

**EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11 ON THE SUSTAINABILITY
OF UNITY IN ECWA ILORIN DISTRICT CHURCH COUNCIL, NIGERIA.**

**AMODU, Abraham Mosadolorun
B.A. (IBADAN), M.A. (ILORIN)
MATRIC NO: 96/0148123**

**BEING A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIONS,
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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was carried out by Amodu Abraham Mosadolorun of the Department of Religions Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria under my supervision.

Dr C. O. Ogunkunle

**B. Th (Kitchener); MA (Winnipeg); Ph. D. (Ibadan).
Supervisor**

Date

ATTESTATION

I, Abraham Mosadolorun Amodu attest to the fact that this project work is original to me and I did not copy or plagiarize the research work of anyone, either living or dead.

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to God Almighty who destined the attainment of this academic height, to my late mother for her immense contribution towards my education and to my wife and children for their endurance in the course of this programme

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ABSTRACT

The Church as the body of Christ comprises people who have a common bond and share life expressed in fellowship (*koinonia*) which is the basis and ground for mutual association and expression of the Christian relationship. Unfortunately the Church is also divided on the basis of certain factors such as nepotism and power struggle. Though this divisive situation was alien to the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) that gave birth to Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), it has characterised ECWA, especially ECWA Ilorin District Church Council (IDCC) through some decades of its existence. IDCC has witnessed unity in recent years, which if guarded could be strong and durable. The main aim of this study was to examine the sustainability of unity on ECWA IDCC in the light of Philippians 2:1-11. The objectives of the study were to: (i) investigate the causes of disunity and conflicts in IDCC; (ii) assess the place of unity among SIM/ECWA missionaries and early converts of the church; (iii) do an exegetical analysis of Philippians 2:1-11 with the aim of understanding the literal and theological meanings of the self-abnegation of Christ; (iv) point out the relevance of Christ's humility to the promotion of unity in ECWA IDCC; and (v) educate members of ECWA IDCC on continuous sustainability of unity in the church.

The research methods adopted in this thesis were historical and exegetical. The historical method provided biblical and denominational records of events. The employment of exegetical method was to explain some critical biblical expressions, particularly Greek, for the right interpretation and correct applications of relevant texts to the issue of church unity.

The findings of this study were that:

- i. conceit, sectionalism, nepotism and power tussle based on ethnic diversity were allowed to breed rivalry and jealousy in IDCC;
- ii. unity among SIM/ECWA missionaries and early converts was achievable because both lived up to their profession of a common bond in Christ Jesus;
- iii. self-abnegation of Christ is not self-disparaging but an antithesis of pride, self-conceit and selfishness that is crucial to good human relationship;
- iv. special endowment is a factor in the promotion of unity by paying indiscriminate attention to the needs of others as Jesus selflessly did despite his exalted position; and
- v. ECWA IDCC members are taught on the need to live in and sustain unity through programmes such as joint fellowship, joint board of elders' meeting, central choir, and IDCC conference.

The study concluded that unity is the bedrock of progress and harmonious co-existence in any organization. Disunity comes if such an organization loses focus and allows crises to grow unchecked because unimportant things have been given prominence over the important. But the desire of Jesus is that the church should be one and this should be the passion of every Christian, leader or follower. The study recommended that the leaders and members of ECWA IDCC needed to live in and sustain unity among themselves by following after the example of Jesus.

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AMODU, Abraham Mosadolorun

MATRIC NO: 96/0148123

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The key to stability is unity. Nothing thrives well in the arena of conflicts, misunderstanding and disunity. Hence the slogan “united we stand, divided we fall” is a fact applicable to every unit of human organizations. The experience of Nigeria as a nation showcased this fact. Tribal and sectional sentiments, among other vices, crept into Nigerian politics shortly after independence. Political turbulence in the Western Region triggered off unrest as a result of power tussle between chiefs Obafemi Awolowo and Ladoke Akintola, the first and second premiers of Western Region respectively.

The whole country was engulfed in this unrest which eventually led to the first and second military coups. The Eastern Region under Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu decided to secede. This led to the civil war which began 6th July 1967 and ended 15th January 1970. But uppermost in the hearts of Northern and Western Regions was unity. This passion for unity was expressed in the war and post war motto. “To keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done.” Even Colonel Gowon, the Head of State then, had his name acronymised – Go On With One Nigeria (GOWON).¹ And in the spirit of unity the war that claimed many lives² was declared “No victor no vanquished.”³

It is not just at the secular sector that unity is seen as solution to development, the spiritual realm is also thirsty for it. No wonder Jesus in John 17:21-23 prayed that his Church be one as he and his father were. It is unity which the world can observe and which will influence the world. These believers then are to be identified as having a common bond, a shared life expressed in fellowship which is the basis for the expression of the Christian

relationship. The basis and ground of this fellowship is Jesus Christ. It implies a common participation in Christ.⁴

But sad and dangerous is the appearance of a trend of crisis of interest or disagreement that is threatening the basis of Christian unity. This is due to an undue emphasis placed on things that separate than the things that unite. This was the case in the Church at Philippi. The Church had been growing tremendously in faith and Christian activities. Impressive to Paul was their cheerful giving to him from time to time (Phil. 4:15-18), their dogged stand in trials (Phil.1:25-30) and their passion for the maintenance of Christian standard by not given in to doctrine not taught them by Paul (chap. 3). But in spite of the fact that the church at Philippi was endowed with these and many more excellent qualities, it was about to be broken up because of its cultural background, self – assertion, selfish ambition and pursuit of only one’s interest. A glaring example was the conflict between Euodia and Syntyche. These women’s quarrel was a disturbance to the Church of Philippi (Phil. 4:2).⁵

Philippians 2, especially verses 5-11, points out the example of Jesus who made himself nothing or emptied himself of his heavenly fame. He being God did not consider the outer manifestation of his deity in heaven, such as omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, treasure to be grasped and retained at all cost. Instead he left heavens’ glory and made himself of no reputation but enter into the humble position of human nature through incarnation, hence, Paul appealed to the Philippian Christians to make his joy over them perfect⁶ by following the example of self abnegation of Jesus as motivation for the sustenance of unity for which he had known them.

In the same vein ECWA IDCC was not crisis-free. In fact churches in ECWA IDCC started experiencing crises since late sixties but the most serious one that paved way for others started in 1973 when 2nd ECWA Church, Ilorin seceded from 1st ECWA, against

Church leadership of 1st ECWA, Ilorin; ECWA Student Fellowship, Ilorin; ECWA Chapel against the IDCC leadership, and so on. But in 2016 the crises was said to have been over. That shows that for over 40 years the DCC had no sustainable peace. Not that there were no moments of intermittent unity but it was not a stable and an enduring unity. Now that the desire to have unity is expressed, how will that unity be sustained so that there will not be a reversal of unity as it used to be? Therefore, it is against this background that this work attempts to show that the application of Paul's teaching to the Philippian church in similar situation of crisis will serve as impetus to the sustainability of unity in ECWA Ilorin DCC.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to the book of Acts the early Church lived in unity. With love they worshipped God without discrimination or segregation (Acts 2:42-47). When there appeared a tendency towards segregation, the apostles quickly nipped it in the bud. This was the issue of the neglect of the Hellenists' welfare in favour of the Jewish (Acts 6). The apostles appointed seven faithful, god-fearing and spirit-filled helpers to take care of that aspect of the Church ministry while they (the apostles) faced the work of Prayer and Preaching of the Gospel.⁷

In the same vein the early missionaries and pioneers of Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), now Service In Mission (SIM), Thomas Kent, Walter Gowans and Rowland Bingham worked with the same zeal and passion. Despite the fact that the trio were not of the same denomination, they worked together in unity to bring about SIM Church in Nigeria. That Church now metamorphosed into Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) but now Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA).

ECWA as an indigenous denomination following after the example of love and unity practised by the SIM missionaries and early converts also started in love and unity. In 1954

when it became an indigenous denomination, the issue of discrimination, segregation along tribal or sectional sentiments was alien to it. The first indigenous executive leaders chosen had only one member from the northern part of the country, the rest three were Yoruba and this did not generate any controversy.⁸

Love characterized the activities of the first generation Christian converts of SIM as well. Like the first century Christian Church in Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47 this group of converts shared their joy and sorrow together. They attended to the needs of one another without favouritism. For instance, they assisted some of them who were unable to attend their farm works on account of sickness by going in team to work on such farms. This display of love and unity was also found among children whose parents allowed them to attend Church services on Sundays. They helped those who were not so privileged unless they doubled their work on Saturday to cover that of Sunday. After leaving their own fathers' farms on Saturday, they would help their friends to cover the work of Sunday so that all of them could attend Church service together. So great and captivating was their love and unity irrespective of age and gender that converts won into the Church were more than those who came in through the traditional method of preaching.⁹

The basis for this unity is one unignorable fact which is that Christianity is a religion that is built and expressed in fellowship and relationship. It is upon this condition that unity thrives and the whole concept of Christian faith and testimony has meaning and relevance. The peaceful co-existence of Christians among themselves and in relation to outsiders is important and must of necessity be established functionally upon love. Hence the importance of Christian unity cannot be overemphasized because it is central to Christian testimony and message. If the church preaches love without practically demonstrating it, it has no message and testimony.¹⁰ It was on the basis of this Christian testimony and message that the Churches that made up Ilorin District Church Council (IDCC) achieved enviable progress and

growth in the areas of church planting and growth, joint maintenance of inherited projects like primary and secondary schools and health centres. But all of a sudden, things began to fall apart. The sudden change came as a result of the creation of Kwara State from the Northern Region in 1967. The predominant sub-ethnic groups that fell into this new state (Kwara) were the Yagba and Igbomina people. Hence a large number of Yagbas and some Igbominas were transferred to Kwara State. So also were ECWA members who were private entrepreneurs came to Ilorin. Consequently ECWA received a large population of members.¹¹ Prior to this new development the churches that made up IDCC had been more of Igbominas but with the influx of the new arrivals the Yagba people had the majority; in fact they dominated the choristers, hence rivalries, sectional interest, competition for voice, leadership positions cum spiritual sentiments caused tempers to rise and this began to disrupt the enviable unity that used to underscore its growth and progress.¹² Though in a situation of growth and development rifts, conflicts of interests and ideas, disagreements and the like are inevitable since there is no organization that is crisis free; but should there be a moment of disagreement, care must be taken so that such does not degenerate into division or disunity. This shows that ECWA IDCC which had been living in peace started to experience real crises since 1973 when the most dangerous one led to the division of ECWA Church Ibrahim Taiwo Road, Ilorin (now 1st ECWA Church) in 1973. These crises cut across segments of its administration such as choirs, gospel team, fellowships, and so on until 2016 when the last bone of contention between the leadership of the DCC and 2nd ECWA Church, Ilorin, which was the posting of pastors from home DCC by 2nd ECWA, stopped.¹³ Though there were moments of intermittent unity before 2016, it was not durable. This shows that ECWA IDCC's march to unity was a chequered one.

Undurable political democracy in Nigeria can be compared to undurable unity in ECWA IDCC. Just like ECWA IDCC Nigeria was also under a crisis of governance which

was the domination of the military rule since 1966 (though the military governance was interrupted briefly in 1979-1983 by civilian rule under President Sheu Shagari) but in 1999 the struggle to have a democratically elected government became a reality when General Abubakar Abdulsalam handed over power to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (a retired army general).¹⁴ Then the expressed concern of many Nigerians was how to sustain the nascent democracy which had been out of sight for about 29 years based on the understanding that the tendencies that brought about military rule were still there.¹⁵ If Nigerians can still be concerned about putting some measures in place so as to sustain Nigeria's democracy despite the fact that democracy is achieved, it is not out of place for ECWA IDCC to do so in spite of unity at hand.

This work examined Paul's teaching in Philippians 2: 1-11 on Christ's self – abnegation to the Philippian church. The growth and progress of the Philippian church was a great joy to Paul and that they had been living in unity in spite of oppositions was a comfort to him. But the sudden threat of division within themselves saddened his heart.¹⁶ He then pleaded with the church members for the perfection of his joy in them by laying down certain principles from Philippians 2:1-11 that would bring about the sustenance of the hither-to unity in their midst. Later references to the Philippian Church showed that it continued to live in unity, the evidence that Paul's provision for unity worked.¹⁷

ECWA IDCC too did not have a durable unity like the Philippian church. Hence the researcher looked into the causes of disunity in ECWA IDCC and why it defied lasting solution. These causes that were responsible for its undurable unity were traced to sectional tendencies, nepotism, power tussle and the like. This work therefore found answer in The Exegetical Study of Philippians 2:1-11 on the Sustainability of Unity in ECWA IDCC. As far as the researcher is aware no one has ever written on this topic in addressing the issue of unity in ECWA IDCC.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this thesis were:-

To investigate into the causes of disunity and conflicts in Ilorin DCC;

To examine the place of unity among SIM /ECWA missionaries and early converts of the church;

To do a thorough exegesis of Philippians 2:1-11 with the aim of understanding the literal and the theological meanings of the self-abnegation of Christ;

To point out the relevance of Christ's humility to the sustenance of unity in ECWA Ilorin DCC; and

To educate the larger society on the ethics of humility for peaceful co-existence

1.4 Research Methodology

The research methods adopted in this work were historical and exegetical. The historical method provided biblical and denominational events on the subject matter. The employment of exegetical method, through the use of biblical languages, particularly Greek, allowed for the right interpretation and correct applications of relevant texts on the humility of Christ to the issues of church unity. Tools like Hebrew and Greek lexicons, books, Bible commentaries, dictionaries and encyclopaedia, journals, electronic sources, etc were made use of. All these resources are sourced out at the libraries of the University of Ilorin, Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) Theological Seminary, Igbaja, Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) Theological Seminary, Jos, United Missionary Church of Africa (UMCA) Theological College, Ilorin and the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso. The use of interview exposes the views of various classes of people within the

ECWA community to the issue of church unity in the DCC. Information relating to the personal profiles of the respondents such as age, sex, marital status, occupation, is required.

1.5 Significance of the Research

True unity cannot be produced in the church by organization; it is the product of the unity of the Spirit and can be obtained in no other way. Hence this work is justified on the hope that it will enrich the ECWA leaders and members of the knowledge of the theology of unity. It is the belief of the researcher that a study of this nature will make a worthwhile contribution to the understanding of the value of unity so as to serve as an encouragement to choose unity. This study hopes to alert ECWA pastors and church leaders on the need to eschew sectional or tribal sentiments in the church so that members can trust them to objectively handle their differences. Also, through some examples given, this work aims at creating awareness among church founders and supervisors of the need to keenly watch out for outbursts of conflicts that can ruin the whole congregations. Based on the ruinous repercussion of disunity, the study challenges the teachers of pastors in various theological institutions to incorporate and emphasise crisis management in their curricula. This research intends to give a proper understanding of what the kenosis of Christ means in the context of his salvific mission to the world because it offers a deeper explanation to the passage under discussion (Phil. 2: 1-11) consequently showing Christ's humility as stimulus to sustenance of unity. Furthermore it is assumed that the exegetical method adopted in this work will serve as an encouragement to teachers and students in theological institutions in their efforts to give the right interpretation to biblical texts.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The desire to have and sustain unity is the struggle that is common to organizations, families, tribes and nations. The church today is not spared of this agitation. Its lack was a threat to the Philippian church. Hence, Paul urges them to go back to and sustain their former situation of unity. Achieving unity calls for an attitude of humility, Phil. 2: 1-11 that mimics that of Christ. So this work is limited to the application of Paul's method of dealing with the promotion of ecclesiastical unity in Philippian church to the same situation of the church in ECWA churches in IDCC. In other words, the thesis is not dealing with unity within the families, political organizations or tribes. It refers to but does not give much attention to the treatment of the problem in his other epistles. Passing comments (where necessary) are also made to the subject in the rest of the Bible.

1.7 Definition of Operational Terms

Kenosis: *Kenosis* is a Greek word for emptiness which is used as a theological term. The ancient Greek word κενωσις, *kenosis*, means an "emptying," from κενοί, *kenos* "empty" It is used both as an explanation of the incarnation and an indication of the nature of God's activity and condescension.¹⁸ The doctrine of *kenosis* attempts to explain what the son of God chose to give up in terms of his divine attributes, in order to assume human nature. As the incarnate Jesus is at the same time fully divine, *kenosis* means that these changes were provisionally taken over by God in incarnation, and that when Jesus went back into heaven after his resurrection, he fully assumed all of his original qualities of divinity. *Kenosis* specifically refers to attributes of God that are thought to be incompatible with being fully human, for instance, God's omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience as well his aseity, eternity, infinity, impassibility and immutability¹⁹

Exegesis is an academic exercise directed towards some theological words through the use of either Greek or Hebrew language so as to understand the import of the author of

those words.

1.8 Review of Related Literature

Many scholars have lent their ideas on the issue under discussion-humility of Christ as stimulus to church unity in the light of Philippians 2: 1-11. The effort is made here to review some of the works with a view to understanding the topic and what others have said. This review is approached under four headings:

The concept of *kenosis*

The Book of Philippians

Unity/Disunity in the church

Church Conflict

The Concept of *Kenosis*

Robert E. Wilson asserts that Philippians 2:5-11 shows that Jesus from all eternity has been *en morphe theou* (in the form of God) and his manner of existence became that of a *doulos* (servant). He was then found by his fellow men in outward appearance (*schema*) a man.²⁰ R.C Trench uses a helpful analogy to describe what happened in the *Kenosis*. He points out that the appearance of a king is the whole outward array and adornment of a monarch-diadem, tiara, sceptre, robe – all of which he might lay aside and yet remain King. This is what Jesus did when he took on himself the form of a servant.²¹

On what Jesus did with his form of God, Wilson continues that the word *arpagnom* (snatching) if translated in the active sense, means act of seizing or robbery, while its passive sense means a thing hold as a prize. So the likely meaning could not be active but passive.

This view is corroborated by Arndt and Gingrich, “the state of being equal with God cannot be equated with the act of robbery.”²² What it actually means is that Christ existed in the form and glory of God but did not consider this equality a thing to be forcibly retained. This is also in agreement with the earlier implicit argument for Christ’s pre –existent equality with God. Therefore that this was Paul’s meaning can also be supported clearly by his statement in Colossians 1:19. “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.”²³

Regarding what Christ emptied himself of; Wilson says that the text does not actually say Christ emptied himself of anything. The self – emptying was qualified by the participle “by taking the form of a servant.”²⁴ Thus the text states that he emptied himself by taking something else to himself and what he took to himself is the nature or form of a servant or slave. The scriptures nowhere suggest that Christ emptied himself of his deity. What took place was a change of the outward expression of his deity. So where his deity had previously been expressed outwardly by his being in the form of God, he now took on himself the form of a servant.

While glorification is the usual way the deity desires to express itself, this passage tells us that the deity chose to set its own desire aside. Hence in the *Kenosis* the Lord emptied himself of the outward demonstration of his deity. This is what that passage in Philippians talks about. Paul teaches humility and self abnegation for the benefit of others and holds Christ up as the perfect example of this attitude.²⁵

In summary therefore, three conclusions have been arrived at (1) It has been shown that *Morphe theou* (in the form of God) is indeed the divine essence (deity) and that it implies the divine mode of existence (God’s glory). So Jesus being *en morphe theou* is an implicit statement of his equality with God (2) *Arpagnom* is best interpreted to mean that Jesus did not consider this state of equality something to be forcibly retained. (3) He emptied himself

of self by allowing the outward expression of his deity to become that of a servant rather than that of a glorified deity. This then is to be our example. We who are in Christ Jesus have a share in his glory and one day will inherit that glory in its fullness. Until then we are called to “have this attitude in ourselves which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5).²⁶

John F. Walvoord, in a similar disposition, notes that one of the crucial thoughts in the theological statement of the incarnation is the definition of what was involved in the condescension and humiliation of Christ in becoming man. He pondered how the eternal God could take upon himself human limitations and still retaining his external deity.²⁷

The response given by the Orthodox Theologians is that God in becoming man did not lessen his deity, but added a human nature to the divine nature. Philippians 2:5-11 is perceived to have clarification for how this actually affected the divine nature. Generally, the incarnation of the Son of God is described first by the word condescension in that he, the eternal God, condescended to be man. Being man he submitted to the death on the cross and this is described by the term humiliation. Christ then rose from the dead and later ascended into heaven where he was elevated to the right hand of God the father. The theological question that came to mind is whether the process of condescension, humiliation and exaltation has anything to do with any change in the divine nature of Christ.²⁸

According to him, the passage in Philippians concerning the self-emptying or *kenosis* of the son of God was introduced by Paul in order to support the practical exhortation to have the mind or attitude of Christ. Hence he presented the action of Christ in proceeding from glory to become man and suffer on the cross as an illustration. It has nothing to do with any change in his divine nature. In the explanation that follows, the apostle gave one of the most terse theological statements of the incarnation to be found nowhere in the scriptures. Christ is pronounced first of all as existing in the form of God.²⁹

He stresses that the word for existing has the thought that Christ always has been in the form of God with the implication that he still is. This would be affirming that the act of the incarnation does not change the deity of Christ. As stated by the apostle Paul, “Christ, being in the form of God, did not consider that equality with God is a thing to clutch on to, but emptied himself, took the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men, and existing in fashion like a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross”. Walvoord continues that the attitude of Christ which believers are exhorted to emulate is that he did not grasp at being on an equality with God as if it had to be retained by effort. Though having existed in the form of God from all eternity, he was willing to empty himself, taking the form of a servant, and ultimately he became obedient unto death. The act of the incarnation, according to him is described by the strong word *Kenosis* meaning to empty as used in four other instances in the New Testament (Rom. 4:14, I Cor. 1:17; 9:15; 2 Cor. 9:3).³⁰

David J. Macleod, on the ethical implications of the *Kenosis* of Christ, observes that Philippians 2 is often referred to as *locus classicus* (central passage) on the hypostatic union by theologians and Bible teachers.³¹ Hypostatic union is the doctrine that the divine and human natures were joined in the one person of Jesus Christ. The eternal son of God, a divine person, took to himself a real human nature.

According to him, the subject of Philippians 2 is the divine person, the eternal son of God who poured himself out by taking an additional nature, a human nature. This pouring-out consisted in the surrendering of his heavenly mode of existence which included the veiling of his personal glory. His pouring out involved the voluntary non-use of his divine attributes; he lived his life on earth as a man.³² Therefore, his pouring out involved his total dependence on the will of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, (Matt. 12: 28, Luke 4:14-18).

He observed further that the saviour died like a slave or a common criminal in torment on a tree of shame. Yet for the believer there is a glory to the cross, (John 13:31-32). It expresses the wisdom and power of God, (I Cor. 1.23-24). Jesus endured the cross for the sake of the joy that would follow, Heb. 12:2, and so on account of the cross believers have eternal life. At the cross Jesus won a victory. And at the cross he demonstrated that equality with God does not mean snatching, grasping, taking. It is giving. Therefore Jesus' supreme example of selflessness and obedience beckons believers to lead lives of selfless living and obedience. His example of abandoning the glories and prerogatives of heaven, pouring himself out for others, should motivate Christians to abandon their self – serving attitudes.³³

The Book of Philippians

Moises Silva, commenting on the link between the author of the epistle to the Philippians and the Philippian Church says that that document was certainly written by Paul of Tarsus to the Christian Church in the city of Philippi, province of Macedonia. This church had been founded by Paul himself in the early 50s of the first century, Acts 16. At the time of writing in the late 50s or early 60s, Paul was in prison and he had just received a monetary gift from the Philippian Church through their emissary, Epaphroditus.³⁴

According to Acts 16:1–15 Paul in obedience to a vision made the momentous decision of leaving the Middle Eastern setting of Asia Minor: with Silas, Timothy and Luke, he set sail for what we now call Europe. His first stop was the Roman Colony of Philippi, a city of considerable importance in the ancient world. He met a group of faithful Jewish women and preached to them. He found them receptive to his message and established his first Christian congregation in Europe.

Sometime later, may be about a year after the church was established³⁵ Paul started his third missionary journey. The major purpose was the raising of money from among the

Gentile Churches to meet the needs of the poor Jewish Church in Jerusalem and Judea, Acts 18:23; Rom. 15:25 – 26. Paul passing through Macedonia, Acts 20:1 – 2 would surely pass a warning of the Judaizers' threat to the Church. This group of Jews created havoc in Galatia and might spread to Philippi. In spite of the fact that the Philippian Church was in financial straits, they insisted on having a share in the fund raising. This act of magnanimity was commended later by Paul in 2 Cor. 8:1 – 5.

Following after the completion of the fund raising, Paul took the money to Jerusalem, Acts 21:17 – 19. Jewish opponents managed to get him imprisoned and for two years he awaited his fate in Caesarea, Acts 21:27 – 24:27. Philippian church wanted to help Paul but their own difficult circumstances prevented them from doing so, Phil. 4:10. At last Paul appealed to the emperor himself and in the year 59 or 60 AD, under guard, he sailed for Rome, Acts 25:10 – 12. The Philippian Church, on hearing that Paul was in Rome and was not in favourable situation, mounted their efforts and raised a large monetary gift, Phil. 4:18. This was sent through Epaphroditus.³⁶

Brien observes that theologically, the situation of the Philippian Church was not rosy.³⁷ The Church was thought to be a model congregation with few problems based on the emphasis on rejoicing³⁸ that characterizes every chapter of the book. But the church had its internal rivalries and disputes, Phil. 2:1 – 4; 4:23. On the basis of this Paul admonishes them to stand fast and persevere as well as to be united.³⁹ This is an expression of living together as citizens worthy of the gospel of Christ, Phil. 1:27 and this verse is the heart of the gospel.

Why should they stand fast and persevere? There are two aspects to this admonition. According to Moises Silva, the congregation had been facing adversity and were tempted to abandon their struggle. They might even lose their sense of joy. In the midst of this spiritual problem, Paul encourages them to stand fast in one spirit and contend for their faith, 1:27 –

28, 4:1 without looking back, 3:13 – 15, to take seriously their awesome responsibility of working out their salvation 2:12. Paul was also in the same struggle, 1:12–14, hence he would want the Philippians to behave in conformity with the same gospel of Jesus Christ, 1:27.⁴⁰

What is this adversity? According to Gordon D. Fee, these were Judaizers, people who tried to bring Gentile believers in Christ under Jewish identity, especially circumcision.⁴¹ They were Jewish Christian Missionaries who operated outside the congregation. Their purpose was to pervert the teaching of Paul that salvation was given by grace and not work of the law. On the second aspect of Paul's admonition to be united, Brien emphasized that Paul's wish for them was to stand firm in one spirit for the cause of the gospel in spite of their internal rivalries, 1:27 – 30⁴²

Paul observed that all was not well within the Church. The fellowship was fractured by personal differences – differences arising out of rivalry, vain glory, selfishness and animosity.⁴³ A case in point is the disagreement between Euodia and Syntyche, 4:2 – 3. Hence Paul repeatedly encouraged them to unity (1:27, 2:2 – 4; 4:2).⁴⁴ In order to bring his point home, Paul appealed to the example of Jesus Christ who made himself nothing but was eventually exalted to the highest place by God. It is to this pattern of selflessness and humility that Paul urged the Phillippian Christians to conform rather than their natural tendering of self-conceit.

Contrary to Markus Bockmuehl, who opined that the primary reason for writing this epistle by Paul was the return of Epaphroditus.⁴⁵ Frank emphasized that the reasons for Phillippians “are manifold.” He said that Paul took the opportunity of Epaphroditus' necessary trip home to warn the Philippians against the errors of his other churches like Corinth (the church that permitted division amongst members) and Galatia (it succumbed to

erroneous teachings of the Judaizers).⁴⁶ Gerald F. also, in support of multiple reasons for Philippians observes that Paul wrote to express his affection and gratitude to the church for their gifts and love. So also Paul wanted them to be current about his present situation. Much more Paul wrote to encourage them to stand firm for the faith of the gospel and not to give in to contrary teaching. He also wrote to correct division within their ranks. Furthermore, he wrote to exhort them to rejoice irrespective of circumstances.⁴⁷

Unity/Disunity in the Church

Commenting on the nature of the Church, Edward T. Hiscox said that the word church (*ekklesia*) is those who have been called out by God from sin to salvation. They are set apart from him and for his service. They are a distinctive people on mission for their Lord in this world.⁴⁸ This tallies with the definition of the church by W. E. Vine.⁴⁹ The word is used both in a general and a local sense. In a general sense it refers to the total body of redeemed believers of all ages. It includes those born again people who have ever lived, believers from every denomination, every nationality, every background and culture in this world. In a local sense it refers to a local congregation of believing people. Thus in a general sense there is one church. It is not an organization. It is an organism. It does not have organic unity but spiritual unity.⁵⁰ In other words, the organismic nature of the Church is dependent on the activity of the Holy Spirit in bringing those who belief in Christ together in fellowship with one another.

This is what Paul meant in Eph, 5:32 “This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.” The word church here speaks of that total body of redeemed people. All those who belong have spiritual unity wherever they are or go. They may meet on the other side of the earth, yet they are one. They are indwelt by the Lord Jesus Christ. They are brothers and sisters in the family of Jesus. The unity of the church cannot be in a human

personality. It cannot be in a program, otherwise, it is superficial. When that particular program is over or that particular personality fails, the unity will disintegrate.

Gerhard Kittel, analogizing the church with the body of Christ explains that in the body there is unity of membership, 1 Cor. 12:12 – 14. It is one body under one head. Christ is not divided. Members cannot be “up” on Jesus and “down” on one another at the same time. There is power in unity. When the unity of the church disintegrates, the power is depleted. In unity the church can accomplish what Christ has for it to do.⁵¹ The church has only a certain amount of time, energy and ability. If this is disoriented by confusion it cannot focus on the mission of Jesus. If its energy is consumed in the negative attacks of members on members, there will be none left to carry out the mission of Jesus in reaching a lost world. If a human body decides to divide itself, it becomes disunited. It becomes disfigured, dismembered and loses its power. The unity of the body is necessary for effectiveness. The church can accomplish the impossible if its members are in one accord. There is mighty power in the concentrated effort of a united body of Christ.

Stressing the fact of diversity in unity Jack MaGerman emphasizes that in the body there is diversity of parts, 1 Cor. 12:14–21. There are many parts in the body. The foot cannot say it is unimportant because it is not the head. No one part can supply all the needs of other body. No one part can be the whole body. Every part is important. Diversity is the key to dynamic potential. Likewise in the church, every member should be led to realize this value to the entire body. He should be led to understand that God has a ministry for each one in the body. Hence he should allow God to use his individuality in the church.⁵²

To some extent each member of the church is independent from each other. In the analogy of the human body, for instance, the ear hears but the eye does not. The eye sees. Each member receives signals from the head to do what it does. So also each member

receives direction from the Lord in his ministry. Christ can lead one member to be involved in his service in ways of which other members are not aware. But while Christ leads each member independent of one another, he does not lead one to do what is detrimental to the body nor to another member. As one member acts or speaks, one is to do so to edify the entire body. In the body there is inter-independence, 1 Cor. 12:20 – 25. Members are responsible to one another; what each member does affects the other. Members of the body are responsible for one another. They are to have the same care one for another.

Everett Ferguson, discussing on the essence of church unity, observes that an important aspect of the Church's witness to the larger society is displaying the unity that is essential to the church and is God's goal for humanity. The images used for the church uniformly denote its oneness. Examples are; body of Christ (he has one body—Eph. 4:4), bride of Christ (the one husband has one wife – 2 Cor. 11:2), temple (God authorized one temple, that at Jerusalem Deut. 12:5, 14: Eph. 2:21), sheep (one flock and one shepherd—John 10:16).⁵³

He further emphasises that the unity of Christ with God the father is set forth as the image and goal of unity among believers. The spiritual gifts are intended to achieve unity so that by that unity the world will be brought to faith in Christ. Hence since Christ is one, the church must be one also. The fundamental Christian experience of salvation in Christ argues against division. Division is considered a sin in Galatians 5:19 – 21. Out of the fifteen items listed as “works of the flesh,” eight have to do with those things that cause disharmony among people. These are enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy. It boils down to the fact that those who allow nationality, colour, social status, cultural mores, economic and political doctrines, educational attainments or personality differences to keep them apart are following the flesh and not the spirit.

However, the application of unity to the daily Christian life and the congregational activities of believers requires certain attitudes and actions. The human task is to keep the unity already created by the Lord as part of what he has done for human salvation in order to achieve an eternal community, “Make every effort to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace”, Eph 4:3. The attitudes necessary to maintain unity are spelt out in the preceding exhortation: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.” (Eph. 4:1-2)

Philippians 2:1–4 presents another significant account of how unity relates to behaviour. There in the passage Paul first of all entreats for unity. “If there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.” Next Paul expresses what it takes to achieve this unity; or, in other words, how the unity is to be expressed in personal relations: “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interest but to the interest of others.” Such attitudes and conduct will go a long way towards making unity effective in congregational life, a need in the Philippian church as elsewhere.

There are two concepts that stand on either side of unity with which it will be helpful to contrast. Those are uniformity and union. Uniformity means everything or everyone alike. Some people think of Christian unity in these terms: everybody must look, think, and sound alike. No doubt there is a certain core of beliefs and practices in which there is uniformity, although even these may often have variations in expression at different times and places: but to expect a large degree of uniformity is to deny individuality and uniqueness of personality.

Union, a coming together for a common purpose, on the other hand expresses only a loose sense of fellowship in which people or groups come together in their diversity for limited objectives and a limited degree of unity. For instance, members of a trade union keep their individuality but unite to achieve certain economic goals of common benefit. This type of coming together of churches may provide a framework in which the participating bodies may grow closer, together, but the most that is achieved, by and large, is a loose federation of churches.⁵⁴

In actual fact unity share some aspects of union and uniformity but its essential quality is greater. Unity requires solidarity and loyalty. Even where there are differences, there is a commitment to remain together. There is a sense of being one people who share a loyalty to the same principles and to one another. There is room within unity for a diversity that seeks to maintain unity; there is no place for a diversity born of party spirit. Division is a denial of unity and an obstacle to Christ's purpose in his priestly prayer in John 17:21 "...that they may be one..." This thought is also shared by Rudoft Schnackenburg who says "United and pursuing unity describes the situation of members of Christ's body, the church."⁵⁵

It is the contention of John MacArthur Jr. that the maintenance of unity demands constant struggles. It is true, Jesus prayed that all Christians would be one just as he and his father are one but all Christians have to cooperate so as to have this unity. This is in line with Paul's appeal to the Ephesian Christians to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, Eph. 4:3. Paul did not tell them to generate unity: they had it already. But they were to maintain the unity God had already given.⁵⁶

This unity worth struggling for because Satan constantly attacks it since he knows it is an important part of the church. It brings God glory. It honours his name. The struggle becomes a must because no one is perfect. There will always be little things that people

disagree about but determination to keep Satan's intention of dividing the church fruitless should be each members goal.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:10, 11 appealed to that church that members speak the same thing and that there should be no division among them. Instead they should struggle to be perfect in having the same mind, the same judgment. In the same vein he told the Philippian church to be striving together for the faith of the gospel, Phil. 1:27. There may be instances when things may not happen the way some people expect them to be. Even if they are right humility and love do not act to bring about division.

Michael Marrioghae and John Ferguson from historical angle trace the problem of church disunity to the foreign evangelists that brought Christianity to Nigeria. "A divided church in Britain and America sent its divided missionaries to preach the gospel in Nigeria. They remained divided.⁵⁷ But the various Christian denominations like the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian, realizing that lack of unity that Jesus prayed for would hamper the effective preaching of the word of God came together to restore the lack of unity. They adopted the principle of "unity in essentials, liberality in non-essentials and charity in all things.⁵⁸ But all efforts towards unity did not yield the desired result simply because:

But division remained, and so often they have become really divisions over inessentials. What then keep us separate, "Partly institutional differences and liturgical variations. All the patterns of Christian worship in Nigeria are alien and require examination, and the differences between one branch of the church and another are imposed from outside and represent the quarrels of European Christians.⁵⁹

Those are humbling, challenging words. This scandal was most readily visible in the mission-field. There you found Anglican areas, Presbyterian areas, Methodist areas, Baptist areas. This division was so embarrassing that full membership would not be granted to a member who left his area to another, either on account of transfer or whatever reason, how

much more of granting him admission to Communion, simply because he belonged to another denomination.

The move towards Church Union initiated in 1905 by the Anglican, the Methodist and the Presbyterian denominations at Calabar was accepted. The three great problems of Church Union: liturgy, church order and the ministry were critically examined. Critical areas that could block a united church were overlooked in the interest of unity. But the inauguration of the Church Union did not see the light of the day.⁶⁰

Gene Mims in stating the purpose of Christian unity observes that a local church is a kingdom of community of believers in dynamic fellowship under Christ's lordship. Its purpose is to establish the kingdom as it fulfils the Great Commission with a passion to see every person completes in Christ through making disciples, maturing believers and multiplying ministries. It is a body with many parts doing certain task assigned by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit produces fruit of the Spirit so as to allow good relationships, which allow those in the church to use their gifts effectively, Gal. 5:22 – 23. The fruit of the Spirit is relational and critical. Without it kingdom relationships (fellowship in love) are impossible, 1 Cor. 13:1ff. Our first relationship as a church is with God in Christ. Our second relationship is with other believers in our church. The third relationship we have is with unbelievers if we would not ignore the Great Commission. These are expressed in fellowship with each other in the church.⁶¹

He explains further that fellowship is more than just a feeling of goodwill in a congregation. It is a result of the intimate spiritual relationship that Christians share with God and other believers through their relationship with Jesus Christ. This fellowship does not evolve naturally in a community of believers but comes only by the power of God working through and among them. This fellowship is vividly describes in Acts 2:42, 46, 47.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.⁶²

Aina Samuel, commenting on Ecclesiastical Union observes that in ecclesiastical union two or more denominations join in submitting to one common form of government.⁶³ And since ecclesiastical jurisdiction includes the maintenance of spiritual discipline, unity in polity requires agreement in the standard of faith and worship which such discipline maintains. Therefore unification in polity, when properly sought and achieved involves also unity in faith, discipline and worship.

He asserts further that as we take into consideration the diversity that exists between denominations arising from differences of ethnic identity, cultural background and historical circumstance, the evidence from the scripture supports the position that the obliteration of denominational separateness is an obligation these churches of Christ must carry out, because the differences that exist often manifest the diversity which the church of Christ ought to exemplify and make for the enhancement of the church's total witness. This view is supported by Thompson who says that if ecclesiastical union impairs the church's diversity it can lead to an impoverishment inconsistent with the witness to Christ which the church must bear.⁶⁴ Aina Samuel concludes that the biblical evidence in support of ecclesiastical union is plain even though ecclesiastical union, judging from historical antecedents, might appear inadvisable.

Carl F.H Henry dwells much on the governmental operations of church in relation to its unity as he affirms that fact that Christ is the head of the church. So it follows therefore that all government in the church must adhere strictly to the pattern of a cone which has its apex in Christ. He instituted the apostolate with authority delegated from him, Matt. 16:18,

19 cf. John 20:21, 23; Eph. 2:19-22. The authority of the apostolate in the sphere of delegated authority is supreme and will continue to be.⁶⁵

Apart from the apostolic authority there is the delegated authority of the presbyterate, always subject to the apostolic institution and to the Holy Spirit who inspired the apostles, John 16:13, 20:2, and ultimately to Christ as King and head of the church.⁶⁶

He emphasizes that all offices in church of Christ, as a matter of fact, can be filled by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, hence this structural subordination of the government of the church to the rule of Christ functions in living reality as a fellowship of the one spirit. Everyone who has the Spirit of Christ is thereby entitled to minister his spiritual gifts to all saints so far he is given opportunity, especially those whose gifts are to rule in the church but they must exercise such gifts in the communion of Christ and his church.⁶⁷

In support of Carl F. Henry, Rene Padillar observes that this is the unity that Christ prayed for in John 17:20, 21. To divorce the unity Christ prayed for from all that is involved in believing upon him through the apostolic witness is to sunder what Christ placed together. Therefore the fragmentation and consequent lack of fellowship, harmony and cooperation which appear on the ecclesiastical scene are a patent contradiction of unity exemplified in that to which Christ referred when he said “as the father art in me and I in thee.” Hence the mysterious unity of believers with one another must come to visible expression so as to be instrumental in bringing conviction to the world.⁶⁸

Closely related to the stand of Aina on the subject of church unity is the position of Thomson Allen. He believes that the New Testament does not suppose that the differences natural to individuals or those arising from ethnic identity, cultural background and historical circumstance are to be obliterated but that the unity of Christ surpasses all diversity arising from language, race, culture and history. This unity, according to him, embraces and utilizes

all the diversity that is proper and this is created by divine providence. In other words if we should maintain that the diversity is anyway incompatible with the unity of which the church is the expression, then we are denying that unity which the ethnic universalism of the gospel implies- the building up of Christ church.⁶⁹

The church of the apostolic days embraces all nations, and kindred, and peoples and tongues. There is no evidence in the New Testament for the diversification of distinct denominations and anything tending towards such was condemned, I Cor. 1:10-13. The emphasis fall upon the oneness of faith, Eph. 4:5 and the oneness of the fellowship of the saints, Eph. 4:2-4, 11:16; Phil. 2:2, 3; 4:2.

Another scholar that expresses this thought is D.A Carson who asserts that the church is the body of Christ and there is no schism in the body, I Cor. 12:25.⁷⁰ As in the human body, there is diversity in unity and unity in diversity, I Cor. 12. The point to be stressed, however, is the unity. If unity exists at all, certainly that unity must express itself in all the activities and units of church Government, for example in an institution of Christ Rom. 12:8; I Cor. 12:28, I Tim. 5:17. Heb. 13:17, I Pet. 5:1, 2, therefore this unity must be expressed in government. A concrete illustration of this principle is the decree of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15:2, 29, 16:4. There the Jews were allowed to practice their Christianity in accordance with their background and the Gentiles according to the preaching of the gospel to them but both were subject to the conclusion of the council.⁷¹

Raymond E. Brown, focusing on what true church unity is argues that Christian unity is always among the virtues that are of the greatest importance. But greater in importance is to know what that unity really is.⁷² He started with a two – fold misconception of unity namely:

1. Unity of doctrine and faith. This consists in the common accord of all the faithful in admitting and believing all the teaching that the church proposes to them as revealed or confirmed by Jesus Christ.
2. Unity of government which produces unity of communion, and which consists in the submission of all the faithful to their respective bishops/leaders.

He claims that Christian unity is altogether greater than the agreement of Christians upon statement of belief or of doctrine or of principle or submission to church organization or church government. Union of purpose or of effort of Christians or among Christians in promoting a cause is not Christian unity. Free and pleasant fraternal association of Christians is not Christian unity.

He comments that Christians have been engaging in all these in one combination or the other and yet there is no unity. Not that all these are bad or that they do not worth doing but that they are not real unity. This is supported by Donald when he observes that Christian unity is far more than is any unity of purpose and is far higher than any unity of effort of Christians promoting a cause.⁷³

Raymond asserts that Christian unity is nothing less and is nothing else than the divine unity itself – the unity of the Spirit.⁷⁴ He emphasized that it is not unity from the Spirit, that is, it is not a unity of people derived from the Spirit. So also it is not primarily a unity caused among people by their possessing the Spirit. It is the unity of the Spirit himself. Hence Christian unity then, is only the divine unity as that unity is in the divinity. This is the meaning of John 14:16, 18, 20 “I will pray the father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever... I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you...at that day ye shall know that I am in my father, and ye in me, and I in you.”

He continues that Christian unity is the unity of the individual Christian with and in the father and the son. This unity, he said, is accomplished by the mighty grace of “the comforter, the Holy Spirit.” Kenneth is of the same mind as he explains the Lord’s priestly prayer:

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word that they may all be one. That is the prayer. How is that prayer to be fulfilled? How is that unity to be accomplished? What is the real key of it? Here it is: “That they all may be one:” 1. “as thou, father, art in me, and I in thee, that”...so that, in order that... “they may be one in us.” 2. “and the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that “so that, in order that... “they may be one, even as we are one” 3. “I in them, and thou in me, that “...in order that... “they may be made perfect in one,” John 17:21-23.⁷⁵

Therefore the real unity, as expressed by Raymond is Trinitarian. In other words it is the unity existing in the God-head; our fellowship must first of all be with the father and with the son before the fellowship with one another.⁷⁶ J. K.K Marcellus expressed the same idea when he says “Thus is Christian unity portrayed, and again it is only with the father, through the son, by the Holy Spirit in the very unity of the God head.”⁷⁷

The reason Jesus prayed for this divine unity of believers is that the world might know that he was sent by God the father. This is the unity of the Spirit – the mystery of God. The culmination of this true Christian unity is the glorious church which the Lord will present to himself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish at his glorious appearing in the second advent of Christ our Lord.⁷⁸

W. Bryant Hicks, drawing from the background of the early church posited that the early church had a form of organization as against the opinion of some scholars to the contrary. And that no uniformity characterized the structure of this early fellowship.⁷⁹ One reason for such a variety is that “there was development in practice within the New

Testament period”⁸⁰ as groups of believers in various locales managed their affairs differently from one another.

To buttress his point, he cited a form of organization even among the disciples of Jesus. For example, Judas was designated to hold the money bag. Also, they were sent out two – by- two on mission, then the appointment of the seven who were chosen for ministry to the widows. He then cautioned that organizations within the church should not be allowed to assume such a revered status as to become ends in themselves. So also should the church guide against the situation where complex organizations hinder faithful response to the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead each individual member of the church should allow Christ to change his life daily as a person under God, while in the second place making the same kind of commitment with regard to every other Christian and every Christian institution, from the local congregation down to every local committee or denominational entity.⁸¹

Commenting on the authority in the churches, Bryant said that the Supreme authority in the churches is Christ. He is being referred to as the head of the church, his body, Col. 1:18. Nothing should supersede his reign over the churches. The second source of authority is the authority of the scriptures. Timothy was charged to continue in the things he had learned and been assured of because he has learned the holy scriptures from childhood, II Tim. 3:14-17. He named the authority of community as another source. By this it means the church body itself. This is the members sharing insights and understandings with one another.

Furthermore the authority of consensus is another source. This implies mutual adherence to doctrinal stipulations and practices as these religious convictions are drawn from the scriptures and lastly the authority of leadership. This refers to those who have been set aside as leaders of the congregations. The apostles have a place of prominence and power

which was not endorsed to other leaders when the former passed off the scene. It was the apostles, especially Paul, who appointed elders or bishops in the churches. These elders or bishops were not to lord it over the members of the churches, I Pet. 5:1, but to shepherd the flock. This is the function the Pastors occupy today.

Commenting on the issue of unity, he said that unity was a striking characteristic of the early Christians. Luke in the book of Acts declares repeatedly that they were of “one accord” or “together”. The most unusual indication of their closeness is that they had all things in common, Acts 2:44, 4:32-35. The greatness of their unity was so glaring that no one in the fellowship was allowed to be in need so long as there were those in the group who possessed material goods.

He continued that Jesus had earlier on called for this oneness. For instance in John 10:16 he says that all the sheep who come to him shall be “one flock, one shepherd.” In his high priestly prayer, he asks that the father keep those whom he has given to him that they may be one,” John 17:11. Paul in the same veins exhorts the Roman Christians that though they are many, they are “one body in Christ, and individually, members one of another”, Rom. 12:5. To the Galatians Paul also said that they were one in Christ. So true is this that all distinctions in the fellowship have been obliterated, whether Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, Galatians 3:28. Hence disunity was never acceptable to Paul. It was on that basis he called the Corinthian Christians carnal, I Cor. 3:3. He instructed the Roman Christians to “take note” of those who cause divisions and difficulties and to avoid them, “Rom. 16:17.

Discussing about the importance of unity, Bryant said that it was the purpose of Christ for his followers, John 17:11. It is also important for mutual edification within the body of Christ, the church, Heb. 10:25. So also is the sense of well – being and power that results

from unity Luke 2:46 -47. Unity enhances witness. A broken fellowship or one known for bickering and dissension are in evidence will never be convincing to an outsider. Lastly, according to him, unity grants stability. If we are one in the spirit through our faith, we can stand against the onslaughts of error, Eph. 4:14. On the sources of unity he referred to Jesus priestly prayer, that oneness between himself and the father. John 17:11, 22. Hence unity of the spirit, one faith, fatherhood of God, as believers are children of one family of God, and love are the sources of our unity.

He further highlighted some causes of disunity in the early church. First on his list is doctrine. He cited the example of Paul who was always pursued and plagued by the judaisers. The second cause is relationships. This was even found among the disciples of Jesus; James and John, sons of Zebedee, seeking for special places of honour in Jesus' coming kingdom, Mark. 10:35ff. The same problem of severed relationship between Paul and Barnabas on the issue of John Mark who deserted them on the course of their first missionary journey, Acts 15:39. The third cause is partisan spirit. The church of Corinth is a glaring example here. They splited into groups, each claiming a different patron, Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or Christ, I Cor. 1:10-11, 3:3-7. He then cautioned that it is proper to fight against falsehood but not with ridicule or fun-making. Where heresy is perceived, it is error and not the personality behind the error that should be attacked and this with a broken – heart and humility. Shurden's caution is fitting here: "orthopraxy (right practice) is every bit as important as orthodoxy (right teaching)."⁸²

G.M Bromiley, commenting on the general concept of unity observes that unity is having no reason for division.⁸³ He seeks to find a place for unity in the body of believers in the historical and action of the church. According to him, it is therefore right and imperative that there be an active pursuit of visible cooperation. In achieving unity, there has to be a conscious understanding and acceptance of one another so that a united social and political

action is put in place in order to meet the current and challenging predicament. Donald Gillies expresses this thought better by saying “not only the blessings of God are received but there is alleviation of poverty, disease, hunger and the creation of true fellowship that relieves the loneliness of modern society.”⁸⁴.

Bromiley further explains that the belief in unity plays a very important role in the education and upbringing of human beings. It has to be consistent with man’s views and action; the same is true of his relationship with God and his fellow beings, thereby joining creation in a single chain of indestructible unity. This type of unity is against the practice of hatred towards one section of human society against another in the name of the one and only God. The principle of unity of God is at variance with this practice and as such does not permit people to create division between God and his creation and within the creation of God. Full unity which is functional, doctrinal and spiritual unity is not possible in our highly compartmentalized, individualized and selfish culture without the Holy Spirit.

In his opinion, unity is outward, and by this he meant that in our culture of relativism we take moment of time to invest in others without any agenda other than to serve and love them. This type of unity he calls authentic unity – a serving heart that is transparent, sharing of all of life while existing together in community. This he said, is what Christ prayed for and taught. This was epitomised in the lives of the early church in Acts 2:42-47. This he called a healthy balance – both inside and outside of the church building. Darrin Patrick applies it this way: “Christians living out the gospel in their cultural context like Jesus who tabernacles among us.”⁸⁵ He concludes that this type of unity does not reflect perfection but perseverance and humility outside of the church building.

In other words we should not put on “Jesus face” as we walk into the building (church) after fighting our spouses and kids on the way to church but that we should be

conscious of the fact that we represent Christ wherever we are or go to incarnate unity. Hence unity is a significant perception that can be substituted by no other truth because on it hangs progress of any organization in all ramifications.

Oluwafemi Ikusagba, commenting on causes of church disunity, casts a glance on the priestly prayer of Jesus Christ. He asserts that being one as Christ is one with his father is not oneness of organization but that of an organism, the mystical oneness of the body of Christ made possible by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁶ He identifies true unity to be the unity of heart and purpose of which Paul urged the Philippian Christians to keep, Phil. 2:1-2.

He observes that the church of today treads the part of the Corinthian church which was overwhelmed by worldliness because they thought they were a pretty sophisticated set of Christians since they lived in a very intellectual, sophisticated and culturally rich Greek community. So also they thought that they were exceedingly spiritual Christians with their great knowledge and communication abilities—possession of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but in reality they were unspiritual. Arrogance is another example of the Corinthian church which the church today exemplified. All these characters cannot but breed disunity.

He groups disunity into two: Intra-church disunity and inter church disunity. Intra-church disunity is disunity within a particular church, as a denomination, people of God meeting in the same place in the same leadership, doctrine and worship. Inter-church disunity, on the other hand, is disunity among diverse denominations. He identifies the following as grounds for intra-church disunity.

1. **Tribalism:-** As it was the case in the early church in Acts 6, where the Hellenists were by-passed in the distribution of food, so also there is tribal discrimination in a local church.

2. **Division of Labor:** - This occurs when some people in the church are not attended to because man power is not adequate.
3. **Selection and Election:** The method of electing or selecting of officers for one assignment or the other often carries difficulties because some people may not agree with the process.

On the category of inter-church disunity he mentions:

1. **Doctrine:** This he categorizes as one of the major explanations for disunity. Doctrinal beliefs of a denomination are seen as a wrong doing by another and this has often been articulated openly.
2. **Power:** - If all the denominations come together under one umbrella, for example Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), who will be the leader and who will give instructions have been subjects of dissatisfaction in Nigeria.
3. **Denominationalism:** - This matter has caused a lot of problems in the church today. Every denomination presents its own gospel as being distinct and diverse from others.
4. **Misconduct and Hypocrisy:** - Many churches are guilty of pretending to be what they are not and many leaders have been found guilty of misbehavior to the great extent of even litigation.
5. **Corruption.** Corruption in the church today has taken varied shapes. There has been sexual scandal, fiscal corruption, heterodoxy, complacency, liturgical exploitation etc.
6. **Money:** - some churches were established money – making project. Many will want to lead because it encompasses money control.

He therefore concludes that a way out is to go the Bible way because the Bible's concern is that there should be actual ministry. That is services not in self – assertion and pride but in humility, obedience and self-offering that imitates the example of Jesus Christ. It is this attitude alone that will make the church effective in witnessing to the world.

Church Conflict

It is an indisputable fact that today's church is passing through multidimensional conflicts. A lot of issues are responsible for conflicts within the church. Conflict ushers in some good effects and it is good to note that as bad as it is, it still has some good effects in the church of God. Kale and McCullough carried out a survey among forty pastors. About thirty-five different sources were discovered. Twelve most widely acknowledged sources were: communication problems, differences over church mission and direction, personality conflict, family conflict, competition, interpersonal relationship, misunderstanding, jealousy, turf protection, personal agendas, lack of forgiveness and work distribution⁸⁷ in the church. Geoar Paul also cited seven out of these sources of conflict.⁸⁸

According to Peter Awojobi, most of the conflicts in our churches today are more of personality than theological or doctrinal. They constantly arise from power struggle.⁸⁹ In most cases, it is because of the organisational arrangement of a place. If the role of an individual leader is not well defined it will experience conflict. Even if a church is spiritually sound but weak managerially, it will suffer a setback. Administrative logjam paves way for conflict. People's response to issues varies because everyone is differently made, as such, people have different needs, desires, understanding, tastes, etc. hence each person will want to protect his ego at all costs.

Awojobi also identified power struggle as another root cause of conflict in the church. This power struggle is usually between the powerful members, groups in the church and the pastor. He observed that power tussle rises because everybody wants to lead; nobody wants to be a servant. So everyone is struggling to be on top.⁹⁰

David E. Bossard cautioned that power should not be seen as merely a force towards gaining personal advantage of getting one's way. It should be seen as a means of mobilizing people and getting them into total unity with one another.⁹¹

In the observation of William, leadership is one of the bases of conflicts. Pastoral leadership, he said, could be either too imposing or passive. It could be weak or too controlling. The misunderstanding of authority and Christian leadership roles cause conflict in the church. The Christian concept of leadership and authority are that of servant hood as taught and demonstrated in the life of Jesus Christ. A true leader leads by example. He does not demand obedience but gets it through his selfless service which motivates his followers to imitate him because of the confidence they have in him. He said further that sometimes, the pastor is the cause of trouble and disunion in the local church. His dearth of love, patience, wisdom... may be the core cause of conflict in the church.⁹²

John Popoola asserts that man was made/created flawless and good at creation. But when man sinned, his nature was changed from perfection (Gen. 3:17)⁹³ hence due to the fallen human nature conflict is bound to occur in the church. This is supported by Peter Awojobi who says that is why churches or congregations today are “made up of people who are not perfect.”⁹⁴

Changes in the church have also been identified as a source of conflict. George Samuel observes that whenever there is a change in the church that is not in the interest of the members or particular group, conflicts can occur. By the changes that are occurring in the church He says “conflict may be caused by the changes that are occurring in the church or by some particular controversial issues. Such issues can create significant pressure because they focus on vital principles or on doctrinal practices which may not be negotiable.”⁹⁵ If neither the pastor nor his members are prepared for a transfer and the pastor is asked to relocate, conflict may follow such an directive and if care is not taken, it can lead to a division. Some of the controversial issues identified by Akpenpum Dsurgha are mismanagement of funds by the treasurer or the finance committee or pastor. So also is attainment of power and its use by some leaders in the church acknowledged as an area of tension.^{96?}

John Wallace asserts that lack of proper communication brings communication gap which in turn could lead to misunderstanding, misconceptions, misinterpretation or misinformation. When the communication lives are messed up or have complications, conflict is the result.⁹⁷ whenever conflicts happen, no matter what its cause or kind, communication has played a key role. In his observation, Keith Huttenlocker said that bad communication used, spur conflict or fuel it.⁹⁸

People involved in conflict may become excessively self-justifying and put up emotional fortifications to shield themselves. These walls keep information from coming in and going out, and rumours and misunderstanding flourish, increasing the conflict. Basically, the conflict starts feeding on itself becoming more complex and difficult to resolve.

Observing further on the causes of conflict, McSwain and Treadwell identified four different sources which are experienced in the church. They are, one, Attitudinal conflict. This appears as a result of individual's differences of feeling or viewpoint about persons and uses. Biases or particular beliefs which people carry with them can cause them to discover they are bouncing into another in conflictual ways. Secondly, there is substantive conflict. This is the situation when there are differences of views about facts, goals, ends or means.⁹⁹ This is what Hocker and Wilmot call "interdependent conflict."¹⁰⁰ They say that this type of conflict rises because a person has no interest in the view of others or in what the other does. For instance, two groups in the church disagreeing over the teaching of the Bible on certain ordinance, say the method of Baptism. Thirdly, is Emotional Conflicts? This is experienced when personal worth is joined with either attitudinal or substantive form of conflict. They assert for instance that people who have been mistreated by a member of another race may find it difficult to relate in a mutual way with any person of that race. Such a prejudice has become emotionally inflexible and no matter how reasonably an argument is presented in order to convince the injured people, it will not yield any desirable effect. The fourth type is

Communicative Conflict. This is a by-product of a failure in healthy, open conversation. Hocker and Wilmot support this point by adding that communication and conflict are interrelated in the following ways: communication behaviour often produces conflicts, communication behaviour reflects conflicts, and communication is the vehicle for the productive or destructive managing of conflict. So communication and conflict are inseparably tied.¹⁰¹ They believe that communication is significant to a reconciling ministry in each of the other forms of conflict. Poor communication magnifies the heart and can develop from attitudinal, substantive or emotive conflict.

Concluding this aspect of the causes of conflict, McSwain and Treadwell highlight the fact that conflict is a process regardless of its causes and there are stages of development through which it passes. To understand these processes is the beginning point of learning how to handle it. The following are what they call rudiments of the process of conflict:

1. Assumption: There is no uncertainty in every conflict situation the persons involved have a set of expectations about it, what to do in it and how to handle it.
2. Context: There is a specific location in which conflicts arise. Some settings produce more conflicts than others. There are three features to context. These are the previous experiences of those in conflicts, the worth of human relationship between them and the procedures of the structure within which they function.
3. Events: Conflict events are the incidences which entice public awareness of the fact of conflict. A fight may “brew” for a long time before anyone identifies it is developing. The announcement of a divorce, occurrence of a church split or resignation of two church leaders as result of a dispute, the event symbolizing underlying conflict has taken place.
4. Engagements: This is the way people respond to conflict events. Some may decide to withdraw, others may become confrontational.

5. Conclusion: Every conflict must eventually end. If the end to a conflict is healthy, there is conviction of Christian growth for the parties involved. But if not, extra conflict may come up.¹⁰²

In their own contribution, Leas and Kittlaus observed that conflict is “a situation in which two or more human beings desire goals which they perceive as being attainable by one and the other but not by both.”¹⁰³ They expatiate further that when two goals strike together, each vying to push the other out. This has the equal result with what occurs if the pastor of a church who holds different concepts about one issue wants the church to go his own way, there certainly would be conflict.

Robert L. Sheffield identifies organizational structure of the church as one of the causes of church conflicts. He observes that the church is an organization as well as a body. He therefore posits that though organisational structure of the church need not be stunned, but prospective trouble areas within the church organisation should be acknowledged. According to him, these parts of conflict within the organizational structure are those between the members of the staff of the church, the pastor and congregation, the pastors and leaders and members to members. This means that much of the conflict circle around the pastor. He stressed further that the state of being unclear about the fundamental problem may cause conflict. This may lead to misunderstanding and this confusion may be as a outcome of ignorance due to lack of information about facts accessible.¹⁰⁴

On the evil effects of conflict, Peter Awojobi highlights that in the instance of conflict, division sets in. Church members are always separated into camps. This affects relational relationship. People become mistrustful of each other. Conflict prevents the church from preaching the gospel and valuable time intended for profitable church program will be used for conflict management.¹⁰⁵

Alade Ola, while supporting the view of Peter Awojobi added that whenever there is disagreement in the church, members leave, the church will divide and starts a new congregation. The financial stand of the church is endangered.¹⁰⁶ This observation is also supported by ECWA Sunday School Manual.¹⁰⁷ Komolafe identified fourteen damages that conflict caused in the church. These he classified into three sections: damages to church members, damages to the church and damages to the ministerial work of the pastor.¹⁰⁸ In the event of conflict members may not be able to pray with one another. He further stated that in an environment of discord, the members live in an atmosphere of distrust, sadness and frustration. It can also lead to loss of lives and treasured goods. So also spiritual attacks may attend conflict and this can lead to death. Members may recourse to use of charms and other devilish approaches. Churches under this condition may likely experience total collapse.

Viewing the effect of conflict on the ministerial work of the pastor, komolafe asserts that, taking into contemplation the consuming nature of conflict, there will be destruction of consideration and focus. Time that should have been spent doing creative ministerial work is expended on unproductive fighting and reconciliatory meetings. All opportunities for outreach will be obstructed. The church will not witness the influx of new members. The ills of the conflict will draw the attention of both print and electric media. The few members that continue in the church will face a heavy amount of work left by those who have abandoned the church. This will create an undue stress for the pastor and other members in the church. Wallace in support of this view comments that it is easy to put an end to something than to build; hence it is important to avert any account of conflict in the church.¹⁰⁹ Referring to how conflict damages the church, Komolafe opined that conflict creates rumours and growing antagonistic environment which have detrimental consequences on the church's fellowship and worship. Formation of some interest groups can result to a state of lawlessness. Definitely no spiritual growth should be anticipated in that church. Any leader desiring to

impose his view may generate needless conflict. Church attendance will also be affected significantly, and many may withdraw their membership. Waning income will attend withdrawal of membership. This will unfavourably affect the development of the church.¹¹⁰

Is conflict all negative? In spite of all the bad effects arising from church conflict, it still has positive roles in the life of the church. The same is true to other organisations. To this effect Speed Leas and Paul kitllauss put forth four major areas where conflict is advantageous. In the first instance it creates vigilance to be active and look for alternate ways of behaving and improve relationship. When tension surges, wisdom teaches that leaders should encounter each other around the substance of the church life that is able to implement programs of greatest merit, value meaningful to mission of the church. Secondly conflict endows specific stand on the part of an individual member. It helps either a person or a group establish his/its sides on the basis of the fact that he or the group can suitably answer why such a side is taken. Thirdly, conflict promotes unity of choice and intension. Both groups will then understand the wrongs of each other. In other words if conflict is resolved both parties will recognise its responsibilities and shortfalls. Fourthly, conflict creates the strength to make it likely for others to tolerate otherwise intolerable situations.¹¹¹ That is to say that in a moment of conflict, passion to move forward, strength to handle and bear disagreement rather than worsen hostility is produced. To this observations, Mcswain and Treadwell add that conflict often result in the quest for more resourceful and sustaining feeling and situation.¹¹² This was also agreed upon by Dokun Oyeshola.¹¹³

Komolafe, though did not disagree with the above scholars, came up with his own table of derivable benefits of conflict. In the first instance he says that conflict is an factor for growth. No church or organisation is conflict free. It is sensitizing for growth and development. It can cause negative or positive change in our lives contingent on the controlling style adopted. Secondly it brings in new capacities. In a situation where conflict

brought about the disengagement of effective members of the church from their role, new leaders who have not been tried before the appearance of conflict because there was no chance for them will certainly appear and take up the function of leadership. Such potentials may even do better. Thirdly conflict improves better understanding. If conflict is properly handled, it can produce better bond such that has not been experienced before the conflict. Members will like to guide against such incidence in the future. The parties involved will comprehend better their personality qualities and try to guide against the occurrence of future mistake. In the fourth instance, it brings about adaptation and re-adjustment principle. Nobody is all in all but it is vital to re-adjust. The range of one's level of wisdom is the commencement for another person's wisdom, hence one of the aftermaths of conflict is that it emboldens the party to adapt and re-adjust to the much-admired better principle of accepting situation as it is and modify his own view in a better way. Fifthly, conflicts promote humility. Conflicts intensify in the society because of arrogance which makes the party to conflict to adopt self-protective method against the ego. It is necessary that in every level of relationship Christians should humble themselves. The Bible enjoins this feature of humility because it plays a noteworthy role in the life of a Christian.¹¹⁴

Duene Elmer, commenting on conflict management observes that no matter what might have been the level of conflict if it is not suitably managed will get down the church. He says that conflict may not be pleasant; it does not have to be bad. It can be a means for strengthening relationships, building respect, winning new friends and establishing credibility.¹¹⁵ So under heaven there is no problem without a way out. In the observation of Charles Spurgeon, on every occasion when there is a problem, there are often about fifty means to come out of it.¹¹⁶

Richard Peterson presents three different approaches towards dealing with conflict. He calls the first approach win-lose approach. In this method either of the parties wins. This

approach is good if it serves group aims and not personal. The second approach he identifies as lose-lose approach. This allows for give and take, neutral third party adjudication or side payment to gain acceptance. It is both parties that submit certain privileges.¹¹⁷ Peter Awojobi agrees with this style of compromise. He says that disposition to discuss is a great virtue knowing that compromise does not make one mediocre.¹¹⁸ The third category, according to Richard, is called win-win approach. The profit of this technique is that every group wins. The resolution is done on the platform of teamwork in order to give peace a chance without impinge on the rights of any.

The difference between churches that are developing and churches that are deteriorating is the way they approach their problem.¹¹⁹ Many churches tend to identify their problem as occasions for progress. Some people observe that conflict is neither to be evaded at any cost nor it is a preoccupation to spread and pleasure in it as if it were the primary stress of the church. Conflict is seen as one of the actualities of human condition. It should not be denied as if it does not exist in good association.

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CHAPTER TWO

UNITY AND DISUNITY IN BIBLICAL CONTEXT

This chapter discusses the issue of unity and disunity in the Bible. Unity and disunity are discussed together in order to emphasise the fact that a description in contrast will help to understand the blissful effects of unity and the unwholesome characteristics of disunity. Hence the chapter is divided into two main sections of unity and disunity and the theme of unity is first discussed.

Christians of all centuries and from diverse orientations are anticipated to live in unity.¹ This unity, discussed in many parts of the Bible is made possible by the Holy Spirit who empowers Christians to exercise patience and love towards each other and also by the meek and intelligent use of the gifts given to the church.² This section therefore is a panoramic assessment of the theme by going through major sections of the Bible in order to clarify its theological nature in the context. In order to achieve this objective, this chapter is sub-divided into:

Unity in the Old Testament Context

Unity in the New Testament Context:

- a. In the Gospels.
- b. In Pauline Epistles

Disunity in the Old Testament

Disunity in the New Testament

2.1 Unity in the Old Testament Context

First and foremost an observation on the language the Hebrew Bible uses for unity is necessary. The main term is *yahad* (togetherness) which bears a superficial similarity to the Hebrew term for 'one' '*ehad*'. The linking (as with the English 'unity' and 'one') inclines our

thinking fairly quickly toward ‘one-ness’ or ‘singularity,’ and that is of course a natural connection to make.³ But the translation of *yahad* is sometimes guarded by the idea of ‘singleness’ ‘unit-ness.’ Therefore in biblical Hebrew, the most noteworthy term (*yahad*) gives the impression of being more accurately rendered by notions of ‘togetherness,’⁴ for instance Deut. 33:5. “The Lord became king in Israel when the leaders of the people assembled, when the tribes of Israel gathered” (New Living Translation: NLT). The understanding here is not a matter of being gathered ‘as one’ but simply of being ‘brought together’, which is an expression of a totality. In other words, the main thrust of the passage is the entire community of God’s people living together in unity. Hence the thought of unity in the Old Testament has its bearing on ‘togetherness’ “and where ‘*yahad*’ and ‘*ehad*’ are used together, in that circumstance the latter is expressly used to further qualify the former.”⁵

Unity in the Old Testament

In Genesis 1:26 the Old Testament talk about the unity of the Godhead. God speaks as the creator-king pronouncing the greatest work to the members of his heavenly court,⁶ “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...” This is a show of unity of purpose, a reflection of unity. Another occurrence of this nature of unity was Genesis 11:7 “Come let us...” Just as in Genesis 1:26, the God-head in unity operated together to effect needed change in the world. Both Bruce ⁷ and Barton ⁸ articulated parallel views with little moderations. In the expression of Amos (3:3) the Godhead can work together because “they have agreed to do so.” They strategised together and carried out their actions together as in this case (Gen. 11:7) when the Tower of Babel was under construction. Planning together, that is, having a mutual resolve, is also reinforced in Isaiah 6:8 (“who will go for us?”) in the vision of the Prophet (Isaiah).

Genesis 2:24 – “And they will become one flesh” The tie of unity and love between a man and his wife is regarded here to be stronger than the natural affinity.⁹ There is a leaving

to make strong the cleaving bond. This tie of unity should not be broken or weakened by having many wives (Mal. 2:15).¹⁰ Hence it is understood how dear the love should be between couples. This passage shows that the bond in marriage is greater and stronger than the natural bond between parents and their children¹¹ and is anticipated to reveal the secret union between God and Israel as the book of prophet Hosea illustrated later.

Adam and Eve demonstrated this bond of unity when they decided together to disobey God by eating the prohibited fruit in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3). The result of their disobedience was sin and its associated problems in the world. One more negative show of unity of mankind in contrast to God's wish was the story of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:7) where the people in unity were constructing a tower that would reach heaven. In their unity they reached a sort of faster progress to the point that the Godhead perceived that should they be allowed to continue, nothing would be difficult for them to do. Hence God disorganised their language. Their negative unity was broken because instead for them to speak one language as before they then began to speak many languages. This is a caution to the church that disunity among God's people results into crises and will be dealt with by God.

David spoke unswervingly about the type of unity that is expected among believers¹² in Psalm 133. This is one of the "Songs of Ascents" This "live together in unity" appeal here pronounces to be "as having one heart, one soul, and one interest"¹³ supports Paul's request of the Philippian Church. This well-known Psalm appears to be a comparing of the superior goodness of 'unity' among brothers with oil and dew, climaxing in the divine assurance of life 'for evermore.'¹⁴ The Psalmist declares a blessing on those who "live together in unity." For the period of the pilgrimages, the pilgrims trooped to Jerusalem from numerous diverse works of life, regions and tribes. Their unity was in agreement with the rules for the three annual feasts – the Feast of unleavened Bread, Feast of Harvest and Feast of Ingathering. (Ex. 23:14 – 17, Lev. 23:4-22, 33–43). Throughout these feasts the Jews celebrated their

mutual tradition: redemption from Egypt and encampment everywhere around the tabernacle in the desert.

Fellowship of God's people on earth is a demonstration of the priesthood of all believers (cf. Ex. 19:6; 1 Pet. 2:9-10). The Psalmist likens the demonstration of harmonious unity to the special sweet-smelling oil used by the priests (cf. Ex. 30:22-33). Only the high priest and the other priests had the right to be anointed with this oil. Aaron because he is the 'head' of the priestly clan is the representative of all the priests. By means of the priestly institution the Lord guaranteed his people of forgiveness and blessing.¹⁵

On the account of its high altitude and abundant rain, snow, and dew, Mount Harmon was proverbial for luxurious greenery even throughout the summer months (cf. Ps. 89:12). The experience of the pilgrims for the entire period of pilgrimage is like that of the refreshing dew of Harmon. For the duration of the summer months practically no rain falls on Jerusalem. In these months minimum two pilgrimages were held: the Feast of First Fruits in May/June and the Feast of Booths in September. Irrespective of how harsh the conditions of the pilgrimage, the fellowship of the brotherhood of God's people was stimulating.¹⁶ Oil and dew were signs of refreshment in the hot weather of Palestine¹⁷

The implication of the above explanation of Psalm 133 is that where God's people live together in unity there in their midst, the Lord sends blessing – even life forevermore. Life is a gift of God. It is not given as an end in itself, but for communion with the people of God. According to Raymond, the paramount advantage of the togetherness of the people of God is life forevermore. This life is everlasting in the sense that it streamed from the infinite source of life, Yahweh himself¹⁸

Hoerber offers another insight to this unity by suggesting that this Psalm, Psalm 133, presented the coming together at Hebron of all the tribes of Israel to anoint David as their one and only king.¹⁹ Before then the tribes of Israel had had distinct ambitions. This was more

prominent in and after the reign of King Saul. Laymon also submitted that there might be a traditional Jewish connotation to this Psalm. According to him, in traditional Israelite organisation, brothers continue to live together after the death of their father.²⁰ On account of that the family estate stayed intact. But this commendable practice was seriously threatened by urbanization. As a consequence some sold family lands in the Holy Land and went off on their own rather than remain to dwell in unity in the family estate. This Psalm may have been written to discourage this unpleasant attitude. These two views though diverse, yet they strongly pass across the message of unity. In the first view, the disunited tribes of Israel came together (unity) to anoint David as King. The second view explains that those who had ignored living together in unity in their father's estate would return to keep the family estate disintegrated.

In agreement with the discussion above, Prophet Ezekiel in 37:15-28 predicted that Israel would come together again (that is in unity), though they had lived as two distinct kingdoms for many years. This is a demonstration of God's yearning to have his people return but more significantly, that they might be one and no longer two.²¹ He also anticipated that they come under the same leadership and rule. Ezekiel submissively joined the two sticks together (Ezek. 37:15 – 22) on which he had inscribed the names of Ephraim and Judah. This signifies the anticipated merging of Israel in God's hand and this matches the statement of Jesus in John 10 which reference to the oneness of his Church. The reunion of Israel thus prefigures the union of Jesus' two folds he earnestly desires..²² The objective is to bring an end to variances in interests and separated affections. This is a hope for a church in disunity. Henry comments on this passage by saying: "But this certainly looks further to the Kingdom of Christ, he is that one King in allegiance to whom all God's spiritual Israel shall cheerfully unite."²³ It is not the desire of God that his sheep should scatter either physically or spiritually;²⁴ complete unity has always been the yearning of God.

Amos, the prophet from Tekoa says that it is not possible for two to walk together unless they are in agreement. It is the first of his “cause and effect” rhetorical questions to affirm the fact that there are events that must essentially precede others. The reasonable situation in such cases is that “once the first event takes place the second is sure to follow.”²⁵ The two issues in view here are friendship and fellowship. As a matter of fact, where there is no friendship (among believers), there cannot be fellowship.²⁶ The statement of Amos has as its straightforward meaning; the thought of intimacy. It may imply a close relationship (Job 29:4).it may be a reference to something as intimate as a secret or close fellowship with a friend. When used with reference to God, it speaks of his secret council (Job 15: 8) or the intimate bond the righteous has with God in which he discloses his covenant to them (Ps.25:14) and takes them into his confidence (Pr. 3:32). This passage speaks of the intimate relationship of God with his righteous people the basis of which he reveals his covenant to them and takes them into his confidence.²⁷ This is precisely what Paul emphasised in Philippians 2:1-4. There can never be Friendship and fellowship unless there is oneness of mind and heart and this articulates itself in having the same love, being in full accord, regarding others as better and seeking the good of others.²⁸

2.2 Unity in the New Testament Context

2.1.1 In the Gospels

In the Synoptic Gospels, unity, oneness is not established as independent theological idea but is established either by principle or precept.²⁹ In other words, unity, oneness does not stand alone; it has expression in connection with attitude or instruction. Prominence is given to the gospel of John, especially Jesus’ Priestly prayer which will be discussed later as regards detail treatment of this subject.

Mark 10:35 – 45 expresses the thought of Christ as to the significance of unity among his followers. James and John his brother agreed together *θέλωμεν* (the root meaning: to hold

to, have in mind or determined, purposed; hence to be resolved or determined)³⁰ that the positions of power be given to them ἡμῖν (us) by Jesus. Here is a proof of the presence of selfish ambition and vainglory among Jesus' disciples. This approach was capable of causing division if Jesus did not quickly brought the situation under control. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were bidding for position of honour for themselves from Jesus without concern for the thoughts of other disciples.³¹ This attitude annoyed the rest but Jesus quickly got them together and taught them what it meant³² to get to the position of honor in the Kingdom of heaven. The way there was not as the earthly leaders lord it over their subjects (but "not so with you). Contrarily, whoever desires to become great among you must be your servant," (v. 43). Here Jesus reverses the value order of the world. Humble and loving service should be the attitude of the life of discipleship. He demanded that they emulate his example; so also was Paul admonishing the Philippian Christians to do.

Oneness is the key to appropriate explanation of the gospel of John. The key to unity in this gospel is Christological unity, precisely the unity of the Son with the Father. The shepherd section of John opens us to Jesus' longing for unity among his sheep. Jesus is the shepherd, the only shepherd of God's people (10:16). This is an exceptional form of unity. It is also ecclesiological unity; the unity that is related to the Church. Here is a portrait of two folds that are yet to be made one, "other sheep" and "this fold."³³ Jesus says he must bring them together so that both can come under one roof. He will bring them "into the church and kingdom of heaven."³⁴ Jesus spoke of this forcefully in faith, being confident that through the instrumentality of his disciples both Jews and Gentiles would be united in one Kingdom of his. "One fold" means one church, not a separated assembly: a place where there are nothing like partitions or boundaries, where rank and worldly honour are not found, where the consciousness of every member of being under a shepherd is felt. The children of God are currently scattered but they will be merged together. Once they are together, nothing from

within or without will be able to separating them. In John 10:30 the Christological oneness is stated most clearly: “I and the father are one.”³⁵ But the father and the son are in reality distinct though one (10:38). This has nothing to do with unity but distinct activities.

Another feature of unity in John is that salvation is one with heavenly certainty. John 11:52 attests to this that the death of Jesus is not only for Israel but for the purpose of assembling into one the dispersed children of God wherever they are. This objective is rather yet to be fully a reality.

The high priestly prayer of Jesus in John chapter 17 articulates the hope of the Johannine Jesus for the forthcoming oneness of the Church. This is grounded again on the pattern of the oneness of father and son (11:21-23) – “that they may be one as we are one.”³⁶ This is a solid stress on unity. Unity here is understood as already given. It is not something to struggle to attain.³⁷

The passage simply, inspires persistence in that which has been made available without permitting strife and schism to put an end to it. Hoerber asserts: “The unity is to be like that between the father and the son. It is much more than unity of organization but the Church’s present divisions are the result of the failures of Christians.”³⁸ So, both the quality of the unity and the likely results of this unity are mentioned, Christian unity should model that in Godhead. It is to persuade non-Christians concerning the mission of Christ.³⁹ The unity here seems to be that of will and purpose as Paul persuades the Philippians. The quality of unity involved is the utmost possible; it is to surpass usual uniformity or physical unity. It is unity of mind.⁴⁰ It takes a living bond with Christ to have the spiritual motivation to begin and remain in this vital unity.⁴¹ The unity of believers must develop to persuade the world of the father’s love for the son. If church unity fails to accomplish this aim, it is far from true unity⁴² Jesus was not requesting for institutional union. All he was praying for was a unity of love, a unity of obedience to God and his word and a united adherence to his will.⁴³ Jesus

aspires after a spiritual unity of the church. He desired that members of the church should have one heart, one soul and one voice, speaking the same thing.⁴⁴ He wished that the glory he had with God from the beginning will be expressed to the world by his disciples through their unity in truth, love and purpose.⁴⁵

It is clear that this long high priestly prayer is a reflection of the tender yearning heart of a good shepherd's wish to have all his sheep united as brethren. About four times he prayed that they might be one, three of them within vs. 20–23 and in the last of the references (v.23) he wished for the perfection of this unity as an obvious need to him because a disunited flock would dishonouring. The flock had the same lot, the same means to heaven, the same saviour, the same knowledge in the Holy Spirit. Hence, they should be confident that they are of the same family, being bound by bonds more tender than any other.⁴⁶ Their relationship should therefore be so wholesome and stable so as to show they are each attached to the same father and God. It is thus binding on them to love one another, to bear one another's burdens and to chart the path that encourages and makes peace stronger.

It is quite evident that the world outside of their community is full of hostility and aggression but such vices should not be seen among them, so as to make a difference and to be a light to imitate. Those things that bring disagreements will not be totally eradicated from them but the love and grace of God made available to them should be a tool to deal with conflicts and contentions among them.

Verse 23 that says that they be made perfect in one shows that unity has degrees, like a machine⁴⁷ all parts must be whole, lubricated and working for harmony of the parts and productivity of the system. Observed obstructionss in the progress of the community are inadequacies of men, zeal without knowledge, lust, ambition, the inclination to err, and the sneaking into the church, worldly desires and quests that engender strife (James 4:1-2). This reveals the importance and foresight in his prayer – that they should be kept back from evil v.

15). Since they are in the world; they are not shielded from the larger society. They need grace and Jesus prayed for that grace for them. He directs them to the perfect model of unity between him and the father. As they hold onto this and it remains fresh in memory, they are expected to shape their unity after theirs.

One might be tempted to say that this prayer contains implicit directives to Jesus' followers; it is obviously a prayer to God for him to bring about unity. In as long as the earthly church lives in unity with the father and the son, so shall it expresses unity toward that which it is moving and being called. This unity begins from the unity of the father and the Son to that of the Son and believer, to that of believers with each other. I John has similar chief ideas where believers abide in the son and in the father (2:24) and where fellowship (*Koinonia*) between believers rests on fellowship with the father and the son (1:3, 6 – 7).

2.2.2 In Paul's Letters

Apostle Paul was a passionate promoter of peace and unity. Just like Jesus Christ, it was his desire that everybody should pursue unity at all cost. But predominant in his thought, teaching and way of life is the unity of the church. It is not surprising then that the appeal for unity in the church occupied his writings.

Rom. 12: 4-5, 16, 14:19, 15:5, 6. The fundamental factor to Paul's notion of true Christian unity is in Christ.⁴⁸ The secret and means of making this unity a reality also rests in Christ. In other words it is the believers' living relationship in Christ that determines the possibility of living in peace with one another. To counterbalance the danger of individualistic thinking with its consequent danger of pride, Paul points to the human body (12:4-5); a familiar illustration from his earlier use of it in I Cor. 12:12. There three truths are presented: the unity of the body *ἐνὶ σώματι*; the diversity of its members *οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει προᾶξιν*, with equivalent diversity in function (not one function); and the affinity of various members-each member belonging to all the others *ἐν σώμα ἐῖς ἀλλήλων μέλη*. The third

point calls attention to the need of different parts of the body for each other. None can walk independently of the other⁴⁹ So also in Romans 12:16 Paul draws the awareness of the church to the need to live in accord with each other *φρονοῦντες* (be intent, set one's mind on) *συναπαρόμενοι* (accommodate yourself with). He advises Christians that living in harmony (v.16) with one another dismisses discord in the church. To attain this accord, he emphasises the necessity of refusing the inducement to think superior thoughts about one and lists the cankerworms that make Christian unity unachievable such as pride, conceit, refusal to associate with people of lower status as well as vengeance. He charges believers to make all practical sacrifice that can usher in peace and harmony.⁵⁰ This same appeal he repeats in Rom. 14:19 to emphasize the significance of brotherly harmony *διώκωμεν* (pursue) *εἰρήνης* (peace) *καὶ οἰκοδομῆς* (and mutual edification). "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification." New International Version (NIV). The entire church is admonished to aspire after peace which alone is responsible for the atmosphere in which mutual edification can take place.

Paul's appeals and prayers are all geared towards peaceful co-existence among Christians because of its implication for their testimony. He prays for the "spirit of unity" in Rom. 15:5-6 *ὁμοθυμαδὸν* (with one accord) that will reduce individual differences as all fix their eyes on Christ as the standard for their own lives. This is not saying that all believers must see eye to eye in everything but in as much they have one mind *φρονεῖν* (purpose together, set one's mind on) with one another, the greater will be the coheressness of the church. The interest of Paul here is in the consequences of unity in the worship of the church; *φρονεῖν ἐν ἀλλήλοις* with one mind and one mouth glorifying God. This suggests that they be likeminded one toward another. He listed the concrete facet of unity in Rom. 15:1-14:

- bearing with the inadequacy of each other
- not pursuing the interest of oneself only

- making genuine effort to seek one's neighbour's advantage
- having the spirit that bears with one another and
- admonishing one another from the scriptures when hurt. The resultant effect of obedience to these exhortations is eventual harmony, abolition of contention, and praise instead of argument.⁵¹

Paul offered his life as an example as he tried to unite both Jews and Gentiles as an expression of his understanding of his apostleship – a Jewish apostle in mission to gentile people (Rom. 1:1-5). The elimination of this Jewish – Gentile dichotomy was symbolically demonstrated by the monetary collection he took among the largely gentile – Christian congregations for the Jewish Christian poor in Jerusalem. This symbolic unity shown by the offering is understood by his choice of the word *Koinonia* “fellowship” as a word referring to the offering (Rom. 15:26; II Cor. 8:4; 9:13).

I Corinthians

Here in this epistle to the Corinthian Christians Paul discourses the unity of the church but the setting within which Paul worked out the church unity was one of division (I Cor. 1:10 – 17; 3:1-9).

Paul in dealing with parties in discord in the Church identified the cause – carnality (3:1). They had different preachers at different periods and they lined up behind their preferred preachers.⁵² This resulted into considerable dissension and disunity in that church. To aggravate the problem, there was also the Jesus party (1:12). Paul declared his note of correction by enlightening the Corinthian Church members that Christ was not divided so it was a disgrace for those who claim to be in him (Church members) to be divided.

Paul's approach here at resolving the problem was an appeal to the name of Jesus. With reference to the Philippians' case, he made reference to Christ's act of condescension. The situation at Corinth was different there was already division and wide differences that

needed to be corrected by mending and restoration. Therefore he charged them to flawless unity in mind and thought (1:10). They were to renounce areas of difference and everyone endorse things that unite for the mutual good of all and particularly, for the honour of Jesus.

In addition, he reminded his readers the idea of the body of which they were a part. He contended that the body was not to be debased since it belonged to the Lord (I cor. 6:13, 20). If the body was debased, its meaning in the Lord's Supper would also be affected because, according to Paul, from one loaf of the Eucharist the many are created into one body (10:14 – 17). The word *Koinonia* "fellowship," v.16, expresses this thought. This one body (v.17) indicates the equal somatic unity of believers in the Lord's Supper.⁵³ The basis of the unity of the believers is the one Lord and his one, crucified – resurrected body (v.16). It is by partaking in that body by means of the Lord's Supper that the Church is instituted as body. So the Lord's Supper produces the unity of the believers in the body of Christ and it is also the clearest expression of this unity. Therefore the social divisions obvious at the Lord's Supper were specifically disgusting for Paul (I Cor. 11:27 – 34).⁵⁴ So for the one who cannot differentiate the body (of the church) passes judgment upon himself /herself (v.29). In order to establish this stern warning, Paul reiterated the community-constituting characteristics of the Supper to the Corinthians by quoting the words of the institution and its authority (vv. 23 – 26).

Much still, Paul referred to the futuristic nature of the meal that it looks forward to the Messianic banquet in (v.26). The Lord's Supper therefore, is of great significance as a figure of the future; the church which epitomises the future community of the new humanity does its duty of representation accurately in the Lord's Supper. The supper therefore is the model of the unity of the Church.

Furthermore Paul showed the unity of the church in I Corinthians 12 by his use of the body (church) and its gifts. It is the same Lord, and the same God who is the cause of all

gifts (vv. 4-6). This unity is found in baptism by the one Spirit which is given to all baptized Christians. “We are all baptized into one body by the one Spirit, Jews or Greeks, slave or free.”⁵⁵

Galatians 3:26 – 29

The classical passage on unity in Baptism is this passage in Galatians. Faith in Christ Jesus *πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ* makes all who belong to Christ to become the sons of God. Baptism is the visible mark of the union that already exists through faith. All who believe become one *εἷς* (only one) with each other so that there is now neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, but all become one in Jesus in such a way that difference that had alienated loses meaning and they become Abraham’s seed (*σπέρμα* a seed). When Christians regard one another as true brothers and sisters in Christ irrespective of their social standing then the power of such difference such as racial barrier, social status and gender is broken and a basis is laid for social change. Paul by pointing out that the Galatian Christians were acknowledged as the children of God (v. 26) was extending to gentiles a concept usually applied to Jews only. Verse 27 explained how it happened that the gentiles were Sons of God: by baptism. So also identified are the act of putting on Christ and the act of being baptized. Putting on Christ defines the Christian’s integration into the body of Christ as an act of clothing.⁵⁶ The outcome of putting on Christ is unity with him or being in Christ (v. 28). So it is through baptism into Christ that all become Sons of God. The same experience unites all persons with Christ and so with one another. This unity in Christ surpasses ethnic, social and gender differences. There is no Jew or Greek, there is no slave or free, there is no male or female. The partitions which had alienated humanity are now considered overcome in Christ. Not to reject to play down on this understanding is to raise disunity in the body of Christ

Ephesians 4:1–16.

Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus is an epistle that addressed unity. Hoerber believes that 2:13–18 refers to believing Gentiles who had real religious differences from their different upbringings.⁵⁷ Jesus paid exceedingly to eradicate the law of carnal commandments that created enmity between these two sects of people who can now put their faith in God.⁵⁸ Jesus' intention was to make both one new man (i.e. unity). It would therefore be inconceivable to allow anything that endorses what is meant to be non-existent. The relationship between Jews and Gentiles was cultural but with religious traces. Jews would want to maintain ceremonial cleansing by the Gentiles as well as circumcision; those things have been done away with by the death of Christ on the cross. The peace that comes forth from the cross should be allowed to break racial barriers.⁵⁹ The Pauline stand here is that "there are no divisions which Christ cannot bridge."⁶⁰ Hence racial equality must be a certainty among Christians.

According to Ephesians 4:1-6, the members are to make an effort to "make every effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit through the tie of peace." It is not something to put in place, as stated earlier on, so he only urges a continuance of it. They must "walk worthy of the calling to which they are called (4; 1b).

The term "walk" (*Peripateō* *Peripateo* – "to walk around") refers to the whole scope of one's being. This is a strong passion. "Worthily" is an adverb that suggests a contrast between two objects that parallel with one another in some fashion – in this instance, both in kind and in quality. So Ephesian Christians must measure up to the standard enforced by God.

"Lowliness" explains the Greek term *tapeinophresune* *tapeinophresune* (from *tapeinos* *tapeinos* – "low" and *phren* *phren* – "mind"). The word suggests a selflessness that expresses itself in sacrificial love for others – a concept generally despised by the Greeks⁶¹

but adorned in the New Testament. Paul used this word in re-counting his personal lifestyle while working as a missionary among the Ephesians (Acts 20:19). And his life buttressed the claim. The word is rendered “lowliness of mind” in Philippians 2:3, and in that context in Philippians is consequently explained with the utterly selflessness love of Christ becoming human, and going to the cross on behalf of the lost (vv. 5ff). What an incomparable task this is for the people of God!

“Meekness” (*Praytes* *Praytes* – a noun) signifies a “calm and soothing disposition” it is used of mildness “and humanness” in contrast to the “harsh” attitude. It is opposed to “roughness” and “severity.” In the Greek Old Testament *Praytes* carries the thoughts of “submission to the divine will” (Psalm 132:1). Moses was pronounced as the “meekest” man of the earth (Number 12:3). In summary, *Praytes* involves “radical submission to God and modesty in dealing with other people.”⁶² Undoubtedly the exercise of this disposition will amend church problems.

“Long suffering” *μακροθυμίας makrothymias* is a term that indicates taking a “long” time to come to “anger.” It is employed carefully of God who shows this virtue in his relations with sinful humanity (Rom. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:16). It is equally applied to a enduring human quality (Acts 26:3; James 5:7). It is one of the qualities of the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22), and is a necessity for Christian cultivation (Col. 3:12; I Thess. 5:14). Long suffering stands over against thoughtless aggression or rash reaction. In a style of speaking, it refers to a “long burning fuse” that finally fails to ignite.⁶³

Following after the three foregoing nouns are two participle phrases. The first is “forbearing one another in love.” The term “forbearing” stems from a compound word signifying the idea of “holding up” – with allusion to a potential action. The present tense, middle voice form designates a type of behaviour that one exerts, which, eventually, is in his personal best interest. The word assumes that as Christians relate with each other occasions

of differences, even of threatened alienation, are sure to rise. But kinsmen in Christ are not to react hastily and hatefully when conflicts surface; instead, they are to resist every sign to explode and attack.

The fundamental passion that calms tense nerves and encourages good will is “love” (*agape*). *Agape* is not “heart” love; it is “head” love. It is an intentional attitude by which one lives as he attempts to operate in the noblest interest of others. It is a “calculated disposition of regard and pious inclination toward an object deliberately chosen.”⁶⁴ It is very difficult to act with *agape* towards those we do not mostly like – who may, in fact, be somewhat disgusting. However, by the command to love, we need to tirelessly act in the sincere welfare of others.

A second present tense participle “giving diligence” *σπουδάζοντες* (from the verb *spoudazo*) carries the impression of regularly stirring to put forth one’s very best effort. It reveals the enduring zeal that Christians must have for the advancement of unity within the body of Christ, and it casts a dark shadow over those who participate in the mischief of strife and division. The expression “unity of the Spirit” obviously is referring to the “unity” that is sought and originated by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 6:17 by means of his influence through the word of God). Unity is a “state of oneness or of being in harmony and concord”.⁶⁵ The word is well-defined by amicable actions.

One feature that enhances unity is “Peace” Paul employs the expression “bond of peace,” “Bond” *συνδέσμων syndesmoos* is that which “binds together,” as muscles do for the human body. In this passage the word is a metaphor for “that which brings various entities into a united relationship.”⁶⁶ It is the very reverse of that resentful attitude “that spoils for a good fight,” “and always seems to be in the middle of one.”

“Peace” *εἰρήνης eirenes* is a term of marvelous taste. Barclay assumed the word was related to the Greek *eirein*, “to weave together”⁶⁷ It is “a state of being that lacks nothing and

has no fear of being troubled in its tranquility. It is euphoria coupled with security.”⁶⁸ It has a range of uses, e.g. the condition of being reconciled with God (Rom. 5:1), tranquility with other people (Heb. 12:14), or an inward feeling of mental calmness (Phil. 4:7).

Wallace has perceived that the original appeal, “walk worthily” is complemented by the companion participles “forbearing” and “giving diligence,” which demonstrate the means of effecting the responsibility and actually summarize “what this title episode is all about.”⁶⁹

The challenge of this is that the combinations of the qualities cataloged above, if engaged by the people of God, will facilitate an atmosphere wherein the redemptive plan of Christ can operate with finest effectiveness. Every genuine Christian should desire to see this condition triumph in the body of Christ.

Paul did not keep the Ephesian Christians in the dark as to the reason they should go about struggling to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace:

- They have one hope, one faith and one baptism
- They have one Lord, one God and father of all
- Grace is given to make this possible
- Gifts of various type have been made available in the church for this purpose

Colossians 3:15.

Another epistle to note is Colossians. Paul, employing the word “peace of Christ” *εἰρήνη* (harmony, welfare) *τοῦ Χριστοῦ* addressed the topic of unity in this passage. This refers to peace among the believers of the Christian community. It comes from Christ and the believers should allow it to rule *βραβεύετω* (judge, control, serve as umpire). That means that in all inner struggles as well as in all quarrels and differences among Christians, Christ’s peace must give the last verdict. This will be obvious if they put on love which joins them all together in flawless unity as one body *ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι*. He approached this theme of unity from the concept of all being “members of one body.” He pleaded that the attitude of peace that

Christ alone gave should be allowed to substitute the attitude of acrimony and quarrelsomeness.⁷⁰ This attitude should operate like a referee in all Christian interactions. This new inner principle that offers a valuable rule of moral decision and aids unity among Christians was created by the Sonship of Christ.⁷¹ The word “Let” states human responsibility in this matter. It could also mean permitting the peace of Christ regulates the tumult⁷² feelings that well up one’s heart towards another brother.

II Timothy 2:22, 23

Timothy was Paul’s son in the Lord. He was brought up by Paul and put in charge of churches especially around Ephesus. As a young church leader Paul observed he needed church leadership handbook. Paul instructed him on what he should take heed of, what to run away from and the things to hunt after. Among things Timothy is to hunt after is “peace along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” Timothy was to struggle for peace *εἰρήνην* (harmony, welfare) for unity to reign in the church. He should also avoid being involved in irrational and unwitting arguments. Though he should fight heresy but he must refrain from discussing such arguments because discussing such provokes fights. This has the divisive tendency and so can destroy the church. There can be recognised in nearly all Christian congregations those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart and others who constitute the mixed multitude. It is easy for the latter to provoke trouble. Their hearts are not wholesome towards God and their fellows. Spiritual unity can scarcely be sustained for long with these people unless their hearts are also sanitized. That was much work for Timothy. In verse 23, Paul warned Timothy against controversies as well as “foolish and unlearned questions,” *μωρὰς καὶ ἀπαιδέτους* (strife over words). Members of the congregation who raised such quarrelsome questions considered themselves as learned but not so with Paul. “They breed debates and quarrels among Christians.”⁷³ True servant of God must not quarrel (v.24) if unity would be a good option.

Philippians

This epistle has four chapters and in all the chapters, Paul dealt with unity in one form or the other. Some of the references are 1:27; 2:1 – 4; 3:16; 17; 4:2, 3. God's stand and intention on this subject of unity are very clear from all scriptures, as shown above in this chapter. Tracing the necessity for unity from Genesis to this point has being a rewarding exercise as it sets the context for Paul's treatment of the matter in this beloved church of his. God hates disunity-Jesus paid to procure Christian unity. Men of God are to pursue unity and war against disunity. What is the stand of Paul?

Philippians 1:27

Paul uses a verb that means literally "to live as a citizen" for conduct yourselves worthy of the gospel. *πολιτεύεσθε* live a life of responsibility worthy of a good member of a place. He charged them to stand strong in one spirit. They should struggle together in the faith as one man. This appeal to unified thought and action has in mind the objective of competing for the faith of the gospel exemplified in the gospel message. To defend the message of Christ is only conceivable if they live worthy of the gospel in the situation of unity.

Paul says, "Then whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel." Paul, in talking about their developing a life worthy of the gospel, stressed the need for Christian unity, dynamic harmony,⁷⁴ having a mutual outlook and purpose.⁷⁵ The unity anticipated here is that of struggling together side by side against a common enemy from outside, especially where the gospel is under attack. Struggling alone, against a common enemy, for the gospel would not portray a conduct commendable of heaven; neither can they expect to succeed as they dissipate energy that way. Stand steady in one spirit, fight as one man. Steadfast unity in faithfulness to the gospel is the way for victory.⁷⁶

Philippians 2:2-4

Part of this has been taken care of in 1:27 and that is their being one in thought, in love, in desire (Spirit) and purpose. He exhorts the Philippian Christians to make his joy complete by being like-minded *φρονῆτε*, (minding the same thing). He now elaborates on his rejoinder to uphold unity in their thought and deed. By conforming to the next four instructions, his readers will create the atmosphere where true unity could flourish. 1.

Possessing mutual love *ἀγάπην ἔχοντες*, This is one of the fruit of the Spirit and should be validated in every life. 2. Believers should fix their thoughts on oneness in the Spirit and purpose *σύμψυχοι*. This is a sign that there was conflict within the congregation. 3. they should evade selfish desire *κενοδοξίαν* (vain conceit). Contrarily, Christian attitude should express itself in humility. 4. They should be considering not only their own interests but also those of others *σκοποῦντες* (not keep one's eyes on). When each member of the Christian community displays these mutual concern, problem of disunity vanishes.

Philippians 3:16, 17

ἐφθάσαμεν, (arrive, come before, over take) those who are advanced “Live up to” *στοιχεῖν* (agree with, hold to, follow with) Paul pleaded with the Philippian Christians to “join with others.” He admonished all those who are mature to live up to what they have already achieved. Any variance in judgment should not be permitted to divide; they should trust the Lord to clarify disputes for them over time. Paul associates unity with maturity for a number of reasons. A mature mind can undertake being in line with others even when his objectives are either too small or too big.⁷⁷ It is possible for the immature to allow “other mindedness” to lead to disagreement. Thirdly, it is unlikely for unity to exist among a group of immature Christians whose knowledge of the truth is always changing. Such scriptural maturity that boosts unity does not happen. It involves effort and doggedness especially where it is born in mind always.

Philippians 4:2, 3

The focus here is on two leading women in the Church. They were Euodia and Syntyche, close associates of Paul. These women worked with him like the women in Romans 16. Paul urged them to bring their attitude to harmony *ᾠπονεῖν* (be intent on) The real reason for their quarrel and subsequent disaffection is not stated. They many have been powerful women of that church, having strong disposition just like many Macedonian women were noted for.⁷⁸ That necessitated Paul's diplomatic and strategic pastoral counselling.⁷⁹ Paul's management of the circumstance is a model of tact – he did not take sides but encouraged others closer to the situation to stimulate settlement.⁸⁰

Whatsoever might be the basis of their contention, whether personality clash, ethnicity or passion for the Lord, one thing that was very clear was the apostle's emphasis on unity. Moreover, his determination to re-establish unity of mind and purpose is paramount and buttressed his longing to have them reconciled soon in order to carry on in the work of the ministry. It is either (at this point in time, as a result of their estrangement) that these women had relaxed in zeal or were pursuing the same goal in contradictory ways. None of these promoted the work and that caused enough fear for Paul.⁸¹ His reminiscence of happy relationship prompted his concern that the present disunity might be ended so that faithful Christian activity could continue and flourish.

Disunity

Disunity is not a foreign issue to the Christian scriptures. In actual fact, the entire Bible presents diverse aspects of it. For the church today, disunity is very common. Its presence in the church is not a signal of weakness of the Church or that of church leadership or even lack of spiritual slackness.⁸²

Occasions of lack of unity are a part of human society, the church not excluded.⁸³ The biblical occasions of disunity and its management have both undesirable and desirable

effects; without unity and harmony, true spiritual influence cannot be released.”⁸⁴ When disunity is unsettled it can hamper harmony that can convey real spiritual power. Both the Old and New Testaments record immense cases of disunity. Few are presented in this work.

It could be astounding to note that disunity happens in the church as in other secular establishments. The reason being that the church exists in a world which has crept into it so much that disunity is persistent in every sphere. Osei – Mensah observes, “as long as we are on this earth there is a civil war going on”.⁸⁵ The notion of civil war means disagreement in the church situations. He adds, “The Church all too readily begins to copy the world’s models of leadership. Seeing the styles of leadership in the world and the ways in which leaders are chosen there, church members begin to copy these arrangements within the church. The world enters and begins to press the church into its own mold”⁸⁶ The church does not essentially must copy the world no matter how appealing the idea and common sense it holds. The Word of God must remain as the arbiter of our common sense.⁸⁷

2.3 Disunity in the Old Testament Context

The Old Testament serves as the foundational link between it and the New Testament hence there is a long list of instances of disunity therein. The list is inexhaustible but cogent instances are mentioned.

Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1-16)

This disharmony between Cain and Abel was that of jealousy and bias. The root cause of the disagreement was based sacrifice each made to God. The fundamental problem was that Abel’s sacrifice was found satisfactory and was accepted at the expense of Cain’s sacrifice that was rejected by God. The central reason for the refusal of Cain’s sacrifice could be hard to answer. It might be on account “of the time honoured nomad offering of an animal,”⁸⁸ which Abel had no problem providing. Verse 5 literally “the firstborn of his flock and from their fat parts.” Most commentators stressed that Abel’s offering was the best part

and Cain's was not⁸⁹. But Bruce warned that there should not be introduction of any redemptive connotation into the brothers' sacrifices. Both gave of what they had. "Those who see the merit of Abel's sacrifice in the fact that it was bloody certainly do so without the least warrant from the text."⁹⁰

Cain fought with emotional and identity issues. He felt sub-standard and was very angry. His anger heightened into murder because he could not control the situation maturely. The innocent Abel (one can assume that he was not aware that the situation had turned to disunity and he did not know the complexity and the severity of his brother's bitterness) followed Cain to the farm; there he was killed by him. God required an answer from Cain when he (God) asked "where is your brother Abel?" (Gen. 4:9). Regardless of the degree of objection God expected Cain to control the situation maturely instead of the annihilator resolve, but since that was not the case, God cursed him.

Abraham and Lot (Gen. 13:1 – 18, 14:1 – 24)

Abram (being his name before it was changed to Abraham) went to Egypt with his wife and all the people with him. Lot, his nephew, was among those with him. Both Abram and Lot were shepherds. As their livestock multiplied in number, conflict cropped up between Abram's herdsmen and Lot's on the issue of grazing land. Their livestock occupation had become so great that they and their men were getting in each other's neck because they needed more land for grazing. Abram adopted a cooperative character in dealing with this disagreement. He attached very high premium on sustaining a good bond with Lot and he was willing to redirect his own personal goals to preserve the relationship.

Traditionally Abram, as an elder and the leader, had every right to select first but he controlled this crisis sacrificially. He conceded a handful piece of the Promised Land, which belong to him, in order to settle the conflict peacefully.⁹¹

Hence, Lot, though young, was given the privilege of selecting first that which land he would like to have and Abram was prepared to take that which was left.⁹² Because of his big eye he chose the whole well-watered plain of the Jordan which was described “like the garden of the Lord” and “like the land of Egypt” (Gen.13 10).

Lot later fell into great difficulty because of erroneous choice of location and wealth. He was attacked, robbed and carried off by four kings from Mesopotamia. There was no reluctance in Abram’s response to Lot’s dilemma of being taken captives. In spite their earlier disagreement Lot was still like a son to Abram⁹³ He risked his life and servants in order to liberate Lot. He undertook this liberation mission with all it cost to save Lot and his household. Boice observed “Lot put himself in a position to be influenced by the wickedness in the world and to be drawn into God’s judgment by his association with it. Lot eventually lost his possession, his wife, his daughters and his own personal integrity.”⁹⁴

Sarah and Hagar (Gen. 16:1)

The sterility of Sarai stirred her to think that the promise of God to Abram could be achieved through the slave woman, Hagar an Egyptian handmaid to her. She initiated the interest of her husband who in the end consented to sleeping with the slave woman. Hagar was the slave of Sarai. As Hagar’s mistress, she has the right to trade with the slave woman the way she thought fit. Hagar’s problem began when she realised that she was pregnant, she scorned her mistress, causing disunity in the household. Hagar was driven out at the persistence of Sarai but an angel of the Lord appeared to her and sent her back to Sarai and she gave birth to Ishmael.

When Ishmael was fourteen years old, Abraham (Abram now changed to Abraham by God) one hundred years and Sarah (her name was also changed to Sarah by God) ninety, Isaac was born. At a great feast held in connection with Isaac’s weaning, Ishmael sneered at the events (Gen. 21:9), so Sarah maintained that Hagar and her son, Ishmael, be cast out

because she was not happy with the situation. Abraham reluctantly conformed and God guaranteed him that Ismael too would become a nation. There was the likelihood that the more time Sarah and Hagar stayed together after the birth of their sons the greater possibility that conflict would arise. James observed:

The circumstances under which Hagar conceived a son was first suggested by Sarah, but subsequently Sarah had a son and the situation changed in Sarah's mind. Jealousy and the question of inheritance were the two apparent issues that drove Sarah to rid herself of the bondwoman. "Wherefore she said unto Abraham, cast out this bond woman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac" (Gen. 21:10). God told Abraham to resolve the conflict by sending away Hagar and Ishmael into the wilderness. However God did not let them die there. He used Ishmael to develop another great nation, the Arabic.⁹⁵

Abraham could not settle the disagreement between Sarah and Hagar so perpetual parting of both women from each other was God's approval, if not their disagreement would produce a rift so great that it might not be put right.⁹⁶ The loggerhead was an account of suspicion and contention.⁹⁷ It began with the children who were oblivious of what was going on in the whole family. The unreasonable attitude of the blameless children became the ground for the enemy to carry out the bitter envy and hatred. Discord can take its stem from any iota of failure to be conscious of its presence hence there is always the need to nip it at the bud. If it is permitted to remain it can be very harmful to rapport of the groups concern. But much more is its irritation to succeeding generation. "Interpersonal interactions associated with negative relationship include criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling"⁹⁸. Therefore disagreement must be settled and both parties involved should struggle to allow peace to reign because broken relationship promotes a life-long enmity.

Jacob and Esau

Jacob and Esau were sons of Isaac and Rebecca. They were twins. The discord between these twins started from their mother's womb. The process of their birth is very

significant because according to culture to the first belongs the right of inheritance. Hence Esau has that right because he was born first but when they were in the womb Jacob took hold of Esau's heel (Gen.25:26). That gave Jacob the name "tripper" or "supplanter"⁹⁹. Their conflict was of both behavioural and cultural differences as the account in Genesis shows.

When they grew up Esau took to hunting while Jacob was a shepherd. Esau chose hunting and agriculture. Esau concentrated more on the things of the world {He lived for the present).¹⁰⁰ This portrait was demonstrated when he allowed Jacob to have his birth right for a dinner of bread and stew because he was hungry. The scripture says "Esau despised his birthright" (Gen.25:30-34).

Isaac obviously preferred the older son but Rebecca was partial to Jacob. Their discord became heated up when Isaac, their father, became old and blind, sensing that he was about to die, desired to impart the parental blessing on Esau who was still his favorite son. So he asked Esau to prepare a favourite dish, telling him that after eating it he would pronounce the blessing. But the blessing was never for Esau because Jacob came again with his manipulation. He deceived his father to claim the blessing of Esau. So the blessing attached to birth right went to Jacob instead of Esau. It must be noted that the action of Jacob was perpetrated by Rebecca their mother. According to Madsen:

When Isaac became about 130 years old and his sons than 70, the time was right for the bestowal of the birthright blessing. Rebecca felt the blessing should not go to Esau, that he would not perform it as he should, and remembering God's word that "the older shall serve the younger" implemented a plan to ensure that her worthy son, Jacob, would receive it {Gen 27:6-10). Yet Jacob was hesitant to participate in the plan, so his mother reply, "upon me be thy curse, my son, only obey my voice" (Gen.23:13). Thus, by pretending to be his brother, Jacob received the birth right blessing from his father that his brother had promised him years earlier.¹⁰¹

When it was dawn on Esau that Issaac had blessed Jacob he too entreated his father for his own blessing. He got it but the blessing still placed him under Jacob his brother. He

did not like this blessing because it made him the servant of his brother. Esau was greatly agrieved he decided to retaliate. He vowed to kill Jacob. Any crack that may have existed between them was now a chasm.¹⁰² Rebecca regreted the outcome of her action and knowing fully well that Esau would kill Jacob persuaded Isaac to send Jacob to Laban her brother for safety. Jacob was to marry from Laban's family. Jacob ultimately fled to Haran where he worked for Laban his uncle for many years.

When he got to Haran he met Rachel at a well. She made known to him that she was the daughter of Laban. He too introduced himself to Rachel, watered her flock and went home with her to Laban (Gen.29:1-14). He desired to marry Rachel for a contract of seven years but Leah was given to him at the end of the seventh year (Gen.29:15-30) because he was cheated. So he had to work for another seven years if he wanted Rachel, which he did.

God blessed Jacob in Haran. "Then in a visit from an angel of the Lord, Jacob was commanded to return to his birthright land" (see Gen.31:11-13).¹⁰³ The only obstacle was his brother Esau, whose birthright he stole and on account of which he became a sojourner in Haran. Madsen stressed:

Supposing that his brother's former frame of mind still prevailed, Jacob sent messengers to Esau with a friendly greeting. They returned with word that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 armed men (Gen.32:6). "Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed" (Gen.32:7). Since God had given the direction, Jacob appealed to him in fervent prayer for protection¹⁰⁴

Jacob set his family in files of different¹⁰⁵ parts in order to meet his thought-to-be angry twin brother who was offended two decades ago. It was going to be a get-together with unclear result. As Esau moved close, Jacob, accompanied by his wives and children went to meet his brother, bowing seven times as he went, a sign of respect for his brother. Esau met Jacob with joy {Gen.33:4}, he had indeed buried his resentment, and forgotten all his injuries. Esau demonstrated forgiveness. Esau hugged him and fell on his neck and kissed him and wept. They discussed about their experience and about the lovely family of Jacob.

Esau refunded Jacob's gifts which were sent to pacify him but Jacob maintained that he received all. So Esau in the end agreed, for according to custom, the receipt of gift indicated a reliable friendship had been formed. In spite of their past, they now saw they could be friends. When their father died they came together to bury him.¹⁰⁶

Jacob calmed down the stormy ocean by his meek method to Esau. Not only Jacob, but the whole of his family bowed to Esau. Getting together and recognising each other as brothers is the true measure to resolving conflict. Both of them had to forgo one thing or the other. Their get-together was sincere and passionate. Hostility disappeared and permanent peace was restored. This approach is useful in the present-day church to settle issue of rift fight and disharmony.

Joseph and his brother

Joseph was the child of Jacob; the second to the last child whose mother was Rachel whose love caused Jacob another seven years of servitude after being betrayed by Laban to have Leah instead. Joseph was born when his father was ninety years old. He was his father's much-loved child because he was Rachel's child and the son of his old age. It was possible that Jacob shifted to Joseph the affection he had for Rachel; Benjamin was the younger brother of Joseph. His birthday was always a recap of his brother's death because his mother died at his birth.

Reiss observed:

Joseph being the son of the loved and his dead wife was set apart from his brothers. As we shall see, he developed an exaggerated sense of grandeur and entitlement, with an indifference to the feeling of others. Jacob's partiality toward Joseph brought rift and discord in the family as his mother Rebecca helped create the conflict between Jacob and his brother Esau as well as with Isaac their father¹⁰⁷.

Joseph came to be his father's favourite and this was very obvious to others. The father's discrimination was shown in his giving for Joseph a garment of sundry colors which was a sign of rank, demonstrating that it was his plan to make Joseph the head of the tribe¹⁰⁸

For this reason “the trouble within the family is made clear: they hated him and could not speak with calm with him”¹⁰⁹

Their bad disposition got increased when he somewhat incautiously told them two dreams he had that were indicative of his coming prominence and their subservience to him. “Shall you rule over us?” expressed their hatred of him. His brothers were envious of him and would not speak a gentle word with him. They nicknamed him a dreamer; contrived to kill him but ultimately sold him in spite of his entreating. When they stated the lie of his death to Jacob, their father, they talk about as “your son” {Gen.37:19, 26-28, 31-32} instead of “our brother.” There was no love reserved for Joseph.¹¹⁰

No doubt Joseph lacked maturity and diplomacy: he could also be unaware of the seriousness of the adverse consequences of his father’s favouritism because when his father sent him to check on his brothers he without reservation obliged. When he appeared at a distance they decided they have had enough of him and contrived to kill him. But Reuben saved them of homicide. They hurled him into an empty well and later sold him to some Midianite traders who in turn sold him to a military officer in Egypt called Potiphar. The Lord blessed the officer because of Joseph. Potiphar, having tried and accepted Joseph’s uprightness, made him head of his family. But Joseph came across another trial in Potiphar’s house: his wife fell in love with Joseph but Joseph being a Godly man, could not assent to all her schemes. One day she finally desired to forcefully drag Joseph into the act. Joseph ran away, releasing his shirt in her hands. She then turned the table against Joseph in order to escape humiliation. She asserted that it was Joseph who desired to rape her. Potiphar did not kill Joseph but placed him in prison. But godly interference took Joseph out of prison to the Pharaoh of Egypt’s palace as the second in command to Pharaoh. Joseph ultimately met his brothers. He showed himself to them and pardoned them. His attitude led to reunion of Jacob and his sons in Egypt where they dwelled in the area of Goshen. Joseph referred to his

suffering and dilemma as being designed by God for the purpose of preserving a nation from annihilation. This discord could be termed sibling rivalry; it was caused by parental preferential treatment. But unity was achieved by the unconditional love and forgiveness exhibited by Joseph.

Moses, Miriam and Aaron

Moses, Miriam and Aaron were children of the same parents, Amram and Jochebed of the tribe of Levi. Moses was appointed of God to take the Israelites out from Egypt to the Promised Land. Miriam was the elder sister of Moses and Aaron. She displayed fear and intelligence on behalf of her infant brother, Moses, when he was found in the Nile by the Egyptian princess (Ex 2:4, 7, and 8). She appeared by name first in Exodus 15:20 where she is entitled a prophetess and identified as the sister of Moses. She led the Israelite women in a song of praise after crossing the Red Sea (Ex. 15:20-21). Aaron was three years older than Moses (Ex.7:7). His name was first mentioned in God's assignment to Moses when the latter complained that he did not have adequate skill in public speaking to assume the work to Pharaoh. God affirmed that Aaron should be presenter for his brother (Ex. 4:10-16).

Miriam and Aaron joined together and criticized Moses for his marriage to a Gentile woman, called a "Cushite woman" (Num. 12:1-2). Underlining this personal slight was a more serious threat to Moses' position. Aaron was high priest and thus the highest religious leader of Israel; Miriam was a prophetess (Exo.15:20). The ground issue is not who Moses had married but whether Moses could any longer be regarded the sole authoritative representative of God¹¹¹ as Aaron and Miriam said "hasn't he spoken through us?" (Num. 12:2). It is on account of this basic contest to Moses' God- given status that we must comprehend and appreciate the swift and dramatic reaction of God in solving this problem of discord (Numb 12:4ff). God reproved Miriam and Aaron for speaking in contradiction of Moses, his servant. Moses mediated; but not until Miriam was leprous for seven days before

God answered favorably his mediation. Moses was justified by God as his absolute representative. “This issue is settled by a decree from God which affirms the uniqueness and superiority of Moses as a mediator of revelation”¹¹²

Saul, David and Jonathan

Saul was the first king of Israel, a son of Kish. He appeared in 1Samuel 9 after the Israelites had asked Samuel for a king. David was the youngest son of Jesse of Bethlehem, (1Sam. 16:10-11). He established in strength, bravery and attraction while caring for his father’s sheep (16:12; 17:34-36). When God rejected Saul, the prophet Samuel search for David and in secret anointed him as Israel’s next king. Jonathan the oldest son of Saul, the first king of Israel (1 Sam 14:47) came on the scene after his father was capped king of Israel. He was the bosom friend of David.

The incident that led to the rift among Saul, David and Jonathan was set on motion when the Israelites revealed their disapproval of theocracy. Negligence on the part of Eli and the insignificance of Eli’s son played a vital role towards this decision. Samuel’s children too were not suitable. The Israelites was left with no option than to request for a human leader like other bordering nations. Samuel was slow but God acceded to their request. He (God) told Samuel to accept Israel’s demand for a king to rule over them. ” Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.” Warning about the problematic life style of a monarch was not enough to discourage them. “No! They said, we want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations with a king to lead us and go out before us and fight our battles.” Finally God directed Samuel to elect Saul, son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Saul seemed “an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites- a head taller than any of the others.” He fit the portrait of a king that Israel was looking for, at least on the outside. But Saul’s puzzling behaviour expressed a person with inner struggles. Rather

than depending on God for his strength, he was full of self-doubt. Beneath this self-doubt was a lack of trust and commitment to God.

A military crisis with Philistines exposed defects in the character of Saul. When Samuel was late in coming to make sacrifice before the battle, Saul assumed to present the offering himself. He found himself in the sort of condition that forced the severest pressures on a man of his personality. Saul had an order to go ahead of Samuel to Gilgal where he (Samuel) would sacrifice both burnt and fellowship offerings but Saul “must wait seven days” for Samuel to arrive (1 Sam 10: 8). The solution is a resolute strength of mind to obey such command of God as touched the situation. But his sin was that he heeded to the voice of his own self-doubt rather than to the simple word of God. For this the honour of establishing a dynasty was taken away from him (1 Sam 13; 13-14). From the human angle, Saul was challenging the military supremacy of the Philistines but his religious understanding should have taught him compliance to God’s commands.¹¹³

In the end God acknowledged the “man after his own heart,” as David, son of Jesse, of the tribe of Judah. David had the necessary meekness. He acknowledged God as the basis of his strength. When David sinned he showed unpretentious repentance but Saul shifted blames. “When I saw that the men were scattering and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash and I thought; now the philistines will come down against me at Gilgal and I have not sought the face of the Lord. So I felt duty-bound to offer the burnt offering”¹¹⁴

Watchman added:

On another occasion, Saul failed to obey the Lord’s instructions regarding the Amalekites. Samuel said to Saul, I am the one the Lord sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the Lord. This is what the Lord almighty says; I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do

not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys (1 Sam 15; 1-3) ¹¹⁵

Saul did the opposite. Though he demolished the inhabitants, he freed the king. He kept the best of the livestock. When Samuel challenged him, he lied. Upon realising that his games were up he restructured his disobedience with religious insincerity- that the livestock were set aside by his followers for sacrifice unto the God of Israel.

Samuel professed that God's interest and pleasure was obedience and not in burnt offering. Since Saul had rejected God's word he also had disallowed him from being king over his people, Israel. All the appeal of Saul was not acknowledged by Samuel who stated that since Saul had torn his robes, (he held Samuel's robes in an effort to prevent him from turning away from him) Saul's kingdom had also been torn from him and given to another person.

Saul's rebellion caused the disharmony between Saul and David and between Saul and Jonathan, Saul's son. David came into the scene in 1Samuel16. He was anointed by Samuel as future king and was presented to court life by selection as court musician to play the lyres for Saul when the king was tortured by an evil spirit. After David defeated Goliath, David was again presented before Saul and was signalled by the women of Israel as a greater hero than Saul. Envy, hatred and fear led Saul to direct and indirect efforts against David's life (1 Sam 18:10-11; 21; 19:1-11), and culminated into the hide-and seek chase that twice drove David into Philistine's territory (1 Sam 21: 10; 27:14).

Jonathan's love for David arose the day the two first saw after killing of Goliath (1 Sam 18;1-4), and it remained unwavering despite Saul's idea that David would someday be king in their stead (1 Sam 20;31). Jonathan demonstrated all that is decent in friendship – warmth of affection, selflessness, usefulness and trustworthiness.¹¹⁶ When he first understood his father's hatred towards David he mediated for his friend (I Sam.19:1-7) and later more than once he endangered his life for him. Once, Saul, angered by what he viewed as unfilial

conduct, threw a javelin at him as he had done several times against David. His fair-mindedness and readiness to submit all claims to the throne for the sake of his friend gives proof of a character that is unparalleled. Jonathan would not take part in the scheduled of his father against David who was forced to live in hiding.

Jonathan and David desired peace with Saul, but Saul would not humble himself. At the end of the day Saul died together with Jonathan and his brothers on mount Gilboa in battle against the Philistines (1 Sam 31:2). David later search for the kindred of Saul's family for national admiration and Mephibosheth was the beneficiary of the honour because he was of Saul's lineage, of course Saul's son. Patience, faith and obedience on the side of David afforded him God's intervention as he passed through the suffering of discord under King Saul.

2.4 Disunity in the New Testament Context

Division between the Grecian Jews and the Hebraic Jews

The Grecian Jews are the same as Hellenists while the Hebraic Jews are known as the Hebrews. These terms definitely denote a language based division between the two groupings of converts in the Jerusalem church. The Hellenists are Jews whose chief language is Greek and the Hebrew are Jews whose main language is Hebrew or Aramaic.¹¹⁷

Population outburst in the church led to more mouths to be fed by the church but the big question is why discrimination?" Judaism had a system for the supply of food to the poor. The early Christian communities at Jerusalem likewise showed their spiritual unison in the communal sharing of possession and in benevolent acts (cf. Acts 2. 44-45; 32-5; 11). So the issue about the sharing of food may not have been all that disturbed the fellowship. It is likely that it was only indicators of earlier biases of cultural difference between the Jews and the Greeks.

The Grecian Jews complained that their widows were being abandoned in the daily sharing of food. The apostle's answer in this matter was to call the Christians together and recommended a solution. It is noteworthy that the apostles were not ready simply to disregard the problem; they seem to have understood that spiritual and material needs are so closely connected in Christian experience that one always touch the other for better or worse. Also, no fault was assigned, they proposed that seven men "full of the Holy spirit and wisdom" be selected from among the congregation (apparently only from among the congregation of the Hellenists) who could take charge in the affair. The apostles would give their devotion totally "to prayer and ministry of the word."¹¹⁸ To the suggestion made by the apostles, the Christian community unanimously selected seven men. Through laying- on of hands by the apostles, they were commissioned to be in charge of the daily sharing of food.

From this resolution to early church emergency we notice that the early church took earnestly the blend of spiritual and material matters in carrying out its God-given ministry. So also the early church was enthusiastically ready to modify its actions after its organizational structure and advance new posts of duty in response to existing encounters for the sake of harmony and growth. Much more the leadership in order to uphold unity in the church declined to get involved in the practice of assigning faults where things have gone wrong. They also declined to become authoritarian in resolving problems which infers a readiness to turn the necessary power for working out resolutions over to others. Centred on the instance here, those to be loaded with such duty of providing answer should be those who experience the problem most actively.

Paul and Barnabas

Paul and Barnabas were appointed by the church at Antioch to go on mission work {Acts.13:1ff). They took John Mark along with them at the second phase of their missionary journey. John Mark was first talk about in Act 12; 12 in link with Peter's incarceration. It was

in John Mark's mother's house that the church was praying for the discharge of Peter. Peter was freed and he made straight to this house. This afforded him the chance to accompany them on their missionary journey as their assistant (Acts.13:5). At Perga and Pamphilia, John abandoned his friends and went returned home to Jerusalem. This choice was probably owing to a mixture of homesickness, fear of dangers in the hilly country into the future as well as innocence. Afterwards Paul and Barnabas were preparing the second missionary journey and John Mark desired to go with them (Act.15:36ff).

Should they take Mark along with them this time? Barnabas says "Yes, let us give him another chance" Paul says "over my dead body" The two Christian leaders can't agree and end up going their separate ways. Christian leaders can sometimes find themselves in conflict with one another, and it is pointless to pretend otherwise. Some kind of disagreement need to be faced up to and thrashed out.¹¹⁹

Earlier on before this development, there had been an argument about the gospel- the question of standards for Gentile participation in the church. Must the Gentiles be circumcised as enshrined in the Law of Moses before they could be saved? Paul and Barnabas decided together and refuted this bad teaching that unless the Gentiles are circumcised they could not be saved (Acts 15:5, 12-13). The advancement of the gospel could have crumbled had this wrong teaching not been rectified.

Some of the disagreements in the wider church today are like that. Is there one God, or Mary? Is Jesus the way, the truth and the life, and does no-one come to the father except through him? Is there forgiveness through the blood of Christ? Will he come again in glory? These are not trivial pursuits. They belong to the very heart of the Christian faith. Such things are not negotiable and compromise is not an option. In such matters, we all have a responsibility to stand up for the truth, and to oppose falsehood.¹²⁰

But here Paul and Barnabas' difference over Mark is not the same. It is not a disagreement over dogma but about how and who. Must we take Mark with us? There is repeatedly no easy response to such questions. It is not an instance of true or false, right or wrong but of individual fondness and personality. Paul might be thoughtful of the labour

ahead and determined that Mark would not be practical. Barnabas was concentrating on useful-ability of Mark- “let us give him another chance to redeem himself.”

Paul maintained that Mark should not go along with them. “The divergence became so severe that they separated company.”¹²¹ Barnabas took his cousin, John Mark, and they left for Cyprus. Paul took another friend, Silas, and headed back to new churches in Asia Minor. Luke never references Barnabas again. All his devotion was on Paul’s work.

Mark later surfaced in Rome where he was a companion of Paul: (Phile.24). He was commended to the church at Colosse (Col.4:10). Here he was addressed as the cousin of Barnabas. Paul insisted on Timothy to take along John Mark with him to Rome for he (John) was suitable for the work of the gospel (II Tim. 4:11). Though Paul and Barnabas differed they agreed that their friendship must exceed disagreement and indignant frame of mind. In his letter, Paul underscored unity in the body of Christ. We cannot evade people like Paul who will not grant a second chance to a stumbling brother or sister though he learned his lesson later because he endured Timothy. If rift will not be permitted to lead to disagreement we need more of “sons of encouragement” (like Barnabas) to sustain unity in the church.

Disunity in the church of Corinth

The record of Paul’s appearance in Corinth was seen in Acts 18 on his first missionary journey. He departed from Athens where he was not accorded good reception and he started his mission work in Corinth with a sense of softness, fear and quivering (I Corinth 2:3). He remained there for one and a half years preaching. At his first appearance he became familiar with Aquila (wife) and Priscilla (husband). They were Christians and of the similar occupation with Paul (tent making). Additional great church member, Appolos, a convert of Aquila and Priscilla, at Ephesus, was sent to Corinth from Ephesus with a letter of commendation, and he exercised an persuasive ministry there in Corinth (Acts 18:27 – 28, I Cor. 1:12).

The city of Corinth in Roman times was recognised for its prosperity, extravagance and immorality. It was unequal as a city of vice. “To live like a Corinthian” meant to live a life of recklessness and debauchery.¹²² After Paul departed Corinth he was informed by the servants of Chloe that all was not well in the church (I Cor. 1:11), there were parties; and this news produced in him much pain and apprehension. He then wrote to speak on these subjects that were hindering the peaceful environment of the church.

In the first four chapters the apostle addressed the stated factionalism in the church and points out the shame of party spirits. The problem was that the church broke into groups along the line of initial main workers in the church with the exemption of Jesus Christ whose followership was on the source of his being the author of the church. Some said I belong to Paul, some Apollos; some Peter and others Jesus. The foundation of this problem might be Apollos’ systems and gifts of presenting the gospel which was certainly quite dissimilar from Paul and by this he put the sway of his style of thought on many who heard him (I Cor. 3:4).

Paul, no doubt, was very well educated and exceptionally well read. He could quote the renowned Greek poets and writers. Nevertheless, he was no orator. He termed himself as a feeble speaker (I Cor. 2:1 – 4; II Cor. 10:10; 11:6).¹²³ This would have worked against him in a Greek city like Corinth which ascribed great worth on oratory and skilled oral rhetoric. Although Paul’s letters displayed great skill in the use of Greek rhetoric in writing but, that he was not capable to transfer this proficiency by speech to the equal level of skill worked against him. Contrariwise, Apollos was undoubtedly a great orator.

Based on this problem over oration, Paul in his letter to the Corinthian Church made a great prominence on vanity of worldly wisdom as contrasting worldly wisdom. Paul was trying to enlighten that their cultural values which esteemed oratory highly didn’t matter to God. He recapped that Christ only was their master, Christian teachers being only servants of Christ and fellow workers with God.

It gives the impression that Apollos was well aware of the strain because of his oratory abilities and Paul's lack of the equivalent. Hence he felt hesitant to visit Corinth, and this might be due to the dust of factionalism that had been outstretched in Corinthian church. This depicted Apollos a man of inordinate wisdom and meekness. He could have taken the chance to go and adore the admiration that attended his articulateness, but he wisely stayed out of trouble so that dispute in the church would not lead to fragmentation.

James and John versus other Disciples (Mk. 10:35 – 45; Mk. 20:28)

Zebedee appeared a successful fisherman; James and John were his sons. They were Peter's acquaintances and these were the trio that attained in some sense a place of pre-eminence among Jesus' disciples. It was these same James and John that Jesus nicknamed "Boanerges" ("Sons of thunder" Mark 3:17) when they were scolded by Jesus for rashness based on their submission that Jesus should put an end to a Samaritan village whose inhabitants had rejected the emissaries of Jesus (Luk 9:54). Their assumption and ill-considered thinking were clear again at this case when they asked for a place of reputation in the kingdom of Jesus. Jesus' answer to their demand for places of glory in the coming kingdom was in question. He asked if they could partake in his cup and baptism. The image here probably refers to extreme suffering and death. "Cup" in the Old Testament refers to divine punishment (cf Psalm 75:8), or the image may refer to great suffering (cf. Mk. 14: 36). The verb "baptize" can refer to being overcome or flooded with calamities. Similar idea is in Ps. 42:7; Isa. 43:2).¹²⁴

James and John's response was that they were able. They were told by Jesus that they would surely suffer but as for their demand Jesus apportioned this right to God; "not for me to grant" (Mt. 10:23).¹²⁵ But when the rest disciples heard about this development, they were incensed with James and John. Jesus then brought them together to educate them on what greatness is. He said that the Gentile rulers treasured being in charge ("Lord it over and

exercise power over.”).¹²⁶ But, contrarily, this is not the way they would achieve greatness as true followers of Jesus. The way to greatness was by self-effacing service. Even the son of man (Jesus) was not let off from the law of humble service in the kingdom. He was in fact per distinction the example of it. He did not come as a sovereign who’s every personal urge was to be gratified by groveling servants. Inversely, he came to offer his life a payment for the salvation of those who would believe him.

Jesus appeased this strain of dissonance by calling all of them together to enlighten them that true greatness rests not in having a position of power over others, but in being the slave of all. Their method of leadership should not be regarded as inordinate ambition but that of contemplation for the welfare of others.

Conclusion

An essential feature of the church’s witness to the larger society is demonstrating the unity that is vital to the church and is God’s objective for humankind. Unity is not predominantly something visible. Simply assembling a large number of people together into one place does not establish unity. The nature of unity that God requires goes much deeper than visible appearances. He longs for unity that ensues right from the heart. Therefore if such unity will be experienced the hearts must be right before God and right with fellow members also. The unity God desires was initiated by him. This unity is already offered by him as part of what he did for human salvation in order to achieve an eternal community. It is the unity concerning him and Jesus. Furthermore this unity of God and Jesus is presented as the image and goal of unity among believers.¹²⁸ On account of this, the church must be one also. No wonder Paul unmistakably named disunion a sin in Galatians 5: 19-21.

Unity is already given by God in the best significant things. Partaking in these essential things gives comprehensive and robust grounds for unity. Considering what unites, the things that divide appear less intimidating. They may be vital in themselves, but the

things that divide believers are not nearly as significant as what unites; these are, one God, one Lord, one Spirit, one body, one faith, one baptism, and one hope. There needs to be a resolve to unity as Paul taught the Corinthians to reach agreement with one another as remedy to disunity, and that they might be faultlessly united in mind and thought (1 Cor 1: 10). Where the determination to unity is weak or lacking, nearly anything can be divisive. Where the motivation for unity is solid, even major disparities can be resolved or controlled in such a way as to avoid division. Personal jealousy, self-centredness and arrogance can all be upsetting factors in believers' lives, quite apart from real moral or doctrinal errors, but if Christ is the only reason for wanting to go on living on earth, if he is the pattern of humble-mindedness, and if he is acknowledged as the all-sufficient power of believers, then the root causes of personal disunity in the local assembly fellowship should be uprooted. Then the assembly will be capable of giving visible local expression to the world around it of that wonderful mystery of the church universal as the body of Christ. Hence the mind and thought should be persuaded towards humility and tenderness with patience, bearing with one another in love.¹²⁹

Disunity strains association, causes unfriendliness, hinders progress and stimulates disagreement and if not nip in the bud on time and appropriately, may lead to division and enmity. Causes of disunity are multidimensional but they can be grouped under three categories. The first is disagreement. Where agreement is absent regular fellowship will not be possible. Deviation shows itself in diverse ways such as selfish ambition, hatred, conceit, bitterness, jealousy and devouring. The second kind is doctrinal dissimilarities. This appears largely in the New Testament. Although the same gospel is proclaimed but responses to it varied. The responses express different understandings which lead to opposing declarations which culminate in imbalances and distortions. The consequential effects are divisions and factions just like the Corinthian Christians; lastly, lack of care. A characteristic example is the

rift between the Grecian or Hellenists and the Jews in Acts 6. The vents of this class of discord are complaints, grumbling and organizational regression.

Unity on the other hand inspires progress. This shows itself as follows:

(a). It removes impossibilities. A typical example is the building of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 where God himself perceived that should the people building the tower be allowed to continue, nothing would be difficult for them to do. Paul also warns the Philippian Christians to be of one mind and to agree among themselves so that the progress attained in the church will not be curtailed.

(b). It puts in force the concept of variety in unity. Just like human body which is made up of different parts, though different from each other they function and operate together for the well-being of the body. Some parts are to be covered; some are seen, while some are obscured within. Unity calls for all components in the church to work together with their interdependence so as to accomplish the same purpose which is the oneness of the church. So denominations, organizations, association and fellowships should work in partnership to support this unity.

(c). It encourages Christian testimony. If common agreement is expressed on issues that divide, for example doctrinal, a rapport of ecclesiastical fellowship is put in place by which official exchange of thoughts takes place including exchange of delegates at the meetings of inter- denominational assembly. The preaching of the gospel will fetch more converts to the church because there is a evidence of unity. The church will not feel pain of ridicule as a result of the church not assenting together, the result is good testimony as Jesus will be adored.¹³⁰

Hence dialogue makes relationship interesting because it does not only make public the intimacy of what two people share in common, but gives hints of unexplored mystery of each. Mutual consciousness and sense of fulfillment are basic requirements for a happy

organization, especially the church. To successfully co-exist, the church like a family must learn to pay attention to each other in the membership. It means giving one's full consideration to another in an atmosphere of love, helpfulness and understanding

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CHAPTER THREE

3.0 PHILIPPI IN THE LIGHT OF ITS BACKGROUND

3.1 Philippi: The City

Philippi is located in the North-eastern corner of Macedonia, about ten miles inland from the Aegean Sea on a plain bounded by mountains. Its strategic location made it into a cosmopolitan city. Its earliest name was Krenides¹ The first-century city was not large: a conventional estimate would be about 10,000 inhabitants.² But the population of the modern village called Fillippi could be said to be about 60,000 people and is easily dwarfed by bustling Kavala (its harbour town at Neapolis now modern Kavalla)³ which today is said to be the second largest city in Greek Macedonia and the diocesan headquarters of the Greek Orthodox archbishop of Philippi, Neapolis and Thasos.⁴ The city was perfectly placed for trade links and especially for agriculture, together with grain and wine for which the area around Philippi had long been famous.

The city was founded by Greek Colonists from the Island of Thasos in the early fourth century B.C., it was then fortified and provided with a garrison of Macedonians as a military stronghold by Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, having annexed it to the nearby Pangaeus where silver and gold mines were found. Royal coins issued after 356 BC first called the city 'Philippou.' Two Centuries later (168 BC) Perseus, the last king of Macedon was defeated by the Roman army at Pydna, South of Thessalonica. From then on, Philippi was amalgamated into the first four Macedonian regions (Acts 16:12) and became a way-station through Egnatia. At Neapolis travellers could make their journey faster by taking a boat directly to Troas in Asia Minor or vice versa, as Paul does in Acts 16:11.⁵

In 42 B.C. Philippi was captured by Mark Anthony with the help of Octavian (Emperor Augustus) when they defeated the Roman Republican forces of Brutus and Cassius who assassinated Julius Caesar. and settled his disbanded war veterans there. By 30 BC

Octavian in turn defeated Anthony and took the city and consolidated his grip on it by setting his war veterans there also. He later brought settlers from Rome to the city. He made it a Roman colony in gratitude for the help the Philippians rendered in the capture of the province.

The prestige of a Roman Colony then was like a piece of Rome abroad having virtually everything in it as a Roman. Its Colonists did not consist only of citizenship but extensive property and legal rights, and they were relieved of poll taxes and land taxation. In reciprocation, the colony carefully upheld and groomed its image as a city loyal to the emperor's power in both government and religion. The colony was not only Roman on citizenship and political loyalties, but even the system of local government was patterned on that of Rome itself, with two magistrates at the head.⁶

Its Citizens

The aristocracy, then, were categorically Roman and Latin speaking. Nonetheless, Thracians, Greeks and other nationalities of the region were also living in the area. They probably were largely agricultural workers or skilled tradesmen, retainers or slaves, and foreign merchants. They made up the bulk of the region's population, and the city's culture and language began to give way to the growing impact of Greek from the third century.⁷ Greek speakers comprised the skilled labourers who worked as construction workers and as stonemasons in the local marble quarries. Based on the inscriptional evidence, Philippi, like many ancient Hellenistic cities, had its purple dyers and traders in purple goods. There is every likelihood that purple which was a highly priced dye came from certain marine molluscs natives to the eastern Mediterranean.⁸ Lydia, who appeared to be the leader of Paul's first group of women converts, was one such merchant (Acts 16:14), having moved from Thyatira in the area of Lydia. It is unlikely that she was the only native of that city in that region, since Thessalonian inscriptions attested to purple dealers from Thyatira.⁹ Lydia's

trade must have been giving her a sort of modest social and economic independence. This is established by the hospitality she was able to give to the church. This may bear witness to the moderately noticeable status of women in Mediterranean and in Thyatira, where some are shown to be holding responsibility in municipal government and in athletic contests.¹⁰

Lydia appeared to be a god-fearer (Acts 16:14) by being conversant with the Jewish community in her home town,¹¹ worthy of noting is also Jewish membership of the association of purple – dyers at Hierapolis.¹² The presence of Gentile ‘god fearers’ who are sympathetic to Judaism used to generate controversy but it appears now to have been unequivocally established by an engraving discovered at Aphrodisias in Caria, now South West Turkey,¹³ likewise at Rome.

Greek language and culture continued to regain prevalence in Philippi in the third century. This shows that in some ways Latin was more or less an official culturally fashionable veneer. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that by the time Paul wrote Philippians, the citizenship, language, culture and religion of Rome had been the city’s prevailing public frame of reference for over a century. The significance of this fact in the story of Acts 16 is powerfully evident. Luke’s distinctive identification of the city with the Latin borrowed word ‘Kolonias’ corroborates this¹⁴

3.1.2 Religious Life of the People

Pagan Religion

Paul wrote to a Roman Colony in which Jewish presence was questionable and if any, was negligibly small. Consequently, the religious background of the Philippian church becomes an interesting subject. Even though Roman influence was very strong, the religious life of Philippi in Paul’s day portrayed the inhabitants to be quite mixed in their background. The city was known for a good number of diverse divinities and cults. Monuments of the imperial cult were noticeable with reference made of the priests of Divus (‘the deified’) Julius,

Divus Augustus and Divus Claudius.¹⁵ Greek gods who had their altars and temples in Philippi since the arrival of colonists from Thasos in the fourth century B. C. were identified by their Latin colleagues, especially Jupiter (who was identified with the Greek Zeus), while Juno, Minerva under the name Bendis is attested to by Herodotus¹⁶ and was mainly focused on fertility rites in an agricultural community. There were sanctuaries to gods from Egypt, particularly Isis, and Serapis, as well as to the Phrygian Cybele, recognised as the great mother-goddess. The religious tone at the time of Paul was syncretic, though the official imperial religion appeared central. There is no evidence that the Jewish community is large. Philippi was a Colony; not a commercial centre – since there was no steady synagogue congregation, rather Paul found a casual meeting place out of the city by the river Gangites, the prayer place for many women on the Sabbath. (Acts 16:13).¹⁷

Three other religious forces exercise their impacts on the popular religion of Romans, Greeks and Thracians at Philippi: (i) The unofficial ‘folk religion’ of the typically Roman deity Silvanus, almost entirely a cult for lower class Roman men (ii) The local cult of Dionysus was long situated in the region of Philippi and on Mt. Pangaion. This cult offered the god’s devotees a life of everlasting happiness after death; (iii) The well – confirmed cult of the prominent native deity known as the Thracian Rider or ‘Aulonite Hero’ (typically portrayed as a knight on horseback).¹⁸ Consequent upon this observation we may say that widely significant religious cults such as these would have been recognised and practised along with the official religion. It is even fascinating to note that there was a Philippian coin that showed the Thracian Rider on one side and the ‘divine’ Emperor Augustus (inscribed *Divo Augusto*) on the other side found in the 1980s at Thasos. Of great significance also was Paul’s missionary companion Silvanus (Silas) who was evidently named after the popular Roman deity. Women were also glaringly connected with pagan religion. Portefaux and Abrahamsen’s works have proved the prominence of women in the Philippian cults of Diana,

Dionysus and Isis. Precisely noted is the second and third-century rock reliefs at the acropolis which gave proof both of women's importance in the cult normally, and of their identification with the divine huntress Diana in the hope of sharing in her transcendent life.¹⁹ These works from Portefaux and Abrahamsen have helpfully drawn attention to the public validation of women's religious experiences and responsibilities in Roman Philippi.

Judaism

The letter of Paul to Philippi endorses the notion that the local Jewish presence was either non-existent or negligible in significance. In fact there is no written or archaeological indication of a resident Jewish community at Philippi, and no hint of a Synagogue or even of Jewish homes. Much more, Paul's polemical words about Judaising opponents in Philippians 3:2 concern an intimidation which, although familiar to his readers, is at present likely rather than real, and which is focused on individuals arriving from elsewhere, either directly from Palestine or via Jewish communities in places like Thessalonica (Phil. 1:28, 3:2, Acts 17:5–7).²⁰

The account in Acts 16 offers the suggestion of a Jewish community but this cannot be validated. Paul and his team seemingly found only a small group of God – fearing Gentile women gathered in an admittedly identified Jewish place of prayer outside the city walls (a *proseuche* Acts 16:13, 16). Considerably, Luke refers to synagogues of the Jews' at Salamis (Acts 13:5), Pisidian Antioch (13:14, and Iconium (14:13, Thessalonica (Acts 17:11), Beroea (17:10), Athens (17:17) and Corinth (18:4,7) but at Philippi as indeed at Lystra and Derbe (14:8 – 21), he never states either of Jews or of a Synagogue. The word *proseuche* did of course commonly indicate a building used for prayer to the God of the Jews, in general in the Diaspora.²¹ Everywhere else in Luke's own writings, however, *proseuche* means an act rather than a place of prayer. His usage in Act 16, therefore, may well suggest that he does not consider the Philippian site to be a 'synagogue of the Jews' properly speaking, and perhaps

that he nevertheless accepts the local Philippian designation used by his source. The Philippian *proseuche* for him was certainly a place that one ‘entered’ (Acts 16:16), although perhaps not necessarily a formal building. Whichever way, Luke’s constant interest in Paul’s contact with Synagogues makes it noteworthy that he fails to mention either ‘Jews’ or ‘Synagogue’ in his account of the central Pauline mission to Philippi, about which he seems in other respect to be extraordinarily well informed.

From the proof thus far accessible it would appear that there was at best only a negligible Jewish existence in first century Philippi. This opinion should not pose any surprise— Philippi was a somewhat small and primarily agricultural colony rather than a major commercial or military centre, so there is no obvious reason why substantial numbers of Jews should have been enticed to settle there. Those who met in the *proseuche* were seemingly a group of women, only one of whom is even clearly described as a ‘god-fearer’ (Acts 16:14). No Jews are talked about, and no men (we cannot rule out some), so that we cannot even be sure of what at least in Palestine would later be considered a full Jewish congregation with at least ten men making a quorum. This opinion might give a significant support to the unusual presence of an exclusively or at any rate predominantly female Sabbath congregation. This scenario may well correspond to the common numerical large number of women among proselytes and god – fearers, due partly to the absence of circumcision as a constraining factor and partly to the relatively more respected status of women within Judaism.²²

3.1.3 The Inception of the Gospel

Acts 16:12 – 40 refer to the founding of the church at Philippi and this indicates the entrance of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ into Europe. Luke describes the city as ‘a Roman Colony and the principal city of that district of Macedonia’ (Acts 16:12). This

possibly indicates that Philippi was the first city of the region or sub-province of Macedonia rather than the capital city, a credit which was that of Thessalonica.²³

The history of the city is traced back to Philip II of Macedon about the year 360 B.C. He gave the town its name, Philip's city and strengthens it against attack. In 167 BC it turns out to be part of the Roman Empire, but its real position was not achieved until after 31 BC. After Octavian defeated Anthony and Cleopatra at the battle of Actium, Philippi 'received a settlement of Italian Colonists who had preferred Anthony and had been obliged to surrender their land to the veterans of Octavian.'²⁴ The full title of the city now appears as a *Colonia Iulia Augusta Philippensis*.²⁵ The dignity of Philippians as a Roman *Colonia* is specially mentioned in Acts 16:12. Of all the privileges of this title, which included the use of Roman Laws in local affairs and sometimes exclusion from tribute and taxation, the possession of the *ius Italicum* was the most coveted. This is defined as the privilege by which the whole legal position of the Colonists in respect to ownership, transfer of land, payment of taxes, local administration, and law, became equal as if they were on Italian soil, as in fact, by a legal fiction they were.²⁶ As a result, Philippi had cause for civic pride.

The report in Acts 16:13 gives the indication of the presence of a Jewish community before the coming of the gospel. Though we cannot rule out that probability, the people that Paul met were God – fearers. This indicates that these might be Gentile women who were proselytes. To these women who met for prayer outside the city walls, Paul preached his message and received the yielding of heart of a woman called Lydia who was referred to as a proselyte of Judaism. She was a native of Thyatira in Asia Minor. She traded in purple cloth, dyed from the juice of the madder root, for which her home country was well-known.²⁷

The two conversion stories which are mentioned in the remaining verses of Acts 16 confirm it that the gospel was not restricted to Jews or Jewish adherents. 'To the Jews first and also to the Greek' (Rom. 1:16) was the motto of the apostle's evangelistic procedure.

The change of heart of the slave-girl through exorcism of an evil spirit that had been empowering her to predict the future landed the evangelists into trouble. Being denied of their means of livelihood from the power of divination, the masters of the slave-girl became mad with Paul's action, and indicted them of causing trouble in Philippi and advocating customs unlawful to Romans (Acts 16:20 – 21). By their action they appealed to the anti-Jewish biases of their people because they could not make the exorcism of the evil spirit the basis of accusation before the magistrates. The magistrates gave Paul and Silas no prospect of defence but beat them and thrown them in prison with harsh warning to the prison attendant to keep watch over the prisoners.

While the prisoners were singing and praying at night an earthquake happened. The jailer, thinking that the prisoners had escaped because their chains became loosened, wanted to commit suicide. Paul stopped him from doing so. He was astonished that they did not escape. This led to his salvation together with his household. He then took care of the missionaries. In the morning the magistrates sent their servants to the jailer ordering him to release the prisoners, but Paul protested. He laid claim on their Roman citizenship which conferred on them fair trial before punishment but which the magistrate failed to carry out. They ultimately left the city following the apology from the magistrates.²⁸

Both events give us an interesting background and information about the citizens of a city in which the infant Christian community was formed. The exercise of soothsayers under the control of an oracular spirit, the yearning for 'salvation' (Acts 16:17, 30) and the intolerance shown towards the monotheism and morality of the Jews (Acts 16:20) are evidence of the dominant dispositions in the religious climate of this Graeco – Roman city. Added to this is their political thoughtfulness (Acts 16:16 – 24). Their loyalty to the Roman ethos both as an occasion of proud conviction (v.21) and also as a confession of fear when they realised they had actually beaten and chained men who were Romans (v.38) was overwhelming.²⁹

It was in such a circumstance that a church was founded and this left an ineradicable mark on Paul's mind. He looks upon his converts as his 'joy and crown' (4:1), and boasts of them to other churches (II Cor. 8:1ff). In spite of the explicit reference to Lydia who had a link with Judaism, it seems clear that the main influx into the fellowship was from the Gentile world. Although the church was based in Lydia's house (Acts 16:40) the names of the church members in the letter (2:25; 4:2 – 3) show that the subsequent converts were former pagans. Luke himself appears to have remained in Philippi after Paul and Silas might have left because the 'we' section of Acts did not resume until 20:6 when 'we sailed from Philippi.' Obviously the presence of a Christian leader as Luke was a great backing to the evangelisation and consolidation activities needed in the days that followed.³⁰ Brien even opined that Luke might be the unnamed 'yoke-fellow' that Paul asked to help the warring women, Enodia and Syntyche 'to agree in the Lord'³¹ (Phil. 4:3). This is a possibility if Luke was sent back to the church after he and Paul left in Acts 20:6. If not, Luke could not have been that 'Yoke Fellow' of Paul because the epistle to the Philippians was written when Paul was in prison in Rome.

3.2. The Epistle to the Philippians

3.2.1. Identification of the Author

It is the claim of Paul that he authored the epistle to the Philippians but a few modern scholars, however, have questioned this assertion. Edward Evanson (1731-1805) was the first to do so.³² This was followed by F. C. Baur (1792-1860) and the Tubigen School he founded. Baur assailed the Pauline authorship of the entire letters passing under the apostle's name except Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Galatians.³³ The following are some of his arguments against Philippians:

- (1) The mention of "overseers and deacons" (Phil. 1:1) pointed to a post-Pauline stage of church government. But a study of Acts 6:1-6; 11:30; 14: 23; and

1thessalonians 5:12, 13 shows that these offices happened long before Philippians was written.

- (2) The epistle was a post-Pauline attempt to reunite the Jewish- Christian and Gentile Christian parties, symbolised respectively by Euodia and Syntyche (Phil.4:2). To the contrary, the context of Philippians 4:3 clearly shows that those names belong to women in the church at Philippi and that neither of them had ever been the leader of any party that opposed Paul; both had been struggling with Paul in the gospel.
- (3) The epistle showed no originality but full of imitations of Paul's genuine epistles. Yes, if Paul wrote Philippians as well as Romans, similar words would be natural.

This radical view posited either by Evanson or Baur was not substantial and disappeared only to be revitalised in recent years by A. Q. Morton and J. McLeman. Morton and McLeman claimed that by the aid of sophisticated computers they could count the numbers of sentences in each epistle that bore Paul's name and at the same time the occurrence of *kai* in each sentence. On the basis of that they could establish which of the letters was Pauline and which ones were not. Their conclusion, just like Baur's, was that Philippians was not among the candid Pauline letters.³⁴ The cogency of their methodology and the quality of their work have been severely criticised.³⁵ Therefore, their conclusions have not been widely adopted, nor are they likely to be.”³⁶

Hence that the apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians is virtually undisputed. The document was certainly written by Paul of Tarsus.³⁷ to a Christian church in the city of Philippi, province of Macedonia. This church had been established by Paul himself in the early 50s of the first century (Acts 16). At the time of writing, in the late 50s or early 60s,

Paul was in prison, and he had just received a monetary gift from the Philippians through their emissary, Epaphroditus.

The name of the human author is clearly stated at the beginning of the epistle as it was the custom then. Internal evidences abound to endorse that Paul wrote this epistle. “In thought and language it bears throughout the impress of Paul’s personality.”³⁸

The forthright claim of the letter (1:1) is reinforced by the reference to Paul’s associates, the reflection of known situations in his life and the many signs of Pauline thought. Paul’s authorship of this epistle is therefore not in question but its unity.³⁹ Kenneth Barker says: “Even those who have questioned the unity of Philippians have usually concluded that Paul was the author of its various parts.”⁴⁰

The question that comes to mind is who was Paul, the commended author? How did he identify himself in this epistle to the Philippians? Paul was Saul of Tarsus, the greatest persecutor of the church, turned later to be the greatest defender of the same church he was persecuting after his great encounter with Jesus on the way to Damascus. This event he variously described in the book of Acts and in some of his epistles. A brief look at Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians and Colossians shows a typical epistolary address. In each epistle, Paul favoured to address himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. This trend is different in Philippians and I and II Thessalonians where he referred to his co-workers with him as slaves of Christ Jesus. Though the word *doulos* is translated servant in some Bible versions, there is more to the word than so explained. A *doulos* is more than a servant. He is a slave. A servant is free to come and go; but a slave is the possession of his master forever.⁴¹ According to Barklary, Paul refers to himself as a *doulos* based on the following three things:

- (i) He lays it down that he is the absolute possession of Christ. Christ has loved him and bought him with a price (I Cor. 6:20) and he can never belong to anyone else
- (ii) He lays it down that he owes an absolute obedience to Christ. The slave has no will of his own; his master's will must be his. So Paul has no will but Christ's, and no obedience but to his saviour and Lord.
- (iii) In the Old Testament, the consistent title of the prophets is the servants of God. In fact the highest title of all titles of honour is servant of God, and when Paul takes this title, he humbly places himself in the succession of the prophets and of the great ones of God.⁴²

This nature of addressing himself and his colleagues "Marks out their sense of responsibility under God."⁴³ In line with its use in reference to Israel's prophets, "this title denotes their God-given authority to speak and act in his name as his accredited representatives. Though he does not refer to himself as an apostle of Christ Jesus, as in many other epistles, this description has the token of his sense of apostolic ministry."⁴⁴

But due to negative implication of harsh treatment, forced labour, involuntary subjection associated with the word *doulos* as slave, some scholars.⁴⁵ do not feel contented with its use in that translation. They prefer servant. But contrary wise Paul made himself a unique slave of Christ who bought him, not as earthly masters their slaves though. Much more, Paul applied its use as slave to himself to show great humility, a solution he presents for the disunity predominant in that congregation then. It is a picture of Paul's attitude to Jesus his master.⁴⁶

Paul wrote from a Roman prison and there were threats of execution. He was possibly thinking his last day on earth had come and as a result taking stock of his ministry. As he thought of the Philippian Christians, he became a little disturbed. What would likely

happen to his joy should this church linger in conflicts? Would disunity, in this church spoil his joy? Hence Paul, having some other reasons in mind like gratitude for gifts, wrote to plea to the church to be of one mind.

3.2.2. The Author's Relationship with the Church

Philippians is one of Paul's letters from incarceration. It offers characteristic proof not only to the life and thought of its apostolic author, but also to the state of the intended readership. The church at Philippi was the first Pauline church and the first Gentile church in Europe. It was pre-existed only by the Jewish – Christian community at Rome. The church also represents Paul's first move from cities with large Jewish populations in Asia Minor to a much more clearly Gentile and pagan setting in Greece.

The church at Philippi was founded when he entered Macedonia with the gospel of Christ in answer to the 'Macedonian call.' He went back to it again (Acts 20:6) and even thoughtful of another visit. This letter bears witness to his happy rapport with these Christians.⁴⁷ On his third missionary journey, Paul was in Macedonia (Acts 20:1) probably in Philippi.⁴⁸ Thereafter he went to Greece, back to Macedonia, and Acts 20:6 says that he set sail from Philippi to return to Jerusalem. Here we have the evidence of an close association with him. The reason might be because of their warm welcome.

Paul seems to have reserved a special love for this church (Phil. 1:8, 4).⁴⁹ He has strong assurance in God's plan for them.⁵⁰ the plan is good, supernatural and continual. His consideration is also strong for them. The church engaged his thoughts, occupied his heart, and caused him to yearn for them. The Christians there were a source of joy and reassurance to him (Phil. 11:3–4).⁵¹ Perhaps the facts highlighted by Willington.⁵² may have been responsible or contributory to his affection for that Church. His first visit, though not all that pleasant, was greeted with supernatural intervention at each stage: An Asian woman was

converted; a Greek slave-girl was delivered of demon possession and a Roman jailer was saved.

His love and fondness for this church fostered a flow of information from him to them and vice versa.⁵³ The church knew how Paul fared in Rome at the close of his third missionary journey when he was jailed there. They therefore mounted their efforts and raised a large monetary gift (Phil. 4:18). The Philippians themselves were feeling some serious problems. Opponents of the Christian community were causing great alarm in the congregation, and the Judaizing threat was beginning to make itself felt (Phil. 1:27 – 30; 3:2,18 – 19).

Being aware of how much they were in need of spiritual help and direction, they sent Epaphroditus with the gift and asked Paul to keep him as his helper but to send Timothy back to Philippi. When Epaphroditus got to Rome he fell sick. The news of his sickness caused a great fright among the Philippians. Ultimately, God saved him and continued on to Rome. Paul must have been in prison for a year by the time Epaphroditus reached Rome. Thus the Philippian gift was truly a God – given blessing and the apostle was at a loss how to show his thanks to a church that had given so sacrificially. With this it is not astonishing that Philippians is the most personal of all Paul's letters.⁵⁴ The church was Paul's preferred which did not fail even when others did.⁵⁵ However, Paul's joy in them was not comprehensive because of discord produced by selfish ambition, not being of the same mind, not cohesive in spirit and not being on one determination. Therefore to complete his joy and appreciation, he gives the secrets; take on Christ-like humility. This will aid to be at harmony with each other.

3.2.3 Date and Place of Writing of the Epistle

Meanwhile Paul was a detainee at the time of writing this epistle (Phil. 1:7, 13, 16), identification of this detention will make the fixing of date and place of source of the letter possible. Three options are considered: Caesarea, Rome and Ephesus

1. .Caesarea. Paul was a detainee in Caesarea for two years (AD 57 – 59) and his friends had free contact to him (Acts 24:23, 27). The “praetorium” (Palace guard Phil. 1:13) could be agreed upon as Herod’s palace at Caesarea (Acts 23:35). Additionally, the polemic against Jewish teachers (3:1 – 16) fits well the period of Jewish – Gentile disagreement. This notion has not been widely held because there is not much proof in its support. Paul anticipated his release to be fast but at Caesarea there was no cause for such a hope. Much more this view was no longer conceivable after he had appealed to Caesar.⁵⁶

2. Rome. The old view places the writing of Philippians during Paul’s first detention in Rome during A.D. 59 – 61 (Acts 28:30). This is the most normal understanding of “Palace guard” (1:13) and “Caesar’s household”⁵⁷ (4:22). If “palace guard” (Praetorium) denotes the imperial guard whose headquarters were in Rome then Caesar’s household indicates the slaves and freedmen attached to the Emperor’s house in the same city among whom there were converts to Christianity.⁵⁸

Paul’s trial was still going on during the writing of the epistle and its result could be either bad or optimistic (life or death). Apparently there could be no entreaty from its verdict (1:19-24). This situation applies only to trial from which no entreaty could be made. This definitely could not refer to Caesarean imprisonment “It is also difficult to believe that any provincial court could have produced in Paul the sense of approaching finality of decision which the Philippian letter implies” (cf. 1:19ff).⁵⁹ Paul also had independence to arrange itineration for his companions and opportunity to carry on considerable communication. He also had strong expectations of being free in order to visit Philippi in the near future, but at Caesarea his face was turned westward, and his aims were driven by his appeal to Caesar. Hence Paul’s circumstances reflected in the epistle fit the Roman imprisonment better than Caesarea.

3. Ephesus. Is it conceivable to allot Philippians to such a period if we assume that Paul served a period of incarceration in Ephesus? If it is possible, the letter will be dated AD 53 – 55 (Acts 19). While Acts of the Apostles did not mention any imprisonment of Paul in Ephesus, some scholars⁶⁰ hold that an Ephesian source is more likely than one at Rome. This is because the letter to the Philippians presumes several time – consuming journeys between Philippi and Paul's whereabouts at the time of writing. These journeys are about six. If Paul was in Rome, it would require two months making the journeys but if Ephesus, about one week. These journeys are:

1. News of Paul's predicament reaches Philippi
2. Epaphroditus journeys with a gift to Paul
3. News of Epaphroditus gets to Philippi (4:18; 2:26)
4. The report of the Philippians' worry reaches Paul. (2:26).
5. Epaphroditus takes the letter to Philippi (2:25)
6. Timothy is shortly to visit Philippi and to report back (2:19)

This tough list of journeys raises reservations about the likelihood of assigning the origin of the letter to Rome. But some adjustments of the seeming difficulties are necessary. The Philippians need not have heard of Paul's incarceration in advance before sending their gift to him (4:4). Paul had been facing trouble all along ever previous this time. A trip from Rome to Philippi with news of Paul's incarceration before their gift can be sent is needless. Philippians also says nothing about the collection for the saints, a work Paul was busy in while at Ephesus. It appears Philippians is detached from other prison epistles (Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon) because it was carried by a different envoy and reveals circumstances seemingly somewhat later than those linking the other three. Hence the traditional view of Rome as the place of origin is favoured since Acts is quiet about an

Ephesian incarceration. In this case, the epistle would possibly have to be dated near the end of the two-year imprisonment cited in Acts 23:30; about AD 61 is suggested.⁶¹

3.2.4 Purpose of Paul's Letter to the Philippians

Paul's epistle to the Philippian Christians bears all the features of a very individual letter where the motives for writing are various and many. Just like a chat, the subject matter changing without sign as in an informal dialogue between friends. Hence Paul wrote because he had a profound love for the Philippians (4:1). So when an occasion came to have a letter taken to them, he wrote. He wrote to keep them abreast of his present condition and the prospects for his future, namely that he was in danger and was distressed, but at the same time jubilation and optimistic (1:2 – 26; 2:24). Moreover, he wrote to inform them of the erroneous but seductive tenets of the Jewish religion and to implore them to follow him and his teaching as a pattern for living rather than to follow Judaism (3:2 – 21). So also Paul wrote to inspire the Philippians to stand firm for the faith of the gospel, to inspire in them thorough commitment to the will of Christ in spite of any severe travail they might find themselves in whether as a result of oppression that may come upon them for declining the message of fanatical Jewish preachers, or because of the likelihood of experiencing a Martyr's death for refusing to bow before any lord but Jesus (cf. 1:27 – 30). Much more, he wrote to inform them about Epaphroditus, their messenger, whom they sent to minister to his needs. Epaphroditus had been rigorously ill to the point of death but now well again. He had not been found inadequate in his mission nevertheless he had to return home. He was worthy of honour among them, after all, he endangered his life to carry out their teaching and accomplish the work of Christ (2:25 – 30).⁶²

But above all, Paul wrote to pay warm tribute to the frequent liberality of the church in the material help which it had sent to him. In spite of their poverty – stricken situation (II Cor. 8:1 ff) they had supported the ministry of the apostle right from the period when he left

Philippi after the first visit (1:5, 4:15). At Thessalonica (4:16), and at Corinth (II Cor. 11:9) gifts had gotten to him; and, as a highest gesture, the church had ordered its member, Epaphroditus to become its emissary and to take care of Paul's needs both by the additional gift which came by his hands (4:18), and by the ministry of comradeship and succour which he was able to exercise at the apostle's side (2:25, 30). These good actions Paul would gratefully recognize. He regarded the gifts not only as a service rendered to him personally but as a contribution to the work of God and the gospel.⁶³

Separately from the above is the most noticeable flaw that could mar the church's fair reputation; that is disunity. That there were variances of opinion and internal conflicts within the assembly is clear from 2:2 – 4, 14; 4:2 and possibly 1:2). The regular use of the word "all" (1:1, 4, 7, 8, 25; 2:26; 4:21), is related to apostle's appeal for unity and concord. Then Paul offered the maximum summons to self-forgetting humility in 2:5-11. This presents the true understanding of their calling in Christ as members of his church and reminding them of the necessity to hold on to the standard of behaviour which this privilege enforces on them. Hence this last subject on Paul's resolve in writing the epistle is the argument of this work.⁶⁴

3.3 Exegetical Analysis of Philippians 2:1-11

Philippians 2:1-11 cannot be treated in separation of the preceeding passage of chapter 1:27-30. This is attested to by the word *ou=n* (therefore) in 2:1 *Ei; tij ou=n* (if there be therefore) that points to that section. Paul, after having discussed his own affairs and their consequences, and after having disclosed his own innermost feelings (1:12-26), turns now to give instructions to the entire community. Words of reassurance now control the thought because the musing about life and death are over. Rhetorically and logically, this section is indeed the core piece of Philippians: it spells out in the most vital terms what the progress of the gospel means at Philippi.⁶⁵ This new section of the epistle (1:27-30) is marked by the transitional word *Mo,non*

monon,only. This use of *Mo,non monon* is found most obviously in Galatians 2:10 and 5:13. The first of this passage (Gal.2:10) is particularly enlightening.

According to Gal.2:7-9, the Jerusalem Church leaders guaranteed Paul that everything was in order. There was only one thing, however, that they must request of him, and that was to think of the poor in Jerusalem. In the same vein Paul in this epistle had assured his readers in the preceding passage, especially verses 24-26 that all would be well, nevertheless, there was only one thing remaining and that was a great concern for him: the Philippians were in danger of managing their Christian duty to sustain spiritual unity; scared by their enemies, they might slacken off their passion in conflict. He begins with two short sections on determination in the midst of suffering (1:27-30) and on unselfish unity (2:1-4), this in turn leads into his famous poetic section on the example of Christ's humble obedience (2:5-11). Our focus in the first section is mainly on verse 1:27 based on its significance to the issue of disunity disturbing the Philippian church.

1:27 *Mo,non avxi,wj tou/ euvaggeli,ou tou/ Cristou/ politeu,esqe(i[na ei;te evlqw.n kai. ivdw.n u`ma/j ei;te avpw.n avkou,w ta. peri. u`mw/n(o[ti sth,kete evn e`ni. pneu,mati(mia/| yuch/| sunaqlou/ntej th/| pi,stei tou/ euvaggeli,ou*

1:27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Verse 27. This section was presented with the verb *Mo,non* (only). By this Paul emphasised that “the one essential thing” for the Christian was to live in a fashion worthy (*avxi,wj*) of the gospel of Christ? What does it mean to live in a fashion worthy of the gospel of Christ? Paul responded to this question in part by the special verb he uses to issue his command

(politeu,esqe) (to live) and in part by the subordinate ideas he ascribes to this verb. This verb is found twice in the New Testament, here and Acts 23:1,⁶⁶ where it connotes little more than to live out one's life. But formerly it means to "live as a citizen of a free state" polij⁶⁷ to take a dynamic part in the activities of the state.⁶⁸ Paul stands by this (earlier) meaning. In the thought of the ancient Greek, the state h polij was by no means merely a place to live. It was somewhat a kind of partnership koinwni,a ei=na aimed with a view to assisting people reach the peak of all human goods. There in the state the singular citizen built up his gifts and comprehended his potential not in seclusion but in cooperation. Here he was able to make the most of his abilities not by himself or for himself, but in community and for the good of the community. Hence, mutuality and interdependence were important ideas intrinsic in the concept of polij. "To live as a citizen" politeu,esqai, therefore, represent for the Greek (and later Roman) rights and privileges but also duties and responsibilities.⁶⁹

As originally assumed by the Jews, the notion of polij had as its central potent the "city of the great king" (Psalm 48:2 cf. Matt. 5:32). Initially Jerusalem was this perfect city, limited to a small area and limited in scope. But under the psalmist and prophet the idea "city" was extended until Jerusalem was not only for every member of the state, but a spiritual fellowship into which the nations of the world ultimately would enter (cf. Ps. 87), a general centre of worship of Israel's God, the God of the whole earth (Isa. 66:20) Amos 9:11-12, Zech. 14:8-11.⁷⁰

Paul joined these ideas together in his studied choice of this occasional verb for "living" peripatei[n (Rom. 6:4, I Cor. 3:5, II Cor. 5:7, Gal. 5:16). Thus to live in a fashion worthy of the gospel of Christ means to live as a worthy resident of an earthly state, fully performing one's duties and responsibilities to that state. Moreover, by the gospel which declares Christ as saviour, the Christian is prepared as a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem (cf. Heb. 12:22-23, Rev. 21:2-3), a partner in a spiritual fellowship, a member of a new

community, the Christian common wealth, the church (Phil. 3:20, cf. Eph. 2:19). To live worthy of the gospel, then also means that the Christian lives as a good citizen of this new state, guarding his actions by the regulations of this unique politeu,,ma which are justice, peace, faith, hope, love, mutuality, interdependence, good deeds, service to one another, worship of the living God, and so on. Furthermore, to live in a mode worthy of the gospel of Christ means that the Philippians will live in accord with each other, a meaning that flows quite logically from the fact that they are fellow citizens of a heavenly state, companions in a new community.⁷¹ Paul here in 1:27 may be referring to their sense of civic responsibility: ‘since you know the pride and responsibility surrounding living in a Roman colony: remember you have a higher commitment urging you to faithful conduct;’ this citizenship necessitates a dogged spirit 1:27-28 in the face of travail 1:29-30, which is likely only through the power of Christian unity (2:1-4.)

So Paul’s word politeu,esqe was a suitable term for a letter written to a church in a city whose dwellers were proud of their status of Roman citizen (Acts 16:12, 20, 21). Paul therefore expected them to live their lives in a manner suitable to the gospel of Christ whether he would be fortunate to see them again or not. Just as they were expected to exemplify Rome in Philippi, so they were expected to live in unity like those in heaven. As such, being members of the body of Christ, they owe Christ peaceful co–existence and a thoughtful effort to steer clear of animosity and disunity.

One Spirit evn e`ni. pneu,mati(

Aside from conducting themselves worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Paul wishes the Philippian Christians to “stand firm in one spirit? True unity can only be created by the Holy Spirit. The word “spirit” here speaks of the unity in which members of the church

should be glued and merged.⁷² It is “having a mutual disposition and drive.”⁷³ A divided church can scarcely survive a common enemy. The reason for instilling a collective spiritual life in them by the direct working of the Holy Spirit is to remain in one spirit, it was not to divide.

One Mind *mia/| yuch* It could also suggest struggling side by side for the one gospel. The word here expresses the joint effort of athletes or soldiers functioning as a team. The metaphor would be very at home with them at Philippi.⁷⁴ King James version (KJV) of the Bible says “with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.” But some translations are different. For instance the New International Version (NIV) gives the same phrase as “contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.” Good News Bible (GNB) has it as “with only one desire you are fighting together for the faith of the gospel.” It appears sure that “one mind” means “only one desire” (GNB). Christians need each other and need to remain together where the gospel is under attack. This common feeling of oneness springs from their having the same spirit.⁷⁵

This appeal to unified thought and action has in focus the aim of “contending for the faith of the gospel” Paul here is speaking the objective faith (that is, the body of truth) enshrined in the gospel message. Contending suggests their need to support and defend the message of Christ, while at the same time indicating that adversaries must be faced. Such work demanded joint effort if victory at the contest would be realised.

Unselfish Unity 2:1-4

2:1 *Ei; tij ou=n para,klhsij evn Cristw/| (ei; ti paramu,qion avga,phj (ei; tij koinwni,a pneu,matoj (ei; tij spla,gcna kai. Oivktirmoi*

2:2 *plhrw,sate, mou th.n cara.n i[na to. auvto. fronh/te (th.n auvth.n avga,phn e;contej (su,myucoi (to. e]n fronou/ntej (*

2:3 mhde.n katV evriqei,an mhde. kata. kenodoxi,an avlla. th/| tapeinofrosu,nh| avllh,louj h`gou,menoi
u`pere,contaj e`autw/n(

2:4 mh. ta. e`autw/n e[kastoj skopou/ntej avlla. Îkai.Đ ta. e`te,rwn e[kastoi

2:1 If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,

2:2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves

2:4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

There is a fourfold ground to his plea in verse one that all dissension and hostility within the church should resolve, and in his mind there was nothing more sure than the realities to which he appeals. Each plea is presented by the word “if.” This is not a statement of doubt but one that is sure. Some exegetists have a preference for “since” or “as sure as,”⁷⁶ “since there is.” One more hurdle to clear is how to comprehend precisely what Paul had in mind by the nouns he used in each of these four clauses and their connections. Likewise who is the one performing each action of the four clauses and to whom?

para,klhsij evn Cristw What is the meaning of para,klhsij evn Cristw/| ((literally “encouragement in Christ”) as employed by Paul? It is clear to Paul that the matter which he will base his appeal is definite certainties in the experience of the Christians to whom he is speaking. Consequently he begins with para,klhsij evn Cristw/|((encouragement in Christ). The noun is capable of bearing at least two diverse meanings: (1). “comfort” or “consolation” on the one hand, and (2) “exhortation” or “encouragement” on the other. Paul has made use of the verb para,ka;lein from which this noun originates for the counsel he himself offered from the word of God and in the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 12:1; 15:30; 16:17; I Cor.

1:10; 4 :16; 16:15; Eph. 4 :1; Phil. 4:2; I Thess.2:11-12; 5:14), it will be proper to understand the noun παρακλησις in the same sense. This is to say that this compressed statement appears to picture Paul as the one who has given the Philippians exhortations, words of encouragement in “Christ” in the power of the Holy Spirit. His παρακλησεις were not orders but appeals to Christians (those εἰν Χριστῷ by a fellow Christian (one who is himself εἰν Χριστῷ. This can be understood as moral empowering by one who is stronger in faith. This can be rendered ‘exhortation’ as in I Corinthians 14:2 and is approved upon by many commentators.⁷⁷ Paul seems to be saying “and if my words of encouragement have in any way helped you stay true to the faith in the past, then respond accordingly in the present.”⁷⁸

One more spiritual reality that should bind the Philippians together as members of the family of faith is love. εἰ τι παραμυῖον ἀγαπῆς (if any comfort of love). It has its central idea “to speak to someone,” or to speak to someone by coming close to his side, “and always in a friendly way.”⁷⁹ The thought of παραμυῖον like παρακλησις is two – fold : with reference to what should to be done “to admonish” or with reference to what has previously taken place, “to console”? So the words παρακλησις and παραμυῖον cannot be sharply differentiated. This is even plain from how the verbs from which these nouns originated are normally coupled together, for instance 1Thess.2:12 παρακαλοῦντες καὶ παραμυῖομενοι encouraging, comforting/consoling cf. 1Cor.14:3 .παρακλησιν καὶ παραμυῖαν encouragement and consolation; Phil.2:1 Εἰ τι ὑμεῖς παρακλησις ἐν Χριστῷ/(εἰ τι παραμυῖον ἀγαπῆς) (“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love...” On the basis of this proof, and for the fact that παρακλησις was employed in the first clause to express the idea of “exhortation,” it is suitable to say that here in the second clause, the notion of consolation comes to the fore in παραμυῖον. The noun ἀγαπῆς (of love) is a subjective genitive, so the consolation is the consolation created by

love.⁸⁰ But whose love, Paul's or God's? Since it is perceived that in this letter Paul's love for the Philippians is incontestable and so much in the centre, and since the verb *paramu,qeoqai* is never employed directly for God's comfort, is sensible to say that it is Paul's love that gave consolation for the Philippian Christians. "If my love has provided you with any consolation in your suffering, as indeed it has, Paul says "then please now respond properly to my request." The third clause is *ei; tij koinwni,a pneu,matoj* (if any fellowship of spirit). In the New Testament *koinwni,a* is that fellowship or that close rapport which occurs between believers, and here it is so between Paul and the Philippian Church (Ph. 1:5,7. Since *pneu,matoj* has no definite article in Greek some translators recognise it merely as "spirit" or "mind". Hence the statement *koinwni,a pneu,matoj* consequently means no more than a fellowship to kindred spirits, "mutual harmony" or perhaps 'spiritual fellowship'"⁸¹ But it is more plausible that *pneu,matoj* talk about the Holy Spirit because *koinwni,a* itself as it is used in the New Testament expresses the notion of spiritual fellowship. The addition of *pneu,matoj* as an adjectival modifier is not necessary. Furthermore , the words of II Corinthians 13:14- *h` koinwni,a tou/ a`gi,ou* (the fellowship of the Holy Spirit) is a parallel so remarkably close to the statement found in Philippians 2:1 that one cannot but admit that here *pneu,matoj* can only speak of the Holy Spirit. And the genitive, *pneu,matoj* which modifies *koinwni,a* is subjective genitive. Since the three-fold benediction of 11 Cor. 13:14 (May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit) that is the closest and only parallel to *koinwni,a pneu,matoj*, contends in favour of that understanding. Therefore, *koinwni,a pneu,matoj* here, as in II Cor. 13:14, speak of that fellowship created by the Holy Spirit. So Paul's entreaty states that if you belong to that community brought into existence by the Holy Spirit, and enjoy any fellowship with one another as a result, then live in view of that. Their mutual sharing in the spirit should be a

significant factor in their corporate life as one body in Christ (Rom. 12:5). The stress is on life in the spirit as a prerequisite for the unity the spirit gives.⁸²

The final clause *ei; tij spla,gcna kai. oivktirmoi*, (literally, if any bowels and mercies) The noun *spla,gcna* occurs also in 1:8 and was interpreted there as “deep affection”. Ta *spla,gcna*, the viscera, were held to be the seat of one’s deep feelings such as “affection,” “tenderness” “compassions” kindness”. *Oivktirmoi* (mercies) used only five times in the New Testament and almost solely by Paul corresponds in meaning with *spla,gcna*. It refers to a similar state of mind such as pity, mercy and compassion. Therefore these two nouns together then may be rendered fittingly into English with the word “affection and compassion.”⁸³ But then the question now is – whose “affection and compassion are in view and to whom are these feelings focused? It is likely that Paul has in mind God’s or Christ’s warmth of affection and tenderness towards the Philippians since Paul used *Oivktirmoi* twice over (out of the four times he used this word) to designate God’s tender mercies (Rom.12:1; 11 Cor.1:3) also *spla,gcna* itself is sometimes used of divine compassion (Luk.1:78; Phil. 1:8; cf. Col.3:12), and since *spla,gcna* and *Oivktirmoi* are so closely connected here as to be taken for a hendiadys, translated “affectionate sympathy.”

Hence the four clauses divide into two distinct parts. The first centring on the human side of things – Paul’s encouragement of and love for the Philippians, the second on the divine – the unity among the Philippians produced by the Holy Spirit and God surrounding them with the warmth of his affection. “If then” says Paul, “you know anything of the mercy and compassion shown you by God in Christ, as you most certainly do then please respond by saying yes to my request.”⁸⁴ If these aids of life in Christ have any significance at all, then: Vs.2. *plhrw,sate, mou th.n cara.n* (make my joy complete). Paul’s joy will be thorough if only these words of entreaty are responded to and correction made in the church’s domestic

life as God's family. Paul's main worry, his absolute request of the Philippians, is that they struggle for unity together with humility.

The four fold plea (as discussed above) is to lead to a fourfold outcome if the anticipated ends are to be realised. These are:

i[na to. auvto. fronh/te (literally, "that you think the same"), or of one mind. This statement cannot mean that Paul appeals for drab equality of thought or that he insists on everyone holding in common an exact opinion. This request of such will even contribute to discord. The verb fronou/neiu means (to think), but not only, or even mainly in the intellectual sense. It similarly includes one's emotions, attitude and will. what Paul by his choice of the verb fronou/neiu (to think) is asking for is a complete inner approach of mind or disposition of will that struggles after one thing which is superior to any human truth – mine, yours, his," a unity of spirit and feeling in which powerful pressures are held together by overmastering allegiance to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. Such unity will only arise when Christians are unassuming and bold to lay grip to the unity already given in Christ and take it more earnestly than their own self reputation....and to make of those deep variances of doctrine, which originate in our own flawed perception of the gospel and which we dare not belittle, not a defence for letting go of one another or staying apart, but rather an encouragement for a more earnest seeking in friendship together to hear and follow the voice of Christ.⁸⁵

This theme is strengthened by the word th.n auvth.n avga,phn e;contej (having the same love). The objective auvth.n (same) stresses the mutuality of love that is to permeate the Christian community identical with the self sacrificing love of Christ for the church (I John 3:16, II Thess. 1:3). Partaking in the same love means to share the type of love which has the same foundation, impetus and object. In as much as all were indwelt by the same Spirit (v.1), love as a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) must to be proven.

The theme of unity is pressed further both by *su,myucoi* and the repetition of initial clause *to. auvto. fronh/te*, though slightly reinforced so, *to. auvto. fronh/te* becomes *to. e]n fronou/ntej* (that you think the same) S. *su,myucoj* (one mind) recalls the term *mia/| yuch/|* (with one soul) in 1:27. It emphasises the notion that the Philippians are to share one soul, possess a common affection, desire, passion, sentiment for existing together in concord. So Paul, forceful in his own yearning for unity, repeats himself because *to. e]n fronou/ntej* (mind this one thing) is almost alike in wording to the clause he used earlier *i[na to. auvto. fronh/te*⁸⁶ (that you think the same). Thus in four diverse ways Paul recaps the same impression over and over again, expecting that the Philippian church will understand the point. Unity is vital for the spiritual progress of the church, the progress of the gospel and the victory of believers over their adversaries. This piling up of terms which all rest upon church unity is deliberate.. The Philippians are left in no uncertainty as to the apostle's aspiration for them that they should share a collective position.

v. 3-4 But unity is not attainable if everybody is out for himself, if each supports his own cause and seeks his own benefit. In these verses then, Paul stresses definite attitudes and activities that must stop as well as those that must remain.

mhde.n katV evriqei,an mhde. kata. kenodoxi,an (literally, nothing according to selfish ambition, nor according to conceit). Paul in 1:17 used this word *evriqei,aj*. As it is stated here and in 1:17 it carries implications of a party spirit caused by selfish ambition. Competitiveness is guaranteed to put an end to unity hence it must go. *kenodoxi,a* used only here in the New Testament has its basic notion "empty opinion," "error". A person with this leaning is a person who forcefully, even arrogantly, claims to have the right view *dox,a* but who is in fact in error *kenoj*. He is a person who is arrogant without reason, deluded, ambitious for his own status, stimulating others to contention, himself jealous of others (cf Gal.5:26, where the equivalent adjective, *keno,doxoi* is used). Subsequently, he is a person

who will fight to show his notion is right. This character might be the issue accountable for the incapability of the Philippian Christians to be united. If this was so, Paul, by requesting that no one do something from a deep craving to boast, is in earnest entreating that each look to himself and think on this option, because where such “empty conceit” occurs, unity is a delusion.⁸⁷

Another adverse feature that must go if the Philippian Christians or any Christian community is to live in accord is *ta. e`autw/n e[kastoj skopou/ntej* (looking only to one’s own interests) This is a selfish looking out for one’s own benefits or those of his special group, to the marginalization of the benefits of others (v.4). Paul on many junctures speaks out against this attitude (I Cor. 10:24, Phil. 2:24) repeating to his readers that it is divisive (2:4) that it is opposing to the character of the God they worship (cf I Cor. 13:5 with I John 4:7-8). Unity cannot co-exist with egoism or bigotry. Philippians are to keep their eyes fixed on the good ideas of others rather than for each to focus on his own spiritual endowments. So beneath the negative practice in which this counsel comes, Paul in fact is making the entreaty for each to pay concerned thoughtfulness to the things that interest and deeply concern the other member.⁸⁸

On the other hand along with the negative directives is the one positive encouragement to “humbly consider others better than yourselves”(v.3) *tapeinofrosu,nh| avllh,louj h`gou,menoi u`pere,contaj e`autw/n..* The accomplishment of the Christian community rests on this. The Greek word *tapeinofrosu,nh|* (noun) humility, modesty, used here is said to be possibly unused in any Greek writing before the New Testament but the adjective related to it *tapeinoj* was often used, especially so, to refer to the mentality of a slave. It expresses the notion of being base, unfit, shabby, mean, of no account. Consequently “humility” could not have been considered by the pagan as a quality to seek after. This same perception of *tapeinoj* survives in the LXX. But by now in the Old Testament a new note is

struck: “God chooses the insignificant and the minor for his plans” (LXX 1 Kgs 18:23; Ps 118 :67; Jud. 9:11). “God saves the lowly and humble” Ps 17 :23. “God looks upon the lowly” Ps 112:4-6; “God pays attention to the prayer of the humble” (Ps 10:1:18, “God gives grace to the lowly while he opposes the scoffers” (Isa. 2:11, Ezek. 17:24) Meekness and humility are thus assessed as positive qualities by the Bible, particularly as they touch the way in which people act toward others and in which they approach God (Cf. Isa. 57:15). In the Qumran community humbleness is treasured as an asset because it carried within itself the components for unity and love within the fellowship.⁸⁹ Constantly in the Scroll of the Rule the members are taught that “they shall all be in the community of truth and virtuous humility and loving charity and scrupulous justice.” (IQS 2:24) Paul also imbibes this idea of humility among the Qumran community because he too believes that humility is central for unity within a community. The new input he makes to the idea is that he attaches this humility to Christ Jesus, to the self – humiliating love of the one who existed in the form of God. Accordingly, humility as Paul understands it and promotes it is not self – disparagement but an attitude inspired by the example of Christ, and is therefore specifically Christian, an attitude of common love in the church, an antithesis of pride, self conceit and selfishness.⁹⁰

Aside from humility, the participle *h`gou,menoi* is designed from a verb *h`g,eisqai* (that means “to calculate” “to reckon.” It infers a cognisant sure judgment resting on carefully evaluated facts. Here it refers to a proper appraisal of others and of oneself in the light of the holiness of God, the Christian gospel and the example of Christ. The outcome, Paul says, will be “to set others above you.”

This others are not talk about just “the good, clever, earnest, pious” ones to whom all willingly bow, but those who do not have these features as well.⁹¹ Complications of disunity end when we discover reverence for each other, not on any condition but on the basic fact that we are commanded to do so, undertaken to count each other better than ourselves;

particularly to the Christian community. Though this seems abnormal but being a divine instruction infers divine backing to carry out the order. To esteem others more highly is thus a quality required to send away disunity among the Philippian Christians, but these fellows were possibly seeing only their own abilities, gifts, situations and influence. The consequence is the disunity being talked about.

Paul reassures the Philippian Christians to struggle for unity. In four successful clauses beginning each with “if,” he forcefully stressed upon his friends that they truly are the beneficiaries of his encouragement and love, members of an unusual fellowship produced by the Spirit of God, and objects of God’s affection and compassion. Hence, obligation required that they take heed to God’s request through Paul to fight for harmony and unity. Uniformity of view is not the argument of Paul here. He is not asking from them that they all reason alike. But that they strive after an inner sentiment for one another that is full of love. He expects that they all have a mutual soul, share a mutual affection for each other, have a mutual desire to live together in harmony by relinquishing a party spirit that is joined with empty conceit and selfishness and by approving a humble attitude that appraises others as better than themselves. In such an environment unity flourishes, the church mature and the individual Christian is reinforced in the faith.

Thus Paul, by means of fourfold incentive, has encouraged the Philippian church to be submissive to the threefold command that they should demonstrate to one another the spirit of oneness, lowliness and helpfulness (Phil. 2:1-4). In order to emphasize this appeal and to specify the source of the power to live up to it, he now refers to the example of Christ, who with a view to saving others surrendered himself, and thus attained to glory.⁹²

Example of Christ’s Humble Obedience 2:5-11

This segment is the most significant segment in the letter and surely the most problematic to interpret.⁹³ Consequently also the flood of scholarly consideration that has been given to this passage could be said to be unequalled to any other New Testament text in the twentieth century.⁹⁴ Nevertheless much has been written on these verses, there is little that can be settled upon whether the topic deliberated upon is the specific form of this section, its authorship, its place and purpose in the letter, the sources used in the arrangement of the letter, and so on. Good enough, there is one basic fact that is generally approved upon. It is that verses 6-11 constitute a beautiful pattern of a very early hymn of the Christian church.⁹⁵ But agreement vanishes on the breakdown of the hymn structurally. Some authors see the hymn as been made up of six strophes of three lines each, with the first three strophes declaring the humiliation of Christ vv 6-8, and the lasts three as exaltation vv9-11 but the words “even death on the cross” are not there, considered as not being part of the original hymn. Some others see only three strophes in the hymn agreeing with the three stages of Jesus’ existence: his pre-existence state vv6-7a; his earthly life vv 7b-8 and his exaltation vv9-11.⁹⁶

As indicated above, this kind of breakdown often calls for erasure of words and phrases from the hymn as it stands in order to have the right balance in the strophes. There are other suggested analyses of the passage. But as a matter of fact, regardless of the level of erasure, all prove that these verses contained an early hymn, or at least part of the early hymn that had as the subject Jesus Christ; (cf. Eph. 5:19; Col 3:16, and the remark of Pliny, the younger governor of Bithynia- Pontus, written to the Emperor Trajan AD112-113 that Christians were in the practise of singing hymn “to Christ as to a god” Epistles 10, 96),⁹⁷ supports Christians’ fond of singing hymns.

On the other hand lack of agreement among scholars about that precise arrangement of these verses makes one to doubt the likelihood of knowing for sure what this hymn looked

like when it was first collected, if it does not look the same as it is in the text currently accessible. So also the need for neglecting words and phrases or changing terms to make the strophes come in agreement with the suggested notion of what they ought to be, makes one determine that the whole exercise is just hypothetical.

On account of this, this work, though admitting the hymnic nature of Phil.2 :6-11 does not endeavour to lay down the specific strophic structure of its arrangement, but admits all words and phrases as part of the original hymn and a necessary constituent of its meaning; recognises that the hymn obviously falls into two parts : Jesus' voluntary act of humiliation and his exaltation by the sovereign act of God; agrees for the likelihood that such early Christian hymns as this one were not as flawlessly constructed in the contemporary sense of what we recognise as congregational hymn, with metrical verses,⁹⁸ and rejects the rationality of the opinion that a correct understanding of the hymn is based on a correct versification of the hymn. It is correct to say that proper exegesis of Phil 2:5-11 must be based on its literary setting. The most significant fact worthy of note is that whether Paul put down those words originally or not, he undoubtedly used them to substantiate the argument of verses 1-4, and is primarily in that light that the words must be exegete. The exegetical problem we face arises from the inclination to stress the pre-Pauline setting of 2:5-11 and therefore wrest it from the background it comes down to us.⁹⁹

Therefore, in spite of the diverse views on the part of scholars with allusion to the background of the passage, if our main goal is to comprehend the meaning of the passage in its background, the problem of finding out its original setting is immediately far less serious, and if one accepts Pauline authorship, it vanishes. Paul was a man of enormous wealth of knowledge and his writings are best seen as the out put of his religious and cultural development in Palestine and Diaspora Judaism, hence he is able to draw on this wealth of

knowledge to set into view the crucial meaning of Jesus' humble act of service as a model to his Philippian believers

2:5 *Tou/to fronei/te evn u`mi/n o] kai. evn Cristw/| VIhsou/(#*

2:6 *o]j evn morf| qeou/ u`pa,rcwn ouvc a`rpagmo.n h`gh,sato to. ei=nai i;sa qew/|*

2:7-8 *avlla. e`auto.n evke,nwsen morf.n dou,lou labw,n( evn o`moiw,mati avnqrw,pwn geno,meno] kai.*

sch,mati eu`repei.j w`j a;nqrwpoj ⁸ evtapei,nwsen e`auto.n geno,meno] u`ph,kooj me,cri qana,tou(qana,tou de. staurou/Å

2:9. *dio. kai. o` qeo.j auvto.n u`peru,ywsen kai. evcari,sato auvtw/| to. o;noma to. u`pe.r pa/n o;noma(*

2:10. *i[na evn tw/| ovno,mati VIhsou/ pa/n go,nu ka,myh| evpourani,wn kai. evpigei,wn kai . katacqoni,wn*

2:11. *kai. pa/sa ghw/ssa evxomologh,shtai o[ti ku,rioi VIhsou/j Cristo.j eivj do,xan qeou/ patro,j*

2:5. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

2:6. Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

2:7. but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

2:8. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

2:9. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

2:10. that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

2:11. and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

v. 5 The Christ – hymn (6-11) displays Jesus as the absolute example of the humble, self-sacrificing, self – denying, self –giving service that Paul has just been advising the Philippians to put to use in their dealings one toward another (vv. 1-4). Paul's aim in using the hymn here is not theological but ethical. His purpose is not to give teaching in doctrine,

but to emphasise teaching in Christian living. And he does this by pointing to the conduct of Christ. The hymn, therefore, reveals Christ as the final model for moral action. This is the most evident and natural clarification for its appearance at this point in the letter, and it is quite in agreement with Paul's practice elsewhere of using the life/death of Christ as a form for Christians to follow (Rom. 15:1-7, I Cor. 10:31-11:1, II Cor. 8:6-9).

Based on this fact, verse 5 constitutes the link between the two sections. It is the shift from appeal to illustration. For example the verb *fronein* (to hold an attitude) which is prominent in this verse, also surface twice in verse 2, and the word *tapeinofrosu,nh* (humility), verse 3, is echoed by *evtapei,nwsen e`auto.n* (he humbled himself), verse 8. This verse 5 then displays to us that the hoped-for attitude delineated by Paul in verses 2-4 tallies with that displayed by Christ Jesus, especially in verses 6-9, and that the Philippian church members are bound to act in accord with this attitude towards one another if they wish to copy their Lord and partake with him in his exaltation and glory (2:9-11; cf.3:11, 20-21 and IITim. 2:11-13; Matt18:4). So *Tou/to* (this), that begins the verse, points backward to Paul's appeal and not onward to the Christ – hymn. It stands for *Tou/to to..fronh/ma* (this frame of mind) that Paul just refer to, and it serves as the topic of the imperative.*fronei,sqw.. evn u`mi/n* modifies *fronei,sqw.* is passive and talks of personal agent (by you). The clause which follows is *o] kai. evn cristw/| Vlh sou/* (which also in Christ Jesus). Paul then says in your inner being linger to set your attention on this which (is) also in Christ Jesus.¹⁰⁰ In other words, “this way of thinking must be adopted by you, which also was the way of thinking adopted by Christ Jesus.” The apostle wishes that the Philippians keep on valuing the character described in verses 1-4, a disposition that also characterized Christ Jesus. It is true there is an aspect where Christ cannot be our example. We cannot duplicate his redemptive acts but with the help of God we can and ought to copy the spirit that was fundamental to these acts. The attitude of self – renunciation with a view to helping others ought to be

present and must develop in the life of each disciple. And that confidence is the point here. Oneness, lowliness and helpfulness were expressed by our saviour (John 10:30, Matt. 11:28, 20:28). These should characterize his disciples' also.¹⁰¹

Unity, to Paul, means existing and functioning together with one mutual salvation in focus, loving one another in the same way and not being too differing in purpose. He realises this as likely in view of the bases deliberated on earlier on in verse 1. Such constitute an remedy to disunity and contention.

v.6 This verse begins the Christ hymn proper. Its original word, the relative pronoun *o*j (‘‘who’’) recognises Christ as the subject. In II Corinthians 8:9 a similar form of a moral entreaty to generosity is linked by a relative pronoun to the story of Christ. But more considerably, however, this pronoun links and classifies the historical Jesus (v.5) with the one who existed before the incarnation. The main notion of the remaining part of the verse (v.6) refers to Christ’s pre-existence and expresses what took place in that period. According to the hymn, Christ was *evn morphh/| qeou/* (‘‘in the form of God’’) *‘‘en morphē theou.’’*¹⁰²

He existing in the form of God:

He exists or literally existing (Being in the very nature God). The Greek verbal form translated being *u`pa,rcwn* (*hyperchon*) points back to our Lord’s pre-temporal existence as the second person of the trinity. It means ‘‘to be, to subsist, to rule. It is formed from two other words *u`pw* (*hupo*) under and *a,rcwn* to begin. It can also mean be at one’s disposal.¹⁰³ This denotes possession or property. It is something Christ had or possessed both in his pre-existent and incarnates states. /

Form of God.¹⁰⁴ *morphh/| qeou/*. It also means divine essence or the manner of divine existence (i.e God’s glory).¹⁰⁵ *Morphe morphē* denotes the method of being or appearance from which the crucial character or position of something can be identified.¹⁰⁶ What is said here of Christ is that he delighted in a Godlike way of being. In other words *morphh/| qeou/*

(*morphe theou*,) “in the form of God” means Jesus owned inwardly and revealed outwardly the very nature of God himself.¹⁰⁷ This is in line with Markus who observes that “in the form of God” though initially signifies the observable outward appearance of a person or object, the word “form” (*morphe* only Phil. 2:6f and Mark 16:17) could also come to mean the distinctive characteristics that match this appearance.¹⁰⁸

In the opinion of Gerald Hawthorn, the best way to understand the meaning of *morfē* (*morphe*) is to know that from original Greek texts *morfē* was at least used to express the way in which a thing, being what it is in itself, looks like to our senses. *morfē* always indicates a nature which actually and completely reveals the being which underlies it. Thus, when this word referred to God, his *morfē* must refer to his deepest being, to what he is in himself, to that which cannot be exchanged by our understanding or sight. In fact the word has meaning here only as pointing to the reality of God’s being. *morfē*/| *qeou*/ then, may be properly perceived as the necessary nature and character of God.¹⁰⁹ To say, therefore, that Christ existed *evn morfē*/| *qeou*/ is to say that outside his human nature Christ had no other fashion of existing aside from existing “in the form of God” meaning that apart from Christ being in possession of all the characteristics and qualities belonging to God. Therefore this mysterious statement seems to be a thoughtful hidden way to say that Christ was God, having the very nature of God without declaring these particular words. It might be a declaration made by a devoted monotheist who being incapable to declare “Christ is God” but was obligated by his experience of personal knowledge of the resurrected and living Christ to affirm as best as he could to the reality of Christ’s divinity. That this is the right import is reinforced by the next :

Being equal with God. *to. ei=nai i;sa qew (To eina isa Theou)*

The definite article in *to. ei=nai* suggests that this second term is closely connected to the first, because the function of the definite article here is to refer back to something

formerly stated. Therefore to. ei=nai i;sa qew should be understood thus: “the equality with God of which we have just spoken equivalently by saying evn morfē/| qeou/ u`pa,rcwn .¹¹⁰ In other words i;sa (*isa*) means equal, the same, in agreement, similar in amount or kind. Hoerber refers to this as “the status and privileges that inevitably follow from being in very nature God.”¹¹¹ Jesus being in the “form of God” has this position and rights in the same way or in equality with God.

Not consider something to be grasped ouvc a`rpagmo.n h`gh,sato (*ouch herphamon herpagmon hegestato.*) The correct reading of the sentence is “he did not consider that being equal with God was something to be grasped.” This is the only section in the entire the New Testament where the word a`rpagmo.n is used.¹¹² This statement refer to the very character of Christ and it makes this hymn to be significant.

a`rpagmo.n is perceived differently by many scholars. Some see it as discussing a thing not yet possessed but anticipated a thing to be snatched at, grasped after as Adam and Satan tried to grasped equality with God. Such an explanation will mean that Christ is not equal with God but could have forcibly stretch for and possibly snatch such equality had he chose to do so. Others take it to mean a thing already possessed and cherished: a thing to be grasped and held on to. This meaning indicates that Christ was already equal with God and that he has the right to grip tightly to this equality and use it to his own benefit. So, Jesus did not count equality with God as seizing; on the contrary, he empties himself. In other words, he did not contemplate that being equal with God was taking all to himself, but (*avlla*) giving everything away for the sake of others. Hence the participial phrase that begins v. 6- o]j evn morfē/| qeou/ u`pa,rcwn (“who being in the form of God”) should be understood as “because he was in the form of God, he reckon equality with God not as a matter of getting but of giving,” rather than “who though he was in the form of God.” In other words, some take it (a`rpagmo.n) passive while some in the active sense, *res rapta* and *res parienda* respectively,

to use the Latin tags.¹¹³ *Res rapta* means Christ does not hold on to equality with God which he owns but gives it up.¹¹⁴ *Res rapienda* on the other hand means Christ refused to fall to the temptation to grasp what he did not as yet possess but was pleased to wait for it to be given to him.¹¹⁵

It is the thought of Muller that since equality with God is a right Christ in fact possesses, a`rpagmoj should be understood in the passive sense (*res rapta*) of robbed or grasped rather than robbery.¹¹⁶ This view was also shared by Wuest because, according to him, it affirm the humility of Christ and self – abnegation for which Paul empolys the hymn.¹¹⁷ This implies Christ does not consider his morfh/| qeou/ a highly prized possession to grasp on to tightly and thereby keep him from condescension.¹¹⁸

consider h`gh,sato (*hegesato*)

The word can be interpreted regard, think or thought, consider, reckon. It is noted as “he did not think he needed to take advantage¹¹⁹ by Markus. It means Christ declined to act selfishly with reference to his pre-incarnate state in relation to God. This is the attitude Paul had in mind when in v.3 he used the same verb (think, consider) ‘in consider each other better than yourselves’ as against the human (and may be the Philippian) inclination to use prestige and privilege to one’s own advantage, Christ did not consider his position as something to be selfishly exploited.

The thought of Paul then is that Christ Jesus had always been and continues to be God by nature morfh/| qeou/. He is in very essence God. He is the same with God in essence of deity. But he does not regard this equality with God a thing to hold tight to unreleased or let go. So “the Godlike one did not use his dignified standing for purely selfish ends.¹²⁰ In other words, he did not think that being equal with God was taking everything to himself, but offering everything for the sake of others.

v.7 This verse expresses the humility which Christ chose instead of the self – serving attitude rejected in verse 6 *ε`auto.n evke,nwsen heauton ekenosen* (“emptied himself”).

The verb is *keno,w kenoo* (“to empty”) while the adjective is *kenoj, kenos* (“empty”).

This attitude of Jesus was presented by *avlla alla* (“but”). The position of being equal with God does not imply filling oneself up, but on the contrary it connotes emptying oneself out. So the hymn declares that Christ, who shared the essence of God, who was the same with God *to. ci=nai i;sa qew* emptied himself *ε`auto.n evke,nwsen*. The forceful position of *ε`auto.n* (“himself”) and the type of the verb (indicative aorist) strongly implies that the act of “emptying” was deliberate on the part of the preexistent Christ.

The verb *keno,w kenoo* can mean either literally ‘to empty,’ or metaphorically to ‘deprive’ or ‘make of no effect’ for example I Cor. 9:15, II Cor. 9:3, Rom. 4:14.¹²¹ Batz and Schreiner agreed with this view of Markus by saying that *keno,w* is frequently used in a figurative way for “emptying| “depriving” or destruction of various spatial or spiritual – psychic entities.¹²² It is a poetic sense of celebrating the adjustment in status, not a way of speaking about the forsaking of divine substance or essence. To them, the crux of the matter is the conversion of roles from divine authority to slave status.¹²³ Christ emptying himself is inseparably connected with *morfh.n dou,lou labw,n morphen doulou labon* “taking the form of a slave.” This is a statement of the manner and style of Christ’s self emptying. There are three important words here: took (*labw,n*) form (*morfh.n*) and slave (*doulou*) . *doulou* means “of a slave” where a slave is “one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, his will altogether used up in the will of the other.”¹²⁴ *morfh.n morphen* “form” it is used here on the same sense as in *morfh qeou/*.¹²⁵ It means a statement one gives of his innermost being.¹²⁶ Therefore *morfh.n dou,lou* indicates that our Lord has outward expression to his innermost sustance, the outward expression being that of the bond slave.¹²⁷ This in no way is a pointer to a physical appearance but to an attitude in nature. *Labw,n labon* (took) speaks of a

thoughtful action freely taken by Jesus. The Greek text *labw,n labon* (took”) is an aorist participle which can also suggest “haven taken” according to zodhiates¹²⁸ and Wuest,¹²⁹ the actions of the participles are reliant on or serve those of the principal verb. Here the principal verb is *evke,nwsen* “emptied” “*ekonosen.*” This shows that the act of taking goes before that of emptying. This then indicates that the act of taking upon himself the nature of a servant does not only precede it but is definitely the cause of the emptying.¹³⁰

Being made in human likeness *evn o`moiw,mati avnqrw,pwn geno,menoj En homoiomati anthropon genomenos* The main word to study is “likeness. *o`moiw,ma Homoioma* indicates likeness, resemblance.¹³¹ Something made to appear like image, as in Rom. 1:23 .¹³² The Greek text talks about “that which is made like something else” thus showing that “our Lord’s humanity was a real likeness, not a phantom nor an incomplete copy of humanity.”¹³³ Christ lived in this earth in actual portrait of men but it was not an hereditary likeness of being¹³⁴ which indicates plainly that his manner of appearance resembled that of men. He was not unlike other children of men as his *morfh. morphe* was man’s.¹³⁵ The phrase implies that he shared the status of humanity.¹³⁶ This reveals the paradox of the Godlike and hence immortal one taking on complete human existence with its purpose in death.¹³⁷ He who was the same with God keenly condescended to be the same with humanity.

The question that will likely come to mind is: What did this act of self-emptying comprise? Of what did Christ empty himself? Some suggested he emptied himself of his glory, of his sovereign exercise of authority, of the rights of deity, of the emblems of majesty, of the relative attributes of deity – omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, of being equal with God, and so on. But for the fact that no reference was made with regards to what Jesus emptied himself of does not give room for these various answers.¹³⁸ A comprehensive and profitable way of understanding the phrase is to bear in mind that the verb *kenoun* can also signify “to pour out” and *e`auto.n* can be taking as its direct object. It is then understood

as Christ who was in the very essence God but did not reckon that this form was considered by covetousness “effaced all thought of self and pour out his fullness to enrich others”.¹³⁹ It is therefore not obligatory to insist that the phrase *e`auto.n evke,nwsen* needs the addition of genitive of content from the context, for example, Christ emptied himself *of something*.” One does not need to envisage that the phrase implies that Christ threw away substances or essences, rather it is a poetic, hymn-like way of expressing that Christ poured out himself, putting himself totally at the disposal of people (cf. 1 John 3:16), that Christ became poor that he might make many rich (11 Cor.8:9; cf also Eph. 1: 23; 4: 10).”¹⁴⁰ A brief play on words explains this stand more kenodoxi,a: (empty opinion,” ”conceit,” v. 3) describes the attitude of those who were challenging their rights and claiming own way; whereas *kenoun* (“to empty” v. 7) describes the action of Christ in terms of setting aside his right and in not claiming his own way. ”Ralph Martins clarifies further that *e`auto.n evke,nwse labw,n* (he emptied himself) does not mean that Christ stripped himself of the relative attributes of deity but rather demonstrates that his *kenoji.j kenosis* or self-emptying was his taking the servant form, and this involves the necessary restraint of his glory which he sets aside in order that he might be born in human likeness.¹⁴¹ In the same order, Gerald elucidates further that the term *e`auto.n evke,nwsen* is defined more precisely by the participial phrases that follow = “taking *labw,n* the form of a slave,” “becoming *geno,menoj* in the likeness of human beings,””and being found *eu`reqei.j* in human form.” He observed that though these participles are aorists, they are aorists of simultaneous action and they point out the source by which the action of the verb *evke,nwsen* was effected. Ironically, then, Christ’s self-giving was proficient by taking, his self-emptying was realized by putting on what he was not before, his *kenoji.j* not by take off from but by adding to. Hence, nothing was deducted from his essence but added to it what was not there before---“the form of a servant,” “the likeness of human beings.”¹⁴² Hence, Christ took to himself willingly the form of a slave. The same word is used here as in v. 6. There is no

idea here that Christ possessed the outward appearance of a slave, or that he camouflage himself as a slave. Rather it signifies that he assumed the nature, “the characteristic attributes” of a slave. In other words, he turned out a slave.

V.8 *kai, sch,mati eu`reqeij w`j a;nqrwpoj Kai schemati heurethesis hos anthropos* (“being found in human form” “being discovered to be and recognized as a man” is the final phrase in the midst of the groups of participial phrases that explain the clause, “he emptied himself” and it reinforces the meaning of “identity” for (likeness). The word “form” *sch,ma* means that “outward form or structure observable to the senses and therefore generally points to what is “external and changeable: over and against what is “essential and permanent,” its significance in this context is not to be so restricted.¹⁴³ Settling aside etymologies, *sch,ma* ‘form’ together with *morfh*. (form) and *o`moiwm*,*ma* (likeness) gives a threefold repetition of the one essentially important idea that Christ in the incarnation fully connected himself with humanity, he truly became man, not merely an external appearance but in thought and feeling, he shared man’s predicament in reality and was no mere “reasonable facsimile of a man.”¹⁴⁴ Markus, talking about those three words discussed above says “the cumulative effect of these words is to stress that Jesus humbled himself to become human, and indeed lowly through and through”.¹⁴⁵ He says further that the verb interpreted appeared *eu`reqeij* literally means, ‘he was found.’ Being passive, it has to do not so much with sighting but with what in French is termed by *se trouver*:¹⁴⁶ the way a person’s situations turn out in the event, rather than what is the case in principle.¹⁴⁷ Thus, within an noticeable event in history Jesus was born as a man. This is what *geno,menoj* (becoming) clarifies. It is aorist participle derived from *ginesqai* the verb that emphasises “beginning” or “becoming.” This stands contrary to *u`pa,rcwn* (present participle) in v.6. where it was said that Christ always existed (*u`pa,rcwn*) “in the form of God. Here it is said that he emanated into existence *geno,menoj* “in the likeness of man.” No finite can describe how the one who was God fully could also be a human person to the

completely. This is the thought of Luke 2:52 ‘and Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man.’ This signifies that Jesus being a truly genuine human being having all the potential for physical, mental, social and spiritual growth proper to humanity is both simultaneously divine and human, God and man.

Humbled himself *evtapei,nwsen e`auto,n Heauton etapeinosen* (humbled himself). Paul continues to say that Christ in the days of his flesh humbled himself. This indicates that as a man Christ did not strive for some pinnacle of human achievement. “He humbled himself” shares closely the vocabulary and the character encouraged in verse 3-4 and stands in similar to “he emptied himself” in the previous verse as the final downward step of self – abasement. This verb is in active aorist reflective pronoun,¹⁴⁸ hence it indicates a voluntary historical act of self-humbling. This act of Christ’s humanity and self-humbling is noteworthy for the moral argument Paul is trying to derive from his audience. Paul wants the Philippian Christians to realise that Christ did not stand where they stood (cf. v3) “not where the battle was fought for honour, right and credit. Instead, his whole life was characterized by¹⁴⁹ self surrender, self renunciation and self – sacrifice.”

Becoming obedient unto death *geno,menoj u`ph,kooj me,cri qana,tou*

Genomenos hupekoos mechri thanatou. A participle is used there to set into view exactly the implication of the principal verb *evtapei,nwsen* Christ humbled himself “by becoming *geno,menoj* (obedient unto death).”¹⁵⁰ This concise phrase “obedient unto death” evaluates the greatness of Christ’s humility and expresses the idea that he was essentially “obedient to God to the full length of accepting death.

u`ph,kooj hupekoos is the nominative singular and indicates “obedient.” As an adjective, it refer to the quality of life in Christ which contrasts¹⁵¹ the manner of the Philippians. This gives details of its function and the ground Paul appeals to it in dealing with disunity in this church. Christ’s personal humiliation was shown by his obedience (Heb.

5:8). ‘Becoming obedient unto death’ qualifies the degree and profundity of the act. He became obedient to the father, this obedience knew no limits,¹⁵² was not put off by an inglorious death on a cross. In likewise manner these “warring” church members should put down their tools and pay attention to Paul’s admonition. Also if the exercise of surrendering one’s life completely for another’s will, like Christ for his father’s, is being experienced in this church,¹⁵³ the problem of disunity would not be have arisen. The younger in age who becomes a leader in the church should be submitted to by even the older who may also be wealthier.

There seems also a way in which Christ was obedient to the desires of the people. As a slave he conditioned himself not only to obey God but also to serve human kind. Put in another way, he set himself to obey God through serving humankind. This could be deduced from Christ’s statement in Heb. 10:7, Luke 19:10 Mark. 10:45 “I have come to do your will, O God.” “I have come to seek and save that which is lost, to serve and to give my life a ransom for many,” Christ’s approval of death, therefore, was his eventual yes to God and man; his ultimate act of obedience to God in his self – giving service to people. Moreover, the death of Christ was also vicarious, that is a death in place of others. Though it is not evidently stated here but it can be deduced from the context. It was the expectation of Paul as shown in his appeal to the Christian church in Philippi that they forsake their individual privileges for the advantage of the whole. This entreaty must get its impetus from Christ, “renunciation for the benefit of others of his own right to live.” So also it is hard to envisage that God would have need of of Jesus to submit not only to death but to criminal death unless that death was in some way vicarious, and in some sense the realisation of God’s redeeming purpose for mankind.

qana,tou de. staurou/Å Thanatou de staurou (death on a cross). Christ’s death was not a usual death. It was death on a cross. *.staurou* is the genitive singular of the word *staurouj*

stauros. This word means, by implication, punishment of the cross, crucifixion.¹⁵⁴ Literally it is “of a cross” but plainly expresses within the context the kind of death Jesus freely accepted in complete obedience to his father, mark of his self – abnegation. It was “no ordinary death, but death of shame and suffering”.¹⁵⁵ It was a peak of humiliation,¹⁵⁶ death of a cursed person Deut. 2:23. It is the most demeaning death¹⁵⁷ for a most exalted Lord. It is still a stumbling block to many Gentiles who are familiar to clothing their divinities with every outward attribute of grace and beauty.¹⁵⁸

The conjunction *de. de* (even) that presents this phrase calls special consideration to this most remarkable element in the humiliation of Christ. Crucifixion, which has its origin from the Persians and perfected by the Romans,¹⁵⁹ was an uncommon cruel and humiliating method of capital punishment. It was commonly set aside for slaves, robbers, assassins, rebellious provincials and the like. It was detested by the Jew, not only because of its pain and disgrace but because anyone thus hanged was regarded accursed by God (Deut. 21:22,23, I Cor. 1:23, Gal. 3:13). It was no less detestable to the Roman. Cicero articulated Roman abhorrence of crucifixion thus: “let the very name of the cross be far or away among not only from the body of a Roman citizen but even from his thoughts, his eyes, his ears.”¹⁶⁰ The death of Christ by crucifixion was, therefore, the final in human humiliation. Consequently he who existed in the form of God, was equal with God, emptied himself, humbled himself, surrendered himself to a criminal’s death. So, three pictures of this type of death—painful, shameful and accursed reinforce the appeal of Paul as an answer to the Philippian disunity. Any Christian prepared to be accursed, treated disgracefully with pain, to all intents and purposes, can tolerate insults, deprivation and reproof from fellow Christian. Thus the fundamental thought of verses 5-8 is vividly summarized by Hendricksen:

Surely if Christ Jesus humbled himself so very deeply, you Philippians should be constantly willing to humble yourselves in your own small way. Surely, if he became obedient to the extent of death, yes death by a cross, you should become increasingly

obedient to the divine directions and should accordingly strive more and more to achieve in your lives the spirit of your master, that is, the spirit of oneness, lowliness, and helpfulness, which is pleasing to God.¹⁶¹

V.9 At this stage there is a radical change in the hymn. Whereas the first half of the hymn refers to Christ as the acting subject of all the verbs, now in the last half God is the one performing while Christ is the object of the divine act. The first half of the hymn refers to Christ's self degradation but the second half describes his adoration by God. This last half opens with a strong inferential conjunction, *dio*. *dio* followed immediately by a second conjunction *kai*, *kai* showing that the inference is obvious. Together they may be translated "as a consequence, therefore"¹⁶² These conjunctions say in effect that the exaltation of Jesus, soon to be mentioned, was not all that a reward for his self abnegation or a gracious gift that excludes any idea of merit on Christ's part as it was the normal or reasonable result of his humility. In other words they confirm what Jesus taught, namely that in the divine order of things, self humbling leads unavoidably to exaltation.¹⁶³ *o` qeo.j auvto.n u`peru,ywsen ho theos auton hyperupsosen* (God exalted him). The exaltation of Christ, which is now the subject of the second half of the hymn, is not described in phases as was his humiliation – descent. Rather Paul portrayed God in one dramatic act elating Christ from the lowest point to the heights. The verb chosen in relating this astonishing change of events is the verb *u`peru,ywsoun hyperupsoon* "to super exalt" "to raise someone to the loftiest height"¹⁶⁴ The phrase "therefore God, raised him to the loftiest heights,"¹⁶⁵ confirms Jesus Maxim in Mathew. 23:12b "whoever humbles himself will be exalted" as true. The primary idea projected by this verb is not comparative,¹⁶⁶ that is that Christ is now someone greater than he was before the incarnation, or possesses a position superior to that which he had in his pre – existent state, but superlative, that is, that Christ, who made himself so very lowly, was made by God very high, so high in fact, that he is placed over *u`per hyper* all things. Remarkably, this verb

u`peru,ywsoun is used in the LXX Old Testament to designate Yahweh as the one who is “exalted far above all gods” (Ps 96,97:9; cf. Dan 3:52,54, 57-88) Paul’s entreaty to the issue of Christ’s adoration implies that the problem in the Philippian church shoots from self – exaltation instead of self–abnegation. Also, that they are duty– bound to follow the footsteps of Christ. The height to which Jesus was elevated by God because of his self – humiliation should make the Philippian Christian to put an end to fighting and bow to one another as an alternative. The fear of being step upon by believers, which sparks of adverse reaction, should give way to a deliberate self – humbling. That God “exalted” him by the use of the aorist tense *u`peru,ywsen* refers unreservedly to that moment in history marked by the resurrection – ascension of Christ. Jesus Christ who humbled himself in submission to God to the point of accepting death in its most horrible form was resurrected from the dead by God and elevated to the place of ultimate power (cf Acts 2:32,33; 5:30,31; Eph 1:20,21).

What then is the form of this exaltation? It is not farfetched-the statement that God “highly exalted” Christ is accompanied by the statement that God *evcari,sato auvtw/| to. o;noma Echarisato auto to onoma* (gave him the name). This name is above *u`per hyper* every name. The word *evcari,sato* is the third person singular first aorist indicative of *cari,zomai* chariszomai, it means “to give”. It could also be rendered, freely bestowed, ¹⁶⁷ graciously given¹⁶⁸ or granted.¹⁶⁹

1. In ancient thought *o;noma* “name” was not only a means of differentiating one individual from another, but also a means of expressing the inner being, the true essence of that individual (cf. Gen 25:26, I Sam. 25:25).¹⁷⁰ So for Paul to pronounce that God conferred on Christ “the name that is above every name” is to announce that God not only graciously bestowed (*evcari,sato*) on him a title which distinct him from all other beings, a title which outranked all other titles, but also that he bestowed on him a nature which corresponded with that

title, giving substance and meaning to it. If that title (name) is *ku,rioj kurios* Lord ¹⁷¹ as the context indicates, (v.11), it ultimately indicates that Christ has been given the character of Lord. This is to say, not only does he own the title “Lord” but he is *ku,rioj* Lord, sovereign over the whole cosmos. All authority in heaven and earth is his gift and nature (Matt. 28:18). This then is the extent of Christ’s exaltation – lifted by God to the position of Supreme authority in the cosmic structure of things. The verb *evcari,sato*, a first aorist, shows that this action has taken place, given the impression of a complete action. Its result continues but awaits a final consummation. That this name is above every name confirms self-esteem and power. The Philippians must learn from this that “the way up is down.” A personal human tendency to grasp or hold forcefully to what is ours produces disunity and does not elevate. He who humbled himself was exalted so the Philippians Christians should habitually be willing to humble themselves.

V.10 God’s determination in thus elevating Christ and conferring on him this all surpassing name is two – fold. The first is stated in this clause *i[na evn tw/| ovno,mati Vlhsou/ pa/n go,nu ka,myh* “in order that at the name of Jesus every knee might bow.” Two matters of importance are brought out. The first is the designation “the name of Jesus” *tw/| ovno,mati Vlhsou/* For the fact that it is here that Paul declares the name *Jesu* is not because he thinks that ‘Jesus’ and not “Lord” is the name that is above all names. For *tw/| ovno,mati Vlhsou/* does not imply that everyone will bow ‘at the name Jesus (*Ihso/n* dative), rather that everyone will bow “at the name of Jesus” (*Ihsou/* genitive,) that is “at the name belonging to or that is borne by Jesus.” And that name is *ku,rioj kupios* (“Lord”). The understanding is that the one who emptied himself, who humbled himself, who became human in space and time, who became a slave, who was crucified, who died a criminals death – this one, Jesus whom people

so male-treated, God has made both Christ and Lord (cf. Acts 2:36). He is saying that the one “who was completely obedient must now be completely obeyed.”¹⁷² The other matter of importance is that the verb *ka,mpt̃in* (to bow) is followed by the preposition *evn* and the dative *evn tw/| ovno,mati...ka,myh*. The writer is here emphasising that homage is actually to be paid to Jesus as Lord, not through Jesus to God. Hence the expression *evn tw/| ovno,mati* must be explained “at the name” or “before the name”¹⁷³ signifying that all must bring their homage to Jesus, all must fall on their knees before him to show him honour.

pa/n go,nu ka,myh This is translated every knee should bend. *ka,myh* is the third singular first aorist subjunctive of *ka,myto* which means “to bend, inflect the knee, bow.”¹⁷⁴ Every knee should bow implies a universal assertion and worship of Jesus¹⁷⁵ and not the Emperor. It is at the second coming of Jesus that all creatures at the three levels (pertaining to heaven, pertaining to earth, and pertaining to the underworld), shall worship Jesus and bow to him.¹⁷⁶ These adjectives are operating as nouns and may be neuter, referring to things, animate and inanimate alike, creation in its entirety. It is likely that Paul, when he wanted to declare the universality of worship due from creation to Jesus, made use of the phraseology of his day (cf. Rev5:13. Because in antiquity people believed in a three-storied universe and universality was thus often indicated by phrases that embrace all the three.¹⁷⁷ Also this adjective-nouns may be masculine, referring only to rational beings. Grounded on the context, the latter seems to be correct since only sensible beings can recognise and acknowledge something to be true (v. 11). The worship would be world-wide, by creatures, spirits and demons, by sinners and saints readily or ruefully.¹⁷⁸ Because in this series the writer describes angels, men and demons as joining together in an act of worship (cf. 1Cor 4:9). All principalities and powers (cf. Col 1:16,20; 2:15; Eph 3:10) as well as all people are to bend their knees before Jesus and do homage to him in admiration and awe (cf. Eph 1:10).

v.11 The second part of God's purpose in exalting Christ and giving him the name that is above all names is now expressed *pa/sa glw/ssa evxomologh,shtai o[ti ku,rioj V[hsou/j Cristo.j pasa glossa exomologe satai oti kurios Jesoos kristos*. It is that "every tongue (*glw/ssa*) might openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord." This is the awaited peak of the hymn, and it makes available to the reader the name that is above every name "Lord." It is obvious that "Jesus Christ is Lord" was the original confessional recipe of the church (cf. Acts 2:36; Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 11:23, 12:3; 16:22). The significant thing to consider here is that this acknowledgement is not confined to the church, every tongue will confess.¹⁷⁹ This phrase *pa/sa glw/ssa* is a poetic way of saying "everyone or all," It especially refers to 'all peoples' since *glw/ssa* ("tongue") is often used as a synonym of *fulh,, laoj eqoj* (tribe, people, nation, Isa. 66:18, Dan. 3:4,17, Rev. 5:9, 7:9, 10:11). But looking at it from the context, especially verse 10, it quite feasibly refers to all sensible beings, to everyone who is capable of making a clever acknowledgement concerning the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The acknowledgement of the Lordship of Christ is gladly and willingly.

Verse 11 then implies that the hope of God is that every clever being in his universe might declare openly and gladly that Jesus Christ alone has the right to reign. So the purpose behind God's action to elevate Christ and to share with him his own name *ku,rioj Yahweh* (Lord) according to verses 10 and 11 is in order that every created being in heaven, on earth and under the earth might eventually be submissive to himself by willingly and happily pledge loyalty to the one who chose the lowly path of self –effacement and of humble service to others (cf. Eph. 1:10).

Even though Jesus has the name "Lord" *ku,rioj* the name belonging to God himself which in Old Testament is "Yahweh" and he is implicitly professed to be God with all the right and freedoms of God, Jesus does not in any way dislodge God, or even competing God. Therefore, at whatever time and by whomever the confession is made that "Jesus is Lord,"

God suffers no humiliation, rather he is glorified *eivj do,xan qeou/ patro,j Eis doxan theou patros* (to the glory of God the father). When the son is glorified, the father is glorified also, and vice versa, and when the son is banned the father is banned also, and vice versa.¹⁸⁰

Surely the Philippian Christians have a lot to learn, a great challenge to face and a humble decision to make. They should endeavour to work hard to give God the glory through bearing with one another. If they fail in this, their conflicts will make the unbelieving community to reproach the name of God. They should understand the message of Paul; be humble like Christ. Do not contend with one another even Christ did not think it right to hold on to his right unreleased. They should set their mind on Christ and copy his example because that is the road to that glory by which God himself is glorified.¹⁸¹

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ECWA

4.1 Historical Origin of ECWA

The history of ECWA (Evangelical Church Winning All but then Evangelical Church of West Africa) will be incomplete without any mention of how it came into being through Sudan Interior Mission, now Service In Mission (SIM). This chapter presents a brief description of the enabling environment that motivated the pioneers of the mission to the Sudan. It discusses the mission's pioneering age, the mission's development and how it was able to establish a foothold in the Sudan as well as the footpath of unity established by the mission. The chapter also focuses on the general philosophy of the mission with reference to mission theory and practice and activities in the field, culminating in the indigenisation of the mission and its attendant growth that resulted into the birth of Ilorin District Church Council (IDCC).in 1971 out of the pioneering Yoruba District Church Council (YDCC) of 1954.

The pioneering work for the establishment of the mission enterprise in the Sudan centred around three young men, Walter Gowans, Rowland Bingham and Thomas Kent. That, notwithstanding, one of the motivating factors was a godly woman, Mrs Margaret Gowans, mother of Walter. She hailed from Scotland but was living in Toronto, Canada. She was a woman with great interest in missions. The zeal and passion for mission work was passed on to her family. Her daughter, Miss Annie Gowans was a missionary in China.¹

Mrs Gowans, based on her study of the great mission fields of the world, had prayed for several years for the needy mission field of the Sudan² which had an area believed to be larger than India and a population totalling sixty to ninety million³ was convinced that that was the place God was calling her son, Walter, to work as a missionary. Such a wonderful eagerness and urge did not just begin overnight; it was as a result of some factors.

4.1.1 Motivation for the Birth of SIM in Sudan

The word “Sudan” is an Arabic word and means the land of the blacks. The Sudan has no precise boundary. Approximately, it may be said that on the north it is bounded by the Great Sahara and Egypt; on the south by Uganda, the Congo Free State and French Congo, the district of German Cameroons, Southern Nigeria, and the smaller west colonies of Sierra Leone, French Guinea and the Sene-Gambia.⁴

A. Evangelical Community of Toronto, Canada

Here is a brief description of the factors that influenced the first three pioneers of SIM in coming to the Sudan. These factors played a great role in the formation of progressive growth and the establishment of a foothold on the Sudan. The first factor was the Christian family environment in which Walter grew up. His father was a Trustee and an elder in Saint James’ Square in Toronto. His mother was a woman leader in the same church while his sister was a missionary in China. Another factor was the growth of missionary interest in North America and there were many missionary colleges established for that purpose. Dr. A. B. Simpson of the Christian Missionary Alliance founded one such college in 1882. It was in that college that Walter Gowans and Thomas Kent studied in 1893 and Rowland Bingham in 1895. The urge and vision for mission was increased for each of them while they were studying in the college.⁵

Mention must be made of the role of the Evangelical Publishers of Toronto, the publisher of the popular Christian magazine called the Faithful Witness or else the early history of SIM will be incomplete. The first issue of the magazine went forth on its mission in January 1887 with Mr. Alfred Sandham serving as its editor. Bingham was said to have been its editor for 33 years. It was this Christian magazine that broke the age long unavailability of a channel of expression or organ through which to promote the common

evangelical interests of many forms of union of Christian activity in Toronto and other lands.⁶

The purpose for which the magazine was established was thus stated:

1. To preach the Gospel of Salvation
2. To propagate those truths designed for the building up and sanctifying of believers
3. To defend the faith against the assaults of modern heretics and unbelievers, whether in the church or out of it.
4. To provide the gist of the best news of progress and interest in all the churches in their work of making Christ known in all the lands.⁷

The last but not the least factor was that of Mrs. Margaret Gowans. Apart from sharing with and convincing her son, Walter, of the burden of the Sudan, she shared her son's vision for the Sudan and the difficulties in sourcing for funds for the journey to the Sudan he was experiencing with Bingham.⁸ As a result of meeting Mrs Gowans, Bingham decided to visit Walter Gowans who had travelled to Britain and go with him to Africa. Both Walter and Bingham were convinced later that Thomas Kent should join them.⁹ It was out of this evangelical, religious and social background that Mr. Walter Gowans, Mr. Thomas Kent and Mr. Rowland V. Bingham appeared as the first three pioneers of the SIM.¹⁰

B. General Background to the Lives of the First SIM Pioneer Missionaries

In the previous section we discussed the religious environment of the first SIM pioneers. Here in this section we shall examine the immediate and personal factors that are responsible for the call of the three SIM pioneers, Gowans, Kent and Bingham.

(a) Mr. Walter Gowans

Mr. Walter Gowans, a Scottish Canadian, grew up in a home highly interested in missions. As we discussed earlier, his family was closely associated with the Saint James' Square Church in Toronto. His father, John Gowans, was a Trustee and an elder in this

Church, while his mother, Mrs. Gowans, was a leading woman in the same church. His sister, Miss Annie Gowans, was a missionary to China.

According to Rowland Bingham's personnel records, Mrs. Gowans was influential in motivating her son, Walter Gowans to enlist for the Sudan Mission field:

Then she told how Christ had come the second time to her home, looking for an ambassador and had taken her oldest boy, and sent him to the Sudan.... Simply, she unfolded the story of his call, how he felt that he should go not only to the needy, but to those who needed him most. She told how he had studied the great mission fields of the world and had been brought to the conviction that the Sudan, which had an area larger than India, a population of sixty million without a single Christian missionary, was to him the place of the divine call.¹¹

Mr. Gowans was the first of the three SIM pioneers upon whom God laid the burden of the unreached millions in Africa's Central Sudan. He definitely caught the vision clarified and strengthened when he enrolled at Rev. Simpson's Missionary Training College in New York in 1892 and 1893. It was in this center that Mr. Gowans received Rev. Simpson's vision for a lost world and the church's responsibility to it.

In spite of his burden and eagerness for the Sudan he was faced with the problem of funding. His efforts did not receive any enthusiastic reception from the North America or British societies. Canada and America were not ready to open a new mission field for lack of funds to finance it. Great Britain hanged its excuse on fruitlessness of two earlier missionary expeditions to the Sudan and so the Sudan was considered a closed field.¹²

The only source of inspiration he received in North America was the financial and moral help from Rev. Simpson, the founder of Toronto Missionary Training School, and his church in 1893. The money given was just enough a transport fare to get to England. Mr. Gowans remained dogged. His heart was gladdened when two more young men, Kent and Bingham, who shared his vision, joined him in England in readiness for the Sudan.

(b) Mr. Thomas Kent

The second member of the three pioneers was an American from Buffalo, New York, Mr. Thomas Kent. He also attended Rev. Simpson's Missionary Training College together with his friend, Walter Gowans in 1892 and 1893. It was during his course of study in this College that he got his vision and challenge for the Sudan. Both of them (Gowans and Kent) shared the same burden of the Sudan and Kent was eager to join Walter at any time when enroute to the Sudan. Meanwhile Mr. Gowans had travelled to England to raise funds for the Sudan Mission fields because he was unable to raise any in North America. In 1893 when Mr. Gowans and his new team mate, Mr. Bingham, decided to go to the Sudan at any cost, Mr. Kent was invited to join them in England. Both Gowans and Bingham wrote simultaneously to Kent without informing each other. Here is Bingham's account of the event:

At the same time we each wrote this decision to a mutual friend, Mr. Thomas Kent, in America who had offered to join us if desired. It confirmed our faith when shortly after a letter arrived from Tom Kent stating that following a time of waiting on God, he had felt impelled to come on to Britain to join us, whatever our decision. These letters were in the mail at the same time, each announcing his decision without knowing the conviction of the others.¹³

(c) Mr. Rowland V. Bingham

The third person of the Sudan Missionary enterprise under SIM was Mr. Rowland V. Bingham. He was an English Canadian who migrated from England to Toronto, Canada, in 1889. He was a member of the Salvation Army and was very active in its religious activities. On arrival at Toronto he met Rev. John Salmon, the Pastor of the Bethany chapel and founder of Bethany Healing Home and Toronto Missionary Alliance. Rev. Salmon's life of faith, example, and prayer left an unbelievable spiritual mark upon Bingham's life. Mr. Bingham was a man of many backgrounds and privileged to be influenced by many religious people from whom he received the great passion and vision for the Sudan. But his meeting with Mrs. Gowans, Walters, mother, enlisted him for the Sudan. Bingham stated: "It was the

impassioned pleading, of a quiet little Scotch lady that linked my life up with the Sudan. She had invited me to her home for lunch from a meeting where I had been speaking in the city of Toronto. There in the quietness of her parlour she told the story of her home, and unburdened her heart.”¹⁴

She also informed him of her daughter’s passion for missions as well as the difficulty Walter was facing in getting financial support. In response to her, Bingham testified:

It was when Walter Gowans had reached this stage of utter discouragement man- ward that his mother poured the story that day into my ear. I was then a young Englishman, little more than a lad, who had come to Canada but four years before the appeal fell on a prepared heart. The challenge of a great needy field moved me. The picture of that lonely pleader for the Sudan, rejected by mission boards, without companions or support, challenged me, with that mother, I knelt in prayer for God’s blessing upon her boy. I was strangely moved, but left the home without decision.¹⁵

Bingham’s resolution was made after listening to Mr. Fred C. Arnot, the pioneer missionary to the Bible and the Garanganzee region of South Africa. “That night the decision was made, and I had become convinced that Africa was my field and that I was to join young Gowans as a pioneer to the Sudan.”¹⁶

Bingham, without meeting with Mr. Gowans assured his mother and travelled to England to meet him. For six months the two tried to rouse interest in a new effort to reach the Sudan with the Gospel but there was no sign of success. Bingham narrated the experience.

Finally driven to the conclusion that none of the regular mission boards would accept or send us, after much prayer, the decision was reached that it was incumbent on us to obey the command of our Lord and to go, board or no board. If the boards could not or would not send us, we still had to answer to the one who we believed had commissioned us to go and whose command we believed to be sovereign.¹⁷

This was the nature of anxiety that these pioneers come upon yet they resolved to go forward alone in single faith “in the great Head of the Church.” It was at this stage of firm conclusiveness that both wrote to invite Thomas Kent to join them if he would and of course, he did without reluctance.

Bingham stated their situation thus: “we did not form a mission.” We simply sought as individual Christians to obey the command of our Lord. None of us had any assurance even of a local church support. Mr. Kent was Congregationalist, Mr. Gowans a Presbyterian, while I, after resigning as an officer in the salvation (Army) had made ecclesiastical affiliation.¹⁸

So the SIM’s burden for the Sudan was borne out of a life of dedication to a vision of the lost, obedience to the call of God, reliance upon the sovereign God, and a life by prayer and faith. Thus the religious and social environment of the Toronto area was not the only explanation for the birth of missions, another factor was the personal faith, conviction and vision which characterized the life of the SIM pioneers.

4.1.2 SIM in Nigeria

We have discussed the motivating factors behind the move of these first three SIM pioneers. The next stage of our discuss now focuses on their pioneering attempts as this unattached group forged into a mission based on their belief that they were obeying the command of God.

The Three SIM Pioneers’ Pioneering Attempts

Mr. Rowland Bingham wrote: “The burden of the Sudan! Thus would we commence the story of the Sudan Interior Mission.”¹⁹

Certainly it was this burning burden that brought the three young pioneers together. If not for this burning burden how could these three young men leave their comforts and venture into a land unfamiliar without support? The burden of the Sudan was stated in this manner:

The great Sudan with its teeming population of upwards of sixty millions of souls in pagan darkness lay untouched, uninfluenced by the church of Christ, not one missionary lived within its borders, and the Gospel story was unknown throughout its vast extent. Could anyone, appreciating the infinite value of a soul, look out upon this great field and consider unmoved the hopeless destiny of its dying million²⁰

Though this was an expression of a fervent soul burdened by concern for winning souls for Christ, it was nevertheless exaggerated because there were missionaries in Lagos before their arrival there and these missionaries must have been preaching though there might not be mass converts and the fact that they did not venture into the interior.

The Sudan was a mystery. It attracted powerfully the pioneers' sympathy, and they finally decided that no difficulties would be sufficient to stop them from carrying the Gospel there. These three pioneers, who did not form any mission, but went out as individuals with a mutual burden sought to obey the command of God. Later, they left for West Africa, not as a mission, but as individuals who were never attached to any association or group, but were joined and held together by common conviction and vision, faith and prayer. In short they were a faith mission.²¹

Apart from the real problem of no home support these missionaries were also informed of disappointing stories of the depressed failures of other missionaries to enter the Sudan. In England, they were told that the Central Sudan was a closed field but none of these scary stories discouraged them.

Mr. Gowans used to say that the Sudan was a closed field simply because the church had never in any adequate sense put her hand to the door to open it. We expressed our conviction in a little Sudan song ... as expressive of the faith with which the little band was actuated. For many years here Christians gazed and then stood still aghast. And said the dangers were too great, this field was closed fast. But Jesus' power shall break the bars, and burst the gates of brass. The dark Sudan shall hear the name of Jesus.²²

In spite of these deterrent elements they continued firm and unwavering.

Even though they were aware that endeavouring to go to the Sudan with the gospel message could lead to loss of their lives, still they determined to risk it in faith. They were so resolute that not even sickness, death or lack of provision could create a faltering block to their mission. Expressing the mind of his partners, Walter Gowans wrote:

Our success in this enterprise means nothing less than opening of the Sudan for the Gospel. Our failure at most, is nothing more than the death of two or three eluded fanatics (for the Lord). But if we fail, it will be our fault through lack of faith. God is faithful. He faileth not. Still, even death is not a failure. God's purposes are accomplished. He uses death as well as lives for the furtherance of his cause. After all, is it not worth a venture? Sixty million souls are at stake.²³

Going from the above statement, nothing could stop these daring young men to fulfill their mission since they were spiritually prepared to face any difficulty or danger on their way. So they embarked on their journey to the Sudan. It is with this resolute spirit that they set sail from England on the steamer SS Accra on November 4, 1893 and landed in Lagos, December 4, 1893.²⁴

Ever before they left England they had pursued the permission of the Royal Niger Company to proceed up the Niger River. This permission was needed because Britain had given a Charter of control to the company with the rights to make pacts with kings and chiefs. The company had a little army of trained Africans under British officers to carry out its authority, protect its trade and extend its sphere. So it had adopted the policy of prevention of trade from the whole region, but it was equally opposed to the entrance of missionaries.²⁵

On board the SS Accra was the officer commanding the Royal Niger Company's troops, who treated them with contempt when he learned that the pioneers were missionaries. The man, known as Captain May said to them: "I understand you propose to go up from Lagos overland into the Niger Company's territory. If you did I shall have the pleasure of arresting you and marching you back across the border."²⁶

Confusing and scary accounts of Missionary experiences on the West Coast of Africa was their welcome reception on their way to Lagos. In Free Town, Sierra Leone, they met with the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Wesleyans, the United Brethren, and the Missionary Alliance. From these missionaries they heard the stories of the death of over 50 missionaries within 20 years. This fact helped to confirm the popular slogan that Africa was “The White Man’s Grave.”

As they landed in Lagos, they run into one problem after another. The first was the deterrence from their missionary counterparts, three missions which had been working in Lagos. The Superintendent of the Methodist Mission in West Africa remarked: “Young men, you will never see the Sudan, your children will never see the Sudan, and your grand-children may.”²⁷ The second problem was transportation. There were no roads apart from the little native paths through the dense forest on the coast and the long grassland of the interior. The only means of carrying loads was head portage by inhabitants who were not easy to employ because of great slave-raiding wars. Thirdly they had the problem of legal tender. The medium of exchange was cowry shells used in the interior. At the time two hundred cowry shells were equivalent to one British penny. These young missionaries landed in Lagos with only thirty British pounds. After a weekly prayer a gift of five hundred dollars was received through Rev Salmon of Toronto. Bingham remarking on the gift said; “This included a number of gifts, but the largest donor was a servant named Mary Jones. The gift of this servant came just at the moment of our greatest need and made possible the first journey up into the Soudan” (Sudan).²⁸

Fourthly, they encountered with health problem. Mr. Bingham was attacked with fever just in a little over three weeks in Lagos. They prayed expecting divine healing but this did not work. So they decided to visit a doctor but the doctor gave a miserable picture of death. By divine providence Bishop Hill and his wife and his team arrived in Lagos at the

time. He prayed over the sick Bingham; he did recover but later Bishop Hill and his wife died.²⁹

Mr. Bingham stayed in Lagos to recover, keep communications, received and forwarded goods while Mr. Gowans and Mr. Kent advanced to the Sudan. Bingham commenting on this arrangement says: “None of us wanted this task. Each was keen to go forward. But when I was stricken down the doctor gave his verdict that it would be a long time before I was fit to travel and in consequence, it was decided that my lot was to take the post none of us desired.”³⁰

While still in Lagos the S I M missionaries noticed that all the mission societies for the most part were operating along the coast. Mr. Gowans remarked: “They are really afraid to venture too far beyond civilization, and I believe this is the reason of the great mortality among them, as nearly all the coast of Africa is swamp land”.³¹

4.1.2.1 The Barren Years in the Mission Field-1893-1990

(a) First attempt into the interior

Mr. Gowans and Mr. Kent left Lagos in April 1894. They got to Bida in June 1894. At Bida, Thomas Kent went back to Lagos for provisions, while Mr. Gowans proceeded upward to Kano. Kent arrived in Lagos covered from head to foot with boils and sickening with malaria. When he got better he left to rejoin Walter Gowans but it was difficult for Gowans to go further than Bida. He faced the problem of wars in Sokoto and Kontagora which shut the roads to Kano. But he managed to push forward to Kano but got trapped by the Emir of Kontagora, who besieged a small town where Gowans was. The town was overpowered by the Emir and Mr. Gowans had his provision seized with the promise of paying in cash but the Emir of Kontagora sent slaves to him in place of his impounded goods which he refused. Gowans managed to reach Zaria but was taken ill with dysentery. On November 4, 1894, a party of semi-scientific explorers, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Bonner and Dr.

Tonkins saw him. He was counselled by Dr. Tonkins to return to Canada or else he would die. Gowans in the long run died 17th November 1894 and was buried at Girku, 40 miles from Zaria.³² The news of his death did not get to Rowland Bingham until February 7, 1895. In 1915, Bingham visited Girku and saw where Gowans breathed his last.³³

Mr. Kent continued his journey to meet Mr. Gowans in Kano in early September and got to Bida on the 9th of October, 1894. Because of transport problems and local wars, he was constrained to stay back in Bida. He took ill there and died on 8th December, 1894 in the presence of two other young missionaries from England who were also making the same venture for the Sudan.

One, Mr. David Loynd left England on October 20, 1894 to join Bingham and his group. In December 1894, he and Mr. Bingham went inland to Ogbomosho where Mr. Bingham heard of the death of Mr. Gowans on February 7, 1895. Bingham and Loynd returned to England in May 1895. Later, Bingham returned to Canada and to Gowans' mother. He described that moment of meeting in these words:

She came in a little later and extended her hand and held mine in silence for a little while. Her eyes were filled with tears. We were both thinking about the past. Then she broke the silence with these words. "Well, Mr. Bingham, I would rather have Walter go out to the Sudan and die there all alone, than have him home today disobeying his Lord. She prayed that God would send a messenger of the Gospel to the village where her son died."³⁴

This story of these three pioneers on the west coast of Africa is touching. In spite of all hazards nothing daunted them. They were only frail human beings in contrast to the tough and impassable natural barriers. They left North America and England for the Sudan without any name, except for the hearts that were passionate for the Sudan. It was when they were in Lagos that they agreed to 'call their burden, the Sudan Interior Mission.'³⁵ According to J. H. Hunter.

Walter Gowans and Thomas Kent accomplished far more by their deaths than by their lives. The world may view their end as untimely, good lives thrown away in vain endeavor and that they accomplished nothing. The world may say that they failed. But

that is not as God sees it. Their names are written on honorary role of heaven. Besides, two grains of wheat fell into the ground and died in that far off day of 1894. True to the word of the Lord Jesus Christ, ten thousand fold is the harvest being reaped today.³⁶

In other word this adventure of the three young pioneers of S I M was a remarkable and audacious start of missions to the Sudan, even though it was met with depressing failure. Nevertheless this was to be a hope deferred, “for the seeds of faith had been established through failure and martyrdom”.³⁷

Appraisal of the first attempt

As soon as he returned to Canada in 1895, Bingham determined to lay a firm foundation for the mission enterprise.³⁸

He started with the need of getting medical training if he would return to Africa.³⁹ This shows that the need for medical training for Bingham was to support the Africa natives as well as the missionaries. So he registered in hospital services in Cleveland, U S A under Miss. M. Gerber, the Medical Superintendent of the hospital.

Though he appreciated his training well, he decided to leave his medical ambition and settle for becoming a church minister. Therefore he joined Rev. Simpson’s Missionary Training College, New York, where his two companions, Gowans and Kent graduated in 1893. At the conclusion of his Bible Training, he accepted a pastoral position in a Baptist church in Newburg, New York in 1896 with the firm certainty that the significance of his ministry should be laid upon missionary activity.

His new pastoral position did not withdraw his attention from promotion of mission for the Sudan. He started with the attempt to awaken the Baptist’s support for the Sudan missions. Because of his enthusiasm and resolve for the Sudan, Bingham was put down for trying to load on the Baptist body a new movement when they were engrossed with existing responsibilities.⁴⁰ The only person that supported him financially was an old lady from

Rescue Home who gave him one hundred dollars. This lady was not a Baptist member but Presbyterian.

The attitude of this old lady created in Bingham a predicament whether he should form a denominational or an interdenominational body. As he remembered the background of his dead colleagues he remarked that Mr. Gowans was a Presbyterian, Kent was a Congregationalist and he too was a Baptist. He considered it therefore a reversion to establish the mission as a denominational cause. Hence he was convinced he should found an interdenominational mission. He commented: with real belief. "I had come to the conclusion that God intend that our foreign missionary work should not be on denominational basis, but within the safeguards of the great fundamentals of the faith, should welcome to its fellowship and to its service all who were sound in the great doctrines held in common by the whole church of Jesus Christ."⁴¹

Bingham on 27th May, 1898 assembled a little group of men in Toronto to act as the foundation members of the mission council. This group was eight in number of which two were Anglicans, one a Methodist, two a Congregationalist or independents, one a Presbyterian and one a Mennonite. Bingham was the honorary secretary of the mission, and Toronto was its headquarters. The new mission was named Africa Industrial Mission based on the resolve of the meeting of provisional council of the proposed Industrial Mission held at 2pm on 3rd June 1898, at 8 and 10 Lombard Street, Toronto. 43 Charles Street, Toronto, Canada was the home office of the new mission. The council members were: Elmore Harris, president; Rev R. V. Bingham, secretary; James Acton, Treasurer; Pastor Fisher, J. G. Greey and William Henderson.⁴²

(b) The second Sudan attempt into the interior

Now that the aspiration to have a home base organization for the Sudan enterprise was settled, the Africa Industrial Mission decided to continue missionary work in the Sudan, but

with a different approach from the one adopted at the first attempt in 1893. The mission decided to study the methods of the Industrial Missions in British East Africa and Tripoli as a guide for the industrial work in the Sudan. Subsequently two missionaries, Mr. Herbert Lawrence and Mr. A. J. Moline, were sent between February and March 1899. They would receive training in British East Africa, then return to learn the Hausa Language in preparation for the Sudan. After the completion of their assignments it was Mr. A. J. Moline that was chosen, Mr. Herbert Lawrence was dropped and he returned to Canada.⁴³

Rowland Bingham was asked by the council to form and lead a new expedition to the Sudan. He, leaving his wife, Hellen Elizabeth Blair and a daughter just two week old, left New York for England on 13th January 1899 along with Mr. Albert Taylor.

The three, Bingham, Taylor and Moline, headed for Lagos to journey overland from there because travelling by the Nigeria River was not available for them. On 21st February 1900, they departed Liverpool, England, for Lagos on SS Jebba. On Tuesday, March 11, 900 the team was in Lagos and an old missionary friend of Bingham accorded them a warm reception. But the missionaries in Lagos had no sympathy for their mission. These missionaries succeeded in poisoning the minds of Bingham's companions. Bingham took ill again barely three weeks following their arrival in Lagos. The doctor at the hospital where he was taken advised that he should return to Canada. His two young companions promised to carry on the work. But they became weakened by the discouraging picture of their mission painted by the Lagos missionaries hence; they joined Bingham to Canada on the next boat. According to him:

It would have been easier for me, perhaps, had I died in Africa, for on that homeward journey I died another death. Everything seemed to have failed, and when, while I was gradually regaining strength in Britain, a fateful cable reached me with word that my two companions were arriving shortly, I went through the darkest period of my whole life.⁴⁴

Bingham met with the council in Toronto, Canada. Though no one of the board spoke hurtfully of this second expedition, but they were utterly discouraged. As a result of this failure, the second in Bingham's account, the council met in Toronto and made the following decision:

Having heard the correspondences read regarding the return of the missionaries and the reason for it, it is resolved that instructions be given to Mr. Bingham to take steps for the continuance of the work in the Central Sudan, and that we look to the Lord for the right men as missionaries to go to the field of labour. Resolved, that all the friends of the Africa Industrial Mission be asked to unite in prayer on Monday evening.⁴⁵

The council was informed that one of the returnings was willing to go back to the mission field but the other was not willing and even spoke disparagingly of the work.

Around June 1900, when Bingham appeared before the council he was welcomed. One of the council members, late Mr. William Henderson, a man of faith, heartily supported him. "He could see stars in the heavens when all others saw only clouds." He alone cheered continuance of the work.⁴⁶ Nothing to show because the second attempt at Sudan did not succeed might be the comment of some but the importance of the period was in its great ideas and philosophy of funding Industrial Missions. Though People died and circumstances were hostile, events were difficult to understand but the Great Commission still stood, carried on the wings of faith- lo I am with you always.⁴⁷

4.1.2.2 The Beginning of fruitful Years in the Mission Field: 1901

The mission to central Sudan is suspending. Must the work be given up? Should an easier, healthier and more convenient field be pursued for? The answer to these questions was the resolution of the council that the Sudan effort be continued. After seven years of barrenness, darkness and death Bingham was able to present three men prepared to consider a new effort.

The council took decided to send the next pioneers to Tripoli, North Africa. Two of the new party were sent to Tripoli because the climate was conducive and there was a Hausa colony. The language which was spoken by traders in West Africa would be useful in communicating with the people of the Central Sudan. The other two members were sent to stations of the Zambesi Industrial Mission so as to study their approaches which had been confirmed to be very successful and which they hoped might produce the desired result in the Sudan. At the completion of their training they returned to England and in the beginning of 1901 they were ready to sail to Nigeria. The new party prepared to undertaking the mission of the third attempt were E.A Anthony Charles Robinson, Albert Taylor and A.W. Banfield, who joined later.⁴⁸

The party left for England where they met Sir Frederick Laggard, the newly appointed High Commissioner for Northern Nigeria. Their meeting him was successful. He did not only arrange for them to travel with him on the same boat on his way back to Africa, he also promised to ease their work on the field in every way and allowed them to travel on the government boat from Lagos to Patigi their first station, “five hundred miles up the Niger River.”⁴⁹ At last a station at Central Sudan was established at Patigi in 1901. Patigi, a Nupe town in today’s Kwara state became the first station and centre for the evangelization of the Sudan. This success of the founding of a mission station at Patigi put an end to series of fruitless effort at gaining a grip on the Sudan. These missionaries afterwards brought together the first Nupe dictionary. They translated the four gospels into the Nupe language. They also founded a printing press, the Niger Press⁵⁰ which empowered them to print portions of the scriptures into many languages.⁵¹

Foundation of Fruitful Years: 1908-1914

In spite of the physical successes with loss of lives, there was not yet a single convert among the indigenes. However 1908-1914 ushered in the beginning of fruitfulness and the

basis of what is today ECWA. The first converts came from Yagba, now Kogi State, and Igbomina in Kwara State. It all started when in 1905, Mr Fred Lang, one of the missionaries at Patigi treked to Ogga as part of his routine evangelistic tour to neighboring villages. He was astonished to meet an old man Mr. Daniel (Dani) Orisamaiye reading the Bible aloud in Yoruba language to a group of young people.⁵² How did Mr. Orisamaiye become christian? It all started when he, as a boy was sold as slave to a man at Abeokuta. He was able to work for his ransom and shortly after left for Lagos where he learned painting. He became a Christian and chose Araromi Baptist church under the pastorate of Dr. Agbebi. It was at that time that he learned how to read and write and later purchased his own copy of the Yoruba Bible. In 1904, Daniel made his way to Ogga his home town.

Mr. Fred Lang made three trips to Ogga before he left for Canada in 1908. At home in Canada he described his experience at Ogga and informed them of how a group of young people were praying for a missionary to be sent to their tribe. Tommie Titcombe felt that God was calling him to Ogga upon hearing Mr Lang's report. Opportunity came to make his intention known when in 1906 Charles Waddell, an S I M Missionary on holiday, gave a persuasive message about the need for young men to take the gospel to those who had never heard about it. He was among the sixty people that declared their intention. He made his plan known to the S I M Director, Rev. Rowland Bingham. After several refusals, his request was finally accepted. In 1908 he left for Nigeria with one George Sanderson who was going to Wushishi to join Mr. F.H. Hein. In September 1908, Tommie was with Dr. Stirrett at Patigi.⁵³

A group of delegates from Ogga came to see Dr. Stirret and reminded him of their demand for a missionary to their town when Mr. Fred Lang visited them some years back. Mr. Titcombe decided to go with these delegates but Dr. Stirret counselled that Mr. Titcombe

stayed at Egbe, the largest town in the area. Though the delegates felt disenchanted they were consoled by the promise that Tommie would be visiting them regularly.

It took Mr. Titcombe three days journey to reach Egbe from Patigi. He met with Chief Asanlu, the Elegbe of Egbe and was warmly welcomed after a brief consultation with his (Elegbe) counselors. Mr. Titcombe mastered Yagba Language and within a year of his settlement at Egbe he built a home for himself and one each for his interpreter and houseboy, Aliu Paul and David Adeniyi respectively. In May 1909 he gave his first sermon in Yagba in Egbe market. In October 31, 1909 he administered the first baptismal service in S I M, Ogga where ten men and three women were baptized. David Adeniyi, his houseboy was one of those baptised. Egbe in turn in November 1912 witnessed the first baptismal service involving eighty-nine men and women.⁵⁴

Another missionary was enlisted in 1911. He was Rev. Guy W. Playfair, a Canadian and an outstanding athlete from the province of Monitoba. He stationed at Egbe at his arrival but later reassigned to Oro-Ago to open a new mission station there in 1912. He is nicknamed ‘Alabojuto’ (the field director) by his Yoruba friends and admirers. But the Igbominas among whom he worked for several years, called him “Oyinbo Oro’ (the white man of Oro Ago).⁵⁵ He and his followers went round Aiyetoro/ Okedaba Odo, Oke Ayin and Omugo all in Oroland in 1911 before returning to Egbe. The paramount king at the time was His Royal Highness, Oba Buremoh Ariyun keye (1900-1925) Oloro of Oro- Ago. The meaning of Ariyunkeye is a monarch who adorns Chieftancy with coral beads).⁵⁶

Playfair returned fully to start his missionary work on 7th December 1912. He demanded for a piece of land from the Oba for his mission station but as it was the normal practice then, the traditional council refused to oblige the white man until the District Officer in Lafiagi, Mr. T.A.G. Budgeon compelled the Oloro to accede to the request. The reason for refusal was that the white man would deny parents the service of their Children on the farm.

The place given to him was where there were many snakes because the natives wanted to see what would become of him.

With zeal and passion, Mr. Playfair preach with all enthusiasm from house to house in spite of the fact that bulk of the natives were living on the hills and caves because of fear of slave raiders, inter-tribal wars and agents of other inhuman actions of the olden days. There were just some detached scattered houses on the plain called Ago today.⁵⁷ In spite of this tedious task posed by distance between the natives' dwelling places, the white missionary visited all the different settlements. He was even instrumental in bringing many of the natives down from their various hills of abode to the present site of Oro-Ago town. Mr. Playfair's first convert was Jamiu Adeniyi. He joined the mission in 1913 after he was released by his father, the Ooju of Ayetoro, to Plyfair at the age of fifteen years. He later became the first native to be ordained a Reverend by S I M even before the body of believers became indigenized as ECWA.⁵⁸

Thus we observed that the first converts by S I M were among the Yagba and Igbomina people with stations at Egbe and Oro-ago.⁵⁹ So the S I M first station south of Niger were Patigi, opened in 1901 or 1902 by A.W. Banfield and his team. Egbe in 1908 by Tommie Tittombe, Oro –Ago 1912 by playfair; Agunjin 1913 by Norman Davis and Makutu Isanlu by W.S.Crais. At the north of Niger, the early SIM stations were opened at Bida 1903 at Wushishi in 1904 by Mr. F. E. Heins. Other places opened were Minna, Jos, Kafanchan, Kagoro, Kwoi and others.

The following is a brief description of the progressive and chronological founding of the mission stations at the early stage of SIM in the Sudan.

1893-1900 which was the first decade of SIM's developmental period witnessed several unsuccessful efforts at gaining a foothold in the Sudan. In fact the endeavour claimed the lives of Walter Gowans, the leader of the team and that of Thomas Kent and it compelled

Rowland Bingham to make a disappointing and embarrassing return to Canada. But rather than allowing this fruitless attempt to discourage him, Bingham summoned courage and between 1894, the years he returned to Africa and the second attempt in 1900, the mission continued to grow and this led to the constitution of a missionary council called Africa Industrial Mission (AIM) in 1898. It was this disappointment that served as a foundation of stronger faith, courage and commitment to the vision and mission of the Sudan until it occasioned the success of the third attempt in 1901.

1901 to 1910 was the third attempt of the SIM effort at evangelizing the Sudan. It was made under the name Sudan Party with the following missionaries: Alex W. Banfield, E Anthony, Albert Taylor and Charles Robinson. This party finally gained a foothold in the Sudan in 1901 and this put an end to years of disappointment, hindrance and fruitlessness because a mission station was opened at Patigi in Nupeland in 1901 or 1902, March,⁶⁰ though Bingham said it was 1901.⁶¹

Eight mission stations were established by SIM in the Sudan between 1901 and 1910. These were:

(a) Patigi in 1901 or 1902

Patigi in Kwara State, initially Ilorin province, was opened by the Sudan Party by A.W. Banfield, E Anthony, Albert Taylor and Charles Robinson. Dr. Stirrett, SIM's first medical doctor, joined them later. This station served as the hub of missionaries' activities at the earlier stage of mission activities. From this station the mission evangelised, itinerated and bring into being other stations such as Bida, Wushishi, Kpada, yagbaland, Gbagyiland as well as other areas.

(b) Mission Station in Bida, 1903

This mission station was also in Nupeland in the then Niger province now Niger State. It was opened in October 1903 by Mr. and Mrs. Homuth, Mr. Charles Waddell, Mr.

Albert Taylor and Mr. W. Spinks. SIM discarded this station in 1906 because of fire disaster and the colonial policy that prohibited two missions operating in one area.

(c) Wushishi Mission state 1904

Wushishi was formerly in Kontagora province but later Niger province. It was a Hausa settlement and the mission station was opened in 1904 by Dr. Andrew P. Stirrett and Mr. E. F. Rice. This town, about 11 miles west of Zungeru, was built by Hausa and Fulani warriors of Kontagora as an outpost for slave-raiding and slave trading among the Nupe, Bassa, Gbagyi and Kamuku. This great trading and caravan route afforded the mission the opportunity of spreading the gospel to many traders from all parts of Hausaland even as far north as the French colony of Niger.⁶² It was the mission headquarters under Dr. Stirrett when he took over field leadership from Rev. A. W. Banfield who resigned as the first field superintendent of the mission in 1905.

(d) Egbe Mission Station 1908

This was the first mission station in Yorubaland. The indigenes speak Yagba dialect. The town was formerly in Ilorin province but now in Kogi State. SIM Mission station there was opened in November 1908 by Rev. Thomas (Tommie) Titcombe. This area was mainly traditional before the arrival of the missionaries and was quite receptive to the gospel.

In spite of the fact that the missionaries settlement was at Egbe, the first group of people to be baptized were from Ogga town.⁶³ The people of Ogga had been introduced to Christianity by Mr. Daniel Orisanaiye, a freed slave who had returned to Ogga from Abeokuta and Lagos.⁶⁴ This was even before the arrival of Rev. Tommie Titcombe at Egbe. In fact Rev. E. F. Lang had made several visits to Ogga from Patigi, his station. It was at his first visit that he saw Mr. Orisanaiye reading the Bible aloud and to young people around him. It was this group of people that requested for a missionary to their land and when Lang went home on furlough, this request was part of his report, hence Tommie Titcombe was sent

to Egbe. Egbe station grew to become the most advanced and successful missionary experiment in the mission field. It became a leading centre of missionary enterprises, educational endeavours, medical work and church planting activities. The mission advanced from this centre to reach Yagba land and Igbomina land

(e) Paiko mission station 1909

This station in Gbagyi land was opened in January 1909 by Mr. E. F. Rice and Mr. George Sanderson. From Wushishi the mission directed its attention to the vast Gbagyi land. Gbagyi land was divided into two broad areas-Gbagyi Yamma and Gbagyi Mattai. Paiko belonged to Yamma area. From this station the mission reached Minna, Diko, Ida, Karu, Kwoi and even as far as Bauchi and Plateau areas.

(f) Kpada mission Station 1909

Kpada was in Nupe land and was opened in May 1909 by Rev. E. T. Lang and Rev. Frank X. Stanley. The area was principally traditional but accepted the gospel after much resistance.

(g) Kwoi Station in 1910

Kwoi was in Jaba land, Nassarawa Province but now in Kaduna State. The place was founded in July 1910 by Rev. F. E. Hein and Rev. Charles Dudley. This area was mainly traditional and quite receptive to the gospel. The missionaries took the gospel from this station to different ethnic groups such as Kagoma, Koro, Kagoro, Kataf, Kaningkon and others.

(h) Karu station in 1910

Karu was also a Gbagyi colony and was opened in 1910 by Rev. George Sanderson and Rev. Charles Dudley. This station was also mostly traditional and receptive. Karu as well served many ethnic groups far as Keffi, Nassarawa and Abaji areas.

(i) Oro-Ago in 1912

This mission station in Igbomina land was established in 1912 by Rev. G. Y. W. Playfair. The area was mostly traditional and receptive to the gospel. It became a successful and great centre for missionary activities throughout Igbominaland.

(j) Igbaja station in 1933

Igbaja was also another station in Igbomina land. It was founded in 1933 by Rev. & Mrs. Hunt A. de V. and Rev. and Mrs. W. C. McIvor. The area was also traditional. Igbaja later grew to become a great educational centre of the mission.

(k) Omu-Aran 1943

This mission station which was also in Igbominaland was opened in 1943 by Dr. and Mrs. R. V. Herbold. The area was also receptive to the gospel. The mission built a leprosarium in the area.

(l) Ilorin Mission Station in 1946

Ilorin station in Yoruba land was established in 1946 by Rev. and Mrs. C. P. Jenson. Being the province head, it served as a centre from where the missionaries launched out to other areas.

(m) Oke Ode mission station 1947

Rev. and Mrs. W. C. McIvor were the pioneer missionaries in this area. It was largely traditional but receptive to the gospel.

(n) Shao station in 1953

Shao also in Yoruba land was opened in 1953 by Rev. and Mrs. Derek C. Porter. The area was principally traditional but receptive to the gospel.

S I M Legacies

Apart from many mission stations, and churches established by the SIM missionaries, the following are other gifts from the body':

1. Educational programmes

The core purpose for the establishment of educational programmes by SIM was primarily for the transmission of the gospel. So, early missionary education refers only to the use of education as an extension of the missionary activity of a mission station and a primary tool for the gospel of Christ. Here is the SIM educational policy at the developmental period:

The educational policy of the mission in the main recognizes no greater responsibility than teaching of an illiterate population to read and write so that they can use the Holy Scriptures for themselves and then to teach intensively those Scriptures. Because the greater bulk of the people in the central Sudan are illiterate teaching must of necessity go hand-in hand with evangelism.⁶⁵

This was the situation until 1940 when the prevalent socio- political circumstances of both the world and Nigeria affected colonial educational policies and the early missionary Educational philosophy, policies, programmes and activities. Hence the early missionary education programmes gave way to formal and regular conventional educational programme. As a result various schools and Colleges were established by SIM. For instance, Primary schools, Secondary schools, Teachers' Colleges, special Schools such as Girls' Schools, schools for the blind, Home for the Boys were established apart from Theological institutions in vernacular and English.

1. Medical programmes

An auxiliary to the primary objective of missionary work, just like education, is medical work. Medical care, health services and treatment of diseases were secondary undertakings to the preaching of the gospel but in earnest medicine was often the key that paved the way. "WE have hospitals that we might evangelise."⁶⁶

Great importance was attached to this ministry so that all major mission stations had dispensaries or health clinics established, and at times mobile health Clinics were made and the general medical practices of the mission included the following: primary health care and

treatment of various diseases and physical ailments. To achieve this landable aims the SIM established the following health programmes:

a. Dispensaries.

There were S I M dispensaries and out-patient Clinics where S I M carried out general medical work and services beginning from Patigi, the first mission station all well over 110 health centres.⁶⁷

b. Hospitals

These hospitals specialized in the treatment of more complex physical illnesses and diseases. Some of them were:

- (i) Egbe maternity Hospital built by Rev. Thomas Titcombe in 1920 under the supervision of his wife, Esther Titcombe.
- (ii) Egbe general Hospital. This was in answer to the longings of Africans who had been demanding for a general hospital for their medical needs. So in 1953 Dr. Campion built this general Hospital in the area.
- (iii) Bingham Memorial Nursing Home, Jos. This hospital was founded in 1946 but prior to its establishment there had been a missionary Clinic in Jos which was opened in 1928 by Dr. Stirrett. This Nursing Home was primarily for the medical care of missionaries in the field but in 1969 it was merged with the African Hospital and changed its name to Evangel Hospital, Jos.
- (iv) Kano Eye Hospital. The S I M also opened an eye hospital in Kano in 1943. This hospital was the first eye hospital in the whole of West Africa.
- (v) Africa Hospital, Jos. It was built in 1959 but joined with Bingham Nursing Home for missionaries.
- (vi) Kaltungo Hospital, 1955. S I M built another hospital to meet the medical needs of the Tangele-Waja area. It was built in 1955.

In medical work, just as in education, the service of SIM exceeded that of the colonial administration which provided scanty medical services to the generality of the people. The following provinces benefited from the SIM's legacy of innovative medical work; Ilorin, Kabba, Niger, Northern Kano, Katsina and Sokoto.

(d) Leprosy work

Though part of medical work, it was a specialized medical field and the S I M was a pioneer, a leader, and the larger contributor of all missions throughout Nigeria. Nigeria had a total of 14 leprosy hospitals out of which 7 belonged to the SIM.⁶⁸ The provinces covered by the SIM in its leprosy work were: Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, Bauchi, Borno, Zaria, Plateau, Benue, Niger, Ilorin, Kabba.

Apart from the S I M leprosaria, provincial lager centres were opened in some provinces such as Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, Zaria, Bauchi and Borno by the Colonial administration in partnership with the native Authorities of the Northern provinces.⁶⁹ These settlements were being care for by the British Empire Leper Relief Association (BELRA). This body was not a mission agency and its staff being disheartened by leper work, did not want to stay very long. In 1996, April, the official of BELRA, Dr. Ernest Mutr came with Dr. Johnson, the principal medical officer in Nigeria, to visit Dr. Helser and Rev. Beacham of the S I M at the SIM mission at Kano to deliberate on the possible of takeover of the leprosy work by the SIM. With the consent of Emirs of Kano, Katsina and the Sultan of Sokoto, SIM expressed its readiness to take over. The mission, concluding preliminary deliberation with Colonial Administration in Kaduna, tentative approval was granted. In discussion with other missions the SIM submitted its leper camp at Zaria to C M S and that of Maiduguri to the SUM. It then demanded to have those of Sokoto, Kano, Katsina and Bauchi. Thus the SIM grew to have the major medical staff, leprosy hospitals, isolated village and Clinics of any Mission society in Nigeria.

4.2.0 The Birth of ECWA

Indigenization of S I M Mission in Nigeria

The leadership of S I M mission decided to hand over its mission to the indigenes as a result of the general trend towards political self-rule in the 1940 and 1950s in Africa. This became more noticeable in West Africa. Indeed, the campaigning for independence was so loud and clear that the foreign missions were worried about the future of their enterprise should Nigeria suddenly or eventually become a self-governing nation. The experience of what happened to the China Inland Mission in China and that of S I M in Ethiopia, whereby these missions were banished from these countries and their properties seized, was fresh in mind and anticipated.⁷⁰ Would the mission lose its belongings to the government of Nigeria? In the situation of it being kicked out of Nigeria to whom would it hand over its property?

This pressure for self-rule was not only external, it was internal as well. The churches too were clamoring for self-rule. Within the S I M family some Africans became vocal and drastic and were requesting for advanced training and greater involvement in the running of the mission. Such nonconforming voices started to manifest simultaneous of the Nationalists activities.⁷¹

So the political agitation for self-rule by the natives as well as the interest of the churches to get power out of the hands of foreign missionaries urged the mission to think of uniting the SIM churches with the purpose of making them one indigenous, self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating corporate organization which would be legally recognized by the Nigerian government. This would make it possible for such an indigenous organization to take over the property of the founding mission and continue the work in case of any ejection from the country.

Subsequently, the S I M mission leadership swung into action in order to find solution to the indigenization matter confronting it. The leaders embarked on inter-district church

conferences which began in the late 1940s. This common medium provided them with an opportunity to meet one another and also to deliberate on the future and form of the national church. The all S I M Conference held between 1949 and 1954 were for the purpose of equipping national church leaders, defining the indigenization process and the nature of the national church. Hence from February, 23 to 27, 1949 the African church leaders sat side by side for the first time with the S I M leaders for policy and decision making. This took place in Kagoro. The recommendations coming from this conference were.

- (a) More Africans should be licensed to give Holy Communion
- (b) English to be taught in Bible schools
- (c) More Bible schools to be established
- (d) More of the stations to be manned with men instead of women.⁷²

There were other conferences following after that of Kagoro, for instance All-SIM conference, February 15-19, 1950 at Kano, at Kaltungo, February 14-18, 1951; at Karu-February, 7-10, 1952. Another notable one was All S I M conference, January 15-18 at Igbaja. All field Council members of S I M were requested to attend with about 50 Africans. This conference was very distinctive in that issues affecting the relationship of the indigenized church with the government of Nigeria were raised and discussed. For example the registration/incorporation of the churches as a united body was thoroughly debated. The national delegates called for accelerated action on registration since the mission could not ordain pastors or handover or transfer properties to unregistered churches. The white representatives advised that the issues of the constitution of the new church should be settled first since this preceded registration. In answer to whether the constitution would be decided by whites only, Rev. Playfair replied that it would be done by both because the government would not accept and recognize such a constitution done alone by the whites. Subsequently, a three member constitution drafting committee was selected. It was made up of Rev. W. G.

Crouch, Lawyer C. H. C. Edwards (the mission's legal adviser) and Rev. David Ishola Olatayo. The committee was instructed to submit its report at the next meeting scheduled for Kagoro, January 7-10 1954.⁷³

The All-SIM conference at Kagoro, January 7-10, 1954 was also worthy of note. Some of the important issues discussed at the conference were the following:

(a) Bible school

It was decided that Board of Governors be established for each Bible school and the student should be self-supporting.

(b) AMS

African Missionary Society, later called Evangelical Missionary Society (EMS), should have a new Board of Governors to be set up in May 1954

(c) Politics

A letter was sent to the conference by the Field Council of S I M and was read by the mission legal adviser Mr. C H.C Edwards. It informed the house that any pastor wishing to join politics should quit his post because the two could not go together. This was unanimously accepted by the house.

(d) The draft constitution was decided upon and the conference totally approved it as well as the establishment of the indigenous church which would be effected at the new General Church Assembly at Egbe, may 18-20, 1954.

Development of a Church Constitution

Following after the tension of the nationalist movement both within the political arena and church setting in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the S I M was extremely concerned about ways and means of starting a national church.

The following approaches were made by S I M:

(a) Church Laws

A committee was set up by the S I M to study church laws. The members of this committee included Mr Blunt, Mr Thamer, Pastor David Olatayo. They were to study the proposed church laws and submit its endorsements to the house. The work of this committee was later integrated into the Draft Constitution.

(b) Registration of the Indigenous church

This was necessitated by the fact that the struggle for self-rule was becoming a reality. So the S I M wanted to know whether there was any need for the registration of their churches with the government and to be clear of the form such a registration would take if it was necessary. This led the S I M to set up a committee to make research and investigation in regard to the incorporation and organization of the S I M Churches.

The members of the committee consisted of Mr Osborne, Chairman, Mr. Hilker and Mr Crouch. The result of the research and investigation on the necessity of legal registration was the incorporation of S I M Churches in 1952.⁷⁴

(a) The constitution of the Church

Consequent upon the work of committee on the registration of the national Church, another committee called the Church Constitution Committee was set up.

The Field Council of the S I M met and approved the draft constitution in 1952. At the All- SIM conference at Igbaja from 15th -18th January 1953, discussion on the constitution did not take time. The main thrust of the house at the meeting was to know the reason why the SIM was slow in registering the indigenous church with the government.

At this conference of Igbaja two names for the national Church were supported

(i). Nigeria Church of the Sudan Interior Mission

(ii). West African Church of the Sudan Interior Mission.

It was at Kagoro's meeting of 7th -10th January 1954 that constitutional matters were fully discussed. At this conference the name The Evangelical Church of West Africa

(ECWA) was decided upon. The new constitution was also totally approved. The constitution was to be sent to all the churches in the districts for the members' opinions by 1st April, 1954 and that the Assembly under the proposed constitution was to be held at Egbe in May 18-20, 1954.

First General Church Assembly

Egbe hosted the first General Church Assembly of ECWA on May 18-20 1954.

Seven districts were represented at the conference as follows:

- | | | | |
|-------|---------------|---|-----------|
| (i) | Bauch /Bornu | 2 | delegates |
| (ii) | Gwari | 2 | delegates |
| (iii) | Kano/katsina | 2 | delegates |
| (iv) | Nupe | 2 | delegates |
| (v) | Tangale/Waja | 5 | delegates |
| (vi) | Yoruba | 7 | delegates |
| (vii) | Zaria/plateau | 9 | delegates |

There were twelve (12) SIM officials at the meeting which was presided over by Rev Raymond Davis, the Acting Field Director of the SIM.

The main thrust of the discussion was the constitution of the new Church. Minor modifications were made, especially the name "The Evangelical Church of West Africa" was modified to read "The Association of Evangelical Churches of West Africa."

The reason for the change is that each church is an Evangelical Church in West Africa. These independent churches joined together formed the Association to be called the Association of Evangelical Churches of West Africa which is to be governed by the new constitution.⁷⁵ This indicates that each church was independent but based on common purpose, joined together to carry out the goals of the mission. By this understanding, other

SIM founded churches in West Africa would become members of ECWA. But the reverse was the case because other SIM related churches in West Africa did not adopt ECWA as a name or join ECWA.

As decided by the General Assembly, the new constitution would be given a trial for a year before the appointment of the trustees and registration with the government of Nigeria. That taken, Pastor David Ishola Olatayo moved for the adoption of the new constitution while Pastor Bagaiya seconded the motion. The whole Assembly unanimously approved the new constitution by a standing ovation.

The election of the officers of the Association was done. At the end of the election process the following officers were elected:

President: Pastor David I. Olatayo

Vice President: Rev. D.N. Blunt

Secretary: Mr. P. Koledade

Treasurer: Pastor Bagaiya Nwaya

The officers were to run for only one year term. They were introduced to the house by the Chairman, Dr Davis. Rev. Dr. R.V. Herbold led the prayer of dedication and installation. This was followed by the declaration of the independence of ECWA by the chairman and Acting Field Director of the SIM, Dr. Davis. He closed the ceremony with the following solemn and challenging words:

The eyes of the world will be on this new organization. They will be watching to see what will become of it whether it will be an insignificant organization or one which will take its place in a rapid advancing Nigeria, What kind of organization will it be? ⁷⁶

The delegates all replied in unison these remarkable words “It will be one which will hold its place honorably and cater for the spiritual, temporal and physical needs of Nigeria.”⁷⁷

The church statistics presented at the first General Assembly of ECWA were as follows:

1. Yoruba	3,500
2. Nupe	300
3. Gwari	943
4. Zaria-plateau	4,050
5. Tangale-Waja	2,007
6. Borno/Bauchi	400
7. Kano-katsina	175
8. Sokoto	27
9. Niger Colony	30
10. Dahomey	54

At the close of the meeting Dr. R. J. Davis indicated that while ECWA has now come into being the SIM would still work closely in partnership with it and that it reserved the right to choose the overseers in the various districts. The stand of the church now, however, is that both Africans and the white missionaries would work together side by side.

The ECWA constitution made provision for a three tier church council as follows: The Local Council (LCC), the District Church Council (DCC) and the General Church Assembly (GCA). The Local Church Council is formed when there are properly constitution local Churches in an area. The District Church Council is formed by a number of properly constituted Local Church Council in a distinct. Each district council is independent in matters affecting Church administration of the Churches within its jurisdiction. The General Church Assembly was made up of all the Distinct Church Councils. It was set up as an advisory body made up of representatives of the Distinct Church Councils. The Assembly was to meet annually although there was provision for special meetings on a written request of at least

three District Church Councils. The GCA concerned itself principally with matters of general interest to the churches, but “its decisions as they affect the churches shall be advisory”.⁷⁸

The constitution also provided for registered Trustees who should be carefully chosen for life (then) and on the basis of one from each DCC in Nigeria. Hence ECWA started with eight Trustees. This is the situation till today. There was also a provision for the establishment of ECWA Headquarters to be located in Jos. The Trustees represented the new church in all its dealings with government.

Take off Grant from SIM

The new church, the Association of the Evangelical Churches of West Africa (ECWA), took off very much poor. The SIM did not make any financial endowment for newly established national church. The mission then held on to the few revenue-yielding establishments under its control such as the Niger Press, the Bookshops and the hospitals and clinics,⁷⁹ so also was the general levy on the DCCS which was 3d (three pence; which in Naira value is equivalent to three kobo), which was increased in 1956 to 6d (six pence, or five kobo) and 1 shilling (ten kobo) in 1971 per member in good standing.⁸⁰ This rigid obedience to the principle of God providing every need through prayers was one of the heritages SIM passed on to her ‘new baby’ and the new church.

At its creation in 1954 Yoruba Distinct Church Council covered the extensive area extending from Lagos to Jebba and it included Lokoja, Akoko in Ondo State and Sapele in Delta State. Necessity required that it broke up for smooth administration, hence it was broken into three: the Southern Distinct Council, with headquarters in Lagos 1971.⁸¹ the Ilorin Distinct Church Council with headquarters, first at Omu-Aran but later Ilorin 1971⁸² and the Kabba later United but now Egbe) Distinct Church Council with headquarter at Egbe 1971.⁸³

4.3 The Creation of Ilorin District Church Council (IDCC).

ECWA Ilorin District Church Council was a product of the SIM's mission policy which stated that the missionaries would go to the interior (the unreached communities) areas of the black people and would not work where established mission was. According to Bamisile:

The mission was for those who lived in the jungle, bushes and people in darkness. The thought of missionary to Sudan was after a strong fasting and praying, which followed with great spiritual sweeping power in every part of the evangelical churches in America and Canada in the 8th century ... Gowans made Africa his choice for evangelism.⁸⁴ For Gowans too, it was not an accident to have chosen the Sudan. He was motivated by his mother, Margret Gowans, a great intercessor who laboured in prayer for the birth of SIM/ ECWA in Nigeria and the world all over.⁸⁵

It was this persevering nature of the SIM. Missionaries that gave birth to ECWA in 1954 with eight district churches within Nigeria. Yoruba D.C.C. was one of those DCCs. And as the indigenous Church (ECWA) was growing rapidly the need arose to start other DCCs all over Nigeria. This automatically affected the Yoruba DCC as well.

Creation of more DCCs out of Yoruba DCCs

ECWA's objective for the creation of more DCCs

According to S. N. Alayande, the following are the ECWA's objectives for creation of more DCCs:-

That the gospel of Christ may reach the unreached areas (II Thess. 3:1-3),

That Christian education may cover our churches,

That the effects of God's word may have power over smaller groups in the churches

That more people may have the grace of using their talents given to them by God

That the gospel of Christ may be closer to our door posts.⁸⁶

But as laudable and inspiring as these objectives are, the underline factors were far from the above. The administration of the DCC witnessed tribalism and division. This was confirmed by Alayande who said that Omu-Aran in Irepodun Local Government Area used to be the headquarters of Yoruba DCC but the headquarters was shifted to Ilorin, the then capital of Ilorin Province of which the present Kogi State was a part. The ground for this move was simply multi-ethnic composition of the DCC.⁸⁷

Though the spread of the DCC was vast and it kept on getting bigger, the issue of who should rule and where should he come from played a prominent role. The two ethnic groups that dominated the DCC were the Yagbas (the Yoruba ethnic group that speak Yagba dialect. They are now in Kogi State due to the creation of another state out of Kwara in 1992) and the Igbominas (the Yoruba that speak Igbomina dialect. This group formed the bulk of the Yoruba in Kwara State). In order to put an end to issues of rift and disagreement, Yoruba DCC was splited into three in 1971 as follows:

(1) The United District church Council (UDCC) with the headquarters at Egbe (This is the Yagba speaking Yoruba group. (2) The Southern District Church Council (SDCC with its headquarters at Lagos). This DCC was a mixture of ethnic groups such as the Egbas (Ogun state Yoruba), the Lagosians as well as the Igbominas. (3) The Ilorin District Church Council (IDCC). This was majorly Igbomina people in population). Its Headquarters was at Ilorin.

The Emergence of Ilorin District Church Council

When Ilorin DCC was created in 1971 ECWA had 76 DCCs as against 8 in 1954 when it was indigenized. This is a testimony to the rapid growth of ECWA. The creation of District Church Council is subject to the final approval of the General Church Council in line with ECWA Constitution and bye-laws. The constitution stated the necessary procedures to

follow in the creation of Local Church Board (LCB); Local Church Council (LCC) and the District Church Council (DCC). The constitution stated thus:

A new District Church Council shall be received into ECWA membership under the following terms: (a) The authority to grant the establishment of a District Church Council shall be vested in the General Church Council (GCC) and duly constituted District Church Council shall be eligible to write to the General Secretary requesting to be constituted into more than one District church Council.⁸⁸

The existing District Church Council had to convince the General Church Council that its request to have a District Church Council created out of it was based on a two-third vote of its members at its usual regular meeting in which quorum was made.⁸⁹ Upon receiving the DCC request for another DCC to be created out of it, the GCC shall set up a committee to ascertain the appropriateness and sustainability of the proposed DCC. Among the issues to be considered is the fact that “the request has not been motivated by a rift.”⁹⁰

But the fact remained that some DCCs coped with crises to create another DCC in order to forestall division. The creation of Ilorin DCC was not an exception. The DCC was formed out of crisis. The Yagba group felt that the Igbomina people should not always lead them since they had capable Pastors among them. The Igbomina block too felt that it was automatic for them to dominate. It is true that this issue of power tussle was not publicly pronounced in any gathering but action, jokes and interface had been the media of demonstrating this intention between the two blocks.⁹¹ So since the internal bickering was becoming noticeable the leadership of ECWA felt it was necessary to split the Yoruba DCC in order to boost growth and to allow peace to reign.

The DCC at inception had Rev. J. Luke Asonibare (1972 – 1976) as the first Chairman while Rev. S. B. Ogunmola (1972 – 1976) was the secretary. Since then the DCC has been waxing stronger and stronger. Currently Ilorin DCC has 15 Local Church Councils

(LCC). Ilorin D.C.C. has its Secretariat in the heart of Ilorin metropolis; it is located in Ahamadu Bello Avenue, GRA, Ilorin.

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CHAPTER FIVE

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11 ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CHURCH UNITY IN ECWA IDCC

5.1 Appraisal of Church Unity in IDCC

Emergence of Conflicts in the DCC

Outside forces triggered off crises in Ilorin. Hitherto the Churches in Ilorin had been crises free. As observed by Adeyemi, “early in the history of SIM/ECWA in Ilorin, the church was virtually crisis free until the creation of Kwara State when the youths trooped down from the North.”¹ These youths who had been wide-open to different practices of liturgy and administration² in the North³ would obviously expect the same situation to prevail in their churches at home. They were stirring for similar mode of worship and leadership style. Many times they were in sharp discord with the elders. These differences even affected the mode of fund raise for the needs of the church. Adeyemi added that:

During the time Rev. P. O. Akure was the pastor of 1st ECWA Church, Ilorin (1967 – 1969) there was disagreement on the mode of revenue generation for the Church. The elders decided to levy the members in order to raise sufficient funds but the youths thought that that was not scriptural. Some groups decided not to succumb to such ‘an unscriptural’ arrangement. So there was a stalemate which God through the wise management by Rev. P. O. Akure helped to resolve.⁴

The first crisis experienced by the Church was a clash between charismatic youths and conservative elders. However, the church continued to increase numerically as a result of the inflow of Kwara indigenes from the North due to the creation of Kwara State.. This increase in church population was not without its attendant harms. It raised sectionalism between the Yagba and Igbomina people. Adeyemi confirmed that:

Another problem that accompanied the sharp increase in Church attendance due to the arrival of those from the North was sectionalism between Yagba and Igbomina people. This problem led to the 1972/73 crises that eventually resulted in the split of the

church into two – 1st and 2nd ECWA... The 1st ECWA Church comprised mainly the Igbominas.⁵

The people of Yagba were in Kabba Province, now Kogi State of the defunct Northern Nigeria while the Igbominas were in Ilorin Province now Kwara State. Initially Yagba West was part of Ilorin Province but in 1934 it was merged with East Yagba. This then signifies that the Igbominas and the Yagbas who were neighbours were answerable to different governing authorities: Ilorin and Kabba Provinces respectively.⁶ But in 1967 when Nigeria was reorganised into 12 states from the colonial structure of 26 provinces, the Kabba and Ilorin Provinces were merged and were given the name Kwara State. This administrative/political restructuring necessitated the coming together of both Yagba and Igbomina people under Kwara State with Collonel David Bamigboye as the first Military Governor of the new state. Thus a large number of Yagba people and Igbominas were transferred to Kwara State Civil Service to support the state to take off appropriately in administration. ECWA Ilorin then received a great population of members who joined the church for worship.⁷

The matter became more compounded because as the Church population increased the ratio of the two ethnic groups was almost equal. In fact, some groups like the choristers were dominated by Yagba people.⁸ but unfortunately the rapport between these two groups of people was characterized by unhealthy competitions whenever they assembled together. Before the creation of Kwara State, the Igbominas formed the greater part of the population of ECWA Church, Ilorin but each group became almost the same in membership following after the state creation. Hence Igbomina leaders in 1st ECWA began to suspect their Yagba counterparts and a sort of delicate cold war, sectional interest and unhealthy contentions began between them; to the extent that they resorted to using harsh words and foul tongues during their meetings.⁹ This was confirmed by Revd Dr Stephen Sanusi who saw the cause

leading to the crisis as undue emphasis on things that should not be by Igbomina people especially when the population of both ethnic groups became almost equal.¹⁰

According to the Yagba view, the root cause of all these actions and counter reactions from both sides was traceable to a kind of pent up feelings on the part of the Igbominas against the little advantage the Yagba people had over the Igbomina people. Egbe station, the first SIM station in Yorubaland, was opened in Yagbaland in 1908 by Rev. Tommy Titcombe. He deployed Rev. G. Plyfair to open another station in Oro Ago, the second station in Yorubaland. This first contact of SIM missionaries gave the Yagbas early lead in Christian religion and western education. This explained the fact that they were the first set of teachers, preachers and medical workers even in Igbominaland. So now that the Igbominas too have come of age they were fighting being second fiddles to the Yagbas.¹¹

Some minds were able to read the handwriting on the wall after studying the faster rate of corresponding proportion in population and called for a split of First ECWA into two churches peacefully.¹² Sad enough these submissions were not adhered to until the break was inescapable through a crisis.

The most central reason for discord was inter-tribal rivalries, other reasons perfected it. Resultant effect of these rivalries was suspicion. Any action or inaction was interpreted or misinterpreted on the suspected inter-tribal disparity. For instance the annual midyear Igbaja conference was forthcoming and the elders granted the donation of £100.00 (N200.00) in support of the conference to Ilorin DCC. Some elders also recommended a similar funding for Egbe Conference even if less than what was planned for Igbaja. The Yagba group in the board viewed this as a fair sharing but those from Igbomina saw no reason for such grant since Egbe was outside IDCC.¹³ The concluding resolve by the board of elders not to give any amount to United DCC for Egbe conference was not satisfactory to those who suggested the sharing and all sorts of intimations were made against the Igbomina members while the

Igbomina in turn interpreted the suggestion of Yagba people as a validation of their divided loyalty. This scenario further widened the gap of cooperation within the church.

Another cause for divergence was the issue of accommodation for Rev. M. E. Ariye who was posted to Ilorin in 1992 but not to a particular church. Since his posting was not to a particular church it became necessary for him to be accommodated outside any specific church premises. A vacant house behind the SIM (Challenge) Bookshop which was earmarked for the incoming manager of the bookshop was unoccupied. So ECWA headquarters, Jos and Ilorin DCC agreed that Rev. M. E. Ariye could reside in the house till the arrival of the manager of the bookshop. When Rev. S. O. Babatunde from Oro-Ago, an Igbomina man was appointed the manager of the bookshop, Rev. Ariye was asked to leave the house for him. On account of the existing power struggle between the two groups the move was interpreted as another example of conflict between them. It was seen as a good turn to an Igbomina Church officer against a Yagba minister of God.¹⁴

The alleged negative attitude of an Igbomina elder against the then incumbent pastor, Rev. F. A. Adeyanju was another reason for discontent between the two ethnic groups. The elder was alleged to have shown little regard to the Reverend and on one occasion he even told the Rev that he could not work with him. According to information, it was not long enough after the row that the Rev.gentle man was transferred from Ilorin to Oke-Ode. This was understood to mean that Igbomina people could wield so much power as to transfer the pastor. The Yagba group then thought that a better alternative for them was to form another church of theirs where their own wish would be equally respected.¹⁵ All these formed the reason why separation was seen as the only solution for side-lining in the hands of the Igbomina people.

As against the proposal earlier raised with regards to the establishment of another church out of first ECWA Ilorin, the plan to establish an English speaking Church at Youth

Centre (now ECWA Chapel), Ilorin was been concluded. Unsuspectingly to the Igbomina people and the DCC Executive, Yagba people were also cultivating the idea of second ECWA Church, Ilorin. The last elders' meeting for 1972 was held on 16th December, 1972. Unfortunately this was the last meeting both groups had together. The elders went on break for Christmas and New Year celebrations and it lasted till 3rd February, 1973. Before both elders and members went home on vacation everything was cordial, but unknown to the Igbomina group, Yagba group was still nursing the pains of the existing mistrust and previous differences.

On 31st December, 1972, those who did not travel home for Christmas but stayed in Ilorin worshipped in the church as usual. It was during the service that the following announcement was made by Elder S.I. Adeygboye, the Secretary of the church¹⁶ "The second ECWA will start next week. The venue will be declared later."¹⁷ It was this announcement that signalled the split of First ECWA Church. On January 7, 1973 the following Sunday after the announcement of breakaway, all the Yagba people were not present in the church. They held their worship in the Cinema House along Emir's Road, Ilorin. The members that went home for the Christmas and the New Year festivities returned to realize that their church had splited into two. Though some members opined that there was no disagreement at all that could warrant the split but the cold war was obvious and those who were hard hit made recourse.

No effort towards reconciliation with the 2nd ECWA Church was made by 1st ECWA Church until a letter came from ECWA Headquarters, Jos that the church should not break on tribal line and that both churches should close ranks and work together to give peace a chance as that was the only way to encourage unity.¹⁸ Fellowship groups of both Churches met in obedience to ECWA Headquarters order but the crisis was not resolved. Though a meaningful peace meeting was held on 4th January, 1982 between IDCC and 2nd ECWA Church,

Amilegbe at IDCC Conference Room attended by the then ECWA President, late Revd D Olusuyi in which the elders of 2nd ECWA church were formerly welcomed by the ECWA Trustee, late Elder Seth A. Oshatoba, late Revd S. B. Ogunmola, late Revd S. J. Akangbe and late Pastor G. N. Adekeye, the supposedly happy reunion did not bring out any understanding.¹⁹ Relationship still attracted some strains. 2nd ECWA insisted on paying their statutory dues to home DCC, United District Church Council (UDCC) instead of IDCC where they were. They recruited their pastors from UDCC as well.²⁰

Gospel Team Crisis with church Leaders (1980 – 1988)

What later became a full fledged Gospel Team of First ECWA Church, Ilorin was a group of people constituted by some SIM missionaries with some members such as elder J. A. Afolabi, Timothy Jimoh Atolagbe and a few early members of the church. This group went on bicycles from village to village in the early 1980s. This was the group that preached at Shao with the assistance of a SIM missionary Revd. C. D. Porter. Today ECWA Churches in Shao are five. Some neighbouring villages around Shao such as Mosankore, Igbo-Emu, Sheji, Budo-Oke, Alapa, Olooru and Bacita were also visited and churches were planted there. Few other places that were blessed with the activities of the gospel team were Amoyo, Okanle, Ode-Giwa.

The team relaxed in their zeal between 1977 and 1979 ²¹ but in 1988 the challenges it received after a revival service in 1980 rebounded it to life. It became active and strong. And as a result of power encounters on the field of evangelism, the team needed to embark on elaborate prayer and fasting sessions. But in their effort to do this they went rather Pentecostal.²² and this was the point of discord with the elders of the church. Adeyemi attested:

Their mode of prayer became so much different from ECWA traditional way of prayer. They raised their voices while praying and on many occasions many members would pray simultaneously. The result was series of complaints from the pastors' resident in

the church premises about disturbances from this group. Other Bible study or prayer groups similarly complained about the noise coming from the gospel team.²³

The leader of the group was severally invited to the Elders' meeting but the group remained insolent. Neither the resident pastor then nor other groups that used the church premises simultaneously could curb their noisy and disturbing mode of prayer. This caused rancor in the church since the leadership of the group was still unyielding contrary to the expectation of every group in the church. The resident pastor was forced to take the matter to the Board of Elders' meeting in order to provide a lasting solution to the problem but nothing positive came out of the effort.

Rev. D. A. Onijala who was the resident Pastor of ECWA Ilorin then was the first to complain to the elders. On 20th August, 1980 he observed that both day time and all night prayer sessions were noisy. The elders then decided that since such a practice was not in accordance with ECWA tradition those who did so should be stopped.²⁴ On 18th September 1980, Rev. P. Olasehinde the leader of the group was invited to the Board of Elders on the same issue. There he was told to stop all night prayers in Church. He sought audience with the elders on 25th September, 1980. This was followed by a letter from him a week after appealing to the elders to rescind their decision on stopping the all night prayers. But the elders maintained their resolve.

In March, 1981 the group had a new leader in the person of Mr Moses Akerele. He too followed after the step of his predecessor. This forced the elders to repeat their earlier decision on all night prayers on 21st May 1981 and throughout the month of June. No solution was on sight until the Board of Elders was dissolved on November 12, 1981. But the new Board stood by the decision of the former Board.

This problem was unresolved when Rev. D. A. Onijala was transferred and Rev. S. A. Fatoye succeeded him in 1982. He came at a time when the matter had become an emotional

issue between the Elders and the gospel team. He and the elders' representative to the team admonished the team to stop their noisy prayer so as not to disturb anybody; males and females should not be praying together at night to avoid abuses and scandals; they should also endeavour to be in the church by 10.00pm to avoid going to the church late in the night and to forestall possible exposure to danger.²⁵ They complied with all but the first condition. They then decided to move their all night prayers to private homes and this continued for a long time. Many attempts were made at reconciliation but the crisis defied solution.

Rev. S. A. Fatoye became the IDCC Secretary and left the Church with the crisis unresolved. Rev. J. O. Folaranmi succeeded him in 1987 and the problem escalated again. The team would always go against the wish of the elders whenever it organized a revival service because they always insisted on inviting a Pentecostal preacher against the order of the elders that they should choose from among the ECWA or ECWA related pastors.

Since no positive result attended any attempts towards peaceful resolution even those held between March and April 1988, a decision was taken after the meeting of April 14 1988 to dissolve the group entirely and to reconstitute a fresh gospel team which would abide by ECWA traditions and obey constituted authorities. This decision was applauded by the majority of the Church members and other groups in the Church. When the IDCC Executive members were informed they agreed with the Church.

On Sunday 17th April, 1988, the dissolution was announced by Rev. J. O. Folaranmi. The team threatened to come to the church to hold its meetings as usual on the following Monday 18th April, 1988 but the youths were ready to enforce the Elders' decision if necessary. Peace eventually prevailed.²⁶ Meanwhile, a new team came into being through the use of newly designed form. Opportunity was given to the members of the defunct gospel team to join if they would abide by the requirements given in the form of enrolment but they

refused saying that Jesus did not ask his disciples to fill any form before commissioning them to preach the gospel.²⁷

Three leading ECWA Pastors, Rev. D. I. Olatayo, Rev. G. O. Aro and Rev. S. J. Akangbe intervened on the issue in 1989. They constituted themselves into a committee so as to bring about reconciliation. They investigated issue on ground; interviewed both sides and eventually invited both sides to a meeting at First ECWA Ilorin on 28th August, 1989. Their recommendations were that the elders should not allow politics or personality clashes to influence their decision so that such decision would be respected. They condemned disloyalty to elders' authority as evident in the teams meeting at Amoyo without the approval of the elders. They admonished pastors to be involved in gospel team activities and that all groups should have written guidelines. Furthermore they said that theological views must be held in conformity with the church traditions. They then admonished the dissolved team members to fill the form prescribed and attend ECWA Bible study and seminars and that the church should accept them back with love after their compliance.²⁸

These recommendations were accepted by the elders and they promised to accept anyone who filled the form but the old members did not comply. Instead the group constituted themselves as a church known as ECWA Gospel Team. The church is located at Coca-Cola Road, Ilorin. After many years of estrangement the church eventually reconciled with ECWA and jointed a Local church Council (LCC) of their choice in the DCC. The LCC is Gaa-Akanbi LCC. The team, on a sad note "quarreled among themselves and broke into factions."²⁹

ECWA Student Fellowship Crisis

This Fellowship was initially named ECWA Student Association (ASA). It was the fellowship established by ECWA leadership for its sons and daughter in tertiary institutions because they might be where no ECWA local assemblies were. The crisis here was that of the

fellowship of ECWA students who were in various tertiary institutions in Ilorin and other places in Kwara State. The main bone of contention with this group was the mode of worship which was leaning towards Pentecostalism. They also imbibed the mode of prayer and worship quite similar to the dissolved Gospel team. While praying members would face the walls, beat all objects around them and prayed chorously. This new development attracted the attention of the leaders in churches in Ilorin. It was later discovered that some of them were attending other Pentecostal churches and bringing their method of worship there back to the fellowship as against the policy and Articles of Faith of ECWA.

ECWA leadership in Ilorin thought it wise to put a pastor in their care for corrective purpose, hence, Pastor J. O. Olatunji who was an associate pastor in First ECWA Ilorin was specifically assigned to them to bring them back to the right path. These students were later advised to join ECWA Chapel where services were conducted in English.³⁰ This was a measure to guide them towards ECWA tradition but different doctrines from those traditionally accepted by ECWA were still held by them..

Their claim was that some of their actions were as a result of inspiration from the Holy Spirit. They also disparaged the elders whom they accused of being guided by experience and not by the Holy Spirit. This scene was a rude shock to pastors and elders who were at the reconciliation meeting. “Such were the words spoken by those children to the elders among who were the ages of their grandparents. The elders excused them briefly and then decided that such people would lead other children astray if they remained leaders.”³¹

The elders rebuked them strongly for their rudeness to them and the anointed men of God. They then suspended the Executive committee of the fellowship but permitted them to continue to worship in the main church until further notice. Pastor Olatunji was to be in charge of the group until the suspension was lifted.

The committee responsible for the group felt a little slighted because such a move was taken without consulting them.³² The elders explained to the committee that the tone of the meeting warranted such a quick action and that they should continue to monitor them and reported to the Board. But all efforts to bring these students to order proved abortive and they continued to hold on to the tradition other than that of ECWA. The crisis with the group led to the change in its name to “English Church.” This was another Church in First ECWA, to be managed by it and to be attended not just by students alone but any interested group of people that preferred to worship in English language.³³

This measure settled the conflict and the church is growing faster. It has its own pastor and is monitored by core group that is directly responsible to the Board of Elders in the main Church. Eventually, members of this English church emerged as elders in the Board of Elders and their interest is well presented and protected. According to Abolade Israel:

Many churches, fellowships and small groups remain superficial because they are afraid of conflict. Whenever an issue pop up that might cause tension or discomfort, it is immediately glossed over in order to preserve a false sense of peace... In fact the tunnel of conflict is the passage way to intimacy in any relationship...when conflict is handled correctly; we grow closer to each other by facing and resolving our differences.³⁴

Conflicts in ECWA Church Osere

Traditionally in ECWA a new church takes of from the status of a preaching station, house fellowship, prayer house or relocation of families to the new Church. That of Osere began from the station of a house fellowship, meeting at Elder Matthew Ayinla’s Bakery. The house fellowship later metamorphosed into a full fledged local church board on 8th June, 1986.³⁵ The church’s leadership at its inception was in the hands of a caretaker committee. The church had some minor problems not long after its establishment.³⁶ This problem was

associated with leadership among the groups in the church and it continued till December, 1989.³⁷

However, the Church was visited with a crisis that nearly destroyed its unity in 2006 consequent on maladministration. The nature of the crisis was described because it involved pastors. The DCC executive had to intervene because of the seriousness of the crisis. According to Ajisafe:

There had been minor crises relating to the choir, and even some individuals in the church. These crises were resolved amicably and the church forged ahead. In 2006 there was a major crisis emanating from the management of the proceeds that was realized from the outing and thanksgiving ceremony hosted by the church. The crisis almost paralyzed the church. As a fall out of the crisis, the minister of the church, Rev. D. S. Ayantunde (JP) was transferred to another church, ECWA Bacita, while another minister, Rev. J. O. Atolagbe was brought in to pastor the church.³⁸

Eventually the unity of the Church was continued but not without great determination. ECWA Osere strived to survive the storm. The crisis nearly resulted into deep seated animosity among the members of the church but concerted efforts were subsequently made by the church and the church today is growing in unity.³⁹ Ilorin DCC executive members made a very swift action in addressing the crisis and the problem was laid to rest.

Conflict between ECWA Chapel and ECWA IDCC Executive

The initial name for ECWA Chapel was Youth Centre. It was a centre for recreation and sporting activities. It was also nicknamed Kwara Stadium because the sporting facilities there attracted sports lovers from within and outside the state. It was only football that was not played there because there was no space for its field, so footballers made use of the now A Division Police Station field. At ECWA Chapel (Youth Centre) various denominations as well met for sporting activities. Since the place was open to youths and some adults of various denominations it was difficult to insist on ECWA mode of worship. The conversion of the centre to Local Church Board was motivated by Mr. Wilber. The idea was not

welcomed at all. But after the crisis in 1973 through which second ECWA emanated, the conversion was possible. “Thus besides First ECWA Taiwo Road which was established on 7th April, 1946 and Second ECWA Amilegbe which took off on 7th January, 1973, ECWA Chapel established in 1977 became the third LCB in Ilorin metropolis.

This LCB grew impressively. “This church is highly rated for her mission-oriented programmes as members gave towards mission work.⁴⁰ It was this accelerated growth of the Church that made it a necessity for pastors, either full time or part time, to be posted to the church. But according to Adeyemi:

Towards the last quarter of 1994, the church experienced a little crisis in which the Chapel Elders strongly challenged IDCC executives for the unfair steps taken on the issue of proposed posting of a resident pastor to the Church. This situation caused Rev. (Prof.) Mordi to proceed on sabbatical leave... Thanks be to God for the way the matter was prayerfully resolved without breaking the Church but instead peace, growth and progress prevailed. By January, 1996 a full time resident pastor, Rev. G. O. Abikoye, was posted to the Church with the full knowledge and cordial consultation of both parties.⁴¹

As an heterogenenouse congregation, people from different backgrounds, professions and locations worship there.

Conflict between Choir and Elders of ECWA Gaa-Akanbi

What led to this crisis was the resolve of the elders of the church to adjust the occurrence of annual festivals in the church. Hence on 23rd February 1992 the decision of the leadership of the Church to adjust annual festivals in the church to bi-annual events was announced. The reason been that the annual festivals held by various groups in the Church totalled about 20. Should the Church dedicate 20 Sundays to one anniversary or the other in a year, Sunday services would be bored as well as prolonged..

This decision did not boil down well with youth and choir members in the Church. They felt that they should have been informed before the decision was made public. The elders tried in vain to make them see reason. The elders were unable to calm them instead they

wrote demanding for a reversal of the earlier announcement which should be made public. The elders considered this an insult. On the following Sunday, the choir refused to sing and one of the choir members remarked that that action “was a warning shot.”

The elders decided to set up a committee to look into the matter but the aggrieved youth and choir refused to be pacified. The case was brought to the notice of the Joint Board of Elders of ECWA Churches in Ilorin on Friday March 27, 1992. But to the dismay of the whole congregation, the choir refused to sing again and women choir was asked to sing. But the choir interrupted their songs through the playing of guitar or intermittent singing of choruses. This demeanor made the women choir to stop singing. This provoked the congregation as well as the board of elders because the service was badly interrupted by the choir. According to Adeyemi:

The Reverend announced the suspension of the choir until the issue was resolved. One of the leaders of the group picked the microphone and announced on behalf of the youth the suspension of the Reverend of the Church. When the risk of a possible breakdown of law and order rose so high the service was abruptly brought to an end.⁴²

Since the choir would not listen to the Church leadership, it was suspended and elders and youth from First ECWA, Ilorin were on ground to settle the matter but to no avail. This crisis then attracted the attention of ECWA IDCC leadership. The crisis was brought to an end at a meeting held with ECWA Gaa-Akanbi on Sunday 7th June, 1992 by the IDCC.⁴³ The choir resumed singing on 9th August, 1992.

Conflict among Choir members of Second ECWA, Ilorin

ECWA is known for singing among other factors that enhance the spread of the message of salvation; hence ECWA monitors its choir with jealousy. That explains how important this conflict was to the church. The crisis was caused by election into leadership positions in the choir. ECWA had to follow the constitutional requirements guiding any election in order to consider the suitability of any member nominated, hence, screening of the

nominees had to be done. In the process of screening allegations and counter allegations were raised against many of the members by other members and because this was leading to scandal in the church, the board of elders dissolved the choir. New members were enrolled.⁴⁴ The new members were passionate and zealous in promoting the good course of the gospel both in the Church and outside. Old members that were adjudged to be above board were also re-enrolled. The dissolution and enrolment of new members as well as readmission of those who were considered qualified brought sanity to the Church.

Conflict on the creation of Local Church Council (LCC) in IDCC

In ECWA one of the factors responsible for the creation of LCC is numerical growth. After cases of crises in the DCC, there resumed a season of happy reunion. As the churches were growing numerically, there arose the need to create more local church councils for effective administrative activities. All the churches in the DCC consented to have more LCCs and the machinery was set in motion towards achieving that. But a new conflict arose again because Second ECWA had expected it would be the seat of one of the LCCs while First ECWA would be another.⁴⁵ But that was not the case, Gaa-Akanbi was chosen as the LCC seat and 2nd ECWA was part of the churches under 1st ECWA Church. 2nd ECWA disagreed and refused to participate in any of the LCC programmes unless it has its own LCC. The DCC Executive did not rescind on its decision and the feud was prolonged. The reason behind the exclusion of 2nd ECWA from being another local church council headquarters was on its insistence on recruiting its pastors directly from United District Church Council (UDCC) and unless their loyalty was assured, IDCC would not revert to its earlier resolve.⁴⁶ When Revd Gordon Aro was their Pastor he tried to bring the opposing parties together. Being a detribalised person he pleaded with his church elders to stop requesting for pastors from UDCC if 2nd ECWA would want to be a LCC headquarters. He was the one who started the IDCC Joint Board of Elders and the first chairman of the Board but he did not earn the

favour of his elders. Revd James Kayode who succeeded Revd Aro in December 1990 started on the same template of his predecessor. He continued as the chairman of the Joint Board of Elders. He moved closer to other pastors in the DCC.⁴⁷ and when the issue of LCC seat was resolved “he had the privilege of being the first Local Overseer of the newly created Amilegbe LCC in February 1993.”⁴⁸ From him the path towards unity began a meaningful course.

According to Adeyemi:

A protest letter was written to IDCC on this issue but when it appeared that IDCC was holding its ground; 2nd ECWA decided not to take part in any activity... A committee of respected elders and pastors was appointed to resolve issue. To the joy of all churches, it was announced at the IDCC conference held at the 1st ECWA Church Ilorin from 6th to 8th March 1992 that the issue had been resolved. The 2nd ECWA resumed its activities with other churches and everybody was happy. Later in the year 1992, the 2nd ECWA was made the seat of a new LCC thereby ending the cause of conflicts.⁴⁹

As is expressed by Second ECWA Church, Ilorin:

The bone of contention is now a thing of the past as age of unhealthy rivalries in the mission among the communities of Igbomina and Yagba and have given way to a period of healthy competition in church planting, evangelism and Bible studies. The two groups now cooperate more meaningfully and sincerely in the SIM/ECWA and IDCC, Ilorin.⁵⁰

To confirm the above statement, Revd Ajise said that IDCC started to experiment posting pastors to 2nd ECWA in 2003 when Pastor B. M. Owojaiye, a Yagba man, was transferred to the church. The action was met with resistance but six months later the church expressed their willingness to have him.⁵¹ Revd Malomo said that Revd Dr S. Owoeye another Yagba indigene was in 2nd ECWA Ilorin fully under IDCC based on request to IDCC by that church but because the Revd was the South West Regional Evangelist under ECWA Headquarters’ surveillance full authority had to come from Jos. Hence Jos authorised IDCC and Isanlu DCC

(Revd Owwoeye's former DCC) to affect the request of 2nd ECWA Ilorin. The first actual straightforward sign of unity was that of the posting of Pastor Samuel Oyegunle. 2nd ECWA Amilegbe requested in writing for a pastor from IDCC and Samuel was transferred from ECWA Gaa Imam to the church in 2016.⁵² Revd Ajise remarked: "After series of meetings the issues of non-payment of statutory dues to IDCC, the recruitment of pastors from home DCC are all over. We enjoy 100% cordial relationship from 2nd ECWA Amilegbe even more than some churches started by IDCC. They love us; they are proud of us."⁵³

Currently, a Yagbaman, Pastor M. Owajaiye, is one of the Associate Pastors in First ECWA Church, Ilorin. It would be wrong to assume that 2nd ECWA Church, Ilorin was the only LCB that raised issues with IDCC on the creation of LCC. The only difference was that its case was just more serious than others.

5.2 Benefits of unity in the IDCC

This section of chapter 5 focuses on the evidence of unity in the management of the DCC's inherited institutions like education and medical as well as the role unity played in relation to the welfare of the people, evangelism, fellowship groups and conferences. These are the key elements that enhance growth even as the DCC experienced some rifts, crises and disunity in its administrative set up.

There is no doubt IDCC has experienced many crises as mentioned above but unity prevailed over these forms of crises.⁵⁴ Praise should be given to fellowship groups, elders, executive members and some individuals that were in the forefront of conflict management in the DCC.⁵⁵ Various conflict management methods were employed such as delegation, negotiation, confrontation, dialogue, mediation, etc. in order to restore peace and sanity to the system.⁵⁶ Certain fact is established by what IDCC passed through in those turbulent years of

conflict and that is the fact that conflict is inevitable ⁵⁷ in a vibrant system. It has its advantages as well as its related disadvantages. ⁵⁸

The soul-winning efforts of the SIM that began rather inconspicuously in 1893 had, by the early 1950s become one of the missionary endeavours in Africa. The miracle that began in 1901 or 1902 at Patigi became more fruitful in Yagbaland in 1908 and had spread to Igbominaland in 1912, and from there to territories beyond the Niger and Benue. Kano, Kagoro and Jos had become flourishly mission centres. Other stations had been established in various parts of West Africa, Niger, Dahomey (modern Benin Republic), Upper Volta and the Gold Coast (modern Ghana) had received their own share of the SIM missionary “invasion.”⁵⁹

New fields had been discovered by the mission’s founder, R. V. Bingham, in 1927. Ethiopia had SIM stations including Bible schools, teachers’ Training institutes, orphanages, hospitals, leprosaria and other gospel media were established. From Ethiopia the mission agents spread the message to Eritrea, Aden, Somalia and the Sudan with varying degrees of success. It was this tempoc of success that gave birth to the establishment of African Missionary Society in 1948, for the purpose of preaching the gospel to the remote and yet-unreached parts of Nigeria and West Africa.⁶⁰

The first group of recruits launched out on evangelism in 1949. They were drawn mostly from among Yagba and Igbomina converts. “The European missionaries had come to plant the seed of the Word,” says SIM, “but in order to water and care for it till it takes root...the Christians of this land must take on the job and evangelize the multitudes.”⁶¹

Hence in the early 1950s it could be said of SIM that the mission had come of age and the time had come for it to give active consideration and encouragement to the coming into scene in this country of its own indigenous arm. This became a reality in 1954 when ECWA was born, taking off with eight district church councils in Nigeria and two outside Nigeria. Yoruba DCC was one of those eight indigenous DCCs. This accelerated progress and

expansion of the Yoruba DCC coupled with complicated and unedifying quarrelling and recrimination,⁶² gave birth to three DCCs, namely Ilorin, Southern (now Lagos) and Kabba (later called United, but now Egbe) DCCs in 1971. At inception Ilorin DCC had seven LCCs but within a very short time the LCC grew to fourteen due to the assiduous disposition of the pioneer leaders and these leaders worked very hard to see that unity prevailed in the DCC they administered. Growth came as a result of tireless efforts on evangelism but this growth that the DCC experienced was as a result of two foremost institutions: education and medical. These are some of the legacies Ilorin DCC inherited from the SIM missionaries. How did the pioneer leaders manage these institutions for continuous growth?

Evidence of Unity in the Management of Inherited Legacies

A. Educational legacy

Establishment of educational institutions by the missionaries was for evangelistic purpose and though the indigenes took over the control of the schools after them, the aim was still the same; even later when these mission schools were handed over to the government the mission owner still practised its mission agenda because the takeover was not total but joint ownership. The missionaries handed over 65 primary schools to YDCC out of which 42 were in IDCC.⁶³ In the primary schools children from neighbouring towns and villages that had no primary schools were enrolled and were taken care of by the church elders where such schools were. For instance, at Igbaja where there was Igbaja Cenrtal School, now ECWA Demonstration School. Pa Abraham Dairo took care of some children from Shao.⁶⁴ One of such children was Solomon Oladele. He later became a clergyman and had his doctorate in Theology. This gesture was not limited to Christian children alone. Amuda Baale and Mubo Buruju were children of muslim parents from Igbaja.⁶⁵

At Okeya and Oke-Ode the same treatment was giving to children from neighbouring environment by church elders. According to Elder Solomon Ajide Olowu, many Christian farmers often visited SIM/ ECWA Primary School, Oke-Ode on their way from their farms in order to give them roasted.⁶⁶ yams. He was also one of the primary school committee members at that time. In a situation where children were not enough in a community to run all classes, they were allowed to run standard three then complete the rest in another town. Such was the experience of Pa Joseph Dairo (first son of Pa Abraham Dairo) who had to leave for Egbe because as from 1938-1943, SIM Igbaja Central School had only junior section. Such children were hosted by church elders without any awareness of who the parents of the children were and the parents of these pupils never bothered about those who were hosting their children.⁶⁷ It was love, trust and unity all round.

Almost of equal status to primary school was Oro-Ago Girls' school, the only school of such standard for girls in IDCC. SIM established the school in 1930 for the purpose of training Domestic Science to the girls who enrolled there. This did not hamper their regular school courses. The girls beside their regular school and homework were also taught in sewing and crochet work and the manufacture of caps and beads which may be sold in the local market.⁶⁸ Girls from every nook and cranny of IDCC were enrolled in this school under the care of the Eiders of ECWA Oro-Ago but sponsored jointly by all the churches in the DCC. The school was later upgraded to Christian Training Institute (CTI) in 1962.⁶⁹

With reference to post-secondary schools, IDCC had two then. They are SIM/ECWA Teachers' Training College, Igbaja, established in 1941.⁷⁰ The second was SIM/ECWA Women's Teachers' Training College; Woko-Womu (look at Omu-Aran, look at Oko) because the school was established between Omu-Aran and Oko towns. The school is now called ECWA Girls' Secondary School, Omu-Aran. It was established in 1950.⁷¹ There was cordial relationship between the two hosting communities (Oko and Omu-Aran). The elders

of the two communities contributed to the welfare of the students through the provision of food stuff in order to augment that which the school provided. Security of the students was also the concern of these host communities. In case of the teachers' college at Igbaja, some students from other communities and who could not afford being boarders were allowed into the church elders' custody like the primary school pupils. In the spirit of unity IDCC decided to have a private secondary school to be sited at Ilorin.⁷² All the churches in the DCC pulled their resources together to make this a reality in 1994. The school later relocated to its permanent place at Ganmo in Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State.

The choice of who would head either primary or post primary schools was based on unity. For instance, ECWA Teachers' College, Igbaja for several years had non- indigenes as the principal. The same is true of ECWA Women's Teachers' College, Omu-Aran.⁷³

Generally the DCC leadership ensured that cordial relationship existed among all the staff of both primary and post primary schools. Friendly activities like inter-school games, end of the year party and entertainment were common. As a result some male teachers in Igbaja Teachers' College had no problem approaching female students of ECWA Women Teachers' College, Omu-Aran for marriage. This gesture was copied by the pupils and students as well to the extent that one of them said that all of them were taught to fellowship together "as one family both in primary school (Oro-Ago) and secondary school (Igbaja)" and this teaching is a factor in uniting them together till today.⁷⁴ In fact Abolarin said that it was this example of unity that laid the foundation for ECWA Women's Fellowship.⁷⁵

B. Medical legacy

SIM missionaries in the mission field started their simple medical work by treating various diseases and physical ailments. They began first with what was called home treatment. That is the treatment of Africans in missionary homes but later on dispensaries

were built. The dispensaries were the first medical institutions to be built by the Mission. These dispensaries were in most cases supervised by missionary ladies. Those among them that were qualified Registered Nurses were granted government permits. First and foremost the staff of the Mission dispensaries were evangelists before being health workers.

The inherited SIM medical work and services in the following mission stations in IDCC are in the form of dispensaries and out- patient clinics:

- a. ECWA dispensary, Oro Ago, 1912
- b. ECWA dispensary, Igbaja, 1933
- c. ECWA leprosarium, Omu-Aran, 1943
- d. ECWA dispensary, Oke-Ode, 1947
- e. ECWA dispensary, Shao,⁷⁶ 1953 (Turaki, 315)

All the churches in the DCC were mandated to see to the progress of these dispensaries and the leprosarium. This made the treatment avoidable to the patients. Dispensary Committee was established by each church under the supervision of the DCC through its Medical Supervisor. The members of the committee cut across the churches in the LCCs irrespective of ethnic affiliation; for instance, the dispensary at Igbaja was manned by Mr Ige, a Yagba man from Egbe, for many years until his retirement.

The one at Shao was so well managed that it enjoyed the patronage of people not only from its immediate environment but also from neighboring states such as Oyo, Lagos and Niger.⁷⁷ As a result of cooperation from all churches in the DCC, some communities handed over their dispensaries to ECWA IDCC. Such communities were Babanla, Oko, Igbowu, Olla. The little gain accruing to the mission from the proceeds of these medical centres was used for the maintenance of the entire dispensaries in the DCC irrespective of the location and viability of these clinics. Staff salaries were centrally paid in the spirit of unity.⁷⁸ The

leprosarium at Omu-Aran was also a beneficiary because it was run purely on humanitarian ground. The ECWA dispensary at Agamo in Omu-Aran was unanimously agreed upon by the DCC to be converted to a full hospital and this was affected in 1990. All the churches through their LCCs contributed to make it possible.

Commenting on non-functioning situation of these medical facilities, it was the opinion of Olaosebikan that the DCC explore the possibility of partnering with Non-Governmental Organizations in the effort to bring it to its formal standard. He mentioned Bill Gate Foundation and UNICEF.⁷⁹

(C) Welfare of the People

One of the committees set up by IDCC was the Welfare Committee. The leadership of the DCC mandated each church to take care of its widows and orphans as a carryover of orphanage programme of the SIM missionaries. There was an orphanage at Oro-Ago.⁸⁰ When the DCC could no longer shoulder the responsibility of a centralised orphanage some orphans were given into the care of some elders in bigger churches. Those that showed learning aptitudes were sent to schools while those that were not all that endowed learned one trade or the other. One of those that were so endowed was Rowland Elelu. He lost his mother. He was brought up at Mopa from there he was taken to Oro-Ago where he had his secondary school education. He later proceeded to ECWA Theological Seminary, Igbaja. He is now in USA.⁸¹ Few others that learned one trade or the other were: Mrs Grace Dada.⁸² She married another orphan; Mr Dada.⁸³ So also was Mrs Aleru.⁸⁴ All of them were taken care of by the church irrespective of their nativity or ethnicity.⁸⁵

The widows, apart from what each church made available for them locally, mainly food stuffs, each LCC must also contribute money and food stuffs at the annual New Year and Mid-Year conferences at Oro-Ago and Igbaja respectively. Whatever was made available

was distributed as welfare package to the widows concerned through their LCCs. This was handled by the DCC Welfare Committee. The target of this committee was to arrange a housing scheme for ECWA staff.⁸⁶ It was this committee that also looked into the establishment of cooperative society. Though this cooperative society was not meant to be centralised at the DCC for all members, except the staff, its introduction served as a pace setter for ECWA churches then and now. In fact members of ECWA fellowship groups, units, and staff of institutions improved their welfare through it.⁸⁷ Mrs. V. Osadare, while corroborating this wished that IDCC intensified effort on it.

So strong was the concern for the welfare of each other that some churches took it upon themselves to provide for the needs of some members. For example, Olayemi Ayo was trained by ECWA Church Igbaja. Another example was the case of one Matthew Olawepo whose leg got broken when the wall fell on him at the renovation of ECWA Demonstration School, Igbaja. The church took it upon itself to foot the medical bill of treatment.⁸⁸ Some individuals were not left out in this act of welfares. One of them was Pa Abraham Dairo, a native of Igbaja. He was said to be a great farmer but more than half of his farm produce went to the needy in the church. He always visited the sick in the dispensary at Igbaja. Those that slept on mats he provided mattresses for them. An instance was a man bitten by a snake from Anwa Compound in Igbaja. Pa Dairo visited him, finding him sleeping on a mat in the dispensary; he bought a mattress for him and made the church to employ him as a gardener after his recovery.⁸⁹

(D) Evangelism

Since one of the primary purposes of the DCC creation was for numerical expansion through establishment of more churches, the DCC embarked on aggressive evangelistic activities for its growth. Because it is an undisputable fact that the growth of any Christian

organization is usually known by its passionate involvement in such activities so as to bring members to its fold, Ilorin DCC was not an exception. It carried out its evangelistic activities through:

(i) Gospel Team

Though there was nothing like IDCC joint gospel team but each bigger church had and launched out on behalf of the LCC it belonged to for the DCC. The first gospel teams in churches were those started by the missionaries but they were making use of the indigenes. For instance at Igbaja and its environs, the following were some of the members of the gospel team, Pa Abraham Dairo, Pa Joseph Eyitayo, Pa Dere. They went from village to village on foot and on bicycles. As a result they were able to win many converts and churches such as Ora, Patako, Oke-Ayo, Ilala, Agbeku, Eggii were established. Great success attended the evangelistic efforts of this gospel team in this area because of the presence of Bible College and later Seminary. The missionaries in this institution allowed their students to compliment the efforts of the churches by sending them out every Sunday on bicycles to churches that were established.⁹⁰ The church at Oke-Ode had Elders Luke Atolagbe, William Ogidi-Olu, Isaiah Orile-ola, Adenigba (all late) and Solomon Olowu as pioneer indigenous gospel team members. They visited place like Agbee, Labaka-Omiaro, Alaabe, Banba-Nla, Asungbale, Shagbe and other places. Churches were established in all these places.⁹¹ Among these people mentioned, Elder William Ogidiolu has served as the delegates of Oke-Ode LCC to IDCC Council when the church was given the status of a LCC Headquarters.⁹² At Kainji the pioneer gospel team members were: Revd. Ayanda, Elders G,B, Alashi, Olawole, Korede, Badiru and Mrs. Dada, Mrs. Malachi. The areas they covered were: Tungar Baare, Tungar Ayaba, Konkogi, Kabe, Kiama, Orendaji, Benin Republic, Babana, Yerogo, Kuji, Luma, Wara, Corner Regear, Gada Olly, Kurumi Adam and so on.⁹³

(ii) Annual Festivals

According to Pa Oderinde, another strategy adopted for evangelism was the annual festivals like Easter and Christmas. Christians at home and in diaspora always came home. Each family had its own Easter or Christmas day when all the church members, including children, were invited for a get-together after which the entire members went to the market square with singing and dancing to preach to the people. Notable among the champions of this method in Igbaja were Pa Dere and Pa Ogunrinde. Pa Ogunrinde resided in Lagos but at every Christmas he would make sure that many Christians celebrated Christmas at Igbaja. So great was this love that many people joined the church.⁹⁴

(iii) Festival of Gospel Songs (FESTIGOS)

FESTIGOS was a programme of Eternal Love Winning Africa (ELWA), Igbaja Studio and the brainchild of Rev. Peter Salawu, a onetime Studio Manager of ELWA, Igbaja. ELWA was one of the evangelistic arms of ECWA. One of its core aims was to bring ECWA church choirs together for fellowship and relationship because there was no formal forum bringing them together for such purpose apart from annual services of songs of which extension of invitation of one choir to the other was voluntary. Another objective was to get ECWA churches united through gospel songs as another avenue for raising support for evangelistic ministries of ELWA.⁹⁵ The unity FESTIGOS has fostered has a far reaching effect beyond ECWA churches in Ilorin; it cuts across almost all denominations. For instance, Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), United Missionary Church of Africa (UMCA) and Baptist Church have been active participants and some of their pastors rendering services in support of the festival.⁹⁶ So also choirs from other denominations such as Christ Apostolic Church, Agbo-Oba, Ilorin, New Jerusalem Church, Igbeti in Oyo State have been active and

regular participants in its annual programmes.⁹⁷ The first FESTIGOS was held in March, 1989 in 2nd ECWA Church Amilegbe and since then the church has been hosting it.

(iv) ECWA Joint Board of Elders

When the crisis that occasioned the establishment of 2nd ECWA was settled the first major machinery put in motion to anchor unity was this forum. It is an important forum where issues affecting all ECWA churches in Ilorin are discussed. Indeed it is the unity and development umpire of all the ECWA churches in Ilorin. The leadership positions of the fellowship cut across all ECWA churches in Ilorin. ECWA churches in Ilorin set the pace for Joint Board of Elders' Fellowship and each ECWA community that has more than one church in Ilorin DCC embraced the practice.

(E) DCC Creation

According to Alayande, when he assumed office as the Chairman of IDCC in 1987 there was a collective will for unity and expansion of the DCC. To this effect a committee was set up comprising the following:

1. Rev. Professor S. O. Abogunrin
2. Rev. J.O. Folaranmi
3. Pastor J.O. Kolawole
4. Elder M. Ifabiyi
5. Elder S. Aboyeji

Top among the scope of operation of the committee was the unified effort on LCC and DCC creation. The principle behind this is that the creation of more LCCs or DCCs would generate healthy competition for expansion as well as serving as a way to expose those church members who were not active or not noticed and motivate them to engage in church

activities. By the time he left office in 1993, the LCC had increased to 28 from 14 in 1987. The DCC creation also materialized and Omu-Aram DCC was created out of IDCC in 1993.⁹⁸

. **(F) Fellowship Groups**

(i) Men's Fellowship

Men's Fellowship started in IDCC by R. B. Buremoh from Idera and Elder Gbadeyan from Oke-Onigbin. The fellowship had a rough beginning because the pastors considered it a threat to their authority in the church; hence they resisted its take off. All of these pioneers were illiterates but they had worked intimately with the SIM missionaries.⁹⁹ The fellowship later served as a bulwark to the e pastors. At the onset it was not a Local Church or LCC affair. It started on DCC level. Those who caught the vision for its existence were representatives from different churches meeting together for the DCC's progress, but when the hurdle of suspicion was over, the fellowship reorganized itself along local church and local church council levels.

Apart from their normal meeting schedule they had special time of meeting at every annual New Year and mid-year conference. At the end of any of these special meetings they met to discuss issues concerning the progress or retrogress reports given by each LCC in the conference; this meeting was called "Ipade apero agba." That is the forum for eiders' deliberation. It was there they took decision on how to restore sanity to trouble arrears and to plan for further progress of the DCC. In this way they solved many conflicts in local churches and local councils as well and stabilize relationships among pastors in one hand and between pastors and churches on the other hand.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, they met the needs of those in their membership as well as those of church members in general by rendering financial and

material assistance to those in needs. They were always together in moment of joy and sorrow like wedding and burial ceremonies.¹⁰¹

(ii) Women's Fellowship

ECWA women's fellowship started out of a burden of care for womenfolk. In 1930 a woman almost died in child labour because there was no medical facility in Miango where she was. The sister of the affected woman then suggested to women of ECWA denomination to contribute money to buy a bicycle to be used in carrying women to Vom where medical facility was at the time so as to save other women from the terrible experience her sister went through at child labour. An SIM missionary in Miango, named Miss E. Varley, seeing the cooperation and fellowship that began to grow among the women, gave them her backing. Missionaries from other stations embraced the movement based on its importance for the Christian women. The fellowship became a national issue in 1943 and the first national conference was held in 1953 at Samaru Kataf in Zonkwa area of Kaduna State. In 1955 at Dikko the decision to divide into districts rather than combine national conference was made and seven districts were formed. Among them was Yoruba DCC. From that time each district chose its leadership.¹⁰²

In IDCC the women followed after the footstep of the pioneer leaders; that is caring for each other. They organize seminar on family and home; workshop on empowerment. According to Mrs Olawoye they often invited experts in certain field of trade like soap-making, snacks, wedding cake- baking, cloth- dyeing such as Adire and Kampala. As a result many of these women are making their living through this activity of the women fellowship. They furthermore contributed to meet the needs of members in the area of sponsoring children from poor families on either learning one trade or the other or offering of scholarship on education without discrimination.¹⁰³ The leadership is always there to wade into family

disputes, especially between husband and wife. As a sign of unity they organize love feasts at all levels of their administrative sector. They were pastors to aged women who could no longer register their presence in church activities and they sent gifts to them. At their Bible study they always inculcated in themselves the “necessity of unity in order to bring in the real meaning of fellowship.”¹⁰⁴

Apart from unity among members they promoted the same in the church. They were readily available to mediate in dispute anywhere in the DCC. The dispute might be between pastor and the church, elders and the DCC leaders, choir and the elders, etc. They served as the backbone to pastors in the church by making his ministry comfortable and fruitful. They were the first group to inform the pastor’s wife to call her husband to order if his actions were tending towards a breach of peace and harmony in the church. In moment of crisis they were the pacifiers.¹⁰⁵

(G) Conferences

The joint annual conferences of Egbe, Oro-Ago and Igbaja that started at the creation of Yoruba DCC in 1954 as a continuation of Inter-DCC Church Conference initiated by the SIM missionaries.¹⁰⁶ continued between Oro-Ago and Igbaja following after the creation of more DCCs from Yoruba DCC. Egbe conference fell into United DCC. While Oro-Ago and Igbaja were under Ilorin DCC. The conference was Ilorin DCC’s affair hence all churches in the DCC had to attend. The one at Igbaja was called mid- Year Conference because it was always in the month of August while the one which Oro-Ago hosted in February was called New-Year Conference. Each conference lasted four days beginning from Thursday evening to Sunday afternoon. Unlike what obtains today, participants had to go on foot for a whole day. It was the hosting church that fed the participants for the four days that the conference lasted. There was daily food timetable for each church in the hosting LCC of the conference location.¹⁰⁷ For instance, whenever Igbaja hosted the conference, all the churches in Igbaja

LCC had to bring daily specified food to the distributing centre. At the conference the DCC assessed the performance of each church from the reports given by each LCC. Monetary and material supports were also raised for the needy at the conference.

5.3 Philippians 2:1-11 on the Sustainability of Unity in IDCC

There is no doubt the church at Philippi was very dear to Paul. This church was characterized by many excellent qualities. Paul calls its members “my brothers, beloved and longed for, my joy and crown” (Phil, 4:1). He praises them for their fellowship in the gospel and for their generosity (Phil. 1:5; 4:10; 14-18). But the domestic affairs of the church were not entirely as ideal as were their foreign affairs. There was some trouble on the home front. Some were on each other’s nerves. Some were amplifying the weaknesses and underestimating the virtues of other church members.

As it was then so it is now. Local churches are facing increased polarization from those that attend their churches. Gossip reigns supreme. Men and women who call themselves Christians do not see the need to be unified with other believers because they feel they have their own personal bond with Jesus and that is enough. Internal strife, bickering, impatience, backbiting, gossiping and the like are common but unity, kindness, patience are rare. Some church members are of the opinion that there is no way to bring together their personality differences; there is no way they can work together on a level because their spiritual maturity is so much superior to others’ immaturity. But as Paul says no to all these excuses coming from the Philippians, by application he says the same to churches in similar situation, especially ECWA IDCC. He says there are resources in Jesus which make unity possible. He says that those who claim that just finding fault is a justification to break rapport have forgotten what they share in Christ. There is an alternative to breaking off relationships. ECWA IDCC has experienced the bitterness of disunity and is now enjoying

the blessing of unity but how will this unity be sustained in spite of noticeable differences. The answer is found in Philippians 2:1-11.

The Four-fold Incentive for Unity (2:1)

The nature of Paul's plea here shows that there was among the Philippians, at least among some of them, a measure of personal discord, perhaps for ecclesiastical admiration or promotion. The same is true of ECWA IDCC; hence Paul classifies four resources that stem from the believers' union with Christ. Since all these are what believers all over the world have in Christ, this is applicable to ECWA IDCC as well, hence unity is possible. These resources are:

(1). Encouragement for being in Jesus; (2). Comfort of love also as a result of Christians' union with Jesus; (3) fellowship with the Spirit; and (4) affection and compassion. The first two resources were from Paul to the Philippian Christians. He has encouraged them in their Christian life. They have also shared in his consolation concerning their situations on account of his love for them. ECWA IDCC has also benefited from the same resources given by the SIM missionaries and ECWA early converts. The last two were what the Philippian Christians received from the divine angle- the Holy Spirit and God. Philippian Christians have enjoyed fellowship which is unity and oneness as a result of belonging to the community brought into existence and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. So also they were beneficiaries of God's tenderness and kindness (pity, mercy, compassion) at salvation. All these are true also of IDCC members. Hence it has no excuse not to pursue durable unity. IDCC members need to pursue enduring unity by showing love to one another and being one in spirit. When they work together, caring for the problems of others as though they were their problems, unity will be sustained, therefore IDCC members should avoid vices that lead to broken relationship. It is on the basis of the above exhortation that the following directives are possible:

The Four – fold Directives for Unity (v2)

- (1) Be of the same mind. This phrase does not mean that the IDCC members should have the same opinion or agree about everything. The issue here is unity and not uniformity. The English word uniformity has within it uniform – to dress alike, look alike, sound alike, think alike, act alike. Be of the same mind is the inner desire to conduct oneself in a cooperative manner, to be on the same team; to go for the same objectives for the benefit of one another. It is a common inclination to work together and serve one another so as to make enduring unity possible in ECWA IDCC.
- (2) Maintain the same love. People are like porcupines. They have many good points but they are hard to get close to. The reason is that their prickling characters keep needling each other but true biblical love deals with incompatibility. It is easy to go along well when things are working well but what about when things are behaving badly? This is where love takes over. Both the nature and degree of love have impact on unity among Christians. Love must be fervent and without pretension. Therefore, it behoves IDCC members to shun vices that are inimical to unity such as nepotism and sectionalism.
- (3) Unite in Spirit. Paul advised Phillippian Church to unite in spirit. This has the idea of joint souls; meaning Christians are to be soul brothers and sisters in harmony with all of God's people. Leaders and members of IDCC should understand that it is human to disagree. If disagreement comes they should respect the right of others to disagree as true unity is not absence of conflict but a commitment to reconciliation.
- (4) Be intent on one purpose. IDCC members should continue to pursue unity being one in purpose because it is centered on the preaching of the gospel. Even in the midst of unmet expectations, personal conflicts and various other schisms, this solitary purpose that all Christians share ought to compel them to stay united. Hence, the way to express the resources believers have in Christ is to, first of all, recognize and

appropriate their identity in Christ, and secondly they must make a decision of the will to unite with other believers for the sustainability of unity in IDCC.

The way to fulfill the Four-fold Directives to Unity (vs. 3.4)

Paul in verses 3 and 4 gives the means by which to fulfill verse 2 above.

1. Do nothing from selfish ambition. Selfish ambition was one of the vices upsetting unity in the Philippian Church. The same was responsible for disunity in IDCC. It is an ugly self-promotion that steps on the neck of others to lift oneself up. If everyone is constantly thinking of himself alone, how can unity ever be realised? As the Philippians must not be motivated by unholy rivalry, by selfish motives, craving honour and prestige for themselves so also ECWA IDCC should steer clear of the same.
2. Do nothing from empty conceit. Selfishness or selfish ambition and empty conceit (self-promotion} go together for the emptier the head the louder the boast. Empty conceit is a description of a balloon full of air. It may appear beautiful and gorgeous but it is in fact empty. Thus to live for the glory of the day is a very hollow pursuit.
3. In humility regard others as better than yourself. Humility is not thinking less of oneself, but thinking of one less. To regard others as more important than one is not connected with gifting, skill, personality or ministry responsibility, but with understanding the value, dignity and worth of other believers. It is a happy condition which arises when in a church each member considers the other to be better than him. Thus the members, filled with tender affection, will be outdoing one another in showing honour. IDCC members are therefore admonished to guard against any selfishness, prejudice or jealousy as a positive step towards maintaining unity among them.

4. Look not only to your own interests but also the interests of others. This is fellow-feeling. The word 'look' here means to pay careful attention to, look out for, and notice. It follows from the immediately preceding point above. If one regards the brother very highly, he will be concerned about that brother's interests in order to help him in every possible way. The apostle surely implies that a believer should look to his own interests but he should not stop there. He should lend a helping hand whenever the situation demands for such. ECWA members should go back to that age long heritage of helpfulness in which farmers who were sick were helped by their male counterparts by working on their farms. There were instances when the entire ECWA Community in Igbaja worked together to provide a new house for a family in need. This spirit of helpfulness brought many people to the church apart from its promotion of unity.

The Example of Jesus (2:5-11)

There are two angles at which this passage can be understood. First of all the powerful doctrinal truth is very obvious. There is tremendous Christological significance in this passage. It gives a remarkable perception into the nature and work of Christ. It tells of his equality with God and his coexistent humanity. It gives details of his obedience to the will of God and how he died on the cross. The passage also tells of his final exaltation, how every knee will bow and how every tongue confesses that he is Lord.

Secondly, and equally of importance is the background message which is extremely practical. This section should be understood in the context of the book as a whole and the overall argument Paul is passing across to the church at Philippi. He writes to instruct them on how to live. It is not then, primarily a text about the theology surrounding Jesus, but it is more a passage from a letter to a church giving them Jesus as their example. It tells them that by following his example they can effectively live the Christian life.

So as to understand what verses 6-11 are saying verse 5 has to be understood. It sets the tone, gives insight into and makes the application of those verses clear; which is to do what Jesus did, to think what he thought, to have the same attitude towards servant-hood that he had. Verses 6-11 spell out in very descriptive terms not only what that attitude was but how it was lived out in his life. Therefore verse 5 coming on the heels of verses 1-4, explains that Philippian Christians are to be servants, just as Jesus was a servant. So then in order to emphasise this exhortation and to point out the source of the strength needed to live up to it, Paul now points to the example of Jesus who renounced himself in order to serve and save others. Hence both the leaders and members of IDCC should have the principle that underscores the promotion of unity, which is to display the attitude of Christ according to verse 5. Believers cannot duplicate the precise work of Christ but they can demonstrate the same attitude; the attitude not to be served but to serve others (Mk. 10:45). Adherence to this principle by ECWA IDCC members makes the admonitions in verses 6-8 and their attendant reward possible.

(a) Set aside Right and Power- verses 6 – 7

Jesus is in every form God but without ceasing to be God, he voluntarily assumed a human body and human nature. He did not give up his deity; he set it aside in order to carry out God's plan of salvation for all people. He did not only become human, he descended lower than that. He entered servitude by exercising his freedom of choice.

What did he give up?

(i) He gave up his favourable relation to the divine law. When he was still in heaven he was not disturbed by the burden of sin but at his incarnation he took this burden on him and began to carry it (John 1:29). He who was without sin became sin (II Cor. 5:21).

(ii) He gave up his riches. Paul writes "... because of you he became poor, though being rich, that you through his poverty might become rich (II Cor. 8:9). So poor was he

that he was continuously borrowing: a house to sleep, a boat to preach from, an animal to ride on, and a room for the Lord's Supper.

(iii) He gave up his heavenly glory. He before whom the Seraphim covered their faces (Isa. 6:1-3, Jn 12:41), the object of most solemn adoration, voluntarily came down to the realm where he was "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and accustomed to grief" (Isa. 53:3). No wonder he prayed... Jn. 17:4.

(iv). He gave up his independent exercise of authority. He said "I do not seek my own will, but the will of him who sent me" (Jn 5:30; cf 5:19; 14:24).

Often people excuse selfishness, pride or evil by claiming their rights. But believers should have a different attitude—the attitude that gives room for the exercise of one's willingness to lay aside his rights in order to save others. If Jesus could not regard his quality with God as something that must not slip his grip, if he could identify with the suffering of mankind by his incarnation, if he could pay for the offence he did not commit just for the benefit of the salvation of mankind, ECWA IDCC members and leaders should imbibe the same attitude so that unity will continue to flourish in the DCC. They should exemplify the selfless servanthood attitude of Jesus. They should endeavor to humble themselves though highly placed in the society either on account of position or wealth; the same is applicable to leadership position in the church and they should exercise the power and authority given to them to serve rather than lording it over the followers.

Wealth, position or special endowment should not stand in the way of unity as Jesus did not allow his right to block his vision. If they follow Christ they must also desire to live as he lived. Jesus' attitude of selflessness should be imitated even when no one cares to offer recognition for the efforts. Leaders in the DCC should earnest all the power and privilege they have access to as a result of their position towards serving those they lead. The attitude

of health-and-wealth Christianity which is all about getting as an alternative to giving, being served instead of serving contradicts the attitude of pouring out oneself for others.

(b) Live a Life of Selfless Humility-verse 8

Not that Christ only took the nature of man; he made himself even lower than that. He offered himself to be killed on a cross as a criminal. In Christ's time, to be put to death on a cross was the most disgraceful thing that could happen to a man. The death on the cross was the Roman way of killing worst criminals. Nothing was so humiliating than a crucified criminal. And yet Christ came down from the uppermost position of all and put himself in the lowest position of all for mankind's sake. The strength of what Paul is saying here is that Jesus who was co-eternal and equal with God, who had all power over all creation and creatures, humbled himself and allowed himself to be killed. What then would be too much for both members and leaders in IDCC to give up on account of love that will be equal to what Jesus did for mankind?

Therefore, the underlying thought of verse 8 is that if Jesus humbled himself so very deeply, members of ECWA IDCC should be constantly willing to humble themselves in their own small way. If Jesus became obedient to the point of death, even the most shameful and accursed death – death on the cross, ECWA members should become increasingly obedient to the command of God, and should likewise endeavour more and more to have the mind of Jesus and that is, the spirit of oneness, selfless sacrifice, taking risk on behalf of one another, lowliness and helpfulness. As Jesus 'selflessness led to the salvation of mankind, so also the leaders and members of the DCC must strive selflessly to promoting the welfare of each other. Pride, self-will and conceit walk against unity in the church.

Reward for Selfless Humility-9-11

According to verse.9, the voluntary humiliation of Jesus was followed by his exaltation by God. The nature of this exaltation was his elevation to the highest position and

the award to him of a name that is above every name. Exaltation to the highest place (super exaltation) is a reference to the resurrection, ascension and glorification of Jesus following his humiliating death, whereby all that he had laid aside was restored to him and even more (vs. 10 – 11). The same rule which he himself had put down for others was now applied to his own case (Matt. 23:12). The lesson here for ECWA members is that the way up is down. Humility does not demean but elevates. It does not reduce one's status but commands respect. Unity is reinforced when selfishness, pride and self-will are not allowed to reign in the congregations. Verse 10 teaches that Jesus was not only raised from the dead and restored to a status appropriate to his nature, he was also exalted to the highest place *huperupsosen* (super-exalt) and given him a name that is beyond every name so that all beings irrespective of locations might bow in acknowledgment of the name that belongs to him and confess that he is Lord to the glory of God. So IDCC leaders and members are to be conformed to Jesus' likeness in selfless humility and they will be exalted. Pride, arrogancy and selfishness do not command respect and praise. It is only for those who yield to Paul's exhortation to live out the selfless attitude as a result of their being in Christ. This is how to maintain unity in the church.

Conclusion

In conclusion therefore, for stable and enduring unity in ECWA IDCC, the members from leadership to followership should imbibe Paul's concept of unity. Paul did not expect the Philippians to all think alike. Instead, he asked that they strive for an inner sentiment for each other that is full of love. The oneness he pleaded for should be oneness in disposition, love and aim as widely divergent purposes are not likely to allow for unity. Hence this is applicable to ECWA members wherefore they live by the ingredients of unity that are like-mindedness which is a common disposition to work together and serve one another. This is the attitude of Jesus. Another ingredient of unity is having the same love. This love is fervent

and without pretension (Rom. 12:9). When unity is prevalent in a community, people freely love one another because both the nature and degree of love affect unity among believers. Furthermore, it is essential that the members of ECWA IDCC be united in mind. This means being in full accord, it speaks of a common purpose and endeavour in the community life. This is possible in view of the bases of the empowerment Jesus gives such as encouragement from the love of Jesus, comfort of love, fellowship with the Holy Spirit and tenderness and affection. Such resources from Jesus constitute an antidote to disunity and contentions.

Rather than consider position and status to represent that which is good and happy and beautiful, ECWA members ought to look at the example of Jesus and realize that the good and happy and beautiful life is a life lived for others. Jesus chose the way of self-humbling and the result was that God super-exalted him. The same would be the lot of the members that choose to abandon status for servanthood because whoever so exalts himself would be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted (Matt. 23:12).

Notes and References

1. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand: The Story of the Birth and Growth of SIM/ECWA in Ilorin (1914-1995)* (Ilorin: Okinbaloye Commercial Press, 1095), 58.
2. Many of these young ones were not attending ECWA churches in their places of domicile due partly to distance and partly to interest. When they arrived home (state of origin) they wanted ECWA to adopt the practices of the various denominations they were used to, such as speaking in tongue, loud and ecstatic prayer posture, vigils, etc. Those that remained ECWA even in diaspora criticized among other things the mode of giving in the church that it should be voluntary and should not be by levy on individual members.
3. North here refers to former northern region from which Kwara State was created on 27th May, 1967 by the then Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon. (www.nigeriagallery.com Assessed on 27/10/2016). Originally at its creation in 1967 the state was known as Western Central State but later on changed to Kwara State. (www.cometonigeria.com assessed on 27/10/2016). 12 states were created to replace the former 4 regional structure: the North, Western, Midwestern and Eastern regions in the country. (www.onlinenigeria.com assessed on 27/10/2016).
4. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 58. This was also corroborated by 2nd ECWA, Ilorin: “Also the new comers...came with some new ideas from the north on how to raise fund for rapid Church growth and were critical of some areas of worshipping in ECWA, Ilorin.” Second ECWA Church, *The History of Second ECWA Church, Amilegbe Road, Ilorin, Kwara State: Genesis, Growth and Development (1973-2012)* (Ilorin: Adewumi Press, 2012), 4.
5. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 58.
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10. Interview with Revd Dr Stephen Sanusi on 2/2/2017.

11. Second ECWA Church, Ilorin, *The History of Second ECWA Ilorin: Genesis, Growth and Development* 1973-1912, 1-2.
12. FECI/D4/2 vol. 1 Minutes of elders' meeting of July 8th, 1972, 12th August, 1972.
Note: FECI means First ECWA Church, Ilorin.
13. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 59 in minutes of elders' meeting of 2nd September, 1972.
- 14 Interview with Elder E.B. Ajagbe.
15. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 60 in interview with Elder E. B. Ajagbe. Evidence confirmed by Elders J. A. Adeyemo, P.O. Gbenle, M. K. Ogunlana and L. Atolagbe.
- 16 Second ECWA Church, Ilorin, *The History of Second ECWA Ilorin: Genesis, Growth and Development* 1973-1912, 6.
13. 17. Second ECWA Church, Ilorin, *The History of Second ECWA Ilorin: Genesis, Growth and Development* 1973-1912, 7.
18. FEC1/D1/27 Letter from Jos Headquarters to the secretary, Ilorin DCC, dated 2nd May 1973.
19. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 98.
20. Interview with Revd Dr Stephen Sanusi on 2/2/ 2017.
21. They did not embark on further church planting because they were satisfied with the initial church planting at Ilorin and its surrounding preaching stations. Their activities were mainly on strengthening the outstation churches around Ilorin and house-to-house evangelism within Ilorin metropolis.
22. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 74.
23. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 87.
24. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand* 87.
25. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 87.

26. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousan*, 90-93.
27. Statement of some of the members of Gospel team in the screening exercise conducted by the elders for a new gospel team membership after the old team has been dissolved according to E. A. Adeyemi, 93.
28. In minutes of elders meeting of 13th June, 1994
29. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 94.
30. In minutes of elders meeting of 13th June, 1994
31. In minutes of elders meeting of 23th June, 1991.
32. In minutes of elders meeting of 11th July, 1991.
33. Samuel Ajisafe, *The Church is Marching on: A Chronicle of ECWA Church, Osere* (Ilorin: Unknown Publisher, 2011), 10.
34. Israel O. Abolade, *Understanding Servanthood in Leadership* (Lagos: Danobish Creative Prints, 2011), 57.
35. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 97
36. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 97.
37. Samuel Ajisafe, *The Church is marching on*. 11.
38. Samuel Ajisafe, *The Church is Marching on*, 11.
39. Samuel Ajisafe, *The Church is Marching on*, 11.
40. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 98- 99.
41. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 99
42. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 100-101
43. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 101
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45. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 101.
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47. Interview with Revd Dr Sthepen Sanusi on 2/2/2017.
48. Second ECWA Church, Ilorin, *The History of Second ECWA Ilorin: Genesis, Growth and Development 1973-1912*, 47.
49. E. A. Adeyemi, *From Seven to Seven Thousand*, 100.

50. Second ECWA Church, Ilorin, *The History of Second ECWA Ilorin: Genesis, Growth and Development* 1973-1912, 15.
51. Interview with Revd Stephen S. Ajise on 4/2/2017
52. Interview with Revd Emmanuel O. Malomo on 4/2/2017.
53. Interview with Revd Stephen S. Ajise on 4/2/2017.
54. Interview with Revd. Professor S. N. Alayande, aged 94 on 17th July, 2016. Pa Alayande was a onetime Chairman of Ilorin DCC from 1987-1993.
55. An interview with Mrs Serah Ogunsola, aged 76 on 4th September, 2016.
56. Interview with Mrs Emily Adewumi Olawoye, on 26th September, 2016.
57. Interview with Dr. J. A. Abiodun on 18th May, 2016.
58. Interview with Revd. Reuben Afolayan Salami on 17th July, 2016.
59. Adeleye Ijagbemi, *Christian Missionary Activity in Colonial Nigeria: the work of the Sudan Interior Mission among the Yoruba* 1908-1967 (Lagos: Nigeria Magazine, 1996), 100.
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70. Interview with Pa Joshua Dairo on 4th March, 2016.
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74. Interview with Elder P. F. Afolabi on 19th May, 2016.
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76. Yusufu Turaki, *Theory and Practice of Christian Missions in Africa*. 315.
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78. Interview with Pa Emmanuel Afolabi Olawoye on 26th, September, 2016.
79. Interview with Elder Dr. S.O. Olaosebikan on 19th May, 2016.
80. Yusufu Turaki, *Theory and Practice of Christian Missions in Africa*, 292.
81. Interview with Pa Oderinde on 19th August, 2015.
82. Interview with Pa Oderinde on 19th August, 2015.
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92. Interview with Pa Isaiah Orileola on 10th April, 2016.
93. Interview with Elder S. T. Adebayo on 17th May, 2016.
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CHAPTER SIX

SUMMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of this last chapter is majorly threefold. First to summarise major issues that were raised in the course of this research, secondly to draw a conclusion based on the findings from the research conducted on the topic of the thesis and thirdly to make some recommendations as possible incentives to promotion of unity in ECWA IDCC.

6.1 Summary of the Study

The thesis was undertaken under six chapters. The introductory chapter stated that unity is *sine qua non* to progress and stability in any organization that is why every organization struggle very hard to remain unified. Both secular and religious sectors need unity in order to survive and that was why Jesus prayed for the unity of the church in John 17: 1-23. It was discovered, however that the church generally is divided along tribal, sectional, denominational, doctrinal lines. ECWA as a denomination shared in this undue emphasis placed on areas that divide in contrast to the legacy of unity it inherited from the SIM missionaries and through which it had experienced growth and progress for decades. It was discovered that for ECWA IDCC to regain, sustain and maintain its unity, it has to follow the example of Jesus in Philippians 2: 1-11 which was the admonition of Paul to that church at Philippi in similar situation of disunity.

The thesis reviewed relevant literature revolving around, (a). The *kenosis* of Jesus in Philippians 2:7-8. Here the emphasis was self-abnegation of Jesus as antidote to rift in the church; (b).unity and disunity in the church. It was discovered that the type of unity that the church needed and should operate in should be unity in diversity. It was likened to human body that is made up of many parts but each part works differently and cooperatively for the welfare of that one body. Disunity was seen to be contrary to this concept. It operated on selfishness and self-conceit. (c). Conflict was seen to be inevitable in a dynamic organization

and it should not be seen as always negative. If it appeared it must be settled in an atmosphere of no victor no vanquished as much as possible.

The focus of chapter two was the discussion on the historical background to Philippi and Philippians. The city was established by Philip of Macedon about 360 BC and he gave it the name Philippi (Philip's city). It was declared a Roman colony by Octavian in 30 BC. Philippi as a Roman Colony enjoyed all the privileges Roman citizens enjoyed, such as citizenship, freedom from payment of polls and land taxes, legal rights, etc. The city was multinational in population but had little Jewish settlement as evidenced by lack of synagogue in it. The inhabitants were worshippers of different divinities with the official imperial religion dominating.

Paul got in touch with the Philippians in answer to the clarion call in Acts 16. It was there that he was beaten and jailed on account of exorcism but the incident led to the conversion of the household of the Philippian jailer apart from Lydia. Two major reasons for the letter to this church were, (a) to express his appreciation for the church's concern for his welfare in spite of their poverty-stricken condition, (b), to address the obvious evidence of defect in their midst-disunity that could mar the good reputation of the church. Hence Paul admonished those who thought they were more important than others among them to follow the example of Jesus who set aside his divine glory and condescended to help humanity and was super elevated as a reward of this action of his.

In chapter three the thesis explored the concept of unity and disunity in both the Old and the New Testaments. It showed that unity in the Old Testament expressed the idea of oneness or togetherness in the atmosphere of love. Disunity on the other hand established itself through jealousy, bitterness, hatred. Unity in the New Testament also expressed the notion of oneness as shown by Jesus' Priestly Prayer in John 17: 1-23 that both the Jews and Gentiles might come together in unity to form one kingdom, the church. Paul in his epistles

also admonished that unity should be struggled for. He compared unity in the church to different but harmonious functions of the parts of human body in order to bring home his idea of unity in diversity. But instances of disunity in the New Testament negated the positive products of unity. It was about to breed division in the early church through the demonstration of favouritism by the Hebraic Jew against the Hellenists. Paul and Barnabas also had a taste of disunity and it led to their separation. The Corinthian church demonstrated disunity to the maximum to the extent that Paul categorized them as immature.

The thesis in chapter four centred on the history of ECWA. ECWA had its beginning from the passion of Mrs. Gowans, who sold the idea of millions of people in the Sudan without Christ to her son and Bingham. This concern of hers brought the three pioneers of SIM missionaries, Walter Gowans, Thomas Kent and Rowland Bingham to Lagos in December, 4, 1893. It was Rowland Bingham alone that witnessed the fruition of their venture; the rest two died. With the Sudan's first mission station in 1901 or 1902 at Patigi, the missionaries extended their territories to Yagba and Igbomina lands and greater areas in the northern part of Nigeria as well as some African countries. This amazing growth, not just in establishment of churches but also in medical, educational, etc., led to the indigenization of the mission in 1954 as ECWA with eight DCCs in Nigeria. Out of these DCCs was Yoruba DCC. Yoruba DCC gave birth to three DCCs, namely Ilorin, United and Southern DCCs in 1971. The creation was not without internal wrangling and acrimony

The thesis in chapter five introduced the fact that when unity was allowed to reign in IDCC the DCC was able to manage all the legacies bequeathed to it by the SIM missionaries and was able also to put in place many more to the extent that the DCC experienced growth and stability but the DCC gave in to tribalism, pride, jealousy, sectionalism, selfishness, nepotism and the likes hence peace and progress that had been the joy of the DCC became stalled. The valuable time that should be spent on further improvement was expended on

conflict settlement. Since the DCC has tasted the joy of unity and the agony of derailment to disunity and is now in nascent unity, how does it sustain the present moment of unity? The answer was found in Philippians 2:1-11. It was discovered that the church at Philippi was passing through similar problem of disunity hence the teaching of Paul who called the attention of the Philippian church to the attitude of Jesus as a way back to their hitherto unity that was responsible for their corporate passion for the spread of the gospel was employed to address ECWA IDCC as well. The resources the Philippian church needed as an encouragement to unity have been provided by Jesus (Philippians 2:1). The attitudes to put on and put off were also given to them by Paul (Philippians 2:2-4). To bring home his admonition, he anchored the success of the pursuit of unity on the attitude of self-sacrificing humility of Jesus as the only option for them. This should be the attitude of ECWA IDCC to each other from leadership to followership for the sustenance of its new unity.

Finally, chapter six presented the summary of the thesis. It made some recommendations to ECWA IDCC leaders and individual members as well as the general public. Furthermore, some observations were made based on the issues raised in the course of the study. Much more the work presented its contributions to knowledge and concluded by challenging ECWA IDCC to understand that it must struggle to sustain the just realised unity within its fold and that unity would be a reality only in an atmosphere of love.

6.2 Observations

The following are the observations made by the researcher in the course of carrying out this research:

1. Though ECWA IDCC experienced crises, which is typical of all growing organizations, religious or non-religious, but then no situation of crisis has warranted law-suit among members. Whenever there was grievance within the body polity it was settled in-house in compliance with the teaching of Paul in ICorinthians 6:1-8 that disputes should be settled

within the church and in Ephesians 4:3 Paul said that unity of the Spirit must be pursued in the atmosphere of peace. This has been the approach of the IDCC to issues of conflict.

2. In spite of the difficulty encountered by the SIM missionaries in the early beginning of their missionary endeavour in Nigeria such as lack of dependable source of funds and unfriendly weather conditions resulting in loss of lives, it is an indubitable fact that their missionary efforts were a huge success. Many churches were established; learning institutions (secular and theological schools) were established. Empowerment of members and non-members which subsequently metamorphosed into institutions such as People Oriented Development (POD) of ECWA and ECWA Rural Development (ERD) were embarked upon. Medical care was put in place in the form of dispensaries and hospitals basically on humanitarian ground.

3. ECWA followed after the principle of faith and perseverance that has been the factor responsible for the momentous achievements of SIM in Nigeria to the extent that there is still accelerated growth in church planting and as a result the denomination can boast of 80 District Church Councils of which IDCC is one of the prominent. So also is the proper maintenance of the various legacies bequeathed to ECWA by these missionaries in the aspects of education, medical care, missions and empowerment of the members.

4. The contribution of the fellowship groups towards the progress of the IDCC can never be over emphasized. Women's fellowship started at the national level on the basis of offering care to women during child labour but they continued far more than that to the extent of granting scholarship to children from poor families, mediating in areas of family and ecclesiastical disputes and engaging womenfolk in empowerment. Men's fellowship on the hand, though initially considered a threat to the power and authority of the pastor in IDCC, is now assisting the pastors in the struggle for peace as well as championing the cause of their welfare in the DCC.

6.3 Recommendations

1. The leadership of ECWA IDCC should understand that the Church is an organization but much more it is an organism. Therefore, its organismic quality and tendency should be guarded for sustainability of unity in Church.
2. Every gathering of the members should be for the promotion of unity rather than sectional or tribal interests.
3. ECWA Pastors are to teach and preach the common elements that all Christians share together which are one body, one spirit, one faith, one Lord, one hope, and one baptism in order to ginger up the struggle for unity.
4. There is need for more emphasis on trainings for effective communication, relational understanding and general management strategies for the church leaders. This will reduce conflicts and promote unity.
5. Church leaders should avoid lackadaisical attitude at the wake of disagreement.
6. Church leaders should lead exemplary life of tolerance, patience and love in order to accommodate the views of different organs in the church.
7. It is very important that church members guide against the temptation of making inflammatory statements or inciting parties to disagree against each other as well as against the decision of leaders in case of church dispute.
8. The flow of communication between the leadership and followership is very important. It is a necessity for a healthy relationship among the church members. Hence church leaders should open up a channel of communication in order to bridge relational gap that might be a hinderance to promotion of unity.
9. Both leaders and members should work together to see that ethnicity, nepotism, favouritism, sectionalism and tribalism are discouraged in the Church.

10. Other areas of interaction in addition to the existing ones should be explored by IDCC leadership, for instance, joint cooperative society, joint fellowship groups, etc. as measures for making unity durable.

6.4 Contribution to Knowledge

For decades ECWA IDCC has been battling with one form of crises or the other. As a result of slight cultural diversity, power tussle, nepotism, sectionalism, empty conceit, and the like, it has not realised stable and durable unity. It is the candid belief of the researcher that it is possible for ECWA IDCC to be released of its unstable and undurable unity by taking to the teaching of Paul in Philippians 2:1-11. The life of selfless humility of Jesus shows that selflessness does not demean a person. His condescension to serve humanity led to the reinstatement of his glory he set aside as a result of his identification with mankind through his incarnation. It is to be understood that when people are quarreling, the part to peace is to seek humility rather than to assess arguments and weigh one against another, because when such is done those involved run into self-satisfaction and selfish ambition which make sustainability of unity impossible.

Where ever vain conceit and selfish ambition are found, it is a disclosure of pride. It is worth mentioning that pride, whether in a single individual life, in a family, a church, in government, or in a whole nation, always destroys, divides, sets one person against another, extends conflicts, breaks up partnership and union of all sorts. But when provocations are hot, passions are aroused and patience is stressed, Paul admonished that the way to stop the urge to defend oneself and the persistent insistence on what is called one's rights is to follow the example of Jesus.

When the persons involved in conflict admit that they have contributed to it and are willing to lay to rest the past in forgiveness, the outcome is a deeper sense of acceptance than ever before. When this stage is attained the quarrel actually helps unity rather than destroying

it. It results in deeper appreciation, respect and love than before. Hence the adoption of Paul's teaching in Philippians 2: 1-11 by ECWA IDCC raises the hope that it can rise above its current intermittent unity and achieve sustainable unity. This is also applicable to all minds involved in making sustenance of unity a reality in their set up.

6.5 Conclusion

The study has examined the long history of crises in ECWA Ilorin DCC. The crises which started in the early 60s lingered on till 2016 when the desire for peace was expressed though there were moments of intermittent unity. The solution to this nascent unity was traced to Paul's admonition to the Philippian Christians in similar condition of crisis. The Philippian Christians were about to be torn apart by disunity caused by empty conceit and selfish ambition. Paul therefore called for the sustenance of unity for which he had known them if they would make his joy perfect. The qualities that would sustain unity among them according to Paul were like mindedness, having sincere love towards one another, pursuit of the same goal in the same spirit.

The cause of the problem with the IDCC could also be traced to lack of the same qualities that were the cause of the problem among Philippian members because empty conceit and selfish ambition breed sectionalism, nepotism, power tussle that caused crises in ECWA IDCC. Hence this work offered the same admonition to ECWA IDCC as an end to its chequered past of intermittent unity. The sustainability of the existing unity in the DCC depends significantly on how much the church is able to adopt the admonition of Paul in Philippians 2:1-11. And since Paul's admonition helped to sustain unity in the Philippian Church, it will certainly work for ECWA IDCC.

Jesus as the perfect example did not selfishly held on to his glory but was contented to empty himself and condescended to identify with mortal man. He was not disheartened by the inglorious death on the cross. It behooves ECWA IDCC members to have this Christ-like

attitude in them so that they can sustain the existing peace. This becomes a reality when they have nothing to do with selfish ambition, vain glory and looking on one's own interests only but follow after being like-minded, having the same love, being one in the Spirit and purpose and humbly bearing in mind others as better than they themselves.

Since the intent of Paul in Philippians 2:1-11 is the exhortation to unity and the reference to the attitude and nature of Jesus as an example of selfless humility in order to help the Philippian church members to sustain their unity, it also served as an encouragement to ECWA IDCC too to struggle towards the sustainability of its nascent unity in the midst of threatening crises. The contents and concepts of this message affect both leaders and followers.

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Oral Interview

No	Name	Age	Date	Place	Occupation	Denomination
1.	Mrs. V. Oshadare	58	21/2/2016	New Bussa	Teacher	ECWA Church
2.	Elder Adebayo S.T	48	21/2/2016	New Bussa	Civil servant	ECWA
3.	Elder Afolabi P.F.	56	21/2/2016	New Bussa	Accountant	ECWA
4.	Elder Dr. Abiodun J.A	50	21/2/2016	New Bussa	Civil servant	ECWA
5.	Elder Akande D.A	48	26/2/2016	New Bussa	Engineer	ECWA
6.	Elder Olowu S.A.	73	18/7/2016	Oke- Ode	Farmer/Carpenter	ECWA
7.	Elder Orile-Ola I. A	98	18/7/2016	Oke- Ode	Retired Head Master	ECWA
8.	Mrs. Adeniyi F.M.	75	19/8/2016	Igbaja	Retired headmistress	ECWA
9.	Elder Oderinde	87	17/8/2016	Igbaja	Carpenter	ECWA
10	Mrs. Ogunsola S.	76	20/8/2016	Igbaja	Teacher	ECWA
11.	Elder Dairo J.	90	22/8/2016	Igbaja	Teacher	ECWA
12	Emmanuel A. Olawoye	88	26/8/2016	Ilorin	Chief Health Inspector	ECWA
13	Mrs.Emily E.A. Olawoye	81	26/8/2016	Ilorin	Principal	ECWA
14	Elder J. Gidado	80	24/8/2016	Ilorin	Journalist	ECWA
15	Elder Olowojofe S.S.	53	26/2/2016	New Bussa	Civil servant	ECWA
16	Pastor E.A. Adekoye	36	13/8/2016	Lao	Pastor	ECWA
17	R.A. Afolayan	66	15/7/2016	Omu-Aran	Pastor	ECWA
18	Alayande S.N.	94	17/8/2016	Oko	IDCC Chairman:1988-1993	ECWA
19	Odetayo G.T.	36	17/8/2016	Ilorin	Pastor	ECWA
20	Mustafa S.M.	35	17/7/2016	Budo-Oke	Pastor	ECWA
21	Elder Oyawoye S.O.	61	26/8/2016	New Bussa	Teacher	ECWA
22	Elder Dr.S.O. Olaosebikan	52	26/2/2016	New Bussa	Lecturer	ECWA

23	Mrs. D. Aiyedun	76	18/10/2016	Igbaja	Teacher	ECWA
24	Peter Salawu	62	1/11/2016	Jos	ELWA Director	ECWA
25	Samuel Adetiba	46	4/11/2016	Igbaja	ELWA Studio Manager	ECWA
26	Revd Dr Stephen A. Sanusi	69	2/2/2017	Ilorin	IDCC Chairman:1997- 2000; 2008-2011	ECWA
27	Revd Stephen S. Ajise	54	3/3/2007	Ilorin	IDCC Chairman:2003- 2008; 2012 to date	ECWA
28	Revd Dr Emmanuel O. Malomo	43	3/3/2007	Ilorin	IDCCSecretary:2013- date	ECWA