

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SALVATION IN  
CHRISTIANITY AND EWE INDIGENOUS  
RELIGION IN GHANA**

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**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF  
PHILOSOPHY IN THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS**

**BY**

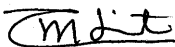
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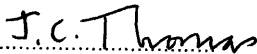
## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this study was carried out by me at the Department for the study of Religions, University of Ghana, under the supervision of the Rev. Professor J. C. Thomas and the Rev. Dr. Brandford Yeboah. I am solely responsible, however, for any possible errors or omissions in this work.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my beloved wife, Prisca and children (Tyrone and Tyrese), who share with me the high adventure of discovering God's best for our lives. Their enthusiasm for enduring my absence in course of the study, along with the encouragement to undertake this research, has actually made the enterprise a great joy.

## **ABSTRACT**

The study essentially demonstrated that the Christian missionaries and the early Ewe clergy did not take cognizance of the Ewe belief in God, (*Mawu*) the all embracing creator of humankind. This can be discerned in the manner and methods these early missionaries proclaimed Christ in Eveland. Their interpretation of salvation was far out of tune from that of the Ewe. This may be explained by the fact that they failed and disregarded to reach out to the roots of Ewe indigenous religious thought. They did not learn, and failed to appreciate, the fact that traditional Ewe religious thought, just as Christianity, embodies the essence of humanity, which is the key to understanding and appreciating the Ewe in his environment, particularly at that time.

The study has shown that the quest for **salvation** is in all people, irrespective of one's religion. **Salvation** is therefore perceived as the aim and end of life. We also noted that, Ewe Christian theologians such as C. G. Baeta, N. K. Dzobo, C. R. Gaba, G. Ansre, Elom Dovlo and Dela Adadevor, have all affirmed the notion that salvation is the liberation of the person from the powers that have the potential of interfering with the original identity and sense of being. They all affirm that, salvation is about gaining one's freedom from life's negating forces, both spiritual and physical. Their works, in essence, demonstrate that it is the same God (*Mawu*) who is acting uniquely in both Christianity and Ewe indigenous religion to bring about **salvation**.

Although the Church was introduced from Germany into Eveland, God, the essence around whom and on whom the Church has been built, has been in Eveland in all his unique manifestations before the arrival of the Christian missionaries in 1847. The observation of Jacob in Genesis 28:16-17: "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it. How awesome is this place! This is none other than

the house of God; this is the gate of heaven” clearly illustrates the religious situation of the Eve before their contact with the European Christian missionaries. In fact, God had already revealed himself to the Eves throughout human history; it is believed that he has never left himself without a witness in the Eve indigenous religion.

In analyzing the nature and meaning of **salvation**, the study clearly demonstrates that both Christianity and followers of Eve indigenous religion acknowledge that, God (*Mawu*), who is the source of **salvation**, works through intermediaries such as Jesus Christ, the ancestors, deities and powerful spirits. These intermediaries serve as God’s (*Mawu*’s) agents of mercy and justice. It is pertinent to observe and recognize that libation prayers of the Eve appeal to the ancestors to ensure that the people and the community they (the ancestors) left behind become increasingly better off than they left them. The essence of this is reflected in such admonishments as: ‘may your back be more peaceful than your front;’ meaning may the relatives, people and communities left behind prosper and become better than at the time the ancestors were in this life. This clearly illustrates the conceptual link between the dead (ancestors) and the living. Although the aspect of pouring a liquid or drinks on the ground in libation prayers may be appropriately reviewed, there can be no doubt that there are lessons to learn from it.

The study also points out that the Eve concept of **salvation** (*Dagbe*), profoundly reflects God’s (*Mawu*’s) provision of abundant life in the present and the future; this includes the restoration of all forms of human failures, and the ordering of the community and the universe as a whole. Similarly, Christianity perceives **salvation** as deliverance of all of God’s creation from every shortcoming in order to make them happy and finally to obtain everlasting life. This study, in a modest way contributes to, and draws attention to other factors not at present given due consideration in the attempt of the Church to concretize the gospel of Christ to the Eve.

From the above discussion, other relevant literature and the operation of the diverse forms of Christian religious movements on Ewealand in particular and Ghana in general, the study has discerned the emergence of Africanist Christian life and thought which is perceptibly different from traditional orthodox Western Christianity. Although this particular issue is beyond this thesis, it is important to note that the new and emergent Africanist Christian thought is likely to influence, and contribute to the future development of Christian life and thought in Africa in particular. It is therefore of crucial importance for the Church to seriously take cognizance of this and timely and appropriately tune its theology as a consequence.

In conclusion, it may be emphasized and suggested for particular consideration that the harsh and unfriendly social, cultural and economic environment, particularly in the urban setting, is **real in the life circumstances** of the individual and his or her perception of **salvation**. In this emerging context of **salvation**, Christianity has to first address these contextual issues before relating them to the eschatological reality. The economic and technological hardships such as stark poverty, unemployment, low income, housing, health, personal and social relations, etc, are increasingly changing the context in which Christianity is operating in Ewealand and Ghana in general. The Church therefore needs a radical approach to its theological expressions which have the potential to influence the issue of **salvation** in Africa, particularly because, **salvation** ought to relate to the environment of the believer. If this is done, then the hard realities of **salvation** and the hard realities of life will be closer to match the daily necessities of life.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 BACKGROUND

The concept of salvation is central to most religious traditions such as Christianity, Islam, and the African Indigenous Religion. Indeed, the aims and ends of religions is “salvation.” Abraham Akrong suggests that “at the core of all religions is the quest for salvation.”<sup>1</sup> I agree with him that in the world, there cannot be a religion without the idea of salvation. Akrong’s view of salvation is that it is a real practical concern that has to do with the challenges of life and human existence.<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Parrinder also argues that: “... Whatever else a religion may or may not be, it is essentially a reaching forward to the idea of salvation.”<sup>3</sup>

In the light of Parrinder’s argument cited above, it can be said that salvation has been treated as a key subject in most religions. There is therefore the need for a comparative analysis of the various perceptions of salvation. This thesis is a comparative one involving two religions (Christianity and Eve indigenous religion) and attempts to show the extent to which the Eve indigenous view of wholeness and the ideal life influenced the appropriation and interpretation of the Christian understanding of salvation, or vice versa.

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<sup>1</sup> Abraham Akrong, “Salvation in African Christianity” in *Legon Journal of the Humanities* vol. 12. (Accra: Mustard Impressions, 1999-2001), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Akrong, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey Parrinder, “The Salvation of other Men” in *Man and his Salvation: Studies in memory of S.G.F. Brandon*. Eds. Eric J. Sharpe and John R. Hinnells (Manchester: Rowman Littlefield Publishers, 1973), 189.

The Ewe migrated from *Notse* in the Republic of Togo and settled in part of the present Volta Region of Ghana. They had their first formal contact with Christianity as early as 1847 when the Bremen Missionaries settled at Peki. This led to the establishment of a church, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (Then known as the Ewe Presbyterian Church). Since then, the proclamation and the teaching of the gospel have not ceased.

Nonetheless, irrespective of the similarities between the nature and meaning of salvation in Christianity and the Ewe indigenous religion, to a great extent, the majority of the early Christian missionaries did not, in their work, accord the indigenous worldview the necessary dignity it deserves. As a result, the presence and the practice of Christianity have side-lined the expression and the appropriation of the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of the Ewe, both among the indigenous group and the Christian converts.

Despite the fact that the church (community of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ and are bound by rules such as those partially attributed to Augustine of Hippo i.e., living life in love, community, obedience, and service) is keen in its approach that there is no salvation outside it, the contemporary phenomena of Inculturation and Contextualization of the church demonstrate how the existing Ewe indigenous religious view of salvation may be, and indeed is, relevant to enhance the Christian concept and understandings of salvation.

Arguably, a basic concept in Christianity is salvation. Eventhough, the discussion of salvation and justification were at the very centre of Reformation Theology, I submit that the questions relating to them have changed after the Reformation. This is supported by

the fact that, biblical hermeneutics and interpretation of the Scripture and questions about biblical authorship such as those of the Pentateuch changed since 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Synoptic discrepancies which are an on going debate have also posed serious theological challenges for contemporary Soteriology.

The church perceives “Mission” as making people aware about salvation and damnation considering the importance attached to salvation. This is mainly because Christians are mostly concerned about the *eschatos*<sup>4</sup> than any other biblical belief, since much of Jesus’ teachings were geared toward the end times.

The indigenous Eves are equally concerned about their salvation like Christians. They believe in a hierarchy of deities:

- The Supreme Being or God (the Great God) – *Mawuga* or *Mawu*
- Ancestral Spirits- *Togbewo* or *Togbe-togbewo*
- Lesser Gods or deities- *Trowo*, *Vudu* or *Mawuviwo*
- Other Spirits and Powers- *Dzo*, *Adze*, *Tukpui* etc.

The Eves also believe that the world was created by *Mawu* who has the power over life and death and the power to save. Christian R. Gaba conceives *Dagbe* as the indigenous Ewe word that translates the English word salvation. He observes that the interpretation

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<sup>4</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier has suggested in the 1996 Revised Edition of the *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*, of which he is the general editor that the term “Eschatology,” is the beliefs or teaching about last things. The word which is from the Greek language is derived from the term *eschos* “*Eschos*” meaning “Last Things.” Biblical, intertestamental and rabbinic writings often distinguish between the present age or aeon, the period of history in which life is being lived, and the future, coming age, or period of transformed existence that God will bring at the end of history. The latter age or aeon is sometimes also referred to as the age to come or coming age, the kingdom of God, the new world, or the new or messianic age. In this context, the term “eschatology” is inherently ambiguous, since it may refer to teachings either about events expected to take place during the last days of the present age or about occurrences anticipated at the beginning of or during the age to come.

and appropriation of “*Dagbe*” is in the Hebrew word *shalom*, meaning total—well—being, which is achieving the fullness of life here and now, and in the life after.<sup>5</sup>

In his works on traditional understanding of salvation among the *Anlo-Eve*, Gaba expresses the view that ‘abundant life’ rather than salvation, is a better translation for the *Eve* concept of *Dagbe*. Abundant life in his view is total—well—being; that is wellbeing in both the spiritual and material aspects of life. To support his reason for using abundant life rather than salvation, Gaba explains that in the milieu of those for whom *Dagbe* has existential relevance, abundant life is a more expressive rendering of the concept than the word salvation. Gaba shares the view of Bolaji Idowu that the Hebrew concept of *shalom* or total wellbeing is the goal of African indigenous religion in general.<sup>6</sup>

Bolaji Idowu observes that the concept of *Shalom*, in Hebrew religion, which is total wellbeing in body, mind and soul in relation to personal, domestic and societal issues, is also the goal of African indigenous religion in general.<sup>7</sup>

The questions that arise are: is *shalom* attainable in the present life? Can we say that because one has become financially independent, economically viable and in fairly good health means one has achieved a total—well—being? In the midst of total—well—being, are we able to put to rest the problem of evil?

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<sup>5</sup> Christian Gaba, “Man’s Salvation: Its nature and meaning in African Traditional Religions,” in *Christianity in Independent Africa*. Eds. Edward Fashole-Luke et al. (London: Rex Collins, 1978), 389.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> E. Bolaji Idowu, *African Traditional Religions* (London: S C M Press, 1973), 46.

I suggest and hold the view that the Christian conception of heaven and the Ewe indigenous view of the ancestral world known as *togbeawo yife* is essentially that of the eschatological realization of the presence and power of God, and the final elimination of sin and evil. This is the consummation of the concept of salvation in both religions, in which the presence, penalty and power of sin have all been finally eliminated, and the total presence of God in individuals and the community of the faithful have been achieved. Until then, I suggest a total—well-being is not recognizable in this world, irrespective of life's prospects and fulfillments.

*Dagbe* also connotes the idea of “deliverance” among Ewes. This is because the concept of *Dagbe* has developed and evolved around Ewes historical escape from *Notsie* in the Republic of Togo under the tyrannical rule of King *Agorkorli* to their present place of liberty and freedom. Therefore, the Ewe concept of *Dagbe* covers the whole person, i.e., progress in life, good health, and good harvest among others. From its everyday usage, *Dagbe* has to do with the fortifying, strengthening, enriching, or enhancing life.<sup>8</sup>

In another work Gaba used the word *fafa* (peace) as an Ewe concept of salvation. This he also perceives as the equivalent of the Hebrew concept of *Shalom*. The difference between *fafa* and *Dagbe* is that *fafa* is used more commonly in everyday conversation.<sup>9</sup>

Two other Ewe concepts which are possibly translated as salvation by Dela Adadevor which Gaba does not discuss in his works are *Agbenono* (Being in a state of life or

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<sup>8</sup> Christian Gaba, in Dela Adadevor, “Approaches to Christianization among the Ewe people of Ghana” (Ph. D. Dissertation., University of Leeds, 2005), 99.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

existence); and *Blibonyenye*. The latter refers to well being as 'wholeness,' which represents meaningful life.

Birgit Meyer conceptualizes salvation as the exorcism of evil spirits. This is confirmed by the fact that the terms *xoxo* (from *xo*, to receive, to get, to save) and *dede* (from *de*, to take away) are both used to translate 'salvation'<sup>10</sup> by Christian converts among the Ewe. She argues that "since *dede* is also used to translate 'deliverance' (from evil spirits); it is no great surprise that salvation is conceptualized as the act of being taken away from the realm of Satan."<sup>11</sup>

Abraham Akrong argues that "Christian Soteriology has been enriched prominently by culture and local beliefs of salvation. Therefore, the emphasis on a new paradigm and fresh interpretation for salvation is a legitimate and pressing concern for indigenous religion and African theology."<sup>12</sup>

It is evident from the discussion above that the word salvation means very different things to different people in the church, from the time of the early church to today. Since it is the pivotal doctrine on which the church stands and falls, a working definition of it is crucial for our understanding of a comparative study of the kind envisaged in this work and will occupy us in the next stage.

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<sup>10</sup> Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 1999), 165.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Abraham Akrong, "Salvation in African Christianity", 1.

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<sup>10</sup> Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 1999), 165.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Abraham Akrong, “Salvation in African Christianity”, 1.

## 1.1 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

**SALVATION:** Alister E. McGrath maintained that, salvation is a “complex notion” with regard to the many nuances the term carries, with both secular and religious connotations.<sup>13</sup> Komi A. Hiagbe also indicated that, “the meaning of the term salvation differs from one context to another. In the same vein, what constitutes salvific phenomena in one religion or context, may not in another,”<sup>14</sup> because, salvation may be ascribed to specific or particular situations. “For example a river suddenly swells to deliver the persecuted from the persecutor; the river is revered as a saviour, and the phenomenon as salvation.”<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, to discuss the concept of salvation, one needs a working definition for the purpose of analysis, objectivity and clarity. Akrong argues that a careful study of the concept of salvation in the various religious traditions shows that there is a need, a lack, or a deficiency in human life that needs or calls for divine or transcendental help. Therefore, the structure of salvation operates on an assumed need in human existence that makes salvation necessary or relevant to human life.<sup>16</sup>

Particularly, the message of salvation is completely different in the respective religious traditions and even within movements or denominations of the same faith. Akrong reiterated that “the salvation message of the different religions and indeed different movements within the same religion puts forward different ways in which the perceived

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<sup>13</sup> Alister E. MacGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 337.

<sup>14</sup> Komi A. Hiagbe, *Reconciled to Reconcile: An African view of John Calvin's Doctrine of Salvation* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2008), 31.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Akrong, 22.

causes or the source of human predicament can be resolved or overcome.”<sup>17</sup> He went on to cite the Christian tradition as an example that the different cultural and philosophical contexts have produced different interpretations of the meaning and significance of the death of Christ for human salvation.<sup>18</sup>

The word salvation equally means very different things to different people both in and outside the church. According to the Wikipedia encyclopedia, salvation is a 13<sup>th</sup> century English word c. 1225 and is originally a Christian word from the Latin *Salvatio* (from *salvare*) meaning “to save.” The Latin translation of the Greek, σωτηρια (*soteria*) is a noun of action from *salvare* (save) meaning *deliverance by the soter* (saviour). The Greek σωτηρια (*soteria*), from which the New Testament concept of salvation is primarily derived, has secular meanings of victory, deliverance, preservation, security and, bodily health.

Hiagbe argued that the term salvation also carries the nuance of ‘a means of safety,’ a safe return, and a guarantee. He maintained that, this definition is amply substantiated by the *Theologisches Worterbuch zum Neuen Testament* which obviously illustrated the understandings of σωτηρια (saviour) within the Graeco-Roman tradition: a) tradition recognized the *gods* and the ruling cults to be protecting the welfare of the people against enemies, hence were considered to be saviours, b) they bring about peace, order and security as salvation, so the leaders who made these possible were considered saviours,

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<sup>17</sup> Abraham Akrong, “An Akan Christian view of Salvation from the perspective of John Calvin’s Soteriology” (Ph. D. Diss., Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1991), 30.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

and c) other specific and peculiar situations where people are said to have experienced a spectacular deliverance by a deity.<sup>19</sup>

Primarily, salvation is the act of “saving” from sin and its consequences such as curse and death. In Christianity in particular the reference is to “saving” from sin. Likewise, Christianity is a religion through which one is saved from one’s sins and its consequences. Consequently, sin became a conditioned phenomenon for salvation in Christian theology. In fact, in the beginning, God and humans were said to be together in perfect relationship. Then sin came and separated humans from God as they turned their back to God in disobedience. A gap was hence created between humans and God. In traditional Christian theology, Jesus then became the only access to God.

Salvation, in general, refers to deliverance or rescue from some undesirable state or condition. In theology, salvation can mean three related things: being saved from something, such as suffering or the punishment of sin—also called deliverance; being saved for something, such as afterlife or participating in the reign of God—also called redemption or eternal life; and social liberation and healing, as in liberation theology.

In my view, there are three stages of salvation from Christian stand point:

The first stage is what is called initial salvation. It refers to the event of a person’s conversion from sin to state of grace. The second is progressive salvation which covers a believer’s faith journey between conversion and death. And the final stage is the event of God saving his people at the final judgment, the great divide between “sheep and goats”.

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<sup>19</sup> Hiagbe, 31.

According to Daniel Migliore, “salvation is more than a return to pristine creation, more even than the reconciliation with God and our fellow creatures that are present in the life of faith, hope, and love here and now. Salvation means final fulfillment of life in perfect and everlasting communion with God and our fellow creatures.”<sup>20</sup>

S. Mark Heim argues that the debate about salvation in other religions will not shed much light unless it is recognized that there are many different understandings of the final end of human life. Both those who deny and those who affirm salvation through other religions overlook this fact. In Heim’s view, it is a mistake to assume that all religions aspire to the same end, and that they all share a common understanding of salvation. He therefore speaks of “salvation” in plural or even more carefully, of distinct “religious ends.”

Migliore, commenting on Heim’s view, maintained that, “there are, in other words, different understandings of human destiny, different interpretations of the end for which the various religions instruct and prepare their adherents.”<sup>21</sup> Heim then concluded that, in Christian theology salvation is “a relationship of communion through Christ with God and with other creatures.”<sup>22</sup>

According to the existentialist, Paul Tillich, the universal significance of Jesus as the Christ, which is expressed in the symbols of subjection to existence and of victory over

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<sup>20</sup> Daniel Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Michigan, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 319.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> S. Mark Heim, *The Depth of the Riches: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends* (Michigan, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 53.

existence, can also be expressed in the term “salvation.” This is so, because, Jesus is called the Saviour,<sup>23</sup> the Mediator,<sup>24</sup> or the Redeemer.<sup>25</sup> The Mediator appears under the institutions of prophecy, kingship, and priesthood to demonstrate God’s commitment to the salvation of human beings.<sup>26</sup> For Tillich, salvation refers to being saved from the ultimate negativity, which is the exclusion from the universal unity of the Kingdom of God, and the exclusion from eternal life. He offers a limited meaning of salvation as the question of “to be or not to be.”<sup>27</sup> The philosophy of existentialism affirms that, salvation depends on the “Free Will.” This logically concludes that, in the final analysis, what one gets by way of acceptance or rejection by God is what one chooses. It means one’s life is determined by the decision one makes day by day regarding salvation.<sup>28</sup>

Paul Tillich believed that, salvation is either total or non-existent. Total salvation, in his view, is identical with being taken into the state of *ultimacy*. This is the opposite of damnation. He goes on to argue that, if salvation to eternal life is dependent upon the encounter with Jesus as the Christ and the acceptance of his saving power, then, only a small number of people will ever reach salvation. Tillich’s argument suggests that, people are condemned through a divine decree or destiny or guilt.<sup>29</sup> However, the theology of

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<sup>23</sup> From the Greek *Soter* and Latin *Salvator*. A biblical term for God as deliverer and protector as well as for Jesus Christ, emphasizing his work as the one who brings salvation.

<sup>24</sup> Latin *medius* meaning “middle.” One who stands between parties in order to effect reconciliation. The term is applied to Jesus Christ as the one mediator between God and humankind (1 Tim.2:5), who has effected reconciliation by overcoming sin.

<sup>25</sup> Latin *redimere* meaning “buy back.” God is the rescuer of Israel. A designation also for Jesus Christ, who brings salvation and the redemptive relationship God, intends to have with those who believe.

<sup>26</sup> Abraham Akrong, “An Akan Christian view of Salvation from the perspective of John Calvin’s Soteriology,” 126.

<sup>27</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology II* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 165.

<sup>28</sup> Lk.6:43-45 New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

<sup>29</sup> Tillich, 165 NRSV.

Universalism (the view that all persons will ultimately receive salvation from God) always tried to escape this idea.

The current pluralistic religious environment has led to the reinterpretation of the concept of salvation by some scholars such as Akrong and John Hick. The views of these scholars have been categorized as pluralism, inclusivism and exclusivism or particularism and evidentialist particularism. I start with Pluralism, which is the view that, most, if not all religions are in God's plan of salvation. The view which is also known as universalism basically taught that, "All people will be saved" irrespective of their belief. John Hick, the most contemporary proponent of this concept, maintained that, God is in the center of salvation and not Christianity. Therefore, the church cannot influence God's plan of salvation.<sup>30</sup>

Hiagbe wrote: "Deploring Karl Rahner's 'inclusivist' theory of anonymous Christianity in which the latter posits the view that based on their core beliefs, Buddhists, for instance, can be justifiably be considered as anonymous Christians, Hick questions why the argument is not the other way round, i.e., Christian as anonymous Buddhist."<sup>31</sup> Hick however, questions why some religions especially Christianity claim superiority over others hence as the custodians of the "highest truth."<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, as discussed earlier on, different religions have varying understanding of the concept of salvation, and all religions cannot be said to be leading to the same goal (s).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Hiagbe, 30.

<sup>31</sup> Hiagbe, 35.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

Second, Christian inclusivism suggests Jesus Christ as the normative fulfillment of all religions. It implies that, people can only be saved in and through the salvific act of Jesus, even though they remain in religions other than Christianity. This Christian inclusivist's perspective of salvation affirms that, God's provision of salvation in Christ embraces people of all cultures and religions. Karl Rahner suggests that, Buddhists are really anonymous Christians.<sup>34</sup>

Third, exclusivism, restrictivism or particularism is the perspective that salvation is available only through faith in God's special acts of history, culminating in Jesus Christ. The view suggests that there is salvation outside the church based on the doctrine of prevenient grace. Prevenient grace is the grace which is believed to have preceded any human response to God. This grace is seen as irresistible. In Arminianism and Wesleyanism the view is that God's grace is extended and persons may choose whether to or not to believe in Jesus Christ meaning, you will be saved if only you believed and vice versa. The human decisions of the faithful are responsive to and enabled by God's grace.<sup>35</sup>

Finally, evidentialist particularism is a combination of inclusivism and particularism which places emphasis on God's role in saving humankind on account of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, whether or not they ever place explicit faith in him. This view derives from general and specific revelations as sources of religious knowledge. It is argued that particularism is the view of salvation best supported by biblical and extra

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Donald K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 120.

biblical evidence.<sup>36</sup> This view considers salvation to be related to an individual's personal response to the Christian gospel, as contrasted to universalism, which teaches that God will save all persons regardless of their responses.

**DAGBE:** The concept of *Dagbe* is a controversial one. According to C. R. Gaba, the word *Dagbe* is particularized for ritual usage and scarcely appears in a function that does not involve rituals. *Dagbe* in a prayer always expresses a prayerful wish for the promotion of the well-being and abundant life of the people. He suggests an interpretation of *Dagbe* through etymological analysis. He indicated that *Dagbe* comes from the root words *daa* and *agbe*. For him, *daa* means 'always' or 'everlasting,' and *agbe* means 'life.'

Gaba writes:

According to speculative etymological analysis, *Dagbe* derives from two *Anlo* words: *daa* which means always, forever, eternally, and *gbe* which means day. Put together *Dagbe* means literally to have only the day always, forever, eternally. And if we remember that the night in *Anlo* thought is symbolic of all life-negating phenomena and the day of all life-affirming phenomena then this attempt at etymological analysis of *Dagbe* may be acceptable since *Dagbe* implies the eternal absence of life-negating

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<sup>36</sup> Hiagbe, 37.

phenomena from the human condition and the eternal experience of life-affirming ones.<sup>37</sup>

Dela Adadevor, on the other hand, thinks there is another way of analyzing etymologically the meaning of *Dagbe* that is consistent with the Ewe religious understanding of life. He proposes that the Ewe indigenous religious meaning of the word *da* is 'life force.'<sup>38</sup> He also maintained that, *Da* is considered as coming from God, and that, God is the source of *Dagbe*. B. Maupoli affirmed that this is why in certain cases the Ewe would refer to *da-gbe* as *Mawu-gbe* (the God-life), which is the soul (*se*) of a person as well as other living things.<sup>39</sup> The difficulty with Maupoli's explanation of *Mawu-gbe* as 'God-life' is that there is no differentiation between the nature of the God-life as experienced by humans and animals. The God-life is as such regarded as the soul in humans and animals alike. Nonetheless, *Mawu-gbe* as an alternative for *Dagbe* is used in this study strictly in relation to the human experiencing of the God-life.<sup>40</sup>

It came to light during the field work for this study that, the Ewe believes that, it is with this 'life force; *da*, that God created the world. *Da* is thought to be a spiritual life principle, the idea of life and movement among the Ewe of present day Benin. Adadevor however argues that, if *da* has anything to do with the word *Dagbe*, then *da-agbe* or *da fe agbe* translated would mean 'life which comes from the life force of the creature.' This is

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<sup>37</sup> Gaba, "Total— Well—Being: Salvation and God in the Experience of an African People" in *God: The Contemporary Discussion*. Eds. Frederick Sontag & Darrol Bryant (New York: The Rose of Sharon Press, 1982), 139.

<sup>38</sup> Adadevor, 106.

<sup>39</sup> Adadevor, 107.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

consistent with the belief of the Ewe people that the creator *Mawu* is the source of *Dagbe*. *Da* can also mean 'snake' or 'weigh' etc. in Ewe language.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Gaba asserts that salvation is possible both in Christianity and Ewe indigenous religion except that its nature and means as well as the understandings vary. This calls for an in-depth academic exploration. The work will examine the similarities and differences in the concept and show how both religions have influenced one another.

## **1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY**

As mentioned above, the primary aim of the study is to investigate the similarities and differences in the concept of salvation in Christianity and Ewe indigenous religion. The study also aims at finding out how the Ewe indigenous view of human well-being had influenced the proclamation of the concept of salvation in Christianity, and also how the presence of Christianity has influenced the indigenous beliefs and practices of the Ewe.

## **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

A comparative study of the concept of salvation in Christianity and Ewe indigenous religion will in the first instance contribute to the quest for the Inculturation of the Church.

In the second place, it is hoped that the study will contribute to the re-interpretation of the concept of salvation in both Christianity and Ewe indigenous religion.

Thirdly, with the emergence of “prosperity gospel” leading to the relegation of the core concept of Christianity (salvation) to the background, the study will seek to re-awaken Christians to the essence salvation which is their ultimate goal.

Finally, the study seeks to identify how the Church can use the existing meaning of salvation among the indigenous Ewe to enhance its teaching on salvation.

### **1.5 SCOPE OF STUDY OF STUDY**

The primary focus of this study will be a comparative study of salvation in Christianity and Ewe indigenous religion.

Consideration will also be given to the history of the Ewe from Oyo in Yoruba land in Western Nigeria up to their present settlements. Their beliefs and practices which gave credence to their affirmation of God and salvation by ways of culture, religion, social and psychological identities will be carefully analyzed and evaluated.

The Bremen Mission and its offspring –Evangelical Presbyterian Church, will be discussed as the pioneering stream of Christianity among the Ewe people of Ghana.

### **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following questions cannot be left out in this study as they will guide the formulation of the thoughts in the thesis. In providing answers to these questions, the approach will primarily be balanced using the requisite academic and professional tools. The following questions will be addressed:

- Are there similarities and differences in the concept of salvation in Christianity and Eve indigenous religion?
- What are the viewpoints or positions of the various Christian traditions on the concept of salvation?
- What is the Eve indigenous worldview regarding the concept of salvation?
- Can both Christianity and Eve indigenous religion learn from each other? If so, what can be learnt?
- How does the human drive for meaning come to express itself as a need of salvation?

### **1.7 HYPOTHESIS**

The hypothesis is based on the belief that, the need for salvation is in all “men.” Thus, the aspiration or the yearning for the good or the good life has been part of human existence. Indeed, human existence has always been characterized by crises, not only for the unbeliever, but also the believing Christian alike. However, the paradox concerning life is that “good people” sometimes tend to suffer while “evildoers” are said to be the ones who prosper and enjoy the “good life.” In the hereafter, it is believed that good people will be adequately rewarded for their good deeds, and evildoers will be punished for their wicked deeds. This is not so with the present existence. It is rather the opposite in most cases in the here and now. The hypothesis is that, religion cannot determine whether one may be saved or not; and that salvation brings fulfillment to the soul in all fairness.

In the light of the above, the Eve people perceive the hereafter to belong to those who have led the good life and have died in a dignified manner (for example, not through accident). Such people will eventually become ancestors. For the Eve, life is beyond the grave for those who led exemplary lives. These people will live on in the spirit world known as the ancestral world. They will triumph and protect and guard the activities of the living. In the same way, evildoers such as murderers and those who practice witchcraft among others could not become ancestors. They are believed to have turned into evil spirits, thereby causing calamity upon the people. They are therefore referred to as “hovering spirits” who do not find a resting abode.

In the same vein, the concept of heaven and hell is essential to Christianity. In Christian theology, it is believed that the good will be rewarded in heaven and those who practice evil, immorality, sorcery, adultery etc will be condemned to gnashing of teeth in hell as their punishment. This understanding of human existence and salvation is the point at which both the Eve religion and Christianity can meet the gospel. And this intersection makes each of the religions stronger.

Consequently, this quest for salvation has led to new religious movements. This study therefore seeks to investigate the similarities and differences in the understanding of the concept of salvation in both Christianity and Eve indigenous religion thereby stating their respective positions. The study will also analyze and evaluate whatever that promotes and constitutes the good or the good life for Eve peoples and Christians alike.

## **1.8 METHODOLOGY**

The historical and phenomenological methods of gathering information were employed. The historical method was used in analyzing the presence of Christianity among the Ewe people of Ghana. More importantly, chapter two of the study, which traces the developments in the various understandings and articulation of the concept (salvation), is largely a historical study. This enabled us dissect how the concept has been articulated by the various scholars over the centuries.

This historical analysis helped to systematically outline the concept of salvation from both Roman Catholic and Protestant perspectives. The systematic approach to this study helps in interpreting and expressing the concept in a coherent and systematic manner.

The phenomenological method was applied mainly for the purpose of gaining insight into the Ewe indigenous religion, particularly their concepts of salvation and human wholeness. This mainly applies to chapter three of this study, where the Ewe indigenous view of salvation is vividly examined. The phenomenological method enhances dialogue that respects both Christianity and Ewe indigenous religion.

The comparative paradigm method engages mainly chapter four to strike the similarities and differences between the Ewe and Christian understandings of salvation. The means by which Christianity and Ewe indigenous religion have influenced one another since their interaction have also been critically reviewed and analyzed using the comparative method.

**Theoretical Framework:**

In this research, an investigation of the religious and social practices of Christianity and the Eve indigenous religion was studied to highlight their dynamic elements. It also emphasizes the lifestyle of the African as concrete reflections of his/her concept of salvation. So this study is in the area of anthropology of religion.

**Sources of Study / Data Collection:**

Both primary and secondary sources are available for this study. The bulk of the data for the study comes from primary sources. Secondary sources especially apply to chapter two. A range of general literature concerning the Eve people in particular was consulted.

**Primary Sources**

Participant observation was used in studying the various phenomena. Visits were made to a number of shrines and churches where people search for security and healing. Indigenous priests/ priestesses; chiefs and queen mothers; diviners; traditional medicine people; opinion leaders and ordinary people were interviewed. Also, a keen observation and active participation in the cultural and religious ceremonies of the people such as the rites of passage taking into account the religious phenomena enhances the data.

Interviews were conducted for theologians, pastors, catechists, presbyters and other lay members of the various Christian denominations.

## 1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW

Theological researchers have investigated the meaning of salvation among people of varied faiths. In this study, I consulted, utilized and analyzed what had already been done. Relevant literature then helps broaden the scope of study and guides its organization. The bibliography contains detailed list of works consulted.

We must indicate here that published works on the phenomenon under study is woefully inadequate. The following specific published sources serve as literature consulted to enhance the authenticity of the study:

1. P. Wiegrabe's *Eve Kristo Hame Nutinya* (1936), offers an outstanding historical background to the Christianization of the Eve people of Ghana. It provides a balanced view of Eves before and after their contact with the Bremen missionaries. This enhanced the historical method involved in this study.
2. Abraham Akrong's Ph. D. dissertation, entitled "An Akan Christian view of Salvation from the perspective of John Calvin's Soteriology" (1991), offers initial insight into the concept. By using the "Correlation method of Contextualization" which is based on the incarnation, Akrong shows a significant number of similarities regarding salvation in Reformed theology and Akan indigenous religion. This has created the basis for cross cultural dialogue on the concept as well as a definite cultural understanding of the concept.

Akrong's work sets the tone for effective comparative study of the concept of salvation in an indigenous religion such as that of the Eve and Christianity, particularly by using the historical and phenomenological methods.

3. Dela Adadevor's Ph. D. dissertation, entitled "Approaches to Christianization among the Ewe people of Ghana" (2005), offers a credible insight into the process of Christianization among the Ewes, and how the existing indigenous religion has influenced the interpretation and appropriation of the concept of salvation. Adadevor shows the impact on peoples and their culture resulting from the interaction between Christianity and other religions, particularly the African indigenous religions (AIRs).

Adadevor used the "Theory of Communicative Action" as method or hermeneutical tool which enabled him to understand the authors and respondents in the context of their culture and communities. This work provides the solid background for grasping the concept of salvation among the Ewe people. In actual fact, the "Communicative Action" method applies to this historical and phenomenological study.

4. Christian R. Gaba's article entitled "Total Well-Being: Salvation and God in the Experience of an African People" (1982), offers an in-depth knowledge of the Ewe people's experience of salvation. He employed the literary and phenomenological methods in his approach in articulating the concept of salvation among the Anlo-Ewe. Gaba's work leads in the phenomenological analysis of this study.
5. Christian Gaba's publication "Man's Salvation: Its nature and meaning in African Traditional Religion" (1978), no doubt outlines the nature and meaning of salvation among the Ewes of Ghana. Gaba's phenomenological investigation provides the material for discerning the nature and meaning of salvation among Ewe people in particular and for Africans in general.
6. Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics. Vol. IV* (1956) has expatiated the doctrine of grace and justification by faith alone in a systematic manner from the perspective of a

- reformed theologian. Barth's systematic articulation helps interpret the concept of salvation academically and professionally in a clear and systematic manner.
7. Karl Rhaner's *Theological Investigations. Vol. 4* (1966), discusses a Roman Catholic view of the concept of salvation. His concept of "Anonymous Christian" offers this study a wide range of understandings of the concept of salvation.
  8. *Man and his Salvation: Studies in memory of S. G. F. Brandon* edited by Eric J. Sharpe and John R. Hinnells (1973), offers a sound reflection on the ideas of salvation from pre-Christian, Christian and primal backgrounds. The work enables this study to avoid theological biases.

Despite the fact that the literature so far reviewed may not comprehensively address the major concern of the study, namely, salvation is possible in religions other than Christianity; this definitely shapes the scope and import the thesis.

### **1.10 RELEVANCE / SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

The study seeks to establish the relationship between the nature and meaning of salvation in Christianity and Ewe indigenous religion.

This comparative study also addresses the question of how the indigenous and biblical Soteriology and eschatology interact.

Finally, the study contributes to a new approach at the interpretation and appropriation of the concept of salvation that ensures effective interaction and interpretation of Christian and indigenous views on salvation.

### **1.11 LIMITATIONS**

As a pastor, going to visit traditional shrine thereby participating in the ceremonies may raise an alarm to church members who may know or hear of it. It may also have an effect on the image of the church as well as my own calling. However, the hierarchy of the church was duly informed about the research and was in the position to respond to any public concern.

I also envisaged time constraints, but the necessary professional competence was employed to carry out the study within the required duration of period.

The difficulty in accessing library and internet information cannot be left unmentioned. Nonetheless, through hard work any information needed for the project was professionally accessed and utilized on schedule.

## **1.12 ORGANIZATION/STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY**

The introduction (chapter one) outlines the background, the definition of concepts, the problem, aims and objectives; and the scope of the study. It also gives review of relevant literature, hypothesis, methodology and research questions. This chapter finally enumerates the relevance and limitations of the study.

Chapter two focuses on the understandings of salvation in Christian theology. It also traces some ancient sources of the concept of salvation, and the manner in which the Christian traditions drew on them. This chapter finally discusses the concept of salvation in Christianity from the biblical stand point through the Reformation era to the contemporary ecclesiological setting.

Chapter three outlines the history of the Eve people and their world view of sin and salvation. It also investigates the idea of the ideal life in Eve indigenous religion.

Chapter four is a comparative study of salvation in Christianity and Eve indigenous religion taking into accounts the similarities and differences in the ways the two religions have expressed and interpreted the concept of salvation.

The conclusion (chapter five) recalls how the church has used the existing Eve indigenous view of salvation to enhance its teaching of the concept of salvation by using the Inculturation and contextualization methods. It also explores how the religious groups in this study have influenced one another. Finally, the study outlines and discusses some recommendations for peaceful co-existence of religions.

## CHAPTER TWO

### BIBLICAL AND CHRISTIAN CONCEPTS OF SALVATION

The doctrine of “salvation” has been the subject of debate in Christian theology. In the sixteenth century,<sup>41</sup> there was a spark of disputes and disagreements between the Roman Catholics and continental Reformers over how believers were justified by God. However, theological debates on the concept of salvation and related issues such as justification, predestination, original sin, good works, and sanctification which emerged from the Old and New Testaments were pursued vigorously at the Reformation era. In this chapter, I will analyze and evaluate the concept of salvation from the Biblical, Catholic and Protestant perspectives.

#### 2.0 FEATURES OF SALVATION IN OLD TESTAMENT

The interpretation of salvation in New Testament was grounded in the themes of the Old Testament concerning the Christ event. The word and idea of salvation are basic in the faith and theology of the Old Testament.<sup>42</sup> It is in the light of this assertion that I argue against the view propounded by James Barr that, Old Testament scholars have not taken salvation as one of their organizing concepts, when he cites scholars such as Von Rad and Rowley among others.<sup>43</sup> If Barr’s standpoint is scholarly to go by, I can then say that

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<sup>41</sup> Later Middle Ages.

<sup>42</sup> *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Roland E. Murphy (New Jersey: Geoffrey Chapman, 1990), 3108.

<sup>43</sup> James Barr, ‘An aspect of Salvation in the Old Testament’ in *Man and his salvation: Studies in memory of S. G. F. Brandon*. Eds. Eric J. Sharpe and John R. Hinnells (Manchester: Rowan Littlefield Publishers, 1973), 39.

perhaps, those scholars are reading the Old Testament from the perspective of the New Testament which I consider to be the spiritualized context and connote the idea of heaven and hell. However, I agree with him that, the Old Testament concept of salvation is complex and exhibits a historical development which is extremely difficult to synthesize.<sup>44</sup>

The Hebrew word *yeshu'a*, which translates “salvation,” often occurs in contexts where it refers to deliverance by military means. In these contexts the word “salvation” can be translated “victory” which is parallel to the righteous deeds or the “judgments” of *Yahweh* on behalf of Israel. Salvation also signifies deliverance from any threat to life and integrity of person. The king in Israel was always regarded as the king -saviour, to whom his people looked for salvation against external enemies through war and from injustice within the community through his judgment and the administration of law. In this vein, *Yahweh* is celebrated as king-saviour in Old Testament.<sup>45</sup>

*Yasha'*, *yeshu'a* and *yeshu'a* are by far the most commonly used words to convey the idea of salvation in Old Testament and provided the Hebrew root of the name Jesus which the angel told Joseph to give to Mary's baby: “Because he will save his people from their sins.”<sup>46</sup> The key argument in this study from the Christian perspective is that, human beings are by all means being saved from sin. This is because, without sin there will not be the need for salvation. Yet, since Christian theology suggests that everybody is a

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<sup>44</sup> James Barr, 39.

<sup>45</sup> The New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 1308.

<sup>46</sup> Matthew 1:21 NRSV.

sinner, and needs redemption (liberation from forms of bondage such as sin, death, law, or evil), Jesus Christ becomes our saviour.<sup>47</sup>

This part of study examines those Old Testament themes, stories and narratives whose contents suggest salvation, deliverance, rescue and the like. It also takes a critical look at the use of linguistic terms which more or less mean 'save,' 'deliver,' and 'salvation'.

Genesis 3 clearly indicates a disturbance in the relation between God and human beings and suggests that human beings have done what God had prohibited. As a result, sin emerged and distorted the very good order that God had endowed the world with. And finally, human life went on contrary to the will of God, who had instructed that 'man' would 'die' in the day he ate of the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Due to the fall, punishment came on the entire creation and physical death eventually. From this, sin and evil have entered human life. The first account of trouble and the effect of Adam's sin is the murder of Abel by his brother.<sup>48</sup> Genesis 6 gives an account of the amount of 'evil' that existed in the world; thereby compelling God to wipe out humankind from the surface of the earth, exempting Noah and those who did not partake in the prevailing evil. The rescue of Noah and others is an offer of salvation to all who live according to God's law as it is to this day. I may call that the real manifestation of God's promise to Adam before he was kicked out of Eden. Indeed, the clothing of Adam

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<sup>47</sup> Rom. 3:23 NRSV.

<sup>48</sup> Genesis 4 NRSV.

and Eve is an indication by God that God would supply that which would cover the nakedness of sin and provide a righteous covering through the death of Christ.<sup>49</sup>

“The Lord then said to Noah, ‘Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. Take with you seven of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. Seven days from now I will send rain on earth forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made’. And Noah did all that the Lord commanded him.”<sup>50</sup> According to Walvoord, another dramatic event in the early history of the race is the preservation of Noah and his family in the ark. This attests to the fact that in the midst of almost universal judgment, God singled out the righteous and preserved them. It represents in general God’s deliverance of the righteous from judgment, a major aspect of the work of the Saviour.<sup>51</sup> Just as God saved Noah while bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly<sup>52</sup> and as God delivered just Lot<sup>53</sup> from Sodom, Peter concludes: “if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials, and to hold the unrighteous for the Day of Judgment, while continuing their punishment.”<sup>54</sup> This deliverance, however, does not exclude the possibility of martyrdom as indicated in, for example, Paul’s experience in 11 Timothy 4:18.

Yet, the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19 suggests that ‘evil’ and ‘sin’ emerged again after the flood, and it goes on and on, even after the

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<sup>49</sup> Job 29:14, Ps. 132:9, Rom.3:22 etc. NRSV.

<sup>50</sup> Genesis 7: 1-5 NRSV.

<sup>51</sup> John F. Walvoord, *Jesus Christ our Lord* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 81-83.

<sup>52</sup> 11 Peter 2:5 NRSV.

<sup>53</sup> 11 Peter 2:7 NRSV.

<sup>54</sup> 11 Peter 2:9 NRSV.

Sodom and Gomorrah event; hence the promise of a saviour and the concept of salvation came to be re-introduced into the picture. However, I believe the 'seed' of salvation had been there all the while, but was offered to individuals, and in the case Sodom and Gomorrah, to cities as Abraham stood before God to plead for them. Therefore, Noah was a prophet, and so was Abraham. Their duty was to turn the people away from evil and consequently from destruction. Turning people away from evil is central to the "salvation message."

The history of Israel suggests that there are two distinctive and notable features about the understanding of salvation in the Old Testament. First, salvation is the work of God. God is always seen as the author of salvation.<sup>55</sup> The people are rescued by God; "who alone can save the flock"<sup>56</sup>; for there is none other who can do it<sup>57</sup>; he alone merits the lofty title, "God our Savior"<sup>58</sup>, "from the Lord comes deliverance."<sup>59</sup>

The second feature to note is that salvation happens in history and embraces families and communities. The entire picture of Israel being delivered out of Egypt and brought through the wilderness experience into the Promised Land is a major field of typology and one which illustrates the work of God in salvation. The major elements of the deliverance such as the plagues, the institution of the Passover, and the deliverance at the Red Sea speak of salvation. "That day the Lord saved Israel from the hands of the

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<sup>55</sup> Hosea 1:7 NRSV.

<sup>56</sup> Ezekiel 34:22 NRSV.

<sup>57</sup> Isaiah 43:1 NRSV.

<sup>58</sup> Psalm 68: 19 NRSV.

<sup>59</sup> Psalm 3: 8 (a) NRSV.

Egyptians.”<sup>60</sup> In this respect, Michael Green comments: “it is no exaggeration to say that this rescue from Egypt, the land of bitter bondage under the threat of imminent death at the hand of harsh task masters determined the whole future understanding of salvation by the people of Israel.”<sup>61</sup> It can therefore be asserted that as far as the people of Israel are concerned, the most single important act of salvation by God was a solid historical event that liberated the whole community. I can therefore, analyze and evaluate the features of salvation in Old Testament in the following dimensions:

### **POLITICAL**

The Old Testament usage of salvation appears to embrace conquering heroes, and victory in the earthly realm and not spiritual realm. The idea of victory over enemies is explicitly political and militant. The Zion poems of Isaiah locate salvation in a restored Jerusalem that receives as tribute the wealth of nations.<sup>62</sup> Political salvation means not only deliverance from enemies, but final victory and the submission of the nations to the rule of Israel. Israel will then be restored to its land and its oppressors disappear for the land to be purged of gross crimes and vices thereby paving way for all nations to worship and be restored to *Yahweh* through Israel. The concept of the ‘Messiah’ is an important feature of Old Testament understanding of salvation. The Messiah is the promised deliverer of Israel who would establish God’s rule by acting like heroes to defeat the enemies of Israel in war and battle.<sup>63</sup> In Old Testament, life is conceived of in terms of concrete experience and the good life is represented in political terms.

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<sup>60</sup> Exodus 14: 30 NRSV.

<sup>61</sup> E. M. B. Green, *The Meaning of Salvation* (London: Holder and Stoughton, 1965), 16.

<sup>62</sup> Isa.49-52; 60-62 NRSV.

<sup>63</sup> Some of Israel’s enemies include the Midianites, Babylonians and Romans, among others.

I believe the discussion in the preceding paragraph captures Israel's quest and reason for asking for a king as the prophet Samuel writes: "But the people refused to listen to Samuel. 'No!' they said. 'We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.'"<sup>64</sup> Hence salvation from Old Testament perspective is frequently deliverance from war and invasion leading to the idea of "king-saviour." The king of Israel is associated with the salvation of *Yahweh*. In effect, he is the object of salvation of *Yahweh* and the saviour of his people, particularly in war. The king is also the saviour of the weak, poor and vulnerable in society.<sup>65</sup>

## JUSTICE

A careful analysis of the history of Israel suggests that salvation has also been closely associated with justice as in judiciary. Psalm 72: 4 pleads with God to give his divine justice to the King of Israel so that "he will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy." The idea of salvation as vindication for the poor and the oppressed runs throughout the passages dealing with Israel's legal system as the prophet Isaiah indicates that, "listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations. My righteousness draws near speedily, and my arm will bring justice to the nations. The islands will look to me and wait in hope for my arm".<sup>66</sup> Thus, the Old Testament sees salvation more as the era of universal peace, when injustice gave way to justice resulting in the establishment of that

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<sup>64</sup> I Sam. 8:19-20 NRSV.

<sup>65</sup> Ps. 72:4-13 NRSV.

<sup>66</sup> Psalm 51:4-5 NRSV.

security which comes from the judicial system and administration based on righteousness and good judgment.<sup>67</sup>

### COMMUNAL

Salvation is clearly understood in Old Testament as social and corporate event which involves every aspect of life. God's salvation is associated with the historical existence of the people of Israel. The very center of God's saving activity in the Old Testament was the calling forth of a redeemed community, the people of Israel. Thus, salvation is expressed to a whole community in the Old Testament. This is reflected in the deliverance from Egypt, the victory of Israel in the land of Canaan through the judges from the attacks of the enemies, the establishment of the monarchy and the deliverance from the Philistines. God's judgment apparently leads to the achievement of salvation by the people of Israel through God's offer of salvation. This is the liberation from all evil and granting of good harvest and material prosperity collectively.<sup>68</sup>

### PERSONAL

Old Testament frequently used the phrase "God of my salvation."<sup>69</sup> The favorite objects of the salvation of *Yahweh* in the Old Testament are the poor and helpless. In actual fact, God's salvation is dispensed most readily to those who are most hopeless. In this attitude toward the poor the personal aspect of salvation emerges. There are many lamentations

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<sup>67</sup> Is.32 NRSV.

<sup>68</sup> Amos 9:8b-15 NRSV.

<sup>69</sup> Ps.18:47; 24:5, etc. NRSV.

and petitions for the salvation of the individual from poverty, childlessness, illness and evil plans of enemies such as the deliverance of Daniel from the lions' mouth.<sup>70</sup>

I also see the personal dimension of salvation in the covenant relationship between God and Abraham. God called Abram from the nations making a covenant with him, a solemn oath or commitment even passing between the dismembered halves of animals saying in essence, "If I ever leave you, may I myself be torn apart."<sup>71</sup> God promised to make him into a great nation, bless him and bless all the peoples of the earth through him.<sup>72</sup> Also inclusive in the promise was the land itself.<sup>73</sup> It is in this context that scripture says, "Abram believed God, and he credited it to him as righteousness."<sup>74</sup> Abraham was justified by faith. God then gave him an outward sign of this covenant relationship in circumcision.<sup>75</sup>

The utmost striking point that runs throughout the discussion and the citation above is that God did it all. It is salvation by grace alone. Of course, the fact cannot be denied that Abraham's response to God's call was a major endeavor that led him to leave his people and traveling through the desert to a far-off land. But God made the choice; God made all the promises; and salvation was from God. When Abram believed, God saw his faith and it was credited to him as righteousness. This tends to explicate the point also that, in the Old Testament, salvation was by grace through faith, according to God's calling.

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<sup>70</sup> Ps.3:8; 7:2 NRSV.

<sup>71</sup> Genesis 15:6-21 NRSV.

<sup>72</sup> Genesis 12:1-3 NRSV.

<sup>73</sup> Genesis 15:18-21 NRSV.

<sup>74</sup> Genesis 15:6 NRSV.

<sup>75</sup> Genesis 17 NRSV.

## **COVENANT**

The Old Testament talks about salvation mostly in the context of covenant. Certainly, *Yahweh* is Lord of all nations, and works in them equally as in Israel in order to accomplish *Yahweh's* will which includes justice for the poor.<sup>76</sup> This view of salvation in Israel reflects God's covenant relationship with a chosen group of people who consciously confessed *Yahweh* as Lord. However, God's covenant relationship was not restricted to communities but also with an individual such as Abraham. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel stated salvation in the formula of a covenant union. The Lord declares: "You shall be my people and I will be your God."<sup>77</sup> The statement shows God's promise to restore the communion with the people of Israel which resulted from their unfaithfulness. From the covenant perspective, salvation is seen as *Yahweh* dwelling in the midst of *Yahweh's* people.<sup>78</sup> Covenant is the revealed "will" of *Yahweh* which brings regeneration to the people in order to enjoy the peace and prosperity promised by God.<sup>79</sup>

The vertical dimension of salvation is important and everywhere present. Since God is the author of salvation, God took the initiative of salvation in the Exodus event and the people of Israel continue to enjoy salvation only as they trust in *Yahweh* and remain in *Yahweh's* covenant.

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<sup>76</sup> Daniel 4:27 NRSV.

<sup>77</sup> Jer. 7:23 NRSV.

<sup>78</sup> Jer. 30-31 NRSV.

<sup>79</sup> Jer. 18:89; Ezek. 36:26 NRSV.

## THE SACRIFICES

God established about five different sacrifices within the Mosaic administration of God's covenant, including one for guilt and another for sin. In those sacrifices, the guilt of the sinner would symbolically be transferred to the animal (sometimes by the sinner's laying his hands onto the animal), which would then be "punished" (either slaughtered or driven out of the land) in place of the sinner. Kohler sees salvation as the existence of Israel united to *Yahweh* through cultic practice [sacrifice].<sup>80</sup> When I examine the relational context and the question of righteousness or justification by faith that were already a part of the covenant since Abraham's day, it raises the concern as to whether these sacrifices were meant to bring forgiveness in the sense of justification, which is righteous standing before God. There must be healing to a wounded relationship with God in the same manner that Christians are "forgiven" when they confess their sins.<sup>81</sup>

It is necessary to mention here that the sacrifices are in themselves typical institutions. The sin offering, trespass offering, meal offering, peace offering and burnt offering occupy a central place in cultic practice [sacrifice] in Israel. These and other offerings are an integral part of the Levitical ritual which was revealed and required by God. In agreement to Walvoord, I argue that although the sacrifices in the Old Testament have their respective significances in relation to the life of the people such as health and hygiene, they mainly point to the person and work of Christ as the New Testament makes it clear. The sacrifices in Walvoord' view makes the essential requirement of shed blood

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<sup>80</sup> James Barr, 39.

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<sup>80</sup> James Barr, 39.

<sup>81</sup> I John 1:9 NRSV.



to stand out boldly in the divine pattern of salvation for lost humankind and erring Saints;<sup>82</sup> the reason being that there is life in the blood.

### **“SHALOM”**

The concept of salvation in Old Testament depicts the fulfillment of the relationship between God and the people of Israel who were designated as covenanted and elected people of *Yahweh*. This salvation is expressed in happiness, blessing, well being and good influences in the lives of the people. The concept of *shalom* is the expression of God’s peace to the people of Israel. In this regard, salvation is considered as both “*shalom*” and “righteousness” as emphasized by Von Rad:

Both terms denote the same outgoing qualities of the divine character: God saves because God is righteousness and faithful, and unrighteousness of the people will not make God abandon them because faithfulness is an aspect of God’s righteousness. The concept of righteousness in the Old Testament means conformity to the norms or fidelity to one’s station in life; it means satisfying the claims and demands that result from a covenant relationship.<sup>83</sup>

Abraham Akrong also perceives the prophetic vision of the redemptive acts of God as a new creation sealed in the knowledge of God’s righteousness in covenant. He claims that,

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<sup>82</sup> John F. Walvoord, 74.

<sup>83</sup> Von Gerhard Rad, *Old Testament Theology*. Trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 371.

in prophetic theology, creation itself is viewed to be an aspect of salvation. Akrong writes: "If creation is a salvific act that brings order out of chaos then redemption is a renewal of creation (Isaiah, 45:21)."<sup>84</sup>

I agree with Akrong that righteousness and salvation are inseparable attributes of the triune God of grace, taking into account prophetic theology.

Akrong re-iterates,

Later on, this great vision of the continuity between creation and redemption, especially of the Isaianic School, fades away and salvation by the righteousness of God is obscured by salvation through human effort in rabbinic Judaism. However, side by side, with this legalistic conception of salvation in Judaism, there developed in later apocalyptic and eschatological literature a vision of salvation often associated with the Messiah whose coming will usher in the Kingdom of God.<sup>85</sup>

In the light of Akrong's statement cited above, I believe that, for Jews of the second temple period, salvation essentially amounted to an expectation of some future event within history where God would openly vindicate the nation of Israel. The oracles of Balaam in Numbers 23-24 suggest the blessing of *Yahweh*, which makes Israel a people set apart from other nations, assured of victory over their enemies, of peaceful dwelling

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<sup>84</sup> Abraham Akrong, "An Akan View of salvation from the perspective of John Calvin's Soteriology" (Ph. D. Diss., Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1991), 34.

<sup>85</sup> Akrong, "Salvation in African Christianity," 3.

in their own land, and abundant prosperity. The prosperity included in the Old Testament salvation<sup>86</sup> is the recipe for *shalom* (peace).<sup>87</sup>

The material blessings of the Old Testament are not merely symbols of spiritual blessings; they are the effect of spiritual blessing. In general, The Old Testament shows no awareness of an after life; it emphasizes having peace with God. The only good life that Israel knows is conceived of in terms of concrete experienced existence. This experience is transformed by perfect community with *Yahweh*, who dwells among them. Indeed, the people of Israel enjoyed good and pleasant life when there was no resistance to the saving “will” of God.

#### RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

The idea of salvation was deepened and expanded after the exile. This is because, the people of Israel felt that, for the power of *Yahweh* to save them from their present predicaments then, it has to be demonstrated in a manner that exceeds the one exhibited in the exodus event. This was expected to happen in the restoration of Israel to its own land.<sup>88</sup> But the future salvation soon becomes messianic in character and was seen as a new creation of Israel, an event in which all the themes of victory and deliverance implied are brought to their fullness.

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<sup>86</sup> Is.60; 65, Amos 9:13-15.

<sup>87</sup> John L. Mackenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1976), 760.

<sup>88</sup> Ps 14:7; 69:36, Jer.30:10 NRSV. (These are exilic doxologies).

The restoration of Israel means a new *Zion*<sup>89</sup> and a new Israel, a new revelation of the character of *Yahweh*, which implies a new world, devoid of all evil and crop failure, with the maximum security. The new Israel will experience forgiveness of sin and an internal moral regeneration and repentance from impurities and apostasies in order to be restored fully. The fact stands that, the supreme threat to the salvation of the people of Israel in both the historical and the prophetic literature is their sins, particularly their disloyalty to *Yahweh*. Hence, the full and eternal salvation of messianic Israel is inconceivable unless the threat of disloyalty to *Yahweh* is removed.

### THE REIGN OF GOD

The ultimate fulfillment of salvation in Israel is in the idea of the reign of God or the kingdom of God. This is the salvation which needed no further definition because it is the total acceptance of God's "will" by all, through God's revelation of self to Israel. Every resistance to the "will" of *Yahweh* must yield before *Yahweh's* matchless power of redemption. In the world where God reigns, people will be secured from any threat whatsoever, and free to lead the fulfilled life. This is the Israelite hope of salvation.

In conclusion, I affirm that, the story of Joseph's brothers' conspiracy against him was God's special plan of salvation for the nation of Israel, which involves personal, social and corporate experiences of life. As such, the element of grace, faith and obedience to the law cannot be left out. The salvation offered by God in the Old Testament include

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<sup>89</sup> Zion (Heb. "fortress") is used in the Old Testament for all or part of Jerusalem. In both Old Testament and New Testament it refers to God's heavenly city (Is.60:14; Heb.12:22; Rev.14:1). In Christian theology, it is an image of heaven. Zionism is a contemporary movement that seeks to restore the Jewish people to the land of Israel as their historic homeland since biblical times.

material prosperity, justice for the poor and needy, and the continued historical existence of the people of Israel which affirmed the election of the nation of Israel as God's redeemed community. This is what the Old Testament interpreted salvation.

In the light of the above discussion, I affirm that, salvation in the Old Testament has not been discussed fundamentally in terms of going to heaven; it is rather being in the right relationship with *Yahweh*.

## 2.1 INTERPRETATION OF SALVATION IN NEW TESTAMENT

The interpretation of salvation in the New Testament was grounded in themes and prophecies of the Old Testament in the Christ event. At this stage, I will analyze and evaluate the concept of salvation from the perspectives of the Gospels and Paul.

### THE GOSPELS

The promise of a “Messiah” eventually became the concept around which the Gospels defined salvation. He is the principal factor in the development of the New Testament idea of salvation. This is because, as discussed earlier, the appearance of Jesus was seen as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. The term “Messiah” is from the Hebrew *mashiah* which means the “anointed one.” In theology, the Messiah is an anointed agent of God appointed to a task affecting the lot of the chosen people. Though the Hebrew verb *mashiah* was often used of the anointing of men as kings over Israel<sup>90</sup> or as priests,<sup>91</sup> the title *mashiah* occurs less often. At first, the term “Messiah” was employed for unnamed historic kings of Israel or for named kings such as Saul and David, and even for the pagan king Cyrus. In the postexilic period, when the monarchy was no more, it was used of the high priest.<sup>92</sup> Rarely, it was applied to patriarchs or prophets<sup>93</sup> and it may refer to Israel itself.<sup>94</sup> I will therefore discuss the nature and context of salvation in the gospels and how Messianism relates to salvation.

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<sup>90</sup> 1 Sam.9:16, 2 Sam.2:4; 7, 1 Kings 1:39, 45, Ps.89:20 etc. NRSV.

<sup>91</sup> Exodus 40:15; 28:41 NRSV.

<sup>92</sup> Lev.4:3, 5, 16; 6:22 NRSV.

<sup>93</sup> Ps.105:15; 1 Chron.16:22 NRSV.

<sup>94</sup> Hab.3:13 NRSV.

## MESSIANISM

The concept of Messianism<sup>95</sup> is an important feature of Old Testament Judaism which developed through the centuries from the expectation of an ideal Davidic king to a future Davidic figure who would appear at the end of the world to deliver Israel from her adversaries such as the Midianites, Babylonians and Romans, among others, and establish God's rule.<sup>96</sup> David as God's chosen ruler was the one after whom the dynasty was named.<sup>97</sup> However, the concept of Messiah in Israel does not evoke the suffering or death of the person designated.<sup>98</sup> Yet, there is no doubt also that, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ were major themes of prophecy in Old Testament. From Genesis to Malachi, the Old Testament abounds with anticipations of the coming Messiah of Israel. Numerous predictions, fulfilled in the New Testament, relate to his birth, life, death and resurrection. Other prophesies speak of his ultimate glory. I can affirm that, no other prophetic theme of the Old Testament approaches in magnitude and significance than the subject of the coming Messiah.

The promises made to David regarding the perpetuity of his house are now seen to be fulfilled in 'great David's greater son', and from David we go to Jesus Christ whom God has brought to Israel as a Savior. "By the time of Jesus, the Jewish messianism had assumed many forms: Davidic Messianism associated with the restoration of the kingdom of Israel; sometimes the Davidic kingdom is regarded as the prelude to God's paradisa

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<sup>95</sup> Messianism is the belief in the coming of a Messiah to deliver Israel from the Gentiles. The messianic hope for Israel hence became the center of eschatological expectation.

<sup>96</sup> The term Messiah is derived from the Greek *Messias* which in turn is a transliteration of the Aramaic form of the Hebrew *Mashach* (*Mashiah*—Refer Deut.18:15, 18), meaning "to anoint." The equivalent in New Testament terminology is *Christos* or Christ, meaning "the anointed one."

<sup>97</sup> II Sam. 7:8-16 NRSV.

<sup>98</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier et al., *Bible Dictionary* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996), 677-679.

kingdom. Other forms of Messianism are expressed by the idea of Son of Man; sometimes the Son of Man is depicted as the one who passes judgment on all creation.”<sup>99</sup>

I can identify at this point the principal types of messianic prophecy in Old Testament as follows: a) the general messianic prophecy which is expressed in language only a Messiah could fulfill and observe<sup>100</sup> and b) personal messianic prophecy which is often identified by some specific terms. In Isaiah 7:14 for instance, the Messiah is identified by the usual term Immanuel or “God with us.” This passage deals specifically only with the future Messiah that the New Testament brings to us.

The New Testament perceives Jesus as the “Christ” and the one in whom God’s promises are fulfilled.<sup>101</sup> However, the “Messiah” is the realization of Old Testament prophetic anticipation of king and deliverer (political and religious) that will bring salvation to the world,<sup>102</sup> and will ultimately rule the world and its divine order.<sup>103</sup> At other times, the Messiah is described as the son of Levi who will deliver Israel from its diabolical enemies and put an end to all evil forces.<sup>104</sup> By far the most predominant type of messianism at Jesus’ era was the “war- like nationalistic type, which defined salvation in terms of the restoration of the kingdom of Israel.”<sup>105</sup> However, the new emerging teaching of Jesus on salvation was certainly a total “deviation” from the existing “popular nationalistic” understandings of salvation. Indeed, the life, ministry, death and

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<sup>99</sup> Akrong, “Salvation in African Christianity,” 3-4.

<sup>100</sup> 1 Sam.2:35 NRSV.

<sup>101</sup> Acts 2:31-36 NRSV.

<sup>102</sup> Acts 18:5, Rom. 1:1; 7-8; 5:8 NRSV.

<sup>103</sup> Phil.2:5-11 NRSV.

<sup>104</sup> Leivestard Ragnar, *Christ the Conqueror* (London: S. P. C. K., 1954), 4.

<sup>105</sup> Akrong, “Salvation in African Christianity,” 3.

resurrection of Jesus establish his answer to our search for salvation,<sup>106</sup> which is the good news of the dawning messianic kingdom.

The messianic prophesy however characterizes certain inherent problems. First, the language of messianic prophesy is often obscure. According to John F. Walvoord, the divine intent in the obscurity is to render the messianic prophesy understandable only by true believers in God who are taught by the Holy Spirit and therefore are able to discern passages belonging to genuine messianic prediction. For him, many of these passages cannot be interpreted except in the light of the entire content of the Word of God.<sup>107</sup>

Second, figurative language is frequently used in messianic prophesy. Often the figure gives a very clear idea even though the passage may require interpretation. For instance, when Isaiah 11:1 writes: "There shall come forth a rod out of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots," it clearly refers to the messiah as one who will descend from Jesse. Although figurative language is used, the truth conveyed is quite clear.

Third, the messianic prediction is often regarded as past or present. Yet the Hebrew frequently uses the perfect tense in working predictions such as the one recorded in Isaiah 53. For Walvoord, the perfect tense used in this way in the Old Testament signifies that the event predicted is certain of completion even though it is future and not past. Thus, messianic prediction in the perfect tense is an emphatic future event.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> E. Stauffes, *The New Testament Theology* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 165.

<sup>107</sup> John F. Walvoord, 81-83.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

Fourth, messianic prophecy like other forms of prophecy is often seen horizontally rather than vertically. In other words, while the order of prophetic events is generally revealed in Scripture, prophecy does not necessarily include all the intermediate steps between the great events in view. According to Walvoord, as expressed in most cases, the great mountain peaks of prophecy are revealed without consideration of the valleys between the peaks. Hence the Old Testament prophecy may leap from the sufferings of Christ to his glory without considering the time which elapses between these two events.<sup>109</sup> The fact that messianic prophecy does not always take place into consideration the passage of time between events is illustrated in the quotation by Christ in Luke 4: 18-19.<sup>110</sup> The Isaiah passage quoted by Jesus links his first and second comings without any indication of an intervening period of time. History has shown that more than nineteen hundred years must elapse between these two events. Christ in his quotation of the Old Testament includes the aspects relating to his first coming, but does not include the reference to “the day of vengeance of God” which refers to the judgment of his second coming. When properly understood, this problem in the interpretation of messianic prophecy does not present too many difficulties, but does warn the interpreter not to form hasty conclusions. “Any one prophecy is necessarily incomplete and care must be exercised to understand precisely what the author intended to convey.”<sup>111</sup>

L. Goppelt argues that the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in Mark 1:9-11 is a historical event which can serve as a stumbling block for the Christian church that their

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Isaiah 61:1-2 NRSV.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

Redeemer himself should have received baptism for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>112</sup> However, Jurgen Moltmann sees Jesus' baptism as the beginning of his messianic call and certainly his public ministry.<sup>113</sup> For Moltmann, in his baptism, Jesus must have experienced the special character of his calling. He reiterates that, the interpretative accounts talk about 'the Spirit of God descending upon him.' Moltmann interprets this to mean first of all, Jesus' personal inspiration and legitimation as prophet. It also means the beginning of the messianic significance of Jesus. The prophetic—messianic gift of the Spirit to Jesus is bound up with the divine proclamation: "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."<sup>114</sup> The Matthian account records "this is my beloved Son."<sup>115</sup>

The question then arises: When Jesus is declared 'the Son', what does this mean? I agree with Moltmann in believing that this form of address is evidently picking up the royal Israelite ritual in Psalm 2:7 which record "You are my Son, today I have begotten you." It is a ritual which displays messianic dimensions. At the moment of enthronement, the king is pronounced the 'Son of God.' The proclamation "Thou art my beloved Son" indicates that Jesus is the Messiah according to Old Testament traditions. This is because; the son who is especially 'dear' is always the only son as in the case of Isaac. Moltmann concludes by asserting that, the history of Jesus was not the triumphal history of a messianic victor. It was much more like the suffering history of the servant of God promised in Isaiah 53.<sup>116</sup> The comments of Floyd V. Filson suggests that, because of the claim of Jesus and the apostles that he is the expected Messiah of Israel, the Jews have an

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<sup>112</sup> L. Goppelt, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Gottingen, 1978), 92.

<sup>113</sup> Jurgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1993), 66.

<sup>114</sup> Mark 1:11 NRSV.

<sup>115</sup> Matthew 3:17 NRSV.

<sup>116</sup> Moltmann, 66.

honored place in his church. Yet, this view is branded by some Christians as anti-Semitism because to such Christians we have no right to present the claims of Jesus to the Jews. It is true that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel but the gospel is for all other nations including the Gentiles to respond to faith. Floyd continues by asserting that, Jesus is the Christ of Israel and was the central figure of the Jewish people which dominated their thought and life.<sup>117</sup> Thus, the authoritative teaching of Jesus is a necessary aspect of his messianic activity.<sup>118</sup>

Wolfgang Pannenberg claims that the transition to the Gentile mission is motivated by the eschatological resurrection of Jesus as resurrection of the crucified One. To summarize his view point, Israelite prophecy expected the self-demonstration of God, which it proclaimed, as an event that would take place before the eyes of all peoples. Not just Israel but all nations were to recognize from this future event the exclusive divinity of Israel's God. This messianic expectation corresponds to the hope, rooted in Jerusalem tradition of the election of David and Zion, that in the end time, all peoples would submit themselves to the lordship of God and Jesus Christ. However, contrast to this stood the dominant conception which regarded the Gentiles simply as godless and which hoped for the time of God's vengeance on Israel's oppressors and their final annihilation at the arrival of the Messianic Kingdom.<sup>119</sup> This affirms my belief that, there is therefore the paradigm shift, that, Jesus' resurrection signifies the inclusion of the Gentiles into the eschatological salvation.

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<sup>117</sup> Floyd V. Filson, *Jesus Christ: The Risen Lord* (New York: Abingdon Press, MCMLVI), 55.

<sup>118</sup> Sir Edwyn Hoskyns and Noel Davey, *The Riddle of the New Testament* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1974), 96.

<sup>119</sup> Wolfgang Pannenberg, *Jesus—God and Man* trans. Lewis L. Wilkings and Duane A Priebe (London: The Westminster Press, 1970), 70.

## **FORGIVENESS OF SIN**

Jesus redefined God's kingdom as God's caring restoration of Israel in the forgiveness of sins and new possibilities of salvation for all. Thus salvation is offered to every sinner in a peculiar nature which includes forgiveness of sins, the healing of spiritual and physical deformity and liberation for all under bondage.<sup>120</sup> Jesus' healing ministry had announced in vivid terms that God's redemption is of course present in him.<sup>121</sup> Likewise, the driving out of demons from those possessed meant that Satan's kingdom was dealt with a fatal blow in order to proclaim freedom to people from the devil, so that they can live their lives as God's children through Jesus the Christ.<sup>122</sup>

Jesus has been portrayed in the "Good News" both as the life of cosmic history and salvation history,<sup>123</sup> being the creator and redeemer of the world. However, salvation does not depend solely on forgiveness; it is also obedience to Jesus Christ.

## **THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

Jesus links salvation inseparably with the Kingdom of God. This is vividly captured in Jesus' encounter with the rich young man in Mark 10: 17 – 26. When the rich young man asked the means to inherit eternal life, Jesus replied and told him to sell all his possessions, give it to the poor, and follow him. And when the young man sadly declined this costly invitation, Jesus said that it is almost impossible for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God. To that, his disciples wondered: "Who then can be saved?" For Jesus, receiving salvation and entering the Kingdom are virtually identical.

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<sup>120</sup> E. Stauffes, *New Testament Theology* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 165.

<sup>121</sup> Luke. 11:20 NRSV.

<sup>122</sup> Luke. 10: 17-18 NRSV.

<sup>123</sup> John 1:4 NRSV.

The Kingdom of God is God's sovereign (reign and rule) which is also equivalent to the Kingdom of heaven. God's reign was the major focus of Jesus' teaching.<sup>124</sup> Though its fullness is believed to be in the future,<sup>125</sup> it has also come in Jesus himself.<sup>126</sup> According to the Synoptic Gospels, the following events or phenomena are also closely associated with the Kingdom: a) Jesus' own future manifestation b) The resurrection of the dead c) The day or time of judgment d) Gathering at table with the patriarchs and the "saints" of all generations.<sup>127</sup> Taken together, these are sometimes referred to as "eschatological" or "Parousia" events. It is however not clear whether the Kingdom of God is present or yet to come. But Paul's references to the Kingdom of God indicate that he looked for its coming in the future,<sup>128</sup> when Satan and death will forever be destroyed.<sup>129</sup>

The liberal Protestants in the nineteenth century who were more concerned with improving the conditions of human society or the "social gospel" saw in Jesus' *kerygma* of the Kingdom of God a model for reconstituting social arrangements. They interpreted the Kingdom of God to mean the church or individual religious experience.<sup>130</sup> Prominent among them was Walter Rauschenbusch. He defines the Kingdom of God as the doctrine that lies at the center of the Social Gospel. He maintains that the Kingdom defines the progressive struggle of humankind from beginning to end and comes not by peaceful development only, but by continuous conflict with the Kingdom of evil. For him, this conflict is about messianic woes and battles depicted in the Apocalypse.

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<sup>124</sup> Matt.6:33, Mk. 1:15 etc. NRSV.

<sup>125</sup> Luke. 13:29; 22:18 Acts 1:6-8; 3:17-21 NRSV.

<sup>126</sup> Luke. 10:9; 17:21 NRSV.

<sup>127</sup> Rev.2:7; 17 NRSV.

<sup>128</sup> 1 Cor.6:9, Gal.5:21, 1 Thess.5: 1-2; 23, 2 Thess.1:5 NRSV.

<sup>129</sup> The last enemy to be destroyed is death (1 Cor.15: 26 NRSV).

<sup>130</sup> Lk.17:21 NRSV.

According to Rauschenbusch, the Kingdom was both a gift and a task, progressively realized yet always still ahead of us. Its source and consummation were transcendent but its workings were immanent. He writes:

The Kingdom of God is always both present and future.... It is the energy of God realizing itself in human life. It invites and justifies prophecy, but all prophecy is fallible; it is valuable in so far as it grows out of action for the Kingdom and impels action. No theories about the future of the Kingdom of God are likely to be valuable or true which paralyze or postpone redemptive action on our part.... It is for us to see the Kingdom of God as always coming always pressing in on the present, always big with possibility, and always inviting immediate action. We walk by faith. Every human life is so placed that it can share with God in the creation of the Kingdom or it can resist or retard its progress. The Kingdom of God is for each of us the supreme task and the supreme gift of God. By laboring for it we enter into the joy and peace of the Kingdom as our divine fatherland and habitation.<sup>131</sup>

However, Rauschenbusch was criticized of a ready identification of contemporary finite achievements with the absolute victory of the Kingdom. But if one reads him carefully, one will see that his vision is not one of finalizing any finite achievement, but rather one of continuous growth and aspiration, never perfected in history yet, communing with that ultimate Kingdom in each momentary and partial victory. He iterates: "We are on the march toward the kingdom of God, getting our reward by every fractional realization of it

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<sup>131</sup> Walter Rauschenbusch, *The Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1918), 227.

which makes us hungry for more."<sup>132</sup> He understands the Kingdom of God as a social order at every stage of humankind's highest development which involves the redemption of social life that is free from all forms of slavery and political autocracies and economic hardships. He saw a close relationship between redemption and freedom. The Kingdom is the progressive unification of humankind without the surrender of individual and group identity; and dynamic relationship of God's grace and "man's" work transcendence and immanence. God was understood as immanent Spirit at work in history and guides it toward its final goal of a community in fellowship with trinity.

According to Rosemary R. Ruether, the point of reference for understanding the kingdom of God, and even the church itself, was the community of humankind in history. This is the "body" that was being shaped by the Spirit, and criticized by the prophets, and led toward ultimate salvation in the Kingdom. The Kingdom is not to be found by turning from the world to the religious community; rather, the Kingdom is the goal and completion of the worldly community of "man." For her, in American Social Gospel, God was understood as an immanent Spirit at work in history and guiding it toward its final goal.<sup>133</sup> Therefore, it presupposes that, to be on the side of human progress in any of its many forms is to be on the side of Christ, because Christ is the head and crown of humanity itself that finds its final realization in the messianic Kingdom of the future.

It may be affirmed that, the social hope for a new cooperative society in the future can be readily equated with the Christian hope for the Kingdom of God. This does not mean that

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *The Radical Kingdom: The Western Experience of Messianic Hope* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1970) 83.

the church teaches socialism per say as salvation, but there exist a harmony between socialist goals and Christian ideals. When socialism inveighed against the exploitation of the worker, it was in line with the prophetic attack on the exploitation of the poor by the rich.<sup>134</sup> The Socialist's hopes for a cooperative economic order are also in keeping with the Christian understanding of fellowship and community. The future hopes of the new socialist order are in the same direction as the Christian expectation of the Kingdom of ultimate reconciliation, justice and peace, except that the Christian hope demanded a deeper and more thorough going regeneration of believers. Hence, salvation, from the stand point of the Gospels is what happens when people respond in faith to Jesus' preaching<sup>135</sup> and this preaching is nothing other than the proclamation of a person, Jesus the Messiah, and the announcement of his dawning Kingdom.<sup>136</sup>

In conclusion, I must say that, there is an impressive agreement among students of the Gospel that Jesus' teaching concerning the Kingdom of God is basic to an understanding to his ministry. According to James L. Price, the Gospels illustrate that the coming of the Kingdom of God was proclaimed by Jesus throughout his ministry.<sup>137</sup> His teaching, healings, exorcisms as well as death and resurrection, all serve to make good this proclamation of the Kingdom of God. For Moltmann, there were statements explicitly by Jesus proclaiming and implying the coming Kingdom of God and its heirs especially in the parables. Therefore, the kingdom is the hope which has its ground in the promise

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<sup>134</sup> Amos 2:7, Lk.10:7 (For the worker deserves his wages) NRSV.

<sup>135</sup> Luke 8:15 NRSV.

<sup>136</sup> Green, 126 NRSV.

<sup>137</sup> James L. Price, *Interpreting the New Testament* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1961), 235-245.

directed towards the lordship of God.<sup>138</sup> Once the basic axioms of Jesus' proclamations are accepted, and the event of his death and resurrection is actually taken as the central clue, there comes into operation a logic that links every detail to this core of the mystery of the Kingdom.<sup>139</sup>

## COMMUNAL

Salvation is communal. A new redeemed community was central to God's salvation in the Old Testament. In like manner, the followers of Jesus maintained a new community where values taught by him were lived out.<sup>140</sup> Sider maintains that experiencing the salvation of the Kingdom that Jesus announced meant a total transformation of values, actions and relationships. As in the case of the rich young man, people sometimes rejected the Kingdom's salvation call because they were unwilling to abandon wealth and give to the poor. Sometimes, as in the case of Zacchaeus, they repented of sin (dishonesty, official corruption, and injustice) and righted those unjust relationships by returning unjustly obtained money and giving to the poor- "Today," Jesus said, "salvation has come to this house."<sup>141</sup>

The text does not indicate clearly that Jesus pronounced forgiveness of sin to Zacchaeus, although the content makes it abundantly clear that Jesus' whole action of visiting the home of this public sinner was an act of forgiving acceptance. But the salvation that happened was not merely some vertical forgiveness of sin although it certainly included

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<sup>138</sup> Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of Christian Eschatology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 216.

<sup>139</sup> Paul S Minear, *The Kingdom and the Power: An exposition of the New Testament Gospel* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978), 216.

<sup>140</sup> Sider, 87.

<sup>141</sup> Luke 19 NRSV.

that important component. The new social relationships made possible by grace in the life of the repentant and forgiven oppressor should be considered imperative to the salvation of Jesus' eminent kingdom which is corporate and social as well as personal and individual.

### PHYSICAL HEALING

As discussed earlier, physical healing is part of salvation in the Gospels. The concept of salvation in the Gospels embraces not only the forgiveness of sins but also as seen in the Old Testament that the word salvation pointed to the wholeness or *shalom* in every area of life. In almost one out of four times whenever Jesus' healings are recorded in the synoptic gospels, the word save (Heb. *Sozo*) is used to describe physical healings.<sup>142</sup> The Samaritan leper was "saved" in Luke 17: 19, as was blind Bartimaeus in Mark 10: 52, as were the man whose withered hand was restored in Mark 3:4-5 and the liberated demon – possessed man in Luke 8:36. The word "save" is also used to describe physical rescues from the danger of death.

Salvation then encompasses the transformation of broken physical bodies when the messianic kingdom breaks into history in the person of Jesus. It presupposes that salvation from the perspective of the gospels is not only for the soul but for the body as well. This gives the impression that God's saving agenda is to correct the full devastation of sin, not just in some inner immaterial realm but in the total created order. This physical

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<sup>142</sup> *Sozo* is used sixteen times to refer to healing. *Therapeuo* (Gk healing) is used thirty-three times, and *laomai* is used fifteen times for healing. Similarly, Acts 4:9; 14:9. In the book of James, *Sozo* is used to indicate both physical healing (5:15) and escape from divine punishment at the final judgment (5:19). Often the English translation obscures this fact. Mark 6:56 reads: "All who touched him were healed. "But the word translated "healed" is *Sozo*, the verb usually translated "save" (Cf. also Matthew 14:36).

healing can be called salvation in the content of the presence and acknowledgment of Jesus the Christ in whose person the presence of the kingdom of God is realized. Luke therefore sees the healing of a Gentile soldier's servant,<sup>143</sup> the forgiveness of a fallen woman,<sup>144</sup> the restoration to wholeness of a demented man<sup>145</sup> and the provision of new life for a dead girl<sup>146</sup> as illustration of salvation, a new life, wholeness, forgiveness, and healing.

Paul Tillich argues that, only when salvation is understood as healing and saving power through the New Being is the problem surrounding it put on another level.<sup>147</sup> This is because; to a large extent all people participate in the healing power of the New Being. Otherwise, the self destructive consequences of estrangement would have destroyed them. It is believed that, no person has ever been totally healed, not even those who have encountered the healing power as it appears in Jesus as the Christ. For the proponents of this view, the healing received by those who have encountered Jesus was incomplete. Hence, the concept of salvation drives us to the eschatological symbolism and its interpretation. This is the symbol of cosmic healing and the question of the relation of the eternal to the temporal with respect to the future. Jesus is thus seen as the ultimate criterion of every healing and saving process. Nonetheless, I think Tillich is right by affirming that, in Jesus the healing quality is complete and ultimate. In his view, the Christian remains in the state of relativity with respect to salvation, and that the New Being in Christ transcends every form of relativity in its quality and power of healing. "It

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<sup>143</sup> Luke 7:3 NRSV.

<sup>144</sup> Luke 7:50 NRSV.

<sup>145</sup> Luke 8:36 NRSV.

<sup>146</sup> Luke 8:50 NRSV.

<sup>147</sup> Tillich, 165 NRSV.

is just this that makes him the Christ. Therefore, wherever there is saving power in mankind, it must be judged by the saving power in Jesus as the Christ."<sup>148</sup>

In conclusion, I must affirm that, with respect to both the original meaning of salvation<sup>149</sup> and the present situation, the term has been interpreted as "healing," where healing means reuniting that which is outcast, cursed and estranged. It is overcoming the split between God and human beings and God's world as well as "man and himself." Out of this interpretation of salvation, the concept of the New Being has developed. Salvation thus, is reclaiming from the old and transferring into the New Being. According to Tillich, since Christianity derives salvation from the appearance of Jesus as the Christ, it cannot separate from him.

#### **RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

According to the gospels, having the right relationship with God is also at the center of salvation. For Sider, we would be grossly distorting the Gospels if we focused exclusively or primarily on the horizontal aspects of salvation. Right at the heart of salvation is a right relationship with God made possible because Jesus died for our sins on the cross. The son of Man, whom Jesus identified as none other than himself, came to suffer for our sins. He bore vicariously the wrath of God upon sin in order to atone for the sins of humanity. Thus, his cross brings together God's wrath and mercy that reconciled us to the Father in a unique *abba* relationship.<sup>150</sup> That is absolutely central to the gospels' portrayal of salvation.

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<sup>148</sup> Tillich, 166-168.

<sup>149</sup> Latin *salvus*, "healed."

<sup>150</sup> Mark 14:36; cf. Rom. 8:15-16; Gal. 4:6 NRSV.

In conclusion, I affirm Akrong's view that the interpretation of salvation in the New Testament was grounded in the themes of the Old Testament in the Christ event. Hence, the unique vision of the New Testament was the discovery of the prophetic idea that, the redemption of the righteous God of the covenant is an aspect of divine creativity. Within this structure of the creation-redemption-salvation continuum, the New Testament announces the good news that the righteous God of the covenant is forgiving sinners and accepting them into a new relationship and fellowship with self as a result of the life, death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ of Nazareth<sup>151</sup>

## 2.2 SALVATION IN PAULINE THEOLOGY

When Paul was travelling to Damascus to persecute the Christians in that city, he was stopped short by a revelation. He was then commissioned and appointed by Christ as apostle to the Gentiles. That is how the Acts of the Apostles, and Paul himself, described the turningpoint of his life. It is a meeting between the risen Lord and his strongest opponent Paul, who is forced from the path that he had followed, and set on the path along which his new Master is to lead him.

However, it is clear that Paul's conversion set the tone for his missionary activities. A critical evaluation of Paul's Soteriology indicates that he viewed salvation in terms of the past, present, and future redeeming work of God in the person of Christ. This includes the sacrifice on the cross; the experience of Justification, regeneration, and sanctification; the

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<sup>151</sup> Akrong, "Salvation in African Christianity," 3.

reality of Jewish new community; and the ultimate cosmic restoration of all things in Christ.

As his epistles portray, salvation in Paul is individual and corporate, vertical and horizontal. And it is definitely related to conscious confession of Christ.<sup>152</sup> For salvation in terms of the past, Paul sees salvation as a redeeming act of Christ on the cross. John Stott argues that Paul used three different key words for salvation:

The first is *soteria* (salvation). For Paul, we obtain salvation as we hear the gospel, and we are justified by faith rather than works,<sup>153</sup> and are free from the anger of God as a result of the cross of Christ.<sup>154</sup> Secondly, *Apolutrosis* (redemption), which is similar to the forgiveness of sins, that has been granted to us because of the expiation of the blood of Christ at the cross.<sup>155</sup> Third, *Katallege* (reconciliation) which is grounded in the cross on which Christ was made sin for us so that we could be reconciled to God.<sup>156</sup>

Paul perceives salvation in terms of the present and the future:

**Salvation in terms of the present:** The Apostle Paul said a lot about salvation as the present reality by using the term *dikaosune*.

According to St. Augustine and much of the Catholic tradition, the word *dikaosune* is that genuine righteousness that the Holy Spirit creates in persons as they are conformed

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<sup>152</sup> Col. 2:15. NRSV.

<sup>153</sup> Rom. 1:16-17 NRSV.

<sup>154</sup> Rom. 5:9 NRSV.

<sup>155</sup> Rom. 3:24-25; 8:23; Col. 1:1-13 NRSV.

<sup>156</sup> John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1986), 175-203.

more and more into the image of Christ. Martin Luther, on the other hand, viewed *dikaosune* primarily as justification, namely God's act of declaring sinners forgiven for their sins and thus justified "by faith alone" as they trust in Christ's merits reckoned to them through the cross.

A careful reading of Paul suggests that Paul uses *dikaosune* to refer to what Luther called "forensic justification," a legal act or declaration, used in relation to righteousness and justification in Protestant Theology. It indicates that God declares (not makes) a sinner righteous or justified through Jesus Christ.<sup>157</sup> At other times, this word points to genuine sanctification of persons.<sup>158</sup>

It is clear that the word *dikaosune* (righteousness) is not limited to the forgiveness and sanctification (the process of God's continuing work in Christian believers through the power of the Holy Spirit and growth in grace and holiness of life marked by good works) of the individual. In Romans 14:17, *dikaosune* refers to the transformed social relations in the redeemed community of believers. In Romans 14:13ff, Paul argues that no foods can be regarded as unclean in themselves, but if a person considers some food as unclean, then we must not destroy that weak person by continuing to eat it, "for the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness [*dikaosune*], peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Rom. 4:5-8 NRSV

<sup>158</sup> Rom. 6:1-20 NRSV.

<sup>159</sup> Rom. 14:13 NRSV.

It presupposes that peace and righteousness refer also to that wholeness of good relations within the Christian community, so that living now as members of Jesus' dawning Kingdom; we are enjoying wholeness and genuine social salvation.

The corporate aspect of salvation which pictures the vertical and horizontal dimensions of salvation is revealed through the cross.<sup>160</sup> The death of Christ on the cross has brought reconciliation between God and humankind.<sup>161</sup> In this reconciliatory act Christ becomes part of the gospel and thus part of the salvation that Paul announced. For Paul, salvation in terms of the present includes forgiveness, sanctification, and the new redeemed community.

**Salvation in terms of the future:** In Pauline theology, salvation has a powerful future or eschatological dimension. According to Paul, God, who started a good work in human beings, will certainly continue and complete it in the future.<sup>162</sup> Paul further asserts that the salvation that human beings have already experienced is down payment of the complete inheritance that will be theirs on the return of Christ,<sup>163</sup> so that their bodies will experience redemption.<sup>164</sup> Paul's conception of redemption includes the whole of creation, and the restoration of the physical world which can be referred to as 'cosmic salvation.'

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<sup>160</sup> Eph. 2: 11-37 NRSV.

<sup>161</sup> Eph. 2:11-17 NRSV.

<sup>162</sup> Phil. 1:6 NRSV.

<sup>163</sup> Eph.1:13-14 NRSV.

<sup>164</sup> Rom.8:23 NRSV.

Paul, however, is aware that when believers in God are “revealed” – when Christ returns and human beings experience the resurrection of the body – then the whole created order will also be made new: “The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.”<sup>165</sup> This is clearly emphasized by the evangelical Scholar F.F. Bruce: “If words mean anything, these words of Paul denoted not the annihilation of the present material universe on the day of revelation, to be replaced by a universe completely new but the transformation of the present universe so that it will fulfill the purpose for which God created it.”<sup>166</sup>

In the writings of St. Paul, the earliest of the New Testament writings, “salvation’ is used to refer to a future event in which God will judge the world, destroy the wicked and establish his final kingdom on earth. In his letter to the Christians at Rome, Paul writes that “salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed,”<sup>167</sup> implying, as the context shows, that the return of Christ and the last judgment were expected to take place before Paul and his readers may die. Elsewhere, he speaks of “the hope of salvation,”<sup>168</sup> clearly seeing it as a future event. Paul refers to Jesus as Savior only once, but here again it is in respect to Jesus’ future work: To the Christians at Philippi, he writes, “We await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him to subject all things to himself.”<sup>169</sup> Jesus is called savior because of what he *will* do, not because of what he has already done. The future sense is also found in the Synoptic Gospels, where to be saved is identical in meaning with entry into the kingdom of God.

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<sup>165</sup> Rom.:21 NRSV.

<sup>166</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 170.

<sup>167</sup> Rom.13:11 NRSV.

<sup>168</sup> Col.1:27 NRSV.

<sup>169</sup> Phil.3:20 NRSV.

Salvation in the New Testament includes past, present and future references. I can conclude that, the New Testament understanding of salvation presupposes the following:

a) something has happened as in the case of Zacchaeus. Jesus has saved us from the penalty of sin when we accept him as saviour, b) that something is happening now as Jesus is saving us from power of sin, and c) that something further will still happen to believers because Jesus will save them from the presence of sin and evil and give them “heavenly reward” (Justification). Salvation in terms of the future does not suggest any of the following: deliverance, healing and socio-economic development. It is entirely “going to heaven.” Yet, even though heaven has been mentioned in the New Testament, union with Christ seems to be fundamental in Pauline Theology.<sup>170</sup>

In the light of the above discussion regarding biblical understandings of salvation, I can suggest that, New Testament studies view justification of a believer as hearing the affirmation that one is a full member of the community of promise. It is also very clear that, in both the Old and New Testaments, salvation originally had connotations other than the Christian experience of God’s reconciliation with fallen humanity in Christ.<sup>171</sup> This includes the events of peace, order and security among others which scholars such as Gaba regarded as total well-being and has to do with both the spiritual and physical dimensions of human condition. Thus, according to Hiagbe, the New Testament understanding of salvation is not different from that of the Old Testament as such.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Union with Christ has been mentioned almost 200 times particularly in Paul’s letters alone.

<sup>171</sup> Komi A. Hiagbe, 31.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

### 2.3 SALVATION AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Salvation has been the key doctrine on which the Roman Catholic Church had received immense criticism and condemnation, dating back prominently to the Great Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Since her establishment, the Catholic Church believes that human beings are justified by grace through faith on account of Jesus Christ. Catholics also believe that good works can contribute to salvation. By comparison, the reformers argued that salvation is purely by grace through faith in Jesus Christ “alone” and that Christ’s redemptive work is the exclusive cause of the salvation of human beings without any human element of cooperation.

In medieval Catholicism, Jesus Christ earned the merit of the believer when he was humbled and obedient unto death; and his Father exalted him and gave him a name that we must all honor.<sup>173</sup> He earned a reward from his Father in his humanity as the Son of God who was raised and placed at the right hand of his Father.<sup>174</sup> Therefore, believers are united to Jesus Christ and they can do nothing unless remained united with him. Once a believer remained united with Jesus, everything he or she does actually becomes as though Jesus did it. Believer’s action from thenceforth is Jesus’ action. In the light of this, Roman Catholic theologies assert that justification comprises of the believers’ merit and the merit of Jesus together.<sup>175</sup>

It was thus Augustine’s exposition of justification by grace “alone,” together with his emphasis on the importance of faith, which furnished the categories for the sixteenth –

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<sup>173</sup> Phil. 2: 5-11 NRSV.

<sup>174</sup> A position of authority, honor, power and might among others.

<sup>175</sup> This has been referred to as the doctrine of “Cooperate Grace.”

century debates which divided the church in the West. It was also Luther's redefinition of justification that initiated the major debates at the Reformation which gave rise to Protestantism.<sup>176</sup>

The selling of indulgences (a pardon for temporal punishments that remain due for sin after repentance and forgiveness of guilt) developed slowly throughout the middle ages. Originally, its conception was limited to removing the temporal or earthly punishment that the church had the right to inflict as part of the sacrament of penance.<sup>177</sup> It was later associated with the remission of temporal punishment due to sins for which pardon has already been received, because, the church believes that, salvation is from guilt and its consequences in this and the next life.<sup>178</sup> Due to the "treasury of merits" received from Christ and the Saints, the Catholic church believes it has "the power" to remit the temporal punishment that remains a Christian's due after he or she has received divine forgiveness, and they do this in acts of varying intensities, thereby effecting partial or total remission,<sup>179</sup> reaching the living by way of absolution<sup>180</sup> and the dead by way of intercession.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Andrian Hastings et al., eds., *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 362.

<sup>177</sup> (Lat. *Paenitentia*, "penitence). The action of showing sorrow and remorse for sin. It is one of the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church (also called "sacrament of reconciliation"), and the prescribed way for post baptismal sins to be forgiven. Its elements are contrition, confession of sin, and "doing" of penance.

<sup>178</sup> In purgatory and hell.

<sup>179</sup> Because the prayer is offered in the name of the Redeemer for a contrite believer.

<sup>180</sup> "Absolution" is from Lat. *Absolvere*, meaning to set free. It is the formal act of pronouncing forgiveness of sins. In Roman Catholic theology, it is the formula the priest uses in the sacrament of reconciliation (formerly penance), usually saying "I absolve you." In Eastern churches it is "May God forgive you." Also, absolution of the dead characterizes Medieval service after a Requiem Mass consisting of prayer for the dead (Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms).

<sup>181</sup> "Intercession" is from the Lat. *intercessio*, meaning "a coming between," or "intervention." It is a prayer offered on behalf others as in 1 Tim. 2: 1 (Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms).

As a result of indulgences, Catholics are assured of their salvation.<sup>182</sup> Therefore, the Catholic Church taught that both faith and good works are necessary for salvation, grounding their argument primarily on Galatians 5: 6 and James. 2:26.<sup>183</sup>

The Holy Spirit's transforming work in the sinner becomes the grounds, along with faith, for justification and, being good enough, merits the earning of salvation. It does not mean that the Catholic Church does not teach grace. It taught that God is "gracious." Yet, the means by which God's grace comes to believers has been the bone of contention that the reformers grappled with. Even though, both the reformers and the Catholic Church taught that grace is a free gift of God that comes to the believer through faith in Jesus Christ alone, the Catholic Church went further to teach that grace comes through the means of the indulgences and sacraments<sup>184</sup> as well. As such the sacraments are considered to be God's grace to the believer. There was therefore the "presumptuous habit of trusting to the purchase of Masses while dying, to the neglect of a holy life and repentance while in health."<sup>185</sup> There was also the element of clerical or priestly abuses and exploitation of the Mass which formed part of the grounds for attacks on the Mass launched by the English Reformers.<sup>186</sup> An example of clerical abuses includes charging of exorbitant fees

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<sup>182</sup> Donald Bloesch, *Sacrament Worship, Ministry, Mission* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2002), 48.

<sup>183</sup> "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love; As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead But Luther refused this by referring to James as "book of straw."

<sup>184</sup> The word "Sacrament" is from the Greek *mysterion*, which translates "mystery" and *sacramentum*, which means "oath." It is an outward sign instituted by God to convey an inward or spiritual grace. Sacraments are liturgical practices of some churches. Roman Catholicism recognizes seven sacraments and Protestants two. The sacraments recognized in the Roman Catholic tradition and in Eastern Orthodox are: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, reconciliation (penance), anointing of the sick (extreme unction), marriage (matrimony), and holy orders (ordination). However, Protestants accepted baptism and Eucharist as the only sacraments instituted by Christ—Westminster Dictionary of Theological terms.

<sup>185</sup> Francis Clark, *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), 56.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

~~Before~~ the Mass was celebrated for people with the intention of generating funds for the building of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

It was however agreed at the Council of Trent in 1562 that the Mass (i.e., the Eucharistic Mass) is not an absolute but a relative sacrifice, drawing its efficacy from the sacrifice of Calvary. They also believed that the death of Christ alone remits our sins, yet it does not mean that the sacraments of the Church have no role in that remission. This is because the sacraments are considered as instrumental causes by which the death of Christ is applied for the benefit of the believer.<sup>187</sup> In Roman Catholic theology, the sacraments of baptism and reconciliation (penance) are considered to bring justification and salvation.<sup>188</sup>

The doctrine of purgatory<sup>189</sup> suggests that human beings can never come to full assurance of salvation on earth, for they are still capable of committing mortal sin. This is surely true about "Double Predestination" as well. Calvin taught that no one can be fully sure about his or her salvation on earth. It is believed that when Catholics die (in exception of "Saints"), they go to the place called purgatory to undergo purification so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of Heaven. The doctrine of purgatory was formulated especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The practice was, and as is still the case that while going through the process of purgation, intercessory prayers are

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<sup>187</sup> Clark, 57-97.

<sup>188</sup> Donald K McKim, 246.

<sup>189</sup> (Lat. Purgation, "cleansing"). A doctrine prominent in medieval Catholicism and taught in Roman Catholic tradition. Purgatory is a place where the souls of the faithful dead endure a period of purification and cleansing from sin prior to their entrance into heaven. It completes sanctification.

offered and votive and requiem Masses conducted for the dead so that they may be lose from their sins.

However, the reformers were opposed to the offering of prayers for the dead stating that its efficacy is questionable. They maintained that even the “saints” themselves prayed and made supplications in respect of their sins while they were alive, and that we must also do same while we are still living in the world and have the opportunity to do as the “Saints” who have gone before us.

Augustine points out that there is no salvation outside the church. The Athanasian Creed taught that “Whoever wishes to be saved, needs above all to hold the Catholic faith; unless each one preserves this whole and inviolate, he will without a doubt perish in eternity.”<sup>190</sup> This creedal statement affirms the Vatican council I decree that “outside the Church no one can be saved.... who is not in this ark will perish in the flood.”<sup>191</sup>

As Catholic tradition developed, salvation came to be understood by her as a free gift of the Spirit and more as a grace generated by the Spirit and infused into believers through the rites and sacraments of the Church. The church was actually depicted as supernatural mediation, playing the central role of binding and loosing through her exercise of the keys of the kingdom. Cyprian articulated vividly that: “If some one has not the Church for his mother, he has not God for his father”<sup>192</sup> Thus, again, “there is no salvation outside the church.”

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<sup>190</sup> [Http://www.catholicdoors.com/coursed/salvatio.htm](http://www.catholicdoors.com/coursed/salvatio.htm).

<sup>191</sup> The Roman Church symbolizes Noah's ark on earth according to the Vatican council I decree.

<sup>192</sup> [Http://www.catholicdoors.com/coursed/salvatio.htm](http://www.catholicdoors.com/coursed/salvatio.htm).

Karl Adam, the proponent of this traditional view spoke of the church primarily as an institution for salvation. Simply, “a community of salvation is a community that receives in faith the salvation of Christ and carries it out in herself. It is she who gives this salvation and makes the faithful members of Christ.”<sup>193</sup> He held the view that, the church stands not only in a passive but also in an active relationship to Christ and the salvation he gives. Karl Adam goes on to portray the Church as instrumental cause or agent and the visible earthly tool with which the Lord of the Church, who won her by his blood, pours the treasures of grace and love proceeding from the Trinity into the body of the Church.

However, this view of salvation came under critical scrutiny. In fact, later Catholic theology affirmed the work of the Spirit in relation to salvation. Nonetheless, the canons of Trent concerning justification also apposed “cooperate grace” when canon 1 (one) stated: “If anyone said that man may be justified before God by his own works, whether done through the teaching of human nature, or that of the law, without the grace of God through Jesus Christ; let him be anathema.”<sup>194</sup> The Council of Trent is the official Roman Catholic Church’s definitive response to the Protestant challenge, and somehow they reaffirmed the views of Augustine on the nature of justification that the relevance of the cross is central to salvation.<sup>195</sup> Trent’s decree seems to suggest that, Luther and his followers failed to harmonize justification and sanctification<sup>196</sup> together at the anthropological level. Nonetheless, Trent affirmed a merited justification meaning, God

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<sup>193</sup> Karl Adam, *The Roots of the Reformation*, trans. Cecily Hastings (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1951), 91.

<sup>194</sup> [http://www. Theoped.a.com/Council of Trent](http://www.Theoped.a.com/Council%20of%20Trent).

<sup>195</sup> Karl Adam, 77.

<sup>196</sup> Sanctification (Gr. *Hagiasmos*, Lat. *Sanctification*) is the process or result of God’s continuing work in Christian believers through the power of the Holy Spirit. In Protestant theology, this occurs after justification and is growth in grace and holiness of life marked by good works; Regeneration (Gr. *Polingenesia*, Lat. *Regeneratio*, “new birth,” “new life”) is the action of the Holy Spirit, who transforms the lives of those given the gift of faith so that they may experience a “new birth” and salvation through Jesus Christ (Titus 3:5).

makes persons just or righteous through their participation in the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church and by the gift of the Holy Spirit which is the new life principle of grace, expressed through love and the cross and death of Jesus Christ.<sup>197</sup>

Paul Whitcomb maintained that, for Catholics, both faith and good works are necessary for salvation, because such is the teaching of Jesus. He writes "What our Lord demands is faith that worketh by charity."<sup>198</sup> According to him, when St. Paul speaks about justification by faith without works of the Law, he was referring to works peculiar to the old Jewish Law and cites circumcision as an example. Thus, faith is only the beginning but not the complete fulfillment of salvation. Whitcomb reiterates "nowhere in the Bible is it written that faith alone justifies."<sup>199</sup> He further asserts that, the Catholic Church does not teach that purely human good works are meritorious for salvation. He indicates:

Such works are NOT meritorious for salvation, according to her teaching. Only those good works performed when a person is in the state of grace that is, as a branch drawing its spiritual life from the Vine which is Christ (John 15:4-6). Only those good deeds work toward our salvation, and they do so only by the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ. These good works, offered to God by a soul in the state of grace (i.e., free of mortal sin, with the Blessed Trinity dwelling in the soul), are thereby supernaturally meritorious because they share in the work and in the merits of Christ. Such supernatural good works will not

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<sup>197</sup> Andrian Hastings et al., 363.

<sup>198</sup> Paul Whitcomb, *The Catholic Church has the Answers* (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, INC., 1986), 24.

<sup>199</sup> Whitcomb, 25.

only be rewarded by God, but are necessary for salvation.<sup>200</sup>

According to Whitcomb, St. Paul shows how the neglect of certain good works will send a Christian believer to damnation in the following passage: "If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever."<sup>201</sup> Jesus also said "For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done."<sup>202</sup> In the light of the statements cited above, I believe Catholics are emphasizing good works as meritorious.

The doctrine of universal salvation was popularized in Catholic theology at Vatican II Council by Karl Rahner. The second Vatican Council maintained that all will be saved in the *Apokatastasis* or final restoration of all things. Rahner pointed out that "while helping the world and receiving many benefits from it, the Church has a single intention: that God's kingdom may come, and that the salvation of the whole human race may come to pass. For every benefit which the people of God during its earthly pilgrimage can offer to the human family stems from the fact that the Church is 'the universal sacrament of salvation' simultaneously manifesting and actualizing the mystery of God's love."<sup>203</sup> Rahner maintained that eternal damnation remains a possibility, but we are not granted the knowledge to know which people are effectively involved in it.

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> 1 Timothy 5:8 NRSV.

<sup>202</sup> Matthew 16:27 NRSV.

<sup>203</sup> <http://www.romancatholicity.Org/universal-salvation.htm>

Pope John Paul II writing for the post Vatican Council II era maintained that despite the fact that the church mediates Christ's salvation the source of this salvation is the grace of God. He commented: "people are saved through the church, but they are saved by the grace of Christ."<sup>204</sup>

The new, post-Vatican II Catechism of the Catholic Church also gives us the hope that all will be saved. The Church prays that no one should be lost: 'Lord, let me never be parted from you.' This suggests that if it is true that no one can save himself, it is also true that God desires all people to be saved,<sup>205</sup> and that for God 'all things are possible.'<sup>206</sup>

The new Roman Missal and Divine Office exhorted the faithful that in prayer they should "remember our brothers and sisters who have gone to their rest in the hope of rising again; bring them and all the departed into the light of your presence. Have mercy on us all. Almighty God, we recall how you sent your angel to the centurion Cornelius to show him the way of salvation. Open our hearts to work more zealously for the salvation of the world, so that your Church may bring us and all men into your presence."<sup>207</sup>

Donald G. Bloesch emphasized that John Paul II "reaffirms the Augustinian–Thomistic tradition that holds to the priority of grace over human striving and obedience that "all of

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<sup>204</sup> John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, ed. Vittorio Messori (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 140.

<sup>205</sup> I Tim.2:4 NRSV.

<sup>206</sup> Matt.19:26 NRSV.

<sup>207</sup> Eucharistic Prayer II.

the church's children must remember that their privileged condition is not the result of their own merits, but the result of the special grace of Christ.<sup>208</sup>

In catholic theology, "people of faith cannot earn grace, but they can cooperate with grace and thereby contribute to grace's efficacy."<sup>209</sup> In the words of Francis Fernandez, who claims to be restating Thomas Aquinas' position: "They will be good collaborators with God's grace, for the Holy Spirit uses man as an instrument. Then their works take on a divine effectiveness, like a tool which of itself is incapable of producing anything, but in the hands of a good craftsman can produce a masterpiece."<sup>210</sup>

In Roman Catholic theology, grace is in the hands and power of the Church. It is the Church which, through the practice of its sacramental rites and ceremonies, communicates grace to its people. Thomas Torrance strongly maintained his argument against this view on the grounds that grace "remains absolutely sovereign and transcendent in God's self-communication to us, and so retains us in comprehensibility and mystery as grace."<sup>211</sup>

Karl Rahner, who featured prominently at Vatican Council II, propounded the concept of the "Anonymous Christianity." The concept arose from two reasons. First, Rahner saw the possibility of supernatural salvation and of a corresponding faith which must be granted to people outside Christianity, even if they never become Christians.

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<sup>208</sup> Bloesch, 48.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid

<sup>210</sup> Francis Fernandez, *In conversation with God* (London: Scepter, 1990) 31. See also Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologica* 2-2 177.1.

<sup>211</sup> Thomas F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids, Mich. Eardmans, 1975), 101.

Seward, that, salvation cannot be gained without reference to God and Christ, since it must in its origin, history and fulfillment be a theistic and Christian salvation. Therefore, God who desires all people to be saved cannot possibly consign all non-Christians to hell. And, also, Jesus Christ is God's only means of salvation. This suggests that the non-Christians who end up in heaven must have received the grace of Christ without their realizing it.

Though Rahner acknowledges that there are some weaknesses with the term "anonymous Christian", he considered it a vital one. More so, he was greatly encouraged by the statements of Vatican II, regarding salvation as further endorsement of his theory of the "anonymous Christian."

It was affirmed during the second Vatican Council that, those who have not yet received the gospel without any faith of their own are given the possibility of eternal salvation and that God in the unknown ways, of God's grace can give them "faith" without which there is no salvation even to those who have not yet heard the preaching of the gospel. Vatican II further maintained that those who through no fault of their own, do not know the gospel of Christ or his church, yet sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do his will as it is known to them through the dictates of their conscience will be saved. Rahner is of the view here that this statement allows even atheists and polytheists the possibility of salvation.

The concept of "Anonymous Christian" has been highly criticized. Conservative Christians believe the concept explicitly contradicts the Apostolic teaching in Acts 4: 12

that, "there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." There are also "Christian exclusivists" whose view is that biblical Christianity is true and that other religious systems are false.

For some others, the concept of "anonymous Christianity" argued by Karl Rahner is a very grave doctrinal error because it declares personal justification as being already realized for every one without any participation of his or her will or free choice and, so, without any need of one's conversion, faith, baptism or works. This view point raises the idea that redemption is granted to all, and that sanctifying grace was ontologically present in each one so long as he or she is a person.

Liberal Christians have nonetheless disagreed vehemently on the concept of "Anonymous Christian." Hans Kung maintained the impossibility to find a Jew or Muslim or Atheist in "heaven" who may not even consider the stand that he or she is an anonymous Christian. John Hick also argues the point that how can people receive grace without expressing any desire for it? What is implied in this argument is that people can be Christians without realizing it. I can also agree that, Rahner is thinking about those who preceded Jesus Christ and their salvation and it is therefore unfair to condemn a group of people who have not had a realistic opportunity to hear the gospel.

## **2.4 SALVATION AND THE REFORMATION**

The debate about how believers are justified featured prominently in reformation theology. Since the time of Anselm and Abelard, Western Soteriology has been dominated by the legal and moral models of salvation. The reformers re-interpreted the legal notion of salvation inherited from medieval scholasticism on the basis of the justification by faith through grace.<sup>212</sup> In pietism and revivalism, salvation is the conquest of the godless state through conversion and transformation for those who are converted. However, in ascetic and liberal Protestantism, salvation is the conquest of “special sins” and progress toward moral perfection. Nonetheless, the question of life in the ultimate sense has not disappeared in the later groups, except in some forms of theological humanism.<sup>213</sup>

### **MARTIN LUTHER**

Martin Luther (1483-1546) challenged the Catholicism of his time by arguing that grace is not a fluid or power dispensed by the church but the free bestowal of the Spirit of God who nonetheless condescends to meet us wherever the Word is truly proclaimed and the sacraments rightly administrated.

Luther maintained that the sacraments do not work “*ex opera operato* (the view that the efficacy of a sacrament does not depend on the spiritual goodness of the one who administers it; rather God’s grace makes it a sacrament) but can have a powerful effect

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<sup>212</sup> Akrong, *Salvation in African Christianity*, 5.

<sup>213</sup> Theologically, the term humanism indicates the high value that Christianity places on humans as created and redeemed by God. Humanism is a philosophical or religious viewpoint that emphasizes human values, worth and achievement. It is sometimes used in contrast to the theological viewpoint that gives God the place of supreme value.

when they are united with the preaching of the Word and laid hold of by the Spirit as he communicates the meaning and impact of the Word to the hearts of believers.”<sup>214</sup> Luther disagreed with the notion that salvation comes through outward means such as the word, the sacraments and good works. We therefore understand from Luther that salvation that is brought through such means is an attempt of seeking self –salvation that contradicts the biblical teaching.

Luther maintained that faith transports us out of ourselves into the promises of Jesus Christ, which are found in Holy Scripture and which never deceive. Central to his theological insights is the doctrine of “justification by faith alone.” He clearly indicated that faith has a personal rather than a purely historical, reference, and concerns trust in the promises of God and unites us to Christ.

According to Alister E. McGrath “the doctrine of justification by faith” thus does not mean that the sinner is justified because he or she had faith. This would be to treat faith as a human action or work. In actual fact, McGrath maintained that the justification of the sinner is based upon the grace of God, and is received through faith.”<sup>215</sup>

I can conclude that in Luther’s theological insights the doctrine of justification by faith alone is the affirmation of God’s sole activity necessary for salvation. And so I can declare faith as a gift of God in itself rather than human effort or action.

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<sup>214</sup> Bloesch, 49.

<sup>215</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 45 -457.

Luther's understanding of imputed righteousness which was developed by Melancthon into the concept generally referred to as "forensic justification" emphasized that, the sinner is pronounced righteous under God's judgment in the heavenly court, in *foro divino*, hence 'forensic'.<sup>216</sup> This led to a sharp distinction between justification and sanctification (regeneration).<sup>217</sup> The concept of law also emerged which suggests salvific requirements of the individual rather than participation by the power of the Holy Spirit. This led to the view that justification by faith alone renders faith into work and subsequently resulted in the attack on the reformers' theology. Those who opposed this view thought that, making justification conditional upon faith alone grossly overestimate faith as the sole human virtue at the expense of all other human virtues.<sup>218</sup> Thus for Luther, justification is the righteousness imparted directly from God.<sup>219</sup>

Both Augustine and Luther believed that God graciously gives sinful human beings, a righteousness which justifies them. The question then arises: where is the location of that righteousness? St. Augustine maintained that it was to be found within believers but Luther argued that it remained outside believers. Augustine goes on to argue that the righteousness in question is internal, while Luther insists it is external. Commenting on the views of Augustine, it is obvious that God bestows justifying righteousness upon the sinner, in such a way that it becomes part of his or her person, although it is originating from outside the sinner.

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<sup>216</sup> Hastings et al., 363.

<sup>217</sup> Sanctification (Gr. *Hagiasmos*, Lat. *Sanctification*) is the process or result of God's continuing work in Christian believers through the power of the Holy Spirit. In Protestant theology, this occurs after justification and is growth in grace and holiness of life marked by good works; Regeneration (Gr. *Palingenesia*, Lat. *Regeneratio*, "new birth," "new life") is the action of the Holy Spirit, who transforms the lives of those given the gift of faith so that they may experience a "new birth" and salvation through Jesus Christ (Titus 3:5).

<sup>218</sup> Hastings et al., 363.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*

Luther maintains that the righteousness in question remains outside the sinner when he wrote that it is an “alien righteousness” (*iustitia aliena*). God treats, or “reckons,” this righteousness as if it were part of the sinner’s person. Luther again stated: “There are two kinds of Christian righteousness, just as man’s sin is of two kinds. The first is alien righteousness, which is the righteousness of another, instilled from without. This is the righteousness of Christ by which he justifies through faith, as it is written in I Cor. 1[:30]: “Whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption...

The second is self righteousness which is justifying one’s own actions as being virtuous. It is a personal effort at receiving justification from God through one’s own effort to be morally righteous”<sup>220</sup>

## JOHN CALVIN

Calvin’s discussion on justification reflects his disagreement over the concept of ‘forensic justification.’ He therefore, sets to restore a proper balance. In the first place, of all the Reformers, John Calvin (1509-64) made the sharpest distinction and insisted that faith as such cannot contribute anything whatsoever to our justification— *nihil afferens nostrum ad conciliandum Dei gratiam*. He re-iterated however that, Faith is not a *habitus* nor a quality of grace infused into the believer,<sup>221</sup> but if we believe, then we come to God quite empty and God has to close God’s eyes to the feebleness of our faith, as indeed is the case. Second, Calvin was concerned that, any attempt to identify the ‘righteousness of

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<sup>220</sup> Timothy Lull, ed. *Martin Luther’s Basic Theological writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 135 – 136.

<sup>221</sup> Gal.3:16 NRSV.

God' with 'righteousness from God' will fail to perceive that; we are not justified based on the extent and adequacy of our faith, but on the human righteousness of Christ.<sup>222</sup>

While Luther interpreted justification as a righteousness imparted directly from God, Calvin established an objective focus on the righteousness of God, in terms of Christ's human righteousness when he writes:

The righteousness of God in Christ was emphatically not a divine righteousness infused into Christ but a genuinely human righteousness. As the Second Adam, Christ assumes our humanity and thereby realizes and fulfils all righteousness in our place and on our behalf as the truly human righteousness of the one who is flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. Human justification is established in the person of our kinsman redeemer who thereby restores us to our lost inheritance: righteous communion with God.<sup>223</sup>

In the light of Calvin's statement cited above, it can be argued that our justification is not by merit. For that reason there is no point in inquiring about the completeness of our faith. It is clear from Calvin that if faith was to be a virtue, a power and achievement of our man, and if as such it was to be called a way of salvation, then the way was opened up for the antinomian. The libertarians even believe that a dispensation from all "human works" was both permitted and commanded. But then, the objective of Roman critics was that in the Reformation *sola fide* was wildly overestimated at the expense of all others. Barth

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<sup>222</sup> Adrian Hastings et al., 363.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

wrote: "even at the present day there is still cause most definitely to repudiate this misinterpretation, for which the Pauline text is not in any sense responsible."<sup>224</sup>

Justifying faith therefore makes the believer to link up with the righteousness of Christ and be justified on its basis. We are righteous by the imputation of a merciful God. John Calvin insisted that salvation is found only in the Church, the community where Christ is acknowledged and proclaimed. The church is necessary to introduce believers to salvation and to preserve them in the faith. "Apart from the body of Christ and the fellowship of the godly, there can be no hope of reconciliation with God. Hence in the creed we profess to believe in 'The Catholic Church and the forgiveness of sins' ... Hence, also, a departure from the Church is an open renouncement of external salvation."<sup>225</sup>

Calvin insisted that the preacher is a means of grace, since it is through his or her instrumentality that Christ bestows his blessings in order to save those he leads to faith. The preaching itself ought indeed to be the ministry of salvation and the whole of its power and efficacy depend on God. Therefore, we may have to praise God whenever God's Word is proclaimed to us.

Calvin affirmed the role of instruments or means of grace and insisted that it is the spirit alone who saves and redeems. Though the spirit acts in conjunction with, and sometimes in and through outward instrumentality, he could even declare our salvation. Our salvation is not only effected by God, but it also begun, continued and is perfected by

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, 33:24. Trans. William Pingle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1852), 3:42-43.

God without any contribution of our own. This is certainly true because the Spirit has chosen us (preachers) as his vessels to distribute the graces of the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ.<sup>226</sup> This presupposes that the Spirit of God acts irresistibly within us to achieve our salvation and that our faith and obedience are a result of God's eternal predestination, which we cannot effectively oppose though we can willingly acclaim and celebrate. Calvin writes: "... justified by faith is he who, excluded from the righteousness of works, grasps the righteousness of Christ through faith, and clothed in it, appears in God's sight not as a sinner but as a righteous man. We therefore can explain justification simply as the acceptance with which God receives us into his favor as righteous people. This acceptance consists of remission of sins and the imputations of Christ's righteousness."<sup>227</sup>

#### THE ARMINIAN- CALVINISM DEBATE

The major ideological opponent of Calvinism was Arminianism which is the approach to the doctrine of God and God's salvation that had its origin with Jacobus Arminius (1560 – 1609), a Dutch theological professor at Leiden University, who departed from the Reformed faith on a number of "important points."

The doctrines of Arminianism were articulated in the conviction that the teaching of the successors of John Calvin in the Calvinist churches was developing in an unsatisfactory and unbiblical way. The doctrines were set forth in the Remonstrance (1610), a document which taught that God eternally elected in Christ all who will believe in Christ, that

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<sup>226</sup> Bloesch, 51.

<sup>227</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Ed. John T. Mc Neill (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, MCMLX), 726 – 727.

Christ died for every person, that each believer must be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, that it is possible to resist the grace of God, and therefore that the possibility of falling completely from grace must be seriously considered.

In summary, Arminius taught:

1. Election based on foreseen faith
2. The universal merits of Christ
3. The free will of man due to only partial depravity
4. The resistibility of grace, and
5. The possibility of a lapse from grace

Arminianism held that election is conditional on faith, and Christ died for all people, and people cannot save themselves or do good without grace and that grace is resistible. Arminianism is also used by two English theological movements. The first associated with Archbishop Laud in the 1620s and 1630s, and the second with John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church. Methodist teaching is often called Arminianism. Interestingly, the Arminian – Calvinism conflict became so severe that it led the Netherlands to the brink of civil war (1555-1585).

In 1617 the synod of Dort was called by the orthodox Calvinists to respond to those articles of Arminianism and also to resolve the Arminian – Calvinism conflict. The synod subsequently developed the canons which absolutely rejected Arminianism and biblically

set forth the Reformed doctrine on these points, now popularly called "the five points of Calvinism".<sup>228</sup>

1. **Total Depravity** is the belief that humanity is dead in trespasses and sins and totally unable to save him or herself. Many adherents of this point went further to claim that human beings cannot even desire a relationship with God apart from God's working in their hearts. It is claimed that God must regenerate a person before he or she can even desire to come to Christ.<sup>229</sup>
2. **Unconditional Election**, also known as "predestination" or "foreordination," is the belief that in eternity past God chose or elected certain people to obtain salvation. Unconditional Election consists of two aspects: single and double predestination. Single predestination is the view that God predestines or elects some to salvation by means of a positive decree while those who are not saved condemn themselves because of their sin. The unsaved are "passed over" in that they remain in their sin. However, double predestination or reprobation is the teaching that God, in eternity past, selected some people to go to heaven and others to go to hell, and there is nothing anyone can do to change God's election. For instance, if one is elected for heaven, one will go to heaven regardless of what one does, and if one is elected for hell, there is no possibility of one ever being saved.<sup>230</sup>
3. **Limited Atonement**: the Calvinists teaching that Jesus did not die for the sins of the entire world, but that he instead only died for those that he elected to go to

<sup>228</sup> This was contained in a sermon on the "The Meaning of Predestination" by John H. Leith, a Presbyterian pastor at Montreat in 1966.

<sup>229</sup> Rom.3: 11-12; John 6: 44, 65 NRSV.

<sup>230</sup> Eph.1:4-5, II Thess.2:13, I Peter 2:8 and Rom.9:22-23 NRSV.



heaven. The argument is that for Christ's work on the cross to be "efficacious," it must work for all for whom he died, and that he could not have shed his blood for those who are lost. Some Calvinists have gone to great lengths to explain this point that Jesus died for all, but does not pray for all, or that his death theoretically could save everyone, but is effective only for the elect. The end result is the same in each case that Jesus only died effectively for some people and not the whole world.<sup>231</sup>

4. **Irresistible Grace:** this doctrine teaches that God will draw to God-self those whom God elected, regardless of their rebellion against God. This belief says that human beings cannot resist the drawing of God to God self. God causes the elect to believe the gospel, even though they may not be aware of this fact.<sup>232</sup>
5. **Perseverance of the Saints,** also known as "eternal security," is the doctrine that attracts people to Calvinism, because it is the belief that the elect cannot lose or give up his or her salvation. Because salvation is entirely God's work, and not human's.<sup>233</sup>

These essential doctrines concerning salvation which Presbyterians and some other denominations cling to are summed up in the acronym TULIP, which stands for Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace and Perseverance of the Saints. Though we cannot claim that these points completely embrace the scope of Calvinism, they are best referred as the five errors of Arminianism.

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<sup>231</sup> Matt. 1:21, John 10:11; 26-27, Acts 20:28 and John 15:13 NRSV.

<sup>232</sup> Rom. 9<sup>th</sup> 15, John 6:37; 44; 65, Acts 13:48 and John 15:16 NRSV.

<sup>233</sup> II Peter 1:10, Heb. 3:6; 14, Col. 1:23 and Rom. 11:29 NRSV.

## **THE DISPUTE BETWEEN JACOB ARMINIUS AND FRANCIS GOMAR**

One leading opponent of Arminius was Francis Gomar, (1563 – 1641), a “Flemish Calvinist” theologian, who sharply disagreed with Arminius on doctrinal basis. Arminius stated his objection to the Belgic Confession of 1561 (A thirty seven-article of statement of faith composed by Calvinistic Dutch Protestants who sort religious liberation from Philip IV. After it was revised at the Synod of Dort in 1619, it became the primary confession of Reformed Churches) and called for the revision of the Heidelberg confession of 1563 written by Reformed theologians Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus claiming in a letter to Gomar that “it was at variance with the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, made God the author of sin, hindered sorrow for sin, lessened the desire for good works, and took away the fear and trembling of working out our salvation.”<sup>234</sup> Gomar however considered this as ‘error.’

In the debate, Arminius started with the question of predestination, but Gomar started with justification by faith. The discussion also dealt with whether faith is itself the righteousness by which we are justified or whether the righteousness is imputed; whether faith is the cause or the effect of election; whether grace is resistible; and whether the true believer will persevere. Arminius was undecided about the last but opposed Gomar in all the rest. I can deduce from this dispute that, predestination leads to faith and salvation.

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<sup>234</sup> [http://encyclopedia.farlex.Com/Gomar, + Francis](http://encyclopedia.farlex.Com/Gomar,+Francis)

## **KARL BARTH AND THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REFORMERS**

Karl Barth believed that for us to be justified by faith alone we have to recognize and confess the reality of God. He maintained that God is gracious to mankind because God has the “power to do and exercise it”<sup>235</sup> – sovereign power. Therefore, faith is absolutely necessary for the one justified by God, yet our justification is by faith alone. Barth taught that justifying ourselves with “good works” in order to be saved amounts to false faith.<sup>236</sup> Barth does not consider faith to be the supreme form of self justification. But to play off faith in an attempt to be justified in the form of fidelity to the law and good works is also “merely nonsensical.”<sup>237</sup>

Barth considers justification by faith only on account of the righteousness of God. As discussed earlier, Martin Luther called this righteousness “alien righteousness” of Jesus Christ. Barth went on to argue that faith is wholly and utterly humility but not a self chosen humility<sup>238</sup>. “It is not the humility of pessimism, skepticism, defeatism, misanthropy, weariness with the world and oneself and life. These are possibilities which a man can choose for himself, and in fact often does choose. They cannot be substituted for humility of faith.”<sup>239</sup>

Barth considers faith as obedient humility, which has to be excluded from any co-operation of human action. But Karl Barth maintained that obedience and humility are the negative form of faith because it is human and external and that the redemption in Christ

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<sup>235</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics Vol. IV* (Edinburgh: T&T Clarke, 1961), 611.

<sup>236</sup> Mk.9: 24 NRSV.

<sup>237</sup> Barth, 611.

<sup>238</sup> Col.2:23 NRSV.

<sup>239</sup> Barth, 611.

includes the reconstitution and renewal of the covenant relationship between human beings and God. The following questions then arose: what is the relationship between Christ's objective fulfillment of righteousness and the subjective righteousness of the faithful? How does the righteousness of the life of Christ relate to the life of the church as a whole and to the lives of individual believers?<sup>240</sup>

Barth held the two questions in balance while placing the emphasis firmly on the objective Christological pole as denoting a completely, unconditional, and once and for all event. He maintained that, any emphasis on subjective justification must derive from the objective and Christological content of the doctrine of justification. He further argued that, the human appropriation of righteousness, whether by good works or some subjective act of faith, it must not be seen as a condition of the significance or extent of Christ's establishment of righteousness on behalf of humanity. This position is believed to be accepted in both Catholic and Protestant theology.<sup>241</sup>

Barth's concept of salvation which relates redemption to creation illustrates a shift in contemporary soteriological theory, which views salvation more in terms of restitution. This emerging perspective of salvation conceives of the atonement as an aspect of the process of salvation which is much larger and more inclusive than the idea of salvation understood exclusively in moral and legal terms.<sup>242</sup> Akrong commenting on F. R. Barry

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<sup>240</sup> Andrian Hastings et al., 362.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Akrong, "Salvation in African Christianity," 5.

describes this view as an ontological view of salvation that sees redemption as new movement or as an aspect of divine creativity.<sup>243</sup>

Paul Tillich conceives that salvation is divine creativity which can be said of Karl Rhaner's anthropological or ontological view of salvation. Johnnes Metz also perceived salvation in the same dimension, which could be described as "social dimension of grace because, according to him, "salvation is mediated through the whole of creation, and human history and not just the personal or existential orientation of faith."<sup>244</sup> It is believed therefore that redemption in Christ brought about a new reality which is the unity of the realms of nature, grace and glory.

In conclusion, I can say that, in the theology of Karl Bath, all good works, merit and the like which are excluded from justification denies the competence, the relevance, the power and the value of all *mundane* action. But the two propositions (faith and works) mutually condition and determine each other. We therefore need to interpret them in the light of each other.

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

## **2.5 SALVATION IN CONTEMPORARY ECCLESIOLOGY**

Ever since the irruption of Pentecostal spirituality within Protestant and Roman Catholic denominations, there has been a gradual emergence of what might be called 'charismatic theology.' To be sure a lot of this theology is, and has been written at a popular level, but within the last twenty years, there has evolved a distinct theology with discernable approaches and common themes such as salvation.

In actual fact, the debate about the doctrines and dogmas of the church such as Christology, the Trinity and the like has become a thing for the seminaries. And salvation understood as eternal life after death and the questions about justification, good works, merits etc. is no longer relevant or believable in most churches today. Popular Christianity is much more concerned with the power and work of the Spirit in the life of the believer which brings about salvation in their day-to-day living.

Nonetheless, the word salvation means different things to different people in the contemporary church. For some individualistic Christians, salvation means forgiveness of sins and a one-way ticket to heaven. Such people do not see much connection between salvation and their broken marriages, racial prejudice, or economic injustice. For some Christians, salvation is only what happens when society becomes more peaceful and just. In most charismatic circles, prosperity is seen as salvation and that prosperity and salvation are in union. They also see salvation prominently as liberty, deliverance, healing, safety, protection, welfare, victory and accessibility to almost everything one wants because it teaches that the believer (especially the born again one) has prosperity by right and only the devil stands between the believer and his or her destined prosperity.

The Pentecostals concept of salvation is often primarily defined around the needs of individuals. It embraces the belief that the power of the Holy Spirit is available to deal with all the problems of Christians including protection from witchcraft; deliverance from ancestral curses and demonic presence in the life of people which prevented women from having husbands and children and vis-à-vis; traders from doing well in business; workers from getting promotion; students from passing their examinations; couples from stable marriages; and there is access to wealth creation.

In contemporary Christian theology, salvation is the fulfillment of life in relationship with God and others. It includes renewal of life and reconciliation with God; with neighbors and enemies; with oneself, and the natural world. E. Kingsley Larbi perceives salvation in Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity primarily in terms of “atonement, forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God.”<sup>245</sup>

Commenting on Paul Gifford, Larbi maintained that salvation is reacting out to things that clearly go beyond the “born again” experience to an experience that permeates the here and now life, and also promises a better tomorrow in the here after. The here and now includes liberation from problems relating to financial and economic, marriage, children, employment, family needs, lawsuits, drunkenness, education, accommodation, demons, witchcraft etc. Salvation for Pentecostals covers all spheres of life because they have an integrated view of the world, which focuses on overcoming dangers and evil powers that range against us.

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<sup>245</sup> E. Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Accra: Center for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, 2001), 407.

Contemporary African Christian theologies as discussed earlier, view salvation in a way that covers the whole person. As outlined in the preceding paragraph, examples include deliverance from the power of evil, being at peace with oneself, neighbors, environment and God. It also encompasses progress in life, good health, having children and getting the material things one needs. Sometimes, the word salvation itself is used to mean conversion and given the connotation of something that should precede these blessings or breakthrough. This African Christian understanding has been influenced by the African world view.

Generally, there must not be disruption of life that the power of the Holy Spirit cannot handle. This has therefore provided hope and ways of dealing with issues that are fundamental to the African.<sup>246</sup> The contemporary African church ought to deal with the salvation questions posed by African Christians. This point of departure of the new movements in African Christianity is the secret of the phenomenal growth of Christianity in Africa.<sup>247</sup>

The emergence of the Pentecostal churches at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century suggests there are unresolved questions facing the mission churches in Africa, such as the role of 'success' and 'prosperity' and 'faithfulness' in God's economy. This is enjoying the gifts of God which are healing and material provision that embrace holistic dimension of 'salvation' meaningful in African context. As discussed earlier, Pentecostalism in Africa seeks to address practical needs like sickness, poverty, unemployment, loneliness, evil spirits and sorcery. In order to fill the gap created by the older churches regarding

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<sup>246</sup> Akrong, "Salvation in African Christianity," 22.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

indigenous cultural practices, Pentecostals try to offer answers to some of the fundamental questions asked in their own context. They put a lot of emphasis on personal devotion and personal appropriation of power which seems to satisfy the religious aspirations of Africans. For us Africans, it is therefore, necessary to relativize the messianic question, "Who do you say that I am?" in our lives as Christians.

Kwabena Asamoah- Gyadu argues that, a systematic approach to local culture and the retention of certain cultural practices are undoubtedly major reasons for their attraction.<sup>248</sup> The concept of *Kpodzi* (mission) among the people of Ewe, which is the segregation of Christian converts from the "unbelievers," thereby preventing them from taking part in any cultural practices of the people which were considered as evil is sidelining the African culture.

Pentecostals also confront old views by declaring what they are convinced is a more powerful protection against sorcery, and a more effective healing for sickness than either the existing churches or the indigenous rituals had offered. Healing, guidance, protection from evil, acquisition of visa, successful marriage and success and prosperity are some of the practical benefits offered to faithful members of Pentecostal churches.<sup>249</sup> The strong emphasis on personal holiness through fasting and prayer among others makes them feel the presence of the Holy Spirit more closely. This gives them the needed spiritual strength to overcome life's challenges to emerge victorious. In the final analysis, I can

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<sup>248</sup> Kwabena J. Asamoah-Gyadu, "Traditional Missionary Christianity and New Religious Movements in Ghana" (M Phil Thesis, Accra: University of Ghana, 1996), 55.

<sup>249</sup> K. J. Asamoah-Gyadu, 'The Church in the African State: The Pentecostal/Charismatic Experience in Ghana,' *Journal of African Thought*, 1:2 (1998), 56.

affirm from the foregoing that, the contextualization of Pentecostal Christianity ultimately accounted for the steady growth of Pentecostal churches in Africa.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I can affirm from the foregoing that traditionally faith is the condition, and the death of Christ is the ground for salvation. Faith as a condition of salvation is obviously the belief in the promises of God revealed in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, Salvation is essentially Trinitarian. For Adam and Eve, it was faith in the promise that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent to bring salvation to the fallen race and also to defeat the tempter. In the light of the above, the Old Testament perceives faith as trust in God while the New Testament sees faith as the belief in the person and works of Jesus the Christ. The outstanding belief is that faith manifests in sacrifices and works.<sup>250</sup> In contradiction to this view, J. C. Thomas argues that although faith can be falsified by evidence, it cannot be produced or induced by any evidence or proof, no matter how strong because, faith is an epistemological incarnation through God's grace that makes us to believe in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> James 2:17, Heb.7:27; 8:6 NRSV.

<sup>251</sup> J.C. Thomas, "Christology, Creation and Falsification" in *The Ghana Bulletin of Theology* Vol. 4 No. 9. Ed. J.N. Kudadjie (Accra: Presbyterian Press, 1975), 20.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE EVE AND SALVATION**

The Eve people are an African ethnic group of 2-5 million, inhabiting the southeastern part of Ghana, known as the Volta Region and the southern parts of neighboring Togo and Benin. Geographically, Eveland lies between the Mono River to the East and the Volta River to the West. This chapter therefore investigates and analyzes the history of the Eve, their concept of salvation and life situation just before the arrival of the Christian missionaries. First, a brief general history of the Eves and the traditions of their migrations and settlements are discussed. Then attention is focused on their worldview of salvation. This introductory description provides some insight into the environment into which missionaries of the North German Mission came to work.

#### **3.0 THE HISTORY OF THE EVE**

Eves are migrant people, and it was undisputed that they all came from *Notsie*. From *Notsie*, they went in waves; some to the North; others to the East, South and the West. The Eves are both an ethnic and linguistic group. Historical research has shown that there was a small Eve enclave of Eves in the Western part of Nigeria, and through occupational migration, the Eves are found all over Ghana and Africa.

Politically, the Eve are of the major ethnic group in Ghana, who were colonized by the Germans up to the First World War and later came under the British and the French at different times in history. The Eve have not been able to form a single political unit

although they have been able to live as a cultural unit held together by one common language, Ewe; and one indigenous religion, *Mawuism* (belief in the supreme God, *Mawuga*). They also have a shared common pattern of behavior and a system of thought.

### OYO SETTLEMENT

Ewe traditions recall their migration from Oyo in Western Nigeria. Yoruba oral traditions also traced the origin of the Yoruba people to *Ile Ife* which is considered to be the heart of Oyo land where the Yoruba, also known as the *Adja* group, lived in the past. The Ewes were part of the Adja group who lived in Western Oyo. With the expansion of the Yoruba, the Adja group was forced to migrate further west in the present day Benin, what was formerly known as Dahome, and settled at Ketu to be precise.<sup>252</sup>

### KETU SETTLEMENT

At Ketu,<sup>253</sup> the Ewe lived in a walled city in an attempt to protect themselves from the frequent attacks by the Fulas who lived to the north of Ketu. Again, as a result of the persistent harassment of the Fulas, the Ewes further moved westwards in search of more fertile lands for farming and also to be free from the disturbances of the Fulas. On departing from *Ketu*, they came and settled at *Notsie* in the Republic of Togo

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<sup>252</sup> *Amedzofe* is 'the origin of man'. *Mawufe* is the home of God. *Amedzofe* is equivalent to *Ile Ife* which means 'the original home of man'.

<sup>253</sup> Attempts are made by some scholars of the Ewe history to push their origin further back to "*Belebele*" which is in turn identified with the "mythical Babel" of the Bible. However, such claims can be easily dismissed as attempts by people to establish a biblical ancestry for the Ewe. In any case, the early versions of the tradition that were recorded make no such claims.

## NOTSIE SETTLEMENT

It is believed that, like Ketu, the Ewe lived in another fortified walled city.<sup>254</sup> The early kings of Notsie ruled well and the kingdom expanded. Trouble however began when King Agokoli ascended the throne<sup>255</sup>. He was tyrannical and wicked. Various accounts of his alleged wickedness have been preserved. He was alleged to have requested his subjects to knead clay into cacti and thorns and demanded that his subjects make ropes of clay etc. However, this characterization of Agokoli has been challenged recently by historians such as T.N. Gayibor who alleged that the tyranny of Agokoli was nothing more than the determination of the king to assume the essentials of power rather than be a mere tool in the hands of the elders of *Notsie*.<sup>256</sup>

As the rule of King Agokoli became unbearable, some sections of the Ewe, therefore, decided to escape in order to search for a new settlement. They sought for advice from an old man in the community, called, Tegli, who was believed to be highly knowledgeable. He advised the women to keep on wetting a certain part of the wall by pouring dish-washing water on it in order to make it soft to break through. Further to that, they were to escape amidst a hilarious drumming and dancing at night. Subsequently, on the night of their departure, the men were to bore a large escape route in the affected part of the wall, while the women and the children were given the preferred opportunity to escape first. They were followed by the old man, Tegli, who offered a prayer by asking for the

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<sup>254</sup> Notsie was also called *Glime*, i.e., within the walls or *kpome* which is an allusion to the excessive heat of the location. They were also believed to have settled at *Hahome* which was near the river Haho and *Hogbefé*, meaning a place of migration.

<sup>255</sup> The various accounts of the tradition differ as to whether Agokoli was the second, third or even the seventh king of *Notsie*. It is also believed that he was the last king to rule the kingdom. The Ewe who were known as *Dogboawo* have established Adja kingdoms such as those of Allada, Abomey and Fon among others during their earlier settlements in Dahaomey

<sup>256</sup> T. N. Gayibor, *Migrations—Civilization, Les Ewe du Sud—Togo* (P hD Diss., Paris, 1975), 152.

direction of *Mawu* in their escape agenda. Those who were doing the drumming and the dancing including the rest of the men left at last. This is how the Eve escaped from Notsie to their present settlements. The Eve calls this historical experience as "*dodo le glime*."<sup>257</sup> It is believed that, the people walked backwards during their escape from Notsie to avoid any trace of the direction of their foot prints in order to confuse the army of Agokoli in case they were to be pursued. The understanding was that, it will look like people invading the city rather than escaping from it. By this, it became difficult for Agokoli to know their where about.

Though traditions are silent on the dates of the migrations and the settlements, it is believed that most of the settlements had already been founded by the beginning of the 14th century. It is also believed that, the people of Eve were already established in their new home by 1677. However, since all the people did not migrate the same time, one cannot pinpoint any one date for the events. On the whole, it is likely that the Eve began to settle in the present Volta Region of Ghana at least by the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Dates which are very much earlier than this have been suggested by Adu Boahen and Gayibor. Basing himself on what purports to be linguistic evidence, Adu Boahen has asserted that the Eve, and also the Ga-Adangbe entered their present home much earlier than the fourteenth or fifteenth century. Gayibor also sets the exodus from Notsie at a time between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries. He considers the period of early eighteenth century suggested by Cornevin and that of 1200 suggested by Adzomada as

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<sup>257</sup> Rev. Prof. Noah Komla Dzobo told this story during my maiden interview session with him at his residence in Ho on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2008. Prof. Dzobo is an Anthropologist, Philosopher of Religion and Educational Psychologist. He is a former Moderator of Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana.

both too late and too early<sup>258</sup>. However, contemporary research has suggested 1720 as the period of the escape from *Notsie*. This escape and the subsequent resettlement are commemorated in an annual festival, known as the “*Hogbetsotso Za*.”

Unlike the political and social organization of the Akan, where matrilineal rule prevails, the Ewe are essentially a patrilineal people. The founder of a community becomes the chief and is usually succeeded by his paternal relatives. The largest independent political unit is the chieftaincy, the head of which is essentially a ceremonial figure called *Togbe* or *fia* who is assisted by a council of elders (*Ametsitsiawo*). Chiefs rule over a population of few hundred people in one or two villages or several numbers of suburbs. Unlike the Asante among the Akan, no Ewe chief gained hegemonic power over its neighbour.

### 3.1 THE EWE CONCEPT OF SALVATION

It can be considered necessary at this point, to discuss in some detail, the salient beliefs and practices of the Ewe, which affirm their understanding of salvation. The Ewe indigenous religion can be described as a “world-affirming” religion that aims at achieving the fullness of life here and now and in the life after. It was established during the field work that, to achieve the supposed good life, it is important for the individual to be in the right relationship with the spiritual world. The views collected at the field of research show that, salvation for the Ewe is primarily the ability of the supernatural to rescue people from painful occurrences such as sickness, curse, poverty and death, among others, in order to lead them to good health, prosperity and fulfillment. The saved

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<sup>258</sup> D. E. K. Amenumey, *The Ewe in Pre-Colonial Times* (Accra: Sedco Publishing Ltd, 1986), 5-7.

life among the Ewe is referred to as *Dagbe* as discussed in chapter one of this work. *Dagbe* is the experience of relative tranquility by the people, be it physical or spiritual. It is a life devoid of evil and is blissfully eternal. This is shown in the day to day greetings of the people. When visitors greet, the first question to be asked by the host is *dagbea?* It literally means, is the mission of the visit a peaceful one? As discussed already, other concepts that connote the same idea include *fafa* (peace) and *blibonyenye* (wholeness). The Ewes therefore believe that, it is the responsibility of the ancestors and the spirits to intervene to prevent anything that works against their welfare. And as discussed in the foregoing, beyond the physical is the spiritual which involves the hereafter or the after life.

It was revealed during the field work for this study that, essential to the Ewe concept of salvation is the concern to find the means by which one can experience the good life. This assumed good life seems to be under the threat of evil spirits that manifest in the activities of *bayifowo*, *adzewo* (witches) and *trowo* (fetishes) among, others. They act as agents of destruction and make life precarious, difficult and a frightening journey. It was also established during the field work that, as a result of the foregoing assertion, the main concern of the Ewe is to obtain powers that can protect him/her from evil spirits and to secure his/her welfare. These powers also help the Ewe to maintain good relationships that bring unity and safety. This is reflected even in the celebration of festivals such as *Tedudu* (Yam festival) to signify abundance of food leading to the sustaining of the conditions of good existence contrary to the wish of evil spirits. All of this discussion about the concept of salvation among the Ewe can be applied in personal, cosmic and social terms.

## **SALVATION AS IT PERTAINS TO THE INDIVIDUAL PERSON**

The historical escape of the Ewe peoples from *Notsie* under the tyrannical rule of King Agokoli is a dramatic salvific event and also, an act of deliverance. This leads to the assertion that the Ewe understands salvation not in terms of going to heaven as in Christianity. In actual fact, the Ewe concept of salvation does not originate with their worldview. Thus, for the Ewe, the good life is the life devoid of unemployment, poverty, sickness, among others. This is explained in the emphasis on material things and benefits by the Africanist churches (Pentecostals etc.).

Birgit Meyer emphasizes the point that, salvation is conceptualized as the exorcism of evil spirits in Ewe indigenous religion. Even though, this is not necessarily the case, because, *dede* is also used to translate 'deliverance' from all life negating forces, her understanding is confirmed by the fact that the terms *xoxo* (from *xo*, to receive, to get, to save) and *dede* (from *de*, to take away from) are both used to translate "salvation."<sup>259</sup> This belief best expresses *Dagbe* as the preservation of life, deliverance of life from destruction, and protection from evil. The goal of *Dagbe*, which is *nutifafa* (peace), embraces peace of mind, well being, harmony, prosperity and fulfillment in all aspects of life. This involves protection, restoration, and preservation of life from both physical and spiritual threats such witches, sorcerers, poverty and vengeful spirits.

In conclusion, it can be argued that, salvation in the context of Ewe thought is the liberation of the individual from life threatening forces, be it spiritual or material, such as possession by evil spirits, sickness, hunger, childlessness, broken relationships, poverty;

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<sup>259</sup> Meyer, 165.

or, living in some form of captivity or bondage. These experiences contradict the good life as known to the Eve. For the Eve, the good life is the experience of good health, general wellbeing, prosperity and victory over one's enemies. This liberating act can only be affected by *Mawuga*, and in some special cases, the ancestors and other deities. Salvation is also becoming an ancestor which is the ultimate goal of existence. This can only be experienced by the Soul or the Spirit, unlike the Christian concept of the resurrection of the body. It has been found out through research that, one of the reasons why most Eves would want to do what is expected of them and avoid what is forbidden is to, at least, have a place among *togbuiwo* (ancestors). For one to qualify as an ancestor, one need to, a) lead good and exemplary life on earth; b) experience a natural death; c) and be given the prescribed traditional burial. These requirements are basic to ancestorhood among the Eve. Indeed, the burial rites of the Eve point to their concept of the hereafter.<sup>260</sup> Yet, those who practiced evil such as witchcraft and sorcery; or have died an unnatural death, such as through accident; or were not given the required traditional burial, are believed to turn into evil spirits. These spirits hover around to cause calamities on the lives of the people. It is however, not clear, how long they continue to wander in the world. It can finally be said that salvation is expressed concretely in Eve indigenous religion.

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<sup>260</sup> People are buried with cooking utensils, food stuffs, ingredients and beddings for use in the next world. Sometimes, these items are placed on the grave. Prominent people like chiefs used to be buried with their beloved wives and maidservants in the olden days in order to continue their services in the ancestral world. These people were executed and their heads buried with their "master." As intermediaries, libation prayers were offered very often through them to *Mawuga*. In actual fact, ancestor reverence is prominent among the Eve. Messages are even given to the dead to be delivered to family members who have long gone. This is why they are referred to as *togbuiwo* by the Eves.

## **SOCIAL**

Socially, the Ewe sees salvation as the protection of social structures and institutions and values against the forces that work against the stability of the community. Salvation therefore, embraces the element of receiving something good and life saving acts. This includes prosperity, good health, and feeling free (freedom), moral and spiritual integrity of the entire community. This affirmation may also be attributed to Mbiti's philosophy of communality of the African when he attributes the existence of an individual to the pre-existence of the larger community.<sup>261</sup>

*Dagbe* for the Ewe is the experiencing of well-being in every area of life, and the negation of experiences like trouble, poverty, sickness and death. It is also seeking deliverance from all forces that negate the experiencing of material, spiritual and emotional well-being.<sup>262</sup> This is because, generally, Ewes believe that, evil forces are real and capable of destroying human life.

From the literal expressions of the Ewe, especially that of libation prayers, it is suggested that *Mawu* (God) is the source of 'man's salvation and the dispensing of salvation in the world. However, this act of salvation is carried out by worshipful spirits which are the source of healthy existence. Thus, there is no doubt that morality and spirituality are the conditions for experiencing salvation in the Ewe context. There are spirits that help the individual to strive for the good. One is therefore held responsible for qualifying or not qualifying for experiencing salvation. And whoever fails at one time or period to

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<sup>261</sup> "I am because, we are."

<sup>262</sup> Adadevor, 102-113.

experience salvation has a way of re-admission to the state of experiencing it. This is done through the means of sacrifice called *nuxe* (to pay a price). The aim of *nuxe* ritual of absolution is to free the individual from the broken state so that one can once again experience *Dagbe*. The head of the *nuxe* animal is usually offered in sacrifice to the deity. The belief is that, the head of the animal has to replace the head of the offender in order to deliver one from any impending calamities associated with the offense.

However, people do not attribute all human failure to moral shortcomings on the part of the individual. They insist that, there are individuals who experience prolonged suffering caused by evil spirits even though they have met all the moral conditions for experiencing the good life (*Dagbe*). Therefore, the conclusion is that, not all moral suffering is indicative of moral failure. In the same vein, in Christianity, one can be saved and not having material well-being.

Adadevor agrees with Elom Dovlo who conceives of *Mawu* as the ultimate source of salvation, and the ancestors as custodians of morals and good and prosperous living. Adadevor further posits that the ancestors offer salvation to the people in both the present and future sense of the word. He conceives of salvation as the liberation from all forms of material bondage, and finally, joining the company of the ancestors. This view suggests that, people live their lives in the present with the hope of achieving the state of ancestorhood after death in *tsiefe*. The word *tsiefe* is derived from the two words, *tsi* and *fe* or *afe*. The word *tsi* means 'to remain', and *fe* or *afe* means 'place or home'. *Tsiefe*



## **COSMIC**

For the Ewe, salvation also means the protection and preservation of the universe (Cosmos). One of the key respondents during the field work in the person of Togbe Kofi Eleblu of Mafi Adidome was of the opinion that, cosmic evils occur only when people break a taboo or when there were ritual errors caused by the ritual functionaries. These ritual errors are always prevented through the regular performance of the rituals by traditional priests, elders or chiefs as the case may be. The cosmic evil can be visited on the entire community as a result of the breaking of a taboo. These dimensions and avenues of evil as opposed to *Dagbe* invading human life makes evil very concrete and close that it must be prevented or controlled through ritual means. Salvation is therefore, an existential experience of the individual, society and the entire universe.

### **3.2 THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE EUE**

To begin with, although the initial attempt to evangelise Ghana (then Gold Coast) by the Roman Catholic Mission in the fifteen century had been a failure, Christianity had firmly been established in the year 1828 by the Basel Evangelical Mission Society. However, the people of the Eveland had their earliest contact with Christianity in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century with the arrival of the Bremen Missionaries who came to introduce the Christian Gospel to them. The plan of the *Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft* (The North German Mission Society)<sup>265</sup> was to establish the Christian faith among the people of the Eveland in accordance with Jesus' command to his disciples to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And

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<sup>265</sup> Later, it came to be called 'The Bremen Mission.'

remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."<sup>266</sup> In compliance with this divine directive, the North German Mission Society established a special group in Hamburg dedicated to proclaiming Christ's gospel to parts of the world where it had not reached.

It is however clear that, the missionary group itself was formed in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, specifically, 11<sup>th</sup> April 1838 with the aim of sending Missionaries to evangelize the heathens. "These societies were inspired directly by the Pietist Movement and the Christian Awakening which occurred in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and spread wide in Europe and U.S.A. These movements were themselves the result of the Reformation which had taken place in the early 16<sup>th</sup> Century, but which had many long-lasting effects"<sup>267</sup>

The first group of missionaries who came to work among the people of the EVELAND was part of the students trained at the Society's Mission School in Hamburg under the inspection of Johann Harting Brauer. The school was established on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1837 and the course lasted four years. Most of the students were North Germans who had previously learned a trade or had been farmers.<sup>268</sup> John Agbeti indicates that, the initial plan of the missionary society was to embark on mission work in New Zealand and India where their pioneer missionaries were sent in 1842 and 1843 respectively. Later, they added a third mission field of Gabon in West Africa. The first group of missionaries who were sent to Gabon includes Lorenz Wolf of Bingen on the Rhine, 26 years old; Luuer

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<sup>266</sup> Matthew 28:19-20 NRSV.

<sup>267</sup> Gilbert Ansre (Ed), *Evangelical Presbyterian Church: 150 Years of Evangelization and Development 1847-1997* (Ho, Ghana: E. P. Church Press, 1997), 18.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*



Bultman of Vahr near Bremen, 28 years old; James Graff of Jutland in Denmark, 32 years old; and Karl Flato of Horn near Bremen, 25 years old. By profession, they were tradesmen such as carpenters and leather and shoe makers.<sup>269</sup> They were the first group of missionaries sent by the North German Missionary Society (Bremen Mission) to Africa to locate a suitable mission area, free from slave traders and where the climate was friendly.<sup>270</sup> The conditions and guidelines for missionary work were those contained in the Zahn's constitution. Zahn was the Bremen Mission Inspector from 1864 to 1900.

The above mentioned group started their missionary journey by sea on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 1847 when they left Germany for Gabon in West Africa. Agbeti reiterates that, when the journey started, Lorenz Wolf recorded: "We set sail. As far as the eyes could see, it beheld ships, O in full sail, setting course for the sea. It seems to me as it was war time, as though all were frigates in a hurry to make some conquest, and indeed they are all out for war conquest, the conquest of trade and we are going with them. When we saw the open sea for the first time we sat in the prow of our ship and greeted it with Luther's hymn: 'A safe strong-hold our God Still.'<sup>271</sup>

They landed at Cape Coast, in the Gold Coast (presently Ghana), on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 1847 where they were received by the Wesley Missionary Rev. Thomas Burch Freeman. After two weeks' abortive attempt at Gabon by Bultman and Wolf where Bultman eventually passed away, Wolf returned to Cape Coast. At his arrival, he was informed about the demise of Flato too. Thus, only Wolf and Graff were left. They were really dismayed but

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<sup>269</sup> J. Kofi Agbeti, *West African history- Christian missions and Church Foundations: 1482-1919* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986), 81.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>271</sup> Agbeti, 81.

not discouraged. Their plan was to locate a mission field suitable to them in the Gold Coast. Accordingly, when Wolf and Graff learnt that since 1828 their counterparts, the Basel Missionaries had settled at Christianburg which was about hundred miles east from Cape Coast, they left Cape Coast to settle at the Christianburg. At their arrival, they sought advice from the Basel Missionaries in respect of virgin mission fields to engage their attention.<sup>272</sup> They were subsequently advised and encouraged to turn to the Eveland.

At the time of the missionaries' stay at Christianburg, there were trade links between the people of Peki and the people of Accra near Christiansburg where the people of Peki used to buy European commodities such as guns and ammunition. Before then, the Basel Missionaries had established a school at Osu in Accra where Prince Nyangamagu, a son of Kwadzo Dei Tutu Yao II, King of Krepi was attending. When the Prince got wind of the fact that Wolf and Graff were looking for a place to begin missionary activity, he gave the assurance that his father who was then a powerful King ruling over hundred territories would be glad to receive them for mission work in his kingdom. The Prince eventually extended an invitation to the missionaries (Wolf and Graff) to go with him, to Peki. After Wolf and Graff agreed to travel to Peki, the Prince sent word to his father and the king accepted to host them. The king then sent bearers (carriers) to Christianburg to bring the missionaries to Peki. Wolf and the bearers and the Prince started their journey on 10<sup>th</sup> November, 1847, leaving Graff at Christianburg. They arrived at Peki on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 1847. That day marked the birth of the Church (Evangelical Presbyterian Church) in Eveland. Wolf's first sermon was based on Psalm 22:22.<sup>273</sup> Research has shown that, further to the preaching of the Gospel, there were promotion of trade,

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<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>273</sup> "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you."

politics, education and health by the missionaries who worked among the Ewe. This led to early civilization and development of the people and communities in Eveland.

According to Wiegrabe, two new pastors from Germany, Groth and Quinius came to assist Wolf in 1849. In 1850, Mrs. Wolf also joined her husband at Peki and this brought a steady growth to the church. However, Wolf became weak and old that he decided to return home in January 1851 to receive medical attention. Groth and Quinius also decided to go with the Wolfs since they were handicapped in the absence of Wolf. Thus, they all left Peki with pain.<sup>274</sup> Wolf's condition became deteriorated on their way back to Germany and sadly, he died at the dock of the ship at Hamburg.<sup>275</sup> He was subsequently buried in his home country. This is a brief account of missionary beginnings in Eveland.

### 3.3 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I can affirm from the foregoing that geographically, the Ewe tribe is the only ethnic group that is scattered all over West Africa and the Ewe language spoken across its borders. Politically, it is one group that was colonized by the Germans, the French and the British. The rise of Ewe nationalism in both Ghana and Togo was of more of a reaction to the May 1956 plebiscite imposed by the British colonialists. That divided the Eveland between the Gold Coast and Togo. Traditionally, the cultural and religious and anthropological practices of the Ewe reflect their concept of salvation.

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<sup>274</sup> P. Wiegrabe, *Ewe Kristo Hame Nutinya: 1847-1936* (St. Louis: The Board of International Missions, 1936), 1-6.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE EWE AND CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDINGS OF SALVATION**

This chapter engages a comparative analysis of Christians' and Eves' worldview of salvation. This is a difficult task due to the fact that the documents being compared are different in nature, one literary (Christianity) and the other oral (Eve). The difficulties depend on how feasible it is to pursue a comparative analysis with different modes of data. This is because the data on the Eve was mainly accessed through oral means while that of Christianity was primarily from documented sources such as published and unpublished works and periodicals.

As a result of the above discussion, it may be argued that it is not appropriate to use the Comparative Analysis approach in studying concepts in a well documented religion such as Christianity and pre—literary type of religion like Eve indigenous religion. However, Brandford Yeboah asserts that, scholars such as Kwesi Dickson believed the Comparative Analysis is very appropriate and possible to be applied in such a study.<sup>276</sup> He clearly reiterates Kwesi Dickson's position that, the Comparative Analysis is acceptable in research, when the phenomenon has been initially studied in its own historic-religious context before applying the Comparative paradigm. Yeboah concludes that the Comparative paradigm is actually Africa's contribution to biblical studies.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Brandford Yeboah, "Worship in Ancient Israel and Traditional Africa: A Comparative Study" (M. Phil. Thesis, University of Ghana, 1994), 140-141.

<sup>277</sup> Brandford Yeboah, "The 'African Predilection for the Old Testament'—Questioning the Comparative Paradigm" in *Analecta Bruxellensia* (Brussels: Revue annuelle de la Faculte Universitaire de Theologie Protestante de Bruxelles, Vol. 8, 2003), 147.

We have established, in the course of this work that a vital element in the two religions under study (Eve Indigenous Religion and Christianity) is salvation. In each of these religions in question, the concept of salvation serves as an indispensable response to the yearning for the good life. The followers of the respective religions are also conscious about what will happen to their souls; this denotes existence after death. Hence, both religions affirm the need for salvation, and are equally concerned about it. Therefore, at this stage, the similarities and differences in the Eve's and Christians' understanding of God and salvation will be probed. This comparative analysis will offer a new perspective on religious pluralism that recognizes different religious ends in both religions.

It is clear that there are some basic striking similarities and differences in the way Christians and Eve traditional people perceive salvation. Their beliefs and practices that are similar, in respect of salvation, will be critically examined and analyzed through the application of the comparative paradigm. The following reflect some of the salient similarities and differences in the nature and meaning of salvation in both religions:

#### **4.0 GOD AND CREATION**

To begin with, it has been established in this study that, both Christianity and Eve indigenous religion affirm God's power to create, redeem and save. The Eves believe that the world was created by *Mawu* (God) who has the power over life and death and the power to save. Similarly, Christian theology teaches that the world and everything that is in it was created and ordered by God and that, God is the source salvation. Salvation for both the Eve and the Christians alike is the intervention of the supernatural to rescue the people from life threatening situations such as sickness, curse, poverty, drought,

pestilence and death, among others, in order to lead them to good health, well being, prosperity and self-fulfillment. One may argue that, the gift of salvation is the plan of the same God in both religions.

Christians and Eves alike believe in Monotheism. Monotheism is the belief in one God who reveals himself in different ways. For Eves, this God manifests himself in deities and intermediaries such as *trowo* (fetishes) and *gbogbowo* (spirits). Even though they believe in plurality of gods (deities), these gods are not regarded as equal to *Mawu* in power. As intermediary, a deity serves as a link between God and the people, and acts as God's agent of mercy and justice. It is believed that when a deity is offended, the community or the individual involved is visited upon with calamities such as plague, drought and sickness. These intermediaries are also mediums of communication between humans and God. They receive information from God for the people and the other way round, through libation prayers, possession and divination among others. In conclusion, deities serve as God's instrument of salvation for Eves through protection of the environment and promotion of social order.

In contrast to the above discussion, Christians believe that God revealed himself as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Fatherhood (Godhead) of the Trinity has been closely linked with creation. Jesus, who is the second person of the trinity, is the only source of salvation for Christians. Thus, Christology is accessing salvation, and more of second chance experience. This is because the importance of Christ is linked to the event in the Garden of Eden and its restoration. More importantly, at the center of Christology is the

issue of sacrifice and necessity of an “intermediary” like Jesus Christ, whose life begets life.

The theology of the blood is crucial to salvation. The role of blood in reconciliation in Christianity and Eve Indigenous Religion cannot be glossed over. Among the Eve, ancestral stools that chiefs occupy were established (*Zikpuidodo*) and sustained (*Zikpuidudu*) with human blood. The efficacy of the stool is depended upon human and animal sacrifices. Therefore, when a serious taboo such as incest, murder, arson, or adultery is committed (*hlododo*), it calls for blood sacrifice to appease the ancestors and the other deities to forgive the affected individual or community. In the past, human beings were used for the *nuxe* sacrifice. Nonetheless, in recent times, a sheep is used, especially, the *agbotsu* (male sheep). Sheep is considered gentle among animals and it is a symbol of peace among the Eve people. For Eves, in case of conflicts and strife, reconciliation is considered necessary through ritual slaughter of animals and offers made to the ancestors and the gods to restore peace and harmony. Everyone is expected to be peacemaker. People are discouraged from showing anger, pride and injustice. Once, the necessary reconciliation ritual is performed, peace prevails among parties who are considered to be enemies.

Likewise, in Christianity, reconciliation is an act of God which was initiated by him through the death of Jesus. The blood of Jesus serves as expiation and atonement for the sins of the world. It is therefore considered very important to the salvation of people. Through the blood and the cross of Jesus Christ, Christians received forgiveness of sins and are reconciled to God. The blood of Jesus protects the believer against evil spirits.

In the light of the above discussion, it can be suggested that both Christians and Eves believe that the blood contains life and must therefore, be regarded sacred. This is why murder and cruelty against animals are regarded as first degree evil. The significance of the blood ought to be appreciated and respected in every category of life. For Christians, the blood of Jesus was poured out once and for all and there is no need for blood sacrifices again. The sacrifice of Jesus is believed to be efficacious for all people. The Eve on the other hand, believes that sacrifices ought to be repetitive according to one's involvement in sinful acts.

In fact, the meaning and significance of the death of Christ for human salvation is a strong Christian affirmation. Christian theology affirms that the only way to salvation is Jesus Christ. The New Testament clearly teaches that Jesus is the final revelation of God and the only way to salvation. Jesus declares, "I am the way and the truth and the life,"<sup>278</sup> Peter and the Apostles also insisted that salvation was available only through the crucified and risen Jesus Christ when they declare: "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by whom we must be saved."<sup>279</sup> In Christian theology, Jesus Christ is the Supreme revealer of God.<sup>280</sup> He therefore is the only mediator of salvation; through him people are reconciled with God, thereby, making peace through his blood, shed on the Cross.<sup>281</sup> Indeed, the historic Christian claim is that, Jesus of Nazareth, the Word became flesh, is the only way to salvation. Roman Catholic and Evangelical leaders alike confess their common belief in the absolute uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the only savior of humankind. It therefore,

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<sup>278</sup> John 14: 6; 3:36 NRSV.

<sup>279</sup> Acts 4:12 NRSV.

<sup>280</sup> Matt. 11:27, 1 Tim. 2:5-6, 1 Cor. 8:5-6 and John 1:18 NRSV.

<sup>281</sup> Col. 1: 19-20 NRSV.

**calls for obedience to his commands, particularly, the show of love to God and one's neighbour.**

For Christians, to live by faith is to live in hope. And the ground of their hope is Jesus Christ. As first-born from the dead, Jesus Christ is the realization and the manifestation of the new humanity. In his life and work, death and resurrection, God manifests the future he intends for the world through the Spirit. In him, life eternal enters the life of the believer, lifting him or her out of bondage to death (damnation) and bringing him or her into full communion with God. It is believed that, the Spirit poured out by the Risen Christ is the seal of the believer's hope.

Christians further believe that, Jesus Christ rose from the dead to overcome all evil powers and fear (particularly, the fear of death). He is therefore with them, in Word, in baptism, in the Eucharist and in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church. This is the source of their hope in this world of death and hatred. It is believed that, hope must be related to the present, and it must serve as a means of transforming an oppressed community into a liberated and liberating one. From Christian view point, people are lost without Christ. Therefore, the belief in the person and works of Jesus Christ which comes through baptism and faith in his redemptive acts is necessary for salvation.

In the Gospel, Jesus indicates: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the

year of the Lord's favour."<sup>282</sup> He reiterates his plan to offer salvation to people when he said: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."<sup>283</sup> The passages cited above show clearly that Christ's mission is to make people to have life to the full. It also suggests his ministry of preaching and healing to meet every human need. However, this study has not lost sight of the sayings of Jesus that, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it."<sup>284</sup> Basically, Jesus' principle is that, in some instances, in order to meet one's needs, one has to face life the hard way. It is often said that, there is no crown without a cross.

The Eve indigenous people do not perceive salvation through Jesus Christ. Essentially, salvation for the Eve is the intervention of *Mawu* to offer *Dagbe*. Therefore, the Jesus factor makes a clear difference in the understanding of salvation in Christianity and Eve indigenous religion in which there is the belief that, one can communicate to *Mawu* through *Mawuviwo* (deities) who act as intermediaries or agents of *Mawu* in the discharge of *Dagbe* to the people and **not Jesus Christ**. However, some African Christian theologians such as Charles Nyamiti, John Pobee and John Mbiti conceived of Christ as a Great Ancestor, considering the roles ancestors play in the mediation of salvation with traditional African communities. This comprehensive comparison has been objected to by Evangelical Christians on the continent of Africa today.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> Luke 4:18-19 NRSV.

<sup>283</sup> John 10:10 NRSV.

<sup>284</sup> Luke 9:22-23 NRSV.

<sup>285</sup> Hiagbe, 167.

The third person of the trinity, the Holy Spirit, is the power that advocates and intercedes for believers, such that they are able to receive forgiveness of sin from God to reconcile with him. He also sustains the believer to experience the good life through the achievement of his or her goal. In Ewe indigenous religion, there are powerful and countless Spirits such as *dzo* (fire) and *adze* (witchcraft). They protect the people and serve as their advocate. They can also be harmful at times. That is why among the Ewe, these spirits are classified as good or bad. For instance, *adze nyuie* (good witch) may protect the life of the members of his or her family and may influence prosperity and success; but *adze vo* (bad witch) destroys life and brings about curse, poverty and even death to his or her own family.

In conclusion, it may be argued that, only Christianity offers salvation in the specific sense of communion with the triune God. Ewes have completely different view of the end or the fulfillment of life. The end envisioned by the Ewe is *Dagbe*. This is mostly used in the worldly sense of fulfillment. Nonetheless, the distinctiveness of the Christian understanding of salvation is the newness of life spiritually, mentally and physically in communion with the Father, Son and Spirit. And because, trinitarian faith understands the God-life as communion in a bond of love, salvation turns to depict the fulfillment of reconciliation accomplished in Christ and the everlasting communion of believers with God through the power of the Spirit. This understanding of salvation is not offered by Ewe indigenous religion. The Ewe does not perceive salvation by a *Mawu* who is triune.

## **4.1 THE GOOD LIFE**

Both the Eve and Christians alike acknowledge and yearn for the good life. This is a life believed to be fulfilling in every sense of the word, including material prosperity, good health, success and protection. The attainment of this good life brings joy and happiness to individuals, families and communities as well. This is because, both religions believe in the reality and existence of demons that work against the good life. In these religions, there is no doubt about the reality of the existence of evil forces which cause calamities to the people.

Both the Eve and Christians alike realize that the environment is more powerful and stronger than them. Sickness, death, and the harsh realities such as inconvenience and the hostility, failure in life, drought, famine, epidemics and disasters, among others, are but some examples of what they experience in their environment. They certainly have also attempted to confront these obstacles and disasters but they almost always face a transcendence which they cannot defy. While reflecting on the causes of these failures, mortality being one, they discovered God (*Mawu*), the transcending power who has, at his disposal, a whole army of forces, which are nothing other than divinities (“*Trowo*” and other Spirits). Christians call this army of forces angels who protect believers against evil spirits and demons. In Christian theology, there is the concept of “Guardian angel” who protects the individual assigned him by God at all moments against evil forces.

From the above point onwards, the Eve in particular realizes that he or she can make alliances with these forces to benefit him or her in the life here on earth. But not all Eves enter directly into relations with these forces; there is the need for the assistance of

priests/priestesses called *Mawunua* (mouth of *Mawu*) or *Tronua* (mouth of *Tro*). Therefore, the Ewe pursues his or her way always in quest of a happy life, always seeking to be rescued from life's wilderness.<sup>286</sup>

In the same vein, the religions under study teach that the yearning for the good life is in everybody, and it is embodied in the saved life. Salvation therefore, is the state of blessedness in every category of human existence which includes deliverance from the powers of evil, peace of mind and victory over one's environment, including enemies. The victorious life embodies life beyond the grave which triumphs over the bodily life.<sup>287</sup> This is referred to as the **heavenly life** or the **ancestral life**, depending upon the individual's religious affirmation. For the Ewe, the beneficiaries of this triumphal life are the ancestors, while Christians refer to such people as saints. Nonetheless, the requirements of ancestor and saint are relatively the same in the two religions; this is leading good and exemplary life. It may be argued therefore that, salvation for the Christian and the Ewe is the *attempt by the supernatural to rescue one from those life threatening forces* mentioned above.

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<sup>286</sup> The idea emerged from an interview with Prof. Thompson Kumekpor (Ewe Anthropologist and Sociologist) on Thursday January 29<sup>th</sup> 2009.

<sup>287</sup> This was revealed in an interview with Togbe Asong Bansah of Wusuta on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2008. Togbe Asong Bansah is an elder and zikpuitor (stool father) to Togbe Tsradzi, chief of Wusuta Anyinabase and gyasehene of Wusuta traditional council. He is also a Christian.

## 4.2 WORSHIP

The worship of God (the source of salvation) is central to Christianity and Ewe indigenous religion. It involves a total response of devotion from believers. It is also the source of praise, devotion, thanksgiving, and petition directed toward *Mawu* (God) who is perceived of as *Summum bonum* (Supreme good or highest good) through actions and attitude. *Mawu* is the ultimate end toward whom all worship is directed. As indicated earlier, worship plays vital role in the two religions under study. Brandford Yeboah perceives worship as an indispensable response of the people's consciousness of the divine presence and goodness, which leads them to praise and thanksgiving.<sup>288</sup>

Among the Ewe, public worship is carried out at shrines on specific days associated with a particular deity such as *Koku* (Wednesday male born) and *Asuokofi* (Friday male born) shrines. Their worship is mostly characterized by intensive drumming and dancing by functionaries, and young virgins<sup>289</sup> who do the dancing in most of the cases. They engage in a lot of chanting and display of powers such as cutting oneself with a sharp object without being harmed. Food and animal sacrifices are performed to the deity and the needs of individuals and the community are presented to him. This attracts people from all walks of life including Christians who go with various needs, petitions and requests, such as the need for protection, childbirth, healing, employment and promotion. Others go to honour their pledges to the deity for granting their needs or delivering them from evil and calamity.

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<sup>288</sup> Yeboah, "Worship in Ancient Israel," 87.

<sup>289</sup> Some of these young virgins are mostly in bondage in order to atone for the evil committed by their family members. This is the concept of *Trokosi* among Ewes.

In Christianity, days for public worship vary from denomination to denomination as in the case of Ewe people. Some denominations worship on Sunday, and others Saturday or any other day that they deem it holy. This is in line with the concept of Sabbath Worship in Israel. At worship service, the liturgy of prayer, reading of Scripture and the proclamation of the Word, as well as sacrifice of offering are carried out to enhance the ecstasy of the worship life of the believer to the glory of God. They sing hymns and songs, accompanied by drumming and dancing to God's glory and their edification. Like the Ewe, believers pay their tithe and other pledges and levies during worship services in appreciation of God's goodness, and as faithful stewards. In conclusion, one needs to know that the practice of private or self devotion to God is also essential to worship in both Christianity and Ewe indigenous religion. This is mostly done through the acts of meditation, prayer and charity.

#### 4.3 THE CONCEPTS OF SIN AND MORALITY

Both religions emphasize morality as a requirement for the good life.<sup>290</sup> They believe that one cannot be saved when one indulges in sinful acts such as murder, incest, and robbery which go contrary to societal norms and the will of God. This is because; salvation is striking the balance, where both humans and the divine are equally satisfied. As a result, taboos form a great part of Ewe indigenous religion just as the biblical laws regulate the Christian conduct. A taboo is something that should be avoided, not be touched or seen or eaten or said or even smelt according to the cultural values of one's community. Prominent among them are having sex in the bush, even with one's own wife; stealing or

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<sup>290</sup> During an interview session with Mr. Kofi Eleblu on Friday, November 14<sup>th</sup> 2008, he stressed the need to believe that, Christians are not custodians of morality. For him, Ewes deserved more commendations as people of good moral standing. He is an elder of a town called Norvisi.

robbery, insulting an adult or a chief and murder, among others. Breaking of any of these taboos is a serious offense which attracts very harsh punishment as prescribed by the community's and the ancestor's code of discipline.<sup>291</sup> In an interview with Prof. Ansre, he believes that to talk about ancestor/deity punishment is only psychological terrorism. This means that the concept of deity punishment is only to put fear in people against sin. It is actually not a reality.

Taboos that seek to promote hygiene and good health attract lighter punishment in nature such as warning, rebuke or fine. They serve as rules and guide for good conduct. By and large, taboos enhance good life of the members of the community and make life and property safe. They also make the community healthier for people to inhabit. For example, it is a taboo to sing while eating. It is clear that when you sing and eat, you might get choked. Another example of such rules is the ban on hunting and fishing at certain times of the year; this eventually serves a utilitarian purpose of attaining the greatest happiness for the greatest number. This may also help to preserve animal species. In Christianity, believers serve as stewards of the environment and God's creation and they ought to see it as a duty to protect nature against any form of destruction. For the Eve, some practical rules of life can best be observed only when they are put in the form of taboo.<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> These are the views of Dada Janet Xatse who is a unit committee member of Wusuta traditional area interviewed at her residence on Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> 2008.

<sup>292</sup> Mr. Kofi Eleblu reiterated these views during the interview recorded earlier in the work.

For the Ewe, people who perpetrate sin such as those indicated earlier are deprived from attaining *Dagbe*.<sup>293</sup> It is believed that such people will not enjoy material prosperity but will suffer, even to the point of banishment and death.<sup>294</sup> They will also not experience the good life. The ancestors and God become grieved, displeased, angered and unhappy when people engage in sinful acts that bring dissatisfaction to humans and God alike. In Christian theology, those who practice sexual immorality, hatred, and envy, among others, shall be condemned by God on the Day of Judgment.<sup>295</sup>

It is clear from the above discussion that, even though both religions have climbed a parallel ladder, in terms of beliefs and practices regarding the good life, the Ewe rather enforces strict morals, and administered harsher punishments to those who fall foul to the moral code. They also, meted out instant justice which serves as deterrent to people. Christianity has been more liberal and grace oriented in dealing with evildoers. Its emphasis is on the future judgment and punishment of God as discussed earlier. As a result, it is believed that sin is more prevalent among Christians than traditional Ewe. The main proponent of this view is Togbe Yaoga who is the oldest traditional priest at Wusuta. He mentioned bribery and corruption, armed robbery, prostitution, rape and abortion as some of the sins, which lead to HIV and AIDS and rampant death.<sup>296</sup> This seems to suggest that indigenous Ewe communities are safer to live in, in terms of crime prevention, social order and economic viability. This is because people actually enjoy the

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<sup>293</sup> During an interview section with Prof. Christian Robert Gaba at his residence in Cape Coast on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2008, he emphasized the point that, the attainment of *Dagbe* belongs to good people and not evildoers. He maintains that, the gods and the ancestors are people who have triumphed over sin and evil and are being rewarded by *Mawu*.

<sup>294</sup> This was revealed in an interview with Togbe Asong of Wusuta on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2008. Togbe Asong is an elder and a stool father. He is also a Christian.

<sup>295</sup> Galatians 5: 19-21.

<sup>296</sup> This is Ewe indigenous priest, Togbe Yaoga's affirmation. This interview was conducted on Friday November 7<sup>th</sup> 2008 at his shrine at Wusuta.

fruits of their labor. Togbe Yaoga revealed that in the past, there were no doors and locks to buildings in Ewe communities. People go to farm or travel with their doors opened, yet, they always returned to find their properties as they left them.<sup>297</sup>

The Bible teaches that Christians are sinners and therefore need to be saved from their sins.<sup>298</sup> Jesus Christ therefore, became that Savior for them. There is a clear warning in the Bible that, the wages of sin is eternal death. This calls for a Day of Judgment and repentance. Actually, God eagerly desires the salvation of everyone. Peter writes that the Lord is patient, “not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”<sup>299</sup> This does not then mean that God, in every case, does not give punishment at all and that he only waits for the Day of Judgment. From biblical times to the present day, we can pinpoint some examples of God’s instant justice such as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19: 1-29) and the plagues on the people of Egypt (Gen. 7:14-11:10), among others.

In an answer to what conditions the Ewe indigenous religion put in place to rectify the anomalies about breaking the laws/taboo and then the possibility of one gaining salvation, Togbe Asong Bansah, *zikpuitor* (stool father) of *Tsradzi* stool, explained that there are prescribed sacrifices characterized by prayers that have to be performed in order to bring such people to salvation. He identified *amefafla* or *aflaxoxo*, *gbofafla*, *busioyi* and *gbetsidede* as some of the options to clear anomalies of such nature. These ritual

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<sup>297</sup> Togbe Yaoga also blamed theft and robbery on the presence of Christianity among Ewes. But Ansré objects to this view saying, moral decadence has always been with the Ewe.

<sup>298</sup> Romans 3:23 NRSV.

<sup>299</sup> II Peter 3:9 NRSV.

sacrifices are performed by the traditional priests/priestesses who can discern the spirits and do what they required.

The respondent emphasized the point that, the process of the sacrifice differs from taboo to taboo. In most cases, they slaughter a lamb and the blood poured on the feet of the affected person to signify atonement, forgiveness, reconciliation and the pacification of the gods. When it is the community that needs to be cleansed, the blood was sprinkled around the four corners of the town accompanied by other rituals like drugging a chick tied up to palm branches on the streets, and drumming of a special traditional drum such as *dabatram* in the case of Wusuta people. This is what Eves call *gbomekpokplo* (sweeping of town), which is carried out mostly at mid-night when the ancestors are believed to come round. In the event of emergency, *gbomekpokplo* ritual can be performed during the day. It is believed that when the proper sacrifices and prayers are offered, people and communities are released from the state of death and destruction to life, and evil forces are driven out from their midst.

Togbe Asong Bansah also maintains that, festivals such as *Teduza* (the New Yam Festival) of the Eve is not just a celebration of the new yam and a temporary end to hunger, but it is a celebration of the renewal, reconciliation and restoration of fresh relationship between *Mawu* (God) and the ancestors on the one hand and human beings on the other. Moreover, some communities that are not in good terms with one another can initiate the celebration of a common festival to foster unity and reconciliation. Similarly, sister communities mostly celebrate a common festival to sustain their bond of unity. This happens ones in the year in most of the cases. Some examples are the

*Sasaduza* of the people of Sovie, Alavanyo, Saviefe and Akrofu, and the *Gbidukoza* of the people of Peki and Hohoe. The festival of *Sasadu* for example reminds the people about the escape of their forefathers from Notsie to their present settlements. During these festivals, special rituals and sacrifices are made to clear the community of evil thereby appeasing and pacifying the ancestors for the misbehavior of the people. When this is done, the people in turn enjoy blessing from the ancestors resulting in good rain, prosperity and bumper harvest to mention a few. On the contrary, the anger of the ancestors brings nothing but curse, failure in life, hunger, drought and death, among others. He said libation prayers play prominent role in the festival rituals.<sup>300</sup>

#### 4.4 THE CONCEPT OF DEATH

The concept of death is affirmed by both religions. This is because, as stated above, sin leads to death and death is the necessary end to the physical life and certainly, an inevitable end to human existence. However, in spite of the fear attached to death, they accept the fact that it is the only entrance or gate way to the hereafter (*Awlime*).<sup>301</sup> There is nonetheless the belief that, even though human beings battle with death, they cannot avoid or escape it, because death is the universal end of the physical life. It is the separation of the soul from the body at the cessation of breath and heartbeat. But Christianity does not see death in terms of physical death only. There is also a spiritual death that people who experience it may not even be aware off.

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<sup>300</sup> This was also said by Togbe Asong on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2008.

<sup>301</sup> This was revealed during an interview with Prof. Thompson Kumekepor (Ewe Anthropologist and Sociologist) on Thursday February 19<sup>th</sup> 2009.

#### **4.5 THE CONCEPT OF REINCARNATION CONTRASTED WITH RESURRECTION**

Christians and Eves believe in life after death. The traditional Eves, unlike Christians, however believe in transition and reincarnation. This is the belief that the spirit of the dead remains in the world and that the dead person can come back embodied in another person. This is the concept of *gbugbogadzi* (Reincarnation).

As a result of the concept of reincarnation, the Eve perceives that the soul of their departed relatives remain close to them and can be approached through libation prayers and offerings. The term “transition” is therefore commonly used to refer to dying in Eve context which implies taking the lead to the next life or world. Eves therefore give messages to a dead person to be delivered to friends and relatives who have died long ago and are believed to be living in the ancestral world known as *tsiefe* (or *yome* or *awlime* or *togbuiawoyife*). This presupposes that, the deceased person has not left them completely but “passed on”. It is actually only a physical loss. Nonetheless, despite the consolation that the concept of the after life brings to the Eve, they still consider death as an enemy to life.

John S. Mbiti perceives the concept of reincarnation as relevant to many African societies. He however thinks this is a partial reincarnation in the sense that only some human features or characteristics of the living-dead are said to be ‘reborn’ in some children. This happens chiefly in the circle of one’s family and relatives. The living-dead who has been reincarnated continues, however, to have his or her separate existence and

does not cease to be. From the perspective of Mbiti, it can be argued that, reincarnation is purely biological phenomenon.<sup>302</sup>

While the Eve believes in reincarnation, the concept of the resurrection of the body has been propounded by Christian theology. Christians believe in a bodily resurrection even though the kind of body is not adequately known. It is believed that, this is likely to be a special and a new body which will be completely different from the present one. Paul refers to this when he writes, “For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling—if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden because, we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.”<sup>303</sup>

The above quotation was vividly captured in the creedal statements of the Church and confessed in the words of both the Apostles’ and the Nicene—Constantinopolitan Creeds (381). In the explication of the Apostolic faith, the following statement of faith was outlined: “We (*I*) believe in the Resurrection of the Body...”

However, resurrection needs to be distinguished from resuscitation or reanimation of the physical body. It denotes a complete transformation of the human being in his or her

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<sup>302</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Oxford: Heinemann Educational Book Ltd, 1969), 159.

<sup>303</sup> II Cor. 5:1-4 NRSV.

psychosomatic totality.<sup>304</sup> This is expressed in a number of similes such as a) the resurrected will shine like stars<sup>305</sup>; and b) they will be like the angels.<sup>306</sup> Resurrection is therefore thought of as an event for each individual after death. But it is also regarded as a corporate event due to the fact that, God would raise all of the elect at the end of history.

#### 4.6 IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

As discussed above, from the Christian religious view point, death is never the end of life, but rather a transformation. Christians believe that the soul is immortal and continues to exist eternally after physical death either in paradise (heaven) or in hell.<sup>307</sup> It is therefore believed that the soul (spirit) is the life force of a person and every living thing which will eventually sustain any future or eternal existence. The idea of the immortality of the soul was affirmed by the Christian Church over the past periods.<sup>308</sup>

Certainly, the Ewe also believes in the immortality of the soul.<sup>309</sup> This is revealed in their concept of the hereafter. As discussed in chapter three of this work, it can be suggested that, the *amedidi* (burial) ritual of the Ewe, offerings, libation prayers and ancestor reverence, point to life beyond the grave and the concept of the hereafter. It is believed that, after one's life on earth, one still has to journey successfully to *togbuiawoyife* ("paradise"). The Ewe believe that one has to cross a river, hence donation of coins to pay

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<sup>304</sup> 1 Cor. 15:35-55 NRSV.

<sup>305</sup> Daniel 12:3 NRSV.

<sup>306</sup> Mark 12:25 NRSV.

<sup>307</sup> This assertion was made by Prof. Thompson Kumeqpor during an interview section Tuesday March 10<sup>th</sup> 2009.

<sup>308</sup> Walvoord, 287-290.

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for the cost of the ferry.<sup>310</sup> Therefore, the successful completion of burial rites on earth finally releases the person from all earthly responsibilities so that he or she can take permanent place of rest.<sup>311</sup> As indicated earlier, it is believed that, the souls of the wicked, such as those who practiced witchcraft or murderers or those who have died an unnatural death<sup>312</sup> or given improper burial, wander in agony, in the spirit world. They are referred to as *dufuevo* (bad ghost). It is however not clear when this wandering ends. Such wicked people are sometimes reburied or cremated to signify their perpetual end. Research has shown that, in some Ewe communities, rituals such as cremation are practiced in order to reconcile wandering spirits with the ancestors. People who go through such rituals are those who practised moral evil. This practice of exhuming and cremating of dead bodies is what Ewes refer to as *homtodzoe* (the exhumed and burnt).<sup>313</sup> Evil doers are also believed to be punished in the after life, but the spirits of the ancestors are forever remembered and evoked, particularly in libation prayers.

In conclusion, it is argued that both religions accept the need to rely on the supernatural for salvation rather than oneself. They also believe that salvation is actually a human need which manifests in the good life of the individual here and now and in the hereafter. There is nevertheless, a strong emphasis on good moral living as the goal of the fulfilled life and salvation. Finally, both religions affirm death as the universal end to the physical existence.

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<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

<sup>312</sup> In Christian theology, the type of death is immaterial. Jesus died a violent death. Therefore, Christians don't need any ceremonies or rituals such as *lvvotsotso* which is carrying of the souls of those who died in an accident or drown or buried in a foreign land to liberate their souls in order to experience salvation. For those who are buried in a foreign land, it was ensured that their finger nails and heirs were brought home in a match's box for this ritual in traditional Ewe religion.

<sup>313</sup> Harry Agbanu, 117-128.

#### 4.7 THE CONCEPT OF HEAVEN AND HELL

It is being argued that Eoes do not perceive salvation as going to heaven; neither do they believe in eternal damnation in hell. They believe that there is a place beneath the earth where the ancestors spend eternity in full communion with *Mawu* and the living. Those who could not attain ancestorhood have no particular destination of their own. They become wandering and bad spirits that roam about in the spirit world, but it is not known how long they remain in that state.<sup>314</sup>

Christian theology on the other hand, conceives of heaven or hell as the final destination of humankind. In hell, the wicked are believed to burn in everlasting lake of fire contrasting to what happens in heaven. In heaven or paradise, the righteous or the saints will enjoy eternal blissfulness. From the Christian view point, paradise opens as a communion in which the relations isolated by death will be united. In fact, salvation is ultimately conceived as something that will be accomplished only after death. This is when individual souls will be redeemed for continuous existence.

The concept of hell however, raises the following questions, among others:

- (a) Do the wicked burn literally in everlasting fire?
- (b) Does God's wrath continue forever in never-ending punishment?

There is the doubt that the literal imagery is the case as affirmed by many Christians. This is because it is believed that the essence of God's punishment of sinners is to lead them to repentance. There must therefore, be a limit or an end to God's punishment of

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<sup>314</sup> This was affirmed by Togbe Asong Bansah.

people created by God's self and in God's own likeness. However, it is believed that God is merciful and slow to anger.

#### **4.8 THE CHURCH AND THE CLAN**

In every Ewe community, there are clans (or family units). These are territorial groups which serve as social units in the Ewe social structure before the establishment of the Church. The identities of clans are traced to an ancestor, and as a result, some members of a clan bear a common ancestral name. Clans consist of varying number of lineages. Their role is to provide security and welfare to members of the families constituting the clan through lending of financial, moral and spiritual support. For instance, when a member of the clan is in any form of problem or difficulty such as sickness, poverty, or police arrest, it is the collective responsibility of the clan to contribute to rescue such a person from his or her predicament. This involves caring for the sick, payment of school and hospital bills and organizing rites of passage such as naming, puberty, graduation from a programme as well as funeral, to support the less privileged ones. It is believed that, when a member of the clan is in trouble or engages in any illicit act, the image of the entire clan is brought into disrepute. In the same way, when a member of the clan excels in life, it brings honour and respect to the entire clan. This affirms the belief that, the existence and wellbeing of a person depends on the larger community in Africa.

In the same vein, the Christian Church provides communal identity to its members as the clan system among the Ewe. To belong is to affirm one's faith in the lordship of Jesus Christ through the rites of sacrament such as, baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist. The Church also performs naming and funeral rites, thereby participating in the life of

individual members spiritually, morally and materially. This has led to the establishment of welfare schemes in the Church to meet the needs of members through scholarships, loans and gift donations. However, this turns out to be burden for the poor as they have to pay dues in order to benefit from the Church's welfare. It implies that, the rich are the most privileged in the Church's ministry of kindness.

In conclusion, it may be suggested that, the clan and the Church play essential role in helping people to experience *Dagbe*. Nonetheless, gradually, the clan is being substituted for the Church by many Christians resulting in the neglect of family responsibilities and commitments.

#### **4.9 CONCLUSION**

From the discussions advanced so far, it has been argued that salvation in both Christianity and Eve indigenous religion primarily amounts to experiencing the good life by means of good rains, fertility, bumper harvest; abundance of food, prosperity, good health and social harmony among others. Salvation is also attaining communion with God. But it can be said that even though both religions value worldly fulfillments, they consider them as avenues of approach to the transcendental otherness. Indeed, the concept of salvation defines the dynamics by which both Christians and Eves reach their goal. Thus, traditional Eve views and biblical views agree on the reality of evil which hinders the attainment of the good life.

A critical study of the beliefs and practices of the Eve people leads to the theological conclusion that Eve indigenous religion is a religion of salvation and completeness. And

As discussed earlier, a careful analysis shows an emphasis on this-worldly salvation and fulfillment. The Eve believes that life involves relationships that may both enhance and preserve life or destroy it. For the Eve, the goal of religion is to maintain those relationships in order to protect and preserve life, because it is the harmony and stability provided by these relationships, both spiritual and material, that create the conditions for the good life. Therefore, while Christianity conceives of God as the ultimate end and source of salvation, the Eve traditional religion believes that both the ancestors and the deities also contribute to the salvation that is offered by *Mawuga* (God).

At this concluding part, it will be prudent to discuss how the Eve traditional view of salvation has influenced African Christian theology in its explication of the gospel of salvation. African theology, or what some call African Christian theology, is that theology which reflects on the gospel, the Christian tradition, and the total African reality from an African perspective. The total African reality includes the ongoing changes in the African society and culture. Some prefer to call it theologies because they see much diversity in African culture and religion. Others refer to it as a fundamental similarity in the religious experience and in the nature of the emergent issues. African theology is conceived of as based on culture and as seeking to give African expression to the Christian faith.

The above discussion suggests that both Christianity and African traditional religion are religions of salvation, but whereas missionaries presented salvation as mainly in the

future and individualistic, Africans want to experience it as present, communal, and holistic. For Christians and Eve, salvation is well-being and the possession of life in its fullest potency.

But as both the living and the living-dead are bound together in this cosmic oneness, there can be no well-being unless one is in harmony with the cosmic totality. The good life manifests in good health, sufficient food, adequate housing, fertility, and offspring. It is social and political harmony. It is good neighbourly relations, a good name, social justice, sharing, and solidarity with all in building the earthly city. It therefore calls for "ontological balance" which must be maintained between God and human beings, spirits and human beings, the departed and the living. When this balance is upset, people experience misfortunes and sufferings. Hence, in a number of African independent churches, "healing" is an integral part of church ministry, with the priest being the healer and psychiatrist. As a result of their encounter with the gospel, Africans have developed a concrete eschatological hope which eventually led to the development of the Deliverance Ministry in contemporary Africa as a way of confronting evil and witchcraft.

The practice of Deliverance Ministry is mainly associated with the Charismatic churches such as the King Jesus Evangelistic Ministry and New Creation Church, among others in Ghana. This is based on the strong belief in the power of Satan and evil spirits (demons) to destroy people both spiritually and physically thereby robbing them off the joy of life. The practice of deliverance and exorcism therefore attempt at warding off and casting out

**Satan and demons. Exorcism is the expelling of non-human malevolent spirits out of persons, objects and places. Deliverance is loosing people from the chains of demonic possession, attacks and oppressions such as sickness and poverty and restoring them to their rightful state.**

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION AND MAIN FINDINGS

The emphasis on Christian doctrine of salvation and traditional Eve cultural and religious practices associated with salvation and well-being is to inform readers to distinguish between Christian and traditional Eve means of attaining the eternal (salvation). It has also discovered the significant similarities in how both religions perceived the concept of salvation and influenced each other.

The method of comparative paradigm has been utilized to study the concept of salvation in the domain of traditional Eve moral ethics and cultural symbols associated with holism; and the Christian stewardship and Soteriological symbols that covered a wide range of human conditions, situations, needs, and aspirations that lie at the heart of the quest for salvation and life after death. This comparative paradigm is used consistently, taking into consideration the hermeneutical tools of contextualization and Inculturation through which Christ engages the traditional Eve understanding of salvation as “Total Well-being.”

We have established in the course of this study that the concept of **salvation** is a very complex one. The study has demonstrated that the concept of salvation is central to both religions (Christianity and Eve indigenous religion). **Salvation**, in the context of Christianity and Eve indigenous religion, is primarily reaching forward to the ideals of the good life and morality. The good life is the life that is devoid of any precarious phenomenon occurrence such as sickness, drought, famine, disaster, abject poverty,

childlessness, etc. **Salvation** therefore embraces the liberation of the entire universe, in order to experience the life that is fulfilling.

The doctrine of “**salvation**” has been a major subject of debate in Christian theology. The bone of contention has been how believers are justified, and saved by God; hence, the role of merit and good works in the drama of **salvation**. The reformers such as Luther and Calvin argued against the Roman Catholic view that believers are saved by good works and the grace of God. The reformers taught that Christians are saved by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ. Invariably, this study has argued that the teachings of both the Old and the New Testaments point to the fact that **salvation** is the believer’s experience of reconciliation with God in Christ. This includes the events of peace, healing, order, security and everlasting life eventually.

The Eve fundamentally perceives salvation as being secured in every aspect of life. This is the intervention of the supernatural to rescue them from factors that pose serious threats to the good life such as drought, famine, war, curse, sickness and death. **Salvation** is therefore good health, morality, bumper harvest, abundance of food, good rain, prosperity and finally, joining the company of the ancestors and Spirits.

It can be argued from the forgoing discussion that, the Eve Christian understanding of salvation is not the same as the traditional Eve because:

- i. The concept of heaven and the belief in the person and works Jesus Christ is essential to salvation in Christianity. Hence, Eve Christians perceive salvation solely through Jesus Christ.

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- i. The concept of heaven and the belief in the person and works Jesus Christ is essential to salvation in Christianity. Hence, Eve Christians perceive salvation solely through Jesus Christ.

ii. The traditional Eve sees the ancestors as the immediate source of salvation.

    Ancestorhood therefore is the goal of salvation.

iii. In Christian theology, God's grace is the fundamental cause of salvation.

iv. However, morality and effective participation in the cultural and religious practices are requirements for experiencing salvation in Eve indigenous religion.

A critical analysis of the field work shows that, God's (*Mawu's*) plan of salvation is to redeem all that has been created by him. The study has also demonstrated that God (*Mawu*) is the only source of existence and salvation according to Christians and traditional Eves. They both believe that the new life of salvation is a life of the spirit. In fact, what Eves have traditionally believed of God (*Mawu*) and the transcendent reality has shaped their Christian identity and perception of life.

Eve theologians have therefore adopted basic key concepts which seek to harmonize the beliefs and practices of Christianity and those of indigenous Eve religion and culture. This is because the church in Eveland, and Africa for that matter, is still perceived to persist in its western nature. This makes people to consider it as an alien religion. This view is reinforced by Brandford Yeboah's argument that in order to make Christianity more meaningful, concrete and relevant to the needs and expectations of Africans, it has to be presented and explained in the language, terms and experiences that are already familiar to them. He reiterated the need to recognize the positive roles of African religious worldviews in enhancing and facilitating the understanding and embracing of

Christianity by Africans on the African soil.<sup>315</sup> Invariably, Christianity deals with the diversity of cultures in this world, and as such culture shapes the expression of the Christian faith.

The study carried out critical theological reflections on the two major hermeneutical tools (Inculturation and Contextualization) which are used to harmonize the beliefs and practices of salvation. The influences of each of the religions on the other in their attempt to lead people to the good life and salvation were discussed and critically analyzed. The implications emerging from the interaction of the two religions (Christianity and Eve indigenous religion) were evaluated with a view to make recommendations that seek to enhance harmonious co-existence of Christianity and traditional Eve religious thought, i.e. Christians in the Eve context.

## **5.0 INCULTURATION**

In missiological literature the term “Inculturation” refers to a theological reflection describing the way in which Christianity interacts with a particular culture. The study extensively utilized the concept of “Inculturation” in the analysis of the intricate interrelations between Christianity, as introduced in EVELAND, and Eve traditional religious thought.

In October 1974, during a Synod on evangelisation in Rome, the Bishops of Africa and Madagascar declared obsolete the theology of adaptation in the process of evangelisation, and recommended the development of a theology of “Inculturation.” In the wake of

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<sup>315</sup> Brandford Yeboah, *Analecta Bruxellensia*, 5.

further missiological study, the Magisterium recognised the theological significance of the similarity between the idea of 'Inculturation' and the mystery of the Incarnation.<sup>316</sup> It can be argued that the need for a reflection on the notion of Inculturation comes from a deeper insight into the implications of the Vatican II decrees on mission and on non-Christian religions. Evangelisation has therefore, to be understood as an attempt to inculturate the Gospel.

The message of Christ has presented a challenge to Christians themselves as well as adherents of other religions. Theologians speak of its prophetic aspect. Jesus himself fulfilled this prophetic role throughout his life and up to his death on the cross. The Jews experienced the novelty of his message as a serious questioning of their traditional religious beliefs. At the same time the challenge radiated throughout their cultural values. We have only to think of Jesus' welcoming attitude to those who were excluded by society, or his great freedom towards some customs that had become sacralised, for example, observation of the Sabbath and washing of hands. In modern times, Jesus could have been accused of failing to adapt to the local customs, which, in sociological terminology, constitutes a revolutionary stand and to a modern theologian, a difficult process of Inculturation.

Inculturation is to purify the society, to animate the society, to get rid of the obnoxious things in the society so that there is a new creation. It is pertinent to reiterate, in this

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<sup>316</sup> In *Slavorum apostoli* (1985) Pope John-Paul II expressed it succinctly: '*Inculturation is the incarnation of the Gospel in local cultures and at the same time the introduction of these cultures in the life of the Church.*'



Christian Churches and missionaries are allowing or even promoting practices that compromise the Christian Gospel.

Some of the social, economic, health, etc, consequences of the teaching and practice of these fast expanding Africanist Christian Churches pose serious challenges to individual, community and national development. A simple but relevant example is the increasing practice of directing seriously sick people to "Prayer Camps" (*Gbedodafe*) instead of to accredited health care centres. Similar examples abound. This is not to disregard the potency of prayer and faith in the healing process of Christian religious practice.

One should however not only over-emphasize the extremes of the practices of the "new churches." Such increasing syncretic contributions of these "Churches" as the particular blending of traditional music (Ewe , Akan, Ga etc) with Christian worship has influenced the worship patterns of almost all orthodox Christian denominations in Ghana. Of particular interest is the E. P. Church where the incorporation of the Central Ewe *Borborbor* music (music and words) is such that the Ewe migrant worshipper feels he/she is back in his/her home town. The use of indigenous songs, language and musical instruments serve as avenues for evangelism. In the contemporary Church, traditional music such as *Borborbor*, *Atsiagbekor* and *Agbadza*, which were regarded as evil, worldly and profane and from which Christians were strictly prohibited participating in, are however now part of the Church's music ministry. This makes people become more comfortable and feel at home in the Church.

Reformed Christianity however indicates that the church's authority is only the Holy Scriptures and not ecclesiastical traditions or human inventions. Scripture demonstrates the self-revelation of God. The Scriptures are thus to be recognized as such and obeyed as reliable guides for worship and Christian living. It may be argued that the formal principle of the Reformation is *Sola Scriptura*, and as such, cultural elements like those of the Eve indigenous religion discussed above conflict with the understanding of salvation in Reformation theology. It came to light during the field work for this study that, members of the E. P. Church (Reformed) in Eveland are calling for the use of the local palm wine (*Deha*) and the locally baked bread and calabash (for the chalice) in the administration of the Holy Eucharist. It was further discovered that the locally baked bread is already being used in some congregations instead of the wafer.

## 5.2 INFLUENCES

In the light of the above observations, it is pertinent to discuss the extent to which Christianity and Eve indigenous religion have influenced each other. The Eve traditional religious heritage has effectively influenced Christianity in a number of significant ways, such as respect for human life and dignity, the environment (forest reservations and rivers), natural resources, property and particularly morality. These enhance the good life that the Eve yearns for. However, the influence of Christianity on the Eve religio-cultural tradition is enormous. The Eve rites of passage and initiation rites such as naming, puberty, festivals, instoolment of chiefs, funerals and methods of enforcing the moral code (for example, banishment and the burning of the dead) have seen significant improvements and modernization as a result of the influence of Christianity on the Eve culture, making these rites more attractive, especially to the Eve-Christian. Eve Christians

Nowadays claim to have been more comfortable when participating in their cultural practices. As a matter of fact, the days when Christians could not freely participate in their own cultural festivals and related activities because they are Christians are gradually becoming a thing of the past. The implications of the above discussions are that, it is increasingly difficult to draw a line between the "Christian life" and life of the "World". This has led to a more active involvement of Christians in traditional practices.

Similarly, Christianity has been greatly influenced by the Eve indigenous religion which has led to the Inculturation of the Church among the Eves as discussed earlier. Mostly, it is their worship (Liturgy) and socialization that receive great influence. Customary marriages, widowhood rites and enstoolment of chiefs have become part of the Church's Liturgical order. Jesus has therefore, become the Supreme Protector, Liberator and Savior of the Eve-Christian. It is worth mentioning here that, the historical Churches such as the Roman Catholic, the Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist churches are the most affected by this new development. It is equally a matter of fact that some of the traditional practices such as swearing of oath to the traditional stool are really unacceptable to fundamental Christian thought and practice.

In conclusion, it can be reiterated that the common yearnings and aspirations for such things as the good life and salvation have always been expressed by adherents of both Christianity and the Eve traditional religion as has been demonstrated in this comparative study of salvation in the two religions.

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Similarly, Christianity has been greatly influenced by the Eve indigenous religion which has led to the Inculturation of the Church among the Eves as discussed earlier. Mostly, it is their worship (Liturgy) and socialization that receive great influence. Customary marriages, widowhood rites and enstoolment of chiefs have become part of the Church’s Liturgical order. Jesus has therefore, become the Supreme Protector, Liberator and Savior of the Eve-Christian. It is worth mentioning here that, the historical Churches such as the Roman Catholic, the Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist churches are the most affected by this new development. It is equally a matter of fact that some of the traditional practices such as swearing of oath to the traditional stool are really unacceptable to fundamental Christian thought and practice.

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### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of important recommendations emerge from the findings of the study:

- i. The traditional moral philosophy and practices of the Eve regarding salvation, despite their inadequacies, need to be recognized and appreciated by Christians because; they provide the grounds for a dialogue to promote better understanding of life.
- ii. The study essentially demonstrated that the Christian missionaries and the early Eve clergy did not take cognizance of the Eve belief in God, (*Mawu*) the all embracing creator of humankind. This can be discerned in the manner and methods these early missionaries proclaimed Christ in Eveland. Their interpretation of salvation was far out of tune from that of the Eve indigenous thought. This may be explained by the fact that they failed and disregarded to reach out to the roots of Eve indigenous religious thought. They did not learn, and failed to appreciate, the fact that traditional Eve religious thought, just as Christianity, embodies the essence of humanity, which is the key to understanding and appreciating the Eve in his environment, particularly at that time. Contemporary Christian missionaries therefore need to show due appreciation for Eve indigenous religion.
- iii. In analyzing the nature and meaning of **salvation**, the study clearly demonstrates that somehow Christianity and Eve traditional religious thought acknowledge that, God (*Mawu*), who is the source of **salvation**, works through intermediaries such as Jesus Christ, the ancestors, deities and powerful spirits. These intermediaries serve as God's (*Mawu's*) agents of mercy and justice. It is pertinent to observe and recognize that libation prayers of the Eve appeal to the ancestors to ensure

that the people and the community they the ancestors left behind become increasingly better than when they left them. The essence of this is reflected in such admonishments as: 'may your back be more peaceful than your front;' meaning may the relatives, people and communities left behind prosper and become better than at the time the ancestors were in this life. This clearly illustrates the conceptual link between the dead (ancestors) and the living. Although the aspect of pouring a liquid or drinks on the ground in libation prayers may be appropriately reviewed, there can be no doubt that the contents of libation prayers have a lot of significance. It came to light during the field work for this study that, libation prayers cover the needs of individuals, families, communities, the nation and the universe as a whole, seeking for them God's protection and blessing such as peace, good rain, bumper harvest, prosperity, gainful employment, political stability, good health, long life, etc.

- iv. The study also points out that the Eve concept of **salvation** (*Dagbe*), profoundly reflects God's (*Mawu's*) provision of abundant life in the present and the future; this includes the restoration of all forms of human failures, and the ordering of the community and the universe as a whole. Similarly, Christianity perceives **salvation** as deliverance of all of God's creation from every shortcoming in order to make them happy and finally to obtain everlasting life. This study, in a modest way contribute to, and draw attention to other factors not at present given due consideration in the attempt of the Church to concretize the gospel of Christ to the Eve.
- v. From the above discussion, other relevant literature and the operation of the diverse forms of Christian religious movements on Eueland in particular and

Ghana in general, the study has discerned the emergence of Africanist Christian life and thought which is perceptibly different from traditional orthodox Western Christianity. Although this particular issue is beyond this thesis, it is important to note that the new and emergent Africanist Christian thought are likely to influence, and contribute to the future development of Christian life and thought in Africa in particular. It is therefore of crucial importance for the Church to seriously take cognizance of this and timely and appropriately tune its theology as a consequence.

- vi. In conclusion, it may be emphasized and suggested for particular consideration that the harsh and unfriendly social, cultural and economic environment, particularly in the urban setting, is real in the life circumstances of the individual and his or her perception of salvation. In this emerging context of salvation, Christianity has to first address these contextual issues before relating them to the eschatological reality. The economic and technological hardships such as stark poverty, unemployment, low income, housing, health, personal and social relations, etc, are increasingly changing the context in which Christianity is operating in Evedland and Ghana in general. The Church therefore needs a radical approach to its theological expressions which have the potential to influence the issue of salvation in Africa, particularly because, salvation ought to relate to the environment of the believer. If this is done, then the hard realities of salvation and the hard realities of life will be closer to match the daily necessities of life.

## **APPENDIX**

### **PRIMARY/ORAL SOURCES**

#### **(KEY INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY THE RESEARCHER)**

Togbe Asong Bansah of Wusuta

Togbe Yaoga of Wusuta

Prof. Thompson Kumekpor of Accra and Agorme Tormegbe

Prof. C. R. Gaba of Anlo and Cape Coast

Mr. James Martey of Adutor

Mr. Christophe Kofi Eleblu of Mafi Adidome

Prof. N. K. Dzobo of Anfoega

Rev. Fr. Dr. John Ofosu-Mereku of Catholic Institute of Business and Technology

Prophet Obed Bansah of Acts Revival Church International

Rev. Prof. J. D. K. Ekem of Trinity Theological Seminary

Rev. Bernard Bamfo Bossompem of Methodist Church

Rev. Prof. Gilbert Ansre of Peki

Dada Janet Xatse

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