The Complexity of Culture and Spirituality of Shalom Between Ancient Israelites and Charismatic Pentecostals in Nigeria

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Abstract
The article sets out to unveil a spirituality that is bedeviled by theological oppositions from exclusivity in ancient Israel and Charismatic Pentecostals in Nigeria. It sets on the premise that religious exclusivity against divergent and cultural pluralism among different religious sects lays claims to matchless experiences and makes exceptional claims. It argues that cultural pluralism of shalom (complete peace) in human existence and life development requires healing as a recovery of peace, restoration of order and reparation (remedy). In its methodology, it employs an integrated hermeneutics of socio-historical critical, socio-literary, and comparative cultural approaches in examining and comparing the culture and spirituality of shalom in ancient Israel as the anchor and basis of appropriating divine healing in Yoruba concept of Alafia for homegrown relevance. It recognizes a conceptual homogenization of Shalom in Israelite primal worldview as Alafia in Yoruba cosmology and the forces of creating order through reconciliation of conflicts. So, religions engage in emancipating concepts and metaphors as pragmatic approaches of interpreting and solving existential challenges and situational problems of human survival.
Keywords: Ancient Israelites, Charismatic Pentecostals, *Shalom*, *Alafia* and Religious Exclusivity.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Religious activities in ancient Israel and Africa involve virtues highlighting piety, holiness, devoutness and mysticism among sacred high places. But, these characteristics of spirituality are bedeviled and outmaneuvered by theological oppositions, pluralism, divergences and exclusivity from various religious sects laying claims to matchless experiences and making exceptional claims. The diverse practices characterizing spirituality, pluralism and inimitability ferment together in ancient Israel and Africa to assume shapers of cultural anxieties and religious differences in the communication media of both cultures while still shooting as products of dominant discourses in them. Instances of religious diversity as well as religious liberty existing in the two domains are then reported as stimuli of religious exclusivity among the charismatic and revival movements in both cultures. Yet, those marks of distinctiveness or individuality of religious fervor continue to serve as spiritual emphases in the dynamic phenomena witnessed in every setting of socio-religious relations and age (Olaniyi & Bateye 2016:124-162).

Paul M. Lipowski, in his exegesis of the book of Job 28:4 captures the crisis of divergent beliefs in ancient Israel about "why righteous people suffer and how their suffering can be reconciled with the goodness of God". He interrogates how the innocence of Job is misunderstood and wrongly judged by his three friends representing the views of the existing religious perspectives of the period. A religious sect of the age considers that Job is being punished. Another religious faction assumes that Job has incurred the wrath of God. Another religious sect opines that Job has sinned in some way against God. All the three perspectives label Job as guilty and deserving affliction of divine judgment (Paul M. Lipowski, 2015:205).

The contemporary culture as a civilization of religious indoctrination through media technology (proficient at simultaneous coverage, reproduction and transmission of images and sounds) is a projection of achievement, reputation and charisma of individuals to the public order. It exclusively treats an appreciable talent, charisma and image of an individual as an advertised commodity with alluring features of excellence and value for globalization. Though the unmediated presence and extraordinary quality innate in certain individuals that made them charismatic are not produced or constructed by the mass media but they are made public and famous to a much larger audience by the media-constructed mechanism. So, each new form of the media is a challenge to the charismatics being projected to the world with new concoction. This experience is demonstrated in the context of Daniel, an Israelite turned a Jew on Babylonian exile while serving Kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar with the innate charisma in him as a migrant from Palestine among the Babylonians (Daniel 5:1-31).

Shalom Wald avows that though, "all biblical prophets maintained a critical distance from the power-holders of the day and called first and foremost for better ethics, which alone could guarantee better governance" (Wald 2014:164). The text of Daniel 5:1-31 avers that Daniel engages the media of his time to interpret divine revelation for the royal court, challenging its cultural and religious identities not in maintaining critical aloofness or detachment. Daniel nicknamed Belteshazzar, though, a captive in Babylon employs the media of instruction (the projection of *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin*) for a revivalist, charismatic and missionary purpose within the space contestation of the age. This is to magnify divine assessment and rejection of the popular culture for social transformation known with prophetic and revivalist movements (Kessler 2008:186-187). The prophetic ministry of Daniel reshapes the religious landscape of the text in spite of the challenges of popularity, celebrity and prosperity that the media inducts on his 'charismatic pentecostalism'. This new mode of communicating socio-religious revival creates a new set of meaning and value system for the theology of Yahweh and the Babylonian ethics. It facilitates the culture and spirituality of creating order, the reconciliation and synergy of skills and the promotion of resources for total wellbeing in assuming a force producing effects and change. So Shalom S. Wald avers that "religion continues to succeed because it is apparently beneficial to evolutionary fitness—in other words, because it makes people better adapted to survive and pass their genes on to the next generation." Evidence from collected and analyzed data has also supplied proofs that confirm this hypothesis for certain individuals since "in comparable circumstances, actively religious people have more resistant immune systems, live longer and healthier lives, and are happier than nonreligious people" (Wald 2014:163).

Rosalind I.J. Hackett also acknowledges that the airwaves in Africa are even alive with religion of one form or another, both as sources of (i) revenue upon which some media outlets are dependent on and (ii) available religious broadcasting to keep them alive. Consequently, new media revolution in Africa is a replication and an intensification of old polarities among religions, generating new forms of religious intolerance and conflict using religious exclusivism to label or stigmatize other religious approaches as demonic (Hackett 2012:483-484). This defective situation requires healing, remedy, mending or fixing of the long deep crack in the system.

II. METHODOLOGY

Gatti and Ossom-Batsa categorize African biblical hermeneutics as the domain of integrated approaches to contextualizing the Bible (as the theoretical framework for biblical analysis) in a dynamic dialogue with the diversity of cultures that typify the African continent (Gatti & Ossom-Batsa, 2011:167-180). Thus, this paper engages: first, historical critical view of taking the historical dimensions of the Bible seriously by focusing attention on the world behind biblical texts to compare biblical accounts with non-biblical evidences in reconstructing Israelite history and culture (P. K. Tull, 2005:684; Rhonda Burnette-Bletsch, 2007:20). Second, literary method deals with the final form of biblical texts today analyzing biblical texts as literature. This foregrounds the Bible in the form in which it is stabilized canonically to focus on its textual surface and follow the logic of its narrative (P. K. Tull, 2005:688-689; Rhonda Burnette-Bletsch, 2007:21). Third, social anthropological (comparative sociology) technique examines circumstances that inform social roles, how certain phenomena function in Israelite society and the social organization of structures and groups in ancient Israel. It examines the way ancient Israelite society develops as an integration of interrelated and interacting social units in forming a system of social relations as a structure (Robert R. Wilson, 1984: vii-viii & 19-20). The institutionalization of the religious groups culminates in the establishment of social orders of perpetuating the religious community (certain codes, structures and status dimensions as bases of recruiting and socializing new members and creating a sense of identity and belonging). It has set norms of achieving the common goals of the group that are converted to roles which members carry out (Gary E. Kessler, 2008:240-241). Fourth, comparative cultural approach lays emphasis on the cultural context, studying biblical concepts and traditional theories together with the view of each throwing more light on the other. It relates the Bible to beliefs of other religions as a dialogue partner (promoting inter-religious dialogue) in the quest for mutual enlightenment in a religious pluralistic setting (Gatti & Ossom-Batsa, 2011:170-171).

The Complex Culture and Civilization of the Israelites

Every religious organization that engages in (i) gaining mastery over imperfections of human life and (ii) bringing the world into conformity with the realistic order of life in its domain, employs strategies of transforming the imperfections of human life that are stimulated by social conditions and status. However, social status and situations also influence the religious thought and action that are dominant in any domain. Consequently, dynamism in religious emphases about strategies of transforming human life becomes prevalent, pragmatic and determined by the socio-economic changes in the society which are also acclimatized into the process of creating order (Kessler 2008:42-46, 288-293, 301).

Consequently, stating a record of Israelite civilization and culture is a difficult task. John Goldingay comments on the religious experience of the Israelites assumed to be codified into certain codes guiding Israelite ethics and civilization (*Torah*) as mere ideological impressions of a prototypical society. The *Torah* as a visualization of a future construction is expected to be translated into practical deeds in human relations and socialization (Goldingay 2002:202). Thus, according to Wald, record of Israelite religious experience manifests components that are not rooted in religion or that are only partly rooted in religion. Available documents reveal that there are history, literature, language, social organization, folk sanctions, standards of conduct, social and spiritual ideals, aesthetic values, accumulation of knowledge, skills, tools, arts, laws, philosophies and economic and technological factors that forge together to document what is known as the civilization and culture of the Israelites. These are because there is only one Jewish civilization, but there are many Jewish cultures since many and different Jewish cultures emerge from the interactions of Jewish communities as they migrate into and absorb with the cultures, languages, and religions of their host countries. For instance, Hebrew *zivilisatzia* (civilization) is a contemporary loanword taken from the Yiddish or Russian sense of the term. The nearest original Hebrew word is *tarbut*, and it is translated as culture from the sense of education, transmission of custom, rearing or breeding of following generation. Thus, Jewish *tarbut* or culture consists of the manifold expressions—written or oral, visual or textual, material or spiritual—with which human beings represent their lived experiences and the experiences of earlier generations in order to give them meaning (Wald 2014:4-7).

Apart from the linguistic factor, socio-literary documentation records that a traditional Hebrew, Israelite or Jew views history as moving ahead in a linear direction and driven by religious-spiritual causes and events. Israelites generally believe that history begins at a point zero, the creation of the world, and reaches a high point, the revelation of the *Torah*. In other words, the transmission of the divine laws as *Torah* follows the creation of the world as a viewpoint. So, Moses received the *Torah* from Sinai and handed it on to Joshua and Joshua transmitted it to the Elders, and the Elders handed it over to the Prophets, and the Prophets transmitted it on to the men of the Great Assembly who passed it on to the sages of the Mishnah who handed the *Torah* on to the sages of the Gemarah, who passed it on to the Saboraim, and the Saboraim handed it to the Geonim, and the Geonim handed it on, finally, to the Jewish sages of the contemporary age. However, the sages of the Talmud assert that the *Torah* existed and was obeyed by the patriarchs long before Israel received it on Mount Sinai. In this light, Jewish history should be regarded as a mirror of a single religious idea because Jewish history is first and foremost the history of its religion or Judaism, the revelation of a transcendent spiritual God and the negation of paganism (Wald 2014:17). From this standpoint, Jewish history has, so far, completed three cycles: the first from Abraham to the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE, culminating in the middle in the period of David and Solomon; the second from the exile in Babylonia to the fall of Betar in 138 CE, culminating in the successful Maccabean revolt; the third from 138 CE to the Chmielnicki massacres in Ukraine in 1648/49, culminating in the history of Spanish Judaism. There are, thus, three periods of "power and achievement," similar to Golden Ages… (Wald 2014:18).

From the foregoing, there are two groupings of Israelite history of religions. There is a history from the patriarchs of Israel with an inclusive understanding of God amidst divinities which the patriarchs recognized. There is another history from Moses and the emancipation of Israelites from Egypt with an exclusive understanding of one God, who alone should be worshipped to avoid colonialism. In this light, Wald adds "religion is interwoven with the history of every civilization. It is the source of the founding myths that shaped the collective identity of all old civilizations." But, "religions carry with them political and social ideals that can determine social structure and daily life. The impacts of these ideals on society stimulate or stifle economic development and strengthen or weaken civilizations." So, "different historians have proposed contradictory evaluations of the impact of a specific religion on a civilization." This is apparent as religion, socio-economic factors and civilization regarded as dynamics or forces producing actions, effects and change (progress) are objectively complex and sometimes contradictory as they continually change from period to period. In addition, "few aspects of civilization are as inextricably linked with the personal background and values of the historian as religion, and it is unlikely that historians will ever come to an agreement on the relations among religion, socio-economic factors, and civilization." Yet, historically, the Jews as ancient people emerged with a religion that dominated their life and thought. Hence, civilization and religion cannot be separated among them since normative Judaism also puts higher value on religious practice than on mere declarations of faith. Therefore, the bedrock of Jewish faith has continued to be the belief in a personal, Almighty God who has issued laws and promised his people protection and prosperity if his people would follow the codes of the relationship. This is the ultimate reason why, through much of history, many Jews have continued to remain as Jews (Wald 2014:162-164).

For instance, Moses, the prophet per excellence of the Israelites delivers a speech in Deuteronomy 4 to explain Israelite theology as shown in verse 19. The situation is the address of a dying leader to peoples of different backgrounds (Aramean/Syrian, rabble from Egyptian slavery, Midianite in-laws etc) who have long forged a synergy to assume one community of diverse experiences and skills as a history. The message prohibits

the worship of astral bodies or heavenly divinities that are allotted by Yahweh to other nations. The religious doctrine exposes that the gods of other nations as astral divinities, are clearly under Yahweh's power since Yahweh has the power to allot them to other nations for worship (Deuteronomy 10:17; 17:3; 29:26). In view of that, the gods of other peoples are subordinate to Israel's national God as a demonstration of tolerant monolatry, in which though Yahweh is above his own Israelite pantheon, the divinity of astral bodies as indigenous religions is not denied. However, in intolerant monolatry, the worship of Yahweh alone is authorized while the worship of other divinities as gods of other peoples is prohibited for the Israelites. The culture and civilization of the people called the Israelites and later known as Jews are then seen as demonstrating the promotion of one God in a monolatry of other divinities as the civil and state religion of the Israelites in Deuteronomy 4:19-20 (Pakkala 1999:85-91).

In another instance, Sun-Jong Kim perceives an Israelite household as an essential context of Israelite communal existence and a significant factor of its economic and religious development. The household known as the house of the father in Leviticus 25:10 is a haven to return to during Israelite Jubilee year (after leaving to work in another household or clan). The household is also saddled with kinsman redemption in Leviticus 25:23-31. In the Jubilee year, a kinsman is redeemed from any loan indebtedness that could lead to a forfeiture of the family or household lands (Kim 2011:71-81). So, Francesca Stavrakopoulou adds that the study of religion has long been subjugated with examining the household life of people as both a topographical and social location of religious beliefs and practices. This is because, it is in the domestic sphere that "the key elements of the human condition" are most clearly recognized and "the constructions of family, gender, religion, economics, power and culture" are demonstrated. Hence, the term "household religion" is a rural or pastoral branding employed in describing and interrogating "forms of religious practice that are distinct from religious activities associated with temples and other high-status religious sites" of the metropolitan Israelites. This designation is used because worship at the temples of ancient Israel and Judah was "an urbanized, elite and highly specialized form of religious practice" unfamiliar to most run-of-the-mill ancient Israelites and Judahites. Many of the temple activities, ideologies and worldviews like "kingship rituals and political cosmologies" were also quite dissimilar to those practiced by the ancient Israelite and Judahite majority, "whose primary locus of religious expression was the household in its agrarian context" (Stavrakopoulou 2016:347). So, for Raymond F. Person, Jr, education and the transmission of culture begin in the family home, where people learn their language from their parents and siblings and their culture through such everyday tasks. Ancient Israel was no exception as primarily an agrarian society. Yet, with "increasing urbanization and the related specialization, some ancient Israelites earned their living in various trades associated with artisan and craftsman guilds, but even in these settings education was primarily within the family business." In this sense, the task of education and the transmission of culture began in the family as the most basic social unit in ancient Israel. The family was then referred to as the *bet 'ab*, meaning literally the "household of the father" or the "patriarchal household" and better still, the "family household" where" the tasks of both males and females were highly and equally valued." In this light, "the survival of the household required all family members to contribute significantly to the household's economy, including having important decision-making authority over the various gendered household tasks." Therefore, the androcentric denigration of work associated with women would and was probably not the reality in the typical *bet 'ab*. On the contrary, the *bet 'ab* depended on maximizing the labor of the entire family for its survival as the general agricultural subsistence strategy throughout ancient Israel conformed to the "Mediterranean agricultural pattern" of producing majorly "crops of grain, wine, and oil as well as a variety of legumes, fruits, nuts, herbs, and vegetables and included sheep and goat herding." In order to establish a productive subsistence strategy, a vital connection between the land of the family and knowledge concerning the best subsistence strategies for that land was established culminating in patrilineal and patrilocal traditions of ancient Israel, including levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5–6). In the light of "the close connections between the family and its land, the identity of any family unit was thus inseparable from its land, which was the material basis of its survival." So, virtually every family household had its particular culture of survival since every family household experienced a different set of challenges in establishing a productive subsistence strategy (Person 2016:366-367). Households were also divided along the relationship between sacredness of subsistent agricultural form (values of Yahweh) for survival and socio-economic mobility (values of Baal) that existed among households and communities that coalesced into one nation of the Israelites (Olaniyi & Bateye 2016:131-133).

The Culture and Spirituality of Shalom in Creating Order in Ancient Israel
In view of the above-mentioned, three Old Testament texts: Leviticus 26:4-6; and Ezekiel 34:25-29 and 47:12 provide the context of the culture and spirituality of creating order. Leviticus 26:4-6 belongs to the *Torah* or Law (Pentateuch) guiding the social relationship of the Israelites and summoning ancient Israel to spirituality in Yahweh. Leviticus 26:6 promises complete peace in "I will give complete peace" (wünätaTTî šälôm). Ezekiel 34:25-29 and 47:12 belong to a prophetic interpretation of the *Torah* or Law among the Israelites (who were

becoming Jews on exile). Ezekiel 34:25 also promises a covenant of complete peace in "I will make with them a covenant of complete peace" (wükäraTTî lähem Bürît šälôm) while Ezekiel 47:12 establishes the importance of healing in the covenant of complete peace. Fruit trees with leaves for healing will grow on both banks of temple-river. Thus, in the covenant of complete peace is a provision of "…and their leaves for healing" like medicine for healthy living (wü`älë°hû litrûpâ). The above mentioned texts employ the concept of shalom (complete peace) as a dominant discourse in the culture and spirituality of the Israelites (Bushell and Tan, 2003:930, 1022).

The Hebrew term *šälöm,* written as *shalom,* generally connotes enjoying comfort, wellbeing, total reconciliation, harmony and whole peace. Lexicon of Hebrew language in BibleWorks presents *šälöm* (~Alv') in diverse usages and several meanings as wholeness, completeness, soundness, safety, prosperity, welfare, wellbeing, health, peace, quietness, tranquility, contentment or friendship (BibleWorks 7, 2003:1022). Philip Bernbaum admits that *shalom* has a wider meaning. "It signifies welfare of every kind: security, contentment, sound health, prosperity, friendship, peace of mind and heart, as opposed to the dissatisfaction and unrest caused by evil" as expressed in Isaiah 37:17; 48:32 (Bernbaum 1975:601). So, the context of its usage determines the most appropriate translation of the concept as a discourse.

Clifford W. Yank recognizes that the noun *shalom* originates from the verbal form, *shalem*, which variously means "to be complete," "to make complete", "to finish" or "to make an end of" imperfection and incompleteness since "shalom is not the absence of hostilities." Rather, *shalom* in the Hebrew arises out of a notion of perfection and the opposite of *shalom* is not war but, it is imperfection and incompleteness.

In the light of the foregoing, Leviticus 26:4-6 captures the description of peace by Yank as a summary of the culture of having "every creature in community with every other, living in harmony and security toward the joy and wellbeing of every other creature." It asserts among other things having rains in their season, the land yielding its produce in increasing measures, and the trees of the field bearing their fruits in order for the threshing sessions to last to the time of another sowing and for the Israelites to eat bread to the full, and dwell in their lands securely. So, the safety which goes with peace in the discourse includes settling down without being terrified as agents of evil are removed or exorcised from the land in order to prevent sword from going through the land. In this light, "shalom is the essence of this one community embracing all creation" (Yank 1987:81-83).

Nonetheless, biblical records show that certain changes are later introduced by Israelite leaders to the commands of the *Torah* in ensuring peace among the Israelites. From a canonical reading, the total wellbeing (shalom) of people and properties is established by a relative egalitarian settlement of the Israelites on different provinces in Canaan (Numbers 1:1-19; 2:1; 13:1-22; 26:52-56; 27:1-11; 36:1-13). But, King David facilitates the unification of the different provinces from ethnic identities into an Israelite confederacy in 2 Samuel 1-4; 5:1-5. However, the challenge of administering an institutionalized army (beyond previous rallying of volunteer clan or tribal fight champions) and monarchy for an urbanized Israel under Davidic dynasty culminates in the employment of *Baal Perazim* worldview along with the worship of Yahweh under the dictates of the *Torah* in 2 Samuel 5:6-25; 1 Chronicles 14:1-17.

In other words, the introduction of social stratification (an ideology of a division of the society into different strata and classes) and hierocracy during Israelite monarchy that is incorporated under religious exclusivity to Yahweh and the *Torah* stimulates some perversions, divisions, ethnicity and hostilities during the United Kingdom of twelve Israelite geo-political zones administered by Solomon and Rehoboam (of the Davidic dynasty). A hierarchical and centralized administration of the lands for stipends, fiefs and grants in keeping peasants as serfs and as labourers in serfdom against traditional egalitarian inheritance system (of inalienability of land) increase certain tensions within Israelite society as explained in 1 Samuel 8:1-18 (descriptions of the political and socio-economic pressures of monarchy). The phenomenon corresponds in an increased hybridization of Yahwist (traditional land inheritance system for egalitarian wealth distribution) and Baalist (hierarchical and centralized administration of the lands for stipends and fiefs from stratified wealth acquisition) indices of power and social status within Israelite religious sphere. So, Yahweh and Baal forms of worship are no longer separate. The two indices merge to present another social system in which to live, function and excel beyond the understanding of particular gods to worship (Todd 1992:1-11; Blenkinsopp 1995:147-150). But, religious exclusivity and social ethnicity culminate in the unpopular Divided Kingdom of Israel (under Rehoboam) called northern Israel with its capital at Samaria and southern Israel with its capital at Jerusalem called Judah. Neighbouring nations exploit the division among the Israelites to cause external aggression and colonialism called the exile. Literature of Prophet Jeremiah 29:10-14 and Daniel 9:1-3 establish the sojourning of the Israelites on exile as lasting seventy years!

So, Prophet Ezekiel expresses the point of having one community (of prosperity, sound health, security and culture of reconciliation of differences and exclusivity) in Ezekiel 34:25-29 and 47:12. The Prophet (Ezekiel) interprets the *Torah* to the exilic Israelites seeking restoration that total peace and wellbeing are characteristics of in the culture of shalom and spirituality. The message identifies the cost and implication of having complete reconciliation, sound health and material prosperity. It connects taking practical steps towards

reconciliation in human relations with restoration of peace (shalom). A show of power in the texts of Ezekiel is also embedded in engaging in concrete terms of agreement and partnership called cutting or making a covenant of peace (shalom). It is achieved through a publicity of the vision of shalom by healing and through thorough efforts of banishing and exorcising evil, hostile or wild acts from the land (the abode of the Israelites). The nexus between healing (especially herbal cure) and total peace for order in Ezekiel 47:12 is explained in the exposition of the radical letters *rp'* in Hebrew language used for healing in Israelite context of shalom.

Alan Kam-Yau Chan, Thomas B. Song and Michael L. Brown consider healing in propinquity, contiguity and correspondence with complete peace (as shalom) from Hebraic and Israelite *rp'* root of the word. Thus healing is restoring, mending, putting back together, curing, remitting and repairing shattered expectation or broken-down object. It is to be made wholesome; to recover; to heal up; to get remedy and to make fresh. These views are in keeping with the covenantal understanding that equates health and fertility with divine blessing in Exodus 5:26; 23:25-26; Deuteronomy 7:12-15 cp. 2 Kings 2:21-22; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Ezekiel 47:8-9&12). Consequently, "to be (come) healthy" or strong "is sometimes found in proximity to or parallel with shalom" in Isaiah 57:18-19; Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11; 14:19; 33:6 (Chan, Song and Brown 1997:1162-1164).

Yet, the question of figurative or spiritual healing in the Old Testament has a wide range of conditions that are candidates for healing. There is healing of sin and apostasy in Jeremiah 3:22 and Hosea 14:3. So, "to the biblical mind, the restoration of an individual's health would be seen as literal while the restoration of a nation's health would be understood to be figurative" (Chan, Song and Brown 1997:1165). "In other words, healing of physical diseases was certainly not excluded from the wider metaphor of national healing and restoration" as Isaiah 53:4-5 presents "healing in a total sense: the healing of the person, restoring fullness and completeness, a mark of the Messianic day." Psalms also have instances of "reference to literal, physical healing" as shown in Psalm 6:3; 30:3; 41:1-4; 103:3; 107:20 (Chan, Song and Brown 1997:1166). But Proverbs 3:7-8 and 4:20-22 show "the healing promised as a result of godly living is bodily" since Proverbs in Wisdom Literature "sees godliness as the very real path to life and well-being". Thus the force of the above verses of Proverbs reflects "godly living is a key to healing and health" (Chan, Song and Brown 1997:1167). However, among the Israelites "the priests functioned only as observers and hygienists" unlike Egyptian and Mesopotamian physicians and magical healers (Chan, Song and Brown 1997:1168). Surprisingly, *rp'* for healing "never occurs in the Old Testament with both a human subject and object…the Lord is virtually always the subject of *rp'*…for the people of Israel, there was to be one main source for healing, deliverance, and salvation, viz., the Lord"(Chan, Song and Brown 1997:1169). In conclusion, Ezekiel 47:12 connotes "the doctor is god's agent for healing, using the (herbal) medicines that the Lord has put in the earth" (Chan, Song and Brown 1997:1171). In other words, herbal cure in Ezekiel 47:12 is "found in proximity to or parallel with shalom" in the experience of a priest turned prophet and pharmacist by life challenges (Chan, Song and Brown 1997:1164).

The result of the exorcism of evil and the reconciliation of the differences that emerge with exclusivity in Israelite socio-religious relations will make them dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep securely in the woods that will be transformed from infertility, desert encroachment and desolateness into consecrated or sacred high places of blessing. There will be showers of rain in their seasons as showers of blessing. Consequently, productivity will replace unproductiveness with the trees of the field yielding their fruit and the earth producing in increasing measures amidst communal security. The achievement of togetherness and security of life and property will safeguard the community from being a prey of westernization masked as urbanization (denying villages and towns of their youth as the youth get attracted to migrate to the city), neo-colonialism, migration due to visa lottery and new slave trade to other nations. Sound health and material prosperity will be channelled towards technology of sustainable development of the towns and villages and the concealment of the beasts (evil) of the land in rehabilitation homes that are well secured. Such an arrangement envisions an apocalyptic and eschatological creation of order, reconciliation, security and prosperity labelled as plantations of complete peace (shalom). This is the culture and spirituality of shalom in creating order in a world of perversion, division, ethnicity and hostility. Thus, Clifford W. Yank affirms that

The origin and destiny of God's people is to be the road of shalom, which is to live in harmony, joy, well-being and prosperity toward the perfection or wholeness of God. This wholeness and completeness is the ultimate will of the biblical God, where people are not only at one with God but are one with one another as a family and community, sharing, caring, loving, rejoicing with the creation as well (Yank 1987:83).

Religious Divergence in Charismatic Pentecostalism in Yoruba (African) Culture

The complexity of views on religious revivalism in Africa has continually made a clear taxonomy of African spirituality an almost impossible task. Afe Adogame avers that African continent represents one of the major global theatres for the dramatization of different religious activities. African form of Christianity, Islam and the indigenous religions engage in and negotiate the enduring processes of renewal and revitalization that Africa is renowned for. These religious initiatives demonstrate a vitality that puts them and their activities within and beyond local-global spaces. They employ new initiatives in spreading their religious ideologies,

taking advantage of new forms of communication technology, as well as responding to religious, economic and socio-political realities (Adogame 2013:145). This phenomenon exists as religious communities and traditions continue to maintain permeable boundaries and relate to both the global transportation of peoples and the transnational acceptance of religious ideas (Juergensmeyer 2003:5).

So, religious pluralism exists and is prevalent in Africa especially among the Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria. There is the belief in God, the shaper of the beauty of rainbow into boundaries, who has no shrine with which divinities are known for (Eledumare, Oba ti ko ni ojubo bi ti awon orisha). This belief implies an inclusive understanding of God. However, the Christian belief in only one God that the missionaries of mainline or mission planted churches preached (along with British colonial assistance) arrived into the inclusive Yoruba households with exclusive denominations of Christianity like Catholic faith, Anglican faith, Methodist faith, Baptist faith, Presbyterian faith, and so on separating every household into different doctrinal practices. David T. Ejenobo acknowledges extant evidences of conflicting doctrines among Christian sects on the problem of equality of the three persons in the Godhead, especially the resolution of the most important matter of the standard but nonspecific relationship between God the Father and God the Son. He adds to the divergent views on the Holy Spirit by asserting that "understanding the Holy Spirit as a distinct person from the other persons of the Trinity" is not the intention of the epistles of Apostle Paul. Rather, "Paul actually understood the Holy Spirit as God so that when he used the phrase "the Holy Spirit" he was not thinking essentially of another person in the Godhead, but the Godhead itself" (David T. Ejenobo, 2016:427). Another instance of conflicting tenets is the reference of Jonathan E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor to translations of the holy kiss instructions in 1 Thessalonians 5:26. It is primarily a familial greeting shared among those who have been incorporated into Christian fellowship of the love of God and regarded as holy children of God. Though "holy kiss" in the context of personal greetings is not shared with non-family members, yet it later acquires sexual connotation. So, "a hermeneutical interpretation of kiss could be 'embrace' because it portrays the bond expressed in kissing" as a gesture that is not done in public and in sacred contexts like the church. However, the "holy kiss" is a cultural issue that may or may not be translated since there is no consensus as to the mode of greeting with "holy kiss". More so, greeting someone with a "kiss" is considered by some Christians as a profane and an insulting act in a religious setting like the church. But there are sects "advocating that there is nothing wrong with the translations which say that Christians should 'greet one another with a holy kiss,' when they meet" (Kuwornu-Adjaottor, 2014:530-538).

Consequently, there is a colossal diversity and complexity of African Christianity in indigenous religious creativity. The innovations in myths and rituals of healing the divergences and deficiencies regarded as forms of illness requiring healing (in Yoruba cosmology) are confronted with resistance and prohibition in the mainline churches. The introduction of pragmatism to establish the inventions (of reconciliation) by establishing interdenominational revivalist and renewal groups and organizing various programmes of healing the deficiencies noticed in the mainline brand of Christianity with creativity, accounts largely for the rapid expansion of Charismatic Pentecostal Christianity that involves in reshaping local and global religious mapping (Adogame 2012:311).

Still, Dada avows that African Indigenous Churches (otherwise known as African Independent or Initiated Churches that is AICs) and Charismatic Pentecostals (the demonstration of spiritual gifts in addressing the failures of the state on health, security, employment, safe transportation and road networking amidst craves for socio-economic mobility, the need for authority to create influence, the desire for material prosperity, the quest for status and respect and the pursuit of honourable opportunities of success) are renowned for incorporating "elements of Israelite or Jewish religion" into their liturgy with emphasis on the use of the Old Testament (Dada 2002:56). Kalu adds that they curry acceptance and growth owing to their provision of "charismatic religiosity" with the emphasis on the use of the Old Testament as the central focus of their apologetics (Kalu 2005:335-355). The economic base of most African Pentecostal churches is known to also revolve around rhetoric taken from the Book of Malachi in the Old Testament (Adogame 2012:311). In this light, Christianity as a world religion demonstrates certain characteristics and traits common to other faiths across socio-cultural and national boundaries.

Managing religious diversity in this setting where civilization, socio-economic factors and religion are forces effecting change and progress requires realistic, practical, every day and rational approaches. There is a need to forge a synergy of diverse skills and resources for solving the problem of exceptional theories, exclusive ideologies and ethnic peculiarity through uncomplicated, matter of fact, and logical but reasonable methodology and suggestions. The synergy by camaraderie must aim at establishing security and prosperity for the one community of diverse peoples called the Yoruba. So, the culture and spirituality of creating order among the Yoruba people are located within the diversely interpreted concept of *Alafia*. The Yoruba cosmology of bodily health, healing, social peace, career success, material wealth, social status and esteem, and opportunity of power is located in the concept of *Alafia* (Olaniyi 2012:266-269)[i].

Yoruba worldview of *Alafia* (complete peace) is caught and assumed as a child from early socialization of the child into wishes of healing and comfort in African household and family training (Olaniyi & Olayiwola 2014:289-291)[ii]. Yoruba share greetings and courtesy with *Alafia fun yin ninu ile yi o* (translated as "total or complete wellbeing to all dwellers of this household"). This courtesy or wish as a prayer for the good and health of people is aimed at caring about the safety of life and property of the recipient. Yoruba people believe that every feature of wellbeing (health, happiness, safety, comfort, security, peace or harmony) and all the goodwill of life are encompassed in *Alafia* (Olaniyi 2016:26-28)[iii]. In this light, *Alafia* is related to the Hebrew concept of *Shalom*. There is an adage as a saying that '*peaceful security of health is the bedrock of wealth*'. Consequently, whoever is peacefully secured health wise is rich in all things (*Alafia ni oogun oro. Eni tio ni Alafia, oni oun gbogbo*).

However, divergent opinions exist among scholars of religion on the definition, periodization, taxonomy and categorization of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. On one hand, emphasis on healing and prophetic ministries assisted indigenous growth of Pentecostal experience in African Initiated Churches. On the other hand, introduction of theories of church planting and church growth for amassing proportions, extent and largeness as a numerical standard and measurements of population of membership and attendance by American televangelists transformed the success of African Charismatic Pentecostals (Ayegboyin & Ukah 2008:1-21; Anderson 2010:13-27; Ojo 2012:304-305). This paper uses the term Charismatic Pentecostals for movements or churches that emphasize the demonstration of spiritual gifts in employing pragmatic approaches to addressing craves for socio-economic mobility, need for authority to create influence, desire for material prosperity, quest for status and respect and pursuit of honourable opportunity in Africa. More so, Ojo adds that the Charismatic Pentecostals possess certain distinctiveness that fits into "African primal worldview" as they source African idioms from "the interior of African spirituality" to analyze and interpret African problems (Ojo 2012:300).

Charismatic Pentecostals claim a sense of divine calling to publicize liberating and progressive messages of divine enablement in pragmatic styles that are connected to African cosmology. They target multinational audience who can easily relate with their teachings and practical elegance to recruit mixed ethno cultural members. So, they use postmodern communication and musical equipment, audio and video cyber transmissions, and radio and television broadcasting in publicizing their interpretation of African challenges. Adogame adds that these revivalist and renewal movements use

the mass media, especially the internet to widely publicize their activities, but also as a recruitment strategy and medium for enlarging their clientele. Appropriation of and coverage by the media may in some respects help to mobilize support, achieve validation and acquire some kind of legitimization within and around the sociocultural environment of religious organizations (Adogame 2013:153).

They seek a profound understanding of Christian spirituality that is emancipating and liberal. They employ print and electronic media in advertising their liberating and tolerant beliefs and practices on sign boards, mobile intra and intercity buses, and radio and television programmes. They engage in audacious and adventurous activities called divine enablement by or for divine healing based on the belief that everything in life (business, marriage, education, bodily health, career, automobile and so on) can get ill and needs healing, cure and restoration. They involve in enterprising events of persuasion and conversion known as aggressive evangelism. They practice exorcism of situations regarded (in African Yoruba belief) as evil or products of malicious spirits to obtain miraculous healing from sickness, to receive success and liberation from discomforts and to access economic and material prosperity.

Ojo remarks that Charismatic Pentecostals "lay emphasis on healing and miracles as manifestations of the Holy Spirit" and are more ecumenical in the expression of their spirituality. They are "led by solitary figures who are founders and general overseers, who have built up mega churches, and who exercised authority over their organizations as personal empires without recourse to any constitutional framework." They profess "a new cultural product designed in response to individual, group, and social needs in contemporary Africa" as a "continuation with traditional cosmology of evil in the African society." So, the rapid growth of African Charismatic Pentecostals is "because of their modernizing tendencies and strategies, and their pragmatic approach to social and religious issues affecting millions within the disruptive socio - economic and political climate in Africa." However, these movements employ "healing to counter difficulties and malevolent spiritual forces, and emphasized the empowerment of believers for upward social mobility in a competitive capitalist environment." In this sense, "traditional African cosmology of evil and healing are central to the beliefs of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in Africa" (Ojo 2012:295-298). Ojo succinctly describe Charismatic tackling of existential issues of African experience as placing emphasis on appropriation of healing since lack of material wealth is regarded as an illness that needs healing, security and power against the spirit world (a powerful metaphor and instrument in enhancing change, in reordering life, in accomplishing things and in transforming individuals):

Healing refers first to physical healing which is basic to all Pentecostal groups and forms the bulk of testimonies …. Second, healing is constructed within the African worldview as relief from evil, witchcraft, and the world of

spirits. Demonic attacks could cause bodily ill - health, and Pentecostals obtain healing when malevolent forces are cast out. This process is termed "Deliverance" which releases one from the curse of the past and empowers that person to face the future. Thirdly, progressive Pentecostals stress success and prosperity, which is another form of healing over the socio-economic difficulties of the individual. Lastly, Pentecostals have extended their healing activities over the political and socio–economic conditions of a nation, which they strive to bring about through "Prayer for the Nations". These four spheres of healing are found in varying degrees among African Pentecostal and Charismatic organizations.

Charismatics understand healing literally and as a powerful metaphor to negotiate wider concerns in the contemporary situation... while concentrating on the Biblical symbols of illness and healing, Charismatics have employed healing to confront what they consider to be overwhelming evil within their society such as illness, failures of the political system in providing social services, socio-economic problems, and general dislocation created by successive totalitarian governments (Ojo 2012:305-306).

However, new forms of religious intolerance are fomented by the revivalist and renewal movements called the Charismatic Pentecostals. Hackett avers that this rising Christianization in many parts of Africa known as "Pentecostalization" and "Evangelicalization" and new sites, symbols, and strategies of religious identities often undermine and outplay one another to promote ethnicity in the quest for public recognition in mass - mediated public spheres. Many of the religious groups also compete for followers by trying to malign or delegitimize other groups regarded to be the opposition groups. There are instances of defamation and demonization of traditional religious ways as backward, reducing the options that religious communities have to interact with or learn about each other. Unfortunately, the secularist paradigm of many civil society and international non - governmental organizations has only resulted in the rise of more exclusivist forms of religion, taken to be better equipped than ever before with their media prowess to effect changes in the social and moral landscapes of African societies (Hackett 2012:483-487).

III. CONCLUSION

The article sets out to expose the complexity of spirituality and culture of *shalom* (complete peace) in ancient Israel as *Alafia* in Yoruba context. In its findings, ancient Near Eastern (ANE) religious diversity, religious fervor and religious liberty interdependently result in religious exclusivity and stigmatization among the Israelites. The religious exclusivity and social ethnicity culminate in the unpopular Divided Kingdom of Israel as northern Israel with its capital at Samaria and southern Israel (Judah) with its capital at Jerusalem. Neighbouring nations exploit the division among the Israelites to cause external aggression and colonialism called the exile. The relationship between Leviticus 26:4-6 as the *Torah* for the exilic Ezekiel 34:25-29 and 47:12 exposes the complexity of culture and spirituality of *shalom*. Total peace through healing in creating order in ancient Israel always has Yahweh as the subject of *rp'* (healing under the covenant of peace). So, one main source for healing, deliverance and salvation is the Lord in envisioning an apocalyptic and eschatological creation of order, reconciliation, security and prosperity labelled as plantations of complete peace (*shalom*). So, sound health and material prosperity will be channelled towards technology of concealment of the beasts (evil) of the land in rehabilitation.

In the same view, the airwaves in Africa publicizes different forms of religion intensifying old polarities among religions, generating religious intolerance and conflict, and using religious exclusivity to label or stigmatize other religious approaches as demonic. The Yoruba belief in God, the shaper of the beauty of rainbow into boundaries, who has no shrine with which divinities are known for (inclusivity) is confronted by the Christian belief in only one God that the missionaries of mainline or mission planted churches preach (exclusivity). Every Yoruba household is separated into different doctrinal practices creating a colossal diversity and complexity of African Christianity in the indigenous religious creativity. Innovations of healing the divergences are confronted with resistance and prohibition in the mainline churches and account largely for the rapid expansion of Charismatic Pentecostals reshaping local and global religious mapping in Nigeria. The religious space is thus exposed to problems of exceptional theories, exclusive ideologies and ethnic peculiarity. New forms of religious intolerance are thus fomented by the revivalist and renewal movements called the Charismatic Pentecostals. They compete for followers by maligning other groups regarded to be the opposition groups in order to delegitimize them. The defamation and demonization of traditional religious ways as backward, reduces the options that religious communities have to interact with or learn about each other. The relationship between religious exclusivity and demonization of inclusive religious forms further drives this paper to aver that religion as a force producing changes is objectively complex and sometimes contradictory as it continually changes from period to period.

Vita

Abiola Ayodeji Olaniyi is a scholar of Biblical Studies with emphasis on Old Testament Studies in African Christianity. He holds a PhD degree in Religious Studies from the University of Ibadan. He has a PGDE

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Interviewees

Senior Prophetess Durodola, also known as Iya-Ijesha, the Minister in Charge of The Sacred C&S Church, Fajuyi, Ile-Ife, 08/05/2011.

Senior Reverend Mother Mary Olaniyan, the Founder and Minister in Charge of the Kingdom of Light Gospel C&S Church Aladura, Ifewara, Ile-Ife, 04/11/2011.

Lady Captain Adejumo, also known as Eri-Mother, the Founder and General Overseer of St. Mary C&S Church, Oke-Atan, Ile-Ife, 07/05/2014.

Venerable James Adebajo, the Regional Overseer of the Church of the Lord Aladura, B-Zone, at 51b, Obalufon Street, Ile-Ife, 08/05/2014.

Most Senior Apostle and Prophet Abiola Makinde, the Minister in Charge of the Evangelical Sacred Order of C&S Church, Itapa, Ile-Ife, 10/05/2014.

Reverend Apostle Missionary Adekemi Olabosoye Adetiloye, the Founder of Living Seed Glorious Church, 28 Ede Road, Ile-Ife, 12/12/2014.

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[i] These views were gotten from Senior Reverend Mother Mary Olaniyan, the Founder and Minister in Charge of the Kingdom of Light Gospel C&S Church Aladura, Ifewara, Ile-Ife on 04/11/2011 and Senior Prophetess Durodola, also known as Iya-Ijesha, the Minister in Charge of The Sacred C&S Church, Fajuyi, Ile-Ife on 08/05/2011.

[ii] These remarks were added by Lady Captain Adejumo, also known as Eri-Mother, the Founder and General Overseer of St. Mary C&S Church, Oke-Atan, Ile-Ife on 07/05/2014, Venerable James Adebajo, the Regional Overseer of the Church of the Lord Aladura, B-Zone, at 51b, Obalufon Street, Ile-Ife on 08/05/2014 and Most Senior Apostle and Prophet Abiola Makinde, the Minister in Charge of the Evangelical Sacred Order of C&S Church, Itapa, Ile-Ife on 10/05/2014.

[iii] These were added by Queen Captain Eunice Adeoti, the Bishop of Osun Diocese of Christ Church of C&S, Nigeria and Overseas on 31/11/2012. These were added by Queen Captain Eunice Adeoti, the Bishop of Osun

Diocese of Christ Church of C&S, Nigeria and Overseas on 31/11/2012 and Reverend Apostle Missionary Adekemi Olabosoye Adetiloye, the Founder of Living Seed Glorious Church, 28 Ede Road, Ile-Ife on 12/12/2014.