ST. AUGUSTINE'S FREE WILL THEODICY AND THE AFRICAN QUESTION OF SUFFERING: TOWARDS A DIALOGUE THEODICY

Submitted by

Carren Ajwang'Ogelo

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Theology from St. Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya

May 2017

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

ST. AUGUSTINE'S FREE WILL THEODICY AND THE AFRICAN QUESTION OF SUFFERING: TOWARDS A DIALOGUE THEODICY

Submitted by

Carren Ajwang' Ogelo

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Theology from St. Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya

Supervisors: Rev. Dr. John Kiboi.

Rev. Canon Prof. Joseph Galgalo.

May 2017

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

DECLARATION

This dissertation is a product of my own work and is not the result of anything done in collaboration. It has not been previously presented to any other institution. I agree that this dissertation may be available for reference and photocopy, at the discretion of the university.

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT……DATE……..

I confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the student under my supervision.

1st SUPERVISOR:

The Rev. Dr. John M. Kiboi ……..sign……date……..

2nd SUPERVISOR:

The Rev. Can. Prof. Joseph D. Galgalo……sign……..date……..

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am grateful to several people whocontributed to making this work a success. I specially thank my supervisors Rev. Dr. Kiboi and Rev. Canon Prof. J. Galgalo, for their diligent guidancethroughout thisproject.

I also thank theRt. Rev. James Ochiel and the entire Diocese of Southern Nyanza for their support, particularly inallowing me to study at St Paul's University. I am equally grateful to my friends and collogues for their encouragements.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

The dissertation examines the problem of suffering among African Christians who in establishing their faith in Christian God, has never known why they would continue to suffer. The problem is that suffering causes a lot of anxiety to African Christians. When Christianity teaches that God is all-powerful, all knowing and supremely good, this would mean that He should eliminate pain. However, since suffering still exists, this sometimes resultsinto a lapse of faith where Christians resort into consulting witchdoctors in search of asolution for suffering. By engaging into dialogue between St. Augustine's free will theodicy and African problem of suffering,Augustine's theodicy provides us with important points that can enhance deeper understanding for African Christians in the problem of evil, hence answer to Africans questions to suffering. Augustine shows that suffering is necessary and that both righteous and wicked suffer alike. Also, Augustine also by offering an assurance of God's presence is suffering, affirms the belief in omnipotent, good, and all loving God.The dissertation is, therefore,a contribution to thetheology of understanding the problem of suffering which is a pertinent issue in the society.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION i

ACKNOWLEDGMENT ii

ABSTRACT iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS iv

ABBREVIATIONS ix

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 Background of the Study 1

1.2 Statement of the Problem 1

1.3 Objective of the Study 2

1.4 Hypothesis 2

1.5 Methodology 2

1.6 Justification of the Study 3

1.6 Chapter Outline 5

CHAPTER II: AFRICAN CHRISTIAN QUESTION OF SUFFERING 6

INTRODUCTION 6

2.1 Causes of suffering 7

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

2.1.1 Traditional African Concept of Evil 7

2.1.1.1 Origin of Evil 8

2.1.1.2 Nature of Evil 11

2.2 Attributes of God and their Solution to Suffering 12

2.2.1 Omnipotence of God 12

2.2.2 Omnibenevolence of God 15

2.2.3 Holiness of God 16

2.3 African Christian concept of salvation 17

2.3.1 Wellbeing 17

2.3.2 Deliverance and healing 18

2.3.3 Salvation as wholeness 19

2.3.4 Change of identity 21

2.4Christian concept of God 22

2.4.1 Omnipotence of God 22

2.4.2 Goodness of God 23

2.4.3 Holiness of God 24

2.5 Biblical concept of salvation 26

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

2.5.1 Deliverance and healing 26

2.5.2 Salvation as the forgiveness of sin 30

2.5.3 Change of identity 30

2.6 The African Christian anxiety 31

CONCLUSION 33

CHAPTER III: ST. AUGUSTINE'S FREE WILL THEODICY 35

INTRODUCTION 35

3.1 The problem of evil 35

3.2 St. Augustine's free will theodicy 36

3.2.1 Origin of Evil 36

3.2.2 Nature of Evil 42

3.2.2.1 Evil as Non-substance 42

3.2.2.2 *Privatio Boni* 44

3.3 Why do good people and bad people suffer alike? 47

3.6 Hope for the sufferer 48

CONCLUSION 51

CHAPTER IV: DIALOGICAL THEODICY 53

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION 53

4.1 Dialogue 54

4.1.1 How dialogue theology works 57

4.1.2 Justification 59

4.1.3 Critique for dialogue 62

4.2 Towards a dialogical theology 64

4.2.1 Weakness of African theodicy 64

4.2.2 Weakness of St. Augustine's theodicy 64

4.2.3 Strengths of African theodicy 65

4.2.4 Strengths of St. Augustine's theodicy 65

4.3 Dialogue between Augustine and Africans 67

4.3.1 Suffering is not necessarily bad, it is also good 67

4.3.2 Good and bad people suffer alike 68

4.3.3 Total dependence on God for strength and hope 68

CONCLUSION 70

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION 71

5.1 Pastoral implication 72

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

5.2 Recommendation 73

BIBLIOGRAPHY 74

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

ABBREVIATIONS

AACC: All African Conference of Churches.

WCC: World Council of Churches.

Conf: Confession.

C.G: City Of God.

Ench: Enchiridion.

E.G: *Evangelii Gaudium*

PROCMURA: ProgrammeforChristian-Muslim Relations.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Before the arrival of Christianity, Africans had answers to the problem of evil. With theadvent of Christian teaching of God as omnipotent, omnibenevolent and Holy and yet evil exists, the African initial understanding was put to question. Their holding that God is omnipotent and good yet evil exists is judged by philosophers as a contradiction.

Out of pastoral experience, attending to funerals where suffering is evident, questions in the midst of bereaved when goodness and power of God are preached are numerous. Why would God allow this if he is good and all able? Would he not prevent this evil? When life becomes so painful, people become so anxious and often, longing for deliverance is the only alternative. For Africans, the anxiety in times of suffering can lead to backsliding in order to search for asolution from their traditional culture which they understand.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The problem of evil is causing a lot of anxiety to African Christians because they do not understand how God who is loving and all powerful is not able to help solve their many problems that besiege them on a day-to-day basis. The dilemma with which African Christians are exposed to is, how to explain suffering when Christianity teaches thatGod is all-powerful and all-knowing and supremely good. These attributes would mean thatGod should be in a position to rid people of their poverty, sickness, and injustices. Unfortunately, the dilemma is thateven those who believe in omnipotent Goddo suffer. The dilemma has caused some Africans to resort to

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

thedual allegiance of faith, where sometimes Christians slide into African cultural solutions including witchcraft in search of salvation from evil and suffering while they remain in Christian faith.

A critical analysis of Augustine's free will theodicy offers a biblical explanationthat will help African Christians in the understanding of how to reconcile the faith in God and the question of suffering.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to investigate the strengths in Augustine's free will theodicy with thehope that it will provide adeeper understanding for African Christians'concern about the problem of evil.

1.4 Hypothesis

This research presupposes that, if Augustine's free will theodicy is used to explain the problem of evil, African Christians can understand why suffering persists despite the fact that God is omnipotent and all loving.

1.5 Methodology

The research follows dialogue model as employed by World Council of Churches and Vatican II in its encounter with the people of living faith, which in their case was geared towards peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims.

Dialogue approach has been portrayedtorepresent religions at loggerheads, however, as Nazir Ali, Sigvard von Sicard and Ingo Wulfhortshowin their definition, conflict is just one aspect that defines dialogues. Instead, it also carrieswith itdefinitions such

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

as conversation, discussion aimed conversion, personal exposition to own faith, witnessing(Ali, 1987:105), a talk orinvestigation about something (Sicard & Wulfhort, 2003:14).Dialogue also has been taken to be asubject of inter-religious concern. However, according to Roman Catholicespecially on Pope Francis'exhortation, the Pope also emphasized on dialogue with other Christians and the larger Christian community (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 2013: 238; henceforth E.G).

In this case, the dialogue between Augustine's theodicyand Africansdo not presuppose conflict between Africans and Augustine or with Christians, neither does it means that African Christianity is a different religion as Christianity, but dialogue, as used here, is a discussion or a conversation with a purpose of offeringto understand for the African problem of evil.

1.6Justification of the Study

The problem of suffering is of great significance, not only to African Christians but also to the Christian church at large. This is because the question of suffering is a reality; people continue to suffer whether from people with bad intent or from the cause of nature. This calls for the church's continuous need to explain the suffering in people's context. These contexts include Africa, hence by critically examining African views of suffering in the light of Augustine's theodicy, the research will present African spirituality of life in which asAgbonkhiameghe Orobator (2008:130-131) puts it, carries a theology of 'life in its fullness' where God is seen to be present and actively involved.

The crucial answers will be derived from St. Augustine whose emphasis is on 'free will' and thepossibility of good living now should human will good. From free will,

ST PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

beliefs regarding human will and responsibility is a determinant factor for a better world. This possibility is not clearly stipulated by critics of Augustine. For example, Fredrick Schleiermacher (Conf, 1:25, 26) asserts that the claim of St. Augustine that God would give ahuman being a free will to do bad is not attainable. According to Augustine, God does not cause people to do wrong, in his being, actually it is in his nature to contradict himself he is Good, all powerful and holy that in his plan has willed to save people from suffering.

Dialogue approach is recommended in this study becauseit encompasses the whole meaning of, the word "theology" which St. Anselm defines as "faith seeking understanding". Dialoguethereforeisan activity directed at both Christians and non-Christians. It is where Christians are helped to learn the faith they hold while non-Christians are enlightened of the gospel truth. The non-Christian concepts are then challenged to consider the claims of Christ and Christians to help confront with personal and social challenges.The argument will be that,St. Augustine's free will theodicy, as well as African views of suffering when put into dialogue, isadequate in theunderstanding of God and human suffering.

So as to understand the evil and suffering in the presence of God, theodicy is a continued quest for the church in Africa. African Christians thereforeneed to analyze their conceptual views of evilin the light of other theodicies in the Christian tradition so as to have meaningful answers in relation to suffering.Subjecting African Christian understanding of evil to Augustine theodicy will offer the church in Africa with chains of possible understandings and points for interaction with suffering and evil, which is a pertinent issue in the society.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

1.6Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: This chapter provides the background to the study, the problem statement, the objective of the study, hypothesis, methodology, and thejustificationof the study.

Chapter 2: This chapter deals with African Christian experiences of evil and suffering, their views of suffering and responses.

Chapter 3: This chapter provides the Augustine's theodicy since it has been considered as a Christian orthodoxy.

Chapter 4: This chapter explains dialogue strategy in understanding the African problem of suffering and Augustine's freewill theodicy and draws lessons for African Christians dynamism.

Chapter 5: In this chapter conclusion for our study is drawn, challenges and recommendations are thus generated.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER II: AFRICAN CHRISTIAN QUESTION OF SUFFERING

INTRODUCTION

Though Africa is portrayed as a field of church growth, the continent has remained to be a suffering continent. According to Gideon Strauss (2000), Africa is faced with food crisis.It is the angriest in the world, debt crisis, sickness, political turmoil etc. However, Africans understand that the problem of suffering has not begun yesterday, but it has been part of human experience throughout ages. In fact, Africans believe that they exist in a world full of evil forces and that evil is the root cause of all sufferings we see in the world today.

Since evil hinders and frustrates the goal of existence, the place of human being is in continued struggle against evils so as to achieve a successful life. For example, John Mbiti (1969:117) study on *Concepts of God in African* states that, from an African traditional religions perspective, it is God through his intermediaries (divinities) who could see people through their sufferings. This is because evil forces are more powerful than human beings, so God who is omnipotent uses divinities that he has given relatively more powers than humanity as the source of refuge for humanity (Mbiti: 1969:117). For Christians, knowledge of God and belief in his powers and love offers the basis for solving the problem. However, in most cases, this is not true. There are many Christians and innocent people who suffer daily. This puts God's omnipotence and love to question hence the root cause of anxiety.

To believe that God who is Omnipotent, Omnibenevolent and Holy cannot eliminate evil is not attainable for Africans. So, the problem of suffering in Africa is based on African Christian understanding of evil and salvation in its points of continuity and

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

discontinuity with Christian teaching on the concept of Omnipotence, Omnibenevolence, and Holiness of God.

African ideas as used here are particularly anchored on the African Christians. The researcher is also aware that not all African groups believe in the same things and in the same way as informed by their traditional background, so whenever such difference is referred, the specific tradition or denomination shall be singled out. It is also important to note that African religious traditions will be pointed out because as Kelvin Onongha (2013: 126) notes, people's background inform their world views.

2.1 Causes of suffering

2.1.1 Traditional AfricanConcept of Evil

Evil is a practical concern among the Africans. It is understood as a natural force that is rooted in the world, such that among the Bantu community, Placid Tempels (1959:10) notes that it is "entirely ontological, immanent and intrinsic." Its effect as Samuel Waje Kunhiyop (2008: 374) states "is the human experience of pain, sickness, death, and anything that causes discomfort or suffering. The human life, therefore, is a struggle against these forces with a purpose of getting salvation.

Evil is also termed in respect to individual morality, which results incosmic suffering. This is in relation to the notion that African preoccupation is characterised by cosmic entanglement where life is as Orobator (2008:63)calls it "a shared reality," where, one person's moral decision is deemed to affect all beings. However, judgment of morality whether evil or good, depends on the visible outcome. For example, suffering is a sign of evil one has done, so that as John Mbiti (1969:210) puts it, "one's misfortune is… an outcome of their misconduct". According to Kwesi

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Wiredu (1983:11), those wrongs such as killing, stealing, adultery, and disrespect to elders are what constitutes evil. In analyzing this concept of evil that is determined from the outcome, Joseph Galgalo (2012:26) observes that evil, in this case, is "not dependent on the action but the negativity of the outcome of such actions" which often is suffering.

It is in the understanding of evil in terms of ethics and morality that sometimes the question of the Africans' usage of word 'evil' and 'sin' arise. Drawing from Africa theologians such as Mbiti (1969: 204) and Wayer (1972:106), John Pobee states that, for African, sin leads to evil. An example of the illustration is what Harold W. Turner (1967:359-361) reports of the Church of God (Aladura) where sin is understood as what separates one from good, while evil the punishment that comes from the sin. In terms of ethics and morality, what a person does that affects human life negatively is defined as sin for the African (Benezet Bujo, 1990:77). However, for Galgalo (2012:27), sin and evil in Africaare taken to mean the same thing.

2.1.1.1 Origin of Evil

Mbiti in his study of '*African myths of origins*,' concluded that, in most of theAfrican societies, the original state of being when God created, was that there was no evil (Mbiti, 1969:204). Mbiti further elaborates that God is neither the originator of evil nor does He do any evil at all. Instead, theorigin of evil is in spiritual agents or human agents and this is the work of the devil (Zablon Nthamburi, 1991:59).

In cases where God is thought to be the source of evil among the African societies, Mbiti says that this is just an explanation to bring toconclusion a subject beyond

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

African thought, since for Africans God does not in any way cause calamity (1969:42-43, 208). The same is reiterated by Smith, who says:

> Now on the death of a person they commonly put the question: 'by whom was the death caused? Was it a bad spirit?' When there seems to be no other reason they say: 'it is a death which comes from God.'…Anything which they are not able to give an account of in other ways is certainly the act of God(Smith,1936:61-62).

The two arguments clarify the principle in African thought that God does not and cannot commit evil.However, when talking about sin, Mbiti (1986: 137) notes that Africans show no concern of original sin because they only make reference to personal sin. He also points out that African Christians connect Satan and devil with evil in the world (1986:115).

Spirits are considered to be the origin or embodiment of evil in most of theAfrican societies. Africans differentiate between good spirits and evil spirits, whereby, bad spirits are part of creation that was good but later turned evil. It is from these evil spirits that all evils come from (Nthamburi, 1991:58-59). For example, among the Bukusu community, Mbiti says that there are evil spirits from which comes evil (Mbiti, 1969:204). John S. Pobee supports this view by arguing that, in Africa, human beings sin because an evil spirit has entered them causing them to sin (Pobee, 1979:32) this in turn results into suffering. For this reason, human beings are just but a secondary cause or agents of evil while evil spirits are the cause of the evil. There are also good spirits with whom there is no evil (Nthamburi, 1991:58-59).

Belief in spirit as theorigin of evil is also evident in African Christians. In a research conducted by Donald Jacobs (1976: 182) among the African instituted churches, he observes that the Legion Maria, demonstrated a kind of African exorcism in their "typical confrontation" with devil and spirits which the Luo feared as the agents of evil. He further points out that;

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

> The possessed then goes into convulsions and begins to speak in tongues. The officials rebuke the spirit and order it out of the person. Dialogue with the spirit or spirits continues until as a result of communal prayer the spirit announces its departure. If a spectator also trembles and begins to speak in tongues during the rite, he, too, is exorcised. If the spirit returns to someone already exorcised, the person, in order to maintain a resistance to the threatening spirit, is required to join the healers and the exorcists and help others who aresick and possessed. If possession persists, it could indicate that a sick person is living in a demon-infested situation. The solution is to move away (Jacobs, 1976:182).

Some of the evangelists of this movement not only claim God-givenpowers but also God-given knowledge such as the ability to discern the identity of the spirit that possesses people (AylwardShorter &Joseph Njiru, 2001:101).

Clement C.A. Majawa expounds on the belief among charismatic movements in Africa. He notes that they live in a world that is full of devils and spirits as active forces that cause sufferings and misfortunes (Majawa, 2007:350). To be free from these forces, the devil has to be exorcised or commanded directly in order to vacate a place, to abandon a situation or to release a person (Majawa, 2007: 374). This is because as Mbiti puts it, for Africans, the powers of evil forces "are concrete realities" hence require a confrontation (1986:114).

According to Nthamburi (1991:55), belief in spirits in the traditional Africa informs most of the indigenous churches' belief on spiritual forces. Giving an example of the Aladura church, he points out that existence is wholly guided by the spirit. For the faithful, the Holy Spirit always works towards theelimination of the evil spirit.

Another origin of evil is the charms used for magic or witchcraft. There are people in communities who are believed to use magic, sorcery or witchcraft so as to cause suffering to people or their neighbors. Though, as Mbiti (1969: 205) puts it, magical powers or witches are not totally bad; they only become bad when used negatively.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

2.1.1.2 Nature of Evil

African presentation of the nature of evil is that of a reality in terms of a concrete physical substance. It is an external reality, this means that evil and human exist as distinct entities. This is why among theAgikuyu community, there is a ritual of "vomiting the sin" (Mbiti, 1969:210). Mbiti further explains that, this is why theapplication of Ephesians 6:10-18 where bows, arrows, and spears are applicable in fighting evil make sense in African Christianity (Mbiti, 1986:117).

Evil as ascribed to witchcraft, sorcery, magic and troublesome spirit forces exists as, "independent and external objects which, however, cannot work on their own unless they are employed into human being using spiritual agents" (Mbiti, 1969:204). However, outside human being, it is not easy to describe what they are though their manifestations are clear. According to Mbiti, "every form of suffering whether pain, misfortune, sorrow or suffering; every illness and sickness … death whether of an old man or of the infant child; … failure of the crop… hunting …fishing…bad omen"shows that there is evil that has been committed (Mbiti, 1969: 66).In this case, according to Keith Ferdinandos(1999: 13),specialists like diviners are used to find out the cause, source, and destination of evil and possibly prescribe a remedy.

Evil is understood to be transferable from one person to another using witch. Beliefnet(http://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/christianity/2005/08/) holding a research about the evangelical healing process in Africa, the researcher of the article noted the belief that sources of their problem could either emanate from their jealous family members or relative. In this case, the problem of evil is outside one's will because it can be implanted into a person using charms without their knowledge.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

2.2 Attributes of God and their Solution to Suffering

2.2.1 Omnipotence of God

In the heart of remedy to the problem of suffering is the question of the nature of God (Lucien Richard 1992:8). Mbiti in his book, *Concepts of God in Africa*, highlights very important aspects in studying African concept of God in relation to suffering. In his analysis, he concludes that all the African societies believe that God is Supreme over powers in the world even amidst suffering(Mbiti, 1969:29). Jesse N. K. Mugambi (1989:59)also notes that God is a personal deity who is the sole creator and sustainer of all that he has created. According to Geoffrey Parrinder (1962:39), common attributes could be used to refer to this deity in the respective communities. For example, he says that these attributes do not only reflect the might in his person, but also his intrinsic nature, hence such attributes such as Omnipotent, Omnibenevolent, and Holy (Parrinder, 1962:39).

Omnipotence is an attribute that defines God as all powerful and all mighty(Mbiti, 1969:30). He can do anything and everything that excludes evil. Mbiti notes the logic in the African religion that because God is all powerful then there is nothing he cannot do. And consequently, he is the master of all things (Mbiti, 1991:56).

Understood this way, God is therefore not comparable to any other being. God's power is seen in practical terms, where he takes part in political, social, and economic and emotional life of the society (Mbiti, 1969:31). God in his power, therefore, can do extraordinary; for example the Ngombe of Congo, believe that God is so powerful that he can even clear their thick forest (Mbiti, 1969:32). God in his

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

power is therefore consulted by the people for protection against natural disasters, evil spirits and all other forms of evil (Mbiti, 1969:32).

Although God is regarded as powerful, according to Kunhiyop (2012: 50), Africans also recognize other evil powers that existopposite to God's sovereign power. These powers he says can "undermine [God's] sovereign and loving provision to his creation" (Kunhiyop, 2012: 50, 51).

However, the dilemma with African traditional belief in power of God according to Mugambi and Nichodemus Kirima is that, God's power cannot be contained even by his creation; in this case, God is transcendent and he does not take part in the daily running of the creation (Mugambi & Kirima, 1976:126,128). According to Mbiti, some communities believe that God after creation isolated himself from the creation to somewhere in the sky (Mbiti, 1969:35-6) leaving as Kunhiyop (2012:49) says, spirits and divinities were therefore left to be a means of interaction between God and his people.Therefore, as Parrinder (1997:58)puts it, the search of God's power and goodness is found in spirits and divinities whom God uses.

The given power of God, Mbiti (1969:320) argues, is exercised hierarchically, that is, he is the Omnipotent God, but below him are spirits with relatively little power than him. Human beings have powers a little lesser than those of the spirits. He further elucidates that, "God made anorderly and harmonious world where [everything] performs ...own duty." To the "rulers", he has "given thepower to rule", for the "medicine men", he has "given the power to heal" and to the "Diviners" is the power to cast out evil(Mbiti, 1969:40).

ST PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Mbiti continues to argue that the belief that God exerts his powers through the spirits makes the Christian Holy Spirit "a functional entity" for salvation (Mbiti, 1986:142). This is because, in hierarchy, Holy Spirit is understood as more powerful than other spirits, thus proficient of curing, restoring health, providing wealth, good health and defeating evil forces. Those who are filled with the Holy Spirit are sure of protection from evil and powers to fight evil forces. Giving anexample of Annang independent churches, those who are filled with the Holy Spirit are able to recognize hidden charms (Mbiti, 1986:143). So, it is only those who have no faith who are not able to experience the power of God (Mbiti, 1986:144).

Kunhiyop (2012: 49) states that a little is known of theimmanence of Godin African mind. He disagrees withMugambi and Kirima(1976: 129) who argue that,"powers of God are evident in other individual parts, whether in medicine men and spirits, or diviners,and withMbiti (1986:143)who holds that "when an African prayer is answered; it is God who has done so."According to Kunhiyop, in practice it is not God but such spirits and divinities that people interact with (Kunhiyop, 2012:49).

God's power is also linked to his wisdom among the Africans. In African heritage, wisdom just as Mbiti notes is given thehighest place of honor, and so, God who has the highest wisdom also possesses the highest honor in African society (Mbiti, 1969:30). This attribute explains that God who knows all things is also able to do all things. By doing this, Mbiti (1991:56) notes that Africans realizea limit in their wisdom in comparison to God's wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. God's wisdom is not even compared to the wisdom possessed by wise men and women. Because while God knows all things, wise men and women do not know all things, and more so, rely on God for their wisdom (Mugambi &Kirima, 1979:123).

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

It is because of his incomparable wisdom that Africans believe that God knows all things before they happen. He also can offer answers immediately to people's concerns. Therefore, whenever Africans needsGod's counsel, they would always evoke his wisdom by using metaphors of hearing and seeing (Mbiti, 1969:31). As Shorter puts it, "amongst many Africans, God has eye to see and ears to hear". He gives an example of the Galla of Ethiopia in their prayer who ask God to hear and to see them;

> Listen to us aged God
> Listen to us ancient God
> Who has ears!
> Look at us aged God
> Look at us ancient God
> Who has eyes! (Shorter, 1975:30)

The Dinka of Sudan would in the process of prayer ask God, "Do you not hear, O Divinity?" Therefore, the God who knows all things, who is able to see and hear is consequently able to know that his people are suffering, and because there is nothing against his power and strength, then he can either save them or better still destroy evil.

2.2.2 Omnibenevolence of God

In African society, people believe in thegoodness of God. This attribute is not a matter of discussion for he is considered to be an absolute Good; He is good all times and in all places, and his goodness never ends. Mbiti gives anexample of this conclusions by referring to a Zaire saying "rejoice God never does wrong to people" (Mbiti, 1991: 55). Because God is good, he is the Source of all good, which is also embedded in his being as good. In his goodness, God also provides to his creation including human beings, animals and plants with life, good health, and fertility (Mbiti, 1991:52). For this reason, Africans approach God at their point of desperation

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

for they know he is good and expect to experience good things from Him. Mbiti goes on to note, that for Africans this means that, suffering in the presence of a good God does not match (Mbiti, 1969:208).

God's goodness actually is contradicted with theexistence of calamities. Some societies then would rather explain all the human suffering that exists including, calamities, and misfortune as only coming from evil spirits or those working magic (Mbiti, 1969:37). Some societies such as Tonga and Tivo understand that sometimes natural calamities such as thunder and lightning are just manifestation of God's anger upon ills committed by humanity (Mbiti, 1969:37). However, it is because of God's goodness that God rewards good to good people and rewards bad towards the evil people. This is what Mbiti (1969:38), calls God's Justice. In this case, God cannot allow evil to befall good people. Their lives are always coupled with wealth, good health, and success.

2.2.3 Holiness of God

Mbiti (1969:38) states that Africans have a little to say in regard to God's holiness. But, he also admits that Africans are aware of God's holiness such that, in their approach to God, there is reverence, cleansing, and refrain from some foods and some activities that are thought to cause contamination. But, the awareness of God as both transcendent and immanent obliges Africans to concentrate a little on Holiness of God. However, whenever Africans think of God who is Holy, then they understand that God is able to eliminate all evil. Thus, what African theology is emphasizing is God who cannot entertain evil and cannot allow his people to suffer (Mbiti, 1969:38).

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

2.3 African Christian concept of salvation

2.3.1 Wellbeing

According to Mbiti (1986: 158),suffering frustrated the purpose of being, this is why Africans understand salvation as the main objective of a human life(Mbiti, 1986: 158). Many of the perceptions developed by the African Christians have their roots from the Biblical images, both from the Old Testament and New Testament, though the focus is sometimes based on their different experiences which include their traditional past. This is because, for Africans, their world and need for salvation readily matches the world of the Bible, where salvation fits with struggles of life (Mbiti,1986: 156).

In his study of the Aladura church in Nigeria, H. W. Turner (1960) in noted that salvation is believed to result in obtaining good and wellness of humanity in both the physical and spiritualaspects. The same view is held by Kunhiyop (2012:105) who states that salvation applies not only to the spiritual sense but also the physical self. Building his arguments on Jesus' proclamation in Luke 4:18-19, Kunhiyop likens the assurance in this passage to the critical action of salvation for Africanswhich isassurance of well-being to all parts of the life. Salvation entails fighting thedevil and demonic powers, ensuring provision for the poor, freedom for prisoners, healing for the sick and claiming God's abundance (Kunhiyop, 2012:105). This is just to say, as (Wilbur O'Donovan, 1992:97) puts it, salvation means, "Just as being saved from fire means you don't get burned." The point driven home by O'Donovan is that, as salvation is against suffering a person who is saved should not suffer So, salvation for African Christians ensures that Jesus deals with issues that are affecting their

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

lives now and in the future thereby ensuring an increase and progress in the state that is conceived as safe, prosperous and glorious (Mbiti, 1986:135).

Life of wellbeing defines salvation as a life without sickness, where there is joy, success, brotherhood, sisterhood and hope is assured. In the same regard, Mbiti observes that the Eucharist is also taken as a means of salvation because it is believed to offer healing to partakers and by sharing together people show the solidarity of a community (Mbiti, 1986:142).

2.3.2 Deliverance and healing

Mbiti notes that the question of fear of evil forces is a major concern for the African instituted churches where salvation goes beyond question of sin and soul to physical deliverance from those anxieties of life such as death and spirits (Mbiti, 1969:132) just as Jesus taught his disciples to pray for deliverance from evil (Mathew 6:13). In this context, Salvation is understood as God's deliverance from physical, spiritual and moral threats (Mbiti, 1986: 158). This likewise supports Kenneth Enang's (1975:9) conclusion that, Africans understand salvation as deliverance from powers and principalities thus freedom from fear as it is stated in Psalm 27:1 "The Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear?" (Mbiti, 1986:152; O'Donavan, 1996: 250). Therefore, God in Jesus Christ delivers us from the dengerous threats in this present age (II Corinthians 1:10). That is deliverance from physical attacks, evil powers and anything that would bring jeopardy to life (Appiah-Kubi, 1996:23). Among the Annang, Mbiti notes that baptism is taken as a charm that propels evil forces from coming near a person thereby securing life against "dark abyss" (Mbiti, 1986:138).

ST PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

This concept of deliverance takes center stage of African concept of salvation where elaboration is made on rescuing, healing, liberating and delivering (Henry Mugabe, 1993:34). Healing becomes part of deliverance because sickness also comes from the evil forces. As a healer, African consider Jesus as a healer "per excellence" for their physical disease (Mugabe, 1993:35).

2.3.3 Salvation as wholeness

African understanding of self-encompasses, oneself, neighbour, community and environment (Mbiti, 1986:152). Selfgoes further to include physical and spiritual self. So, one person's immorality would bring social disorder and suffering to the whole community. The Salvation that makes sense should, therefore, be based not only on personal faith but also on intention to maintaining peace and unity with God and community with which one's life depends (Pauline Hanson, 1997:240).

Salvation is bringing into the relationship people of different backgrounds as one large family of God. This is why Galgalo notes that one of the reasons why Africans joined Christianity meant joining oneness of One God for all tribes, therefore 'transcending the tribal limitation' hence harmony thus eliminating "social and spiritual difficulties" (Galgalo, 2012:19) because, in African sense, much ethnic communitieswould result into ethnic animosity.

The actof Salvation from evil forces for the African Christians is similar to those in traditional African thinking where salvation is holistic. Manas Buthelezi (2001:51,87) explains this concept further in his work on "*African salvation and wholeness"* where he states that an African is always "imprisoned to politics of social order" such that he cannot personally take a different desired end. To be saved

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

fromsuffering therefore, African Christians employ a holistic salvation where thecommunity is healed and natural forces causing evil extracted. Salvation, in this case, is not personal, but "pluralistic"as elucidated by Galgalo (2012:27). From this understanding then is the reason Mbiti states that baptism is considered as salvation because it offers a person an identity by initiating the person baptized to the family of God (1986: 136).

Among the Kimbanguist church, Nthamburi (1991:59) noted the belief that salvation from evil lies entirely on the commitment of a person to faith. Faith in this respect results in "wholeness, health, and liberation." This concept is different from the biblical standpoint that sees evil as having to do with demon and human sinful nature (Roman 7:14-20).This is whyO'Donovan argues that African Christians practice a different aspect of salvation that entails more deliverance through exorcism than renouncing sin (O'Donovan, 2000:230-231).

It is also important to note the importance of prayers in an African spirituality. According to Tokunboh Adeyemo (1997:35), Africans respond to life-threatening experiences using both public and privateprayers.In the process of prayer, the sufferer objectively requests for the removal of evil and sin and demandsfor the restoration of all that was good.Prayer, therefore,becomes a means of restoring wholeness and balance in life.

Whereas ancestral and sometimes spirits need to be placated through sacrifices and offerings, those spirits that are merely wicked and unknown must be exorcised or chased off so that they will not cause affliction. Among the Kimbanguist church, Nthamburi (1991:59) notes that faithplays an important role in healing.Inorder to

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

throw away the misfortune, services of a religious specialist are required for this. When such a spirit of affliction is diagnosed, it must be disowned and made to go "where it belongs", that is, to its proper home. It is scolded sometimes using very unclean language in order to show that it is not needed at all in the area (LaurentiMagesa, 1987:89).

2.3.4 Change of identity

Galgalo (2012:21)states that the understanding of salvation in Africa is coupled with anew identity, it is where old self of suffering and frustration goes and new better self materially, socially, politically and morally comes in. Envisioning the word saved in the New Testament is to be made completely whole. This image of wholeness is majorly the salvation that Paul talks about. According to Paul,Salvation is areconciliation of humanity to God (II Corinthians 5:20) and also to other human beings. Because salvation brings peace that restores to us to God (Romans 5:1) through Jesus we have peace with Jesus who is also peace (Eph2:14). This leads us into a changed relationship of a united whole where God and humanity are in one harmony. Reconciliation brings a new identity a “new creation” (II Corinthians 5:17) that fits the original purpose of God. This view is expounded further by Galgalo who states that by converting into Christianity many Africans believed their identity could completely change in terms of wealth(Galgalo, 2012: 21). This is the main root of prosperity gospel. If this change is not seenin one church, Africans constantly move from one church to other in pursuit of it (Galgalo, 2012: 21).

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

2.4 Christian concept of God

2.4.1 Omnipotence of God

According to Alister McGrath, Christians assert strong view on the omnipotence of God, for example, in Genesis 17:1 he is called Almighty(McGrath, 2001:281). This means that God having the power to act is an active force in the world(McGrath, 2001:281) and as per the definition of Henry Thiessen, "God is all-powerful and able to do whatever he wills. He can do everything that is in harmony with his nature (Thiessen, 2000: 82). So, McGrath argues that the Omnipotence of God is revealed in two dimensions; one is the idea of strength or power inherent in him and second is the strength based on his power (McGrath, 2001:281). This is why for instance, we readthat nothing is too hard for God (Genesis 18:14; Jeremiah 32:17), that he can do whatever he pleases (Psalms 115:3; 135:6), that no one can hinder him (Isaiah 43:13), and with him, all things are possible (Mathew 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 18:27).

Aiden W. Tozer points out that the power of God is made manifest in his creation (Tozer, 1987:100). Though he is believed to be transcendent, he is also immanent in his infinite power; God is nearby and everywhere and he is always there to save from death, to redeem his people and to sustainthem. In other words, God does all that he does just to accomplish this purpose (Tozer, 1987:100). His sovereignty is over the power of evil such that he can even change evil for good.Forexample in Genesis 50:20, even though Joseph's being sold was evil, Joseph eventually became the savior for his family. God in his power can also limit the free choice of human beings. It is from this that Donald Guthrie maintains that, there is no distinction

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

between thepower of God and his providence of the creation (Guthrie, 1981: 93). So it is not surprising for him that the New Testament concentrates on salvation from suffering inflicted by Roman rule and evil (Guthrie, 1981: 93).

According to Guthrie, the Scriptures show thatGod in his power overcomes and defeats evil(Guthrie, 1981: 93). This he has done in history. He does not need anybody to exercise his Sovereign power. An elaborate power of God is given in the New Testament in the person of Jesus where God acts on his own as a Redeemer and Saviour. In the person of Christ, God is not the source of evil, but he willingly suffered the consequences of it (death) so that sin is defeated (Romans 5:8; 8:32; I John 4:8- 10). Guthrie also regards thepower of God to his object of knowledge (Guthrie, 1981: 93). Jesus says that God can do all things (Mark 10:27; Luke 22:69).

2.4.2 Goodness of God

According to Tonny Evans, "God's goodness is defined as the collective perfection of his nature and benevolence of his act" (Evans, 2011:11). This defines goodness from his nature and his action. In comparison to other goodness, Wayne Grudem argues that the "Goodness of God means that God is the final standard of good and that all that God is and does is worth approval" (Grudem, 2004:197).

Defining Good, James Innel Packer (1958:482) notes that 'man is good, and things are good, just so far as they conform to the will of God". This means that God is the source and standard of Good from which humanity gets their goodness. According to Bridges, God uses his power to provide, and it is for this reason that Jesus taught us in Mathew 6:11 to ask him for our daily bread. This is why for him, Paul affirms as the psalmist that there is no one who is good but God (Psalms 54ff; Romans 3: 12;

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Carles Bridges, 1996: 112). The goodness of God is not only seen in his actions but also it is his intrinsic nature this is why Jesus said that “No one is good except God alone” (Luke 18:19). According to Guthrie, whenever Paul calls God good, he is referring to God’s provision to needs of humanity (Guthrie, 1981:108).

McGrath notes that goodness of God is made manifest in this world that is full of sin and evil(McGrath, 2001:281). This is because God’s goodness supersedes human goodness, his purpose is to unconditionally show love for his people. According to McGrath, this is why, when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman," that he may redeem humans from their sins. Not only dying but also sharing in the humanity”. He says that the surest hope Christians have in relation to problem of evil is that God has promised to put to an end all evil and suffering "that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (McGrath, 2001:281). We therefore learn that in spite of evil in our world, God has given himself to fight evil and assure humanity salvation.

2.4.3 Holiness of God

The semantic root for the word ‘holy’ is ‘to cut’ or ‘to separate’ (Thomas L. Trevethan, 1995:1). According to Guthrie holiness of God refers to the absolute perfection of God with no sin, defilement or corruption. He also adds that, the places designated for Him are also regarded as holy (Guthrie, 1981:99). This is why according to Guthrie (1981:99)holiness forms both Levitical declaration and prophetic proclamation against the sins of Israelites. In his prophecy Isaiah calls God, ‘holy one’ (Isaiah 6). Those who are called of God are also supposed to be holy

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

(Leviticus, 11:45). Jesus also addressed God as 'Holy Father' (John 17:11) (Guthrie, 1981:99).

Trevethan (1995:14) also says that holiness of God forms foundational significance of the biblical passages, his character is such that his liberation and judgment is seen as the same level of his holiness. Therefore, He is set apart and distinct from all that is evil (Trevethan, 1995:14).

O'Donovan says that the other side of theholiness of God is righteousness; meaning that he is morally pure andHe does everything right and perfect (O'Donovan, 1992:65). God in his holiness is different from all created things which are liable to corruption. Whenever a person comes in contact with him, they are changed, that is they are made pure, and separate from all moral defilement this is why he is referred to as a consuming fire (Habakkuk 1:13, Exodus 3:2; Hebrew 12:29, Isaiah 6:3). It is this characteristic that also sets God apart from sin and evil(O'Donovan, 1992:65).

Because God is righteous, whatever he does is just and right (Dan. 9:14). He judgessinners right and by the same standard (Jer. 9:24; Ps. 145:19). Though he abhors sin, God is patient with sinners out of His great love, this is where God's love and justice meet (Rom. 3:25f). As such, for WalterKasper (http//:understandinggodsmercy.com) to neglect the love of God when talking about his Holiness can only lead to despair.

According to O'Donovan, all other attributes of God depend on his holiness (O'Donovan, 1992:65). In support of this, Trevethan indicates the biblical view that "meeting God as holy, and other attributes whether goodness, justice, and righteousness is a manifestation of his wrath against evil as well as thedeliverance of

ST PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

the poor, and the suffering" (Trevethan, 1995:14). For example, Moses encounter with God (Exodus 3) became the first point of liberation of Israelites. Isaiah's encounter with God provoke him into theneed for forgiveness.

Holinessof God as Guthrie asserts means more than just being set apart(Guthrie,1981:100). It also includes all aspects of salvation plan where God acts against evil and all manner of oppression (Guthrie,1981:100).This is why for him when Paul states that "created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:24), he is referringto what proceeds from God to man "in the sense of his power which creates salvation" thus as Kasemann puts it, this resultsin "God's victory" over sin and evil (Kasemann, 1961:146, 152).

2.5 Biblical concept of salvation

2.5.1 Deliverance and healing

The Bible employs different concepts of salvation that include terms such as *Nasal, Malat, Palat, Gaal, Hayah, Yasa, Soteria and Sozo* (William Barclays 1976:23, William Vine 1997:988, JohnTaylor, 1977:369, The Illustrated Bible Dictionary, 1980:1371).

The term *Nasal*according toBarclays means to pull or draw out(Barclays, 1976:23). This is mostly referred to in the times of danger imposed by evil people and natural forces. For example, he states thatMoses assured Israelites in the time of danger to "…..fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which God will work for you today" (Ex. 14:13-14)(Barclays, 1976:23). Therefore *Nasal* presents God as immediate salvation for His people (Rom. 8: 23-27). The Old Testament teaches that God delivers his people from dangers such as slavery. He delivered Israelites from

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

slavery in Egypt (Exodus 13:3, 20:2, Deuteronomy 5:6, 8:14). This is why Vine (1997:988) states that God's delivering of slaves sometimes is by paying a ransom for a poor person who is unable to pay a debt (Exodus 21:7-11, Job 6:23). Because God also delivers from trouble, the Psalmist in Psalm 107:19-20 then cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction. So salvation of the righteous is from the Lord; he is their stronghold in the time of trouble (Psalm 37:39).

While Vine argues that *Malat* just as *Nasal* carries the same meaning of deliverance, Richard Taylor indicates that *malat*in some cases refers to deliverance that is beyond human ability where the reference is only God(Taylor, 1977:369). This is why for him, Israelites would speak of no other savior but Yahweh, the only God who saves: "I am Yahweh, and beside me, there is no savior (Is.43:11, Hos. 13:4). The understanding here is that there are other forms of suffering that are beyond humanity, but for God, there is nothing He cannot do(Taylor, 1977:369).

Palat means deliverance on the basis of God's grace and providence (Barclays 1976:23). By using the term *Palat,*Vine argues that salvation here is God's own initiative in delivering humanity from situations that threaten life (Vine, 1996:987). Likewise,*Hayah* speaks of salvation as God's initiative, where He acts out of his love to save and provide humanitywith a better life. *Hayah* carries the sense of rescuing and delivering humanityto a better life of his provisions. In the Old Testament God willingly elected people and used them as salvation to others (Genesis 17:16-19). God saved Lot from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by his mercy, and Joseph was saved from the evil intent of his brothers (Genesis 45: 5, 7, 8). The

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

saving act here is intended to better the lives of people. From theexampleabove, Lot's salvation saved the people of Sodom and Gomorrah while Joseph's salvation extended to be thesalvation of his brothers from hunger.

Vine states that *Gaal* means to deliver, redeem or pay theransom(Vine, 1996:987). The price is paid for freedom. Paul said "…being justified freely by his grace through redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24), for you are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body (I Corinthians 6:20)(Vine, 1996:987).

Yasa means to be "safe", "sound", or "victorious" (Norman Geisler 2004:231). Geisler further states that the whole concept is a salvation that is intended tochangehuman beings from worse to better, from bad into good circumstances, where life flourishes and is protected from enemies (Ps. 18:18, 19)(Geisler, 2004:231). According to Hanson, by *yasa,* one is saved or delivered from physical attacks that emanate from spiritual forces such as enemy or illness (Hanson, 1997:239). At the center of deliverance is God (Psalms 18:27, 40:17, 72:4, 85:4, 109:31).

The New Testament also presents several meanings for salvation. According to Hanson (1997:239), the New Testament represents salvation with the Greek word *sōzō* (σώζω) or *soteria* (σωτηρία) meaning "deliverance" that brings the idea of safety, rescue and healing (McKim, 1988:75; Hanson, 1997:239). The verbal form is *sozein* meaning "saved" or "healed". The original Latin word is *salvus* meaning "healed" (Hanson, 1997:239). Physical and spiritual healing aspects are therefore important topics in salvation. Theologically salvation would refer to deliverance from danger.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Vincent Taylor (1984:78) says the main concept of deliverance as in *Sozo*, is safety and soundness. As Danny McCain puts it*Sozo* comes with the concept of salvation in its perfection state, where it is completely sound and without elements of spiritual and physical sickness(McCain, 2000:101. This would include as Taylor argues, deliverance and preservation from peril(Taylor, 1977:450. It also includes cosmic salvation from thesin-infested environment (Ephesians 2:5). So according to Taylor and McCain, the mission of Jesus is based on this understanding, that of saving the lost (Luke 19:10) hence his name "Saviour" (Luke 2:11, John 4:42, Acts 5:31, Ephesians 5:23, 1 John 4:14; McCain, 2000:101; Taylor, 1977:450).

However, McCain shows that in the synoptic gospels, there are sixteen times when the use of *sozo* speaks of salvation, which includes the concept of healing as restoration to health, being preserved for health and being made whole or wellbeing. Pointing out John 11:12, Jesus'wordfor the blind man would be understood as"your faith has healed (*sozo*) you (McCain, 2000:101). Paul also says that "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9).

Other passages that McCain points out include; the promise of Jesus in the New Testament is that his salvation delivers a believer from death. Satan comes to steal, destroy and to kill but I came to offer life and life in abundance (Mathew 10:10). Therefore, as McCain notes, to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and believe that He was raised from the dead for the forgiveness of sins of humanity, and to give eternal life, can makehumanity whole physically, mentally, and spiritually(McCain, 2000:102).

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

2.5.2 Salvation as the forgiveness of sin

Paul believes that a person who is saved is the one whose sins are forgiven "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace" (Romans 6:14).In Luke 19:1-10 Jesus tells Zacchaeus that "today salvation has come to your house" and to respond to this salvation Zacchaeus confesses his sins. By this salvation is based on personal faith and intention to making peace with God and people (Hanson, 1997:240).

Salvation, in this case, is a personal initiative (Galgalo, 2012:27) where a person takes their own initiative to confess their individual sins. "If you confess with your own mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your own heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10: 9).

2.5.3 Change of identity

In the New Testament, Paul talks of salvation as being made completely whole in order to reconcile humanity to God (II Corinthians 5:20) and also to other human beings. Wholeness is attained because salvation brings thepeace that restores us to God (Romans 5:1) through Jesus. We have peace with Jesus who is also peace (Eph2:14). This leads into a changed relationship of a united whole where God, and humanity is in one harmony.

Lesslie Newbigin argues that, from the Christian perspective, salvation is the gracious act of God to deliver a sinner from a cursed situation of sin(Newbigin, 1956:11). Reconciliation brings a new identity a "new creation" (II Corinthians 5:17) that fits the original purpose of God where, theoriginal state of thecreation of harmony and wholeness is restored (Newbigin, 1956:12). He notes the various aspect

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

of the created order that needs redemption which includes natural world, human relationship, personal relationships and relationship with God (Newbigin, 1956:11-14). It is where the old self goes and the new better self comes in. Hanson adds that the action takes place under the new covenant, a covenant that does not decay (Hebrews 8:13). As a result, one's being changes from worse to better, from bad into good circumstances, where there is no suffering and where one is protected from attacks by the enemies both in physical and spiritual existence (Hanson, 1997:239).

2.6 The African Christian anxiety

Early Christians trying to evangelize Africa witnessed a rapid growth of Christianity in Africa. Starting from Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost from Acts 2:9-11, among the three thousand people who were converted during the Pentecost, were Africans from Libya and Egypt (Andre Karamaga, 1991:16). However, Karamaga (1991:19-21) notes thatChristianity collapsedafter experiencing a period of reasonable growth. Parratt attributes this to the fact that the church was of the elite and the faith as preached was not concerned with African experiences (Parratt, 1997: 3). According to Karamaga, around the 15th and 16th-centuries church communities improved in areas dominated by the poor. He concludes that the realized increase in masses was as a result of the evangelical teaching that emphasized on the salvation of God that is matched with the desires of those masses(Karamaga, 1991:19-21). For example, the church taught total liberation from suffering for those who believe and total dependence on God who is omnipotent, omnibenevolent and holy(Karamaga, 1991:21). Another emphasis was that, in Christian God, there would be no suffering of any kind because God's power eliminates evil. Africans then trusted this God who would assure them hope in their context, abandoning spirits and divinities they used

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

to consult. In other words, Christianity for African brought the power of God near where they would not need an intermediary.

The desire of Africans to actualize opportunity and the promises of salvation came with theemergence of independent churches that practiced healing, divination and prophecy (Parratt, 1997:12). However, still many African found themselves struggling with the problem of answers to their miseries because the problem of evil still remained. Their experience today is how to grasp the challenge with God in anextraordinary sense to save from miseries and hunger so as to lead to new identity with dignity and freedom. When these promises are not met, this explains the constant movements of Africans from one church to other or back to traditional diviners in search of answers to their suffering.

The church's invitation was for all to embrace salvation where God, because of his love, goodness, and power, eliminates evil and suffering. In God, would be the physical, spiritual and mental healing and basic reinstitution of all broken relationships. This conception of salvation leaves no room for any kind of suffering, whether physical or spiritual. The contrary such as poverty leads people into crossroad and anxiety in life as well as of creation.

The place of Christianity has been to present God as thelife force that is active in the world. This force is realizable through confession and salvation of God. The rapid acceptance of Christian faith in Africa carries with it the same intention of understanding the existence of God and the actualization of the same force working in their lives. However, this has not left them without suffering. Hence the question, why should the evil persist in the face of a powerful and loving God?

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

In relation to the goodness of God, O'Donovan presents concerns of Africans as follows;

> We … learn [from the bible] that God is good. He used his power to help those in need and to relieve suffering. He used his power to do good because he is good by nature Luke 18:19. Why then do Christians suffer, if God is good and compassionate? Why does God allow good and Godly men to suffer? Why does he allow some devoted Christians to live their lives in great pain and suffering? (O'Donovan, 1992:63).

In view of the argument above, the African problem of suffering and the concept of omnipotence, goodness, and holiness of God is a subject that needs more critical analysis with an objective to reasoning and answering the question of why evil persists in the face of an all-powerful and loving God. For this challenge to be met a new Christian theological method needs to be formulated. Through dialogue, a platform for conversation with African Christians and their engagement with the world of Africans with that of the text affirms the Bible as well as answer the problem of suffering.

CONCLUSION

Africans' conception and belief in God have implication in their response to the problem of evil and suffering. In our analysis, it is also in the understanding of God's providence that African Christianity represents points of continuity and discontinuity with Christian faith. The African understanding of the Christian teaching on God's omnipotence, goodness and holiness isthat, in his power and goodness God would always save his own from the problem of evil. Africans on their side have not been able to grasp this truth because even in the face of an Omnipotent and loving God, suffering still persists.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

To be able to address African anxiety as a result of theproblem of suffering, thedialogue is recommended in order that African concepts are put into conversation with other theologies for better understanding.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER III: ST. AUGUSTINE'S FREE WILL THEODICY

INTRODUCTION

Whenever human being experience suffering, they attempt to look for answers to their experiences. This effort is made even more complex when they believe in an omnipotent, all good and holy deity. The assumption is that such a deity should be able to eliminate evil from the world, yet evil still exists.

This chapter attempts to explore the Christian perspective that has tried to explain how the existence of human suffering in the face of an Omnipotent, Good and Holy God is possible; this concept is known as a theodicy. In this chapter the study of St. Augustine's free will theodicy is studied with the hope of drawing from it positive teachings which we hope could be used to explain to African Christians why they should continue believing in the Christian God as was introduced to them by missionaries even when suffering holds its way.

3.1 The problem of evil

The problem of evil according to Eleonore Stump &Jocelyn Murrayshows that there is a contradiction in theideathat adeity who is all good and all powerful can exist and evil also exist (Stump & Murray, 1999:153). They say that the argument is based on the fact that the logic can only be that such deity does not exist because evil exists. As evidenceof the problem, evil is logically incompatible with the fact that there is an all-powerful, all-knowing and all-good God, but that existence ofevil provides good evidence against God(Stump & Murray, 1999:153). The existence of evil makes it difficult to assert that such a God would have created the world with evil because for the sake of his goodnesssurely he would not have created the worldwith

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

this much suffering in it.Alvin Plantinga (1974:10-17) further observes that, if God is omnipotent, he should be able to do anything that would include annihilating evil. If he is good, then there are a number of things he cannot allow his creation to go through, suffering being one of them. And if he is holy, then his nature cannot entertain evil. However, the support of these divine attributes with the evidential problem of suffering may only seem to be a contradiction.

Plantinga however, states that such belief is only a contradiction in relation to ordinary logic. He argues that, when talking about thepower of God, human natural logic is limited because, the extent of God's power can break the human law of logic(Plantinga, 1974:10-17).

3.2 St. Augustine's free will theodicy

3.2.1 Origin of Evil

Though Augustine tries to bring out the origin of evil, he admits a limitation of knowledge regarding the precise origin of evil. He writes;

> We cannot doubt that the willful turning away from God is evil, but surely we cannot say that God is the author of that evil…but what will be its cause? If you ask me this, and I answer that I do not know, probably you will be saddened. And yet that would be a true answer. That which is nothing cannot be known (Grace and Free Will, II, xx, 54).

The comments of Augustine above might seem meaningless but they ensure consistency on any matter evil. By stating that he "does not know where evil came from," Augustine justifies his arguments that, "evil is not a substance as substance constitute what is created". And Augustine in his Confession believed that God is not the source of evil, neither did he create evil (Conf. 7, iii).

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Augustine states that nature in itself is good. However, there are times when evil such as earthquakes, thunder, fire, hailstone etc. come from nature. These include the physical motions that human being cannot know or see (Ench. v: 16). However, in their creative order, all these things were created and so Augustine considers them good. God made everything good, and anything good is only good in relation to all other created Good. According to him, everything is good individually but is very good when seen together (Conf., vii. Xii). Evil in nature happens because of loss of order with the rest of creation (Conf., vi.xiii.19). When there is order then they are good.

According to Augustine, thedevil is the original cause of evil. By devil here, Augustine means angels who choose to disobey God. Their leader is Satan. Augustine here is confirming the position of St. Paul (II Corinthians 13:1-18), who also views demonic elements as responsible for much of the suffering on earth (Conf. vii. viii. 5).

Angels were created good by God. But again, what caused this being, presumably created perfect, to reject God and become the originator of evil? Augustine attributes this character flaw in Satan to having come from pride. Pride led this once perfect being of God to turn away from the Creator and become self-focused, rather than God-focused. Satan's example was followed by a host of other angels, who followed him down the trail of demonic rebellion, thus creating the satanic group that stands behind so much of the suffering we see in our world. He says, "Bad [spirits] delighted with slaughter and tragic invocations" (C.G, xi.13; Conf. xi.15).

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

At this point, Augustine anticipates a question that many who are following his argument will surely ask;why did some angels rebel, while others did not? This is because, in Augustine's thought, all angels were gifted with the same status and power by God. However, they were not created equal. Some angels were given a greater amount of grace than others. They also possessed a greater degree of wisdom, which enabled them to resist the temptation to bring moral ruin upon themselves through an open rebellion against their Master (Conf. vii. iv).

According to Augustine, humanityout of their free will is the source of moral evil. But then, how did man come to start willing that which is evil and not bad? Augustine admits that man was lured into sin by thedevil, but instead of putting blame on the devil, according to Augustine argues that, man takes responsibility in his will to evil (Conf, vii. v). Though from nature comes evil, Augustine argues that evil that comes from nature is a punishment of the evil that came from the free will (Conf. vii. Iv. 6). The natural evils are permitted by God in His justice in relation to one's action. In other words, the reason why God ordained evil is due to the evil action of free will. Here, John H. S. Burleigh (1959:39) notes the fact that Augustine is very careful to note that, wherever God allows evil such as earthquake, then it is a punishment for the evil action of free will such that God is not seen as the cause of a disaster but the person's free will that is, "penal consequence of sin".

God did not create evil neither is he the origin of anything evil. Since all things that were created are good, evil automatically cannot be that which was created. Evil is from freedom to will in humans which God did choose to give. Thus, humanity was created with freedom of both sinning and not sinning, such that without being compelled, they can do either freely (Conf. vii.3).

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Because ‘free will’ was created good, willing evil came with the fall. Using the biblical story of the fall in Genesis 3, Augustine traces the origin of evil and suffering from the fall of Adam (doctrine of the original sin). Satan (fallen angel that God created good but in his pride wanted to assume supreme authority just like God hence rebelled causing other beings to rebel) lured Adam and Eve whom then in their free will chose to disobey God,hence the fall. However, sin is persistent because “by willing to sin, man lost power not to sin” (Ench, xxviii.106). According to Irenaeus as quoted by John Hick, it could not be right that human being who was created good could prefer bad to good unless they are forcedin (Hick, 1985:356). However, for Augustine, even though humanity was lured into sin, God is just in punishing sinners because they had in their free will ability not to sin but in their free decision chose otherwise.

Although, God in his Omnipotence, “could have made it impossible for man to do evil” (Conf. Vii. iii), Augustine would not accept any argument of this kind because in doing so, God would limit human freedom. God in his power and goodness would have made it possible for beings to will good but not bad. But, this would make free will not free at all.

This freedom of will that God created inhuman beings is itself good. But humanity’s evil will is a defect, a movement from being to not being. Since God is not the author of sin, God then is not the cause of that movement in individuals (Conf. Vii. iii). If God would be a cause behind this movement, then for Augustine it could either mean he is the cause of humanity sinning or still, it could mean that humanity is not free at all. Hence his defense for free would be a flop.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

From the beginning, Augustine maintains that the goodness of God that exempts Him from any cause of evil. He further holds that, God allows evil, although He is in no way responsible for it because evil came from free willing of ahuman being (Conf. 5, iv.6).

> The only thing that does not come from you [God] is what does not exist, together with any movement of the will away from you who are and towards that which is in a lesser way, for such a movement is crime and sin (Conf xii.11).

Apart from that, Augustine is of the view that, God knew his creatures would sin when he created in them free will (Conf. vii. iv). Augustine is therefore interested in Confirming that God is all knowing. He may also be inclined to justify the biblical stand in Isaiah 45:7 where God says, "I form the light and darkness, I bring prosperity and create adisaster, I, the LORD, do all these things."

From these two arguments; "God did not create evil" and "God knew his creatures could sin," made Augustine to immediately reconcile the biblical teaching of God's providence in the face of suffering. He had stated that "…free will is the cause of evil, and [God's] just punishment is the cause of … suffering" (Conf. vii, iii), because of his omnipotence, God had put within his power the possibility of evil and his grace for salvation for evil does not injure God's providence. God does not take away evil but has provided grace in the face of free choice with which man would choose or choose not.

Hick completely disagrees with Augustine on the fact that suffering is as a result of divine punishment for sin. According to him, "suffering is not deserved" and it is "bad for the sufferer" (1985:370). However, according to Gregory Boyd, it could be faulty to think that God is "behind all suffering and evil". Using the image of God as revealed in Jesus' suffering, where God has to fight evil, he argues that, God could

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

not will what he could later fight (Boyd, 2003:41, 61). Instead, he goes ahead and supports Augustine in his human "freedom". This makes it just when God punishes sin. He states that God is love and if there is evil then it is the freedom of choice that God has given his people (Boyd, 2003: 64-5).

In the *City of God* (xxi: xiv: v) Augustine holds that all descendants of Adam are prone to suffer because they inherit the evil nature from their ancestors, Adam and Eve. Suffering, in this case, begins at birth up to death, as a consequence of God's just punishment for their inherent evil. Augustine goes on to say that; "Great travail is created for all men and a heavy yoke upon the sons of Adam from the day that they go out of their mother's womb, until the day they return unto the mother of all" (Conf, xxi: xiv: v). So, that from fall sin is in loins of Adam (Ench., viii. 26). St Paul also holds the same view (Romans 5:12).

He illustrates this by examining the suffering of innocent infants. He is admittedly a bit baffled at how such suffering makes sense. He therefore explains that "their suffering is pedagogical for the sake of their parents, but also adds that God will surely have some special reward stored up for them to balance their pain" which is based on God's grace (Enchiridion, xxv.95).

However, the disapproval of free will and soul-making theodicies later came with John Roth, who does not put the blame of evil on ahuman being, or that suffering is deserved. According to Roth, the problem is that we "do not inhabit the perfect world". To him, humanity could not will what leads to his destruction. The blame here is put on God who is all powerful but has refused to use his powers to save man from theworld of evil (Roth, 1981: 9). However, for Augustine God has continued to

ST PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

work towards theelimination of evil through the grace of his given sacraments to the church. Secondly, Augustine refuses any understanding that evil is an inherent nature of humanity because they were created as good (Conf., vi. ix.1).

Turning to the argument that God willed to give ahuman being free will, which could later lead them into evil, Friedrich Schleiermacher supports Augustine on the fact that God would have willed the evil by giving human being freedom to will. Then sin of humanity must be both inherent and external. It is inherent because, from the freedom of choice, humanity could choose something they so will, but they willed bad. It is external because God would in his power remove evil, but because he has not, then it is his will (Schleiermacher, 1928:293-304).

In summary, what is clear in Augustine is to explain that God is not part of evil. Even when he acknowledges that God instills suffering, the origin of evil is found in the will of God's creatures, and neither in God, nor in an imperfect creation.

3.2.2 Nature of Evil

3.2.2.1 Evil as Non-substance

Augustine believed in theperfection of God, which is also seen in his creative works. However, he did not dismiss the existence of evil and suffering. He confessed that he suffered. He experienced beatings starting from his school days. He experienced the pain of death when he lost his mother, his son and his friend. He also made references to the fate of the Christians during the sack of Rome as well as the long list of human miseries. Inthe *City of God*(CG) he inquired on why the innocent babies could suffer (CG i.9-19 xix; xxii: 22). These became enough confirmation of his belief in the reality of evil and suffering.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

For Augustine, evil's existence cannot be denied; and that it is a hostile force in the universe, though not with an equal power as of One Supreme God who rules everything. The concept of evil brought Augustine into asking questions such as; what is evil? Is it a substance? Out of these, Augustine drew his concept of evil as follows;

Augustine held that though evil exists, evil has no substance. A substance is what is created. Being God the 'supreme Good', all that he created are good creatures (Confession: vii.v.7henceforth shall be Conf.). Evil would also be good if it were a substance (Conf: Vii: xii: 18). But this, according to Augustine does not mean that evil does not exist at all in the universe. As a matter of fact, evil exists because it is a reality in the experience. However, its existence is in relation to that which is created 'good', because in itself evil does not exist at all, but it exists as theabsence of good (Conf, iii: vii: 2). He actually argues that the reason he does not know evil is that evil is 'nothing'. He says;

> Where then does evil come from, if God made all things and, because he is good, made them good too? It is true that he is the supreme good than these lesser goods that he created. But the creator and all his creation are both good. Where then does evil come from? Can it be that there was something evil in the matter from which he made the universe? When he shaped this matter and fitted it to his purpose, did he leave in it some part which he did not convert to good…nothing evil exists in itself…they are not anything at all (Conf. vii, 5).

Augustine's argument holds that sin is synonymous with evil, though this can only be understood in the distinctions between two sorts of evil; that is, moral evil and natural evil. Stephen Davis explains that; moral evil is called sin and constitutes wrong doings or suffering brought about by moral agents such as pride, envy, lying, murder etc. (Davis, 1981:4).

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Hick is of the view that Augustine's position is influenced by Plotinus metaphysics. In this conception, the world of 'Ideals' and 'Forms' formed 'Real', while 'matter' which is shapeless and measureless does not exist and are in the state of "non-being" or "nothingness" (Hick, 1985:41-42). The existing being, on the other hand, possess such attributes as; "measurer*modus*, form*species* and order *ordo*" (Hick, 1985:51).

Hick further observes that, Augustine's concept of the nature of evil dismissed Manicheans teachings which held the dualistic cosmology where a board of darkness (evil) exists on one side, and God who created the world (God) on the other(Hick, 1985:51). Augustine says that Manichean teaching, held thataboard of darkness existed as an equal power, but opposing force to God (Conf. Vii.ii.3).

If evil "is not created", "it is nothing", yet "it exists", how then should Christian relate with evil? This is a question that Augustine labored to prove.

3.2.2.2 *Privatio Boni*

Augustine believed that evil is a corruption or deprivation of good. This corruption is not found in God, but it is in thedisobedient will of human beings.

By deprivation of good, Augustine meant that the original creative work was good. However, the present existence of being is less good as a result of falling away from its original proportion of goodness. This reduction of theproportion of good is what he calls privation or corruption. When corrupted, a good thing suffers deprivation by losing its proper being and becomes evil. It is a privation because there cannot be a case where a good thing can lose all its being as good. For Augustine, "if the good is diminished as to be utterly consumed, just as there is no good left so there is no existence left" (Conf., Vii: Xii).

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

What causes corruption, which is evil, is not an existing entity in itself. He uses the word "parasitic" in reference to thereal existence of evil. He writes;

> Nothing evil exists in itself, but only as an evil aspect of some actual entity…Evils, therefore, have their source in the good, and unless they are parasitic on something good, they are not anything at all (Enchiridion., iv.13-14, HenceforthEch.).

Augustine uses the biblical creation story in Genesis 1:31 to explain this concept. He elaborates that God being perfect created everything, and all things that were created were very good. To "create all" means there was nothing before God created, meaning he created *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). The fact that God created out of absolute 'nothing' became a fundamental principle in Augustine's theology of evil, hence the concept of deprivation. Creation *ex nihilo* explains the concept that things created are contingent and mutable. He uses the following characteristics to differentiate between the creator and creation. First, what is created *ex nihilo* is contingent hence depends on the creator for its existence. Second, they are mutable, therefore, to move away from the creator is to move from its being to non-being, (Torchia, nd: 1). The creator, on the other hand, is immutable and does not depend on anything for its existence. In this case, God is a necessary being in whom other creations depend.

According to Hick, it is necessary to understand Augustine's assertion thatwhat exists is good is based on platonicphilosophy(Hick, 1985: 47).So, by stating that the creation depends on God for their existence, then, Hick meansthat they depend on God for their goodness, without which they cease to be good hence evil (Hick, 1985: 47). However, Augustine also notes that there is no such thing as 'pure evil' because pure evil is nothing. For him, goodness as derived from God is good, if God would have created of himself then they would be absolutely Good hence immutable.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

A good thing lives in harmony with one another, but, evil is no harmony, meaning, evil is lack of good or in other words, a privation of good and hence it has no substance or being but lack of goodness, and that which God did not create (Conf. vii.xii.18, xiii.19). For Augustine, "…things are real insofar as they have being" (Conf. vii.xv.21).

The change of 'being' from good to evil is possible in the sense that, things that are created "good" according to Augustine are liable to corruption. What is not good has nothing to be corrupted while that which is good then is "liable for corruption unless they are supremely Good that they are incorruptible" (Conf: vii: xii: 18). Augustine explains this further in the Enchiridion, where he holds that it is only the Supremely Good God who cannot be corrupted because he is Unchangeably Good. All other things were created "very good", but not "Supremely Good" and are liable to change. Therefore, good beings are liable to change their existence to be either of the opposite; good or evil. But evil cannot change to good because it does not exist (Ench, iii: 10; iv: 12; iv: 13).

These two concepts are vital for Augustine in showing the nature of evil. By stating that evil is not a substance, Augustine frees God of any accusation that He had created evil. The *privatioboni* on the other hand refutes the belief that evil has some sort of intrinsic, "real" existence. Since according to Hick, Augustine usage of the word *privatio* means, the state where that which is created abandons their "proper role in the divine scheme and ceases to be what it is meant to be [good or *boni*]" (Hick, 1985: 47).

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

3.3Why do good people and bad people suffer alike?

This is the more difficult subject for Christians since it is believed that if God is good, those people who are good should not suffer. Or when God grants bad people of his good, then he is not just. However, for Augustine, there is no unjust suffering because, by suffering together with the righteous, the wicked are able to learn from their examples.He writes;

> Why the good men are chastised along with wicked men…they are punished together, not because they have spent an equal corrupt life, but because the good as well as the wicked, though not equally with them love this present life; while they ought to hold it cheap that the wicked, being admonished and reformed by their example, might lay hold of life eternal(C.G., I. 9).

In addition, thesuffering of the righteous help them not to boast of their goodness. If God were to reward good people with only good things, then they would think it is because of their work (C.G., I.8) yet"by willing to sin, man lost power not to sin" (Ench, xxviii.106). According to Donald McKim, Augustine believes that no one merits their being good, but through grace, God always goes before the sinner offering them salvation and causing in their heart to will good (McKim, 1988: 88).Augustine observes that,"no one will be good who was not first of all wicked" since all had been seminally affected by theoriginal sin of Adam and therefore bad by nature (C.G, 15:1). This would be the justice of God in allowing even infants to suffer. Suffering is a way of administering correction to bad people and good people. Since according to Augustine, everyone "yields" to evil, such that even good people though not in an equal measure as wicked, also revolt to sin of "pride and luxury"(C.G., I.9).

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Besides that, when God has not punished the wicked, it "shows the patience of God still invites the wicked to repentance, even as [suffering] educate good to patience" (C.G., 1.8).

However, suffering for both good and evil people does not suggest that there is no difference between evil and good people because they both suffer. According to Augustine, thedifferencebetween suffering endured by the wicked and suffering endured by the righteousis thatsuffering for righteous produces good. Augustine writes;

> Subjected to the same fire, gold glows with a reddish gleam but chaff smoulders. Subjected to the same threshing sled, the straw breaks into small pieces, but the grain is freed from the husk…So one and the same onrushing force tries, purifies, and refines the good, but condemns, devastates, and exterminates the evil. Thus, visited by the same affliction, the evil curse and blaspheme God, but the good beseech and praise him. It is not the kind of suffering but the kind of person who suffers that is so important (C.G., I. 9, 10).

The hope for the righteous therefore is that, even thoughthey are scourged with the wicked, they anticipate an eternity without punishment (CG I.9).But for Augustine, God has kept recompenses for the righteous and penalty for the wickedthis will only be made known at Christ's return.

3.6Hope for the sufferer

In view of the concept of sin and grace, Augustine harmonizes how omnipotence, goodness, and holiness of God are made evident in times of suffering.So, even when we suffer, it does not mean that God's attributes are thwarted.This is because, the will of the Omnipotent God is never overpowered (Ench. xxvi. 102). Amidst suffering, God still shows his power, his goodness, and holiness.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

For Augustine, God stimulated by the deep power became 'word' incarnate and dwelt among us (Conf., vii. xviii). This position is founded in his belief that salvation is possible only through Christ.Christ who is truly God took part in suffering in order for humanity to get salvation. Basil Studer argues that Augustine usage of the word 'for us' qualifies the position of Christ as being mediator offering a sacrifice (1997:43) and also the power of God at work in us. Incarnation demonstrates that God is not away from suffering creation, but he is actively involved in thesuffering of his people, not only as God of God but also God of man. This is divine solidarity with humanity in suffering. In Christ, God descended to defeat the power of evil in the power of resurrection. In reading Augustine's trinitology then is an imitation of orthodox teaching (Nicene Creed) that Jesus is divine. Thus the action of Christ is 'God acting in Christ.' That is Christ is emptied of *sui generis* (Hick, 1989:168). This is the assurance of overcoming and enduring suffering.The place of Jesus in incarnation according to Augustine is not only a mediator but alsoGod; this therefore explains how God himself came to suffer and die to redeem humanity of evil. He further observes;

> We need a mediator who, being united to us here below by the mortality of his body, should at the same time be able to afforest us truly divine help in cleansing and liberating us by means of immortal righteousness of His Spirit, whereby he remained heavenly even while here upon earth (Conf., ix. 17)

Apart from that, thesufferingof Christ goes beyond divine justice into explaining his goodness and power. Turning to Christ is turning to God's power and wisdom that being in oneness with us 'God of man' creates and recreates what was lost in us. He therefore becomes Christ in us causes us to do good, therefore, act as Catholic teaching that "God created us without us; but did not will to save us without us (St. Augustine, Sermon; 169, 11, 13). This paradox of incarnation, according to Martin

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Luther King, demonstrates thedifferent modes of divine power which are identification, participation endurance, and transformation (King, 1963:16). This makes his goodness to his creation apparent.

Incarnation for Augustine is an assurance to humanity of victory over sin through Gerhardus Vos' concept of 'already but not yet' interpretation in regard to coming in the fullest of time (King, 1963:46). Meaning, there is a sense in which the kingdom of God where God exerts his power over evil is 'already come' in the person of Christ and 'not yet' because everything has not been subjected to him. This will take place in the city of God.

Augustine explains that God's providence has continued to be effected through baptism. On the account that God does what he wills, God has arranged to do good to man even in sinfulness. Thus thegood will of God (grace) is manifested in the resurrection for theremission of sin. Human beings are therefore joined in this grace in the sacrament of baptism without which, there is no salvation.

Baptism restores the will to good (prevenient grace) by igniting the ability to do good (cooperative grace) which humanity lost with the original sin. In summary, baptism is ultimate control of choices against evil by providing wisdom which is a property for self-caution and desire for good.

In baptism, humanity joins with Christ in his death and resurrection for new life (recreation). Therefore providing inner wisdom or light with which humanity is set free. The inner wisdom enables humanity to freely choose good.

In summary, Augustine's theodicy perceives free will as the determinant factor in relation to evil. If this is true then the problem of evil in Christianity can best be

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

handled with emphasis on the subjective and personal view of evil in such a frame of reference where self is the center of determination in matters related to personal preferences and following the responsibility evil carries. Where self is limited, then assurance of God's love and power is manifest. He is God who is not less good and He is not less powerful, yet still just and gracious.

CONCLUSION

Augustine's theodicy takes seriously the present day concern of an African in relation to the problem of suffering. Africans subscribe to Christian faith with the hope that God in his goodness and power is able to free them of all the attacks of evil. Augustine's theology of evil clearly presents Christian reality envisioned in the mystery of God's attribute. Evil is a reality, but still, God is omnipotent and good.

In Augustine's theology, the authentic and true way of understanding omnipotence as well as thegoodness of God in the face of every day's pain is in understanding free will, justice, and grace of God.

Vice is one's own free will, God punishes evil that is caused by own evil. For this reason, God is just in punishing sinners though punishment for vices causes suffering. However, because of his love and being omnipotent, God still reigns on his mercy. Augustine acknowledges the grace of God which is prevenient grace, always going before the sinner offering them salvation based on his love for humanity. God's grace enters a human's heart causing them to will good. It is impossible for the two cities to exist together. There will be atime when the two cities will be separated.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

So, Plantinga(1974:23-24) in support of Augustine argues that evil and the Omnipotence of God is not contradictory. Using the third preposition of Augustine that evil is caused by thefree choice of humanity, Plantinga argues that God who is Omnipotent cannot inhibit human beings moral decisions since this would limit human freedom. The reality of crime, injustices, diseases, death and many other sufferings would "find a proper place in the world andto ask for another world is to ask for impossible" because of our free will. When God removes evil, it is because of his mercy, when God does not remove evil then it is his justice. But finally, evil will be defeated because evil and good cannot forever stay together.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER IV: DIALOGICAL THEODICY

INTRODUCTION

African life has been characterized by a struggle of finding answers to the problem of suffering. To get asolution, Christian theologies have continued to play amajor role in understanding and applying Bible. Unfortunately, most of thetheologies have not completely answered the African problems. The major problem began with the coming of missionaries whose theology was majorly a presentation of western world views. These theologies did not relate to African ways of thinking. To counteract western theology, the efforts of African theologians have been to create authentic African theology, where the emphasis has been on adaptation, inculturation, liberation, reconstruction etc. However, the result is less universal theology but divisive in dimensions for presentation as Western, African, Indian etc.

The need of atheologyof dialogueis to present a theology that is universal, communal, based on the Bible, and at the same time representing true African worldview in matters of African problem. Dialogical theology goes beyond "making Christianity feel at home," (Walliggo, 1986:11)into realizing that the church is communal. Thus it offers African Christiansan opportunity to engage with the larger Christian community in findingsolutions to their problems. In this paper, dialogical theodicy is proposed as a model that can harmonize African problem related to biblical theologies, thus limiting Africans' lapse in Christian faith as a result of anxiety.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

4.1 Dialogue

The word dialogue basically comes from Greek word*dialego* that means to discuss, to talk about, or to investigate (Sicard & Wulfhort, 2003:14). In a religious platform, Michael Nazir Ali (1987:105) clearly summarizes the possible meaning employed to dialogue; where for him, thedialogue would be a discussion geared towards conversion, or an attitude of sympathy or a personal exposition of one's own faith or a way to witnessing. Thus, dialogue model does not necessarily takes place in a context of conflict but also, it takes seriously communication or conversation or discussion in doing theology. It promotes and increases understanding and cooperation on matters affecting the various communities (Ali, 1987:105).

Dialogue is "a process in which individuals and groups learn to wipe out fear and distrust of each other and to develop new relations based on mutual trust" (Ali, 1973:19). The end result of a dialogue is directed towards living together, acting together, building the world anew together as people with different faith (Ali, 1973:19).

Emerging from Vatican II and World Council of Churches, the call for dialogue arose as a means of offering an opportunity for peaceful coexistence between the Church and other religions. For example, the Program for Christian-MuslimRelations in Africa (PROCMURA) was established in 1985 under World Council of Churches (WCC) and All African Conference of Churches (AACC) ensures dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

Away fromdialogue with other faiths, the concern of Vatican II and WCC have been Dialogue within Christian faith. The argument is based on the fact that different

ST PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

traditions present different understanding and different doctrines. This may result into doctrinal dualism. According to the Catholic Church, Christians belonging to many different Christian communities with different liturgical, spiritual, theological, and canonical traditions does not add up to the catholicity of Christ's Church. Instead, those divisions lead to conflict and divergence of Christian faith, hence a clear contradiction of the Gospel of Christ that is based on unity among all Christians.

Out of the two calls for dialogue, we are able to see the two directions that have been taken. The first is a dialogue which is an outward looking. Its main focus is other religions and is known as 'interfaith dialogue'. The second direction of dialogue is that which is inward looking, where the main focus is on different Christian community. Upon these concerns, church dialogue has been both 'interfaith' dialogue and 'intrafaith' dialogue. In this work, the second model is taken as anecessary tool for doing Christian theology in this context of globalization.

In the exhortation of Pope Francis (*Gaudium et Spes*), the pope emphasized the importance and the need of the Church to get involved in the two dialogues, that is, interfaith dialogue (dialogue with other religions) and intrafaith dialogue (dialogue with other Christians and the larger Christian community) (E.G2013: 238; henceforth).

Though dialogue theology is both outward looking and inward looking in matters of faith, the dialogue we are thinking about here is not that dialogue between one religion and another, but a dialogue within Christian set up. It means as Ryan puts it (200:136), creating within Christianity approach towards a common interest recognizing those values or concepts that may be of interest to others hence

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

appreciating the gifts of others. For example, mainstream churches can borrow from African instituted churches and vice versa. The major concern of dialogue theology is to engage African theology with the rest of theologies as an attempt to solving life problems.

Dialogue theology recognizes that even within the same faith, there is likely different theological orientation based on context. So as to do way with dualism that is likely to arise, as Orobator (2008:88) would put it, 'dialogue is a tool for integrating diversity and pluralism and achieving complementarity within the church as a family' by conversing, discussing, and sharing with different traditions. Dialoguetheology, therefore, takes seriously socio-political and economical experiences existing in the society where dialogue is taking place (Ali, 1987:113-114).

Dialogue as a method of doing theology is participatory, more diversified, adopting amore critical approach to thesocial problem without abandoning the Christian faith. It takes seriously the present quest of theology that regenerates the life of people. A theology that is productive and is implementable for common good of the universal church, thus making the work of theology as the authentic word of God that which is shared, talked over and discussed.

Dialogue presents the church as a communion. It goes beyond the traditional comparative method which is aimed at attaining what is similar or different from both sides. It also goes beyond the inculturation approach which is considered as mere 'patching an old garment with a new patch'. Dialogue offers a point of conversion where one is able to understand themselves and others better and possibly

ST PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

draw lessons. It recognizes that integration of tradition with other community of faith both local and international and building consensus leads to more understanding. Also, Dialogue theology realizes the importance of areturn to the love of God and neighbor by connecting the "I" and "we" and thus fulfilling Orobator's saying, "if two hands wash then both hands are clean."

By using the dialogue model, the research joins the belief that African mind possesses the facts necessary for faith. According to Ryan (2008:129), God, in the person of Holy Spirit has continued to reveal himself to different people even outside the church through their culture and belief systems. These revelations can complement Christianity and thus, would be regarded as *preparatioevangelica*. In terms of theology, Africa has what it takes to dialogue with other theologies to forge towards the Catholic faith. This is in support of Shorter (1975: 147), that, The Church assuming its responsibility of furthering essential aspects of ecclesial reality, not to harm fairness of the communion with particular church, African theology must remain faithful to the authentic tradition of the universal church, at the same time pay attention to the life of our communities and respect to our tradition and language.

4.1.1 How dialogue theology works

Dialogue theology is a theology which is done around the table. It seeks to answer Christian questions that result from different experiences. The answer here is based on the analysis of the question; 'what have others said about this?'

The steps followed according to Waardenburg are as follows;

First, identify the problem that requires a clarification. The issue here must be of mutual concern, in a multicultural and pluralistic context. This can be on, concept,

ST PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

doctrine discipline, structure or statement of faith (Waardenburg, 2000:10-11). An appropriate selection according to Ryan (2008:133) is that which shows "continuity with Scripture, creed and global tradition".Also identify a Christian Church and or other ecclesial communities at local, national, and international levels with whom conversation will be done.

Second, analyze what the Bible says about the problem. Noting the areas of disconnects in relation to one's experience.

Third, the concerns are then subjected into a conversation so as to determine what others are saying concerning the subject. Analyze each statement in line with disconnects that arose in thesecond stage while disengaging those things that are not of importance for Christian faith. A comparison should be done with the biblical statements to ensure that one understands the biblical teaching on the subject.

This stage ensures that both parties develop a mutual understanding of one another. In some cases, thediscovery of misunderstandings, prejudices, and attacks in the past are uncovered while levels of common understanding and meeting in faith with one another are also clarified.The understandingof the truth about Christian mysteries as a church community is achieved by transforming the limitations of self. Look into new capabilities, experiences and expression adaptation matching the scripture that its Christian faith, tradition, and reason. As Kate Zebiri (1997:37) shows, this stage happens "…in an atmosphere of openness… mutual respect and willingness to listen" by either party. The underlying goal is to create a better understanding.

Fourth, apply the biblical teaching on the subject to experience.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

General principles that must be observed throughout the process of dialogue is that dialogue should not be defensive, but it involves conversation, explanation, and a reasoned reflection on one's belief about God and meaning of human life (Swindler, 1980: iv). Dialogue does not only commit to truth about one's religion but also recognizes the fact that no one can completely hold the truth, hence the assertion of Vatican II that "the purpose of dialogue is to grasp the greater truth… to be established in the realm of truth... and extension of knowledge" (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis,* 1968:60). Every party should be given equal chance. By this then dialogue is understood as encounter, motivational, respectful, communal, participatory and relational, other than personal, and gathering of information (Ryan, 2008:132).

The task of dialogue requires that we carry out a humble self-examination and take responsibility to renew and reform any aspect of ecclesial practice or "even … the way that Church teaching has been formulated"(Zebiri, 1997:37) so that it more faithfully reflects Christ's message.

4.1.2 Justification

Among the major concern of theologies is actualizing the Christian concepts in African contexts. In fact, the major question that has been asked is whether the western concept as was presented by missionaries to Africans made sense for Africans. The consent of many African theologians is that western concepts of Christianity left Africans as Galgalo calls it a "stranger within' Christianity. The need to reconcile the Christian concepts with African concepts will ensure that Africans are given chance to converse with other theologies.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Dialoguetheology therefore is necessary for doing theology today because it fits well African context.Since dialogue is done in a context of sharing, conversing and discussing, it reflects African worldview based on communality an atmosphere Magesa (2008: 112-113) calls as an atmosphere of "participation, motivation, and fulfillment"

According to Pope Paul VI (*Ecclesiam Suam*, 1964), salvation history is based on the long history of God getting into dialogue with humanity, starting from creation, through to prophets. In his love, God "addresses men and women as his friends and lives among them, in order to invite and receive them into his own company" where they can continue to dialogue with Him (Gen 1; Isaiah 1:8; John 1:1-3; *Dei Verbum* 2). This means that dialogue is God's agenda. For example in a call to dialogue, Pope Paul indicated that "we are called to dialogue because the triune God has entered into dialogue with humanity and has shared with us the [same] mission of the incarnate word in the world" (*Ecclesiam Suam*, 1964).

Trinitarian Mystery draws all humanity into existence coupled by dialogue between Godhead, dialogue between humanity and Godhead and between humanity themselves (*Unitiatis Redintegratio*, 1964:2). It is from this example of Trinity that Pope Paul says that Christians are part of this triune dialogue, "a dialogue of fervent and unselfish love." As Christians, "we are called to be a Church in dialogue because the Triune God has entered into dialogue with us, and has shared with us the mission of the Incarnate Word in the world" (*Ecclesiam Suam* 73; cf. 71-72).

Dialogue has continued to be emphasized upon bymajor councilsof the church. The second Vatican Council (1962-1965) inauguration of *Nostra Aestate* brought the

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

church into a new dawn of dialogue. From this council, the emphasis was put on "interfaith" (interreligious) dialogue, which the document defined as 'people of a living faith". With the same spirit, World Council of Churches also meeting in 1977 at Chiang Mai Thailand called its member churches into dialogue, which in their case was geared towards peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims. In 1971 the world council of churches set up a subunit for dialogue. This later was transferred to the office of interreligious dialogue. Out of these, guidelines for dialogue were established (Goddard, 2000:177).

Dialogue fits well with other African theologies. As an advocate of inculturation, Ary Roest Crollius (1986:43) supported the need to include dialogue in the process of inculturation. This is because, according to him, inculturation is not only about integrating Christian elements into a culture but also, the process involves dialogue where determining elements that best express the Christian experience are critically analyzed. Thus, inculturation is "integration of Christian's experiences into a culture of a people, where the result experience does not only express itself in the new culture but also orient the new culture into the Christian communion thus universal church" (Crollius, 1986:43). Seen this way, dialogue, therefore, is a very important tool for doing contextualized theology; it stimulates inculturation structure with an aim to integrating those elements that can best transform Christian faith.

Pope Francis held dialogue as away for church growth. He reaffirmed his move by conducting a theological dialogue with different Christian community including, Orthodox Churches, Evangelicals, Anglican Church of Canada, Lutherans etc. In his report, the pope noted that out of the dialogue they are able to reaffirm a common understanding of the sacraments and ministry in different traditions (*Evangelii*

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Gudium, 2013:4). Pope John Paul II in support of dialogue noted that "dialogue will let God be present in our midst, as we open ourselves to others, we open ourselves to God".

Dialogue has received lots of support from scholars. For example, Shorter (1975:27)in support of dialogue says that 'Christianity without dialogue would simply be living in a vacuum'. Joseph Ratzinger's (1997:283) agree with shorter in his dialogue structure by simply stating that; involvement of an individual concern with the faith of the church and the church great thinkers is core in the formation of theology. Therefore, according to Ratzinger, thedialogue is not only to be used on an interfaith platform, but also on the 'intrafaith', where the local theologies are let to converse with the intellectuals for abetter understanding of ones' faith.

4.1.3 Critique for dialogue

Even though there is huge support for dialogue, some scholars have not seen it helpful. According to the relativists, thedialogue is not in line with the great mission. According to relativistic thought, outside the church, there is no salvation.

John Kiboi (2015: 17, 24-26) dismisses dialogue on three grounds;

One; for him, while dialogue presupposes equality, Christianity is never equal to other revealed religions such as Islam and African traditional religion, and as such Christianity cannot be in dialogue with any religion. The same attitude is held by Hendrik Kraemer.According to Kraemer "Christianity is unique, God's final self-disclosure" (Kraemer, 1956). Two, adialogue if allowed,Kiboi (2015: 17, 24-26) goes on to say that it might lead to anexchange of cultures between Christianity and the other religion it is brought into dialogue with thus resulting into syncretism. And

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

three, on the basis of "urgency" of the mission, he argues that dialogue, and *diapraxis* is a 'delay' to the mission(Kiboi (2015: 17, 24-26). However, against these views of Christian absolutism, Vatican II's in *adgentes* (document on church missionary activity) and *Gaudium et Spes*(Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world) believed that Christianity cannot claim to be the only religion God has revealed himself, because the riches of God's revelation is distributed among the nations. This is because theinfluence of the Holy Spirit transcends Christianity, affecting the whole universe(Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*1965). According to Pope John Paul II universality of the Holy Spirit is asign of God's intention for universal fellowship. Therefore, in the document *Redemptoris Missio* (1990), he called unto dialogue with other religions so as to discover God-given gifts in those other religions.

All the same, the Pope also noted that if there is any absolute truth that is in Christianity, as also claimed by Catholic Church, then, this is the reason why Christians should commit to dialogue, so that "through dialogue, we are able to bear witness of that truth… to the society" (*Ut Unum Sint*, 1995:217).

Ryan (2008:129) also challenges such Christian absolutism, according to him; no religion should be seen as being at the center of others as each religion has only a slice of the truth and needs the other to 'complement' it. He gives an example of African churches that got its enrichment from African Traditional Heritage. Therefore, Christians "cannot say God's revelation is full and complete" with Christianity(Ryan, 2008:129). God has also revealed himself in other religions.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

4.2 Towards a dialogical theology

4.2.1 Weakness of African theodicy

The Africans challenge, however, comes from their worldview that does not harmonize divine transcendence and immanence in explaining divine omnipotence in the face of suffering. They tend to alienate divine from human daily life struggles leaving theonly option to other deities. For Africans, the reason why suffering persists is because they live in a world that is full of devils and spirits as active forces. It is from these forces that come evil thus resulting in suffering. This makes it hard to enhance human responsible to moral evil. Two, Africans claim that God is transcendent. This implies that the power of God exists on the earth as a passive potency, because God does not directly take part in his creation, but he uses other creatures in effecting his power and purpose. These powers are considered lesser compared to the Sovereign power of God. So, it is in the active power of omnipotent and good God that there is relatively hope for the problem of evil.

4.2.2 Weakness of St. Augustine's theodicy

However, the challenge in Augustine is in his introduction of the concept of predestination where God would will in humanity selectively to do good and other no matter how good they try, they cannot be saved. It is therefore hard to contemplate the Love of God if he predestined people for suffering. In this case, it is hard to understand free will as a means of responding to God's will.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

4.2.3 Strengths of African theodicy

Africans do not have a problem of improving the existence of evil. They are straight forward about one Supreme God. He is powerful, good, knowledgeable, holy and just. God's original intention for his creation is thelife of happiness, harmony, and good. When it comes to suffering, morality and ethics come first. Hence the emphasis is on acommitment to set laws and traditions. Personal life in relation to set out laws is the means to salvation. So the success of a person is not predestined but dependent on every individual where if'you do what is good, you expect good, and if you do what is bad, you expect bad.'

4.2.4 Strengths of St. Augustine's theodicy

In chapter three, Augustine succeeds in bringing out doctrinal issues without contradicting biblical teaching. For example, he starts from acknowledging God's place in the universe. God is perfect and all he created is good. He did not create evil. So, evil and suffering entered the world through free willing of Adam and Eve. On the other hand, there is a lot of suffering. It is not only the evil people who suffer, but also the innocent ones, even infants who have known no sin undergo suffering. So that just as in Christian teaching, God in his goodness and power does not necessarily mean that he always saves his own from suffering. Christians also suffer persecutions, death and even dread illness (Job; John 16:33; Romans 5:3-4; 8:18; II Corinthians 4:17 etc.). But this state is not the original intention of God who always desires life of happiness, harmony and good for his creation.

With his concept of free will, Augustine on the other side achieved in explaining the reason why evil persists in the presence of omnipotent and good God. Evil is

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

notcreated by God but originated from human choices and loss of responsibility. Therefore, free will as the ability to choose between good and evil brings out the importance of personal accountability for sin. The fundamental religious duty is to choose good. If we can succeed in this, moral evil and consequently suffering that comes with it can be avoided.

So, suffering is not just for wicked alone, but also righteous suffer. This is because, by willing to sin, all humanity has inherent tendency to sin, even the righteous. This, as a result, justifies why they suffer. But as much as both suffer, there are good implications for suffering. This, therefore, removes theanxiety of suffering.

Augustine also gives an assurance to the sufferer of omnipotence, goodness, and love of God even amidst suffering. For Augustine, God stimulated by the deep power and love, empathized with humanity,became'word' incarnate and dwelt among us (Conf., vii. xviii).Here Augustine presents us with transcendent but purely immanent God who is not only far, but God who in himself in his power, goodness and Holiness is able to carry the sufferings of the humanity.Meaning for Augustine, the solution to the problem of suffering starts and ends in God. It is God alone who in his grace from creation time has acted to remove suffering. Even now, the acknowledgment of God through Jesus we can reach God in suffering. So, the term mediator as used by Augustine expresses the dialogue character of God redemptive work. Jesus is a mediator who as Leonard Namwera calls him, "even before he begins his action, stands on God's side, must first come to sinful men, and in a second, corresponding movement give himself to God" (Namwera, 1990:123). For example, Baptism that joins humanity with Christ in his death and resurrection for new life (recreation), restores the will to good (Prevenient grace) by igniting the ability to do good

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

(cooperative grace). Baptismis thusan ultimate control of choices against evil by providing wisdom which is a property for self-caution and desire for good.

4.3 Dialogue between Augustine and Africans

4.3.1 Suffering is not necessarily bad, it is also good

St Augustine theodicy and African theology offer various theological and philosophical explanations to the problem of suffering. In trying to find the solution to the problem of suffering, both Augustine and Africans hold the belief that God neither created nor cause evil. In the case of Africans, evil comes as a result of failure to do good or appease spirits. Augustine however, traces this to free will, Africans is as a result of neglect of responsibility and breaking of taboo.

However, African view that puts blame on evil spirits, demons and witchcraft can be informed by Augustine's place of human choices. Just as in African tradition view where breaking of taboos or neglect of societal laws results in suffering, free will then, therefore, may help lessen causes of suffering on the account of enhanced human responsibility by reconciling morality and ethics to the problem of suffering. Just as in the Bible, where human actions lead to anoutcome. For example in the Old Testament, whenever Israelites did wrong and went contrary to the commandments they suffered the consequence. But whenever they returned to God, they experienced a successful life. This is therefore defined goodness of God.

While Africans tradition view suffering as producing a negative result, Augustine's theodicy can inform Africans that suffering is not necessarily bad. Sufferings also produce good result just as in the case of thesuffering of Jesus where his suffering

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

was to save humanity. For Christians,sufferings define their "ultimate good" of which God is preparingthem (II Corinthians 4:17; Rom. 8:28).

4.3.2 Good and bad people suffer alike

Augustine does not exclude righteous from suffering as African traditions would teach. In the African traditions suffering depicts evil that a person has done,

4.3.3 Total dependence on God for strength and hope

The problem, therefore, goes as O'Donovan (1992:73-75) states, omnipotent God present the hope for African Christianity. From the Bible, Christians understand that God is absolutely powerful. He commands and controls the forces of nature. For example, He walked on water (Mark 6:45-51). He commanded the storm to calm (Luke 8:22-25). He is the man who fed more than 5000 hungry men and women (John 21:3-6)." Then, with his power why would dedicated Christians still live their lives in great pain and suffering?

As a response to what God does in suffering, Augustine recognizes the need for humanity to show dependence on God who is omnipotent, good and holy. This forms the point of departure from African's view of God in suffering. Africans believe that God is Omnipotent, Good and Holy, though whenever people are confronted with suffering, all these attributes of God seem far apart.

The contribution of Augustine holds a balance between divine transcendence and divine immanence, which either stresses the omnipotence, goodness, and Holiness of God within and with every person in their suffering. Augustine shows that divine transcendent does not exclude God's presence from the creation. But rather it to

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

show the otherness of God from creation, that puts him as Supreme in power, goodness, and holiness above other creatures. Augustine asserts that God is omnipotent and that he is directly and actively involved in the problems of his creation including termination of sin and suffering. This happens by grace through incarnation and baptism.

Through theincarnation, two points are worth noting from Augustine. First, Christ who is truly God takes part in suffering in order for humanity to get salvation.Thus the action of Christ is God acting in Christ. So, Incarnation demonstrates that God is not away from suffering creation, but he is actively involved in thesuffering of his people, not only as God of God but also God of man. This is divine solidarity with humanity in suffering meaning, in Christ, God descended to defeat the power of evil in the power of his resurrection.

Second,sufferingof Christ moves from explaining divine justice, where God takes in himself penalty of sin, into his goodness and power to overcome evil. Turning to Christ is turning to God's power and wisdom. That being in oneness with us 'God of man' creates and recreates what was lost in us. This paradox of incarnation, according to Martin Luther King, demonstrates thedifferent mode of Divine power which are identification, participation endurance, and transformation (King, 1963:16). This makes his goodness to his creation apparent.

Incarnation for Augustine is an assurance of the human victory over sin through Gerhardus Vos' concept of 'already but not yet' interpretation in regard to coming in the fullest of time (King, 1963:46). Meaning, there is a sense in which the kingdom

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

of God where God exerts his power over evil is ‘already come’ in the person of Christ and ‘not yet’ because everything has not been subjected to him.

Africans and Augustine hold the same view of mediatorship, however, limitation of African priests or diviners is fulfilled inAugustine’s mediator (Conf., ix.15). Christ is one mediator between God and humanitywho does not only come as human but as God. God is the liberator per excellence with all the salvific actions taking part in the willing (in us), linking us to God and himself suffers the consequence and assuring us salvation.

4.4 Elements that are incompatible Christian teachings

According to Studer, the fundamental concerns in Augustine theodicy is that, even after Augustine has joint Catholic faith his background remained characteristic of his thinking. Occasional Augustine kept on showing thedualistic tendency of neo-platonic and Manichean thoughts these can bring theproblem with biblical text.

CONCLUSION

Dialogical theodicy uses Dialogue model with people of the same faith as a way of solving the contextual problems. With the tremendous growth of African instituted churches, there is a need for continued dialogue with other theologies in matters tradition, doctrines and philosophies. This will help Africans understand well Christian concepts. Thus challenge accusations that strands of African Christianity as Galgalo (2012:104) admits, is based on theologies which are sometimes seen as “shallow” or theologies not correct. It offers theopportunity to the local theologies to converse with other theologies.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

The observation that has been made in this paper is that from African concept of God, it has become hard for Africans to conceptualize the Christian teaching of theomnipotence of God in the face of suffering. This is what has caused anxiety in theAfrican context. Therefore by engaging African concepts into a dialogue with St. Augustine's free will defense, Augustine analysis of the divine attribute in relation to the question of suffering helps clarify the biblical teachings on God's attributes and suffering.

It was suggested thatAfrican thoughtscan be engaged into dialogue in matters of Christianfaith without fearing as Kiboi says that "whenever foreign elements are introduced into pure religion [Christianity] syncretism results" (Kiboi, 2012:41). Here African thought is held as a *preparatioevangelica* together with scholars who have used African concepts in explaining Christian concepts such as Mbiti (1969:180), and Charles Nyamiti (1977:52). The problem of suffering has no doubt further warranted the usefulness of African thoughts that it has something to offer to other theologies. In order to understand the problem of suffering, it was suggested we need to dialogue with other theodicies so as to allow more answers as well as release thoughts not inherent with gospel truth. By dialogue with Augustine's theodicy, Africans can come to see those discourses involving around understanding how God's omnipotence, Omnibenevolence answers the problem of suffering hence remove evidential lapse of Christian faith due to anxiety.

Augustine was suggested in two ways, first, because Augustine is fallible hence could warrant dialogue. It is only the scripture which is infallible. Second Augustine

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

theodicy focuses more on biblical teaching to draw aconclusion(Hick, 1985:37) that are useful in understanding Christian teaching on suffering.InAugustine, suffering does not mean God has abandoned humanity; in fact, God empathizes with humanity that in theincarnation, Jesus Christ joint in our suffering.This affirms the belief in omnipotent, good, and all loving God. Suffering should not be seen as bad, what is worth understanding is thedifference between righteous suffering and wicked suffering. That suffering renders to righteous good as it plays the role of sanctification. This is why John Calvin believed that Christians should "…lovingly kiss the cross rather than dread it" (Calvin, 1948:63).

5.1 Pastoral implication

A Central focus to the question to the problem of suffering is in understanding the salvific plan of God and seeing how such question responds to gospel truth. That is to say, whenever Africans are able tounderstanding that God salvific plan is not thwarted by anything, that he is omnipotent, omnibenevolent and holy, Africans will believe more in this God, hence there will be no need to walk out of the church in search of salvation. Thus shaping Christianity in Africa, as well as releasing thoughts not inherent with gospel truth.

The dialogical method that has been recommended here ensures that African churches remain constructive in influencing other religions and cultures with norms and values derived from biblical teaching. Engagement with other traditions makes a church where people understand differing denominational doctrines and their faith.A church that enters into dialogue will no longer be interested in denominationalism but the truth of the gospel.

ST PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

5.2 Recommendation

The church in Africa still influences by thoughts inherent with thegospel, as well as concepts that can impact Christian teachings. This is why there is then need for continued dialogue with Christian concepts so as to be able to see those disconnect. This can be done from the church level, where different ministries can be engaged. The focus of dialogue should be on the issues such as doctrines, sacraments, church tradition etc.

The word theology encompasses the whole meaning of faith seeking to understand. It is, therefore, an activity directed at both Christians and non-Christians, where Christians are helped to learn the faith they hold while non-Christians are enlightened of the gospel truth. The non-Christian concepts are then challenged to consider the claims of Christ and Christians to help confront with personal and social challenges.

While Augustine's free will theodicy has been recommended in making Africans understand who God is and how he deals with the problem of evil, it is also criticized on the grounds that St Augustine is not infallible and thus cannot represent absolute Christian teaching. Meaning, while St. Augustine's teachings have been taken Orthodox, there are some of his teaching that does not rightly represent the Bible.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

List of books;

Adeyemo,T. 1997. *Salvation in the African Tradition*, Nairobi, Kenya: Evangel Publishing Company.

Appiah-Kubi, K. 1987. "*Christology" in African Christian Theology,* Ed. Parratt, J. London:SPCK.

Augustine, 1952. *The Confessions, The City Of God On Christian Doctrine*, Edit. Hutchins, M. R. London: William Benton Publishers.

_____. 1942. *The Confession*, Trans. Van D. M. 1, New York; Sheed & Ward.

_____.1942.*The Confession*, Trans. Sheed, F.J. Book I-X, New York; Sheed & Ward.

_____. 1991. *Confessions*, Trans. Chadwick H. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_____. 1950. *City of God* Trans. Everyman Library, New York: Dent and Sons Ltd.

_____. 1955. *Enchiridion: On Faith, Hope, and Love*, Trans. Outler, A. C. Texas: Westminster Press.

Ali, M. N. 1987.*Frontiers in Muslim-Christian Encounter*, Oxford, U.K.: Regnum,

Barclay, W. 1976. *Word meaning*, Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press

Berkhof, L.I. 1958. *Systematic Theology*, Children Street: The Banner of Truth Trust.

Bolaji, E. I. 1973. *African Traditional Religion; An Introduction*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbits

Bonner, G. 1963. *St. Augustine of Hippo; Life and Controversies*, London SCM

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Press LTD Books

Boyd, G.A., 2003. *Is God to Blame: Moving Beyond Past Answers tothe Problem Of Evil*. Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove.

Bridges, C. B. 1996. "Good, Goodness," In, *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Ed. Elwell, W. A, England: Grand Rapids

Bujo, B.1990.*African Christian Morality; At the Age of Inculturation*, Nairobi: PaulinePublications Africa.

Burleigh, J. H. S. 1953. *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press.

Buthelezi, M. 1973.*Theological Meaning Of True Humanity in Black Theology*, LondonEducational Publishers.

Calvin, J. 1948. *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle tothe Hebrews*, Trans. Owen,J. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Cassidy, E. 2005. *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue*, New York: Paulist Press.

Crollius, R.A.1986 "Inculturation: Newness and Ongoing Process" In; *Inculturation: Its Meaning and Urgency*, Muliggo, J. et al, Nairobi: St Paul's Publications.

Davis, S. T. (Ed) 1981. *Encountering Evil*, Atlanta: John Knox Press.

Draper, P. 1999. Pain and Pleasure; an Evidential Problem for Theists, In, Stump, E. &Elphinstone, A. 1976. *Freedom suffering and love*, London: SCM Press Ltd.

Ferdinando, K. 1999. *The triumph of Christ in African perspective: A study of Demonology and redemption in the African context.* Carlisle: Paternoster Press.

Galgalo, J. 2012. *African Christianity: The Stranger Within*, Limuru: Zapf Chancery

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Publishers Africa Ltd.

Geister, N. 2004. *Systematic Theology; Sin and Salvation*, Vol.3,Minnesota: Minneapolis,

Griffin, D. R. 1976. *God Power and Evil: A Process Theodicy*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

Grudem W. A. 2004. *Systematic theology: an introduction to biblical Doctrine*, England: Grand Rapids.

Guthrie, D. 1981. *New Testament Theology*, USA: Intervarsity Press.

Hanson, B.C 1997. *Introduction to Christian Theology*, USA/ Michigan: Grand Rapids.

Hick, J. 1985. *Evil and the God of Love*, London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.

_____. 1989. *The mythof God Incarnate*, London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.

Karamaga, A. 1991. Problem and Promises of Africa: Towards and Beyond the Year 2000 (2nd Ed) Nairobi: AACC.

Kasper, W. 2007. *A Handbook of Spiritual Ecumenism*, New York: New City.

Kraemer, H. 1956. *Religion and The Christian Faith*, London:

Kwesi W. 2004.*A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, Quinn P.L. & Talia F. Ed. Oxford UK: Blackwell.

Kasemann, E. 1961. 'God's Righteousness in Paul', In, *New Testament Questions for Today*p.p. 168-182

Kunhiyop, S. W. 2012. *African Christian Theology*, Kenya: Hippo Books.

Lewis, C. S. 1967. *The Problem of Pain*, London: Fontana.

Magesa, L. 1997. *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

_____. 2008. "Spirituality for another Possible World: Reclaiming Own African Heritage in Spirituality", In;*Spirituality foranother Possible World,*Getui, M. N. et. al Ed. Pg. 103-118 Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Majawa, C. A. 2007. *The Holy Spirit and Charismatic Renewal in Africa: (Pneumatological Considerations),* Nairobi: Creations Enterprises.

Mbiti, J. 1969. .*African Religion and Philosophies*, London: SPCK.

_____. 1990. *African Religions & Philosophy*, 2nd ed. Heinemann, Oxford ; Portsmouth,

_____. 1986. *Bible and Theology in African Christianity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_____. 1969. *Concepts of God in Africa*, New York: Praeger.

_____. S. 1991. *Introduction to African Religion*, (2ndEd) Nairobi Kenya: East AfricanEducational Publishers.

McGill, A.C.1968.*Suffering: Attest of Theological Method*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press.

McGrath, A. E. 2001. *Christian Theology; And Introduction* 3rd Ed., USA: Blackwell Publishing.

McKim, D. K. 1988. *Theological Turning Points; Major Issues in Christian Thought*, Atlanta: John Knox Press

Murphree, J. 1981 A Loving God and a Suffering World: A New Look an Old Problem

Mugambi, J.N.K. 1989. *African Christian Theology: An Introduction*, Nairobi: EAEP Ltd.

Murray M. J. ed.*Philosophy of Religion: The Big Question*, (pp. 164-175), UK: Blackwell Publishers.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Nash, Ronald H. 1988.*Faith and Reason: Searching for a Rational Faith*, MI: Grand Rapids.

Newbigin, L. 1956. *Sin and Salvation*, London: SCM Press.

Nthamburi, Z. 1991. *The African Church at the Crossroad; Strategy for Inculturation*, Nairobi: Uzima Press.

Namwera, L. 1990. "Personal Liberation through Communication" In. *Towards African Christian Liberation*, Namwera, L et.al Nairobi: St Paul Publication Africa.

O'Donovan, W. 1992. *Introduction to Biblical Christianity*; *from an African Perspective*, USA: Wilbur O'Donovan.

_____. 2000. *Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa*, UK: Paternoster Press.

Orobator, A.E. 2008, *Theology Brewed In an African Pot*, Kenya; Pauline.

Outler,A.C. (Trans) 1955. *St. Augustine, Enchiridion: On Faith, Hope, and Love*, Texas:MCMLV.

Packer, J. I. 1958. *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*, London: IVF

Parrinder, E.G. 1962. *African Traditional Religion*, (3ed) London: Sheldon Press.

Plantinga, A. C. 1974. *God freedom and Evil*, London: Eerdmans

_____. 2002. *God, Freedom and Evil*, Michigan: Eerdmans co.

Pope Francis, 2013. *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) Ottawa: CCCB1.

Pope John Paul II, 1995. *Ut Unum Sint*, "Commitment to Ecumenism", Ottawa: CCCB1

Pope Paul, 1978. *Ecclesium Saum*, Ottawa: CCCB1

Richard, L.O. 1985. *Expository Bible Dictionary of the Bible words*, Zondervan Publishing.

Richard, L. 1992. *What Are They Saying about the Theology of Suffering*? New

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

York: Paulist Press.

Rosmini, A. (2009). *Theodicy: Essays On Divine Providence,* Durham: Rosmini House.

Roth, J. K. 1981. "A Theodicy of Protest," In; *Encountering Evil: Live Options in Theodicy,*Atlanta:John Knox Press.

Schaff, P. 1889. "The Westminster Confession of Faith" In; *Creeds of Christendom,* Grand Rapids, MI: Christian ClassicsEthereal Library

Schleiermacher, F. 1928 *The Christian Faith,* Mackintosh, H.R. & Stewart J. S. (Ed.), Edinburg: T&T Clark.

Shorter, A. 1975. *African Christian Theology,* New York: Geoffrey Chapman

_____. 1975. *Prayer in the Religious Traditions of Africa*, Nairobi: Oxford University.

Shorter, A. & Njiru, J. 2001. *New Religious Movements in Africa,* Nairobi, Kenya: Pauline's Publications Africa

Sicard, S.V. &Wulfhort, I. (Ed) 2003. *Dialogue and Beyond: Christians and Muslims Together on the Way.*Geneva: Lutheran world Federation.

Studer, B. 1997. *Grace of Christ and the grace of God in Augustine of Hippo Christocentric or theocentric?* Transl. O'Connell, M. J. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press.

Stump, E. & Murray, M. J. 1999. *Philosophy of Religion: The Big Question,* USA: BlackwellPublishers.

Taylor J. V, 2004. *The incarnate God,*Publishers London New York.

Taylor, R. 1977. *Atonement in New Testament Teaching,* London: Epworth Press.

Taylor, W. 1984. *The right concept of sin,* Beacon Hill Press.

Tempels, P. 1959. *Bantu Philosophy*. Paris: PresenceAfrican.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Thiessen, H. 2000. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, Wm.B: Eerdmans Publishing Company

Torchia, J. (no date). *Creation Ex Nihilo andthe Theology of St Augustine: The Anti-Manichean Polemics and Beyond*, New York P. Lang.

Tozer, A. W. 1987. *The Knowledge of the Holy*, Carlisle: OM Publishing.

Trevethan, T. L. 1995. *The Beauty of God's Holiness*, Illinois: Intervarsity press

Turner, H W 1967. *African Independent Church I and II: The Life and Faith of the Church of the Lord (Aladura),* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vatican II, 1964. "*Unitiatis Redintegratio"* (Decree on Ecumenism), In; *Conciliar And Post-Conciliar Documents.* Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press.

_____. 1965. *Gaudium et Spes*, (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World). Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press.

Vine, W. E. 1997. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, Nashville, ten. : T. Nelson publishers.

Wenham, J. 1994.*The Enigma Of Evil: Can We Believe In The Goodness Of God*? Guildford:Eagle publishers.

Wiredu, K. 1983. "Morality and Religion in Akan Thought". In: Odera, H. O. & Wasola D.A. (Eds.): *Philosophy and Cultures*. Kenya: Bookwise Ltd.

_____. 2004. *A comparison to African philosophy*, Kenya: Blackwell Publishers.

Zebiri,K. 1997. *Muslims and Christians face to face*, USA: one world publishers.

List of journals;

Kiboi, J. 2012. "Theological Inculturation and the Problem of Syncretism; Towards a Noetic Approach as a Remedy against Syncretism" In; *African Christian Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 2, June; pg. 20-44.

Mugabe, H. 1993. "Salvation from an African Perspective", In; *Indian Journal of*

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Theology, August pg. 31-42.

Onongha, K. 2013. "Suffering, Salvation, and the Sovereignty of God: Towards a Theologyof Suffering"In; *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Art. 12 pg.126-150.

Ryan P. 2008. Christian Perspective onInter-Religious Dialogue, In; *Spirituality for nother World*, Getui, M. N. et. al Ed. Pg. 119-138.

Vatican II, 1979. "Decree on Ecumenism," In; *Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents.* Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press.

_____. 1994. "Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity" In; *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*. Ottawa: CCC.

Internet Material:

http://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/christianity/2005/08/date accessed 11thFebruary 2017.

http//:understandinggodsmercy.com.Date accessed, 27thMarch 2017.

Strauss, G. 2016. Six challenges facing Africa in 2016, in http://providencemag.com.Date accessed 15th august, 2017.

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY