

**PREDESTINATION IN SCRIPTURES AND REFORMATION TRADITIONS:
TOWARDS DECONSTRUCTING PARADIGMS FOR SOTERIOLOGY IN A
PROPOSED CAMEROON BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL TREATISE**

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Theology

In the subject

Systematic Theology

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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May 2013

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I declare that *PREDESTINATION IN SCRIPTURES AND REFORMATION TRADITIONS: TOWARDS DECONSTRUCTING PARADIGMS FOR SOTERIOLOGY IN A PROPOSED CAMEROON BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL TREATISE* is my own work and that all the resources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE
Greg Sako Kame

DATE

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BGC* Baptist General Conference
- CBC* Cameroon Baptist Convention
- CBNT* Coniectanea Biblica, New Testament
- CBTS* Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary
- CNT* Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
- ESV* English Standard Version of the Bible
- IBC* Interpretation: A Biblical Commentary for Preaching and Teaching
- ICC* International Critical Commentary
- JSNT* Journal for the Studies of the New Testament
- KJV* King James Version
- NABC* North American Baptist Conference
- NASB* North American Standard Version of the Bible
- NT* New Testament
- NTM* New Testament Message
- NTS* New Testament Studies
- OT* Old Testament
- WBC* World Biblical Commentary

DECLARATION

I declare that “*PREDESTINATION IN SCRIPTURES AND REFORMATION TRADITIONS: TOWARDS DECONSTRUCTING PARADIGMS FOR SOTERIOLOGY IN A PROPOSED CAMEROON BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL TREATISE* ” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed _____
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Date _____

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ABSTRACT

In the wake of the 19th century, the protestant reformation in Europe that led to the formation of mainline reformation traditions began impacting and shaping ministry in Africa, through missionary activities. But the clarion call for Africa's renaissance was also a wakeup call for the African church to move from being consumers of the 'imported' theology brewed from a European perspective and take some responsibility in producing her own theology, which can be viewed and understood with an African cultural lens. If Africa must achieve the much needed renaissance, the church certainly has an indispensable role to play. But how can there be a meaningful church praxis in African polities without a solid contextualized theological foundation? Therefore in this project, I justify the need for a biblio-centric African theology by making a case for the Cameroon Baptist Convention in the Republic of Cameroon.

I argue that, to be able to solidify its foundation and enhance its Christian theological praxis in the society, a Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise is needed in the Cameroon Baptist Convention. One that would contain well delineated and defended theological tenets required of an independent Christian denomination in Africa. Central to the development of this treatise is the development of a soteriology with a cognitive theological understanding of divine predestination. To develop a correct soteriology for this purpose, a process is required, one that would need to use sound theological principles to ensure a biblically accurate and theologically sound doctrine of soteriology as the point of departure. As an evangelical systematic theological research, I attempt in this project to deconstruct biblical and theological paradigms from scriptures and reformation traditions, which the Cameroon Baptist Convention leaders could use as tools in the process of delineating and defending their own tenets on soteriology in the proposed theological treatise. It begins by gathering data from reformation traditions and scriptures on predestination and moves on to construct

theories that would not only help the Cameroon Baptist Convention leaders to develop a soteriology but also be fundamental to developing other relevant doctrines needed in the proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise.

DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writing of this research project has been made possible through the help and support given to me by different people at different stages. First, my gratitude goes to my family, the Kames family of Buea-Cameroon who put family resources together to ensure that I embark on this project on a full time basis until its completion. My father, Mr. Joseph Kame who because he could not achieve his academic goals in his youth due to circumstances beyond his control at the time, put in extra efforts in ensuring that his dream of higher academic attainments be achieved in his son. His timely motivation and support during challenging moments of my research gave me the impetus to continue, I am most grateful for his role in my life and career.

Second, I am thankful to Professor Christoph Stenschke (Germany) who began this journey with me from the discipline of Biblical Studies at the University of South Africa. He gave me helpful guidance at the initial stage of my research project that eventually led to my transfer into the discipline of Systematic Theology as a more suiting discipline from where the project has been carried out to its completion.

Third, I am indebted to my promoter, Prof. Rothney S. Tshaka (chair of the department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic Theology at the University of South Africa). His helpful guidance and friendly dispositions towards me created an amiable atmosphere for me to progressively bring this project to a close in good time. Dr. Philemon Yong (USA) also avidly read through my entire manuscript and made some very thoughtful comments on biblical hermeneutics and Greek exegesis. Even though I would take full responsibility of any short comings that could be found in the hermeneutics of my work, Dr. Yong's thoughts really helped me to make some progress in this regard, my special thanks goes to him.

Fourth, I say a big thank you to the University of South Africa and its various departments especially the department of student funding which favorably considered me for a postgraduate bursary that covered most of my academic and research expenses. Without this bursary, I would have hardly been able to bring this project to a close in good time. My indebtedness to this institution for sowing a seed in my education in this way shall never be forgotten.

Fifth, I would like to acknowledge the role played by the Dutch SKILL Development Program that sponsored me for a study visit to the Netherlands during the research phase of my work. My stay at the Free University of Amsterdam (VU) as a PhD guest under the tutelage of Prof. Eddy van der Borgh of the faculty of theology at VU did not only stimulate my PhD trajectory but also expanded my academic network in a meaningful way. During my short stay in the Netherlands, I came across fine Dutch theologians like Dr. Van den Broeke at the VU faculty of theology and the Dutch Baptist Scholar, Prof. Henk Bakker, who heads the Baptist seminary program in the theology faculty at VU. He was patient enough to look through my work and gave me some helpful guidance.

Mr. Jaap Bannemaa, the leader of the men's bible study group at Trinity International Baptist Church, Leidschendam in the Netherlands was also kind enough to read through some portions of my project and made some helpful comments. I very much appreciate his efforts. I cannot forget to mention Colette at the SAVUSA office at VU University Amsterdam who attends to the Dutch SKILL program students in the Netherlands. She practically went out of her way in ensuring that I make the most of my study visit to the Netherlands. She was quick to make possible for me to visit all the relevant reformation places in Europe that would be helpful for my research. Thus apart from the places I visited in Amsterdam, I was also privileged to visit reformation places in Germany, France, and Switzerland. My time in Calvin's Geneva was most significant for me and my research as I was not only opportune to

visit the World Council of Churches Library Achieves where I had the privilege to use their research facilities, I also spent some meditative time at the International Museum of the Reformation and the St. Peter's Cathedral where Calvin preached daily. This experience greatly added some weight and meaning to my research trajectory.

I will not end without acknowledging some of the churches in the Cameroon Baptist Convention that labored with/for me in prayer during the course of this project and those who have made some financial contributions to me at different stages of my academic career. In this regard, I acknowledge Gethsemane Baptist Church in Bokoko-Buea Cameroon, Ebenezer Baptist Church Great Soppo Buea Cameroon, Macedonia Baptist church Molyko-Buea Cameroon, Mizpah Baptist Church Down Beach Limbe Cameroon, Emmanuel Baptist Church Bota-Limbe Cameroon etc. I equally acknowledge other Baptist churches outside the Cameroon Baptist Convention who supported me at some point in my studies. In this light I acknowledge Global Deliverance Baptist Church in Kumasi Ghana, with special thanks to their senior pastor Rev. Enoch Nketiah, First Baptist Church Ipaja-Lagos Nigeria, with special thanks to their senior pastor Rev. Michael Abodourin and Miracle Rock of Ages Baptist Church in Pretoria West-South Africa with special thanks to Rev. Lawrence Mogoera under whom I served as an assisting minister for teaching and preaching at some point during my studies and in whose congregation I was honored with an ordination as a Baptist minister of the gospel of Christ.

And finally, my ultimate gratitude goes to God almighty for given me the prowess for this theological research task. I acknowledge his grace as the reason and the means through which this project has finally come to a close. From the day I sensed His call into my life for the Christian ministry, my driving passion has neither been to become a famous minister or an accomplished theologian but to simply invest according to the grace He has bestowed in me to diligently understand what He means by what he has said in scripture and to effectively

make it known to others with all clarity and precision. This has been and remains my primary concern. Therefore, if I were to think of this achievement as an academic crown, then I can think of no other head worthy enough to wear but the head of Him whose every promise for my life and ministry has been enough for every step I have taken- the king eternal, immortal and invisible, the only one true God be glory and honor for every and ever. Amen!

Greg Sako Kame

KEY WORDS

Predestination; Reformation Traditions; Soteriology; Cameroon Baptist Convention; Evangelical Theology; Systematic Theology; Theological Treatise; Cameroon Missions; Romans 9:18-23; 2 Peter 3:1-10.

INTRODUCTION

Theology in the Cameroon Baptist Convention (C.B.C)¹ is for the most part undefined. Without a defined theology, the ministerial praxis of a church in the society is seriously challenged, for a church can be in practice only what it is in theology. The continental call for Africa's renaissance² certainly includes the Republic of Cameroon, as much needs to be done to improve governance and ensure social justice especially for the most disadvantaged in society. As one of the mainline indigenous churches in Cameroon, the C.B.C certainly has a role to play in this regard. But how can this role be effectively played if her theology which in practice is the bedrock of the church is undefined?

In order to make its impact felt in the Cameroonian society, there is therefore an imperative need for the C.B.C leaders to realise that, a comprehensive theological treatise for the C.B.C is the most efficient salvation plan that will not only guarantee the theological future of the convention but also ensure the stability of its theological foundation and enhance its ability to make meaningful contributions in the state towards good governance and social justice.

As a study that falls within the scientific framework of Systematic Theology approached from an evangelical perspective, this project attempts something new on the subject of predestination by deconstructing some biblical and theological paradigms from scriptures and reformation traditions which the C.B.C. leaders could use as resourceful tools in the process of delineating and defending their own contextualized theological tenets for soteriology that will be fundamental for the proposed theological treatise. But

¹Unless otherwise stated, the Cameroon Baptist Convention will be abbreviated as C. B. C. from now henceforth.

²Thabo Mbeki, former president of South Africa is one of the leading voices in contemporary Africa on the need for Africa to rise up from the ashes of colonialism and achieve its renaissance.

what is the C.B.C. and how can its current undefined state of theology be justified for this research? It is to this finding that we now turn.

The Cameroon Baptist Convention (C.B.C) is a mainline protestant denomination in the Republic of Cameroon that was established in 1954.³ As a living fellowship of churches that runs under the motto “One Lord, One Faith and One Baptism,”⁴ the C.B.C. is growing in grace, strengthening one another in faith, and working together in obedience to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ through worship, preaching, teaching, healing and social ministries.⁵ It is a member denomination of the All African Baptist Fellowship and also in a working relationship with other Baptist bodies around the world like the North American Baptist, South American Baptist, All African Baptist Fellowship, Baptist World Alliance⁶ etc. It is governed by the General Secretary who works closely with the General Council (composed of the President, Directors of different boards and Fields Pastors) to make and review decisions for the general good of the convention.

The Convention comprises of 28 Administrative Units, 3 Missionary Areas, 1,028 organized churches with a membership of about 105,000 registered Christians. It has two main seminaries aimed at training its pastors and leaders for her churches and institutions namely the Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary in Ndu, and the Cameroon Baptist Seminary in Kumba. It also runs many schools and colleges nationwide. Some of C.B.C. schools reckoned among the best in the country include; Joseph Merrick Baptist College

³See William H. Brackney. *Historical Dictionary of the Baptists*. Scarecrow Press, 2009:116 and Robert E. Johnson. *A Global Introduction to Baptist Churches*. Cambridge University Press, 2010: 245.

⁴Cameroon Baptist Convention. [Accessed 7th July 2012]
(<http://cbchealthservices.org/HBCN/CBC/html/About%20us.html>)

⁵ See Lloyd Emerson Kwast. *The Discipling of West Cameroon: A Study of Baptist Growth*. Eerdmans, 1971: 95 for more on the growth of the CBC.

⁶See J. Gordon Melton and Martin Baumann (ed). “Cameroon Baptist Convention.” In *Religions of the World, Second Edition: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices*. ABC-CLIO, 2010: 487. Also see Huibert van Beek (ed). *A handbook of churches and councils: profiles of ecumenical relationships*. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2006: 24.

Ndu, Saker Baptist College Limbe, and Baptist High School Buea. The Cameroon Baptist Convention also boasts of several hospitals and clinics such as Bansa Baptist Hospital in Kumbo, Mbingo Baptist Hospital in Mbingo and Baptist Hospital in Mutengene. To achieve her mission of ministering to the whole person, the Cameroon Baptist Convention operates 5 Departments; the Evangelism and Missions, Christian Education, Education, Health, and Finance and Development Departments.⁷

Despite this mainline denominational status of the C.B.C. in the Republic of Cameroon, all is not well when it comes to the current state of its theology. In an exclusive interview with one of the most influential figures⁸ in the theological history of the C.B.C, the following was gathered about the current state of the convention's theology; according to Dr. Philemon Yong theology in the C.B.C. is;

Strong in little pockets but very weak in the main circles. Theology in the system remains undefined. There is a claim to the authority of Scripture but there is no evidence that the ministry of the church is carried out under the authority of Scripture. Tradition and personal preferences seem to reign. There is resistance to learning from those in leadership. So I would say, it is weak at moment for the most part but changeable with the right leadership. The theological culture of leaders, if it is strong, will naturally filter into and change the culture of the local churches.⁹

If Dr. Yong's convictions about C.B.C's theology are anything to go by, then the following diagnosis would be true about the state of theology in the C.B.C; first, even though strong in 'little pockets,' theology in the C.B.C. is weak in the main circles. Second, CBC has undefined theological tenets.

⁷Cameroon Baptist Convention. [Assessed 7th July 2012]
(<http://cbchealthservices.org/HBCN/CBC/html/About%20us.html>)

⁸At least in the opinion of the researcher, Dr. Yong who is a Cameroonian by birth but an American by nationality is one of the most influential theologians in the history of the CBC. He worked in the theological department of the CBC for about 10 years as Baptist General Conference missionary mainly as a professor in the Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary, Ndu.

⁹Philemon Yong. "The Current State of theology in the CBC." *Exclusive Interview*. Minneapolis: Minnesota, 13th July 2012.

Third, Even though many C.B.C. churches claim they operate in the authority of scriptures, they however

lack convincing practical proof to show that they operate under the authority of scriptures. Fourth, instead of a unanimous biblio-centric theological position that binds all local churches together into one convention, what seem to reign in the C.B.C is personal preferences¹⁰ to theological issues with claims of them being inspired by the Holy Spirit. Barth articulates the folly of such grounds to theology in this way, “As a foolish church presupposes his presence and action in its own existence, in its offices and sacraments, ordinations, consecrations and absolutions, so a foolish theology presupposes the Spirit as the premise of its own declarations.”¹¹ Fifth, since tradition and personal theological preferences reign, most C.B.C. leaders resist theological progress relevant for the contemporary Cameroonian audience. And sixth, the C.B.C. leaders generally have a weak theological ‘culture’ that affects a sound flow of theology from the top and down to the level of the local churches.

In his *The Living Church*, the well acclaimed lifelong pastor, John Stott observed that “many churches are sick [today] because they have a false self image. They have grasped neither who they are (their identity) nor what they are called to be (their vocation).”¹² Clearly, the C.B.C. is obviously sick today because it neither understands nor does it has a clear definition of its theology and a church can only live out in practice what it believes in theology and with an undefined theology, the very ministerial praxis of that church is seriously challenged. Regrettably, the substance called theology in the

¹⁰Some of these preferences corroborate with one or more of the mainline reformation traditions which most often are so imperfectly understood even by those who claim to be authorities in the field.

¹¹ Karl Barth. “The Place of Theology.” In *Theological Foundations for Ministry: Selected Readings for a Theology of the Church in ministry*. Ray S. Anderson (ed.) Grand Rapids: Michigan, William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979:58.

¹² John Stott. *The Living Church: convictions of a lifelong pastor*. Norton Street: Nottingham, Intervarsity Press, 2010: 53.

ministerial landscape of the C.B.C. has succumbed totally to the prevailing winds of praxis where personal preferences function as the standard manifestos to justify as well as to compel what theology should be in the convention.

But as Anderson noted, “ministry cannot be constructed solely as the practical application (or technique) which makes theological knowledge relevant and effective...the practice of ministry then is not only the appropriate context for doing theological thinking, it is itself intrinsically a theological activity.”¹³ Little wonder why Barth described theology as “a function of the church.”¹⁴ A living church must not exist solely by deriving its essence from the people who make up its membership. It must be “grounded in the being and life of God, and rooted in the eternal purposes of the Father to his Son, Jesus Christ, to the Head and saviour of all things.”¹⁵ And simply stated, this implies that a living church must be grounded in a bible centred theology.

There is therefore need for a theologically innovative work that aims at providing a meaningful solution to C.B.C’s theological problems in a bid to ensure its theological future and progress. To this end, this project suggests that a carefully written Theological Treatise for the Cameroon Baptist Convention by the General Council¹⁶ is certainly what is needed to address these theological challenges and enhance progress. This move however must start with a conscious determination for the C.B.C. leaders to rise up above

¹³Ray S. Anderson. “A Theology for Ministry” in *Theological Foundations for Ministry: Selected Readings for a Theology of the Church in ministry*. Ray S. Anderson (ed.) Grand Rapids: Michigan, William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979:7.

¹⁴Karl Barth. *Church Dogmatics*. Vol. 1. Part II. “The Doctrine of the word of God.” Eninburg: T&T Clarck Ltd. 1975:3.

¹⁵ Thomas F. Torrance. “Foundation of the Church.” In *Theological Foundations for Ministry: Selected Readings for a Theology of the Church in ministry*. Ray S. Anderson (ed.) Grand Rapids: Michigan, William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979:199.

¹⁶The General Council of the CBC is the topmost decision making body in the Convention composed of the General Secretary of the Convention and all the field pastors responsible for the various CBC fields in the entire nation. It is from here that major decisions concerning the church are taken and so a perfect platform from where the proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise can be developed. Though any serious C.B.C minister or theologian who may not be part of the General Council may be involved in the process of developing the proposed theological treatise, the General Council should play a leading role.

their theological differences and stand together on a common theological front to delineate and defend their own theological tenets central to their identity as an independent protestant denomination in Cameroon.

But how can C.B.C. rise above these differences? In response, the researcher argues that, while not despising the relevance of existing mainline reformation traditions in inspiring the process, there is need for the C.B.C. leaders to come together on a common ground and this would be scripture. Through a common interpretation of scripture, the General Council members can delineate and defend theological tenets for the CBC which would throw some light on the existing reformation traditions but which will be exclusively applicable to the Cameroon Baptist context and these views can be contained in a theological treatise.

Developing a theological treatise that covers all major theological doctrines relevant for the C.B.C. is by all estimation a huge task that requires time and great studies. Coming together alone is not enough for the General Council to successfully develop a theologically comprehensive treatise for the convention, biblically and theologically innovative paradigms are needed to enhance this process. Space and time does not permit for the development of theological tools needed for all the major doctrines relevant for a theological treatise in this project. But one indispensable doctrine which is theologically encompassing in nature has been singled out and discussed in details; the doctrine of soteriology with a focus on predestination.

The reason for selecting soteriology as the main concern in this project is based on the fact that soteriology is the end and purpose for which all other doctrines are given. Correct views on the meaning and method of salvation are closely correlated with

understanding other theological views such as the nature and function of God as well as the human nature.¹⁷ Ryrie makes the point even clearer;

Soteriology, the doctrine of salvation, must be the grandest theme in the Scriptures. It embraces all of time as well as eternity past and future. It relates in one way or another to all of mankind, without exception. It even has ramifications in the sphere of the angels. It is the theme of both the Old and New Testaments. It is personal, national, and cosmic. And it centers on the greatest Person, our Lord Jesus Christ¹⁸

Also, predestination is one of the most hotly debated subjects among C.B.C. leaders which has accounted for a widespread theological disunity on the doctrine of soteriology and eventually on other doctrinal issues. Thus a step towards uniting them on this subject will also help in uniting them in other doctrines.

With predestination in soteriology as the chief concern, the research suggests that, rather than focusing on an endless debate on which of the mainline protestant tradition is suitable for the convention, C.B.C. leaders should come together and delineate and defend their own tenets on predestination in their soteriology. And by being united on a correct soteriology, the foundation for a Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise is guaranteed, from which other doctrines would also be correctly delineated and defended. To be able to achieve this goal, this thesis goals at deconstructing biblical and theological paradigms from reformation traditions and from the exegesis of key texts on predestination (especially Romans 9:18-23 and 2 Peter 3:1-10). This is mainly for C.B.C. leaders to use as tools in the process of delineating and defending their own theological tenets on soteriology in the proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise.

Since some of the tenets on predestination by mainline protestant traditions have been misunderstood by many in the C.B.C, chapters one and two look at how mainline

¹⁷Scholars like Ayers would agree with the researcher on this. See Robert H. Ayers. *Christian Theology in a Contemporary World*. Lampeter: Wales, the Edwin Mellen Press, 1997: 123.

¹⁸ Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*. Wheaton, IL, Victor Books, 1987: 277.

traditions have explained predestination in their soteriology and how their thought eventually found its way to Cameroon and the C.B.C. The purpose is not only to trace the effects of C.B.C's theological history on its current state of theology but also as an attempt to dispel all misconceptions on the mainline protestant traditions on predestination lingering in the minds of many in the C.B.C. which has contributed to the undefined nature of theology in the convention. Thus these chapters are the background from where this project springs forth to achieve its purpose.

Having understood the history of the interpretation of predestination from the mainline reformation traditions and traced how these interpretations have affected the current state of C.B.C's theology through missionary activities, chapters three, four and five (being the crux of the dissertation) move on to deconstruct some helpful biblical and theological paradigms. This is achieved by a detailed observation of how predestination has been discussed in scriptures. Chapter six moves on to expatiates on how these paradigms, if used as tools to develop C.B.C's soteriology would also inform C.B.C's theology on other doctrines necessary for the proposed theological treatise. And chapter seven ends with general conclusions and recommendations.

1. Statement of Research Problem

In response to the undefined nature of theology in the C.B.C, the main objective of this project is to deconstruct biblical and theological paradigms for the C.B.C leaders to use in the process of delineating and defending their own contextualized tenets on soteriology in a proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise.

1.1. Main Research Questions

1. How has Predestination been interpreted by mainline reformation traditions?

2. How did these ideas arrive in Cameroon and the C.B.C?
3. What does the Bible generally teach on Predestination?
4. What insightful paradigm on predestination can be deconstructed from scriptures?
5. How can they assist the C.B.C. leaders as tools in the process of delineating and defending their own theological tenets?
6. How does a well developed soteriology inspire a correct view on other doctrines?

2. Hypothesis

A comprehensive theological treatise for the C.B.C. will help define the undefined state of its theology and boost its Christian theological praxis in society. Central to the development of this treatise is a correct understanding of soteriology. Helpful paradigms can be deconstructed from scriptures, which throw some light on reformation traditions for C.B.C. leaders to use as tools in the process of delineating and defending their own tenets on soteriology in this proposed theological treatise.

3. Definition of key terms

Five main terms need to be clearly defined for the purpose of this study namely; Predestination, Protestantism, Soteriology, Deconstruct and Evangelical Theology.

3.1. Predestination

According to *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Predestination refers to the “Predetermination by God of the individual’s ultimate destiny.”¹⁹ As a theological doctrine, it presupposes that all events have been willed by God, including election for believers and reprobation for unbelievers. The crux of the

¹⁹J.D. Douglas (ed.) *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Grandrapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1978:798.

theological discussion on predestination centres mainly on the relationship between man's free will and a universe that seems in some sense determined.²⁰ John Calvin, a prominent figure on the subject explains this as follows;

Predestination we call the eternal decree of God, by which He has determined in Himself, what He would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with a similar destiny; but eternal life is foreordained for some and eternal death for others. Every man, therefore, being created for one or the other of these ends, we say he is predestinated either to life or to death.²¹

In less complex terms, Vermigli simply defines predestination as “the most wise purpose of God by which he has from eternity constantly decreed to call all those whom he has loved in Christ to the adoption of his children, to justification by faith, and at least to glory through good works that they may be made like the image of the Son of God, and that in them may be declared the glory and mercy of the creator.”²² The discussion on this subject usually involves considerations on whether God is omniscient, eternal or atemporal (i.e He cannot be limited by time).²³ Further considerations involve whether God can see the past, present and future at the same time. Many predestination theologians like Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and Arminius²⁴ do agree that God can, but the area of considerable disagreement is in God's role in setting ultimate destinies based on his foreknowledge. The questions usually asked on this subject include the following:

- Is God's predetermining ability based only on a knowledge of his own will or does it also include a knowledge of whatever will happen?

²⁰Ibid., 798.

²¹John McClintock and James Strong. “Calvinism.” In *Encyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature. 12 Vols.* Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing House, 1970, 2:42.

²² Frank A. Pietro Martire Vermigli. *Predestination and Justification: Two Theological Loci.* Volume 8. Kirksville: Missouri, Truman State University Press, 2003: 19. Originally from the Church of England's *Articles of Religion.* Article 17 “Of Predestination and Election” in *Creeds of Christendom: With a History and Critical Notes.* Philip Schaff (ed.) Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983: 497.

²³Ibid., 497.

²⁴Ibid., 487.

- In what way is God’s prior decision particular? Does it focus on particular persons or events or is it based on a broad category of people and things?
- When making his prior decisions, how free is God. Is he limited to conditions external to his own will or he is not limited by anything?
- If individuals had no choice in determining who, when and where to come to being, how are the choices of their existence determined?
- How capable is an individual to desire all the choices available for his being and how capable is he to put into effect what he desires?

Scholars²⁵ who follow teachers like John Calvin generally argue that God alone determines the eternal destination of all human beings regardless of their own choices, thus what they eventually do, follow according to God’s will for their lives. On the other hand, scholars²⁶ who follow teachers like Jacobus Arminius argue that, even though God is completely sovereign over all things, he has chosen to give each individual a self-determining free will through grace, thus allowing the person to either accept or reject the offer of salvation.

²⁵Donald J. Westblade. “Divine Election in Pauline Literatures” In *The Grace of God, the Bondage of the Will: A Historical and theological perspective on Calvinism*. Thomas Schreiner and Bruce Ware (ed.) Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House Company, 1995: 65-66; Thomas Schreiner. “Does Romans 9 Teach Individual Election unto Salvation?” In *The Grace of God, the Bondage of the Will: A Historical and theological perspective on Calvinism*. Thomas Schreiner and Bruce Ware (ed.) Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House Company, 1995: 89; John Piper. “Are there Two Wills in God: Divine Election and God’s Desire for All to be Saved. In *The Grace of God, the Bondage of the Will: A Historical and theological perspective on Calvinism*. Thomas Schreiner and Bruce Ware (ed.) Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House Company, 1995: 131; Charles Spurgeon. *All of Grace*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1960: 26-32; Geoffrey B. Wilson. *Romans: A digest Reformed Comment*. Carlisle: Pennsylvania, the Banner Truth Trust, 1980:165; John Murray. *The epistle to the Romans: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*. 2 Vols. Ch. 9-16. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965: 31-31; J.D.G. Dunn. *Romans 9-16: World Biblical Commentary*. Dallas: Word, 1988: 555-556.

²⁶Howard Marshall. “Predestination in the New Testament.” In *Grace Unlimited*. Minneapolis: Bethany, 1955: 136; Jack Cottrell “The Nature of Divine Sovereignty.” In *The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989: 114; James D. Strauss. “God’s God’s Promise and Universal History: The Theology of Romans 9.” In *Grace Unlimited*. Minneapolis: Bethany, 1955: 200; Roger T. Foster and V. Paul Marson. *God’s strategy in Human History*. Wheaton: Tyndale, 1973: 145; Henry C. Theissen. *The Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949: 346-347 and J. Morison. *Exposition of the Nith Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988:149.

Predestinarian beliefs are often categorized in two perspectives, with the basis of each found under their definition of free will especially between the creator and his creatures. These can be contrasted as either univocal or equivocal concepts of predestination.²⁷ The univocal concept of predestination holds that, even though created by God, the human will is free of cause. The view argues that God has fashioned a system of absolute freedom that gave room for a human will which is free and independent. On the other hand, equivocal predestination (also referred to as analogical concept of freedom)²⁸ states that individual human free will is not excluded from the fashioning work of God. It holds that God has created and determined human will to be free. Since its freedom is determined by God, the equivocal perspective of predestination explains that man's will is free but not in an absolute sense.²⁹

3.2. Protestantism

Protestantism comes from the verb *protestari* where the adjective Protestant is derived which means to protest in the sense of raising an objection.³⁰ In theology, the word Protestantism is understood as a Christian movement that began in 16th century Germany as a reaction against Roman Catholicism especially on their teachings on

²⁷See James L. Halverson. *Peter Aureol on Predestination: A Challenge to Late Medieval Thought*. Leiden: the Netherlands, Koninklijke Brill NV, 1998:134-158.

²⁸Eunan McDonne. *The Concept of Freedom in the Writings of St Francis de Sales*. Stella Niagara: New York, International Academic Publishers, 2009: 56-76.

²⁹See the following resources for a more comprehensive explanation on predestination: David Basinger and Randball Basinger. *Predestination and Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom by John Feinberg, Norman Geisler, Bruce Reichenbach and Clark Pinnock*. Downers Grove: Illinois, Intervarsity Press, 1986; G.C. Berkouwer. *The Providence of God*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, WmB Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972; Loraine Boethner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*. Philadelphia: Prebyterian and Reformed, 1965; James M. Montgomery. *Our sovereign God*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House, 1977; D.A. Carson. *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility*. Atlanta, John Knox Press, 1981; Stephen Davis. *Logic and the Nature of God*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, WmB Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983; Gary Friesen. *Decision Making and the Will of God: A Biblical Alternative to the Traditions View*. Portland: Multnomah Press, 1980; Sydney Hook (ed.) *Determinism and Freedom*. New York: Collier Books, 1958; Ronald Nash. *The Concept of God*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing Company, 1983; Clark Pinnock (ed). *Grace Unlimited*. Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1975

³⁰J.D. Douglas (ed.) *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1978:808.

salvation, justification and soteriology. During the time of the reformation, the word Protestant was used to refer to the letters of protest written by the Lutheran princes³¹ against the decision of the Diet of Speyer in 1529, which reaffirmed the edict of the Diet of Worms in 1521. Soon after, it became the general word to describe the adherents of the Reformation in Germany, then later to members of any western church which existed outside the Roman Catholic Church.

The mainline protestant or reformation traditions include Lutheranism, Calvinism and Arminianism. Contrary to Roman Catholicism, Protestantism believes in the confessing of the primitive faith of the early church which they believed had been obscured by the latter innovation of medieval Catholicism and considered their teachings an apt recovery of Pauline theology.³²

3.3. Soteriology

The word soteriology is originally from the Greek word *soterion* meaning salvation and salvation from *soteria*, meaning to save.³³ As a major branch in Christian theology, soteriology is “nothing new, it is just the study of salvation.”³⁴ Salvation

³¹ Luther Princes refer to the six Fursten (princes) and 14 Imperial Free Cities, representing the Protestant minority, who petitioned the Reichstag at Speyer on April 1529 against the Reichsacht (Imperial Ban) against Martin Luther, as well as the proscription of his works and teachings, and called for the unhindered spread of the Protestant faith. See Roland Bainton (2007). *Here I Stand - A Life of Martin Luther*. Plume, 1995

³² See the following resources for more on Protestantism: J.D. Douglas (ed.) *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1978:808. For reference and further studies on Protestantism, the following resources are recommended: William Ketcham Anderson (ed). *Protestantism: A Symposium*. Commission on Courses of Study: The Methodist Church. 1969; Martin E. Marty. *Protestantism*. New York : Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972; George H. Tavad. *Protestantism*. London : Burns & Oates, 1959; M.A. Malden. *A companion to nineteenth-century Europe, 1789-1914*. Stefan Berger (ed). Blackwell Pub., 2006; J.A. Wylie. *The History of Protestantism*. Rapidan: Virginia, Heartland Publications, 2002; Robert William Dale. *Protestantism: Its Ultimate Principle*. BiblioBazaar, 2010; Edward Preston Usher. *Protestantism: A Study in the Direction of Religious Truth and Christian Unity*. Columbia University: Lee and Shepherd Publishers, 1897; Louis Bouyer. *The Spirit and Reforms of Protestantism*. The University of California, Newman Press, 1956; J. Leslie Dunstan. *Protestantism: The Spirit of Protestantism (1961)*. Kessinger Publishing LLC, 2010.

³³ David R Anderson. *Free Grace Soteriology*. Xulon Press, 2010:14.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, vii.

according to the *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* refers to the “deliverance by God from almost any kind of evil.”³⁵ Soteriology as a doctrine covers topics on biblical issues such as regeneration, conversion, justification, adoption, sanctification and glorification.³⁶

3.4. Deconstruct

To deconstruct means to break down from a structure into components or expose an idea for better understanding.³⁷ It also means to analyze, interpret or explain an idea for better comprehension. The suitability of the word in the context of this project is justified in that, the research does not seek to deconstruct a paradigm from the Cameroon Baptist Convention theology but for the Cameroon Baptist Convention theology.

It premises on the mainline traditions on predestination in the history of protestant soteriology (Lutheranism, Calvinism/Moderate Calvinism, Arminianism/Wesleyan Arminianism and also Neo-orthodoxy-Karl Barth) to deconstruct (interpret, explain, analyze, break down)³⁸ biblical and theological paradigms from the exegesis of key texts on predestination in scriptures (especially Romans 9:18-23 and 2 Peter 3:1-10) for C.B.C leaders to use as tools in the process of delineating and defend their own tenets on soteriology in the proposed theological treatise. The paradigms are biblical and theological

³⁵ J.D. Douglas (ed.) *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Grandrapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1978:874.

³⁶ For more on Soteriology, the reader is referred to the following resources: John McIntyre. *Shape of Soteriology: Studies in the Doctrine of the Death of Christ*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd, 1995; Joseph Pohle. *Soteriology: A Dogmatic Treatise on the Redemption*. Hardpress Publishing, 2012; Samson Adetunji Fatokun. *Soteriology: An African Outlook : a Historical Study of the Christian Doctrine of Salvation from an African Perspective*. End-Time Publishing House, 2010; David Allen. *Basic Studies in Soteriology*. Xulon Press, 2005; Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie. *The soteriology of Jesus*. Dunlap Printing Co., 1896.

³⁷ Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary. [Assessed 08/11/2012]

<http://oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/dictionary/deconstruct>

³⁸ Ibid.

because they are deconstructed from mainline traditions³⁹ and from the exegesis of key texts on the subject. However, the main emphasis is on the Bible.

3.5 Evangelical Theology⁴⁰

Evangelical theology is a branch of systematic theology which constitutes mostly of a protestant Christian reflection of God and salvation, guided by the ultimate authority of scriptures.⁴¹ In his introductory book to Evangelical theology, Barth defines the discipline as one that draws upon the New Testament writings and the Reformation tradition of the sixteen century.⁴² The reason why it is described as evangelical is because it focuses primarily and decisively on the Bible. The point of departure for evangelical theology is the conviction that the bible is God's full and final revelation.⁴³ Smith points out the three vital presuppositions of evangelical theology that derive from this conviction.

First, God has spoken in his word.⁴⁴ It presupposes that since the Bible has been provided to us as an inspired, inerrant, authoritative and sufficient word from God, our only task is to simply identify what it says, summarise what it says and teach what it says in as clear and concise as we possibly can. Second, since the word of God comes from the mind of God, it forms a harmonious whole without inner contradictions.⁴⁵ And third, although the teachings of the Bible are a coherent whole, the evidence that justify its claims progresses over time. Progressive in the sense that, each new revelation does not

³⁹They only throw light to the discussion rather than serve as models for the CBC.

⁴⁰This is a systematic theological project approached from a conservative, evangelical manner.

⁴¹Roger E. Olson. *The Westminster Handbook To Evangelical Theology*. Louisville: Kentucky, Westminster John Knox Press, 2004:9.

⁴²Karl Barth. *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*. New Bond: London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963: 5.

⁴³Kevin Gary Smith. *Academic Writing and Theological research: A Guide for Students*. Johannesburg: South Africa, South African Theological Seminary Press, 2008: 183.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 183.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 184.

contradict but build on the foundation of earlier revelations on the same topic.⁴⁶ This approach to systematic theology differs vastly from a liberal approach.

This is because, liberal systematic theology is “based on the premise that human righteousness should be understood and interpreted from the perspective of modern knowledge and modern experience.”⁴⁷ Friedrich Schleiermacher, a notable scholar usually called the father of liberal theology is known to be the brain behind this approach. He argued that the Christian experience, as interpreted by the Christian community is the primary source for the knowledge of God.⁴⁸ Hence, at its basic level, liberal theology does not begin with the assumption that God has spoken, it rather resorts to speculation, which makes the approach to be simply a subjective and conceptual comparison of what scholars in the field have or are saying on a given subject.⁴⁹

3.6. Systematic Theology

Systematic theology has been defined in different ways but for the purpose of this project with its evangelical approach, the following definition as posited by Grudem will be used: “Systematic Theology is any study that answers the following questions, ‘what does the whole bible teach us today?’ about any given topic.”⁵⁰ By virtue of this definition, systematic theology at its basic level, involves collecting and understanding all the relevant passages in the bible about a given topic under study and then summarize their teachings clearly so that what to believe about each topic could be easily understood. This

⁴⁶Ibid., 184.

⁴⁷Paul Razor. *Faith without Certainty: Liberal Theology in the 21st Century*. Boston: MA, Skinner House Books 2005:1.

⁴⁸See Gerald R. McDermott. *The Great Theologians: A Brief Guide*. Downers Grove: IL, Intervarsity Press, 2010: 134. For details on Schleiermacher’s works, see Friedrich Schleiermacher. *Friedrich Schleiermacher Volume 1 of Making of Modern Theology Series*. Keith W. Clements (ed). Minneapolis: MN, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1987.

⁴⁹Kevin Gary Smith. *Academic Writing and Theological research: A Guide for Students*. Johannesburg: South Africa, South African Theological Seminary Press, 2008:184.

⁵⁰Wayne Grudem. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrines*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing Company 1994:21.

work is truly a systematic theological project because it seeks to collect and understand all the relevant texts on predestination in the bible in order to know what to believe about soteriology which would be helpful for the C.B.C leaders.

4. Delimitation of Study

The scope of this study is limited in the following ways:

4.1. Biblical

While all the texts on predestination in scriptures will be considered directly or indirectly in this project, only two problematic text will be treated in details by way of exegesis namely; Romans 9:18-23 and 2 Peter 3:1-10. The reason for this selection is because both texts apparently show a direct contrast on the teaching of predestination. The former reveals God as the main subject in determining those who are elected and those who are reprobated and then ends with a justification for God's righteousness. The latter rather explains that God's desire is not for any to be reprobated but for all to be saved. Due to this apparent contradiction, these two texts have been treated in greater details in chapter three in a bid to find out what the apostles meant by what they said in them as a major step towards deconstructing paradigms for the CBC.

4.2. Historical

Even though a broader view of predestination has been considered to a reasonable extent, the exact history however, of the interpretation of predestination has been limited only to the mainline reformation traditions that sprang up in Europe from the sixteen century onwards These traditions include; Lutheranism, Calvinism, Arminianism and not leaving out Barthianism as a Neo-orthodox tradition. Other historical details on

Predestination such as the views of the church fathers⁵¹ from the time of the early church, and views from other Christian denominations or mainline Christian churches like Roman Catholicism⁵² and Eastern Orthodoxy⁵³ have not been seriously considered in this project.⁵⁴

4.3. Ecclesiastical

While it would be beneficial to churches in Africa in general and those in Cameroon in particular, the biblical and theological paradigms on Predestination developed in this project are applicable mainly within the context of the C.B.C.

5. Presuppositions of the research

1. A comprehensive theological treatise is what the CBC needs to address its theological problems.⁵⁵
2. A correct soteriology is central to understanding other key doctrines relevant in a theological treatise.
3. The strength of CBC's theology will enhance its holistic involvement in social issues such as public in education, health care and social justice.

⁵¹To read more on the church fathers on this subject, please see the following: B. K. Kuiper. *The Church in History*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, WmB Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964; Justo L. González. *Church history: an essential guide*. Abingdon Press, 1996; James North, Don Umphrey. *A History of the Church: From Pentecost to Present*. College Press Publishing Company, 2007; Bruce L. Shelley. *Church History in Plain Language*. Nashville: Tennessee. Thomas Nelson Inc., 1978; Eusebius and Andrew Louth. *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*. Andrew Louth (ed). Penguin Books Limited, 1989.

⁵²To read more on Roman Catholic's position on this subject, see the following: *The Catholic Dogma: Predestination of the Elect*. Catholic Encyclopaedia. [assed 09/05/2012] <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12378a.htm>; A&E Television Network. *Pope John Paul II : Biography*. Random House Inc. 1997; George Weigel. *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*. Harper Perennial; Updated edition. 2005; Caroline Pigozzi. *Pope John Paul II: An Intimate Life: The Pope I Knew So Well*. FaithWords; 1 edition. 2008.

⁵³See the following resources for more on this subject: Michael Pomazansky. *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology: A Concise Exposition*. Saint Herman Printers, 2006:33-34; S. T. Kimbrough. *Orthodox And Wesleyan Scriptural Understanding And Practice*. St Vladimirs Seminary Printers. 2006:23; St. Theophan the Recluse, *An Explanation of Certain Texts of Holy Scripture*, as quoted in Johanna Manley's *The Bible and the Holy Fathers for Orthodox: Daily Scripture Readings and Commentary for Orthodox Christians*, St Vladimir's Seminary Press; Reprint edition, 1999: 609

⁵⁴However, appendix III briefly summarizes some of these other traditional positions in predestination.

⁵⁵Such as a 'weak theological culture,' pocket theology and personal preferences etc.

6. The value of the research

6.1. Theological value

Developing a theological treatise for a mainline denomination like the C.B.C is by all estimation a huge task. The tools needed for this purpose must be preferably developed by someone who is familiar with the ministerial and theological landscape of the CBC. Hence, the theological value of this project is that, it provides informed theological paradigms for CBC leaders to use in the process of delineating their own tenets on soteriology in their own theological treatise, since the research is carried out by a researcher who is quite familiar with the theological state of the CBC. Dr. Yong further elaborates on the theological value of this project in this way; “I believe that [this] work is going to begin to provide the tools needed to address the [theological] issues and for pastors to use. You are pointing out a problem that exists and maybe people do not even know that they have the problem.”⁵⁶

6.2. Practical value

The practical value of this project for the Cameroon Baptist Convention is that, it provides the tools needed to ensure that CBC has a defined theology expressed in a theological treatise written within the framework of the CBC. And with a defined theology, CBC’s identity and impact in the society will be felt. Also, with a defined theology, it will be easy for visitors (especially missionary lecturers) to clearly understand CBC’s theological position. This will enable them to clearly decide whether to work in the system or not and if they decide to, they will have a clear understanding with the leaders on how they would teach in light of their established positions. It could also serve as a

⁵⁶ Philemon Yong. “The Current State of theology in the CBC.” *Exclusive Interview*. Minneapolis: Minnesota, 13th July 2012.

helpful tool to determine whether missionaries who wish to serve in the C.B.C should be accepted or rejected.

Furthermore, personal traditions and preferences on theological issues that have been an obstacle to growth in the CBC will give way for theological unity as all ministers in the church and seminaries will be bound according to the tenets delineated in the proposed theological treatise. Finally, with a strong theological position on soteriology, the practical value of this project is that it will also help CBC leaders to identify areas of theological weakness in some aspects of their practical ministries such as in baptism, the Lord's Supper, church discipline, evangelism, church government, denominational distinctives (what does it mean to be a Baptist?) and church planting among others.

7. The structure of the research

This project falls within the scientific study of systematic theology approached from an evangelical theological perspective. In his book on *Academic Writing and Theological research*, Kevin Smith provides some helpful steps to doing systematic theology from an evangelical perspective which this project has seriously considered. According to Smith, evangelical systematic theology proceeds in a truly scientific manner⁵⁷ with the presupposition that God has spoken in his word and at the heart of the scientific method lies a two-fold process namely, (a) collection of data by observation and (b) the construction of theory.⁵⁸ In this work, chapters one to four have been dedicated to

⁵⁷Apart from Smith, a notable theologian who also speaks of theology as science is McGrath. He argues that a theological discovery of reality parallels with a scientific investigation of reality, which involves collecting of data by observation and formation of theories from the collected data. The same is true of a theological investigation as it collects data from scriptures and traditions and forms theories from the collected data. See McGrath, A. *On Writing a Scientific Theology: A Response to Ross H. Mckenzie*. Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith 56(4), 2004:11.

⁵⁸ Kevin Gary Smith. *Academic Writing and Theological research: A Guide for Students*. Johannesburg: South Africa, South African Theological Seminary Press, 2008: 184.

collecting data by observing how the subject of predestination has been handled by mainline reformation traditions and by scriptures in general.

Having collected this data in the first four chapters, chapters five and six continue the research process by constructing theories helpful for the CBC leaders as they consider developing a theological treatise for the convention. There is a basic design for evangelical theology as suggested by Smith⁵⁹ which this work has carefully considered. This involves the following sections:

Section 1: Introduction

Smith explains that the introduction of an evangelical systematic theological project must explain the ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ of the study.⁶⁰ Therefore, this project begins with an overview of the current state of theology in the CBC, pointing out the main problem, the accompanying key questions, its delimitations and hypothesis. It also points out the value of this study to the CBC and explains the methodology employed by the researcher to achieve his objectives.

Section 2: Current views

The second section of an evangelical theological study focuses on the current views from mainline traditions or key scholars. Smith explains that this section must offer a clear and objective description of each of the current views on the subject under investigation.⁶¹ Hence in chapter one, we use literary resources⁶² to attempt a clear and objective view of how some mainline reformation traditions like Lutheranism, Calvinism,

⁵⁹Ibid., 185-195.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 190.

⁶¹Ibid., 190.

⁶²Even though an alternative methodology may be acceptable, Smith agrees that the common research methodology used in this section is usually literary method. See Ibid., 192.

Arminianism and later Barthianism have handled the subject of predestination in their soteriologies. In chapter two, we observe how these traditions were progressively ‘exported’ into the Cameroons leading to the current problematic state of theology in the CBC.

Section 3: Biblical evidence

The next major section of this project consists of a thorough inductive analysis of the relevant biblical texts on predestination. This has been done through a biblical survey and biblical exegesis in chapters three and four. First, we identify (considerably) the texts that address the subject of predestination in the Old and New Testament and attempt a brief analysis to determine their meaning. Second, we select some major texts which have been a reason for heated debates among scholars on the subject of predestination and attempt an exegesis of each. In this regard, two texts have been exegeted; Romans 9:18-23 and 2 Peter 3:1-10. As Smith explains that “exegesis is the bedrock of theology,”⁶³ this is by all estimations necessary because, in order to develop correct paradigms that would help the CBC leaders to construct a soteriology in the proposed theological treatise, a correct and healthy exegesis of key text is needed.

Section 4: Theory construction

Having done an overview of scriptures and exegeted key texts on the subject in the previous section, chapter five continues the project by deducing some timeless principles from them and constructing a theory to account for all the relevant data. Ware⁶⁴ refers to this as *retroduction* as it entails looking at the data and questioning how we can best make some sense out of it. The chapter mainly focuses on deconstructing biblical and

⁶³Ibid., 186.

⁶⁴Bruce Ware. Method of Evangelical Theology. [assessed 10/04/2013] [www.biblicaltaining .org](http://www.biblicaltaining.org), 2001.

theological paradigms from the data collected in chapters one to three which the CBC leaders can use as tools in the process of delineating and defending their own tenets on soteriology in the proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise.

Section 5: Contemporary significance

Smith pointed out that, the task of evangelical theology remains incomplete until it clearly points out its significance for today's church and its believers.⁶⁵ In chapter six, we bring the project closer to its end by exploring both the doctrinal and practical significance of beginning the process of developing a comprehensive theological treatise for the CBC by first of all developing a contextualized soteriology. And chapter seven ends with informed conclusions as well as suggestions and recommendations for further research on other aspects of growth necessary for the C.B.C which will be enhanced by its solid theological foundation.

⁶⁵ Kevin Gary Smith. *Academic Writing and Theological research: A Guide for Students*. Johannesburg: South Africa, South African Theological Seminary Press, 2008:194.

CHAPTER 1

REFORMATION TRADITIONS ON PREDESTINATION IN THE HISTORY OF PROTESTANTISM

Introduction

Given the main objective of this project⁶⁶, the purpose of this chapter is not to engage into a critical discussion on the various perspectives of the mainline protestant traditions nor is it to show how fruitless it would be to attempt an application of these tenets in the Cameroon Baptist Convention (C. B. C.) without some form of contextualization from a European to an African context. The chapter simply attempts a succinct restatement of the core tenets on predestination in the soteriology of some of the mainline protestant or reformation traditions, showing how they agree or differ with each other on the subject simply as a demonstration of the researcher's mastery of the subject of predestination in the history of Protestantism that gives him the impetus to attempt a research on this subject for the good of the theological future of the C. B. C. The chapter also functions as a point of departure for the project to advance into the subsequent chapters in an effort to achieve the objective of the project.

The researcher believes that an insightful restatement of the underlining tenets on predestination as postulated by mainline protestant traditions is helpful for this project for two main reasons; first, despite the fact that many C. B. C. leaders hold on to a given protestant tradition on predestination as personal preferences,⁶⁷ there is still a 'weak

⁶⁶To develop biblical and theological paradigms from scriptures that throw light on the existing mainline protestant traditions on predestination which the CBC leaders can use as tools in the process of delineating and defending their own tenets on soteriology in the proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise.

⁶⁷ Says Dr. Philemon Yong on "The Current State of theology in the CBC." *Exclusive Interview*. Minneapolis: Minnesota, 13th July 2012

theological culture’⁶⁸ in the C.B.C. This implies that most of the C.B.C. leaders who claim adherence to a given protestant tradition as a preference to others do not even demonstrate a thoughtful knowledge or application of the tenets in the C.B.C, thus the result would inevitably be a weak theological culture from the top to the bottom in the convention.

It is therefore important to start this project by attempting a restatement of some of these mainline protestant traditional tenets on predestination so that the desired audience⁶⁹ of this project would clearly understand what each tradition stands for as a helpful insight on the predestination discourse in the C.B.C. Second, the researcher is convinced that a project that aims at developing tenets for a soteriology in the proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise must consider the history of how the subject has been treated by other authorities in the past as this would throw some light in the research process. This explains why the researcher considers it helpful to begin this project with a succinct summary or restatement of how the subject of predestination has been treated by some of the mainline traditions in the history of Protestantism. .

1.1.The mainline reformation traditions

In the 16th century, Europe experienced the Renaissance, a revival of learning and antique culture that eventually informed the Reformation of the church.⁷⁰ The renaissance era made it possible for ancient Greek, Latin and Hebrew to be mastered by any serious scholar and this gave an illuminating access to the writings of the Early Church fathers.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Says Dr. Philemon Yong on “The Current State of theology in the CBC.” *Exclusive Interview*. Minneapolis: Minnesota, 13th July 2012. By weak theological culture, Dr. Yong means that the CBC system does not encourage/stimulate thoughtfulness on burning issues about faith and practice and even those who claim to demonstrate thoughtfulness on these issues based on preferences to a given protestant tradition do so in a way that only suggest that they have imperfectly understood these traditions.

⁶⁹The leadership of the CBC and the many Christian in the CBC who will find this work an interesting piece to read.

⁷⁰Peter Hammond. 2006. *The Greatest Century of the Reformation*. Howard Place: South Africa, Christian Liberty Books. 2006:5.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 5.

Thus the reformers were able to translate scriptures from the original language to show how far the Catholic Church had departed from the Faith.⁷² However, most of the renaissance men especially in Rome became flagrantly irreligious and immoral to the point that even the Popes embraced a revived paganism.⁷³

Almost any official in the Catholic Church could be bought and church positions became dominated by corrupt and materialistic humanists who ruthlessly persecuted genuine believers. The biblical values of the church were flagrantly abandoned for selfish and fleshy desires. To finance the Pope's extravagant living and the construction of St. Peter's Cathedral, the church was selling indulgence and dispensations that justified purchasers to break church rule; they were allowed to commit adultery, marry close relatives, rely on horoscopes etc.⁷⁴

When as a Roman Catholic priest, Martin Luther visited Rome in 1510, he was shocked at its corruption and degeneracy. Seven years later, Dr. Martin Luther now professor of theology⁷⁵ at Wittenburg University confronted the indulgence sales man⁷⁶ with his ninety five theses in 1517.

⁷²For how the church had departed from the faith, see Alastair Armstrong John Hamer. *The European Reformation, 1500-1610*. Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 2002: 2.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴ Peter Hammond. 2006. *The Greatest Century of the Reformation*. Howard Place: South Africa, Christian Liberty Books. 2006:5.

⁷⁵Luther earned his Doctorate degree in theology in October 19th 1512 at the University of Wittenburg. And, on 21 October 1512, he was received into the senate of the theological faculty of the University of Wittenberg, having been called to the position of *Doctor in Bible*. He spent the rest of his career in this position at the University of Wittenberg. See Martin Brecht. *Martin Luther*. tr. James L. Schaaf, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985–93, 1:12–27 for more details.

⁷⁶These earthly and spiritual pardon or indulgence was sold by a Dominican monk called Jahann Tatzel

Luther taught that salvation is not earned by good deeds but received only as a free gift of God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ as redeemer from sin.⁷⁷ His theology challenged the authority of the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church as it taught that the Bible is the only source of divinely revealed knowledge. Following his refusal to retract all of his writings at the demand of Pope Leo X in 1520 and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms in 1521⁷⁸, Luther was consequently excommunicated by the pope and condemned as an outlaw by the emperor. But “[His] courageous and historic speech before the assembled authorities of the Holy Roman Empire and the Catholic Church shook the world.”⁷⁹

The impact of Luther’s reformation ideas through his writings spread like wild fire throughout Europe and soon reached France, the then largest and richest nation in Europe, with a population of about 16 million. At a time when Spain had 7 million and England had 3 million, Paris was the largest city in Europe with a population of 300,000 people.⁸⁰ Luther’s books poured into France and many were converted to the protestant faith. In defiance of Protestantism in France, King Francis I ordered vigorous persecution to stamp out the faith, as a result, many received inhuman treatment including being burnt alive. It

⁷⁷See the following authors on Luther’s teachings on salvation by grace alone through faith: Ewald M. Plass, *What Luther Says*, 3 vols., St. Louis: CPH, 1959: 88; M. Reu, *Luther and the Scriptures*, Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1944:23.

⁷⁸The diet of worms was attended by the emperor Charles the V, 6 princes, 24 splendidly dressed dukes, 30 archbishops, and 7 ambassadors. The agenda of the meeting was definite; first, that Luther should confirm that the writings on the table were his and second, that he should recant and admit that they were heretical. In response, Luther answered in German “*Unless I am convinced by scriptures or clear reasoning that I am in error- for popes and councils have often erred and contradicted themselves, I cannot recant for I am subject to the scriptures I have quoted. My conscience is captive to the word of God. It is unsafe and dangerous to do anything against one’s conscience. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. So help me God. Amen.*” See Ray Comfort. *Luther Gold*. Alachua: FL, Bridge Logos Foundation, 2010:61.

⁷⁹Peter Hammond. 2006. *The Greatest Century of the Reformation*. Howard Place: South Africa, Christian Liberty Books. 2006: 6.

⁸⁰*Ibid*,6.

was against the backdrop of this persecution that the brilliant young humanist law student, John Calvin was converted to the protestant faith around 1530. He passionately called for a purified Christianity, stressing salvation by grace alone.⁸¹

Calvin was a principal figure in the development of the system of Protestant theology which is today called Calvinism.⁸² This tradition is sometimes identified with the five points of Calvinism, also called the doctrines of grace. It is best known for its doctrines of predestination and total depravity, stressing the absolute sovereignty of God. In English, the five points of Calvinism are sometimes referred to by the acronym TULIP⁸³ explained as follows:

Total depravity⁸⁴: This doctrine teaches that, as a consequence of the Fall of man into sin, every person born into the world is enslaved to the service of sin. The term “total” in this context refers to sin affecting every part of a person, not that every person is as evil as possible. It presupposes that, people are not by nature inclined to love God with their whole heart, mind, or strength, but rather all are inclined to serve their own interests over those of their neighbour and to reject the rule of God. Thus, all people by their own

⁸¹Ibid,6.

⁸²The teachings of Luther have been termed Lutheranism and those who follow Luther’s teachings are called Lutherans. Even though influenced by the theology of Luther, the teachings of Calvin have been termed Calvinism and those who follow these teachings are called Calvinist. The foundation of Lutheranism and Calvinism are basically the same on the issue of predestination. The difference is simply in their focus; while Luther focused on justification by faith, Calvin focused on the sovereignty of God but both shared an overwhelming sense of the majesty of God. However, Calvinism is known to be the tradition that has clearly articulated the doctrine of Predestination. In this project, Calvinism and Lutheranism are considered as some of the mainline traditions on predestination.

⁸³It should be noted that, the TULIP was a summation of judgement rendered by the synod of Dort in 1619 as a direct response to the five points of the Arminian Remonstrance, a collection of articles authored by the opponents of the reformed doctrine but they were rejected by the Synod of Dort in 1619. Calvin himself never used such a model and never combated Arminianism directly. In fact, Calvin died in 1564 and Jacob Arminius was born in 1560, and so the men were not contemporaries.

⁸⁴See David N. Steele and Crutis C. Thomas. *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended and Documented*. Philipsburg: New Jersey, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1963:24.

faculties are morally unable to choose to follow God and be saved because they are unwilling to do so out of the necessity of their own natures.⁸⁵

Unconditional election: This doctrine asserts that God has chosen from eternity those whom he will bring to himself not based on foreseen virtue, merit, or faith in those people; rather, it is unconditionally grounded in God's mercy alone. God has chosen from eternity to extend mercy to those He has chosen and to withhold mercy from those not chosen. Those chosen receive salvation through Christ alone. Those not chosen receive the just wrath that is warranted for their sins against God.⁸⁶

Limited atonement: Driven by the concept of God's sovereignty in salvation, this doctrine teaches that Jesus' substitutionary atonement⁸⁷ was definite and certain in its purpose and in what it accomplished. This implies that only the sins of the elect were atoned for by Jesus' death. The atonement is not limited in its value or power, but rather in the sense that it is designed for some and not all. Hence, the atonement is sufficient for all and efficient only for the elect.⁸⁸

Irresistible grace: This doctrine asserts that the saving grace of God is effectually applied to those whom he has determined to save (the elect) and, in God's timing, overcomes their resistance to obeying the call of the gospel, bringing them to a saving faith. This means that when God sovereignly purposes to save someone, that individual certainly will be saved. The doctrine holds that this purposeful influence of God's Holy

⁸⁵ David N. Steele, Curtis C. Thomas, and S. Lance Quinn. *The Five Points of Calvinism Defined, Defended, and Documented*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2004: 25.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 25.

⁸⁷ The idea of Jesus dying as a substitute to others is referred to as the substitutionary atonement.

⁸⁸ See David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas. *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended and Documented*. Phillipsburg: New Jersey, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1963:38.

Spirit cannot be resisted, but that the Holy Spirit, graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ.⁸⁹

Perseverance of the saints: The doctrine asserts that since God is sovereign and his will cannot be frustrated by humans or anything else, those whom God has called into communion with himself will continue in faith until the end. Those who apparently fall away either never had true faith to begin with or will return.⁹⁰ The saints in this context refers to all who are set apart by God, and not of those who are exceptionally holy, canonized, or in heaven.⁹¹

These teachings became so widespread that even after his death in 1564, Calvin became the most influential man of his age and his teachings greatly shaped Britain and the United States of America. Most great men, thinkers and theologians were influenced and shaped by his theology. For instance, in the University of Leiden, prominent theologians like Lambertus Danaeus, Johannes Drusius, Guillaume Feuguereius, and Johann Kolmann were influenced by Calvinism.⁹² Kolmann especially believed and taught the high Calvinism. And many students flocked into the university for theological education including Jacob Arminius, a young Dutch student, who studied at Leiden from 1576-1586. Jacob Arminius studied with success and had seeds planted that would begin

⁸⁹Ibid. 18.

⁹⁰See Lorraine Boettner. *Perseverance of the Saints*. [assessed 23/06/2012] http://www.the-highway.com/perseverance_Boettner.html.

⁹¹ For reference and further reading on the five points of Calvinism, the following resources are recommended: Edwin H. Palmer. *The Five Points of Calvinism: A Study Manual*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House, 1972; Robert Lewis Dabney. *The Five Points of Calvinism*. Solid Ground Books, 2007; David N. Steele, Curtis C. Thomas, and S. Lance Quinn. *The Five Points of Calvinism Defined, Defended, and Documented*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2004.

⁹²Those who were influenced by Calvinism in this era did not only differ with the Roman Catholic Church but also with the Lutherans especially on issues such as the Lord's Supper, baptism, theories of worship etc.

to develop into a new theological system called Arminianism⁹³ that would later compete with the dominant Calvinism.

When Moses Amyraut (1596-1664)⁹⁴, (originally a lawyer) read Calvin's "*Institutes of the Christian Religion*"⁹⁵ He was influenced by its doctrines and eventually converted to the study of theology. While he maintained the fundamentals of this doctrine, he however considered Calvin's teachings to be too extreme and advocated for a moderate view, a view which is now known as Moderate Calvinism.⁹⁶ This tradition rejects one of the Five points of Calvinism⁹⁷; the doctrine of limited atonement and rather holds that, the atonement has been provided equally to all men, but seeing that none would believe on their own, God elected those whom he will bring to faith in Christ, thereby still holding on to the Calvinist doctrine of unconditional election.

While Moses Amyraut came up with a new tradition from Classical Calvinism called Moderate Calvinism, John Wesley (1703-1791)⁹⁸ on the other hand, came up with another tradition from Reformed or Classical Arminianism called Wesleyan Arminianism, a theological position that blends concepts of Jacobus Arminius with his own concepts. Thus from the sixteen to the eighteen century, the mainline traditions on predestination

⁹³ The tenets of Arminian tradition were officially articulated in the Remonstrance (1610), a theological statement signed by 45 ministers and submitted to the Dutch states general which called the Synod of Dort (1618–19) to pass upon the Remonstrance. See Aza Goudriaan and Fred van Lieburg. *Revisiting the Synod of Dort (1618-19)*. Leiden: the Netherlands, Koninklijke Brill NV Incorporated, 2011:84.

⁹⁴See Hubert Cunliffe-Jones. *A History of Christian Doctrines*. York Road: London, T&T Clark Ltd. 1978:436.

⁹⁵Calvin's first theological masterpiece published in 1536

⁹⁶ This view is also named after its formulator Amyraldism or sometimes Amyraldianism, also known as the School of Saumur, Hypothetical universalism, Post Redemptionism.

⁹⁷Thus it is sometimes also referred to as Four Points Calvinism

⁹⁸An Anglican priest and scholar whose evangelistic work produced a major revival in the British Isles and later became the foundation for the Methodist Church.

that prevailed in Europe were namely; Lutheranism by Martin Luther, Calvinism by John Calvin⁹⁹ and Arminianism by Jacobus Arminius.¹⁰⁰

In a bid to explain these mainline traditional views on Predestination, this chapter does so by simply explaining what each of these Reformers believed about predestination in their soteriology (since these traditions originated from their personal positions). We begin with predestination in Luther's theology, then in Calvin's theology before moving to Arminius' theology.

1.1.1. Predestination in Luther's soteriology¹⁰¹

The extent of Luther's treatment of the doctrine of predestination has been the reason for debates among contemporary scholars: Some scholars like R. C. Sproul argue that, predestination was more central to Luther's theology than it was in Calvin's. Thus he states:

It is important for us to see that the Reformed doctrine of predestination was not invented by John Calvin. There is nothing in Calvin's view of predestination that was not earlier propounded by Luther and Augustine before him. Later, Lutheranism did not follow Luther on this matter but Melancthon, who altered his

⁹⁹From where Moderate Calvinism by Moses Amyraut (1596-1664) took its roots. See Hubert Cunliffe-Jones. *A History of Christian Doctrines*. York Road: London, T&T Clark Ltd. 1978:436.

¹⁰⁰From where Wesleyan Arminianism by John Wesley (1703–1791) took its roots. See Hubert Cunliffe-Jones. *A History of Christian Doctrines*. York Road: London, T&T Clark Ltd. 1978:529.

¹⁰¹Luther's theology was highly informed by his life history especially his academic and monastic life. Even though this information is relevant to understanding his theology, the objective of this project however does not justify the need for such information in this context. To know more about the history of the formation of Luther's theology, the following books are recommended: Ewald M. Plass. "Monasticism," in *What Luther Says: An Anthology*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959, 2:964; Ewald M. Plass, *What Luther Says*, 3 vols., (St. Louis: CPH, 1959), 88, no. 269; M. Reu, *Luther and the Scriptures*, Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1944: 23; Luther, Martin. *Concerning the Ministry* (1523), tr. Conrad Bergendoff, in Bergendoff, Conrad (ed.) *Luther's Works*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958, 40:18 ff; Roland Bainton. *Here I Stand: a Life of Martin Luther*. New York: Penguin, 1995: 269; Hendrix, Scott H. "The Controversial Luther." *Word & World* 3/4. St. Paul, MN, Luther Seminary Press, 1983:393; Hans Hillerbrand & Donald K. McKim (eds.). "The Legacy of Martin Luther." in *The Cambridge Companion to Luther*. Cambridge University Press, 2003; Martin Brecht. *Martin Luther*. James L. Schaaf (trns), Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985–93, 1:3–5; Oswald Bayer. "Martin Luther (1483-1546)." In *The Reformation Theologians*. Carter Lindberg (ed). Malden: Massachusetts, Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2002: 52; Schwiebert, E.G. *Luther and His Times*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950: 136; Bainton, Roland. *Here I Stand: a Life of Martin Luther*. New York: Penguin, 1995: 40–42; James Kittelson. *Luther The Reformer*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishing House, 1986: 53.

views after Luther's death. It is also noteworthy that in his famous treatise on theology, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin wrote sparingly on the subject. Luther wrote more about predestination than did Calvin¹⁰²

Boettner makes further emphasis on this by asserting that Luther "went into the doctrine as heartily as did Calvin himself... He even asserted it with more warmth and proceeded to much harsher lengths in defending it than Calvin ever did."¹⁰³

On the other hand, scholars like Don Matzat¹⁰⁴ and James R. Swan¹⁰⁵ hold that, the doctrine of predestination was not for the most part a central theme in Luther's theology. Luther rather advocated that Christians should follow the systematic presentation of scriptures especially in Romans. Thus he wrote:

In chapters nine, ten, and eleven [of Romans] the apostle teaches about the eternal predestination of God.... Follow the order of this Epistle: first be concerned about Christ and the Gospel, in order to recognize your sin and his grace; then fight against your sins...Adam must first be quite dead before a man is able to bear this subject and to drink this strong wine. Watch that you do not drink wine while you are still an infant. Every doctrine has its limit, time, and age.¹⁰⁶

Unlike other leading Reformers like Calvin, it seems evident that Luther was rather an advocate for the avoidance of any discussion, debate or argument on the doctrine of predestination as he also stated:

A dispute about predestination should be avoided entirely... I forget everything about Christ and God when I come upon these thoughts and actually get to the

¹⁰² R. C. Sproul, *Chosen by God*. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1986: 11-12.

¹⁰³ Lorraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1932:1. Other scholars with a similar view include: Duane Edward Spencer, *Tulip: The Five Points of Calvinism in the Light of Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1979: 6-7; Edward H. Palmer, *The Five Points of Calvinism*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980:19; David Steele, and Curtis Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism Defined, Defended, and Documented*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 2004 74.

¹⁰⁴Don Matzat. *Martin Luther and the Doctrine of Predestination*. [assessed 21/05/2012] http://www.issuesetcarchive.org/issues_site/resource/journals/v1n8.htm.

¹⁰⁵ James R. Swan. Is Luther's Doctrine of Predestination "Reformed"? [assessed 21/05/2012] http://www.tquid.sharpens.org/Martin%20Luther%20and%20TULIP.htm#_edn4.

¹⁰⁶Edward M. Plass. *What Luther Says: A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active Christian*. Concordia Publishing House, 2006:455.

point to imagining that God is a rogue. We must stay in the word, in which God is revealed to us and salvation is offered, if we believe him. But in thinking about predestination, we forget God... However, in Christ are hid all the treasures (Col. 2:3); outside him all are locked up. Therefore, we should simply refuse to argue about election...Such a disputation is so very displeasing to God that he has instituted Baptism, the spoken Word, and the Lord's Supper to counteract the temptation to engage in it. In these, let us persist and constantly say, I am baptized I believe in Jesus. I care nothing about the disputation concerning predestination.¹⁰⁷

The extreme caution that Luther suggested over predestination came not only from his earlier pre-Reformation experiences, but also from his experiences as a pastor. He came across those who were preoccupied with predestination internally struggling with questioning whether or not they were of the elect.¹⁰⁸ In a 1531 letter to a woman troubled about her election, Luther explains that he too was plagued by such doubts and “brought to the brink of eternal death by them.”¹⁰⁹ He counsels her not to probe into the secret council of God, to recognize that such speculations come from Satan, and that she should look toward Christ for her assurance. “In this way, I say, and in no other, does one learn how to deal properly with the question of predestination. It will be manifest that you believe in Christ. If you believe, then you are called, then you are most certainly predestined.”¹¹⁰

Irrespective of the extent of Luther's treatment of this subject, his theology of predestination can however be clearly seen from his writings. In dealing with the issue of predestination, Luther believed that divine election was the *cause* of our salvation. Thus

¹⁰⁷Ibid, 455.

¹⁰⁸ James R. Swan. *Is Luther's Doctrine of Predestination Reformed?* [assessed 15/11/2012] <http://tquid.sharpens.org/Martin%20Luther%20and%20TULIP.htm>.

¹⁰⁹Theodore Tappert, *Luther's Letters of Spiritual Counsel*. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2003:115.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 116.

he wrote: “The human doctrine of free will and of our spiritual powers is futile. The matter [salvation] does not depend on *our* will but on *God’s* will and election.”¹¹¹

While accepting divine election, Luther refused to embrace the logical conclusions that atonement is limited to the elect and that grace is irresistible. But believed in the universality of grace and man’s power to resist and reject the Gospel. Thus he stated:

[Christ] helps not against one sin only, but against all my sin; and not against my sin only, but against the whole world’s sin. He comes to take away not sickness only, but death; and not my death only, but the whole world’s death.¹¹²

He rejected the idea of divine predestination to damnation and taught that damnation is simply the result of the unbeliever’s sins, the unbeliever’s rejection of the opportunity to be forgiven of his sin or simply his unbelief. On the eternal security of believers, Luther believed that Christians are eternally secure, but solely in Christ as he wrote:

For if you concern yourself with this alone and believe that it has happened for your sake, you will certainly be preserved in this faith.... Look for yourself in Christ alone. . . . Then you will find yourself eternally in him.¹¹³

Even though when in Christ they are secured, Luther warned that what guarantees that security is their determination not to despise the word. If a person claims to be in Christ yet pays no attention to the word his/her eternal security cannot be guaranteed. Thus in the Smalcald articles,¹¹⁴ the Lutherans explain that the need for repentance is not just a once

¹¹¹Ibid., 116.

¹¹²Margarete Stiener and Percy Scott, *Day By Day We Magnify Thee*. Philadelphia: fortress Press, 1982:1. This remains a controversial issue because Luther seems to have taught differently in his earlier commentaries on Romans. For instance, in his Lectures on Romans. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961: 252, Luther taught that “Christ did not die absolutely for all”.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴The Smalcald Articles are a summary of Lutheran doctrines written by Martin Luther in 1537 for a meeting of the Schmalkaldic League in preparation for an intended ecumenical Council of the Church. See the following resource for reference: Theodore Gerhardt Tappert. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. USA: Fortress Press, 1959: 309.

off affair but one that “continues until death”¹¹⁵ because throughout the Christian’s life, s/he “contends with the sins that remain in the flesh.”¹¹⁶

1.1.2. Predestination in Calvin’s soteriology¹¹⁷

Even though Predestination is usually associated with Calvin as a key authority on the subject, the doctrine did not however originate from him. It has been propagated since the time of Paul by a plethora of theologians who sought to articulate the method by which God saves sinners. Of these theologians, St. Augustine is commonly considered as the greatest influence on Calvin’s doctrine of predestination. Spurgeon traces the roots of his Calvinistic stance from the apostle Paul to Augustine before Calvin in this way:

The old truth hat Calvin preached, that Augustine preached, that Paul preached, is the truth that I must preach today, or else be false to my conscience and my God. I cannot shape the truth; I know of no such thing as paring off the rough edges of a doctrine. John Knox's gospel is my gospel. That which thundered through Scotland must thunder through England again.¹¹⁸

Calvin developed his theology on Predestination mainly in his biblical commentaries¹¹⁹ and his sermons and treatises.¹²⁰ But the most concise expression of his views are found in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. In this book, the statement; “whoever, then, heaps

¹¹⁵Ibid., 309.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 309.

¹¹⁷ Calvin’s theology was highly informed by his life history especially his academic life. Even though this information is relevant to understanding his theology, the objective this project however does not justify the need for such information in this context. To know more about the history of the formation of Calvin’s theology, the following books are recommended: Cottret, Bernard. *Calvin: A Biography*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000: 8-12. Translation from the original *Calvin: Biographie*, Editions Jean-Claude Lattès, 1995; T. H. L. Parker. *John Calvin: A Biography*, Oxford: Lion Hudson plc. 2006; Alexandre Ganoczy. “Calvin's life”, in McKim, Donald K., *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004; Alister E. McGrath. *A Life of John Calvin*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990; Wulfert De Greef. “Calvin's writings”, in McKim, Donald K., *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004; T. H. L. Parker. *Calvin: An Introduction to His Thought*, London: Geoffrey Chapman. 1995; T. H. L. Parker. *The Oracles of God: An Introduction to the Preaching of John Calvin*, Cambridge: James Clarke Company, 2002; John Thomas McNeil. *The History and Character of Calvinism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954.

¹¹⁸ Charles H. Spurgeon. *A Defence of Calvinism*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976:4.

¹¹⁹ Especially on Romans. See Jean Calvin. “III Epistle to Simon Grynaeus on the Commentary on Romans”. In *Calvin: Commentaries*. Joseph Haroutunian (ed). Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958: 73

¹²⁰ John Calvin. *Calvin’s Calvinism: Treatises on the Eternal Predestination of God and the Secret Providence of God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformed Free Publishing Assocl., no date

odium upon the doctrine of predestination openly reproaches God,”¹²¹ clearly stresses the importance of this doctrine to Calvin’s theology.

These resources systematically explain Calvin’s predestination beginning from the Fall and original sin to how this has affected the soteriology of individuals. In his treatise,¹²² Calvin takes an infralapsarianist¹²³ position on the Fall. His infralapsarianism is influenced by Augustine’s thought. In discussing Augustine’s views in his works, Calvin speaks in an infralapsarian manner. For instance, he quotes Augustine speaking in an infralapsarian way about men who fall away from the faith. This falling away shows that “such were never separated from the general mass of perdition by the foreknowledge and predestination of God.”¹²⁴ In this quote, Augustine assumes that the truly elect were separated from the mass of fallen men. Calvin later speaks of Augustine’s views with admiration. He states that Augustine teaches men how they are to reverence God. That God chose out of the condemned race of Adam those whom He pleased, and reprobated those whom he pleased.¹²⁵ So Calvin believed that, God chose some men out of the fallen race of mankind.

Calvin further taught that God created Adam good. Therefore, responsibility for the Fall rested solely on Adam’s shoulders, for he chose to sin. To Calvin, Adam “fell by his own full free will, and by his own willing act.”¹²⁶ Hence, although Adam had been created perfectly righteous he fell on his own accord and willingly and brought

¹²¹John Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Vol. 3. Translated by John Allen. Philadelphia: Philip H. Nicklin and Hezekiah Howe, New Heaven, 1816: 21, 4.

¹²² John Calvin. *Calvin’s Calvinism: Treatises on the Eternal Predestination of God and the Secret Providence of God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformed Free Publishing Assocl., no date

¹²³Infralapsarianism is a theological position that teaches that God’s decree to permit the fall logically preceded His decree of election. So when God chose the elect and passed over the non-elect, He was contemplating them all as fallen creatures. Supralapsarianism on the other hand is the view that God, contemplating man as yet unfallen, chose some to receive eternal life and rejected all others.

¹²⁴ John Calvin. *Calvin’s Calvinism: Treatises on the Eternal Predestination of God and the Secret Providence of God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformed Free Publishing Assocl., no date: 41.

¹²⁵Ibid., 130.

¹²⁶Ibid., 93.

condemnation upon all mankind. This makes Adam and not God fully responsible for his sin.¹²⁷ Calvin carefully developed how Adam was responsible for his own actions yet his choice was ordained by God. To Calvin, the reason why Adam was guilty for the Fall was because he “of his own will and accord, deprived himself” of perfect righteousness and “gave himself up to the service of sin and Satan.”¹²⁸

He added that, the easier way to establish Adam’s guilt, is to simply understand that his sin was a voluntary transgression. He also defined the nature of Adam’s freedom and the freedom to sin that fallen mankind possesses by stating that, men do not sin “from any outward impulse or constraint, but knowingly and willingly from the spontaneous motion of the heart.”¹²⁹ So while he claimed that “whatever happened to Adam was ordained of God” he also maintained Adam’s full responsibility.¹³⁰

On the extent of human depravity, Calvin taught that man is totally depraved and dead in sin. Thus he wrote:

Scripture everywhere declares that man, being the captive, the servant, and the slave of the devil, is carried away into wickedness of every kind with his whole mind and inclination, being utterly incapable of understanding the things of God, much less of doing them.¹³¹

Because of his total depravity, Calvin taught that man cannot understand and believe the gospel or to exercise faith in Christ because “the wisdom of Christ is too high and too deep to come within the compass of man’s understanding.”¹³² Due to the total depravity of man that makes him guilty of sin and therefore condemned in Adam, Calvin disbursed a lot of energy explaining why God would be absolutely just to condemn the entirety of the human race to eternal punishment.

¹²⁷Ibid., 125.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 125.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 116-117.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 93.

¹³¹Ibid., 206.

¹³²Ibid., 82.

Against the argument for God's injustice in predestining some to life and rejecting others, Calvin sided with Augustine to argue that "the justice of God is by no means to be measured by the short rule of human justice."¹³³ He explained that since all men are totally condemned, when God chooses to save someone, it is an act of a free and amazing grace that goes beyond justice. He goes on to compare God's justice in forgiving some guilty sinners to a man forgiving a fellow man's debt to him. He cites an example of two men who owe a debt to a third party, the third man has the right to forgive the debt of the one and still require the other to pay. Likewise God has the right to forgive one person out of pure grace and leave the other person to divine justice.¹³⁴

By arguing this way, Calvin's predestination is considered to be double (double predestination). This is clearly articulated in his *Institutes* in these words:

We call predestination God's eternal decree, by which he determined with himself what he willed to become of each man. For all are not created in equal conditions, rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others. Therefore, as any man has been created to one or the other of these ends, we speak of him as predestinated to life or death.¹³⁵

Reid has made a succinct summary of Calvin's double predestination position in these words:

The conclusion must be drawn that Calvin regarded the relation of election and of reprobation as symmetrically related to the will of God, that election and reprobation are correlatives standing in an identical relation to God's will and equally expressing it. We are thus led to the forbidding doctrine of predestination duplex¹³⁶

Calvin unites election and reprobation by teaching that it is simply God's way of seeking his own glory. While election reveals the free grace and love of God, reprobation reveals his justice. To Calvin, reprobation serves election in that it reveals the extent of God's

¹³³Ibid., 131.

¹³⁴Ibid., 131.

¹³⁵Taken from Fred H. Klooster. *Calvin's Doctrine of Predestination*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House, 1977: 25.

¹³⁶J.K.S. Reid. (ed.) *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God*. London: England. James Clarke and Co., 1961: 36.

mercy extended to the elect. Hence, Calvin's central interest in predestination lies in his doctrine of election. Even though he did spend time to defend the doctrine of reprobation, it was only a secondary concern and he did so simply because he understood that election can only be believed when reprobation is fully understood.¹³⁷ The difference however in election and reprobation in Calvin's thought is that there is a 'proximate'¹³⁸ cause for reprobation but there is no cause for election, it is simply an amazing demonstration of God's grace.

In explaining the ultimate cause for reprobation, Calvin argued that the cause is not sin, nor is it God's foreknowledge of man's sin. He rather taught that the ultimate cause is simply God's sovereign will.¹³⁹ Sin, Calvin taught is not the ground for the ultimate discrimination between the elect and reprobate. This is evident from the fact that all men sinned in Adam and that they all deserve condemnation. To Calvin, sinful action was the cause of reprobation only with respect to the condemnation aspect of reprobation.¹⁴⁰ That is, reprobate men really deserve the condemnation that they receive through the decree of reprobation because of their sin and guilt. But the ultimate ground for reprobation is found in the sovereign will of God. He continued that, in the instance of Jacob and Esau Paul clearly teaches that they were loved and hated before they had been born and had not done good or evil. So the cause of election and predestination is not found in human willing, but in the will of God.

Against the semi-Pelagian view which argues that man is the first and ultimate cause for his actions and has, by his own ability to choose to believe in Christ or not,

¹³⁷Ibid., 36.

¹³⁸Ibid., 36.

¹³⁹Fred H. Klooster. *Calvin's Doctrine of Predestination*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House, 1977: 60-62.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 62.

Calvin taught that God and not man is the first cause and that there is no room for human autonomy in the work of salvation. Thus he stated:

The sum of the doctrine of the thus reviled one is, that God, in wondrous ways and in ways unknown to us, directs all things to the end that He wills, that His eternal will might be the first cause of all things.¹⁴¹

This however does not imply that by referring to God as the first cause, Calvin taught that God by inference was the author of sin. He denied this assumption as he quotes other men as his authorities on the same point:

But when Calvin, and before him Luther and Bucer, and antecedently to them, Augustine, the other godly teachers, testify that the will of God is the supreme cause of all things that are in the world; it was the farthest possible from the mind of each of them, and of them all, to entangle God in any shadow of fault.¹⁴²

According to Klooster, Calvin made a distinction between the causes involved in predestination in his commentary on Ephesians in these words:

The efficient cause is the good pleasure of the will of God; the material cause is of Christ; and the final cause is the praise of His grace....The formal cause [is] the preaching of the Gospel, by which the goodness of God flows out to us.¹⁴³

The sovereignty of God in election is simply painted as an incomprehensible phenomenon in Calvin's theology. Due to its incomprehensibility, Calvin warns that men should not seek to pry into the solution to this complex issue as he stated:

The why? Of God's works is not to be audaciously or curiously pried into; but that, on the contrary, as the counsels of God are a mighty deep, and mysteries that surpass the limits of our comprehension, it becomes a man rather to adore them with reverence than to investigate them with presumption.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹John Calvin. *Calvin's Calvinism: Treatises on the Eternal Predestination of God and the Secret Providence of God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformed Free Publishing Assocl., no date: 190.

¹⁴²Ibid., 192.

¹⁴³Fred H. Klooster. *Calvin's Doctrine of Predestination*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House, 1977: 30.

¹⁴⁴John Calvin. *Calvin's Calvinism: Treatises on the Eternal Predestination of God and the Secret Providence of God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformed Free Publishing Assocl., no date: 190. Calvin's point here is very much in line with his argument in his exegesis of Romans 9:20. See John Owen, ed.

Overall, Calvin's argument on this comes down to one simple point: God is the supreme cause who is infinitely righteous. Therefore men must know that everything that He wills is righteous. Deep questions concerning how God can be sovereign and yet not be responsible for sin are generally left unanswered in Calvin's theology. He claims to have a learned ignorance as he says:

And let us not be ashamed to be ignorant of something in this matter, wherein there is a certain learned ignorance.¹⁴⁵

Contrary to the semi-Pelagian view that election was based on God's foreknowledge of what man will freely choose to do, Calvin distinguished his predestination from Semi-Pelagianism by teaching that election is not based on God's foreknowledge of human actions as he wrote:

By thus covering election with a veil of foreknowledge, they not only obscure it but feign that it has its origin elsewhere.¹⁴⁶

Calvin defended his position by referring to Augustine who had taught that the word "foreknowledge" in Scripture was not to be so widely separated from predestination as the opponents of sovereign grace taught, but that by "foreknowledge," "we are to understand the counsel of God by which He predestines His own unto salvation."¹⁴⁷ He further defended his position by exegeting portions of I Peter where he argued that it is ridiculous to "pin the eternal election of God upon the merits of men" as his opponents do in their interpretation of I Peter.¹⁴⁸ Calvin responds that Peter everywhere ascribes election to God alone.

Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans by John Calvin. Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959: 363.

¹⁴⁵John T. McNeill (ed). Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960: 923.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., 932.

¹⁴⁷John Calvin. *Calvin's Calvinism: Treatises on the Eternal Predestination of God and the Secret Providence of God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformed Free Publishing Assocl., no date: 48.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 48.

He also noted that, by referring to the “elect according to the foreknowledge of God,” in 1 Peter 1:2, the apostle is placing the decree of God as the one cause “above all other causes” of the believer’s election. To Calvin, Peter is not comparing men with men so that some by their goodness merit being elected. In addition Calvin refers to I Peter 1:20 (where the apostle says; “who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world”) to establish the idea that Christ was preordained to be the Saviour of His people by the “eternal counsel of God.”¹⁴⁹

As he developed his predestination theology, Calvin rejected the notion of universal or common grace notably argued by Pelagius who based his argument on Psalm 145:9 to teach that salvation was planned for all men without distinction or difference,¹⁵⁰ Calvin rejected this view and rather taught that, Psalms 145:9 “The Lord is good to all” does not refer to the whole of creation and that it will be ridiculous to understand it as meaning all creatures for this would also mean even animals have received God’s grace. Calvin continued against Pelagius by arguing that, God’s grace is not offered equally to all humans but it is offered in the gospel only to God’s elect. Thus he stated:

The fiction of Pighius is puerile and absurd, when he interprets grace to be God’s goodness in inviting all men to salvation, though all were lost in Adam¹⁵¹

Pelagius taught that the gospel can only be preached if there was a universal offer for salvation. But Calvin objected that, a particular offer of salvation remains consistent with the universal proclamation of the gospel. He believed that predestination must be universally preached so that “he who hath ears to hear” the free grace of God might glory in God, and not in himself.”¹⁵² Calvin rebukes the idea of conservatism and taught that

¹⁴⁹Ibid., 49.

¹⁵⁰ John Calvin. *Calvin’s Calvinism: Treatises on the Eternal Predestination of God and the Secret Providence of God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformed Free Publishing Assocl., no date:88.

¹⁵¹Ibid., 49.

¹⁵²Ibid., 148.

the doctrine of predestination must be preached to all. His rhetorical question explains it better:

Why should these men of our day think they act rightly in the matter of their teaching by keeping themselves shut up in silence within the strong tower of invincible truth...?¹⁵³

When the doctrine of election is preached, Calvin believes that it is by so doing that men will live as he wrote:

Wherefore, let him that receiveth not the truth reject it; but let him that heareth and understand the truth, receive it and drink it, and drink and live!¹⁵⁴

Throughout the history of Calvinism, many efforts have been made to reform or expand Calvin's teachings especially on predestination. These efforts have eventually led to the formation of other schools of thought on predestination within the Calvinistic traditions. These other schools of thought include, Hyper Calvinism, Moderate Calvinism and Neo-Calvinism.

1.1.2.1. Predestination in Hyper Calvinism

In the mid 18th century, controversies over indiscriminate gospel offers and human responsibility to faith rose up among the Calvinists. This eventually led to the formation of another Calvinistic tradition called Hyper Calvinism¹⁵⁵ which primarily holds a doctrine of limited atonement by denying the need and desirability for God to present a universal call to repent and believe in the gospel¹⁵⁶. This teaching became widespread among the English, particularly the Baptist of that day and can be seen in the writing of men like

¹⁵³Ibid., 148.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., 148. Nathan Brummel. *Calvin on Predestination, Providence and the Church*. [assessed 23/06/2012] <http://www.scribd.com/doc/25865236/Calvin-on-Predestination-Providence-and-the-Church>.

¹⁵⁵Some times also referred to as false or high Calvinism.

¹⁵⁶ See Peter Toon, J. I Parker. *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity*. Wipf & Stock Pub, 2011.

John Gill,¹⁵⁷ Joseph Hussey.¹⁵⁸ Historically, the term was first used in 1825 by George Croft against the doctrine of limited atonement as he stated:

Should it be asked, whether all Calvinists differ from Arminians, only in reference to effectual grace and perseverance, it is frankly acknowledged, that there are some who differ from them in other points. These persons are generally styled High-Calvinists, or Hyper-Calvinists. Hyper signifies above, and Hyper-Calvinists are so called, because their system is above genuine Calvinism. The Hyper-Calvinist holds the particular design of Christ's death, but denies its general design; whereas moderate or modern Calvinists, as they are called, hold both.¹⁵⁹

Other scholars like Iain Murray have also described Hyper Calvinism as an attempt to square all truths with God's purpose to save the elect and in doing so, it denies that there is a universal command to repent and believe, but rather asserts that we only have warrant to minister the gospel message to those who are conscious of a sense of sin and who are in need of the master's saving love. So it is only to those who have been spiritually quickened to seek the savior that the gospel minister has the warrant to invite to Christ.¹⁶⁰

1.1.2.2. Predestination in Moderate Calvinism

Moderate Calvinism¹⁶¹ aimed at bringing Calvinism more closely along side with Lutheranism hence it rejected one of the five points of Calvinism; the doctrine of limited atonement in favour of an unlimited atonement. It is also for this reason why this Calvinistic tradition is also referred to as the Four Points Calvinism¹⁶². Moderate

¹⁵⁷ John Gill, Michael A. G. Haykin. *The Life and Thought of John Gill (1697-1771): A Tercentennial Appreciation*. 1997. Leiden: Netherlands, Koninklijke

¹⁵⁸ Joseph Hussey. *God's Operations of Grace: But No Offers of His Grace. to which are Added, Two Brief Treatises. the One about Invitation, and the Other about Exhortat*. Reprint: BiblioBazaar, 2010

¹⁵⁹ Curt D. Daniel. *Hyper Calvinism and John Gill*. University of Edinburg, 1983.

¹⁶⁰ Iain Murray. *The Forgotten Spurgeon*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Banner of Truth Trust, 57: 1998.

¹⁶¹As taught by Moses Amyraut

¹⁶²There is another slight variance from this view developed by Mark Driscoll known as the doctrine of "Four and a half Gospel." He argues here that, "*Jesus by dying for everyone, purchased everyone as His possession and He then applies His forgiveness to the elect by grace and applies His wrath to the non-elect. Objectively, Jesus' death was sufficient to save anyone, and, subjectively, only efficient to save those who repent of their sin and trust in Him.*" See Mark Driscoll. *Unlimited Limited Atonement*. [assessed

Calvinism posited that the atonement has been provided to all men alike but since God saw that none would believe on their own, he then elected those whom it pleased him to bring to faith in Christ. The doctrine is still considered to be under a Calvinistic school of thought because it maintains the particularity of sovereign grace in the application of the atonement, thus still maintaining the Calvinist tenet on unconditional election. Other prominent historic theologians on this tradition include men like John Davenant,¹⁶³ John Preston,¹⁶⁴ and Richard Baxter.¹⁶⁵

1.1.2.3. Predestination in Neo-Calvinism

Neo-Calvinism is a post modern Calvinistic tradition that has been adopted by many today. It is motivated by the theological tenets of the Reformation traditions with the aim of exploring their historical consequences and implications to the modern man.¹⁶⁶ It was developed by the Dutch Theologian and statesman, Abraham Kuyper who wanted to awaken the church from what he viewed as its pietistic slumber. He declared: “No single piece of our mental world is to be sealed off from the rest and there is not a square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry: ‘Mine.’”¹⁶⁷

Neo-Calvinism is understood as an update on Calvinism with the aim of extending the Calvinist understanding of religion to scientific, social and political issues. This

25/06/2012] http://marshill.com/files/2005/11/20/20051120_unlimited-limited-atonement_document_9143.pdf.

¹⁶³ John Devenant and Josiah Allport. *An exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians*. Volume 2. London: Hamilton, Adams and Co. 1832.

¹⁶⁴ Jonathan D. Moore. *English Hypothetical Universalism: John Preston and the Softening of Reformed Theology*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, WmB Eerdmans Publishing Company. 2007

¹⁶⁵ John Hunt. *Religious thought in England from the Reformation to the end of the Last Century*. Ludgate Hill: London, Strahan & Co., Publishers, 1870: 265-277.

¹⁶⁶See James Bratt “The Dutch Schools” in David F. Wells (ed.) *Reformed Theology in America* Baker Book House, 1997.

¹⁶⁷Abraham Kuyper, inaugural lecture at the Free University of Amsterdam, October 20, 1880, quoted in *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*. James D. Bratt (ed.). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998:488.

implies that, Neo-Calvinism corroborates with Calvin's predestination tenets but emphasis on the need for these teaching to be contextualized in all spheres of modern society. It thus emphasis on the Lordship of Christ over all creation. They believe that it is not only restricted to the spheres of church but extends through every area and sphere of life and that all knowledge is affected by the true knowledge of God through the redemptive work of Christ.¹⁶⁸

Neo-Calvinism sees Genesis 1:26-28¹⁶⁹ as God's mandate to men to cultivate and develop the earth,¹⁷⁰ which they describe as the cultural mandate, a mandate which is as important as the Great Commission.¹⁷¹ This tradition holds that God providentially sustains the created order, restraining of possible evils and giving non-salvific good gifts to all humanity despite their fall into sin.¹⁷² Apart from Kuyper, other key scholars associated with

Neo-Calvinism are Herman Bavinick,¹⁷³ Herman Dooyeweerd,¹⁷⁴ and Albert Wolters.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁸ Bradshaw Frey et al. *All of Life Redeemed: Biblical Insights for Daily Obedience*. Ontario: Paideia Press, 1983.

¹⁶⁹ 26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

¹⁷⁰ Gordon J. Spykman *Reformational Theology: A New Paradigm for Doing Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 109:1992.

¹⁷¹ Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey. *How Now Shall We Live?* Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 295:1999

¹⁷² See Richard Mouw. *He Shines in all that's Fair*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002

¹⁷³ See Herman Bavinck and John Bolt (ed). *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Publishing Group, 2008.

¹⁷⁴ Herman Dooyeweerd, C. T. McIntire. *The Legacy of Herman Dooyeweerd: reflections on critical philosophy in the Christian tradition*. University Press of America, 1985; Herman Dooyeweerd. *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought: The necessary presuppositions of philosophy*. Edwin Mellen Press, 1997.

¹⁷⁵ Albert Wolters. *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, WmB Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005.

1.1.3. Predestination in Arminius' soteriology

As a student at Leiden, Arminius was exposed to Calvinism by teachers like Johann Kolmann whose teachings made God to appear to be a tyrant and an executioner to young Arminius. He however studied with success in this Calvinistic tradition but these impressions planted a seed in him which he will later develop into a different theological tradition that will compete with the dominant Calvinism. After spending some time with Theodore Beza who further influenced his theology in the Calvinistic tradition, he moved to Amsterdam and was ordained as a pastor in 1588. He gained a good reputation as a good preacher and pastor. Through his series of expository preaching on Ephesians and Romans, Arminius began to gradually develop opinions on grace, predestination and free will that were inconsistent with the teachings of Calvin and Beza.¹⁷⁶

But he was seriously opposed mainly by his colleague, Pertrus Plancius.¹⁷⁷ In 1603, he was called back to the University of Leiden as professor but his position as an academic in that institution was only cautiously approved by the administration given his already suspected unorthodox views. He remained as a professor at Leiden until his death in 1609 but not after serious controversies with Franciscus Gomarus which resulted into a large scale split within Calvinism.¹⁷⁸ Gomarus was a forceful defender of Calvinistic doctrine who also served as professor at Leiden. But being a doubter of Calvinistic doctrines, Arminius and Gomarus were always against each other and this led to a series of public debates between them.

¹⁷⁶Theodoor Marius van Leeuwen, Keith D. Stanglin, Marijke Tolsma (eds). *Arminius, Arminianism, and Europe: Jacobus Arminius (1559/60-1609)*. Leiden: Netherlands, IDC Publishers 2009:ix-xvi.

¹⁷⁷Jonathan Israel. *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477-1806*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995:374.

¹⁷⁸Ibid.

Arminius considered Calvinism to be too harsh and attempted to modify some of its tenets such as unconditional predestination and limited atonement. Grace was a key issue in Arminius' theology.¹⁷⁹ He taught that, grace is prevenient as it is not through human efforts, it is not however limited only to the elect as Calvinist teach but has been sufficiently given to all by the Holy Spirit so that all might come to repentance and be saved.¹⁸⁰ Thus he states that grace is "sufficient for salvation conferred on the elect, and on the Non-elect; that, if they will, they may believe or not believe, may be saved or not be saved."¹⁸¹

By the end of his career, Arminius was able to influence some local clergy like Adrianus Borrius who began supporting his views. Several close friends and students also began supporting Arminius' views some of them included names like Johannes Drusius, Conrad Vorstius, Anthony Thysius, Johannes Halsbergius, Petrus Bertius, Johannes Arnoldi Corvinus, and the brothers Rembert and Simon Episcopius.¹⁸² Even though Arminius finally died on the 19th October 1604 at his home in the Pieterskerkhof,¹⁸³ his ideas planted a seed that eventually began the Arminian tradition.

1.1.3.1. Arminianism

Arminius' theology did not fully develop during his lifetime but after his death, his ideas were systematized and formalized into what is today known as Arminianism.

¹⁷⁹ Witt, William Gene Witt. *Creation, Redemption and Grace in the Theology of Jacob Arminius*. Ph.D. thesis: University of Notre Dame, 1993: 259-260.

¹⁸⁰Justo L. Gonzalez. *A History of Christian Thought*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1983: 3:257.

¹⁸¹Jacob Arminius. James Nichols and W.R. Bagnall, (eds). *The Works of James Arminius, D. D., Formerly Professor of Divinity in the University of Leyden*. Buffalo, NY: Derby, Miller, and Orton. 1853: 1:367.

¹⁸²Petrus Bertius (ed.) *The Works of James Arminius, D. D.* 1825. Trans. James Nickols. The London ed. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1825, reprint Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986: 319.

¹⁸³ Carl Bangs. *Arminius, A Study in the Dutch Reformation*. New York: Abingdon Press, 326-330:1971.

According to Curtiss,¹⁸⁴ there were four people worth mentioning as developing the Arminian theology, and these include: Simon Episcopius, James Uytenbogaart, John Van Olden Barneveldt, and Hugo Grotius. After the death of Arminius, Simon Episcopius took his place as professor at Leiden and spent much of his time defending the memory of Arminius.

Uytenbogaart worked exceedingly hard to establish tolerance in the nation, and after the death of Arminius, he became the leader of the Arminians. Barneveldt was a leader in the government, and also a layman. He advocated for toleration of the Arminianism ideology, however, he was beheaded on March 14, 1619. The last was Grotius, who was imprisoned in a castle with only books allowed to him. After 18 months, he was able to escape in the box that the books were carried in.¹⁸⁵

The Arminian ideas were not originally articulated until 1610 when Uytenbogaart developed a theological statement which was also signed by 44 other ministers called the Arminian Remonstrance and submitted to the Synod of Dort. The crux of the Remonstrant was that, human dignity requires an unimpaired freedom of the will. This was stated in five key points¹⁸⁶:

1. Election (and condemnation on the day of judgment) was conditioned by the rational faith or non faith of man;
2. The Atonement, while qualitatively adequate for all men, was efficacious only for the man of faith;

¹⁸⁴ Geo. L. Curtiss. *Arminianism in History; or, The Revolt from Predestinationist*. Cincinnati: Cranston & Curtis, 52-63:1894.

¹⁸⁵Geo. L. Curtiss. *Arminianism in History; or, The Revolt from Predestinationist*. Cincinnati: Cranston & Curtis, 52-63:1894.

¹⁸⁶See Lambertus Jacobus van Hulk. "From Arminius to Arminianism in Dutch Theology." *Man's Faith and Freedom: The Theological Influence of Jacobus Arminius*. Ed. Gerald O. McCulloh. New York: Abingdon Press, 1962: 27-45.

3. Unaided by the Holy Spirit, no person is able to respond to God's will;
4. Grace is not irresistible; and
5. Believers are able to resist sin but are not beyond the possibility of falling from grace.

The Synod of Dort condemned the Remonstrant and the 45 ministers who signed them were banned. Despite the stiff persecution, Arminianism was still able to spread. Such that, Christians of many sects including the Baptists, Methodists, the Congregationalists of the early New England colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries, and the Universalists and Unitarians in the 18th and 19th centuries have been influenced by Arminian views.

The Arminian perspective of predestination is clearly articulated in the two mainline Arminian traditions namely; Classical Arminianism and Wesleyan Arminianism.

1.1.3.2. Predestination in Classical Arminianism

This Arminian tradition is sometimes also referred to as Reformed Arminianism or Reformation Arminianism. It is the theological system that was presented by Jacobus Arminius himself and maintained by some of the Remonstrants.¹⁸⁷ Its tenets on predestination serve as the foundation for all Arminian systems. Like Calvinism, it also teaches that, human depravity is total as Arminius stated:

In this [fallen] state, the free will of man towards the true good is not only wounded, infirm, bent, and weakened; but it is also imprisoned, destroyed, and lost. And its powers are not only debilitated and useless unless they be assisted by grace, but it has no powers whatever except such as are excited by Divine grace.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Stephen Ashby. "Reformed Arminianism." *Four Views on Eternal Security*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002: 137.

¹⁸⁸ James Arminius. *The Writings of James Arminius* (three vols.), tr. James Nichols and William R. Bagnall. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1956: I:252.

On the extent of the atonement, Classical Arminianism believes that Christ's atonement is intended for all men and that all have equal opportunity to salvation through faith in Christ.¹⁸⁹ It explains that, the penalty for the sins of the elect is paid in full through Jesus' work on the cross. Thus Christ's atonement is intended for all, but requires faith to be applied. Arminius confirms this in these words; "Justification, when used for the act of a Judge, is either purely the imputation of righteousness through mercy... or that man is justified before God... according to the rigor of justice without any forgiveness."¹⁹⁰ Classical Arminianism believes that there are only two possible ways in which sinners can be justified before God and that is either by our absolute adherence of the law of God or by God's imputation of Christ's righteousness on us.¹⁹¹

On the resistibility or irresistibility of grace, Classical Arminianism holds that grace is resistible. This grace which is prevenient is given to all men so they can be drawn to the gospel and lead them to saving faith. Picirilli further explains that, this grace is indeed "close to regeneration that it inevitably leads to regeneration unless finally resisted."¹⁹² Forlines explains this further by stating that, this offer of salvation through grace does not act irresistibly in a purely cause-effect, deterministic method but rather in an influence-and-response fashion that can be both freely accepted and freely denied.¹⁹³ Even though man has free will to respond or reject God's offer for salvation, Classical Arminiansim teaches that this free will is however limited by God's sovereignty but not in a way that does not allow man the choice to accept the gospel through faith or to resist it.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., I:316.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., III:454.

¹⁹¹See Stephen Ashby. "Reformed Arminianism." *Four Views on Eternal Security*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002:140.

¹⁹² Robert Picirilli. *Grace, Faith, Free Will: Contrasting Views of Salvation: Calvinism and Arminianism*. Nashville: Randall House Publications, 2002: 154ff.

¹⁹³ Leroy F. Forlines. Pinson, Matthew J. and Ashby, Stephen M. *The Quest for Truth: Answering Life's Inescapable Questions*. Nashville: Randall House Publications, 2001: 313–321.

Based on Arminius' definition of election;¹⁹⁴ Classic Arminianism believes that election is conditional. It teaches that God alone determines who will be saved and his determination is that all who believe Jesus through faith will be justified. According to Arminius, "God regards no one in Christ unless they are engrafted in him by faith."¹⁹⁵ Pawson further explains that, God's purpose of predestination is not based on who will believe but on the believer's future inheritance. God predestines the elect into sonship through adoption, glorification and eternal life.¹⁹⁶

Classical Arminianism believes that regeneration precedes an individual's repentance and belief in Christ. It is only after this that Christ's righteousness is imputed on the believer to justify him before God.¹⁹⁷ Once this is done, the eternal security of the believer is conditioned on the fact that he remains in Christ. Since salvation is conditioned on faith, it also follows from a Classical Arminian perspective that perseverance is also conditioned on the believer's willingness to hold on to that faith.¹⁹⁸

1.1.3.3. Predestination in Wesleyan Arminianism

This tradition blends the theological position of Jacobus Arminius and John Wesley.¹⁹⁹ Wesley thoroughly agreed with the vast majority of what Arminius himself taught, maintaining strong doctrines of original sin, total depravity, conditional election, prevenient grace, unlimited atonement, and possibly apostasy. However, he departs from

¹⁹⁴ "The decree of God by which, of Himself, from eternity, He decreed to justify in Christ, believers, and to accept them unto eternal life." James Arminius. *The Writings of James Arminius* (three vols.), tr. James Nichols and William R. Bagnall. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1956: III:311.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 311.

¹⁹⁶ David Pawson. *Once Saved, Always Saved? A Study in Perseverance and Inheritance*. London: Hodder & Staughton, 1996: 109ff.

¹⁹⁷ F. Leroy Forlines *Classical Arminianism: A Theology of Salvation*. Randall House Publication, 2011: Chapter 6.

¹⁹⁸ Robert Picirilli. *Grace, Faith, Free Will: Contrasting Views of Salvation: Calvinism and Arminianism*. Nashville: Randall House Publications, 2002: 203.

¹⁹⁹ John Wesley was an Anglican priest and scholar whose evangelistic work resulted to a major revival in the British Isles and later became the foundation of the Methodist church. He was noted for his method of holiness and his teaching on grace that enables Christians to live holy lives. Wesley is historically known to be an influential advocate for the teachings of Arminian soteriology.

Classical Arminianism primarily on three issues which is now considered as the Wesleyan Arminian tradition.

First, on atonement Wesleyan Arminianism believes that the atonement is not necessarily God's way of ensuring that justice is done for sin as it is for reconciling man back to God. Harper states this position better: "Wesley does not place the substitutionary element primarily within a legal framework...Rather [his doctrine seeks] to bring into proper relationship the 'justice' between God's love for persons and God's hatred of sin...it is not the satisfaction of a legal demand for justice so much as it is an act of mediated reconciliation."²⁰⁰

Second, on the possibility of apostasy, Wesleyan Arminianism agrees with Classical Arminianism that genuine Christians could apostatize and lose their salvation. This could either be because of unconfessed sin or the actual expression of apostasy. The point of difference between the two traditions however is that Wesleyan Arminianism disagrees with Classical Arminianism to maintain that apostasy is not final. In response to those who have made a shipwreck of their faith in 1 Timothy 1:19, Wesley explained that "not one, or a hundred only, but I am persuaded, several thousands...innumerable are the instances...of those who had fallen but now stand upright."²⁰¹

Third, Wesleyan Arminianism believes that entire sanctification is attainable in this life. Christians, according to Wesley could attain a state of practical perfection, meaning a lack of all voluntary sin by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, in this life. This is simply "purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God and the mind which was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ walked. It is loving God with all our heart, and our

²⁰⁰ Steven Harper. "Wesleyan Arminianism." *Four Views on Eternal Security*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002: 227ff.

²⁰¹ John Wesley. "A Call to Backsliders." *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 14 vols. (London: Wesley Methodist Book Room, 1872; repr, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986: 3:211ff.

neighbour as ourselves.”²⁰² He continued that practical perfection is a restoration not only to the favour, but likewise to the image of God. It means to be filled with the fullness of God.²⁰³ Wesley was clear that Christian perfection did not imply perfection of bodily health or an infallibility of judgment. It also does not mean we no longer violate the will of God, for involuntary transgressions remain. Perfected Christians remain subject to temptation, and have continued need to pray for forgiveness and holiness. It is not an absolute perfection but a perfection in love. Finally, Wesley did not teach a salvation by perfection, but rather concluded that, “Even perfect holiness is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ.”²⁰⁴

1.1.3.4. Summary of Predestination in Arminian soteriology today

1. God offers salvation to all men.²⁰⁵

This has been justified in the following points:

- a. God wants all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9)
- b. God has extended his saving grace to all men (Titus 2:11)
- c. Jesus died so that all will be saved (1 Tim 2: 6; Heb. 2:9; John 3:16; Romans 5:18-19)
- d. God’s offer to salvation is preached in the gospel to all men (2 Thess. 2:14; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38-39)

²⁰² John Wesley. “A Plain Account of Christian Perfection.” in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 14 vols. London: Wesley Methodist Book Room, 1872; repr, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986: 3:211ff.

²⁰³ John Wesley. “The End of Christ’s Coming.” in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 14 vols. (London: Wesley Methodist Book Room, 1872; repr, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986: 3:211ff.

²⁰⁴John Wesley. "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection", in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 14 vols. (London: Wesley Methodist Book Room, 1872; repr, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986: 3:211ff.

²⁰⁵ See James Nichols. *Calvinism and Arminianism compared in their principles and tendency: or, The doctrines of general redemption, as held by the members of the Church of England and by the early Dutch Arminians*. Harvard University Press, 1824: i- xlix.

2. There are divinely decreed conditions of salvation which all men must meet to be saved.²⁰⁶

These conditions include the following and their scriptural support:

- a. Men must believe in Christ (Mark 16:15-16; John 3:14-16)
- b. Men must consciously and genuinely repent of their sins (Acts 17:30-31; 2 Pet. 3:9)
- c. Men must confess Christ and be baptized (Matt. 10:32; Mark 16:16)

3. The power to accept or reject salvation has been granted to every man by God.²⁰⁷

This is justified by the following points and their scriptural references:

- a. Every man has the ability to chose whether or not he/she wants to meet God's condition for salvation (Deut. 30:15-19; Joshua 24:15; Heb. 11:24-24; Isaiah 1:18-20).
- b. Every individual has a role to play in the determination of his/her destiny (1 Pet. 1:22; 2 Cor. 8:5; Phil. 2:12; 1 Tim 4:16)
- c. God does not respect any person (Rom. 2:6-11)
- d. Those who have been chosen by God may lose their salvation. (Heb. 6:4-6)

1.1.4. Predestination in Mainline Protestant soteriologies compared and contrasted

1.14.1. On Human Freewill and depravity

Lutheranism believes that man is totally depraved and his free will is limited until he has experienced regeneration. Calvinism agrees with Lutheranism that man is totally

²⁰⁶Ibid., xlix.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., xlix.

depraved but believes that man's free will is by nature limited. Arminianism also agrees with these traditions on the total depravity of man but believes that even in this state, man still has a free will which is enabled by prevenient grace.

1.1.4.2. On election and reprobation

Lutheranism believes only in an unconditional election to salvation. Calvinism believes both in an unconditional election to salvation and a damnation of sinners to hell (double predestination). Arminianism differs from the two traditions by taking a conditional election stand based on God's foreseen faith or unbelief in man.

1.1.4.3. On justification

Lutheranism believes that Christ's death has completed the justification of all people. Calvinism agrees with Lutheranism that justification was complete at the cross but differs in the sense that it was not for all people but only to those predestined to salvation. Arminianism agrees with these other traditions that justification was made complete at the cross but differs in the sense that it hold that it is not automatically applied to anyone except that individual places faith in Jesus Christ.

1.1.4.4. On Conversion

Lutheranism holds that conversion is monergistic²⁰⁸ through an irresistible grace. Calvinism also believes in a monergistic conversion but hold that it is brought by an irresistible inner calling of the Holy Spirit. Arminianism differs completely by holding that conversion is synergistic²⁰⁹ and it is by prevenient grace which can be resisted by the human will.

²⁰⁸Without cooperating with the individual

²⁰⁹With cooperation of the individual

1.1.4.5. On Preservation and Apostasy

Lutheranism holds that it is possible for an individual to fall away but a reflection of Christ's redemptive work on sinners provides an assurance of preservation. Calvinism on the other hand believes that those who have been elected in Christ will persevere in faith and holiness until the end. Arminianism teaches that perseverance is conditioned upon continuous faith in Christ and by reflecting on this faith, the individual is assured of his salvation.

1.1.5. Calvinism versus Arminianism on Controversial Passages on Predestination²¹⁰

Of all the sixteen century traditions that usually echo in the theological landscape of the CBC, Arminianism and Calvinism are the most common preferences of many, which the researcher believes they have been so imperfectly understood. Before moving on to Karl Barth's view of predestination in his soteriology, it would be helpful to round up our study of the sixteen century mainline traditions on predestination by reviewing how these two traditions have responded to some controversial questions in the Bible. This would be helpful for two reasons; first, it will provide clarification on some of the fundamental tenets of these traditions which have been so imperfectly understood by many leaders in the CBC.

Second, knowledge of how these two main traditions have responded to some of the problematic texts on predestination will throw some light in the process of deconstructing paradigms from the bible which the CBC can use as tools in the process of delineating and defending their own tenets on soteriology in the proposed Cameroon

²¹⁰ See Dennis McCallum and Gary DeLashmutt. *Calvinism & Arminianism: Controversial Passages*. Essays from Xenos Christian Fellowship [Assessed 21/07/2012] <http://www.xenos.org/essays/calvinism-arminianism-controversial-passages>.

Baptist Theological Treatise. Dennis McCallum and Gary DeLashmutt have provided a helpful insight on how these traditions respond to controversial texts in scripture. A brief review of their work would suffice for our purpose.

“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away” (John 6:37).

According to McCallum and DeLashmutt,²¹¹ Calvinism believes that this verse talks about irresistible grace. That since an individual cannot refuse God’s choice, therefore all those given to Christ will respond.

But according to Arminianism, McCallum and DeLashmutt²¹² explain that the phrase; “those given to me” in verse 37 is the same as those who “believe in him” in verse 40. This means that, when God foresees that some will believe, he gives them to Christ. Verse 45 confirms this; those who “have heard and learned from the father” are the ones who “come to me.”

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:44:65)

According to McCallum and DeLashmutt Calvinists believe that this passage teaches total depravity, unconditional election, and also imply limited atonement and double predestination. This can be justified as follows:

- “No one can come to me unless . . .” implies that they are totally depraved
- “It has been granted him from the Father” or “the Father draws him” suggests unconditional election. It is unconditional in because the cause is the father, not the individual.

²¹¹Ibid., [Assessed 21/07/2012]

²¹²Ibid., [Assessed 21/07/2012]

- Limited atonement and double predestination are usually inferred from the fact that it is impossible to come to him without election. Therefore, those whom the Father has not drawn are naturally destined for judgement, and are therefore those for whom Christ did not die.

But for Arminians, McCallum and DeLashmutt explain that this passage only teaches total depravity with the Father responsible for drawing all men to Christ. (Jn. 12:32; 16:8). Arminianism further holds that, to assign the cause exclusively to the Father ignores verse 29; 35; 40; and 47. To attribute the cause exclusively to the Father regardless of the response of the person, flies in the face of the stated will of the Father in vs. 40 that “Everyone who beholds the Son and believes in him” will be saved.

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain...” (John 15:16)

Calvinists believe that this is a proof text for unconditional election, emphasizing the irrelevance of human choice but Arminians on the other hand believe that, this statement is made to the disciples with reference to their apostleship, not to their salvation. This interpretation accords well with the next phrase “that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain.” John. 6:70 refers to the same choice. Judas was chosen but not saved.²¹³

“And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.”(Acts 13:48)

McCallum and DeLashmutt explain that Calvinists believe this verse teaches unconditional election, because it would have been easy to say “as many as believed were appointed eternal life” but the reverse is stated. But this is not true for Arminians. For them, the participle translated “were appointed to” (*tetagmenoi*) is in the middle-passive

²¹³Ibid., [Assessed 21/07/2012]

voice. This means that the same form is used in Greek to designate both the middle voice and the passive voice. The NASB has translated it in the passive voice. However, if it is translated in the middle voice, the passage would read “. . .as many as set themselves to eternal life believed.”²¹⁴

“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.” (Galatians 1:15-16)

This text according to Calvinists gives evidence that God irresistibly called Paul because he was elected to salvation. And this simply implies that salvation is typical of all Christians in this regard. But to the Arminians, McCallum and DeLashmutt explain that Paul's election and calling were based on God's foreknowledge of Paul's decision to believe. Some Arminians acknowledge that Paul may have been unconditionally elected and irresistibly called by God, but point out that this does not prove that God deals with all people in this way. They hold that, there is no reason to think that God cannot deal differently with some people than others and that, the fact that Calvinism only have one proof of unconditional election and no other proof to show that God elects all in this same way weakens their claim for unconditional election of all saints.²¹⁵

Ephesians 1:4-5

...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.

Calvinism believes that this passage is teaching unconditional election. God “chose us before the foundation of the world.” And “has predestined us to adoption as sons . . . according to the kind intention of His will.” These phrases are taken to mean that God has

²¹⁴Ibid., [Assessed 21/07/2012]

²¹⁵Ibid., [Assessed 21/07/2012]

sovereignly decided in advance who will be saved, completely irrespective of human choice.²¹⁶

For Arminians, Verse 4 is teaching God's election of the believer to salvation. However, the significance of the phrase; "in Him" implies that Christ was the chosen one (Is. 42:1), and that believers participate in his chosenness because they are baptized into him when they believe (Eph. 1:13). Arminians also insist that God's election and predestination are based on his foreknowledge of our choice to believe in Christ (I Pet. 1:1,2; Rom. 8:29). With regard to verse 5, this passage is referring not to God's choice of who will be saved, but of Gods choice that those who believe will be ultimately glorified. The phrase; "Adoption as sons" is a references to the glorification of believers. A case in point is Romans 8:23 where Paul uses of "adoption" in this way).²¹⁷

"But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth." (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

"...for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed." (1 Peter 2:8)

According to McCallum and DeLashmutt,²¹⁸ some Calvinists find support for double-predestination in this passage. God appointed certain people to "doom" and therefore they rejected Christ. But Arminians hold that the specific cause for their stumbling is not God. They stumble simply because "they are disobedient to the word."

"For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." (Jude 1:4)

Since according to this verse, the false teachers referred to were "long ago marked out [by God] for... condemnation." Calvinists hold that this passage teaches double-predestination.

²¹⁶Ibid., [Assessed 21/07/2012]

²¹⁷Ibid., [Assessed 21/07/2012]

²¹⁸Ibid., [Assessed 21/07/2012]

But for the Arminians, McCallum and DeLashmutt explain that the participle “previously marked out” (*proegrammenoi*) can also be translated “previously written about.” The latter translation is preferable because Jude goes on to cite several recorded examples of the destruction of ungodly persons (vss. 5-18).

“So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “ for the very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth.” 18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. 19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault ? For who resists His will ?" 20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God ? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? 22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction ? 23 And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory.” (Romans 9:16-23)

Calvinists hold that Romans 9 teaches unconditional election and double predestination.

McCallum and DeLashmutt²¹⁹ elucidate their claims with the following justification:

- “It [God’s choice] does not depend on the man who wills” verse 16.
- Verse 18 refers to double predestination.
- Verses 22-23 refer to “vessels of wrath prepared for destruction” and “vessels of mercy prepared beforehand for glory.”
- The election involved is not a national election, because verse 24 implies that the vessels of mercy are the believing Christians whom God called not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

On the Arminian perspective, McCallum and DeLashmutt²²⁰ explain that:

²¹⁹Ibid., [Assessed 21/07/2012]

²²⁰Ibid., [Assessed 21/07/2012]

- Verses 1-5 make clear that the context is that of national choice. This is confirmed in verses 6-7 because all Israelites were not saved and all Ishmaelites were not damned. Also, in verse 13 Malachi 3:2 is cited to demonstrate that God had favoured the nation of Israel over the nation of Edom.
- Verse 16 refers to God's choice of how to lead the nation of Israel through the wilderness, which was independent of Moses' opinion. Personal salvation is not in view in the original passage (Ex. 33:19).
- Verse 18 is in the context of verse 16. Verse 17 refers to God's temporal destruction of the Egyptians when they wanted to destroy Israel. It teaches that, God caused his choice of Israel to stand regardless of Moses' attempts to help or Pharaoh's attempts to hinder. Neither Moses' nor Pharaoh's personal salvation was in view in these passages.
- Verses 22-23 refer to nations which have either glorious or a judgmental role in history. God allows evil nations to exist, and often uses them to bless Israel. Other believers are able to participate in the covenant blessings of Israel, because they have been "grafted in to the rich root" of God's purpose in history. Also, the "lump" of clay in verse 21 refers to national Israel. God has the right to divide Israel into two vessels: unbelieving Israel, which has now become a vessel of wrath and believing Israel, which, along with believing Gentiles has become a vessel of mercy.

1.1.6. Predestination in Barth's Soteriology

Karl Barth is arguably the most prolific theologian of the twentieth century. Little wonder why pope Pius XII described him as the most important theologian since Thomas Aquinas.²²¹ He is esteemed among men like John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards for his

²²¹ See *Church Dogmatics* IV.1, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004

strong theological view. His most famous works are his *The Epistle to the Romans*,²²² and his massive fourteen-volume work *Church Dogmatics*,²²³ which is one of the largest works of systematic theology ever written with an accurate explanation on predestination in his soteriology. Many scholars today have been influenced by Bartianism. For instance, Harry Mulisch in his *The Discovery of Heaven*,²²⁴ makes mentions of Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, as does David Markson in his "The Last Novel".²²⁵ Also, in Marilynne Robinson's "Gilead,"²²⁶ the preacher John Ames reveres Barth's "Epistle to the Romans" and refers to it as his favourite book other than the Bible. Whittaker Chambers also cites Barth in most of his books such as "Witness,"²²⁷ "Cold Friday,"²²⁸ and "Odyssey of a Friend."²²⁹ If Barth is as important as many describe him to be in modern times, then for the purpose of this research objective, it would be expedient to also summarise his views on predestination as another mainline protestant tradition that emerged in the twentieth century.

Barth's soteriology emphasized the sovereignty of God, particularly through his interpretation of the Calvinistic doctrine of election. Sung Chung explained that, "Barth accepted the Reformed theological argument that God's election is one of the most central aspects of the gospel and it is purely grounded upon God's sovereign grace and mercy

²²² Karl Barth. *The Epistle to the Romans*. London, Oxford University Press. 1933; Maico M. Michielin. *A Shorter Commentary on Romans by Karl Barth with an introduction by Maico M. Michielin*. Translated by D.A. Van Daleen. Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007

²²³ Karl Barth. *Church Dogmatics*. George Street: Endinburg, T&T Clark, 1961

²²⁴ Harry Mulisch. *The Discovery of Heaven*. Translated by Paul Vincent. Penguin Books, 1997.

²²⁵ David Markson. "The Last Novel". USA, Shoemaker & Hoard, 2007.

²²⁶ Marilynne Robinson. *Gilead*. Little, Brown Book Group, 2009

²²⁷ Whittaker Chambers. *Witness*. Regnery Gateway, 507: 1987.

²²⁸ Whittaker Chambers. *Cold Friday*. Random House, 194: 1964.

²²⁹ Whittaker Chambers. *Odyssey of a friend: Whittaker Chambers' letters to William F. Buckley, Jr., 1954-1961*. William Frank Buckley (ed.) Regnery Books, 201,231:1987.

toward humanity without any consideration of human religious merit and moral state. In this sense, we may identify Barth as a Calvinian theologian.”²³⁰

Barth responded to Calvin’s predestination by explaining its superior biblical basis to other competing traditions. He however differed with Calvin’s concept of double predestination, arguing that to ascribe the salvation or damnation of humanity to an abstract and absolute decree is to make some part of God more final and definitive than God’s saving act in Jesus Christ. To Barth, God’s absolute decree, is His gracious decision to be for humanity in the person of Jesus Christ²³¹ as he stated in his *Church Dogmatics*:

According to Scripture, the divine election of grace is an activity of God which has a definite goal and limit. Its direct and proper object is *not individuals* generally, but *one individual* – and only in Him the people called and united by Him, and only in that people, individuals in general in their private relationships with God. It is only in that one man that a human determination corresponds to the divine determining. In the strict sense only He can be understood and described as ‘elected’ (and ‘rejected’). All others are so in Him, and not as individuals.²³²

With this view, predestination to Barth is properly explained with Jesus as the elect as he stated “In its simplest and most comprehensive form the dogma of predestination consists, then, in the assertion that the divine predestination is the election of Jesus Christ.”²³³ With Jesus as the subject in election, Barth believes He manifests in this regard in three aspects; first, as the electing God, second as the electing man and third as the only man rejected or

²³⁰ Sung Wook Chung. *Karl Barth and Evangelical Theology: Convergences and Divergences*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006:71.

²³¹Karl Barth’s Predestination. [assessed 28/06/2012]

<http://turnershull.tumblr.com/post/20175290244/karl-barths-predestination>.

²³² Barth, Karl. “The Election of God.” Translated by Geoffrey Bromiley, J.C. Campell, Iain Wilson, J. McNab, Harold Knight, and R.A. Steward. Vol. 2, pt. 2 of *Church Dogmatics*, edited by Geoffrey Bromiley and Thomas Torrance. London: T. & T. Clark, 2004: 43.

²³³ Karl Barth. “The Election of God.” Translated by Geoffrey Bromiley, J.C. Campell, Iain Wilson, J. McNab, Harold Knight, and R.A. Steward. Vol. 2, pt. 2 of *Church Dogmatics*, edited by Geoffrey Bromiley and Thomas Torrance. London: T. & T. Clark, 2004:103.

damned by God.²³⁴ According to Crisp, Barth further holds that as the elect one of God, Jesus is man's representative, and all men are derivatively elect in Him.²³⁵

According to Hausmann, Barth grounds his argument for Jesus as the subject of election in his exegesis of Ephesians 1:4, which says, "He chose us *in him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless in his sight." For Barth, "*in him*," was not to be interpreted as, "with him," or "through him." "'In Him' means in His person, in His will, in His own divine choice, in the basic decision of God which He fulfills over against every man."²³⁶ To Barth, Jesus is not only the subject in election but also the subject in reprobation as he stated:

The only truly rejected man is His own Son; that God's rejection has taken its course and been fulfilled and reached its goal, with all that that involves, against this One, so that it can no longer fall on other men or be their concern... Their concern is still to be aware of the threat of their rejection. But it cannot now be their concern to suffer the execution of this threat, to suffer the eternal damnation which their godlessness deserves.²³⁷

By referring to Jesus as the reprobate, Barth corroborates with the Bible in affirming that Jesus took away man's sins and endured God's wrath on the cross and in so doing, he atoned for the sins of men and in this way, the power of evil is overthrown and negated.²³⁸

From this, it can be inferred that Predestination in Barth's soteriology is summed up in two points; first, Barth sees Jesus as the electing God from whom any true statement on predestination must start. Second, Jesus is the chosen man who atones for the sin of all

²³⁴ William John Hausmann. *Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1969:1.

²³⁵ Oliver D. Crisp. "The Letter and the Spirit of Barth's Doctrine of Election: a Response to Michael O'Neil," *Evangelical Quarterly* 79:1, 2007:56.

²³⁶ William John Hausmann. *Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1969:36.

²³⁷ Karl Barth. "The Election of God." Translated by Geoffrey Bromiley, J.C. Campell, Iain Wilson, J. McNab, Harold Knight, and R.A. Steward. Vol. 2, pt. 2 of *Church Dogmatics*, edited by Geoffrey Bromiley and Thomas Torrance. London: T. & T. Clark, 2004:319.

²³⁸ Clifford Green. (ed). *Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991: 32.

men. Hence election does not directly deal with man as such but with Christ. So when God elects man, he elects him in Christ and when he rejects man, he rejects him in Christ.²³⁹

Conclusion

This chapter has critically reviewed the existing literatures on predestination from the mainline protestant traditions such as predestination in Luther's soteriology, predestination in Calvin's Soteriology, predestination in Arminius' soteriology and predestination in Barth's soteriology. The chapter identified their key points as well as the areas in which these traditions overlap or differ from one another. The relevance of this chapter to this project is that it demonstrates the researcher's understanding of the subject of predestination from the mainline protestant traditions which would throw some light in the research process of deconstructing helpful paradigms which the CBC can use as tools in the process of delineating and defending tenets for a more biblically and theologically sound soteriology in the proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise.

²³⁹For refence and further reading on Barth's predestination, the following resources are recommended: Karl Barth. *The Humanity of God*. Zollikon: Zurich, Evangelischer Verlag A. G. 1960; Karl Barth and William H. Willimon. *The Early Preaching of Karl Barth: Fourteen Sermons with Commentary by William H. Willimon*. Louisville: Kentucky, Westminster John Knox Press, 2009; Mark S. Gignilliat. *Karl Barth and the Fifth Gospel: Barth's Theological Exegesis of Isaiah*. Burlington, Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009; John Stephen Bowden. *Karl Barth*. S.C.M. Press, 2006; Edward Jungel. *Karl Barth, a Theological Legacy*. Westminster Press, 1986; Eberhard Busch, Darrell L. Guder, Judith J. Guder. *The Great Passion: An Introduction to Karl Barth's Theology*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, WmB Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004; William John Hausmann. *Karl Barth's doctrine of election*. Philosophical Library, 1969.

CHAPTER 2

PROTESTANTISM IN CAMEROON: THE CAMEROON BAPTIST CONVENTION

Introduction

Having attempted to review the exact teachings on predestination in the soteriology of mainline protestant traditions, it is important to trace the history of the theological problems the Cameroon Baptist Convention (C.B.C.) currently faces right from the time when protestant missionaries came into Cameroon with these protestant views. The importance of a careful study of the missionary activities in Cameroon to this end is thus emphasised by Awoh; “the contributions made and the challenges raised by missionary activity in Cameroon in particular...were enormous, dynamic and penetrating. Missionary impact is therefore an indelible part of our history.”²⁴⁰ Why is it that these mainline traditions are frequently misunderstood or misquoted in the CBC today? Could it be that these missionaries did not correctly teach these traditions to the people of Cameroon? Or could it rather be that the missionary concern was not on theological grounding as it was for numerical growth to the extent that numerical growth superseded indigenous theological development?

This chapter traces the place of theological development (especially on the subject of soteriology) in the missionary activities in Cameroon in general and the Cameroon Baptist Convention in particular. This is in a bid to understand the root of CBC’s theological problem and then proceed with a way forward. To situate the subject in its right context, we begin with an overview of the church in the Republic of Cameroon, then to the history of protestant missions in Cameroon with special concern on the Baptist.

²⁴⁰Peter Acho Awoh. *The Dynamics and Contradictions of Evangelisation in Africa: An Essay on the Kom Experience*. African Books Collective, 2010: Xiii.

2.1. Cameroon church history in its political context

It is important to consider the political context because Cameroon's church history is closely associated with its political history. A history which is owing to the works of Protestant as well as Roman Catholic missionaries who came into the territory in the 1800s. Even Pope John Paul II acknowledged this fact in his speech during his first visit to Cameroon in August 1985:

The Christian faith was presented to the people of this country at the end of the last century by Protestant and Catholic missionaries. They came without knowing you with the sole desire of sharing with you what they themselves have received as "Good News" and what was the cause of their joy and their salvation: the acceptance of our Saviour Jesus Christ. And the Cameroonians welcomed them... and it has brought forth marvellous fruits, the fruits of a Christianity that reflects the character of Africa²⁴¹

Most often, when the name Cameroon is mentioned today, what usually comes to mind are some of her prominent footballers like Roger Miller and Samuel Eto whose achievements in the world of sports have brought Cameroon to the lime light.²⁴² However, apart from football, several other factors such as her diversities and marvels also accounts for why the nation is internationally acclaimed today. Little wonder why Cameroon has often been described as the 'melting spot of Africa' or 'Africa in miniature.'²⁴³

As a triangular shaped country stretching from the equator to the tropic of Cancer, modern Cameroon stands at the point of convergence of the roads that ran from the Nile Valley to the Atlantic and border countries of Lake Chad to the navigable canals of the great equatorial rivers. Thus, it was the crossroads where the great migrations of people of

²⁴¹John Paul II, Welcome Speech. Yaounde International Airport, Yaounde: Cameroon. 10th August, 1985.

²⁴²For more on the football history of Cameroon in its political context, see Bea Vidacs. *Visions of a Better World: Football in the Cameroonian Social Imagination*. Berlin, Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, 2010.

²⁴³Ben West. *Cameroon 3rd Ed*. Guilford: Connecticut, The Globe Pequot Press Inc., 2011: Vii.

the black race converged, giving it a complex ethnic landscape.²⁴⁴ Cameroon is mainly inhabited both by the people of the Savannah Sudanese and the forest populations of Bantu origin. Cameroon is comprised of approximately 278 tribes with many languages, customs and ancestral beliefs.²⁴⁵ It has a population of about 20.6 million inhabitants, of which approximately 60% are youth²⁴⁶

The political history of modern Cameroon dates as far back as February 1961 when the United Nations came up with the unity plan for a bilingual Cameroon through a plebiscite. The new Constitution adopted in January 1996, culminated in the democratization of the national political life. The president of the Republic, Head of State, is elected for seven years on a one-man-one-vote basis. Legislative power is exercised by the parliament, which is composed mainly of National Assembly. Judiciary power is ensured by the High Court, the Court of Appeals, and the Tribunals.²⁴⁷

Today, Cameroon's political landscape boasts of about 170 political parties. The party of President Paul Biya, which has been in power since 6th November 1982, has the majority of members in the National Assembly (116 out of 180 seats). Seven parties have their headquarters at this Assembly and 11 take part in the management of the Communes. The Social Democratic Front (SDF) is the main opposition party. Cameroon is a member of the Commonwealth, of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, a member of the Non Aligned Group, the African Union and the UN. Cameroon is also a member of ACP-European Union Convention, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community

²⁴⁴All Africa Conferences of Churches Bulletin No: 003 November. [Access, 29/06/2012] <http://archive.wfn.org/2003/11/msg00118.html>.

²⁴⁵See the following resource for full details on the cultural heritage of Cameroon: John Mukum Mbaku *Culture And Customs Of Cameroon*. Westport: CT, Greenwood Press, 2005.

²⁴⁶Ben West. *Cameroon 3rd Ed*. Guilford: Connecticut, The Globe Pequot Press Inc., 2011: 16

²⁴⁷All Africa Conferences of Churches Bulletin No: 003 November. [assessed 29/06/2012] <http://archive.wfn.org/2003/11/msg00118.html>.

(CEMAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC), and of the Inter-African Conference of Insurance Markets (CIMA), among other organizations.²⁴⁸

Religion in Cameroon is characterized mainly by Christianity and Islam as well as indigenous beliefs. The Northern region of the country is a stronghold for Islamism. In 1715, the first Islamic school was founded under pressure from the Muslims of Bornou on the Mandara Kingdom. The infiltration by the Fulani people and the subsequent crusade of Adama did the rest to solidify Islam in the North. While Muslim communities live in almost every region of Cameroon, the greater Northern region of the country is mostly Islamic; Bamoun Country (Foumban region in the West) has the greatest concentration. Today, Islam has nearly 1.5 million followers.²⁴⁹

Even though in the recent past, there has been an emerging group of Pentecostals with worrying extremism,²⁵⁰ Catholicism and Protestantism are the main Christian traditions in Cameroon. The Catholics arrived in 1890 with several German and later French missions who expanded the Southern and Western regions. They undertook massive conversions including the opening of schools and colleges, dispensaries, and orphanages. Today, Catholics represent the greatest number of believers in Cameroon, with about 2.7 million followers.²⁵¹ But for the purpose of this study, we concern ourselves with protestant missionaries.

²⁴⁸Ibid. [assessed 29/06/2012]

²⁴⁹Ibid.

²⁵⁰ See the following resource for more on Pentecostalism in Cameroon: Robert Mbe Akoko. "Ask and you shall be given": Pentecostalism and the economic crisis in Cameroon. Oxford: African Studies Centre, 2007.

²⁵¹Ibid.

2.2. An Overview of Protestant missions in Cameroon²⁵²

Through the effort of European missionaries, Protestantism found its way into Cameroon from the 19th century, making Cameroon one of the strongholds for Protestantism in Africa today. The main protestant groups in Cameroon today are the Baptist, the Presbyterians, Lutherans and the Evangelical Church. The largest is the L'église Evangelique du Cameroun, which developed from the Paris mission and had absorbed former German missions in French Cameroon. By 1957, most of these churches became autonomous and eventually started a United School of Theology in Yaoundé in 1962, which later became the Faculté de Théologie de Yaoundé for all francophone Africa, north of the Congo. What was the main concern of these protestant missionaries in Cameroon? To what extent was it goaled at developing a strong theological culture among the indigenes to the point that, they can confidently stand on their own theological terms? We turn now to the history of protestant missions in Cameroon with this interest in mind.

²⁵²For reference and a detailed sweep of the history of missions in the Cameroons, the reader is referred to the following helpful resources: Shirley G. Ardener. *Eye-Witnesses to the Annexation of Cameroon 1883-1887*. Buea: Government Press, 1968; Emmanuel Aloangamo Aka. "Joseph Merrick, Alfred Saker and the Foundations of Christianity in the Cameroons 1844-1876." *Cameroon Tribune*. October 8, 1986; David B. Barrett. *Schism and Renewal in Africa*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968; F. A. Cox. *History of the Baptist Missionary Society, from 1792 to 1842*. 2 vols; London: T. Ward and Co., and G. and J. Dyer, 1842; Paul R. Dekar. "Alfred Saker and the Baptists in Cameroon." *Foundations* 14(4):325-43, 1971; Joseph Jackson Fuller. Fuller's Comments on Early Mission in Fernando Po and Cameroon. Typescript. BMS Archives A/5. n.d; Joseph Jackson Fuller. Recollections of the West African Mission of the B.M.S.Typescript. BMS Archives A/5. n.d; Joseph Jackson Fuller. Autobiography. Typescript. BMS Archives A/5. n.d; Adrian. Hastings. *The Church in Africa 1450-1950*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994; Alexander Innes. *Cruelties Committed on the West Coast of Africa by an Agent of the Baptist Mission and Others*. London: Arthur, 1862; Virtue Heal et al. *More Light: The Cameroons and the Baptist Mission*, in Four Parts, with Introduction and Appendix. The Only True Biography of Alfred Saker and His Cruelties, by Eye-Witnesses. Liverpool: Birkenhead, 1895; Jacobs, Sylvia M. Jacobs. (ed.) *Black Americans and the Missionary Movement in Africa*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982; Richard A. Joseph. "Church, State and Society in Colonial Cameroun." *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 13(1):5-32, 1980; Werner Keller. *The History of the Presbyterian Church in West Cameroon*. Victoria: Presbook, 1969; Lloyd E. Kwast. *The Discipling of West Cameroon: A Study of Baptist Growth*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971; Gary L. Osteraas. "Missionary Politics in Cameroon 1844-1914." Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1972; Emily M. Saker. *Alfred Saker, Pioneer of the Cameroons*. London: Carey Press, 1929; Brian Stanley. *The Bible and the Flag. Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Leicester: Apollos. 1990; Brian Stanley. *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1992*. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark. 1992; Brian Stanley. "The Legacy of George Grenfell." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. 21(3): 120-23, 1997;

The first Christian missionaries to Cameroon were Protestants, specifically missionaries from the London Baptist Missionary Society who arrived at the territory in 1845. They came under the leadership of Alfred Saker with some West Indian Baptist preachers mainly from Jamaica. Their being the first to come can be understood because the British were among those who led the war against the slave trade. Their main purpose of coming to Cameroon was to completely abolish slave trade from its roots in West Africa and to spread the message of the Gospel. They came alongside the explorers and merchants who were looking for markets as well as sources for raw materials for their industries after their withdrawal from the American plantations as a result of the American war of independence in 1777-78.²⁵³ At the time of their arrival, there were more than 140 ethnic groups in Cameroon who were worshippers of the African traditional religion. This religion was characterized by sacrifices, belief in the Supreme Being, belief in the ever presence of the ancestors etc. But many later abandoned these traditional religions for Christianity. The missionary group that came immediately after the Baptists were the American Presbyterians²⁵⁴ who together with the Baptist planted the first seeds of Christianity in Cameroon.²⁵⁵

Even though it proved to be a harder task than they had anticipated, the main aim of the protestant missionaries to Cameroon was to reach the Cameroon mainland. The major hindrance to this goal was mainly because most of the people were from cannibalistic tribes and often at war with rival tribes, and normally went about naked. This was a completely different culture for the Europeans that made penetration difficult. Saker

²⁵³Stan Mary Nsotaka. *History of the Church in Cameroon*. Internet resource: Cameroon Church History. [assess 30/06/2013] <http://fonnsostan.webs.com/cameroonchurchhistory.htm>.

²⁵⁴ See Werner Keller. *The History of the Presbyterian Church in West Cameroon*. Victoria: Presbook, 1969

²⁵⁵ Stan Mary Nsotaka. *History of the Church in Cameroon*. Internet resource: Cameroon Church History. [assess 30/06/2013] <http://fonnsostan.webs.com/cameroonchurchhistory.htm>.

relentlessly preached for two years with very little interest from the indigenous people. But in 1849, the people began responding to the message and in 1866, Saker ordained the first ever-Cameroonian pastor, George Nkwe, a native Bamelieke. By the time of German rule in Cameroon, they had reached the mainland and planted three English Baptist mission stations in the territory; “one at Victoria, and two on the Cameroons river – at Bell Town in Douala and at Hickory across the river.”²⁵⁶ Saker also opened many mission stations in Douala and its environs.

These Baptist missionaries however left the territory at the eve of German colonization of Cameroon and they were succeeded by yet another group of protestant missionaries from Germany, mainly the German Baptist and the German Basel missionaries.²⁵⁷ These protestant missionaries became actively involved in the promotion of local African leadership in the churches they founded. By opening schools, they made a lot of progress especially in the Bulu area of the country. Sundkler & Steed recount that, “An amazing growth of the church followed with some 70,000 in total baptized in 1925, 85,000 in 1962 and 200,000 in 1968.”²⁵⁸ Protestantism also gained ground in the 1920s through the work of the famous Douala Pastor Modi Din. He preached the Gospel message from the Cameroon coast right to the Ivory Coast and his influence spread. However, his work did not last long enough because he went too fast without spending enough time with his converts to mature in faith.

The three Baptist missions in Cameroon eventually got into conflicts over their diversity of views on matters like church discipline and above all some of the churches

²⁵⁶ Tambi Eyongetah Abuagbaw & Robert Brain. *A History of Cameroon*. Longman Group Ltd, Honkong 1974: 76.

²⁵⁷ The Basel mission eventually became known as the Presbyterians.

²⁵⁸ Bengt Sundkler & Christopher Steed. *A History of the Church in Africa*. Cambridge University Press, 2000:754.

had special international connection than others. With the help of other protestant missionaries, their differences were reconciled in the 1920s and the three missions combined to form the United Baptist Church. Even after the reconciliation, these disagreements still continued and this eventually led to the formation of the Native Baptist Church which was a real torn in the flesh of the British and French colonial administrators. In many instances, missionaries sided with the people against the colonial administrators who were oppressing the people through the use of forced labour.²⁵⁹

In July 1914, delegates from the Basel Missions, the Baptist Mission, the Presbyterian Church, and the Gossner met at Buea: It was this group that would one day become the Evangelical Federation, but time was required for this idea to mature. A second meeting took place in 1931 in Gabon, and in 1940, the Federation of Evangelical Missions of Cameroon and Equatorial Africa was established. After deciding to admit autonomous African churches into its fold in 1951, the Organization became known as the Evangelical Federation of Cameroon and Equatorial Africa. Following the political independence of the countries of French Equatorial Africa, the Evangelical Federation restructured and became the Federation of Churches and Evangelical Missions of Cameroon. Also known as the Federation of Protestant Churches and Missions in Cameroon (FEMEC in French). Its objectives remained the same:

- The search for unity of churches and Evangelical missions working in Cameroon
- To experience sharing for mutual enrichment
- The common management of certain projects, the evangelization of less evangelized

²⁵⁹Stan Mary Nsotaka. *History of the Church in Cameroon*. Internet resource: Cameroon Church History. [Access, 30/06/2012] <http://fonnsostan.webs.com/cameroonchurchhistory.htm>.

areas, and promotion of ecumenical movement.²⁶⁰

The list below shows some of FEMEC's member churches/denominations today:

1. Eglise Presbytirienne Camerounaise (The Cameroonian Presbyterian Church)
2. Eglise Evangilique Luthirienne du Cameroun (The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon)
3. The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
4. Eglise Fraternelle Luthirienne (The Brotherhood Lutheran Church)
5. The Native Baptist Church
6. Eglise Protestante Africaine (The African Protestant Church)
7. Union des Eglises Evangiliques du Cameroun (The Union of Evangelical Churches of Cameroon)
8. Eglise Anglicane (The Anglican Church)
9. Union des Eglises Baptistes du Cameroun (The Union of Baptist churches of Cameroon)
10. The Cameroon Baptist Convention

2.3. Pioneer Protestant Missionaries and theological development in Cameroon

Even though other protestant missionaries such as the Presbyterians could also be considered as part of the early missionaries to Cameroon, the main pioneer missionaries to Cameroon were the Baptists. And given that the focus of this work is on the Baptist, we limit mainly to the three major pioneer Baptist missionaries to Cameroon namely; Alfred Saker, Joseph Merrick and Jackson Fuller and attempt an overview of their work in Cameroon with an interest on the place for indigenous theological development in their missionary agenda.

2.3.1. Rev. Alfred Saker: British Baptist missionary (1814-1880)

When the London Baptist Missionary Society commenced the mission to West Africa, Mr. and Mrs. Saker, who were members of the Morice Square Baptist church, Devonport, offered themselves to be sent as missionaries. Saker was then sent as an assistant missionary. In 1843, he travelled along with John Clark first to Jamaica to take

²⁶⁰Ibid. [Access, 30/06/2012]

the West Indian missionary group. From there, all the recruits arrived at the Headquarters of the Baptist missionaries in Fernando Po in February 1844 and from there, Saker visited tribes on the mainland at the mouth of the Cameroons River.²⁶¹

In Cameroon, he built a house suitable for the work, and gradually began to learn the language of the people. Within two years of ministering in Cameroon, Saker was able to reduce their language to writing and prepared a lesson-book for the school which he had formed. His home church back at Devonport sent him printing press and materials which he used to print schoolbooks for the use of his scholars and portions of the New Testament. By 1849 the church in Cameroons was formed, and a Christian civilization began to spread itself there through Saker's efforts.²⁶² He introduced new dynamics in agriculture for the people; introducing the cultivation of various plants, such as bread-fruit, mangoes, oranges, and other fruits and vegetables for daily sustenance.

These productions, moreover, enabled them to obtain manufactured articles from the ships frequenting the river, and in the course of a few years a civilized community was established. He taught his converts the industrial arts, and soon found himself surrounded by artisans of all sorts, — carpenters, blacksmiths, bricklayers, etc. He later became helpful in the printing-office work, and aided in the translation and printing of the Scriptures in the Dualla tongue, which was his life-long task. In 1851 the mission was reduced by death to such a degree that not a single fellow-labourer remained of those who went out with him, except one or two coloured brethren.²⁶³

All his European colleagues were gone, and he was left alone with the responsibility of the work all on his shoulders. In 1853 the Spanish government, instigated

²⁶¹ William Cathcart (ed.) *The Baptist Encyclopedia*. Vol 1 of 3. Paris: Arkansas, the Baptist Standard Bearer, inc. reprint 1988: 1022-1023.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 1023.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1023.

by the Jesuit missionaries, insisted on the departure of the Baptists from Fernando Po, and suppressed all Protestant worship. The converts resolved to accompany their teachers, and the whole Baptist community removed under Saker's guidance to Amboises Bay, on the mainland. He purchased a tract of land on the coast from the Bimbia chief, and mapped out the new colony of Victoria which was soon covered with houses and gardens for the exiles through his efforts.²⁶⁴

Saker's influence upon the native chiefs and their people was most successfully exercised in suppressing many of their cruel and inhuman customs such that if he had chosen, he might have made himself their king in the later years of his residence among them. Since he lived so long in a climate deadly to Europeans, he suffered greatly from health complications. Few who saw him when he occasionally visited England could tell of the look of extreme depreciation which always characterized him.²⁶⁵ But his soul was always full of an indomitable dynamism, and it was not until 1878 that he finally gave up the work and returned to England. As opportunity offered, he visited the churches in the interest of missions until March, 1880, when he died at the age of sixty-five.²⁶⁶

2.3.2. Rev. Joseph Merrick: Jamaican Baptist missionary (1808-1849)

Joseph Merrick's missionary work in Cameroon was short but outstanding to a point that it earned him the title; "founder of Christianity in Cameroon."²⁶⁷ According to Ngoh,²⁶⁸ Merrick began preaching in 1837 in Jamaica and was ordained a full missionary in 1838. In 1842 when members of the Baptist missionary Society in London were seeking

²⁶⁴Ibid., 1023.

²⁶⁵Ibid., 1023.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 1023.

²⁶⁷ Bengt Sundkler & Christopher Steed. *A History of the Church in Africa*. Cambridge University Press, 2000:261.

²⁶⁸Victor Julius Ngoh. *History of Cameroon Since 1800*. Limbe: Pressbook, 1996: 352.

Jamaican lay missionaries to join them for missions to the Cameroon coast, Joseph Merrick noted his interest and signed in and arrived Fernando Po in 1843.²⁶⁹ In 1844, Merrick went on from Fernando Po to Binbia and established a church on the mainland. But this was not without some initial resistance from the king; William of the Isubu people.

By 1845, Merrick had founded the Jubilee Mission and went on to translate parts of the New Testament into the Isubu language. He also set up a brick-making machine and a printing press, and used the latter to publish his Bible translation and a textbook for teaching in Isubu. In 1849, he became ill and had to set off for furlough in England but never made it home alive as he died at sea in October 22 1845.

2.3.3. Rev. Jackson Fuller: Jamaican Baptist missionary (1825-1908)

Joseph Jackson Fuller was one of the earliest slaves to be freed in Jamaica and went on to become well-educated and travelled internationally. He came over to West Africa to join his father who had been a part of the original mission group from Jamaica, and arrived in West Africa in 1845.²⁷⁰ In 1850 he was accepted by BMS as a full missionary and served in Cameroon until his retirement in 1888. Fuller was actually a replacement of Merrick as he took charge of the mission station and congregation at Bimbia.²⁷¹

His sermons to the people of Bimbia were so convincing that, besides the local people, he attracted a village chief and a group of nobles. And In the 1850s his ministry

²⁶⁹Mark W. DeLancey and Mark Dike DeLancey. *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Cameroon* (3rd ed.). Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 200: 101-102.

²⁷⁰Roswith Gerloff, & Klaus Hock (ed). *Christianity in Africa and the African Diaspora: The Appropriation of a Scattered Heritage*. New York, Continuum International Publishing Group. 2011:80

²⁷¹Ibid. 80.

extended to the Bethel congregation in Douala. Where he later used Merrick's printing press to translate and reprint the bible in Duala. He was ordained on 4 April 1859 by Alfred Saker and later became head of the Cameroon mission and played a crucial role in maintaining Baptist interest in the mission in Cameroon, and was the centre of stability for the mission until Germany took over the country and the Baptist missionaries had to move away to the Congo.²⁷²

From this overview of the Baptist missionary activities in Cameroon, it is evident that even though these missionaries made some progress, they were not as concerned with indigenous theological development as they were on other social issues. Much of what is remembered of Saker, Merrick and Fuller in Cameroon today has little or nothing to do with theology. Let us carefully look at the immediate theological impact of these protestant missionary activities not just in Cameroon but in the Cameroon Baptist Convention in particular.

2.4. The Impact of Protestant missionary activities on the theology of the C.B.C.

If these pioneer missionaries were sent to Cameroon by the London Baptist Missionary Society, then their theology would be for the most part based on the theology of their sending agency. The theological foundation of the London Baptist Missionary Society was for the most part anti-Calvinist. This can be traced from the time of its creation by William Carey; in the late eighteenth century, hyper-Calvinism that taught that men were not responsible for their salvation prevailed in the Baptist churches. In response to this prevalent belief that gave no room for human freewill, William Carey, in a

²⁷²See the following for more on Joseph Jackson Fuller: Robert Glennie. *Joseph Jackson Fuller: an African Christian Missionary*, Carey Press, 1933; Charles W. Weber. *International Influences and Baptist Mission in West Cameroon: German-American Missionary Endeavour under International Mandate & British Colonialism*. Leiden: The Netherlands, E.J Brill: 1993; David Killingray and Joel Edwards. *Black Voices: the shaping of our Christian experience*. Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press England 2007:170; Bengt Sundkler. & Christopher Steed. *A History of the Christian Church in Africa*. Cape Town: South Africa, Cambridge University Press. 2001.

ministers meeting of 1786 raised a question on whether it was the duty of all Christians to spread the Gospel throughout the world. J. R. Ryland in response rebuked him with these words; “Young man, sit down; when God pleases to convert the heathen, he will do it without your aid and mine.”²⁷³

Carey however remained unsatisfied with the prevailing theological conviction of his day and in 1792, he published his groundbreaking missionary manifesto, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. The book mainly justified the need for all Christians to be involved in missionary activities by pointing to Jesus’ command for Christians to make disciples of all nations in Matthew 28:18-20. Based on this, Carey concluded the book by calling for the formation of a missionary society by the Baptist denomination and describes the practical means by which it could be supported.

This eventually led to the formation of the Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Amongst the Heathen which later became known as the Baptist Missionary Society.²⁷⁴ Judging from the theological history of the London Baptist Mission, it can be inferred that the pioneer missionaries who came to Cameroon were more of Moderate Calvinists with a touch of Arminianism. However, Even though they made some progress with their missionary work, their short time²⁷⁵ in Cameroon did not permit them to build a strong theological foundation in their established missions because the German Baptist took over from them in 1884 when Cameroon became a German colony.

²⁷³ F. Deaville Walker, William Carey. *Missionary Pioneer and Statesman*. 1925 repr. Chicago: Moody Press, n.d: 54.

²⁷⁴ And since 2000 as BMS World Mission

²⁷⁵ From 1841 – 1886, making a total of 45 years. Being the pioneering missionary agency, this certainly was not enough time for them to focus on theological development among the Baptist.

The German Baptist missionaries with a theology influenced directly or indirectly by Lutheranism and Calvinism continued the work in collaboration with Cameroonians but again their short stay in Cameroon²⁷⁶ did not give them enough time to establish a strong theological foundation because of their sudden departure from Cameroon after Germany was defeated in the World War II, leaving the work in the hands of the Cameroon Baptist Mission. But their departure in 1941 did not leave the Cameroon Baptist Mission without a missionary body on ground. The North American Baptist Conference had joined the German Baptist missionaries in 1935. So upon the departure of the Germans, the Cameroon Baptist Mission continued under the North American Baptist Conference whose theological convictions were more on Arminianism.

Since Cameroon had been divided into two different territories, part of the Baptist work remained in the French speaking Cameroon while the Cameroon Baptist Mission evolved mainly in the English Speaking Cameroon with its head quarters transferred from Buea to Bamenda from 1947 to present. Even though they worked with the Cameroon Baptist Mission only for 19 years (1935-1954), the North American Baptist missionaries achieved comparatively much in laying down a structure for a theology in the Cameroon Baptist Convention.²⁷⁷ Their work in the CBC was so comparatively outstanding that Conley describes the CBC in his book as the daughter church of NABC.²⁷⁸

The most significant NABC contribution in the CBC was to establish the Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary in Ndu which aims at providing theological

²⁷⁶From 1886 – 1941, making a total of 55 years. Although they stayed longer than their predecessors, it was still a short time for them to be able to develop a strong theological foundation for the Baptists in Cameroon because the transition from English system to German system and the issues of language were barriers that needed time to deal with before such matters as theological foundation could be properly handled.

²⁷⁷Bill J. Leonard. *Baptists in America*. New York, Columbia University Press, 2007: 114

²⁷⁸Joseph F. Conley. *Drumbeats That Changed the World: A History of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union and the West Indies Mission, 1873-1999*. William Carey Library, 2000: 517.

training to pastors and church leaders. Current statistics show however that, the main concern of the North American Baptist Conference (NABC) missions in Cameroon has really not been on theological grounding but on other social ministries especially in the health sector. The list²⁷⁹ below shows the names and duties of some of NABC missionaries currently serving in Cameroon in a bid to justify the claims that the concern of missionaries in the Cameroon Baptist Convention has not been on theological development:

	Name	Missionary work
1.	Cal and Susan Hohn	NABC Missions Field Director in Cameroon
2.	Jayne McKercher	Physiotherapy trainer at Mbingo Baptist Hospital.
3.	Julie Stone	Training national medical interns at Bango Hospital
4.	Lance and Debbie Rundus	Seminary Professor at Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary, Ndu
5.	Dennis and Nancy Palmer	Director of Internal Medicine Internship at Mbingo Hospital
6.	Elsie Lewandowski	Home School director for children of missionaries
7.	Walter and Florence Grob	Missionary in charge of Finances at the CBC head office
8.	Kristi TenClay	Teacher at Rain Forest International School (RFIS), in Yaoundé
9.	Rick and Debbie Bardin	Christian Internal Medicine Specialization program at Mbingo
10.	Gordon & Denise Erickson	Hostel parents at the CMF (Cameroon Missionary Fellowship) in Yaoundé

²⁷⁹From North American Baptist Conference Missionary Serving in Cameroon. [assessed 21/07/2012] <http://www.nabconference.org/missions/our-mission-fields/cameroon>.

From the list above, only one NABC missionary is currently working towards theological grounding in the Cameroon Baptist Convention. Emphasis is more on the health sector. NABC is mainly focused in training national medical staff such as midwives, nurses, physiotherapists, doctors and internal medicine staff. Emphasis in education is mainly directed towards the children of missionary families. This shows that even the North American Baptist Conference (NABC) has not done much towards the theological development of the C.B.C.

Admitted, their interest in the C.B.C from the beginning may have been more on the theological sector (evidenced by the presence of the Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary in Ndu today) but the fact that they failed to meaningfully develop the theological thoughtfulness of the indigenous ministers²⁸⁰ who eventually took over from them and the fact that their current interest in the convention is more on holistic ministries than in the theological sector indicate to the researcher that the NABC has not done enough to help strengthen C.B.C's theological foundation. Also, despite the later involvement of the Baptist General Conference (BGC)²⁸¹ who played a key role in the theological development of a few indigenous pastors like Dr. Wilfred Fon who studied at Westminster Theological Seminary and later became the president of the Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary in Ndu for several years, the point still remains; the NABC and later the BGC may have helped the C.B.C to a limited extent but not well enough to provide the convention with a stable theological foundation on which it could stand on and

²⁸⁰Mostly because most of the missionaries who served as lecturers in the Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary in Ndu then were not theologically strong to lead the way for the indigenes to emulate.

²⁸¹Baptist General Conference is a U.S. national evangelical Baptist body which grew out of the great revival of the 19th century with current headquarters in Orlando, Florida. They also operate the Bethel Theological Seminary and the Bethel University in Arden Hills, Minnesota.

engage in a meaningful ministerial praxis in the society. The necessity therefore for CBC leaders to take responsibility in developing their own theology cannot be overemphasised.

Conclusion

As a progression from chapter one, this chapter has mainly focused on how these mainline protestant traditions came into Cameroon through the missionaries and how this has affected the current state of theology in the Cameroon Baptist Convention. By looking at a general overview of protestant missions in Cameroon and the place of indigenous theological development in the missionary agenda of mostly the pioneer missionaries to Cameroon, it has been realised that these missionaries are not as concerned with theological development in Cameroon as they are on other social ministries.

Thus the reason why C.B.C has no strong theological culture as Dr. Yong observed is not only because the leaders are resistant to change and closed to learning but also because there is no history of a strong theological culture in the history of the C.B.C that can support it today. Therefore the point this chapter is making is that, unless indigenous C.B.C ministers come together at a united theological front and engage into meaningful discussions towards developing a theology for themselves, the theological future of the CBC is bleak. Since the missionaries have not done enough in this regard this responsibility now lies in the hands of the ministerial and/or the General Council of the C.B.C and they can do this by coming up with a theological treatise for the convention that will contain their own well delineated and defended theological views.

To contribute towards the development of this treatise, this project has identified soteriology as a fundamental doctrine which if correctly understood will enhance the understanding of other doctrines needed for this proposed treatise. To make an original contribution on the subject of predestination, this work now proceeds to deconstruct

paradigms from the Bible that throw light on some of the existing mainline traditions as tools for C.B.C leaders to use in the process of delineating and defending their own tenets on soteriology in the proposed theological treatise. The common ground on which CBC ministers can stand to make progress with this theological treatise is scriptures alone. It would therefore be important to critically research on how the bible has treated the subject of predestination and then proceed from there to deconstruct paradigms for the CBC which would be both biblical and theological tools to enable CBC in this regard. Chapter three and four thus attempt a critical survey of predestination in scriptures while chapter five focuses on deconstructing the relevant paradigms from the bible helpful for the C.B.C.

CHAPTER 3

EVIDENCE OF PREDESTINATION IN SCRIPTURES

Introduction

Charles Spurgeon once recounted his encounter with a brother who did not believe there was any such thing as predestination in the Bible. According to Spurgeon, this brother told him in confidence that having read Scriptures through a score and even more times, he never found the doctrine of predestination in them. He added that he was sure he would have done so if it had been there especially as he read the Word on his knees. In response, Spurgeon sarcastically said “I think you read the Bible in a very uncomfortable posture, and if you had read it in your very easy chair, you would have been more likely to understand it.”²⁸² It could be gathered from this conversation that, while people like Spurgeon believe this doctrine is in the bible, others like the one mentioned in the illustration don't. What did John Calvin, the theologian who is usually associated with this doctrine say about its canonicity? The following quote gives a succinct answer:

Scripture is the school of the Holy Spirit, in which, as nothing is omitted that is both necessary and useful to know, so nothing is taught but what is expedient to know. Therefore we must guard against depriving believers of anything disclosed about predestination in Scripture, lest we seem either wickedly to defraud them of the blessing of their God or to accuse and scoff at the Holy Spirit for having published what is in any way profitable to suppress... But for those who are so cautious or fearful that they desire to bury predestination in order not to disturb weak souls - with what colour will they cloak their arrogance when they accuse God indirectly of stupid thoughtlessness as if he had not foreseen the peril that they feel they have wisely met? Whoever, then, heaps odium upon the doctrine of predestination openly reproaches God, as if he had unadvisedly let slip something hurtful to the Church.²⁸³

²⁸²C.H. Spurgeon. *A Defence of Calvinism*. 3 Murray Field Road: Edinburgh, The Banner of Truth Trust, 2008: 11.

²⁸³John Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, III. John Allen (trns). Philadelphia Philip H. Nicklin Publishers, 1816: XX,3.

At least, at the level of the CBC, no serious minister doubts the biblical status of predestination.²⁸⁴ The point of considerable disagreement is on how predestination is treated in the bible and the applicable message to the contemporary audience. As Dr. Yong noted, it is not as though there is no theological position within the ranks of the CBC, what simply reigns is “tradition and personal preferences.”²⁸⁵ In order to unanimously come up with the proposed theological treatise for the CBC, there is need for the leaders to come to a common understanding on predestination in scripture as this will enhance a common understanding on other doctrines. First we begin with a biblical survey of predestination in scriptures then pay some close attention on the different types of predestination and their biblical support before engaging into a closer look on how predestination has been treated in specific texts in the bible.

3.1. Biblical survey of predestination in scriptures

3.1.1. Predestination in the Old Testament

The OT writers generally viewed history as occurring in God’s sovereign and predestined plan. In the OT, Predestination is most vividly expressed when God’s choice of Israel to be a light to those in the world is considered. We see this clearly in the Law, in the wisdom literatures and in the prophets. In Deuteronomy 7:6-8, Predestination is obvious as Moses spoke to the Israelites:

For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a

²⁸⁴This implies that those who do are not considered to be serious students of the word.

²⁸⁵Philemon Yong. “The Current State of theology in the CBC.” *Exclusive Interview*. Minneapolis: Minnesota, 13th July 2012.

mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

We learnt from this text that the reason why God choose the Israelites to be a special people unto himself above all the people that are upon the face of the earth is not for any other reason but for the fact that God loves them and wants to keep his promise which he made to their fathers. This clearly indicates that Israel was involved in God's plan right from the beginning but so was Egypt where God hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would refuse to emancipate them as scriptures say in Exodus 3:19, "And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand." Here, we see how God purposefully hardened Pharaoh's heart so that through his refusal to release the Israelites according to the demands of Moses, God will display his might for his glory.

In the wisdom literatures, we see predestination in Job 14:1-5:

"Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble. He comes out like a flower and withers; he flees like a shadow and continues not. And do you open your eyes on such a one and bring me into judgment with you? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? There is not one. Since his days are determined, and the number of his months is with you, and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass."

This text explains Job's understanding that, it is God who predetermines how long man will live on earth and no man can live beyond God's designated time.

In Psalm 64:9, the Psalmist says:

"Blessed is the man whom thou choolest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy example."

We learn from the Psalmist in this text that it is God who chooses and causes those who eventually dwell in his courts and those whom he chooses are indeed blessed.

In Proverbs 16:33, Solomon says:

“The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.”

Again, we learn from Solomon in this verse that we may make our own decisions but the Lord alone determines what actually happens.

In the prophetic books, we see predestination in Isaiah 42:6 “I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.” Here we see God taking responsibility of the righteousness of the Israelites and also the responsibility to keep them in that righteousness so that through his covenant with them, even the Gentiles will also be brought to His saving knowledge.

Thus from the OT, it can be seen that from the beginning of history, that predestination plan of God is evident in the redemption of his people. The fact that God, through the law and the prophets, made statements that were predictive and expected specific results in the future only points to the fact that the OT teaches that God sovereignly controls and predestines whatever comes to pass.

3.1.2. Predestination in the New Testament

There is enough scriptural evidence to justify the NT’s teachings on predestination.

First, the doctrine of predestination is clearly articulated in Acts 4:27-28 as Luke says:

“For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.”

This clearly teaches that, God predestined the work of Christ. Furthermore, the apostle Paul teaches that Christians “have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.”

(Ephesians 1:11). Again in Romans 9: 23, the apostle Paul explains the reason for divine reprobation over election in this way “What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory.”

All of these only give evidence to the NT’s teaching that predestination is according to God’s purpose or will.

Just like in the OT, the NT teaches that predestination has to do with those who have been chosen by God as evidenced in the following texts:

In Rom 8:28-30

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

This text explains the process through which God calls to salvation, those whom He has chosen before the foundation of the earth.

In Ephesians 1:3-6

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

This text also explains that God chooses for himself, those whom he desires before the foundation of the earth and this is based simply on account of his good will and pleasure.

In these verses, Paul is crystal clear that God ordains all acts and that every thing exists and happens according to God’s predestined plan and sovereign purpose as he again says in Ephesians 1:11 “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”

3.2. General Biblical texts on predestination

Matthew 22:14

“For many are called, but few [are] chosen.”

We learn from this text that, even though the gospel call for repentance is for all humans, only those who have been elected will be chosen by their expressed willingness to respond to the gospel message.

Jeremiah 1:5

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

We learn from this text that Jeremiah’s appointment as a prophet to the nations was already fixed by God even before he was born. This teaches that the ultimate outcome of humans is predetermined by the Lord.

Mark 4:10-12

“As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables. And He was saying to them, “To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but those who are outside get everything in parables, so that while seeing, they may see and not perceive, and while hearing, they may hear and not understand, otherwise they might return and be forgiven.”

“To you” according to the text refers to those whom Christ has chosen according to the will of the Father while “those who are outside” refers to those who have not been called. So in this text, we learn that those whom God have chosen have the ability to understand the truths of the kingdom while those who have not been called do not understand.

Ephesians. 1:3-5

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will...”

We learn again from this text that God choose the saints before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him.

Psalm. 139:16

“Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written
The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.”

In this text, predestination is seen in the fact that before David was yet to be formed his destiny was already determined by God’s purpose.

Romans 9:15-18

“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.”

This text speaks of predestination as it speaks of God’s will and pleasure as the determining factor for who receives his saving mercy and compassion and who does not.

Exodus 4:21

“The LORD said to Moses, "When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go.”

In this text, we learn that God can harden someone’s heart such that he/she becomes disobedient to His message. This enforces the predestination message that the ability for a person to respond in obedience to God’s message depends on what God does in him/her.

Ephesians 2:8-10

“For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

We learn from this text that salvation comes to us as an unmerited favour from God. This strengthens the predestination message that God chooses to save the elect not because of any merit or foreseen merit but simply because of his good pleasure.

Acts 13:48

“And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.”

This text again speaks of predestination in that it explains that through the preaching of the word of the Lord to the Gentiles, many who received it were appointed to eternal life through the empowering work of the Holy Spirit.

3.3. Types of protestant predestination and their Biblical support

There are different types of Predestination, but can be conveniently grouped under two main categories namely; unconditional predestination or conditional predestination (Most commonly referred to as unconditional or conditional election).²⁸⁶ The following pages provide a detailed explanation of these two types of predestination and their biblical support.

3.3.1. Unconditional predestination

Unconditional predestination is a theological concept from the writings and teachings of John Calvin. It teaches that each individual was unconditionally predestined or foreordained by God's sovereign decree before the world began. This predestination or foreordination is unconditional, having nothing to do with the will, choice, obedience, or character of the individual. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* John Calvin explained unconditional election this way:

We say, then, that Scripture clearly proves this much, that God by his eternal and immutable counsel determined once for all those whom it was his desire one day to admit to salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, it was his desire to doom to destruction. We maintain that this counsel, as regards the elect, is founded on his free mercy, without any respect to human worth, while those whom he dooms to destruction are excluded from access to life by a just and blameless, but at the same time incomprehensible judgment. In regard to the elect, we regard calling as the evidence of election, and justification as another symbol of its manifestation, until it is fully accomplished by the attainment of glory. But as the Lord seals his elect by calling and justification, so by excluding the reprobate either from the

²⁸⁶The other types of predestination are infralapsarianism, supralapsarianism, open theism etc. But this work focuses on these two because they clearly represent the major traditions on the doctrine of predestination.

knowledge of his name or the sanctification of his Spirit, he by these marks in a manner discloses the judgment which awaits them.²⁸⁷

The history of this position dates back to the doctrine of salvation adopted by St. Augustine of Hippo and was first codified in the Belgic Confession of 1561 in these words:

We believe that all the posterity of Adam being thus fallen into perdition and ruin by the sin of the first parents, God then did manifest Himself such as He is: that is to say merciful and Just: merciful, since he delivers and preserves from this perdition all whom He in His eternal and unchangeable counsel of mere goodness has elected in Christ Jesus our Lord without any respect for their works, just in leaving others in the fall and perdition wherein they have involved themselves.²⁸⁸

In 1619, this position was reaffirmed in the Canons of Dort and is now represented in different reformed confessions like the Westminster Confession.²⁸⁹

Unconditional Predestination is also referred to as Double Predestination²⁹⁰ as it involves both election and reprobation. The view holds that God from all eternity decrees some to election and positively intervenes in their lives to work regeneration and faith by the work of grace without the cooperation from the individual (monergism). To those who have not been elected (reprobate) God withholds this saving grace from them and leaves them to themselves. The Canons of Dort²⁹¹ explains divine reprobation as an act of God which out of His “sovereign, most just, irreprehensible, and unchangeable good pleasure,

²⁸⁷John Calvin. “Of the Eternal election by which God has Predestinated Some to Salvation and Others to Destruction.” in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. 3.21.7. [assessed 10/05/2012] <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.v.xxii.html#v.xxii-p19>. 1559.

²⁸⁸From Chuck Baynard. *Commentary on the Belgic Confession of Faith*. Lulu.com publishers, 2008 : 59.

²⁸⁹See Chapter III: Of God’s Eternal Degree. And Chapter X: Of effectual Calling. *Westminster Confession of Faith*. [assessed 10/05/2012] http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs/.

²⁹⁰See the following resource for more on Double Predestination: RC Sproul. *Double Predestination*. Internet resource: http://www.thehighway.com/DoublePredestination_Sproul.html. Date of access, 15/05/2012.

²⁹¹The Canons of Dort. 1st Head of Doctrine, Article 15. [assessed 15/05/2012] <http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/creeds/dort.htm>.

has decreed to leave in the common misery”²⁹² which those who have not been elected have wilfully plunged themselves. He does so by not bestowing upon them, saving faith and the grace of conversion but rather permits them in “His just judgment to follow their own ways, at last, for the declaration of His justice, to condemn and punish them forever, not only on account of their unbelief, but also for all their other sins.”²⁹³ But this, explains the Canon of Dort does not in any way makes God a sinner or the author of sin and that to think so of God in this regard will be blasphemy.

Still under the umbrella of unconditional election, there is yet another view opposite to Double Predestination known as Single Predestination which is usually held by Lutherans.²⁹⁴ The view holds that desiring to save all fallen human beings, God sent his Son Jesus Christ to atone for the sins of the *whole world* on the cross. Those God saves have been graciously predestined from eternity in Christ. Those who are condemned are condemned because of their fallen will. Proponents of this perspective of conditional predestination always ask the question; if God wants all to be saved and Jesus died for everyone, why doesn't God convert the fallen will of all? The answer to the question according to them lies within God's hidden purpose, which is beyond human comprehension.

3.3.1.1. Biblical evidence for unconditional predestination

John 15:16

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.”

²⁹²The Canons of Dort. 1st Head of Doctrine, Article 15. [assessed 15/05/2012] <http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/creeds/dort.htm>.

²⁹³Ibid., [assessed 15/05/2012].

²⁹⁴This perspective of unconditional predestination is drawn from Martin Luther's *The Bondage of the will*. Henry Cole (trns). Digireads.com publishing, 2009.

This text speaks of God as the one who chooses the elect. “That you should go and bear fruit” is the reason for the choosing and not the condition for choosing. The text nowhere cites any condition upon which God imposes to choose the elect.

Acts 13:48

“And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.”

Without making reference to any condition that may have necessitated the action, this text explains how God appointed to eternal life all those who believed in Him.

Romans 9:15-16

“For he says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.’ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.”

This text explains that God’s saving grace does not depend on any human condition or influence but simply in God’s sovereign mercy.

Ephesians 1:4-5

“Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will”

Without explaining anywhere in this context that this is based on any human condition, this text teaches that before the foundation of the world, God chose us in him so that we might appear holy and blameless before him.

Ephesians 1:11

“In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.”

This text teaches that predestination is not premised on any condition but simply in accordance with God’s sovereign purpose.

1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

Here, Paul explains that the reason why God choose the saints in Thessalonica was because they believed the gospel message that was preached to them in the power of the Holy Spirit. Their faith in this context is not a condition for their being chosen but simply a response to what the Holy Spirit did to them (bring full conviction in their hearts) when they preaches the gospel.

2 Thessalonians 2:13

“But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits to be saved, through sanctification [by the Spirit] and belief in the truth.”

The fact that the apostles calls on the Thessalonians to give thanks to God for choosing them as the first fruit to be saved only goes on to strengthen the point that salvation is not a result of human efforts but simply God’s grace. Hence those who receive this grace must express their gratitude to God.

2 Timothy 1:9

“Who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.”

This text explains that the reason why God calls the saints to a holy living is not based on their efforts but simply because of his grace and good will.

3.3.2. Conditional predestination

Conditional Predestination is a theological position argued by Jacobus Arminius. Haven studied under staunch Calvinists like Theodore Beza, Arminius began arguing that their views on election were problematic because they could not reconcile human freedom with God’s sovereignty. Arminius’ theology was based on Molinism²⁹⁵ which attempted to reconcile human free will with God’s omniscience. He saw human freedom in terms of

²⁹⁵Named after the philosopher Luis de Molina (1535-1600), a Spanish Jesuit priest and a staunch Scholastic defender of human liberty

the liberation philosophy that man's choice is not decided by God's choice, thus God's choice is conditional or depending on what man chooses.

He believed that, God looked down the corridors of time to see the free choices of man, and based on that, he chose those who will respond in faith and love to his love and promises as revealed in Jesus. Arminianism sees the choice of Christ as an impossibility, apart from God's grace; and the freedom to choose is given to all, because God's prevenient grace is universal (given to everyone). Therefore, God predestines on the basis of foreknowledge of how some will respond to his universal love

3.3.2.1. Biblical evidence for conditional predestination²⁹⁶

3.3.2.1.1. Men must believe in Christ

Mark 16:15-16

“He said to them, “Go into the entire world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

This text teaches that the conditions for salvation belief in the gospel message followed by baptism.

John 3:14-16

“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.” For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

This text teaches that the condition for salvation is belief in Christ as the saviour.

3.3.2.1.2. Men must repent of sin

Acts 17:30-31

“In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with

²⁹⁶See the following resource for reference and further reading.: *Election, Predestination and Foreordination: Conditional or Unconditional?* Gospel Way. [assessed 10/05/2012]
<http://www.gospelway.com/salvation/predestination.php>.

justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

This text teaches that the only way men can escape the judgement of God is that they repent of their sins. To repent therefore in this text is God’s condition for salvation.

2 Peter 3:9

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

This verse teaches that the condition for salvation is based on men’s repentance that is why God who does not want men to perish is patient to ensure that they repent and thus be saved.

From these verses, advocates for conditional election²⁹⁷ argue that, all who will be saved must repent. Since God does not want anyone in the world to perish, His desire is that all should repent as repentance is the only way through which they can access into the salvation plan he has offered for mankind. To them therefore, Scriptures clearly teaches that repentance is a condition of salvation, and everyone on earth must meet that condition.

3.3.2.1.3. Men must confess Christ and be baptized

Matthew 10:32

“Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.”

This text teaches that the condition upon which a person is recognized as one of the chosen in heaven is based on how he/she boldly makes known the gospel message to others.

²⁹⁷ Jacob Arminius. James Nichols and W.R. Bagnall, (eds). *The Works of James Arminius, D. D., Formerly Professor of Divinity in the University of Leyden*. Buffalo, NY: Derby, Miller, and Orton. 1853: 1:367.

Mark 16:16

“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

This text teaches that the condition for salvation put forward by God is belief in Christ, followed by baptism.

Acts 2:38-39

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

This text teaches that in order for sins to be forgiven, men must repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus.

Romans 10:13-17

“for, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’ But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our message?’ Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.”

This text teaches that salvation has been promised only to those who would acknowledge and call on the name of the Lord to deliver them from the sink hole of sin. But in order for men to be able to know and then call on the Lord, they need to hear of him first through the preaching of the gospel.

3.3.2.1.4. Each person is able to choose whether or not he/she will meet the conditions of salvation.

Deuteronomy 30:15-19

“See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. But if

your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.”

In order for God to save them from danger and bless them with the abundance of his blessings, the Israelites had the choice to choose between obeying the commands of God which would lead to life or disobey them which would lead to death.

Joshua 24:15

“But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

In order to be God’s chosen people, the Israelites were given the choice to choose for themselves. For Joshua and his family, they choose to serve the Lord and walk in the path of righteousness.

Hebrews 11:24-25

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

In order for Moses to be recognized as one of God’s chosen people, he had to make a choice to denounce all the advantages of being the son of Pharaoh’s daughter and join his people, the Israelites.

Isaiah 1:18-20

“Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.” For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

The condition for salvation is premised by a willingness of men to make a decision to come to the Lord so that He might cleans them of their sins that they may be as white as snow.

Matthew 23:37

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.”

The reason why Jesus did not choose the inhabitants of Jerusalem in general is simply because they were unwilling to be chosen. Hence salvation is based on men’s willingness to chose whether they wish to meet the conditions to be saved.

Based on these passages, conditional predestination scholars²⁹⁸ hold that God does not choose men unconditionally and then compel men to accept His choice. He wants them all saved and invites them to accept His will, but He allows them to choose how they will respond to His invitation.

3.3.2.1.5. Each person has a role to determine his/her own salvation

1 Peter 1:22

“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.”

The subject to the verb ‘purify’ in this context is not God but the saints. Suggest that the saints took responsibility to purify themselves by obeying the truth. Hence as far as sanctification is concerned, each person has a role to play.

2 Corinthians 8:5

“And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.”

²⁹⁸ Jacob Arminius. James Nichols and W.R. Bagnall, (eds). *The Works of James Arminius, D. D., Formerly Professor of Divinity in the University of Leyden*. Buffalo, NY: Derby, Miller, and Orton. 1853: 1:367

The fact that the Corinthians gave themselves first to the Lord, suggest that men do play a role in becoming part of God's chosen family.

Philippians 2:12

“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”

Paul asked the Philippians to take responsibility to work out their salvation. This suggests that men do play a role in determining their own salvation.

1 Timothy 4:16

“Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”

In order to be able to save others, Timothy was given the responsibility to watch his life and doctrine closely. This suggests that the salvation of others also depends on the conduct of those who have already been saved. Hence men do have a role in determining his/her own salvation or the salvation of others.

2 Corinthians 5:20

“We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.”

The charge to be ‘reconciled to God’ is given to the Corinthians. This suggests that they must play a role in the process. Hence men do have a role to determine their own salvation.

Based on these Scriptures, conditional predestination scholars²⁹⁹ do not believe that man is totally passive in salvation. They do not also believe that nothing in man is a condition that influences whether or not God chooses to save him. To them, these passages clearly show that man does have the power to choose and that what we do will determine whether or not God chooses to give us eternal life.

²⁹⁹Ibid., 367.

Irrespective of this wealth of evidence for predestination both from the OT and NT, it suffices to admit at this juncture that predestination is a paradoxical theological concept that cannot be fully understood for it is an act that resides in the mind of a infinite being like God which makes it difficult for finite beings like us to fully comprehend. There are some problematic texts in the bible that makes the process of understanding predestination even more complex. We now move on to closely examine some of these problematic texts on predestination in scriptures as a necessary step towards fully understanding the bible's teaching on the subject.

CHAPTER 4

EXEGESIS OF PROBLEMATIC PASSAGES

Introduction

Even though there is a plethora of biblical evidence on predestination in the Old and New Testament, the major bone of contention that mountains against an accurate understanding of predestination in the CBC has been due to some controversial texts that apparently argue in different directions. This chapter identifies some of these passages and attempt an exegetical study of them before the research process proceeds to deconstruct paradigms for the CBC in chapter five and their impact in chapter six. The necessity for biblical exegesis in an evangelical systematic theological project like this cannot be overemphasised. Smith seriously advises that a theological project that seeks to develop helpful biblical worldviews must strive to build on exegesis.³⁰⁰ He describes exegesis as “the bedrock of theology.”³⁰¹

Thus doing evangelical theology must come as the result of well developed exegetical skills and this is seriously enhanced by the study of the biblical languages. According to Schreiner, biblical exegesis is “the method by which we ascertain what an author meant when he or she wrote a particular piece of literature.”³⁰² The authorial intent of a given text is vital in determining its meaning³⁰³ as that intent is expressed in the words of the text which an exegetical and theological study seeks to unravel. This study method is therefore the most accurate methodology in the science of biblical and

³⁰⁰ Kevin Gary Smith. *Academic Writing and Theological research: A Guide for Students*. Johannesburg: South Africa, South African Theological Seminary Press, 2008: 193.

³⁰¹Ibid., 186.

³⁰²Thomas Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*. Grand Rapid, Michigan: Baker Book House. 1990: 20.

³⁰³For more on the relevance of biblical exegesis in accordance with the authorial intent, please see the following literatures: E.D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation*. New Heaven: Yale Press. 1967; P.D. Juhl, *Interpretation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1980; J.K. Vanhoozer, “A lamp in the Labyrinth: The Hermeneutics of Aesthetic Theology,” *Trinity Journal* 88. 1987: 25-55.

theological studies that aids the student to discover the meaning that is intended by the human authors of Scriptures and the theological principles/implications for modern readers.

Thus in this project, the researcher sides with Schreiner to “reject any theory that says that the meaning of the author is unattainable or that the reader imposes one’s own meaning unto it.”³⁰⁴ However, exegesis is practically impossible without some preconceived ideas of some sort about the text in question because we are all shaped by our world views. Hence in this exegetical exercise, the researcher’s helpful and valuable presuppositions³⁰⁵ have been employed.³⁰⁶

There are many problematic texts on predestination in the bible but this project is limited to dealing with two key texts namely; Romans 9:18-23 and 2 Peter 3:1-10. The reason for this selection is because, both texts seem to be on opposite sides on the same subject of predestination. Romans 9:18-23 projects God as the subject in election and reprobation and seems to be justifying God’s actions. 2 Peter 3:1-10 on the other hand seems to be saying that God does not wish for any to be reprobated but for all to be saved. The point therefore in this chapter is to do a careful exegetical and theological study of these two texts which houses the controversial doctrine of predestination as a conscious endeavour to deconstruct paradigms which CBC leaders can use as tools in the process of delineating and defending their own tenets on soteriology in the proposed theological treatise.

³⁰⁴Ibid., 55.

³⁰⁵Such as the following; first, Paul had salvation in mind when he was writing this text. Second, it is one of the strongest passages in scriptures that fairly treats the subject of election and reprobation in the same contexts. And third, understanding this text is crucial to understanding divine predestination.

³⁰⁶The following authors agree that exegesis without presupposition is impossible: G. N. Stanton, “Presuppositions in New Testament Criticism,” in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*, ed. I. H. Marshall. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1977: 60-71; R. Bultmann, “Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?” in *Existence and Faith*. London: Hodder & Stoughton. 1960: 289-296.

4.1. Exegesis of Romans 9:18-23

The book of Romans is one of the key Pauline epistles that have much to say on matters pertaining to faith and practice. NT scholars like John MacArthur has acknowledged the theological importance of this epistle. Thus he states that the epistle is primarily a “work of theological teaching that covers many themes and key doctrines of the bible.”³⁰⁷ It is thus not surprising to see the doctrine of predestination as an element of this book’s teachings. To deconstruct biblical and theological paradigms that throw some light on the mainline traditions discussed in chapter one, this section seeks to do an exegetical and theological study of Romans 9:18-23.

Normally, before a modern reader plunges into an exegetical study of any given text in the bible, it is helpful to read the historical and cultural background of that text. As Schreiner states:

The more one knows about the culture, history and literature of NT times, the greater will be the ability to put oneself into the shoes of the original readers, which is always a benefit to interpretation. After all, Paul was not writing to our own 20th-century culture but to a culture that existed nearly 2000 years ago.³⁰⁸

Helpful as it is in enabling the reader to feel the full weight of the passage, the broad understanding of the Greco-Roman world and the background from which the epistle to the Romans was written has rather been included in appendix 1 and not in this chapter. This is in a bid to maintain the flow of the project without having to divert to too much details.³⁰⁹ Thus this chapter rather begins the exegetical process by engaging directly into

³⁰⁷John MacArthur, *The Bible Hand Book: A Book-by Book Explanation of God’s Word*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publications, 2003: 265.

³⁰⁸Thomas Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*. Grand Rapid, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1990: 62.

³⁰⁹For a general sweep of NT history and background, the reader is referred to the following literatures: E. Ferguson, *Background of Early Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1987; J.E. Stambaugh and D.L. Balch, *The New Testament in its Social Environment*. Philadelphia: Westminster. 1986; F.F. Bruce,

the crux of the matter which begins with the immediate context of Romans 9:18-23 before moving to its meaning proper.

4.1.1. The immediate context of Romans 9:18-23

According to Duval and Hays³¹⁰, the immediate context is the closest section to the passage, since it describes what happened or is happening before the main text. Hence, gaining acquaintance with the immediate context will be a healthy prerequisite to delving into the main text. To be very precise, the immediate context of Romans 9:18-23 comprises of Romans 9:1-18 and then verses 24-26. For easy understanding, this section has been divided into sub-units according to Paul's flow of thought

The first unit here is Romans 9:1-5. It talks of how Israel is separated from Christ. The next is Romans 9:6-13 which talks about God's promise to Israel. So what should naturally follow should be Romans 9:14-23 which covers a discussion on God's sovereign righteousness. But because of the scope of this study, the researcher deems it fit to break at verse 18 as the end of the immediate context because, Romans 9:14-18 actually focuses on God's sovereign rightfulness while Romans 18-23 continues with the idea that as a sovereign being, God is righteous in His dealings with men. And then the study of the immediate context will end with Romans 9:24-26.

4.1.1.1. Romans 9:1-5

New Testament History. Garden City, New York: Doubleday. 1969; B. Reicke, *The New Testament Era: The World of the Bible from 500 B.C to A.D 100*. Philadelphia: Fortress. 1968; E. Lohse, *The New Testament Environment*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1976; C.K. Barrett, *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents*, rev. and expanded ed. San Francisco: Harper & Row. 1989; H.C. Kee, *The Origin of Christianity: Sources and Documents*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall. 1973.

³¹⁰Scott J Duval and Daniel J. Hays. *Grasping God's Word*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan, 2001: 119.

In chapter 8, Paul focuses on the new life of Christians, through the help of the Spirit. This is a further development of the theme he has been preoccupied with from Romans 5:1-11. A theme based on the question of salvation and justification. In this section, he now turns to another part of the argument and takes up a specific problem that his gospel of uprightness through faith in Christ is raised: the relationship of Israel to the mode of justification or salvation.³¹¹

This Pauline movement from chapter 8 to 9 signals a very abrupt transition. No doubt Moo comments, “No conjunction or participle connects the two chapters, and the tone shifts dramatically from celebration (8:31-39) to lamentation (9:1-3)”³¹² (Moo 1996,555). Dunn further strengthens the point by pointing out the fact that, the absence of a possible connection between the phrases, “I speak the truth in Christ”, and “I do not lie” only suggests that a pause was intended between Romans 8:39 and 9:1 and the implication of this according to Dunn is that, Paul wanted that these words should be read slowly, with solemn emphasis.³¹³

Here, Paul simply expresses his sincerity as he adds conviction to his assertions. Similar to other laments over Israel’s sin the OT Prophets; Paul laments greatly for his people and his lament generally gives way to the expression of hope in the future³¹⁴ (Moo 1996, 557). Paul now proceeds to give the reason for his sorrow against Israel which Bruce wittily summarize by explaining that, they are considered as the sons of God, they are privileged to experience God’s shekinah glory, they have the law and the promises and

³¹¹ J.A Fitzmyer. *A New Testament With Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1993: 393.

³¹²Douglas J Moo. *The Epistle To The Romans*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996: 555.

³¹³Dunn, D.G. 1988. *Romans 9-16: Word Biblical Commentary*. Dallas, word, 1988: 522-523.

³¹⁴Douglas J Moo. *The Epistle To The Romans*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996: 557.

to them belongs the patriarchs who come from their own very race according to the flesh and through that patriarchal lineage, they are privileged to have Christ, whose roots can be directly from the line of David.³¹⁵

When Paul thinks of all these privilege that are true of Israel and looks at their present state, he really weeps. By pointing out the benefit of Israel in these verses, Paul according to Montgomery is simply passing out the message that, advantage alone does not save³¹⁶

4.1.1.2. Romans 9:6-13

At this point, Paul senses that his argument in 1-5 seem to be raising some objective question in the minds of his reader. This objection, Fitzmyer pointed out thus;

If God has indeed endowed Israel with such prerogatives, does not Israel's failure to react to the gospel and to the new message about salvation and justification by faith really mean that God's purpose too has failed? Have not God's promises to Israel ended in nothing as far as the Jews are concerned?³¹⁷

Hence, in a way of answering this objection, Paul strongly defends the idea that, God's word has not failed. He does so by distinguishing between the broader ethnic Israel and the narrower ethnic Israel. This distinction is justified in two parallel arguments; first from verse 7-9 and then from verse 10-13.³¹⁸ In these two parallel arguments, Paul quotes the OT twice to contrast two brothers. In the first argument, he pointed out God's choice of Isaac and not Ishmael and in the second, he pointed out God's choice of Jacob and Esau.

³¹⁵ Bruce, FF. 1994. *New Testament Commentaries*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Intersity Press, 1994: 175.

³¹⁶James Boice Montgomery . *Romans: God and History. Vol 3 Romans 9-11*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Intersity Press, 1993: 1029.

³¹⁷J.A Fitzmyer. *A New Testament With Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1993: 558.

³¹⁸ Douglas J Moo. *The Epistle To The Romans*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996: 571.

This is simply to explain that, the reason why some were included as the people of God and others were not was mainly on the basis of God's good will and not on any physical or human reasons.³¹⁹ Erdmann also hold this same view as he states; 'This shows [therefore] that the right to be the children of God and heirs of his promises does not depend upon the mere accident of birth, but upon the action of the divine will in accordance with the divine word.'³²⁰

All of these only go to explain the point that, Paul's purpose was to simply pass out the idea that belonging in the family as a new covenant people of God is based on God's choice and not by birthright. Thus, it should not be a surprise and certainly no threat to the integrity of God's word, if many Jews have failed to believe in Christ today.

4.1.1.3. Romans 9:14-18

As Paul progresses with his argument, he realizes that his audience is becoming too uncomfortable with many question in their mind as a result of his teaching, for this reason, he takes a detour from the main road of his argument because he knows that his insistence on God's initiative in determining who should be saved and who rejected will meet with question and objections. Appropriately, Paul reverts to a diatribe style, with its question – and – answer format and reference to a dialogue partner.³²¹

Paul continues with a further proof of God's gracious mercy to Israel in salvation history. He explained that Israel's present state is not because of what they did but simply because of how God wills it, thus it is not contrary to his plans as they may think. He went further to explain how God's mercy really manifests by using the case of Moses and

³¹⁹Ibid.

³²⁰Charles Erdamns. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. Philadelphia, the Westminster Press. 1967: 115.

³²¹Douglas J Moo. *The Epistle To The Romans*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996: 571.

pharaoh as a case study, explaining how God raised pharaoh to demonstrate his power by hardening his heart. Reasoning with McGee on This Point, It's Important for the reader to understand that when the Scripture Says God Hardened Pharaoh's Heart, It Means, "God forced Pharaoh to Make the Decision That Was in His Heart. God [only] forced him to do the thing that he wanted to do. There Never Will Be a person In hell who did not chose to be there, my friend you are the one who make your decision"³²²

4.1.1.4. Romans 9:24-26

This section is simply a continuation in support of all Paul has said in Romans 9:18-23 concerning God's sovereign control over the dealings of men. The verses further ground the Pauline idea that, God does not only use His sovereignty to include the Jews in his covenant family, but also the Gentiles. As a result, those (Gentiles) who were not usually known as the children of God will be known as His children.

Hence the apostle has not only succeeded to pass across the idea that divine bestowal of mercy is purely according to God's good will, he has also made it clear that God does not gauge out things by human standards. He does not try to argue the question of theodicy, he simply rejects it.

4.1.2. The Meaning of Romans 9:18-23

This section seeks to answer the question; what does the apostle Paul mean by what he has said in Romans 9:18-23.³²³ Given that the epistle to the Romans was written in Greek, an accurate interpretation of this text will require a proper consultation of the text in its original form. Hence, it is necessary to engage in a syntactical analysis of this

³²²Vernon J. McGee. *Romans 9-16*. Pasadena: California, Thru the Bible Books. 1980: 195

³²³To achieve this objective, the researcher has employed three research methodologies namely the following; first, lexical analysis. The grammar of Romans 9:18-23 has been carefully analyzed. Second, discourse analysis. The discourse features in Romans 9:18-23 and in its immediate and broader context have been carefully analyzed with the aim of showing the flow and coherence of its periscope. And third, redaction criticism. The theological message in Romans 9:18-23 has also been carefully explored

text from its original language which will help the reader to be familiarized with the tenses and modes of the various words and how they function to communicate what Paul intended. This will facilitate the interpretation process that will eventually result in an accurate explanation of the text as the writer intended, for a text that has not been properly translated cannot be properly explained.

4.1.2.1. The Greek Version of Romans 9:18-23³²⁴

¹⁸ ἄρα οὖν ὃν θέλει ἐλεεῖ, ὃν δὲ θέλει σκληρύνει. ¹⁹ Ἐρεῖς μοι οὖν, τί [οὖν] ἔτι μέμφεται; τῷ γὰρ βουλήματι αὐτοῦ τίς ἀνέστηκεν; ²⁰ ἄνθρωπε, μενοῦνγε σὺ τίς εἶ ὁ ἀνταποκρινόμενος τῷ θεῷ; μὴ ἐρεῖ τὸ πλάσμα τῷ πλάσαντι, τί με ἐποίησας οὕτως; ²¹ ἢ οὐκ ἔχει ἐξουσίαν ὁ κεραμεὺς τοῦ πηλοῦ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ φυράματος ποιῆσαι ὃ μὲν εἰς τιμὴν σκεῦος, ὃ δὲ εἰς ἀτιμίαν; ²² εἰ δὲ θέλων ὁ θεὸς ἐνδείξασθαι τὴν ὀργὴν καὶ γνωρίσαι τὸ δυνατόν αὐτοῦ ἤνεγκεν ἐν πολλῇ μακροθυμίᾳ σκεύη ὀργῆς κατηρτισμέναι εἰς ἀπώλειαν, ²³ καὶ ἵνα γνωρίσῃ τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ σκεύη ἐλέους, ἃ προητοίμασεν εἰς δόξαν,

4.1.2.2. The English Version of Romans 9:18-23

“So then He has mercy on whom he desires, and He hardens whom He desires. 19. You will say to me then why does he still find fault? For who resist his will? 20. On the contrary, who are you, o man, who answers back to God? The thing moulded will not say to the moulder, “why did you make me like this” will it? 21. or does not the potter has the right over the clay, to make from the same lump one

³²⁴In this chapter, several resources have been consulted on Greek syntax and grammar. The reader is hereby referred to the following for reference and further research: S. McKnight. “New Testament Greek Grammatical Analysis.” In *Introducing New Testament Interpretation*. ed. S. McKnight. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989; D.A. Carson. *Exegetical Fallacies*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984; J.A. Hewett. *New Testament Greek: A Beginning-Intermediate Grammar*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1986; J.A. Brooks and J.R. Winbery. *Syntax of New Testament Greek*. Lanham, Md.: University Press, 1979; H.E Dana and J.R. Mantey. *A Manual Grammar of the New Testament*. New York: Macmillan, 1979; J.H. Greenlee. *A Concise Exegetical Grammar of the New Testament*. 3rd Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963; M. Zerwick. *Biblical Greek Illustrated by Examples*. Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1963; A.T. Robertson and W.H. Davis. *A New Short Grammar of the Greek New Testament*. 10th ed. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1933; C.F.D. Moule. *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963; E.D Burton. *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1900; F. Blass and A. Debrunner. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literatures*. Trans. And ed. R. W. Funk. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961; J. H. Moulton, W.F Howard, and N. Turner. *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*. 4 vols. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976; A. T. Robertson. *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*. 4th ed. Nashville: Broadman, 1934; M.J. Harris. “Prepositions and Theology in Greek New Testament.” In *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology*. ed. C. Brown. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.

vessel for honourable use and another for common use? 22. What if God, although willing to demonstrate his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 23. And he did so to make know the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he prepared before hand for glory.”

4.1.2.3. Exegesis and Exposition of Romans 9:18-23³²⁵

Romans 9:18 ἄρα οὖν ὃν θέλει ἐλεεῖ, ὃν δὲ θέλει σκληρύνει. “So then He has mercy on whom he desires, and He hardens whom He desires.”

Having pointed out how God dealt with Pharaoh and the purpose of His actions in verse 17, the apostle proceeds in verse 18³²⁶ to conclude that God is sovereign over all men as his creation, and He can deal with each as He pleases.³²⁷ The illustration about Moses in verse 17 only echoes in this next unit that, God is a being who freely bestows mercy on whomever He desires. His word to pharaoh indicates that he can harden the heart of whomever he wishes so as to accomplish his purpose. Just as in Pharaoh’s case, the reason was so that he might display his wondrous power to the world.³²⁸

³²⁵The views of the following commentaries have been considered and should thus serve as a reference for further reading to the reader: Paul J. Achtemeier. *Romans*. IBC. Atlanta: John Knox, 1985; Brendan SJ Byrne. *Romans*. SP. Collegeville, inn.: Liturgical Press, 1996; C.E.B. Crainfield. *The Epistle to the Romans*. ICC. Vol 2. Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1979; James D.G. Dunn. *Romans*. WBC 2 vols. Dallas: Word Books, 1988; Joseph A. SJ. Fitzmyer. *Romans*. AB. New York: Doubleday, 1993; Ernst Kasemann. *Commentary on Romans*. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (ed). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980; Douglas J. Moo. *The Epistle to the Romans*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996; Charles H. Talbert. *Romans*. Smith and Helwys Bible Commentary. Macon, Ga.: Smith and Helwys, 2002; NT Wright. “The Letter to the Romans” NIB. 10:393-770. Nashville: Abington, 2002; Charles Hodge. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994; John Murray. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997; Leon Morris. *The Epistle to the Romans: The Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988; C.E.B. Crainfield. *Romans 9-16*. International critical Commentary. Grand Rapids: Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004; C.E.B. Crainfield. *Romans A Shorter Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985; Martin Luther. *Commentary on Romans*. J. Theodore Mueller (trns). Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing Company, 1954;

³²⁶ ἄρα at the beginning of the verse functions as an inferential participle and it means therefore, consequently, so, thus. This is indicative of the fact that, this text is an inference to the premises Paul has built in the preceding text.

³²⁷J.A Fitzmyer. *A New Testament With Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1993: 568.

³²⁸Should the reader need to read more on how God is free to harden whomever he wills, the following work is highly recommended. John Piper. *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans: 1-23*. Grand Rapids, Baker. 1993:171.

Understanding the meaning of the verb σκληρύνει³²⁹ is indispensable at this point. The concept of hardening in context has been the reason for heated debates over the years. Some scholars like Kaesemann³³⁰ have argued that, hardening of hearts here according to Paul refers to eternal reprobation while others like Munck³³¹ have argued from this text that “it is exegetically unjust and theologically blasphemous to say that Paul has regard for the eternal destiny of individuals.” Hence, we need to find out what Paul really means by this phrase in a bid to solve this problem.

According to Moo, the hardening here refers to an action that renders a person insensitive to God and his word, and this only leads to eternal damnation. If it is clear from Paul that God bestows his mercy on individuals on his own initiative, then Moo believes it should also follow that, the same will be true of God’s hardening³³² i.e as He has mercy on whomever He wishes, so He also hardens whoever He wishes.

Hence, it can be said here that the hardening of hearts by God is a “protological way of expressing divine reaction to persistent human obstinacy against him...not from God but from a creature that rejects divine invitation.”³³³ Also, by holding on to the fact that God ‘hardens whom he desires,’ Geoffrey pointed out that Paul is affirming the sovereignty of reprobation as of election ... [because] if he presents God as sovereignly

³²⁹Present Active Indicative form from σκληρυνω meaning to harden.

³³⁰ Kasemann, E. *Commentary on the Romans*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1980: 268

³³¹ Munck, J. 1967. *Christ and Israel: An Interpretation of Romans 9-11*. Philadelphia. 1967:45.

³³²Douglas J Moo. *The Epistle To The Romans*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996: 597.

³³³J.A Fitzmyer. *A New Testament With Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1993: 568.

loving Jacob, He presents him equally as sovereignly hating Esau; if he declares that He has mercy on whom He wills, He equally declare that He hardens whom He wills.³³⁴

So it can be seen that, there is a good reason to side with scholars like kaesemann to argue that the use of hardening in this verse refers to eternal reprobation. So when Paul says God hardens the heart of whomever he pleases, he implies that, He hardens the heart of whomever he wishes as was the case with Pharaoh.³³⁵

Romans 9:19 Ἐρεῖς μοι οὖν, τί [οὖν] ἔτι μέμφεται; τῷ γὰρ βουλήματι αὐτοῦ τίς ἀνθέστηκεν; “You will say to me then why does he still find fault? For who resist his will?”

What actually spurred the writing of this verse and the subsequent ones is that, Paul anticipated an objection to what he has just said in the preceding verse. Piper coins this objection in the following words, “if as you say a person’s hardness is owing ultimately to God’s will and not to a man’s willing or running, then it is unrighteous of God to condemn man.”³³⁶ Or better still as Schreiner puts it this way; “If God shows mercy and hardness whomever he wills regardless of human effort or choice, then how can He possibly sign blame to human being for their choice and actions?”³³⁷ μέμφεται in context functions as a deponent verb functioning in the Present indicative mood from μεμφομαι. meaning to find fault or blame.

It is worth pointing out at this juncture that this objection is not simply a humble one that can be translated, “how can these things be”, but rather an indignant declaration

³³⁴ Geoffrey B. Wilson. *Romans: A Digest Reform Comment*. Carlisle: Pennsylvania, the Westminster Press. 1980: 165.

³³⁵For further research/studies on Romans 9:18, the reader is referred to the following book; Jonathan Edward. “Seventeen Occasion Sermon :Sermon IV” in *the work of Jonathan Edwards*. Edinburgh and Carlisle , PA: the banner of truth trust. 1976: 850. In this book, Jonathan Edward explains what God’s sovereignty in the salvation of men implies as exposed in this verse. And even the reason why God actually exercises his sovereignty in the saving affairs of men.

³³⁶John Piper. *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans: 1-23*. Grand Rapids, Baker. 1993:186.

³³⁷Thomas Schreiner. *Romans: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House, 2003: 514.

that these things ought not to be.”³³⁸ τῷ γὰρ βουλή ματι αὐτοῦ τίς ἀνθέστηκεν; (*For who resists his will?*) “for” (γὰρ) in this verse functions as a ground³³⁹ to the question, “why does he still find fault?” and this objection simply implies that, if God is sovereign in His choice and use of his power, who then has ever thwarted His purpose? Or who can oppose his judgment?³⁴⁰ ἀνθέστηκεν (Perfect Active Indicative mood from ἀνθίστημι) means to resist or stand up against. This objection implies that, it is only when people will be responsible for their actions that one will rightly argue that God’s judgment is really just, otherwise, it is unjust.

Romans 9:20-23 ²⁰ ὦ ἄνθρωπε, μενοῦνγε σὺ τίς εἶ ὁ ἀνταποκρινόμενος τῷ θεῷ; μὴ ἐρεῖ τὸ πλάσμα τῷ πλάσαντι, Τί με ἐποίησας οὕτως; ²¹ ἢ οὐκ ἔχει ἐξουσίαν ὁ κεραμεύς τοῦ πηλοῦ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ φυράματος ποιῆσαι ὃ μὲν εἰς τιμὴν σκεῦος, ὃ δὲ εἰς ἀτιμίαν; ²² εἰ δὲ θέλων ὁ θεὸς ἐνδείξασθαι τὴν ὀργὴν καὶ γνωρίσαι τὸ δυνατὸν αὐτοῦ ἤνεγκεν ἐν πολλῇ μακροθυμίᾳ σκεύη ὀργῆς κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν, ²³ καὶ ἵνα γνωρίσῃ τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ σκεύη ἐλέους, ἃ προητοίμασεν εἰς δόξαν,

“On the contrary, who are you, o man, who answers back to God? The thing moulded will not say to the moulder, “why did you make me like this” will it? 21. or does not the potter has the right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honourable use and another for common use? What if God, although willing to demonstrate his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?”

Having imagined that his teachings will obviously provoke the above objection (which is based mainly on the fact that God is unjust), Paul now sets out to portray God’s justice in his dealing with humans by stressing on his sovereignty in hardening people’s hearts. All this is in an attempt to dismiss the above objection. Hence, from verse 20-23, Paul put forward a strong argument to defend the love and justice of God as he relates with men.

³³⁸John Piper. *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans: 1-23*. Grand Rapids, Baker. 1993:186

³³⁹A ground in a sentence is a word that points the reader to an obvious fact on which the writer premises on to make a point. The word “for” is a ground for the phrase “who resists his will” on which Paul premises on to say if this is true, then the obvious question would be “why does he still find fault?”

³⁴⁰J.A Fitzmyer. *A New Testament With Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1993: 568.

Romans 9:20 ὧ ἄνθρωπε, μενοῦνγε σὺ τίς εἶ ὁ ἀνταποκρινόμενος τῷ θεῷ; μὴ ἔρεῖ τὸ πλάσμα τῷ πλάσαντι, Τί με ἐποίησας οὕτως;

“On the contrary, who are you, o man, who answers back to God? The thing moulded will not say to the moulder, “why did you make me like this” will it?”

According to Piper, Paul’s emphatic “o man” (ὧ ἄνθρωπε) at the beginning of 2:20a and his emphatic “to God” (τῷ θεῷ;) at the end of 9:20a only assigns to the objector his proper place.³⁴¹ Or better still as Moo puts it; it implies that “Paul chooses the term to accentuate the subordinate creature status of the objector.”³⁴² In other words, we as humans have no right to accuse God of unrighteousness or injustice. The participle μενοῦνγε (meaning “on the contrary”) suggests a contrast to what has been going on in verse 19. ἀνταποκρινόμενος is a deponent verb which functions here as a present, middle participle from the verb ανταποκρίνομαι meaning “to answer back,” “to talk back or to reply.”

The noun; πλάσμα (nominative singular) means “that which is moulded or formed.” πλάσαντι is a verb in the aorist active participle from πλασσω meaning to form or to mould. ἐποίησας is in the aorist active indicative from ποιέω meaning to make or to fashion. This does not imply that humans are not allowed to ask helpful questions to God. Paul does not actually object “when a person seeks to understand as much of God’s dealings as possible. But he objects tenuously when a person criticizes and rejects the truth which he discovers.”³⁴³

The rhetorical question in 9:20b is not without a purpose, it is aimed by Paul to give reason why a person like Pharaoh or even the objector in verse 19 should not question God’s ways. Paul explains that, man is the creation while God is the creator.

³⁴¹John Piper. *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans: 1-23*. Grand Rapids, Baker. 1993:186.

³⁴²Douglas J Moo. *The Epistle To The Romans*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996: 600.

³⁴³Ibid. 600.

Thus, it will be totally out of place for man to advise God on how He ought to act. This position is strengthened by the OT quote from Isaiah 29:16, which reminds the objector that man is subordinate to God. Hence, we must establish from this verse that “Paul does not speak of the right of God over his creation as creatures, but as sinful creatures.”³⁴⁴

One can be tempted to think that Paul did not or has not answered the objection posed in verse 19 but he has because, according to Sanday and Headlam, Paul has provided an answer that stresses on human weakness as opposed to God’s sovereignty. The Pauline answer, to this objection according to these scholars is that, as mere creatures, we are too inferior in every aspect to question God’s authority over his created order because he freely exercises his right as the creator and he is just in that. If we understand this, then according to them, there will be no such objection.³⁴⁵ And this is the same idea Paul sets out to pass across in this verse.

Romans 9:21 ²¹ ἢ οὐκ ἔχει ἐξουσίαν ὁ κεραμεὺς τοῦ πηλοῦ ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ φυρᾶματος ποιῆσαι ὃ μὲν εἰς τιμὴνσκεῖνος, ὃ δὲ εἰς ἀτιμίαν;

“or does not the potter has the right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honourable use and another for common use?”

The word “or” (ἢ) at the beginning of this verse suggests an alternative to what Paul has said in verse 20. In the previous verse, he used the example of moulder and the moulded substance to justify his argument that man has no right to question God on how to carry out His affairs in His world. To maintain this same point, he comes up with an alternative illustration about the potter and his clay objects. The fact that this verse is also in a

³⁴⁴ Charles Hodge. *A Commentary on Romans*. Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, Illinois: Banner of Truth Trust, 1972: 141.

³⁴⁵W Sanday and A.C. Headlam. 1902. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary to the Book of Romans*. Intentional Critical Commentary. Edingburg: Clark, 1988: 556.

rhetorical form suggests that it is “aimed at introducing something obvious enough to render the point of 9:20b even more certain.”³⁴⁶

The noun κεραμεὺς³⁴⁷ means potter and the noun πηλου³⁴⁸ means clay. In this verse, this word is interpreted along with the word ἐξουσίαν meaning authority. The idea therefore is authority over the clay. φουράματος meaning lump. ποιῆσαι functions in context as an aorist active infinitive verb form from ποιεῖω meaning I do or I make. The verb explains how the potter has authority over the clay.σκεῦος means vessel. ἀτιμίαν from ατιμῶα meaning dishonour. So the whole phrase; σκεῦος, ὃ δὲ εἰς ἀτιμίαν means one vessel designed for noble and the other for ignoble use³⁴⁹.

Hence, to the researcher, an accurate interpretation of this verse will be that, Paul continues his argument by pointing out God’s sovereignty to do to all humans as He pleases. He uses a potter-clay relationship to explain God’s sovereignty over all human beings. Just as the potter has the right to mould from the same lump a vessel that is honourable and another for dishonour and will not be blamed for it, so too does God in His powers as the creator, has the right to create some people for His noble purpose³⁵⁰ and others for destruction. And He should also not be blamed for it.³⁵¹ By this interpretation, the researcher sides with Schreiner to disagree with scholars like Dodd³⁵² who deny this view, “[Dodd]” Schreiner writes “fails to understand that, the metaphor is not transferable

³⁴⁶ John Piper. *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans: 1-23*. Grand Rapids, Baker. 1993:186.

³⁴⁷Nominative, singular, masculine.

³⁴⁸Genitive, singular, masculine from πηλῶ.

³⁴⁹Noble and ignoble use in this verse simply refers to election and reprobation where God graciously predestines some for glory as the elected and allows others to be damned as a result of their sins.

³⁵⁰i.e to share in his glory as the elect.

³⁵¹To know more on this, please read all of John Piper. *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans: 1-23*. Grand Rapids, Baker. 1993; and Douglas J Moo. *The Epistle To The Romans*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996.

³⁵²CH Dodd. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: Moffat New Testament Commentary*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1932: 159.

in every respect and that Paul is what we would call today a compatibilist. That is, human responsibility and freedom are subdued under the umbrella of divine sovereignty.”³⁵³

Romans 9:22-23. εἰ δὲ θέλων ὁ θεὸς ἐνδείξασθαι τὴν ὀργὴν καὶ γνωρίσαι τὸ δυνατὸν αὐτοῦ ἤνεγκεν ἐν πολλῇ μακροθυμίᾳ σκεύη ὀργῆς κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν, ²³ καὶ ἵνα γνωρίσῃ τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ σκεύη ἐλεῶς, ἃ προητοίμασεν εἰς δόξαν,

“What if God, although willing to demonstrate his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 23. And he did so to make know the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he prepared before hand for glory.”

These verses mark the end of Paul’s argument for God’s justice in his dealings with man.

θέλων is a Present Active Participle from θελω meaning “to desire.” As a participle, it describes an ongoing action. ἐνδείξασθαι is a deponent verb and it is in the aorist middle infinitive from ενδεικνυμι meaning to show, to demonstrate, to show some thing in some one. It functions as a complementary infinitive to the main verb γνωρίσαι which is in the aorist active infinitive mood from γνωρίζω meaning to make known. ἤνεγκεν is in the Aorist active indicative mood from φερω meaning to carry, to bear.

μακροθυμίᾳ means longsuffering. κατηρτισμένα is a Participle in the present perfect tense from καταρτιζω meaning to make ready or prepare. ἀπώλειαν is in the accusative case from ἀπολεια meaning ruin, destruction. γνωρίσῃ functions as a verb in the subjunctive mood. It is the aorist active of γινωσκω meaning to make known. ἵνα

³⁵³Thomas Schreiner. *Romans: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House, 2003: 515. Other scholars who agree with the way the researcher has interpreted this verse include; E. Kasemann. *Commentary on the Romans*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980: 255; John Murray. *The Epistle To the Romans: The English Text With Introduction, Exposition and Notes*. Vol. 2: Chapters 9-16. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965: 31-32;. However, apart from Dodd as already cited above, other scholars who would differ with this interpretation include the following; CEB Crainfield. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans: Commentary of Romans IX-XVI and Essays*. Edinburgh: Clark, 1979:439; JA Fitzmyer. *A New Testament With Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1993: 569; DG Dunn. *Romans 9-16: Word Biblical Commentary*. Dallas, word, 1988: 557; W Sanday and A.C. Headlam. 1902. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary to the Book of Romans*. International Critical Commentary. Edingburg: Clark, 1988: 261; J Munck. *Christ and Israel: An Interpretation of Romans 9-11*. Philadelphia, 1967: 569.

in context expresses purpose (in order that, so that). δόξης is from δοξα which means honour, glory. ἑλέους is a masculine plural noun in the accusative mood from ελεος meaning mercy. προητοίμασεν is in the Aorist Active indicative from προετοιμάζω meaning to prepare before.

Looking at these concluding verses from a grammatical perspective, the main assertion here is that, God sustained and tolerated with much patience, vessels of wrath made for destruction. Note that, the word “vessels” (σκεύη) here is not in the singular but plural. Pointing to the fact that, even though the person mentioned thus far in the argument is Pharaoh, it is not only him that Paul is talking about. “Pharaoh instead serves as a type of all other vessels of wrath.”³⁵⁴ Note also that, verse 22 does not say the non-elect prepared themselves for destruction as argued by Stott³⁵⁵ or that, they are ripe for destruction as argued by scholars like Crainfield, Fitzmyer, Sanday and Headlam.³⁵⁶ But as Cosgrove rightly argued, this verse should be interpreted as a divine passive because it talks of a preparation by God for destruction and not a self-preparation.³⁵⁷ Pink even makes the point clearer when he stated;

[this verse] does not say the vessels of wrath fitted themselves, nor does it say they are fit for destruction; instead it declares, they are fitted to destruction and the context show plainly it is God who thus fits them objectively by his eternal decrees.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁴John Piper. *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans: 1-23*. Grand Rapids, Baker. 1993:200

³⁵⁵Stott, John. *God's Good News for the World*. Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity. Zondervan Publishing, 1994: 272.

³⁵⁶CEB Crainfield. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans: Commentary of Romans IX-XVI and Essays*. Edinburgh: Clark, 1979:439; JA Fitzmyer. *A New Testament With Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1993: 569; W Sanday and A.C. Headlam. 1902. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary to the Book of Romans*. International Critical Commentary. Edingburg: Clark, 1988: 261

³⁵⁷CH Cosgrove. Rhetorical Suspense in Romans 9-11: A Study of Polyvalence and Hermeneutical Election. In *Journal of Bible Literature*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, 1996: 120.

³⁵⁸Arthur Pink. *The Sovereignty of God*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992: 570. JA Fitzmyer. *A New Testament With Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1993: 569; DG Dunn. *Romans 9-16*:

It can be clearly seen that, Paul is continuing with the reason why God makes some as vessels of wrath. Again, His main reason for doing so according to this verse is so that, in the day of judgment, He might manifest his wrath on those whom he has prepared for his purpose. Why? So that His power might be made known. In verse 23, he goes further to point out the larger purpose why God displays his wrath. He explained that, the elect are no better than the reprobate and that the reason why they are excluded from God's impending wrath is not because of what they have done but simply because of God's love and mercy on them. This should of course result to praise as Schreiner rightly commented that, when the elect reflect on the fact that they deserve the same punishment as the reprobate, they will deeply appreciate God, thus glorifying Him.³⁵⁹ Moo even gives a further explanation to this verse that suggests a better ending when he stated;

The verses express a third and climatic purpose of God's patient endurance of the vessels of wrath. God has withheld the final judgment that could rightly fall on his rebellious creatures at any time not only because he wanted to display more graciously his wrath and power (v.22a) but also and especially because he wanted to make known his glorious riches to vessels on whom his mercy rests, vessels whom God has prepared before hand for glory.³⁶⁰

This in a way greatly summarizes what Paul intended to pass across to his audience in these verses. However, it is worthy of note that, there are still some problems with verses 22-23 that deserve some in-depth treatment. Piper has rightly pointed out and treated some of these issues. Some of them have to do with the logical relationship between the clauses in the two verses, the implication of God's patience with the vessel of

Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas, word, 1988: 570 in objection rather believes that, the use of the phrase; "vessels of mercy" (σκεύη ἐλέους,) in verse 23 is meant to simply parallel the vessels of wrath.

³⁵⁹Thomas Schreiner. *Romans: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House, 2003: 608.

³⁶⁰Douglas J Moo. *The Epistle To The Romans*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996: 608.

wrath, what Paul really means when he talks of those who are fitted for destruction, and how God is justified in His ultimate purpose.³⁶¹

It has been seen from the interpretation of Romans 9:18-23 that this text can be conveniently divided into three main parts; Verse 18 as part one, verse 19 as the second part and verses 20-23 as the third. The first part begins with an inferential participle (ὃν πα) as a way of concluding Paul's preceding argument that God has mercy on whomever He pleases and hardens whomever he pleases. The second part raises some objective questions against Paul if he is drawing the right inference from his preceding argument such as, why then will God blame men for their sins if everything is determined by him? And if this is true, then God is unfair.

In the last part (verses 20-23) Paul defends God's justice in his dealings with men as a way of challenging every inferred idea against God's morality. Here, Paul uses the illustration of the potter and his clay to refute these unjust claims against God by advancing the argument that as the creator, God has the right to do with every man as he pleases. This marks the end of the text. Verse 24 continues with the same flow of thought by pointing to the fact that since God acts as He pleases, He does not only include the Jews in His covenant family but also the Gentiles. As a result, those (Gentiles) who were not usually known as the children of God will be known as His children.

³⁶¹To get full details on this, the reader is kindly referred to John Piper. *The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans: 1-23*. Grand Rapids, Baker. 1993:204-215.

4.2. Exegesis of 2 Peter 3:1-10³⁶²

4.2.1. Immediate context of 2 Peter 2:1-10

The immediate context of 2 Peter 3:1-10 would be the apostle's argument in chapter 2 which focuses on the imminent coming of false teachers and their heresies. And it is from this premise that he moves on to chapter 3 to call on his readers to take to holy living. The immediate context of 2 Peter 3:11-10 can be explained from the following sections:

4.2.1.1. 2 Peter 2:1-3

The apostle begins by identifying his problem which is namely that false teachers are introducing heresies of destruction (2:1) but after announcing their coming, he moves right ahead to announce their impending doom: "swift destruction" (2:1). One of the way to identify them from their teachings is to consider the fact that they deny "the master who brought them" (2:1) . Irrespective of their erroneous teachings and their impending doom, they have a way of persuading many people who passionately follow them and their teachings. Those who follow them also emulate their immoral behaviours despite the fact that they have been exploited by these false teachers (2:3) and the end result is that the gospel is criticized and slandered by those outside the faith (2:3). Thus posing a very sever problem.

³⁶²Just as the researcher has explained above (in the first exegetical study), this second exegetical study also begins with the immediate context of 2 Peter 3:1-10. The reader is referred to appendix II for more details on the broader context of the passage.

4.2.1.2. 2 Peter 2:4-10a

The apostle moves on to refute the false teachers introduced in 2:1-3. The point of his rebuttal focuses on their claim that there is no evidence that God intervenes to judge the world either in the past or present and therefore, there is no reason to think he will judge humanity in the future. In response to this, the apostle argued that God has acted in judgment in the past for instance the case with the sinful angels (v.4), the ancient world which was destroyed by flood (v.5) and the immoral cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (v.6).

To further strengthen his point, the apostle went further to argue how in some of these judgements, God delivered the righteous. For instance the case of Noah and his family (v.5) and the case of Lot (vv. 7-8). With these glaring evidence from the past, Peter moves on to draw his conclusion, stating that if God saved the righteous and destroyed the wicked in the past, then He will surely do likewise now. (v.9) In verse 10a, he identifies the wicked as the heretics whom God will destroy on the day of judgement.

4.2.1.3. 2 Peter 2:10b-16

In this section, Peter moves on with his argument by seriously denouncing these false teachers. In denouncing their sins, the apostle focuses on their arrogance, irrationality, dedication to wanton pleasure, enticement of others through sexual desires and their greed for money and material possessions of this world. He pointed out that they use their materialism and sexual desires to entice members of the church to following them and this only goes to liken them with Balaam who, who though he showed a sense of honesty in his determination not to curse Israel, laid out a means by which they could be tempted to indulge in sexual sin.

4.2.1.4. 2 Peter 2:17-22

In this section, the apostle continues by repeating the denunciation of the heretics. He again highlights their doom and warns the believers about their arrogance and their attempt to seduce the ones who have only recently become converts (vv. 17-18). One of the most enticing things that the heretics promise to offer to the people is freedom a phenomenon most needed by many. But this is ironical because these heretics themselves are enslaved by their own corruption (v. 19). Peter then warns his readers to be steadfast in their faith and not to yield to these teachings lest they become worse than when they first began (v. 20) for it is better never to have known the way than to know it and turn from it.

4.2.2. The meaning of 2 Peter 3:1-10

To determine the meaning of 2 Peter 3:1-10, it is important to first of all understand the text from its original Greek form before engaging into a concise exegetical exposition of the passage.³⁶³

4.2.2.1. The Greek version of 2 Peter 3:1-10

¹Ταύτην ἤδη, ἀγαπητοί, δευτέραν ὑμῖν γράφω ἐπιστολήν, ἐν αἷς διεγείρω ὑμῶν ἐν ὑπομνήσει τήν εἰλικρινῆ διάνοιαν, ²μνησθῆναι τῶν προειρημέτων ῥημάτων ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγίων προφητῶν καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀποστόλων ὑμῶν ἐντολῆς τοῦ κυρίου καὶ σωτῆρος: ³τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες, ὅτι ἐλεύσονται ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν [ἐν] ἐμπαιγμονῇ ἐμπαῖκται κατὰ τὰς ἰδίους ἐπιθυμίας αὐτῶν πορευόμενοι ⁴καὶ λέγοντες, Ποῦ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ; ἀφ' ἧς γὰρ οἱ πατέρες ἐκοιμήθησαν, πάντα οὕτως διαμένει ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κτίσεως. ⁵λανθάνει γὰρ αὐτοῦς τοῦτο θέλοντας, ὅτι οὐρανοὶ ἦσαν ἔκκαλοι καὶ γῆ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι' ὕδατος συνεστῶσα τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγῳ, ⁶δι' ὧν ὁ τότε κόσμος ὕδατι κατακλυσθεὶς ἀπώλετο: ⁷οἱ δὲ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ

³⁶³ In order to determine this meaning, the researcher has used the following research methodologies; Lexical analysis: the grammar of 2 Peter 3:10 has been carefully analyzed. Discourse analysis: the discourse features in 2 Peter 3:10 and in its immediate context have been analyzed with the aim of showing the flow and coherence of its periscope. Redaction criticism: the theological message in 2 Peter 3:10 has also been carefully explored.

τεθησαυρισμένοι εἰσὶν πυρί, τηρούμενοι εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως καὶ ἀπωλείας τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων. ⁸ Ἐν δὲ τοῦτο μὴ λανθανέτω ὑμεῖς, ἀγαπητοί, ὅτι μίᾱ ἡμέρᾱ παρὰ κυρίῳ ὡς χίλια ἔτη καὶ χίλια ἔτη ὡς ἡμέρα μία. ⁹ οὐ βραδύνει κύριος τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, ὡς τινες βραδύτητα ἠγοῦνται, ἀλλὰ μακροθυμεῖ εἰς ὑμᾶς, μὴ βουλόμενος τινὰς ἀπολέσθαι ἀλλὰ πάντας εἰς μετάνοιαν χωρῆσαι. ¹⁰ Ἡξει δὲ ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτης, ἐν ἣ οἱ οὐρανοὶ ῥοιζηδὸν παρελεύσονται, στοιχεῖα δὲ καυσούμενα λυθήσεται, καὶ γῆ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα εὐρεθήσεται.

4.2.2.2. The English Version of 2 Peter 3:1-10

“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in [both] which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance; 2. that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: 3. Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4. And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as [they were] from the beginning of the creation. 5. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water 6. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9. The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some men count slowness; but is patient towards you, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

4.2.2.3. Exegesis and Exposition of 2 Peter 3:1-10

To ensure a concise exegetical exposition of 2 Peter 3:1-10, the text has been divided into different sections namely; 3:1-2, 3:3-7 and 3:8-10. The following presents a detailed exposition of these various sections.

2 Peter 3:1-2³⁶⁴ *Ταύτην ἤδη, ἀγαπητοί, δευτέραν ὑμῖν γράφω ἐπιστολήν, ἐν αἷς διεγείρω ὑμῶν ἐν ὑπομνήσει τὴν εἰλικρινῆ διάνοιαν, μνησθῆναι τῶν*

³⁶⁴For reference and further studies, the reader is referred to the following literatures: Richard J. Bauckham. “Delay of the Parousia” *Tynbull* 31. 1980: 3-36; G.L. Green. “As For Prophecies, They Will

προειρημένων ῥημάτων ὑπὸ τῶν ἁγίων προφητῶν καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀποστόλων ὑμῶν ἐντολῆς τοῦ κυρίου καὶ σωτηῆρος:

“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in [both] which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance; 2. that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour”

Given the heresy of false teachers that is bringing the apostle’s teachings to question, Peter begins chapter 3 by calling on his readers to remember the things he has previously taught them and the prophetic and apostolic witness.

2 Peter 3:1 Ταύτην ἤδη, ἀγαπητοί, δευτέραν ὑμῖν γράφω ἐπιστολήν, ἐν αἷς διεγείρω ὑμῶν ἐν ὑπομνήσει τῆν εἰλικρινῆ διάνοιαν,

““This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in [both] which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance”

The apostle opens this chapter by addressing his readers as ἀγαπητοί³⁶⁵ meaning beloved. This signifies a sense of familiarity between the apostle and his audience. This address does not only underscore a strong sense of solidarity between the readers and the author, it also lends force to the apostle’s appeal for his audience to heed his teachings and not to the of heretics’ teachings which only leads to an immoral way of life.

Peter strengthens his appeal by reminding his reads that this is now the second letter he is writing to them. While scholarship on this epistle has mostly centred on its interconnectedness with 1 Peter,³⁶⁶ there has been a considerable interest among scholars in determining which letter the author refers to in this verse. Some have argued that it is 1

Come and End: 2 Peter, Paul and Plutarch on ‘Obsolence of Oracles’” *JSNT* 82. 2001: 107-22; Charles H Talbert. “II Peter and the Delay of Perousia,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 20. 1966: 137-45.

³⁶⁵ Vocative plural, masculine from ἀγαπητός

³⁶⁶Please see the following authors for more on the relationship between 1 and 2 Peter: G.H. Boobyer. “The Indebtedness of 2 Peter to 1 Peter.” Pp. 34-53 in *New Testament Essays: Studies in Memory of Thomas Walter Manson, 1893-1958*. Edited by A.J.B. Higgins. Manchester: University of Manchester Press. 1959; C. Biggs. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. Peter and St. Jude*. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T&T Clark. 1901: 323; M.J. Gilmore. *The Significance of Parallels between 2 Peter and Other Early Christian Literature*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature. 2002: 93.

Peter.³⁶⁷ But for others, it is Jude.³⁶⁸ To yet other scholars, it is neither 1 Peter nor Jude but a lost letter.³⁶⁹ However this can/has been explained, it is clear that the author of 2 Peter wants to point out the similarity between 1 and 2 Peter. His comment that this is the second letter does not only confirm the content of the first letter but also highlights the importance of the present teachings.

2 Peter 3:2 *μνησθῆναι τῶν προειρημένων ῥημάτων ὑπὸ τῶν ἁγίων προφητῶν καὶ τῆς τῶν ἀποστόλων ὑμῶν ἐντολῆς τοῦ κυρίου καὶ σωτῆρος:*

“that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour”

In this following verse, the apostle goes further to identify what he wants his readers to remember which is namely; the words of the prophets and the commands of the apostles, which is without doubt to live holy lives in the lights of the saviour’s second coming. There are different opinions as to who these prophets are. For instance, Sidebottom³⁷⁰ holds that the holy Prophets in this verse refers to prophets who predicted future events in the NT era and not OT prophets. While Bauckham³⁷¹ on the other hand maintains that the reference to prophets in this verse refers to prophecies³⁷² concerning the scoffers who mock at the delayed coming of God’s judgement.

Reasoning along with Bauckham, it seems fitting to maintain here that since the false teachers questioned the reality of God’s future judgement, Peter referred to OT prophets to remind his audience of the many prophetic oracles about God’s future

³⁶⁷The Following author argues that 1 Peter is the letter referred to by the author in 2 Pet. 3:1. Gene L. Green. *Jude and 2 Peter: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Publishing Group. 2008: 310.

³⁶⁸The Following authors argue that Jude is the letter referred to by the author in 2 Pet. 3:1: J.A.T. Robinson. *Reading the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Westminster. 1976: 195;

³⁶⁹The Following author argues that it is neither 1 Peter or Jude but a lost letter which is the letter referred to by the author in 2 Pet. 3:1: M. Green. *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Leicester, UK: inter-varsity/ Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1987: 134

³⁷⁰E.M. Sidebottom. *James, Jude and 2 Peter*. New Century Bible. London: Nelson. 1967:118.

³⁷¹R.J. Bauckham. *Jude, 2 Peter*. World Biblical Commentary. Waco: Word. 1983:287.

³⁷²Amos 9:10; Malachi 2:17

judgement. τῶν ἀποστόλων ὑμῶν “Your apostles” refers to those who have proclaimed the Christian message to them concerning the commandments of Christ about the impending judgement of God.

2 Peter 3:3-7³⁷³ ³τοῦ το πρώτον γινώσκοντες, ὅτι ἐλεύσονται ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν [ἐν] ἐμπαιγμονῇ ἐμπαίκτηι κατὰ τὰς ἰδίαις ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτῶν πορευόμενοι ⁴καὶ λέγοντες, Ποῦ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ; ἀφ' ἧς γὰρ οἱ πατέρες ἐκοιμήθησαν, πάντα οὕτως διαμένει ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κτίσεως. ⁵λανθάνει γὰρ αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεέλοντας, ὅτι οὐρανοὶ ἦσαν ἔκκαλαι καὶ γῆ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι' ὕδατος συνεστῶσα τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγῳ, ⁶δι' ὧν ὁ τότε κόσμος ὕδατι κατακλυσθεὶς ἀπώλετο: ⁷οἱ δὲ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ τεθησαυρισμένοι εἰσὶν πυρὶ, τηρούμενοι εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως καὶ ἀπωλείας τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων.

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4. And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as [they were] from the beginning of the creation. 5. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water 6. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

Having called on his readers to remember the things he had taught them as well as the words of the OT prophets and not living out the Lord's commandments which are being made known by the prophets, Peter proceeds to point some distinctive attributes of heretics, explaining that, they are controlled by mundane desires and they are those who will deny the reality of God's future judgement given that since the ancient times, things have remained the same. But in response to this heretical way of thinking, the apostle unequivocally stressed that God has previously judged the world and the only reason why things continue as they have been from the beginning is because God's word sustains

³⁷³ For reference and further study, the reader is referred to the following resources: Sam Meier. “2 Peter 3:3-7 – An Early Jewish and Christian Response to Eschatological Skepticism,” *BZ* 32. 1988: 255-257; Jerome H. Neyrey. “The Form and Background of the Polemic in 2 Peter,” *JBL*, 99. 1980: 407-31; Carsten P. Thiede. “A Pagan Reader of 2 Peter: Cosmic Configuration in 2 Peter 3 and the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix,” *JSNT* 26. 1986:79-96; Donald P. Senior, C.P and Daniel J. Harrington, S.J. “1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter” *Sacra Pagina Series*. 15, Collegeville: Minnesota. 2003: 281-292.

everything. But even though God sustained the ancient world, he destroyed it through the flood and in like manner he will destroy this present world by fire including the destruction of the ungodly.

2 Peter 3:3 τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες, ὅτι ἐλεύσονται ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν [ἐν] ἐμπαιγμονῇ ἐμπαῖ κται κατὰ τὰς ἰδίᾳς ἐπιθυμίας αὐτῶν πορευόμενοι

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts”

Since the apostle’s main concern is to refute the heretical teachings against God’s judgement by affirming the truth of God’s prophetic message and emphasize its importance to his readers, he continues with verse 3 by calling their attention to what they should first of all know τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες and that is the fact that ὅτι ἐλεύσονται ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν [ἐν] ἐμπαιγμονῇ ἐμπαῖ κται κατὰ τὰς ἰδίᾳς ἐπιθυμίας αὐτῶν πορευόμενοι in the last days, there shall be many scoffers who walk after their own selfish lusts. The apostle recognizes the presence of these scoffers as the sign that the last days have arrived. The heretics are labelled as [ἐν] ἐμπαιγμονῇ ἐμπαῖ κται “scoffers.” Scoffing is an act of dishonour in an attempt to bring shame upon a person. These heretics do not only mock or scoff at the saints because the second coming has delayed, they also laugh at the very idea.

2 Peter 3:4 ⁴καὶ λέγοντες, Ποῦ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ; ἀφ' ἧς γὰρ οἱ πατέρες ἐκοιμήθησαν, πάντα οὕτως διαμένει ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κτίσεως.

“And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as [they were] from the beginning of the creation.”

They scoff at Christ’s return because they do not see any visible sign that he will ever come καὶ λέγοντες, Ποῦ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ; their scepticism on Christ’s second return is based on the apparent lack of divine intervention in the affairs of men in the past since from the time of the creation of all things. Thus they

argue ἀφ' ἧς γὰρ οἱ πατέρες ἐκοιμήθησαν, πάντα οὕτως διαμένει ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κτίσεως. The expression ἀφ' ἧς means “since.” And it communicates the idea that it has been a long time now.

The heretics marked the time since the fathers “fell asleep” ἐκοιμήθησαν (Aorist passive indicative mood, 3rd person plural). These fathers πατέρες (nominative, masculine plural) refers to ancestors who have long since passed off the scene. By referring to the time when these ancestors passed away as well as the time of creation, these false teachers are simply arguing that, there is clear empirical evidence to show that God has never intervened in human history and that all things have been continuing since the time of creation without change. Since there have been no changes in the past, nor divine intervention or judgement, it is only logical to maintain that things will continue as they have been into the future. In other words, the promises of God have not come to pass in the past so they will surely not come to pass in the future. Peter will vigorously reject this position in the following verses.

2 Peter 3:5 ⁵λανθάνει γὰρ αὐτοὺς τοῦτο θέλοντας, ὅτι οὐρανοὶ ἦσαν ἔκκαλοι καὶ γῆ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι' ὕδατος συνεστῶσα τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγῳ,

“For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water”

Having established the point of the heretics in the preceding verses, the apostle moves on in verse 5 to argue against the affirmation of the heretics found in verse 4b “For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as [they were] from the beginning of the creation.” He begins his refutation by denouncing the ignorance of these heretics: λανθάνει γὰρ αὐτοὺς τοῦτο θέλοντας (For this they willingly are ignorant of) the verb λανθάνει (Present active indicative mood, 3rd person singular) in context means not taking notice of something or something escaping a person’s notice. The verb θέλοντας (Present,

Participle, active, accusative, Plural, masculine, meaning willingly or gladly) indicates that Peter does not just tag these heretics as those who have failed to recognize some of the fundamental truths in God’s world, but as those who have wilfully and gladly ignored or them.

The heretics also ignore the truth from scriptures: ὅτι οὐρανοὶ ἦσαν ἔκπαλαι καὶ γῆ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι’ ὕδατος συνεστῶσα τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγῳ, *that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water.* Peter looks back to the creation of the heavens. The verb ἦσαν (imperfect, indicative, 3rd person, plural, meaning where) implies that these things came to being. The adverb; ἔκπαλαι does not mean for a long time but “long ago.” Hence his point is that these physical realities were there long time ago.

The apostle’s concern is not simply with God’s creation of the heavens through his word but also the earth γῆ (noun, nominative singular, feminine) which also exists and is sustained by the same word of God. The verb συνεστῶσα (perfect, active, participle, nominative, singular, feminine meaning sustained or standing together) functions as a modifier of γῆ (earth) which suggests coexistence. Meaning Peter is saying the earth is held together by the word of God. Peter does not only explain the way the word of God sustains the heavens and the earth by how the earth was created ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι’ ὕδατος *earth standing out of the water and in the water.* This is an allusion to Gen. 1:9 where God commanded “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place and let the dry land appear.” (NRSV)

2 Peter 3:6 ὅτι ὧν ὁ τότε κόσμος ὕδατι κατακλυσθεὶς ἀπώλετο:

“Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.”

Against the opinion of the false teachers, Peter has thus far argued that God is not only the creator of the heavens and the earth but is also actively involved in sustaining the world. In this verse, he further advances his argument as he calls his readers attention to the fact that God has already judged the world in the past by means of flood. Peter’s adjectival use of τό τε is a way of referring to those things or those who existed in the distant past. The fact that the apostle gives a rather sparse description of the flood suggests that his audience are well acquainted with the narrative found in Gen. 7 especially the way the flood destroyed all living creatures with the exception of Noah and those with him.

God’s destruction of the ancient world points to the type of destruction that will come upon this present world in the future. Since the flood generation were sinners, the flood served as God’s way of judgement. The apostle does not only comment how the ancient world was destroyed through flood but also that it came to its end. ὕδατι κατακλυσθεῖς. *Being flooded with water.* He refers to the flood by using the substantive form of the verb κατακλυσμον which only goes on to clarify his readers on how the ancient world was destroyed.

2 Peter 3:7 ⁷οἱ δὲ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ τεθησαυρισμένοι εἰσὶν πυρὶ, τηρούμενοι εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως καὶ ἀπολείας τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων.

“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

In this verse, the apostle arrives at his conclusion, contradicting the false teaching of the heretics who deny the coming judgement. He argues that, just the ancient world was brought into being and sustained by the word of God, so also the present world is being sustained by the same word of God. But just as the first world was destroyed, so too this will end in divine judgement. By affirming that *“the heavens and the earth, which are*

now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men,” the apostle in this verse does not only castigate the heresies that has made its way into the churches but also encourages the believers to hold on to a holy way of life. The verb τηρούμενοι (participle, present, passive, nominative, plural, meaning being kept) indicates that God is not only keeping the righteous for salvation but also the ungodly for their final doom. It also implies that God is equally keeping the doom for the ungodly. The means of judgement is not by flood as was in the past, but by fire (πυρί).

2 Peter 3:8-10³⁷⁴ ⁸ Ἐν δὲ τοῦτο μὴ λανθανέτω ὑμεῖς, ἀγαπητοί, ὅτι μία αἰὶ ἡμέρα παρὰ κυρίῳ ὡς χίλια ἔτη καὶ χίλια ἔτη ὡς ἡμέρα μία. ⁹ οὐ βραδύνει κύριος τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, ὡς τινες βραδύτητα ἠγοῦνται, ἀλλὰ μακροθυμεῖ εἰς ὑμεῖς, μὴ βουλόμενός τις ἀπολέσθαι ἀλλὰ πάντα εἰς μετάνοιαν χωρήσαι. ¹⁰ Ἡξει δὲ ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτῃς, ἐν ἧ ὁ οὐρανοὶ ῥοιζηδὸν παρελεύσονται, στοιχεῖα δὲ καυσούμενα λυθήσεται, καὶ γῆ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα εὐρεθήσεται.

“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9. The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some men count slowness; but is patient towards you, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

Having refuted the heretical claims that all things have continued as they were without change since the creation and therefore, there will obviously be no future judgement, he sets out in this section to explain to his readers why there is this apparent delay in judgement. First, he states that the way God sees time is not the way man does since what could be seen as a long time for man could be a short time for God. He added that, one cannot really speculate when God will bring judgement into the world because it

³⁷⁴For reference and further study, the reader is referred to the following literatures: Thomas H. Duke. “An Exegetical Analysis of 2 Peter 3:9,” *Faith and Missions* 16/3. 1999: 6-13; G.A Van den Heever. “In purifying fire: World view and 2 Peter 3:10,” *Neot* 27. 1993: 107-18; Larry R. Overstreet. “A Study of 2 Peter 3:10-13,” *BS* 137. 1980: 354-70; David Wenham. “‘Being Found’ on the Last Day: New Light on 2 Peter 3:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:3,” *NTS* 33. 1987: 477-79; Al Wolters. “Worldview and Textual Criticism in 2 Peter 3:10,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 49. 1987: 405-13.

is scheduled to come in an unexpected time like the coming of a thief. But God's delay in judgement does not in any way imply that God is unable to intervene in human affairs. It is rather an expression of God's mercy, who desires that people be saved rather than be destroyed. But despite this delay, the end will eventually come and it will be a time when all the deeds of men will be exposed and heaven and earth will suffer destruction.

2 Peter 3:8 ⁸ Ἐν δὲ τοῦτο μὴ λανθανέτω ὑμεῖς, ἀγαπητοί, ὅτι μία ἡμέρα παρὰ κυρίῳ ὡς χίλια ἔτη καὶ χίλια ἔτη ὡς ἡμέρα μία.

“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

The false teachers have taught that the apparent delay in God's judgement argues strongly against its reality. But in this verse, the apostle opposes them by stating that; Ἐν δὲ τοῦτο μὴ λανθανέτω ὑμεῖς, ἀγαπητοί, ὅτι μία ἡμέρα παρὰ κυρίῳ ὡς χίλια ἔτη καὶ χίλια ἔτη ὡς ἡμέρα μία. “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” The address ἀγαπητοί ³⁷⁵ does not only mark a transition in Peter's argument but also brings the readers close to him. While arguing that they should not be like the heretics, his main concern is that what the heretics have ignored, the recipients should not let escape their notice. Peter further stresses the contrast between the heretics and his readers by including the emphatic δὲ ... ὑμεῖς “But...you.” The difference between the heretics and the readers is that the former are inspired by their perception while the latter are inspired by the biblical teachings from the apostles and the prophets. Thus the apostle is saying, notwithstanding the heresies that creep into the church, the church must strive against all odds to be guided by true theology and not hollow philosophies from men.

In the second part of the verse, the apostle alludes to Psalms 90:4 as he states: ὅτι μία ἡμέρα παρὰ κυρίῳ ὡς χίλια ἔτη καὶ χίλια ἔτη ὡς ἡμέρα μία. “that one

³⁷⁵ Aorist, vocative, plural, masculine, meaning beloved

day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” This does not imply that Peter is furnishing the readers with an interpretive key to understand certain days in God’s plan as if they represent a thousand years or vice-versa. His argument is simply that, the way God sees time is not the way man does. A period that may appear prolonged by human standard is actually short according to God’s calculations.

2 Peter 3:9 οὐ βραδύνει κύριος τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, ὡς τινες βραδύτητα ἡγοῦνται, ἀλλὰ μακροθυμεῖ εἰς ὑμᾶς, μὴ βουλόμενός τις ἀπολέσθαι ἀλλὰ πάντα εἰς μετάνοιαν χωρῆσαι.

“The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some men count slowness; but is patient towards you, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

This is a very important verse as it plays a key role in understanding our passage. It has been the reason for heated debates among scholars especially on what the text means when it speaks of God as “patient towards you,” and “not willing that any should perish.” The bone of contention that surrounds this verse becomes clear especially when the Calvinist versus the Arminian view of salvation is considered. Most Arminians have used this verse to counter the Calvinist view of salvation. In response to the Calvinistic argument that “regeneration precedes faith,”³⁷⁶ many Arminians have argued that this cannot be true otherwise, why then is God patient with sinners if regeneration actually depended on Him? It makes no sense to Arminians to think of God as being patient with sinners while at the same time withholding the grace that they need to respond to the gospel message and yet He still wills that non should perish. Therefore, Arminians see it rather fitting to maintain that “the fact that God is longsuffering towards us presupposes

³⁷⁶i.e a man can only respond to God in faith when God has irresistibly changed his/her heart. See R. C. Sproul. *The Mystery of the Holy Spirit*. Scotland: UK, Christian Focus Publication Ltd. 2009. In this book Sproul explains in details the Calvinistic position of regeneration as an act that precedes faith.

man's responsibility, viz man's responsibility to repent of sins and to respond to the Gospel."³⁷⁷Tozer has explained this nicely:

God will take nine steps toward us, but He will not take the tenth. He will incline us to repent, but He cannot do our repenting for us. It is of the essence of repentance that it can only be done by the one who committed the act to be repented of. God can wait on the sinning man; He can withhold judgement; He can exercise long-suffering to the point where He appears 'lax' in His judicial administration; but He cannot force a man to repent.³⁷⁸

But what could this verse really mean, given the current debate on its meaning and implication on the doctrine of soteriology? A detailed study of this verse in the context of our entire passage would be helpful to deconstruct what the apostle meant to communicate in 2 Peter 3:1-10. First of all, it should be understood that the phrase οὐ βραδύ νει κύριος τῆς ἐπαγγελίας “The Lord is not slow concerning his promise” is a direct response to the opinion of the false teachers, which is echoed, in the second clause of the verse ὡς τινες βραδύτητα ἡγοῦνται, “as some men count slowness”. This builds on the previous verse where he declares that God's estimation of time span is different from man's perspective. In the latter part of the verse, the apostle proceeds with the real reason for God's delay in judgement; ἀλλὰ μακροθυμεῖ εἰς ὑμᾶς, μὴ βουλόμενος τινὰ ἀπολέσθαι ἀλλὰ πάντας εἰς μετάνοιαν χωρῆσαι “but is patient towards you, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”.

Peter's point here is that, the delay in judgement does not argue against its reality but rather as evidence that God “is patient towards you” which is a clear demonstration of God's mercy towards humanity. Some Arminian scholars have argued that God's delay in this verse is necessitated by the fact that the responsibility to respond in faith lies with the

³⁷⁷ “Why Is God ‘Long-Suffering, (Not Willing That Any Should Perish)’?” Countering the Rise of Arminianism. [Accessed 13/05/2013] <http://counteringcalvinism.wordpress.com/2011/03/09/why-is-god-long-suffering-not-willing-that-any-should-perish/>

³⁷⁸ A.W. Tozer. *The Incredible Christian: How Heaven's Children Live on Earth*. Camp Hill: PA, WingSpread Publishers, 2007:44.

sinner. And that since God does not want any to perish, he therefore decides to wait until they come to their senses and make a choice to respond in faith.³⁷⁹ But as Wiesbe argues, it seems fitting to rather hold that “God’s “delay” is actually an indication that “He has a plan for this world and that He is working His plan.”³⁸⁰ And that plan is his “willingness to give all humans the opportunity to find their way to Christ and the gospel”³⁸¹ which is expressed through his delay in fulfilling his promise.³⁸² Thus Bauckham is right to also explain God’s delay simply as an act of forbearance.³⁸³ So it must be understood then that the delay as noted in this verse is not necessitated by the fact that man is responsible to find his way to Christ but by God’s desire that all men be saved through his redemptive plan which makes possible for man to respond in faith. Even John Calvin who argues for unconditional election agrees here that the basis for Peter’s argument in this verse is not necessarily rooted in God’s decreed purpose but simply in his desire to see all men saved. Thus he states “no mention is here made of the hidden purpose of God...but only of his will as made known to us in the gospel.”³⁸⁴

Note that the apostle mentions that God is patient εἰς ὑμᾶς “towards you”. The question here is “you” refers to who? First of all we know from the beginning of the letter (2 Peter 1:1b) that he is writing to the saints “who obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.” And from our argument

³⁷⁹ “Why Is God ‘Long-Suffering, (Not Willing That Any Should Perish)’?” *Countering the Rise of Arminianism*. [Accessed 13/05/2013] <http://counteringcalvinism.wordpress.com/2011/03/09/why-is-god-long-suffering-not-willing-that-any-should-perish/>

³⁸⁰ Warren W. Wiersbe. *The Bible Exposition Commentary : New Testament, Volume 2*. Colorado Springs: Colorado, Cook Communications Ministries, 2003: 465.

³⁸¹ Donald P. Senior and Daniel J. Larrington. *1 Peter, Jude and 2 Peter (Sacra Pagina)*. Collegeville: MN, Liturgical Press, 2008: 289.

³⁸² See Gerhard Kittel. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans.

³⁸³ Richard J Bauckham. *Jude, 2 Peter*. Word Biblical Commentary. David A. Hubbard and Glen W. Barker. Dallas, Word Publishing, 1983: 310.

³⁸⁴ John Calvin. *Hebrews, 1 Peter, 1 John, James, 2 Peter, Jude, Calvin Commentaries*. Vol. 22. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House, 2005: 419.

thus far, it has been inferred that God's patience is towards those who object his truth with their hollow philosophies.

So if the apostle makes mention of "towards you," knowing fully well that the letter will be read publicly during the gathering of believers, it implies that the author assumes that there are some amongst them who are tempted to follow these false teachers or who have even begun to follow them. Ὑ μᾶς "you" then does not refer to the false teachers who are known to be spreading heresies nor to the saints whom the apostle describes as those who have "obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ," but to the saints in the church who are tempted to follow the teachings of the heretics or who have begun following them already.

The reason why God delays his judgement is that he is: μὴ βουλό μενός τις τινος ἀπολέσθαι ἀλλὰ πάντας εἰς μετάνοιαν χωρῆσαι. "Not purposing any to perish but all men to repentance come." This does not imply that Peter believes in universal salvation. The noun μετάνοιαν³⁸⁵ does not mean a change of opinion nor does it mean to do penance. It rather means the act of abandoning deeds associated with sin and turning back to God. And this points to those in the church who are tempted to follow or who have begun following false teachers. Peter is saying that God's delay in judging sinners is justified by the fact that since he does not want to lose those who were once in the church but are now being deceived by false teachers, he is hoping that by delaying in judgement, they will have enough time to come back to their senses and repent because he does not desire that anyone who is in the church should perish but come to realise their

³⁸⁵Accusative singular from μετάνοια

transgressions against Him and repent. The verb ἄπολέσθαι³⁸⁶ does not just refer to mere death but as Schreiner explains, it refers to eternal punishment or judgement.³⁸⁷

So what then can we make of this verse in the context of 2 Peter 3:1-10? Several things to note; first, that eternal punishment (ἄπολέσθαι) for sinners is not God's desire but a consequence of the sinner's obstinacy to respond to God's free offer of salvation. God's sincere desire is rather to see that men be saved. And so it would be pleasing in his sight to see them come to repentance and accept the offer of his saving mercy. Second, that in the light of God's desire to see all men saved, if any one comes to him with a sincere desire to be saved, he/she will not be cast away. And third, that since God desires that all men be saved, he has made a redemptive plan which makes possible for men to respond to his saving grace and this is expressed through his patience towards sinners.

2 Peter 3:10 *Ἡξει δὲ ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς κλέπτῃς, ἐν ἣ ὁ οὐρανὸς ῥοιζηδὸν παρελεύσονται, στοιχεῖα δὲ καυσούμενα λυθήσεται, καὶ γῆ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα εὐρεθήσεται.*

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

That God is patient with the swayed away members of the church does not mean that judgement will never come. Thus the apostle opens this verse with the emphatic statement; Ἡξει δὲ ἡμέρα κυρίου ὡς “But the day of the Lord will come.” The assertion that the coming will be “as a thief in the night” finds its roots in the teachings of Jesus (Matt. 24:43-44).

The apostle focuses on the terror of the event, describing the nature of the judgement on that day; ἐν ἣ ὁ οὐρανὸς ῥοιζηδὸν παρελεύσονται, στοιχεῖα δὲ

³⁸⁶Aorist, infinitive, middle from ἀπόλλυμι

³⁸⁷Thomas R. Schreiner. *1,2, Peter and Jude, The New American Commentary*. E. Ray Clendenen (ed). Vol. 37. Nashville, Broadman and Holman, 2003: 381.

καυσοῦ μενα λυθήσεται, καὶ γῆ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα εὐρεθήσεται. “*in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*” This was basically the church’s expectation regarding the end of the present world. The verb εὐρεθήσεται³⁸⁸ suggests a severe injury through which God will discover the deeds of humanity and will pass his judgement based on what they have done.

4.3. Synthesis

Before moving on to deconstruct the paradigms necessary for the C.B.C. leaders to use as tools in the process of delineating and defending their own tenets on soteriology in the proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise, it would be important to conclude this chapter by attempting a synthesis of the data on predestination amassed thus far from the reformation traditions and from scriptures.

4.3.1. Scriptures

From the exegetical study conducted, it can be deduced that key texts like Romans 9:18-23 and 2 Peter 3:1-10 that appear to disagree with each other on the subject of predestination only appear to be, but are really not. In order to come up with a correct soteriology for the convention, the CBC leaders need to first of all understand that predestination might be a complex doctrine but certainly not a contradictory one within its biblical context. This is because from the exegetical study above, Romans 9: 18-23

³⁸⁸ Indicative, future, passive, 3rd person, singular meaning shall be burnt down

simply reveals an amazingly loving God, who shows his love to a group of undeserving people who deserve nothing but his wrath.

On the other hand, the text also reveals a totally just God who ensures that no sinner goes unpunished and by punishing these sinners for their sins, those whom he has graciously saved from this wrath must perceive their salvation as an amazing demonstration of God's love that goes beyond justice. The study also reveals that, the apparent discrepancy between Romans 9:18-23 and 1 Peter 3:1-10 is only a presupposition and not a fact that can be justified by correct exegesis. Because from the exegesis of 2 Peter 3:1-10 it seems to the researcher that the text rather complements than opposes Paul's teachings in Romans 9:18-23.

In it, Peter simply expounds more on what Paul is saying by explaining that all of those whom God has shown his saving grace will eventually come to repentance because God does not want them to perish with the rest that is why he elected them before the foundations of the earth in the first place. With this understanding of how predestination has been handled in scriptures, chapter five continues with an attempt to deconstruct paradigms from these texts that throw light to some mainline reformation traditions for the C.B.C. leaders to use as tools in the process of delineating and defending their own tenets on soteriology in this proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise.

4.3.2. Reformation traditions

It seems fitting to maintain at this juncture that, while the mainline reformation traditions remain distinct from each other by virtue of their different theological tenets and perspectives on predestination in their soteriology, there is a point however where they both agree. Arminianism and Calvinism for instance do agree that, the elect are the called and chosen ones, but differ widely only on the manner in which this election is done. While Calvinism argues that God unconditionally elects those he loves before the

foundation of the earth, Arminianism counters that God looks at the future to see those who would eventually believe in him and elects them. But given this chapter's survey of predestination in scriptures, it could be affirmed that despite their contrasting views, the arguments of the Calvinists and Arminians are all bible centred in their own terms.

Some of the bible centred positions by the Arminian tradition include the following; "while the sovereignty of God is absolute in its prerogatives, it is self limited in its existence."³⁸⁹ And also that, God "remains the potter and will overrule where He cannot rule."³⁹⁰ Further more, the Arminians have rightly argued that, "in the divine initiation of salvation, the whole plan of redemption is God's down reach to lift fallen men. It is not man's device whereby salvation could be achieved. Therefore, what we have is given, not earned. It is mercy, not justice. It is divine not human, and it leaves us with eternal indebtedness to God, the Author of our salvation."³⁹¹

And lastly, Arminian scholars do correctly argue that, even though "God's will is frustrated by every lost soul, however, on the side of the divine respect for human freedom, His will is inviolable."³⁹² All of these are not only biblically accurate but some seem to be in line with the argument of the Calvinist. For instance in page 437 of their book, Purkiser and his colleagues explained Arminianism in this way, "God's will is frustrated by every lost soul: but on the side of the divine respect for human freedom, His will is inviolable."³⁹³

The inability of man to violate God's will whether from the respect for human freedom as explained here by Purkaiser and his colleagues is one of the strongest

³⁸⁹W.T. Purkiser, Richard S. Taylor and Willard H.Taylor. *God, man & salvation: A Biblical theology*. Kansas City Kansas City, Mo., Beacon Hill Press 1977:435.

³⁹⁰Ibid., 435.

³⁹¹Ibid., 435.

³⁹²Ibid., 435.

³⁹³Ibid., 435.

arguments put forward by the Calvinist to advance the doctrine of election and reprobation as the Calvinist-Wilson stated “There is a point beyond which we cannot answer back to God or question his justice because, we are His creation and have no right to accuse God of injustice.”³⁹⁴ By so saying, this Calvinist scholar is implying that whatever God wills stands, and man cannot resist nor should he question it. Therefore, though different in their fundamental tenets, there are some points of biblical agreements among these mainline traditions. It is for this reason that the biblical paradigms deconstructed in chapter four would agree with and/or throw some light on some of these mainline reformation traditions.

³⁹⁴Geoffrey B. Wilson. 1979. *Hebrews: A Digest of Reformed Comment*. Carlisle, Pennsylvania, The Westminster Press, 1979: 165.

CHAPTER 5

PARDIGMS FOR SOTERIOLOGY IN A PROPOSED CAMEROON BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL TREATISE

Introduction

In chapters one and two, we looked at how mainline traditions have interpreted predestination in the bible and traced how these ideologies eventually found their way into Cameroon. From this study, it was realised that one of the reasons why the C. B. C. leaders do not have a strong theological culture is because the Baptist missionaries from the London Baptist Missionary Society who came to Cameroon did not concern themselves with the theological development of the indigenes. Even the current North American Baptist Conference missionaries that came in the eve of the establishment of the modern day CBC, (and who are still involved with missions in Cameroon) are not as concern with theological development as they are in holistic ministries. Therefore, it was reached that the way forward for theological development in the CBC lies absolutely in the hands of their indigenous theologians and ministers.

In order to come up with a theologically strong and comprehensive theological treatise for the CBC, the researcher has maintained in this project that beginning with a correct soteriology is of fundamental expedience and to this end, there is need to provide CBC leaders with the tools needed to develop correct tenets on soteriology for this treatise that will be both theological and biblical. Since chapter one and two have looked at how mainline theological traditions have treated the subject of predestination in their soteriology and chapter three has critically focused on how the bible has also treated the subject, chapter four now foundations on this data to deconstruct biblical and theological paradigms for the CBC leaders to use as tools in the process of delineating and defending

their own theological tenets on soteriology for this theological treatise. It begins with an attempt to deconstruct biblical and theological paradigms from Romans 9:18-23 then from 2 Peter 3:1-10 and ends with other paradigms in general.

5.1. Biblical and theological Paradigms from Romans 9:18-23

4.1.1. It is all about God's glory

Studies from Romans 9:18-23 have revealed that when it comes to matters pertaining to God's dealings with man (including salvation), it is all about God's glory than it is about human desires or happiness. In his treatise on theology, Pendleton explained that, the fundamental reason why God created the universe is to promote the glory of his own name which he described as God's "supreme purpose"³⁹⁵ and all other purposes are simply "inferior and subordinate to this one."³⁹⁶ Therefore, for men to seek their own glory, Pendleton explains is "selfish and culpable."³⁹⁷ In Romans 9:23, we see that God's fundamental purpose for "showing mercy on who he desires" and "hardening who he desires" is simply "to make known the riches of his glory...."

This implies that as far as predestination is concerned, CBC leaders need to realize that it is all about God's glory. The very fact that the text rebukes man for questioning God on this matter implies that looking at predestination from a human point of view is totally misleading, God wants us to see the essence of predestination only from his point of view and that is simply because he wants to make known the riches of his glory. It must be understood from here that God has only one purpose for why he does things and that is to glorify himself. Beginning from when God created man in Genesis, his glory has always been the motive. CBC leaders must all come to realize the fact that God created

³⁹⁵James M. Pendleton. *Christian Doctrines: A Compendium of Theology*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1878: 102.

³⁹⁶Ibid., 102.

³⁹⁷Ibid., 102.

man in his own image (Genesis 1:26-28) indicates that he created man for his glory because if man reflects God's image, it means he represents his greatness, his excellence, his beauty etc. After Adam and Eve were created, God was not satisfied with two individuals that represent him for his glory, he wished to see more humans in his image, thus he commanded Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. In Isaiah 43:7, the bible clearly stated why God created his people "whom I have created for my glory, whom I have formed, even whom I have made."

This means that we were all created for God's glory and whatever he chooses to do with us, he chooses to do, so that he will be glorified. This explains why God forbids us from exhorting our selves or seeking to partake in his glory. We are simply tools which he uses to glorify himself and so must not share or desire to share in his glory, as the apostle Paul stated in Romans 9: 21 "...or does not the potter has the right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honourable use and another for common use?" Does this mean that God does not love us or do something for us? No, God loves us and is there for us. But for God to show that he is there for us, he must first show that he is there for himself. He shows that he is there for himself by making the perfection of his attributes known to us of which love is the chief attribute. So he shows his love to us because he wants to glorify himself. He loves us for his sake and for his glory not ours and this explains why we can have full confidence in God's love because it is more than just being nice to us, it is a love that is committed to God's glory.

We see this fact everywhere in scriptures. Of all the nations of the world, God chose to show his love to Israel not because they were different from the other tribes. In 2 Samuel 7:23, the bible tells us why; "And what one nation on the earth is like Thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people and to make a name for

Himself...” This shows that, the reason why God showed his attribute of love to Israel was simply because through his dealings with them, his glory will be known and his fame will spread throughout the world. But all was not glowing for Israel as a chosen nation or an ambassador nation for God’s glory. Many times they had to suffer under oppressed nation as slaves. The question that would arise is, if God has chosen them for his glory, why will they have to go through such shameful experiences? How does that show God’s glory? But it is amazing to know that it was still all for his glory.

For instance, when God allowed them to be taken as captives in Egypt, his purpose was simply to make a name for himself by rescuing them out of Egypt with his powerful hand. Isaiah 63: 12-14 declares:

Who caused His glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, dividing the waters before them, to make for Himself an everlasting name, Who led them through the depths, like a horse in the wilderness, so that they did not stumble? Like the cattle that go down into the valley [to find better pasturage, refuge, and rest], the Spirit of the Lord caused them to rest. So did You lead your people to make for Yourself a beautiful *and* glorious name

This shows that, God’s dealings with Israel has been motivated by his glory and his glory alone. Apart from Israel, there are several other things in the bible that explains why it is all about God’s glory. A case in point is the death of Christ. It might be hard to believe that God’s glory was the motivation for Christ’s death on the cross but the bible clearly teaches so. In John 17:4, Jesus prayed to his Father saying “I glorified Thee on earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.” Again in John 12:27-28, when his death was drawing closer and his heart was filled with sorrow, Jesus prayed saying “Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Thy name.” Then a voice came from heaven saying: “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.”

It is amazing to realize that in that scene of great sorrow, only one thing stayed in Jesus' mind; God's glory. So God's glory motivated him to show love to mankind by going to the cross to die for them. If Christ's death was motivated by God's glory, then the whole idea of salvation is equally motivated by God's glory. So when God forgives us of our iniquities, it is mainly because of his glory. The following texts will justify this:

- In 1 John 2:12, the apostle wrote to the brethren; "I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you *for His name's sake.*"
- In Jeremiah 14:7, the prophet prayed to God; "Although our iniquities testify against us, O Lord, *act for Thy name's sake!*"
- In Psalm 25:11, David prayed; "*For Thy name's sake*, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great."
- Again in Psalm 79:9, he said; "Help us, O God of our salvation, *for the glory of Thy name*, and deliver us, and forgive our sins, for thy name's sake."

The implication to this is that, just as David was full of sin, we too, are full of sin. And like David, we need to realise that we cannot save ourselves and because of our sins we deserve eternal punishment in hell. But our only hope is to look up to God and cry out for mercy. If God's glory is the fundamental motive for every divine action, then in a bid to work together in delineating tenets for soteriology, CBC leaders need to understand God's dealings with man on matters of salvation from God's glory point of view rather than from the logical effects in the lives of individuals. Once they all get to this point of understanding that the whole idea of predestination is not about man but about God's glory, it will humble them to humbly conclude with the Apostle Paul: "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!" (Romans 11:33)

5.1.2. God's sovereignty also means he has the right to rule over us

Another paradigm drawn from this text that could serve as an effective theological tool for CBC leaders to use in the process of delineating and defending their own tenets for soteriology in the proposed theological treatise is that, God is not just sovereign over all men and things; he also has the right to rule over them however he pleases. Paul's reference to the potter and the clay in verse 21 justifies this claim; "does not the potter have a right over a clay object, to make from the same lump one vessel for honourable use and another for common use." Unlike in the Reformation age where people sought after and understood a gracious God who saves by faith alone according to his good pleasure, the 21st century man is after the God who claims to have right to rule over men to come and justify why he should act like that. The modern man does not believe that God has the right to do with us as he pleases at least not in this age where there is human rights and freedom of speech.

But from this study, it must be understood that the bible clearly teaches that God's sovereignty also implies that he has the right to do with us whatever he wills because it is for his glory that we were created in the first place. We were not created for us, we were created for God. And being his creation, we cannot go after God as we do to our fellow human who try to abuse our right to be self determined, thus Paul rebukes in verse 20; "who are you oh man who answers back to God? The thing moulded will not say to it's moulder 'why did you make me like this,' Will it?" This does not mean the bible forbids asking God a question, it simply rebukes our questioning God's right to rule over us.

Does this mean God is usurping or abusing our human right? No, because we were not created for us, we were created for him. It is simply because he wanted to rule over us that is why he created us. Our right to live only comes alive in his goal to glorify himself

in our existence. Without God's purpose, we have no right. This means that our rights in life cannot be at odds with God's purpose but indebted to it. Any other person who tries to abuse human right is wrong because they did not create man and so cannot take his rights for granted. Only God has the right to rule over man, to wound or heal us and to give to us or take away from us. This is quite hard to take as it stirs up fear and awe.

The awful nature of this teaching has pushed some CBC leaders to only speak of the soft side of God's attributes such as his love and his care for us. While these are true and must be affirmed in the church, our theology must progress and expand to also realize that God is more than just love, he is the king over all heavens and earth. He is not only the saviour we should befriend but also the sovereign king we must also come to revere. The gateway of understanding God's sovereignty over us and his right to do for us as he pleases premises on our healthy understanding that it is not about us but it is all about God and his glory. Once the glory of God in all affairs of men has been well understood, God's right to rule over us for his glory will make more sense and this would be fundamental to developing a correct soteriology for the CBC in the proposed theological treatise.

5.1.3. Election reveals God's love and reprobation reveals God's justice

The main problem with the teachings on election and reprobation among some CBC leaders is that many do not really see the logical sense in them. They corroborate with scholars like Marshall in arguing that they "cannot see how it can be just arbitrarily [for God] to save one guilty sinner and not another."³⁹⁸ They also reason with others like Erdman to argue that "if naturally, God is sovereign and carries out his purposes to the end in spite of the will of men, how can he blame men for disobedience or unbelief? Does not

³⁹⁸ Howard Marshall. Predestination in the New Testament." *In Grace Unlimited*, (ed) Minneapolis: Bethany, 1955: 136.

God's sovereignty abolish all human responsibility? Will not God be unjust if he punished those who rejected Christ?"³⁹⁹

But unless some correct sense is made out of election and reprobation, the process of developing a correct soteriology in the proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise would be seriously challenged. Thus as the last paradigm from Romans 9:18-23, the CBC leaders need to entertain a paradigm shift on their election and reprobation theology by realizing that predestination is not as dreadful as it seems. It is a doctrine that explains God's saving love for a people who deserve nothing but his wrath and His justice in ensuring that no sinner goes unpunished. Manfred further elucidates this by stating that "What from the limited vantage point of our human observation seems unjust is in fact only a misunderstanding of the mysterious working of God's mercy."⁴⁰⁰ A mercy which does not operate merely on a rewards for works basis but on something much better than that; his sovereign love as defined according to his good pleasure.⁴⁰¹

To unanimously get to this point, the CBC leaders must first of all be in agreement on the fact that Adam represented the human race and as a representative of the human race, what is true of Adam is also true of humanity whether born or unborn. Adam made in the image of God, Adam sinless and perfect, therefore all men are made in the image of God, sinless and perfect.

³⁹⁹Charles Erdamn. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. Philadelphia, the Westminster Press, 1967: 109.

⁴⁰⁰Brauch T. Manfred 1989. *Hard Sayings of Paul*. Downers Grove Illinois. Intervarsity Press 1989:55.

⁴⁰¹Jerry Bridges. 1991. *Transforming Grace: Living Confidently in God's Unfailing Love*. Springs: Colorado, A Ministry With the Navigators, 1991: 47.

But when Adam sinned and broke the fellowship with God, all men also sinned and lost their fellowship with God. Thus the bible declared “for all have sinned and fall short to the glory of God.” (Romans 3: 23). In Ezekiel 18:20, the prophet defines the lone consequences of sin “The soul that sins shall die.” This means that the punishment for sin for all mankind was that all will have to die and that must be because “God is not a man that he should lie nor a son of man that he will change his mind.” (Num. 23:19). If God has assigned death as the consequence of sin, then all men would have to die since all have sinned and fallen short of his glory. The fate that awaited the entire human race was death. Since man could not save himself from this impending doom and because of his love for man, God decided to come up with a redemptive plan to save man from his wrath. This redemptive plan is usually known as Eternal Covenant or the Covenant of Redemption.⁴⁰²

There were three parties⁴⁰³ in this covenant namely; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The lone objective of entering into this covenant was simply to work out a redemptive plan for man and reconcile him back to God. In this covenant, each Person of the Trinity had His role or responsibility in the redemption story. The Father had the following role:

a.) To promise to bring to the Son all whom He had given Him:

“And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.” (John 6:39)

⁴⁰²For reference and further reading on this, please read the following resources: Ralph Allan Smith *The Eternal Covenant: How the Trinity Reshapes Covenant Theology*. Moscow: ID, Canon Press, 2003; Gerhard E. Spiegler. “The eternal covenant: Schleiermacher's experiment in cultural theology.” In *Makers of modern theology*. Harper & Row, 1967; Stanley W. Paher. *The Eternal Covenant: God's Invitation to Faith and Life*. Nevada Publications, 1997.

⁴⁰³Normally covenants are made between those of different authority levels like a king and his subjects. But it must be noted here that in the Eternal Covenant, all the parties involved are equals.

“For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.”(John 17:2)

“I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.” (John 17:9)

“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”(John 17:24)

b.) To be responsible for sending the Son into the world to be the representative of the people:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”(John 3:16)

“Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.” (Romans 5:18-19)

c.) To be responsible for preparing a body for the Son:

“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.” (Col. 2:9)

“Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:“Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me.”(Heb. 10:5)

d.) And to give the Son all authority in heaven and on earth:

“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”(Matt. 28:18)

The Son on his part accepted to;

a.) Become man

“who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant,[a] being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”(Phil. 2:6-8)

b.) Be found under the law;

“But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.”(Gal. 4:4-5)

c.) Die for the sins of the world;

“He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2)

“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.” (1 Pet. 2:24)

d.) Be raised from the Dead by the Father

“God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay.” (Acts 13: 34)

“Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.”(1 Pet. 1:21)

The Holy Spirit Accepted to play the following role:

a.) To empower Jesus⁴⁰⁴ to do the will of the Father on earth;

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.”(Matt. 3:16)

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.”(Luke 4:1)

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.”(Luke 4:18)

⁴⁰⁴Note that The Holy Spirit did not empower the Son but Jesus the man

“For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.”(John 3:32)

b.) To apply Christ’s redemptive work on Christians;

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever- the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”(John 14:16-17)

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”(John 14:26)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.”(Acts 2:17-18)

From this Redemptive Covenant, it can be leant that Jesus was empowered by the Holy Spirit to come on earth and save all those whom his Father will give him. These people whom his Father would give him refer to those whom God has shown mercy in Rom. 9:18. They deserved to die because they were guilty of sin, but God chose out of his good pleasure to show them mercy by bringing them to Jesus for their salvation.

This means that by electing these people for salvation even when they did not deserve it, God demonstrated an amazing sense of love that goes beyond justice. Since he was not expected to show this love in the first place, God cannot be thought of as being biased to those he did not bring to Jesus for salvation. What they deserve is death and by allowing them to die, God is being just in ensuring that no sinner goes unpunished. Thus reprobation reveals God’s justice. Any further question from this point would not be

allowed by scriptures as the Apostle objects in Romans 9:20, “But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’”

5.2. Biblical and theological paradigms from 2 Peter 3:1-10

5.2.1. Some saints can be swayed away by false doctrine but not from the faith

To develop a correct soteriology in the proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise, matters pertaining to the security of salvation have to be correctly understood. To provide the CBC leaders with the tools needed in this regard, the first paradigm deconstructed from the exegetical study of 2 Peter 3:1-10 is that the possibility exists for some saints to be swayed away from the truth but not from the faith. From the exegetical study, it is clear that Peter’s concern is not on the faith of the saints but on the false teachings they were exposed to. The fact that his letter was directed to a Christian community with the purpose of warning them against false teachers and the fact that in 3:9 he said “God is patient towards you” implies that even though he was writing to the saints, he knew that some of them are being influenced or have even begun thinking like false teachers.

It can therefore be inferred from this text that, it is possible for a saint who belongs to the household of faith to be influenced by the hollow philosophies of men and be swayed away from the truth. It must however be noted that, the text has not said the saints can fall away from faith. Hence this is by no means a question of whether or not a saint can lose his/her salvation. It is a matter of whether or not a saint can be influenced to think contrary to the word of God and in response, the apostle confirms this possibility.

But what then shall we say about Hebrews 6:4-6:

“It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age 6 and who have fallen[a] away, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.”

In this text, it is clear that the author suggests a possibility of falling away but away from what? From the faith or from the community of faith? To some scholars,⁴⁰⁵ it means falling away from the faith (i.e. losing salvation completely) But is this actually what the author of Hebrew meant to say? The subsequent paragraphs have explained why it is not so with the aim of justifying why CBC leaders need to work on a mutual understanding that saints can be swayed from the truth but not from the faith in order to develop a correct soteriology for the convention.

It must first of all be understood that, everyone who has been called to faith of course by God, cannot fall away from faith. Because as Saint Augustine of Hippo puts it, “God will[s] what [he] command[s] and command[s] what he will[s].”⁴⁰⁶ This implies that God cannot command election to someone and not will it to come to pass. Therefore, all who are predestined unto salvation must be saved and no one will lose his salvation. Jesus even makes this crystal clear in John 10:28-29;

“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all[a]; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.”

This means that He gives eternal life to those whom His Father gives Him (and this should be understood as the elect) and that they will never perish and no one will ever snatch them out of his hands. This is because God the Father, who gives them to Him, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch those elected ones out of His Father’s hands.

⁴⁰⁵E.g. Eaton Michael. *No Condemnation: A New Theology of Assurance*. Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1995: 154.

⁴⁰⁶George A. Barroise. *The Confession of Saint Augustine*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1967: 25.

This only shows therefore that those who are elected are elected for life and they can never lose their salvation that has been entrusted to them by grace from eternity past.

This position that the Bible rightly teaches cannot be opposing to what the author of Hebrews says because the Bible is totally infallible and non contradictory. Therefore, if it is true that the bible agrees to the fact that no one can lose his salvation, then the author of Hebrews cannot be denying this claim. If there is any contradiction it would not be a problem that arises from the general bible teaching, but a problem that arises from the fact that, we have not correctly understood the relationship between what the bible is teaching in Hebrews 6: 4-6 and what it teaches about the absolute security of our genuine salvation.

To attempt a biblical reconciliation of this apparent disparity, the CBC leaders need to understand that there is a covenant community of God's people. A community, comprised of members who have expressed their sorrows for their sins through repentance, and have been enlightened by the gospel. They might also show convincing external signs of a Christ-like way of living through the empowering of the Holy Spirit and they greatly function for the general edification of the whole body. However, even though all of these qualities could be true of all the members, it does not guarantee that all who are members of this body have been elected unto salvation. Some of them have not been elected unto salvation and even though all the above attributes are true of them, the truth is that, they have not really experienced the redeeming work of the Holy Spirit in their lives even though their lives have been influenced by the Holy Spirit.

It is from this background that the author of Hebrew writes Hebrews 6:4-6. When talking about falling, the author of Hebrew is not referring to all the members of this covenant community but to the non elect who (even though transformed) have not been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. So the author is saying that, if any of them falls away from

this community, they will never come back to repentance because they are voluntarily rejecting all their blessings and turning against them thus hardening their hearts to a point that one cannot cause them to feel the sorrow of their sins. This is simply because they have been enlightened by the truth of the gospel and have tested its beauty, yet they decide to reject it. Hence, no amount of preaching will change their minds because they have consciously rejected it, knowing fully well the blessings that are in it.⁴⁰⁷

Even though this is written to God's people, it does not mean that true Christians (the elect) will fall away, but "the author hopes to recall them from the brink of disaster by an alarming description of those who totally fall away from the profession of the Christian faith."⁴⁰⁸ Grudem also added that the author of Hebrews wants to use the "strongest language possible to say here is how far a person can come in experiencing temporary blessing and still not be saved."⁴⁰⁹ i.e, the text is aimed at warning believers that they should not just be rest assured of their salvation on grounds that they are faithful members of God's community. Rather, the emphasis is that even though they are functioning as members of Christ's body, if they do not continue in faith, they will fall away and if they do, they may not come back to repentance.

And if they fall and do not come back to repentance, it only implies that they were not elected unto salvation in the first place. This is because all those who have been redeemed by the Holy Spirit (the elected) cannot fall away. Rather, they must persevere to

⁴⁰⁷More on this can actually be read from scholars who argued that a believer cannot lose his salvation and that if he eventually falls away, it only means that he was not even saved in the first place. To know more on this, the reader is kindly referred to the following authors; Daniel Guthrie. *The Epistle to the Hebrews: An introduction and Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Eerdmans, 1983: 140; F.F. Bruce. *The Epistle To the Hebrews*. Grand Rapids: Michigan Eerdmans. WmB Eerdmans Publishing Company 199: 148.

⁴⁰⁸Wilson, Geoffrey B. Wilson. *Hebrews: A Digest of Reformed Comment*. Carlisle, Pennsylvania, The Westminster Press, 1979: 76-77.

⁴⁰⁹Wayne Grudem. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan, 1994: 800 .

the end. Erickson clarifies perseverance when he says “The individual maintaining faith and commitment to the very end through the grace of God is perseverance.”⁴¹⁰ So those who are elected cannot fall away or lose their salvation, but every truly elected person will always entertain the fear of falling away and the reason for this is not because they lack the assurance but because the fear of falling away acts as a stimulus for them to continue through the perseverance of their faith to the very end. This must be the case with all genuine believers. It is only those who actually persevere to the end who are the true elect unto salvation. From this explanation, it can be said that, the only way one can know whether he/she is truly elected unto salvation is only when he/she perseveres in faith to the end and not falling off along the way.

Once the CBC leaders get to the point of understanding that once a person is truly saved by grace that salvation cannot be lost but the possibility exists for a saved person to be swayed from the truth such that s/he could get into error. With this paradigm from 2 Peter 3:1-10 in mind, the next paradigm is a progression from the first; God is patient with every saint who is swayed away from the truth.

5.2.2. God is patient with every saint who goes astray

It can be deconstructed from 2 Peter 3:1-10 that God’s delay in judging sinners is a gracious way of displaying his patience with them, hoping that they would eventually repent from their evil ways and do good. While it may graciously extend to false teachers, this divine patience is especially towards those in the church who have been swayed by these false teachers. The idea from this text is that God has reserved punishment for all those false teachers who are destroying the church with their hollow philosophies but

⁴¹⁰Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House, 1999: 919.

through the virtue of his patience in judgement, he is giving swayed away saint the opportunity to repent.

Thus the apostle states in 2 Peter 2: 9 “the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from all trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgement.” The godly under trials also extends to the saints who have been influenced by false teachers and Peter says God knows how to rescue them from this situation by giving them time to realize their sins and come back to the fold. The unrighteous in this verse also refers to the diehard heretics. Peter says God has “kept” them under punishment due to them on the last day. So this reveals that God’s patience is not towards diehard heretics but towards the godly ones who have been influenced by these heretics.

5.2.3. God’s patience does not mean no judgment

That God exercises patience with some saints who fall away does not imply that this must be taken for granted. It is important at this point to attempt to balance this view so as to avoid extremism on CBC’s soteriology. i.e to hold that since genuine believers are assured of their salvation, even if they fall from the truth, God will lovingly be patient with them until they are restored and so become relaxed in their Christian growth. Such a perspective is definitely not what will inform a correct soteriology for the CBC. Hence the last paradigm deconstructed from 2 Peter 3:1-10 for CBC leaders to use in the process of delineating and defending their own tenets on soteriology for the proposed theological treatise is that God’s patience for the sake of the godly does not in any way mean he will not pass judgement over sin.

It must be learnt from this text that even though Peter teaches that God’s desire is that all in the church should be saved on the last day and because of this, he gives a chance

for those who have gone astray to repent, God will eventually judge sinners. Implying that, those in the church, guilty of being influenced by false teaching who do not take advantage of God's patience with them will be destroyed when he destroys the unrighteous who have been kept for punishment on the day of judgement.

Verse 10 of 2 Peter 3 paints a vivid image of that day of judgement as follows "...the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burnt up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed." The fact that this imagery of destruction follows verse 9 "the Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise as some count slowness but is patient towards you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance," suggests that Peter is clearly saying if they (saints in the church who are being deceived by heretics) fail to repent, they will not be spared on the day of judgement.⁴¹¹

5.3. General Biblical and theological Paradigms

5.3.1. Predestination must necessitate evangelism

It is important for the CBC leaders to understand the place for evangelism in the predestination discourse as this would eventually help in developing a correct soteriology. Considering the whole discourse, if it is true to say that by his sovereignty and his creatural powers, God has elected people in eternity past and reprobated some, it is easy for one to reason that the whole human race is therefore made up of two categories of people; those who are saved and those who are not. And those who are not saved will never be saved while those who are saved will eventually come to God's saving knowledge, since they have been predestined unto salvation and their coming to faith is

⁴¹¹ And this only means they were not even genuinely saved in the first place

not because of man but because of what God has said. If so, why therefore should people be bordered to preach the gospel knowing fully well that these people will still come to repentance since that is their fate? After all whether we preach or not, those who have been saved in eternity past will eventually be saved and those who are predestined for destruction will be destroyed.

As logically justified as these concerns might seem, it is imperative for CBC leaders to know that what seems to be right in man's eyes may not really be what is actually right because God is the standard and determining factor for what is truly right or wrong. Coming from the biblical survey of predestination in chapter three, it must be affirmed that biblical predestination must inspire the necessity for evangelism and not the other way around. One of Paul's greatest motivations for evangelism is because some are out there who are elected unto salvation (2 Tim 2:10) and the only way they can believe is when they hear the gospel message and for them to hear, someone must go out there to tell them. And for these people to go, the author of salvation must send them so that, what he predestined from eternity past will come to pass (Romans 10:14-15).

The apostle's predestination theology did not cause him to shrink back, it rather, acted as an incentive for him to suffer all forms of hardship for the sake of those whom God has elected unto salvation (2 Tim. 2:10). In 2 Tim. 2:4, that the apostle Paul urged Timothy to preach the gospel in and out of season suggests that there should be no time in the program or theology of a church where preaching the gospel should not be considered a priority since God's elect are out there (Romans 8:29-30) waiting for the gospel that will only come to them through evangelism. Hence, a predestination theology that castigates the expedience of evangelism would clearly be inconsistent with scriptures. Erickson puts this better:

Predestination does not nullify incentive for evangelism and missions. We do not know who the elect and the non elect are, so we must continue to spread the word. Our evangelistic efforts are God's means to bring the elect to salvation. God's ordaining of the end includes ordaining the means to that end as well. The knowledge that missions are Gods means is a strong motive for endeavors and gives us confidence that it will prove successful.⁴¹²

This clearly explains that preaching the gospel is not just an indispensable but also an inevitable requirement for someone to believe in the Lord Jesus. The CBC leaders need to come to the point of understanding that, God does not command things and does not make a means through which these things will come to pass. He is a God who according to Saint Augustine of Hippo wills what he commands and commands whatever he wills.⁴¹³ And if the means through which He has ordained that people will believe in Him is through the hearing of the gospel being preached, therefore, there is certainly a place for the preaching of his word. Paul even makes this clearer "and how will they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14c).

It is in this light that one can easily come up with this fact; if God has ordained that the means through which the elect will come to faith is through the preaching of the word, then how can they respond to faith if someone is not commissioned to preach the word? Therefore, the fact that there are elected people out there is rather a strong motivation for preaching the gospel and not the other way around. Because the preacher knows that it is in doing so that others might come to the saving knowledge of Christ and since we are servants of God, we must be obedient to the task of evangelism which the Lord has commissioned us in Matthew 28:19 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

⁴¹²Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House, 1999: 940.

⁴¹³ George A. Barroise. *The Confession of Saint Augustine*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1967:27.

5.3.2. God's sovereignty in salvation must not undermine human choice

In developing a soteriology in the proposed theological treatise, the CBC leaders must ensure that the emphasis of God's sovereignty in salvation must not ignore the relevance/place of human choice in the whole process. If not correctly understood, predestination might lead to a serious misconception that we have no choice to either accept or reject Christ since each one has either been elected or reprobated from eternity past and are conditioned to respond to the gospel according to the path that has been designed for him/her. This is surely not what biblical predestination implies, scholars like Osborne do agree that God's sovereignty in salvation also takes into account human choice.⁴¹⁴

The CBC leaders need to come to the point of understanding that predestination does not deny our voluntary choices, i.e it does not deny the fact that we do make voluntary choices to either accept or reject Christ. The choices we make are not what someone wants us to make but what we like and wilfully decide to make. But what happens is that, as we make our choice, we do so through the powerful working of God who works through our desires to enable us make decisions that are in line with what he has ordained before creation. (Eph. 1:11).

But how free are our choices if they are done through the powerful working of God? This is quite complicated but the strongest response is simply that, God who created us says this choice we make is ours. For instance, scriptures tells us that unless a man believes Christ, he shall not be saved (John 3:16). In this case, it is clear that God permits people to make decisions for themselves whether or not they want to believe Christ. And

⁴¹⁴Grant R. Osborn, "Soteriology in the Epistle to the Hebrews." In *Grace Unlimited*, Clark H. Pinnock (ed). Bethany Fellowship, Minneapolis, 1975: 167-189.

the misconception that further complicates things on this subject is that we are often tempted to believe that what makes a choice free is only when it is absolutely free from any influence, be it physical or spiritual.

But such understanding of freedom cannot hold in God's universe because he must exist as the Great Absolute, who wills and commands everything according to his good pleasures. Hence, to define free choice in God's universe to mean total freedom from any influence is to limit God's sovereign control over everything in his world. Infact, Grudem states this in a more succinct way; "In short, we can say that God causes us to choose Christ voluntarily."⁴¹⁵ This means therefore that God sovereignly ordains that we should freely respond to his call for salvation. So we have a choice to make on matters pertaining to our own salvation but our choice is eventually going to be inconformity with God's purpose for our lives.

5.3.3. The elect and the non elect have equal opportunities to believe in the gospel

The rationale behind this notion stems from the idea that, if God has already willed from the foundations of the earth that only the elect will be saved, then the non-elect do not have the opportunity to respond to the gospel call for salvation and even if they are given the opportunity, it is purely meaningless since they are not destined to respond to salvation. Therefore there is practically no need for the gospel to be preached to them. As logically convincing as this inference might seem, biblical predestination does not support such claims. In order to develop a correct soteriology for the CBC, there is need for the leaders to carefully understand the extent of the atonement in general and the exact nature of its efficacy on individuals. They must be careful not to delineate tenets that limit the

⁴¹⁵ Wayne Grudem. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan, 1994: 680.

gospel only to the elect but one that extends to the non elect as well. Their tenets here must be deductive in nature i.e moving from general to particular, preaching the gospel to the whole world but impacting only the elect.

The fact that Jesus in Matthew 22:14 said, “For many are called but few are chosen.” Suggests a general to particular process in kingdom business; it was a statement which concludes the Parable of the Wedding Feast. The main reason why Jesus spoke this parable was to show how the kingdom of heaven will be like at the end of the age. According to the narrative, the king invited guests to a wedding feast but he got words from his servants that his invited guests refused to come for different reasons; some because they were busy, others because they did not like the king. Seeing that his guest might not come and all his preparations might be a waste, he resolved to send his servants into the streets to invite anyone they find such that the whole wedding hall was filled with people.

But amongst them was one who did not dress in wedding clothes, the king noted him and drove him away. Then Jesus concludes by saying that even though many are called or invited into the kingdom, only those who have been chosen will stay. Those who try to come without their sins being clothes or covered by the blood of Christ are not adequately clothed for the kingdom and the Lord will send them out into the darkness (Matthew 22:13). It must be understood from this that, the gospel message for salvation is meant to be preached to all. As the gospel is preached, all men are open to hear but only few respond because through the help of the Holy Spirit, they do not only hear but the message also makes sense to them. In many instances, (Matthew 11:15; Mark 4:9; Luke 8:8, 14:35), Jesus said “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” Meaning everyone has ears but not all have the ears to hear and respond.

Perhaps it would suffice to further elucidate these paradigms for the CBC by attempting to reconcile it against the backdrop of some mainline traditions. For instance, some traditions like Calvinism hold that the salvific purpose of Christ' death has been successfully accomplished and applied and those who have been saved are those whom Christ had in mind (the elect). Thus the saving effect of Christ's death is limited only to the elect. From its surface, it would appear as though Hyper Calvinism differs with Moderate Calvinism on this issue but a careful look will conclude that they both agree on this but just express it in different ways. The former's is a harsh way of putting it while the latter is a mild or moderate way of putting it which closely corroborate with other verses of scripture more appropriately.

Based on the premise above, Hyper Calvinism argues that Christ's death is not for everyone but only for the elect. Moderate Calvinism on the other hand argues that it is the effect of Christ's death that is for the elect and not the meaning and significance of it. The universal quantifiers in some key texts on the subject e.g Matthew 22:14 suggest that the news/message/importance/relevance/significance of Christ's death is meant for all men in the world to hear/know and even believe. But the saving effect of the message of the cross is only meant for those who have been predestined before hand to salvation. Those who are not elected do respond to the gospel in different ways; (1) It might sound stupid to them (2) They may understand but refuse to believe it (3) They may understand and even believe in the truth of the message but not willing to respect or submit to it. It is only those who have been elected who immediately or eventually respond to the message of the cross through the convicting work of the Holy Spirit.

This implies that while both traditions believe in the salvation of the elect only, moderate Calvinism is more of a deductive theological position that moves from the

general to the particular while Hyper Calvinism is simply a particular theological position which ignores/undermines the efficacy of the place of the general sense in the whole discuss. Therefore while moderate Calvinism believes that though many are called, only few are chosen (Matt. 22:14) Hyper Calvinism denies the many are called aspect and only believes that few are chosen. It can be consequently admitted from here that while both traditions are close to the bible, the closest however which the CBC leaders should consider in their process would obviously be a theological position that moves from the general to particular.

CHAPTER 6

PRACTICAL IMPACT ON CAMEROON BAPTIST CONVENTION'S THEOLOGY

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the main concern was to deconstruct biblical and theological paradigms for the CBC leaders to use as tools in delineating and defending their own tenets on soteriology in the proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise. This was done under the presupposition that a correct soteriology is fundamental to developing other doctrines. In this chapter therefore, the main concern is to show how correct soteriological tenets delineated from the deconstructed paradigms in chapter four will enhance CBC's understanding of other relevant theological issues such as her theology of conversion, evangelism, church discipline, baptism and even the Lord's Supper which will eventually inform the process of delineating and defending better tenets on these subjects in the proposed theological treatise.

6.1. Growth in C.B.C's understands of Conversion

The first impact of a correct soteriology on CBC's general theology is that it will enable the leaders to have a better positing on conversion. The subject of conversion is one of those technical areas that need careful attention. The technicality behind this subject comes up when one attempts to determine when exactly a person is said to be truly converted and treated accordingly in the church. To some leaders who respond to this issue, conversion is evidenced by a person's willingness to respond to an alter call after an evangelistic sermon and say the traditional sinner's prayer. To others, conversion is certain, when there is a visible change of attitude for the better. Others use a person's love

for the things of God and his/her commitment to the work of the ministry as the basis for determining whether or not a person is truly converted.

Even though these may have some merits, this research posits that such is not the actual biblical basis for determining conversion and as such, some CBC leaders are living on a presumptuous conversion testimony and not on a fully assured one. In one of his sermons, Spurgeon clarified the difference among church folks by explaining that there are those who are ready to be fully assured and those whom “it would be death to talk of it.”⁴¹⁶ He explained that there is a great difference between presumption and full assurance. While full assurance is based on a “solid ground,” presumption “takes for granted and with brazen face pronounces that to be its own which it has no right to whatsoever.”⁴¹⁷

The prince of preachers as he was sometimes called warned his congregation to beware of presuming that they are saved. He explained that “if there be no vital change, no inward godliness; if there be no love to God, no prayer, no work of the Holy Spirit,” then for someone to assume that he/she is saved is his/her “own assertion, and it may delude.”⁴¹⁸ But he clarified that “If with thy heart thou dost trust in Jesus, then thou art saved...If thy heart be renewed, if thou shall hate the things that thou didst once love, and love the things that thou didst once hate; if thou hast really repented; if there be a thorough change of mind in thee; if thou be born again,”⁴¹⁹ then the Christian may rejoice as a truly saved person. Thus a biblical understanding of predestination in CBC’s soteriology as

⁴¹⁶Charles H. Spurgeon. “The Prayer of Jabez.” *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. Pasadena: Texas, Pilgrim, 1995: 25.

⁴¹⁷Ibid., 25.

⁴¹⁸Ibid., 25.

⁴¹⁹Ibid.,25.

advocated in this thesis will inform the leaders with a better theological understanding of conversion as follows:

6.1.1. God's sovereignty and human responsibility in conversion

They will be able to reconcile God's sovereignty and human responsibility in conversion. A story is told about Karl Barth and Billy Graham that in one of his meetings with Graham, Barth told him that he loved his messages except for one thing: "Barth urged Graham to tell the people not that they must be saved but that they were already saved in Christ and that settles it."⁴²⁰ If predestination is understood as argued in this thesis, then CBC will understand that conversion solely depend on God but its application to the individual, solely depends on the person's efforts to respond in faith.⁴²¹ And this human effort is enabled by the Holy Spirit. With this theological concept, rejoicing therefore, over one converted soul in the CBC will be premised simply on the fact that the Holy Spirit has graciously convicted and converted this person and he/she has wilfully responded in faith.

6.1.2. When is a person believed to be converted?

Grudem defines the process of conversion in this way "conversion is a single action of turning from sin in repentance and turning to Christ in faith."⁴²² Going by

⁴²⁰See Mark Dever. *Nine Marksof a Healthy Church*. Wheaton: Illinois, Crossway Books, 2004: 107.

⁴²¹The reader is referred to the following resources for more on God's sovereignty in conversion and human responsibility: James Boice Montgomery. *Christ's Call to discipleship*. Chicago: Moody, 1986. Zane C. Hodges. *Absolutely Free! A Biblical Reply to Lordship Salvation*. Dallas: Redencion Viva, and Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1989; Anthony A. Hoekema. *Saved by Grace*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, and Exeter: Paternoster, 1989; John Murray. "Faith and Repentance." In *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955: 106-116; J.I Packer. "Evangelicals and the Way of Salvation: New Challenges to the Gospel-Universalism and Justification by Faith." In *Evangelical Affirmations*. Ed. By Kenneth S. Kantzer and Carl F.H Henry. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990: 107-136; J.I Packer. *Evangelicalism and the Sovereignty of God*. London: Intervarsity Press, 1961; Thomas Watson. *The Doctrine of Repentance*. Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 1987.

⁴²²Wayne Grudem. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrines*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing Company, 1994: 714.

Grudem's definition, conversion involves repentance and faith. A person is said to be converted when he/she changes his/her heart towards God in repentance and trusts in Christ and his word in faith. It is not just adjusting our lives to ourselves and our own desires. It is adjusting our lives to God and his ways with us and his claims upon us.⁴²³ The New Hampshire Confession of Faith, Article VIII underlines the relevance of repentance and faith in the process of conversion in this way:

We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus as our Prophet, Priest and King and relying on Him alone as the only and all sufficient saviour.⁴²⁴

Therefore, no serious member in the church can speak of true saving faith without having repentance for sin. It is also not possible for someone to say he/she has accepted Christ as saviour and Lord if that means just depends on him for salvation without a commitment to forsake sin and be obedient to Christ from that point on. Such was the experience of many church fathers and theologians in the history of the church: for Augustine, his conversion came when he heard a child's voice in the next yard saying "take up and read, take up and read." When he heard those words, he reached out for a bible which was beside him and his eyes fell on Romans 13:11-14:

And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here, so let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us behave decently as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.⁴²⁵

⁴²³ Mark Dever. *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*. Wheaton: Illinois, Crossway Books, 2004: 103.

⁴²⁴See O.C.S. Wallace. *What Baptists Believe: The New Hampshire Confession: An Exposition*. Nashville: Tennessee, The Sunday school Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1934.

⁴²⁵New International Version.

Having read these words, Augustine became convicted of sin and was converted to faith in Christ. For Luther, it was in his study of Psalms, Romans and Galatians that he began to see that the righteousness God required of us is not our own righteousness but the righteousness of Christ troth upon us which comes as God's free gift to all who believe in him. For John Bunyan, the famous writer of the Christian classic, "Pilgrim's progress", he heard two old washer-women talking about God with much insight and their discussion pricked his heart and God used that to bring Bunyan to faith in Christ.

For John Newton, the famous writer of the song "Amazing Grace," it was his prospects of drowning at the high sea as a slave trader that God used to bring him to Christ. For Spurgeon, it was a snow storm which led him to an old primitive Methodist deacon who was filling in for the preacher of the church. As Spurgeon sat down in the almost empty church, the old preacher got up looking straight at him and repeated one phrase again and again "look unto Christ! That is all you gotta do, just look unto Christ!" and God used that to open Spurgeon's eyes to the truth.⁴²⁶ There is no specific way in which people get converted. God can use any way to convert his people but whatever way he chooses, the purpose remains the same in every case – "to give us the gifts of repentance and faith"⁴²⁷

It is important to realize at this point that faith and repentance are not only confined to the beginning of the Christian life but are rather attitudes that continue for the rest of the Christian life. Grudem makes the point clear:

Although it is true that initial saving faith and initial repentance occur only once in our lives, and when they occur they constitute true salvation, nonetheless, the heart attitude of repentance and faith only begin at conversion. This same attitude should

⁴²⁶See Mark Dever. *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*. Wheaton: Illinois, Crossway Books, 2004: 116-117

⁴²⁷Ibid.

continue throughout the course of our Christian lives. Each day, there should be heartfelt response for sin that we have committed, and faith in Christ to provide for our needs and to empower us to live the Christian life.⁴²⁸

With such an understanding of conversion, CBC leaders will be enabled and informed to delineate and defend a biblically and theologically sound position on conversion in the proposed theological treatise.

6.2. Growth in C.B.C's understanding of evangelism

Once soteriology is correctly understood in the CBC, a correct theology of evangelism would also be the outcome. John Stott has rightly affirmed that, “biblical theology and practical strategy combine to make the local church the primary agent for evangelism.”⁴²⁹ But in the case of the CBC, their unresolved debate on the best mainline theological view to hold on predestination is affecting the practical progress in evangelism. Some ministers do not see evangelism as a priority for the church while others think otherwise. And in cases where evangelism is done, the motivation is usually towards numerical growth and expansion of the church as evangelism is often defined by achieved result. “But the way to tell whether in fact we are evangelizing is not to ask whether conversions are known to have resulted from your witness.” Parker noted “It is to ask whether you are faithfully making known the gospel message.”⁴³⁰ By understanding evangelism from an achieved result perspective, most churches in the CBC are actually more into a religious campaign for expansion than into evangelism. Cheesman further clarifies what evangelism is and what it is not in the following way:

Evangelism is not a making of proselytes; it is not persuading people to make a decision; it is not proving that God exists, or making a good case for the truth of

⁴²⁸Ibid. 717.

⁴²⁹John Stott. *The Living Church: convictions of a lifelong pastor*. Norton Street: Nottingham, Intervarsity Press, 2010: 52.

⁴³⁰J.I Packer. *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*. Downers Grove: Illinois, Intervarsity Press, 1991: 41.

Christianity; it is not inviting someone to a meeting; it is not exposing the contemporary dilemma, or arousing interest in Christianity; it is not wearing a badge saying “Jesus saves”! Some of these things are right and good in their place, but not of them should be confused with evangelism. To evangelize is to declare on the authority of God what he has done to save sinners, to warn men of their lost condition, to direct them to repent, and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.⁴³¹

Furthermore, the 1974 Lausanne conference clarified what evangelism really is. In this conference, John Stott explained that evangelism does not just mean to win convert but to simply announce the good news, irrespective of the result.⁴³² A correct soteriology would help CBC leaders to understand two important concepts in evangelism namely; the sovereignty of God in evangelism and man’s role in the process, as well as a right motivation for evangelism in the CBC.

6.2.1. The sovereignty of God and human responsibility in evangelism

Divine sovereignty and human responsibility in evangelism are compatible theological concepts that work together to bring the sinner to repentance. Spurgeon was once asked to reconcile these concepts and in response, he simply said they are friends that need no reconciliation.⁴³³ In his excellent little book on Evangelism and the sovereignty of God, J.I Packer’s explanation would suffice to understand this concept in the CBC:

It is necessary, therefore, to take the thought of human responsibility, as if affects both the preacher and the hearer of the gospel, very seriously indeed. But we must not let it drive the thought of divine sovereignty out of our minds. While we must always remember that it is our responsibility to proclaim salvation, we must never forget that it is God who saves. It is God who brings men and women under the sound of the gospel, and it is God who brings them to faith in Christ. Our evangelistic work is the instrument that he uses for this purpose, but the power that saves is not in the instrument. We must not at any stage forget that. For if we

⁴³¹ John Cheesman et. al. *The Grace of God in the Gospel*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1972: 119.

⁴³²See John Stott. “The Biblical Basis for Evangelism.” In *Let the Earth Hear his voice*. ed. J. D. Douglas. Minneapolis: worldwide, 1975: 69.

⁴³³Says pastor Eddie Rasnake. *Philosophy of Evangelism*. Sermon at Woodland Park Baptist Church. 1999. [Assessed 14/12/2012] <http://www.woodlandpark.org/downloads/philosophyEvangelism.pdf>.

forget that it is God's prerogative to give result when the gospel is preached, we shall start to think that it is our responsibility to secure them. And if we forget that only God can give faith, we shall start to think that the making of converts depends, in the last analysis not on God, but on us, and that the decisive factor is the way in which we evangelize. And this line of thought constantly followed through will lead us far astray.⁴³⁴

God is the one who gives faith and result when the gospel is preached. The author of Hebrews speaks of Him as "the author and finisher of our faith." (Hebrews 12:2). Again in John 6:44, the apostle explains how Jesus links the response to the gospel message as a sole responsibility of the Father as he says "No one can come to me unless the father who sent me draws them." This means that, while the evangelist is expected to do his best in preaching the gospel, CBC leaders should understand that visible success in evangelism depends more on the work of the Holy Spirit who does the conviction when the gospel is preached. Packer explains this further:

It is not right when we regard ourselves as responsible for securing converts, and look to our own enterprise and techniques to accomplish what only God can accomplish. To do this is to intrude ourselves into the office of the Holy Ghost, and to exalt ourselves as the agents of the new birth. And the point that we must see is this: only by letting our knowledge of God's sovereignty control the way in which we plan, and pray and work in his service, can we avoid becoming guilty of this fault. For where we are not consciously relying on God, there we shall inevitably be found relying on ourselves. And the spirit of self reliance is a blight on evangelism. Such however is the inevitable consequence of forgetting God's sovereignty in the conversion of souls.⁴³⁵

Once the CBC leaders understand the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man in salvation from this perspective, it will motivate the need for biblical evangelism.

⁴³⁴J.I Packer. *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*. Downers Grove: Illinois, Intervarsity Press, 1991: 27.

⁴³⁵*Ibid.*, 29.

6.2.2. A biblical motivation for evangelism

A correct soteriology will inspire a biblical motivation for evangelism in three important ways. Namely; our love for God and our desire to glorify Him, in obedience to the Great Commission and then because of our passion for lost souls.

6.2.2.1. The love for God and His glory

A correct soteriology as advocated in this project will lead the CBC leaders to agree that, God's gracious election is an amazing demonstration of his love that goes beyond justice. And if God has shown us such love, he expects us to reciprocate his love and this love for God leads to a desire to serve him. Evangelism is one of the chief ways to express our love for God which gives him ultimate glory. This is because it is a call to turn our lives from a self-focus to focusing on God and his creation. This also includes loving the people that God has created in his own image but who are alienated from him and in need of salvation from sin so they can be reconciled back to God. Cheesman et. al. explains this better:

Love for God is the only sufficient motive for evangelism. Self love will give way to self-centeredness; love for the last will fail with those whom we cannot love, and when difficulties seem insurmountable. Only a deep love for God will keep us following his ways, declaring his gospel when human resources fail. Only our love for God- and, more important, his love for us will keep us from the dangers which beset us. When the desire for popularity with men, or for success in human terms, tempts us to water down the gospel, to make it palatable, then only if we love God will we stand by his truth and his way.⁴³⁶

6.2.2.2. In obedience to the Great Commission

Matthew 28:19-20

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things

⁴³⁶John Cheesman et. al. *The Grace of God in the Gospel*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1972, 122.

whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Once a correct soteriology is developed, the importance and necessity for the great commission will become clear in the CBC: Since God has shown his saving love to undeserving men even while they were yet sinners and expects that they respond to this saving love in faith through the preaching of the gospel, then the already saved Christian will understand why God has given us the charge to go and evangelize. When Christians evangelize because they want to obey the Great Commission from this understanding, God is more glorified.

6.2.2.3. A passion for lost souls

Once the sovereignty of God and human responsibility in salvation is understood in CBC's soteriology, a genuine passion for lost souls to be saved will be another biblical motivation for evangelism. The evangelist goes out to evangelize not so that people might hear and perhaps believe but because there are God's elect out there who are still in the bondage of sin waiting for the gospel to be preached so that they might respond to faith in Christ.

These imply that, the biblical motivation for evangelism is not for the benefit of the church as an organization but first for God and then for the people evangelized. Numerical growth and church expansion should therefore not be the motivation but the result of a properly motivated evangelistic effort. Such an understanding of evangelism would surely inspire the C.B.C leaders as they delineate helpful tenets on evangelism in the proposed theological treatise.

6.3. Growth in C.B.C's understanding of church membership

Another impact of a correct soteriology in the C.B.C is that, it will enable the leaders to develop a better theology on church membership in the proposed theological treatise. They will understand that a church, according to the New Testament is a body of people who do not only profess but also give evidence that they have been saved by grace alone, for his glory alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.⁴³⁷ This implies that a church is not a building; the building is simply where the church meets. Membership therefore into the church should not be based on cooperation or willingness to be part of the building or the structure but based on evidence of being saved by grace. So the church is not a place where people come and expect to be saved, it is a place where saved people come to grow in fellowship with other believers.

What qualifies for church membership therefore does not start with the member, it starts with God and his saving grace effected in the life of the individual. Not all 'Christians' in the C.B.C member churches show evidence of being saved by grace, yet they are usually considered to be members as long as they remain registered and partake in the activities of the church. A practical impact of developing a correct soteriology as advocated in this project is that it will therefore help the C.B.C leaders to delineate helpful biblical tenets on church membership in the proposed theological treatise.

6.4. Growth in C.B.C's understanding of baptism and the Lord's supper

When matters of soteriology have been rightfully settled in the C.B.C, a correct theological view of baptism and the Lord's Supper in the proposed theological treatise would be the result. It is important to have a correct view of these ordinances because they

⁴³⁷ Mark Dever. *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*. Wheaton: Illinois, Good News Publishers, 2004:149.

are activities that indicate what a church thinks about salvation and also serve as membership control for the church. Baptism is simply the means of admitting people in the church and the Lord's Supper is the means for allowing people to give a sign of continuing in the membership of the church. Those who receive Baptism and the Lord's Supper are considered by the church to be saved. In the C.B.C, it is not usually so; what actually qualifies for Baptism is successful completion of the doctrinal classes while for the Lord's Supper, it is simply the fact that the person has been baptized.

This means that in C.B.C, if a person is saved by grace and has not gone through baptismal classes, that person will not be allowed to be baptized yet neither is he/she allowed to take the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is only for those who have become members in the church through Baptism. This kind of situation puts C.B.C in a state where those who are truly saved (and as such qualify as members of a biblical church) but have not been baptized are deprived of the privilege of partaking in the ordinances of the church while those who have been baptized but do not give evidence of salvation by grace alone partake in these ordinance without any restriction. This indicates serious weaknesses in C.B.C's soteriology.

Since a church is not a building or an organization but a place where saved people come together in fellowship, the C.B.C cannot deprive these truly saved but yet to be baptized Christians their right to partake in the activities of the church fellowship. This is by no means ignoring the relevance of baptism as a necessary ordinance that admits people into the church fellowship. The point is, these converts should be allowed to partake in these ordinances but arrangements should be made to baptize them as soon as possible. In this way, the meaning of the church as a place for those who have been saved by grace is affirmed.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper still remain the key marks to control membership in a local church. In fact they define a living church. A broader definition of the church would be a gathering of brethren saved by grace alone who are being initiated into the family of God through baptism and demonstrate a continuation of their membership in the church and the Christian life through partaking in the Lord's Supper. No matter how big or small the gathering is, as long as it possesses these qualities, it is ripe to be called a church. When a church is understood not from this biblical perspective but from an organizational point of view, it is the size of the church that determines whether or not it should be called a church and this is an improper way of understanding the church and its membership.

The C.B.C does not consider a gathering of brethren below 100 as a church but simply as a prayer group even if they practice baptism and the Lord's Supper. There is therefore a need for C.B.C to reconsider her soteriology in order to have a better view of church membership, baptism and the Lord's Supper. To this end, this research posits that once the C.B.C leaders are able to develop a correct soteriology, they will be able to correctly delineate and defend better tenets on these issues in the proposed theological treatise that will improve on their ministerial praxis within and outside the walls of the church.

6.5. Growth in CBC's understanding of church discipline⁴³⁸

⁴³⁸The purpose here is not to give a detailed explanation of what church discipline is all about. It is simply to show how the deconstructed paradigm on predestination can help improve CBC's understanding on church discipline. Should the reader wish to know more about church discipline, the following books are recommended for reference and for further reading: R. Albert Mohler, Jr. "Church Discipline: The Missing Mark," in John H. Armstrong (ed.) *The Compromised Church*. Wheaton: Illinois, Crossway, 1998, 171-187 the book will help the reader to have a good biblical understanding of the importance of church discipline in a local congregation; on the way to go about church discipline, the following books are recommended: Daniel E. Wray. *Biblical Church Discipline*. Carlisle: PA., Banner of Truth Trust, 1978; John L. Dagg. *Manual of Church Order*. Harrisonburg: Va., Gano, 1982; Mark Dever. *Polity: How Christians should live together in a church*. Washington: D.C., Center for Church Reform, 2001; J. E. Adams. *Handbook of Church Discipline*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing Company, 1986; Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *Life together*. San Francisco, HarperSan Francisco, 1993. For the history of church discipline in the church,

A correct theological view of church discipline depends on the soteriology of that church. Another impact of a correct soteriology in the general theology of the CBC is therefore that it will lead to a better understanding of church discipline. The leaders will agree that, the task of holiness and righteousness does not depend wholly on human effort but on God who saved him in the first place and that the grace that began the salvation process is still the same grace that will sustain the process till the end. When sin is brought to the attention of leaders, they simply understand that one member is down and needs to be lifted up for his own good and then for the purity of the church. In this case, church discipline is not a punishment for sin (in that sense of the word), but a way of restoring the person concerned back to the fold. Christian love as well as moral and spiritual assistance is highly needed at this time in the life of the person in question and not the other way around.

In most instances, church discipline in the CBC is usually administered as a punitive measure for sin committed by her members and when that happens, the person concerned is cut off from the activities of the church and does not usually associate with the rest of the Christians during this period. Wherever s/he goes within the church community, s/he carries that stigma of sin as others would look at him/her with a sense of disdain; “there goes the one who sinned.” This is not what biblical church discipline entails. It only reveals the weaknesses in CBC’s soteriology as it implies that CBC believes that holiness is the sole responsibility of man and should s/he fall short of it, discipline as a punishment becomes the inevitable. Dana responds to the abuse of church discipline in this way; “The abuse of discipline is reprehensible and destructive...it is time

the following book is recommended: Gregory A. Wills. *Demographic Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996

for a new generation of pastors to restore this important function of the church to its rightful significance and place in the church life.”⁴³⁹

A proper administration of church discipline is one of those attributes that defines a true church and that can be properly enhanced through a correct soteriology. The Belgic confession of 1561 made the point clear: “The marks by which the true church is known are these: if the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein...if church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin; in short, if all things are managed according to the pure word of God...”⁴⁴⁰ There is therefore a need for CBC leaders to develop a correct soteriology. They need to come in agreement on the fact that sin still remains an unresolved issue in the life a believer even after conversion. Transformation is not automatic but progressive leading up to a state of perfection and that will be until the second coming of the Lord. Sin in the life of a believer is not necessarily an abnormality since we are still in the flesh. It only becomes abnormal when the individual persists unrepentantly in that sin.

So when a Christian sins and admits his/her wrongs, there is no need to exercise discipline on the individual. Infact, every Christian who has been genuinely saved by grace may still fall into sin at one point of his/her life or the other. We are only made righteous through the righteousness of Christ. This means that by nature we are still sinners. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that we strive towards holiness by warring against our sinful human nature. If church discipline is simply disciplining those who sin, then every member of the church will eventually be disciplined at one point or another.

⁴³⁹H.E. Dana. *Manual of Ecclesiology*. Kansas City: Kan., Central Seminary Press, 1944: 244.

⁴⁴⁰Philip Schaff. *The Creeds of Christendom: With a History and Critical Notes*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House, 1983: 419-420.

So, sin remains an issue which the converted Christian will always fight against until Christ's second return.

The difference between a Christian who should not be disciplined and one who should be is not on whether they sin or not but on whether they are repentant when they sin and show a genuine willingness to strive for holiness. Such an understanding of church discipline is necessary for the CBC and to this end, this research argues that the deconstructed paradigms for understanding soteriology in this work will assist the CBC leaders to also delineate and defend better tenets on matters pertaining to church discipline in the proposed theological treatise.

CHAPTER 7

GENERAL SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Introduction

This project has been written as a theological response to the undefined state of CBC's theology. Central to the project is a proposition that the way forward for the theological future of the CBC lies in the establishment of a Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise which will contain CBC's own delineated and defended theological tenets. To this end, soteriology was singled out as the most central and fundamental doctrine that would inspire the development of other relevant doctrines needed in this treatise as Ryrie noted:

Soteriology, the doctrine of salvation, must be the grandest theme in the Scriptures. It embraces all of time as well as eternity past and future. It relates in one way or another to all of mankind, without exception. It even has ramifications in the sphere of the angels. It is the theme of both the Old and New Testaments. It is personal, national, and cosmic. And it centers on the greatest Person, our Lord Jesus Christ.⁴⁴¹

Thus in a bid to come up with a correct soteriology for this theological treatise, the research majored on deconstructing biblical and theological paradigms from predestination texts in general and Romans 9:18-23; 2 Peter 3:1-10 in particular that throw some light on some of the existing reformation traditions in the history of Protestantism like Lutheranism, Calvinism, Arminianism and later Barthianism which the CBC leaders could use as tools in the process of delineating and defending their own tenets on soteriology in the proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise.

7.1. Summary

In chapter one, the research process began with a critical study of how predestination has been interpreted by the mainline reformation traditions in the history of

⁴⁴¹ Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*. Wheaton, IL, Victor Books, 1987: 277.

Protestantism. Thus the chapter was entitled; *Reformation Traditions on Predestination in the History of Protestantism*. Its main concern was on the three mainline traditions that developed after the protestant reformation in the sixteenth century and latter Neo-orthodoxy that developed in the twentieth century. From this study, it was discovered that each of these traditions had their own take on the biblical perspective of predestination. Lutheranism held that all men are totally depraved without any free will until the time that they are regenerated. Calvinism differed slightly by arguing that all men are indeed totally depraved but they still have free will which is however limited by the human nature. Arminianism agreed to the idea of total depravity and the idea of human free will but argued that this free will is enabled by prevenient grace.

Furthermore, on the conditionality of salvation, Lutheranism argued that the election of people to salvation is unconditional. Calvinism took it further to say it is not just unconditional election to salvation, it also implies that eternal damnation is equally unconditional. Arminianism differed widely on this by arguing that election to salvation is conditional based on God's foreseen faith or unbelief in the destiny of individuals. Lutheranism further explained its predestination position by arguing that, justification is for all people and it was complete at Christ's death. Calvinism differed with Lutheranism by stating that even though it is right to say that justification is complete at Christ's death, it is however not for all people but only for those who have been predestined to salvation. Arminianism agreed more with Lutheranism by stating that justification is for all people through Christ death but it is not automatic; it is only applied when an individual puts his faith in Christ.

In the twentieth century, Neo-Orthodoxy developed as another tradition with the main objective to re-evaluate the teachings of these sixteen century traditions. Prominent

on this tradition has been Karl Barth. In evaluating these traditions for the modern man, Barth considered the Calvinistic teaching to be too extremist especially its view on double predestination. To him, understanding predestination from that perspective would make God appear to be more of a ruthless dictator than a loving and caring God who saves through Jesus Christ.

When the Baptist minister, William Carey opened the world's eyes with his arguments for the biblical mandate for evangelism and missions as a duty for all Christians, many protestant groups caught the vision for missions to other people groups in the world. As a result these protestant traditions that developed in Europe began to spread to other parts of the world including Africa especially in the 19th century. The Republic of Cameroon was no exception to the influx of protestant missionaries. Hence, chapter two focused on how these missionaries established the protestant tradition in Cameroon and how it eventually influenced or shaped the theological history and systems of the Cameroon Baptist Convention. This explains the title of the chapter; *Protestantism in Cameroon: The Cameroon Baptist Convention*.

Beginning from the influence of the London Baptist Missionaries to the German Baptist Missionaries and finally to the North American Baptist Missionaries, the history of the Cameroon Baptist Convention theology was traced to its current state. It was realized that, due to the different theological traditions as well as differences on their vision among the Baptists in Cameroon, the Cameroon Baptist Convention did not really have a good opportunity to develop a healthy theological system which will serve as a standard for faith and practice for her member churches. And because of this, even though the Cameroonian indigenes took over the administration of the Convention in 1954, they have still not been able to come together to understand and define their own theology. Due to

the undefined nature of theology in the CBC, the researcher argued for the need for a theological treatise in the CBC as a solution and identified soteriology as a fundamental doctrine that needs to be developed first. And to develop a correct soteriology for the CBC, there was a need for some biblical and theological tools which the leaders would use in the process.

Hence chapter three, four and five majored on that. Chapter three focused on a survey of predestination in scripture to ascertain its biblical evidence while chapter four attempted an exegetical and theological study of some problematic texts on predestination in Scriptures. Since some have argued that predestination is not a doctrine that is supported by scriptures, it was necessary for these chapters to do a fresh inquiry on the canonicity of this doctrine especially as the objective of the research was not just to develop theological paradigms from mainline reformation traditions but mainly from the exegesis of key texts which focus on this subject. From this survey, it was gathered that the opposition against predestination as a doctrine not supported by scriptures is only a presupposition and not a fact; the concept of predestination is well described in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament.

But how does the bible support predestination and what can this possibly mean to the C.B.C today? To get to the root of this, it was necessary to do an exegesis of some key controversial passages like Romans 9:18-23 and 2 Peter 3:1-10 in chapter four. From this study, it was discovered that their apparent discrepancy on the subject of predestination is only apparent as the two texts work together in explaining that predestination reveals a totally just God who ensures that no sinner goes unpunished and by punishing these sinners for their sins, those whom he has graciously saved from this wrath must perceive their salvation as an amazing demonstration of His love that goes beyond justice. And that

all of those whom God has shown this saving grace will eventually come to repentance because God does not want them to perish with the rest that is why he elected them before the foundations of the earth in the first place.

Based on this biblical perspective of predestination and keeping in mind some of the mainline protestant tenets that corroborate with the bible, chapter five then moved on to deconstructing some biblical and theological paradigms which the CBC leaders could use as tools in the process of delineating and defend their own tenets on soteriology in the proposed theological treatise. Thus the chapter was entitled; *Paradigms for Soteriology in the Proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise*. Three biblical paradigms were deconstructed from the exegesis of Romans 9:18-23 and three from the exegesis of 2 Peter 3:1-10. In Romans 9:18-23. It was posited that, in order for the leaders to be able to develop a correct soteriology, matters pertaining to the glory of God and his dealings with man especially on salvation must be clearly understood. They will need to be in agreement on the fact that when it comes to salvation, it is all about God and his glory. That God is not as concerned with our human opinions and expectations as he is concerned with his ultimate glory. Once there is agreement on this, then they will be on an express road towards developing a correct soteriology for the convention.

The second paradigm for this purpose was that they must understand the true nature and extent of God's sovereignty. They must be in agreement on the fact that God's sovereignty is not only limited to material things in the universe but it is also inclusive of all human beings. When this is understood, it will be easy to realise that even though humans have their free will to choose between good and evil, God is actually ruling over us all and this means how we eventually end is directly or indirectly linked to God's purpose. Not to believe that God rules over all men would be to limit his powers as the all

mighty and to believe that he rules over all will make possible for the understanding of election and reprobation which will in turn lead to the development of a correct soteriology.

The final paradigm that was deconstructed from the exegesis of Romans 9:18-23 was that, in order for the C.B.C leaders to correctly develop tenets on soteriology for the proposed theological treatise, they must be careful to only look at predestination from its positive aspect as explained by scriptures than looking at the logical implication of the teaching based on human reasoning. Once they look at predestination in a positive way as explained in the bible, they will realise that it is a doctrine that does not aim at projecting God as a ruthless despot but one that aims at portraying two very important virtues of God namely; his love and his justice. When God elects to salvation those who by their sinful nature deserve nothing but his wrath, he is simply demonstrating his amazing love that goes beyond what they deserve. This should cause those who have been saved by grace through faith to forever remain thankful to God for showing such an undeserving love to them. When God ensures that sinners go to hell as a consequence of their sin, he is simply acting justly and not impartially because that is what they deserve in the first place. Rather than thinking that God is unfair not to have chosen these ones for salvation, the C.B.C leaders should instead see this divinely demonstrated act of justice as God's way of showing the extent of his love to the elect who are no better than the reprobate.

From the exegetical study of 2 Peter 3:1-10, it was deconstructed for the CBC that that predestination does not imply that once a person has been saved by grace through faith, s/he cannot be swayed away from the truth. It is the responsibility of the saved to maintain their righteousness through an unflinching determination to living in accordance with the word of God. Once predestination is understood from this perspective, it will be

easier for all the variant positions on the security of salvation to be reconciled which will enhance a unanimous position for the C.B.C leaders to then proceed to delineate correct tenets on soteriology in the proposed theological treatise.

It was further deduced from the exegesis of 2 Peter 3:1-10 that even though it is possible for a saved person to sway away from the truth, God is however patient with every one of them in ensuring that they come back to the fold because it is his amazing love that saved them in the first place while they were yet sinners. The fact that God is patient with them implies that he is expecting them to make a decision to come back to the fold. This implies that the C.B.C leaders need to be in agreement with the fact that even though salvation might be the work of God through the work of the Holy Spirit, maintaining a saved life is the work and efforts of every individual who must consciously make a free decision to hold fast to the grace s/he has received.

And finally, it was also deconstructed that, God's displayed patience on those who have swayed away from the truth must not be taken for granted because it does not cancel the fact that he will not pass judgement for sin. This thus eliminates the idea which is frequently cited in opposition of predestination that once a person is saved, he is free to live the way s/he pleases since it was grace that made possible for his/her salvation. The fact that God punishes sin should bring fear in the hearts of all who have been saved by grace and should cause them to strive for holy living which has been made possible by God's saving grace.

Apart from paradigms deconstructed from the exegetical study of Romans 9:18-23 and 2 Peter 3:1-10, other paradigms were also deconstructed from bible and theology in general that C.B.C leaders could also use as tool in the process of delineating and defending their own tenets on soteriology in the proposed Cameroon Baptist theological

treatise. Some of these paradigms include the following; that it is important for the CBC leaders to understand the place of evangelism in the predestination discourse as this would eventually help in developing a correct soteriology and to this, it was posited in the research that for CBC's soteriology to be correct, their understanding of predestination must necessitate evangelism.

It was also submitted that In order to develop a correct soteriology in the proposed theological treatise, the C.B.C leaders must ensure that the emphasis of God's sovereignty in salvation must not ignore the relevance/place of human choice in the whole process. And lastly, the opportunity to hear the gospel between the elect and the non elect must not be limited only to the elect in C.B.C's soteriology if it must be truly biblical. It must be agreed that both have equal opportunities to believe in the gospel even though only the elect would eventually respond to it through the working of the Holy Spirit.

Since these paradigms were deconstructed under the presupposition that a correct soteriology would eventually lead to the development of other relevant subjects necessary in the proposed theological treatise, chapter six attempted to justify this assumption. Thus it was entitled *Practical Impact on Cameroon Baptist Convection's Theology*. and in it, it was learnt that a correct soteriology would eventually lead to growth in CBC's theology of conversion, evangelism, church membership, baptism and the Lord's supper and not leaving out C.B.C's theology of church discipline. Thus the necessity for these paradigms as tools for the C.B.C leaders for this purpose could not be over emphasised.

7.2. Conclusion

This dissertation shows that practical theological growth in C.B.C is possible if their leaders and theologians will pocket their personal views and traditions and seek to

allow the Bible to determine what should or should not be for the convention. Developing a helpful framework that will define the trajectory for a contextualized theological construct for the C.B.C is not usually an easy task especially as most of their ministers have not attained a higher level of theological education (especially in the discipline of systematic theology) which would equip them with the relevant theological competence to develop helpful theological principles for the C.B.C in this regard. Written by a minister of the C.B.C who is familiar with its theological landscape, the researcher believes that this project that falls within the scientific frame work of systematic theology at the doctoral level could be quite resourceful to the C.B.C leaders in ensuring their theological progress.

Given that the paradigms posited from this research have been deconstructed from the exegesis of key controversial texts on predestination than they have been from a specific mainline theological tradition, the researcher expects that every serious minister in the C.B.C who holds on to the Bible as the standard for faith and practice and who believes in the inerrancy of Scriptures would not find these biblical paradigms to be problematic or biased. Unity is needed if the C.B.C must make progress and that unity can never be realised unless the Bible is made the central point of concern for all. The researcher couldn't agree more with Dr. Philemon Yong⁴⁴² that the future of the C.B.C's theology is bright if the Bible increasingly remains the focal point of its ministers. Thus he stated:

I have learned that when people see what the Bible actually says, they will accept it... [The future of the Cameroon Baptist Convention theology] will not be worse than it is now since hardly much exists now. Given the current condition, I am more positive and can only see the situation getting better and not worse. More

⁴⁴²A South American Baptist theologian who served as a missionary professor at the Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary for over seven years and considered by the researcher to be one of the most influential theologians whose presence has left its positive marks on the development of C.B.C's theology.

people are getting educated, more are taking the Bible seriously, those who a right in their theology will soon have leadership roles etc. So, I think it will instead get better.⁴⁴³

7.3. Suggestions

7.3.1. A Suggested Outline for Soteriology⁴⁴⁴ in the Proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise

As has been reiterated since from its beginning, the purpose of this project is not to develop tenets on soteriology for the CBC in the proposed theological treatise but to simply develop tools which the leaders can use in developing tenets on soteriology for this purpose as they come together in a united theological front. Having understood how the subject has been treated by scriptures and reformation traditions and the various theories that have been deconstructed from this study, it suffices for this project to end with a suggested outline for soteriology which is ofcourse informed by the data collected and the theories constructed in this project. The outline for soteriology in the proposed theological treatise may consist of three fundamental sections; section A should look at the role of God the Father in soteriology, section B should look at the role of the son and section C, the role of the Holy Spirit.

Section A- The Eternal Role of the Father in Soteriology

1. The meaning and scope of soteriology

Here, the CBC leaders need to delineate tenets that aim at explaining in simple and plain terms for the lay members of the convention to understand the encompassing scope of

⁴⁴³ Philemon Yong. "The Current State of theology in the C.B.C." *Exclusive Interview*. Minneapolis: Minnesota, 13th July 2012.

⁴⁴⁴See the following for more insight on the guideline for soteriology: John R. W. Stott. *Basic Christianity*. Inter-Varsity Press, 1958; Lewis Sperry Chafer. *Salvation: God's Marvelous Work of Grace*. Dunham: Kregal, Nabu Press, 2010; C. Gordon Olson. *Getting the Gospel Right: A Balanced View of Salvation Truth*. Global Gospel Publishers, 2005; Bruce Demarest. *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*. Crossway, 1997.

salvation that includes the total work of God by which he seeks to redeem man from the power of sin and to bestow on him the riches of his grace which includes both eternal and abundant life.

2. The Motivations of soteriology

Here, the CBC leaders need to explain what necessitated the divine decision to save man from the sink hole of sin into his glorious light and how the lay members of the convention need to understand and apply it to their lives.

3. The three phases in soteriology

Here, the CBC leaders must designate and defend tenets that explain the three fold phases involved in the divine soteriological process which involves past, present and future i.e salvation has been accomplished and applied, it is being accomplished and applied and it shall be accomplished and applied.

4. Election and Reprobation

Here, the CBC leaders need to designate and defend tenets that explain these two concept in such a way that questions such as when and why God chooses us and whether others are not chosen must be made clear for the lay men and women of the convention to understand and apply into their lives.

5. Infants in divine soteriology

Here, the CBC leaders need to delineate and defend tenets for the convention that explain the implication of election and reprobation to infants who have not come to the age of knowing the difference between what is good or evil. This section must answer questions like; when does God elect and reprobate, is it before or after birth? What happens when an infant dies at a tender age before reaching the age of knowing the difference between good and evil? Should that child be thought of as elected or reprobated? This section must

provide biblical and theological principles for the lay men and women of the convention to understand and apply to their lives.

6. The implications of soteriology

Here, the CBC leaders need to explain the theological significance of divine soteriology in the life of a Christian and the implications to the body of Christ. From this section, the lay men and women of the CBC must understand that first, divine soteriology reveals God's love to a people who deserve nothing but his wrath. Second, divine soteriology through the person of Christ is an express manifestation of Grace which in both principle and practice no one deserves. Third, that divine soteriology also manifest God's holiness as He makes possible for man to be reconciled to him by coming up with a salvation plan meant to cleanse man from sin so that he may once again have the opportunity to be in fellowship with the Father. And fourth, divine soteriology restores the fellowship between God and man and enables man to manifest the goodness of God despite his imperfections.

Section B- The Redemptive Role of the Son in Soteriology

1. As prophet

To a people who prior to their conversion were familiar with the concept of prophets mostly from an African Traditional Religious point of view, the CBC leaders need to develop a theological position in this section for the Christians in the convention that explains how Christ is the literal spoken word of God who brings God's message of instruction to us. And how the order of prophets as seen in the Old Testament reaches perfection only in Christ as God's perfect revelation of Himself to man.

2. As priest

To a people who prior to their conversion were familiar with the concept of a priest mostly from an African Traditional Religious point of view, the CBC leaders need to develop a theological position in this section for the Christians in the convention that explains how

as priest, Christ plays a significant role in divine soteriology by offering an acceptable sacrifice of his own blood to God for our sins and also intercedes for us now in his living capacity as a faithful high priest.

3. As king

In this section, the CBC leaders must explain to the understanding of the lay men and women in the convention how as king, Christ plays a significant role in soteriology by bringing to completion the work of redemption and establishes his reign over the kingdom of redeemed men. Which involves (1.) a literal earthly reign over a literal earthly kingdom with Israel as the nation and Jerusalem as the capitol; (2) a spiritual reign over those who have been redeemed (3) a universal reign over all things both spiritual and material.

Section C- The Empowering Role of the Holy Spirit in Soteriology

1. The Gospel call and the effective call

Here, the CBC leaders must explain the difference between the gospel call and the effective call and show how through the work of the Holy Spirit, man responds to the gospel and is drawn to the saving grace of the Father. The lay men and women in the convention need not to only understand what this call is all about but how it becomes effective to the hearers when they hear the gospel being preached.

2. Conviction of sin

The CBC leaders will need to develop tenets that seek to explain what it really means to be born again and the role the Holy Spirit plays in this process of regeneration in such a way that the ordinary Christians in the CBC will understand and apply to their lives.

3. Conversion

Here, clarity would be needed for the good of the lay men and women in the CBC on the relationship and difference between faith and repentance as enabled by the Holy Spirit. The CBC leaders will need to explain what true repentance really is/means and the difference between faith and saving faith on matters pertaining to salvation.

4. Justification

In this section, the CBC leaders will need to delineate and defend tenets that explain the convention's position on when it can be said that a person has gained a right standing before God and how this is done through the work of the Holy Spirit.

5. Adoption

Here, careful tenets must be delineated as the convention's position on what is considered an acceptable standard for membership in God's family (both spiritual and physical-the church). The CBC leaders will also point out the expected benefits of being a member of God's family so that the people will understand what to expect as Christians in the convention.

6. Sanctification

Here, doctrines on growth in Christian maturity need to be developed and the expected blessings that comes along with it. The CBC leaders must clarify for the benefit of the Christians in the convention how through the powerful working of the Holy Spirit, they can experience a progressive process of sanctification into the likeness of Christ.

7. Glorification

Here, the CBC leaders will need to develop theological tenet that aim at explaining when the saved brethren in the convention will receive resurrected bodies through the miraculous workings of the Holy Spirit and how they will look like and what will happen to them with their resurrected bodies.

7.3.2. Other theological doctrines relevant for the proposed Cameroon Baptist Theological Treatise

7.3.2.1. Bibliology- The doctrine of the bible

7.3.2.1.1. Suggested resources for C.B.C leaders

R.C Sproul. *Knowing Scriptures*. Published in 1978 by InterVarsity Press .

This book will help the CBC leaders to dig out the true meaning of Scripture for the good of the convention. In it, Sproul has done well to lay the groundwork by discussing why it is important to study the bible and how our own personal study relates to interpretation. He also presents in simple, basic terms the science of interpretation and gives practical guidelines for applying this science.

F.F. Bruce, Philip Wesley Comfort, Carl F.H. Henry and J.I. Packer. *The Origin of the Bible*. Published in 2003 by Tyndale House Publishers.

This book will provide the CBC leaders with a fascinating overview of how the Bible was first inspired, canonized, read as sacred literature, copied in ancient Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, and eventually translated into the languages of the world. This resource will surely play a helpful role in enabling them develop a bibliology for the convention in the proposed theological treatise.

J.I. Packer. *God Has Spoken*. Published in 2012 by Baker Academic.

This book deals with the growing controversies in mainline denomination over issues like the inspiration of scripture and the acceptance of homosexuality. In it, Parker stresses the need for church leaders to return to the bible by pointing out the way to understand and apply life-changing truths in the bible. This would certainly be a helpful resource for the CBC leaders in delineating and defending tenets on bibliology in the proposed theological treatise.

N.T. Wright. *Scripture and the Authority of God: How to Read the Bible Today*. Published in 2011 by HarperOne.

In this book, Wright delivers a new model for how to understand the place of scripture and God's authority in the midst of religious confusion which would certainly be a helpful resource for the CBC leaders. The book gives life to the old doctrine of the authority of scripture by presenting a fresh, helpful and concise approach to reading the bible today.

D.A. Carson, Andrew David Naselli. *Collected Writings On Scripture*. Published in 2010 by Crossway Books

In this book, respected scholar D. A. Carson who has written widely on the nature of Scripture over the past thirty years presents a theologically balanced and confessional perspective of scriptures in such a way that will help the CBC leaders in the process of delineating and defending their own tenets on bibliology in the proposed theological treatise.

Andreas J. Kostenberger and Richard D. Patterson. *Invitation to biblical interpretation : exploring the hermeneutical triad of history, literature, and theology*. Published in 2011 by Kregel Publications.

This is certainly an excellent book that would be helpful for the CBC leaders as it will provide them with the relevant methodologies find out both the historical setting and the literary context, as well the theological message of biblical texts. I strongly recommend it for this purpose.

7.3.2.2. Theology Proper- The doctrine of God

7.3.2.2.1 Suggested resources for C.B.C leaders

Christopher Kaiser *The Doctrine of God*. Published in 2001 by Wipf and Stock Publishers.

This book will be helpful for the CBC leaders because it provides a good historical introduction and outlines the basic tenets of theology proper, tracing the history of Christian reflection about God, His existence and attributes.

R.C. Sproul. *Discovering the God Who Is: His Character and Being. His Power and Personality*. Published in 2011 by Gospel Light Publications.

In this book, Dr. Sproul passionately teaches about the character of God, explaining the existence and attributes of God in clear language that anyone can follow and understand. Thus would be helpful for CBC leaders in their process of developing the doctrine of God in the proposed theological treatise.

Gerald L. Bray "The Doctrine of God" in *Contours of Christian Theology*. Published in 1993 by InterVarsity Press.

In this book, Bray wrestles with the questions of theology proper by examining the biblical teaching as well as the way classic and contemporary theologians have understood the biblical teaching. This book is strongly recommended for CBC

leaders as they delineate tenets on the doctrine of God in the proposed theological treatise.

John Frame. *The Doctrine of God: A Theology of Lordship*. Published in 2002 by Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company.

Frame's work is a contemporary Reformed treatment of the doctrine of God which would certainly be helpful for CBC leaders. He deals with God's attributes and acts and concludes with a lengthy discussion of the Trinity.

Thomas F. Torrance. *Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons*. Published in 2001 by Continuum International Publishing Group.

In this book, Torrance makes an advanced treatment of the doctrine of God which would be helpful for the CBC leaders. He is cited often in the works of other scholars, including Reformed theologians such as Robert Letham and Douglas Kelly thus the book is recommended for the CBC leaders.

Richard P.C. Hanson and R.P.C Hanson. *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318-381 A.D.*

This massive scholarly work traces every detail of the Arian controversy from A.D. 318 - 381. There are extensive discussions of the events and debates leading up to the councils of Nicea and Constantinople. It will be a helpful resource for the CBC leaders as they develop their theology proper in the proposed theological treatise.

7.3.2.3. Christology- The doctrine of Christ

7.3.2.3.1 Suggested resources for C.B.C leaders

Bruce A. Ware. *The Man Christ Jesus: Theological Reflections on the Humanity of Christ*. Published in 2012 by Crossway Books.

This book examines what it really means to think of Jesus as being human. In it, Ware takes his readers back to the biblical text to show them a profoundly human Jesus who faced many of the same difficulties and limitations they experience in today. He explores the significance of Christ's humanity and helps his readers to learn, by the power of the Spirit, to follow in Jesus' steps. Certainly a helpful book for CBC leaders in developing a Christology in the proposed theological treatise.

John Piper. *The Passion of Jesus Christ: Fifty Reasons Why He Came to Die*. Published in 2004 by Crossway Books.

In this book, Piper provides thoughtful answers to some of the burning issues about the passion of Christ which in a great way would provide the CBC leaders

with some substance as they develop a Christology in the proposed theological treatise.

Richard Bauckham. *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity*. Published in 2008 by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

This book is a greatly revised and expanded edition of Bauckham's acclaimed "God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament" (1999), which helped redirect scholarly discussion of early Christology. It will definitely be helpful for the CBC leaders.

Donald MacLeod. "The Person of Christ" in *Contours of Christian Theology*. Published in 1998 by InterVarsity Press.

In this book, MacLeod does justice to the doctrine of Christ by addressing the subject from a multifaceted point of view. He looks at the NT and how recent attempts have been made to understand its Christology. He also focuses on how Christ has been treated in the history of Christian theology. Certainly a helpful resource for CBC leaders.

Raymond Edward Brown. *An Introduction to New Testament Christology*. Published in 1994 by Continuum International Publishing Group.

The book mainly focuses on exploring the identity of Jesus in the New Testament which would be helpful for the CBC leaders as they develop a Christology in the proposed theological treatise.

N.T. Wright. *The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is*. Published in 1999 by InterVarsity Press.

In this book, Wright challenges his readers to take seriously the study of the historical Jesus by explaining who he really was and is now. It will help the CBC leaders as they develop a Christology for in the proposed theological treatise.

John MacQuarrie. *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought*. Published in 1991 by T&T Clark.

In this book, Macquarrie represents a vital contribution to Christology. He begins with a helpful consideration of the main New Testament sources and also the period up to and including classical theology. The second part of the book examines the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment critique of classical Christology, together with attempts at reconstruction. And in the final part, Macquarrie makes his own systematic and constructive Christological statement which would certainly be inspirational for the CBC leaders as they develop a Christology in the proposed theological treatise.

Gordon D. Fee. *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study*. Published in 2007 by Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, LLC.

This book is an exhaustive study of Pauline Christology which is recommended for the CBC leaders. In it, Fee provides a detailed analysis of the letters of Paul (including those whose authorship is questioned) individually, exploring the Christology of each one, and then attempts a synthesis of the exegetical work into a biblical Christology of Paul.

Darrell L. Bock. *Jesus According to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels*. Published in 2002 by Baker Academic.

Against the argument that the truth about Christ can only be learnt from extrabiblical document, Darrell Bock, argues that when read together, the Gospels provide a clear picture of Jesus and his unique claims to authority. It approaches the study of Christ from a biblio-centric perspective which will certainly be helpful for the CBC leaders.

D.A. Carson. *Jesus the Son of God: A Christological Title Often Overlooked, Sometimes Misunderstood, and Currently Disputed*.

In this book, Carson sheds some light on Jesus' identity with a commendable exegetical clarity and theological insight, first by broadly surveying Jesus' biblical name as "the Son of God", and then by focusing on two key texts that speak of Christ's sonship. He then concludes with the implications of Jesus' divine sonship for how modern Christians think and speak about Christ. Certainly a helpful resource for CBC leaders.

7.3.2.4. Pneumatology- The doctrine of the Holy Spirit

7.3.2.4.1 Suggested resources for C.B.C leaders

John Owen. "The Holy Spirit." in *Treasures of John Owen for Today's Readers*. Published in 1998 by Banner of Truth.

The book is a modernized abridgement of Owen's massive Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit. It deals with the name, nature, personality and operations of the Spirit and urging the need for gospel holiness. It will certainly be helpful for the CBC leaders as they develop a Pneumatology in the proposed theological treatise.

R.C. Sproul. *The Mystery of the Holy Spirit*. Published in 1994 by Tyndale House Publishers.

In this book, Sproul draws on the witness of Scripture and the testimony of the church's greatest thinkers, as he looks at God the Holy Spirit and his roles. He handles the perplexing aspects of the doctrine in a thoughtful way which the researcher believes would be helpful for the CBC leaders as they develop a

Pneumatology in the proposed theological treatise. covers this perplexing doctrine as well as the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Sinclair B. Ferguson. "The Holy Spirit." in *Contours of Christian Theology*. Published in 1997 by IVP Academic.

Ferguson's book is rooted and driven by the scriptural story of the Spirit in creation and redemption. It explains the church's historical theology of the Spirit and shows the wide variety of contemporary Christians who have explored the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It will be a helpful resource to the CBC leaders.

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen. *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective*. Published in 2002 by Baker Academic.

In this book, Kärkkäinen provides a helpful guideline for readers to discern the activities of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the third millennium as he focuses on the ecumenical, international, and contextual pneumatologies as well as international scopes which gives voice to African and Latin American perspectives on pneumatology. It would be a vital resource for the CBC leaders.

James M. Hamilton Jr. *God's Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments*. Published in 2002 by B&H Academic.

This book will be helpful for CBC leaders as they develop a pneumatology in the proposed theological treatise. It answers some vital questions aim to explain the works of the Holy Spirit in salvation history.

Vincent E. Bacote. *The Spirit in Public Theology: Appropriating the Legacy of Abraham Kuyper*. Published in 2005 by Baker Academic.

This is another helpful resource recommended for the CBC leaders. In it, Bacote, demonstrates the necessity for Christians to know how to follow Jesus in every area of life. He shows how the Dutch politician and church leader Abraham Kuyper lived a thoroughly Christian life. He then explains why Christians need to follow Kuyper by taking their faith into the public sphere. Identifying the characteristics of a true Christian worldview. He also demonstrates the need for a public theology that stresses engagement between the church and the world.

7.3.2.5. Anthropology- The doctrine of man

7.3.2.5.1 Suggested resources for C.B.C leaders

J. Gresham Machen. *The Christian View of Man*. Published in 1984 by Banner of Truth Trust.

The book provides a helpful insight on man from a biblical perspective which will certainly be resourceful for the CBC leaders as they develop the doctrine of man in the proposed theological treatise.

John W. Cooper. *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-dualism Debate*. Published in 2000 by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

In this book, Cooper deals helpfully with the body-soul question. Certainly a recommended resource for CBC leaders as they develop the doctrine of man in the proposed theological treatise.

John Piper and Wayne Grudem (eds). *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*. Published in 2012 by Crossway Books.

The book is a collection of essays written in response to arguments put forward by evangelical feminists. It contains a good number of helpful chapters that would be resourceful for the CBC leaders as they develop the doctrine of man in the proposed theological treatise.

Anthony Hoekema. *Created in God's Image*. Published 1994 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

This book is a helpful Reformed overview of the biblical teaching on the nature of man and sin. It has some insightful chapters on what the church has taught about the meaning of "the image of God." Which will be very resourceful for CBC leaders as they develop the doctrine of man in the proposed theological treatise.

H.D MacDonald. *The Christian View of Man*. Published in 1981 by Crossway books.

The book will furnish the CBC leaders with a helpful perspective on Christian anthropology which will inspire them as they develop the doctrine of man in the proposed theological treatise.

Philip Edgcumbe Hughes. *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ*. Published in 1989 by Intervarsity press.

As the CBC leaders work towards developing the doctrine of man in the proposed theological treatise, Hughes' book is recommended because it will help in explaining how man's true image is found and reflected in Christ, thus making their anthropology Christ centered.

7.3.2.6. Ecclesiology- The doctrine of the church

7.3.2.6.1 Suggested resources for C.B.C leaders

Mark Dever. *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*. Published in 2004 by Crossway Books.

In this book, Dever points out the various models that make for a healthy church that church leaders need to seriously consider. Thus recommended for the CBC leaders as they develop an Ecclesiology in the proposed theological treatise.

Jim Belcher. *Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional*. Published in 2009 by IVP Books.

In this book, Belcher expounds on a fresh perspective on Ecclesiology in this post modern era. This work will certainly be helpful to the CBC leaders as they develop their own Ecclesiology in the proposed theological treatise.

Tim Chester and Steve Timmis. *Total Church: A Radical Reshaping Around Gospel and Community*. Published in 2008 by Crossway Books.

This is another helpful resource recommended to the CBC leaders. In it, Chester and Timmis outline the biblical case for making gospel and community central and then apply this dual focus to evangelism, social involvement, church planting, world missions, discipleship, pastoral care, spirituality, theology, apologetics, youth and children's work. The book calls the body of Christ to rethink its perspective and practice of church, it charts a middle path between the emerging church movement and conservative evangelicalism that the CBC leaders will find helpful.

Timothy Keller. *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City*. Published in 2012 by Zondervan Publishing Company.

In this book, Timothy Keller, outlines a theological vision for ministry that is organized around three core commitments: Gospel-centered, City-centered and Movement-centered. It will be a helpful resource for CBC leaders as they develop their own contextualized Ecclesiology in the proposed theological treatise.

Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears. *Vintage Church: Timeless Truths and Timely Methods*. Published in 2008 by Crossway Books

Driscoll and Breshears have done a good job to put forth twelve practical questions about church doctrine and answer them in clear, biblical language that both church leaders and lay people can understand. It will help CBC leaders as they develop their own contextualized Ecclesiology in the proposed theological treatise

Rich Warren. *The Purpose-Driven Church*. Published in 1995 by Zondervan Publishing Company.

This is a helpful resource that has seriously impacted the church by bringing focus and direction to many pastors and church leaders all over the world. It would certainly be a helpful resource for CBC leaders as they develop their own contextualized Ecclesiology in the proposed theological treatise

Brad Harper and Paul Louis Metzger. *Exploring Ecclesiology: An Evangelical and Ecumenical Introduction*. Published in 2009 by Brazos Press.

In this introduction to ecclesiology, Brad Harper and Paul Louis Metzger offer an insightful evangelical yet ecumenical survey of the church in mission and doctrine. It combines biblical, historical, and cultural analysis, and explores the church as a Trinitarian, eschatological, worshiping, sacramental, serving, ordered, cultural, and missional community. It also offers practical application, addressing contemporary church life issues such as women in ministry, evangelism, social action, consumerism in church growth trends, ecumenism, and the church in postmodern culture. The substance in this book will certainly appeal to the CBC leaders as they develop their own contextualized Ecclesiology in the proposed theological treatise.

7.3.2.7. Eschatology- The doctrine of the end time

7.3.2.7.1. Suggested resources for C.B.C leaders

R.C. Sproul. *The Last Days According to Jesus: When Did Jesus Say He Would Return?* Published in 2000 by Baker Books

In this book, Sproul analyzes what Jesus said about his return and the last days, with some insights on the antichrist, the resurrection, and the timing of the millennium. A helpful resource for CBC leaders as they develop a contextualized eschatology in the proposed theological treatise.

N.T. Wright. *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*. Published in 2008 by HarperOne.

In this book, Wright describes the present confusion about a Christian's future hope and shows how it is deeply intertwined with how we live today. He asserts that Christianity's most distinctive idea is bodily resurrection and provides a good defense for a literal resurrection of Jesus, showing how this became the reason for the Christian community's hope in the bodily resurrection of all people at the end of the age. A helpful resource for CBC leaders as they develop a contextualized eschatology in the proposed theological treatise.

Kim Riddlebarger. *A Case for Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times*. Published in 2003 by Baker Books

In this book, Riddlebarger presents an accessible look at the crucial theological question of the millennium in the context of contemporary evangelicalism. He examines related biblical topics as a backdrop to understanding the subject and discusses important passages of Scripture that bear upon the millennial age. Certainly a recommended resource for CBC leaders as they develop a contextualized eschatology in the proposed theological treatise.

J. Dwight Pentecost. *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*. Published in 1965 by Zondervan Publishing Company.

This is another resource recommended for CBC leaders an encyclopedic reference work on biblical prophecy. It explores the basis of interpretation, biblical covenants, prophecies of this age and its end, the tribulation, the second advent, the millennium, and the eternal state.

George Eldon Ladd. *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism*. Published in 1996 by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

In this book, Ladd begins by surveying the debate over eschatology and discusses the promise of the kingdom, the fulfillment of the promise, and the consummation of the promise. He argues that the kingdom of God involves two great movements; fulfillment within history and consummation at the end of history. Another recommended resource for CBC leaders as they develop an eschatology in the proposed theological treatise.

7.3.2.8. Angelology- The doctrine of angelic beings

7.3.2.8.1 Suggested resources for C.B.C leaders

C. Fred Dickason. *Angels Elect and Evil*. Published in 1995 by Moody Publisher.

The book gives some helpful insights on what angels are like, how many they are, the roles they play etc. it furnishes the reader with some accessible scriptural answers to frequently asked questions about the spirit world. It will certainly be a helpful resource for the CBC leaders as they develop the doctrine of angels and demons in the proposed theological treatise.

Peter Kreeft. *Angels and Demons: What Do We Really Know about Them?* Published in 1995 by Ignatius Press

Peter Kreeft response to the questions many people have asked about angels & demons by separating fact from fantasy and myth from reality as he answers 101 common questions about these spiritual beings as he attempts to clear up some of the misinformation abounding in numerous books today on what we really know about these mysterious spirits. The insights of this book would provide some helpful information for CBC leaders as they develop their own contextualized doctrine of angels and demons in the proposed theological treatise.

Alex W. Konya *Demons: A Biblically Based Perspective*. Published in 1990 by Regular Baptist Press.

In this book, Konya conducts a clear and practical study of Ephesians 6:10-17 as he examines the New Testament data on the subject of demon possession. It will surely provide CBC leaders with some insight as they develop their own contextualized doctrine of angels and demons in the proposed theological treatise.

Robert Lightner. *Angels, Satan and Demons*. Published in 1998 by Thomas Nelson Publishers

In this book, Robert Lightner answers questions about spirit beings by attempting an in-depth look at the world of the "invisible" as expressed in Scripture. Another helpful resource for CBC leaders as they develop their own contextualized doctrine of angels and demons in the proposed theological treatise.

Billy Graham. *Angels: God's Secret Agents*. Published in 1975 by Doubleday Books.

In a world which is consituously fascinated by angels, Graham attempts to approach the subject from a biblical perspective by defending a thesis that humans are assisted and defended by a powerful order of invisible beings.

7.4. Other Suggestions for growth in the CBC

Apart from the need to improve the theological system of the Cameroon Baptist Convention, there are other key areas that need to be developed for the general growth of the Convention. These areas include leadership, education and social justice. It will suffice for this project to end with some suggestions in these areas that will pave the way for further research towards improving on the ministerial praxis of the Cameroon Baptist Convention in the society at large.

7.4.1. Leadership Growth

Dr. Yong believes that reformation at the leadership level is very crucial towards the general growth of the C.B.C. He identified weaknesses in leadership as a major reason for the current parlous state of C.B.C's theology. In an interview with him, he made the point clear:

There is resistance to learning from those in leadership. So I would say, it [C.B.C's theology] is weak at moment for the most part but changeable with the right leadership. The theological culture of leaders, if it is strong, will naturally filter into and change the culture of the local churches.

This implies that practical theological growth in the C.B.C must seriously take into account the need to reform the leadership structure as Dr. Yong says, when it is proper at the top, it will “naturally filter into and change the culture of the local churches.” It seems to the researcher that when it comes to the attributes that qualify a candidate to be considered for a leadership role in the C.B.C, the level of academic/theological qualification and soundness of the candidate’s theology is not considered to be a major factor. Other issues like the length of service within the system are considered more relevant than the former. While not disputing the appropriateness of the latter, the researcher is hereby suggesting that the academic/theological qualification of any C.B.C leader must be seriously considered.

A standard must be placed that allows only those with a doctorate in theology or relevant ministry to be considered as suitable candidates for the leadership roles of the Convention. In this way, the C.B.C leadership will not just be made up of those who have a long history of service within the system but those with a long history of service in the system and have also attained the highest levels of theological/ministerial education. Having such persons at the helm of affairs in the CBC will mean the convention is being led by well trained and refined theologians whose impact “will naturally filter into and change the culture of the local churches.” There is need for further research on the practicality of leadership development for the CBC mostly by Cameroon Baptist Scholars. The following suggested topics could serve as a guide in this regard:

1. The Role of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Developing Leaders for the Cameroon Baptist Convention: Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis-Minnesota, USA has sent Steve Roy as a missionary professor at Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary to help train Christian leaders. Outstanding from this endeavour has been

Rev. Dr. Wilfred Fon whom they sponsored the development of his theology and he later became the president of the Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary for many years. It would be a good endeavour for a research to focus on this area to see what Bethlehem has been doing and how things can be improved from this point.

2. The Nigerian Baptist Convention vs. The Cameroon Baptist Convention: Perspectives on Leadership for Church Growth: The Nigerian Baptist Convention is one of the biggest Baptist bodies in Africa with comparatively more developed leadership and theological standards. Being the closest international example of an Anglo-Saxon Baptist body for the C.B.C, it would be helpful for a research project to do a comparative study on the different models of leadership used in these distinct bodies and what can be learnt for the good of the C.B.C.

7.4.2. Growth in C.B.C's philosophy of education

The underlining vision of the C.B.C is to “work together in obedience to the great commission of Jesus Christ through worship, preaching, teachings and social ministries.”⁴⁴⁵ Three departments have been established to bring this vision to pass namely; the health department, the education department and the evangelism and missions department. The current philosophy of education which empowers these departments is as follows; the Baptist seminaries exists as the main hives of the CBC's vision to train leaders for her churches. These seminary trained leaders can also serve as chaplains in CBC schools and hospitals as well as lead the Evangelism and Missions Department and also qualify to become the General Secretary. This means that the CBC seminaries exist mainly to train leaders for the evangelism and missions department of the convention.

⁴⁴⁵Cameroon Baptist Convention. [access, 20/07/2012] <http://cbchealthservices.org/HBCN/CBC/html/About%20us.html>.

At the level of the education and health departments, the same is not true. To begin with the education department, there are only very few established Baptist institutions aimed at training teachers for this department and those that exist are mainly for primary education like the Baptist Teachers Training College in Ndop. The education department of the CBC depends more on the government trained teachers and educators to serve as class room teachers, and administrators in her schools like CBC education department heads, principals and vice principals in secondary and high schools, headmasters etc. So in terms of providing training for her teachers especially in the secondary and high schools as well as training for her administrators in the education department, the CBC is lacking.

Likewise in the health department; apart from the few examples of CBC institutions that train medical practitioners at the elementary levels, the CBC educational philosophy is not broad enough to include training God-centred leaders with the vision of the convention to provide godly leadership in all CBC health stations. The CBC has to again depend on the government trained medical practitioners to lead this department. This implies that of the three main departments established by the CBC to advance its vision, only the department of evangelism and missions is closest in fostering the vision of the Convention since it is only in this department that CBC is training leaders to spearhead its interest. The CBC vision mindset in the leadership of the other two departments is not comparatively strong since the leaders in these departments have not been raised and trained in the CBC system of belief.

Since the purpose for the educational department is not just to provide education to the people as it is the case with the government ministry of education but to minister the love of God to the people and reach them with the gospel message through education, and since the purpose of the health department of the CBC is not just to treat patients but to

minister the gospel to the sick through medical healing, there is a need for CBC to review its philosophy of education to include the direct training of God-fearing leaders for these institutions who will be well informed to ensure that her vision is lived out.

In response to this need, the following suggestion is made for the CBC: since the CBC seminaries, especially Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary functions as the main hub for the articulation of the CBC vision and the training of its leaders, the philosophy of the school should not only be limited to training leaders for the evangelism and missions department. It should expand to also training leaders for the education and health department of the convention. At the masters level, a practical degree should be introduced with two streams namely; Master of theology in church and educational administration and Masters of theology in church and health administration.

7.4.2.1. MTh in Church and Educational Administration

A three years degree aimed at providing quality education to CBC ministers called to serve the Lord in the educational department of the convection. The degree will be both theological and practical as they will not only take courses in biblical theology but also on educational administration. It will require short term internships at CBC schools which will give them the opportunity to understand how things work in the system. Upon the completion of this degree, the graduates will qualify to serve as pastors in CBC churches and even lead the convention. But most specifically, they will be used to head the educational department of the CBC and serve as headmasters, principals and vice principals in all CBC school.

They will in turn administer and manage the school in the vision of the CBC and be responsible for the staff under them. This means that the CBC will recruit

professionally trained Christian teachers in all the disciplines of sciences and the arts to come and work under these leaders. Apart from the general administration of the schools, these CBC trained leaders will also ensure that these recruited teachers do their job as professionals and in the vision of the CBC. In this way, the atmosphere of CBC schools will be godlier as the students will be learning under the ministerial supervision of these theologically sound leaders. This will not only make a difference in the output, it will also be a practical way for the CBC vision to remain alive in this department.

7.4.2.2. MTh in Church and Health Administration

A three years degree aimed at providing quality education to CBC ministers called to serve the Lord in the health department of the convection. The degree will be both theological and practical as students will not only take courses in biblical theology but also on health administration, covering all the relevant areas of management and leadership in a health context. It will also require short term internships at CBC hospitals and clinics which will give them the opportunity to understand how things work in the system. Upon the completion of this degree, the graduates will qualify to serve as pastors in CBC churches and even lead the convention. But most specifically, they will be used to serve as heads in the health department of the CBC; mainly as administrators of CBC hospitals and clinics.

CBC will then recruit medical professionals and specialists in the various fields to work in their health institutions under these CBC trained ministers. In that way, these ministers will lead the CBC team of medical practitioners to live out the CBC vision of ministering to the needs of the masses with the love of the master. As they are led and answerable to these CBC ministers, these health professionals who may have been trained by the government of Cameroon or abroad will directly or indirectly be mentored by these

leaders as they submit to their leadership in that way, creating an even wider door for these workers to conform and serve in the CBC vision.

To bring these suggestions to fruition, the teaching faculty of the Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary⁴⁴⁶ will not only be limited to experts in theology but will also include experts in educational administration and health administration. The practical impact of this suggestion is that it will not only give CBC the opportunity to have a firm grip of its vision in all its established departments, it will also bring a broader opportunity of ministry for CBC ministers. This will surely improve their level of scholarship and mindset as they can think outside of the box. It will also increase the desire for many young people to enrol into our seminaries because of the variety of ministry opportunities that exist to serve after graduation. Such a development in CBC's philosophy of education will undoubtedly bring about practical growth for the convention. This is an area that can be researched on by a CBC scholar. The following are some of the potential topics:

1. The Making of Servant Leadership for Effective Management of CBC Institutions
2. Trained Theologians as Leading Educationist in the CBC: A Feasibility Study
3. Trained Theologians as Leading Health Administrators in the CBC: A Feasibility Study

7.4.2.3. The Baptist Centre for Public Justice

The social and holistic ministry approach is one of the strategies employed by CBC to meet its vision of sharing the love of God to the people in obedience to the Great Commission. The main concern in the social ministry of the convention as stated above has been in the area of education and health. The necessity for these concerns cannot be

⁴⁴⁶The name can be changed to Cameroon Baptist University Seminary to suit its philosophy of education.

overemphasised as a model for other private and government schools and hospitals in the country. However, another area of social ministry which has for the most part been ignored by many Christian bodies in Africa has been in the area of seeking social justice for the inalienable rights of the masses and be a voice to the voiceless. Like the poor widow in Jesus' parable (Matt. 18:1-6), current research has shown that most Africans and Cameroonians are in need of justice but hardly get it because of the widespread corruption in the leadership and the judiciary.

According to Amnesty International Report 2012⁴⁴⁷, the state of human rights in Cameroon is nothing to write home about. The report reveals that political and human rights groups were routinely denied the right to organize peaceful demonstrations and activities; eight activists were arrested in Yaoundé, when they met to organize a demonstration in memory of victims of human rights violations during the 2008 demonstrations. According to the report, Mboua Massock, a political activist, was arrested for trying to organize a demonstration against the October 2011 presidential election. Farmers were also arrested for trying to demonstrate against bad roads and inadequate government support for agriculture. The farmers were later released without charge. In February 2011, the chairman of the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC), chief Ayamba Ette Ottun, and several other people were arrested. On 1 October 2011, security forces interrupted a meeting of the SCNC and arrested 50 people. They were reportedly released without charge several days later.

The Amnesty International report further reveals that, the security forces that committed human rights violations, including killings, during demonstrations in 2008 continued to enjoy impunity. Many journalists and critics of the government were

⁴⁴⁷ "Cameroon." *Amnesty International Report 2012: The State of the World's Human Rights*. Part 2. [Assessed 15/07/2012] http://files.amnesty.org/air12/air_2012_full_en.pdf. 2012.

detained in 2011. For instance, Bertrand Zepherin Teyou, a writer was arrested while trying to launch his book about the wife of the president. He was arrested in November 2010 and released on 29th April 2011; Paul Eric Kingue was imprisoned in connection with the 2008 demonstrations, Pierre Roger Lambo Sandjo also suffered imprisonment for 3 years because he composed a song criticizing a controversial Constitutional amendment that eliminated presidential term limits and Reinnier Kaze, a press correspondent was also arrested on 23 February 2011 while covering an opposition demonstration in Douala.

These stunning revelations should justify why the CBC needs to stand up to these inhuman treatment perpetrated against the people of its ministerial jurisdiction. The ministry of the church should not only be limited to specific confines in the society, the impact of the church must be felt in every sphere of the society because as Abraham Kuyper noted, “No single piece of our mental world is to be sealed off from the rest and there is not a square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry: ‘Mine!’.”⁴⁴⁸ This should justify why the CBC needs to expand her social ministry to include the fight for social justice for the people of Cameroon. Luther was very clear in articulating the rights and duty of the church on matters pertaining to the state;

trample on the forces of injustice that prevail in the country. What power could be better than the sovereign power of the almighty God, who is the power to the powerless and the strength to the weak? The social ministry vision of the Cameroon Baptist Convention cannot ignore this need for as Luther noted, doing so will be far more seditious.

Therefore, while focusing on the development of theology and other areas of growth, there is need for CBC leaders to also establish a department that will focus on seeking justice with the love of God on behalf of the people of Cameroon. John Stott makes the point even clearer:

We need to pray that God will raise up more ethical thinkers, who will not just climb Mount Sinai to declaim the Ten Commandments but will argue that God's standards are best. Just as we need theological apologists who will argue the goodness of God's gospel, so we need ethical apologists who will argue the goodness of God's law.⁴⁵⁰

Just as has been suggested in the other existing social ministry departments of the CBC, this department should be headed and managed by CBC ministers who are schooled in law and theology. They will in turn recruit other professionally trained layers who will submit under them towards reaching out to the Cameroonian people in need of justice with the love of God. The main objectives of the Baptist Center for Public Justice in Cameroon will be as follows:

- To be a voice for the voiceless in Cameroon
- To promote and defend the inalienable rights of all Cameroonians
- To provide free legal aid to low income earners in Cameroon
- To educate Christians on their rights and roles in the state

⁴⁵⁰John Stott. *The Living Church: Convictions of a lifelong pastor*. Nottingham: England, Intervarsity Press, 2010.

- To criticise government policies that are not to the social and political advantage of the poor majority in Cameroon.
- To argue for the goodness of God's law towards social, economic and political development in Cameroon.

With an improved theological system and a reformed philosophy of education for her schools and hospitals and not leaving out the establishment of a center for seeking justice for the general masses of Cameroonian citizenry, the Cameroon Baptist Convention will be on the right path towards catalyzing a stronger sense of the overdue national spiritual awakening in Cameroon. Jesus' word for the church in Matthew 5:14-16 cannot be ignored in conclusion:

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.
(NIV)

APPENDIX I

THE CONTEXT OF ROMANS 9:18-23

1.1. The historical/cultural context of Romans 9:18-23

The historical context of a book is very important because, it enables the reader to view the interpretation of this book from a broader spectrum. It helps the reader to understand certain background information of a text such as authorship, the time and place it was written the occasion and purpose that inspired the writing etc. thus enabling the reader to understand the text within its context. Below is a summary of the historical and cultural background of 9:18-23

1.2. Authorship of the epistle to the Romans

The authorship of the book of Romans remains a clear fact that has not been gainsaid, given that “no serious scholar today doubt that Paul wrote Romans.”⁴⁵¹ In the book of Romans, Paul even identifies himself with the first word, which clearly affirms the Pauline authorship of the letter. The apostle Paul therefore is the author of this letter to the Romans and he was a typical Jew. “He was born and brought up as a Jew, and he never ceased to be a Jew.”⁴⁵² The apostle grew up to be conscious and proud of his Jewish heritages, the more reason why he could proudly call himself a “Hebrew of the Hebrews” (Philippians 3:5) within a context of “Diaspora Judaism.”⁴⁵³ Born in a Hellenistic city called Tarsus where many types of human philosophies and doctrines were thought, Paul as a growing young man may have been influenced by his society. But his strong

⁴⁵¹Thomas R. Schreiner. 2003. *Romans: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House. 2003: 2.

⁴⁵²D.G. Dunn. *Romans 9-16: Word Biblical Commentary*. Dallas, word. 1988: xxxix.

⁴⁵³Ibid.

affirmation to his Jewish heritage indicates that he grew in a very strict Jewish home.⁴⁵⁴ He was trained in Jerusalem by one of the most distinguished rabbinic teachers before the fall of Jerusalem in the A.D 70s who was known as Rabban Gamaliel.⁴⁵⁵ Through his influence, Paul was brought up as an orthodox Jew, with a theology that made him to pay no interest to the devilish teachings of his day.

As a faithful servant of Judaism, his zeal led him to persecute the church, which he considered as a threat to Judaism.⁴⁵⁶ In his mid career as a Jewish persecutor, he was arrested by the glorified Christ who granted him an exceptional resurrection appearance (1 Corinthians 15:8) and from then onwards; Paul was converted into Christianity and never doubted the Lordship of Christ. He also submitted himself as his slave.⁴⁵⁷ This became a major turning point in Paul's life as he transferred his zeal for Judaism to Christianity and embarked on serious evangelistic and missionary outreach. In the face of many challenging difficulties during his outreach ministry, he reflected on the evidence of his election, knowing that he "was not self appointed but God called him: this was very essential to his ongoing service"⁴⁵⁸ Irrespective of the difficulties he encountered in his ministry, he was able to write letters of encouragement and teaching to many individuals as well as to churches. For instance, he wrote some letter to individual like Timothy, Philemon and Titus etc and to churches like the church in Corinth, the church in Ephesus and also to the church in Rome etc.

⁴⁵⁴C.K. Barrett. *Black's New Testament Commentaries: The Epistle to the Romans*. London, A&C Black. 1987: 1.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid, 2.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸R. Kent Hughes. *Romans: Righteousness from Heaven*. Wheaton: Illinois, A Division of Good News Publishers. 1991: 17.

“Romans was Paul’s last letters written before his prolonged period of detention, first in Caesarea and then in Rome.⁴⁵⁹ Of all other letters, “Romans is the greatest of Paul’s letters, and the Roman church became one of the major centres of Christendom.”⁴⁶⁰ If there is any tangible reason why Romans is placed first among the other epistles, it is because of its “superlative excellence”⁴⁶¹ and its rich exposition of great teaching of salvations.

There are some suggestions that, Paul communicated the general themes of this book to Tertius who wrote down the latter according to Paul’s dictation; word for word and arranged it accordingly. Irrespective of the method however, it should be accepted that, the book of Romans is a product of Paul’s dictation of Tertius.⁴⁶² With this insight on the authorship of this epistle, and some background information about the author’s life and scholarly competence, the research concern proceeds with the setting of this book i.e the time and place where Paul wrote this letter.

1.3. Time and place of the epistle to the Romans

“Dating ancient letters is notoriously difficult, but in the case of Romans, we can safely locate the letter between A.D 55 and 58.”⁴⁶³ Paul wrote this letter in Corinth at the close of his third missionary journey, as he prepared to leave for Palestine with an offering for the poor believers in the Jerusalem church. There is substantial internal evidence to support this view; in chapter 16, “he commends to them phoebe of Cenchrea, who was on

⁴⁵⁹FF. Bruce. *Romans: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, William Eerdmans Publishing Company, Leicester: England. 1987: 30.

⁴⁶⁰ Kenneth L. Baker and John R. Kohlenberger. *Zondervan NIV Commentary Vol. 2:an Abridgement of the Expositors Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan. 1992: 519.

⁴⁶¹Leslie F. Church. *Zondervan NIV Mathew Henry Commentary. In one volume*. Zondervan Publishing House Grand Rapids: Michigan. 1992:25.

⁴⁶²Ibid.

⁴⁶³Schreiner, Thomas R. *Romans: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapid: Michigan, Baker Book House. 2003: 3.

the point of going thence to Rome and who was probably the bearer of the letter. He sends salutation from erectus the chamberlain of the city (which after mention of Cenchrea, must be concluded to be Corinth).”⁴⁶⁴ Also, Boice affirms the time and place of Romans as he states, “With those powerful opening words written nearly two thousand years ago in the bustling commercial city of Corinth, Greece, a Jewish Christians began a letter to believers whom he had never seen in the far off city of Rome”⁴⁶⁵

However, all of the suggestions on the time and place of Romans are not absolutely concrete because they do not provide its exact date. And even though Schreiner sounds to be very confident with his date, he concludes also that, “certainty on this issue is impossible, but we should confine the date to the period between 55 and 58 although Dodd [1932:xxvi] opts for AD 59.”⁴⁶⁶

Having known when and where this letter was written and interpreted, the research process continues with a research on the people who read and interpreted the letter. At this stage, it is worth admitting that interpretation is usually influenced by certain geographical, cultural, political and spiritual factors. Hence, in order to know how Paul’s audience understood him in Romans 9:18-23, it’s important to look at the political, social, economic and spiritual set up of their time. Who actually were Paul’s audience and in what circumstance were they in?

⁴⁶⁴H.D.M. Spencer and Joseph S. Exell.. *The Pulpit Commentary: Acts and Romans*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, WmB. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1962: ii.

⁴⁶⁵James Montgomery Boice. *Romans: God and History. Vol. 3. Romans 9-11*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House. 1991:11.

⁴⁶⁶Thomas R. Schreiner. *Romans: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House. 2003: 5.

1.4. The audience of the epistle to the Romans

As the title of the Epistle implies, this letter was written to the believers who were in Rome, a city founded in 753 BC. “Rome in Paul’s day was the capital city of an empire which stretched from Britain to Arabia. It was a wealthy and cosmopolitan city that boasted of its diplomatic and trade centres.”⁴⁶⁷ In Paul’s day, this city had a population of over one million people, many of whom were slaves. The city boasted of some magnificent buildings like the emperor’s palace, the Circus Maximus, etc but this beauty was marred by the slums in which so many live.⁴⁶⁸ At the time when Paul wrote this letter, “there may well have been several local churches at Rome like that referred to in 16:3-5, but the apostle addresses this epistle to all believers there.”⁴⁶⁹

The church in Rome had a large number of Jew and it was also in contact with a great Jewish community in the capital city. Even though some modern writers have come up with the hypothesis that the church was largely made up of Gentile Christians, who had previously been proselytes of Judaism, some scholars have however denied this claim. Charles Erdmann⁴⁷⁰, for instance argued that, it was a Jewish audience that was in Paul’s mind when he penned down the letter and he was away from this audience. The amazing point about this letter is that, Paul was writing to a people whom he had never seen; this is because, at this point of his ministry, he had not visited Rome yet. However, “Paul knew Rome although he had not been inside her city limits.”⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁷Zondervan *Handbook to the Bible: Completed Revised Edition for the three million copy best seller*. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapid: Michigan. 1999: 336.

⁴⁶⁸John MacArthur. *The Bible Hand Book: A Book-by Book Explanation of God’s Word*. Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publication. 2003: 364.

⁴⁶⁹Cancerous R. Stan. *Commentary On The Epistle Of Paul To The Romans*. Chicago: Illinois, Berean Bible Society. 1981:xv.

⁴⁷⁰Charles Erdman. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. Philadelphia, the Westminster Press. 1967:13

⁴⁷¹Vernon J. McGee. *Romans 9-16*. Pasadena: California, Thru the Bible Books. 1980: 173.

The origins of the Rome church remain a problem to this day. As many scholar have come up with different explanation in an attempt to solve the problem. there are all together three serious claims as far as the origin of the Rome church is concern; some (especially the Roman catholic church) have argued that, is was founded by the apostle Peter, claiming that after he left the city of the Caesars, he went to Rome at the beginning of the reign of emperor Claudius and was active in the overthrow of the heretic Simon Magus there.⁴⁷²

However, this suggestion falls short if many things are taken into consideration. It was for this reason that many scholars like Hayes pointed out that, “the authorities for this tradition are too untrustworthy to command the respect of the modern world. Practically all protestant have refused to believe it.”⁴⁷³ Also, Stam sided with Hayes that “there is no one scintilla of evidence in scripture to bear this out... especially since the Scriptures clearly state in Gal. 2:9 that Peter and the Judean leaders publicly and solemnly agreed that they would thenceforth confine their ministry to Israel, acknowledging Paul as God’s appointed to the Gentiles.”⁴⁷⁴

Many other scholars like McGee have suggested that, it was Paul who established the Romans church. “I am going to make a rather unusual statement here: Paul is the one who founded the church in Rome and he founded it by radar or by long distance telephone.”⁴⁷⁵ He argued that, as Paul moved about preaching the gospel, he met many people who were from Rome like Pricilla and Aquila and presented the gospel to them and went to Corinth. And by the time he was writing Romans, they had returned back to Rome

⁴⁷²D.A. Hayes. *Paul And His Epistle*. New York: Cincinnati, The Methodist Book. 1915: 301.

⁴⁷³*Ibid.*, 301.

⁴⁷⁴ Cancerous R. Stan. *Commentary On The Epistle Of Paul To The Romans*. Chicago: Illinois, Berean Bible Society. 1981:xv.

⁴⁷⁵ Vernon J. McGee. *Romans 9-16*. Pasadena: California, Thru the Bible Books. 1980: 172.

and send greeting to them. Apart from this, the friendly tone Paul uses in greeting some people in Rome suggest that, he had met them before. Thus McGee holds that Paul was the founder of the church at Rome by long distance as he led people to Christ who later migrated to Rome.⁴⁷⁶

He continued that, Paul makes it clear in Romans 15:20 that he does not go to a place where another person has gone to preach the gospel because, by so doing, he will be building on someone else's foundation, it is therefore for this reason that McGee believes that Paul was the one who established the Roman church, since no one has ever been there. Apart from the two views above, other scholar like Schreiner and MacArthur have denied both the Peterine claims, holding that, he "resided in Jerusalem in acts 15, and if he travelled anywhere after his escape from prison, it was probably to Antioch [and that] Luke who has a significant interest in Rome. Would not have omitted a Peterine visit."⁴⁷⁷

These scholars hold that, the very fact that Paul has not been to Rome at the time he was writing the letter already dismisses any such claims. And so they maintain that, the reason why he was moved to carry the gospel to Rome was not because he established the church, but because, the church was not planted by an apostle, otherwise, he would be laying on the foundation of another apostle. Hence, MacArthur for instance, suggests that, some of those converted on the day of Pentecost probably founded the Roman church. They were both Jews and gentiles, some of whom Paul had met in the past. It was these people who latter went back to Rome and established the church there.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁶Ibid., xv.

⁴⁷⁷Thomas R. Schreiner. *Romans: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House. 2003: 11.

⁴⁷⁸John MacArthur. *The Bible Hand Book: A Book-by Book Explanation of God's Word*. Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publication. 2003: 364.

We have thus far had good reasons to believe that it was neither Peter nor Paul who started the Roman church. Hence, we are left with no better option than to agree that, those who established the Roman church were the visitors to Jerusalem from Rome who were converted on the day of Pentecost.

1.5. The occasion and purpose of the epistle to the Romans

If it suffices to maintain that, Paul wrote to the Roman Christian, what then was the occasion and purpose? This is because with this in mind, as well as the factors that led to the writing, we shall be able to better understand Paul in Romans 9;18-23. Barner⁴⁷⁹ explained that, Rome had a large number of Jews who worked as slaves during the reign of Pompey the great, who captured Judea in 03 B.C. but because of their reluctance to work, they were finally emancipated and were given a settlement across the Tiber, where they grew to be a great nation.

Bruce⁴⁸⁰ further explains that, on the day of Pentecost, after Peter's message, some of the converts (among whom were some proselytes from Rome), went about proclaiming the gospel, planting churches in Palestine and the neighboring territories. Because of this, the spread of Christianity into Rome was just inevitable. From the large number of Jews in Rome as well as some converted gentiles, the church was formed in Rome and from there, it continued to grow against all odds.

It was actually not because of some internal condition that influenced Paul to write this letter, it came simply according to his own plans. Having finished his work in the east, he decided to go west and to start a mission in Spain. In line with this vision, Dodd

⁴⁷⁹Albert Banner. *Banner's Note On The New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing Company. 1978: 256.

⁴⁸⁰FF. Bruce. *Romans: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: the Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, William Eerdmans Publishing Company, Leicester: England. 1976: 16.

explains, “he therefore, projected a visit to Rome since he was by no means *persona grata* in Christian circles, he could not be altogether sure of a welcome. It was important for him to secure the sympathy of the church of Rome. He therefore sets before them a comprehensive and reasoned statement of the fundamental of Christianity as he understood it...”⁴⁸¹ in more specific terms, Gutzke explained that, the basic reason why Paul wrote this letter to the Romans was, “to confirm their faith and to enable it to grow and expand.”⁴⁸² This is because, like any other church, the Roman church also needed rich theological teachings and practical instructions on the subject about the authority of the Mosaic law, the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith in Christ etc.

To sum up this section, Erdman explained that, the Jewish Christians in Rome were tempted to boast because of their superior privileges and to place a false confidence on their relation to the Mosaic Law. Thus he stated:

Paul writes forth this letter, not merely to set forth the content of the gospel, but to do so with his own country men in mind, with the purpose of showing the relation of Jews and Gentile in the economy of God and of teaching that both were in need of the salvation which the gospel proclaimed and that both should be united harmoniously in one body, free from all their former national prejudices, and living as a pattern and example to believers of all nations.⁴⁸³

1.6. The surrounding context of Romans 9:18-23

According to Duval and Hays, the surrounding context of a text simply refers to the text that surrounds the passage to be studied. They describe it as “the textual world in which the text lives.”⁴⁸⁴ Harrison, in an attempt to point out the importance of looking at a

⁴⁸¹C.H. Dood. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. London: Collins Clear-typing Press. 1959:18.

⁴⁸²Manford George Gutzke. *Plain Talk on Romans*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan. 1976: 7.

⁴⁸³Charles Erdman. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. Philadelphia, the Westminster Press. 1967:13

⁴⁸⁴Scott J Duval and Daniel J. Hays. *Grasping God's Word*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan, 2001: 119.

text in its surrounding context explained that, “the division of the epistle in one sense so clearly parenthetical, in another sense so clearly connected with the unfolding of its themes that one cannot catch its deepest import until this relationship is recognized.”⁴⁸⁵

Therefore, this chapter begins by looking at the surrounding context of Romans 9:18-23 which will be the first eight chapters of the book and then 9:1-11:36.

Paul opens his letter with an epistolary opening (1:1-17). This opening contains his usual exhortations and thanksgiving. He then concludes the opening with the themes of the letter which is; the gospel as the revelation of God’s righteousness, and a righteousness that can be experienced only by faith. D.A Carson and his mates have done a good job to do a good break down of this text in an intelligent order. Hence, except where mentioned otherwise, much of the material in this section comes from their book.⁴⁸⁶ Also Harlow equally states a good summary of the surrounding context by explaining that, “it tells us what Paul’s whole letter is all about: The Good News. The Good News reveals the Lord Jesus Christ and tells us about him.”⁴⁸⁷

Paul’s first major section as suggested by Carson, Moo and Morris is Romans 1:18-4:25 which they sum up as, “the righteousness of God by faith.” Here, Paul paves a way for this theme by explaining why it was necessary for God to manifest his righteousness and why humans can only experience this righteousness by faith. He pointed out that sin has so penetrated the human race in such a way that, only the act of God which

⁴⁸⁵Harrison, Norman B. *His Salvation as Set Forth In the Book of Romans*. Minneapolis: Minesota, the Harrison Services, 1926: 67.

⁴⁸⁶D.A Carson, Douglas J. Moo and Leon Morris. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan, 1992: 239-240.

⁴⁸⁷Harlow, R.E. *Alive and Free: Studies in Romans*. Scarborough: Canada, Every Publication Inc., 1987: 9

we experience as a free gift through faith can actually break this strong hold. (Romans 3:23-26)⁴⁸⁸.

In this section, Paul also expounded on the sinfulness of men that gives them no excuse from God's wrath; Both Jews and Gentiles, and concludes that, all of them are helpless slaves of sin and cannot be brought into relationship with God by anything they do. The only way out for them is only by God who can change their tragic situation. And this, (Paul pointed out that) God has already done by making available through the sacrifice of his Son a means of becoming righteous or innocent before God. And this justification, Paul insists can be gained only by faith. (Romans 3:28).

Having shown how men are sinful, and how they can be made right before God (which is totally by faith in Him), Paul opens another subject (5:1-8:39) to draw out the significance of this act; both for the future judgments and the present earthly life. Carson, Moo and Morris captions this as, "the gospel as the power of God for salvation."⁴⁸⁹ Paul in this section pointed out a secure hope of vindication to those who have faith in Christ. And the ground of this hope is the believer's relationship to Christ, who has won eternal life for all who belong to Him (Romans 8:1-5).

This however does not mean that the Christian is free from the ongoing battles of this age but the difference is that, we battle with confidence, "knowing that Christ has set us free from the tyranny of those powers."⁴⁹⁰ And the direct implication of this according to Paul is that sin no longer dictates on us. And through the work of the Spirit, believers are assured of a final victory over death and the influence of the flesh. The Holy Spirit

⁴⁸⁸D.A Carson, Douglas J. Moo and Leon Morris. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan, 1992: 239.

⁴⁸⁹D.A Carson, Douglas J. Moo and Leon Morris. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan, 1992: 239.

⁴⁹⁰Ibid.

also testifies to us that the work God has begun in us will be brought to a triumphant conclusion.

The driving motive in Paul's mind right from chapter 1-8 has been to point out the relationship between the Law and the gospels i.e. God's Old Covenant people and his new Covenant people. Hence, Carson, Moo and Morris explained that, in this section of Paul's argument, he looks at this more closely. His concern is to show whether "the transfer of the covenant privileges from Israel to the church means that God has spurned his promise to Israel."⁴⁹¹ So he explains that, this is not the case at all because, God's promises were not intended to guarantee salvation to every Israelite by birth. (Romans 9:6-8) and also that, if some one were to be blamed, then it is the Israelites because, they have failed to embrace God's righteousness in Christ even though God has clearly spoken to them.

However, it is not as though all Israelites have been cut off from God's saving purpose because, some Israelites like Paul are being saved and God's promises are being fulfilled. To sum up this argument, Paul counters the arrogant boasting of some Gentile Christians by reminding them that, it is only through divine love that salvation has come to them, and that there awaits a day when God's promise to Israel will come to fruition and then all Israel will be saved.

Thus far, we have seen that Paul has one main theme in mind and that is the theme of the righteousness of God which He has revealed to those who believe in Him. With this theme in mind, we have seen how he systematically developed his argument by first of all pointing out the extent to which man has sinned against God, thus all men are condemned and that the only way out is by believing in Christ. And if we believe in him, we shall be

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

made righteous. And consequently, be freed from the slavery of sin that leads to condemnation (chapter 8).

In chapter 9-11, Paul introduces another thought which has to do with the problem of the rejection of Israel from the privileges of being saved. In 9:1-18, he begins by lamenting because; Israel is not part of these privileges, irrespective of her many advantages. But he however pointed out that, it is not as though all that God has promised Israel will not come to pass, but simply that as the creator, God plans his things in ways that man cannot understand and he does with men not as they please, but as He pleases.

This now sets the stage for the subsequent argument. That is, since Paul has established that, God does to humans as he pleases. And also that, God has hardened the hearts of some Israelites not to believe, the result will obviously be that his audience will logically think, it will be unfair if God still holds me responsible for not believing in Him, since he is the one who does with every one as he pleases. This seems to be a faulty way of looking at this according to Paul. Hence the apostle sets out to solve this problem in the subsequent argument, by explaining that this does not in any way show that God is unjust and unloving.

APPENDIX II

THE CONTEXT OF 2 PETER 3:1-10

2.1. Historical/cultural context of 2 Peter⁴⁹²

The history of this epistle down the centuries has been very rough. Its entry into the Canon has been greeted with diverse criticism. During the reformation, key reformers seriously questioned its essence. “It was deemed second-class scripture by Luther, rejected

⁴⁹²For reference and general sweep on the historical background of 2 Peter, the reader is referred to the following resources: Norman Hillier. *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*. JIBC. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1992; J.N.D. Kelly. *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude*. HNTC. New York: Harper and Row, 1969; Donald Senior. *1 and 2 Peter*. New Testament Message 20. Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1980; Raymond E. Brown. *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind*. New York: Paulist, 1984; Raymond E. Brown, Karl P. Donfried, and John Reumann. *Peter in the New Testament: A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars*. New York: Paulist, 1973; Raymond E. Brown and John P. Meier. *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic university*. New York: Paulist, 1983; PHEME PERKINS. *Peter: Apostle for the Whole Church*. Columbia: university of South Carolina Press, 1994; Richard J. Bauckham. *Jude, 2 Peter*. World Biblical Commentary 50. Waco: Word Books, 1983; Charles Bigg. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. Peter and St. Jude*. ICC. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902; John H. Elliot. *I-II Peter, Jude*. Augsburg Commentary on the NT. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982; Michael Green. *The Second Epistle of Peter and the general Epistle of Jude*. Tyndale NT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968; J.N.D Kelly. *A Commentary on the Epistle of Peter and Jude*. Harper’s NT Commentaries. New York and Evanston: Harper, 1969; Steven J. Kraftchick. *Jude/2 Peter*. Abington New Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abington, 2002; Joseph B. Mayor. *The Epistle of st. Jude and the Second Epistle of Peter*. London: Macmillan, 1907; Jerome H. Neyrey. *2 Peter, Jude*. AB 37C. New York: Doubleday, 1993; Bo Reicke. *The Epistles of James 2 Peter, Jude*. AB 37C. New York: Doubleday, 1968; Donald Senior. *1&2 Peter*. NTM 20. Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1980; Michael Desjardins. “The Portrayal of the Dissidents in 2 Peter and Jude: Does it tell us more about the ‘Godly’ than the ‘Ungodly’?” *JSNT* 30, 1987: 89-102; Anders Gerdmar. *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy. A Historiographical Case Study of Second Peter and Jude*. CBNT 36. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001; Jonathan M. Knight. *2 Peter, Jude*. *Sheffield NT Guides*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995; Duane F. Watson. *Invention, Arrangement, and style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter*. SBLDS 104. Atlanta: Scholars, 1988; Eugene M. Boring. “Gospel and Church in 2 Peter.” *Mid-Stream* 35, 1996: 399-406; Eugene M. Boring. “The historical Pilgrimage of the Church According to 2 Peter.” *Mid-Stream* 35, 1996: 407-14; Terrace Collan. “The Christology of the Second letter of Peter.” *Bib* 82. 2001: 253-63; Terrace Collan. “The Soteriology of the Second letter of Peter.” *Bib* 82. 2001: 549-59; Tord Fornberg. *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society. A Study of 2 Peter*. CBNT 9. Lund: Gleerup, 1977; Ernst Kasemann. “An Apologia for Primitive Christian Eschatology.” In idem, *Essays on New Testament Themes*. London: S.C.M., 1964: 169-95; Jerzy Klinger. “The Second Epistle of Peter: An essay in Understanding.” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 17, 1973: 152-69; Michael J. Kruger. “The Authenticity of 2 Peter.” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42, 1999: 645-71; Jerome H. Neyrey. “The Form and Background of the olemic in 2 Peter.” *JBL* 99, 1980: 407-31; Thuren Lauri. “Style Never Goes Out of Fashion: 2 Peter Reevalued.” In Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Oilricht, eds. *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology. Essays from the 1994 Pretoria conference*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996; Robert W. Wall. “The Canonical Function of 2 Peter.” *Biblical Interpretation* 9, 2001: 64-81.

by Erasmus, and regarded with hesitancy by Calvin.”⁴⁹³ However, despite these challenges, the church came to accept the epistle and recognized the accuracy of its claim apostolic authorship and its authoritative content.⁴⁹⁴

2.2. Authorship of 2 Peter

The first problem with this epistle is that of authorship. “Many scholars believe that the apostle did not write it because the church of the first century was so slow to accept it as part of the New Testament.⁴⁹⁵ Those who⁴⁹⁶ are reluctant to accept a Peterine authorship of the epistle usually point to its dependence on Jude. They argue that “It would be unlikely for an apostle of Peter’s rank to borrow from a nonapostle.”⁴⁹⁷ But whatever the case, internal evidence (1:1, 14, 16-18, 3:1, 15) suggests that the writer intends to be seen as the apostle Peter. “A popular theory however is to see that the letter is a pseudepigraph, a writing published after Peter’s death to honour him and to say what he might have said in a situation of difficulty.”⁴⁹⁸ Since there is no substantial backing to

⁴⁹³Michael Green. *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 2 Peter and Jude*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987: 13.

⁴⁹⁴Curtis Vaughan and Thomas D. Lea. *Bible Study Commentary: 1,2 Peter, Jude*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1988: 135.

⁴⁹⁵Cary N. Weisinger III. *The Epistles of Peter*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Book House, 1962: 95.

⁴⁹⁶A good example of a scholar who rejects an apostolic authorship of the epistle would be Senior as he states “2 Peter was not written by the apostle. An author writing long after Peter’s death, perhaps as late as 125 AD uses the name of the apostle to ram home his message about authentic tradition and to justify his right to speak in strong tones to his sister churches.” Donald Senior C.P. *1&2 Peter: New Testament Message*. Vol. 20. Lower Abbey Street: Dublin. Veritas Publication, 1980: 99.

⁴⁹⁷Douglas J. Moo. *The NIV Application Commentary to Contemporary Life*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1996: 17.

⁴⁹⁸Curtis Vaughan and Thomas D. Lea. *Bible Study Commentary: 1,2 Peter, Jude*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1988: 135. A good advocate for the Pseudonymy of 2 Peter is Kelly who emphatically stated “We must therefore conclude that 2 Peter belongs to the luxuriant crop of pseudo-Peterine literature which sprang up around the memory of the Prince of the apostles.” J.N.D. Kelly. *The epistle of Peter and of Jude*. Great Britain, R&R Clark, LTD: Edinburgh, 1969: 236. For more on the Pseudographical evidence for this epistle also see Dennis Farkasfalvy. “The Ecclesial Setting of Pseudepigraphy in Second Peter and its Role in the Formation of the Canon.” *Second Century* 5. 1985-86: 3-29.

this alternative, it is safe to assume in this project that this epistle was the product of Peter in one way or the other.⁴⁹⁹

2.3. Occasion and date of 2 Peter

With Peter as the author, it is most likely that it was written when the apostle was in Rome just shortly before his death (1:15). Apparently, the apostle had worked among these readers and he thought it wise to write to them some exhortations that he would have delivered personally if he were present (1:16). He realizes that his work is nearly concluded so with an attitude of urgency, he writes this letter as an antidote to the infiltrating threat of false teachers who would appear on the scene (2:1). However, “the frequent use of the future tense in describing these false teachers (2:2,3) suggests that the writing is to have a preventive effect when heretics eventually appear on the scene after he probably most have passed away.”⁵⁰⁰

As his purpose, he intends to strengthen his readers in faith and moral commitments so that they will be able to resist the ungodliness of false teachers who will threaten their spiritual life. With regards to when the epistle was written, there is actually no internal evidence that clearly indicates its timing but it seems most likely that it was written not too long after 1 Peter which would be towards the end of Peter’s life, before

⁴⁹⁹The following notable scholars would agree to a Peterine authorship of this epistle: C. Bigg. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. Peter and St. Jude*. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901; E. Green. *2 Peter Reconsidered*. London: Tyndale, 1959; J.A.T. Robinson. *Reading the New Testament*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976; M. Green. *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Leicester, UK: Intervarsity/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987; D. Guthrie. *The New Testament Introduction*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1990; D.J. Moo. *2 Peter and Jude*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996; M.A. Kruger. “The Authenticity of 2 Peter.” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42:645-71, 1999; Michael J. Gilmour. “Reflections on the Authorship of 2 Peter.” *Evangelical Quarterly* 73, 2001: 291-309.

⁵⁰⁰Ibid. 136.

A.D 68.⁵⁰¹ And most probably between A.D 64 when the great fire of Rome, which marked the start of Nero's persecution of Christians and A.D 68⁵⁰²

2.4. The Recipients of 2 Peter

In 1 Peter, a specific audience is mentioned (1 Peter 1:1) but in 2 Peter, there is no specific destination but the internal references (1:12-15; 3:1,14) suggests that the letter was written to a specific community as opposed to a general circular letter. It is safe to infer that the reference to a second letter in 3:1 indicates that the writer was the one who wrote the first. If this is true, then Peter is writing a second letter to the same audience he wrote the first.⁵⁰³ Given that the destination of a writing is not a major factor in interpretation and since there is no source by which to draw a firm conclusion, this research leaves the destination of this epistle an open option even though it is also possible to see it as a text written to the same group that received 1 Peter.

2.5. The false teachers in 2 Peter

In this epistle, Peter vigorously denounces a group which he calls *pseudodidaskaloi* ("false teachers"). He accuses them of introducing destructive heresies into the community of believers and of promoting a licentious or immoral lifestyle. They are further accused of exploiting people with false and fabricated words for their own personal financial gains. These false teachers are clearly Christians. According to 2 Peter 2:20-22, they thought that by becoming Christians they have escaped "the defilement of the world" but ironically they now find themselves "entangled in them again."

⁵⁰¹Ibid.

⁵⁰²Peter H. Davids. *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude: The Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2006: 130.

⁵⁰³In contradiction to this view, Vaughan and Lea argue that the interpretation of 2 Peter 3:1 does not demand that the reference be to 1 Peter for there may be an allusion to a writing of Peter now lost. Curtis Vaughan and Thomas D. Lea. *Bible Study Commentary: 1,2 Peter, Jude*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1988: 135

By promoting theological scepticism about Jesus' *parousia* and the Last Judgement and by displaying pagan lifestyle, Peter likens these false teachers to dogs who return to their own vomit or like a pig who once haven been washed clean, goes back to rolling in the mud. Harrington suggests that these false teachers are Gentile Christians. Thus he states: "The false teachers seem to have been gentile Christians who appealed primarily to other Gentile Christians and promoted a kind of Christianity more at home in a pagan milieu than in a Jewish society or a Jewish-Christian community, especially with regards to eschatology and ethics."⁵⁰⁴

2.6. Surrounding context of 2 Peter 3:1-10

As has already been mentioned in appendix I, the surrounding context according to Duval and Hays simply refers to the text that surrounds the passage to be studied. And this, they describe as "the textual world in which the text lives."⁵⁰⁵ In this study therefore, the surrounding context of 2 Peter 3:1-9 would be the first two chapters of the epistle and then 3:10-18.

Green⁵⁰⁶ has done a helpful division of the epistle that clearly explains the context that surrounds 2 Peter 3:1-9. The first is the epistolary greetings (1:1-2) that clearly identifies the author as the apostle Simon Peter and the recipients as "those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ."⁵⁰⁷ The apostle then moves on to the crux of his letter by warning these saints of an imminent coming of false teachers (1:3-3:18a). To advance his point, the

⁵⁰⁴Daniel J. Harrington, S.J. "Jude and 2 Peter" in *Sacra Pagina*. Collegeville: Minesota, The Liturgical Press. 2003: 234. For further reference on false teachers in 2 Peter, the reader is referred to the following resource; Hans C.C Callan. "The False Teachers of 2 Pt as Pseudo-Prophets." *TouT* 21, 1979: 263-70.

⁵⁰⁵Scott J Duval and Daniel J. Hays. *Grasping God's Word*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Zondervan, 2001: 119.

⁵⁰⁶Gene L. Green. *Jude and 2 Peter: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Publishing Group. 2008

⁵⁰⁷English Standard Version (ESV)

apostle begins by sounding God's clarion call to glory and virtue in 1:3-11 where he stresses the need for divine power and promises for life and duty in 1:3-4 and an urgent appeal for these saints to grow in godly virtue (1:5-11).

In 1:12-2:22, the apostle makes his testimony of false teachers which serves as a counterpoint to the scepticism of the heretics and this is a divinely inspired witness which the readers must take very seriously. He demonstrates his desire to make known these things to them, both in the present while he lives (v.13) and in the future after his death (vv.12, 15). "the letter will serve as the apostle's continued voice in the community well after the time he has passed off the scene."⁵⁰⁸ In this section, the apostle wants his readers to remember the moral virtues mentioned in 1:5-7 because they are transcendent for the church. To indicate their importance, the apostle expresses his determination to do what he must do to ensure that they keep them in mind even after his death. They need to keep this in mind because the coming of false teachers is imminent.

Hence, in 2:1-3, he denounces the false teachers who invade the church. He argued that, despite the heretics claim to the contrary, God did judge humanity in the past and if he did before, he will do it again in the future. In 2:10b-16, he exposes the corruption and the ultimate doom of these false teachers and then warn in 2:17-22 that the believers should be on the lookout for the arrogance of these heretics and their attempts to win new converts.

Having exposed the imminent coming of heretics especially after his death, the apostle ends the letter by calling on the saints to be holy (3:1-18). He identifies the heretics, noting that they are usually controlled by desire and will usually deny that God

⁵⁰⁸Gene L. Green. *Jude and 2 Peter: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Michigan, Baker Publishing Group. 2008: 205.

will judge the world. The author explains that the reason for the scepticism of these heretics is owing to the apparent lack of divine judgment in the past but moves right ahead to counter their claims by pointing to the history of divine judgement which gives evidence of the type of judgement to come. He then moves on to recount the reason for God's delay in judging the world warning that the day of God's judgement will come unexpectedly hence the saints must cling on to a moral life and live in hope that God's day of judgement will eventually come. He then concludes with a series of exhortations.

APPENDIX III

OTHER CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS ON PREDESTINATION

Introduction

Even though this project mainly focused on how predestination has been interpreted by the mainline traditions in the history of Protestantism, there are however other helpful traditions on predestination that could be helpful in having a broad understanding of the subject. Though they might not have been relevant in the body of the work given the scope, it seems fitting to now include them in the appendix. These traditions include Roman Catholicism and the views of the Eastern Orthodox Church. The fact that the Roman Catholic church largest Christian denomination in the Republic of Cameroon and also that the presence of the Eastern Orthox church is equally felt in the country, it would be helpful to summarize their own views on soteriology against the backdrop of protestant views so that the CBC leaders have a good understanding of their theological terrain as they make efforts to develop their theology.

3.1. Roman Catholicism

Roman Catholicism refers to a mainline denomination which dates as far back to the time of the apostles of the early church. With Rome as its main headquarters, the church is led by the bishops and the Pope. They believe in the Lordship of Christ and also recognize the Triune God (the Trinity) consisting of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Their views on predestination is clearly stated in the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*⁵⁰⁹ as follows:

⁵⁰⁹Charles George Herbermann. "Predestination of the Elect." In *Catholic Encyclopaedia: An International work of Reference in the constitution, Doctrine, Discipline and History of the Catholic Church*. 12 Vols. New York, Universal Knowledge Foundation, 1913:380.

He who would place the reason of predestination either in man alone or in God alone would inevitably be led into heretical conclusions about eternal election. In the one case the error concerns the last end, in the other the means to that end. Let it be noted that we do not speak of the “cause” of predestination, which would be either the efficient cause (God), Or the instrumental cause (grace), or the final cause (God’s honour), or the primary meritorious cause, but of the reason or motive which induced God from all eternity to elect certain definite individuals to grace and glory. The principal question then is: Does the natural merit of man exert perhaps some influence on the Divine election to grace and glory? If we recall the dogma of the absolute gratuity of Christian grace, our answer must be outright negative. To the further question whether Divine predestination does not at least take into account the supernatural good works, the Church answers with the doctrine that heaven is not given to the elect by a purely arbitrary act of God’s will, but that it is also the reward of the personal merits of the justified... the Catholic dogma of predestination keeps the golden mean, because it regards eternal happiness primarily as the work of God and His grace, but secondarily as the fruit and reward of the meritorious actions of the predestined. The process of predestination consists of the following five steps: (a) the first grace of vocation, especially faith as the beginning, foundation, and root of justification; (b) a number of additional, actual graces for the successful accomplishment of justification; (c) justification itself as the beginning of the state of grace and love; (d) final perseverance or at least the grace of a happy death; (e) lastly, the admission to eternal bliss. If it is a truth of Revelation that there are many who, following this path, seek and find their eternal salvation with infallible certainty, then the existence of Divine predestination is proved (cf. Matthew 25:34; Revelation 20:15).

Furthermore, the views of Pope John Paul II⁵¹⁰ on predestination also affirm the Roman

Catholic position on the subject as he stated:

The universality of salvation means that it is granted not only to those who explicitly believe in Christ and have entered the Church. Since salvation is offered to all, it must be made concretely available to all. But it is clear that today, as in the past, many people do not have an opportunity to come to know or accept the gospel revelation or to enter the Church. The social and cultural conditions in which they live do not permit this, and frequently they have been brought up in other religious traditions. For such people salvation in Christ is accessible by virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the Church, does not

⁵¹⁰ One of Roman Catholic’s longest serving popes (1978-2005) and the first non Italian pope since 1523. He has been acclaimed as one of the most influential leaders in the 20th century and one of the most travelled world leaders in history; he made papal visits to about 129 different countries during his time As part of his special emphasis on the universal call to holiness, he beatified 1,340 people and canonised 483 saints, more than the combined tally of his predecessors during the preceding five centuries. He named most of the present College of Cardinals, consecrated or co-consecrated a large number of the world's past and current bishops, and ordained many priests. A key goal of his papacy was to transform and reposition the Catholic Church. For more on Pope John Paul II, the reader is referred to the following resources: A&E Television Network. *Pope John Paul II : Biography*. Random House Inc. 1997; George Weigel. *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*. Harper Perennial; Updated edition. 2005; Caroline Pigozzi. *Pope John Paul II: An Intimate Life: The Pope I Knew So Well*. FaithWords; 1 edition. 2008.

make them formally part of the Church but enlightens them in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation. This grace comes from Christ; it is the result of his Sacrifice and is communicated by the Holy Spirit. It enables each person to attain salvation through his or her free cooperation.⁵¹¹

3.1.1. Protestantism versus Roman Catholicism on Soteriology

On faith and works in the context of salvation, Protestantism (e.g Calvinism and Lutheranism) teaches that we are justified by faith apart from works (Rom 3:20-28; 4:1-5; 9:30-32; Gal 2:16; 3:1-14), but that once we believe with true faith we necessarily do good works as a result (Eph 2:8-10; Jam 17). Catholicism teaches that we are justified by faith and by the good works that flow from that faith (Jam 2:21-22).

On the meaning of justification, they both have contrasting views. The crux of their disagreement stems from their differences over the definition of the word “justify.” Roman Catholics generally argue that to justify someone is to recognize that the person really is righteous.⁵¹² Thus, they read James 2:21-22 to teach that Abraham reached a point of actual righteousness when he passed the test of being willing to sacrifice his son Isaac in Genesis 22. Protestants like the Calvinists, on the other hand, recognize two definitions for “justify” it could sometimes mean to “vindicate” or “validate,” and also “to count a person as if he were righteous, even though he really isn't.”⁵¹³ For example, when Abraham believed God, God counted Abraham as if he were actually righteous (Gen. 15:6) even though Abraham had not yet done any good works since believing. Protestants teach that the only one who is truly righteous enough to be saved is Christ himself (Romans 3:9-20; 5:15-19), and that Christ shares his own status as “righteous” with those who are united to him by faith (Galatians 3:17-29).

⁵¹¹see Patric J. Miron. *Behold the Lamb of God: A Treasury of Catholic Truths, Teachings and Traditions*. Oxford: UK, Trafford Publishing 2006:243

⁵¹² From Ra McLaughlin. *Calvinism vs. Roman Catholicism*. Third Millennium Ministries. [assessed 09/05/2012]

<http://thirdmill.org/answers/answer.asp/file/99973.qna/category/th/page/questions/site/iiim>.

⁵¹³Ibid.

The first definition, “vindication,” is the one Calvinists apply to James 2:21-22. Calvinists believe that the context in James 2 is not contrasting, on the one hand, true faith plus good works, and, on the other hand, true faith without works. Rather, Calvinists argue that⁵¹⁴ James is contrasting two kinds of faith, one that produces good works (true faith) and one that does not produce good works (false faith). “Vindication” seems the best definition in this passage according to Calvinists, because Abraham was already reckoned as righteous when he believed God in Genesis 15 many years before God tested his faith (Genesis 22:1). The test was to determine whether or not Abraham’s faith was true (Genesis 22:12), not to cause Abraham to do enough good works to earn his justification.

On Predestination, some protestants like the Calvinists and Lutherans hold to the view of predestination taught by St. Augustine. Roman Catholics hold to a modified version of St. Augustine’s view. Calvinists especially believe that God predestined whom he wanted to predestine, without consideration of the predestined people’s merits. Roman Catholics teach that predestination was somewhat conditioned upon the merits of those predestined.

On free will on the matter of salvation, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the Fall did not remove from man the ability to respond in faith to the gospel. Protestants like Calvinists and Lutherans believe that the Fall did remove this ability, and that any time a person comes to salvation, it is because God has renewed that person’s heart to respond positively in faith (John 6:44; Acts 16:14; Rom 8:1-8).

⁵¹⁴Ibid.

3.2. Eastern Orthodoxy

The Eastern Orthodox Church is considered to be the second largest Christian church in the world with an estimated 240 million adherents.⁵¹⁵ Their adherents believe that the Eastern Orthodox church is the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church established by Jesus Christ and his Apostles almost 2,000 years ago. Their main Biblical texts used include the Greek Septuagint and the New Testament and also the seven Deuterocanonical Books⁵¹⁶ and a small number of other books that are in the Western canon. Orthodox Christians use the term *Anagignoskomena*⁵¹⁷ for the ten books that they accept but that are not in the Protestant 39-book of the OT canon. They regard them as venerable, but on a lesser level than the 39 books of the Hebrew canon,⁵¹⁸ they are used mostly in their Divinity Liturgy.⁵¹⁹

Eastern Orthodoxy believes that scripture was revealed by the Holy Spirit to its inspired human authors. However, they believe that scriptures are not, the source of the traditions associated with the Church but rather the opposite; the biblical text came out of that tradition. Even though inspired by the Holy Spirit, they also believe that scripture is not the only important book of the Church. There are literally hundreds of early patristic writings that form part of Church tradition.

3.2.1. On Predestination and free will

On predestination, Eastern Orthodoxy castigates the protestant stands. Evidenced by the fact that in 1672 an Eastern Orthodox council was convened in Jerusalem, known

⁵¹⁵ Major Denominational Families of Christianity in Major Branches of Religions Ranked by Number of Adherents. [Assessed 09/05/2012] http://www.adherents.com/adh_branches.html.

⁵¹⁶ Most protestants have generally rejected these seven Deuterocanonical Books.

⁵¹⁷ a Greek word that means "readable", "worthy of reading"

⁵¹⁸ Michael Pomazansky. *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology: A Concise Exposition*. Saint Herman Printers, 2006:33-34.

⁵¹⁹ S. T. Kimbrough. *Orthodox And Wesleyan Scriptural Understanding And Practice*. St Vladimirs Seminary Printers. 2006:23.

as the Synod of Jerusalem to deal with this reformed influence (especially Calvinism) and its doctrine of predestination. From this Synod came the Confession of Dositheus⁵²⁰ which even though it is not universally accepted among the Orthodox, it to a reasonable extent represents the Eastern Orthodox position on predestination. Michael Patton⁵²¹ has done a good job to summarize the theology of predestination as discussed in this Synod.

According to Patton this council, having affirmed their commitment to the authority of the church as being equal to that of Scripture they then proceeded to give an Eastern Orthodox understanding of Predestination:

We believe the most good God to have from eternity predestinated unto glory those whom He has chosen, and to have consigned unto condemnation those whom He has rejected; but not so that He would justify the one, and consign and condemn the other without cause.⁵²²

The key here is that while believing in predestination, Eastern Orthodoxy does not believe that it is “without cause.” The agent of the cause is not God’s sovereign will, as argued by the Calvinists (unconditional predestination), but in man’s free will thus they stated:

But since He foreknew the one would make a right use of their free-will, and the other a wrong, He predestinated the one, or condemned the other.⁵²³

According to Eastern Orthodoxy, man’s “right use” of their own freedom is the boundary line which ultimately decides the predestination and fate of the individual.

Eastern Orthodoxy rejects the concept of “imputed sin” (i.e. we are condemned for Adam’s sin), and rather argue that we are born with a debilitating sinful nature that makes

⁵²⁰Dositheos (Patriarch of Jerusalem). Confession of Dositheos, Or, The Acts of the Synod of Jerusalem. Eastern Orthodox Books, 1692.

⁵²¹Michael Patton. *An Eastern Orthodox View of Predestination*. Oct. 2010. [Assessed 09/05/2012] <http://www.reclaimingthemind.org/blog/2010/10/an-eastern-orthodox-view-of-predestination/>.

⁵²²John H. Leith. *Creeds of the Churches, Third Edition: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*. Westminster: John Knox Press, 1282: 487. Originally an extract from the Eastern Orthodox confession at the Synod of Jerusalem (1672).

⁵²³See Tony Lane, A. N. S. Lane. *A concise history of Christian thought*. Ada: MI, Baker Academic press, 2006:83.

us unable to wilfully choose God without divine assistance. Therefore, in order for one to make “right use of their free-will” there must be some type of “mediating” grace that makes the person *able* to choose God. In this vein, the confession goes on:

And we understand the use of free-will thus, that the Divine and illuminating grace, and which we call preventing [or, prevenient] grace, being, as a light to those in darkness, by the Divine goodness imparted to all, to those that are willing to obey this — for it is of use only to the willing, not to the unwilling — and co-operate with it, in what it requires as necessary to salvation, there is consequently granted particular grace.⁵²⁴

In their explanation of the genesis of belief in a fallen, broken, will-tainted world, the Orthodox church does not see this corruption as radical as Protestants and do not call it “total” depravity, they nonetheless recognize that we need help. This genesis of our faith comes by way of “illuminating” or “preventing” grace. This grace goes before salvation and is given universally. It is the grace that enables or helps a person to believe. Once the person believes, they are then among the predestined (so long as they persevere in their belief). More from their confession makes the point clear:

This grace co-operates with us, and enables us, and makes us to persevere in the love of God, that is to say, in performing those good things that God would have us to do, and which His preventing grace admonishes us that we should do, justifies us, and makes us predestinated.⁵²⁵

For those who do not respond or co-operate with God’s grace, the Orthodoxy says:

But those who will not obey, and co-operate with grace; and, therefore, will not observe those things that God would have us perform, and that abuse in the service of Satan the free-will, which they have received of God to perform voluntarily what is good, are consigned to eternal condemnation.⁵²⁶

Concerning the means of salvation, the Orthodoxy believes that:

⁵²⁴John H. Leith. *Creeds of the Churches, Third Edition: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*. Westminster: John Knox Press, 1282: 487. Originally an extract from the Eastern Orthodox confession at the Synod of Jerusalem (1672).

⁵²⁵Ibid., 488.

⁵²⁶Ibid., 488.

We believe a man to be not simply justified through faith alone, but through faith which works through love, that is to say, through faith and works. But [the idea] that faith can fulfill the function of a hand that lays hold on the righteousness which is in Christ, and can then apply it unto us for salvation, we know to be far from all Orthodoxy. For faith so understood would be possible in all, and so none could miss salvation, which is obviously false. But on the contrary, we rather believe that it is not the correlative of faith, but the faith which is in us, justifies through works, with Christ.⁵²⁷

Most specifically, this Orthodox confession clearly condemns all the Reformed positions on the means of salvation assigning them to be among the “most wicked heretics, thus they stated:

But to say, as the most wicked heretics do and as is contained in the Chapter [of Cyril’s’ Confession] to which this answers — that God, in predestinating, or condemning, did not consider in any way the works of those predestinated, or condemned, we know to be profane and impious.⁵²⁸

Furthermore, in response to the question What is the relationship between the Divine provision and our free will? Bishop Theophan the Recluse’s⁵²⁹ answer helps to clarify the Eastern orthodox position on predestination as he stated:

The fact that the Kingdom of God is “taken by force” presupposes personal effort. When the Apostle Paul says, “it is not of him that willeth,” this means that one’s efforts do not produce what is sought. It is necessary to combine them: to strive *and* to expect all things from grace. It is not one’s own efforts that will lead to the goal, because without grace, efforts produce little; nor does grace without effort bring what is sought, because grace acts in us and for us through our efforts. Both combine in a person to bring progress and carry him to the goal. (God’s) foreknowledge is unfathomable. It is enough for us with our whole heart to believe that it never opposes God’s grace and truth, and that it does not infringe man’s freedom. Usually this resolves as follows: God foresees how a man will freely act and makes dispositions accordingly. Divine determination depends on the life of a man, and not his life upon the determination⁵³⁰

⁵²⁷Ibid., 496.

⁵²⁸Ibid., 488.

⁵²⁹ St. Theophan the Recluse (1815-1894) is a prominent saint in the Russian Orthodox Church. He was ordained in 1841, became a monk, and adopted the name Theophan. He later became the Bishop of Tambov. He is especially well-known today through the many books he wrote concerning the spiritual life, especially on the subjects of the Christian life and the training of youth in the faith.

⁵³⁰St. Theophan the Recluse, *An Explanation of Certain Texts of Holy Scripture*, as quoted in Johanna Manley’s *The Bible and the Holy Fathers for Orthodox: Daily Scripture Readings and Commentary for Orthodox Christians*, St Vladimir’s Seminary Press; Reprint edition, 1999: 609.

Finally, the writings of Bishop Elias Minatios, another prominent Eastern orthodox bishop would suffice in clarifying their position on predestination in their soteriology.

Divine predestination is one of the most inaccessible mysteries, locked in the abyss of divine reason and wisdom. The human mind, short on comprehension and limited in its ability to grasp concepts, will never be able to understand this mystery even if it studies and investigates it endlessly. Oh, you learned theologians, I know how you deliberate on divine predestination. You say: “predestination is the foreknowledge and preparation of God’s good things by which those who are saved are unalterably saved; that it is the ascension of rational creatures to eternal life, and is the process of being chosen to grace and glory.” Yet you do not understand that God foresees from the beginning all that people do within time, that this divine foreknowledge is stable, but the works of humans within time are free. How can we reconcile the unchangeability of God’s providence with the free self-determination of intelligent creatures?...Brothers and sisters, in this realm which defies comprehension, we understand only one thing: Predestination is the combination of divine grace and human will of the grace of God which calls, and the will of man which follows this calling.⁵³¹

⁵³¹Elias Minatios. *On Predestination: From the Writings of Bishop Elias Minatios*. Orthodox Christian Information Center. [Assessed 09/05/2012] <http://orthodoxinfo.com/inquirers/predestination.aspx>.

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