

**MATTHEW'S VERSION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER IN EWE-GHANAIAN CONTEXT**

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## Abstract

The Lord's Prayer has throughout the epochs of Christian history gone through layers of interpretations and translations. The three variants in Matthew, Luke, and the Didache, are internal and external evidence of hermeneutical traditions and context sensitivity in the handling of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. The study explores the Matthean rendition of the Lord's Prayer within the socio-linguistic and liturgical milieu of Ewe-Ghanaian Christianity. The study first and foremost identifies and corrects anomalies in existing Ewe translations of Matthew's rendition of the Lord's Prayer. The study explored the continuity and discontinuity between the Lord's Prayer and Ewe libation prayer with the aim of creating a healthy dialogue between Christian prayers and Ewe traditional religious prayers. Employing the critical-historical method, the study delved into the Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman backgrounds of the Lord's Prayer through critical examination of the *Kaddish* from the Talmud, and other early Jewish prayers predating the Lord's Prayer. It also explored the continuity and discontinuity between Matthew and Luke's versions, and assessed its relevance for the 21<sup>st</sup> century Ewe-Ghanaian Christian.

The advent of Christianity in Africa has resulted in the translation of the Bible into several African indigenous languages, and the Ewe language, spoken by people living in the southeastern part of Ghana, Togo, and part of Benin, is no exception. The translation of the Bible in general and the Lord's Prayer in particular from its source language (Greek) to the receptor language (Ewe), has undoubtedly enhanced the spiritual and liturgical life of the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian, especially in the area of prayer. This notwithstanding, the translation of the Bible into the Ewe language, just as in the medieval, modern and postmodern settings, has also led to the creation of linguistic, hermeneutical, theological, doctrinal, and liturgical discrepancies. The exegetical and hermeneutical exercise carried out in this study, is therefore an attempt to address such discrepancies as evident in the themes of the Lord's Prayer such as Πάτερ and οὐρανοῖς in the invocation, βασιλεία του θεού in the second petition, ἄρτον and ἐπιούσιον in the fourth petition, ὀφειλήματα and ὀφειλέταις in the fifth petition, and πονηρός in the sixth petition. The liturgical relevance of the Lord's Prayer for the 21<sup>st</sup> century Ewe-Ghanaian Christian has also been brought into question, especially when viewed within the ambience of popular Ewe-Ghanaian Christian prayers. The question of relevance challenges the ritual of reciting the Lord's Prayer, the time of its recitation, and popularity, leading to the assertion by a section of the Ewe-

Ghanaian Christian fraternity that the Lord's Prayer has outlived its relevance. The question of relevance therefore stimulated the need for a dialogical engagement between the Lord's Prayer and the pre-Christian Ewe traditional libation prayer as a response to the theological issue of the Christianization of the libation prayer. The study is therefore the researcher's contribution to the academic knowledge on the Lord's Prayer and inspires the use of Mother Tongue Biblical hermeneutics in the development of commentaries, Bible dictionaries, lexicons, concordances, and study bibles for the Ewe Christian communities in Ghana, Togo and Benin.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 AIM OF RESEARCH

Despite the consistent attempt by notable Ewe biblical scholars to exegetically formulate a standard translation of the Lord's Prayer in the Ewe language, it has been observed that discrepancies between the translations from Greek to Ewe still persist. This calls for an in-depth academic and exegetical exploration of the wider theology of the Lord's Prayer in the Synoptic gospels with key emphasis on Matthew's presentation. Furthermore, although the dust on the debate as to whether the Greek word *βασιλεία* used in Matthew 6:10 translates *fiadudu* (kingship) or *fiadufe* (kingdom) in Ewe seems to have settled through the revision of the Ewe Bible and Ewe liturgy, there is the need to revisit it from an academic perspective. In light of the above issues raised, the study sets for itself the following research questions to answer:

1. How do the discrepancies in translation of the Lord's Prayer from Greek to Ewe render the text ambiguous?
2. In what ways does the use of Mother Tongue Biblical hermeneutics help address the discrepancies that evolve as a result of translation from Greek to Ewe?
3. What is the relevance of the Lord's Prayer for the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian today?

The research which falls within the framework of Mother Tongue Biblical hermeneutics as a new approach to doing biblical Studies in Africa, essentially interprets and translates the Lord's Prayer from its source language (Greek) to the receptor language (Ewe) in comparison with existing Ewe translations such as *Biblia* and *Nubabla Yeye La* by the Bible Society of Ghana (1931/2010 and 1990 respectively), and *Agbenya La* by the International Bible Society-Africa (2006). As such, the study tackles and engages the linguistic and exegetical elements of the text and specifically grapples with the translation and usage of Πάτερ and οὐρανοῖς in the invocation, *βασιλεία* in the second petition, ἄρτον and ἐπιούσιον in the fourth petition, ὀφειλήματα and ὀφειλέταις in the fifth petition, and πονηρός in the sixth petition, in the Ewe, and for liturgical purpose explores the source and usage of the doxology. The study thus identifies and corrects anomalies in existing Ewe translations of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew and also addresses the hermeneutical/doctrinal distortions in Ewe liturgical use of the Lord's Prayer resulting from

some ambiguities in translation. The study also took a critical look at the continuity and discontinuity between Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer and that of Luke, and assessed its relevance for the 21<sup>st</sup> century Ewe-Ghanaian Christian. The work critically analyzes and compares the Lord's Prayer with the pre-Christian libation prayer of the Ewe to establish points of continuity and discontinuity. The aim is to help the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian appreciate the interface between the two prayers thereby creating a healthy dialogue between the Christian faith and Ewe traditional religion. The study is the researcher's contribution to the academic knowledge on the Lord's Prayer and inspires the use of Mother Tongue Biblical hermeneutics in the production of commentaries, Bible dictionaries, lexicons, concordances, and study bibles for the Ewe Christian communities in Ghana, Togo and Benin.

The production of commentaries, study bibles, bible dictionaries, lexicons and concordances, in the Ghanaian-African languages is at the heart of Biblical Studies in Africa today. Although European missionaries and translation agencies such as the Bible Society of Ghana and the Ghana Institute of Linguistic, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) have contributed tremendously in translating the Judeo-Christian Scriptures into various Ghanaian local languages leading to rapid spread of Christianity in Africa, there still exist hermeneutical challenges that need to be addressed. It is against this background that this research degree in New Testament is pursued to benefit the Ewe people in particular and Ghanaian-Africans more widely. This study primarily leads the Ewe-Christian to appreciate the interplay between the Lord's Prayer and the indigenous libation prayers with the aim of "making Christianity at home" (Bediako 1992:8). It is hoped that the outcome of this study will lead to the production of a commentary on the Lord's Prayer for the Ewe Christian community in Ghana and the Republic of Togo.

## **1.2 SOURCES OF DATA**

Both primary and secondary sources were employed for this study. Primary sources were obtained through interviews and bible study sessions while the secondary sources were obtained through literature related to the Lord's Prayer. In analyzing the data, all recorded interviews were carefully transcribed and edited for use.



### **1.2.1 Primary sources**

The study used semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires, participant observation, and group discussions which depended largely on fieldwork to gather data. This included consultation with academic theologians, social anthropologists and language experts to enrich the data. Traditional leaders and linguists, church leaders and church members were engaged in the interviews for the express purpose of blending indigenous knowledge with the academic, thereby bridging the gap between academic and grassroots theologies. The researcher personally recorded the interviews with audio tape, transcribed and used it in his analysis. The researcher also employed a technique where interviewees responded to the questions in writing. Data was collected from five Ewe communities namely; Peki in the South Dayi District of the Volta Region of Ghana and the citadel of Ewe Christianity, Anloga and Akatsi Abor, all in the Keta District of the Volta Region in Southeast Ghana, Volo in the North Tongu District of Ghana, Ho the regional capital of the Volta Region. Some interviews and two Bible study sessions were held among the Ewes in Accra, the capital of Ghana. These communities were selected for linguistic purpose. Two bible study sessions were held with Presbyters and youth of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, Lashibi in the Tema West District of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, while the researcher also participated and observed one allnight service organized by youth of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, Lashibi. In all, a total of sixty (60) respondents were engaged by the researcher. Ten (10) of the respondents, comprising Heads of Churches, traditionalists, academics, and the laity were interviewed using an audio tape recorder. The recorded interviews were then transcribed and used in the researcher's analysis. An open and close-ended questionnaires were administered to the remaining fifty (50) respondents. The questionnaires were based on the aim of the study and it captured basic information on the demographics of respondents such as sex, age, level of education, religious affiliation, position in church, and occupation. The data of the fifty respondents was coded and entered manually on to the computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences analysis tool.

### **1.2.2 Secondary sources**

A wide range of general literature on the subject was consulted as a secondary source of information for the dissertation. These were assessed through the libraries, internet and other archival sources that account for the religious worldview of the Ewe on prayer. As the study dialogues with the worlds of Lord's Prayer, a vast corpus of published and unpublished materials

including books, commentaries, dictionaries, academic dissertations and journal articles on the Lord's Prayer were also consulted.

### **1.3 METHODOLOGY**

The study was pursued through a combination of fieldwork and desk-based research. In studying a subject of this kind, a multi-dimensional approach is very advantageous. Therefore, in this study, both quantitative, qualitative, participant observation, and exegetical techniques, as well as comparative and dialogical approaches were employed. The comparison and dialogical approach were employed to engage the Lord's Prayer which Christ taught his first century followers with the prayer that was handed down to the Ewe by their ancestors (Hays 2014:15-37; Ukpong 2000:11-14). This was carried out by finding points of continuity and discontinuity between the two prayers. The sole aim for carrying out this exercise was to identify a common ground between the two prayers and to assert the relevance of the Lord's Prayer for the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian. The researcher began by first of all situating the Ewe libation prayer within its primordial context, asserting that the libation prayer predated Christianity, thereby justifying its comparison with the Lord's Prayer. The researcher collected Ewe libation prayer texts from published and unpublished materials, and interviews with Ewe traditionalists. The texts were transcribed, analyzed, and compared with the Lord's Prayer in terms of date, language, style, structure, and content.

The exegetical or historical-critical approach was employed to bring out the meaning of the text from the source language to the receptor language. It follows Hughson Ong's "discourse analysis", originated by Dell Hymes in his "Ethnography of speaking" and adapted by Holmes and Ottenheimers (Ong 2012-2013:98-123; Coulthard 1977, 1985:34-58). The following components of his approach forms the basis for the exegetical analysis of the Greek text: The genre; topic, which deals with a systematic analysis of the lexical hierarchy of the Greek text of the Lord's Prayer; purpose or function of the Lord's Prayer; key or emotional tone of the text; participants, that is, the speaker and his audience, the characteristics of the audience and their relationship; message form, that is, the syntactic structure of the text and, the message content or specific details of the Lord's Prayer. The final stage of the dissertation employed the Mother-Tongue Biblical approach. Ekem (2007:77) argues that Mother Tongue approach to biblical

interpretation is likely to shape the future of Biblical Studies in Africa. This approach involves the use of dialogue between the Biblical texts and their translations into various languages, taking cognizance of the *Sitze im Leben* (situation in life) that govern them as well as their *Wirkungsgeschichte* (history of effect/influence) and current practical application. He outlined the importance of dialogical exegesis to Biblical Studies in Africa which involved:

1. An examination of texts from a cross-cultural hermeneutical perspective whereby the biblical and other world-views (e.g. African) are brought face to face with each other on the principle of reciprocal challenge (intercultural/cross-cultural hermeneutics)
2. Dialogue between the translated texts and their 'originals' with the view to ascertaining their points of convergence and divergence as well as their impact on the community of faith (inter-textual dialogue)
3. Bringing the insights of [1] and [2] to bear on the development of context-sensitive Study Bible Notes and Commentaries (applied hermeneutics).

In applying the above method to the study, the researcher carried out an exegetical analysis of the existing Ewe translation of the Lord's Prayer such as *Biblia La* (1931, 2010), *Nubabla Yeye La*, *Agbenya La* (the Living Word). They were then compared with the source language and translations in other Ghanaian languages such as Akan and Ga. This finally, led to the production of an Ewe commentary on the Lord's Prayer.

#### **1.4 OUTLINE OF STUDY**

The study is demarcated into six Chapters with chapter 1 covering the introduction, aims of research, sources of the data, and the methodology employed.

Chapter 2 delves into the prevailing forms of Ewe religious worldview of libation prayers as replica of the Lord's Prayer. The chapter is divided into the following sections: Ewe religious worldview of libation prayer, the concept of libation in other religious settings, the Ewe libation process, the prevailing forms of Ewe libation prayers, collection and in-depth analysis of the themes of Ewe libation prayers, and comparison between Ewe libation prayer and the Lord's Prayer.

Chapter 3 critically investigates the Judeo-Christian background of The Lord's Prayer. It explores the continuity and discontinuity between the Lord's Prayer and other prevailing Jewish prayers such as the *Kaddish* from the Talmud. The chapter is divided into five main sections: an overview of Jewish prayer concept, Jewish prayer forms from the patriarchal to Second Temple eras, the prevailing prayers in the Jewish liturgy, the influence of the Jewish liturgy on early Christian worship, the *Shema*, *Amida*, *Kaddish* and their liturgical uses, and comparison between the *Amida/Kaddish* and the Lord's Prayer.

Chapter 4 concerns itself with a detailed linguistic and exegetical comparison between the Matthean and the Lukan accounts of the Lord's Prayer. The chapter also analyzes issues related to interpretations and theologies of the Lord's Prayer between the Patristic, the Medieval, and the Reformation eras.

Chapter 5 critically analyzes the Lord's Prayer text in existing Ewe translations using the Greek text that led to the production of an Ewe commentary on the Lord's Prayer.

Finally, Chapter 6 concludes with a recap of the preceding chapters and highlights the main findings of the work. The chapter also outlines recommendations as to how to teach and study the Lord's Prayer devotionally and academically. This is intended to help improve on any future exegetical work related to the Lord's Prayer.

## Chapter 2

### The prevailing forms of Ewe religious worldview of libation prayers as replica of the Lord's Prayer

The primal religion or traditional forms of religious practices of every society has been the bedrock upon which the Christian religion has thriven, and Ewe primal religion is no exception.<sup>1</sup> An important component of all religions, particularly African traditional religious practice is prayer. Heiller's (1932: xiii) study into the subject sums up the views of religious people, students of religion, theologians of all creeds and tendencies which is that "prayer is the central phenomenon of religion, the very hearthstone of all piety." Mbiti's (1975:57) ontological description of prayer as "an act of pouring out the soul of the individual or community" also paints a vivid picture of the African context. Prayer, rendered *Uleya*<sup>2</sup> in *Adagana*<sup>3</sup>, in its varied forms such as, *adegbedodo*, *gbedodoḡa*, *amlafofo* or *tsifofodi*, which is commonly called libation – connects the Supreme Being to their devotees. Before the advent of Christianity, libation served as a medium through which the traditional religious devotee communed with the divine. Libation, according to Sarpong (1996:29) and Ganusah (2001: 278-291; 2008:89-91), is a religious act of prayer and sacrifice. Ganusah (2008:89) and Opoku (1978:37) describe libation as "an essential ritual in the traditional understanding of life"<sup>4</sup> – it is the pathway into African spirituality and an expression of African religiosity. Libation prayer permeates every facet of Ewe life and thought – political, judicial, social, economic, and religious.<sup>5</sup> Spieth (1906:448) echoes this in his interaction with a chief of Ho<sup>6</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> See Perkins, Wilken (1986), Asante (1995), and Bediako (2009).

<sup>2</sup> *Uleya* in *Adagana* means 'moving the play' from *Ule* (move) and *Ya* (move).

<sup>3</sup> *Adagana*, from *Ada* (Ewe for heaven), *ga* (rhythm), is Ewe religious language or expressions which usher one into the rhythm of the cosmos.

<sup>4</sup> Mulago's article in *African Traditional Religions in Contemporary Society*, edited by Olupona (1991), gives us insight into what Africans understand as life. He observes that life is understood as both empirical and super-empirical, and in view of the African "the two lives are inseparable and interdependent." Therefore living, according to Mulago, finds meaning in a person "existing in the bosom of the community." See Mulago (1991:120).

<sup>5</sup> See Spieth (1906: 159-634) and (Gavua 2000:85-86).

<sup>6</sup> Ho is currently the capital of the Volta region of Ghana and the headquarters of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana. It was part of the Trans Volta Togoland which was made a protectorate of Germany in 1890 after an agreement with England, and one of the mission posts of the North German Missionary Society in Bremen in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. But the nomenclature in Ewe cosmology is the fourth dimension of existence.

if there is a person in my village who does not pray every morning after getting up in the morning from his mat, and does not pour water [libation] on the ground and say: ‘*O Mawu Sodza, hāgbenō lāgbenō, di nuḍuḍu egbe ne maḍu, eye ne matsi agbe*, literally, ‘O God Sodza, owner of palm wine, owner of meat, find food today for me to eat, so that I stay/remain alive’, then that person is not a human being.

(Spieth 1906:448)

The above custom is prevalent in many primal religions in African. Heiller (1932:4), refers to the Ovambo of Namibia who “appears in the morning before his tent door, spits towards the sun, throws out a handful of grass or leaves and at the same time expresses his wishes.” Another example of the prevalence of libation prayer is that of the Djaga Negro, who “spits toward the sun four times every morning and says”: ‘O Ruwa, protect me and mine’ (Idelsohn 1995:7-8). The following is the morning prayer of the Masai of Southern Kenya and Northern Tanzania: ‘God of my misery, give me to eat, give me milk, give me children, give me cattle, give me meat, my father.’ At sunset, the Khoikhoi walks out and, turns his or her face toward the east, and prays: ‘God of heavens, father of all’ (Idelsohn 1995:8). The Ana-people in Atakpame approach with awe the holy shrine of the highest god every morning to pray and bring offerings. They bend their knees, touch the floor with their foreheads and chins, clap their hands, and say: ‘Good morning, father’ (Idelsohn 1995:8). This primal concept of prayer is not different from views expressed by theologians of the early twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> Heiller again posits that:

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<sup>7</sup> The views of early 20<sup>th</sup> century theologians, poets, writers and critics on religious issues on prayer are discussed in Friedrich Heiller’s work: for Martin Luther:- faith is prayer and nothing but prayer. For Johann Arndt, we cannot find God without prayer; prayer is the means by which we seek and find Him. According to Schleiermacher, to be religious and to pray is one and the same thing. For Novalis: prayer is to religion what thinking is to philosophy. Praying is religion in the making. The religious sense prays, just as the thinking mechanism thinks. Richard Rothe is of the opinion that the religious impulse is essentially the impulse to pray. It is by prayer that the process of the individual religious life is governed, the process of the gradual fulfilment of God’s indwelling in the individual and his religious life. Therefore, the non-praying man is rightly considered to be religiously dead. It is the potent agency for obtaining power to live a religious life, the specific remedy for religious weakness. For Adolf Deissmann also, religion, wherever it is alive in man, is prayer. Gustav Theodor Fechner at his turn, argues that if you take prayer out of the world it is as if you had torn asunder the bond that binds humanity to God, and had struck dumb the tongue of the child in the presence of his Father. C.P. Tiele opines that where prayer has wholly ceased, it is all over with religion itself. Auguste Sabatier argues that where prayer of the heart is wanting, there is no religion, and for William James prayer is the first, highest, and most solemn phenomenon and manifestation of religion. This is also the opinion of Alban Stolz: prayer is the blood and the circulation of the blood in the religious life. M. Meschler has the same conviction: prayer is the soul of the public worship of God and the chief means of grace for the inner life. For J. Wellhausen prayer is the only adequate form for a confession of faith, and for E. Kautzsch prayer is the absolutely necessary activity of the religious life, the unconscious, indispensable breathing of the religious spirit. R. Kittel argues that prayer is the natural and necessary expression of every religion, and for P. Christ prayer is the culmination of the religious process in man. E. von der Goltz sees prayer as the breath of all piety. For Paul Althaus

all the various thoughts of God, creation, revelation, redemption, grace, the life beyond, are the crystallized products in which the rich stream of religious experience, faith, hope, and love, gains a firm outline. All the manifold rites and sacraments, consecrations and purifications, offerings and sacred feasts, sacred dances and processions, all the working of asceticism and morality, are only the indirect expression of the inner experience of religion, the experience of awe, trust, surrender, yearning, and enthusiasm. In prayer, on the other hand, this experience is directly unveiled.

(Heiller 1932: xv)

Prayer, as Thomas Aquinas sees it, ‘is the peculiar practical proof of religion’; it is, as Girgensohn states, ‘a perfectly accurate instrument for grading the religious life of the soul.’ Perhaps Farnell’s view on prayer resonates well with Chief Kofi of Ho, ‘there is no part of the religious service of mankind that so clearly reveals the various views of the divine nature held by the different races at the different stages of their development, or reflects so vividly the material and psychological history of man, as the formula of prayer.’ I cannot agree more with Deissmann view that ‘one might ... write a history of religion by writing a history of prayer.’

Despite the central role that libation prayer occupies within African primal religions, its practice has not been without contention. It has been noted by Sarpong (1996a:vii,27, 2012b:72-73) and Dankwa (2004:79) that libation prayer has become one of the most controversial subject matter in Ghanaian traditional religious practice and has been regarded as demonic within the Christian fraternity, calling for its complete abolishment.<sup>8</sup> This chapter, as background to this study, intends to explore the various forms of Ewe religious world view of libation prayer as replica of the Lord’s Prayer which Jesus taught his disciples to pray.<sup>9</sup> The chapter is divided into six main sections: Ewe religious world view of libation prayer, libation concept in other religious settings,

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prayer is the soul and very heart-beat of piety, and for R. Kähler prayer is a fundamental element in all genuine piety, the central point of all personal Christianity. Samuel Eck opines that prayer is the essential and characteristic expression of the religious consciousness. F. Ménégoz is of the opinion that prayer is the primary phenomenon of religion, the primary fact of the religious life, for K.F. Hermann prayer is the simplest and most direct way by which man puts himself into relation with the Deity, and for Feuerbach the innermost essence of religion is revealed by the simplest act of religion – prayer.

<sup>8</sup> Parson’s (1963) survey of the work of three Protestant Mission Societies in Ghana reveals that the Ghana Presbyterian Church, now Presbyterian Church of Ghana, banned its members from observing outdoor ceremonies in their communities because it is associated with the pouring of libation. In the code of conduct in connection with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, libation, no matter its form, was viewed as idolatrous, hence it cannot be performed at any Christian ceremony, particularly burial services. See Parson (1963:75,77)

<sup>9</sup> Friedrich Heiller (1932:1) emphasized that the fact of primitive prayer, in its spontaneity and petitionary, “exhibits the prototype of all prayer, [including the Lord’s Prayer]”

the Ewe libation prayer process, the prevailing forms of Ewe libation prayers, an in-depth analysis of the main themes of the Ewe libation prayers, and a comparison between Ewe libation prayer and the Lord's Prayer.

## 2.1 EWE RELIGIOUS WORLDVIEW OF LIBATION PRAYER

The Ewe cosmology is a spiritually saturated one with every life event interpreted in the light of events happening in the spirit world. This cosmic understanding stems from the believe that the whole of the universe is an embodiment of the Supreme Being (*Mawugã*). *Mawugã*, it is believed, emanated from the absolute/celestial state of being through the various levels of existence to the embodied state.<sup>10</sup> From this state, *Mawugã* created all living things (Ewe-*Nugbegbeawo/nugbagbeawo*),<sup>11</sup> including human beings, and dwells in them. God is therefore known at the absolute state as *Sogbe-Lisa*, from *So* (Father), *Gbe* (Mother); *Lisa*, from *Li* (exists), and *Sa* (immortal/eternal). The third deity surrounding the duality *Sogbe Lisa* in the celestial realm of existence is called *Chi* – the awakener and consciousness behind *Sogbe Lisa*. In other Ewe traditions, the Supreme Being is called *Se*,<sup>12</sup> with the dualistic pair *Sodza* (female) and *Sogbla* (male), with *Sowlui* as a third pair (Spieth 1906:458-462).<sup>13</sup> Thus, the pantheon of deities<sup>14</sup> called *Trɔwo* and *Voduwo*, and every living creature, are manifestations of *Sogbe-Lisa* at

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<sup>10</sup> In an interview with Dr. Kumordzi on September 28, 2015, he mentioned that *Sogbe Lisa* manifests the self at seven different levels. At the first and second levels, which is called the absolute state, He exists as *So* and *Gbe* with *So* being the father and *Gbe* being the mother, and *Chi* as the awakener and consciousness behind *Sogbe*. And because they exist in an immortal and eternal state they are called *Sa*. So the eternal immortal God in Ewe is called *Sogbe Lisa*. At the third level of existence, *Sogbe-Lisa* exists as primordial sound (*Hu*). At the fourth level of existence, *Sogbe Lisa* manifests the self in a cosmic trinity of *Sovi-Agbade*, *Sovi-Da*, *Vodu-Da* or *Da-Kriso*, and *Sovi-Agbeku* who are creators of life with the responsibilities to preserve, create and destroy life respectively. See also Awoonor (2006). At the fifth level of existence, *Sogbe Lisa* is called *Xebieso*, the god of light and sound (thunder) who is believed to controls about 256 deities known in Ewe as *Trɔwo* (lesser gods) who are the embodiment of the law and order of the cosmos. *Voduwo* are the gods who exist at the sixth level of the divine manifestation. In the final level of existence, *Sogbe Lisa* manifests the self in their visible form – sun, moon and galaxy of stars, plants, animals, man, the earth, rocks, mountains, rivers, and the ocean, with man as epitome of all creation.

<sup>11</sup> *Nugbegbeawo*, now pronounced as *Nugbagbeawo*, from *Nu* (thing (s), *gbe* (sound/voice), meaning all things that are the embodiment of sound.

<sup>12</sup> The whole of existence is an ordered law system.

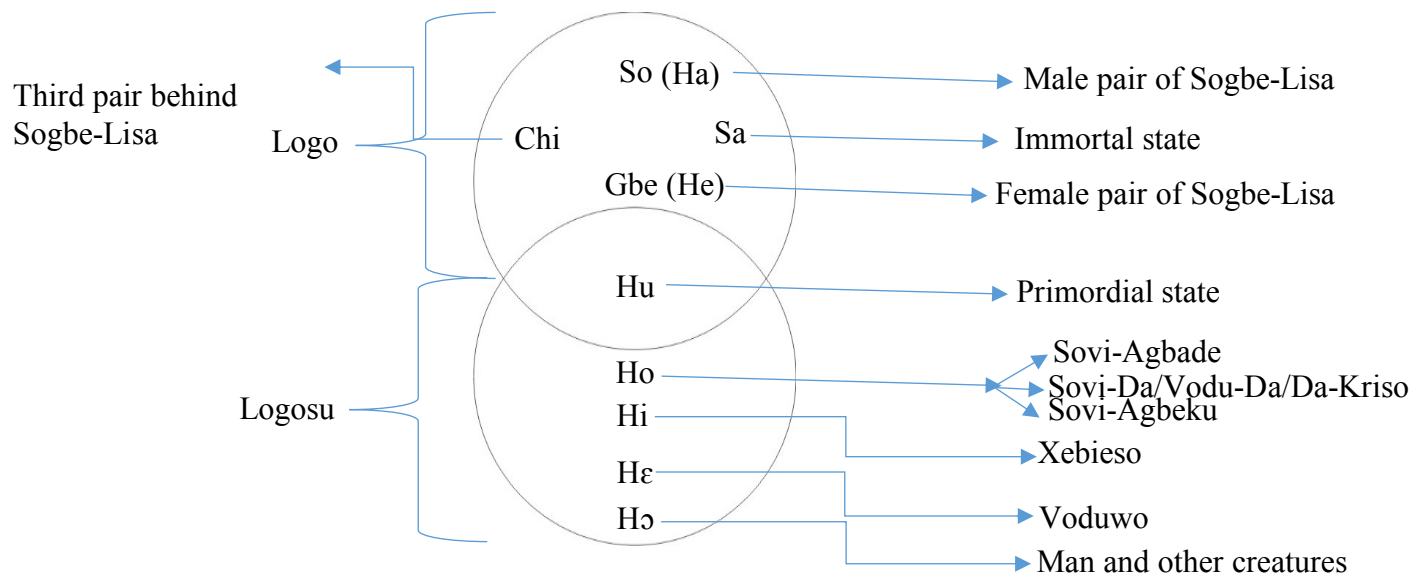
<sup>13</sup> See also Wicker and Opoku (eds. 2007), and Dzobo (2008). Gbolonyo (2009) has also done extensive work on the idea of a cosmic trinity in Ewe ontology.

<sup>14</sup> Wicker and Opoku (2007:26) have categorized the Ewe primordial divinities into five: *Torhonor* which is the divinity of thunder and rain, and is responsible for the fertility of plants, beasts and humanity; *Torkorsu*, the divinity of water bodies – oceans, seas, lagoons and rivers; *Ablor*, the divinity of the earth and patron of farmers and animal husbanders; *Ade*, the divinity of fortune and patron of hunters and warriors; *Efa*, the divinity of wisdom, science and divination and the patron of clairvoyants and diviners as well as the spokesman for all the other divinities, and *Egu*, the divinity of irand patron of smiths and technologists. *Egu* is also responsible for the welfare of hunters and



various stages of existence. *Sogbe Lisa* is “the source which has emanated to become the manifold universe, that upon which you lean and do not fall; *Zioni* – the Eternal Support”<sup>15</sup> Awoonor (2006:377). In this cosmic understanding, the whole of creation, in both physical and metaphysical forms, is inextricably linked to the Supreme Being. *Hamugbetɔ*, now pronounced *Amegbetɔ*, from, *Ha* (the male counterpart of the divine duality in its blissful state), and *Gbe* (the female)<sup>16</sup>, is the embodiment of the male and female pairs of the Supreme Being, and the totality of creation. Man is named and called *Homo Sefe*, the embodiment of all the laws of creation; also known to be *Homo Lodo*, because he embodies all the mysteries there is, or *Homo Adetɔ*, because he is the only creature who has been given the power of speech. The above cosmology situated within a philological context can be seen in the *Efa* or *Yeve* cultic system described by Wicker and Opoku (2007:26) as the ... “spokesman for all the other divinities.”<sup>17</sup> The diagram (Fig. 1) below is a graphical representation of the Ewe cosmology.

**Figure 1**



warriors as well as all those whose profession involves the use of metals. Dr. Kumordzi, however, disputes this arrangement of the cosmic hierarchy.

<sup>15</sup> Dr Datey Kumordzi in one of the interviews granted confirmed Awoonor’s position. The late Awoonor who met his untimely death during Al-Shabab Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi on September 21, 2013 acknowledged Dr. Datey Kumordzi as the one who supplied him with information on Chapter 26 of his book “The African Predicament: Collected essays.” See Awoonor (2006:376-386).

<sup>16</sup> Another designation for the male pair of the Supreme Being is *SoHa* while the female is *TeGbe*

<sup>17</sup> Meyer (1999:61) agrees with Spieth (1911:172-88) that *Yeve* is a secret society. On the contrary, *Efa* or *Yeve* in reality is not a divinity. In the interview with Dr. Dartey Kumordzi, *Efa* was described as the entire existence, while *Yeve* is the physical, mental and metaphysical world. *Yeve* is the cognate for the Tetragrammaton YHWH or YHWH.

Ewe concept of prayer is derived from the cosmic understanding that the entire universe, aside being viewed as the embodiment of the Supreme Being, is also viewed as the divine cosmic drama.<sup>18</sup> *Tsifofodi* which is libation prayer, is derived from *Chi* (water) *fo* (beat), *di* (manifest). The phrase, *fo chi woadi* means, beat *chi* to manifest. *Chifofodi* is therefore the awakening of the divine deity to respond and move into action. Thus, libation prayer, according to Gbolonyo (2009:218-219), carries the idea of communicating with the deities in a petitionary manner through the medium of speech or music. Mbiti (1975a: 55; 1975b:61) describes it as the commonest medium through which devotees approach the deity, and it is said either by individuals, families through their family heads or the religious spokesman – the priest – on behalf of the community. Libation brings enlightenment to the mind of the libator, his audience and the environment, hence its original name *Libata*<sup>19</sup>, from *Li* (light), *ba* (come/bring), and *ta* (mind). Its intended purpose is to remove the veil of ignorance from the mind so that one acquires the knowledge of what to do.

Since its inception, water has been the sole liquid used in libation performances for the sole reason that it symbolizes *Chi*, the awakener of the divine blissful play and the third person of the cosmic trinity.<sup>20</sup> Spieth (1906:55, 464,472, 485) and Sarpong (1996:16) allude to the fact that other liquids such as *wɔtsi* (Corn flour solution) and *deha* (palm wine), have over the years been accepted as either alternatives or in lieu of water. Gbolonyo (2009:219) posits that these three liquids are used due to their natural, pure and unprocessed compositions. Spieth (1906), in his ethnographic study of the Ewe people in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century asserts that the variety of drinks used in libation prayer must be understood within the context of the deities' freedom of choice. He explains that prior to the Bremen Missionaries' arrival in Eweland, water was what the people used whenever they were performing libation prayer but changed with the introduction of European brands such as Schnapps and Whisky.<sup>21</sup> Oseadeeyo Addo dankwa (2004:81-82), late paramount chief of Akuapen Traditional Area, and a Christian, confirms Spieth's position when

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<sup>18</sup> The divine cosmic play is called in Ewe *Havle*.

<sup>19</sup> *Libata* is in cognate with *Sabata* (Sabbath in Judaism), from *Sa* (state of immortality). *Sabata* means lifting one's mind into the state of bliss.

<sup>20</sup> Water was originally written *chi* in Ewe.

<sup>21</sup> See also Sarpong (1977:25-26), Adjaye (2004: 19).

he wrote about a century later that, “the use of strong drinks ... is a departure from the original method [of libation prayer]. He further points out that,

water was used because it is an Akan custom that in welcoming a family member or a stranger who must have walked a long distance from the village and in the process must have gathered dust on his feet, water is poured down, conceptually, intended to wash the dust off his or her feet. Therefore, if the use of strong drinks is intended also to wash the feet of the ancestor who is supposed to have arrived after a long journey with possible blistered feet, the ancestor will feel uncomfortable and such an act might constitute a hostile reception.

(Dankwa 2004:81-82)

Although Ewe understanding of the use of water in libation performance resonates with Addo Dankwa’s position, it however, contrasts sharply with the idea that the water is intended to wash the feet of the ancestors. Thus, water as symbol of *Chi*, connects the one who prays to the source of the prayer (*Sogbe Lisa*), moving him to act on the prayer request. Thus, a departure from the use of water in libation performance is a distortion of the Ewe belief system and affects the efficacy of the prayer made. The use of corn flour solution in libation on certain occasions must be understood from the fact that corn symbolizes life (*agbe*). Corn flour is therefore added to water for the purpose of making it more efficacious.

### **2.3 LIBATION CONCEPT IN OTHER RELIGIOUS SETTINGS**

Libation is born with the Ewe; it is as old as the Ewe language and pervasive in the religions of antiquity. Evidence from Judaism and the religions of some Ancient-Near Eastern nations suggests that libation is an ancient religious practice. The regular pouring of libation and its attendant abuse in temple worship, for instance, is evident in the law, the prophets and the writings.<sup>22</sup> In the early religious life of Jacob, he offered libation at Bethel on his return from Padan Aram.<sup>23</sup>

The practice also appeared in the rituals that were performed for a Nazirite who has completed his Naziriteship, and for Aaron and his sons during their consecration as priests serving in the

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<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey L. Rubenstein in his ‘The Sukkot Wine Libation quotes Hosea 9:4, Joel 1:4-9; 2:19, 24; 4: 18; Exodus 29:40; Numbers 28:7ff; 15:5,7,24; 6:15,17; Leviticus 23:13,18,37, and refers to A. Weiser’s work on Psalms, translated by H. Hartwell, H.J. Kraus’ “Worship in Israel, R. Kittel’s “Die Psalmen”, Josephus Antiquities 15:394 and *m. Mid.* 3:8 as evidence of the pouring of libation in temple worship.

<sup>23</sup> See Genesis 35:14

cult.<sup>24</sup> It was also part of the daily offerings that the people were to offer to God in the tabernacle.<sup>25</sup> Food was to be put on table for YHWH and drink poured out for Him on daily basis. The practice was intended to continue upon their arrival and settlement on the Promised Land and during the celebration of some festivals such as the Feast of the First Fruits, Pentecost (Feast of Weeks), Feast of Trumpets and Feast of Tabernacle.<sup>26</sup> The practice became so pervasive, as Rubenstein (1999:427-430) describes it, that the people were reprimanded by the prophets for offering it to foreign gods.<sup>27</sup> Rabbinic tradition, according to Rubenstein (1999:575-576), confirms the biblical basis of the pouring of libation through proof text approach. In his description of the celebration of the festival of *Sukkot* (Tabernacle), Rubenstein opines:

each day a priest poured a double libation of water and wine upon the altar. Water was drawn from the Siloam Pool, carried with great fanfare in a formal procession to the Temple, and placed in a bowl set on the south-western corner of the altar. The priest poured a libation of wine into a second bowl in such a way that the two libations flowed onto the altar simultaneously.

(Rubenstein 1999: 575)

It is obvious from Rubenstein's description of the practice of the pouring of libation by the Israelites during the Second Temple worship that it was performed as a rain-making ritual, intended to honour YHWH and to petition Him to send down abundance of rain for bumper harvest. Its mention in biblical and rabbinic traditions attests to the fact of its prevalence within the Jewish religion.

Libation was also offered by non-Jews such as the Greeks and Romans, to their gods of wine, Dionysus and Liber respectively. Jonathan Kirkpatrick (2013: 167) writes about how Greeks and Romans identified their gods, Dionysus and Liber, with the Jewish God during the era of the Maccabean revolt. This, he said, was premised on three things:

the cult of the Temple of Jerusalem was seen by outsiders to be characterized by the use of wine, an impression Jews did nothing to counteract. Second, outsiders acted on this impression, both as part of the cognitive step of identifying the God of the Jews with Dionysus, and, possibly, making gifts

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<sup>24</sup> See Numbers 6: 15, 17; Exodus 25:29; 29:40-41

<sup>25</sup> See Numbers 28:1, 7

<sup>26</sup> See Leviticus 23:13, 18, 37; Numbers 15:5, 7, 24

<sup>27</sup> See Hosea 9:4, Joel 1:4-9; 2:19, 24; 4: 18

to the Temple, while it stood, of wine-related dedications, and third, this was a characterization Jews were willing to embrace themselves, even at times of revolt.

(Kirkpatrick 2013:167)

Bowie's (2012:259-260) research into the religious practices of characters in the five "ideal" Greek novels, discovered in Longus, one of the five novels, "a full range of traditional religious practices, including vows and libations" (Bowie 2012:225). Under libation, Bowie identifies its performance at public ceremonies and private symposia, and gave typical examples to buttress his point. A few of those examples would suffice.

### **Libation at the lightening of fire on the altar – Public ceremony**

#### **English gloss**

"They asked the priest of the Pythian to begin the libation and to light the altar, and Charicles said that the libation was his own concern, 'but let the leader of the *theoria* set light to the altar, receiving the torch from temple attendant, for this is the custom that the ancestral law determines'. These were his words, and he began to pour the libation, and Theagenes began to take the fire ..." (Bowie 2012:225)

### **Libation in private**

#### **English gloss**

"Let us pour libation ... to the gods of this country and of the Greeks, and indeed to Pythian Apollo himself, and also to Theagenes and Charicleia the fair and noble, since I inscribe them too in the number of the gods. And at the same time he shed a tear, as if contributing his lamentations as another libation to them."

Anthony Ephirim-Donkor (2008), a Ghanaian traditional ruler and theologian, in correcting the wrong perceptions and condemnation of libation by opponents of African traditional religious practices and rituals, also traced the source of libation prayer to ancient Egypt and cites typical examples from ancient Greek religious prayer of libation as evidence:

and the young men filled the mixing-bowl with pure wine and passed it to all, pouring first a libation in goblets. Then when they had poured out wine, and drunk as much as their hearts wished, they set out from the shelter of Atreus' son, Agamemnon.

The idea of libation again appears in the theology of Paul when he metaphorically viewed “the Philippians as...priests, their Christian achievements as their sacrifice, and his own possible martyr death as the accompanying libation” (Robertson 1929:1245). Paul’s knowledge of the Pentateuch coupled with his use of typology<sup>28</sup> in articulating his theological ideas, and the significant role of libation in temple worship might have informed its use in encouraging the Philippian church on the need to remain steadfast until the day of Christ, an eschatological expectation which, in his thought, he may not live to see. The death of Christ may be viewed as libation *par excellence* – he poured his blood on the ground for us.<sup>29</sup>

#### 2.4 EWE LIBATION PRAYER PROCESS

At the center of every libatory prayer is the officiant who serves as link between the Supreme Being, the gods, ancestors, and the community. Ganusah (2001: 279) and Adjaye (2004: 20-21) explain that the officiant begins his prayers by first and foremost baring his shoulders and feet in reverence to the deities and the ancestors to be invoked. It is followed by the pouring of water into a calabash by an aid to the libator. He then evokes *Sogbe-Lisa* and *Chitikata*, the awakener and the consciousness, the primal life force and the mind behind the universe, *trɔwo* (deities), *voduaowo* (divinities), and, *tɔgbuiwo* and *mamawo* (the ancestors), followed by the pouring of water on the ground. Adjaye (2004) describes it in the Akan practice, which bears resemblance to the Ewe counterpart as follows:

the libator utters his words, invoking the various spiritual entities through the application of a rich and witty interplay of verbal resources, competence in the Akan system of metaphysical thought, and familiarity with the contextual situation. He fashions the ceremonial action through specialized modes of verbal patterns.

(Adjaye 2004:21)

The libator then presents the petition of the family/clan or community to the deities for their attention and subsequent action, depending on the occasion. The occasions on which libation

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<sup>28</sup> See Exodus 29:41; Numbers 15:10. See also Fairbairn (1852) and Goppelt (1982) on Paul’s use of typology in the interpretation of Scripture.

<sup>29</sup> See Isaiah 53: 12a.

prayers are made are varied but can be classified, according to Adjaye (2004:19-20), into the categories of obligatory, preferred and optional. The obligatory, also known as mandatory occasions are performed on occasions such as festivals, funerals, installation or destoolment of chiefs and elders, during war times, child naming, and marriage. The second category falls under meetings of elders, and the welcoming and bidding farewell of visiting dignitaries. Other occasions include crisis situations such as famine, droughts, wildfires, natural disasters, missing citizen, and inexplicable family calamities. Third, libation as a form of prayer, can be made at any gathering and by any number of persons; “whenever two or three are gathered, asking for blessings and other favours from the deities and the ancestors, libation can be poured” (Spieth 1906; see also Adjaye 2004).

The role of the officiant of the libation prayer cannot be overemphasized since he is seen to serve as the link between the living, the deities and the ancestors. In an interview with Tɔgbe Keh XII, Divisional Chief of *Gbi Wegbe* and Leftwing Chief of *Gbi* Traditional Area with over a decade and a half years of experience in chieftaincy, a tax officer, a Christian and church leader, he stressed the important role that the libator plays in the whole libatory process. According to him the piety of the libator greatly affects the efficacy of his performance. He must prepare himself spiritually by not getting intoxicated and must not engage in any sexual activities at least three days ahead of the ceremony. Moreover, he must be at peace with every member of the community since in libation prayer, the moral backing of the audience is essential. The importance of the audience in the entire libatory process, as indicated by Tɔgbe Kleh, resonates with Adjaye’s (2004) assertion that:

in a sustained flow of language ... [the libator] moves his audience along in a processual progression of verbal art. The level of verbal and ritual efficacy that he is able to attain is directly related to his ability to heighten the emotional and experiential engagement of his audience. This he effects to the extent that his unfolding performance stimulates spontaneous responses from participants as they become engaged in a shared, dramatic performance.

(Adjaye 2004: 21-22)

The responses of the audience which comes in the form of *sio* or *wee* (meaning yes), affirms the validity of the libator’s statement and also serves as an encouragement that heightens his orchestration of the event (Adjaye 2004: 22).

On competence, both Adjaye and Tɔgbe Kleh XII agree that it is a critical ingredient in the pouring of libation. According to *Tɔgbe Kleh*, anyone chosen to lead libatory prayer is first given informal training through the process of mentoring. Some of the selection criteria include one's temperament, industriousness, courteousness and communicative skill. It is competence coupled with experience that qualifies either family heads/knowledgeable adults<sup>30</sup> or linguists to lead libation prayers in private and at state functions respectively (Adjaye 2004:23-24).

The prayer then ends either with a benediction for the community or a malediction on anyone who wishes the ill of the community or the event. On the installation of a chief for instance, the libator pronounces blessings on the new chief by saying, *Na Tɔgbe ne nɔ agbe, Gbi fiawo ne nɔ agbe*, literally, "let the chief stay alive, let all the chiefs of *Gbi* state stay alive", or he makes imprecatory comments. The libator, on certain occasions, ends his prayer with a loud sound from the lips, followed by the slaughtering of a ram in the case of the installation of a chief, which in the words of Tɔgbe Kleh, symbolize peace, long life, prosperity and progress of the community.<sup>31</sup> The blood of the ram which touches the ground is interpreted to mean that any incident in the community involving blood should carry good omen.

The importance of libation prayers, according to Adjaye (2004:26), lies in the fact that they serve as the individuals, families, clans or community's "conception of themselves". They are what Adjaye (2004:26) describes as "the take-off point from which all major ceremonies are initiated." Libation prayers are the construction of, and relationship between, not only the human and spiritual world, but also fellow humans.<sup>32</sup> When libation prayers are offered, they affirm people's connections to their spiritual universe and their interrelations with each other and bring their past to their present. If performed continually, they serve as binding factor, linking the living-dead, the unborn and those alive. Libation pouring is therefore, an affirmation of African belief in the

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<sup>30</sup> According to Torgbe Kleh XII, family heads who get converted to Christianity stop offering libation prayers because their new faith does not permit such rituals.

<sup>31</sup> In an interview with Torgbe Kleh, he explained that the blood of the ram which touches the ground means that whenever something happens in the community and blood is involved, it should be for good and not for evil. For instance, the blood that touches the ground when a child is born, during hunting, fishing, when a farmer cuts himself while weeding, or when two men get into a fight should all be signs of good omen.

<sup>32</sup> See also Mbiti (1975:61-63), and Opoku (2004).



existence of the Supreme Being, the mediatory role of the lesser deities as messengers of the divine sent to punish and/ or reward their subjects, and the recognition of the ancestors as part of the community and the need to revere and emulate them as a way of maintaining the moral fortitude of the community – a kind of social control mechanism intended to keep society morally stable<sup>33</sup> (Sarpong 1996a; 2012b). Libation, as Adjaye rightly expresses, is dialogic in that it generates a conversation between the one performing it and his audience. It must therefore be understood, as Adjaye (2004: 21, 26) suggests, within the...“cultural milieu in which they are enacted and performed, and...grounded in the ontological and belief systems of the people.”

## 2.5 EWE LIBATION PRAYER FORMS

Magesa (2013:65), alluding to Shorter (1975), Mbiti (1975a) and Ephirim-Donkor (2011), asserts that “there are no standardized forms of prayer in African rituals.” However, there is certainly a “style and structure” or modality to African prayer. Ewe prayer is not in isolation and it appears, as indicated earlier, in the form of *gbedodoḍa*, *amlafofo*, *Aḍegbedodo* and *tsifofodḍi* with *tsifofodḍi* as the prayer of libation. Libation prayer, to borrow the words of Adjaye (2004: 22), may appear “in a short, abbreviated form, or in longer, more elaborate versions, depending on the occasion and the skills of the individual performing it. The longer type, which Adjaye (2004:22), and Gbolonyo (2009:219) label under mega-communicative variety, can be divided into four stanzas: first, the prelude, which involves the use of vocal and symbolic gestures of the trinity of life; second, invocation/salutation: calling (by name) gods, ancestors, and legendary figures and reciting their appellation and praise texts; third, petition, that is, stating the immediate reason for the occasion including blessings for oneself and the community, warding off the seen and unseen enemies and constructing ethical constraints on the event; fourth, the conclusion, namely – calling for peace, good health, and prosperity. The shorter type, usually comprises the invocation of either the lesser deities or the ancestors or both. In carrying out an in-depth analysis of the prevailing forms of Ewe libation prayer, the following prayer texts have been collected from six sources:

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<sup>33</sup> Awoonor (2006:378,382) states that African spirituality is “defined by a moral order [and that] ... the most direct cause of the disintegration of any society can be traced to the overthrow of morality as the only basis of its existence.

1. Dr. Datey Kumordzi, an ardent Ewe traditionalist and national president of Sofia system in Ghana;
2. Jacob Spieth, missionary of the North German Missionary Society and ethnographer in his “The Ewe people: A study of the Ewe People in German Togo,” published in 1906;
3. E.K. Agozie’s MPhil -thesis titled “Cult names and appellations in the socio-cultural milieu of the people of Veta traditional area in the Volta region of Ghana”, presented to the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana in 2000;
4. J.S.K. Gbolonyo’s PhD -thesis titled “Indigenous knowledge and cultural values in Ewe music practices and their traditional roles and place in modern society”, presented to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, University of Pittsburgh in 2009;
5. H.K. Gbotsyo (Rev), pastor in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church--Ghana and king maker of Agortime Kpetoe Traditional Area in the Volta region of Ghana;
6. Torgbe Korsi Abuda, traditional libator of Volo Traditional Area in the north Tongu district of the Volta region of Ghana.

This is intended to highlight the elements within the prayers that are typical of the Lord’s Prayer which Jesus Christ taught his disciples in his Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matthew. The texts collectively are divided into three main parts: The invocation/salutation, petition, and benediction.

### **2.5.1 Libation prayer texts**

#### **Text 1**

**General prayer, by Dr. Kumordzi, national president of Yeve/Efa/Sofia system in Ghana, recorded in Accra on October 14, 2015**

OM! OM! OM! OM! OM! OM! OM!

Wò Ho, Edzi, Edo

Wò hoe ɔ̄o ta, wò hoe ɔ̄o xo, wò hoe ɔ̄o anyi

Om! Sogbe-Lisa. Wo Mawu Chitikata,

Wò Aɔ̄aɔ̄uwɔ̄tɔ̄, be yewɔ̄ asi, be ye wɔ̄ afɔ̄. Wò mavɔ̄mavɔ̄tɔ̄.

Ahe ne to dzi, evɔ̄ ne to dzi, edɔ̄ ne fo mia nu.

Ekú nẹ fọ míá tá  
Akọẹ dẹgbẹ vẹ dẹgbẹ, lāmẹsẹ, abọkẹ, drikẹ.  
Agoo, voduwọ dẹ, agoo nẹ gbẹtọ fọmẹa. Agoo, agoo.

### **Translation**

(Call the whole of existence)

Thou who is the heaven, who is the earth

I salute thee who is the light of my mind

I salute thee who is sitting in the chamber of my heart

I salute thee who has built the body

Om! Sogbe-Lisa. Thou the Awakener and conscious One. The primal life force and the mind of all existence.

Master artist, who made us hands and feet. The Eternal One.

May we not be caught in the state of darkness and ignorance,

May we not be caught in the state of fear, confusion and superstition.

May we not be caught in sickness, disease and squalor.

May death and destruction depart from us.

May you grant us the blessings of material prosperity.

May our children be the source of blessing.

May you grant us good health and longevity

Peace to the gods, peace to creation, peace unto you.

### **Text 2**

**Prayer for total well-being of the community by king Kofi of Ho, reproduced from Jacob Spieth's "The Ewe people" – (1906)**

O; Mawu Sodza hagbeno, lagbeno,

Tevu flevu, nyaganyagavu, dza dzi dza dzi menya dzi o.

Wò nẹ amẹ nẹ amẹ, tẹ amẹhawọ. Eya kẹ mẹnẹ wò, natsa du.

Xexeme nefa, ame nedzi kple tsro, afelã nedzi, gbelã neku. Adela de adegbe me nefɔ kukuwo kple gbagbe tse, nukpui boloko ave me woyea; tre nesɔ, ze nesɔ, xɔ ɖome neve mía ta nesɔ tititi, nya vɔ neyi avali me; nenyee alea! Ehe!<sup>34</sup>

### Translation

O, Mawu Sodza, mother of the cosmos and embodied life.

One who is the mover of all things, one who cannot be compelled to act against his will

One who gives man before he gives another. I give same to you, take and eat.

May there be peace in the world, may man be born together with the placenta! May domestic animals multiply, wild animals should die! A hunter goes hunting, may he find the dead and living also, the fat grasscutter in the forest! May the calabash match, pot also match.<sup>35</sup> May it stink behind the house<sup>36</sup> our head match equally, evil word go far away to land where nobody has ever set foot. So be it! Yes!

### Text 3

**Reproduced from E.K. Agozie's MPhil-thesis "Cult names and appellations in the socio-cultural milieu of the people of Veta traditional area in the Volta region of Ghana", presented to the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, -2000.**

Mawu Kitikata, Adanuwɔtɔ, Wɔ asi wɔ afɔ  
Meyɔ Adaba, Meyɔ Kli, Meyɔ wo Agbadevodu  
Kli madza ... Tu kpam da kpam. Ewu de kpɔtɔ de  
Meyɔ wo Bani klo, Amegla mate ku. Ku enye gla  
Agbo ŋkuagba masia lakloe o. Nyanye kple manyeawo ken

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<sup>34</sup>This prayer was said by King Kofi of Ho, directed to *Mawu Sodza* in front of a post planted and decorated with a white stripe in the 1880s, recorded in Jacob Spieth's (1906: 473).

<sup>35</sup>The calabash stands for a husband while the pot stands for a wife. In other words, *Sodza* should let husband and wife live in peace.

<sup>36</sup>It is a petition for *Sodza* to bless the community with children. Children are seen defecating behind their homes and so the absence of stench at the back of the home is a sign of barrenness among couples.

### **Translation**

God Kitikata, Master artist, Who made the hand and foot  
I call Adaba (Eye lash), I call kli. I call you Agbadevodu (Yeve or Torhonor)  
The gun fires resounding, it kills some leaving some  
I call you Bani, Human jaw cannot deny death. The jaw belongs to death  
Blind ram, who fears no wild animal. Known and unknown

### **Text 4**

**Reproduced from J.S.K. Gbolonyo's PhD thesis "Indigenous knowledge and cultural values in Ewe music practices and their traditional roles and place in modern society", - presented to the Faculty of Arts & Sciences, University of Pittsburgh-2009.**

Oh! Oh! Oh! Eto enye agbe  
Mawuga meyo wo. Trɔwo kple veduwo kata meyo mi  
Miafe tsi/aha enye esi, mixoe no  
Tɔgbuiwo kple mamawo kata, meyo mi  
Miafe tsi/aha enye si, mixoe no

### ***Literal translation***

Oh! Oh!! Oh!!! Trinity is life  
Supreme God, I call on you (I invoke you)  
All lesser deities I call on you  
Here is your drink accept it  
All male and female ancestors I call on you  
Here is your drink accept it

### **Text 5**

**Annual self-purification/cleansing ritual meal prayer for family/clan, by H.K. Gbotsyo (Rev), pastor of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana, and King Maker of Agortime Kpetoe Traditional Area in the Volta Region of Ghana, recorded in Tema in the Greater Accra region of Ghana on September 24, 2015**

O! Bokɔ Glido, woe nye Mati be Tetey (Mati's firstborn son). Mati, woenye Dugba be Na,  
O! Midzi viwo, woatse wodziviwo wova dzi mí. Míawoe le miatefe fifia .Míde bubu mianu,  
Míado ñukpe mi o. Míafe nkɔ anyɔ le afe, anyɔ le gbe. E, xaxa le agbe ñu. Mía ñunu e. Hiahia  
geḍe le agbe ñu. Dɔwuame vana, neva naḍe mí ḍa le eme. Kuḍiḍi vana, naḍe mí ḍa le eme.

Yeadewoyia, nyɔnu aḍewo le mía dome wofo vidzidzi sesena, ne eḍe yi ḍe klodzia ne wo do le  
eme le ñutifafa me. Newo dzi ve ne mí wɔ. Dutsuwo, yeadewoyia, ñutsu ḍewo le mía dome  
wome se koklowo gbeḍeḍe o. Yata ne wokpɔ nyɔnu ko nyɔnua dzoḍa le wogbɔ. Gbe ya dom ḍa  
míele a wofo hiahawo ma neva eme nawo.

E, amegbetɔwo míenye, mía davo amewo tse woada vo ḍe mía ñu. Ne woawo davo ḍe mía ñua,  
míe doa gbe ḍa nawo be mia kpeḍe mía ñu be mía tɔɔ kewo. Míelea ame ḍe dome o, míawo  
míetsɔ nuwɔwo kena. Míelea ame ḍe dome o lo, mía tɔgbuiwo, mía mamawo, míelea ame ḍe  
dome o, mia ñutɔ se ma mie ḍo na mí ye ma. Gake ne míawo mi míe dzee le wo dzi eye wobe  
yewo maa tɔɔ ke mí o la, fãã ele wogbɔ. Nuḍiaḍia ḍesiaḍe yike ava mía mɔ me, ḍe mia xe mɔ nɛ.  
Míawoe nye mía wo vɔdo. Mixe mɔ na nuḍiaḍiawo na mí. Nuḍiaḍia aḍeke ne gava afo vo mí o.  
Ne mí yi asigbe a, asi nenyɔ, ne mí yi agble gbe a agble nenyɔ.

Ekema gbeke gbe mía tɔtsogbe aḍo ḍe, mia kpe ḍe míanu ne mía ḍo mia gbo le ñutifafa me.

### **Translation**

Oh! Bokɔ Glido, you are Mati's first son. Mati, you are Dugba's mother.

O! You gave birth to many children, they also gave birth to many children who have also given  
birth to us. We are the ones representing you presently. We honour you. We would not disgrace  
you. Your name will resurrect at home, and resurrect abroad. Yes, there are problems associated  
with life. However, we would eat. There are lots of needs associated with life. Hunger comes,  
when it comes deliver us from them. Famine comes, deliver us from it.

Sometimes, some women among us find it difficult giving birth, if any of them goes on her  
knees, let them get out of it in peace. Let them give birth to twins...Men, sometimes, some men

among us don't hear the voice of fowls. So, as soon as they find women, then the women leave them. This prayer we are praying, let their needs come to pass.

Yes, we are humans, we may offend, others would also offend us. If they offend us, we prayer for them that you help us to forgive them. We don't keep a person in our stomach, we forgive sins. We don't keep a person in our stomach at all, our fathers, our mothers, we don't keep a person in our stomach, you yourself that was the command you gave us. But if we offend them and they would not like to forgive us, so be it, it is up to them. Every temptation that would come our way, prevent them from coming. You are our stronghold. Prevent all the temptations for us. No temptation should lead us into sin. If we go to the market, let the market be good. If we go to farm, let the farm be good. Then when the day of our crossing of the river approaches, help us to come to you in peace.

#### **Text 6**

**Traditional festival prayer, by Torgbe Korsi Abuda, traditional libator from Volo in the North Tongu district of the Volta region of Ghana, recorded in Volo on October 1, 2015**

Agoo! Me do agoo!

O! Me yɔ Tɔgbe Ade, me yɔ Tɔgbe Ade, Ayo mío tɔgbe Logotoli, Alɔɔ, Kpetsika, Meyɔ Mawu, EZu, enɔ gbede tum, Kpele, Nyagbaligba, me yɔ Vodun Xebieso le yame, Vɔvɔ Tigali.

Meyɔ mi le ɔagbe dzi, menye vɔ dzi o. Ne ati kui atita ye toɔ. Mío tɔgbewo wo dzi mí, wova dzo wò susɔ mío deviwo. Keɲ, gbeto wo ho ava le míe ɲu wo tekpee do kpoe. Wo da mí kplí bɔmp, etsí míe gbota kpo nu fifilake. Ne ame ale be nuvivi ne yi fie elayi kpɔɛ. Ke mínya be mío tɔgbe wo do ne mí. Yeta ne fe trɔ ɔesiade ko ele be mía ɔu azã nawo. Keɲ tugbedzo gbã, wò le be míva le ɲku le ɲuti be mie tɔgbewo wo do nuka ta miaɔu azã nawo o. Ye na mí nɔ azã ɔum ne tugbedzoɔ. Gake míe tɔgbe ke wo yi nugbe fioo e, ne woa gbugbo va, ɲu le míe tsam ne míatu agbe fo anyi sigbe ale ke mí wɔɔne tsã ene.

Mie nɔviwo wo va gbɔnye wototo kee egbe Yawoda woako aha gã kee be míatsɔɛ ana tɔgbewo.

Aha kee ne mia xɔ.

Amegbetɔ keke atsa titre le novie ale ɲuti be ye novi mega nɔ ne yea nɔ klu Helu neno kɔ nɛɛ. Ye ɲto ne trɔ tsie ne woatsɔ goɔ da dɛ. Amegbetɔ ne wɔdɔ ne dɔ anyɔ nɛ. Wò ameke be ye novi wo dɔwɔwɔ meganyɔ o la wò hã tɔwò meganyɔ o. Amesiame tɔme nenyɔ. Ameyi ke dɔe be ya gba novie la ye hã tɔ ne gba dugu dugu dugu dugu. Amesiame ne nɔ se sɛɛ ne fafa neva. Miɔ totaxe minyɔ. Mi me dɔ to wòku o. To neno agbe ne miáfɔ axɔ le eɲu. Gake ame yi ke dɔe be Volodu ne gba la, etɔ ne gba tɔhɔtɔhɔtɔhɔ.

Afɔ velie ye kie lo. Fafa neva. Novinye ke wo va dɔ gbɔnye le gie ka mí le nya kie gblɔm fie newo nɔ sesɛɛ. Amele abu tame le dɛ ɲuti be nukata ye hã akɔ agbalɛ dɔ abɔ alo yele nya biem ne yease blema nya hã-mega na anyi o. Klu helu ne trɔ tsie ne woa tsɔ goe ada dɛ, ne woa dɔ aɗaɲ nyuie ne mí.

### **Translation**

Peace and blessing! I say peace and blessing!

Oh! I call ancestor Ade, I call ancestor Ade and call ancestor Logotoli, Alɔɔ, Kpetsika.

I call Mawu, Ezu (he was a blacksmith), Nyagbaligba.

I call Vodun Xebieso in the sky, Vɔvɔ Tigali.

I call you for peace and not for evil.

When a tree dies, another germinates.

Our ancestors gave birth to us. They have all left leaving us the children behind.

People waged war against us but have failed.

They shot us with a missile which is there at Gbɔta for all to see.

And we know that it is the intervention of our ancestors that is why we celebrate an annual festival in their honour; that is why we celebrate Tugbedzo festival.

Our ancestors who have all left us should come back so miátu agba fu anyi as we usually do.

Our brothers have come to me this Thursday with a drink to be given to our ancestors.

Anyone who will stand against his neighbor, that his neighbor should not live, it should hung on that person's head, he himself should pour out the water and leave the container behind.



People should work and prosper. But you who wish his neighbor's work to destroy, his should also be destroyed.

Anyone who plans to destroy his neighbor, his should also be destroyed completely.

Everybody should stay healthy so that peace prevails.

But anyone whose wish is to see Volo state destroyed, his also should be destroyed totally.

This is the second leg. Let there be peace.

My brothers who have come to me for this conversation should stay healthy.

If anyone should question the reason why this research is being conducted, that person should not live. Klu helu should pour out the water and leave the container behind, and give us good counsel.

## **2.6 ANALYSIS OF THE LIBATION PRAYER TEXTS**

### **2.6.1 Invocation**

The invocation in all libation prayers involves the calling of the Supreme Being, the deities and divinities, and the fathers/mothers commonly known as ancestors. In the six prayer texts presented above, the highest deities invoked include *Sogbe Lisa* and *Mawu Sodza* (Texts 1 and 2), *Chitikata/Kitikata* (Texts 1 and 3) and, the Absolute Trinity and *Mawuga* (Text 4). These are the eternal/immortal deities dwelling in the absolute or blissful state of existence – the cosmic trinity (*So/Ha*, *Gbe/He* and *Chi*) living in the transcendental state of existence known in Ewe (*Adagana*) as *Logo*. They are said to be remote and so are not concerned about the affairs of humankind, hence the delegation of their powers and functions to the lesser deities. The prelude and epilogue to the prayer in text 6 and 1 respectively, “*Agoo!*”, originally, *Hago*, usually appears in more formal prayers and carries the meaning of knowledge and bliss. Thus “*Hago me*” is the phrase for celestial or blissful state. In the context of the prayer in text 1 and 6, where the libators says *Agoo!*, they are essentially saying peace and blessings to the lesser deities. On the other hand, when *Agoo* is used in the exchange of greetings, it means, “peace and blessings I bring to you”. For instance, before one enters his/her neighbor's home, (s)he first says “*Agoo!*, that is, peace and blessings I bring to you. The neighbour then replies “*Agoo neva eme*”, that is, may the blessed one come in. The three most important stanzas that are missing in Ewe libation prayers today are those found in the prayer in text 1. The first is *Oom! Oom! Oom! Oom! Oom!*

*Oom! Oom!*,<sup>37</sup> followed by *Wò Ho, Edzi, Edo*, that is, thou who is the heavens (*Ho* and *Edzi*)<sup>38</sup>, who is the earth (*Edo*), and, *Wò ho ye do ta* (I salute thee who is the light of my mind), *wò ho ye do xo* (I salute thee who is sitting in the chamber of my heart) and *wò ho ye do anyi* (I salute thee who has built the body). The libator in evoking the whole of existence, acknowledges that the entire human body is God; He is the one who illuminates the human mind and dwells in the innermost part of the heart. In addition, God is the one who has built every part of the human anatomy and inhabits them. Hence, He is inseparable from His creation, especially human beings who are the epitome of God's creation.

The pantheon of deities (*deti* or *trɔwo*) followed the Supreme Beings mentioned generically in the prayer in text 3, and they were also immediately followed by the *voduwo*, mentioned in texts 2 and 5 respectively (*Agbadevodu* and *Bani klo*, and *Vodu Xebieso, Kli, Alɔɔ, Tigali*), and in text 3 (generic). Considering the cosmic hierarchy (cf. Fig. 1), *Agbade* and *Xebieso* do not belong to the category of *voduwo*. They exist in realms above the *voduwo* with the former being the preserver of life at the third level of existence and the latter the god of light and thunder and controller of the pantheon of deities – the *trɔwo*. The *trɔwo* are the embodiment of the law and order of the cosmos; the pillars on which the Supreme One descends to His creation. They are both the mysterious creators of life known in Ewe traditional religion as *agbedzimawuawo* and providers of life – the *agbedimawuawo*. They are the protectors of society, hence they are worshipped by clans and communities (Awoonor 2006: 380-381).<sup>39</sup> The mention of a specific deity in libation performances depends, to a large extent, on what their forebears bequeathed to them from *Hogbe*, their ancestral home. There are foreign deities such as *Tigali* which the forebears bought from the Northern part of Ghana and added to what they already had.

The roll call ends by the invocation of *Tɔgbewo* and *Mamawo* (fathers and mothers) in text 3 with reference to specific ones – *Glido, Dugba* and *Mati* appearing in 4 and *Ade, Logotoli*,

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<sup>37</sup> *Oom* is originally pronounced *Aum* and represents the *So* whose other names are *Aba, Ado, Ade, Ala, or Adu*, etc. It is believed that *Mawugã* emanates into the third dimension of existence *Ho* through sound (*Hu*). Thus *Hu* is the primordial sound over which *Mawugã* comes to create. The mind knows *Mawuga*, the blissful state of existence as *Hu*. All creation goes back to *Mawugã* through *Hu*. The Ewe phrase “*Hu dzie zɔ or Da dzie zɔ*” attests to this myth. *Minana* or *Tula* (the builder of the cosmos) is the creative principle in the *Ho* state. In Ewe cosmology, all creation is the modification of *Minana*.

<sup>38</sup> *Ho* as the third realm of existence, *Edzi* as the skies.

<sup>39</sup>They are also known as *Bokɔwo* or *Deti*- Presiding deities.

*Kpetsika*, *Ezu*, and *Kpele* in text 5. These are forebears who are believed to be dead in the body, but alive in the spirit world to make intercession on behalf of the living, hence their veneration. The philosophy behind their veneration is that they are the ones who have attained higher degrees of spiritual knowledge and intellectual understanding of the divine cosmic play, and had material prosperity which they used to address the needs of family relations and the communities in which they lived. They are then deified and given the title *Tɔgbeawo* (fathers) and *Mamawo* (mothers) of life. They are therefore called upon in times of life's exigencies.<sup>40</sup> In the interview with Rev. H.K. Gbotsyo, he confirmed Dr. Datey Kumordzi's assertion of the prominent role of the ancestors in Ewe cosmology. He stated that, "the Ewe is made to believe right from childhood that when their parents die, they keep close eyes on the living." He buttressed this position with an Ewe burial practice in antiquity. In Egypt, where they believe to have originated from, they buried their dead with the head to the west, facing the east. This practice is informed by the belief that the eastern side of the Nile river was said to belong to the dead while the western belonged to the living. To bury someone, therefore, (s)/he must be carried across the Nile which the Ewe call *Kutɔ*, literally, death river. This act symbolizes the believe that the ancestors still participate in the activities of the living, and so whenever they die it is said of them that they have gone to *Avlime* or *chiefe*, that is, the state of divine blissful play or place of consciousness.<sup>41</sup> This practice is common among the Semitic people such as the Jews and it is still practiced by the Ewe of Ghana, Togo, Benin and in some parts of Nigeria.<sup>42</sup>

### 2.6.2 Petitions

Libation prayers are situational and petitionary, and are centered on what the Ewe call "*Agbe fe kuxiwo*", life's predicaments. The Ewe identifies four cardinal predicaments of life: first, *Ahe*, darkness and the state of ignorance; second, *Vɔ*, the state of fear, confusion and superstition; third, *Dɔ*, disease, sickness and squalor; and finally, *Ku*, death and destruction.<sup>43</sup> These life's predicaments are unequivocally echoed in the prayer text 1, where the libator directs his prayer to the cosmic trinity, *Sogbe Lisa* and *Chitikata/Kitikata* with the following phrases: *Ahe ne to dzi*,

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<sup>40</sup> Interview with Dr. Datey Kumordzi, October 13, 2015.

<sup>41</sup> In Ewe cosmology, when one dies, (s)he rises from the *Hɔ* state of existence to the various levels of consciousness depending upon one's purity and strength of his/her life's work, i.e. how (s)he used the intellect, material prosperity to help society.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Rev. H.K. Gbotsyo, September 24, 2015.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Dr. Datey Kumordzi, October 14, 2015.

*evɔ ne to dzi, edɔ ne fo mia nu. Eku ne fo mia ta. Akoe ɖagbe vie ɖagbe, lāmese, abɔka, adrika.*  
In this petition, the libator recognizes that man is by nature at the shore of the sea of ignorance and that is why (s)he must continually climb the ladder of knowledge in order to free herself/himself from the state of ignorance which creates fear, confusion, superstition, disease, sickness, squalor, culminating into death and destruction.

In the prayer of King Kofi of Ho in text 2, said over a century ago, and directed at *Mawu Sodza*, the king petitioned *Sodza*, the god of lightning and thunder for world peace, procreation among humans and animals, peace among couples, “equality of heads”, and the warding off of evil. The idea of petitioning the gods for world peace (*xexeme nefɔ*) should be understood within the context of prevailing tribal conflicts between the people of Ho and their neighbours such as the *Akwamu*, and probably the looming World War I. The king’s use of *ame nedzi kple tsro*, literally, let human be born with the roughage, suggests increased infant and maternal mortality within the community and the need for the gods to intervene.<sup>44</sup> Children were given names such as *dzikudziku* (born-death-born-death), *Ati* (tree), *Blenyege* (coming to deceive me), *Kuɖego* (died in the open), and *Aquɖɔ* (urine), to dissuade death from laying its hands on them. The king also asked *Sodza* to intervene in the breeding of domestic animals and the death of wildlife, *afelã nedzi, gbelã neku*, (domestic animal should breed, wildlife should die), for the purpose of food only. In King Kofi’s era, hunting was regarded as one of the most important vocation to the extent of idolizing it. Hunting is called *Adee*<sup>45</sup> (the god of hunting). A hunter who goes hunting washes his face with a hunting medicine every morning and says the following prayer: “if I now go into the bush, may an animal come towards me, so that I can kill it!” (Spieth 1906: 426). He also procure magic objects some of which were tied to the stock of the gun. Bush burning was another activity practiced among the people and one of the ways through which wildlife were killed and used for food. Rituals were performed with associated prayers before the bush were

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<sup>44</sup> Spieth (1906: 269-270) indicates in his study a high infant mortality rate among the Ewe of Ho in the late 1880s. For instance, he reports that a man had nine siblings, but lost all by the time he turned 25. A woman giving birth to twenty children, and lost fifteen of them in 1886. Another woman gave birth to ten children, and lost four in the same year (1886). A man was also reported of having twenty children from three wives, but lost eighteen of them. These deaths were, Spieth opines, due to carelessness on the part of mothers and what he describes as “useless” customs and traditions relating to society’s attitude towards children. There were cases where children fall from the cloth that were used to carry them, some children lost their lives because their mothers laid with them near fire and got burned, mothers exposed their children to the open too early, covering them with cloth to prevent them from the scorching sun, resulting in suffocation.

<sup>45</sup> Ade in Adagana is the name for *Mawugã*. He is called Ade, *Aɖe*, *Aba*, *Aɖo*, and *Aqu*.

burned to usher in the farming season.<sup>46</sup> Our forebears were more ecologically conscious, and so would not engage in any activity that would endanger the ecosystem. There were taboos that prevented people from degrading the environment, polluting water bodies and the atmosphere, keeping the ecosystem in a state of equilibrium. In the next stanza of the petition, King Kofi stressed the importance of the peace that needs to prevail within the nuclear family and the community at large with the metaphorical phrase, *tre nesɔ ze nesɔ ... mia ta nesɔ tititi*, literally, let *tre*, (the calabash), and *ze* (the pot) be equal. He also reiterated the essence of procreation as the only means of preserving the family tree with this metaphor, *xɔ ɖome neve*, (there should be stench at the back of the home).

The same can be said of the prayers in texts 4 and 5, where both prayers sought to petition the hierarchy of deities and the ancestors to intervene in the lives of individuals, clans or the community in difficult situations. In text 4, for instance, the libator identified some life's predicaments such as *dɔwuame* (hunger), *kuɖiɖi* (drought), antenatal complications, marital challenges, the need to forgive one another and the prevention of provocative behaviours. The prayer is offered at an annual self-purification/cleansing ritual meal known in Ewe as *dɔmekɔklɔ nududu*, from *dɔme* (stomach), *kɔklɔ* (cleansing), and *nududu* (meal). Its main purpose is to unite clans within a community by employing traditional conflict resolution mechanism. When clans come together once every year, the local court of the clan sit and arbitrate conflicts that have divided them. After the adjudication process is complete, water is poured in a calabash and the “herb of unity” is dipped into it. Prayer is then offered, after which every member of the clan is invited to drink from the calabash and wash his/her face with the unity herb solution, starting with the elders. By drinking the water and washing the face, one is essentially saying that (s) he has let go of every resentment held against the other and a self-assurance that indeed the ‘stomach is clean’. After the ritual, a sumptuous meal is prepared and enjoyed together. In the event of any hypocritical disposition on the part of any individual, the person’s stomach swells

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<sup>46</sup> A typical prayer said before the bush was burned is as follows: “During the burning of grass that is about to happen, may the animals die, and may anyone, who goes into the bush, find dead animals! If someone sees a live animal, may the animals become blind. Inversely, may their eyes (the eyes of human beings) be clear! That is why we have preceded coming before the animals. When the animals come, tell them that human beings have been here for a long time, and that they have no case to present” (see Spieth 1906: 346).

up and (s)he dies. The worse form of punishment for refusing to partake of the ritual was ostracism.

In the prayer, therefore, the libator, in petitioning the ancestors, acknowledges that they are humans and are susceptible to wrongdoing, that is, “*amegbetɔwo mienye* (we are humans), *mia davo amewo tse woada vo de mia nu*” (we will sin, other will also sin against us). However, when they are offended they pray that the ancestors help them forgive the offenders (*Ne woawo davo de mia nua, mie doa gbe da nawo be mia kpede mia nu be mia tso kewo*”), with the sole motivation that they (the offended) have been instructed by their forebears not to harbour any resentment against anyone (*mielea ame de dome o lo, mia tɔgbuiwo, mia mamawo, mielea ame de dome o, mia nutɔ se ma mie do na mi ye ma*). On the contrary, if they offend others and they refuse to forgive them, so be it, (*gake ne miawo mi mie dzee le wo dzi eye wobe yewo maa tso ke mi o la, fãã ele wogbo*). The petition in the prayer text 5 is not different from the previous ones which core messages center on existential needs – unemployment, good health, peace, patriotism and cohesion among members of the community. The libator’s appeal made to the deities and ancestors are expressed in the phrases, “*amegbetɔ ne wɔdɔ ne dɔ anyɔ ne*” (may mankind work and may his work be successful) and “*amesiame ne nɔ se sɛɛ ne fafa neva*” (may everyone be of good health and may there be peace).

### 2.6.3 Benediction

The question of whether or not the concluding part of libation prayer is a malediction or benediction always arises especially from opponents of traditional religious practices.<sup>47</sup> In my interview with Torgbe Kleh XII, he indicated that the malediction at the end of libatory prayer must be understood within the context of the communal life of the people. In other words, any act by any member of the community that seeks to jeopardize the communal interest is regarded as treacherous. In the case of a chief for instance, since he is the embodiment of the community, wishing him ill suggests ill wish against the entire community. Adjaye’s (2004:30) Akan libationary prayers renders it more strongly in the following sentence, *obi a ɔbedwene ... adwen bɔne deɛ, ennee ne koko mmɔ so*, literally, whoever might think ill ..., then let him heave his last breath.<sup>48</sup> Mujynya (1969) describes it vividly in Mulago (1991),

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<sup>47</sup> See Sarpong (1996a, 2012b).

<sup>48</sup> See also Opuni-Frimpong (2012:182-183).

... actions thought favourable to the blossoming of life, capable of conserving and protecting life, of making it flower and increasing the vital potential of the community are, for these reasons, considered good ... on the other hand, any act thought prejudicial to the life of the individual or of the community is judged evil, even where it only attacks the material interests of the persons, physical or moral.

(Mulago 1991: 119)

But it is not all libation prayers that end with an imprecation. King Kofi for instance ends his prayer by petitioning the deity to *avli*, the cosmological nomenclature for divine blissful state, that is, the home of the dead. In my interview with Dr. Dartey Kumordzi on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 he explains that a saint (Ewe, *sati*) in Ewe traditional sense “may [conclude] his prayer by asking the gods to give knowledge to those who may not understand what he is doing: “may you help them gain proper knowledge.” In other words people are enemies because of ignorance so it is believed that when they gain proper knowledge they may change their minds and become friends. In Adjaye’s (2004) research into the Akan libation prayer the phrase, “*yɛn a yahyia nyinaa nkwa so*”, that is, [I pray this prayer] to the health of all of us gathered here – is commonly used. In prayer text 1 for instance, the libator, Dr. Datey Kumordzi, concludes with *Agoo, voduwɔ de, agoo ne gbetɔ fomea. Agoo, agoo*, that is, peace to the gods, peace to creation, peace unto you, while King Kofi libation prayer in text 2 ends with *nya vɔ neyi avli me; nenye alea? Ehɛ?*, literally, may evil word go to bliss. So be it? Yes!

One phenomenon that keeps the Ewe in particular and African religiosity alive is the fear of the unknown and the problem of evil. It is this fear that moves people, and in some cases Christians, to resort to tutelary gods, divination, sorcery and magic for protection. In his conclusion, therefore, King Kofi calls on the god *Sodza* to do what he is known for, that is, “intervening on behalf of the community by watching over family homes against all forms of evils and giving rain for growth and fertility.”<sup>49</sup> Prayer text 5 also concludes in these fashions, “*nuɖiaɖia ɖesiaɖe yike ava mia mɔ me, ɖe mia xe mɔ nɛ*” (prevent any kind of provocation that may come our way), and, “*ekema gbeke gbe mia tɔtsogbe aɖo ɖe, mia kpe ɖe miaɲu ne mia ɖo mia gbɔ le ɲutifafa me*” (then when the day of our crossing of the river approaches, help us to come to you in peace). Finally, in prayer text 6, the community libator concludes with the following phrases,

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<sup>49</sup> See Spieth (1906: 473).

“wò ameke be ye nɔvi wo dɔwɔwɔ meganyɔ o la wò hã tɔwò meganyɔ o” (whoever wishes his neighbour’s work should not succeed, his should not succeed either), and ... “ame yi ke doe be Volodu ne gba la, eto ne gba tɔhɔtɔhɔtɔhɔtɔhɔ” (whoever wishes the collapse of Volo community, his should also be crashed completely).

## 2.7 LIBATION PRAYER AND THE LORD’S PRAYER: POINTS OF CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY

### 2.7.1 Invocation

#### Πάτερ, ημῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς

Libation prayer, just as the Lord’s Prayer, is a way of communicating with the deities, communal or private. In libation prayer however, the communication with the deities is accompanied by the pouring of drink and in some cases the slaughtering of an animal. Thus, it is almost impossible to communicate with the deities without a medium. The language of both prayers are performative and fluid – the fluidity of the Lord’s Prayer can be found in the three recensions in Matthew, Luke and *Didache*, and the layers of interpretations throughout the epochs of Christianity. Both prayers can be said to be petitionary. In terms of structure, they both begin with an invocation/address but whereas the Lord’s Prayer is addressed to God, libation prayer is primarily addressed to deities and ancestors acting on the authority of the Great God (*Mawugã*).<sup>50</sup> The concept of God as Father and His place of abode as *dzifo* or *dziŋgɔ* is alien to Ewe religious worldview. Although God is conceived as male (*So*) and female pair (*Gbe*), He is never addressed as Father. Thus traditionally God does not want to be addressed as Father. God, as already explained in the Ewe cosmology, is *Zuba*, that is, He is the substratum of all being. The traditional prayer is essentially saying that ‘we are gods’; we are united with God. In Ewe traditional sense, God did not create man to become His son. Rather, He became human. In other words, God emanated to become human. The Ewe concept of creation is therefore emanation and not creation. So essentially we are His replica.

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<sup>50</sup> This assertion is however challenged by some traditionalists. In an interview with Torgbi Keh XII, Divisional Chief of Gbi Wegbe and Leftwing Chief of Gbi Traditional Area, he stresses that the Most High God (*Mawuga*) is first mentioned in all libation prayers, and that there is virtually no points of discontinuity between the libation prayer and the Lord’s Prayer.



Another perspective of Ewe cosmology which contrast the concept of God as Father in the Lord's Prayer is the mythical notion of His remoteness. It is this notion of the remoteness of the divine that places the ancestors in fatherhood (*toḡbeawo*) and motherhood (*mamawo*) position. The implications of addressing God as Father are that first, it challenges the authority of the lesser deities and the ancestors and relegate their mediatory functions to the background. Second, it abolishes the virtual wall between *Mawugã* and His worshippers, thereby bringing them closer to Himself. This disenchanting position however, begs the question of what role the deities and ancestors would be playing in the religious life of the Ewe since they are still believed to exist? This theological tension is what the 19<sup>th</sup> century North German Missionaries who evangelized the Eweland sought to cure through the Christian gospel. Thus, if an Ewe traditional worshipper gets converted to Christianity, his or her faith enables them to understand that the Spirit of *Mawugã* comes to live in their hearts and that they can communicate with Him without consulting any medium. But Jesus Christ, whom the Missionaries presented as the Mediator between man and God was understood to be equal to the *trɔwo* because of the bloody nature of his death (Meyer 1999: 75).<sup>51</sup> On the dwelling place of God, the libation prayer text 1 says “*wò ho, edzi, edo*”, suggests that God is heaven and earth, while in the Lord's Prayer, He is in the heavens. It is therefore axiomatic that the Christian God and the Ewe *Mawugã* are the same but differ in terms of His relationship and place of abode. The question of the exclusivity of *Mawugã* does not arise in Ewe religion. However, every clan or family possess their own lesser deities which they call upon in times of need.

### 2.7.2 Petitions

Regarding the sanctification of God's name, the phrase “*wò hoe do ta*” in libation text 1 suggests that God is the light that shines in the mind of man. The first petition, ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου is therefore viewed as the glory of God which in Ewe cosmological sense is already present in humans. But since the *trɔwo* have great influence over the Ewe traditional worshipper, they are revered and feared. In addition to the pantheon of deities, *toḡbeawo* and *mamawo* are also revered. The responsibility of hallowing of their names is therefore mutual, that is, the names of the deities are hallowed through strict adherent to *kɔnuwo* (rituals). The deities are also required

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<sup>51</sup> The death of Jesus was analogous in Ewe religion to *ametsiava* (person who died at war). When the spirit of such a person manifest through a human being qualifies as “a powerful *trɔ*.”

to grant the requests of their worshippers once the right rituals are performed for them. The deities punish anyone who defiles their names through misconduct. Worshippers also may abandon their objects of worship if they are not in a position to grant their requests. The idea of the kingdom of God in the second petition is also alien in Ewe cosmology. It is believed that the kingdom of God is already present in humans. Again the phrases “*wò hoe do xo*” and “*wò hoe do anyi*” in prayer text 1 suggests that God is the one who sits in the chamber of the heart and the maker of the body. So while the Lord’s Prayer says “ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου” (let your kingdom come), Ewe libation prayer says “*ele fiaɖum le menye xoxo* (you are ruling in me already). In essence, the Ewe has no eschatological expectation. The earthly kingdom of men is therefore a manifestation of the divine kingdom. The third petition γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς, and the second are inextricably linked. The will of the Ewe deities are embedded in the unwritten taboos and moral codes intended to keep the society in a moral equilibrium. A violation of these rules arouse the anger of the gods whose vengeance on the offenders sometimes result in their death. In other words, the doing of the will of the Ewe deities is mandatory for all devotees, unlike Christianity where worshippers are entreated to do God’s will.

The fourth petition, τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον, is one among others that really continues with the libation prayer mainly due to its anthropocentric nature. The Ewe equivalence, as found in libation prayer texts 1, 2, 5, and 6, views the bread in the petition as material prosperity, good health and longevity. The Ewe rendition addresses the ambiguity found in the Lord’s Prayer as expressed in the following phrase: *akoe ɖagbe vi ɖagbe, lāmesese, abɔka, drika*, that is, may you grant us the blessings of material prosperity, may our children be the source of blessing, may you grant us good health and longevity. The libation prayer is essentially saying that ‘give me prosperity, good health and longevity so that I can provide for myself’ (Meyer 1999:68).

The Ewe concept of forgiveness is a very complex one as compared to what Jesus taught his disciples in fifth petition, καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν. In the traditional religious practice, it is the gods and one’s neighbour that are offended and not the high God. If one’s neighbour gets offended, the gods are also offended. Sometimes you ask for forgiveness by word of mouth depending on the gravity of the offense. In

the traditional sense, if you offend someone, the spirit of love demands that you apologize. So there is always a court of justice where you are summoned to (Meyer 1999:68). When one is found guilty after adjudication, he/she apologizes or pacifies the offended. However, if the offender refuses to admit the wrongdoing, he is discharged pending further investigation into the matter. If the investigation confirms the wrongdoing, the offender is then left into the hands of the gods to deal with him/her. The gods then appear to the offender thrice to convict him/her of the offense and if they deny it, then they start killing from the offender's family members before he/she is finally killed. This is because in the extended family system, one's family is responsible for the actions or inactions of the individual. In other words, you exist because your family exists. This approach to justice stems from the principle that the house of a thief is not burnt outright; it is destroyed gradually beginning from the roof. There are also communal rituals performed to forgive sins called *nukpidodo*. Here members of the community are made to drink from a calabash used for the ritual symbolizing unity and reconciliation. Anyone who does not go through the ritual from a pure heart meets his/her untimely death.<sup>52</sup>

The Ewe libation prayer, unlike the Lord's Prayer, ends with both a benediction and a malediction. The libator invokes blessings upon the good and an imprecation on the bad. The imprecation invoked on the evil doer is intended to avert the evil from befalling the individual, family, or the entire community. Although evil is mentioned in the sixth petition *καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ*, it is not clear whether or not it is to be visited on the enemy. It is however, intended to be prevented from being visited on the petitioner. However, in the event of the petitioner falling into the temptation, (s)/he prays to the heavenly Father for rescue. Both Ewe libation prayer and the Lord's Prayer, however share the notion that the power to avert evil (*νῶ*) rests solely on their objects of worship.

The question of being led into temptation and deliverance from evil/evil one is addressed in Ewe libation prayer by the phrase "*ahe ne to dzi, evɔ ne to dzi, edɔ ne fo mia nu, eku ne fo mia ta*", that is, "may we not be caught in the state of darkness and ignorance. May we not be caught in the state of fear, confusion and superstition. May we not be caught in sickness, disease and squalor. May death and destruction depart from us." It is believed that ignorance is what leads a

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<sup>52</sup> Bible study discussion with church elders at EPCG, Lashibi, 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2018.

person's ego to throw him/her into sin. In Ewe cosmology therefore, the word 'Devil' does not exist. What existed during pre-missionary and missionary eras was *Abosam*, borrowed from the Akan *Abonsam* or *Sasabonsam*, perceived to be a monstrous creature synonymous with Satan (Meyer 1999: 77-78). The 'diabolic' term that the Ewe can identify with is *vo* (fear) which translates evil. What the Ewe sees therefore as evil is the state of fear, confusion and superstition. As pointed out in Ewe worldview, the four things that govern life are the state of ignorance, fear, sickness and disease, and death. Fear is caused by ignorance (*manyε*) which throws a person into the state of darkness (*tsizi*)<sup>53</sup> and leads to confusion and superstition (*nazabubu*), and finally into sin. The main agent of evil that puts the Ewe Christian and non-Christian to fright is witchcraft (Meyer 1999:175-212). Witchcraft is believed to be responsible for all human predicaments and it is said to operate through blood relations (Meyer 1999: 188-192). The light that Ewe notion of evil throws on the sixth petition is that the path to sin is not witchcraft but ignorance, confusion, and superstition. The bible study discussion with the elders of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (EPCG) revealed categories of offenses one falls into and the punishments that are prescribed. When one falls into the temptation of adultery for instance, (s)/he is taken to a place known as *toko atolia*, literally, the fifth landing state. The person is taken from his/her home, sent to a distant place and buried alive with protruding head. An incantation is then made on the person and birds evoked to pluck out the eyes until (s)/he dies. In other cases, punishment for sins is paid by a close relative of the offender who is sent into servitude at the shrine for life. This is the cause of the *Trokosi* practices in parts of Ewe-Ghanaian communities.

In summary, the above comparison between the Lord's Prayer reveals that the libation prayer discontinues with the Lord's Prayer in terms of the invocation of the pantheon of deities and the use of elements such as alcoholic drinks, water and corn flour. It also discontinues with the address to God as Father and the responses that accompany the pouring of the libation. However, there is continuity between the two prayers in terms of the sanctification of the name of God and the lesser deities, ancestors, except that the lesser deities are not acknowledged in the Lord's Prayer. There is also continuity between the two prayers in respect of the petitions. The extent to which the deities and the ancestors are revered in Ewe traditional religion mirrors the

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<sup>53</sup> It has already been noted in the Ewe religious worldview that *ahe* is used to describe darkness and the state of ignorance.

consequences of defiling the divine name in this life and the afterlife. In the libation prayer, the deities are honoured by the platitude of appellations that are ascribed to them. The Ewe earthly kingdom is a reflection of the heavenly kingdom and the divine will. Its advent and linear nature is what the libation prayer lacks. The petition for bread, forgiveness of sins, and the battle against evil forces continue with the Lord's Prayer's and give a deeper understanding of what Jesus really meant in his teaching of the prayer. In the next session, the study seeks to address the question of whether or not the comparison between the two prayers warrants a Christianization of libation prayer.

## **2.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In delving into Ewe religious world view of libation prayer as replica of the Lord's Prayer, the following observations were made: Firstly, the Ewe knew the creator of the cosmos and had been communicating directly and/or indirectly with Him before the advent of Christianity. The ancestors taught their progenies that whenever they wanted to engage in any serious communication with the Divine, they should pour water on the ground and call upon the name of *Sogbe Lisa, Chitikata*, the pantheon of deities and the ancestors whom they revere as saints (*satiwo* in Ewe). Secondly, Ewe libation prayer is 'window' into the spirit world and they are made to affirm the relationship that exists within the entire Ewe cosmology. Thirdly, the concept of libation is not exclusive to the African traditional religion but common among some Ancient Near Eastern religions as well. Fourthly, all Ewe libation prayers are petitionary and fall within the category of what Adjaye (2004:18, 22) describes as mega-communication. In all six prayer texts analyzed, five (texts 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) appear static in structure, dynamic in content and varied in form depending on the occasion and the intelligence of the performer. Prayer text 1 presents a fascinating characteristics in terms of its structure and content. It is static and succinct, and does not possess the fluidity associated with the others. Its addressee is the cosmic trinity who dwells in the highest realm of existence and not His ministering spirits and the ancestors, although their cosmic reality are unquestionable. The petition, unlike the more elaborate ones found in the other five texts, is generic and touches on the predicaments of life, with a benediction as its conclusion.

Data from the field reveals that respondents have little knowledge of their traditional libation prayer. Those who find no similarities between the two prayers are those who would not like to have anything to do with the pouring of libation because of its profane nature. Majority however, does not deny the invocative and petitionary continuities between the two prayers. Their understanding of the communicative interaction existing between worshippers and their objects of worship cannot be overemphasized. Furthermore, the material elements in the libation prayer sharply distinguished it from the Lord's Prayer. Respondents' lessons from the comparison are noteworthy. Those who think of the two prayers as having the same object of worship but different media are in the majority (16%). This assertion highlights the conclusion of other respondents about human being's dependence on the Supreme Being. Those who say the Lord's Prayer must be preferred to libation do so on the ground of superiority, that is, the Christian prayer is superior to the traditional prayer. The syncretic position of some respondents also emphasizes the point of relapse in the history of Christian conversion in particular and Ewe Christian conversion experiences during missionary era in general, highlighted in the work of Meyer.

Christianization appears to be the way forward in the dialogue between the Lord's Prayer and Ewe libation prayer. The idea is best appreciated when viewed from the perspective of inculturation which is premised on Christianity's adaptation of non-Christian cultural background. In the context of Ewe libation prayer, inculturation is the changes that the prayer must go through in order to qualify as Christian prayer. Respondents' views were sought on this and the result is almost in the negative; the percentage which responded in the affirmative (12%) mentions monotheism as the reason why libation prayer should be Christianized. For those who reject the Christianization of libation prayer, do so on grounds of idolatry, syncretism, abomination, incomparability, and destruction of the Christian faith. One respondent, however, in defense of the traditional religion, cites the obliteration of the Ewe culture as one of the reasons why libation prayer should not be Christianized. Rev. Amevenku's view on the issue of Christianizing libation prayer points towards the careful process of adoption of the traditional prayer.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Interview with Rev. Fred Amevenku, 2018.

A critical look at the Ewe – Ghanaian Christian prayer pattern however, suggests that libation prayer has already been adapted into popular Ewe-Christian prayer in form and language. In popular Ewe Christian prayers, anyone praying begins by first of all addressing God with platitudes of appellations that were initially addressed to pantheons of deities and traditional leaders in Ewe traditional religion. Since Ewe Christian spirituality forbids alcohol use, it is replaced with other liquids such as water, anointing oil, and non-liquids such as salt. Spiritual warfare dominates every petitionary and intercessory prayers because of the believe that the Devil and his agents (demons) are the source of the Christian’s predicament. This prayer theme is said with tumult and verbosity.

## Chapter 3

# Judeo-Christian background of The Lord's Prayer and its continuity and discontinuity with Jewish prayers

### 3.1 Introduction

The question of the “Jewishness” of the Lord’s Prayer continues to attract attention among theologians over the years. Oesterley (1925:151), Scott (1951:39-41), Lachs (1987:117) and Flusser (1992:85-86) have all alluded to the fact that the Lord’s Prayer has in one way or the other been influenced by Jewish prayer forms such as the *Shema*, *Amida* (*Shemôneh ‘Esreh*), and *Kaddish*.<sup>55</sup> Milavec (2003:314), observed that there was a general consensus among scholars writing on the Lord’s Prayer during the latter part of the twentieth century that the Lord’s Prayer “fits comfortably within a Jewish horizon of understanding.” His observation was based on the fact that Jesus and his disciples were greatly influenced by Judaism, the religion in which they were raised.<sup>56</sup> Joachim Jeremias (1971:198), cited in Milavec’s work, is widely known for leading the argument in favour of Jewish prayers, especially the *Kaddish*, as prototype of the Lord’s Prayer.<sup>57</sup> However, there are several other scholars who do not agree with the assertion of Joachim and others. Milavec quoted Bradshaw (1991:1) as saying that although most scholars in the latter part of the century had “a considerable degree of assurance what Jewish worship was like in the first century”, this assurance had almost entirely evaporated by the turn of the century. His argument was backed by the fact that no surviving synagogue prayer book goes back earlier than the ninth century.<sup>58</sup> Bradshaw, concludes that a survey of all relevant documents leads to the conclusion that three regular prayers were used by many ordinary Jews during the first century: the *Shema*, the *Tefillah* or *Amidah* .... The *Kaddish*, Bradshaw suggests, developed only later;

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<sup>55</sup> See Rev. W.H. Karlake’s (1861:37-41) earlier work on the comparison between the Lord’s Prayer and ancient Jewish prayer forms such as the *Shemôneh ‘Esreh* and *Kaddish*.

<sup>56</sup> See also Milavec (2007:121), Perkins (1978:61), Keener (2009:216), and Keener’s (2009:237-238) notes on Ahmad’s Muslim’s commentary on the Bible.

<sup>57</sup> See also Dunn (1991:38) who agrees with Jeremias’ position on the *Kaddish* as prototype of the Lord’s Prayer, as cited in Milavec’s work.

<sup>58</sup> Hoffman’s (2000:33-35) work throws more light on Bradshaw’ assertion that Jewish prayers prior to the ninth century BCE were in rote.



hence, there is no certainty that the Lord's Prayer was shaped by first-century prayers used in the synagogue. This is, a view shared by Lachs (1987), who identifies weaknesses in the theories propounded by scholars of the twentieth century on the relationship between the Lord's Prayer and other forms of Jewish prayers, particularly, the *Shemôneh 'Esreh* and the *Kaddish*.<sup>59</sup>

The aim of this Chapter, therefore, is to critically investigate the Judeo-Christian background of the Lord's Prayer and also to explore the continuity and discontinuity between the Lord's Prayer and prevailing Jewish prayers such as the *Shema*, *Shemôneh 'Esreh* and *Kaddish*. The Chapter is situated within the broader framework of early-Jewish liturgical practice from the *Mishna* and *Talmud*, and its impact on early forms of Christian worship. The Chapter is divided into three sections: Jewish prayer forms from the patriarchal to the Second Temple era, the *Shema*, *Amida*, *Kaddish* and their liturgical uses, and the points of continuity and discontinuity between the *Amida/Kaddish* and Lord's Prayer.

### 3.1 JEWISH PRAYER FORMS

#### 3.1.1 Patriarchal to First Temple periods

Idelsohn's (1960) etymological inquiry into the meaning of Jewish prayer suggests that the Hebrew expression *mithpallel* (intercessor) and its verbal perfect form *vayithpallel*,-(Gen. 20:17), situates Jewish prayer within the context of intercession.<sup>60</sup> The root "*pallal*", he continues, originally meant "to arbitrate, to judge". The reflexive *hithpallel* means to judge oneself, to cut oneself in worship, is in cognate with the Arabic *falla*-notch, edge of a sword. He postulates that the expression might imply a process of self-castigation and self-mutilation in moments of ecstasy, indicating a form of sacrifice to a god, a process which is well illustrated in the scene on Mount Carmel between Elijah and the priests of Baal (1Kings 18:28). This practice, according to Idelsohn, is also prevalent in Greek literature, particularly in the treatise of Lucian, *On the Syrian Goddess*, which states,

At the spring festivity in honor of Ishtar the noisy and exciting music of the double-pipes, cymbals, and drums used to stimulate the youths to such a frenzied state that they would emasculate

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<sup>59</sup> The *Shemôneh 'Esreh* (eighteen) and *Amidah* (standing) are used interchangeably to mean the eighteen benedictions. The *Amidah* is sometimes referred to as *Tefillah* (prayer) because it is regarded by the Rabbis as prayer *par excellence*. See also Hoffman (2000:6-7).

<sup>60</sup> For a detailed discussion on the etymology of prayer in the Old Testament, see Verhoef (1996:1060)

themselves. Those emasculated servants of the Goddess Ishtar would march through the streets in procession, cut themselves with swords, and lash themselves until blood gushed forth.<sup>61</sup>

(Idelsohn 1960:5)

Writing in the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century on same subject of Judaism and Jewish prayer, Reif also argued that,

The Hebrew root *pll* in the *hithpa'el* conjugation and its equivalent substantival form, translated “pray” and “prayer”, are used to describe appeals to humans, idols and God. The appeal, which may be on behalf of oneself or someone else, is usually for the removal of physical problems or the granting of favours and the format sometimes resembles a kind of negotiation rather than a direct request.

(Reif 1993:32)

He further pointed out that there are also “instances in which miraculous vision, forgiveness and the punishment of an adversary are sought in which the petitioner asks for consideration based on his previous good behaviour” (Reif 1993:32). He was however, quick to cite instances where “similar form of appeal is made to God, with a record of the alleged wording, but without the actual use of the technical term *hithpallel*”, with Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samson, and Hannah’s prayers described as *locus classicus* in our understanding of prayers that do not derive from *hithpallel*.<sup>62</sup>

The expression “*mithpallel*”, however, assumed new interpretation as a prayer concept, implying, to intercede for something or somebody (Verhoef 1996:1061; see also Richardson 1957:169-171). The use of the term “*tefilla*” (prayer) is found in the prayers of King David attributed to him in the Psalms.<sup>63</sup> In Verhoef’s view, “this marvelous blend of yielding and insistence marks David’s faith and Israel’s prayer at its best” (Verhoef 1996:1063). It therefore presupposes, as Idelsohn also suggests, that “David’s laudations and prayers became the foundation of Israel’s worship” (Idelsohn 1960:7). “In times of trouble,” Idelsohn adds, “The public service in Israel would consist of prayers of repentance and burnt-offerings, accompanied

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<sup>61</sup> Several texts in the Jewish Scripture show the practice being forbidden, though (Dt 14:1; 23:2; Lv 21:5 cf. Is 56:4-5; Dn 1:3; 2 Ki 24:15; Jr 29:2).

<sup>62</sup> See Genesis 18:22-33; 28:16-22; 32:12; Exodus 32 :11-14; Joshua 7:6-9; Judges 15:18; 16:30; 1 Samuel 1:10-16).

<sup>63</sup> See 2Samuel 7:18-29; 12:13, 16; 15:31; 24:14, 17, 25; 1 Chronicles 16:8-36; 17:16-27; 29:10-19.

by public confession.<sup>64</sup> On holidays and festival days, peace-offerings would be sacrificed, the blood and fat and some parts of which would be burnt on the altar, other parts would be given to the priests, and the rest would be eaten by the assembly.<sup>65</sup> There exists also before the advent of First Temple era, the institution of the Levitical singers.<sup>66</sup> Jewish prayers, in the words of Verhoef, are

characterized by their acknowledgement of God, their descriptive praise of God, their appeal to and concern for God's reputation, the confession of sins whereby the petitioner fully identifies himself with the people's guilt and need, and by the all-important elements of intercession and petition, the last named occasionally characterized by grateful deference and bold command.

(Verhoef 1996:1064)

The primary source of Jewish prayers, Simpson (1965:13) noted, "is the Hebrew Bible... Many of the prayers in the Jewish liturgy are simply mosaics of biblical phraseology." Adelson (1960:4), in his work "*Jewish Liturgy and its Development*", also alluded to the Jewish Scripture as source of Jewish worship forms and prayer, using proof text as evidence.<sup>67</sup> Reif (1993:23) also writes that "the Hebrew Bible always constituted a major source of Jewish liturgical theory and practice in their generality, however much the details of their application might vary from generation to generation and between one centre and another" (see also Bridger 1976:389). Idelsohn in his survey into the historical development of Jewish worship revealed that the form of Jewish worship in Ancient Israel was not different from that of other Ancient Near-Eastern countries: "There was the sacrificial cult, first with altar and later with sanctuary" (Adelsohn 1960:3; see also Vriezen 1963:10-11, 103).<sup>68</sup> With specific reference to the worship form of the patriarch, H.H. Rowley (1967) came to the following conclusion:

worship in the patriarchal age, then, was simple and individual, and its known forms were sacrifice and prayer. Yet it rose to heights of fellowship with God seldom surpassed, and worship and life

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<sup>64</sup> See 1 Samuel 7:6; Judges 20:26; 1 Kings 8:22-53; 2Chronicles 6:12-42; Isaiah 38:9-20; Psalm 88; Job 42: 1-6; Jeremiah 1:6; 4:10; 7:16; 11:5,14; 12:1-17; 18:19-23;20:7-18;32:16-25; 33:3; Daniel 9: 4-19; Ezra 9:6-15; Nehemiah 9:5-38.

<sup>65</sup> See 1 Samuel 9:13.

<sup>66</sup> See 1 Chronicles 16:37-42; 2Chronicles 6.

<sup>67</sup>See Adelson (1960: 3-16) for the Bible references.

<sup>68</sup> See Genesis. 12:8, 13:4, and 14:18-24. Abraham, according to Idelsohn, made use of the worship form of his time to the extent of expressing his willingness to offer Isaac as sacrifice to the Most High God until he received a revelation that God did not accept human sacrifice-a reform which later on became law in Israel ( Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-5). See also Rosenberg (1997:14-16).

were closely related. It lacked the corporate element which we so often think of as the essential element of worship because the conditions under which the patriarchs lived made corporate worship of that kind impossible.<sup>69</sup>

(Rowley 1967:36)

Bridger (1976:389) explicitly explained in his *“New Jewish encyclopedia”* that although sacrifices were performed alongside prayers, there were instances where Bible personalities like Isaac, Moses and Hannah offered prayers without sacrifices, a fact which Idelsohn earlier in his work alluded to: “The institution of worshipping by means of words without sacrifices is therefore, according to Biblical tradition, old in Israel, reaching as far back as the patriarchs” (Idelsohn 1960:4; see also Rosenberg 1997:9, 14). In his study on the biblical and historical background of Jewish customs and ceremonies, Bloch (1980:72) also observed that “the urge to pray was an innate and spontaneous instinct of primitive man,” approaching the deities in sycophantic and pacificatory demeanor. Early Jewish prayers, he added, “reflected a submission to the will of God”, intercession for God’s salvation and “An informal adjunct of sacrificial rites.” Torah worship, according to Bridger, was done through choruses, the chanting of prayers and the offering of sacrifices by Levites and priests respectively (Bridger 1976:389). Rosenberg also noted that although Jewish worship before the fall of the Temple in 70 A.D. focused on the sacrificial cult, “The meaning ... changed over time from paying tribute and giving an anthropomorphic God a cooked meal, to altering the state of mind of the priest giving the offering” (Rosenberg 1997:16).

The structure of Jewish worship became more formalized following the completion of the Temple in Jerusalem during the reign of Solomon the King around 980 B.C.E. It is also worth noting that the form of worship that characterized the introduction of Yahweh<sup>70</sup> as God of Israel before the introduction of Temple worship was mainly corporate in nature, emphasizing both

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<sup>69</sup> The patriarchs lived within a polytheistic religious setting. Before the introduction of Yahwism as God of Israel (Exodus 3), mention is made in patriarchal stories of Semitic deities such as El with their compound names such as El-Shaddai, El-Bethel, Elyon, El-Olam, and El-Roi. But there were no evidence that the patriarchs were polytheistic. See Rowley (1967: 9- 15).

<sup>70</sup> It is widely believed among Old Testament scholars that “Yahweh was the God of the Kenites before the days of Moses, and that he was the God whose priest Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, was.” But the interesting thing about religion is that it “is not the name of the God invoked, but the conception of the deity and the nature of the worship and the level of life to which it leads. Yahweh became the God of Israel, not because Moses taught them his name, but because he had saved them from the power of Egypt” (Rowley 1967:43-44).

ethical conduct and the observance of rituals<sup>71</sup> (Rowley 1967:45). The liturgy of the temple worship centred mainly on the burning of incense of sweet spices before God,<sup>72</sup> continual provision of showbread and burnt – offering<sup>73</sup> (Rowley 1967:83-84). This was to be carried out every morning and evening, on the Sabbaths, and on the new moons and on the appointed seasons of the Lord, accompanied by the singing of Psalms.<sup>74</sup> Rowley reiterated the fact that the ritual acts in the First Temple worship “were accompanied by the recital of liturgical texts, which were designed to make the ritual acts vehicle of the spiritual worship of the people.” He added that “singing and prayer were also given a place in the worship of the Temple,” with prophets also performing functions in the Temple alongside the priests (Rowley 1967:103). The singing of psalms and the chanting of prayers during the service, according to Idelsohn, dates back to the very beginnings of Israel and its neighbours<sup>75</sup> (Rosenberg 1997:14-19). There were also, special services held three times in the year on Sabbaths, new moon and on the three Jewish holidays - feast of unleavened bread, feast of weeks and feast of tabernacle (Idelsohn 1960:10; see also Rowley 1967:87-88).

The patriarchs understood prayer, not only in the light of sacrifice, but also intercession and supplication to God. The construction of the first Temple resulted in both corporate and individual worship which finds expression in the reading of liturgical texts, the chanting of prayers, and singing of psalms and hymns in addition to ritual performances. Ritual performance, with its attendant liturgy, according to Rowley, serves one single purpose, namely “to foster penitence, thanksgiving, adoration, devotion, and humble surrender and consecration to God”

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<sup>71</sup> See Exodus 20, 34 and Deuteronomy 5.

<sup>72</sup> The theological understanding in the Ancient Near Eastern countries was that the sanctuary was the habitation of the Supreme deity.

<sup>73</sup> See also 1 Chronicles 2:3.

<sup>74</sup> See 1 Chronicles 15: 17-24; 16: 4-43; Rowley (1967: 90-94).

<sup>75</sup> The custom of chanting praises and prayers, in the words of Idelsohn (1960:11), “was an old established institution in the sanctuaries of Babylon and Egypt.” The Psalms, he asserts were “created partly during the First Temple and partly during the first part of the Second Temple, though Biblical scholars opine that a number of the Psalms are of late origin, consist of petitions, meditations, laudations, reflections, and ethical doctrines. Among the Psalms are fine descriptions of nature and of God’s omnipotence and omnipresence.” See Idelsohn (1960:14 – 15). A number of the psalms, Idelsohn (1960:15) indicates, “are for public worship while others are for private devotion, as evident from their form and style.” There are, he continues, “outpourings of a noble soul next to prayers that the enemy be exterminated, fine thanksgivings for personal happiness and woeful outcries over national calamities.” The Psalms comprise forty-eight petitions, fifty-eight meditations, and forty-four laudations or hymns. This classification, points to the fact that “the urge of prayer compelled the Levitical singers to compose more petitions and meditations than hymns and laudations” (Idelsohn 1960:15).

(Rowley 1967:142). The change in Jewish liturgical life came about as a result of unfavourable religious conditions, occasioned by the exile, which we now turn to.

### 3.1.2 Exilic to Second Temple periods

The idea of a common Jewish devotional service, according to Heiller (1932), became possible during the exilic era since the pre-exilic worship, which consists of

offering of gifts, slain beasts, burnt offerings, acts of consecration, ceremonies of purifications, and rites of *tabu* would not have been possible in the land of Babylon - a land which was deemed to be far away from the dwelling place of Yahweh and described as “unclean”, *tabu*, the property of demons.<sup>76</sup>

(Heiller 1932: 297-298)

In fact, the exilic period, as McEwen pointed out, “is a landmark in OT prayer” mainly due to the suspension of sacrificial worship in the First Temple (McEwen 1957:170). Bloch’s study also revealed that Jewish prayer, “after the destruction of the First Temple [586 BC] ... was promoted to a position of primacy in the Babylonian diaspora” (see also Simpson 1965:17). The prayer book of the people, according to Heiller, was the psalm<sup>77</sup> and although temple worship with its associated sacrifices continued during the post-exilic era: “The service of the Word and prayer which was born of exilic religion, could never again be dispossessed by a sacrificial cult.” Even in the temple, Heiller asserts, “holy Scriptures were interpreted, and the lofty prayers of the psalmists resounded. The post-exilic religion revealed side by side the old sacrificial cult and the new spiritual worship of the Word and Prayer.” Rosenberg gave an outline of the liturgical order of worship during the Second Temple era: Morning prayers, he writes, “included recital by the priests of the Ten Commandments and the *Shema*, including *Va ‘Y’hi Im Shamo*a (from Deuteronomy) and *Va ‘Yomer* (from Numbers), a blessing after the *Shema* beginning with *Emet V’Yatziv*, the *Avoda*, and the Priestly Blessing.” On Sabbath days, he, continued, “the priests recited an additional blessing for the outgoing *mishmar* (the priestly shift, of which a total of twenty-four alternated during the year). Furthermore, the Levites, “Would sing psalms during

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<sup>76</sup> See also Idelsohn (1960:16-25), and Psalm 137:1-4.

<sup>77</sup> According to McEwen (1957:170), the Psalms, as liturgical document used in the Temple, were collected between the Exile and the Maccabean era, and contains a variety of prayers of spiritual quality. For extensive discussion on the Psalm, see Rowley (1967:176-212).

and after the sacrifices, including a Psalm of the Day, as well as special Psalms on holidays (such as Psalm 30 on *Chanuka*).<sup>78</sup> On pilgrimage festivals, he concluded, “they would sing Psalm 120 to 134 while ascending the fifteen steps that led from the Women’s Court to the Men’s Court, where the altar was situated” (Rosenberg 1997:18).

The remarkable role the synagogues also played in Jewish prayer life is worthy of notice (McEwen 1957:170). The advent of the synagogue worship system, Rosenberg noted, brought a seizure to the sacrificial system of worship after the destruction of the temple. The synagogue, according to Rosenberg, developed during or soon after the Second Temple period supposedly due to “prayer services originally held at the Temple by the *ma’amdor* or more likely based on prayers developed in *Bet Ha’Midrash* (the house of study) and in *chavurot* (tableside prayer groups)”<sup>79</sup> (Rosenberg 1997:16,18). The aftermath of the destruction of the Second Temple saw a variety of temple prayers and substitutes for temple rituals “mingled with prayers developed in other context” with its attendant mystical activities such as *Merkava* mysticism.<sup>80</sup> However, their sole purpose was evident - to maintain “a flow of mind-state” (Rosenberg 1997:19). Rowley (1967) gave an idea of the structure of the synagogue liturgy: the *Shema*, and the *Shemoneh Esreh*, which the congregation recites by standing and end by responding with “Amen”.<sup>81</sup> It is then followed by the reading from Scripture, which is, the Law and the Prophets, and then concluded with the priestly benediction (Rowley 1967:234). The pronouncement of the benediction, Rowley reports, took the following form: “The priest faced the congregation for the blessing, while the congregation stood with hands raised as high as their shoulders, repeating the

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<sup>78</sup> *Chanuka* (dedication) is a Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Holy Temple.

<sup>79</sup> The intertestamental or post-Exilic period cannot be left out of Jewish worship, particularly prayer. There are footprints of prayer in the apocryphal books emphasizing on prayer with, as McEwen indicates: “One or two interesting developments and some significant links with the NT. See, for instance 2Maccabees 12:44; 15:12-14 where mention is made of the living praying for the dead and *vice-versa*, respectively. See also links between some other apocryphal documents with the following New Testament texts: Ecclesiasticus 7:14; Matthew 6:7 and Ecclesiasticus 28:2-4 and Matthew 6:14.

<sup>80</sup> *Merkava* mysticism is “the mysticism of the wheeled chariot that bore the throne of God in Ezekiel’s vision.” They were, as Rosenberg puts it, “said to have devised prayers such as the Kedusha that were believed to have the power to assist the worshipper in ascending to heaven.” This power, according to Rosenberg, consisted not in the words of the prayers, but in the manner in which they were recited. Like “mantras, they were a means by which a worshipper could transfer his mind from cognitive considerations to effective alteration of one’s total perspective in order to achieve divine revelation.” In fact Rosenberg, reveals that this was a Jewish mystic response to the early Christians and the Muslims; for Jews, there was no need for further prophets, because every Jew had the capacity to achieve divine revelation personally through prayer and mystical experience.

<sup>81</sup> The text of the *Shema* is found in the Torah passages: Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41. As for the *Shemoneh Esreh* or *Amidah*, it is not all of them that pre-date the fall of Jerusalem. See Rowley (1967:235).

formula word by word after the priest and responding with Amen after each of the three parts of the blessing” (Rowley 1967:237).

Jesus, Heiller asserts, shared in the Jewish common worship of the Word and prayer and after his resurrection and Pentecost his disciples continued to visit the temple to worship. This is evident in the Eucharistic prayers in the *Didache* which in the words of Heiller, “gives a fairly accurate picture of the eucharistic liturgy in the early church at the time when the disciples still belonged to the Jewish communion and took part in the divine service of the Temple or the Synagogue” (Heiller 1932:300).

The birth of the church, however, introduced a new dimension into the existing worship system where the disciple now “assembled together daily for a special Christian service, a common meal, and giving of thanks.” The primitive church, as Heiller succinctly puts it, “knows a double congregational worship; the general Jewish services on Sabbath or festival days in Temple or Synagogue, and the special Christian Eucharistic service for which the disciples gathered in their houses.” Beckwith (1978:41) reiterates Heiller’s point: “The main centres of Jewish worship at the birth of Christianity were three: the Temple, the synagogue and the home.” Frederic Henry Chase (1891) in his book *The Lord’s Prayer in the early church*, published earlier, unequivocally pointed out that,

Christianity, absolutely new in its central ideas and aims, employed time-honoured machinery for their furtherance. In itself the most revolutionary force which the world has ever seen, it effected the greatest upheavals of political, social, and religious life by conservative methods. It inherited the powers which were inherent in, or had been won by, Judaism; and it made Judaism a thing of the past.

(Chase 1891:1)

Regarding the worship pattern of the early church, Rowley states that the “Church continued to use the same pattern of worship, including prayer, the reading of Scripture, and exposition”, the variations notwithstanding. As Rowley stipulates,

to the Scriptures of the Old Testament those of the New have been added, and the emphasis of the exposition has been accordingly modified. The *Shemoneh Esreh* has been replaced by other prayers.



The Jewish Sabbath has been replaced by the Lord's Day as a day of rest and worship. But this does not diminish the significance of the Church's debt to the Synagogue.

(Rowley 1967:242)

The above argument regarding Jewish prayer forms has however, been sharply disputed by Bassier and Cohen (2015:171) who argue that "the forms, genre, and content of prayers in the Second Temple era can only be speculated." Their argument is based on the fact that until at least the eighth century, the Jews did not use prayer books for public prayer. Rather, the custom was that a trained reader would recited the prayers aloud and his audience would repeat after him or else right along with him. This notwithstanding, Jewish worship leading to the First Temple era, took the shape of sacrifice, the reading of liturgical texts, prayer, praise and, singing and chanting of hymns; thus music is what gives impetus to Jewish liturgical practice during pre-exilic era (Friedmann 2012: 16; Rowley 1967:104). The synagogue worship can be described as a revival of Jewish worship life considering the significant role it played in resuscitating Jewish worship and serving as foundation for early Christian liturgical activities. It introduced a simplified liturgical form consisting of two important prayers that are relevant to the objective of this Chapter: the *Shema* and the *Shemoneh Esreh*.<sup>82</sup> Although the *Kaddish*, in its original form, predates Christianity, it was not introduced into Jewish worship until the first half of the second century CE

### **3.2 THE *SHEMA*, *AMIDA*, *KADDISH* AND THEIR LITURGICAL USES**

The Jewish liturgy, as presented above, contains three main prayers that need to be explored further; the *Shema*, *Amida* and *Kaddish*. These three prayers, according to Scott (1951:42), were the three prayers which were solemnly recited at every meeting. The *Shema* -, "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One"<sup>83</sup>, is said to be the quintessence of Jewish religious life. This passage is an affirmation of the Divine Unity; everything derives from this affirmation. If God is one, then the entire creation is one. The moral implication of the *Shema* is "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all they soul and with all they might." And as sign of

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<sup>82</sup> The text of the Shema is found in the following Torah passages: Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Numbers 15:37-41. As for the Shemoneh Esreh or Amidah, it is common knowledge that it is not all the eighteen pre-date the fall of Jerusalem. See Rowley (1967:235).

<sup>83</sup> See Deuteronomy 6:4.

constant reminder, the people were instructed to “bind them [the *Shema*] for a sign upon thine hand. And they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thy house, and upon thy gates.” In the words of Simpson (1965): “This primary affirmation, then, is to be the subject of constant meditation, the content of education and the guide to all living.”

Oesterley (1925:45) locates the antiquity of the *Shema* as one of the pre-Christian elements in the Jewish liturgy, the *Mishnah* and the gospels<sup>84</sup> (De Sola & Raphal 1843:1-2; The Mishna 1933). As already mentioned, it is recited at the beginning of the main morning service and its words, as Rowley (1967:259) puts it, “were designed to evoke the sense of awed privilege at the approach to God.” It is preceded by three liturgical benedictions: *Yôtzer* (Creator), *'Ahabah* (Love), and *Emeth we-Yatzib* (True and constant) or *Geullah* (Redemption). The form of the *Yôtzer* and *'Ahabah* precede the *Shema*, while the *Geullah* follows it (Idelsohn 1960:89). The form of the *Yôtzer*, as Oesterley (1925:47) observes, “offers a good illustration of the way in which liturgical pieces have, in the course of ages, been lengthened from time to time by the addition of new matters.” But the change in length must be put in proper context in order to appreciate the rationale behind them. In the case of the *Yotzer*, the insertion that praises creation and presents God as the Creator of both light and darkness is a polemic from Isaiah 45:7 in response to Zoroastrianism where *Ahura mazda*, the benevolent ancient Medes and Persian deity, was viewed as god of light and goodness, and *Ahriman*, the malevolent deity, god of darkness and evil (Idelsohn 1960:89; see also Nulman 1993:386; Rosenberg 1997:62-64). This dualist view of the Supreme Being is common in many religions, including African religion but in sharp contrast with Judaism which views God in the light of His unity which is the mantra in *Shema* recitation, as both light and darkness. The *'Ahabah* benediction is one in which prayer is offered to the glory of God for spiritual light, contrary to the *Yôtzer* where He is glorified for giving Israel material light. It is believed that the Torah is the spiritual light that God has given to his people because it is “the brightest of all the luminaries; the sun gives light in the daytime only but the Torah gives light both day and night” (Nulman 1993:11). The *Geullah* benediction, also known in antiquity as *Emeth we-Yatzib*, was originally made up of only forty-five words.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> See *Mishnah*, Berakhôth 1:5; *Tosephta*, Berakhôth 1:4; Mark 12: 29. See also Josephus (*Antiquity* IV. Viii. 13).

<sup>85</sup> See Zunz in Oesterley (1925:48).

The three *Shema* benedictions are praises which seek to project God's supremacy over other deities and His love for His people in giving them the Ten Commandments, and His redemptive work in history. The texts below reflect the benedictions in either their original forms, or they are close to their original. The form of the *Yôtzer* presented below is said to be either close or equal to the original while the *Ahabah* is Zunz's appended translation closely reflects the original form:

### ***Yôtzer***

“Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who formest light and creates darkness; who makest peace and creates all things; who givest light in mercy to the earth and to those who live thereon, and in goodness renewest every day continually the work of creation. Be Thou blessed, O Lord our God, for the excellency of the work of Thy hands, and for the bright luminaries which Thou hast made; let them glorify Thee. Selah. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who formest the luminaries.”<sup>86</sup>

### ***Ahavah***

“With great love hast Thou loved us, O Lord our God; with great and overflowing pity hast Thou pitied us. O our Father, our King, for our fathers' sake, who trusted in Thee, and whom Thou didst teach the statutes of life, be gracious unto us too, and teach us. Enlighten our eyes in Thy Law, and let our hearts cleave unto Thy commandments, and unite our hearts to love and fear Thy Name, that we may never be put to confusion. For a God that worketh salvation art Thou; and us hast Thou chosen from every people and tongue, and hast brought us near unto Thy great Name [Selah] in faithfulness, to give thanks unto Thee, and to proclaim Thy unity, in love. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who chooseth Thy people Israel in love.”

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<sup>86</sup>This translated version of the *Yôtzer* is reproduced from Oesterley (1925) who credited Zunz as source.

## ***Geullah***

“True and constant, established and enduring, right and faithful, beloved and precious, desired and pleasant, awe-inspiring and mighty, well-ordered and acceptable, good and lovely, is this word unto us for ever and ever. True it is that the God of the universe is our King, the Rock of Jacob, the shield of our salvation. To generation and generation He endureth, and His Name endureth. And His throne is established, and His Kingdom and His faithfulness endure for ever. And His words are living and enduring, faithful and desirable for ever and unto the ages of ages, for our fathers and for us, for our children and for our generations, and for the generations of the seed of Israel Thy servants.

True it is that Thou art He who art the Lord our God, and the God of our fathers; our King, and the King of our fathers; our Redeemer, and the Redeemer of our fathers; our Maker, the Rock of our salvation; our Liberator and our Deliverer from everlasting; that is Thy Name; there is no God beside Thee ... With a new song did the redeemed praise Thy Name on the sea-shore; with one accord did they give thanks and acknowledge Thy Kingship, and said, ‘The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.

O Rock of Israel, arise to the help of Israel, and deliver, according to Thy promise, Judah and Israel. Our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is His Name, the Holy One of Israel. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hast redeemed Israel.”

### **3.2.1 Amida**

The *Amidah* (standing), also known as *Tefilla* (prayer), is the fifth section of the *Shaharith* and it is described as the climax of the morning service in particular and Jewish service in general. Its purpose being to petition God for “national redemption culminating in world peace; a time to ask God for things that will benefit humankind and the Jewish people” (Green 1996:30-31; Rosenberg 1997:73). Rosenberg’s work shows that “the Amida was included in the liturgy as a substitute for Temple sacrifices” (Rosenberg 1997:23). It is described as the most important prayer of the synagogue liturgy, consists of eighteen benedictions (*Shemōneh ‘Esreh*) originally and prayed three times a day in the Jewish liturgy.<sup>87</sup> Although the prayer contains an additional one benediction, it is still known by its pre-Christian name with the exception of the twelfth and

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<sup>87</sup> See Mishnah, Ber. Iv.1

fifteenth benedictions which according to Oesterley were added about 100 CE and 200 CE respectively<sup>88</sup> (Rosenberg 1997:75). The nineteen benedictions, as Rosenberg suggests, guide worshippers to visualize the path to attaining redemption and appreciate the associated benefits (Rosenberg 1997:73-74). The prayer, according to Oesterley (1925:58-59), consists of three groups of benedictions: the first three which contains ascriptions of praise (*sheva*), making the first group; the intervening group containing petitions (*Emitzaïyoth/bakkashoth*); and the last three which consists of thanksgivings (*Bërachoth/aharonoth*) (see also Idelsohn 1960:92-105; Rosenberg 1997:79-97). They are classified under the following sub-themes as presented below:

### **Sheva (Praise)**

#### **First benediction** (*Avoth/Fathers*)

“Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Blessed art thou, O Lord, the shield of Abraham.”

#### **Second benediction** (*GevUroth/Power*)

“Thou art mighty forever, O Lord, that causeth the wind to blow, and the rain to descend; thou quickenest the dead, Blessed art thou, O Lord, that quickenest the dead.”

#### **Third benediction** (*Kedusha/holiness/Sanctification of God’s name*)

“Thou art holy, and holy is thy name (Selah). And holy ones praise thee every day. Blessed art thou, O Lord, the Holy God.”

### **Emitzaïyoth (Petition)**

#### **Fourth benediction** (*Bina [Wisdom]*)

“Thou dost favourably grant knowledge unto men, and dost teach discernment unto men; grant us from thee knowledge and understanding and discernment. Blessed art thou who dost graciously grant knowledge.”

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<sup>88</sup> A comparison between the *Shemôneh ‘Esreh* and Wisdom of Ben-Sirah, said to be written about 175 B.C. is clear indication of its pre-Christian date. See Oesterley (1925:55). The Jewish tradition also suggests a post-exilic date (444 BCE) as the appropriate date for its compilation. Friedlander (2008:129) also indicates in his work that the Shemoneh Esreh pre-dates Matthew and Luke. Although its date was set at 70-100CE., its groundwork is ancient.

**Fifth benediction** (*Teshuva* [Repentance]).<sup>89</sup>

“Cause us to return, our Father, unto thy law; and draw us near, our King, unto thy service; and bring us back in perfect repentance to thy presence. Blessed art thou, O Lord, that delightest in repentance.”

**Sixth benediction** (*Seliha* [Forgiveness])

“Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned; pardon us, our King, for we have transgressed. For thou art the God of goodness, thou dost forgive. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who dost abundantly forgive.”

**Seventh benediction** (*Geulla* [Redemption])

“Look upon our affliction, and plead our cause, and haste to redeem us; for thou art God, mighty redeemer. Blessed art thou, O Lord, the redeemer of Israel.”

**Eighth benediction** (*Refua* or *bircath haholim* [Prayer for the sick])

“Heal us, O Lord our God, and we shall be healed; vouchsafe healing to all our wounds, for thou, O God, art a merciful healer. Blessed art thou, O Lord, that healest Israel.”

**Ninth benediction** (*Bircath hashanim*)<sup>90</sup>

“Blesse us, O Lord our God, in all the work of our hands, and bless our years, and satisfy the world and its fullness with thy goodness. Blessed art thou, O Lord, that blesses the years.”

**Tenth benediction** (*Kibbutz galuyoth* [a prayer for the gathering of the exiled Jews from their dispersion to Palestine])

“Sound the great horn for our freedom, and lift up the ensign to gather all our exiles from the four corners of the earth to our own land. Blessed art thou, O Lord, that gatherest Israel.”

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<sup>89</sup> This prayer and the sixth benediction are said to date 10-40 CE. See Sanders (1977:232).

<sup>90</sup> A prayer which “goes back to the period when Israel still dwelt in Palestine, and agriculture was the staple occupation of the people.” See Idelsohn (1960:100).

**Eleventh benediction** (*Hashiva shofētenu or bircath mishpat* [a prayer for the domination of righteous judgment])

“Restore our judges as in former times, and our counsellors as in the beginning, and do thou alone reign over us. Blessed art thou, O Lord, that lovest judgement.”

**Twelfth benediction** (*Bircath hamminim or haztiddukim/ hazzedim*).<sup>91</sup>

“And for the sectarians let there be no hope, and may all the evil in an instant be destroyed and all Thy enemies be cut down swiftly; and the evil ones uproot and break and destroy and humble soon in our days. Blessed art Thou, Lord, who breaks down enemies and humble sinners.”

**Thirteenth benediction** (*Bircath hatzaddikim*)<sup>92</sup>

“Upon the righteous, and upon the proselytes of righteousness, let thy mercies be stirred, O Lord our God; and grant a good reward unto all that trust in thy name. Blessed art thou, O Lord the trust of the righteous.”

**Fourteenth benediction** (*Bonê yerushalayim* [“Build the House”]).

“Do thou dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, thy city, and build it an everlasting building speedily in our days, blessed art thou, O Lord, that buildest Jerusalem.”

**Fifteenth benediction** (*Bircath Dawid*)<sup>93</sup>

“Do thou cause to flourish the branch of David speedily, and do thou exalt his horn by thy salvation.”

**Sixteenth benediction** (*Shomea tefilla*)<sup>94</sup>

“Hear our voice, O Lord our God, and have mercy upon us, and accept our prayer in mercy. For thou hearest the prayer of every mouth. Blessed art thou that hearkenest unto prayer.”

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<sup>91</sup> A benediction according to Talmudic sources by Samuel the Younger about 100 CE. at the request of Rabbi Gamaliel against sectarians and heretics among the Jewish people, probably before the destruction of the Temple),

<sup>92</sup> A benediction for the righteous and for the pious and for the true proselytes and the remnant of the Scribes. It is consequential to the twelve benediction

<sup>93</sup> A prayer for the reinstatement of the dynasty of David the King

<sup>94</sup> The concluding benediction of the second petition section.

## **Bĕrachoth aharonoth (Thanksgiving)**

### **Seventeenth benediction (*Avoda*)<sup>95</sup>**

“Accept, O Lord our God, thy people Israel and restore the service to the oracle (*debir*) of thy house. Blessed art thou, O Lord that restores thy Shekhinah unto Zion.”

### **Eighteenth benediction (*Hodah*)<sup>96</sup>**

“We give thanks unto thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers. For our lives which are committed into thy hand, and for our souls which are in thy care; for thy miracles and for thy wonders, and for thy benefits at all times. Blessed art thou, O Lord; good it is to praise thee.”

### **Nineteenth benediction (*Bircath cohanim*)<sup>97</sup>**

“Give peace and blessing unto us, even unto Israel, thy people. Bless us altogether, O Lord our God, yea, it is good in thine eyes to bless thy people Israel. Blessed art thou, O Lord, that blesses with peace. Amen”

Rosenberg (1997) in his work, summarized the content of the *Amida* in terms of its nature and meaning:

We visualize our ancestors to engender pride (Blessing 1). Then, we must respect and comprehend the forces of nature (Blessing 2). Third, we must sanctify ourselves and connect with the divine force within ourselves by emulating the angels (Blessing 3). Through these efforts we develop knowledge of good and evil (Blessing 4). By knowing good and evil we develop the capacity to repent (Blessing 5) and to achieve God’s forgiveness (Blessing 6). With God’s forgiveness, we can be redeemed (Blessing 7) from the adversity that resulted from the bad we have done. This redemption takes on many forms: being healed from disease and from physical and mental wounds (Blessing 8), being blessed with good harvest (Blessing 9), and being restored to our land (Blessing 10) and our own system of justice (Blessing 11). Redemption also entails having our people reunified in spirit as a nation; this requires that we fortify ourselves to take a strong stand against members of our own people who turn against us (Blessing 12) and that we develop the generosity of spirit to welcome members of other people who sincerely wish to become part of us as Jews-by-choice (Blessing 13). Being a Jew is not just a legal matter or a phenomenon of birth; it is a state of mind, a sense of being

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<sup>95</sup> A prayer for the acceptance of the service in the Temple

<sup>96</sup> A thanksgiving benediction which, like the *Avoda*, was part of the service at the Temple.

<sup>97</sup> The Priestly Benediction, the oldest liturgical text recited by the priests at the conclusion of the daily sacrifice



spiritually united with the Jewish people. Reunited as a sovereign and prosperous nation, we will be able to rebuild the physical and governmental structures that once formed the heart of that nation—not merely a building and bureaucracies, but as lasting structures of peace (Blessing 14 and 15). We pray to God to accept our prayers (Blessing 16), then silently meditate, perhaps adding personal prayers and request. We then thank God in advance for granting our request (Blessing 17 and 18). Finally we recite the Peace Blessing (Blessing 19), in which we pray that, again united as a nation, we will become a force that will bring peace to the entire world and not just benefit ourselves.

(Rosenberg 1997:74)

While the first and last three benedictions are recited on daily basis, the middle thirteen are recited on weekdays except on Sabbaths and festivals when prayers are said only for God to accept and purify the mind to serve Him. Customarily, the *Amida* is said silently by all worshipper and then repeated by the service leader. It is also said standing with the feet together and facing Jerusalem. Three steps are taken forward when beginning the *Amida* and bow when one begins to recite the first and eighteenth benedictions, *Avot* (Patriarchs) and *Hoda'ah* (Thanksgiving) respectively (Rosenberg 1997:77-78).

### 3.2.2 Kaddish

The *Kaddish* is one of the prevalent Jewish prayers that this study seeks to explore. The term, in Aramaic, means “Sanctification or “holy”, originating as a prayer that ends a study session in a house of study<sup>98</sup> (Bridger 1976:259). It then assume liturgical use and recited at the close of Jewish traditional service, marking the end of the *Birhot Ha'Shachar* (morning benediction), that is, “a closing doxology to a Haggadic discourse” (Pool 1909: 8, 11, 20-21).<sup>99</sup> Haggadic discourse, according to Pool, were divided into three - introduction, exposition, and conclusion – and were regularly held on Sabbaths and festivals and often every morning, and predictably

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<sup>98</sup>According to Pool (1906:5), two schools were attached to every one of the 480 synagogues in Jerusalem—one for Bible study and the other for traditional knowledge.

<sup>99</sup>Haggadic discourse came to prominence in Jewish worship life as a result of the destruction of the Temple in 586 BCE and consequent cessation of sacrificial services during the Babylonian exile, which led to the development of the synagogue liturgy. One other factor which stimulated the development of the synagogue service was the Maccabean revolt and factionalism in the Jewish state. See Pool (1909:4).

characterized by words of consolation and Messianic promises (Pool: 6-7).<sup>100</sup> The *Haggadah*<sup>101</sup> thrives on the principle of “auspicious words”, a principle which has influenced penultimate verses in prophetic literature such as Isaiah, Malachi, Lamentation and Ecclesiastes.

The *Kaddish* is described as not only one of the most familiar Jewish prayers, but also one of the most “unusual and misunderstood.” The words of Rabbi Hayim Halevy Donin vividly describes the *Kaddish* as follows “No prayer in all of Jewish liturgy arouses greater emotion than *Kaddish*. No prayer instills greater reverence. No prayer projects more mystery” (Kadden & Kadden 2004:79). Writing on the content of the *Kaddish*, Sherman (1980) observes that “there are uncertainties surrounding the origin of the *Kaddish*” Sherman (1991) is one among many others who pointed out that the *Kaddish* originally was not part of the synagogue service. Most probably, he posits, it originated in the Talmudic period since it is written in the Aramaic, the language spoken by the Jews of Babylon.<sup>102</sup> Pool’s (1909) earlier investigation into the *Kaddish*, however, revealed that the synagogue service actually began with the summons and the *Kaddish* at the time of the *Massechet Soferim* (The Tractates of the Scribes),<sup>103</sup> with the latter closing the reading of the Law and the entire synagogue service (Pool 1909:107; Lehnardt 1999:303). Oesterley (1925:72) situates the origin of the *Kaddish* in its succinct nature, its correlation with temple worship and the Lord’s Prayer, and the fact that it was written in Palestine and not in Babylonia.<sup>104</sup> Rosenberg in his comprehensive work on the Jewish liturgy, clarified Oesterley’s assertion:

[The *Kaddish*] originated in Israel in the first century B.CE as a prayer that marked the end of a study session in a house of study.” The institution of the synagogue may have had its inception in the houses of study where the common people of Israel at the time of the Second Temple learned the

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<sup>100</sup> According to Pool, the *Haggadah* always follows the reading of the prophets and Messianic coloring was given to the text on every possible opportunity. In times of unparalleled hardship, best exemplified by the Hadrianic persecution, the people turned to the *Haggadah* for hope and consolation.

<sup>101</sup> The *Haggadah* is a collection of rabbinic texts including folklore, historical anecdotes, moral exhortations, and practical advice in various spheres of life, from business to medicine.

<sup>102</sup> The traditional understanding of Aramaic as the language of the *Kaddish* can be found in the work of Lehnardt (1999:303). Because in Babylon there were *hame ha-arazot* (the people without adequate knowledge) who did not understand the “holy tongue”, that is, Hebrew. Second, “persecutions in the Byzantine which led to the enactment of a law by Emperor Justinian in 553 CE. forbidding the reading the doxology of the *Haggadah*.” See also Pool (1909:10, 20).

<sup>103</sup> *Massechet Soferim* (The Tractate of the Scribes) is the apocryphal Talmudic work believed to have originated from 8<sup>th</sup> century Palestine.

<sup>104</sup> see also Pool (1909:21).

Oral tradition. With the destruction of the Temple and the end of sacrificial ritual, the synagogue became the focus of public worship. It was natural for Kaddish, which must have been widely known, to be accorded the same function in the synagogue liturgy-marking endings-as it had had in the earlier study sessions.

(Rosenberg 1997:47)

According to Kadden and Kadden, the origin of the *Kaddish* may have been influenced by two biblical passages in Psalms and Daniel.<sup>105</sup> The Daniel passage appears in Aramaic, the *lingua franca* of the Jews in Babylonia and Palestine during the rabbinic and post-rabbinic era, and the language that dominated the *Kaddish*. This situation had arisen mainly because of the use of the *Kaddish*, that is, at the end of a study session in the early years of the second century. Upon a critical look at the text of the Kaddish, that is, its language and style, Lehnardt draws the following conclusion on the language of the *Kaddish*: “The question, of whether the Kaddish was formulated first in Babylonia or in Palestine, cannot be answered definitely, since the grammatical and phonetic evidence differs from manuscript to manuscript.” Pool had already made this observation in his earlier work, namely - that [the Kaddish] “is in grammar and vocabulary colorless enough to have been used harmoniously both in the East (with regard to the Onqelos) and in the West (with regard to the so-called Palestinian Targumim)” (Lehnardt 2004:307).

It appears the phenomenon of using two languages interchangeably during the Second Temple era may have accounted for the *Kaddish's* Aramaic-Hebraic character. This phenomenon is evident in what Pool described as “the composite linguistic character of the books of Daniel and Ezra which scholars believed are Second Temple documents” (Pool 1909:17).

### **3.2.3 *Kaddish* forms and their liturgical uses**

The *Kaddish* is unique in terms of its composition, origin and part of speech. It is incontrovertible that the *Kaddish*, in its varied forms, was composed at different epochs of Jewish history. As Gafiel (1975:75) observed, “each sentence, sometimes each phrase, comes

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<sup>105</sup> “Let the name of the Lord be blessed now and forever” (Psalm 113:2), and “Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever” (Daniel 2:20)

down to us through devout routes, from different times and as parts of prayers for different occasions.”<sup>106</sup> The oldest part of the *Kaddish* “May God’s great name be blessed for ever and ever” is found in the Talmud and other rabbinic literature, and it is the key phrase that the congregation uses as response when reciting the *Kaddish* (Kaden and Kadden 2004:79; *Berakhot* 3a.). The last line, however, in all five forms of the *Kaddish* except the half *Kaddish*, was written in Hebrew. It reads, “May the one Who make peace in Heaven” and a paraphrase of its Aramaic counterpart “*Oseh Shalom*” which precedes it and also found in the concluding part of the *Amidah* and *Birkat HaMazon*, a clear indication of the important role peace plays in Jewish tradition. The phrase “*Yitgadal V’yitkadah*” (May God’s Name be magnified and sanctified) introduces the *Kaddish* and as Kadden and Kadden suggests, may derive from Ezekiel’s messianic vision, “And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations.”<sup>107</sup> The *Kaddish* in its entirety is said to be written in the third person, contrary to most rabbinic prayers in the Talmud which are written in the second person and does not also contain the liturgical designation ascribed to God – *Adonai* and *Eloheimu* (Kadden & Kadden 2004:80).

It is recited seven times daily and as Nulman pointed out, the recitation is based on the verse “Seven times a day I praise Thee.”<sup>108</sup> The seven occasions on which the *Kaddish* is recited include the following: first, after *YISHTABAH* (be praised), because, in the words of Nulman (1993:185), “the mitzvah<sup>109</sup> of reciting *Pesukay Dezimrah*<sup>110</sup> has been completed and a new

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<sup>106</sup> See also (Kadden & Kadden 2004:79).

<sup>107</sup> See Ezekiel 38:23

<sup>108</sup> See Psalm 119:164.

<sup>109</sup> The *mitzvah* (commandment), in rabbinic Judaism, refers to the 613 commandments given in the Torah at Mount Sinai and the seven rabbinic commandments instituted later for a total of 620.

<sup>110</sup> P’sukei D’zimra (lit. Verse of Song), according to Rosenberg, “consists of psalms and excerpts from psalms that praise God. They are said in public worship for purpose of getting into the proper frame of mind to recite the obligatory morning prayers, the *Shema*, and, most of all, the *Amida*.” The psalms is preceded and followed by blessings. This custom, Rosenberg proceeds, “originally stemmed from the Levites’ practice of reciting certain psalms, particularly a version of Psalm 105, during the morning sacrifices. On Festivals, the Levites recited Psalm 120 to 134 while ascending the fifteen steps to the altar, one psalm per step, making the act of climbing the steps a lengthy processional, perhaps symbolic of ascending to heaven and bringing the mind closer to divine revelation. After the destruction of the Second Temple, it came to be the custom of some of the Talmudic rabbis in the second century CE. to prepare for prayer not only by silent meditation, but by the regimen of reciting either the entire book of Psalms or collections of representative verses from the psalms and Psalm 134, perhaps adopting the former practice of the Levites as something analogous to mantra to prepare the mind for communication with God. The purpose of the P’sukei D’Zimra, according to Rosenberg, is “to collectively prepare the minds of the worshippers for intense concentration during the Shema and the Amida.”

mitzvah of reading the *Shema* and its blessings is about to begin.” Second, after the *Shemôneh ‘Esreh*, which, as Nulman puts it, “is also considered a mitzvah in itself.” Third, after *Kedushah Desidra*, which is *UVA LETZIYON*.<sup>111</sup> Fourth, after *ASHRAY* (‘happy are they’) of *Minhah*, which is considered a separate *mitzvah* (Nulman 1993:42). Fifth, after reciting the *Amidah* at *Minhah*. Six, after reading the *Shema* at *Arvit*, which is obligatory, and seven, after *Tefillah Arvit* (the Evening Service). The *Kaddish*, Nulman (1993:185) observes, “is also said after reading the Torah because reading the Torah with a quorum is viewed as a *mitzvah*.” Idelsohn (1960), Scherman (1980), Nulman (1993) and Hoffman (2002) classify the *Kaddish* in five different forms.<sup>112</sup>

### 3.2.3.1 *Half Kaddish (Hatzi-Kaddish)*

#### **First half**

“Magnified and sanctified be His great Name in the world which He hath created according to His will. May He establish His kingdom during your life and during your days, and during the life of all the house of Israel, even speedily and at a near time, and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.”

#### **Second half**

“Blessed, praised, and glorified, exalted, extolled, and honored, magnified and lauded be the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He; though He be high above all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations which are uttered in the world; and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.”

The *half Kaddish* is the basis upon which all the others were developed. It is described in both historical and halachical terms as the oldest. It is composed of two halves; the first half being the earliest and predates Christianity, and the second half being a late insertion, probably developed later in the medieval era. It is recited by the *Shli’ah Tzibbur* (“messenger of the congregation”) in

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<sup>111</sup> *Uva letziyon*, meaning “A redeemer shall come to Zion”. It is recited at the closing of the daily morning service and at *Minhah* on Sabbath and festivals. See Nulman (1993:333).

<sup>112</sup> Rosenberg (1997:47) identifies with all except the *Kaddish* of Renewal.

between sections of the Jewish liturgy,<sup>113</sup> specifically, in between *Yishtabach* and *Barchu*<sup>114</sup> to show the conclusion of the Verses of song (*Pesukei D'Zimra*) and the beginning of morning service (*Shacharit*) proper. As Kadden & Kadden (2004:80) clearly reiterated, the *Kaddish* is recited during the morning service (*Shacharit*) and it occurs after P'sukei d'Zimra, after the *Amidah*, and after the Torah reading. It is also recited after the Shema and its blessings (*Sh'ma Uvirchoteha*) during the afternoon service (*Minha/Minchah*).

In Rosenberg's (1997) allusion, the *half Kaddish* divides the *P'Sukei D'Zimra* and the *Shacharit* in the traditional liturgy but is eliminated or made optional in the Reform liturgy (Rosenberg 1997:59-60). It is said to date back to mishnaic times and older than the *Complete Kaddish*, which was said to have been developed around the ninth century CE. Traditionally, the most important section of the *Kaddish* is the middle sentence recited by the congregation, "*Y'hei shmei raba m'vorakh l'olam ul'olmei olamaya*" (May His great name be blessed forever and ever) (see also Scherman 1980: vi-xvii). The *Kaddish*, in the words of Rosenberg (1997:60), "was used, in the ancient houses of study, at the end of sermons that were conceived of as efforts to understand the secrets of the Bible as a prerequisite for mystical experience." This was based on the principle that "every sermon had to conclude with words of consolation - that is, with references to the messianic age." It later developed as a short prayer added by preachers to conclude their sermons due to its petitionary nature, that is, "the sanctification of God's name and for the coming of God's kingdom," at the center of which is '*Y'hei shmei raba*'. Its Aramaic origin "*Baruch shem k'vod malchuto l'olam va'ed*", that is, "Blessed be the name of the glory of His kingdom forever and ever", is the second line of the *Shema* and it was customary in the Second Temple. Once the *half Kaddish* is recited, Rosenberg added, "we make another

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<sup>113</sup> *Hatzi/Chatzi Kaddish*, according to Rosenberg, acts as a divider between P'Sukei D'Zimra and the Shacharit service in the traditional liturgy, although its use has been eliminated or made optional in the Reform liturgy. *Chatzi Kaddish*, Rosenberg reveals, dates from mishnaic times. It is actually older than the *Complete Kaddish*, which did not appear until the ninth century. The middle sentence recited by the congregation, *Y'hei shmei raba m'vorakh l'olam ul'olmei olamaya* (May His great name be blessed forever and ever), is traditionally the most important. It was used, in the ancient houses of study, at the end of sermons that were conceived of as efforts to understand the secrets of the Bible as a prerequisite for mystical experience. The rule was that every sermon had to conclude with words of consolation, that is, with references to the messianic age. Some preachers added *Kaddish* as a concluding short prayer because it contains petitions for the sanctification of God's name and for the coming of God's kingdom, of which *Y'hei shmei raba* is the central one.

<sup>114</sup> *Yishtabbah* is the concluding benediction of the Verses of Song (*Pesukei D'Zimra*) while *Barchu/Barechu* is the opening word uttered by the *Sheli'ah Tzibbur* when summoning the people to public worship at the morning and evening services. For further explanations, see Nulman (1993:84, 377) and Idelsohn (1960:84).

transition, this time from mental preparation to forming a spiritual community with our fellow worshippers” (Rosenberg 1997:60).

### 3.2.3.2 *Full Kaddish (Kaddish shalayim)*

“Magnified and sanctified be His great Name in the world which He hath created according to His will. May He establish His kingdom during your life and during your days, and during the life of all the house of Israel, even speedily and at a near time, and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.

Blessed, praised, and glorified, exalted, extolled, and honored, magnified and lauded be the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He; though He be high above all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations which are uttered in the world; and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.

May the prayers and supplications of all Israel be accepted by their Father Who is in heaven; and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.”

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life for us for all Israel; and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.

He who maketh peace in His high places, may He make peace for us and for all Israel; and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.”

The *full Kaddish (Kaddish shalayim)*, commonly known to be *Kaddish titkabayl*, (May He receive [the prayer of Israel])<sup>115</sup>, is recited by the *Sheli'ah Tzibbur* only after the conclusion of the *Amidah* and at the end of the *Selichot* (literally, forgiveness) service<sup>116</sup> (Nulman 1993:184). Kadden & Kadden added that the *Kaddish* is recited prior to the *Aleinu* but later on replaced with the *Chatzi Kaddish* when *Musaf* is prayed and it is followed by the *Musaf Amidah*. The *Kaddish* is the same as the Rabbinical *Kaddish* except that the line “Unto Israel and unto the Rabbis and

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<sup>115</sup> The *Kaddish titkabal* is also known as *Kaddish gamur* (complete Kaddish), *Kaddish batra* (last Kaddish).

<sup>116</sup> The *Selichot* prayers, according to Rosenberg (1997:104), “are what replaced sacrifices after the fall of the Second Temple as a means of requesting forgiveness for sins. It is a special order of service consisting of additional prayers for forgiveness originally recited on all fast days, including *Yom Kippur*, *Tisha B'Av*, and the Fast of Esther. It later came to be said during the High Holidays from the Sunday before *Rosh Ha'Shana* to *Yom Kippur*.”

unto their disciples” is substituted with “May the prayers and supplications of all Israel be accepted by their Father who is in heaven.” The concluding part of the Kaddish contains a request for the peace of the nation Israel, as found in the mourner’s *Kaddish*. Unlike the half *Kaddish* which concludes sections of the liturgy, the full *Kaddish* punctuates an entire morning service, following the *Amida* and the recitation of *Hallel*<sup>117</sup> on major festive occasions. (Rosenberg 1997:113; Scherman 1980:43).

### 3.2.3.3 Mourner’s *Kaddish* (*Kaddish Yatom*)

“Magnified and sanctified be His great Name in the world which He hath created according to His will. May He establish His kingdom during your life and during your days, and during the life of all the house of Israel, even speedily and at a near time, and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.

Blessed, praised, and glorified, exalted, extolled, and honored, magnified and lauded be the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He; though He be high above all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations which are uttered in the world; and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life for us for all Israel; and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.

He who maketh peace in His high places, may He make peace for us and for all Israel; and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.”

The *Kaddish yatom*, was said at the services by the mourner for the first eleven months of the year and at each recurring *Yahrtzeit* (the anniversary of the death) of one’s relatives. It is essentially the same as the full *Kaddish* except that, since it is not recited following the completion of the *Amida* or *Shemoneh Esrei*, it does not include the phrase “*titkabeil*.” The *Kaddish*, according to Kadden & Kadden, assumes liturgical use as early as the eighth century CE, but became mourner’s prayer by the thirteenth century, recited at the end of the lives of

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<sup>117</sup>The Hallel (literally, ‘praise’) is made up of Psalm 113 to 118. According to Rosenberg (1997:111), “these psalms came to be recited in the Second Temple by the Levites on all major biblical Festivals while the Festival sacrifice was being slaughtered”. The custom, he added, “Was quite ancient, and certainly predated the Hasmonean period.” See Rosenberg (1997:111).



scholars. “Life, in a sense, is a study session that ends only in death; we can and, ideally, do continue learning new things each day of our lives” (Rosenberg 1997:50). It was in the eighth century CE that two sentences beginning with “*Yhei Sh’lama*” and “*Oseh Shalom*”, were added to the *Kaddish* and was, as already indicated, recited at the end of a study session, following *shiva* (the week-long mourning period) for a scholar, after the *Aleinu*, and as part of the preliminary prayers during *Shacharit* and after Psalm 93 at *Kabbalat Shabbat* (reception of the Sabbath).<sup>118</sup> It was eventually recited at the end of every *shiva*, that is, *shiva* period for both scholars and non-scholars due to the Jewish understanding that all are equal in death. It became customarily associated with death in Germany in the era of the Crusades as a response to intense persecution and assuming the mystical notion that it lessens the severity of any possible punishment being inflicted on their dead relatives whenever it is recited (Rosenberg 1997:50). Each time the *Sheli’ah Tzibbur* recites the *Kaddish*, the entire congregation’s response was “Amen”, and then follows with the recitation of the phrase “*Y’hei Sh’mei Rabbah*” (May His great name be blessed) and “*B’rich Hu* (Blessed be He)”<sup>119</sup> (Kadden & Kadden 2004: 80; Nulman 1993:186).

### 3.2.3.4 Rabbinical *Kaddish*/Scholar’s *Kaddish* (*Kaddish D’Rabbanan*).

“Magnified and sanctified be His great Name in the world which He hath created according to His will. May He establish His kingdom during your life and during your days, and during the life of all the house of Israel, even speedily and at a near time, and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.

Blessed, praised, and glorified, exalted, extolled, and honored, magnified and lauded be the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He; though He be high above all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations which are uttered in the world; and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.

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<sup>118</sup>*Kabbalat Shabbath*, according to Avery-Peck (2007:701), is the Jewish worship service traditionally held immediately after sundown on Friday evening, marking the beginning of the Sabbath and precedes the the regular evening prayer service. It consists of the recitation of Psalm 29 but in some Jewish traditions, Psalms 95-99 are recited instead. The chanting of the hymn *Lekhah Dodi* (“Come, my friend), and finally, Psalms 92-93. *Lekhah Dodi* is a reflection of the Jewish mystical practice of greeting the Sabbath as a queen who represents the Shekinah, the mystical, female personification of God.

<sup>119</sup> It is believed that the congregational response to the recitation of the *Kaddish*, as Rosenberg (1997:50) reports, could in effect reach into the afterlife to assist the deceased by nullifying heavenly decrees against him. This superstitious belief, according to Rosenberg (1997:51), was developed in the twelfth century by a group of mystics known as *Chasidei Ashkenaz* (the Pious Ones of Germany); responding to the *Kaddish* brings one into partnership with God in the creation of the world, and hence, empowered to change the fate of the departed.

Unto Israel and unto the Rabbis and unto their disciples and unto all the disciples of their disciples, and unto all who engage in the study of the Law, in this or in any other place, unto them and unto you be abundant peace, grace, lovingkindness, mercy, long life, ample sustenance, and salvation from the Father Who is in heaven, and say ye: (Congregation) Amen

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life for us for all Israel; and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.

He who maketh peace in His high places, may He make peace for us and for all Israel; and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.”

The rabbinical *Kaddish* is generally said by mourners after the study of rabbinic writings, that is, after a public lecture in the Oral Torah - ‘*Mishnah, Halachah, and even Midrash or Haggadah*’ - and after studying portions of the liturgy such as those contained in the morning benediction (*Birchot HaShachar*) and the inauguration of Sabbath (*Kabbalat Shabbat*)(Rosenberg 1997:47;Scherman 1980:50). It consists of the entire text of *Kaddish Yatom* and since it is related to Torah study, it includes a passage on behalf of “the Jews, the teachers, their students, their students’ students, and all those who engage in the study of Torah.” It is now the custom of mourners only to recite *Kaddish d’Rabbanan* in addition to *Kaddish Yatom* (Kadden & Kadden 2004:80).

### **3.2.3.5 The *Kaddish* of Renewal (*Kaddish Le’ithadeta*)**

“May His great Name be magnified and sanctified in the world that is to be created anew, where He will quicken the dead, and raise them up unto life eternal; will rebuild the city of Jerusalem and establish the Temple in the midst thereof; and will uproot the alien worship from the earth and restore the worship of the true God. O may the Holy One, blessed be He, reign in His sovereignty and glory during your life and during your days, and during the life of all the house of Israel, even speedily and at a near time, and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.

Blessed, praised, and glorified, exalted, extolled, and honored, magnified and lauded be the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He; though He be high above all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations which are uttered in the world; and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life for us for all Israel; and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.

He who maketh peace in His high places, may He make peace for us and for all Israel; and say ye: (Congregation) Amen.”

Scherman describes the *Kaddish* of Renewal as one which “refers to the state of perfection which will come with the Redemption and the End of Days” (Scherman 1980:56). It contains a distinctive insertion to the *Kaddish*, and is said to be recited on two special occasions; after burials and also at the *Siyum* when a tractate of the *Talmud* or an order of *Mishnah* is completed. This *Kaddish* is also known as *Kaddish gadol* (the Great or Long *Kaddish*). Sephardim also recite *Kaddish Le'ithadeta* on *Tishah b'Ab* and at *Hashkavot* (Rosenberg's 1997: 47-48; Kadden and Kadden 2004:81). The content of the *Kaddish*, Nulman points out, “are the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple, revival of the dead, the destruction of alien worship from the face of the earth,<sup>120</sup> and it underscores the *Talmudic* teaching that ‘all who engage in Torah study will be granted life in the world-to-come.’” It is common knowledge within the Jewish community that resuscitation and life everlasting await any scholar, and for that matter anyone, who devotes himself to the teaching of the Torah since devotion to Torah study is “Israel’s prime mission and its guarantee of Redemption”; hence the recitation of the *Kaddish* during national day of mourning as words of consolation at their burial. It is comforting to the participants at the burial that dedication to the study of the Torah results in joyful Redemption and arouses enthusiasm and confidence in the mourners that after all life does not terminate at the grave.

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<sup>120</sup> Scherman (1980:58) explains that the phrase “and uproot alien worship from the earth” must be understood, not in its literal sense, but in terms of “human perception of God’s truth will allow no room for pagan belief.”

### 3.2.4 Textual analysis of the *Kaddish*

Having situated the *Kaddish* in its historical and linguistic frame, it is now appropriate to carry out an analysis of the texts to ascertain the convergence and divergence between the *Kaddish* and the Lord's Prayer which Jesus taught his disciples. Here the half *Kaddish* is more appropriate for the analysis since it pre-dates Christianity as compared to the other four, and serves as the basic *Kaddish* from which all the others derive their composition.

The *Kaddish*, as Scherman indicated,

is a declaration of faith in Israel's national purpose, of loyalty to Israel's Creator, of confidence in the ultimate triumph of the ideals for which heaven and earth were created, of longing for the time when people-all people-will accept the Heavenly mission that gives meaning to life and transcends death, that will illuminate the darkest moments of personal and universal tragedy.

(Scherman 1980: vii)

Israel's national purpose, Scherman explains, "is to achieve recognition of God's sovereignty everywhere", which the central theme of the *Kaddish*, "Magnified<sup>121</sup> and sanctified be His great Name", declares. The phrase suggests that God's name will ultimately be "holified" through Israel's redemption (Scherman 1980:27). This declaration of faith, in the words of Scherman (1980:27), "is a communal responsibility, for the Divine Presence [Shekinah] rests upon a community; the greater the number, the more intense the Presence." It is therefore imperative that the community recites the *Kaddish* in order to "achieve [the] goal to its ultimate degree."<sup>122</sup>The true sense of the phrase *Yisgadal* (be magnified), Scherman clarifies, is Israel's anticipation of a universal acknowledgement, acclamation and elevation of God high above all creation (Scherman 1980:28). The second half of the phrase, *v'yiskadash* (be sanctified), according to Scherman (1980:28), does not suggest that God be made holy. Rather, His holiness, like His exaltation, be acknowledged by humanity, which culminate in God's final redemption. Other interpretations suggest that the phrase "be exalted", is in reference to "God's greatness as exemplified by His deeds, while "be sanctified" should be understood in terms of a "recognition of the sanctity of His Essence, entirely apart from whether or how He manifests this

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<sup>121</sup>Scherman (1980:28) proposes that this translation be changed from magnify to exalt to avoid the erroneous impression that God will eventually be greater than He is presently.

<sup>122</sup> See Exodus 15:1; Ezekiel 38: 23.

in ways obvious enough for us to perceive” (Scherman 1980:28). The exaltation and sanctification of God are predicated on His name. Here the understanding from both Talmudic and Old Testament sources that God’s name is rather to be praised above Himself is implied (Scherman 1980:29).<sup>123</sup>

The medieval interpretation of the phrase “May His great NAME be sanctified” is in line with Exodus 17:16: “The name and Throne of God will not be complete until victory crowns the twelve months war with Gog and Magog = Amalek” (Pool 1906: 29; see *Mishna Eduyot* 2:10). The addition of the Tetragrammaton to the phrase, according to some Rabbinic sources, however, rendered it “Magnified and sanctified by the great Name of ‘Yah’.” This is then given an eschatological interpretation in the *Midrash* that “God’s glory, as represented by the Name ‘Yah’ is diminished by the continued existence of the forces of evil.” It added, “Only at the End of Days when the enemies of God and Israel are finally and totally defeated, will God’s Name emerge in its full glory” (Scherman 1980:29). The next phrase worth considering is the phrase “In the world which He hath created according to His will.” Judaism believes that “God created the concept of this perfect world before He created the universe.” The prayer therefore, is an expression of hope that God will eventually reinstate that perfect state because “Creation could not achieve its purpose unless such a state eventually comes into existence” (Scherman 1980:30-31). The first line of the *Half Kaddish*, “Magnified and sanctified be His great Name in the world which He hath created according to His will” means that God created the cosmos in accordance with His perfect will but corrupted by evil forces. The restoration of this perfect will of God greatly depends upon humanity’s acknowledgement, acclamation and elevation of God’s Name, resulting in the defeat of the forces of evil.

The second line of the *Kaddish* reads “May He establish His kingdom during your life and during your days, and during the life of all the house of Israel, even speedily and at a near time.” The call for God to establish His “kingdom”, as suggested in the work of some scholars, must be understood not as a political or physical term, but in terms of His sovereignty (Pool 1906:36).<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> See also *Berakhot* 3a; Zechariah 14:9; Daniel 2:20.

<sup>124</sup> The following Biblical passages also buttress the point: Jeremiah 10:7; Obadiah 21; Psalm 22:29; 47:3,8; 98:6; 103:19; 145:11-13; 146:10; Daniel 2:44; 7:14; 1 Chronicles 29:11f, apocalyptic and apocryphal literature, and from repeated passages in the Targum and Rabbinic idioms generally.

The appropriate translation of the phrase, therefore, should be “May He reveal His sovereignty”.<sup>125</sup> This interpretation is in line with Jewish understanding that “God’s kingship over Israel and the world is and always has been established, but only after the Messianic kingdom will it be for the first time fully revealed” (Pool 1906:36).<sup>126</sup> The concluding part of the second line point to the fact that the establishment of God’s “rulership” – should happen during the life time of those reciting it and the entire community, with all the urgency it deserves. Rosenberg expresses this in the following fashion: “The *Kaddish* is an expression of yearning for the coming of the Messiah and the rebuilding of Jerusalem” (Rosenberg 1997:50). As Pool also puts it, the *Kaddish* “has become in itself the three pillars upon which the world stands (*Aboth* 1:2) ... as the doxology of the study house ... as an integral part of the synagogue service and ... as mourner’s prayer for the dead” (Pool 1909:10).

Charles (1914) in his *Religious development between the Old and the New Testaments*, explored the Jewish concept of the kingdom of God during the intertestamental era, and arrived at the following conclusion: Dalman (1902), and later Edersheim’s (1971) interpretation of the kingdom of God as “the sovereignty or rule of God” in rabbinic literature is a concept based on their understanding of the phrase from a New Testament perspective (Charles 1914:47). Dalman, in his linguistic analysis of the Hebrew rendering of the phrase, concludes: “No doubt can be entertained that both in the Old Testament and in Jewish literature *malekhut*, when applied to God, means always the ‘kingly rule,’ never the ‘kingdom,’ as if it were meant to suggest the territory governed by Him” (Dalman 1902:94; Edersheim 1971:269).<sup>127</sup> The eschatological sense of the kingdom of God in both prophetic literature and in the New Testament, as Charles pointed out, is “the divine community in which the will of God will be perfectly realized” (Charles 1914:48). However, the “kingdom” concept has undergone several developments from the

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<sup>125</sup> Milavec (2007:119) was emphatic in his assertion that the “‘kingdom/reign of God,’ ... was not a place, not a title, not an office, not a church – it was God acting within society and the world.”

<sup>126</sup> See Deuteronomy 32:10; Genesis 24:3, 7. The following two phrases “and cause His salvation to sprout and bring near His Messiah”, according to Scherman, used to be part of various early versions of the *Kaddish* but were omitted due to the view that “both salvation and Messiah are essential components of God’s kingdom”. See also Dalman (1902:91-101) and Edersheim (1971:269-270, 524-541).

<sup>127</sup> Dalman supports his position with the following Old Testament references: Psalm 29:29, 103:19, 145: 11-13; Obadiah 21. Rabbinic sources include Apocalypse of Abraham (70-150CE), 4 Ezra (ca. 90-100CE), 2 Enoch, 2Baruch, 3Baruch, 1Enoch (the Similitudes of Enoch 37-71), the Book of Heavenly Luminaries 72-82, the Animal Apocalypse 83-90, Epistle of Enoch 92-105.

second century B.CE through to the birth of Christianity, and the contribution of Jewish apocalyptic literature during the intertestamental period cannot be disregarded.<sup>128</sup>

Having examined all the prayers from patriarchal era to the era of the development of a standardized Jewish liturgy, it is axiomatic that two prayers, the *Amida* and *Kaddish* occupy the liturgical space in Jewish worship life. Since Jesus in the Matthean and Lukan gospels, and the early church in the *Didache*, benefited from Jewish prayers used in the synagogue which the *Amida* and oldest form of the *Kaddish* were believed to be part, it is not far-fetched to conclude that the gospel writers and first century Christians were familiar with prevailing Jewish prayer forms, particularly the *Amida* and *Kaddish*, and that they were influenced by them. Thus the *Tefilla* of the New Testament and the early church (the Lord's Prayer) resonates with the *Amida* and the oldest form of the *Kaddish*. A comparison between them to find points of continuity and discontinuity is therefore appropriate.

### **3.3 AMIDA, KADDISH AND THE LORD'S PRAYER: POINTS OF CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY**

The Lord's Prayer undoubtedly has a Jewish antecedent. The socio-religious milieu within which the prayer emerged suggests that Matthew and Luke may have had Jewish prayer (s) in mind when they composed their prayers, and they can be none other than the *Kaddish* and the *Amida*. The Lord's Prayer can be divided into two main parts: anthropocentric and theocentric (Flusser 1992:85-86). The first half contains four petitions addressing what Flusser describes as God's holiness and divine will, while the second part contains three petitions expressing a plea for help from the community of faith. The invocation, Πάτερ, ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, can be found in one of the five forms of the *Kaddish* (*Kaddish Shaleim*) which reads "May our prayers and requests be acceptable before our Father who is in Heaven" (Basser & Cohen 2015:183: see also

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<sup>128</sup>The kingdom of God, as understood by the prophets are summarized in Charles (1914:49) as follows: The kingdom was to be under the immediate rule of God. Its members, according to the narrower school of the prophets, were to be composed only of the righteous Israelites who had survived its advent: but, according to the larger hearted prophets, the righteous in Israel were to form the centre of the kingdom, and the Gentiles were to be brought into it by conversion. Its blessings were to be at once spiritual and material. The kingdom was to endure for everlasting, but its members were not to enjoy immortality but lives of patriarchal duration. See Charles (1914:49-64) for detail on the kingdom of God in apocalyptic literature. The following apocalyptic works of the second century throw more light on the development of the concept: Isaiah 25:1-19, Daniel 1, Enoch 21-36, 83-90, Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, and Jubilees.

Karslake 1861:40-42). It is also found in the fifth and six benedictions of the *Shemôneh 'Esreh* and one of the *Shema's* liturgical benedictions - the *Ahabah* and *Abinu Malkênu* (“Our Father, our King”).<sup>129</sup> In these petitions, God is addressed as the Father. It is worth noting that the original recipients of both prayers were Jews who had no difficulty in calling God their Father. However, the address to God in the *Amidah* must be understood within the context of the Torah. It has already been indicated by Weiller that Jewish prayer finds expression within the Jewish legal regime. The relationship that exists between God and Israel is strictly by their adherence to the Torah; “Cause us to return, our Father, unto Thy Law”. Law-driven prayer, as Weiller (2010:18) observed, finds meaning only in the quintessential category of religious life - holiness and sanctity. Scott (1951:48) reiterates this point: “The aim of Jewish prayers is to ensure that Israel as the people of God will be constant in their observance of His law, which is their sure guide and protection.” In the Lord’s Prayer, however, God relates with the followers of Christ not by “the law of sin and death but by the law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus himself” (Rom. 8:1-2). If one is to consider the Lord’s Prayer within the context of a Jewish audience, then the phrase Πάτερ, ἡμῶν lends credence to its exclusiveness. On the other hand, if one should consider it universally, then Scott’s (1951:64) assertion, namely that when “Jesus uttered them he was not thinking of a chosen race which claimed to stand in a special relation to God”, and that “He spoke for all humanity, and in the name ‘Father’ he gathered up everything he had taught of God’s love and compassion, and of his care for each one of his children, is plausible.

The half *Kaddish*, described as the oldest form of *Kaddish* and antedating Christianity, presents a striking parallel with the second, third and fourth petitions of the Lord’s Prayer, as shown in the table below:<sup>130</sup>

	<b>Matthew 6:9-10</b>	<b>The <i>Kaddish</i></b>
1	Our Father who art in heaven	Their Father who is in heaven
2	sanctified be thy name	Magnified and sanctified be his great name

<sup>129</sup>See Psalm 103:13, Hosea 11:1, Wisdom of Solomon 14:3, Ecclesiasticus 23:1, and T.B. Taanith, 25b., Deuteronomy 32:6, Isaiah 63:16, 64:8, Jeremiah 3:4,19, 31:9; Malachi 1:6, 2:10. For a discussion of these texts, see Buchanan (1996:301-302), Friedlander (2008:127, 133), Nulman (1993:56).

<sup>130</sup> The above parallels are taken from Flusser (1992:85).



3	Thy kingdom come	May he establish his kingdom
4	thy will be done on earth as in heaven	In the world which he hath created according to his will
4b		He who maketh peace in his highest, may he make peace for all Israel

The “holifying” of God’s name, the coming of His kingdom and the establishment of His will on earth gives meaning to what Weiller (2010:17) describes in his first of four dimensions of the meaning of Judaism’s legal understanding of prayer. As indicated by Weiller (2010:17), the ultimate result of Jewish prayer is submission to the will of the divine, and it is in achieving this goal that one is regarded as truly free.<sup>131</sup> One important observation that needs to be made regarding the first petitions in the Lord’s Prayer, ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου and the *Kaddish* is that whereas the latter exalts the holiness of God’s name, the former calls on God to let His name be holified. In other words, God’s name is being hallowed in the *Kaddish*, while in the Lord’s Prayer He is being asked to let His name be hallowed. The same can be said of the third petition, γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς. It is in the third petition, ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου however, that both pray that God should establish His kingdom, with *Kaddish* expressing it in a limited and exclusive sense and a sense of urgency; “in your life-time and in your days, and in the life-time of all the house of Israel speedily and in a near time” (Karslake 1861:42-43; Friedlander 2008:137). Further clarification needs to be made with regards to the third petition. The will of God in *Kaddish* is predicated on the hallowing of His name, whereas in the Lord’s Prayer, it is subject to the earth. The *Amidah*’s third benediction also finds parallel with the second petition of the Lord’s Prayer: “Thou art holy, and holy is thy name (Selah). And holy ones praise thee every day. Blessed art thou, O Lord, the Holy God.” The benediction is in recognition of God’s holiness as His moral attribute expressed in praise by those who share in his holy nature. Day (2009:24) has indicated the variety of meanings the sanctification of God’s name has assumed since Old Testament times. God sanctifies His name “by manifesting his judgement ... where his name has been profaned ... through those who serve and worship

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<sup>131</sup> See also Friedlander (2008:147-148) for parallels of fourth petition in the Old Testament and Rabbinic literature.

him”<sup>132</sup> (Day 2009:23). In rabbinic usage of the term where the observation of the Torah became accepted as sanctifying God’s name, the meaning of the term was stretched to the point of giving one’s life (martyrdom). Day’s assertion is in agreement with Weiller’s, which is an acknowledgment of what is described in Judaism as “The ideal of Jewish life” expressed in *Kuddish Ha-shem* (sanctification of the divine name) which has implication for absolute love and loyalty to God and His will.<sup>133</sup>

A parallel of the fifth petition, καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν, is also found in the sixth benediction of the *Amidah* which reads “Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned; pardon us, our King, for we have transgressed. For thou art the God of goodness, thou dost forgive.” They, however, differ in the condition attached to the forgiveness in the Lord’s Prayer, “as we also have forgiven our debtors”, a concept which in the words of Oesterley (1925:153), is “unfamiliar if not unknown to Jewish theology” – a view which his contemporary Abraham (1917:140) does not share. The notion of forgiveness in Jewish thought, according to Abraham, is not different from that proclaimed by Jesus and his followers, except that Jesus, through his atoning sacrifice, as Abraham argues, “claimed the function of mediatorship between man and God in the matter of forgiveness.”<sup>134</sup> Judaism, and for that matter, Pharisaic Judaism, subscribes to the theological ideas that God pardons all manner of sins but dispenses his mercy with retribution (Abraham 1917:146). It is in line with this divine attribute that the Rabbis, as Abraham suggests, translate Exodus 34:7 as “and he will altogether clear” the repentant, and not “and he will no means clear the guilty.” The same thought is evident in the Jewish liturgy<sup>135</sup> on the Confession of Sins used on *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement): “For all these [sins]<sup>136</sup>, O God of forgiveness, forgive us, pardon us, grant us remission” Abraham (1917:145-146). In the Lord’s Prayer, as already intimated, there is a caveat to God’s forgiveness of disciples’ sins, “As we forgive those who sin against us”, which does not depart from the

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<sup>132</sup> Day (2009:23) suggests that the idea behind the sanctification of God’s name is closely linked to His revelation of Himself to His creation because He would not allow His name which is synonymous with Himself to be spoken against. See, for example, Psalm 138:2.

<sup>133</sup> See Isaiah 29:23; Friedlander (2008:134).

<sup>134</sup> For a detail reading on God’s forgiveness, see Abraham’s (1917:140-149).

<sup>135</sup> This liturgy predates the *Didache*. See Abraham (1917:145).

<sup>136</sup> This sins, according to Abraham (1917:145), includes “offences of the most varied kind, including breaches of the Decalogue and also those sins (“profanation of the name” and so forth).”

Pharisaic viewpoint that “man’s duty [is to] strive to earn pardon, and his inability to attain it without God’s gracious gift of it” (Abraham 1917:147).

Moreover, evidences abound in Wisdom literature such as Proverbs, and deuterocanonical documents such as Sirach and *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, regarding man’s forgiveness. Below is a comparison with the Synoptic gospels:

**Ecclesiasticus XXVIII. 3-5**

“Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done unto thee; so shall thy sins also be forgiven when thou prayest.

One man cherisheth hatred against another, and doth he seek healing from the Lord? He sheweth no mercy to a man like himself, and doth he make supplication for his own sins? Being flesh himself he nourisheth wrath: Who shall atone for his sins?”

**Synoptic gospels: Mark 11:25; Matthew 6:14; Luke 6:37**

“When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

**Matthew 6:12, 14, 15**

“Forgive us our debt, as we also have forgiven our debtors. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive your trespasses. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses.”

**The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (*Test. Gad. vi. 1*)**

“Love ye one another from the heart; and if a man sin against thee, cast forth the poison of hate and speak peaceably to him, and in thy soul hold not guile; and if he confesses and repents, forgive him. But if he deny it, do not get into a passion with him, lest catching the poison from thee, he takes to swearing, and so thou sin doubly. And though he deny it and yet have a sense of shame when reprovèd, give over reprovèd him. For he who denieth may repent so as not again

to wrong thee: yea he may also honour and be at peace with thee. But if he be shameless and persist in his wrongdoing, even so forgive him from the heart, and leave to God the avenging

### **Proverbs 24:17-18**

“Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he is overthrown:  
Lest the Lord sees it, and it displeases him,  
And he turn away his wrath from him.”

In case of the sixth petition, *καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ*, Flusser (1992:86) describes it as typical of Jewish apotropaic prayers, one of which main features is petitioning “God to avert personal danger and grant heavenly bliss” or “ward off evil spirit”. Oesterley (1925:154) in the beginning of the century, had observed a distinct parallel in one of the benedictions for the daily Morning Service, but lacks sufficient evidence to prove its pre-Christian origin, although one cannot rule out its possibility. The benediction reads: “O lead us not into the power of sin, or of transgression or iniquity, or of temptation, or of scorn”, and “May it be thy will, O Lord my God, and God of my fathers, to deliver me this day, and every day, from arrogant men and from arrogance ... and from any mishap, and from adversary that destroyeth” (see also Flusser 1992:86). Another parallel, described as the oldest known apotropaic prayer of the Second Temple period, was discovered in the Aramaic Testament of Levi from Qumran community. Reconstructed from the Greek parallel it reads as follows:

O Lord, you [know all hearts, and] you alone understand [all the thoughts of minds.]...Make far [from me, O Lord, the unrighteous spirit, and] evil [thought] and fornication [and] turn [pride] away [from me]. [And] let not any Satan have power over me [to make me stray from your path.]<sup>137</sup>

(Chazon 2003:75)

Wold (2014:112), in his work *Apotropaic Prayer and the Matthean Lord's Prayer*, also holds the view that the seventh petition of the Lord's Prayer, (“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”) may be described as apotropaic prayer depending on the hermeneutical position one takes considering the ambiguity characterized by the word “Evil”. For Wold (2014:112),

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<sup>137</sup> See also Flusser (1966:194-205). Eshel also cited other apotropaic prayers texts from the *Plea for Deliverance* (11QPS<sup>a</sup> Col. 19), Jubilees 6:1-7, 12:19-20, and Psalm 155:11-13.

Matthew 6:13 is apotropaic if the genitive *tou poneirou* reads “Evil One”. It however, sounds apocalyptic if the genitive is interpreted as “Evil”. He concludes however, that “if the early church is instructed how to ward off personified evil, and ‘evil’ is defined as demonic activity, then the final defeat of Satan and demonic beings lies in the future than perhaps the past” (Wold 2014: 112).

The part of the Lord’s Prayer which finds no parallel in the Jewish liturgy is the fourth petition, τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον. Nonetheless, rabbinical writings attest to the fact of its use in relation to Jewish Messianic expectation. Rabbi Eliezer for instance is quoted as saying that “He who created the day created also its provision; wherefore he who, while having sufficient food for the day, says, ‘what shall I eat to-morrow?’ Belongs to the men of little faith such as were the Israelites at the giving of the manna” (Friedlander 2008:154)<sup>138</sup>

### **3.3.1 The Lord’s Prayer, the Kaddish, and Messianic expectation**

The composition of the Lord’s Prayer and the Kaddish unequivocally point to the fact that they both belong to the category of prayer. This is evident in, as Pool observed, “the mention of God and of His kingdom” (Pool 1909:26). Whereas in the Lord’s Prayer the name of God is replaced by ‘Father’, He is named in the third person singular in the Kaddish in order to avoid a direct mentioning of His name (Pool 1909: 29-31). Eschatological passages in early Jewish prayers are quite numerous; one such passage is found in the *Kaddish* (Hengel 1974: 253). The central theme in both the Lord’s Prayer and the Kaddish, and by extension other forms of Jewish prayers, is the coming of the kingdom of God.<sup>139</sup> In his work on the Jewish root of the Christian faith, Garr (2015:63) reiterates Martin Buber’s assertion that what Christians and Jews have in common is a “book and an expectation”. Christianity, he added, literally inherited both the Hebrew Scripture and the expectation of the coming of the Messiah, the only difference being that the coming of the kingdom of God in the *Kaddish*, which, as Horsley (1992: 63-64) suggests, has a political implication. Although Garr opines that both Jews and Christians understand the Messiah within an eschatological sense, the latter carries a spiritual function rather than political. It must be

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<sup>138</sup> See Proverbs 30: 8, and the discussion of Taylor (2009:126).

<sup>139</sup> There is no Jewish benediction in which the sanctification of God’s name and the coming of His kingdom is not mentioned, since they are the key elements in any form of benediction (Taylor: 2009:124-125).

added, however, that the coming of the Messianic expectation is also understood not only from the perspective of this-worldly, but also other-worldly, depending on which Jewish camp one inclines to.<sup>140</sup> Friedlander (2008:138), in his reaction to criticism of Jewish conception of the kingdom of God as this-worldly, posits that Jewish conception of the kingdom should not be understood only as “materialistic, particularistic, and permeated by a political spirit”, but also in the light of peace, justice, righteousness and the knowledge of God.<sup>141</sup> Oesterley and Robinson (1930), in their earlier work on the origin and development of the Hebrew religion, concluded that

eschatological ... thought among the Hebrews goes back to an early period and centred in the popular idea that a “Day of Yahweh” would come, a day on which the national God would show His might by overcoming the enemies of His people and inaugurate a time of well-being and prosperity [shalom] for them.<sup>142</sup>

(Oesterley & Robinson 1930:386)

### 3.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The above discussion reveals the following findings: First, that Jewish prayer, as already indicated in the preliminary remarks, has in its primitive years/pre-Exilic and exilic periods, greatly been influenced by her neighbours, and is not different from other primitive prayer forms such as African traditional religious prayer forms. Second, Jewish liturgy is fixed and communal in character and the centrality of prayer cannot be overemphasized (Friedmann 2012:15-16). Third, the ancient forms of Jewish liturgical practice took the form of sacrifices and the use of words which with the Jewish Bible, particularly the Torah as its primary source.

The comparison between the Lord’s Prayer and the Shema, *Shemôneh ‘Esreh* and *Kaddish* is striking. The argument for the continuity between the Lord’s Prayer and the *Shemôneh ‘Esreh* and *Kaddish* in particular, and Jewish prayer forms in both the Hebrew Bible and Rabbinic sources, outweighs those that regard theological exercise as fruitless and a mere speculation. The

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<sup>140</sup> See Petuchowski and Petuchowski (1998:95) for further reading. Abraham (1917:136-138) also touched on the personal use of the term “Messiah”.

<sup>141</sup> The following Jewish apocalyptic and apocryphal literature also throws light on the Jewish concept of the kingdom of God: Apocalyptic *Jubilee* (135-105 BCE), *Similitudes of Enoch* 37-71, 49:2 (95-80 BCE), *Psalms of Solomon* 17 (70-BCE), *Assumption of Moses* (7-30 CE.), *Sibylline Oracles* 3:652-795 (c. 140 BCE), *Tobit* 13:11 (2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE), *Book of Wisdom* 6:21; 9:18 (1st century BCE)

<sup>142</sup> See also Bucknell (2016:41-57).

Fatherhood of God, the sanctification of His name, the coming of His kingdom and the doing of His will, the request for daily provision, forgiveness of sin, and deliverance from evil, all originate from Jewish theology. In fact the Lord's Prayer is better appreciated when understood within the context of ancient Judaism.

This study therefore concludes that the "head" of the Lord's Prayer (theocentric) continues with the half Kaddish while its "tail" (anthropocentric) can be found in the Amida, Jewish apotropaic prayers, and rabbinic literature with slight variations. The central theme which the Lord's Prayer is hinged on - the kingdom of God - carries an eschatological hope which Christianity inherited from Judaism. The final finding this Chapter makes is that in order to engage in any meaningful study of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures in the African context, the interface between African traditional religion and its Jewish background, and to a large extent, the Ancient-Near Eastern background, is critical.

## Chapter 4

# Exegetical comparison between the Matthean and Lukan versions of the Lord's Prayer, and their interpretations from the Patristic to the Reformation periods

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Lord's Prayer has gone through layers of interpretations following its composition in the Matthean and Lukan gospels till date (Ong 2013-2014:105-107; Brown 2004:1). Ong (2012-2013:98-101) is of the opinion that the meaning and purpose of the Lord's Prayer would be preserved if it is interpreted within its socio-linguistic setting. His socio-linguistic tools, "ethnography of speaking" and "politeness theory" originated by Dell Hymes and adapted by Holmes and Ottenheimer, would be employed in understanding what Jesus Christ meant in the Lord's Prayer (Spolsky 1998:14-15; Keating 2001:285-295).<sup>143</sup> The ethnography of speaking, also known as the discourse analysis approach, considers the function of a language rather than its properties – an inquiry into the phatic use of language than for transmitting "factual or propositional information" (Brown & Yule 1983:1). The following components of Ong's approach will form the basis for the exegetical and linguistic comparison between the Matthean and Lukan versions of the Lord's Prayer in this Chapter: the genre or literary type of the prayers; purpose or function; key or emotional tone of the text; participants (the speaker and his audience); systematic analysis of the lexical hierarchy of the Greek text of the Lord's Prayer; and message form (the syntactic structure of the text and, the message content or specific details of the prayers). This will be followed by a historical hermeneutical survey of selected works on the Lord's Prayer from the Patristic to Reformation eras. This will aim at discovering how the prayer has been understood, interpreted, and used throughout the epochs of Christianity within the first sixteenth centuries. This Chapter is divided into the following broad sections: Greco-Roman prayer concept; changing pattern of Greco-Roman prayer concept; exegetical and linguistic

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<sup>143</sup> For the works of Hyme, Holmes and Ottenheimer, see Hyme (:110-124), Holme (1992:365-366) and Ottenheimer (2009:123-138).



comparison between the Lord's Prayer in Matthew and Luke; and the interpretation and theology of the Lord's Prayer from the Patristic to the Reformation periods.

## 4.2 GRECO-ROMAN PRAYER CONCEPT

The New Testament emerged from a Greco-Roman<sup>144</sup> religio-cultural context, and the general terminologies applied to prayer included προσεύχομαι (to pray, entreat); εὔχομαι (request, vow); ευχή (prayer, oath, vow); and προσευχή (prayer) (Brown 1976:855, 861; Aune 2002:28; Marchall 2002:113). These concepts convey the basics for invoking a deity, often accompanied by an offering or request in profane Greek with the sole aim of either deriving material benefits or protection against “spiritual or moral harm” (Brown 1976:862; Aune 2002:25-29).<sup>145</sup> A similar concept prevails in African cosmology of prayer, especially the Ewe worldview of prayer where prayer always opens with invocation and ends with either benediction or malediction. For the Greeks, prayer and sacrifices were inextricably linked because they both entailed “asking the gods for something”, and giving as well. One does not customarily approach the gods empty-handed (Aune 2002:31). Prayer in this form is simply “an informal principle of reciprocity in human social interaction applied to the analogous sphere of divine-human relationships” described by scholars as magical in nature (Aune 2002:26). The elements of prayers found in Greco-Roman religion include “blessing” (εὐλογέω, εὐλογία, κατ'εὐλογέω), “cursing” (κατάρρα, καταράομαι, ἀνάθεμα, ἀναθεματίζω, καταθεματίζω), “thanksgiving” (εὐχαριστέω, εὐχαριστία, εὐχάριστος), “praise” (αἰνέω, αἶνος, αἰνεσις, ἐπαινέω, ἔπαινος),<sup>146</sup> and “petition” (ἐπικαλοῦμαι),<sup>147</sup> which appear in the form of invocation<sup>148</sup>, narrative or argument and request (Aune 2002:29-31).<sup>149</sup> Prayer in the New Testament, besides προσεύχομαι, carries other

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<sup>144</sup> The Greco-Roman period covers early Hellenistic (300BCE – 50BCE) and late Roman periods (250CE – 350 CE)

<sup>145</sup> Aune (2001:25-29) indicates that prayer in the Greco-Roman world thrives on the principle of reciprocity. Thus prayer to the gods is viewed as χάρις (grace, favour) which is expected to yield similar favour to humans. In other words, ““when a worshipper gives something to a god through sacrifice, he or she gives *charis* in the sense that the offering is pleasing. At the same time, however, the worshipper is storing up a feeling of gratitude on the part of the god, which is also called *charis*.” See (Aune 2002:26)

<sup>146</sup> Terms like δόξα, δοξάζω, μεγαλύνω, εὐφημέω, εὐφημία, are also used to express praise in Roman religions. Other terms such as ὀρκίζω, ἐνορκίζω, ἐξορκίζω, ranging in meaning from “to put under oath” to “to strongly implore”, and are prevalent in magical prayers. See Aune (2002:29).

<sup>147</sup> Thanksgiving and praise, according to Aune (2001:41) are largely absent from Greco-Roman prayer.

<sup>148</sup> Prayers may also appear in the form of songs (αιοιδαί) or chants (ἐπαιοιδαί) and are found mostly in invocations.

<sup>149</sup> The invocation, according to Aune, is preceded by a request for the god to listen, including the name of the god (s) with a listing of their titles and local associations (see Aune 2001:34-36). In the invocation, the deity is always called to come because unlike the Christian God, the Greek deities (with the exception of Zeus) are not omnipresent.

meanings including *αἰτέω* (ask, ask for, demand) with its varied forms; *αἴτημα* (request, demand); *ἀπαιτέω* (demand back); *ἐξαιτέομαι* (ask for, demand); and *παραιτέομαι* (ask for, request, excuse, refuse, decline). Prayer also carries the meaning of *γονυπετέω* (fall on one's knees or kneel down before [God]), *δέομαι* (ask, request, beseech, beg) with its varied forms, *δέησις* (request, entreaty), *προσδέομαι* (need), *ἰκετηρία* (supplication), and *ἔντευξις* (petition, prayer) (Brown 1976:855-861; Aune 2002:28). The meaning that *αἰτέω* conveys in the New Testament is synonymous to asking and demanding, or desiring something for oneself in profane Greek (Brown 1976:855). Thus, prayer in all its varied forms carries the idea of making request, supplication, petition, entreaty and kneeling before God. The idea of prayer in the New Testament is also derived from the Old Testament concept, hence the noun form, *προσευχή*, translates in Hebrew *tefillah* (Brown 1976:867).

Basically, most Greco-Roman prayers take the form of invoking the gods and petitioning them (Aune 2002:30). Brown identified the similarity between prayer and legal diction, and the technicalities associated with them: the name(s) of the god(s) are mentioned with precision, and in instances where the name is unknown, their nicknames (*cognomen*) are used. Also, there are ways of calling divinities whose names are said to be unmentionable (*nefandi*) (Brown 2004:62-63, Aune 2002:31). An invocation is followed by petition (*preces*) which from Roman prayer perspective and prayers of primal religions, is defined by asking the gods as already mentioned in Aune (2002:26-27), to create favourable conditions that would make the accumulation of blessings (Brown 2004:64-65). The following examples explain the twofold prayer form:

#### 4.2.1 Invocation

You gods and goddesses,  
who inhabit the seas and lands,  
I pray and beseech you that those deeds,  
which under my command have been accomplished,  
are being accomplished and will afterwards be accomplished,  
may turn out favourably and that you may prosper them all,

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The narrative or argument consists of special claims on the divinity's favour which in most case takes the form of imprecatory or magical (Aune 2001:31).

and cause them to succeed for myself,  
for the Roman nation, for the allies, and for the Latin people  
who follow the lead, command and authority of the Roman people  
and of myself on land, sea and rivers.  
I pray that you may preserve us safe and unharmed,  
by the conquered enemy and that as conquerors together with me,  
these soldiers may return home in triumph adorned with spoils and laden with loot.  
Grant us the opportunity to avenge our enemies, personal and public.  
And whatever the Carthaginian people have attempted to do to our state,  
grant me and the Roman people the ability to do to the Carthaginian state as an example<sup>150</sup>  
(Brown 2004:63).

#### **4.2.2 Petition**

Goddess Proserpine Ataecina who inhabit the town of Turobriga, I beg, pray and beseech you by your majesty to revenge the theft that has been committed against me and to [punish with a terrible death] whoever has borrowed, stolen or made away with the articles listed below; six tunics, two cloaks (Brown 2004:65).

Also, there is a third part; argument or narration which is often found in many prayer forms where a claim is made seeking favour from the deities before petitioning them (Aune 2002:30-31).

#### **4.2.3 Invocation**

Lord of silver bow who set your power about Chryses and Killa the sacrosanct, who are lord in strength over Tenedos.

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<sup>150</sup> This prayer is attributed to *Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus* (236-183 BCE), the Roman general and later consul under the Roman Empire. He is often regarded as one of the greatest generals and military strategists of all time.

#### 4.2.4 Narration

Smintheus [Apollo], if ever it pleased your heart that I built your temple, if ever it pleased you that I burned all the rich thigh pieces of bulls, of goats,

#### 4.2.5 Request

Then bring to pass [this wish I pray for]; Let your arrows make the Danaans pay for my tears shed.

Greek deities, with exception of Zeus, were invoked with the view that the deities are distance away from them (Aune 2002:32-33).

### 4.3 THE CHANGING PATTERN OF GRECO-ROMAN PRAYER CONCEPT

It must be pointed out that, before the advent of the Lord's Prayer in the Roman Empire, the traditional religion had assumed a philosophical dimension. Thus, Greek philosophers at that time found the theology of cultic practice problematic and thought it could be "categorised and overcome with the guidance of reason" (Brown 2004:38). They therefore sought to engage in what Brown described as "cultic *didache*" with the view of changing the face of the crude religious practices (Brown 2004:42).<sup>151</sup> Meanwhile, the prevailing religious practice prior to the philosophical intervention, took the form of supplication, petition, rites of placation, purgation, and aversion with a gradual focus on supplication and petition (Brown 2004:40). Regarding prayer, the philosophers found it to be "too materialistically oriented and improperly based on the assumption that the gods somehow need the sacrifices of human beings" (Brown 2004:38). The principle of profit as a norm for piety was well pronounced and philosophers were critical of the "misdirection of prayer" (Brown 2004:38). Brown, citing from Heraclitus observed that "the average person prayed to the image as if the idol were the actual god." This attitude is believed "turned the Orant into nothing but a braggart whose words do not reach the ears of the god" (Brown 2004: 37-38). He further expressed the sentiment to the effect that "the language of prayer was not as 'exalted' as it should be", adding that "too many unseemly thoughts were communicated in prayer, and that it was too self-interested" (Brown 2004:38). Below are two

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<sup>151</sup> There were three problematic areas of the theology which the philosophers had reasonably addressed: atheism, superstition and godliness. See Brown (2004:38).

philosophical petitionary prayer examples said by two prominent philosophers; Solon and Socrates.

#### **4.3.1 Solon**

Muses of Pieria, glorious children of memory and of Olympian Zeus, hear my prayer. Grant me wealth from the blessed gods, and from all men fair fame to enjoy forever. So let me be sweet to my friends and bitter to my enemies, revered by the one and feared by the other. Though I long for wealth, I would not possess it unjustly, wealth that the gods give abides with a man as a tree stands firm from root to top; but wealth that men seek by presumptuous outrage comes not in due course, but follows reluctantly the lure of unjust deeds (Brown 2004:43).

#### **4.3.2 Socrates**

Beloved Pan and all other gods living here, will you please grant that I become “beautiful” within and that I have without be in accordance with what I have within. And may I consider the wise man rich and let the mass of my gold be only what the wise man, and no other, can bear! (Brown 2004:44).

What the philosophers have sought to do in their prayers is to shift from the crude and egocentric prayers prevalent at the time, to a more refined and selfless one. Although the first prayer deemed to have been said by Solon contained elements of egocentrism and imprecation, a clear indication of submission to the will of the gods prevails. In the second, however, there is a clear departure from value placed on external beauty to internal, and from material wealth to wisdom. There is therefore a philosophical shift in paradigm in the way prayer should be perceived and practiced. First, “prayer is moved from a form of egoism to a concern for the other.” Second, “prayer, though directly addressed to the gods, is in reality indirectly addressed to others (Brown 2004:45). The point to be emphasized here is that, by the time the Lord’s Prayer arrived in the Greco-Roman world, philosophical theology<sup>152</sup> had taken over the religious scene. All religious expressions, particularly the concept of the gods and prayer, was subject to philosophical scrutiny and new concepts developed which invariably reduced the gods to what Brown

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<sup>152</sup> Brown (2004:45) for instance, describes the import of Plato’s cultic didache as being social than purely theological.

described as “relatively low esteem” (Brown 2004:45). One of the philosophical critiques of Greek classical or traditional theology is found in the writing of Xenophanes with special interest in his reference to African perception of the gods at the time:

mortals imagine that the gods go through birth, wear human cloth, with a human voice and form. ... The African give their gods snub noses and black skins, the Thracians give their blue eyes and red hair ... If cattle or horses or lions had hands or could draw with their hands or make statues as men do, they would draw the shapes of gods and form their bodies respectively just like their own

(Brown 2004:45-46)

The above picture about the traditional religion of the Greeks, Thracians<sup>153</sup>, and Africans is characteristic of every religion in its crude form including religions of Ancient Near-Eastern countries such as Judaism where their deities were perceived in anthropomorphic forms. The philosophers were critical about the polytheism of their time, developing the idea of the unity of God to deal with it prior to the arrival of the gospel. The idea of the “reality of one god present in the world in diverse forms; “one god is the greatest among gods and men; in neither form nor thought is he like mortals” (Brown 2004:46). With this idea, the omnipotent, omniscience, omnipresence, and the transcendence of the Greek god were already developing within the Greek religious life, as evident in the work of *Troades*:

Sustainer of earth, throned on the earth, whoever you are, hard to discern, Zeus, whether natural law or human intellect, I call on you; for moving on a noiseless path you guide all things human along ways of justice.

(Brown 2004:46)

The philosophers also developed the idea of divine perfection and benevolence which, according to Brown, became the rationale for Hellenistic theology, found in hymns for the gods (Brown 2004:48-50). For them,

God, since He is good, would not be the cause of all things, as most say, but causes of a few things to mankind, and of many no cause; for the good are much fewer for us than the evils; and of the good

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<sup>153</sup> The Thracians were of Indo-European ethnic groups, said to inhabit a large area in South-eastern Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Turkey.

things God and no other must be described as the cause, but of the evil things we must look for many different causes, only not God<sup>154</sup>

(Brown 2004:47)

It is these critical views about the primal religion of the Greeks expressed in the works of the philosophers that triggered the theological paradigm in Greek cultic practice, especially in the area of prayer (Brown 2004:50). Although prayer still remains fundamental of Greek religion, the philosophers succeeded in changing the understanding of it (Brown 2004:50). Cleanthes' (331-232) hymn to Zeus, cited by Brown (2004:48-50; taken from Cassidy 1997:135-137), represents the collective theological position of the philosophers on prayer during the Hellenistic era:

Most glorious of immortals, honoured under many names, all-powerful forever,  
O Zeus, first cause of Nature, guiding all things through law,  
Hail! For it is just for all mortals to address you,  
Since we were born of you, and we alone share in the likeness  
Of deity, of all things that live and creep upon the earth.  
So I will hymn you and sing always of your strength.  
For all the cosmos, as it whirls around the earth,  
Obeys you, wherever you lead, and it is willingly ruled by you.  
For such is the power you hold in your unconquerable hands:  
The two-forked, fiery, ever-living thunderbolt.  
For all the works of nature are accomplished through its blows,  
By which you set right the common reason, which flows  
Through everything, mixing divine light through things great and small.  
Nothing is accomplished in this world save through you, O Spirit,  
Neither in the divine, heavenly, ethereal sphere, nor upon the sea,  
Save as much as the evil accomplish on their own ignorance.  
But you are yet able to make the odd even,  
And to order the disorderly; and to love the unloved.  
For thus you have fit together into one all good things with the bad.  
So that they become one single, eternal harmony.  
They flee it, those among mortals who are evil –

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<sup>154</sup> This theological view contrasts not only classical Greek theology, but also Jewish and Christian theology. See Brown (2004:47).

The ill-starred, they who always yearn for the possession of beautiful things  
But never behold the divine universal law. Nor do they hear it,  
Though if they harkened to it, using intelligence, they would have a fortunate life.  
But in their ignorance they rush headlong into this or that evil:  
Some pressing on in an aggressive search for popularity and renown,  
Others in reckless pursuit of wealth,  
Others yet in laziness or in sensual pleasure ...  
They are borne hither and thither,  
All hastening to become the opposite of what they are.  
Zeus the all-give, wielder of the bright lightning in the dark clouds,  
Deliver mankind from its miserable incompetence.  
Father, disperse this from our soul; give us  
Good judgment, trusting in you to guide all things in justice,  
So that, in gaining honour we may repay you with honour,  
Praising your works unceasingly, as is always fitting for mortals.  
For there is not greater honour among men,  
Nor among gods, than to sing forever in justice your universal law.

(Cassidy 1997:136)

This prayer is said to be part of the fifth century CE anthology of ancient Greek literary excerpts compiled by Stobaeus (Cassidy 1997:133). In the prayer, the orant after invoking Zeus, continued to argue to justify his petition and finally concluded with his request. Zeus in philosophical terms represents the law of nature and reason (*nomos* and *logos*), as expressed in the following phrase; “O Zeus, first cause of Nature, guiding all things through law” (Cassidy 1997:135, Brown 2004:50). The hymn also describes all mortals as children of Zeus, thus children of *nomos* and *logos*, and created in their likeness. It also describes, the entire cosmos as created by *logos* (reason) and governed by *nomos* (law) with Zeus’ thunderbolt, as the creative force and the divine light which unifies and permeates every living organism (Cassidy 1997:36). On the philosophical question of gods and the problem of evil, the position of the hymnist is that Zeus is not the author of evil; evil comes about as a result of the cravings and ignorance of humankind



and disobedience of the law of nature. It is therefore believed that deliverance from evil can be achieved through knowledge, as evident in the petitionary part of Cleanthes' hymn:<sup>155</sup>

Zeus the all-giver, wielder of the bright lightning in the dark clouds [thunder], deliver mankind from its miserable incompetence. Father, disperse this from our soul; give us good judgement, trusting in you to guide all things in justice, so that in gaining honour we may repay you with honour, praising your works unceasingly, as is always fitting for mortals. For there is no greater honour among men, nor among gods, than to sing forever in justice your universal law.

(Cassidy 1997:136)

It appears that the philosophers, in their effort to redefine prayer, gave new understanding of the deities as “perfect in all respects” – in power (omnipotent), and in knowledge (omniscience). The deity, having been put in the light of perfection in power and knowledge, is responsible for all that happens to mankind with the exception of evil (Brown 2004:51). Evil, as already indicated, is the result of human's inclination towards materialism occasioned by ignorance. By attributing perfection to the deity, the philosophers “made the subject of prayer the attainment of moral or philosophical goods rather than material ones” (Brown 2004:51). The fact, however, still remains that the injection of philosophy into the traditional religion of the Greeks could not wipe it away completely. Superstition still persisted; vows were still made in prayers to the gods with the expectation that they would be fulfilled on condition that the gods will be favourable towards them (Brown 2004:51-52).

The ascension of Emperor Augustus unto the throne saw a revival in Roman religious practice after it had suffered a setback prior to the golden age of Roman civilisation. The religious life of the people, unlike the Greeks, was more practical<sup>156</sup> and was centred on three objects of worship: Apollo, Mars and the Emperor himself with Rome as the citadel of Roman religion (Brown 2004:52-53). Prayer, just as it pertains in African Christianity and traditional religious settings

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<sup>155</sup> The petition is a sharp departure from the usual request for material things.

<sup>156</sup> On the practicality of Roman religion as against its Greek counterpart, Brown quotes Versnel as saying: “Greek gods live, Roman gods work” (Brown 2004:52). Brown (2004:54) emphasizes Versnel's position as follows: “Roman religion was more concerned with what worked than it was with the speculative theology behind religious activities.” He does not, however, dispute the fact that Roman theology also existed. The practicality on Roman religion, Brown (2004:54) further states that “it was part of the overall structure of the Roman worldview”, and that “Roman religion was no more practical than Roman political and legal theory.” In other words, the two, that is, religion, politics and law, are not mutually exclusive.

today, assumed a more professional status because those who pray “had to be persons skilled in the composition, recitation, and performance of such prayers”, a condition which is necessary for the peace of the gods (*pax deorum*) (Brown 2004:54).<sup>157</sup> Brown in drawing the distinction between Greek and Roman prayer forms, noted that whereas the former emphasised on the performer, the latter focused on the performance, as expressed in the following sentence: “Greek religion was concerned with the ἦθος of the orant, while Roman religion was interested in the efficacy of the linguistic and liturgical construction of the prayer” (Brown 2004:55-56).<sup>158</sup> Another distinction between Greek religion and Roman religion is a matter of the attitude of the orant towards the gods and society. In Roman religion, “one’s attitude toward the gods was inseparable from one’s attitude toward the rest of life.” This practice portrays a symbiotic relationship that existed between religion and politics in Roman society. Also, *pietas*, which is an important component of Roman religion, is said to be the foundation upon which Roman civil order stands; its absence affects the “loyalty and social union, and justice, which is viewed as ‘the queen of all virtues’” (Brown 2004:56). Roman religion is also described as ethnocentric and views all other religions as superstitious and unacceptable unless the efficacy of that religion is proven. The litmus test of a religion, proven to be efficacious, is the ability of followers of that religion to conquer others, as expressed by Brown in the following statement:

It appears that in the mind of the imperialistic Romans, the cultic practices of the conquered could often be nothing more than *superstitio*. Not only were they foreign, they were also useless. That is, if the religion of the conquered were useful, at all, they would not be the conquered. Such a view places the conqueror’s religion at the forefront and diminishes the perceived validity of the religion of the conquered.

(Brown 2004:58)

Another important component of Roman religious worldview and fundamental to its development is what Brown describes as *auctoritas* (authority). It is this governance concept, where power (*potestas*) is vested in absolute terms (*imperium*), in the emperor, making him

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<sup>157</sup> The central goal of Roman state religion is “a mutually beneficial state of peace between Rome and its deities, with the gods safeguarding Rome’s public welfare and the Romans providing the gods their desired worship and cult.” Prayer, in order to be very effective, must go with precision. See Brown (2004: 62).

<sup>158</sup> Brown (2004: 56) alludes to the fact that Roman religion thrives on *pietas*, that is, “conformity to normal, traditional, indisputable relationships... For a good Roman, one’s attitude toward the gods was inseparable from one’s attitude toward the rest of life.”

*princeps senatus* (first member by precedence of the Roman Senate), clothed with power to speak before any other in all issues of governance (Brown 2004:61).<sup>159</sup> *Auctoritas* was a political concept developed by the Roman senate during the reign of Augustus and was occasioned by the belief that “if Rome were to prosper, it would do so through the guidance of the customs, rules, laws, ideas, and so on established by *maiores*” (Brown 2004:60). The *maiores* were the ancestors whose traditions were believed to be of great significance to the development of Rome. This is where religion was viewed as important components of the socio-political development of the society.

#### **4.4 EXEGETICAL AND LINGUISTIC COMPARISON OF THE LORD’S PRAYER IN MATTHEW AND LUKE**

##### **4.4.1 Differences and similarities**

The Lord’s Prayer is described as a liturgical hymn used by the early church “as an act of obedience and to commemorate the Lord’s teaching about prayer” (Ong 2012-2013:107; Lioy 2004:161). It was used in both the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist in the liturgy of the early church (Ayo1992: 193, Betz 1995:375). It is recorded in the accounts of Matthew and Luke with some variations, and in the *Didache* (Scott 1951:19; Ong 2012-2013:106; Sauder 1976:14; Bezt 1995:370).

Matthew’s version came after the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. He was at Galilee with Capernaum as his place of residence, “teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing diseases and sicknesses among the people.<sup>160</sup> It was when he realised the gargantuan crowd from all walks of life that he ran away to “a mountainside” where his disciples came to him “and he began to teach them.<sup>161</sup> The Sermon on the Mount, as it is generally referred to, contains the Beatitude, the interpretation of the Torah, cultic rituals, and issues of life (Betz 1995:59-62).<sup>162</sup> The Lord’s Prayer falls within the category of the cultic rituals. Although it is argued that Matthew’s version of the prayer should be interpreted within

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<sup>159</sup> This is where the whole idea of imperia cult evolved, elevating the emperor to the status of a god and head of the Roman religion, benefactor and saviour. As Brown indicated, “the ruler cult was beneficial to imperial governance and helped garner the loyalty of the provincials. See Brown (2004:61-62).

<sup>160</sup>Matthew 4:23-24

<sup>161</sup>Matthew 5:1-2

<sup>162</sup>Matthew 5:17-20, 6:1-18, 6:19-7:12

the context of the Sermon on the Mount (SM), another school of thought argues that any exegetical discussion on the prayer which does not situate it within the context of the Sermon on the Mount cannot be rendered invalid (Brown 2001:3; Betz 1995:349).

Luke, on the other hand reports that Jesus was one day praying “in a certain place” after which “one of his disciples” requested, “Lord, teach us to pray as John taught his disciples.”<sup>163</sup> The prayer is taught as a model prayer in Matthew while it is to be literally said in Luke. In Matthew, Jesus condemned the posture of Jewish prayer, that is, “standing in the synagogues and on the street corners”, and the mode of “pagan” prayer, that is, “babbling”, before teaching his prayer. Jesus however, did not condemn praying by standing; what he condemned was standing “to be seen by men.”<sup>164</sup> The motive of the prayer is what is important here and not the mode. In the words of Jesus, there is a reward in prayer but if it is done with the wrong motive (to draw attention), then there would be no reward for it. The understanding of “pagans” prayer, according to Matthew, is that the more your words, the earlier or faster you are heard.<sup>165</sup> But the prayer that is offered to God should not be of many words because, “your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”<sup>166</sup> While Matthew was specific about the place and occasion of the Lord’s Prayer, Luke did not think it matters. Luke did not see the need to include the prayer John the Baptist taught his disciples in his introduction. It would therefore be very difficult to get the prayer John the Baptist taught his disciples in order to compare it to what Jesus taught his disciples. It appears that unlike Matthew who appears elaborate in his presentation, Luke always tries going straight to the point in his reporting.

Hypothetically, Matthew and Luke relied on Mark and “Q” in their compositions and the general consensus among scholars is that both books were written around the third quarter of the first century (Kilpatrick 1946:6-7). The variations in Matthew and Luke may be understood in the context of the Evangelists and their communities. Thus, the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew, Luke and in the *Didache*, were written to meet the liturgical needs of their respective communities (Scott 1951:23, 25; Brown 1976:870). The idea of community is evident in the use of the first person

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<sup>163</sup>Luke 11:1b

<sup>164</sup>Matt. 6:5

<sup>165</sup>Matthew 6:7

<sup>166</sup>Matthew 6:8

plural “us”, employed in the fourth, fifth, and sixth petitions of the prayer, and the possessive pronoun “our” used in the opening sentence in Matthew. Thus, the language of corporate prayer is communal (Blomberg 1942:119). Luke’s version is shorter as compared to Matthew and appears individual in character (Scott 1951:25; Allen 1907: 58; Liroy 2004:161). The doxology “for thine in the Kingdom and the power and the glory”, used in Matthew, have arisen from what is described as a liturgical pressure exerted on the Christian community by Judaism later in the first century (Scott 1951:25).<sup>167</sup> Internal evidence shows that the prayer’s original language is Greek and points to Jesus as the author of this prayer with the aim of establishing propriety in communication with the Divine (Bezt 1995:373-374).<sup>168</sup> It is performative in its language and petitionary in structure. In terms of style, one finds common phrases and clauses in the first three petitions. In terms of content, Luke replaces the phrase Πάτερ, ημων ο εν τοις ουρανοις with Πάτερ. He then omitted the third petition γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς, and continued with the fourth, δίδου ἡμῖν τὸ καθ’ ἡμέραν instead of Matthew’s δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον. In the fifth petition, Luke discontinued with Matthew by changing the phrase τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν in Matthew to τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν, which is said to be the Aramaic rendering for sins. He then ended the second part of the petition with ἀφίομεν παντὶ ὀφείλοντι ἡμῖν (Scott 1951:25). The use of the present tense αὐτοὶ ἀφίομεν παντὶ ὀφείλοντι ἡμῖν in Luke instead of Matthew’s past perfect tense ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν, makes his idea of forgiveness an on-going process and not an event. Attention must also be drawn to the inconsistency in Matthew’s use of the dwelling place of God, οὐρανος, in the invocation and the third petition. Whereas the term is pluralized (οὐρανοῖς) in the invocation, the evangelist used its singular (οὐρανῷ) in the third petition. The phrase ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ in the last petition is omitted in Luke, making the composition of his prayer about half that of Matthew’s. The succinct nature of Luke’s version of the prayer has been viewed by some scholars as reason for its originality (Scott 1951:27; Brown 1976:870). Nonetheless, Matthew’s Hebraic background, especially in comparison with prevailing Jewish prayer forms, such as the *Shemoneh Esre* and the *Kaddish*, gives some credence to it being more authentic as compared to

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<sup>167</sup> Oesterley (1925:70, 141, 147,151) cites several instances from the Hebrew Bible and rabbinic sources to prove that the doxology used in Matthew’s account of the Lord’s Prayer was influenced by Judaism. Some Christian writers also attest to the fact that the doxology was a late insertion into the prayer and that none of the earliest manuscripts captures it. See Scott (1951:25).

<sup>168</sup> Kilpatrick (1946: 7) writing in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century expressed uncertainty about the authorship of Matthew.

Luke (Scott 1951:27-29). Moreover, Luke's omission of the third and alteration of the first, fifth and sixth petitions, could account for its originality; suggesting his community's gradual departure from Jewish concept of prayer and Judaism's understanding of the will of God, sin and the question of evil, as dealt with in the previous chapter.<sup>169</sup> The tone of the prayer, according to Ong (20012-2013:114), is petitionary and familial. If the discussion on the Judeo-Christian background of the Lord's Prayer in Chapter 3 of this study and the original recipients of the prayer (Jews) is anything to go by, then Matthew's version of the prayer may be close to the original than Luke's (Scott 1951:29). What Matthew sought to achieve in his gospel in general and the Lord's Prayer in particular, is to convince his Jewish audience that Jesus is the Messiah, thereby establishing continuity between Judaism and Christianity. However, the rote use of Luke suggest that Matthew may have developed his model prayer from Luke's rote. Again, the oral nature and fluidity of the prayer also suggests that, there are three independent texts; Matthew, Luke, and *Didache*, first in their oral forms, and their transmission into written form might have accounted for the variations (Bezt 1995: 370-371).

#### 4.2.2 Lexical and syntactic analysis

##### Texts Lord's Prayer – Matthew 6:9-13

Matthew 6:9-13	Luke 11:2-4	<i>Didache</i>
Πάτερ, ημων ο εν τοις ουρανοις	Πάτερ,	Πάτερ, ημων ο εν τοις ουρανοις
ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου (what looks like π, is γι: αγιασθητω)	ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου·	ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου
ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου ·	ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου·	ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου ·
γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς · Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον · καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα	Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δίδου ἡμῖν τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν,	γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς · Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον · καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ (την)

<sup>169</sup>It has also been argued that Mark provides the source material for the Lord's Prayer in Matthew and Luke. See Brown (1976:870-871). Also, the division of Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer into two – Theocentric and anthropocentric, suggests a parallel with the Decalogue. See Brown (1976:871-872).

<p>ἡμῶν ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ .</p>	<p>καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἀφίομεν παντὶ ὀφείλοντι ἡμῖν. καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν.</p>	<p>ὀφειλήματα (ὀφειλην) ἡμῶν ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν (ἀφιεμεν) τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.</p>
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#### 4.2.2.1 The invocation

The invocation of the prayer opens with Πάτερ in Luke but ἡμῶν ο ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς was added in Matthew. It has been observed in Chapter Three of this study that the opening address of the prayer, Πάτερ, is not uncommon in rabbinic literature. The designation is also prevalent in many Greco-Roman literatures in addressing their gods (Brown 2004:8).<sup>170</sup> However, it was employed by Jesus to mean more than just a surrogate for the divine name (Brown, Fitzmyer & Murphy 1990:645). It is what Brown (1961:188) describes as being “closely connected to the coming of God’s eschatological kingdom.” The Greco-Roman background of the invocation, as Brown (2004:10) puts it, “provided [the] conceptual basis for the Gentile Christian understanding of God as father in the Lord’s Prayer.” In his interpretation of the term within the context of an imagined legally regulated Greco-Roman social structure, Brown (2004:4, 5) noted that although the *paterfamilias* is both austere and tender, it failed to provide the needed social protection for the vulnerable in the society (Brown 2008: 6).<sup>171</sup> Comparing *paterfamilias* to Πάτερ, ἡμῶν ο ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς therefore, the Greco-Roman Christian –slave and freed– view the Father in heaven as one of “benevolence rather than self-aggrandizement” (Brown 2008:6). Thus, a Greco-Roman Christian reading of Πάτερ, ἡμῶν ο ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς would be, “our Father”, the one who is in the heavens, not *paterfamilias*. The use of the possessive pronoun ἡμῶν emphasised the relationship between the Gentile Christian and God through Jesus Christ; an indication of “a

<sup>170</sup> According to Brown (2004:8, 9), “both humans and immortals often call Zeus father. Polyphemos calls the god Poseidon father.” Jupiter and Mars are also invoked as fathers in Latin literature.

<sup>171</sup> It must be noted, as Brown (2001:6, 7) indicated, the nomenclature *paterfamilias* is generic and it is the designation for both father of the smaller household and the Emperor who was viewed as father of the state – the larger family. Its imperial, political and absolute nature must have accounted for its failure to live up to its intent and purpose.

fundamental understanding of the sociality of existence” (Brown 2004:10).<sup>172</sup> The symbiotic relationship that exists between humans and other creatures cannot be extended to God. When it comes to man’s relationship with God, the former absolutely depend on the latter. The philosophical view during the time of the prayer perceive God as the first cause of all existence, as Scott describes it, “Father of the world of nature and of our own rational being” (Scott 1951:84). The invocation concludes with the phrase ο εν τοις ουρανοις (the one in the heavens). The locative voice of the phrase places God from Brown’s Greco-Roman viewpoint, within a monotheistic frame. It also raises the question about the abode of God, that is, He transcends the entire cosmos and is “willing and able to assist the orant in his quest for a hearing” (Brown 2004:13; Nolland 2005:288-289).

#### 4.2.2.2 Petitions

The first three petitions have always been viewed as eschatological; praying for the heavenly kingdom to be replicated on earth (Allen 1907:58). The petitions find meaning in Jewish eschatology (Allen 1907:58). The first reads, “ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου” in both Matthew and Luke. The word ἀγιασθήτω in this petition is the aorist imperative, passive voice, 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of the verb ἀγιαζω (to treat as holy, to reverence). The phrase points to an action which Brown (2004:13) describes as “an instance of the Greek aorist of prayer.” Although the use of the aorist generally suggests that the sanctification of God’s name is a one-time event<sup>173</sup>, its passive voice here conveys what Brown (1961:185) described as “a surrogate for the divine name” (Bezt 1995:378). Considering the tone of the prayer, the petitioner(s)’ request was to the effect that God should intervene in the sanctification of His name, especially where His name

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<sup>172</sup> Brown (2004:11) argues against the hermeneutical stance that the possessive pronoun “our” is referring to Christians from a theological perspective, arguing that, first, it is against the tenet of Judaism and Christianity which affirm that “all humanity derives from God and thus can claim God as Father. He cites the following Bible passages to buttress his point: Deuteronomy 32:6, Malachi 2:10, Acts 17:28-29, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Ephesians 4:6. Secondly, it undermines God’s divine attribute of perfect justice and the doctrine of monotheism. Thirdly, unlike Luke’s version of the prayer and the *Didache*, it is unclear whether Matthew’s version of the prayer was addressed to disciples or everyone. The argument is raised in the work of Ong (2012-2013:112) where the point is made that it is only when Πάτερ translates “householder of the earth” that it validates the inclusive interpretation of the word. Considering Matthew’s version of the prayer from its socio-linguistic setting, however, its audience is unquestionably followers of Christ. See Ong (2012-2013:113). Also, the disciples ought not to be interpreted with the possessive pronoun ἡμῶν from an exclusive point of view because they may be conscious of the Jewish theological view of God as God of the Jews.

<sup>173</sup> Robertson (1930:53) also indicates that the aorist imperative in this petition suggests an event which is urgent.



was being profaned (Allen 1907:58; Brown 2004:13).<sup>174</sup> The text does not explicitly stipulate whether the sanctification could equally be carried out by humans but implied (Allen 1907:58; Bezt 1995:379).<sup>175</sup> The same linguistic sentiments are expressed in the second and third petitions ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου ἰ, γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, and ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ἰ. The word ἐλθέτω in the second petition “ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου” is also aorist imperative, 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular active voice of ἔρχομαι, (to come). The petition suggests a future advent of the establishment of God’s sovereignty on earth. In the third petition, which is omitted from Lukan account, γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς the word is also aorist imperative 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of the verb γίνομαι (to become, to come to pass, to be done, to happen). Allen’s understanding of the kingdom and the will of God is that the heavenly kingdom, when established, will consequently result in the sanctification of God’s name and the doing of His will (Allen 1907:58). Many interpretations have been given to the term ἡ βασιλεία (Bezt 1995:379; Jeremias 1971:96-103). The noun form, *basileus*, was originally said to have been used to describe a monarch. It then went extinct during the era of the aristocrats, and its place taken over by *tyrannos*, a designation for someone who gains power illegitimately (Klappert 1976:372; Ernest 1994:256-257). The abstract noun, βασιλεία, used in the Lord’s Prayer developed during the Hellenistic period. It carries the following meanings: the fact of being king, the position or power of the king, and translates office of king, kingly rule. A second meaning of βασιλεία is geographical, hence its designation kingdom, suggesting the area or territory over which a king rules (Klappert 1976:373; Ernest 1994:260).<sup>176</sup>

The term itself appears 162 times in the New Testament with varieties of meanings depending on the context in which they were used in the sayings (*logia*) of Jesus source. It conveys the idea of the office of a king and his domain from an earthly perspective<sup>177</sup>, which sharply contrasts with

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<sup>174</sup>This understanding resonates with the Jewish view expressed in Chapter 3 of this study regarding the sanctification of God’s name in for instance the *Kaddish*, clarifying sanctification to mean that “the subject of the activity would be God and not the orant.” See Isaiah 52:5b, Ez. 36:22-23, Rm 2:24; Brown 2004:13.

<sup>175</sup>Allen’s assertion is that the sanctification of God’s name by way of its restoration among the nations foreshadowing “the future consummation.” However, the *sacra familiae* concept in Greco-Roman society which speaks of the responsibility of the father of the family to maintain the sanctity of the family affirms the petition’s intended meaning. See Brown (2004:13, 14).

<sup>176</sup>While kingdom is defined as “the land or state governed by a king, and by extension a collective or persons or things ruled by a common principle, reign on the other hand is “the exercise of royal power, domination, either absolute personal power or dominating influence” (Ernest 1994:256)

<sup>177</sup> See Luke 19:12, 15, Revelation 17:12, Matthew 4:8, Luke 4:5, Mark 6:23, Revelation 16:10

the βασιλεία του θεού since they are known to be the βασιλεία του διαβολου. The βασιλεία του θεού, as a term exclusive to the synoptic gospels, also varies in forms (Klappert 1976:381, Jeremias 1971:96-97). Whereas Mark and Luke speak of the kingdom of God, Matthew's form is the kingdom of heaven,<sup>178</sup> with few instances where Matthew reversed to the kingdom of God formula.<sup>179</sup> The question of the kingdom coming, as expressed in the second petition of the Lord's Prayer, puts the petition in an eschatological mood. Jesus in his proclamation of the βασιλεία, pointed to its imminence and urgency. Regarding the imminence of the kingdom, the understanding one gathers is that "the rule of God is coming" like volcanic eruption and will happen during the lifetime of the then generation.<sup>180</sup> It is within this sudden advent of the kingdom that the Parousia finds meaning (Klappert 1976: 382).<sup>181</sup> The urgency of the βασιλεία points to the fact that it is a present reality: "if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."<sup>182</sup> The kingdom of God is also understood to be realised in the person of Christ. Thus, the Messianic expectation expressed in the Hebrew Bible and in many rabbinic literature, finds fulfillment in Jesus who is viewed in Christian theology as the Messiah. Its ultimate realisation, however, comes to fruition at his second coming (Brown 1961:189). This clarifies Jesus' call on his disciples to pray for the coming of God's kingly rule and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Situating the will of God within Roman religious context of *pietas*, one cannot agree more with Brown that the concept of the kingdom in Roman understanding carries the notion of peace which always "requires the imposition of the divine will and the establishment of *pietas*" (Brown 2004:15). This notion is vividly conveyed in the words of Epictetus, the Roman born Greek-speaking Stoic philosopher, cited in Brown (2004:16) from Higginson (1948:22-23) as follows:

remember that you are an actor in a drama of such sort as the Author chooses – if short, then in a short one; if long, then in a long one. If it be his pleasure that you should enact a poor man, or a cripple, or a ruler, or a private citizen, see that you act it well. For this is your business – to act well the given part, but to choose it belongs to another.

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<sup>178</sup> According to Ernest (1994:266), "the formula 'kingdom of heaven' does not mean a kingdom that is in heaven but results from Jewish scruples about uttering the divine name" (see Dan. 4:23, 1 Macc. 3:18-19, Lk 15:18, 21).

<sup>179</sup> See Mark 1:15, Matthew 4:17, Luke. 6:20, Matthew 5:3, Matthew 12:28, 19:34, 21:31, 21:43

<sup>180</sup> See Matthew 24:32f, Mark 13:28f, Luke 21:29

<sup>181</sup> See Matthew 24:43, Luke 12:39, Matthew 24:45, Luke 12:42-46, Matthew 25:1-13, Mark 9:1, Matthew 16:28, Luke 9:27, Luke 22:18, Mark 14:25

<sup>182</sup> See Matthew 12:28, 29, Luke 11:20, Mark 3:27, Luke 11:21, Luke 10:18, Luke 17:20, Mark 2:19, Matthew 9:15, Luke 5:34, Luke 12:32, Matthew 11:12, Luke 16:16

Thus the will of God must not be understood as only a command to obey but as Brown (1961:192) indicated, “[His] plan for the universe” with Jesus Christ as the primary instrument of such plan.”

The last three petitions, which scholars describe as anthropological and/or eschatological<sup>183</sup>, begins with the phrase τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον · The word δὸς in the fourth petition is 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the aorist imperative, active verb δίδωμι. Therefore, the aorist imperative of the verb δίδωμι in Matthew points to an eschatological interpretation, unlike Luke’s present imperative δίδου, which is “continuative and non-eschatological (Brown 1961:195). However, the question whether ἐπιούσιον, as a key word to our understanding of the petition be interpreted as literal, eschatological/sacramental, has generated theological debates mainly due to its obscurity (Allen 1907:59; Scott 1951:98; Arndt & Gingrich 1957:296-297; Brown 1961:195-196; Bezt 1995:179; Brown 2004:18). An eschatological/sacramental interpretation is implied if the word translates “[bread] for the coming day/tomorrow”, while “[bread] for today” or “daily [bread]” or “[bread] necessary for existence” represents a literal or non-eschatological interpretation (Blomberg 1942:119; Foerster 1964:597; Harrington 1991:95; Liroy 2004:163). But there is also a non-eschatological sense in the rendering “[bread] for the coming day” which is consistent with Luke (Foerster 1964:592-593). The literal interpretation is also viewed from the perspective of consistency (Scott 1951:98-99; Brown 1961:196). It is viewed to be consistent with biblical phrases such as “therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself” and “Let the day’s own trouble be sufficient for the day”<sup>184</sup>, and with the instruction concerning the gathering of the manna on the wilderness (Harrington 1991:95; Foerster 1964:595).<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Scholars are divided on whether the last three petitions be interpreted as anthropological or eschatological. Brown (1961:175-208) for instance, viewed even all the petitions as eschatological.

<sup>184</sup> Matthew 6:11, 34

<sup>185</sup> Exodus 16:16-18

The *paterfamilias* concept within the Greco-Roman household gives some insight on the literal or non-eschatological interpretation of the word. According to Brown (2004), the petition is one which seeks to some extent;

appeal to the Deity for justice, to insure the equitable distribution of material goods necessary for survival in the household. As an expansion of this understanding, yet also within the household model, this petition for bread becomes an appeal to the individual occupying the highest status in the cosmic *oikonomia* to ensure the benevolent distribution of food to those occupying the lowest strata in society.

(Brown 2004:20)

In the fifth petition *καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν*, the word *ἄφες* is also aorist imperative of the verb *ἀφίημι* (to let go, to cancel, to remit, to pardon). The word *ἀφήκαμεν* in the second half of the fifth petition *ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν* carries the aorist present form of the verb *ἀφίημι*. Whereas Matthew's use of the word suggests forgiveness at the moment, Luke's use is continuous. This petition in both Matthew and Luke is a conditional petition for divine pardon for debts which is predicated on human pardon for debts/sins (Allen 1907:59-60; Aune 2013:65). The parallels to both the divine and human pardons have been highlighted in the *Kaddish*, *Shemôneh 'Esreh*, Jewish Wisdom and rabbinic literature, and deuterocanonical documents (Abraham 1917:140,145-147; Allen 1907:60).<sup>186</sup> The replacement of *τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν* (our debts) with *τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν* (our sins) in Lukan account suggests that a "social debt" was what the phrase really meant (Plummer 1896: 297; Brown 2004:24). In other words, forgiveness of sins is viewed in the light of debts and its cancellation. Sin is forgiven in the same manner as the cancellation of debt which cannot be redeemed<sup>187</sup>, but the use of the aorist again in Matthew suggest a one – time forgiveness; an eschatological tone is once again implied here (Brown 1961:199).

The word *εἰσενέγκης* in the first half of the sixth petition "*καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκης ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν*", is a negated aorist subjunctive of *εἰσφέρω* which carries the meaning of 'to bring in, to lead into', whilst that of *ῥῦσαι* in the second half of the petition *ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ*. is aorist imperative of the verb *ῥῥομαι* which means, to rescue or to deliver. The two

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<sup>186</sup> Proverbs 24:17-18, Ecclesiasticus XXVIII. 3-5, *Test. Gad.* vi. 1.

<sup>187</sup> Matthew 18:23-27

verbs, however, have the same eschatological sense (Brown 1961:204).<sup>188</sup> Notwithstanding, the ambiguity of ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ, has been noted by many scholars (Brown 1961: 206). According to Brown's (2004: 25), the meaning of πονηρός has evolved from its older Greek usage as "a person who is morally reprehensible in conduct toward the gods and human beings" to a Hellenistic interpretation which suggests an "idea of the evil *daimon*." In its neuter usage however, πονηρός carries an abstract interpretation (Bezt 1995:380). The Jewish idea of πονηρός, as discussed in Chapter Three of this study, suggests two different understandings: an apotropaic view, suggesting the warding off of evil spirit, and apocalyptic perspective which makes Satan the object of evil with the former conforming to Brown's Hellenistic interpretation (Wold 2014: 101-112). If evil spirits are believed to be angels of Satan, then πονηρός is evil personified. In other words, πονηρός is Satan himself. Another viewpoint that may influence the interpretation of πονηρός is dualism; the notion of "this-worldly" and "other-worldly" (Wold 2014:110-111). The interpretation of this part of the petition, to a larger extent is Christological, meaning Christ's deliverance is a continuous process; he has delivered and continuous to deliver. A middle way of interpretation of πονηρός is that the two interpretations are not mutually exclusive since Satan can be described as evil or he is the evil one.

### **4.3 INTERPRETATIONS AND THEOLOGIES**

#### **4.3.1 The Patristic period**

Having considered the Greco-Roman religio-cultural background in which the Lord's Prayer in particular and Christianity in general were received, and the lexical and syntactic analysis of the prayer, we now delve into its interpretations and theologies over the epoch of Christianity especially in the writings of the church fathers and the reformers. The works of the following prominent church icons of the first four hundred years of Christianity will be analysed in this discussion: Tertullian (160-225/30CE), Clement of Alexandria, St. Cyprian (200-258CE) and St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430CE) representing the Western Church, while Origen (285-253CE) and St. Gregory of Nyssa (died 335 – 394CE) represented the Eastern Church. It is then be followed by the works of Martin Luther (1483-1546) and John Calvin (1509-1564) representing the Reformation period.

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<sup>188</sup> Luz (1989:384) refuted an eschatological interpretation of *πειρασμός*, saying that it is neither consistent with Jewish apocalyptic nor in New Testament apocalyptic technical terminology.

#### 4.3.1.1. Versions of the Lord’s Prayer

<b>Tertullian</b>	<b>Origen</b>	<b>Cyprian</b>	<b>Augustine</b>
Father, you who are in the heavens, let your name be hallowed, let your will be done in the heavens and on the earth, may your Kingdom come. Give us this day our daily bread, Pardon us our debts as we too pardon our debtors, Do not lead us into temptation But remove us from the evil one	Our Father who are in the heavens, let your name be hallowed, let your Kingdom come, let your will be done – as in heaven so also on earth Give us today our supersubstantial bread And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors And do not bring us into testing, but rescue us from evil.	Our Father, you who are in the heavens, let your name be hallowed, let your Kingdom come, let your will be done in heaven and on earth. Give us this day our daily bread, and pardon our debts just us we pardon our debtors, and do not allow us to be led into temptation, but set us free from the evil one.	Our Father, you who are in the heavens, let your name be hallowed, let your Kingdom come, let your will be done, just as in heaven, also on earth. Give us this day our daily bread, and pardon us our debts just as we pardon our debtors, and do not allow us to be borne into temptation, but set us free from the evil one.

#### 4.3.1.2 Introduction

Tertullian’s theology on prayer echoes Judaism’s viewpoint that prayer replaced the Old Testament animal sacrifices.<sup>189</sup> Thus, prayer in the Christian sense is a form of sacrifice to God, an assertion which echoes the concept of Priesthood of all believers, stated in the theology of Peter and advanced during the Reformation era (Brown 2004: 237, 245). In Tertullian’s view, the Lord’s Prayer has come to replace all forms of traditional prayers, and that the Lord’s Prayer is

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<sup>189</sup> As already stated in chapter three of this study, the exile with its attendant abolishing of temple sacrifice, forced the Jews to replace their daily sacrifice with prayer.

an embodiment of the entire gospel (Souter 1919:21; Brown 2004:235). In his treatise on prayer, translated by Souter (1919:19), Tertullian developed his theology on prayer by first describing it as fulfillment of all prayers and model of all Christian prayers. He divided the Lord's Prayer, arguably Matthean<sup>190</sup>, into three components: "the word, by which it is uttered; the spirit, in which alone lies its power; and the reason by which it is taught (Souter 1919:20). The work of Cyprian (200CE-210CE), Bishop of Carthage agrees with his predecessor in structure and interpretation, except in the sixth petition and audiences. While Tertullian's treatise was written to new converts preparing for baptism and for the edification of his congregation at that time, Cyprian wrote to the clergy. The unity of the ecclesia was critical in Cyprian's time, hence his emphasis on the corporate and liturgical essence of the Lord's Prayer (Roberts & Donaldson 1868:111). His interpretation is said to be an imitation of Tertullian's but credited with attention to detail (Roberts & Donaldson 1868:398; Stewart-Sykes 2004:31-32). Origen (185-254), an older contemporary of Cyprian, was born in Alexandria but reportedly died in either Tyre or Caesarea. His extensive work on prayer covers such thematic areas as lexical inquiry into the use of prayer in Scripture, philosophy of prayer, mood, manner, form, object and purpose of prayer. He viewed the Lord's Prayer as the form of prayer which guides our disposition towards the direction and content of every prayer we pray (Stewart-Sykes 2004:109).<sup>191</sup>

#### **4.3.1.3 God as Father in Heaven**

Tertullian viewed the invocation, "Father, who art in heaven", as "witness to God and the reward of faith." Brown (2004:245) describes it as a prayer and confession of faith. For Tertullian, calling God 'Father' signifies worship and obedience to His command (Souter 1919:21; Brown 2004:245; Stewart-Sykes 2004:43). The calling of God as Father also means calling Jesus Christ His only begotten Son, and Mother which he called the church – an interpretation which situates the invocation within a Trinitarian perspective (Brown 2004:245; Stewart-Sykes 2004:43). Augustine also shared the same view on the motherhood of the church (Kavanagh 1951:253). On the contrary, Tertullian's exceptional formulation of the Trinity as Father, Son and Mother is in

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<sup>190</sup> Brown (2004:245) disagrees with Souter's (1919: xiv) assertion that Tertullian used the Matthean version of the Lord's Prayer in his analysis. However, the form he used in his work *Against Marcion* is different from the one he used in *Prayer*. See (Brown 2004:245).

<sup>191</sup> In his lexical examination of prayer, Origen through his reading of the Septuagint understands prayer sometimes as a vow (*euche*) or intercession (*proseuche*).

congruence with the Greco-Roman understanding of the gods as parents who perform parental functions (Brown 2004:246). St. Cyprian, student of Tertullian, built upon the work of his mentor on the Lord's Prayer in his treatise to the North African Church on "the duty of unity, brotherhood, and unanimity" (Bindley 1914:14). His view on addressing God as Father is exclusive, that is, it is only those who are born of the Spirit qualifies to do so, citing several scriptural passages to buttress his point (Stewart-Sykes 2004:70-73).<sup>192</sup> The works of the Eastern fathers also add interesting hermeneutical perspective on the invocation. Origen and Gregory of Nissa viewed the phrase "Our Father" from divine moral attribute which He shares with mankind. Their moral caveat on calling God as Father is forcefully articulated in Graff (1954:10), "man's sonship consists in the moral purity of a good conscience, and the opening words of the prayer are meant to exhort us to a virtuous life".<sup>193</sup> Origen again in the words of Woolsey and Ulyat (1856:107), asserts that "the brightest dignity of Christians, their being born from the seed of God, is shown in good actions, and their whole life is but a perpetual cry to God: Father in heaven— where our citizenship is." Although he acknowledged in the covenant relationship between God and Israel in his treatise as that of father and children, Origen found the use of the term "Father" in the prayer to be exclusively of New Testament origin (Stewart-Sykes 2004:159). Whether heaven is the dwelling place of God, Origen is claimed to have said "the heaven contains him not; no bodily form includes Him; He is not in space; everything corporeal is also perishable, divisible. But corporeal objects bear the marks of his power and glory; they are, so to speak, the emanations of His God-head" (Woolsey & Ulyat 1856:107; Stewart-Sykes 2004:162).<sup>194</sup> Origen added that an allegorical interpretation of the dwelling place of God [heavens] should be preferred to the literal because "if the heavens contain him it follows that God would be less than the heavens, whereas the ineffable power of his divinity entails our belief that all things are contained and held together by him" (Stewart-Sykes 2004:162). The anthropomorphic designation for God, in Origen's view, does not necessarily mean that God is an "old man" whose dwelling place is up in the skies. His visible presence, however, is made

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<sup>192</sup> See also John 1:11, Deuteronomy 33:9, Matthew 8:22, John 8:44, Is.1:3-4, John 8:34, 1 Kings 2:30, 1 Corinthians 6:20.

<sup>193</sup> Origen's proof-text approach on the invocation is different from Gregory's philosophical approach which is based on the concept of fatherhood. The ethical relationship that is supposed to exist between a father and son is that "if a man knows how to approach the Divine qualities, he will not dare to call himself a child of God unless he finds these [qualities] in himself." See Stewart-Sykes (2004:159-165) and Graff (1954:10).

<sup>194</sup> Origen added, "for if the heavens contain him it follows that God would be less than the heavens, whereas the ineffable power of his divinity entails our belief that all things are contained and held together by him."



manifest in corporeal objects such as human beings. It must be pointed out quickly that the writings of Origen and his contemporaries' were influenced by the philosophical culture of their time (McGrath 2007:174-176). His interpretation of God as one who dwells in the heavens for instance, is in response to "uncultured" Christians of that time, coupled with Neoplatonism which viewed God as corporeal (Griffin & Paulsen 2002:97). He traced the source of the idea behind the corporeality of God to "simpler minds" who read certain passages of Scripture, particularly from the Johannine Corpus, in its literal sense (Stewart-Sykes 2004:162-163).<sup>195</sup> The question of corporeality was never raised in the church until the gospel encountered a more sophisticated audience of the philosophical world. The danger the theory of the corporeality of God poses to Christianity, according to Origen, is its subsequent ridiculous doctrine of Stoicism and Docetism that if God is corporeal, then He is divisible and material and corruptible. Thus Origen is vehemently opposed to the prevailing philosophical theology about the nature of God which purportedly contravenes authentic Christian theology (Stewart-Sykes 2004:163-164). It is however, not all of the church fathers who hold the same theological view about the corporeality of God. Tertullian, for instance, with his Stoic philosophical background, holds a strong view that God has a Corpus (body) (Griffin & Paulsen 2002:97). This is consistent with his Trinitarian theological formulation, where he described the triune God whose function bear a resemblance to that of Greco-Roman deities. Gregory's forceful interpretation of the prayer in his homily is placed under the category of supplication<sup>196</sup> and grounded within the context of allegory and asceticism, typical of post apostolic biblical hermeneutics (Graef 1954: 4, 6). His understanding of the invocation of the prayer attests to his ascetic inclination,

all things exist and are dependent on the ineffable will of the Divine Wisdom. I would have to remove my mind far from all things that change and are in flux. By attaining to an unchanging and unwavering disposition of the soul, I would first earnestly make Him my friend who is eternal and unchanging. Only then would I invoke that most intimate Name and say, "Father!"

(Sylianopoulos 2003:2)

For Gregory, addressing God as Father requires a high moral standing. In other words, it is not possible for God to be the Father of those who engage in acts of evil. He described an evil person

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<sup>195</sup> See also John 13:1,3, 14: 23, 28,16:5.

<sup>196</sup> This he did by juxtaposing prayer and vow and came to the conclusion that while a vow seeks to offer what is in human hands to God, the one who prays "take[s] courage to ask for what is in God's hands. See Stylianopoulos (2003:1).

addressing God as Father as mockery and that from his concept of father, God would be the source and cause of the evil acts perpetrated if indeed He is the Father of evil.<sup>197</sup> Saint Augustine of Hippo, in his expository work on the Lord's Prayer in "the Lord's sermon on the mount", touched on all the petitions of the prayer.<sup>198</sup> On the invocation, Augustine also disagrees with the universal understanding of God being the Father of all. Rather, He becomes our Father only through a spiritual birth (Kavanagh 1951: 242-243). The effect of the prayer, he added, lies on the affection of the one who prays, that is, God hears a prayer which is from the heart.

Clement of Alexandria may have excluded the Lord's Prayer from his prayers based on his fundamental hermeneutical principle that the voice of the *Logos* must be heard in all prayers including the Lord's Prayer (Brown 2004:153). He therefore described the prayer as improper, inappropriate, and superstitious (*deisidaimon*), and thus in conflict with Clement's theology on prayer on the grounds that the prayer's overall theological orientation, its petitionary nature, "envisions a socially integrated universe in which the relationship between God and creation involves the expression and fulfillment of needs on both sides" (Brown 2004:53). He further stated that, "the LP assumes that God is a God with certain needs; to have his name sanctified, his kingdom come, and his will be done", while human beings also demand from God daily bread, forgiveness of sin and deliverance from evil. Second, Clement may find the use of anthropomorphic nomenclature such as Πάτερ and the phrase ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς absurd "since God is understood primarily through intellectual means ... any comprehension of God beyond the noetic [for instance the *Logos*] is in some way a falsification of the being of God" (Brown 2004:154). Clement also does not believe that God is "our" Father because of his belief in both social and ecclesiastical hierarchy. He had already mentioned that in the ecclesia, it is only the Gnostics who know the Divine better and have closer relationship with him. They [the Gnostics] believe they have what Brown (2004:139) describes as "the type of ethos deemed appropriate by God", and whose prayers are appropriately offered and answered accordingly (Brown 2004:152, 154). Clement's supposed understanding of the first petition of the Lord's Prayer is sarcastically

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<sup>197</sup> Gregory in his second homily on the Lord's Prayer, used the concept of father which in his words "signifies fatherhood – the source and cause of a person who is made to exist by God", to argue that one needs to participate in the moral nature of the divine in order to qualify as His son. See Stylianopoulos (2003:2).

<sup>198</sup> Stewart-Sykes (2004:22, 27) reports that the Lord's Prayer during the time of Augustine was used at the end of Catechism to teach Catechumens how to pray before they are baptized.

expressed in the second of his trilogy – *Paedagogus* – “and he says in his prayer, our Father, who art in heaven” (ANF 2:228).

#### 4.3.1.4 The hallowing of God’s name

The hallowing of God’s name in the first petition of the prayer, Tertullian posits, is a call for God’s name to be holified in both the church which is the *Corpus Christi* (body of Christ) which already dwells in God, and the world, who through His saving grace are waiting to be in Him. Moreover, an eschatological meaning is also implied in this petition because in the words of Tertullian, the calling of God’s name to be made holy is only a form of rehearsal of what Christians are going to do when they get to heaven, that is, to sing in worship with the angels “Holy, holy, holy.” It therefore suggests that God is already sanctified in Himself and that His name can never be profaned (Stouter 1919:22; Brown 2004:246; Stewart-Sykes 2004:44). Cyprian also agrees with his master that the hallowing of God’s name does not imply that it is the prayer that would holify God’s name. Rather, as he puts it, “we ask and beseech that we who are made holy in baptism should have the ability to persist in the way we have begun” (Stewart-Sykes 2004:73). Origen on the other hand acknowledged the eternity and immutability of God but noted that it is not all who perceive this holiness in all things. The prayer for His name to be made holy is therefore a call for all creation to conceive and share in God’s holiness. For Origen, “only by holiness united with concord and unanimity do we come, by recollection, to a true and high knowledge of God’s nature; possessing a spark of his divinity, which is reanimated in us” (Woolsey & Ulyat 1856:107; Stewart-Sykes 2002:166-167).<sup>199</sup> The hallowing or the exaltation of God’s name, therefore, is something that must happen within – a dedication of a dwelling place for God in the heart of men. Origen also emphasized the mood of the phrase to his audience by way of cautioning them against translations and misinterpretations of biblical passages of his time. He particularly warned against that of Tatian, a Christian teacher of the second century of Syrian origin, whose misleading translation of Genesis 1:3 in the optative mood instead of the imperative, suggesting that God was praying for light and not commanding it; a translation which implied theologically that “God was in darkness” (Stewart-Sykes

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<sup>199</sup>The theological ideas Origen used in this exposition can be found, as Stewart-Sykes (2004:167) suggests, in Plato’s theory of recollection which brings about religious learning, as outlined in the *Meno*. Thus, according to Origen, the “folly” or unlearned are those who do not hallow the name of God.

2004:168). Gregory's view on the first petition of the prayer can be found in the fourth part of his homily on the Prayer. His interpretation of the petition is an affirmation of the traditional view that God's name is eternally holy and that to pray for His name to be made holy would only suggest its appropriation in human life (Stylianopoulos 2003:3-4). Augustine's understanding of the hallowing of God's name does not differ from the traditional meaning, that is, a prayer for the holiness of God to be fulfilled in the heart of his audience. Clement's view on the petition, ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου, found in the fragment from Cassiodorus 1.1 states, "for so you have in the Lord's Prayer, hallowed by thy name" (ANF 2:572; Brown 2004:155), suggesting that "only the righteous can sanctify God's name." This view is expressed in his commentary on 1Peter 3:12.<sup>200</sup> As to how the righteous are the only ones to sanctify the name of God, Clement claims "because they have the correct conception of God's nature .... others are incapable of hallowing God or the *Logos* because they are uninformed or badly informed of the divine nature" (Brown 2004:155). In Clement's theological and philosophical understanding, the issue of the sanctification of God's name has already been dealt with. According to Brown (2004:155), the process of the sanctification began when God, through the mediatory role of the *Logos*, "placed truth in all cultures, manifested truth explicitly through the incarnation, and continues to reveal truth as the *paedagogus* of humanity, using both persuasion and coercion." The point that the name of God has already been sanctified through general and special revelations may be a valid one when it is considered from the perspective of Christ's death, resurrection and glorification. Since the prayer was taught before his death, resurrection and glorification, it is logical to state that both the name of God, His kingdom and will, have all been fulfillment in the person of Jesus the Christ.<sup>201</sup>

#### **4.3.1.5 The coming of God's kingdom and the doing of His will**

On the second petition, the kingdom of God is preceded by the will of God (*voluntas Dei*) in Tertullian's translation; a departure from the original source. The *voluntas Dei* (will of God) is interpreted metaphorically by Tertullian to mean the salvation of "those whom He has adopted" (Souter 1919:23). Also, the will of God is to "walk according to His training." This form of

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<sup>200</sup> 1 Peter also cites Psalm 34:12-16 to support his theological view on Christian suffering.

<sup>201</sup> Clement however, interpret this petition not universally but exclusively and spiritually, important categories in his theological discourse. See Brown (2004:150).

interpretation was occasioned by the varied rendering of the original text, as seen in the above texts, which Tertullian and his student Cyprian used – “Thy will be done in heaven and in earth” – although the original form was commonly used in their day. What this means allegorically to Tertullian is that the will of God be done “in the two parts of man’s nature, spirit and flesh” or “in Christians and in unbelievers” (Bindley 1914:16; Stewart-Sykes 2004:45). In other words, since the human being is born of spirit and flesh, the prayer is said to request that the divine will be done in the body and spirit, as expressed in Cyprian’s treatise;

since we possess a body from earth and heaven, and in both – that is, in body and in spirit – we pray that God’s will may be done ... we pray also for those who are still earth and who have not begun to be heavenly that, in their case also, the will of God may be done ... we make intercession for the salvation of all, so that as in heaven – that is, in us – through our faith God’s will has been done, whereby we are of heaven, so also in earth – that is, in those others – God’s will may be done, on their becoming believers; so that those who are yet earthly by their first birth, may begin to be heavenly, when born of water and of the Spirit.

(Bindley 1914:17)

The will of God, as Cyprian understands is found in the works of Christ, the performance of God’s commands and complete submission to God as the following statement suggests:

humility in conduct, constancy in faith, truth in speech, justice in deeds, mercy in works, restraint in self-discipline, knowing nothing of doing injury yet willing to endure slight, holding to peace with the brothers, devoted wholeheartedly to the Lord, loving him as Father, fearing him as God, preferring nothing whatsoever to Christ because he preferred nothing to ourselves, clinging inseparably to his love, standing by his cross with courage and faith, and when his name and honor are contested, being a confessor by constancy in what we say, being defiant by fidelity under interrogation, receiving the crown by patience under sentence of death.

(Stewart-Sykes 2004:75-76)

The coming of the kingdom of God, in the words of Tertullian, is inextricably linked to the will of God. God, according to Tertullian, is a King and as it pertains to all kings they rule in a kingdom. Thus, the kingdom of God, in his view, is the reign of God culminating an eschatological expectation (Souter 1919:24; Stewart-Sykes 2004:46). Cyprian’s interpretation of the coming of the βασιλεία is the same as that of Tertullian. He however, substituted the βασιλεία with Christ, saying that “Christ himself is that kingdom whose coming we daily desire

... soon to see ... he himself is the Kingdom of God, because in him we are to reign” (Stewart-Sykes 2004:74). In his understanding of βασιλεία, Gregory first of all acknowledged the kingship of God over the *cosmos* in both the territorial and moral spheres of human life. Whereas his predecessors, Origen and Cyril see the kingdom as a place of bliss and from eschatological point of view respectively.<sup>202</sup> Gregory viewed it from a militant perspective. As echoed in the words of Graff, “the Kingdom of God among men can be initiated only by means of a relentless warfare on the battlefield of the soul.” The perfect dominion of God will not be achieved until sin and death have been overcome, in a holy alliance between God and the soul” (Graff 1954:11). The βασιλεία, in Gregory’s view, is the reign of God in the heart of men. In praying for the coming of God’s kingdom therefore, Gregory declares,

we fervently entreat God to actualize in us these blessings: to be released from corruption; to be liberated from death, and to be loosed from the bonds of sin. We pray that the tyranny of wickedness ceases its power against us and its war not conquer us, leading us away as captives through sin ... in order that the evil passions which rule and lord it over us may depart from us, and indeed vanish into nothingness.

(Stylianopoulos 2003:5)

He however, added a Trinitarian perspective to his interpretation, substituting the βασιλεία with the Holy Spirit, and arguing philosophically that once the Spirit is the kingdom, then it is neither ruled nor created because it possesses the qualities of the divine nature as the Son possesses (Stylianopoulos 2003:5-6). This hermeneutical twist was in response to the rising practice of heresy in the church. Augustine’s βασιλεία is an eschatological one – “the kingdom that [will] exist after the end of the world” (Kavanagh 1951:243). It is a kingdom that is both territorial and spiritual which criterion is “good life” (Kavanagh 1951:244). He also linked the third petition with the kingdom saying “the will of God shall be so done in them that, being holy and just, they shall receive the kingdom” (Kavanagh 1951:244). In the words of Augustine, the will of God is not done in only the righteous, but also the wicked whose destination is eternal damnation. Augustine clearly pointed out in his sermon that God’s will is being done in heaven already, and

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<sup>202</sup>According to Origen, “[the kingdom of God] is but the holy ruling of God in our hearts, the establishment of His authority in the spirit, the exaltation of that which is highest in us above our lower nature, the orderly succession of wise thoughts. The words of salvation which we preach, and the works of righteousness which they perform, are the kingdom of Christ: for He is the Word and Righteousness.” See Woolsey & Ulyat (1856:107-108), Stewart-Sykes (2004:169-171).

that it will be completely done on earth, that is, in his audience as Kavanagh (1951) cited as follows:

when ... all lust will have been changed into charity; when nothing will remain in the body to resist the spirit, nothing to be tamed, nothing to be riddled, nothing to be trampled on; when the whole man [the spirit and the flesh] will be harmoniously advancing toward justice – then it will have come to pass that the will of God is being done in heaven and on earth.

(Kavanagh 1951:245)

Augustine by this interpretation, anticipated a state of perfection in this petition. He again looked at the interpretation of this petition from two other perspectives; spirituality and carnality, the church and her enemies. He viewed the church as a place for both the spiritual and the carnal. He allegorically termed the spirituals as heaven and the carnal as earth. Thus praying for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven suggests that "the carnal may be reformed, and serve Thee in like manner with the spiritual." On the church and her enemies, Augustine placed the church as heaven while the earth represents the enemies of the church. The implication, as he noted, is in this plea: "may our enemies believe in Thee, just as we believe. May they become friends, and cease their enmity. They are earth and are therefore against us; may they become heaven, then they will be with us" (Kavanagh 1951:246). Origen on the contrary, would allegorize heaven as Christ and the earth as the church since,

anybody who interprets "heaven" allegorically as Christ, and "earth" as the church will so readily solve the problem by stating that everybody in the church should pray that they might receive the Father's will as Christ received it, for he came to do the will of his Father and completed it perfectly. For it is possible to be so joined to him as to become one spirit with him, and so to receive the will of God so that just as it is perfected in heaven so it may be perfected on earth also.

(Stewart-Sykes 2004:172-173)

Clement in his *Stromata*, interspersed Jesus's own words in his understanding of the kingdom, "but seek first the kingdom of heaven, and its righteousness", with his gnostic ideas, "for these are the great things, and the things which are small and appertain to this life, shall be added to you ... Does He [God] not plainly then exhort us to follow the gnostic life, and enjoin us to seek the truth in word and deed?" This he did to emphasize the pre-existence of the kingdom (Stromata 4.6, ANF 2:415). The following quotation from the *Stromata* attests to the fact that

the kingdom has already been established but lack of knowledge is what is preventing people from experiencing it:

The Son is the highest pre-eminence, which set in order all things according to the Father's will, and steers the universe aright, performing all things with unwearying energy ... to him is subjected the whole army of angels and of gods – to him, the Word of the Father, who has received the holy administration by reason of him who subjected it to him; through whom also all men belong to him but some by way of knowledge.

(*Stromata* 7.2.5; see Brown 2004:156)

In Clement's view, education is the only panacea for this ignorance. When it comes to the third petition, γεννηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς, Clement's understanding of this petition can be found in his *Stromata* 4.8 – “the earthly church is the image of the heavenly, as we also pray, that the will of God may be done upon the earth as in heaven” (ANF 2:421). Clement's philosophy of divine providence (*pronoia*), however, stands in antithesis with the theology behind this petition – that God's will be done on earth as it is being done in heaven (Brown 2004:156). It is the same divine providence motif that informed his interpretation of the fourth petition - Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον. The principle of divine providence demands that human beings submit to God's will as a way of imitating “the divine order that prevails in heaven”, and transmitted through the *Logos* (Brown 2004:156). Opposing the divine will, therefore, is a sign of ignorance. Clement sees the traditional interpretation of the third petition as “inappropriate because it implies that providence can be thwarted when it cannot” (Brown 2004:156).

#### **4.3.1.6 The giving of daily bread**

Tertullian finds disconnection between the name of God and its sanctification, the doing of His will and the coming of His kingdom on one hand, and the request for daily bread, forgiveness of debts and the deliverance from evil on the other hand. This is because it is inconsistent with Jesus' command to “seek first the kingdom, and then these things also will be added unto you” (Souter 1919:24; Stewart-Sykes 2004:46). He therefore spiritualized the meaning of the bread saying, “for our bread is Christ, because Christ is life and the bread of life” (Souter 1919:25; Stewart-Sykes 2004:46). The spiritualization of biblical passages has been a hermeneutical style of the church fathers due to what is perceived to be the struggles over the philosophical contexts



in which they theologized. Tertullian's spiritualized interpretation of the bread was occasioned by his Eucharistic sense of Jesus Christ, that is, his body and blood as bread and wine respectively.<sup>203</sup> He was, however, quick to add that "because this phrase [our daily bread] is admitted in a carnal sense, it cannot be realized without the piety that belongs to spiritual instruction as well" (Souter 1919:25). Cyprian shared Tertullian's Eucharistic interpretation of the ἄρτον in the petition, stating that its daily request is intended to prevent believers from falling into sin. He also touched on the literal meaning of the ἄρτον with the justification that "we who have renounced the world and its wealth and its pomp, abandoning them through faith in his spiritual grace, are asking for as much food and sustenance as is needful" (Stewart-Sykes 2004:79). Cyprian does not see any ambiguity in the literal interpretation of the petition Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον since there is enough internal evidence to prove that the request for bread is for the day and not for the future (Stewart-Sykes 2004:79). In other words Christians under persecution and eagerly waiting for the coming of their Lord would not think about what would sustain them tomorrow because their future is characterized by uncertainties. Origen, in his treatise on the Lord's Prayer, differs in opinion on the corporeality of the bread, describing those who subscribe to the corporeal interpretation of Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον as false (Stewart-Sykes 2004:175). Rather, it is, as Graff (1954:12) puts it, "the substantial bread that nourishes our souls and gives them health, strength, and finally immortality." In Origen's own words, "[the bread] signifies nutrient suited to our true nature, to the incorporeal in us; that imperishable food which remains unto eternal life, which the Son of Man gives unto us; it signifies faith in Him, nay Himself, the bread from heaven" (Woolsey & Ulyat 1856:108; Stewart-Sykes 2004:176). Origen's Eucharistic view of the petition for bread is based on his translation of ἐπιούσιον as "supersubstantial", a word which most bible scholars have struggled with over the years due to its exclusivity.<sup>204</sup> Applying Aristotelian philosophy in his interpretation, Origen came to the conclusion that the essence (*ousia*) of incorporeal things is primary to that of the corporeal, hence the bread in the petition must be above material substance and that it must be given daily (Stewart-Sykes 2004:179,186). He further perceived that supersubstantial bread in the petition is reason, wisdom and truth (Stewart-

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<sup>203</sup> See John 6:33, 35.

<sup>204</sup> Origen himself has observed in Stewart-Sykes (2004:178-179) that ἐπιούσιον has never been used in any New Testament writing or ancient Greek literature.

Sykes 2004:176,178,181). The same spiritualized interpretation of the bread is found in the work of Cyril, although his translation states the contrary. The meaning of τὸν ἐπιούσιον, petition for bread by implication, is a Eucharistic petition. For Gregory, the petition for bread is a petition for “ordinary material bread, and, more generally, everything necessary for the preservation of our physical existence, excluding luxuries.” (Graff 1954:12-13). When it comes to the interpretation of “τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον”, Augustine posits that it is an admission on the part of the one who prays that he/she is a “beggar” before God. He gave two interpretations of the bread in the petition: the physical bread which in his view is given to both the good and the evil, and second, the spiritual bread (the Word of God) which God gives to His children daily (Kavanagh 1951:247-248). Thus the believer’s “daily food is the Word of God” and the place it is dispensed is “the church”, received after one is baptised.

The fourth petition for Clement is questionable because it is inconsistent with either the power of God or His benevolence. This he clearly articulated in his *Stromata*, concerning the activity of the *Logos*; “for either the Lord does not care for all men; and this is the case, either because He is unable or because He is unwilling, which is not the attribute of a good being” (Brown 2004:156-157; *Stromata* 7.7.42, 46, 48, 7.13.81). Clement’s social context, Brown observed, may be one other reason for his rejection of the fourth petition. Brown asserts that as a wealthy Roman citizen believed to be “shielded from the vagaries of food supply and consumption”, there was no way he would interpret the request for daily bread literally. Brown therefore came to the conclusion that “Clement’s theological vision and the influence of his social context converge in a way that makes any material interpretation of this petition useless” (Brown 2004:157). He joined the myriad of early Christian exegetes of the Lord’s Prayer, who by way of preserving the *pronoia* motif, would give a spiritual interpretation to the idea of bread in the petition, as evident in his *Paedagogus* 1.6 and ANF 2:22, where reference is made to the Word of God as “bread of heaven” and “baked bread” respectively (Brown 2004:157). It therefore suggests that the bread being referred to in the fourth petition is not material bread but the *Logos*. And since *Gnostics*, like Clement, claimed to have received the *Logos* through *gnosis* already, it would be inappropriate to pray for it to be given again (*Stromata* 7.13.82).

#### 4.3.1.7 The forgiveness of debts

Tertullian's interpretation of the phrase τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν (our debts) in the fifth petition as metaphor for sin is highlighted in Brown (2004:21-25). This places the whole idea of indebtedness within the context of Greco-Roman social system (Souter 1919:26). Tertullian opines that sin, like debt, "is due to be judged and a demand is made on it, and it does not escape just exaction, unless exaction be remitted" (Souter 1919:26; Stewart-Sykes 2004:47-48).<sup>205</sup> By referring to the parable of the wicked and unforgiving servant in Matthew 18, Tertullian admits that forgiveness is a reciprocal action; it puts the one who is forgiven under an obligation of forgiving those who offend him/her (Brown 2004:249). Cyprian identifies the connection between the request for daily bread and pardon for debts forgiveness as appropriate because it provides for our material and eternal existence, that is, bread for the body and pardon for forgiveness which paved the way to eternity (Stewart-Sykes 2004:81). He, like his predecessor, sees the debt as sin which is forgiven on condition of reciprocity (Stewart-Sykes 2004:82). Origen also sees the debt in the petition as sin and identifies five entities we are indebted to: ourselves, fellows, angels, God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. The sacrifice Jesus made on the cross, Origen asserts, only dealt with Original sin and that "by an earnest endeavor no longer to remain in guilt, we may destroy that debt" (Woolsey & Ulyat 1856:108; Stewart-Sykes 2004:187-188). Origen reiterated the reciprocity of the petition, pointing out that we have "the power to forgive them, mindful of our own guilt." He concluded by instructively stating that Christ has given authority to certain men to as it were, "mediate for others the forgiveness of [their] sins, which God alone can grant, which sins exclude idolatry, adultery, and fornication (Woolsey & Ulyat 1856:108; Stewart-Sykes 2004:189-190). Gregory also agrees with the traditional understanding of debt as sin and the need for reciprocity in petitioning for pardon. He, however, departs from his predecessors' with the introduction of Original Sin into the picture (Graff 1954:13; Stylianopoulos 2003: 2). He recognized the fact that to forgive is divine, hence any prayer seeking forgiveness from God in a reciprocal manner must share in the divine nature. He further established the basis for our pardon for sin in the Fall, exploring human frailty and the difficulty in accepting pardon from others and finally came to the following conclusion: "If we are to bring before God our entreaty for mercy and forgiveness, let us first cultivate the

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<sup>205</sup> The following examples of Scriptural passages were used by Tertullian to buttress his point: Hebrew 4:15, Matthew 6:12, Ezekiel 18:32, Matthew 18:21, 22, 27, 30, Luke 6:37, 12:58, 59.

confidence of conscience by presenting our life as advocate of our petition and then truly say, ‘as we, too, have forgiven our debtors’” (Stylianopoulos 2003:6). Augustine also reiterated Gregory’s point in his homily. He first established that the debt used in the petition refers to sins and not money owned –a vulnerability which, he admitted, even bishops find themselves (Kavanagh 1951:248). The only panacea to the remission of sin, he added, is through prayer and almsgiving (Kavanagh 1951:249). In spite of the human frailty that makes it difficult to forgive those who sin against believers, Augustine stressed in his exhortation to the catechumens on the need to forgive as they are about to be baptised:

Now, my most dearly beloved, give me your attention ... You are about to be baptized; forgive everything. Whatever anyone of you has in his heart against anyone let him dismiss it from his heart. Come to the front with this disposition, then rest assured that you are forgiven all the sins which you have contracted – both the sin that is yours by reason of your birth from parents with original sin according to Adam, and also whatever sins you may have committed during your lives, by word, or thought, or deed. All sins are forgiven you, and you shall come forth from the front, as from the presence of your Lord, with the assurance that all your debts are forgiven.

(Kavanagh 1951:251-252)

Clement’s theological view on the fifth petition, *καὶ ἄφεξις ἡμῶν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν*, can also be found in *Quis div. 39* and [ANF 2:602]. There he states, “[The] Lord commands us each day to forgive the repenting brethren” (Brown 2004:157-158). He describes forgiveness as “a demonstration of *eusebeia* (piety) and an *imitatio Dei*” (imitation of God) (Brown 2004:158). He further states in *Stromata 7.13.81* that “[The gnostic] never remembers those who have sinned against him, but forgives them; wherefore also he has a right to pray: “forgive us, for we forgive” (Brown 2004:158). Clement’s understanding of the practice of sin, as Brown (2004:158) puts it, is based on the doctrine of monotheism: “since all created beings derive from God and God forgives them, refusing to forgive another is tantamount to a rejection of God’s will.” His objection to the notion of sin as indebtedness was driven by his conviction that “sin is the result of human ignorance and the entanglement of the individual in passion” (Brown 2004:158). Once human beings are able to cure their ignorance and passion

through the bestowal of *gnosis* from God, praying for forgiveness of sin would no longer be necessary.<sup>206</sup>

#### 4.3.1.8 Temptation and deliverance from evil

Regarding the interpretation of the sixth petition, Tertullian gave an interpretation which is inconsistent with his translation. Whereas his translation of the sixth petition renders “do not lead us into temptation”, he paraphrased it in his treatise as “do not allow us so to be led by the one that tempts” (Souter 1919:27; Stewart-Sykes 2004:48). He thus refuted the notion that one is tempted by the Lord, assigning the idea of evil solely to the devil’s domain, using the trial of Abraham’s faith and Jesus’ temptation as evidence of Satan being the source of all evil (Brown 2004:250).<sup>207</sup> Cyprian’s translation of the sixth petition reads, “and do not allow us to be led into temptation, but set us free from the evil one” (Stewart-Sykes 2004:39, 84). Although this translation is a sharp departure from that of his master, they agree theologically. Here, Cyprian is of the view that God does not lead human beings into temptation. Rather, He permits the devil to tempt His children. For Cyprian, “power against us is given to the Evil One in proportion to our sins” (Stewart-Sykes 2004:84).<sup>208</sup> Origen, unlike Tertullian and Cyprian, holds the view that God is the cause of all human temptation and his translation “do not bring us into testing”, attests to this fact (Stewart-Sykes 2004:193,196). In his attempt to address the question of why Jesus Christ should teach his followers to pray that they do not enter into temptation when it is obvious that God tempts His people in one way or the other, Origen appealed to several Scriptural references and the philosophical tool of Platonic myth of the winged soul in *Phaedrus* at his disposal, as expressed in the following statement:

If it is not unjust that nets be spread for birds, then God quite rightly leads us into the snare. Not even the cheapest of birds, a sparrow, falls into a snare without the Father willing it, for its falling into the snare comes about on account of its failure to make proper use of the power of its wings, which were given so that it might soar upward; and so let us pray that we should do nothing that would make us worthy of being led into testing through God’s just judgment. For everyone who is handed over to

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<sup>206</sup> Clement’s thought on forgiveness might also be informed by 1John 5:16-17. In *Stromata* 2.14-15, Clement discusses human acts that are voluntary and involuntary, saying that they both constitute the basis of sin. He suggests, “the involuntary does not come under judgment” (*Stromata* 2.14.60.1) while “voluntary actions corresponds to desire, choice or an intellectual thought” (*Stromata* 2.15.62.1).

<sup>207</sup> Even with God’s command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, Tertullian viewed it as “not to try his faith, but to approve it. See Souter (1919:27).

<sup>208</sup> Cyprian gave two reasons why God grants power to the Devil against his people: “for punishment when we sin and for glory when we are proved.” See Stewart-Sykes (2004:85; 2Kgs. 24:11, Is. 42:25, 1 Kgs. 11:14, and Jb. 1:12, Jn. 19:11).

impurity by God in the desires of his own heart is so led, as is everyone who is handed over to the passions of dishonor, and everyone who does not prove to have God in himself is handed over to a corrupt mind, to do whatever is improper.<sup>209</sup>

(Stewart-Sykes 2004:202)

Augustine's comment on the last petition was brief. He viewed temptation as sins that are likely to be committed in future and translated πονηρός as evil and not the devil. On the sixth petition, ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ, Clement's interpretation is that "God is not responsible for temptation in the sense that God does not seek to do harm to human beings, nor does God simply allow evil to persist, but God uses evil as an instrument for education" (Brown 2004:158).<sup>210</sup>

## **4.4 THE REFORMATION PERIOD**

### **4.4.1 Martin Luther and John Calvin**

Martin Luther in his catechetical work adopted a devotional approach to his interpretation of the Lord's Prayer (Pelikan 1956: x). He describes the Lord's Prayer as prayer of prayers and makes a clear distinction between the Lord's Prayer and other forms of prayers. For him, "our will and honor are more sought [in pagan prayer forms] than the will and honor of God" (Lenker 1907:251, Pelikan 1956: x). Luther suggests that the Lord's Prayer in general, addresses the welfare of God's children with the first to third petitions being the highest of all the benefits we receive from God (Pelikan 1956:146). His division of the prayer into seven petitions does not differ from that of his predecessors. On the preface, "Our Father who art in heaven", Luther, like the church fathers, especially his role model, St. Augustine, argued that it expresses an intimate relationship between God and His children. Using it therefore, is a confession of "our consciousness of being children of God and thereby it exerts a powerful influence upon him" (Lenker 1907: 208-209, 251-252). He however, embraced both the exclusive and inclusive views of the preface. He perceived God as the Father of all in one breadth and in another argues that the term "Father" is so lofty a word that "it cannot be spoken out of the nature of man, unless the spirit of Christ is in the heart" (Lenker 1907:252, 255). This middle position taken by Luther

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<sup>209</sup> See also Proverbs 1:17, Psalm 65:11, Deuteronomy 8:3, 15:2.

<sup>210</sup> This theological position might be informed by his understanding of James 1:13-15.

regarding who has the right to call God “our Father” is occasioned by the intolerant posture of the Papacy on almost all theological issues. Apparently no one thinks theologically right apart from the Pope. In Luther’s view, the second part of the preface “who art in heaven”, is what motivates the children of God to communicate with Him and in turn, receive His mercy. In other words, addressing God as the one who dwells in heaven betrays what Luther describes as our “lamentable need and misery” – it arouses our heartfelt longing for God (Lenker 1907:252). Luther paused to vent his frustration on the ecclesiastical authority of his time who held on to the form of prayers to the detriment of the essence, as expressed in the following sentence: “So there are priests and ministers who rush through the established hours of prayer without a trace of devotion” (Lenker 1907:253; Pelikan 1956:138). He did not spare the laity either regarding their attitude towards prayer, stating that there is one who “stands in church and turns over the leaves, counts the rosary beads until they rattle, and with his heart thinks of something which has no bearing whatever upon what he is confessing with his lips. This is no prayer”, he said (Lenker 1907:253).

Calvin’s interpretation of the Lord’s Prayer can be found in his commentary on the harmony of the gospels (Morrison 1972) and his *Institute of the Christian religion* (McNeill 1977). He divided the prayer into six petitions with the first three relating to God’s glory while the second part relates to things necessary for salvation. He also finds a correlation between the Lord’s Prayer and the Decalogue saying “as God’s Laws is divided into two tables, the first containing the claims of devotion, the second of charity, so in prayers Christ tells us to consider and search out in one part the glory of God, and then allows us in another part to think of ourselves” (Morrison 1972:205). Calvin in both his *Institute of the Christian religion* and harmony of the Gospels, viewed the first part of the invocation “Our Father” as relational, “an open access” to His love and kindness and power (Morrison 1972:206). This relationship, however, is not exclusive; it includes the redeemed and the yet to be redeemed (McNeil 1977:900-901). This view however, contradicts with his view on the same subject in his harmony on the gospels published later, where he posits, “it would be foolish, nay crazy, presumption to invoke God as Father, except as far as we know ourselves to be ingrafted into the body of Christ as sons, we conclude that there is no other means of prayer than to come to God relying upon His mediation” (Morrison 1972:206). This position is not very different from Luther’s view that although God is

Father for all, no one calls Him Father without being inspired by the Spirit. His understanding of the second half of the invocation suggests God's transcendence, superintendence and Divine Providence over the entire *cosmos*. In other words, "all things are subject to His command, the world and all that is in it are in the palm of His hand, His influence is spread on all sides, everything is ordered by His Providence" (Morrison 1972:206).

Luther describes the first petition "hallowed be thy name", as the greatest of all the petitions and that "if one properly hallowed the name of God he would not need to pray the Lord's Prayer any more" (Lenker 1907: 256, 262). His interpretation is not different from the church fathers, particularly Cyprian and his tutor Tertullian who hold common hermeneutical view that the object of the hallowing of God's name is the church and the world (Lenker 1907:256). The name of God, Luther added, signifies His honour and praise (Lenker 1907:210, 211, 265).<sup>211</sup> In his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, which was written and published at the heat of the Reformation<sup>212</sup>, he indicated that God's name was being desecrated by "the abominable belief of the Pope, Turks, the factious [schismatic] spirits and heretics" (Hay 1892:254, Pelikan1956:146). Calvin's understanding of this petition follows that of Luther, stating that the hallowing of God's name has direct correlation with "our great shame". He acknowledged that although God's name is hallowed in itself, it is "obscured partly by our ungratefulness ... ill will, and ... our presumption and insane impudence" (McNeill 1977:903). He however added that the ungodliness and sacrilege of humankind cannot tarnish the name of God. The prayer, therefore, according to Calvin, suggests that "God's name is unworthily snatched from him on earth" and that if His worshippers cannot assert it, they should show concern for it in prayers. The petition by implication calls for "all impiety which has besmirched this holy name [to] perish and be wiped out; that all detractions and mockeries which dim this hallowing or diminished it may be banished; and that in silencing all sacrileges, God may shine forth more and more in his majesty" (McNeill 1977:904). The petition is to the effect that "God's glory may shine out over the world, and its qualities be well spoken of amongst men" (Morrison 1972:207).

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<sup>211</sup> Luther explained to his catechumens that the names of all virtues are the names of God. God's name, he added, can be profaned through abuse, theft and robbery. Hence anyone who does not practice virtues is a thief and robber of God's name and honour. See Lenker (1907:256-257, 260).

<sup>212</sup> Luther wrote his "Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount" on November 9, 1530 and was first published in 1532.



Touching on the second petition, Luther alludes to the dualism of the kingdom – the kingdom of the devil and the kingdom of God. His understanding of the kingdom of God is that it is the kingdom of “righteousness and truth – where there is no sin in us anymore, but all our members, powers and faculties are subject to God and in his service” (Lenker 1907:269, Pelikan 1956:146). This he however, states, that the kingdom can be accomplished “when no sin rules with us, when Christ alone rules with his grace” (Lenker 1907:269; see also Hay 1892:255). Furthermore, the kingdom of God means “peace, soberness, humility, chastity, love and every virtue; or the absence of all wrath, hate, bitterness, unchastity and the like” (Lenker 1907:211, 212, 270). The prayer for the will of God to be done on earth, as it is in heaven, just like all others, is a confession of failure on the part of believers to do God’s will (Lenker 1907: 272). In other words, the fact that Jesus asked his followers to pray for God’s will to be done is an indication that they have failed to do His will. The prayer for the coming of kingdom of God to Calvin is a call for God to rule in the hearts of those who “pledge themselves to his righteousness in order to aspire to a heavenly life” (McNeill 1977:905). This is achieved in two ways: correcting every carnal desire that war against the flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit, and bringing our minds into total submission to His rule voluntarily (Morrison 1972:207). Calvin also recognized the eschatological dimension of the kingdom of God when he states;

while we submit to his righteousness, he makes us sharers in his glory. This comes to pass when, with ever-increasing splendor, he displays his light and truth, by which the darkness and falsehoods of Satan’s kingdom vanish, are extinguished, and pass away. Meanwhile, he protects his own, guides them by the help of his Spirit into uprightness, and strengthens them to perseverance. But he overthrows the wicked conspiracies of enemies, unravels their stratagems and deceits, opposes their malice, represses their obstinacy, until at last he slays Antichrist with the Spirit of his mouth, and destroys all ungodliness by the brightness of his coming<sup>213</sup>

(Calvin, in McNeill 1977:906)

The doing of the will of God, therefore, Luther further argued, “is the keeping of His commandments”, that is, the mortification of our old nature (Lenker 1907:273-274). He prescribed two ways of mortifying the old nature: suppression and restraining of our evil inclinations through fasting, watching, prayer and perseverance, almsgiving and kind services to

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<sup>213</sup> See Morrison (1972:208) for similar view expressed by Calvin on the coming of the kingdom of God.

our neighbours (Lenker 1907:213, 214, 274); and by doing God's will through our adversaries as noted by Luther. God, he asserts, uses our adversaries to destroy our will for His will to be fulfilled in our lives. Hence the greatest evil in humans, Luther concludes, is self-will which is described as the utmost part of our faculties, which when surrendered, will result in freeing us from sin (Lenker 1907:279, 280). Calvin's exposition follows in similar frame; that God's will is sometimes done through the machinations of the devil. In other words, He uses the will of Satan to accomplish His divine will. The second part of the petition "as it is in heaven", according to Calvin, places a responsibility on God's children to be eager to carry out the divine will on earth while it is being carried out in heaven by the angels (McNeill 1977:906-907).

Luther shares the views of the church fathers in his interpretation of the petition for bread, that is, he spiritualised the bread to mean the holy word of God which quenches the spiritual thirst and hunger of humankind (Lenker 1907:280-281).<sup>214</sup> The German translation is "Our daily bread give us today" and according to Luther, it is a prayer that offers peace and comfort in the midst of tribulations. For him, the petition is said when one who is suffering to the point of death cries to God for strength through the mighty word of God (Lenker 1907:283-284). Luther justified his spiritual interpretation of this petition by arguing that for the bread that satisfies human's physical hunger needs not be asked for because the needs of all creatures are met through divine providence (Lenker 1907:284). Luther, like the church fathers had no difficulty with the translation of the word ἐπιούσιον because of their spiritual position taken regarding the nature of the bread – an immaterial bread. He agreed with the variety of interpretations assigned to the word, claiming that they all suit the nature of the bread (Lenker 1907:285). The bread is therefore prayed for so that at any material moment that the believer finds the self in tribulation, they will eat it for strength to overcome. Noted for his criticism towards the priesthood of the time, Luther observed that the lack of spiritual bread in the life of the Christian is as a result of not praying for it, and consequently it produces "unlearned bishops, priests, and monks who are able to give us nothing" – who have been called to feed the laity with the Word of God (Lenker 1907:286). Luther in his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, however, softened his stance on the incorporeality of the bread in this petition and described it as "food, a healthy body, good

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<sup>214</sup> Although Luther understood the bread to be food for the body, he emphasized on its spiritual essence (Lenker 1907:293).

weather, house, home, wife, children, good government, peace ...” (Hay 1892:255; Pelikan 1956:147). Calvin on the other hand does not share the view of Luther and the church fathers on the supersubstantial interpretation of the bread, describing their reason for spiritualizing the bread as “absurd” and a sharp departure from what the text meant (Morrison 1972: 209; McNeill 1977:908). Calvin’s literal interpretation makes ἐπιούσιον corporeal, and must be provided daily. The use of ἡμέρα in the petition therefore, in the words of Calvin “is added to stop excessive greed” (Morrison 1972:209-210; McNeill 1977:908).

Luther understands the forgiveness of sins in the fifth petition in two ways – inwardly and outwardly, visibly and invisibly. In his words, “God forgives sins secretly, without our being sensible of it; just as he imputes and retains sin to many men who neither perceive nor regard it. Secondly, God forgives sins publicly and so that we feel it; just as he imputes sin to some so that they feel it; for instance in the form of penalties and terrors felt by conscience” (Lenker 1907:294).<sup>215</sup> In other words, since the justice of God demands that sin be punished at all cost, God forgives sin but allows us to face its consequences both inwardly by either afflicting us or putting fear in us. Luther describes the petition as “the mightiest letter of indulgence<sup>216</sup> which ever came upon earth, and which, moreover, is not sold for money but is freely given to everybody” (Lenker 1907:295-296). For Calvin sins and debts used in Matthean and Lukan accounts are not mutually exclusive. He added that debt is used due to the penalty associated with it, a penalty which was paid by Christ through propitiation and expiation (Morrison 1972:211; McNeill 1977:910). Calvin situated his exposition within the context of the fundamentalism of his time, especially Libertines, otherwise known as “the Spirituals” who hold the theological view that perfection is primarily attained once one receives forgiveness through Christ’s atoning sacrifice and there is therefore no need asking for pardon, describing such theological posturing as “childish” (McNeill 1977:91-912). On the second half of the petition,

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<sup>215</sup> For further explanation on this petition, see Hay (1892:255-256).

<sup>216</sup> Whilst the sale of indulgence was motivated by the raising of funds to build the St. Peter’s Basilica, God’s forgiveness was graciously and freely given to both rich and poor without asking for anything in return. See Lenker (1907:295-296). Whilst almsgiving for the construction of St. Peter’s *Basilica* was the condition for the offering of indulgence, God’s indulgence in the fifth petition, according to Luther, “if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” See Matthew 6:14-15, and Lenker (1907:296).

Calvin appeals to Lukan account, indicating that the forgiveness is continuous and not a one-time forgiveness.

The question that Luther sought to address in the sixth petition is the question of why God permits His children to be tempted to sin. This he posits

that man may learn to know himself and God. To know himself – that he can do nothing but sin and evil. To know God – that God’s grace is mightier than all creatures. Thus man shall learn to despise himself and to praise and glorify God’s grace. For there have been those who have tried to withstand unchastity by their own powers, by fasting and work. They have broken down their bodies thereby and yet have accomplished nothing. For evil desire is extinguished by nothing except the heavenly dew and rain of God’s grace. Fasting, work and watching must indeed accompany it; but they are not sufficient.

(Lenker 1907:306; see also Hay 1892:256)

Another question Luther sought to answer regarding temptation is its source. According to him, the source of temptation is both external, that is, “from the world and the devil”, and internal, that is, “from our own flesh” (Pelikan 1956:147). He concludes his exposition with the last petition “but deliver us from evil, Amen.” His interpretation, however, is not different from his mentor St. Augustine, and Cyprian, who did not personify evil. He however, applied to “strife, famine, war, pestilence, plagues, and also hell and purgatory, and all ills which cause pain to body and soul” (Lenker 1907:307). He emphasized that the petition is for deliverance from evil and not escaping from it. He noted: Inasmuch, then, as this life is nothing but a wretched, evil state, which renders temptation inevitable, we should pray for deliverance from evil for the purpose that through the cessation of temptation and sin, God’s will be done and his kingdom come, to the praise and honor of his holy name (Lenker 1907:307).

Calvin had in his preliminary comment on the Lord’s Prayer observed a correlation between the Lord’s Prayer and the Decalogue. The sixth petition in his view, “corresponds to the promise that the law is to be engraved upon our hearts, but because we obey God not without continual warfare and hard and trying struggles, here we seek to be equipped with such armor and defended with such protection that we may be able to win the victory” (McNeill 1977:912-913). His interpretation of temptation is that “[God] in His own way... actually leads men into

temptation”, citing the evil spirit which God sent to torment Saul (Morrison 1972:213). He was however, quick to add that God is not the author of evil, saying that “His sending men along the way of the wicked is not reckless tyranny, but the execution of His righteous – though obscure – judgments” (Morrison 1972:213). The temptation, he observed, comes from left and right and in varied forms. On the right comes “riches, power, honors, while the left presents itself in the form of poverty, disgrace, contempt, afflictions, and the like” (McNeill 1977:913). On the second part of the petition, Calvin observes, “it makes very little difference whether we understand by the word “evil” the devil or sin.” He added, “indeed, Satan himself is the enemy who lies in wait for our life ... moreover, he is armed with sin to destroy us. This, then, is our plea; that we may not be vanquished or overwhelmed by any temptations but may stand fast by the Lord’s power against all hostile powers that attack us” (Morrison 1972:213).

Luther and Calvin’s comment on the doxology attest to the fact that they are familiar with the original manuscripts but find their German and French translations which contain the doxology liturgically appealing (Pelikan 1956:147). This assertion is evident in Calvin’s comment on the doxology:

it is strange that this doxology, closing the prayer, which it fits so well, has been omitted in the Latin [Vulgate]. It was added not only to warm our hearts to press towards the glory of God, and warm us what should be the goal of all our supplications, but also to tell us that all our prayers, here set down for us have no other foundation than God alone, in case we should put any weight upon our own merits.

(Morrison 1972:213)

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

The Lord’s Prayer, as a petitionary prayer, follows the structure of the Greco-Roman religious prayers – invocation and petition. The contents, unlike its Greco-Roman counterpart, assert the omnipresence of God and so does not require anyone to call Him to come and be with him/her. He is not like Baal who is believed to appear when devotees call with tumultuous verbosity. The religious, philosophical and imperial milieu of the Greco-Roman world, in which the Lord’s Prayer functioned, aided its understanding, interpretation and theology.<sup>217</sup> The advent of the

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<sup>217</sup> Brown (2004:65) has distinguished between Roman prayer during and after the imperial era.

Lord's Prayer in the Greco-Roman world redefined the meaning of God and prayer to the Greco-Roman converts. However, one must also acknowledge the grounds of religious reorientation that philosophy undertook in ensuring that the content of the Lord's Prayer resonates to some extent, with the religious worldview of the people. In summary, Christianity in the Greco-Roman world, thrived on philosophy and prayer was its window.

It is obvious from the lexical and syntactic analysis that the aorist imperative is the dominant voice in the composition of the prayer in both Matthew and Luke. The question of origin remains unanswered since all scholarly work on the subject is speculative (Bezt 1995:370-374; Luz 1989:370-372). Observing the prayer critically, one comes to the conclusion that it addresses both spiritual and material needs of people who are called 'sons' of God. The invocation projects God as a transcendent being who has a relationship with those who call Him their Father. The hallowing of His name in the first petition is a call which places a moral obligation on Himself and those He is 'Fathering'. The acknowledgement of His holiness is implied and therefore not questionable – God is Holy. The kingdom and the will of God are clearly eschatological themes which when understood within the context of the Παρουσία, suggests an urgent call for its arrival. Matthew's use of οὐρανοῦς in the invocation and the first and fourth petitions is interesting. Whereas the term is pluralized in the invocation, it is singular in the fourth petition. It raises the theological question about the dwelling place of God; is it in οὐρανοῦς or οὐρανοῦς? But it may also suggest that the two can be used interchangeably. This discrepancy may have accounted for Luke's omission of the term in his version. The obscurity of ἐπιούσιος which literally suggests that the bread for tomorrow be given today, leaves the interpretation of the word to the discretion of the exegete. It's usage in the New Testament or Greek literature could have provided us with some hint to its meaning but it is a word which is mentioned only in the Lord's Prayer. The only source of understanding the word has been its etymology (Robertson 1930:53, Ernest 1994:55-57). When viewed from spiritual perspectives, it renders the entire petitions eschatological/sacramental. But if the assertion that the last three petitions address the material needs of the petitioners, then our understanding of ἐπιούσιος, πονηρός, and πειρασμός in the last three petitions would all be understood in their literal sense. It is worth concluding with this observation that the amanuensis attempt to render the entire prayer in an eschatological

mode may have accounted for ambiguity of the petition. The spiritualization of biblical texts through the ages is evidence of this assertion.

The various interpretations of the Lord's Prayer by the church fathers were aided by nature, philosophy and allegory in making the prayer relevant to their audiences. They also appear to share common theological views on all the petitions of the prayer. Both eschatological and anthropomorphic themes run through the various interpretations of the prayer. In other words, the prayer deals with both what will happen here and now and at the end of the age. The βασιλεία του θεού, which is central to the Lord's Prayer, was understood from both territorial and moral domains of human life. God does not only rule in the heart of men, He is expected to come and rule physically as King over all His creation eternally. There are however, issues of harmony and consistency when it comes to some key theological themes of the prayer. This has affected the construction of a common theology for the entire prayer. A careful examination of the various interpretations reveals a tension among the church fathers on theological propriety which has the tendency of weakening the body of Christ. The church fathers were not unaware of the varieties of misinterpretation of biblical passages during their time which have the tendency of misleading and confusing their followers, and drawing some away from the faith. The evidence from their interpretation of the Lord's Prayer suggests that their disagreements on theological themes within the prayer were not spiritually but philosophically inspired. A few observations have been made on their opposing theological views on the Lord's Prayer. On the invocation for instance, one finds a sharp contrast between Tertullian and Origen on the corporeality of God. It appears Tertullian, in his attempt to making the Judeo-Christian Scriptures relevant to the Greco-Roman religion, emphasized the corporeality of God while Origen sought to maintain tradition. The implication of the idea of the corporeality of God is what Brennan described as "anyone who asserts that God is somehow corporeal has moved from the faith, and encourages others to do the same" (Brennan 2015:125). The entire theology of the Lord's Prayer is premised on God and His relationship with those He has called out. Therefore, if our idea of the Holy is defective, everything about Him also becomes flawed. Another point to note about the hermeneutical work of the church fathers on the Lord's Prayer is their points of divergence on whether or not God is Father for all and hears the prayers of all who call on Him. The two contexts of the prayer – the Sermon on the Mount and on the Plain clearly point to the

disciples as the original recipients of the prayer. It is therefore reasonable to state that although God hears the prayers of all who diligently call upon Him, the two contexts of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew and Luke betray an exclusive interpretation. When it comes to the question of forgiveness of sins, the church fathers seem to be divided in their theological views. Whereas some bishops hold that certain sins such as idolatry, adultery and murder, when committed are punishable by excommunication, Cyprian would rather take a softer stance by reinstating those who through persecution have relapsed. Diverse theological stance such as this has implications on the unity of the body of Christ. The church fathers also have divergent views on the request for bread in the fifth petition, temptation and deliverance from evil (One). Whereas some viewed the bread as substantial, others interpreted it as supersubstantial which must be received daily. On the question of temptation, it is either God who leads His children into it or it is Satan. These opposing views have the tendency of redefining the theology on God and the problem of evil.

Clement of Alexandria's theological views on the Lord's Prayer is intriguing. If Brown's (2004) hypothesis about his rejection of the prayer is anything to go by, then one may conclude that his outright rejection of the prayer may be as a result of the context in which he theologised – philosophy and Gnosticism.<sup>218</sup> It appears Clement would not comment on any biblical text if it is not relevant to his audiences. His view on the fatherhood of God, for instance, was due to his gnostic view that God is only understood by reason (*Logos*) and not anthropomorphism. The *Logos* motif is the basis for interpreting the other petitions of the Lord's Prayer including the sanctification of God's name; the coming of His kingdom and the doing of His will; the request for daily bread; forgiveness of sins; the leading into temptation; and the deliverance from evil. The lesson Clement presents to us is contextualised theology, that is, the notion that if a biblical text does not apply to a particular context, it must not be used. This sounds apostatic but that has been the praxis of Christian theology over the centuries; for a particular biblical text to speak the language of a particular community, the text must be interpreted in a manner that appeal to the people or else that text is reckoned as dead (Bultmann 1952: 164).

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<sup>218</sup> Bultmann (1952:164) observed that "in the Hellenistic world it was a historical necessity that the gospel should be translated into a terminology with which that world was familiar-this gospel of the one true God and of Jesus the Messiah-Son-of-Man with its eschatological message of imminent judgment and salvation, all of which had at first been embodied in the concepts of the Old Testament-Jewish tradition."



Luther and Calvin in their interpretations of the Lord's Prayer sought to build on the prevailing ecclesiastical status-quo on the interpretation of Scripture. They generally shared common theological views on how the prayer should be interpreted with a few exceptions. They both viewed the Lord's Prayer as a liturgical and devotional material and so interpreted it in a way that would enrich the spirituality of their audience. Considering the context of his interpretation, Luther applied the first petition of the Lord's Prayer to the monopoly of the papacy and the entire priesthood on almost all theological matters, making them the repository on matters of the Divine. He was also critical of the attitude of the laity towards prayer, describing it as mere ritual which lacks dedication. Luther at one breadth spiritualized the bread in the fourth petition and call it the Word of God, and in another he interprets it figuratively. Calvin on the other hand would always maintain a literal interpretation. His interpretation of the fifth petition was also influenced by his theological view on indulgence received in the church for forgiveness of sins. Calvin understands the Lord's Prayer in the light of the Decalogue and therefore interpreted it as such. His interpretation of the fifth petition like Luther, was influenced by the Libertine theology of a one-time forgiveness of sins propounded at the time, hence his literal position on the petition. Both Luther and Calvin agree that God is the one who permits His children to be tempted to sin.

The investigation into the interpretation of the Lord's Prayer from the first century to the era of the Reformation suggests that although the texts remain static, the fluidity of its interpretation and translation has been greatly influenced by the contexts in which it was received. It thus appears though, that the Lord's Prayer was originally given to the followers of Christ in anticipation of the Parousia. This view is evident in the third to sixth petitions where the coming of the kingdom, petition for bread, forgiveness of debts, the deliverance from evil things through protection against fallen into temptation, were all being petitioned in anticipation of the Parousia. The quest for relevance therefore necessitated the layers of interpretations throughout the Christian epochs. The introduction of the historical – critical approach to the interpretation of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures in general and the Lord's Prayer in particular in the centuries following the medieval era has thrown more light on our understanding of the Scriptures in terms of what it meant to its original recipients and what it means for today's Christian. In the following chapter, the Lord's Prayer will be explored in a new language and method that is

foreign to the Biblical World the world thereafter – the Ewe-Ghanaian context using the Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutical approach. It will view the Lord's Prayer from the perspective of its translation from the source language (Greek) to the receptive language (Ewe), interpretations, and relevance.

## Chapter 5

### A critical analyses of existing Ewe translations, and Ewe commentary on the Lord's Prayer

#### 5.1 THE BIBLE IN EWE – AN OVERVIEW

The liturgical life of the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian is hinged on the Bible, order of worship and hymn (Ewe Liturgi 1928: III). The translation of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures into Ewe was a missionary initiative, aided by the indigenous<sup>219</sup> people of the land about a decade after their arrival in 1847 in the then British Togoland. This vision was occasioned by the need to communicate the gospel in the language that the people understand. The initial translation works they undertook include *Nya nyuie h'akpale le wegbe me* (The four gospels in Ewe, 1861) by Schlegel and John Wright<sup>220</sup> which was revised as *Nyanyuie we agbale ene le Ewe gbe me* (The four gospels in Ewe) by Merz and his team, published by the Bremen Bible Society in 1874 in Stuttgart. They also translated *Paulo kple Petro kple Jakobo kpakple Juda we Epistolowo le Ewe gbe me* (The epistles of Paul, Peter, James and Jude in Ewe), published in 1875, *Yoshua kple Wornudrorlawo kple Rut we agbalewo le Ewe gbe me* (Joshua, Judges and Ruth in Ewe, 1875), and *Samuel we agbale eve le Ewe gbe me* (The two books of Samuel in Ewe, 1876). Merz was also reported to have worked on the translation of Genesis (1877), 1 and 2 Kings (1878), and Isaiah and Jeremiah (*Yesaya Nyagblola le We gbe me*, 1889; see Ekem 2011:125-126). Johannes Knüsli and his team of natives in 1889 also translated Isaiah and Jeremiah in Ewe (Wiegräbe 1968:17). Wiegräbe (1968: 22-23) commended Johann Konrad Hermann Weyhe (1861-1870) and Aaron Onipayede for their contribution to the translation of the Acts of the Apostles and

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<sup>219</sup> The intellectual capabilities of the natives in the translation work were measured by their ability to speak about six different languages. See Wiegräbe (1968: 27) and Ekem (2011:128).

<sup>220</sup> Benhard Schlegel was one of the North German missionaries who was known to be the father of Ewe literacy. He worked for 4 years 8 months, married at Anyako, one of the mission stations along Ghana's costal belt. He died in 1859 barely five months after his marriage and was buried at Keta another mission station along the costal belt. He wrote many books in Ewe in addition to his translation work. John Wright was "an angel sent from heaven" to help the missionaries as their interpreter. Though a native of Accra, he understood Ewe and English due to his education through the Basel missionaries in Christianburg castle. He also helped the missionaries in commercial and legal transactions as well (Wiegräbe 1968:23-26).

Psalms, published in 1867 and 1871 respectively (Ekem 2011:122).<sup>221</sup> Other translation works include *Mose we agbale gbato si woyo na be Genesis le Ewe gbe me* (The first book of Moses known as Genesis, in Ewe, 1870), and *Mose we agbale evelea si woyo na be Exodus le We gbe me* (The second book of Moses known as Exodus in Ewe language, 1877) by Binder and his team. The same year also witnessed the revised editions of *Epistolo si wonlo do de Hebritowo, Johane we Epistolo gbato, evelea kple etolea, Jesu Kristo we nyadedefia si wode fia Johane le Wegbe me* (The epistle written to the Hebrews, 1, 2, and 3 John, Jesus Christ's revelation to John in Ewe language). Another translation work in that same year was *Nubabla yeye we agbalewo kata le Wegbe me* (All the New Testament books in Ewe language), the first translation of the New Testament from Greek to Ewe, edited by Merz, and reprinted in 1898 coordinated by Jakob Spieth and G. Bäuble (Ekem 2011:127).

The first Bible manuscript translated in Ewe was fully completed by Jacob Spieth and Ludwig Adzaklo in 1911 and printed in Germany under the auspices of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1915.<sup>222</sup> In 1916, 200 copies of the publication reached the soil of the British Togoland, Keta to be precise, amidst jubilant celebration (Wiegräbe 1968: 42-44; Ekem 2011:139-140). Ekem (2015:170-171), cites the translation theory employed in translating the Ewe Bible in Adzaklo's farewell speech marking the successful completion of the Ewe Bible project:

[T]here are certainly different options regarding how Bible translation should be carried out. Some would opt for a word for word translation whilst others would be more inclined towards a free translation. The question now arises: 'How was the Ewe Bible actually translated?' I can answer the question as follows: 'if one were to take portions of our translation and translate them literally into German, that would not make any sense to the German ... We have translated according to the thought pattern of the Ewes which is different from [the thought pattern] of the German and that of the Hebrews.

(Ekem 2015:170-171)

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<sup>221</sup> Ekem (2011:120) also reports that J. Binder, mentioned in Wiegräbe (1968:25) to have contributed to the translation of Genesis, collaborated with the native converts in the translation of *Apostolowo we dorworworwo we nutinya le Ewegbe me* (The story of the works of the Apostles in Ewe), published in 1867.

<sup>222</sup> The following also provided assistance in reviewing the manuscript in Togo where it was sent to: Rev. Andreas Aku, Samuel Quist, Joseph Tosu, and Joseph Kudese. See Ekem (2011:136).

One finds in the above remarks the Eugene Nida's twentieth century dynamic or functional equivalence translation theory which thrives on the principles of:

1. reproducing the message of the source language;
2. seeking equivalence of the message rather than conserving the form of the utterance;
3. using the closest natural equivalence;
4. giving priority to meaning over structure; and
5. preserving style although it is secondary to content.<sup>223</sup>

Further revisions were made to the New Testament and the full Bible in 1929 by Westermann. In the following year, the revised New Testament with Psalm was published as *Nubabla yeye la kple Psalmowo fe agbale* (The New Testament and the book of Psalms). Another revision of the full Bible was published in 1931 as *Biblia alo Dɔŋlɔ Kɔkɔe la le Evegbe me* (The Bible or the Holy Writing in Ewe) under the supervision of Däuble and Westermann. Then in 1953, the large print of *Nyanyuie la, abe alesi Marko ŋlɔe ene* (The Good News as Mark has written) was issued (Ekem 2011:145). Currently the following revised and new versions of the Ewe Bible have been published: *Biblia* (Bible, 1931), the *Nubabla Yeye La* (The New Testament, 1990), a revised version of the *Biblia* published in 2010 by the Bible Society of Ghana, and *Agbenya La* (The Living Word), translated from the New Living Translation and published in 2006 by the International Bible Society-Africa. It is worthy of note that the Lord's Prayer in Ewe existed in oral form and was recited at liturgical gatherings prior to the translation of the Bible into Ewe (Wiegrabe 1936:16).

What this chapter intends doing is to critically examine the text of the Lord's Prayer in the various Ewe translations and their theological implications to the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian. This will lead to the production of a commentary of the Lord's Prayer in Ewe with an English gloss.

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<sup>223</sup> This translation theory is an alternative to the Literalist/Formal Equivalence translation theory applied in the translation of the King James Version of the Bible. Both theories lay emphasis on the language and meaning of the source language with the literalist equivalence translation focusing on word groups while the dynamic equivalence translation dwells on clauses (see Porter & Boda 2009:122-128). Other translation approaches have been proposed which are viewed as complementing the literalist and dynamic equivalence theories. These include functionalist theory, discourse analysis, relevance and descriptive approaches, and cultural/postcolonial theories. These translation models have sought to, as it were, raise the level or units of text analysis from the word groups and clauses, to clause complex (in the case of functionalist translation), discourse (in the case of discourse analysis), context of situation (in the case of relevance theory), and context of culture (in the case of cultural/postcolonial theory; Porter & Boda 2009: 131-142).

## 5.2 THE PLACE OF THE LORD'S PRAYER IN THE EWE LITURGY

The current Ewe liturgy, published in 2016 for the Ewe Christian community of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana and Togo, was the outcome of the effort made by the two sister churches headed by natives to improve upon the existing liturgy which was first published in 1877 by the German Protestant Church and translated into Ewe by the Northern German Missionaries (Meyer 1999: 23). It was revised 50 years later and practiced for 89 years until 2016 when the new edition was published. A critical examination of the two liturgical documents reveals that both liturgies are the same in structure and content with a few variations. Both liturgies are divided into three main sections covering *gbedodoḡawo* (prayers), *Sakramentowo kple ḡoḡo bubuwo* (sacraments and supplementary order of worship), and *kpekpeḡenyawo* (Miscellaneous). The variations are that the new liturgy begins with *sḡlemeḡu ḡoḡowo* (order of worship) which includes the sacraments and others, *ḡoḡede asi* (commissioning) *habḡḡowo ḡomeḡoḡoanyi* (inauguration of groups in the church), *nyadzḡdzḡowo* (Events) and *dukḡme ḡkekenyuiwo* (national or community anniversaries).

The order of worship comprises *Kwasida sḡleme ḡoḡo* (Sunday worship order-long and short), consisting *geḡeḡeme* (procession), *gbedonahame* (salutation), *ha* (opening hymn) which is sung standing, *dodoḡedzi* (exaltation; a Psalm of praise). The Psalm of praise is followed by the congregational response: *Yehowa mia Mawu xḡ miafe kafukafu kple akpedada to Viwo mia Afetḡ Yesu Kristo dzi*. Amen! Translated literally as, Jehovah or God, receive our praise and thanksgiving through your Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen! It is then followed by another *ha* (hymn) with the congregation sitting. After that the liturgist reads *Mawu fe lḡḡnu* (the will of God) – a prescriptive passage with a hymn as the congregational response. The liturgist then confesses the sins of the congregation and the congregation responds immediately with an appropriate hymn followed by *amenuvenyawo* (words of grace). Prayer is then said by the liturgist either extemporaneously or from the liturgy book. The prayer comprises *kafukafu kple dodoḡedzi* (praise and adoration), and *akpedada* (thanksgiving). It is then followed by *xḡsemevuvu* (affirmation of faith in the words of the apostle) standing, and a hymn. Since *hadzihawo* (groups) are the spine of the missionary church, they are called upon to sing in

between church announcements.<sup>224</sup> This is then followed by *gbedodoḍa le Mawunya ḡḡ* (sermon prayer), and lections with the congregational response *Yehowa mía Mawu na dzi nyanu mí bena míase wò nyawo ḡḡme eye míawḡ de wo dzi*. Amen! Translated literary as, Jehovah our God, grant us the heart of wisdom so that we will understand your words and practice them. The sermon is then delivered preceded by the sermon hymn. After the sermon delivery, time is allocated for personal introspection on the word of God before the collection of offering which is done with Ewe Christian choruses accompanied by traditional drumming and dancing. This is then followed by dedication of offering, a hymn with the congregation seated, and the closing prayer (intercessory). After the closing prayer, the congregation stands to recite the Lord's Prayer, followed by the benediction, doxology, closing hymn and recession.

The above liturgy seeks to address some liturgical deficiencies in the missionary liturgy which focused on German Protestant worship order with its attendant rigidity and boredom (Meyer 1999:20, 23,121, 142). In the missionary liturgy for instance, a typical Sunday worship service is made up of hymns, sermon prayer, the sermon itself, prayer after the sermon, the Lord's Prayer, benediction and dismissal. The liturgy allows only hymns from the Ewe hymnal and forbids the use of local choruses, the clapping of hands and use of traditional drumming and dancing (Meyer 1999:68). Innovations in the liturgical practice of the church came after the natives began to head the church. The introduction of contemporary Christian music into the Church from the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the pressure from Pentecostalism has also changed the face of worship in the Church. An important component of the liturgy is prayer. However, prayer is mostly said by the liturgist in the old liturgy; the entire congregation prays only the Lord's Prayer together (Meyer 1999:143). In the new liturgy, however, provision is made for the individual to pray extemporaneously as in the prayer of intercession in addition to the Lord's Prayer which is prayed collectively. It must however be noted, that although individual prayer is not encouraged on Sunday worship services, it is done at prayer meetings and in private. Nonetheless, the Lord's Prayer continues to dominate the liturgical life of the Ewe Christian; it is recited during sacraments of baptism and Eucharist, catechism, ordination, consecration of church agents, solemnization of matrimony, naming, burials, etc. Till today, many Christians –

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<sup>224</sup> One finds not less than five singing groups in a typical Evangelical Presbyterian Church. In the researcher's previous pastoral station, the singing groups number up to nine.

both Ewe and none Ewe – know no other prayer apart from the Lord’s Prayer. Their private prayers are incomplete without the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer. Those who do not recite it sees the prayer as a model prayer and would use the invocation and petitions as themes for their prayer – thanksgiving and adoration to God (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> petitions), confession of sins (5<sup>th</sup> petition), request for material needs (4<sup>th</sup> petition), and ‘spiritual warfare (6<sup>th</sup> petition).’ The Lord’s Prayer, in spite of its long period of existence, remains the sole guide to having fellowship with our Father who dwells in “the belly of the skies.”

### 5.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 5.3.1 Interview result

This section provides detail information on the findings of interviews conducted and open and close-ended questionnaires administered to test the knowledge of church members and leaders of six Ewe Christian denominations in Ghana on the Lord’s Prayer.<sup>225</sup> The results were based on the demographics of respondents and study objectives. The views of sixty respondents were sought on their general knowledge on the Lord’s Prayer, the translation and interpretation of the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew, a comparison between Matthew and Luke’s versions of the Lord’s Prayer, and a comparison between Matthew’s version of the prayer and Ewe traditional prayer-libation. Respondents’ views were also sought on the relevance of the Lord’s Prayer within the milieu of popular Ewe-Ghanaian Christian prayers. Out of the sixty respondents, fifty of them responded to the questionnaires in writing while ten were interviewed and their voices recorded and transcribed. The results were used to engage existing Ewe translations on the Lord’s Prayer.

**Table 1**

<b>Sex of respondents</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Female</b>	20	33.33
<b>Male</b>	40	66.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age of respondents</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>

<sup>225</sup> The Christian denominations are drawn from Catholic, Protestant, African Initiated Churches, Pentecostal/Charismatic from the following communities: Peki, Abor, Anloga, Volo, Ho, and Accra



18-39	30	50.0
40-60	25	41.7
61-71	4	6.7
72 and above	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Level of education</b>		
<b>Level of education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Primary school	1	1.7
Middle/JHS	-	-
Technical/vocational	2	3.3
Secondary school	6	10.0
Tertiary	31	51.7
Postgraduate	19	31.7
Other	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Religious affiliation</b>		
<b>Religious affiliation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Roman Catholic	3	5.0
Orthodox	5	8.3
Protestant	32	53.3
Pentecostal/Charismatic	18	30.0
African Initiated Church	2	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Position in church</b>		
<b>Position in church</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Pastor	15	25.0
Group leader	26	43.3
Church member	17	28.3
Other	2	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Respondents' occupation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Civil servant	26	43.1
Public servant	1	1.7
Lecturer	2	3.3
Entrepreneur	1	1.7
Lay preacher	1	1.7
Psychologist	1	1.7
Minister of the gospel	6	10.0
Farmer	3	5.0
No occupation	3	5.0
Development worker	1	1.7
Finance/Accounts Officer	3	5.0
Analyst	3	5.0
Student	7	11.7
Investment analyst	1	1.7
Artisan	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of sixty respondents on the Lord's Prayer, 33.3% of which were females while 66.7% represents males. Fifty of these respondents expressed their views on the prayer through open-ended questionnaires while the remainder were interviewed with a recorder and transcribed. In addition, two focused group discussions were held with a group of church elders and youth. The age group of respondents were within the category of 18 and 72 years, with half of them (50%) being young people between the ages of 18 and 39. Twenty-five of the respondents representing 41.7% were between 40 and 60 years, while four representing 6.7% being between 61 and 71 years. Only one respondent representing 1.7% is above 72 years of age. In terms of respondents' level of education, 51.7% have tertiary education, 31.7% are postgraduates, 10% have secondary education, 3.3% fall within the category of technical/vocational education, and 1.7% each having primary and no education respectively.

On respondents' religious affiliation, 53.3% said they were Protestants, 30% from Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition, 8.3% Orthodox, 5% Roman Catholic, and 3.3% African Initiated Churches. Group leaders form the majority (43.3%) of the total respondents who hold positions in the church. They were followed by church members (28.3%), Pastors (25%) and 3.3% who did not indicate their positions. Respondents' occupations include civil servants (43.1%) who were in the majority and were predominantly school teachers. Others include ministers of the gospel (10%), lay preachers (1.7%), lecturers (3.3%), an entrepreneur (1.7%), a development worker (1.7%), finance/ account officers (5.0%), investment analysts (6.7%), a psychologist (1.7%), farmers (5.0%), an artisan (1.7%), students (11.7%), and the unemployed (5.0%).

**Table 2**

<b>Knowledge of the Lord's Prayer</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very well	51	85.0
Quite well	9	15.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As shown in table 2 above, all respondents seem to have general knowledge about the Lord's Prayer with 85.0% knowing the prayer very well while the remaining 15% know it quite well. A cross-tabulation of the respondents' demographics and their knowledge of the Lord's Prayer, showed that all respondents, regardless of their sex, age, levels of education, position in church, occupation, and religious affiliation, had some level of knowledge about the Lord's Prayer.

**Table 3**

<b>Translation of the invocation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Mía Tɔ, si le dzifowo	10	16.7
Mía Tɔ, si le dzifo	14	23.3
Mia Fofɔ si le dzifowo	13	21.7
Mia Fofɔ si le dzifo	19	31.7
Mia Fofɔ si wɔ dzifo	2	3.3

Mia Fofoga si le anyigba kple dzi fo nutowome dzi dum	2	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Interpretation of the invocation</b>		
<b>Interpretation of the invocation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
The giving of reverence to God the Creator who is holy and resides in the holiest place	19	31.7
God is a Father whose fatherhood includes everyone in the world	13	21.7
God is a Father who has control over the heaven and the earth	5	8.3
God is our heavenly Father in His majesty, holiness, and personality	3	5.0
God is our invisible Father who is all powerful and all knowing	9	15.0
God is above all who dwell physically in heaven but spiritually among men on earth	1	1.7
It means praise/ appellation to God	3	5.0
It about the supernaturality and transcendency of God	2	3.3
Adoption into God's family	5	8.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Translation of the first petition</b>		
<b>Translation of the first petition</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Woade bubu wò ñkò ñuti	4	6.7
Na wò ñkò ñuti nakò	27	45.0
Wò ñkò ñuti nakò	20	33.3
Bubu kple kafukafu na wò ñkò kòkòe la	3	5.0
Woakò wò ñkò ñuti	3	5.0
Kòkòe woana wo ñkò/nenò wò ñkò ñuti	2	3.3
Na woawò wò ñkò kòkòe	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Interpretation of the first petition</b>		
<b>Interpretation of the first petition</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
God should let His name be holy	9	15.0

God's name should be held in reverence as depicted in the third commandment	15	25.0
God's name be recognized as holy by every human under the sun	13	21.7
Our behaviour as children of God must honour/glorify Him	9	15.0
God's name deserves recognition because of the power and miracles associated with it	2	3.3
To magnify God as the Most High and acknowledge His holiness in obedience	4	6.7
It means God's name be praised, glorified, and worshipped always	8	13.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

On the translation of the invocation of the Lord's Prayer (Table 3), 31.7% rendered it *Mia Fofu*<sup>226</sup> *si le dzifo*, literally, our Father, the one in the belly of the height or sky. The remaining percentage was distributed among the remaining 41 respondents as follows: *Mia To, si le dzifo* (23.3%), *Mia To/, Mia Fofu, si le dzifowo* – Our Father, the one in the belly of the skies (16.7%/21.7%), *Mia Fofoga si le anyigba kple dzifo nutowome dzi dum* – Our Great Father, the one who is ruling over the earth and the regions of the belly of the skies (3.3%), , and *Mia Fofu si wo dzifo* – Our Father who made the belly of the sky (3.3%). Respondents assigned various meanings to the invocation of the Lord's Prayer: 31.7% percent said it meant “the giving of reverence to God who is holy and resides in the holiest” place; 21.7% said “God is a Father whose Fatherhood includes everyone in the world”; 15% said “God is our invisible Father who is all powerful and all knowing”; 8.3% said “God is a Father who has control over the heaven and the earth”; another 8.3% said it meant “our adoption into God's family”; 5.0% said “God is our heavenly Father in His majesty, holiness and personality”; another 5.0% interpreted it to mean “praise/appellation to God”; 3.3% said the invocation was all about “the supernaturalism and transcendence of God”; The remaining 1.7% viewed the invocation to mean that “God is above all and one who dwells physically in heaven but spiritually among men on earth.”

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<sup>226</sup> *Mia Fofu*, as already explained, is the designation for “our Father” by the Anlo Ewe while *Miatɔ* is used by Ewes living in the middle belt of the Volta Region. In the researcher's district, *Miɔ Tate* is used instead.

**On the translation of the first petition**, 45.0% rendered the text as *Na wò ñkò ñuti nakò*, literally, let your name be clean; 33.3% translated it as *wò ñkò ñuti nakò*, literally, your name be clean. Other translations included *Woade bubu wò ñkò ñuti* (6.7%), literally, your name be respected; *bubu kple kafukafu na wò ñkò kòkòe la* (5.0%), literally, respect and praise to your clean name; *Woakò wò ñkò ñuti* (5.0%), literally, they should make clean your name; *Kòkòe woana wo ñkò/nenò wò ñkò ñuti* (3.3%), literally, clean/holy be given to your name/ be with your name; *Na woawò wò ñkò kòkòe* (1.7%), literally, let your name be made clean.

The following meanings were assigned to the above translations: “God’s name should be held in reverence as depicted in the Ten Commandments” (25%); “God’s name be recognized as holy by every human under the sun” (21.7%); “our behaviour as children of God must honour/glorify Him (15.0%); “God’s name being praised, glorified, and worshipped always (13.3%); “to magnify God as the Most High and acknowledge His holiness in obedience.” (6.7%); “God should let His name be holy (15.0%); and finally “God’s name deserves recognition because of the power and miracles associated with it.” (3.3%).

**Table 4**

<b>Translation of the second petition</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Na wò fiaduƒe nava	29	48.3
Na wò fiaduƒu nava	26	43.3
Na wò fiaduƒe nanò mía dome	1	1.7
Na be wò fiaduƒe la nava eme	1	1.7
Na wò fiaduƒu nava nò mía dome	1	1.7
Wò fiaduƒu le gbogbome ne xò afe le xexeame	1	1.7
Na be wò fiaduƒe/fiaduƒu nava	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Interpretation of the second petition</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
God should let His heavenly kingdom/dominion/royal administration be established on earth	25	41.7

The reign of God must prevail	11	18.3
Respect for God's will for order to prevail	3	5.0
The power of God should be in the heart of men	4	6.7
It means God is king on this earth	2	3.3
Lifting God higher and praising Him	1	1.7
God's reign of righteousness, peace and joy be established in our hearts	8	13.3
The kingdom of God established through Christ be fulfilled	3	5.0
The victory of God come on earth through Jesus Christ	1	1.7
The second coming of Christ being awaited	2	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4 shows the respondents' translations and interpretations of the second petition of the Lord's Prayer: 48.3% translated it as *na wò fiadufe nava*, literally, let your place of reign come; 43.3% translated it as *Na wò fiaduḍu nava*, literally, let your reign come; 1.7% each rendered it as *Na wò fiadufe nanɔ mia dome*, literally, let your place of reign be in our midst, and *Na be wò fiadufe la nava eme*, literally, let your home of reign come to pass, respectively. Another translator (1.7%) rendered it as *Na wò fiaduḍu nava nɔ mia dome*, literally, let your reign be in our midst, while another 1.7% renders it as *wò fiaduḍu le gbɔgbɔme ne xɔ afe le xexeame*, literally, let your reign in the spirit have its abode on the earth. The final translator (1.7%) rendered it as *Na be wò fiadufe/fiaduḍu nava*, literally, let your home of reign/reign come.

Respondents' understanding of the petition is as follows: (41.7%) "God should let His heavenly kingdom/dominion/royal administration be established on earth; (18.3%) "The reign of God must prevail." (5.0%) "Respect for God's will for order to prevail"; (6.7%) "the power of God should be in the heart of men"; (3.3%) "God is king on this earth" (1.7%) "lifting God higher and praising Him"; (13.3%) "God's reign of righteousness, peace and joy be established in our hearts"; (5.0%) "the kingdom of God established through Christ be fulfilled"; (1.7%) "the victory of God come on earth through Jesus Christ"; (3.3%) "the second coming of Christ being awaited."

**Table 5**

<b>Translation of the third petition</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Woawɔ wò lɔlɔnu le anyigba dzi sigbe alesi wowɔne le dzifo la ene	50	83.3
Na be wò lɔlɔnu wɔwɔ nenɔ anyigbadzi abe alesi wòle dzifo ene	1	1.7
Na wò lɔlɔnu neva eme le anyigbadzi abe alesi wònɔ dzifo ene	3	5.0
Na woawɔ wò lɔlɔnu si le dzifo le anyigbadzi	1	1.7
Na woawɔ wò lɔlɔnu, abe alesi wòle le dzifo ene, le anyigbadzi	3	5.0
Wò lɔlɔnu si wowɔ na le dzifo fiaɖufe me la ne va anyigbadzi ne miawo hã	2	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Interpretation of the third petition</b>		
<b>Interpretation of the third petition</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
The will of God be done by God Himself	1	1.7
The will of God be done by believers alone	13	21.7
The will of God be done by both believers and non-believers	24	40.0
The will of God be done	12	20.0
The plans of God should override ours	7	11.7
Asking God for heaven on earth - an ideal world	3	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Regarding the third petition (Table 5), 83.3% of respondents translated it as *woawɔ wò lɔlɔnu le anyigba dzi sigbe alesi wowɔne le dzifo la ene*, literally, they should do your loving thing on earth just as they do it in the belly of the sky. It was followed by 5.0% who rendered it as *na wò lɔlɔnu neva eme le anyigbadzi abe alesi wònɔ dzifo ene*, that is, let your loving thing be fulfilled on earth just as it is in the belly of the sky; another 5.0% translated it as *na woawɔ wò lɔlɔnu, abe alesi wòle le dzifo ene, le anyigbadzi*, that is, let your loving thing be done, as it is in the belly of the sky, on earth; 1.7% rendered it as *na be wò lɔlɔnu wɔwɔ nenɔ anyigbadzi abe alesi wòle dzifo ene*, literally, let it be that your loving thing is done on earth just as it is in the belly of the sky; yet another 1.7% renders it as *na woawɔ wò lɔlɔnu si le dzifo le anyigbadzi*, literally, let



them do your loving thing which is in the belly of the sky on earth. Finally, 3.3% translated it as *wò lólonu si wowo na le dzifo fiadufe me la ne va anyigbadzi ne míawo hã*, literally, your loving thing which they do in your place of reign in the belly of the sky, should come on earth for us too.

The following interpretations reflect respondents' understanding of the petition: "the will of God be done by both believers and non-believers" (40%); "the will of God be done by believers alone" (21.7%); "the will of God be done" (20%); "the plans of God should override ours" (11.7%); "asking God for heaven on earth" (5.0%); "the will of God be done by God Himself" (1.7%).

**Table 6**

<b>Translation of the fourth petition</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Na míafe nuḍuḍu si asu mía nu egbe la mí!	17	28.3
Na míafe abolo si asu mía nu egbe/gbesiagbe la mí	2	3.3
Na míafe gbesiagbe fe nuḍuḍu/nuhiahiawo na su mía si	4	6.7
Na egbe/gbesiagbe fe nuḍuḍu si asu mí/ade na mí la mí	4	6.7
Na nuḍuḍu si mía ḍu egbe la mí	17	28.3
Na mí egbe kple gbesiagbe fe nuḍuḍu	2	3.3
Na míafe gbesiagbe fe nuḍuḍu mí, ḍe gbesiagbe nu	1	1.7
Na gbesiagbe nuḍuḍu mí egbea	4	6.7
Na nuḍuḍu si hia mí egbe la mí	6	10.0
Na míafe gbesiagbe agbebolo mí	2	3.3
Na míafe egbe bolo mí	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Interpretation of the fourth petition</b>		
<b>Interpretation of the fourth petition</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
God should provide what is just sufficient for the day	25	41.7
Dependence on God for our daily bread/needs	23	38.3

God should feed us with the bread of heaven - the Eucharist/body of Christ/word of God	3	5.0
God gives us the ability to work for our daily needs	3	5.0
God should give us the food for everyday today	2	3.3
God should provide us our daily needs. He will provide for us if we have faith	2	3.3
God should provide both our material and spiritual needs	2	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Respondents' views on the translation of the fourth petition, as shown in table 6, are as follows: 28.3% believe that it should be rendered as *na nuḍuḍu si mía ḍu egbe la mí*, literally, give what we will eat today to us; another 28.3% said it should translate *na míafe nuḍuḍu si asu mía nu egbe la mí!*, literally, give us what will be sufficient for us today to eat; 10% rendered it as *na nuḍuḍu si hia mí egbe la mí*, literally, give what we need to eat today to us; 6.7% said it should render *na egbe/gbesiagbe fe nuḍuḍu si asu mí/ade na mí la mí*, literally, give us what will be sufficient/ satisfy us today/daily to eat; 3.3% said that the petition should read *na míafe abolo si asu mía nu egbe/gbesiagbe la mi*, literally, give us our bread that will be sufficient for us today/daily; another 3.3% said it should translate *na míafe gbesiagbe fe nuḍuḍu/nuhiahawo na su mía si*, literally, let us have what we will eat daily/things needed; again 3.3% renders it as *na mí egbe kple gbesiagbe fe nuḍuḍu*, literally, give us today and daily eating thing; 6.7% said it is *na gbesiagbe nuḍuḍu mí egbea*, literally, give daily eating thing to us today; 3.3% also said it should read *na míafe gbesiagbe agbebolo mí*, literally, give us our daily living bread; finally 1.7% each said the petition should translate *na míafe gbesiagbe fe nuḍuḍu mí, ḍe gbesiagbe nu*, literally, give us our daily eating thing according to each day, and *na míafe egbe bolo mi*, literally, give us our today's bread.

The following were the meanings respondents assigned to the their translations: "God should provide what is just sufficient for the day" (41.7%); "Dependence on God for our daily bread/needs" (38.3%); "God gives us the ability to work for our daily needs" (5.0%); "God should feed us with the bread of heaven" (5.0%); "God should provide us our daily needs; he

will provide for us if we have faith” (3.3%); “God should give us the food for everyday today” (3.3%); and “God should provide both our material and spiritual needs” (3.3%).

**Table 7**

<b>Translation of the fifth petition</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Eye na tso míafe vodadawo ke mí abe alesi míawo hã míetsɔ kea amesiwo da vo le mía dzi la ene	11	18.3
Tso míafe nu vɔwo ke mí abe alesi míetsɔ kea amesiwo davo ɔe mía ɲuti ene	25	41.7
Tso míafe fenyinyiwo ke mí sigbe alesi míawo hã míetsɔ ne ke na amesiwo nyi fe/ɔuafe le mía ɲu la ene	8	13.3
Tso míafe nuvɔwo ke mí, abe alesi míawo hã míetsɔ ke amesiwo wɔ vɔ ɔe mía ɲuti la ene	7	11.7
Eye na tso míafe agɔdzedzewo/dzidadawo ke mí abe alesi míawo hã míetsɔ ke amesiwo dze agɔ le mía dzi ene	2	3.3
Eye tso míafe nu vɔwo ke mí, elabena mía ɲutɔwo hã míetsɔ ne kea amesiame si nyia fe le mía si	1	1.7
Tso míafe fewo ke mí abe alesi míawo hã míetsɔ ame siwo nyi fe le mía si la tɔ ke woe	6	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Interpretation of the fifth petition</b>		
This petition establishes the conditionality, reciprocity and morality of forgiveness or the golden rule on forgiveness	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 7 shows respondents’ translations and interpretations of the fifth petition of the Lord’s Prayer. On the translation, *tso míafe nu vɔwo ke mí abe alesi míetsɔ kea amesiwo davo ɔe mía ɲuti ene*, literally, forgive us our [bad deeds] just as we forgive those who ‘mishrow’ against us, is the preference of the majority (41.7%). The rest are; *eye na tso míafe vodadawo ke mí abe alesi míawo hã míetsɔ kea amesiwo da vo le mía dzi la ene* (18.3%), literally, and forgive our ‘mishrowings’ just as we also forgive those who ‘mishrow’ against us); *tso míafe fenyinyiwo ke*

*mí sigbe alesi míawo hã mietsɔ ne ke na amesiwo nyi fe/ɔuafe le mía ɲu la ene* (13.3%), literally, forgive us our debts just as we also forgive those who are indebted to us; *tɔ míafe nuvɔwo ke mí, abe alesi míawo hã mietsɔ ke amesiwo wɔ vɔ ɔe mía ɲuti la ene* (11.7%), literally, forgive us our [bad deeds] just as we also have forgiven those who have [done bad] to us); *tɔ míafe fewo ke mí abe alesi míawo hã mietsɔ ame siwo nyi fe le mía si la tɔ ke woe* (10.0%), literally, forgive us our debts just as we also have forgiven those who have own us; *eye na tɔ míafe agɔdzedzewo/dzidadawo ke mí abe alesi míawo hã mietsɔ ke amesiwo dze agɔ le mía dzi ene* (3.3%), literally, and forgive us our ‘heart-throwings/failings’ just as we have also forgiven those who throw their hearts/fail us; *eye tɔ míafe nu vɔwo ke mí, elabena mía ɲuɔwo hã mietsɔ ne kea amesiame si nyia fe le mía si* (1.7%), literally, and forgive our [bad deeds] because we also forgive those who owe us.

Respondents were unanimous with their interpretation of the petition, that is, the petition establishes the conditionality, reciprocity, and morality of forgiveness or what can be described as ‘golden rule’ on forgiveness.

**Table 8**

<b>Translation of the sixth petition</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Eye mèga kplɔ mí yi tetekpɔ me o, ke ɔe mí tso vɔ/nuvɔɔɔ me	5	8.3
Eye mèga kplɔ mí yi tetekpɔ me o, ke ɔe mí tso Vɔditɔ la si me	48	80.0
Mèga na mía ge dze nuvɔ me o, ke boɲ ɔe mí tso nuvɔ/ku si me	1	1.7
Mèga na be mía ge ɔe tetekpɔ me o, ke ɔe mí tso nuvɔ me	4	6.7
Mègakplɔ mí yi fume o, ke ɔe mí tso vɔ me	2	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Interpretation of the sixth petition</b>		
<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
God's protection against all evil	7	11.7
God's protection against the Devil/evil one	11	18.3
God's protection against the doing of evil	6	10.0
God's protection against any trap of the enemy/the devil	10	16.7

God's deliverance from temptation	11	18.3
God's deliverance from evil things, evil deeds or evil people	2	3.3
God should help us not to sin and lead us away from difficult trials	4	6.7
God's deliverance from the grips of the devil	4	6.7
God is the one who leads us into temptation	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Regarding the translation of the sixth petition (Table 8), the following views were collected from respondents: 80.0% said it should be rendered as *eye m̀ega kplɔ́ mí yi tetekpɔ́ me o, ke ɖe mí tso Vɔditɔ́ la si me*, that is, and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the hand of the [bad one/person]; 8.3% would go for *eye m̀ega kplɔ́ mí yi tetekpɔ́ me o, ke ɖe mí tso vɔ́/nuvɔ́ɖi me*, that is, and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from [bad/bad deed]; 6.7% rendered it *m̀ega na be mía ge ɖe tetekpɔ́ me o, ke ɖe mí tso nuvɔ́ me*, that is, do not let us enter into temptation, but deliver us from [bad thing]; 1.7% says it should read *m̀ega na mía ge dze nuvɔ́ me o, ke boɲ ɖe mí tso nuvɔ́/ku si me*, that is, do not let us fall into [bad thing], rather deliver us from [bad thing/ death]; 3.3% translated it as *m̀egakplɔ́ mí yi fume o, ke ɖe mí tso vɔ́ me*, that is, do not lead us into suffering, but deliver us from (bad [thing]).

This is how respondents interpret the various translations: 18.3% said it is God's deliverance from temptation; 18.3% thought it means God's protection against the Devil/evil one; 16.7% said it should be God's protection against any trap of the enemy/the devil; 11.7% understood it to mean God's protection against all evil; another 10% said it is God's protection against the doing of evil; 6.7% would interpret it as “God should help us not to sin and lead us away from difficult trials”; another 6.7% says it is “God's deliverance from the grips of the devil”; and finally 3.3% thinks that the petition should be understood as “God's deliverance from evil things, evil deeds or evil people.”

**Table 9**

<b>Translation of the doxology</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Elabena tɔwoe nye fiaɖufe kple la kple ɲuse la, kple ɲutikɔkɔe la, yi ɖe mavɔ me. Neva eme.	2	3.3

Elabena tɔwoe nye fiaɖufe kple ɲuse kple ɲutikɔkɔe yi ɖase ɖe mavɔmavɔ. Amen	17	28.3
Elabena tɔwoe nye fiaɖuɖu kple ɲuse kple ɲutikɔkɔe yi ɖe mavɔmavɔ me. Nevame	2	3.3
Elabena tɔwoe nye fiaɖuɖu kple ɲuse kple ɲutikɔkɔe yi ɖe mavɔmavɔ me. Amen	23	38.3
Elabena tɔwoe nye fiaɖufe kple ɲuse kple ɲutikɔkɔe yi ɖe mavɔmavɔ me.	10	16.7
Elabena tɔwoe nye fiaɖuɖu kple ɲuse kple ɲutikɔkɔe yi ɖe mavɔmavɔ me.	2	3.3
None	4	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Interpretation of the doxology</b>		
<b>Interpretation of the doxology</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Everything (kingdom, power, glory) belongs to God and radiate from Him alone. It is about God's sovereign right	27	45.0
God has the power to destroy the works of the devil for His name to be glorify	3	5.0
It is a hymn of praise and adoration to God	9	15.0
It is the appropriate way of ending the Lord's Prayer (liturgical reason)	2	3.3
It is summary of all the petitions	2	3.3
It means our total submission to the power of God	2	3.3
It is an expression of hope about the second coming of Christ	3	5.0
It means the kingdom of God is limitless	8	13.3
No idea	4	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Reason (s) for the doxology</b>		
<b>Reason (s) for the doxology</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Reaffirmation of the invocation and the three petitions	21	35.0

To satisfy liturgical requirement of ending a prayer as found in 1 Chronicles 29:11-13	4	6.7
It is an affirmation of faith in God - emphasis	10	16.7
It is added to teach that we must thank God after our petitions	10	16.7
No idea	5	8.3
To give a sense of completeness to the prayer/it closes the prayer	4	6.7
It reminds us that all things belong to God	5	8.3
It was added to show that the word of God is not static	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Respondents' translations of the doxology (Table 9) were as follows: 38.3% of respondents would translate it as *elabena tɔwoe nye fiaɖuɖu kple ηuse kple ηutikɔkɔe yi ɖe mavɔmavɔ me. Amen*, that is, because yours is the kingship, and might and glory into eternity. Amen; 28.3% translated it as *elabena tɔwoe nye fiaɖufe kple ηuse kple ηutikɔkɔe yi ɖase ɖe mavɔmavɔ. Amen*, that is, because yours is the kingdom and might and glory/sanctification into eternity. Amen; 16.7% believed it should translate *elabena tɔwoe nye fiaɖufe kple ηuse kple ηutikɔkɔe yi ɖe mavɔmavɔ me*, that is, because yours is the kingdom and might and glory/sanctification into eternity; 3.3% rendered it as *elabena tɔwoe nye fiaɖuɖu kple ηuse kple ηutikɔkɔe yi ɖe mavɔmavɔ me*, that is, because yours is the kingship, and the might, and sanctification into eternity); 3.3% said it should read *elabena tɔwoe nye fiaɖufe kple la kple ηuse la, kple ηutikɔkɔe la, yi ɖe mavɔ me. Neva eme*, that is, because yours is the kingdom and might and glory/sanctification into eternity. Let it be; There is another 3.3% which rendered it as *elabena tɔwoe nye fiaɖuɖu kple ηuse kple ηutikɔkɔe yi ɖe mavɔmavɔ me. Nevame*, because yours is the kingship, and might, and glory/sanctification into eternity. Let it be. 6.7% however, did not attempt any translation of the doxology.

The following are respondents' interpretations of the doxology: 45.0% understood it as "everything (kingdom, power, glory) belongs to God and radiates from Him alone. It is about God's sovereign right." 15.0% said the doxology is a hymn of praise and adoration to God; 13.3% said it means the kingdom of God is limitless; 5.0% said it means God has the power to destroy the works of the devil for His name to be glorified; another 5.0% said it is an expression

of hope about the second coming of Christ; 3.3% said that it means our total submission to the power of God; 3.3% said it is the appropriate way of ending the Lord's Prayer; yet another 3.3% said it is summary of all the petitions; 6.7% however, had no idea as to what the doxology really means. On the reason why the doxology is added to the prayer, respondents had this to say: 35.0% said it was added as reaffirmation of the invocation and the three petitions; 16.7% said it is an affirmation of faith in God – a kind of creed; another 16.7% said it was added to teach that we must thank God after our petitions; 6.7% believed that it was added in order to give a sense of completeness to the prayer or it closes the prayer; 8.3% said it reminds us that all things belong to God – kingdom, power, glory; 6.7% says it is added to satisfy liturgical requirement of ending a prayer as found in 1 Chronicles 29:11-13; 1.7% said that it was added to show that the word of God is not static; 8.3% however, had no idea why it was added.

**Table 10**

<b>Similarities between Matthew and Luke's versions</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
The invocation (a), 1st ,2nd, 4th, 5th, and 6th (a)	23	38.3
They are all the same/they have same structure	9	15.0
Invocation and the 5th petition	2	3.3
They are all taught by Jesus	6	10.0
They follow similar pattern and address God in heaven	8	13.3
They all address praise, supplication and forgiveness	3	5.0
No idea	9	15.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Differences between Matthew and Luke's versions</b>		
<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	
The contexts are different	3	5.0
Matthew's is pattern prayer while Luke is rote	2	3.3
Invocation (b), 3rd, 6th (b)	10	16.7
Invocation (b), 3rd, 6th (b), doxology	8	13.3
Doxology	16	26.7
The linguistic difference	2	3.3



The difference is in the 6th petitions of both prayers	2	3.3
The difference is the 4th petition	2	3.3
The invocation is the only difference	1	1.7
No difference	4	6.7
No idea	8	13.3
The third petition is the difference	1	1.7
The difference is in the fifth petition	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Reason (s) for the differences</b>		
<b>Reason (s) for the differences</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
The context is what has accounted for the differences	26	43.3
Transmission of the prayer/translation errors	6	10.0
No idea/Respondent does not understand the question	23	38.3
Due to how they were inspired to write	4	6.7
Luke's version is summary of Matthew's	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table (Table 10) shows respondents' view on the similarities between the two versions of the Lord's Prayer – Matthew and Luke. 38.3% found the first part of the invocation (a), 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, and first part of the 6<sup>th</sup> petition (a) common to the two prayers while 3.3% said the similarity is in the invocation and the 5th petition only; 15.0% said the two prayers are all the same in structure; 13.3% said they follow similar pattern and address God in heaven; 10.0% said they were all taught by Jesus; 5.0% held the view that they all address praise, supplication and forgiveness; 15.0% however, found no similarities between the two prayers.

When it comes to the differences between the two prayers, respondents' views were as follows: 26.7% said the difference is the doxology while 13.3% said it is the second part of the invocation (b), 3rd, second part of the 6th petition (b), and doxology; 16.7% however, said the differences are the invocation (b), 3rd, and the second part of the 6th petition (b) without the doxology; 5.0% see the context within which the two prayers were said as difference; 3.3% said Matthew's version is a pattern for prayer while Luke's is to be recited; 3.3% again sees a linguistic

difference between the two prayers; another 3.3% sees the difference in the 6<sup>th</sup> petition and 3.3% sees it in the 4<sup>th</sup> petition; 1.7% said the difference is in the invocation while another 1.7% found it in the 3<sup>rd</sup> petition; 6.7% found no differences between the two prayers. The percentage of respondents who did not attempt any comparison between the two prayers is 13.3%.

Respondents were also asked about what they thought had accounted for the differences between the two prayers. Here, 43.3% assigned the reason (s) for the differences to the context in which the two prayers were said; 10.0% mentioned transmission of the prayer or translation errors as the reason for the differences; 6.7% assigned it to how the writers were inspired to write; 1.7% said Luke’s version is a summary of Matthew’s while a significant percentage of 38.3% seemed to have either no idea or did not understand the question.

**Table 11**

<b>What lesson (s) can you learn from the differences as an African Christian?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No idea/ misunderstood question	34	56.7
African Christian eschatological hope must derive from its Jewish eschatology	2	3.3
Interpreting the Christian message within the African context	8	13.3
The substance of the Christian message matters and not the form	5	8.3
As African Christians, the gospel tradition must be preserved	1	1.7
Christian message is dynamic	8	13.3
Use the theological resources around you to enrich your understanding of God	1	1.7
It raises the question of doubt in the minds of new conversion	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Regarding the lessons that respondents have learnt as Ewe-Ghanaian Christians from the differences between the two prayers (Table 11), 56.7% of them either did not understand the question or had no idea about it; 13.3% said that the Christian message must be interpreted within the African context; another 13.3% observed the differences is an indication that the

Christian message is dynamic; 8.3% said that the substance of the Christian message matters and not the form; 3.3% said their lesson was that African Christian eschatological hope must derive from Jewish eschatology; 1.7% said that African Christianity must preserve the gospel tradition; another 1.7% said that African Christians must use the theological resources around them to enrich their understanding of the Christian message.

**Table 12**

<b>Use of the Lord's Prayer in church</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	53	88.3
No	7	11.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Why yes?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Because Jesus taught it	11	18.3
It reminds believers of the importance and order of prayer	2	3.3
It is a guide to all prayers	15	25.0
Because it is used for liturgical reason	17	28.3
It is used to end the church liturgy but don't know why is it recited	3	5.0
No idea	4	6.7
Our prayers are incomplete without it	1	1.7
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>88.3</b>
(No)	7	11.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Why no?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Because the kingdom of God has already come (Mt.26:29)	1	1.7
Because the Lord's Prayer was relevant as long as Jesus lived with His disciples	1	1.7
It is only used to guide how we pray and not a rote	4	6.7
No idea	1	1.7

<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11.7</b>
(Yes)	53	88.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

On whether or not respondents use the Lord's Prayer in their various denominations (Table 12), 88.3% responded in the affirmative while the remaining 11.7% responded in the negative. The following reasons were given for the use of the prayer: because it is used for liturgical reason (28.3%); it is a guide to all prayers (25.0%); because Jesus taught it (18.3%); it was used to end the church's liturgy but don't know why is it recited (5.0%); it reminds believers of the importance and order of prayer (3.3%); 1.7% thought that our prayers are incomplete without it; 6.7% however, had no idea as to why the prayer was used. Those who said they do not use the Lord's Prayer in their churches also give the following reasons: it is only used to guide how we pray and not a recital (6.7%); because the kingdom of God has already come (Mt.26:29) (1.7%); because the Lord's Prayer was relevant as long as Jesus lived with His disciples (1.7%). The remaining 1.7% had no reason for not using the prayer.

**Table 13**

<b>Is the Lord's Prayer still relevant today?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	58	96.7
No	2	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Why is it still relevant?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Because it contains a golden principle in life - forgiveness	3	5.0
Because it controls excesses in prayer requests	3	5.0
There are moral lessons in the prayer	4	6.7
Because is has keys to our spirituality	10	16.7
Because God/God's word has not changed	4	6.7
Because it is the model for all prayers	26	43.3
Because human needs have not changed	5	8.3

Because it is still part of Scripture	4	6.7
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>98.3</b>
(No)	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Why is it not relevant?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Because we are no longer under law	1	1.7
Missing system	59	98.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>The forms/popular prayers in the church today</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
None	18	30.0
Praying in the name of Jesus, Jesus, Jesus	1	1.7
Intercessory and deliverance prayers	3	5.0
Vocal/spontaneous and silence prayers	5	8.3
Spiritual warfare/prayer against demons	4	6.7
Petitionary prayers	12	20.0
Binding the devil/casting out demons, fruit of the womb, anointing, healing, deliverance	6	10.0
All kinds of prayers	10	16.7
Libation prayer cloth as Christian prayer	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As confirmation of their earlier responses to the use of the Lord's Prayer in their churches, respondents' views on the relevance of the Lord's Prayer were collected (Table 13). Their responses were as follows: 96.7% responded in the affirmative with only 3.3% responding in the negative. When asked to give reason (s) for their responses, 43.3% of respondents said because it is the model for all prayers; 16.7% said because it has the keys to our spirituality; 6.7% said since God's word has not changed, the Lord's Prayer has not changed either; another 6.7% were of the view that there are moral lessons in the prayer; 8.3% said because human needs have not changed; 5.0% said that because the prayer contains a golden principle of life – forgiveness;

5.0% again said that because it controls excesses in prayer requests; 6.7% are of the view that the prayer is still relevant because it is still part of Scripture. For the 1.7% who said the Lord's Prayer is not relevant, the reason is that we are no longer under the law. On the forms of prayers that are more relevant or popular in the church today, 20.0% said petitionary prayers; 16.7% said all kinds of prayers; 10.0% said binding the devil/casting out demons, fruit of the womb, anointing, healing, deliverance; 8.3% said vocal/spontaneous and silence prayers; 6.7% said spiritual warfare/prayer against demons; 5.0% said intercessory and prayer for deliverance; 1.7% said praying in the name of Jesus; 30.0% however believed that there is no prayer more relevant or popular in the church today than the Lord's Prayer.

**Table 14**

<b>Similarities between the Lord's Prayer and libation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
They all contain invocation and petitions	15	25.0
They are all prayers; can't tell if God hears the libation prayer	2	3.3
They both contain invocation	22	36.7
They both contain petitions	6	10.0
No similarities	12	20.0
No idea	3	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Interpretation of the similarities</b>		
<b>Interpretation of the similarities</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
The concept/idea of the Holy exists in all religions	12	20.0
It means communication between worshippers and the object of worship	6	10.0
The Supreme Being is sovereign, creator and ruler over all the earth	18	30.0
No idea	20	33.3
There is no communion between the Holy and the profane	1	1.7
It does not mean anything	3	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Differences between the Lord's Prayer and libation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Their objects of worship are different	27	45.0
The use of medium (drinks) in the prayer	12	20.0
The Lord's Prayer is said by Christians while libation is said by traditionalists	11	18.3
The Lord's Prayer is Scriptural	2	3.3
No idea	5	8.3
Differences in structure		3.3
Libation prayers contain the cursing of enemies	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Lessons from the similarities and differences</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Both Christians and traditionalists worship the same God through different media	7	11.7
God must be approached directly through no medium	3	5.0
It is a warning against syncretism	4	6.7
The Lord's Prayer must be preferred to libation	2	3.3
It teaches man's utter dependence/survival on higher authorities	4	6.7
It encourages constant communication with the Supreme God	4	6.7
The central motif in the Lord's Prayer (forgiveness) is the lesson	1	1.7
Both prayers are incomparable	5	8.3
The traditional religion points to Christianity	1	1.7
Non/No idea	24	40.0
The need to know more about the Supreme Being	1	1.7
Two different religious prayers	4	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Christianization of libation prayer</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	12	20.0

No	47	78.3
No idea	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Reasons (s)</b>		
<b>Reasons (s)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No because it may lead to idolatry	19	31.7
Yes because the objects of worship (God) is the same; the only difference is the medium of worship	6	10.0
No because it may lead to syncretism	8	13.3
No because it may wipe out the Ewe culture	1	1.7
No because God forbids it/ it is not biblical/unchristian	7	11.7
No reason	8	13.3
No because the two prayers are incomparable	3	5.0
No because tradition can destroy our faith	2	3.3
Yes by removing certain elements that are unchristian	5	8.3
No because the Christian community may view it as Occultic	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Respondents were also asked to attempt a comparison between the Lord’s Prayer with their most popular traditional prayer – the pouring of libation (Table 14). The results were as follows: 36.7% said both prayers contain invocation; 25.0% said they all contain invocation and petitions; 10.0% says they both contain petitions; 3.3% said they are all prayers but cannot tell if God hears the libation prayer; 20.0% said there are no similarities between the two while 5.0% did not dare to compare the two prayers.

The following meanings were assigned to the similarities between the Lord’s Prayer and libation: The Supreme Being is sovereign, creator and ruler over all the earth (30.0%); The concept/idea of the Holy exists in all religions (20.0%); it is a sign of communication between worshippers and their object of worship (10.0%). For those who said there are no similarities between the two prayers, (1.7%) said that there is no communion between the Holy and the profane; it does not mean anything (5.0%); 33.3% had no comment to pass. Respondents’ views on the differences



between the Lord's Prayer and libation are as follows: 45.0% held the view that both prayers have different objects of worship; 20.0% said the use of medium (drinks) in the prayer is the difference; 18.3% said the Lord's Prayer is said by Christians while libation is said by traditionalists; 3.3% were of the view that the Lord's Prayer is Scriptural while the libation prayer is not. 8.3% however, did not express any view on the differences.

Respondents have divergent views on the lesson (s) they have drawn from the continuity and discontinuity between the two prayers; 11.7% said both Christians and traditionalists worship the same God through different media; 8.3% said both prayers are incomparable; 6.7% saw the comparison as a warning against syncretism; another 6.7% said it teaches man's utter dependence/survival on higher authorities; yet another 6.7% said that it encourages constant communication with the Supreme God; 5.0% said that God must be approached directly through no medium; 6.7% said the two prayers are two different religious prayers; another 3.3% said the Lord's Prayer must be preferred to libation; 1.7% said the lesson to be learnt from the comparison is forgiveness; another 1.7% said the traditional religion is a pointer to Christianity; 1.7% again says that the comparison emphasizes the need to know more about the Supreme Being. Majority of respondents (40%) had either refused to comment or had no idea or lessons to draw from the comparison of the two prayers

In the final segment of the interview, respondents were asked whether or not to Christianize libation prayer. Their responses were as follows: 78.0% said no while the remaining 12.0% said yes. For those who say yes, their reasons were that the objects of worship (God) is the same; the only difference is the medium of worship (10.0%). Also, libation prayer can be Christianized by removing elements that are unchristian (8.3%). For those who said no, their reasons were: it may lead to idolatry (31.7%); it may lead to syncretism (13.3%); it may wipe out the Ewe culture (1.7%); God forbids it/it is not biblical/unchristian (1.7%); the two prayers are incomparable (5.0%); tradition can destroy our faith (3.3%). 13.3% however, assign no reason (s) whatsoever.

**Table 15**

**Texts of Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer in Ewe**

<b>Biblia – 1931</b>	<b>Nubabla yeye la – 1990</b>	<b>Agbenay la – 2006</b>	<b>Biblia – 2010</b>	<b>Liturgical version</b>
9. Mía Fofó, si le dzifowo! Wò ñkɔ ñuti nakɔ!	9. Mía Tɔ, si le dzifowo, Na wò ñkɔ ñuti nakɔ.	9. Mía Fofó, si le dzifo, woade bubu wò ñkɔ ñuti,	9. Mía Tɔ si le dzifowo Na wò ñkɔ ñuti nakɔ	9. Mía Tɔ/Fofó si le dzifo Wò ñkɔ ñuti nakɔ
10. Wò fiaduƒe nava! Woawɔ wò lɔlɔnu le anyigba dzi, sigbe alesi wowɔna le dzifo ene!	10. Wò fiaduƒu nava; Na woawɔ wò lɔlɔnu le anyigba dzi, abe alesi wowɔne le dzifo la ene.	10. wò fiaduƒe neva, woawɔ wò lɔlɔnu le anyigba dzi abe ale si wowɔne le dzifo ene.	10. Wò fiaduƒu nava; Na woawɔ wò lɔlɔ nu le anyigba dzi, abe alesi wowɔne le dzifo la ene.	10. Wò fiaduƒe/fiaduƒu nava Woawɔ wò lɔlɔnu le anyigbadzi, sigbe alesi wowɔne le dzifo ene
11. Na míaƒe nuƒuƒu, si asu mía nu egbe la mí!	11. Na nuƒuƒu si hiã mí egbe la mí.	11. Na nuƒuƒu si míaƒu egbe la mí.	11. Na nuƒuƒu si hiã mí egbe la mí.	11. Na míaƒe nuƒuƒu si asu mía nu egbe la mí.
12. Eye natsɔ míaƒe vodadawo ake mí, sigbe alesi míawo hã mietsɔna kea amesiwo daa vo ƒe mía ñuti la ene!	12. Tɔ míaƒe nuvɔwo ke mí, abe alesi míawo hã mietsɔe ke amesiwo wɔ vɔ ƒe mía ñuti la ene.	12. Tɔ míaƒe nu vɔwo ke mí abe ale si míawo hã mietsɔne ke na ame siwo daa vo ƒe mía ñuti la ene.	12. Tɔ míaƒe nu vɔwo ke mí, abe alesi míawo hã mietsɔe ke ame siwo wɔ vɔ ƒe mía ñuti la ene.	12. Tɔ míaƒe nuvɔwo ke mí, sigbe alesi mietsɔ na kea amesiwo daa vo ƒe mía ñuti la ene.
13. Eye mègakplɔ mí yi ƒe tetekpɔ me o; ke ƒe mí tso vodito la si me!	13. Mègakplɔ mí yi tetekpɔ me o. Ke ƒe mí tso Vodito la si me.	13. Mègakplɔ mí yi tetekpɔ me o, ke boɲ ƒe mí tso vodito la sime.	13. Mègakplɔ mí yi tetekpɔ me o. Ke ƒe mí tso Vodito la si me.	13. Eye mègakplɔ mí yi tetekpɔ me o; ke

Elabena tɔwoe nye fiaduƒe kple ŋuse kple ŋutikokɔe yi ɔe mavɔmavɔ me. Amen.				ɔe mí tso vɔditɔla si me. Elabena tɔwoe nye [fiaduƒe]fiaduɔu kple ŋuse kple ŋutikokɔe yi ɔe mavɔmavɔ me. Amen.
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## 5.4 DISCUSSION

### 5.4.1 Translation and interpretation of the invocation

#### Πάτερ, ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς

The data gathered from the field show that all respondents have knowledge of the Lord's Prayer regardless of their sex, age, level of education, position in church, occupation, and religious affiliation. Respondents are divided on the translation of the invocation of the Lord's Prayer. Those who translate Πάτερ in the invocation as *Mía Tɔ/Mía Fofɔ* (our Father), and οὐρανοῖς as *dzifowo* (heavens) demonstrate their knowledge of the plurality of the dwelling place of God in Matthew's version. For those who rendered the dwelling place of God in the singular, thus, *dzifo* (heaven), did so from a liturgical point of view, that is, how it has been recited at liturgical gatherings since missionary era. On the fatherhood of God, there are those who are of the view that if an earthly father is referred to as *fofo* (father), then the heavenly Father must be *Fofoga* (Great Father). When respondents' views on the meaning of the invocation are put together, one may conclude that addressing God as Father is a sign of respect to Him. They also acknowledged the inclusiveness of the Fatherhood of God, that is, He is Father of Jews, Christians, and non-Christians alike. Adoption into the family of God the spiritual Father has also been cited as justification for addressing Him as Father. Other views that have also been expressed on the interpretation of the dwelling place of God included the omnipotence and omniscience of God and His power to control the cosmos.

In comparison with the existing Ewe translations (Table 15) which shows four versions of the Lord's Prayer – *Biblia* (1931), *Nubabla Yeye La* (1990), *Agbenya La* (2006), *Biblia* (2010) – the *Biblia* 1931 and *Agbenya La* translate Πάτερ, ημων ο εν τοις ουρανοις as *mía Fofó, si le dzifo* (our Father who is in heaven) while *Biblia* (2010) and *Nubabla Yeye La* (1999) render it as – *mía Tɔ si le dzifowo* (our Father who is in heavens). In all, 40% of respondents align themselves with *Biblia* (2010) and *Nubabla Yeye La* (1999) in translating Πάτερ ημων as *mía Tɔ* while the remaining 60% are with the *Biblia* (1931) and *Agbenya La*'s (2006) translation – *mía Fofó*. Thus, majority of Ewe Christians understand Πάτερ to be *mía Fofó* and not *mía Tɔ*. Internal evidence also confirms this finding. Example is found in Jesus' Gethsemane prayer where he used Πάτερ μου which renders in all three Ewe translations *Fofonye* instead of *Tɔnye/Tatanye*.<sup>227</sup> The only reason that can be attributed for the use of *Tɔ* and *Fofó* interchangeably in these translations is orthography.<sup>228</sup> The question of orthography has arisen due to the three different dialects in which the Ewe language finds expression – *Anlo*, *Tongu* and *Ewedome*.<sup>229</sup> The use of *Fofó* in translation carry two meanings – father and senior brother depending on the part of Ewe one hails from – Ghana, Togo or Benin. Similar to *Tɔ* is *Tate*, which is used by Ewes living along the Volta Lake – the *Tongu* people. A *Tongu* rendering of Πάτερ μου would be *míw Tate* as compared to *mía Tɔ* in the existing translations in standardized Ewe. Unlike the Ewe, the Akan has no differing rendition. The Akan name for father is *Egya* or *Agya*, and that is what is used to render Πάτερ in *Fante* and *Asante/Akuapem* translations of the Lord's Prayer. The hermeneutical position of respondents on one becoming a child of God through adoption agree with Cyprian, Origen and Gregory of Nissa, Augustine, and even Clement's exclusive interpretation of God's moral attribute shared by those with high moral standing. Luther and Calvin, although favours the exclusivity of the first part of the invocation, supports its universality. This position must however, be understood within the context of the ecclesiastical tension between the Reformers and the existing religious structures. It was extremely difficult for people like Luther to accept that the Papacy could address God as Father. Modern scholars such as Brown (1961:188), Brown (2004; 6-10), and Ong (2012-2013:13) are in favour of the inclusive interpretation of the first part of the invocation. Their knowledge of interpretations of the Lord's Prayer through the

<sup>227</sup> See *Ewe nyadigbale* (Ewe concordance).

<sup>228</sup> The following liturgical books show the variations in translation: *Liturgi alo dɔdɔ na subɔsubɔ* 2016: 102; *Nyanyui Hame Hadzigbale sue* (2002: 282); *Liturgi*.

<sup>229</sup> Interview with Rev. Fred Amevenku, 2017.

epochs of Christianity, coupled with their particular religious setting, is what informed their hermeneutical positions. Brown (2004:11) for instance, asserts that the inclusive interpretation of the phrase Πάτερ, ἡμῶν is consistent with the tenet of Judaism and Christianity because the two religions affirm God as the source of all human existence, His perfect justice, and the doctrine of monotheism.<sup>230</sup>

Regarding the translation of οὐρανοῖς, only the *Agbenya la* renders it *dzifo* (heaven). This agrees with the majority of respondents (61.6%) and used in the Ewe liturgies of Ghana and Togo Protestant churches, especially the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (EPCG) and Église Évangélique Presbytérienne Du Togo (EEPT). The Akan and Ga translations *sor/soro* and *ɲwei* respectively are in the singular instead of plural. In the other Ewe translations (Biblia 1931, 2010, *Nubabla Yeye La* 1990), *dzifowo* (heavens) is used because of its equivalence to the Greek οὐρανοῖς. The word is derived from *dzi* (height) and *fo*, literally, stomach, and denotes the belly of the height.<sup>231</sup> Thus, *dzifo* is conceptualized as the inner height or belly of the sky and conceives God as a Being whose dwelling place is in the inner part or belly of the sky. This idea of the dwelling place of the Holy One is also expressed by the *Ewedome* people as *dziɲgɔ*, from *dzi* (height), and *ɲgɔ* (ahead or beyond) (see Spieth 1906: 48, Meyer 1999:55). This notion depicts Old Testament imagery of the heavenly tabernacle where God is believed to dwell in the holiest place. This hermeneutical position, and those expressed by respondents on their interpretation of the second part of the invocation, raises the issue of whether or not the heaven (s) is really God's dwelling place. Origen had already argued that the heavens cannot contain the omnipotent and omnipresent God and that only a metaphorical interpretation of οὐρανοῖς can make any sense. This point is reiterated by Calvin who alluded to the fact that the heavens cannot contain God because of His transcendence, superintendence, and providence over the entire cosmos. This hermeneutical view about God's dwelling place has not changed over the years, as it continues to appear in the works of 21<sup>st</sup> century scholars (Brown 2004:13; Nolland 2005:288-289). But, as the locative voice of the phrase ο ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς suggests, God is located in a place known as the heavens. This study therefore agrees with the two existing Ewe translations –

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<sup>230</sup> Scott (1951:84) in chapter 4 of this study alludes to brown's view as the prevailing philosophical view during the time of the Lord's Prayer.

<sup>231</sup> Interview with Rev. Fred Amevenku, 2017.

*Biblia* (1931, 2010) and *Nubabla Yeye La* (1999) – that the invocation of the Lord’s Prayer – Πάτερ ημων ο εν τοις ουρανοις – should literally be *Miatɔ si le dzifowo* (our Father who is in [the] heavens). An annotation is necessary to explain the continuity between the Jewish and Ewe concepts of ουρανοις in order to bridge the gap between popular and academic use of the invocation of the Lord’s Prayer.

#### 5.4.2 Translation and interpretation of the first petition

##### Ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου

All existing Ewe translations render the first petition, ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου, *na/wò ηκɔ ηuti nakɔ* (literally, let/may your name be made clean) except *Agbenya La*, which renders it as *woade bubu wò ηκɔ ηuti*, (literally, they [humans] must honour/respect the body of your name). The use of the particle *ηuti* in all three translations suggests that the name of God is synonymous with His character. Similar notion is expressed in the Akan and Ga translations – *wo din ho ntew* (Akuapem twi)/ *wo din ho nte* (Asante twi), and *wo dzin ho ntsew* (*Fante*). The difference between the missionary translations – Ewe and Akan – and their revised versions on one hand, and the *Agbenya La* on the other hand, is that the latter tries to deal with the apparent ambiguity characterized by the former regarding the object of the sanctification. In other words, while the former translates the phrase literally, the *Agbenya La* paraphrases it to mean that the honouring of God’s name is to be done by humans, as instructed in the Decalogue.

In the interviews and questionnaires administered on the petition, respondents’ have varied views on how the petition should be translated. The translation *na wò ηκɔ ηuti nakɔ* is generic and does not really address the question of whose responsibility it is to ensure the hallowing of God’s name. The translation which points to humans as the subject of the hallowing are *woade bubu wò ηκɔ ηuti*, literally, may they put honour on your name, and *woakɔ wò ηκɔ ηuti*, literally, may they clean your name, from *wo* (they), and *kɔ* (clean/sanctify/holify). A more creative translations *kɔkɔe woana wò ηκɔ*, and *na woawɔ wò ηκɔ kɔkɔe*, literally, holy must they give to your name and, may they make your name holy. The rendition *bubu kple kafukafu na wò ηκɔ kɔkɔe la*, literally, honour and praise to your clean name, paraphrases the petition instead. These translation forms agree with the points Allen (1907:58) and Brown (2004:13) made in chapter 4 of this study, who interpret the petition within the context of humanity’s abuse of the divine

name. Allen and Bezt (1995:379) also noted human's role in the sanctification of the divine name, suggesting a mutuality in the hallowing of God's name. This is evident in majority of respondents who link the first petition to the Decalogue, that is, the petition places a moral obligation on humans to sanctify the name of God. It is first of all an acknowledgement by all that God is holy. Secondly, it behooves on all to sanctify the name of God by behaving as such. The sanctification of God's name is manifested through holiness and obedience to His word. This confirms Brown's (1961:185) observation that the passiveness of the petition implies that it is a surrogate for the divine will, that is, the sanctification of God's name and the doing of His will in the third petition are not mutually exclusive. Tertulian's assertion that the sanctification of God's name is an obligation, not only for the church, but for the world also, broadens the scope of the petition to include the secular world. Similar views are shared by Cyprian, Origen, Gregory, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. Origen for instance, had stressed that the petition is a call for all creation to conceive and share in the divine holiness and not a minority. Clement on the contrary had argued that it is only the righteous who have the right to sanctify God's name because of their full knowledge of the divine nature.

In popular Christianity however, the petition is interpreted as praising God and "worshipping" His holy name. This is what the invocation and the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer stand for in Pentecostal/ Charismatic setting. Most of the young people who spoke during the Bible study discussion on the Lord's Prayer alluded to the fact that the first petition is not really a petition but an acknowledgment and adoration of God's holiness, purity, and righteousness.<sup>232</sup> One other strong interpretation that came up in the Bible study discussion with church elders on the invocation, the first, second and third petitions, is that they are appellations or cultic names ascribe to God. This notion stems from the Ewe traditional religious practice where God and traditional rulers who are regarded as fathers of the land are addressed with appellations in their traditional prayers such as libation.<sup>233</sup> Tertulian had this primal view of the petition in mind when he posits that the petition echoes angelic chanting of God's holiness as revealed in the

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<sup>232</sup> Bible study discussion on the Lord's Prayer with the youth of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (EPCG), Lashibi-Accra, 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2018.

<sup>233</sup> Bible study discussion with seventeen (17) Presbyters of the EPCG, Lashibi-Accra, 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2018. An example of such appellations is *Mawu Sogbe Lisa, Chitikata, be ye wɔ asi, be ye wɔ afɔ, wɔ mavɔmavɔtɔ*, as shown in the first Ewe libation prayer text in chapter two of this study.

apocalyptic work of John in the book of revelation. Clement again argues that the issues with the sanctification of God's name had already been handled through God's general revelation through nature and special revelation in the person of Jesus the Christ. In other words, God had through nature placed the truth of His holiness in every culture and religion, and by the incarnation. Thus the petition, according to Clement, had already been fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. Juxtaposing the literature on the Ewe translation of Ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου with the views expressed by respondents, the researcher is of the view that *na wo ηκω ηuti nakɔ*, that is, let your name be sanctified, should be the appropriate rendering of the petition. The note that must accompany this translation is to point out that the sanctification of God's name is a divine initiative because of the aorist imperative used in the text. However, since holiness is a moral attribute of God, the petition can be interpreted as a call to participate in the divine holiness.

### 5.4.3 Translation and interpretation of the second petition

#### Ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου

The translation of βασιλεία in this petition always results in two Ewe renditions – *fiadufe* and *fiaduɖu*. This is evident in the existing Ewe translations and data collected from the sixty respondents from the six Ewe communities. There is always linguistic and theological tension among those who are torn between the spiritual and territorial understanding of βασιλεία. Those who are in favour of the territorial translation (*fiadufe*) interpret it as the establishment of God's royal administration culminating in the second coming of Jesus Christ as shown in Table 4. For the spiritual (*fiaduɖu*) translators, the βασιλεία is the invisible reign of God in the heart of humans. One respondent vividly expressed it as *wo fiaduɖu le gbɔgbɔme ne xɔ afe le xexeame*, that is, your kingship in spirit should dwell on earth. Some youth who recite the Lord's Prayer in English hold the view that the English word kingdom, must translate *fiadufe* in Ewe.<sup>234</sup> These young men and women ascribe exaltation to the interpretation of the petition.

Now since the missionary and post-missionary eras (1847-1990), ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου, has been translated as *wò fiadufe nava* (your place of reign come), a notion which is derived from the English word *kingdom*. The Ewe concept of *fiadufe* just like its English rendition makes God a king with a domain. This translation, after about seventy decades of its existence in the Ewe

<sup>234</sup> Bible study discussion with nine young people of the EPCG, Lashibi, 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2018.



liturgy, was later revised to *fiaduḍu* to mean God’s kingship in the hearts of humans. Situating the rendering of βασιλεία as *fiaduḍu* in its missionary context throws more light on the early missionary understanding of the term. The term renders “Dein Reich komme” (your realm come) in the German and carries the same sense of the domain over which rule or control is exercised.<sup>235</sup> Reich is typically used to designate a kingdom or an empire, especially the Roman Empire. It is this traditional and imperial context that informed the choice of *fiaduḍu* in the earliest Ewe translation of βασιλεία. This rendering is also consistent with the Pietistic theological ideology of the kingdom of God (Meyer 1999:31-35). It also finds expression in Ewe translations of some German hymns on the kingdom of God. One such hymn is “*Yerusalem, du si wotu ḍe dzi ... Edzro nye luwo vevie ...*” (EPHB<sup>236</sup> 261), literally, Jerusalem, city which is built above ... my soul yearns for it earnestly. Although the concept of a heavenly kingdom has no place in Ewe cosmology, Ewe converts since early nineteenth century have conceptualized βασιλεία in an eschatological sense, that is, the future manifestation of a holy city. The translation of βασιλεία as *fiaduḍu* is the second meaning of the term and it appears in the 1990 and 2010 translations of the Ewe Bible. The term derives from *fia* (king), and *ḍu* (literally, eat), and carries the idea of a king enjoying his position. The missionary translation, *fiaduḍu*, from *fia* (king) and *ḍuḍu* (literally eating place), denotes the place where the king is literally enjoying his kingship. The difference between the two terminologies is the suffix *ḍu* (place) suggesting that βασιλεία is a place where God rules. Thus, while βασιλεία as *fiaduḍu* points to the fact that there is a place where God reigns, *fiaduḍu* does not, that is, there is no cut out place that God is exercising His rulership. This makes βασιλεία a material/external and spiritual/internal realities.<sup>237</sup> This external reign of God with its eschatological underpinning, is what Tertulian, Cyprian, and Cyril subscribe to in their hermeneutical views on the petition. Gregory and Calvin agree with the territorial and eschatological interpretation, but also holds a moral/spiritual view which they share with Origen, Clement, Augustine, and Luther. Clement however, argues further that the kingdom of God had already been established on earth but it is not being experienced on earth due to human’s ignorance. Obviously, the translation of βασιλεία has evolved from its imperial

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<sup>235</sup> Interview with Rev Hannes Menke, General Secretary, Bremen Mission, 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2016.

<sup>236</sup> Evangelical Presbyterian hymn book.

<sup>237</sup> In an interview with Rev. Fred Amevenku, lecturer in New Testament Studies at the Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, the kingdom of God is both a present reality and a future expectation. In other words, the kingdom is already here and at the same time yet to come. Eschatologically, he noted, the Christian history is navigating toward a new heaven and a new earth; a renewal of the cosmos.

and territorial understanding, (*fiadufe*) to a rather internal (*fiaduqu*) connotation, as revealed in the works of Dalman (1902:94), Allen (1907:58), Charles (1914: 47), Jeremias (1971:96-103), Edersheim (1971: 269)Betz (1995:379), Klapert (1976:372-373), Ernest (1994:256-257). The term, as used in the synoptic gospels and discussed in the works of the above scholars, varies in form and meaning. Its imminence and the urgency are both characterized by the *Parousia* and the fact of its present reality (Klappert 1976: 381-382). Milavec's (2007:119) assertion that the βασιλεία του θεού is neither to be interpreted as a place, title nor office, but "God acting within society and the world", represents the views of many modern and postmodern scholars. However, the Ewe choice of *fiadufe* or *fiaduqu* greatly depends on their syntax. In the case of this petition, the researcher agrees with the 21<sup>st</sup> century scholars that *fiaduqu*, the kingly rule of God, is to be preferred to *fiadufe*, the territorial rule of God.

#### 5.4.4 Translation and interpretation of the third petition

**Γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς**

The translation of γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς is rendered *na/woawɔ wɔ lɔbnu le anyigba dzi, sigbe/abe alesi wowɔne/ wowɔna le dzi fo/ dzi fo la ene*, literally, let [them] do your will on earth, as they do it in heaven. All four translations, including that of fifty respondents from the field, suggest that the doing of God's will lies on someone else and not God Himself. However, when it comes to interpretations, the general consensus among respondents is that if the will of God should be done, then it must be done by either Himself, believers or both believers and non-believers. It is believed that the will of God is done in heaven by angels who bow to Him daily in worship.<sup>238</sup> The petition is therefore a request for the divine will which is already done in heaven to be replicated on earth. The Akan (*Asante* and *Akuapem*) versions, *nea wope nye hɔ/ wope nye hɔ*, and *wɔnye wope* (what you will be done ... or your will be done ... or they should do your will), seem to suggest that it is God's responsibility and human's moral duty to do the divine will. In the *Fante* and *Ga* versions, *wɔnye nea wope ...* and *áfe noni osumɔ ...* (literally, they [should] do what you like), imply that the will of God is to be done by someone else and not God Himself. Respondents' inclusive interpretation is in line with

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<sup>238</sup> Bible study discussion with EPCG youth, Lashibi, 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2018. In an earlier discussion with Presbyters, the general view shared by participants was that obedience to God's commandments on earth is what Jesus meant by the divine will.

the position held by Tertulian and his student Cyprian, and later Augustine, on the petition, that is, an obligation on both Christians and non-Christians to do the divine will since they are all created in the *Imago Dei* (image of God). It is only in Clement's *stromata* that one finds an exclusive interpretation of the petition, that is, the church is solely obliged to do the divine will. His philosophy on the principle of Divine Providence, however, suggests that the doing of the divine will is obligatory to all humanity and not a few minorities. In other words, the principle of Divine Providence demands that humanity submits totally to the divine will. The inclusive view on the Divine Providence is shared by scholars who have written on the subject (Brown 1961: 192; Brown 2004: 15). It is axiomatic, as Allen (1907:58) has already alluded to in chapter 4 of this study, that the three petitions – sanctification of God's name, the doing of His will, and the coming of His kingdom are not mutually exclusive. The position of the researcher on this petition – γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς – is that, it should translate *na be wò lɔlɔnu newɔ, abe alesi wò le le dzifo ene la, nenɔ nenema ke le anyigbadzi*, literally, let your will be done, as it is in heaven, so be it on earth. This rendering reflects the view of the minority of respondents, as shown in Table 5. It is a sharp departure from the traditionally accepted rendering - *woawɔ wo lɔlɔnu le anyigbadzi sigbe alesi wowɔne le dzifo ene*.

#### 5.4.5 Translation and interpretation of the fourth petition

##### Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον

Ewe mother tongue translators, like their Western counterparts, continue to struggle over the exact rendering of the fourth petition, τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον, due to the ambiguity associated with the source language. All four Ewe translations render τὸν ἄρτον *nuɖuɖu la*<sup>239</sup> (the food) instead of *abolo la* (the bread). Thus while *nuɖuɖu* denotes the generic sense of edible items, *abolo* refers to specific food – bread. When it comes to ἐπιούσιον, the early missionaries and their co-workers translate it as...*si asu mía nu*, literally, that [which] would be sufficient for us. This rendering continues to be used in the liturgy of the Ewe speaking churches in Ghana and Togo. Closely related to this translation is *Agbenya la* which renders it as ...*si míaɖu*, when translated literally means – [that] which we will eat. In the 1990 and 2010 versions, the term translates,...*si hiã mí*, literally,...[that] which we need. All four

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<sup>239</sup> *Nuɖuɖu* literally means, things [that are] eaten.

translations, except the *Agbenya La*<sup>240</sup>, are non-eschatological and they convey the idea of food that is necessary for the day's survival. The same literal sense is what the Akan translations (Asante, Akuapem), *Ma yen yen daa aduan (e) nne* and Fante (*ma hen daa daa edziban nde*) suggest, and it is open to two different interpretations. First, that God as a Father who provides His children with their daily food, is called upon to provide for the day. The second interpretation would be for God the Father to feed His children today with their daily food.

The petition is generically presented by majority of respondents as *nuɖuɖu*, literally, thing eaten/food, except three who presents it as *abolo* (bread). Respondents' translation of ἐπιούσιον suggests that the *abolo/nuɖuɖu* is that which is sufficient for the day. There are those who also think that the *abolo/nuɖuɖu* is a daily provision (*gbesiagbe*). The *abolo* is spiritualized as living bread/the Eucharist/the body of Christ/ the word of God (*agbe bolo*) by some respondents. This description of the bread came out strongly in the Bible study discussion with the youth group where the bread is interpreted as Jesus Christ. A response to the critical question of how the *abolo/nuɖuɖu* is provided is that God does it by giving us the ability to work for it. There are those who also think that faith is the vehicle for providing the *abolo/nuɖuɖu*, that is, we eat by believing in God. A well balanced position however, is that the *abolo/nuɖuɖu* is both material and spiritual. Thus if one questions the Ewe Christian on the street about his/her understanding of the petition for bread, one is likely to get any of the above responses. But regarding the relevant question of the interpretation of ἐπιούσιον, an Ewe maxim *Dometɔ enye ametɔ. Esi le alɔgo me enye adela tɔ*<sup>241</sup>, throws some light on it. The adage literally means, what the stomach owns is what a person owns, but what is in the mouth belongs to the hunter. When food is in a person's mouth and s/he happens to meet a hunter and shot, it is the one that gets into the stomach before s/he meets the hunter that they can claim ownership of. The food that is yet to be swallowed before meeting the hunter does not get the chance to enter the stomach. The adage essentially means that one cannot be sure of the security of the food that s/he hoards. The Ewe Christian therefore identifies with the first century prayer and would interpret ἐπιούσιον to mean bread that is sufficient for the day because nobody knows what happens tomorrow.<sup>242</sup> The

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<sup>240</sup> The *Agbenya La* avoids ἐπιούσιον in its rendition.

<sup>241</sup> The adage came out of the bible study discussion with Presbyters of EPCG, Lashibi on 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2018.

<sup>242</sup> One respondent in the Bible Study session with Presbyters pointed out that in her family in the village they would always prepare meals that is sufficient for the day. The leftover was never deliberate. In the preparation of food, the

petition for bread therefore, was originally material. The issue of spiritualization probably arose out of the struggle of the church to address the ambiguity associated with the translation of ἐπιούσιον and also to make the prayer more relevant to the audience at the time. Both the spiritual and literal translation of the petition have already been suggested in the works of Allen (1907:59), Blomberg (1942:119), Scott 1951:98-99), Arndt & Gingrich (1957: 296-297), Brown (1961:195-196), Foerster (1964:597), Harrington 1991:95), Bezt (1995:179), Brown (2004:18), Liroy (2004:163). Synthesizing their theological positions, one comes to the conclusion that the interpretation of the petition is predicated on whether it is used eschatologically or literally. Tertullian for instance, takes a spiritual or incorporeal stance due to the inconsistency characterized by the petition when compared with Mattheu 6:33, 35, a position which is supported by Origen and Clement of Alexandria. Their stance resonates with the 5% of respondents who hold the view that the bread symbolizes the body of Christ. Cyprian, though could not agree more with his teacher, added a literal interpretation, that is, daily bread that is necessary for survival. This corporeal interpretation is supported by Gregory and Calvin, and in agreement with about 90% of respondents' view on the petition. Augustine who may have read the works of his predecessors, took a middle stance and concludes that while the corporeal bread is for both the good and the bad, the incorporeal is for only the children of God. Luther also, greatly influenced by Augustine, followed his line of interpretation. Luther in one breathe describes the bread from incorporeal perspective stressing that material needs must not be prayed for because of the Divine Providence (*pronoia*) motif. For him God in His divine providence meets the material needs of all His creation. In another breathe, Luther interprets the petition from a corporeal point of view. One other valid question raised during the two Bible study sessions was the timing of the prayer. It is instructed in the *didache* and the Apostolic Constitution to be recited thrice daily in private but has assumed liturgical role among Catholics and Protestant communities. The difficulty with the petition, which the Ewe translation struggles to address, is the theological sense one makes from reciting the prayer at night. The only condition that may justify its use at night would be the introduction of the pronoun ἡμῶν into the petition when recited publicly. This would suggest that, corporate as the prayer is, there may be

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stranger or a family member who may visit without giving notice, was always in mind. A similar understanding is drawn from the bible study discussion with the youth group where ἐπιούσιον is interpreted as warning against human greed.

some members in the fellowship who at the time (night) of reciting the prayer may have not had his/her daily bread. The opinion of the researcher on this petition is that it is non-eschatological and should be literally rendered, *miafe egbe bolo la, tsɔe na mí egbea* or *na miafe egbe bolo mí egbea*, or *na miafe gbesiaegbe bolo mí egbea*, literally, our bread for today, give it to us today, or give us our today's bread today, or give us our everyday's bread today. The above renditions, however, do not address the ambiguity in the petition and so do not make any linguistic sense in Ewe. In order to make it reasonable, it must be rendered, *na miafe gbesiagbe bolo si asu míanu la mí*, that is, give us our daily bread that would be sufficient to us. This translation appears to address the ambiguity associated with ἐπιούσιον and does not limit the petition to a particular time of the day. Notes are however, necessary to highlight the eschatological underpinning of the text and the ambiguity associated with the use of ἐπιούσιον, including all other theological concerns relating to the petition in its entirety.

#### 5.4.6 Translation and interpretation of the fifth petition

**Καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν,**

Majority of respondents (73.4%) were of the view that ὀφειλήματα in the petition should be translated as either *nuvo* or *vodada* while 23.3% translates it as *fe/fewo/fenyinyiwo* (debts). Two terminologies, *agɔɔdzedzewo/dzidadawo*,<sup>243</sup> have been introduced by 3.3% of respondents into the vocabulary to aid the understanding of ὀφειλήματα. Regarding the interpretation of this petition, respondents unanimously say that it establishes the conditionality or reciprocity in forgiveness. Allen (1907:59-60) and Aune (2013:65) have already noted that the caveat in the petition indicates divine pardon for debts predicated on human pardon – a condition which the *Kaddish*, *Amida*, Jewish Wisdom and rabbinic literature, and deuterocanonical documents highlight in chapter 3 of this study (Abraham 1917: 140-149; Oesterley 1925: 153). In other words, the petition seems to suggest a kind of ‘golden rule’ on forgiveness – forgive, for we have also forgiven. But respondents are however divided between Matthew’s momentary tense and Luke’s continuous tense. For those who used *vodada*, 58% employed the continuous tense of Luke, and for those who used *fewo/fenyinyiwo*, 14% chose Luke’s continuous tense while 4% goes for Matthew. For the 4% who translates ὀφειλήματα as *agɔɔdzedzewo/dzidadawo*, they chose Matthew’s momentary tense. A further interpretation in the Bible study discussion drives home

<sup>243</sup> *Agɔɔdzedze* and *dzidadawo* denote the breaking of traditional norms.

the seriousness that need to be attached to the prayer since it is more of a vow being made to God than a mere pronouncement. It is therefore wise not to make it at all than to make it and not redeem it.<sup>244</sup> In another Bible study discussion with church elders, it was pointed out that failure to say the petition and not redeem it is tantamount to one summoning the self to God.<sup>245</sup> All the church fathers, mentioned in chapter 4 (Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Augustine, Gregory), with exception of Clement, translate ὀφειλήματα and share its notion as sin. Luther and Calvin follow the same interpretation and in agreement with their predecessors that sin was what is implied in the use of ὀφειλήματα, and that it is forgiven on the basis of reciprocity. Situating the reciprocity of forgiveness within the context of the Reformation, Luther posits that it is the greatest indulgence letter ever that has been issued because it is free of charge. The stance of Clement and the Libertine Christian sect on forgiveness of sins are the same, that is, there is no need to ask for forgiveness of sins. The difference between them is that whereas the Libertines premise their view on the notion that we have been made perfect already, Clement based his on lack of knowledge, that is, ignorance is the reason why Christians ask for forgiveness of their sins. For them once we know that we have already been made perfect, there is no need to pray for forgiveness of sins.

The petition presents some difficulties in the translations from the field and existing Ewe texts on the Lord's Prayer. The word ὀφειλήματα is rendered *vodadawo* in the missionary translation and *nuvɔwo* (sins) in the 1990, 2006, and 2010 versions, instead of *fewo/fenyinyiwo* (debts). There are similarities in the translation between the 1931 and 2006 versions on one hand, and 1990 and 2010 versions on the other, on the translation of the second half of this petition. In the former, both render ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν as *sigbe alesi miawo hã mietsɔna ke amesiwo daa vo de mia nyti la ene*, literally, just as we also forgive those who 'mishrow' against us, while the latter render it as *abe alesi miawo hã mietsɔe ke amesiwo wɔ vɔ de mia nyti la ene*, literally, in the same manner we have forgiven those who have done [bad] against us. It is obvious that the 1990 and 2010 versions are consistent with the use of *nuvɔ* in its rendering of ὀφειλήματα and ὀφειλέταις respectively. What is however missing is that ὀφειλέταις is rendered

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<sup>244</sup> Bible study discussion with EPCG youth group, 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2018.

<sup>245</sup> Bible study discussion with EPCG Presbyters, Lashibi, 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2018. Some participants confess that they do not recite this part of the Lord's Prayer because they would not like to commit themselves.

in the singular instead of plural. In the 1931 and 2006 versions, ὀφειλήματα is substituted with *nuvɔwo* while *vodada* is used to substitute ὀφειλέταις. Thus, whereas the 1990 and 2010 chose to interpret ὀφειλήματα and ὀφειλέταις as *nuvɔwo* and *wɔɔlawo* respectively, the missionary version and *Agbenya La* employ the *vodadawo/vodadawo* and *nuvɔwo/vodadawo* formulae respectively. Again, the missionary and 2006 translations made use of Luke's continuous tense of forgiveness motif instead of Matthew's past perfect. Liturgically, however, the Ewe missionary church uses the 1931 and 2006 renditions in the recitation of this petition of the prayer. The use of *nuvɔwo* to translate ὀφειλήματα and ὀφειλέταις in the 1990 and 2010 versions, and, *vodadawo/vodadawo* and *nuvɔwo/vodada* to translate ὀφειλήματα and ὀφειλέταις in the missionary (1931) and *Agbenya La* (2006) versions respectively is worth exploring. On the difference between the two terms, *nuvɔwo* and *vodada*, participants in a Bible study discussion explain that both terms denote sin but the former denotes sin that is committed knowingly while the latter is sin that is committed unknowingly. Meyer's (1999: 85-111) investigation into Ewe concept of evil reveals that translating sin as *nuvɔ* is inappropriate since the two are conceptualized differently (Meyer 1999:86). Whereas ἀμαρτία denotes failure, being in error, or missing the mark, in English, *nuvɔ* is popularly conceptualized in Ewe as something that is evil or literally bad.<sup>246</sup> The term is actually derived from *nu* (thing), and *vɔ* (to fear). *Nuvɔ* is therefore something that makes one afraid. *Vodada* on the other hand, derived from *vo* (free), and *dada* (throwing), is basically the throwing of one's freedom away. It falls within the semantic domain of *dzidada* and *agɔdzedze*.<sup>247</sup> Ἀφήκαμεν, which translates debts is neither sins nor *nuvɔwo*. It is in Luke's version that one finds the word for sin – ἀμαρτία – which should translate *vodada* in Ewe and not *nuvɔ*. The appropriate Ewe word which translates ἀφήκαμεν is *fewo* (debts). It is therefore obvious that the translation of ἀφήκαμεν as *vɔwo* or *nuvɔwo* is not Matthean. Thus, the appropriate word which translate ἀμαρτίας should be *vodadawo* and not *nuvɔwo*. The Akan (Twi, Akuapem, Mfantse) versions translate the petition *na fa yen aka firi yen senea yede firi wɔn a wɔde yen aka*. The phrases *yen* (our) *aka* (debts), and *wɔn a* (those who) *wɔde yen aka* (they owe us [debts]), also translates *nyɔdzi le* and *mei ni hiewɔ nyɔdzi le* in Ga, and are literal translations of ἀφήκαμεν and ὀφειλέταις from the source language. The Ewe rendering of the

<sup>246</sup> In an interview with Rev. Fred Amevenku, *nuvɔ* is the generic name for sin while *vodada* is an example of *nuvɔ*.

<sup>247</sup> *Dzidada* or *sedzidada* is from *se* (law), *dzi* (up/top), and *dada* (throwing). It denotes the throwing of the law out of place or simply flouting traditional norm. *Agɔdzedze* from *agɔ* (fan palm), and *dzedze* (cracking), literally, cracking/breaking the fan palm. It carries the same meaning as *dzidada*.



petition must therefore read, *eye tsɔ miafe fewo ke mi, elabena miawo hã mietsɔe ke mia fenyilawo*, or *eye tsɔ miafe fewo ke mi abe alesi miawo ha mietsɔ ame siwo nyife le miasi la tɔ ke woe*, and this must be accompanied with notes to highlight the discrepancies in the translation of ἀφήκαμεν and ὀφειλέταις.

#### 5.4.7 Translation and interpretation of the sixth petition

##### **Και μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ**

In the last petition all four translations render *και μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ* as *eye mègakplɔ mí yi de tetekpɔ me o; ke de mí tso vɔdɪtɔ la si me*. The only word missing in the 1990, 2006, and 2010 versions but used in the 1931 version is *και*. All four translations also render *πονηροῦ* as evil personified. The Ewe rendering for *πειρασμός*, *tetekpɔ*, from the verb *tekpɔ*, literally, push/drag to see, suggests an object which one pulls or drags to see its reaction. The cognate, *dodokpɔ*, from *dokpɔ*, literally, measure/weigh/examine and see, is the same word used to render *πειρασμός* in Akan (*sɔhwe*), which shall be looked at shortly. The use of *vɔ/vɔdɪtɔ* to render *πονηρός* betrays the difficulty in the translation of *ὀφειλέταις* as *sin* in the fourth petition. Thus the two words, *ὀφειλέταις* and *πονηρός*, cannot be said to have the same Ewe equivalence. When it comes to comparison with other Ghanaian translations, all three Akan and Ga render *πειρασμός* and *πονηρός* as *sɔhwe*, literally touch and see, and *bɔne*, literally, a smelling thing, respectively. *Sɔhwe* is the same terminology used to denote examination in Akan. Thus *πειρασμός* is perceived as an examination or test while *πονηρός*, as understood to be evil thing, is conceptualized as foul smell or rot in Akan. The issue with respondents' translations of the petition is whether or not *πειρασμός* should be personified. A significant number of respondents (86%) hold the view of the personification of *πονηρός*, but only about half (46%) interpret it as such – grips/traps/snare of the Devil and enemy/evil people. This assertion was confirmed in the two Bible study discussions held with elders and youth. The belief that the Devil is the source of all evil is enough justification of the assertion that *πονηρός* is a person and not a thing. This demonological motif of personified *πονηρός*, is in consonance with the translations of all the church fathers in this study except Origen. Luther and Calvin also align themselves with majority of the fathers who argue for a personified translation of *πονηρός*. Jewish apotropaic and apocalyptic thoughts, in addition to Greek and Hellenistic notions of *πονηρός* may enlighten our understanding (Flusser 1992: 86; Bezt 1995:380; Chazon 2003:75;

Brown 2004: 25; Wold 2014: 101-112). In these two worlds, the term denotes both personality and an abstract. In Ewe cosmology however, there exists evil and not the Devil. It is therefore foreign to the Ewe primal mind to personify evil.

Although all respondents seem to deny that God is the one who leads us into temptation, they think that He protects them against it or delivers them from it. Only one respondent who thinks God is the one who leads us into temptation. But the result is not very different in the Bible study session with church elders and the youth group. The consensus here is that God allows us but does not lead us into temptation. The same difficulty can be found in the translations and interpretations of the church fathers. Tertullian for instance, though opted for a God-led temptation, took a hermeneutical stance which suggests that God only allows temptation. Cyprian, Clement, Augustine, and Luther share the same hermeneutical opinion with Tertullian but disagree with him in translation. Origen's consistency in translation and interpretation confirms his assertion and that of the only one respondent among the sixty, that God is the cause of all human temptations, a position which Calvin also shares in his thought about the petition. One question, however, that begs for an answer in all the Bible study discussions is that, if God does not lead us into temptation why then did the Holy Spirit "throws" or led Jesus Christ into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.<sup>248</sup> James in his apologetic mood wrote that it is the human desire that leads him/her into temptation and not God.<sup>249</sup> Luther however, opines that what we must be concerned with is reasons why God allows temptations to come the way of His children. His answer resonates with an Akan adage which literally means that a piece of advice does not change a person unless temptation. In other words God uses temptation to teach us life's lessons so that we may come to the realization that "... evil desire is not extinguished by nothing except the heavenly dew and rain of God's grace" (Lenker 1907:306, Hay 1892: 256). Following the Ewe cosmological understanding, the sixth petition, *και μη εισενέγκης ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ*, should read *eye mega kplɔ mi yi tetekpɔ me o, ke demi tso vɔ/nuvɔɖi me* with notes.

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<sup>248</sup> See Matthew 4:1-2, Mark. 1:12-13.

<sup>249</sup> See James.1:13-14.

#### 5.4.8 Translation and interpretation of the doxology

The two translation issues again emerge from this section – *fiadufe/fiaqudu* from the second petition and the conclusion of the doxology – amen. Again, a balanced percentage of respondents – 48.3% and 44.9% – render the term as territorial/external and spiritual/internal respectively. The doxology as a liturgical piece is concluded with Amen to denote participation and emphasis. 66.6% of respondents failed to translate the Amen into Ewe because it is liturgically normal to say it in English. Only 3.3% translates it as *neva eme*, literally, let it come to being or let it come to pass/be. Half of respondents’ interpretation of the doxology reiterates the sovereignty of God and the fact that the key words in the doxology – kingdom, power, and glory – belong to and radiate from Him. The power, some respondents (5.0%) believe, destroys the work of the devil for God’s glory to be revealed. The rest of the interpretations – hymn of praise and adoration, appropriate way of ending the Lord’s Prayer, submission to God, suggest respondents’ liturgical understanding of the doxology. There is an insignificant percentage (3.3%) who believe that the doxology is the summary of the entire petitions. We cannot ignore the views of those who interpret the doxology in the light of Christian eschatology and the description of the kingdom in it as boundless.

On the reason (s) for the inclusion of the doxology, some respondents think that it was added to the prayer to ensure that every petitionary prayer ends with thanksgiving. This idea may have been derived from popular Ewe-Ghanaian Christian prayer patterns where every prayer always ends with the giving of thanks. However, all the participants in the two Bible study discussions think that the doxology is for the purpose of emphasis. An interview with Rev. Fred Amevenku however reveals that the doxology was not part of the original manuscript and since no one is able to prove that Jesus did not mention it, one cannot contest its authenticity.<sup>250</sup> For Rev. H.K. Gbotsyo, the doxology may have been added by a redactor for apologetic reason because its form appears creedal.<sup>251</sup> Calvin’s commentary on the doxology echoes its liturgical importance as already mentioned in chapter four (4) and it is worth revisiting; “it is strange that this doxology, closing the prayer, which it fits so well, has been omitted in the Latin [Vulgate].” He added, “it was added not only to warm our hearts to press towards the glory of God, and warm us on what

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<sup>250</sup> Interview with Rev. Fred Amevenku, 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2017.

<sup>251</sup> Interview with Rev. H.K. Gbotsyo, 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2015.

should be the goal of all our supplications, but also to tell us that all our prayers, here set down for us have no other foundation than God alone, in case we should put any weight upon our own merits” (Morrison 1972:213).

It is an established fact that the doxology is not found in the earliest and best manuscripts of the gospel. It is however, found in late manuscripts, particularly Textus Receptus manuscripts, which the nineteenth century German Missionaries used in the 1931 translation of the Ewe Bible.<sup>252</sup> In Catholic Sacramental practice, the doxology is traditionally positioned to affirm its late inclusion. Thus whenever the Lord’s Prayer is recited, the doxology follows the embolism as indication of its late arrival. Following Matthew’s rendition of the prayer in Textus Receptus manuscripts, the corresponding Ewe rendition should be *elabena tɔwoe nye fiaduɖu, kple nuse, kple ηutikɔkɔe, tegbee. Neva eme.*

#### **5.4.9 Comparison between Matthew and Luke’s versions of the Lord’s Prayer**

It appears from Table 10 that respondents’ have disjointed opinions on their comparison of the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew and Luke. Although they seem to have general knowledge about the Lord’s Prayer (Table 2), only 70% of them are able to compare Matthew and Luke’s versions partially. The remaining 30% either do not have any idea whatsoever about the existence of the two versions of the prayer or find it difficult comparing them. They first of all understand collectively that Jesus is the one who taught the prayer. Second, that the structure of the two prayers are the same, and find the similarities in the first part of the invocation (Our Father), the first petition (the sanctification of God’s name), second petition (the coming of the kingdom), fourth petition (the petition for bread), fifth petition (forgiveness), and the sixth petition (temptation and deliverance from evil things/evil one). They also identified collectively the differences between the two prayers in terms of context, that is, what occasioned the prayer and

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<sup>252</sup> The earliest manuscripts containing the Lord’s Prayer, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, were from the fourth century CE, and the difference between these two Manuscripts and the one containing the doxology, Codex Washingtonensis (4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century) is just about one or half a century. In addition, the Patristic evidence from John Chrysostom’s (347-407) homily on the doxology suggests that the doxology cannot be thrown out easily on the basis of its lateness. The truth is, the earliest Manuscripts such as Codex Sinaiticus from Alexandria are not without omissions either. For instances, omissions are found in texts such as 1 Corinthians 13:1-2; Luke 10:32, 35 and; John 6:15, 55. Find these facts on the website of The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts: [http://www.csntm.org/Manuscript/View/GA\\_032](http://www.csntm.org/Manuscript/View/GA_032); The Codex Sinaiticus Project Website: <http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en>.

audience, and linguistic differences. They also noticed that unlike Matthew, Jesus taught the disciples to literally recite the prayer. Differences were also found in the second part of the invocation, the third petition, the second part of the sixth petition, and the doxology. There is 13.3% of respondents who either find no difference between the two prayers or have no idea about them. This is also reflected in the Bible study discussions held with church elders and youth who have little or no idea about the Lord's Prayer in Matthew and Luke, hence their inability to do any comparison.<sup>253</sup> There is however, a narrow gap between literature on the exegetical comparison of the prayers and respondents' thoughts collectively. On what has accounted for the differences between the two versions of the prayer, 38.3% have either no idea or do not really understand the question. The remaining 61.7% identifies the reasons in the area of context, translation errors, inspiration, and the fact that Luke's version summarizes Matthew's version. There is also a difficulty when it comes to lessons respondents have learnt from the differences between the two versions of the prayer. Majority (56.7%) seems to either have no idea or misunderstand the question. The views of the remaining 43.3% are expressed in terms of African Christian eschatological hope, contextualization of the Christian message, the preservation of the Christian tradition, dynamism of the Christian message, and the use of African theological resources to enrich one's theological understanding. What these respondents are suggesting essentially is that context sensitivity is the approach to understanding the Christian message. This theological exercise must be skillfully undertaken in order to preserve the Christian tradition. We must not however ignore the view of one respondent who shares the view that the discrepancies between the two prayers does more harm than good to the immature Christian, that is, it throws them into the state of unbelief. Those who hold the view that there is no differences between the two prayers (26.7%) say so because the 1931 version of the Ewe Bible was based on Lucan version of Textus Receptus and not the Alexandrian manuscripts. The text is as below:

*Mia Fofò, si le dzifowo, wò ñkò ñuti nakò! Wò fiadufe nava! Woawò wò lólónu le anyigba dzi, sigbe alesi wowónà le dzifo ene! Na miáfe abolo, si asu mia nu gbesiagbe la mi. Eye tsò*

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<sup>253</sup> When a question was posed to participants in the bible study discussion on their knowledge of the existence of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew and Luke, only one out of sixteen from the presbyters, and two out the seven youth knew about it. The rest only know the prayer liturgically.

*míafe nuvɔwo ke mi; elabena mía ηutɔwo hã mietsɔne kea amesiame, si nyia fe le mía si! Eye megakplɔ mí yi ɔe tetekpɔ me o, ke ɔe mí tso vɔditɔ la si me! Luka 11:2-4*

Our Father who is in the heavens, your name be sanctified, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. Give us our daily bread that is sufficient to us. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive those who are indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the hand of the evil one.

Obviously, respondents' answered their questions based on the particular Ewe translation at their disposal. Their translations either confirm or challenge existing Ewe translations. Their interpretations are not very different from that of the church fathers and the Reformers whose works on the Lord's Prayer is used in this study. Their hermeneutical views have shaped our understanding of the Lord's Prayer. But to the majority of Ewe-Ghanaian Christians who are not educated, the discrepancies in the prayers create doubt in the authenticity of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. The Bible to the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian is more than a literary document; it is the inspired word of God which answers most, if not all, of the theological questions the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian is asking.

#### **5.4.10 The relevance of the Lord's Prayer**

The 88.3% of respondents who use the Lord's Prayer in their denominations are from the Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal/Charismatic, and African Initiated Churches. The 11.7% who do not use the prayer are from the Pentecostal/Charismatic and African Initiated traditions. In the Bible study discussions with church elders and youth however, all participants who responded to the question of whether or not they use the Lord's Prayer did so in the affirmative. The reasons for the affirmative responses both on issues of biblical authority, liturgical appropriateness and the fact that the Lord's Prayer is widely known to be the prayer of all prayers. Tertullian in his theology of prayer described the Lord's Prayer as the fulfillment and model of all forms of prayers. On the contrary, those who do not use the Lord's Prayer said so because according to them the prayer has outlived its relevance. In other words, it was given under the law and now that grace has come, it is no longer relevant. This view seems to suggest that the Lord's Prayer was not intended to be a liturgical prayer, rather, a prayer said in anticipation of the advent of the

kingdom of God in the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Respondents believe that the prayer has already served its eschatological, soteriological, and pedagogical purposes.

It is interesting, however, to note that the 96.7% of respondents who were of the view that the Lord's Prayer is still relevant included the 3.3% of those who gave reasons for not using it. They however, cited reasons that are different from the one's they assigned for not using the prayer. Issues of censorship, moral lessons, spirituality, the immutability of God's word and human needs, the authority of the Bible, and structure have been cited as reasons for the relevance of the prayer. The relevance of the prayer also lies in the fact that its author is Jesus himself. It is also believed that once Jesus is the one who taught the prayer, it cannot be said to be irrelevant. The Lord's Prayer provides guide to anyone who would like to pray to God, but if one does not have anything to say to God, the Lord's Prayer is there to be recited. New converts also need the prayer to help them learn how to pray and grow in their prayer lives.<sup>254</sup>

On the issue of censorship, there seems to be excesses in the Ghanaian religious landscape and the media is used as the vehicle to escalate the situation. The faith in general and prayer in particular is romanticized in the Ghanaian religious space to the extent that worshippers are made to believe that just by tumultuous and verbose prayers one's request would be granted. The theological understanding that has emerged in the Ewe Christian life and thought is built around African affirmation of life where faith in Jesus Christ, is believed to be accompanied by healing, success in life through travel, employment, etc. Anything that works against achieving these things is seen as demonic and prayer is therefore the key to reversing it. Prayer has become the most popular liturgical theme which is trendy in both traditional and social media platforms. What the Lord's Prayer is believed to do is to control the 'shopping list' that worshippers present to God daily and focus more on their submission to the Divine will and moral uprightness. This then leads to a better understanding of the kind of spirituality Christians must practice – a spirituality which is not need driven but God-driven. Respondents' views on popular Ewe-Ghanaian Christian prayers today, which we now turn to, throws more light on why the question of relevance of the Lord's Prayer is even more valid.

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<sup>254</sup> Bible study discussion with EPCG youth, 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2018.

#### 5.4.11 Popular Ewe Christian prayers today

Ewe traditional Christian prayer has no place in Ewe popular Christianity; it is described as boring, ineffective and less powerful. A powerful prayer is one that is accompanied by tumultuous verbosity. This style of prayer now permeates every facet of the Ghanaian Christian denominations – Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal/Charismatic, and African Initiated Churches. It is commercial in outlook and media friendly. Ironically, the enthusiasm in listening to the word of God is dwindling and its place is being taken over by prayer. Although similar in structure as the Lord’s Prayer, popular Ewe Christian prayers sharply departs from the Lord’s Prayer in terms of content, language, and formula. It is spontaneous, petitionary and intercessory, verbose and tumultuous, ritualistic, materialistic, and has its own doxology – the shouting of the name of Jesus three times. The above description reflects the views of respondents on Ewe Christian prayers that are as equally relevant as the Lord’s Prayer today. The opinions of majority of the interviewees are that praying ‘in the name of Jesus’, intercessory and deliverance prayers, spiritual warfare and praying against demonic attacks, imprecations, petitions, binding and losing prayers, prayer by anointing with oil, salt, communion wine, healing prayers, are all popular Ewe Christian prayers that are relevant today. Other popular prayers also came up in the two Bible study discussions with church elders and youth. They include vengeful prayers (back to sender), prayer for success in life – employment, travel, marriage, childbirth – shooting at the devil and his agents with verbal declarations. There is a new prayer pattern that is developing on social media where the man or woman of God makes a declaration concerning the needs of friends and ask them to type AMEN for their wishes to be granted.<sup>255</sup> In short, the affirmation of life, mentioned above, permeates all Ewe prayer life, and anything that poses itself as a thread to the life of individuals is prayed against. A simple formula runs through all popular Ewe Christian prayers: The leader raises the prayer topic and then instructs the congregants to pray. When the prayer ends, the leader makes a series of declarations, commonly known as “I declare” pronouncements, and the congregants follow suit. Afterwards, the leader calls individuals by mentioning their specific problems and invites forward to be prayed for. S/he then lay the hands

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<sup>255</sup> Bible study discussion with EPCG Presbyters and youth, Lashibi, 24<sup>th</sup> January, and 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2018.



on them one after the other and prays for them by anointing their heads with oil.<sup>256</sup> In one prayer meeting in which the researcher participated, the following prayer formula was employed:

**Leader:** This year alone, about five ministers of [our] church have died. The Lord says if we do not intercede for them, we will hear of more deaths by the end of the year. We are going to stand in the gap for our pastors. We are saying that “let the spirit of death that is hovering around our pastors be arrested in the name of Jesus.

**Leader:** An altar has been raised and you are the reason for that altar. We are going to pray that any altar that has been raised with your name written on it should be broken.

**Congregation:** The congregants then respond in a tumult and verbose manner, accompanied by glossolalia amid clapping of the hands, singing with musical instruments – drums, organ, tambourine, with loud microphones.

**Leader:** I can see three coffins in this church ‘auditorium’ so let us pray the following prayers:

My Father my Father (2times)

I come before you tonight (2times)

Anybody, be it a man, be it a woman, who wants my death and has sent my coffin, back to sender, back to sender<sup>257</sup>

The above prayer was intended to achieve one obvious objective – to reverse any threat to the life of the individual. Every sphere of the Ewe-Ghanaian life is spiritualized – health, education, the economy, trade and industry, communication, agriculture/aquaculture, energy, employment, road and transport, lands and natural resources, science and technology, etc. It is therefore believed that prayer is the sole panacea to the ailing socio-economic and political problems of the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian. In an interview with Rev. Amevenku, he observed that the issue of prayer today is a challenging one. He added that once a person claims to be going higher in

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<sup>256</sup> In any ‘serious’ Ghanaian Christian prayer meeting, one finds in addition to colours of anointing oil, communion wine and salt. Needless to mention the sprinkling of water on worshippers at revival programmes. The oil are used to anoint worshippers while the communion wine is drank as symbol of Jesus’ blood. Worshippers are asked to either bring them to the prayer grounds or buy them upon arrival.

<sup>257</sup> These prayers were recorded from an All-Night service organized by the youth group of the EPCG, Lashibi on 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2017.

matters of spirituality, s/he gets to a point where they hardly can distinguish between the occult and the divine. He described the prayers that dominate Christianity today in Ghana as African traditional prayers in Christian garb. This development he observed, is a contextualization gone haywire. What needs to be done, he posits, is education so that people would know the lines of continuity and discontinuity between the holy and the profane.<sup>258</sup>

## **5.5 AN EWE COMMENTARY ON THE LORD’S PRAYER**

### **5.5.1 Introduction**

The only Ewe interpretation of the Lord’s Prayer is found in the commentary of Rev. Samuel Quist (1937 unpublished) on Matthew. He was born on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 1870 in Keta in the Southern part of the Voltal region of Ghana and died in December, 1936 at Agome-Kpalime in Togo. He was one of the native co-workers who assisted the German missionaries in the first Ewe Bible translation project. He was commissioned by the Bremen Mission in 1931 to write a commentary on the gospel according to Matthew. In his commentary on the Lord’s Prayer, he divided the prayer into invocation and seven petitions. The first three which seeks the glory of God in the midst of His people, and the last four which deal with material (4<sup>th</sup> petition) and spiritual needs (5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> petitions). The arrangement of the petitions, according to Quist, is clear indication that we must pursue godly things (1<sup>st</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> petitions) more than our own things (4<sup>th</sup> petition) in our prayers. This division therefore places the prayer in theocentric (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> petitions) – anthropocentric (4<sup>th</sup> petition) – and theocentric (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> petitions) formula. He translates the invocation as *Mia Fofo, si le dzi fowo* – a translation which aligns with the 1931 version of the Ewe Bible which he collaborated with the missionaries to translate. He interpreted the invocation from the perspective of inclusivism, that is, God is Father of all who must be approached with reverence, a childlike faith and a loving heart. Addressing God as Father to Quist means addressing fellow humans as brothers (and sisters) and loving one another as we love ourselves. This inclusive idea of access to the Holy One is also expressed in the translation work of Jacobus Capitein<sup>259</sup> on the Lord’s Prayer. He paraphrased the invocation Πάτερ, ημων ο

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<sup>258</sup> Interview with Rev. Amevenku, 2017

<sup>259</sup> Capitein (1717-1747) was the first Ghanaian minister of the gospel and pioneer of Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics in Ghanaian language (Akan-Fante). He was said to be the first Black African slave to be baptized into the Dutch Reformed Church in Holland and had his theological education in Leiden University in 1742. He was subsequently ordained as the first Protestant African pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church. He spent about fourteen years in the Netherlands before he was dispatched to the then Gold Coast as missionary and chaplain for the workers

εν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς as “*Jinjena Jinnadja endi owassúr*”<sup>260</sup>, literally, we all our Father because of which He is in the sky (heaven). The fact that God is in heaven, Quist asserts, is an indication of a heavenly hope, and though he dwells in heaven, He also fills the earth as well. He draws a clear distinction between God’s Fatherhood and that of our earthly fathers (Quist 1937:42).

Quist’s translation of the first petition of the prayer, “*wò ñkò ñuti nakò*”, follows the missionary pattern. He views God’s name as the totality of His personality. Although he admits that God’s name in itself is holy in every aspect, the sanctification of his name above all others in word and deed is what should be the Christian’s priority (Quist 1937:43). Capitein’s Mfante translation also renders it as *wo dzin wɔmbɔ no yie*<sup>261</sup>, literally, your name, may it be mentioned properly. Quist translates the second petition as “*wò fiaɖufe nava*”, literally, your place of reign come. It is this same traditional understanding of βασιλεία that informed Jacobus Capitein’s translation of this petition in the *Mfante Twi* language at the middle of the eighteenth century – *Maohinman unbra*<sup>262</sup> literally, your city/country of reign come (Ekem 2011:11). This translation suggests that the βασιλεία is a city reserved for the people of God. Quist in his commentary posed a rhetorical question, [the kingdom should come] from where? And come to where? Although God’s kingship in heaven is unquestionable, he observed, we are to pray He extends that kingship to the earth where the devil rules as king. He added that the kingdom of God had already come through His Son and that the prayer is meant for the Father to let His Spirit fill us so we may change from our hearts and indeed through the word of the Son, deny ourselves and the worshipping of other beings and become his [the Son] here on earth and the world to come – His glorious kingdom. He concludes “*ale miɖafe gbedodoɖa la nye: wò fiaɖufe neva nam, na trɔsubɔlawo, na wò hame la*”, literally, your kingdom come to me, to idol worshipers, to the church (Quist 1937:43). On the third petition, Quist’s translation again falls in line with the missionary version. He asserts that the doing of God’s will is among thousands of angels, worshipping Him day and night in submissiveness, willingness, humility, and righteousness. And it is the same attitude the prayer is

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of the then second Dutch West India Company (WIC) at Elmina. As an advocate of the use of the local language for effective missionary activity, Capitein developed a Dutch orthography for the Fante dialect and by 1745 was able to translate the Lord’s Prayer, the Twelve Articles of Faith, and the Ten Commandments into Fante (see Ekem 2011:7-16).

<sup>260</sup> This is the text in the original Dutch orthography. The reconstructed text in the *Mfante* orthography is *Hen nyinaa hen Eɖya a ntsi ɔwɔ sor*.

<sup>261</sup> The original Dutch text is Oediên Wobonnejé.

<sup>262</sup> This text now reads *Ma w’aheman mbra* in modern *Mfantse* orthography.

seeking to promote among believers on earth (Quist 1937:44). Capitein's paraphrase of the petition renders the petition as *dza ekyere wɔnyen esor, ɔnye asaase*<sup>263</sup>, literally, what you teach that they do above, [let it] be done on earth. Capitein avoided the ambiguity in the fourth petition, τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον in his *Mfante* translation and renders it as *hen adziban ma hen dabaa*<sup>264</sup>, that is, our food, give us every day. This rendering represents the view of the ordinary *Mfante* on the street whose experience of hunger is not theoretical/spiritual, but reality/material. It is this existential reality that Quist also expressed in his commentary. He first translates this petition as *na míafe nuɖuɖu si asu mía nu*, that is, give our food that will be enough for us. He then explains that the food includes all that would sustain the body – food, drink, clothing, child, house, husband, wife. He further adds an ethical dimension to his interpretation of the *nuɖuɖu* to mean that it is our food and not the food of others, that is, not stolen food or food taken by cheating others. He again stressed that the food is supposed to be one that would be enough for the day – every day with its need – tomorrow will take care of its needs so we need not be worried about it. He concludes by observing that the use of *na mi* (give us), suggests inclusiveness – the need to include the poor and the needy in the petition (Quist 1937:44).

He translates the fifth petition as *Eye natsɔ míafe vodadawo ake mí, sigbe alesi míawo hã míetsɔna kea amesiwo daa vo ɖe mía ηuti la ene*. His use of *vodada* (*wo*) to render ὀφειλήματα and ὀφειλέταις is clear departure from the literal sense of the words and it aligns with Luke's continuous tense translation. His translation however, betrays the choice of *vodadawo* as the appropriate rendering for ἁμαρτία. Quist describes ἁμαρτία as poison that kills the soul, leading to eternal death (see Quist 1937:44). Capitein's eighteenth century *Mfante* paraphrase is interesting. His translation of the petition is rendered as *ɔnye hen andzebɔn a y'aye fakye hen*, literally, our bad things we have done forgive us. He then continues with the second half of the text, *Ebiso ɔaye hen adzebɔn a, yedzebekyen*<sup>265</sup>, literally, if others have done us bad thing, we will also forgive them. This translation discontinues with the Akan rendering that followed.

<sup>263</sup> The original Dutch orthography is Dieekjereê wojen essuúr, ónne adaêde.

<sup>264</sup> Again the original text in the Dutch orthography is Innadubánne mánjen dabaê.

<sup>265</sup> The original Dutch text: O'nne innadebonni jaje fakjejen. Ebiso wajejen adebonni jeedebekjen.

Quist interpreted *πειρασμός* in the first part of the petition to mean sins that are obstacles; sins that ‘*de xa de mía nu.*’ For him, it is God who allows temptations as trials to come the way of His own for their good. He cited EPHB<sup>266</sup> 387 to buttress his assertion (Quist 1937:44). He however, made the second half of the sixth petition his seventh and personifies it as the Devil himself. For him all manner of evil – ill-health, body pains, calamities, ‘heart pains’ and grieve – *vloedoaime kple koko* – come from the Devil. This notion of every evil thing emanating from the Devil is prevalent in Akan and Ga demonology as well. Quist shows two ways in which God delivers His children from all this evil; He either prevents it from happening to them or He gives the strength and understanding to bear them with joy. One finds a combination of both translation and paraphrase of the sixth petition in Capitein’s work. Just like Quist, he views *πειρασμός* as sin but points to God as the one who gets His children into *πειρασμός*, expressed as, *na ma mma hen tsir nnkɔ adzebɔn mu*<sup>267</sup>, literally, and do not let our head get into a bad/an evil thing. He also describes *πονηρός* as evil person but not the Devil, as evident in the following rendering; *ma mma Obiso nnye hen adzebɔn*<sup>268</sup>, that is, do not let someone also do us bad/evil. The understanding that someone is always responsible for another person’s misfortune is prevalent in every primal religious practice and has become an essential component of Ewe, Akan, and Ga Christian demonology.

Although Quist noted that the doxology of the Lord’s Prayer was not in the earliest manuscripts of Matthew and Luke, he understands it to mean assurance that God is able to listen, He agrees to listen, and He must listen. The reason being that the prayer is said to the King of kings, the Almighty Father whose glory will be exalted in heaven by all His creation in all eternity. He however, adds, *de ko meganlɔ esia be o bena: Mawu la fofowò wònye, menye wò subɔlae o! Eye na akpedada nakpe de wò kukudɛdewo nyiti le Mawu nkume daa!*” Literally, only bear in mind that God is your Father, not your servant. And add to your petition thanksgiving in the presence of God always! (Quist 1937:42, 44). The doxology is also found in three Akan and Ga translations with exception of the MFante. In the 1932 version of the Asante and 1992 version of the Ga Bibles for instance, 1 Chronicles 29:11- 13 was cited as justification for the inclusion of

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<sup>266</sup> The hymn suggests that Satan, and not God, is the one who tempts us.

<sup>267</sup> The original text is *o’nye meêma jenitiêr ónko adebónnim*

<sup>268</sup> The original text is *meêma ebiso ónyen adebónni*

the doxology. Capitein's Mfante however, has the doxology as follows: *adze a ɔye ahenman no, ɔwo w'ara wo nsamu/ɔwoara na inyim*<sup>269</sup>, that is, that which is the kingdom is in your hand/ is before you; *ɔnye w'ahoodzen*, that is, it is your power/strength; *ɔnye adze a oye ingyina ɔkan aman a onnyi ewiei*, that is, and all that which is good, and that which has no end; *ɔnye dem*, that is, so be it. Obviously, Capitein's inclusion of the doxology to his 'Lord's Prayer' is solely for liturgical reason as it is believed to be throughout the epoch of Christianity.

## **5.5.2 Mateo fe agbalē ta ade kpukpui asieke vasede wieto lia me dzodzro/Commentary on the book of Matthew chapter six verses nine to thirteen**

### **5.5.2.1 Dgɔdonya**

Mateo fe agbalē enye Nyanyuie la fe agbalēawo dometo deka si wonlo tso Mía Feto Yesu fe dzidzi, anyinonɔ le mía dome, efe dɔwɔwɔ, efe ku kple efe tsitrestiti, Nusɔlawo domenonɔ zi mloeto kple wofe dɔdɔ de dɔgbe, kple efe dzi fo yiyi. Agbalēa ɲlo la tso togbewo ɲoli enye Mateo gake amesiwo bi le Mawunya me domotor adewo susu be Mateo fe ɲko ko agbalēa tso. Biblia ɲuti nunyala gedewo lo de edzi be fe alafa deka fe akpa etolia me ye wo ɲlo agbalē la. Wo ɲlo agbalē la le Helatowo fe gbe me hafi wo va de egome le gbegblogblo vovowo me si Ewegbe nye wo dometo deka. Agbalēa fe taɔdzinu enye be Yuɔatowo na dzeii be Yesu enye Mawu fe Amesiaminala eye Yesu Mawu fe Amesiaminala subɔsubɔ nye Yuɔatowo fe subɔsubɔ fe dziyiyi.

### **Introduction**

The book of Matthew is one among the gospel books which gives account of Jesus' birth, life and work, death and resurrection, last days with his disciples and their commissioning, and his ascension. Traditionally, Matthew is credited with the authorship of the book but some Bible scholars think that the use of Matthew is pseudonym. The majority of scholars, however, agree that the book was written during the third quarter of the first century. The book was written in the Greek language before it was later translated into various languages including Ewe. The purpose of the book is to argue to the Jews that Jesus is God's Anointed One and that Christianity is continuity of Judaism.

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<sup>269</sup> Original text – *a'de ehinman owowarra ɔnsim, o'nne oahomadɔn, o'nne adeaɔje injena okan aman injeanoe, ojendam*

### 5.5.2.2 Ememama

Agbalēa memama le akpa vovovo me. Ke memama gā akpa ene ye le ɲu: akpa gbātɔ – Yesu *fe* dzidzi (Mateo 1: 1-4:11); akpa evelia – Efe dɔwɔwɔ *fe* gɔmedzedze (Mateo 4:12-26:1); akpa etolia – efe dɔwɔwɔ *fe* nuwuwu (Mateo 26:2-26:46); akpa enelia – efe ku kple d̄d̄i, tsitrestiti kple dzifo yiye (Mateo 26:47-28:20).<sup>270</sup> Nufiafia enye Yesu *fe* dɔwɔwɔwɔ dometo d̄ka eye gbedodoḍa si wò fia efe nusrolawo si wo yɔ na be Afeto *fe* gbedodoḍa, si le efe todzi nyagbɔgbɔwɔ/nufiafiawo me la nye wo dometo d̄ka. Wo ma Yesu *fe* todzi nufiafia la me d̄e akpa ene me: Yayra nyawo, se ewo la gɔmeded̄e, subɔsubɔ kɔnuwo, kple agbe me nyawo.<sup>271</sup> Afeto *fe* gbedodoḍa nye subɔsubɔ kɔnuwo dometo d̄ka. Woakpɔ Afeto *fe* gbedodoḍa la le Luka *fe* Nyanyuie kple Apostolowo *fe* nufiafia si wo ga yɔ na be *didache* la me.<sup>272</sup>

### Division

The book is divided into many smaller divisions. There are however, four major divisions into which it is divided: first, the birth of Jesus (Mat. 1:1-4:11); second – the beginning of his ministry (Mat. 4: 12-26:1); third – the end of his ministry (Mat. 26:2-26:46); fourth – his death and burial, resurrection and ascension (Mat. 26:47-28:20). Teaching was among Jesus' ministry, and prayer which he taught his disciples, also known as the Lord's Prayer, found in his Mountain Sermon, was one of his teachings. Jesus' Mountain Sermon is divided into four parts: Beatitude, interpretation of the law, cultic rituals, and life issues. The Lord's Prayer falls under the cultic rituals. The Lord's Prayer is also found in the gospel of Luke and the teachings of the apostles also known as *didache*.

### 5.5.2.3 Vovototo siwo le Mateo kple Luka *fe* gbedodoḍa me

Vovototo si le Mateo *fe* gbedodoḍa kple Luka tɔ me enye esi: gbātɔ, Mateo *fe* gbedodoḍa didi wu Luka tɔ. Wo fia gbedodoḍa la le todzi le Mateo me eye le Luka me la, wo fiɛ le gbadzaa *fe*. Le Luka me hã la, nusrolawoe bía tso Yesu si be wò fia gbedodoḍa yewo, ke le Mateo me la, Yesu ɲtɔ ye d̄o efafia. Mateo ga na míenya be gbedodoḍa la kpɔdeɲu ko wònye. Gake le Luka

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<sup>270</sup> See Adeyemo (2006:1106-1107)

<sup>271</sup> See Betz (1995:59-62).

<sup>272</sup> See Betz (1995:370-371).

me la, enye gbedodoḡa koṅ Yesu ḡo nawo be woa do ḡa. Nusi hã nye vovototo le gbedodoḡa eve siawo dome enye ame siwo wo ṅlɔ agbalẽawo ḡo ḡe– Hebritowo (Mateo) kple Helatowo (Luka). Mateo dze efe gbedodoḡa la gome kple ‘mía Tɔ/Fofo si le dzi fowo’ eye Luka tɔ dze egome kple ‘Tɔ/Fofo.’ Biabia evelia, “woa wo wò lɔlɔnu le anyigba dzi ...”, si le Mateo me la bu le Luka me eye biabia etolia la, “na mí egbe” trɔ zu “na mí gbesiagbe” le Luka me. Le biabia enelia fe akpa gbãtɔ me la, Luka trɔ Mateo fe nya gbe “fewo” zu “vodadawo”, gake metro fenyilawo le akpa evelia me zu vodalawo” o. Le biabia sia ke me la, Luka gatɔ “elabena míetsɔ ke amesiwo ...” zu “elabena míetsɔ na ke na amesiwo ...” Ne eva biabia atolia fe akpa mamle tɔ, “ke ḡemi tso vɔ/vɔḡitola si me”, mele Luka fe gbedodoḡa me o. Ame aḡeke menya gbedodoḡa eveawo dometɔ kae wofia gbã o. Gake edze fãã abe Mateo kple Luka ḡewo tia gbedodoḡa la fe me nyawo tso gbe si me Yesu fia gbedodoḡa la le tsã alo ḡasefo vovovo ye bɔ gbedodoḡa me nyawo na Mateo kple Luka yata vovototo va gbedodoḡa eveawo dome ḡo.

### **Differences between Matthew and Luke’s prayers**

The differences between Matthew and Luke’s prayers are: first, Matthew’s prayer is longer than Luke’s. In Matthew, the prayer was taught on a Mountain while in Luke, it was taught on a plain. In Luke, it was the disciples who asked Jesus to teach them how to pray while in Matthew Jesus himself planned the teaching. Matthew also informed us that the prayer was a model prayer. But in Luke, it was supposed to be recited. Another difference between the two prayers is the audiences; Matthew’s audience were Jews while Luke wrote to Greek audience. Matthew began his prayer with “our Father who is in the heavens” while Luke began his with “Father”. The third petition, “your will be done on earth...” in Matthew is mission from Luke. And the fourth petition, “give us today...” changes to “give us every day...” in Luke. In the first part of the fifth petition, Luke changes Matthew’s word “debts” to “sins” but maintains “debtors” in the second part. He also changes “for we also have forgiven those who...” to “for we also forgive those who...” When it comes to the last part of the sixth petition, “but deliver us from evil/the evil one”, it is missing in Luke’s prayer. It is not really known which of the two prayers was taught first. It is however, obvious that Matthew and Luke selected their prayers from the language in which Jesus originally taught it, or that different witnesses recounted the prayers to them, and that may have accounted for the differences between the two prayers.



#### 5.5.2.4 Gbedodoḡa fe taḡodzinu

Yesu fia gbedodoḡa sia hede vovototo trɔsubɔlawo fe gbedodoḡa kple Afeto fe gbedodoḡa dome. Yesu dedzsii be trɔsubɔlawo fe gbedodoḡa le abe ḡevi siwo le nufɔfo sɔm ene. Ga kpe ḡe enu la, wo lɔa nya gbogbo gbɔgbɔ le wofe gbedodoḡa me elabena wo susube yewo fe trɔwo ḡoato yewo ne nye be yewo fonu gbogboo le yewo fe gbedodoḡa me (Mateo 6:7). Ke Yesu fia efe nusɔlawo be wo mega gbɔ nyatsinyatsi le wofe gbedodoḡa me o elabena “mia Fɔfo [si le dzifowo] nya nu siwo le mia hiam xoxo hafi miebiane” (Mateo 6:8b).

#### Purpose of the prayer

Jesus taught this prayer to distinguish between pagan prayer and the Lord’s Prayer. Pagan prayer is synonymous with children who are now learning how to speak. In addition, they like saying many words in their prayers because they think that their gods would listen to them when they say many words (Mateo 6:7). Jesus then taught his disciples that they should not say many words in their prayers because “your Father [in the heavens] knows what you need before you ask (Mat. 6:8b).

#### 5.5.2.5 Afeto fe gbedodoḡa kple gbedodoḡa bubuwo

Hebitowo fe gbedodoḡa siwo do ηḡɔ na Afeto fe gbedodoḡa la – *Kaddish* (ηḡitikɔkɔ gbedodoḡa) kple *Amida* (tsitrenu gbedodoḡa) – fe nyati aḡewo le Afeto fe gbedodoḡa la me. Woa kpɔ gbedodoḡa la fe nyati aḡewo hã le gbedodoḡa bubu siwo do ηḡɔ ne la me, abe Ewe trɔsubɔsubɔ gbedodoḡa aḡewo me, le kpɔḡeḡu me, tsifofodɔ. Nyatiawo enye Mawuga fe nko yoyɔ, efe dziɔfo alo dzingɔ nɔnɔ, efe ηḡitikɔkɔe, efe fiadudɔ kple efe lɔlɔnu wɔwɔ, agbemenu hiãhiãwo, tsɔtsɔke, kple ḡeḡetso vɔ/vɔditɔ [f’asi] me. Esia ḡo kpe edzi na mí be Mawugã ḡe eḡokui gbadzaa fia efe nuwɔwɔwɔwɔ to wofe kɔnuwɔwɔwɔ hã me, vevieto to gbedodoḡa me. Gbedodoḡa siwo katã do ηḡɔ na Afeto fe gbedodoḡa la nye efe vɔvɔliwo alo nɔnɔmetatawo.

#### The Lord’s Prayer and other prayers

Jewish prayers predating the Lord’s Prayer – *Kaddish* and *Amida* – have some of their themes in the Lord’s Prayer. Themes of other prayers, such as Ewe libation prayers, are also contained in

the Lord's Prayer. They include invocation, God's dwelling place, His sanctification, His kingship and the doing of His will, existential needs, forgiveness, and deliverance from evil/evil one. This is a confirmation that God has generally revealed Himself to His creation through their rituals, particularly prayer. All prayers predating the Lord's Prayer are its shadows or types.

### 5.5.3 Emedzodzro

#### 5.5.3.1 Mawugã yoyɔ – Mateo ta ade: kpukpui asieke fe akpa evelia

##### Míatɔ si le dzifowo

Afeto Yesu, Mawu fe Amesiamina La, dze efe gbedodoɖa fafia gɔme kple Mawu yoyɔ – “mía Tɔ/ mía Fofɔ si le dzifowo” (Mateo 6:9). Gake Luka dze eto gɔme kple Fofɔ alo Eto. Le Yuɖatowo kple wofe nufiala gãwo (rabiawo) fe gbedodoɖa siwo do ŋɔ na Afeto fe gbedodoɖa, le kpɔɖeɲu me, *Kaddish* kple *Amida* la, woyɔ Mawu be yewo fe Fofɔ eye wonya hã bena dzifo enye efe nɔfe. Eye le trɔsubɔlawo (Helatowo kple Romantowo) fe gbedodoɖa siwo do ŋɔ na Kristosubɔsubɔ me la, wo yɔ na wo fe trɔ aɖewo – Zeus, Poseidon, Jupita kple Mars – be fofɔ le Helagbe kple Latin gbewo me. Dko si le Mawugã si le Eve trɔsubsubɔ me la enye Sogbe-Lisa, si gɔme enye Mawu Tɔ (Sogbe) kple nɔ (Lisa). Efia be mɔnukpɔkpɔ le Mawu fe nuwɔwɔ ɖesiaɖe (Yuɖatowo kple trɔsubɔlawo sia) si be wò a yɔ Mawugã be Fofɔ.

Mateo gana míenya be Mawu fe nɔfe enye dzifowo, dziŋɔ alo alilikpowo me. Gake dzɔdzɔme nunyalawo na míenya be afima menye ame aɖeke fe nɔfe o. Le Eve dzɔdzɔme nunyanya me le Yeve subɔsubɔ me la, Mawugã fe kɔkɔfe le mama adrẽ me. Esia fia be Mawugã le alilikpo adrẽlia me. Gɔmesese sia de alesi Mateo se Mawugã fe nɔfe gɔme dzi. Ke biabia la enye be, Mawu fe alilikpowo me nɔnɔ gɔme enye nuka? Mawu fe alilikpowo me nɔnɔ gɔme enye be efe nɔfe enye kɔkɔfe eye wòle yaɣla ɖe amegbetɔ elabena Gbɔgbɔ wònye. Ne mía gbugbɔ Mawu yoyɔ le Afeto fe gbedodoɖa la me aɲlɔ la, ekema míagblɔ be, mía Tɔ/Fofɔ, wò amesi fe nɔfe nye kɔkɔfe eye wòle yaɣla ɖe amegbetowo la, míeyɔ wò.

### Commentary

#### Invocation: Matthew 6:9b

The Lord Jesus, God's Anointed One, begins his teaching on the prayer with the calling of God – our Father who is in the heavens (Mat. 6:9b). But Luke begins his with 'Father'. In some Jewish

prayers and the prayers of the rabbis, for instance, the *Kaddish* and *Amida*, they call God their Father and also know that heaven is His dwelling place. And in Greek and Roman religions which predate Christianity, they also refer to some of their gods – Zeus, Poseidon, Jupita and Mars – as fathers. The name given to God in Ewe traditional religion is *Sogbe-Lisa*, meaning father (*Sogbe*) and mother (*Lisa*). This presupposes that the claim to the Fatherhood of God is universal. Matthew also tells us that God’s dwelling place is in the heavens or in/beyond the clouds. However, science teaches that the heavens are no one’s dwelling place. In *Yewe* cult, there are seven (7) different levels of God’s existence. This suggests that God dwells in seven heavens, a view which supports Matthew’s plural idea of heaven. Thus the heavens as God’s dwelling place symbolizes His dwelling in a place higher and hidden from humans since He is Spirit. If we are to rewrite the invocation, it would read, Our Father, you whose dwelling place is higher and hidden from humans, we call you.

### 5.5.3.2 Biabia gbãtɔ – Mateo ta ade: kpukpui asieke fe akpa etolia

#### Na wò ñkɔ ñuti neko

Le biabia gbãtɔ me la, Yesu fia amehawo be ne woyɔ Mawu vɔ la, woagblo ne be “(na) wo ñkɔ ñuti neko. Nukae gbedodoɖa sia fia? Gbedodoɖa sia fia mí be amesiame si yɔa Mawu be Tɔ alo Fofɔ la nade bubu efe ñkɔ ñuti. Le Eve trɔsubɔsubɔ me la, subɔlawo toa wo fe konuwɔwɔwo dzi tɔɔ dea bubu trɔwo, tɔgbeawo kple mamawo ñuti. Eye subɔla siwo da na le konuwɔwɔ aɖe dzi la xɔa tohehe tso trɔwo gbɔ. Gakpe ɖe eñuti la, ne trɔ aɖe hã mewo ɖe subɔlawo fe hiãhiãwo dzi nawo o la, subɔla siawo gbena trɔ la eye wova subɔna trɔ bubuwo. Gbedodoɖa sia gɔmedeɖe enye be mía Tɔ si le dzifowo alo dzingɔ ne na efe ñutikɔkɔe na kle le viawo fe dzi me bena woawo hã wo aɖe ñutikɔkɔe ma afia. Tohehe li na mí le agbe sia kple ekemee me nenyɛ be mía foɖi mía Tɔ fe ñkɔ ñuti to aglãdzedze me.

#### First petition

In the first petition, Jesus taught the crowd that after addressing God as Father, they should say, “let your name be sanctified.” What does the petition teach us? It teaches that whoever addresses God as Father should give reverence to His name. In Ewe traditional religious worship, worshippers revere the names of the gods, ancestors and ancestresses through their rituals. A worshipper who flout any ritual receives punishment from the gods. On the other hand, if any

god fails to grant the request of their devotees, they abandon that particular god for another. This petition therefore means that our Father in the heavens or beyond the sky should let His glory shine in the hearts of His children so that they would in turn reflect this glory. Punishment awaits us in this life and the afterlife if we defile the name of our Father through our rebellion.

### **5.5.3.3 Biabia evelia kple etolia – Mateo ta ade: kpukpui ewo**

**Na wò fiaduḍu neva, na be wò lɔlɔnu newo le anyigbadzi abe alesi wò le le dzifo ene**

Biabia evelia kple etolia me nyawo enye, (na) wò fiaduḍu ne va, kple, eye na be woawo wo lɔlɔnu, abe alesi wò le le dzifo ene la, nenema ke wòà nɔ le anyigbadzi hã. Mawu fe *Basileya* (fiaduḍu gome le Hela gbe me) fia fiaduḍu la fe anyinɔnɔ kple efe vava kpui. Gbedodoḍa la le Mawu si nye fiawo dzi fia yom be wòà ḍu fia le amegbetowo fe dzime. Gakpede eḅuti la gbedodoḍa la nye mɔkpɔkpɔ be gbedeka la Afeto Yesu Kristo ava ḍu fia le Yerusalem yeye la me le nuwuwu ŋekeke la dzi kple ḅutilã magblẽmagblẽ. Edze fãã abe Mawu fe ŋko ḅuti kɔkɔ, efe fiaduḍu kple efe lɔlɔnu de nu wonɔewo me. Nusi ke bla biabia eto siawo ḍekae la nye nyafɔkpe siwo le biabia etolia fe akpa evelia, **abe alesi wo le le dzifo ene la, nenema ke woanɔ le anyigbadzi** la me. Ne wotsɔe kpe biabia gbãto kple evelia fe akpa gbãto la, ke edze abe Mawu fe nko ḅuti le kɔkɔe, ele fia ḍum, eye wo le efe lɔlɔnu ha wom le dzifo xoxo. Mawu fe ḅutikɔkɔe adze to efe fiaduḍu kple efe lɔlɔnu me. Ne Mawu fe ḅutikɔkɔe yɔ xexeame la, ekema aḍu fia le xexeame katã dzi eye efe lɔlɔnu ko ava eme le amewo katã fe agbe me.

### **Second and third petitions**

The words of the second petition are, let your kingdom come while the third is, let your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. The *Basileia* of God indicates the imminence and urgency of the kingdom. The petition is a call to God the King of kings to come and rule in the hearts of humans. Moreover, the petition is in anticipation that one day the Lord Jesus Christ will come and reign in the New Jerusalem in the last days with a celestial body. It appears that the sanctification of God's name, the coming of His kingdom, and the doing of His will are intertwined. What links them together is the phrase in the second part of the third petition – as in heaven, so on earth. It appears that the name of our Father is being sanctified, and His kingdom and will are already being done in the heavens. If the glory of God fills the earth, then He will reign on the entire cosmos and His will shall come to pass in the lives of all men.

#### 5.5.3.4 Biabia enelia – Mateo ta ade: kpukpui wiedeke

##### *Na míafe gbesiagbe bolo si asu míanu la mí*

Biabia sia gomedede sēsē le ato susoewo dome le Hela nyagbe ‘ἐπιούσιον’ (*epiusion*), si ηuti do wo zã le bibia me la ta. Ne wo ma biabia la me nya siwo le Helagbe me de akpa eve me la, akpa evelia gome enye “na mí egbe”, eye akpa gbãto gome enye “míafe gbesiagbe bolo” alo “etsò bolo” alo “abolo si hiã mí” alo “abolo si asu mí nu.” Mía le ηku de nyagbe bubu aḡewo hã ηuti le biabia la me – eyae enye abolo si gome woḡe be nuḡuḡu le Eve bibliawo katã me. Ne Mawu enye amesi nana gbesiagbe bolo la, ke gbedodoḡa la le biabian be Mawu Fofò nena egbe to hã mí elabena ame aḡeke menya etsò me o. Le Eve tròsubòsubò fe gbedodoḡa me la, abolo enye ηutila me nuncamesiwo kpòkpò, agbe didi kple lamesē, kpakple vidzidzi elabena viwo le abe kesinonuwo ene. Biabia sia le gbedodoḡa la me fia be enyo be woa bia gbògbòme kple ηutilã me nuwo le gbedodoḡa me. Gake edze be gbògbòme tòwo na sògbò wu ηutilã me tòwo abe alesi wòdze le Afeto fe gbedodoḡa me la ene.

Nya bubu si ku de biabia la ηuti enye yeḡiyi si me wo biana biabia sia le gbedodoḡa me.

Gomesese aḡeke mele biabia la kpakple gbedodoḡa la katã ηuti ne enye be wodoe ḡa le fiēsi me o, elabena ame aḡeke me biana nuḡudu be yeaḡu ne enye be woyi na anyi mlòfe o. Eyata ehiã be woatò asi le biabia la fe menyawo ηuti be woa zãe le yeawo katã yi. Nusi ahe gomesese nyuie to ava gbedodoḡa sia me nenye be wodoe ḡa le zãme alo anyimlòyi enye be wodoe ḡa le habòbò me. Mía gade dzesii be wo mele abolo la biam le biabia la me be wò a ge tso dzifo ve abe Mana ene o, ke boḡ woa ga anyigba hafì akpòe aḡu. Eye amesiwo Mawu yra kple nuḡuḡu le agbòsòsò me la ne ma nusi woḡu susò la kple hiãtòwo hã. Azò tòtò si dze be wòano bibia la fe gomedede me be egome na nya ase enye si: *na míafe gbesiagbe bolo si asu mí nu la mí.*

#### **Fourth petition**

The interpretation of this petition is the most difficult among the other five because of the Greek word ἐπιούσιον, used in the petition. When the petition is divided into two parts, the second part says, ‘give us today’ while the first part could be interpreted as ‘our everyday bread’, ‘tomorrow’s bread’, ‘bread that we need’, or ‘bread that will be sufficient for us’. If God is the one who gives everyday’s bread, then the petition suggests that Father God should give us

today's bread because no one knows tomorrow. In Ewe traditional religion, bread is viewed in material terms, long life and health, and procreation because children are seen as asserts. What this petition teaches us is that it is right to petition God for both spiritual and material things. However, our spiritual request should be more than material request just as it appears in the petition. One difficulty with the petition is the time of its recital. There is no logic in saying the petition at night because no one prays for food when going to bed. An emendation of the petition is therefore necessary for its use at all time. The only reason that may justify the use of the petition at night or when going to bed is when it is recited collectively or in a group. It is also worth noting that the bread is not expected to come down from heaven like Manna but rather by 'tilling the ground'. And for those who are blessed with enough bread to spare, they have the moral duty to share the excess with the needy. Now to the emendation that needs to be done about the petition for it to make logical sense is this; give us our daily bread that would be sufficient for us.

#### **5.5.3.5 Biabia atolia – Mateo ta ade: kpukpui wieve**

**Eye tsɔ míafe fewo ke mí, elabena míawo hã míetsɔɛ ke mía fenyilawo, alo eye tsɔ míafe fewo ke mí abe alesi míawo hã míetsɔ amesiwo nyife le míasi la tɔ ke woe ene**

Tsɔtsɔke enye biabia sia fe tometi. Yesu fia amehawo be newo bia Fofola be netsɔ wofe fewo ke, elabena yewo hã yewo tsɔ ke yewo fe fenyilawo [xoxo]. Gake le Luka me la, nusɔlawo bia be Fofola netsɔ yewo fe vodadawo ke elabena yewo tsɔna kea amesiwo nyi fe ɔe yewo ɔuti [yesiaɣi]. Mateo zã fe zi eve le efe biabia la me ke Luka zãe zi ɔeka ko. Le Mateo kple Luka me la vɔwɔwɔ ɔe Mawu kple amewo ɔuti le abe fenyinyi ɔe amea ɔuti ene. Hafɔ nusɔlawo nava Fofola gbo abia tsɔtsɔke la, edze be woatsɔ ake gbã (Mateo 6:14-15, Marko 11:25, Luka 6:37b). Biabia sia fia se alo ɔɔɔ si le tsɔtsɔke ɔuti – eya enye be, ne etsɔ amea ɔe fe fe [ɔesiade fomevi] kee la, Fofola hã atsɔ tɔwò ake wò. Le Ewe trɔsubɔsubɔ me la, menye vɔ ɔesiade wo tsɔ kena o. Ne amea ɔe wo nu vɔɔi abe ahasi ene la, fiawo alo trɔnuawo drɔna nya la eye wo heato nenyɛ be wo bufɔ amea. Yesu va ku ɔe míafe vodadawo ta eye wò xe mía vodadawo fe fe ɔe mía nu. Eyata fexexe kple vɔsasa ɔe mía vodadawo ta megali o. Míafe vɔsasa ɔe míafe vodadawo ta enye emevuuu to gbedodoɔa me. Amea ɔe agblo be, ne Yesu ku ɔe míafe vodadawo ta la, ekema mehía be mía bíá tsɔtsɔke azɔ o. Duɔɔɔa enye be, ne míedavo ɔe mía nyigbadzi fofowo ɔuti

ḑee, nuka míe wóna? Tsotsòke bíabía enye dzezi be míese veve ḑe míafe vodadawo ḡuti eye míetro dzime le wo ḡuti.

### **Fifth petition**

Forgiveness is the theme of this petition. Jesus taught the crowd to ask the Father to forgive their debts, because they have also forgiven their debtors already. But in Luke, the disciples asked that the Father forgives their sins because they also forgive those who are indebted to them [always]. Matthew used debt in his petition twice while Luke used it only once. In both Matthew and Luke sin against God and fellow humans is synonymous with indebtedness. Before the disciples come to God and ask for His forgiveness, they must first forgive (Mateo 6:14-15; Marko 11:25, Luka 6:37b). This petition teaches a fundamental principle on forgiveness, that is, if you forgive someone's debt, the Father will also forgive yours. In Ewe traditional religion, it is not every sin that is pardoned. When someone commits abominable sin such as adultery, the gods and their priests adjudicate the matter and punish if found guilty. Jesus came to die for our sins, and has paid for our sin on our behalf. So there is no payment and sacrifice for sins any longer. The sacrifice we now pay for our sins is confession prayer for pardon. Someone may say, if Jesus Christ had died for our sins, then there is no need to ask for forgiveness of sins. The response is, what is the right thing to do if you offend your earthly father? Asking for forgiveness of sins is a sign that we regret them and repent from them.

#### **5.5.3.6 Biabia adelia – Mateo ta ade: kpukpui wietò**

##### **Eye mega kplò mí yi tetekpò me o, ke ḑemi tso vò/nuvòḑi me**

Kpòkplò yi ḑe tetekpò me kple ḑeḑe tso vò me nye biabia sia *fe* tometiwo. Fofò la mete na eviawo kpò na o. Ḑee wò le nenema la ne nya fòkpea gblò be; me gate mí kpò o. Ke boḡ egblo be mega kplò mí yi tetekpò me o ... Eye wò yi edzi kple ḑeḑe tso vò/vòḑitòla si me. Mía se bíabía sia gòme nyuie nenyè be míetsòe sò kple Ewe *tsifofòḑi* gbedodòḑa *fe* nyafòkpe aḑewo.

Yeveawo yò na Mawu Sogbe-Lisa le wofe gbedodòḑa me eye wo gblò na ne be nena ahe ne to dzi, evò ne to dzi, edò ne *fo* mía nu, eku ne *fo* mía nu. Nyati siwo le nyafòkpe siawo me le fiáfiam kotee be Sogbe-Lisa me ga na alo me ga ḑemò be ahe, evò, edò kple eku nava mía dzi o. Nu si hena ame yi na ḑe tetekpò me enye ahe alo manye eye ne míafe manye alo manyamanya na be míe geḑe vò me la, ekema mía bíá Fofò si le dzifowo be woaḑe viawo tso eme.

### **Sixth petition**

The leading into temptation and deliverance from evil/evil one are the two main themes of this last petition. The Father does not tempt His children. If it is so, the phrase would have read, do not tempt us. Rather, it says, do not lead us into temptation ... And continues with, deliver us from evil/from the hand of the evil one. This petition is well understood when compared with some prayer lines in Ewe libation prayer. In Yewe cultic prayer, they address *Sogbe-Lisa* and say, may we not be caught up in the state of fear, confusion and superstition; may we not be caught up in sickness, disease and squalor. The terms in this statements show that *Sogbe-Lisa* should not allow fear, confusion, superstition, sickness, disease and death to come upon us. What leads a person into temptation is fear or ignorance and if we get into evil through our ignorance, then we will ask the Father in the heavens to deliver His children from it.

#### **5.5.3.7 Dutikókœ fe nya**

Zi geḍe la míe wua *Afeto fe* gbedodoḍa nu le *míafe fufofewo* kple nuwuwu nya siawo bena: Elabena tɔwoe nye fiaḍuḍu kple nuse kple *nutikókœ* yi ḍe mavɔmavɔ me. Amen. Mía de dze si nyagbe eve le nuwunya sia me be, wodze le biabia gbãtɔ kple evelia hã me; woawo enye *nutikókœ* kple fiaḍuḍu. Ḍeko wò dze abe nyagbe siawo wotsɔ nɔ nuwunya alo *dɔgsɔlɔdzi* lae. Biblia me dzrolawo na míenya bena nuwunya aḍeke menɔ *Afeto fe* gbedodoḍa la nɔ le *gɔmedzedzea* me alo agbalẽ si dzi wo nɔ gbedodoḍa la kple asi le Helagbe me si wo yɔna be manuskripte gbãtɔ la me o. Yesu *fe* nusrolawo me zãe le *wofe subɔsubɔ* ḍoḍo aḍeke me hã o. Gake edze le manuskripte bubu si tsi megbe na gbãtɔ la me, esi dzi wokpɔ hafi ta Englishtɔwo *fe* Biblia tata etɔlia si wo yɔna be Fia Yakobo alo King James *fe* Tata la me. Efe blaato aḍewo koe le manuskripte eve siawo dome. Biblia me dzrolawo hã ga susui be gbedodoḍa la *fe* nuwuwu alo *dɔgsɔlɔdzi* la, eva dze le esi me xɔseto siwo va dzo le ha gbãtɔ megbe la nɔ didim be *Afeto fe* gbedodoḍa la na sɔ kple gbedodoḍa siwo le Yudaɔwo *fe* subɔsubɔ ḍoḍo bubuwo nɔ. Yudaɔwo wua *wofe* gbedodoḍa geḍewo nu kple nuwunya sia *fomeviwo*. Le Eve *trɔsubɔsubɔ* geḍewo me hã la, wo wua *wofe* gbedodoḍawo nu kple nya alea ... nya vɔ neyi avlime; nenyɛ alea! Ehê! Alo ame yi ke ḍoe be mío du ne gba la, eto ne gba tɔhɔtɔhɔtɔhɔ. Efia mí kɔtee be gbedodoḍa nuwuwu sia *fomeviwo* li tso blema ke hafi wova dzi mía *Afeto* Yesu, eye wo hía na subɔsubɔ nɔti *dɔwɔwɔ*. Mía gade dze si gbedodoḍa *fe* nuwunya susuetɔ – Amen – si gɔme le Ewegebe me enye,



neva eme. Anyo be x̄sehawo le Ēveme nawu afeto fe gbedodoḡa la nu kple *neva eme le wofe* sub̄sub̄o me eye w̄a dze le Biblia fe ḡmedeḡe yeye siwo aga va emegbe la me.

### **Doxology**

Many a time, we end the Lord's Prayer in our liturgical gatherings with the following concluding statements: because yours is the kingdom and the might and the sanctification to eternity. We must note two key words in this doxology which appear in the first and second petitions – sanctification and kingdom. Bible comentators have observed that there was no doxology in the Lord's Prayer from the beginning or in the early manuscript. Neither had Jesus' disciples used it in any of their liturgical writings. It however, appears in late manuscripts, specifically in the Textus Receptus bibles such as the King's Version. The difference in terms of duration, between this manuscript and the early one is just about half a century. Bible commentators also think that the doxology came as a result of the desire of the early Christians to align the Lord's Prayer with Jewish prayer forms. The Jews conclude their liturgical prayers with doxologies such as this. In most of Ewe traditional religious prayers, phraseologies such as, 'evil news should go far away to a land where nobody has ever set foot'; 'So be it!'; and, 'anyone who wishes for the destruction of our community, his also should be destroyed completely', are used to end their prayers. The presence of the doxology is clear indication that these forms of ending prayer existed before the birth of Jesus and they serve liturgical purposes. We must also take note of the last word in the doxology – Amen – which in Ewe means, let it come to pass. It would be appropriate that Ewe worshippers conclude the doxology with *neva eme* (Amen) in their liturgical gatherings and it should appear in subsequent editions of Ewe Bible translations.

### **5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

What this Chapter has done is to critically analyse the existing Ewe translations of the Lord's Prayer in the Ewe language and to write an Ewe commentary on the Lord's Prayer. In all, four Ewe texts of the Lord's Prayer (1931, 1999, 2006, 2010) contained in four Ewe versions of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures and a liturgical rendition were analyzed. The analysis of the prayer is situated within the context of Ewe liturgical life and thought. The prayer appears in all Ewe-Christian liturgies and used by all Ewe Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal/Charismatic, and African Initiated denominations. The prayer is found in the liturgies of the sacrament, catechism,

commissioning and ordination of ministers of the gospel. It is also used in the liturgies of consecration of church agents, solemnization of matrimony, naming and burials, Bible study sessions and at all prayer meetings.

Interviews and questionnaires were administered to sixty respondents in six Ewe communities, and two Bible study sessions held to throw more light on the text. The following are the observations made out of the analysis: First, the variations in the four versions of the Ewe Bibles are due to the sources consulted by each translator. The *Biblia* (1931), which is also described in this study as the missionary translation, consulted the Textus Receptus source used in the King's Version, and that is how come it contain the doxology. The *Nubabla Yeye La* (1999) and *Biblia* (2010) used Sinaiticus and Vaticanus in rendering the text. These two sources therefore do not contain the doxology. The source of the *Agbenya La* (2006) is the New Living Translation of the Holy Bible and employed common Ewe which is intended to make the reading of the Bible in Ewe easy to the ordinary person. One therefore finds a sharp departure of this version of the Ewe Bible and the academic approach to translation work. A fifth rendition is the liturgical version of the Lord's Prayer which is not very different from the missionary rendition. It can be said to be the grassroots approach to the recitation of the Lord's Prayer and orally or traditionally acceptable version of the Lord's Prayer in Ewe.

When it comes to the content of the prayer, the study is of the view that *Miatɔ/Mía Fofo si le dzifowo* should be used interchangeably as standard Ewe for the translation of the invocation of the prayer. Annotations are however, necessary to explain *Tɔ*, *Fofo*, and *Tatɛ*, the variant renditions for the fatherhood of God. Second, *dzifowo* does not resonate with the Ewe worldview about the plurality of heaven. *Dzifo* therefore reverberates the Ewe cosmology of God's dwelling place. The Ewe imagery of the belly of the skies as God's dwelling place can be well conceptualized as a place high above us or hidden from our eyes. Another interpretation of the invocation is the giving of appellation to God. Since there exists a linguistic discrepancy between the traditional rendition of the prayer and its literary version, the notes would seek to bridge the gap between the two. The same difficulty is encountered with the first petition where the Greek translates liturgically as *wò ñkɔ ñuti nakɔ* instead of *na wò ñkɔ ñuti nakɔ*. A typical Ewe-Ghanaian Christian understands the petition as an appellation, adoration and moral obligation to

revere the personality of God, and this understanding is worth considering. A note is again needed to carry the audience along from the known to the unknown.

The second and third petitions are mutually not exclusive as it appears in the commentary. The challenge with the translation of βασιλεία as *fiadufe/ fiaduqu* in the second petition is first of all etymological, that is, the word carries both internal and external connotations. Second, the Christian theology of ‘heaven is our home’ is the rationale behind the *fiadufe* translation in the early nineteenth century. This concept paints a royal picture in the minds of the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian convert that God, though Spirit, reigns in a heavenly kingdom with the host of angels bowing down to Him day and night. It is the manifestation of this royal kingdom that is anticipated in the second petition of the Lord’s Prayer. If the Jewishness of Matthew’s version of the Lord’s Prayer portrays βασιλεία as an external eschatological expectation, then *fiadufe* rightly translates the reality of it. The petition is essentially saying that God’s kingly rule should appear on earth as it is in heaven. And once the whole earth becomes his *fiadufe*, His kingly rule (*fiaduqu*) and divine will (*lɔlɔnu*) will be done. However, since Jesus Christ has never promised an external or territorial kingdom, *fiaduqu*, the spiritual/ internal/moral reign of God perfectly fits into the setting of the prayer.

On the fourth petition, the ἄρτον must translate *abolo/broɔo* instead of *nuɔuɔu*, and the ambiguous word ἐπιούσιον must be paraphrased and rendered [*abolo*] *si asu mianu egbe*, that is, [bread] that is sufficient for us today. The choice of this meaning over the others is to make the petition sound naturally Ewe. The researcher also argues that in order to make the petition liturgically appropriate, it should translate *na miafe gbesiagbe bolo si asu mianu la mi*, that is, give us our daily bread that would be sufficient for us. These renditions also need notes for proper understanding and life application of the petition. Essentially what the prayer suggests is that God is the one who provides for all His creation, and He does that on daily basis and sufficiently. Therefore, to say to God τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον is to say, give us today’s share of the bread you provide for us daily. On the question of the timing of the prayer generally and the fourth petition in particular, the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches have dealt with it by avoiding its recital. As a model prayer, the first three lines – invocation, first and second petitions, are interpreted as appellation or adoration, the fifth petition changes position

with the fourth petition and are termed confession and request for material needs respectively. Then finally, the sixth petition now turns into a command and spiritual warfare with the devil. The Ewe Catholics and Protestants ritual of petitioning for daily bread at certain times of the day, and times when one has enough to eat and spare needs critical consideration. However, a slight change to the liturgical rendition of the petition, which has been proposed above, is the only condition that can address the limitation associated with the prayer in terms of time.

When it comes to the fifth petition, it is observed that the translation in all the versions in Table 1 are not totally Matthean. The petition is rendered in Matthew as *eye tso miafe fewo ke mi, elabena miawo hã mietsɔɛ ke mia fenyilawo*. It is therefore obvious that translators' use of *vodadawo/vodadawo* and *nuvɔwo/vodada* formula in Luke's version to render ἁμαρτία as surrogate for ὀφειλήματα and ὀφειλέταις does not reflect the linguistic and theological meaning intended in Matthew's version.

The personification of πονηρός runs through all the translations in the sixth petition. This translation sits well with popular Ewe-Ghanaian Christian demonology and dualism. However, situating the petition within Ewe religious worldview, πονηρός is abstract and not personified. There are conflicting views regarding the assertion that God is the one who leads His own into temptation. This conflicting positions may have arisen because nobody would like to implicate the divine in evil. The truism of this assertion finds acceptance in Ewe cosmology and African Christian theology where they commune with God through the medium of the lesser deities. God cannot be blamed for the sins of individuals or community. This is confirmed in the interviews and questionnaires administered to all sixty respondents and participants in the Bible study sessions who agree with the translation of *καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ* as *eye mɛgakplɔ mi yi de tetekpɔ me o; ke de mi tso vodito la si me* but deny its attribute to God. Matthew's account of Jesus' own experience of how he was tempted by the Devil suggests that it was the third person of the trinity – the Spirit – that led him into the wilderness to be tempted (Mat. 4:1-11). It is therefore plausible that the True God does the leading before the Devil continues with the tempting. The doxology, as long as it serves a liturgical purpose in Ewe Protestant churches, its relevance will remain an academic debate. The only change that is required of it, going forward, is its frequency and conclusion – Amen – which

is transliterated in *Biblia* (1931) and the liturgical rendition. The appropriate Ewe rendering of the conclusion – *neva eme* – must begin to find place in the liturgical books of the Ewe Protestant church as long as the tradition of reciting the doxology continues.

The comparison between Matthew and Luke's versions of the Lord's Prayer is an indication that the prayer was hypothetically reconstructed from an original source which both writers had access to. They however, decided to select what is suitable for their particular audiences. The relevance of the prayer cannot be over-emphasized. It is the foundation of all Christian prayers and guides both converts and mature Christians in the way to commune with the Creator and Redeemer God. The prayer as a liturgical piece, exists primarily to censor excesses in our religious expression, especially the appropriate way to commune with 'our Father'. The invocation and the first two petitions are interpreted in Ewe popular Christianity as thanksgiving, praise and adoration to God, followed by the fourth petition which serves as confession of sins, then petition for daily needs as in the third petition before the fifth petition which is interpreted in the light of imprecation, binding and losing, spiritual warfare with the devil and his messengers.

Considering the fact that majority of respondents identified the object of worship and the pouring of drinks as the only areas of discontinuity between the Lord's Prayer and libation prayer, they do not think that libation prayer should be Christianized. The fact however, is that the prayer has inadvertently been Christianized and being used in popular Christianity, and gradually gaining orthodoxy in the Ghanaian Christian space. Although alcoholic drinks, which Christians frown upon are not poured in those prayers, no 'serious' Christian prayer is said today without the use of other liquids – anointing oil, communion wine, water, milk, non-alcoholic beverages, etc. Other non-liquids – salt, clothes, stones, canes, etc., are also used to offer prayers to God. The language is also similar –

I receive that which belongs to me according to the covenant of the blood of Jesus Christ ... I open all doors of my life ... I hereby locate my destiny with the light of God through Jesus Christ my Lord ... I overthrow all my enemies from the four corners of the earth by the blood of Jesus ... I hereby destroy all my enemies and them that hate me by the potent name of Adonai ... I surrender all my enemies and them that persecute me to rulership and lordship of Jesus, by the chariot of fire, the flames of fire, the pillar of fire, fire of the comforter ... I rain terror and fire over my enemies that

they be as stone still now and forever more ... I command my soul to escape all traps of the evil one now and forevermore in Jesus name ... I receive total healing and command every disorder in my body to be ordered in Jesus name ... Holy Ghost fire, descend upon me and purge me through fire by the unquenchable fire at the feet of the Most High God ... I create my destiny according to your riches and glory ... let me lay gold as dust. I receive your blessings to become rich in Jesus name ... let my finances be brought back to life now and forevermore ... let not poverty come near me now and forevermore ... let my heavens rain treasure and glory in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen ... with my tongue as a sword of God, I cut through all limitations, boundaries and release these words upon my life that through faith in Christ Jesus, everything and everyone will grant me favor without delay ... I release the angel of favor to be by my side now and forevermore in the name of Jesus.

(Adjei-Sarpong 2013:25-32)

The Ewe commentary on the Lord's Prayer is an attempt to explain the Lord's Prayer and future Biblical texts to the Ewe audience in their particular context. It blends academic and Ewe traditional knowledge in unravelling the meaning of the prayer to the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian today. The commentary has an introduction, division of the gospel of Matthew and the Lord's Prayer, purpose, comparison between Matthew and Luke's account and, Jewish and Ewe traditional prayers. The prayer is in dialogue with Luke's account, the *Kaddish* and *Amida*, and Ewe libation prayer, to enrich Ewe Christian understanding of the main themes contained in the prayer. The researcher's own translations and interpretations are provided after engaging with the four existing Ewe translations, scholars, traditionalists, and sixty respondents from six Ewe-speaking communities. An English gloss is also provided to the prayer to enable English audiences to engage with their Ewe counterpart. This commentary is inspired by the mother tongue Biblical exegetes such as Jacobus Capitein, Rev. Samuel Quist, Prof. Gilbert Ansre, and Prof. J.D.K. Ekem. It is a statement that points to the future of mother tongue Biblical hermeneutics in developing commentaries and study bible notes for the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian community in Ghana, Togo and Benin.

# Chapter 6

## Summary, conclusion and recommendations

### 6.1 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This Chapter is the conclusion and recap of the preceding chapters and a highlight of the specific main findings of the work. The Chapter finally outlines some recommendations for further exegetical work relating to the Lord's Prayer. The study first of all sought to identify and correct anomalies in existing Ewe translations of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew. It also addressed the hermeneutical/doctrinal distortions in Ewe liturgical use of the Lord's Prayer resulting from some ambiguities in translation. The study also took a critical look at the continuity and discontinuity between Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer and that of Luke, and assessed its relevance for the 21<sup>st</sup> century Ewe-Ghanaian Christian. The study also explored the continuity and discontinuity between the Lord's Prayer and Ewe libation prayer in order to help the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian appreciate the interface between the two prayers with the aim of creating a healthy dialogue between Christianity and Ewe traditional religion. The study is the researcher's contribution to the academic knowledge on the Lord's Prayer and inspires the spirit of Mother Tongue Biblical hermeneutics in the production of commentaries, Bible dictionaries, and study bibles for the Ewe Christian communities in Ghana, Togo and Benin.

A polygonal hermeneutical approach was employed to engage the text from its source language (Greek) to the receptor language (Ewe). Data was collected from the field and used to interact with the source language and four existing Ewe translations – *Biblia* (1931, 2010), *Nubabla Yeye* (1999), and *Agbenya La* (2006). Sixty respondents, within the age category of 18 and 75 years with diverse educational and professional backgrounds were engaged. They comprise Ewe traditional religious leaders, Bible scholars, church leaders and members from six Ewe Christian communities from Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal/Charismatic, and African Initiated Churches. Ten out of the total number of respondents had their voices recorded and transcribed while the remaining 50 responded to semi-structured questionnaires. Materials consulted include published and unpublished books, journal articles, Bible commentaries and dictionaries.

The study is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 comprised the aim of the study, sources, methodology and outline. Chapter 2 employed the comparative approach to analyze the prevailing forms of Ewe libation prayers as replica of the Lord's Prayer. The researcher collected six libation prayer texts through interviews with Ewe traditional religious leaders, published and unpublished works on libation, and carried out a comparative analysis between the prayer and Jesus' prayer, also known as the Lord's Prayer. Here, the researcher identified points of continuity and discontinuity between the two prayers. The comparative analysis revealed that the Ewe libation prayer resembles the Lord's Prayer in structure and content. Both prayers have invocation/appellation and petition. In terms of content, there is continuity between the two prayers with regards to the appellation and all the petitions. What this means is that it establishes the authenticity of the pre-Christian prayer as the most authentic way of knowing God's self-revelation in Jesus the Christ. It is therefore appropriate describing the Ewe libation prayer as prototype of the Lord's Prayer. The historical-critical and comparative approach was used in analyzing the Lord's Prayer in chapters three 3 and 4.

In Chapter 3, the Jewishness of the Lord's Prayer was established as evident in the *Amida* and the half *Kaddish*. These are Jewish prayers composed of Biblical phraseology and predating the Lord's Prayer. The *Kaddish* for instance, continuous with the Lord's Prayer in Matthew in the appellation, first and second and third petitions but discontinues with it in the, fourth, fifth, and sixth petitions. Thus the *Kaddish* continues with the 'head' of the Lord's Prayer and discontinues with its 'tail'. Whereas the *Kaddish* is theocentrically composed, the Lord's Prayer is both theocentric and anthropocentric. However, the *Shema*, *Amida* and rabbinic literature contain aspects of the Lord's Prayer that are anthropocentric. It is therefore plausible to assert that the 'head' and 'tail' of the Lord's Prayer are interspersed in Jewish prayers that predate it. The researcher therefore disagrees with scholars who hold the view that any attempt to compare the Lord's Prayer with Jewish prayers is an exercise in futility. The Fatherhood of God, sanctification of the divine name, the coming of His kingdom and the doing of His will, His providence, pardon for debts, His leading into temptation and deliverance from evil/evil one, have a Jewish origin.



The implications of the comparison between the Lord's Prayer, Jewish prayers, and Ewe libation prayers is that African traditional religion and Judaism are the foundations of the Christian religion mainly due to the continuity that exist between them and the Lord's Prayer. Second, the Lord's Prayer as the prayer of all prayers, is God's perfect revelation to humanity on the propriety of communicating with the divine. Third, the two prayers, Jewish prayer and Ewe libation prayer, shed more light on our understanding and appropriation of the Lord's Prayer. Fourth, the Lord's Prayer therefore becomes the standard and trailblazer in spiritual intercourse with the divine.

## **6.2 TRANSLATIONS, INTERPRETATIONS, AND THEOLOGIES**

Translating the text from the source language to Ewe, the study engaged the variety of existing Ewe translations (1931- 2010) which are revised versions of the first publication undertaken by the Bremen missionaries and their colleague Ewe natives in 1916. Sixty (60) semi-structured questionnaires and interviews, and two Bible study sessions that were held on the Lord's Prayer were used to facilitate dialogue between the existing Ewe translations and the Ewe communities that have practiced the Lord's Prayer more than one and a half centuries. The goal is to produce a translation and interpretation that reflect the meaning of the text to the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian. Out of that number, questionnaires were administered to fifty respondents, comprising of twenty (20) females and forty (40) males, while the remaining ten were interviewed. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and used in the analysis. In addition, two separate bible study sessions were held with seventeen (17) church elders and nine (9) youth of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, Lashibi, the researcher's own denomination. The respondents are from four Christian denominations – Catholic, Protestant, African Initiated Churches, and Pentecostal/Charismatics, who seem to have appreciable level of knowledge on the Lord's Prayer.

The translation of the invocation, Πάτερ, ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, are rendered in Ewe as either *Mia Tɔ/Fofo, si le dzifowo* (our Father, who is in the heavens) (38.4%) or *Mia Tɔ/Fofo, si le dzifo* (our Father, who is in heaven) (61.6%). The former which is from the Alexandrian manuscripts, pluralized God's dwelling place. It is this translation that is found in *Biblia* (1931, 2010), and *Nubabla Yeye La* (1990), but it is unpopular. The popular rendition which is on the

lips of every Ewe-Ghanaian Christian is the one which is found in the *Agbenya La* (2006), translated from some Textus Receptus Bibles such as the King James Version which is the most popular English bible in the life of the Ewe church. Thus, there is a translation and hermeneutical gap between what the invocation meant to the Matthean community and what it means to the Ewe Christian community. Comparing the second half of the invocation, ο εν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, with the second half of the second petition, γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς, it is striking to note how οὐρανός appears in the two petitions in singular and plural forms respectively. The question is whether or not ‘our Father’ is in heaven or in the heavens. Luke may have noticed this inconsistency in Matthew, and so decided to avoid the use of οὐρανός in both the invocation and the second half of the second petition.

On the interpretation of the invocation, respondents who touched on the ecclesiological inclusiveness of the Fatherhood are 13 representing 21.7%. Five (5) respondents representing 8.3% takes an ecclesiological exclusiveness and conditional position so far as the Fatherhood of God is concerned, that is, only by adoption does a person becomes a child of God and not by natural birth. It is this exclusive position that is taken by the Church Fathers, and partially Reformers such as Luther and Calvin. The modern Ewe-Ghanaian Christian, on the other hand, avoids the argument of exclusion and inclusion and describes the petition as an appellation in acknowledgement of the divine nature. Viewing the invocation from Ewe traditional religious lens, however, God is viewed as the Father of all creation. There are however, two Ewe schools of thought on His place of abode; the general religious view of a singular place of abode and the *Yewe* philosophical view of a pluralized place of abode. Relative to this is the critical question of whether God really dwells in heaven or the heavens. This is theologically relevant, especially when viewed from the perspective of modern science. The researcher’s rational position is that *dzifo* (heaven) or *dzifowo* (heavens), symbolizes the transcendence and inaccessibility of the Divine. This, in Ewe cosmology, is conceptualized as absolute or eternal realm of existence. Thus the heaven (s) that is described in Christian theology prepared for the dead in Jesus Christ is an eternal state of existence. What qualifies the Ewe to enter that state is his/her purity and strength of their life’s work. The researcher therefore concludes that the invocation of Matthew’s version of the Lord’s Prayer should be *Mia To, si le dzifowo* (our Father, who is in the heavens) with annotation using insight from Ewe religious worldview.

Although the majority of respondents (45%) translates the first petition as *na wò ñkò ñuti nakò* (let your name be sanctified), it does not reflect the popular/liturgical rendition, *wò ñkò ñuti nakò* (your name be sanctified) (33.3%). They are however, divided over the subject of the sanctification. 51 out of the total respondents, representing 85%, understand the petition to mean that it is the duty of the Christian community to sanctify God's name. The remaining 15% respondents understand it to mean that the responsibility to sanctify God's name lies solely on God Himself and not any other person. Thus, in the view of majority of Ewe-Christians, the first petition places the moral obligation on humans to sanctify the name of God. None of the respondents places any obligation on God Himself. The use of the aorist imperative in the petition is an indication that the sanctification or hallowing of God's name is not an appellation or affirmation of God's holiness but a call on Him to act. The petition can alternatively be rendered as, *kò wò ñkò ñuti* (sanctify your name). This petition and the second petition follow the pattern of the third, *γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς*, calling on God to sanctify His name on earth, bring His kingdom to the earth, and do His will on earth, as in heaven. Obviously, the name of God, like His kingdom and will, is already sanctified in heaven; God has therefore fulfilled His side of the relationship between Him and humans; the onus now lies on humanity to share in the divine holiness. The researcher's position is that the petition be literally translated as *na wò ñkò ñuti nekò* (let your name be sanctified) and be interpreted in the light of the Greek aorist imperative passive voice, and the religious worldview on the sanctification of the name of Ewe deities. This would aid the Ewe convert's understanding of *ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου* as a divine-human activity and not the divine alone.

The key word the research had to deal with in the second petition, *βασιλεία*, is either translated *fiadufe* (51.7%) or *fiaduqu* (46.7%) in Ewe. It is not surprising because scholars since the patristic era are equally divided over the interpretation of the term as either spiritual/internal (*fiaduqu*) or physical/external (*fiadufe*) reign of God. This is due to the Hellenistic understanding of the term as kingly rule (*fiaduqu*) and kingdom (*fiadufe*). It must be reiterated that the entire Lord's Prayer is hinged on the coming of God's kingdom and the submission of creation to the divine will, and was exclusively Israel before the advent of Jesus Christ the Messiah. God's promise of a *βασιλεία* was given to Israel; the Gentiles were later grafted (Ac. 26:17-18). Jesus

himself made it clear in his earthly ministry that “salvation is of the Jews.” His earthly ministry never extended beyond Jewish borders (check from the gospels). Although he mentioned that the gospel must be preached in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the world, the twelve were hesitant in spreading the gospel to the Gentile world until the conversion of Paul.

It is therefore obvious that the whole notion of βασιλεία in Matthew 6:9-13 is about Jewish eschatology – the expectation of an earthly kingdom as revealed in chapter three of this study with a clear roadmap to its realization/fulfillment. It finds expression in Jewish liturgical life beginning from the pre-exilic era to the construction of the first temple. It then continued from the exilic and post exilic eras, and then to the coming of the Messiah as evidence of the arrival of the spiritual kingdom of God – the reign of God (*fiadudu*) in the hearts of humans. The eschatological dimension of βασιλεία, translated as *fiadufe* in Ewe, finds expression in Christian eschatology and apocalypse.<sup>273</sup> There is ample evidence from biblical texts which reveal Christian eschatologies that are cosmological in orientation. Paul’s letter to the church in Thessalonica for instance, reveals an eschatological vision that is centred on the *Parousia* and rapture of the saints while his letter to the church in Rome portrays an eschatological vision which centres on the eager anticipation of creation for the revelation of God’s glory in His children or call it the renewal of the whole creation – nature and mankind.<sup>274</sup> In Peter’s letter to the believers scattered throughout Pontius, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, he conceived an eschatological vision in terms of the burning into ashes of this present world and its replacement with a new one whereas in John’s apocalyptic work in Revelation, his eschatological vision seeks to transform the universe rather than destroying it with fire.<sup>275</sup>

All the eschatologies, though diverse, seem to focus on a hope of future great event. Thus situating Matthew’s βασιλεία within its Jewish eschatological context, one would conclude that the βασιλεία is both imminent and urgent, that is, it has arrived and at the same time yet to appear in a form that is difficult predicting. The kingdom of God will come when heaven unites with earth, and when that happens, the earth surrenders its will to the Divine will. It is therefore

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<sup>273</sup> See Wilkinson (2010: 53-88); 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21:1-8; Romans 8:18-30; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Corinthians 15; the Synoptic gospels.

<sup>274</sup> See Wilkinson (2010:64-67, 76-84); 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11, Romans 8:18-30.

<sup>275</sup> See Wilkinson (2010:67-71, 72-76); 2 Peter 3:10-13

obvious that *fiaduḍu* is what our Father is doing in His *fiaduḍe* in the heavens. The choice of *fiaduḍu* is based on the correlation between the sanctification of our Father's name, the coming of His kingdom, and the doing of His will, predicating on ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς. *Na wò fiaduḍu neva* (let your kingship come) is therefore the researcher's rendition of the third petition. Following the rule of the aorist imperative active voice, the petition therefore, places the burden on God to initiate the doing of His divine will on earth as it is in heaven. However, the existing Ewe translations and the majority of respondents disagree with that hermeneutical position. Moreover, there are discrepancies or disconnect between the translation and interpretation of respondents. Although 50 respondents, representing 83.3% translate the petition as, *woawɔ wò lɔlɔnu le anyigbadzi sigbe alesi wo wɔ ne le dzifo ene* (They shall do your loving thing on earth, as they do it in heaven), it does not reflect the interpretation implied in the translation. Only one respondent among the fifty (50) aligns with the hermeneutical understanding that humans are the subject of the doing of the divine will. The researcher's position, therefore, is that the petition should render, *na be wò lɔlɔnu newɔ le anyigbadzi abe alesi wò ne le dzifowo ene* (let your loving thing be done on earth, as they do in the heavens), to reflect the rule of the aorist imperative which oblige God to do something about the doing of His will on earth which is already done in heaven.

Although the study holds the view that the fourth petition should translate *na mi egbe miafe gbesiagbe bolo* (give us today our daily bread), the liturgical translation, *na miafe nuḍuḍu si asu mia nu egbe la mí* (give our food that will be enough today to us) remains most popular (56.6% of respondents). There is additional 16% of respondents whose translation are close to the liturgical rendition. In effect, about 73% of respondents have been able to deal with the ambiguity associated with ἐπιούσιον in their own way by translating it as food or bread that is sufficient for the day. But the aorist imperative active voice in Matthew does not allow a non-eschatological interpretation of this petition. It is in Luke's rendition that one finds both eschatological and non-eschatological interpretations. The only point that justifies a non-eschatological interpretation of the petition in Matthew is its consistency with Jesus' own statement contained in the third block of his Mountain Sermon concerning issues of life. Here, Jesus is cited as instructing his followers that they should not think about what they would eat tomorrow. One other difficulty the researcher finds with the liturgical translation is the time of its

recitation. For instance, it does not make any liturgical sense to ask for the day's bread at night. It only makes sense when those reciting the prayer are yet to find their meal for the day. Second, when the petition is recited by those who have enough to eat and spare. In order for the petition to be liturgically relevant, it has to be rendered *Na míafe gbesiagbe bolo si asu míanu la mí* (give our daily bread that will be sufficient to us).

Matthew's translation of the fifth petition of the prayer in the source language does not agree with the view of majority from the field, neither does it agree with the existing Ewe translations. The translators combined words from Matthew and Luke to render this petition and the new petition so formed has gained popularity in Ewe liturgical life. The nature of the forgiveness in Matthew may have accounted for the amalgamated rendition. The aorist present form in Matthew suggests that ἄφεξις is a one-time pardon with an eschatological undertone. It is this eschatological understanding of the petition that questions the recitation of the Lord's Prayer as a whole. One respondent for instance, argues that the fifth petition and for that matter the Lord's Prayer as a whole is no longer relevant because it finds fulfillment in Jesus Christ who has already paid the ransom for our sin. The position of the researcher on the translation of the petition is that the literal translation of ὀφειλήματα and ὀφειλέταις as *fewo* (debts) and *fenyilawo* ( debtors) respectively in Ewe should be maintained throughout the petition and notes be provided to interpret them. The choice of the researcher for this petition therefore, is *Eye tsɔ míafe fewo ke mí, elabena míawo hã míetsɔe ke mí fenyilawo* (and forgive us our debts, because we also we have forgiven our debtors), or *eye tsɔ míafe fewo ke mí abe alesi míawo hã míetsɔ amesiwo nyife le míasi la tɔ ke woe ene* (and forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven those who are indebted to us) instead of *Tsɔ míafe nu vɔwo ke mí abe ale si míawo hã míetsɔne ke na ame siwo daa vo de mía nyiti la ene* (forgive us our sins, as we also forgive those who sin against us), or *Tsɔ míafe nu vɔwo ke mí, abe alesi míawo hã míetsɔe ke ame siwo wɔ vɔ de mía nyiti la ene* (forgive us our sins, as we have also forgiven those who have sinned against us), or the missionary rendition, *Eye natsɔ míafe vodadawo ake mí, sigbe alesi míawo hã míetsɔna kea amesiwo daa vo de mía nyiti la ene!* (and forgive us our 'misthrowings', as we also forgive those who 'mistrow' against us). On the nature of the forgiveness, it is appropriate for the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian to continue to ask our heavenly Father for pardon as s/he awaits the coming of Jesus the Christ.

The translation of the sixth petition in both existing Ewe texts and from the field suggest an appeal to God not to lead us into temptation but the interpretations denies His involvement in the process. It is therefore the view of the researcher that “our Father” is the one who brings His children to the wilderness of the mind to be tempted by evil. As for the translation of *πονηρος*, two interpretations have emerged – the old Greek and Jewish apocalyptic viewpoints which carries a personified interpretation, and Hellenistic and Jewish apotropaic viewpoint which carries an abstract interpretation. In both the existing Ewe texts and popular view from the field, the understanding of *πονηρος* aligns with the Old Greek and Jewish apocalyptic interpretation, suggesting that the term be rendered the Evil One. However, the Ewe religious background discussed in chapter one of this study does not support the data from the field, that is, *πονηρος* has no incarnation. Prior to the advent of Christianity in Eweland, the Ewe worldview of *πονηρος* has been abstract - *νɔ*. The researcher therefore aligns with the Ewe worldview of evil and render *πονηρος* as *νɔ/nuvɔɖi* (fear/fearful thing) The petition therefore translates *eye mega kplɔ mi yi tetekpɔ me o, ke demi tso νɔ/nuvɔɖi me* (and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil/evil thing). The doxology has been discussed extensively in the previous chapters. It must however, be re-emphasized that it is not found in the earliest manuscript of Matthew but it is as old as Christianity itself. Its appearance in Textus Receptus bibles is the reason for its inclusion in the earliest Ewe translation. However, the translation of the concluding part of the doxology in Ewe – *neva eme* (let it be) – needs to be considered in subsequent versions of the Ewe Bible. In summary, this study, having consulted all available data, primary and secondary, on the Lord’s Prayer, concludes with the following rendition of the Lord’s Prayer in Ewe:

*Miatɔ si le dzifowo,*

*Na wò ηkɔ ηuti nekɔ,*

*Na wò fiaduɖu neva,*

*Na be wò lɔlɔnu newɔ le anyigbadzi abe alesi wò wɔ ne le dzifo ene,*

*Na míafe gbesiagbe bolo si asu míanu la mí.*

*Eye tɔɔ míafe fewo ke mí, elabena míawo hã míetsɔɛ ke mía fenyilawo.*

*Eye mega kplɔ mi yi tetekpɔ me o, ke demi tso nuvɔɖi me*

## **Translation**

Our Father, who is in the heavens

Let your name be sanctified

Let your kingship come

Let your will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven

Give us our daily bread that will be sufficient to us

And forgive us our debts, because we also have forgiven our debtors

And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil things

### **6.3 ONE PRAYER, MANY INTERPRETATIONS: CASE FOR CONTEXT SENSITIVITY IN BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS**

An exegetical comparison between Matthew and Luke's versions of the Lord's Prayer was carried out to establish points of continuity and discontinuity between the two renditions of the prayer in Chapter 4. The Lord's Prayer appears in Matthew, Luke, and in the teachings of the Apostles, also known as *Didache*. The exegetical comparison between the two prayers reveals that both prayers are liturgical prayers used sacramentally by the early church to address the liturgical needs of their respective communities. The prayers are taught at different locations, with Matthew's version longer than that of Luke's. Matthew is Jewish in outlook and may be written to Jewish Christians who could not read Hebrew or Aramaic, while Gentiles are Luke's audience. Jesus is said to be the author of the prayer, hence the assertion that Matthew and Luke's versions are secondary sources and not the original is plausible. Whereas Matthew's version is given as pattern of prayer, Luke's version is supposed to be recited. The prayer is hypothetically from Q with Luke the closest. The analysis also reveals variations in the content of the two prayers. They discontinue in the invocation, first and third petitions. The ambiguity in Matthew's fourth petition is also present in Luke while the petition for pardon in His (Luke's) fifth petition continues with Matthew but replaces the Greek word ὀφειλήματα with ἁμαρτίας in the first part. Matthew's aorist present and Luke's continuous tenses is another point of divergence in petitions. The two prayers also discontinue with each other in the second part of their last petitions. There seems to be inconsistency in the use of οὐρανοῦς in the invocation and second half of the third petition in Matthew. Whereas it is rendered οὐρανοῦς (plural) in the invocation, it appears οὐρανῷ (singular) in the second half of the third petition.



The following are the study's conclusions deduced from the comparison between the two renditions of the Lord's Prayer – Matthew and Luke: None of the two versions can be said to be the original. The evangelists' sensitivity to the liturgical needs of their audiences (Jews and Greeks) is what informed the variations in their renditions. The variations in the two prayers are normal phenomenon in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, especially the gospels. It is in the light of this phenomenon that the doxology, although absent from the earliest manuscript used in analyzing the prayers in Matthew and Luke, found its way in Textus Receptus manuscripts and used in such translations as the King James. The divergent hermeneutical views and theologies expressed in the works of the Church Fathers on the prayer is another layer of interpretation which situates the Lord's Prayer within the particular life situation of the exegetes and their audiences. The African Fathers like Tertullian and Cyprian, seem to share similar hermeneutical view on the Lord's Prayer. Clement of Alexandria, on the other hand, has a radical philosophical and theological view which sharply contrasts with those of Tertullian and Cyprian his protégé because of their religious and sophisticated philosophical environment in which they theologized. The same can be said of the devotional approach adopted by Luther and Calvin during the era of the Reformation.

Juxtaposing the above exegetical comparison with the raw data collected from the field on the prayer, it is worth emphasizing that only a few respondents really have knowledge about the existence of two versions of the prayer because no single one of them is able to compare them fully. The study reveals that the Ewe understanding of the Lord's Prayer today is not very different from the medieval and Reformation eras. It however, noted an exegetical gap between literature and the grassroots. This gap has resulted in difference between academic and devotional use of the Lord's Prayer. The contribution of Ewe grassroots hermeneutics teaches us a lesson on how effectively Biblical studies in Africa would be carried out if the Biblical text is allowed to dialogue with readers or practitioners of the Christian faith. The contextualization must however be skillfully carried out in a very balanced way in order to preserve the gospel.

Although the relevance of the Lord's Prayer cannot be overemphasized, it is facing stiffer competition from among Ewe-Ghanaian Protestant tradition, Pentecostal/Charismatics, and

African Initiated Churches in terms of its ritual of recitation. This is as a result of the growing concern of the spontaneity of praying in popular Ewe-Ghanaian Christianity. Prayer that is written and read out is viewed by many as unspiritual and boring. It is in the light of this growing concern that the rote use of the Lord's Prayer is considered by a section of respondents as irrelevant. In short, the meaning of the Lord's Prayer lies, not only in how the source community views and understands it but also how the recipient community appropriates it. Second, the Lord's Prayer will continue to remain the prayer of all prayers in the Ewe Protestant church for a very long time to come.

#### **6.4 TOWARDS AN EWE COMMENTARY, BIBLE DICTIONARY, AND STUDY BIBLE ON THE LORD'S PRAYER**

The product of this study is the development of an Ewe commentary on the Lord's Prayer. The commentary was inspired by an earlier one developed by Rev Samuel Quist for the Ewe community in 1937, and Jacobus Capitein, whose commentary in Mfante language about two centuries earlier remains the first Mother Tongue Biblical hermeneutics in the Ghanaian language. Inspiration was also drawn from twentieth century African theologians in Mother Tongue Biblical hermeneutics such as Professor Gilbert Ansre and John David Kwamena Ekem, both experts in Mother Tongue Biblical hermeneutics in Ewe and Akan respectively. Having structured the prayer into introduction, division, purpose, and comparison between the two versions of the prayer, comparison with Jewish and Ewe traditional prayers believed to predate the Lord's Prayer such as the *half Kaddish* and the pouring of libation, the study then delved into the content of the commentary. The commentary engages the Lord's Prayer text in Matthew with its Jewish, Greco-Roman, and Ewe-Ghanaian backgrounds to aid Ewe readers to appreciate the prayer in the light of their particular life situation. The prayer is divided into invocation and five petitions, and a doxology. The main themes in the invocation are the Fatherhood of God and the fact of the heavens as His dwelling place. There is continuity among Jews, Greeks and Romans, and Ewes concerning the Fatherhood of God. Regarding the dwelling place of God, the *Yeve* (YHWH) cultic cosmological view of seven (7) different levels of God's existence supports the Jewish traditional view of the plurality of heaven (*shamayim*). It is this cosmological understanding that informs the translation of the invocation as *Miatɔ si le dzifowo* (our Father, who is in the heavens). The theology around the first petition is the sanctification of our Father's

name. Like the God of the Jews, there is no question about the holiness of the Ewe God; holiness is His beauty. Therefore, the interpretation posited in the commentary is that the petition, *na wò ηκω ηuti nakω* (let your name be sanctified), acknowledges the divine holiness. Moreover, there is moral obligation on creation to share in that holiness.

The second and third petitions are joined as one in the Ewe commentary of the Lord's Prayer in this study. One may even stretch the argument further by including the first petition because of the phrase *ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς* which virtually links all three petitions together. If our Father's will is being done in the heavens, then His name and reign are as well being experienced in the heavens. One translation anomaly in this petition which is addressed in the commentary is the Ewe rendering of *ἄρτον*. It is rendered *nuɖuɖu* (food) instead of *abolo* (bread) which is the equivalent of *ἄρτον*. In Ewe-Ghanaian life and thought, nobody petitions the gods or *Mawuga* (the Great God) for tomorrow's provision but rather, daily provision. It is against this religio-cultural backdrop that informs the translation of *ἐπιούσιον* as *na míafe gbesiagbe bolo si asu mía nu la mí* (give us our daily bread sufficient to us). This translation addresses the limitation associated with the prayer in terms of time. As a result of the notoriety of Ewe religiosity, the researcher noted that the petition does not suggest that the bread is to be provided like the way it was done with the manna on the wilderness. Rather, it is provided by as it were, by 'tilling the ground'. Those who have enough to eat and spare must not be described as hypocrites when they say the prayer. They must however, through the recitation of the prayer remind themselves of their moral duty to share the excesses of their daily bread with the needy. Forgiveness is the central theme in the fourth petition. The commentary highlights the conditionality and has arrived at the formula divine-human, and human-human. The divine-human forgiveness is predicated on the human-human forgiveness.

Another terminology highlighted in the commentary in comparison with Luke is the Greek *ὀφειλήματα* (debts). Whereas Matthew uses the debts-debtors formula in the petition, Luke employs the sins-debtors formula. All manner of debts can be forgiven in this petition on condition that the one asking for forgiveness is willing to forgive also. Forgiveness therefore thrives on the basic principle that anyone who asks for pardon (human or divine) must also freely pardon others. The same cannot be said of forgiveness in Ewe religious practice. In this faith,

sins are punished, ransom paid, and sacrifices made to pacify the gods. The implication for conversion from the old to the new faith is that it has the tendency for relapse due to the apparent laxity in the way sins are dealt with in the new faith.

The commentary on the last petition touches on two main themes – the leading into temptation and deliverance from evil/evil one. The former observes that God does not tempt [us]. Rather, He leads [us] to be tempted. His deliverance is then activated when [we] fall into temptation. In an attempt to aid our understanding about what is responsible for our falling into temptation, the commentary draws insight from Ewe religious worldview and identifies fear and ignorance as the main causes. In Ewe religious worldview, fear and ignorance precede one's "own evil desire". The doxology is added to the commentary to make a case for its relevance in the liturgical life of the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian. The commentary highlights the fact that its central themes of sanctification and kingdom are drawn from the first and second petitions. It also highlights the appearance of the doxology in Textus Receptus Bibles such as Stephanus (1550), Scrivener (1894), and the Byzantine Majority Text (2000), with their English renditions such as the King's Versions of 1611 and 1769. Another highlight in the doxology is the liturgical pressure from Judaism which may have necessitated its inclusion into the Lord's Prayer. A comparison with doxologies in Ewe traditional prayers like the pouring of libation confirms the liturgical pressure on Christian prayers at the time. The pressure continues to mount up in the liturgical life of the Ewe-Ghanaian church where every liturgical activity, including teaching and preaching of the word is accompanied by a doxology. On the use of the Greek word  $\alpha\mu\eta\eta$  which concludes the doxology, the commentator argues and employed the Ewe rendition, *neva eme* (let it be) be used. This is to correct the notion that the Ewe language and for that matter African indigenous languages are liturgically inferior to the Queen's language. The emotional and psychological effects of  $\alpha\mu\eta\eta$  and other liturgical terminologies, on Ewe-Ghanaian spirituality has created the impression in the minds of worshippers that it is more spiritual and 'powerful' expressing it in English than Ewe.

## **6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The use of the Lord's Prayer (private and public) has gone through layers of traditions since the first century Christian era. It still remains part of the liturgical life of Catholic and Protestant

churches and recited during worship services. On the contrary, Pentecostal/Charismatic and African Initiated Churches use it as a guide to both private and public prayers. This study has explored the synergy between the Lord's Prayer, Jewish and Ewe traditional prayers that predate the Lord's Prayer. It also examined the Lord's Prayer from a diachronic and synchronic perspectives, culminating in the development of an Ewe commentary on the Lord's Prayer. In light of the translation and hermeneutical issues, coupled with questions of relevance of the prayer for the 21<sup>st</sup> century Ewe-Ghanaian Christian, the researcher proposes the following recommendations to aid further studies of the Lord's Prayer academically and devotionally:

### **6.5.1 On use of Mother Tongue and African traditional religion in theologizing**

1. Although global Christianity has gravitated towards Sub-Saharan Africa and the vernacular its medium of expression, the English language still remains the vehicle through which most theological activities are documented. Theological Institutions in Africa should encourage students to use their Mother Tongues to enrich their long essays, Masters and Doctoral dissertations.
2. The linguistic and theological footprints left behind by the nineteenth century missionaries and their native co-workers have laid the foundation for doing Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics. It is apparent though, that little is done in terms of building upon those foundations. Theological seminaries in Ghana in particular and Africa generally, must therefore make theologizing in the mother tongue a core subject in their curriculum.
3. The Ewe orthography developed by the missionaries has served as the bedrock for modern scholarship in Bible translation work in Ewe. Going forward, the translation of the Bible should be carried out in the three Ewe dialects – *Anlo, Tongue* and *Ewedome*, thereby breaking the monopoly of Standard Ewe.
4. A lot of investments is needed in translation work in Africa in general and Eweland in particular in order to improve upon its quality.
5. It is a truism that the English language is gradually becoming the Mother Tongue of children of African descent, especially in urban centers. The teaching and learning of the vernacular must be reinforced in the church and home if the future of Mother Tongue Biblical hermeneutics is to be secure.

6. The result of this study is a revelation that a mult-dimensional approach needs to be employed in examining any biblical text, including Mother Tongue Biblical approach. The use of only the traditional historical-critical method leads to a mere mimicking of Western theology.
7. The teaching of African Traditional Religion should be one of the prerequisites courses in all theological seminaries in Ghana and Africa since it is their “Old Testament.”

### **6.5.2 On propriety of prayer**

8. Prayer is the most popular theological theme in Ewe-Ghanaian Christian setting. The Ewe-Ghanaian Christian turns to relate well with God in prayer. There is more premium placed on prayer than the preaching and teaching of the word of God. In other words, the Ewe Christian talks to God more than (s)/he listens to Him. Although Ewe Christian prayer today follows the pattern of the Lord’s Prayer, there is the need to address the issue of superfluous through ecumenical dialogue at both local and national levels. Two important superfluous in prayer that deserve attention; first, the phenomenon of ‘pray for me’ within popular Christianity. This has led to another phenomenon described as spiritual ‘machoism’ where worshippers are made to believe that it is only the pastor or prophet’s pray that God answers speedily. Second, the inclination toward materialism in petitioning God. The fact is that since prayer is “the material replacement for animals, incense, and grains”<sup>276</sup>, it must be offered through the only Mediator between God and humankind – Jesus the Christ – in order to discourage the deification of ecclesiastical personalities. Also, the petitions of the Lord’s Prayer, which are essentially requests for spiritual needs, should serve as guide to our private and corporate petitions.
9. The role of Local Council of Churches (LCCs) is crucial at the local level in ensuring the propriety of prayer while at national level, dialogue among the numerous Ecumenical Councils must be encouraged. Prayer should neither be seen as a stage performance nor nuisance by non-Christians.
10. Regular ecumenical engagements by the Catholic Bishops Conference, the Christian Council of Ghana, Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council, National Association of Charismatic and Christian Churches, and other Ecumenical Councils that are springing up

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<sup>276</sup>See Brown (2004:260).

in Ghana, are needed to help the censorship of Christian prayers to avoid the superfluous and to bring some level of sanity within the liturgical space. The language of the Lord's Prayer must shape and refine Ewe prayer terminologies.

11. The rote learning of the Lord's Prayer by catechumens should continue in order to enable them grow in their prayer lives.

### **6.5.3 On translation, interpretation, and use of the Lord's Prayer**

12. The Lord's Prayer is undoubtedly the prayer *par excellence* with every Christian prayer developing out of it. Its use in Ewe Christian context varies from recitation (Luke's version) to just a model prayer (Matthew's version). The feedback from the two Bible study sessions held in this study are important for the Ewe-Ghanaian Christian church. The church must therefore consider the following themes in the teaching and learning of the Lord's Prayer:

- Our relationship with God and fellow humans;
- The question of the heavens as God's dwelling place;
- Sanctification of God's name and its implication for good Christian living;
- A better understanding of the concepts of βασιλεία and the divine will prevailing over human will;
- Addressing the question of human needs;
- Peaceful co-existence and reconciliation;
- Spiritual warfare – revisiting issues of human sensuality, materialism, and ostentation.

This is to increase the Ewe Christian community's knowledge of the Lord's Prayer and be conversant with its use.

13. The popularity of the Lord's Prayer in Ewe is primarily due to its liturgical use. There should be continuous interface between academic and grassroots theologies in order to bridge theological and liturgical gaps between the academia and the church. This is to help the African church take the results of theological research seriously and to erase the notion that they are not 'spiritual.'
14. The textual discrepancies in the existing Ewe renditions of the Bible in general and the Lord's Prayer in particular are wake up calls for African theologians in general and Ewe-

Ghanaian theologians in particular to develop enough skills in using the vernacular as tool for theologizing.

15. It is important to use the Lord's Prayer to emphasize the essence of communality in the life of the church – our Father, not my Father; give us, not give me; our daily bread and not my daily bread; forgive us, and not forgive me, our debts (sins), not my debt (sin); lead us not, not lead me not – into temptation; deliver us from evil/evil one, not deliver me from evil.
16. Considering the pluralized religious environment that the Ewe Christian finds her/himself, we must be guided by the interpretation we give to the invocation since its exclusive view may lead, not only to religious conflict, but also ethnic tension. The church's rich resources in interfaith relations and ecological awareness should guide the interpretation of the invocation.
17. The church must revisit the concept of οὐρανοῦς and βασιλεία in the first and second petitions and educate church members on their eschatological and cosmological visions envisaged in the gospels, epistles, and the apocalypse.
18. The mention of the will of God in the Lord's Prayer has implication for the role of the divine will in African Christian prayer. Our petitions must fall within the sovereign will of God our Father; a Father who will not give what His children want but what they need, and what He wills for their lives.
19. The fourth petition is a request for daily bread and it is situational. The communal sense it conveys must be stressed and practiced as demonstrated in the fellowship of the early church in the book of Acts.
20. The fifth petition must be used to engender peace and reconciliation among Christians on one hand, and people of other faiths. Alternate Dispute Resolution mechanisms should be put in place in the church in resolving conflicts rather than resorting to the traditional courts for redress.
21. The sixth petition, it must be emphasized, should not be interpreted as imprecatory prayer; it must be devoid of all 'vindictive and imprecatory sentiments'. As Rowley (1967:267-268) indicates, "the imprecatory prayers such as we find in the Psalms, the cries for vengeance, the harsh denunciations of enemies, whether personal or national, are unsuited to be the vehicle of our worship." See Psalm 137. The imprecatory prayers in the psalms,



as Rowley suggests, must be used liturgically to, as it were, warn against sharing the tempers of those who created them (Rowley 1967:268).

Finally, the comparison of Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer with Luke's version, Jewish prayers, and Ewe libation prayer, affirms the case for contextualization of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. However, contextualization must be carried out with care so as to preserve the core of the Christian message.

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## **Interviews**

Interview with *Torgbe Keh XII*, Divisional Chief of *Gbi Wegbe* and Leftwing Chief of Gbi Traditional Area

Age: 57; Level of Education: BA; Occupation: Tax Officer; Position in church: Member of church session, finance committee, choir secretary (1992-2000)

Date of Interview: 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2015

Interview with Rev. H.K. Gbotsyo, minister of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana

Age: 69; Level of Education: MTh; Occupation: Pastor; Position in church: District pastor

Date of Interview: 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2015.

Interview with Dr. S. Datey Kumordzi, National president of the Sofia system in Ghana, 25<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> September, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 in Accra.

Age: 77; Level of education: Postgraduate; Occupation

Date of Interview: 25<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2015

Interview with Torgbe Korsi Abuda, traditional libatory of Volo Traditional Area in the North Tongu district of the Volta Region of Ghana, 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2015

Age: above 100 years; Level of education: non-literate; Occupation: farmer

Date of interview: 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2015.

Sixty respondents in six Ewe-speaking communities – Ho, Abor, Anloga, Peki, Volo, Accra.

Gender: female (20); male (40); Ages: 18 – 39 (30); 40-60 (25); 61-71 (4); 72 and above (1);

Levels of education: Basic school (1), Technical/Vocational school (2); Secondary school (6);

Tertiary institutions (31); Postgraduate (19); Other (not specified) (1);

Religious affiliation: Roman Catholic (3); Orthodox (5); Protestant (32);

Pentecostal/Charismatic (18);

Position in church: Pastors (15); Group leaders (26); Church members (17); Others (not specified) (2); Occupation: Civil servants (26); Public servant (1); Lecturers (2); Entrepreneurs

(1); Lay preachers (1); Psychologist (1); Minister of the gospel (6); Farmer (3); Unemployed

(3); Development specialist (1); Finance/accounts officers (3); Investment analysts (4); Students

(7); Artisan (1).

Interview with Rev. Hannes Menke, General Secretary, Bremen Mission

Age: 40-60; Level of Education: Dip.theol.; Occupation: Pastor; Position in church: Pastor and General Secretary, Bremen Mission; Denomination: Protestant

Date of interview: 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2016.

Interview with Rev. Fred Amevenku, lecturer, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon – Accra.

Age: 40-60; Level of education: Master of Theology; Occupation: Lecturer; Position in church: Pastor; Denomination: Protestant

Date of interview: 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2017.

Bible studies session with elders of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, Good Shepherd Congregation, Community Sixteen (16), Lashibi- Accra.

Date of interview: 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2018



Interview with Mr. Kenn Kafui, lecturer, Music Department, University of Ghana, Legon.  
Date of interview: 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2017.

Interview with Rev. Dr. Dorothy Akoto, lecturer, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon  
Date of interview: 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2017; Time: 12:28pm; Duration: 56:42 min.

Interview with Apostle Richard Boafuor, General Overseer, The Lord's Pentecostal  
International, Kwashibu-Accra.  
Date of interview: 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2017

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Society of Ghana, 1992.

## Interview guide

### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENT

Community.....

Questionnaire ID.....

NO.	QUESTIONS	VARIABLE NAME
1.	<p>Sex of the respondent? (Please tick as appropriate)</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">1. Female <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">2. Male <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<i>Sex of respondent</i>
2.	<p>Could you please tell me your age?- for generational analysis</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">1. 18-39 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">2. 40-60 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">3. 61-71 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">4. 72 and above <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<i>Age of respondent</i>
3.	<p>What is your highest level of education completed? (Please tick as appropriate)</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">1. None <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">2. Primary school <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">3. Middle/JHS <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">4. Technical/Vocational <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">5. Secondary education <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<i>Level of education</i>

4.	<p>6. Tertiary <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>7. Postgraduate <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>8. Other [specify] <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>What is your religious affiliation (Please tick as appropriate)</p> <p>1. Christian(Roman Catholic) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>2. Christian (Orthodox) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>3. Christian (Coptic) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>4. Christian (Protestant) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>5. Christian (Pentecostal/Charismatic) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>6. Christian (African Initiated Church) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>7. Traditionalist <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<i>Religion of respondent</i>
5.	<p>What position do yo occupy in your church?</p> <p>1. Pastor <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>2. Leader <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>3. Member <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>4. Other[Please specify]</p>	<i>Position of respondent</i>
6.	<p>What is your occupation?.....</p>	<i>Occupation of respondent</i>

SECTION B: TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

NO.	QUESTIONS	VARIABLE NAME
7.	How well do you know the Lord's Prayer?	<i>Respondent's knowledge of the Lord's Prayer</i>
8.	How would you translate Matthew's version of the invocation of the Lord's Prayer in Ewe? "Our Father who art in heaven"	<i>Respondent's translation and interpretation of the invocation of the Lord's Prayer</i>
9.	What does the translation mean to you? Please explain briefly	<i>Respondent's translation and interpretation of the six petitions in the Lord's Prayer</i>
10.	How would you translate the first petition of the Lord's Prayer in Ewe? "Let your Name be hallowed be"	<i>Respondent's translation and interpretation of the six petitions in the Lord's Prayer</i>
11.	What does the translation mean to you? Please explain briefly	<i>Respondent's translation and interpretation of the six petitions in the Lord's Prayer</i>

12.	What is your translation of the second petition of the Lord's Prayer in Ewe? "Let your Kingdom come"	
13.	What does the translation mean to you? Please explain briefly	
14.	How would you translate the third petition of the Lord's Prayer in Ewe? "Let your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth"	
15.	What does the translation mean to you? Please explain brief	
16.	What is your translation of the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer in Ewe? Give us today our daily bread/ give us today our bread for the coming day.	

17.	What does the translation mean to you? Please explain briefly	
18.	How would you translation of the fifth petition of the Lord’s Prayer in Ewe? “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors”	
19.	What does the translation mean to you? Please explain briefly	
20.	What is your translation of the sixth petition of the Lord’s Prayer in Ewe? “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil/the evil one	
21.	What does the translation mean to you? Please explain briefly	
22.	What is your translation of the doxology in Matthew’s version of the Lord’s Prayer? “For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.”	<i>Respondent’s translation and interpretation of the doxology in the Lord’s Prayer</i>

23.	What does the doxology mean to you? Please explain briefly	
24.	Why do you think it is added to the prayer?	

SECTION C: COMPARISON BETWEEN MATTHEW'S AND LUKE'S VERSIONS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

NO.	QUESTIONS	VARIABLE NAME
25.	What are the similarities between Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer and that of Luke?	<i>Respondent's comparison between Matthew's and Luke's versions of the Lord's Prayer</i>

26.

What are the differences between Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer and that of Luke?

27.

What in your view has accounted for the differences?



28.	What lessons can you learn from the differences as an African Christian?	
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SECTION D: RELEVANCE OF THE LORD’S PRAYER

NO.	QUESTIONS	VARIABLE NAME
29.	Do you pray the Lord’s Prayer in your church? 1. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 2. No <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Respondent’s opinion on the relevance of the Lord’s Prayer</i>

30.	If yes, why is it used?	
31.	If no, why is it no longer used?	
32.	Is the Lord's Prayer still relevant today? 1. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 2. No <input type="checkbox"/>	
33.	If yes, how relevant is it?	

34.	If no, why is it no longer relevant?	
35.	What form (s) of prayer (s) is (are) more relevant in the church today?	<i>Respondent's knowledge of other prayer forms more relevant in the church today</i>

SECTION D: COMPARISON BETWEEN THE LORD'S PRAYER IN MATTHEW AND LIBATION PRAYER

<b>NO.</b>	<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>VARIABLE NAME</b>
36.	What are the similarities between the Lord's Prayer and libation prayers?	<i>Respondent comparison between the Lord's Prayer</i>

37.	What do the similarities mean to you if any?	<i>and libation prayers</i>
38.	What are the differences between the Lord's Prayer and libation prayers?	
39.	What lesson (s) can you learn from the differences and/or similarities between the Lord's Prayer and libation prayers if any?	

40.	<p>Can libation prayer be “Christianized”?</p> <p>1. Yes      <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>2. No        <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><i>Respondent’s opinion on Christianization of libation prayer</i></p>
41.	<p>Give reason (s) for your answer.</p>	