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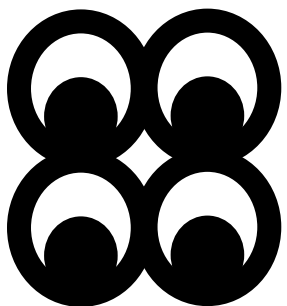
# OGUAA JOURNAL OF RELIGION AND HUMAN VALUES



**A Publication of the Department of Religion and  
Human Values  
University of Cape Coast, Ghana**

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**Volume 7 Issue 2  
(June, 2024)**





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## Statement of Purpose

The aim of the Department of Religion and Human Values at the University of Cape Coast is to make the study of religion relevant to the social, economic and political needs of society. One of the ways of doing this is through its Departmental journal, the *Oguaa Journal of Religion and Human Values*. The journal is for promoting research on issues concerning Religion and Society in areas such as Ethics and Philosophy, African Tradition Religion, Islam and Christianity and the Bible. The journal gives an equal opportunity and space to scholars to present scholarly and insightful research in these areas of study. Every effort shall be made to have in every edition of the journal at least one article from each of these areas. The journal is published twice in a year – June and December. It is our aim that the journal will become one of the journals of reference in Africa. Thus, we hope that articles sent to us would be marked by a high standard and originality. *Oguaa*, the name of our journal, is in recognition of the journal's setting, that it is published within the *Oguaa* Traditional Area. *Oguaa* is the traditional name for Cape Coast. *Oguaa* is also known in Ghana as the citadel of learning and academic excellence. The journal is, thus, positioned to reflect this reality.

## Author's Guidelines

The length of each paper should be minimum of ten pages and a maximum of twenty-five pages. Each paper should contain an abstract of not more than two hundred and fifty words accompanied by five key words. Each manuscript goes through a blind peer-review system and thus each manuscript should have a cover page indicating the title of the paper, author's name, address (email, and telephone) and biographical information as well as institutional affiliation. The title of the abstract should appear on another page, and the main essay should start on the third page.

This journal uses *only* footnotes for citations, following either the Kate Turabian style or the 15th edition of the Chicago Manual of Style. *No end-of-manuscript reference list is required.* The first time a source is cited, the full bibliographical details (for a book or journal) must be provided. For subsequent citations, include only the author's last name, the first two or three words of the title, and the page number. If citing more than one work by the same author, differentiate them by title. For example, if citing Amina Wadud's *Qur'an & Woman: Re-reading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) and *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam* (Oxford: One World Publications, 2006), the first citation of each work should include the full details. Later citations should appear as follows: Wadud, *Qur'an & Woman*, p.7 and Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad*, p.45. American or British spelling is acceptable, provided that the choice is used consistently.

Submission of articles can be made to [religion@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:religion@ucc.edu.gh) or [s.kofiappiah@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:s.kofiappiah@ucc.edu.gh) or [awuah.nyamekye@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:awuah.nyamekye@ucc.edu.gh)



## Editorial

This issue of our journal brings together a diverse range of essays that probe into the intersections of religion, ethics and culture, offering fresh perspectives on enduring debates and timely issues. The articles featured here not only illuminate theological and cultural discourses but also invite readers to critically engage with the complexities of human identity, belief systems and societal structures. Each contribution offers an in-depth analysis of its subject matter, fostering an enriching dialogue that spans biblical exegesis, interreligious dynamics, ethical inquiries and cultural studies.

Appiah and Berchie's essay examines Jesus' use of David's story in Matthew 12:3-4, presenting a nuanced argument that prioritizes the literary and theological context over straightforward typological interpretations. Komolafe's study tackles the complex ethical implications of the Greek term *arsenokoitai*, highlighting its rarity and contentious translation while arguing that Paul's usage suggests a condemnation of homosexual relations. Yamoah, in turn, offers an innovative perspective on holiness, linking Old Testament injunctions for migrants to the identity of modern Christians as sojourners in a transient world.

Meanwhile, Olademo's exploration of gender relations in Yoruba society delves into how cultural and religious dynamics shape leadership roles in Southwestern Nigerian Christian churches, contributing to the broader discourse on gender equality in religious leadership.

These essays, though varied in their focus, collectively underscore the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in understanding the intersections of religion, ethics and culture. As you navigate these contributions, we invite you to reflect on the critical questions they pose and the broader implications for academia, faith communities and global society.

Kofi Appiah



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**“The Use of David’s Story in Matthew 12:1-8:  
Appraisal of Jesus’ Hermeneutics.”**

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**Abstract**

Scholars identify Jesus’ hermeneutical methodology of David’s example in Matthew 12:3-4 as (a) rabbinic hermeneutics and (b) typological hermeneutics. In all, Jesus is connected with David. Contemporary New Testament scholars understand Matthean Jesus’s use of the story of David as (1) Jesus has authority like David; (2) Jesus presents himself as the Messiah and an antitype of David; or (3) Jesus sees himself as greater than David and/or the Temple.

Thus, scholars compare Jesus with David and postulate that Jesus has authority to ignore the law. Hence, Matthew 12:3-4 has been interpreted through David-Jesus messianic lenses. However, a critical look at the text in its setting questions these long-held views. A critical review of related literature has presented two main gaps that this study seeks to address: (1) comparing David with Jesus makes the comparison awkward; (2) The David-typology approach makes an argument to justify the conduct of Jesus' disciples, thereby advancing a Christological statement about Jesus and his ministry, without identifying the setting that allows Christological reading of the text. The burden of this research is to explore Jesus' use David's example in Matt 12:3-4 in the setting of Jesus and the Evangelist while investigating its hermeneutics.

## Keywords

David, Jesus' disciples, rabbinic hermeneutics, typological hermeneutics.

## Introduction

The rationale for Jesus' use of David's story in defence of the action of the disciples has attracted a myriad of attention. For example, Eugene Boring thinks that Matt 12:3-4 presents Jesus as an authority.<sup>1</sup> Like David, Jesus overrules the Sabbath on the basis of the necessity of humankind.<sup>2</sup> Craig Blomberg further stresses the authority of Jesus as the one who "can transcend the law and make permissible for his disciples what once was forbidden".<sup>3</sup> However, David Garland opines that in Matt 12:3-4 Jesus is shown as the messiah and antitype of David who ignored the law in an emergency situation.<sup>4</sup> Thus, scholars compare Jesus with David and that Jesus has authority to ignore the law. Hence, Matthew 12:3-4 has been interpreted through David-Jesus messianic lenses.<sup>5</sup> However, a

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene M. Boring, "The Gospel of Matthew," *New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1994), 8:278.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary 22 (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992), 197.

<sup>4</sup>David E. Garland, *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the First Gospel* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993), 136.

<sup>5</sup>John Appiah, "A Critical Study of Jesus' Use of David's Story in Matthew 12:1-8," (PhD diss., Philippine Christian University, Manila, Philippines, 2017), 10-18; John Appiah and Daniel Berchie, *A Review of the Rationale for Jesus' Use of David's Example in Matthew*

critical look at the text in its setting questions or challenges this general understanding or long-held views.<sup>6</sup> A critical review of related literature has presented two main gaps that this study seeks to address: (1) scholars explain Jesus' use of the example of David as a rabbinic hermeneutics or typological hermeneutics. Generally, Jesus is seen as the antitype of David. This assumption may explain messianic reading of Jesus' use of David's story in Matt 12:1-8. A sound typological hermeneutics may focus on the essential correspondences between the person, event or the thing compared. It is suggestive, then, that Jesus' action and David's conduct should be compared. However, both stories differ since Jesus was not hungry and did nothing unlawful but David was and did. Therefore, comparing David with Jesus makes the comparison awkward. Also, it has been pointed out that Matt 12:3-4 compares the conduct of David and those with him with the conduct of Jesus' disciples.<sup>7</sup> While scholars compare David (with his companions) and Jesus (with his disciples), the passage seems to present a different picture.<sup>8</sup> (2) The David-typology approach makes an argument to justify the conduct of Jesus' disciples, thereby advancing a Christological statement about Jesus and his ministry. None of the postulation of scholars, however, adequately explains why Jesus used the example of David in answering the Pharisaic query.<sup>9</sup> Because of the inadequacies of typological hermeneutics, this study argues that Jesus' use of David's story in Matt 12:3-4 is best understood through a nuanced analysis of its literary and theological context, rather than as a straightforward typological comparison.

In the synoptic gospel analysis, the intention is to seek the place; premium on the theological interest of the gospel writer. A consideration of Jesus' use of David's story in the synoptic gospels

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12:3-4 in Contemporary Scholarly Debate, *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies (ERATS)*, 9.7(2023), 281-287.

<sup>6</sup>Appiah, "A Critical Study of Jesus' Use of David's Story in Matthew 12:1-8," 22-23; Appiah and Berchie, "A Review of the Rationale for Jesus' Use of David's Example in Matthew 12:3-4," 281-287.

<sup>7</sup>John P. Meier compares David and his companions with the disciples of Jesus [John P. Meier, *Matthew*, New Testament Message: A Biblical-Theological Commentary (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1980), 129].

<sup>8</sup>Appiah, "A Critical Study of Jesus' Use of David's Story in Matthew 12:1-8," 17-18; Appiah and Berchie, "A Review of the Rationale for Jesus' Use of David's Example in Matthew 12:3-4," 281-287.

<sup>9</sup>Appiah, "A Critical Study of Jesus' Use of David's Story in Matthew 12:1-8," 17-18; Appiah and Berchie, "A Review of the Rationale for Jesus' Use of David's Example in Matthew 12:3-4," 281-287

shows both significant verbal and conceptual differences.<sup>10</sup> This is due to the theological interest of each, in view of the overall purpose of writing. Apart from assessing Jesus' intent for using David's story, one may need to appreciate why Matthew included this Sabbath conflict episode in its present place and the overarching purpose of writing.<sup>11</sup> This article investigates the rationale for the use of David's story in defence of the disciples eating of the heads of grain in Matthew 12:3-4.

In synoptic Gospel studies, the setting of the sayings and the deeds of Jesus is key to understanding any text.<sup>12</sup> Scholars have identified three settings for this purpose: First, the actual life setting of Jesus' ministry. This setting revolved around the public ministry of Jesus of Nazareth in the first third of the 1st century CE.<sup>13</sup> Second, the church's situational needs shaped the words and the deeds of Jesus prior to the documentation of the Gospels. This setting centred on the apostolic preaching about Jesus' material during the second third of the 1st century CE.<sup>14</sup> Third, the setting during which the writings of the Gospels took place. This setting centred on the written Gospels during the last third of the 1st century CE.<sup>15</sup>

The attempt to identify how the needs of the church affected the oral transmission of the words and deeds of Jesus has been educated conjecturing. As such, NT scholarship concentrates on establishing "the actual events in the lifetime of Jesus" and "the setting at the time of writing of the Gospels".<sup>16</sup> In the view of Warren, both the settings of Jesus and the Evangelist contribute to understanding the text.<sup>17</sup> Matthew 12:3-4 may be more appreciable

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<sup>10</sup>William D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *Matthew 8-18*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh, UK: T. & T. Clark, 2003), 308, 313; Scott F. Spencer, "Scripture, Hermeneutics, and Matthew's Jesus," *Interpretation* 64, no. 4 (2010), 371; David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London, UK: Athlone, 1956), 71; Dan M. Cohn-Sherbok, "An Analysis of Jesus's Arguments Concerning the Plucking of Grain on the Sabbath," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 2 (1979): 31-41; Meier, *Matthew*, 129.

<sup>11</sup>Appiah, "A Critical Study of Jesus' Use of David's Story in Matthew 12:1-8," 17-18; Appiah and Berchie, "A Review of the Rationale for Jesus' Use of David's Example in Matthew 12:3-4," 281-287.

<sup>12</sup>William F. Warren, "Interpreting New Testament Narrative: The Gospels and Acts." In *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction to Interpreting Scripture*. 2nd ed. ed. Bruce Corley, Steve W. Lemke, and Grant I. Lovejoy (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 2002), 319-320.

<sup>13</sup>Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1997), 107; Warren, "Interpreting New Testament Narratives," 319.

<sup>14</sup>Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 107, 108; Warren, "Interpreting New Testament Narratives," 319.

<sup>15</sup>Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 109; Warren, "Interpreting New Testament Narratives," 319.

<sup>16</sup>Warren, "Interpreting New Testament Narratives," 319.

<sup>17</sup>Warren, "Interpreting New Testament Narratives," 320.

in these two settings as found in the final text of the Gospel of Matthew. This may help to better understand the hermeneutical appraisal of Jesus' use of David's story in Matthew 12:3-4, namely, (1) the audience of Jesus and (2) the audience of Matthew.

What is clear from this brief overview of scholars' understanding on Jesus's use of the story of David is that (1) Jesus has authority like David; (2) Jesus presents himself as the Messiah and an antitype of David; or (3) Jesus sees himself as greater than David and/or the Temple. In sum, scholars compare Jesus with David and that Jesus has authority to ignore the law. Questions that might proceed from the above scholarly positions on the text are: Why did Jesus use David's story to answer the question of the Pharisees in Matt 12:3-4? And what hermeneutic principle did Matthean Jesus use in Matthew 12:3-4?

### **A Hermeneutical Appraisal of Jesus' Use of David's Story in Matt 12:3-4**

New Testament scholarship generally understands the use of David's story in Matt 12:3-4 as either (1) rabbinic hermeneutics (*gezerah Shewah*) or (2) typological hermeneutics. However, there are gaps in research as to the rationale of Jesus's use of David's story and hermeneutical scheme employed by Jesus as a response to the legitimacy of his disciples plucking of grains and eating on the Sabbath. Essential questions arising in connection with this subject includes the following: (1) did Jesus use typological or analogical hermeneutics as he used David's story? (2) On what grounds and to what extent should analogical or typological hermeneutics be employed in understanding the first Sabbath conflict episode as scholars have already done? (3) Did the use of the story have any Christological implication in the context of Matthew? (4) On what basis is Christological reading allowed?

#### **Analysis of David's Example in Matthew 12:3-4 (Cf.1 Sam 21:1-6)**

The table below gives a snapshot of David's example in Matthew 12:3-4. The analysis of the table below points that Matthew compares David and those with him to the disciples of Jesus. By implication, Jesus assumes the position of Ahimelech, the priest, who allowed David and those with him eat the showbread, which otherwise was

not lawful for them to eat. Jesus also permitted (or did not prohibit or censure) his disciples to pluck heads of grain to eat on Sabbath.

*Analysis of David's Example in Matthew 12:3-4 (Cf.1 Sam 21:1-6)*

David and those with him	Jesus's disciples
They were hungry (Matt 12:3)	They were hungry (Matt 12:1)
They ate the showbread (v. 4)	They plucked heads of grain and ate on the Sabbath (Matt 12:1)
It was not lawful for them to eat the showbread (Matt 12:4; cf Lev 24:9)	The Pharisees accused Jesus's disciples that what they did was unlawful (Matt 12: 2)
Scripture did not condemn them for doing so (implied).	The Pharisees should not condemn the disciples for doing so (implied).

From the table above, Matthew seems to compare Jesus with Ahimelech, the priest. The followings are the reasons: (1) David and his companions were hungry (Matt 12:3; cf. 1 Sam 21:3); the disciples were hungry (Matt 12:1). (2) David and his men ate the showbread (Matt 12:4); the disciples ate the heads of grain (Matt 12:1). (3) David did what was not ordinarily permitted to do (Matt 12:4; 1 Sam 21:4); the Pharisees accused the disciples of doing what was not permitted to do on the Sabbath (Matt 12:2). (4) Ahimelech was responsible for the action of David at Nob (implied); Jesus is responsible for the action of the disciples (implied); (5) Ahimelech, the priest, interpreted the law to allow David and his companion to eat the showbread (1 Sam 12:4-6); Jesus interprets the law in defence of the disciples that they are innocent of the accusation of the Pharisees (Matt 12:3-4). The comparisons above seem to suggest that Matthew compares the disciples with David and his men. It also suggests that Matthew compares Jesus with the priest. This helps in drawing the best conclusion from the example in Matt 12:3-4.

### **The Rationale for the Use of David's Story in Matthew 12:3-4**

In the setting of the actual event of the first Sabbath conflict, David's story had no messianic significance to the immediate audience of the story. The immediate audience includes the Pharisees and the disciples. To the Pharisees, in particular, David's story might seem



to be an analogy which fit into their hermeneutics (*gezerah shewah*, a rabbinic hermeneutic scheme). This scheme compares similar laws and their applications to real life situations. Since the story of David is situated in a cultic setting which is rooted in the Torah (I Sam 21:1-6; cf. Exod 25:30; Lev 24:1-9), the Pharisees might have understood Jesus' use of David's story as *gezerah shevah* (analogical hermeneutic) which was rabbinic. Thus, in the setting of Jesus, David's story was probably used to silence the Pharisees since the two situations required the breaking of cultic law.

It is noteworthy that any statement that suggested that Jesus was placing himself at par with the divine or identifying himself as the Messiah, the Pharisees registered their disapproval. For instance, when Jesus forgave the sins of the paralytic, the Pharisees considered his words as blasphemous (Matt 9:2-3). The Pharisees understood Jesus as a teacher (Matt 8:19; 9:11; 12:38; 22:16, 36). In 12:3-4 Jesus used *gezerah shewah* as a hermeneutical scheme to give further details about the law, that the Sabbath regulations could be relaxed for a genuine need.

In the setting of Matthew, the use of David's story in Matt 12:3-4 should be considered in the whole story of Matthew. The role of David's story in the gospel of Matthew needs considerable discussion. Matt 12:1-8 was to emphasize the authority of Jesus as the antitype of the priest, Ahimelech who was the interpreter of the law. Matthew seems to compare David and his men with the disciples of Jesus. By inference, Matthew seems to compare the authority of the priest (who allowed David and his men to eat the showbread) with that of Jesus (who allowed the disciples to pluck heads of grain and eat on Sabbath). Matthew's interest in the background of Jesus as a Jew, and portrayal of Jesus as the fulfillment of OT prophets and Temple services and ministry, seems to support this position.

Moreover, Matthew's second argument (vv. 5-6), which is uniquely Matthew's, points to the Temple and the priests who minister in it. The second argument (vv. 5-6) gives the impression that Matthew's emphasis in David's story is the authority of Jesus as priest, Ahimelech, in permitting others to do what was not permissible by cultic regulations. Thus, Matthew uses David's story differently (from Mark and Luke) in the Matthean context. Matthew is concerned with the rabbinic hermeneutic. Jesus as the image of the Godhead in the incarnated-priestly ministry. Thus, Mathew's audience might have understood Matthew 12:3-6 that Jesus is the antitype of the priest (who interpreted the law and offered sacrifices

on the Sabbath on behalf of Israel) and the temple (the dwelling place of God).

Presumably, the audience of Matthew may have seen the Emmanuel concept clearer with the use of strings of OT references as rebuttals to the Pharisees' accusation. Matthew seems to compare Jesus with the priest and temple. Matthew uses David's story to portray Jesus as the antitype of the priest who was the interpreter of the law. Thus, in the context of Matthew, the rationale for the use of David's story is typological.

Matthew seems to compare Jesus with Ahimelech, the priest. The followings are the reasons: (1) David and his companions were hungry (Matt 12:3; cf. 1 Sam 21:3); the disciples were hungry (Matt 12:1). (2) David and his men ate the showbread (Matt 12:4); the disciples ate the heads of grain (Matt 12:1). (3) David did what was not ordinarily permitted to do (Matt 12:4; 1 Sam 21:4); the Pharisees accused the disciples of doing what was not permitted to do on the Sabbath (Matt 12:2). (4) Ahimelech was responsible for the action of David at Nob; Jesus is responsible for the action of the disciples; (5) Ahimelech, the priest, interpreted the law to allow David and his companion to eat the showbread (1 Sam 12:4-6); Jesus interprets the law in defence of the disciples that they are innocent of the accusation of the Pharisees. The comparisons above seem to suggest that Matthew compares the disciples with David and his men. It also suggests that Matthew compares Jesus with the priest. This helps in drawing the best conclusion from the example in Matt 12:3-4.

## Findings

An important aspect of gospel study is the recognition of the different setting of Jesus and the Evangelists. The results of this study have revealed the following:

First, Jesus used analogical hermeneutics as he used David's story in the setting of Jesus. Thus, the primary audience of Jesus, the Pharisees and the disciples might have understood David's story in Matt 12:3-4 as *gezerah shewah* (a rabbinic hermeneutics). However, the audience of Matthew (the setting of the author) might have understood David's story as a typological hermeneutics, in the context of the entire gospel of Matthew. Jesus as the image of the Godhead in the incarnated-priestly ministry. Thus, Mathew's audience might have understood Matthew 12:3-6 that Jesus is the antitype of the priest (who interpreted the law and offered sacrifices on the Sabbath on behalf of Israel) and the temple (the dwelling place

of God). Presumably, the audience of Matthew may have seen the Emmanuel concept clearer with the use of strings of OT references as rebuttals to the Pharisees' accusation.

Second, the audience of Jesus (Jesus's setting) might have understood the story of David as portraying Jesus as a rabbi who used his knowledge of hermeneutics to further explain the Sabbath law. They might have understood the first Sabbath conflict, Matt 12:1-8, as Jesus using *gezerah shewah* to explain that in both the situation of David and the disciples, a cultic regulation was violated. That since Scripture does not condemn David, the Pharisees should not condemn his disciples. They might have also understood that divine command can set aside the Sabbath law as in the situation of the priests' sacrifice on Sabbath (Matt 12:5; cf., Lev 28:9-10). Thus, if the Temple work can make the priests sacrifice on Sabbath blameless, similarly, Jesus' disciples are blameless since they work with him, who (and whose ministry) is greater than the Temple (and its ministry) (v. 6).

Third, to Jesus's audience, the use of the story of David might have no Christological implications. The reason is that, if the Pharisees understood the story Christologically, then, they might have accused Jesus as blaspheming (cf., 9:3). The Pharisees understood Jesus as a teacher (Matt 8:19; 9:11; 12:38; 22:16, 36). However, in the context of Matthew, David's story has Christological implication. Jesus is the antitype of the priest who was the interpreter of the law. Inferred from the story of David is the interpretation of the cultic law and the authority of the priest, Ahimelech, to give David and his colleagues the showbread. As Ahimelech, the Priest, used his authority to allow David and his companions eat the showbread, so too Jesus used his authority to permit his disciples to pluck heads of grain and eat on the Sabbath. Implied in both stories is that both Ahimelech and Jesus are interpreters of cultic laws.

Fourth, Christological reading is allowed on the basis of reading the first Sabbath conflict, Matt 12:1-8, in the context of the whole gospel of Matthew. Matthew's Gospel presents Jesus as the fulfillment of priest, temple and all the OT types. Typological reading of the text is, thus, allowed in the context of the whole gospel of Matthew.

## **Implications**

The results of this study are foreseen to provide the following implications: Jesus had authority to clarify the law in specific cases for his disciples. In 12:3-4 Jesus used *gezerah shewah* as a hermeneutical scheme to give further details about the law, that the Sabbath regulations could be relaxed for a genuine need. In 12:5-6 Jesus again used *gezerah shewah* as a hermeneutical scheme to give further details about the law, that the Sabbath regulations could be relaxed by another divine instruction. In 12:7 Jesus emphasized that mercy should be the underlining force of interpreting the Sabbath regulations. And in 12:8 Jesus as the master/Lord of the Sabbath should be understood in the context of his authority to interpret the law regarding the observance of the Sabbath.

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**An Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 6:9 and Its  
Discourse in Relation to the Contemporary Church**

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**Abstract**

Human sexuality has been a fundamental and complex issue throughout history. Scholars have debated the meaning of the term “ἀρσενικοῖται” (*arsenokoitai*), used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:9, to support their arguments for or against same-sex relationships. In recent times, several countries, primarily in the northern hemisphere, have recognized gay marriage and allowed homosexual practices. The objective of this paper is to examine Paul’s usage of the Greek term *arsenokoitai* in its original context and to explore its theological implications for the contemporary Church. Historical and exegetical methods were employed to analyze the lexical and contextual meanings of the text. Data was gathered partly through interviews with ministers from selected Christian churches and through desk research of relevant online and library sources. The analysis of these sources suggests that, although same-sex relationships were common in the ancient Greco-Roman world, Paul likely coined the term *arsenokoitai* from Leviticus 20:13 to condemn not only same-sex relationships but also other immoral behaviours. The paper concludes that by using the term *arsenokoitai*, Paul

acknowledged that while some individuals in Corinth had engaged in same-sex relationships, they could still seek forgiveness and be cleansed by the blood of Jesus if they repent and accept Christ.

## Keywords

**Keywords: Same Sex, *Arsenokoitai*, 1 Corinthians 6:9, Christians, Contemporary Church**

## Introduction

In his condemnation of all kinds of same-sex practices, Paul seems to have been unquestionable and set standard for Biblical teachings for nearly two thousand years of recorded Christian history. However, beginning from 1960s, some Biblical passages used in supporting prohibition of same-sex relations, have not only been disputed but also vigorously scrutinized by scholars who disagree with the general opinion. One of the vital words at the centre of this argument is the word, *Arsenokoitai*, used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:9. *Arsenokoitai* is a unique and controversial word. Many researchers call it *hapax legomena* meaning it is once spoken or used in a single context in any Greek document of its time and for many centuries that followed.

Also, *Arsenokoitai* is a problematic word because it has not been easy for translators to translate it to English language. For instance, some translate it to mean “men who practice homosexuality” (ESV); “men who have sex with men” (NIV); “male prostitutes ... homosexual offenders” (NIV); and so on. These translations appear to agree with the individuals’ view of men who engaged in some kinds of sexual activity of which Paul disapproved. But the translations’ differences outshine their agreement. There are questions such as “Should the terms be understood together or separately? Does the term *Arsenokoitai* denote male homosexual activity generally or the active participant in a homosexual act specifically?”

Again, there has been a great disparity and lack of consensus among Biblical scholars as to what Paul had in mind when he first used the word. Brandon Wallace <sup>1</sup> writes: “there is nothing for at least three hundred years, after the writing of Paul that could shed

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<sup>1</sup> Brandon Wallace (2012), “Response to a Critique” In the Gay Christian Magazine, [www.thegaychristian.com/karl-hand-response](http://www.thegaychristian.com/karl-hand-response). Accessed on 11/06/2022.

light on the meaning of the word". Gene Robinson<sup>2</sup> shares his view about the uniqueness of the word *Arsenokoitai*: that it is found just at two places in the New Testament (1 Cor. 6:9 and 1 Tim. 1:10) and have nothing either internal to the Scripture or external, to give guidance as to its meaning.

This lack of consensus on the meaning of the word among Biblical scholars has some implications. It points to the reality that there is little understanding about the precise contextual meaning of the word. A more serious implication has to do with the various ethical positions of the Church on the issue that relates to same-sex relationship as we have in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christian Church.

## **Context of the Book of 1 Corinthians**

### **Historical Context**

The consideration of a given text in its context either of the Bible or any literary work is very vital. Historical context will greatly help in determining its contextual meaning, as intended by the original author. The book of 1 Corinthians belongs to the category of literature called, the letter or epistle genre. It therefore follows the format of most letters or epistles written during the first century. Frank Decanio pointed out that the basic form of Pauline letter has the following elements... salvation, thanksgiving, body of the letter, exhortation, instruction and closing. Again, carefully reading through the book of 1 Corinthians, one will discover that, it is an occasional letter, written to address specific needs of the church at Roman province of Corinth.

This paper divides the whole sixteen chapters of 1 Corinthians into five parts, namely: introduction, division in the church, issues related to moral and ethical disorder, answers to specific questions asked by the Corinthians and conclusion. The introductory section comprises of Paul's salutation and thanksgiving (1 Cor. 1:1-10). In section two, Paul deals with the issue of division in the church, as reported by the members of the house of Chloe (1Cor. 1:11, 4:21). This division can be attributed to their "... misunderstanding of the essence of Christian leadership (Kelvin, 2003). Section three deals with decadence and other vices committed by members of the Church such as incest, law suit and sexual immorality (1 Cor. 5-6). The fourth section talks about Paul's response to the specific question asked him by the Corinthians on

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<sup>2</sup> Gene, Robinson (2013), "Homosexuality in 1 Corinthians and 1Timothy". [www.faithstreett.com/./977](http://www.faithstreett.com/./977). Accessed on 19/06/2020.

issues like: marriage, personal liberty, and conduct during public worship, Spiritual gifts and resurrection (1 Cor. 7-15). The last section deals with conclusion or closing (1 Cor. 16). The focus and limitation of this paper is contextual interpretation of 1 Corinthians 6:9 which belongs to the third section as given above.

## **Religious Context**

Apart from its rich historical context, Strabo Hafemarn<sup>3</sup> infers that the religious context of the book of 1 Corinthians also provides a helpful insight for the understanding of the text: 1 Corinthians 6:9. The citizens of the ancient Greek Corinth and their numerous visitors worshipped dozens of gods and goddesses. In fact, scores of cults thrived in the city. Examples include: Apollo, Hermes, Hercules, Athema, Poeidon, Asclepius (the god of healing), Demeter, Isis and Aphrodite, just to mention a few. The most significant pagan cult in Corinth is the cult of Aphrodite. Both the Corinthians and their visitors worshipped Aphrodite or Venus (Roman name) by engaging in sexual act with temple prostitutes. Strabo claims that, "one thousand prostitutes served as slaves for the temple of Aphrodite in Corinth". Several words were coined to describe the numerous vices that characterized the city. For instance, Aristophanes (450-385BC) coined the term, 'Corinthianize' to describe the act of fornication, for which the city was known. Plato uses words such as 'Corinthian Girl' and 'Goddesses' which involved religious sexual prostitution, to depict the act in the Old Greek Corinth before its destruction, and even in the revived Roman Corinth. Craig Keener<sup>4</sup> asserts that the proverbial sexual looseness of ancient Greek Corinth seems to have continued in Roman Corinth as well. Thomas Lee and David Black<sup>5</sup> corroborate Keener's assertion by saying that immorality, contentiousness, heresy and brutality were prosperous in this pagan community.

Interestingly, the worship of gods and goddesses which often involves sexual immorality, most especially, the worship of the goddess of love and fertility- Aphrodite had heavily influenced the thinking of the citizens of Corinth including the members of the

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<sup>3</sup> Strabo J. Hafemann (1993), "Corinthian Letter" in *Gerald F. Hawthorne* (Chief Editor) *Dictionary of Paul and his letters*. (Illinois: Intervarsity Press), 172.

<sup>4</sup> Craig, S. Keener. (1993), "The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament" (Illinois: Intervarsity press), 451.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas, D. Lee and David A. Black (2003), "The New Testament: Its Background and Message" (Nashville: B& H Publishing group), 401.



Church there. John Wycliffe<sup>6</sup> posits that many had been brought up to believe that sex was a normal part of worship and that sexual deviations were an acceptable alternative. This is wrong and it is not surprising therefore, to notice issues related to Christian morality being dealt with in Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians.

### Literary Context

Apart from the religious context in which 1 Corinthians 6:9 exists, a close study of the context is also vital to the understanding of this important passage. This immediate context relates particularly to chapters 5 and 6 and the addendum chapter 7 which constitute a distinct section. The beginning of 1 Corinthians 5 marks a major transition that concludes at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter. Here, Paul addresses what Kelvin<sup>7</sup> calls clear-cut breaches in Christian ethics, especially the Christian sexual ethics. The Christian sexual ethics discussed here centres on how Christians should behave differently from those outside the Corinth Church (1 Cor. 5:9-12). Paul started with the case of a member of the Church having sexual intercourse with his father's wife. What upset Paul the most in this situation was that, the Corinthian church members and leaders tolerated and condoned the act. Paul then stated the general principle that Corinthians should not welcome or allow anyone who is sexually immoral into their midst. This principle also applies to the greedy, robbers, idolaters, revellers and drunkards (1 Cor.5:9-11). Paul expected the conduct of the Corinthian Christians to be exemplary, standing in clear contrast to the conduct of the unbelievers in the city of Corinth.

Also, on what should be the clear-cut demarcation between life in the Church at Corinth and life in the outside, Paul finds it abhorrent for believers going to the public court headed by unbelievers to settle disputes among themselves (1 Cor. 6:1-8). On getting to verse 9, Paul repeated what he has said earlier in chapter 5:9-12 where he asserts that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God. He listed ten vices (all nouns) that refer to people who habitually behave in one of these ways. Six of these sins or vices are non-sexual in nature, while the remaining four are sexually related. The word *arsenokoitai* belongs to the category of the four. In 1

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<sup>6</sup> John, Wycliffe (1999), *The New American Commentary*: second Corinthians vol.29. (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers), 21.

<sup>7</sup> Kelvin, Giles (2003), "Paul's condemnation of Phoenicia: sexual immorality in 1 Cor. 6:9-10" [www.ethos.org.au/online-Articles/Bi...](http://www.ethos.org.au/online-Articles/Bi...) Accessed on 8/06/2022

Corinthians 6:12-20, Paul concludes the whole section by expressing his concern on how sexual immorality has been accepted in the life of the Corinthian church, the same matter he mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:1. He reviews this matter too in 6:13; 6:18 and 7:2. The repeated use of similar words in chapters 5 and 6 with sexual immorality being prominent gives a remarkable theological insight into Paul's likely primary theme in 1 Corinthians 5 and 6.

It is worthy to note that there exists several overlaps and intertwine in the language and thought of the three sections of 1 Corinthians 5 and 6 namely; 5:1-13; 6:1-11; 6:12-20. The tone, forms of speech and theme of judgment remain the same throughout the three sections. And with sexual immorality prominent in the list, the basic thrust of chapters 5 and 6 is sexual, specifically the right way of dealing with sexual challenges in the face of the imminent end when judgment will be given and the kingdom of God will be attained.<sup>8</sup>

Another part of the immediate context of 1 Corinthians 6:9 is chapter 7 which constitutes an entirely distinct section. This is crystal clear in the introductory aspect of 1 Corinthians 7:1. Paul in response to the questions asked him by the Corinthian Church on the various phases of the subject of marriage, he approves of sexual relation between a husband and his wife, as against forms of sexual immorality which he condemned in chapters 5 and 6. Steven Barabbas argues that while Paul praises celibacy as a valid choice for those who can accept it, he holds marriage to be wise and honorable.<sup>9</sup> Paul equally addresses the issue of circumcision and slavery while asking believers to remain in the marital relationship they were before becoming Christians (1 Cor. 7:16-24).

## Origin and Diverse Translation of the Word

### “ἀρσενοκοῖται” *Arsenokoitai*

There are two main issues closely related to 1 Corinthians 6:9. One has to do with the origin of the word and the other about the correct way to translate the Greek word. The task of tracing the origin or source of the term *Arsenokoitai* has not been easy. Translating the term is much more difficult, being a rare word and scholars differ greatly in their opinions as to how the term should be translated. The

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<sup>8</sup> George, Shillington (1997), “people of God in the court of the world: A study of 1 Cor. 6:1-11” In *Direction*, [www.directionjournal.org/15/1/people...](http://www.directionjournal.org/15/1/people...) Accessed on 8/06/2022.

<sup>9</sup> Steven, Barabbas (1987), ‘Corinthians, 1 & 2, In J.D Douglas (Ed.) *New International Bible Dictionary*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House), 235.

issues that are related to the origin and translation of the term shall be considered one after the other.

### A. Origin of the word *Arsenokoitai*

The origin of the word, *Arsenokoitai*, and the views of scholars about it can be grouped into two. The first view holds that the word is a coinage of Paul, while the second postulates that it is a Jewish coinage from the Septuagint translation of Leviticus 18:20 and 20:13. Scholars like Colin Smith, Bridgeless Canyon, De young and Rembert Truluck among others support the Pauline coinage of the word. Colin Smith asserts that Paul appears to have created it by joining the two words *arseno* (male) and *Koiten* (bed or sexual lying).<sup>10</sup> Bridgeless Canyon (2018) shares the same view that Paul seems to have coined it from two words *arsen* meaning male and *koites* meaning bed.<sup>11</sup> James De Young on his own, explains that Paul coined the term *arsenokoitai*, deriving it from the Septuagint of Leviticus 20:13 and using it for homosexual orientation and behaviour".<sup>12</sup> Rembert Truluck (2012) posits that the word is rare in Greek and Paul was apparently the first author to use this word.<sup>13</sup>

There are also quite a number of scholars who do not agree with the Pauline origin of the word, but, hold to the Jewish coinage of the word from the Septuagint. Scholars like Richard Hays, Eugene Rice and Robin Sroggs just to mention a few hold onto the second position. Richard Hays as quoted by David Gushee<sup>14</sup> surmises that Paul is not altogether being original, but instead, alluding here to the Septuagint (Greek) translation of the Hebrew Bible's Leviticus 18:20 and 20:13. Tracing the origin of the word to the Septuagint, Eugene Rice submits that the source of *arsenokoita* is in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible known as the Septuagint. This then means that the word was almost certainly coined by Greek-speaking Jews.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Colin, Smith (1982), "Paul's views on Corinthians and Timothy" in *Gay and Christian-Homosexuality in Corinthians Details*. [www.gaysandslave.com/or-detain.html](http://www.gaysandslave.com/or-detain.html). Accessed on 19/07/2023

<sup>11</sup> Bridgeless, Canyon (2018), "Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians" *In a daily walk* [www.adailywalk.com/11/1Cor./Background.html](http://www.adailywalk.com/11/1Cor./Background.html). Accessed on: 04/06/2023

<sup>12</sup> James, De Young (2021), "The source and N.T. Meaning of *Arsenokoitai* with implications for Christian ethics and ministry" in *Masters Theological Journal*. [www.galaxie.com/article/tins/03-2-05](http://www.galaxie.com/article/tins/03-2-05), Accessed on: 20/06/2023.

<sup>13</sup> Rembert, Truluck (2012), 'Bible and Homosexuality: 1 Timothy 1:9" in *Whoever Magazine*. [www.whosoever.org/bible/tim.shtml](http://www.whosoever.org/bible/tim.shtml). Accessed on 20/06/2021

<sup>14</sup> David, Gushee (2017), "Two odd little words: the LGBT issue part II (Revised)". [www.baptistnews.com/opinion/columns/ite...](http://www.baptistnews.com/opinion/columns/ite...) Accessed on 21/06/2023.

<sup>15</sup> Eugene, Rice (2010), "glbtz>>social science >>Paul, St." [www.glbtq.com/Paul2](http://www.glbtq.com/Paul2). Accessed on 19/06/2023.

Robin Scroggs<sup>16</sup> also supports a non-Pauline origin of the word, *arsenokoitai*, as a Hellenistic Jewish coinage perhaps influenced by awareness of rabbinic terminology. Paul did not originate the term, but borrowed it from circles of Hellenistic Jews acquaintance with rabbinic discussion.

Considering the views of both sides, Paul could have coined the term being the only writer who has used the term in the New Testament. However, the word does not exist in a vacuum; it is possible he coined it from the Septuagint version of Leviticus 18:20 and 20:13. Another possibility is that the word could have been derived from rabbinic discussion of homosexuality based upon the term in Leviticus 18:20 and 20:13. The term "*arsenokoitai*" does not appear in the Septuagint translation of Leviticus 18:20 and 20:13 in the exact form it appears in 1 Corinthians 6:9.

## B. Diverse Translations of the word *Arsenokoitai*

The Greek word, *Arsenokoitai*, has been a bit of a mystery to many scholars. It is a compound Greek word, formed from the joining together of the Greek adjectival prefix for male (*arseno*) and bed (*koitai*). Literally, the word denotes male beds. The accurate translation of the word is highly contested and contentious among scholars. The differences in the way the word is translated to English by many scholars could be attributed to the fact that it appears just twice in the New Testament and is rarely used in the Greek literature of its time. Additionally, the disparity of the translation of the word has made it have different connotations. Justin Canon observes that the variation in translation, points to the fact that there is very little understanding of its precise meaning.

The first translation of the Greek Bible into Latin was done by Jerome in 405 A.D. In this Latin Bible, *Arsenokoitai* is translated as: *Masculorum concubitores*, meaning male concubines. Also, the first English translation of the Greek Bible was done by John Wycliff 1380 A.D and *Arsenokoitaias* was translated as *thei that don lecherie with men*. Over the years, the word has been translated differently by scholars into English. This is very true of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible (RSV), as well as other contemporary versions of the Bible in English today. The first edition of the Revised Standard Version (RSV) published in 1946 translates *arsenokoitai* in 1 Corinthians 6:9 as homosexual. This is the first time the word

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<sup>16</sup> Robin, Scroggs (1972), "The Analytical Greek Lexicon", (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing house), 6.

homosexual will appear in the English Bible. The word homosexual is a Greco-Latin compound word, comprising homo and sexual. Cannon writes the Greek word, consisting of homo, meaning the same, and the Latin term *sexualis*, meaning sex. The term homosexual is of modern origin and it was not until in used till about a hundred years ago after it was first used.<sup>17</sup>

The second edition of RSV was published in 1952, rendering both “μαλακοὶ” (*malakoi*) and “ἀρσενοκοῖται” (*arsenokoitai*) as same. The 1977 version of RSV replaced homosexuals with sexual pervers for both *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*. Rogers Matt<sup>18</sup> observed that the translators did not state whether the sexual pervers were homosexuals or heterosexuals or both. There is a remarkable change in 1989 revision of the RSV as the Greek words *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* were translated separately; the former is translated as male prostitute, while the later as sodomites. The King James Version translates *arsenokoitai* as abusers of themselves with mankind, while the New King James version uses ‘sodomites’. Other English translations of the Greek word *arsenokoitai* in the Bible include: (NKJV) sodomites; (NASB) homosexuals; (NED) homosexual perversion; (NIV) homosexual offenders and so on. Jeremy Townsley<sup>19</sup> (1989) in one of his scholarly works traced the translation of the words, *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* through history. His research further attests to the fact that *arsenokoitai* is a difficult word to translate.

## Analysis of 1 Corinthians 6:9

The term *Lexico* here refers to words and their meaning. *Lexico* analysis therefore seeks to study the meaning of each key word in the Greek text of 1 Corinthians 6:9.

### Text in Greek

ἢ οὐκοῖδατε ὅτι ἄδικοι θεοῦ βασιλείαν οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν; ἢ μὴ  
 πλανᾶσθε: οὔτε πόρνοι οὔτε εἰδωλόατρα οὔτε μοιχοὶ οὔτε  
 μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἀρσενοκοῖται

<sup>17</sup> Glaze, R.E (2020), “Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians background” *In a daily walk* [www.adailywalk.com/11/1Cor./Background.htm](http://www.adailywalk.com/11/1Cor./Background.htm). Accessed on 04/06/2023.

<sup>18</sup> Rogers, Matt (2019), “Matt Rogers>>Paul on homosexuality: part six” . [www.mattrogers.us/..1](http://www.mattrogers.us/..1) Accessed on 23/06/2023

<sup>19</sup> Jeremy, Townsley (1989), *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 306-12.

## Text in English

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor the idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts...” (Revised Standard Version).

## Word Study

Here, the key verse and noun used in Greek text of 1 Corinthians. 6:9 such as: οἶδατε, κληρονομήσουσιν, πλανᾶσθε, ἄδικοι, θεοῦ, πόρνοι, εἰδωλόατραι, μοιχοὶ, μαλακοὶ, ἀρσενοκοῖται shall be examined. In all, there are three verbs and eight nouns in the Greek text of 1 Corinthians 6:9.

οἶδατε: Parsing this verb indicates that it is the second person plural perfect active indicative of οἶδα which denotes to know, to know how, to regard with favour. William Arndt<sup>20</sup> describes it as to know, know about something, be intimately acquainted with, and know or understand how.

Κληρονομήσουσιν: This is the third person plural, future active indicative of κληρονομεῶ, meaning to inherit, to enter into full possession of something. Sakae Kubo describes it simply as inherit.

πλανᾶσθε: This word is a second person, plural present passive indicative or imperative of πλανᾶω, which denotes to deceive or err. Fritz Rienecker submits that the verb signifies to lead astray, mislead, or to deceive.

ἄδικοι: This word is a nominative plural masculine of ἄδικος which denotes unjust, unrighteous, iniquitous, vicious, deceit, and fallacious. In classical Greek, this covers all that offends, “against morals, customs, norm or decency; all that is unseemly, unspeakable or fraudulent”. Schrenk<sup>21</sup> (1985) affirms that it denotes violator of the law. In the Septuagint, the word refers to deceit, fraud, lie and so on. (Ps. 63:11; Prov. 6:17; Jer. 5:31).

Βασιλείαν: This word is an accusative singular of βασιλεία, meaning a kingdom, realm, the region or country that is governed by a king, kingly power, authority, dominion, reign, royal dignity and so on. In classical Greek, it is described as an abstract noun denoting the fact of being the king, the position or power of the king... the area cover which a king reigns, his kingdom. The classical

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<sup>20</sup> William, F. Arndt, (1987), “*Epistle of the Corinthians*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987, 154.

<sup>21</sup> Schrenk, George (1985), ‘alkos’ in Geoffrey W. Bromiley (ed), *New International Dictionary of New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing company), 23-24.

Greek usage agrees with the lexical meaning earlier given. In the LXX, it denotes kingdom or reign. The reference is usually to power rather than locality (1 Sam. 20:31; 1 Kgs. 2:12; 1 Chro. 12:23; 11 Chro. 11:17; Dan. 9:1; Ps. 103:19; 145:11-13 etc). In the New Testament, it refers to being, or natural, or state of a King (Lk. 19:12, 15; Rev. 7:12; Matt. 4:8; 12:25) Kingdom of the devil (Matt. 12:26), Kingdom of Christ (Matt. 13:41; 16:28; Lk. 22:30 etc), Kingdom of God (Jh. 3:5; Matt. 13:43; 26:29).

θεοῦ: This word is a genitive singular of θεος, denoting an idol, the true God, deity and so on. The origin of the word has been a subject of considerable discussion among scholars. Some scholars argue that it is originally used as a title. In classical Greek, the word refers to the Greek gods, who are presented in anthropomorphic form as personal being, though Greek philosophy conceives the gods as non-personal beings.

In the LXX, the word occurs 300 times, usually as an equivalent of *El* and *Elohim*. These two Hebrew words “are (the) generic designation of God and are not limited to Israel alone; but are words common to all Semitic languages.”<sup>22</sup> It can be found in passages like: Hosea 11:9; Exodus 20:4; Isaiah 52:7; 37:18; 40:25; Habakkuk 3:3 and so on. In the New Testament doctrine of God and in a few contexts, it refers to pagan god or goddess. The New Testament adds a new fact to the Old Testament doctrine of God in that, He is presented as being near and the father of Jesus Christ (Matt. 23:9; Rev. 3:30; 1 Cor. 8:4; Gal. 3:20; 1 Tim. 2:5; Js. 2:19).

Πόρνοι: This word is a nominative plural of πόρνος. In classical Greek, it refers to a person who has sexual intercourse with prostitute; an immoral male, male prostitute or whoremonger. In its usage in the LXX, the word signifies fornication, to play the harlot (Gen. 38:15; Jos. 2:1; Jud. 11:1; 16:1; 1 Kgs 3:16). In the New Testament, it connotes prostitution, a fornicator or impure person (Matt. 21:31-32; 1 Cor. 1:26; 6:12; 2 Cor. 12:21; Heb. 11:31).

εἰδωλολάτραι: This word is a genitive feminine singular of εἶδος. In classical Greek, it refers to the images of the gods or idols. In the LXX, it signifies the images of the heathen gods and the deities represented by them (Ex. 20:3-4; Deut. 5:7-8). The New Testament uses it as a reference to false god (Rom. 2:22; 1 Cor. 10:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Thess. 1:9)

<sup>22</sup> Glaze, R.E (2020), “Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians background” *In a daily walk* [www.adailywalk.com/11/1Cor./Background.htm](http://www.adailywalk.com/11/1Cor./Background.htm). Accessed on 04/06/2023.



μοιχοὶ: This is a nominative word and vocative plural of μοιχος which Liddell<sup>23</sup> describes as “adulterer, paramour, seducer”. In classical Greek, the law strictly forbids adulterous women and grants to the husbands or family the right of revenge. The LXX usage covers every extra-marital sexual relationship by a married woman and the extra-marital relationship of a man with a married or engaged woman (Gen. 38:15; Lev. 19:20-22; Deut. 22:28-29). In the New Testament, it is used in the same sense as the Old Testament. Adultery on the man’s part is unreservedly measured by the same standard as in the woman (Mtt. 5:32; Mk. 10:11-12; Lk. 16:18).

μαλακοὶ: This is a nominative plural masculine of μαλακος. In classical Greek, it refers to effeminate men (men and boys who indulge in homosexual acts). Greek medical writers describe it as a weakness or an illness but LXX uses it for sickness (Deut. 7:15; Isaiah 38:9; 53:3). New Testament uses it as soft, soft to touch, delicate (Mtt. 11:8; Lk. 7:25), an instrument of unnatural lust, effeminate (1 Cor. 6:9). Fritz Rienecker regards it as a technical term for the passive partner in homosexual relation.<sup>24</sup>

ἀρσενοκοῖται: This particular word occupies a central place in this research. It is a nominative masculine plural of ἀρσενοκοῖτης. It has been translated differently as sodomites, perverts, homosexuals, the abusers of themselves with mankind. Liddell simply describes it as one guilty of sexual perversion.<sup>25</sup> The noun, ἀρσενοκοῖτης, is derived from two Greek words: ἀρσεν denoting, male as opposed to female (with strong emphasis on sex), a male child and κοῖτης which signify bed, marriage bed, den of an animal or the nest of a bird, to lie down, co-habitation (whether lawful or unlawful). It is also used in a number of instances in association with sexual intercourse (Lev. 15:18; 19:20; Micah 5:13; Prov. 7:17; Hebrews 13:4 and so on).

## Paul’s Meaning of *Arsenokoittai* and Its Implication for the Contemporary Church

The difficulty in the choice of the appropriate English word that best translates *Arsenokoittai*, also applies to the meaning of the word as originally used by Paul. *Arsenokoittai* is derived from the combination of two Greek words: *Arseno* (male) and *koittai* which signifies bedroom or bed; and euphemistically denotes lying with or having

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<sup>23</sup> Liddell, G.T. (1998), “ἀρσεν” Greek - English Lexicon (Oxford: The Clarendon Press), 450.

<sup>24</sup> Fritz, Rienecker (1998), *Practical word studying in the New Testament* vol.2 (Chattanooga: Leadership ministries).

<sup>25</sup> Liddell, G.T. (1998), “ἀρσεν” Greek - English Lexicon, 450



sex with someone. *Arsenokoitai* simply describes the active males who are doing the bedding (sexual act), regardless of whom the partners are. Scholars however differ in their arguments on the full extent of Paul's intended meaning of *Arsenokoitai* as used in 1 Corinthians 6:9.

On one hand, some scholars argue that Paul condemns all men in general, who are active partners in male-male sexual act. On the other hand, some are of the opinion that, *Arsenokoitai* does not apply to all males who play any active role in male-male sexual act. Bill Fortenberry contends that *arsenokoitai* is a reference to homosexuals.<sup>26</sup> He argues that *arsenokoitai* is a compound word coined from the Septuagint version of Leviticus 20:13. David Wright is of the opinion that the compound word refers to those who sleep with males and denotes male homosexual activities.<sup>27</sup> Scholars like Robin Scroggs and Boswell do not agree with the views of Bill Fortenberry and David Wright. While Robin Scroggs posits that the word denotes "exploitative pederasty",<sup>28</sup> Boswell believes that the word refers to homosexual rape or homosexual prostitution.<sup>29</sup> Robert Gagnon explains that the two words, *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*, describe individuals who are engaged in an activity that Paul regards to be *sin*.<sup>30</sup>

From the above, it can be deduced that there are diverse interpretations of the words. This researcher is of the view that Fortenberry and David Wright's interpretations are more appropriate and correct. Looking at the two words, they fall in a much longer list of 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. Paul insists that people whose lives are characterized by these actions "will (not) inherit the kingdom of God." There is a considerable overlap between this list and the list of 1 Corinthians 5:11 which describe individuals who are subject to the discipline of the church. Also, these two terms together capture the range of male same-sex activity which is contradictory to the word of God but found practiced by some believers. Though, some have argued that Paul is only condemning a particular or narrow kind of homosexual behaviour, such as prostitution,

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<sup>26</sup> Bill, Fortenberry (2015), *People To Be Loved: Why Homosexuality Is Not Just An Issue*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 107, 118.

<sup>27</sup> David, Wright (1987), *An introduction to the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 40.

<sup>28</sup> Robin, Scroggs (1972), "The Analytical Greek Lexicon", (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing house), 6.

<sup>29</sup> Boswell, Black (1994), "Literary context of first Corinthians", In *Lives matter: Jesus died and rose again*. [www.biblicalfaith.tumblr.com/post/28394](http://www.biblicalfaith.tumblr.com/post/28394), Accessed on 18/06.2023

<sup>30</sup> Robert, A. J. Gagnon (2001), *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*, (Nashville: Abingdon), 303-39.

pederasty, or rape. But on a careful reading of the text, there is a space in Paul's ethic for homosexual activity between two consenting adults and not on forceful engagements. This view runs through Paul's argument in Rom 1:18-32. The last verse says "Who knowing the judgement of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (KJV). For one thing in Paul's day, the term, *malakos* had already acquired a meaning when it was used in sexual contexts.

In his own submission, Preston Sprinkles asserts that the term, *arsenokoitai*, is a compound word formed from two nouns meaning "man" and "bed".<sup>31</sup> Its origins are not difficult to discover. These two terms appear together in LXX Lev 18:22 and 20:13. In fact, in Leviticus 20:13, the two component parts of Paul's new word stands side by side. Both these passages in Leviticus roundly and categorically condemn same-sex activity. This word *arsenokoitai* must refer to a wide range of male same-sex activity and may properly be translated "bedders of males, those (men) who take (other) males to bed," "men who sleep or lie with males". Since it is paired with the word *malakoi*, the word *arsenokoitai* may particularly denote the active partner in male same-sex activity. The two terms, *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*, then, capture, in unqualified and comprehensive fashion, male same-sex activity.

James De Young avers that Paul is concerned with the address of sinful sexual behavior in these two terms *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*. He added that in Paul's day, the term *malakoi* could denote more than just a sexual activity. Such persons sometimes "intentionally engage (d) in a process of feminization to erase further their masculine appearance and manner".<sup>32</sup> That is to say, the word, *malakos* was used to describe a man who is trying to be a woman or a man who significantly blur (s) gender distinctions. This signifies that Paul's primary concern in 1 Cor. 6:9 is with same-sex behavior. The Apostle is also aware that, in the social context of which he and his readers were part, those who committed themselves to this lifestyle are not infrequently blurred with the culturally discernible lines between a man and a woman. It is in this

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<sup>31</sup> Preston, Sprinkle (1998), LXX Lev 18:22 reads καὶ μετὰ ἄρσεως οὐκοιμηθήσῃ κοίτην γυναικὸς βδέλγμα γάρεστιν. Lev 20:13 reads ὁς ἄνκοιμηθῇ μετὰ ἄρσεως κοίτην γυναικὸς, βδέλγμα ἐποίησαν ἀμφότεροι ἔνοχοί εἰσιν. θανατοῦσθωσαν, Accessed on 12/09/2023

<sup>32</sup> James, De Young (2021), "The source and N.T. Meaning of *Arsenokoitai* with implications for Christian ethics and ministry" in *Masters Theological Journal*. [www.galaxie.com/article/tins/03-2-05](http://www.galaxie.com/article/tins/03-2-05), Accessed on 20/06/2023.

sense that one can appreciate the translation “effeminate” for *malakoi*, even if one opts for another English word that better captures the sense of the Greek word in the context of Paul’s argument.

The use of the word *arsenokoitai* in the teachings of Paul has some implications for the contemporary church. First, Paul helps the Church to see that there is more to same-sex sin than the physical act of same-sex intercourse. In Paul’s day, some persons who engaged in the act consciously attempted to blur the lines between male and female. In the contemporary society, some countries in North and South America who have legalized same-sex marriage are of the opinion that the step was to eradicate gender inequality. On the contrary, Paul was sensitive and attentive to the ways in which this sin can foster and encourage a sinful distortion of a person’s God-given masculinity (or femininity). Similarly, many African leaders have been very sensitive on the issue and therefore refused to legalise same-sex marriage.

Professor and Evangelist Taiye Opoola in an interview explains that in 1 Corinthians 6:9, Paul references *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* in the third person but concludes with an appeal which begins as “such were some of you” (1 Cor. 6:11). One of the implications of this way of speaking to the Corinthians then is the recognition that sinners often come to draw their identity from particular sins to which they give themselves freely. In other words, they are known for and may even come to see themselves in light of a particular sin. That was the situation in which some of the Corinthians had found themselves, but no longer. Today, one hears that some Christians may legitimately identify themselves as “gay Christians.” For instance, marriage equality is not largely limited to countries in North and South America, but also in Europe and Oceania. South Africa is the only country in Africa and only Taiwan in Asia that have legalise same-sex marriage. For Apostle Paul, a “gay Christian” is a contradiction in terms. One may identify as “gay” or identify as “Christian” but should not identify as both at the same time. This is the position of most Christian leaders in Africa. Christians’ basic and comprehensive identity is to be in Christ. Just as Paul persuaded the Corinthians in the verses that follow to “flee from sexual immorality” (1 Cor. 6:18, 6:12-20), Christians in the contemporary society are also admonished to do the same. Any Christian wrestling with temptations of same-sex sin must be decisive to flee to Christ for the resources needed to fight sin.

Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 6:9 are a reminder that people today even Christians are susceptible to the temptations of same-sex sin. It is not just that he reminds the church that "some" of them had been enmeshed in such sins but the warning of 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 also assumes the possibility of professing Christians falling into the sins that he enumerates in those verses. This submission is supported by the researcher because there is no Biblical reason to think that any Christian is somehow immune to temptation of such sins, or free from their commission. Those who preach and teach the word of God, especially, must never make the fatal error of assuming that same-sex sin, in any of its forms, lies entirely outside the walls of the church. However, Paul's words are full of grace. For example, in Verse 11 of the 6 Chapter, he reminds believers of the resources that are available in Christ to cover the guilt of sin, to dethrone the dominion of sin, and to mortify indwelling sin, "But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God". Based on the above statement, Paul does not promise Christians that they will be spared setbacks or deep grief in conflict with this sin or any other sin but the joy in Christ that lies before them is well worth the fight. And even in the fight, Paul does not exonerate himself as he said we know that "we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

## Conclusion

Same-sex was a common and accepted practice in the ancient Greco-Roman world. In fact, there are standard terminologies for talking about these relationships. Paul, however, did not use any of these. Instead, he probably coined a word from Leviticus 20:13, *Arsenokoitai*, which may refer to all males who play active roles in sexual intercourse with other males. Paul does not focus the search light of his condemnation of same-sex relationship alone but on other vices too. Paul identifies in 1 Corinthians 6:9, male same-sex behaviour as sinful. He places none of the qualifications or limitations upon that behaviour for which some in recent times have pleaded. There is, in other words, no category of acceptable or virtuous same-sex behaviour in Paul's thinking as interpreted by some scholars. He recognizes that what may move one to attend such behavior is the conscious blurring of culturally discernible lines between masculinity and femininity. This practice is alien to Africans even though some engage in it.

Like the discussion on lawsuits (6:1-11), Paul appeals to future realities to inform present moral thought and action. The Corinthians thought that sexual desire meant the body was designed to be satisfied by any sexual partner or any sexual act. In a counter parallel to the food slogan, Paul places the purpose of the body under the use of the Lord. As food is made to quash stomach desires and the stomach was created to eat food (so said Corinth, wrongly), so the Lord exists to benefit the body and the body shows needs of fulfilment from the Lord. It is then disheartening that some civilized countries encourage and legalize the act of homosexuality.

The theological implication of the teachings of Paul is that same-sex relationship is not the only a vice that excludes one from the Kingdom of God. Paul's reference to the Old Testament in order to address an issue in the New Testament Church is a pointer to the fact that both Testaments condemn the act and this condemnation applies to present day Christians. It has been established that same-sex sin may occur among Christians. The good news is that the sin is pardonable by God if the offender repents. It can be forgiven and washed by the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:11). Just as Paul admonishes the Corinthians to be cognizant of the fact that their body is the temple of God and not their own, it is also recommended that Christians should flee from sin. Their body has been bought by a price and therefore should glorify God with their body by not committing same-sex practices (1 Corinthians. 6:19).

Finally, if Paul could further condemn thieves, the greedy, drunkards and extortionists (1 Cor. 6:10), then, his condemnation of same-sex practices should not be questioned or mis-interpreted.

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**Migration and Spirituality: The Holiness of the  
Church as A Reflection of the Holiness of the  
Migrant Covenanted Israelites**

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**Abstract**

This article discusses the holiness of Christians in relation to that of the migrant Israelites during their wilderness journey from Sinai to the east side of Jordan in the plains of Moab. On the strength of typical stipulations such as those mentioned in Leviticus 11:45 and Deuteronomy 23:12-14, the paper links the expectations of such Pentateuchal laws of holiness with the kind of holy living expected of Christians. Using intertextual links, it shows that the demands of the New Testament (NT) for holiness in particular are clear reflections of what pertained in some of the regulations of the Old Testament (OT) laws. The article concludes with a call on present-day Bible believers who, like the OT believers in God, are also considered as migrants on earth, to strive for holiness throughout their earthly journey.

**Keywords**

YHWH, Israel, Priest, Migration, Holiness, Pentateuchal laws, Covenant, Old Testament, New Testament, Church.

## Introduction

Migration is an old phenomenon usually associated with animals. It describes a locomotory activity usually recognized as ‘an adaptation to resources that fluctuate spatiotemporally either seasonally or less predictably.’<sup>1</sup> Often regarded as preemptive, it may be an individual-based behavior or a group (or population) type of movement that transcends taxon, form, and environment. Migration is a concept that encompasses both its mechanism and its function the phenomenon incorporates immigration and emigration. Dingle and Drake suggest four different but overlapping concepts of migration:

- (1) a type of locomotory activity that is notably persistent, undistracted, and straightened out;
- (2) a relocation of the animal that is on a much greater scale, and involves movement of much longer duration, than those arising in its normal daily activities;
- (3) a seasonal to-and-fro movement of populations between regions where conditions are alternately favorable or unfavorable (including one in which breeding occurs); and
- (4) movements leading to redistribution within a spatial extended population.<sup>2</sup>

This article agrees with the submission of Dingle and Drake that concept (1) describes a process, whereas the remaining three concepts describe outcomes. Moreover, while concepts (1) and (2) relate to individual animals, (3) and (4) concern populations.<sup>3</sup> Migration has generated interest in many fields of study. Biblical studies show that the phenomenon is demonstrated by many individual characters and groups at different times and places. The discussion focuses on the journey of biblical Israel from Egypt through the wilderness to the Promised Land in Palestine which is a typical example of the process and some of the experiences involved in the phenomenon.

The external and religiously-driven migration of Israel is not only a result of “push and pull factors”<sup>4</sup> where Egypt is less

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<sup>1</sup> H. Dingle, and V. A. Drake, “What Is Migration?” *BioScience*, 57/2: (2007), 113-121.

<sup>2</sup> Dingle, and Drake, “What Is Migration?” 113-121.

<sup>3</sup> Dingle, and Drake, “What Is Migration?” 113-121.

<sup>4</sup> Exploring migration causes: why people migrate. Online article: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/world/20200624STO81906/exploring-migration-causes-why-people-migrate> accessed on 2023-27-06.

attractive because the Israelites had been enslaved and the Promised Land more attractive because of the freedom and prosperity they would enjoy inferred from the description of the land as 'a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey' (Exod 3:8<sup>5</sup>) respectively: but more importantly, in fulfilment of YHWH's covenant with their forefathers (Gen. 15:12-21; 17:1-8; 26:3-5; 46:1-4; Exod 2:24).

## **Methodology**

This is a comparative study with the objective of examining the concept of holiness and how the call for such a virtue in the body of believers in Jesus Christ, who constitute the Church, could be seen as a reflection of the holiness required of the migrant Israelites by some of the Pentateuchal laws, such as Leviticus 11:45, 19:2; 21:5-6, and particularly, Deuteronomy 23:12-14. Therefore, the focus of discussion will primarily be on Israel as a migrant covenant community, in their journey from Mount Sinai, where they stayed and YHWH entered into a covenant with them, to the east side of Moab, where Moses recapped the stipulations of the Sinaitic covenant with the surviving community.

Then, through intertextuality, the paper links the expectations of such OT laws of holiness with some of the NT Scriptures for holy living expected of Christians, who, like the OT believers in God, are also considered as migrants on earth, to show that the demands of the latter in particular are clear reflections of what pertained in some of the regulations of the former. The article concludes with a call on Christians to strive for holiness in their earthly journey.

## **Holiness as a Pivot to the YHWH - Israel Covenant**

The word "covenant" (Heb. *berit*) is an agreement that binds two parties of equal or unequal status in an inseparable union such that one is identified with the other. The parties could be individuals or groups and could either be restricted to such entities or extended to other people connected to one or both parties. Every covenant has stipulations that spell out the conditions for each party. There are usually blessings or benefits for fulfilling the covenant as well as punishment or suffering for failure, depending upon the parties involved. A typical example is the YHWH - Israel covenant, which

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<sup>5</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all the texts in this article are from the NIV.



was also an extension of that which YHWH had made with their forefathers. It was entered into at Sinai after the Israelites came out of Egypt and were migrating to the Promised Land, in fulfilment of God's covenant promises.

Holiness or purity (used interchangeably in this paper) comes from the Hebrew noun *kodesh*, meaning "set apart." It is one of the most difficult concepts to define or explain. This observation is supported by a comment by Regev that holiness 'is the basic foundation of every religion and cult, so differences in definition and characterisation of the concept of holiness have important implications as far as religious ideology and perception is concerned.'<sup>6</sup> Little wonder that scholars of the OT and the Pentateuchal laws in particular continue to discuss the concept of holiness in the hope of finding a common ground for its definition and interpretation of its related laws.

Holiness was pivotal to the YHWH – Israel Covenant. YHWH became their Holy God and Israel was to become a holy people of God, and as stated in Leviticus 20:26: 'You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy...' In Deuteronomy 23:12-14, holiness was tied up to God's presence with the people and was a determining factor of their victories over their enemies. Thus, holiness is regarded as a fundamental virtue in the relation between the migrant Israel community and YHWH, their God.

### **Entities identified with the definition of Holiness in the YHWH-Israel Covenant**

Whereas some regard holiness as a primary nature of God, the subject is better discussed against the backdrop of other entities that relate with Him. According to Domeris, holiness should not be seen only as a preserve of the deity, but certain personalities are empowered to function on behalf of the deity. Such functionaries become 'the holy ones.'<sup>7</sup> The *Priestly writings* are identified by Wright as materials in the Torah that explicitly tackle holiness. He notes that the Priestly Torah defines holiness as a state of being in objects, places, and times, that is commensurate with God's

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<sup>6</sup> E. Regev, "Priestly dynamic holiness and Deuteronomistic static holiness." *Vetus Testamentum*, 51/2: (2001), 243-261. Online article: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1585253>, accessed on 2011-23-02; cf. D. L. Christensen, *Word Biblical Commentary: Deuteronomy 21:10-34:12*, vol 6B. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), 157.

<sup>7</sup> W. R. Domeris "The office of the Holy One." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 35: (1986), 35-38; cf. F. F. Bruce, *New International Biblical Commentary*, Based on the NIV. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979), 59.

holiness.<sup>8</sup> Thus, holiness in connection with the YHWH-Israel covenant, can be defined with respect to priests, Levites, the firstborn, all Israel, temple materials, geographical spaces/places, special days, and the like. In the subsequent sections, attention has been devoted to some of the fundamental entities considered holy in the YHWH-Israel covenant relationship in the OT.

### *Holiness is the Nature of YHWH*

Wright notes that both the Priestly Torah and the Holiness School identify holiness with God.<sup>9</sup> Holiness is not to be considered as just 'one of the essential and identifiable attributes of God'<sup>10</sup> but also His 'quintessential nature.'<sup>11</sup> Indeed, God, according to Hartley 'is the source and the standard of its measure.'<sup>12</sup> In other words, He is both the model and standard for which all holiness is defined. It is so important an attribute that God himself had to iterate it to the people: 'You shall be holy for I the LORD your God am holy' (Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26). Thus, God was straightforward with His people about His very self: 'I am holy.' For Wright, 'God affirms God's holiness'<sup>13</sup> (cf. Lev 10:3; 22:32; cf. Exod 29:43). Ryrie also notes:

God's holiness is a purity of being and nature as well as will and act...not only that He is separate from all that is unclean and evil but also that He is positively pure and thus distinct from all others...holiness of God means that sinners have to be separated from Him unless a way can be found to constitute them holy.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, YHWH being *holy*, becomes a requirement for anyone who enters into a covenant relationship with Him. This also means that holiness does not end with God; for His presence requires that

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<sup>8</sup> D. P. Wright, "Holiness in Leviticus and beyond: differing perspective." *Interpretation* 53: (1999), 355-364; cf. Regev, "Priestly dynamic holiness and Deuteronomic static holiness," 246.

<sup>9</sup> Wright, "Holiness in Leviticus and beyond" 1999, 353-364.

<sup>10</sup> M. F. Unger, *New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, rev and updated version. (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute, 1988), 581.

<sup>11</sup> Domeris, "The office of the Holy One." 35-38.

<sup>12</sup> cf. J. E. Hartley, *Word Biblical Commentary: Leviticus*, vol 4. (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1992), IVII.

<sup>13</sup> Wright, *Holiness in Leviticus and beyond*, 353-54.

<sup>14</sup> C. C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 42-43.

everything reflects His holy nature, and whoever comes to Him must be holy.

### *Holiness of the Priests and all of Israel*

Wright argues that the priests have a level of holiness that is different from the rest of the people and that the priestly consecration rite as a whole sanctifies them, the High Priest inclusive. He maintains that the Levites must be holy since they are substitutes for the Israelite firstborns (Num 3:11-13, 44-51). The holiness of the priest in particular which has been appreciably examined by Asumang and Domeris<sup>15</sup> cannot be overlooked.

Biblical Israel was a nation that was set apart by God for himself to be like Him in holiness (Lev 20:26). Therefore, He was the model for which Israel was to strive for holiness. Hence, the Israelites' holiness was analogous to the deity: 'You shall be holy for I the LORD your God am holy' (Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26). This indicates that holiness is not a pre-existing state but a state that one has to attain. Though attainment and maintenance of holiness is by observing the laws and could also be attained ritually or by contact with something holy (Exod 29:37; Lev 6:27), God is the ultimate source of the holiness of His people (Exod 31:13; Lev 20:8; 22:32).

Wright observes that Israel's holiness in Deuteronomy is based on their separation from other nations. He argues that Israel's separation from other nations does not bestow holiness on them; 'it only sets the stage for consequent holiness'<sup>16</sup> (Lev 20:24-26). Further, he points out that the people's holiness entails distinguishing entities that are acceptable by the covenant from the unacceptable. Thus, 'God and His people come into dialectical interplay: when the people live a life in accordance with divine holiness, they are, in turn, sanctified by God.'

### *Holiness of the Camp environment*

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<sup>15</sup>A. Asumang and W. R. Domeris, "Ministering in the Tabernacle: Spatiality and the Christology of Hebrews." *Conspectus* 1: (2006), 1-26.; cf. J. Moskala, "Categorization and Evaluation of Different Kinds of Interpretation of the Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals in Leviticus II." *Adventist Theological Society* 25-26: (2000), 1-41; cf. Unger, *New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 582; cf. H. Adler "Sanitation as taught by the Mosaic Law." A paper read before the Church of England Sanitary Association (1893), 6-7. Online article: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/60240182>, accessed on 2012-08-01.

<sup>16</sup>D. P. Wright, *The disposal of impurity. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series*, (Atlanta Scholars, 1987), 101.

A significant part of our discussion is the idea that God dwells among the people in the migrant camp (Exod 25:8; 29:45-46; Num 16:3; 35:34; cf. Lev 15:31; 26:11). This, for this article, relates to consecration or otherwise of the place, which is both the sanctuary and the land because of the divine presence. This observation is corroborated by Wright's argument that the sanctuary is holy, meaning that, all sin/impurity must be kept out of it to avoid pollution (cf. Lev 12:4). Wells compares how the idea of holiness occurs in each book of the Torah,<sup>17</sup> thus provides an excellent counterpoint to Wright. Yet, some of his comments are not very different from the latter's position on Israel's holiness. One of such relates to their election where Wells notes how the essence of Israel's election at Sinai is a call by God on them to be holy. He argues that this focuses 'on faithful adherence to God's covenant laws in all aspects of worship and life.'

### ***The Call to Holiness by YHWH***

Though holiness is explained by many scholars such as Regev, Domeris, Wright, Wells, and Sprinkle, as the central focus for the enactment of the laws, they nevertheless present different shades of opinions in their reason for such injunctions. Deuteronomy 23:12-14 is one passage that is significant in its demand for holiness, a position symbolically interpreted by Sprinkle to mean a separation of Israel from the Gentiles. For him, Israel was a "holy nation" (Exod 19:6) set apart from all others. He categorizes the priests as "holy" and thus separated from other Israelites, and that the Israelites as a whole were also "clean" and separated from non-Israelites, who were "unclean."<sup>18</sup> His view on "holiness as separation" finds support from other scholars and is of interest to this study since it calls for a similar sense of purity. Sprinkle further argues that the laws inculcated into Israel the concept of "holiness," creating in the people a sense of identity as a "separated" nation.<sup>19</sup>

### ***Holiness of God in contrast to the uncleanness of Humanity***

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<sup>17</sup>J. B. Wells, *God's Holy People: A Theme in Biblical Theology*. (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, 2000), 7.

<sup>18</sup> J. M. Sprinkle, "The rationale of the Laws of clean..." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43/4: (2000), 637-657; cf. J. H. C. Wright, *The Mission of God: unlocking the Bible's grand narrative*. (Norton Street, England: IVP, 2011), 508.

<sup>19</sup> Sprinkle, "The rationale of the Laws of clean..." 651.

Pertinent to Sprinkle and of relevance to this paper, is the concept of the holiness of God being in contrast to the uncleanness of humanity. It is as a result of the unclean nature of humans that specific instructions of the Torah (Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; Deut 23:12-14) were given so that people could relate more closely to the Holy God. Defending his position on the link between ritual impurity and deviations of morality, Sprinkle observes that the use of uncleanness in a metaphorical sense for deviations of morality hints at a symbolic connection.<sup>20</sup> He mentions for example, certain ritual practices in the Torah on one side and moral practices on the other, to show such a symbolic link between ritual and moral uncleanness. He argues that everyone by nature inevitably contracts uncleanness from time to time and that by being part of this sin-cursed fallen world, humanity is “unclean” and thus ineligible to approach God. While admitting a strong analogy between “uncleanness” and “sin,” he maintains that just as physical uncleanness can come from within and from without in an analogous way, sin comes both from perverse human nature within and temptations without. So, based on the laws of purity in Leviticus 11-15, for example, man in contrast to God, is contaminated and corrupt.

### *Holiness is dealing with Pollution*

Mary Douglas explains holiness from physical and social perspectives. Worthy of note is her comment on the effect of “pollution” on holiness. She sees pollution as a danger that is not likely to occur unless the lines of structure, cosmic or social are clearly defined. According to her, the whole repertoire of ideas concerning pollution and purification is used to mark the gravity of the event and the power of ritual to remake a person.<sup>21</sup> For Douglas: ‘A polluting person is always in the wrong...’<sup>22</sup> In support of the significance of Douglas’ contribution to the awareness of the effect of pollution on man, Cothey comments: ‘Douglas highlighted the positive social functions that purity concepts can fulfil and described

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<sup>20</sup> Sprinkle, “The rationale of the Laws of clean...” 651; cf. Hartley, *Word Biblical Commentary: Leviticus* (vol 4), IVIII.

<sup>21</sup> M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo*. (New York: Routledge, 1966), 1-2; cf. C. Owiredun “Blood and Life in the Old Testament” (A Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Durham), 2005), 18; cf. R. S. Kawashima, “The Jubilee year and the return of cosmic purity.” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 65: (2003), 372.

<sup>22</sup> Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 1966, 12.

the diverse forms in different societies that such purity concepts can take.’<sup>23</sup>

### *Holiness is ritual, moral, and functional*

Domeris comments on the functional nature of God in relation to other functionaries. He observes that holiness is not just in ritual (or cultic) and moral (or ethical) sense but as a functional office that certain individuals or groups are called to occupy. He quotes Hewett’s idea of becoming holy: ‘[An object] is not holy and therefore used by Yahweh; it is used or possessed by Yahweh and therefore holy.’<sup>24</sup> In this wise, the reference point for holiness is God, and that He as the “Holy One” decides who also becomes holy. Furthermore, Domeris argues:

Deep within the idea of holiness, there is a sense of numinous power which may be transferred to the bearer. This idea sees holiness as a tangible positive force associated with God, very much like electricity. At one level, this power equips the bearer to live a life of ethical and ritual purity, but at another level, this power generates an electrical tension which comes to the fore whenever the holy one encounters the realm of the profane’. This is to say, something is holy when the “Holy One” interacts with it; it is profane when He despises it.<sup>25</sup>

In other words, because only Yahweh is intrinsically holy, any person or thing is holy only as it stands in relationship to him and that the ultimate source of all holiness is God, ‘the Holy One of Israel...’<sup>26</sup> Alexander and Rosner’s position also identifies with Domeris. They consider holiness as pre-eminently a characteristic of God himself, and that ‘the terminology is used to signify that God is

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<sup>23</sup> A. Cothey, Ethics and Holiness in the Theology of Leviticus. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 30/2: (2005), 131-151. Online article: <http://JSOT.sagepub.com>, accessed on 2011-18-03.

<sup>24</sup> Domeris, “The office of the Holy One.” 35-38; cf. Bruce, *New International Biblical Commentary*, 59.

<sup>25</sup> Domeris, “The office of the Holy One.” 35.

<sup>26</sup> Domeris, “The office of the Holy One.” 35; cf. P. S. Minear, “Holy People, Holy Land, Holy City: The Genesis and Genius of Christian Attitudes.” *Interpretation* (n.d.), 18-31.

wholly other, distinct and separate from everything that he has made, and different from the gods of human imagination.'<sup>27</sup>

Domeris notes that 'the functional aspect of holiness is connected to the title, "the holy one" which underscores the idea of 'an authorised *representative or agent*' (his emphasis) of the realm of the holy and continues that such an agent is 'one chosen by Yahweh for a particular task, which also involves a certain life style.'<sup>28</sup>

## Theological significance of Holiness to Migrant Israel

The laws on holiness, according to Radmacher et al, were meant to dictate to Israel exactly how YHWH wanted them to live.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, Bruce believes that the Law was not intended as a legislative code to cover all possible contingencies but to serve as a guide to the life expected from a "holy" people.<sup>30</sup> This is a view that Gaebelein shares. He notes that Israel's national existence as the people of God - external, physical, and material means - had spiritual significance and the laws were used to teach lessons on the nature of their relationship to YHWH and the nature of the holiness that was required of them.<sup>31</sup> Along the same line, Asumang and Domeris argue that the laws on holiness were designed to preserve the separation of God's people from the other nations and that they were meant to maintain their continued relationship with God, and to prepare them for their inheritance of the Promise Land.<sup>32</sup>

Narrowing down on Deuteronomy, Wright notes that it considers the people holy from the beginning, 'prior to any act of obedience, on account of their election by YHWH'<sup>33</sup> (Deut 7:6; 14:2, 21). Specifically, Deuteronomy 23:12-14 does not only connect Israel to the Holy God, but also strengthens their covenant relationship with Him, and maintains their status as a holy covenanted people. Similarly, Radmacher et al note that Israel's distinctive characteristic in the ancient world was underpinned by the fact that they were set

<sup>27</sup> T. D. Alexander and S. B. Rosner, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 544.

<sup>28</sup> Domeris, "The office of the Holy One." 36-38.

<sup>29</sup> E. D. Radmacher, R. B. Allen and H. H. Wayne (eds), *The Nelson Study Bible* (NKJV). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), 312.

<sup>30</sup> Bruce, *New International Biblical Commentary*, 62-78.

<sup>31</sup> F. E. Gaebelein, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, with NIV: *Deuteronomy - 2 Samuel*, vol 3. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 140; cf. J. G. McConville, *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy*. (Trowbridge, Wiltshire; Great Britain: Redwood Burn Ltd, 1986), 18.

<sup>32</sup> Asumang and Domeris, "Ministering in the Tabernacle..." 22.

<sup>33</sup> Wright, "Categorization and Evaluation of..." 353; cf. Regev, "Priestly dynamic holiness..." 244-246.

apart for God's holy purposes which demanded their absolute allegiance to Him. As a result, they were supposed to be distinct from other nations because He, the God of Israel, is distinct.<sup>34</sup>

It is not surprising that while the nations that surrounded Israel practiced polytheistic forms of worship, worshipping their gods at many different places, Israel was set apart from other nations to be holy to, YHWH, the Holy God (Lev 20:26) and required to worship the One God at one place which He would choose. So, God asked the chosen people also to be different such that any defect in them was considered unacceptable to Him. Whether at the camp of the whole covenant community with the tabernacle or at the camp of the military, the Holy God was still with His people so they were supposed to observe His presence and keep themselves pure.

### **Socio-Cultural significance of Holiness to Migrant Israel**

Besides theological considerations of the ritual practices associated with the laws, the basis for the directives on holiness in the Torah could be the ethical (or moral) implications for the people. That is, the laws of holiness are meant to promote ethical behaviour since they cultivated some virtues in the people. Indeed, 'Theology and ethics' according to Wright 'are inseparable in the Bible.'<sup>35</sup> If the popular maxim: 'Cleanliness is next to godliness'<sup>36</sup> is of value, then the strict requirement for the migrant community to maintain cleanliness of their camp, was part of the call to holiness. Though it is a call for separating oneself ritually, the practice was to make meaningful the belief that life is lived well when one is conscious of the things that make the person chaste.

Douglas sees holiness as the attribute of the Godhead, who is also the source of all blessings.<sup>37</sup> Not only is God the source but also the connection between holiness and blessings. It is the blessing of God that would make it possible for the land to be habitable. In her opinion, God's work through the blessing is essentially to create

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<sup>34</sup> Radmacher et al, *The Nelson Study Bible*, p. 312.

<sup>35</sup> J. H. C. Wright, *Old Testament ethics for the people of God*, a fully rev updated and integrated ed of *Living as the people of God and walking in the ways of the Lord*. (Leicester, England: IVP, 2004), 17.; cf. Sprinkle, "The rationale of the Laws of clean..." 654-55.

<sup>36</sup> For more details, refer Adler "Sanitation as taught by the Mosaic Law," 4.

<sup>37</sup> M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of concept of pollution and taboo*. (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2003), 2; cf. Moskala, "Categorization and Evaluation of..." 21-24; M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of concept of pollution and taboo*. (New York: Routledge, 2002), 49-50.



order, through which humanity can prosper. Thus, any impurity which will cause a withdrawal of God also means the withdrawal of blessing. Douglas regards blessing and success as virtues that 'required a person to be whole in body, whole-hearted and trailing no uncompleted schemes,' arguing that if holiness means separateness, then holiness equally represents wholeness and completeness in a social context.<sup>38</sup> For her, 'morality does not conflict with holiness.' In other words, the law of holiness places a demand for behaviours that lead to it. Therefore, defilement, she argues, is never an isolated event because it cannot occur except there is a deliberate action. Douglas' connection between holiness and "wholeness," "physical perfection," and "completeness" is also supported by Sprinkle.<sup>39</sup>

### **Transition from OT to NT: The Post-Sinai migrant Israel-Church intertextual link**

One key avenue for how the NT interpreted the OT is through the literary theories of intertextuality. This theory sheds considerable light on the conceptual and theological relationship, which is our interest in the current discussion. It examines how one group of texts is, by way of intra-biblical exegesis, used in another group; and here it shows the fulfilment of an OT promise in an NT event. Such links are established by 'inner-biblical interpretation,'<sup>40</sup> or what Beale prefers to designate as 'inner-biblical exegesis or inner-biblical allusions.'<sup>41</sup> The use of intertextual links here confirms the continuity between the OT and the NT.<sup>42</sup> It is generally observed that the OT text is intertextually connected to the NT based on interplays of parallels, allusion, typologies, and inner biblical interpretation.

Beginning with a discussion on the OT in general and subsequently and specifically the laws, this section looks at the bond between these areas and the NT before the discussion narrows down

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<sup>38</sup> Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 2002, 41-53.

<sup>39</sup> Sprinkle, "The rationale of the Laws of clean..." 649-50.

<sup>40</sup> C. Edenburg, "Intertextuality, Literary Competence and the Questions of Readership: Some Preliminary observations." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 35/2: (2010), 131-148.

<sup>41</sup> K. G. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2012), 31-40; cf. Brown, *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*, 225-26; W. Randolph Tate, *Handbook for Biblical Interpretation: an essential guide to methods, terms, and concepts*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 219.

<sup>42</sup> For more details, refer K. J. Brown. *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics: Scripture as Communication*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 228.

to application to NT believers through intertextual links. The OT has been described as ‘an inspired document that finds dynamic unity and fulfilment in the New Testament.’<sup>43</sup> Along this line, Kudadjie and Aboagye-Mensah argue that ‘the NT fulfils and enriches the OT teachings.’<sup>44</sup> Kaiser Jr.,<sup>45</sup> in agreement, states: ‘We are obligated to search the “whole counsel of God,” from Genesis to Revelation’. Hence, the proposal that ‘both testaments should be read together to obtain a complete understanding,’<sup>46</sup> is essential for the current discussion.

Another important area of exploration for this paper is the establishment of the post-Sinai migrant Israel-Church relationship. This is significant to our argument that Deuteronomy 23:12-14 and other passages on holiness in the Torah, especially Leviticus, which were given to the migrant covenant community of Israel could be regarded as a template for the call of the migrant church of the NT to holiness. It is in this vein also that Asumang and Domeris used the “Theology of the Tabernacle” to explain the link between the Exodus generation and the congregation addressed in the NT book of Hebrews.<sup>47</sup>

Though God’s new covenant was to be established ‘with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah’ (Jer 31:31), the NT applies such a covenant to Christ and His Church when He inaugurated it (2Cor 3:7-16). By His death and resurrection, Jesus became ‘Israel’s Messiah, as well as the Saviour of the nations.’<sup>48</sup> Indeed, Jesus declared the Gentiles “clean” (Mark 7:14-23) before His death and they were incorporated into the Church after Pentecost. No wonder that some of the Jewish laws that created a “separation” between them and the Gentiles had to be addressed (Acts 15:1-31), after the Church was inaugurated.

In support of the view of some scholars that ‘the Church did begin in the OT,’<sup>49</sup> most likely on the basis of Israel being referred to as ‘the church in the wilderness’ (Acts 7:37-38, KJV), the Church

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<sup>43</sup> D. T. Lioy, *The Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount*. (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2004), 4.

<sup>44</sup> J. N. Kudadjie and R. K. Aboagye-Mensah, *Christian Social Ethics*. (Accra, Ghana: Asempa Publishers, 1992), 6.

<sup>45</sup> W. C. Kaiser Jr. *The Old Testament Documents: Are they Reliable & Relevant?* (USA: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001), 219-222.

<sup>46</sup> Lioy, *The Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount*, 4.

<sup>47</sup> Asumang and Domeris, “Ministering in the Tabernacle...” 22.

<sup>48</sup> W. J. Hendryx, “Progressive Covenantalism.” (2012), ¶3, §3. Online article: <http://triablogue.blogspot.com/2012/09/progressive-covenantalism.html>, accessed on 2014-14-03.

<sup>49</sup>N. Woodbridge, “A Biblical critique of the twofold theory of dispensationalism: the distinction between Israel and the Church.” *Conspectus*, 2: (2006), 92.

somehow, 'inherited all of Israel's promises, prophecies and precepts as it began on the Day of Pentecost.'<sup>50</sup> Other proponents, for example, Walvoord and Zuck used Galatians 6:16 to support their contention that Israel was the church in the OT.<sup>51</sup> It is reasonable to deduce that the reference to Israel in Galatians 6:16 is to God's covenanted people in Christ, which is the Church, just as the post-Sinai migrant Israel was God's covenanted people. That is, after the mediatorial work of Christ was applied to 'all flesh' or 'everyone who calls on the name of the LORD', i.e., Israel of the OT and then all other people (Joel 2:28-32; cf. Acts 2:16-21), the Church was born.

To a large extent then, this work agrees with Christian reconstructionists like Gundry that the Church is not the same as Israel but 'another phase in the history of God's people,'<sup>52</sup> though the two bodies are linked intertextually. What Scripture says of Israel 'might be applied to the Church'<sup>53</sup>, especially in terms of history and theology. For instance, Luke is understood by Wright as bringing the whole OT story of Israel to its climax and destination in the Church.<sup>54</sup> Thus, God's purpose for creating Israel to be the blessing of all nations 'now becomes a reality through the mission of the Church,'<sup>55</sup> and He is fulfilling the remaining promises to Israel through the church.

### **How the Holiness of Migrant Israel is intertextually linked to the Holiness of the Church**

The Church is a body of believers in Jesus who the Lord himself described as being in this world but not of this world (John 15:19; 17:14 and 16). So, they are not only sojourners in the world (1Pet 1:17, KJV) but are pilgrims (1Pet 2:11, KJV) who are migrating to a place regarded as better, in the hope of going to be with the Lord eternally (John 14:1-3, 17:14; Luke 24:51).

There are enough parallels and typologies between the post-Sinai Israelite community in the Torah and the body of Christians, i.e., the Church. The similarity between the theology of the OT camp of the wilderness migrant community and the NT temple of

<sup>50</sup> For more details, refer Lioy, *The Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount*, 6.

<sup>51</sup> F. J. Walvoord and B. R. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*. (Colorado: Victor. 1984), 611.

<sup>52</sup> S. N. Gundry (ed), *Five views on Law and Gospel*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996) 104-5, 151; cf. Hendryx, "Progressive Covenantalism," ¶3, §2.

<sup>53</sup> For more details, refer Kudadjie and Aboagye-Mensah, *Christian Social Ethics*. 6.

<sup>54</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 2011, 514.

<sup>55</sup> Woodbridge "A Biblical critique..." 92; cf. Lioy, *The Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount*, 4-6; Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 322.

Jerusalem is noted by Asumang.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, Asumang and Domeris' discussion of 'the migrant camp in the Torah as a uniting theme for the Epistle to the Hebrews'<sup>57</sup> shows the parallel between Israel as a migrant community in the OT and the Church as a migrant community in the NT. The argument by Johnsson that the Christians addressed in the book of Hebrews should be seen as a 'cultic community on the move'<sup>58</sup> clearly supports the foregone observations. This means the NT Jerusalem in Hebrews reflects the camp of the OT (Lev 24:23; Num 15:35; 19:3; 31:12; Deut 24:12-14) in the spiritual sense in that both represent a place of holy living.

Similarly, there are passages which lend support to the argument that the theological and moral principles of holiness in the Torah compare to that in the NT, though not in the literal sense. Particularly, the call to Christians to pursue holiness 'without which no one can see God' (Heb 12:14) can be intertextually linked to the command by God for the Israelites to be holy (Lev 11:44-45; cf. Lev 10:3); thus, establishing an indirect link between Christians (the Church) and the OT migrants. Additionally, Liu identifies some of the OT passages on holiness which are indirectly applied by Paul in some NT passages. He provides insights into Paul's letters to the Corinthians based on the socio-historical backgrounds of the book. Some of his observations focus on Paul's holiness metaphor in passages such as 1 Corinthians 3, 5, 6, 7, and especially 2 Corinthians 6. For him, the contexts of this text and other similar ones provide ample evidence of holiness for the Church at Corinth. Liu establishes that holiness conveys the idea that 'the authentic worshipping community is the dwelling place of the Spirit of God.'<sup>59</sup>

Specifically, Liu shows a high degree of relationship that exists between the holiness requirements of 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 and that of Deuteronomy 23:12-14, though there is no direct proof that Paul had the OT text in mind. Along the same tangent, Briley posits that Paul's call for a separation in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 is 'in

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<sup>56</sup> A. Asumang, "The Tabernacle as a Heuristic Device in the interpretation of the Christology of The Epistle to the Hebrews" (A Thesis submitted to the South African Theological Seminary in candidacy for the degree of Master of Theology). *Conspectus*, (2005), 29.

<sup>57</sup> A. Asumang and W. R. Domeris, "The migrant camp of the people of God: a uniting theme for the Epistle to the Hebrews." *Conspectus*, (2007), 1-33.

<sup>58</sup> W. G. Johnsson, "The pilgrimage motif in the Book of Hebrews." *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 97: (1978), 249; cf. Asumang, "The Tabernacle as a Heuristic Device..." 128.

<sup>59</sup>Y. Liu, "Preview of 'Purity in 1-2Corinthians in the Context of the Jewish and Greco-Roman World'." *Trinity Journal* 33/2: (Fall 2012), 289.

the language of the OT ritual purity laws.<sup>60</sup> These observations are irrespective of the debate on whether or not 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 is non-Pauline and interpolation, as some scholars have argued.<sup>61</sup> In 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, the Christian community that constitutes the Church is addressed as a unit/camp situation and not as single individuals. By referring to the Christians as the temple of the living God (2Cor 6:16), Hafemann argues that Paul was equating them as a unit to the OT temple situation, so that the church, 'both in regard to its individual members (1Cor 6:19) and in its life together corporately (1Cor 3:16-17; cf. 6:19), is now the place of God's presence in the world.'<sup>62</sup>

Once the OT temple requirements and lifestyle are observed to have developed from the wilderness camp setting which began in the Pentateuch, envisioning Christians as a temple could be an allusion that travels back to the Israelites of the Pentateuchal context. Similarly, Paul's message in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 could be explained from the context of the wilderness migrant camp where the community life of the recipients of the message of Deuteronomy 23:12-14, for example, was in focus. Since the wilderness was a 'location where God is encountered, where personal transformation takes place and where community is formed,'<sup>63</sup> the life of Christians is also expected to manifest in a transformed community living. Like the migrant camp where impurity must be avoided, Paul was concerned with the kind of practices that defile the purity of God's people and must be avoided.<sup>64</sup>

Just as the OT migrant covenant community addressed in Deuteronomy 23:12-14, the holiness required by 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 is the removal of anything unclean from amongst believers, because 'the LORD is in their midst.' Unlike the OT community, however, the defilement of the Christian community is in connection with idolatrous practices of the Greco-Roman world (2 Cor 6:14-16). As Paul instructed in 1Corinthians 5, ensuring purity is to not associate with any defiled entity (vs. 9), but to 'get rid' (vs. 7), or to

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<sup>60</sup> T. Briley, "The Old Testament 'Sin Offering' and Christ's Atonement." *Stone-Campbell Journal*, 3: (Spring 2000):89-101.

<sup>61</sup>S. J. Hafemann, *2Corinthians: The NIV Application Commentary from biblical text...to contemporary life*: (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 278-282; cf. P. R. Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary: 2Corinthians*, vol 40. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986), 191-204.

<sup>62</sup> Hafemann, *2Corinthians*, 278-282.

<sup>63</sup> T. Dozeman 1998:43. The wilderness and salvation history in the Hagar story. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117:23-43.

<sup>64</sup> Hafemann, *2Corinthians*, 292, 295.

'expel' anything evil (vs. 12) from the "camp" of believers, a position that Liu<sup>65</sup> identifies with.

Again, the use of 'not being unequally yoked' (2Cor 6:14) is first expressed in Deuteronomy 22:10 and is one of the links of the text to the holiness tradition of the Torah. Besides, the messages of Isaiah seem to be recalled by Paul, an observation also made by Liu.<sup>66</sup> To live holy lives, Christians are exhorted: 'Touch no unclean thing and I will receive you' (2Cor 6:17), which is a call for holiness traced to Isaiah 52:11. Domeris mentions Paul's description of Christians as "holy ones" (*hoi hagioi*) in the world (1 Cor 1:2) serving on behalf of YHWH.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, just as migrant Israelites by the covenant were to serve as priests and had to remain holy (Exod 19:6), Paul, according to Hafemann, 'views the Corinthians as priests fulfilling Israel's role.'<sup>68</sup> Paul's call for holiness (2Cor 6:18) is also on the basis of God's promises (2Cor 7:1), as similarly indicated in Deuteronomy 23:12-14. Once again, Hafemann notes that Paul's call to such a life is grounded 'in the present exercise of God's sovereignty to deliver and protect his people [Deut 23:14] as their father'<sup>69</sup> (2 Cor 6:18). In other words, a life of holiness needed to be maintained by the Church community to guarantee God's presence amongst them.<sup>70</sup>

It is also worthy of note that the use of "temple" in 2 Corinthians 6:16 which underscores God's dwelling among His people (the Church) emphasises the body of believers as a place for God's presence in the world. It underlines the link between 2Corinthians 6:14-7:1 and Deuteronomy 23:12-14 where the phrase, 'I will live with them and walk among them' is considered to be parallel to 'the LORD your God moves about in your camp' respectively. This observation finds support in the commentary of Martin that: 'The people of God are the temple of God, for he dwells in their midst and walks among them.'<sup>71</sup> Keener also strikes this connection when he observes concerning "God will *live* with His people" (Gk. *skenoo*) in the NT that it was 'a frequent Jewish hope that ultimately points back to a promise of God's covenant for

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<sup>65</sup> Y. Liu, *Temple Purity in 1-2Corinthians*. (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 145.

<sup>66</sup> Liu, *Temple Purity in 1-2Corinthians*, 214.

<sup>67</sup> Domeris, "The office of the Holy One." 37.

<sup>68</sup> Hafemann, *2Corinthians*, 292, 295; cf. Sprinkle, "The rationale of the Laws of clean..." 642; S. Madeleine and M. J. Lane, *Harper's Encyclopedia of Bible Life*. (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1978), 270-271.

<sup>69</sup> Hafemann, *2Corinthians*, 285-286.

<sup>70</sup> Anonymous, "Review of Temple Purity in 1-2Corinthians by Yulin Liu." (2014), §1. Online article: <http://www.mohr.de/en/theology/subject-areas/all-books/buch/temple-purity-in-1-2-corinthians.html>, accessed on 2014-09-08.

<sup>71</sup> Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 204.

Israel<sup>72</sup> (Exod 25:8; Lev 26:12; Ezek 37:27; Zech 2:10-11), and connected to the temple (Ezek 43:7, 9).

What completes the description of the NT believers as a migrant community is their link to the saints of the Eschatological age. Liu is of the view that the kind of community living as indicated by Paul concerning the Corinthians 'serves as a good testimony of unity and holiness and has an eschatological identity by representing the new people of the age to come.'<sup>73</sup> He concludes that 'by preserving its purity, the community leads an ongoing sanctified life in the worship and service of God toward its consummation.' Hafemann connects 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 with the past, present and the future by his argument that the passage makes Christians of today 'to recover the covenant and eschatological perspective of God's plan.'<sup>74</sup> Just as obedience to the laws on holiness (Deut 23:12-14) was the underlying factor to the fulfilment of the promises of YHWH to the OT migrants, the promises of 2Corinthians 6:14-7:1 are indeed for the future 'but conditioned on holiness and driven by obedience.'<sup>75</sup>

### **Implications of the Holiness required of Migrant Israel for the Church**

In agreement with Smith,<sup>76</sup> an exegetical work which does not address any current issues of significance can be described as incomplete. Thus, in our effort to address how the call for holiness of the church reflects the holiness required of the migrant covenant community of Israel, it is needful to consider the church not only as a body of believers in the NT period but including the contemporary time and even beyond into the Eschatological Age.<sup>77</sup> This is irrespective of the fact that the practical application of some disciplines of life in the OT occurred in specific contexts that are far removed from our contemporary context.<sup>78</sup> The objective is to show

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<sup>72</sup> C. S. Keener, *Revelation: The NIV Application Commentary: from biblical text...to contemporary life*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 487.

<sup>73</sup> Liu, "Preview of 'Purity in 1-2Corinthians...'" 289.

<sup>74</sup> Hafemann, *2Corinthians*, 293.

<sup>75</sup> Hafemann, *2Corinthians*, 293.

<sup>76</sup> K. G. Smith, "How to do an exegetical study." *Conspectus*, 10: (2010), 6.

<sup>77</sup> For more details, refer W. E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. (London: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 40, 307; H. J. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, rev ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980), 487-88.

<sup>78</sup> Bruce, *New International Biblical Commentary*, 7.

how the holiness of the migrating Church reflects that of migrant Israel.

There is no doubt about the current argument of some scholars (theonomists) that the OT Laws have relevance for Christians,<sup>79</sup> since they metaphorically symbolised moral purity which, according to Sprinkle, 'is still a Christian idea.'<sup>80</sup> Indeed, the moral undergirding of the laws has continuing importance, if not for everybody, at least, for the Church,<sup>81</sup> just as Douglas also argues that 'morality does not conflict with holiness.'<sup>82</sup> There exists enough impact of some OT laws in the study of ethics from both non-Christian and Christian perspectives with implications for other areas of life.<sup>83</sup> The laws, the gospels, and all the underpinnings of the epistles 'express God's moral will within the framework of the covenant of redemption' since by special and natural revelations, 'God's casuistic expectations, anchored in his own holy character, are revealed to all human beings'<sup>84</sup>, as Paul argued in Romans 1:18-2:1.

While Christians are guided by the fact that they are not bound by the ceremonial requirements of the laws they should accept that their moral obligations are still active. Especially, since the OT migrant camp has been argued as parallel to the "spiritual Jerusalem" of the NT, Christians, as "holy ones," are equally enjoined to a life of moral purity that parallels that of the OT laws. Since Paul's call for holiness in 2Corinthians 6:14-7:1 is 'in the language of the OT ritual purity laws'<sup>85</sup> the call to a holy living in the OT is also applicable to the Church. Indeed, just as Paul instructed the NT believers (1Cor 5) to live holy lives by dissociating themselves from any defilement (vs. 9), and getting rid of (vs. 7) or expelling anything evil (vs. 12) from among them, even so the present migrant community of believers should remain holy.

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<sup>79</sup> For more details, refer Gundry (ed), *Five views on Law and Gospel*, 93-143.

<sup>80</sup> Sprinkle, "The rationale of the Laws of clean..." 654-656.

<sup>81</sup> For more details, refer Wright, *The Mission of God*, 2011, 508.

<sup>82</sup> Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 2002:53; cf. J. Klawans, "Ritual purity, moral purity, and sacrifice" in Jacob Milgrom's *Leviticus*. *Religious Studies Review*, 29: (January 2003), 19-28; Moskala, "Categorization and Evaluation of..." 1-41.

<sup>83</sup> cf. Lioy, *The Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount*, 6; S. V. Poythress, *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses*. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1991), 139.

<sup>84</sup> K. D. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 262.

<sup>85</sup> T. Briley 2000:100. The Old Testament 'Sin Offering' and Christ's Atonement. *Stone-Campbell Journal* 3 (Spring):89-101; cf. Hafemann, *2Corinthians*, 282.



The migrant Israelites were called to reveal YHWH to their world<sup>86</sup> for which some of the laws had to address specific issues of their lives, particularly, holiness. Similarly, as a migrant community of believers (1Cor 3:16-17; cf. 2Cor 6:14-7:1), regardless of the period and place, the requirements for holiness specify the type of behaviour that 'always is the duty of God's people.'<sup>87</sup> Not only the believers at Corinth but Christians everywhere anytime are called to a life of holiness 'so that it could be sanctified as the dwelling place of God.'<sup>88</sup> Just as migrant Israel by virtue of their covenant with YHWH was to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod 19:5-6) in the place where He was leading them, the Church is not only a kingdom of priest but also addressed as a holy nation (1Pet 2:9) and therefore called to pursue holiness (Heb 12:14).

## Conclusion

The foregone discussions have established that the instructions on holiness given to the Church in the NT and looking forward to the Eschatological age, reflect the kind of holiness in the Torah, especially Deuteronomy 23:12-14 and Leviticus 11:45, which is spelt out to the migrant covenant community of Israel. This article has argued that the Church, as a migrant community of God's people like the migrant Israelites, is privileged to be called a holy nation (Exod 19:5-6; Deut 22:10; 23:14; cf. 1Pet 2:9). Moreover, like the migrant Israelites who were YHWH's treasured possession out of all the nations, the Church is the "salt" and "light" of the world (Matt 5:13-16). Therefore, not only should there be a distinction between Christians and non-Christians (2Cor 6:16), but believers in Christ should remain tasteful as salt and also let their light shine wherever they are. In this way, they will not only enjoy YHWH's presence, but just as the migrant Israelites enjoyed a fulfilment of His blessings in the Promised Land, they also will enjoy the promises that godliness holds for the present life and the one to come (1Tim 4:8).

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<sup>86</sup> I. D. Block, "Bearing the Name of the LORD with honor." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 168: (Jan-Mar 2011), 25; cf. J. H. C. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's grand narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 224-25, 329-33.

<sup>87</sup> Lioy, *The Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount*, 17-21.

<sup>88</sup> Liu, "Preview of 'Purity in 1-2Corinthians...'" 289.



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**A Study of Men's Roles in Churches/Ministries  
Founded by Women in Yorubaland**

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**Abstract**

The Yoruba ethnic group, predominantly found in southwestern Nigeria and West Africa, relies on oral literature to preserve and understand its culture, including gender relations. Yoruba society emphasizes balance and complementarity between genders, allowing women to hold significant leadership roles in religion and culture. This influence extends to Christianity, where women lead in Orthodox, African Independent, and Pentecostal churches. Some women have even founded churches with male and female congregations.

This study examines gender dynamics in Yoruba Christian churches, exploring questions about men's roles, the alignment with Biblical gender roles, and implications for church development. Using a mixed research design, data were collected through interviews with four female church founders and 100 questionnaires distributed across six churches. Each church contributed responses from 15 male and 5 female members, selected via purposive and random sampling methods. Descriptive analysis revealed that 95.8% of respondents reported male cooperation with female church founders, marking a significant shift from traditional Biblical views of male-dominated leadership. This study highlights the evolving

gender roles within Yoruba Christianity, reflecting a broader cultural emphasis on shared responsibilities.

## **Keywords**

Men's roles, church, Women founders, Gender, Christianity

## **Introduction**

The first attempt to Christianise Nigeria was in the fifth century, in Benin and Warri in the present day Edo and Delta States, Nigeria, respectively. But this attempt failed due to language and environmental problems. However, in 1842, Christianity, finally arrived in Nigeria at Badagry through the efforts of missionaries, which included Thomas Birch Freeman of the Wesleyan Mission and Henry Townsend of the CMS/ Anglican Mission. These missionaries represented and pursued the interests of the Methodist, and Anglican Missions.<sup>1</sup> These Missions had practices that are heavily coloured with Western culture and condemnation for African worldview and culture. For instance, realities for Africans such as witchcraft, spiritual attacks, polygamy and mysticism were classified as superstitions by missionaries and condemned outrightly. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, African Independent and Pentecostal churches came on board with practices that addressed the aforementioned realities with Biblical remedies which resulted in a remarkable movement of African members from the Missionary churches. Over the years, Christian practices under-went changes that have resulted in the emergence of other Christian denominations in Nigeria.

Thus, Christian churches in Nigeria could be classified into three broad groups: the Orthodox/Mission churches (Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Methodist), the African Independent churches (Celestial, Cherubim & Seraphim, Yahweh) and the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches (Deeper Life, Living Faith, Redeemed).<sup>2</sup> The Orthodox churches are characterized largely by a

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<sup>1</sup> R. W. Omotoye 'Christianity as a Catalyst for Socio-Economic and Political change in Yorubaland, Nigeria: An Account of a Church Historian' 159<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Lecture, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria, 2015, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Oyeronke Olademo 'New Dimension in Nigerian Women's Pentecostal Experience: The Case of DODIM, Nigeria' *Journal of World Christianity*, Vol 5, No. 1, 2012, pp. 62-74.

strong hierarchical male dominated clergy, and promotion of Western culture, while the African Independent churches prioritize African cultural sensitivities and the Pentecostal churches prioritize manifestations of the Holy Spirit such as speaking in tongues, charismatic leaders, women in ministry and preaching of the 'prosperity gospel'. The roles of women in the three categories of churches among the Yoruba stated above have been severally researched in the last two decades. The main findings include the non-ordination of women into formal leadership positions in many of the Orthodox churches, the barring of menstruating women from the altar in the African Independent churches and the act of spouses of Christian leaders operating on derived authority (as opposed to call from God) in Pentecostal churches. These issues and more have been analysed academically and recommendations proffered to address such.<sup>3</sup> Women leaders and women church founders are present realities in the African Independent and Pentecostal churches in Yoruba land. Examples of women leaders of Christian Missions and churches include: Prophetess Aimela, Reverend Mrs. Ailara and Pastor Mrs. Olotu, all in Ilorin, Kwara State.<sup>4</sup> This paper is a flip of the coin by examining the roles of men in churches and ministries founded by women.

The paper utilized the mixed research design by sourcing data through interviews, participant observation and the administration of a questionnaire. The paper explored a variety of theories on masculinity but proposed and adopted the theory of relational masculinity which is context bound, marked by cooperation for common good and sustainability. Quantitative and qualitative data are analysed by the SPSS software and content analysis respectively.

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<sup>3</sup>Mercy Amba, Oduyoye, and Musimbi R. A. Kanyoro, (eds). *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition, and the Church in Africa*. New York: Orbis Books, 1992, Andrew O. Igenozia *Polygamy and the African Churches: A Biblical Appraisal of an African Marriage System*. Ibadan, Nigeria: African Association for the Study of Religions Publication Bureau, 2003, O. Olajubu *Women in the Yoruba Religious Sphere*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2003, Afe. Adogame, "Engaging the Rhetoric of Spiritual Warfare: The Public Face of Aladura in Diaspora." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 34, no. 4, 2004, pp. 493-522, O. Olademo 'Church and State in Western Africa' in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 238-239

<sup>4</sup> O. Olademo 'Women Empowerment and Pentecostal Experience' in D. O. Ogungbile and A. E. Akinade (Eds.) *Creativity and Change in Nigerian Christianity* Lagos: Malthouse Press Limited, 2010, pp. 161-171

## **Theoretical Framework**

Masculinity study mainly examines how masculine power is constructed and represented<sup>5</sup> (Bhatti 2022). Masculinity is generally construed as a uniform group marked by sameness but this is largely unrealistic and this stance has been variously problematized. Masculinity refers to behaviours associated with boys, Men and males, which are socially constructed but with accompanied biological features such as testosterone and physical strength. Certain misconceptions are generally conceived as marking masculinity, including perceiving the expression of emotions as weakness, as being always physically strong as well as being leaders in all settings at all times. An illustration is the assumption that all women must be subject to any man always. In addition, many societies enact and maintain structures of the State and Laws that are patriarchal in nature, though recent approval for paternity leave for fathers is a commendable exception.

According to Connell, there are multiple kinds of masculinity because what is considered 'masculine' differs by race, class, ethnicity, sexuality and gender. Socially, all men share in common gender privilege/patriarchy which is described as having 'a sense of entitlement', however not all men are powerful in all settings at all times. In addition, not all males are men in every culture because to be a man in many cultures the male must be socially responsible hence masculinity is a value not a fact in society. Connell<sup>6</sup> (2005) identifies four different types of masculinities: hegemonic, complicit, subordinate and marginalized. The hegemonic refers to the dominant, heterosexual, physical strength, suppressed emotions and legitimizes patriarchy. The complicit does not challenge the dominant forms of masculinities as long as it benefits them. The subordinate acts in feminine manners, emotional, homosexual; and the marginalized is unable to conform to prevailing expectations, example is the disabled. Each of these types of masculinities may manifest in the same society at once at different times.

Eric Anderson and others have subsequently identified new conceptual and theoretical frameworks including inclusive masculinity theory and precarious manhood theory. The precarious manhood theory asserts that masculinity is earned and maintained through public manifest actions that meet societal expectations;

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<sup>5</sup>F. Bhatti *Masculinity Studies: An Interdisciplinary Approach* University of Edinburgh, 2022.

<sup>6</sup> R. W. Connell 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept' SAGE.

while the inclusive masculinity theory asserts that masculinity may also encompass emotional relationships, thus recognizing experiences of subordinate and marginalized men as significant component of masculinity<sup>7</sup>.

The distinct character of Yoruba contemporary worldview subscribes to hegemonic masculinity but with emphasis on complementary gender relationships aimed at sustaining the common good. This reflects the Yoruba stance of no absolutism, sustained by checks and balances hence this paper utilized the relational masculinity to discuss men's roles in churches founded by women in Yoruba land.

### Gender construction in the Bible

Gender refers to defined capacities and attributes assigned to persons based on their alleged sexual characteristics. Gender construction is a product of a peoples lived experiences and philosophy and reflects at the theoretical and practical levels among the people. It manifests as expectations for females and males in the society in different contexts. It is also evident in a people's language, rituals, and perceptions of the ecosystem.

The Bible prescribes subordinate role for the woman in the creation narratives of the book of Genesis, albeit in marital relationship between Adam and Eve. Nonetheless, this position has been used as a principle to impose subordinate roles for females within and outside marital relationships. Patriarchy has been severally identified as a formidable character of Biblical gender relationships, supported by the fact that Jesus had no female disciple among the twelve apostles. As I noted elsewhere, '---the interpretation of passages from the Bible plays a formidable role in prohibiting women from leadership roles in a number of Christian denominations'.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, many scholars have analysed Biblical gender prescriptions to show that interpretations of certain passages of the Bible towards entrenching subordinate roles for women were

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<sup>7</sup> L. Gotten, U. Mellstrom, T. Shofer 'Introduction: Mapping the Field of Masculinity Studies' *International Handbook of Masculinity Studies* London: Routledge pp. 1-16.

<sup>8</sup> Oyeronke Olademo *Women in Yoruba Religion* New York: New York University Press, 2022, p. 25.

driven by the politics of control<sup>9</sup>. Biblical passages support subordinate roles for women in marital relationship, though also recognizing that each spouse should submit to one another. Outside of marriage, the Bible recognizes that men and women may be leaders and agents of the divine as God wishes. While it is true that none of Jesus twelve disciples was a woman, women contributed significantly to the spread of the gospel, during and after Jesus' death. The patriarchal gender prescription of Biblical interpretation is continually being challenged by re-interpretations from perspectives of a God who loves all and can choose to use anyone in any capacity at any time. Traditional Yoruba gender construct operate on the concept of complementarity rather than oppression and has served to revise gender relations in Christian churches among the Yoruba.

### **Gender construction in Yoruba land**

Yoruba cosmological narratives exert tremendous influence on Yoruba gender categorizations and roles for males and females. It prioritizes complementary roles for the male and female gender with each gender having specific areas of specialization. In addition, Yoruba gender construction is fluid and may be modulated by context, thus it is 'not equivalent to or a consequence of anatomy at all times. The boundaries of Yoruba gender construct is constantly shifting and reconfigurations occur in its expressions often. Furthermore, Yoruba gender construct does not translate the oppression and domination of women by men because complementary gender relation is appreciated. This stance manifests at every level of Yoruba philosophy including ecology, politics, economy, sociology and especially religion, wherein male and female principles are crucial to positive living experiences. The ultimate aim for gender relationship among the Yoruba is cooperation and the common good for which both female and male principles are needed. Yoruba gender roles have influenced the practice of the two imported religions (Christianity and Islam)

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<sup>9</sup> M. A. Oduyoye *The Will to Arise* New York: Orbis Books, 1992, pp. 135-140; Musa Dube *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* Chalise Press, 2000; O. Olajubu *Women in Yoruba Religious Shpere* Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003, O. Olademo 'Doing Christian Theology in Africa from a Feminist Perspective' in Adewale et al (Eds.) *Biblical Studies and Feminism-The African Context* Ibadan: National Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS), pp. 31-44.



among the people from different perspectives. Examples include the creation of leadership for male and female roles in some churches and women led ministries in Islam in Yoruba land today. This informs the focus of this paper to explicate men’s roles in some churches founded by women in Yoruba land.

### **Data Presentation**

Four female church founders and one male successor of a female church founder were interviewed. These were Mama prophetess Sarah Samuel of Christ Apostolic church Oke-Iyanu, Eleko Apata Yakuba, Mama Evangelist Deborah Ayoola of Holy church of Christ Ministry, Olunlade, Mama Evangelist Helen Mosunmola Molagun of God is able Evangelical church, and Mama Pastor Busola Olotu of the Daughters of Deborah International ministry. The male successor of Mama Pastor Aimela is Pastor Aina Olusegun Babatunde of Christ the Messiah church, all in Ilorin. These five churches were founded by women in 2013, 2000, 2008, 2008 and 1982 respectively by God’s calling. All of them have at least the West African Certificate and have male members, who function in different capacities in the churches. However, there are more female than male members in each of these churches founded by women. During the interviews it came to fore that men’s roles in these churches include ushers, choir members, preacher, children department, project management and church council members. In addition, it became apparent that fewer men than women attend church programmes, especially during the week. Of the one hundred questionnaires administered in these churches, seventy-two were retrieved and analyzed through SPSS software. Data analysis and interpretation is here presented according to the objectives of the research.

#### 1. How do men function in these churches?

Table 1: How men function in churches

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Pastor	70	2	1.03	.165	
Council Member	71	1	1.01	.118	
Chorister	71	1	1.01	.118	
Usher	70	2	1.03	.165	
Fund Raising	71	1	1.014	.118	
Evangelism	69	3	1.042	.201	
Church Administration	70	2	1.028	.165	
Management of church fund	66	6	1.083	.278	

construction, church project	68	4	1.083	.402
marriage family counselling	68	4	1.056	.231
discipleship training	65	7	1.097	.298
disciplinary committee	65	7	1.125	.442
children department	63	9	1.125	.333
support for the needy	69	3	1.042	.201
representing the church in CAN, PEN	67	5	1.069	.256
<hr/>				
AVERAGE Mean				

Table 1 showed how men function in the sampled churches and the roles they play. From the descriptive analysis, participants affirmed that almost men in the sampled churches function in all the specified roles. Council Membership, chorister and fund-raising top functions men perform in these churches as only one participant do not perform the three roles in all churches. As revealed in the mean score, most men affirmed that their functions in the church are centred around children department, disciplinary committee, discipleship training, management of church fund, and church project among others.

## 2. What is the prevailing gender relation in these churches?

Table 2: Demography of Prevailing Gender Relations in churches

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative F
Male	45	62.5	62.5
Female	27	37.5	100.0
Total	72	100.0	

The demographic variable reveals that 62.5% of the total participants were male and 37.5% were female. Therefore, male members of the church are well represented than their female counterpart in the survey.

Table 3: the prevailing gender relations in these churches

Items	Yes	No	Me an	SD	Standard Error	Deci sion
Relationship of male and female workers in church is cordial	67 93.1%	5 6.9%	1.0 7	.256	.030	
Relationship of male and female workers in church is competitive	37.5%	45 62.5%	1.6 3	.488	.057	

Relationship of male and female workers in church is challenging	28 38.9%	44 61.1%	1.6 1	.491	.058
Men in church cooperate with the woman founder always	69 95.8%	3 4.2%	1.0 4	.201	.024
Men in church cooperate with the woman founder often	48 66.7%	24 33.3%	1.3 3	.475	.056
Men in the church cooperate with woman founder rarely	15 20.8%	57 79.2%	1.7 9	.409	.048
Men contribute more money than women in this church	43 59.7%	29 40.3%	1.4 0	.494	.058
Some men have challenges serving in this church	28 38.9%	44 61.1%	1.6 1	.491	.058

The above table reveals that majority of men in church cooperate with the women founder always (95.8%) and just 20.8% of men in the church cooperate with women founder rarely. Also, 66.7% of men in church cooperate with the women founder, there is also cordial relationship between male and female workers in the church (93.1%) while 37.5% have a competitive relationship between male and female in the church. Some men reported having challenges serving in church (38.9%). While 59.7% of them contributed more money than women in the church, which is also equal to the percentage of those having challenging relationship with female workers in church (38.9%)

However, 79.2% disagreed that men in church cooperate with women founder rarely and 40.3% disagreed that men contribute more money than women in the church. 61.1% disagreed that some men have challenges serving in this church which is also equal to the percentage of people who disagreed that relationship of male and female workers in church is challenging while 33.3% disagreed that men in church cooperate with women founder often. 4.2% disagreed that men in church cooperate with women founder always. 62.5% disagreed that relationship of male and female workers is competitive and 6.9% disagreed that relationship of male and female workers in the church is cordial.

3. How do these prevailing gender relations differ from biblical gender relations?

**Table 3: t-test result of how prevailing gender relations differs from biblical gender relations**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t-value	p-value
Prevailing_Gender_Relation	72	11.4861	1.49170	71	65.337	.000
Biblical Gender Relation	23.7500	5.70828				

Table 3 indicates that the calculated t-value of 65.3 is significant as the p-value is less than .05 alpha levels. This implies that prevailing gender relations differs from biblical gender relations. In other words, the result suggested that prevailing gender relations and biblical gender relations differs.

4. What are the implications of men’s roles in these churches to development in the churches

**Table 4: implications of men’s roles to development in the churches**

S/N	Item	A	U	D	X	Decision
1	the bible is against women founding churches	14 19.4%	4 5.6%	54 75%	2.10	Reject
2	the holy spirit cannot operate through a woman	59 81.9%	3 4.2%	10 13.9%	4.24	Accept
3	women cannot worship God during menstruation	54 75%	5 6.9%	13 18.1%	4.08	Accept
4	the bible prescribes that women must be supervised by men in the church always	39 54.2%	7 9.7%	26 36.1%	3.44	Accept
5	the bible gives examples of women leaders in Ministry	8 11.1%	4 5.6%	60 83.3%	1.85	Reject
6	the bible records examples of men and women working together in Christ's Ministry	6 8.4%	3 4.2%	63 87.5%	1.67	Reject
7	the bible condemns pride and hypocrisy	64 88.9%	-	8 11.1%	4.38	Accept

8	the bible supports the position that God can women and men as He pleases	66 91.7	1 1.4%	5 6.9%	4.43	Accept
9	the bible describes every Christian as members of the same body	69 95.8%	-	3 4.2%	4.60	Accept
<b>Average</b>					<b>3.42</b>	

The table 4 shows that most of the items on implications of men's role in church for development were accepted and only a few items like the bible gives examples of women's leaders in ministry with a mean score of 1.85, the bible records examples of men and women working together in Christ's ministry with a mean score of 1.67, and the bible is against women founding churches with a mean score of 2.10 were rejected by participants for the accepted items mean score above 3.0 was set as cut-off score and decision point in the study. From the analysis, participants who agreed that the bible describes every Christian as members of the same body with a man score of 4.6 which is followed by the bible supports the position that God can women and men as He pleases and the bible records examples of men and women working together in Christ's Ministry with the least score of 1.67.

### Discussion of Data

Relational masculinity which prioritizes cooperation of the genders, is progress focused and committed to sustainability of a joint destiny in any setting is validated by data from interviews and questionnaire as analysed. The top three roles of men in these churches founded by women are membership of church councils, chorister and fund-raising activities while the mean score that men perform roles in all departments in the churches, including the children department. Again, that more males than females are represented in the respondents conform to the purposive sampling technique for questionnaire administration since the paper focused on men's roles in these churches. The prevailing gender relation shows a high score of 95.8% for cooperation of males with the female founder/leader in the churches. This is a clear departure Biblical gender prescription which is often translated as prescribing male leadership at all times, being the basis for prohibitions on female ordination in some

Christian denominations. In addition, data 93.1% shows a cordial relationship between male and female workers in these churches and this confirms Yoruba preference for complimentary gender relations. Responses on the third research objective present data that buttress the fact that gender roles in these churches differ from Biblical gender prescriptions thus indicating change in prevailing gender roles, which could be attributed to the influence of Yoruba cultural paradigm of complementarity. In addition, majority of the respondents on research objective four subscribe to the stance that for the church to develop, Christians should appreciate the positions that Christians (male and female) are members of the same body; God can use women and men as He pleases; and the Bible gives examples of women and men working together in Christ's ministry.

### **Conclusion**

This paper is an attempt to explicate the roles of men in churches founded by women in Yoruba land. The discourse comprised examination of theories on masculinity with eventual adoption of the novel relational masculinity theory. It came to fore that Biblical gender construct has been interpreted as ascribing subordinate positions to women in all settings, at all times, but this has been severally challenged by scholars over the years. The paper explored Yoruba gender construction which is fluid and promotes gender complementary relations. It was observed that the Yoruba gender construct has significantly influenced gender relations in churches in Yorubaland, and this was empirically confirmed by data for this research. Illustratively, men play diverse roles in churches founded by women comfortably, such as the care for children and ushers. Thus, the need to maintain peace, sustain growth and please God remains the focus of these churches founded by women.