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Editor's Introduction

We once again proudly present, from the grounds of Bodija, another edition of our well-esteemed and widely read academic journal. This edition is coming up at a very peculiar moment in the world's history and the Church's annals. Advancement in technology, especially as seen in the proliferation of Artificial Intelligence products and devices which have infiltrated normal daily lives, including the academia, has called into question, the authenticity of authorship. With technology today, faces and voices are cloned and speeches are practically read with the faces of popular political and social figures. This challenges the truth value attached to circulated videos, evidences presented in court proceedings, the authenticity of human authorship of academic researches, and even the certainty of a human counterpart in mobile telephone chats. All these question the acclaimed ability of modern media to create a global village. Do we truly have a global human village or a mixed robot-human village in the world today?

The social media continues to be a force, either for good or bad, or both, in our contemporary society. The original fear and risk of the proliferation of the modern means of communication is the creation of what Pope Francis calls, "social hermits" among the youths – a situation whereby young persons lose the skills of proper interhuman communication skills and become unable to engage in conversations with persons physically living next to them. Recent events in our national history, however, demonstrate the evolution of collapse of human communication due to addiction to the internet into a unification of peoples still through the internet. The almost Nigerian counterpart of American George Perry Floyd Jr, the 27 year old musician who died under suspicious circumstances, resulted in protest marches and candlelight processions in major cities inside and outside the country. This singular event once more showcased the power of the modern media and its great influence on normal life. The matrix of the society is gradually being influenced by the discussions and the conversations going on online. This has serious implications for politics today and no government can totally hoodwink her populace without turning into a tyrannical one.

Still in the vein of creating true communities, the Church convened in Rome in October 2023 to ponder as the family of God on the concept of synodality. The ongoing synod has the theme, “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission.” The three year process has resulted in an unprecedented manner of approach and preparation: intense discussions at parochial, diocesan, provincial, national and continental levels, with each documenting its conclusions and reporting to relevant authorities. The three-year long synod is intent on reflecting on the nature of the Church as a communion of persons walking together with God and one another. Pope Francis reiterates that the Church is synodal by its very nature. The call of Pope Francis for such a synod is at home with the focus and message of his pontificate, which has constantly called on all to reach out to the peripheries and involve the most neglected. The only challenge of peripheral ministry is when its activity seemingly bothers otherwise sacrosanct boundaries of doctrinal teaching and magisterium of the Church. Nonetheless, the importance of ensuring communion, insisting on participation and actively going on mission constitute the magna carta of new evangelization in our world today.

This edition is packed with innovative and cerebral academic researches which would readily engage any interested reader. **John Adimike** in his article, “Logicism and Theory of Coherence in Bertrand Russell’s Thought”, interrogates the concept of Logicism within the realm of Bertrand Russell’s philosophical thinking. Russell was a prominent advocate of Logicism, and Adimike’s paper seeks to scrutinize how Russell perceived its philosophical significance. Russell’s perspective is illuminated by his portrayal of mathematical knowledge as a coherent entity. The central aim of the paper is to both outline Russell’s coherence theory and assess its relevance within the broader discourse on Logicism and the certainty of mathematical principles. He argues that Russell perceived an inverse proportion between a logical reduction of mathematics and the certitude of non-novel mathematical theorems.

Charles Ozioko on his part examines the revised Book VI of the Code of Canon Law, issued by Pope Francis in May 2021 and enforced in December 2021. He focuses on the concept of sanctions in the Church and its relationship with charity, mercy, and justice.

The article raises significant questions regarding the necessity and purpose of these sanctions within the Church. It also questions whether penal law in the Church has genuinely led to the reform of individuals. It presents a tension between the idea of demonstrating mercy and forgiveness to those who transgress in the Church and the need to balance these principles with the requirements of justice and effective governance.

In their essay, **Clifford Ayegwalo, OMV** and **Francis Ikhianosime** examine the historical development and impact of the decree on seminaries as an innovative outcome of the Council of Trent. The central objective of their essay is to chronicle the background and motivations that led to the decree's creation, provide a critical analysis of the decree itself, and investigate the initial reactions of the ecclesial community to this significant reform, as well as evaluate the contemporary stance of the Church in responding to the ever-evolving signs of the times concerning the training and formation of future priests.

How is idolatry viewed by Israel's God and how does sixth century prophet Jeremiah codify Israel's infidelity? In his essay, **Francis Onwordi** dwells on Jeremiah 11:9-13 in order to explore the essence of covenant in Israel's relationship with God and the effects of its compromise on the history of the Israelite nation. According to Onwordi, Jeremiah emphasizes that covenant is the foundation of Israel's identity and is very crucial for her survival. Israel's relationship with the covenant is seen in light of her obedience and loyalty to YHWH. The paper specifically examines the adulterous practices of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem when they worship false gods. This behaviour is considered as infidelity to YHWH and akin to a rejection of YHWH's leadership over Israel.

Raymond Okoro, in his article, probes the pivotal role of the resurrection of Jesus in Christian faith and doctrine. He emphasizes that the resurrection is the cornerstone of Christian teaching from the very inception of the Church and that Christians, through their faith in the Risen Lord, are called to bear witness to this event worldwide.

The final entry dwells on the scourge of ethnic politics as it plagues the nation, Nigeria. Here, **William Ikre** traces the origins of ethnic politics in Nigeria and how the project of forming a nation

had structural problems from the beginning. He attributes ethnicism to extensive colonialism. He posits that for true ethical democracy to be practiced in Nigeria, all regions and interested parties need to go back to the drawing board and decide on the willingness to proceed as a nation.

This edition no doubt has very interesting entries and it is hoped that readers will once more glean pivotal academic submissions and research topics from the publication. At this point, we cannot but appreciate the tedious and productive efforts of our erstwhile editor, Very Rev. Fr. Prof. Anselm Jimoh, who after overseeing the production of three editions of the journal, has handed over the baton of editorial leadership. As he proceeds on a sabbatical break, the entire editorial team of Bodija Journal wishes him great and fruitful experiences during the well-deserved leave. In the same vein, we celebrate and appreciate the contributions of one of our erstwhile editors, Very Rev. Fr Prof. Damian Ilodigwe. We pray the good Lord to continually strengthen him and grant him abundant grace for the years ahead. And to you, our dear readers, we wish you an exciting intellectual engagement.

Francis Adelabu
Chief Editor

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Logicism and Theory of Coherence in Bertrand Russell's Thought

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Abstract

Logicism is the thesis that all or, at least parts, of mathematics is reducible to deductive logic in at least two senses: (A) that mathematical lexis can be defined by sole recourse to logical constants [a definition thesis]; and, (B) that mathematical theorems are derivable from solely logical axioms [a derivation thesis]. The principal proponents of this thesis are: Frege, Dedekind, and Russell. The central question that I raise in this paper is the following: 'How did Russell construe the philosophical worth of logicism?' The argument that I build in response to this is that Russell perceived an inverse proportion between a logical reduction of mathematics and the certitude of non-novel mathematical theorems – such that the more we reduce mathematics to logic, the more certain we become of our mathematical theorems; this was portrayed through a presentation of mathematical knowledge as coherent. Therefore, I set out to sketch Russell's coherence theory and appraise it in relation to the presence discourse: that is, in relation to logicism and mathematical certainty.

Keywords: Logicism, Epistemic Coherence, Mathematical Theorems, Logical Theorems.

1.0 Introduction

Logicism is the thesis that all or, at least parts, of mathematics is reducible to deductive logic in at least two senses: (A) that mathematical lexis can be defined by sole recourse to logical constants [a definition thesis]; and, (B) that mathematical theorems are derivable from solely logical axioms [a derivation thesis]. Among the principal proponents of this thesis are Gottlob Frege, Richard

Dedekind, and Bertrand Russell. Had Russell's logicism been successful, it would [have] demonstrated how mathematical theorems [afterwards, MTs] feature appropriate epistemic properties typically ascribed to logical theorems [subsequently, LTs].

A tacit implication of the logicist thesis is the inheritance of relevant epistemic properties of logical concepts and theorems by mathematical ones. Should mathematical claims be in fact, descriptions or apocopes for logical ones and are themselves derivable from logical ones, then MTs necessarily feature the relevant epistemic characters attributed to LTs. A possible interpretation would be to say that MTs are necessary, potentially knowable, *a priori*, certain, and self-evident. Thus, by this fact, MTs obtain the properties of LTs by some kind of hereditary accretion or, transferal of property. These properties are called Epistemic Transferred Properties [ETPs] and this accretive procedure is called Epistemic Property Transfer [EPT] thesis.

Russell may have very well motioned to sustain the EPT thesis even as he upheld logicism; the EPT was a strong motivating factor for Russell's logicism.¹ Lugubriously, the EPT opposes Russell's logicist stance – or so it seems. Russell himself states:

... the chief reason in favour of any theory on the principles of mathematics must always be inductive, i.e. it must lie in the face that the theory in question enables us to deduce ordinary mathematics. In mathematics, the greatest degree of self-evidence is usually not to be found quite at the beginning, but at some later point; hence, the early deductions, until they reach this point, give reasons rather for believing the premises because true consequences follow from them, than for believing the consequences because they follow from the premises.²

Given this and seeing that Russell 'apparently' never believed in EPT, did Russell ascribe significant epistemic consequences to

¹ Martin Godwyn and Andrew Irvine, "Bertrand Russell's Logicism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Bertrand Russell*, ed. Nicholas Griffin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 171-202.

² Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell, *Principia Mathematica*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962).

logicism? Did logicism hold significance for mathematical epistemology? Russell did grant relevance to logicism – because it enhances mathematical explanation and facilitates discovery. Russell's key motivations of logicism include: (1) portraying how apparently differing theorems and their proofs can be derived from a common core of axioms; (2) revealing methods for proving already-stated theorems that are otherwise unproven; and, (3) suggesting novel concepts and theorems in mathematics.

I certainly believe that Russell ascribed relevance to logicism. Thus, I argue that Russell upheld the belief that the reduction of mathematics to logic steps up the certainty of MTs – even the rudimentary facts of basic arithmetic. My discussion is not so much as concerned with expending much philosophical rigour on the grandeur of demonstrating the reduction of MTs as it is of justifying LTs in order to ground the certainty of MTs. I maintain that this certainty does not derive from any transferal of ETPs; rather, it is owed to the coherent structure of mathematical knowledge. I therefore structure this paper into two sections; in the first, I argue Russell's logicism and whether or not, he upheld the EPT thesis; and in the second, I discuss Russell's theory of coherence and its mark on logicism. I do not consider the fluidity of Russell's thought any much alarming because of the relative constancy of his thought on coherence from 1907 through the 1950s. I therefore encourage the reader to muster courage in the analysis that I urge below.

2.0 Russell's Logicism and the EPT

"The most obvious and easiest things in mathematics", says Russell, "are not those that come logically at the beginning; they are things that, from the viewpoint of logical deduction, come somewhere in the middle".³ This passage explains that Russell did not take mathematical axioms as homogeneously self-evident.⁴

In *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903), Russell committed himself to establish the logicist view that "all pure mathematics deals

³ Bertrand Russell, *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell*, ed. John G. Slater (Routledge: New York, 2009), 2.

⁴ Russell, *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell*, 279.

exclusively with concepts definable in terms of a very small number of fundamental logical concepts, and that all its propositions are deducible from a very small number of logical principles”⁵ as well as to expound “the fundamental concepts which mathematics accepts as indefinable”.⁶ The *Principia Mathematica* encapsulates some heavy utility of symbolism in the argumentation of the logicist conviction. Of it [i.e., the *Principia*], Bede Rundle excogitates a striking conceptual overlap in theoretical terrain with that “covered by Frege in his *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik*, a work to which the authors acknowledge their chief debt on questions of logical analysis; in some respects, such as the demarcation between logical and metalogical theses, *Principia Mathematica* falls short of the standards of rigor observed in Frege’s masterpiece”.⁷

As essentially formulated by Russell in the *Principia Mathematica* as well as the *Principles*, Russell takes logicism to assert that the enterprise of mathematics can be reduced to symbolic logic—i.e., as a claw of symbolic logic. Grounded upon symbolic logic as well as logical axioms [such as Peano’s axioms of arithmetic, and that of reducibility], it is then possible to express mathematical truths and concepts in some formal language. With respect to this, it must be conceded that Russell’s views on formal language typically represented in the theory of descriptions, held a significant impact on his conception and eventual articulation of this ‘formal language’ which expresses mathematics.⁸ Similarly, Russell’s debt to Alexius Meinong is seen in that Russell’s realist position [which he had taken up due to G. E. Moore] was strengthened by “an extreme form of the referential theory of meaning, the view that in order for a

⁵ Bertrand Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1938), xv.

⁶ Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics*, xv.

⁷ Bede Rundle, “History of Modern Logic: From Frege to Gödel”, in *Kabbalah to Marxist Philosophy*, vol. 5 of *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Donald M. Borchert, (New York: Thomson Gale, 2006), 466.

⁸ William Demopoulos and Peter Clark, “Logicism: Frege, Dedekind, and Russell,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Mathematics and Logic*, ed. Stewart Shapiro (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 154-159.

linguistic expression to have a meaning there must be something that it means, something to which it refers".⁹

Needless to say, Russell's perception of the logicist project was marked by optimism. Also, there was some tinge of ambition to the project because, Russell hoped that the project would eradicate the paradoxes and problems which had so long bedevilled the enterprise of mathematics.¹⁰ By means of the logicist project, it was Russell's aim to restore certainty and clarity to the mathematical enterprise.

I must concede at this moment, a fundamental distinction between Russell's perception and the Fregean [and neo-Fregean] towards the project of logicism. While the latter construe theirs to be in essence, a matter of epistemology – i.e., dealing with the security of the epistemological footing of our beliefs in arithmetical truths, demonstrating their entailment from logical truths as well as analytic principles with an equivalent epistemological status of definitions – Russell construed his as being a matter of application of philosophical method.¹¹

The methodology spoken of in the previous paragraph, consists of a two-phase process. Kevin Klement explains this quite aptly:

In the first phase, one begins with a certain theory, doctrine or collection of beliefs, which is thought to be more or less correct, but is taken to be in certain regards vague, imprecise, disunified, overly complex or in some other way puzzling. The aim is to work backwards from these beliefs, taken as a kind of "data", to a certain minimal stock of undefined concepts and general principles which might be thought to underlie the original body of knowledge. The second phase consists in rebuilding or reconstructing the original body of knowledge in terms of the results of the first phase. More specifically, one defines those elements of the original doctrine deemed worth preserving in terms

⁹ Paul Edwards, William Alston, and A. N. Prior, "Bertrand Russell," in *Shaftesbury to Zubiri*, vol. 9 of *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Donald M. Borchert, 2nd ed. (New York: Thomson Gale, 2006), 541.

¹⁰ Irving Copi, *The Theory of Logical Types* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), 1.

¹¹ Kevin Klement, "Neo-Logicism and Russell's Logicism," in *Russell: The Journal of Bertrand Russell Studies*, 32 (Winter 2012-2013): 144.

of the “minimum vocabulary” identified in the first phase, and derives or deduces the main tenets of the original theory from the basic principles or general truths so identified.¹²

Russell describes this procedure as *analysis*,¹³ which, rather than being a process of discovering “‘what we meant all along’ by a given collection of statements,”¹⁴ is one that sees to the provision of “a *replacement* for the original doctrine, something that preserves what was desirable about the original, but taking a new form in which connections between various concepts are made clear, the logical interrelations between various theses of the theory are explicit, and vague or unclear aspects of the original terminology are eliminated”.¹⁵

Given Russell’s perception of logicism, we shall now examine Russell’s logicism and the EPT. Logicism, as is generally put, entails the hereditary accretion of LTs by MTs. This is confuted however, by Russell. He also denied the certainty of logical principles: “In mathematical logic, it is the conclusions that have the greatest certainty: the closer we get to the ultimate premises, the more uncertainty and difficulty we find”.¹⁶ Russell further claims that the axioms of infinity and multiplicity are non-necessary; similarly, he denies the logical veracity of any existential postulate: “Among ‘possible worlds’, in the Leibnizian sense, there will be one having one, two, three ..., individuals. There does not even seem any logical necessity why there should be even one individual-why, in fact, there should be any world at all”.¹⁷

Lastly, Russell argues that the justification of mathematical axioms is based on a spuriously inductive method: whether they can be used to develop theorems of arithmetic and analysis. Thus, it is non-clear that Russell’s axioms are potentially knowable *a priori*.

¹² Klement, “Neo-Logicism and Russell’s Logicism,” 144.

¹³ Here, one familiar with Russell literature may be quick to observe some equivocation. While Russell refers to the methodology itself as analysis, he also refers to the first part of the procedure as the stage of ‘analysis’, and the second as that of ‘synthesis’ or, as the synthetic stage.

¹⁴ Klement, “Neo-Logicism and Russell’s Logicism,” 144.

¹⁵ Klement, “Neo-Logicism and Russell’s Logicism,” 144.

¹⁶ Russell, *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell*, 285.

¹⁷ Russell, *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell*, 203.

As regards the existential axioms, Russell points out that “Existence theorems, where individuals are concerned, are now theorems as to existence in the philosophical sense; hence it is natural that they should not be demonstrable *a priori*”.¹⁸

There is still further reason to believe that Russell never ratified the EPT thesis. Regardless of his importunity with respect to the pursuit of the logicist programme, the *Principia Mathematica* fails to adequately argue out the claim that all MTs are derivable from solely logical axioms. Russell states that:

We have sufficiently defined the character of the primitive ideas in terms of which all the ideas of mathematics can be defined, but not of the primitive propositions from which all the propositions of mathematics can be deduced. This is a more difficult matter, as to which it is not yet known what the full answer is. We may take the axiom of infinity as an example...., though it can be enunciated in logical terms, cannot be asserted by logic to be true.¹⁹

Russell therefore, is uncertain as to whether or not MTs can be proven by sole virtue of pure logical axioms. If the claim of the derivation thesis, namely that ‘all MTs are derivable from solely logical axioms’ were true, then there must be proof of their logicality – and dear Russell has explicitly denied this in some of the citations above. Russell’s reluctance in endorsing the derivation thesis suggests his perception of logicism. Firstly, he appears more concerned about the definition thesis of logicism; secondly, the axiomatization of the entire enterprise of mathematics has an independent worth even if the necessary axioms for this are not purely logical.

By and large, there are two significant implications characteristic of Russell’s logicist project that bear on mathematical epistemology: (1) in the logicist attempt, better explanations of mathematical theorems are acquired through a harmony of proofs in a single axiomatic set; (2) novel concepts and theorem-proving methods are learned. However, as Russell’s logicism does not entail the hereditary accretion of such logical features as necessity, and a

¹⁸ Bertrand Russell, “The Paradox of the Liar,” unpublished manuscript in *The Bertrand Russell Archives* (McMaster: McMaster University), 65.

¹⁹ Russell, *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell*, 206.

priority by MTs from LTs, so Russell still does not provide a defense of/for the EPT thesis.

In the final analysis, is there then, perhaps, any manner wherein the logicist manifesto proliferates the certainty of MTs? For Russell, the answer is in the affirmative (even though there has been so far, a rather sparse textual evidence). The second section of this paper shall demonstrate why the affirmative obtains.

3.0 Russell's Theory of Coherence and the Epistemic Significance of Logicism

Russell recognized the existence of *a priori*, necessary, and self-evidential truth; an example of such is the logical law of thought of non-contradiction. This law states that P cannot simultaneously be true and false; $p \wedge \neg p$ cannot obtain concurrently. As such, for any set of propositions implying a contradiction, at least one member of the set must be false. This assertion is still supported by Russell even when significantly modified. Represented, we have the following:

(A): For any set of propositions, *S*, if *S* implies a contradiction, then there is at least one proposition *p* that is false.

(A'): For any set of propositions, *S*, if *S* does not imply a contradiction then *S* has evidence for its assertions.

Similarly, Russell writes that: "The proof of a logical system is its adequacy and its coherence. That is: (1) the system must embrace among its deductions all those propositions which we believe to be true and capable of deduction from logical premises alone ... and (2) the system must lead to no contradictions".²⁰

Taking 'proof of a logical system' to mean 'truth of the axioms', then Russell's conclusion appears peculiar. There are quite a number of consistent mathematical axiomatizations and in the absence of an argument where the logical constancy of a set of propositions is support enough for their veridicality.

Russell means more than 'logical constancy' when he speaks of coherence. For Russell, when a number of propositions bear a

²⁰ Whitehead and Russell, *Principia Mathematica*, 12.

relation R to one another, the set becomes more 'obvious', 'credible' than the individual propositions. It is the collation of all such relations R that Russell calls 'coherence'. In a 1912 paper, Russell introduced the terminology of coherence: "In regard to probable opinion, we can derive great assistance from coherence, which we rejected as the definition of truth, but may often use as a criterion. A body of individually probable opinions, if they are mutually coherent, become more probable than any one of them would be individually".²¹

Then, he calls this view the 'coherence theory of probability': "I do not accept the coherence theory of *truth* but there is a coherence theory of probability which is important and which I think valid"; he goes ahead to explain the theory: "suppose you have two facts and a causal principle which corrects them, the probability of all three may be greater than the probability of any one, and the more numerous and complex the inter-connected facts and principles become, the greater is the increase of probability derived from their mutual coherence".²²

Russell's repeated discussions of the coherence theory and the great chunk of temporal slices claimed in the process, suggest the importance that Russell attached to this theory. What I maintain is that by his logicist venture, Russell was indeed endeavouring, at least to some extent, to demonstrate the possibility of coherent organization in mathematical knowledge – thus, strengthening one's evidence for the certainty of mathematical claims. To clarify my position, I shall elucidate three key ideas: (1) what Russell means by coherence; (2) the relations coherent propositions bear to one another; and, (3) the epistemic properties of a set of propositions that coherence provides support for.

Russell succinctly defines coherence in these words: "Two propositions are coherent when both may be true, and are incoherent when one at least must be false".²³ In the instance of more than two propositions, we should revert to Russell's 'dream

²¹ Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, ed. John Perry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 140.

²² Bertrand Russell, *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Its Limits* (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1948), 395.

²³ Russell, *Human Knowledge*, 120.

example²⁴ where he uses coherence in reference to a computable measure of the evidential support a proposition offers another. Rephrasing the second question, we ask what properties of a set of propositions, Ω , defines its coherence. To answer this, some certain questions pop up:

- (I) the number of propositions in Ω ;
- (II) the complexity of propositions in Ω ;
- (III) the possibility of deriving some propositions in Ω from other propositions in Ω ;
- (IV) the question of the satisfiability of Ω ; and
- (V) the safety of Ω from contradiction.

Russell opines that some of the basic probes listed above might have probabilistic analogues.²⁵ For instance, in speaking of the ‘interconnectedness of propositions’, what Russell might very well be speaking of is whether or not, for any singular proposition $\alpha \in \Omega$ the credibility (or probability) of $\Omega \rightarrow \alpha \setminus (\alpha)$ is less than, equal to, or greater than, the credibility/probability of simpliciter.²⁶ As against what one would expect, Russell fails to succinctly speak on this matter and, notwithstanding the current method of probability is one way of making coherence exact, there are other rational and plausible methods one can explore.

Yet, with the method he advocates, Russell faces a major setback of vagueness. One glaring example of this vagueness is the example that the number of propositions in a set is a criterion for deciding the coherence of the set. In a formal expression, a finite amount of assertions can be unified; so, we can then ask if propositions can be defined so as to achieve a distinction between a finite collection of propositions and ‘one’ proposition. We can even go further to

²⁴ Russell, *Human Knowledge*, 140.

²⁵ The later Russell held that on a field of non-demonstrative extrapolations, logical inferences are the natural endpoints. This is concordant with the views in: Russell, 383.

²⁶ Russell tacitly employs this concept of conditional probability to execute an explanation of the manner in which the credibility of a proposition ought to be defined by known probabilities.

question the appropriateness of cardinality as a measure of numbers of propositions in a non-finite set if we are to quantify the intricacy of the set.

The final idea in Russell's coherence theory which I shall clarify, is a claim regarding the epistemic properties of a set of propositions that coherence provides support for. I assert that what Russell truly intends by 'probability' in 'coherence theory of probability', is a measure of evidential support, non-satisfactory to current standards of axioms of probability theory. This is because of Russell's claim that "A body of individually probable opinions, if they are mutually coherent, become more probable than any one of them would be individually".²⁷ Literally interpreted, this assertion is diametrically opposed to the probabilistic rudiment that the conjunction of two or more propositions is less probable than either conjunct: i.e., $\forall A \forall B [p(A \wedge B) \leq p(A), p(B)]$. For Russell, the reverse obtains: he seems to discern a rather overall probabilistic fact: if μ entails ν , then μ is less probable than ν . Russell therefore writes: "For the probability that Socrates is mortal is greater, on our data, than the probability that all men are mortal (this is obvious because if all men are mortal, so is Socrates; but if Socrates is mortal, then it does not follow that all men are mortal)".²⁸

Perhaps the equivocation of 'probability' in his earlier writings, led Russell to show precisely, the difference between probability and credibility as is evident in *Human Knowledge* – Russell's most sustained discussion of probability and its construal readings. Though the coherence theory is pretty much incomplete, the above outline suffices for a discussion on its significance with regard to the logicist project. If the reduction of mathematics to logic erases contradictions, discovers logically simple principles, proliferates the number of propositions that one receives by constructing novel theorems and reveals 'derivability relations' between propositions, then the logical analysis of MTs makes mathematical knowledge more coherent, and for Russell, more probable.

²⁷ Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, ed. John Perry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 140.

²⁸ Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, 80.

“Why then does coherence enhance the credibility of a set of propositions?”, one may ask. The above readings show Russell’s answer. The coherence of a set of properties is a sign of truth only when at the very least, some propositions are sustained independently by accessible suggestions. From the excerpts of Russell’s work which we have reviewed in this section, Russell says the following to us [according to their order of appearance in the present paper]: (1) coherence is a sign of truth so long as one’s beliefs are already ‘individually probable’; (2) coherence portends truth among mathematical and logical propositions insofar as these propositions are by this time, ‘obvious’; and, (3) the coherence of the propositions designated by Russell pass as support only because they are implied/entailed in inferences whose structure are valid and widely accepted as such.

Russell’s epistemological enterprise thus combines foundationalist and coherentist leitmotifs. Some justified beliefs are ‘probable’, ‘obvious’ or are conferred the status of ‘facticity’ either because they are self-evidential or directly inferred from observation; others obtain justificatory support from the introduction of coherence to a set of self-reliantly obvious/probable views. As such Russell awaited the opposition that coherence is not always indicative of the truth. Russell showed that only when some of the propositions in Ω are probable, self-evidential, or obvious, do the propositions in Ω get backing from the coherence of the entire set, Ω .

Nonetheless, we are faced with another important question: If coherence does not generally point to truth, why then does it ever offer proof for any set of propositions, Ω ? I think that we can provide a Russell-like response, employing his treatment of the criteria for good mathematical premises and causal inference. When one proves an intricate MT from non-complex [simple] premises, a greater proof for the veridicality of the theorem is acquired. Reasoning by way of symmetric relations, if we can prove that individual premises are indispensable for the deduction of evident arithmetical facts, this provides greater evidence for the premises and one has gained proof of the premises from an obvious arithmetical state of affairs. This is the interpretation of Russell’s claim that a formal system (theory) ought to be judged by its ‘adequacy’.

Well aware that a natural objection would be that MTs can be deduced from infinitely many different sets of axioms, and that there are seldom any axioms that can safely be proven essential for acquiring ordinary/conventional mathematics, for Russell, coherence is a measure of the necessity of the premises in an axiomatic system for deriving the consequences. It is for this reason that Russell lays emphasis on the 'interconnectedness of propositions' in a 'complicated deductive system' as a suggestion of their coherence.

For further clarity of this view, let us understand it in this manner: in inductive analysis, one can never make evident that a set of laws (or an individual laws) is needed to explain specific occurrences. However, one can recover confidence that if the true laws were to contrast with the conjectured ones in definite ways, then one should not have recorded the phenomena that s/he did. In the same manner, one can demonstrate that a certain axiom is necessary for a proof modulo other axioms. For instance, modulo ZF and classical logic, the axiom of choice is acknowledged as crucial to prove any number of elementary mathematical relationships. This suggests a relationship between Russell's views on simplicity and coherence. Summarily, the coherence of any set of propositions Ω can be truth-indicative because it meets up to what extent one's premises are 'roughly basic' for proving those facts taken as self-evident.

4.0 Conclusion

The factual significance of my paper is grasped within the context of twenty-first century trends of mathematical logic. With such attempts as those of Bob Hale, Crispin Wright, Otavio Bueno, Bernard Linsky, Kevin Klement, Alan Weir, Warren Goldfarb, Ed Nouri Zalta, and a host of other philosophers of logic and mathematics who are making revolutions in terms of the resuscitation of the logicist programmes [although with modifications of either programme], it becomes expedient that one gets to understand the proper purview and mind of the originators of the programme, before attempting a resuscitating project. While I do not make a case for either neo-Fregean logicism or neo-Russellian logicism in this paper, I am well aware of the bias towards Russell's brand of logicism as *supposedly*

devoid of any useful import in terms of logic and epistemology. Hence, this paper has supplied a meaningful exposition of Russell's logicism and his outlook towards epistemic coherence.

In the first section, I argued that Russell committed himself to establish the logicist view that all pure mathematics deals exclusively with concepts definable in terms of a very small number of fundamental logical concepts, and that all its propositions are deducible from a very small number of logical principles. Russell took logicism to expound the fundamental concepts which mathematics accepts as indefinable. I have shown that Russell was uncertain as to whether or not MTs can be proven by sole virtue of pure logical axioms. If the claim of the derivation thesis, were true, then there must be proof of their logicity. Russell's reluctance in endorsing the derivation thesis suggests his perception of logicism.

We have also seen what Russell means by coherence. Russell means more than 'logical constancy' when he speaks of coherence. When a number of propositions bear a relation R to one another, the set becomes more 'obvious', 'credible' than the individual propositions. It is the collation of all such relations R that Russell calls 'coherence'. Thus, in Russell's view, in regard to probable opinion, we can derive great assistance from coherence, which we rejected as the definition of truth, but may often use as a criterion. A body of individually probable opinions, if they are mutually coherent, become more probable than any one of them would be individually.

Conclusively, we can say that Russell's theory of coherence offers a partial response to a need for certainty in mathematics: even if the logicist ambition is not successful, owing to the fact that certain axioms may not be purely logical, the enhanced structuration of mathematical knowledge results in a coherent corpus of theorems of superior security than the disjointed collection of mathematical subjects with which we began.

Sanctions in the Church: A Discourse on the Revised Book VI of the Code of Canon Law

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Abstract

With the apostolic constitution, *Pascite Gregem Dei*, Pope Francis promulgated the revised text of Book VI of the Code of Canon Law. This new revised version abrogated what until now in the 1983 Code of Canon Law was known as Book VI on Sanctions in the Church. The promulgation brought to light again some of the questions many have asked. Do we really need Sanctions in the Church? What is their relevance? Has penal law ever made anyone better? Is it not better just to forgive everyone who has committed a crime in the Church, in other words show mercy and life will be normal? The other side of the coin remains, however, how to reconcile the demands of justice and good governance with mercy. The difficulty of combining the demands of charity with those required by justice has remained a concrete one in the Church. This article reviews the new Book VI of the 1983 Code of Canon Law using the pastoral nature of the penal law as the context.

1.0 Introduction

Should someone who has committed a crime be punished? And what kind of punishment can be given that will be commensurate or adequately repay a damage that has been done by someone through a criminal conduct? Is there a sufficient punishment that can be given to someone who has broken the law? In other words, is there a correspondence between crime and punishment? One may think immediately here of the principle of proportionality in penal law. Little wonder, many civil systems choose the retributive and vindictive response, aiming, in most cases at compensating

only the social damage caused by the commission of a criminal offence. And since the point of departure is the conception that the negative should be answered with a corresponding negative, the penalty par excellence in many civil systems is imprisonment or death penalty for the commission of certain crimes.

How is it in the Catholic Church? Should the Church punish her members who commit crimes? Why do we have and need penal law in the Church that preaches love? To what end? Is it not better just to forgive everyone who has committed a crime in the Church, in other words, show mercy, and life will be normal? The title of a work on penal law in German published in 2006 says it all, “*Strafrecht in einer Kirche der Liebe: Notwendigkeit oder Widerspruch* [“*Penal Law in a Church of Love: Necessity or contradiction?*].¹ What, therefore, is meant, when it is said that in the Church sanctions aim to realise the supreme ecclesial goal, i.e., the *salus animarum*, which permeates not only the penal law but the entire Church’s legal order?

2.0 Overview of the Revised Book VI on Sanctions in the Church

On the 23rd of May 2021, Pope Francis, with the apostolic constitution *Pascite Gregem Dei* promulgated the revised text of Book VI of the Code of Canon Law, which entered into force on the 8th of December 2021.² With this act, what until now has been the Book VI of the Code of Canon Law was abrogated. In other words, what we have until now as Book VI of the Code is totally abolished and replaced with the new revised version. In the apostolic constitution *Pascite Gregem Dei*, Pope Francis recounts not only the reasons that necessitated the revision of the penal regulations contained in the 1983 Code, but also the process of the revision, which according to

¹ Ludger Müller, Alfred E. Hierold, Sabine Demel, Libero Gerosa and Peter Krämer, eds., *Strafrecht in einer Kirche der Liebe. Notwendigkeit oder Widerspruch?* (LIT Verlag, Berlin 2006).

² Pope Francis, Apostolic Constitution, “*Pascite Gregem Dei qui Liber VI Codicis Iuris Canonici reformatur*,” 23rd May 2021; *L’Osservatore Romano*, June 1, 2021, 2. The new Book VI is also published in this volume immediately after the Apostolic Constitution from pages 2-4.

him was ordered by his venerable predecessor Benedict XVI in 2007.

Just like what can now be referred to as the old Book VI of the Code, the New Book VI contains 89 canons. However, 63 canons representing 71% have been amended, 9 others were repositioned (10%), while 17 (19%) remained unchanged.³ Juan Ignacio Arrieta in this intervention at the press conference to present the new Book VI gave the three guiding criteria for the revision. They are: better determination of the norms, i.e., setting out the cases in which the penal system is to be applied and how offences are to be punished; the protection of the community with a focus on repairing the scandal and compensating for damage; and finally, providing the authority with adequate instruments to be able to prevent offences, intervene in time to correct situations before they become more serious and to promote amendments.⁴

Regarding the concrete changes, revisions and updates that were made, we resort to the intervention of Archbishop Filippo Iannone, the president of the Dicastery for Legislative Texts at the press conference to present the new Book VI of the Code of Canon Law.⁵ According to him, the new penal code introduced new criminal offences, defined better other offences already provided for, punishing them with different penalties. In addition, new offences have been introduced in financial and economic matters. New penalties have been envisaged, such as fines, compensation for damage, and the deprivation of all or part of ecclesiastical remuneration, in accordance with the regulations established by the individual Episcopal Conferences, without prejudice to the

³ Juan Ignacio Arrieta Ochoa de Chinchetru, "Intervention at the Press Conference to present the new Book VI of the Code of Canon Law," accessed June 10, 2023, <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2021/06/01/210601e.html>

⁴ Arrieta Ochoa de Chinchetru, "Intervention." See also the interview he granted to Christopher Wells, "Bishop Arrieta: How Book VI of Canon Law has changed", accessed June 10, 2023, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2021-06/book-vi-vatican-penal-code-apostolic-constitution.html>

⁵ Filippo Iannone, "Press Conference to present the new Book VI of the Code of Canon Law," accessed June 1, 2021, <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2021/06/01/210601e.html>

obligation, in the case of a cleric who is subject to a penalty, to ensure that he does not lack the necessary means for an honest livelihood.

Attention was also paid to listing the penalties in greater order and detail, to allow the ecclesiastical authority to identify the most appropriate and proportionate for individual crimes, and the possibility has been established of applying the penalty of suspension to all the faithful, and no longer only to clerics. More suitable means of intervention have also been provided to correct and prevent crimes. The explicit affirmation in the text of the fundamental principle of the presumption of innocence is also worth mentioning, and the amendment of the rule on prescription, to encourage the conclusion of trials in a reasonably short time.

The crimes reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, specified after the promulgation of the 1983 Code, have also been included in Book VI. The crime of sexual abuse of minors and child pornography are now also extended by the Code to members of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life and to the lay faithful who enjoy a dignity or hold an office or function in the Church.

3.0 Sanctions vis-à-vis Charity, Mercy, and Justice

Cataldo Zuccaro concluded his contribution to the 47th Study meeting of the Italian Group of Professors of Canon Law with the subtitle '*justice as mercy*'.⁶ Citing Romans 3,21-24, he concluded that one could say that in the New Testament perspective, and particularly in Pauline thought, the meaning of divine justice lies in mercy.

Indeed, the difficulty of combining the demands of charity with those required by justice has been a concrete one in the Church.

⁶ The theme of the 2021 conference of the Canon Law Association of Italy was 'The penal law at the service of communion of the Church'. For the proceedings, see Gruppo Italiano Docenti di Diritto Canonico, ed., "Il diritto penale al servizio della comunione della Chiesa," *Quaderni della Mendola* 29, (Edizioni Glossa, Milano, 2021). Cataldo Zuccaro, "Peccato e Delitto tra Teologia morale e Diritto canonico," in *Il Diritto penale al servizio della Comunione della Chiesa*, 24.

Especially, in the years following the Second Vatican Council, widespread anti-juridic tendencies flourished. The notion, especially present in some quarters, was that the idea of law in the Church, and the idea of the Church as a coherent society in need of law, is antiquated, draconian, or at odds with Christian charity.⁷ G. Boni recalls how, in the post-conciliar climate, the very existence of the *potestas puniendi* (the right to punish) of the Church (and its *ius coactivum* – coercive right) had been placed fundamentally in question, if not even virulently censured by those who considered it not only obsolete – inasmuch as it was considered inseparable from the outdated ecclesiology of the *societas iuridice perfecta* (juridically perfect society), and counterproductive “for a community that intended to bring the good news to all and to dialogue even with people contrary to the Gospel and with the faithful guilty of crimes, without condemning anyone”.⁸

In her opinion, this tendency came from the conviction that the demands of charity were trampled upon and stifled by canon law, seen to be inflexible and lacking in clemency. It held further that justice and good governance cannot be reconciled with mercy.⁹ Some even went as far as raising the question “of the theological foundations of the right to punish and their appropriation in a canonical ‘penal’ doctrine, including the reflection intrinsic to it on the penitential nature of ‘penal’ sanctions”.¹⁰

We therefore understand the position of Pope Francis, when he denounces in the apostolic constitution *Pascite Gregem Dei*, a way

⁷ Edward Condon and J.D. Flynn, “The Church’s new Penal Canon Law: The good, the bad, and the ugly,” *The Pillar*, accessed June 10, 2023, <https://www.bishop-accountability.org/2021/06/the-churchs-new-penal-canon-law-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/>.

⁸ Geraldina Boni, “Il Libro VI De sanctionibus poenalibus in Ecclesia: novità e qualche spigolatura critica” [“The Book VI De sanctionibus poenalibus in Ecclesia: innovations and some critical gleanings”], *Stato, Chiesa e pluralismo confessionale*, Revista telematica (<https://www.statoechiese.it>), fascicolo n. 11 (2022): 3. https://d1vbhhqv6ow083.cloudfront.net/contributi/Boni.M_Il_Libro_VI.pdf. (Accessed 10/06/2023).

⁹ Boni, “Il Libro VI,” 3.

¹⁰ Boni, “Il Libro VI,” 25, footnote 88; see also 28, footnote 98.

of thinking that failed to appreciate the close relationship existing in the Church between the exercise of charity and recourse to disciplinary sanctions, especially where circumstances and justice require it. According to him, this manner of thinking risks leading to tolerating immoral conduct, for which mere exhortations or suggestions are insufficient remedies.¹¹

St. John Paul II had earlier denounced a like manner of thinking, noting how such misunderstanding is not only unfortunate but harmful, as he responded to those who believe, taught, and have attributed the scope and pastoral intentions uniquely only to those aspects of moderation and humanity that can relate directly to canonical equity, i.e., those who maintain that the scope and pastoral intentions consist only in the exceptions to the laws, the avoidance of recourse to processes and canonical sanctions.¹² Therefore, to avoid the danger that over time immoral conducts become entrenched, making corrections more difficult, the creation of scandal and confusion in the Church and above all the denial of justice, it is necessary for bishops and superiors to inflict penalties. It is, indeed, charity that requires Pastors to have recourse to the penal system as often as necessary, bearing in mind the three purposes that make it necessary, namely, the restoration of the requirements of justice, the amendment of the offender and the reparation of scandals.¹³

In the words of Jorge Miras, “when situations arise that require by their nature a penal action, it is an indication of the commitment of the Good Shepherd to pursue it with prudent diligence, tempered strength and justice quickened by charity towards God, towards his Church, towards the flock entrusted to him and towards the person with the behaviour that is perhaps criminal”.¹⁴ In fact, today, the omission of penal action could even constitute a specific offense (cf. c.1389) as confirmed by the apostolic constitution *Pascite Gregem*

¹¹ Francis, “Pascite Gregem Dei”, §7.

¹² Pope John Paul II, “Address to the Tribunal of the Roman Rota, 18th January 1990,” n. 3. *Acta Apostolica Sedes* 82 (1990): 873.

¹³ Iannone, “Press Conference”.

¹⁴ Miras, “Practical Guide.” 2.

Dei which maintains that the negligence on the part of a bishop or superior to resort to the penal system, when this is required, is a sign that he has failed to carry out his duties honestly and faithfully, as pointed out in the Apostolic Letter issued *Motu Proprio As a Loving Mother* (4th June 2016) and *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* (7th May 2019).¹⁵

Undoubtedly, the quarrels, punishments, and trials that we all have are the sign of a Church that is not yet living its divine vocation to the full, thus denouncing its shortcomings and its sins. But it is a reality that cannot be ignored. If the Church is on a journey, and the Church by its very nature is always on a journey, it also includes sinners in its bosom, and must come to terms with the harshness and difficulties of human life. In this perspective, the penal law and subsequently the penal process is an indispensable service to justice, truth, and human dignity.¹⁶ Hence, it is expected that bishops and superiors will incorporate penal law into their ordinary governance of the Church's life.

4.0 The Pastoral Character of Penal Laws¹⁷

St. John Paul II has been cited as affirming that the Code of Canon Law is the last document of the Second Vatican Council.¹⁸ We, therefore, understand when Woestman writes, for instance, that the members of the Commission for the revision of the Code sought not only to avoid anything that would contradict Vatican II, but to be most faithful to the mandates and spirit of the Council.¹⁹ This

¹⁵ Francis, "Pascite Gregem Dei," §7.

¹⁶ Claudio Papale, "Il Processo Canonico. Commento al Codice di Diritto Canonico, Libro VII, Parte IV," (Urbaniana University Press, 2012), 15, footnote 8.

¹⁷ This was the chosen title of a paper presented at the 17th Congress of the "Consociatio Internationalis Studio Iuris Canonici Promovendo," [Webinar: Riforma del Liber VI], 14th September 2021 by Andrea D'Auria. Id., "La pastoraltà del Diritto penale canonico. Il can. 1311 § 2". http://www.consociatio.org/webinar-2021/Dauria_Consociatio-Webinar.pdf (Accessed 11/06/23).

¹⁸ Velasio De Paolis, "Il Codice del 1983 del Vaticano II," *Periodica* 102 (2013): 517-548.

¹⁹ William Woestman, *Ecclesiastical Sanctions and the Processes: A Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2009), 3.

was already the longing of the 1967 Synod fathers as they approved the *Principles for the revision of the Code of Canon Law*. The *Principia* in number 3 states, “To foster the pastoral care of souls as much as possible, the new law, besides the virtue of justice, is to take cognizance of charity, temperance, humaneness, and moderation, whereby equity is to be pursued not only in the application of the laws by pastors of souls but also in the legislation itself”.²⁰

For the Church, therefore, in as much as unduly rigid norms are to be set aside and rather recourse is to be taken to exhortations and persuasions where there is no need of a strict observance of the law on account of the public good and general ecclesiastical discipline, it also affirms that sanctions are neither contrary to the spirit of the gospel nor the religious liberty of the Christian faithful. On several occasions, Pope Francis, has repeated that the canonical sanction also has a reparatory and salutary medicinal function and seeks above all the good of the accused.²¹ Typical instances of the pastoral import of the Church’s penal law are cc. 1313 and 1317. Can. 1313, § 1, for instance, has it that, ‘If a law is changed after an offence has been committed, the law more favourable to the offender is to be applied’. Can. 1317, on the other hand, stipulates that ‘Penalties are to be established only in so far as they are really necessary for the better maintenance of ecclesiastical discipline’.

5.0 Some of the Fundamental Principles Codified in Book VI of the Code

The New Book VI of the Code contains, as expected, many fundamental principles of penal law. The first canon of Book VI of the Code, namely, c. 1311 sets out synthetically and underlines in a concise manner many of these principles.²² This canon is, therefore, very fundamental both in understanding the entire book on Sanctions and the pastoral character of canonical penal law.

²⁰ Synod of Bishops, “Principia quae Codicis Iuris Canonici recognitionem dirigant, 7th October 1967,” *Communicationes*, 1 (1969): 77-85. The principles were thereafter incorporated the *Preface* of the 1983 Code.

²¹ Iannone, “Press Conference”.

²² D’Auria, “La pastoraltà,” 2.

Canon 1311, §1, incorporating an affirmation already present in the former CIC and throughout canonical tradition, stipulates the first of these principles in these words, “The Church has its own inherent right to constrain with penal sanctions Christ’s faithful who commit offenses”. The Church, aware that offenses and their necessary punishment are a reality of human existence, even for Christians, restates in this first paragraph its right and obligation to punish its errant members, which flows from its nature as a visible community or society, and the consequent necessity to recall delinquent faithful to their Christian duty and repentance.

The Church has, in addition, a certain degree of power over its members, which includes also protecting the innocent faithful from bad examples and behaviours disruptive of ecclesial communion, promoting the unity of faith and deterring the weak from being led astray. Thus, when the Church affirms its ‘inherent right’ (*nativum*, i.e., not acquired during time, but existing from the Church’s foundation by Jesus as a necessary element for its social nature), it has also to do with the affirmation of its autonomy and independence from any human, civil power. In other words, this right is proper, and not vicarious or by delegation by civil authority.²³

Furthermore, the Church feels that its primary mission in history is to proclaim the salvific Presence, which includes pointing out those truths that are the way to heaven and to allow the continuous redemption of mankind. This will never be sufficiently possible if the Church does not equip itself with instruments, including penal ones, capable of defending, safeguarding, and adequately protecting its goods and its wealth, which is above all the gift of communion with the Lord.²⁴ In the apostolic constitution *Pascite Gregem Dei*, Pope Francis notes, “As I observed recently, canonical sanctions also have a reparative and salvific end, and are primarily directed to the good of the faithful. In this sense, they represent “a positive means for the realization of the Kingdom and for rebuilding justice in the

²³ Woestman, “Ecclesiastical Sanctions,” 8; See also Papale, “Il Processo Canonico,” 15. The other instances in the CIC where reference is made to this right are for example in cc. 232 & 747, § 1.

²⁴ D’Auria, “La pastoraltà,” 2-3.

community of the faithful, who are called to personal and common sanctification”.²⁵

In the second paragraph of c. 1311, which did not exist in the old book VI in the formulation that it has today, many other fundamental principles are recalled in these words,

“The one who is at the head of a Church must safeguard and promote the good of the community itself and of each of Christ’s faithful, through pastoral charity, example of life, advice and exhortation and, if necessary, also through the imposition or declaration of penalties, in accordance with the provisions of the law, which are always to be applied with canonical equity and having in mind the restoration of justice, the reform of the offender, and the repair of scandal.”

Therefore, the first of the principles set forth in this second paragraph may be said to be that the role of sacred pastors includes the power to impose proportionate sanctions to protect relevant ecclesial values, when required by the common good of the Church. In fact, the sacred pastors have a duty to ensure the integrity of communion in the faith, in worship and in governance, which are essential elements of the common ecclesial good: that is to say, of the set of conditions necessary to make it possible to carry out the mission of the Church - as well as other values of special human and Christian transcendence, protecting them, even coercively when necessary.²⁶

Secondly, safeguarding and promoting the good of the community and Christ’s faithful are part of the ways to live out pastoral charity. In line with Vatican II, it is maintained that penal law of the Church should be marked in a special way by Christian mercy and a pastoral spirit so that even the sanctions would never harm those punished and penalties always respect the personal dignity and rights of those punished.²⁷ In other words, there should

²⁵ Francis, “Pascite Gregem Dei,” §9.

²⁶ Miras, “Practical Guide,” 2.

²⁷ Rafael Domingo, “Penal Law in the Roman Catholic Church,” *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 20 (2018) 158-172, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325016353_Penal_Law_in_the_Roman_Catholic_Church. (Accessed 25/06/2023).

be a pastoral approach in the application of penalties. Here we are reminded of the instances in the Code where reference is made to the pastoral care demanded of the Church pastors in the exercise of their functions: in the exercise of the office of the bishop (c. 383 §1); The parish priest and the exercise of pastoral care (c. 519) and the pastoral care offered to those preparing for marriage (c. 1063). In the apostolic constitution *Pascite Gregem Dei*, Pope Francis explains,

“The observance of penal law is binding on the whole People of God, but responsibility for its correct application . . . lies specifically with the bishops and the superiors of individual communities. It is a task that cannot be separated in any way from the *munus* pastorale entrusted to them and is to be carried out as a concrete and essential requirement of charity, not only towards the Church, the Christian community, and potential injured parties, but also towards those who commit crimes and are themselves in need of the Church’s mercy and correction”.²⁸

The third is the example of life that is demanded of those in authority. C. 1311, § 2 adds the obligation placed on those in authority to lead by example. They are to safeguard and promote the good of the community and of each of Christ’s faithful also by example of life. It is, in our opinion, firstly, an emphasis on a change in mindset. And secondly, of a reminder of Pope Francis’s conviction expressed also in the apostolic letter *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, that the credibility of the gospel message has been so much undermined by the tragedy caused by the abuse of minors and vulnerable adults in the Church.²⁹ The promotion of the credibility of the gospel, therefore, requires a continuous and profound conversion and renewal of the educational mission of the Church. This must be attested to by concrete and effective actions that involve everyone in the Church but especially those who lead.³⁰

²⁸ Francis, “Pascite Gregem Dei,” §6.

²⁹ Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter issued Motu Proprio, “Vos Estis Lux Mundi”, On the protection of minors and vulnerable adults, 7th May 2019.

³⁰ Francis, “Vos Estis,” *Preamble*.

The next principle given in the second paragraph of c. 1311, § 2 is the fact that the penal law and application of penalties in the Church is the last resort. Hence, for the Church, the emphasis is more on other pastoral and juridical measures than on penalties. The Code makes it explicit that the Ordinaries should employ penalties only when other pastoral means fail or are not adequate to realise the goal of the Church's penal law, namely, reparation of scandal, restoration of justice, and reformation of the offender (cf. cc. 1311, §2; 1319, §2; 1341). It is, therefore, not without reason that the words, "if necessary" were used. Even when the Ordinary decides to apply penalties, there should be a pastoral approach in their application and must be done in accordance with the law. The coercive power of the Church is therefore necessary, albeit as a last resort, as a service to charity and thus to the eternal salvation of the offender.³¹

The paragraph continues by maintaining that the imposition or declaration of penalties, in accordance with the provisions of the law, are always to be applied with canonical equity (cf. cc. 19, 1752). In his inaugural address for the new juridical year of the Rota Romana on 8th February 1973 – entirely dedicated to canonical *aequitas* – Paul VI described it in these words, "In canon law *aequitas*, which the Christian tradition received from Roman jurisprudence, constitutes the quality of its law, the norm of their application, an attitude of spirit and soul that tempers the rigour of law".³² The jurist, Alexander III, had earlier admonished that 'iuxta iuris aequitatem procedere' (the just law must proceed with equity) since *aequitas* is the reasonable consideration of the peculiarities of individual cases³³ (as against the aphorism, 'Everybody is equal in the eyes of the law'). Honorius III (1216-1227) also pointed to *aequitas* as a sure criterion for every ecclesiastical superior.³⁴

³¹ D'Auria, "La pastoraltà," 3.

³² Pope Paulus VI, "Allocutio Ad Praelatos Auditores et Officiales Tribunalis Sacrae Romanae Rotae, a Beatissimo Patre novo litibus iudicandis ineunte anno coram admissos, die 8 mensis februarii a 1973," AAS 65 (1973): 99.

³³ Paolo Grossi, *L'Ordine giuridico medievale* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2011), 212.

³⁴ Grossi, *L'Ordine giuridico*, 212.

Examples of the application of this principle can be seen in c. 1345, for instance, that requires the judge, in the given situations, to refrain from punishment if he considers that the person's reform may be better accomplished in some other way. In the same line c. 1346, §2 demands the prudent decision of the judge to moderate the penalties in an equitable fashion and to place the offender instead under vigilance, when the sum of penalties to be imposed seems excessive for the offender.

Finally, in the last part of c. 1311, § 2, the goal of penal law and all penal proceedings is restated in these words, "... *having in mind the restoration of justice, the reform of the offender, and the repair of scandal*" (see also c. 1341). In other words, in all penal proceedings, the Church seeks primarily to restore justice, that is, to attend to the spiritual and material wounds caused by the crime, eradicating or neutralizing their cause and repairing them, to the extent allowed by the juridical powers of the pastor.³⁵ At the same time, efforts must be made to mend the culpable person for his salvation. Finally, the reparation of the scandal is sought – especially avoiding, not only among the faithful – the spread of doubts, ambiguities, or confusion about the attitude of the Church with respect to certain behaviours that falsify her truth and hurt her image.

Going beyond the fundamental principles stipulated in c. 1311, § 2, we would like to look at some other principles in Book VI that are very necessary for a proper understanding of the Church's penal law.

6.0 The Principle of Legality: "*Nullum crimen sine praevia lege poenale*"

One cannot end a discourse on the principles codified in the book on sanctions in the Church without referring to the so-called principle of legality, *Nullum crimen sine praevia lege poenale* (there can be no crime if there is no pre-existing norm that judges it as

³⁵ J. Miras explains that other means undoubtedly can and should be used simultaneously or successively, which accompany and complement, but cannot replace prosecution – except in cases stipulated by the Legislator when this might be the required response. Miras, "Practical Guide," 2.

such, albeit with the limits imposed by c. 1399). This principle expresses the prohibition of subjecting someone to a penal sanction for the commission of an act that, at the time it was committed, the act was not provided for by law as a crime.³⁶ The same applies when the Church in c. 221 §3 stipulates that Christ's faithful have the right to be punished according to the norms of the law.³⁷

7.0 The Principle of Due Process

As Ed Condon and JD Flynn observed, among the changes likely to be praised by canonical advocates and especially those concerned with the protection of priests' rights in the revised Book VI are two small but significant additions.³⁸ The first is in canon 1321, § 1, where the new text adds a positive assertion of the presumption of innocence: "Any person is considered innocent until the contrary is proved". It is a clarification that no one can be punished with a sanction unless he is proven guilty and is imputable, which means that he is psychologically and morally responsible for his actions.³⁹ They conclude, therefore, that the affirmation that the Church maintains a presumption of innocence is like a validation of the human right to a fair hearing of those priests and their advocates, who in recent decades have charged that the mere accusation of a canonical crime should not be enough to remove them from ministry.

The other change that can be taken as – a protection of due process for accused clerics and a measure of accountability and justice for alleged victims of clerical abuse or misconduct is the change in the new time limit on canonical prosecutions. Current

³⁶ Papale, "Il Processo," 34.

³⁷ Condon and Flynn, "The Church's new Penal Canon Law," 36, footnote 90.

³⁸ Condon and Flynn, "The Church's new Penal Canon Law," 36. The part here is dependent on this article.

³⁹ Francesco Zanchini di Castiglionchio, "Riflessioni sul "giusto processo" in diritto canonico, sullo sfondo del riequilibrio in corso fra diritti e poteri nella Chiesa Cattolica," ["Reflections on Due Process in Canon Law, against the background of the ongoing rebalancing of Rights and Powers in the Catholic Church"], *Rivista telematica* (<https://www.statoechiese.it>), fascicolo n. 20 (2022), 87-126. Accessed 20/06/2023.

penal law maintains a general statute of limitations of 20 years for serious crimes, which can be waived when necessary. The new text of canon 1362 allows a window of only three years from the beginning of a formal canonical process for the prosecution to conclude its case, before the clock on the statute of limitations starts running again. It means then that, clerics in lingering canonical processes can now demand a resolution to their status, and eventually make a legal claim that the case against them has expired.

8.0 The Laity

A key thematic change in the revised Book VI is a much-amplified recognition of the laity, and the role they play in the institutional life of the Church.⁴⁰ Lay men and women have for decades played an increasingly important role in the institutional Church, serving as diocesan chancellors and notaries (cf. cc. 482-483, 1437), finance officers (c. 494), judges in diocesan tribunals (c. 1421, § 2), diocesan tribunal directors and assessors like safeguarding officers (c. 1424), auditors (c. 1428), promoters of justice or defender of bonds (c. 1430, 1432), consultors in an ecumenical council (c. 339 § 2); particular councils (c. 443 § 4); diocesan synods (cc. 460; 463 § 1, 5° & § 2); college of arbitrators (c. 1714); particular consultations like in the appointment of bishops or parish priests (cc. 377; 524); experts *ex officio* (c. 1575). At the parish level, other positions have also come into being since Vatican Council II, including the option for some lay people to be given administrative charge of a parish in some circumstances (c. 517), members of the pastoral council (cc. 512, 536); council for economic affairs (cc. 492; 537; 1280), etc.

The revised Book VI includes several new references to the laity, and to men and women religious, including the norm that lay Catholics, religious sisters, and brothers, are now explicitly to be punished under canon law for various offenses related to sexual abuse. For example, canon 1333 previously stipulated that the punishment of suspension “can affect only clerics”. That provision is removed from the revised text, meaning that those lay men and women who hold ecclesiastical offices can now be subjected to the

⁴⁰ Condon and Flynn, “The Church’s new Penal Canon Law,” 36.

same penalties as clerics in relation to their offices, and, at least implicitly, expect the same stability in office as a cleric accused but not yet found guilty of misconduct.

Conversely, the law previously defined as a crime the use of physical violence against the pope, bishops, and clerics in hatred of the faith. But the revised canon 1370 is now broadened to include any member “of Christ’s faithful out of contempt for the faith, or the Church, or ecclesiastical authority or the ministry”. This would seem to cover physical assaults carried out against lay men and women during an ecclesial office or ministry.

9.0 The Power of Remorse

The Church believes strongly in man’s ransom and redemption, even after he has done wrong. Little wonder much emphasis is placed on the pastoral character of punishment, and its nature as a coercive legal instrument necessary for the protection of ecclesiastical discipline in a just order.⁴¹ Put differently, a primary goal of the canonical penal system, as we have mentioned, is precisely to concern itself with the conversion and eternal salvation of the offender (cf. cc. 1341, 1752), that is, the one who has broken the law, thus creating a serious injury above all to his own human dignity and then to the entire community.

It is, however, also necessary that the offender demonstrates remorse and conversion. The Code maintains that the ordinary must refrain from imposing penalty when the offender has shown sufficient level of remorse (c. 1335, § 2). According to c. 1347, § 1 “A censure cannot validly be imposed unless the offender has beforehand received at least one warning to purge the contempt and has been allowed suitable time to do so. § 2: The offender is said to have purged the contempt if he or she has truly repented of the offence and has made suitable reparation for the scandal and harm, or at least seriously promised to make it”⁴² (see also c. 1358 §1). **However, once the contempt has been purged, the remission cannot be**

⁴¹ D’Auria, “La pastoraltà,” 3; Domingo, “Penal Law in the Roman Catholic Church,” 172.

⁴² Emphasis is ours.

refused, without prejudice to the provision of can. 1361, §4.⁴³ Obstinacy, or what the Code calls ‘contumacy’ is a ‘cancer’ that ravages those who have failed to understand the dynamics of the Church’s legal system.

The revised Book VI of the Code of Canon Law has been greeted by many as laudable. Many criticisms, however, have also trailed its publication. Some critics maintain that the preference for pastoral approach, steeped in compassionate *caritas* towards the offender and all focused on the inviolability and intangibility of the right of defence of the accused, ... on the one hand, the obtuse and oblivious approach to the retributive function – albeit well understood and purged of all vindictive mechanism – of punishment on the other, undermines the Church’s legal system.⁴⁴ In the opinion of B. Boni, the scourge of so-called paedophilia, for instance, that has engulfed and still plagues the Church certainly would not have occurred in such impressive proportions if the ordinaries had diligently and fully performed their painful but inevitable punitive task.⁴⁵

10.0 Conclusion

It is precisely the urgency of the task that the Church feels and has always felt in the time of human history that leads her to understand more and more how the juridical instrument, which can also endow the Church with a coercive force, is a valid, perhaps indispensable, help in fulfilling her mission among men. The Church has the obligation to protect the rights of each faithful, promote and protect the common good as an indispensable condition for the integral development of the human and Christian person. Within this context the penal discipline has its place. It is, thus, not without reason that the name of the apostolic constitution, with which the new Book VI is promulgated is *Pascite Gregem Dei* ... (“Shepherd God’s flock”) taken from 1 *Pet* 5:2.

⁴³ Emphasis is ours

⁴⁴ Boni, “Il Libro VI,” 9.

⁴⁵ Boni, “Il Libro VI,” 10-11.

From Trent to Today: Revisiting the Decree on Seminaries and its Impacts on Priestly Formation in our Contemporary Age

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Abstract

The decree establishing seminary for training future priests is the most innovative decree of the Council of Trent. With this innovation, the Church showed its bent to get internally reformed and respond to the needs of the time. The decree became necessary following Luther's protest, mainly caused by the immoral, intellectual decadence of the priesthood in the centuries before Trent. There was a need to reform the priesthood in general and its training. This reform was predicated upon the general pastoral outline of the council of Trent reform, *cura animarum*, 'care of souls'. The conciliar fathers, attentive to the Church's previous attempt at educating priests and taking the template of a few reforming schools, decreed that every diocese should have a special institute to train young men for the priesthood. This decree, canon 18, was enacted in Trent during the 23rd session of the council. The effect of this decree on the life of the Church since its enactment is unquantifiable. The essay intends to study the issues leading to the decree, a critical review of the decree and the first reaction of the ecclesial community to this decree. There is also a brief historical analysis of how the formation of priests in the Church has changed and responded to different epochal challenges since the enactment of this canon. This essay concludes with an evaluation of the contemporary disposition of the Church to respond to the signs of time in the training of future priests.

Keywords: Council of Trent, Decree on Seminary Priestly Formation, Reformation.

1.0 Introduction

The Council of Trent was the Church's attempt at responding to issues raised by the protestants in the late medieval. The council also fulfilled the Church's desire to put its house in order by enacting some far-reaching reform decrees, especially related to the parochial clergy and its training. Trent did not provide a specific definition of the Church, as this was not its primary goal. However, the reform it pursued was based on its understanding of the Church's role as a mediator between Christ and the faithful. That understanding was predicated upon "the care of souls" as the primary objective. In the estimation of Antonio Cardinal del Monte (one of the presidents of the council), "the aim of our reforming activity is the revival of pastoral ministry – the 'care of souls.'"¹ The pastoral care of souls (*cura animarum*) was central to Tridentine reform.

If the primary duty of the Church is the care of souls, it follows that those who have been given this task as priests must be well prepared for this mission. This disposition towards internal reform was at the core of Trent's decree on establishing the seminary found in canon 18 which was dedicated to the Reform of the Clergy.² The idea of a Seminary was the creation of the Council of Trent. The seminary, which is understandably the seedbed for the training of future priests, has become proper and characteristic for the formation of priests today. The seminary decree as one of the achievements of Trent has left a long-lasting mark on the Church, Catholic priestly life, and parish ministry. The Tridentine seminary decree heightened the cultic dimension of the Priesthood and refocused churchmen's attention on their pastoral and spiritual responsibility. The far-reaching impacts of that decree on the Church

¹ Hubert Jedin, *A history of the Council of Trent*. Vol. 2. (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons 1961), 356.

² Among all the canon discussed and decreed on the reformation of the priestly life during the 23rd session of the Council of Trent, Canon 18 was the most important. This canon mandated that every diocese was to provide a seminary for the education, especially boys, for the priesthood. See, *Dekrete der Ökumenischen Konzilien*, besorgt von Giuseppe Alberigo, Giuseppe L. Dossetti, Perikles- P. Joannou, Claudio Leonardi, Paolo Parodi in Zusammenarbeit mit Hubert Jedin, Istituto Per Le Scienze Religiose (Hg)3, (Bologna, 1973), 750.

and contemporary priestly formation constitute part of ongoing research. The discourse on seminary is always relevant when situated within the current disposition of priestly formation to respond to issues of humanity's quest for freedom, the need for pastoral creativity to meet the 'signs of time', and the current understanding of obedience. There is also the need for modern and updated priestly education. All these continue to probe the necessity of seminary and priestly formation in this milieu. This paper explores the historical context that led to the decree, the mindset of the Conciliar Fathers about an ideal of priestly formation, and a review of the issues raised in the decree. It also interrogates contemporary issues surrounding the seminary, highlighting the need for practical reforms to confront present pastoral challenges. As the Church has consistently adapted its approach to priestly formation in response to epochal challenges, there is a pressing need for seminary reform to address current needs and challenges.

2.0 Priestly Training Before Trent

The decree on the establishment of a seminary solemnly confirmed as the form of education for clergy on July 15, 1563, in the twenty third session of the council of Trent remains one of the great insights of the Council of Trent. Church history is replete with ideas of priestly training when reconstructing the life of the early Church and the post-apostolic Church of the first and second centuries.³ It has to be acknowledged that there was no special educational institution for the training of Priests before the time of St Augustine. Augustine recognized the need for some form of 'special training' for priests in his native North African Church. According to Frederick van der Meer, Augustine believed that "he could render no greater service to the Church in his part of the world than by creating a new elite,

³ John Tracy Ellis, "A Short History of Seminary Education: I-The Apostolic Age to Trent" in: James Michael Lee and Louis J. Putz, ed. *Seminary Education in a Time of Change* (Indiana: Fides Publishers 1985), 3. See also Augustin Theiner, *Geschichte der geistlichen Bildungsanstalten* (Mainz, 1835), 6-8.

educated under his supervision, in his own house.”⁴ This disposition of Augustine to covert his private monastery into a form of priestly training helped reform priests in North Africa. Augustine’s approach to training priests strongly emphasised spiritual formation and theological education as essential components for effective ministry. His priests were equipped to fulfil the pastoral role of guiding and nurturing their congregations while also upholding the purity of the Church through discipline. Augustine also encouraged a sense of fraternity among priests and emphasised the importance of Christian community life, which later inspired Monastic life. His formation model prioritised the significance of sacraments, preaching and teaching, and engagement with philosophy to defend Christian beliefs. The Augustinian model became a reference point for the formation of monasteries and schools for training priests in the medieval period. As Van der Meer explains, Augustine “left behind him, a seedbed for sanity and what was the first seminary for priests. It was imperfect, but its essential features were to be repeated through the ages.”⁵ In the medieval period, this idea of Augustine underwent significant changes from monastic schools, episcopal schools and universities. From those ecclesiastical institutions of the period, there emerged notable figures like St Benedict, St Boniface, St Anselm, St Albert the Great, St Thomas Aquinas, St Bonaventure and John Fisher.⁶ For the most significant part of the medieval period, those ecclesiastical, educational institutions later became universities that educated those preparing for the Priesthood or those already ordained.

With regard to the involvement of the Church’s magisterium in the formation of priests, the general idea of such training began in the 9th century with Pope Eugene II. He declared in 826 that every cathedral should have a cell established “in which young clerics

⁴ Frederick van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, Trans Brian Battershaw and R. G. Lamb (London: Sheed and Ward, 1961), 200.

⁵ Van der Meer, 234.

⁶ Theiner, 15-40.

were to be formed in ecclesiastical discipline.”⁷ The cathedral school was an effort at the formal education of priests even though it was uneven in achieving this aim in different dioceses. Lateran Council III (1179) also took up the question of priestly training. It decreed that “In every cathedral church there should be provided a suitable master who shall instruct without charge the clerics of the cathedral church and other poor scholars.” It stipulated that the master should have an income.⁸ Lateran IV in 1215 also made a decree advocating for instruction for priests after ordination. It decreed that the master must be a trained theologian, and students should be instructed in scripture and pastoral theology. Training after ordination can also be noticed in Popes Honorius III’s legislation (1219) and Boniface VIII (1298). Overall, the reception of these papal and conciliar decrees and their implementation are subject to debate because the centuries leading to the Lutheran revolt and the Council of Trent witnessed many ignorant Priests.

3.0 The Need for Reform of Priestly Training in the Late Middle Ages

As the Middle Ages drew to a close, “a pervading laxity had overtaken the religious orders as well as the secular priests -with high prelates the worst offenders of all, and the result was a situation unparalleled for clerical scandal since the so-called dark ages.”⁹ The secular clergy was the most glaring depiction of the decadence and corruption of the Church within the period. Church historians have attributed many and varied reasons to this decadence. Ignorance was especially outlined as a principal reason for the collapse of the moral and spiritual life of the clerics. Since they had little intellectual

⁷ Michael A. Mullett, *The Catholic Reformation* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 64. See Michael L. Papesh, *Clerical Culture: Contradiction and Transformation* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2004), 6. Maryanne Confoy, *Religious Life and Priesthood: Perfectae Caritatis, Optatam Totius, Presbyterorum Ordinis* (Rediscovering Vatican II) (New York: Paulist Press, 2008), 78.

⁸ Mullett, 64.

⁹ Ellis, 12.

and spiritual education, it affected everything about them, including their disposition towards an ascetic lifestyle. Temporal worries plagued them, and some lived in concubinage.¹⁰ Just like any historical period, there were exceptions because this age also produced outstanding men in theology and moral discipline.¹¹

The level of training and discipline was mainly due to the type of priest. Regular Priests, who operated primarily in urban areas, were more likely to have received a university education, while their secular counterparts in rural communities were less academically exposed. According to Hubert Wolf, many secular Priests struggled with “financial distress which hardly allowed them to study at a university.”¹² Valentine Iheanacho sustains a similar argument. According to him, “the spiritual and material needs of the rural clergy before Trent, more often than not, were a matter of survival of the fittest. The same could be said of their lack of proper supervision”¹³ The common practice in vogue was for a candidate for the Priesthood to hire himself out to a pastor for two years as an apprentice with him and then register with the bishop for ordination.¹⁴ Their training was done in apprenticeship while candidates from noble families with ambition plans for future ecclesiastical careers, attended universities where they had access to good education in theology and, most times, in Canon Law.¹⁵ As Peter Hersche points out, the Priesthood in this period and early modern times was largely heterogeneous. Its numerical strength, societal influence, and training varied from country to country, notwithstanding the homogeneous and widespread apprenticeship

¹⁰ Herman Tüchle, “Das Seminardekret des Trienter Konzils und Formen seiner geschichtlichen Verwirklichung”, in: Remigius Bäumer (Hg) *Concilium Tridentinum* (Darmstadt 1979), 522. See also Ellis, 12.

¹¹ John W. O’Malley, *Trent: What happened at the Council* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2013), 213.

¹² Hubert Wolf, “Priesterausbildung zwischen Universität and Seminar: Zur Auslegungsgeschichte des Trienter Seminardekrets”, in: *Römische Quartalschrift* 88 (1993), 299.

¹³ Valentine U. Iheanacho, “Care of Souls and the Logic of Trent as a Pastoral Council” in *Acta Theologica*, 39(1), (2019), 106.

¹⁴ Wolf, 229. See also O’Malley, 213.

¹⁵ O’Malley, 212-213.

system of priestly formation of the time.¹⁶ The half-baked measures in priestly training and associated problems became quite untenable in Europe in the early 16th century. They contributed to the slipping of the German Catholic masses led by Martin Luther into the Church of Reformation. Pope Adrian VI was elected pope amid this crisis in 1522. He acknowledged the depravity in the Priesthood. He indicated the need for reform in his letter to the Diet of Nuremberg in 1522 with the following words:

Holy Scripture declares aloud that the sins of the people are the outcome of the sins of the Priesthood ... We all prelates and clergy have gone astray from the right way, and for long, none has done good; no, not one ... Each of us must consider how he has fallen and be more ready to judge himself than to be judged by God on the day of His wrath.¹⁷

Adrian VI did not live long to enforce the desired reform. The need for clerical reform and training occupied the attention of different Church leaders and scholars during this period. According to Wolf, "It was evident that such untrained priests were hardly up to the challenges of the Reformation."¹⁸ Pope Paul III eventually set up a commission to study the question of priestly reform. In the explication of Herman Tüchle, "The problem faced by the first reformist cardinals appointed by the Pope to a special commission was the rush of unqualified clerics to the ordinations."¹⁹ The commission of nine members, with four Cardinals, was headed by Cardinal Gasparo Contarini. It recommended the introduction of a formal examination before ordination.²⁰ While the commission was

¹⁶ For a detailed social historical study of the Church and the priesthood slightly before Trent and modern time, see Peter Hersche, *Muße und Verschwendung: Europäische Gesellschaft und Kultur im Barockzeitalter*, Vol. 1. (Wien: Herder, 2006).

¹⁷ Adrian VI to Chierigati, November 1522, Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, Vol. IX (St Louis: Herder, 1910), 134-135.

¹⁸ Wolf, 229.

¹⁹ Tüchle, 532

²⁰ This recommendation is contained in Johannes Dominicus Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, Vol. XXXV (Paris and Leipzig: Welter, 1902), 347-355.

concerned about those admitted to Holy Orders, there was no corresponding interest in the report about creating an institution to train and prepare young men for entrance into the Priesthood.

Next in this spirit of reform was an imperial reform in 1563 in Vienna that suggested that universities be built where future priests would be trained. Although the cost-effect was high, the timing of this bold suggestion was very close to the end of Trent. For this reason, the Conciliar Fathers at Trent came to a compromise between having a university with financial costs or a unique institute for training priests. This compromise, over time, proved prudent. The Tridentine model was an improvement of the already existing cathedral school. It came in due course to shape and dominate Catholic priestly training for over three centuries. The primary concern of Trent was on the part of the Church to eliminate the causes that had led to the Reformation. It is not surprising that the Council Fathers unanimously saw the catastrophic level of education of the secular clergy as one of the main evils to be eradicated.²¹

Within the same period, some notable individuals embarked on the Reformation of priestly training. Their reform efforts served as a template for the council fathers in their deliberations. Notable among those pre-conciliar reforms are:

1. German College in Rome: Because of the effect of the Reformation, the German world experienced a decline in the vocation to the Priesthood. The need for an institution dedicated to training Germans for the Priesthood greatly interested Cardinal Marone. He had worked in Germany as a papal nuncio and experienced the decline. Leveraging on the newly founded Society of Jesus, with a disposition towards reform and education of priests, Cardinal Marone would convince Pope Paul III and the curia of the need to establish a school in Rome for the formation of young Germans to be ordained priests. This idea gave birth to the Collegium Germanicum of the Jesuits founded in Rome in 1552.”²²

²¹ Wolf, 229.

²² Hubert Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient: Dritte Tagungsperiode und*

2. Cardinal Reginald Pole's efforts at reforming the Church in England resulted in the English Synod of 1556 in London. "Reformatio Angliae" is important in the history of the Tridentine decree on the formation of priests. Attempts at restoring Catholicism in England created a template for priestly formation that the Trent decree would adopt in the formation of priests. Because Marone admired Pole's seminary idea, under the presidency of Cardinal Marone, Trent adopted Pole's seminary experiment in England.²³
3. Bishop Giberti's school at the Cathedral of Verona deserves mention. His goal was to train young priests and young men preparing for the Priesthood.²⁴

4.0 The Decree on the Establishment of Seminary Training and its Review

During the discussion on the general need for priestly reform, which began on 12th May 1563, canon 16 (the final version, canon 18) for the training of future priests was introduced to the fathers by the president, Marone. In this canon three drafts were presented and debated one after the other. The debates lasted some weeks and centred around the definition of a seminary. Jedin highlights how the conciliar fathers, relying on previous reforms about Catholic education in general, wanted a special school with elements of the previous attempted education of priests. It would be a unique institution to provide quality education for future priests.²⁵ At first, the element of the school was more in the foreground. It was later placed more in parallel with the educational function of the College of the Jesuits. After that, the seminary was to be seen as a college with the particular purpose of training secular priests. Given this conception, "the seminary was not supposed to take the place of

Abschluss, IV (Überwindung der Krise durch Marone, Schließung und Bestätigung), (Wien: Herder 1975), 73.

²³ Jedin, 73.

²⁴ Jedin, 73.

²⁵ Jedin, 74.

the universities, but to stand alongside them, not to replace them, but to be a beneficial addition.”²⁶ On July 15, 1563, during the 23rd solemn session at which the doctrine of the sacrament of Holy Orders was proclaimed, the decree on the establishment of seminary was published, mainly taken from the 18th and last canon of the final draft.²⁷ The original intention of conciliar fathers was to give all candidates for the Priesthood a university education. They could not immediately realize that original aim on account of financial reasons. Hence, in the explication of Wolf, the bishops settled for the possibility that “poorer candidates should also be given a solid minimum education.”²⁸ The Tridentine Seminary decree sought to merge the practical visions of the English Church reform and the religious and educational dispositions of St Ignatius of Loyola.²⁹ The overall aim was to give proper training to all who would be entrusted with the care of souls.

Church historians and commentators on the Council of Trent generally agree that the usefulness of this canon in the future development of the Church cannot be overemphasized. Pallavicino Sforza once remarked about the decree: “many were of the mind that whatever other good remained undone, this alone recompensed for all the labours and anxieties which the fathers had experienced.”³⁰ In Michael A. Mullett’s estimation, “if nothing had been done towards the renewal of the Church in the late Middle Ages, but initiate the setting up of diocesan seminaries for priests; it would have done a great deal.”³¹ In another manner, Mullet expresses the view that the decree alongside its innovation, “provided the Church with a trained and devoted clergy who deserved much credit

²⁶ Tüchle, 527.

²⁷ *Dekrete der Ökumenischen Konzilien*, 750. See also O’Malley, 212.

²⁸ Wolf, 232.

²⁹ Tüchle, 531.

³⁰ Pallavicino Sforza, *Istoria del Concilio*, vol. X edited and trans. By Francescantonio Zaccaria Mendrisio: Minerva Ticinese, 1836], 223. See also O’Malley, 212.

³¹ Mullett, 65.

for the subsequent gains of Catholicism.”³² A few other salient issues in the decrees are worth highlighting.

The decree was modelled after the Lateran Council III (1179), which directed that cathedral schools as a sort of colleges be established for the training of future priests. The decree equally owes a lot to Cardinal Reginald Pole, and the synodal decree on the training of priest for the English Church.³³ Every cathedral and metropolitan Church were mandated to build a special institution for the education of future priests, and poorer dioceses could pull their resources together to erect one seminary for their area.

While the decree made establishing a seminary mandatory for every diocese, it did not state that everybody ordained must be educated in the seminary. This is to be understood within the Tridentine understanding of the seminary which was conceived as a service to poor youth who desired the Priesthood but could not afford a university education. In this regard, the seminary was to be a place where the essential minimum of education was provided for all candidates for the Priesthood but most especially for poor children whose parents could not pay for their seminary training. This aspect of the decree gave it a solid pastoral bent. The decree was pastoral in tone and its canonical orientation. Its attentive care toward boys from poor financial backgrounds who might be unable to pay for their education remains remarkable. It must also be noted that the decree did not exclude children from wealthy families apart from the fact that their families ought to pay the cost of the training. It made the training of priests one of the primary obligations of the diocesan bishop, who was responsible for training his priests.

The short introduction of the decree, points to the need for early education in piety and religion. This was done with the awareness of the burden of original sin on human beings since, without the extraordinary grace of God, constant perseverance in the ecclesias-

³² Mullett, 65.

³³ Henry. J. Schroeder, ed., *Canons and Decree of the Council of Trent, Original Text with English Translation* (St Louis: Herder, 1941) 175-179.

tical life and the Priesthood was considered impossible.³⁴ The decree established the minimum age for admission into the seminary, together with the ability to read and write. An overview of what is to be taught, but, specific subjects were not given in the decree. In this study requirement, the fathers were vague. Although the fathers did not specify what the students were to study, they outlined the theological content needed in the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and confession. There was no division of studies on the basis of the age group of the students. The fathers were less ambiguous on the spiritual formation of the candidates and, more specifically, on the following areas: wearing clerical garb, assisting at Mass, monthly confession, receiving Holy Communion and adhering to the spiritual director's advice. In addition, students were to receive a tonsure while entering the seminary. This was a sign of being set apart because religious men and women had great honour in the late Medieval time.

The management of the seminary was of great concern to the Tridentine fathers. As the proprietor of the seminary, the diocesan bishop was to appoint competent teachers to the seminary. There was an emphasis on the quality of those who were to teach in the seminary. They are not to be just priests, as in the previous apprenticeship system. The would-be seminary teachers were expected to be men of integrity and knowledgeable in theology. The impression is that the seminary administration was topmost for the fathers. Apart from a few introductory lines and directives on the faculty, the rest of the pages were dedicated to administration and financial issues.

One major challenge for the Fathers during the debate on the seminary was the question of finance. They wanted to ensure special provisions were made to finance the seminary project. Therefore, "Its directives on financial support to seminaries indicate the council's highest premium on the training of future priests who were to be entrusted with *cura animarum*".³⁵ As far as the Conciliar Fathers

³⁴ Tüchle, 527. See *Dekrete der Ökumenischen*, 750.

³⁵ Iheanacho, 106.

were concerned, no effort was to be spared in raising funds for such a worthy project, described by it as a “holy and pious work.”³⁶ This is very important because a lot has been written on the scandalous lifestyle of pre-Tridentine rural clergy. There has not been a balanced acknowledgement of the economic needs of rural clergy who never had the structural and financial support that the post-Tridentine Church was ready to accord to the secular clergy.³⁷

The Tridentine decree on the establishment of seminaries should be commended for its bold innovation, which has contributed tremendously to the training of priests in the Catholic Church. However, situating the decree within the general principles of counter-reformation, it seems to have come late and fell short of the agitations of the protestants. Just like the commission set up by Pope Paul III a few years before the council, the decree was more concerned about preventing the ordination of unsuitable candidates who might inhibit the pastoral care of the people of God. Trent and its decree on establishing the seminary were essentially directed towards reforming the Church from the inside.

5.0 A Short Overview of the Reception of the Decree on the Seminaries

In his description of the outcome of Trent, Peter Hersche expresses the view that “The Council of Trent had set high moral standards for the clergy; satisfying them entirely would have made everyone a potential saint, but the reality was natural, and the Council Fathers certainly knew something else.”³⁸ Naturally, there exists a divergence between the ideal of Trent, its concrete applications and realizations.³⁹ Analyzing the details of the reception of Trent’s Decree on priestly training is beyond the scope of this study. However, it is essential to note the following:

- I. The reception of the decree did not happen all at once. It took decades as a lot depended upon the political will of a

³⁶ Iheanacho, 106.

³⁷ Iheanacho, 106.

³⁸ Hersche, 296.

³⁹ Wolf, 233.

- country's ruler and those of its bishops for ecclesiastical reform.
- II. One thing remains true, the decree somehow shaped individual countries' spiritual, pastoral and historical destinies that bordered on different national characters and adaptation to local circumstances and realities.
 - III. Papal nuncios in different countries repeatedly pushed for the establishment of seminaries. The manner of execution was by no means uniform. The seminary was an idea whose practical implementation belonged to those responsible, in this case, the bishops. The decree left much leeway.⁴⁰
 - IV. While Trent made the establishment of a seminary obligatory for every bishop, it did not make the seminary an express condition for receiving ordinations. The decree did not give specific instructions about the duration of the seminary or the division of seminarians into different groups or classes.⁴¹
 - V. There remained in the background the possibility of ordaining people without seminary training which even in some places continued after the council. Many bishops could not shoulder the task of funding a seminary at the time.

The Tridentine decree was received in Rome and some Italian dioceses, even though some dioceses did not immediately establish seminaries for a lack of financial resources. Pope Pius IV established a seminary in Rome in 1565, which served as a model Tridentine seminary. Charles Borromeo was another example. He ensured the decree was well received in his region, where seminaries were established on the Tridentine model. Individuals like Philip Neri established Oratory to train secular priests, who later inspired some notable figures to train secular clergies in the 17th century. The

⁴⁰ Tüchle, 531.

⁴¹ Tüchle, 532.

spirituality and formation of diocesan seminaries were shaped in France by outstanding men like Cardinal de Berulle, Vincent de Paul, and Jean Jacques Olier.⁴² They founded religious congregations that were dedicated to the formation of priests. The establishment of seminaries contributed to the reception of Trent in France and around Europe before the French Revolution. Having championed the reform at the Council of Trent, Spain was well disposed towards the reception of the conciliar decree. The seminary decree was not initially well received in the German world. There were a few reforming German bishops with their cathedral chapters amongst other prelates who saw no need to spend money on establishing seminaries. The few built were modelled after the Jesuits who cared for many of them.

The 19th century was when the Council of Trent's Decree on the seminary became fully implemented in many places around Europe. Wolf notes that the period of secularisation, especially from 1803 and up until the beginning of the First World War in 1914, was marked by a series of disputes between universities in Europe and the Church.⁴³ The uneasiness about secularism and enlightenment led many bishops to devise solutions to get around intellectual hostility from the secular climate in Europe. The solution was the ecclesiastical tightening of the training of priests in seminaries which encouraged the building of seminaries. An interpretation of the decree of Trent from the 18th to 19th centuries ushered in the debate about the conciliar intention for the establishment of seminaries. Church leaders and scholars like Augustin Theiner argued that the panacea against hostile secularism was the seclusion of the Tridentine Seminary since universities had opened the door to "frivolous spirit and inclined towards paganism."⁴⁴ Henceforth, seminaries became increasingly to be regarded as full-fledged academic institutions to protect those preparing for the Priesthood from the enlightenment that had taken over the universities.

⁴² Confoy, 80.

⁴³ Wolf, 219.

⁴⁴ Wolf, 220.

The aim of post-Tridentine seminaries in the 19th century came to be that of helping candidates to develop a habit similar to monastic life with strict obedience. The original intention of the conciliar fathers at Trent was to guarantee basic education for the poorer candidates evolved and took other motifs as dictated by circumstances and ecclesiastical needs, especially within the context of the 19th century. Klaus Unterburger argues that the refashioned idea of priestly training, “superficially described as the pre-modern, Tridentine priestly image itself, came about late due to numerous transformations and modernization processes.”⁴⁵ The seminary ideal of this period raised the image of the priest beyond the cultic model that has always been associated with Trent. It placed the priest on the ethical plane with a sound education. The Priesthood and its training came to be seen as a counter-symbol against a materialistic image of man and the alleged hedonism of modernity. The Priesthood was considered a commitment to Christian hope against a worldly logic. Unterburger identifies four things that characterized priestly training in this period: “A spiritualization, an academisation, a homogenization and an episcopal domestication of the priestly profession.” All four, according to him, “created a new ideal image and a new habitus of priestly existence.”⁴⁶

The 19th-century priestly training harmonized Jesuit intellectualism and monastic spirituality through asceticism and contemplation. The seminary became a full-fledged academic and spiritual institution with the sole purpose of producing sound priests who were obedient and willing to defend the Church against any attack. These ideas and values succeeded in creating a homogenous priesthood as the Church stepped out of Europe and evangelized all parts of the world with priests trained within that European environment. With a theology of the Priesthood centred around the “ascetic ideal of dying away from the world and the fulfilling love relationship with Christ,” the priestly image of the 19th century

⁴⁵ Klaus Unterburger, “Zwischen Ganzhingabe und Überforderung: Erfolg und Grenzen des Priesterbildes des 19. Jahrhunderts” in: *Communio: Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift* 1 (2022), 17.

⁴⁶ Unterburger, 20.

became too idealistic and closed upon itself. The Church saw itself sandwiched in a world that it perceived as materialistic, which clamoured for modernization and democracy.⁴⁷

6.0 Engaging a Contemporary Discourse on Seminary Formation

Among the many issues that the Vatican I did not address was the issue of priestly training. However, Vatican II stepped up to remedy this by renewing the life of the Church and ministry. The Church is now defined as a divine mystery of love and a holy people of God, which complements the pre-existing concept of the Church as a hierarchical society. Vatican II's teachings on seminary are grounded in the overall ecclesiology of the Church as the people of God. An idealistic priestly formation isolated from the world was deemed insufficient to meet the Church's current needs and the complexities of modern society. Therefore, the Vatican II seminary model takes a broader view of the Church and the world. It is important to note that this is not just an adjustment to the seminary demands in light of a changing world. Instead, it is a continuous endeavour on the part of the Church to attend to the yearning and aspiration of humanity based on contemporary ecclesiological understanding.

Seminary formation that began with Trent and its decree has evolved. As an ecclesiastical institution, it has responded to the needs of the Church in different epochs since 1563. Since seminary training has been consistently structured to address the need of every epoch, there is a current need for practical reforms of the priestly training that go beyond issuing statements and Church documents.

In Europe and America, a substantial decline in the vocation to the priesthood and apathy towards the Christian faith has eroded the strict seminary training obtainable in the Post-Tridentine seminary; in some cases, question the necessity of seminary education. On the other hand, many African countries and some Asians are battling increasing growth in the vocation to the priesthood, making it difficult to differentiate between false and

⁴⁷ Unterburger, 21.

genuine vocations. Harnessing this ministerial apathy in some parts of the world and concurrent growth in other parts remains one of the challenges of 21st century priestly training. The extent to which the current formation program can respond to decreased and excessive desire in faith and vocation to the priesthood is worth a discourse.

The Post-Vatican II ideal of the Priesthood seems grounded on the pillar of intellectual formation. This intellectual formation, however, has not been able to blend with the dynamics of contemporary society. While the seminary academic curriculum has mainly remained homogenous and stable in many countries, there is a constant challenge in inculcating the Church's ideal of priestly intellectual training in a constantly changing world. Intellectual training in seminary often dwells on manuals, lacking creativity. Also, the current intellectual formation in the seminary is battling to synergise with cultural values in different parts of the world outside European context.

The pastoral formation that occasionally encourages seminarians' involvement, even during their studies, in the pastoral life of the Church is to be commended. This is unlike the previous centuries that separated seminarians from the world for fear of modernity. Nevertheless, harmonising this noble idea with the genuine meaning of obedience and its current limit is challenging. There seems to be a growing tendency to present those seminarians in some parts of the world as servants rather than pastoral agents. Pastoral works often end in obedient service to priests instead of learning the dynamics of pastoral life. Amid some improvised societies, there is also the danger of clerical arrogance and materialism among the priests assigned to form these young men pastorally.

Spiritual and Human formation involves the necessary affective maturity needed for someone to live a priestly life and become an effective pastoral minister. The post-Vatican II Seminary training is battling between developing sincere spirituality and honest human development among seminarians. The effect of genuine spiritual development helps human development since both go together. However, good in themselves, the current traditional routine prayers and occasional spiritual direction have become too mechanical for

the sincere growth of the seminarians. Along with the question of human development lies the discourse about maturity, development of virtues and issues about human sexuality concerning priestly training.

Given this fact, it remains to be asked, what should be the drive of seminary formation in the contemporary time with its advancement in science and technology, coupled with demands for freedom and social inclusion?

Modernity has redefined the concept of leadership. It emphasizes participatory leadership, where ideally, everyone's opinion matters. Vatican II partially recognized this form of government with its theology of collaborative ministry. Since the priest has long been held as the leader of the parish community, has the seminary been able to prepare seminarians to become servant leaders who consult and listen or has the old-fashioned leadership model prevailed? There is an urgent need for seminaries to be able to train young men to lead with humility and respect for their lay collaborators.

The clamour for freedom is part of the recent significant changes in our world. According to the Church, this bluster for freedom must go with responsibility. Forming young men to minister in this environment when freedom is no longer a privilege, the seminary should train students to reconcile freedom with obedience and responsibility, especially in line with the nature and use of authority in the Church. How are seminarians to be given a genuinely liberal education that is available today, free from the modern dictatorship of relativism? Furthermore, to what extent should the principle of withdrawing clerical candidates from the world be modified to leave space for genuine spiritual and human development that can serve as a panacea to current abuses in area of sexuality and other human endeavours?

These questions have largely been answered in Vatican II documents on priestly formation, *Optatam totius*, Pope John Paul II's *Pastoral Dabo Vobis*, and the numerous documents from the Holy See and episcopal conferences of different countries. Some of those documents are very evasive and vague in answering these questions. There still exists in many places an apparent gulf between the desire of the Church and the actual practice of training accountable church leaders.

7.0 Conclusion

The Council of Trent was the best counter-reformation offered by the Church amid the Protestant revolt that threatened the very existence of the Church. At the heart of this reform was an attempt to cure the Church of clerical moral recklessness that provoked the protest. The conciliar decree that established seminaries for the training of poor young men for the Priesthood sought to remedy the immediate ecclesiastical situation of the time. This paper examined the historical issues at stake and the Church's previous attempts to educate priests. As has been demonstrated, those past attempts helped the conciliar fathers at Trent enact a decree that has guided the Church in training future priests. The decree itself was not uniformly received and implemented in different countries. It took a while before it became accepted and reached its zenith in the 19th century. The prevailing circumstances of the time led to the development of a priestly image that was closed in on itself, with high ethical and intellectual standards. Those ideals were considered important since they helped the Church to defend itself against external rational threats. The seminary as an institution within the Church continues to evolve and adapt amidst changes with regard to times, circumstances, places and needs of the Church. Keeping in mind the changes that have confronted contemporary societies in many areas, there is a need for practical reforms capable of addressing these challenges in priestly training.

A Study of Jeremiah 11:9-13 and Its Theological Implications

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Abstract

In keeping with the deuteronomistic tradition of the covenant, Jeremiah insists that the covenant is not only the foundation and source of Israel's identity but also the basis of Israel's survival. Thus, Israel's attitude towards the covenant becomes very important as any action that contravenes the demands of the covenant would directly mean rebellion and a rejection of YHWH's leadership of Israel. Judah and her inhabitants in Jerusalem indulged in adulterous practices through the action of worshipping false gods. This is infidelity to YHWH. Consequently, this paper studies the text of Jeremiah 11:9-13 as it concerns Judah's infidelity and adulterous actions, and its theological implications. The paper adopts the historical-critical method. It discovers that Judah and its inhabitants sway from the covenantal relationship between the nation and YHWH and that the decision to be unfaithful to the covenant is as a result of an unanimous conspiracy by the people. The study shows that covenant is conditional, since YHWH's fulfillment of his promises is based on Judah's fidelity. Also, judgment introduces the forensic dimension of the text, highlighting that Judah will be punished in as much as Judah remains unfaithful and adulterous.

Keywords: Covenant, Judgment, Infidelity, Idol, Conspiracy, Adulterous, Sin.

1.0 Introduction

Idolatry can be defined as the “practice of worshiping and serving images (pictures, sculpts etc.) as identified with, as representative of, or as deity”.¹ Idolatry is considered the first and worst violation of the covenantal relationship between Israel and YHWH. Idolatrous acts that undermine the covenant are described as vile deeds by the prophet Jeremiah (cf. Jer. 11:15).² It is important to underscore prophet Jeremiah’s emphasis that God’s covenant with Israel is the foundation of Israel’s identity and the key to the survival of Israel as a nation and a people.³ In other words, in this conditional covenant, God’s obligations was premised largely on Israel’s fidelity and obedience. An obedience which implied that God was accepted unreservedly as the suzerain and any form of worship of any other god or gods would constitute a violation of YHWH’s claim of exclusivity in terms of loyalty.⁴ Furthermore, the prophet Jeremiah considered social injustices in its different and varying manifestations (cf. Jer. 2:34; 5:26-28)⁵ and foreign political alliances which strictly speaking, undermined God’s rulership of Israel and represented an abandonment of God as strategic ways of violating the demands of the covenantal relationship between God and Israel.⁶

A look down the history of the people of God, Israelites, the practice of the worship of idols and or other gods, is not strange to the religious experiences and practices of the Israelites and even when monotheism became a major religious practice, the attitude and practice of withdrawing to worship idols was never completely overcome. The second commandment of the Decalogue which outrightly condemns idolatry and its practices, directly speaks to the fact that idolatry was not just a possibility among the Israelites but that it was a constant religious deviation which Israel needed to stay away from.

¹ Marbaniang Domenic, “Idolatry,” *Light of Life Magazine*, Mumbai: 2007.

² Thomas Leclerc, *Introduction to the Prophets: Their Stories, Sayings and Scrolls* (New York: Paulist Press, 2007), 251.

³ Leclerc, *Introduction to the Prophets*, 248.

⁴ Leclerc, *Introduction to the Prophets*, 248.

⁵ Leclerc, *Introduction to the Prophets*, 253.

⁶ Leclerc, *Introduction to the Prophets*, 259.

This article attempts an exegetical analyses of the text of Jer. 11:9-13 with specific aim of gleaning the theological themes therein. In essence, the text of Jer. 11:9-13 exposes how both Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem indulged in infidelity and adulterous practice which resulted into the breaking and violation of the covenantal relationship between them and God. This led to the nation's backsliding and consequently returning to the sins of her fathers. Thus, the nation was guilty of idolatry which is the worship of other gods other than the one true God of Israel.

2.0 Background to the text of Jeremiah 11:9-13

As shown in the superscript of the book of the prophet Jeremiah (cf. Jer. 1:1-3), Jeremiah carried out his prophetic activities during the kingship of Josiah, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah under whom Judah as a nation was exiled. Thus, Jeremiah experienced Judah on two fronts; that is, Judah as a faithful and loyal nation and Judah as a disloyal, covenant breaking nation. That is, Judah abandoned the worship of God as she practiced idolatry and also indulged in injustices of different sorts.⁷ Thus, the text of Jeremiah 11:9-13 can be traced to the period of Josiah's kingship over Judah after the assassination of his father in 639 B.C and he reigned for thirty-one years.

During his time as king, Assyrian reign and power was in its final decline⁸ and this gave momentum to the many political and religious reforms that Josiah undertook. Although, scholars disagree as to when Josiah began his religious reforms, these reforms essentially ensured the removal of all traces of foreign worship and the elimination of all outlying places of worship including those in Assyrian controlled sections of what was the Northern Kingdom.⁹ The consequence of Josiah's action is glaring as all religious practices were centralized in Jerusalem and he entered into a

⁷ Leclerc, *Introduction to the Prophets*, 251.

⁸ Paul Achtemeier, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (Bangalore: Theological Publication, 2002), 510.

⁹ Achtemeier, 510.

covenant with God and this was crowned with the special Passover he observed in Jerusalem.¹⁰

Sadly, Josiah was killed at Megiddo by Pharaoh Neco II in 609B.C and Judah was faced with serious grim political situation. According to 2 Kings 23:30, his son Jehoahaz succeeded him as he was installed by the people and in 2 Kings 23:34, another of his son Jehoiakim was installed king by Pharaoh Neco II of Egypt.¹¹ Generally, it is accepted that after the death of Josiah, his religious reforms failed as Judah once again relented in her worship of God and in keeping the covenant between God and her ancestors.

From the above, Jeremiah experienced Judah abandoning the Sinitic covenant and this implies that Judah needs a recall or reminder of the demands of the covenant and an explanation in regard to the plight of Judah.

3. Text

Jeremiah 11:9-13

The Lord said to me, “there is revolt among the men of Judah and inhabitants of Israel”.

10 They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers who refused to hear my words. They have gone after other gods to serve them. The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken the covenant which I made with their ancestors.

11 Therefore, thus says the Lord, see! I am bringing evil upon them which they will not be able to escape. Though they will cry to me, I will not listen to them.

12 Then the cities of Judah and inhabitants of Israel will go and cry to the gods who they burn incense to but they will not save them in their time of trouble.

13 For your gods have become as many as your cities O Judah! And as many as the streets of Jerusalem are the altars you have set up to shame, alters to burn incense to Baal.

¹⁰ Achtemeier, 510.

¹¹ Leclerc, *Introduction to the Prophets*, 236.

3.1 Delimitation of Jeremiah 11:9-13

The text of Jer. 11:9-13 can be considered and studied as an independent unit and a smaller unit within the larger block of Jer. 11:1-13:27. Also, the text of study as an independent unit is situated within the sub-section Jer. 11:1-17 which is termed 'rejection of the covenant message'.¹² The larger block of Jer. 11:1-17 is divided into four parts and the text of study Jer. 11:9-13 as an independent unit of study, constitutes the third part of the larger block which clearly manifests the actions of the present generation of Judah in undermining the covenantal relationship between their ancestors and YHWH and presents the testimony against such action.¹³

Furthermore, the text of study Jer. 11:9-13 as an independent unit, begins a new thought pattern in the message of Jeremiah Judah and her inhabitants. Significantly, the shift in the sequence of thought centers on the tension between YHWH and the present generation of Jerusalem and Judah as it relates to the covenant. That is, Jeremiah 11:9-13, in specific terms, expresses how the present generation of Judah rebelled against YHWH and the subsequent action of YHWH. That is, as an independent unit, it states the action of Judah which informed YHWH's response in the in the following unit (cf. Jer.11:14), where he refuses to listen to their plea or their call in time of distress.

Also, as an independent unit of study, it is loaded with themes that are unique to it. These include: the theme of tension and conspiracy (Jer. 11:9), the theme of backsliding (cf. Jer. 11:10), the theme of judgment (cf. Jer. 11:11) and the themes of false gods and idolatry or apostasy (cf. Jer. 11:12-13) which is the fundamental action that undermined the covenantal relationship. Also, from the point of view of genre, the text of study could be termed a conflict story as it depicts the struggle of Judah in obeying the demands of the covenant between her and YHWH. Lastly, in terms of linguistic style the text of Jer. 11:9-13 can be considered an independent unit.

¹² Lawrence Boadt, *Old Testament Message: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Willington: Michael Glazier, Inc 1982), 93.

¹³ Gordon McConville, *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Prophets*, (Illinois: Intervarsity, 2002).

Precisely, the linguistic use of the word ‘therefore’ (*l k n*) to introduce the threat of judgment (cf. Jer. 11:11) and the use of ‘for’ (*kî*) to introduce direct address to the people (cf. Jer. 11:13)¹⁴ show the specific linguistic element in the text of study.

3.2 Literary Genre of Jeremiah 11:9-13

The text of study Jer. 11:9-13 belongs to the set of Jeremiah’s sayings under the literary genre called prose sermon.¹⁵ However, in some scholarly works, Jer. 11:13 is considered a poetic verse.¹⁶ On the other hand, the text of study Jer. 11:9-13 could be considered a combination of prose and poetry. In the book of the prophet Jeremiah, prose takes several forms which include judgment speech, indictment of sins, and threat of judgment which is usually introduced by “therefore” (*l k n*)¹⁷ (Jer. 11:11). Also, poetic section may be included in a prose sermon as is the case in verse 13 and this largely accounts for the earlier assertion that the text of study is a combination of both prose and poetry and the fact that in certain part of the book, there exists a combination of both techniques of writing.¹⁸ Also, the text of study could be considered a conflict story between Judah and YHWH and this is seen in the revolt against the demand of the covenantal relationship between Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and YHWH. This paves the way for the use of forensic language in Jer. 11:11-12.

3.3 Literary Structure of Jeremiah 11:9-13

The text of study is structured in such a way that the message of the prophet is clearly buttressed. The prose sermon has been divided into two major parts and they are:

1. The action of Judah and her inhabitants: Jeremiah 11:9-10
 - i. The Conspiracy of Disobedience (Jer.11: 9).

¹⁴ John Mackay, *Jeremiah* (Edinburgh: Free Church College, 2014), 403.

¹⁵ John Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah (New International Commentary on the Old Testament)*; Grand Rapids: William B.Eerdmans, 1980), 339.

¹⁶ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 401.

¹⁷ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 394.

¹⁸ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 344.

- ii. The Return to Idols (Jer. 11: 10)
- 2. The consequence of Judah and her inhabitants action: Jeremiah 11:11-13
 - iii. The Judgment of YHWH (Jer. 11:11)
 - iv. Futility of their Efforts (Jer. 11:12)
 - v. Justification of YHWH Action (Jer. 11:13)

4. Analysis of Jeremiah 11:9-13

This section deals with the analysis of the text of Jeremiah 11:9-13 with the view of adequately exposing the different aspects, as shown in the structure of the text. In achieving this, the historical-critical cum exegetical methods will be applied.

4.1 The action of Judah and her inhabitants: Jeremiah 11:9-10

Jeremiah 11:9-10 is the first major subdivision of the text of Jeremiah 11:9-13 and this subdivision contains the dual actions of Judah and her inhabitants which underscore the abandoning of the covenantal relationship with God.

i. The Conspiracy of Disobedience (Verse 9)

The verse opens with the introduction of the word *qešer* and understanding this word depends largely on the meaning read into the word. It is translated as 'conspiracy' or 'alliance' and from its root meaning, it means 'to tie', 'to join'.¹⁹ Thus, when one reads the word *qešer* from the political point of view, one gets a sense of the uniting together of the people in order to revolt against or overthrow a constituted authority. Basically, the word is borrowed from the political circle and adapted into religious explanation. This is even clearer when we consider the fact that the covenantal relationship is structured according to the models of political treaties where loyalty was central.²⁰ On the other hand, some scholars hold that if

¹⁹ McConville, *Exploring the Old Testament*, 47.

²⁰ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 346.

the words in verse 9 are earlier in terms of dating, they definitely must be describing the unexpressed determination to resist the religious reforms to which Josiah represented.²¹

In any case, the word *qešer* must be read as a metaphorical presentation of Judah's attitude²² where a consensus was reached by the people to renounce YHWH as their God and also renege on the demands of the covenant.²³ It is important to point out that such a rebellion was not a hidden or secret act and that there was no form of formal gathering where this rebellious action was planned. In other words "there was no furtive plotting but rather there was a wide spread of minds".²⁴ The implication of this is that, the mind-set of the people of Judah towards loyalty as it concerns YHWH was questionable even though they continued in the observation of temple rituals. This unprecedented agreement in their mind-set which refers to *qešer* (conspiracy) could only result to religious anarchy or confusion. J.L. Mackay gives a summary of this verse as follows:

A consensus had emerged whereby the sovereignty of the Lord was rejected and also their obligation to respond to the demands his covenant had placed on them. It had not arisen suddenly from nowhere but came out of the mind-set of the people. Although they do not seem to have given open voice to their attitude and there was continuing observance of Temple rituals, the nation as a whole was effectively united in agreement over this and the result in the realm of religion is like the anarchy and turmoil that is associated with a coup d'état.²⁵

ii. The Return to Idols (Verse 10)

The composition of verse 10 continues to establish the action of the inhabitants of Jerusalem as regards the conspiracy in verse 9. Here,

²¹ William Lasor, David Hubbard, and Frederick Bush, *Old Testament Survey* (Michigan: Zondervan, 2010), 337.

²² McConville, *Exploring the Old Testament*, 47.

²³ Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 345.

²⁴ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 401.

²⁵ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 401.

the conspiracy comes into action as they completely returned to the sins of their forefathers. The word *š b* which is translated as 'returned' expresses the consequence of the conspiracy clearly and *ḏâû* is used ironically to mean 'backsliding' which implies turning away from the Lord and reverting to evil practices.²⁶ In other words, Judah turned back to *'āwōnōt* (the sins) of their ancestors. According to J.A. Thompson, "the apostasy of Judah was the turning back of the people to the iniquities of their earliest forefathers, who refused to listen to YHWH's covenantal demands. These led them to follow other gods and to serve them".²⁷

Now when the rendering *ābōwtām h riš nîm* (their fathers the former ones) which is a compound phrase is interpreted in conjunction with the word 'fathers' in verses 4, 5 and 7, one gets the sense that reference is made not just to the immediate generation but to a much more earlier generation in the nation's history (cf. Exod. 32; Num. 14; Judg. 2:10-23).²⁸ Thus, verse 10 establishes the main charge against Judah. That is, Judah and her inhabitants both refused to listen to the words of YHWH (cf. Jer. 11:1-8) and consequently followed other gods to serve them (cf. Jer. 1:16). This charge of apostasy is directly connected to the earlier acts of apostasy in Israel's history and this makes it clear that *ḏâû* implies that the Sinaitic covenant was abandoned and YHWH consequently was no more their God. Nonetheless, it should be said that it is the behaviour of Jeremiah's contemporary that is being described. According to J. L. Mackay, "the current generation was walking in the steps of their ancestors. This is the main charge against them, and it is obviously not a peripheral matter but takes on the central demand of the covenant that there be total and undeviating loyalty to the Lord".²⁹

Furthermore, *hêpêr* (they have broken), is interpreted to mean 'withdrawal' or 'removal',³⁰ and refers to the action of Judah to cease their support for and maintenance of the covenant between

²⁶ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 401.

²⁷ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 345.

²⁸ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 402.

²⁹ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 392.

³⁰ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 402.

them and YHWH. It should be noted that Judah broke the covenant YHWH made with their origin or ancestors. J.D. Hays comments that *hêpêr* (broken) “does not carry a mere connotation of “to violate” as when we break the law today, say by speeding; it implies breaking the relationship, as in an annulment ... clearly there is no danger of Yahweh “violating the rules”, but rather the threat is of Yahweh ending the covenant relationship in Deuteronomy”.³¹ Now, *š b* (backsliding or turning back) in this verse, suggests the fact that at a time, Judah and her inhabitants were in the right with YHWH in terms of loyalty to him as their God and loyalty to the covenant. This period in history is associated to the reign of Josiah the king who championed religious reformation. On the other hand, the word *š b* also points to the fact that the religious reforms of Josiah failed after his death and as a result, a people who once were loyal to YHWH became disloyal.

4.2 The consequence of Judah and her inhabitants action: Jeremiah 11:11-13

Jeremiah 11:11-13 is the second major subdivision of the text of Jeremiah 11:9-13 as shown in the structure above. This subdivision highlights in clear terms, the repercussion or aftermath of the action of Judah and her inhabitants which is outlined in Jeremiah 11:9-10.

i. The Judgment of YHWH (Verse 11)

This verse introduces the judgment that will befall Judah for breaking the covenant. In other words, the conspiracy led to the invocation of the curse of judgment and the wordings of verse 11 show how extreme the situation was.³² The word *l k n* (therefore) initiates the judgment and sadly they will not be able to escape the horrors that will befall them. This evil will not come all of a sudden on them but will be the product of divine initiative (cf. Jer. 4:6,

³¹ Daniel Hays, *The Message of the Prophets*, (Grand Rapids, Illinois: Intervarsity, 2022), 163.

³² Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 402.

5:15) and on this ground, they will not escape the evil. On account of the dire situation they will find themselves, they will cry to YHWH for help and they will find no help. They will cry (*zaaq*) for help and their cry will connote an expression of distress expressed to YHWH and pleading for his help.³³ Sadly, their cry (*zaaq*) for help will yield no help from YHWH as at this point, their consistent refusal to listen to YHWH necessarily brings upon them judgment which they cannot avoid.³⁴ They refused to listen to YHWH and now that they seek for audience with YHWH, they will not get it.

ii. Futility of their Efforts (Verse 12)

The misery and inescapable hardship that Judah will face on account of YHWH not listening to Judah and its inhabitants' cry will lure them into seeking for help from the gods they have been worshiping in place of YHWH. However, the much needed help sought for from these gods will not come as these gods will not be able to help. That is, these gods are impotent. The attitude of returning to these gods and their failure to help them was first presented in Jer. 2:27-28 and this also indicates that the attitude of worshiping other gods at this point in time in the history of Judah, was prevalent even in the early days of Jeremiah the prophet and during the reign of Josiah the king.³⁵ In fact, it is an attitude or habitual practice for Judah and its inhabitants to abandon YHWH and to go after other gods. This is made clear by the phrase *məqattîmərîm* (to make sacrifice or burn incense) which is from the root *qtr* and serves as a participial phrase indicating habitual practice.³⁶ Also, as they carry out this habitual practice of burning incense or making sacrifices looking for remedy, they won't be saved. Rightly, these gods cannot save them as it is only YHWH who can come to their aid. This fact is strengthened by the word *yasha* (help), which is translated in Jer. 2:27-28 as 'save' and is a common word for deliverance and it implies

³³ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 402.

³⁴ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 402

³⁵ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 246.

³⁶ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 403.

that it is only from YHWH that such a divine and effective intervention can come forth.³⁷

iii. Justification of YHWH Action (Verse 13)

In considering the actions of YHWH in relation to their behaviour, verse 13 provides as it were a justification or reason why the Lord would treat them the way he promised. The verse opens with the causal clause (*kî*) and the statement is put in a direct form of address.³⁸ The multiplicity of idols by the people once again re-echoes the habitual practice of the people in following other gods and here, it was a custom for each community to view its god as manifestation of Baal.³⁹ Also, the statement “your gods have become as many as your cities...” is a sarcastic way of describing the powerlessness of these gods whom they have embraced at the expense of YHWH.⁴⁰ Furthermore, one gets the impression from the above statement that every street in the capital had one god which was considered to be a manifestation of Baal and this depicts massively the rate at which idolatry had eaten deep into the religious life of the people. Again, some scholars consider the statement to be a hyperbolic statement while some truly think it best described the religious situation during the time and reign of king Jehoiakim.⁴¹

5.0 The Theological Implications of Jeremiah 11:9-13

The exegetical study of the text of Jer. 11:9-13 reveals two major theological themes and they are:

1. The theology of covenant
2. The theology of judgment

5.1 The Covenant

At the heart of the text of study is the theme of covenant and indeed,

³⁷ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 403.

³⁸ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 403.

³⁹ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 403.

⁴⁰ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 403.

⁴¹ Thompson, *Jeremiah*, 403.

in discussing the religious history of Judah, the covenant and its demands cannot be over emphasized. Very importantly, when the wordings of Jer. 11:9-10 are put into perspective, one gets the sense that the covenant and in fact its violation underscores the focus of the entire chapter 11 of the book of Jeremiah. According to Thomas Leclerc, "in chapter 11 we find Jeremiah's most developed treatment of the covenant".⁴² Now, Jeremiah views YHWH's covenant to be the foundation of Israel's identity and the foundation to its survival.⁴³ Thomas Leclerc captures this aptly in the following words:

This passage evokes the memory of two significant events in Israel's past: the promise of land God had made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Jer. 11:5) and God's deliverance of the Hebrews from their Egyptian bondage (Jer. 11:4). At Sinai, God formalized the relationship built on promise by making it a relationship built on covenant. That relationship is classically and succinctly summarized in Jer. 11:4: so shall you be my people, and I will be your God.⁴⁴

Furthermore, this covenant was one built on condition. That is, God's fulfillment of his promises was premised on Israel's fulfillment or fidelity to its own part of the covenant. With this in mind, it becomes clear that within the context of the covenant, YHWH is the master while Judah is the suzerain and YHWH claimed exclusive loyalty in this relationship. Any actions that undermined this exclusive loyalty as can be seen in the worship of other gods and the many social injustices prevalent in Judah and among her inhabitants amounted to a violation of the covenantal relationship. Essentially, for Jeremiah, the covenantal relationship is based on the ground that YHWH has a special relation to Israel, a relation which is built on God's original grace and love. YHWH for him is conceived as the universal God of the world to whom as the creator of the world and lord of history, all powers are subject and obedience is due.⁴⁵ The covenantal relationship is therefore based on man

⁴² Leclerc, *Introduction to the Prophets*, 249.

⁴³ Leclerc, *Introduction to the Prophets*, 248.

⁴⁴ Leclerc, *Introduction to the Prophets*, 250.

⁴⁵ Artur Weiser, *The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development*, (New York: Associated, 1961), 221.

being open to an inner surrender to God in love and loyalty (cf. Jer. 2:32, 29:12ff, 35).⁴⁶

Interestingly, Jeremiah's understanding of the covenant is not completely different from early prophetic description of the relationship between YHWH and his people. Thus, in the description of covenantal relationship as 'marriage relationship' (cf. Jer. 2:2, 3:6), or speaking of Israel as Yahweh's sons (cf. Jer. 3:19, 4:22), we see striking similarities between Jeremiah and Hosea.⁴⁷ Now, Jeremiah unlike the Deuteronomistic theologians begins the history or story of this relationship with the deliverance of Israel from Egypt (cf. Jer. 2:6). This deliverance is traced back by Jeremiah to the love of YHWH and not to the election of Israel.⁴⁸ The period of pure covenantal relationship is limited by Jeremiah to the time of Moses and the wondering in the desert by Israel when there was yet no sacrifice (cf. Jer. 2:2, 7:22).⁴⁹ Therefore, it becomes clear that for Jeremiah, Israel's entrance into the promise land marked the beginning of distorted relationship between YHWH and the people of Israel. In fact, the entrance into the promise land, Canaan, marked the beginning of apostasy in Israel's history (cf. Jer. 2:7).⁵⁰ Speaking about this, Georg Fohrer says: "Entrance into the settled land of Canaan marked the beginning of apostasy from Yahweh (2:7), which Jeremiah prefers to describe in terms drawn from nature rather than from history (8:4-7) and which he depicts in almost classic fashion in 3:19-20 Because this apostasy has continued to the present day..."⁵¹

5.1.1 The Covenant and Sin

With regard to covenant and sin, Jeremiah insists that the propensity for Judah to break or consistently flout the demands of the covenant is hinged on the nature of human heart which for him, is indelibly

⁴⁶ Weiser, *The Old Testament*, 221.

⁴⁷ Georg Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, (London: S.P.C.K 1968), 402.

⁴⁸ Fohrer, *Introduction*, 402.

⁴⁹ Fohrer, *Introduction*, 402.

⁵⁰ Fohrer, *Introduction*, 402.

⁵¹ Fohrer, *Introduction*, 402.

stamped with sin (cf. Jer. 13:23).⁵² The apostasy of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the text of study shows the ungrateful rebellious character of Judah. For him, the human heart is the domain for intellectual and moral decision and the heart is deceitful and corrupts (cf. Jer. 17:9).⁵³ Therefore, for Jeremiah, sin is not interpreted as an individual transgression but as a basic perversion of human life.⁵⁴ Jeremiah recognizes “the ingrained nature of sin which perverted basic attitude and in man’s callousness with regard to God (cf. Jer. 4:22, 5:3, 6:15, 13:23)”.⁵⁵ Thus, for Jeremiah, sin is habitual and Judah cannot overcome by their own efforts their habitual sinfulness.⁵⁶ Jeremiah speaks of the irreversible quality of sin which is manifested in the inability of the people to change their evil behaviour (cf. Jer. 8:4-7), inability to give up their lustful urges (cf. Jer. 2:25), and their continuous going backward (cf. Jer. 15:6).⁵⁷

For Jeremiah, sin impacts negatively on the human condition and the health of the nation. It is old and extends back to Israel’s earliest generation which made it bad (cf. Jer. 2:20, 7:22-26, 22:21) and within the context of the new generations, it has become worse and renders the new generation worse (cf. Jer. 16:12).⁵⁸ In conclusion, Jeremiah clearly holds the view that Judah cannot but walk the path of apostasy and social injustice. Judah cannot but violate the covenantal demands and this unrepentant attitude will definitely lead to YHWH’s judgment.

5.1.2 The New Covenant

The old covenant which was the Sinaitic covenant was one based on condition. That is, it was a mutual covenant which impressed obligations and rights on the persons involved in as much as they kept the demands of the covenant. Thus, this covenant was liable

⁵² William, *Old Testament Survey*, 350.

⁵³ William, *Old Testament Survey*, 351.

⁵⁴ Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 402.

⁵⁵ Weiser, *The Old Testament*, 221.

⁵⁶ Weiser, *The Old Testament*, 221

⁵⁷ Jack Lundbom, *Jeremiah in Anchor Bible Dictionary*, (Toronto: Doubleday, 1992), 718.

⁵⁸ Lundbom, *Jeremiah in Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 718.

to violation or can be broken on account of the faults of the individuals who entered into it (cf. Jer. 11:10, 31:32).⁵⁹ The violation or breaking of the covenant by Judah which, simply put, implied abandoning of YHWH meant that the covenant could not lead Judah and its inhabitants to righteousness and implied that YHWH abandoned Judah. Now, in the midst of the punishment that followed the violation of the covenant, YHWH inaugurates a new covenant which in essence is different from the old covenant. He does not renew the broken covenant but enacts a new one which will revolutionize the relationship between him and his people.

In other words, on account of YHWH's own initiative to save and restore his people, he opens up a new covenant where his laws will be written on the hearts of the people (cf. Jer. 31:31-34). This new covenant will essentially lead to an interior regeneration of the human heart⁶⁰ and will symbolize the new marriage between Judah and God. This new covenant unlike the old will not be based or built on external requirements or rituals and obligation and external admonitions but will be based on God creating a new heart for humans who will have the love, fear and knowledge of God (cf. Jer. 5:4ff, 22:16, 24:7, 32:39-40,). For Jeremiah, a renewed heart will necessitate the transformation of the entire human person and as a result, the human person will freely respond to God's laws naturally and spontaneously in obedience⁶¹ without any form of compulsion (cf. Jer. 31:31-34). In conclusion, the new covenant that Jeremiah speaks about signifies the hope of restoration in Jeremiah's theology. This hope and restoration is premised on God's own turning from his anger to delivering his people.

5.2 The Theology of Judgment

The concept of judgment is a dominant theme in the text of study. The use of the particle adverb *l k n* (therefore) (Jer. 11:11)

⁵⁹ P. Van Imschoot, *Theology of the Old Testament*, (Paris: Descale, 1965), 242.

⁶⁰ Imschoot, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 243.

⁶¹ Jarvis Washington, *Prophet, Poet, Priest and Kings*, (New York: The Seaburt, 1974), 201.

introduces the theme of judgment and this is the direct consequence of Judah's violation of the covenant. That is, in as much as both nations refused to repent or embrace conversion, YHWH's judgment will but surely fall on them. In prophet Jeremiah's theological presentation of judgment, it usually will come upon anyone when repentance or conversion has proven to be impossible.⁶² YHWH's judgment in this wise is different from "the reckless and arbitrary Judgments of ancient Near Eastern deities and the mindless judgment of evil people".⁶³ In essence, YHWH's judgment according to Jeremiah is reason based and the reason is sin (cf. Jer. 1:16, 4:17, 5:6, 8:14, 13:22). Therefore in the theology of the prophet Jeremiah, judgment is tied to threat and punishment and punishment is sure to befall both nations on account of their moral and religious corruption (cf. Jer. 2:13, 5:27-28, 7:18-31) and for the prophet, the failure of both nations to change could only lead to the end of divine protection, defeat, destruction and exile.⁶⁴ Articulating the idea of punishment as a necessary part of YHWH's judgment of Jerusalem and Judah, Jack R. Lundbom writes: "YHWH is the one who raised the question of pardon for Jerusalem (cf. Jer. 5:1-8), but his answer was negative because the city could not produce one righteous soul. Repentance would have made a difference (cf. Jer. 4:1-4), but the people refused. Pardon had to wait therefore until after the punishment was completed (cf. Jer. 31:34)."⁶⁵

From the above, it becomes clear that pardon was in view in the judgment and consequent punishment of both nations. Interestingly, the people would not repent and as such, YHWH on his own part, repented from his anger and pardoned his people. "For Jeremiah, God himself relieves the tension. It is he who from the depths unfathomable love subdues his anger within himself (cf. Jer. 31:20) and forgives human sin, who on his own initiative will make a new covenant on the foundation of the forgiveness of sins by giving

⁶² Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 402.

⁶³ Lundbom, *Jeremiah*, 718.

⁶⁴ Eugene Maly, *Prophets of Salvation*, (New York: Harder and Harder 1966), 117.

⁶⁵ Lundbom, *Jeremiah*, 719.

man a new heart.”⁶⁶ Consequently, within the context of the judgment and punishment, Jeremiah foresaw God’s reversal of the situation of his people. That is, he foresaw “the powerful hand of God coming down to save his people much as he saved them in the land of Egypt”.⁶⁷ YHWH who had used other nations to punish his people, will now intervene in the history of his people, turning the table round and delivering his people in a divine and fatherly show of mercy. Jack R. Lundbom once again captures this divine act succinctly in the following words: “Because Yahweh is God over the whole earth, other nations cannot escape his punishment. Yahweh has no covenant with any of them; still he must avenge himself for the evil done to his people and to Jerusalem (cf. Jer. 46:10; 51:53), but he also moves against them because they are wicked (cf. Jer. 25:31), proud (cf. Jer. 50:31-32), and trusting in their own gods (cf. Jer. 50:38, 51:47).”⁶⁸

6.0 Jeremiah 11:9-13 and its Implication for the Traditional African Christian

The text of Jeremiah 11:9-13 has serious implication for the Traditional African Christian. It should be understood that the Traditional African Christian is first and foremost rooted in the African cultural world view especially as it relates to African Traditional Religion and the general African perception in the local deities or gods. Therefore, it appears as scholars have argued that the Christian God is a stranger to the African just as Christianity is a late comer within the African world.⁶⁹ Consequently, the Christian faith, practice and belief find itself in a weak position. This is even more pronounced within the context of deficient assimilation of Christian teachings and doctrines by some Christians within the African world. “Given such religious environment, an African Christian consciously or unconsciously begins to follow the trail of

⁶⁶ Weiser, *The Old Testament*, 221.

⁶⁷ Maly, *Prophets of Salvation*, 118.

⁶⁸ Lundbom, *Jeremiah*, 719.

⁶⁹ Emmanuel Nwaoru, *In God’s Words: Essays on Select Old Testament Text in Context* (Owerri: Apt Publications Nigeria 2022), 390.

this traditional relationship to the divine, even in practicing Christianity. Thus, many African Christians hardly conceive God as a revealed Divinity or Supreme Being who in his uniqueness demands exclusive relationship with his adherents.”⁷⁰

Therefore, just like the situation in the text of Jeremiah 11:9-13, the Traditional African Christian operates on a level where it is easy to move or walk away from the Christian God or finds it comfortable to marry the worship of the Christian God and the gods of the Traditional African Religion. Just as Judah found it pleasing to return to the religion of his ancestors, the Traditional African Christian may find it all the more comfortable to return to the religion and worship of the gods of his or her ancestors. This obviously in some instances, have become the other of the day where it becomes difficult to tell who is a Christian. That is, persons who profess to be Christians are seen involving or indulging in actions that completely repudiates the exclusive relationship that is expected to exist between God and the Christian. The allegiance and total fidelity that Christianity as a religion demands from the Christian is not only compromised but considered as old fashioned.

In considering the definition of Idolatry, it is clear that idolatry and its practice have been taken to a whole new dimension. That is, apart from the possible worship of the traditional African gods or deities etc. elements such as money, power, position, and wealth, have all become gods that demand allegiance. In essence, these continue to place the Christian who freely opens up to them, on the platform where fidelity to God is challenged and as can be seen in some cases, God is abandoned and these elements are embraced. In other words, the place of God in human life is challenged by these new idols which give quick but brief or momentary hope to the many economic and human challenges facing the human person.

7.0 Conclusion

This paper has so far studied the text of Jer. 11:9-13 and the study showed that both Judah and its inhabitants abandoned the covenant that existed between them and God. The study showed that, in the

⁷⁰ Nwaoru, *In God's Words*, 391.

breaking of the covenant, Judah, appeared to have agreed in what is termed, conspiracy of disobedience and in this, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, walked away from God and embraced the idols which their fathers served. The study revealed that Judah as a nation, reneged on the covenantal relationship between her and God, thus, putting into jeopardy, God's absolute ownership and rulership of the nation. The study showed that the backsliding or turning away from God to idols is habitual, sinful and consequently necessitated God's anger and judgment. The study showed that Judah's actions were adulterous, as it is a departure from God and towards the creation of man (idols). It involves surrendering one's allegiance not to God but to created idols. Finally, the study emphasized that although Judah and its inhabitants cry to God, this effort would be futile as their consistent refusal to listen to God would inevitably bring upon them God's anger.

The Resurrection of Jesus: The Foundation of Christian Faith

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Abstract

The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of the Christian faith and doctrine. It is the cornerstone of the teaching of the Church since inception, and by reason of faith in the Risen Lord, Christians are called and strengthened to bear witness all over the world. This paper is an exposition of the doctrine of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It argues that the Christian faith will make no sense if the “Lord is Risen” is not given a prior place. It also gives a significant cue to the fact that Christian theology does not merely affirm an eschatological bodily resurrection, but that a physical bodily resurrection is essential for a post-mortem eschatological existence, without which the Christian account of an afterlife is questionable, if not false, at best. Although, much of the structure of this paper is inspired by Joseph Ratzinger’s masterpiece, *Jesus of Nazareth*, the paper is not aimed at a mere intellectual or conceptual clarification, but hopes to engender and evoke genuine faith in the reader to proclaim that indeed, “the Lord is Risen.” Consequently, to undermine the resurrection of the Lord, one undermines the faith of the Church, and hence, its hope.

Keywords: Resurrection, Christian faith, Easter, Scripture.

1.0 Introduction

More often than not, the language of Christian prayer reflects two central themes of Christology. While one centres on the history shrouding the death of Jesus, and the other asserts his continuing presence to the believer. But the way these twin themes are articulated

is nowhere more apparent than in the theology of the Resurrection.¹ There, careful scrutiny is launched to underscore the significance of the Easter Faith, that “Jesus is Risen,” to the believer. As a matter of fact, the Easter proclamation that “Jesus is Risen,” should not merely be treated as one of those events in the life of Jesus, but must be incarnated in the life of the believer, such that, as Bultmann’s position clearly relates, to confess belief in the resurrection is essentially to realize that the cross has been taken into one’s life and has become a reality of faith. Bultmann says, “If the event of Easter Day is in any sense a historical event additional to the event of the cross, it is nothing else than the rise of faith in the risen Lord.”²

Furthermore, the increased attention to Christology during the past few years has resulted in greater diversity. Although the range of opinions among Catholic theologians is somewhat more restricted than it is among Protestants,³ Catholics, too, differ widely in their views on the subject.⁴ This paper takes its inspiration from the distinguished biblical exegete and theologian, Joseph Ratzinger’s (Pope Benedict XVI) seminal work, *Jesus of Nazareth*, on the theme: “Jesus’ Resurrection from the Dead” (Chapter 9), which stands for Christianity as the bulwark of faith (1 Cor. 15:12-14). However, this research is not done in isolation from the text above, but in the wake of the discourse by other leading contemporary theologians. It tries to clarify what the notion of resurrection means to Christians and how the resurrection of Jesus can be understood from two traditions that testify to the utter reality of the mystery of our faith, as well as the historical significance of this event in the contemporary world.

¹ David Fergusson, “Interpreting the Resurrection”, *Scotland Journal of Theology*, Vol. 38 (1985): 287.

² For a good exegesis of Bultmann’s position on the resurrection, see Schubert Ogden, *Christ Without Myth* (London: Collins, 1970), 83-88.

³ Joseph Smith, “Resurrection Faith Today,” *Theological Studies* 30 (1969): 393-419. Here, you can have access to studies of earlier literatures on the Resurrection message as far from yielding a uniform consensus.

⁴ John Galvin, “The Resurrection of Jesus in Contemporary Catholic Systematics,” *Heythrop Journal* 20 (1979): 123.

2.0 The Resurrection of Jesus Defined

Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians gives a perfect exordium with which to define or describe the Christian teaching on resurrection, when he writes that the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead is “a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1: 23-24). In another place, he remarks, “If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ” (1 Cor 15:14-15). The Christian faith stands or falls with the truth of the testimony that Christ is risen from the dead; it is its very foundation.⁵

What is expressed here is simply that the truth that Jesus Christ rose on the third day after his agony, crucifixion and death on the cross, in time, gives Christianity and all it stands to represent a new face, an appealing significance, and indeed, such that, as Ratzinger beautifully puts it, “only if Jesus is risen has anything really new occurred that changes the world and the situation of mankind. Then he becomes the criterion on which we can rely. For then God has truly revealed himself.” With the Resurrection, Jesus becomes the ultimate criterion, the crucial point of all measures. With it alone, the fullness of the figure of Jesus is manifestly complete. Karl Barth maintains that the Resurrection, distinct from the incarnation and crucifixion, is everywhere in the New Testament described as a sovereign act of God’s free grace.⁶ Given the centrality of this message, that “Jesus is Risen,” great efforts have been made over the centuries to spell out the presuppositions and implications, historical, metaphysical and theological, of this very event. In this paper, we join the queue of this gainful efforts, for we cannot be deceived into believing that the savour of the message has been completely exhausted.

⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week from the entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection* (San Francisco: Ignatian Press, 2011), 172.

⁶ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, Vol. IV, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1957), 303.

In order that we might understand what actually happened, it is quite instructive to take a historical look into the Sacred Scripture. There, we are sure to find the Word (John 1:1-2) and Wisdom (1 Cor. 1:24) of the Father, revealed to us in the person of Jesus Christ; there, we hear from the witnesses who encountered the risen Lord himself (Acts 3:15). Although Hans Kung argues that the resurrection event cannot be described as a historical event in the strict sense:

For the raising of Jesus is not a miracle violating the laws of nature, verifiable within the present world, nor a supernatural intervention which can be located in space and time. There was nothing to photograph or to record. What can be historically verified are the death of Jesus and after this the Easter faith and the Easter message of the disciples. But neither the raising itself nor the person raised can be apprehended, by historical methods.⁷

Yet, one fact remains that a historical survey of the New Testament testimony leaves us with no doubt that what happened in the “Resurrection of the Son of Man” was utterly different, unimaginable and unprecedented. Hans Urs Von Balthasar calls it an event without analogy and an absolute unique state, such that anthropological considerations become of limited value in discussing its nature.⁸ Ratzinger captures it even aptly as “a life that opens up a new dimension of human existence.” Kung’s language expresses his sentiments as “a radical transformation into a wholly different state, into another, new, unparalleled, definitive, immortal life: *totaliter aliter*, utterly different.”⁹ Although, the Resurrection actually took place in the world, it has no antecedent cause, with no logical connection to the pragmatic context of human decisions.¹⁰ It is on this basis that we can understand the unique character of this New Testament testimony of the Easter faith.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ cannot be understood merely in terms of a return to a normal human life in this world much like

⁷ Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian* (London: Collins, 1977), 349.

⁸ Hans Urs Von Balthasar, “Mysterium Paschale,” *Mysterium Salutis* 3/2 (Einsiedeln, 1969), 257-69, 308, 265.

⁹ Kung, *Being a Christian*, 350.

Lazarus and the others whom Jesus raised from the dead. For if in Jesus' Resurrection we were dealing simply with the miracle of a resuscitated corpse, it would ultimately be of no concern to us.¹¹ In fact, such miracle would only demonstrate, at best, that Jesus' Resurrection was equivalent to the raising of the son of the widow of Nain (Lk. 7:11-17), the daughter of Jairus (Mk. 5:22-24, 35-43), and Lazarus (Jn. 11:1-44). But that 'Jesus is risen' is drastically beyond a miracle, at least, is evident since the New Testament texts never suggest that the resurrection appearances "were in any way spectacular miracles which could have been watched with amazement by the general public."¹² "He has entered upon a different life, a new life – he has entered the vast breadth of God himself, and it is from there that he reveals himself to his followers."¹³ The disciples came to believe because the crucified Jesus manifested himself to them as Lord; "as they experienced after his death the living person himself."¹⁴

3.0 The Two Types of Resurrection Testimony

As highlighted above, the Scripture proves to be a powerful testimony to the Resurrection message and thus instructive. In the New Testament accounts, we find that there are two types of testimonies or traditions: "the Confessional Tradition" and "the Narrative Tradition."¹⁵ Below, we shall now consider each of these traditions.

3.1 The Confessional Tradition

The confession tradition reveals pertinent instances where the essentials of this mystery is crystallized in short phrases and anecdotes within which a genuine Christian identity is established.

¹⁰ Barth, *Church Dogmatic*, 300. For this reason, Barth frequently compares Jesus' resurrection to God's creation of the world. Barth sees in Jesus' resurrection an 'exact correspondence with what He did as Creator when He separated light from darkness and elected the creature to being (349).

¹¹ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 173.

¹² Kung, *On Being a Christian*, 375.

¹³ Kung, *On Being a Christian*, 174.

¹⁴ Kung, *On Being a Christian*, 373.

¹⁵ Kung, *On Being a Christian*, 176.

With this Easter confession, Christians recognize one another. Ratzinger unveils that the context of these confessions evidently spread across the New Testament pages. When the two disciples in the Emmaus story returned to Jerusalem to meet with the eleven apostles, they were greeted with these words: “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon” (cf. Lk. 24:34). In this narrative, we can identify a formula of confession in which the essential is proclaimed: the event and the witness who testifies to it.¹⁶

Again, in another passage, St. Paul writes: “If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom 10:9). Here, Ratzinger says we can point out two elements to the confession: first, “... that Jesus is Lord...” (that is, He is divine); and secondly, “... that God raised him from the dead...” (the fundamental historical event itself). The ultimate culmination of this confession has unflinching significance for Christians: “you will be saved” (v. 9). Accordingly, therefore, the confession of this truth is one that necessarily leads to the truth that is salvation of a new life in the Risen One.¹⁷

By far the most important of the Easter confessions is found in the fifteenth chapter of the first letter to the Corinthians where St. Paul makes strong the claim that the faith which he delivered to them is not of his own initiative, but a product of the common tradition of the Church from her beginnings, a transmitted deposit of faith:

That Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive ... Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me (1 Cor. 15:3-8).

The crux of this Pauline profession of faith is, “that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the

¹⁶ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 177.

¹⁷ Cf. Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 177.

Scriptures...” (1 Cor. 15:4). However, going by the view of many biblical exegetes, and the testimony of the Gospel evangelists (Lk. 24:34; 24:36-49; Mk. 16:14; Jn. 20:19-20; 20: 26-31), one is poised to add the fifth verse: “and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve” (v. 5). Meanwhile, notice that there are other details that St. Paul adds to this confession testimony. While it is believed that the original confession ends with the fifth verse, the appearance to Cephas and the Twelve, the further addendum of having appeared to more than five hundred brethren, to James, and to all the apostles, and lastly to himself (Paul), is more or less controversial. Yet, we shall be content with the relieving remark of Walter Kasper that, “despite the irreconcilable discrepancies, however, all the traditions agree on one thing: Jesus appeared after his death to certain disciples.”¹⁸ In what follows, we shall thematically examine the confession tradition itself: “Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scripture.”

3.1.1 *Jesus’ Death*

Ratzinger notes that the fact of Christ’s death is predicated on two additional expressions: “for our sins” and “in accordance with the Scriptures.” It is crucial that the identification of the figure of Christ is inextricably tied to his death, or better still, to the paschal mystery. In that mystery, the fullness of revelation is evident and the fullness of God’s love and power is manifest. Christ’s death was an event that only demonstrates folly to the mind outside of faith, yet instructive and purposeful to the believer. For the Lord himself taught the disciples on the way to Emmaus that everything that happened to Him is in fulfilment of the Scriptures (Luke 24:13-35). In fact, Jesus made it clear by asking that “was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things, and so, enter his glory?” (Luke 24: 26). This means that with reference to Jesus’ death on the cross, there was no coincidence. It was not a product of happenstance. “It belongs in the context of God’s ongoing relationship with his people, from which it receives its inner logic and its meaning. It is

¹⁸ Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ* (London: Burns & Oates, 1976), 129.

an event in which the words of Scripture are fulfilled; it bears within itself Logos, or logic; it proceeds from the word and returns to the word; it surrounds the word and fulfills it.”¹⁹ And so, it is within the context of the *Logos*, the word of God, that one grasps the fundamental relationship between Christ’s death and us, God’s people; it is a dying “for our sins.” This forms the rationale and the warrant for death.

Therefore, here we can safely state that Jesus’ death was not occasioned or presumed by men; it was entirely a divine plan out of the humility of God.²⁰ By far, “it is not the inevitable consequence of a false hubris, but the fulfillment of a love in which God himself comes down to us, so as to draw us back up to himself.”²¹ It is the mystery of Jesus’ death that opens the way to the Resurrection message.

3.1.2 The Question of the Empty Tomb

Quite recently, some contemporary Catholic theologians have more profoundly explored and illuminatingly articulated in their works thoughts around the gospel stories on the empty tomb and of the appearance of Christ to his disciples. As for the empty tomb narrative, it appears in the Resurrection accounts of the four gospels, with the Markan version considerably held to be prior to others (Mark 16:1-8).²²

From the foregoing, it is settled that Jesus participated in the human destiny of death, so that we can say that he had a complete

¹⁹ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 180.

²⁰ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 180.

²¹ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 180.

²² The Catechism theologians share this opinion of the Markan priority among the four gospels we have. Again, they hold that the eight verses Markan empty tomb narrative constitute “the oldest account of Easter in the gospels.” For more reading on this, see Fergus Ker, *The Empty Tomb Story*, 455. Also see Feiner and Vischer, *The Common Catechism* (London: Search Press, 1975). For a systematic presentation of Christian beliefs from the perspective of the Catechism theologians. On Markan priority, see John S. Kloppenborg, *Q, the Earliest Gospel: An Introduction to the Original Stories and Sayings of Jesus*. (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 5-12.

human voyage of crib to grave, from the joys of birth to the seemingly hopeless end in the tomb. Now, if the Resurrection message was true (which we suppose is the case), is it possible that he remained in the tomb? Would not the tomb have been empty after he had risen? Several debates have in theology have been centred on this issue over time. Most commentators come to the conclusion that an empty tomb would not be enough to prove the Resurrection, albeit John's account makes it clear that Mary Magdalene found it empty and assumed that someone must have taken Jesus' body away (Jn. 20:11-15), so that the fate of the corpse is of no consequence.

On the contrary, then, one is perplexed how the Easter faith is compatible with the body remaining in the tomb afterward. This creates a vague scenario for Christians. But Kung argues, on the flip side that the Resurrection of Christ could still be bodily, even if the tomb were not empty. He says "the empty tomb is not a condition, but at best an illustration, of the Easter event. It is not an article of faith; it is neither the ground nor the object of the Easter faith."²³ Ratzinger, given these fronts, concluded that since "Thomas Söding, Ulrich Wilckens, and others rightly point out that in Jerusalem at the time, the proclamation of the Resurrection would have been completely impossible if anyone had been able to point to a body lying in the tomb," it would be safe to argue "that the empty tomb as such, while it cannot prove the Resurrection, is nevertheless a necessary condition for Resurrection faith, which was specifically concerned with the body and, consequently, with the whole of the person."²⁴

But ultimately, a decomposition of the body would mean that he never conquered death. For this reason, Ratzinger argues that "resurrection essentially implies that Jesus' body was not subject to corruption. In this sense, the empty tomb is a strongly scriptural element of the Resurrection proclamation."²⁵ Thus, theological

²³ Kung, *On Being a Christian*, 366. He employs both scriptural and metaphysical argument to clear this point.

²⁴ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 181.

²⁵ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 183.

speculations arguing that Jesus' decomposition and Resurrection could be mutually compatible belong to modern thinking and stand in clear contradiction of the biblical vision. This opens us into the realm of the Catechism theologians who approach the matter from another perspective. Their perspective leans toward treating the verses of the empty tomb account as a setting of the Church's already established Easter faith in the context of an angelic message.

Consequently, the central theme of these verses stress more on the origin of the easter faith in divine revelation than with the historical fact of the tomb being empty. Kasper, one of the Catechism theologians writes: "The clear intention of the passage is to use the messenger angel as a means of giving the women – and through them the reader – the news of the raising of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth, and to present it as 'divine news', and not a human invention."²⁶ In this way, what the angel says is far more important than what the women find. In other words, "Mark's empty tomb story is a dramatic presentation of the Easter message with all the stress on what God has done rather on what the women found."²⁷ However, this does not take away the tradition that the tomb was empty, at least "on the whole it seems probable."²⁸

Clearly, that the emptiness of the tomb as a historical fact is not the point of the story of the women's visit to the tomb, and that it is thus not to be taken primarily as a historical record, is shown as plausible. But for Ratzinger, Peter's Pentecost sermon strikes him as important, where Peter quotes Psalm 16:8-10 as follows: "... my flesh will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life" (Acts 2:26-28). Although Peter grants that the psalm was originally prayed by David, he nevertheless, held that Jesus is revealed here as the true David, precisely because in him this promise is fulfilled: "You will not let your Holy One see corruption."²⁹ Consequently, if St. Paul stated that Jesus rose according to the

²⁶ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 170.

²⁷ Kerr, *The Empty Tomb Story*, 456.

²⁸ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 171.

²⁹ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 182.

Scriptures, then surely Psalm 16 must have been seen as key scriptural evidence for the early Church. Here, they found a clear statement that Christ, the definitive David, will not see corruption – that he must truly have risen.³⁰

3.1.3 The Witnesses

From “He appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve...” St. Paul enumerates a number of witnesses to the truth of gospel to which he is proclaiming, that “he rose from the dead.” By far, the names that St. Paul lists can be said to have some theological weight; they reveal the foundation of the Church’s faith.³¹ Because Peter had a unique and particular mission, first at Caesarea Philippi, and then at the Last Supper (Luke 22:32), and since the Christian faith stands or falls to the truth of testimony to the Risen Christ, Peter’s special witnessing would play a vital role vis-à-vis the faith of the whole Church (John 21:15-17). So, the Resurrection account flows naturally into ecclesiology.³² Clearly thus, it would be strikingly appropriate that Jesus appeared first to him, before appearing to the Twelve, that he may strengthen his brethren (Luke 22:32).

3.2 The Narrative Tradition

Now, we move on to the narrative tradition. Whereas the confessional tradition authoritatively articulates the shared faith of Christianity in fixed formulae and insists on their binding character, down to the letter, for the whole believing community, the narrative accounts of the Resurrection appearances reflect different consideration.³³ They may not be taken as binding in every detail, but are clearly regarded as valid testimony, giving content and shape to the faith. Ratzinger points the major difference between the two traditions: “The narrative tradition tells of encounters with the risen Lord and the words spoken by him on those occasions; the confessional tradition merely establishes the key facts that serve to

³⁰ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 182-83.

³¹ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 185.

³² Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 185.

³³ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 185.

confirm the faith: this is another way of describing the essential difference between the two types of tradition.”³⁴ Again, in the confessional tradition only men are named as witnesses, whereas in the narrative tradition women play a key role, indeed they take precedence over the men.³⁵ The reason for this is not far from obvious: the fact that in the Jewish tradition only men could be admitted as witnesses in court – the testimony of women was considered unreliable.³⁶

The narrative tradition are the various anecdotes that tend to explain what it was that happened geographically in Jerusalem and Galilee, the appearance stories of the Risen Jesus that the Christian confess, as enshrined in the gospels. The narrative tradition proclaims the experiences of the witnesses and the words spoken by the Risen Lord at such encounter. That narrative that captures the ‘Easter Faith.’ However, since it is a mystery between Jesus and the Father, a phenomenon totally outside human experience, it defies description for us. Barth explains it as “to raise the dead, to give life to the dead, is like the creative summoning into being of non-being, a matter wholly and exclusively for God alone, quite outside the sphere of any possible co-operating factors.”³⁷

³⁴ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 186-87.

³⁵ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 187.

³⁶ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 187. Here, one can deduce Ratzinger’s thought on the on-going campaign on rights for women in the Church, especially as concern Sacred Orders. For him, though the Church’s juridical structure follows the foundation on Peter and the Eleven, nevertheless, the quotidian life of the Church belong to the women who are constantly opening the door to the Lord and accompanying him to the Cross, and so it is they who come to experience the Risen One. (p.187). Thus, women should feel content that the whole breadth of the Resurrection experience is entrusted to them.

³⁷ Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 301. These are some of the reasons why Kung thinks that the Resurrection cannot be, strictly speaking, an historical event. Hans Kung says, “For the raising of Jesus is not a miracle violating the laws of nature, verifiable within the present world, nor a supernatural intervention which can be located in space and time... neither the raising itself nor the person raised can be apprehended, by historical methods.” See Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian*, 349.

3.2.1 *The Appearances of Jesus in the Gospels*

Further, it goes without saying that the appearance narratives we read in the Gospels are manifestly different. While the narratives tell of the physical dimension of the Risen One, such as walking alongside the Emmaus disciples; the invitation of Thomas to touch his scars, and more importantly, having to eat a piece of fish³⁸ (Luke 24:42-43), yet, they do not diminish the utter mysterious novelty that accompanied his new existence. One striking fact to this is that it took the disciples quite some time to recognize him at first: “Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus” (Jn. 21:4). Not until that disciple whom Jesus loved would say to Peter, ‘It is the Lord!’ (21:7); it was a deep inward recognition.

In fact, one marked significance of the Risen Jesus was that though he appeared in full physicality, he was nonetheless bound by no physical laws of time and space, he had no immediate recognizability (Luke 24:31,36; John 19:20), he lives anew in fellowship with God, permanently beyond the reach of death. In this remarkable dialectic of identity and otherness, of real physicality and freedom from the constraints of the body, we see the special mysterious nature of the risen Lord’s new existence.³⁹ Ratzinger, examining some earlier theophanies of the Old Testament – God’s appearance to Abraham at the Oak of Mamre (Gen 18:1-33); Joshua and a man with a drawn sword (Josh. 5:13-15); the story of the angel of the Lord appearing in human form (Judges 5:11:24) – concludes that though these theophanies may be admittedly analogous, the theophany of the risen Christ is radically novel; it reveals him as truly man and truly God, not coming from the realm of the dead, but from the realm of pure life, he comes as the one who is truly alive, who is himself the source of life. Luke notes that

³⁸ Although some biblical exegetes accuse Luke of an exaggeration here in his apologetic zeal, so that he contradicts his own narrative by drawing Jesus back to the very empirical physicality that he had transcended by virtue of the Resurrection.

³⁹ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 189.

he is not a ghost or a spirit to be feared for he ate before their eyes (Luke 24:41-43), and he has “flesh and bones” (Luke 24:36-43).

It was instructive for Ratzinger that he considered the three passages where Jesus is presented with eating a meal. With this, he finds out that Jesus establishes a new ‘table fellowship’ through which he incorporates his disciples into a share of his new real life. The immediate passage that comes to mind is the Emmaus story where Jesus sat down to table with the disciples, taking the bread, giving thanks and praise, breaking the bread and giving it to the two of them. At this point, something happened: “they recognized him and he vanished out of their sight” (Luke 24:31). Again, in John 21:1-14, Jesus, though not recognized by the disciples, standing on the sea shore invites them saying: “Come and have breakfast.” And now “they knew” that it was Jesus” (v. 12). In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke gives us three elements that characterized the time Jesus spent with his disciples generally: “For forty days he had continued to appear to them and tell them about the kingdom of God. When he had been at table with them, he had told them not to leave Jerusalem” (1:3-4). Thus, He appeared to them, he spoke to them, he sat at table with them. In other words, appearing, speaking, and sharing meals. These three self-manifestations of the risen Lord belong together; they were his ways of proving that he was alive.

Ratzinger gives a special emphasis on the third element going by the word Luke used to describe it: *synalizômenos*. Literally, it means “eating salt with them.”⁴⁰ Here, we can draw an implication in that salt is regarded as a guarantee of durability. It is a remedy against putrefaction, against the corruption that pertains to the nature of death. To eat is always to hold death at bay; it is a way of preserving life.⁴¹ We can also see an inner association of this new table fellowship with the Last Supper where Jesus established a New Covenant: he gives himself to his followers as food and thus makes them sharers in his life, in life itself.⁴² So, Luke’s event of the appearances of Jesus and in those three elements that characterize

⁴⁰ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 192.

⁴¹ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 192.

⁴² Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 192.

his company with the disciples shows that “the Lord is drawing the disciples into a new covenant-fellowship with him and with the living God; he is giving them a share in real life, making them truly alive and salting their lives through participation in his Passion, in the purifying power of his suffering.”⁴³

4.0 The Nature of Jesus’ Resurrection and Its Historical Significance

The Resurrection message of Jesus is, by far, what gives content to Christian preaching and teaching as well as its faith: “If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is void of content and your faith is empty too” (I Cor. 15:14). And so, what is the true nature of Christ’s Resurrection? Some theologians such as Karl Rahner interpret the resurrection as in fundamental continuity with the life and death of Jesus. In a theology that echoes John’s gospel, Rahner views the death and resurrection of Jesus as two aspects of a single event in which Jesus hands over his life’s history of freedom to God and God accepts and seals forever the totality of that offering of love.⁴⁴

Liberation theologians, like Elizabeth Johnson, Edward Schillebeeckx, John Sobrino have a different position.⁴⁵ For them, the resurrection can only be understood from the point of view of the cross, for the resurrected one is one and the same who was crucified; though Ratzinger stresses that the resurrection event can no longer be described in same terms as the crucifixion of death of Jesus, because it has attained a radical ontological leap that elevates it beyond history.⁴⁶ However, for the liberation theologians, the death of Jesus of Nazareth was clearly an execution by the complicity of both political and religious leaders of his tradition because of the lifestyle Christ had adopted, lived and taught, as well as the fidelity to his preaching mission; but, in all these, God remained silent. For

⁴³ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 193.

⁴⁴ Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith* (New York: Seabury, 1978) 266.

⁴⁵ Mary Catherine Hilkert, “Preachers of Grace: Witnesses to the Resurrection,” *Worship* 77, no. 4 (July, 2003): 294.

⁴⁶ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 195.

that reason, the liberation theologians underline the scandal of the cross.⁴⁷ In the final analysis, the point is that the resurrection confirms definitively: death and evil do not have final victory; the power of God does.

Nonetheless, it is important to make it clear that “what Christians celebrate is not the cross, nor the sufferings of Jesus, but the power of a love that is faithful even unto death. The triumph of the cross is the triumph of God’s mercy bursting the bonds of sin and death – the triumph of resurrection.”⁴⁸ The point here is simply that in and through Jesus’ love and fidelity God has taken on the evil and suffering of this world and broken their hold once and for all with the stronger power of love, so that placing the resurrection in the context of the life, ministry, and death of Jesus, the social and political significance of that love is highlighted concretely.⁴⁹

Ratzinger’s thought is not far from this as well. For him, it is not enough to take the Resurrection as some deceased individual coming back to life. Rather, it is an “ontological leap,” opening up a dimension that affects us all, creating for all of us a new space of life, a new space of being in union with God.⁵⁰ The Resurrection has its origin within history and up to a certain point still belongs there: it points beyond history but has left a footprint within history. Therefore, it can be attested by witnesses as an event of an entirely new kind, but not the same kind of historical event as the birth or crucifixion of Jesus.⁵¹

5.0 Conclusion

It has been an interesting discourse to engage here on the resurrection of Jesus from the perspective of Joseph Ratzinger (the Late Pope Benedict XVI). The paper began by clarifying the notion of the resurrection, thereby presenting what it means. Then, it considered the two testimonial traditions that the resurrection message presents

⁴⁷ Hilkert, “Preachers of Grace,” 295.

⁴⁸ Hilkert, “Preachers of Grace,” 295.

⁴⁹ Hilkert, “Preachers of Grace,” 296.

⁵⁰ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 194.

⁵¹ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 195.

to us from the Scripture: The Confessional Tradition, and the Narrative Tradition. Only after that did it look at the historical significance of the nature of the Easter faith, both for our contemporary world and generations to come.

As a matter of fact, the claim that God raised Jesus from the dead has implications not only for how we interpret the life, ministry, and death of Jesus, but for our understanding of who God is and how God acts as well. The Christian hope remains that God can and will bring life out of death, that like Jesus, not only human persons, but all of creation will be taken into God and transformed. But is that hope credible in a postmodern scientific and suffering world, some have continued to ask? In moments of doubt, Ratzinger gives us a cue to help us recover our faith: "If we attend to the witnesses with listening hearts and open ourselves to the signs by which the Lord again and again authenticates both them and himself, then we know that he is truly risen. He is alive."⁵²

⁵² Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 196.

Ethnic Politics in Nigeria: An Ethical Perspective

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Abstract

Nigeria is inevitably a volatile mix of cultures and ethnic groups. This has arguably given rise to the phenomenon of ethnic politics which is a challenge that requires serious attention, debate and interrogation with the ethics of our society as a people of diverse ethnic groups. This paper highlights how ethnicity shapes and influences politics in Nigeria. The observed chronic ethnic fractionalisation within the country is believed to be associated with high levels of deadly political violence, as well as other challenges, which in turn severely strain the democratic ethos of the society. To a large extent, ethnicity in Nigeria came about because of the extended period of colonialism, a time when the dominance of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria - within the socio-political space - became visible over the other ethnic groups. During this time, the colonialist used the three major ethnic groups as a platform for the distribution of socio-political and economic goods. The conflicts and issues that often result in an atmosphere of ethnic politics have necessitated this work, which attempts an ethical analysis of ethnic politics within the country and the role ethics ought to play in our politics today.

Keywords: Nigeria, Democracy, Politics, Violence, Ethnicity.

1.0 Introduction: Short History of Nigeria

Nigeria's history is filled with twists and turns that have taken it from tribal kingdoms to a British colony, then a military dictatorship, and now a developing democracy.¹ Like most states, modern Nigeria

¹ Douglas Phillips, *Nigeria* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004), 11.

emerged gradually over a long period. Before colonial rule, which set the machinery for the creation of Nigeria into motion, some various tribes and groups independently inhabited the geographical area called Nigeria today.²

The attempt by the British colonial masters to make Nigeria one country is believed to have gained momentum in 1906 when the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria were amalgamated into the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria.³ It is believed that Frederick Lugard started putting Nigeria under British control. He executed the task of uniting the Northern and Southern Protectorates into one political entity in 1914.⁴ The creation of this political entity was without the consent and consensus of the different tribes/ethnic groups which were over three hundred even at the time. This view was reaffirmed by Onwe, when he writes that on the formation of Nigeria on January 1, 1914, all the ethnic nationalities were conquered, subdued, and placed as subjects of the British Monarch.⁵

Because of his basic unifying work in the country, Lugard is considered a key figure in creating the entity we now refer to as Nigeria. But even though Nigeria was unified in the early twentieth century, little meaningful contact occurred between the regions. Differences in environment, history, and culture between the north and south were enormous. These differences continue to plague the country even today. Some scholars trace the origins of ethnic politics and conflict to faulty foundations on which the colonial masters founded the country.

1.1 What is Ethnicity?

Traditionally, ethnicity is primarily defined in terms of shared

² Helen Metz, ed., *Nigeria: A Country Study* (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, 1992), 3-28.

³ James Ojiako, *Nigeria: Yesterday, Today, And...?* (Onitsha: Africana Educational Publishers, 1981), 8.

⁴ Douglas Phillips, *Nigeria* (New York: Chelsea House Publisher, 2004), 43.

⁵ John Onwe, "Historicism of Ohanaeze Ndigbo political endorsements," <https://guardian.ng/politics/historicism-of-ohanaeze-ndigbo-political-endorsements/> (Accessed 17 February 2019).

genetic, racial, and sometimes linguistic traits, usually visibly apparent and hence detectable by outsiders.⁶ An ethnic group has been conceived broadly as a people “who identify themselves or are identified by others in cultural terms, such as language, religion, tribe, nationality, and possibly race.”⁷ According to Joseph Rudolph,

Ethnic groups are typically described as having three distinguishing characteristics: they are ‘largely biologically self-perpetuating’; ‘they share clusters of beliefs and values’; and they ‘have internal differentiations which could affect the community’s political capacity to deal with outside pressures.’ The first two elements are normally visibly apparent to anyone researching and writing in the area of ethno-politics; often the third only becomes apparent in the context of a case study.⁸

Cohen on his part defines an ethnic group as an informal interest group whose members are distinct from the members of other ethnic groups within the larger society because they share kinship, religious and linguistics ties.⁹ Likewise, Thomson defines an ethnic group as a community of people who believe that they possess a common identity based on issues of origin, kinship ties, historical experiences, traditions and cultures, and perhaps share a common language.¹⁰ This means that ethnic groups are social formations distinguished by their boundaries’ communal character.¹¹ These social formations affect the performance and functioning of the Nigerian leaders as they may be influenced in their actions and decisions due to their ethnic inclinations and parochial mentality. The inter-ethnic struggle for social and economic dominance also inevitably leads to nepotism

⁶ Joseph Rudolph, *Politics and Ethnicity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan Publishers, 2006), 2.

⁷ Rudolph, *Politics and Ethnicity*, 2.

⁸ Rudolph, *Politics and Ethnicity*, 11.

⁹ Abner Cohen, *Customs and Politics in Urban Africa: A Study of Migrants in Yoruba Towns* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 4.

¹⁰ Alex Thomson, *An Introduction to African Politics* (London: Routledge, 2004), 50.

¹¹ Okwudiba Nnoli, *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd., 1978), 5.

and its attendant consequences, mostly hostility in the form of inter-ethnic violence.¹²

Osaghae, in his view, sees ethnicity as a social formation predicated on culturally specific practices and unique symbols.¹³ Here, ethnicity entails a situation in which individuals of a particular ethnic group consider themselves or are viewed by others to have a common affinity which distinguishes them from other groups in the society. Also, as distinct cultural behaviours develop, various groups can be identified through religion, politics, occupation, or language.¹⁴ In political terms, ethnicity refers to the ethnic-identity-based behaviour which seeks, in a competitive setting, to capture political power at the micro level and state, power at the macro level.¹⁵

So viewed, ethnicity has long been a basis of political and social association. It is believed that self-conscious ethnic identity can powerfully impact a political process. It sometimes seems as if ethnic loyalties and rivalries are universal and fundamentally unexplainable expressions of human nature. According to David Brown,

Ethnicity constitutes one of several forms of association through which individuals pursue their interests relating to economic and political advantage. But there is more to ethnicity than this, since it appears to offer intrinsic satisfaction as well as instrumental utility. Individuals seem to need to distinguish between 'us' and 'them' communities, and ethnic consciousness arises when such psychological constructs are attached to observable differences of language, religion, lifestyle or physiognomy.¹⁶

¹² Fineface Ogoloma, "Secularism in Nigeria: An Assessment," *AFRREV IJAH: An International Journal of Arts and Humanities* 1, No. 3 (2012): 63-74.

¹³ Eghosa Osaghae, *Ethnicity and its Management in Africa: The Democratization Link* (Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd., 1994), 10.

¹⁴ Alegbeleye Ilesanmi, "Ethno-Religious Crisis and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward," *Journal of Policy and Development Studies* 9, no.1 (2014): 139-148.

¹⁵ Goddy Osimen, Akinyemi Balogun, & Taiwo Adenegan, "Ethnicity and Identity Crisis: Challenge to National Integration in Nigeria," *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 16, no. 4 (2013): 79-86.

¹⁶ David Brown, *The State and Ethnic Politics in Southeast Asia* (New York: Routledge Publishers, 1994), 11.

Thus, looking at Nigeria within the boundaries drawn by the British colonialist, one finds a staggering variety of ethnic groups. This is evidenced by over two hundred and forty languages in the country. Many of these linguistic groups are tiny and politically insignificant. Just three comprise roughly two-thirds of the population: the Hausa-Fulani, the Yoruba, and the Igbo.¹⁷ In his Independence anniversary broadcast, on October 1, 1964, Nnamdi Azikiwe asked: "Is Nigeria four years after independence and a year after becoming a republic, still a group of tribes or is it a nation?"¹⁸

Ordinarily, the significant differences among the different ethnic groups should not cause worry. Part of the wonder and richness of being human is that we are all different to a greater or lesser extent. However, it does not follow that because we are all different, we should therefore all be treated differently, or worse still, have other laws applied. Some persons have argued that the exploitation of ethnicity through the tool of ethnic politics contributed to the failure of the First Republic and the subsequent civil war. This position is courted because the historic competing nationals of Nigeria's three largest tribal nations were never successfully reconciled and united into an overarching Nigerian identity.¹⁹ For clarity, we must emphasise that ethnicity as a concept, in itself, is politically neutral. The inter-ethnic tensions, impeded group interaction and political disagreements result from the politicisation of ethnicity. In contemporary society, such politicisation of ethnic groupings brings about leadership problems.

The African continent is replete with numerous ethnic nationalities which were more or less independent until the dawn of colonisation. With colonisation, these separate ethnic groups were brought together as political entities. Consequently, the state took control of the people's lives and determined to a great extent the living conditions of the people in Africa. What therefore ensued

¹⁷ Larry Diamond, *Class, Ethnicity, and Democracy in Nigeria* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1988), 21.

¹⁸ Ojiako, *Nigeria: Yesterday, Today, And...*, 190.

¹⁹ Diamond, *Class, Ethnicity*, 14-15.

was the *struggle* to control the state by different ethnic groups. This brought to birth the concept of ethnic politics and politicisation of ethnicity where each group canvases for access to state power because of the extensive intervention of the African state in the sphere of life of the African ethnic societies. However, the dimension of politicisation of ethnicity and its motivation differs among the different ethnic nationalities though its potential is present in every ethnic group.

1.1.1 Historical Background of Ethnicity in Nigeria: Nigeria as a complexity of different Ethnicities

Bearing in mind the numerous ethnic groups within Nigeria's geographical area, Nigeria is often described as one of Africa's most ethnically diverse countries. According to the 1952 and 1953 census, there are more than two hundred distinct ethnic groups in Nigeria, most of whom have particular customs, traditions, and languages. The larger and politically dominant groups include the Yoruba, the Igbo, the Hausa, and the Fulani.²⁰ Other prominent but less numerous groups include the Edo, Ibibio, Tiv, Nupe, Kanuri, to mention but a few. Each ethnic group occupies a distinct and continuous territory. The 1914 amalgamation brought together the heterogeneous races of Nigeria for the first time. During the colonial period, when the various groups inhabiting Nigeria came under one government, trade, and cultural contacts among the different ethnic groups increased substantially. Unfortunately, the other ethnic groups were not adequately integrated into the new administrative system. This gave rise to the race for ethnic identity and superiority as a dominant feature of Nigerian history.²¹

²⁰ See Reuben Udo, "Environments and Peoples of Nigeria," in Obaro Ikime, ed., *Groundwork of Nigerian History* (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Plc, 1980), 14.

²¹ See Helen Metz, ed., *Nigeria: A Country Study* (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, 1992), 34-37. One can read more about the culture of Nigeria, history, people and customs in Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 4; Toyin Falola, ed., *Nigerian History, Politics and Affairs*, 405-423.

After independence in 1960, Nigeria had a federal structure comprising three regions: the North, the East and the West. Not too long after, observable differences among the three regions became evident to the discerning populace. This was further augmented by the formation of three regionally-based and ethnically nurtured political parties. They were the Northern People's Congress (NPC) led by Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto from the North, the National Convention of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe from the East, and the Action Group (AG) led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo from the West.²²

The ethnic rivalry amongst the different ethnic groups negatively impacted Nigeria's first attempt at democracy. The scenario I described above (between 1960 and 1965) alongside other mitigating factors endangered Nigeria's corporate existence and unity as a sovereign state. The quest for power by all means as exhibited by the various ethnic leaders at this time deteriorated any construction of national unity. This led to political violence, maiming and killing of the citizenry and arson. The political unrest inevitably ushered in the first military coup of 1966, which truncated the nascent democracy of the first republic.²³

It has been pointed out that the British system of 'indirect rule' contributed significantly to widening differences between indigenous communities by earmarking some for more outstanding education, administrative responsibility, and commercial roles.²⁴ As a result, ethnicity seems to have emerged as a persistent issue in the political process in Nigeria and a very latent precursor of ethnic conflict within the country. In its own right, ethnicity may not be necessarily wrong. Undoubtedly, it has some attendant challenges and could be a potential catalyst for division. Still, when properly harnessed, the different ethnicities of a nation like Nigeria could produce variety and add beauty to the country's national image.

In Nigeria however, ethnicity has been manipulated by corrupt political leaders as an element available for political exploitation

²² Metz, *Nigeria*, 38-46.

²³ Metz, *Nigeria*, 47-62.

²⁴ Rudolph, *Politics and Ethnicity*, 171.

and indeed it has been mobilized as a political tool to access power in our nation. Usually, the nation's national interest should effectively command its citizens' loyalty, overriding the interests and claims of the different ethnic groups within the country. Still, the reverse is the case in ethnic politics as visible in the Nigerian political sphere. A situation where ethnic identity is more prized than national identity often leads to exclusion and building of boundaries with the result that the national unity of that nation suffers.

Ethnicity ordinarily has little or no political saliency, but when dubious and ill-mannered politicians exploit it negatively, its adverse effects on the political process could be very weighty. The widening of ethno-political identities within Nigeria has been identified as a legacy of colonialism emanating from the impact of colonial rule in the making of Nigeria.²⁵ But the problem of ethnicity has been amplified by politicians who try to exploit ethnic interest or the ethnic tag to achieve their political ambitions which are often borne out of the struggle for scarce resources and non-inclusivity in governance. In the above light, we could say ethnicity is not the bane of the problem but politicians who are using and exploiting ethnicity to the detriment of the unity of the nation. This has given birth to the ethnic politics witnessed in Nigeria today.

Ethnic politics could be described as politics driven exclusively by vested or sectional interest instead of national interest. It does not favour fair politics, which should be equitable, unbiased, and inclusive. Scholars have observed that the inter-ethnic relations in Nigeria have been one of conflict caused mainly by ethnic chauvinism, which manifested in the form of ethnic nationalism. There is no doubt that this has implications for the survival of democracy in Nigeria.²⁶ Some scholars have affirmed that it would not be easy to identify a country that is not affected by issues triggered by ethnicity. Still, some countries' situations are particularly striking

²⁴ Rudolph, *Politics and Ethnicity*, 174.

²⁶ Joseph Jiboku & Peace Jiboku, "Ethnicity and multi-party democracy: The Nigerian experience," *Journal of Social Sciences* 55, nos.1-3 (2018): 12-24.

because of the lessons they provide regarding the impact of ethnicity on the democratic ethos and national development.²⁷

2.0 The Ethics of Politics

Questions about ethics in politics spring up almost everywhere. Demands for a just politics or a stop to unjust politics can be found in virtually every country. The question of ethics in politics and how ethical politics could make a difference is germane more than ever in our nation, Nigeria. Some assert that ethical politics is rare if not almost an impossibility. Yet, fusion of ethics and politics is essential as nearly every successful profession today has its moral codes. Indeed, there ought to be a necessary unity of ethics and politics.

The word “politics” is derived from the Greek “*polis*” meaning city state. Covertly is the idea of governance in the word “*polis*”. Various scholars have given politics different definitions, which largely reflect the social, philosophical, and political background of these scholars. As a result, no universally acceptable explanation can be ascribed to the word politics. For example, Hornby²⁸ sees politics as the science and art of government. It is the science dealing with terms, organization and administration of state or part of one and the regulation of its relation with other states.

Notwithstanding the conflicting notions of politics, there seem to be a common strand that binds these divergent views - the centrality of the state and power to the political process. Thus, politics is concentrated as revolving around the state, its agencies, activities and overall impact on the society; and an analysis of government and its responsibilities.²⁹ According to this view, most people are not involved in politics. Not all institutions engaged in “running the country” are regarded as “non-political”.³⁰

²⁷ Johnson Ajayi & Bernard Owumi, “Ethnic pluralism and internal cohesion in Nigeria,” *International Journal of Development and Sustainability* 2, no. 2, (2013): 926-940.

²⁸ Albert Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²⁹ Angadipuram Appadorai, *The Substance of Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

³⁰ Andrew Heywood, *Politics* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997), 1-13.

As Benoit Girardin puts it, “Politics is an essential human activity in building societies and communities based on rules, laws and a balance of conflicting interests.”³¹ At the same time, ethics ordinarily concerns the standards of right conduct. Ethics in politics, can thus be seen to affect the standards of conduct appropriate to political life, not only for those in government but also for citizens acting in their civic capacity as electors and participants.³² In the words of Bertrand Russell “in every society, there ought to be acts that are enjoined and forbidden, acts that are applauded and reprobated.”³³

No doubt, when a man belongs to a larger community or holds a political office, the scope of his duties and possible sin becomes greater and there arises the need for a code of conduct or professional ethics to which he ought to conform. Ethics in politics ordinarily should ensure that the morality and actions of politicians should be in tandem with the ethical standard and ethos of the society. In Nigeria, however, the relationship between politics and ethics oscillates between close alignment and almost complete mutual exclusiveness. The rule of law is often undermined significantly in the political profession. Because of this, politics is often referred to as a dirty business and ethno politics a dirtier business, hence the need for an effective relationship between ethics and politics where ethics serves as a checker of politics. Ethics points us to the importance of virtue and character in politics. Ethics is needed to regulate the political process.

The ethics of politics demands politicians to prove themselves by lifting their eyes and the eyes of their people from petty, parochial or ethnic interests to the far horizons of national and general interests. They are expected to coalesce around shared values and principles of a common political will and project. Ethics in politics should foster justice and fairness to all concerned parties or ethnic

³¹ Benoit Girardin, “Ethics in Politics,” www.globethics.net. (Accessed, 15/05/2022)

³² John Uhr, “Democracy and the Ethics of Representation,” in Noel Preston ed., *Ethics and Political Practice* (London: Routledge Publishers, 1998), 11.

³³ Bertrand Russell, *Human Society in Ethics and Politics* (London: Routledge Publishers, 1954), 38.

groups as we expect the political leaders to exhibit integrity and responsibility in their political participation.

The political process ordinarily should be instilled with professional ethics transcending ethnic lines of identity and ensuring respect for the rule of law to benefit the entire nation and its citizenry. The ethics of politics demands leaders to think through the full implications of their political decisions and policies and the adverse consequences that may result from their political choices and policies.

Ethics of politics can be conceived as the heart of politics since it is believed to be concerned with the thinking and actions of leaders and people that take care of the needs of a community and its people. Constitutions often invoke ethics, since they lay down principles, values, basic rights and higher norms.³⁴ According to Benoit Girardin, political ethics is not limited to top political rulers – presidents, ministers, or state secretaries. It extends to parliamentarians, the judiciary and civil servants, businesses, civil society organisations, the media, and last but not least, citizens.³⁵ At the same time, justice ought to be at the heart of ethics governed politics. This entails equity, equal access to resources, fair distribution of common and public wealth, assets, services, and same rules for everybody with no impartiality. The unpleasant display of ethnic politics within Nigeria over the years is a sharp pointer to the fact that ethics in politics matters more than ever. Ethics adds a decisive value to politics by securing fair treatment of political stakeholders, stressing equity and fairness. When the prevalent ethics of a given society is allowed to properly govern politics, it can result in the emergence of leaders who are honest, just, and respectful of the truth, with the resultant effect that the country or society will be better managed honestly, justly, and with due respect for truth and democracy.

³⁴ Benoit Girardin, *Ethics in Politics*, www.globethics.net. (Accessed, 15/05/2022).

³⁵ Girardin, *Ethics*.

2.1 Ethnic Politics and its Effect on Regional Integration of the Citizens

From experience, it can be said that politics that is based heavily on tribe and ethnicity is politics that is doomed to tear a country apart. Indeed, any nation that has embraced division on either tribal lines or ethnicity is usually weak and disunited. Today in Nigeria, it is not a far-fetched truth that most political decisions or conglomerations are based on ethnic arithmetic and calculations. This has adversely affected the national unity of the country.

The problem of national unity is arguably one of the serious problems that has cropped up upon attaining independence in Nigeria.³⁶ The reason for this occurrence is not far-fetched. Nigeria consists of many ethnic groups with different languages, customs and traditions. These various ethnic groups were brought together by the accident of colonial conquest and occupation. Before independence, the principal unifying force of the different ethnic groups was the overbearing might of the British. Upon the withdrawal of this force, at independence, the divisive forces of ethnicity and tribalism began to plague the Nigerian politics. Political parties were consequently based on ethnic affinities. Rather than owe allegiance to the nation, Nigerians often owe their loyalty to their ethnic groups or states of origin.³⁷ Ethnic consciousness has thus militated against national unity and this problem, to this day, is yet to be resolved.

As James Ojiako puts it, ethnic politics which emphasizes our differences produces tribalism, nepotism, perfidy, bribery, and corruption. He believes that:

With tribalism on the rise, the personality of our nation becomes decomposed and stinks. With nepotism influencing their judgements, the will of the Nation becomes stifled and immolated.

³⁶ Uche Eme-Uche and Chigozie Okonkwo, "Nigeria and the Challenges of National Unity," https://www.ocerints.org/intcess20_e-publication/papers/358.pdf (Accessed 17/05/2022).

³⁷ Metz, *Nigeria*, 47-83. See also, Uche Eme-Uche and Chigozie Okonkwo, "Nigeria and the Challenges of National Unity," https://www.ocerints.org/intcess20_e-publication/papers/358.pdf (Accessed 17/05/2022).

With perfidy as the vogue among some of our politicians, the morals of our nation vanish to zero as no faith can be placed on the words of a crooked, doubled-faced, double-tongued scourge of the human race. With bribery and corruption permeating their way of life, the prestige of our nation dwindles to the vanishing point, defacing our national image, and bringing shame to Nigerian citizens.³⁸

Indeed, politics or democracy is often fraught with challenges in an environment of intense ethnic preferences. In such plural societies, like in the case of Nigeria (where different cultural groups have incompatible values and cohesive political organisation, and ethnicity is of high salience), pre-independence ethnic cooperation gives way to intense ethnic political conflict.³⁹

When ethnic politics becomes the order of the day, several challenges naturally arise. As the salience of ethnicity increases, multi-ethnic coalitions, and other brokerage institutions disappear, interparty cooperation declines, collective goods such as education become 'ethnicised', and ethnic moderation becomes untenable. Eventually and inevitably, as Larry Diamond notes, this leads to a breakdown of democratic procedures.⁴⁰ This has led to the situation in the country today where, more often than not, voters go to the polling stations and exercise their democratic right for a candidate not based on his or her character or manifesto but on the voter's ethnic identification with the candidate's ethnicity. This is often done in place of the possible or potential benefits the voter believes could accrue from such a decision.

Ethnic politics militates against fair politics' goal, "justice and the common advantage." It does not respect the rule of law. It instead treats laws as menu where everybody picks only what suits her or him and the ethnic group he or she represents.⁴¹ Indeed, in deeply divided societies, especially those split along ethnic lines, the relationships between the demographically dominant groups and

³⁸ Ojiako, *Nigeria: Yesterday, Today, And...*, 190.

³⁹ Diamond, *Class, Ethnicity*, 7.

⁴⁰ Diamond, *Class, Ethnicity*, 7.

⁴¹ Girardin, *Ethics*.

all other groups are often highly problematic.⁴² In such situations, more commitment is given to ethnic interest at the detriment of national interest, resulting in a low-quality, flawed democracy.⁴³

The challenge of ethno-politics does not necessarily arise from the fact of ethnicity but predominantly from ambitious political leaders who mobilize communities around latent or forgotten ethnic identities and grievances, thereby utilizing ethnic identity as a tool of politics to achieve their agenda. From this perspective, ethno-politics could be seen as driven, more often than not, by a selfish or ulterior motive. Ethno-politics, as experienced in Nigeria, has often resulted in the abuse of the country's public goods, which are placed in the care of dubious politicians. It is undoubtedly one of the prominent factors that have given rise to the prevalence of ethnic conflict in Nigeria. It gives way to that state of nature, which Thomas Hobbes describes as nasty, brutish and short. The ethnic factor in politics could be adduced as one of the elements that has led to the unpleasant political upheavals in the country. This situation is aggravated by ethnic link to political parties in different regions of the country.

Politicians have often used ethnicity as an electoral weapon against each other to gain advantage over their political adversaries. The prevalent situation in the country is such that there now exist politicians, divided by ethnicity and region, who fight for control of significant social and economic institutions along ethnic lines and predominantly for the advancement of their selfish interest and that of their ethnic communities. When ethical decisions are made based on the number of people who would benefit from such decisions, such is known as utilitarian ethics. Such an ethics can also be described as consequentialist ethics focuses on the consequences of ethical decisions. The central question then is: does the end justify the means?

According to Kenneth Amaeshi, an ethical view often side-lined in modern day politics objectively looks at the morality of both the

⁴² Adrian Guelke, "Advancing Peace in Deeply Divided Societies," in Adrian Guelke, ed., *Democracy and Ethnic Conflict* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan Press, 2004), 9.

⁴³ Guelke, "Advancing Peace," 15.

process and the outcome. This ethical view called deontological ethics, basically ascribes rightness or wrongness of one's conduct from the character of the behaviour rather than the consequences of the conduct. In other words, the quality of the outcome is not superior to the process, and vice versa.⁴⁴ He went on to postulate that:

The challenge of this ethical view is that it is much more demanding than consequentialism, as it requires one to fulfil two conditions, which are equally important and could not be easily traded-off against each other. This is obviously a tougher demand. It challenges the assumption of the wisdom of the many and empowers minority views. Christian moral theology, especially Catholicism, is to a large extent founded on deontological ethics. For a true Christian, therefore, deontological ethics allows for some natural impossibility where one with God, for example, can be majority.⁴⁵

The ethnic and regional competition that is predominantly associated with ethnic politics has fostered deep, reciprocal distrust and insecurity not only between the three major groups but between these and the numerous minority groups as well. Given the prevalent reign of ethnic politics in Nigeria, it could be said that dubious politicians, with loose sense of morals and ethics, are the worst threat to the country's national unity as they exploit ethnicity negatively to the detriment of the country's national unity.

Conclusion

The events within the country point to the increasing prominence of the ethnic factor in the political sphere within Nigeria as well as a lack of a sense of national identity. It is visible from what has been discussed that a serious problem emerges when our politics is

⁴⁴ Kenneth Amaeshi, "Why Do Nigerians Love Ethnic Politics and Yet Pretend Not To?" *Premium Times* September 13, 2015. Available at: <https://opinion.premiumtimesng.com/2015/09/13/why-do-nigerians-love-ethnic-politics-and-yet-pretend-not-to-by-kenneth-amaeshi/> (Accessed, 23/01/2023)

⁴⁵ Amaeshi, "Ethnic Politics".

over-ethnicized. Indeed, ethnic politics is a challenge that requires serious attention, debate and interrogation with the ethics of our society which is capable of checkmating the menace and unpleasant effects of ethnic politics. Ethnic politics is a significant pointer to the absence or insignificant presence of ethics in Nigerian politics. To curb the menace of ethnic politics, ethics and morality need to be given a prominent place in the political process. As Douglas Phillips has noted, Nigeria's candle of democracy is very fragile and its flame can quickly be extinguished by ominous threats such as corruption, violence, ethnic divisions, and ethno-politics. Politics in Nigeria should be driven by common shared values and ethics which will benefit all parties and individuals concerned. Indeed, a healthy infusion of politics with acceptable societal ethics creates a conducive environment for people to live together peacefully in a pluralistic society like Nigeria.

⁴⁵ Klaus Unterberger, "Zwischen Ganzhingabe und Überforderun: Erfolg und Grenzen des Priesterbildes des 19. Jahrhunderts" in: *Communio: Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift*1 (2022), 17.

⁴⁶ Unterburger, 20.