African Theological Journal
for Church and Society

African Theological Journal for Church and Society (ATJCS) is a scholarly journal publishing in any applicable theological discipline, focussing on the church and its role in societies within the African context. The Journal was launched in 2020 by NetACT (Network for African Congregational Theology), a network of a significant number and a variety of theological institutions in Africa (https://www.netact.org.za), in partnership with Christian Literature Fund (https://clf.co.za) and Hugenote College (https://www.hugenote.com).

It is a peer reviewed, open access journal. A print version (ISSN 2708-7557) is also available. It is published at least twice a year. Special editions containing monographs or contributions focussing on specific themes are published in a concurrent series of ATJCS Supplementa.

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The scope/core focus of ATJCS is to promote high quality scholarship in the fields of theology relevant or applicable to church and society in the African context. ATJCS publishes original research and literature studies in within the relevant focus areas. The intended readership of ATJCS is theological scholars (researchers), students, ministers and persons interested in the particular field.

African Theological Journal for Church and Society

In this issue

> The primary aim of this article is to argue that the curricula of many African evangelical theological seminaries are devoid of Public Theology. This lack has made it extremely difficult for the church in Africa to collapse the sacred-secular divide.

> A rather counterintuitive view states that embryonic cells are virtual objects merely adhering to each other, undeserving moral protection until much later. The opposing view states that embryonic cells have/ought to be given complete moral status of human beings' courtesy of their potentiality.

> This article is a missiological-theological appraisal of the missionary work of Serving in Mission (SIM) in Nigeria, founded during the later 1890s. A historical study was undertaken to track the 125 years' work of Serving in Mission with the aim to appraise key aspects of the work.

In this issue (cont.)

Introduction

This is the joyous, historical event of the publication of the very first volume of the African Theological Journal for Church and Society (ATJCS). The Journal is a joint venture of NetACT, in partnership with Christian Literature Fund and Huguenot College. It is intended to be a theological journal of high academic standards. The articles are therefore strictly peer-reviewed. The scope of the journal covers all major disciplines of theology, written from or for the African context and is aimed at making a contribution towards the church's role in society. It is an open access, electronic journal hosted on the NetACT internet portal. There is a need for scholars from African Theological Institutions (and others) to publish in a peer-reviewed, academic journal of high standard, but which is affordable or free (no page fees!).

We trust that initially at least two regular volumes of this journal will be published annually (in September and April each year). From time to time special editions on specific topics may be published. Scholars are most welcome to send the outcomes of their research to us. We are also eager to publish book reviews on newly published books from or intended for the African context.

This first edition consists of five articles:

Prof Sunday Agang is provost of ECWA Theological Seminary, Jos (JETS) in Nigeria. His article *Integrating Public Theology into African Theological Institutions' Curricula* makes the argument for the inclusion of African Public Theology into the curricula of all African Theological Institutions in order to bridge the disconnect between the sacred (devotional life) and the secular (everyday life) of Christians in Africa. Churches and church leaders should become involved with the important issues of the public domain and a new generation of pastors should be trained accordingly.

Dr Fred Olwendo is lecturer at Daystar University. In his article *The metaphysical, ethical and theological musings on embryonic stem cells: a response to Peter van Inwagen* he reflects on the intricate ethical

question: do embryonic cells have/ought to be given complete moral status of human beings' courtesy of their potentiality? He enters into a discourse with Peter van Imwagen and also reflects on some African narratives, theological perspectives and implications.

Dr Mipo Ezekiel Dadang is a member of the ECWA Theological Seminary Jos, Nigeria. In his article *125 years of Serving in Mission (SIM) in Nigeria: A missiological-theological appraisal of missionary work,* he provides an historical overview of the work done by SIM, especially the significance of their theological and holistic views of mission practice.

Dr Joshua Bagudu Boyi is staff member at UMCA Theological College, Ilorin, Nigeria. In his article *The response of Christians to Islamic violence in Northern Nigeria*, he asks the question whether the only option for Christians in responding to the religious violence in Nigeria is counter violence – as self-defence or as reprisal. He proposes the biblical notion of non-violence.

Dr Annette Potgieter is lecturer in theology at Huguenot College, Wellington, South Africa. In her article *Standing in God's favour: spatial reasoning in Rom 5:1–5* she argues that Paul redefines ideas such as "love", "favour" and "glory" in order to communicate from a bodily perspective the significance of a believer's relationship with God. "Space" and "body" have become very relevant concepts during the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown period.

This edition concludes with a review of the newly published book: *African Public Theology*, by Sunday Agang, Dion Forster and Jurgens Hendriks.

Dr Gideon van der Watt

(General Editor)

Integrating Public Theology into African Theological Institutions' Curricula

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Abstract

The primary aim of this article is to argue that the curricula of many African evangelical theological seminaries are devoid of Public Theology. This lack has made it extremely difficult for the church in Africa to collapse the sacred-secular divide. As a result, our public faith does not tally with our private faith, beliefs and practices. The curriculum that our evangelical pastors get trained in lacking an important ingredient: Public Theology. As such it does not address and help its graduates to collapse the sacred-secular divide. Thus, although year in and year out our evangelical seminaries are turning out graduates, they are in much cases incapable of overcoming ethnic differences. They do not know how to reposition and transform their communities into vibrant Christian communities. They largely tend to have no clear-cut understanding of the public relevance of their Christian faith, talk less of helping their members to collapse the sacred-secular divide and become effective Christians in every sphere of public life and human endeavours.

To address this abnormality in our African theological training, Public Theology needs to be introduced in our evangelical seminaries. In a continent a in transition with shaky moral and ethical foundations we can afford to continue turning blind eyes to the faulty lines of our theological education in Africa. African theological enterprise owes the continent a solution to some of the destructive and systemic structures of injustice, corruption and impunity. To address this salient problem, the article discusses the

role of Public Theology in theological education; the challenge of theological seminaries in Africa; Why Africa needs integrative curricula; the urgent needs and the challenges of integrative curricula theological education; the parochial nature of theological schools: the sacred-secular divide; Why public theology is important for integrative curricula in theological education; the salient relevance of public theology to African educational integrative curricula; and concludes with a narrative of Nigerian seminaries modelling integrative curricula through public theology.

Introduction

The Instructions of the LORD are perfect, reviving the soul.
The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.
The commandments of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are pure, lasting for ever.
The laws of the LORD are true, each one is fair. They are more desirable than gold, even the finest gold. They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb. They are a warning to your servant, a great reward for those who obey them.[1]

No wonder, this is said about the Bible:

The Bible brought its view of God, the universe, and mankind into all the leading Western languages and thus into the intellectual process of Western man [sic]... Since the invention of printing, the Bible has become more than the translation of an ancient Oriental literature. It has not seemed a foreign book, and it has been the most available, familiar and dependable source and arbiter of intellectual, moral, and spiritual ideals in the West (H. Grady Davis[2]).

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[1] Psalm 19:7–11 NLT

[2] Cited in Vishal Mangalwadi, *The Book that Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilisation,* (Nashville, Dallas, Mexico City, Rio De Janeiro, Beijing: Thomas Nelson, 2011), 1.

If this is what African Christians find and read in the Bible, why is Africa still a continent in transition with many shaky foundations? This is an important question. It is the motivation for this article. The question shows that there are matters arising in our theological educational curricula in the continent which need urgent attention. Undoubtedly, it can rightly be said that all theological enterprise in the world is public theology in nature and scope. Yet in Africa there is little or no sign that theological ideas about public theology are being integrated in African theological educational curricula by African theological educators.

With the myriad of problems currently bedevilling the continent, public theology as an important aspect of African Christian theology has to be given a top priority. For the problems facing Africa today require a multidimensional approach. In other words, to address the myriad of social, spiritual, political, economic and intellectual problems facing Africa today, theological educators need to take integrative curricula seriously. Based on the words of the psalmist quoted above, theological institutions are in a better position to engage in curricula integration.

As such, this article argues that no integrated curricula of theological higher education will be complete without it including Public Theology. Public Theology gives theological curricula a focus on the reign of God or kingdom-of-God theology. So, in this article, I explore the strategic role public theology plays in the quest for an integrative curriculum in African evangelical theological seminaries. That is, I draw the attention of theological educators across Africa to the significance of public theology vis-a-vis the effort to create a culture and a form of integration that is all-embracing so that our theological graduates grasp God's kingdom morality and ethical perspective for the common good of church and society.[3] That is, a perspective that will become the true source of our continent's repositioning and transformation; a fountain "and arbiter of intellectual, moral, and spiritual ideals" in Africa.

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[3] Matthew 6:10.

I address the challenges that theological educators in Africa have to radically overcome in order to be able to enshrine public theology in their institutional curricula. I numerate the peculiar benefits of having public theology in Africa's theological curricula and then conclude with some empirical examples of two Evangelical theological seminaries in Nigeria who have seen the significant need and the enormous benefit of including public theology in their curricula. Consequently, they have been able to move theological reflection and discussions out from academic circles into the streets by engaging in robust informal discussions, active engagement in newspapers, electronic media press, social media, communication media and the marketplace in general.

The role of Public Theology in theological education

Public theology is important in the schemes of things because it is a subject that helps us to comprehend how God is the God of faith and reason, theology, communication, entrepreneurship, science, technology and so on. Public theology can enable African Christians to make sense of their world. It is the medium through which African Christians can grasp and wrestle with the issues involved in human and societal transformation and development. One of the issues that is very critical to nation building is character virtues. Developing virtuous character in any given society is a significant feature of public theology.[4] For it gives us rich insights for living a holistic life that impacts deeply on the way we think, see and act in all spheres of life in our society. It also takes a holistic approach to educational content, which includes curricula delivery and the whole gamut of the milieu of a theological seminary, Christian university or college.[5] By "curricula", as Zamani Buki Kafang explains, we mean the "type of courses, programme, and instructional plan designed to achieve the philosophy and objective of each institution. This includes the type of method

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[4] Mangalwadi, *The Book That Made Your World*, 181.

[5] Jonathan S. Raymond, *Higher Education: Integrating Holiness into all of Campus Life*, (/Spring Valley, CA: Aldersgate Press, 2015), 14.

used, subjects taught, and number of credit hours required for each course of study."[6]

The challenge of theological seminaries in Africa

Integrated curricula bring faith and reason, theology and science/technology together. The implementers of integrated curricula, undoubtedly, recognise that God is both the God of the sacred and the secular spheres. God is the God of faith and reason. God is the God of the private and the public spheres. Thus, a revelatory education was started by the church in its quest to fulfil the mission of God. Vishal Mangalwadi asserted, "...[T]he university was invented and established by Christians ... Education was a Christian missionary enterprise. It was integral to Christian mission because modern education is a fruit of the Bible. The Biblical Reformation, born in European universities, took education out of the cloister and spread it around the globe."[7] Yet, given that many of the African evangelical seminaries were started by missionaries who came out of the tension between faith and reason, which the Enlightenment proponents created and distorted the intrinsic and symbiotic connection between faith and reason, making that connection today is not a simple possibility. Prior to the Enlightenment, Christians did not think they must choose between faith and reason. Both were essential.

However, during the Enlightenment's wave of onslaught on the Christian faith,[8] the Bible and tradition, evangelical Christians decided to take the route of faith while the proponents of Enlightenment took the route of logic and reason, and promoted human reasons characterised by logic, science and technology. That attitude brought about the present problem the African church and its theological institutions now have: viewing life from the perspective of a sacred-

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[6] Kafang Zamani, Buki, *Higher Theological Education*, 47.

[7] Mangalwadi, *The Book that Made Your World*, 194.

[8] Mangalwadi, *The Book that Made the Soul of your Civilisation*, 260.

secular divide. Zamani Buki Kafang has explained that, "The curricula designed and used by the theological institutions are the engines and road maps." Yet these so-called "engines and road maps" are not holistic enough. He pointed to the fact that, "[T]he early theological institutions were started by the missionaries with the aim of producing well-disciplined and committed evangelists, pastors, church planters and other church related ministry workers."[9] From Kafang's statement we can clearly see that there is a huge challenge today: This goal/aim was parochial in nature and scope. It was not integrative enough. Given the present circumstances where Africans are sick and tired of getting leaders whose mind-set is completely on self-interest rather than the common good of society, evangelical theological institutions have to re-evaluate and review their curricula in such a way that they become wholly integrated.[10]

Why Africa needs integrative curricula

Higher theological education has a goal: moving from only emphasizing saving souls (evangelism) to also emphasizing saving minds (social action that brings human renewal and transformation for the common good of society). To achieve higher education's goal of producing graduates who excel in learning, knowledge and character, evangelical curricula have to be integrative so that our graduates become bearers of intellectual, scientific, technological, social, political, economic and moral light, which is capable of bringing gladness, joy, and honour to the African peoples. To bring joy, gladness and honour to a broken and decaying society like Africa, our task as public theologians is to help them develop mental representations of the subject matter that will provide a basis for further learning, thinking, and use. [11] Therefore, an integrated curricula implies

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[9] Zamani Buki Kafang, *Higher Theological Education: An Overview of Six Protestant Theological Institutions in Nigeria* (Jos, Plateau: Pyria-mark Services Ltd, 2009), 43.

[10] Kafang, *Higher Theological Education*, 45-46.

[11] Wilbert J. McKeachie, *Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College*

knowledge acquisition that involves correlation and synthesis, and cross-fertilisation of ideas within the confines of the different intellectual fields of human inquiry and learning. Public theology fits the goal of higher education. For as we are aware in Christian theological seminaries, universities and colleges of higher learning, "The noble intent of many for centuries has been to develop godly Christian graduates of competence and character at first for church service, but then also to impact the various marketplaces of life."[12]

The term "integration" refers to a situation in which a subject becomes a dialogue partner to other subjects, a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approach to knowledge acquisition and dissemination. The integration model of theological education, which this article envisages, places premium on advance content-knowledge, relies on higher order, skills, and focuses learning on major issues that cut-across fields of multidimensional intellectual disciplines.[13] It is a model that fits squarely with the aspiration of all institutions of higher learning: Globally, all Christian higher education is expected to holistically prepare men and women to be agents of transformation in church and society. Thus, unlike public higher education, whose primary concern is to give the graduates a good grasp of various specialized areas (science, economics, technology, etc.), African evangelical theological seminaries need to go beyond such a parochial curricula to include also the belief in the universal Christ, the one who has been given power and authority in heaven and on earth; power over all of life, the sacred and secular.[14] By so doing, the graduates of such an integrated educational curricula will experience a higher form of education, one that not only integrates, but also infuses the head and the heart with the idea of Kingdom ethical character virtues and moral vision, which Africa

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and university Teachers, Tenth Edition, (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), 6.

[12] Raymond, *Higher Higher Education*, 14.

[13] Raymond, *Higher Higher Education*, 15

[14] Raymond, *Higher Higher Education*, 9.

desperately needs at this period of confusion and despair. This educational perspective will enable the graduates of such integrated curricula to reject and go beyond the sacred-secular divide.

Integrative curricula education in Africa: The needs and challenges

Why we badly need pubic theology in our institutions is primarily because Africa is a continent that is still in transition with shaky foundations. In this context, for Africans to enjoy social, economic, political, and spiritual vitality, our educational curricula have to be integrative enough to include pubic theology. All disciplines and subject matter have to be taken seriously so that they can be repositioned for the qualitative and quantitative transformation of every sphere of our nations across the continent.

Furthermore, integrative curricula that include public theology are needed today more than ever because of the explosive growth of Christianity in the continent. Robert J. Priest writes:

> The remarkable expansion of Christianity in Africa in the context of massive social challenges has created unprecedented opportunities for leadership by Christians. Hundreds of thousands of young congregations now provide local platforms for the development and exercise of spiritual and social leadership. And because many of African's countries are majority Christians, African Christians also find themselves exercising leadership in a wide variety of business, educational, media, social-services, and governmental venues.[15]

This development, where leadership is needed, makes it extremely necessary to have an integrative educational curricula that include public theology in order to help our theological institutions provide a holistic training that will adequately prepare men and women for

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[15] Robert J. Priest, "The Genesis and Growth of the African Christian Leadership Study" in *African Christian Leadership: Realities, Opportunities, and Impact,* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2017), 1.

effective and active participation in affairs of their society, particularly, life in both church and society, without falling into the snare of the modern and post-modern sacred-secular divide.

African theological enterprise is public theology both in its nature and scope. Therefore, it requires an integrative curricular which will help in the collapsing of the sacred-secular divide, which is still a huge setback to the development of a holistic theological perspective. For instance, Benezet Bujo catalogued the challenges that African theological education faces, which to my mind, necessitate an integrative theological curricula education to overcome the impasses. He observed that since "modern African theology began in 1956 with the publication of *Les Pretres hours interrogent*, African theologians have been making every effort to have a more genuinely African way of theologising. However,

> Many things have happened in Africa ... There have been many obstacles to hopes that independence would create a more friendly environment for African cultural values and lead to the development of a theology freed from colonial burdens. Wars, corrupt dictators, and a continuing economic colonialism from the rich North have created an environment where Africans continue to struggle to assert their own dignity and the dignity of their cultures.[16]

We live in a colonised social context with unprecedented consequences. Gender-based violence, economic exploitation, corruption at all levels of society and so on. We assumed that when we got independence from our colonisers who denied us our human dignity, we would truly be free. We did not know that we would only take off the colonialists and replace them with our cousins who have learned how to use us to help them maintain the status quo. Like the colonialists, they made sure that we do not have integrative

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[16] Benezet Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context,* (Maryknoll, New York, 1992), 5.

educational curricula that is humane and self-conscious and a radical liberation. Integrative educational curricula, which African public theology promotes, is one that reaffirms the sacredness of every sphere of human endeavours and the restoration of the dignity of the Africa peoples which they have been deprived, not only at the economic, political or social level, but also at the intellectual and spiritual dimensions.[17]

The parochial nature of theological schools: The sacred-secular divide

All African evangelical Christians believe that Christ is Lord of all of life. Yet there are also many of them who tend to believe in what is called the *sacred-secular divide*, the dichotomy between private and public faith or the separation between evangelism and social action. This contradiction has continued to create a *thin* instead of a *thick.* [18] Christian ethics and morality in a continent which is in transition with shaky (moral, ethical, religious, cultural, political, social, scientific, technological and economic) foundations. In God's economy, he has purposed and planned that all those who belong to Christ Jesus through faith will be his conduit of spreading the life of a radical and transforming moral and ethical life. According to St. Paul, God has decided that "through us [he will] spread the fragrance of the knowledge of him [Christ] everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life" (2 Cor 2:14–16). How then can we be a fragrance to our corrupt society and generation if we do not fully participate in the activity of the community or city? To permeate every sphere of life we need to see all of life as the Lord's. As the psalmist

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[17] Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context,* 9.

[18] Michael Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad,* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 85.

prayed, "May your glory shine over all the earth" (Ps 57:11). Therefore, Christians who compartmentalised their faith, reducing faith to a private and "otherworldly" thing, have failed to grasp the full meaning of personal faith in Christ. They have fallen prey to the unnecessary separation of faith and reason. To address these enormous theological lacunas, African theological seminaries need to include public theology in their curricula.

Integrative curricula and the two tasks of the church

The church has two essential tasks: *saving the soul and saving the mind*.[19] Thus, the essence of curricula integrative is to provide a holistic and transformative education to our people to enable them to develop their God-given potential. It is also so that they can be able to positively reposition and transform their families, communities and the society at large for human and environmental flourishing. So, our students acquire the extraordinary insights, understanding, knowledge, wisdom and broad breadth of mind with which to bring the needed social, political, moral and economic justice in their societies and the African continent at large, African theological institutional curricula have to be integrative.

Why Public Theology is important for integrative curricula in theological education

Theology is traditionally defined as the study of God or speaking about God. In our book, African Public Theology, I defined theology not only as the study of God, or the language about God, but also as the study of how God interacts with his creation, as already noted above. That is, public theology is a theology that recognises that God is interacting with all sphere of human life and the non-human creation. For instance, Paul tells us in Romans 11:36 that, "Everything comes from God, everything exists by his power and everything is intended for his glory"

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[19] Charles H. Malik's Dedication message at the Billy Graham Centre at Wheaton, 1993.

(NLT). Public theology by its nature and scope does not only recognise that Christ is the Lord of all of life and all of its spheres, but also it defines theology as "the study of God and how he interacts with all of his creation."[20] As such it collapses the dichotomy between private and public faith, the sacred-secular divide, and the separation between evangelism and social action. It gives all its students a theological education that is capable of helping them to reposition and transform every sphere of church and society to the praise of God's glory. Public theology helps Christians to live a life of goodness, peace, justice and joy in all spheres of life. Therefore, I argue that a socially, politically, religiously and economically divisive and hostile society like Africa needs public theology. I attempt to delineate how public theology is gradually becoming part and parcel of the curricula of some of Africa's theological institutions, particularly in West Africa. And given the expressed desire of African youth, which is captured by the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, I stress the importance of public theology in a continent that is increasingly being ravaged by corruption and impunity and being turned into a theatre of insecurity and fields of blood.

Public theology gives theological education a biblical outlook that is comprehensive and all-embracing. For example, Mangalwadi explained, "The global spread of Western education made...[the]scientific way of seeing nature so common that most educated people do not realise that the scientific outlook is a peculiar way of observing the world –an objective ("secular") method moulded by a biblical worldview. Science uses objective methods to observe, organize, and understand the natural world."[21] Thus, the need for integrative curricula is overdue in Africa, particularly as we see the African people yearning for a new spirit of Africa, which has resulted in

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[20] Sunday Agang, Dion Foster, J Jurgens Hendriks, *African Public Theology,* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Langham Literature, 2020),

[21] Mangalwadi, *The Book that Made the Soul of your Civilisation,* 223

the African Union coming up with what it calls, Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. Achieving this agenda definitely requires integrative curricula in our institutions of higher education, especially the theological seminaries and colleges across Africa. The Africa we want can only come to fruition if we have an integrated curricula in our African evangelical theological seminaries who are willing to avoid their parochialism and fundamentalism and embrace what Philip Dow calls, "virtuous minds character development," which is characterised by intellectual fair-mindedness, intellectual curiosity, intellectual tenacity, intellectual carefulness, intellectual courage, intellectual honesty and intellectual humility.[22] By nature and scope, public theology provides the whole gamut of theological education. It argues that "the theological educator's task goes far beyond cognitive articulation of biblical truth to living it out." Undoubtedly, "This task is not new, for the practical life of the theological educator has always been paramount in undergirding, or otherwise, underlining his effectiveness as interpreter and communicator of divine revelation."[23] Therefore, public theology is critically needed in Africa's theologian's quest for integrated theological educational curricula. For instance, public theology is capable of helping our theological graduates to be able to critically reflect on the religious, political, social, intellectual, economic and spiritual landscape of Africa. Or like Jurgen Moltmann asserts, it will help our theologians to "think critically about the religious and moral values of the societies in which they exist, and present their reflections as carefully reasoned positions."[24] Integrating public theology into

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[22] Philip E. Dow, *Virtuous Minds: Intellectual Character Development for Students, Educators & Parents*, (Downers Groves, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2013), 25.

[23] Annang Asumang, "The Theological Educator's Incarnation of Biblical Truth in a Post-Truth World" in *Priorities for Evangelical Education: Essays in Honour of Reuben van Rensburg, Feschrift*, edited by Zaltan Erdey, (Johannesburg, South Africa: SATS Press, n.d.), 143.

[24] Jurgen Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society: The Public Relevance of Theology*, (St. Alban Place London: SCM Press, 1999), 2.

African theological educational curricula will undoubtedly help African theologians to overcome the snare of the sacred-secular divide. Thus, the urgent task facing African theologians is to engage in a transformative theological enterprise.[25]

The salient relevance of Public Theology to African educational integrative curricula

Public theology is very integrative in its nature and scope. It gives Christian educators a broader and more holistic perspective than what is usually obtainable in many traditional ways of curricula instruction. By its nature and scope, public theology is an all-embracing theology. It provides educational practitioners with a praxis model of engagement with the society in which they live, work and have their livelihood and being. It has to be part of Africa's quest for curricula integration because an integrated curriculum, as the name implies, connects the different fields of intellectual inquiry. It cuts-across subject-matter lines and concerns itself with the unification of concepts therein. Curricula integration is very necessary, particularly in our theological institutions because it can help our students and graduates to make the necessary connections which will allow them to become whole persons in a whole world. In other words, integrative curricula are the pivotal hope for Africa's holistic transformation. Generally speaking, "Integration focuses on making connections for students, allowing them to engage in relevant, meaningful activities that can be connected to real life."[26] That real life is what public theology is primarily concerned about.

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[25] Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "Transforming the Landscape of Theology in Africa: Women's Agency" in *African Christian Theologies in Transformation*, edited by Ernst M. Conradie, (Matieland, Stellenbosch, SA: EFSA, 2004), 68–69.

[26] "Integrated Curriculum: definition, benefits, and examples". [Online]. Available: https://study.com/academy/lesson/integrated-curriculum-definition-benefits-examples.html [8 June 8 2020].

However, over the years, the challenge that Christians, particularly in the West have had and continue to have is the Enlightenment celebration of human reason and logic and its disconnection from Christian faith. In other words, the discovery of scientific and technological powers over nature by humans caused Christians to leave reason and logic to the scientists and only pursue faith, resulting in the creation of a dichotomy between secular and sacred spheres. To rediscover the connection between the sacred and the secular will necessitate the inclusion of public theology in our quest to integrate African theological educational curricula.

Integration is our Christian badge. As the German theologian, Jurgen Moltmann aptly argues, "There is no Christian identity without public relevance, and no public relevance without theology's Christian identity, since for Christ's sake theology is kingdom-of-God …" [27] Similarly, he argued that by virtue of Jesus' declaration (Mt 28:18–19), public theology has always been in existence since the beginning of the mission of God in the world. However, it has not been critically paid attention to nor critically thought through by this generation Christian theologians, particularly in Africa. Public theology must be seen as worthy of being considered as part of an integrated curriculum in our theological seminaries across the continent. Given the socio-political, socioeconomic, sociocultural and spiritual challenges facing our continent today, public theology now demands an explicit integration. Christ's declaration in Matthew 28:18-19 demands integrative theology, which public theology offers. As Moltmann puts it, public theology is the theological enterprise that gets us profoundly and actively involved in the public affairs of our God-given society. Specifically speaking, public theology helps Christians to think about "what is of general concern in the light of hope in Christ for the kingdom of God."[28] In other words, in its quest to disciple all spheres of a nation,

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[27] Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society,* 1.

[28] Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society,* 1.

public theology pays critical attention to the matters of love, justice, human rights and tries to reposition and transform systemic socio-political, socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-religious injustices by replacing them with justice that serves the common good of all.

A narrative of Nigerian seminaries: The implication of integrating Public Theology in their curricula

The dichotomy between faith and reason emerged with the separation between evangelism and social action, particularly during the 20th century social gospel crisis. Consequently, many evangelical theological institutions focus today on training men and women who will go out and evangelise an unsaved world, plant churches and pastor already established churches and/or lead new or established ministries. They rarely see any connection between evangelism and social action. As a result, they are not able to (like Ronald J. Sider says in Good News and Good Works: A Theology for the Whole Gospel (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), hold evangelism and social action in total balance. Today, however, there is a gradual paradigm shift. Things are beginning to take dramatically new shape in theological education. We now have theological institutions in Nigeria, for example, that are making intentional effort to bridge the gap between evangelism and social action and collapse the sacred-secular divide. These institutions realised that the church's vocation is fundamentally twofold: saving souls and saving minds (or transforming minds for holistic development of society.) For instance, about three to four years ago, ECWA Theological Seminary, Kagoro (ETSK) in Kaduna State, where I was the President for six years; and Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN) Bukuru, in Plateau State separately saw the need to take public theology seriously. So, they have now included public theology in their curricula from the master's to the PhD levels. This is a very important development. They realised that theological institutions have not been making the deep impact in our society that they have the potential of making because they have curricula that do no integrate public theology or have no public outlook. Consequently, these institutions

decided that they will have to produce graduates whose theological reflection will move out from academic circles into the streets and engage in robust discussions about the marketplace – indeed, the whole gamut of moral, social, economic, and political, spheres of human endeavours . With this new theological key, the prophetic voice that is much desired in a continent of systemic injustice, economic exploitation and gender abuse and oppression will be heard. As a result, the ordinary Christians that we disciple in our local churches will have a faith that has a public outlook and they will be able to make a deeper impact in their different vocations in the whole of public life.

As ETSK integrated public theology in its curriculum, we have suddenly witnessed unprecedented change in the kind of graduates we produce. Today our graduates are becoming actively and intentionally involved in interfaith dialogue, debate on gender issues, entrepreneurial education, the marketplace, communications (electronic and social media) and so on. Presently, my daughter, Esther Paul Moses, is writing her Master thesis on, Domestic Gender Abuse: The Church's Inaction at ETSK. Another graduate of ETSK ECWA has successfully established a ministry and counselling programme for community and church youths who are struggling with the challenge of drug addiction. In sum, as the result of integrating public theology in ETSK's curriculum, we are seeing a whole array of our graduates involved in seeking to transform both church and society.

Therefore, by way of conclusion, I will argue that to succeed in the task of an integrative educational curricula in Africa, we have to take Jesus' pronouncement seriously: "All authority in heaven and on earth have been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ..."[29] The issue of public theology is the issue of looking at ministry from the point of God's kingdom, God's reign over all of life, not just the confines of the church walls. For as Moltmann succinctly argued, "Theology has only one problem [concern]: God. We are theologians for God's sake.

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[29] Matthews 28:18, 19a.

God is our dignity. God is our suffering. God is our hope."[30] Thus public theology, "As the theology of God's kingdom [the rule or reign of God], has to be public theology: public, critical and prophetic complaint to God—public, critical and prophetic hope in God. In its public character is constitutive for the theology, for the kingdom of God's sake."[31] Jesus Christ, our theological teacher, radically engaged his social context and its political and economic challenges. His approach to ministry was holistic and he has sent the church to disciple all spheres of our nations.

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[30] Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society,* 5.

[31] Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society,* 5.

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The metaphysical, ethical and theological musings on embryonic stem cells: a response to Peter van Inwagen

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Abstract

A rather counterintuitive view states that embryonic cells are virtual objects merely adhering to each other, undeserving moral protection until much later. The opposing view states that embryonic cells have/ought to be given complete moral status of human beings' courtesy of their potentiality. Taken to their logical conclusions, these two positions leave us in unchartered territories that don't sit well with our basic moral beliefs. Intuitively, most of us believe that while it may be the case the human organism is neither human being nor potential one, however, we also find it counterintuitive when this is taken to suggest that there is nothing going on there that is of moral significance. Still, we have to be careful how much stock we can put on the potentiality argument as it has been the undoing of some. The human organism may have the potential to be a human being. But that does not mean it is a human being, or that it will *become* one. Potentiality only means the human organism can become a human being or has potential to be one *if* the right conditions obtain. It is a potentiality that gives us some leverage on the moral protection of embryonic cells but comes with corresponding moral restrictions.

1. Introduction

When does life begin to exist? The long and controversial abortion debate revolves around the different positions people usually take when responding to this question. In the text where his metaphysical views as discussed here are explicated, Peter van Inwagen (1990) thinks there is no sharp answer to this question and the answer to this question, Van Inwagen claims, does not fall anywhere between conception and the embryonic stage. He believes it is only after the differentiation stage that we can talk about the formation of an organism, i.e., a life with the genetic identity of a human being. According to Van Inwagen, to think there is life as soon as conception occurs, or anywhere during the embryonic stage has at least two problems. One, such a view presupposes that we were once zygotes, an idea he thinks is obviously false because the zygote ceases to exist before life is formed. Two, it leads to the conclusion that the developing embryo is an organism – a human being or having the potentiality to become one, an idea he considers implausible because of the possibility that monozygotic twinning could still occur. And the possibility of the latter, in his view, is proof enough that the embryo is not an organism, thus neither a human being nor a potential person.

This paper is about the metaphysical claims of embryonic cells by Peter van Inwagen, and the corresponding ethical and theological implications that can be drawn from those metaphysical claims. In this paper, I will adopt Van Inwagen's metaphysical theory of embryonic development; this is because Van Inwagen and I essentially agree on what the basic structure of embryonic development should look like. For instance, Van Inwagen is correct to say that the developing embryo does not have the genetic identity of a *particular* or a potential human being. Consequently, one would be right to say that abortion at this period leads neither to the killing of a human being nor preventing a particular person (whose identity has been determined at fertilization) from existing. Hence under his theory, abortion might be thought to be morally permissible during this period. Put differently, if life does not

begin until after the central nervous system is developed, then it means that prior to this development, abortion is of little or no moral consequence. While Van Inwagen himself does not make ethical let alone theological observations from the metaphysical claims attributed to him in this paper, however, the second part of the paper is about the ethical and theological implications that can be drawn from the metaphysical claims he makes here about embryonic development. Precisely, I will show that after conception, abortion at whatever stage becomes problematic, with significant moral, even theological implications. My arguments rest on two premises.

First, I will argue that fertilization of the embryonic cells makes a huge difference in determining identity of persons. Let us call this the *potential person by fertilization* argument. Second, I will appeal to the very process of embryonic development, and show that on strict biological grounds, there is continuity of the *human organism* throughout the process of embryonic development. This is what others like Warren Quinn (1984) refer to as smooth gradualism of embryonic development. At the end of this process, there is the possibility of the birth of something with the same genetic form as the embryonic cell. Let us call this the *potential person by gradualism* argument. Here, I will use the potentiality argument but in a different way. So, while I believe as Van Inwagen does, that the standard potential person argument as advanced by antiabortionists does not work because the embryo or zygote does not itself become a human being, however, contrary to Van Inwagen, I suggest the potentiality argument still works in a different way, what I call the *potential to produce* a human being claim (Persson 2003).

The paper will move in five steps. In the first section, I will present Van Inwagen's metaphysical theory of embryonic development. In the second section, I will consider the practical implications of the theory, being part of the conversations of the abortion debate. Third section will be about the potential persons' arguments, where I will offer a deeper insight of the organism under debate. The fourth section will

discuss the ethical implications that can arise from these metaphysical conversations (in lieu of Van Inwagen's views and mine). For example, whether they can line up with our basic moral intuitions. The last section is a conversation around theological perspectives and African narratives with regards to the unborn/fetus, and the implications that can arise from these conversations relevant to Van Inwagen's views and mine on the status of embryonic cells.

2. Van Inwagen's metaphysical theory of embryonic development

I consider his theory to be a three-step account of embryonic development. First, there is the conception stage which starts as soon as the sperms and the eggs meet and forms the zygote. Here, we will have to say more about exactly how this initial process takes place to give us insight into the metaphysical and scientific nature of the theory in general. Once the egg and the sperms meet, a new chapter is opened in the interaction of cellular organisms, an interaction between the sperm chromosomes, the mass of cytoplasm (the daughter cells from the previous egg cell division), and other minor cellular organisms created from the ongoing meiotic divisions. A further interaction of the male and female cellular organisms results into the formation of what is known as the zygote. He says,

> chromosomes of the sperm and the haploid egg nucleus and various sub cellular organisms cooperate to arrange themselves and the available cytoplasm into an arena, the activity of the inhabitants of which will constitute the new life. The new life begins … A new object, a zygote, now exists" (p. 152).

And with the formation of the zygote, the 'simples' that composed both the sperms and the eggs cease to exist. This marks the beginning of what I take to be the first stage of van Inwagen's theory of embryonic development (1990).

We are now at the monozygotic stage. What is a zygote? It is important to be clear about the cellular organism represented at this stage as well

as its biological status. This is crucial because there are those who (the extreme antiabortionists, for example) hold the view that the zygote is a human being or a potential one, that when it is fully grown, the result is a human being, or an organism that will become a human being. Van Inwagen thinks such views are mistaken. He says,

> the zygote is a single cell. About thirty hours (in the case of human beings) after fertilization, it will divide mitotically, and the immediate result will be two duplicates of it that adhere to one another" (p. 152).

This marks the end of the first stage, and the beginning of what I take to be the second stage of his theory. Before considering what the second stage entails, a clarification should be made as to what exactly happens as soon as the monozygotic cell division occurs.

What happens to the zygote once it divides? Philosophers have different views about what happens after the monozygotic cell division occurs. For Van Inwagen, there are at least three possibilities. First, let us suppose that A is the zygote; and B and C are the two-cell embryo after the mitotic division. Under possibility (1) the zygote ceases to exist, giving way to a two-cell embryo. Under possibility (2), the zygote continues to exist by replicating itself, and adheres to its replica, hence either B or C is A; and in (3) the zygote changes from a one-celled to a two-celled organism, where A becomes the mereological sum of B and C. Van Inwagen favours possibility 1 (1990). It would be interesting to pursue the discussion further and find out whether Van Inwagen is right in rejecting possibilities 2 and 3. But since I am not challenging the basic structure of Van Inwagen's theory, I will not go into the debate. I am in favour of possibility 1 for the same reasons as Van Inwagen. Hence, like van Inwagen, I believe that when the cell division occurs, the zygote ceases to exist, and it is replaced by two-cell embryo. Further, like Van Inwagen, we could also say that there is no interaction between the two cells, they are merely stuck to each other and do not compose anything.

Thus, in a Van Inwagenian sense, while B and C are individual organisms, they do not form a larger living thing. In other words, the

activities of the two cells do not together constitute a single life; *life* comes to an end when cell division occurs, i.e., when the zygote ceases to exist (1990).

But what exactly is *life*? John Locke's work on the persistence of organisms as expressed in his discussion of the "oak" can speak to this question. While Van Inwagen does not agree with all that Locke says about the persistence of organisms, however, Locke's views are still relevant to this discussion. Says Locke,

> we must therefore consider wherein an oak differs from a mass of matter; and that seems to me to be in this, that the one is only the cohesion of particles of matter anyhow united, the other such a disposition of them as constitutes the parts of an oak, and such an organization of those parts as is fit to receive and distribute nourishment, so as to continue and frame the wood, bark, and leaves, ... of an oak, in which consists the vegetable life (Fraser, Book 2 1894:443).

While Locke is talking about the persistence of organisms of a different species from animals, however, there is similarity in the general concept of what it means for the activities of an object to constitute life, i.e., it is an organized structure such that there is coordination of all the different parts of the oak to form a single whole; all its parts are actively involved in the formation as well as the sustenance of the oak as a whole. This is what it means for all the parts to participate in one common life. A non-material object on the other hand lacks such an interaction; its various parts, the mass (es) of matter that 'compose' it are not united, thus, they do not partake in one common "life". Van Inwagen has made it clear that the two-cell embryo does not constitute "life", the cells are merely adhering together, there is no organization or interaction of the different cellular organisms within it. As for the oak, as long as the different particles partake of the same life, there is bound to be continuity or persistence of the organism even if the original composing particles of matter are replaced by new ones.

Another way to explain "life" is to use Van Inwagen's analogy of the self-maintaining club of automata. Life is made of events and processes, constituted by atoms that maintain themselves by drawing components and getting rid of unwanted ones. Hence, there is an internal infrastructure responsible for maintaining the club so as to ensure its continuity even when old members are replaced by new ones. This is what he refers to as the organism, which ensures the club's continuity (1990). The activities of the two-cell embryo do not constitute events, meaning there is no internal infrastructure responsible for sustaining the object(s) so as to both maintain and regenerate new members from the standard object.

Once again, we can re-state the opening question of this paper: when does life begin to exist? According to Van Inwagen, "cells that are arranged embryonically begin to compose something when their activity begins to constitute a life" (1990:154). We have seen what it means for the activities of an organism to constitute a life. From the foregoing, the activities of embryonic cells do not constitute life – the cells are merely adhering together without forming or constituting a single material object representative of an organism, i.e., a single living thing. So, when does the embryonic material begin to compose something? Here is Van Inwagen (1990:154):

> ... certainly not earlier than the inception of cell differentiation. Certainly not later than the development of a functioning central nervous system, which in the case of human beings, takes place about twelve days after conception.

We will call this the third stage of the theory. And so, life does not begin until the end of the second stage of embryonic development. More precisely, there is no "life" until when the third stage is in progress, or when its conditions are met. From what he has said, the development of minimal brain life seems to be a good indicator of 'life', this comes twelve days after conception. Strictly speaking, there is no single life in both the first and second stages of the development of the thing – the

multiple embryonic cells do not compose a single life according to Van Inwagen.

3. The practical implications of Van Inwagen's theory

So far, I have been trying to lay out the structure of Van Inwagen's theory of embryonic development. In this section I will discuss the practical implications of the theory in the context of the abortion debate. Specifically, I am going to discuss how the theory speaks to what I think are the main areas of concern in the abortion debate: one, can abortion be morally equivalent to the killing of a human being and/or an infant, when it is procured any time between the first and second stages of embryonic development? Two, how would Van Inwagen's theory respond to the claim that acts of abortion during the first two stages of the theory could lead to preventing a potential person from existing?

One way to proceed is by considering how Van Inwagen would respond to his critics' rebuttal that embryonic cells actually constitute a single being. That is, what would he say to the charge that the activities of embryonic cells, whether at the first or second stage of the theory, constitute a single life? I take it that by responding to this question, we will, simultaneously, be using the theory to speak to the first claim of the abortion debate: that acts of abortion in the first two stages of the theory are morally equivalent to the killing of a human being or an infant.

Basically, Van Inwagen has two responses. The first response is the one about the fate of the zygote after monozygotic cell division occurs. Does it continue to exist after the cell division? If it does, then Van Inwagen's critics have a case, and abortion during the two stages could more or less raise moral concerns similar to those that arise when an infant or an adult human being is killed. This is mainly because a zygote (says the critics) is considered a living organism. The second response is the one about the status of the two-cell embryo at the second stage. If we can show that the two-cell embryo's activities constitute life, then

we have a reason to believe that abortion at this stage presents powerful moral problems; embryonic cells would then have claims of right to life that begin to restrict our actions on them.

Let us start with the second response. Do the embryonic cells constitute a single life? According to Van Inwagen, it is implausible to think the two-cell embryonic cells constitute single life. This is because, among other reasons, there is still the possibility of monozygotic twinning. And as long as the possibility of monozygotic twinning exists, Van Inwagen thinks we have reasons to think the cells' activities don't constitute life. And why is this the case? Here is his response:

> Suppose, then, that this (monozygotic twinning) had happened. What would have become of me? Only one answer is even superficially coherent: I should have ceased to exist, and two new organisms would have been generated out of the cells that had composed me. I should prefer to think that if an embryo is still capable of twinning, then it is a mere virtual object (1990:154).

We can restate the gist of his argument by reminding ourselves how his theory speaks to the question of the fate of the zygote (the first response) after cell division: let us suppose A is the zygote, and B and C are the two new organisms generated out of the cell division. We saw that according to van Inwagen, once monozygotic cell division occurs, A ceases to exist, and neither B nor C is A. In the same vein, once the mass of adhering cells splits into two, it ceases to exist. B and C ceases to exist with every further division that occurs, thus no life in the second stage of the theory (1990).

So far there are two big conclusions (by way of responses) that can be drawn from the ongoing discussion that can advance the course of our argument. One, at no time are/were human beings a zygote. Zygotes cease to exist at the end of the first stage of the theory. Two, as long as there is a possibility of twinning, the two-cell embryo is not a single being or organism whose activities constitute life; the multi-cellular organisms do not exist until after the differentiation period. Next is to consider how these two responses are brought to bear on the first claim

in the abortion debate. If Van Inwagen is right on both counts, then it means the developing embryo does not have the genetic identity of a human being, a specific one or in general. That is, there is no particular individual whose identity has been determined at the embryonic stage, until much later in the process. Hence a woman named Ms. X, who aborts an embryo named Y at any of the first two stages of Van Inwagen's theory is not in any way endangering the life of some genetically identifiable individual whose features (like DNA) would be intimately related to the embryonic cells.

We have now seen how the theory responds to the first claim in the abortion debate. We now turn to the second claim in the abortion debate: whether or not abortion would lead to preventing a potential person from existing. In order to see the reasoning behind this claim, let me briefly say something about the claim by way of an overview, before we consider how Van Inwagen's theory would respond to it.

The advocates of the potentiality argument claim that "a human being begins to exist at conception because an organism with the potential to become a human being is then formed" (Persson 2003:505). Thus, they ground their claim on the idea that once conception occurs, there is a possibility a human being could exist, since, biologically speaking, the zygote, an organism with the same genetic make-up (e.g., DNA) as a human being, is formed. With the formation of the zygote, they believe that as long as the process goes uninterrupted and the embryo is allowed to live and develop, it will eventually become a human being (Persson 2003). And now, what will van Inwagen have to say about that? Van Inwagen's response is simple, I think. He will have to say, as he has done so earlier, that such a view is mistaken because the zygote ceases to exist as soon as the monozygotic cell division occurs – given that it is a single cell, it ceases to exist as soon as the division takes place, giving way to the two-cell embryo. In other words, his response to the potentiality claim would be that the zygote's potentiality to become a human being is a false claim because the zygote does not have "the potentiality to itself become what will undoubtedly be a human being"

(Persson 2003:505–509). In essence, the point is that in order for the zygote's potentiality to be actualized, fate has it that it undergoes certain cell divisions. Unfortunately, these cell divisions bring the zygote's existence to an end (Persson). So "the zygote only has the potential to give rise in place of itself to something else that will, if it has what it takes, become a human being" (Persson 2003:510). Hence the potentiality argument does not work.

If the zygote lacks this potentiality, what about the two-cell embryo? What is its fate? We had seen that if zygote, A, divides, resulting into two cells, B and C, then neither B nor C is A. Hence it could be SAID that "none of the two cells B and C will itself have the potential to become a human being, since they will in a few days cease to exist by division" (Persson 2003:510). So like van Inwagen, the response would be that after the zygote ceases to exist, a new organism, two-cell embryo is formed, which undergoes similar cell divisions. Thus, no potentiality is preserved in B and C (Persson). In addition, earlier we saw that the two-cell embryo is not a single living being; they are cells which merely adhere to each other without any form of interaction, thus do not compose anything, metaphysically speaking.

We have now considered how Van Inwagen's theory would respond to the two major concerns in the abortion debate. First, we have seen that prior to the differentiation stage, there is no human life, thus, no particular persons can be claimed to exist. Two, for van Inwagen, the potentiality argument does not work – there is no potential person around. Hence acts of abortion results neither in the death of a human being/infant, nor the prevention of a potential person (one whose identity has been identified at fertilization) from existing.

4. Potential person by fertilization

In this section I will advance the view that abortion at whatever stage is an issue of moral significance, for two reasons. My first premise is that fertilization makes a huge difference because of the genetic structure that is formed as soon as conception occurs. I will proceed by first laying

out the argument, and then see how it impacts on what Van Inwagen has said so far.

Once there is conception, the answer to what kind of organism or "the thing" we are talking about is settled. That is, the genetic structure helps to determine the *type* of organism we are concerned about, i.e., that it is a biological organism of the *homo sapiens* category, a species which is genetically distinct from other species as winter is from summer. No matter how primitive the stage of this biological organism might seem to us, we cannot refer to it as a cow's, chimpanzee's, or hippo organism. Thus, in a way, its identity (one of genetic form) has been fixed, courtesy of species membership as Human organism (Quinn 1984). So, if we let the organism to live and develop, chances are the end result will be an organism with the same genetic structure or form as the embryo.

Further, the potentiality by fertilization argument can be reinforced because it is implausible to imagine the possibility of a change in species membership; in fact, this is impossible. For instance: is it possible for individual biological organisms to change their species memberships, say from *homo sapiens* to another species (Persson 2003)? Species membership has been identified (Persson 2003) as one of the essential properties of organisms that belong to a biological species. Imagine a situation in which a man named Methuselah contemplates turning into a giant bug: "if his brain, or just the parts underlying his mind or consciousness were removed from his body and transplanted into some other unconscious body, like a giant bug, would Methuselah go on to exist in that body" (Persson 2003:507)? What would we say has become of the being that was Methuselah a while back? Would we now have a bug or a human being in existence? Is it possible for Methuselah to turn into a being of a different species, i.e., a bug? I think the vast majority believe Methuselah will continue to exist in the shape of a bug. We are likely to think that in this case, what determines his identity is the memory, mental consciousness or the mind which continues to exist, but now clothed in a bug's organism.

This view is consistent with the idea that species' membership is an essential feature for every individual biological organism, that no biological organism can change species membership from say, human being to a cow. Thus there is preservation in species membership (Persson 2003).

We could run the same argument in a different way, without having to go from one species to another. This argument seems to work even for biological organisms that are members of the same species. Again, let us use Ms. X as an example. The doctor has diagnosed her with a viral infection in which all her eggs have been invaded by a deadly virus. From now on, any fertilized eggs will generate cellular organisms but of a different species membership, say swine (we could also imagine that as long as this virus is active, it dominates the male sperms and solely determines the genetic make-up of her conception). She has the option of changing her reproductive genes from eggs to sperms. If she succeeds, the infection is rendered inactive, and she will now produce normal human sperms. If she fails, and continues to produce the now condemned eggs, her fate is sealed, any pregnancy will result into the birth of swine. Assuming she cannot tolerate the idea of giving birth to swine, what other options does she have? I am not aware of any scientific procedure that might help to alter X's genetic make-up from eggs to sperms to enable her to escape the misfortune. There could be some research going on out there on this front. However, at the moment, and as long as there is no scientific breakthrough yet, many would agree that X's fate is sealed, altering her genetic make-up would not work. She is genetically hard-wired to produce eggs, not sperms. This was sealed, first, by the entity/organism which was formed at conception. At that critical moment, other than being determined to be an organism of a particular species (human organism), her DNA was categorized to be of female type. Thus, in virtue of the overall genetic structure, her sexual orientation had been determined to produce eggs, not sperms.

Let us do a recap of what we have said so far for purposes of clarity. First, we have said that at conception, there is a biological organism which is formed of the *homo sapiens* type. A human organism is distinct from other species, the distinction courtesy of the genetic structure. Since it is an organism of the species *homo sapiens*, let us refer to it simply as a human organism. Important to note is the significance of this terminological distinction. The entity is not a human being; thus, we are not conferring human significance to the organism at this time. Neither are we suggesting there is something remotely in existence along those lines (Quinn, 1984).

Second, we have also intimated on the question about the organism's life span or persistence. This is where we have said that it is implausible to think that an organism of a particular species membership could change and belong to one of a different species other than what was determined by the genetic structure at the time of conception. This is the case of Methuselah and the giant bug. In addition, we have seen that there are restrictions on organisms of the same species membership. This is the case of Ms. X and the swine. In both cases, the biological organism stays the same, it does not change. Methuselah does not become a giant bug. He remains a human being. There is no change of species membership. Likewise, Ms. X cannot alter her sexual reproduction trend from eggs to sperms. For both Methuselah and Ms. X, such unchanging features were fixed at conception. Hence while different changes might occur in the course of embryonic development, "the human organism persists, and continues to develop … through all these changes it will remain one and the same biological organism" (Quinn 1984:27, 30).

If this is correct, then we need to find out if there is a connection between the human organism and human being. The potential person by fertilization argument helps to establish a link between Human organism and human being, a link which comes by virtue of certain essential features that we possess as human beings. A good example is the attribute of mental faculties. Conventional sagacity tells us mental

faculties is perhaps the most distinctive attribute to a human being. But underlying these mental faculties are the mental *capacities* (Quinn 1984) that makes it possible for us to learn and develop the normal cognitive powers:

> … for if we distinguish between the mental faculties that are developed as a normal human infant collects and sorts experiences of himself and the world, that is, the mental faculties that the child or infant comes to have in virtue of the learning he has done, from the underlying mental capacities that make this learning possible, it seems attractive to identify the latter as what is essential (Quinn 1984:33).

Hence, we have these essential features (mental faculties) first and foremost because of other underlying essential features called mental capacities. We possess these things by virtue of being members of a particular species, i.e., human beings. But we become members of the human species by virtue of the core attribute, i.e., the human organism.

How does this impact on Van Inwagen's metaphysical theory as we know it so far? Based on what we know about the theory, Van Inwagen would be hard pressed to deny the force of my reasoning under the genetic structure argument but might be uncomfortable with its implications. Hence, in principle, what I have said so far does not involve me disagreeing with Van Inwagen's metaphysical claims. For instance, suppose that at the time Ms. X is contemplating to abort Y, Van Inwagen is asked the following question: what kind of organism are we contemplating its abortion? I think he will have to say it is a human organism. He may not refer to it as human organism as such, he may say something like, "human cells," but the difference in terminology (not substance) is of no consequence, since I am not ascribing human significance (i.e., of genetic identity) to the embryonic cells at this stage.

How about a second question, one of the possibilities of a change in species membership? If cell division occurs, whether at the first or second stage under van Inwagen's theory, will there be change in

genetic structure, will the "human cells" now belong to a different species? Like the rest of us, I think his response is in the negative. He would say that cell divisions at whatever stage will not alter species membership. He will admit that genetic structure is constant in the first two stages of embryonic development. Hence, in both stages, the cells are human organisms. If the cells are human organisms at the first and second stages, then they are human organisms at the third stage, since for Van Inwagen, life starts at the third stage. Once he admits that the genetic structure is preserved in both stages, he will have to live with the results thereafter. For example, while he will deny that human organism is a human being, a view which is not different from mine, however, it is not clear what he will say concerning whether or not they form some kind of entity. He will have to say the organisms are cells with a certain *type* of identity, meaning, cells of a biological organism of the species *homo sapiens*. Hence, they have an identity determined at fertilization, one of genetic form. And since their genetic structure has been preserved, in a way, their identity as human organism is preserved because this identity is brought about by the unchanging structure. In which case, it would be right to maintain that the same biological organism persists throughout (in the three stages), hence, there is potentiality of personhood that is obtained.

4.1 Potential person by gradualism

In the previous section I argued for the existence of a potential person once fertilization takes place. In this section I hope to arrive at the same conclusion via a different route. Here, I will adopt Quinn's view that embryonic development is a process (1984). Quinn's view is based on an intuitive idea that before a human being comes into existence, a process comes into play, albeit a passive one: "our ordinary concepts recognize and make room for processes in which things come into existence" (1984:36).

Let me make some remarks about this process to help clarify what I have in mind.

First, there is the idea that there is a basic plan of development in place by which human beings gradually come into existence. For example, there is a tendency for things to happen in a certain way, a trend that is both "conceptually unobjectionable and empirically verifiable" (Quinn 1984:27–28). Conceptually, we know what we are referring to, a process that has been initiated after fertilization. While we may disagree on the status of the embryo at different stages of its development, we all acknowledge it is a process, nevertheless. Once there is conception, we all believe a process has been initiated, directed towards a specific end which if not interrupted, will most likely result into the birth of a human being. Here, we could say that the basic plan of development seems to proceed in a fashionable manner or tendency. Each cell division (no matter what stage) leads to another cell division, until in the end, a life is formed (unless of course, interference with the process occurs, e.g., hostile maternal environment, or voluntary abortion, all which have the effects of retarding or ending the development) (Quinn 1984).

Second, "the smooth gradualism of ... development is, of course, part of the reason" (Quinn 1984:27–28). This is what we talked about earlier in the human organism case. We saw that no matter what changes the human organism undergoes, there is persistence/continuity; the organism persists throughout the entire process. The gradualism argument is reinforced because this process is empirically verifiable. For example, we can study and monitor the organism's "progress" (Quinn 1984).

We should be clear with the point being made here. We are not saying there is a definite person who, like a house which has been specifically designed and is under construction, is waiting to emerge from the process upon completion. All we are doing is to try to appeal to our basic intuition about what such a process would amount to if the right conditions were to obtain. Hence there is no specific "house" (metaphorically speaking) that we have in mind, nor a potentially identifiable one in the horizon. But if we let nature take its course, it is possible to have a "house" – one with the same genetic form as the

construction material (the embryo). Strictly speaking, we don't have a human being until life is formed, but I think it would be counterintuitive to suggest that there is nothing going on worth talking about.

So how are these two arguments relevant here? That is, how exactly do they address my embryonic cells' potentiality of persons claim? This question is important. This is because many arguments about the potentiality of personhood (like Quinn's) fall into the temptation that to be persuasive, we should try and establish a direct link of genetic identity of the human being to be born with its potential counterpart, the embryo/zygote. Mine is a different approach, so Van Inwagen should not find my potentiality arguments disagreeable. But this does not mean my arguments have lost their force either.

To see what I am trying to say, first, let us consider the concept of "potentiality" and see what it means. What does it mean to say that P has the potential to become a human being? To have the potential is to be in possession of a certain capacity to be something else. So, if P has the potential to become a human being, it means it *can* become a human being, one, if that capacity is actualized, and two, if the conditions of becoming a human being obtains. In other words, the potentiality to become something does not mean that P will automatically become that thing (in this case a human being). Rather, it will be that thing only after its potentiality is actualized, and when the necessary and sufficient ingredients are present. Quinn has said that embryonic cells have the potential to be human being since the potentiality resides in the zygote/embryo, but this does not imply its being a human being (Persson 2003).

Imagine the case of a college student who is hoping for a good career at the end of his college education. He believes that in the end, he can graduate to become a lawyer, nurse, philosopher, pilot, or any other professional as long as he meets the requirements. Once he decides to take philosophy as a major, it means he is limiting his potentiality to become all the other things. Further, he can set up to go to graduate school to start working on his PhD so he could become a philosopher.

That said, he will not become a philosopher, nor any of the other career opportunities by simply enrolling himself into a school. He must meet the requirements to be awarded a degree in order to become a philosopher or any of the other professions. And finally, even after he has met the requirements for the award of a particular degree(s), it is the institution that awards the degree (Persson, 2003).

What am I trying to say here? The power of the student to actualize his potentiality does not reside in him. Such that his becoming something else, i.e., a lawyer, pilot, philosopher, etc., depends first, on what he studies, second, on whether or not he has met the requirements – a decision to be made by his professors; and finally, it has to be decided by the institution that awards the degree. In short, the student has the potential to become different things, but their actualization depends on other external factors (Persson 2003). There is no guarantee the student will become any of these things, this is because "the force that determines which, if any of these things, the student will become is not located inside him, but is external to him, e.g., in the hands of his professors" (Persson 2003:506). The case is different with human organisms. As we saw earlier, given their genetic makeup, "the force that determines that a zygote or a two celled embryo becomes a human being rather than a horse or a donkey is located inside it, in its DNA" (Persson 2003:506). Thus:

> … to say that P has the potentiality to develop into a human being entails that P is in some internal state that "steers" P towards becoming a human being if certain "non-steering" external circumstances are present, e.g., if P obtains nutrition and is exposed to no harmful influences (Persson 2003:506).

It is important to emphasize here that for the case of human organism, the external factors do not determine what kind of thing it becomes in the future, hence are largely non-steering factors. In the end, we can say that while it is correct to maintain that the developing embryo is not a genetically identifiable person, nor is it one that will exist to become a person, still, it is not implausible to believe that as a process,

embryonic development does produce a potential person, once the process is completed (Persson 2003).

There are two objections to my general view that embryonic development yields potential persons. I will answer these questions before I talk about the ethical implications of the potential persons' arguments.

The first objection involves Van Inwagen's twinning argument. From what we saw, Van Inwagen claims that the possibility of twinning is proof that the embryonic cells do not exist, i.e., are not organism. My potentiality of persons' arguments is immune from monozygotic twinning rebuttal. For example, once the genetic structure is laid out, and a biological organism is formed, we have nothing to worry about in the event that twinning occurs. For example, even if twinning should occur, there is no change in the general species membership of the organism, say from *homo sapiens* to another. Besides, if twinning does occur, it won't alter the genetic features of an individual who is a member of a specific species, say changing the genetic feature of a human organism to produce sperms instead of eggs. These are the Methuselah vs. giant bug, and Ms. X vs. swine cases, respectively. When monozygotic twinning occurs, neither of these aspects will change. Unlike for van Inwagen, monozygotic twinning is not injurious to my arguments. Besides, we have seen that there is one entity throughout the embryonic cycle, the human organism. This entity is preserved no matter the remarkable changes in the embryonic cycle.

I will now address the second objection. It goes something like this: since I maintain that fertilization has a huge part in determining the outcome of the abortion debate, it is not clear where we should draw the line between potential and non-potential persons. Such a state of affairs is worrisome, the critic might add. For instance, it could lead to wholesale condemnation of contraceptives and other family planning methods, including abstinence, methods which are popular especially among the conservatives in the society. In the end, if my potentiality of persons' arguments is stretched to their logical conclusions, says the

critic, it has somewhat unwelcome consequences, namely, that any sexual act could be thought to produce a potential person. But I think my potentiality arguments don't have the problem of arbitrariness. The idea that we might end up condemning birth controls and the like is unfounded because, as we all know, not every sexual act results in a conception. From what I have said, as long as fertilization has not occurred, there is no moral challenge we are up against because the genetic structure has not been determined. In the absence of the latter, there is no biological organism, and where the organism is absent, no potential persons of the sort I have argued for could be claimed or imagined to exist.

But I think there is one instance where my theory would be opposed to the use of contraceptives and other birth control methods. So, there is one instance in which the use of contraceptives and other birth controls would amount to interfering with the life of a potential person. Imagine a couple who for their entire productive life cannot regularly generate 'fertile' sperms and eggs. As husband and wife, each has only one parcel of "fertile" sperm and egg respectively that would result into sexual reproduction. I think this is a difficult case to handle. Given their condition, the couple has only one window within which fertilization would occur. In such a case, it makes sense to believe that in a way, the genetic structure of the "organism to be" has been determined. This places serious restrictions on their sexual life. There is a potentially determined human organism that's vulnerable. To secure the organism's right to life, the couple should not use contraceptives or any other birth control method until after the fertilization.

5. The ethical implications of the debate

To consider the ethical implication(s) of Van Inwagen's theory on the abortion debate, and the extent to which they might differ with mine, we could start by asking whether the embryonic cells have any rights of the very sort possessed by human beings.

Let us first be clear about what we mean by rights, especially the rights to life's claim. What is a right? Robert Armstrong (1977) thinks there is a general consensus that the essential feature of right has to do with the fact that in order for one to exercise their right, there is need for non-interference from others. Hence it only makes sense to talk about rights within the framework of certain social constraints, moral and legal in nature, where we seek to protect an individual person's rights from being violated by others/society on the one hand, and seek to restrain the individual from violating others'/society's rights as he goes about exercising his rights, on the other hand (Armstrong 1977). As Armstrong asserts, "a right is a societal concept. Rights only obtain in a community of persons, a social context, and is determined by just those rules that govern permissible activities that may adversely affect the interests of other persons" (1977:13). If this is correct, Armstrong adds, then "we have rights by virtue of our membership in a human community, by virtue of the moral and legal structure of that community" (1977:14). Significant also is that rights come with duties. Where people have rights, we have a corresponding duty not to interfere with their rights. To fail to observe this clause in a way harms the bearers of such rights (Armstrong 1977).

So, what do we make of embryonic cells' right to life claim? Do they have rights to life? A good amount of literature has gone into the discussion of the question whether or not embryonic cells have rights. For example, other than being admitted as members of the human community, there is the expectation that the bearers of such rights should be those with the will to act as well as the ability to engage in constructive interaction with other members of the said community. There are no doubt embryonic cells lack such abilities (Armstrong, 1977). But from what I have said about them so far, we can make use of the potential persons' arguments and make the case that embryonic cells have certain attributes that can qualify them to be considered part of the human community, albeit remotely so. For instance, we saw that a biological organism is formed as soon as fertilization takes place, with a species membership (as human beings), followed by persistence in

the entire process of embryonic growth until when life is formed. In the end it can be said the organism is a 'member' of the human community, having earned its rightful place through the proper channel of species' membership complete with an enduring genetic structure. It therefore has claims to the right to life clause, putting some restrictions on us to not to interfere with and/or cause it harm. If I am right with the potential persons' arguments, then it might be the case that the human organism has certain right to life and should be protected from being harmed by other members of the community. Given the status I have ascribed to the human organism, we have a duty to not to interfere with the gradual process of growth that takes place after the conception.

But someone might object that we cannot have a right to anything, let alone life, if we don't have a desire for it. The right to life goes hand in hand with a corresponding desire to live, says our critic. So, does the human organism have the desire to live? I think there is some merit in the objection. In many standard cases of abortion, the pro-abortionists' view is that the embryonic cells lack the desire to live, meaning that we have grounds to interfere with the life that is in process, if it is life at all. But I think the embryonic cells' desire to live clause can be spelt out differently to achieve the same results.

Let me try and make this argument more precise. I will use Armstrong's (1977) view of what it means for the embryo to have desire for life. For example, it seems that we are genetically hardwired to have certain desires. If someone is out to hurt me, my first instinctive response is to want to defend myself. But what makes this the case? The reason is pretty simple. First, I have an in-built desire to want to continue living. Hurting me puts that desire in jeopardy. Second, I have strong belief, could be innate, that other persons should not interfere or harm my interests in life (Armstrong 1977).

The problem, however, is that the human organism does not have such desires, even though we might say it has the potential, given its species membership. However, I still think there is a way in which it does. Let us consider what we have said about it so far, and the process of its

development. There seem to be a common denominator between the organism in question and a human being: vulnerability. That is, in exactly the same way a human being requires a hospitable environment/community to thrive, for example to go to school/college, get a job, start a business, have a family (all these projects require that his/her right to life be respected, and supported by others). Similarly, a human organism requires a similar environment or much more (i.e., a mother's womb, stimuli, etc.) in order to thrive/develop, and be able to grow from stages 1,2, 3 of the theory as we saw in Van Inwagen's account. When such an environment is not forthcoming, the organism's development process stagnates or ends, the same way it does for a human being. We can thus say that given this vulnerability, the organism can be harmed or benefitted by our actions (Armstrong, 1977). Explicitly stated or not, the organism has certain desires which it acquires by virtue of its species membership and its enduring genetic form. In fact, looking at the aspect of vulnerability of a human being in comparison to that of a human organism, the gap is not even close, thus we could even make the case for a supererogatory duty, not just the positive and negative ones that have been sketched here. Extreme vulnerability means we should go out of our way to cushion and enhance their wellbeing. The highest moral strength or virtue of an individual and society is expressed in their responses to the plight (s) of the weakest and most vulnerable among us.

6. African narratives, theological perspectives and implications

Because of space constrains, what I intend to do here is to perhaps initiate what I hope will be an ongoing discussion around the following key questions: what are some of the African and theological narratives and perspectives on embryonic cells? How would Van Inwagen's metaphysical claims of the unborn sit within theological and African worldview circles? Are there some guidelines or clues that can be gleaned from scripture and/or Judeo-Christian traditions, beliefs, customs and laws that could shed light on the abortion discourse? What

are some of the African cultural practices, beliefs, customs, laws and perspectives regarding the status of the unborn, about pregnancy and life in the womb, on childbearing? Were there special protections accorded women at pregnancy? What were the Judeo-Christian and African traditional beliefs around the subject of children, marriage, and childlessness? What beliefs do Africans and Christians have about God/Supreme Being and life in the womb? What did the great church theologians, fathers, and reformists teach concerning the life of the unborn?

For purposes of style, the discussion in this section flows from the conclusions of the previous section to make its case. More precisely, this section draws from the fundamental question of the previous section, namely, whether embryonic cells have rights (rights to life), and if so, the basis of that right. As we saw in the previous section, we established that embryonic cells have rights, the sorts of rights ascribed to humans. This right was defended on two grounds. One, through the potentiality argument, where we saw that embryonic cells somewhat are part of the human community, courtesy of species membership and enduring genetic structure. Two, on account of their vulnerability, from which the obligation and duty (supererogatory) to protect and promote their wellbeing ensues.

And so, are there justifications, theologically and from the perspective of African narratives, for claiming that embryonic cells have a right to life? Is a fetus part of the human community, within the theological and African narratives? What is the status of the unborn/fetus from the two schools of thought?

We start with the question whether embryonic cells have a right to life. Tertullian, one of the most profound, prolific church fathers, in the *Apology*, had this to say on matters around abortion:

> It is unlawful even to destroy the fetus in the womb while the blood is still forming into a human being. Preventing of birth is premature murder, nor does it alter the question whether one takes away a life already born or destroy one which is in process of formation. This

also is a human being, which is about to become one; just as every fruit exists already in the seed (Bindley, H.T. 1890:31).

Clement of Alexandria (AD 150–215), in the *Paedagogas*, had this to say on abortion: "But women who resort to some sort of deadly abortion kill not only the embryo but, along within, all human kindness (Klusendort, S 1995). Thus, for Tertullian and Clement, it is clear the unborn/fetus has a right to life. The basis of that right is drawn from at least two grounds. First, because a fetus is a living organism, and the process of 'life' evidently is going on. Thus, unlike Van Inwagen, they maintain that embryonic cells are far from virtual objects merely sticking together. Second, on the grounds of humanity. In fact, for Tertullian, potentiality and humanity of the fetus seem to go hand-in-hand: fetus is fruit and seed at the same time. So, both theologians believe the fetus deserve our protection as they are part of the human community. Dietrich Bonhoeffer also thought the unborn had a right to life: "the destruction of the embryo in the mother's womb is a violation of the right to life which God has bestowed on this nascent life" (Neuhaus, R.J. 2006). Pope John Paul II, in *Evangelium Vitae*, had similar sentiments, "No word has the power to change the reality of things: procured abortion is the deliberate and direct killing, by whatever means it is carried out, of a human being in the initial phase of his/her existence" (Klusendort, S. 1995). The question of when does life begin is settled for Bonhoeffer and Pope John II, as it does for Tertullian and Clement. Life begins at conception plain and simple, and God is the source of that life.

If the unborn/fetus is potential human being thus portrayed, what would we say are our moral obligations as the human community, and why? John Calvin (1509–64), another protestant reformist had an insight why the unborn deserves our protection, drawing from the vulnerability argument:

The fetus though enclosed in the womb of its mother … it is a most monstrous crime to rob it of the life which it has not yet begun to enjoy. If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than

in a filed, because a man's house is his place of most secure refuge, it ought securely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy a fetus in the womb before it has come to light (Brown, S. 2009:293).

Calvin raises two big issues touching on theological ethics. Distributive justice means we got to be fair in how we share the assets and burdens of society. One of the assets of society is right to life, and ensuring that this life is protected, even promoted in certain cases. Calvin is here using the language of equity. Acts that lead to not to protect or promote the life of the unborn are monstrous in nature, he says, because they bring about unequitable distribution of the human asset called life. Secondly, he appeals to the argument of vulnerability through the analogy of a house; killing a man in his house is more horrible than killing him in the field he says. The house is man's sanctuary, the safest place one could ever be. By analogy, the womb is the safest place a fetus should ever be. The fetus deserves utmost protection there. Further, expecting the human community to go out of their way to ensure and enhance the wellbeing of the unborn would not be asking for too much. Thus, according to Calvin, supererogatory deeds towards the unborn are actually expected if not required.

The African society as well as the Judeo-Christian tradition celebrates human life, expressed through the gift of children (Klusendort, S. 1995). This idea is mirrored in other religious traditions as well, especially those of the Far East (e.g., Hinduism, Buddhism, and others), where it was known as fertility, with each of the religions having a specific deity ascribed with the office of fertility for the worshippers.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition in particular, children are seen as the highest possible blessing, this according to Psalms 127:3-5, 113:9, Genesis 17: 6. Hence children in the Judeo-Christian tradition are not a nuisance or unwanted (Klusendort, S. 1995). Thus, pregnancy whether expected or not was something to be celebrated, not a source of agony as it is sometimes the case today. According to Psalms 127: 3b: "and the fruit of the womb is his reward." Here scripture refers to conception as 'fruit of the womb' and secondly, as a reward from God. So, if it is a fruit

and reward from God it means it is a treasure, a sign of prosperity and favour from the divine. And of course, a reward means a good thing, especially if it is from God. Life in the womb was therefore a good thing. God's rewards make us better, according to scripture, the blessings of the Lord make us rich and adds no sorrow (Prov 10:22).

In the same vein, a pregnant woman in the African society was treated special. She would be assigned special meals complete with a nurse (who would sometimes translate into a mid-wife at the time of delivery), a practice that was common in the Jewish culture as well. This is why it was a taboo in the African culture for a man to beat his pregnant wife, for the simple reason of the protection of the unborn and as an expression of the treasure in the unborn.

In the Jewish as well as the African culture, the concept of immortality through children/descendants is ingrained in their psyche. Abraham became father of many nations through Isaack, Jacob, Joseph and on and on (Psalms 127:3, Krusendort, S. 1995). In the African setting there is value for children for the same reasons. In fact, one's social status was determined by the number of children. Their heritage or legacy was continued through the children. It therefore goes without saying that there was high premium placed on the unborn 'child' among African societies.

Lastly, both the Judeo-Christian setting and the African society see God/Supreme Being at work in the womb, in the shaping of human life. This is well articulated in Psalms 139:13–16, Isaiah 49: 1, 5, Jeremiah 1: 5 (Klusendort, S. 1995). Martin Luther (1483–1546), the great protestant reformist, saw conception as nothing short of a miracle. In *Luther's Works*, he says, "even if all the world were to combine forces, they could not bring about the conception of a single child in any woman's womb nor cause it to be born; that is wholly the work of God (Pelikan, J., Lehmann, H.T., 1955:333). This means conception was not man's affair, it was divine. In the African traditional context, it showed the gods, other deities (e.g., the ancestors – living dead) were in good terms, even pleased with the family. And so, if God is the one fashioning

the unborn then certainly there is a lot more going on in the womb than the human mind can articulate or comprehend. This is in direct conflict with the view that says that embryonic cells are mere virtual objects.

7. Conclusion

We could end by asking a question that requires a simple intuitive response: does the human organism have the same moral protection (should it be accorded) as a human being? Does it have full right to life? Or, is abortion in the first two stages the same as the killing of a human being/infant? We start with how Van Inwagen's theory would respond. From his theory, since the human organism is neither a human being nor a potential one (the embryonic cells are merely a mass of cells with no moral significance until much later), abortion during the first and second stages pose no serious moral, cultural, even religious concerns. We are not killing a human being at any of the two stages of abortion, not even a potentially identifiable one. The organism has no right to life. I take a different view from Van Inwagen. Intuitively, I think Van Inwagen's theory is right to say that abortion at the first two stages is not morally equivalent to the killing of a human being or infant. I have argued that potentiality does not mean the embryonic cells are human beings. In fact, it does not mean they will *become* human beings. All it means is that it will become a human being if the right conditions obtain. Up to this point, Van Inwagen and I agree. However, from the potentiality of persons' argument, I have shown that the human organism has some claims of right to life which a mere cell does not have. Further, I have shown how the concept of potentiality and the rights to life's argument could be used to enrich the abortion debate as it opens another window to this debate by looking at the theological perspectives as well as African narratives around the life of the unborn/fetus.

That said, however, I also still think that the claim of right to life is different from the one possessed by human beings or even infants – since the organism in question is not a human being, nor is it something that will exist to become one.

In sum, if stretched to a logical conclusion, Van Inwagen's metaphysical claims have serious ethical implications and much more. Intuitively, his view is contrary to what most of us seem to think about embryonic cells, that they have some moral significance. That is, it is counterintuitive to think, as Van Inwagen does, that the embryonic cells are a mere mass of cells, and thus lacking any moral significance. While I maintain that the embryonic cells do not have similar rights or moral status as human beings, my potentiality arguments place embryonic cells in a different category; they belong, though remotely, to the family of the human community. Thus, they have claim of right to life as does human beings. But given their lack of possession of a complete moral status, they do not have claim to *full* right to life, for to maintain that they do would equally be counterintuitive.

The merit of my argument is that it avoids extremists' views that is the rank and file of standard abortion debates. As I have intimated in this discussion, the extreme pro-abortionists take the counterintuitive view that the embryonic cells are a mere mass of cells, and we can do whatever we want with them until much later in the third stage of embryonic development. The extreme antiabortionists, on the other hand, subscribe to the view that the organism, as a potential human being, deserve full rights to life as those conferred on humans. This is equally counterintuitive, as most of us believe the embryonic cells do not have the full moral status of a human being. The position I have taken in this debate falls in neither of these two camps. It is a view that is in tandem with some of our basic moral beliefs, cultural norms, and religious perspectives.

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125 Years of Serving in Mission (SIM) in Nigeria: A Missiological-theological Appraisal of Missionary Work

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Abstract

This article is a missiological-theological appraisal of the missionary work of Serving in Mission (SIM) in Nigeria, founded during the later 1890s. A historical study was undertaken to track the 125 years' work of Serving in Mission with the aim to appraise key aspects of the work. This study establishes the significance of the mission work in Africa and the historical activities of Serving in Mission, with a broad discussion on how the mission work resulted in the birth of an indigenous church that continues to build on the legacies of the founders of Serving in Mission. These legacies, strongly driven by a theological and holistic view of mission practice, were appraised. Furthermore, some issues left unaddressed through the work of Serving in Mission were identified and suggestions made.

1. Introduction

Missionary work in Africa has contributed greatly to the development of the continent in diverse ways. It has contributed in driving many developments in the area of education, health care, general wellbeing and many more inexhaustible areas. The work of Serving in Mission (SIM) in the last 125 years has experienced tremendous growth, which has also resulted in the birth of an indigenous church that continues to build on the different legacies, especially in the areas of expanding the

frontiers of missions to other parts of Africa, educational advancement, improving health care services and many more. These legacies were strongly driven by a firm theological and holistic view of mission practice, which has remained critical to the history of evangelical missions in Africa. However, despite the rich historical heritage of Christianity before and after SIM, and the laudable legacies they have left, some key theological issues remain unaddressed. Nigeria, and indeed Africa, seem to be bankrupt of the gospel again and again.

Thus, what is the state of the church after 125 years of SIM in Nigeria? What were the theological undertones that informed the work of SIM and how effective were they in engaging the deep-rooted cultural issues that seem to be challenging Christianity in Nigeria today? How should the Evangelical Church Winning All, an indigenous church that was birthed out of the work of SIM, reposition herself to engage the unaddressed challenges and continue to build on the enduring legacies of the founding fathers of SIM? This paper undertakes a historical study in order to track the 125 years' work of Serving in Mission with the aim to appraise the key aspects of the work of SIM using a missiological-theologically approach. This will no doubt provide a useful pathway for the church in Nigeria to adequately engage the unaddressed challenges that have continued to threaten the Nigerian church today; especially those deeply entrenched in history.

2. Background to Serving in Mission

The work of Serving in Mission (SIM) is one example of the many contributions of Western missionaries in Africa. This is generally true because "[t]he majority of Nigerian Christian churches came into being through the work of Western missionaries" (Dadang 2017:15), although, Bauer (2009:16) alludes to the fact that Christianity in Africa is not a recent happening. Its roots go back to the very time of the Apostles. Africa has played an important role in God's unfolding plan of salvation and redemption from the time of Abraham to the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus (Baba 2009:11, 12, 13). This rich historical role was lost along the line, which rendered Africa bankrupt of the

gospel. Thus, the burden and vision of the early missionaries to take the Gospel back to Africa, to the millions without Christ is commendable (Turaki 1999:130).

The first attempt to sow the seed of the Gospel in West Africa, especially in Nigeria, was presented by the Portuguese traders and Catholic missionaries who came to Benin and Warri around the end of the fifteenth century (Baba 2009:18). Their efforts did not bring any lasting results, and historians gave several reasons for this, for example, tribal wars and diseases (particularly malaria made it difficult for Europeans), traditional religion and culture dominance in the lives of the people (Baba 2009:18). Additionally, the few priests did not make much of an effort to train local catechists who would have provided continuity in the work. The lifestyle and commercial interests of the clergy often included the slave trade, which also contradicts the teachings of Christianity (Baba 2009:18). Isichei (1993:61, 62) also gave other reasons such as often political instability. He adds the fact that local rulers were concerned with expanding and protecting their territories and thus, they only supported mission work if it could advance their interests in which case, they may have welcomed the presence of priests. But, for the most part, these early missionary efforts did not see Christianity take root (Isichei 1993:63).

"By the middle of the nineteenth century, the modern missionary era in Nigeria was under way" (Sanneh 1983:120–122). This century experienced remarkable landmarks in missionary work in Nigeria. By 1842 many former slaves had returned to their people in the Lagos, Badagry and Abeokuta areas. It is notable that freed slaves, who had become Christians while in different countries, played a significant role in taking the gospel back to the various parts of West Africa (Sanneh 1983:122). Thomas Birch Freeman, a Methodist born in England, the son of an English mother and an African father spent many years as a missionary in the Asante Kingdom, the area now called Ghana (Sanneh 1983:122). During this time, he also travelled to Dahomey (Benin) and Yoruba land in Nigeria to try to establish churches in those lands

(Sanneh 1983:122). Samuel Ajayi Crowther of the Church Missionary Society established a station at Abeokuta (Isichei 1993:171). Isichei has argued that "by far, the most successful missionaries in nineteenth and twentieth-century West Africa were Africans" (Isichei 1993:156).

3. History of Serving in Mission in Nigeria

Fraud (2001:147) documents that the "Sudan Interior Mission was founded during the later 1890s by a British-born Canadian evangelical, Rowland Victor Bingham." He affirms that "It was in this context that missionaries of the Sudan Interior Mission contributed to planting the Christian church in Nigeria" (Fraud 2001:160). The Sudan area in West Africa consisted of a large number of black people who practiced African traditional religion, but it was evident that Islam was rapidly ravaging the Sudan, which aroused the interest to do mission (Turaki 1999:167). This and many other factors instigated the work of SIM in Nigeria.

Fraud (2001:160) narrates that in Toronto in June 1893, Rowland Bingham met with Mrs. Margaret Gowans, a staunch Christian woman who had keen missionary instincts for the spiritual needs of the Sudan which encouraged his missionary vision for the Sudan and propelled him to take steps to journey to the Sudan. Turaki (1999:176) elaborates that the first decade of 1893–1900, marking the beginning of SIM, was the formative period of the mission. In this era several unsuccessful attempts to gain a foothold in the Sudan were made. "SIM's first missionaries had the burden to reach the interior of Africa into the geographical area known as the central Sudan, Nigeria in the year 1893." (Baba 2009:11–12). Turaki further reveals that in "1893, the first attempt by the SIM's three pioneers, namely; Walter Gowans, Thomas Kent and Rowland Bingham to gain a foothold on African soil ended in dismal failure" (1999:176). The attempt claimed the lives of Thomas Kent (in Bida) and Walter Gowans (in Girku) and forced Bingham to make a disappointing and humiliating return to Canada (Turaki 1999:176). But this frustration seemed to have been revisited in the light of business and Mission.

3.1 Bingham's idea of business and mission

Turaki reports on Bingham's idea on business and mission for the second attempt around 1899–1900. So, Bingham and his backers adopted the name African Industrial Mission, believing that developing businesses would help to finance the mission as well as open the doors for evangelism. Between February and March of 1899, the mission had sent out two missionaries, first to British East Africa, and then to Tripoli, North Africa and finally to the Sudan (Turaki 1999:112).

Bingham's ideas of the African Industrial Mission were captured in his missionary bulletin, *Faithful Witness,* which expressed his plea for self-supporting and self-propagating industrial mission in Africa. In this bulletin, Bingham argued for a biblical and historical continuity of economics and Christianity, showing that from its inception, the early church refused to divorce the spiritual from the secular as he argued for "the use of industries as an auxiliary to the preaching of the gospel" (Bingham 1898). Bingham believed that "industrial missions historically date their existence to the period of apostolic labors" (Bingham 1898). Bingham's plan for industrial mission called for the purchasing of 1000 acres in Northern Nigeria and the planting of coffee. The hope was that the mission station could achieve self-sufficiency in three years (Bingham 1898). Porter (1977:40) alleges that "it was within this missionary milieu that SIM was founded. Rowland V. Bingham was a premillennialist, which helped to explain his zeal for missionary work."

As brilliant as Bingham's idea was it eventually did not work. Turaki (1999:112) states that this too failed with Bingham being repatriated home and his colleagues following shortly afterwards. For the third attempt, they returned to the original name of Sudan Interior Mission and sent out a party of four, namely Alex W. Banfield, E. Anthony, Albert Taylor and Charles Robinson. Pategi in Nupe land was opened in March 1902 as their first missionary station (Turaki 1999:117).

Low is of opinion that "later the emergence of a commitment to evangelism unsullied by commercial associations would confirm commerce and Christianity's disestablishment" (1973:68). Stanley

(1983:72) states that the "espoused ideal of economy and Christianity was of a fundamentally evangelical variety", however, he thought that the market orientation of "free trade in religion" made clear and irrevocable by the English constitutional revolution, which had the effect of reducing the Church of England to naturally extend to the mission field where most evangelicals thought in times of investment and return in both souls and commodities (Stanley 1983: 76). Other missionaries, for example Roman Catholics, did not relate the two. They were forbidden to engage in trade by canon law, and the High Anglicans of the Universities Christian Mission who were primarily concerned with establishing an episcopal system in Sub-Saharan Africa (Stanley 1983:76).

Baeta (1968:102) has asserted that the evangelical Protestants though characterized with the Calvinist work ethic and inspired by Livingstone's injunction that they ought to encourage the Africans to cultivate markets as the most effectual means next to the Gospel for their elevation. Porter submits that "the relationship was between commerce, and Christianity was never complete" (1985:616). Porter reiterates that its completeness was never assured, because mammon was never at all times or in all places thought by evangelicals to be their ineluctable partner in missionary endeavour (1985:616). Robinson and Gallagher argue that "public interest in the continent in the late nineteenth century was low and sporadic consisting only of vague benevolence" (1981:24). Porter (1985:616) faults that such "interpretation led them to conclude on the need for preaching the Gospel of Christ in the Dark Continent if few regarded it as the duty of the state". He further notes that by the 1990s, mission and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa was no longer cantered on "Commerce and Christianity" (1985:616).

Fraud (2001:160) emphasizes that the missionary zeal that has been rekindled at Cambridge had waned, and the amalgamation between economy and Christianity, although not dead, had ceased to be the guiding philosophy upon which the extension of the evangelical faith

was based. Hastings (1976:3) points that most evangelical missionaries during this period believed in the superiority of their own civilization, which tends to despise both "African culture and African capacity". According to Hastings, they largely ceased to espouse the Old saw of "commerce and Christianity" (1976:3). Fraud continues, "the Lancashire cotton depression of the 1860s contributed decisively to this change" (2001:160). Porter notes that in West Africa where SIM would soon make inroads, "many of evangelical persuasion felt that the Bible should no longer be yoked to the plough" (1977:25, 26). There was a deliberateness to divorce economy and Christianity, and Davis and Huttenback add that "they had no time for its perverted cousin, capitalism" (1986:100). Thus, Porter brings the discussion on commerce and Christianity to a close, stating that "in addition to these reasons for the shift away from commerce and Christianity on the mission field, the advent of premillennialism (1977:40) was another contributing factor."

3.2 Premillennial views and mission

Porter (1977:40) explains that this belief; the expectation of Christ's return before the thousand years of peace on earth, gained prominence among many evangelicals and fundamentalists in the 1870s. Porter alleges that this phenomenon spread rapidly, and in missionary circles it had the effect of stimulating a drive towards evangelization as opposed to conversion (1977:40). According to Porter, if human history was going to end due to an act of ultra-supernaturalism, as the aggressive premillennialists impressed upon their often-reticent colleagues and superiors in its West African work where missionaries' unrelenting haste in evangelizing as many Africans as possible was powered by this premillennialism (1977:40). Palmer affirms that this early missionary theology tended to be individualistic and other-worldly. He also adds that, "salvation for these early missionaries was then the salvation of the soul, and not of the body. Salvation for them is the forgiveness of sins" (2015:87).

Palmer, however, admits that this individual dimension of salvation has some basis in Scripture. The Messiah is called Jesus because he will save

his people from sins and Jesus brought salvation through the forgiveness of sins. Salvation in this context is therefore equivalent to justification. Those who believe in Jesus are justified and saved; those who do not believe are not saved (Palmer 2015:87, 88).

Kunhiyop offers a theological balance on premillennialism. He opines that "those who hold to a premillennial position expect that Christ will return to earth, bodily, and personally to establish his kingdom" (Kunhiyop 2012:238). According to him, premillennialism is a characteristic of a dispensationalist approach which sees a basic distinction between the church and Israel in the present age and right up to the end times (2012:237). Kunhiyop also argues that Premillennialism tends to exaggerate distinction in order to fit everything into its scheme of things and he admits that premillennialists have been accused of being pessimistic about the future which can lead to a lack of concern about addressing present problems (2012:238). However, against the backdrop of the theological debate for and against the premillennial view, Serving in Mission's missionary efforts also faced severe restriction.

3.3. Restriction of Serving in Mission missionaries in Northern Nigeria

The work of SIM did not go unhindered. Barnes (1995: 412) argues that up until the late 1920s, colonial officials opposed most missionaries. Crampton alleges that they lacked social graces, common sense and self-discipline, leading to conflicts between missionaries and the British government (2004:59,60). Walls (2002:151) documents that Miller, one of the most eloquent missionary figures associated with Northern Nigeria "complained not that the British government practiced neutrality in religion, but it did not". Walls further explained that if the government was truly neutral, Islam would not have been making the progress it had in Nigeria, such that the Plateau people had a long experience of harsh treatment from Muslims. But while Muslim missionaries were allowed to go anywhere under British administration, Christian missionaries were restricted (Walls 2002:151).

Ubah refers to a 1951 plea by the Emir of Gwandu not to proselytize school children in leprosaria, that such a plea was made more than ten years after the matter was first raised suggests that the freedom of missionaries had not been effectively circumscribed (2007:13). Ubah further notes that "because of the restrictions and discrimination against the missionaries, there was fear that with independence, the situation would worsen in the early 1950s" (2007:13). However, in the midst of the stringent restrictions which Serving in Mission missionaries faced in Northern Nigeria, Tucker affirms that "Serving in Mission eventually became the largest Protestant interdenominational mission in Africa" (Tucker 1983:295, 299)

Gailyn notes that "years after Serving in Mission Missionaries, succeeding generations of missions' scholars began to seek to overcome paternalism" (1996:191). According to Gailyn "paternalism occurs when missionaries and their sending churches exert control over local Christians and their leaders" (1996:191). Gailyn alleges that "this control is almost always exerted through financial arrangements and the implicit authority of money" (1996:191). According to Gailyn, "it was out of this idea developed that the indigenous philosophy stream of thought on handling money and missions was developed" (1996:191). Gailyn says that contrary to this theory, "young churches should be self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing from their inception" (1996:195).

Serving in Mission later adapted the *three-Self* formula by saying that missions' churches should be self-propagating, self-governing and self-supporting, while reflecting God's will in appropriate ways (1953:7). Hodges defines an indigenous church as a native church which shares the life of the country in which it is planted and finds itself ready to govern itself, support itself, and reproduce itself. Serving in Mission finally gave birth to an indigenous church denomination called Evangelical Churches in West Africa. Musa (2007:1) establishes the fact that Serving in Mission created Evangelical Church of West Africa in 1954 out of various Churches she planted already existing. It was

registered officially with the Federal Government of Nigeria. However, a common English saying "like father, like son" happened to become true of the newly registered Evangelical Churches of West Africa (ECWA).

4. Like Father like Son

As Serving in Mission Missionaries were restricted in spreading the gospel in Northern Nigeria, the newly organized church, ECWA, was also restricted. Olatayo notes that "the absence of religious freedom continued even after ECWA was formed in 1954" (1993:1, 2). According to Olatayo, the aim had been to allow the church to inherit the property of the founding missionaries and continue the work in case the mission was expelled from Nigeria after independence in 1960 (1993:21). Olatayo (1993:39,40,41) also argues that the absence of religious freedom concerned delegates attending the 1956 ECWA General Assembly. They felt that the inclusion of a human rights clause in the Federal Constitution would provide legal safeguards. Sir Ahmadu Bello, the premier of Northern Nigeria, was invited to address a joint ECWA/SIM meeting in Jos where he assured them there would be no interference in mission work although Muslims would not be encouraged to convert to Christianity.

Bagudu alleges that churches were still concerned about the religious freedom of their new converts in Northern Nigeria. The situation compelled evangelical denominations to produce a joint statement to the Willinks Commission hearing in Zaria calling for guarantees of fair representation, equality under the law, religious liberty, and equal rights to education, employment and promotion (2003:220–223). He affirms that these church denominations did not make any representation regarding state creation; instead, they sought constitutional guarantees (Bagudu 2003:298). These requests were granted in 1959 when a Human Rights Declaration for the Northern Region was promulgated (Olatayo 1993:42, 43).

However, the rights and freedom of worship for Christians were still not guaranteed. Even when Nigeria got her independence on October 1, 1960, some mission organizations in Northern Nigeria were apprehensive. They feared persecution and the continuous absence of religious liberty for the churches they planted. The Lutheran missionaries provide a case-study, as Kastfelt notes that Danish Lutherans and their converts in Numan and Yola observed that the mood of missionaries was very uncertain. Various questions were raised. What would happen with their schools and mission stations? How would it face the challenges of nationalism and Islam? (1994:36, 37, 38). Kastfelt narrates how that, to meet these challenges, the Danish Lutheran missionaries redoubled their evangelism and developed their leadership training both for church purposes, and to provide the secular leaders that the country would need (1994:38).

The newly founded Evangelical Churches of West Africa was not exempted as Olatayo (1993:33, 34) asserts that "there continued to be outstanding cases of violence against Christians and denial of human rights". According to him, (1993:53, 55) "individuals and corporate churches were denied rights to purchase parcels of land to build churches, own property and freedom of proclamation faith". The 1966 Evangelical Churches of West Africa General Church Council heard reports of threats to burn a church in a particular village if it held services while Sir Ahmadu Bello campaigned there. Sir Ahmadu Bello could not get to the village, as God intervened by sending out fire from his presence, the fire burnt up his car on the way to the village (Olatayo 1993:33–34, 53, 55).

In fact, the growing missionary work through ECWA faced a lot of opposition during those early years. Fuller observes that, "History and culture were against her. One of those opponents was Islam, and its discrimination against Christians and traditionalists" (1980:199). However, like its founder, Evangelical Churches of West Africa has grown beyond Africa.

4.1. Church growth and leadership

ECWA experienced an exponential growth in membership, scope and leadership. Musa notes that ECWA currently estimates her membership to be over six million in Nigeria (Musa 2007:1). As a result of its numerical growth, the name was changed to Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA 2010:1, 2). The Evangelical Church Winning All's constitution was revised and approved in April 2019 to reflect global practices (Baba 2019:16).

Baba (2019:16) further affirms that "the missionary journey which started like a lifeless project had metamorphosed into a historical breakthrough that had over 10 million members in Nigeria alone and some 10,000 pastors of local gathering of believers associated with the Evangelical Church Winning All in Nigeria". He further asserts that apart from membership growth, Serving in Mission missionaries are no longer the dominant figure in the life of the African church; however, the enduring legacy SIM missionaries left has been its partnership relationship with the national church (Baba 2019:16).

5. Appraisal: The legacy of Serving in Mission

Today, the success story of Serving in Mission portrays "years of God's faithfulness in its missionary activities in Nigeria." (Gyang 2019:16) SIM's missionaries' success story left for ECWA legacies in the areas of medicine, education, theological trainings, Church growth and leadership and partnership.

5.1 Medical work

The medical work of SIM missionaries played a significant role in propagation of the Gospel of Christ in Northern Nigeria. Turaki (1999:167) mentions that missionaries viewed medical work as the most effective means of approaching Muslims with the Gospel. He reiterates that "SIM was the largest contributor in Northern Nigeria towards leprosy work and fighting eye diseases and blindness" (Turaki 1999:312). Butler adds that in the early days of the work, before there was even a nucleus of believers, the preaching of the Gospel-

accompanied generally by such medical help was available and was the main task of the missionary pioneers (1967:48).

5.2 Educational work

Another legacy of the pioneering missionaries is the use of education as tool for expanding the missionary work. Tushima (2018:4) notes that the pioneering missionaries regarded education as a tool and means of evangelism and church planting. Educational programmes and activities were used as a means of communication and spreading the Gospel of Christ. The type of education was mainly literacy with the goal of converts being able to read and teach the Word of God.

The place of educating those coming to faith was therefore a priority, particularly before being baptized. Butler (1967:48) emphasizes that an illiterate church can never be an effective Church; nor indeed, can it remain a live church in the context of this modern age. According to Butler, it was thus generally a prior requirement that those desirous of being baptized should not only give evidence of genuine repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, should also have made at least a serious attempt to learn to read (1967:48).

Tushima stresses that those early missionaries' educational goals of proclamation of the gospel of Christ, raising local evangelists and teachers of the gospel of Christ, and the strengthening and sustenance of Christianity in Africa guided the development of the philosophy, policy, activities and programs of education (2018:4)

5.3 Theological training schools

The missionaries employed the use of formal theological training. Tushima emphasizes that one cardinal objective in the missionaries' application of education "was the transformation and acquisition of socially desirable values, attitudes and skills" (2018:5). According to him, since students acquired their core values more from its environment than home, "education becomes the fulcrum for their character formation and spiritual formation" (2018:5). From Tushima's explanation it shows that early SIM missionaries were careful not to

build a one-sided education but one that was holistic. Butler shades light on the fact that the mere amassing of knowledge can never bring new life to the soul. Yet the very Gospel we preach, cleansing the heart and setting free the soul, at the same time renews the mind, creating within it new desires, releasing new potentialities, and redeeming the whole of life from the destructive effects of sin (1967:48).

As a result, SIM missionaries started Bible training schools to train lay evangelists and leaders. The earliest were Bible College Kagoro, and Bible College Billiri, then later Aba Bible College. All these have become theological seminaries. Kafang (2009:32) affirms that schools are not located anyhow and anywhere. They are located deliberately looking at the size of the estimated population of the area the school will serve, the distances, and what will be achieved by citing it there. Kafang (2009:32) also points out that "that was the case with the early theological institutions when the missionaries started them". Another legacy SIM Missionaries left was partnership with its national church.

5.4 Partnership

SIM did not break ties with the national church she founded. Chiang notes that "partnership began to develop in the late twentieth century, as the world became increasingly interconnected" (1992:284,). According to Chiang "this interconnectedness led to heightened cooperation among international businesses and governments" (1992:285). Chiang believes that by this time the Christian movement in the Southern Hemisphere had surpassed that of the Northern Hemisphere in both number of Christians and missionaries (1992:286, 287–289). From the ideas of Bush and Lutz "partnership must not be naively constructed but governed by fundamental Christian principles of mutuality (Bush and Lutz 1990:46).

Unfortunately, Lederleitner laments that "many churches and mission agencies misunderstand the purpose of partnership" (2010:132). To Lederleitner (2010:132) "it is not just giving money or cutting a check". He is rather of the view that there is need to go beyond that to the place where we help partners develop infrastructure and capacity, so they are

sustainable over the long haul. Bush and Lutz's understanding of Partnership shows that it is an association of two or more Christian autonomous bodies who form a trusting relationship and fulfil agreed-upon expectations by sharing contemporary strengths and resources to reach their mutual goals (1990:46).

This understanding of partnership is what ECWA/SIM has operated over the years through a yearly memorandum of understanding. An example of a yearly memorandum of understanding between ECWA/SIM reads:

> That in consideration of the historic linkage, common bond, common purpose and evangelical beliefs, both the Church and the Mission do prayerfully commit themselves to a loving, friendly, trusting, co-operative, inter-dependent working relationship and mutual understanding (ECWA/SIM2008:2).

The memorandum of understanding allows ECWA to govern itself in accordance with its Constitution and through its General Church Council. SIM governs itself with SIM's Manual and its Board of Governors and matters relating to the working relationship and or mutual understanding between the national Church and the Mission are governed by this agreement (ECWA and SIM 2010:3). This memorandum of understanding shall normally be jointly reviewed by both parties every five years (ECWA and SIM 2010:6).

Smalley expresses that, "It seems to have become axiomatic in much missionary thinking that a church which is self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating, is by definition an indigenous church" (1999:474–479). However, Smalley adds that the criteria of self-government, self-support, and self-propagation are not necessarily diagnostic of an indigenous movement. They are essentially independent variables, because it may be very easy to have a self-governing church that is not indigenous (1997:231–237).

Certainly, the partnership relationship between ECWA/SIM has been good all through the years. However, one would have offered a godly

advice to SIM that with the COVID-19 pandemic, Serving in Mission needs to revisit and restore her spirit of raising funds from overseas partners to support the ECWA Theological Seminary Jos and others. This is in the light of the fact that the aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic might weaken theological institutions and churches in Africa economically.

Indeed, the Evangelical Church Winning All has experienced tremendous numerical growth. However, the founding fathers, SIM left some issues unaddressed. For the purpose of this article a few of them are mentioned. Laubach observes that the "church is characterized by *Illiteracy* because majority of the church's rural membership cannot read and write" (1967:58). Another unaddressed matter is *tribalism and ethnicity*. This a more sinister factor which seems increasingly to have raised its ugly head in ECWA leadership at all levels. Turaki (1997:146) offered words of hope that "the challenge of addressing the issues of ethnicity, racism and tribalism lies in the hands of the church". He advocates further that "the church has the spiritual and moral resources required to tackle these issues effectively" (Turaki 1997:146).

A further unaddressed matter is issue of discipleship. Because the early converts were not discipled, the indigenous church is characterized by nominalism. Turaki (2000:281) explains that "nominalism is neither a foreign term to us nor is it distant from us". He further notes that "Nominalism is both a western and a non-western problem. Nominalism among second generation Christians is on the increase in Africa". Hendricks (1991:8) laments that the "nominal way of many church members has made them have divided loyalty in their Christian faith". Hendricks (1991:9) goes on to describe this category of Christians as people who "are under the Word of God, but not in it for themselves". These are people who believe in Christ and come to church, but who during the week turn to diviners, astrologers, witch doctors and spiritual houses for healing and help.

Additionally, the effect of dualism that seems to be sown many years ago is widening and ravaging the church today. Cope called this phenomenon, "A spilt mindset." Cope (31–32) asserts that

Over the past two centuries Christians, especially evangelicals, have developed a split view of the world that dominates much of church today. This dualistic thinking developed as one part of the church took the stand that God was responsible for salvation and that it was the church's responsibility to look after people's basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, health, and education. Another part of the church responded to this stance with a resounding "No!" This group believed that only people's souls were of value and that the church was to focus on evangelism. This latter group, identified as evangelicals, was concerned with "spiritual" or "sacred" matters, while the former group, identified as liberals, was concerned with "material" or "secular" matters. This split sacred-secular view of the world was exaggerated by an increasing emphasis among some evangelicals on the immediate return of Christ and the belief that the material world would be destroyed.

The question then is 'would the Evangelical Church Winning All reposition herself to engage these unaddressed challenges and continue to build on the enduring legacies of her founding fathers?'

6. The challenge

In the quest for ECWA to break new opportunities for mission practices amidst the changing national and global contexts, ECWA's leadership must appraise the position of ECWA today after many years of being self-governing. Firstly, ECWA's assessment must not be on the basis of prestige, power, buildings, money or large congregations, rather, as part of mission practice, its leadership levels need to assess the potential context within which ECWA operates and does mission work appropriately. Secondly, ECWA needs to identify the major driving forces that transform people and cultural norms within the African context with a view of reaching them with Christ. Cope (2011:39)

reports that in addition to our awareness of the population and geographic challenges of the task of reaching the world, "we can compare the job of reaching every creature today with the job of the first-generation church" (Cope 2011:39). Cope adds that we know today that some eleven thousand languages in the world still have no witness of Jesus. However, so much has changed in the context. For instance, we know which of these groups have already been targeted by translation ministries and how long it will take them to be reached. We have also experience advancement in computers, language, and mapping programs that have made giving meaningful tools to workers in the field. "All of this helps us to evaluate the job the church needs to accomplish and the strategies needed to do it." (Cope 2011:39)

The gap seen in the area of training leaders through the theological institutions is another area that must be appraised. The reality is that most of the grassroots pastors or mission workers are educationally deprived even though they are undeniably committed Christians. They need training, but much of it must be orally transmitted through non-formal learning methods. Chrispal (2019) notes that:

> The materials from traditional theological education place a heavy emphasis on reading and writing, which is quite difficult for oral-based learners. They also carry different worldview presuppositions. Therefore, we need adaptable materials with a solid biblical base which are easily transferable according to the needs of people.

There is an urgent need for theological training in ECWA institutions to be redesigned to address the emerging needs of our time, particularly that of raising leaders for the church. Chrispal (2019) alludes to the divide between the church and theological education which is said to have widened. He notes that within the last 30 years in India, there has been an explosion of church growth, much of it, especially in North India, through Christian workers who have no connection with the traditional denominations and seminaries (2019), and this is also true in Nigeria. As a result of the divide between the church and theological education, the leaders of many churches are not being equipped by the

seminaries, nor are the leaders of the seminaries well acquainted with the needs and challenges of the emerging churches. This is affecting the thoroughness of ministry at the grassroots. The existing gap between theological institutions and churches must therefore be bridged, and emphasis placed on Spiritual and character formation for mission and ministry.

The power of the church to accomplish and sustain her missional work is deeply imbedded in the Bible, upon which the values of the denomination, ECWA are said to be based. Wright rightly posits that, "there would be no good news if God's blueprint is ignored; there would be no knowledge of that good news if the story of God's love and its redemptive achievement were not recorded for us in the Scriptures (Parker, 2009:5), thus biblical theology must remain the basis for all missional practices in ECWA, and ECWA must continue to uphold the comprehensive richness of what the Bible teaches. This can only be possible by the power of the Holy Spirit, because when the gospel is carried in the power of the Spirit, the evidence from the life of the early church suggests that there is first 'transformation' and then 'influence' (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2009: 33). The long-awaited transformation becomes evident as lives are turned around

The inseparable relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Word of God is thus the power of the gospel. Asamoah-Gyadu (2009:32) rightly asserts that the work of the Holy Spirit is to take what is of God, animate it with his Presence and through that, restore life to human brokenness. Thus, through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, ECWA can address the issues calling for attention today and chart a course for the expansion of the Gospel in this dispensation.

Lastly, the need for discipleship is increasingly widening as Africa is become more youthful and the future of church depends on it. David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons (2007:242) assert that:

Since the church is the body of Christ on earth today, then thirty years from now it still will need to be doing what Jesus did while here in his physical body two thousand years ago. While the

church's methods must constantly change in a changing world, the church's mandate will never change: we are called to know and love God (worship), love each other (fellowship), grow in Christlikeness (discipleship), serve God by serving others (ministry), and share good news (evangelism).

The ministry of church has to be holistic like never before. In fulfilling the mandate of the church, we must recognize the fast-changing context, with a majority of the church population becoming youthful. Hence, the ministry of the church must be investing in equipping her teeming youth towards enabling them to fulfil the mandate. The teeming youthful population of Africa are in need of Jesus Christ and only discipleship can accomplish that. Landa Cope (163) posits that "if believers are to regain the influence God designed for us in every arena of life, we are going to need a greater revelation of Christ." In a time where there are many conflicting narratives fighting for the attention of the youths, the Evangelical Church Winning All must be willing to invest in making Jesus known to them. Cope (2011:163) adds,

> One of the important questions in the New Testament, one Jesus was continually leading people to ask, is, "who is Jesus?" The great transforming truths of the gospel are all contained in the answer to that one question. Who is Jesus Christ?

Only the holistic knowledge of Jesus can transform the mind of the youths and equip them for the fast-changing context. The founding missionaries were young people, unfortunately, many youths seem unequipped for our increasing secularized society, but the knowledge of Jesus through discipleship will prepare them for the secularised world. Youth people in the church cannot continue to be clueless on how to engage their world. It is the responsibility of the church to prepare them. Cope (2011:169) notes,

> Today, we talk a great deal about secularization in societies – Christmas, Easter, Sundays, and so on. And it is true that much of culture, even religious culture, has been turned into a business venture void of additional meaning. Who is responsible for that

secularization process? Many believers think nonbelievers are to blame. But that cannot be true. Such people don't know God and don't have the understanding to change culture. They do live in a secular world, because their world does not include the living God. Believers, on the other hand, have a choice!

Now is the time for this to be the priority of church; the empowering of the youthful population through discipleship to be the salt and light of the different sector of the society.

7. Conclusion

The place of the Bible in shaping the mission work of the church and sustaining the long-lasting legacies of missionary organisations like Serving in Mission in Nigeria and around the world is imperative and cannot be over emphasized. God has continued to sustain his mission throughout history even amidst several challenges. This is no doubt an existential proof of God's work seen in God's loving self-revelation intended for our redemption. Thus, as creation groans and awaits its redemption, (Romans 8:19–24), in a violent and turbulent changing mission context, ECWA congregations can take advantage of the innovative holistic mission practice as a strategy to advance the Church's mission methodology of reconciliation, healing and witnessing to the broken-hearted.

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The Response of Christians to Islamic Violence in Northern Nigeria

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Abstract

Religious violence in Nigeria is worrisome, and years of repeated assaults on churches and individuals in the northern parts of the country seem to have forced Christians to conclude that the only option is to respond with violence, not merely in self-defence but in reprisal, even pre-emptive assaults on Muslims. The obvious consequence of this is that the Christian faith is losing its uniqueness as a religion that truly preaches and practices peace. The gospel is at risk of losing its power, which lies in love – even for enemies. Yet, the response of many Christians is almost understandable in the face of relentless assaults on their freedoms and lives, with little or fruitless government interventions. Is there an option that might at least offer hope for Christians of dealing with the problem of Islamic violence without losing the power of the gospel? This paper proposes the philosophy of nonviolence as a positive response that has biblical backing, and that has been used elsewhere with a good measure of success. In doing this, the paper adopted a historical-critical method for the research.

1. Introduction

The research examines the response of Christians to Islamic violence in Northern Nigeria, using Jos as a case study. Various incidences of Islamic violence in Northern Nigeria targeted at Christians – their lives, churches, homes and businesses – are discussed. It also identifies the

various strategies adopted by Christians as a response to the Islamic violence in Northern Nigeria, which has mostly been retaliation. In addition, the research proposes the philosophy of nonviolence as a positive response, citing examples from the Bible and other nonviolent approaches that have proved to be efficient and successful in real life situations. The nonviolence proposal is to caution the fact that violent responses by Christians to Islamic violence may lead to the abandonment of peace, which is a core Christian characteristic that has since began to erode. Christians may no longer be considered true followers of Jesus Christ, who has given love and forgiveness as conditions for being his followers and entering heaven. More so, violent response may aggravate religious violence and halt the preaching of the gospel, especially to the Muslims.

The research adopted mainly secondary sources of data, using books, journal articles and internet sources to gather information relevant to the study in order to understand the nature and the impact of Islamic violence on Christians in Northern Nigeria and how Christians have responded to this. The data collected were analysed using a historical-critical method. The article is divided into headings and subheadings as follows: 1. Introduction; 2. Cases of Islamic violence in Northern Nigeria; 3. The responses of Christians to Islamic violence; 4. Alternative responses, which is further divided into sub sections thus, 4.1 The Ghandi/Luther model, 4.2 Jesus teachings on love and forgiveness and 4.3 Paul's recourse to civil rights, 5. the challenges of alternatives to violence, and 6. Conclusion and recommendations.

In all the religious violence in Northern Nigeria, Jos seems to have been the most hit; thus, in this paper Jos is used as reference point. In 2010 there was an eruption of religious violence in Jos that reportedly claimed about 500 lives. There was massive destruction of property, and about 40,000 people were displaced. Bodies of victims were stuffed into wells and septic tanks. Authorities were caught unawares, and it took the intervention of the military to bring the ferocious conflict under control (Ekhomu 2010:12). Before January 2010, there have been

several religious conflicts that have hitherto occurred in Jos, including those of 1994, 1997, 2001, 2004, 2006 and 2008 (*Saturday Punch* 2010:3). Over the years many other conflicts have erupted in Jos and other parts of Nigeria, especially in the north with thousands of lives and property destroyed. Most of the violence was initiated by religious fundamentalists and fanatics coming from Islamic groups and most of the victims have tended to be Christians. Some of these groups as pointed out by Sylvester (2010:15) include the notorious *Hisbah, Boko Haram,* the *Salartist* Group of Preaching and Combat, *Al Sunna Wal Jamma*, and the Zanfara State Vigilance service, which have set up camps and operate in various States. Words of protest by Christian leaders have generally failed to produce any abetting of the attacks. Perhaps as a consequence of the persistent attacks, Christians have also responded violently with increasing frequency, and have sometimes been the actual perpetrators of violence against Muslims, often with claims that such actions were to pre-empt suspected plans of attack by Muslims.

Various explanations have been given for the existence and persistence of religious violence in Northern Nigeria. For example, Gofwen (2004: 46–47) sees conflict in general as "the inevitable paradox of corollary of human existence and civilization." Throughout humankind's history, a major source of such conflict seems to be religious intolerance in all societies. For Nigeria, Gofwen (2004:50, 58, 130–131, 39) alleges that the violent imposition of colonial rule, the creation of separate settlements called *Sabon Gari* for Christians in Muslim cities, created a culture of "we versus them" and the intra-elite struggle for power between southern and northern factions of the Nigerian power elite in the postcolonial era as the causes of religious conflict in Nigeria's constitution into consideration.

2. Cases of Islamic violence in Northern Nigeria

Christians have not been slacking in cataloguing cases of Islamic violence in Northern Nigeria. For instance, Kuka (1992:234–235), a Catholic priest, observes that "the growth of Christianity in the areas of

the northern states that have been predominantly Muslim is a source of worry for many Islamic fundamentalists." This is why churches are targets of Muslim rioters, and why the fundamentalists try to frustrate the building of Christian churches in Muslim-dominated cities. Kuka (1992:234) again points out the Muslim's arguments that Euro-Christian values have informed policy formulation in the nation's legal affairs; thus, they confuse the West with Christianity.

Ascribing Islamic violence to Islamic world ambition and strategy, Abikoye (1983:23) records that on 30th October 1982 a group of Muslim jihadists took to the streets bringing down two Christian churches, and damaging six others in the *Sabon Gari* area of Kano municipality, saying similar incidents have also been happening in Kaduna. Another case is cited by Oluniyi (2006:125–126) who quotes a website belonging to Bob Jones University News Service that a group of Muslim leaders known as the Council of Ulama warned a German Evangelist known as Reinhard Bonke to be prepared to die if he came to Northern Nigeria; and that while Bonke's crusades have attracted millions of Nigerians in the south, Bonke's attempt to hold a crusade in the Muslim-dominated north in 1991 ended with the deaths of Christians and destruction of many churches. Oluniyi goes on to point out that the 1991 riot in Kano lasted two days, leaving 200 people dead and hundreds injured.

The targets were mostly southerners and Christian northerners. A new dimension was introduced as the rioters moved from street to street, killing people, setting vehicles and houses on fire. As have never happened in the previous riots, the Christian community showed an unwillingness to turn the other cheek. They mounted barricades and formed vigilante groups to defend the non-indigenous enclave of *Sabon Garri*. The counterattack threatened to escalate the crisis. A mosque was burnt at Emir's Road in apparent retaliation of the more than 20 churches bunt (Oluniyi 2006:132). *Today's Challenge* (1987:6–21) also records Kaduna State Government report of a Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Kafanchan communal disturbance of Friday, 6th September 1996: at about 8:30 am one Monday Yakunat was

alleged to have preached the Christian religion and in the course was said to have blasphemed the name of the Holy Prophet of Islam. That led to his abduction by the Shiite Muslim group.

The episode led to a crisis where two lives were lost, several people injured, and property alleged to be worth 3.6 million naira (Nigerian currency) were damaged. Kafanchan has since remained a hot spot for religious violence that has repeatedly occurred and lingered up to 2020. The violence was between indigenes, which are largely Christians and the non-indigenes, which are mostly Muslims, between farmers and herders, and between Fulani and Christians. Referring to yet another incident, Benson (2010:11) recalls many destructive Islamic attacks in Kaduna that rendered lots of residents homeless, fatherless, motherless and childless, while many lost their life savings and acquisitions. He then lamented how many human beings were slaughtered towards the end 2009 in the Boko Haram crisis in Borno State. Sylvester (2010:15) further points out the emergence of several Islamic fundamentalist groups in the northern parts of the country, especially in Zaria, Bauchi, Kano, Yobe, Katsina, Kebbi and Jigawa States. He lists the groups as including the notorious Hisbah, Boko Haram, the Salartist Group of Preaching and Combat, *Al Sunna Wal Jamma*, and the Zanfara State Vigilance service, which have set up camps and operate in this States.

Adetunji (2010:7) reports the allegations of some human rights activists that thousands of Nigerians had been killed in different religious conflicts within the country since her independence in 1960 through religious extremists. He further points out that Nigeria, Africa's most populous country with more than 150 million people who live on less than $2 a day, has become a breeding ground for Islamist Fundamentalists. *The Punch* (2010:58) notes that the *Almajirai* (Islamic education pupils) have always been the major players in most religious riots, as also witnessed in the *Boko Haram* and *Kala Kato* violence in Maiduguri and Bauchi States.

When the Kano State government set up a Religious Disturbances Administrative Committee to investigate the religious rampage of 30th October 1982, the Kano State branch of the Christian Association of Nigeria complained that the Kano State government and people have subtly encouraged the attacks on Christians. The association pointed out the takeover of Christian schools without compensation to the churches owning the schools; the posting of Islamic religious teachers to those schools while refusing to post Christian religious teachers there; discrimination against Christian community in the use of public owned mass media while Islam is favoured; denial and revocation of certificates of occupancy for church buildings, as well as demolition of church buildings (Abikoye 1983:20). Abikoye (1983:20–24) also records destruction of churches in Kaduna State; building of mosques deliberately near churches to create tension, possibly leading to excuses to attack and demolish the churches; denial of places of worship to Christian students of Bayero University, Kano; the refusal of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria to establish a department of Christian religious studies. Further, the violent activities of the campuses are seen as assaults on Christian rights by Muslims in northern Nigeria.

All these are mere samples of the many atrocities, many going unrecorded, of Islamic violence against Christians in northern Nigeria, which sometimes results in responses and reactions of various kinds by Christians.

3. The responses of Christians to Islamic violence

The Christian response to Islamic violence in northern Nigeria has shifted from mere protests to violent reactions. According to McCain (2005:27–28), after some Muslims extremists in Zaria burned down 142 churches, some Christian leaders in the north met and decided that they were not going to be passive anymore. Since then, Christians have often responded to violence in Christian areas by attacking when they have been attacked. Kuka (1992:235) points out that in response to Islamic violence, "Christian militants have sought to assert their rights,

arguing that they have constitutional protection to settle, work and worship anywhere."

Sometimes the response of Christians has been that of panic. This is usually aggravated by text messages alleging plans by Muslims to attack. Such text messages are difficult to verify but tend to circulate very quickly. Falola (2010:34) reports such a panic in Mina, Niger State when a text message sent to the hand phones of many residents claimed that members of a particular religion will be attacked by another group after the Friday (Muslim) prayers. The alleged plot was leaked by a "little girl" who overheard a conversation in which the threat was mentioned. In panic, many Christians have closed their businesses, ran to military barracks or relocated to southern Nigeria over the years.

Another response is more commonly verbal rhetoric. For instance, Olatunji (2010:69) argues that the political north, as long as it has existed, has promoted the exclusive political and economic interest of the North-West of Nigeria, while the Christians in the north have only been used as donkeys for carrying the political burden of the region. This, he says, explains why the so-called northern leaders protested against the appointment of service chiefs from southern Kaduna. They protested the appointment of General T. Y. Danjuma as the chairman of the presidential adversary committee. They resisted the emergence of a Christian governor in Kaduna State. They sponsored the ethno-religious crisis against Christian communities of the north, particularly in Zangon Kataf, Tafawa Balewa and recently in Plateau State. Olatunji asks if the description of the north for political reasons by northern politicians include the Bachama, Jukun, Baiju, Idoma, and other ethnic groups whose churches in Kano, Sokoto, Zanfaraa, Katsina and Borno are regularly razed under the watchful eyes of government officials. Some of the rhetoric is less cohesive than Olatunji's. It might include direct threats or violence against Muslims, or description of Muslims in very uncomplimentary terms. *Today's Challenges* (1987:21) reaction to the problem of imposition of Islamic school uniforms on Christian pupils

is that the "school uniform is another ploy by Muslim fanatics to convert former missionary schools into centres for the propagation of Islam, and to Islamize the educational system."

The reactions are often emotion laden descriptions of Islamic violence, such as Fabiyi's (2010:8) description of the January 2010 violence in which some Christians were attacked in Jos as premeditated, wicked, deliberate and terrifying. He continues: "Our fellow brothers and sisters were just coming out of churches in Nassarawa of Jos when some Muslim youths pounced on them with cutlasses and other weapons. He then expresses the attitude of the Christians: "We call on our Muslim brothers and sisters to see this as last of such on the Christians in the State. Enough is enough." Fagbenle (2010:17), a columnist, opines that the imposition of the Hausa people on the indigenous people of Jos by the British colonialists, which did not result in the conversion of the indigenous people to Islam, has "turned these later day conflicts into the savage and unmitigated bloodletting they have become." Lasisi (2010:5) laments that

> Jos used to be a home of peace, friendship, neighbourhood and fun; it is a city any young man wanted to live in. But now, if you are not a Muslim you cannot say you want to freely walk to a Muslim-dominated area; and if you are not a Christian, you can't dare stroll into a Muslim-dominated area. It is the story of the killing of the town.

These reports and statements imply that Christian response has grown in violence, especially with the reports of large number of Muslims killed and displaced in the Jos violence which is symptomatic of the trends of the Christian response, especially where Christians exist in large numbers. Christians seem to be abandoning their identity of peace. Can such identity be reclaimed in the face of relentless violence by Muslims? Do Christians not have a right to defend their property and loved ones against attacks by lawless persons, even though such persons seem to have the backing of government agencies? Most worthy of careful thought however should be the following questions:

What happens to the gospel when Christians respond to violence with violence, no matter the justification for it? Will violent response actually bring an end to Islamic violence or merely give Islamic fundamentalists an excuse to continue with their violence without a twinge of conscience? Does the failure of Western governments' efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan to stop Islamic violence to teach us the futility of violent response to Islamic extremism? Are there no alternatives to violent response by Christians?

4. Alternative responses

From the earliest days of the Christian church, peace has been the predominant attitude, but this shifted somewhat with time. According to Baiton (1960:14) the early church was pacifist up to the time of Constantine. Then, partly as a result of the close association of the church and the state under this emperor, and partly by reason of the threat of barbarian invasions, Christians took over from the classical world the doctrine of the just war, whose objective was to vindicate justice and restore peace. The just war had to be fought under the authority of the state and must observe a code of good faith and humanity. The Christian elements added by Augustine were that the motive must be love and that Monks and Priests were to be exempted. The crusades arose in the middle ages, a holy war fought under the auspices of the church or of some inspired religious leaders, not on behalf of justice conceived in terms of life and property, but on behalf of an ideal, the Christian faith. Just wars and crusades were however notorious for their atrocious ferocity and serious departure from the principles of the Christian faith. It was only in the modern era that other approaches emerged that offered alternative responses to violence.

4.1 The Gandhi/King model

Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, and died by assassination on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. He was an eloquent black Baptist minister who led the mass civil rights movement in the USA from the mid-1950s until when he was

assassinated. He rose to prominence through the organization or the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, promoting nonviolent tactics to achieve civil rights (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 6, 1987:870). King developed his philosophy of nonviolent resistance by studying the tactics of Mahatma Gandhi. According to King (2000:24), "Gandhi was probably the first person in life to lift the love ethic of Jesus above mere interaction between individuals to a powerful and effective social force to a large scale." King asserted that he found alternative and moral satisfaction in the nonviolent philosophy of Gandhi. Gandhi helped him to see that "the 'turn the other cheek' philosophy and the 'love your enemy' philosophy" were applicable to individual, racial and international conflicts (2000:24).

Referring to the lasting friendship between Gandhi and Lady Mountbatten, wife of Mountbatten who was once Viceroy of India, King (2000:125) believes that the aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, so that when the battle is over, a new relationship comes into being between the oppressed and the oppressor. King also quotes Gandhi: "If you are hit, don't hit back; even if they shoot at you, don't shoot back. If they curse you, don't curse back. Just keep moving. Some of us might be thrown in jail before we get there, but let's just keep moving" (2000:128–129).

King realized that the nonviolence philosophy would be hard to accept in the face of persistent violence by their opponents who seemed to show no signs of remorse. He did all he could to convince his people:

> But there is something I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice; we must not be guilty of wrong deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our theist for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into violence. Again, and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force (2000:225).

In a correspondence in response to the clergy representing eight major faiths in the USA, King states:

> We had no alternative except to prepare for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of local and national authority. Mindful of the difficulties involved, we decided to undertake a process of self-purification. We began a series of workshops on nonviolence, and we repeatedly asked ourselves: "Are you able to endure the ordeal of jail?"(2000:190).

Stassen (1992:20) makes a claim for nonviolence when he declares that "the practice of nonviolent action is spreading internationally, and it is turning over unjust regimes." He goes on to postulate that "Biblical peace involves relationship with God, society, and environment" (Stassen1992:213).Some of the responses of Christians to Islamic violence in Northern Nigeria have been quite biblical. For instance, following another mayhem in Are, Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State in July 2010, the then governor of the state, Jonah Jang declared 30 days of fasting and prayer (Nigerian Tribune 2010:3). The response of Christians to Islamic violence, however, needs to take a deeper recourse than has ever been done.

4.2 Jesus teachings on love and forgiveness

The basis for the Christian faith is love and where there is love there will be forgiveness. Jesus taught these principles as criteria for being a child of God or his follower. Not only did Jesus teach these, he practically lived it out for his followers to emulate. The book of Acts (1:1) talks about all that Jesus began both to do and to teach. Kadal (2013:18) agrees that "Jesus did not only teach pacifism, he lived it. Several times during his earthly ministry when confronted with death or threat of violence of some kind, he escaped from it." Jesus taught that blessed, or happy are those who make peace, for they shall be called the children of God; those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, the kingdom of heaven belongs to them; those whom men revile and accuse falsely, instead of retaliating they should rejoice for their reward shall be great

in heaven (Mt 5: 9–12). Responding to the question on what the greatest commandment is and what to do to inherit the kingdom of God, Jesus pointed out the love for God and loving your neighbour as one's self as the most important (Mk 12:28–31; Lk 10:25–27). Those who use violence against the church or Christians are not to be paid back with violence but are to be loved, blessed and prayed for (Mt 5:44–45, Rom 12:19–21, 1 Pet 3:8–22, 4:12–19).

Among other reasons, Agang (2017:38) suggests that "Jesus command is the first reason we need to refrain from responding to violence with violence." True followers of Jesus will obey his command, the greatest of which is love, not only for self or brethren but also for enemies. Apostle Peter, referring to the teachings of Jesus on love and forgiveness pointed to them as what Jesus himself practiced and left for the Church to follow as examples (1 Pet 2:19–24). In what seems to be a new order from what the Jewish law says about retaliation in the Old Testament, Jesus speaking to his disciples in the New Testament recommended nonviolence response to violence and ill treatment when he says:

> You have heard that it was said, 'and eye for an eye and tooth for tooth.' But I say to you, do not resist evil. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles (Mt 5: 38–42).

In the opinion of Kadala (2013:16),

> … if the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:38–45 are a response to the Jewish *lex talionis*, then one ethic is being subverted by a new, superior morality. "An eye for an eye" is thus countermanded as inferior, even crude or barbaric, at least if viewed literally.

He however agrees that this teaching of Jesus was difficult to the disciples, it was difficult for the early church because of the persecution they underwent; it is equally difficult for Christians today, and it is more

difficult for Christians living in the northern part of Nigeria because of the ever-increasing religious and ethnic conflicts that have permeated their society. Kadala (2013:18) further quotes Graig S. Keener as asserting that although the *lex talionis* gives you the right to claim damages for the wrongs done to, this is also wrong. He maintains that it was permitted to the Jews because of the hardness of their hearts, but they took it to be a norm. This is in agreement with Marxsen (1993:104) when he says that what Jesus meant was that "The evil done by our enemies should never determine our actions or reaction."

Violence against Christians or against the church is an expression of ignorance, though it may seem as if the perpetrators know what they are doing. The Bible records that if the Devil knew he would not have crucified the son of God. Jesus considered the treatments mated to him up to the point of crucifixion as acts of ignorance. Throughout these, he did not protest neither did he retaliate, rather he prayed the father to forgive them for they did not know what they were doing. In the opinion of Kadala 2013: 21,

> Jesus action may appear stupid before the wisdom of this world; however, its potential to creating peace and save the world is explained by Paul in his letter to the Philippians. There Paul urges the Philippians to adopt this attitude, urging them to "promote not only their own interests, but to consider also the interest of others" (Phil. 2:4). In Paul's vision, peace will be obtained if the Philippians would "become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe" (2:5).

The teachings of the New Testament have never been easy at any time, but practicable by the grace of God. So, Christians can adopt nonviolence as an alternative response to Islamic violence.

4.3 Paul's recourse to civil rights

The apostle Paul faced many situations that placed him in danger of suffering. In cases where he could not avoid suffering, he took it and

went on with his ministry (e.g. Acts 14:19–20). But whenever he could, he made use of his legal rights to escape suffering unnecessarily and kept on preaching the gospel. In Acts 16:35–39, Paul asserted his rights as a Roman citizen in questioning the way he has been illegally beaten and jailed. He thereby extracted an apology from the magistrates and has afterwards treated with proper respect. Just like in the nonviolence movement, Paul did not resort to violence, but used his civil rights to prevent further violence from being done to him. He was even able to peaceably visit other brethren and encourage them without further molestation.

In Acts 21:33–39, Paul was arrested by a Roman commander in Jerusalem following attack on him by a Jewish mob. Paul knew he could obtain permission from the soldier to express himself. He asked for permission and, receiving it from the commander, he preached to the mob that had attacked him. He did not try to preach in a riotous environment until he had obtained official permission. When the mob grew violent again, the commander decided to interrogate Paul by having him scourged, Paul then informed the commander that he was a Roman citizen. This immediately prevented him from suffering unnecessary torture and secured him safe passage later (Acts 22:25–29; 23:12–35). When he was allowed to confront the Sanhedrin, and the high priest ordered him to be struck, he boldly questioned the high priest's right to strike him illegally (Acts 23:1–7).

When Paul realized that there was a manoeuvre to hand him over to the Jews, which would probably end in his death, he appealed to his right to be tried by Caesar, thereby gaining passage to Rome, where he continued to preach the gospel in relative safety (Acts 25:1–12). Paul used every legal right available to him to ensure that he continued to preach the gospel wherever he could. He never took violent action against either the mob that attacked him, or the government officials who wanted to treat him shabbily. Some Christians in Nigeria have suggested such an approach, such as the suggestion of Oluniyi (2006:96–99) that Christians should respond to violence with "respect

for human rights and for the rule of law, appeal for reason and common language, and aversion of threat." All these alternative responses to violence however are very challenging and not easy to follow. Abikoye (1983:16–25) points out that "while the Bible enjoins us to repay evil with good and leave vengeance to God, it does not forbid us to assert our civil rights as enshrined in our nation's constitution." We need to seek creative ways of asserting our rights, while still repaying evil with good. Constructive engagement with Islamic violence must include condemnation of violence, but declaration of love for the violent.

5. The challenges of alternative responses to violence

Three major challenges that must be overcome in developing an effective response to Islamic violence in northern Nigeria include the attitude of the Muslims, the attitude of security agents, and the attitude of Christians themselves. An Egyptian convert to Islam presents a typical Muslim attitude to Christians that makes Christian response a great challenge:

> Our hatred towards Christians took the form of harassment and assaults against them on the streets, but they answered our assaults with disgusting meekness. We responded by being more aggressive against them, and we started to plan how we could torture and intimidate them. We learnt that God had legalizes killing them, plundering their possessions and looting their houses. According to the Qur'an, all their belongings were to be gifts from God to the Muslims (Copland 2003:81).

Oluniyi (2006:85) also cites the tendency of Muslim group to denounce delegates to national conferences on the grounds of marginalization of Muslims and to threaten *jihad*. Nonviolence is always premised on its appeal to reason; to a common standard of morality and logic. Muslim always believes Christian meekness is mere subterfuge to gain an advantage over Islam. Nonviolent response may even encourage more violence from Muslims. Moreover, many Muslims believe it is actually a religious duty to act violently towards Christians. To what then will

Christian nonviolent response appeal to bring an end to Islamic violence? It is worth noting, however, that Oluniyi commends an Islamic organization known as the Supreme League for *Sharia* Consciousness (SLSC) for denouncing another Islamic organization known as the Supreme Council for *Sharia* in Nigeria (SCSN) for the latter's violent view on *jihad*. Oluniyi (2006:85) says; "It is clear that the Supreme League for *Sharia* Consciousness is an agent of peace. While the Supreme Council for *Sharia* in Nigeria spoils for terror, the SLSC seeks to build bridges." Perhaps the existence of bridge builders among Muslims gives cause for hope that peace is possible through nonviolent means.

Another challenge is however posed by the involvement of the security agents who are considered to be the representatives of violent Islamic groups. Concerning the January 2010 religious violence in Jos, an Assistant Commissioner of Police, Usman Dagogo was suspended by Police authorities on suspicion of arming some displaced Muslim youths who were taking refuge at the Police Staff College, Jos (The Punch 2010:8). Fabiyi (2010:8) also reports allegations that Major General Saleh Maina, a General Officer commanding in Jos used his position to help in the killing of Christians. He was alleged to have organized all-Muslim Army patrol teams who were instructed to kill Christians. The Nigerian Army however faulted the allegations as unlikely. These incidents and allegations create an attitude of desperation and suspicion among Christians, making it difficult to develop any positive ideas about confronting Islamic violence in a creative manner. Questions may arise about the extent and consequences of the involvement of security agents in Islamic violence.

The attitude of Christians themselves is also a challenge to the development of a productive response to violence. Anyoku (2010:80) laments the absence of what he calls the church in the classical, pristine and original sense of them. He explains what he means as the existence of "only watery holes of famished, debauched souls, beehives of rump-shaking, woogie-boogie pleasure seekers, popular centres for

socializing, for deal-cutting, and amorous liaisons for trysting sweethearts." The pleasure-loving attitude of Christians today certainly makes it difficult for them to develop the type of courageous attitude that is needed for creative response to Islamic violence. Many other Christians are not really concerned with the issue of the faith as such. They see nothing wrong with responding violently to Islamic violence because their major concern is self-defence. This is not a new attitude, as Baiton (1960:103) points out that the development of the idea of the just war could be traced to the Barbarian invasion of the Roman Empire:

> The promotion of peace by the church in the period following the invasions was more difficult because the invaders had cut their way into the empire by the sword. They were bellicose, utterly devoid any feeling for the beatitude upon the meek. When these lusty warriors embraced the Cross, they regarded it not as a yoke to be placed upon their pugnacity, but as an ensign to lead them in battle. The Barbarians militarized Christianity.

There are many Christians today, and even Christian ministers, who care little about the beatitudes, as long as they can feel safe and have their needs daily met. They are quick to advocate violent response to Islamic violence. Christians must however realize, as Colson (2001:1–16) says to Americans in the faith,

> The Christian life is a life of returning, of going back to the Cross daily in repentance and faith. We must face a sobering fact: we will not prevail against terrorism no matter how good our armed forces are. We will prevail only if God in His mercy decides to forgive us, heal our land, and give America another chance.

Violence has not succeeded, even when used by the armed forces of super-power countries, in quelling Islamic violence. Violence by Christian civilians is at best futile. Certainly, Nigerian Christians must return to God and his ways, while looking up to God to show us mercy and show us a way out of Islamic violence in northern Nigeria.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

The path to peace with an opponent bent on violence is not an easy one, neither is a nonviolence response to violence an easy path to trade. It was not easy for the disciples of Jesus, that was why Peter took a sword and cut off some body's ear in defence of Jesus during an attempt to arrest him before Jesus corrected him (Mt 26: 50–54). It was not easy for the early church and it cannot be easy for our generation. When the instruments of government are used to discriminate against one religion, when the oppressor believes he has a divine mandate to discriminate and tacitly support acts of violence against others in the name of religion, when security agents are infiltrated by a group bent on visiting violence against other groups, the path to peace is not easy. However, responding to violence with violence is utterly futile to bring an end to violence, especially of a religious nature. The most effective counter force to religious violence is religious love; particularly Christian love. It is this love that some have employed in the nonviolence philosophy to bring about change. It is fraught with many uncertainties; it requires a lot of time to bear fruits; it will cost the lives of some of its advocates; but it is the best available means to ultimately prevail on the reasonable elements within violence-prone groups to bring about reasonable peace. Christians in northern Nigeria can develop a creative approach to Islamic violence which includes peaceful but loud and strong protest against violence and government discrimination; appeal to common humanity and scriptures in Islam that advocate peace; responding with love action towards Muslims, instead of violence; and perseverance and willingness to suffer while boldly proclaiming the virtues of peace.

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Standing in God's favour: spatial reasoning in Romans 5:1–5

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Abstract

Paul's language in Romans 5:1–5 permeates spatiality and references to the Roman Empire. These images form part of a spatial reasoning in which he wants to convince an audience, who have already heard of the good news, that no force or power can separate them from the love of God if they unceasingly orientate themselves towards God. Paul redefines ideas such as love, favour and glory in order to communicate the significance of a believer's relationship with God from a bodily perspective. This article explores Paul's spatial reasoning with specific focus on the impact thereof for the church during Covid-19.

1. Introduction

The Roman architect Vitruvius (81–15 BCE) wrote in the first century BCE that structures can promote good health when light, temperature and air movement are taken into account. [32] The link between corporeality and space is undeniable and the body can be viewed as a "culture site" because impressions of space culminate and play out in the body (Pernau 2014:541).

The recent worldwide Covid-19 lockdowns made people intensely aware of the impact that spaces have on them as well as the impact

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[32] Cf. *De architectura* 1.10; 6.1.1–12; 6.4.1–2.

they have on their surrounding spaces. During the first week of the national Covid-19 lockdown in South Africa, a disturbingly high number of gender violence instances were reported (Mlambo 2020). Even president Ramaphosa has voiced concern about the alarming problem of gender-based violence in South Africa referring to it as a pandemic (Ellis 2020). Considering that the majority of people in South Africa identify as Christian (Schoeman 2017:3), there is a need for theological reflection to determine the role of the church in reducing these acts of violence. The pandemic offers an opportunity to rethink the church's positioning as the body of Christ in South Africa.

In Romans 5:1–5 Paul's language is permeated with spatial imagery that form part of a larger argument that spans Romans 5–8. The main argument in Romans 5–8 can be summarised as follows: Paul wants to convince his audience that no force or power can separate believers from the love of God when they position themselves to God as their ruler.[33]

This article focusses on the spatial reasoning in Romans 5:1–5 where Paul employs the body as communicative strategy by portraying it as a space in which God brings peace. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's (1980:3) theory of cognitive linguistics, stating that metaphors are not merely ornamental poetic tropes, but are expressed in thought and actions pervasive to daily life, forms the basis of my research. Elena Semino (2008:54) also mentions that metaphors successfully support arguments and she lists various metaphor patterns that can form within discourse to increase persuasiveness. Metaphors have the potential to expand understanding of a subject and to transform one's way of thinking. Accordingly, a conceptual metaphor comprises a source domain (where a concept originates) and a target domain (where the concept is clarified) (Kövecses 2010:4).

This article begins with a concise review of the structure of the argument in Romans 5:1–5 which is followed by detailed analyses of the

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[33] See Potgieter, A., 2020, *Contested body: metaphors of dominion*. Aosis (forthcoming).

images in Romans 5:1–5. In conclusion some implications of this spatial reasoning for the church as the body of Christ are discussed.

2. Structure of Romans 5:1–5

5:1, a) Δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ <u>πίστεως</u>,

b) εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς ⬚τὸν θεὸν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ,

5:2, a) δι᾽ οὗ καὶ τὴν προσαγωγὴν <u>ἐσχήκαμεν</u> [τῇ <u>πίστει</u>] εἰς τὴν χάριν ταύτην

b) ἐν ᾗ <u>ἐστήκαμεν</u>

c) καὶ καυχώμεθα ἐπ᾽ ἐλπίδι <u>τῆς δόξης</u> <u>τοῦ θεοῦ</u>.

5:3, a) <u>οὐ μόνον δέ</u>, ἀλλὰ καὶ καυχώμεθα ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν,

b) εἰδότες ὅτι <u>ἡ θλῖψις ὑπομονὴν</u> κατεργάζεται,

5:4, a) <u>ἡ δὲ ὑπομονὴ δοκιμήν</u>,

b) <u>ἡ δὲ</u> δοκιμὴ ἐλπίδα.

5:5 a) <u>ἡ δὲ</u> ἐλπὶς οὐ καταισχύνει,

b) ὅτι <u>ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ</u> ἐκκέχυται ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν

c) διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου τοῦ δοθέντος ἡμῖν.

3. Spatial images in Romans 5:1–5

Romans 5:1 starts with a forensic image "justified by faith" (δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως (Rom 5:1a)). Δικαιοω should be interpreted in the light of the frameworks of Romans 5:1–11 and Romans 8:31–39 (Dahl 1951:37–48, Dahl 1977:88–90) as the image stems from court proceedings where an accused is acquitted (Du Toit 2003:60). The image in Romans 5:1 should be understood along with Romans 8:34 indicating that God has already justified believers (Du Toit 2003:60). The passive use of δικαιοω indicates God's initiative in his relationship with believers (Fitzmyer 1993:395; Greijdanus 1933:255;

Moo 1996:298; Wolter 2014:319). Accordingly, a believer undergoes a status change from unrighteous to justified (Greijdanus 1933:255; Moo 1996:298).

However, this forensic image is subordinated to the main image "we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ (Rom 5:1b)). This image is dense and in order to truly understand Paul's rhetorical effectiveness with these images, the different layers of meaning must be unpacked. The first layer of understanding lies in detecting the textual discrepancy of ἔχομεν/ἔχωμεν, which influences the reading of εἰρήνη. [34] I interpret ἔχομεν as an indicative. The source domain of εἰρήνην ἔχομεν can be traced to the Roman *pax deorum.* This rite constituted a contract between the Roman people and the gods where the former would obtain protection and success from the latter via sacrifice (Malherbe 2008:303; Rankov 2007:69; Rüpke 2001:132). The Caesar played a vital role in this transaction as he facilitated it. However, if disasters or discord occurred, the notion was that the contract of peace with the gods had been disrupted. In order to repair the relationship, sacrifice, prayer, fulfilment of vows and the ritual of *lustratio*[35] would be required to protect the city from hostile influences (Aune 1993:790). Loyalty to the caesar was also displayed by participating in these rites (Rankov 2007:69). During the *Pax Romana* εἰρήνην ἔχομεν functioned as a well-known slogan indicating Rome's

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[34] Scholars who argue for the subjunctive "let us have peace" include Black (1973:74); Jewett (2007:348); Porter (1992:58). Greijdanus (1933:256) posits that it is without contest an indicative on the grounds of "intrinsic probability". Furthermore, Cranfield (1975:257) argues that it is clear that Paul views the believers' peace with God to be factual. Along similar lines, Morris (1988:218) favours an indicative reading of ἔχομεν as he argues that a subjunctive reading would indicate a choice, which is 'un-Pauline'.

[35] This is an ancient Roman purification ritual that in some cases would involve sacrifice.

political and military prowess employed to uphold Rome's authority (Malherbe 2008:303).[36]

Paul uses εἰρήνην ἔχομεν as a metaphor in which the political facet of the source domain, which is mapped onto the target domain, is illustrated as believers' relationship with God. The audience could have implicitly understood the Jewish notion of *shalom* in the target domain, but this is not part of the source domain. What is important though, is that the image conveys that believers were in a position of animosity with God and have been changed to be in a position of peace, which entails the possibility to have a future and thrive. Peace is the absence of war that facilitates the possibility to organise the future and ensures calmness and the chance for happiness (Spicq 1994:425).

However, the prepositional phrase "towards God through Jesus Christ our Lord" πρὸς τὸν θεὸν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is used instrumentally. Space forms an intrinsic part of the prepositional use of πρός that, along with the accusative, indicates direction, which in this case is "towards God" (ὁ θεός) (Smyth 1956:371). God enables believers who are not on his level to orientate themselves towards him "through Jesus Christ our Lord" (διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ).

It is no coincidence that Paul refers to Jesus as κύριος "Lord". Κύριος would have immediately been recognised by the audience as a term that refers to political rulers as well as gods (Aune 1993:794). In Rome the perception was shared that the caesar was a god. It is enticing to interpret κύριος as Paul depicting Jesus as an alternative bringer of peace in contrast to the caesar, especially with the use of εἰρήνην ἔχομεν. However, just as easy as it is to interpret Jesus as an alternative peace bringer, the contrary can be indicated. Paul uses κυρίος to refer to Jesus, but if Jesus was truly depicted as an alternative peace bringer, Paul would also have made a connection between θεός and κυρίος

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[36] Cf. Tacitus, *Histories* 2.12; 4.74; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 14.160; 15.348; *Orientis graeci inscriptiones selectae (OGIS)* 614 where the slogan expresses both political and beneficence of Roman rule (Malherbe 2008:303).

(Zimmermann 2007:194). It is therefore more plausible that Paul is drawing on the early church confession "Jesus Christ is Lord" as seen in 1 Corinthians 12:3 Κύριος Ἰησοῦς and Philippians 2:11 κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός. Paul wants to convince an audience, who already knows about the gospel, of his viewpoint. The metaphor is embedded in a Christological reference (Fitzmyer 2011:815; Zimmermann 2007:194) describing early believers' experience and understanding of Christ (Fatehi 2000:267). The peace with God, managed through Jesus Christ "our" Lord, indicates God as the ruling party who enables believers to enter a peaceful relationship with God as they become the embodiment of peace.

The instrumental role of Jesus Christ is further elucidated in the relative clause in Romans 5:2a (δι᾽ οὖ καὶ τὴν προσαγωγὴν ἐσχήκαμεν [τῇ πίστει] εἰς τὴν χάριν ταύτην). The spatial image προσαγωγή is used and it is difficult to pinpoint its source domain. There are three options. The first is unlikely as προσαγωγή is used to illustrate an area that ships cannot access[37] which is not coherent with the imagery in Romans 5:1–5 and according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980:86) metaphors are coherent. The second interpretation is προσαγωγή as a cultic image. This use is seen in the LXX Leviticus 4:14; Exodus 29:4; Leviticus 21:18–19 and Numbers 8:9–10 in the context of God's altar that is approached with an offering (Black 1973:75; Longenecker 2016:558; Michel 1966:177; Van Leeuwen & Jacobs 1974:102; Wright 2002:516). Paul uses a noun in Romans 5:2 and not the verb as seen in the LXX.

The third possibility is that it derives from a royal image. Bauer et al. (2000:876) list the royal connotation of προσαγωγή as the first possible interpretation. This connotation stems from a description of an audience with Cyrus described in Xenophon Cyropaedia 7.5.45 (Liddell, Scott & Jones 1996:1500). The spatiality of this image where the king is approached is often overlooked. Within the purview of Romans 5:1–11 and Romans 8:31–39, I argue that the body becomes the intended place

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[37] Plutarch, *Aemilius Paulus*, 261 [13, 3]; Polybius, 10,1,6.

cordoned off by Jesus to facilitate an encounter with God that results in having peace. However, this metaphor is novel and trying to determine its source domain remains highly speculative.

Προσαγωγή is furthermore embedded in other images found in the relative clause δι᾿ οὗ καὶ τὴν προσαγωγὴν ἐσχήκαμεν [τῇ πίστει] εἰς τὴν χάριν ταύτην ἐν ᾗ ἐστήκαμεν (Rom 5:2a,b). Believers have access by faith in this favour in which they stand. There is a wordplay between ἐσχήκαμεν "we have" (Rom 5:2a) and ἐστήκαμεν "we stand" (Rom 5:2b). Both verbs are in the perfect tense – the former (ἐσχήκαμεν) underscores Christ's continuing activity and the consequence thereof (Morris 1988:219; Wolter 2014:321), while the latter (ἐστήκαμεν) underscores the image of standing. However, believers are standing in this favour. The demonstrative pronoun (ταύτην) along with the noun χάρις, that refers to εἰρήνην (Rom 5:1b), enhances the spatiality.

The image of believers standing "in this favour" (εἰς τὴν χάριν ταύτην) requires more understanding. Paul uses χάρις, a central leitmotiv in the Hellenistic reciprocity system that kept Rome in place (Barclay 2015:24; Harrison 2003:2; Joubert 2005:187–212) and which is foreign to the LXX. Benefactors aimed to gain honour and loyalty whilst the client benefitted materially (Joubert 2005:189–190). The power of the elite was so vast that a high proportion of society depended on them (Barclay 2015:13). Although there was a government, personal patronage kept elite families under the supposed beneficence of the Caesar (Barclay 2015:36).

Paul uses χάρις in a new way by employing it to indicate the relationship between God and believers. Unlike the Roman patrons, God is a benefactor worth following and who gives unconditionally (Du Toit 2009:131). Χάρις describes believers' new position being under the influence of God's favour.

Engberg-Pedersen (2008:15) questions whether it is truly possible to speak of an unconditional gift. He interprets ἀγάπη and πνεῦμα in Romans 5:5 as precursory for the believer's reaction in Romans 8:14–39, with especially Romans 8:28 expressing believers' love towards God

(Engberg-Pedersen 2008:38). However, I agree with Du Toit (2009:131) that χάρις is constant and originates exclusively from God and Jesus Christ. Accordingly, believers stand in "this favour".

Believers take pride in this favour with reference to hope of the glory of God (καὶ καυχώμεθα ἐπ᾽ ἐλπίδι τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ). Romans 5:2c elaborates on this position of favour. A textual discrepancy is also prevalent with the verb καυχάομαι as it is not certain whether it should be read as an indicative or a hortative subjunctive. I interpret it as an indicative coherent with Romans 5:1. The verb καυχάομαι, along with the preposition ἐπί, indicates being proud of something (Bauer et al. 2000:536) which in this case is ἐλπίς that refers to τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ as the genitive indicates (Légasse 2002:340).

Gerber (2015:230) turns the typical Bultmann (1938:646–654) understanding that boasting is a theological problem for Paul around and convincingly illustrates that "boasting" is an essential rhetoric component when defending one's argument. Paul wants to convince his audience to take pride in the hope of the glory of God.

This image of hope grounded in the glory of God becomes even richer when understood within the context. Spes, the Roman goddess of hope, played an important role in the life of Romans. Not only was she revered at birthdays and weddings, but also played a vital role in the imperial cult and Roman propaganda (Tataranni 2013:65–78). In Rome, the temple of Spes was located on the triumphal route next to the temple of Janus, who was the god of war and peace (Tataranni 2013:70–72). Hope became an extension of the Caesar's promise of prosperity for the Roman people.

The expression τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ is also often neglected. Δόξα was used in honorific inscriptions for benefactors (Harrison 2010:156–188). Paul's use of δόξα refers to God's action through Jesus Christ on the cross and the resurrection through the glory of the father as seen in Romans 6:4 (Wolter 2014:322). This is also a bodily image. Different from the hope associated with the imperial household bound to military

success, believers can take pride in the hope associated with Jesus and connected to the glory of God.

In contrast to the hope of believers derived from the glory of God, they also take pride in sufferings (οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ καυχώμεθα ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν (Rom 5:3a)). Sufferings should be interpreted from the Jewish understanding thereof (Wolter 2014:324). Paul employs a circular arrangement picking up the key word from each preceding phrase in Romans 5:3–5:5a: ἡ θλῖψις ὑπομονὴν κατεργάζεται (Rom 5:3), ἡ δὲ ὑπομονὴ δοκιμήν, ἡ δὲ δοκιμὴ ἐλπίδα· (Rom 5:4), ἡ δὲ ἐλπὶς οὐ καταισχύνει (Rom 5:5a) (Blass, Debrunner & Funk 1961:§493(3); Moule, 1953:117), employing the rhetorical techniques of *graditio* and *polysyndeton* (Wolter 2014:324). Drawing on the Jewish tradition of understanding, the rhetorical chain underscores the test that the innocent undergoes of suffering (Wolter 2014:324). The reason for this testing is seen in Romans 5:3b (εἰδότες ὅτι ἡ θλῖψις ὑπομονὴν κατεργάζεται) as Paul assumes his audience is already aware that suffering results in perseverance (ἡ θλῖψις ὑπομονὴν κατεργάζεται (Rom 5:3c) (Jewett 2007:354; Wolter 2014:324).

In Rom 5:5a it is clear that hope is not put to shame. The reason becomes clear in the clause ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκκέχυται ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου τοῦ δοθέντος ἡμῖν (Rom 5:5b,c). Paul's use of ἀγάπη underscores God's initiative in the relationship with believers (Bauer et al. 2000:7). He uses an abundance metaphor depicting God as a generous benefactor as "the love of God had been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit". The heart (καρδία) is a bodily image that conveys the inclinations, desires, purpose and mind, thus expressing a person's whole inner life (Bauer et al. 2000:508). The believer becomes the specific location of God's activity. This is a rare case where the preposition εἰς is substituted with ἐν (Oepke 1964:433). The verb ἐκχύννω functions in a metaphorical sense denoting "cause to fully experience" (Bauer et al. 2000:312). But what is more, the abundance of the Holy Spirit is also seen in Rom 8:15 and

8:23 indicating the body as the place that waits in anticipating for the redemption of the body.

Paul employs the body of the believer as the specific location where God enables him/her to have peace. It is also a place where God's love had been poured out through the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, Paul's imagery is permeated with spatiality. The believer is not only marked as a space that has the potential to be redeemed to a spiritual body and thus saved from decay (Rom 8:23;24), but also a space entrenched in the favour of God as believers stand in this favour. The hope of the believer is also based on the glory of the father though Jesus Christ which is another bodily image.

4. What does a bodily understanding of Romans 5:1–5 mean for the church?

During the national Covid-19 lockdown in South Africa, our awareness of our own bodiliness, as well as the church as the body of Christ, has increased. However, bodiliness does not describe the mere physical body, but includes the soul, mind and physical body. Paul's use of the body as a place where God's peace is possible, sheds a different light on the idea of the body as a "culture site". Firstly, this implies that we underestimate the impact we, as individual representatives of the church as well as the collective church, have on our immediate society and society at large. Secondly, Paul emphasises God's initiative in the relationship. The church should be busy where God is being busy. Thirdly, Paul does not describe the body as a perfect place. This is a place that will encounter suffering, but it is anchored in God's favour.

This renders the following questions when we talk about "culture sites": Which type of culture do we want to establish? How do we speak about bodies that are different from ours, for example differently abled bodies? How do we speak about the violence of bodies against other bodies, specifically gendered violence? As silence also sends a message. For Paul it is vital that the believer continually orientate himself/herself towards God. This orientation towards God enables

believers' bodies to become spaces that contribute to creating a culture of flourishment.

When thinking in terms of the spatial reasoning of Romans 5:1–5, it is also prevalent that the message of the gospel is anti-culture. Paul is not explicitly attacking the Roman Empire. On the contrary, he is encouraging believers to live to their fullest by understanding what God has envisioned for them. This is per implication different from their current culture. Modern Christians are also called to a counterculture that protests violence, inequality and discrimination. However, especially in a technological era where we are preoccupied with an instant-gratification mentality, we match the needs of the world instead of focussing on being an authentic Jesus culture that does not subscribe to populist ideals.

During Covid-19 we have re-realised that we are not as in control as we think and that the church has a unique opportunity to rethink which type of bodiliness we want to portray, namely a body that speaks out about gender-based violence, but also contributes to a culture where we transform patterns of violence to the intended position of having peace with God.

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Review

African Public Theology:
Sunday Bobai Agang (General Editor), Dion A Forster and H Jurgens Hendriks (Associate Editors), Hippo Books, Bukuru: 2020, ISBN 978-1-78368-766-4, 422pp
Review by Dr Gideon van der Watt (Department of Practical and Missional Theology, University of the Free Sate, South Africa)

This seminal book on African Public Theology appeared early in 2020, a year disrupted by the Coronavirus pandemic that – together with other crises of economic, political and ecological nature – is severely impacting the African continent. More than ever this exceptional year laid bare the vulnerabilities of African countries and societies. All of this underscores the timely appearance and great importance of this book.

Several renowned theologians of Africa contributed chapters on a wide variety of relevant themes. The chapters on different themes all make a unique, but also correlating contribution to the discourse on a distinct *African* Public Theology on the one hand, as well as a Public Theology in the *African context* on the other hand. The challenges faced by most African countries and societies, and also the trials posed not only to the church in Africa, but also to confessing believers working in all spheres of life, Christians and church leaders and theological institutions, are put on the table and rigorously analysed. The book is linked to and builds on *Agenda 2063: The Africa we want*, a "blueprint" for transforming Africa recently adopted by the African Union.

The book makes a convincing argument for the urgency and necessity of an authentic African Public Theology in the current predicament of Christianity in Africa. Although Africa is saturated with churches and Christians make up the majority in most countries, there is an apparent lack of Christian influence or impact on the prevalence of destructive

issues (irresponsible leadership, conflicts, poverty, corruption, injustice, violence, crime, etc.) resulting in Africa "groaning" under the weight of all these seemingly unresolvable matters. The book therefore focuses on the disconnect between believers' devotional and their everyday life, between the sacred and the secular world. Public theology calls each believer to take up the threefold task that the church everywhere is called to do: "1) proclaim the word which God has spoken, 2) demonstrate the way of Christ, and 3) work hard for the healing of our nations" (p4).

The book is divided into three sections:

Part one describes the crucial need for Public Theology in Africa. It reflects on a biblical foundation and a definition of Public Theology, a theology reflecting on, in Nico Koopman's words, "the meaning, significance and implications of Trinitarian faith for public life" (p19). It also focusses on the nature of Public Theology: being biblical, multilingual (contextual), interdisciplinary, providing political direction, prophetic and inter-contextual. Public Theology cannot but remain a deeply Trinitarian theology, and it challenges Christians to deliberately live out their identity as image bearers of the Triune God within their communities.

Part two reflects on Public Theology's role in and relevance to different spheres of public life. It ranges from citizenship, economy, community development, education, environment, science, health, arts and the media, gender- and intergenerational issues, to land issues, interfaith relations, etc. An important focus is on leadership and the training of a new generation of leaders. Indeed, there is no terrain of public life on which a Christian Public Theology could or should not make some contribution, albeit from its particular, even often peculiar angle. The coming of the kingdom of God has implications for the whole of our present life; it is not just an eschatological expectation for the distant future. And believers, each in their own occupation or field of influence, can and should make a significant contribution.

Part three redirects the focus back to the church in Africa and the role it could play in the transformation of African societies. It contains an overview of the current state of the church in Africa – the church itself is in critical need of transformation before it can play a role in transforming communities, being light and salt in the world.

The book boasts a formidable list of contributors, scholars working in the African context and making a significant contribution to a distinctly African Public Theology. They certainly write with "pathos", "ethos" and "logos" and challenge us to be deeply concerned about the things in our public life that God is concerned about. The book is compassionate about Africa's suffering people, but also passionate about the Africa we all want, the type of Africa God would approve of.

The book profoundly challenges churches and individual Christians, and especially also centres of learning in Africa to engage with these issues Africa is struggling with – and then from a different, biblical perspective. Although much research has clearly been done, the content of each chapter is stripped of unnecessary academic baggage and language; it is easily readable and accessible to a wide readership. The book is also especially suitable as handbook for theological training, not only in Africa, but across the world. Each chapter ends with some questions that can be fruitfully discussed and it makes suggestions for further reading. Theological institutions just cannot afford to omit these important subjects, and this particular resource, from their theological curricula.

The African Theological Journal for Church and Society (ATJCS) is a scholarly journal publishing in any applicable theological discipline, focussing on the church and its role in societies within the African context.

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