

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE-COAST

AMOS' CRITIQUE OF THE ISRAELITE CULT OF YAHWEH: ITS  
IMPLICATIONS FOR GHANAIAN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN THE  
PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC CHURCHES

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PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC

BY

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## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is as a result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: ..... Date: .....

Name: Joseph Gyanvi-Blay

### Supervisors' Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: ..... Date.....

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## ABSTRACT

There has been inconsistency between a nation with about two thirds of its citizens being Christians yet ranking high in corruption in Africa. It is against this background that Amos' message is relevant. This study seeks to investigate Amos' critique of the Israelite cult of Yahweh and its implications for modern Ghanaian Christian Community in the Pentecostal/ Charismatic Churches. Rhetorical criticism is the methodology used in the study and Kennedy's model of five- staged procedure has been chosen. In this study two texts, 4:4-5 and 5:21-27 which is the rhetorical unit. Rhetorical situation is made up of the background, historical context and the birth of the text and the third step being rhetorical invention which uses both internal and external proofs. The fourth step is the rhetorical disposition made up of the organization and the persuasive style. Persuasive discourse is divided into *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos*.

Using the style above, the people are zealous with the cultic rites to the extent of offering an abomination, neglecting justice and righteousness and making noise about it. The people were told of their strained relationship with Yahweh as well as the hatred that has been evoked. Yahweh is therefore displeased and cuts off his allegiance with the people who then go into exile. The people of Israel are condemned to exile since they are only zealous with rituals but oppress people and deny the weak the needed justice. For national development to be enhanced in a highly Christianised country like Ghana, this thesis recommends that this in-depth study be extended to the ruling class and public sector workers since Amos' message has so much implication for their work ethics.

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## DEDICATION

This thesis dedicated to my beloved wife Mrs. Philomina Blay and my son  
God'spower Egya-Blay.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the Study

The Hebrew Bible narrates a story of Yahweh's dealings with his people, the Israel. The Pentateuch tells the story of the covenant, which began first between Yahweh and Abraham (Gen 15, 17), and was later confirmed with Abraham's successors—Isaac (Gen 26:3,4) and Jacob (Gen 28:13, 14; Sitali, 2014). This covenant between the patriarchs and Yahweh was to be extended to the descendants of Abraham (Sitali, 2014). The Hebrew word for covenant is *berit*. The term may be traced to the Assyrian noun '*binlin*' which denotes either a 'bond' or 'fetter'. The idea that comes out is one in which both parties, Yahweh and Israel, bind each other in a tight relationship, 'fastened', one may say, with the tightest possible means comparable to chains or fetters (Sitali, 2014).

The covenant relationship is meant to last with either party fostering loyalty. This loyalty is expressed visibly and audibly by both Yahweh and the people of Israel (Sitali, 2014). "The audible and visible expression of the relation between Yahweh and the people of Israel is referred to as a cult" (Vannoy, 2007, p. 1). Some scholars like Williams and Vannoy refer to it as rituals (Vannoy, 2007). In Israel, this consists primarily of the sacrificial system and the ceremonies associated with temple worship (Vannoy 2007).

Mowinckel points out that every religion has three main dimensions which are cult or worship, myth or teaching, and ethos or behavior (morals) (William, 1972). To remain loyal and faithful to Yahweh, the ceremonial laws associated with the cult must not be divorced from the moral laws which direct

the ethos of both the individual and the nation Israel. In view of these three dimensions or categories, Israelite Priests are called to oversee the worship which includes the offerings or sacrifices and the performance of all rituals while the Prophets are also called to remind the people of Yahweh's commandments given to the people through Moses (Exodus 20, 34; Deuteronomy 9). The Prophets, thus, promote a worship of God which comprises loving one's neighbor and practicing justice and high standard of ethics. They did not just place morality above the cult, but considered it integral to cultic life (Vannoy, 2007).

During the era of the divided kingdom, there was a good relationship between the Israelites and Yahweh. The brilliant leadership of Jeroboam II brought Israel to the height of prominence (McComiskey, 1985). The financial and material prosperity of the Northern kingdom unfortunately grew directly proportional to the moral decay of the Israelite society (McComiskey, 1985). This means as prosperity increased, moral decay also increased. The wealth was, however, not evenly distributed, the rich got richer and the poor got poorer (Folarin & Olanisebe, 2014). This moral decadence eroded the social structure to such an extent that it created a cleavage or a big gap between the rich and the poor (McComiskey, 1985). Since this situation is a violation of Yahweh's covenant with Israel, Prophets like Hosea, Micah, Amos and Isaiah (writing prophets) arose in the 8<sup>th</sup> century in Israel and Judah against the social injustices as well as the cult which was being practiced in the environment of moral decadence (Lafferty, 2010).

For the purpose of studying these Prophets and their critique of the Israelite cult of Yahweh, the book of Amos has been chosen since many

scholars including J.A. Motyer (1994) are of the view that the book of Amos is one of the most carefully edited pieces of literature. Due to its high quality of work done on the text it can be a credible source of information for the message of social justice and the critique of the cult. The second motivation for choosing the book is the uncompromising nature on justice and righteousness. Prophet Amos is also believed to be the first of the classical prophets whose message or oracle was transformed into a book (Barré, 1992). From the text (1:1), Prophet Amos was a Judahite from a town called Tekoa. He prophesied at Bethel, one of the cultic centres in the Northern kingdom. The ministry of Prophet Amos was during the reigns of king Uzziah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel which Barré (1992) places within a period of 786-742 BCE.

According to Barré (1992), the four main themes in the book of Amos are judgment, social justice, cult and the word which are treated in the book according to the order given. Secondly, one of the features of the Israelite religion or cult was the interconnection between one's relationship with one's neighbour and to Yahweh as established by the covenant. The book of Amos shows how the Prophet was enraged by his observation that many of the financially powerful people in Israel had ignored the relational aspect of the religion and maltreated the poor in the society (Barré, 1992). Thirdly, even though many of the people took advantage of the poor, they continued observing their worship which included presenting sacrifices and avoiding the conduct of business on *Shabbat* (Sabbath) days (Barré, 1992). Finally, Barré explains that the people of Israel's rejection of the Prophet's word and their continuance of disloyalty to Yahweh are serious offenses in which case

Yahweh is going to withdraw the guiding word from them (8:11-12: Barré, 1992). Out of these four messages, the issue of the cult or worship where the people would observe all the rituals and still oppress the poor is what I would want to delve into.

Motyer (1994) points out that even though Amos stresses the unique privilege of Israel (2:9-11, 3:2), he does not only present Yahweh as the God of Israel but also a universal ruler and a moral judge of all nations. This means that every situation in every nation and in all generations within every period of time where people engage in rituals in a meticulous manner but neglect morality is inadvertently condemned. If Christians share in the Old Testament tradition, then, it is important that they pay attention to Amos' critique of the Israelite cult of Yahweh. As Williams (1972) points out, the Israelite cult or worship pattern is responsible primarily for the origin, preservation, and transmission of a large portion of the Hebrew Bible and also part of the Christian heritage. Secondly, some scholars like Williams (1972) hold that if Yahweh who is the Israelite deity is the same as the God of the Christians then the moral expectations of the Israelites cult will inform the morality of the Christian cult. This implies if the people of Israel, having offered sacrifices while oppressing the poor, were condemned by the Prophet, then Ghanaian Christians could receive an equal condemnation since oppression of the poor and corruption are observed to be perpetrated by some Ghanaian Christians. This situation calls for an in-depth study of Prophet Amos' critique of the Israelite of cult of Yahweh and a subsequent drawing of implications for the Ghanaian Christian Community in the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches.

## Statement of the Problem

Christianity is one of the fastest growing religions in Africa today and Ghana is experiencing its equal share of the unprecedented growth of Christianity (Stiles-Ocran, 2013). In Ghana, Christianity has managed to spread out to several areas including the remotest part of the country (Appiah-Sekyere, 2016). Christianity accounts for 71.2% of the Ghanaian population (Ghana Statistical Service 2012) which is the highest in West Africa followed by Benin (43%), Nigeria (40%), Côte D'Ivoire 33% (Zandt, 2011).

The corruption perception index 2016 (CPI), a research conducted on corruption by the Ghana Integrity Initiative reports ranks second in corruption in West Africa after Senegal, ninth in Africa and seventieth globally (Ghana Integrity Initiative 2016). This is a breach to the tenets of the Bible and calls for concern for any country whose two thirds of the population is supposed to follow the teachings of the Bible.

To buttress the breach to the biblical tenets just made above, a 2013 report from the Ghana Prisons Service on the religious backgrounds of prisoners incarcerated year shows that 4377 out of 7022 (62.3%), confess to be Christians, followed by Islam (1592, 22.7%), those with no religion (826, 11.8%), and then traditional religious believers (227, 3.2%; Ghana Prisons Service 2013). The same report has it that 40.8% of these prisoners were convicted of various theft cases (Ghana Prisons Service 2013).

The inconsistencies between a nation with about two thirds of its citizens being Christians yet ranking high in corruption in Africa leaves one to question the kind of Christianity people in Ghana practice. It can be deduced from the inconsistencies mentioned above that if Prophet Amos condemned

the Israelite cult of Yahweh in his time due to the disconnect between the cultic activities of the people of Israel and their moral life then that same condemnation still goes for Ghanaian Christianity since Amos espouses a teaching that presents Yahweh as an universal moral judge.

Scholars like Mamahit (2009) and Mamahit & Venter (2010) who have worked on the theme of social justice in the book of Amos did not include any implications for any African societies. There are some others who dealt with social justice issues in the book of Amos and included the relevance to their African societies. Some of them are Umeanolue (2018) to the Nigerian society and Amisah (2016) to Ghana. However, Amos' critique of the Israelite cult has not received equal attention. Scholars like Lafferty (2010) who have studied the cult critique, have stopped short of extending its implications to contemporary Christianity. This study, therefore seeks to look at Amos' critique of the Israelite cult of Yahweh and its implications for modern Ghanaian Christian Community in the Pentecostal/ Charismatic Churches.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this work are:

1. To unravel the concepts and characteristics of Israelite cult.
2. To bring out the real intentions of the prophet in the text, Amos 4:4-5 and 5:21-27 using Rhetorical criticism
3. To explore the historical context of the period in which Amos prophesied
4. To examine Amos critique of the Israelite cult.
5. To explore the implication of Amos' criticism of the Israelite cult for the contemporary Ghanaian Christian community.



## Research Questions

1. What are some of the concepts and characteristics of Israelite cult?
2. What are some of the real intentions of the prophet in the text, Amos 4:4-5 and 5:21-27 using Rhetorical criticism
3. What is the historical context of the period in which Amos prophesied
4. What is the basis of Amos critique of the Israelite cult?
5. What implications have Amos' criticism of the Israelite cult for the contemporary Ghanaian Christian community?

## Literature Review

### Israelite cult and Prophets

#### Cult

Williams (1972) considers Israelite cult simply as an "organized worship", namely, those forms of worship found to be at the heart of main stream Yahwism. Williams (1972) further adopts Mowinckel's definition which sees cult as "the visible and audible expression of the relation between the congregation and the deity" (p. 111).

Leo G. Perdue (1977) defines cult as:

The concern of cult is to maintain a continuing relationship with that deity in the hopes of securing divine blessings for the community by means of obeying the commands of the deity, providing for the deity's needs, propitiating his anger, and maintaining the integrity of his sanctity ... (p. 9).

Wickham understands the above to be the totality of a worship system of external religious practices and observances which are the "ordered response

of a society and its individuals to the belief that a deity has appeared within its midst” (p. 8).

The difference between Perdue’s (1977) definition and Mowinkel cited by Williams (1972) is that while Mowinkel in Williams (1972) is concerned with the way and manner the relationship between the deity and the worshipper can be expressed in a visible and audible manner, Perdue’s (1977) concern is on how to maintain the relationship and how to make amends in the event of moral failing. Perdue (1977) goes further to point out the essence of engaging in the activities of the cult, which is to do everything to secure and to maintain blessing of the deity. Wickham (2009) understands cult to be resting solely on tithes, offerings and any celebration that is connected with offerings.

Soggin (2001) defines cult as the expression of religious experience in concrete external actions. He further defines cult specifically in the context of the Hebrew Bible as the “product of the confluence of many elements so that a neat separation from the world of religions is impossible” (Soggin, 2001, p. 76). Mowinkel classifies religion into cult, myths and ethos or worship, doctrine and behavior as stated earlier which is in agreement with Soggin’s aforementioned assertion. Cult, myths and ethos in Mowinkel’s classification might be in line with the many elements which must be united and not be separated. Soggin’s definition is similar to that of Mowinkel’s in respect to the external expressions that are emphasised in both cases but differ from one another in the sense that while Mowinkel’s case has a generalised physical expression, immaterial religious experience is also mentioned in Soggin’s case. Cult, therefore, is the expression of religious experience in audible and visible forms emanating from a relationship between the people and the deity.

### **Cultic rites**

Wickham (2009) posits that the purpose of sacrifices was to provide a means of approaching Yahweh in his place of manifest presence (Lev 1:2) and to maintain that presence by preserving the purity and holiness of the sanctuary. Wickham continues to explain that the emphasis is not so much on the nature of the sacrifice, as it is on the attitude of the worshipper (Lev 16:29-31). JoAnn Scurlock (2006), on the other hand, understands a sacrifice as something made in the spirit of a contract between a person and a god or between a person and a demon with a god as guarantor. In this case, the worshipper agrees to provide animals or other gifts or, at least, to be thankful to the deity who has solved his or her problem or cured him or her. Scurlock's (2006) definition was made in view of the Ancient Near Eastern religious culture.

In Wickham's (2009) view, the purpose of the cultic rites or sacrifices is that they serve as a means of approaching Yahweh at his sanctuary, where his presence manifests. On the other hand, Scurlock (2006) sees the purpose as fulfillment of a contractual agreement and also as appreciation to the deity for performing his part of the agreement. The similarity between Wickham's (2009) assertion and that of Scurlock (2006) is that, in both cases, there is an interactional relationship between humans and the deities as well as an involvement of sacrifices in the cultic activities which are necessary to enhance continuous relationship. The difference between the two views is that while Wickham (2009) sees sacrifices, as means of supplication and veneration, Scurlock (2006) sees offering sacrifices as fulfillment of duty by the worshiper. Also, unlike Wickham's (2009) view which emphasises an

attitude of awe on the part of the worshiper, Scurlock's (2006) view emphasises the duty aspect. Wickham's (2009) view on the purpose of sacrifices is going to be used in this study.

In Scurlock's (2006) view, the deity can initiate an approach by performing an unsolicited gesture for the worshiper to make payment in the form of sacrifices while, in Wickham's (2009) view, the deity (Yahweh) is always at a location where his presence manifests only for the worshiper to approach with sacrifices. The purpose of sacrifices, therefore, in this study is a means of supplication and veneration at Yahweh's presence.

Oesterley and Robinson (1961) classify cultic activities or rites into festivals and sacrifices. Many scholars including de Vaux (1965) and Soggin (2001) independently classify sacrifices into holocaust, communal and expiatory sacrifices and further explain that expiatory sacrifice belongs to the post exilic period. This agrees with what Oesterley and Robinson (1961) discussed. Oesterley and Robinson (1961) again posit that Israelite religion in the 8<sup>th</sup> century was an agricultural religion and needed Yahweh (chief deity) to favour them to have a bumper harvest. As such, the Israelites showed appreciation by making offerings of the produce to Yahweh (Oesterley & Robinson, 1961). Soggin (2001) and de Vaux (1965) independently divide communion sacrifice into praise or thanksgiving, freewill offering, peace offering and vows.

Again, scholars including de Vaux (1965) and Oesterley and Robinson (1961) all independently observe that communion sacrifice is shared between the offerer and his family in order to strengthen the bond between the people in the community and Yahweh. It can also be deduced from what Soggin

(2001), de Vaux (1965) and Oesterley and Robinson (1961) say that apart from burnt offering that is wholly burnt on the altar for Yahweh, all other offerings (peace offering, thanksgiving offering, freewill offering, grain offering) and tithes are meant to strengthen the fellowship between Yahweh and the worshipers as well as provide support for the priesthood and the poor who could not feed themselves.

Concerning festivals, Whitehouse (1920) mentions that the three festivals were the annual festivals taking place in the earlier periods of the Israelite life (Ex 34:25) which includes the period of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The above assertion is later supported by Oesterley and Robinson (1961) and de Vaux (1965). Festivals including the feast of unleavened bread, feast of weeks and feast of booths or ingathering are generally referred to as pilgrimage festival. Many scholars including Oesterley and Robinson (1961) and de Vaux (1965) suggest that the feast of unleavened bread, feast of weeks and feast of booths are those festivals rejected by Yahweh as stated in the book of Amos (5:21) since the book does not spell them out.

From the above discussions, since the pilgrimage festivals highlighted above were being celebrated annually in the early days of Israel including the period of 8<sup>th</sup> century, then one can agree with Niehaus, Whitehouse, Paul and de Vaux who postulate that these were the festivals rejected by Amos. The Prophet does not specify those festivals in his address but since those festivals are celebrated annually and have become a general knowledge among Israelites, one can assume that the mention of the word festival implied the pilgrimage festivals.

The next element to consider is the function of festivals. Festivals provide opportunity for the people to relate with Yahweh and to be generous to the poor. In this regard, Duane Garrett (1996) points out that those Israelite festivals (8<sup>th</sup> century) were communal since they drew the people together for both celebration and worship. According to Thomas Hui (1990) the season of festival is marked by a joyous celebration and, due to the agricultural nature, the people engaged in sharing their abundant proceeds among themselves. Garrett (1996) and Hui (1990) agree to the holding of solemn assemblies or holy convocations. During such assemblies, Freeman Hobart (1975) also observes much singing and joyous celebrations. Hui (1990) further points out that the solemn assemblies are not meant for worship alone but also to fellowship with one another. Hobart (1975) opines that more sacrifices (burnt offerings and peace offerings) are made during festival periods than the normal periods of the cult.

From the discussions above, it can be deduced once again that the essence of sacrifices and festivals is for relationship with one another and to support one another especially the poor as they socialise. From the above, festivals are part of the cult that involves almost all rites which are being rejected in the text of Amos 5:21. It is during festivals that the people engage in almost all the rites mentioned in the text (4:4-5; 5:21-27), and their essence is to ensure good relationship with both Yahweh and one another.

### **Prophets in relation to the cult**

John Collins (2010) explains that the word prophecy comes from the Greek word *prophētēs* “proclaimer” which refers to one who speaks on behalf of a god or goddess. In the Hebrew Bible, the term used for such

spokespersons is *nābī* meaning ‘one who is called’. Robert Sanders (1970) also defines the term as “a man who stands between God and man with the responsibility of faithfully declaring to man what he has heard from God” (p. 19). Sanders (1970) believes that Prophets are endowed with a remarkable insight into the significance of the political events of their time and had the task to speak for Yahweh in a given historical context and situation. In this case, it is his or her involvement in the present situation that leads the Prophet to make conclusions that have future implications. Harry Mowvley (1979) in supporting Sanders (1970), points out his observation from a close reading of the prophetic books which reveals the Prophets’ concern with contemporary affairs and commenting in strongest terms on those issues which are contrary to the will of Yahweh. He further explains that the prefix “pro” in the Greek word ‘*prophētēs*’ signifies a forth telling or declaring instead of a ‘fore telling’ or predicting the future. Thus, Prophets tell forth the message of Yahweh to the people of their own day. Mowvley (1979), thus, agrees with Sanders’ (1970) description of Prophets’ role in speaking to political and social issues. Carolyn Sharp (2009) also supports Sanders' views by clearly stating that the Prophets’ response to contemporary issues can be observed in economic, social and cultic issues as well as their interventions in international issues. Collins (2010) gives another definition which agrees with Max Weber’s definition as an individual bearing a charisma who, by virtue of his or her mission, proclaims a religious doctrine or a divine commandment. Klaus Koch (1982) also defines a Prophet as

A spokesman clearly authorized by God (or even with the author of a biblical) who- left to his own resources, in duty bound to his

conscience and no one else-preaches the law of God, harshly condemns violations of it, and prophesies future events which God is going to bring about for the salvation of men and women or for their doom” (p. 16).

Mowvley (1979) and Kyle McCarter Jr (1980) agree with each other in saying that *nābî'* and *rō'eh*, translated prophet and seer respectively, are the terminologies used in first Samuel. According to the two scholars even though the Chronicler makes use of *hārō'eh*, the seer,(1 Chron 9:22; 26:28; 29:29), what has been said in 1 Samuel 9:9 is a redactional note from the Deuteronomistic historian in order to harmonise all the terms *nābî'* (prophet), *rō'eh* (seer) and *'iš hā'ēlōhîm* (the man of God) attributed to Samuel.

From the above definitions, the primary duty of the Prophets is telling forth a message from Yahweh, and this message is the mind of Yahweh concerning contemporary issues. Koch (1982) further observes that the Prophets do not aim at proclaiming mysteries but believed and spoke their message based on what they knew. The above assertion might not be representing the whole duty of Prophets. Koch's view also can be seen as an oversimplification of the duties of the Israelite Prophets since, in the deuteronomistic history, there are examples where Prophets were either consulted to determine the future or make future pronouncements that were fulfilled. 1 Samuel 28:6 and versus 15 recount the tradition of consulting Prophets which was one of the ways the people “inquired of the Lord”. In Joshua 6:26, Joshua pronounced a curse on anyone who tries to rebuild the Jericho wall which was fulfilled in 1 Kings 16:34 where Hiel who tried lost his two children. Jeremiah also gave specific details of the fall of Judah in



Jeremiah 25:11, 12 which was also fulfilled. From all the definitions, the workable definition that can be given for a prophet is: an authorised representative of God endowed to declare God's word into every situation and condemning anything which is against God's will. The above definition takes into consideration both contemporary situations and prediction of future according to the will of God and the rebuke of contrary vices.

From what has been discussed concerning Prophets, one can opine that apart from the Prophets' role of telling forth or declaring the mind of Yahweh concerning contemporary issues (forth telling) and also predicting the future based on the present situation, there is also the aspect of prophesying into the future (fore telling) without any recourse to the current situation. Even though the Israelite Prophets played the role of forth telling and fore telling, it can also be concluded that the forth telling is given a higher priority and focus than fore telling. The process of fore telling by the prophets, according to Collins (2010) corresponds to a process of divination.

Divination therefore is defined by The New Bible Dictionary as the attempt to discern events distant in time or space that consequently cannot be perceived by normal means (Mashall, Millard, Packer & Wiseman, 2001). Koch (1982) broadly classifies the process of divination into inductive or instrumental and intuitive or mediated divination. With inductive or instrumental divination, the diviner makes use of instruments like *urim* and *thummim*, casting of lots and interpreting omens like the interpretations from lambs' entrails and so on, while in the intuitive divination, human mediums pass hidden information through their voices. *Urim* and *thummim* consist of twelve stones with the names of the tribes of Israel on them, placed in the

breast plate section of the priest's garment and used to determine Yahweh's decision on matters (Bakon, 2015).

Collins (2010) does not make any classification as Koch (1982) does but sees divination generally as discerning the will of a deity by various means including the use of instruments, which is the role of the Priests. Comparing Collins' (2010) view with that of Koch's (1982), Collins (2010) equated instrumental divination to the general phenomenon of divination, while associating the intuitive type of divination with prophecy, thereby differentiating between prophecy and divination. John Miller (1987) arrives at a similar idea as Koch's classification above and tries to differentiate the two clearly by saying that Israelite Prophets received their intuitive divination in a quieter frame of mind during prayer or meditation while inductive divination is operated by Levitical Priests by the use of *urim* and *thummim*.

However, there are indications that Prophets sometimes make use of instrumental divination to unravel either the hidden past or determine future events and as such the use of instruments are not limited to the Priests alone. In 1 Samuel 10: 17-27, Prophet Samuel casts lot which fell on Saul and since, he was nowhere to be found, the Prophet inquired of the Lord.

### **Prophets' role in promoting the doctrines Israelite religion**

Regarding the role of the Prophets in establishing and promoting teachings about Yahweh, Grant Osborne (1991) outlines three of them. The first is that Prophets received and communicated revelations from Yahweh either in the form of direct words from Yahweh or in the form of ideas which are believed to originate from Yahweh. Secondly, the Prophets played a formative role in the evolution of Israel's religion. In order words, the

Prophets emphasised strict obedience to Yahweh's commands in their preaching. The Prophets did not preach any new messages but contextualized the *tōrāh* into the current situations. Osborne (1991) concludes that they were revivalists who sought to bring the people back to Yahweh. Thirdly, the Prophets played the role of leading the people to preserve the tradition of their ancestral worship of Yahweh and the observance of the laws (especially the moral and the ceremonial laws). The Prophets, in this case, emphasised the centrality of the temple and called for reforms of the people's attitude towards the sacrifices and the rituals done in the temple. This is seen when in Malachi 1:8, the Prophet complains of the people bringing blind, sick and lame animals for sacrifice. In Osborne's view, the role of the Prophets is to enforce the observance of Yahweh's laws through their preaching.

Bruce Vawter (1992) equally identifies Israelite Prophets' role as preaching about eschatology as serving the function of a communal conscience for the people and also promoting ethical monotheism. In the eschatological messages of the Prophets, there was the belief that Israel is made of people who were elected by Yahweh and had been given the power to play part in the work of judgment in the universe. With this definition, the Prophets, especially Amos, preached that the "day of Yahweh" is meant to punish the people of Israel for their evil in their society.

For the second role, the Prophets served as the conscience of the people, and insisted on social virtues which had been violated in Israel. Due to the violation of the virtues, the Prophets were recalling the people for morality (Vawter, 1992). The third role of the prophets was to promote a theology that

says that Yahweh has a moral will and that the only way to worship him is by a pure moral life. This theology is referred to as ethical monotheism.

All these scholars (Osborne; 1991, Buss; 1984 and Vawter; 1992) indicate the role of Prophets to be preaching Yahweh's will concerning contemporary issues but show different emphasis. While Osborne emphasises a strict obedience to Yahweh's laws, Buss emphasises condemning evil in society. Vawter on his part looks into the specific content of their messages, which include eschatology, moral conscience and ethical monotheism. Having discussed the Prophets' role in promoting doctrines, it is prudent to look at the impact of cult and doctrines on ethos.

#### **Impact of cult and doctrines on ethos**

M. J. Buss (1984) also contributes to the role of Israelite Prophets in the cult by comparing prophecy with priestly tradition. This comparison of prophecy with priestly tradition brings out the importance of the role of the Prophets in rebuking and exposing the evil in their society and seeking to campaign for a new ethos. Prophecy, in general, shares a common role with the priestly tradition in the emphasis placed on revelation from Yahweh but only differs in the way each vocation expresses it. While the Prophets express the revelation received in first person speeches, the Priests preserve the past revelation that has been constituted into Israelite sacred tradition. Buss (1984) further indicates that the Prophets' role in speech is to condemn the evil committed by various categories of people like the members of Israelite ruling class as well as the Priests. The Priests were condemned for failing to follow Yahweh's instructions in discharging their duties but were only interested in the financial and material gains. The members of Israelite ruling class were

also accused of not caring for the weak and the poor but exploited them and accepted bribes while the business people were also criticised for cheating the citizenry (Amos 6:1-6; Hos 5:10; Isaiah 1:23; Amos 8:4-6).

The study, having dealt with the Prophets in the cult, their role in promoting Israelite doctrines and the impact of the cult and doctrines on ethos, it will be important to look at how some scholars see Amos' critique of the cult found in the text under review.

### **Amos' critique of the Israelite cult of Yahweh**

Oesterley and Robinson (1961) point out that "the language used by Amos suggests that he did not regard the cults of Bethel and Gilgal as true Yahwism" (p. 218). This implies that the people's expression of their worship was corrupted with their immoral life and, as such, their impure form of worship was what was condemned. Oesterley and Robinson (1961) further explain that there have been false ideas that have been connected to the worship of Yahweh by the people of Israel who are condemned by the 8<sup>th</sup> century Prophets including Amos. One of such ideas is syncretism which is not emphasised by Amos as Hosea does. Such syncretism is alluded to by Oesterley and Robinson from the mention of Kewan and Sakuth by Amos which are observed to be Mesopotamian deities.

John Bright (1972) opines that Amos' message was a "devastating attack on social evils of the day particularly on the heartlessness and dishonesty with which the rich had ground down the poor" (p. 259). The second observation made by Bright (1972) is that Amos condemned the immorality and the "careless pursuit of luxury which has taken over the national character which were sin that Yahweh would punish" (p. 259). It can

be realised that, even though Amos does not use the word covenant, Bright (1972) sees Amos' attack from the background of Mosaic covenant that has been violated.

Bright's (1972) contribution to the discourse on Amos' critique of the cult has it that "Israel's cult has become a place of sin in which Yahweh is not present" (p. 259). This implies that the cult which is supposed to attract Yahweh and even pacify him if he has been provoked has rather become a source of sin which rather repels him from the midst of the people. In view of the above situation, Bright (1972) is of the opinion that there is no hope of salvation and as such Yahweh is going to execute vengeance.

Theresa Lafferty (2010), in her thesis, observes that Amos and other 8<sup>th</sup> century Prophets did not call for a total elimination of the cult nor condemned the cult in itself but rather condemned the people's attitude of giving so much priority or putting confidence to the performance of cultic activities over justice and righteousness. In her thesis, the Prophet urged the people's justice and righteousness not to be intermittent. The intermittent nature of the people's justice and righteousness has been likened to *wadis* of the Mediterranean region that dries up as soon as the rains stopped (Lafferty, 2010). The above analogy means that justice and righteousness must be ever flowing and not intermittent.

Mowvley (1979) gives an initial comment concerning the text under consideration (4:4-5; 5:21-27) saying that "the prophet certainly regarded the paraphernalia of worship" to be "ineffective and worse except accompanied by justice and righteousness" (p. 77).

Analysing the words of the critique of the cult found in Amos 4:4-5, Mowvley (1979), comments that even though the people are invited to the cultic centres with the aim of giving worship, their worship now becomes a source of rebellion. According to Mowvley (1979), the Prophet does not give any reason why the Israelite cult has been described as 'sinful'. In view of the uncertainty surrounding the 'sinfulness' of the cultic centres, Mowvley (1979) suggests a number of reasons which may include the fact that Amos being a citizen of Judah might believe that the only cultic centre approved by Yahweh is Jerusalem, hence, might have seen any other cultic centre as sinful.

Mowvley (1979) further makes three observations which are the following: First, in the wilderness period, the people of Israel managed their relationship with Yahweh without sacrifices; hence, the sacrificial aspect of the cult can be rejected outright. Second, the Prophet appealed for righteousness and justice to undergird sacrifices as sacrifices without righteousness and justice is hypocritical and sinful. On this observation, Mowvley (1979) points out that what is required by Yahweh is a good combination of both inward disposition of obedience to him and outward act of sacrifice. The third observation made by Mowvley (1979) is that the Prophet regarded worship and sacrifice (cult) as perfectly right provided there is an inward disposition of obedience. Thus, what the Prophet condemned is the worship that substituted sacrifices for Yahweh himself. With regard to 5:21ff, Mowvley (1979) sees the strongest condemnation of the cult from the Prophet where Yahweh hates their worship and rejects their sacrifices to the extent that their pilgrim feasts, sacrifices, music and singing will be taken away and replaced with righteousness which comprises individual's

obligations to fellow Israelite in relation to the community. Sanders (1970) points out that Amos' condemnation of Israelite cult for the injustice and the iniquities of society and emphasise the fact that religion must not be concerned with the conditions that tends to strangle people.

James Ward (1969) also posits that classical Prophets were critics of primarily public worship but, in relation to Prophet Amos' critique, there is a "relative ignorance of verbal content of the Israelite rituals" (p. 133). This means that there is little or no information as to what constitutes good or bad worship, hence, in Ward's (1969) perspective, one does not know why the rituals are being condemned as it has been put forward by Mowvley. Despite this lack of information, Ward (1969) believes that the condemnation of the Prophet was as a result of profaning the name of Yahweh through sexual intercourse by a father and son with the same woman, which consequently leads to the defilement of both the ritual and moral aspects of the cult. Ward (1969) continues to say that, in view of the defilement of both the ritual and moral aspects of the cult as a result of sexual sins, three instances of announcements of pending doom of the Israelite cult are observed in the book of Amos (3:13-15; 5:4-6; 9:1ff).

Concerning the text under review (4:4-5, 5:21-27), Ward's (1969) research points out that the Prophet mocks the Israelites' delight in abundant sacrifices and the contradiction created as a result of the people worshipping through ritual means but turning away from Yahweh through in their immoral conduct. In view of the above, Ward (1969) explains that the condemnation of the Israelite cult by the Prophet is due to "social injustice and moral indifference" (p. 138). In Ward's (1969) perspective, therefore, the Prophet's



rejection of the cult does not constitute a rejection of all forms of public worship but Yahweh desires that more emphasis will be placed on righteousness and justice rather than the rituals.

### **The purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is:

1. To explore the history of Israelite cult by critically analyzing Amos 4:4-5 and 5:21-27 using rhetorical analysis.
2. To highlight the causes of the Prophet's condemnation of the most important act of worship in the Israelite history.
3. To discuss the authorial intent and the meaning of the selected text.
4. To relate the text to Ghanaian Christianity.

### **Significance of the Study**

First of all, the study will add to the stock of knowledge on biblical interpretation and its relevance to Ghanaian experience. Secondly, the study will serve as a source of training manual to equip government communicators or speakers with the skills of persuasion

Thirdly, practitioners of the religion will find reason to evaluate some of the position and practices that they have taken for granted. Fourthly, it will increase the stock of knowledge of Pastors and Christian workers on the use of rhetorical criticism for the reading of the book of Amos. Finally, this study will provide a study material for Christians and Pastors on moral uprightness. Thus, this study will be a useful tool in teaching Christian ethics.

## Research Methodology

Rhetorical criticism is the method adopted for the study. Rhetorical criticism is also defined by Aristotle as the study of methods of persuasion. Prophet Amos and other biblical authors wanted their audience to believe what they were saying or writing in order for the people to respond positively by turning away from the evils they were committing (Morrison, 2004).

David M. Howard (1994) points out that the discipline of rhetorical criticism in Old Testament studies had its origins from James Muilenburg's SBL (Society of Biblical Literature) presidential address in December 1968. Muilenburg points out his interest in rhetorical criticism, and his definition in a statement is as follows:

What I am interested in, above all, is in understanding the nature of Hebrew literary composition, in exhibiting the structural patterns that are employed for the fashioning of a literary unit, whether in poetry or in prose, and in discerning the many and various devices by which the predications are formulated and ordered into a unified whole. Such an enterprise I should describe as rhetoric and the methodology as rhetorical criticism (Muilenburg, 1969, p. 8).

In other words, the enterprise that attracted Muilenburg deals with the Hebrew literary composition which consists of structural patterns that are used in forming literary units. The various devices which have been used in forming a unified speech known as the rhetoric and the methodology is referred to as rhetorical criticism.

Howard (1994) posits right from Muilenburg's time, Hebrew Bible has embraced two distinctive aspects of communication in rhetorical criticism which are persuasion (convincing someone to do something) and the suatory (the act of advising). He further explains that there are three categories of persuasive discourse identified in the classical tradition: (1) Political or deliberative discourse which is an attempt to persuade an audience to take or not to take an action. (2) Epideictic or ceremonial discourse which deals with goodness, excellent, nobility and so on. This is also referred to as praise or blame rhetoric. According to Kennedy (1984) it deals with a change in attitudes or deepens values (3) Forensic or judicial discourse also deals with the question of truth or justice (Kennedy, 1984).

The book of Amos uses the judicial type of rhetoric. Examples of passages that are using the above type are (6:6-16) and the passage under study (4:4-5, 5:21-27). In these passages, judicial rhetorical is patterned in a scenario where there are accusations wrapped in the courtroom language. It seems that through the Prophet, Yahweh, as the prosecutor, is bringing the case against the Israelites into a legal court and delivers a word of indictments upon them (Mamahit, 2009). This type of rhetorical criticism will be investigated into in the course of this study.

Rhetorical criticism can be understood in two ways which are the art of composition and the art of persuasion (Trible, 1994). This methodology comprising the art of persuasion and composition is characterised by seeing the text as an integral whole, involving a close reading that helps to deal with the structure, content and the style of the text (Trible, 1994). "This method also corresponds to objective procedures that show how the parts of the text

work together to produce the whole” (Trible, 1994, p. 27). Furthermore, this methodology is to discover the authorial intent which makes it suitable for study. The reason for discovering the intent of the author is that the Prophet himself, in delivering the speech, had a specific desired goal of persuading his audience with specific meaning in mind. As such, he designs his speech to suit that purpose. This is in line with Kennedy (1984) assertion that states that “the ultimate goal of rhetorical analysis, briefly put, is the discovery of the author’s intent and of how that is transmitted through a text to an audience” (p. 12). The focus on author’s intent using rhetorical criticism can be buttressed using Trible’s (1994) assertion which states that:

responsible and proper articulation of the words used in their linguistic patterns and in their precise formulation will reveal to us the texture and fabric of the writer’s thought, not only what it is that he thinks but as he thinks it (p. 26).

In other words, since rhetorical criticism has been chosen, one is presented with the opportunity to look for the various words that have been used in an articulated manner in order to form linguistic patterns. When that is achieved, the author’s intent comes out clearly as the author designed it so that proper implications for a modern religious group, like the Ghanaian Christian community in the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches, could be drawn.

In order to succeed thoroughly in investigating the text, the five steps that Kennedy (1984) proposes which is the rhetorical unit, rhetorical situation, rhetorical invention, rhetorical disposition and rhetorical effectiveness are going to be used. According to Kennedy (1984) the first stage is the rhetorical

unit, “corresponding to the pericope in form criticism” (p. 33) and also the amount of text to be studied (Morrison 2004). This may be a delimitation of a kind of the text which is 4:4-5; 5:21-27. The second stage of rhetorical criticism is rhetorical situation and according to Kennedy (1984), it also corresponds to *sitz im Leben* (German word which means context or situations in life; Pearson, 2019) of form criticism. This includes the cause of the text, the reason for which it was written, the mood of the audience, the mood of the author, and their social values (Morrison 2004). The third stage is the rhetorical invention which is concerned with the way the text persuades its audience (Okyere, 2013). Kennedy (1984) sees rhetorical invention as the process of planning of a discourse and the argument to be used in it. This stage is based either on external proofs, evidence of witnesses or on internal or artistic proof designed by the author (Kennedy, 1984). Rhetorical disposition, the fourth stage looks at the way the arguments are organised or arranged and the style (Kennedy, 1984). Arrangement of the argument is done by “the composition of various parts into an effective whole” while the style deals with “choice of words and the composition of words into sentences” (Kennedy, 1984, p. 13). With respect to the style, the logical argument (*logos*), emotional reactions or playing on the feelings of the audience (*pathos*) and credibility that the speaker or author must establish (*ethos*) are considered (Kennedy, 1984). Along the line some literary techniques used are considered. The fifth stage is the review of analysis that focuses on the discourse’s rhetorical effectiveness, seeking to establish whether the discourse was effective (Kennedy, 1984).

Kennedy (1984) further points out that having been successful in rhetorical effectiveness implications for the Pentecostal/Charismatic Christian community can be drawn. Concluding on the use of rhetorical criticism, Kennedy (1984) states that “rhetorical criticism takes the text as we have it whether the work of a single author or the product of editing, and looks at it from the point of view of the author’s or editor’s intent, the unified results, and how it would be perceived by an audience of near contemporaries” (p. 4). Further on the use of rhetorical criticism, Kennedy (1984) states that “rhetoric originates in speech and its primary product is speech act, and not the text...” (p. 5). This seems to suggest that the focus on the message of the Prophet is on how the message was delivered to the people and the effect the message had on the people he addressed. In this case the best methodology to use is Rhetorical criticism so that modern readers will also receive the message the way the Prophet communicated in order to receive the same effect when implications are drawn from the study.

### **Organisation of the Study**

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction to the study which comprises the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, literature review, purpose of the study, the significance of the study, research methodology, and the organisation of the study. Chapter two deals with the Israelite cult of Yahweh in the eighth century BCE. Chapter three deals with the historical context of Prophet Amos and rhetorical analysis to the text. Chapter four explores the implication of Amos’ critique of the Israelite cult for the Ghanaian Christian community in

the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches and finally Chapter five gives the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

### **Conclusions to chapter one**

The Hebrew Bible is believed to be a story of Yahweh's dealings with his people, the Israelites, and the Pentateuch tells the story of the covenant. Cult is expressed in the sacrificial system and the ceremonies associated with the temple worship. Every religion has three main dimensions that are cult, myth and ethos and, to remain loyal to Yahweh, the ceremonial laws must not be divorced from the moral laws. The Prophet saw Yahweh as a universal ruler and a moral judge and as such condemned Israelites' meticulous performance of rituals and neglect of morality. This situation in ancient Israel is what is being investigated and the implications for the Ghanaian Christian in Pentecostal/ Charismatic Churches will be drawn.

Rhetorical criticism is made up of the art of composition and persuasion which are put together in Prophet Amos' message and it is the methodology to study Amos' critique of the Israelite cult of Yahweh found in Amos 4:4-5; 5:21-27 and its Ghanaian implication for Ghanaian Christian community in Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches which is likely not to have been treated has been chosen. In order to succeed, Kennedy's five steps are going to be used.

A Prophet can be described as an authorized representative of God endowed to declare God's word in every situation while condemning anything which is against God's will. The Prophet's work involves both foretelling and forth telling with much emphasis on forth telling.

Some of the impact of the cult and doctrines on ethos are the Prophets' communication of messages from Yahweh to revive their obedience to Yahweh through their preaching and leading them towards observance of the law by calling for Israelite political and social reforms. These reforms championed were in condemning the evil committed by various people like people in government, Priests and business people. The messages of the Prophets centred on eschatology, served as a moral conscience and ethical monotheism.

Having given the background of the study, stated the problem, explained the methodology, and reviewed literature and so on in this chapter, the next chapter is going to deal with the Israelite cult of Yahweh in the eighth century BCE.



## CHAPTER TWO

### ISRAELITE CULT OF YAHWEH IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY BCE

#### Introduction

From the literature reviewed, cult is the expression of religious experience in audible and visible forms emanating from a relationship between the people and the deity. Every religion has three dimensions which include living in accordance with the moral laws and in order to remain loyal to Yahweh, one must not divorce ceremonial laws from the moral laws. Prophet Amos critiqued the cult which is the focus of the study. This chapter, therefore, will be dealing with the Israelite cult of Yahweh. The specific topics to be looked at are polytheism in Ancient Israel, Yahweh as the Israelite deity, Israelite sacrifices and festivals, Israelite temple, divine service and institution of priesthood. The chapter also looks at the concept of covenant as understood by the eighth century Israelites which forms the basis of the Israelite doctrines. The concept of covenant espoused in this study is from natural laws (historical perspective) and monanthropology (sociological perspective).

#### Polytheism in the Ancient Israel

The influences from the Ancient Near Eastern environment are in the areas of the motif of the divine council (Sitali, 2014), the Hebrew language being referred to as the language of the Canaanites, the culture of making sacrifices of the first fruits and other religions like that of the *Ba'al* and *Asherah* which became cults in Israel found in the Hebrew Bible (Sitali, 2014). All these influenced the cult of Yahweh when it became the only recognised national cult in Israel. Therefore, polytheism became visible in various forms of Canaanite practices like consultation of spirits, *Asherah*,

*Ba'al*, fertility, ancestors, and necromancy in addition to the Yahweh cult which would be discussed later in detail in the next item.

### **Yahweh as the Israelite deity**

Yahwist (J) and Elohist (E) traditions believe that Moses was the first "Israelite" to be confronted by *Yahweh* (Collins, 2010)– a god who came from a territory which did not form part of the later Israelite region (Modriaan, 2010). Scholars like Janzen state that a name embodies its actual history and future, hence, the name Yahweh, in the biblical narrative, explains what is in the name (Modriaan, 2010). The ancient Hebrew derivation of the name Yahweh is suggested from Exodus 3:14 which says “I am that I am”. The name is also discovered to be a causative form of the verb “to be” (Bright, 1972). Exodus 3:13-15, unequivocally, declares that the revelation of God under the name Yahweh was fundamental to the theology of the Mosaic age (Modriaan, 2010).

Names were symbolic to the ancient Israelites, as illustrated in the etymologies of many Israelite names in the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Bible refers to the Israelite God by a number of names, titles and epithets (Modriaan, 2010). The name of the Israelite God was furthermore attached to a place, and this place was reserved for worship (Modriaan, 2010). This assertion is supported later by the facts that, first, in Deborah’s song in Judges 5:4,5 Deborah speaks of Yahweh coming out from Seir which is a mountainous area called Sinai; second, Amos speaking of Yahweh roaring from Zion; and thirdly, Elijah going to Horeb, the mount of God in order to meet with him (Oesterley & Robinson, 1961). The name *El*, referred to the "creator-god",

*ĕlōhîm* – is the word generally used for "God" in the Hebrew Bible with a variety of meanings (Modriaan, 2010).

The priestly narrator in Genesis 4:26 calls Seth as the ancestor of Yahweh cult and the birth of Enosh as the time when people began to call on the name of Yahweh (Modriaan, 2010). It has been generally accepted by scholars that the belief in Yahweh originated on the soil of Canaan (Modriaan, 2010). The cult of Yahweh, from the southern desert regions, merged with the local Canaanite cults particularly, those of *El*, *Ba'al*, and even *Asherah* (Modriaan, 2010).

The name Yahweh was unknown to the patriarchs of the Hebrews. Rather, they worshiped the Canaanite god, *El* who is the chief of the deities, the father of the pantheon (Mason, 2015). In Exodus 6:1-9, Israelite God reveals himself again to Moses and refers not only to "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" but also explains that Yahweh revealed himself to them then only as *El-Shadday* and deliberately did not reveal his name "Yahweh." Again, he specifies to Moses that he is really "Yahweh," and, in this name, he will make a covenant with the people of Israel and will deliver them (Mason, 2015). Yahweh made a covenant with his people who pledged themselves to a monotheistic faith (Modriaan, 2010).

Yahweh himself does not appear to have been a Canaanite god in origin but originates outside the land of Israel to the south, in the area of Midian (Mason, 2015). Yahweh was introduced by king Saul (Modriaan, 2010) and incorporated into the older figure of *El*. Yahweh and *El* were identified at an early stage and, ultimately, Yahweh became the supreme deity, and *El*, as a separate god, disappeared (Mason, 2015). This is supported by the

fact that *El* has been incorporated into the name of the nation, Israel which means *El* will rule (Mason, 2015).

Modriaan discovers, from extra biblical information, that the name Yahweh for the Israelite God was associated with a group of nomads, *Shasu* in the Sinai Peninsula. Yahweh was even discovered from this group to have been established and located in Sinai and revealed himself in thunder, smoke, fire, and earthquake and was brought to Palestine between the late bronze era (Modriaan, 2010).

As the Israelite religion developed, the Prophets who were noted to be inspired by Yahweh emerged to emphasise on his moral demands (Oesterley & Robinson, 1961). They had a supreme place of identifying Yahweh with the good moral standards (Oesterley & Robinson, 1961). These Prophets were the canonical Prophets (prophets whose teachings are found in the Hebrew Bible). They condemned the evil in society and established teachings that formed the basis of the Israelite beliefs (Oesterley & Robinson, 1961).

The teachings of the canonical Prophets portray Yahweh's attributes found in the law. In this case, his will was taught to be absolute, reliable and did not change with time. What was evil was always evil (Oesterley & Robinson, 1961). Again, their teachings portray Yahweh as the lord of nature (mountains, weather, and so on). Another teaching which formed part of the belief system is Yahweh being the lord of history, which depicts Yahweh being in control of all events and also in control of the destinies of nations (Oesterley & Robinson, 1961).

Again, the teachings bring out the belief that Yahweh is the lord of the end of things. This indicates that Yahweh will interfere to put an end to the

existing order. It is also espoused in the teachings that Yahweh is the God of Israel and also the lord of universal morality. In his capacity as the lord of universal morality, whatever was wrong or every violation of the law taking place everywhere, whether in Israel or any foreign land, will meet the due punishment (Oesterley & Robinson, 1961). Wherever cruelty and injustice were found, Yahweh sat in council and, as such, could mete out vengeance. This is what motivated Amos to condemn nations like Damascus, Philistia, Edom, Ammon, Tyre, and many more including the Yahweh cult of his own people (Oesterley & Robinson, 1961).

### **Covenants**

The Hebrew Bible contains a story of Yahweh's dealing (covenant) with his people, Israel (Sitali, 2014). In the “midst of varying opinions, the etymology of the covenant motif may be traced to the Assyrian noun *'binlin'* (Hebrew *'berit'*) which denotes either a 'bond' or fetter” (Sitali, 2014, p. 89). Furthermore, Walther Zimmerli also sees the word covenant coming from an Arabic root which means “cut apart”, Akkadian *biritu* meaning “bond” or “a binding contract, “that which is noted, stipulated or under obligation” (Zimmerli, 1984). The purpose of the covenant is to establish a *shalom*, “peace”, “wellbeing” “wholeness” and, as such, the Hebrew word *berit*, to cut is to perform a ritual involving sacrificial animals which are cut apart to reinforce the obligation (Zimmerli, 1984). There are other forms of covenants which can be expressed as a matter of agreement between two human beings reinforced by oath (Zimmerli, 1984).

Covenant, therefore, is defined as the agreement between two parties sealed by an oath and, occasionally, reinforced by a ritual sacrifice of an

animal. Covenant expresses a mutual belongingness between Yahweh and the people, showing a call to obedience to specific commands which are as responses to divine provisions and promises of blessings and judgments (Hafemann, 2007).

Eugene Merrill (1987) posits that the covenant forms that have existed in the history of Israel are comparable to the Hittite treaties that existed in the period of 1400-1200 BCE. These Hittite treaties are exhibited in two categories which are the parity treaty existing between equals like that between David and Jonathan (1Sam 18:1); and the suzerainty-vassal treaty which is drawn up by a superior power and imposed on an inferior. This took place between a superior king of a nation and a vanquished king on behalf of his nation in order to ensure peace (Merrill, 1987). This type is believed by some scholars to have existed between Yahweh and Israel.

For suzerainty-vassal treaty to be perpetuated, the suzerain (master or superior) is unconditionally bound to the vassal (servant or inferior) in a promissory covenant while the vassal must also be faithfully obedient to the suzerain in an obligatory covenant (Lopez, 2004). This means that the suzerain binds himself or herself with a promise to continue all dealings with the vassal while the vassal, in return, must also remain loyal and obedient to the suzerain without any default in order for such treaty to continue.

### **The presence of the covenant motif in the message of the eighth century prophets**

Several debates abound among scholars concerning the existence of mosaic covenant in the eighth century BCE. Eduardo Folster Eli (2014) presents two schools of thoughts. The first view presented by Eli (2014) is

championed by William Dumbrell who considers the message of the Prophets including that of the eighth century Prophets to be based on covenant framework (Eli, 2014). In Eli's (2014) research, Douglas Stuart points out that the Prophets' message can only make sense when references to the Mosaic covenant with all the curses and blessings are considered. The Prophets either directly make reference to what was contained in Mosaic covenant or draw implications from it (Eli, 2014). For example, Hosea states twice that the people have transgressed and rebelled against Yahweh's laws (Hosea 7:7; 8:1).

Frank Seilhamer (1974) asserts that the premise of the verbal attacks made by Amos is covenant-backed and is based on mainly two factors. First, the terminology used to describe the nation's corruption is frequently employed in Near Eastern and technical biblical covenantal parlance. Second, the sins of which the people are guilty are condemned by the covenantal texts or traditions. The people's actions in the book of Amos are termed *peša'*, "acts of rebellion". In Ancient Near Eastern treaty language, the term "to revolt," "to transgress," "to rebel" means to throw off the authority of an acknowledged suzerain by violating the stipulations of the pact that bound the parties together (Seilhamer, 1974).

In the indictments against Judah and Israel, Amos specifically states the reason for Yahweh's displeasure with Judah which was that "they have rejected the law of Yahweh" (*mā'osām et tôrat y<sup>h</sup>ōwāh*) and "has not kept or fulfilled his statutes" (*w<sup>e</sup>ḥuqqāw lô šāmārû*). Both *tôrah* and *ḥuqqāh* are used repeatedly in the Hebrew Bible to describe the provisions of the covenant which the nation is to observe because she has bound herself to Yahweh

(Seilhamer, 1974). Some passages in the book of Amos apparently refer to the stipulations embodied in the *berit* which Yahweh made with Israel at Sinai (Seilhamer, 1974). The injustice shown including the oppression of the poor as condemned in Amos 2: 6-7a are infractions or a breach of injunctions against the same in the stipulations set forth at Sinai (Seilhamer, 1974).

The second opinion gives an idea of covenant between Yahweh and Israel which was a late creation innovated in the seventh century BCE, influenced by the Prophets (Eli, 2014). From the above, the eighth century Prophets like Hosea, Amos, Isaiah and Micah do not make reference to any covenant and do not have any knowledge of the Sinai covenant (Eli, 2014). This view further explains that the full expression of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel came later in the Deuteronomistic and Priestly literature (Eli, 2014). The chief modern protagonist of this view is Steven McKenzie (Eli, 2014).

Siqueira's (1996) research explains Bernhard Duhm's version of covenant motif in the book of Amos. Duhm's version considers the book of Amos as a break away from ancient natural and magical understanding of religion which preached a new religion based on morality and universalism called ethical idealism. Amos and other Prophets of the Assyrian period or of the eighth century never appealed to any divine commandment or covenant as a basis of their arguments or preaching (Koch, 1989; Siqueira, 1996) but might have influenced the formulation of such concept during king Josiah's reign in the seventh century (Siqueira, 1996).

Wellhausen emphasises the revolutionary character of the preaching of Prophet Amos and his opposition to the old Israelite religious understanding.



The people of Israel are Yahweh's children and they have a relationship with him and literally share in his divine nature (Siqueira, 1996). From the above school of thought concerning the late development of the concept of the covenant, the technical word *berit*, was not used in Amos' preaching but only used from the time of king Josiah (Siqueira, 1996). This point of late origin is buttressed by the protagonists (Duhm, Wolff, McKenzie and many more) by the fact that the English translation covenant seen in the book of Amos is in reference to the *tôrāh* (law or instruction) and *ḥuq* (statutes; Siqueira, 1996). According to Duhm, the use of the word covenant in the book of Amos "does not form part of the authentic sayings of the Prophet but are later additions to the book from the Deuteronomic or Priestly times" (Siqueira, 1996, p. 11). It is the use of the words like *tôrāh* and *ḥuqqāh* that make the proponents of the early origin of covenant to allude to covenant motif by the eighth century Prophets especially Amos.

Hans Walter Wolff posits that the authentic sayings of Prophet Amos is from chapter three to six, with the rest of the book containing scattered sayings embellished with insertions and commentaries by a group of people working on the book of Amos as editors that can be called a redaction school of Amos (Wolff, 1977). For the sake of the discussion in this study, the second view of the late origin of covenant will be chosen.

Further on the late origin, scholars like George Smith, W. Norwack and Hermann Gunkel give another dimension of the above view by objecting to the fact that Amos is the innovator of a new ethical or moral religion. For them, Amos, rather, is a reformer and a revivalist of an old and forgotten ingredient of religion which was based on common sense and universal

principle known by all people (Siqueira, 1996). The dimension brought by Amos is his unprecedented emphasis on morality (Siqueira, 1996). The understanding of covenant in the eighth century can be done in both historical and sociological perspectives which are given below.

### **The concept of covenant in the eighth century**

#### **Historical perspective**

From the time of Wellhausen, it has been believed that the concept of covenant came later than the eighth century into Israel's consciousness (Dyrness, 1979). The early relationship between Yahweh and the people of Israel was held to be a natural one and an ethical dimension was added by the classical Prophets (Dyrness, 1979). The relationship with Yahweh was later understood to be a covenant in Israel's history and was read back into history during the people's early life (etiological origin; Dyrness, 1979).

In the book of Amos, the use of the word *berit* is found only in 1:9 which is posited by Ernst Kutsch as a late addition (Siqueira, 1996). Even though the word *berit* is not observed in the authentic words of Amos as stated earlier, it is used in the context of a relationship that went on between Tyre and Israel during king David's reign that was extended to Solomon (Niehaus, 1992). This relationship is referred to by Niehaus as a covenant of love or brotherhood which existed between David of Israel and Hiram of Tyre which extended to Solomon (Niehaus, 1992). This covenant of brotherhood motivated Hiram to supply Solomon with building materials when Solomon was in need of some for the construction of the temple in 1 Kings 9:11 (Niehaus, 1992). This covenant of love needed to be extended from David to subsequent generations, and it is the breach by Tyre that attracted the

Prophet's condemnation in the text (Niehaus, 1992). The attitude of love which makes one to help one in need which emanated from the covenant of love between the house of David and Hiram is what must be seen to be replicated from one to another in Israel, and this is an essential ingredient of every society.

Kevin Patrick Wax (2013) believes that the pre-exilic religious tradition of ancient Israel determined Yahweh as their national deity, which directed their history. The relationship between Israel and Yahweh was based on a political ideology which sought to maintain cosmic harmony (Wax, 2013). During the eighth century, there was a general belief that the relationship between the Israelite king (representative of the people) and Yahweh (controller of the universe) placed the responsibility on the king to ensure that the people are governed on behalf of Yahweh with laws that are universally used in maintaining the cosmos (Wax, 2013). Peter Lemche says that these universal laws are the social justice where the weak must be protected against being violated by the strong and the existence of a cordial relationship with one another (Wax, 2013). Social justice “focuses on ‘the common good of the community’, as manifested in areas such as ‘the fair and equal distribution of goods and benefits’, as well as ‘respect for the rights of others’” (Woodbridge & Semmelink, 2013, p. 83). Cordial relationship constituted a covenant treaty which ensures that the people are given righteous and just ruling both at the court and before the elders in resolving matters (Wax, 2013). From Amos' preaching, it is obvious that Yahweh is more than the God of Israel and Judah and has been accepted as being in a special covenantal relationship with all nations which requires obedience to the laws

used in maintaining the cosmos mentioned earlier on, that also has been integrated into the people's national and religious laws (Wax, 2013).

As earlier stated, the Prophets, in this era, did not appeal to any divine commandment but faithfulness from the people to the community (*ṣ<sup>e</sup>dāqāh*). Therefore, preaching of the eighth century Prophets lamented the absence of this faithfulness (Koch, 1989). Faithfulness sees the individual as a part of an institution which makes life possible for the people. In other words, every virtue that can produce a peaceful condition in the community is required by all to contribute to that society. The critique does not spring from the Mosaic law as it is stipulated by some scholars since, during the pre-exilic period of Amos, there was no sign of a divine law which was given any importance. Moreover Moses did not leave any formulated legal code behind until king Josiah's cultic reforms in 622 BCE (Koch, 1989). In the beginning of the ancient Israelite religion, faithfulness to supportive social institutions like the clan and the people was counted the highest ethical goal (Koch, 1989). This became a factor during the pre-exilic period which elicited a correlation between good deeds and salvation, hence, making an undisturbed relationship with Yahweh possible (Koch, 1989).

### **Sociological Perspective**

Klaus Koch (1989) states that the faithfulness to the community comes from what he calls monanthropology. According to a review of Koch's book on the Prophets by Thomas Overholt (1984), the terminology is used in the context of the eighth century Prophets where responsibility is taken of the existence of a moral order, and shows a connection between action and an outcome. The term monanthropology might come from the word anthropology

which according to concise Oxford English dictionary is the study of humankind, including the comparative study of societies and cultures which seems to be the root of the terminology. This phenomenon of society focuses on the moral life of the people and hence might have been called moral anthropology or monanthropology. Hence, when Amos speaks about an impending disaster on Israel, he was not revealing a discovery of a “new God” who has broken a relationship with humans and revoked his willingness to forgive. Instead, Amos was announcing a consequence of a corporate life which Koch refers to as concentric monanthropology (Overholt, 1984).

Overholt explains the above term saying that it was believed in ancient Israel in the period that everyone molds himself or herself through the behavior which is controlled by the community (Overholt, 1984). This means that the moral character of an individual within the community over the years encircles or surrounds him or her with an aura emanating from the moral character to produce a particular destiny (Overholt, 1984). It was believed by the people that, for a people to produce a peaceful or stable community, each one in the community are obliged to produce a good aura around him or her as a contribution to creating that stable community (Overholt, 1984). Furthermore, one’s behavior within a community or the cordial relationship with one another is a necessary ingredient for a peaceful community (Overholt, 1984). The concept of concentric monanthropology, might be one of the most important ingredients of the Israelite teachings which got degraded over the years until calamity became eminent during the period of eighth century (Overholt, 1984). From the above, it can be deduced that each individual Israelite is in a covenant agreement to contribute a good aura in

order to be faithful to the community. The expected moral code might have been inherent in their tradition which Amos expected the people to apply to their life, hence its absence attracting his condemnation.

### **Israelite Sacrifices**

The whole aim of a religion which emanates from a people of agricultural background is to secure the hearty co-operation of the deity who has been responsible for the production of the various crops (Oesterley, & Robinson, 1961). For this reason, the deity is to be kept in a favourable mood with the help of certain rituals (Oesterley, & Robinson, 1961). These rituals go a long way to maintain and renew a good relationship between the worshippers and the deity. These rituals are sacrifices and festivals (Oesterley, & Robinson, 1961). The offering of sacrifices is to be regarded as an institution by Yahweh according to the Israelite belief (Easton, 1997).

"Sacrifice" is a translation of a Hebrew noun (*zebah*) meaning literally "slaughter" and referring to the killing of a domestic animal as an offering to the deity. A sacrifice is a cultic act in which objects are set apart or consecrated and offered to a god, deity or some other supernatural power (Mvunabandi, 2008). There is a slight difference between sacrifice and offering: an offering is that act of presenting something to a supernatural being, while a sacrifice is an offering accompanied by the ritual killing of the object of the offering (Mvunabandi, 2008) A sacrifice may function in two ways: as a gift, oblation (*minḥah*) to the deity, (in this case, God of the Israelites) and as an atonement in overcoming estrangement between humanity and God (Dunning, 1983).

A sacrifice is the principal act in Israel's cult and it is any offering, animal or vegetable which is wholly or partially destroyed upon an altar as a token of homage to Yahweh (de Vaux, 1965). de Vaux has grouped sacrifices in Israelite cult into three main groups which are the expiation, holocaust and communion sacrifices. In this study holocaust and communion sacrifices are going to be discussed since they may be the normal rituals performed by the Israelites during the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Holocausts**

Holocaust comes from the vulgate translation of the Hebrew word *ôlāh*, meaning to go up (de Vaux, 1965). This holocaust is a sacrifice which is "taken up" on the altar or a sacrifice whose smoke goes up to Yahweh when burnt indicating that the smoke must ascend to Yahweh as a pleasing odour (de Vaux, 1965). The characteristic feature of this sacrifice is that the entire sacrificial animal or victim is wholly burnt and nothing is given back to the Priest or the offerer (de Vaux, 1965). This type of sacrifice is called burnt sacrifice, and Gordon Wenham (1979) believes it is the commonest type of sacrifice that is performed every morning and evening and on holy days. The various animals permitted for this offering are supposed to be male cattle, sheep, and goats and if it should be birds, either male or female turtle doves and pigeons can be used.

The sacrificial animal must be one year old without blemish (Wenham, 1979). With exception of the skin (in case of cattle, sheep and goats) and the crop (in case of birds), the whole animal is burnt on the altar (Wenham, 1979). The sacrificial animal is brought by the offerer or worshipper to the outer court which is at the entrance of the tent of meeting where the altar for the

burnt offering is located (Wenham, 1979). This sacrificial animal has to be approved and accepted on behalf of Yahweh by the Priests (Lev 1:3). The offerer shall lay his or her hand on the head of the sacrificial animal and then the animal is killed by the offerer himself or herself at the north side of the altar (Wenham, 1979).

The sacrifice would not proceed in silence but accompanied by either reciting or singing the psalms (Pss 20:3, 40:6, 51:16, 66; Wenham, 1979). All the blood is drained out of the sacrificial animal into a bowl (Wenham, 1979). The Priests take the drained blood and splash it against all the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting (Lev 1:5).

### **Communion Sacrifices**

The term “Communion sacrifice” was taken from the Hebrew word *zebāh š̄lamîm* or *š̄lamîm* for short. This word is translated peace offering, wellbeing offering (New Revised Standard Version) and welcome offering (de Vaux, 1965). Communion sacrifices can be divided into praise (*tôdāh*), which is a thanksgiving offering; voluntary offering (*nēdābāh*), one offered out of devotion or freewill; votive (*neder*) offerings, one which the offerer binds himself with a vow and grain offering (de Vaux, 1965). In these rituals (*tôdāh*, *nēdābāh* and *neder*), the main characteristic feature is that the sacrificial animal is shared among Yahweh, the Priest and the offerer (de Vaux, 1965). In the voluntary or freewill offering, female animals and animals with minor blemishes can be accepted and the part of the sacrifice which is given to Yahweh is the part that is burnt on the altar. These are the fats around the intestines, kidneys and the liver (de Vaux, 1965). The sacrificial animal of *tôdāh* is eaten on the very day it is offered while that of *neder* can be eaten the



next day but must be burnt in case it is not eaten by the third day (de Vaux, 1965). The *tôdāh* is normally accompanied with an offering (*minḥah*) of unleavened cakes and of leavened bread which are meant for Yahweh and the Priest (de Vaux, 1965).

Generally, with peace offerings, the Priest is given the breast and the right thigh and the rest of the sacrificial animal is left for the offerer “to eat with his or her family and friends before the lord” (Deut 12:7; Wenham, 1979, p. 76). The sacrificial rites explained for the holocaust or burnt offering which involves the offerer laying his hands on the sacrificial animal and the Priest pouring blood is repeated for this and other blood sacrifices.

The purpose is to ensure the people’s devotion to Yahweh while creating an occasion to fellowship with him. The point of eating is to enact the bond of fellowship and relationship between Yahweh and his people and also renew loyalty to him and to one another (Jemphrey, 2007).

#### **Grain or cereal offering (*minḥah*; Leviticus 2)**

This is a special communion sacrifice which is one of the three offerings that produce a soothing aroma to Yahweh (burnt offering, peace offering and grain offering; 1:9,17; 2:2,9,12; 3:5,16). Unlike peace offering, grain offering is made up of cereals. In the grain offering, only a handful of it is burnt as a token of the sacrifice and the rest is given to the Priests to eat (Wenham, 1979). The grain offering can either be given or offered in conjunction with the burnt offering or offered alone in case of first fruits (2:14). The sacrificial materials used in this offering are flour and cooking oil which can either be baked in an oven or presented unbaked. Some amount of salt and frankincense are also added (Wenham, 1979).

Any offerer presenting grain offering mixes and bakes the sacrificial material on a griddle (a flat metal plate used for heating) without yeast to produce what can be called a wafer (Wenham, 1979). The wafer produced is broken and spread on the altar and then oil poured on it by the Priest (Wenham, 1979). The wafer put on the altar is burnt as a token or memorial of the sacrifice and the rest is given to the Priests to eat in the temple (Wenham, 1979). The purpose of the grain offering is to present it as a gift (*minḥah*) to Yahweh (Wenham, 1979). It is also a tribute to Yahweh in recognition of his lordship over the offerer (Jemphrey, 2007).

### **Tithes**

This appears for the first time in the Hebrew Bible in Genesis 14:20, during Abram's encounter with Melchisedek where the record has it that Abram gave him a tenth, *ma'ăšēr* of what Abram had from "the spoil of battle field". Abram gave it as a freewill offering to show his appreciation to Yahweh for his help in the battle. Tithing became a practice for the subsequent patriarchs (Isaac and Jacob), evidenced in the time of Jacob's encounter with angels (Whitehouse, 1920). At Bethel (formerly called Luz according to Gen 28:19) Jacob had a dream of angels ascending and descending. Jacob made a promise to Yahweh when he woke up, that he would give tithes of all his earnings if he is brought back safely, and he dedicated Bethel after the encounter and institutionalised Bethel as Yahweh's house where he will give one-tenth of whatever he received (Gen 28:22; Whitehouse, 1920).

Tithes were a form of sacrificial offering which was later gathered by the king of the cornfield, orchard and the flock to maintain the priesthood (1 Sam 8:15,17; Whitehouse, 1920). Tithing became institutionalised and

practiced in the eighth century during Prophet Amos' time as mentioned in Amos 4:4 and was given every three years according to Deuteronomy 14:28; 26:12. Even though tithing was one of the 8<sup>th</sup> century rituals, what is uncertain is its practice in three years if what is given in the text is hyperbolic. The only record of the three year stipulation of tithing (tithes brought in three years) is found in the book of Deuteronomy found in D document which suggest a seventh century tradition (Cassuto 2006). If this is true, how could Amos have mentioned tithes? The only suggestion that can be given is that what is found in Amos concerning tithing might be an insertion by redactors. Amos' critique of the tithes was ridiculing the people who gave their tithes promptly and still oppressed the poor by saying three days instead of three years.

### **The Israelite temple, divine service and the institution of priesthood**

Some of the duties that ancient Israelite Priests were engaged in were divination through the use of the *urim* and *thummim* as well as the resolution of doubtful cases of adultery in a woman by the use of try by ordeal in Numbers 5:11-31 (Haran, 1979). Menahem Haran (1979) believes that they (priests) also ensure ritual purity by exorcising the demonic powers of defilement or performing apotropaic rites which are meant to prevent the return of this power to a cleansed body. The Priests remain responsible for caring for the cult and make sure there is constant orderliness of the service of Yahweh (Haran, 1979). The priesthood in Israel is the most exalted manifestation of the divine service in ancient Israel (Haran, 1979). The Priests become the bridge or intermediaries between Yahweh and the people. They are the cultic personnel leading the people to have fellowship with Yahweh.

The place where the Priest is most likely to perform his task is the temple and the most well-known house of Yahweh is one built in Jerusalem which became a central religious symbol for later generation (Haran, 1979). According to Haran (1979), prayer in the temple is considered to be a gesture of secondary order and a substitute for sacrifice in the temple. In other words, prayer substituted sacrifice in the case of the poor who cannot afford as well as a visitor who might have visited empty handed (Haran, 1979). This is evidenced in the book of Psalms where the prayers of a suppliant asking that the prayer is taken “like the incense before the lord” (Psalm 141:2; Haran, 1979). Sacrifices are, therefore, obligatory and were brought frequently (Haran, 1979).

In the Israelite temple, the highest obligation for the people is to bring sacrifices or oblation like the burnt offering, peace offering, grain offering and all the others (Haran, 1979). In a typical Israelite worship service, *āvôdāh*, sacrifices are bound to be brought to the Priests for the Priest on duty to lead an individual offerer or the congregation to make the type of offering for that occasion (Haran, 1979). In most cases prayers are recited in a formulaic, poetical language in a pattern of psalmodic poetry with examples in the biblical psalter (Haran, 1979). If the worshipper is unable to say a prayer he or she would have to “prostrate before the lord” (Haran, 1979, p. 133). Therefore, anyone who entered the temple court would have to prostrate on arrival and departure (Haran, 1979).

Apart from the temple being used as a place of worship, it is also used for festivals, rites of initiation and sacrifices which include purification and so on (Kim, 2014). An important feature of an Israelite temple or tabernacle is the altar which serves to provide a focal point of one's encounter with the divine. It is a raised structure with a flat surface on which offerings are made (Kim, 2014).

As cult has been defined earlier by Soggin as the expression of religious experience, the Priests are the officially appointed exponents and the custodians of the Israelite cult. Their main role is to see to the sacrifices in the temple and also to teach the people to have intimate relationship with Yahweh which is the essence of the cult. As custodians of the cult, it is also part of their priesthood duties to teach the people to know the sacred traditions and ensuring that the people observe them. During the eighth century period, the Priests occupied themselves with the sacrifices in the temple since a lot of food and money were accrued from peace and grain offerings and this has been indicated earlier by Buss (1984).

### **The Israelite festivals**

Yahweh's intention was to meet with the people at a designated place in order to have a relationship with them at an appointed time (Hui, 1990). It is this concern with time that is addressed through the different festivals mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. Yahweh met with his people in other periods selected by him for worship, celebration and the rejoicing of his people in his presence (Rodríguez, 2005).

The two main words used for festivals or feasts are *ḥāg* and *mô'ēd*. *ḥāg* refers to a feast observed by pilgrimage which is celebrated with a procession,

amidst singing and dancing and also associated with burnt offering and communal meals (Vine, 1940).

The second word, *mô'ēd* is also designated for a set time and assembly. In this case, it is an occasion which is meant for an appointment with Yahweh for the acts and purposes of worship (Vine, 1940). Even though Prophet Amos did not mention or give specific examples of the festivals, it can be deduced from scholars like de Vaux (1965), Paul (1991) and Niehaus (1992) who all suggest feast of unleavened bread, feast of weeks and feast of tabernacle or booths as the kinds of festivals being rejected by Amos, taking references from Exodus 23:14-17; 34:22-25, Deuteronomy 16:9-17. These festivals have been given different names by scholars like de Vaux (1965), Paul (1991) and Niehaus (1992) such as the three great feasts of pilgrimage, the three pilgrimage festivals and the three major festivals respectively.

In Exodus 5:1 and 10:9 according to Moses' demand from Pharaoh, the people of Israel are to make a pilgrimage to the wilderness so that they can celebrate a festival so during such three great pilgrimage festivals, the Israelites left their homes and traveled to the sanctuary, and sacred or solemn assemblies were held on some of the days (Garreth, 1996). These feasts pointed back to the time when they left Egypt in haste as a memorial and, as such, giving thanks to Yahweh (Lev 23:34,39-43; Fleming 2004; Rodríguez, 2005). During this period, sacrificial items for burnt offering and peace offering are provided for Priests for the various sacrifices on behalf of the nation (Garrett, 1996). During the celebration, the first fruits of the harvest are also presented to Yahweh to show gratitude to him for blessing the work of their hands. This period is described by Hosea as the times where the people

had great intimacy with Yahweh (2:14-15; Rodríguez, 2005). From what has been discussed so far, the significance of such time was to strengthen the relationship between the people of Israel and Yahweh with both the solemn assemblies and the sacrifices. During those days, the people fellowship with one another through interactions with one another when they gathered at one place and participated in the sacrificial meal (peace offering). It can also be deduced that it is this ritual that was done without treating one another with love that the Prophet condemned.

### **Conclusion**

Cult is defined as the visible and audible expression of the relation between the congregation and the deity. This cult was influenced by the ancient Near Eastern environment from which it evolved. This influence on Israelite cult came as a result of close relationship with the Canaanite culture.

Yahweh was unknown to the patriarchs of the Hebrews. Rather, they worshiped the Canaanite god, *El*. The name Yahweh for the Israelite God was associated with group of *Shasu* nomads in the Sinai Peninsula who had the encounter with them through smoke, thunder and earthquake and was later brought by the people of Israel to Palestine. As the Israelite religion developed the Prophets emerged to emphasise on his moral demands. These Prophets (canonical) developed teachings that portrayed Yahweh's attributes found in the law, as the lord of nature and history, the lord of end of things, God of Israel and also God of universal morality.

Covenant is referred to as binding agreement 'fastened' with an oath and occasionally reinforced by a ritual sacrifice of an animal. To maintain such covenantal relationship are the sanctioned -sealed stipulations which

must be followed by both parties. There are two forms of covenants which are the parity and suzerainty-vassal.

Two schools of thoughts are presented about covenant motif in the message of the eighth century Prophets. The second school of thought is what is agreed on for discussion in this study. The eighth century understanding of covenant is presented in both historical and sociological perspectives and out of these perspectives, the concepts of natural laws and monanthropology emerge respectively which form the basis of Israelite doctrines.

In order to maintain and renew a good relationship between the worshippers and a deity, sacrifices and festivals are the most important rituals that are performed by worshippers. Sacrifices that took place in the eighth century have been grouped into holocaust and communion sacrifices.

A holocaust is the burnt sacrifice which is characterized by the entire sacrificial animal wholly burnt without anything left for the Priest or the offerer and it is the commonest type of sacrifice that is performed. Communion sacrifices are divided into praise (*tôdāh*), voluntary (*nedābāh*) and votive (*neder*) offering, peace offering and grain offering.

The purposes of these sacrifices are to ensure the people's devotion to Yahweh, an occasion to fellowship with him and to enact the bond of fellowship and relationship between Yahweh and his people. Another offering that the people of Israel were giving was tithing which is a tenth of possession. Tithing became institutionalised and practiced in the eighth century during Prophet Amos' time as mentioned in Amos 4:4 but the stipulation of giving it every three years might be a later insertion by redaction.



Feast of unleavened bread, feast of weeks and feast of tabernacle are suggested as the kinds of festivals being rejected. This period is described by Hosea as the times where the people had great intimacy with Yahweh and to strengthen the relationship between the people of Israel and Yahweh and also with one another through interactions when they gathered at one place and participated in the sacrificial meal (peace offering).

In this chapter sacrifices dealt with are burnt, peace, thanksgiving, freewill and grain offerings and tithes and the festivals were feast of unleavened bread, feast of weeks and feast of tabernacle. During festivals solemn assemblies accompanied by music were organized. With the help of the discussion in this chapter, the next chapter will look at the historical context of Prophet Amos and rhetorical analysis of his critique of the Israelite cult.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF AMOS' CRITIQUE OF THE ISRAELITE CULT

#### **Introduction**

A lot of prophetic addresses are polemic in their nature and they function as persuasive discourses (Choi, 2001). According to Concise Oxford dictionary, a discourse is a written or spoken communication. This written or spoken communication effectively used to entice readers or hearers to ensure persuasion is referred to as persuasive discourse and the methodology is rhetorical criticism. The critique of the Israelite cult of Yahweh in the book of Amos employs a judicial rhetoric type where the speaker seeks to persuade the audience to make a judgment about events that occurred in a courtroom scenario in which case the offender is surely guilty of the offense (Choi, 2001). In order to arrive at a desired objective George Kennedy's (1984) model of five-staged procedure have been chosen for the study. This model consists of (1) determination of the rhetorical unit (2) definition of the rhetorical situation (3) identification of the rhetorical invention by planning a discourse and espousing an argument (4) In rhetorical disposition the arrangement and the style are dealt. Concerning the style of persuasion, the *pathos*, *logos* and *ethos* are going to be used (Kennedy, 1984) (5) evaluation of the rhetorical effectiveness (Kennedy, 1984).

#### **Rhetorical analysis of Amos' critique of the cult**

##### **Pericope**

Below are two texts (4:4-5 and 5:21-27) which are dealt with as one unit with reasons to be given in the next four paragraphs.

4:4. Come to Bethel — and transgress; to Gilgal — and multiply transgression; bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days; 5. bring a thank offering of leavened bread, and proclaim freewill offerings, publish them; for so you love to do, O people of Israel! says the Lord GOD (NRSV).

5:21. I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. 22 Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. 23 Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. 24 But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. 25 Did you bring to me sacrifices and offerings the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? 26 You shall take up Sakkuth your king, and Kaiwan your star-god, your images, which you made for yourselves; 27 therefore I will take you into exile beyond Damascus, says the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts.

The first task of rhetorical analysis is the delimitation of the literary unit. These are the passages which contain Amos' critique of the Israelite cult of Yahweh and the passages are 4:4-5 and 5:21-27. The unit is seen not to be continuous but have passages dealing with other themes. Even though in delimiting a text as it should be in rhetorical unit, literary unit is what must be used but for the sake of the focus of this study, only those portions of the unit containing the religious critique must be considered in order to focus the

discussions on the religious critiques. In view of the said focus the theme of religious indictment in the text has been chosen.

The fact that the whole of Chapters 4 and 5 is not continuous can be explained to be either a series of interpolations or digressions. A cursory look at Motyer's (1994) outline of the book of Amos, it is characterised by three divisions as a result of the presence of *inclusios* which is the occurrence of certain words or main idea starting a text and ending it. For example in 1:2 mentioned is made of the roar of a lion and it is repeated in 3:8 forming a complete text with the roaring lion being a theme for that division (Motyer, 1994). Another character helping in the three divisions is the existence of symmetrical patterns formed as result of "a reversal of the order in corresponding words or phrases referred to as chiasmus (Kennedy, 1984, p. 12). According to Motyer (1984), the first division after a brief introduction in the first verse is (1:2-3:8). This forms an ABB'A' chiastic structure with a theme the roaring lion. The second division is (3:9-6:14) with the structure ABCC'B'A' and title is the surrounding enemy. The final division is (7:1-9:15) having the chiastic structure ABCDC'B'A', with title, the Lord's judgment that will not happen and the hope that will. The pericope (4:4-5, 5:21-27) lies within the second section.

Apart from the chiastic structures that are dividing the book into three main parts, there are three phrases that form *inclusios* that subdivide the three major divisions into smaller parts according to themes. They are *kōh 'āmar yehōwāh*, thus says the Lord, *'āmar yehōwāh*, says the Lord and *n<sup>e</sup>um yehōwāh*, declares the Lord or refers to as Yahweh's declaration. With regards to the first division, (1:2-3:8) there are a lot of instances where *kōh 'āmar yehōwāh* is

used to introduce a new theme and then *'āmar y<sup>eh</sup>ōwāh* concludes it. In the oracles against the nations (1:3-2:6), for example, *kōh 'āmar y<sup>eh</sup>ōwāh* is used to introduce the oracle against Damascus (1:3) and concluded with *'āmar y<sup>eh</sup>ōwāh* (1:5) and this is repeated to that of Moab (2:3). *n<sup>um</sup> y<sup>eh</sup>ōwāh*, is used more in the second division either to conclude themes like Israel's luxurious life in 4:3 and Israel's piety ridiculed in 4:5 or chapters like 2, 3 and 6.

Chapters 4 and 5 containing the pericope consist of digressions purposely alternating social indictments with religious indictments and each ending with pronouncements of judgments. Chapter 4 starts with a summary of a social indictment in 4:1-3. 4:1-3 is marked off from the previous chapter with *n<sup>um</sup> y<sup>eh</sup>ōwāh* concluding both chapter 3 and the theme in 4:1-3. 4:4-5 introduces the religious indictment in a summarised form which is again concluded with *n<sup>um</sup> y<sup>eh</sup>ōwāh* making 4:4-5 a separate text with a specific theme mentioned earlier while 4:6 comes back to continue with the details of the social indictment. Chapter 4:6 is also separated from 4:4-5 by the use of disjunctive conjunction *w<sup>egam</sup>* meaning “but also” which introduces another story. The details of the social indictment starting from 4:6 recount the failed efforts of Yahweh to draw the people's attention up to 4:13. These efforts are followed by a lament in 5:1-3, a plea for repentance, the need to do good in 5:4-8 and a description of Yahweh's nature while 5:10 gives more details of social indictments and concludes the social indictment with woes and judgments in 5:18-20. In 5:21, the writer of the book of Amos comes back (continuing from 4:4-5) to the religious indictment or condemnation of the cult ending in 5:27 with both judgment and Yahweh's declaration. The judgment which starts from 5:18 ends with a rhetorical question in 5:20 in the form of an

interrogative *hă* and third person masculine singular pronoun marking it off from 5:21-27 which starts with a *Qal* perfect first person singular conjugation. Chapter 5:21-27 is also differentiated from the preceding unit 5:18-20 by shifting from predominantly third person singular to first person which is maintained in that unit (Wolff, 1977).

In view of the arrangement described above, the religious indictment or critique is introduced in 4:4-5 and details are given in 5:21-27. In view of what has been explained make it convenience to put the two texts which deal with religious indictments can be put together to form one continuous story with one title of religious critique or a critique of the cult which is the subject of discussion in this thesis. These passages have been taken in the context of Yahweh desiring justice and righteousness (5:24) instead of the people's emphasis on festivals and sacrifices in their pursuit of the Israelite cult (4:4-5). Even though the unit chosen are from two separate passages, the two can be joined together to form a meaningful composite with 4:4-5 serving as an introduction to 5:21-27. The unit (4:4-5, 5:21-27) is marked by starting with an imperative statement, which ends with "declaration of the Lord Yahweh". The second passage, 5:21-27, which forms the body ends with a quotation of Yahweh's declaration such as *'āmar yehōwāh ʔlōhē šebā'āōt šēmō* literally meaning "he says Yahweh God of hosts name of him" which means, says the LORD whose name is the God of hosts.

4:4-5 makes a general statement about the two cultic centres of Israel where various offerings take place, and the people loved to carry out these offerings. The narrative continues in 5:21 with Yahweh's disapproval of the rituals. The critique is climaxed with the reason of the condemnation which is

the neglect of justice and righteousness in 5:24 and is culminated by the people making an image of a star god (5:26) which attracted Yahweh's judgment of the people pronounced in 5:27. Even though 5:26 is considered by some scholars like Wolff (1977) as a later interpolation, by Francis Anderson and David Freedman (2008) as a prediction for exilic period, but for the sake of this discussion, Paul's (1991) view of the case being part of the religious indictment addressed by the Prophet will be acceptable. This is because according to Paul (1991) the case where the people are carrying effigies in 5:26 is in line with what the masoretic text portrays.

### **Rhetorical situation**

Rhetorical situation is the second stage of rhetorical criticism of those contexts in which speakers or writers create rhetorical discourse (Bitzer, 1968). Rhetorical discourse comes into existence as a response to a situation in the same sense that an answer comes into existence in response to a question or a solution in response to a problem (Bitzer, 1968). This implies that Prophet Amos might not have given his whole message in general, and the critique of the cult in this study in particular in a vacuum but might have reacted to a deteriorating moral situation. For the context to be fully understood 1) The background of the Prophet 2) The historical context within which the Prophet prophesied and 3) The birth of the text or what might have necessitated the message or the text under review must be dealt with in order to get the full details of the context.

### 1) The background of Amos

According to Reed (1966), Prophet Amos' message has been given applause by many scholars after their critical and exegetical studies of the book of Amos due to its pure Hebrew style. He lived and wrote in the first half of the eighth century during the reign of Jeroboam II of the Northern kingdom around 755 BCE (Reed, 1966) in a small village known as Tekoa. Tekoa was approximately 12 miles (19.3 kilometres) south of Jerusalem (Smith, 2012), located on the mountains along the ridge road that went from Hebron to Jerusalem in the Southern kingdom (Smith, 2012). The village had rocky hills where shepherds could take care of their sheep (Smith, 2012). According to the account in Amos 7:14, Amos was described as a herdsman (*bôqēr*) and dresser of sycamore trees (*bôlēs šiqmîm*), which shows that Amos is not a simple farm hand or a shepherd but a well to do Judahite who held a managerial position in the animal rearing industry at the time (Klingbeil & Klingbeil, 2007).

His call was from Yahweh who took him from following the flock, implying a sudden seizure by an uncontrollable power (Reed, 1966). The genuineness of his call gave him the courage and dynamism to proclaim of his message (Reed, 1966). Amos had a deep resentment against social evils of injustice and dishonesty (Reed, 1966). The nature of the message delivered to the people is described by Reed (1966) as “a whip to the oppressor and an honey to the oppressed” (p. 108).



## **2) Historical background (Israel during the eighth century)**

### **Political**

Several events converged at the beginning of the eighth century BCE which served to catapult Israel into prominence. Assyria had an area dominance in terms of military wars. Atilla Batmaz (2012) writes that the initial area dominance of Assyria can be attributed to their technological and military prowess. This achievement suffered a setback due to Assyria's inability to have a centralised oversight of the vassal states and also could not manage the professional military troops, hence, weakening the internal security for vassal states like Urartu, Syria. This situation consequently brought freedom to Israel. The defeat of Syria or Damascus by Adad-nirari III, king of Assyria around 794 BCE also added to the liberation of Israel from the Syrian and Assyrian oppressions (King, 1989). Due to the decline of Syria and Assyria, Israel gained the peace and liberty to expand their territories (King, 1989).

### **Economic**

Israel benefitted from the good relationship she had with Phoenicia which had gained control of trade in the Mediterranean world (King, 1989). The above situation created a good condition for Israel to experience what Martin Noth called a "golden age" (King, 1989). The period of eighth century marked greatness for Israel in terms of power and prosperity which was comparable to the reigns of kings David and Solomon (King, 1989). Israel was ruled by Jeroboam II who was able to extend or reclaim his territory from Hamath to the sea of Arabah (2 kgs 14:25) which is towards the central Syria and finally to the Dead Sea (King, 1989). Samaria or Israel experienced the

highest level of prosperity and expansion in the reign of Jeroboam II. Israel commanded great affluence in trade and commerce due to its location near the international trade route. Another source of prosperity was in agriculture due to the fertile soil (King, 1989).

Bright (1972) observes that different kinds of tolls were collected by the state which, coupled with the interchange of goods, Israel a lot of wealth. Trading in Israel augmented the result of the revival or rejuvenation of Red sea trade due to the presence of copper industry in Arabah. As the Israelite's economic and political wellbeing prospered likewise their strong military bases, there was a gradual decay of their morality due to the people's violation of the covenant established between the nations and Yahweh (McComiskey, 1985).

### **Religious**

During the eighth century, the people zealously worshipped Yahweh through their sacrifices but also offered sacrifices to *Ba'al* (Oesterley & Robinson, 1961). In the same period, the Prophet discovered in the process when the traders among them were busily making sacrifices at the temple and observing the regulation of taboos, they were planning how to cheat customers (Amos 8:5; Oesterley & Robinson, 1961).

The turn of events at the time has been described in a quotation that "the cultus participated in the economic boom: sacrificial offering proliferated (4:4-5; 5:21-27); the feasts were celebrated with ebullient singing and instrumental music" (5:23; Wolff, 1977, p. 90). In other words, during the eighth century, the time of Amos, the economic prosperity in Israel manifested in a corresponding increase in the offerings brought to the temple which were

even more than the required and the feasts celebrated were accompanied by an overflowing excitement and enthusiastic singing with loud music.

Bright (1972) observes a religious decay going on hand in hand in ancient Israel with social disintegration. The cultic centres or shrines (Bethel and Gilgal) were all the time busy and crowded with worshippers who lavishly supported the sacrifices (Amos 4:4f; 5:21-24; Bright, 1972). The people introduced polytheistic cult like the fertility cult recorded in Hosea (Ho 1-3, 4:11-14) and the worship of *Ba'al* which were not rebuked by the Priests (Bright, 1972). Concerning *Ba'al* worship, one may assume that the use of the word is only an appellation comparable to Yahweh in Hosea 2:16, but it is observed by Bright to be a real worship in ancient Israel, which many other scholars can agree.

According to Bright (1972), there used to be dynamism and spiritual fervor that existed right from the days of the monarchy. He further explains that this fervor manifested in someone like Jehu killing Jezebel and the king's seventy sons due to the evil perpetrated in the king's house (2 Kings 9:30; 10:6-7). The evil that Jehu tried to remove from that society spread to the extent that it led to total breakdown of morals and the people could not worship wholeheartedly like Elijah intended their worship to be (1 Kings 18:20; Bright, 1972). Instead of the Priests engaging in teaching and promoting moral decency associated with any religious group, they became what Bright terms as "timeservers" which means those who have compromised their duties to suit the *status quo* and professionals, which were only interested in the fees collected for their duties (Amos 7:12; Micah 3:5, 11; Hosea 4:8; Bright, 1972).

The Priests, at that time, became complacent in the sense that the rich in society experienced increasing prosperity as they brought their sacrifices (Bright, 1972). This prosperity in their business was interpreted by the Priests as Yahweh's approval. In view of such prosperity of the rich, the Priests did not pay attention to the morals of the rich, hence, leading to total collapse of morality in that society (Bright, 1972). It was in the context of the issues discussed above that a prophet like Amos stepped on the stage to condemn the kind of religious decay that characterised the Israelite worship.

### **Social**

The period of economic prosperity in Jeroboam II's time saw increased moral decadence to the extent that the entire social structure showed a cleavage between the rich and the poor (McComiskey, 1985). Bright (1972) even describes the situation as egregious (conspicuously bad) due to a sharp contrast between the rich and the poor. This is illustrated in cases where a peasant farmer who had a meager economic status found himself or herself often at the mercy of the money lenders especially, when there is the slightest crop failure and drought (Amos 4:6-9: Bright, 1972). The difficulties of the harsh conditions of crop failure and drought are aggravated by the greed of the wealthy people who took advantage of the plight of the poor in order to enlarge their holdings (Bright, 1972). Deceitful business practices (Wolff, 1977) where weights and measurements were falsified, the poor were cheated and exploited (Amos 5:11, 8:4-6) and other dishonest practices prevailed everywhere in the society. The judges were venal (open to bribery; Amos 5:10-12) and so the poor could not have justice in court (Bright, 1972). This means "the poor are trampled upon as if they have no rights at all; not only do

they lack the resources they need, but they are viewed as commodities to be exploited by the wealthy land owners. The poor are worthless, valued as one values a sandal” (Amos 2:6; 8:6: Butler, 2009, p. 9).

Sexual immorality and luxurious lifestyle by the rich also increased (2:7b; Wolff, 1977) and it was in this situation that a Prophet like Amos took the challenge to address in the Israel’s history, and his words were preserved (Bright, 1972). Amos’ message has been described by Bright (1972) as a “devastating attack on the social evil of the day” (p. 259). Amos attacked the notion that Yahweh’s election of Israel guarantees her protection (1-3:1ff; 9:7) and even stated that Israel’s cult had become a place of sin (Bright, 1972) of which Yahweh was not present (4:4f; 5:4-6). Hence, Amos proclaims no hope for the Northern kingdom except when justice could be practiced (Bright, 1972).

### **3) The birth of the text**

The pericope being considered (Amos 4:4-5; 5:21-27) deals with what is to be done at Bethel and Gilgal. These places of worship have been places where Yahweh had had encounters with certain individuals starting with Abraham and the people of Israel. Due to the encounters, Bethel and Gilgal had been declared a site for worship right from the time of the patriarchs. During the time of Jacob when he was fleeing from his brother, he saw Yahweh at Bethel which later became a sanctuary and one of the places where Samuel judged (1 Sam 7:16; Niehaus, 1992).

Even though Bethel has a historical antecedent of being a “house of God”, Jeroboam 1 established the place as a sanctuary to provide an alternative centre to Jerusalem. After the schism and in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, it

became the “king’s sanctuary” (Amos 7:13; McComiskey, 1985). Gilgal which was another Israelite sanctuary in the 8<sup>th</sup> century was the base camp in the early days of the conquest (Niehaus, 1992). It is at Gilgal that Joshua 5:9 records Yahweh removing the “disgrace of Egypt” from the people, hence, becoming an important sanctuary (Niehaus, 1992).

As stated earlier in this study, rhetorical situation is the context or *sitz im leben* which is fact that in the 8<sup>th</sup> century during Amos’ time, the worship of Yahweh in Bethel and Gilgal had deteriorated to such an extent that both centres had become a sources of rebellion against Yahweh (Niehaus, 1992). The people had the zeal to worship and as such made sacrifices more frequently, even more than what the law required (Niehaus, 1992). This zeal of cultic activities was demonstrated by the people choosing to bring their tithes in three days instead of the required three years (Deut 14:28). The issue of the tithes that Amos speaks about can be explained in terms of the Prophet using hyperbole by using three days instead of three years to express how the situation rather than the people really bringing their tithes in three days enraged him.

It can be deduced from what has been discussed so far that the conditions where people could be zealous for the cult but will not live according to moral teachings gave birth to the rhetorical problem emanating from the situation which the Prophet put out in the form of irony in 4:4-5. This means that the people proudly concentrated their commitment to the cult sacrifices only and made a public show of the performances. The people made sacrifices more than the requirement of the law but failed to obey the most important law that is to love their fellow citizens (Niehaus, 1992). The more

they observed the ritual law, the more “they sold the righteous for silver” and “the needy for a pair of sandals” (Amos 2:6).

During the period of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the people made excess sacrifices of thanksgiving by offering leavened bread in addition to the unleavened bread required by the law (Niehaus, 1992). The people were more loyal to the religious rituals which they thought could appease Yahweh irrespective of their moral and spiritual conditions (Niehaus, 1992). Paul (1991) describes the situation as taking the cult to be a “surrogate panacea for religion” (p. 139). The situation of the Israelite cult of being loyal to the religious rituals like the tithes, sacrifices (thanksgiving, freewill, grain, peace and offerings), festivals (feast of unleavened bread, feast of weeks and feast of tabernacle) and solemn assemblies but neglecting the poor and oppressing the needy has been described by John Miller (1987) as soporific (meaning boring or causing to sleep). This boring or soporific worship so described is what enraged the 8<sup>th</sup> century Prophet to speak the way he did. The disposition of rage is again demonstrated by encouraging the people of Israel to go to the sanctuaries or shrines, Gilgal and Bethel and make more sacrifices that represent increase in sin which the people love to do (Niehaus, 1992).

It is in view of the disturbing condition discussed on the rhetorical situation that the Prophet observed that provokes Niehaus (1992) to ask certain questions like “What good will punctuality do where sin is rampant?” and again “what help is excessive sacrifice where rebellion characterises a people (p. 396)?” These bothering questions could be what motivated Prophet Amos to launch a critique of the cult of the people.

### **Rhetorical invention**

Unlike the rhetorical situation which discusses the context of the writer and his writing, rhetorical invention is concerned with the way the text persuades its audience. That is the mode and manner a text uses to convince its audience or the proof it employs (Okyere, 2013).

It can be deduced from the study that the whole critique (4:4-5; 5:21-27) of the Prophet has been divided into ridicule (parody; 4:4-5) which is also like an abstract of a thesis and rejection (condemnation; 5:21-27) being the main text. These are in the form of progressions from general to specific terms in both cases (Mamahit, 2009). In 4:4-5, the parody or ridicule starts with general terms for animal sacrifices which come every morning and tithes which come every three days and then ends with specific examples of sacrifices like thanksgiving and freewill offerings. The first part of the unit (4:4-5) starts on a low key of an invitation to the cultic sites to the highest level of sacrifices in a descending order from thanksgiving and freewill offerings. The decreasing order of importance realised here forms something like a crescendo (gradual increase in loudness or intensity of a music). In other words, the critique of the activities of the cult in 4:4-5 starts from the most important cultic site Bethel and then Gilgal followed by thanksgiving and ends at the lowest which is freewill.

The rejection stanza (5:21-27) also follows a similar progression from general terms like festivals and solemn assemblies (5:21-23) which have not been specified in this text and then climaxes with other examples of sacrifices like burnt, grain and peace offerings in decreasing order of importance. The stanza finally ends with the music of the cult being taken away. This order of



arrangement of cultic rites is in line with Laferty's observation (Laferty, 2010). Burnt offerings (Ex 29: 18, 25), grain offerings (Ex 29:41, Lev 2:2) and peace offering (Lev 4:31) are known by the pentateuchal traditions as the sacrifices that produce pleasant aroma when they are made. These three sacrifices above in a decreasing order of importance which are supposed to produce a soothing aroma to Yahweh are now being condemned. Peace offering being in the singular form has been attributed by Niehaus (1992) to the sacrifice being a communion meal whereby the sacrificial animal is eaten. It is possible one peace offering is made on behalf of the people and the sacrificial animal is eaten in order to foster fellowship and love with one another. During the period, the people will eat together as if they love one another but cheat one another after the gathering. In order for the people not to attack the Prophet and also for the Prophet not to be charged with treason, the message was carefully presented in hymn-like form with good rhythm capable of persuading the people.

“The Prophet addresses a satirical invitation to the people to continue to perform their customary rites at the customary places and at the customary times—all of which paradoxically and bewilderingly exacerbates and epitomizes their transgressions” (Paul, 1991, p. 137). This means that the Prophet is rebuking the people in the form of ridicule by inviting them to the cultic centre at the set times and further saying that, as they made the sacrifices, their sacrifices became surprisingly and increasingly evil. The Prophet's invitation for the people to bring their sacrifices every morning and tithes every three days to Gilgal and Bethel stated in 4:5 is just to “multiply” or “enlarge” (*harbû*) their rebellion (*p<sup>e</sup>šō‘a*).

In the case of Amos' message being discussed in 4:4-5, the people do not quietly perform their cultic rites but “call out” (*w<sup>e</sup>qir'û*) thanksgiving offerings and also proclaim or “cause” other people to “hear” (*hašmî'û*) about freewill offerings. The above words, *w<sup>e</sup>qir'û* and *hašmî'û* form hendiadys. Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines it as an expression of a single idea by two words connected with a conjunction ‘and’ (Soanes & Steveson, 2004). These words can mostly be nouns or verbs which are synonymous (Lillas, 2012). In the pericope under review (4:5), *w<sup>e</sup>qir'û* and *hašmî'û* of thanksgiving and freewill offerings respectively form hendiadys (Niehaus, 1992). These two Hebrew words are synonyms used in the sentence to emphasise the intensity of making a public show of their offerings especially, thanksgiving and freewill offerings (Niehaus, 1992).

They proclaim or make public all the offerings but thanksgiving and freewill offerings mentioned here are examples of the various sacrifices performed which are made public. The use of (*w<sup>e</sup>qir'û*) “call out” and (*hašmî'û*) “cause... to hear” in 4:5 intensify the kind of focus or emphasis that the people gave to the rituals and the extent that the people went in making them public when they have performed the rituals.

Since the people come to the cultic centres not to give Yahweh the kind of worship he required but only to “make big” or multiply their rebellion, then Yahweh is rejecting all their rituals or cultic rites (festivals, solemn assemblies, burnt offerings, grain offerings, peace offering, songs and melodies). All these seven different rites mentioned in 5:21-23 are being rejected because Yahweh was expecting that as the people performed these rites, justice (*mišpāṭ*; 5:24) will be shown by each one towards one another

especially, from the rich to the poor and from elite to the peasant in their business transactions. Apart from justice, the people must relate to each other in righteousness (*š<sup>e</sup>dāqāh*; 5:24) in an ever flowing or continuous manner among themselves. Even though the people's zeal towards the rituals is commendable, since these virtues (righteousness and justice) were missing in their midst, their meticulous performance of cultic activities are not only being rejected but also the people will be taken to exile as the consequence of the kind of worship given to Yahweh.

According to Kennedy (1984) rhetorical invention “is based either on external proofs, which the author uses but does not invent” resulting from evidence of witnesses and documents or “on internal or artistic proof” (p. 14). With this study, both internal and the external proofs are going to be used. This is because the external proof is available in the text as a support for the argument being espoused. With the internal proof, a very strong repudiation for the activities of the cult has been indicated (5:21) due to the absence of justice and righteousness (5:24). One can bring out an argument that Yahweh has rejected the Israelite cult of Yahweh because the people engaged in it without justice and righteousness (5:24). Yahweh is not only rejecting their cult but the people will also be dragged to exile. One can explain that the use of *šānē* and *mā'as* without any conjunction is the culmination of the repudiation. This climax is demonstrated beginning from 5:21b to 5:23 in a descending or deteriorating manner which can be seen as follows:

- 1) *w<sup>e</sup>lō* 'ārīḥa, “I take no delight” in your solemn assemblies
- 2) *lō* 'erṣeh- “I will not accept” your burnt and grain offerings
- 3) *lō* 'abbîṭ- “I will not look upon” your peace offering of fatted animals

4) *hāsēr ma ‘ālā* - “Take away from me” the noise of your songs,

5) *lō ’ešmā* - “I will not listen” to the melody of your harps

The repudiation starts from 1) Yahweh not taking delight in the solemn assemblies because he does not enjoy it. If Yahweh does not enjoy the gathering of the people then 2) he will not accept anything they offer especially burnt and grain offerings. Yahweh is not only ‘not accepting’ the offerings but will also not even want to look upon 3) other offerings like the peace offering. Having rejected the offerings, the noise of their songs is to be taken away since he is angry and does not want any sound from the people 4). If the sound of their songs is to be taken away then the melody of their harps will not be listened to 5) and as such leading to a complete hatred and rejection indicated by *śānē’* and *mā’as* 5:21a.

External proof-5:25 provides a historical proof which points to the fact that Yahweh related to the people of Israel in the wilderness without sacrifices and so if the people must offer sacrifices and celebrate festivals which will be acceptable to Yahweh then those rituals must be preceded by justice and righteousness. Therefore, the argument being espoused is that if the cult activities together with the solemn assemblies are being rejected then the people are also rejected as well and will be taken to exile as it is indicated in 5:27.

### **Rhetorical disposition**

Contrary to rhetorical invention which deals with the kind of argument that the text is espousing in order to persuade the audience, rhetorical disposition looks at the way the arguments are organised or arranged and the

style of arrangement in order to effect persuasion. While the rhetorical situation is looking at what might have given birth to the text, both rhetorical invention and disposition are dealing with the text itself in different ways.

In the rhetorical invention, Yahweh has been provoked and has finally passed judgment against the people of Israel. Yahweh's accusations and pronouncements by the Prophet on Yahweh's behalf have been well organised or arranged and the type of genre used in the pronouncements has to be looked at in this case. The organisation of the pronouncements or charges, therefore is referred to as rhetorical disposition (Mamahit & Venter, 2010).

After a careful observation of the genre used, messenger speech, covenant lawsuit and judgment oracles have been identified to be effectively combined in the critique (Wallace, 2007). A messenger speech has a formula "Thus says the Lord", *kōh āmar y<sup>h</sup>ōwāh*, "says Yahweh", *āmar y<sup>h</sup>ōwāh* or "declares Yahweh" *n<sup>e</sup>um y<sup>h</sup>ōwāh* either introducing or concluding the message. The judgment oracle, on the other hand, mostly talks about doom, disaster striking or the people going to exile while covenant lawsuit states a breach of a covenant (Wallace, 2007) or the accusation against the people who have been disloyal to a covenant and their guilt declared (Davidson, 2010) and woe oracle expresses lamentation (Wallace, 2007). The text being studied makes a combination of the genres (messenger speech, covenant lawsuit and judgment oracles) which are artfully intertwined to give a good persuasion.

Yahweh addresses the people through the Prophet by using first person in the form of a direct confrontation with the people. The main type of genre or form used in conveying this message (4:4-5; 5:21-27) is the covenant lawsuit and is concluded with the messenger formula of *n<sup>e</sup>um ādōnāy*, which

means declares the Lord Yahweh in the case of 4:5 and *āmar y<sup>eh</sup>ōwāh* in the case of 5:27. Secondly, the pericope concludes with a prophetic judgment of the people going to exile beyond Damascus (5:27). In other words, the pericope is marked by the messenger formula forming *inclusio*. The message continues with a covenant lawsuit from 5:21 and concludes with a prophetic judgment in 5:27 before concluding with messenger formula *āmar y<sup>eh</sup>ōwāh*

Niehaus (1992) observes a lot of covenant lawsuit in the book of Amos which 4:4-5 and 5:21-27 are part. Starting from chapter four to chapter five, there are two indictments of the covenant lawsuit which are the social indictments and the religious indictments. The text under review therefore, falls under religious indictment which is introduced by 4:4-5 and then continued in 5:21-27 (Niehaus, 1992). The pericope under review can be outlined as follows.

- 1) Exordium/ Introduction to the accusation -4:4-5
- 2) Rejection and accusation-5:21-23
- 3) Reason for condemnation -5:24
- 4) Historical facts about exodus and idol worship to remind them that they are guilty of accusation-5:25-26
- 5) Judgment pronounced 5:27.

Having identified the genre in the unit, Kennedy (1984) strategy of the rhetorical disposition which looks at the text's organization or arrangement of material and persuasive style are going to be followed.

### **Organization of the text or material**

The material to be considered for its arrangement is 4:4-5; 5:21-27 which is the pericope. The pericope begins with *Qal* imperative and it says *bō'û bêt'-'el*

*ûpiš'û* “you come to Bethel and you transgress” which though given in imperative commanding or inviting the people to come to the cultic centre or shrine, the second person plural verb form also indicates a present tense which also mean that “you always come to Bethel to transgress (Owens, 1992). The second person plural is indicated by *-û* attached to *bō'û* and *ûpiš'û* underlined in the words. In other words the people always come to Bethel and Gilgal to transgress. This is followed by a definite article attached to a proper noun Gilgal, functioning attributively meaning that what is done at Bethel is also done even worse in Gilgal. In other words the satirical invitation taking place at Bethel is to be repeated at Gilgal in a consecutive manner without interruption. It can be said here that the definite article *ha* used implies that the people who are being invited to Bethel to transgress are also being invited to Gilgal to repeat same. In this case instead of the words used for Bethel, *bōû...ûpiš'û*, “come to... and transgress” to be repeated for Gilgal as it is done for the oracle against the nations , “for three transgression...”, *'al š'elōšāh piš'ê*, repeated eight times in 1:3-2:16 in the case of each nation mentioned, the repetition has been avoided. This is to vary the style in order to enhance persuasion. *Qal* conjugation is the basic and simple form of verbs (*bō'û*, come and *ûpiš'û*, and transgress). It can be deduced that the *Qal* conjugation can be said to show the use of a calmer mood of the speaker. *Qal* conjugation then changes to a *Hiphil* imperative second person plural (*harbû*, multiply) when talking about what happens in Gilgal (Owens, 1992). *Hiphil* indicated by- *ha* attached to *rābāh* to form *harbû*. The use of *Hiphil* expresses causation. The *Hiphil* form, here, demonstrates how the people themselves deliberately transgress both with their actions and attitudes when they come to Gilgal

(Owens, 1992). In other words the people are actively involved in certain acts that show a progressive increase, *harbû* in sin or rebellion, *ûpiš'û*. The situation where the people are being invited to go to the shrines to transgress is a parody or ridicule of the cult. Parody or satire is an imitation of a style or genre with a deliberate exaggeration for comic effect (Soanes & Stevenson, 2006). In other words it is a form of literary style that exposes the vices of the people through ridicule (Ryken, 1999). Its purpose is to attack the people's cult that is excellent in the rituals but fails in justice and righteousness (Ryken, 1999). This invitation, to go to the shrines "every morning with your animal sacrifice" *labōqer zibhêkem* and *lišlōšet yāmîm ma's'ērōtêkem* "your tithes every three days" is hyperbolic which an exaggeration is in order to ridicule the boring worship. It is a deliberate exaggeration, not meant to be taken literally (Soanes & Steveson). The law stipulates that tithes were supposed to be presented "in three years" *šālōš šānîm* (Deu 14:28) or "in the third year" *hāšlīšît š'enēt* (Deu 26:12 ) but, instead of the stipulated time above, the tithes are reported to have been brought in three days, *lišlōšet yamîm* in the book of Amos.

Concerning the period of presentation of the tithes as mentioned in the text 4:4, two ideas are conceived. In the first instance, the people can be taken literally to be bringing tithes in three days instead of the stipulated three years since the people are zealous with the rituals and provide other sacrifices like leavened bread in addition to the unleavened bread which exceeds what the law required. On the other hand, the Prophet used hyperbole in using three days instead of three years. If the use of hyperbole is an exaggerated fact, then three days, *lišlōšet yamîm* must mean three years. This assertion can be



supported by the fact that since, in the text under review, the people are being urged to go to the sacred place to rebel and even increase it, then this ridicule is being garnished with a hyperbolic expression. Hence, three days in the text, can be considered to be three years. Hyperbole here is also used to intensify the gradation of emphasis.

Certain prepositions like *l<sup>e</sup>*, *b<sup>e</sup>*, *k<sup>e</sup>* and so on have been put into different use in the text. Such prepositions are joined to either nouns or verbs and are not separated or standing on their own. They are referred to as inseparable or independent prepositions. Inseparable preposition *l<sup>e</sup>* appears in different forms to play different roles in the text. The one found in 4:4 in the word *lipšō‘a* (to transgress) puts it in an infinitive construct which indicates the purpose of the people going to the shrine: which is to transgress (Cook & Holmstedt, 2009), and also helps to explain the reason why the people’s transgression multiplies (Cook & Holmstedt, 2009). The reason follows *lipšō‘a* which is the fact that the people do not perform the rituals or “sacred acts” in a solemn or quiet manner but makes noise, *hašmî‘û* or cause people to hear about it, *w<sup>e</sup>qir‘û*. The purpose of sacrifices, according to Wickham (2009), is only “a means of approaching the Lord in his manifest presence” (p. 193) and as such must be presented in a prayerful mood. In view of this making noise about offering of sacrifices makes the ritual sinful. At the point where animal sacrifice, *zibhêkem* is mentioned, there is a shift from second person plural address to a third person plural. In a judicial rhetoric or courtroom scenario the second person address Yahweh represents a judge making a direct address to the accused in the second person. In the situation of a shift from second person to the third person plural the Prophet assumes the position of the counsel for the

plaintiff, Yahweh and addresses the accused (the people of Israel) on behalf of Yahweh who is the plaintiff.

In 4:5, the writer returns to second person plural. The climax of the accusation is *w<sup>e</sup>qattēr* (and you make go up) which is in *Piel* conjugation which expresses intensity or forceful actions that indicate an established state of being (Kukis, 2012). This type of conjugation is indicated by the vowels *patach* and *tsere* instead of *qamets* and *patach* found in *w<sup>e</sup>qattēr* for the Qal form. *w<sup>e</sup>qattēr mēhāmēš* in *Piel* is speaking with certainty that making many sacrifices especially turning leaven food into smoke makes them guilty according to Leviticus 2:11. Even though the zeal with which the people make sacrifices is commendable, but sacrificing leaven food is an abomination and as such the more people went to the shrines with leaven food the more they increased sin. Since such abomination of sacrificing leaven foods have been observed, there is the certainty that the people are guilty, hence saying it demands the use of a *Piel* conjugation. The use of the *Piel* is indicated by

The strongest attack or rebuke of the Israelite cult is made when *Piel* conjugation is used in terms of “making to go up” *w<sup>e</sup>qattēr*, sacrifices of leaven foods together with a *Hiphil* conjugation used in describing how they cause people to hear, *hašmî’û*. Indeed, the style is a judicial rhetoric which makes a declaration of the accusation, emphasising that the people send leavened food as sacrifices in smoke which is not acceptable and later switches again to the third person.

The climax of the whole condemnation is reached in 5:21-23 starting with two strong words *śānētî*, ‘I hate’, *mā’astî*, ‘I despise’ (5:21). These two words, *śānētî* and *mā’astî* follow one after the other without any conjunction

which forms the strongest hendiadys registering a total condemnation of the Israelite festivals, *ḥaggēkem*, ‘your festivals’. This condemnation is made in the form of an attack, using the first person *Qal* conjugation, *śānētî* and *mā’astî* which is directed on the festivals in a second person plural, *ḥaggēkem*. This attack is further directed to other cultic activities like solemn assemblies, *b<sup>e</sup>’aššrōtēkem*, ‘in your solemn assemblies’ which Yahweh will not look upon, take delight or perceive. Chapter 5:22 continues the critique by giving details of sacrifices mentioned in 4:4-5, in order of importance, burnt offerings, *’ōlôt*, grain offerings, *minḥōtēkem*, and peace offering, *šelem*. Out of these sacrifices mentioned, only grain offering, *minḥōtēkem* has a pronominal suffix, *-kem*, indicating a possession of the people. *’ōlôt*, burnt offerings is put in plural form while *šelem*, peace offering in singular. From the observation made concerning burnt, grain and peace offerings one can say that burnt offering and peace offering are not offerings from the people’s discretion but Yahweh’s specific commands to the people to fulfill the demand of the cult. Unlike burnt offerings and the peace offering, grain offerings are supposed to be gifts from the people in appreciation of Yahweh’s kindness, hence, the use of pronominal suffix in the case of the grain offerings, *minḥōtēkem*. The second person plural form of *minḥāh*, gift or grain offering ends with- *kem* which converts *minḥāh*, the singular form to the second person plural. These three letter *-kem* added to *minḥāh* at the end is what is referred to as a pronominal suffix. This Peace offering in singular form might be due to the fact that all other sacrifices brought by the people to the temple are offered to Yahweh individually, and after all the sacrifices (burnt, grain, thanksgiving and freewill offerings) are made, one fat cow is offered generally on behalf of

all the people to Yahweh as a peace offering after which the meat is cooked and eaten by the people as a communal meal to conclude all the sacrifices (Wolff, 1977).

The anticlimax of the cult comes after the condemnation in 5:23. In this verse, the people are commanded to take away the noise of their song and the melody of their harps which will not be listened to. The command to take away or remove the noise (*hāmôn*) of the songs is presented in *Hiphil* conjugation, which indicates the removal of the songs or stopping the use of music in their solemn assemblies. This condemnation has been done in a list in 5:21-23 made up of seven cultic activities like festival (*ḥag*), solemn assemblies (*‘āšārāh*), burnt offering (*‘ōlāh*) grain offerings (*minḥāh*) peace offerings (*šelem*), songs (*šîr*) and melody of psalteries (*zimirāh*) which Yahweh is rejecting. This is known as Heptad. It is a set of seven questions, accusations, judgments and oracles (Gordis, 1980). This rejection of the cultic rites above is referred to by Paul (1991) as a Heptad of negation and sees them to represent a complete repudiation of the cult.

This condemnation is not made in a vacuum but has been done to dissuade the people from focusing on the ritual aspect of the cult and further promote a shift of focus to justice, *mišpāṭ*, and righteousness, *šedāqāh* in 5:24 (Mamahit, 2010). This condemnation of the rituals in order to promote *mišpāṭ* and *šedāqāh* is a literary device called dialectic negation which is done to negate the rituals in order to promote the ethical dimension, *mišpāṭ* and *šedāqāh*.

Having negated the ritual dimension of the cult which had been the main focus of the people when it comes to the cult, there is a call for a new

focus which must be *mišpāt* and *š<sup>e</sup>dāqāh*. This is presented in the text using a jussive form of conjugation in a third person masculine singular. It is used to express an indirect commands, direct negative commands and other actions of desire which can be translated as “let or may” (UnfoldingWord Hebrew Grammar 2018). When this jussive verb is presented in a *Niphal* form the sentence is now put into passive form, *w<sup>e</sup>yiggal* which can read as ‘let him be rolled down continually’ (5:24; Benton, 2009). The new focus being promoted in a picture of a dry environment (ethical drought) is *mišpāt* and *š<sup>e</sup>dāqāh* which must flood the area in manner comparable to water bodies. Such comparison is made by an independent preposition *k<sup>e</sup>* preceding the water bodies *kammayim* (like the water) and *k<sup>e</sup>naḥal* (like ever flowing stream). This figure of speech is called a simile. It is a figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another of a different kind (Soanes & Stevenson, 2006).

In the part of speech used in 5:24, righteousness and justice must flow or continue to operate in the midst of the people in a manner comparable to a Middle East or an Arabian narrow valley which must be ever flowing (Niehaus, 1992). This comparison gives an indication of the importance of justice and righteousness in the Israelite cult as opposed to the emphasis on public show of ritual worship.

Promotion of *mišpāt* and *š<sup>e</sup>dāqāh* is augmented by following 5:25 with a rhetorical question which is identified by an interrogative *hā* preceding the word for animal sacrifices, *hazzbaḥîm* whose answer is surely no. This confirms that the people did not bring any sacrifices in the wilderness. The rhetorical question about sacrifices in the wilderness is closely followed with

perfect consecutive future which denotes a sequence of actions in the future (Pratico & Van Pelt, 2007). 5:26 starts in a *Qal* form by talking about a procession of the people carrying effigies of two deities (Paul, 1991) and finally concludes in 5:27 in a *Hiphil* which Yahweh himself will take them to exile.

### **Persuasive style of the text**

Kennedy (1984) reiterates Aristotle's three modes of artistic proof which are *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos* are going to be used in the discussion of the persuasive style of Amos' critique. According to Kennedy (1984) *ethos* means character which is defined as "the credibility that the speaker or author is able to establish in his work" (p. 15). In this case the established credibility is able to attract the audience to accept his or her message (Kennedy, 1984). *Pathos* is described as the emotional reactions the hearers undergo or take place within the audience as the speaker delivers the message (Kennedy, 1984). This emotion is as a result of the speaker, through the speech, "playing on the feelings" of the audience (Kennedy, 1984, p. 15). In other words, 'playing on the feelings' of the audience means using certain words or reminding the people or audience of a past sorrowful occurrence. Kennedy (1984) also defines *logos* as the logical found within the discourse (p. 15). The modes of artistic proofs (*logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*) are being used in the study because they are the universal factors or means of persuading any audience (Kennedy, 1984).

**Logos:** Prophet Amos, in his book, promoted a universal morality when he pronounced judgment against other nations which included Judah, his own people (1:3-2:5) for various crimes against humanity (Paul, 1991). In the

Prophet's religious indictment in 4:4-5, he focused on Bethel and Gilgal (shrines) and sarcastically invites the people to those shrines in order to increase transgression (Paul, 1991). The use of hyperbole in 4:4 is a style to launch an attack on the cult, which also seeks to downplay the emphasis on the cultic activities in order to promote justice and righteousness (Henkemans, 2013). The people were zealous in making offerings at the shrines to the extent that they made more offering than they were supposed to give. In their zeal, they were burning portions of leavened food, *w<sup>e</sup>qattēr mēḥāmēš tōdāh*, “and to make go up in smoke from leavened food thanksgiving offering” (4:5) in addition to the required offerings which are forbidden in the Levitical law (Ex 23:18; Lev 12-14; Keil, 1980) but to be given to the Priests. The people did not quietly offer these abominations as sacrifices but were proudly making a public show and announcing, *tōdāh w<sup>e</sup>qir'û nēdādôt hašmî'û*, (4:5) those offerings. In view of the above, the more the people went to the shrines with those offerings, the more they multiplied their transgressions. The satirical invitation of the people to the shrines is a powerful tool used by the Prophet to point out the transgressions or deficiencies in the Israelite cult to both the elite class and the ordinary people (LeBoeuf, 2007). This is also to make their mode of worship become foolishness without making them angry until the speaker completely delivers the message (LeBoeuf, 2007).

The people of Israel attracted the anger of Yahweh and were ostracised from his presence for three main reasons. For Yahweh to use the words, like *śānē'tî* (I hate) and *mā'astî* (I despise) for their festivals mean a total rejection for all that festivals stand for. For the Prophet's audience to know how serious he is in his address, he does not just use general terms such as festivals and

sacrifices but gives details of the kind of sacrifices that are being rejected both in festivals and day to day cult activities.

Secondly, if Yahweh is not taking delight in both *'ārîḥa* the solemn assemblies which are to draw the people closer to him and the festivals to book appointment with him, then there seems to be a great hostility which is eventually cutting the people off from himself completely.

Thirdly, due to this hostility, words used in 5:21-23 include *śānē'tî*, I hate, *mā'astî*, I despise your festivals, *w<sup>e</sup>lō' 'ārîḥa*, I take no delight in your solemn assemblies, *lō 'erṣeh*, I will not accept your burnt offering and grain offerings, *lō 'abbîṭ*, I will not look upon your peace offering, *hāsēr ma'ālâ*, take away from me the noise of your songs, *lō 'ešmā'*, I will not listen to the melody of your harps have been used.

These hostilities have been as a result of the people who are only committed to the cultic activities (4:4-5), neglecting justice and righteousness which is the new paradigm shift for the cult (5:24). Since the people failed to give attention to justice and righteousness, their zeal for the cultic activities is no more important (5:25). If the cult in the forty years experience in the wilderness did not require sacrifices, then being zealous in bringing offerings without accompanying them with the needed justice and righteousness is not acceptable and as such Yahweh is certainly going to take the people by himself from Israel where he meets with them regularly to a place beyond Damascus where his presence will be no more and they will be in captivity (5:27).



## Pathos

In chapter 4:4-5 the Prophet attacks the people's moral life in relation to the cult by the use of ridicules concerning the way they conducted themselves in the cult. The use of parody or humour attracted the people to the message, but, at the end of the message, they are captivated with a conviction (Leboeuf, 2007). The message of satirical invitation of the people does not only arouse the people's emotions but even displays the sadness of the Prophet when he invites the people to Bethel to transgress, *pāša'* and to Gilgal to transgress more. The use of *pāša'*, transgress, means to revolt or cast off allegiance to authority, which is in the context of political authority (Paul, 1991). The people of Israel believe they are in a relationship with Yahweh and are always under his authority. In view of this relationship, the people were passionate about the cultic activities at the shrines so to be invited to the shrines in order "to cast off that allegiance to authority" really arouses their emotions of fear and surprise. This use of parody to arouse their emotion increases and sustains their interest when their public show of the sacrifices is being intensified by the use of hendiadys (*w<sup>e</sup>qir'û...hašmî'û*; 4:5). According to Henkemans (2013), hyperbole used in 4:4 is meant to make justice and righteousness appear more important, more desirable and more frightening if they fail to imbibe that.

The critique of the cult reaches its climax when two synonyms *šānē'*, and *mā'as*, have been used (5:21) together in a hendiadys. The word *šānē'* expresses an emotional attitude towards persons whom one wishes to have no contact or relationship with (Harris, Archer, Waltke, 1981). It also "evokes an

emotion of intense hatred; typifies the emotion of jealousy which creates strong disdain” (Okyere, 2015, p.126).

The word *mā'as* translated simply in English as reject or despise means a condition of avoiding all associations with the people of Israel and also expressing a feeling of great displeasure or nausea when Yahweh comes into contact with the people (Swanson, 2001). For the Prophet to combine two strong disparaging words (*śānē'*, and *mā'as*) in a personal address without any conjunction displays the emotion of hatred which can be characterised with a vehement attack likely to result in a physical assault that can lead to an emotional break down and sorrowful moments for the people being addressed.

These two words used together without any conjunction and this style is meant to give rhythm to the message and also gives an indication of the speaker giving a list which is being added to (Nordquist, 2017). In this list, the essence and the role of the cultic activities for Yahweh is curtailed or destroyed in the sense that the solemn assemblies will no longer bring relief or alleviate Yahweh's distress (*w<sup>e</sup>lō'ārīḥa*, 5:21; Swanson, 2001). Yahweh will no longer be fond of their burnt offerings and grain offerings (*lō'erṣeh*, 5:22; Swanson, 2001), nor have regard for their peace offering (*lō'abbīṭ*, 5:22; Swanson, 2001), nor listen to (5:22, *lō'eśmā*) the noise of their songs and melody of their harps. The above list of signs of Yahweh's rejection of the cultic activities is as a result of Yahweh's sorrowful emotional state. In view of the rejection of the cultic activities, even their music which helps them to express their communal belief regarding their faith in Yahweh (Parrott 2009) is being asked to be taken away. Music has an inherent quality which elicits emotions and specific physiological changes in the people (Miller &

Strongman, 2002) and so any message telling the people to take the music away will be the highest form of rejection which will not be received with excitement but sorrow.

The deliberate attempt of the Prophet to appeal to the emotions of the people is heightened when he reminds them of their history of the forty years wilderness wanderings (5:25) which were characterised by bitter experiences. Even though the Prophet only refers to it in terms of sacrifices but immediately the forty years wandering experience is mentioned in any context, all the bitter experiences come to mind and that whips up emotions.

The anticlimax of the message is that Yahweh himself will take them to prison in Damascus where they will be uncovered, or naked *w<sup>e</sup>higlêti* or become vulnerable physically and emotionally (5:27; Swanson, 2001). This pronouncement will be the final straw that will break the camel's back on their emotions which might have brought them on their knees.

### **Ethos**

Within the pericope, the credibility of the message is established by consistent appearance of Yahweh's declaration (or "declares Yahweh") or "thus says the Lord" formula. In 4:4-5 *n<sup>e</sup>um y<sup>e</sup>hōwāh* forms an *inclusio* appearing at the end of the first line (4:4) in the Masoretic text and the end of 4:5, and, when it gets to the second portion of the unit (5:21-27), *'āmar y<sup>e</sup>hōwāh* ...meaning "says Yahweh..." also comes towards the end of 5:27. These declarations indicate that the Prophet's message is from Yahweh.

Secondly, apart from the declarations within the pericope that establishes credibility, Amos' encounter with Amaziah in 7:12-14 records as follows: "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, earn your bread there, and

prophesy there...”. In other words other prophets who are prophesying in Judah earn their livelihood through that prophetic ministration so Amos must go there and do same. Even though other Prophets make their living out of their prophetic ministrations by charging those who patronise them as deduced from 7:12-14, Amos decided to take care of himself through his own business in order to fulfill his calling. Amos not making a living out of his prophetic vocation indicates that he was not doing so to earn a living but he is doing so because Yahweh has commissioned him to do so. This augments the credibility of the Prophet.

Thirdly, there is a historical record in the deuteronomistic history (2 Kings 18:9,10) of the fulfilment of Amos’ prophecy of the people of Israel going to exile. In this record, king Shalmaneser of Assyria attacked king Hoshea and took him and the people as prisoners as Prophet Amos prophesied, hence, establishing the credibility for the real readers today.

### **Structure of pericope**

Come to Bethel — and transgress; -1<sup>st</sup> line

To Gilgal — and multiply transgression; -2<sup>nd</sup> line

Bring your sacrifices every morning, -3<sup>rd</sup> line

Your tithes every three days; -4<sup>th</sup> line

... And proclaim freewill offerings, -5<sup>th</sup> line

Publish them -6<sup>th</sup> line

From the first part of the pericope, 4:4-5 the second line presented in a similar form to the first line but in the case of the second line, it is being heightened by the word multiply or increase, *harbû*. In other words, the people are being invited to Bethel to transgress and then to Gilgal in order to increase or

multiply the transgression. At both Bethel and Gilgal, in the third and fourth lines, the people are to bring sacrifices every morning and in addition to the sacrifice every morning, they should bring tithes every three days. Synonymous parallelism is also used in the case of the fifth and sixth line where words carrying similar ideas like proclaim, *w<sup>e</sup>qir'û* and publish, *hašmî'û* are used in both lines respectively.

According to Ryken (1999) parallelism used adds “artistic beauty” to the sentences of the pericope and indicates skillful handling of the language (p. 183). Parallelism also increases the impact that the speech is going to have on the audience and help the audience to focus on the message being delivered through the speech (Ryken, 1999). From a close look at the first part of the pericope, 4:4-5, the synonymous parallelism gives an indication of an increasing progression of the rhythm of the speech climaxed by the use of *w<sup>e</sup>qir'û*, proclaim, and *hašmî'û*, publish.

The second part of the pericope 5:21-27, consist of poetic (5:21-24) and prose (25-27) forms. This poetic (5:21-24) form starts with a synthetic parallelism 5:21 followed by antithetic 5:22, synthetic parallelism 5:23 and finally synonymous parallelism, 5:24.

5:21, ‘I hate, I despise your festivals’ - 1<sup>st</sup> line

And I take no delight in your solemn assemblies- 2<sup>nd</sup> line

In the above pair of statements, the second line gives further details of how Yahweh despises their festivals which is shown in Yahweh no more taking delight in their solemn assemblies. The above shows a synthetic parallelism.

The structure changes in 5:22

Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, -1<sup>st</sup> line

I will not accept them; 2<sup>nd</sup> line

And the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals -3rd line

I will not look upon.-4<sup>th</sup> line

In the above, the second line is in contrast with the first line that is 'I will not accept is contrasted with ... you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings and then in second instance, 'I will not look upon' which the fourth line contrasts with 'and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals', the 3rd line.

In 5:23 Take away from me the noise of your songs;-1<sup>st</sup> line

I will not listen to the melody of your harps-2<sup>nd</sup> line

The structure of the pericope changes from antithetic parallelism in 5:22 to synthetic parallelism in 5:23. Synthetic parallelism in 5:23, the second line, 'I will not listen to the melody of your harps' gives further details or a reason why the people must take away the noise which makes the situation obvious for the noise to be taken away stated in the first line.

5:24, But let justice roll down like waters,-1<sup>st</sup> line

And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream-2<sup>nd</sup> line

In this verse, the structure returns to synonymous parallelism, it begins in 4:4-5. In this verse two similar virtues which are justice and righteousness are expressed in the imagery of moving water.

### **Rhetorical effectiveness of the persuasion**

“At the end of the process of analysis, it will be valuable to look back over the entire unit and review its success in meeting the rhetorical exigence or urgent need and what its implications may be for the speaker or audience” (Kennedy, 1984, p.38). This procedure is referred to as rhetorical effectiveness. The condition of the people’s worship where they committed themselves to the religious rites and neglected the poor and oppressed the needy became hypocritical worship which Yahweh hated. Since they forgot about justice and righteousness which should be the most active ingredient in the relationship with Yahweh, Prophet Amos was commissioned to pronounce judgment on them. This message in the Prophet’s pronouncement was crafted in a judicial rhetoric where the accusation has been made against them and the people have been declared guilty. The allegation against them could not be refuted and, as such, the verdict of the judgment passed on them is that they are going to exile. The purpose of using this persuasive language in this rhetorical unit is firstly to persuade his audience to accept the verdict which says that they are guilty for neglecting justice and righteousness. Secondly, there is no opportunity for the people to change. Since Yahweh is described as a God of universal morality, the rhetorical strategy is to persuade the then world and the world to come that the judgment of Israel is imminent and justifiable. Again, the purpose of using rhetorical criticism in reading this text or unit is to present the *ipsissima verba* which are the exact words and sentences of the Prophet in order to come out with the Prophet’s intention that has a lot of implication for Ghanaian Christian community (Trible, 1994).

## Conclusion

Rhetorical criticism is the methodology used in the study. George Kennedy's model of five- staged procedure has been chosen for this study. These are rhetorical unit made up a pericope or a well defined text. The second step is rhetorical situation made up of the background of Prophet, historical background and the birth of the text. The historical background also entails the social, religious, economic, and political conditions that existed during 8<sup>th</sup> century Israel. In this study two texts, 4:4-5 and 5:21-27 which have been combined to form one literary unit is used.

Rhetorical invention uses both internal and external proofs. The internal proof shows by arranging the repudiation in a deteriorating manner. The arrangement is as follows: Yahweh is not taking delight in the solemn assemblies because he does not enjoy it. He will not accept anything they offer especially burnt and grain offerings and also not even want to look upon other offerings like the peace offering. If the sound of their songs is to be taken away then the melody of their harps will not be listened to leading to a complete hatred and rejection indicated by *śānē'* and *mā'as* 5:21a. 5:25 provides a historical proof which points to the external proof that it was possible for Yahweh to relate to the people in the wilderness without sacrifices and so if the people must offer sacrifices and celebrate festivals which will be acceptable then those rituals must be preceded by justice and righteousness.

The climax of the whole condemnation is reached in 5:21-23 starting with two strong words I hate, I despise. They are directly joined with each other without any conjunction forming the strongest hendiadys which registers



a total condemnation of the Israelite festivals despite a commendable zeal and the meticulousness of the people's ritual duties.

The anticlimax of the cult comes in 5:23 where the people are commanded to take away the noise, *hāmôn* of their song and the melody of their harps which will not be listened to. This condemnation has been done in a list in 5:21-23 made up of seven cultic activities in a heptad signifying a total rejection of the cultic activities.

Persuasive discourse is divided into three categories which are *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos*. Prophet Amos promoted a universal morality when he pronounced judgment against other nations including Judah for various crimes against humanity. In the religious indictment in 4:4-5 it focused on Bethel and Gilgal (shrines) which sarcastically invites the people there to increase transgression. The people were so zealous to the performance of the rituals that they made so much sacrifice to the extent that they were burning leavened food as thanksgiving offering in addition to the required offerings which are forbidden in the Levitical law (Lev 23:18). The people did not quietly offer these abominations as sacrifice but were proudly making a public show and announcing (4:5) those offerings. In view of the above the more the people went to the shrines with those offerings the more they multiplied their transgressions. The use of the satirical invitation of the people to the shrines is a powerful tool used by the Prophet to point out the transgressions in the Israelite cult to both the elite class and the ordinary people.

The people attracted the anger of Yahweh and were ostracized for three main reasons. In the first place Yahweh meets with the people during festival so for him to use the words, like *śānē'tî* and *mā'astî* for their festivals

means a total rejection for all that festivals stand for. Secondly, if Yahweh is not taking delight in, *'ārīḥa* the solemn assemblies seems to be a great hostility then this hostility eventually cuts the people off from himself completely. Thirdly, due to this hostility words used in 5:21-23 totally reject the cultic activities. These hostilities have been as a result of the people only committed to the cultic activities (4:4-5) and neglecting justice and righteousness which is the new paradigm shift for the cult (5:24). If the cult in the forty years' experience in the wilderness did not require sacrifices then bringing offerings without accompanying them with justice and righteousness will certainly attract Yahweh's sanctioning them to exile.

The Prophet rebukes the people using ridicules concerning the way they conducted themselves in the cult. The use of parody attracted the people to the message but captivated them. The message not only arouses the people's emotions but also display the sadness of the Prophet. To transgress is in the context of political authority which is against Yahweh authority. Due to their passion in their pursuit of the cultic activities being invited to the shrines in order to cast off the allegiance really whips up emotions, hence, the use of parody sustains interest which is intensified by the public show of the cultic activities. Hyperbole used in 4:4 is meant to make justice and righteousness appear more important, more desirable and more frightening if they fail to imbibe that.

The critique is climaxed with *śānē'*, and *mā'as*, used together in hendiadys and *śānē'* expresses an emotional attitude of strained relationship, evokes hatred and disdainful jealousy while *mā'as* is a condition of seclusion with Israel and also expressing a feeling of great displeasure. These two strong

disparaging words (*śānē'*, and *mā'as*) without any conjunction kindles emotion of hatred characterized with a vehement assault.

With this reason for this hendiadys (*śānē'*, and *mā'as*) to be used in 5:21 in the context of the Israelite festival stands for all the cultic activities initiating a list of the cultic activities. The essence of the cultic activities for Yahweh is curtailed in the sense that the solemn assemblies will no longer bring relief nor alleviate Yahweh's distress with the cultic activities. The above list of signs of Yahweh's rejection of the cultic activities shows the highest extent that music that catalyzes their faith in Yahweh is being taken away which really tortures their emotions.

This pronouncement will be the final straw that will break the camel's back on their emotions which might have brought them on their knees.

The credibility of the message is established by consistent appearance of Yahweh's declaration which forms an *inclusio*. These declarations prove that the Prophet's message is from Yahweh. Secondly, Amos' encounter with Amaziah records that he was gainfully employed but has to prophesy from his own resources to prove his point of credibility. Thirdly, there is a historical record of the fulfillment of the people of Israel going to exile hence establishing the credibility for the real readers today.

The pericope, 4:4-5; 5:21-27 consist of a poem (5:21-24) and prose (25-27) and the structure is made up of synonymous parallelism, 4:4-5, synthetic parallelism 5:21 followed by antithetic 5:22, synthetic parallelism 5:23 and finally synonymous parallelism, 5:24. Inseparable prepositions like *min* and *l<sup>e</sup>* have been put in different use. *min* used partitively, for adverbs of manner and place. *L<sup>e</sup>* used to express infinitive, distributiveness, construct and

directional. The special use of these prepositions is to explain the reason for the increased sinfulness at the shrines and to augment the persuasive styles. The pericope is reviewed of its success in meeting the rhetorical exigence and this brings out the effectiveness of the persuasion. The boring nature of the Israelite worship attracted Yahweh's judgment through the Prophet. The message has been crafted in a judicial covenant lawsuit fashion.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### IMPLICATION OF AMOS CRITIQUE OF THE ISRAELITE CULT FOR THE GHANAIAN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN THE PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC CHURCHES

#### Introduction

The Hebrew Bible did not only provide a historical account of the Israelite religion but has also made an immense contribution to the Christian heritage of monotheism and further laid foundation to its ethical purity requirement associated with it (Williams, 1972). Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches being referred to in this study have general characteristics like emphasis on healing, prophecy, seeing visions and other pneumatic phenomena (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005, p. 97). Even though the two traditions or persuasions have a lot in common that makes them to be treated as one big family, the difference between the two persuasions is that while the Pentecostals identify speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Bruner, 1997), the Charismatics, on the other hand, see other supernatural manifestations in the absence of speaking in tongues (Fanning, 2009). Examples of Pentecostal Churches are Christ Apostolic Church International; The Apostolic Church, Ghana; The Church of Pentecost; and Assemblies of God, Ghana (White, 2017) whiles that of the Charismatic Churches are the Synagogue Church of All Nations, Life Assembly Worship Centre and Anointed Palace Church and so on. In this study, the case of Assemblies of God is used to represent the Pentecostal Churches.

Facts about the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches may be relevant to modern Christianity and as such when Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches are to generally represent modern Christianity, then “the church of God” or simply “the church” (with small letter c) will be used but if there is any specific case being referred to in the context of Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches then the word “Churches” or “Church” (with capital C) will be used.

Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the founder of Christianity and he, also, is believed to have practically demonstrated justice and righteousness during his earthly ministry as it is expected in the book of Amos. Christians also believe in three in one God or trinity (Father, Son or Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit; 1 John 5:5-8) and they (Christians) ascribe worship to Jesus (Heb 13:8; Rev 1:8) and also pray through him (John 14: 13; Acts 4:10-12; Phil 2:7-11) hence Jesus Christ will be referred to, in this study as the God of the Christians or the Christian God. Christianity and all it has to do with their worship of God will be referred to as the Christian cult.

The doctrines of the Christian cult are the ethical teachings of the Christian Bible (both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament), especially Jesus’ teachings. Jesus’ teachings are expected to reflect in the lives and conduct of Christians. Even though the motivation to show love or relate cordially with one another alongside the ritual demands of Christianity also stem from a natural order and principles like it is demanded in the Israelite cult, the motivation is heightened by a demand to conform to stipulations of a covenantal relationship with Jesus Christ. This is summarised in Christ’s sayings as follows “He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all

your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind ...'You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-39).'" In the book of Amos, the Prophet condemned the situation where people committed themselves to offering sacrifices and tithes, observed festivals and solemn assemblies but oppressed the poor.

This chapter will discuss the implications of Amos' critique for the above Ghanaian Christian community. The discussion here will include the relationship between the Israelite cult and Ghanaian Christian cultic activities, concepts of justice and righteousness, impact of Christianity or the Christian cult in Ghana over the years, current moral decadence and its critique in the general society and specifically the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches will be discussed.

### **The relationship between the Israelite cult and Ghanaian Christian cult**

Many Christian rituals have been inherited from the 8<sup>th</sup> century Israelite cult and some of the rituals are going to be discussed. Prayer in Christianity is very important to such an extent that it seem to have replaced offering of sacrifices. Christians believe that Christ death has made a once and for all sacrifice and there is no need of it except what is done in monetary terms. Atwea mountains in Ghana can be compared with Bethel or any of the Israelite cultic centres where sacrifices are made. In the case of Atwea in Ghana, prayers are presented as a form of burnt sacrifice to the Christian God. Many Christians embarking on trips to the mountain also correspond to the Israelite pilgrimage festival motif inherited from ancient Israel.

The Christian Churches attending services on Sundays (first day of the week, *yôm ri 'šôn* in Hebrew) adopted by the early Church (Acts 20:7) did so

from one of the two holidays of the feast of unleavened bread, which are the first and the last days of the week which were ceremonial Sabbaths (Rodríguez, 2005). Celebration of Easter by Christians during March/April coincides with *Nisan* at the time of feast of unleavened bread. During the period of Christian festivals, various churches embark on pilgrimages called conventions during which members travel to gatherings for solemn assemblies at different places.

Solemn assemblies organised during festivals of the Israelite cult are characterised by a joyous and exciting music. This exciting and joyous music described as ebullient (overflowing excitement) by Wolff (1977) has also been continued in the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches, and this forms part of the worship service during gatherings. This can be explained by the fact that, in the text (5:23), music in the Israelite worship during solemn assemblies are very loud and the people are excited. This is what is seen in most Ghanaian Christian praise and worship.

To Christians, singing, praising and worshipping also form a major part of sacrifices which have replaced animal sacrifices, hence, playing a major role in Christian worship and festivals. With the exception of Israelite animal sacrifices which are made by the Ghanaian Christian churches in monetary terms, there has been lot of continuity of the Israelite rituals in the Ghanaian Christian worship.

### **The concept of Justice (*mišpāṭ*) and Righteousness (*ṣ̣ēdāqāh*) in both 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE Israel and Modern Ghana**

The 8<sup>th</sup> century was a period during which a privileged few in Israel were enjoying unprecedented prosperity while most Israelites were in serious



poverty (Mariottini, 2007). Justice and righteousness are noted to be the ideal principles which were missing in the midst of the people and that was what Amos was criticising in his preaching (Mariottini, 2007).

Justice (*mišpāt*), in the book of Amos, according to Mariottini (2007), is the result of seeking and loving good (Amos 5:15). In other words, it is the attitude of seeking to do good to others in order to create a good relationship between persons and Yahweh and also with the members in the community (Mariottini, 2007). In this case, the righteous person does what is right to other persons living in the community (Mariottini, 2007).

Justice and righteousness (*mišpāt û šedāqāh*) seem to differ slightly from each other but must always coincide or go together (Heschel, 2001). While *mišpāt* denotes a mode of action, *šedāqāh* stands for a quality of a person in the prophetic books (Heschel, 2001). Secondly, Justice or *mišpāt*, means exact or strict or giving a person his or her due in order to ensure equilibrium while righteousness, *šedāqāh* means benevolence, kindness, generosity, or having a “burning compassion for the oppressed” (Heschel, 2001, p. 256). Heschel (2001) further opines that, *mišpāt* in the prophetic books, did not always mean equal legality but bias towards or in favour of the poor or leaning towards mercy for the widows, orphans, sick, poor and the weak in society or showing care and love for the poor and the oppressed. The above pair of words (justice and righteousness) was the standard of life for assessing the moral and religious life for the Israelite citizens, and the same goes for Ghanaian Pentecostal/Charismatic community (Okyere, 2015).

### **Impact of the Christian cult in Ghana**

Even though Ghana is a secular state, religion and politics have been “inextricably linked since the pre-colonial times, with Christianity identified with the colonial rule” (Dovlo, 2005, p. 633). During pre-colonial times, Christianity became the primary or dominant religion (Dovlo, 2005). Abamfo Atiemo points out that when Kwame Nkrumah ascended the presidency after independence, he tried to marginalise or relegate religion to the background and get religion out of public life but that was curtailed by Dr. Busia (Atiemo, 2010). Dr Busia brought back the situation where Christianity regained its national preference in public life which is referred to as the “fear of God” (Atiemo, 2010). This is illustrated by the changing of the national anthem to begin with God (Atiemo, 2010).

During Acheampong’s regime in 1977, when there had been a long period of drought and the crops had failed, resulting in a serious famine, there was a general feeling of divine displeasure and so the people sought divine forgiveness and intervention by the help of Pastors in a “National Week of Repentance and Prayer” (Atiemo, 2010, Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005).

Impact of Christianity over the years has penetrated into the public and official spaces. Atiemo (2010) also points to prayer sessions that are conducted at state functions and then institutions such as parliament and the judiciary before daily sessions. The presidency also participates in prayers to such a level that President Atta Mills was accused by some members of the NPP of turning the castle into a prayer camp (Ghanaweb, 2015). It is also reported in 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017 edition of citifmonline.com concerning the government sponsoring a group made up of Pastors, musicians and religious

leaders to embark on a pilgrimage to Israel to pray for the nation giving an indication of the value that the Ghanaian state places on the Christian God (citifmonline.com, 2017).

The most monumental contribution of the Ghanaian state towards Christianity is the cutting of sod by the President on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017 for the construction of a national interdenominational cathedral which is “meant to be a gesture of thanksgiving to the almighty for the blessings he has showered and continues to shower on our nation” (Graphiconline, 2017). Thanksgiving expressed by the state led by the President in the form of building a cathedral can be seen as a form of thanksgiving offering, *tōdāh* by the state to the Christian God.

Freedom of worship allowed in the Ghanaian secular state serves as an advantage for Christianity to flourish and eventually become the dominant religion to the extent of influencing situations of leadership of the nation right from the beginning of post-independence and as such gave much attention to the Christian cult and its activities.

The passion of the leadership of Ghana and the people continues to be tilted favourably towards Christianity over the years such that many groups and fellowships are formed to be praying regularly for the nation. Women’s Aglow Fellowship has been organising monthly Saturday morning prayer meetings for the nation at the Independence square and the same replicated at the Jubilee parks in the regional capitals simultaneously.

Apart from national fellowship meeting at various places, other gatherings where a lot of people gather to pray which also serve as camps and centres of Christian pilgrimages have been identified in Ghana. Buzz Ghana

(2018) has identified seven of such camps in this country. They are Moments of Glory Prayer Army (MOGPA) led by Rev Osei Bonsu, Mount Horeb by Rev Nii Okai, Hebron by Elder Donkor, Abasua Prayer Camp established by late Rev Osei Asibey, Bethel Prayer Camp by Rev Vida Mensah, Achimota forest used by different churches and groups and finally Resurrection Power New Generation Prayer Camp by Rev Anthony Boakye. Apart from these rituals that take place at every gathering, there are others that are occasional and these include festivals like the Easter and the Lord's supper which are the common Christian rituals that take place.

The above discussion demonstrates how zealous Ghanaian Christians including both political leaders and ordinary Christian citizens are concerning Christian rituals in the cult. As the people of the ancient Israel were so zealous with the Israelite cult of Yahweh, so one finds Ghanaian Christians to be. Despite all the zeal with the Christian cult by the Christian leaders, the elite in society as well as the ordinary citizens' morality has got decayed over the years. A brief general moral decay in society will be looked at since people in the church forms part of the society and focus will be on Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches.

### **Current moral decadence in Ghanaian society and its critique**

From the above discussion, the Christian cult in Ghana, right from the time of independence, has made so much influence in all sectors of national and public spheres which demonstrates the zeal of the people to the Christian cult. Some of the cultic activities undertaken by most of Churches mentioned in this study are attending church services on Sunday mornings and Friday all

nights, paying tithes, making frequent fat cash donations as offerings, embarking on long days of fasting and prayer.

Atiemo (2010) observes that, despite the leanings of Ghanaians towards Christianity or the Christian cult, there is a perceived general collapse of public morality which constitutes the ethos of the Christian community under review. One will have expected that if someone or a group of people profess to be Christians, they will show high moral or ethical uprightness, but the case of the Ghanaian society is on the contrary. Even though the percentage population claiming to be Christians is very high (71.2%) corruption abounds as it was in the period of Amos. The general collapse or decay of morality over the years in a highly Christianised country where the people are committed to cultic or sacred activities is seen in terms of corruption and bribery, neglect of the poor and the sick, fornication and adultery, stealing and so on. This general moral decay is going to be discussed in the context of Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches.

### **Moral decadence discovered in the Pentecostal/ Charismatic Churches**

Kudadjie and Aboagye –Mensah see the role of the church as the moral conscience of society in the sense that the Church claims a moral right and obligation to intervene in national affairs (Saa-Dade, 2015). The church's role in moral conscience is expected to be seen through political education (Yirenkyi, 2000).

Instead of the various churches taking care of the poor, sick and the weak among the members, diverse forms of exploitation, abuses and lack of care exist in recent times in Africa, in general, as well as in Ghana, in particular. Siyabonga Nyezi (2013) observes that a lot of men of God or

pastors who spread the gospel are multimillionaires running big businesses while their followers are poor. Due to the nature of diverse afflictions of poverty and diseases of a lot of followers, they are in desperate need of a miracle which comes with huge costs (Nyezi, 2013). This study reveals that sacrifices and tithes in the Israelite cult have been continued in the Christian cult in monetary terms which makes giving money in church a necessary ritual in Christianity. Even though giving money in the church is one of the rituals in the Christian cult, from experience, some Pastors make giving look as if the only way to obtain God's favour is through giving. This picture painted portrays coercion which amounts to exploitation.

The exploitation becomes more obvious in the form of payment of very exorbitant consultation fees (for example Gh¢500 consultation fee is charged by Pastor Christian Andrews also known *Sofo Kyiri Abosom*) when one needs one-on-one appointment with the man of God for "counseling". Various fees are assigned to certain prophetic direction (*Akwankyerε*) and selling of miracle items like anointing oils (*Agradaa* or thunder oil, Destiny and Breakthrough oils, Back to sender oil and so on) holy water (*Yesu mogya* or blood of Jesus) pomade (*Abayifoꝝ nku* or pomade against witchcraft) and soaps. All these monies derived from these merchandize are not channeled into helping the poor but to maintain their luxurious and extravagant lifestyle (Nyezi, 2013). A typical example of extravagant life demanding huge expenses is Rev Obofour of Anointed Palace Church buying a brand new ford Mustang (GH¢100,000 worth) car for his daughter as her ninth birthday gift (Peacefmonline, 2018). Luxurious lifestyle that was led by the elite in society in ancient Israel described in Amos 4:1-3 is the same being perpetrated

by most of the Ghanaian Priests. In the case of Ghanaian Priests who are supposed to lead the people in worshipping God through the ritual activities in the Christian cult are rather guilty of extorting money from members.

Interaction with members of Akim Oda Central Assemblies of God Church in the Eastern Region reveals that various departments like men, women, youth and children crown their week celebrations on the Sundays with fund raising and periodic revivals that are also crowned with fund raisings. During their celebrations, many strategies are employed to collect money from the people. Other forms of fund raising like Pastors' appreciation, major and minor harvests are done in the year. Fund raising within the year can be maximized in the form of competition among members of the church grouping themselves according to the day each one is born in the week. In other words they are grouped into seven and competing among themselves. This kind of fund raising coerces people especially the poor to give the little they have.

With all these fund raisings that take place in the mentioned Church above, there is no proper welfare or any social intervention through which the poor in the Church are being taken care of. There is a case in hand in this Assemblies of God Church where a single parent woman who lost her job because she became almost blind and has to depend on friends outside the Church to cater for her two sons' school fees. According to an observer's account of woman's plight, these boys are active organists playing for the Church when they came on vacation but the Church is not giving them any support to pay for their fees. In this case there is a neglect of care and support for the sick and the weak which are the ingredients of justice and righteousness.

What the people call welfare fund is from monthly contributions from members which are given to those in good standing when they are bereaved, wedding, or naming their children. Even though the church is not a welfare club, as it preaches Christ who fed hundred's in his earthly ministry, the church must be seen to set the example of how to care for the needy and also feed the hungry so that the members can follow. The worse part of the author's three-year experience in the Church was the total neglect of the Lord's Supper which is part of the Christian cult that members must benefit from. This means the Pastors or the Church was only interested in gathering money from the congregation and neglected both social and spiritual needs of the members. In the ancient Israel, as stated in this study, the Priests neglected their core mandate of teaching all that concerns the cult and got interested in the fees and sacrifices that the people brought to the temple. It is the same thing that showed up in the case of Akim Oda Church where the Lord's supper was neglected.

From the discussion on the activities of the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches so far, one can say that the collapse of morality discussed has affected the church's care for the members such that the church seem to distant itself from the sufferings of its members. This is what some scholars including Sanders (1970) observe in his research. According to him, the sin of the Ghanaian church is living in isolation from the agonies and struggles of the people and some of them are exploiting their people (Sanders, 1970). In this sin, Sanders (1970) points out that "it is deceitful to claim that the God of the church desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth while its adherents remain aloof from humanity's hurt" (p. 35). Since the



church is not doing much and not only staying aloof but even actively exploiting its members, then a lot of modern Christian churches including Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches are giving a deceitful worship and, as such, are being condemned equally. The real business of the church “is not to tolerate evil” but to speak the abrasive word of God to any social condition that shackles men” (Sanders, 1970, p. 35). This is the prophetic role the church must play in Ghanaian society.

Quite apart from the church’s moral and social failure already discussed, certain individuals who may be part of the elite in society who are not ordinary members of the church but elders are expected to live a life of high moral standard. Many of such church elders occupying high positions in the nation have failed in that regard. An example, Justice Ajet Nassam, formerly of Accra high court, is one of the 34 judges who was caught on Anas Aremeyaw Anas’ tape receiving a total of GH¢16000 from one of three accused, Bernard Sallah in order to free him (Graphic.com, 2015). These accused persons allegedly stole GCB bank cheque booklets belonging to Tema Oil Refinery, forged the signature of the general manager and the financial director in order to cash one million Ghana cedis from the company’s account (Graphic.com, 2015). This judge, Ajet Nassam being an elite in society, is one of the elders of the Accra branch of Synagogue Church of all Nations who has been leading delegations to represent the general overseer in presenting donations to orphanages, prisons and the needy in society, which is part of the Church’s activities. In the case of this discussion, Justice Ajet Nassam may represent other elites whose zeal for the ritual activities of their churches have been recognised by being given a leadership role in the church. In spite of this

commendable zeal in rituals in the church, the judges among the elite church elders, like Ajet Nassam, will still secretly pervert justice. In the case of the conduct of the Ghanaian judges explained above like Ajet Nassam, “the poor and the needy are bent until they are ground into the earth” (Koch, 1983, p. 48) as it is found happening in the days of Amos. Furthermore, the poor in the Ghanaian case is at the mercy of the rich (Koch, 1983) or those who can pay as it was in ancient Israel.

Having dealt extensively with the implications for Ghanaian Christian community in the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches the study will now look at the summary, conclusion and recommendations in the next chapter which is the final chapter.

### **Conclusion**

The Hebrew Bible has been a Christian heritage which contains moral teachings that Jesus Christ, the founder of the Christian cult, approved and exemplified making the critique of the Israelite cult of Yahweh by Prophet Amos relevant to the Christian community today. Some of the activities of the Israelite cult inherited by Ghanaian Christian community are going to the mountains to pray, embarking on pilgrimages and festivals like the Easter and the Lord’s supper, sacrifices like the thanksgiving, freewill offerings, paying of vows, tithes which are made in monetary terms, and solemn assemblies on Sundays and other days. These activities take place in the Christian churches and the members are actively involved in them.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century justice denoted a mode of action of doing good and the attitude of leaning towards the weak and the vulnerable while righteousness is the quality of a person’s character towards having compassion

to show kindness to the oppressed. Even though Ghana is a secular state Christianity is a dominant religion and has a lot of impact on the scheme of things in the country. Some of the impacts are the national prayer organized from time to time at various places among the ruling class, the government sponsoring overseas pilgrimage and sod cutting for a national cathedral as a *tōdāh* to the Christian God.

Despite all these influence and impact on Ghanaian society there is a general collapse of public morality cutting across all manner of social class with much emphasis on the church of God. Commendable zeal is displayed in the activities of the Christian cult like prayer sessions in many places by many people including ruling the ruling class, fastings, tithes and offerings in monetary terms and so on. Despite being meticulous in the activities of the cult, various means like taking exorbitant fees for both counseling and sales of miracle items are used by some of the Pastors to oppress and exploit the people. Instead of these Pastors leading the church to show kindness, love and care for the people they neglect their social and spiritual duties and this is what the Prophet criticized.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The findings from the kind of worship given to Yahweh in the Israelite cult of Yahweh and the Christian cult have certain similarities which have been summarised in what Isaiah of Jerusalem said in 29:13 as follows: “The Lord said: Because these people draw near with their mouths and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their worship of me is a human commandment learned by rote”. From this quotation, the people’s worship is only with their mouth which shows in the emphasis they place on the performance of cultic rites rather than the commitment of the heart, which has to do with justice and righteousness. This same quotation was used in Mark 7:6,7 by Jesus in addressing the people who were following him, and this is what has been condemned by Amos the Prophet. The implications of such situation for Ghana have been shown in this study. The main task of this study is to analyze Amos’ critique of the Israelite cult of Yahweh and bring out its implication for Ghanaian Christian community from the Catholic and some selected Protestant Churches.

#### Summary

Cult is expressed in the sacrificial system and the ceremonies associated with the temple worship. Every religion has three main dimensions that are cult, myth and ethos and, to remain loyal to Yahweh, the ceremonial laws must not be divorced from the moral laws. The Prophet saw Yahweh as a universal ruler and a moral judge and as such condemned Israelites’ meticulous performance of rituals and neglect of morality. This situation in

ancient Israel is what is being investigated and the implications for the Ghanaian Christian in Pentecostal/ Charismatic Churches will be drawn.

Persuasion and suatory types of communication in rhetorical criticism have been identified in the Hebrew Bible and deliberative, epideictic and judicial categories of persuasive discourses are also identified in the classical tradition. The text chosen for the study (Amos 4:4-5; 5:21-27) is an example of judicial rhetoric. A Prophet can be described as an authorized representative of God endowed to declare God's word in every situation while condemning anything which is against God's will. The Prophet's work involves both foretelling and forth telling with much emphasis on forth telling.

Some of the impact of the cult and doctrines on ethos are the Prophets' communication of messages from Yahweh to revive their obedience to Yahweh through their preaching and leading them towards observance of the law by calling for Israelite political and social reforms. These reforms championed were in condemning the evil committed by various people like people in government, Priests and business people. The messages of the Prophets centred on eschatology, served as a moral conscience and ethical monotheism.

Cult is defined as the visible and audible expression of the relation between the congregation and the deity. This cult was influenced by the ancient Near Eastern environment from which it evolved. This influence on Israelite cult came as a result of close relationship with the Canaanite culture.

Yahweh was unknown to the patriarchs but rather worshiped the Canaanite god, *El*. The name Yahweh for the Israelite God was associated

with group of *Shasu* nomads in the Sinai Peninsula who had the encounter with the people. As the Israelite religion developed the Prophets emerged to emphasize on his moral demands through their teachings that portrays Yahweh as God of universal morality.

Covenant is referred to as binding agreement 'fastened' with an oath and occasionally reinforced by a ritual sacrifice of an animal. To maintain such covenantal relationship are the sanctioned -sealed stipulations which must be followed by both parties. There are two forms of covenants are the parity and suzerainty-vassal.

Two schools of thoughts are presented on covenant motif in the message of the eighth century Prophets. The second school of thought is what is agreed on for discussion in this study. The eighth century understanding of covenant is presented in both historical and sociological perspectives and out of these perspectives, the concepts of natural laws and monanthropology emerge respectively which form the basis of Israelite doctrines.

Sacrifices and festivals are the most important rituals that are performed by worshippers which include holocaust and communion sacrifices. The purposes of these sacrifices are to ensure the people's devotion to Yahweh, an occasion to fellowship with him and to enhance fellowship between Yahweh and his people. Tithing is another offering to Yahweh and it is done by giving a tenth of possession. Tithing became part of eighth century practice which the Prophet mentions in Amos 4:4 but its stipulation of giving it every three years might be the work of redaction in later years.

Feast of unleavened bread, feast of weeks and feast of tabernacle are suggested as the kinds of festivals being rejected but described as the times of

great intimacy with Yahweh Sacrifices dealt with are burnt, peace, thanksgiving, freewill and grain offerings and tithes in addition to the three festivals. Solemn assemblies accompanied by music were organized during the festivals.

### Conclusions

Rhetorical criticism is the methodology used in the study. George Kennedy's model of five- staged procedure has been chosen for this study,. In this study two texts, 4:4-5 and 5:21-27 which have been combined to form one literary unit is used. Rhetorical invention uses both internal and external proofs. The internal proof is shown by arranging the repudiation in a deteriorating manner as follows: Yahweh is not taking delight in the solemn assemblies because he does not enjoy it. He will not accept anything they offer especially burnt and grain offerings and would not even want to look upon other offerings like the peace offering. If the sound of their songs is to be taken away then the melody of their harps will not be listened to leading to a complete hatred and rejection indicated by *śānē'* and *mā'as* 5:21a. 5:25 provides a historical proof which points to the external proof that Yahweh related to the people of Israel in the wilderness without sacrifices and so if the people must offer sacrifices and celebrate festivals which will be acceptable to Yahweh then those rituals must be preceded by justice and righteousness.

The climax of the whole condemnation is reached in 5:21-23 starting with two strong words I hate, I despise. They are directly joined with each other without any conjunction forming the strongest hendiadys which registers

a total condemnation of the Israelite festivals despite a commendable zeal and the meticulousness of the people's ritual duties.

The anticlimax of the cult comes in 5:23 where the people are commanded to take away the noise, *hāmôn* of their song and the melody of their harps which will not be listened to. This condemnation has been done in a list in 5:21-23 made up of seven cultic activities in a heptad signifying a total rejection of the cultic activities.

Persuasive discourse is divided into three *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos*. Prophet Amos promoted a universal morality when he pronounced judgment against other nations including Judah for various crimes against humanity. The religious indictment in 4:4-5 focuses on Bethel and Gilgal (shrines) which sarcastically invites the people there to increase transgression. Even though the people's zeal to the performance of the rituals is commendable sacrificing an abomination according to the Levitical law and not living right is what is being down played through sarcasm. The people attracted the anger of Yahweh and were ostracized for three main reasons. The use of parody in the Prophet's message attracted the people to the message but captivated them. The message not only arouses the people's emotions but also display the sadness of the Prophet. To transgress is in the context of political authority which is against Yahweh's authority. Due to their passion in their pursuit of the cultic activities being invited to the shrines in order to cast off the allegiance really whips up emotions, hence, the use of parody sustains interest which is intensified by the public show of the cultic activities. Hyperbole used in 4:4 is meant to make justice and righteousness appear more important, desirable and more frightening.



The critique is climaxed with *śānē'*, and *mā'as*, used together in hendiadys and *śānē'* expressing an emotional attitude of strained relationship, evokes hatred and disdainful jealousy while *mā'as* is a condition of seclusion with Israel and also expressing a feeling of great displeasure. These two strong disparaging words (*śānē'*, and *mā'as*) without any conjunction kindles emotion of hatred characterized with a vehement assault.

With this reason for this hendiadys (*śānē'*, and *mā'as*) to be used without conjunction in 5:21 in the context of the Israelite festival stands for all the cultic activities initiating a list of the cultic activities. The essence of the cultic activities for Yahweh is curtailed in the sense that the solemn assemblies will no longer bring relief nor alleviate Yahweh's distress with the cultic activities. The above list of signs of Yahweh's rejection of the cultic activities shows the highest extent that music that catalyzes their faith in Yahweh is being taken away which tortures their emotions. The anticlimax of the message which can be compared to a death sentence is that Yahweh himself is taking them to prison in Damascus. The credibility of the message is established by consistent appearance of Yahweh's declaration which forms an *inclusio*. Secondly, Amos' encounter with Amaziah records that he was gainfully employed but has to prophesy from his own resources to prove his point of credibility. Thirdly, there is a record of the fulfillment of the people of Israel going to exile hence supporting credibility for the real readers today.

The pericope, 4:4-5; 5:21-27 consist of a poem (5:21-24) and prose (25-27) and the structure is made up of synonymous parallelism, 4:4-5, synthetic parallelism, 5:21 followed by antithetic, 5:22, synthetic parallelism 5:23 and finally synonymous parallelism, 5:24. Inseparable prepositions like

*min* and *l<sup>e</sup>* have been put in different use. *min* used partitively, for adverbs of manner and place. *l<sup>e</sup>* used to express infinitive, distributiveness, construct and directional. The special use of these prepositions is to explain the reason for the increased sinfulness at the shrines and to augment the persuasive styles.

The pericope is reviewed of its success in meeting the rhetorical exigence and this brings out the effectiveness of the persuasion. The boring or hypocritical nature of the Israelite worship attracted Yahweh's judgment through the Prophet. The message has been crafted in a judicial covenant lawsuit fashion. In the Prophet's message in the pericope the verbs used starts with a *Qal* conjugation which is basic form of expression giving the impression of starting a song with a low key. It then changes to *Hiphil* indicating the people's deliberate involvement in the moral decay of the shrines. If the people are involved in deteriorating the shrines with sacrificing abomination then certainly they are guilty and this is spelt out with the use of a *Piel* conjugation which says they are certainly guilty of increasing rebellion at the shrines. The ideal condition or the expectation of the speaker, which says righteousness and Justice be rolled down, is expressed using jussive, *Niphal*. If the people have been proven guilty and there no way for the people to make amends then a *Hiphil* is used to pronounce judgment which means Yahweh himself is going to drag them to exile.

Several literary devices to enhance the style of persuasion are satire which is meant to ridicule the cult in order to down play it. This down play is a form of attack. Hendiadys is also used to strengthen emphasis in order to portray a rejection. Heptad another literary device is used to show a complete rejection. Dialectic negation is also used in negating the ritual aspect of

worship in order to promote justice and righteousness. In order to enhance stylistics, the satirical invitation is garnished with hyperbolic expression in the context of the tithing that must be presented at the shrines.

From the research, two authorial intentions can be proposed from the rhetorical criticism. The first intent can be stated from the fact that the people are zealous with the cultic rites to the extent of offering an abomination, neglecting justice and righteousness and making noise about that, hence, the above intention is shown by a sarcastic downplay of the cultic rites. Secondly, it is to present a vivid picture of the situation of the cult from Yahweh's perspective.

The popular assertion of most scholars including Bright (1972), Mowvley (1979) and Ward (1969) is that Amos did not state why Bethel and Gilgal, the Israelite shrines are sinful and as such several suggestions have been given which include the fact that Jerusalem is the only approved cultic centre and so any other cultic centre is sinful. The study reveals that the reason for the sinfulness of the shrines has been stated by the Prophet and the reason is that the people offered leaven food in addition to unleavened food which was an abomination. In view of this the more they sent those sacrifices the more they increased rebellion.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century justice denoted a mode of action of doing good and the attitude of leaning towards the weak and the vulnerable whiles righteousness is the quality of a person's character towards having compassion to show kindness to the oppressed. Some of the impacts made by the Christian cult are the national prayer organized from time to time at various places

among the ruling class, the government sponsoring overseas pilgrimages and sod cutting for a national cathedral as a *tōdāh* to the Christian God.

Despite all these influence and impact on Ghanaian society there is a general collapse of public morality cutting across all manner of social class with much emphasis on the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches. Commendable zeal is displayed in the activities of the Christian cult like prayer sessions in many places by many people including the ruling class, fasting, tithes and offerings in monetary terms, celebration of festivals like Easter and the Lord's supper which are inherited from ancient Israel. Despite being meticulous in the activities of the cult, various means of exploitations like taking exorbitant fees for both counseling and sales of miracle items, Pastors coerce members to take money from them and refuse to care for them people and also neglect their business of celebrating the Lord's supper with the people which the Prophet criticized.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made.

Firstly, for national development to be enhanced in a highly Christianised country like Ghana, this thesis recommends that this in-depth study be extended to the ruling class and public sector workers since Amos' message has so much implication for their work ethics.

Secondly, the study revealed that some members of the elite class who are members of the churches in the position to administer justice on behalf of the weak rather deny them and so it recommended that Pastors focus their

messages on virtues like justice and righteousness in order to reform such individuals.

The study also recommends that the Christian church in general and the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches in particular must implement programmes like giving scholarships to the needy but brilliant students, organize employable skill training for their unemployed youth in the church, take care of the sick and the widow which are virtues of righteousness.

Churches must offer biblical formation with much focus on the prophetic literature for their ministers. This can equip them to effectively teach the whole concept of justice and righteousness in churches. The understanding of justice and righteousness from the prophetic literature especially the book of Amos will help in reduction of corruption and help to reform society.

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