolis which they surveyed⁴ were above WHO and NESREA standards for permissible noise levels, both during the day time and at night (47).

⁴ The study surveyed several locations in and around Wurukum and North Bank areas of Makurdi, Benue State

3.3 Electricity Generators

A standard portable power generator can give off at least 60 dB of sound and can go as loud as 100 dB (Sanders). This implies that heavy duty generators can produce much more. Again, even portable generators, when old, can generate way more than 100 dB. In Benue, like most other parts of Nigeria, epileptic or total unavailability of electricity has caused over-dependence on power plants by public and private organisations as well as individual homes. In the day time, many business and corporate organisations electrify their offices via generators. The same happens in markets and street shops. When the night comes, people retire to their homes and have no option than to switch on their generators (some through the night and others till bed time). In certain parts of Benue towns, it so happens that in a compound of 10 rented apartments, at least a third of the tenants own power generators of different noise emitting capacities. Many residents experience sleep deprivation and other noise-related stress during the night when they should be resting (Anjembe). Thus most people experience noise pollution both at work and at home.

3.4 Night Recreational Facilities

Recreational facilities such as film halls, eateries, bars, and night clubs are also responsible for noise pollution. Most of them run their generators in addition to loud music, which is meant to entertain their guests, but their location in residential areas cause noise pollution to those who have retired home to sleep. Particularly, night clubs are most culpable because they stay open all through the night, some for seven nights a week. And again, since most are located within or near residential areas, the music they blare at hundreds of decibels to the pleasure of their customers is usually to the extreme discomfort of their neighbours (Orhena).

3.5 Advertisement of Music Records

Closely related to the noise generated by night clubs, but much more intense, is the blaring of music from dealers of music records. They advertise their products by mounting amplified high-watt loudspeakers in front of their shops; these are often engaged at very high volume, blaring samples of their records for at least 12 hours a day. Most record dealers are found in groups of shops within commercial centres and markets; some locate their services at motor parks. They call out to customers by playing



their records at high volume. They believe that the when the music it blared at such volumes even passers-by, who might like what is being played, are attracted to visit the shop and buy. Hence such is a practice is meant to attract customers and boost sales (Okechukwu). Those who work or live near these record dealers' experience severe noise pollution on a daily basis. Apart from these record dealers who occupy shops; there exists another group of mobile dealers who use modified wheel barrows which are mounted with small generators, sound systems and television sets. They go about town blaring loud music in the course of hawking music records and films (Mary).

Another important contributor to noise pollution is the group of mobile dealers who use vehicles (vans, wagons, and tricycles) which are mounted with loudspeakers that blast high volume music as they go about urban centres selling records and household products. Some are engaged in advertisement of and or sale of health and life style products; some sale telecommunication products (sim and recharge cards); some sale household items (detergents, soap, milk, cereals, and electronics); and others promote events. All these activities disperse enormous noise in urban areas on a daily basis (Orhena).

4. Control of Noise Pollution in Urban Benue: An Assessment

Nigeria, like Benue “does not have specific legislations on noise pollution as is the case in countries like the United States of America and United Kingdom” (Ijaiya 4). The country relies rather on relies on Acts which define the policies and strategies of some environmental agencies. Hence, efforts to control environmental pollution in Benue State can be grouped into two: Governmental, and Non-Governmental. Governmental efforts take the form of different agencies that have been mandated to carry out various roles to ensure better environmental conditions for the people of the State. Some of these agencies are under the control of the Federal government, while others are under the authority of the State. There are two such agencies in Benue. The first is the National Environmental Standard and Regulation Enforcement Agency (NESREA) which was founded in 2007 as a parastatal of the then Federal Ministry of Environment, Housing and Urban Development. It is a Federal government agency mandated to ensure, amongst other things, compliance with environmental laws. In Benue NESREA has a head office in Makurdi,

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the Benue State capital (“NESREA”). The NESREA Act of 2007 empowers the agency to control noise pollution; its agents can “seize, impound or confiscate any instrument used in causing disturbance to the public” (“Noise Makers...” *Premium Times*). Specifically, the Act provides that:

- a) The Agency shall on the commencement of this Act, and in consultation with appropriate authorities:
 - i) identify major noise sources, noise criteria and noise control technology; and
 - ii) make regulations on noise, emission control, abatement, as may be necessary to preserve and maintain public health and welfare.
- b) The Agency shall enforce compliance with existing regulations and recommend programs to control noise originating from industrial, commercial, domestic, sports, recreational, transportation or other similar activities (section 22).

In addition, the National Policy on Environment of 1988 empowers relevant agencies to, *inter alia*:

- (a) set up standards including acoustic guarantees;
- (b) prescribe guidelines for the control of noise especially with respect to construction sites, market and meeting places.
- c) prescribe permissible noise level in noise-prone industries and construction sites and to ensure the installation of noise dampers on noise equipment;
- d) set up quiet zones especially within game parks, reserves and recreational centres (para 3.12).

The second environmental agency is the Benue State Environmental Sanitation Authority (BENSESA) was created in 2005. Its primary responsibility is the enforcement of environmental health laws and the implementation of all policies that have to do with environmental sanitation. It also facilitates waste disposal in the townships (“BENSESA”). The above agencies, in spite of legislative support, tend to focus more on other kinds of pollution and have not shown any noticeable commitment to the control of noise pollution yet.

In the same way, non-governmental efforts to control pollution tend to neglect noise. Indeed, there is evidence that individuals are involved in efforts to curb other forms of environmental pollution in areas



like environmental protection and waste disposal. For instance, recycling of metallic waste is done by people who have taken it up as a commercial activity. Also some individuals engage in clearing and incineration of household waste around their homes and businesses. In other parts of Benue towns, there are youths who visit premises (like houses and shops) collecting waste which they convey to public dump sites in the neighbourhood; they are paid fees based on the amount of waste they collect at any given time.

Aside from these roles, there seems to be no concerted effort against noise pollution. In the course of this research, it was found that there were no big private organizations in charge of waste management or noise pollution in the State. It is important to state that noise pollution has become highly prevalent in Benue State because there is little or no effort to control it. This view is corroborated by the finding of an earlier research in Ibadan:

Noise pollution is one aspect of environmental pollution that is taken lightly in Nigeria and has not been seen as dangerous and having adverse effect on the life of people and this is possibly the reason why not much research into environmental noise pollution has been carried out in Nigeria (Luqman et al 26).

This gloomy picture at the national level is similar to the Benue experience. It is for this reason that the Church which enjoys a large following in the State has been viewed as capable of tackling this menace.

5. The Role of the Church in Tackling Environmental Pollution

Benue State is host to various denominations of the Christian faith which have millions of devout followers. Every Church exercises a great degree of control over its members who derive from all levels of economic, political, and social endeavours; as such it is may be argued that this influence, as well as other aspects of the Churches activities can be harnessed to reduce the rate of noise pollution. These roles have been discussed in the following subsections.

5.1 Cutting Down on Church-Caused Pollution

It is evident that the Church is a major contributor to various kinds of environmental pollution. Key among these is noise pollution. Pentecostal, evangelical and charismatic churches are mostly guilty of this charge. Noise pollution is not only a serious risk to human health; it is a

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violation of the law. More so, underlying the issue of noise pollution is that of wrong location; most churches in urban Benue are not located within legal limits. There are federal laws regulating the location of institutions; some of them been domesticated by many states in the federation. For instance, the Land Use Act of 1978 abolished all freehold systems and vested all urban land within the state in the state governor, and all non-urban lands in the local government in which they are found (section 2, 1(a) and 1(b)). Thus the use of all land in Nigeria fell under the regulatory capacity of the governor and relevant agencies within the jurisdictions stipulated by the Act. This gave room for town planning and regulation of lands for industrial, residential, recreational, educational, administrative, social, and worship purposes. Many states have also created master plans for their urban lands which clearly stipulate where and how certain buildings (including churches) should or should not be built. Areas designated as residential are not supposed to house churches or industries. This means that by law, churches are not supposed to be sited in certain areas which are designate as residential. However, as Akinola noted above, churches (and mosques) tend to spring up anywhere these days (76). Indeed, a large number of them are in wrong and illegal locations.

Hence, to control the problem of noise pollution by churches, those who operate church ministries must learn to comply with the law on the issue of location. The same can be said of the churches sited in residential areas; they should either be closed down or made to comply with the law on what amount of noise is permissible in residential areas. This will greatly reduce noise pollution and its attendant health problems in Benue urban centres. Following this structure, the different Churches in Benue can look inward and determine which of their activities are harmful to the environment and either abolish them totally or cut down significantly in order to guarantee a better environment for the people. In an interview, Mary⁵, a resident of Makurdi, lamented that noise from a church located next to her house had kept her awake and restless every other night for all the years that it has been in existence. She believed that the nuisance was the cause of high blood pressure. She noted that if there

⁵ real name withheld



were strict compliance with town planning laws, such nuisance could be avoided.

Finally, the Church preaches the principle of “...love thy neighbour as thyself” (*The Bible*, KJV, Matt 22:39) which implies a duty of care to one’s neighbour. Churches located in residential areas can practice what they preach by cutting down on the noise they make because it has serious health consequences on those who live within those neighbourhoods.

5.2 The Church as a Socialization Agent

Socialization refers to “the lifelong process of inheriting and disseminating norms, customs and ideologies, providing an individual with the skills and habits necessary for participating within his or her own society” (Clausen 5). It is a vital means by which social and cultural continuity is attained. There are different kinds of socialization; secondary socialization (which applies here) is the process of learning what constitutes ‘appropriate’ behaviour as a member of a smaller group within the larger society; it is basically the behavioural patterns reinforced by socialization agents of the society (such as the school, the church, and the work place). Secondary socialization takes place outside the home; for instance, schools, the Church, and social associations require different behaviour from the home and participants must act in accordance with the new rules to fit into the new group (“Secondary Socialization”).

As an agent of socialization, the Church has two cardinal roles to play in the fight against noise pollution. The first is in the area of attitude formation. The Church can groom people (right from their youth) to embrace anti-noise pollution (and by extension environmental friendly) attitudes. A good example of such an attitude is the inculcation of Christian environmental stewardship; the teaching that man is a vicegerent whose responsibility is to take good care of the natural environment knowing that he shall give an account of his stewardship to God (Bugg). Obviously, people who grow up knowing that they owe it a duty to account for the way they treat the natural environment will definitely be mindful of the amount of pollution they cause (and this includes noise pollution).

The second aspect of the Church’s role is in the area of anti-noise pollution advocacy. The leadership and congregations of the Church can borrow a leaf from the advocacy of the Catholic Papacy (which has been

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pro-environment for centuries) by setting up special advocacy groups that will campaign against noise pollution. By use of peer educators, the Roman Catholic church has combated the HIV/AIDS pandemic to a standstill. The same be done in the fight against noise pollution. Peer educators can prove quite effective in creation of awareness on the dangers of noise pollution and advocacy against it.

5.3 The Church as a Regulator of Culture

In Benue State the Church occupies a very special sphere of influence; it has for several centuries caused changes in the peoples' culture. According to Kombol, the Catholic Church alone has over one million adherents in Tiv land alone (148-149). Similarly, the NKST Church enjoys a large followership with over one million members (Ahenekaa and Achineku 46). Other mainline churches in Benue include Assemblies of God Church, Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church, Anglican Church. Aside from the mainline churches, there are hundreds of new generation churches that span the length and breadth of the Benue territory. Major ones include; Living Faith Church, Dunamis International Gospel Church, Deeper Life Bible Church, Mountain of Fire Ministries, Shelter of Glory Ministries, All Nations Evangelical Ministries, Redeemed Christian Church of God amongst several others. The population that these churches control indicates a large sphere of influence. An example of how this applies is found in the regulation of burial practices among the people. In the late mid-2000s, having observed that Benue people were spending huge sums of money on so-called 'befitting burials', the Catholic Church issued a decree that: - (i) building of flamboyant and expensive graves should be stopped, (ii) no one should be kept unburied for longer than twenty-one days after death, (iii) extravagant spending on food, drinks, and clothes was to be stopped forthwith, and (iv) no Catholic priest was to bury anyone whose funeral was arranged in violation of the decree. This decree was soon re-echoed by the NKST Church Synod, which cut the number of days to fourteen. Within a few weeks the practice of spending huge sums of money to make caskets and graves, sew funeral uniforms, kill cows, and cook luxurious meals was stopped! This example shows the extent to which the Church can cause changes, even in the cultural affairs of the Benue people.



This same influence can be harnessed to wage war against noise pollution in the State. If the Church can regulate negative customary practices in such a swift manner, it can definitely change practices that exacerbate noise pollution as well.

5.4 The Church in Education

Benue State plays host to several churches, most of which are major stake holders in the educational sector due to their large ownership of schools – which range from the primary level to the tertiary. For instance, the NKST Church has 7 tertiary institutions, 53 secondary schools and 500 primary schools (*N.K.S.T Annual Report 2012*). And the Catholic Church has close to a hundred schools in the State. Other Churches in the State that own schools include, Anglican, Methodist, ECWA, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Living Faith, National Evangelical Mission, and so on. By way of estimation, there are over 300 schools in Benue which are owned by Church-based organizations. This way, the Church can be said to have a huge impact on the people that go through these educational institutions (both as students and staff).

This large sphere of influence can be leveraged on by introducing eco-friendly education on the curricula (e.g., the teaching of Environmental Stewardship) and as well enforcing eco-friendly attitudes to nature (such as Biocentrism, Egalitarianism, Connection, Cooperation, and Holism). These measures will ultimately lead to the enlightenment of the people on the need to cut down on noise pollution.

5.5 The Church and the Political Elites

The influence of the Church in political affairs predates modern times, in ancient civilizations for example, the Kings were selected by the Church and the former were wary of the power of the latter in shaping people's belief and fears. That way, Kings were easily influenced by the Church. In modern times, this influence has not waned, for instance, Godwin notes that the Abortion Law of January 1993 which criminalised abortion in Poland was passed due to the influence of the Church; even though 59 percent of Poles were against it (qtd. in Grzymata-Buse 1). Aside from prayers, vigils, and explicit politicking on behalf of allied politicians and political parties; the Church also exerts political influence by use of duress on its members in high positions. Regarding this,

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Grzymmata-Buse gives an example of how the Roman Catholic Church has always threatened to excommunicate supporters of policies (like abortion) which are deemed sinful. The clergy, she maintains, “have openly used their pulpits to openly denounce specific laws and the political actors who supported and passed them” (22).

It is worthy to note that the use of church punishment as a threat is not a sole preserve of the Roman Catholics though. In Benue, the NKST has used it to regulate several kinds of activities before (including marriage, burial, drinking, dressing, grooming, and political participation (*source*: field study). Again, as it is the case in other parts of Nigeria, politicians in Benue State rely on the influence of religious organizations like the Church to get elected into public office and to consolidate their leadership of the populace. Aside from that, most politicians are members of one religious organization or the other. This means that the Church has a level of influence (whether authoritative or persuasive) both on the Benue political elite and their followers. As such, the Church can lobby for the enactment and implementation of anti-noise pollution, and eco-friendly laws; it can also push for change of attitudes, policies, strategies, and environmental protection awareness.

6. Conclusion

The issue of noise pollution remains very important regarding its many negative effects. This fact has been demonstrated above, and the paper was also able to pinpoint the peculiarities of the Benue experience of noise pollution. Within the same discourse it was possible to highlight the various ways by which the Church can play vital roles in curbing this menace. It is the hope of these researchers that since the Church has been known to successfully tackle so many other ills in the society, it is also capable of cutting down noise pollution in Benue State. Thus, this is a call to all stakeholders to support the Church in that direction.

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Disaster Management in Benue State and the Role of Religious Institutions

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Abstract

Benue State has been experiencing a series of environmental crisis that sometimes attribute to disasters and other emergencies. Government and non-government organizations (NGOs) as well as religious institutions at the national, state and local government levels have put in place certain measures to confront these natural and human-induced disasters. Relief/rehabilitation remains an important part of the recovery process. The authors seek to discuss risk reduction and application of disaster management techniques/policies that provide knowledge in enhancing the coping strategies of stakeholders in disaster management in Benue State. The researchers take a brief look at the history of some major disasters in Benue State and the activities of religious institutions in disaster management. The article utilize primary and secondary sources, which includes: interview reports, books, journal articles, research reports and a select internet sources. The researchers use descriptive analysis for the interpretation of both the primary and secondary data. The study reveals that religious models for disaster risk reduction and management have been severely challenged, overtime. It is the thinking of the researchers that in view of the major role played by religious institutions in complementing government and NGO's efforts in managing various forms of disasters in



Benue State, both traditional and modern strategies be harnessed by disaster managers in handling disasters and victims of such.

1. Introduction

Natural and human-made activities, sometimes, lead to certain disasters; such disasters are increasing regularly and perhaps more importantly, their impacts on population and human settlements are rising steadily. This state of affairs coupled with cycles of dependency and shortages of resources, point to the need to evolve additional approaches and re-examine traditional policies on relief and rehabilitation/reconstruction measures. This article therefore, discusses the historical context of Benue State, major disasters in the State, disaster management initiatives in the State, the role of religious institutions in managing disasters and re-construction, highlights on certain challenges in disaster management and the way forward.

2. Historical context of Benue State

Benue State is named after River Benue. The State lies within the lower Benue trough and shares boundaries with five other states and Cameroun. It is low-lying and made up of riparian wetlands, fertile for agriculture. FRN states that Benue State has a total population of 4,253,641 comprising of 2,144,043 males and 2,109,598 females based on the 2006 Census, with an average population density of 99 persons per km. This makes Benue the 9th most populous state in Nigeria (qtd. In Abu, Madu and Ajaero “Mortality in Benue”).

However, the distribution of the population across local government areas shows marked duality. Markurdi town, which is the capital of the state, lies within the floodplain of the lower River Benue valley and serves as the administrative headquarters of Benue State. The town is drained principally by River Benue, which divides it into Makurdi North and South. Hula and Udoh opine that the low topographical relief of the area results in the floods experienced by residents (54-55). The National Population Census figure shows that Makurdi alone is home to over 300,377 persons. There are areas of low population density such as Guma, Gwer East, Ohimini, Katsina-Ala, Apa, Logo and Agatu, each with less than seventy persons per km while Vandeikya, Okpokwu, Ogbadibo, Obi and Gboko have densities ranging from 140 persons to 200 persons per km.

Makurdi LGA which is one area of this study, has over 380 people per km. Flood events in Benue state impact communities as far as Vandeikya due to the rivers and tributaries that surround the state Abu, Madu and Ajaero (“Mortality in Benue”).

3. Major Disasters in Benue State

3.1 Tiv Riots of 1960-1964

The Tiv are one of the ethnic nationalities that are mostly found around the North-central part of Nigeria with a population that cut across parts of Benue, Nassarawa, Taraba and Cross-River states. Following the independence of the country in 1960, the Tiv division in the province of Benue was characterized with several political crises that seem very destructive and unending. To many observers the crises were considered as a grand conspiracy of the central government to destabilize the peace, unity growth and development of the region. Sharing this same view, Oradi affirmed that:

The NPC regarded the long chain of disturbances in the division as a conspiracy by some external forces... aided by some selfish politicians in the area who hope to achieve their pet ambition. It has been the vowed desire of the disgruntled politicians that by so doing, they will make an-in-road into the north and cause a setback to the present, peaceful and steady march towards political solidarity and economic emancipation of the Northern regional government (qtd.in Anifowose 163).

The Tiv crisis came largely due to disagreements between the Northern People Congress and the opposition, United Middle Belt Congress over the inclusion of some policies from the central government of NPC which were aimed at reducing the entire operation of the UMBC. For instance, the inclusion of traditional members of the council into the regional government as directed by the NPC as well as the wide spread taxation and the victimization of opposition members of the party by the NPC (Audu 7).

Consequently, by 1960, the UMBC supporters under the leadership of Joseph Sarwuan Tarkaa, in Tiv could no longer tolerate these local functionaries of the NPC (8). From these, it became clear that resistance to political oppression became the major factor that resulted into this crisis that claimed severed lives and properties worth thousands were



destroyed. During the crisis, over 500,000 people were arrested out of which 3,882 were convicted (Dent, Qtd in Audu 8). To the contemporary Tiv person, this crisis which was headed by J.S Tarkaa is seen as a struggle of the minorities towards emancipation. It is a struggle for self-identity and self-recognition.

3.2 The Tiv/Jukun; and Benue - Nassarawa Crises

The Tiv and Jakun ethnic nationalities have had disputes and crises that were attributed to land issues for a long period of time. The Jukuns would come under the canopy of acquired land for farming but this was often not the reason as the true reason was political. Note also that before now, the Jukuns do have a rosy relationship with the Hausa-Fulani's until this relationship was spoiled due to fight. Before this clashes, the Jukamis before now choose to tell other ethnic communities that the Tiv people are bad and wicked and this led to a continuous conspiracy and attacks on the Tiv and this has remained a worrying situation that is refusing to end in that part of the state.

3.3 Attacks on Tiv Communities in Nasarawa State

In Nasarawa State, some Hausa people from Katsina State and Kano sometimes long ago, were accommodated on Tiv land in Awe. There was a time when Uchir Chado Mtsor, a retired soldier who is also an indigene of Awe, came back home after a successful peace keeping mission and gave his elder brother, John Mtsor, a chair gift. The clan head of Deketi, an Mkwei man from Plateau State, said he should have been the person to have the chair, which according to him, is more befitting of his personality than John Mtsor. He was under the district head of Azara, Musa Ibrahim, a Hausa settler who was made district Head as a result of conspiracy activities against Tiv people by some ethnic groups. Akir who was invited by Ibrahim, left his home state of plateau to Nasarawa and was crowned the clan head by Ibrahim so that they two can work against the Tiv (GaddiDonald@facebook.com) It then follows that, each time a Tiv people cultivate on soil, they will bring tractors and till the land and thereafter, claimed it. Tiv people continued to file lawsuits of which more of them came in their favor as Ibrahim kept buying justice always in his favour. Thus, resulted into serious crises that claimed many lives and properties destroyed.

3.4 The 2012 and 2017 Floods

The world over, communities at risk of flooding have existed and persevered despite the recurring onslaught of extreme weather events and disasters. Wisner notes that many rural people have encountered severe natural occurrences and even climate change (93). A regional breakdown of data for 36 countries suggests that 17 countries in Africa are at extreme risk, 14 countries are at high risk, and 5 countries are at low risk. The susceptibility of the continent of Africa is further compounded by a low risk score of 4.12. Africa is evidently less prepared than many other regions for the implications of climate change, thus, the continent as a whole receives a high vulnerability rating (Maplecroft Verisk Climate Change Vulnerability Index, 2011).

In 2012, Benue State experienced a severe flood that cut across all the major towns on the banks of River Benue. Despite the warnings by the weather agency to prepare for increased rainfall and floods, Agada and Nirupama submit that a visit to the major cities, reveals drainage and canals silted with sand, plastic and other non-decomposable garbage's, buildings sited on drainage channels and erosion passages (1405-1407). Similar to the situation in Kogi, heavy downpour and the opening of the Lagbo dam spillway is fingered to be the cause of the flood. Homes, farmlands and valuable belongings were lost to the raging flood waters. Ojigi et al. assert that flood in Makurdi township displaced 112,362 persons and inundated 932.46 km² of land. Newspaper reports surmise that flood waters ravaged and swept away buildings and farmlands within 10 kilometres radius of the bank of River Benue (1068). The devastation of the flood stretched to communities in Apa, Agatu, Guma and Otukpo, with attendant difficulties experienced by residents of these areas. The flood waters submerged buildings, damaged roads and other properties including farmlands.

Similarly, in August 2017, a 72-hour downpour resulted in flooding of Makurdi, the state capital. According to Duru, this flood event is considered to be worse than the floods experienced in 2012. Reports emanating from the state, suggest that no fewer than 110,000 persons have been displaced, and no lives lost. The flood affected six local governments (Makurdi, Buruku, Guma, Tarka, Logo and Agatu), causing widespread



devastation in its wake. Farmlands, roads and homes were reported to have been washed away (“Benue Flood”).

3.5 The 1987 St. Martins Catholic Church Tragedy

Between 1950 and 1983 when St. Ann’s Parish Adikpo was created, it operated as a zone under the parish, opening more stations, during this period, the Church was known as St. Joseph Catholic Church. In 1984, the request of the Shangev-Ya Lay Faithful was granted and the Church was raised to the status of an independent mission by the Most Revd. Donald Murray (CSSP) the then Bishop of Makurdi Diocese.

The growth of the Church however continued and barely two (2) years of her independence, it was raised to a full Parish on 30th August, 1986 and the name was changed from St. Joseph’s Catholic Church to St. Martin’s Parish Mbape. Barely five (5) months of the creation off the Parish on 30th January, 1987, had tragedy struck the entire Catholic Community when the Parish Choir members were involved in an accident while travelling to Korinya for a Deanery Meeting. The Parish lost thirty-six (36) dear lives on that fatal accident.

3.6 The 1987 St. Roberts Catholic church Adamgbe

A Catholic church building in the Village of Adamgbe, Mbayongo Vandeikya Local Government area of Benue collapsed at about 9:45 PM tonight killing some 30 villagers who were worshipping during the Easter vigil night at the church. Mbayongo-Vandeikya is one of the communities in Benue State that borders Obudu Cross River tha lack modern amenities. To the, people of this community, church attendance provides some sort of spiritual and psychological comfort to many.

Parishioners of St. Roberts Catholic church Adamgbe Mbayongo were right in the middle of service when the church walls came tumbling, crushing at least 30 people to death. A survivor of the tragedy Michael Tyokyaa said the situation was very tragic as it took extremely long before any form of help could come their way. Police officers from Vandeikya township in the local government headquarters managed to get to the collapsed scene almost an hour after the church building.

3.7 Herdsmen attacks on Farmers in Benue State

The Fulani Herdsmen attacks on Farming Communities remains a major issue in Benue State. So far, thousands have been killed and many more have been expelled from their homes, and the Nigerian government does not appear willing to initiate any forceful action against them. Rather, they are requesting for pieces of land from states in order to provide the rampaging herdsmen with permanent feeding ground.

Before now, the herdsmen have been known to wreak havoc in certain communities in Nigeria, but now, the rate at which they commit these crimes has increased exponentially. According to statistics provided by the Institute for Economics and Peace, 1,229 people were killed in 2014, up from 63 in 2013 and Benue State seems to be the hardest hit in recent times. Barely five days to the end of Governor Gabriel Suswam's administration in May 2015, over 100 farmers and their family members were reportedly massacred in villages and refugee camps located in the Ukura, Per, Gafa and Tse-Gusa local government areas of the state.

According to reports, in July 2015, suspected herdsmen attacked Adeke, a community on the outskirts of the state capital, Makurdi. Last December, six persons were killed at Idele village in the Oju local government area. A reprisal attack by youths in the community saw three Fulani herdsmen killed and beheaded. In February this year, as a result of a clash between herdsmen and farmers in Benue State, 40 more people were killed, about 2,000 displaced and not less than 100 were seriously injured.

Essentially, Benue's economy is an agrarian one which houses a vast majority of the state's population. What this means is that any threat or attack to the sector will definitely have serious ramifications on the life of the people who depend on it for their livelihood, and by extension the nation economy which relies on proceeds from this sector which Benue state plays a prominent role as the food basket to boost its economic growth. While natural disasters such as flood and drought can also affect such an economy, which is perfectly understood because they are beyond human control; avoidable ones like herdsmen onslaught on farmers' lives and crops, and cattle destruction of crops have badly affected the peasant economy in Benue.

4. Disaster Management in Benue State



Disaster risk reduction and management forms a major part of policy in all regions of the world. Raymond Kuban points out that the initiation of disaster preparedness and maintaining momentum for disaster reduction policies is the most significant role of government (9). According to him, Nations must statutorily set aside a portion of their national income to combat the negative effects of natural and physical disasters. This paper seeks to evaluate the role of local coping mechanisms of at-risk communities in the disaster risk reduction process, and the possibility for better aligning state determined, scientific planning for disaster risk reduction with locally determined, traditional processes. This description will seek to introduce the concept of local knowledge, to (or “intending to”) argue its relevance and importance in the disaster risk reduction process. Relevant literature will be assessed to provide information on recent happenings around the world.

It has been argued by many scholars such as Aysan, Baumwoll and McEntire that government policies play a fundamental role in disaster management programmes and activities. The political factors identified by McEntire include: minimal support for disaster programs among elected officials; over centralization of decision making; and isolated or weak disaster related institutions. Due to their standing in the society indigenous communities may be ostracized and not be considered when resources are allocated. Politicians and governments may give priority to the influential sectors of society that have the power to vote for them (191). Similarly, McEntire suggests that disaster managers must not be the sole administrators of projects. It, therefore, suggests that enhancing the capacity of vulnerable communities is important especially in the era of global warming and its attendant ills. This development often leads to political vulnerability which according to Aysan is capable of creating limited access to political power and representation. He (Aysan) equally maintains that politics has a serious influence on the vulnerability of indigenous communities. This vulnerability occurs when people lack political voice that may be finally used in decision making (55).

In most instances these communities face considerable disadvantages in the key areas of health, education and housing. Due to their status in society indigenous communities have a lack of access to knowledge and information on health, low levels of education and inadequate access to shelter and safety. The above conditions make these

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communities to accord a much lower priority to Disaster Risk Reduction activities. Instead of using their resources for disaster risk reduction initiatives they use them to address more pressing needs such as health, education, employment, housing, food and transport. This therefore makes them more vulnerable to disasters than any other groups. Another factor that increases the vulnerability of indigenous communities is that in many instances they are extremely isolated. They are also often located in remote and risk-prone areas. Often these areas are difficult for emergency services to access them easily. There have been instances where fire services could not gain access to informal settlements due to the fact that the roads were inaccessible and not negotiable or even non-existent. The remoteness of the location of indigenous communities results in challenges for the delivery of relief and recovery assistance during disasters (Kelman 66).

In Benue State, the politics of disaster management started with the establishment of Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA). This agency was established via Act 12 as amended by Act 50 of 1999, to manage disasters in Benue State. While the framework makes provisions and enactments that posit efficiency in disaster management practice in Benue State, the situation reveal that implementation is near absent. Implementation in this case involves activities carried out to achieve objectives of established policies. It entails converting material, financial, technical and human inputs into outputs.

On implementation, Makinde observe that the absence of critical factors such as communication, resources, disposition or attitudes, and bureaucratic structure, leads to implementation problems of public policies. The disposition/attitude of departments and agencies of government in the areas studied, is rather reactive. It appears that government presence is noticed only when disaster strikes. Resources such as human capital, finance and land needed to implement the National Disaster Management Framework suffer setbacks.

The content analysis of the framework reveals codes that suggest a collaborative strategy is encouraged. The NDMF ascribes relevance to the local governments in the planning of disaster management strategies. Disaster management planning in the NDMF allude to the role of community institutions and proposes community response as an important tool. Collaboration between state agents and relevant stakeholders in the disaster risk process is enshrined in all thematic areas of the framework.



For example, the framework stipulates that emergency management authorities at all levels shall collaborate with other stakeholders to ensure coherent and relevant disaster risk reduction planning is undertaken nationwide, and consistent with the national disaster risk reduction management plan. Therefore, it is deduced that local knowledge is favoured in the disaster risk management strategies prescribed by the NDMF.

While the act establishing the State Emergency Management Agency mandates the creation of branches in all local governments across the State; the reality is that not all local governments have complied with this directive. This is confirmed by the findings by Adedeji et al. that not all areas in the federation have complied with the directive to create emergency agencies and where they exist, they are not functionally independent and equipped to perform their duties (44). The local governments argue that their budgets do not provide for the creation of new departments. It is argued that this argument is flawed, given the cost of governance imbued by the politicians. The budgetary situation in Benue State, and in other parts of Nigeria as argued by Adeolu and Osabuohien suggest that the rising proportion of allocations to support government administrative structures has permitted a high incidence of poverty and influenced economic collapse of vibrant sectors 55). Furthermore, an evaluation of the capital budget of Nigeria for the 2012 fiscal year by Ogujiuba and Ehigiamusoe reveals that only 51% of appropriated funds were utilized (28). It, therefore, suggests that departments and agencies were starved of funds to carry out their operations.

The inclusion of ideas from at-risk communities in the disaster planning process, engenders success and enhance cooperation. Ahrens and Rudolph identify participation, the rule of law, transparency, equity and accountability as important factors to be embodied when implementing a sustainable development and disaster risk reduction program (14). However, in much of the developing economies, the factors above are lacking thus negatively impinging on the efficiency of disaster management policies. Corruption, bureaucracy and a gradual eroding of social values threaten the ability of developing states to attend to disaster management.

5. The Role of Religious Institutions in Managing Disasters and Reconstruction

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A few articles discussed how religious groups cope with natural disasters. Chester and Duncan examined past and present disaster responses by Christians. Christians have a theodicy they follow which is defined as combining the idea of a loving God with the evils that exist in the world. Chester and Duncan examined the Old Testament of the Bible in which disasters were explained as a punishment from God for sinning. After Chester and Duncan completed a review of the literature on how Christians respond to disasters, they concluded that since the mid-1990's a change in Christian beliefs towards disaster victims had occurred. The general belief is that disasters occur "so that God can realize a more significant benefit" (86). Chester and Duncan suggested that this change means that in the vast majority of cases, relief can proceed without the need to reconcile concepts of a loving God with the reality of human suffering, because the divine presence is to be found in the distress of victims and is not viewed as a function of the physical process that trigger disaster (88-92).

Aside from the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in Nigeria there are numbers of NGOs among which are Christian and Muslim based NGOs which can be categorise as Faith Based NGOs. These Faith Based NGOs are in to Humanitarian Aid activities with the aim to reconstruct victims of disaster and to mitigate or plan for occurrences of any natural or man-made disaster in Nigeria. In this section the three Christian Faith Based Nongovernmental Organisations are sample for in-depth analysis of the role this faith Based NGOs play in management of disaster and reconstruction and also in the aiding and contribution to development of humanity particularly in Nigeria.

There are numbers of services rendered by this Faith Based NGOs ranging from social services, Health services and educational services. The most common theme for religious groups to cope with natural disasters was to help others in their time of need by addressing their physical needs first and then their spiritual needs. Religion had a major impact on a group's choice to provide relief efforts after a disaster. Even though four groups mentioned they provided relief efforts to assist the community in their time of need, three of these four groups also mentioned religious beliefs as a reason for providing relief services. The majority of religious groups stated they provide relief efforts due to their religious beliefs, teachings, and/or the mission of their church. Some religious groups also



used specific quotes from the Bible to illustrate why they provide relief efforts. The most cited verse from the Bible referred to by religious groups was from the Book of Matthew. Jesus says to clothe those without clothing, feed those without food, and serve those without.

6. Challenges of Disaster Management in Benue State and The Way Forward

Alrein Wajong in his paper titled “Disaster Medicine Enthusiast with Limited Field Experience” describe disaster management cycle as an ongoing process by which government, civil (and military) society plan for and reduce the impact of disasters, react during and immediately following a disaster, and take steps to recover after a disaster has occurred (“Disaster Management Circle”).

The primary aim of disaster management is to reduce, or avoid, the potential losses from hazards, assure prompt and appropriate assistance to victims of disaster, and achieve rapid and effective recovery. The Disaster management cycle illustrates the ongoing process by which governments, businesses, and civil society plan for and reduce the impact of disasters, react during and immediately following a disaster, and take steps to recover after a disaster has occurred. Appropriate actions at all points in the cycle lead to greater preparedness, better warnings, reduced vulnerability or the prevention of disasters during the next iteration of the cycle.

The complete disaster management includes the shaping of public policies and plans that either modify the causes of disasters or mitigate their effects on people, property, and infrastructure. These are planned steps taken to minimize the effects of disaster and measures made to proceed to business continuity stage. This is sometimes referred to as disaster recovery management; the process may be initiated when anything threatens to disrupt normal operations or puts the lives of human beings at risk.

The mitigation and preparedness phases occur as disaster management improvements are made in anticipation of a disaster event. Developmental considerations play a key role in contributing to the mitigation and preparation of a community to effectively confront a disaster. As a disaster occurs, disaster management actors, in particular humanitarian organizations, become involved in the immediate response

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and long-term recovery phases. The four disaster management phases illustrated here do not always, or even generally, occur in isolation or in this precise order. Often phases of the cycle overlap and the length of each phase greatly depends on the severity of the disaster.

Developmental considerations contribute to all aspects of the disaster management cycle. One of the main goals of disaster management, and one of its strongest links with development, is the promotion of sustainable livelihoods and their protection and recovery during disasters and emergencies. Where this goal is achieved, people have a greater capacity to deal with disasters and their recovery is more rapid and long lasting. In a development oriented disaster management approach, the objectives are to reduce hazards, prevent disasters, and prepare for emergencies. Therefore, developmental considerations are strongly represented in the mitigation and preparedness phases of the disaster management cycle. Inappropriate development processes can lead to increased vulnerability to disasters and loss of preparedness for emergency situations. To this end, the emergency management plan is to ensure that the hospitality industries has a robust and resilient 'Major Emergency Plan'. This is to guarantee prompt and appropriate response to any major incidents of disasters that occurs at any point in time. The plan must be prepared, coordinated, effective and speedy.

In Benue, the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) coordinates disaster research, informs the federal government and the public on disaster trends and directs all disaster response efforts. In the aftermath of such events like floods and other emergencies, the agency is required to provide first-response services, distribute emergency relief materials to victims and assist in the rehabilitation of the victims where necessary.

However, politics and other government policies have continued to mar the smooth operation of this agency for optimum performance. For instance, following the 2017 flood, according to Sue Agema who works with Gender and Environmental Risk Reduction Initiative in Makurdi, that instead of SEMA to promptly carry out their mandate, rather, it was local groups and individuals that had to rise up to circumstance and respond to the victims of the flood (qtd. In. Samuel Ogundipe, "Disaster Policies"). He said, "SEMA was somewhat slow in its reaction. It was the civil society organisations, Benue NGO Network (BENGONET), NGOs like Red



Cross, UNHCR and private individuals that jumped to the rescue. By the time SEMA came through, a lot was happening already.” (qtd. in Samuel Ogundipe, “Disaster Policies”).

Government policies have continued to affect disaster management. For example, the state which gets about N4 billion as federal allocation and about N500 million in internally-generated revenue, IGR, per month against a population of 4.5 million, can hardly boast of ecological projects such like the dredging of the River Benue, construction of adequate dams and drainages and compensation and relocation of settlers (Samuel Ogundipe, “Disaster Policies”).

Another area where government policies affect disaster management is in terms of funding. SEMA as an agency requires adequate funds to solve serious environmental problems. But like most other initiatives of the government, the fund has been marred by diversifications to other sectors of the state due largely on political or selfish interest of the people in authority.

7. Summary and Conclusion

In this article, the authors discuss five aspects on disaster management in Benue State and the role of Religious Institutions. These include, a historical background of Benue State, major disasters in Benue State, disaster management in Benue State and the role of religious institutions etc. It is expectation of the authors that disaster risk reduction will be prioritised given the worsening climatic condition as there are opportunities that exist for collaboration between public institutions and development partners.

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Gambling and its Effect on Nigerian Youths: A Christian Perspective

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Abstract

Gambling is an activity through which parties risk something valuable referred to as stake with the expectancy of winning a more valuable prize. At most times, some families and the society in general have recorded many negative moral issues that are associated with the act of gambling. Many marriages have been dissolved; many families have been put apart, because some people abandoned their family responsibilities for gamble, some families went through some level of trauma in trying to secure relatives from such act. This paper focuses on the implication of betting on the Nigerian youth from the Christian perspective. The study adopted the primary and secondary method of data collection which made use of the descriptive method of analysis. Findings from the study revealed that some youths involve in betting as a result of unemployment, peer pressure or peer influence, greed and craving for quick money. It was also revealed in the study that betting has a lot of consequences on those who indulge in it, these consequences among others include psychological, social and economic consequences. In respect to the bible, it has been shown in the study that the bible Shawn's every act of betting/ gambling and advices abstinence from such.

Keywords: Gambling, Betting, Youth.



1. Introduction

The word gambling is synonymous with betting. It can be referred to as game or a means of investment or an act of ‘do’ or ‘*ta hwande*’ in Tiv language which means putting ones resources in a game for the purpose of getting more to it by chance. Betting in some cases can be referred to as gambling and in some cases may not necessarily be gambling which involve financial commitment but could be as a result of an argument which could lead to those parties engaging in betting. Gambling and games of chances have been popular throughout history. While the globalization of gambling has passed through a number of cycles, its current status in most cultures as a socially acceptable form of entertainment suggests its continued growth and expansion (Derevensk and Gupta 24). This act has ruined many people more especially the youth in our communities. It has turned many into lazy people and others into criminals trying to raise money for the betting activities. This has also landed many in various prisons in Nigeria and Benue state in particular.

Though explicit legislative statutes in most countries prohibit children and adolescents from gambling on regulated games, their resourcefulness enables many youth to engage in both regulated and non-regulated (e.g., card games, peer sports wagering, etc.) forms of gambling. Several recent studies have identified the various factors associated with gambling, betting participation, non-problem gambling, and/or problem gambling which include socio-demographic variables such as gender (Gray, 24; Moore, 13), older age (Tozzi, 213) and other risk behaviours such as substance use, drinking, smoking, drug abuse (Engwall, 24; Hodgins and Racicot, 13; Tozzi, 203), delinquency/illegal acts (Johansson, 29), sexual risk behaviour (Huang 7), and poor mental health, anxiety and mood disorders (Lorains 11; Sharp 14).

Betting activities have flourished in different countries of the world driven by increasing evidence of betting promotions and advertisements among other triggers. In Nigeria, sport betting has been rampant and has grown to a significant level in the early 2000 where a lot of betting companies were of increase in the country which included the *Naira bet*, *the betking*, *bet Naija*, *’waliwali’*, and the many more. This study therefore focuses on gambling and its effect on Nigerian youth from the biblical perspective.

2. Types of Gambling

Gambling or betting is done in various forms, and these could be referred to any of the following stated below:

2.1 Fixed-odds betting

Fixed-odds betting is a form of wagering against odds offered by a bookmaker or an individual or on a bet exchange. In Australia, the practice is usually known as "SP betting". It is customary with fixed-odds gambling to know the odds at the time of the placement of the wager (the "live price"), but the category also includes wagers whose price is determined only when the race or game starts (the "starting prices") (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/fixed-odd_betting). It is ideal for bookmakers to price/mark up a book such that the net outcome will always be in their favour: the sum of the probabilities quoted for all possible outcomes will be in excess of 100%. The excess over 100% (or overround) represents profit to the bookmaker in the event of a balanced/even book. In the more usual case of an imbalanced book, the bookmaker may have to pay out more winnings than what is staked or may earn more than mathematically expected. An imbalanced book may arise since there is no way for a bookmaker to know the true probabilities for the outcome of competitions left to human effort or to predict the bets that will be attracted from others by fixed odds compiled on the basis personal view and knowledge (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/fixed-odd_betting).

2.2 Parimutuel betting

Parimutuel betting is a betting system in which all bets of a particular type are placed together in a pool; taxes and the "house-take" or "vigorish" are deducted, and payoff odds are calculated by sharing the pool among all winning bets (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/parimutuel_betting). Parimutuel betting differs from fixed-odds betting in that the final payout is not determined until the pool is closed in fixed odds betting, the payout is agreed at the time the bet is sold. Parimutuel gambling is frequently state-regulated, and offered in many places where gambling is otherwise illegal. Parimutuel gambling is often also offered at "off track" facilities, where players may bet on the events without actually being present to observe them in person.



2.3 Arbitrage betting

Betting arbitrage is an example of arbitrage arising on betting markets due to either bookmaker's differing opinions on event outcomes or errors. When conditions allow, by placing one bet per each outcome with different betting companies, the bettor can make a profit regardless of the outcome (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arbitrage_betting). Arbitrage betting is a theoretically risk-free betting system in which every outcome of an event is bet upon so that a known profit will be made by the bettor upon completion of the event, regardless of the outcome. Arbitrage betting is a combination of the ancient art of arbitrage trading and gambling, which has been made possible by the large numbers of bookmakers in the marketplace, creating occasional opportunities for arbitrage.

2.4 Sports betting

Sports betting are a form of gambling that entails placing a wager, also known as a bet, on the outcome of a sporting event. The primary intent of sports betting is to win additional money. With the exception of spread betting, 'draw no bet' wagers and a few other examples, a bet will have two possible outcomes (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sport_betting). Either you win a profit based on the bookmaker odds, or you lose your wager. While sports betting obviously incorporates wagers on sports like rugby and tennis, it also includes betting on entertainment, such as the winner of Dancing with the Stars, and finance, such as interest rate changes.

In Nigeria today, the prevalent type of gambling or betting form is sport betting, this has brought about the proliferation of betting shops in most part of the country. These betting activities are been anchored by betting sites which includes 1xbet, Naijabet, Nairabet, Betway, Bet9ja, Sportybet, Lionsbet, Merrybet, Surebet247, Betfarm, Betland, 1960bet, Betking, 9japredict, Lovingbet, Winnersgoldenbet, Bet365naija, Championsbet, Saharabet, Marsleisure, 360bet, Superiorbet, UBCbet, Nairastake, Betdey, R & S Bet and Naijagaming and many more.

3. Reasons Why Youth Engage in Gambling

The reasons for gambling among youths are not unlike those for adult gambling. Young people who gamble report that fun, opportunity to

win money, and excitement of gambling games are the top reasons they participate. In addition to these motivations, some adolescents feel that gambling is a way to socialize, make friends, relax, relieve boredom, feel older, escape daily problems, alleviate depression, and deal with loneliness (Gupta & Derevensky 18). Studies have found adolescents identified as problem gamblers were more likely than non-problem gamblers to gamble as a way to escape daily problems, alleviate depression and anxiety, relax, and deal with loneliness (Gupta & Derevensky 98). It appears that for young problem and pathological gamblers, gambling is less perceived as a means to make money and functions more to provide stimulation, enjoyment, and a way of coping with difficulties. In a sense, gambling transports problem and pathological gamblers to a fantasy world without life's daily problems, anxiety, depression, or loneliness (Gupta & Derevensky 18). Some of the basic reasons why youth engage in betting include the following:

3.1 Unemployment

According to trading economics, a website which provides historical data, forecasts and news on more than 300,000 economic indicators from nearly 200 countries, Nigeria's unemployment rate has been on the rise. "Unemployment Rate in Nigeria increased to 23.10 per cent in the third quarter of 2018 from 22.70 per cent in the second quarter of 2018. Unemployment rate in Nigeria averaged 12.31 per cent from 2006 until 2018, reaching an all-time high of 23.10 per cent in the third quarter of 2018," the website, which was last updated on March of 2019, said (<https://microeconomics.org>). The classification of Nigeria as the poverty capital of the world, according to a report by the Brookings Institution, when considered alongside the unemployment rate, suggests that betting could be a means of escaping the endemic poverty in the country. Interactions with avid punters indicate that, at a subconscious level, betting gives those who indulge in it a considerable degree of hope, akin to the expectation of an imminent good fortune. Afella stated that since the government has no jobs to offer to him, he finds solace in a particular bet Naija shop where he spends his entire day trying his luck from morning till night (Oral interview 07/11/2019). According to Eunice, it is always youths who are jobless that are mostly found in venues where they play bet or gamble (Oral interview 07/11/2019).



3.2 Peer Influence

Sports betting is pervasive such that it is viewed in Nigerian society as ‘normal thing – ‘almost everybody around you is involved and this serve as a ready influence. Youth engage in betting sometimes because they feel and realize it is a trend that is going on among their peers. One of the most recent betting youths in the current society indulge in is the Naija bet. Samson in an interview asserted that he play sport betting because his friends do it and sometimes win a lot of money which they spend together (oral interview 07/11/2019). Oche also acknowledged that it was his friends that lured him into playing visual game in bet shops close to his house (Oral interview 07/11/2019).

3.3 Economic Condition

The economic condition has given way to why many Nigerian youths engage in sports betting. The environment is not safe for businesses. According to Terna some of these youths claim as a result of the poverty condition of the country and the unfavorable situation for business activities, they resolved or resort into betting activities. There are perceived benefits that they feel they realize from betting which could either improve their economic status if luck falls on their side (oral interview 07/11/2019).

3.4 Greed

Access to fast, risk free cash is one of the reasons many youth engage in sports betting. It is stress free, and direct access to cash. Onoja also stated greed also comes into play. It could be tagged as a ‘business’ that you invest with as little as N50 to win as much as any amount, if the predictions are correct. This is greed in the sense that the youths in this respect expect to gain or rather win much amount of money without working for it and at the same time earn money without sowing(oral interview 07/11/2019).

4. Negative Effects of Gambling/Betting

According to Philip Okorodudu, Gambling/betting makes you wager your money or other valuable items on an uncertain event. It is

dependent, partly or wholly, on chance. In the long run, the bet causes harm to the gambler after he loses his chance. Gambling is a game of chance in which the probability of winning is an independent event (14). That is, just as there are only two sides to a coin, there are also only two sides in gambling. It is either you win or you lose. There is no such thing as sitting on the fence in a bet. In recent times, betting rate has increased in geometric proportions and this is because of the desire to cheat greedy persons by lottery firms and to generate revenue for government (14). The rampant effect of betting or gambling in Nigerian society can never be overemphasized as most youth in Nigeria now frequent bet shops.

Investigations by The Guardian revealed that people who indulge in betting activities borrow as much as N20, 000 for their daily stakes. Some of them win, while some lose. As a two-way thing, when the prediction comes through and the individual who wagers his money wins, the company will have to pay. However, if he loses, the bet company smiles (Daniel Anazia 2).

Today, the list of sports betting companies in Nigeria seems to be growing faster. Such companies come in different platforms and operational styles. Some of the betting platforms in the country include 1xbet, Naijabet, Nairabet, Betway, Bet9ja, Sportybet, Lionsbet, Merrybet, Surebet247, Betfarm, Betland, 1960bet, Betking, 9japredict, Lovingbet, Winnersgoldenbet, Bet365naija, Championsbet, Saharabet, Marsleisure, 360bet, Superiorbet, UBCbet, Nairastake, Betdey, R & S Bet and Naijagaming (Daniel 2).

As cited in Daniel, Usman Ojedokun, said: “The increasing involvement of Nigerian youths in betting has multidimensional implications. First, the habit is a gateway to other social vices, like stealing, drug abuse and violence. “Second, it could lead to the onset of depression and emotional trauma for those involved, especially those that lost huge amount of money. “Betting can also lead to pathological or compulsive gambling, in which the individual concerned would find the act difficult to resist (5).

Tolulope, a shoemaker in Ibadan, lost his chances of gaining entrance into the university to sporting betting. He was introduced to betting by his friend in secondary, got addicted to the gambling games and started pumping all his income into betting, but never won in the process. “My mum gave me N33, 000 to deposit in the bank, but I used it all to



gamble on sport bet and I lied that I was attacked. I was also given N7, 000 for my JAMB registration five years ago, but I used the money to bet and lied that I had registered for my exams” (5). Most active participants in this trade are adolescents and youths whose main objective, rather than being how to lay good foundations to better their tomorrow, is on the desire to get rich at all cost and crush any obstacle that might stand against their desire.

To Philip, Gambling/Betting poses a significant challenge to public health. Recent statistics show that adolescents and young adults face highest risk of developing gambling problems. This is because of the increase in gambling centres, where the underage are daily being exposed to unregulated forms of gambling and are daily succumbing to the temptation and pressure to engage in the act (15). As in most games of chance, money is spent to get more money. And for adolescents and youths who rely on their parents for their daily bread, the money to bet has to be gotten from their parents under false excuses. If this fails, they look for other means of getting the money to satisfy their urge to bet. At this point, gambling becomes an addiction. Its effect devastates the doer, the family and the society at large. When the money stops coming the way of the gambler, he/she may engage in drugs in frustration.

For the occasional gambler, these behaviours may provide an innocuous opportunity for excitement, socialization, or boredom relief. When these behaviours increase, however, problem and pathological gambling create negative consequences in an individual’s financial, social, and overall health. Gambling explored through the public health perspective looks at the effect of gambling on individual well-being and health, familial health, community health, health care system and public policy. Shaffer and Korn identified eight negative health and social consequences of gambling: gambling disorders, family dysfunction and domestic violence, youth, and underage gambling, alcohol and other drug problems, psychiatric conditions, suicide and suicide ideation, significant financial problems, and criminal behaviour (99).

And according to Blinn-Pike financial behaviors were associated with sensation seeking and risk-taking activities like gambling. Youths often use resources such as credit cards, debit cards, or borrowed money to gamble; this is common for adult gamblers as well, but these habits may have greater negative financial consequences in a younger

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population(207). The rate of involvement in gambling or betting among Nigerian youth has brought about more devastating effects on their financial, social and psychological life, amongst which some of the following stated effects were examined below:

4.1 Bankruptcy

Football betting can turn into a dangerous two-way street when you least expect it. Weird things happen suddenly and your life can go all to pieces. One minute you are rich and the next you are down to your last kobo. Obilikwu stated that many youths become less productive by spending much time in betting shops that when they should be engaging in more productive activities that should earn them much money. Therefore, as a result they become bankrupt (oral interview, 12/11/2019).

4.2 Drug Addiction

Do you know that losing to a bet can cause sadness, high Blood Pressure, regret, depression and a whole lot of negative emotions including insanity. Majority of the youths also experienced emotional ups and downs due to gaming. Winning games would bring a sense of achievement and satisfaction but losing would produce negative effect such as feeling upset, angry, disappointed and nervous. This feeling leads youths into a lot of ill feeling that eventually leads them into drug addiction and use of drugs (oral interview, 12/11/2019).

4.3 Suicide

You need to see the anger and frustration in the eyes of those who lost to a bet. It is quite frightening and frustrating majority of youths sometimes bet with huge amount of money. Terna asserted some go to the extent of spending their school fees, borrowing huge amount of money from friends, families and even financial institutions with the hope of winning much more amount of money. Failure to achieve this goal result to contemplation of suicide (oral interview, 12/11/2019).

4.4 Laziness

According to Lazarus it makes youths so lazy that they forget about doing anything for their lives. Most of them don't take their bath



because they are busy gambling away their lives (oral interview, 12/11/2019).

4.5 Waste of Financial Resources betting could be costly

Youths spent a considerable proportion of their pocket money on the activity. Sarah opined that betting or gambling for unanticipated long hours would incur great expenses interfering with the original budget. Majority admitted that they had spent too much money on gaming causing difficulty in meeting competing financial needs (e.g. eating lunch, traveling to and from school by public transport, and joining extra-curricula activities). To conclude, the youths clearly reported the benefits and the detrimental impacts associated with the betting activity. When they were asked if they would cut down or quit gaming to reduce gaming-related harms, none were willing to cut down or give up the activity (oral interview, 12/11/2019).

4.6 Family Conflicts

It destroys one's relationship with family, friends, and colleagues. Due to obsession with the game a person is isolated from the family members which can cause serious family crisis. Certainly, no mother will proudly introduce his son as a football betting maniac. An interview was held with some group of youths where interviewees claimed that their parents were aware of their betting habit. Eight reported, "My parents don't like me playing games there." Six confirmed, "We spend less time with our family members in order to save time for playing games with friends." Terhile and Aondoakura recognized that their relationship with their family members got worse due to gaming. Several were angry with their parents who had taken offensive measures to control or interfere with their gaming behavior. A teen said, "I go out to play games without telling my parents (oral interview, 12/11/2019). I know they would stop me from going to the Internet cafe." Many hated their parents' nagging and endless complaints about their game playing habit. They realized parent-child communication and relationship worsened due to conflicts over the activity (oral interview, 12/11/2019).

5. A Biblical Perspective on Gambling

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God's people in the Bible apparently were not greatly tempted with gambling. It seems the vice manifested itself only when Israel was dominated by heathen nations. When gambling did occur God clearly indicated His attitude concerning it (Edward, 4). During the Babylonian captivity the Israelites came under the influence of people who gambled. As a result some of the captives also became involved.

The bible according to the book of Proverbs 14:11, "Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow." God is sovereign and will provide for the needs of the church through honest means. The bible in this text did not specifically mention gambling, though it falls within the context.

A careful reading of Scripture makes it clear that there are numerous biblical principles, which indicate that gambling, is an evil to be avoided. When people recognize God's authority they will honor the principles which indicate gambling is evil. According to Rogers in his study, the reasons why gambling is wrong are:

5.1 Gambling is wrong because it is a disregard to responsible stewardship

The Bible clearly teaches that all things belong to God. "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it" (Psalm 24:1). Since all things belong to God, people are placed in the position of stewards who must give a proper accounting for everything given to them in trust. The first step in a faithful administration of this stewardship is the giving of self to God. Believers must recognize they are not their own (1 Corinthians 6:19). They have been redeemed with a price, not of silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus (1 Peter 1:18,19). The churches of Macedonia set a worthy example of personal dedication when "they gave themselves first to the Lord" (2 Corinthians 8:5). Life, with all it involves, is a stewardship to be administered for the glory of God. People who honestly dedicate themselves to God will also recognize that all they possess must be handled as a stewardship. The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14–30) indicates that the good and faithful servants administered the talents entrusted to them in such a way that the master was pleased. The wicked and slothful servant failed in his administration and suffered the appropriate consequences (135). When people recognize their stewardship responsibilities they will not consider gambling in any



form a proper administration of divinely bestowed resources, time, and ability. Even the ethics of the world will not tolerate those who gamble with resources put in their trust. Christian responsibility transcends all other responsibility, and for the Christian, gambling is wrong. It is a total disregard of the principle of stewardship. It is a prostitution of God-given assets which should be used to glorify God and advance His kingdom.

5.2 It involves a chance of gain at the expense and suffering of others

The nature of gambling is such that a person has a chance of gain only because others have suffered loss. The economic benefits come only to a very few. The financial loss is borne by many who usually least can afford it. The fact that people involved in gambling are commonly referred to in derogatory terms by its promoters is an indication of the status to which they are reduced. Whether or not the financial loss is excessive, gamblers are basically the losers while the operators of gambling establishments are the winners.

The suffering caused by gambling is totally inconsistent with the teaching of Scripture concerning love. Not only is the Christian to love those who are lovable, but even enemies. God's people are to love their neighbors as themselves. The principle of love will prevent Christians from gambling because of the damage it does to others. The principle of love will cause Christians to oppose any effort by the state or any other organization to legalize any activity based on a weakness of people which degrades society. William Temple, late Archbishop of Canterbury, stated the Christian position well when he wrote:

Gambling challenges that view of life which the Christian church exists to uphold and extend. Its glorification of mere chance is a denial of the divine order of nature. To risk money haphazardly is to disregard the insistence of the Church in every age of living faith that possessions are a trust, and that men must account to God for their use. The persistent appeal to covetousness is fundamentally opposed to the unselfishness which was taught by Jesus Christ and by the New Testament as a whole. The attempt (inseparable from gambling) to make profit out of the inevitable loss and possible suffering of others is the antithesis of that love of one's neighbor on which our Lord insisted(136).

5.3 It is inconsistent with the work ethic of Scripture.

Throughout Scripture, the importance of work, is emphasized. In several places the correlation between working and eating is stated. The Old Testament reminds us, “He who works his land will have abundant food” (Proverbs 12:11). In the New Testament the same principle is stated with great forcefulness. To the Thessalonians Paul wrote: “When we were with you, we gave you this rule: ‘If a man will not work, he shall not eat’ ” (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

Not only does the Bible require that one should work for the necessities of life, but it also warns against the something for nothing, get-rich-quick approach. “One eager to get rich will not go unpunished” (Proverbs 28:20). “He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil [envious] eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him” (Proverbs 28:22, KJV). “Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow” (Proverbs 13:11). In the wisdom of God work was assigned in the garden of Eden even before the Fall (Genesis 2:15ff; cf. 1:28). Though sin resulted in a change of the nature of work (Genesis 3:17, 19), the responsibility of working was never rescinded. Any effort to circumvent the work ethic of Scripture can result only in failure. Gambling, whether to secure wealth in a hurry or to place bread on the table, is inconsistent with what the Bible teaches about work.

5.4 Gambling tends to be habit forming.

Gambling, like other evils, has a tendency to become an addiction. As in the case of alcoholics and drug addicts, compulsive gamblers are dominated to the extent that they risk not only money, but everything meaningful in life. They have lost control of themselves. This condition is contrary to the teaching of Scripture. The Word of God points out that a Christian will refuse to be brought under the power even of lawful things (1 Corinth 6:12). The person indwelt by the Holy Spirit will be characterized by temperance, or self-control (Gal 5:23).

Those who have studied gambling addiction seem to agree there are six symptoms characteristic of compulsive gambling: (1) the activity becomes chronically repetitive. (2) It becomes a mania, which precludes all other interests, including the home. (3) A pathologic optimism replaces the ability to learn from previous losing experiences. (4) The ability to stop in a winning situation no longer exists. (5) In spite of initial decisions to



gamble only so much the addict invariably risks too much. (6) The activity seems to produce an enjoyable tension consisting of both pain and pleasure. It is obvious that habitual gamblers are under the control of the compulsion to gamble. Rather than being servants of God, they are servants of a desire they cannot handle. Paul described the condition clearly when he wrote (Romans 6:16). Because of the degrading possibility of addiction, gambling should be considered an evil.

6. Conclusion

Betting and gambling go hand in hand; it is a process that involves the use of money or valuables with an expectation of profit on the money used to gamble. There are several reasons why people go into betting of which some tend to gamble or bet because the unemployment, poor economic status, peer pressure or influence, high taste and crave for quick money. Gambling has some social, physical and economic effects. The church should intensify the campaign against gambling, by providing recreational activities that can engage youths during their leisure and diminish participation in gambling activities. This should also be made part of civic education in primary and secondary schools. If these steps are taken, gambling could be minimized.

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S/No	Name	Age	Occupation	Sex	Date	Place
1	Terver Akaa	35	Teacher	Male	10/11/2019	Makurdi
2	Doose Terna	39	Student	Female	10/11/2019	Makurdi
3	Aondongu (Ng) Nyagba	56	Trader	Male	11/11/2019	Makurdi
4	Philomena Peter	67	Pastor	Male	12/11/2019	Makurdi

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5	Ushahemba Iotyom	45	Reverend	Male	12/11/2019	Makurdi
6	Desmond Adi	48	Teacher	Male	12/11/2019	Makurdi
7	Mnena Desmond	37	Business woman	Female	12/11/2019	Gboko
8	James Anzum	41	Trader	Male	12/11/2019	Makurdi
9	David Recharo	63	Famer	Male	07/11/2019	Makurdi
10	Veronica Abari	41	Tailor	Female	07/11/2019	Makurdi
11	Terna Fanen	44	Farmer	Male	20/12/2019	Naka
12	Terdoos Orseer	71	Fisher	Female	12/012020	Enugu
13	Aondoakura Wilfred	45	Trader	Female	12/012020	Nassarawa
14	Lazarus Kusa	34	Business man	Male	26/02/2020	Makurdi
15	Onoja Ojile	67	Business man		26/02/2020	Otukpo
16	Obilikwu Daniel	56	Civil servant	Male	26/02/2020	Taraba
17	Charles Obi	32	Trader	Male	26/02/2020	Kano
18	Oche Andrew	43	School teacher	Male	07/11/2019	Abuja
19	Afella Tyorzua	58	Civil servant	Male	07/11/2019	Keffi
20	Eunice Amadi	47	Student	Female	07/11/2019	Villa suit
21	Samson Oche	55	Tailor	Male	07/11/2019	Wurukum



The Changing Phase of *Shagba* in The 21st Century Tiv Society

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Abstract

This paper discusses changes in the display of Shagba among the Tiv. Shagba means 'nobility' while its expression is Shagba U kumen (demonstration of nobility). Although Shagba originated out of ego and pride to show that one had wealth and surpassed his Mbakwav (age grade), it came to be associated with the demonstration of gratitude to the Supreme Being. The man who became Shagba was called Shagbaor (Noble man). In the pre-colonial era, a man who had acquired wealth and affluence in the Tiv society regarded it as wealth for the community generally. The Tiv practised communalism as a socio-political system where all the means of production were communally owned. This policy or lifestyle united the people who saw one another as a brother. The several components in the display of shagba were directed towards improving peaceful coexistence, appreciating Aondo and for the unity of the society. However, with the advent of western education and the capitalist ideology, the Tiv society has experienced tremendous changes and the demonstration of Shagba is the most prominent. Indeed, the corrosive tendency of westernization on Tiv culture becomes a glaring reality. Hence, there is need to examine this phenomena. The paper employed a phenomenological method. Oral interview and participant observations constituted a major source of primary data collection. The secondary source of data included textbooks, journal articles, magazines, dictionaries, newspapers and encyclopaedias. Findings show that, western civilization has affected the display of Shagba positively and negatively; positively by abolishing the aspect of human sacrifice; and negatively by creating division, individualism and unhealthy competition among the Tiv. This study recommends that the practice of Shagba should be encouraged while avoiding the aspect of human sacrifice.



1. Introduction

Since the advent of colonialism, the Tiv society has experienced tremendous changes in terms of culture, religion, economic, social and political organizations. Indeed, the corrosive tendency of westernization on Tiv cultural heritage is a glaring reality. It is to be noted that, there are positive impacts which include improvement in healthcare delivery with the introduction of orthodox medicine, education, improved standard of living among others. Recognizably, cultural diffusion has penetrated the core areas of the Tiv worldview and shaken them off their roots. The basic concern here therefore will be to examine the Traditional Religious perspective and the significance of nobility among the Tiv; its practice under the influence of westernization and civilization.

This paper therefore discussed the concept of *Shagba*, ways of demonstrating *Shagba*, qualifications and the influence of western education on the display of *Shagba*. It also discussed cultural and religious significance of *Shagba* and the key factors that necessitated its institution and celebration, continuity and discontinuity as well as its integration to conform or suit the civilized way of life. Thus, it is on this background that this paper basis. The paper seeks to provide answers and solutions on such issues as; what is the religious significance of nobility among the Tiv? How was nobility acquired in Tiv society? What were the preconditions for the celebration of nobility among the Tiv? What were the rituals attached to the demonstration of nobility? How did westernization influence the expression of Nobility in Tiv today? What is the future of the acts of Nobility and its practice in Tiv society?

2. The Concept of *Shagba*

Shagba means nobility while its expression is *Shagba U kumen* (literally, demonstration of nobility or wealth). It is understood as the manifestation of wealth, affluence and prosperity acquired in the community for the community. Therefore, in Tiv society, a man who acquires *Shagba* (wealth) is often called *Shagbaor* (i.e a Noble man). In the pre-colonial period, a man who had acquired wealth and affluence, which ascended to the rank of Nobility in the Tiv society, saw his achievement as wealth for the community generally. Thus, life in Tivland was communalistic (Atel 24).

The Changing Phase of Shagba in The 21st Century Tiv Society

Noble men were looked upon not just as wealthy men but as leaders of the community who could direct the people in time of moral crisis, conflict with neighbouring tribes, and when important decision was to be taken. Thus, every activity that marked the demonstration or celebration of nobility portrayed this fact. For instance, it indicated that one was wealthy, morally reliable, generous, brave, and a man of great wisdom. For Niongon, noble men among the Tiv could portray great wisdom, generosity and a spirit of solidarity (Oral Interview). Tor affirms that nobles were an emblem of morality because they were leaders; the Tiv had neither a paramount ruler, nor traditionally recognized chiefs like their northern counterparts who had well established monarchy (Oral Interview). As a result, every man that rose to the rank of nobility was recognized first of all among his *Mbakwav* (the age grade) as a *Shagbaor* (noble man) and acknowledged by the community as an icon to reckon with.

3. Ways of Demonstrating *Shagba* in Tiv

The demonstration of nobility (*Shagba*) in Tiv traditional religion and culture has various components. An individual willing to ascent the ladder of nobility may accomplish most or all of them. A fundamental requirement or condition that qualified one to be initiated into to the cult or circle of *Ashagbaior* or *Uishagbambaiorov* (noble men of affluence) was wealth exhibited through large farms (since the Tiv were predominantly *ior mba eren tom sule* i.e farmers), they must marry many wives (*Kasev*), have plentiful children (*Mbayev/Onov*) and animals (*Anyamev/Ilev*). Certain activities acted as rituals while others marked the demonstration of nobility proper as outlined below.

3.1 Buying of Horse (*Nyinya*)

In the past, when there were no western means of transportation, the Tiv people used horses (*Anyinya*), donkeys (*Jaki*) and camels (*Lakomi*) as a predominant means of transportation. Akume Solomon asserts that apart from the use of animals, those who could not afford the luxury of acquiring the beasts of burden solely trekked long distances with their goods conveyed on their heads (*Ve tôô ikyav sha ityo*) (Akume, Oral Interview). Thus trekking long distances with one's luggage on the head was the most distinguishing feature between the rich and the poor.



Although this was tasking and burdensome, it was the only alternative when one could not afford to buy either *Nyinya* (a horse) or *Lakomi* (a camel).

Iorkyaa Ajoko affirms that, in those days, it became fashionable among the *mbakwav* for one to tell another that; *Mough heen kera! Wanye u lun aa kwase mon tseghee, ukuma u yan kwav amo?* (Get away, you with just one wife, I am not your age); *U ngu a sule er kamo?* (Do you have farm like me?); *Or kwaghyan hen ya wough wee?* (Do people feed in your house?); *Ka an nan feu hen tar nee?*, among other degrading and dishonourable comments (Ajoko oral interview). Just like the expressions above have portrayed, buying a horse became competitive just to show off among the age mate. Just like in the modern era, somebody will be proud among his friends of buying a latest car model, buying a horse was considered as an achievement and another way of *Tesen/Kumen Shagba* (display or flaunt wealth) and affluence.

Furthermore, within the *Mbakwav* (age grade) clique, any *Orkwav* (age mate) that had a horse became superior to those who had none. Gradually, to claim superiority over one's *Kwav*, an individual had to buy a horse. This became so competitive to the extent that, a community even boasted of how many horses and by implication, how many *Ashagbaior* (noble men) they had. Buying of horses later became an act that one must accomplish before he was regarded as *Shagbaor hen ityô* (a noble man in the community) and among his *Mbakwav*. Like in the modern era, the *Tiv* who had horses attended event on their horses. Those who had no horses trekked to events such as *Kwase Kuhan* (nuptial parties), *Imo Mirin* (traditional songs festival), *Ivom unden* (ascending dais) etc.

When such events were hosted, the *Kwav* usually attended in grand style, for instance, on horses, with special regalia, either *Goho* (hired) or *Yam* (bought) specifically for the event. Abah Gabriel adds that, sometimes when one wants to celebrate his new wife through *Amar a Mirin* (nuptial dance), he was required to buy a horse. In this regard, it was not only to show his level of affluence but also to honour his wife (Abah, oral interview). This implies that, in the expression of nobility, marriage was a fundamental element. Buying a horse to honour one's marriage was itself a show of nobility. Hence it was not everyone that could afford to display such luxury. Thus, buying a horse was very significance not only to the individual but also to the *Mbakwav* and the community as a whole.

3.2 Installation of Traditional Drum

In the demonstration of *Shagba* (nobility), is customary for an intending noble to *Gber Indyer* (acquire traditional drum). According to Zaki Julius Yongo it was a prerequisite for every noble to install *Indyer* (Yongo oral interview). Although the traditional drum was of two types namely; the *Indyer* and *Illyu*, emphasis was more on *Indyer* because *Illyu* is commonly used as an instrument while *Indyer* was rarely put to use only on specific occasions that demanded it. For instance when the owner of the *Indyer*; an elderly person of substance; a noble or a king died, *afaityo u kumen Indyer* (the Drum could be sounded). This implies that, *Indyer* was symbolic and carried much *ulum* (traditional substance) than *Illyu*.

The *Illyu* on the other hand, is a small wooden drum. Like *Indyer*, it is made predominantly of wood, but it is much smaller in size and was owned even by commoners. As the size portrayed, so was the substance. The *Indyer* drum required a lot of human sacrifices before it were hewed. According to Ieren Ihyoo, who also *Gber* (carved/hewed) *Indyer* drum, about twelve people died as sacrifice for the acquisition of the *Indyer*. This were specifically from among ones' children hence, the intending noble was required as a condition to have a large family. More sacrifices were demanded even in moving the *Indyer* from where the tree was cut down and hewn to where it was specially designed to stay. The process of transporting it is called *Kpela indyer*. The stones upon which the *Indyer* drum was placed also represented human heads. The *Shav Indyer* (sticks) used for the sounding of the drum was also produced with human heads. The sound and effectiveness of the *Indyer* depended much more on the amount of human sacrifices offered to acquire it. Therefore, any noble who wanted his own *Indyer* to sound loudly to reach longer distance, say 60 kilometres would offer more sacrifices (Ihyoo, oral Interview).

3.3 Hosting of Nuptial Dance (Ivyaa/Kwase Kuhan)

Ieren Ihoor succinctly states that, this honour of a new bride was displayed by riding on a new horse *Nyinya* and by embarking on a journey to one's maternal home; this is accompanied by singing and dancing with one's age mates (*Mbakwav*) (Ihoor oral interview). He further buttressed that, the aspiring *shagbaor* (noble) undertakes an inquest from other nobles (*ashagbaior*) on how to organize a dance ceremony (*amara mirin*). Every bit of the expression of *shagba* involved human sacrifices especially



the aspirant who was in for beneficial purposes worthy of note is that, some persons were into the pursuit of *shagba* and particularly, the nuptial dance to only exhibit their affluence as a mark of appreciation to God and the community and to also show their generosity and a spirit of philanthropy therefore, human sacrifices were not involved in such cases. Interestingly, if the kinsmen-*ityo* insist, a human head must go down.

3.4 Building of Traditional Dais (Ivom Kahan)

This dais describes as the construction of an earthen heap-like platform usually done by a person that has its mastership. Construction of *Ivom* Dais also demanded human sacrifices to add potency and honour to the celebration. The construction of the dais took different form and position among the various districts in Tivland. For instance, Ieren who is of *Kparev* major extraction (*Jemgbagh* axis) and specifically from Ipav district in Gboko explained that, the *Ivom* was constructed in a house-like structure, raised and cemented in a roundish manner with certain number of polls, like 1-4 polls, buried at the edge of the building with one in the middle according to the strength of the aspiring noble (Ieren oral interview). These polls were human heads which according to Ieren, who were members of the man's family, used as sacrificial lambs. This erected building was sand filled to level with *Ashita* (steps) by the side to help someone to ascend to the top and dance on.

Similarly, Yongo of Masev extraction from Gee, Gwer East Local Government Area admits that, the building of the dais required a lot of human sacrifice (Yongo, oral interview). But unlike Ieren, Yongo emphasize that, the dais was built in form of a half pyramid with a buttressed foundation and a table top for drummers and the celebrant. During its construction, a tall pole cut from a *Vambe* tree (Silk Cotton Tree) was stuck in the middle of the foundation which also represented a human head. Then, mud was used predominantly to mount a pyramid-like structure (i.e the dais). Every single item employed for the construction of the dais was emblematic, i.e it represented sacrifice. This is the reason why, its building required some mastery. Such a person was knowledgeable about the rituals involved in the phenomenon.

Tyopande Orofa also emphasized that, many people could ascend the dais as possible depending on the fact that they have met the conditions and requirements and have properly registered for the event (Orofa, oral

interview). There were many people who may be enthusiastic to ascend the dais, but who may be unable to offer the required amount of human sacrifices for the construction of the dais. Such people could pay a price (monetary, not human sacrifice) as registration to participate in the ceremony. No one ascended the dais alone. It was usually done with a woman whom the man loved. As such, a man could ascend the dais as many times as possible at different occasions. Yongo also emphasizes that, in those days, there were certain restrictions. For instance, one who intended to display *shagba* through the construction and ascension to the dais was required to marry in all the major extractions of the Tiv tribe (i.e Ichongo and Ipusu) as well as a foreigner, preferably from the bordering 'Udam' known as *Kwase-Dam* (i.e from Gakem tribe of the neighbouring Cross River State).

3.5 Ascending of Traditional Dais (Ivom Unden)

Ivom Unden is a prestigious event such that only people of means are allowed to participate. Before ascending the structure, donations in cash or kind are given to the celebrant in the form of domestic animals, items of clothing, foodstuff, etc and he who is able to do this gains recognition and the respect of the community as a prominent member thereof. His opinion is also sought in public and social matters of the community (114). On top of the *Ivom* structure, participants sing and dance invoking the spirit of their ancestors believed to have enabled them to achieve such a feat in the society. All persons who ascend the *Ivom* structure on coming down, occupy a special place in the arena separated from the rest of the crowd and are also lavishly served and entertained with both food, meat and drinks (*Kwaghyan, Nyam man Tashi*).

All the activities surrounding this festival were performed in the afternoon. There was heavy entertainment and merriment, everyone danced, ate and drank locally brewed beer (*tashi*) to stupor. *Baba* added that during his time, he killed four cows (*ibua*) including a Tivcow (*bua u Tiv*) which is always expensive and not easy to afford. He further said the *Tiv* cow was necessary because he ascended the platform with his son, Tyavkase Ihoor. Anyone who wished to perform this festival alone was only required to use only one pig for entertainment, though this was optional. Ieren analyzed and revealed that slaves were also captured on the festive day; likewise, volunteered slaves were begotten as well. If he was



a boy slave, he procreates and they all bear your name and are admitted as full members of your family. As a woman slave, she becomes your wife. Celebration is continued until dawn with jubilation and merriment with everyone including one's peer group. Considering the adorning nature of the festivity, Ieren opines that people do not just retire to their destinations immediately. The next day, a visitation to the *angor* (female siblings that are married out to other men) who actually attended the occasion was embarked upon by the *mbakwav* (age mates). Gifts of yams, goats, money, clothes, chickens and a host of other items were presented by the *angor* female siblings to the *mbakwav* (age mates) as a mark of respect to their brothers.

4. Qualifications for Nobility in Tiv

Just like in the Western concept of nobility where, individuals aspiring for nobility were required to fulfil certain demands, the Tiv concept of *Shagba* too has some demands to be met. There are certain conditions and requirements that individuals must satisfy in order to qualify for the demonstration of nobility. Although these conditions vary significantly in that, in the Western concept, nobility can be inherited, bought with money, won in a duel or by doing a heroic deed. Meanwhile, the Tiv does not recognize the component of inheritance, only the property can be inherited and not nobility. Fundamentally, it is a matter of one's struggle and accomplishment.

Many people hold different views on what qualified individuals for *shagba*. For instance, in an oral interview with Grace Gbor of Ikyurav Tiev II, Katsina Ala, she posits out that, *shagbaor* has a variety of qualities that are inherent in him without which he is at risk. First and foremost, every intending *shagbaor* is supposed to be well versed in witchcraft (*mbatsav*) ideas-*kor akombo a Poor*. The importance of *Tsav* for nobility in Tiv is that, once one becomes noble, he attracts enemies, most of whom are his age mates and elders (Gbor, oral interview). Therefore, without the knowledge of *tsav*, he becomes prey and likely victim of attacks from *mbatsav*. As earlier stated, *tsav* is a cosmic force or power that can be used either negatively or positively.

5. Influence of Western Civilization on Shagba Display

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Until the advent of colonialism and western culture in Tivland, the demonstration of *shagba* (nobility) with its accompanying components remained enchanting and glamorous. However, with the coming of western education, capitalist ideology, Islam and to be more specific, Christianity, the Tiv worldview on *Shagba* was altered significantly. According to Yongo (Yongo oral interview), the colonial masters regarded the phenomenon of human sacrifice as barbaric in the first instance and abolished any practice that had to do with sacrifice within the society be it cultural or religious. He also adds that, with the coming of western civilization, people became more enlightened on the need to adopt western life style. Particularly, the economic ideology introduced by the western civilization completely shattered the existing foundation upon which the Tiv culture was anchored. Following this downturn, almost every aspect of the *shagba* expression with its accruing impact was overturned.

Firstly, capitalism which was the prevailing economic ideology contrasts with the communalism which the Tiv knew and practiced. The capitalist economic ideology prioritizes maximization of profit. Thus, the individual had to venture only into that which will cause more gain than loss. Secondly, capitalism encourages private ownership of the means of production such as land, capital, labour and entrepreneurship as opposed to collectivism in communalism. Most importantly capitalism encourages a highly competitive market where ‘winner takes all’, and ‘counter balancing’ are accommodated. Capitalism is a market-based economy combined with private or corporate ownership of the means of production. Goods and services are produced solely to make a profit, and this profit is reinvested into the economy to fuel economic growth. In capitalism, Classes exist based on their relationship to capital; the capitalists own shares of the means of production and derive their income in that way while the working class is dependent on wages or salaries (34). In this economic system, Callahan emphasizes, that all individuals make decisions for themselves (128). People make the best decisions because they must live with the consequences of their actions. Freedom of choice allows consumers to drive the economy. Capitalists see capitalistic and market-based societies as beacons of freedom, priding themselves on permitting social and economic freedoms not experienced under Communism. Under the capitalist system, the focus is on individualism.



Meanwhile, the economic ideology of the Tiv was communalism. Communism is a system of social organization based on the holding of most property in common, with actual ownership ascribed to the workers. Communism is a socialist ideology that emphasizes on profit distribution among the society or workforce to complement individual wages/salaries. As an agrarian society the Tiv practiced communalism based on what they have, for instance land, food, sisters (for exchange marriage) etc. Land in Tiv which was of high economic value was communally owned by the community and a member who needed land had the opportunity to use it. As Moti point out that, this communality explains why there is no oligarchy in Tiv traditional administration and the land, which is the source of prosperity, was equitably shared. In Tiv land use system, the land is commonly owned by the *ityo or ya* units. In spatial distribution each adult member of the family has the agnatic rights to sufficient land to farm for his wives and children (104).

Leadership of the community was also rotational among the Tiv based on their principle of *Ya na wangbian*. Decisions on issues affecting the community were communally taken with the heads of families representing their families. According to Tule Kohol the practice of “sisters sharing” (*iye ingyor*) fundamentally speaks volume of their communalism (Kohol Oral Interview). Specifically, when the traditional system of marriage known as exchange marriage was still in place, those who never have sisters to exchange for wives were given. People with many sister use to share with those who don’t have to enable them obtain wives for themselves. Even now that the system is not in place, the money paid as bribe price is shared among the “*ye ingyor*”.

Kwaghkor Madugu affirms that this philosophy is of great characteristic feature of the Tiv worldview and found expression in maxims as *kon mom ngu lun ikyo nga* (a single tree cannot make a forest); *ka tema imongu mbagbera ve fe iwa ye* (it is only by sitting together have the people of *mbagbera* come to know the art of blacksmithing); and *ya na wangbian* (eat and give to another brother or sister). All these express the fact that no Tiv person was an island (Madugu, Oral Interview). Every Tiv person looks at himself only with reference to the community into which he is born.

Now, with capitalism properly enshrined in the society, most Tiv who were already competitive of others saw themselves clearly above and

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ahead of others. With the foundations of communalism destroyed, many people became reluctant to conceive the idea of large parties such as nuptial dance, dais, song festival, etc, where money, food and other valuables were lavishly spent. People began spending on what will maximize profit to them. Even the so called nobles began to look only to their families. Tyotom Orhembaga notes that capitalism sees the right of the individual as most paramount so that the community or the society is an arena for grabs where every man is for himself and the strongest takes all. Individualism judges a person not for what the person is, but by what he/she has (Orhembaga, Oral Interview).

The introductions of capitalism, individualism and other related ideologies have led to de-communalism in the Tiv way of life. Toyo is one of those who contend that, the selfish competition in capitalism promotes inequality rather than strengthened the communal life of the African people. He says that: Capitalism is rooted in and promotes selfishness, greed, covetousness grabbing egotism, opportunism, love of material things (especially money), greed, criminality, commercialism (readiness to sell anything for money), callousness (sacrificing human beings and heir interest for money, lying and the tendency to steal) (19). This scholar sees capitalism not just as a trade system but a way of life that is extremely exploitative, selfish, self-centered, and discriminating. The western culture also destroyed the religious elements of *Shagba*. Although, there are striking similarities between the Christian and Tiv religions namely; the Supremacy of God/*Aondo*, existence of Angels/divinities and Saints/Ancestors are comparable. In spite of these similarities, the Christian religion recognizes only the blood covenant made in the person of Jesus Christ in contrast with the Tiv practice of human sacrifice. Thus, Tiv religious practices were vetted as barbaric. The shagba that one will have to install a traditional drum with several scores of human head lost its vitality.

Furthermore, the coming if western education and civilization generally, most things that the Tiv acquired in the name of demonstrating nobility lost their value, for instanc, buying of horse. The old means of transportation by horses, camels, donkeys etc had been substituted with products of western technology such as trains, cars, air crafts, boats and ships. Being this as it may, beasts of burden are not only archaic but inefficient and time consuming. The impact of science and technology has



overwhelmed what was formerly regarded as *Yough Yough*. Buying of horses these days remains for recreation, tour and for documentaries rather than as *shagba*. Abaiyol Dekwagh also points out that, marrying of several wives is neither lucrative nor economical these days (Dekwagh, Oral Interview). Under the capitalist ideology, the modern mechanized farming has substituted the manual labour. What a tractor can work in a day cannot be accomplished by twenty young men in a week. Hence, there is no gain, marrying plentiful wives as source of labourforce when tractors could do every farm work. Rather, one would acquire or hire tractors to work better in the farms. So, even in the economic perspective, the *shagba* of having large families as labour force has become outdated.

Lamenting on Western influence in Africa, Mbiti insists that it has detribalised the African society (218). This observation is true of the Tiv. The deep undermining of the traditional life is giving way for other identities to take over on the individual and society level. The corporate existence of the family is severely affected. For instance, in a family where children are in the university or have become medical doctors and the parents are peasants farmers, their economic standards, cultural understanding and practice cannot be the same. This manifests in health care, clothing, houses, food and moral behavior. On the individual level, the detachment from the society to work elsewhere produces dehumanized individuals who are either cut off or separated from corporate morality, customs and communality of their people. Though living as individuals in the cities the corporate humanity of their forefathers that makes life meaningful is forfeited. Therefore, he becomes a foreigner in both traditional and postmodern life. Politically, the traditional political institutions that existed were either suppressed or destroyed. The effect of money economy is far reaching on the Tiv society.

People in the rural areas grow cash crops like cocoa and beniseed while others take up employment. There is a phenomenon of rural to urban migrations that have caused a reduction in the number of people that could have stayed in villages to continue with the traditional practices. Rural to urban migration have caused shifts in attractions. People are no longer attracted to outdated activities; especially, the youths who are more inclined to the western pattern of life. On the whole, modernity has not only challenged the Tiv demonstration of nobility but has altered and

vanderlized most significantly, some of the structures that constituted the core culture.

6. Conclusion

This paper discusses “the changing phase of Shagaba in the 21st Century Tiv society”. The paper defines *Shagba* as the demonstration of wealth, affluence and prosperity acquired by an individual in the community for the community. In the pre-colonial era, a man who acquired wealth and affluence in the Tiv society had regarded it as wealth for the community i.e he shared it with his people. With a society built upon communal philosophy, the Tiv displayed *shagba* as a mark of gratitude to the ancestors, *Aondo* (God), *Akombo* (deities, divinities) and to the community into which he is connected. Demonstration of nobility was done in a number of ways namely, the hosting of *Ivom* or *Dam* ceremony (marriage feast), *Yam Nyinya* (buying of Horse), *Amar a Mirin* (hosting of music festival) among others. *Amar a Mirin* (hosting of music festival) is the climax of the exhibition of nobility, wealth, affluence and prosperity in Tiv traditional society. The researcher observes that all these ceremonies have either vanished in most Tiv communities or only appear in rare situations with the influence of civilization. Community life is individualized just like social roles. The researcher recommends that the practice of Shagba should be reviewed and encouraged with the practice of human sacrifice should be abolished.

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LIST OF RESPONDENTS

S/ N	Name	Age	Sex	House Address	Occupation	Date of interview
	Baba Ieren	95	Male	Yandev, Gboko LGA	Community Leader	15/01/2019
	Zaki Julius Yongo	76	Male	Gee Alieda, Gwer LGA	District Head	10/03/2019
	Gbor Grace	54	Female	Katsina Ala street Makurdi	Teacher	20/01/2018
	Atoo Shima	51	Female	Ihugh town, Vandeikya LGA	Farmer	09/04/2018
	Oraduen Tamen	67	Male	Igbaor town, Gwer LGA	Farmer	18/01/2019
	Abah Gabriel	60	Male	Ihugh town, Vandeikya LGA	Tailor	02/10/2018
	Gbatsorun Tomna	42	Female	Taraku Gwer LGA	Trader	05/02/2019
	Aoor Vandefan	76	Female	Adekaa, Gboko LGA	Applicant	04/02/2019
	Tyonongo Luor	45	Female	Gyado Villa, Makurdi	Teacher	03/01/2019
	Adaaku Ianna	70	Male	Mkar, Gboko LGA	Farmer	07/10/2018
	Akpenwu an Adigbo	76	Male	Akoodo, Mbakor Tarka LGA	Farmer	23/07/2018
	Amachigh Godwin	28	Male	Ushongo town, Ushongo LGA	Student	17/01/2019
	Abashia Wuave	37	Male	North bank Makurdi	Trader	21/01/2019