# A SOCIAL READING OF JUDGES 5 AND IT'S IMPLICATIONS ON THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN ERADICATING NEGATIVE ETHNICITY IN KENYA

Submitted

By:

JOHN WILSON OKEYO
MTHLMR101418

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Master of Theology Degree (Old Testament) from St. Paul's University, Limuru Campus

AUGUST, 2020

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Supervisors

Rev. Dr. Zebedi Muga
Rev. Prof. Chosefu Chemorion

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## DECLARATION

This dissertation is a result 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 photocopying at the discretion of the University.

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT:_____ DATE: 14/08/2020.

We confirm that the work reported in this proposal has been done by the student under our supervision.

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR:_____zebedi_____DATE: 14/08/2020.

SIGNATURE OF CO-SUPERVISOR:_____ DATE: 14/08/2020.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my precious twin sister Jemima Akoth Okeyo, my treasured father the Rev. Canon Walter Philip Okeyo and my incredible mother Grace Awuor Okeyo.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to register my sincere thanks to people who gave me support in different capacities.

In the first place, I am grateful to my twin sister Jemima Akoth Okeyo, my father Rev. Canon Walter Philip Okeyo and my mother Grace Awuor Okeyo, who besides praying for me, encouraged me through this dissertation writing.

I am equally indebted to the Rev'd. Dr. Zebedi Muga and the Rev'd. Prof. Chosefu Chemorion for professional guidance and support in my academic endeavors especially during my dissertation writing.

I give special thanks to the almighty God who called me to ministry, and graciously provided all that appertains to ministerial formation.

Let God shower His blessings upon you.

## ABSTRACT

Ethnicity in itself is impossible to get rid of from our lives or from our churches. Attempts to do so merely end up privileging one ethnicity over the others. These realities highlight the need and importance of an appropriate model approach that incorporates ethnicity and embraces its benefits, while also ensuring that the church alongside the nation remain unshaken. The specific objectives of this study were: To carry out an elaborate exegesis of Deborah's Song – Judges 5 alongside an analysis of the functionality of the Early Israel Amphictyony; To establish why ethnic loyalties override Christian unity and identity in Kenya; To Evaluate the Role of the Church in Kenya in eradicating Negative Ethnicity and to employ the findings obtained from the social scientific study of Judges 5 in proposing ways of combating negative ethnicity in Kenya. The study mainly utilized the social scientific approach alongside the exegetical and hermeneutical methods in unearthing principles that can be employed in the eradication of negative ethnicity. This study was also guided by the following questions: What informed and enhanced the functionality of Amphictyony in Early Israel?; What is the impact of the Church's ethnic cracks in Kenya?; What is the connection between the governance and operations in churches and the divisive ethnic identities in Kenya?; and what principles does the song of Deborah in Judges 5 offer, regarding the role of the church in combating negative ethnicity in Kenya? This study dwelt around the confederation of the tribes of early Israel, established what held the tribes of Israel together in unity and the manifestations of the unity of the tribes more specifically in the operations of the Amphictyony. The researcher's main assumption in this research was that, Kenya is an accurate reflection of her church. This claim springs from the fact that there is a high presence of Christianity across the country. For this reason, this research sought to reveal that the church plays an important role in eliminating the negative effects of ethnicity within herself and the country by extension.

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

**Deuteronomistic –** This is in reference to the rich and comprehensive traditional history of the children of Israel as is enshrined in the Old Testament Canon, particularly recorded in the twelve books namely: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.

**Amphictyony** - Israel's tribal organization during the period of the judges could best be referred to as an *Amphictyony, a confederation* or a *federation league.* This was a term from ancient Greece describing a loose organization of people held together by a central sanctuary or worship center and a common cultus.

**Ethnicity -** Fenton (1999:16) defines ethnicity as an aspect of collective self-recognition as well as an aspect of its recognition in the eyes of outsiders.

**Church -** The church as is used in this study is not a specific physical building or a denomination, but a body of local believers in Kenya. This in other words, is the plentiful gatherings of people who claim the name of Christ and are therefore referred to as Christians. The denominations in Kenya that profess Christianity are numerous.

**Abbreviations**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ch. | - | Chapter. |
| Chs. | - | Chapters. |
| Dt. | - | Deuteronomy. |
| Jgs. | - | Judges. |
| Ex. | - | Exodus. |
| Lev. | - | Leviticus. |
| v. | - | Verse. |
| vv. | - | Verses. |
| ff. | - | Following. |

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of Study

"Judges" - an Old Testament historical book central to this study, is a translation from the Hebrew title, "*sophetim".* The book of Judges is anonymous with no clear indicators of its date of composition in the book or elsewhere in the Old Testament Canon. This could be as a result of it being a collection of various blocks of material about different judges, obtained from different sources. In light of dating, Howard Jr (1993: 106), argues that since Judges (Chs. 2:6 – 16:31) is "Deuteronomistic" in nature, its final form dates in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.

The book of Judges which is the central thrust of the study, has in it the famous Song of Deborah. The Song of Deborah (Judges 5), reveals how the already present and strong bond of cohesion amongst the tribes of Israel, enhanced the survival of Israel as a nation amidst fierce tensions, attacks and dangers. Howard Jr. (1993: 108) observes that, early Israel existed as a league of tribes, a structural organization which was analogous of the Greek "amphictyony", with a classic example obtained from Delphi in central Greece - dating *ca*. 600 B.C. Bright (1981: 164) argues that, Israel's inter-ethnic unity was not created merely as a result of concerted action in the face of danger, because if that was the case, it would not have endured the significant about two hundred years it lasted.

The famous Song of Deborah (Judges 5) discloses one of the earliest crises during the days of the Judges, which the tribes of Israel combated squarely, mainly because they were a united federation. Bright (1981: 164) observes in his consideration of the Song of Deborah (Judges 5) that the tribal league was in full operation, with at least ten out of the twelve members in the twelfth century B.C. Bright (1981: 167) observes from the Song of Deborah (cf. Judges 5:15-17, 23), that the tribes could not be compelled to respond in cohesion with the rest, but were obligated to do so failure to which they invited curses to themselves, depicting unity of purpose.

Scholars conventionally agree that the tribal league might have been formed, shortly after the struggle for the land of Palestine had ended *c.* 1200 BC (Bright, 1981:173). Pursuant of the Old Testament narrative, it is clear that not all Israelites were related one to another by blood. Hinson (1990: 77) contends that the composition of Israel entailed both the segment of Israel that had come from the desert, and those that were already inhabitants of Palestine who later voluntarily joined the Israelite structure. All these people could not have possibly descended from a solitary family tree. Albeit the crystal clear diversity within the Israelite tribal league, the diverse tribes seem to have constantly stood on an equal footing. There is actually no evidence in the Biblical narrative that alludes to any form of inequality amongst the tribes of Israel.

The Amphictyonic model proposed by Martin Noth, has been widely criticized especially recently. According to Howard Jr. (1993: 108), amongst the most telling criticisms has been that the primary

characteristic of Greek amphictyonies was a central shrine, whereas the specific number of its members was secondary since it was not consistently twelve. Noth (1958), on the other hand, granted the number "twelve" to primary status albeit the biblical evidence being unclear on the status of Israelite shrines at Shechem and Shiloh at the time. In addition, nowhere in the books of Joshua, Judges or Samuel is the structural Amphictyony of Israel mentioned at all. If anything, the emphasis especially in Judges is laid on the facts that, there was neither a politically nor a religiously centralized authority.

Tutu (1999: 35) resonates with the *ubuntu* philosophy especially on its implication, noting that everyone's humanity is caught and bound up in others. This further means that we all belong to a bundle of life, and that without other people, a person is unable to be a person. What qualifies our humanity is the mere fact that, we belong, we participate, share and are available for each other. We all belong to the greater whole and are diminished when others are humiliated, demeaned, tortured, oppressed or treated as though they are less than they are. Through this humanitarian lens, this study perceives negative ethnicity not only as ungodly but as a disaster that must not be tolerated and has to be wiped out of humanity.

Principal to this research is the Kenyan context, where intertribal violence has been the order of the day especially almost in every single General election carried out after a cycle of five years. The 2007 and 2017 post - elections are up to date considered the most ferocious and destructive

periods in the Kenya's history. The high voltage post-election violence in the aforementioned years, especially 2007 rendered many innocent Kenyan citizens either dead or displaced. Hence, there has been an urgent need to transform Kenya, a nation that was initially viewed as a beacon of peace in the Africa continent.

### 1.2 Statement of Problem

Admittedly, the same way Israel's immediate neighbours such as: Canaanites, Moabites, Ammonites and Edomites struggled to establish functional organizations that bolstered cohesion and unity amongst their respective tribal groups (Bright, 1981:163), African countries and more particularly Kenya is still grappling with possibilities of combating the glaring challenge of negative ethnicity.

Ideally, in Christian circles and that entails decision and policy making councils, winners and losers; or superiors and inferiors have no place whatsoever on any emergent issue. Tabart (2003: 18) holds that, in the process of seeking to discern God's will for the way forward, every member of the Church body is expected to listen to each other's insights and opinions humbly devoid of prejudice and discrimination. The implication of this is that, we are equals and are united as long as we are members of the Church.

Kenya as a country is still far from realizing absolute equality, unity and cohesion amongst its diverse tribes. It is frightening to note that inter-ethnic conflicts are shredding the fabric of Kenyan

societies; hatred is hardening into ideology and violence in its most horrible forms is boldly being expressed as a norm. The Church in Kenya which should take lead in terms of influencing its massive following in combatting negative ethnicity is inert. Most often than not, the Church in Kenya has been seriously critiqued for either being partisan and prophetically passive. Church leaders especially during the disputed presidential elections in 2007 and as was also witnessed in 2017, opted to fall back to ethnic cocoons for personal and ethnic interests. A move that ended up neutralizing the Church's significant Christian functionality and responsibility. This atmosphere contributed a lot to the Church's loss of moral authority and status on the National platform, and as a result the Church has been reduced to ethnic voices. The Church is marred by so much alienation and disharmony, conflict and turmoil, enmity and hatred characterizing so much of life especially around ethnic groups in Kenya.

This situation provides adequate hints that ethnic animosity is still prominent among Christians and leaders in Kenya. Hence, the struggle to free the nation from the problem above is still on to date. Since the Church boasts of the largest following when it comes to religious affiliation in Kenya, its unity is crucial and should act as an archetype of national unity. This research therefore, employs a social reading of Judges 5 with the aim of proposing viable dimensions the Church should take in tackling negative ethnicity in Kenya.

### 1.3 Research Objectives

1. To carry out an elaborate exegesis of Deborah's Song – Judges 5 alongside an analysis of the functionality of the Early Israel Amphictyony.
2. To establish why ethnic loyalties override Christian unity and identity in Kenya.
3. To Evaluate the Role of the Church in Kenya in eradicating Negative Ethnicity.
4. To employ the findings obtained from the social scientific study of Judges 5 in providing solutions to negative ethnicity in Kenya.

### 1.4 Research Questions

1. What informed and enhanced the functionality of Amphictyony in Early Israel?
2. What is the impact of the Church's ethnic cracks in Kenya?
3. What is the connection between the governance and operations in Churches and the divisive ethnic identities in Kenya?
4. What principles does Judges 5 offer, regarding the role of the church in combating negative ethnicity in Kenya?

### 1.5 Research Hypothesis

The researcher's assumption and hypothesis in this study is that, Kenya as a State is only but an accurate reflection of her Church. The basis upon which this claim is to be developed, is the high presence of Christianity and Christians across the Country. For this reason, the researcher is convinced that the Church should take lead in influencing the State positively in practice. The

researcher holds that, as long as the Church is infiltrated by the cracks of negative ethnicity, efforts to eradicate the aforementioned menace will remain futile.

### 1.6 Justification for Research and Significance

Kurian (1992: 71) highlights statistics which indicate that Kenya is much more Christianized than other countries in the African continent. Despite boasting of having a Christian population of approximately 80%, the expected effects of Christianity are yet to be felt in Kenya. This has been attributed to a silent, neutralized and less influential Church that is unable to unite the ethnic groups in Kenya.

It beats logic and defeats every purpose, when the Church instead of living up to National unity, resigns into ethnic identities. A keen study on why some church leaders and their members go ethnic at times of high ethnic tensions is therefore important. This research considers it imperative to conduct a social study on Judges 5 focusing on the structures and operations of the Amphictiony of early Israel in relation to ethnic notions.

Other than adding data to the existing literature on Ethnicity, this kind of study lays a foundation to understanding why ethnic loyalty overrides Christian unity and identity. This study provides a means to self-reflection and evaluation of Church in Kenya, borrowing critical sociological lessons from the early Israel confederation of tribes as is brought forth in Deborah's song (Judges 5). These

principles will enable the Kenyan Church to restore and regain her moral authority which will be instrumental in enhancing inter-ethnic cohesiveness in the Country.

### 1.7 Theoretical Framework

One fairly well established theory that is employed in this research in exploring the Early Israel Amphictyony is Mancur Olson's Collective Action Theory (Claud, 2018). This theory which manifests in communities, organizations and other settings in ways such as in protests, awareness raising and campaigns geared towards a common course. This may in other words mean, a structured group(s) effort aimed at achieving or addressing something jointly and mutually.

Mancur Olson's Collective Action Theory is employed as a framework in which the study of the period that preceded the emergence of the monarchy is done. A period in which the Israelite tribes formed a particular kind of association which Martin Noth (1958) in his book, 'The History of Israel' refers to as the 'Amphictyony'. The Israelites formed a confederation of tribes whose main focus was a common sanctuary. According to Martin (1975: 9), it was the location of the Ark which symbolized the presence of God with the people, hence it determined where the central sanctuary was. The central sanctuary in early Israel is noted to have been in different places first at Shechem, then Bethel, then Gilgal and finally Shiloh. Interestingly, all this time, the tribes of Israel were united.

The towering idea in which this study will resonate is that, since the twelve tribes of Israel managed to survive for a period of about two hundred years, as a self-conscious entity in solidarity, peace and harmony, it is possible for Kenyan tribes to rise above negative ethnicity, with the Church being the chief driving force in this process. This research dwells around the confederation of the tribes of Israel, establishing what held the tribes of Israel together in unity, the manifestations of the unity of the tribes in operations of the Amphictyony. This study then proceeds to test and advance the hypothesis that Negative Ethnicity in Kenya is an accurate reflection of the Church in Kenya. This research eventually culminates into the sociological implication of the early Israel Amphictyony as is exemplified in Deborah's song (Judges 5) in the Kenyan context.

**1.8 Statement of Limitation.**

The book of Judges is a fairly large book which comprises 21 chapters. In this study, the researcher only focuses primarily on the study of one chapter and that is Judges 5. In addition, it is important to note that there are numerous methods of studying a biblically text. However, this research only adopts the social scientific approach by Norman Gottwald alongside the exegetical and hermeneutical methods of studying biblical passages.

Naturally, the scope of this research is limited since it carries out a study of church unity and ethnic identity in Kenya. Apart from considering primarily the aforementioned specific geographical location, this study is also directed to only one religion that is Christianity.

Time is also a point of limitation, owing to the fact that this research is conducted within the confines of spelt out academic deadlines pursuant of St. Paul's University guidelines. This research unlike other researches which allow unlimited time for data collection, only goes by the data gathered, analyzed, sieved and organized before the spelt out deadlines of submission, presentation and defense.

### 1.9 Chapter Outline.

This study has six chapters:

Chapter One: Introduction. It comprises of the background of the study, problem of the statement, research objectives, research question, hypothesis, justification for research, limitation of study and the definition of key terms.

Chapter Two: The Literature Review. This entails a critical evaluation of what scholars have proposed in the following respective fields: the Amphictyony of early Israel, ethnicity, negative ethnicity and the impact of negative ethnicity on the Church.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology. This states the way the study is conducted which includes the Social – scientific, the exegetical and hermeneutical approaches. The social scientific approach is used to clarify the social condition of the tribal union of early Israel during the time of Judges, while the exegetical and hermeneutical methods are used to understand the deeper and intended implication of Judges 5.

Chapter Four: Exegesis. This Chapter entails an elaborate exegesis of the Song of Deborah – Judges 5, employing the social scientific method in the study of the text and the study of early Israel. This passage (Judges 5) comprises crucial elements of the tribal federation of early Israel.

Chapter Five: The Research Analysis. This Chapter comprises an in-depth analysis of the key themes and principles obtained from the research findings. The analysis is based on the findings obtained from the social scientific and exegetical approach employed to study Judges 5.

Chapter Six: Conclusion. This includes the summary of the findings from the field and literature review. Other than the summary it also includes the eventual recommendations from the study.

# CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

This section entails a review of facts advanced by scholars about the Amphictyony of early Israel, Ethnicity, the history of the diversity of ethnicity in Kenya and the impact of it in the Church. However, it is imperative to note that the term 'Amphictyony' is not found in the Bible let alone the book of Judges. This chapter assesses the concept of the Amphictyony in the context of the book of Judges; the historical background of ethnic diversity in Kenya and the impact of Ethnicity in the Church.

## 2.2 The Concept of Amphictyony in Early Israel

The book of Judges which forms part of the second main section of the Old Testament Canon which is referred to as the Historical Books, consists of a series of independent episodes all joined by a common motif of Israel's twelve tribe system also referred to as Amphictyony. The book of Judges also provides part of the story of Israel's traditional history. The researcher's reason for the choice of the book of Judges is because, it provides the traditional view in which the people of Israel settled in Canaan in a tribal league, with a consistent history on how the tribal confederation operated as a united entity.

Having successfully conquered and entered the Promised Land, the chosen people of God had the task of settling down on their new space. The Israelite tribes which took possession of the cultivated land of Palestine, were not at first united or led and organized under a common leadership. Relations between the tribes were loose with very little close contact, at least until during the latter stages of their settlement. It did not take too long, before prominent personalities

Emerged in the name of 'Judges', and ascended to the leadership of the people of God (Herrmann, 1975: 112).

Over the years, there continued to be speculations about the precise nature of Israel's organizational structure during the period of the judges. Israel's twelve tribe system was a religious association of twelve tribes revolving around a shrine, pledged to a peaceful coexistence and a common defense against outside aggression. Howard Jr. (1993: 108) notes that, the twelve tribes of Israel met occasionally to affirm the covenant and its system of common defense.

Martin (1975: 10) observes that the ongoing scholarly conversation on the book of Judges, has focused so much on criticizing Noth's idea of the existence of an Amphictyony in ancient Israel. The sanctuaries which were said to have been central sanctuaries are now no longer regarded as such with so much confidence. In addition to this, scholars have also continued to engage on the final appendix of the book of Judges which comprises of chapters 19 to 21, contending that there is much to suggest that it is a compilation of a very late date.

The question of the origin of the book of Judges inevitably arises when approaching the book from a literary rather than a historical point of view. The book of Judges embodies various sections, each with a different topic as its primary concern. As a result, there are too many differences in style in the way the book of Judges is knit together. Martin (1975: 5) concurs with other Old Testament scholars that the book of Judges is part of a larger whole, which comprises the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings with the book of Deuteronomy as its preface.

### 2.3 An Anatomy of Ethnicity.

There has been a considerable amount of previous academic research in the field of Ethnicity done by prominent authors namely: Michael Hitchcock (2002), Francis F. Lyimo (2002); Tarimo

Fenton (1999). According to Tarimo (2000:22), ethnicity refers to a group of people sharing a common name, language, symbols, socio-political organization, religious beliefs, cultural heritage, sometimes territory, common descent or ancestry and a group identity.

Ethnic plurality has an affinity of being highly politicized and yet the Church grows and seems to flourish along ethnic lines. The researcher holds that ethnicity in itself is good for the beauty of diversity of a people and a nation. Some scholars have indicated that it is possible to talk of negative and positive ethnicity. For instance, Koigi wa Wamwere defines negative ethnicity as "ethnic hatred and bias" (Wamwere, 2003, p. 22). While positive ethnicity is basically the profound embrace of an ethnic group by another as people who share a common identity which include name, history, language, and culture (Kamara, 2010, p. 128). In a context of negative ethnicity, the religious life of people is key for many reasons, especially when it comes to the social and moral being of any society. It would be ideal to provide a historical background of ethnic diversity in Kenya prior to missionary activities and colonialism.

Aguilar (1998: 6) and Barth (1998: 13) both concur that ethnicity is created by the establishment of social boundaries. That is to say, ethnic identity is as much an identification of who we are not, as it is of who we are. Ethnic groups then, are socially constructed entities, which form a larger taxonomy of people which informs actors within a particular social environment. By contrast, Isajiw (1979:10) defines the ethnic group as "an involuntary group of people who share the same culture or the descendants of such people who might identify themselves and/or are identified by others as belonging to the same involuntary group."

## 2.4 Historical Background of Ethnic Diversity in Kenya.

Robert W. Strayer holds that, by the time missionaries were arriving in Kenya, structurally there was political decentralization. In addition, there was a conspicuous absence of a separate or autonomous political sector. In that case, "it was not the state but the cross-cutting links of age and kinship, institutionalized in corporate descent and age group, which provided cohesion for these rural communities" (Strayer, 1978: 3). Strayer further notes that "careful historical study of most East African people reveals a pattern of heterogeneous and diverse origins very far from notions of ethnic purity" (Strayer, 1978: 4). The other scholar who reflects on precolonial Africa is Eunice Kamara. Kamara agrees with Strayer that a careful consideration of the ancient years, reveals that Africa was not ethnically homogeneous. Societies existed side by side although individually unique in cultural, social, economic and political organizations (Kamara, 2010, 129).

On the other hand, alluding to the 1994 historic genocide which had befallen Rwanda between the Hutus and Tutsi, the bloody ordeal might actually cause one to pause in blaming racism entirely, for every conceivable ill that has occurred in humankind. Tutu (1999: 207) notes that, much as the whites had a hand in fomenting the ethnic internecine strife, the actual perpetrators were blacks against counterpart blacks, where one ethnic group wants to assert itself as a ‘top dog’, therefore, reducing the other(s) via unbelievable means which tend to be mostly violent and brutal.

## 2.5 The Impact of Ethnicity on the Church

Moore (1994:16) asserts that the Church is generally racked by party spirit and mutual distrust. It is sickening to note that the Anglicans, Lutherans, Methodists and Roman Catholics just to mention a handful of mainstream churches, have fragments among themselves and within their own houses as well, depicting an intolerance that is not of Christ. More reason why the Church is yet to recover,

what it means to be the body of Christ in which each member is significant and has vital functions to perform. Tutu (1999:207) contends that, human beings are capable and have full capacities of unleashing against fellow human beings. In African history and Kenya to be more precise, those who had turned against one another in gory fashion, had often intermarried and lived amicably in the same villages with one another, most of them being members of the Church.

It is and has always been God's intention that we should live in friendship and harmony. That was the point of the story of the Garden of Eden, where there was no bloodshed, not even for religious sacrifice. The lion and the lamb played together, and all were vegetarian. Human beings later came to be at loggerheads, blaming one another and being at one another's throats. Alienation and disharmony, conflict and turmoil, enmity and hatred have continued to characterize so much of life. According to Tutu (1999:212), Christians are the most forgiven people in the world. Therefore, we should be the most genuinely and completely forgiving people in the world. The unfortunate reality is that Christians are the most unforgiving people in the world.

In most African cultures today, moral issues are informed by both the religion they ascribe to, traditional culture which is still very strong and to some extent reason. The church has been accused over the years of taking sides when a crisis arises, a time when unity is really needed. For example, during conflicts that are ethnic in nature, churches stand in solidarity with their ethnic side of affiliation. At such time, Church unity sublimes into ethnic identities.

Positive ethnicities bring to the church all of the linguistic and cultural benefits of incarnated Christian living. The gospel translated into the “heart-language” of the mother tongue for instance, can move the soul beyond what any attempt to communicate in a second language can do. An appreciation of the different culture of a fellow Christian, can deepen our own understanding of the nature of the truth and of the Kingdom.

In contrast, negative ethnicity robs the Church of her ability to create a new community. According to Waruta (1992:6), "most religious groups and denominations, closely scrutinized, are very ethnic in their composition and leadership. Those that happen to be multi-ethnic with a national outlook are plagued with internal interethnic conflicts". The subject of negative ethnicity operates and creates so much tension in the Church as it does in the political arena.

Large established churches have bigger problems with democracy than the smaller newer churches. Although the latter are more “fundamentalist”, they are more democratic within, providing more prospects within for internal promotion and are not determined by a striving for supremacy. Waruta (1992:7) opines that, as far as the history of African Christianity is concerned, this situation is linked to the method applied by certain missionaries of concentrating their effort of evangelization within a given ethnic group, "thus producing a largely one-ethnic denomination. In the process of maintaining their dominance, such ethnic groups tend to conduct their worship services in their ethnic languages, thus keeping out all the others".

Concerning power distribution and administration, leaders such as bishops from the Kenyan mainstream churches, are often appointed and assigned duties basically on ethnic arrangements as more and more dioceses and geographical jurisdictions are created along ethnic boundaries. These churches are threatened by the clamor for each ethnic group to have its own bishop or leader. In

an attempt to unveil the problems facing the church today, Tarimo (2000:25) says that, the challenge of the Church is how it can appeal to the gospel values, to construct a new community with new social relationships.

Tutu (1999: 223), who defines the Church as a living organization contends that, if the Church with her immense influence and potential as an agent of unity and equality, is unable to bring people together regardless of their ethnic groups, then the wrong message is sent to both politicians and the people of God at large.

### 2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that much as the Church enjoys a huge presence in Kenya, she still faces the challenge of uniting her members in one formidable identity irrespective of the existing diverse backgrounds. Ethnic geographical locations form territories, that at times experience conflicts which have continued to threaten national unity to date. This chapter has put to perspective the goal of this research which is, providing apt and suitable social solutions to the existing negative ethnicity in Kenya from Deborah's Song in Judges 5.

# CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter entails the methods that are utilized in carrying out the study. This research is conducted using three key methodologies namely: the social scientific approach, the exegetical approach and the hermeneutical approach. The social scientific method will help reveal the sociological issues revolving around the tribal union of early Israel. On the other hand, the exegetical approach and the hermeneutical approach will be employed to disclose the in-depth meaning and interpretation of the Song of Deborah, as is recorded in Judges 5.

## 3.2 Social – Scientific Method

Many scholars, among them Norman Gottwald employ the Social Scientific approach in the assessment of the social organization and cultural materialism of the early Israelite community. The Social-scientific approach emanates from the premise that the Bible is not only a religious literature recording divine incidences or a record of divine history initiated and developed by God, but it is also a record of social events that are uniquely Israelite in nature and differentiates Israel from other tribes in the Ancient Near East world. This study uses this method in the analysis of the sociology of Ancient Israel around her tribal confederation.

According to Gottwald (1979:51), the Social Scientific method traces a history of Israel that includes customary, political and religious axes of its life, which is completely and adequately representative of early Israel's real life conditions. This method observes the texts from the sociological point of view, where the society's structures and common processes of socialization amongst a people are given eminence. The Social scientific approach which embodies theoretical and analytical tools, illuminates in this study Judges 5 in light of negative ethnicity. This approach

also aids the study of the social arrangement and organization of ancient Israel in its units, either at a particular moment in cross-section or over a course of time.

### 3.3 Exegetical Method.

The exegetical approach is defined according to Peter (1994: 60), as a careful and systematic study of the scripture in order to discover the original, intended meaning of a passage. According to Gorman (1955: 8), exegesis also known as "scholarly reading" or "close reading" means a careful historical, literary and theological analysis of a text. The aim of exegesis is to aid in the understanding of a text through hermeneutical principles. This method brings together the text and the reader to meet at a certain point since both are distance by both time and subject matter. Through exegesis, a coherent and credible understanding of a text on its own terms and in its own context is achieved.

Exegesis as Gorman (1955: 9) holds, has to do with an investigation, conversation and art of many dimensions and textures of specific texts. It is a process of asking deliberate questions that are often provoked by the text itself. This research undertakes a critical exegesis employing the Diachronic approach also known as the historical – critical method, with the goal of focusing more particularly on the passage that entails Deborah's Song (Judges 5), with the aim of understanding the world behind the text, reading in the text as well as reading in front of the text, with the objective of deducing the significant sociological principles of the text in the contemporary Church in Kenya and world today.

### 3.4 The Hermeneutical Approach.

This study also employs the hermeneutical approach which is employed to elucidate a text's present meaning rather than its original intent. The word Hermeneutics is derived from a Greek

word which is translated as “to interpret”. Osborne (2006: 22), observes three noteworthy hermeneutical concepts: First, hermeneutics is a science that provides a logical, structured classification of the laws of interpretation; Second, hermeneutics is an art demanding both imagination and an ability to apply the laws to selected passages or books; Third and most significant, hermeneutics when utilized to interpret scripture is a spiritual act, relying on the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Hermeneutics is vital because it facilitates the movement from Judges 5 to the Kenyan context, to allow the God-inspired meaning of the text to speak today with as fresh and dynamic relevance as it had in its original setting of Amphictyony in early Israel. According to Osborne (2006:26), much as modern critics increasingly object the very possibility of discovering the original and intended meaning of a text, the Hermeneutical Approach has continued to be employed to discover and establish the intention of the author and the text believed to have been inspired by God.

### 3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has basically shown, the viable methodologies this research has critically employed to reach its goal of providing helpful solutions for combating negative ethnicity In Kenya. The methodologies this research will utilize are namely the social scientific approach on the study of the Amphictyony of Israel; this will be flanked by both the exegetical and hermeneutical methods on the study of the song of Deborah – Judges 5.

In summary, this research which perceives ethnicity as social identification based on the presumption of a shared history and a common cultural inheritance, regards ethnicity as good thing but renders negative ethnicity as disastrous. The research endeavors to demonstrate that, Kenya as a nation will only achieve inter-ethnic cohesion like the Amphictyony in early Israel,

when the Church resigns from her polarization around ethnic affiliations. Without which, it will constantly be an uphill task to unite Kenya as a country as long as the Church is infiltrated by conspicuous ethnic cracks. This study shows why the Church needs to adopt a socio-scientific approach of Judges 5 in eradicate negative ethnicity both within the Church and nationally.

# CHAPTER FOUR: EXEGESIS.

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter primarily focuses on the ancient Song of Deborah as is recorded in Judges 5 with the objective of unearthing its meaning so as to propose ways of eliminating negative ethnicity in Kenya. Its central themes and its principles which are relevant to our lives today. It goes further to consider the literary form, setting and textual structure of the periscope. This chapter later conducts a detailed analysis and synthesis of Judges 5:6-19. It also highlights other biblical texts in the Old Testament that speak to negative ethnicity, alongside the attitudes of Israelites towards non-Israelites. The researcher in carrying out an exegesis of Judges 5:6-19 employs the diachronic approach, also referred to as the historical – critical method with a close eye on the origin and development of the Judges 5:6-19. In order to get the original and intended meaning of the Judges 5:6-19, this chapter begins by translating the Hebrew text into English as shown below:

## 4.2 Translation of Judges 5:6-19.

| **Hebrew Text** |
| --- |

בִּימ שׁמגר בן ענת בִּימֵי יעל חִדְלוּ אֳרחת והלְכ נְתִיבֹת ילְכוּ אֳרחֹת עקלקלת:

חדלוּ פרזן בישׂראל חדלוּ עַד שׁקמתּ דּבוֹרה שׁקמתּ אם בישׂראל:

יבחר אלהים חדשׁים אז לחֶם שׁערם מגן אם יראה ורמח בראבעם אלף בישׂראל:

לִבּ לחקק יִשׂראל המתנדבם בעם ברכְ יהוה:

רכב אתנת צחרת ישׁב על מִדִּן והלכ על דּרךְ שׂיח:

קוֹל מחצצם בין משׁאבִּם שׁם יתנּ צִדְקת יהוה צדקת פּרזן בישׂר אל אז ירד לשׁערם עַם יהוה:

עוּרְ עוּרִ דּברה עוּר עוּר דּבר שִׂר קוּם ברק ושׁבה שׁביך בן אבנעם:

אז יַרד שׂרד לאדּרם עם יהוה ירד לי בגּבּרם:

מנּ אפרים שׁרשׁם בעמלֵק אחֲריךְ בִּנְיָמִין בעממךְ מנּי מכר ירד מחקקם ומזבלן משׁכם בשֵׁבט ספר:

ושׂר בישׁשכר עם דּברה וישׁשכר כן ברק בעמק שׁלח ברגל בפלגת ראבן גדלם חקק לב:

לָמּה ישׁבתּ בין המשׁפתם לשׁמַע שׁרקת עדרם לפלגת ראבן גדלם חקוּ לב:

נִלעד בעבר הרדֵן שׁכן ודן למה יגר אניּת אשׂר ישׁב לחף ימם ועל מפרע ישׁכן:

זבֻלן עם חֵרֵף נַפְשׁוֹ לָמוּת וְנַפתּלִיְ על מְרוֹמי שָׂדֵה:

בא מלכם נִלחמ אז נִלחמ מלכֵ כנען בתענךְ על מי מגדּ בצע כסף לא לקח:

**Working Translation.**

[6]"In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways ceased, and those going in paths traveled in byways.

**[7]** The leaders ceased in Israel; they ceased until I, Deborah, arose; I arose as a mother in Israel.

**[8]** They chose new gods; then war was in the gates. Neither a shield nor spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel

**[9]** My heart was toward lawgivers of Israel, who freely offered themselves among the people. Bless Jehovah.

**[10]** You that ride on white asses, you that sit on rich carpets, and you travelers on the way.

[11] Louder than the voice of dividers between the watering places, there they shall tell of the righteous acts of Jehovah, the righteous acts of His leaders in Israel. "Then the people of Jehovah went down to the gates.

[12] "Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, utter a song! Rise, Barak, and lead your captives captive, son of Abinoam.

[13] Then he caused me tread on the remnant of the noble ones of the people; Jehovah trod for me among the warriors.

[14] Out of Ephraim they came, those whose root was against Amalek. After you, Benjamin, among your peoples; and out of Machir came down commanders, and out of Zebulun the ones that hold the staff of the scribe;

[15] And my commanders in Issachar were with Deborah, as was Issachar, so was Barak. They were sent into the valley at his feet. Among the divisions of Reuben searchings of heart were great.

[16] Why did you sit between the sheepfolds, to hear the bleating of flocks? At the divisions of Reuben searchings of heart were great.

[17] Gilead remained beyond the Jordan; and why did Dan, stay in the ships? Asher sat on the shore by the water, and remained by his havens.

[18] Zebulun, a people who despised his life, even to death; Naphtali on the high places of the field.

[19] Kings came, they fought; then the kings of Canaan fought in Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of silver.

### 4.3 Literary Form

The language and style of Judges 5 portrays that it is an ancient piece. A piece that falls in the literary form or genre of poetry. According to McCann (2002: 55), Judges 5 is amongst the oldest if not the oldest Israelite poem that has come down to us. The Song of Deborah has visible and conspicuous characteristics of Hebrew Poetry such as Synonymous Parallelism, which is the most common form of parallelism in Hebrew poetry. Lias (1882: 30) contends that, this occurs when the second portion of the verse simply repeats the idea of the first in different words as is the case in vv. 12, 15, 18, 21 and 23.

Chapter 5 is distinctive in the book of Judges, though not in the Old Testament as a whole. In several other books, poetry is inserted into a narrative as it is here. Perfect examples are the songs of Moses in both Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32, and Jonah's psalm in Jonah 2. Judges 5 is a very ancient song recounting in the form of poetry, the events that chapter 4 has already narrated in prose. Wilcock (1992: 64) notes that in a deeper sense the poetry in Judges 5 makes certain things even clearer than the prose does.

The other kind of Hebrew parallelism which occurs in the Song of Deborah is Synthetic parallelism. According to Lias (1882: 30) in this type of parallelism, the second member of the

sentence extends and completes the idea of the first. Good instances of Synthetic parallelism are to be found in vv. 12, 14 and 19. Finally, on the Hebrew parallelisms that feature in the Song of Deborah is, the synonymous parallelism. This is where in four clauses, either the first corresponds to the last and the third to the second, or the first to the third and the second to the fourth (Lias, 1882: 31). An instance of this can be found in v. 19 of the song of Deborah. There is some repetition in verse 6 of the word 'days', repetition is largely used in poetry to capture the reader's attention. According to the researcher, the poem also employs the poetic device of Symbolism in verse 8 by the usage of the phrase translated as 'new gods'.

### 4.4 Literary Setting:

#### 4.4.1 Historical Context

The book of Judges spans a critical period in Israelite history from the death of Joshua to a tragically costly and unholy civil war (Jgs. 19-20), in which total liquidation of the tribe of Benjamin is narrowly averted (ch .21). Meeks (1993: 367) asserts that, the book's background extends from the closing decades of the Late Bronze Age through to the Iron I period (ca. 1200-1020 B.C.E.). The 410 year era that results from adding up the periods of oppression, the tenures of the judges, and the periods of "rest" mentioned in the book assumes that the judges governed "all Israel" sequentially. In fact, leadership was more likely local and overlapping. Despite sweeping claims in the preceding book of Joshua of conquest of the entire land, Judges describes continued warfare with Canaanites, plus challenges to Israel's hegemony posed mainly by the various tribal groups (Midianites, Amalekites, and other Easterners), the emerging territorial states (Moab and Ammon), and the arrival of the Philistines on the coast.

Lias (1882: 34) holds that, the song of Deborah in Judges 5 provides such an insight into the inner life of Israel, the conditions and customs of the country, and the relations of the tribes. Reading

the song of Deborah, we see the warriors of Israel assembling for the battle, as well as the personal life of the quiet villages, and the simple dignity of the men of influence. The song of Deborah contains the most interesting information about the conditions and occupations of the tribes, the isolation of Judah, the irresolution of Reuben, the indifference of Gad, the selfish conduct of Dan and Asher, all engrossed in commercial and maritime pursuits.

### 4.4.2 Social & Cultural Context

The poem reflects the probable historical situation of the Israelites in the period between 1200 and 1020 B.C. In this era, the emerging Israelites would have lived in the highlands, beyond and between the spheres of influence of the more powerful Canaanite city-states. Early Israelites were opposed to the Canaanite city-state system and its hierarchical organization. McCann (2002: 55) argues that, biological families and extended families worked together to attempt to subsist at the margins of Canaanite control. As a result, life became a struggle for subsistence which entailed: a struggle to grow enough crops for food; a struggle between the agriculturally oriented Israelite peasantry and small villagers on one hand, and the more urbanized and commerce oriented Canaanites on the other; a struggle that would have required the contribution of all able-bodied persons, including women.

Soggin (1981: 94) contends that the language of Judges 5 is older than the classical Hebrew of the eighth century BC, but later than that of the so called Gezer calendar from the end of the tenth century BC. The poetry of the song of Deborah presupposes a poetic tradition of some magnitude, and the acquisition of considerable skill. There are however some elements which might suggest a stay of some length in Canaan. Israel considers herself quite naturally as the master of the land, and others as oppressors if not trespassers. This reflects the point of view of the earlier monarchy, much as the early monarchy is not mentioned clearly.

### 4.5 Literary Context

Various theories have emerged over the centuries of scholarly study of the Old Testament, as a solution to the question of the origins and authorship of the book of Judges. When putting to consideration the dating and authorship of the book of Judges, the following questions come to mind: whether the author was one and the same throughout?; whether the book is of early origin and if it is so, how then is the history of Micah, the Danites and the Levites featuring in the book? The book of Judges has been attributed to various periods and to various authors. According to Lias (1882: 10), the book of Judges was written later than the previous books of the Old Testament. The book of Judges was either written by a prophet or under the supervision of one, after David had become an undisputed king over Israel, and after he had overthrown his enemies round about, but most probably before the disorders of his later years, commencing with Absalom's rebellion, fixing the date between 1042 and 1023 B.C.

In common with the other "Former Prophets," the book of Judges is anonymous. Because it contains a historical record that extends over centuries, the unknown author had to resort to sources for information about events that did not happen during his own lifetime. Whether these sources were written or oral, or both, cannot be determined with certainty. According to rabbinic tradition the author of the book of Judges was Samuel (Roehrs, 1979: 158). But there is no reference in the book itself or in other Biblical books to sustain this assertion. Nevertheless, it is quite likely that the book was written during or soon after the time when this imposing figure in Israel's history had appeared on the scene.

According to McCann (2002: 55), numerous struggles are reflected in the poem, which assumes an oppressive situation from which the Israelites needed to be liberated. The situation is most clearly suggested in verses 6-8. Verse 6 depicts Canaanite control of roads and trade routes,

apparently resulting in hardship for the Israelite "peasantry" (vv. 7, 11) until Deborah began to exercise leadership. Verse 7 in NIV says, "Village life in Israel ceased, ceased until I, Deborah, arose, a mother in Israel." This seems closer to the Hebrew text and communicates more clearly the result of Canaanite oppression.

The poem unearths an element of liberation by describing a deadly threat and celebrating deliverance from it against all odds. As verse 9 suggests, addressing the Canaanite threat requires the participation of all the people who must offer themselves voluntarily and willingly. The poem thanks God for those who did "offer themselves willingly" (v. 9), commending them by their tribal names (vv. 14-15b; 18). It also recognizes that some did not contribute to the effort, and it takes them to task criticizing them by their tribal or group names (vv. 15 - 17). The lack of a unified effort also reflects the probable historical realities of the period between 1200 and 1020 B.C. There was almost certainly not an organized, centralized tribal league. McCann (2002: 56) holds that in early Israel, leadership apart from being occasional in nature, it was more localized to specific tribal groups. Insofar as the book of Judges gives the impression of more organized political structures, this is the result of the later editing of earlier stories and traditions, probably by the so called Deuteronomistic Historian.

The very looseness of early Israelite social and political organization, along with the requirements of a substance economy, probably explains why women could play such a major role in Israelite life, as they clearly do in the book of Judges, especially in Chapters 4 -5. The oppressive situation mentioned in 4:3 and described in 5:6-8 was reversed "because Deborah arose as a אם 'mother' in Israel" (v. 7). "Mother" in Israel may be understood as a sort of office. Deborah does appear to have functioned in some sort of official legal capacity, although the final clause of (Jgs. 4:5) could

be translated as “and the Israelites came up to her for justice.” And this clause could be understood to mean that in a situation of deadly oppression, the people sought Deborah’s help in effecting deliverance from death and restoration of conditions that support life as God intends it – in a word, justice. McCann (2002: 57) infers that from this perspective, “mother of Israel” suggests that it was Deborah’s efforts that in effect, gave Israel a new life and went ahead to nurture the conditions that would sustain her life. In either case, the title “mother in Israel” communicates the honor and gratitude extended to Deborah by the people.

### 4.6 Textual Structure

The outline of the song of Deborah in Judges 5:6-19 is as follows:

a. The conditions prevailing before the battle vv. 6-8;
b. The call to participate in the battle vv. 9-13;
c. The response of the tribes vv. 14-18;
d. And the battle itself vv. 19.

### 4.7 Detailed Analysis

**v. 6.**

חֲדָלוּ֙ אֲרָחֹ֔ת וְהֹלְכֵ֖י נְתִיב֑וֹת

**Those going in paths traveled in byways.**

Presumably not the main trade routes of the coastal plain, which had never been in their control, but those from the hill country to Arabia and other remote regions. The Israelites concentrated in the hill country were responsible for the cessation of caravans traveling to and from the remoter regions to the south and east, the caravans that followed the **נתב** “winding roads,” not the level

main roads of Esdraelon and the coastal plain. This circumstance according to Boiling (1969: 118), profited Israel since usually caravans were the monopoly of kings and other wealthy nobility who led the country.

Reference is made to abandoned roads (5:6), with travel possible only by crooked back roads, and a pall of fear on village life (v. 7). This seems to point to the economic strangulation of the life of the Israelite villagers by control of the major trade routes, such as the west-to-east road from Dor to Beth-shean and the south-to-north road from Joppa to Hazor by way of Megiddo (Hamlin, 1990: 82).

**v. 7**

חדלו פרזן בישׂראל

**The leaders ceased in Israel.**

Some scholars give a different interpretation of the phrase "the leaders ceased," preferring to translate the verb חדל as "grew fat or plump," that is, on raids on Canaanite caravans. The NRSV translates the phrase as, "the peasantry prospered in Israel" while the NIV translates it as, "villagers in Israel would not fight." The problem with this interpretation is that it does not fit with the climax of vv. 6-8, "until you arose…" or the reference to the poor preparation of the militia for battle (v. 8). According to Hamlin, (1990: 83), the befitting interpretation of v. 7 which is given to "the leaders ceased" refers to the capitulation of some of the oppressed people when they "forsook God." Deborah arose with wise leadership as Israel's mother-savior to give her people a generation of stability.

At the climax of this section Deborah is lauded as **אם** "a mother". The title "mother" appears to be honorific, bestowed by the poet for the entertainment of folk who customarily associated oracular technique with the priestly title of "father" (Boling, 1969: 118).

**v. 8.**

יבחר אלֹהים חדשׁים

**They chose new gods.**

Here is a flashback to a more recent period of warfare in which Jael, Shamgar, Deborah and Baraq had taken part. The NRSV translates the phrase as, "when new gods were chosen" while the NIV translates it as, "God chose new leaders." The researcher prefers the NRSV translation to the NIV translation since, it is in line with the original text. The time reference appears more specifically, to be the beginning of that period, when the initial successes against the caravans had led to a sense of satisfaction with the status quo. Here is an Israel which was prosperous, complacent and was turning to other gods (Baal and his consort Astarte or Asherah, as specified in 2:13 and 3:7), fighting with each other, with many unwilling to take up YHWH's cause, to take control of Esdraelon and other crucial territories belonging to the promised land, especially in face of superior Canaanite arms and Philistine military leadership. In this situation Deborah had aroused an army for Baraq and spurred both on to action (Boling, 1969: 119).

אז לחֶם שׁערִם

**Then war was In the Gates**

Deborah, inspired by YHWH, made the decision for war, against the better judgement of Barak (4.8). This decision was made in response to the cries which the people brought to God through her as a prophet. Deborah would be able to meet with the elders of the villages of Ephraim and Manasseh in the שׁער "gate or entrance of the city", to urge their participation in the liberation struggle (Hamlin, 1990: 84).

**v. 9**

לחקק יִשׂראל המתנדבם בעם

**Law-givers who freely offered themselves among the people.**

The cultic community was called upon to praise God for the חקק "prescribers or law-givers", who נדב "volunteered" and offered themselves freely to fight and to give leadership. Here, the leaders and the people are called upon to praise God for the victory that has been won (Martin, 1975: 66). The NRSV translates the phrase as, "the commanders of Israel who offered themselves willingly among the people" while the NIV translates it as, "Israel princes who willing volunteered among the people." The researcher prefers the working translation of חקק as "law-givers" to both the NRSV and NIV.

**v. 10**

**אתנת**

**She asses.**

The nobles and the wealthy were the only ones, who could afford to ride on **אתנת** "she - ass" which is basically in reference to light-colored animals. These animals which were a reserve for the wealthy were saddled with rich carpets. Both NRSV and the NIV translate this expression as, "white donkeys", translations which the researcher finds problematic. The nobles as well as the less favored who walk were to assemble at "the gates" and "repeat" i.e. to sing responsively their song of thanksgiving (Roehrs, 1979: 165). The differences in verse 10 may be differences of activity or social class. Whether they are travelling, either riding as befits the wealthier members of society, or afoot, or sitting in their tents on their saddle-cloths, they are bidden to ponder what God has done for his people. The places where the women draw water are thought of as social centres where ballads of the country's heroic past would be sung. These folk-songs, too commemorate the victories of the Lord. In the 'holy war', it is God who fights alongside and for his people; it is God who is the true champion of Israel (Martin, 1975: 67).

**v. 11**

צדקת

**Righteousness acts.**

More literally "triumphs" or "acts of triumph"; other translations of the same Hebrew word **צִדְקֹת** in the RSV are: "saving deeds" or "saving acts" (1 Samuel 12:7); "righteous acts" (Daniel 9:16); and "vindication" (Ps 103:6). While the NRSV translates the phrase as, "the triumphs" while the NIV translates it as, "the victories." The researcher, prefers the NRSV translation to the NIV and RSV, since it is closer to the Hebrew text. Through human judges, the judge of heaven and earth

restored to the Lord's penitent covenant people, the right to serve the purpose for which they had been chosen and to bless all nations (Roehrs, 1979: 165).

**v. 12**

עוּר דְּבֹר שִׁר

**Awake…Utter a song!**

עוּר "arouse oneself or awake" according to Boiling (1969: 119), is in reference to being active militarily as the God of the venerable Ark of the Covenant. The NIV translates the phrase as, "wake up, break out in song", which according to the researcher misses the military activity as is brought out by the Hebrew word עֽוּר 'arouse'.

**v. 13**

אז יְרַד שָׂרִד לְאַדִּרִים עם

**Then he caused me to tread on the remnant of the noble ones of the people;**

Deborah and Baraq, stirred by the action of God's call, were able to arouse at least six tribes to a common venture of faith against apparently insurmountable odds (Roehrs, 1979: 165). The idea of ירד "coming down or marching down" here does not refer to descending from Mount Tabor, which is mentioned as the place of muster in ch. 4. The reference in ch. 5 is rather to the descent of the Israelite warriors, from the hill-country of Galilee to the plain of Jezreel (Martin, 1975: 70). The NRSV translates the phrase as, "then down marched the remnant of the noble" while the NIV

translates it as, “the remnant of the nobles came down.” According to the researcher, both the NRSV and NIV translations are in line with the Hebrew text.

**v. 14.**

אפרים בנימין מכר

**Ephraim…Benjamin…Machir;**

The three tribes of the hill-country of central Palestine. Machir was Manasseh’s eldest son according to Genesis 50:23 might suggest that he was his only son. The reference here is obviously to that part of the tribe of Manasseh which was settled west of the Jordan. Zebulun and Issachar are two Galilean tribes, the latter apparently being Deborah’s tribe. Barak’s tribe was Naphtali, and one would have expected a reference to Naphtali at this point (Martin, 1975: 70).

Some scholars suggest that the second Issachar in verse 15 is an erroneous repetition of the first, and that נפתל ‘Naphtali’ should be read in its place. Reuben, whose territory lay east of the Jordan, at the north-east corner of the Dead Sea, is the first of the tribes reproached for not participating in the battle. According to Martin (1975: 71), there appears to have been a lack of unanimity about Reuben’s absence.

**vv. 16 – 17**

לפלגת ראבן גדלם חקקי לב:

**At the divisions of Reuben searching of heart were great.**

The reasons for Reuben's חֵקֶר לֵב 'heart-searchings' have to do with sheep-breeding, an important feature of the economy east of Jordan. The tradition in Num. 32 records that the tribes of Reuben and Gad laid special claim to the particularly fine pasture-land east of the Jordan precisely because they had 'large and very numerous flocks'. No reason is given for Gilead's non-participation. Gilead is, strictly speaking, a geographical term, not the name of a tribe, though it does seem to have tribal significance in a passage such as Judg. 11:1-2. The region of Gilead lay east of the Jordan opposite Ephraim and was occupied by the tribe of Gad. According to Martin (1975: 71), the reasons for the non-participation of Dan and Asher both have to do with the sea. This is understandable with regard to Asher, whose territory lay between that of Naphtali and the Mediterranean; it is less so with regard to Dan. The reference to Dan tarrying by the ships makes no sense if we suppose Dan to be still settled in its original territory west of Benjamin and Judah. The researcher assumes that the reference is to Dan settled in the area to the north of Lake Huleh. There of course, the Danites were far inland from the sea, but we could assume that they like the Asherites, provided a labour force for the costal seems to suggest some kind of relationship between the Sidonians and the inhabitants of the region subsequently occupied by the Danites.

**v. 18**

עַל מְרוֹמֵי שָׂדֶה׃

**The high places of the field**

The mention of ten tribes implies a northern federation at this time. Issachar (v. 15) joined Naphtali and Zebulun, since their territories join at Mount Tabor. Perhaps we may assume that the three others (Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh - Machir) were guarding the escape routes on the

southern rim of the valley. This might account for the discrepancy between the ten thousand troops of the prose account and the forty thousand of the poem. Some scholars suggest that the other four tribes (vv. 15-17) also participated in the battle. Hamlin (1990: 85) holds that, the list of tribes in Judg. 5 is interpreted as a "tribal muster" at a covenantal assembly recalling the victory. The absence of Judah is most noticeable, and may mean that Judah was not yet fully a part of the tribal league. The NRSV translates the Hebrew phrase על מרומי שׂדה as, "the heights of the field" while the NIV translates it as, "the terraced fields." The researcher finds both the NRSV and NIV translations problematic, hence prefers the meaning drawn from the Hebrew text.

### 4.7 Biblical Texts That Speak to Negative Ethnicity

#### 4.7.1 Exodus 12:43.

| **Hebrew** |
| --- |
| ויאמר יהוה אל משׁה ואהרן זאת חקּת הפּסח כּל בן נכר לא יאכל בו׃ |
| **Working Translation.** |
| And Jehovah said to Moses and Aaron. This is the ordinance of the Passover. No alien may eat of it. |

**Analysis.**

The Passover could be partaken of by the purchased servants of the Hebrews who had become full Israelites by circumcision. But a foreigner or a hired servant as Falwell (1982: 141) explains, would not partake because he had not become joined to Israel. In addition, no stranger's son could join in the Passover meal. But a גר 'protected resident alien', was allowed to eat the Passover if he was circumcised. A slave born in the house would naturally be circumcised, and thus eligible. Even a

slave ‘bought for money’ may eat if circumcised. This is because as a possession, he is part of the family. Cole (2002: 112) observes that, this reiterates the essential ‘family’ nature of the Passover, and is part of the Israelite concept of ‘symbiosis’, which allowed a lamb from a man’s own flock to represent him as a sacrifice, and also demands the stoning of his household, slaves and animals, if he himself had sinned.

**4.7.2 Leviticus 22:25.**

| **Hebrew** |
| --- |
| וּמִיַּד בֶּן נֵכָר לֹא תַקְרִיבוּ אֶת לֶחֶם אֱלֹהֵכֶם מִכָּל אֵלֶּה כִּי מָשְׁחָתָם בָּהֶם בְּמ֣וּם לֹא יֵרָצוּ לָכֶם: |
| **Working Translation.** |
| And you shall not bring near the bread of your God from the hand of a son of a stranger, or any of these, for their corruption is in them, they are blemished; they are not acceptable for you. |

**Analysis.**

The law about not offering blemished animals was enforced when foreigners made sacrifices to the Lord. According to Keck (1998: 1152), offering discount bargains where the holiness of God was involved was to be strictly forbidden; otherwise the offering will not be accepted by the Lord. Gorman Jr. (1997: 125) adds that, an animal that is obtained from a foreigner may not be offered because it has been ‘mutilated’ and is thus, blemished. Budd (1996: 311) asserts that, such animals are presumably unacceptable, because they do not have origins in the holy land among the holy people. In addition, it is assumed that there are defilement risks stemming from their origins which the Israelite owner may not be aware of.

**4.7.3 Deuteronomy 17:15.**

| **Hebrew** |
| --- |
| שָׂ֣ום תָּשִׂ֤ים עָלֶ֙יךָ֙ מלך אֲשֶׁ֣ר יִבְחַ֔ר יְהוָ֖ה אֱלֹהֶ֑יךָ בְּ֠ מִקֶּ֨רֶב אחיך תשים עלך למך לא תּוּכַ֥ל לָתֵ֛ת עָלֶ֖יךָ אִ֣ישׁ נָכְרִ֑י אשר לא אחיך הוא׃ |
| **Working Translation.** |
| Then you shall certainly set a king over you. You may not set an alien over you, one who is not your brother. |

**Analysis**

Israel was allowed to have a king, if they so desired. But God gave certain rules for establishing a king over His people. Amongst the rules was that the king could not be a foreigner but had to be from among the brethren. On occasion the kings who reigned in Canaan at the time, as Falwell (1982: 35) observes, would be foreigners either conquerors or appointees of conquerors, and nearly always they would attempt to amass horses, harems, wealth, and other accoutrements emblematic of royalty and power. According to Merrill (1994: 265), it is in opposition to things such as these that the law speaks, for the Lord's people and their rules were to treasure and depend on Him more than anything else. Foreign kings would tend to direct Israel's loyalty from the Covenant; a large contingent of horses would rekindle interest in returning to Egypt from which the best were obtained; and many wives with their diverse backgrounds in pagan religions, would induce their husbands to follow after their illicit cults.

**4.7.4 Ezra 9:1-2.**

| **Hebrew** |
| --- |

וככלת אֵלֶּה נגשׁוּ אלַי השׂרים לֵאמֹר לֹא נבדּלוּ העם ישׂראל והכּהנם והולים מעמ
הָארצת ׳כְּתעבתהם לכּנענ החת הפּרזּ היבוּס העמנ המאב המצר והאמר׃

כּי נָשׂאוּ מִבּנֹתֵיהֶם להם ולבנֵהם וְהתערב זֶרע הַקֹּדֶשׁ בעמ הארצת ויד השׂרם

והסגנם היתה בַּמַּעַל הַזֶּה ראשׁנה׃

**Working Translation.**

And at the end of these things, the leaders came to me saying; The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, as to their idolatries, even the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.

For they have taken from their daughters for themselves, and their sons. So, the holy seeds have mixed themselves with the people of the lands. Yes, the hand of the leaders and the overseers has been foremost in this treachery.

**Analysis**

Their chief complaint was that the Jews had not separated themselves from the people of the lands. The greatest concern here was that, the Jewish community was becoming integrated into the heathen nations around Jerusalem. The lack of separation also involved intermarriage with the foreign population around them. Intermarriage was forbidden to prevent the children of Israel from going into idolatry by defiling the Holy Seed. This sin was however not limited to the common people. The leaders were just as guilty. Falwell (1982: 875) observes that, the leader's example and influence was instrumental in leading the people into sin. McConville (1985: 60) explains that, the issue confronting Ezra is no mere peripheral matter, but a covenant breach in itself. Whether

intermarriage with non-Jews was the only sin of the returned exiles, we do not know. The sufficient point of it is that, it represents a denial of their status as God's chosen people. The prohibition of intermarriage was of crucial importance in their ancient charter (Deut. 7:3) and was designed to secure their continued existence as a distinct people, a Holy seed. Clines (1982: 120) argues that, the phrase 'Holy seed' has overtones of the blessing to Abraham (Gen. 12:7). The measure of disobedience in question is greater, in that it is the leaders who have chiefly offended officials and statutes.

### 4.8 Attitudes towards Non-Israelites.

The attitudes towards 'the foreigner' or 'the alien' in the Bible are often quite negative, and this stems from as far back as the period of Patriarchs. Israel does not begin where this designation for the whole people appears for the first time in documentary evidence. According to Herrmann (1975:41), it begins with the first groups who are later to form themselves into a people which understands itself as Israel. This development begins in the period between 2000 BC and 1550 BC (Hinson, 1990: 14), when the nomadic people were seeking to settle in the fertile lands of Mesopotamia and Egypt, and to share the advantages of agriculture. Among them were Abraham, and his descendants Isaac, Esau, and Jacob, and the twelve sons of Jacob. These people moved from Mesopotamia to Palestine, and then into Egypt.

The patriarchs regarded God as God of people, rather than a God of places as the people of the ancient world who lived a settled life, depending on agriculture and living in cities, usually thought of the gods who they worshiped as belonging to a place. God was from the time of patriarchs a God of Covenant and relationship. A covenant with which he constantly renewed with his people starting with Abraham (Gen. 15:1-6), then with Isaac (Gen. 26:23-25), Jacob (Gen. 28:13-15), and also with Joseph (Gen. 37:5-11). Those who inherited the covenant which God made with

Abraham, Hinson (1990: 40) notes, became heirs naturally by circumcision. This was a widespread custom that begun with the Patriarchs and continued amongst the Jews. Those in the ancient world whose customs and beliefs were contrary, were deemed, termed and treated as 'foreigner' from the very on set.

Foreigners often rendered collectively as נכר "sojourners" were to be killed, conquered, or at the very least avoided. The attitude towards foreigners according Brett (2002: 122) who considers them enemies, was not only a product of warfare or conquest, but was also counseled in other matters of social intercourse, such as marriage. Note for example, that a very similar list of the nationalists of foreign women in Ezra 9 is also found in 1 Kings 11:1-2, where Solomon's wives are mentioned, among whom were Ammonite, Moabite, Edomite, Sidonian and Hittite. Marital ties with foreigners also referred to as aliens were discouraged, dispirited and considered unwise amongst the Israelites.

**4.9 Semantic Analysis.**

As distinct from the sojourner who makes Israel his home, the 'foreigner' comes into temporary contact with Israel as a trader, traveler or soldier, without cutting ties with his original home. Foreigners נכרם – either freemen (Exod. 12:43) or slave of Israelites (Gen. 17:12), were not allowed to participate in the cult, and even their animals were not suitable for sacrificial use (Lev. 22:25).

In priestly legislation, the זרם who was barred from contact with the holy objects include all who are not hereditary priests (Exod. 29:33; 30:33). According to Buttrick (1962: 310), this term denotes one who is not a member of the people of Israel (Jgs. 19:12) and 'comes from a far land'

(Dt. 29:22). The נכר 'foreigner' is to be distinguished from the גר 'sojourner', the non-Israelite whose place of residence is in the land of Israel. The enemy who invades the land of Israel is referred to a foreigner (Ezk. 7:21).

The Old Testament includes legislation regarding Israel's relationship to the foreigner in both civil and cultic matters. There was special legislation regarding financial dealings with foreigners (Dt. 15:3). Foreigners were forbidden to be kings over Israel (Dt. 17:15), to enter the temple (Ezk. 44:7), or to participate in the Passover (Ex. 12:43). Even animals brought from foreigners were not to be used in sacrifice (Lev. 22:25).

During the exilic and postexilic periods, when the Israelites were living in increasing numbers in foreign lands, Israel was forced to reconsider her relationship to foreigners. Bromiley (1995: 336) contends that, in some contests the foreigners' role in the religious life of Israel was viewed favorably (1 Kings 8:41-43 which refers to foreigners as Jewish proselytes), in others it was viewed critically (Neh. 9:2; Ezr. 10:2).

A foreigner in exclusive Israel, God's עם קדֹשׁ 'Holy people' (Deut. 14:2), was a person of another race, acknowledging another God (Ex. 20:10). Foreigners such as Canaanites, Egyptians and Philistines were regarded as a possible political menace, and a threat to racial purity and religious integrity. The presence of foreigners from many lands in the tiny bridgehead of the middle east (Palestine), who were left there as deposits of endless waves of conquest and of trading enterprises, accounts for Israel's strict legislation against foreign marriages (Ex. 34:15) and foreign gods (Deut. 12:2).

In the Old Testament, a sojourner was one who though not an Israelite, lived permanently among the Hebrews (Ex. 20:10). According to Miller (1968: 204), the sojourner had a more intimate position in the Hebrew society than the foreigner who was only a temporary visitor. Under the Mosaic Law, sojourners also referred to as strangers had rights (Ex. 22:21) and duties (Ex. 12:19). Israelites were to treat the sojourners kindly (Lev. 19:33).

### 4.10 Synthesis

The nature of the Israelite society in the pre-monarchic period, cannot be covered completely by a discussion of the possible existence of an Israelite tribal federation. Ever since Noth gave the first thorough and systematic presentation of the theory, that pre-monarchic Israel was a tribal federation with a constitution analogous to the later classical Greek Amphictyony, there has been a considerable interest in the question of the nature of Israelite society as a totality. We shall be concerned here first, with the basic social structure of Israel, and secondly, with the problem of the form by which the total society of Israel may have been comprehended.

#### 4.10.1 The Tribal Society

Israel is defined by the Old Testament as a people descended from the twelve sons of Jacob, each of these sons being considered the eponymous ancestor of a tribe which is known by his name (Exodus 1:1-7). The numbers of each tribe and their constituent clans are provided (Numbers 1; 26). Thus, Israel is portrayed as a 'tribal society' which is brought out very well in the 'Song of Deborah' Judges 5. A quick reading of Joshua 7:14-18 seems to confirm that within each tribe there were several clans, and each clan comprised a number of families or households.

According to Mayes (1985: 46) this description is potentially misleading if it implies that the people had a systematic structure, in which the tribe was the basic and self-contained unit in

society, within the context of which the economic and social relations of its members belonged. The question of what is meant by a tribal society and by Israel's tribalism in particular, has then some considerable importance.

In order to achieve a more secure basis for understanding Israel's social structure, one should seek the fundamental social unit, that to which the individual Israelite primarily belonged and within the context of which the individual's life was ordered. According to Mayes ((1985: 49), the Israelite clan is the group or association within which families are found. It is held together by kinship ties, and functions to maintain and if necessary, restore the families which belong to it. The family is on the other hand not surbodinate to the clan, but forms a real and effective unity within it. In the true social system, the clan is exogamous; that is, the clan is the basic social unit outside which marriages must be contracted; the clan rather than the family is the primary social and economic unit; property is owned by the clan rather than by the family, and work is organized within the framework of the clan rather than that of the family.

Mayes (1985: 49) further asserts that, the Israelite family is socially and economically subordinate, and functions primarily as the means by which the population of the clan is apparently not exogamous. It is the family which is the primary social and economic unit. The endogamous nature of the Israelite clan is indicated by the patriachal stories which allow Isaac to marry Rebekah and Jacob to marry Leah and Rachel; these are marriages of cousins on the father's side which would not be possible in a true clan system. Thus, the family and clan are interdependent rather than independent entities, for neither exists without the other. The family is the primary unit, while the clans functions as the wider association within which the families intermarry and obtain both material aid and protection.

Compared with the family and clan, the 'tribe' in Israel has much less form and consistency. It was both a social and territorial entity, but was subject to strong internal modification and change. The tribe of Dan for instance, first attempted to settle west of Jerusalem, but as a result of pressure from the Philistines or Amorites, was forced to migrate to a new settlement region to the north (Judg. 18; cf. Judg. 1:34). The reference to a Transjordanian tribe by the name of Gilead in Judg. 5:17, at a point where reference to the other familiar tribe of Gad would be expected, may indicate that Gilead was subsequently displaced by a new immigrant tribe of Gad, or that Gilead suffered internal changes leading to the rise of a new element within it named Gad. Judg. 5 refers to a West-Jordan tribe named Machir (v.14), at a point where one would expect reference to Manasseh; on the other hand, Num. 26:29 and 27:1 refer to Machir as the son of Manasseh and father of Gilead. A different type of situation is to be discerned in the case of Benjamin, for there are some indications, particularly its special relationship with Ephraim (Judg. 3:14ff.; 19-21), and the meaning of its name 'southerners', that it originated as a split-off from the tribe of Ephraim (Mayes, 1985: 50).

The forces that resulted in the first formation of such larger associations, are very difficult to discern. The living together of a number of clans would have been a factor, but not in itself sufficient. The cult fuctions as a unifying force though not necessarily at a 'tribal' level. The mobilization of the popular army in the song of Deborah on the other hand, was essentially a matter for the clan rather than the tribe. Mayes (1985: 51) observes that, even though there seems to have been a tribal mechanism, as opposed to clan mechanism for issuing the call of arms, it probably was in large measure military necessity which forced along the coming together of the clans into loosely organized tribes.

Mayes (1985: 51) further designates Israel's tribalism, as a deliberately formed alternative society, 'a self-constructed instrument of resistence and of decentralized self-rule', which arose in opposition to the hierachic social system of the Canaanite city-state environment. Whether or not this is an accurate representation of the origins of Israel's tribalism, it remains true that the tribal society of Israel was fundamentally based on kinship and the extended family, and was therefore radically different from city-state society. This is because, power, social and economic influence were exercised from the bottom rather than from the top. The tribal social structures, which were obviously wider than families and clans, were loosely organized forms responding both to external pressures and to developing internal needs, but they remained loose and fluid.

### 4.10.2 The Israelite Amphictyony.

The indigenous Greek label 'Amphictyony', which basically refers to "those who dwell around"; is a term that according to Boling (1969: 19), was first used in biblical studies as a cautious sociological analog. There is evidence that the twelve tribes of Israel formed a unity that was amphictyonic in nature. The appeal to the ancient amphictyonies to provide a theoretical base for the historical reconstruction of this obscure period, has gained wide acceptance through the brilliant analysis of Israel's twelve-tribe organization which was held together by an essentially religious bond. The separate tribes of Israel were largely unrelated and had for the most part, separate histories prior to the great covenantal assembly described in Joshua 24.

The result for historical understanding, was a diffusion of traditional claims which made it quite impossible to comprehend Israel's memories about Moses, and the still earlier period of the ancestors, which entail the traditions taken up in Gen 12-50. The Amphictyony is explained by the institution of one central religious sanctuary, the prime focus of religious loyalties of each of the member tribes, who assumes rotating responsibility for the upkeep of the sanctuary one month in

the year. Boiling (1969: 19) infers that, the central sanctuary which hosted the portable Ark of the Covenant does not preclude the use of other local shrines; it properly presupposes them.

According to Noth (Boling, 1969: 21), the twelve-member structure of the Amphictyony had a quite practical purpose. Each member had the obligation to maintain the sanctuary for a month in the year. It was a loose cultic association in which the sanctuary was the focal point. Representatives of the members would meet regularly. Periodic festivals were routinely held. Such mutual obligations as did bind these member tribes together, had reference mainly to the defense and upkeep of the sanctuary.

For a number of reasons this understanding of pre-monarchic Israel enjoyed very wide popularity. First, it supplied an excellent form by which the nature of pre-monarchic Israel could be described. It had generally been accepted that the essence of Israel and its principle of unity was the worship of YHWH. This was critical in distinguishing Israel from the Canaanites. Mayes (1985: 59) contends that with the amphictyony, the necessary concrete form was given to this otherwise too insubstantial idea. The Israelite amphictyony was a sacral union of the tribes bound together around a common sanctuary in the worship of YHWH.

Remarkably, even those who wish to give up the term 'amphictyony' for Israel all but return to it in their insistence on the necessity for an institutional form, within which the community consciousness of Israel rooted in its common faith in YHWH could have come to expression. Yet, at the same time, the amphictyonic structure also explained the lack of political unity so apparent in the traditions from the period of the Judges. According to Mayes (1985: 59), this was not a political organization, but a sacral one.

Secondly, the amphictyony also supplied a context within which it was possible to set institutions and traditions of Israel which were otherwise rootless. Noth himself pointed to the 'minor judges' in Judg. 10.1-5 and 12.7-15 as occupants of an office which had amphictyonic reference. The judges of amphictyonic Israel, were involved perhaps in deciding territorial disputes between the tribes. Other traditions which profited from an amphictyonic background included especially Judg. 19-21, for the internecine war between Benjamin and the rest of Israel found a clear parallel in Greek amphictyonic history. According to Mayes (1985: 60), one could point to the Pentateuchal tradition as having experienced its most significant and formative stage of growth within the framework of amphictyony. It was amphictyony that the isolated traditions of the originally independent clans and tribes of Israel were brought together, set in order and given a national reference to 'Israel'.

The central sanctuary apart from being the home of the ark, was also the place of celebration of the important covenant festivals between Israel and its amphictyonic God YHWH. It was also the meeting place of the Israelite tribes or their representatives. It has been shown on several occasions by Noth, Gottwald and others, that the amphictyony did not form the basis and framework within which a people came into existence. Rather, it is by an already existing people who had been brought together by other means and for other reasons, and who are held together by different bonds such as military leagues, that a central sanctuary was adopted and so was an amphictyony founded (Mayes, 1985: 62). In the Israelite context, the amphictyony was made to serve not just a cultic function, but a political and ethnic function as well. This is held to have been the context within which Israelite political and ethnic consciousness was molded and shaped.

### 4.11 Conclusion.

This chapter which has been an exegesis of the Song of Deborah, has shown the translation of the Hebrew of Judges 5:6-19 to English; it has highlighted its Literary form; Literary setting; Textual structure; It has demonstrated a detailed analysis and a synthesis of the periscope in question, Judges 5:6-19. This chapter also highlighted other biblical texts that speak to negative ethnicity and has considered the attitudes of Israelites towards non-Israelites which were generally negative, as the examples of Exodus 12:43, Deut. 17:15, Lev. 22:25 and Ezra 9:1-2 have shown. It is clear from the Song of Deborah (Jgs. 5), that amphictyony was in full operation in the twelfth century, and that being a sacral league formed in covenant with YHWH and expressed through its tangible institutions namely: the central shrine, the cult with its sacred occasions and the covenant law, it spurred intertribal cohesion amongst the Israelites. The amphictyony however, did not promote inclusion of foreigners hence, it also contributed to the negative attitude of Israelites towards foreigners.

## CHAPTER FIVE: REFLECTION.

### 5.1 Introduction.

This chapter focuses on disclosing and isolating the main ideas from the exegesis of Judges 5:6-19, pointing out features that enhanced cohesion amongst the tribes of Israel. It further unveils an understanding of ethnic identity in Kenya. This chapter highlights parallels of Early Israel Amphictyony and the tribal setting in Kenya. This chapter also interrogates negative ethnicity within the precincts of the Kenyan Church, and climaxes on the role of the Church in combatting negative ethnicity in Kenya.

### 5.2 Central Themes that Stem from The Song of Deborah.

How the men who first caught the vision began the work to which we are called, is the story of the book of Judges. If they did not make much progress, they did one thing which makes us forever their debtors. They crystalized the problem. They brought into clear perspective what was to be the end and aim of the people of God. The struggle these records show was not solely a fight between different people of the earth for the possession of the land. It was a conflict between two wholly different types of civilization: that which is well-pleasing to God and good for all mankind and that which is not. It was a struggle between purely secular, materialistic and inhuman ways of life, and the more spiritual, more humane, more brotherly, more just and holy way which God has made known to man.

One of the chief themes that spring from the exegesis of the song of Deborah and a crytical observation of Ancient Israel is Intertribal cohesion and unity. Ancient Israel albeit being both a social and territorial entity, was still subject to strong intertribal ties and solidarity. This unity was accredited largely to the institution of one central religious sanctuary, not forgetting that they were

all bound by one faith therefore they worshiped the Covenant God, YHWH. This reality drew prime focus of religious loyalty by each of the member tribes of Israel. The twelve-member structure of the Amphictyony had a quite practical purpose: each member had the obligation to maintain the sanctuary for a month in the year.

Other than the cultic association in which the sanctuary and YHWH were the focal point. In addition, with a fairly strong Amphictyony also referred to as tribal federation in Israel, sprung leadership that endeavored to bolster integration amongst the tribes of Israel. Representatives of the members would meet regularly, especially where periodic festivals were held. Such mutual obligations that emanated from leaders did bind the tribes of Israel together, and had reference mainly to the upkeep and maintenance of the Israelites as a people. It was here that the isolated traditions of the originally independent clans and tribes were brought together, set in order and given a national reference to 'Israel'.

Finally, the theme of saving and safeguarding the land with the aim of making it what God meant it to be is also very prominent in the Song of Deborah. Deborah, the mother in Israel with a prophet's vision gives utterance to the heart's cry of all mothers. That the land of Israel albeit having physical tribal boundaries, would become a homeland and a holy land for all its inhabitants. That is the vision which makes Deborah's war-cry different from all others. Her appeal was to the salvation of the land which entailed homes, families and persons from the civilizations around them, which cared not for righteousness and justice, and had no mercy on their needs. It was Deborah's desire that the people of Israel would be delivered from the dangers which would despoil their homes and destroy their manhood. If the call was urgent then, then it is urgent now. For the civilizations of the Canaanites, the Midianites and the Philistines are not dead, and the

lands of the earth which God gave unto us to make into holy homelands are again in danger of being plundered and oppressed.

The turning point in Deborah's day was collaboration between Israelites concentrated in the hill country and certain Hebrew Caravaneers, as celebrated in vs. 10. In this new situation a rally of the tribes by Deborah and Baraq turned a prosperous and complacent Israel into a YHWH army once again, in order to take control of territories belonging to the Promised Land. It thus appears that the cutting off of the caravan routes represents the expanding power of the Israelites under Deborah's leadership, and their successful challenge to those engaged in that sort of trade. In other words, Deborah had organized the battle in which Israel for the first time was able to defeat the Canaanites on their own preferred ground, where the Canaanites could use their chariots. A partial review of those who responded to the call or failed to respond is presented in vss. 14-18. Not all of the tribes are mentioned. References to Reuben and Gilead in Transjordan reflect an instability east of the river that is obscured by the later organizational assumptions.

**5.3 Ethnic Identity in Kenya.**

Human beings have through space and time, used numerous markers of identity to distinguish themselves from the next person or group. These markers include one's name, which is given at birth a few days after birth or through rituals like baptism; the sex and age of a person both of which are biologically determined and socially ascribed. Other important markers of identity include family, lineage, age set, clan, ethnic, racial or religious affiliation as well as cultural, social, economic, political, national and continental markers. All these markers are leaned from older members of society (especially kin, friends and leaders), educational institutions, the media and one's circumstances and experiences.

Eunice Kamara defines ethnicity as referring to an ethnic group by another in relation to people who share a common identity name, history, language and culture (Kamara, 2010: 128). This in itself has no problem, but danger comes in when it is over emphasized leading to what Koigi wa Wamwere calls negative ethnicity. According to Koigi's definition, negative ethnicity is "ethnic hatred and bias" (Wamwere, 2003: 22). For the Kenyan context, ethnic conflicts have plagued the nation perpetually for some significant time, and in almost every electioneering period with the worst being 2007-2008 post-election violence. According to Mbiti (1969: 104), many countries across the African continent experience tribal identities that are very powerful, although the feelings vary from time to time depending on the prevailing circumstances.

Amongst the above mentioned markers of identity, the most divisive in Kenya has been ethnic identity. That is because it can and is often manipulated by sections of the elite, largely for selfish political and economic gains. Where this happens, it leads to polarization in society between groups and factions, creating room for the 'us' versus 'them' phenomenon to set in. The 'othering' of those deemed not to belong to a given ethnic group, creates or aggravates inter-communal tensions often leading to destruction of human life, livelihoods and property as well as displacement of citizens from their homes. This is evidenced by occurrences of pre and post-election violence in Kenya 1999, 2007 and 2017.

Today the phrase ethnic group is generally used to refer to a group of people who have a shared history (through a common myth of origin), cultural heritage, economic circumstances, language, territory and political organization. An assumption is made in Kenya that deliberate discontinuation of ethnic identities is *sine qua non* to attainment of Kenyanhood. This thinking informed a debate on the question of ethnic identity in the 2009 national census, and continues to

inform debates about Kenyanhood. The question to ask is: if human beings all over the world have multiple identities including ethnic identity, why should Kenyans be any different?

It must be pointed out here that ethnic loyalty is not always a bad thing. Since, it can also lead people to do good things for fellow members of their group, even when this is not at the expense of others. This has been happening in some parts of Kenya for many years. For example, schools, churches and health facilities have been built and young men and women educated overseas through fund raising efforts appealing to ethnic groups' need to advance themselves.

Thus, the problem in Kenya is not ethnic affiliation per se, but the coupling of ethnic identity with land, a finite resource, political power and access to public resources. This is what makes the elite to zealously advance internal (ethnic) solidarity, guard mutual boundaries, organize competition against rival ethnic groups for public goods, and to reduce contemporary politics to ethnic conflict. Troops of marginalization and dispossessions of ancestral lands have since time immemorial served this purpose extremely well.

The People of Kenya are divided along ethnic lines and affiliations both in the Church and generally as a nation. People feel a strong sense of belonging, in their ethnic group. There key leaders come from within the group. The government administrative boundaries have been demarcated along ethnic locations. At some points, government administrative boundaries have grouped together different people of different ethnic backgrounds. But mostly, these boundaries put together an almost homogeneous ethnic group. Some people have protested wanting to be joined with their fellow tribesmen. In other cases, conflicts have erupted between two different ethnic groups over boundaries.

However, granted ethnic identity is a fact of life all over the world, Kenyans cannot be expected to run away from their ethnic identity, just as they cannot run away from their names. Therefore, as Njogu (2010: 50) contends, there is a need for outright acknowledgement that multiplicity of ethnicities is a good thing for Kenya's cultural, linguistic and historical diversity.

### 5.4 Parallels of Early Israel and Kenyan Amphictiony.

There are striking differences and similarities between the tribal arrangements and organizations of the 12 tribes of early Israel and the 42 tribes of the republic of Kenya. Mbiti (1969: 101) notes that, the distinguishing features of different Kenyan ethnic groups, is that each tribe has its own distinct language and not simply a dialect. Naturally these languages are related to one another, and scholars have classified them into families. The main linguistic groups in Kenya are three namely: Bantu, Nilotic and Cushites which are broken down further into 42 languages for respective tribes. This great number of languages is often one of the sources of difficulties in modern nationhood. In early Israel on the other hand, the twelve tribes of Israel spoke a common language - Hebrew.

Geographical region is another factor in determining or describing the limits of one ethnic group from another, both amongst the 42 tribes of Kenya and the 12 of early Israel. Each society has at least traditionally, its own geographical area and its own land. The size of land varies from place to place, so that some people own vast areas of land while others who may be more numerical, may own only small areas. Some people being chiefly pastoral and not agricultural, would naturally move over a large stretch of land in their nomadic life searching for water and pasture. It is important to note that, the boundaries between the different people have tended to be a source of tension and fighting from time to time across the world.

A common culture is another characteristic of each ethnic group both in Kenya and early Israel. Members of each tribe share a common history, which is often traced at least mythologically to either the first man created by God, or to leaders responsible for establishing a particular structure of the society concerned. The names of the first ancestors and other tribal figures are always remembered in many societies. Like Mbiti (1969: 102) notes, the Gikuyu say that their first ancestors were Gikuyu and Mumbi. This common culture also expresses itself in the form of common customs, morals, ethics, social behavior and material objects like musical instruments, household utensils, foods and domestic animals. On the other hand, twelve tribes of Israel are traditionally deemed to have descended from the twelve sons of the patriarch Jacob namely: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin.

In Kenya unlike early Israel, each ethnic group has its own indigenous traditional religious system, and a person cannot be converted from one tribal religion to another. One has to be born in a particular society in order to participate in the entire religious life of the people. Mbiti infers (1969: 103) that, fundamental concepts like the belief in God, existence of the spirits and continuation of human life after death seem to be shared amongst numerous tribes, except that the names for God and words for spirits vary from tribe to tribe. Early Israel on the other hand, had a common sanctuary, common religious festivals and a covenant God with whom they all subscribed to regardless of one's tribe.

These realities add to a sense of common origin, unity, oneness and togetherness, and stand for national consciousness. Each ethnic group has its own distinct social and political organization. The family, age groups, special persons in society, naming of children, initiation rites, marriage customs, traditional forms of governments and political personages are points of distinction

amongst ethnic groups in Kenya. Some societies originally had chiefs or headsmen who ruled portions of the tribe, with hereditary or non-hereditary officers. Other tribes only had elders who led the tribe with absolute powers.

### 5.5 Negative Ethnicity in Kenya Stems from the Church.

Tribalism, which is presented as a major challenge in Kenya, by default ends up grouping people of the same blood descent together. Interestingly, the structural systems in Kenyan Churches are replicated the same way in the administrative organization of the government. To understand how this came about, the researcher leans to Kamara's observation of political boundaries the during colonial era. Kamara infers that, within the policy of 'divide and rule', boundaries had two levels of effects. First, homogenous ethnic groups were put within the same boundary. Second, heterogeneous ethnic groups were conglomerated in one administrative boundary (Kamara, 2010: 132).

This affected missionary activity, because of the government's fear of the individualization of mission converts and students who were forming a separate community. To tame the expected problem of resistance from such a group, the government protested against 'detribalization' of converts and hence urged the missionaries "to teach their adherents that their real homes were in the reserves" (Strayer, 1978: 102). Therefore, the church played a huge role in the implementation of these policies (Kamara, 2010: 133). The Church especially mainstream churches such the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church seem to have inherited the policy, consciously or unconsciously to date. This is very much eminent in the establishment and existence of dioceses in the life of the church today.

Strangely enough, tribal minded dioceses and churches may not accept any servant of God from another tribe, it is therefore true to say that majority of the people in Kenya have not changed their worldview to embrace and include other ethnic groups. That is why Christians want to be identified with their ethnic groups. The question to tackle is, to whom does the territory belong, and who is a brother, friend, ally and enemy? (Jenkins, 2012: 593). Ideally, for those who profess Christian faith, must understand itself as a community bound up with common submission to one God. Hence, should live in love with each other regardless of anyone's ethnic origin (Thompson, 2008: 71).

The church is caught up in a country that at times starts disintegrating into distinct ethnic groups that on several occasions has hatched violence. The divisive nature of national politics catalyzes ethnic feelings. Cultural practices like cattle rustling have also contributed to ethnic conflicts. At times when the feelings are so high, citizenship and territorial discourses become exclusionary (Jenkins, 2012: 587). Both Church and national unity is threatened by this situation. Ayallo observed that, in Kenya ethnic identification is quite strong "such that various ethnic groups consider themselves distinctive, and would like to maintain their identities" (Ayallo, 2012: 67).

Church leadership in Kenya is greatly influenced by tribalism. In fact, ethnic affiliations are still very strong and alive in Africa. Negative Ethnicity comes by default without knowing it is part of us. It appears that tribalism is an oversight in the life of the church and it is also there to stay. Hence, forces of negative ethnicity have led to election of mere representative of regions and tribes, rather than authentic leaders and servants of God.

The researcher agrees with Mbiti on the resilience of tribal identity in modern African (Mbiti, 1969, 104). For that matter, there is still a deep sense of kinship. This according to the researcher

is a cardinal point for one to understand the views of Africans on man. In fact, the ethnic thought is strongly associated with land or rather territory (Jenkins, 2012: 578). Leaders of the respective territories have to be natives because one is regarded as a 'foreigner' or an “immigrant” if they are living outside their rural homes (Jenkins, 2012: 578). Hence, the church boundaries forms another basis of territorial affirmation and ownership. This gives reason why church leadership is highly influenced by ethnicity. It helps to understand why some leaders are rejected in one area and accepted in another.

In view of the situation above, Ayallo is right in observing that at times, masses are manipulated and mobilized along tribal affiliations for selfish gains, leading to bloody tribal conflicts. A closer look at the turn of events above makes the researcher agree with Ayallo who says, tribes are reminded of their differences and it becomes a "major contestation of power in almost all spheres including the churches" (Ayallo, 2012: 68). Mbiti is right in asserting that, the feelings of tribal identity "vary like temperature from time to time depending on the prevailing circumstances" (Mbiti, 1969: 104).

Additionally, Jenkins (2012: 587) argues that, territorial discourses are exclusionary and deeply rooted in material, instrumental and in both affective and non-rational factors. An argument that attests to the fact that, Church growth and expansion in Kenya is tilting towards ethnic particularities. As observed, most of the dioceses, parishes and churches in Kenya, actually come up with an ethnic backup. The Christians go ethnic in the church, parish or diocese depending on the numerical strength of the dominant tribe or clan. For example, in Bumala (Western Kenya), the populace there is largely Luhya assimilated into Luo and speak Luo language. They have chosen not to go to the Anglican Church of Kenya - Maseno West Diocese where they can enjoy services in Luo, but have opted to join Mumias because that is where their tribe is. For once,

Mbiti's (1969: 102-103) argument that diversity of languages has been a stumbling block to modern nationhood is challenged.

As if that is not enough, Kenya has a functional national language (Kiswahili), and yet it has not been able to cohesively link different ethnic groups. Ethnic identification in Kenya is quite strong, to the extent that "various ethnic groups consider themselves distinctive and would like to maintain their identities" (Ayallo, 2012: 67). This distinctiveness is realized largely through church structures.

A major problem is that people join the church not necessarily because they are followers of Christ but because they are supporting their person. This points to Horton's, argument that African conversion to Christianity had secular reasons (Kim & Kim, 2008: 77).

There is evidence that cultural interpretations of situations sideline Christian interpretations of the same. If people who are purportedly loyal to the same Lord and in the same denomination, cannot congregate in the same church because of ethnic inclinations, then something is seriously wrong somewhere. Further still, they avoid celebrating the same sacrament together but opt to do it separately in their local churches. This attitude which is engraved deeply in the Church, has a way of reflecting in the face of the Nation.

This is a serious issue that needs to be addressed urgently by the church. Since it challenges the unity of the church. Coupled with divisive politicized ethnicity, it poses a threat to national unity and cohesion. The structures of the Anglican Church of Kenya for instance, are a replica of political administrative boundaries where ethnic groups are placed in one area of administration. In cases where two or three ethnic groups are placed in one politically administrative area, the church through its structures offers an alternative way of separating them. In case of violence, the church

find herself still trapped in ethnic cocoons at the expense of championing forgiveness, peace, reconciliation and unity.

The issue of tribalism is a matter of concern in the Church. For that reason, the clergy need to control themselves and be keen on their call. The clergy at the core of the church leadership, play a key role in sensitizing the Christians on their ethnic differences. Sadly, Church leaders in the Church today do not have a focus and principles to standby. Mbiti's (1969: 104) and Ayallo's (2012: 67) share in the same view that tribal Identity is still very strong in Africa. The researcher infers further that attitudes of negative ethnicity are deeply entrenched in the Church. Even during the recruitment of clergy in the Church, people ask for their own person. It is possible to say that to a larger extent, clergy form a group of ethnic representatives and not servants of God and humanity. It is clear, that the quest for ethnic representation has in a way sidelined the required procedure of electing church leaders. The bottom line as Kamara puts it is that, "ethnic identity seems to override Christian nationalism" (Kamara, 2010: 127).

Cultural conditioning makes it difficult for people to accept leaders from a different ethnic background, and political leadership is not spared from this conditioning. The reason could be that, cultural traditions of certain areas are still held with high esteem. Ethnic groups feel more comfortable being led by their tribesman. These events are a confirmation of Kamara's argument that, "Christians in Kenya are often unable to rise above their ethnic identities (Kamara, 2010: 135).

Jenkins describes the tribal situation in Kenya as one in which, "boundaries between brother and cousin, friend and ally, stranger and enemy are continuously reformulated according to local and political context" (Jenkins, 2012: 577). More worryingly, is that most societies' traditional

worldview had guidelines on human rights only in the context of community (Kamara, 2010: 129-130). Traditional cultural practices also vary greatly and often cause violence as is the case with cattle rustling. In this kind of setting, it is almost impossible to escape and go beyond being trapped in ethnic cocoons. It is evident, that cultural diversity in Kenya which is deeply entrenched in the precincts of the Church is a major challenge to national unity.

Integrity is a very key component of church leadership. Leadership in the Kenyan Church is compromised by tribalism and quest for power. Even in the Church, leaders enjoy the protection of their fellow tribesmen when faced with discipline issues. The collective responsibility notion was captured in Mbiti's cardinal point of African view of man. Mbiti says, "in traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately" (Mbiti, 1969: 108). There is a deep sense of kinship and protection of one another. This notion seems to be real in present times as the findings of this study illustrate.

Consequently, the prophetic voice of the church is lost due to inclinations to tribalism. The result is condoning of vices by fellow tribesmen. Therefore, any church leader always stands by the beliefs of his or her tribe. This is where the church has awfully gone wrong. Actually, tribal feelings have superseded the ideal Christian identity, hence creating a serious weak point of the Church. Wrongs committed by some tribes are not condemned by the bishops of those areas because of fear of being rejected by his tribe.

This confirms Williams' argument that Christian's response to challenges depend on their social location, religious experience and the definition of the keepers of the word (Williams, 2006: 193). No doubt social location and keepers of the word (leaders) are key to the response. Leaders have

failed to emulate Deborah, whose ministry was in households and kinship relationship, but this did not stop her from delivering the desired leadership.

### 5.6 The Role of the Church in Combating Negative Ethnicity.

Instead of Christian values serving to foster national cohesion and identity, religion has been used as a rallying point of ethnic hatred, conflict and mobilization. This idea is stressed by Kamara who maintains that, "ethnic identity seems to override Christian nationalism" (Kamara, 2010: 127). Hence, in times of conflict Christians in Kenya are often unable to rise above their ethnic identities, and therefore end up as ethnically polarized as everyone else (Kamara, 2010: 135). The key players in such discourses are leaders. Church leaders need to agree that ministry exists by 'divine right'. It does not emanate from a mandate of the community but represents, the government of God. Therefore, the office holders should not act in their own name but "represent" God (Vischer, 2010: 225).

Spread out all over Kenya, the church replicates the government administrative boundaries especially the dioceses. The danger with that is that, these boundaries had taken on an ethnic face. With time the church's respective geographical jurisdictions moved from being ethnically heterogeneous to homogeneous ethnic composition. It appears like ethnic territories are affirmed through the Church's administrative structures. In the end, it has affected leadership where the dominant ethnic group carries the day. The minority may opt to separate and join their fellow kinsmen.

There is an urgent need to review the constitution so that it allows for transfer of church leaders and the free flow of clergy in respective churches and jurisdictions within the country. This would help leaders to appreciate people and culture of other ethnic groups. It will give leaders a better

understanding of ethnic worldviews. In effect, the leader and clergyman would get anopportunity to critically reflect on both his and her culture in light of the Christian teachings from a wider perspective.

There should also be a review on territorial boarders to allow for real ethnic inclusion. The more people have nothing to separate them, the more they live together and appreciate each other. Transformative mission helps change ethnic territorial notions that are exclusive in nature. Church leadership should be based on the call and proper training. Honorary ordinations and consecrations based on ethnic background produces poor leaders in terms of mission. These adjustments would ensure development of leaders with the ability to deal with "wider national and international concerns, rather than being exclusively parochial" (Rusk, 2010: 127).

There is need to encourage the clergy to model collaborative and relational leadership. More so, church leaders need to embrace their role in the society as the voice for the voiceless, and condemning all sorts of evils at their disposal. They should come handy in critically assessing existing cultures and working to eradicate divisive notions. Teachings on morality should embrace the Christian inclusive nature that embraces all humanity. The purpose is to "affirm faith that is intellectually cogent and engages with contemporary issues" (Rusk, 2010: 127). The same effort should also be geared towards developing effective discipleship programs for new converts. Emphasis should be put on the need to train, equip, and empower the laity to be effective apostles in the world, and "encourage the clergy to model collaborative, relational leadership" (Rusk, 2010: 128).

Church leaders need to entrench inter-ethnic peace and reconciliation committees in the church, to ensure that negative manifestation of ethnicity in the church is addressed and mitigated. Church

leaders and Christians should be involved in inter-ethnic Christian exchange programmes, especially with other religions, tribes and regions, in order to promote peaceful coexistence among various tribes since the society. In addition, Inter-ethnic cooperation and dialogue should be promoted as a Christian ideology.

There is need to develop educational and cultural programmes at the grassroots level, through which ethnic and cultural diversities can be appreciated and integrated into national unity. The Church can play a significant role in developing these programmes. Church leaders should be more principled and committed to their work. This will be important in combating political interferences in the church today, which is one of the major hindrances towards combating negative ethnicity both in the church and nation.

The church leadership should ensure fair and equal distribution of resources that they receive for example, donations to needy and deserving members of the congregation irrespective of their tribal orientation. The leadership in the various churches should also facilitate enactment of balanced leadership structures that are reflective of the national outlook. The leadership structures should incorporate various tribes to give a sense of belonging in the church and society at large. Church leaders should continuously instill patriotism based on nationalism rather than tribe.

The church leadership should also encourage to promote pulpit exchange programmes, involving different denominations as well as tribes to promote harmonious coexistence. In simpler terms, inter-denominational meetings and activities should be fortified and enhanced. The National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK) which is the umbrella body for Christian churches in the country, should propose new ways of integrating ethnic identity into the structure of State.

In this study of the Song of Deborah in Judges 5, the Israelite Amphictyony has been described as a band of tribes which besides engaging in cultic activities in the narrower sense, also safeguarded

and defended its whole political existence. The Israelite Amphictyony existed from the conclusion of the settlement of the tribes through the period of the judges.

Of importance as has been demonstrated in this research is that, based on the similarities the Israelite and Kenyan tribal settings it is possible to achieve national unity if Church which commands an immense national following stepped up as a key player. Kenyans have a national language – Kiswahili which should inspire oneness like, the Hebrew language did for the Israelite tribes. Kenyan tribes can also draw an inspiration for togetherness from Israelites, who had a shared culture which entailed common morals, ethics and social behavior regardless of their tribes and traditional geographical territories. The Israelites' tribal affiliations and boundaries never stopped them from freely sharing common sanctuaries, religious festivals, cultus and their covenant God. This implies that religion and its leaders, played a critical role in uniting the people of Israel. This should inspire Christianity as a religion and Church leaders in Kenya as key player in the bid for cohesion, unity and national conscience regardless of tribal descent.

### 5.7 Conclusion

This chapter through its focus on disclosing the main idea from the exegesis of Judges 5:6-19, has shown the central themes of the song of Deborah with a focus on what enhanced cohesion and integration amongst the twelve tribes of Israel. It also highlighted parallels of Early Israel Amphictyony and the tribal identity in Kenya. It has also disclosed an understanding of ethnic identity in Kenya, and the negative ethnicity in Kenya which is fueled by the Church. This section finally, has earthed the subject to the Kenyan context providing solutions to the menace of Negative ethnicity.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION.

Judges Chapter 5 is usually known as the Song of Deborah and is generally regarded as one of the oldest pieces of Hebrew literature. Lias (1882: 34) holds that, the song of Deborah provides such an insight into the inner life of Israel, the conditions and customs of the country, the relations of the tribes. The Song of Deborah shows the warriors of Israel assembling for the battle, as well as the personal life of the quiet villages. The Song of Deborah also as has been shown in this research, contains the most interesting information about the condition and occupations of the tribes, the isolation of Judah, the irresolution of Reuben, the indifference of Gad, the selfish conduct of Dan and Asher, engrossed in commercial and maritime pursuits.

Canaan in this picture is nothing like the Homeland the fathers of Israel imagined was waiting for them beyond the edge of the desert. It is not a land flowing with milk and honey, but a land which taxes to the uttermost their courage, resourcefulness and endurance. And therein lies its value to us. It is a picture to the plain truth about all homelands – our own country Kenya, and that of any other people on the face of earth. There is a vast difference between what we should like them to be, and what we know they are. We live in a world which is not to our heart's desire. It is full of problems that are not yet half-answered, and tasks that are nothing like completed. What an opportunity and challenge, to every creative gift with which we have been endowed. Born into a world in the making, with the chance of turning its half-developed lands into homelands and holy lands.

It was also indicated then that this united people of YHWH are unlikely to have originated in the time of monarchy. The monarchy, rather presupposes the existence of Israel. In broad terms the main problem emerged as one of finding historical conditions from which it might be possible to explain the fact that YHWH was acknowledged as God by both Judah and the northern tribes, so

that Judah and the northern tribes together constituted the people of YHWH. Judah while being completely independent of the northern tribes in the period of the judges, shared a common faith in YHWH with those northern tribes in that period.

The African church in the 21st century is faced with a lot of challenges that are ethnically oriented. As a nation, Kenya is struggling to overcome nepotism and tribalism that are deeply rooted in our society today. This study has demonstrated that ethnicity can become a blessing as long as it enriches social life. On the contrary, it can become a curse when it becomes the source of division and hatred between ethnic groups. The church in Kenya as has been shown in this research therefore, has a lot to do in combating negative ethnicity. As human beings we are all made inthe image and likeness of God. This is the biblical foundation on which, as Christians, we evaluate cultures, political, theological and other expressions of identity. Conversion to Christ is meant to be a liberating experience. It means freedom from self-righteousness. Our common identity is formed and repeatedly questioned by our calling to be true to the reign of God. The Church in Kenya is the only driving force that can successfully lead the republic of Kenya towards the end of negative ethnicity.

The poem in Judges 5: 6-19 as has been tackled in this dissertation is in effect liberation theology since, it describes a deadly threat to a people, and it celebrates deliverance from death and restoration of life supporting conditions as God intended, against all odds. As verse 9 suggests, addressing the Canaanite threat requires the participation of all the people who must offer themselves voluntarily and willingly. This research has also shown that, the Amphictionic model gave Israel new life and nurtured the conditions that would sustain her life, Kenya can rise above disintegration around ethnic lines, and become cohesive and integrated. This research which has demonstrated the influence the Church has in Kenya, asserts that the Church should militarily arise

and lead from the front like Deborah did in Judges 5, in liberating Kenya from the menace of negative ethnicity.

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## APPENDIX

### Secondary Data

This dissertation is entirely a product of exclusive use of the library. The success of this research can be attributed to reliance on the available secondary data from research instruments such as books, articles, journals, newspapers, biblical dictionaries, biblical commentaries, the biblical lexicons and the available materials on a myriad of websites.