

# BOLESWA

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## **BOLESWA JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY, RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY (BJTRP)**

*Boleswa Journal of Theology, Religion and Philosophy (BJTRP)* is published twice every year by the departments of Theology and Religious Studies (TRS) of three sister institutions comprising the University of Botswana, University of Swaziland and the National University of Lesotho. Its primary objective is to publish high-quality academic articles covering Biblical Studies, Religious Studies, Theology, and Philosophy. The emphasis is on providing original contribution in the humanities. However, interdisciplinary articles are welcome with the approval of the editorial board. The publication of an article depends on the evaluation of two referees and the editorial board. The editorial board invites contributions on any topic related to Biblical Studies, Religious Studies and Philosophy. Particular preference will be given to issues concerning the African continent and the development of its people.

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# BEYOND RHETORIC IN AIDS DISCOURSE: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SPEECHES ON AFRICA

T.O Adesanmi & T.R. Mphi

## Abstract

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*HIV/AIDS discourse mostly reveals people's perceptions, attitudes and behaviour, as well as required actions towards the disease. As the scourge rages in the world especially on the African continent, concerted efforts at combating the pandemic gather momentum both within and outside Africa. In all these efforts, the use of language is very paramount and of significant effect. Thus, at various fora, public figures and other stakeholders have devoted time to making speeches and giving talks focusing on the need for passionate strategies to combat the menace and make the African continent safe again. This paper focuses on the on-going HIV/AIDS discourse with particular interest in analysing the use of rhetoric in enlisting appropriate actions that will put an end to the nightmare. Therefore, three related speeches, one from Thabo Mbeki (Former President, Republic of South Africa), Dr Luis Sambo (Former WHO Regional Director for Africa), and Matthew T. Harrington (US Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho), were selected for analysis using rhetoric as the analytical tool.*

**Keywords:** Discourse, HIV/AIDS, Rhetoric, Speech

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## 1.1 Introduction

The startling reports of HIV/AIDS in the early 1980s painted the disease as a 'rare cancer' linked to gay men in both New York and California (US) with the claim that the disease could be considered serious yet a limited problem (1996). Since its appearance, the disease has become a significant subject of discussion (Gilbert, 1998; Harbottle, 1998) at various gatherings leading to the production of a parallel epidemic of meanings, definitions and attributions simply described as an 'epidemic of signification' (Treichler, 1999).

There is no doubt that HIV/AIDS has continued to be one of the most devastating pandemics affecting the world and the African continent in particular. Thus, the search for its solutions is becoming increasingly urgent and requires multidimensional approaches (CODESRIA, 2010). Much as the impact of the disease is felt worldwide, the struggle to curtail it seems more pronounced and urgent on the African shore and until HIV/AIDS's simultaneous material and linguistic reality is understood, 'we cannot begin to read the story of this illness accurately or formulate intelligent interventions' (Treichler, 1999: 18). The response to the challenging situation manifests mostly in two ways: action and utterance from all the characters (stakeholders) in the struggle.

The various verbal and non-verbal responses to the situation have culminated in the HIV/AIDS discourse. One vital aspect of the discourse is speech, a kind of address presented at occasions by concerned leaders and government officials on the subject matter with the belief that words, i.e., the use of language through speeches have a significant role to play in eradicating the disease. The power of words and the overall use of language in enlisting helps or mobilising people to deal with a situation like this cannot be over-emphasized (Oyeleye, 2005: 172-3).

Since speeches or addresses constitute an integral part of the overall HIV/AIDS discourse, this paper examines the rhetorical strategies employed in the selected speeches.

## **1.2 HIV/AIDS Discourse**

The significance of the ‘epidemic of signification’ may well be due to the fact that HIV/AIDS has been ‘mediated’ (Davenport-Hines and Phipps, 1994). The disease is the first epidemic of the information age and as such has been widely reported by the media due to its newsworthiness. The media, therefore, has been significantly involved in defining images of HIV/AIDS using sophisticated information technologies. Researchers have noted that the language used in the media in relation to HIV/AIDS is, in many respects, similar to that used in describing cancer. Cancer has been predominantly described using the language of war, a discourse that has commonly been used in the press to give meaning to HIV/AIDS as well (Brown, Chapman and Lupton, 1996).

The word ‘discourse’ is used from a Foucauldian point of view (Foucault, 1972), not as groups of signs but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Discourses, thus, are constructive as they do not simply describe the social world, but are the mode through which the world of ‘reality’ emerges. They contain subjects and construct objects (Parker, 1992) as well as knowledge and truth (Ramazanoglu, 1993). Based on Parker’s view therefore, a discourse presents a coherent system of meanings attached to how ‘truth’ is formulated. In other words, the statements in a discourse cluster around culturally available understandings as to what constitutes a topic.

The HIV/AIDS discourse has since been accorded different descriptions in and outside Africa warranting its various phraseological synonyms or alternatives such as ‘Epidemiological Discourse’, ‘War Discourse’, ‘Discourse of Struggle’, and ‘Discourse of the Outsider’. This has given rise to sub-discourses including: Detective (Medical) Discourse; Save-our-soul Discourse; Discourse of Sexuality (Gendered Discourse); and Racialised Discourse.

The notion of ‘Discourse of the Outsider’ originally has a racial undertone (CODESRIA, 2010). A cursory look at the epidemiological discourse in terms of origin and causes of HIV/AIDS will confirm this observation. The theme of the outsider began early with western notions of the disease being African (tracing it to African monkeys or sexual practices), or as a disease affecting mostly members of the gay community, prostitutes, and intravenous drug users. As a result, the African continent is perceived as the outside source of the epidemic, but also the outsider in the discourse of HIV/AIDS. So, in terms of knowledge production regarding the

disease, Africa has been and continues to be the “outsider” excluded from the production of new knowledge required to address the pandemic effectively.

However, the discourse of the outsider has been redefined to reflect Africa’s specific challenges including its vulnerability and search for solutions. It is redefined primarily to address government and other stakeholders’ insensitivity to the disease as evident in studies that focus on migrants, prostitutes, mine workers, soldiers, foreigners and other perceived outsiders. This explains why African governments and policy makers invest very little in dealing with the pandemic as would be deemed appropriate; the feeling has equally lulled a lot of “citizens” (insiders) into a false sense of security where they no longer perceive themselves as being at risk of contracting the disease. However, later developments with new HIV infections still on the increase daily in many African countries jolted African leaders and their governments into some panicky reactions.

In “War Discourse” involving HIV/AIDS, the disease is personified as an enemy with a human face and obviously a villain constantly on the offensive against humanity while ‘Discourse of Struggle’ shows various parties involved in a constant friction with each other especially the diseased body and the disease, victims and health providers, government and the public etc. in terms of responsibilities and expectations. A discourse of war in this regard presents HIV/AIDS in ways very similar to the manner cancer has been understood (Sontag, 1991) and, like cancer, has become a symbol of death and extinction, instilling a deep level of fear in the people. A war discourse has been pervasive in talk about cancer and HIV/AIDS (Sontag, 1991; Lupton, 1993; Brown et al., 1996).

The HIV/AIDS discourse can be traced to five main closely related sources in the society.

**Books and reports:** These are medical instruments or records of activities or discoveries; and clinical observations or medical researches about HIV/AIDS. Since the appearance of the disease in the 1980s, many reports and counter reports have come out either to contest or confirm one finding or another. At any rate, such medical books and reports on HIV/AIDS deal with what is now known as ‘Detective Discourse’ owing to their investigative activities. A central contribution regarding identification and control of HIV/AIDS is made by medical science resulting in a ‘detective’ discourse in which rational strategies of deduction and detection are adopted to locate the ‘villains’ responsible for the ‘crime’ and then ‘punish’ them (Brown et al., 1996).

**Billboards and flyers:** The use of billboards and flyers has contributed tremendously to the popularity of the HIV/AIDS discourse in Africa. Thus, almost every corner and major roads have billboards with HIV/AIDS subject matter mostly in the form of warning or counselling to the general public. A typical example is the billboard below from Botswana (as displayed online):



**Public institutions:** Institutions like schools, religious places and hospitals are now used as veritable sources of HIV/AIDS literatures. At times, banners or posters are conspicuously displayed at strategic positions in such institutions for educational purposes. Hospitals are particularly awash with such information rendered in colourful door stickers or posters in different languages depending on where they are located.

**Formal gatherings:** The need to respond with a concerted effort has become so pronounced that formal gatherings of stakeholders, ‘outsiders’ and ‘insiders’ alike, are constantly organised to assess the disturbing HIV/AIDS situation in order to proffer solutions to the menace. Thus, seminars, workshops, conferences, and lectures, which are sometimes sponsored by governments and NGOs, spring up in selected locations to shed appropriate light on the needed course of action.

**The media:** It is known that the basic role of the media is to entertain and inform the public perhaps on all matters (Meldrum, 1996:74). Therefore, the mass media plays a vital role in informing public opinion on key issues relating to the general wellbeing of the society (Parker, Kelly and Stein, 2001) including communicating knowledge about epidemics such as HIV/AIDS (Chatterjee, 1999). Whether in print or electronic, the media defines what significant events are taking place and offers powerful interpretations of how to creatively understand these events by producing and reproducing them (Tuchman, 1991:90). The media is so dynamic that all HIV/AIDS discourses are accommodated for dissemination alongside the strategic jingles on radio and television as well as cartoons and notices in the print media for the purposes of fighting the disease.

HIV/AIDS discourse, no matter the source concerns the same set of characters. These are: a) the patients or the diseased body (Sacks, 1996:69) i.e. people living with HIV/AIDS; b) the polluter, transmitter of the disease, the infector; c) a ‘guilty’ party, typically HIV positive men, gay men, casual sex workers or intravenous drug users, who are represented as the ‘villain’ by the media (Brown et al., 1996); d) the governments as leaders or commanders; e) the scientists or experts who act as advisers; f) infants, children, women with unfaithful partners, rape survivors and surgery patients who are generally portrayed as passive and innocent victims; and g) the citizens (common people).

As pointed out by Sherwin (2001), the deployment of a war discourse with regard to HIV/AIDS depicts a moment of being under siege by a dangerous foe (the disease has become personified), a serious threat to people's existence. Therefore, the people require not only a formidable defence but an annihilating counter attack against the enemy, hence the discourse of war creates a sense of urgency in mobilising action against the disease.

### **1.3 Methodology**

Texts of three prominent speeches on HIV/AIDS in Africa constitute the data for this study. The first speech was made by Thabo Mbeki, a former President of the Republic of South Africa tagged: '*13th International Aids Conference Durban, Speech of the President of South Africa at the Opening Session of the Conference*' in 2000; the second is Dr Luis Sambo's, the WHO Regional Director for Africa (2004-2015) titled: '*Speech of Dr. Luis Sambo, WHO Regional Director for Africa at the Conference on "HIV, the Forgotten Epidemic"*' delivered in Rimini, Italy in 2012; and the third speech titled: '*Ambassador Matthew T. Harrington Speech/Remarks at World AIDS Day National Commemoration Event: Thaba Bosiu*' was made by the US Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho in 2014.

In analysing the selected texts, the criteria suggested by Parker (1992) for distinguishing and discussing discourses were generally adopted in the overall discussion of the subject matter. To him, a discourse: i) is realised in text (the texts here are the selected speeches); ii) is about objects (our main object is language response to HIV/AIDS as an epidemic); iii) contains subjects (these are characters e.g. the HIV/AIDS patients, government officials, etc); iv) is a coherent system of meanings (e.g. waging war against the disease); v) refers to other discourses (racialised, gendered, medical discourses); vi) reflects on its own way of speaking; and vii) is historically located within the society.

In addition, rhetoric as a language device in the domain of oratory (Worthington, 2008) was applied in eliciting the interest of the speech presenters and the various sub-themes skilfully planted as the rationale for their discussions. This confirms that rhetoric has an organizational function in a natural text (Mann and Thompson, 1987:1). The use of rhetoric goes beyond using methods outside the given subject by slandering, arousing emotions in the audience, or distracting the attention of the audience from the subject (The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016), to steer the discussion to a logical and an acceptable conclusion without loss of message.

### **1.4 Data Analysis**

#### **1.4.1 Rhetoric in the Speeches**

The concern of rhetoric is simply persuasion, the ability to convince the audience/listeners in a speech situation (Allen, 2007) and it is as old as language itself. Rhetoric is presented as a neutral tool open to be used by all persons of virtuous or depraved character. As such, it can be used for either good or bad purposes causing great benefits as well as great harm depending on who and where (The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016). From various studies on the

relevance of rhetoric, the argument that rhetoric is only useful for those who want to outwit their audience and conceal their real aims, since truth can be communicated using plain language, could be objected to vehemently considering the fact that the power of words or use of language is available to everyone. From Aristotle’s point of view, rhetoric becomes even more useful when facing a mixed or difficult audience. While it is true that rhetoric can be misused, it is easier to appreciate its benefits (Allen, 2007; Worthington, 2008).

Although modern rhetoric theorists have shown interest in all aspects of human communication especially images, gestures, and words (Borchers, 2006: 14-15), in this study, our focus is on words and the three levels of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos since they cover the three aspects of speech making in an event namely, the speaker, the subject and the listeners (audience) (The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2016); McKay and McKay (2017)). In the discussion, *Speech1* refers to that of Thabo Mbeki, *Speech2* to Dr Luis Sambo’s, while *Speech3* is that of Ambassador Matthew T. Harrington.

**Ethos:** A speech is said to be rhetorical if it shows elements of ethos by appealing to the speaker’s or writer’s character or reputation. It equally shows credence, intelligence, virtue, or goodwill on the part of the speaker/writer. The three texts of the speeches studied manifest this as exemplified in Table1 below.

**Table 1**

Text	Ethos Examples
Speech1	<p>Name/Office: Thabo Mbeki, President (RSA)</p> <p>Knowledge: You are in Africa for the first time in the history of the International AIDS Conferences.</p> <p>Credibility: We welcome you warmly to South Africa also for this reason.</p>
Speech2	<p>Name/Office: Dr Luis Sambo, WHO Regional Director for Africa</p> <p>Knowledge: I am aware that previous editions of this meeting have been important forums for the encounter of experiences and peoples of different cultures...</p>

Credibility: I sincerely thank the organizers for asking me to speak at this  
Conference on “HIV, the Forgotten Epidemic”

Speech3 Name/Office: Matthew T. Harrington, US Ambassador to Lesotho

Knowledge: No child should be born HIV positive; we know how to  
prevent that.

Credibility: I am honored to address you all today at Lesotho’s national  
commemoration of World AIDS Day.

A speech maker/writer could possibly be most logical and careful in his argument, but if the audience sees him/ her as not trustworthy or unqualified in one way or the other, his /her reasoning and preparation will amount to wastage. A speaker’s ethos consists of his/her knowledgeable status or intelligence about the topic he/she is speaking about. This is evident in the three speeches. All the speech makers occupy dignified positions and they are quite knowledgeable about the issue of HIV/AIDS in Africa and the world.

**Pathos:** Pathos is the second aspect of rhetoric that deals with a speech appealing to the emotion of the audience. Since a speech is ideally made for an audience, it goes to show that the success of the persuasive efforts depends on the emotional dispositions of the audience. Thus, the orator has a duty to arouse the right emotions, or motivate his audience as would be necessary because emotions have the power to modify our judgments. The rhetoricians of the selected speeches rely heavily on pathos and employ it significantly in their texts. The following examples in Table 2 below are relevant:

**Table 2**

<b>Text</b>	<b>Pathos Examples</b>
Speech1	The peoples of our continent will therefore be closely interested in your work.  You meet in a country to whose citizens’ freedom and democracy are but very new gifts.  You will spend a few days among a people that has a deep understanding of human and international solidarity.

Speech2 It is the collective responsibility of all to finish what has been started, in order to make universal access to prevention, treatment and care a reality.

In 2011, more than six million people were receiving treatment in Sub-Saharan Africa, compared with just 100,000 in 2003.

Speech3 Additional resources are always welcome, but money is not the main obstacle to making better progress in Lesotho.

TREATMENT WORKS! TREATMENT works to prevent new HIV infections...

As seen in Table 2, pathos motivates listeners by making them feel better through the use of expressions ranging from assurance, storytelling, common problem, and figures of speech like repetition. Applying emotional utterances like these enhances a successful delivery of messages to the audience.

**Logos:** Logos as the third persuasive device in rhetoric deals with ‘appeal to reason’. It is hinged on persuading the audience by a set of arguments presented in a given speech. This is often done when the speech maker/writer demonstrates or seems to be demonstrating that something is the case leading to the audience having a deductive or inductive reasoning as mapped out by the speech. In Table 3 below, examples of logos are presented.

### Table 3

Text	Logos Examples
------	----------------

Speech1	Because the possibility to determine our own future together, both black and white, is such a fresh and vibrant reality, perhaps we often overestimate what can be achieved within each passing day.
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Nevertheless, that overestimation must also convey a message to you. That message is that we are a country and a Continent driven by hope, and not despair and resignation to a cruel fate.

Those who have nothing would perish if the forces that govern our universe deprived them of the capacity to hope for a better tomorrow.

Speech2	In Sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 300,000 children were newly infected with HIV in 2011. Therefore, we cannot afford to let HIV/AIDS be a forgotten epidemic.
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By overwhelming the continent's health and social services, by creating millions of orphans and by decimating people in the productive age group, HIV/AIDS continues to cause a negative demographic, social and economic impact.

Speech3 ...due to our strong partnerships and collective efforts across the globe, new HIV infections have dropped by half since the peak of the epidemic, and life expectancy has rebounded.

An AIDS-free generation is within Lesotho's reach, but to get there the country must deliver the right thing, in the right place, at the right time.

The arguments raised by the orators are meant to lead the audience to form their opinions about the various issues raised. In other words, the highlighted statements do not end in themselves. Even though the examples illustrate logos, pathos seems to be the underlying motive owing to the expected perlocutionary effects on the audience. Therefore, logos is deemed to be the superior of all the persuasive appeals seeing that all arguments should be won or lost on the basis of reason alone by allowing the words of the speech to do the persuading.

#### **1.4.2 Themes beyond Rhetoric in the Speeches**

The use of rhetoric in speeches has two major advantages. In the first place, it is employed to convince the audience of the content of the speech. In other words, it serves as an aid to unravel the whole message in a text without any serious difficulty. Secondly, rhetoric actually helps and guides the orator in marshalling the available points in the text.

In this study, there are secondary but germane themes (messages) which appear as appendages to the HIV/AIDS discourse in the three speeches. The themes, which are discussed below, are considered important because of the topical and sensitive issues they invoke.

##### **a. Extreme Poverty/Starvation in Africa**

One of the issues that keep recurring in the speeches is 'extreme poverty and starvation' among the common people in Africa. Thabo Mbeki (Speech1) notes with dismay that the '*world's biggest killer and the greatest cause of ill health and suffering across the globe, including South Africa, is extreme poverty*'. He seems to imply that with poverty among the people, fighting HIV/AIDS becomes complicated. Equally, Dr Luis Sambo (Speech 2) concurs by saying, '*We need to empower the youth and women to address the factors that make them especially vulnerable*'. It could therefore be concluded that if hunger is taken care of, it is very possible that the menace of HIV/AIDS will become easy to curtail.

## b. Diseases in the land

HIV/AIDS appears to be getting all the attention in and outside Africa because of its devastating grip on its patients and particularly its terminal nature. This is responsible for the somewhat similar scary recognition it has as cancer. However, there are several other sicknesses and diseases facing Africa which include malaria, tuberculosis, hepatitis B, among others. Thus, Thabo Mbeki (Speech 1) declares, *'As I listened longer, I heard stories being told about malaria, tuberculosis, hepatitis B, HIV-AIDS... I also heard of cholera, respiratory infections, anaemia, bilharzia, river blindness, guinea worms and other illnesses with complicated Latin names'*. These health challenges other than HIV/AIDS are gradually experiencing a kick-glove treatment, a dangerous trend and a careless oversight indeed. In essence, as much as HIV/AIDS is regarded as being dreadful and a matter of emergency, other sicknesses and diseases should be concertedly stamped out of Africa for the expected peace and total wellness to be achieved.

## c. Need for Proper Management

In fighting HIV/AIDS described by Thabo Mbeki (Speech 1) as 'a grave human problem', an impressive quantity of both local and international resources is required. The management of these resources, especially the material resources, seems lacking thereby making a mockery of the so called war against the health scourge. Dr Luis Sambo (Speech 2) therefore advises that, *'It is imperative that both domestic and international funds are used more efficiently, for greater benefits of affected populations'*. As the continent strives to make Africa HIV/AIDS free, proper management is a must. This position is further reiterated by the US Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho, Matthew Harrington (Speech 3), as follows: *'An AIDS-free generation is within ... reach, but to get there the country must deliver the right thing, in the right place, at the right time.'* The Ambassador argues that *'... money is not the main obstacle to making better progress.* If the struggle against the disease is to yield the desired fruits, proper management of the available resources, human and non-human, must be given a full attention.

## d. The Need for Commitment

Success in any project or business is based on the commitment of the executors. A war situation like fighting HIV/AIDS requires more than 'hoping' as Thabo Mbeki (Speech 1) erroneously emphasized in his speech. It requires deliberate actions and behaviours which are products of commitment (dedication) on the part of all concerned. Ambassador Matthew Harrington (Speech 3) captures this idea extensively as follows:

Successfully turning the corner on HIV/AIDS ... will take visionary and engaged leadership, accountability and courage.

--Courage from pregnant women to make the long trip to get tested and, if positive, to commit to treatment so that their babies can be born disease free;

--courage from family members, co-workers and communities, to fight stigma and ensure that people living with HIV are not treated as second-class citizens;

--and courage from doctors and medical workers to respond vigorously to any obstacles they encounter, so that the programs they run are effective and have maximum impact.

With commitment from every stakeholder, the sense of ownership required in fighting the disease is established, and the battle against the most dreaded disease, in the continent will be easily attained and very soon indeed.

### **1.5 Conclusion**

The speech texts selected for this study constitute one of the crucial steps in the role of the African continent in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Speech making as seen in the study contributes significantly to the on-going HIV/AIDS discourse which has its varieties and sub-types. The reliance of the speeches on rhetoric as a communication device helps tremendously in sensitizing the audience (and stakeholders) by re/defining the deadly disease and soliciting required actions from relevant quarters and stakeholders alike.

### **1.6 Recommendations**

The analysis of the selected speech texts using the rhetorical approach is not only appropriate but rewarding considering the relevance of the texts as an aspect of social discourse. Also, the mixed nature of the audience and the sensitivity of the subject-matter lend credence to the analytical process adopted. In view of the above, we recommend that:

1. Other aspects of the HIV/AIDS discourse including flyers and billboards should be explored by discourse analysts and linguistic researchers for the purpose of establishing their methodology and framework.
2. Newspaper articles on HIV/AIDS should be subjected to rhetorical analysis to establish the relevance of the theory.

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# THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL HEALERS IN HIV PREVENTION IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN SOCIETY: THE CASE OF ESWATINI.

**Hebron L Ndlovu**

## **Abstract**

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*This paper explores the extent of the involvement of African traditional healers in HIV prevention in southern Africa, with special reference to Eswatini (Swaziland). It proceeds from the premise that in southern Africa, as in most emerging economies, traditional healers are the leading, accessible and more approachable health care providers in society when compared with modern health practitioners. The paper notes, however, that there is paucity of literature that examines the degree of the involvement of African Traditional healers in the recently adopted global campaign to scale down and eliminate HIV infection through, inter alia, social and behaviour change. Primary data for the paper was gathered through semi-structured and open-ended interviews and focus group discussions with selected Swazi **tangoma** (diviners/spirit-mediums); while secondary data was drawn from a range of disciplinary perspectives on the subject of the role of religion in the global fight against HIV AIDS. The paper contends that there are strong pointers that in our day and era African traditional healers play a modest but meaningful advisory role in supporting current strategic interventions spearheaded by modern health practitioners and allied partners to contain the spread of HIV by fostering behavioural change among its clients.*

**Key Words:** Traditional healers, traditional health practitioners, **tangoma** (diviners), HIV and AIDS, HIV prevention, modern health practitioners, behavioural change, Swaziland.

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## **Introduction**

A growing body of research has convincingly shown that traditional healing plays a pivotal role in the provision of primary health care in contemporary emerging economies. Traditional healing in this paper refers to “health practices, approaches, knowledge, and beliefs incorporating plant, animal and mineral based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercises, to treat, diagnose and prevent illnesses and, maintain well-being” (World Health Organisation [WHO] 2003: Fact Sheet, 134); while the term modern medicine refers to the maintenance or restoration of human health by biomedical health care providers through scientific study, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease and injury where possible (Makhubu 2009).

For the purposes of this paper, it is essential to give a few examples of studies that attest to the recognition of the crucial role traditional healing plays in developing societies with special attention given to Southern Africa and Swaziland in particular.

At the global level, and writing from the perspective of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Xhang (2004:3) observed that in recent times there has been a sudden increase in the use of traditional/complementary and alternative medicine in developing countries. Similar claims were made by Ernst, Cohen and Stone (2004:156) and Leonti (2011:546) that the popularity of complementary and alternative medicine in both developed and developing countries was considerable. More specifically, Gavriilidis and Ostergren (2012) point out that several countries such as China, India and Ghana have integrated traditional/complementary and alternative medicine into their health-care system. For these observers, the demand for traditional/complementary and alternative medicine indicates, among other things, that modern medicine has failed to meet the health needs of all people, and that traditional healing is the preferred and most accessible health care system (Flint 2015; Ndlovu 2014; Islam and Moreau 2009).

Indeed in Africa the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) observed that African traditional medicine is “the primary, and most often, the only, accessible health-care option for the vast majority of people living in sub-Saharan Africa” (UNAIDS 2006, cf. Eastman 2011). Significantly, the African Union, at the 2001 Assembly of Heads of State and Government, adopted an action plan for health system integration of traditional medicine/complementary and alternative medicine by 2010 (Gavriilidis and Ostergren 2012).

Significantly, Sama and Nguyen (2008:10) observe that in many African countries, deteriorating social and economic conditions, and pandemics like HIV and Aids and malaria put severe strains on the modern health system, rendering radical and pragmatic health sector reforms imperative, one of which should be the formal integration of traditional and modern systems of healing. In particular, Mugisha (2008:201) notes that in Uganda the government committed itself to forging formal co-operation between conventional and non-conventional medicine pre-eminently to ensure and optimise good health for the Ugandan populace. Relatively recently, Suleman and Alemu (2012:36), noted that in Ethiopia, the majority of the population still relied on traditional medicine to meet its basic health care needs; and that the Ethiopian government has shown interest in promoting and developing traditional medicine alongside modern medicine.

In the case of South Africa, Gavriilidis and Ostergren (2012) observe that in 2008 the Government Department of Health drafted a traditional medicine policy that endorsed the integration of African Traditional Medicine into the modern health system. The policy was rationalised on the basis of the World Health Organisation’s official declarations calling for the creation of national policies that promoted traditional medicine/complementary and alternative medicine. The policy was also justified on the grounds that most South Africans use traditional medicine for preventive, curative and palliative purposes (Nxumalo, et al 2011, Gavriilidis and Ostergren 2012).

In Swaziland, the discourse on the need to formulate a policy that formally recognises medicine has spanned a period of about three decades (Makhubu 1978; Green and Makhubu 1983, Dlamini 2002, Mdluli 2002, Amusan 2007; Maseko 2007, Makhubu 2009). The need for such a policy is justified by several reasons, and these include: enhancing the delivery of health

services, protection and regulation of non-conventional medicine, promotion of the traditional healing industry, and conservation of indigenous knowledge systems for socio-economic and ideological reasons (Makhubu 2009:107; Maseko 2007:68; Dlamini 2002:60; Khumalo 1989:16). In particular, Makhubu (2009), Dlamini (2002), and Mdluli (2002) contend that in Swaziland the modern health system needs to be complemented with non-conventional medicine to meet the increased demand for medical services due to the HIV and AIDS pandemic, tuberculosis and other diseases that have spread at an alarming rate in recent times (Ndlovu, 2014).

### **The problem re-stated**

Most of the studies that examine the roles of faith-based communities and organisations in the fight against HIV and AIDS and the promotion of HIV prevention in southern Africa tend to focus their attention primarily on documenting the challenges, successes and failures of Christian Churches (Golomski and Nyawo 2017; Chitando 2015; Togarasei, et al 2008; Haron et al 2008; Amanze, Nkomazana and Kealotswe 2007; Dlamini 2007; Zamberia and Gathu 2006). To some extent, the focus on Churches and related organisations is understandable in view of the fact that in post-colonial Africa the majority of Africans had converted to Christianity; and Africa as a whole had been classified as a Christian continent (Fiedler 1994; Samwini 2013). In addition, it has been rightly observed that Christianity has contributed immensely to the transformation of Africa accompanied by modifications of peoples, social identities, systems of morality and power relations (Ndlovu 2016)

Notwithstanding the above facts, it must be stressed that one of the salient features of African Christianity today is that it is significantly coloured, directly and indirectly, by indigenous African world views, beliefs, values and traditions as documented by many observers (Olupona, 2014; Maluleke, 2010). And there are strong indications that Africanised Christianity is likely to prevail on the African continent because of, among other reasons, the preponderance of international conventions on human rights that affirm the right to freedom of religion, thought and conscience as well as the full recognition of the rights of indigenous communities to practice their religions. Many of these conventions have not only been ratified by many African countries, but have also been incorporated into the constitutions of most (if not all) African states in sub-saharan Africa (Ndlovu 2016).

But more importantly, it must be stressed that Christianity in post-independence Africa has not replaced African indigenous values, beliefs and rituals. Rather it co-exists with them, albeit in a complex manner, as an autonomous religion in its own right (Shoko 2013; Olupona 2014). In the words of Tabona Shoko (2013), one of the consequences of the interaction of African indigenous religion with Christianity “has been Christianized version of tradition or a traditionalized version of Christianity” (2013:573).

One of the enduring traditions of African religion that co-exists in some complex way in modern African society is traditional healing, and its leading practitioners are traditional



healers. Traditional healers may be classified under three categories, namely herbalists, spirit-mediums and BaBholofidi (Christian spiritual mediums). This paper, however, focuses on the category of traditional practitioners called diviners (Izangoma/Tangoma/n'anga). Taken together, traditional healers are consulted by a broad spectrum of people including the youth, elderly, rural and urban folks, educated and semi-illiterate, men and women (Eastman, 2011); and most people consult these traditional health care practitioners simultaneously with modern health practitioners - hence the prevalence of plural health systems in contemporary African society (Flint, 2015).

### **Controversy surrounding traditional healers**

However, the role of traditional healers in the global struggle with HIV and AIDS is fraught with controversy due to two main factors. First, many traditional healers still demonstrate gross ignorance about the aetiology of HIV and AIDS and its mode of transmission. This has given rise to incorrect presumptions about the nature of AIDS, such as claims that HIV positive persons have been bewitched, and that traditional healers can cure such people (Islam and Moreau, 2009). Some traditional healers also suggest to their clients that certain traditional medicines can be used as alternative medications to antiretroviral therapy (Flint, 2015).

The second factor is the colonial legacy and western cultural hegemony. Here the modern health care system is frequently posited as rational and scientific as opposed to traditional healing that is depicted as superstition (Flint, 2015; Ndlovu, 2014). This scenario is worsened by the political economy of medical pluralism in most African societies in which the modern health system enjoys government backing through funding, policies and legal instruments; while the traditional health system, is mostly non-governmental, and is generally ignored and unregulated; and its personnel has no legal status (Makhubu, 2009). This cleavage between modern and traditional forms of therapy has in turn contributed to a climate of mistrust and lack of mutual recognition between modern and traditional practitioners (Flint, 2015).

Recent times, however, have seen a radical change of attitude towards HIV and AIDS on the part of many traditional healers. Thanks to vigorous efforts by many non-governmental organisations and African governments to inform and educate the masses including traditional healers about HIV and AIDS. Some traditional healers support campaigns by modern practitioners to mitigate the impact of the disease. Vermund, et al (2015) attest to the fact that southern African countries have witnessed an increase in referral cases from traditional practitioners to modern hospitals. This is a positive development because more and more traditional healers have come to see modern and traditional healing systems as complementary rather than competitive. Modern medicine is viewed as concerned with removing diseases from the body while traditional healing focuses on the social, spiritual and mental health of the patient (Flint, 2015). This change of heart and mind has been observed in Eswatini as well.

## **Paradigm shift in traditional healer's perception of HIV and AIDS and other 'western' sicknesses in Eswatini.**

Eswatini is the only country in sub-Saharan Africa that is ruled by a monarch who wields real political power. It is a predominantly Christian nation that positively cherishes its dominant indigenous customs and traditions. The country is ruled by dual monarchs, the king and his mother (the senior queen), who are recognized not only as heads of state but as symbols and representatives of Swazi culture, religion, and national identity. Although the dual monarchs commended Christianity to the Swazi, most of whom converted, the king and queen mother have resisted formal conversion. They retained the roles of high priest and priestess of Swazi Religion (Ndlovu, 2014a).

The core values of Swazi Religion include the Creator God named *Mvelinchanti* (meaning The First to Appear), ancestor veneration, traditional healing and medicine, protection of virginity before marriage, chastity, polygamy, permanence of marriage, resourcefulness, altruism, respect for seniority, obedience to civil authorities, the sacred dual monarchy, patriotism, and life after death. Mvelinchanti is the ultimate authority in the world, and he oversees it in conjunction with the ancestors. The ancestors have power and influence over the living, promoting the good of their relatives and regulating their behavior. In their invisible spiritual world the ancestors retain their earthly gender, rank, status, and obligations; thus family ancestors are expected to protect the earthly interests of their kin, while royal ancestors guard the interests of the nation, including security, peace, and progress (Ndlovu, 2014a)

Significantly, traditional healers are held in high esteem because they uphold dominant social and cultural norms of given ethnic groups. In Swaziland, for example the diviners are regarded as custodians of Swazi culture (Ndlovu, 2011).

### **HIV prevention in Eswatini and the role of traditional healers**

Eswatini has the highest HIV prevalence in the region and the world at large (25%). The King declared the pandemic a National Disaster and implored the nation to fight it from all angles (**Yindzaba Yetfu Sonkhe** – It is everybody's concern). Different churches have played significant roles in the campaign to promote male circumcision as one of the effective HIV prevention strategies (Golomski and Nyawo, 2017). Traditional healers, especially diviners (**Tangoma**) also strive to do likewise.

It is important to emphasize that many **tangoma** in Eswatini have been familiarized with HIV and AIDS and very few of them would openly claim to cure the disease. For example, at a recent focus group discussion involving two male **tangoma** and one female **sangoma**, one male **sangoma** Y made the following comment when asked about their role as traditional healers in containing the spread of HIV and AIDS and other critical diseases in society:

*Ungeke umphengule shukela, ikholera, iTB, i HIV.*

*Ematsambo abekelwa kugula lokutilwane.*

(You cannot diagnose diabetes, cholera, Tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS using traditional systems of divination.

Divination through bones was designed for illnesses involving spirits)

(30<sup>th</sup> March 2017)

When asked the extent to which they, as traditional healers, advise their clients about HIV prevention, my informants (Swazi **Tangoma** who are tacitly recognized by Government and society as traditional **healers**) advocate:

(a) abstinence from sex; (b) sex only in marriage settings; faithfulness to one's spouse (or wives in the case of polygamous households; and the (d) use of condoms. Regarding the use of condoms, Diviner X - a female aged between 40 and 45 - had this to say:

*“Sometimes young unmarried girls seek my advices on sexuality matters and marriage; I usually advise them to stay away from intimate sexual relations to preserve their private parts for marriage. But because many unmarried young women are often tempted to engage in sexual congress with their lovers, I advise them to use the condom always. Some of my clients are school –going teenagers who sneak into my household surreptitiously; I strongly advise them to use the condom to avoid contracting HIV and also to ensure that they complete school and pursue whatever professions they desire (Interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2017).*

### **Concluding remark**

This article has attempted to explore the potential and capacity of traditional healers play a crucial advisory role in HIV prevention in African society. The secondary and primary data presented suggest that there is need for sustained empirical studies of the scope on the involvement of traditional healers in the vigorous campaigns to eliminate HIV infection in southern Africa.

The enlisting of traditional healers in such a campaign would not only be sustainable, but it would ensure that all key stakeholders in the fight against the pandemic are mobilized and brought on board.

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# FROM THE ABC MODEL TO THE A-REFLEX MODEL: A TRIPLE PSYCHODYNAMIC, POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY, AND EUDAIMONIC ETHOS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE AIDS EPIDEMIC IN AFRICA

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## Abstract

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*This article aims to critically explore psychodynamic principles for managing the AIDS Epidemic. The methodology is qualitative theoretical analyses, articulated around the ABC Model, which is an abstinence-based sex education policy, and Freudian Psychodynamic Theory. The latter constitute double paradigmatic lenses for enhancing effectiveness and efficiency in managing the spread of AIDS in Africa. The paper posits that the ABC Model has been effective in this fight, but proposes that if psychodynamic principles are associated with the former, there are greater chances that the fight against AIDS will receive a greater psychological boost. In other words, without “individual psychological transformation,” the ABC Model would remain limited in its effectiveness, because it does not directly address the issue of transformation of the “death instinct or Thanatos” into “life force or Eros.” The paper thus advocates that in addition to ‘A’ or ‘abstinence’, there could be ‘Self-Sacrificing Sublimation’ or Authentic Redirection of libidinal energy into Creative Life Force; ‘B’ or ‘be faithful to your sexual partner(s) can be reinforced by ‘Flow’ for reinforcing Transpersonality; ‘C’ or ‘use a condom’ could be complemented by ‘Creative Self-Expressing Eudaimonism.’ This paper thus proposes a new model, A-REFLEX, which could be used complementarily with the ABC Model in the fight against AIDS in Africa.*

**Keywords:** ABC Model, A-REFLEX Model, Psychodynamic Theory, Thanatos, Eros, Sublimation, Flow, Redirection, Eudaimonia

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## Introduction

### *2015 Global HIV Statistics*

HIV continues to be a major global public health issue. In 2015, an estimated 36.7 million people were living with HIV (including 1.8 million children) – a global HIV prevalence of 0.8% (UNAIDS, 2016). The vast majority of this number live in low- and middle- income countries. In the same year, 1.1 million people died of AIDS-related illnesses (UNAIDS, 2016). Since the start of the epidemic, an estimated 78 million people have become infected with HIV and 35 million people have died of AIDS-related illnesses (UNAIDS, 2016).

An estimated 25.5 million people living with HIV live in Sub-Saharan Africa. The vast majority of them (an estimated 19 million) live in east and southern Africa which saw 46% of new HIV infections globally in 2015 (UNAIDS, 2016). Around 40% of all people living with



HIV do not know that they have the virus (UNAIDS, 2016). In 2015, there were roughly 2.1 million new HIV infections, 150,000 of which were among children. Most of these children live in sub-Saharan Africa and were infected via their HIV-positive mothers during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding (UNAIDS, 2016).

Progress in decreasing new HIV infections among adults has slowed in recent years. Since 2010, the annual number of new infections among adults (15+) has remained static at 1.9 million (UNAIDS, 2016). A comparison with country data shows huge discrepancies in efforts to slow the spread of new infections. Some countries have achieved a decline of 50% or more in new HIV infections among adults over the last 10 years, while many have made no measurable progress at all. Yet others are experiencing worrying increases in new HIV infections (UNAIDS, 2016).

### ***Treatment Perspectives***

Despite these challenges, new global efforts have meant that the number of people receiving HIV treatment has increased dramatically in recent years, particularly in resource-poor countries. As of December 2015, 17 million people living with HIV were receiving antiretroviral treatment (ART) - up from 15.8 million in June 2015 and 7.5 million in 2010. This means that 46% of all adults and 49% of all children living with HIV are now accessing ART (UNAIDS, 2016). Significant progress has also been made in the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT). In 2015, 77% of all pregnant women living with HIV accessed treatment to prevent HIV transmission to their babies (UNAIDS, 2016). The ABC Model will be considered as one of the means of managing the AIDS Pandemic in Africa.

### **Origin of the American ABC Model**

It is important to establish how the ABC message was initially developed within the western context in order to understand its irrelevance to Botswana. The first cases of AIDS were reported in the U.S.A in the early 1980s, primarily among gay men in New York and California. The initial response from the U.S. government was to develop AIDS prevention programmes that focused on risk reduction (Green and Herling, 2006). As a result, condoms were provided to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted HIV infection. After further studies by the U.S. Center for Disease Control in 1981, three main behavioural modifications were advised: reducing the number of sexual partners, eliminating the exchange of body fluids during sex, and 'knowing your partner' by avoiding places characterized by sexual anonymity (King, 1993). These behavioural modifications became known as the "safe/r" sex model and was originally designed for homosexual men (Herald, 2002). For heterosexual people, instead of a safe/r sex model, an "abstinence-until-marriage" model was recommended. This model was supported by the U.S. government and in 1981 an "abstinence-until-marriage" programme was distributed across America to teach that abstinence from sex until marriage is the only effective method of HIV prevention (Cohen and Tate, 2005). The program was developed based on dominant American Christian values which held that sex should only take place in the context of marriage

(AVERT, 2009). The main objective of abstinence education is to help young people to refuse or avoid sex. Even though the prevention model had not been named the “ABC campaign” at that time, the concepts and ideology behind the campaign were being developed.

In 1987, when U.S. organizations began to sponsor AIDS education in Botswana, the B for “be faithful” and C for “condomise” in the ABC campaign were taken from the safe/r sex model and the A for abstinence was added as a result of conservative American Christian beliefs in abstinence-until-marriage (Casbarrom and Jäger, 2007). This information led to the creation of the basic components of the American ABC model which was essentially an amalgamation of various best practices from homosexual communities and Christian interest groups in America.

### **Relevance and Efficiency of the ABC Model in Africa**

The ABC Model has been credited by some for the declining numbers of those infected with AIDS in Uganda, Kenya and Zimbabwe, among others. From 1990 to 2001 the percentage of Ugandans living with AIDS fell from 15% to between 5 and 6% (Jonathan, 2005; Green, Halperin, Nantulya, Hogle, 2006). This decline is ascribed to the ABC approach especially the reduction in the number of sex partners, called “Zero-Grazing” in Uganda.

Abstinence-based sex education can include issues of human relationships, the basic biology of human reproduction, safe sex methods and contraceptives, HIV/AIDS information, and masturbation in place of sex. It recommends sexual abstinence outside marriage as an ideal, having only a single long-term sexual partner. The use of condoms and other safe sex practices is advocated only if it is not possible to remain with a single sexual partner. Advocating this ideal, whilst pragmatically dealing with the fact that abstinence only sex education is ineffective by itself, has made the ABC approach popular with many African governments and relief agencies (Green, 2003). Its positive impact has been confirmed by a 2009 Stanford University survey (Bendavid and Bhattacharya, 2009).

### **Critique of the ABC Model in Africa**

The usefulness of the ABC approach is highly debated. The three elements are interpreted differently by different actors and critics argue that often abstinence and faithfulness are unduly promoted over condoms and other measures such as education, female empowerment and making available modern antiviral drugs (Barnett and Parkhurst, 2005). For example, the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief under President George W Bush has been criticized for seeming to prioritize “A” and “B” over “C” within its funding criteria. “C” activities may only be directed at “high-risk” groups, and not to the general population (Cohen and Tate, 2005). However, donor funding has always been allocated overwhelmingly to condoms, reflecting clear US and European policy priorities, including under George W Bush.

A debate continues to simmer over the much-publicized “ABC” approach to HIV/AIDS prevention, since the discussion has become polarized in part because for some, the ABCs are synonymous with the promotion of abstinence-only sex education programs for youth, an area of considerable controversy (Halperin, Steiner, Cassell, Green, Kirby, et al., 2004) that seems to pit political and religious conservatives against their liberal counterparts.

The effectiveness of the ABC Model in Botswana for example is compromised because abstinence from sexual activities, faithfulness and the use of condoms are in conflict with and unaligned to traditional sex education, cultural beliefs and values. For example, 68% of the young men and 78.1 % of the young women (aged 15-24) do not believe it is reasonable to expect people to use a condom for every sexual encounter (Campbell and Rakgoasi 2002). So resistance to the use of condom poses a big challenge for empowerment activities for HIV/AIDS prevention where most people are not going to abstain or be faithful to one partner. Secondly, traditional healers are very influential but also access to traditional medicine and information is locally available and affordable. Thirdly, women are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS not only because of cultural issues but also because of poverty or economic vulnerability, and the abandonment of the traditional communalistic spirit in rural areas for the notions of empowerment in urban areas. Fourthly, empowering women, especially young girls, to negotiate for safer sex and to have the ability to control their sexuality in a patriarchal framework is a big challenge for HIV/AIDS prevention efforts (Campbell and Rakgoasi, 2002).

In addition, although ABC behaviours have been credited with Uganda's dramatic decline in HIV rates (Green, 2003; Stoneburner R, 2004; Shelton, Halperin, Nantulya, Potts and Gayle, 2004; Hearst and Chen, 2004), questions remain as to whether the ABC-related behavior changes are attainable in other developing countries, given many women's relatively limited control over their sexual relationships. Influential AIDS policy makers have expressed doubt that ABC-related behavior changes can take place in settings where women seem to have little control over their sex lives. On the eve of the 2004 International AIDS Conference in Bangkok, for example, the Deputy Executive Director of UNAIDS observed that, “Most of the women and girls, as much in Asia as in Africa, don't have the option to abstain when they want to. Women who are victims of violence are in no position to negotiate anything, never mind faithfulness and condom use” (Cravero, 2004). An influential woman's advocate reinforces this view: “Most prevention messages...focus on the ‘ABC’ approach to fighting HIV-AIDS.... While important messages, these things are often not within women's power to control” (Fleischman, 2004).

Critics also argue that in many countries women are frequently infected by their unfaithful husbands while being faithfully married, and thus women who follow the recommendations of ABC promoters face an increased risk of HIV infection (Sinding, 2005). Critics furthermore allege that the strategy overlooks the epidemic's social, political, and economic causes and “vulnerable populations”, e.g. sex workers and “those who lack the ability to negotiate safe sex” as well as risk groups such as homosexuals and intravenous drug users. However, most infections in Africa occur outside these vulnerable groups, and ABC was a US donor policy

only for the "generalized" epidemics in Africa. Murphy et al. found that Uganda's ABC approach empowered women. "Remarkably, in the 2000–2001 Uganda DHS, 91 percent of women said they could refuse sex with their husbands if they knew their husbands had STIs, a somewhat higher percentage than in several other African countries" (Murphy, Greene, Mihailovic, Olupot-Olupot and Peter, 2006). Critics also argue that using the word "abstinence," then teaching about safe sex and contraceptives, can be contradictory (Cohen, Jonathan, Tate and Tony, 2006).

There is also the argument of the gendered presentation of ABC success stories (Dworkin, Ehrhardt and Anke, 2007). Research has indicated that the power roles in which men and women fall in the gender dynamic of relationships, as well as sexual double standards, sexual violence, and harmful cultural practices affect a greater number of women when trying to implement HIV/AIDS prevention through individual decision making (Dworkin, Ehrhardt and Anke, 2007). Critiques of geographic location are also relevant in the success of ABC success. Migration patterns within a population affect both men and women where men who migrate are more likely to contract the infection and bring it back and infect their female partner, whose greatest risk of contracting HIV is from their husbands' extramarital sexual encounters. But women are also seen contracting the disease outside of their primary relationship, focusing the ABC strategy on morality and "static individualized behavior" (Dworkin, Ehrhardt and Anke, 2007; Parikh, 2007).

### **The A-REFLEX Model: Complementing the ABC Model in Africa through Psychomoral Self-Transformation**

The A-REFLEX Model stands for:

1. A –RE: Authentic Redirection of Sexual Energy through sublimation
2. FL: Flow of Authentically Redirected Sexual Energy through Transpersonal, Harmonious, Eros Channels
3. EX: Expression of Authentically Redirected Sexual Energy through 'Flow Channels', for Creative Self-Actualization

The 'A-RE', 'FL', and 'EX' dimensions of the A-REFLEX Model are respectively derived from Psychodynamic Theory, Positive Psychology and Eudaimonia.

## Psychodynamic Conception of Libidinal Energy

In this paper sexual energy stands for 'creative substance' with the potential for 'death' or 'life', that is, Thanatos or Eros, depending on its centrifugal and/or centripetal personalized, or centripetal and transpersonalized orientations, respectively.

Freud (1920) examined the first law of thermodynamics and applied this to his psycho-dynamics theories. The first law of thermodynamics states that: "Energy can neither be created nor destroyed". Freud theorized this to be true with the human personality, and adopting Darwin's assumption that emotion is a form of physical energy, deduced that 'psychic energy' can neither be created nor destroyed; it can only be converted from one form to another.

Freud's conception of the individual was as a reservoir of dynamic energy, continuously seeking a means of discharge and in turn continuously needing replenishment. This veritable storehouse of energy he called the '**Libido**', the genetically inherent energy empowering the life instinct. The instinctual drive towards survival and replacement of energy requires translation into more specific terms such as 'food, love and security'.

Freud postulated that human beings are dominated by two basic instincts: **Eros** (the sexual drive or creative life force) and **Thanatos** (the death force or destructiveness). The mythical characters of Eros and Thanatos were used by Freud in his formulation of drive theory to represent the two primary outlets of biological energy. Eros represents life, creativity, growth, and increase in tension; and Thanatos represents the movement towards homeostasis (elimination of all tensions), dissolution, negation, and death. We are constantly stimulated and driven into action by a balance of these energies. Both fundamental drives are empowered by Libido energy. To this effect, Freud states:

“Our views have from the very first been dualistic, and to-day they are even more definitely dualistic than before – now that we describe the opposition as being, not between ego-instincts and sexual instincts but between life instincts and death instincts.” [Freud 1920, p. 53]

## Thanatos - Death Instincts – Personalization of Libido

The concept of the death instincts was initially described in Freud's book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in which he proposed that “the goal of all life is death” (1920). In Freud's view, self-destructive behavior is an expression of the energy created by the death instincts. When this energy is directed outward onto others, it is expressed as aggression and violence. He equally suggested that all living creatures have an instinct, drive toward death (*todtriebe*), or impulse to return to the inorganic state from which they emerged.

For this researcher, 'Abstinence' without Authentic Redirection of sexual energy will lead to Thanatos, that is, destructiveness and pseudo-redirection of libido, in a centrifugal and/or centripetal direction for sensual and/or emotional, mental and imaginal self-gratification. Thanatos also implies the personalization of sexual energy which entails both self-gratifying 'self-service and sacrifice of others' in the centrifugal and/or centrifugal inauthentic direction of sexual energy, through phenomena such as, premeditated infection of others, unprotected sex, with all the associated consequences of HIV and AIDS and STDS infections.

### **Thanatos and pseudo-redirection of personalized sexual energy**

Pseudo-redirection of personalized sexual energy is also a defense mechanism which avoids 'vagina sacrifice, non-vaginal intercourse' by engaging in the following 'alternative sexual activities':

1. **Exhibitionism:** is when gays and lesbians like displaying their sex organs to others who are not interested. In some cases, exhibitionism involves autoeroticism exhibitionism or sexual practices to stimulate oneself or masturbate, while showing it to others. In general, no contact is made with the victim, since the exhibitionist is sexually aroused by the attention and surprise others experience in relation to their invasive actions.
2. **Fetishism:** the tendency to achieve sexual satisfaction by using non-human objects, most often women's clothing, shoes, stockings, or other clothing items.
3. **Frotteurisme:** rubbing one's genital organs in an intrusive manner to others, especially in crowded places like in a bus or train.
4. **Sexual masochism:** sexual pleasure and joy are derived from self-inflicted pain or pain inflicted on oneself by others.
5. **Transvestic fetishism:** entails heterosexual men who wear women's clothes in order to achieve sexual response.
6. **Voyeurism:** having sexual pleasure by watching or peeping others who are naked, undressing, or having sex.
7. **Zoophilia:** sexual feelings or behaviors involving animals such as dogs, sheep or goats.
8. Anal and oral intercourse, masturbation, zoophilia, paraphilic disorders are recurrent, intense, sexually arousing fantasies, urges, or behaviours that are distressing or disabling and that involve inanimate objects, children or nonconsenting adults, or suffering or humiliation of oneself or partner with the potential to cause harm.

The pseudo-redirection of Thanatos-heavy libido, leads to the dissipation and dispersion of personalized sexual energy, and ultimately 'devaluation' through the 'subtractive and divisive orientation' of libidinal energy.

## **A Psychodynamic Perspective: From ‘Abstinence’ to ‘Authentic Redirection’ of Sexual Energy**

### **Eros or Transpersonalization of Sexual Energy**

Eros as seen earlier symbolizes ‘life force’, which for the researcher by extension becomes a ‘constructive and creative energy’ only when libido is given a ‘transpersonal orientation’, in which case there is centripetal redirection of sexual energy through willingness, self-sacrifice, and sublimation.

#### ***From willfulness to willingness***

Willfulness could be associated with the personalizing tendency of Thanatos-heavy personalized sexual energy which leads to pseudo-redirection of the latter, through a stubborn persistence in doing what one wishes, in this case, sensual, emotional, mental and imaginal self-gratification. Willfulness which is devitalizing would be characterized by headstrong recklessness. Willingness on the contrary, is the quality, state or ability of being consciously, voluntarily and knowledgeably ready and prepared to authentically redirect sexual energy, from ‘a centripetal and/or centrifugal devitalizing orientation’, to a ‘centripetal, revitalizing and creative movement.’

Willingness implies not only the determination to ‘sacrifice vaginal intercourse’, but also to transcend ‘non-vaginal intercourse and alternate sexual activities.’ In other words, abstinence without Authentic Re-direction of sexual energy, would most likely lead to ‘willful dissipation and dispersion’ of sexual energy, as seen earlier, ending with total ‘devitalization.’ Willingness entails the courage for self-sacrifice and the total avoidance of self-service and sacrifice of others, because the former is ‘proactive, creative and not passive-reactive.’

#### ***Self-sacrifice***

Self-sacrifice involves the following phases:

1. Withholding and centripetal redirection of sexual energy
2. The ‘damming and electrification’ of authentically redirected sexual energy
3. Through self-sacrifice and authentic redirection of sexual energy, there is transpersonal addition and multiplication, not subtraction and division of libidinal energy.
4. There is progress building up of ‘Higher Ego’, that is, the fulfillment of highest order needs, like self-esteem and self-actualization, following fulfillment, but not fixation on ‘lower ego survival needs’
5. There is movement from personalization of Thanatos-heavy personalized sexual energy, which leads to self-abasement, to transpersonal, revitalization for maximal individualization through generation of ‘Higher Ego.’

## ***Sublimation***

Willingness and self-sacrifice generate ‘centripetal and upward Flow’ of Authentically Redirected sexual energy, in a process which the research will term, like the psychodynamic theory, ‘sublimation.’

According to Freud, sublimation helps both the individual and the social group, through the repression of the genital aim of the libido by substituting a cultural or social aim. The sublimated aim is expressed most obviously in creative cultural accomplishments such as art, music, and literature, but more subtly, it is part of all human relationships and all social pursuits.

One reason that sublimation is a key notion in psychoanalysis is that from a therapeutic point of view, successful psychoanalytic treatment ideally aims at sublimation, inasmuch as sublimation is seen as a necessary condition for full psychic health. By bringing to conscious light hitherto repressed drives, desires, and wishes, energy that has previously displayed itself in unpleasurable symptoms may be harnessed and directed to more productive and felicitous ends.

As Freud puts it in his essay “On Narcissism”:

“Sublimation is a process that concerns object-libido and consists in the instinct directing itself towards an aim other than, and remote from, that of sexual satisfaction; in this process the accent falls upon deflection from sexuality” (Freud, 1961).

For the researcher, sublimation is much more than a defense mechanism, as much as it is the generation and sustaining of the ‘Creative Ego’ through authentically redirected sexual energy. It is:

1. The movement from sensual, emotional, mental and imaginal self-gratification to self-transcendence based on willingness to sacrifice the centripetal and/or centrifugal orientation of sexual energy towards fixation on the ‘survival needs of the lower ego’, towards the redirection of the same for self-actualization and individuation or ‘transpersonal ego needs.’
2. It implies movement from self-gratification to self-elevation and self-transcendence.
3. Sublimation transcends ‘survival’, because it implies the ‘revival and manifestation of the highest transpersonal ideals’, in which case authentically redirected sexual energy becomes the ‘Eros’ or ‘Life Force’ for materializing the highest individual and social ideals



4. Sublimation is the process of developing the necessary ‘electric force’ for self and social transformation, by willingness and self-sacrifice
5. Sublimation is the redirection of sexual energy to its most sublime essence, which is a ‘trans-circumstantial’ light and life force, capable of effecting the aforementioned individual and collective transformation, on the basis of ‘Creative Ego and Ethos.’

Following the Authentic Redirection of sexual energy through willingness, self-sacrifice and sublimation, the ‘FL’ of the ‘A- REFLEX’ Model, is activated as ‘Centripetal, inward and upward Flow’ of transpersonalized sexual energy.

### **Be Faithful to the ‘Other’**

Be Faithful to the ‘Other’ implies a potential for ‘fixation’ and minimization of ‘Flow’, and the increased probability of ‘pseudo-redirection of personalized and personalizing sexual energy.’ Devitalizing pseudo-redirection of personalized, Thanatos-heavy sexual energy effectively compromises ‘Abstinence and Be Faithful’ of the ABC Model, by preventing ‘Authentic Redirection’ of sexual energy and ‘Flow.’

Without ‘Flow’, which is a function of ‘Authentic Redirection or Sublimation’ of Sexual Energy, ‘Be Faithful’ would make the person to ‘sink’ under ‘Thanatos Weight’, into pseudo-redirection of sexual energy for sensual, emotional, mental and imaginal self-gratification. The latter will lead to ‘Anti-flow characteristics; high neuroticism; increased prefrontal cortex activity, all culminating in willful dispersion and dissipation of sexual energy.

### ***Anti-flow characteristics***

Anti-flow characteristics are generated through a combination of willfulness, self-service and pseudo-redirection of sexual energy. They include:

1. Complete distraction, dispersion and dissipation of libido on tasks
2. Ambiguity of goals and a sense of fragmentation and disconnectedness
3. Fixated and trapped in time and space
4. Generalized ‘frustration syndrome’
5. Struggle accompanies all effort
6. Complete imbalance between challenges and skills
7. Actions and awareness are irreconcilable, thereby exacerbating self-conscious rumination
8. There is a feeling of generalized impotence.

### ***High Neuroticism***

Neuroticism is one of the Big Five higher-order personality traits in the study of psychology. Individuals who score high on neuroticism are more likely than average to be moody and to

experience such feelings as anxiety, worry, fear, anger, frustration, envy, jealousy, guilt, depressed mood, and loneliness (Thompson, 2008; Matthews and Deary, 1998). People who are neurotic respond worse to stressors and are more likely to interpret ordinary situations as threatening and minor frustrations as hopelessly difficult. They are often self-conscious and shy, and they may have trouble controlling urges and delaying gratification.

### ***Increased prefrontal cortex activity***

Anti-flow characteristics and high neuroticism will compromise the planning of complex cognitive behaviour, in which case, personality expression and decision making could most likely be immoderate, impulsive and anti-social (Yang, 2009). Secondly, since there is ambiguity of goals, a sense of fragmentation and disconnectedness, thoughts and actions would be equally ambiguous and unfocused. (Miller, Freedman and Wallis, 2002).

In addition, through high neuroticism, increased prefrontal activity 'traps' the non-discerning person in the cross-currents of conflicting thoughts, good and bad, better and best, same and different, working toward ambiguous goals, and low level social "control", that is, the inability to suppress urges that could lead, if not suppressed, to socially unacceptable outcomes.

There can be no 'Be faithful to the Other' in cases of anti-flow characteristics, high neuroticism, and increased prefrontal cortex activity.

### **Flow: beyond Be Faithful**

According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, "The best moments in our lives are not the passive, receptive, relaxing times... The best moments usually occur if a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile." He identifies the following 8 characteristics:

1. Complete concentration on the task
2. Clarity of goals and reward in mind and immediate feedback
3. Transformation of time (speeding up/slowing down of time)
4. The experience is intrinsically rewarding, has an end itself
5. Effortlessness and ease
6. There is a balance between challenge and skills
7. Actions and awareness are merged, losing self-conscious rumination
8. There is a feeling of control over the task

### ***Who Experiences Flow – autotelic personalities***

Interestingly, a capacity to experience flow can differ from person to person. Studies suggest that those with 'autotelic personalities' tend to experience more flow. A person with an 'autotelic personality' tends to do things for their own sake rather than chasing some distant

external goal. This type of personality is distinguished by certain meta-skills such as high interest in life, persistence, as well as low self-centeredness.

### ***What Happens in the Brain during Flow – decreased prefrontal cortex activity***

In a state of flow, the prefrontal cortex is believed to temporarily down-regulate; a process called transient hypofrontality. This temporary inactivation of the prefrontal area may trigger the feeling of distortion of time, loss of self-consciousness, and loss of inner-critic. Moreover, the inhibition of the prefrontal lobe may enable the implicit mind to take over, resulting in more brain areas to communicate freely and engage in a creative process. In other research, it's also hypothesized that the flow state is related to the brain's dopamine reward circuitry since curiosity is highly amplified.

For Be Faithful (passive/reactive) to be effective in the management of the AIDS pandemic, it would be necessary to complement it with Flow or the quest for individuation and 'wholeness of self'. Flow transcends 'eye service faithfulness' because it primarily implies a self-actualizing aptitude through high self-efficacy.

Flow means "faithfulness" to one's Highest Self, not as it is assumed, to the 'other.' In other words, 'faithfulness' which is 'other-heavy', would become inclined to devitalizing pseudo-redirection of sexual energy.

Flow means 'being faithful' to one's highest possibilities and the uncompromising re-direction of all vital libidinal energy towards the attainment of the transpersonal, through the 'Eros Processes' of willingness, self-sacrifice and sublimation.

Flow is the constant, conscious and voluntary redirection of sexual energy towards the 'highlighting' of the 'Transpersonal Creative Ego.'

Flow is the 'reinvention of the self', from survival to highest empowerment and self-transcendence, from lowest level needs to highest level creative action, and from self-gratification to self and other transformation.

Flow is the infinitely limitless ethos which projects the 'ego beyond the ego, to the ego at its highest, best and most.'

The culmination of the A-REFLEX Model is 'EX' or maximal expression of the 'Creative Ego's' highest and best transpersonal ideals. Instead of 'repressing and suppressing' the outflow of sexual energy through 'Condomize', which increases the chances of 'faithlessness and abstinence', 'EX' maximizes transpersonal and creative 'Higher Self Expression', through willingness, self-sacrifice, sublimation, flow characteristics, minimal neuroticism, and decreased prefrontal cortex activity.

## **Eudaimonia – The Summit of Creative Self-Actualization**

### **Hedonia vs Eudaimonia**

Both hedonism and eudaimonism represent efforts in ethical philosophy to answer questions regarding the nature of a good life or a life well-lived. In hedonic philosophies, the principal, and sometimes exclusive, focus is placed on happiness as pleasure, enjoyment, and absence of discomfort understood as subjective affective states (e.g., Aristippus, Bentham, Mill).

Without Eudaimonia which is a function of willingness, self-sacrifice and sublimation through Authentic Redirection of sexual energy and Flow, condomizing in isolation will lead to 'Negative Hedonia'. The latter neologism would be a function of willfulness, self-service, pseudo-redirection of sexual energy, anti-flow characteristics, high neuroticism, increased prefrontal cortex activity. 'Negative Hedonia' would be characterized by:

- Impulsive, compulsive, obsessive dissipation and dispersion of sexual energy through the use or abuse of 'condoms'
- Minimal creativity and self-actualization
- Maximization of lowest level needs as per Maslow's survival level needs
- Shortest term goals and sense gratification
- Maximization of animal propensities
- Low self-image, esteem, efficacy as per Bandura
- Overall mediocrity

Thanatos-heavy 'Survival' would increase the propensity of reckless and non-discriminating dispersion and dissipation of sexual energy, thereby exacerbating the AIDS pandemic, through minimal and erratic self-control.

### **Critique of Hedonia**

#### *Negative aspects of Hedonism and HIV/AIDS*

On the one hand hedonism is associated with good taste and the art of living well, on the other hand with addiction, superficiality, irresponsible behaviour and short-sighted egoism. Human kind, down the ages, has always been warned to avoid the lures of lustful living. Much of this admonition has been voiced by religious leaders, such as Calvin in 16th century Europe and currently by fundamentalists in the Middle East and the USA. The message is also preached by politicians and health advisors. Hedonism has even been criticised by novelists, for example by Aldous Huxley in his *Brave New World*.

There are two main lines in the critique of hedonism. One is that hedonism is bad for our environment, the other that it is bad for us as individuals. The environmental argument holds that hedonism gives rise to over-consumption, and that this will add to the ongoing depletion

of natural resources and consequently will hasten the destruction of the environment. Following this line of argument it is suggested that hedonism reduces ones awareness of danger, because self-indulgences smother awareness and critical thinking.

Furthermore, the daily treadmill of conspicuous consumption impoverishes social quality in many ways, undermining morals and destroying the work-ethic within society. Again hedonists are seen to be blind to these dangers, pleasure induces an unrealistic and rosy outlook. At the individual level there are also two lines of critique. The first is that hedonism undermines health. This argument applies in particular to the pursuit of sensory pleasures such as drinking alcoholic beverages, smoking tobacco, eating sweets and abundant sex. The second line of criticism is that hedonism reduces happiness in the long term.

### **Paradox of hedonism**

The claim that pleasure seeking leads to unhappiness takes the attack to the heart of hedonism. If hedonism is not lead to pleasure after all, then the true hedonist should reject it. In this reasoning happiness is often defined as hedonists would have it, that is, as 'enjoyment of one's life'. The claim holds that a hedonistic lifestyle contributes to happiness in the short run, but not in the longer term, with the paradoxical outcome being attributed to several mechanisms.

#### *How hedonism might reduce happiness*

One reason why hedonists might end up unhappy is that pleasure might fade with time. This would leave the pleasure seeker unsatisfied and give rise to an urge for ever-stronger stimuli. This could involve increasingly hazard ones behaviour and also lead, inevitably, to disappointment, because experience blunts sensitivity, the result for the hedonist being one of emptiness.

A related theme is that hedonism leads to addiction. For one thing, pleasure seeking can lead one into risky experimentation and to making the wrong friends. Furthermore habituation would lead to craving forever increasing levels of stimulation, with the risk of self-destruction. The addiction is part of a wider claim that hedonism leads to a loss of reality control. In this argument, hedonism can also reduce control because it spoils people. Pursuit of pleasure makes people evade challenges and therefore leaves them untrained. Evasion of experiences judged potentially painful would also reduce the hedonists stress tolerance, all this making hedonists more vulnerable in the long term and thereby also likely to be more anxious. Growing anxiety in its turn might enhance dependency on stimulants.

Hedonism is also seen as leading to idleness. Pleasure seeking is considered as antithetical to active involvement, and hedonists are depicted as passive lotus-eaters. Since there is good evidence that enjoyment is a by-product of self-actualisation, it is inferred that the pursuit of

pleasure yields less pleasurable experiences in the end than a life devoted to a cause or to self-development.

Another argument goes that hedonism addresses only a limited part of the human repertoire and therefore leaves many higher pleasures untasted. This links with the theory that happiness requires first of all that one see meaning in one's life. Since there is little meaning in mere enjoyment, hedonists face bankruptcy in this respect. Such a lack would make itself felt when habituation breaks the spell of lust and when sickness and old age reduce the hedonist's capacity for enjoyment, leading to the end of life in an existential vacuum.

Still another claim is that hedonism erodes social bonds. In this reasoning the pursuit of individual pleasures makes people less sensitive to the needs of others, which links up with the earlier mentioned notion that hedonism leads to moral decay; and further isolation, with the hedonists left 'bowling alone'.

### **Eudaimonia – Exaltation of the ‘Creative Transpersonal Ego’**

The concept of eudaimonia received its most notable treatment in Aristotle's (4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E./1985) *Nicomachean Ethics*. The traditional translation of the term is as 'happiness,' though many contemporary philosophers prefer the translation as 'flourishing.' In eudaimonic philosophies, the principal focus is on activity reflecting virtue, excellence, the best within us, and the full development of our potentials (e.g., Annas 1993; Norton 1976; Tiberius and Hall 2010).

Waterman (1993, 2011), in developing the eudaimonic identity theory, adopts an individual nature fulfillment philosophical perspective, placing self-realization as a core defining element of eudaimonia. Acting in ways consistent with personal potentials, including the identification and development of one's best potentials, is accompanied by feelings of personal expressiveness. Self-realization is the more important of these constructs as it is integral to the nature of a life well-lived. Feelings of personal expressiveness—which represent the experiences category serve as a signal that one is acting in a way consistent with one's intrinsic nature and serve to reinforce such actions. Near-core markers of eudaimonia include authenticity, purpose and meaning in life, and dedicated effort in the pursuit of excellence.

The following are six inter-related core and close-to-core eudaimonic elements with strong philosophical-psychological linkages: (a) self-discovery, (b) perceived development of one's best potentials, (c) a sense of purpose and meaning-in-life, (d) investment of significant effort in the pursuit of excellence, (e) intense involvement in activities, and (f) enjoyment of activities as personally expressive. While it incorporates several of the categories of analysis in the classification, based on proportion of item content, it is best viewed as an index of positive functioning. Based on a broad survey of psychological theories, Ryff (1989) identified six

characteristics as core to eudaimonia: (a) self-acceptance, (b) positive relations with others, (c) personal growth, (d) purpose in life, (e) environmental mastery, and (f) autonomy.

For the researcher, Eudaimonia is the ‘crowning summit of creative self-expression, empowerment, maximal interconnectedness, selfless service and social and environmental transformation. Eudaimonia from this perspective or ‘EX’ of the ‘A-REFLEX Model’, could be a necessary complement to the ‘passive-reactive-suppressive’ inanimate interphase of the ‘condom’ in the ABC Model. Eudaimonia is the logical outcome of willingness, self-sacrifice, sublimation, flow characteristics, minimal neuroticism, decreased prefrontal cortex activity, and ‘Eros or Soul Liberation.’

### **Opportunities for implementing the A-REFLEX Model through *Lebollo*, Basotho traditional initiation school system**

*Lebollo* or the Basotho initiation school system envisaged as its main objective fundamental changes for all the initiated in respect of cognitive, affective, practical as well as social-consciousness problem-solving abilities and relationships (Matsela, 2006). To effect the latter changes, *Lebollo* operated on a specific curriculum which entailed among others the development of the following attitudes: respect for one’s elders; the maintenance of strong family ties; respect for womanhood; goodwill towards all persons at all times (Adams and Bastian, 1983). Furthermore, *Lebollo* emphasized personal and group effectiveness, socio-culturally responsible and accountable behavior, as well as cooperative and collaborative efforts in all community undertakings. Cultural values and socio-economic and political issues (often in integrated problem situations) were generally given priority in inter-personal and communal affairs, the general goal being the striving always towards community and national peace, economic self-sufficiency and political freedom (Matsela, 2006). The indigenous Basotho initiation rites of *Lebollo* therefore had a pragmatic orientation, because it envisaged individual and collective transformations (Matsela, 2006).

If we consider that the A-REFLEX Model stands for redirection of sexual energy through vectors of harmony, in order to obtain creative self-actualization, then *Lebollo* could act as a cultural and philosophical prism for the sublimation of sexual energy by the development of creative skills as follows:

#### ***Collective sexual responsibility through revitalization of traditional sex education structures***

Since *Lebollo* is a traditional and culturally respected medium for awareness raising in matters of sexual education, its curriculum should be reviewed, standardized and partnered with western systems of sexual education. To buttress this point, it should be remembered that the destruction of Basotho traditional initiation schools in particular and those of other African countries in general, did a lot of damage to the general discipline of the rural communities in Africa since topics such as sex education were no longer addressed (Matsela and Motlomo, 2002). In addition, problems associated with early pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases

are associated with lack of information that is attributed to the general marginalizing of traditional initiation schools (UNICEF, 1995). Given that the current HIV/AIDS information, education and communication are perceived as externally imposed and culturally alienating, understanding of health and sexuality through an authentic indigenous educational model like *Lebollo* would reinforce the positive perception of sex education curriculum and policies. For example, menstruation rituals, annual sexual education ceremonies, and religious sex education activities can be used to mainstream HIV and AIDS prevention (Ntseane, 2004).

### ***Redynamize traditional participatory approaches***

Traditional Lesotho is known for its effective democratic values such as collective consensus, respect for ideas and opinions shared at the village parliament or 'Kgotla.' This participatory approach is a strength that can be used to engage people in critical reflection and praxis relating to the idea of the A-REFLEX Model for positive harnessing of sexual energy in order to maximize creative self-actualizing activities.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has attempted to present the 'A-REFLEX Model' as a viable complement to the ABC Model, implying that the combination of these twin models will lead to greater effectiveness and efficiency in the management of the AIDS Pandemic in Africa. The ABC Model without the A-REFLEX Model would entail the dismissal of a vitally important and fundamental psychomoral transformation of Africans. The control and overcoming of the AIDS pandemic involves the willingness to consciously and voluntarily redirect, transform, and creatively utilize the same sexual or libidinal energy which becomes death-dealing when it is pseudo-redirected, dissipated, and dispersed through willfulness, self-service, anti-flow characteristics, high neuroticism, increased prefrontal cortex activity and 'negative hedonia.'

Finally, the practical implementation of the A-REFLEX Model as projected can be rendered more effective and contextualized if its ideals are made operative through African indigenous education systems like *Lebollo* of the Basotho. This is premised on the notion that perception of the tenets of the A-REFLEX Model would be more positively perceived, received and implemented if there is realization of continuity between traditional control systems of sexual energy, and those highlighted by the proposed model.



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## READING THE BOOK OF ESTHER IN THE LIGHT OF BOTSWANA'S 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CHALLENGES

Mmapula Diana Kebaneilwe

### Abstract

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*The Book of Esther presents readers with an intriguing story of two women: Vashti and Esther. It is a story of hope for women who find themselves suffering at the hands of cruel and dangerous patriarchal homes, systems, institutions and cultures. Using the case of Botswana, this essay explores how the struggles of the two women in the book of Esther compare with the lived experiences of many African women, and Botswana's in particular. The point I make is that the life of both Esther and Vashti resonates with the struggles of Botswana women who continue to toil and suffer from a complexity of challenges amongst them HIV and AIDS, drought and poverty. The main question I explore is what similarities and lessons, if any, can the story of Esther and Vashti offer concerning the challenges of HIV and AIDS and the declining socio-economic conditions.*

**Keywords:** *Vashti, Esther, Botswana, Socio-economic, conditions, HIV and AIDS*

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### Introduction

The Book of Esther presents two female figures, namely Vashti and Esther who are epitomes of strength, courage, resilience and ability to stand for what is right thing in the face adversity. For example, Vashti can be admired for her bravery in refusing to bow to injustice in the face of a risky and potentially lethal system (Kebaneilwe, 2011). Her powerful refusal to accept what was clearly wrong, demeaning and oppressive teaches us that defending one's dignity is not a matter of choice but of obligation. Esther on the other hand, exposes the fragility and vulnerability of especially women in dire situations. Her desperate desire to save her people blinded her ability to make sound judgement about self-dignity and led her to succumb to the demands of an unjust and dehumanising system that had no regard for women's dignity. It is the nature of the narrative and the actions of its characters that when viewed through the lens of a Motswana woman, provoked the writing of this paper.

Reading a narrative such as the Book of Esther within and for the context of an ailing socio-economic system, coupled with the haunting reality of HIV and AIDS and the lasting effects of the disease on society, proves to be a worthwhile endeavour. The conditions of life expounded on or even implied in the narrative of Esther, echo in some ways, those of an ailing society. It is a tale about power versus powerlessness in which case, power is concentrated in the hands of cruel leaders who do not care about those they lead.

The paper uses the experiences of the people of Botswana as an entry point. As a woman citizen, I can plausibly identify with the sad narrative of the Book of Esther. The essay proceeds as follows: firstly, it defines the theoretical framework and then, provides a summary of the narrative of Esther in order to set the stage for the analysis and to orientate the audience on the

narrative. This will be followed by a summarised literature review of the contemporary HIV and AIDS and socio-economic conditions of Botswana. The idea is to help the audience to see the connecting seams between Esther's narrative and the Botswana context.

### **Defining the Theoretical Framework: A Contextual Analysis Explained**

As indicated above, the paper uses contextualisation or contextual analysis, as the theoretical lens through which the Book of Esther is read within Botswana's context of HIV and AIDS and, the declining socio-economic situation. The main tenet of this paper is that contextual reading and analysis provide an insight into the interactive relationship between the Book and contemporary issues. The theoretical tool suggested here is particularly useful as it allows the text to speak to and to speak with the context for and within which it is read.

Sigurd Bergmann in *God in Context: A Survey of Contextual Theology* (2017) observes that at the heart of contextualisation lies the intention to attach significance to the sociocultural and sometimes the ecological situation for the interpretation of God's revelation. That is, contextual readings of the Bible give priority to the context for which and within which the Bible is read. In other words, the Bible has found and established a home in the African continent and "among communities who identify with the social and economic realities it portrays, no less than the political environments in which Christians find themselves" (Jenkins, 2006: 67). Thus, African interpreters, both lay and trained, have invented a distinguishable kind of theology when compared especially to their Western, Euro American counterparts.

Andrew Mbuvi in "African Biblical Studies: An Introduction to an Emerging Discipline" (2017), discusses what he calls the innovative and reactionary character of African Biblical Studies (which he abbreviates as ABS). His phenomenal work outlines the idea that doing theology and or biblical interpretation in the global south is informed and shaped by the realities as well as the lived experiences of African peoples. There are scholars such as John Mbiti; James Amanze, Musa Dube; Mercy Amba Oduyoye; Madipoane Masenya; Gerald West; Isabel Phiri; and many more whose works have contributed and given shape and character to contextual theology specific to Africa. Thus, there are countless contextual ways of reading and that is outside the scope of this paper.

Simply put, contextual analysis of the biblical text involves "the Christian faith as understood, communicated and lived by Africans and applied to issues which concern them profoundly" (Kasenene, *et.al.* 1994, cited by Bergmann, 2003). While in this instance Kasenene specifically singles out Africans, I suggest that any Christian and any reader and or interpreter of the Bible may apply the biblical message to their specific context(s). In this respect, I read and contextualise the Book of Esther in what follows.

## **The Narrative of Esther through the Eyes of a Motswana woman: What a Story?**

The Book of Esther begins with the banishment of Queen Vashti from the palace and as I noted elsewhere, her banishment and total forsakenness by the text itself (Kebaneilwe 2012). Vashti was married to a powerful King named Xerxes who ruled the entire land of Persia (Esther 1: 1-15). King Xerxes gave a big banquet to all the nobles and officials who were all men; they feasted on food and wine. The big dinner lasted 180 days during which the King showed off the wealth of his kingdom and how magnificent it was. At the end of the lavish 180 days, Xerxes threw another celebration for 7 days. This time he invited all those who lived in the safest part of his kingdom. Food was served bountifully and Royal wine served in golden cups. At this time, Vashti too received a permission to throw a party on the other floor of the palace where she invited all her women friends.

After a week of drinking wine, it is reported that the drunken king summoned his wife Queen Vashti to parade naked before a room full of drunken dignitaries as a fitting last course suitable for male eyes for she was beautiful to behold (James 2005: 145). Unfortunately, Vashti refused to obey the command. Her refusal led her to be dragged out of the palace, forfeiting all the luxuries and to be banished forever (Kebaneilwe 2011). Immediately following the scandal, the king and his men advisers declared a national order. The verdict was cautioning and demanding that every woman remain subject to her male others and never to try to imitate Vashti.

Eventually, Vashti had to be replaced (Esther 2:16-17). The most beautiful virgin girls throughout the land were gathered to parade naked before the king so that he chose the most beautiful as a wife. Esther also known as Hadassah, an orphaned Israelite girl who lived with her uncle in Persia was also brought to participate in the parade. During the boot camp, Esther pleased the attendant in charge of the gathered virgins and he started giving her favours. The selection criteria was such that each of the girls spent a night with the king. Esther was not only beautiful but she pleased the king the night she slept with him and hence she substituted Vashti (Esther 2:12-17).

I will now move onto provide a brief review of the literature on HIV and AIDS as well as the socio-economic status of the present day Botswana after celebrating its 50 years of independence in 2016.

## **Contemporary Botswana's HIV and AIDS and Socio-economic Status: A Threatened near Success Story?**

Research shows that Botswana has made remarkable progress in dealing with HIV and AIDS since its first instance in 1985 (Farahani, *et.al.*, 2014; Allen, *et.al.*, 2004: 1144). The world applauds the country for having one of the most comprehensive strategies for the prevention of HIV from mother to child transmission. Botswana also provides free Antiretroviral treatment to all those infected with the virus. For instance, Creek, *et.al* (2009: 356) note that the

Prevention of Mother to child Transmission (PMTCT) has been available in the country since 1999 and antiretroviral (ARV) therapy since 2001. However, it is now becoming clear that, with the rapidly declining socio-economic conditions, the country is going to face a fresh challenge in dealing with HIV and AIDS. I will recount the socio-economic history of Botswana since independence.

Previous studies show that Botswana was amongst the poorest and least developed countries in the world in 1966 (Owusu, *et.al.*, 1997; Maundeni, 2016). In fact, she was the second poorest country in the world after Bangladesh in 1966 (Dunning, 2005). Unlike other former British colonies, Botswana inherited close to nothing in terms of physical and social infrastructure to foster economic development (Owusu, *et.al.*, 1997). Magang (2015) argues that in 1966, the country was impoverished and benighted with agriculture being the leading economic sector. After gaining independence, Botswana embarked on a long and tedious journey to grow her economy. One of the priorities at the time was to ensure self-sufficiency, hence the establishment of a number of programmes to support especially the agricultural sector, which however suffered because of the mining industry which attracted all attention (Magang, 2015). The situation led to a significant decline in the agriculture and it reached its lowest in the years 2000/2001 with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 2.4% (Magang, 2015). Since then, a number of programmes were designed to support socio-economic development. As Magang (2015) asserts, most notable of the deployed policy instruments included the Arable Lands Development Programme (ALDEP), Financial Assistance Policy (FAP), and Accelerated Rainfed Arable Programme (ARAP). Without detailing the successes and failures of the above mentioned policies whose aim was to provide the support of local farmers to enable self-sufficiency, it is noteworthy that the agricultural sector continued to dwindle (Magang, 2015). There was now a need to ensure food security, which saw the introduction of the National Master Plan for Arable Agriculture and Dairy Development (NAMPAAD) and the Integrated Support Programme for Arable Agricultural Development (ISPAAD) (Magang, 2015).

All of the above were efforts by the government of Botswana to improve the economic situation of the country. In 2001, the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) was established with the mandate to provide financial and technical support for business development and sustainable citizen owned business enterprises.<sup>1</sup> The list of programmes is long and cannot be exhausted here given the limited scope of the paper. The underlying factor however, is that those programmes have not stemmed the onslaught of poverty in the country, resulting in a large number of citizens living below the poverty datum line (cf. Good, 1999: 185).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ceda.co.bw/>

## Now where are we at as the nation of Botswana?

Botswana at fifty years of independence has been tellingly described by some scholars as follows:

“... looking back, it is hard to see a Botswana that would shower its colonial British parents with praise for good parenting. It feels more like an infancy at an orphanage, or being the child of an absentee parent. The ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has won every election since independence....the rate of unemployment is reported by Bank of Botswana (2015) to be at 20%, a high rate of unemployment by any standards” (Mogalakwe, *et.al.*, 2017:1).

Notably, contemporary Botswana relies mainly on two volatile sources, namely diamonds and Sothern African Customs’ Union (SACU) revenues (Seleteng, *et.al.*, 2016: 5 and Mogalakwe, *et.al.*, 2017). Research shows that “in more recent years, there has been a shift in both growth and governance performance. With sustained declines in capital, labour and total factor productivity growth over the two and a half decades to 2010, there is now general recognition that the public-sector driven capital-deepening growth model that Botswana depended on for so long has run its course (IMF, 2013 cited by Mannathoko, 2013). The combination of expenditure growth and the decline in revenue growth is expected to keep the country’s economic growth in the red. This means that socio-economic conditions of the country will continue to decline for some time. Unemployment rate as noted above is also continuing to rise with the youth being the most affected (Mogalakwe, *et.al.*, 2017: 6). Reports further show that Botswana continues to face high levels of poverty and inequality with children of less than 15 years representing 46% of the poor (Good, 1993: 204; Hope *et.al.*, 1996; and Mogalakwe, *et.al.*, 2017: 6). Income inequality in Botswana is amongst the highest in the world with women and girls being the hardest hit (Lekobane, *et.al.*, 2015). Ulriksen (2017), as cited by Mogalawe *et.al.*, opines that “Botswana’s much talked about economic ‘miracle status’ has not translated into the reduction of poverty and social inequality for her citizens and hence it is rather a story about poverty in the midst of plenty. Redistributive policies such as drought relief, feeding schemes, destitute policies and old age pensions have failed to achieve their desired goals” (2017: 6). Maundeni (2003) has observed that Botswana faces high inequalities with many of its citizens earning less than enough to meet basic needs.

Today Botswana still boasts of such shameful schemes as the Presidential Housing Appeal, which has recently been re-branded ‘the National Housing Appeal’ (henceforth NHA). The NHA “calls on all who are able i.e., individuals, groups of individuals and companies to help build houses for the needy. The intention is to have housed all needy Batswana by 2016. Government will for its part continue to play its role but would like to encourage others to partner with it for this cause.”<sup>2</sup> The question to ask is why the lives of the economically disadvantaged have not improved significantly fifty years after independence.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.gov.bw/en/news/presidents-housing-appeal/>



## **Esther in Dialogue with Botswana: A Contextual Endeavour**

The events of Botswana's fiftieth independence anniversary (abbreviated as Bot50) celebrations need to be scrutinized in the light of the present socio-economic issues above. What really happened? Without glamorizing the situation, it is understood that the story of the book of Esther summarized above resembles the Botswana situation. However, careful scrutiny of both stories is in order.

Xerxes' kingdom was undoubtedly economically wealthy and the story reminds one of the extravagant Bot50 celebrations, a point described poignantly by Mogalakwe thus:

Botswana, who is a much-vaunted African success story, turned 50 on 30 September 2016, amidst much pomp and ceremony. The tagline for the occasion was Botswana50: United and Proud. So, are Batswana united and proud? (2017:1).

The Botswana government splashed the nation's funds at the Bot50 celebrations leading government expenditure to reach record high as noted below:

P100 million was allocated to be spent on the Bot50 celebrations. The event coordinator Charity Kgotlafela said additional funding could still be sought towards the event though there are competing needs such as tertiary education funding and drought relief interventions because challenges will forever be and people must live amidst them" (Sunday Standard Commentary, 19 Aug 2016).

The events were unbelievable; from painting of stones and old tyres put along roads, to preparing banquets for some invited dignitaries from around the world, who never turned up according to some reports. We can see a resemblance of the 180 days of celebration and King Xerxes' extravagance in Esther 1: 4-8, which were all at the expense of the national budget. Botswana's ruling Democratic Party of the then President Lieutenant Ian Khama Seretse Khama, like King Xerxes spent extravagantly on the Bot50 celebrations despite the continuing struggles of the nation.

At the end of the celebrations, government sent out memoranda declaring that the same government is now struggling financially. The situation affected many important government sectors. For instance, the Ministry of Education and Skills Development reported that government would not fund many educational programmes including more than 60% of the courses in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Education.

As the Monitor News Paper recalls:

This trend is not only starting to show recently, one could count back to a period spurning five years or more when primary school and secondary school textbooks and exercise books got a sustained knock that continues up to today. There are no text books, pupils are forced to share the books in class nowadays, whether it is at primary

or secondary school level...At higher education the problem has been precipitating in recent years resulting in the logjam we found ourselves in today; colleges and universities are being owed tens of millions of Pula by government, some debts going back to a period of 4-5 years. (The Monitor, 7 Nov 2016).

The situation is further decried by opposition party member of Parliament Dithapelo Keorapetse of Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) who maintains that:

Government has less revenue than expenditure, these budget deficits are financed through borrowing. It has been going on for some time but not as frequent and for such large amounts until in the recent past...The country has for instance borrowed a total of P10 billion from the African Development Bank (AFDB) to stimulate the economy. Several capital projects were also financed by loans from AFDB including Morupule B, North-South Water Carrier Projects and the Kazungula Bridge. (Mmegi News Paper, 7 April 2017).

Much like in the Esther narrative, the people of Botswana continue to suffer lack, injustice and inequality. Thus if the active youth, at the prime of their lives cannot get jobs and if people continue to live on hand outs and humanitarian aids like the National Housing Appeal referred to earlier, what does it mean for the world to speak of Botswana as a success story? It is convincing as Mogalakwe (2003) concludes; “the story of Botswana as an ‘African miracle’ is one of a mistaken identity”. In the Esther narrative, we do not hear of unemployment rates, or outright elite corruption, as in the case of contemporary Botswana (Good, 1994; Mogalakwe, 2003, 2008, 2017). However, a cursory glance at the events of the narrative suggests that there is a lot that was happening to the ordinary people. Thus, it would not be an exaggeration to conclude that the book only gives the reader what could be termed a tip of an iceberg. Reading between the lines of what happens to Vashti and Esther is merely an indicator that King Xerxes had no regard for the ordinary people, let alone women.

Considering the actions of Vashti and Esther, one might learn a few lessons. Vashti resists oppression and defends her dignity although her bold actions land her in trouble with those in power. However, her story is a legacy through which she continues to encourage the powerless others that it is better to be banished from the palace than to accept injustice and humiliation (Kebaneilwe, 2011; Gill, 2003 and Darr, 1991). Her tale reminds one of Nelson Mandela’s assertion that “to deny people their human right is to challenge their very humanity”. Vashti felt that her very essence of humanity was challenged when she was told to strip naked for a drunken male bunch (Esther 1:11) and as such she took a stance to say no to the injustice (Gill, 2003).

Contrary to Vashti’s boldness, Batswana<sup>3</sup> are complacent and content with the international accolades that they are a peaceful and peace-loving nation. They watch injustices thrive and

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<sup>3</sup> The term “Batswana” refers to Botswana citizens.

their humanity challenged as they go hungry in the midst of plenty and just look the other way and chant *go tlaa siama*, it will be well, a statement they make all the time while the country goes to the dogs so to speak.

A painful thing happened as Botswana was preparing for the lavish Bot50 celebrations and as usual, Botswana looked the other way. *The Sunday Standard News Paper* carried the following report:

On Monday afternoon a group of young unemployed citizens, mainly with tertiary education set out to demonstrate to Members of Parliament about their enduring plight. Many of these young people said while the country is gearing up for festivities that are part of the golden jubilee to celebrate 50 years of independence, for many of them they feel they do not have anything to show for the success of the past 50 years the world likes to talk so much when referring to Botswana. These young people said while the country continues to be showered with praises and accolades of being a star pupil in the African continent when it comes to economic management and low levels of corruption, for them the benefits have simply not come their way. In response, the police descended on them with shocking brutality that even embarrassed some of the better-known adherents of the establishment. It is difficult not to sympathize with the demonstrators (*Sunday Standard News Paper*, 14 Aug 2016).

The entire country ignored the incident making one to wonder if indifference qualifies as being peaceful or peace loving. Such a stance demonstrates undesirable passivity. Botswana need to wake up and resolve to defend their dignity and that of their youth. There are other instances where the nation could have come together and voiced out displeasure to the leadership of the country but never did anything. Vashti still speaks to Botswana to rise up and tackle the injustices, inequalities and corruption from the leaders without fear of the consequences. Although Vashti got banished not only from the palace but from the text itself (Kebaneilwe, 2011: 378), for standing up for her own dignity, her legacy continues beyond the banishment.

The character of Esther brings in the issue of HIV and AIDS. Esther must have lived in an HIV and AIDS free era. Unlike her predecessor (Vashti), the text portrays Esther as a stereotypical woman in a man's world (Darr, 2003: 165). She says yes to the authorities. She wins favour by parading her beauty (Esther 2: 2-8) and by her ability to satisfy sexually (Esther. 2:12-17) see also (Darr, 2003 and De Troyer, 1995). Her credentials that won her a place in the palace were thus purely physical and sexual (Fontaine, 2002). Esther's story alludes to what the king desired earlier with Vashti (Esther 1:11). Women were to parade their beauty for men's sexual satisfaction. The expectation was for women to comply and never to question men's selfish demands.

Unfortunately, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century HIV and AIDS era, Esther is not a good example. However, many of our youth have no choice but to follow Esther's example in their efforts to make a living. Many who are unemployed or under paid and exploited by the labour system, turn to

what scholars refer to as transactional sexual relationships in their quest for survival (Leclerc–Madlala, 2008; Weiser, *et.al.*, 2007; Nkosana, *et.al.*, 2007). It is now commonplace to find older men sexually exploiting younger women in what is commonly referred to as “*ma14*,” literally, ‘the fourteen year olds.’ The term must derive from the fact that in most cases the girls are a lot younger than the men are. It is also notable that the men, in many cases, are well off in comparison to the girls and hence are able to lure them into transactional sex. A study conducted in three Southern African countries entitled “Community views of inter-generational sex: Findings from focus groups in Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland,” by Cockcroft, *et.al.*, (2010) sheds light on what is going-on in the sex industry:

The young women were unanimous that they had sex with older men for material gain: Money or other material goods: “What would a guy your age do for you? He has to go ask for two Rands from his mother”.

Some men alluded to the transactional nature of the arrangement: “You don’t need to struggle to get the young girls because they need the money” (Cockcroft, *et.al.* 2010).

The above findings, by analogy, show why Esther gave in to the demands of her system; to parade her beauty and to satisfy sexually. She was a foreigner, an orphan and had no means of survival (Esther 2). She used what was readily available to her; her body. That is, her body and sexuality became asserts and vehicles through which she could get access to what was otherwise inaccessible to her, namely, the luxuries of the palace. It is understood that the youth, especially females, in Botswana today, find themselves in the footsteps of Esther. For them it includes being given money as we have already seen, or even being given employment. It is inevitable that in a corrupt system of governance as in Botswana, even getting a job that one has trained for might require more than the certificate and experience and go as far as one’s underpants.

Of great concern is that in the background of all these challenges perpetrated by bad governance, Botswana envisions a Zero HIV transmission by 2020. The greatest worry is that, if the socio-economic situation continues to deteriorate as figures of unemployment and HIV indicate; the dreams of the Batswana will be shattered under their watch. In the absence of decent means of survival, sex work can no longer be relegated to a few but can only become normalized in the form of transactional and intergenerational sexual relationships. Such power versus powerlessness-type of relations thrive in the inequalities, injustices and dehumanising state of affairs prevalent in contemporary Botswana

## **Conclusion**

The biblical Book of Esther recounts a tale of resilience, shame, victimization, tragedy, power versus powerlessness, gender and economic-inequality, deprivation of freedom and disregard for human rights. However, it is also a tale of hope for the downtrodden, the oppressed and suppressed and victory for the feint-hearted. Read within and for the context of Botswana with

her HIV and AIDS and prevailing socio-economic status, the book speaks to the people. First, it cautions those in power that they can be challenged at any point in time by the weakest in society, for that matter.

The disposal of queen Vashti was occasioned through the advice of the eunuchs (Esther 1: 10-22) who by virtue of their castration were weak and yet more powerful over all women including the queen. However, the lesson is that, in the face of an unjust system which has suppressed the voices of the ordinary, it is possible that even the least of its victims are well capable of rising up for what they believe to be their rights. To the surprise of her lording husband, the king, Vashti took a stand and demonstrated that enough can be enough. Her actions to defend herself may have been in waiting for too long but finally the day came and she threatened the entire patriarchal system.

The example of Esther and her actions in desperation to save her people may not be an appealing one given the HIV and AIDS context of Botswana. We have noted that despite the situation many of our youth find themselves forced into unhealthy sexual relations of transactional sex for material gain. Studies have indicated that the situation contributes to the prevalence of HIV among especially the youth. They need to be proactive in order to change the situation. It is imperative to voice out grievances and challenge corrupt systems than to expose oneself to HIV infection and other ills that come with using one's body to gain access to a living of some sort.

Contrary to international accolades (Allen, *et.al.*, 2004:1143), Botswana is characterized by the realities of lack, injustice, inequality and unemployment, especially of the youth. All these coupled with HIV and AIDS, have led Botswana to lose the gains that she had made soon after independence. Botswana need to be proactive and address the situation. There is urgent need to address the rampant elite corruption by those in high offices. It is time that all Botswana are engaged in framing and mapping the future of a potentially prosperous nation.

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# THE USE OF SESOTHO LANGUAGE IN COMMUNICATING PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES RELATED TO THE AIDS PANDEMIC IN LESOTHO

Maboleba Kolobe & Muringani, Bertha

## Abstract

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*Health is one of the fundamental needs of human beings. As a result, it is important for ministries of health and other relevant authorities to effectively communicate health information to everyone in their nation in the local language. But the question is: How effective is the use of local languages in communicating health issues such as AIDS? This study takes a closer look at the use of Sesotho to communicate AIDS information to Basotho in Lesotho. The focus of the study is the communicative strategies employed by this speech community. To achieve this, a thematic content analysis of corpus collected from music, mass media, theatre for development and others such as public speaking is done. An analysis of the Sesotho speech community is made to find out communication patterns used in the coverage of the AIDS pandemic. The study reveals that Sesotho speech community employs various communicative strategies to conscientize Basotho on this pandemic. This study therefore, proposes a more intense approach to fighting AIDS especially by using local languages to reach everyone.*

**Keywords:** AIDS prevention, AIDS, Africa, continent, health communication, communicative strategies

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## Introduction

Health is one of the fundamental needs of human beings. As a result, it is important for ministries of health and other relevant authorities to effectively communicate health information to everyone in their nations through local languages. This paper seeks to address the effectiveness of communicative strategies and the use of Sesotho in disseminating HIV/AIDS information to Basotho in Lesotho.

Each human language is a complex of systems that enables speakers of the language to communicate with each other, to among others, express ideas, hypotheses, emotions and desires, <http://linguistics.ucsc.edu/about/what-is-linguistics.html>. According to Steinberg (2007), these expressions contain combinations of functions that convey referential, expressive, conative, phatic, poetic and metalinguistic functions. All these build into a wholesome human being who uses language to be understood and understand others as well. As one communicates, Steinberg (1999: 116) rightly reveals there is a need to be emphatic “step out of your own frame of reference and see things from the audience’s point of view”.

## **Communication and health issues**

There are several definitions of health communication (Donohew and Ray, 1990; Healthy People 2010 final review). Generally, communication in public health is the art of disseminating, interpreting, influencing and motivating the public on the important issues of public health at the individual or community level. It involves the use of communication strategies to help patients and colleagues cope with feelings of “depersonalisation, rejection and even alienation” (Rensburg, 1996; Faurie, 2000). The significance of studies on health discourse is evident in Steinberg’s (2007: 307) who writes that

Health providers or professionals, including nurses, doctors, dentists, health administrators and social workers, have been sharply criticized for lack of communication skills. The media in countries all over the world are decrying the lack of effective and satisfying healthcare communication.... Even though it has been established that communication is the most important tool health professionals have in providing healthcare for their clients....

## **Situating HIV/AIDS in Lesotho**

The Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) refers to the virus that attacks and destroys the immune system in the human body (World Health Organisation, 2018). According to Help Lesotho Organization, Lesotho has the second highest HIV prevalence rate in the world after Swaziland. In fact, 25% of its population or one in four people are living with HIV, a virus that causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) if not treated. The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Lesotho has had a devastating impact on the economy, social structure and capacity of families to care for themselves, <https://www.helplesotho.org/lesotho/lesothohivaid-in-lesotho/>. This points to the dire need to sensitise Basotho, in their language, about the epidemic, especially how it is contracted, spread and prevention. It also shows the importance of researching on effective ways to communicate such vital information to the entire nation as does the present study.

The first case of HIV in Lesotho was reported in 1986 (AVERT, 2018). After its detection, the country had been engaged in numerous attempts to combat the virus through government, non-government and public platforms. The virus became a great concern so much that His Majesty King Letsie 111, in 2002, declared it a national disaster and took stern measures to control the epidemic as indicated in his speech below,

The cost of HIV/AIDS pandemic in human, social, and economic terms is indeed very high...To address the pandemic, HIV prevention needs to be a priority for the youth, and my government has developed a national policy and a strategic plan and has established Lesotho AIDS Prevention Coordination Authority (The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2016).

Having admitted that AIDS is not just a health issue, but a development and security disaster, the Lesotho government instructed every ministry to allocate 2% of its budget to AIDS awareness activities (UNAIDS, 2018; Makatjane et al., 2009). According to (AVERT, 2018), Lesotho further responded to HIV/AIDS pandemic by running, among others, programmes such as condom availability and use. The campaign was administered by Lesotho's National AIDS Commission (NAC) which administered the distribution of condoms to patients of HIV/AIDS in 2015 (AVERT, 2018). HIV education was another attempt undertaken by Lesotho's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and NAC in collaboration with behaviour-change-organization *Mantsoapo* to target students and the public with HIV-risk and prevention messages. In addition, Lesotho implemented the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) in 2010 in collaboration with the World Health Organisation to educate and alleviate HIV risk in pregnant women. Further the Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) was introduced to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The Lesotho Global AIDS Response Country Progress Report (2002) highlights a number of key affected populations in Lesotho including women and young girls, factory workers, orphans and children and men who have sex with men. These populations mostly comprise the lower classes of Basotho society, a factor that has to be considered when selecting communication strategies that can effectively communicate information on HIV/AIDS. It means that the strategies must reach all Basotho irrespective of class.

### **Barriers to HIV Prevention in Lesotho**

Despite the mentioned efforts to fight the virus, there are challenges to their success. According to the People Living with HIV Stigma Index Report, HIV prevention is still challenged by HIV-related stigma and discrimination (also see Thuube and Moloi, 2012; Seephephe, 2018). The report reveals that people with HIV have been denied access to healthcare services such as family planning and reproductive health services. Finances are another challenge which impacts negatively on HIV prevention measures. There is no sufficient funding towards alleviating HIV risks in Lesotho (AVERT, 2018). Polygamy is also a barrier particularly that men have sex with any of the wives as they wish with or without protection. This is worsened by the submissive culture of Basotho women who are not expected to contest that.

In addition, inaccessibility to healthcare is a major structural challenge in combating the pandemic. For example, due to Lesotho's mountainous and economic status, many people in Lesotho struggle to access health services because either the place will be too difficult to reach or there will be no money to travel to the centres or even to pay for the services.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study employs both Entertainment Education (EE) and social construction frameworks since it foregrounds language form and function as shown in Leshota (2012). The former is

viewed as “The process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience knowledge about an educational issue, create favourable attitudes, and change overt behaviours” (Singhal and Rogers, 1999: 9). The authors state that EE programmes aim to encourage not only individual behavioural change, but also contribute to social change, which is defined as the process in which an alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system. They suggest that social change can occur at the level of the individual, community, organization or society. Parker et. al. (2000) add that social and behaviour change should be viewed as a long-term process that happens over many years of diverse strategies and interventions. The latter critically analyses the concept of language and use. It displays the relationship between the world people live in and the realities of life through language (Burr, 2003: 4-5).

Freedman and Combs (1996: 23) reiterate Burr’s observation that the theory helps the society to make “connections between the world we live in and the meanings we use and that use us as well.” The theory puts language as a crucial factor of the social interaction between people since the social processes are institutionalized and legitimated by means of language. The current study embraces EE’s central notion of language as it centres on the use of Sesotho language to conscientise Basotho on HIV/AIDS pandemic. The behavioural and social change components of the theory are also relevant to the study as depicted in WHO (2018) that HIV can be controlled through behavioural change such as using a condom.

### **Communicating HIV/AIDS Information in Lesotho**

Previous research (Seephephe, 2018; Thuube and Molo, 2012) has shown that during the past decade or so HIV/AIDS communication was more inclined to intimidating and scaring people from behaviour that would result in getting infected. The pandemic was presented through stereotyped imagery of bedridden and skeletal AIDS sufferers. Such a depiction was meant to scare the target audience from indulging in activities, especially sexual ones, which might cause infection.

Even today this kind of approach to communicating HIV/AIDS information is still there because we read posters with messages such as “God forgives but AIDS does not”, “AIDS kills” and “Graduate with A’s, not with AIDS” posted for the general public in strategic places such as road junctions. However, there is evidence to support that the communicative purpose has now shifted towards educating people about the pandemic. It is the educative and informative purposes of HIV/AIDS communication that this paper focuses on, taking into account the different communication strategies employed in Sesotho language.

### **Lyrical presentation**

Music is one of the strategies employed by Basotho to create awareness on the prevention and effects of the virus. As stated by Phafoli (2005: 105), although music is used for entertainment,

it has also become a form of self-expression of the concerns of the society. Guma (1967:102) states that songs are descriptive of the “joys, sorrows, hopes and aspirations of the individual”. Similarly, Finnegan (1984: 274) suggests that songs are channels of reporting and commenting on “current affairs, for political pressure, for propaganda, and to reflect and mould public opinion”.

Specifically, as illustrated later, Basotho artists contribute in giving the public hope of combating HIV through their music. They hope that their music would influence others’ behaviour and help prevent the spread of AIDS as their songs are compressed. Graham (1988: 10) summarises the importance of music as follows:

Music has been one of the continent’s strongest characters, influencing the social and cultural development of societies beyond the shores of Africa. ...Music acts as cement, which holds the society together- a hidden form of consciousness which is at once both more pervasive and more important than the overt forms of resistance to the exigencies of everyday life. Music constitutes the bed-rock, the grassroots of popular consciousness.

It is believed that as people enjoy the lyrics that go with the music, they also absorb the message behind those lyrics. Since the message would be channelled in Sesotho, its accessibility and/or consumption are high. In Lesotho, coverage of AIDS in songs includes prevention against HIV/AIDS, causes, dangers brought by the virus, nature of the virus and how to live with the virus after contracting it.

Consider the contents of the songs as adapted from Phafoli (2005):

1. *Chaba sa Africa le mamele melao, le mamele likeletso (African nations be respectful and heed advice)*
2. *AIDS ke lefu le sehloho, sechaba se felile (AIDS is a terrible disease, people are dying)*
3. *Tichere li a ruta le likolong koana ka lefu le sehloho (Teachers are teaching about this terrible disease)*
4. *Liboholo li a bua le lia-le-moeeng (Broadcasters are talking about it on air)*
5. *Lingaka li a bua lipetlele koana ka lefu lena (Doctors are talking about it in hospitals)*
6. *Baruti ba ea ruta likerekeng Ma-Africa (Preachers are preaching about it in churches Africans)*
7. *Babusi ba a bua le mamele melao le likeletso (Governments talk about it, listen to advice)*

(A song by Mokete Chakela, 2002)

Other song lyrics that draw the attention of Basotho to the incurable nature of the virus are:

8. *AIDS ha e phekolehe , phofu ea eona ha e phekolehe (AIDS has no cure, its victim never recovers)*
9. *E tsamaisoa sepetlele joalo-joalo (Its victim goes to hospital non-stop)*

(A song by Kheleke tsa Lesotho, 2002)

10. *Le nka e monyane le e moholo (It kills the young and the old)*

11. *Batho ba petetsana ho ea mabitleng (People are pushing their way to cemeteries)*

(A song by Mantsa, 2001)

Through music as a communication strategy, the public is educated on the virus and its effects. This communication is directed to all members of the society without singling out individuals and this makes it less offensive and more acceptable. As observed by other researchers such as Phafoli (2005), this type of music performs a double role in Basotho society, that is, to entertain and to disseminate information on HIV/AIDS.

## Mass media

The study revealed the use of mass media in disseminating health promotion messages. For example, the use of posters is one such strategy. These are mostly used to advertise campaigns for HIV/AIDS programmes such as *RolaKatiba* (literally meaning ‘put off head-covering’). This campaign became popular in Lesotho because of the ambiguity of its Sesotho name. Its pragmatic meaning is ‘circumcise’, which is different from the literal one. Again, data revealed the wide use of printed materials such as magazines such as *Phela* (Live!) and *Khetho ea ka* (It’s my choice) together with pamphlets and/or brochures written in Sesotho. The examples are shown below:

As adopted from UNAIDS, 2018



### Discordance ke eng?



4

Discordance ke ha lipakeng tsa batho ba ratanang kapa ba arolelanang likobo ka thobalano moloho e mong a na le tsoaetsa ea HIV e mong a se na eona. Ha molekane oa hau a se na tsoaetsa ke leihlohonolo. Ha ho bolele hore a ka se be le eona. Ha uena le molekane oa hau le ipheha kotsing, molekane oa hau a kanna a tsoaetseha kamoso. Sireletsa molekane oa hau ka ho etsa thobalano e sireletsehileng. (Mohlala, tsebeliso ea likhohlopo).

Hona le mekhalo ea tsehetso (support group) e tsehetsang balekane/baratani bao boemo ba bona ba HIV bo sa tsoaneng, e ka ba thusang hore ba ithule ho ba bang ba boemong bo tsoaneng le ba bona.

**U ka sireletsa molekane oa hau khahlanong le HIV ka ho sebelisa khohlopo ka nepo ka linako tsohle ha u etsa thobalano.** Khotlaetsa molekane oa hau ho ea Tlhabolong le Tlhabobong ea HIV ele hore a tsebe boemo ba hae.

**BALEKANE/BARATANI BAO BOEMO BA BONA BA HIV BO SA TSOANENG BA KA PHELA BA THABILE LILEMO TSE NGATA BA SA TSOAETSANE. LE LOKELA HO SEBETSA 'MOHO HO TSEHETSANA LE HO SIRELETSA NA KHAHLANONG LE HIV.**

### Na ntse nka etsa thobalano?



4

El Batho ba nang le HIV ba ntse ba etsa thobalano e monate e khotsafatsang empa ho bohlokoa ho etsa e sireletsehileng. Thobalano e sireletsehileng e bolele hore:

- U sebelisa khohlopo hantle nako eohle ha u etsa thobalano.
- U tsepahalla molekane oa hau.
- U tsebisana molekane oa hau boemo ba hau 'me u mo khotlaetse ho hlaloha.

**U KA TSOELA-PELE HO E TSA THOBALANO E SIRELETSEHILENG. HO BOHLOKOA HO E TSA THOBALANO E SIRELETSEHILENG HORE LE BOLOKEHE LE MOLEKANE OA HAU.**

Hopola hore ho na le mekhwa e meng e bolokehileng ea ho bontsana lerato le molekane oa hau, e kenyelletsang ho sunana ho tsoarana le ho akana.

U lokela ho nka baloarabelo ba ho fokotsa menyella ea ho fetsetsa HIV ho molekane oa hau le ho itsoaetsa hape.

### Tlhaloso ea Mantsoe:

**AIDS:** Ke lefu le bang teng ha HIV e bolale masole a 'mele (CD4) a hau kaofela 'me 'mele o se o sa tsebe ho loantša mafu.

**ARVs:** Ke meluta e fapaneng ea litlhare e kokobetsang bohale ba kokoana-hloko ea HIV ka ho sireletsa sesole sa hau ha 'mele.

**CD4s:** Ke masole a 'mele.

**Discordance:** Ha motho e mong ikampanong tsa thobalano a e-na le HIV empa e mong a se na eona. Hona ha ho bolele hore ea se nang eona a ka se be le eona.

**HIV:** Ke kokoana-Hloko e bakiang AIDS.

**Ho bua ka boemo ha hau pheletatsa:** Ho boelile motho e mong ka boemo ba hau ba HIV.

**Ho phela u ikamohetse, u ikamohetse:** Ho ikometa bophelo le 'mele oa hau haeba u phela le HIV.

**Mekhatlo ea tšehetsa:** Sehlopha sa batho se kopanang khaletsa ho seka-seka na se ka phela se ikamohetse joang.

**Sekhobo:** Hobane le lihlong ka lebaka la boemo ba hau.

**Sesole sa 'mele:** Likarolo tsa 'mele tse sireletsang 'mele oa hau ikhahlanong le mafu.

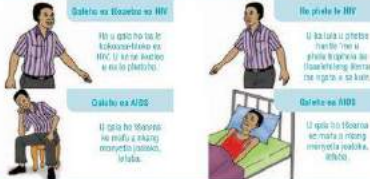
**Nha fumana litlhaloso tsa ling hokae?**  
Litlhaloso tsa bophelo tsa muso, tsa kholeko le tse ikamohetsang.

### Malebela a ho lula u phetse hantle



**HOPOLA: MOTHO EA NANG LE TŠOAEISO EA HIV A KA PHELA BOPHELO BO TLOAELEHLENG, BO ATLEHLENG EBILE BO MATLAFETSE HAFEELE A IKAMOHETSE A LULA A PHETSE HANTLE.**

### Mothati ea HIV ke efe?



**HIV e bolaea sesole sa 'mele butle.** Ho ka nka ilemo tse ngata ho tloha ka nako eo HIV e kenang 'meleng oa hau ho isa ha u tsoara ka AIDS.

**Hopola hore HIV e ka feta ka thobalano e sa sireletsehlang nako eohle ha u phela le HIV.** Ho bohlokoa ho etsa thobalano e sireletsehlang le ho khotlaetsa motekane oa hau ho ea Tlhalobong le Tlhalobong ea HIV.

Ho phela u tlhokometse ho ka kokobetsa sekhahla seo HIV e atang ka sona 'meleng oa hau le ho thibela tšoaetso tse ling hore u lule u le matla u bile u phetse hantle.

Hona le litlhare tse thehetatsang kokoana-hloko ea HIV tse thusang ho sireletsa sesole sa 'mele le hore HIV e nke nako e telele pele e ka ba AIDS.

**MOTHO EA PHELANG LE HIV A KA PHELA BOPHELO BO BOTLE, BO TLOAELEHLENG HA A IKAMOHETSE, A ITLHOKOMETSE.**

### Hobane'ng ho le bohlokoa ho bua ka boemo ba hau?



Ho boelile motho eo u mo tšepang ka boemo ba hau, ho ka u thusa ho ikamohela le ho fumana tšehetsa eo u e hlokanang hore u lule u phetse hantle.

**Ho bohlokoa hore motekane oa hau a ee tlhalobong le ho fumana litlhare e le ho sireletsa bophelo ba hae.** Ha u bua ka boemo ba hau, u ka khotlaetsa motekane oa hau ho ea hlalobela le ho fumana tlhahlobo le litlhare ele hore a lule a phetse hantle.

Mokhoa o motle oa ho loantša sekhobo ho batho ba phelang le HIV ke ho bua ka boemo ba bona. Ha u soabela boemo ba hau ba HIV, u ka fela ho bo patla eha ha u ikamohela. Ho bohlokoa hore u seke ua ikodihleka kapa ua beha molato ho ba bang. Motho e mong le e mong a ka ba le tšoaetso sa HIV.

**HO BUA KA BOEMO BA HAU LE MOTHO EO U MO TŠEPANG KE MOTHATI OA PELE OA HO IKAMOHELA LE HO FUMANA TŠEHETSO.**

Various mass media tend to be favourable due to their coverage capacity. The materials provide instructions on how to use prevention measures as well as educating the audience on its



treatment. Currie et. al. (2001) in Locher (2006) support that the provision of educational information in print form is considered to be a fundamental prerequisite of consumer participation in health care. Lesotho is no exception in this adventure. The media can help to de-stigmatise the disease where stigmatisation is still the case. Mass media approaches have already been effective in improving people's knowledge about HIV/AIDS and reducing associated stigma throughout sub-Saharan Africa (AVERT, 2018). However, it should be noted that this channel of communication is somewhat of restricted to literate members of society and excludes the illiterate ones. This shows limitations of print media compared to music as channels of communication.

Other mass media platforms like television are also used to communicate healthcare issues including HIV/AIDS. For example, *Khetho ea ka* was again televised on Lesotho television. Another famous drama geared to create awareness on HIV/AIDS pandemic entitled *Kau la Poho* (a male cockerel) was featured on Lesotho television. The two dramas have been produced by Lesotho's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and NAC, in collaboration with *Mantsoapo*, to target students and the society (AVERT, 2018).

The use of radio is another communication strategy used to disseminate health education messages. One would hear radio listeners engaging in general discussions and debate relating to HIV/AIDS over radio stations in Lesotho. Based on Lesotho's demography and socio-economic status, owning a radio and listening to one is accessible as compared to other mass media; therefore, it could be assumed that radio has a wider coverage. Thus radio, particularly battery-operated, becomes an effective communication strategy especially rural settlements with no electricity or television. Consequently, its coverage in a diverse range of settings has made radio a prime medium for educational initiatives, and various health topics have been addressed through radio programming throughout the developing world (Nwaerodu and Thompson, 2010). Radio can also serve as a forum to elicit listeners' reactions and comments as in a programme aired on Lesotho radio called *Tseba ka AIDS* (Know about AIDS). The programme adopts an interactive approach since radio callers share with one another information relating to HIV/AIDS. Holder and Treno (1997) and Wakefield and Chapman (2005) hail the media as powerful mechanisms in promoting awareness and education on public health issues. They suggest that the media should play a primary role in policy-making by informing the public about relevant issues and shaping public opinion.

### **Theatre for Development**

The use of theatre also features in communicating information about the pandemic. For example, it was revealed that there are live performances in various parts of Lesotho to educate the public about the virus. The National University of Lesotho's Theatre and Drama Association (TADA) is one of the many active advocates for HIV/AIDS awareness. The findings are in line with Ball's (1993) statement that theatrical health education provides an active learning environment since both the players and the audience benefit from the

performances. The author demonstrated that the live nature of performances brings elements of interpersonal communication that help personalize the issue for viewers. Direct interaction with the audience also enhances viewers' reception and internalization of the message. The study revealed that Non-governmental Organisations have worked together under a project called 'Theatre in Preventing HIV (TIPH) among young people and adolescents'. Here, young people share ideas and experience about HIV/AIDS prevention. For instance, the youth staged a play called *Joale ke nako* (It's about time) which, according to one of the participants was intended to explore "sexuality in the context of HIV and AIDS..." As we can tell from the title of the play, the language used was Sesotho.

### **Miscellaneous communicative strategies**

Public gatherings (*Pitsos*) were found as another informative way of disseminating information about HIV/AIDS (Interview with healthcare worker at the National University of Lesotho clinic). As such for measures intended for public consumption, the language used is usually Sesotho. Here the public is informed about the treatment of the virus and it is encouraged to support one another in fighting its spread. It is on these platforms that the patients freely engage in Sesotho.

Another platform conducted in Sesotho was driver mobilisation formed in partnership with Lesotho's Ministry of Health, USAID and Jhpiego (AVERT, 2018). The programme aimed to equip Basotho taxi drivers with the knowledge about HIV prevention. As drivers do their daily business, they would tell passengers in their vehicles about benefits of circumcising. If the passengers get convinced, they would then get a referral ticket to a clinic to get tested for HIV. The below caption adopted from (AVERT, 2018) shows a driver putting on a T-shirt with the message in Sesotho that *EBA LE BOIKARABELLO- ROLA KATIBA* (Be responsible-Circumcise):



According to healthcare workers at the National University of Lesotho, there is use of stickers on strategic areas such as public transport, teaching people about the virus. However, samples of such stickers could not be found at the time data for this paper was collected. One worker further claimed that health talk/education is a common practice in Lesotho as well. According to this worker, another strategy featuring in health talk is expert patients' talk. This is whereby people living with the virus declare their status openly in Sesotho and encourage others how to live with the virus and still remain healthy. Public gatherings such as funerals similarly feature as a way of reaching out to the public on matters concerning the virus. Though it is not a popular strategy, sometimes, the person who would have been chosen by the family of the deceased to explain the cause of the death would also be guided on whether to disclose the real cause of the deceased's death or not. Very rarely, some families do take that platform to conscientise the gathering on HIV/AIDS prevention. Even though this is not an effective strategy due to stigmatisation, it is worth noting that the language used would be Sesotho.

### **Effectiveness of the Strategies**

It could be argued that some of these strategies are considered effective in informing Basotho on matters relating to HIV/AIDS. For instance, print mass media is considered effective for literate Basotho population. That is, the use of Sesotho newspapers such as *Leselinyane la Basotho*, *Moeletsi oa Basotho* have a lot of information on HIV/AIDS as evidenced by extracts taken from Seephephe (2018) such as:

12. *AIDS ke boikarabello ba rona bohle* (AIDS is everybody's responsibility)

13. *Ha re tloheleng lipolotiki, re loantse HIV/AIDS* (Let's forget about politics but focus on fighting HIV/AIDS)
14. *Bacha buang nnete ka se jang bacha* (Youth say the truth about what kills youth)
15. *Kereke e rupela ka HIV/AIDS* (Church teaches about HIV/AIDS)
16. *Toantso ea lefu la likobo* (Fight against AIDS)
17. *Ho phephetheloa HIV/AIDS* (Fight against AIDS)
18. *Ba feny'a HIV/AIDS maseeng* (Fighting AIDS in children)
19. *Batsoali rutang bana ba lona ka AIDS* (Parents, teach your children about AIDS)

Basotho also use music to communicate messages relating HIV/AIDS as it has been shown earlier. This strategy is considered effective since it both entertains and educates. As people listen to music and are taken on by good lyrics, they listen to words and get the messages accompanying those lyrics. Some of the strategies are audience specific as it is the case with a Sesotho song entitled *EsengKaRonaBacha* (not with us youth) by a young Mosotho musician called Qekha (<https://twitter.com/sesothomedia>). Theatre for development also plays double role like music as the audience enjoy watching drama, they, at the same time learn about HIV/AIDS. They get entertained and educated simultaneously. Consistent with the UN Children's Fund (2010) that theatre creates a safe space to communicate information relating to HIV prevention.

Posters are also effective as they are positioned at strategic points where they are seen by the public repeatedly. They make the messages printed on them memorable and may surely bring behavioural change to people.

Generally, health administrators observed an increase in the number of patients who are testing for HIV/AIDS. This reflects positively on the impact that communicative strategies have on Basotho.

## Conclusion

This paper has shown different communication strategies including mass media, music and others, used to address the pandemic in Sesotho language. It is believed that communicating with Basotho in the language that they understand makes them to become more conscious of the seriousness of the matter and that improves their behaviour. Forman (2004) states that during the 1980s, American AIDS advocates co-opted the phrase, "silence equals death," to describe the danger of the lack of communication. Way back in 1986, when Lesotho first detected the virus, its patients were mocked and called names but with more advocacy,

stigmatisation and de-personalisation lessened. It is evident that lack of communication creates an environment where there is no voice to address the cause of infection among the most affected groups (Torwell and Rodney (2010)). The study concludes that for a successful behaviour change, use of local languages in communication has to be intensified.

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# UNDERSTANDING AIDS PANDEMIC BEYOND THE SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION: AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

Monaheng Mahlatsi

## Abstract

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*Currently, the fight against the AIDS pandemic in Africa depends unilaterally on scientific knowledge that is based on methods of observation and experimentation. This one-sided approach prevents people from knowing and understanding the pandemic holistically. Consequently, medical doctors fail to play their preventive and curative roles against the pandemic. Preventive and curative scientific efforts have been made to address the problem but all in vain. If the approach to the pandemic remains only scientific, the world in general and Africa in particular will continue to suffer from the pandemic. I argue that the spiritual cause of AIDS as understood by Africans beyond the scientific explanation is also important for knowing and understanding the pandemic holistically.*

**Keywords:** AIDS pandemic, scientific explanation, African Onto-epistemology, African philosophy

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## Introduction

In the area of health sciences, knowledge of the cause of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is unilaterally explained through the scientific methods of observation and experimentation as if there are no other alternatives. Contrary to scientific methods which ascribe the cause of the pandemic to the material cause (AIDS virus), Africans ascribe the cause of the pandemic to the spiritual cause (either God or ancestors). Today, it is not yet known with certainty whether the AIDS pandemic has been caused by the AIDS virus, God or ancestors. The uncertainty prevents some people from clearly understanding the pandemic holistically. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to investigate the spiritual cause of the AIDS epidemic which is left open by science.

The cardinal factor which magnifies the uncertainty is that the discussion about the cause of the AIDS pandemic is dominated by the scientific knowledge alone. The purpose of this paper is to synthesise both the scientific and African onto-epistemological explanations of the cause of the pandemic. In so doing, I will demonstrate that both explanations are equally important.

My justification of the equal importance is that, scientific knowledge is necessary for knowing the material cause while the African onto-epistemology is necessary for knowing the spiritual cause of the epidemic. If both methods are considered equally important, the cause of the epidemic could be known with certainty. That is to say, equal consideration of both the material and spiritual causes of the epidemic could make many people understand AIDS pandemic holistically. This would make the prevention and cure of the HIV/AIDS easier. Let us consider the scientific explanation of AIDS.



## **The scientific explanation of AIDS pandemic**

Clifford (1998: 476) observes that from the scientific perspective, AIDS is caused by the virus which attacks the white blood cells which produce antibodies in the bloodstream. According to May (1998: 458), AIDS is defined as the advanced stage of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) which is found in the blood and sexual fluids of a person living with HIV and in the breast milk of an infected woman. It is transmitted through sexual contact, mother to child during pregnancy, at birth or breastfeeding. Conway (1998:496) argues that, "It is not transmitted by shaking hands, sharing a drinking glass or even by being sneezed on."

Scientific research has revealed that many known cases of AIDS are thought to have been contracted by means of homosexuality (ibid, 493). However, there are also cases of heterosexual activities. Tauer (1998, 514) argues that despite the scientific findings that homosexuality contributes positively to the spread of the AIDS virus, homosexuality is also considered as a right of gay and lesbian people and it has been legalised in some countries such as South Africa. The legalisation has contributed to the spread of AIDS that ultimately causes death. Now the questions are: How can a State legalise a deadly behavior? Is it not an attempt to promote death over life?

Contrary to the promotion of the pandemic through the legalisation of homosexuality, a preventive strategy of Abstinence, Be faithful and Condomise (ABC) has been encouraged by medical doctors but has failed. Dube (2013: 193) observes that; "The widely publicised ABC prevention strategy, Abstain, Be faithful and Condomise, had no effect." Furthermore women, men and children continue to be raped by people who have HIV virus in their blood and sexual fluids. Parallel to the failure of this preventive strategy, is the continuous infection because of the absence of the AIDS cure. Harris and Holm (1998:463) argue that, "There is no cure, and the HIV-infected person is infectious throughout all phases of the infection." From the foregoing, it is crystal clear that science on its own has failed to prevent and cure the AIDS epidemic hence an alternative it is required. Christokis (1998: 525) notes that,

Proper conduct of an AIDS vaccine trial must be informed by not only the epidemiology and biology of HIV infection in different settings, but also by the ethical norms and cultural constraints prevailing in such settings.

Even though the scientific knowledge has not yet established the cure and effective preventive strategies AIDS, this does not mean that it is totally useless. Scientific knowledge is also important for at least two reasons. First, science is able to detect the material/physical cause of AIDS. Second, science can observe and experiment with the behavior of the virus. However, the major weakness of science is that it cannot observe and experiment with the spiritual cause of AIDS virus. For example, science cannot observe and experiment how God and ancestors cause AIDS. This weakness requires an alternative explanation which is provided by African philosophy.

## **Trends of African Philosophy**

Literature on African philosophy outlines four types of African philosophy which played a significant role in shaping African worldview. Africans in particular, philosophise through the use of the following four methods: ethnophilosophy, philosophic sagacity, nationalistic-ideological philosophy and professional philosophy. Kaphagawani (1998: 88) notes that "Then

ethnophilosophy, philosophic sagacity, nationalistic-ideological philosophy and professional philosophy turn out to be bivalent: they represent types of African philosophy on the one hand, and methods of philosophizing in Africa on the other.”

### *Ethnophilosophy*

According to Imbo (1998: 53-54), the term “ethnophilosophy” was initially introduced as defamation by professional philosophers in order to undermine the African worldview and cherish the western worldview. Moreover, Imbo (1998: 55) observes that;

The case of ethnophilosophy is its function as a descriptive anthropology. In contrast to the discursive, analytical philosophy, ethnophilosophy treats as philosophy the indigenous cosmologies, the traditional beliefs, myths and cosmology are believed to be interwoven into a complex ritual of practices that are the manifestation of philosophy.

Masolo (1994: 160) argues that, ethnophilosophy is an unwritten method of African philosophy which is understood to have a role of describing the African way of life. For example, it describes the African cosmology and beliefs. The descriptive role is done through the use of language which is full and rich with proverbs, culture, morality, myths and folktales to mention a few which teach one’s place in the community. The anthropocentric character of ethnophilosophy is realised from the use of the Sesotho maxim: “*motho ke motho ka batho*” According to Ramose (1999: 42), this means “to affirm one’s humanity of others and, on that basis, establish humane relations with them.” Therefore, the descriptive role of ethnophilosophy through the use of language positively describes the African way of life hence it can also describe the cosmology and beliefs of the AIDS pandemic.

### *Philosophic Sagacity*

The term “philosophic sagacity” is derived from the word “Sage” which refers to a wise man such as Thales or Socrates who are very popular in the history of Western philosophy. Sages are men and women who demonstrate wisdom in many areas of life such as health, education, good governance, ethics and religion. African sages are understood to be men and women who think critically and independently for the good of the community. Van Niekerk (1998: 79) argues that, “Sages are critical and independent thinkers who know their own minds and who maintain a critical distance.” For example, as it happened in Greece where there had been philosophers such as Thales and Socrates, there had also been African philosophers such as *Morena* Mohlomi and *Morena* Moshoeshoe.

*Morena* Moshoeshoe is regarded as a great philosopher of the *Basotho* nation who deserves credit for his distinct wisdom more especially in political leadership. In the same manner, *Morena* Mohlomi deserves credit of being a *ngaka* (traditional doctor). In contemporary Africa, there are still African sages such as *lingaka* (traditional doctors) who can demonstrate knowledge of the spiritual cause of AIDS. Even though the traditional doctor can demonstrate knowledge it is believed that the healing power does not come from him/her but from the supernatural power. Ramose (1999: 79) argues that:

The underlying idea here is that the certainty that the patient will be cured cannot be provided by *ngaka* precisely because the latter functions merely as a conduit through which the healing powers flow from the supernatural or

unknown source. Accordingly, the patient must trust the *ngaka* and also believe that ultimately, the cure lies in the supernatural source.

### *Nationalist-ideological Philosophy*

The Nationalist-ideological philosophy is normally referred to as the philosophy of political emancipation from Western domination. Given its emancipatory function, it demands a social revolution that is influenced by intellectual revolution. According to Nkrumah (1998: 81), “social revolution must therefore have a standing firmly behind it, an intellectual revolution [sic] a revolution in which our thinking and philosophy is directed towards the redemption of our society.” Given that science has dominated African epistemology, the liberation of African epistemology must be guided by thought.

The struggle of emancipating Africa from the scientific domination is not yet over since the legacy of Western domination through science and technology is still seen in all walks of life including the health sector. For example, science is dominating the AIDS pandemic discourse to the exclusion of the traditional African worldview. This exclusion requires African traditional doctors to employ the Nationalistic-ideological philosophy to liberate the traditional African knowledge of AIDS from the domination of scientific knowledge. Ramose (1999: 103 argues that “(...) Africa must be informed by a new philosophical paradigm capable of refuting and dislodging the social epistemology of domination.”

### *Professional Philosophy*

According to Kaphagawani (1998, 97-98), professional philosophy is chiefly associated with philosophers such as Hountondji, Wiredu, Oruka and Bodunrin. These are African philosophers who received Western education and saw African philosophy through Western spectacles. Some of them see the need for writing philosophy as a prerequisite of African philosophy while others oppose the idea. Hountondji (1984: 33) defines African philosophy as “a set of texts specifically the set of texts written by Africans and described as philosophical by their authors themselves.” It is acknowledged that this definition is complex and has been debated for a long period but what is important is the need for writing philosophy. The need for writing is important since writing preserves information for future generations. Therefore, professional philosophy is needed in order to preserve African knowledge of the spiritual cause of AIDS for future generations. Having demonstrated the nature of African philosophy through its four trends, let us link African philosophy with African epistemology.

## **Linking African Philosophy with African Epistemology**

African epistemology is explained in relational terms with African philosophy. However, there had been a debate on whether African philosophy exists or does not exist. For example, according to Ochieng'-Odhiambo (1997: 1) some Western philosophers view Africans as incapable of engaging in philosophical modes of inquiry due to lack of reason and civilization. On the one hand, the rejection of the existence of African philosophy implies the rejection of African epistemology since they coexist. On the other hand, the argument which holds that there is an African philosophy implies the existence of African epistemology.

Kaphagawani (1998: 205) argues that given that the debate on the existence of African philosophy has been continuing for many decades, it is worth noting that the debate has inclined

to the position that African philosophy exists. It is from this understanding of the coexistence of African philosophy and African epistemology that I raise the question: what is the cause of AIDS and to what extent can African epistemology provide knowledge of the spiritual cause of the epidemic?

Generally, epistemology is the universal study of theories of knowledge by all human beings. Kaphagawani (1998: 206) argues that, “epistemology is a branch of philosophy whose main focus is to analyze and evaluate claims of knowledge. And to the extent that all humans have the capacity to know, epistemology is universal regardless of culture, tribe or race.” In other words, epistemology is the universal capacity to acquire knowledge. However, even though epistemology is the universal acquisition of knowledge, both Africans and non-Africans may claim to have a specific knowledge of something which is not known to the other.

Ruch and Anyanwu (1981, 80) argues that the specific knowledge which excludes other people is possible because of different methods used for acquiring knowledge that differs from one place to another due to cultural experiences. For example, what is known to the British could not be known to *Basotho* (plural of *Mosotho*) and vice versa. It is from this observation that what is known to the British but not known to *Basotho* could be called “British epistemology”. In the same manner, what is known to *Basotho* but not known to the British could also be called “*Basotho* epistemology”. In this article, the term “African epistemology” is used to explain the mode of acquiring knowledge in Africa due to African cultural experiences and knowledge. Therefore, African epistemology is explained in the context of the African cultural experiences and knowledge not otherwise.

According to Placide Tempels (1959:72-3), African epistemology could be explained in two ways: First, it is a true knowledge or wisdom which is ontological knowledge. This refers to knowledge of different forces in their hierarchy and interaction. The hierarchy of forces starts from God who is the Supreme Being. It extends down to ancestors, living human beings, animals, plants and non-living things respectively. Second, African epistemology is a force. This means that, according to Africans, knowledge is hierarchical in the sense that, the hierarchy determines the force of knowledge. This also means that, all beings in the hierarchy do not possess equal knowledge. For example, knowledge possessed by God is not equal to knowledge possessed by human beings.

From the foregoing, it could be concluded that African epistemology is explained in terms of the hierarchy of forces in their spiritual reality. Moreover, African epistemology is understood as the knowledge of the ontological hierarchy of forces as well as their interaction hence it is referred to as African onto-epistemology. It goes without any doubt that the ordering of forces is made for a purpose known to God. Given that He is the designer of the hierarchy of forces, every force in the hierarchy depends on Him hence He knows the cause of every force, event and purpose including the AIDS epidemic.

On the spiritual level, Bakari (1997) observes that Africans perceive the world in a different way compared to the worldview imposed on them by Europeans. Different worldviews imply different experience and knowledge of things. In agreement with Bakari, Mbiti (1996: 67) argues that African epistemology is different from western epistemology since it puts more emphasis on spirituality hence it sees the world in religious terms. In other words, it explains the world through its spiritual cause. Thus, nature in general is considered by Africans as one reality which possesses spiritual reality.

It follows then that the AIDS pandemic in African epistemology is understood and known to have been caused by a spiritual rather than a material cause. Having linked African epistemology with African philosophy, let us move the spiritual cause of the AIDS pandemic as understood by African epistemology.

### **Understanding the AIDS pandemic beyond the scientific explanation: An African perspective**

The quest for knowing the spiritual cause of the AIDS pandemic needs one to understand the African explanation of the hierarchy of forces. According to Tempels (1959: 61), in the hierarchy of forces (God, ancestors, humans, animals, plants and non-living beings), every being possesses vital force or life principle. Given that God is on top of the hierarchy, He has the power to strengthen or weaken the vital force possessed by lower beings. Life in general belongs to God since He is the creator of all beings. It is out of His divine Will that He strengthens and preserves life (ibid: 120). Therefore, anything, any action or behavior is good as long as it strengthens the vital force and the opposite is bad. Tempels (1959: 121) argues that;

Every act, every detail of behavior, every attitude and every human custom which militates against vital force or against the increase of the hierarchy of the “muntu” is bad. The destruction of life is a conspiracy against the Divine plan; and the “muntu” knows that such destruction is, above all else, ontological sacrilege: that it is for that reason immoral and therefore unjust.

This view carries two implications. First, the AIDS pandemic is bad because it diminishes the vital force instead of strengthening it. Second, homosexuality is also bad because it does not increase the vital force but diminishes it. Therefore, it could be safely concluded that both AIDS and homosexuality are morally bad since they diminish the vital force/life.

How then do AIDS and homosexuality diminish vital force? According to the African experience and wisdom, it was by divine design that God created Adam and Eve not Adam and Joseph or Eve and Mary as spouses respectively. According to Charles and Maclaren (1982: 120), the sole purpose of creating male and female was to establish an institution of marriage in which sex is allowed for procreation between spouses. This implies that heterosexuality is natural while homosexuality is unnatural. On the contrary, with the advent of human rights, modern human beings have been empowered to freely engage in homosexuality which in turn plays a vital role in spreading HIV/AIDS virus. Consequently, millions of people in the world in general and Africa in particular suffer and die due to HIV/AIDS. Tempels (1959: 46) further argues that;

Every illness, wound or disappointment, all suffering, depression or fatigue, every injustice and every failure: all these are held to be, and are spoken of by the Bantu as, diminution of vital force.

Living human beings are related to every being in the hierarchy of forces including ancestors. All form part of the web of life/force in a community. Ancestors have the capacity to influence current generations through their experience, teachings, suffering and wisdom. Bujo (1998, 55) notes that, “African communitarian ethics functions in solidarity with the deceased, who remain alive among their descendants through their experience, wisdom and suffering.” It is worth noting that the disrespect of the teachings and wisdom of ancestors is offensive on the part of ancestors since they expect their descendants to respect, promote and protect life.

Therefore, to discard heterosexuality which is natural and was practiced by our fore-fathers and foremothers is to offend ancestors. Consequently, illness such as HIV/AIDS, disappointment, all kinds of suffering which diminish vital force/life befall living human beings.

## Conclusion

The scientific explanation of the AIDS pandemic is not accurate on its own since it is limited in its methods of observation and experimentation. Science rejects anything beyond these, especially the spiritual reality that is considered vital in African onto-epistemology. Africans have abandoned the value of African philosophy and epistemology and have adopted the scientific methods which recognise only the material reality over the spiritual reality. Consequently, the spiritual reality is devalued and regarded as meaningless and useless. This makes it difficult for medical doctors to accurately prevent and cure HIV/AIDS.

Given that scientific knowledge fails to approach reality in its spiritual form, it also fails to explore the spiritual cause of the AIDS pandemic. It is only able to explore the material cause of the AIDS pandemic which is the HIV/AIDS virus. This failure calls for an alternative that can explain the spiritual aspect of the pandemic and such an alternative is the African onto-epistemology that should be adapted and integrated into scientific methods in order to complement scientific knowledge. This can positively help health professionals in understanding the cause of AIDS holistically. Consequently, it would be easier to find effective preventive and curative strategies of the pandemic.

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# THE AFRICAN HUMANITY IN THE ERA OF HIV AND AIDS: A RE-READING OF THE *LIBERATION-MOTIFS* IN EX 3:7-10; 20: 2 IN THE SADAC CONTEXT.

Chris Ukachukwu Manus

## Abstract

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*The purpose of this paper is to access the significance of the original setting-in-life of Exodus 7:3 -10; 20: 2 as reservoirs of the 'good-news of God's powerful interventions among people who suffer adversities. This portion of the Exodus story and the underlying liberation motif are linked to the African contexts. Africans like the beleaguered Israelites await God to send charismatic leaders like Moses to collaborate with him to heal the infected and affected African populations. The paper argues that the same God who saved the Israelites from bondage is still accessible to Africans who are currently being oppressed by pandemics of all types; the worst being the inexorable HIV and AIDS epidemic. As a biblical-theological response to the cankerworm, the paper explores what the African nations in the SADC region are doing to eliminate the epidemic. The paper concludes on a clarion-call on the African scientific community, the medical professionals, social engineers and aid-donors to embrace God's benevolence as they struggle to assist the southern African states re-invent the wheel of progress in Africa's public health sector. Prayer is the "master-key" to God's door. African peoples are therefore enjoined to seek the face of God in prayers for divine intervention in these days of lamentation and grief.*

**Keywords:** Hermeneutics of life, Liberation motif, African humanity, Oppression, Reconciliation, Paradise, Devastation, Malaise.

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## Introduction

The paper exposes the socio-historical contexts of *Exodus* 7:3 -10; 20: 2 as an attempt to reconstruct the original setting-in-life of the passages as reservoirs of 'good-news of God's powerful interventions among people' who suffer much adversity as Africans are experiencing in the HIV/AIDS era. The outbreak of the epidemic has engendered devastation, woes and scourges on the African humanity raising the questions of why? Why? Is it that God does not love African? In this paper, attention is drawn to the miraculous liberation God accorded the children of Israel when they suffered enslavement, oppression and economic hardships in Egypt of old. The paper argues that the same God is still accessible to Africans who are being oppressed by pandemics of all types; the worst being the inexorable HIV/AIDS. Africans like the beleaguered Israelites await God to send charismatic leaders and people like Moses to collaborate with him to continue to heal the infected and affected populations. The revelation of the divine name, "I am who I am" in Exod. 3: 14, indicates God's commitment to be always



with his faithful and to deliver them from all that shackles humanity. There is no doubt that God needs the collaboration of all good-willed African medical and health specialists and other world agencies to diligently operationalize the slogan “Test and Treat” in all its ramifications in order to checkmate the rise and power of this contemporary monster and its oppression. The paper is a biblical-theological response to support what African nations in the SADC region are doing to eliminate the epidemic.

## Methodology

The *Redaction Critical* approach is adopted in this paper. The method involves a *Re-reading* of Exod. 7:3-10 and 20:2 in the era of HIV and AIDS in the SADC region. It provides the opportunity to blend the method that regards the author; namely the J and E authors as editors of their source material as the *Grundschrift* penned in vv.9-10. It exposes the manner in which the final *Redactor* (P) has shaped and moulded the sources to express his theological interests.<sup>4</sup> Certainly, Exod 7:3-10 and 20:2 belong to narratives that had existed since Hebrew antiquity. With the method emerges the possibility of seeing the authors of the Pentateuch exhibit pertinent theological perspectives adjudged relevant to us in Africa today. It draws our attention to the creative role of the author/s in telling stories of a Deity who responds to peoples’ hardships in the course of human history. This insight informs the contextual and theological orientation of my paper towards a *hermeneutics of life* by which I raise the question à la Theresa Okure: “How can the life experiences of the contemporary reader serve as key for re-interpreting and (understanding) the text under study?”<sup>5</sup>

With the approach, the Book of Exodus is being *re-read* not only as an historical and ancient masterpiece. It is *re-read* as a living word of God with an eye on the current crisis of the epidemic that “destroys the human T4 lymphocyte and causes immune system breakdown,...”<sup>6</sup> in Africa and the world. My approach offers me the *link* between the Bible and HIV and AIDS.<sup>7</sup> It is being *re-read* to address the African contexts; namely our *social location* where *this massive prevalence of HIV and AIDS*<sup>8</sup> is endemic. The SADC contexts have to be taken into account in the interpretation of texts. Here, the Exodus story is let to provide an opportunity to make an option for a *liberation hermeneutics* for People Living With AIDS (PLWAs). Such a contextual reading helps link the narrative and its *liberation motif* to the African context so that my interpretation focuses on the tragedy that has befallen African Christian communities as the *readers* than the Priestly editors/authors who had composed the narrative.

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<sup>4</sup> C.U. Manus, “Redaction Criticism”, in Manus C. U. , Course Material for T 305: New Testament Exegesis, Department of Theology & Religious Studies, National University of Lesotho, 2016/2017 Session, p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> T. Okure, “First Was Life, Not the Book” in T. Okure (ed.), To Cast Fire Upon the earth: Bible and Mission Collaborating in Today’s Multicultural Global Context, Cluster Publications, Natal, 2000, p. 198.

<sup>6</sup> National University of Lesotho: HIV and AIDS Policy, Morija Printing Works, Lesotho, 2009, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> See, Johanna Stiebert, “Does the Hebrew Bible Have Anything to Tell Us about HIV/AIDS”, in *Missionalia*, Vol. 29 No. 2 2001, pp. 175-176

<sup>8</sup> J.M. Bonino, “Social Location” in Virginia Fabella& R.S. Sugirtharajah (eds.), Dictionary of Third World Theologies, Maryknoll, New York, Orbis, 2000, p. 187.

In this regard, this *re-reading* is being done with an eye on the grave concern and experience of the harrowing distress and expenses the HIV and AIDS have been inflicting on the African population. It is hoped that this way of doing Contextual Biblical Exegesis with the *Redaction Critical approach* stands to help my readers come to a better understanding of the Priestly authors' ideology on the reality of divine intervention to *faith* people in times of pestilence. For the authors, God is ever in control of human history and so is in our times.

### **Re-reading Exodus 3:7-10 and 20:2**

Let us look at the texts in the light of my chosen methodology and the reflections that can be generated thereof.

(a) Exod 3:7-10.

V.7. But the Lord said, "I have witnessed the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry of complaint against their slave drivers, so I know well what they are suffering. 8. Therefore I have come down to rescue them from the hands of the Egyptians and lead them out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the country of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 9. So indeed the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have truly noted that the Egyptians are oppressing them. 10. Come, now, "I will send you to Pharaoh to lead my people, Israelites, out of Egypt".

### **Comments:**

This chapter documented within the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt; the most celebrated event in the whole of the Hebrew Bible focuses on the travails of the people in Egypt. God's acknowledgement of the afflictions of the people of God in Egypt is here depicted. The unit derives from the wider context of Exod. 3:1-4:17 known by most commentators as "The Call of Moses at the Mountain of God".<sup>9</sup> The Priestly editors and their tradition show great respect for life. The authors inspire modern readers to realize that God is ever mindful of the worth of human life which he had created and vitalized with his image and likeness (Gen 1: 22). It is not God's will that humanity should suffer misfortunes let alone afflictions and diseases. In the editors' sermon, Egypt and the Egyptians mentioned four times in the unit remain symbols of human misery, devastation, exploitation and wastage.

As Brown succinctly puts it, the spirit of the text is, according to the *Redactors*, that "God intervenes because he has seen and heard the cry of the suffering of his people and wishes to lead them out of Egypt".<sup>10</sup> The message of the text challenges us to propose *novel* ways and means to do battle against the current epidemic in order to "lead out" ourselves from this contemporary Egypt. We need to raise loud our "cry" for our people are suffering and must be led out of the current bondage. Africans are not the only race whose forebears had eaten the "forbidden fruit". The text behests us to raise our lamentations in consistent *prayer* to God to

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid; p. 46.

<sup>10</sup>R.E. Brown et al, The New Jerome Biblical Commentary, Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 1999, p. 46.

liberate our people from the current “*Egypt*”, that is, the devastation of the pandemic and the wickedness of its associated illnesses. In the light of the display of divine power in the divine act of deliverance of the oppressed, and with the covenant-making God on our side, Africans shall soon show HIV/AIDS the end of the road.

The mention of the Canaanites and the other nations, six in all, represent inhabitants in the land before the arrival of the Israelites who would constantly be a menace to them in remembering the wounds of oppression and distress. But God is so depicted to “have come down”, to mean that he had touched the human biosphere to perfect his “extraordinary intervention” (Gen 11:5-7)<sup>11</sup> in order to bring succour to suffering humanity. To crown it all, God decided to settle humankind in the “land flowing with milk and honey”; another symbol of the prevalence of divine providence and grant of longevity with assurance of food security and physical wellness (Gen 3:17;13:5;33:3). In v. 10, a figure like Moses, the *liberator* is offered as a divine choice of a human person to accomplish divine mission; especially in the healing of oppressed humanity. Does this figure not have strong messages of hope for African humankind now beset and unsettled by HIV and AIDS in this age?

(b) Exod 20:2

V:2: I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you out of the land Egypt, that place of slavery.

The context of Exod 20:2 is within chapters 20- 24 which provides the reader with a series of laws beginning with the Ten Commandments inclusive of the statutes of the Book of the Covenant.<sup>12</sup> Here, a theophanic voice is heard. This verse recapitulates God’s mighty deliverance of his people; that is, the divine deliverance broached in 3:7-10 as exposed above. The mediating role of Moses (vv. 3-9) is continued. Vv. 2-6 provide a strong assertion that Yahweh is the only deity in Israel. According to Richard J. Clifford “Since he defeated their former lord and master (Pharaoh) he and no other deity is their God”.<sup>13</sup> Here is encoded a cryptic introduction of God that is aimed at identifying his character and nature. He alone has the power to deliver his faithful from the dungeon of oppression and affliction. Once again, the “land of Egypt” is graphically depicted as a symbol of suffering, misery and affliction.

### **Focus of My Interpretation: The African Humanity in the Era of HIV and AIDS**

African humanity is the quality or state of being racially the humankind who live in the African continent. Contemporary discourse holds Africa as an HIV and AIDS beer-parlour. Since 30 years of its outbreak and penetration into the African continent, the pandemic has cost the

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<sup>11</sup> The African Bible, p. 99

<sup>12</sup> J. J. Collins, Introduction to the Hebrew Bible and Deutero-Canonical Books, 2nd Edition, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2014, pp. 109-114.

<sup>13</sup> R. J. Clifford, “Exodus”, in Brown et al, The New Jerome Biblical Commentary, p. 52

continent huge losses in human capital and is still unabatedly on the rampage wreaking multifarious damage to both the social and economic well-being of the African states. As at present, the statistics of the devastation is repulsively staggering.

South Africa, the nation nearly encircling the BOLESWA states happens to be one of the most severely affected nations by the AIDS epidemic. It lives with the largest number of HIV infections in the world and as senior brother to the surrounding states no doubt its contagion affects other SADC nations. South Africa's HIV status is defined as being "hyper-endemic" due to the high rate of HIV prevalence, the modes and drivers of the transmission which include, among others, migration, unserious perception of the risk and multiple and concurrent sexual partnership.<sup>14</sup> South Africa's ante-natal survey report published in July 2009, revealed that the general national HIV prevalence rate among ante-natal females between the ages of 15-49 years is 29.3%. In both 2006 and 2007, HIV prevalence among ante-natal women was 29.0% and 29.4% respectively showing a stabilization around this level. The provinces show variations in the rating: Western Cape had the lowest with 16.1%; KwaZulu-Natal polled the highest with 38.7% while Mpumalanga reported an increase from 32.1% in 2006 to 34.6% in 2007 and 35.5 in 2008.<sup>15</sup> The South African National AIDS Council also records a huge prevalence of many pregnant women and persons with dual HIV and TB infection with CD4 counts of 350 besides a large number of HIV infected infants.

Lesotho holds the record of being the second hardest hit by the epidemic in the entire world manifesting a prevalence rate of about 23.6%, in short, above 24 per cent.<sup>16</sup> Among the infected, women constitute the majority and still appear to be at high risk due mainly to "poverty and gender inequality", in short, due to women underprivileged status in the nation. It is recorded that in "urban areas, about 50% of women under 40 have HIV"<sup>17</sup>; and in the light of the infection rate at 45% in 2014,<sup>18</sup> life expectancy in the country was in 2006 estimated at 42 for men and women.

Botswana has the third highest HIV infection rate of adult prevalence of 22.2% in the world after Lesotho. It is known that the HIV epidemic in Botswana is generally widespread. In 2005, the prevalence rate stood at 25.4%. Even though in 2005 the rate of infections had seriously decreased, recent statistics indicate that some 350, 000 people are living with the HIV virus;<sup>19</sup> hence infections have begun to soar up again<sup>20</sup>. The UNAIDS reports that there is possibly over

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<sup>14</sup> Republic of South Africa: Country Progress Report on the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, March, 2010 Report, p. 10? See also note ii in the Document..

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 10

<sup>16</sup> Lesotho, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lesotho>, accessed 19/02/2017, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> "Her Majesty Launches EID Machine at World AIDS Day"; [http://gov.ls/gov\\_webportal/articles/2016/queen\\_launches\\_eid\\_at\\_worlds\\_aids\\_day.ht...](http://gov.ls/gov_webportal/articles/2016/queen_launches_eid_at_worlds_aids_day.ht...); accessed 19/02/2017, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> UNAIDS Gap Report, 2016

<sup>20</sup> AVERT: HIV and AIDS in Botswana. <http://www.avert.ORG:professionals/hiv-around-world/sub-saharan-africa/Botswana>. Date accessed 19/02/2017, p. 1.

9, 700 new infections.<sup>21</sup> The situation is worsened by the presence of key carriers such as female sex workers and homosexuals even though Botswana's punitive law better calls them "men who have sex with men" (MSM) who have become "the most vulnerable in Botswana's HIV epidemic".<sup>22</sup> A fifth of Botswana's population are young people under the ages of 15-24 years old among who, according to 2013 estimates, indicate 4.7% infection rate. As regards the womenfolk, of adult women aged between 15-49 the prevalence rate stood at 20.8% in 2013 while men of the same age polled 15.6%. Just two years ago, 2015, some 190, 000 women were reckoned as PLWAs compared to 150, 000 estimated for 2005. In other words, women constitute more than half (54%) of persons living with HIV.<sup>23</sup> It is unfortunate that gender inequality is one undeniable factor that catapults the epidemic among women not to talk of early sexual activities, forced marriage and gender-based violence (GBV); all which have quadrupled women's exposure and vulnerability to HIV.<sup>24</sup>

Swaziland is inexorably disfigured by the HIV and AIDS epidemic. The 2012 CIA World Factbook reports that "Swaziland has the highest HIV infection rate in the world with about 25.8% of all adults".<sup>25</sup> Life expectancy is placed at 50 years. According to WHO data given in 2002, 64% of all deaths in Swaziland were caused by HIV/AIDS.<sup>26</sup> In 2009, from a national population estimate of 1, 185, 000, some 7, 000 people passed on from AIDS related illnesses thus indicating that 0.6% of the Swazis die from AIDS every year. Isn't this obsequiously alarming?<sup>27</sup> In 2014, WHO shows that 47% of all infant deaths under 5 are caused by HIV/AIDS.<sup>28</sup>

In the light of these staggering and astonishing HIV and AIDS figures in Southern African states, there is no doubt that the African humanity is under siege by the pandemic. The exponential nature of the epidemic indeed makes it a pestilence, a new mode of oppression and enslavement never known before in the African public health sector. The agony of the nations in putting up with expensive programmes to mitigate the malaise; the distress being experienced by the infected and the affected have reached critical levels that call for divine intervention and liberation from the tentacles of the HIV and AIDS. The motif of liberation in the book of Exodus gives us courage and the impetus to call upon our leaders to continue to take out our endangered species to the Promised Land of wellness and *gesundheit*. At this point, let us examine how God offered deliverance and liberation through Moses.

### **The Contributions of the SADC Nations in the Struggle Vs the AIDS Pandemic**

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<sup>21</sup>UNAIDS Gap Report, 2016.

<sup>22</sup> AVERT: HIV and AIDS in Botswana, p. 2, note 8.

<sup>23</sup> There is however conflicting data which claims that new HIV infections is on the decline among women between the ages of 15 and 49 in 2013.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid; p. 3.

<sup>25</sup><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swaziland>. Accessed 19/02/2017, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid; p. 2.

In this section, I briefly address the role of and contributions being made by the SADC nations to mitigate the ferocious and volatile spread of the pandemic in the sub-region.

## **South Africa**

In its 2010 *Country Progress Report on the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS*, South Africa has acknowledged that it is one of the countries that are severely hit by the AIDS epidemic with about 5.7 million people.<sup>29</sup> Government has committed through its Multi-Sectoral National Strategic Plan (NSP) for HIV and AIDS and STIs 2007-2011 has implemented strategic interventions that have been supported by various international, continental and regional bodies alongside the Millennium Development Declaration to monitor the HIV epidemic trends. Besides, the South African National AIDS Council has continued to provide continued coordination at both the provincial and district levels. This programme has contributed immensely towards the promotion of the nation's ambition to achieve Universal Access to (a) treatment, (b) prevention (c) care and (d) support for the infected and the affected. In the 2008 -2009 and to date, the Southern African Government has continued to increase its budgetary allocations to institutions engaged in national response and has revised its policies and guidelines for pro-active actions. There is also put in place the National AIDS Spending Assessment (NASA) that provides the ideal source to inform national commitment and action with over 25% spending on HIV and AIDS. On December 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, President Jacob Zuma had launched the expansion of access to Ante-Retroviral treatment to pregnant women and people living with dual HIV and TB infections with CD4 counts of 350 or even less. Besides, all HIV-positive infants under the age of one, were started on treatment not minding their CD4 count. By the end of 2009, and more since after, close to 2 million receive treatment, care and counselling and testing at Public Health Centres scattered all over the country such as the Provincial and Districts' AIDS Council. These efforts are highly commendable that the surrounding states in the sub-region have copied.

## **Lesotho**

Lesotho considers the fight against HIV an important agenda in its national development programme. At least, the re-establishment of the National AIDS Commission (NAC) is a step in the right direction; especially to avoid risking the future of most Basotho. Government has, through its HIV/AIDS National Strategic Plan, been addressing the pandemic frontally. Lesotho has recorded an improvement on Mother-to-Child Transmission from 5% in 2005 to 31% in 2007. The provision of Ant-Retroviral therapy has significantly been improved with some 57% of the people opportune to receive treatment today. An earlier Government campaign tagged: *Know Your Status* initiated in 2006 and supported by external funders like the Bill Clinton and Bill Gates Foundations the Chairman of Microsoft to beef up government fight against HIV and AIDS has evolved into the current *Test and Treat* programme in lowering the number of new infections from 26, 000 to 21, 560; hence a record in the decline of the epidemic. It is quite notable how the Apparel Lesotho Alliance (ALAFA), an industry-wide

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<sup>29</sup>2010 Country Progress Report, pp. 2, 10, 12, 14, 27.

programme has, since 2006, been providing prevention and treatment such as the ARVs for over 46,000 women in the Lesotho Apparel Industry. The Alliance is currently battling with the two key drivers; namely poverty and gender inequality in the nation.

At the last year's World AIDS Day in Maseru, her Majesty, Queen Masenate Mohato Seeiso launched the Early Infant Diagnosis (EID) machine that provides an efficient means to detect the infants HIV status within two hours "to reduce the time taken between infection, detection and treatment administration"<sup>30</sup> and thus to fast-track treatment to save their lives in some 159 Health Centres in the country. This is, in fact, a fresh campaign by the new Lesotho NAC which ranks Lesotho as the first nation in sub-Saharan Africa and second in the world in the science of "the viral load testing".<sup>31</sup> What a remarkable breakthrough. The Queen, on that occasion, challenged Basotho to keep abreast with the "need to invigorate and to eradicate infection by 2030".<sup>32</sup>

Under the administration of the US Ambassador, His Excellency, Matthew Harrington, the US Embassy responded to the Government of Lesotho's call to assist persons affected by the AIDS epidemic. In response, the US Presidents' Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has been used to scale down about 57% HIV positive Basotho in five target districts as against 42% in 2015 to access ART in 2016. Ms.Teboho Kalikali, chairperson of the Lesotho Network for People Living with HIV and AIDS (LENPWHA) admitted that her organisation has been working strenuously to scale down Lesotho's current status of being the second in global rankings on HIV and AIDS prevalence".<sup>33</sup>

## **Botswana**

The Government of Botswana has shown serious national commitment in its struggle against the HIV and AIDS epidemic despite the fact that gender inequality fuels the spread of the epidemic among its females.<sup>34</sup> Botswana ranks the first nation in the sub-region to provide Universal Free Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) to its PLWHs

Its impressive HIV response has inspired other SADC countries to follow suit. New infections really dropped but unfortunately in 2015 some 9, 700 cases were recorded by field researchers. Apart from this, Botswana has been making sustained effort at the national level to provide efficient strategies to address the needs of the "key affected populations".<sup>35</sup> In recent years, Botswana launched a National Strategic Framework (NSF) for HIV and AIDS that makes reference to "all inclusive proclaiming". The National Strategic HIV response has battled to

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<sup>30</sup>Cfr; "Her Majesty Launches EID Machine at World's AIDS Day, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017" in *The Lesotho Government Portal*, [http://gov.ls/gov\\_webportal/artcles/2016/queen\\_launches\\_eid\\_at\\_worlds\\_aids\\_day.ht...](http://gov.ls/gov_webportal/artcles/2016/queen_launches_eid_at_worlds_aids_day.ht...) Accessed 19/02/2017, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid;

<sup>32</sup> Ibid; p; 5;

<sup>33</sup> The Lesotho Portal, p; 2;

<sup>34</sup> *AVERT*; 10 January, 2017, p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid; p. 2

reduce gender inequalities. Members of Government and the related agencies have begun to work with men, who have sex with other men as an aspect of Botswana's HIV response.<sup>36</sup> For the youths whose HIV knowledge remains dangerously low, Botswana has recorded substantial progress in the fight against the HIV the AIDS onslaught.<sup>37</sup> Botswana has instituted HIV and Testing and Counselling (HTC) programmes at Public and Private Clinics with more women now submitting to testing than men are doing. In fact, Botswana was the first country in Africa to set up a national policy on Routine Testing in HIV in Public and Private Clinics since 2004. Finally and most importantly, Botswana is fighting against the age-old myths, traditional views and obscure cultural beliefs that despise HIV prevention and the biomedical approach quite notable in many districts in the country.<sup>38</sup> For many Tswana traditionalists and their healers, HIV is not a new epidemic but an "old" Tswana disease which they had been handling since time immemorial. In 2004, Botswana's Ministry of Health and the UNDP established a very laudable HIV response: *The Teacher Capacity Building Programme* aimed at improving "teachers' knowledge to demystify and reduce stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS. This gave birth to the interactive AIDS Education Programme: *Talk Back* that has been aired on Botswana TV and shown in schools twice a week reaching more than 20, 000 teachers and 460, 000 students in the country. The Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) Programme still remains one of Botswana's "most successfully implemented HIV Programmes within the country's HIV response as well as the Voluntary Male Circumcision (VMMC) that has come on the increase. In agreement with the WHO treatment guidelines, Botswana launched a *Test All* strategy in 2016 by which it is insisted that anyone who tests positive for HIV must be put on treatment immediately regardless of the person's CD4 count. Botswana, in a strong and committed national response, insists that many of the HIV programmes, in spite of some challenges are effectively implemented. In conclusion, let me draw our attention to the spirit of this information: "A strong and committed national HIV response in Botswana has enabled significant progress in tackling the HIV epidemic across the country"<sup>39</sup>

## Swaziland

In 2004, the Swazi Government reported that for the first time, it was experiencing an AIDS crisis with a total of 38.8% of pregnant women who had tested positive to HIV. Government therefore mounted a successful HIV and AIDS treatment campaign in 2011 that targeted about 80% coverage of its tiny population of 1.2 million people.<sup>40</sup> In the meantime, Government public expenditure on HIV/AIDS stands at 4% of the country's GDP. This is not laudable at all given that provision of HIV and AIDS services should claim pivotal attention and spending profile in this era in Africa.

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid; p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid;

<sup>38</sup> "HIV and AIDS in Botswana: *Avert*, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>40</sup><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swaziland>. Date accessed : 02/03/2017, p. 1.



## Conclusions with Some Contextual Reflections

This brief analysis of the texts and the state of affairs in our sub-region points us to the urgent need to propound a *hermeneutics of life*; one that makes us know that God's almighty power spurns divine interventions to people in times of insecurity, disasters and life-threatening epidemics. The message of the text given as a follow-up of the *cry* of the Israelites for divine intervention to provide them providential escape from slavery in Egypt and to reach settlement in a land of promise is, no doubt, addressed to us Africans who are scotched and burnt by the AIDS epidemic. Given the rate of the devastation being wrought by the HIV and AIDS in Africa; especially in the SADC states, there is urgent need for Africans to go to God in prayers.<sup>41</sup> Scholars like John S. Mbiti (1975); Alyward Shorter (1975), Kwesi Dickson (1986), and Chris Manus (2017) have recognized Africa as a *praying nation*.<sup>42</sup> According to D.W. Waruta, "Africans go to God for security, protection, food, good health, prosperity and peace for indeed these can only come from God".<sup>43</sup> For Africans, every life originates from the creator God and without his help life cannot prosper. God is the giver of life and blessings such as children, rain, harvest, and the health of the people. Africans firmly believe in the efficacy of prayer. Our people also believe in the existence of the *impersonal mystical forces* that frustrate the flow of vital force from God that results in the occurrence of many misfortunes, diseases and misery that affect the people. HIV and AIDS have become such an anti-life and anti-human forces that is causing debilitating suffering to people in our continent.<sup>44</sup>

As did our forebears, we should seek to neutralize the evil forces through *persistent prayers* to invoke the benevolent spirits and the positive forces of life from the God of Moses to restore Africa's normal flow of good health. The Jahwists, the elohists and the Priestly redactors are pro-life as are reflected in their sermons. Their message behests us to seek ordinary persons as mediums who God chooses like Moses of old to bring divine blessings to our (African) peoples who are under siege of the epidemic. We need a *Holy War* against the evil forces that cause anti-life crisis in our continent. To prosecute this war successfully, Africa needs healers and visionaries who are able not only to inform Africans of the causes of our misery but also of what the people must do to restore God's flow of life and its blessings. As Waruta correctly notes, "Prayer in African tradition is primarily concerned with keeping those anti-life forces at

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<sup>41</sup> This last statement is a post-conference addendum. For it, I am indebted to a discussant whose observation and question were: "Do Africans pray as sinners and criminals; can God hear their *cry* while many of their peoples – men and women - wallow in sin and immorality?". "No, I agreed." Africans, like our ancestors of old, need *purification rituals* indeed cleansing and expiation rites with contrite hearts pleasing to a *Holy God* who saves beleaguered peoples.

<sup>42</sup> John S. Mbiti, *The Prayers of African Religion*, Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 1975; A; Shorter, *Prayer in the Religious Traditions of Africa*, Nairobi, Oxford University Press, 1975; Kwesi Dickson, *Bible and Theology in African Christianity*, Nairobi, Oxford University Press, 1986; Chris U. Manus, 2017, "The Bible in African Christianity" in Kenneth Ross et al (ed.), *The Bible in in African Christianity-Edinburgh Companions to Global Christianity (ECGC) – Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa*, University of Edinburgh Press.

<sup>43</sup> D.W. Waruta, *The Bible and Prayer in Africa*", in William R. Farmer (ed.), *The International Bible Commentary: A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty first Century*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1998, pp. 162 – 164.

<sup>44</sup> Waruta, p. 164.

bay and keeping open the flow of life from God throughout the nations”.<sup>45</sup> The forces that propagate and promote HIV and AIDS are not omnipotent. On the contrary, God is all-powerful and is able to overrule and neutralize all such powers.<sup>46</sup>

At the beginning of creation, Scripture informs us that Planet Earth was a bleak and lifeless wasteland (Gen 1:1-2:4a). But later God intervened in the chaos with a series of mighty acts to fashion one aspect after another of our now familiar world. God’s hand was in every item of creation and he delighted in what he had made.<sup>47</sup> This same God cannot fold his arms to watch HIV and AIDS destabilize and exterminate his proud creation, humankind; especially the African humankind. The Exodus event is liberation *par excellence*. Liberation even in its dogmatic theological sense as “the overcoming of that which enslaves and works against human’s participation in the life of God”<sup>48</sup> is what the text studied here harms upon. But to achieve and attract God’s favour, African need to become a *Holy Race* presentable as holy children to a holy God.

The array of prodigious roles and financial contributions the nations in the SADC sub-region have been playing and undertaking in the fight against the HIV and AIDS onslaught are quite laudable. Much as these are commendable, no one nation has publicly *thought of God* as the ultimate healer and liberator. When theologians and theistically minded philosophers engage in rational discourse on the depredations of such decimating pestilences as HIV and AIDS, they must not fail to behest the nations and their citizens to rise up and seek the face of God who hears the “cry” of his people in times of suffering and death. This paper concludes with the invitation to Africans as praying peoples to begin to consider prayer sessions as essential components alongside their roles in combating the epidemic.

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<sup>45</sup>Waruta, p. 164

<sup>46</sup>Waruta, p. 164.

<sup>47</sup> D. G. Deffenbough & D. L. Dungan, “The Bible and Ecology”, in W. R. Farmer (ed.), *The International Bible Commentary*, p. 314.

<sup>48</sup> J. Sobrino, “Liberation” in Farmer, *ibid*; p. 280.

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# SOCIO-CULTURAL RELIGIOUS CONSTRUCTIONS ON WOMEN FERTILITY AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV AND AIDS IN SWAZILAND<sup>49</sup>

Sonene Nyawo<sup>50</sup>

## ABSTRACT

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*The latest Swaziland HIV Incidence Measurement Survey, or SHIMS 2, funded by the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief shows that Swaziland has nearly halved the number of new HIV infections among adults since 2011. This achievement is largely attributed to the rapid scaling up of the number of people accessing antiretroviral therapy, (ART). While new HIV cases are declining generally, women are at least three times more likely to contract the disease than their male counterparts (UNICEF 2017). This is attributed to high levels of sexual violence, widespread poverty and patriarchal norms that limit women's decision-making on their sexual health. This paper therefore argues that socio-cultural religious constructions on women fertility, embedded in patriarchal structures and systems that uphold and reinforce inequalities between women and men, put Swazi women at a health risk. It is these constructions that are largely responsible for the high prevalence of HIV and AIDS amongst women. Shaped by the patriarchal worldview, Swazi society places a high value on childbearing as a means to perpetuate the bloodline of the father, and for social cohesion; hence the importance of women fertility. Framed within an exploratory and critical feminist research paradigm, the paper advocates for a reorientation of the patriarchal thinking on women fertility, as a means to effectively deal with the high prevalence of the virus amongst Swazi women.*

**Key words:** Patriarchy, socialisation, fertility, communitarian ethic, socio-cultural religious constructions, reproductive abilities

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## Introduction

The first HIV infection was identified in Swaziland in 1986 (SHAPE 1996; SNAP 1999). The government responded by establishing the National AIDS Prevention and Control Programme (NAPCP), later renamed the Swaziland National AIDS/STI Programme (SNAP), with support

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<sup>49</sup> In April 2018, King Mswati III changed the name of the country from Swaziland to Kingdom of Eswatini. The initial rendition is retained in this article.

<sup>50</sup> This paper draws on my PhD thesis, 'Sowungumuntfu ke nyalo' – "You are Now a Real Person": A Feminist Analysis of How Women's Identities and Personhood are Constructed by Societal Perceptions on Fertility in the Swazi Patriarchal Family, completed in 2013. Data collected from participants of this study, in both FGDs and separate interviews revealed that traditionally it is expected that a woman must be fertile in order to bear children for the in-laws, such that in childless unions conclusions are reached, without any medical diagnosis, that it is the woman who is infertile and she is blamed for the predicament. The man is assumed to remain fertile for the rest of his life; low sperm count, varicose veins in the testicles, sexually transmitted diseases and other causes of male infertility are never considered in a traditional family.

from the WHO's Global Programme on AIDS. By the end of the 1990's a standard package of interventions had been put in place (FLAS 2001). As in most countries this was done through the Short Term Plans which evolved into Medium Term Plans. The interventions included mandatory screening of all donated blood; information, education and communication programmes (IEC); condom promotion and distribution; and the establishment of AIDS Information and Support Centres. In February 1999, His Majesty King Mswati III declared HIV and AIDS a national disaster (UNDP 2002). Two new committees: the Cabinet Committee on HIV and AIDS; and the Crisis Management and Technical Committee were then created and launched to carry out the King's mandate.

The Kingdom of Swaziland has long had a severe HIV epidemic with the world's highest national HIV prevalence and incidence (rate of new infections). However, the country has demonstrated a commitment to turning the tide of the epidemic by dramatically scaling up HIV testing and treatment as well as other prevention efforts. Thus, between 2011, when SHIMS1 was conducted, and SHIMS2 in 2016, HIV incidence among adults fell by nearly half (2.5% to 1.4%) and the percentage of HIV-positive adults with viral load suppression (VLS), as a measure of control of the virus, doubled (35% to 71%)<sup>51</sup>. The improved treatment according to a report to the International Aids Society Conference in Paris has made Swaziland, the country with the highest national rate of new infections, as well as the highest proportion of people living with HIV to have dropped infections. The latest data, based on blood tests from about 11 000 people aged 15 and over, showed that 27% were HIV-positive in 2016. This translated to an infection rate of 1.39% among 18- to 49-year-olds, down from 2.58% in 2011 - a 46% reduction. Notably, "incidence was higher among women than in men," said the report to the International Aids Society Conference. The decline was also steeper for men at 52% than for women at 40%<sup>52</sup>. In Swaziland, as in many African countries, women are the backbone of the communities; they maintain the household, generate income, and shoulder the burden of caring for sick family members. However, as shown in the statistics Swazi women continue to suffer a double dose of the HIV burden, even when the rate of new infections has been halved in five years.

Socio-cultural religious expectations of a woman's mandate, that of begetting children in their families, together with other social drivers, contribute to women's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. For instance, Swazi society expects women to be subordinate and submissive, thus allowing men to control their sexual health. This is blamed on the conventional patriarchal discourse, embedded into the psyche of most Swazi women, such that they readily internalise it in defining themselves as worthless without fulfilling the "motherhood mandate" (Ngcobo, 2007). So, even when basic information on HIV and AIDS is available to women, this knowledge does not assist them in making decisions to avoid risky sexual behaviour.

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<sup>51</sup> These are recent findings from the Population-based HIV Impact Assessment, or PHIA surveys, funded by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. The Swaziland HIV Incidence Measurement Survey (SHIMS), which is a nationally representative population-based survey, has collected demographic and HIV-related measures twice. It was the first national-level survey to measure HIV incidence through direct observation of new infections in 2011 (SHIMS 1), and it did the same in 2016 (SHIMS 2).

<sup>52</sup> These statistics were given by a research team led by Dr Velephi Okello of the Ministry of Health in Swaziland in a written presentation to an HIV science conference in Paris in 2016, titled; "Since 2011, national HIV incidence in Swaziland dropped by almost half. Accessible at <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-07-24-swaziland-turns-around-worlds-highest-hiv-infection-rate-report/#.Ws3iTKJrnIU>

Unfortunately, this waters down efforts like condom promotion, meant to discourage women from indulging in unsafe sex and also getting pregnant.

### **Patriarchal Context of Swazi Society**

Swazi society is patriarchal<sup>53</sup> in its nature, and by extension its fundamental unit, the family whose basis is marriage, is also patriarchal (Nyawo and Nsibandé, 2014; Mofolo, 2011). According to Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (*hereafter* SWAAGA) Report (2012),<sup>54</sup> which confirms the national study conducted by UNICEF on ‘Violence Against Children and Young Women in Swaziland’ in the IRIN Report (2010),<sup>55</sup> the patriarchal nature of the Swazi society often fuels behaviour where women are seen as subordinates to men. Even within the legal system, women are considered minors for most of their lives. These studies point at patriarchy in the household, having multiple intimate partners and infidelity, poverty and economic issues, alcohol and substance abuse, harmful customary practices, inaccessibility to key resources such as land and credit, and the misuse of culture to justify harmful actions toward women, as all having contributed to gender inequality and male superiority in Swaziland. Despite its exposure to modern socio-political and economic transformation, the Swazi society has upheld its conventional gender dynamics whereby subservience, deference towards males and asymmetrical gender roles are purported in essentialist terms (Unger, 1970:14). The family unit is central to the reproduction of patriarchal relations and women’s subordination. Family members in the Swazi society are positioned in hierarchical power relations where males have authority over women; they are obligated to comply with the authority that has been defined within these relationships. The husband is therefore culturally accepted as the ruler of the family, and is regarded as the formal authority to whom the wife and children owe their allegiance. Whitehead (1993:72) has labeled this a pervasive ideology of male superiority which shapes women’s views of themselves and their capabilities (Giddens, 2005; Kneel 1981; Horner, 1972).

The male dominance also extends to control over women’s reproductive abilities. Studies undertaken by Ngcobo (2007), Mdluli (2007), AWEAPON (2007), WLSA (2001), Daly (2001), Russell (1993) and Nhlapho (1992) on the dynamics of the Swazi society have shown that the Swazi family is pro-natal, and the ultimate purpose of marriage is procreation; hence women’s fertility is highly regarded. Similar findings by Isiugo-Abanihe (1994) in a different African context further reveal that it is the family structure in a patriarchal society that shapes and influences individual reproductive decision making and women’s fertility. As we have shown in a previous publication emanating from this study, it is the communal and familial ethic of Ubuntu which takes precedence over the (largely feminist) ethic of self-determination (Nyawo, Nadar and Reddy, 2013, pp.105-118).

The ethic of Ubuntu taking precedence over the ethic of self-determination as shown by Nyawo, Nadar and Reddy is confirmed in Mpofu’s (1983) assertion that the dowry that is paid when a Swazi woman gets married is to bind her to her husband and in-laws as the price that

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<sup>53</sup> Patriarchy is a social system in which the role of the male as the primary authority figure is central to social organization, and where fathers hold authority over women and children, and property. There have been controversies about the term ‘patriarchy’, but in recent years most forms of feminism tend to agree that patriarchy is a general descriptor of male dominance.

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.swagaa.org.sz/?page-id=32> [accessed 10 September 2014]

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.irinnews.org/report/73057/swaziland> [accessed 10 September 2014]

acquires her procreative capacity. It is also obligatory that she bears children, preferably an 'heir', for the patriline she marries into. Swazi patriarchy dictates that children belong to their fathers, both culturally and legally, thus they assume the father's identity; "it is through bride wealth that men acquire the right to children and to fertility of their wives" (Russell, 1984, p.50). Women are therefore valued for their ability to produce children who would continue the heritage and name of the family, and to guarantee perpetual lineage (Donkor, 2008; Nukunya, 2003; Buor, 2002). Hence studies such as those conducted by the Women and Law in Southern Africa (*hereafter* WLSA) –Swaziland Chapter in 2004 and the African Women's Economic Policy Network (*hereafter* AWEPON, 2005) demonstrate that in the Swazi family, patriarchy promotes group rights over individual rights. In other words, a man marries a wife for the family, and that assumes that women's interests are subsumed and protected within the wider community. Marriage being so closely linked to women's fertility and sexuality becomes a seedbed for HIV, which disproportionately affects women as a result of their unequal socio-cultural status. Being inhibited to make decisions about their sexuality heightened their vulnerability to HIV.

Notwithstanding the above, Swaziland has made some effort to protect the rights of its citizens. For example, international conventions related to fair the treatment of women, independent of categorical judgments, have been signed. Despite these initiatives an androcentric view which dominates familial and social relations, including women's reproductive abilities, remain captive to the legislative developments which have taken place.

### **Theoretical Considerations: African Feminist Theological Anthropology**

At the heart of this paper is the consideration that women's reproductive capabilities or fertility are believed to be the essence of a married woman's personhood as implied in several studies (Donkor, 2008; AWEPON, 2005; Ginindza, 1989). Thus, as dictated by socio-cultural religious constructions, women view themselves as "fully human" when they are able to reproduce offspring for their families. How Swazi women experience these religious and socio-cultural beliefs and how they make sense of them, determines their response towards HIV reduction campaigns. In order to theorise the implications of the religious and socio-cultural constructions of fertility and women's personhood, in the context of HIV and AIDS, theories of theological anthropology framework best inform the argument.

An African feminist approach takes cognisance of culture as an indispensable variable within gender discourse and argues that culture shapes and influences the experiences of African women (Kwok,2004; Oduyoye, 2001). As noted by Phiri (2004, p.17), culture is a social construct which assigns roles to women and men based on how the society understands the identities of women and men. Whilst Phiri acknowledges that culture is important because it gives people their identities, she also asserts that; "unfortunately African cultures have viewed women as less important than men, thereby making it difficult for women to have valid relationships with self, others, creation and God" (2004, p.17). Hence, culture can provide women with a communal identity and a sense of belonging, while at the same time it can be manipulated and be used as a tool of domination (Kwok, 2004). Kanyoro (2002), Oduyoye (2001), Phiri and Nadar (2006) have theorised on the humanity of African women and how it is so intricately tied with religio-cultural and social expectations of women's subordinate status. The paper employs these theories to interpret the Swazi society's socio-cultural and religious beliefs on women's fertility and how they subsequently frame women's constructions of personhood, which contradict with some HIV reduction strategies.



## **Gender, Power and the Family**

The structure of families is closely guarded and maintained by culture as many scholars have shown (Giddens, 2005; Russell, 1993). “It is within the family that social construction of womanhood is engineered and perpetuated, and in which process women become unwilling partners to even critique culture”, argues Zigira (1998, p.35). Hence, the family is a crucial agent of socialisation, where girls are socialised to be passive, soft-spoken and tolerant throughout their lifespan (Nyawo and Nsiband, 2014). In the same spirit WLSA Swaziland has asserted that the interest and position of a family member are compromised by being born a female. From birth a girl is perceived to be a temporary member of the family and when she gets married she occupies an inferior position as a newcomer, an outsider and a non-blood member (1998, p.64).

Within the global discourse feminists have been analyzing conventional relations which favour men in the intra-familial distribution of power and resources and they have linked this power to how families are constructed. They have further observed that within patriarchal systems, the family is viewed as an important societal institution conceptualised as essential - and this underscores the exalted position of men, whilst condoning women’s inferior positions. This power differential is also clearly evident in the Swazi context as well. For example, many studies undertaken in Swaziland show that although the number of women in Swaziland is larger than that of men, their power is far less than that of men; women continue to be a minority group as a subordinate segment of society (Kioli, 2013; Mofolo, 2011; Mpfu, 1983), yet they are expected to prove their “high quality” (Vitrovitchi, 1997, p.26) through childbearing. Sexual activity and behaviour are considered to be the man’s domain, and a woman is expected to be always at the receiving end in order to fulfill her ‘duty’ of procreation. She must not deny her partner sexual relations, nor should she take the initiative to invite him to sexual intimacy; or else she is labelled as ‘loose’ and suspected of infidelity. Thus, a woman is rendered more vulnerable to HIV, due to lack of control over her body.

## **Socio-Cultural and Religious Beliefs and Practices Regarding Fertility**

Feminist literature shows that patriarchy allows a male superiority ideology to control female sexuality and procreation through cultural beliefs and practices (Rakoczy, 2004; Oduyoye, 2001). In cultures similar to Swaziland where the paying of “bride price”<sup>56</sup> is practiced, it becomes the price for acquiring the wife’s reproductive capacity (Russell 1993). The woman is obliged to produce children for her husband’s lineage; hence WLSA’s (2001) observation that marriage in a patriarchal society serves specific major functions which are the perpetuation of the woman marital lineage and the provision of her domestic labour. Walker (1990) and Carter and Parker (1996), who share similar sentiments, add that sons are preferred; at least one male child in the family is regarded as absolutely necessary. It is therefore true, as Oduyoye (1995:142) would argue, that motherhood in most African societies is a highly valued role open only to women, but desired by both women and men, as the channel by which men reproduce

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<sup>56</sup> The phrase ‘bride price’ is no longer used in scholarship in African theological discourse but I have used it here and in other sections to illustrate the point that when *lobola* is paid it is often assumed that something is being bought.

themselves and continue the family line. So, the actual prestige of reproduction goes to those who 'own' or control the reproductive capabilities of women, such that women are not valued in themselves, but only as valuable objects or means to an end. Other than the continuity of the family name, sons are important for economic support and their permanent residence near the ancestral home, unlike girls who would join their husbands' families after marriage (WLSA, 2008; Ngcobo, 2007; Russell, 1993).

Daly's study also made some important conclusions about socio-cultural beliefs regarding the value of women's fertility within Swazi society (2001:46). He argues that procreation is one of the most highly valued cultural obligations in Swazi communities. In terms of beliefs, among others, he cites three major reasons why Swazi society values procreation so much. First, he notes that the birth of a child brings hope in families that parents will be cared for in their old age. Second, fertility is perceived by society as a sign of wealth and prosperity. Third, it is an indication that one's ancestry is sufficiently pleased to allow the couple successful childbirth. Furthermore, Daly cites (2001:49) several examples of how these beliefs are entrenched within cultural practices. He notes that it is customary if the union is childless that a substitute wife stands in for her sister and bears a child for the spouse. In instances where the man has died before his wife has given birth, the brother of the deceased 'inherits' the wife to facilitate procreation (Daly, 2001; Nhlapho, 1992). All these cultural practices breed behaviours that foster HIV risk, in a context where a woman is socially obliged to accept any gender constructed decision her natal family makes on her behalf. Women have no choice but to suppress their autonomy and embrace these cultural practices that unfortunately expose them to a health hazard.

In addition to the actual socio-cultural practices which enforce women's subordinate status within marriage, another means of entrenching these beliefs are through folk-songs and other traditions. Mdluli (2007) in her article entitled "Voicing their Perceptions: Swazi Women's Folk Songs", has shed an illuminating insight on how patriarchy shows its face in songs. She has categorized the songs into various themes, but for the purposes of this discussion I will only focus on the love and marriage theme. In her exploration of the love folk songs she reveals the patriarchal traits of a Swazi family in that it grooms a girl child for her final destination which is marriage. She is indoctrinated to believe through these songs that her father's house is not her permanent home, although her father would one day be a wealthy man through the exchange of *lobola* cows for her. Through socialisation which she receives primarily from her mother and grandmother, she emerges to fit into the patriarchal society as a 'full' woman. So, marriage becomes the transitional stage each Swazi girl looks forward to as she grows up in her family (Ngcobo, 2007), which is;

An institution that bears responsibility for the physical reproduction of society and for the ideological reproduction of its citizens as gendered subjects with certain beliefs, skills and expectations. It is of primary importance in socialising children into specific socially produced heterosexual norms of femininity and masculinity (Mdluli, 2007, p.88).

Fertility is therefore crucial in any African community for the survival of the clan names and for the incarnation of family ancestors; hence the "child factor" syndrome in African families (Oduyoye, 1999). In response to the societal pressure, Swazi women would bargain with their reproductive health in this era of HIV and AIDS just to meet societal expectations. Despite the government's interventions to promote condom use as a primary preventive measure against HIV transmission, gender related barriers sometimes limit their use. Some women view the use

of condoms as being in conflict with their own or their partners' desire to continue the patrilineal descent. This increases chances of them being infected with the virus.

### **Hegemonic Control over Women's Sexual Health**

Hegemony is explained as the social dominance of a group, exercised not through brute force, but through a cultural dynamic which extends into private life and social realms (Giddens, 2005, p.119). The National Gender Policy of Swaziland (2010, p.10) has defined sexual health as an aspect of health that enhances personal relations, respect for the security of the person and the physical integrity of the human body, and the right to make decisions on sexuality and reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence. Societal perceptions, including those of the women themselves are shaped by hegemonic constructions of sexuality that establish hierarchal relationships between femininity and masculinity. "Male centeredness" places men in an inherently superior position, whilst declaring their experiences as the norm. These hegemonic constructions provide scaffolding for skewed relationships between women and men to be accepted as "natural" whilst inevitably legitimising dominance and submission (Connell, 2000). Such mentalities are characteristic of hegemonic control in gender regimes, where women live their lives to serve and satisfy the interests and ascendancy of the dominant group. This gender order is accepted by the subordinates as natural, divine and unchangeable (Nganga, 2011; Oduoye, 2001). As also noted by Schippers (2007, p.87), hegemony legitimates ascendancy, and also inspires everyone to consent to and go along with social dominance. Failure to fit into this hegemonic 'jacket' results in misery, as the woman would feel like she owes society some debt or "treasure". Yet, women's sexual health embraces reproductive rights which are supposed to grant women freedom to decide on issues that pertain to their sexuality, and not to be deprived of their rights by any cultural undercurrents. The hegemonic control can also be noted in the paying of the 'bride price', which in actual fact purchases her womb from her father, not the body (Nhlapo, 1992, p.48), and ownership of her womb now transfers to her marital home. This is evident in the rituals families perform to redeem childless unions. For example, when elders in her marital family have proven that their son is sterile, arrangements can be made with close relatives to surreptitiously give service to their property, the 'bought womb'. Though not forced, the woman would submerge her dignity and ethics and comply with the 'deal'. Given that the woman is not forced into the arrangement, what then leads her to consent with it yet it works against her favour?

Women willingly accept hegemonic control as a result of gender socialisation. Socialisation according to Clifford (2001), Riley (1989), Ruether (2002, p.1985), and Lerner (1983), trains women to understand themselves in terms of patriarchal super-ordination and subordination of being in the center or being on the fringes. Further it leads them to internalise that they have to accept and adapt to things as they are. Gendered social norms then become formal and informal rules which govern the women's behaviour. They construct fertility in such a way that it is perceived as a societal value that defines a '*real*' woman in Swazi marriages. Through socialisation, which is chiefly supported by biological essentialism, women are taught to accept patriarchal norms, values and beliefs about their fertility as 'natural', 'divine' and obligatory. Failure to fulfill this expectation results in social sanctions which may range from verbal violence to social alienation.

In contrast, socialization of men takes a different path from that of women. With men there is no social pressure to preserve their virginity till marriage as compared to women; neither is there a stigma attached to pre-marital sex. At the same time society pressurizes men to continue

the family line through procreation. Many men would therefore want to prove their sexual prowess through having multiple partners, and this puts women at the center of the storm of the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

### **Tensions between the ‘Motherhood Mandate’ and mitigating Strategies against HIV and AIDS**

The paper has established that traditional socialisation of females and males runs on gender lines in traditional context. As it is the case in other African cultures, socialisation in the Swazi society is reinforced through traditional initiation ceremonies where girls are taught sexual education which includes how to satisfy the sexual needs of their future partners. They therefore grow up conscious of their mandate as wives, which is also instilled through sexual rules. Regrettably, these rules often enhance women’s risk of HIV; hence the high prevalence of the virus with women. Dennis (2003:70) and Haddad (2002:95), remarking on these rules in African societies assert that men prefer dry sex, and women would therefore use herbs that would make the vagina to be dry, tight and warm, yet the dryness cause small tearing during sexual intimacy which increases chances of infection. The ‘motherhood mandate’ would also debar women to negotiate for safe sex through the use of condom. This kind of teaching is often supported with Scripture, where women would be taught not to deny their husbands sexual advances except for prayer’ (1Corinthians7:5-15). Biblical cultures which present women as belonging to either their fathers or husbands are often exaggerated, and are applied as the norm. As noted by Phiri (2003), Scripture is sometimes misinterpreted and misused to serve selfish ends that put women at risk. For instance, women and men will be presented as becoming one flesh in marriage, and that would be the basis for refusing the use of condoms, and that when one is infected they need to share the virus and die together.

### **Conclusion**

The paper has worked from the premise that culture has polarised genders, allowing men to be portrayed as inherently superior, and women to fatalistically accept the societal constructions of their personhood. This poses a threat to the advancement of mitigating strategies against HIV and AIDS, meant to rescue women from the claws of the virus. Constrained by a communal reality or the communitarian ethic to live accordingly to societal expectations, this is when women can only ever make sense of their existence within the community. That said, it is not enough to blame Swazi women’s diminished sense of self with regard to fertility only on the communitarian ethic. We have to go further to recognize that this communitarian ethic is founded on patriarchy. Hence African feminists challenge societies to question the lopsided status quo that seeks to safeguard the interests of men, whilst pushing women to the bottom of the pyramid. They argue that women should not passively accept their ‘fate’ and prop up patriarchy; rather with bruised and anguished voices, women should shout to recover their full humanity (Nganga, 2011). As Oduyoye (1995: 81) has noted; “unlike beauty, oppression does not lie in the eyes of the beholder; it tags at the soul of the one who feels it”. Put differently, the reorientation of the traditionally socialised mindset should start with the women themselves, as people that are at the centre of the storm of the HIV and AIDS pandemic (Phiri 2003). They must learn not to put value on socio-cultural religious constructs at the expense of their health; ‘they should seek ways to empower themselves and their sisters and daughters with knowledge to overcome situations that expose them to the HIVirus’ (Phiri, 2003:16).

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# THE IMPACT OF AIDS STIGMATIZATION ON AFRICAN MECHANISMS OF COPING WITH BEREAVEMENT: THE CASE OF THE SOUTHERN SOTHO

Francis C.L. Rakotsoane

## Abstract

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*Different ethnic groups, the world over, have their own unique ways of coping with bereavement that are influenced by their shared worldview. This paper is aimed at giving an account of the way the Southern Sotho group deals with the issue of bereavement and how this traditional way of dealing with bereavement is negatively impacted upon by the on-going stigmatization of the AIDS epidemic. Adopting a conceptual analysis and informed by the idea of the narrative therapy, the paper argues that the on-going stigmatization of individuals and families that have lost lives and their loved ones to the AIDS epidemic is rendering some of the traditional mechanisms of coping with bereavement ineffective and irrelevant.*

**Key words:** AIDS stigmatization, African mechanisms, coping with bereavement, Southern Sotho, therapeutic and consoling effect

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## Introduction

Prior to the arrival of the Christian faith in Africa, Black African life used to be punctuated by a series of the rites of passage as one strategy of ensuring that communities were built of men and women who were equipped with knowledge and skills necessary for the survival of individuals, families and communities. With the arrival of the Christian Faith with what was perceived as its superior material benefits that were enshrined in the educational system that was brought by Missionaries, many Africans were made (either voluntarily or compulsively) to part ways with their local ways of life and abandon their rites of passage as they embraced the new missionaries' way of life. The abandonment of such rites meant the loss of values, virtues and life principles that were enshrined in these rites and were passed on from one generation to another.

One rite of passage has, however, stood the test of time. That is the rite of death. In sub-Saharan Africa death is generally perceived not as a human tragedy, but as a rite of passage that has to be understood and treated as such (<http://www.africanbelief.com/>).

Understood this way:

Death is the final passage in a long chain of transitions...

Humans are seen as a combination of physical and spiritual elements, which split into separate parts at the time of death, with the body returning to the earth and the spirit or soul passing on to assume its role in the afterlife. That role

obligates the dead to protect and guard their living descendants from harm and to oversee the conduct of their family and lineage members. In return, the living show hospitality and kindness to the dead by giving them food and drink and keeping alive the traditions that they have passed on.

<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/exhibit/OOJgfgg2>).

To ensure that death achieves its purpose as the rite of passage into the glory of ancestorhood, each person is prepared to face it and with dignity. That preparation starts with a sick person being regarded as an ancestor in the making. For that reason, when a person falls sick his or her family is normally expected to do everything possible to make him/her feel loved and cared for. There is nothing more feared than a person who dies unattended to and neglected by members of their family in traditional Africa. The fear comes from the belief that upon their death, people continue to exist invisibly in the spirit world where they can easily revenge against those who neglected them while they were not in good health (Casalis 1862). This also explains why funerals have become such an expensive undertaking in African communities. Sometimes people end up spending so much money on funerals as a way of making up for the missed opportunity of caring for the dead while still alive.

When a sick person passes on, apart from informing the relatives, the affected family usually reports the matter to the community leader who in turn is expected to announce the sad news to his subjects. Once informed of the sad news, members of the community and relatives are expected to visit the bereaved family. In the context of the Southern Sotho, members of the community visit the bereaved family not so much to express condolences, but to be briefed on what led to the loss of the life of the fellow community or family member. There is nothing more embarrassing to the bereaved family than to be found to have neglected the dead member during his/her last days on earth. To have done so is considered a grave offence by both the family relatives and community. It is generally believed that it is only when all has been done as expected that the dead will feel obligated to protect and guard their living descendants from harm and to oversee the conduct of their family and lineage members (Mbiti,1999). Doing things the right way appears to matter most when observed during the last days of the deceased. This is highlighted by the fact that among the Southern Sotho, words uttered by the deceased while in the process of dying are the most honoured by the living relatives.

As one way of ensuring that the family does not get blamed for something that it has not done, one of the elderly family members (called *mooki* or the caregiver) who must have played a critical role in making sure that the family member was well cared for before death, is given the task of narrating what led to the death to every person that pays the bereaved family a visit. Apart from protecting the dignity of the bereaved family, this accurate narrative account of what is said to have led to the loss of life has both a therapeutic and consoling effect on the bereaved family and members of the community respectively.

## **The Problem**

What has been said above does not apply to many of the AIDS-related deaths. This is because there are people who still consider being HIV positive as something morally condemnable and disgraceful and who, as a result of their misconception about the epidemic, stigmatize the individuals dying of AIDS-related causes and their families. Informed by narrative therapy that ‘talking about it makes one to feel better’, this paper argues that the stigma associated with the AIDS pandemic has a negative impact on the efficacy of the ritualistic narrative account referred to above. To do this, the paper will first look at what the benefits of this narrative account to both the family and the community are. This will then be followed by some arguments on how AIDS stigmatization is standing in the way of such benefits.

## **The Benefits of Narrating the Deceased’s Illness History to the Public**

To be able to fully understand the benefits of narrating the deceased’s illness history, one needs to first know something about the workings of a counselling technique called narrative therapy. Narrative is a word that has become enormously popular in counselling and which, at the same time, has been understood in competing ways by those who use it (McLeod, 2003; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Lemmens et al., 2007; Monk, 1997; Biever et al., 1998; Payne, 2006.). Used in the context of this paper,

The term narrative implies listening to and telling or retelling stories about people and the problems in their lives. In the face of serious and sometimes potentially deadly problems, the idea of hearing or telling stories may seem a trivial pursuit. It is hard to believe that conversations can shape new realities. But they do. The bridges of meaning we build with others help healing developments flourish instead of wither and be forgotten. Language can shape events into narratives of hope...  
(<https://postmoderntherapies.wikispaces.com/Narrative+Therapy>).

In the Southern Sotho context, when a family member has passed on, an elderly person in the family (chosen for that purpose) gives a narrative of what has brought about the loss of life to all people who visit the bereaved family. The formula used is usually as follows:

“The Deceased started complaining about....

The family did....

The family further did....

It was while 1, 2, 3 was being done that the deceased unfortunately left us.”

One important observation to make here is that the dead person is never mentioned by his or her name during this narration. He or she is referred to as the deceased (*mofu*). It is not clear why this is so. One can, however, infer that this has to do with the general fear that people show towards the dead (Pula, 1994). In the case of the Southern Sotho, the name of a person is considered identical with the owner. This is the reason why, for instance, it is considered a punishable offence for a daughter-in-law to insult her son or daughter who is named after one of the senior members of her husband's family. Insulting such child is tantamount to insulting the original owner of the name. The Southern Sotho people do not only identify the name with its owner, but they also believe that calling the deceased by his/her name conjures up his/her presence around the person who is calling the name. Having the dead lingering around one is considered a bad thing by the Southern Sotho (Matšela 1990). One who is in such state is said to have *maroko* (the state of having the deceased's presence visionarily lingering around the living) and has to be ritually cleansed of the state. This explains why people never want to call the deceased by their name.

This repetitive and monotonous narration of the way the deceased met their demise is meant to serve several purposes. The first purpose is to reassure the family that everything was done and that there was nothing more anybody could have done to save the lost life. This allays the fears of the family members of the non-existence of any reason for the deceased to revenge against the living. Secondly, this serves to publicly declare the family's innocence regarding the lost life. The Southern Sotho have a tendency of always trying to find someone to blame for any death that occurs. This is evidenced in one of their proverbs: '*Lekoko la motho ha le thakhisoe faatse*' (Sekese, 1983). That is there has to be a human suspect for every loss of human life. Lastly, but surely not least, once it has dawned on the minds of the family members that, indeed, they did everything and that nothing better could have been done to save the lost life, every member of the bereaved family breathes a sigh of relief and feels a sense of gratification. This feeling of satisfaction with one's efforts in saving life has a healing effect on the broken hearts.

### **AIDS Stigmatization and the Narration of the Deceased's Illness History to the Public**

Despite the many efforts made by the international community to eradicate it, AIDS stigmatization is still one of the major painful experiences that infected and affected individuals and families have to endure to this day (Saki et al 2015). As Famoroti et al (2013:1) put it:

The issue of stigma is very important in the battle against HIV/AIDS in Africa since it may affect patient attendance at healthcare centres for obtaining antiretroviral (ARV) medications and regular medical check-ups. Stigmatization creates an unnecessary culture of secrecy and silence based on ignorance and fear of victimization.

One of the expectations during the narration of the deceased's illness history is that, the narrator is telling the truth. It is this repeated truth telling about what led to the loss of life that finally results in people's sense of relief and satisfaction. The troubled minds of the bereaved family members find rest in the true knowledge of what actually was the problem and the humane manner in which it was dealt with.

Today many Southern Sotho families no longer narrate the true history of their relatives' death to the public if it is known to be related to HIV and AIDS for the fear of being stigmatized. Instead, the family will meet to invent what narrative to be given to the public by the family representative (*mooki*). When it is time for the family representative to speak, his/her focus is not to tell the whole truth as expected of him/her, but rather to skillfully present a deceitfully manufactured family account of events responsible for the loss of life. Other members of the family listen attentively with their fingers crossed lest the presenter tell the audience the truth.

Ultimately, the entire family ends up missing the opportunity of healing as a result of failing to tell the truth. This has to be understood in the light of the general principle of narrative therapy according to which 'talking about it makes one to feel better.'

## **Conclusion**

African life, especially in traditional settings, is known to be punctuated by rites of passage each of which has an established way of being carried out. Death is one such rite with its own established procedures. Death's established rituals are meant to ensure that death's impact on the bereaved is significantly reduced. The confidentiality which is imposed when dealing with HIV and AIDS appears to reduce the effectiveness of this traditional way of dealing with death. This makes dealing with AIDS-related deaths to be one of the most painful experiences in traditional African communities. This paper recommends that the eradication of stigma associated with being HIV positive should be intensified.

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# HIV AND AIDS KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES AMONG FORM THREE JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KWENENG AND CENTRAL DISTRICTS

Senzokuhle Doreen Setume

## ABSTRACT

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*This article explores HIV and AIDS knowledge and attitudes of students in their final year of junior secondary school. Though a lot of studies have been carried out about youth and HIV it seems a few have focused on the attitudes of Junior Secondary school students. This category of students is most problematic because of sex related hormones that are combined with the developmental stage (Austin, 1995; DiClemente, 1996) that make teenagers risk takers as they experiment with everything including their bodies. A closed questionnaire was administered to 602 students from which 450 questionnaires were valid. The findings were analysed using descriptive statistics. The AIDS Risk Reduction Model (ARRM) and the Health Belief Models (HBM) are used to understand the current knowledge and attitude of form three students. The following are some of the findings: some students do not perceive themselves at risk of getting infected with HIV; most students still harbour negative attitudes towards HIV and AIDS as they want the status of a sibling who is HIV positive to be kept as a secret; despite evidence of stigma, a large percentage, 62% don't think that HIV and AIDS is a punishment for an immoral life. These attitudes partially explain why pregnancy is still the leading cause of school-drop outs. The paper concludes that students are knowledgeable on HIV and AIDS issues but still harbour negative attitudes towards people living with HIV and AIDS. Therefore continued education to address stigma is necessary. The study recommends that the skills problem must be addressed in order to reduce the HIV and AIDS incidence rate.*

**Key words:** HIV and AIDS, incidence rate, negotiation and refusal skills, career subject

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## INTRODUCTION

Botswana is one of the countries that are hardest hit by HIV and AIDS. The epidemic still remains one of the country's challenging health issues (Mogomotsi, 2004). The latest HIV survey revealed an estimated national HIV prevalence at 16.9% and an HIV incidence of 2.47% for the population six weeks and over (BAIS IV, Statistics Botswana, 2013, p.4). The HIV incidence figure is the most worrisome as it 'measures the degree of new infections' (BAIS IV, Statistics Botswana 2013, p.3). This means that more and more people keep on getting infected by HIV and AIDS. Different variables have been adopted in an effort to understand HIV and AIDS. Early studies focused on the geography of HIV and AIDS since the objective was to establish the origin of the diseases and the patterns of spread (Cliff & Smallman-Raymor, 1992). Extant and extent literature arose that focused on the gender variable (Elice 2016), the vulnerability of women (Preece, 2001, Rakgoasi, 2010) especially girls (Coldrey, 1996, Chirwa, Kasonde-Ng'andu, Kalimaposo, 2016) and widows (Butts et. Al., 2018). The age

variable has been minimally explored. After analysing the 2013 BAIS IV results, Ellece (2016) concludes that ‘In Botswana gender inequality has been identified as the main cause of higher infections among women’ (2016, p.276, Preece, 2001, Rakgoasi, 2016).

The first Botswana National Policy on HIV and AIDS was developed in 1993 with subsequent revisions in 1998 and 2012 (The Revised national Policy on HIV and AIDS, 2012, p.1). The latest policy on HIV and AIDS takes cognisance of the fact that ‘due to age, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation or disability, some Batswana are more susceptible to the devastating effects of HIV and AIDs than others (Revised Botswana National Policy on HIV and AIDS, 2012, p2). Similarly, the Health Belief Model lists age and gender as one of its modifying factors. With so many studies having been carried out internationally and in Botswana on the impact of HIV and AIDS, despite such known information about the devastating impact of the disease on young people, attention is rarely given to the connection between HIV and AIDS and the contemporary knowledge and attitude among the youth in secondary schools in Botswana. Therefore the aim of this paper is to acknowledge that age is indeed a factor in the fight against HIV and AIDS. In order to contribute to the debate this article explores HIV and AIDS knowledge and attitudes of students in their final year of junior secondary school in Kweneng District. Attitudes are very important because they determine the course of action that one is likely to take. This category of the society is challenged partly because of the developmental stage they are at, precisely in relation to sex-related hormones (Austin, 1995; DiClemente, 1996). Compared to students in senior schools they are statistically hard hit by teenage pregnancy. Generally teenagers are risk takers as they experiment with everything including their bodies. Therefore understanding what attitudes and knowledge they have in the present Botswana might contribute to explaining the incidence of HIV after so many years of information dissemination. The findings might further influence the kind of solutions that are relevant in the fight against HIV and AIDS specific to this age category.

### **Government and HIV and AIDS Preventative Measures**

The government has taken a political will power and commitment to fight HIV and AIDS through policies and programmes. The first policy on HIV and AIDS, the 1993 National Policy on HIV and AIDS identifies different causes for the rapid spread of the disease; the extreme mobility of the population; advanced communication systems; high rate of other STDs aligned to the multiple partners and the frequent change of partners (Botswana Government, 1993). The government then introduced different programmes such as Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT), the roll-out of the ARVs treatment, opened Voluntary Testing and Counselling Centres at strategic places throughout the country. It also engaged different non-governmental organisations such as Peace Corps among others. All these efforts were done in order to address challenges posed by HIV and AIDS. Furthermore, the government through the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (now referred to as the Ministry of Basic Education) came up with programmes that focused on students in schools.

### **HIV and AIDS intervention Programmes in Botswana: education**

Until 2000, the Botswana education sector’s responses to HIV and AIDS were very limited. The epidemic was mainly seen as a health issue and the broader relevance on HIV



AND AIDS to the sector was not widely appreciated or formalised in its policies and structures (Kinghorn, Coombe, & McKay Johnson 2002). However this was not to remain a health issue as the prevalence of HIV and AIDS among women receiving antenatal care was at 37.4% in 2003 (NACA). These children will eventually enter the education system. Ultimately the education sector could no longer disassociate itself from HIV and AIDS issues but act! The Ministry of Basic Education had to come up with specific strategies to address HIV and AIDS; a momentum was created by a presidential requirement for responses in each sector, and accountability and reporting to NACA (Kinghorn, Coombe, & McKay Johnson 2002). HIV and AIDS coordinators were appointed. Technical Working Groups composed of focal point persons from all Departments were established to plan and coordinate the Ministry's response. A Strategic Plan, including sub-plans for all Departments and certain key divisions, institutions and units were formulated in February 2001. The group found the following to be imminent in relation to the epidemic (Kinghorn, Coombe, & McKay Johnson 2002):

- What is the role of Education in preventing the spread of HIV among young people?
- How does the sector ensure that all young people, including orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC), achieve their full development potential?
- How does the sector, the country's largest employer, prevent HIV infections among its employees?
- How does the sector continue to improve access and quality of services in the face of the impact of HIV and AIDS on capacity to deliver services?

To react to this, one of the urgent things to do was to ensure that students were informed on the facts about HIV and AIDS: 'The main approach of the Ministry of Basic Education to HIV and AIDS education has been to infuse topics into other subjects already in the curriculum. Content was biased mainly towards technical aspects of HIV and AIDS,' (Kinghorn, Coombe, McKay & Johnson 2002, p.12). HIV and AIDS education was infused into subjects such as Guidance and Counseling. Information on HIV and AIDS was further delivered through radio programme, the Educational Broadcasting, hence the disease was popularly referred to as the 'radio disease'. The group recommended, (Kinghorn, Coombe, McKay & Johnson 2002, p13) among others, the following:

- Fast track development of a stand-alone HIV and AIDS and life skills programme to provide a more focused and holistic approach to HIV and AIDS than achieved through infusion.
- Strengthen and extend the current infusion-based programmes but recognise their limitations
- Aggressively extend initiatives to all levels of primary schooling to reach children before they become sexually active.
- Strengthen peer education approaches and, in particular, the PACT programme.
- Aggressively increase HIV and AIDS training for staff in co-ordination with workplace prevention and impact management programmes.
- Develop ways to address home, community and cultural issues that are undermining school programmes, (Kinghorn, Coombe, McKay & Johnson 2002, p.13) though a

recommendation was made in 2002 that a standalone programme is provided in the fight against the epidemic such information was still infused in the curriculum.

The infusion of HIV and AIDS education into the already existing curriculum, though with observed limitations, is consistent with findings elsewhere (Stockton, Nitza & Bhusumane, 2010; Sefhedi, Montsho & Mpfu 2008). Several HIV and AIDS-related counseling programmes have been presented in Botswana schools. These included life-skills education, sexual and reproductive health education, voluntary testing and counseling, health and safety education, behavioural change, care and support (Sefhedi, Montsho, & Mpfu, 2008). These are key components of a comprehensive in-school HIV and AIDS prevention curriculum (Barth, 2004; Mpfu *et al.*, in press). However limited evaluations of these have been carried out to see the extent to which education has translated into change in behaviour by students. Their other finding was that the 'providers of in school HIV and AIDS counseling services perceived significant training needs in respect of themselves (Sefhedi, Montsho, & Mpfu, 2008). Stockton, Nitza & Bhusumane reviewed the development of professional counseling in Botswana and concluded that 'school guidance and counseling in Botswana...many of those working as counselors have limited training' (2010, p.10). They also found that such counselors report of themselves as experiencing 'on-going difficulties and need more training in dealing with the many social problems in schools, number of HIV orphans, secrets and stigma surrounding the disease, (Stockton, Nitza & Bhusumane, 2010, p.11).

Another effort by the Ministry Of Basic Education to fight the scourge was implementing the Teacher Capacity Building Project (TCBP). The goal of the project was 'to contribute to the prevention and mitigation of the impact of HIV and AIDS by strengthening the capacity of the education and communication sectors to deliver interactive, distance HIV and AIDS education primarily to teachers so that they act as agents of behavior change among the in-school youth. One of the components of the TCBP programme is an HIV and AIDS live teacher education television programme called Talk Back, (Nleya & Segale 2013, p.2). The evaluation of the programme revealed that there are 'several myths, beliefs, misconceptions, and attitudes about HIV and AIDS that exist among Botswana teachers and students and thus make it difficult for the Talk Back programme to impart the HIV and AIDS message successfully. Therefore, there is a need for more stakeholders in HIV and AIDS education, with appropriate learning techniques used to bring about the desired behavioural change' (Nleya & Segale 2013, p.2). This project was not only geared towards imparting knowledge but to provide a more effective way to ensure change in behaviour. This was to ensure that education is complemented by imparting life skills to students. This article evaluates the extent to which students display knowledge about HIV and AIDS and their attitudes towards people living with AIDS given the effort that the government has made to empower students.

The government further introduced *The Ministry of Education and Skills Development Strategic Framework for HIV and AIDS 2011-2016* policy. It was formulated in order to 'enable the Ministry to set out its approach and plans to mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS in the education sector' (NACA, 2012, p.26). In conclusion, though the government of Botswana has put in place all these programmes, risky behaviours such as unprotected sex

resulting in teenage pregnancies, the use and abuse of drugs in schools are a cause for concern. This indicates that there is a discrepancy between knowledge and behaviour which does not lead to a significant change in attitude. According to the ARRM and HBM for any change in behaviour to take place students must perceive themselves as being a risk. Therefore it is important to understand what knowledge and attitudes currently prevail among junior secondary school students.

### **Purpose of study**

This study is informed by my personal experience as a teacher at secondary schools, a lecturer at teacher training colleges and at the University. I have observed that though students have knowledge about HIV and AIDS they still portray risky behaviours. Such risky behaviours include unplanned pregnancy, and the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs as evidenced by disciplinary problems in schools (Garegae, 2007). The study is further informed by the realities of the impact of HIV and AIDS in Botswana on the general population and in particular the continued report of new HIV infections or incidence rate per each BAIS. The paper is driven by the following two questions: What knowledge about HIV and AIDS do students have and what attitudes about HIV and AIDS do students have?

### **Current Knowledge status on HIV and AIDS and Young People**

Like the general population, teenagers in Botswana are infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. Many factors explain the vulnerability of teenagers to infection. Such factors will range from cultural silence about sex issues (Carretta, Burgess & DeMarco 2015; Yates, 2016; Plummer & Njuguma 2009), the unequal power relations between adult males and teenage girls (Luke, 2005, Dahl, 2015), the experiential and risky nature of the teen-age (Austin, 1995) as well as concealing of cases of rape/defilement and incest at family level (Coldrey 1996; Chirwa, Kasonde-Ng'andu & Kalimaposo, 2016). At their age, form three students might not be emotionally mature to handle HIV and AIDS related challenges. The importance of packaging the HIV and AIDS messages according to specific child developmental stage have been discussed (Austin, 1995; DiClemente, 1996; Alder & Rosengard, 1996). For instance, Austin says that at adolescent stage students 'focus on achieving independence by forming an identity, developing a positive body image, developing an inner conscience defining sex and learning about sex relationships' (1995, p.119). He further explains that at this stage any HIV and AIDS message needs to 'emphasise moderation and interventions more than prevention. Adolescents seek solutions not preaching and they want to be part of the solution rather than viewed only as problems' (Austin, 1995, p.123). If students do not change towards safer behaviours then the education system and the country at large will continue having new infections. Overtime this will not be economically viable as risky behaviours like pregnancy, use and abuse of drugs and the drinking of alcohol will continue to be a problem in secondary schools. Understanding what knowledge and what attitudes students have in relation to HIV and AIDS might inform how relevant stakeholders can package resource material to accommodate the developmental stage of students at junior secondary schools in Botswana. Students continue to display risky behaviours though they are knowledgeable of the effects of contracting HIV/AIDS. Young people at this stage are risk takers. The act of falling pregnant

indicates a risky behaviour as one would have engaged in an unprotected sexual encounter hence putting them at a risk of getting infected in the process.

Regionally, a number of studies have been carried out to explore the relationship between youth and HIV and AIDS. For example studies such as Dita & Bodilsen (2018) in Sudan, Kitila & Mkumbo (2013) in Tanzania, Adbpye, Youngsong Akinwumi & James (2016) in South Africa, Gudyanga & Mashini, Gudyanga (2014) in Zimbabwe, Butts et al (2018) Bwalya, Banda, Jere, Patrick Amanzi & Funsani (2015) in Zambia, (Magowe, Seloilwe, Dithole & Lawrence (2017) Kgomotso, Garegae, Mogotsi & Gobagoba (2017)in Botswana, and Mwamwenda (2013)in Kenya have discussed HIV and AIDS and the youth. Most of these studies note a discrepancy between knowledge, behaviour and attitude among youth. For example, Mwamwenda's (2013) found out that unlike most similar studies, there was a correlation between transfer of knowledge and change in behaviour. Gonclaves et. al (2013) carried out a study in Southern Brazil among eleven year olds through a self-administered questionnaire using a sample of 3949 pupils. The objective of the study was to establish the knowledge of the pupils on HIV and AIDS. This particular study found out that knowledge was lower among boys than girls. Such a study is therefore important because more effort is needed to improve the level of knowledge among boys, since culturally men have more power in decision making in relation to sexual issues. Another study was carried out in Nigeria among senior secondary schools to assess the knowledge on HIV and AIDS and their sources of information (Bamise, Bamise & Adediqba 2011). Participants were identified through a multi-stage sampling where 592 students responded to a self-administered questionnaire. The study found out that though students had adequate knowledge about HIV and AIDS (50%), there were some who depicted inadequate knowledge such as that mosquitoes can transmit HIV and AIDS. Ellece (2016) analysed the BAIS IV statistics and concludes that 'young women aged 15-19 are not having sexual relations with men of their age because their age mates have 0% prevalence rate' (2016, p.273).The study further concluded that students still harbour a lot of misconceptions about HIV and AIDS. This study contributes to the debate on HIV and AIDS among students who are almost 'between and betwixt' stages as they complete the final year of junior school and about to enter senior secondary school. These students are at the peak of their teenage years.

### **Theoretical considerations**

Kombo & Tromp explain that the theoretical framework is important because it '...uses a theory to account for and clarify why things are the way they are,' (2006, p.56). A number of behavioural theories, usually referred to as Behavioural Decision Making (BDM) have been adopted to explain and predict behaviour, explain beliefs and attitudes. These theories 'are largely concerned with the cognitive process by which humans perceive, structure and evaluate courses of action (Holtgrave, Tinsley & Kay, 1995, p.25). Denison lists the following as the four major theories of behaviour: the Health Belief Model; AIDS Risk Reduction Model, Stages of Change Theory and the Theory of Reasoned Action (1996). Denison explains further that all these theories try to answer the question; how does one change behaviour? These theories have specific human attributes to predict behaviour: The Health Belief model focuses

on the attitudes and beliefs on the individual; the AIDS Risk Reduction Model (ARRM) focuses on the recognition and labelling of one's behaviour as high risk, commitment and action; stages of Change Theory focuses on identifying the psychosocial stage at which the individual is, in terms of HIV and AIDS, pre-contemplation, contemplation and action, while the fourth stage, the Theory of Reasoned Action, is based on the premise that people are rational beings therefore their actions are reasoned, (1996). Of the four theories I find the Stages of Change theory to be more relevant in counselling programmes, for instance, hospitals, counselling clinics since the customers might already be infected therefore in need of counselling. In a Junior School emphasis should be more on making students to be aware of the risk behaviours associated with HIV infection and help them to effectively assess their own behaviour in relation to its riskiness. The Health Belief Model will partially explain the attitudes that students have while the ARRM focuses on the knowledge aspect. This paper will make use of the Health Belief model and the ARRM. The next section discusses each of the models.

### **AIDS Risk Reduction Model**

The ARRM seeks to establish the extent to which learners perceive themselves as 'actually at a risk of being infected with HIV and AIDS and what they know of HIV and AIDS related issues,' (Fisher & Fisher 2000). The ARRM focuses on the individual who is very important in behavioural change.

### **The Health Belief model (HBM)**

According to Tarkang & Zotor the HBM was first developed during the early 1950s in the United States of America by psychologists Godfrey Hochbaum, Irwin Rosenstock and Stephen Regels working in the US public health service. The model was developed in response to the failure of a free Tuberculosis (TB) health screening programme (2015, p.2). The model makes a number of assumptions;

The HBM assumes that a person will take a health related action if that person feels that a negative health condition can be avoided. It is necessary to help individuals realise that they have the potential to avoid a condition and this can only happen when one has true knowledge of the problem. It is only when one realises this, that one would be able to take a preventative action. The HBM also assumes that a person will take preventative action if that person has a positive expectation that by taking a recommended action, the negative health condition will be avoided.

The person needs to see the benefits that one will get from practicing the behaviour. If a person fails to see any benefit, it would be difficult for one to take the necessary action, or to maintain it. Students in the current study must perceive the benefits of male condoms, before they can initiate and maintain their use in order to prevent HIV/AIDS. The HBM also assumes that a person takes a health related action if the person believes that one can successfully take the recommended action. It requires the person to feel confident that one has the capacity to take the recommended action, and this would require that the person has the necessary knowledge and skills in a supportive

environment to carry out the required action(s).' (Tarkang & Zotor 2015, p.2; Stretcher & Rosenbeck 1997)

The HBM has three components: The individual's perceptions about health (that is, the extent to which one sees themselves as at risk of contracting a disease), the modifying factors which include demographic, socio-psychological and structural variables and the benefits of taking preventive measures (Tarkang & Zotor 2015, p2; Stretcher & Rosenbeck 1997).

It is therefore important to understand the extent to which students at junior schools in Kweneng and Central Districts perceive themselves as vulnerable to contracting HIV and AIDS. Understanding the self-diagnosis of vulnerability in relation to HIV and AIDS is important as it has a bearing on how one relates to those already affected by the disease. If students perceive HIV and AIDS as self-inflicted, then they are highly likely to stigmatise a classmate with a condition or force him or her to hide when taking their medication, thereby compromising compliance. The theory has a number of modifying factors. Modifying factors are those 'things' that would impact on the effectiveness of the theory. For HBM some demographic factors like age, sex culture are significant (for more factors see also Tarkang & Zotor 2015, p4)

The two theories complement each other and will effectively be used as a tool of analysis in this study. Over and above this the theories have been empirically tested as they have been used in other HIV studies (Tarkang & Zotor, 2015) and the ARRM (DiClemente, 1996).

### **Statement of the Problem**

HIV and AIDS has been a problem in Botswana for a long time despite the many intervention programmes that the government has put in place. The government has disseminated information and provided services but there is still evidence of new cases and students in secondary schools still drop out of school due to pregnancy. Many scholars in behavioural change especially in areas concerning HIV and AIDS have noted with concern that knowledge alone does not always translate to behavioural change. Regardless of tremendous efforts that the government of Botswana has put in place, there is evidence that adolescents still continue to display risky behaviours which could result in them contracting HIV and AIDS. Therefore it is important to consistently 'check' what students know and think about HIV and AIDS.

### **Methodology**

Data is from a study that I carried out when evaluating the Peace Corp project in selected junior schools in Botswana. I used a mixed methodology approach. However for the purpose of this paper I selected the quantitative data from 6 junior secondary schools in Kweneng and Central Districts. All research protocol was followed for ethical clearance including consent and assent form. A total of 602 students attempted the questions in all the six schools. After screening and cleaning of data, 450 questionnaires were valid. Descriptive analysis was used to illustrate the knowledge and attitudes of form 3 students. I personally administered the questionnaire except in two schools.

### Variables of interest

My two variables of interest are knowledge and attitudes of students in their final year of junior secondary schools in Botswana. The knowledge variable is defined by the following items: *It is possible for me to contract HIV* and *can people reduce their chances of getting HIV and AIDS by having one uninfected partner who has no other partners*.

The attitudes variable is defined by the items: *AIDs patients suffer the consequences of their immoral lives* and *if my sister or brother has HIV I would like it to remain a family secret*.

### Knowledge variable

Table 1: *Is it possible for me to contract HIV and AIDS*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	STRONGLY DISAGREE	78	17.3
	DISAGREE	54	12.0
	DONT KNOW	74	16.4
	AGREE	142	31.6
	STRONGLY AGREE	92	20.4
	MISSING	10	2.2
	Total	450	100.0

450 students responded to the item. A total of 132 (i.e. a total of students who *strongly disagree* 978) and *disagree* (54) students (29.3%) do not think they can get infection. It is worrisome that despite all the information disseminated in schools about HIV and AIDs there are still students who perceive themselves as immune from HIV and AIDS. Such a position is not safe as students might engage in unsafe sex with the view that they cannot get infected with HIV and AIDS. Over and above the numbers of students who believe they cannot contract HIV and AIDS 74 (16.4 %) do not know if they can or cannot contract the virus. This level of ignorance is a danger to students as they are likely not to take decisions or action to protect themselves from infection. However, slightly more than half 234 (52 %) know that it is possible for them to get infected.

Table 2: Can people reduce their chances of getting HIV and AIDS by having one uninfected partner who has no other partners

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	STRONGLY DISAGREE	57	12.7
	DISAGREE	49	10.9
	DONT KNOW	89	19.8
	AGREE	134	29.8
	STRONGLY AGREE	115	25.6
	MISSING	6	1.3
	Total	450	100.0

450 students responded to the item. The majority 249 (55%) (a total of those who *agree* (134) and *strongly agree* (115) know that one way of protecting oneself from contracting HIV and AIDS is to have one sexual partner who is HIV negative and has no other partner. 106 (24%) students (those who *Strongly disagree* (57) and *disagree* (49)) lack this factual knowledge while 29 (20%) *don't know*. Many students have knowledge on how they can prevent themselves from HIV and AIDS. It is worrisome that after all the resources that are available to students and the nation at large there are still some individuals who do not know how to protect themselves from HIV and AIDS.

### Attitudes Variable

Table 3: AIDS patients suffer the consequences of their immoral lives.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	STRONGLY DISAGREE	65	14.4
	DISAGREE	104	23.1
	DONT KNOW	101	22.4
	AGREE	126	28.0
	STRONGLY AGREE	46	10.2
	MISSING	7	1.6
	Total	449	99.8
Missing	System	1	.2
Total		450	100.0

Of the 450 students who responded a total of 169 (37.6 %) (a total of those who *strongly disagree* 65 and *disagree* 104) portray a positive view towards people living with HIV and AIDS. They understand that not all cases of HIV and AIDS are a result of a careless sexual life style. However that a slightly higher number 172 (38%) (a total of those who *agree* 126 and those who *strongly disagree* 46) say people living with HIV and AIDS are reaping the results



of their immoral acts is an indication of how stigma towards people living with HIV and AIDS will not fade any time soon. This shows that some students have negative attitudes towards people living with HIV and AIDS. This negative attitude can be probably due to insufficient knowledge on the subject. A combination of factors contributes to such attitude. In most African societies sex talk is usually very minimal between adults and children. This results in children lacking clarification on crucial information relating to sex and sexually transmitted illnesses. The negative attitude might also be related to the secrecy surrounding sex and sexuality. 101 respondents (22.4%) do not know whether people living with HIV and AIDS suffer the effects of their immoral lives or not.

To get a clearer picture on the attitude of students towards HIV and AIDS they were asked to express their perceptions on HIV and AIDS within their family set up. Their responses below poignantly captures the current attitudes held by students completing their final year of junior secondary school.

Table 4: *If my sister or brother has HIV I would like it to remain a family secret.*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	STRONGLY DISAGREE	51	11.3
	DISAGREE	58	12.9
	DONT KNOW	57	12.7
	AGREE	134	29.8
	STRONGLY AGREE	144	32.0
	MISSING	6	1.3
	Total	450	100.0

A whopping 278 out of 450 (61.8%) (*agree* 134 and *strongly agree* 144) do not want the world to know that their siblings are living with HIV and AIDS. They want such information to remain a family secret. This shows a negative attitude, shame and stigma in relation to HIV and AIDS. Only 109 (25.8%) (*Strongly disagree* 51 and *agree* 50) students of the 450 feel it is ok not to keep the HIV status of a sibling a secret. Garegare, Mogotsi & Gobagoba (2017) when comparing BAIS II and IV statistics of the attitudes of students in Botswana on whether a student will allow a teacher with HIV and AIDS to continue teaching, found a significant level of tolerance over time. Similarly in this study, though students portray fewer stigmas in general towards people with HIV and AIDs, they find it difficult or more shameful if one with HIV is a close member of the family. This has implications on the day to day lives of patients at home as they might be stigmatised by their own.

## Discussions

A significant 132 (29%) out of the 450 students do not perceive themselves as vulnerable to HIV infection with 74 (16.4%) not knowing whether they can contract HIV or not. The two theories adopted for this paper, ARRM and HBM, explain that for any positive change in behaviour to take place, an individual needs to acknowledge their vulnerability. The fact that some perceive themselves as immune to HIV infection partially explains the ever increasing

teenage pregnancies in schools. Some students are likely not to protect themselves from infection as they do not believe that they can be infected. This is the case despite the knowledge that they have. The paper further concludes that it is a concern that students doing Form three have negative attitudes or stigmatise the disease as reflected in their desire to keep the status of an HIV positive sibling a family secret. This is likely due to the general stigma by societies on HIV and AIDS. These attitudes need to be addressed because they have an impact on;

- How students relate with peers who are living with HIV and AIDS in schools.
- How students with HIV and AIDS would feel in the school environment: (problems in taking medication or withdrawal from school activities are likely and this can raise issues of compliance to medication when a student is on a school trip, for instance).
- The negative attitude will also affect the possibility of disclosure after diagnosis.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This paper concludes that though the government of Botswana has made efforts to educate students on HIV and AIDS lack of knowledge and ignorance is still a problem among the Form three students. Stigma and secrecy are still a problem. There is need to fill in this knowledge gap. Therefore I recommend that the government should continue to educate students on HIV and AIDS with the primary focus on addressing issues of stigma, acceptance and perceptions about HIV and AIDS. This could be achieved by utilising the already existing structures like schools, clinics, churches and departments since manpower with relevant skills already exists in these facilities, a life skills education can be infused effectively. Furthermore having HIV and AIDS issues as a subject vs. infusion might go a long way to address the current knowledge gaps and the attitude that students have taken.

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# THE RE-READING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BY AFRICAN PENTECOSTAL CHARISMATIC CHURCHES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF HIV AND AIDS

Eliot Tofa<sup>57</sup>

Abstract

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*When, in spite of evidence-informed biomedical facts that HIV has, to date, no cure, individuals give testimonies of miraculous healings on the basis of a reading of selected biblical texts and discontinue antiretroviral therapy, it raises critical questions that certainly warrant scholarly inquiry. This is the primary focus of this paper; it is not about the truth or falsity of miraculous cures from HIV but acknowledging the visibility of a growing phenomenon characterising neo-Pentecostalism in Africa today. To argue my case, I revisit the place of the Bible in the spiritual lives of faithful believers against the background of a changed religious landscape - the availability of antiretrovirals and advanced scientific discoveries on the management of HIV and AIDS. The idea is to reason out why beliefs in miraculous cures from HIV persist to this day given that people openly disclose their sero-status during televised healing ministries as a strategy to receive their blessings (cf. James 5:16) and testify of the total eradication of the virus from their bodies on the basis of texts such as Mark 5:19 and 2 Timothy 1:8. I therefore see those texts emphasising a renewed commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour (Mark 9:23; 10:52; Luke 8:50; James 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; etc.) for healing as the basis of unyielding interpretations embedded in a re-reading of the New Testament. This is an understanding that reinforces those "pinnacles of faith moments" orienting believers towards deferring coping strategies within the context of HIV and AIDS. I conclude by taking the position that, the theological thinking of neo-Pentecostal Churches is one of the greatest challenges of the millennium heightening the polarisation of messages communicated about the epidemic in Africa today.*

**Key words:** Charismatics; false negative; HIV; miraculous healings; neo-Pentecostalism; proximity seeking behaviour; viral load; defective theology

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## Introduction

The paper is about the interpretation of the Bible particularly selected New Testament texts by religious organisations within the context of HIV and AIDS in Africa. I give special attention to neo-Pentecostalism and by this I mean those Christian organisations classified by writers (Martin 2002; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005) as Pentecostal Charismatic Churches

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(PCCs). The paper primarily focuses on this religious group because followers believe in signs, miracles and wonders as manifestations of spiritual gifts (Charismata) of the Holy Ghost (Martin, 2002). In addition, some of the defining features in the faith and practice of PCCs relevant to this discussion are that of speaking in tongues – glossolalia - like what happened on the Day of the Pentecost as reported in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1-4 cf. 1 Corinthians 12:1 – 14:40), the casting away of demons and the so-called Gospel of Prosperity (Martin 2002). Prosperity theology is basically a promise for abundant blessings – increased health and wealth – to those who give back generously their material possessions to the house of the Lord (Mbuga, Maura, *et. al.* 2015). By so doing, PCCs teach, are planting the seed and would reap abundantly when the Lord blesses them by doubling their wealth and health in the here and now. This teaching is partly rooted in Jesus’ statement that “... everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property—along with persecution” (Mark 10:29). In this paper, I illustrate ways in which the presence of HIV has shaped the theology and response of PCC to the epidemic at a time when drugs that can only suppress the virus not to degenerate into AIDS have been discovered. I demonstrate how scientific research on HIV and AIDS has shaped the theological thinking of those churches over the past three decades.

As I have said before, the paper specifically focuses on PCC because this brand of Christianity has developed a very distinctive theology of the virus, its diagnosis and management. As previous studies have shown, “[r]eligious leaders may give advice that reinforces or contradicts the prevention messages articulated by the government, international NGOs, and local health organisations” (Tirinapoli, 2011). This is not true for all religious organisations but is characteristic of some PCCs in Africa today. My interest in PCCs was generated in 2009 when I attended a conference at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the United Kingdom. In that conference, a renowned researcher from the United States of America presented a paper on healing techniques in religious organisations across the world, from Shamanism to prophetic deliverances in Christianity. For the first time ever, I did appreciate that ill bodies can do the unthinkable in search of health and protection from malicious spirits. In light of this, I examine ways in which PCCs have grown to be “the third therapeutic system” (Manglos and Tiritapoli, 2011:7) and one of the greatest challenges to best practices in HIV-AIDS management in Africa. To do so, I begin by looking at the reception of HIV and AIDS in their talk and how this understanding has “become powerful images in the religious imagination and has influenced theological interpretations of the way God deals with humanity” (Jonsen., Stryker, 1993). The point I make is that religious ideas about the epidemic have influenced and continue to influence the way people think of the virus to this day.

## Data and Methods

To argue my case, I use testimonies of miraculous cures from HIV that are posted on the churches' official websites<sup>58</sup> and videos on YouTube.<sup>59</sup> I also use print media collected over the years and postings on social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook<sup>60</sup> and Twitter.<sup>61</sup> In addition, I use what I have personally watched on television channels over the years from 2008 to the present. I would, in the process, take down the biblical texts cited by the charismatic prophet-healer and those giving testimonies to justify miraculous cures from HIV. Part of the primary data are also from the widely-publicised healing ministry of the Synagogue Church of All Nations broadcast on DStv channel 390 every Sunday between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. In-depth interviews were used to gain insights on what people think of faith healing in the context of HIV and AIDS. I personally interviewed informants and all interviews were audio-recorded on consent. Those interviewed were purposively selected on grounds that informants are followers of a given PCC or in congregation-based networks of believers. The reason was to collect first-hand information on their views on miraculous claims of cures from HIV. The interviews were carried out on one-to-one basis in order to understand ways in which the Bible shapes their thinking in the presence of HIV. The names of People Living With the Virus (PLWV) in the public domain are given in some cases. For ethical reasons, the names of informants and/or places mentioned, in some cases, are withheld or assigned pseudo names in the write-up.

## HIV and AIDS discourse in Pentecostal Charismatic Churches

From the outset, the church, especially Pentecostal Christianity "adopted a wait - and -see policy" (Parsitau, 2009:45) in its engagement with HIV and AIDS. This is partly because the church "often connected AIDS with sin, and church leaders tried to distance themselves and their churches from people living with the virus" (Paristau 2009: 50). Jonsen., Stryker, *et. al.* (1993) attribute this position to "Old" Testament ideas about catastrophic events in the lives of the covenant community. They write, "[t]he Hebrew scriptures (Old Testament), also revered by Christian faiths, contain many references to plague and pestilential disease, often in the context of divine wrath and punishment (Gen. 12:17; Lev. 26:6,21,25; Num. 8:19; 11:33; 15:37; 25:8; 31:16; Deut. 7:15; 28:22; 2 Sam. 4:8, 5:6; 2 Sam. 25; Jer. 21:6, 33:36)"

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<sup>58</sup> T. B. Joshua Ministries. (2018). Official website Retrieved from [www.scoan.org](http://www.scoan.org)

<sup>59</sup> Emmanuel TV. (2018, February 9). A cure for the incurable: Dealing with the HIV demon. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cNgE518Xt4>

<sup>60</sup> T. B. Joshua Ministries. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/tbjministries>

<sup>61</sup> T. B. Joshua Ministries. (2018). Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/scoantbjoshua?lang=en>



(Jonsen., Stryker *et. al.* (1993). The point made is that the text in Exodus 9:14 which reads "[f]or now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence" (9:14) is one of the bases for the defective theology of HIV from the beginning (Jonsen., Stryker *et. al.* 1993). For that reason, HIV was viewed as a curse because there was no known way of preventing AIDS. Once a person lives with the virus, it would degenerate into AIDS leading to death. They have, Amanze (2000) posits, entered into a covenant with death! Then what is it that believers must do to have life and have it abundantly? The only immediate response was that people must refrain from pre-marital sex (cf 1 Cor. 7:2; 6:18; Heb. 13:14), be faithful to their spouses and practise chastity (ABC) as a panacea against HIV.

The response that faithful believers have to obey God's commandment by abstaining from sex outside marriage (see Genesis 2:24-25; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:18-20; 7:2, 8-9; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; Acts 15:19-20) is not the final word today. This partly explains why, today, the use of condoms is no longer condemned as before in most religious organisations. The case of the Roman Catholic Church is a case in point (Kelly 2009). However, the thinking that HIV is a curse for sexual sins has not totally died away. This is because, one of my informants in white-garment apostolic churches said:

John: Look, in our church we marry many wives and as you can see (pointing to three wives and seven children), we are all healthy. None of us has the virus because I am faithful to my wives. What can you say about that? Don't you think that the Lord is communicating a message to the people?

Me: I see, you all look healthy but have you all tested of HIV?

Esiteri: (First wife intervening) Why should we? There is no reason for doing so because our husband is faithful to the five of us .... We are also faithful to him.... We have not been to the hospital in all our lives .... The Bible prohibits blood tests ... blood is life. (Personal communication, December 12, 2017).

This is also true for the understanding of the disease as a plague heralding the apocalyptic end of the world (Genrich and Brathwaite 2005; Ruth., Denis and Dijk 2009). In an interview, it also emerged that HIV and AIDS are considered as epidemics of the end times in some religious communities:

Mavis: Why is it that there is no vaccine for the virus today? I have even buried many people who were taking ARVs .... I can count ... one, two, three, four .... We must return to the Lord for the prophecies of the old that, in the end times, there will be incurable diseases are being fulfilled. Now it is Ebola and there are earthquakes, wars and disasters everywhere killing people. We are living in the end times I tell you .... Our priest is the last priest (Roughly in the seventies according to the informant) before the Lord comes. (Personal communication, December 12, 2017).

The reasoning of this informant is that nothing has changed; is of the belief that HIV and AIDS are telling signs of the Last Days, the denouement is approaching!

However, with the discovery of ARVs, ideas of HIV as a curse from the spiritual world for sexual sins are slowly weakening and disappearing. How would one explain this development? It is arguable that religious ideas about HIV and AIDS are closely associated with advances in scientific knowledge about the virus and the disease. The reason being that, from the beginning, HIV and AIDS were understood as one and the same thing as People living with HIV would eventually succumb to AIDS. There were no ARVs by then and the hopes for a vaccine are frustrated by the secrets behind the origin and prognosis of HIV. When faithful believers died of AIDS, religious organisations were constrained to refine ideas of seeing AIDS as a fulfilment of the prophecy by Jesus Christ that “there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven” (Luke 21:11). Now it is almost four decades and AIDS is no longer one of the leading killer diseases given that people can live positively with the virus for the rest of their lives.

In light of this discovery, PCCs have come up with a new theology of the virus. The explanation is that the Lord answers the prayers of the faithful. This is a common belief in PCCs as the man of God proclaims: “Where can sickness hide? Where can disease hide? Where can affliction hide? I order the disease to go....”<sup>62</sup> From what the charismatic healer says, the disease is personified; is interpreted as an agent of the evil one – of Satan! And this belief, has led to the understanding of HIV in some PCCs. In one of the most publicised miracle crusade under the theme of Judgement Night, a Zimbabwean prophet prayed over the sick “casting out the HIV demon” (Zimbabwe Mail, 2014). This is also true in the Synagogue Church of All Nations in which the charismatic healer has “a cure for the incurable: Dealing with the HIV demon”.<sup>63</sup> From such statements, one could see where these ideas are emanating from: Is an “attempt to understand and answer this question, the so-called problem of theodicy, is a perennial endeavour for believers and nonbelievers alike” (Jonsen., Stryker, *et. al.*, 1993). The reasoning is like, it is a demon that comes and goes! To this end, it is evident that a re-interpretation of memories of epidemics in Christian and Jewish religious history “have become powerful images in the religious imagination and have influenced theological interpretations of the way God deals with humanity” (Jonsen., Stryker, *et. al.* 1993).

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<sup>62</sup> Emmanuel TV. (2018, February 9). Be healed of every sickness. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2P4L6ohE-u4>

<sup>63</sup> Emmanuel TV. (2018, February 9). A cure for the incurable: Dealing with the HIV demon. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cNgE5I8Xt4>

## The New Testament and miraculous healing within the context of HIV

In a healing crusade, a very popular prophet claimed that "[a]fter this oil touches your body, all diseases will go, even HIV and AIDS. Death will also go!" (Rupapa and Shumba, 2014). Such claims dominate the healing spaces of PCCs in Africa today:

My name is --, I am -- years old and I have been living with HIV for -- years. I am here to confess what the Lord has done to me. His name is Jesus Christ...Whatever situation you are in, you will be healed. My favourite verse is [to cite one example] James 5.13-15 which says "Are you suffering? Call the elders of the church to pray for you and you will be healed"<sup>64</sup>

The claims of miraculous cures from HIV are reinforced by clinical tests. The person comes to the church with a medical report confirming the presence of the virus in the body. The man of God prays over him or her and then returns days later with a medical report indicating sero-negative results displayed alongside HIV positive results.<sup>65</sup>

Most recently, the founder of the Prophetic Healing and Deliverance ministry announced that God showed him Aretha-Aguma as the vaccine for HIV: "God has given me a revelation, we tested it and it's perfect. God showed me a certain tree and a certain people. We have found a cure for HIV and AIDS" (Mabhena, 2018). And how would one explain these claims? My paper is not about the truth or falsity of miraculous cures but to acknowledge the visibility of a growing phenomenon characterising neo-Pentecostalism in Africa today. Of my primary concern is to make sense of those claims in the background of scientific and religious constructions surrounding HIV and AIDS.

In the previous discussion I mentioned that the body is believed to be under attack from the demons - Satan and allied forces (see 2 Corinthians 4:4; 12:7; 1 Peter 5:8) out to thwart God's beautiful plan for humanity: "I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). This is the main reason why Jesus healed people of various diseases and demons: "...many who were possessed with demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick" (Matthew 8:16). The Church is the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:17; Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:24) and Christians, are God's children living under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (1 John 4:4). To this end, the children of God cannot be under oppression by the devil forever. They have to "Be loosened! Be free! In the name of Jesus..." (Tofa, 2014). We can make sense of those within the context of an all-powerful God, beliefs in demons and demon-possession. The reasoning is something like: Are HIV and AIDS God's will and for what purpose? This presents a theological dilemma and PCCs see HIV as a manifestation of the works of the evil one. To this end, in PCCs' healing ministries, lines were drawn between the forces of darkness and God's faithful servant(s). It does not matter where you are: "Viewers, receive your own portion, in the name of Jesus! Are you on the sickbed? Wherever you are and wherever your affliction or disease is located, I

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<sup>64</sup> Testimonies of this nature are common in the healing ministry of the Synagogue Church of All Nations broadcast on DStv channel 390 every Sunday between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

<sup>65</sup> Emmanuel TV. (2014, September 31). Healed of HIV. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvS1dVuPdVI>

command them out, in the name of Jesus! Dry bones - rise again!!!<sup>66</sup> In the posting the prophet healer also commands "Every sickness and disease, wherever it is located - BE REMOVED, in the mighty name of Jesus Christ!" - T.B. Joshua.<sup>67</sup> To which followers, quoted as is, respond:

Rofiat Olorunlogbon: Amen any diseases in my body, husband body, daughter body and that of my family be removed ijn I receive my healing in Jesus mighty name, no more hypertension, no more pains again am free ijn. Spirit of anger, fight and hot tempered be removed ijn amen, Save delivery is my portion in Jesus name Amen.

Celeh Pule: Amen in the mighty name of Jesus Christ...I receive my healing, deliverance, breakthrough, success, I am free in Jesus name and my family is also free from poverty, lack of jobs and diseases in Jesus name.

As simple Google search on official websites reveals that testimonies of this kind are numerous and I have selected these for the purpose of discussion. From the postings, it is evident that followers believe that they received instant healings from whatever condition that was frustrating a full celebration of life. The question that arises is: What can we say of these claims?

The answer is partly embedded in the belief that God is involved in the lives of the peoples and taking the word of the man of God seriously is some kind of proximity seeking behaviour (Ellison, 2014:212); an attempt to have a safe haven in a world that is otherwise a wilderness. By following the prophet and physically going to church or following postings on social media, adherents seek some kind of attachment with God in the manner we build intimate relationships with the significant others – the man of God in this case. This kind of behaviour, as the postings indicate, produce positive psychological outcomes – the belief that believers are covered by the blood of Jesus. To this end, prayers “in the context of a secure (as opposed to insecure or avoidant) relationship with God – an ideal attachment figure – may offer greater emotional comfort, resulting in more favourable mental health outcomes” (Eliot, 2014:214). The point I make here is that, research has shown that “in almost any society, around twenty per-cent of diseases are primarily psychological” (Bourdillon, 1993:100) and for all physical illness, the psychological state of the person is very critical for quick recovery. It is also true that psychological stress impacts negatively on the body’s immune system which, in turn, reduces the body’s ability to cope with any disease. What this means is that drugs work effectively when one is in a sound mental state. In this regard, PCCs’ theology of HIV bolsters pro-active coping strategies when combined

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<sup>66</sup> T. B . Joshua Ministries. (2018, September 6). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/tbjministries/videos/dry-bones-rise-again-tb-joshua-prayer-for-viewers/1052517881574932/>

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

with anti-retroviral therapy. The danger comes when PLWH discontinue ARVs on the belief that they are completely healed from the virus:

Tendai: My brother, it really pains me. I do not know why even educated people believe that they can be healed of HIV when they join those churches. My close aunt, who was a Lecturer at a university with a Ph.D tested positive to HIV. We did everything possible to support her and I personally accompanied her to the local clinic where she received medication. She got better after some time but when she joined – church, she discontinued ARVs and joined their school in .... (country). The next thing I heard was that she was no more. It pains me (zvinondirwadza) and I do not know why people believe in that teaching. (Personal communication, January 15 2017).

The message communicated in Pentecostal Charismatic Churches: “with Christ all things are possible” is certainly “the third therapeutic systems” (Manglos and Trinitapoli, 2011) in as far as it promotes positive living. The claims of instant cures from HIV on the basis of those texts emphasising a renewed commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour (Mark 9:23;10:52; Luke 8:50; James 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; etc.) are unyielding interpretations embedded in a re-reading of the New Testament. This is an understanding that reinforces those “pinnacles of faith moments” orienting believers towards deferring coping strategies within the context of HIV and AIDS. This is because, biomedical research has shown the HIV progresses in three stages: acute; chronic and AIDS. At the first stage, the virus replicates in the body rapidly and as HIV progresses to the chronic stage, the virus replicates less rapidly and the viral load drops only to increase at the AIDS stage. When one is on ARVs, depending on one’s immunity, the viral load could drop to undetectable levels. HIV test may be a false negative. What this means is that ARVs do not eradicate HIV, the virus is present in the body and accelerates into AIDS if one stops taking medication.

To this end, the belief that in Christ all things are possible: “He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them through over them in him” (Colossians 2:15) are etiological ideas associated with ill-bodies extended to HIV in some PCCs. What we see today is a paradigm shift in the understanding of the virus and the disease. Those primitive theologies that associated HIV with “immoral behaviours involving sex and prostitution, and religious leaders often preached that AIDS was a punishment from God for sexual sin” (World Bank 1997 in Paristau, 2009:5) are waning given the presence of ARVs. However the fact that there is no cure for HIV, PCCs, on the basis of a literal reading of the “Old” through New Testament, make sense of the epidemic in the framework of the core beliefs in Christianity: that with Christ all things are possible. This is a message of hope and keeps the people engaged as we wait for a breakthrough in HIV research, treatment and management posing great danger when faithful believers discontinue ARVs.

## Conclusion

From what I have said, it is evident that the understanding of HIV in PCCs is closely associated with clinical research on the virus and the disease. At a time when there were no ARVs and many people were succumbing to AIDS, it was a curse. With the arrival of ARVs, HIV is personified as a demon and is exorcised by Pentecostal Charismatic healers. These notions are reinforced in the talk and symbols performed during healing session. The charismatic leader, I have observed in the healing channel on DStv 390, performs symbolic acts such as talking to the demon or perform incantations to drive away the evil spirit. In response, the demon screams or wiggles out in submission and “departs from this body!”<sup>68</sup> Days-or-weeks-or-years later, the individual returns to the church to give a live testimony detailing how he/she was miraculously healed of any medical condition including HIV. I see those testimonies as attempt to present themselves as faithful believers and great Christians: Jesus said, “Were not the ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Were there not any found to return and give glory to God except this foreigner?” (Luke 17:17-18).<sup>69</sup> On this belief, they return to “to your home, and declare how much God has done for you” (Luke 8:39). They, in their understanding, return to the man of God to give glory not to him but to God: “Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven” (Luke 8:38). To prove that they have been healed, PCCs leaders use medical reports as a way to prove that those discoveries show that God has intervened but humanity is failing to realise that the prayers of faithful believers have been answered. The message that prayer is the panacea for HIV is one of the greatest challenges of the millennium heightening the polarisation of messages communicated about the epidemic in Africa today.

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<sup>68</sup> The catchphrase is commonly used in the healing ministry of PCCs.

<sup>69</sup> The prophet healer televises testimonies of total deliverance during the Sunday services every week which are documented on the said websites.

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# HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION: A CHALLENGE TO MORALITY

Louis Manyeli

## Abstract:

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*The main objective of this paper is to show that homosexuality is immoral by examining its socio-cultural and ethical implications. The concern is borne out of several recent efforts by human rights advocates towards a defense of homosexuality on the unjustifiable ground of right to self-determination. The paper explores the socio-cultural standards for human relations and matrimonies and concludes that homosexuality is evil, engenders terminal diseases such as HIV – AIDS and undermines society’s moral standards. The paper uses the critical and conceptual analysis while the existing literature provides the background to the paper. It is recommended that homosexuality should as a matter of necessity be outlawed in all human societies.*

**Keywords:** Homosexuality, marriage, culture, self-determination, natural law, morality.

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## Introduction:

Using John Corvino’s article “Why shouldn’t Tommy and Jim Have Sex” in which he claims that homosexuality’s unnaturalness has nothing to do with morality and that homosexual sex is not harmful, this paper argues that homosexuality is immoral since it is contrary to the dictates of moral reason. In his *Summa Theologica*, in question 94, article 4, St. Thomas Aquinas holds that “to the natural law belongs those things to which a man is inclined naturally: and among these it is proper to man to be inclined to act according to reason” (Aquinas, 1915: 47). By the dictates of reason, Aquinas simply means that a human person must act guided by his reasoning faculty as a rational being.

The argument against homosexuality is based on my claim that it is contrary to the natural law. The natural inclination of any rational being consists of all dispositions and tendencies to action one has by virtue of the human nature. Any good pertaining to man through practical reason belongs to the precepts of the natural law. It is argued that such goods are, for example, the preservation of one’s own life, marriage and family life. I further argue that the natural law accommodates only heterosexuality, not homosexuality. I base my arguments on Aquinas’ theory of natural law found in his *Summa Theologica* discussed later in this article.

I cite the Catholic Church’s doctrine on the institution of marriage. The Church teaches that God made the married state the beginning and foundation of all human society. She regards the apostolate of married persons and of families as having a special importance for both the Church and civil society, that is, bearing of children. Basing herself on the Holy Scriptures

and on Aquinas' theory of the natural law, the Church correctly confines marriage occurring between males and females.

Furthermore, this paper takes seriously African communitarianism that is sometimes criticized as depriving individuals of their rights. African communitarianism is a political theory whose ultimate goal is the common good or rather the well-being of the community. The paper however makes a case that communitarianism respects individuals' values, but simply regards communal rights as being more valuable than individuals' rights. I accordingly conclude that homosexuality is rightfully prohibited in African communitarian societies because it is not geared towards the common good.

### **Self-determination argument**

Proponents of homosexuality regard the principle of self-determination as their central argument. As autonomous rational beings, individuals must be allowed to make important decisions and choices about their own lives. "For libertarians, the basic unit of social analysis is the individual. It's hard to imagine how it could be anything else. Individuals are, in all cases, the source and foundation of creativity, activity, and society" (Boaz, David. 1997: 95). Contrary to communitarianism, libertarianism, that is, the right wing liberals posit individuals as being prior to their respective communities. Libertarianism is a political theory that favours a minimal state. As autonomous agents, individuals do not allow an external authority (either the government or parents) to regulate their lives. The term 'autonomy is a combination of two Greek words: auto and nomos; 'auto' means self and 'nomos' meaning rule. Autonomous, therefore, means self-rule. This amounts to saying that autonomus individuals must be allowed to rule themselves. Hence as self-determining beings, individuals are free to choose what is best for them. Even when they make mistakes they must be allowed to correct themselves accordingly. In this way, individuals are being fairly treated as adults.

As adult human beings, homosexuals are presumed to have an interest in making decisions for themselves, according to their own convictions about what they regard as good for themselves, and how they want to conduct their own lives. The principle of autonomy entitles them to choose homosexuality, if that is the life they think will suit them most. By so doing, individuals accordingly and promptly are said to be abiding by the principle of autonomy. Accordingly, the Nozikian night-watchman minimal state empowers them to be masters of themselves. It is here where fundamental human rights, particularly freedom of choice are observed and respected. External authorities that legislate laws that forbid homosexuality are in this case seen as clearly depriving individuals their right to determine their own fate. In this way, libertarianism is seen as a political theory that protects minority rights. As the minorities in their respective communities homosexuals are autonomous beings who must be permitted to freely determine their destiny.

However, just as John Locke in his *Treatises of Government* correctly holds that "But though this be a *State of Liberty*, yet it is not a *State of License* (Locke, 1966: 288), I also maintain that the liberty or freedom of individuals is not a state of license. Inevitably, every individual

has a right and is free to choose a life he or she is comfortable with. But such a freedom of choice is and must be constrained if it either directly or indirectly affects the lives of others. In other words, free individuals must take into consideration the 'common good' seriously. Homosexual marriages indirectly have a negative impact on one of the primary goals of marriage, namely, procreation. If, for example, homosexual marriages were legalized, and if the majority of couples were homosexuals, the existence of the human species would undoubtedly be at stake.

### **'What violates an organ's principal purpose is unnatural?'**

John Corvino (2005: 2011-2013) argues against the people who maintain the view that homosexual sex is unnatural since it cannot result in procreation. According to Corvino, human organs have multiple purposes and should not be restricted to particular purposes like confining genitals solely for procreation. He illustrates his point by citing an example of a 'mouth' as an organ having multiple purposes like: eating, breathing, chewing and kissing women or men. Corvino maintains that to conclude that all other uses of the mouth are natural except kissing men is arbitrary. Hence, given that human organs have multiple purposes, same sex partners can rightfully use their mouths for kissing, and there is nothing unnatural in this regard too.

Having shown that human organs have various natural purposes, Corvino confines himself to genitals and maintains the view that they are not only meant for procreating. Sexual organs, Corvino maintains, can also be rightfully deployed for enhancing a relationship, expressing love, celebrating an event, and the like. In this way, even when procreation is not a factor at stake, sexual organs can still be used accordingly for a variety of purposes. Corvino reinstates his point by citing the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church thus: "Indeed, even the Roman Catholic Church, which forbids contraception and masturbation, approves of sex for sterile couples and of sex during pregnancy, neither of which can lead to procreation" (Corvino, 2005: 213). He holds the view that under normal circumstances, sterile couples cannot have children whenever they have sexual intercourse. For them, sexual intercourse is just for pleasure and they also have it to express their intimacy. Given that the Catholic Church allows sterile couples to have sex aware of the fact that procreation is impossible in their condition, Corvino holds that the Church is being inconsistent when it condemns homosexuality on the ground that it is not procreative. The other reason why the Church condemns homosexuality is that it is unnatural (as I am going to show later).

However, the examples cited by Corvino in defense of homosexual people are problematic. He holds that opponents of a homosexual relationship regard it as being immoral because it deviates from the norm as most people engage in heterosexual relationships, but, he maintains, an activity of people writing with both hands is not considered immoral though they are few in number. But, the comparison between few homosexuals having sex and few people writing with both hands is quite irrelevant because the latter activity has nothing to do with morality. Relatively, few people write with left hands and accordingly this activity is neither moral nor immoral, it is just regarded as being unusual. Given the natures of homosexuality and

heterosexuality, they cannot be considered amoral. Therefore, Corvino's mode of thought is not quite right since amoral acts cannot and should not be identified with moral acts.

Again, Corvino argues against the claim that human organs have various principal natural purposes. On the contrary, Corvino maintains, our organs have multiple purposes. He illustrates his point by giving an example of a mouth as a human organ that does not have just one principal purpose but as an organ having multiple purposes. Following Corvino's mode of thought human sexual organs too should not be confined to procreation alone but also have multiple purposes, such as expressing love or giving and receiving pleasure. But, given the structure and the nature of the anus, it is such that it is clearly not intended to be penetrated by the penis, whether Corvino admits it or not. It is not surprising that on many occasions gays had to be operated, given the size of the penis tearing the anus, as medical doctors have testified.

Furthermore, Corvino cites the Roman Catholic Church that allows sterile couples to have sexual intercourse aware of the fact that their having sex cannot lead to procreation because of infertility. But Corvino's mode of thought here is somehow flawed. It is by accident that procreation for sterile couples is impossible. That is to say, sterile couples did not choose to be born sterile, it is by brute bad luck that they happen to be disadvantaged by nature. On the contrary, the same sex couples freely and deliberately decide and choose a relationship where procreation is impossible. In my view, it is clearly wrong to make a general rule that is simply based on few exceptional cases. It is like enacting a law that people should stop walking during the night because some people are blind.

The Catholic Church correctly teaches that: "By their very nature, the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children ..." (Vatican II Council, p. 250). By its very nature homosexual matrimony is not ordained for the procreation and education of children. If we take the preservation of the human species seriously, homosexuality should as matter of necessity be outlawed because it may lead to the extinction of the human species.

### **The Natural Law Theory**

In his most celebrated *Summa Theologica*, St. Thomas Aquinas describes the natural law (in Question 94 with six articles) as the precept to which man is inclined to naturally, and that man is naturally inclined to act according to the dictates of reason. Based on Aquinas' theory, the paper argues that by deciding to opt for heterosexual sex man rightfully follows the dictates of reason.

Aquinas defines a law as an ordinance of reason that is promulgated by the one who has the care of the community, and it is directed towards the common good. According to Aquinas, as a directive, law must at all times be reasonable, that is to say, if it is not reasonable, it cannot qualify as a law. It ought to be directed towards the common good, and not just promulgated for the private interest of relatively few people. The one who promulgates the law must be a legitimate authority responsible for the community, and the law ought to be made known to all the subjects of the law.

According to Aquinas, natural law is the law by means of which God governs rational beings. God, the appropriate author of natural law, governs rational creatures according to their being as rational creatures. Man as a rational being is governed by God through natural law which, as a matter of fact, is a rational participation in the eternal law. For Aquinas, the participation in the eternal law by human beings or rational creatures is called natural law. Aquinas' natural law is actually identical to moral law. Hence, Aquinas' concept of natural law is, in fact, the same as moral law.

For Aquinas, the order of natural inclination is such that it is the order of the precept of the natural law. He holds that "in man there is first of all an inclination to good in accordance with the nature which he has in common with all substances: in as much as every substance seeks the preservation of its own being, according to its nature..." (Aquinas, 1915: 44). In my view, evidently the only way or means of preserving human life occurs when man following the dictates of reason is inclined towards heterosexual sex, and this under normal circumstances belongs to the natural law. There is also an inclination in man to things according to that nature he shares with nonhuman animals. In the light of this inclination, Aquinas maintains, such things belong to the natural law. Here one is rightfully entitled to deduce that together with other nonhuman animals, man is naturally inclined towards heterosexual intercourse and taking care of one's offspring.

Aquinas further teaches that everything to which a man is inclined necessarily belongs to the natural law. He maintains that each and everything that exists is naturally inclined to give birth to that which is in conformity with its nature. In order to re-instate his point he cites an example of fire being naturally inclined to give heat. In our case one gives an example of sexual organs as being naturally inclined to give birth to children. Aquinas further holds that "Sexual matters, which are indeed ordained to the natural common good, just as other matters of law are ordained to the moral common good" (Aquinas, 1915: 46). This observation is vitally important since by deliberately ignoring what sexual organs are naturally ordained for, this may in the long run lead to the extinction of the human species. The dictates of reason must accordingly order the sexual organs to naturally be ordained to the moral common good.

However, Aquinas notes a possible objection to the universality of the natural law. Given that different persons are naturally inclined to different things, it possibly follows logically that there is no one natural law for all. Typical examples consist in that people are naturally inclined: to the desire of pleasures, as in the case of hedonists, the desire of honours and the like. I believe that advocates of homosexuality may most probably add that homosexuals are naturally inclined to the desire of the same sex relationships.

Aquinas' reply is that all other powers of man necessarily ought to be commanded by the faculty of reason. All the natural inclinations belonging to the other powers of necessity must be directed by the dictates of reason. In fact, rationality essentially differentiates us from other nonhuman animals. Any feeling that is incompatible with the dictates of reason must necessarily be suppressed because it ceases to be human, but purely animal like. Therefore, it is in order that all our inclinations should be directed according to reason. If homosexuality is

not ordained to the moral common good, and if it is not universally right for all men, then it cannot be an inclination directed according to reason. Any feeling that is incompatible with the dictates of reason ought to be accordingly prohibited.

Perhaps Emmanuel Kant's categorical imperative could be deployed here to demonstrate that homosexuality is unacceptable. In his *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, Kant expresses the Categorical Imperative thus: "Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law"(Kant [1785] 1964: 103). According to Kant, autonomy means that a rational being is not only self-legislating, but also makes a law which binds every rational nature. If I were to enact a law, then I should ask myself whether I am willing for that law to be followed by everyone at all times. If the answer is yes, that would make it a universal law. Undoubtedly, in my view, we could not will that homosexuality be a universal law because such a law would lead to the extinction of the human species. Evidently, therefore, the dictates of reason cannot rule and command that homosexuality be a universal law.

Aquinas raises yet another possible objection regarding the natural law. He holds that the possession of all things and the universal freedom pertain to the natural law. But it does happen that sometimes human laws change matters of the natural law. Therefore, the natural law is subject to change. The evidence that the natural law is changeable can be seen the countries that have legalized same sex marriages. Aquinas responds by maintaining that the natural law is unchangeable and the same for all men because all men are rational, and that it is in order that human beings be inclined to act according to reason. For Aquinas, a thing belongs to the natural law because nature did not bring in the contrary. For example, it is of the natural law for a man to be naked since nature did not give him clothes. Clothes is just an art invented by man, and as such it does not change the natural law but simply adds to it. On the contrary, it seems to me that the same sex marriage does not add anything to the natural law; but rather it does contradict the natural law since it is directly incompatible with the primary purpose of marriage, namely, procreation.

Pope Paul VI correctly teaches that the sexual activity in which husband and wife are intimately united with one another does not cease to be legitimate even when it is foreseen to be infertile. The reason being that in this particular case it is independent of their will. The Supreme Pontiff holds that "new life is not the result of each and every act of sexual intercourse. God has wisely ordered laws of nature and the incidence of fertility in such a way that successive births are already naturally spaced through the inherent operation of these laws" (*Humanae Vitae*, p. 5). The Church teaches that the precepts of the natural law be observed, and correctly maintains its doctrine of the marital act ought to retain its intrinsic relationship to the procreation of human life. The Church accordingly prohibits the marital act of the same sex couples since their inability to procreate is dependent of their will. In this case it is a matter of choice unlike in the case of sterile couples.

## **Socio-cultural Standards for Human Relations and Matrimonies**

When discussing socio-cultural standards for human relations and matrimonies regarding certain ethical questions like homosexuality, it depends to some extent on the political theory one cherishes. On the one hand, Western liberals welcome both heterosexual relationship and homosexuality; for them, it is just a matter of individual choice. On the other hand, African communitarians regard homosexuality as being immoral and as something that is strictly prohibited.

Liberalism is a political theory that sets out to give people power over their own lives and an equal say in the running of the government. Liberty and equality are two essential constituents of liberalism. Libertarianism is an extreme exclusively individualistic form of liberalism. For libertarians, “the basic unit of social analysis is the individual... Individuals are, in all cases, the source and foundation of creativity, activity, and society. Only individuals can think, love, pursue projects... Only individuals are capable of choice” (Boaz, 1997: 95). Liberal citizens claim to have the liberty to pursue their plans and projects and they hold that they should have equal opportunity to do so.

Liberals’ main argument in defense of their overemphasis on individual rights is self-determination. They hold that individuals must be allowed to make important decisions about their lives for themselves. As autonomous beings, individuals ought to rule themselves and must be permitted to live in accordance with what they consider as a good life for themselves. In this way, an external authority is forbidden to determine the lives of individuals. It is with this mode of thought that opting for the same sex relationships, individuals exercise self-determination and take responsibility for their own lives and for the kind of persons they want to be.

First, if taken seriously, libertarian liberalism tends towards relativism. It does not accommodate a norm or standard by means of which we can pass judgments on human actions. In fact, libertarianism is not different from Protagoras’ sophistic relative doctrine that a human being is the measure of all things, of the things that are, that they are, and of the things that are not, that they are not. Ethical relativism is a doctrine that there are no universal moral standards; it entails that right and wrong are determined by each individual. Now, bearing in mind the notion of libertarian liberalism above and that of ethical relativism, they amount to Protagoras’ doctrine that man is the measure of all things. In this way, if libertarian liberals hold the view that homosexuality is moral and communitarians maintain that it is immoral, both conflicting views must be regarded as being correct because man is the measure of all things. Now, suppose that an adult person freely decides to have sex with a nonhuman animal, and that this decision neither interferes with other humans nor causes pain to the nonhuman animal in question, this abominable act, in my view, must be judged honourable because man is the measure of all things.

In the last analysis, if we take libertarian liberalism seriously, the consequence is to ultimately stop making explicit reflections on moral acts, that is to say, to stop doing ethics.

Second, the self-determination argument that might appear to be admirable at first sight is detrimental for two reasons: firstly, it tends towards anarchism, and secondly it ignores the communal nature of man. In his most celebrated *Leviathan* Thomas Hobbes has this to say: “For every man looketh that his companion should value him, at the same rate he sets upon himself...” (Hobbes: 1991: 88). In chapter XIII of his *Leviathan*, Hobbes talks about the state of nature, a state that he says is characterized by egocentrism. He develops his own moral and political theory based on psychological egoism. To some extent I concur with Hobbes since most of the time people are egoists who act in their own self-interest to obtain gratification and avoid harm. Now, if the argument of individual autonomy is taken seriously, selfish individuals are likely to tend towards anarchism. They will most likely be tempted to enact laws that will legalize same sex marriages, laws that are exclusively individualistic ignoring the common good of society, namely, procreation.

Equally important is a fact that libertarian liberals ignore the communal nature of man. They deliberately ignore an obvious fact that it is not by chance that human beings are born in societies. Now, heterosexuality is such that it enhances this communal nature of man with its basic unit of a family extending to a larger society. Suppose our societies would at one stage be solely composed of pairs of homosexual couples, communities would gradually be diminishing until the entire human species is extinct.

On the other hand, African communitarians accommodate heterosexual relationships and prohibit homosexuality. Communitarianism is a political theory that maintains the view that the community is prior to the individual. It is a political theory that maintains that in the case of conflict of rights the community rights must override the rights of individuals. However, critics of communitarianism regard it as a political theory where individuals are wholly absorbed into a community such that they no longer have rights. Elsewhere I have argued that “communitarianism is not a theory that rejects individualistic values. Individual rights are still respected in a communitarian society. What characterizes a society to be communitarian is its claim that communal rights are more valuable than the rights of individuals” (Manyeli, 2010: 338).

The problem with libertarian liberals is that they mistakenly tend to dissociate individual rights from communal rights. They ignore the undeniable fact that rights of individuals are entailed in communal rights. In other words, communal rights encompass rights of every individual. Moreover, communal rights ensure that rights of all individuals are protected. In the case of conflict communal rights ought to override individual rights because the communitarian theory itself assumes a greater concern for communal values, that is, for the good of the wider society as such. Adhering to the individual right of the marriage of the same sex couples a libertarian liberal view that is exclusively monadological is directly conflicting with the communal value of marriage, particularly procreation which is the good of the wider society.

In as far as the socio-cultural background of matrimony in Lesotho is concerned, homosexuality has always been a phenomenon that is alien. Matsela (1999: 23-37) maintains that from childhood boys and girls were trained and prepared for marriage. Marriage was



regarded as the greatest institution by means of which families were formed and continuity of life ensured. It is worth noting that the same sex marriages never featured in traditional Lesotho society.

Initiation rite was a form of formal education offered to neophytes. Formal instructions to both masculine and feminine initiation centered on the essentials of life such as marriage and the family. Thomas Manyeli holds that “One of the most important information given during the initiation was conjugal life, especially sexual(s) problems. Neophytes were told the role and duty of women in the process of procreation. These lessons were given by detailed poems which described the sexual organs of both sexes as well as the implied sexual relations” (Manyeli, T., 1992: 76). The conjugal life to which the neophytes were informed about was centered on their lives as future husbands and wives, and it is important to note that there was no mention of homosexuality in these vital formal instructions. The neophytes were taught that sexual organs were meant for the sexual gratification of both partners, but most importantly for procreation. Therefore, it is not surprising that sterility was regarded as a curse since sexual organs in the case of sterile couples were not serving the primary purpose of having sexual intercourse, namely, procreation. I have cited above the case of Lesotho where matrimony is strictly confined to heterosexuality and where homosexuality does not feature.

Male same-sex activity had previously been illegal in Lesotho as a common law offence, but had not been enforced. However, in 2012 male same-sex activity was legalized. But that Act was not considered as being legal because it did not follow normal procedures before reaching Parliament to be voted for. In fact, the bill was never publicized as it should in order to allow the public to voice their opinion; even in Parliament it was not debated as the procedure requires. Amazingly, it is unclear why female same-sex activity was not legalized in that same year. Taking into consideration the Basotho conception of homosexuality, public opinion cannot legalize same-sex activity. In my view, the government’s loosing of the general elections in 2012 may be indicative that the people never approved of the attempt to the legalization of male same-sex activity. However, I patiently wait to hear the arguments of the defenders of homosexuality.

The Uganda Anti-Homosexuality Act, 2014 can be cited here to further prove that homosexuality is alien to Africans in general. The Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Act, 2014 was passed by Parliament on 20 December 2013 with life in prison substituted for the death penalty, and the President signed the bill into law on 24 February 2014. I castigate both life in prison and death penalties since they directly violate people’s fundamental right to choose their lifestyle. However, this reaction clearly shows that the concept of homosexuality is alien to African mentality. The re-election of President Museveni of Uganda confirmed that Ugandans concurred with their Parliament on their discontent about homosexuality.

According to a report in Africa, the following website shows that “Africans see homosexuality as being both un-African and un-Christian. Thirty-eight of 53 African nations criminalize homosexuality in some way. A 2013 poll found that the overwhelming majority of Ugandans disapproved of homosexuality” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uganda-Anti-Homosexuality>),

act,2014). The survey perspicuously shows that in general homosexuality is pugnacious to the African culture. The legislations of the following African countries against homosexuality: Malawi, Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda clearly demonstrate that homosexuality is contrary to the African cultural and moral values. Undoubtedly, homosexuality is a new phenomenon in African society. The problem with some Western libertarian liberals is that they tend to regard their culture as being superior to all other cultures; and consequently they regard their culture as setting the standard and norm for all other inferior cultures.

### **Adoption of Minor Children by Lesbian and Gay Adults**

In her famous article “Adoption of Minor Children by Lesbian and Gay Adults: A Socialist Science Perspective”, Charlotte Patterson (1995: 191 – 205) justifies adoption of children by homosexuals on the ground that it serves the best interests of children. Basing on her research findings Patterson maintains that the claim that the adoption of children by lesbian and gay parents is harmful to children is in fact unfounded.

Regarding custody disputes and adoption proceedings, Patterson summarizes three major concerns raised by judges supposedly to be detrimental to the welfare of adopted children: sexual identity, personal development and social relationships.

Questions asked on sexual identity are: Would girls in lesbian or gay families grow up thinking of themselves as boys or boys in lesbian or gay homes grow up thinking of themselves as girls? Is it more likely that children adopted by gays or lesbians end up being lesbians or gays themselves? Unfortunately, Patterson does not respond to the latter question. However, I think that these questions can best be answered by children adopted by lesbian or gay parents. I suppose that it is hard to imagine that homosexual partners can think positively of heterosexual families, given that the latter normally are negative about homosexual families. Inevitably, in my view, lesbian and gay parents’ mode of thought will probably influence children entrusted in their care. Just as it is rare to have children growing under Protestant families ultimately converting to Catholicism, so I suppose it will be the case with children raised by lesbian or gay parents. They will hardly conceive heterosexuality positively. Besides being negative about heterosexuality, homosexual families are less informed about heterosexual families. Just as one does not expect Protestant families to teach children about Catholicism, the same applies to homosexual families regarding heterosexuality.

A second concern raised by judges involves other difficulties in personal development: low self-esteem, problems of adjustment and psychiatric disorders. Patterson’s finding is that “the existing research suggests that the great majority of sexual abuse is committed by heterosexual men, not by lesbian or gay men” (Patterson, 1996: 199). I hope and believe that I do not misinterpret Patterson when I say that according to her it follows from the premises she has laid to conclude that therefore for the best interests of children, it is ideal that they be entrusted to the care of lesbian and gay families. This should be so, according to Patterson, given her claim that ‘the great majority of child sexual abuse is committed by heterosexual men’. Whilst not denying that some heterosexual men may at times sexually abuse children, I suspect that

Patterson's finding is exaggerated, especially when she does not articulate the exact percentage of heterosexual men abusing children and the exact percentage of gays less involved in child sexual abuse.

The third concern of the courts rests on social relationships. Some judges fear that children of lesbian and gay parents will be laughed at or stigmatized because of having homosexual parents. One other judicial concern is whether children of lesbian parents will have sufficient contact with adult men. Patterson's response is that these judicial concerns have no evidence. Regarding the first concern Patterson holds the view that children from lesbian parents do not experience problems because what appears to be complicated to adults may be simple for children. She cites an instance where a child was asked: 'who is that other man who lives at your house'? The child simply responded: 'That's my father's husband'. Regarding the stigmatization concern it depends where one is situated. In the African context children of lesbian and gay parents would be teased and stigmatized by their peers because homosexuality is alien to African culture. And children who find themselves growing in lesbian and gay families would most likely experience difficulties because of finding themselves living under conditions regarded as being alien to their culture.

### **Homosexual Sex is Harmful**

In his defense of homosexuality Corvino does not want to admit the fact that homosexuality is harmful in the sense that it puts people at risk of contracting AIDS. He argues that "For if it is wrong for men to have sex with men because their doing so puts them at a higher AIDS risk than heterosexual sex, then it is also wrong for women to have sex with men because their doing so puts them at a higher AIDS risk than homosexual sex (lesbians as a group have the lowest incidence of AIDS). Purely from the standpoint of AIDS risk, women ought to prefer lesbian sex" (Corvino, 2005: 214). However, it has been scientifically proven that homosexual males are statistically more likely to carry the virus than heterosexuals and homosexual females.

Dr. Elizabeth Boskey's article "Why Do Gay Men Have an Increased Risk of HIV?" tells us that: "In the United States, gay men are at a disproportionately high risk of getting HIV and AIDS. Between 2010 and 2015, 68 percent of HIV infections were among men who have sex with men" (Boskey, 2018: 1). She gives a biological reason why gay men are likely to get HIV: "Scientists have estimated that the average HIV transmission rate during anal sex is 18 times higher than the rate during vaginal intercourse. The risk of acquiring HIV during an act of unprotected anal intercourse is estimated to be 1.4 percent.... There's another biological factor that makes anal sex riskier for gay men. They are much more likely to engage in both 'topping' and 'bottoming', or penetrating and receiving. This is known as **role variability**, and it has been shown to increase HIV transmission risk" Boskey, 2018: 2). She says men who practice receptive anal intercourse stand at a higher risk of contracting HIV and those practicing insertive anal intercourse have more likelihood to transmit HIV to their partners. She then concludes: "When men do both, the combination of behaviors optimizes the spread of HIV in

a way not seen in heterosexual couples” (Boskey, 2018: 2). The harmfulness of homosexuality has thus been proven on scientific grounds.

The HIV and AIDS diagnoses of 2014 read as follows: “Gay and bisexual men accounted for 83% (29,418) of the estimated new HIV diagnoses among all males aged 13 and older and 67% of the total estimated new diagnoses in the United States... Gay and bisexual men accounted for an estimated 54% (11,277) of people diagnosed with Aids” ([www.aidslinkinternational.org](http://www.aidslinkinternational.org)). This study indicates that gay and bisexual men continue to experience the greatest burden of HIV when compared to any other group in the United States. This undeniable fact is due to the nature of rough homosexuality that ultimately tears delicate tissues of the anus. Under normal circumstances, heterosexual sex does not lead to the tearing of delicate sensitive tissues of the female. Corvino’s comparison of heterosexual and homosexual sex does prove that homosexual sex is harmful and that the former is preferable. Heterosexual sex is risky in the case of unfaithful partners, particularly men who also engage in homosexual sex. Most probably, the spread of AIDS is caused by gays who also engage in heterosexual sex.

Corvino concludes that “there is nothing inherently risky about sex between persons of the same gender. It is only risky under certain conditions: for instance, if they exchange diseased bodily fluids or if they engage in certain ‘rough’ forms of sex that could cause tearing of delicate tissue” (Corvino, 2005: 215). But Corvino accepts the finding that in the United States homosexual males are statistically more likely to carry the virus. Undoubtedly, this is due to the nature of homosexual sex itself for it causes the tearing of delicate tissues. Logically, Corvino’s conclusion that ‘there is nothing inherently risky about sex between persons of the same gender’ does not follow, given the nature of homosexual sex, that is, men having sex with other men. As a matter of fact, the correct conclusion from these premises should simply be that homosexual sex is inherently risky, and therefore harmful. As I said, homosexuals who are also active in heterosexual sex do contribute in the spreading of AIDS.

### **Homosexuality violates Biblical Teaching**

Corvino argues against the people who attempt to justify the immorality of homosexuality by appealing to religion. He considers two biblical passages that condemn homosexuality as an activity that is univocal. These passages are: “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination” (Leviticus, 18:22). “For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error” (Romans, 1: 26-27).

Corvino holds that these passages and the like must be understood and interpreted in their historical contexts. He thus cites Leviticus 11: 7-8 where the Jews were strictly prohibited to eat pork, and maintains that such a passage should not be taken literally. It is with this mode of thinking that Corvino holds the view that the above mentioned texts from Romans and

Leviticus ought not to be taken literally. Corvino neglects the fact that even today in Jewish religion Jews are still strictly prohibited to eat pork. Most important, Corvino's hermeneutic of interpreting homosexuality using a text that talks about the prohibition of pork is quite misleading. In my view, a passage must be interpreted by at least using a passage related to it.

The Old Testament as a whole does not accommodate homosexuality. In the beginning "God created man in his image; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1: 27). The creation story clearly attests to the fact that it was in God's plan that man was created with a woman to serve the primary purpose of marriage, namely, procreation as stipulated: "God blessed them, saying: 'Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it'" (Genesis 1: 28). Another version of the creation story shows that God instituted marriage between a man and a woman and neither between a man to a man nor a woman to a woman. In Adam's solitary state God did not create another man for Adam, but a woman, and God found Eve ( a woman) to be the most suitable partner for man. (Genesis 2: 21-24).

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as a punishment for homosexuality is a clear demonstration that this sin does not only affect the Jews, but that it is a sin against humanity in general. The demolition of the entire homosexually inclined people of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19) inevitably demonstrate that before God homosexuality has always been immoral. To relate the Jews prohibition of eating pork with the entire condemnation of homosexuality in the Bible is clearly tantamount to undermining the gravity of the immorality of homosexuality.

## **Conclusion**

The main apparently plausible argument raised by libertarian liberals in defense of homosexuality is individual self-determination. In my view, the main reason why this argument is appealing to many is due to the fact that for centuries some individual rights have been unfairly suppressed. For example, in my traditional Lesotho society people were denied their right to choose in as far as marriage was concerned, families were responsible to choose the right partners for their children. In both African and Western societies women were considered simply as domestic engines confined to the home. Minority groups such as: African-Americans were denied their right to humanity (by being enslaved), black South Africans were denied their rights to vote; and this deprivation of individuals' fundamental rights was tantamount and detrimental to the dignity of the human person.

But, does it mean that every time one encounters marginalized groups or individuals, one should always conclude that they are being unfairly denied their rights? The answer is of course no since every case must be treated as being uniquely different. I do not have an objection against groups or individuals making choices about the kind of lives they want to live since they are free to do so. But in the case of conflict of rights, that is, between communal and individuals rights, the former must prevail. I have shown that procreation ensures the continuation of the human species. Humans are free to choose, but liberty is not and should

not be license. The minority right to the same sex marriage is incompatible with the right to the continuity of the human species.

Accordingly, we cannot allow individuals who may be psychologically disturbed to commit suicide simply because they have a right to choose. We cannot also allow a certain minority group to have sex with nonhuman animals simply because they are free to choose; such a marginalized group choice necessarily ought to be strictly prohibited since it is neither human nor animal like. Similarly, we cannot allow individuals who may be psychologically disturbed to have homosexual sex. The community is duty bound to have pity on such individuals and assist by giving them proper counseling.

Earlier, I have shown that when defining law, Aquinas maintains that it is a directive or a command which must be reasonable, directed towards the common good, and not enacted for the private interest of a few people. Undoubtedly, a law enacted and promulgated to allow same sex relationships and marriages is made for the private interest of a few people. Such a law is not and should not be regarded as binding since it is not directed towards the common good.

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# ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF ANGLICAN AND ROMAN CATHOLIC BILATERAL RELATIONS FROM A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

James N. Amanze

## Abstract

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*This paper is a critical examination of Anglican-Roman Catholic bilateral relations from a theological perspective. The main argument of the paper is that while the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches consider themselves to be in a special relationship as a result of a number of theological agreements reached over the past forty years aimed at bringing them closer together than ever before, they are far from achieving visible church unity. The achievements made over the years, in the form of agreed theological texts have, from time to time, been derailed by subtle theological differences between the two church traditions. This can best be described in the words of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin "One step forward, two steps back". The paper concludes that given the small amount of progress, which is pushed back by a large amount of setbacks, church unity is unattainable.*

**Key words:** Ecumenism, theological texts, church unity, bilateral relations, theological perspective

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## 1. Introduction

Ecumenism, that is, the activities to achieve church unity after the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Protestant Reformation in Germany has been the hallmark of the church in the Twentieth and Twenty First Centuries. Philip Potter, once General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, noted that the ecumenical movement was "the means by which the churches, which form the house, the *oikos* of God, are seeking so live and witness before all peoples that the whole *oikoumene* may become the *oikos* of God through the crucified and risen Christ in the power of the life-giving Spirit."<sup>70</sup> This is in line with the views of the Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) of the Second Vatican Council, according to which "The Church established by Christ the Lord is, indeed, one and unique. Yet many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true heritage of Jesus Christ.... Without doubt this discord openly contradicts the will of Christ, provides a stumbling block to the world and inflicts damage on the most holy cause of proclaiming the good news to every creature".<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Philip Potter, "Report of the General Secretary" in Michael Kinnamon and Brian E. Cope (eds.), *The ecumenical movement: An Anthology of key texts and voices*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997, p.55.

<sup>71</sup> Walter M. Abbott, S. J., (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II*, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966, p.341.



In most cases, the ecumenical movement has taken the shape of multilateral negotiations, but in some instances it has been pursued along bilateral lines in order to achieve and enhance the unity of the divided church. This paper argues that despite making tremendous advances to narrow the gap between the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, subtle theological differences still exist and others come into play, which make the visible unity of the two church traditions almost impossible.

## 2. The two churches' quest for church unity

In the twentieth century the need for church unity between the Roman Catholic Church on the one hand and the Anglican Church on the other began when Geoffrey Fisher, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Pope John Paul XXIII met in Rome in 1960. During this visit the Pope suggested to Fisher that the "separated brethren" (Anglicans) should return to the Mother Church to which the Archbishop responded: "Your Holiness, no return. None of us can go backwards. We are now running on parallel courses; we are looking forward until, in God's time, our two courses approximate and meet". After sometime of reflection, the Pope said "You are right"<sup>72</sup> Mark the Pope's words "return of the separated brethren to the Mother Church". This seems to be the baseline and the ultimate requirement for organic church unity between the Vatican on the one hand and Canterbury on the other regardless of other achievements attained through bilateral ecumenical dialogue.

Interestingly, Archbishop Fisher's visit to Rome generated the idea of establishing an Anglican Centre in Rome which materialized on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1966.<sup>73</sup> It was meant to be a permanent, visible presence of the Anglican Communion in Rome and the base for the Archbishop of Canterbury's personal representative to the Holy See.<sup>74</sup> This arrangement began to improve the relationship between the two churches which had been so bad since the Reformation. This led to the official visit of Archbishop Michael Ramsey to the Vatican. He was received in the Sistine Chapel by Pope Paul VI on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1966 and on 24<sup>th</sup> March they prayed together at the Basilica of St. Paul outside the Walls where they signed a common declaration to mark a new stage in the development of fraternal relations, based upon Christian charity and sincere efforts to remove the causes of conflict and to re-establish unity. They affirmed their desire that Christians who belong to the two communions should be animated by sentiments of respect, esteem and fraternal love. They also pledged to embark on a serious ecumenical dialogue founded on the gospels and on the ancient common traditions, which would, ultimately, lead to church unity for which Christ prayed. The dialogue would include theological matters such as Scripture, tradition and liturgy as well as matters of practical difficulties felt on either side.<sup>75</sup>

Generally speaking, the beginning of bilateral dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches can be traced back to this event for out of this meeting the Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) was established in 1967. Its terms of reference

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<sup>72</sup> Frederick Bliss, *Anglicans in Rome: A history*, Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2006, pp. 46-47.

<sup>73</sup> Bliss, *Anglicans in Rome*... p.89.

<sup>74</sup> Bliss, *Anglicans in Rome*..., pp. 94-95.

<sup>75</sup> Personal communication with the Associate Director Anglican Centre in Rome, 10/6/2016

were established by the Malta Report in 1968. It worked in two phases: 1970 to 1981 and 1983 to 2005. During its life span, ARCIC dealt with a number of theological issues which included, the Eucharist, Ministry and Authority, salvation, the Church as Communion, Life in Christ, Mary in the life of the Church and Grace and Hope in Christ.<sup>76</sup> ARCIC produced a series of agreed theological statements, which addressed issues on which agreement was required if the two communions were to live in visible unity. The first series of statements covered the Eucharist, ministry, ordination and authority and came out under the title “Final Report”. It was presented to the authorities of both churches and received official response.<sup>77</sup> The Anglican Church recognised the Eucharist and ministry statements as “consonant in substance with the faith of Anglicans”. The initial Roman Catholic Response, however, requested further work in these two areas.<sup>78</sup> Further work which was done by an ARCIC Sub-committee provided clarifications which enabled the Roman Catholic Church to judge that the clarifications strengthened agreements in these two areas. Both churches, therefore, recognised the convergence in these areas although, as we shall see later, significant issues have remained to the present day.<sup>79</sup>

As a follow up to the work done by ARCIC, in 1996 Pope John Paul II and Archbishop George Carey issued a common declaration designed to strengthen ecumenical relations between Canterbury and Rome. As a result, in May 2000 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. George Carey and the President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Cardinal Edward Cassidy, called a meeting for Bishops from the two communions at Mississauga in Canada. The objective was to seek a way forward in the continuing ecumenical relations between the two church traditions. It was also designed to address the imperative for Christian reconciliation and healing, assess the progress made in Anglican-Roman Catholic relations and chart a way forward for the future. The assembled bishops focused on the special relationship between the two churches, which was expressed in *Unitas Redintegratio*, the decree on ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council, which states as follows: “Among the communions separated at the time of the Reformation from the Roman see in which the Catholic concept of tradition and institutions in part continue to exist, the Anglican Communion occupies a special place.”<sup>80</sup>

At the end of the meeting, it was agreed that a new body should be established whose task would be to promote the relationship between Roman Catholics and Anglicans. It was envisaged that the new body would be diametrically different from the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission. Its mandate would be to focus on the agreements discerned

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<sup>76</sup> <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/relationships/ecumenical-dialogue/Roman-catholic/arcic.aspx>  
assessed on 15/7/2018

<sup>77</sup> Growing together in unity and Mission (building on 40 years of Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue) *An Agreed Statement of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2007, p.6.

<sup>78</sup> Growing together, *An agreed Statement...* p.6.

<sup>79</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement...*, p.7.

<sup>80</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement...*, p.8

by ARCIC in order to establish how the two communities would work together towards enhancing their joint witness and mission in the world.<sup>81</sup>

As a result, in 2001 the International Anglican –Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) was formed. Its mission was to offer practical suggestions on the way in which the Anglican and Roman Catholic ecumenical participation can be appropriated and carried forward. In 2007 it issued the “Agreed Statement” intended to foster and enhance discussion and reflection.<sup>82</sup> It was hoped that the statement would inspire bishops to engage the clergy and laity to respond to the challenges set out in the text in the context of their local circumstances.<sup>83</sup>

As a result of this arrangement, in a number of places, Anglicans and Roman Catholic Bishops began to meet regularly for consultation and prayer. Representatives of each tradition are invited to be observers at conciliar gatherings of the other. Since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), Archbishops of Canterbury and Popes have met together on frequent occasions, praying together for the church and for the world. They have issued joint declarations which affirm the degree of communion that is already shared as well as the need to continue journeying together on the way to visible unity.<sup>84</sup>

### **3. Points of theological convergence among Anglicans and Roman Catholics**

It is important to note that there are a number of things that Roman Catholics and Anglicans have in common that promote and enhance their ecumenical cooperation. This section discusses some of these to show how the Anglicans and Roman Catholics have advanced ecumenism.

#### **(a) Belief in God as a Trinity**

One of the most important doctrines that connect Roman Catholics and Anglicans is their belief in a Triune God. Leonardo Boff in his book *Trinity and Society* looks at the Trinity as a mystery of inclusion. He notes that the Christian experience of God is that of unity in diversity based on the communion of the different Persons by which each is in the others, with the others, through the others and for the others. According to Boff, the Trinity is the revelation of God as God is, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in eternal correlation, interpenetration, love, and communion which make them one sole God. Boff intimates that “communion” as we find in the Trinity is an expression of love and life. Life and love, by their very nature, are dynamic and overflowing and this is what the Trinity stands for. Boff has gone further to note that the community of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, should become the prototype of the human community of those who wish to improve society and build it in such a way that it becomes the image and likeness of the Trinity.<sup>85</sup> It seems to me that this should be the case with the

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<sup>81</sup> Growing together, *An agreed statement*....., p.3

<sup>82</sup> Growing together, *An agreed statement*.....p.3.

<sup>83</sup> Growing together, *An agreed statement*.....p.4

<sup>84</sup> Growing together, *An agreed statement*,.... p.8.

<sup>85</sup> Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*, New York: Maryknoll1986, pp. 2-7.

Christian family and yet since the Reformation the different Christian denominations which profess the Trinity have failed to turn their faith into action by transforming diversity into unity.

### **(b) Ecclesiology as Communion in Mission**

Another important element that has enhanced cooperation among Roman Catholics and Anglicans is their understanding of the nature and work of the ecclesia. Karl Rahner in *Foundations of Christian Faith* has observed that the question about the church as was really intended and founded by Christ is one of the most difficult and disputed questions in ecumenical theology.<sup>86</sup> Interestingly, it appears that through the work of ARCIC there is a common understanding among Anglicans and Roman Catholics that the purpose of God according to the Holy Scripture is to gather together the whole creation under the Lordship of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit into communion with God. The Church is viewed as the foretaste of this communion with God and with one another. Anglicans and Roman Catholics agree that communion or *koinonia* is the term that most aptly express the image of the church and that this image requires visible expression. The church is a communion in mission. It is the sacrament of the merciful grace of God for all humankind. It exists in order to announce the fullness of the Kingdom of God. In this regard, *koinonia* with one another by Christians leads to *koinonia* with God.<sup>87</sup>

It is also maintained that Anglicans and Roman Catholics agree that the Church is the sacrament of God's saving work. It is both a sign and also an instrument of uniting all things in heaven and on earth. This mission of the church is rooted in the saving work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is generally agreed that the Church exists to announce the fullness of the Kingdom of God in the power of the Holy Spirit and that the Church is called to be a living expression of the gospel evangelized and evangelizing, reconciled and reconciling, gathered together and gathering others. It is understood that Christ's will is that his disciples should be one. In this regard, those who have been baptised in the one baptism cannot indefinitely live in a state of separation. Unity is the essence of the Church and since the Church is visible, its unity must also be visible.<sup>88</sup>

### **(c) The Bible and Church Traditions**

Another area of convergence between Roman Catholics and Anglicans is that they share a common Christian inheritance namely, the Bible, living traditions of liturgy, theology, spirituality, church order and mission all transmitted through the power of the Holy Spirit. This stands in sharp contrast with Reformed Theology according to which Reformers rejected church tradition as a source of divine revelation<sup>89</sup> and placed a great deal of emphasis on *sola scriptura* (the Bible alone) which is considered as a normative depository of divine revelation.<sup>90</sup> Interestingly, Anglicans and Roman Catholics consider church traditions as essential in understanding the nature of the Christian faith. They believe that the Bible is a unique

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<sup>86</sup> Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, London: Darton Longman & Todd, 1978, p.324.

<sup>87</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement*.....pp. 14-15.

<sup>88</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement*....., pp. 14-15.

<sup>89</sup> R. C. Sproul, *What is Reformed Theology?*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1997, p. 30,

<sup>90</sup> Sproul, *What is Reformed Theology?*....p.13

revelation of God and uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit.<sup>91</sup> They agree that the Church's teaching, preaching and church practice must constantly be measured against Scripture. They also agree that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Tradition of the Gospel is alive in the Church in continuity with the earliest Christians. They also agree in the first four ecumenical councils that formulated fundamental and abiding documents of the Christian faith although after that there is a divergence in terms of the councils that were held later and the doctrines that they formulated.<sup>92</sup>

#### **(d) The Sacrament of Baptism**

The sacrament of baptism is another point of convergence between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. It is a visible sign or seal of an invisible grace of God's promise of salvation.<sup>93</sup> Though there are different interpretations of the sacrament of Baptism, Anglicans and Roman Catholics agree that they receive one baptism administered with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Baptism is considered as a sacrament of initiation instituted by Jesus Christ himself by which people are incorporated into the Church –the Body of Christ. It is a sacrament of faith through which persons embrace the faith of the Church. It is believed that by baptism Christians are united with Christ in his life, death and resurrection. At baptism those who are baptised die, are buried in the waters of baptism with Christ and are raised to a new life which begins here and now in the power of Christ's resurrection. It is believed that this one baptism is for the forgiveness of sins, including original sin and that those who are baptised are pardoned, washed and cleansed by Christ who came into the world to save sinners. It is held that baptism is the unrepeatable sacrament of justification and incorporation into Christ and that those who are baptised entirely by the grace of God put on Christ, receive the Holy Spirit and are enabled to live a new life.<sup>94</sup>

Anglicans and Roman Catholics recognise the baptism each offers. They believe that through the power of the Holy Spirit, baptism initiates a renewal of life and growth in holiness which God will bring to completion in eternal life. Those who are baptised enter into a lifelong process of sanctification. They grow into conformity with Christ. The process continues until Christ comes again when those who are baptised will be like Christ. It is taught that through baptism, Christians are brought into union with Christ, with each other and with the church every time and place. Both Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches believe that baptism leads to confirmation. This is an empowerment by the Holy Spirit for witness, mission and public manifestation of membership in the body of Christ.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement*..... p21.

<sup>92</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement* ..... p. 22.

<sup>93</sup> Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004, p.423.

<sup>94</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement* ....., p23.

<sup>95</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement*...p23.

## e. The Eucharist

The Eucharist occupies a central position in the life of both the Roman Catholics and Anglicans. John Macquarrie has pointed out that the Eucharist is the sacrament which provides the structure and support for the growth of the Christian life in the process of sanctification. It is the sacrament of corpus Christi, the body of Christ per excellence. When Christians receive the same bread and drink they realize in a very impressive way the oneness of the members of the community with each other as well as their communion with God.<sup>96</sup>

Interestingly, both Anglicans and Roman Catholics agree that full participation in the Eucharist together with baptism and confirmation completes the sacramental process of Christian initiation. The Eucharist is conceived as a gift received from the Lord himself and celebrated in obedience to his command until he comes again. At the Eucharist Christians receive the body and blood of Christ. It is believed that at the Eucharist Christ is present and the visible unity of Christians is nourished, deepened and expressed in action when believers eat and drink the body and blood of Christ. Both Anglicans and Roman Catholics agree that the Eucharist is the memorial of the crucified and risen Christ and that the entire work of reconciliation between God and human beings has been accomplished in him. By memorial, both Roman Catholics and Anglicans intend to mean not merely calling to mind or remembering what God has done in the past but an effectual sacramental proclamation which through the action of the Holy Spirit makes present what was accomplished in the past. The Eucharist is considered as a sacrifice offered once for all by the Father which cannot be repeated or added to. It is not a repetition of the historical sacrifice. The Eucharistic celebration makes the sacrifice of Christ present for Christians today.<sup>97</sup>

Roman Catholics and Anglicans believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. It is signified effectively by the bread and wine which become his body and blood. Bread and wine for this life becomes bread and wine for eternal life. During the Eucharist the presence of Christ is not confined to the consecrated elements. He is present and active in a variety of ways in the entire Eucharistic celebration. However, in the bread and wine which become the body and blood of Christ, Christ is really present and is really given to people in these elements. The presence of Christ in the Eucharist does not depend on an individual believer's faith. He is present in the power of the Holy Spirit. Anglicans and Roman Catholics, however, believe that faith is required in order for the believer to have a life-giving encounter with Christ.<sup>98</sup>

The Eucharist is conceived as the "meal of the Kingdom" in which the Church gives thanks for all the signs of the coming Kingdom and that the celebration of the Eucharist involves the whole church and that the whole church is involved in the celebration of the Eucharist. The communion established in the body of Christ is a communion with all Christians of all times

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<sup>96</sup> John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977, pp.471-3.

<sup>97</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement....*, p26.

<sup>98</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement....* p27.

and all places. Anglicans and Roman Catholics agree that only bishops and episcopally ordained and authorised priests are allowed to preside at the Eucharist.<sup>99</sup>

#### **f. Church ministry**

Another area of agreement though with some challenges between Roman Catholics and Anglicans is the area of Church ministry. According to Wayne Grudem, church ministry is one of the specific means that the Holy Spirit very frequently uses to bring blessings to individual Christians. This means of grace works when one or more Christians within the church take time to minister in various ways to specific needs of others in the church and the community such as offering a word of encouragement, exhortation, wise counsel, anointing with oil, laying on of hands, assisting with material needs to name a few.<sup>100</sup> As far as church ministry is concerned, Anglicans and Roman Catholics agree that Christ entrusted his own ministry to the whole church as his body. His ministry is the source and model from which all ministries flow and take their shape. In other words, the ministry of the Church is the ministry of Christ himself. Particular attention is paid to the ordained ministry but it is understood that the Holy Spirit gives to every baptised person gifts to be used in the service of the Christian community and in the service of the world and its needs. All are called to offer their lives as a living sacrifice and to pray for the church and the world. The ordained ministry is the ministry of Christ himself with the responsibility of continuing the teaching and mission of the Apostles which was began in the life, work, death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>101</sup>

It should be noted that both Roman Catholics and Anglicans agree to the threefold ordering of the ministry, that is, bishops, priests and deacons as having emerged from the pattern of the ministry of the early Church in the New Testament under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in every era of the history of the Church. Ordination is acceptable within both communions. Ordination of clergy is considered and understood by both Anglicans and Roman Catholics as being in succession of the Apostles within the apostolicity of the whole church. Those who are ordained have the responsibility for the ministry of Word and Sacrament.<sup>102</sup>

#### **4. Obstacles to full visible unity between Anglicans and Roman Catholics**

Having discussed the above areas in which both Roman Catholics and Anglicans agree, it is important to note that there are a number of obstacles on the way to visible church unity between the two church traditions.

##### **a. Ecclesiology**

Though we noted above that Anglicans and Roman Catholics agree on a number of issues regarding the ecclesia, it should be noted that there are a number of subtle differences that keep

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<sup>99</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement*...., p27-28.

<sup>100</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1994, p.959.

<sup>101</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement*...., p29.

<sup>102</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement* ....., pp31-32.

the two churches apart from each other. One of these is the divergent answers given to the question “where is the church to be found”? For the Anglicans an authentic church exists where one finds the following four authentic signs (1) Scripture, Old and New Testaments, (2) the Apostles and Nicene Creeds, (3) Sacrament of Baptism and Eucharist and (4) the historic episcopacy. In the Anglican Communion there are four instruments of unity namely the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference of Bishops, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates’ Meeting. Generally speaking, meetings of bishops with a presiding bishop and councils or synods which bring together bishops, clergy and laity at the diocesan or provincial levels provide a mechanism for unity for the church in the power of the Holy Spirit. In this structure, there is no room for the Pope.<sup>103</sup>

On the other hand, for the Roman Catholics, the church exists where people possess the Spirit of Christ, accept all the means of salvation given to the church with her entire organisation joined together by the bonds constituted by the profession of faith, ecclesiastical government and communion and joined in the visible structure of the church of Christ through the Pope.<sup>104</sup> It is taught that the Church of Christ that we confess in the creed to be One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic-subsists in the Roman Catholic Church which is governed by the Successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him. It is held that the fullness of grace and truths and fullness of the means of salvation have been entrusted to the Roman Catholic Church only.<sup>105</sup>

This view is held despite the fact that the Roman Catholic Church recognises that some of the significant elements such as Scripture, sincere religious zeal, baptism and other sacraments are found in other Christian communities which means that the one church of Christ is effectively found present in them. The Roman Catholic Church emphasises the supremacy of the Petrine Office. One of the landmarks of the teaching of Vatican II is that bishops form a college in succession to the college of the apostles and that together with the Pope, and never apart from him, have supremacy and full authority over the universal church. In as far as the Anglican Church is concerned, this remains a contested area though it is acknowledged that if visible church unity is to be realised this can only be achieved with a common ministry of oversight.<sup>106</sup>

## **b. Church ministry**

One of the issues that has been a bone of contention between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church has been the ordained ministry of the church which is traced back to the time of the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. This culminated in 1896 when in his Apostolic Letter on Anglican Orders titled *Apostolicae Curae* Pope Leo XIII ruled against the validity of Anglican Orders. The question of validity remains a fundamental obstacle to the recognition of Anglican ministry by the Roman Catholic Church. So far it appears that in the light of the agreements on the Eucharist and ministry noted in the ARCIC Statements and in the official responses of both communions, there is evidence that both church traditions have a lot in

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<sup>103</sup>Growing together, *An Agreed Statement*...., p18.

<sup>104</sup>Growing together, *An Agreed Statement*....p.18

<sup>105</sup>Growing together, *An Agreed Statement*...., p18.

<sup>106</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement*....., pp 18-19.



common regarding their understanding of the intention and ordination of the clergy and the celebration of the Eucharist. It is noted by ecumenicists that this awareness should be part of any fresh evaluation of the Anglican Orders.<sup>107</sup>

### **c. Ordination of women to priesthood**

The ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopacy has made matters very difficult between Anglicans and Roman Catholics when it comes to matters of bilateral ecumenical relations. The position and practice of the Roman Catholic Church over the centuries is that women should not be ordained to priesthood. Patricia Daniel has postulated that this position is based on the theology of St. Paul as stipulated in his letters particularly those to Timothy and Titus. The Pauline corpus relegates women to the position of inferiority in the structures of the Church by allowing them to teach other women and children and to remain silent in the Church. The Roman Catholic Church has used Pauline theology to forbid the ordination of women in the church.<sup>108</sup>

Roman Catholics argue that the unbroken tradition of the church does not allow the ordination of women to priesthood. This view was reinforced by Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Letter "Ordinatio Sacerdotalis 1994" in which he discussed the Catholic Church's position requiring "the reservation of priestly ordination to men alone" and wrote that "the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination to women". This stands in sharp contrast to the Anglican view that there are no theological objections to such a development and that by ordaining women to priesthood, Anglicans are not departing neither from the traditional understanding of apostolic ministry nor the nature of ministry set forth in the ARCIC Statements.<sup>109</sup>

### **d. Authority in the Church**

Another hurdle on the march to visible unity is authority in the church. Edward J. Yarnold has indicated that the term authority is complex and that it carries with it a number of associations including that of power.<sup>110</sup> According to Yarnold, in the Roman Catholic Church authority is attributed to the Pope as bishop of Rome, which was formerly defined at the First Vatican Council in 1870. The Council attributed to the Pope within the whole church a primacy held in succession to the primacy which Jesus Christ conferred to Peter (Mt. 16: 18).<sup>111</sup> In this regard, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the ministry of the Bishop of Rome has universal

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<sup>107</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement of ...*, p33.

<sup>108</sup> Patricia Daniel, "Feminism" in Gareth Jones (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Modern Theology*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004, p. 436.

<sup>109</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement ...* p33.

<sup>110</sup> Edward J. Yarnold, "Authority" in Alister E. McGrath, *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1993, p. 21.

<sup>111</sup> Yarnold, "Authority" ....p.23.

primacy in accordance with Christ's will for the church and an essential element for maintaining it in unity and truths. This is the only see which makes any claim of universal primacy and which has exercised and still exercises such episcopate in Rome the city where Peter died.<sup>112</sup>

Anglicans rejected the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome as a universal primate in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Today, however, some Anglicans are beginning to see the particular value of a ministry of universal episcopacy which can be exercised by the Bishop of Rome as a sign and a focus of unity within a re-united church.<sup>113</sup> Despite this development, questions still exist regarding the jurisdiction ascribed to the Bishop of Rome as existing in the church by divine right. Anglicans also question the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope according to which the Pope can make judgments on matters of faith and morals which are preserved from error because his oversight is assisted by the power of the Holy Spirit. Anglicans are of the view that the infallibility of the church is preserved by fidelity to scriptures, the catholic creeds, the sacraments and ministry of bishops. They do not assign an infallible ministry to any group or individual within the life of the church. They hold that such a doctrine, however defined, must be received by the body of believers to whom it is addressed and must be consonant with scripture and church tradition.<sup>114</sup>

#### **e. Private confession**

Another area where Anglicans and Roman Catholics lack unanimity is in the area of private confession. John Macquarrie has defined confession as "the knowledge of one's guilt to other persons or to God".<sup>115</sup> According to Macquarrie, the church provides for confession of sins in various ways one of which is private confession to a priest who is authorised to give to the penitent absolution, counsel and penance.<sup>116</sup> Interestingly, on this matter the Roman Catholic's position is that the Sacrament of Confession is an obligation for those conscious of serious sins and that they should confess their sins privately before a priest. This view differs somewhat from the Anglican understanding of private confession. As a result of the Reformation, which emphasises on the direct access of the sinner to the forgiving and sustaining Word of God, Anglicans reject the view that private confession is obligatory. They hold that private confession is a wholesome means of grace and the formula used is that all may, none must, some should.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement* .... pp34-35).

<sup>113</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement* ..., p37.

<sup>114</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement* ..., p39.

<sup>115</sup> John Macquarrie, "Confession" in Macquarrie, J. & James Childress (eds.), *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, London: The Westminster Press, 1986, p. 111.

<sup>116</sup> Macquarrie, "Confession" ...p.111.

<sup>117</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement* .....p46-47.

## f. Marriage, contraceptives and homosexuality

Other areas of divergence have been noted in the sacrament of marriage, the use of contraceptives and homosexuality. As regards marriage, the Roman Catholic view is that marriage is a union for life and that it is not possible to dissolve the marriage bond sacramentally constituted because of its indissolubility. This is because it signifies the covenant relationship of Christ within the church. However, the Roman Catholic Church recognizes that a true marriage was never contracted if certain conditions were never met. In such cases a declaration of nullity may be granted by the proper authorities. This position is somewhat different from the Anglican Church in that it is willing to recognise divorce following the breakdown of a marriage sacramentally constituted. In this regard, in recent years there have been circumstances in which the church is prepared to allow partners from an earlier marriage to enter into another marriage.<sup>118</sup>

Another area of contention is the use of contraceptives. John T. Noonan has noted that by contraception is commonly understood as the use of physical or chemical means to prevent sexual intercourse from resulting in the conception of a child.<sup>119</sup> The Roman Catholic Church teaches that when a couple is married every act of intercourse should be open to procreation. The use of contraceptives therefore is not allowed. The Anglican position follows the recommendation made at the 1930 Lambeth Conference according to which contraceptives can be used where there is a morally sound reason for avoiding parenthood and a sound reason for avoiding abstinence or any other method to do so.<sup>120</sup>

Finally in recent years disagreement between Roman Catholics and Anglicans has been based on the issue of homosexuality. James B. Nelson has defined homosexuality as “the presence of a predominant and persistent psychosexual attraction towards members of the same sex”.<sup>121</sup> Roman Catholics teach that homosexual activity is always intrinsically and objectively wrong because it is contrary to the laws of nature. Some Anglicans share this view but others do not. As a result, there are some Anglican dioceses and provincial synods which have recently advocated the recognition and blessings of same sex relationships within the life of the church and civil society. To make matters worse, the consecration of Bishop **Vicky Gene Robinson** of the Diocese of New Hampshire in USA, a person living in an openly acknowledged committed same-sex relationship, and the authorization of public Rites of Blessing for the same sex unions created a dispute within the Anglican Communion. As a consequence of the ordination of a homosexual and women to the episcopate it has now been concluded that it is not the right time to embark on a new stage of visible church unity as envisaged at Mississauga.<sup>122</sup> In this regard, the consecration of a homosexual to the episcopacy in the

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<sup>118</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement...* p47.

<sup>119</sup> John T. Noonan, “Contraception” in Macquarrie, J. & James Childress (eds.), *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, London: The Westminster Press, 1986, p.124.

<sup>120</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement...*, p44).

<sup>121</sup> James B. Nelson, “Homosexuality” in Macquarrie, J. & James Childress (eds.), *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, London: The Westminster Press, 1986, p.271.

<sup>122</sup> Growing together, *An Agreed Statement...*, p10).

Anglican Communion became the straw that broke the empire's back. This essentially affirms the argument of this paper according to which the bilateral relations between the Anglicans and Roman Catholics is a "back and forth process" a kind of "one step forward and two steps back" movement, thus making the final goal almost unachievable.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has discussed Anglican-Roman Catholic bilateral ecumenical relations. It has focused on the agreed theological texts towards church unity that have been worked out by ARCIC and IARCCUM for over a period of forty years and yet they have not succeeded. While the agreed statements deal with a wide range of theological issues that can ultimately bring the two churches into an organic church unity, there are a number of subtle differences which outweigh the agreed theological statements on baptism, Eucharist, authority, ecclesiology, ordination of women, use of contraceptives, ordination of homosexuals and a host of other issues. This makes efforts to achieve visible church unity look like a "wishful thinking" never to be materialized in real ecclesiastical life here on earth.

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## OMPHALOS, MIRACLES, AND OCCAM'S RAZOR

Bruce S. Bennett

### Abstract

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*Philip Gosse's Omphalos (1857), which attempted to reconcile Genesis with science by proposing that the pre-Adamite stage of the world existed only as a Platonic idea, has usually been criticized as violating Occam's razor and being unfalsifiable. It is argued here that this is faulty, because Gosse makes different assumptions about the data to be explained. The theory was rejected by Christians not because of logical problems but because of its theological meaningfulness. In this it differs from miracles, which also involve the introduction of extra data.*

**Key words:** Omphalos, miracles, Occam's razor, parsimony, Philip Gosse, Incredulous Stare, creationism, science, religion.

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In 1857, the respected naturalist Philip Gosse, a Fellow of the Royal Society, published *Omphalos*,<sup>123</sup> which attempted to reconcile scientific evidence of geological time with a literal reading of Genesis. The book was published before Darwin's *Origin of Species* and, although well-informed scholars such as Gosse were aware of new ideas, the conflict was being expressed more in terms of *geology*. The account in Genesis seemed to be inconsistent with the evidence, which implied huge periods of time. Many were seeking some reconciliation of the two,<sup>124</sup> though it would not be long before the quest was abandoned by scientists. It is important to note that Gosse was not a theologian but a scientist, not only "the finest descriptive naturalist" of his time<sup>125</sup> but "the David Attenborough of his day",<sup>126</sup> noted for his popular works and public lectures. He was a pioneer of the aquarium and indeed seems to have invented

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<sup>123</sup> Philip Henry Gosse, *Omphalos: An Attempt to Untie the Geological Knot: With Fifty-six Illustrations on Wood* (London: John Van Voorst, Paternoster Row, 1857).

<https://archive.org/download/omphalosanatem00gossgoog/omphalosanatem00gossgoog.pdf> accessed 23 September 2017.

<sup>124</sup> Gosse reviews some of these attempts: *Omphalos*, pp. 5–24.

<sup>125</sup> Stephen Jay Gould, "Adam's Navel", in *idem, Adam's Navel and Other Essays* (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 3.

<sup>126</sup> Gould, "Adam's Navel", p. 2.

the word.<sup>127</sup> It is for *Omphalos*, however, that he is perhaps now best remembered:<sup>128</sup> it was almost universally rejected, and yet debate over *why* it is unacceptable has continued ever since.

Gosse fully understood, and accepted, the implications of the geological record, and was insistent that it must be taken seriously.

Truth is above every thing: there is no such thing as a pious fraud ... and that religion which can be maintained only by dissembling or denying truth, cannot proceed from ‘Him that is Holy, Him that is True’ but from him who is ‘a liar, and the father of it.’<sup>129</sup>

Gosse would presumably have rejected the “creation science” approach of some modern (largely American) creationists, who have attempted to construct a different scientific narrative compatible with Genesis; probably he would have classed it with many well-intentioned theories of his own time which he regarded as based on poor scientific knowledge.

On the other hand, Gosse assumed a fairly literal reading of Genesis. He was ready to consider alternative readings, but (like others) assumed that a reconciliation must involve some fitting of the text to the physical evidence, and did not consider the (now mainstream Christian<sup>130</sup>) view that Genesis 1 should be read as about the meaning rather than the physical process of creation. Thus, although he considered the theory that the six days should be understood as ages, he found it unsatisfactory since the geological record did not match the order of the “days”.<sup>131</sup>

The basis of Gosse’s approach was quite different, and derived from a consideration of the logical implications of the world being created as a going concern, with plants and animals already existing. Gosse pointed out that individual plants and animals were part of a cycle of life, and to create them at one moment would require the inclusion of prior parts of the cycle. For example, a tree would have to have tree-rings, marking non-existent previous years.<sup>132</sup> Gosse also considered other aspects of the earth which were continuing processes. The water flowing in rivers, the Gulf Stream, the clouds, all implied prior existence.<sup>133</sup> In particular, the

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<sup>127</sup> “aquarium, n.”. OED Online. March 2018. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/10022> accessed 25 April 2018.

<sup>128</sup> Apart from his probably misleading portrayal in his son’s memoir: Edmund Gosse, *Father and Son: A Study of Two Temperaments* (London: William Heinemann, 1907). <https://ia902606.us.archive.org/30/items/fatherandsonast00gossgoog/fatherandsonast00gossgoog.pdf> accessed 16 April 2018.

<sup>129</sup> Gosse, *Omphalos*, pp. 6–7. The “father of lies” refers to the devil (John 8:44).

<sup>130</sup> See e.g. “Statements from Religious Organizations”, National Center for Science Education website, <https://ncse.com/media/voices/religion> accessed 22 April 2018.

<sup>131</sup> Gosse, *Omphalos*, pp. 15, 17–18.

<sup>132</sup> Gosse, *Omphalos*, p. 347.

<sup>133</sup> Gosse, *Omphalos*, pp. 355–6.

first man would have a navel (Greek *omphalos*), marking a birth which had never actually happened.<sup>134</sup>

Gosse drew upon extensive scientific examples to show that it was impossible to picture creatures, even if suddenly brought into being, without such evidence of their life-cycle. In a long and fascinating section, written in the loving descriptive style that attracted his popular audience, he imagines that he is present immediately after the Creation, and goes about inspecting plants and animals, showing, with considerable sophistication, how they necessarily bear the marks of previous existence. Examples ranged from elephants to tapeworms, with particular attention to the marine invertebrates which were his specialty.

Yonder Feather-star (*Comatula*) notice; which, having just now started into mature life at the almighty fiat of its Creator, goes careering joyously through the sea, expanding and contracting its many-jointed and feathery arms, as if it had been accustomed to the alternation for a long life, and ever and anon settling itself by grasping the points of rock with its dorsal claws. You would hardly think that those flexible and slender arms were made of stone: yet they are; every joint of the stems and of their pinnæ is a vertebra of stone (precious stones, you will say—topaz and ruby—from their brilliant hues), which has been formed and deposited atom by atom, by the slow and gradual process of secretion of calcareous matter; the lime having been primarily collected from the sea-water which held it in solution. At least, such is the physiological deduction.<sup>135</sup>

Gould notes, as particularly interesting, Gosse's observation of the hippopotamus's teeth. An adult hippopotamus's teeth could only function in a state achieved by wear, so the animal would have to be created with evidence of such a past.<sup>136</sup>

Gosse believed that he had proved the propositions "All organic nature moves in a circle" and "Creation is a violent irruption into the circle of nature."<sup>137</sup> He was aware that the chicken-and-egg logic assumed that species were immutable: if it was granted that a species could develop from something simpler, then at some point in the past the cycle collapses into a point. He specifically noted this, making the immutability of species one of his postulates and conceding in advance that, for anyone not holding this view, his argument would be invalid.<sup>138</sup> Whatever else we think of Gosse's argumentation, it was entirely honest.

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<sup>134</sup> The question of whether Adam had a navel had been raised before, as Gosse notes (p. 289n.), but apparently without appreciating that it was only a special case of a general problem about Adam's body.

<sup>135</sup> Gosse, *Omphalos*, p. 193.

<sup>136</sup> Gould, "Adam's Navel", p. 7.

<sup>137</sup> Gosse, *Omphalos*, p. 126.

<sup>138</sup> Gosse, *Omphalos*, p. 111.



Gosse now took another step. In creating an animal, God must have had a sort of Platonic Idea<sup>139</sup> of the creature's life cycle. In the same way, perhaps God had an ideal concept of the history of the universe, and brought it into being at some particular point in that history? Gosse realized that

In order to perfect the analogy between an organism and the world, so as to show that the law which prevails in the one also obtains in the other, it would be necessary to prove that the development of the physical history of the world is circular, like that already shown to characterise the course of organic nature.<sup>140</sup>

Gosse admitted that he could not prove it, but stated that it could not be disproved either.<sup>141</sup> Here, he seems to have meant not that it was unknowable but that empirical evidence was lacking.

Is it not possible—I do not ask for more—that, in like manner, the natural course of the world was projected in his idea as a perfect whole, and that He determined to create it at some point of that course, which act, however, should involve previous stages, though only ideal ... ?<sup>142</sup>

Admit for a moment, as a hypothesis, that the Creator had before his mind a projection of the whole life-history of the globe, commencing with any point which the geologist may imagine to have been a fit commencing point, and ending with some unimaginable acme in the indefinitely distant future. He determines to call this idea into actual existence, not at the supposed commencing point, but at some stage or other of its course. It is clear, then, that at the selected stage it appears, exactly as it would have appeared at that moment of its history, if all the preceding eras of its history had been real.<sup>143</sup>

In modern terms, Gosse was suggesting that the prehistoric past existed as virtual reality rather than physical reality. This is now a familiar concept; computer models can produce a simulation of what will happen, or has happened. Simulations can be started at a convenient point with preloaded date; for example we might start a global-warming simulation in 2030 with particular assumptions about CO<sub>2</sub> levels, and let it run from there.

Thus, Gosse argues, although the physical evidence does indeed point to an earth millions of years old, and although this can be assumed to be God's plan for the universe, is it

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<sup>139</sup> An Idea, in Platonic philosophy, is an eternal archetype from which actual examples derive. In Christian thought such Ideas may exist in the mind of God.

<sup>140</sup> Gosse, *Omphalos*, pp. 342–3.

<sup>141</sup> Gosse, *Omphalos*, p. 343.

<sup>142</sup> Gosse, *Omphalos*, p. 345.

<sup>143</sup> Gosse, *Omphalos*, p. 361.

not possible that in fact the *physical* reality of the universe started at a later time, consistent with Genesis?

I will refer to the earth's past in Gosse's theory and in the normal view as virtual prehistory and physical or real prehistory respectively. Gosse used the terms "prochronic" and "diachronic" (both apparently his own coinages) for virtual and actual time, but the modern terms may be clearer.<sup>144</sup> Both theories accept that the physical evidence of geology and fossils indicates a very long past development of the earth, in certain patterns which are not consistent with the literal truth of Genesis. Physical prehistory is the common-sense proposition that this past actually happened. Virtual prehistory proposes that this past took place as a sort of virtual reality in the mind of God, up to a relatively recent moment of creation when physical reality began.

Gosse speculated about the nature of long-term biological change, noting that "We have reason to believe that species die out, and are replaced by other species, like the individuals which belong to the species".<sup>145</sup> The present species might in some way imply particular former species, and belong to a "circular revolution in some higher, unnamed, life-history".<sup>146</sup> This would connect the prehistoric animals more closely to his circularity argument, but is not essential.

The book was a total failure. The theory was widely misunderstood, and Gosse was misrepresented as suggesting that the fossils had been placed there as a temptation to unbelief.<sup>147</sup> This deeply unfair distortion is still repeated. The episode is unfortunately normally studied from his son's somewhat fictionalized *Father and Son*,<sup>148</sup> which among other things depicts Gosse as being cast in morbid despair by the book's failure and having burnt his boats with the scientific world, rather than from his earlier and probably more accurate *Life of Philip Henry Gosse, FRS*,<sup>149</sup> which describes him as in good heart and beginning the period of his most important scientific work.<sup>150</sup>

However, there are more serious objections, which have made the theory a point of interest in philosophy. One objection is that the theory violates Occam's razor, the scientific

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<sup>144</sup> "Diachronic" is now used in various academic disciplines to refer to change over time, as opposed to "synchronic" studies of phenomena at a particular time.

<sup>145</sup> Gosse, *Omphalos*, p. 343.

<sup>146</sup> Gosse, *Omphalos*, p. 344n.

<sup>147</sup> Gosse, Edmund, *The Life of Philip Henry Gosse F.R.S.* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Ltd, 1890), pp. 278–9. <https://archive.org/download/lifeofphiliphenr00goss/lifeofphiliphenr00goss.pdf> accessed 9 April 2018.

<sup>148</sup> Gosse, *Father and Son*, pp. 115–36.

<sup>149</sup> Gosse, *The Life of Philip Henry Gosse F.R.S.*, pp. 276–84.

<sup>150</sup> Frederic R. Ross, "Philip Gosse's *Omphalos*, Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son*, and Darwin's Theory of Natural Selection", *Isis*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Mar., 1977), pp. 85–96, esp. p. 86. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/230375> accessed 9 April 2018.

principle that simpler or more parsimonious explanations should be preferred.<sup>151</sup> It explains the same data as the theories of evolution and scientific geology, but adds a large extra aspect to the explanation which alters nothing in the predicted data. Logically, it is impossible to prove that the world was not created five minutes ago complete with all our memories, but this is rejected on the same grounds. Why not ten minutes? Why not fifteen minutes? (Gosse was in fact quite aware of this point, and noted that there was no logical reason why the Creation had to be at the time of Adam; it would be quite possible for God to have created the world in 1857, with everything as it was.<sup>152</sup>) The idea is often described as the *Omphalos hypothesis*.

The late Stephen Gould, a palaeontologist and philosopher of science and history, criticized the theory for being untestable. The very thing which made it attractive to Gosse, that it was completely compatible with the scientific evidence, was also its downfall. We cannot prove it wrong, and we could not know if it were right. As an explanation, therefore, it does not tell us anything. Its significance is in demonstrating a principle of scientific methodology.<sup>153</sup>

However, I would like to question this analysis. In doing so I do not mean to suggest that I think Gosse's theory, which I will refer to as Omphalos, is plausible, but rather that the arguments given above are not in fact entirely satisfactory.

The argument that Omphalos violates Occam's razor assumes that the data of the two theories are the same. But I suggest that this is not in fact the case. Gosse includes, as a datum, that God created the world as described in Genesis. The usual data set, used by the normal geologist, consists of the physical evidence of the rocks. The data set used by Gosse consisted of, firstly, the physical evidence of the rocks, and secondly, the proposition that the world was created as described in Genesis. For Gosse's data set, physical prehistory leads to a

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<sup>151</sup> Defined by OED as "The principle that in explaining anything no more assumptions should be made than are necessary." "Occam's razor, n." OED Online. June 2017. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/234636> accessed 2 October 2017. Occam's razor is in fact much less straightforward than is often imagined. It classically applies "all other things being equal", which is arguably seldom the case in practice, and there are sometimes tensions between simplicity of theory and goodness of fit. However, this paper will not focus on these issues. See Alan Baker, "Simplicity", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/simplicity/> for an overview of the issues.

<sup>152</sup> Gosse, *Omphalos*, pp. 352–3.

<sup>153</sup> Gould, "Adam's Navel". Gould also notes that Gosse's attempt to apply the circularity of life to geology is empirically faulty. It should be noted that although not a believer, Gould sought a better understanding between science and religion on the basis of what he called the NOMA model: "Non-Overlapping Magisteria". That is, the two deal with different areas of life and should not attempt to pronounce on each other's subjects. He set this out in Stephen Jay Gould, *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life* [1999] (London: Vintage, 2002).

contradiction, whereas virtual prehistory does not. Thus Omphalos would explain the data better.<sup>154</sup>

Omphalos—development of the world in virtual time—is obviously a less simple explanation of the geological evidence than the explanation that it developed in real time. However, it does account for an additional datum, namely that the world was created at some instant in the relatively recent past. The logical choice between the two is thus essentially on the basis of whether the extra datum can be accepted. This determination is complicated by the fact that the extra datum does not seem to be of the same type as the others, since it is not observable. This brings us to the nature of science.

It will be objected that there is no reason to accept Gosse’s extra datum. This, however, is open to question. Clearly there is no *scientific* reason to do so, and from a purely scientific point of view Omphalos thus violates Occam’s razor. But Gosse asserts the datum on different, religious grounds. Gosse’s theory therefore only makes sense to someone who accepts his extra datum. It reconciles a problem for these people, but is pointless for others. Gould is correct that it does not constitute a scientific theory in the usual empirical model, but this does not mean that it does not have a logical function.

A possible complication arises in that the extra datum has been derived from a source outside the normal scientific process. By Gould’s model of non-overlapping magisteria (NOMA),<sup>155</sup> this is problematic. The scientific conclusions of the scientist with religious beliefs derive entirely from the same processes of observation and analysis as those of other scientists, and there is no reason why they should be any different. There is nothing logically incoherent in the religious scientist holding that there may be a miraculous exception, which does not affect the science. In the case of Omphalos, however, the added religious datum does lead to a different conclusion about the implications of observations. Whether this is a problem in NOMA terms depends perhaps on whether one considers Omphalos as a different *scientific* conclusion. Since Omphalos is unfalsifiable, it is not, in Popper’s terms, a scientific theory.<sup>156</sup>

There is also the question of realism versus instrumentalism in science. Instrumentalism is the principle that scientific laws are to be understood simply as descriptions of observation, and that the question of what is “really” there is not part of science. Realism however asks that scientific laws not merely conform to observation but in some sense tell us about what is really there. For an instrumentalist, Omphalos is arguably not even a different theory, since it not only makes the same predictions but does so on the same basis. The Omphalos view of the reality behind is metaphysical rather than scientific. For the realist (such as Gosse, and most nineteenth-century scientists) the two are different, though there is no way to determine which is true.

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<sup>154</sup> This is relevant to the argument that the world could logically have been created five minutes ago. For Gosse, that would not match his special datum found in Genesis.

<sup>155</sup> Gould, *Rocks of Ages*.

<sup>156</sup> Karl Popper argued that scientific method is based on *falsification*—theories can be falsified but never finally verified—and that for something to be a scientific theory there must be conceivable data that would falsify it.

The question has some affinity with the western philosophical issue of what lies behind the “phenomenal world” of our senses. William of Ockham (c. 1287–1347),<sup>157</sup> among others, argued that God could replace an object with an illusion, thus creating evidence of something that does not really exist.<sup>158</sup> However, his contemporary William of Crathorn (fl. 1330s) concluded that while this is logically possible, “God or the first cause does nothing groundlessly and supernaturally so as to lead human beings into error” and that “everyone of sane mind judges that such an action is incompatible with divine goodness”.<sup>159</sup>

In the case of Omphalos, a distinction can be made between what might be termed “ecological Omphalos”, the argument that the creation of life required a virtual history, and “geological Omphalos”, the theory that the history of the world in deep time is virtual until a certain point. The question of deception arises mainly with the latter, since with ecological Omphalos it is unclear who is being deceived—Adam and Eve being aware of their recent creation and the animals presumably uninterested in the question—and the virtual history is not, in William of Crathorn’s term, groundless. Both objections do arise with geological Omphalos.

In many ways, the biggest problem with Omphalos is not logical but the psychological implausibility of the idea. David Lewis’s modal realism theory that all possible worlds actually exist has been criticized on various grounds, but one suspects that most of its critics never really considered it as an option, due to “what Lewis calls ‘the Incredulous Stare’—the chief critical response to his modal realism. The Incredulous Stare is simply the view that modal realism is intuitively grotesque.”<sup>160</sup> It has been pointed out with some justice that the Incredulous Stare is not an argument, yet it is arguably what really killed Omphalos in the eyes of Christians. Could it really have been necessary for a Creator God to install so much detailed simulation?

Charles Kingsley wrote to Gosse<sup>161</sup> that while he saw the logic of Gosse’s case about instantaneous creation, the conclusion had made him doubt the concept of instantaneous creation:

Your book tends to prove this—that if we accept the fact of absolute creation, God becomes a *Deus quidam deceptor*. I do not mean merely in the case of fossils which pretend to be the bones of dead animals; but in the one single case of your newly created scars on the pandanus trunk, and your newly created Adam’s navel, you make God tell a lie. It is not my reason, but my *conscience* which revolts here; which makes

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<sup>157</sup> Occam’s Razor is named after William of Ockham, but he did not formulate the principle in the forms now current.

<sup>158</sup> Pirooz Fatoorchi, “On Intellectual Skepticism: A Selection of Skeptical Arguments and Tūsī’s Criticisms, with some Comparative Notes”, *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (April 2013), p. 225  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43285821> accessed 6 September 2018.

<sup>159</sup> Quoted in Fatoorchi, “On Intellectual Skepticism”, p. 225.

<sup>160</sup> Peter King, “David Lewis: Modal Realism”, Pages of Dr Peter King (Pembroke College Oxford)  
<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~worc0337/modal.realism.html> accessed 25 September 2017.

<sup>161</sup> Full text in Gosse, *The Life of Philip Henry Gosse F.R.S.*, pp. 280–3.

me say, “Come what will, disbelieve what I may, I cannot believe this of a God of truth, of Him who is Light and no darkness at all, of Him who formed the intellectual man after His own image, that he might understand and glory in His Father’s works.” I ought to feel this, I say, of the single Adam’s navel, but I can hush up my conscience at the single instance; at the great sum total, the worthlessness of all geologic instruction, I cannot. I cannot give up the painful and slow conclusion of five and twenty years’ study of geology, and believe that God has written on the rocks one enormous and superfluous lie for all mankind.<sup>162</sup>

Thus, although even the tree-rings were problematic, they paled into insignificance before the fossils. And so, the idea turned out to be, for most Christian believers, “intuitively grotesque”. An interesting case is that of coprolites (fossil excrement), which had been suggested as particularly strong evidence of real existence. Gosse quite correctly rejected any special logical<sup>163</sup> status of coprolites. But the idea of God creating virtual droppings rather provokes the Incredulous Stare.

The idea that God might have created the fossils for some reason had been raised before, but in the absence of any reason, such an arbitrary act seemed inconsistent with the nature of God. Gosse argued that his theory was different: the prochronic creation followed a consistent and logical law.<sup>164</sup> But even if virtual creation was not arbitrary in the same way as sprinkling random spurious fossils, it still seemed arbitrary in a broader sense.

Despite the failure of Gosse’s book, its logic remains of interest, notably for the logic of miracles. Consider a present-day scientist who holds religious beliefs. There are plenty of such people, despite arguments from atheists against their position.<sup>165</sup> The Nobel Prize-winning physicist Abdus Salam, for example, is a devout Muslim. John Polkinghorne, another physicist, is both an Anglican priest and a Fellow of the Royal Society.

Belief in miracles implies that although the universe functions according to the laws of physics, God can and occasionally does intervene in ways that actually or apparently go outside

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<sup>162</sup> Gosse, *The Life of Philip Henry Gosse F.R.S.*, pp. 280–1.

<sup>163</sup> Gosse, *Omphalos*, p. 353n.

<sup>164</sup> Gosse, *Omphalos*, pp. 368–9.

<sup>165</sup> According to a world-wide survey by the Pew Foundation, religious scientists are common. In some places, including India, Italy, and Turkey, more than half of scientists had religious beliefs. In most places scientists had lower levels of belief than the general population, but there are interesting exceptions to this, with Taiwanese and Hong Kong scientists being more religious than the general population. “First worldwide survey of religion and science: No, not all scientists are atheists”, December 3, 2015, Phys.org website, <https://phys.org/news/2015-12-worldwide-survey-religion-science-scientists.html>, accessed 2 October 2017. For a statement by an eminent Oxford mathematician see John Lennox, “Eliminating the Impossible: Can a Scientist believe the Resurrection?”, 16 April 2014, <http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2014/04/16/3986403.htm> accessed 16 March 2018.

these laws.<sup>166</sup> It is true that some, such as Polkinghorne, have stated that they do not believe God actually violates laws of nature, and seek or at least assume some way of God's acts being within the laws. More generally, it has been argued that the miracle is in accord with the laws of God in some higher sense, that is, that miracles are not arbitrary deviations from natural law but are consistent with their true nature or meaning.<sup>167</sup> However, this does not affect the argument at the ordinary level, as it is agreed that a miracle is not in accord with the normal pattern of nature.

Natural science, as normally understood, is about observable or at least potentially observable things. More important here though is another principle: the *uniformitarian* principle, the idea that nature is the same everywhere and always. (The term originates in fact with geology.) A forensic scientist, for example, conducts experiments of what happens when a gun is fired, because it is assumed that firing a gun in the past in similar conditions would have had a similar outcome. If we did not use this principle, then science would be impossible.<sup>168</sup> Even a scientist who believes in miracles will make this assumption. “[S]cientists make this assumption as part of the cost of doing business, rather than because they are sure it is always true. Even if it is only true most of the time, such an assumption is probably worthwhile.”<sup>169</sup> Although it has been argued that uniformitarianism makes miracles self-contradictory, this seems logically very dubious unless a question-begging assumption is made that natural laws necessarily cover *all* of reality, which is the point at issue.<sup>170</sup>

Does belief in miracles involve a violation of Occam's razor? As with Omphalos, the question depends on the data set. The religious believer is using a different data set, which includes sources outside science.

One difference now becomes apparent between Omphalos and miracles. In principle, a miracle *could* be scientifically observed;<sup>171</sup> the problem is that such events are by their nature supposed to be very rare, so that a systematic scientific investigation would not normally be possible. Omphalos, on the other hand, is a theory which is *in principle* untestable, since it is of the essence that any possible evidence will be the same for both Omphalos and evolution.

Perhaps more importantly, the significance of the two cases is different. Although it allows for the literal truth of Genesis, Omphalos seems theologically meaningless. Why would

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<sup>166</sup> There are arguably some problems with defining miracles as violations of the laws of nature, but I will not address these here.

<sup>167</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study* (Glasgow: Collins, 1982), pp. 99–103.

<sup>168</sup> Barry R. Bickmore and David A. Grandy, “Science as Storytelling”, *BYU Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (2014), p. 53 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43957149> accessed 23 March 2018.

<sup>169</sup> Bickmore and Grandy, “Science as Storytelling”, p. 54.

<sup>170</sup> Leon Pearl, “Miracles: The Case for Theism”, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Oct., 1988), pp. 331–4 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20014256> accessed 23 March 2018.

<sup>171</sup> In the Catholic Church, miracles (normally of healing) which are part of the canonization process are scientifically tested, usually by medical experts. For a first-hand account by a (non-believing) expert, see Jacalyn Duffin, “Can a scientist believe in miracles?”, 14 February 2014, BBC website, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/0/24660240> accessed 16 March 2018.

God do such a thing? Inasmuch as Gosse's logic was compelling, it seemed to many an argument against the plausibility of recent and instantaneous creation. Miracles, by contrast, are signs which convey meaning: they reveal the nature of God. C. S. Lewis contrasted the miracles of the New Testament, which are miraculous forms of normal things such as healing, the production of food and drink, and so on, with the arbitrary marvels of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.<sup>172</sup> Similar points had earlier been made by Cosmo Lang, later Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>173</sup>

Omphalos is also relevant to the postmodern critique of history. The classic conception of historical research is that evidence reveals a really existing past, which the historian can describe and analyse, albeit fallibly. Some postmodern critics, however, have argued that there is no objectively existing past accessible to us, and that in constructing historical narratives historians are playing a sort of cultural game with the evidence—although they are ready to concede that this game has rules and is not arbitrary fiction.<sup>174</sup>

Philip Gosse's vision is, from one point of view, remarkably similar. According to Omphalos, the world's prehistoric past does not exist as a reality in the same way as the present, but only as the implication of the signs. All the fossils and geological strata constitute a giant "text", which has no referent. Perhaps Gosse should be rehabilitated and celebrated as the first postmodernist.<sup>175</sup>

It is worth asking whether what is "intuitively grotesque" necessarily remains so. Despite this attitude towards David Lewis's possible worlds, the Many-Worlds Interpretation of quantum mechanics, by which all physically possible histories actually happen, has by now made its way into popular culture.<sup>176</sup> This is arguably even more disturbing than Lewis's theory, since it implies that we ourselves have no single future but diverge, whereas Lewis's other worlds are merely *like* ours. In the case of Omphalos there are similar newly familiar ideas. In the classic science fiction film *Blade Runner* the plot involves, among other things, an artificial human being who has a complete set of false memories and believes herself to have lived a normal life. In *Total Recall* people can pay to have false memories of interesting

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<sup>172</sup> Lewis, *Miracles*, pp. 137–8.

<sup>173</sup> Cosmo Gordon Lang, *The Miracles of Jesus as Marks of the Way of Life* (London: Pitman, 1907), pp. 17–22.

<sup>174</sup> For a useful summary see Perez Zagorin, "History, the Referent, and Narrative: Reflections on Postmodernism Now", *History and Theory*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Feb., 1999), pp. 1–24.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2505313> accessed 16 April 2018. See also Michael Stanford, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 68.

<sup>175</sup> A parallel has also been noted between Omphalos and a type of existentialism which denied the meaningfulness of the universe apart from human consciousness. Raymond Ruyer, "Les rapports de la science et de la philosophie et l'étroitesse de la conscience", *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, Vol. 17, No. 64 (2) (1963), pp. 148–50. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23940353> accessed 9 April 2018.

<sup>176</sup> E.g. the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episode "Parallels" (1993).



experiences implanted. Ideas such as this are now familiar to western audiences,<sup>177</sup> and if the hypothesis remains bizarre on a large scale, on a personal scale it now seems merely futuristic. There is also the “simulation hypothesis”, which argues on the basis of certain assumptions that our world is statistically likely to be a simulation.<sup>178</sup>

Modern discussion of the issue is complicated by the fact that in present-day Christianity the literal (“Creationist”) interpretation of Genesis is associated, at least in the United States, with a broader set of cultural assumptions. This association tends to obscure the quite different assumptions of Victorian England. It is interesting that Wikipedia has at least two articles on the subject. “Omphalos hypothesis”<sup>179</sup> deals with the generalized idea and describes it as “pseudoscientific”, which is debatable in terms of Wikipedia’s own definition of pseudoscience as things which are without scientific basis but are *claimed to be scientific*. The entry on the book<sup>180</sup> more accurately states that the Omphalos hypothesis is “a largely philosophical position, not a scientific one.”

In conclusion, then, Omphalos raises some interesting logical issues about Occam’s razor and religious belief. In terms of parsimony, Omphalos is worth considering as a case of different premises about the data set. In itself it went nowhere, but ultimately this was less to do with the theoretical issues often raised about it in discussions of the history of science, and more to do with its intuitive implausibility and lack of religious significance for Christians. In this lack of meaning, it differs sharply from the issue of miracles. Thus, its failure was in fact not logical but religious.

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<sup>177</sup> In 1988 the comic science-fiction series *Red Dwarf* made use of the idea of one character “pasting” a section of his memories into his companion’s mind as an unasked-for gift. “Thanks for the Memory”, *Red Dwarf*, 1988.

<sup>178</sup> Nick Bostrom, “Are We Living in a Computer Simulation?”, *The Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 53, No. 211 (Apr., 2003), pp. 243–255. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3542867> accessed 29 October 2016.

<sup>179</sup> “Omphalos hypothesis”, Wikipedia page, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omphalos\\_hypothesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omphalos_hypothesis) accessed 5 October 2017.

<sup>180</sup> “Omphalos (book)”, Wikipedia page, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omphalos\\_\(book\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omphalos_(book)) accessed 5 October 2017.

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## BOTSWANA-SOUTH KOREA RELATIONS UNDER PRESIDENT IAN KHAMA'S PRESIDENCY: 2014-2018

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### Abstract

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*This paper broadly explores Botswana-South Korea relations during the second term of President Ian Khama's presidency (2014-2018). Botswana and South Korea established diplomatic relations in March 1968, but the relations remained largely on paper and were only revived after President Ian Khama's bold decision to terminate diplomatic relations with North Korea, South Korea's rival, in February 2014. Khama became an instant celebrity in South Korea, and the South Korean government invited him to Seoul in October 2015. South Korea views Botswana as a reliable friend to the extent that Konkuk University awarded Khama an honorary PhD in Political Science during his visit. In Botswana, this sparked divisive debate, with critics arguing that he does not deserve it. Some posited that this 'phony degree' is a 'bribe' by Seoul to access Botswana's mineral wealth. Botswana-South Korea military cooperation has also elicited intense criticisms, mainly from Botswana's opposition political parties. Since 2014, South Korean firms have increasingly won tenders, mainly in the energy sector in Botswana. Khama's strong relations with Seoul, unlike his predecessors, should be contextualised within his sour relations with both North Korea and China. This exploratory paper opens up an avenue for more research into this under researched terrain.*

**Key words:** Botswana-South Korea relations, Korea Aerospace industries, military cooperation, energy sector, Honorary Doctorate, Ian Khama, Park Geun-hye.

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### Introduction and Context

Botswana established diplomatic relations with the Republic of Korea (hereafter South Korea) in 1968, the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (hereafter North Korea) in 1974 and the Peoples Republic of China (hereafter China) in 1975 respectively. It did so at the height of the Cold War. Botswana's bold decision to forge relations with communist China and North Korea, including the Soviet Union in 1970, was a huge political risk (Masire 2006; Kwante & Manatsha, 2016). South Africa, the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK), in particular, were uneasy about this as Botswana's former president, Quett Ketumile Masire (1980-1998), reveals in his memoirs (Masire 2006). Similar sentiments were echoed by Botswana's first president, Seretse Khama (1966-1980) (Carter & Morgan 1980). The UK was Botswana's colonial master and the US was preoccupied with containing communism, while South Africa was worried about the sustainability of its apartheid policy. Thus, all, for various reasons, viewed any country which forged relations with the communist bloc with suspicion and contempt. During the Cold War, South Korea was in the capitalist bloc, and a staunch US

ally. Therefore, most African leaders saw North Korea as a ‘trustworthy partner...compared to South Korea’s capitalist leaning and alliance with the US’ (Kalu & Kim 2012:284). But Botswana’s leaders were pragmatists, and, thus, forged relations with communists and capitalists alike. ‘[I]t was appropriate for us to recognise and cooperate with any country whenever we thought we might benefit from our relations’, notes Masire (2006:300). Although Botswana-South Korea diplomatic relations is five decades old, it had remained lukewarm until February 2014 when Botswana severed ties with North Korea.

In October 2015, President Ian Khama of Botswana (in power since April 2008 and whose term ends on 31 March 2018) was invited to Seoul by then South Korean president, Park Geun-hye (in power from 2012 to March 2017). Whilst in Seoul, Khama was awarded an honorary PhD in Political Science by Konkuk University (*Botswana Daily News* 22 October 2015). Some Batswana (citizens of Botswana) applauded this gesture, while others criticised and mocked it. Critics opined that it was a public diplomacy stunt by another resource-hungry East Asian giant (in addition to China and Japan) eyeing Botswana’s mineral wealth (see Masokola 2015; Gobotswang 2015; Dipholo 2016). Botswana is the leading producer of diamonds by value in the world (Jefferis 2009). Like Japan and China, South Korea uses ‘soft power’ ‘to boost its global image’ (Kalinowski & Cho 2012:3; Lincan & Voicila 2015:49). Khama’s visit to Seoul was the first by Botswana’s president since 1994, but came 39 years after he had visited North Korea in August 1976. Then a 23-year-old officer in the Botswana Police Mobile Unit (now Botswana Police Service), he had accompanied his father, Seretse Khama, and government officials on a state visit to North Korea and China respectively (Parsons, Henderson & Tlou 1980:334). Despite a five decade relationship, Botswana has no embassy in Seoul, so is South Korea in Botswana. Currently, Botswana’s embassy in Tokyo, Japan, services South Korea, while South Korea’s embassy in Pretoria, South Africa, services Botswana. But South Korea plans to open an embassy in Gaborone, Botswana. On its part, the government of Botswana has indicated that due to financial constraints, its embassy in Japan will continue servicing South Korea (*Botswana Daily News* 20 October 2015).

At the time of forging relations with Seoul, Botswana’s gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was a paltry US\$70. In fact, Botswana was one of the poorest countries in the world. Nearly its entire population was illiterate, and the economy was mainly agrarian-based (Samatar 1999; Masire 2006). Botswana was also surrounded by hostile white-minority regimes in Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique and Angola. But with the wise leadership of Seretse Khama and his successor, Masire, Botswana negotiated its survival amidst real military and economic threats. Whilst addressing the first sitting of parliament on 6 October 1966, Seretse Khama had stated that as a poor country, Botswana was ‘unable to stand on its own feet and develop its resources without assistance from its friends’ (Carter & Morgan 1980:14). It was in this context that he forged relations with South Korea, among others. As a close ally of the US since 1966, Botswana’s decision to forge relations with South Korea, another US ally, was acceptable to the US. But the US was uneasy when Botswana forged relations with communist North Korea and China (Grafeld 2006).

Similarly, the geo-political environment under which the two Koreas found themselves at independence in 1948 influenced their foreign policies. From 1948 to 1991, the two Koreas were mainly preoccupied with winning global diplomatic recognition as the sole legitimate government in the Korean peninsula. This only softened when both were admitted to the United Nations (UN) in November 1991 even though they still do not recognise each other diplomatically (Kalu & Kim 2012:282; Kanik 2015:1). Surprisingly, within four years after its admission to the UN, South Korea closed 11 embassies in Africa (Park 2016:1). It was not until the mid-2000 that it began re-engaging with the continent (Kim. Y 2012, 2016). Like Japan and China, its powerful neighbours, South Korea is concerned with resource and energy security (Darracq & Neville 2014:3). Facing real military threat from its nuclear-armed rival, North Korea, Seoul is courting many friends to mount pressure on Pyongyang at the UN and other international forums, and Botswana is one of the leading voices. South Korea also seeks to contribute to the development of the developing world (Lincan & Voicila 2015:52). In 2016, Korea Africa Forum on Economic Cooperation (KOAFEC) pledged US\$10 billion to the development of Africa (Kim. Y 2016:14).

Botswana had remained out of Seoul's diplomatic radar for years. It was only after it severed relations with North Korea, the country Ian Khama calls a 'rogue state' that the South Koreans' interests on Botswana intensified. Botswana's decision was influenced by the United Nations Human Rights Council Commission of Inquiry which detailed grave human rights violations by the North Korean leaders (United Nations Human Rights Council 2014). In recognition of Botswana's bold decision, the then South Korean president, Park Geun-hye, invited Khama to Seoul. Khama also has tense relations with China, a country he sees as bullish (Ramadubu 2017). This helps us contextualise Botswana-South Korea relations under his administration. It was under him that Botswana entered into military cooperation with Seoul. It was also under him that many South Korean firms were awarded tenders, especially in the energy sector. Historically, Chinese firms have always won government tenders, mainly in the construction sector. This paper explores Botswana-South Korea relations under Khama's presidency (second term in office) in the context of South Korea-Africa relations.

### **South Korea-Africa Relations in Historical Perspective**

South Korea-Africa relations began in 1961 when Seoul made its first diplomatic ties with Cameroon, Chad, Benin, Ivory Coast, Niger and Congo. But Gabon became the first African country to open an embassy in Seoul in 1975 (Kanik 2015:1). In 1982, Chun Doo-hwan became the first South Korean president to visit Africa, travelling to Kenya, Nigeria, Gabon and Senegal. Currently, South Korea has diplomatic ties with 46 African countries, but maintains resident embassies in only 13. Kalu and Kim (2012: 83) opined that Africa 'may not be that relevant to South Korea's strategic and diplomatic priorities. But recent developments, especially the North Korean nuclear threat, force Seoul to intensify its global diplomacy. In the 1960s, both Koreas had competed 'for diplomatic influence in Africa' (Kalu & Kim 2012:283). Expectedly, the North Korean communists won the hearts and souls of emerging Marxist-Leninist leaning African leaders and liberation movements. Thus, South Korea initially

struggled to win friends in Africa, mainly because of its Hallesten Doctrine which prevented it from forging diplomatic relations with any country that recognised North Korea diplomatically. North Korea was also richer and it lured poor African countries with financial assistance and military aid. By the 1980s, it had bilateral relations with about 40 African countries, compared to South Korea's 28 (Kim. Y, 2016:134-135).

The post-Cold War era ushered democracy in the former Soviet Union Republics and Africa. South Korea seized this opportunity and worked hard to attract new friends, mostly North Korea's traditional allies. South Korea's inclusive economic development model appealed to the developing world (Linca & Voicila, 2015). In contrast, North Korea's influence in Africa declined owing to its economic woes. In 2006, South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2008) visited Africa after the first visit by President Doo-hwan in 1982. Until 2006, Seoul had disengaged from Africa, but this changed when it faced serious energy and security challenges as noted. President Moo-hyun visited oil-rich Egypt, Algeria and Nigeria and signed trade deals (Kim. Y 2012:1). His visit was 'resource diplomacy' based. Moo-hyun had first used this term before his trip to Russia and Central Asia in 2004. His successor, Lee Myung-bak, actively forged relations with many African countries. His top priority 'became exploring new markets and resources abroad to revitalise the domestic economy' (Kim. Y 2016:132) after the 2008 global economic crunch. Myung-bak's strategy was to achieve self-sufficiency in oil and gas from 4.2% in 2007 to 28% by 2016. This would see South Korea investing US\$17 billion in oil and gas projects by 2016 (Kalinowski & Hyekyung 2012:11).

The first Korea Africa Forum was held in November 2006 in Seoul following President Moohyun visit to Africa. During his visit, he had announced Korea Initiative for Africa's Development, which provided a framework for Korea Africa's cooperation (Kim. Y 2012). This became the 'key policy agenda of subsequent high-level meetings' (Kim. S & Gray 2015:649). The 2006 Korea Africa Forum was attended by delegates from 15 African countries. In November 2007, Seoul organised and funded the Inter-Sessional Conference for Korea Africa in Johannesburg. The South Korean delegates 'promised to transfer economic development experience, especially for rural areas, to other participants' (Kim. T.H 2012:123). In October 2008, the second Korea Africa Forum was held in Rabbat, Morocco, and Seoul pledged to engage with Africa, not only as a destination of Korean goods, but as a partner. It recognised Africa's ideological, cultural and religious diversity. At the 2008 Korea Africa Forum on Economic Cooperation (KOAPEC), Seoul pledged US\$760 million worth of economic cooperation projects by 2010. Ministers from Africa and South Korea agreed that 'there would be increased cooperation in infrastructure and energy development' (Kim. T.H, 2012:123). In 2012, KOAPEC was attended by 35 African countries, and it was organised by the Export Import Bank of Korea, Korea Ministry of Strategy and Finance, and the African Development Bank. In total, 150 delegates, including representatives from regional institutions in Africa, attended. The 2012 KOAPEC expanded the discussion to include development cooperation, trade, investment, peace and security (Kim. Y 2012:1).

In 2010, President Myung-bak made African diplomacy a main goal of his foreign policy. He visited South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Ethiopia in 2011. South Africa is a regional power, and it is the largest economy in Africa, while the DRC is rich in minerals. Ethiopia has special relations with Seoul in that during the Korean War (1950-53), it sent troops as part of the UN mission to defend South Korea. The political instability in the Middle East frustrates Seoul, which depends on imported energy. Thus, Myung-bak's Africa strategies and policies 'became explicitly mercantilist' in pursuit of resource and energy security (Kim Y 2016:132). During his and Moo-hyun's tenures, even high level officials and businesspersons shared this mercantilist approach. This slowed down under President Geun-hye. Nonetheless, in May 2016, Geun-hye visited Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya. She introduced Korean Aid, which 'included the provision of health care, mobile food, spread of Korean culture, food, music and films' (Kim, Y, 2016:134). Presidents from Africa have also visited Seoul over the years to discuss trade and bilateral relations. In 2013, Mozambique's, Ugandan and Ivory Coast's presidents visited Seoul. Botswana's president visited in 2015 (Agyapong 2012:2). In 2016, at the fifth KOAFEC summit held in Seoul, South Korea pledged US\$10 billion as cooperative package to Africa until 2018 (Kim, Y, 2016:14).

South Korea's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa rose from US\$64.1 million in 2006 to US\$357 million in 2012 (Kim, S & Gray 2012:649). South Korea uses ODA to internationalise its capital which has been facing accumulation crisis since the 1980s (Kim, S & Gray 2012:650). Presidents Moo-hyun and Myung-bak's visits to Africa were linked to Seoul's national growth strategy of the post-Cold War era. Seoul had readjusted its economy to the imperatives of globalisation. In 2012, South Korea's grants to Africa totalled US\$96.6 million (10.3% of its total grant). It was shared as follows: education (30.4%), public administration and governance (20%), agriculture, fishery and forestry (18.4%), and health (17.6%). The top recipients were Ethiopia, Tanzania, Ghana, Rwanda and Morocco accounting for 49% of the total disbursement to Africa (Kim, S & Gray 2012:654). The Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) manages and disburses South Korea's loans 'which are more likely to reflect the donor's strategic interests' (Kim, S & Gray 2012:655). In Africa, these loans are concentrated in the development of economic and social infrastructure. In 2011, the total loans disbursed to Africa by EDCF accounted for 13.1% of the total EDCF flows worldwide. After President Moo-hyun's visit to Africa in 2006, the speed and amount of loans have grown tremendously. Between 1987 and 2006, 12 projects (worth US\$245.54 million), in only seven African countries were approved. But between 2007 and 2011, 29 projects (worth US\$1.07 billion) in 12 African countries were approved. South Korea gives out more tied loans than grants. This does 'not only reduce the effectiveness of ODA, but [is] clearly aimed at promoting the economic interest of the donor' (Kim, S and Gray 2012:655). Tied loans means that the recipients must use it 'to purchase goods and services imported from the donors' (Kim, T.H 2012:125). The next section broadly explores Botswana-South Korea relations in the context of common interests.



## **Botswana-South Korea Relations: Common Interests, Common Enemy?**

Botswana-South Korea relations started in March 1968, but remained largely uneventful. Like South Korea, Botswana follows a free market economic model. It was only in 1984, that the two countries established trade relations, and signed a Trade Agreement. In 1986, South Korea's Daewoo Engineering Construction Corporation was awarded a tender to tarmac a road from Serowe (the birth place of Seretse Khama) to Orapa, a diamond mining town in Botswana. In 1993, South Korea's Hyundai Motor Distributors established an assembly plant in Gaborone. However, the plant closed down in 1998 owing to high production costs and lack of domestic market (Republic of Botswana, 2014b). After these two projects undertaken by Korean firms, the relations between the two countries remained lukewarm until President Ian Khama reinvigorated them in 2014. The second president, Masire, had visited Seoul in 1994.

South Korea became intensely interested in Botswana after the latter cut diplomatic relations with North Korea in 2014 as noted. Ian Khama adopted an 'ethical foreign policy' (Malila & Molebatsi 2014:5) departing from the 'quite diplomacy' favoured by his predecessors. Khama's administration insists that North Korea is not a 'worthy partner' as it continues to violate international laws and the UN resolutions. On 27 March 2014, shortly after Botswana had severed relations with North Korea, the South Korean ambassador to South Africa, also accredited to Botswana, Lee Yoon, visited Khama. The speed at which he did that indicates his government's eagerness to reinvigorate its relations with Botswana. South Korea was/is impressed that Botswana was bold enough to publicly criticise the intransigent North Korea. For this, ambassador Yoon conveyed an appreciation message to Khama from President Park Geun-hye, 'who re-affirmed the friendship that existed between the two countries based on their peoples' shared commitment to democracy, good governance and the promotion of international peace and understanding' (*Botswana Daily News* 31 March 2014).

Ambassador Yoon told Khama that the interview that he (Khama) granted on the reasons why Botswana severed diplomatic relations with North Korea was published in a leading South Korean newspaper, *Chosun ilbo*. According to him, it 'aroused great interest among Koreans about Botswana' (*Botswana Daily News* 31 March 2014). In the interview, Khama had sturdily condemned North Korea. Since then, he calls it a 'rogue state'. His vice, Mokgweetsi Masisi, when addressing the UN General Assembly in September 2016, referred to North Korea as an 'evil nation', and urged members to cut relations with it (Hong, 2016). Khama's former minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Phandu Skelemani, had also used similar undiplomatic language on North Korea (Wasosa, 2015). When ending the relations, Khama's administration had harshly said: 'The Government of Botswana does not wish to be associated with a Government which continues to display such total disregard for human rights of its citizens' (Republic of Botswana, 2014a). The statement also said that this was not a punishment to the innocent Koreans who are inhumanly treated by their leaders. It also insisted that Botswana sees North Korea as a threat 'to international peace and security' (Republic of Botswana, 2014a). President Ian Khama had explained to Ambassador Yoon that in Botswana, the rule of law and the respect for human rights are enshrined in the constitution and are strictly

adhered to. He emphasised that this is reflected in Botswana's 'international stand in favour of multilateral human rights frameworks and the upholding of international law' (*Botswana Daily News* 31 March 2014). Nonetheless, Khama insisted that Botswana would support any international efforts geared towards addressing the North Korean crisis. Khama Assured ambassador Yoon that the South Koreans 'shall continue to have Botswana's support in their dealings with their hostile neighbour in the North' (*Botswana Daily News* 31 March 2014). It was in this context that President Park Geun-hye invited Ian Khama to Seoul in October 2015. This historic visit reinvigorated and cemented the relations between the two countries. Ian Khama and Park Geun-hye focused on cooperation in infrastructure development, energy and trade, among others (Republic of Botswana 2015).

The Khama administration realised that it could learn and borrow a lot from Seoul. South Korea is regarded 'as one of the world's most dynamic and successful economies, which at times has grown faster than any other post-World War II economy' (Shelton, 2009:5). South Korea and Botswana have relatively strong democratic cultures and institutions. But Botswana can learn a lot from South Korea's inclusive development. Botswana's mineral-led economy has failed to diversify. For instance, diamonds contribute about 32% to Botswana's GDP and 80% to its exports. Official figures place unemployment rate at 18%, and about 40% of this are the youth. Poverty rate is about 20%, while the Ginicoefficient is 0.64, one of the highest in the world (Manatsha & Maharjan 2009:19-46). Overall, South Korea is doing excellently well in all the above areas, and is ranked amongst the top in the Human Development Index.

### **Botswana-South Korea Summit in 2015: Paving Way for Korean Firms in Botswana**

On 23 October 2015, President Khama, flanked by the then Botswana's Ambassador to Japan, Jacob Nkate, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Venson Moitoi, the Minister of Trade and Industry, Vincent Seretse, and senior government officials, held a summit with their South Korean counterparts, led by President Park Geun-hye. The summit focused on cooperation in the energy and infrastructure sectors. South Korea entirely imports its energy, and relies on fossil fuels for 85.6% of its energy consumption. It also imports 80% of its food (Kanik, 2015:1). In 2014, it was the fifth largest importer of crude oil and the fourth importer of natural gas. It struggles to diversify its energy sources. For instance, it imports 71% of its oil from the Middle East, with a large share coming from the cheap Iranian oil. This worries the US, its ally and a fierce critic of Iran. Since the Fukushima Nuclear disaster in Japan in 2011, South Korea is also worried about the overreliance on nuclear power. Therefore, in a bid to diversify its energy sources, it has turned to the resource/mineral rich Africa (Darracq & Neville, 2014:3). Although Botswana has no oil, it is rich in coal and other minerals. In 2013, Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation (JOGMEC) exploration discovered 3.3 billion tons of untapped coal in Botswana (JOGMEC 2013). Botswana is also the leading producer of diamonds by value worldwide as already noted.

Khama and Park Geun-hye's discussion on cooperation in infrastructure and energy was in line with the resolutions of the KOAFEC summit held in 2008, where Seoul pledged US\$760

million worth of economic cooperation in infrastructure and energy development (Kim. T.H 2012:123). In sub-Saharan Africa, Botswana, Rwanda and Mauritius have ‘strong regulatory environments for infrastructure development’ (The Boston Consulting Group, 2017:16). And South Korean state-owned firms have strength in the construction of infrastructure and power plants (Kim. T.H, 2012:124). This appealed to Botswana, which struggles to turn its coal reserves, solar energy and water resources into sustainable energy supply. Botswana imports electricity, mainly from South Africa. In 2012, it imported electricity worth US\$1.2 billion. An attempt to address this through the construction of a huge coal-powered plant (Morupule B) worth US\$1 billion in Palapye, in the Central District, did not materialise after China National Electric Engineering Company delivered a poor quality project. This project, among others, led to diplomatic mistrust between Botswana and China (Mguni & Benza, 2013; Ontebetse, 2015; *Botswana Daily News* 4 February 2016). During the Botswana-South Korea summit, ‘The two countries [also] agreed that more Korean firms should participate in Botswana’s National Development Plan, worth some USD 2.6 billion. This long-term development plan involves the construction of solar and coal-fired thermal power plants, and the installation of large networks of water pipes’ (Republic of Botswana 2015). A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed to this effect.

The two countries also signed a MoU on e-government cooperation, which was expected to ‘boost cooperation on ‘informatization’ and people-to people exchanges’ (Republic of Botswana, 2015b). South Korea has established itself as a knowledge-based economy in a bid to diversify its economy. Sedimo, Bwalya and Du Plessis argue that unlike Botswana, South Korea has put in place ‘robust strategies’ geared towards bridging the digital divide and these have helped it to transform ‘into a fully-fledged knowledge society’ (2011:1). Thus, Botswana can learn a lot from South Korea. In February 2017, the Khama administration engaged a South Korean company, Korea IT Consulting, to develop the e-government service Enterprise Architecture (EA) and Interoperability Framework at the cost of BWP89 million (US\$9 million). Some senior government officials have attended leadership training on the EA in Seoul (Pinielo, 2017). Thus, South Korea is using ‘soft power’ to reach out to African countries. This includes initiatives such as educational exchanges, scholarships and the provision of health care (Park, 2016). In 2011, only 163 South Koreans were living in Botswana, but the numbers have risen steadily with the increase of young Korean volunteers.

When visiting Africa in 2016, Park Geun-hye announced that her government would provide education and vocational training to 6,000 Africans in the next five years (Kim.Y, 2016:134). She also hailed the ICT sector as one of the packages that would benefit Africa. South Korea ‘has highly mature ICT penetration and currently boasts the world’s highest per capita Internet and mobile penetration’ (Sedimo, Bwalya & Du Plessis, 2011:2). Botswana has also shown growth in the number of internet users. For example, in 2009 it had 120,000 internet users, and in 2010 there were more than two million mobile phone subscribers in the country (Sedimo, Bwalya & Du Plessis, 2011:4). Speaking at a business forum on 22 October 2015 in Seoul, President Khama explained that ‘Botswana has been advocating for an international, open economy’ and the country ‘hope[s] to have more business opportunities with Korea not only

in energy resources but also in broader areas such as manufacturing, agriculture, construction and education' (Republic of Botswana, 2015b). Botswana provides opportunities for doing business, not only for South Korea, but other countries as well. During Khama's visit to Seoul, the Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC) accompanied him, and organised an investment and trade mission in Seoul to identify investment opportunities (BITC, 2015).

South Korea's state-owned corporations and *chaebols* (private corporations) have the capacity to undertake huge projects in many sectors. They include: Electric Power Corporation, Korea National Oil Corporation, Korea Gas Corporation, Korea Resource Corporation and Korea Land and Housing Corporation (Darracq & Neville, 2014:5; Kim.Y, 2016:133). These firms have not successfully penetrated the Botswana market. But following Khama's visit to Seoul, some *chaebols* have been awarded tenders in the energy sector. In 2014, Khama's administration cancelled a lawful tender won by China Major Bridge Engineering Corporation to construct a bridge connecting Botswana and Zambia over the Zambezi River. It re-awarded the job to the second best bidder, South Korea's Daewoo Engineering Construction. Japan's Shimizu and South Africa's Stefanutti had also bid for the project, but became third (Benza, 2013). The on-going project, which includes the bridge, one-stop border post and staff houses, cost US\$259 million. It is funded with loans from the African Development Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the governments of Botswana and Zambia. JICA was supposed to invest US\$110 million into the project, but pulled out of the bridge component as a protest against the interference by the Khama administration in the tender process (Benza, 2013; Manatsha & Malebang, 2016).

The Khama administration had persistently complained about the poor workmanship of some Chinese companies, and their reluctance to invest in the country. In June 2015, Botswana's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Venson Maitoi, travelled to China to formally complain to the Chinese government about some Chinese companies' poor workmanship. She met with her counterpart, and on return she gave an interview to the local press: 'I had to meet him to inform him that our country suffered because of Chinese companies which did not invest in the country, but only came on contracts to make money, and go out after delivering the projects' (Ontebetse, 2013). In March 2016, the government of Botswana awarded a tender worth BWP8.7 billion (US\$600 million) to a consortium of South Korea's Pohang Iron and Steel Company (POSCO) Energy and Japan's Marubeni to refurbish Morupule B Phase 11, a coal-powered electricity plant located in Palapye, Central District. This went against the expert advice tendered by the engaged consultancy firms, Team Delphos International and Aurecon, which had recommended another South Korean company, Korea Electric Power Cooperation (KEPCO). The government of Botswana opted for POSCO and Marubeni because they are said to have quoted less. The project is financed by Export-Import Bank of Korea, Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and an international commerce bank. The developers will 'recover their costs by selling power to the BPC [Botswana Power Corporation] through a 30-year Power Purchase Agreement' (*Sunday Standard Reporter* 14 March 2016).

In 2015, another controversial tender on the energy sector involving a South Korean company in Botswana surfaced. The Khama administration awarded a BWP2.4 billion (slightly over US\$200 million) job through an unsolicited tender to South Korea's Doosan Heavy Industries and Construction to refurbish Morupule A power station, also in Palapye (Letsididi, 2016). Four companies had tendered, and Doosan was not among them. These were Fluor Daniel Holdings, Jeffer, Mitsubishi Hitachi Power Systems Europe Service, and SK Engineering and Construction Company (also South Korean). Except for SK, it is said that others failed to submit all the required documents. But SK did not get the job because it is said to have quoted 'ridiculously high' hence the tender was nullified. The four companies were asked to re-tender, and only SK and Mitsubishi did. SK quoted US\$338.69 million and Mitsubishi US\$374.08 million. The BPC officials arranged a meeting with the two companies and after clarifications, the quotes were adjusted: SK (US\$339.45 million), and Mitsubishi (US\$379.18 million). In the midst of this, Doosan approached the Botswana government with an unsolicited tender, and quoted far less. The tender is now giving the government headache because Doosan realises that it had under quoted (Letsididi, 2016; *Sunday Standard* 23 October 2015). Since its bad experience with some Chinese firms, the Khama administration favours Korean firms, which also enjoy the full support of their government. South Korea lobbies African governments through its embassies, diplomatic missions and Korea Africa Forums. This provides assurances, especially where political instabilities and security challenges, and rigid bureaucracy make doing business difficult (Darracq & Neville, 2014:5). The above discussion shows how the Khama administration favoured Korean firms.

### **Konkuk University Awards President Khama an Honorary Doctorate**

When Khama arrived in Seoul on 21 October 2015, he was welcomed with an honorary PhD in Political Science by Konkuk University, a private institution. The views of Botswana who criticised Konkuk University for awarding Khama this degree were published in the local private newspapers, and extensively discussed on social media. When honouring Khama, Konkuk University President, Kim Kyung Hee, said: 'President Khama has been recognized for his strong leadership in challenging circumstance for steady economic growth and stable governance. Internationally, he is recognised as a voice of rationality, democracy, human rights and the rule of law' (*Botswana Daily News* 22 October 2015). Whilst in Seoul, Khama had told his counterpart and journalists that he severed relations with the North Korean regime because of its obstinacy and disregard for human rights. Using firm and undiplomatic language, he ridiculed the North Korean leaders and likened them to 'Stone Age' creatures. He also said that the North Korean leaders' days in power are numbered suggesting that there would be a revolt by the oppressed people in that country. Khama's berating of Kim Jong Un in his doorstep was very unusual for an African leader. Khama bravely went on:

As a democracy with our own principles, we just felt that they [North Korea] are not worthy, for us anyway, of having relations with. Coupled with that was the constant aggressive stance, military stance that they'd been taking, threatening their neighbours like yourselves. [T]hat convinced us that, well, it doesn't look like

things are ever going to get better there and therefore we need to make a statement. And for us, we live many miles away, so the best thing we could do is just to sever diplomatic relations with that kind of regime. Their kind of behaviour and their kind of conduct is totally unacceptable in today's world [...] It's just a matter of time before that system will be overthrown (Lee 2015).

Critics in Botswana argued that Khama's PhD was a political stunt by Seoul which is also eyeing Botswana's mineral wealth. They insist that Khama has failed to govern the country well, and does not deserve the honour. They cite corruption, high unemployment rate and police brutality, among others (Masokola, 2015; Gobotswang, 2015; Dipholo, 2016; Boko in Enos, 2015; Boko in *The Voice* 6 November 2015; Boko in *The Patriot on Sunday* 10 November 2015; Khan in *Sunday Standard* 29 November 2015; *Sunday Standard* 29 November 2016). Duma Boko, the leader of opposition in Botswana's Parliament, when responding to the State of the Nation Address in November 2015, mocked Khama's PhD: 'I note that the President, in addition to the already numerous names and titles by which he goes, has conspired to add an Honorary Doctorate to the list' (Enos, 2015). At a political rally in Gaborone in November 2015, Boko had said that the Koreans honoured Khama to thank him for the US\$450 million he spent purchasing T50 trainer fighter jets from Seoul for the Botswana Defence Force in May 2015 (*The Voice* 6 November 2015). He was wrong because Korea Aerospace Industries and the Khama administration had not finalised the deal. His colleague, Mohammed Khan, also mocked Khama's PhD when addressing parliament by arguing that 'doctorates just fly around' (*Sunday Standard* 29 November 2015). Critics also argued that these 'phony doctoral degrees' 'are used as bribery to attract favours' from African leaders (Masokola, 2015; Gobotswang, 2015). Critics forget that conferring honours and awards is an age-old practice used in public diplomacy. It is, however, helpful to quote one Masokola to show why some Botswana criticise Konkuk University's decision:

[I]nstead of basking in the adulation of illusory doctoral degree, President Ian Khama must figure out the wider implications of this uncharacteristic gesture from the South Koreans. Lest [sic] we find ourselves being used as a political pawn in the east-Asian struggle for power and influence between China and South Korea. The question is: What does South Korea seek to achieve in our relationship and how do they [sic] intend to frame their interest in the context of our apparent "complicated" relations with China?...Whatever the answer, it would be ignorant to assume that the South Koreans are not aware of Botswana's government's dissatisfaction with Chinese companies (Masokola, 2015).

In his diatribe, Kesitegile Gobotswang contends that Botswana is 'being sold in exchange for pieces of paper they call honorary doctorate degrees and silly little fake academic gowns' (Gobotswang, 2015). He laments that these degrees have been 'dished out mostly by external academic institutions, some which don't even offer undergraduate degrees' (Gobotswang 2015). He says that those who are honoured are mainly politicians in the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), in power since 1966. He concludes by saying: 'When it comes to

politicians who acquired doctorate and medical degrees through training it is the BCP [Botswana Congress Party (BCP), his party] that leads the pack' (Gobotswang 2015). But that Khama has 'sold' Botswana in exchange for an honorary PhD is nothing, but political rhetoric. It is true, as Masokola notes, that South Korea is worried about China's influence in Africa (Darracq & Neville 2014:3). Gobotswang's criticism of Khama's 'PhD' is primarily influenced by his political leanings as the BCP vice president. In diplomatic relations, soft power is a way in which countries first soften relations for future mutual benefits.

In February 2016, having noted that there was intense criticism and mockery of Khama's PhD, the Permanent Secretary in the Office of the President issued a directive to all Permanent Secretaries, Directors and Botswana's diplomatic missions and embassies, spelling out the president's 'new' official name: 'His Excellency the President Lieutenant General Dr Seretse Khama Ian Khama' (*Mmegi* 11 February 2016). This was an instruction to all to address him by his new title, 'Dr'. One observer notes: 'For a very strange reason, Botswana is the only country in Southern Africa (probably in Africa if not the whole world) where people use this honorific without the usual restrictions' (*Sunday Standard* 29 November 2016). In November 2016, Kenneth Dipholo, a seasoned critic of Khama, wrote that the frequency at which honours and awards are heaped on him is worrisome because it renders the 'honours system at both national and international levels scandalous, cheap and laughable' (Dipholo, 2016).

Like China, South Korea suffers from image problem because of a land-lease scandal in Madagascar, illegal fishing, and a controversial diamond mining deal in Cameroon involving its firms (Soyeun & Gray, 2016:656). From a public diplomacy angle, it is understandable that one of its leading universities honoured Khama, a staunch conservationist. For most South Koreans, Khama deserves it, not only for economic reasons, as critics in Botswana argue, but for the wider geopolitical and global politics. For instance, the honour came after Khama had severed diplomatic relations with North Korea in February 2014. This was significant to the Koreans. Khama's bold decision reinvigorated the relations between the two countries. Konkuk University recognised Khama's great contribution to this (*Botswana Daily News* 22 October 2015). This award also fits well in South Korea's soft power strategy in Africa. This paper concurs that 'South Korea has carefully observed and studied the confrontations, competitions, and cooperation among major powers with regard to Africa and its resources' (Kim.TH, 2012:121). The Khama administration went further and initiated military relations with Seoul. This is not surprising because Khama is a tried and tested soldier and pilot.

### **Botswana-South Korea Military Relations**

South Korea has military relations with four African countries (Gabon, Ethiopia, Uganda and Botswana). Botswana-South Korea military relations date back to 30 October 2013 when Botswana's then Minister of Security and Defence, Brigadier Dikgakgamatso Ramadeluka Seretse, a cousin of Khama, attended the Seoul International Aerospace and Defence

Exhibition. He met with his South Korean counterpart, Kim Kwanjin, and discussed military cooperation (*Mmegi* 19 January 2017). For the first time, the media reported that Botswana sought to acquire 16 T-50 supersonic trainer jets to replace its old CF5 C/D fighters from Korea Aerospace Industries LTD (KAI) (*The Bulletin* 25 November 2013). KAI was launched in 1999 under the direction of the South Korean government ‘As part of its drive for economic reform’ following the financial crisis in 1997 (Cho, 2003:43). It was originally a joint venture of Samsung Aerospace, Daewoo Heavy Industries (aerospace division) and Hyundai Space and Aircraft Company. KAI was established ‘to prevent excessive competition and overlapping investment in the aerospace industry’ (Cho, 2003:43). This was seen as hindering South Korea’s competitive position in the global aerospace industry.

In November 2013, the media reported that a high-profile delegation from the South Korean Ministry of Defence would visit Botswana for the first time (*The Bulletin* 25 November 2013). A South Korean senior military official had explained that the visit was ‘aimed at providing government support to facilitate the export of the T-50 or the FA-50’ (*The Bulletin* 25 November 2013). He further noted that ‘We hope the upcoming visit could help pave the way for South Korea to tap into Africa, expanding its overseas market focused in Southeast Asia, Latin America and Europe’ (*The Bulletin* 25 November 2013). The military official’s views resonate well with South Korea’s ‘developmentalist model’. The South Korean government’s close relations with big business/*chaebols* started in the 1960s (Shelton, 2009; Darracq & Neville, 2014; McCartney 2015). To assist the *chaebols* and state-owned corporations to penetrate overseas markets, the South Korean government uses its diplomatic relations, including aid and grants (Darracq & Neville, 2014:6; Kim.Y, 2016:133). For instance, the South Korean government fully supports KAI’s efforts to sell T-50s to Botswana. When Khama visited Seoul in October 2015, the T-50 deal was on the agenda. Thus, he toured the KAI headquarters in Seoul. He is said to have indicated that he expected his army ‘to make its final decision on the purchase by the end of the year after considering options in two other countries’ (Lee, 2015). Indeed, in 2017 Khama visited Sweden, and, again, the proposal to purchase eight second hand Gripen C/D jets for the army dominated his trip. He toured the plant manufacturing Gripens in Stockholm. Facing domestic criticism and in Sweden, Khama defended his decision during a televised media briefing in Sweden.

In January 2017, South Korea and Botswana signed a MoU to promote military cooperation during a meeting in Seoul (*Mmegi* 19 January 2017). It was signed by the South Korean Defence Minister, Han Min-koo, and his Botswana counterpart, Shaw Kgathi. They discussed the ways in which the two countries could promote high-level defence meetings and facilitate defence industry deals. Han Min-koo ‘explained the current security situation on the Korean Peninsula, citing North Korea’s nuclear and missile development programmes’ to Kgathi. He then ‘asked Botswana to join international efforts to pressure Pyongyang to give up its nuclear programme’ (*Defence Web* 19 January 2017). In April 2017, Khama addressed local and foreign diplomats in Gaborone and told them that ‘Botswana remains concerned about the blatant human rights violations in the rogue state of North Korea’ (*APA News* 2017). When North Korea conducted a nuclear test in early 2017, his government issued a strong



condemnation, and applauded the US for deploying the controversial anti-missile system in South Korea. Botswana disregarded the fact that the South Koreans are sharply divided on this issue. China and Russia also oppose the deployment. Undeterred, Botswana considered it 'appropriate and justified' 'to counter threats by North Korea' (Republic of Botswana 2016). Whilst in Seoul, Kgathi also met with South Korea's Minister of Defence Acquisition Program Administration, Chang Myoung-jin, 'to discuss possible cooperation in the defence industry' (*Defence Web* 19 January 2017). It was reported that the Botswana Defence Force had also planned to purchase K2 Black Panther tanks from South Korea. It is unclear how the military cooperation between the two countries would address Seoul's security/military threats from Pyongyang. Khama wittingly/unwittingly answered this when he told Koreans that Botswana 'live many miles away, so the best thing we could do is just to sever diplomatic relations with that kind of regime' (Lee 2015) he called 'a rogue state'.

The Khama administration's negotiations to purchase military hardware from South Korea and Sweden has been criticised by opposition parties and some citizens. In November 2015, the BCP vice president penned a scathing opinion piece criticising Khama's visit to Seoul as wasteful: 'It is not by coincidence that President Khama was awarded an honorary doctorate degree by a South Korean institution while on a state visit (or was it a shopping visit) to negotiate deals to purchase T-50 Trainer Jets' (Gobotswang, 2015). Duma Boko, Botswana's leader of opposition in Parliament, dismissed Khama's honorary PhD as nothing, but a reward for his purchase of the T-50 jets worth US\$450 million from Seoul (Boko in Enos, 2015). Similar criticisms form the basis of many opinion articles published in the local media. The Khama administration has not yet purchased the T-50s and Gripen jets from Seoul and Stockholm respectively. But this has not quelled the criticism. Media reports show that most Botswana are against the purchase of military hardware. Therefore, the public perceptions may negatively affect the (re)invigorated Botswana-South Korea relations. South Korea should be mindful that it already suffers 'reputational damage' after some of its *chaebols* and state-owned corporations were involved in dubious economic deals in Africa (Agyapong, 2012; Kanik, 2015:2). Ironically, President Park Geun-hye, whom Khama met and signed economic cooperation deals with worth more than US\$2.6 billion, was impeached and later removed from office on allegations of corruption in March 2017. She is on trial. KAI is also besieged with corruption scandals, which led to its chief executive officer, Ha Sung-yong, resigning in July 2017 (Tomkins, 2017; *The Korean Times* 14 July 2017).

## **Conclusion**

This paper has argued that under President Ian Khama, Botswana-South Korea relations have been reinvigorated. The previous administrations had not engaged Seoul with the intensity and vigour witnessed under Ian Khama. Khama's decision to sever diplomatic relations with North Korea aroused interest in South Korea. The paper also contextualised Botswana-South Korea relations within the Korea Africa strategy. Seoul's relations with Africa dates back to 1961, but it briefly disengaged from Africa following its admission to the UN in 1991. In the post-2000, it came back to Africa, mainly for economic reasons. Like China and Japan, South Korea

is in a global rush to secure energy sources. Although Botswana has no oil, it is rich in coal and diamonds. When Khama visited Seoul in October 2015, he discussed ways in which Botswana and South Korea can cooperate, especially in the energy and infrastructure sector. Khama and Park Geun-hye then signed an agreement worth US\$2.6 billion in which South Korean firms would undertake development projects in Botswana. Since then, South Korean firms have secured lucrative deals in the energy sector in Botswana. In some cases, the awarding of such tenders has been controversial, and, thus, in principle, deemed 'corrupt'.

Despite all the controversies, Botswana can learn a lot from South Korea in the areas of ICT and education. Botswana may also secure markets for its diamonds. In conclusion, this paper posits that the bad publicity of South Korea in the local print media and by some opposition politicians may undermine the cordial diplomatic relations.

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# PAID IN FULL? JUDEO-CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS ON JUSTICE, PUNISHMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS AS MANIFEST IN THE STORY *DEATH CONSTANT BEYOND LOVE* (1978) AND IN THE NOVEL *CHRONICLE OF A DEATH FORETOLD* (1982) BY GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ.

Barbra Chiyedza Manyarara

## Abstract

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*Using a textual analytical framework and spousal murder and honour killing as fictionalised by García Márquez in *Death Constant Beyond Love* (1978) and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1982), the article examines the question of punishment framed within Judeo-Christian teachings and human rights. Honour killings and spousal murders are usually premised on the desire to control female sexuality. In these narrative works García Márquez displays anxieties over due punishment for transgressors and the non-redemptive nature of colonial prison systems and is critical of adherence to irrelevant and morally conflicted social scripts. It is evident from the narratives that whatever religious teachings and laws governing these homicides, they do not always discourage the transgressions and thereby fail to reduce instances of such crimes. Thus García Márquez raises the fundamental question of the right to life, justice and punishment.*

**Key words:** Crime of passion, debt to society, honour killing, human rights, Judeo-Christian traditions.

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## Introduction

The question of due punishment framed within Judeo-Christian teachings and human rights is significantly evident in García Márquez's short story "Death Constant Beyond Love" (*Death Constant* henceforth) (1978) and the novella *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (*Chronicle* henceforth) (1982), respectively. The two narratives diametrically fictionalise spousal murder and honour killing. Thematically, both are concerned about human sexuality and if as today's readers we are to make meaning of the numerous narratives written on the theme over the ages, it is crucial to acknowledge that sexuality has always been a difficult terrain to negotiate, especially female sexuality. For instance, Geoffrey Chaucer's controversial poem, *The Wife of Bath* (in *The Canterbury Tales*) features the persona Alison; an uncharacteristically outspoken woman who engages biblical and religious references to buttress her ideas and opinions on sexuality, especially female sexuality. Chaucer's construction of Alison appears to subvert the creation myth that centres on a womanhood forever locked in the double bind of the original sin realised on Eve because in his time, female sexuality was connected to the original sin and equated with improper female behaviour. The double standard that haunts the construction of female sexuality is underscored by this period's tolerance of male homosexuality then, a widespread practice among the clergy, yet any expression of female sexuality was thought abhorrent as observed by Agner Fog in *Cultural Selection* (1999). Similarly, analyses of representations of sexualities in Victorian literature open up male/ female ideological questions

that also resonate with cultural attitudes. Generally Victorians have been considered rigid in their attitudes to sexuality but more recent scholarship has shown that Victorians were not prudish and coy morally, rather, they espoused a broad range of perspectives on sexual practices, activities and identities (Mathieson, 2012).

Literature also abounds with thoughts on this human engagement whose expression may stretch from virtuosity to utter depravity. Hallett and Skinner's (1997) collection *Roman Sexualities*, offers an overview on ancient Greek and Roman sexualities. For example, Ovid (43 BC – AD 16 or 17) stands out for his constructions of sexualities and wrote extensively on the theme of love. In the three-book didactic and elegiac poem "The Art of Love", Ovid teaches the arts of seduction and love. The first book teaches men how to seduce women. The second teaches men, how to keep a lover while the third one teaches women seduction techniques. Ovid was already writing sex manuals in the First Century AD, much the same as erotic literature is freely available today. He critically departs from the more serious didactic poetry of his contemporaries such as Virgil (Hallett and Skinner, *ibid*). It is indeed a moot point that whether a writer constructs sexuality as a burden of shame, desire or a liberating force, a gendered sexuality or sexual conduct, such writing has always been an important indicator of a society's morals and values (Manyarara, 2016).

Sexuality is one of the fine strands that connect Gabriel García Márquez's numerous creative works. Another observable strand in Marquez's works is the all-pervasive presence of religion. For this reason, there has been vociferous castigation of his fiction as irreligious. John Cussen (2007) for example, offers a lengthy description of the writer's oeuvre, in which four grievances stand out namely that García Márquez:

- writes against ecclesiastical hard-heartedness;
- opposes the Church's privileging its own tradition of miracles over equivalent indigenous occurrences;
- sometimes criticizes the Church for its focus on Latin America's spiritual needs and its lack of concern for the continent's material needs; and
- excoriates the Church for what he perceives to be its *inordinate dedication to sex's curtailment and virginity's promotion* [my emphasis] (373).

Thus Cussen (2007) sees an unabated "... animus against the Catholic Church ... the Church's sexual ethics ... the centrality and durability of the issue of desire's burden in the shelf of his [García Márquez] work" (p.373). The same critic concludes that García Márquez runs the risk of diverting his remarkable talent by his concerted focus on sexuality, particularly prostitution. While the writer is quite explicit about the Church's limiting roles in the practice of sexuality in the Colombian context, he has reverted to metonymy in his portrayal of other sexually premised postcolonial concerns such as disease and different forms of discrimination such as gender stereotyping and minoritisation of sexualities. Along the same lines, Raab (2005) posits that García Márquez finds the Church and feminists a safer and more politically correct subject matter than the economy, politics or other contentious issues that beset the sub-continent in the postcolony. Clearly, this critic misses the point that representations of sexualities can be vehicles for the expression of many political, social, and economic concerns. García Márquez is no moral coward and does not treat the Church as a soft touch because it is indeed another contested space as is illustrated in this discussion.



Critical writing on Gabriel García Márquez's short story, "*Death Constant*" (1978) has concentrated on symbolism, especially 'the rose' as a symbol of death, rather than of love as is ordinarily believed (Lawall, 1999; Marsh, 2011). Yet there is a well-defined link between the short story and the novella, *Chronicle* (1982) because in many ways the short story is an inversion of the novella in its plotment and themes. To atone for the murder of his wife in the short story, Nelson Farina is imprisoned on Devil's Island, where he has as much chance of survival as Santiago Nasar of the novella, who is murdered in cold blood for a purported code of honour transgression. Questions of the operations of penal codes and 'the law of Moses' on legal and social transgression can be profitably applied to both narratives to uncover what unconscious anxieties García Márquez appears to have over the interstices between the practice of religion and social life as manifest through punishment for sexual transgression and the right of an individual to life.

*Death Constant* is told in a matter of fact mode that belies the deeper realities by treating its subject matter quite superficially. Attending to the minute details given on Nelson Farina unlocks a lot of ugliness buried behind the simple almost careless references made to aspects of life on the penal island colonies of Europe. In *Chronicle*, the church is strongly implicated in quite perplexing instances of violations of the very laws that form the bedrock of Judeo-Christian traditions on justice, punishment and human rights.

### **Conceptualising honour killing and spousal homicide**

An understanding of the two notions of honour killing and spousal homicide is essential to unlocking the nuances of the two death narratives under analysis and the seeming authorial anxiety over the homicides.

#### **2.1 Honour killings**

Honour killings were generally practised in traditional societies but have remained active in many parts of the world where cultural and religious conservatism are the norm (Raffaelli and Ontai, 2004). Largely understood as attempts by men to control and abuse women, honour killings can also be perpetrated by women on other females (Manyarara, *ibid*). The honour-shame connection is the driving motivation for these crimes and can be realized beyond the individual family to reach community level (Raffaelli and Ontai, *ibid*). In their processes honour killings involve a sense of shame that can only be cleansed through violent retribution against the women or the men involved. Controlling female sexuality is the basis of honour killing but such honour rests with the woman's acceptable sexual behaviour. In traditional societies women do not possess honour that is separate from their roles within the family structures. Indeed a woman's actual or perceived sexual indiscretion brings dishonour to those around her and to herself (Manyarara, *ibid*). Thus the males of a family strictly control the sexuality of the female members although they themselves are not bound by such codes (Schneider, 1971; Araji, 2000).

Honour killings may be motivated by codes of morality and behaviour that typify some cultures and are often reinforced by religious teachings. Further encouragement for the practice is implied by laws that rarely prosecute the enforcers of the honour code by handing out deterrent sentences. Although there are different types of honour killings and different types of victims, honour killings are largely family collaborations and so often have multiple perpetrators. The males of the family have the onerous task of showing courage and skill in carrying out honour killing whenever the need arises (Chesler, 2010; Manyarara, *ibid*).

Situating the practice of honour killings, Beattie (1997) observes that the all-pervasive military culture of South America further reinforces the code of honour by promoting the cult of machismo and yet such killings are strictly an abuse of the concerned individual's right to life as promulgated by law and by Judeo-Christian religious practice. Thus García Márquez's unconscious anxieties are understandable over this socio-cultural practice that is embedded in Colombian culture hence its fictionalisation in *Chronicle*.

## 2.2 Spousal homicides

Spousal homicides are spontaneous 'crimes of passion' that result from momentary rages arising from the heat of circumstances rather than from a fixed determination to kill (Howard, 1986). Crimes of passion are crimes committed in the throes of passion with no opportunity to reflect on what is happening and what the person is about to do, that is, there is no specific intent to kill, a necessary condition for a conviction of murder (Hill and Hill, 2005). The notion of spousal homicide can be expanded and linked to domestic violence and alcoholism (Delbreil, Voyer, Lebeau, Sapanet, and Senon, 2013). Quite significantly, in France spousal homicide represents about twenty per cent of total homicides. Thus a defendant can excuse their crime on the basis of sudden anger or heartbreak in order to eliminate the element of 'premeditation'. In such cases there has to be no previous record of spousal abuse or infidelity, the usual reasons for spousal homicide. The three conditions that merit homicide conviction are the intent to kill, the motive and the circumstances that provoke the mortal interactions between victims and offenders but the dead spouse usually dies with their knowledge of the truth (Delbreil, *et al.*, 2013). Literature on spousal homicide cites the causes of such killings as: marital discord; bruised ego due to infidelity or the threat to leave the family home; a history of abuse either as victim or witness, among others (Howard, *ibid*; Westerhof, 2007; McDougall, 2012). There is little known about the psycho-social motivations for spousal homicides because such killers might be ordinary law-abiding citizens who kill in momentary rage or they could be sadists who claim momentary rage to reduce their blameworthiness before the law (Howard, *ibid*).

In 19<sup>th</sup> century France, spousal homicides or crimes of passion "*crime passionnel*" were a valid defense in murder trials and for that reason some cases earned a custodial sentence of two years for the murderer. This only ended in France as the Napoleonic Code was updated in the 1970s but it has been quite influential inside and outside Europe and in many former French colonies where laws continue to be based on it (Howard, 1986). Therefore the law offers the possibility of reduced sentences with regard to adultery-related violent crime. Human Rights Watch advocates observe that crimes of passion have a similar dynamic as honour killings in that women are killed by male family members and the crimes are perceived as excusable or understandable (Mayell, 2002). In the case in point, García Márquez's anxieties over spousal homicide are most evident in the *Death Constant*.

However using both quantitative and qualitative methods were scholars held 190 interviews with 95 English couples on spousal homicide, Dobash and Dobash (2004) found that:

... intimate partner violence is primarily an asymmetrical problem of men's violence over women and women's violence does not equate to men's in terms of frequency, severity, consequences and the victim's sense of safety and well-being and significant social problem the world over (p. 324).

The two scholars also observe that male murderers that used violence against their female partners were likely to have used violence against previous or current partners, that is, they

“specialised” in violence against women. Viner (2005) confirms the Dobash and Dobash findings and notes how up to 120 women in the United Kingdom are killed by their partners each year and how not all cases result in convictions for murder or manslaughter. Such women tend to endure high levels of abuse before death such as:

... years of violence; physical and verbal assaults; harassment; and intimidation and bullying. Some of the men who killed them were subject to restraining orders and facing assault charges but the authorities did not do enough to protect those at risk (Viner, *The Guardian Weekend*, December 10, 2005).

This lack of protection for the victims of homicide is observable in *Chronicle* where, although aware of the pending mortal threat to the persona, Santiago Nasar’s life, the civil, the religious, and the military authorities, do nothing to protect him from a death that turns out unjust and seemingly premised on alterity. On the other hand, Nelson Farina in *Death Constant* does not get a short sentence, he gets the worst, probably because the court that tried him did not believe his wife’s behaviour, such as nagging or infidelity merited her death. Thus the literature available on spousal murders seems to suggest that there are usually underlying causes to this crime beyond these being “crimes of passion”, unlike the laws obtaining in 19<sup>th</sup> century France.

### **Homicide**

In *Chronicle*, the victim of the honour killing Santiago Nasar is bi-ethnic, with an Arab father and an indigenous South American mother, clearly a subject of alterity. He is wealthy but all earned cleanly through inheritance and hard work. Santiago Nasar is fingered but never proved as the violator of the girl Angela who is rejected on her wedding night for her lack of virginity by her new husband, Bayardo San Roman. Angela’s two brothers, publicly intending to exact punishment to recover family honour as cultural sanctions, kill Santiago Nasar in cold blood. This revenge murder ignores any number of social, legal and religious frameworks in its execution.

In *Death Constant*, García Márquez understatedly inverts the notion of honour killing to construct a narrative where a woman is drawn and quartered by her pharmacist husband Nelson Farina, for reasons that are not disclosed. The fact that Nelson Farina lands on Devil’s Island to serve his sentence suggests the gravity of the crime that he was judged to have perpetrated against his victim. The details of the two murders share similarities in their execution and atonement and both cause reader anxiety over the causal effects of the two tragedies. The similarities are going to be illustrated in the following section from the religious, legal and socio-cultural perspectives as these encompass the Judeo-Christian perceptions of justice, due punishment and readerly reactions to the more modern concerns over a person’s primary right to life.

### **3.1 Punishment for taking a life: drawing and quartering in *Death Constant* and honour killing in *Chronicle***

That Nelson Farina is sent to the French penal colony on Devil’s Island implies a serious crime, but its intensity is further suggested by the cruelty of the actual killing itself. We read that:

... he listened to the speech from his hammock amidst the remains of his siesta, under the cool bower of a house of unplanned boards which he had built with the *same*

*pharmacist's hands with which he had drawn and quartered his first wife [my emphasis] (Death Constant, p.221).*

In medieval Europe as described by Frusher (2013), for those convicted of treason, the journey to death was quite gruesome. Hanging, drawing and quartering was meant, at a superficial level, to produce the most bloody and visible death as possible, clearly intended to dissuade such crimes among the populace. Through the dominance of the church, as informed by history, people of the Middle Ages (c. 500-1500 AD) were immersed in a culture of symbolism and ritual so that the whole process of hanging, drawing and quartering was to remove the criminal's status and identity bit by bit until there was nothing left (Westerhof, 2007). That is, even the person's physical integrity had to be destroyed. Thus Nelson Farina's drawing and quartering of his first wife may be understood as an attempt to totally annihilate her from his life and society. However, García Márquez does not clarify what crime the woman could have committed to deserve such a death. As readers we can surmise that at the personal level, adultery may be thought of as betrayal that is tantamount to treason against a spouse and therefore may have led to this fictional but horrendous case of spousal homicide (McDougall, 2012). Spousal infidelity in the form of premarital sex is also the reason that honour killing is perpetrated against Santiago Nasar by Angela's brothers although again in typical García Márquezian fashion, Santiago Nasar's guilty is never confirmed to the end. Thus establishing the illusory nature of honour killing as a strategy for ensuring family honour is fictionally maintained in the novella.

The physical erasure of Nelson Farina's wife through drawing and quartering is comparable to the execution of the murder of Santiago Nasar by the Vicario brothers in its goriness and can be interpreted as an attempt to recover manly honour by removing the cause of dishonour. Thus "... when the Vicario twins killed Santiago, they knifed him so much that at one point he hung onto his house's front door, Christ-like, propped up and stapled to it by their knives" (*Chronicle*, 72). The tacit law of honour as espoused in the novella is incongruous with the church's teachings as practised in the same community. In grave misalliance, the code of honour is the basis of murder vis á vis the Sixth Commandment, 'Thou shall not kill'. This society completely ignores the fact that love and forgiveness are the pillars of Christian faith. To meet legal requirements, a botched autopsy is performed by the local priest Father Amado, whose only qualification for the task is that he had dropped out of medical school. Implicitly participating in the honour killing, the priest cut the cadaver up so much that he admits, "... it's like we killed him all over again after he was dead" (*Chronicle*, p. 72). Showing no remorse for his failure to mediate in the killing and almost gleefully, Father Amado lists seventy-six stab wounds and witnesses swear to a stigmata wound on one hand, perhaps as a reminder of Santiago's Jesus Christ-like innocence (Manyarara, *ibid*).

From the perspective of social custom rather than the law, Santiago Nasar's death could be deemed fair, but like that of Jesus, it was not a just death (Traer, 1991). In this instance, García Márquez does display some anxiety over obedience of laws whether through cultural practice, legal frameworks or the teachings of the church. He appears to suggest that laws must be obeyed because they are right not simply because they are in place. The standard for the law must be sought outside the law as exemplified by the explication of the statutes and judgements of the Ten Commandments in *Exodus* 20, 1-17 (Traer, *ibid*).

Santiago's killing was no haste undertaking. The Vicario brothers went about informing all and sundry of their intention to kill Santiago, thus establishing a specific intent to kill, a condition that makes the act a premeditated crime, therefore an indictable offence. Jewish law instructs

‘an eye for an eye’ and may translate to ‘a life for a life’. In the fictional circumstances, Santiago does not get a chance to defend himself as the social script for honour killings requires, so this killing is in itself without honour (Manyarara, *ibid*). More democratic laws would require his accusers to prove his guilt but the fictionalised inept investigations ignored many pertinent details relevant to the honour killing. Thus constituting a miscarriage of justice. From *Chronicle*, one might assume that honour killings belong with some long past Colombian traditions but the truth of the matter is that statistics on such killings are burgeoning worldwide despite human rights advocacy against such violence, particularly against women (Mayell, *ibid*). This again points to some unformed and therefore unarticulated anxieties about the fine line between crime and socio-cultural practice in the writer.

Whereas Santiago’s murder is followed by an almost frenetic hurry to dispose of the body as decently as possible in the circumstances, Nelson Farina does not just draw and quarter his first wife’s body, he attempts to conceal the murder, thus establishing the intention to kill as evidenced by how he disposes of the woman’s dead body: “... whose pieces had fertilized her own cauliflower patch ...” (*Death Constant*, p. 222). The execution of this murder is particularly horrendous because of the close relationship expected between a husband and wife and so called for a stiff sentence such as the perpetrator being posted to the French penal colony and on Devil’s Island in particular.

By all accounts Devil’s Island has the doubtful honour of having been the most notorious prison island in the world in its time as noted by a former lifer James Erwin in his exposé, “Among the ghosts: Erwin James on the French Guiana penal colony, Devil’s Island”, (*The Guardian*, December 04, 2006). Erwin James further observes that Devil’s Island was once the world’s most notorious penal colony – a place where spirits and bodies were broken, with no prospect of redemption and/or rehabilitation. Perhaps this hell-hole is comparable to South Africa’s Robben Island at its worst. Henri Charrière’s semi-autobiographical best-selling novel *Papillon* (1968), further informs on who could be transported to French Guiana penal colony. Those specifically confined on Devil’s Island were people convicted of treason and the most serious “common” crimes such as murder, rape and robbery, as well as habitual petty criminals. Statistically, about 40% of new arrivals to the colony perished within the first year. According to Erwin James (*ibid*):

... most were killed by the merciless nature of forced labour, the poor diet and lack of protection from the myriad diseases rampant in the unfamiliar tropical environment. Many died during escape attempts, savaged by wild animals, ravaged by scurvy, or picked by professional escapee hunters – or in the case of sea-bound escapees, drowned or were eaten by the sharks that infested the coastal waters (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/dec/04/france.prisonersandprobation>).

That the fictional Nelson Farina had to serve his sentence on this particular island prison reflects public shock and abhorrence at his crime and the premeditated nature of the disposal of the dead wife’s cadaver. Although García Márquez glosses over the details of the crime, it is common knowledge that serving a prison sentence on this island reflects the seriousness of the offence and the full horror of this form of punishment would have had significant implications for family honour and impact severely on the convict’s family.

Being banished to Devil’s Island can be equated to a cleansing operation, the mass destruction of unwanted segments of humanity, all in the name of punishment. Such prisoners were also forced to remain on the French Guiana penal colony if they had served a sentence of eight years

or more, under the policy of *doublage* when their debt to society was paid. This was a life without hope, banished to the edge of the 'western world', a true living hell as further confirmed by Adams (2015). Therefore Nelson Farina's aggravated homicide, escape and survival of the rigours of the dangerous journey from Devil's Island takes on a different complexion when viewed from the perspective of the horrors of serving time on this penal colony. García Márquez appears to question the colonisers' almost scorched earth approach towards punishment and the value of punishment itself as well as the notion of populating the Caribbean with France's 'undesirables'. Such prison systems were not necessarily redemptive nor do they consider a prisoner's debt paid even if one has completed their time. They had to remain in the 'larger prison of life in the Caribbean' even if they could have preferred to return to the motherland.

By seemingly trailing the physical and philosophical features of Devil's Island as detailed by Erwin James (*ibid*), García Márquez appears to implicitly engage the capital punishment debate in that legal systems may dish out lengthy prison sentences whose execution may turn out more deadly than an actual death penalty. Sentences can also be just but unfair if one is sent to certain death. Adams (*ibid*) the survivor of Devil's Island concludes,

... this was punishment and beyond. Here souls were extinguished as, en masse, thousands of men were systematically imprisoned to death. This was life without hope, banishment to the edge of the world, a true living death"  
(<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/dec/04/france.prisonersandprobation>).

The notion of penal colonies as export zones for Europe's worst criminals exacerbates all that is evil about this system because what was offered to the prisoners were not opportunities for redemption and/or rehabilitation but a living death in a place no Frenchman would go unless sent by a judge (Adam, *ibid*). His travelogue advances the reason why the French needed Devil's Island. The convicts were sent to this colony to do the work once done by African slaves. Critically paralleling the fate of the African men and women who survived the sea voyage from Africa to the Caribbean, prisoners who survived the horrors of the penal system were encouraged to remain in French Guiana and marry female felons from France to populate these islands. Like South Africa's Robben Island that has gone on to become a world heritage site and a place of interest, Devil's Island has become a macabre tourist attraction despite or because of its ugly past, perhaps as Mount Gol'gotha (mountain of execution), the site of Jesus' crucifixion, attracts numerous visitors to Israel.

García Márquez's Nelson Farina shows immeasurable ingenuity to have survived and managed to escape from Devil's Island; find and use a black ex-slave stock woman to marry and thus lend a seeming respectability to his criminal past. Superficially at least, in Judeo-Christian traditions, servant women have been employed to populate the Jewish nation, as exemplified by the birth of Ishmael by Hagar on behalf of the childless Sarah, Abraham's wife (*Genesis: 16; 1-16 [King James Version]*). Similarly, just as Hagar and her son were sent away once their purpose was met, Nelson Farina disposes of his daughter Laura by using her to gain his freedom and potentially enslaves her into a prostitution that starts off as familial duty. Thus she is another woman trafficked for a new but fake identity: that is, Nelson Farina becomes a woman trafficker over and above a woman killer. In this instance García Márquez creates a character that will always be a prisoner for going against humanity, one who has not been cleansed because of his failure to pay fully, his debt to society. He is therefore doomed to remain in limbo without any real freedom (Bauman, 2011).

However, there are also other ways of understanding Nelson Farina's arrival at Rosal del Virrey after his escape from Devil's Island. He arrives,

... on a ship loaded with *innocent macaws*, with a *beautiful and blasphemous black woman* he had found in Paramaribo and by whom he had a daughter. *The woman died of natural causes* a short while later and she didn't suffer the fate of the other one ... [my emphasis] (*Death Constant*, p. 222).

Nelson Farina's arrival at Rosal del Virrey village with a "*beautiful and blasphemous black woman ... the woman died of natural causes*" calls attention to Jewish religious laws and practice against blasphemy. The author's almost anecdotal "... the woman died of natural causes" is an overt pointer to the probability that being married to Nelson Farina, she could also have been 'drawn and quartered' considering the character's history of spousal homicide.

According to the Judeo-Christian laws on blasphemy (*Exodus* 20: 7), this woman could have been stoned to death in tandem with the distinctly sexual discourse of this tract as almost happens to the woman accused of adultery and brought to Jesus by the scribes and Pharisees (*John* 8: 3-9, *King James Version*). In this case, García Márquez can be understood as advocating tolerance of difference just as Jesus' reformatory and transformative teachings saved the Biblical woman. A more current instance of the grievous consequences of purported blasphemy is the case of the Pakistan Christian woman, Aasiya Noreen Bibi who was convicted and sentenced to death by hanging in 2010 after an argument with a Muslim woman over a bowl of water (Allen, 2014). Eight years later, the Pakistani Supreme Court has not been able to finalise her appeal hearings mostly due to religio-political pressure on the judiciary (*Morning Star News*, Dec. 04, 2017). Therefore, García Márquez also further lays open ideas on the thin divide between godly and socially sanctioned religio-social practices. There are grounds for death which are clearly unacceptable in Christian teachings yet practised by those that purport to belong with the faith as exemplified by the murder of Santiago Nasar in *Chronicle* by the Vicario brothers over their sister's lost honour for which he was not convicted but persecuted.

Secondly, the notion that Nelson Farina arrived with innocent macaws (parrots), underscores the paradox that to survive Devil's Island, a prisoner must continue to break the law. The phrase "innocent macaws" further draws attention to another South American problem where, wildlife trafficking is thought the third most valuable illicit commerce in the world after drugs and weapons despite the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) bans in 1973 (Michels, 2002; Bergman, 2009). The smuggling of the birds counterpoints the spousal homicide in a significant way.

Macaws as a species mate for life. They not only breed but also share food with their mates and enjoy mutual grooming. In the breeding season, 'mothers' incubate eggs while 'fathers' hunt and bring food back to the nest. Macaws, native to Central and South America are popular pets and many are illegally hunted (*National Geographic Magazine*, January 1973).

Thus the banishment of personae non-grata into French Caribbean colonies through the penal colony system is countermanded by the trafficking and deracination of these delightful birds away from their natural habitat in the rain forests of the subcontinent to the western world. This is a symbolic death for the subcontinent because there is negative gain from what could be thought of as 'importing' undesirables as they 'export' key natural resources, the exotic birds.

That Nelson Farina arrives with a black woman in tow also raises issues of alterity in that no free white woman could have accepted in marriage, a Devil's Island escapee. Her fictional natural death underscores the violence of the first wife's murder. It can also be understood as an authorial strategy to shift focus onto the daughter about whom Nelson Farina, "... had good reason to imagine that he was rearing the most beautiful woman in the world" (*Death Constant*, p. 222). Alternatively, Nelson Farina's social and moral debt had been paid in full by virtue of his having managed to escape where few have survived. García Márquez's silence on the character's attitude towards his incarceration or towards the crime itself invites readerly conjecture. If Nelson Farina had been constructed as genuinely sorry for his crime in addition to having survived Devil's Island, social justice and perhaps Judeo-Christian law could judge him as deserving of redemption but Nelson Farina does not give that impression. Instead, he bides his time until he can wear down the corrupt politician, Senator Onesimo Sanchez. The latter becomes an accessory to the former's prison break by issuing false identification papers to protect the criminal from being sent back to Devil's Island to pay his debt to society in full.

Unsurprisingly, García Márquez unfailingly employs the sexuality motif to allow the Nelson Farina's final bid for complete freedom to succeed by prostituting his daughter Laura Farina to the Senator, and not by any other means. Political dispensation could have allowed Senator Onesimo Sanchez to facilitate Nelson Farina to obtain a new identity card as he was granting other favours willy-nilly on his campaign trail. Whether from a sense of justice or ethics the Senator's refusal to grant him a false identity, Nelson Farina's only comment is: "'Merde' ... '*C'est le Blacamén de la politique.*'" [Shit! That is politics] [emphasis original] (*Death Constant*, p. 222). In this instance the writer draws readerly attention to another form of domination of women, a metaphoric 'honour killing' such as occurs in *Chronicle*. This is a living death and has little justification in either the Judeo-Christian laws or any other legal precepts. This notion is particularly sustained by the girl having to wear a chastity belt, (a lockable device designed to preserve female sexual integrity), when she goes to offer herself to the Senator in exchange of her father's false identity documents. The key is kept by the father. Thus Nelson Farina continues his disposal of the lives of the women of his family for his own flawed survival (Taus, 2014). He neither protects nor behaves honourably towards either of them.

### 3. Conclusion

The writer's almost casual reference to Devil's Island, the French penal colony in French Guiana, raises critical concerns over the former European practice of shipping felons to penal colonies without any opportunity for redemption and/or rehabilitation once their debt to society is paid. This amounts to enslavement of the ex-convicts and gives them an almost indentured servant status, a growing curse of the modern world.

Conflating García Márquez's problematisation of honour killing and spousal murder enabled a paradoxical understanding of the exploitation of female sexuality. The recovery of family honour lost through purported female sexual indiscretion and the recovery of a convicted murderer's freedom through his daughter's sexual dishonour are particularly striking examples of a morally conflicted society. Female sexuality becomes the currency by which the



father can corruptly buy his freedom. Jointly, the two narratives expose an ambivalent attitude towards female sexuality and gross double standards towards religious teachings. In one sense García Márquez displays unconscious anxieties in his fictionalised treatment of homicide in the two works, *Death Constant* and *Chronicle*. Yet in another sense his fictionalisation of honour killing and spousal murder in these works, invites readerly questioning of honour killings and the so-called crimes of passion that in reality are murders and continue to dog the world today. In this way, García Márquez's voice is added to the worldwide consciousness raising campaigns variously organised to counter the psychology of such frightful crimes. Despite the seeming anxieties in these two works, he fulfils a key purpose of literature, namely, to expose purported social evil by causing debate.

Honour killings and spousal homicides have not abated in many societies around the world because some religious teachings encourage the practice and the relevant laws do not always give deterrent sentences to perpetrators of such crimes. García Márquez further invites his readership to question the operations of some cultural systems that tolerate complicity by families, communities and their social structures and continue to uphold social scripts that have lost relevance in the contemporary world. Societies need to work to strengthen perceptions that violence against a member of the community is merely a cultural rather than a judicial matter. Therefore García Márquez draws public attention to religio-social and legal concerns over the right to life of the victims of honour killings and spousal murders as well as the rights of prisoners and the payment of debt to society. Honour killings, spousal homicide and the payment of the resultant debt to society are critically framed around Judeo-Christian teachings and the legal systems that appear to operate in the different settings of the two narratives. For a more just world, humanity should struggle for a justice that is both biblical and spelled out in systematic terms of rights and duties.

#### NOTES

1. Disclosure: There is no clash of interest resulting from research or application of this paper.
2. Despite worldwide appeals for leniency, Aasiya Noreen Bibi's case remains unresolved (*Morning Star News*, Dec. 04, 2017).

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**"BUT IF IT IS BY THE FINGER OF GOD THAT I CAST OUT DEMONS..." (LUKE 11: 20): EXEGETICAL AND HERMENEUTICAL REFLECTIONS IN THE LIGHT OF THE AFRICAN SPIRIT-WORLD.**

**Chris Ukachukwu Manus and Nico Tebatso Markhalemele**

**The Text: Lk 11:20**

But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you (The African Bible, 1999).

M'ó buru site na mkpisi aka Chukwu kam si achupu ajo mmuo, Oputara n'Ala-eze Chukwu erutala unu (Igbo, Translation, mine)<sup>181</sup>.

Lakini, ikiwa mimi natoa pepo kwa kidole cha Mungu, basi ufalme wa Mungu umekwisha kuwajilia (Kishwahili).<sup>182</sup>

Empa ha ke leleka bademona ka monoana oa Molimo, ruri 'Muso oa Molimo o fihlile ho lona. (Sesotho)<sup>183</sup>

**Abstract**

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*This article focuses on the cryptic text of Luke 11:20 where Jesus employs the ancient Hebraic slogan, "by the finger of God" to perform exorcism in his day. Our method is exegetical. Our purpose is to demonstrate some level of interest in emerging creativity and change in contemporary contextual biblical scholarship in Africa. The significance and value of the Redactional hand of the evangelist, Luke, in re-shaping the theology of the verse to suit his gentile audience is acknowledged. The Intercultural Hermeneutical approach helps us to interpret Luke's insights for our culturally alert present-day African Bible readers to understand what Luke says in Chapter 11 verse 20 in a new light. We anchor our perspectives in the realities of the African social locations/context in order to claim that any people's religio-cultural traditions should be utilized as critical resources and basis for meaningful exegesis and hermeneutics tailored to address own specific contexts. Thus, our context of interpretation is the heart of the African social-religious and cultural cosmologies. The paper concludes on the significance of Luke's use of this bizarre Hebrew expression, finger of God. It is noted that the expression is a literary device patterned on the Hebrew narrative of the magic-wand utilized by Pharaoh's magicians in Ex 8: 15-19 to inform his readership that God speaks through sacred writings, in sacred words, sacred objects and that these phenomena are not in the lack in the African environment.*

**Keywords:** Evangelists, Christology, Superpower, Social Locations, Pentecostals, Charismatics, Cosmology, Impersonal Mystical Forces, Finger of God.

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## Introduction

In recent New Testament scholarship, it has become increasingly acceptable that the Septuagint (LXX) based on a pre-Christian Hebrew textual tradition different from the Masoretic text was the *Catechism Book* of the earliest Christian churches.<sup>184</sup> On this assertion, the consensus is quite weighty as there are numerous quotations and paraphrases from the Greek version of the *TANACH* present in the Christian Bible (NT) thus suggesting that the LXX had lent itself too readily to earliest Christian use and interpretation.<sup>185</sup> As the Bible of Greek-speaking Christians from the early apostolic age, the Church Fathers were convinced that the prophetic vision of the LXX was the Word of God. Christian exegesis of what God himself had meant in speaking through the prophets is found in the writings of most of the evangelists and later New Testament authors who had assumed, on the basis of this tradition, that the LXX in its entirety was meaningful and relevant for their own time and contexts. In support of this view, M. Müller advises: “it is a historical fact that, for about a hundred years of its earliest history, the Christian Church shared...the Bible with Judaism”.<sup>186</sup> Further expatiating, Müller asserts:

Apparently they used not only the Hebrew Bible text, but, to an even greater extent, its translation into Greek, which had been created in the third and second centuries BCE<sup>187</sup>

## Aim and Purpose

The central aim and purpose of my paper coheres in the reflection of the LXX in the writings of Luke, the author of the Third Gospel and Acts, himself an educated Hellenistic convert to Christianity in the first century of the Common Era. This is no longer a subject of doubt.<sup>188</sup> *Re-reading* the Greek Bible for the emerging Christian churches in the Gentile missions where the majority of converts were of Hellenistic Jewish extraction, it is notable that Luke had consciously *re-utilized, adopted and midrashed* a segment of the Moses-Pharaoh cycle in the Book of Exodus in order to present an *inculturated* Christology for his Christian community.<sup>189</sup> His purpose is, *inter alia*, to promote a theology of divine empowerment to solidify and edify the faith of his original audience. He also aims at teaching his congregations how best they should understand the miracles and exorcisms performed by Jesus in the light of their religious tradition. For Luke, such prodigies stand out as acts empowered by God and the Holy Spirit. In his understanding, and as it seems, this is what he is mindful of conveying; namely that Jesus’ victory over demonic forces are God’s handwork which remains a sign of the arrival and presence of the Reign of God among the suffering members of his Church<sup>190</sup>. For Luke, Jesus is the New Moses whose power is *Superpower*.

In the light of above, this paper is a combination of *Redaction Criticism and Intercultural Hermeneutics*. With both approaches, we venture to probe the text’s oral stage and its prehistory

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in order to try to uncover how Luke, the evangelist had re-shaped and moulded his source material so much so that his theology exhibits strong lines of cultural similarity, comparability and affinity not only with ancient Jewish religious and legendary traditions but also with the Greco-Roman cultural life-world in which those who first *heard* and *read* his gospel had lived, moved about and had their being. To achieve this, we set ourselves the task of evaluating how Luke's redaction and theology are *re-readable* in African socio-religious and cultural contexts. This quest constitutes the centre-piece of our article.<sup>191</sup>

### **Context of Interpretation: The African Spirit-World**

The specific context in which we wish to *re-read* this verse hails from our African cosmology. In this way, we wish to demonstrate interest in some emerging creativity and change in contemporary contextual biblical scholarship in Africa. Upon realising the significance and value of the *Redactional* hand of Luke, the evangelist, in re-shaping the theology of the verse to suit his gentile audience, our home-grown approach, the *Intercultural Hermeneutics* helps us to interpret his insights to our own audience.<sup>192</sup> *Intercultural hermeneutical* approach helps culturally alert present-day African Bible readers to understand what Luke is saying in Chapter 11 verse 20 in a new light; especially one which European exegetes have not been used to reading from such a Lukan text. Thus, our context of interpretation is the heart of the African social-religious and cultural worldviews.

It has become common knowledge that in spite of the great stride Christian Religion is making in contemporary Africa, belief in occult powers and supply of *muti* as in parts of southern Africa is still on the rise and getting very popular; especially among the political and the business class. The practice by which many people enter into mystery covenant to dine and wine with the habitats of menacing paranormal forces that are believed to pervade Africa is on the increase.<sup>193</sup> Their bondage to "magical presences and forces" wields so much influence on their lives and even drives them to engage in nefarious cultic activities in many parts of the continent. For some of the traditionalists; especially those who engage in occult consultations and demonic practices in some of the monarchical traditions in southwestern Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and Lesotho as well as the flamboyant managers of occult shrines at the Okija sanctuary in south-eastern Nigeria, the powers in the world-in-between and spirit entities are seriously believed to be real. In Lesotho, the *Baloi* made up of both men and women occultists manipulate the supernatural to commit evil actions regularly as they invoke evil forces to prosper or to incapacitate some Basotho people.<sup>194</sup> In many riverine areas of the West African sub-region, ritual killings dedicated to *Mammie Water* (Mermaids, the water spirits) are cultivated with impunity for money-making. In South-eastern Lesotho as well, water is believed to be imbued with spiritual potency and egregious witchdoctors like Khotso Sethuntsa would descend under water (River Senqu) to enhance their spiritual energies and later become capacitated to carry out riverside rituals for blessings or for curses. It is also believed that "in the waters inhabit spiritual personages, many which are serpentine" from which Khotso used to send "a creature with a serpentine body and horse's head" after his enemies at night.<sup>195</sup> Khotso, the mountain magician, had the potency to "call up tornado to wreak havoc on enemies", to turn the storms of Lesotho to work his will and worse, to hurl lightning at someone and as much, he offered "medicines for political power" to jingoists who sought his patronage.

This phenomenon assures us that many African peoples believe that “unseen” forces; the impersonal mystical powers, exist and are endowed with forces which can be tapped to do good as well as to do evil. Many Christians and committed church-goers are believed to be bewitched and demonically possessed by “sent” portents. Several young people have given their lives to occult practices and engage themselves in Satanic rituals in and outside some of Africa’s citadels of learning. The Mungiki Boys in Kenya, the Bakassi Boys in south-eastern Nigeria, the Odua Peoples Congress in Yorubaland Nigeria, the Egbesu Boys of Uroboland in Delta State, Nigeria and other ethnic militias in Burundi and in the Katanga province of the DRC, cling to eerie and esoteric cultures as they execute and perform subtle dysfunctional activities in society. Among cultists, it is believed and as is being demonstrated regularly in Nigeria’s contemporary film industry, the Nollywood, that members barter their lives or those of close relatives; even their mothers and wives for wealth and riches granted by capricious mystical forces and their cohorts

The churches are not spared in these scary beliefs. The Nigerian religious landscape is one known to be demon-full, hence the increasing emergence of the so-called “men of God” who multiply themselves as deliverance ministers, pastor-healers, priest-healers and prophet/ess-healers. These so-called “men of God” brandish and proclaim their clairvoyant powers of exorcistic ministrations before tumultuous crowds at their crusade grounds and open-air rallies. These divines have succeeded in transferring the fear of witches and wizards to the “devil”, a rather curious Middle Eastern religious figure quite unknown in African Indigenous Religions in pristine times. In the Indigenous Religion of the Yoruba, a densely populated race in south-western Nigeria, *Esu* is believed to be crafty, cruel, powerful and the brain behind all good things as well as all bad things to humans. In human history,<sup>196</sup> women in Yoruba towns and villages do not, even today, move about at night for fear of *oros*, petty and worrisome spirits that cause people; especially pregnant women, different kinds of diseases such as swollen legs and partial blindness. Among the Igbo people of south-eastern Nigeria, *Ekwensu*, an evil spirit closest to *Uru-Chi* is a being that is essentially regarded as evil<sup>197</sup>. Among the Hausa-Fulani peoples of northern Nigeria, *Iblis*, a Quranic loan-name, is used to describe the agent of every disaster, calamity, misery and woes that befall humankind.<sup>198</sup> Many clerics strongly believe that the source of evil in our society is from the spiritual forces, evil spirits and demons which they believe to be commonplace in the environment. In that light, they boast of their exorcistic charismata and beguile the over-credulous Africans with the exhibitions of such powers in their crusade sessions, open-air rallies and at several Redemption Camps scattered all over the African nations. Many more of them proclaim the reality of demons, Satans, *Owu-mmiri* (water spirits) and *Mammie-waters* (Mermaids).<sup>199</sup> Among the Pentecostals and the Charismatics of the New Religious Movements is a hard belief in the prevalence of satanic forces and the impending apocalyptic debacle with evil agents in the African world. In short, the preachers create the impression that the land is infested with a pantheon of evil spirits that roam the streets, roads, rivers, markets and even churches and personal houses not only seeking whom to devour but wreaking spiritual, physical and financial havoc to the people of God and the African states. It is in the spirit of the current belief that John S. Pobee, the eminent Ghanaian theologian, could correctly assert that “the issue of witchcraft goes to the heart of the African psyche.”<sup>200</sup> African societies, he further argues, is like the biblical-Semitic

world; both which manifest a religious and spiritual perception of reality.<sup>201</sup> As the principal investigator has elsewhere argued, “the conception of the being of Satan among some African peoples is not altogether distant from their cosmologies; especially their socio-religious perceptions of the problem of evil and its causality<sup>4202</sup>

Our exploration of the religious terrain of most regions of Africa, west, east and south, indicate that the reality of belief in the existence of demons, occult practices and witchcraft is quite widespread in traditional and modern Africa. This fact surely makes a reader of some of the passages of the New Testament to readily believe that the cultural world of the eastern Mediterranean which most New Testament books reflect share a common spiritual and demonic worldviews with those of Africa. If this perspective is comparably acceptable as we think it should, then the interpretation of Luke’s affirmation of the power of Jesus over demons that menaced the people of his time stands as a Lukan model in the quest for well-rounded and sound hermeneutics and theology of the evangelist in Africa. Trained Bible teachers can adopt the model to reverse and to combat contemporary beliefs in demonology in African Christianity. According to the evangelist, Jesus is the new Moses who has been invested with the power inherent in the *finger of God* to execute the arrestation and expulsion of demons and their acolytes. The popular chorus: “Jesus’ Power, Super Power; Satan’s Power, powerless power” impresses us as one such example of Christian Praise-Songs that vindicates many a faithful’s credo in Jesus’ superhuman power to do battle with the occult world for God and for Africa’s contemporary Christianity.

### **The Religio-cultural Background of Luke’s Story**

In ancient Hebrew culture and religion, belief in evil spirits or demons; especially the *Shadim* and the *Sairim* who live in dark corners and maraud the wilderness ever ready to inflict harm on people was quite commonplace. Literary sources such as folklore, oral literature and popular belief bear witness to the exploits of demonic powers in the Hebrew life-world.<sup>203</sup> In late Judaism; especially after the level of Hellenization the society had undergone, belief in the power of evil spirits generally became quite ubiquitous. As the spirits were believed to be readily conjured up by evil-doers to take possession of and afflict people, the practice of exorcism boomed. Many exorcists thrived and claimed the power to heal physical illnesses, social distresses and spiritual anxieties of all sorts.<sup>204</sup> In the Hellenistic period, there were well-known healers and great divine-men like Asklepius of Epidaurus and Apollonius of Tyana.<sup>205</sup> The extant Epidaurian inscriptions indicate that there were ancient doctors, psychiatrists as well as patients and patronisers. In the case of the Epidaurian Healing Centre, its Abaton Hall was then world famous where real sufferers of paralysis, blindness, deafness, dumbness, growths, wounds and ulcers were healed over night by Asklepius.<sup>206</sup>

Early Christianity was influenced by these Jewish and Hellenistic traditional ideas and beliefs. In the Palestine of Jesus’ day, the ancient Hebrew belief in the dysfunctional role of the *Shadim* became spiritualized and conceived to belong to the domain of the occult. The belief, among others, that the spirits attacked humankind by taking possession of them was widespread. Other types of spirits caused seizures, panic and destructive violence to humankind. It was even believed that some demons caused the possessed to blaspheme against their fundamental beliefs. New

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Testament authors took the existence of demons and unclean spirits very seriously. Many Christians of those days considered the spirit entities as members of the family of the fallen angels<sup>207</sup>. Jesus shared this cosmology. And so commonplace was the beliefs in the Gentile world where Paul had evangelized the people. According to Wayne Meeks, ‘The human world is seen under the control of demonic powers’<sup>208</sup>. In 2 Cor 4:4, we read that Satan is the “god of this aeon”. Unseen beings (rulers) and authorities (Col 2:15; Eph 6:12-17; Col 2:20) are identified as elements of the cosmos. Socialized in this cosmology and religious worldview, the early Christians considered the gods and mediums of the Gentile peoples as impersonal mystical forces that incarnate themselves in demons like Beelzebub (Acts 16:16; 1 Cor 10: 20-21; Rev 9: 20). The *Pastors* of the Pastoral Epistles had proclaimed in their churches that such spirit-beings had the potency to divert the attention of the faithful from hearing and accepting the gospel (1 Tim 4:1). For them, it was of pastoral expedience to alert the members of their communities that those spirit entities are opposed to the reign of God. This was the ancient religious tradition derived from the cultural world and the thought-form of the age. In sum, this disquisition has helped us identify a commonality between the context in which the exorcism of Jesus was performed and the African context against which Jesus’ encounter with Beelzebub, ‘the prince of demons’ is going to be *re-read* in the rest of this paper.

### **A Brief Exegetical Analysis of Lk 11: 20**

In this section, we wish to present a critical analysis of Lk 11:20 in a fivefold form; namely, the original Greek text as found in the Greek New Testament, 1979 edition, the English translation readable by many Africans offered in *The African Bible*, (Nairobi, 1999), an Igbo translation carefully rendered by the principal investigator, himself an Igbo of south-eastern Nigeria from the Greek original, a Kishwahili text, the *lingua franca* in Eastern Africa and the language of Western missionary enterprise and education in mission schools and finally the *Sesotho* Bible text in general use among the Basotho Christians in the Kingdom of Lesotho . These five texts reflect how the Word of God is being spread and appreciated in contemporary African Christianity.

Most commentators consider the use of the expression, *en daktulo Theou - the finger of God*; a Lukan creation quite different from Matthew’s ‘Spirit of God’ in his own Gospel. Because of the absence of the enigmatic expression, R. H. Gundry accepts the text as the presence of a number of Mattheanisms<sup>209</sup>. Other critics base their arguments on the fact that what is transmitted in a parallel passage in Matt 12: 28 – *en pneumati Theou - the Spirit of God* is un-Matthean. David T. Williams wants us to believe that the “finger” was employed to signify “a picture of the Spirit”.<sup>210</sup> Are we here really confronted with Lukan omission, substitution, re-interpretation or fidelity to the traditional legend or source? Let us see if the analysis that follows will help us establish any convincing and reliable information on this critical question.

There is no doubt that the saying is quite archaic given the absence of such a phrase in Mark generally accepted as the first Gospel and one used by the Synoptists (Mk 3,23-27)<sup>211</sup>. Even in some major African languages where the phrase is quite complex to explain, translators have rendered the expression as *kidole cha Mungu* (Kishwahili), *mkipisiri aka Chukwu* (Igbo), *owo Olorun* (Yoruba) and finally *monoana oa Molimo* (Sesotho). By so doing, the phrase has not been disoriented. This fact has made it possible to win the approval of the United Bible Societies Translation Team in parts of Africa as Africans' creative skill and ingenuity in social linguistic recreation. Indeed African translators would easily hold the phrase as a symbolic expression of the mystery of Jesus' power in "what God was doing through him" and not as "black magic" mediated through "cooperation with the evil powers of darkness...but rather as R. Summers amplifies "the genuine demonstration of the good powers of light, the indication that the very rule of God in the lives of men, his kingdom, was present."<sup>212</sup>

In everyday labour experience, Africans are known to work with hands but finger is hardly employed to express any sort of work done without the other fingers of a person. A finger would rather be seen as a collaborative organ. A finger cannot alone be used to perform any significant operation. Among the Igbo and many other African people, one needs all the five even the ten fingers to carry out active and successful labour otherwise referred to as *uru aka* – work done with the hands as the Igbo would usually describe such jobs. The collaborative efforts of all the fingers may further be explained with an Igbo proverb that states: *otu mkpisi aka ritalu manu zuru ibe ya ahu* (one finger fetches the oil that smears the rest). This folk saying supposes that the fingers by their closeness to each other cannot but function unitarily, in other words, all fingers are needed to perform effective manual labour. By no means was the finger for most Africans an aspect of divine activity either in traditional religious practices or in social clubs. More often than not, what is reckoned with is the hand, *aka* as an ensignia of collective power among the Igbo of Nigeria.<sup>213</sup> Understood in this sense, we would believe that the expression in its original Greek version also reflects a primitive idiom that probably goes back to an Aramaic cultural setting where, like most Africans, finger is used to express acts done in a collaborative synergy to prosper a person's or the people's wellbeing in the community.

There are three other logia stressing the demonstration of Jesus' superhuman power in the Lukan tradition. The sayings are sandwiched within the context of the exorcisms of Jesus; namely the Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit in Lk 11: 18-19 and parallels, the Dealing with Beelzebub in Lk 11:21-22 and parallels and the Binding of the Strong man in Lk 11: 21-23). In all these four passages, including the text under study, Jesus is depicted as doing battle against the demonic forces instead of meddling with them as some people of our age in Nigeria, Kenya, Lesotho and elsewhere in Africa do today. But were the battles manually waged? How, may Christians in Africa where many peoples' worldviews are believed to be nearly identical with that of the Jews understand this mysterious statement? It is our hope that the bizarre expression, *finger of God*, was not borrowed from ancient Egyptian esoteric and apocryphal oracular work: *The Six and Seven Books of Moses* usually associated with magical conjurations and invocations by demon worshippers and certain believers in occult practices perhaps derived from oriental mystery religions. A better understanding of what is meant can become clearer if Lk 11: 15 where Jesus' power to do exorcism was ascribed to Beelzebub is fairly interpreted from the vision Africans conceive and understand the concept as discussed above. This would be part of our creativity and

change to justify Afrocentric biblical scholarship. Hence, *by the finger of God*, may expediently be taken as in cooperation with God to usher in the reign of God in the human society. But in response to his critics, Jesus makes an *ad hominem* argument (vv.17-19). He retorts by asserting that the fact that Jewish people of that age practiced magical exorcisms was not good enough reason to accuse him of being a magician. Jesus makes the Pharisees realize that it was grossly illogical to conclude that he (Jesus) performed his exorcisms through the power of demons. For if he belonged to the demonic household, the critics should have realized that “division leads to destruction” as there would be no unity in the occultic household.<sup>214</sup> Pertinently Perkins observes that “In Jesus’ view it is totally illogical for the prince of demons to drive out demons and thereby erode his own power. It is tantamount to civil war”<sup>215</sup> Thus Luke makes him deny that his source of power was from the type his contemporaries had employed. In sum, Luke is, in this unit, telling his audience as well as the Jewish Religious Leaders that Jesus performed his own exorcisms by the „finger of God“; that is, by a direct intervention of God and to herald that “the Kingdom of God has come” to them.<sup>216</sup>

Now, can we, with intercultural hermeneutics creatively seek out where this expression was derived? Is it an occult language associated with some syncretistic Jewish charlatans or was it a prevailing religio-cultural idiom native to the Palestinian environment? As we have noted, the statement is absent in the parallel text in Mark’s gospel. Hence Lk 11:19-20/Matt 12:27-28 should be discussed together, at least, the narrative is a Q material independently received by the two evangelists. Once this is ‘seen together’, that is, synoptically “eye-marked”, the ocean of difference between Beelzeboul and God who is working in Jesus becomes glaringly apparent. What is however stressed in the statement, in fact, is that some Jews who had engaged in exorcistic activities had derived their powers from doubtful sources as some witchdoctors and wizards in today’s Africa are known to do. Consequently, it may be queried if it is the performing of exorcism that really mattered or the converting power of the word of God and its real significance in the life of the people? We believe the answer must be sought in further investigation of the Lukan intention for re-telling the Q-story to his audience.

We may not advance to the interpretation of the text without exposing the narrative structure of the Beelzebub Controversy as the third edition of the *Synopsis of the Four Gospels: Greek-English Edition*, edited by Kurt Aland, UBS, 1979, pp. 172-173 captions it. The Lukan version of the story can literarily be sub-divided as follows:

- vv. 14-16 - the actual healing of the dumb person, who spoke, followed by the marvel of the people. The negative criticism of “the people”; or the *Pharisees as per* Matthew (Matt 12: 24) and the critical demand of (*semeion ex ouranou*) a sign from heaven.

- vv. 17-20 - Jesus' re-action and response to the faithless people. His categorical declaration of divine empowerment in his ministries and exorcisms.
- vv. 21-23 Jesus' parable of the Strongman who must guard himself against the attack of Satan or the robbers sealed with his warning to the disciple.

For interpretative purposes, we wish to grapple particularly with the elucidation of v. 20; this cryptic verse received and transmitted by Luke in his own account of the Beelzeboul Controversy. As readers in the twenty-first century church and society, we invite the readers to follow us retrieve the Lukan intended meaning for the members of his community. The approach will help us to see how Luke's insight can assist our *re-reading* of the passage for the faithful of today and for ordinary readers of the Gospel of Luke in Africa. There is no doubt that Jesus performed exorcisms during his earthly ministry. All the four Gospels attest to his victorious encounters with demons, Satan, evil spirits and devils. Most of these accounts are not necessarily those aspects of New Testament theology typical of early Christian spiritualization of the Jesus phenomenon but rather convincing historical accounts of the activities of the Jesus of history which initially circulated orally. Our interest is to put it before our readers to know how Luke interprets this particular exorcism of Jesus. A balanced exegetical analysis of the Lukan *intentio auctoris* becomes very crucial in order to creatively respond to this question in the light of the African spirit worldview. Its clear exposition will clarify our understanding of earliest Christians' process of *re-reading* an activity of Jesus.

In the Q-community at Antioch, Jesus' exorcisms must have been seen as the means by which the reign of God was being ushered in amongst the members of that spirit-filled, vibrant and charismatic community. In the exorcisms of Jesus, God was himself working through him to relieve the community from the tyranny of demonic personages who planned and executed Christian oppression and persecutions in that city, the third largest in the Roman Empire according to the Jewish historian, Josephus.<sup>217</sup> For the Q-church, the Spirit was a living reality that energized the members to engage in powerful prayer-sessions. On one of such occasions, the Spirit fell and the charismatic leaders of that church rose to designate Paul and Barnabas to initiate the earliest and far-flung Christian missionary enterprise in the Gentile world. Here, the notion of the Spirit as mediating realized eschatology was quite at home. Indeed, the Q-church was a Spirit-driven congregation.<sup>218</sup>

Besides this Antiochian tradition, both the Lukan and the Matthean accounts offer us insights into the specific traditional understanding of the notion, "power of God" through the use of such ancient categories as by the *finger of God* or by the *Spirit of God*. But since both evangelists either drew their materials from Mark and Q or had their special sources, how may we know whose version is really authentic? There is no doubt that both Matthew and Luke transmit sound Christology of the incident. One important aspect of creativity we wish to bring about to bear on *re-reading* the passage lies in our interest to establish which evangelist has freely and deliberately exercised literary freedom in the re-interpretative process, a fact which can inspire contemporary African preachers and evangelists to recognize the validity of contextualization. In spite however of this boon, the question still is: whose version is more primitive and why? Could it be Luke's or

Matthew's? Rudolf Bultmann concedes that the Lukan version is rather primitive due to its archaic opening with a parabolic story in Lk 11, 5-13 (The Persistent Friend at Midnight).<sup>219</sup> According to him, the Lukan expression, *finger of God* comes essentially from Q and on this, Marshall is in agreement.<sup>220</sup> This Bultmannian position has won the acceptance of most contemporary Western Synoptic scholars who agree that when Luke and Matthew are using the Q-Source, Luke remains more faithful to the original source. But can we still maintain this hypothesis all the time and in all cases even in the developing thoughts of African Christianity where most preachers thumb through the Bible and preach out of context of the texts? Are we really sure that Luke has, in all probability, preserved the more primitive form of the Q-dictum in this text? Our hesitation derives from the fact that Luke had long been identified as the evangelist of the Spirit and women.<sup>221</sup> If the theme of the Spirit is so saliently central in Luke's theology, why would he delete it from the source he was using here? Many commentators would want us to believe that it appears improbable to accept that Luke would have replaced "Spirit" with "finger" if he had seen "Spirit" in the Q tradition at his disposal when composing his story. For us, in view of the cultural and charismatic background of the Q-document, that is, the Antiochian Church as its provenance, there is hardly any doubt that Luke saw "Spirit" in the Q-Source but as the Igbo people of eastern Nigeria say: *a hu ihe k'ubi, e ree oba* (when one sees what is greater than the farmland, one sells the barn to acquire it).

It can be argued that the evangelists, as *redactors* exercised a lot of literary flexibility with their sources when they composed their gospels. Thus at this occasion and in the light of his biblical theological interests; namely a purposeful intention to propound a *Christology of Power*, Luke decidedly preferred to substitute "finger" in place of Spirit<sup>222</sup>; indeed an interpretative effort that hacks back to the Exodus experience (Ex 8.19). We are convinced that Luke intended to speak with a rather familiar language-register to his audience or readership.<sup>223</sup> Why? This is because the expression, *finger of God* reflects a traditional usage, the instance of an anthropomorphism typical of the Old Testament religion by which the Priestly (P) authors had castigated the Egyptians as their magicians intended "to avoid Pharaoh's anger at their inability" to perform what Moses did.<sup>224</sup>

In this light, we are of the opinion that the phrase is a Semitic idiom, indeed a pre-Lukan concept which has its background in the context of primitive Hebrew theology of divine intervention recorded in Ex 7: 11 – 8: 19. The phrase, though cryptic as it appears, is also used in Dt 9, 10 to describe divine power in inscribing the Ten Words (Commandments) on the stone tablets given to Moses at Mount Horeb or at Mount Sinai (Exod 31,18). So, it may be taken that the *finger of God* is a well-known religious symbolism for God's empowerment of chosen figures. And in each case, it is Moses and Aaron who are the central figures that are referred to in that text. In Lk 20: 14-23, victory over demons is ascribed to Jesus by the *Finger of God* hence He (Jesus) is, for Luke and to his audience, the New Moses. For us, these are some of the religio-cultural and historical reasons why we identify with Luke's adoption of the expression, *finger of God* as a referent for divine empowerment. As we had earlier pointed out, Luke's audience was most probably situated in a region where the LXX was well used in the Daily Readings as was the custom of Diaspora Jews. By the time he wrote his gospel, Jewish converts had become quite numerous in the early

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Hellenistic Christianity. The evangelist, as well as his community would surely be familiar with the Greek version of Dt 9: 10 where the the Lord gave Moses the two tablets of stone on which the Ten Words were written with the *finger of God* and Ex 8:19 where the statement below was reported by Pharaoh's priests:

DEUT: 9: 10 kai. e;dwken ku,rioj evmoi. ta.j du,o pla,kaj ta.j liqi,naj gegramme,naj *evn tw/l daktu,lw/ tou/qeou/* kai. evpV auvtai/j evge,grapto pa,ntej oi` lo,goi ou]j evla,lhsen ku,rioj pro.j u`ma/j evn tw/| o;rei h`me,ra| evkklhsi,aj

Exod 8:19

kai. dw,sw diastolh.n avna. me,son tou/ evmou/ laou/ kai. avna. me,son tou/ sou/ laou/ evn de. th/| au;rion e;stai to. shmei/on tou/to evpi. th/j gh/j

In Rahlfs 1982 *Septuaginta*, we read:

*Eipan oun hoi epaidoi to Pharao, daktulos Theou esti touto*<sup>225</sup>

So the charmers said to Pharaoh, This is the finger of God.

But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not to them, as the Lord said.

The third plague of *kinnim*, a hapax in the whole of the Hebrew Bible, occurred when Aaron struck the dust with his staff and the dust became flying biting insects the gnats (*nkanka* (Igbo), *finfin* (Yoruba), *menoang* (Sesotho) waser infested on the entire land of Egypt (Ex 8:12-16). With these swarming pesky insects, the Lord polluted the Egyptian priesthood who prided themselves of their purity. Here, the Egyptian magicians and wizards “unable to duplicate this miracle” reported to Pharaoh that the infestation of the land with gnats was the handwork of the Hebrew God, the Supreme and Mighty God through whose power, his servants, Moses and Aaron worked greater miracles than themselves.<sup>226</sup> The miracle of the Hebrew leaders proved that they, as messengers of the Israelite God, had access to divine power<sup>227</sup>. In fact, the expression found in the mouth of the Egyptian magicians was to extoll God's power that enabled the miracle to have been wrought. Again, notice must be taken of the fact that in its literary context in the Book of Exodus, the expression is uttered by the Egyptian priesthood, the opponents of the People of God (Israel) who had recognized that astounding prodigies had been wrought by the Hebrew God through the persons and mission of Moses and Aaron.

In his Gospel, Luke reverses the situation. The expression is put in the mouth of Jesus who uses the phrase, *Finger of God* to allude to his miracle and to challenge his critics and opponents to turn towards conversion to God whose intervention in the plight of the oppressed has dawned in his person, ministry and the dawn of the Kingdom of God. Aware of the redactional discretion of the evangelist and as we had earlier stated (*a hu ihe k' ubi eree oba*), Luke had changed the more primitive notion, “Spirit”, indeed a Q- concept in preference to *finger*, - a term uttered by a rather perplexed non monotheists in the Exodus narrative. Luke's intention is to put a biblical touch on

the story. His ultimate interest is to ground the episode in the religio-cultural setting of the ancient Hebrews in order to help his community whose members were largely of Hebrew extraction to come to recognize the power of God behind the miracles of Jesus..<sup>228</sup>

Besides this, there is another theological reason why Luke re-interpreted the Antiochian pneumatology also received by Matthew.<sup>229</sup> A thorough survey of the evangelist's phraseology indicates that *en pneumati Theou* (by the Spirit of God) is inconsistent with Lukan theology of the Spirit. In Luke, the Spirit of God is not an eschatological reality as in Matthew where it usually represents the presence of the kingdom of God. In Luke, the Spirit of God is rather a substitute for the reign of God which was ushered in through the ministry of Jesus. Besides, in Luke, the notion of *en pneumati Theou* is a divine force that works miracles. For Luke, the concept, *pneumatos* is rather a prophetic Spirit often associated with Jesus as the one to whom the prophetic scriptures point.<sup>230</sup> For Luke's Diaspora Jewish audience, the Spirit is not known as an exorcist but the notion, *en daktulo Theou*, *finger of God*, is an anthropomorphism quite duly acceptable by all.<sup>231</sup>

Given the religio-cultural, traditional, redactional and theological argumentations submitted above, we wish to settle with the view that the evangelist, Luke had purposefully substituted the pristine symbolic notion, *finger of God* to take the place of the rather theological concept, *Spirit of God* in his narrative on Jesus' Battle Against Beelzeboul. What he has successfully achieved is the use of *substitution* as a literary device to re-interpret the exorcistic activity of Jesus. Luke's purpose is to educate the faith of a church whose members highly revered their religio-cultural heritage. Suffice it to say that Luke wished his church members to understand the exorcisms of Jesus in the light of an Exodus experience. This Christology would naturally augur well with the Hellenistic Jewish Christians' perception for whom a pre-Christian version of the LXX had been the Bible of their congregations.<sup>232</sup> This is the way he *re-interpreted* that superhuman miracle of Jesus represents the "arrival of the kingdom of God" for the Christians of his day. Surely his account has relevance for African Christians of today. Our hermeneutics will be articulated in the reflections that follow.

## **Our Reflections**

Can this early Christian hermeneutics provide us with the foundation to *re-comprehend* the text of this passage for the People of God in our own time; especially for those faith people who believe that demons still lurk behind every nook and cranny of the African space and environment? We believe that, more importantly, the relevance of this paper addresses itself to the people in our societies and churches who believe that witchdoctors must be befriended, worshipped, patronized and served for wealth and power acquisition. It also speaks correctly to people who believe that their role to drive demons and all hindrances to success is caused by the demons. In most Pentecostal and some Charismatic churches such as that of Prophet T.B. Joshua of the Synagogue of All Nations (SCOAN), Lagos, Nigeria, every service includes a demon delivery service and Healing Ministrations in the Name of Jesus. Extrapolating from the Lukan perspective, we wish to demonstrate that the observation of some Western scholars that the centre of gravity of world Christianity has shifted decisively to the southern hemisphere

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is definitely getting correct.<sup>233</sup> For much too long, Europe and North America have furnished Africa with theological methods, norms, concepts and points of reference even with a monopoly of doing the theological business. Some other western scholars have made us know that in the contemporary age there is need for theologians to shift focus on Africa, Asia and Latin America and have shown willingness to assist train biblical theologians who are/shall be skilled to operate from own contexts. We are not arguing that such scholars represent a movement that is asking us to cut links with the First World. What we are saying here is that a number of them stands out stalwartly as ecumenists and interculturalists who maintain that African contact with the West is not un-essential for the emergence of African home-grown theology. Given the wisdom in their counsel, we believe that there is need to anchor our perspectives in the realities of the African *social locations*/contexts in order to lay claim to the dictum that any people's religio-cultural traditions should be utilized as critical resources and basis for meaningful exegesis and hermeneutics that should address own specific contexts.

For us, Luke's use of the antiquated Hebrew expression, *finger of God*, has amply been demonstrated as a literary device patterned on the Hebrew narrative of the magic-wand utilized by Pharaoh's magicians in Ex 8: 15-19 to inform his hearers that God speaks through the sacred writings, in sacred words, sacred objects and also in places which are not in lack in the African environment as both Pobee and Ositelu attest that, "We are surrounded by hosts of spirit beings – some good, some bad – which are considered able to influence the course of human lives."<sup>234</sup> Besides this, Luke adopts a copious use of anthropomorphisms as in the case of "the hand of God" in Lk 1:66/Acts 4:28,30; 7:50; 11:21; and 13:11. Other occurrences like the "arm of God" in Lk 1:31 and Acts 13:17 are significantly notable. All these Lukan expressions bear figurative significance as they surely draw our attention to the fact that "what Jesus was doing was done with the power of God".

Luke's use of Ex 8,15 vindicates the fact that there is continuity between the Hebrew Bible and Christian Bible and that the Hebrew Bible's theology foreshadows the nascent Christian theology. Above all, it is Luke's conviction that scripture is God's word. He represents that crop of early Christian evangelists who had recognized the validity of the Jewish Bible as a reservoir of divine accomplishment of ancient prophecies and revelations that were so re-interpreted in the light of the faith of the early Christians in Jesus, the Son of God and the Messiah. In sum, Müller is right to assert that Luke vindicates the fact that "the essence of Christian theology is the interpretation of scripture" and by scripture, the Hebrew Bible is meant.<sup>235</sup>

Intercultural Hermeneutics which we have adopted to *re-read* the text has helped reveal that earliest Christian evangelists and teachers had *re-interpreted* or *re-read* the Hebrew Bible giving it a Christian theological sense. In other words, the early church transformed the Jewish Bible and culture into the emerging Christian Bible and culture <sup>236</sup>. This discovery finds expression in the recent submission offered by Jude Thaddaeus Ruwaichi that



...the reality of inculturation is as old as humanity or, if you like, as old as the History of Salvation. Besides, far from being a marginal reality it is an indispensable process. For that matter, failure to come to terms or accommodate adequately the reality and process of inculturation is tantamount to ecclesiastical suicide<sup>237</sup>

Ruwaich's supportive assertion behests us to begin earnestly to engage in the purification and assumption of African sacred traditions and wholesome language in our *theologizing* so that African theologians can creatively begin to propound viable local Christian theologies that address African contexts. What Luke has done in his time and for his Christian community supposes, as Ruwaichi further advises that:

whenever human beings are confronted with the task of living their faith in changing times and contexts, the reality of inculturation is somehow at play. The word of God affords us many instances of the efforts of God's people to reconcile their life and new contexts.<sup>238</sup>

In this light, we would not hesitate to say that we still have a lot to learn from the Lukan initiative in our quest for the relevance of inter-cultural hermeneutics in contemporary African Churches. There is another pertinent lesson this paper offers; namely that mainline Christians may not, after all, have to reject the sermons of the *ad hoc* preachers and pastors of the African Independent Churches (AICs), those of some Roman Catholic priest-healers and the clerics of other new generation churches who insist that demons both seen and unseen crowd the African environment and attribute all sorts of calamities to their agents in our society. We wish to agree with John S. Pobe and Ositelu that it is an essential function of religion to liberate humanity from the tyranny of evil forces and their cohorts.<sup>239</sup> Clerical or ministerial formation of priests, pastors and preachers must take serious cognizance of the fact that the mission starts where the addressees of the good-news are. While the thinking of most traditional Africans may be congruent with what they read in some passages of the New Testament,<sup>240</sup> it must be borne in mind that Jesus has once and for all times conquered the kingdom of the demons and has rendered them powerless before Christians; especially those who wear the true armour of Christ, the Victor.

While contemporary epistemology, namely, the way we know things, behests us to pay attention to the optics of modern science and technology and to recognize that advancement in modern medicine, psychotherapy, psychiatry and psychology as well as the increasingly acquired information from the developing skills in science and religion indicate that belief in the existence of occultic entities are tenable, we will be risking the sense of our apostolic tradition and faith to sheepishly follow the un-reflected scientific claims of the western mind. Clerics must lead the vanguard to address the hopes and fears of African Christians and to liberate the African mind from obsession in demon belief and worship in order to exorcize the African world.

There is no doubt that it is human and social evils that cause suffering, poverty and the rampant madness in our society. Of course, structural evils are by no means metaphysical nor are they caused by any demonic agencies. It is fellow humans, generally those who dine and wine with the elements of the unseen world that instill fear and panic in many unsuspecting Christian people. In

a Christian Africa, what is needed is a new and creative scriptural hermeneutics of the world-in-between than the phobia hitherto associated with it that has continued to grip many people of our contemporary age. It is the duty of the Church, its biblical scholars, theologians and its clerics to promote a rather positive interpretation of the Reign of God as a reality to be realized in our everyday life struggles. In the Reign of God preached and ushered in by Jesus, the realm of the evil one has been subdued, conquered and laid to rest. Of course, some empiricists would doubt our assertion. Jesus' words have reversed values and turned the demonic world upside down. The demons are vanquished and are surely rendered dismally impotent. This is Jesus' proclamation and promise that the Kingdom of God is already here in the midst of his followers. In the light of what we have stated above, we join E.A. Ituma to powerfully declare that

We need a balanced Christianity that seeks a re-interpretation of the Christian gospel to accommodate the social liberating power of Jesus in our political and socio-economic life. The present quest for security and political ascendancy through fetish means must be absolutely condemned by every Christian and the Christ of liberation applauded and embraced. A Christianity that does not see Jesus as a ... liberator is surely not the Christianity of the Bible.<sup>241</sup>

Furthermore, it has to be emphasized for sister churches that, in the Roman Catholic Church, the existence of demons has neither been a doctrinally codified article of faith nor denied. As in the case of Satan, our investigation reveals that the existence of demons is narrated in biblical literature. We discover that such popular beliefs prevailed during the biblical age.<sup>242</sup> Adherents of African Indigenous Religion do neither know nor employ any of these terms in their worship and ritual practices. The fact that different deities with their own names and agents were believed to exist in different African communities, and no matter how rapacious such forces might be, they are not called Satan, demons or devils. Nevertheless, some of the mainline Churches have pastorally provided many means of disarming evil forces opposed to the development of Christian faith and the Gospel. Solemn exorcism and enriched sacraments and Sacramentals are being provided. What most African Christians do not seem to know is that it is risky to Christian faith and morals to swim in the troubled waters of the powers-in-between. The best pastoral counseling approach is to free the minds of the faithful from the allurements of those sorts of entities. It worries us when we hear priests tell members of their congregations that such entities are menacing them or that their Consecration and transubstantiations rites could not be effected because of the incantations and conjurations of occult worshippers around their churches. It is scandalous to many a faithful who wonder and quickly ask one another: where then is the power in the blood of Jesus? Where then is the *finger of God* with which Jesus acts? Why are we believers in Jesus? Is the Bible no longer true? To disabuse the minds of many such bewildered Christians, those who live by preaching the word should do well to anchor the faith of the faithful on the message of Paul in Col 2: 6 where he affirms that the primacy of Christ cancels the authority of all evil powers.<sup>243</sup> It is when the faithful allow God's rule to permeate their entire human existence that the menace of demonic forces and their activities can be demolished and

prevented.<sup>244</sup> Pursuit and inordinate acquisition of wealth and material prosperity must not be let to become mammon which the Christian gospel preaches against.<sup>245</sup>

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**Gabriel Faimau & William O. Lesitaokana (2018)(eds.), *New Media and the Mediatization of Religion: An African Perspective*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishers, 173 pages, ISBN: 978-7-5275-0902-3**

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The book entitled *New Media and the Mediatization of Religion: An African Perspective*, co-edited by Gabriel Faimau and William O. Lesitaokana explores and examines how new media shapes religious discourses of different perspectives and multifaceted characteristics in various parts of Africa. The book greatly enriches the existing scholarship in new media and religion in Africa.

The introduction of the book provides a general overview of the relationship between religion and media in Africa. It also shows how new media has changed the ways in which religious beliefs are practiced and as well as how they have altered the way religious meanings are expressed. The book has demonstrated that media has a role of impacting on religious discourses to produce interesting social and cultural manifestations.

The book contains nine very interesting chapters. Chapter one explores the notion of prophetic activities and the role of new media in shaping and influencing religious language, expression, methods and styles. Chapter two discusses the relationship between media, sociality and religiosity on the Christian community in Zimbabwe. Chapter three examines the ways in which religion is practiced in online spaces in Botswana. The use of Facebook is, for instance, presented as being used in prophetic ministries to present prophets as highly respected, and powerful figures. Chapter four focuses on the popularity of religion and religious groups as they appear on Facebook among the youth in Botswana. The point being made here is that through religious communication, social media provides users with a sense of community. Chapter five interrogates how modern Pentecostal Christians appropriate new media technologies, with its implications and effects on Christian identity formation and negotiation in terms of history and in shaping Christian identity. It highlights on how modern media technologies have transformed the traditional approaches and consequently producing a new Christian identity, which the chapter presents as an e-Christianity. Chapter six considers the digital religion and the impact of technology with a focus on a popular prophetic Christian Church in Botswana, that is, the Gospel of God's Grace (popularly known as the 3G Ministries). This process is seen as enhancing the religious authority of the prophet and shaping a particular religious identity and producing a unique religious community. Chapter seven shows how online platforms provide religious satisfaction among the followers of popular Christian preachers in Africa. The impact of the Facebook page of five popular Nigerian preachers with churches and followers across Africa is highlighted. The appropriation of new information and communication technologies become outlets for world evangelism and also creating new forms of Christianity through online platforms. Chapter eight examines the relationship between new media, religious rhetoric and gendered power relations in Malawi. It concludes that the internet and the multiple media platforms have strengthened and promoted

patriarchal religious and cultural beliefs. Chapter nine, which is the final chapter of the book, uses the case of Boko Haram insurgence in Nigeria, to show how the media has become a critical and invaluable tool in the dissemination of radical Islamic teachings. It also shows how new media has been used to propagate violent radical doctrines and also as a means of negotiation with the state.

In conclusion, therefore, the book, makes an immense contribution to scholarship, particularly on the impact of media on religion in Africa, which it argues continuously shapes religious practice, meaning, and expression.