"THE PEOPLE OF GOD": SCRIPTURE, RACE AND IDENTITY IN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

Elom Dovlo

Abstract: *This paper reviews how Africans in the Diaspora and in Ghana have interpreted race and identity within the context of scripture. It discusses some of the influences of African Diasporic religious movements on Ghanaian biblical identity construction. But the main aim is to probe, using Ghana as our example, how continental Africans have constructed positive identities from scripture in the face of the question of race. The deliberate choice of Ghana is to use a familiar context which is different from the extremely suppressive history of the Americas and Apartheid southern Africa, yet has long history of religious exchange with the African Diaspora.*

Key Words: People of God; racism; sense of God; lost tribes of Israel; new Israel; diaspora; 'other'.

Introduction

Two books that influence discourse on Scripture and Race are Colin Kidd's *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600-2000*[1] and Sylvester A. Johnson's, The *Myth of Ham in Nineteenth-Century American Christianity: Race, Heathens, and the People of God.*[2] Colin Kidd argues that though the Bible has been

> … mobilised in the pursuit of certain theories of race, ethnic identities, racial prejudices and anti racist sentiment. […] The Bible itself is largely colour-blind: racial differences rarely surface in its narratives. The Bible rarely tells us very little about the racial appearance of the figures and groups who feature within it. Even in the Old Testament which is, of course, preoccupied with the doings of the people of Israel, there are very few attempts to engage – except on the level of

[1] Colin Kidd, *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600 - 2000* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
[2] Sylvester A. Johnson, *The Myth of Ham in Nineteenth-Century American Christianity, Race, Heathens and the People of God* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

> religious observance – with the ethnic differences between the nation of Israel and the peoples and cultures of the surrounding world.[3]

Kidd sees scripture as a screen on which "…its so-called interpreters project their racial attitudes, fears and fantasies, (and declares) so race itself is a construct, an interpretation of nature rather than an unambiguous marker of basic natural differences within humankind."[4] He argues that race has no substance in either scripture or in science[5] and exists "only as a property of our minds not their bodies."[6]

Yet Colin Kidd demonstrates how many of such racist minds have misused scripture to vilify African peoples, and how the uses of scripture in constructions of race were theologically mistaken for divine origin of the nature of a people. Further, he argued that such pseudo-historical constructions of race are more manipulated by latter interpreters who give more racial significance to scripture within their own historical milieu.

Scripture is manipulated to construct race through stereotyping a people, differentiating a people, designating a people, judging a people negatively, etc., based on models of the 'other' in the scripture. Racism may be defined as "...a form of racial prejudice that was justified by the dogma that some groups of people inherit characteristics- intellectual and temperamental- that make them inferior to others."[7]

The biblical myth of Ham in Genesis 9:18-27 is the main scripture used to perpetrate and justify racism against blacks. The interpretation of the myth by Jews,[8] Christians and Moslems[9] depict Noah cursing his son Ham with blackness for dishonoring him, and cursing Ham's descend-

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[3] Kidd, *The Forging of Races*, 1, 3.
[4] Kidd, *The Forging of Races*, 1-3.
[5] Kidd, *The Forging of Races*, 13.
[6] Kidd, *The Forging of Races*, 18.
[7] Ayanna, "The Hamitic (Semitic) Hypothesis and Scientific Racism," *Rastafari Speaks Interactive*, November 15, 2002, accessed 1 April 2015, http://www.rastafarispeaks.com/community/modules.php?name=Newsfile=p rint&sid=90
[8] Reuven Firestone, *Who are the Real Chosen People? The Meaning of Chosenness in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2008).
[9] Reuven Firestone, "Islamic Exegesis on the so-called 'Curse of Ham,'" in *Adaptations and Innovations: Studies on the Interaction between Jewish and Islamic Thought and Literature from the early Middle Ages to the late Twentieth Century*, ed. Tzvi Langerman (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 51-66.

ants into slavery. In the 18th and 19th centuries, scientific racism supported this myth with various 'scientific' reasons purported as empirical proof of the biological existence of the Negro stereotype.

As noted by Ayanna,

> …The legacy of this myth has been a false construction of the African that made him abhorrent, unnatural and his skin colour, a mark of one who is morally and spiritually bereft…(and) The "big business" of the Atlantic Slave Trade was justified by the believed inferiority of the Africans.[10]

Sylvester A. Johnson's book probes how from time to time, dependent on new encounters between people who have received scripture, and those who have not, the former contrast themselves as 'the people of God' with those they are in historical encounter with. He analyses the use of Hamite myth as justification for the subjugation of blacks in the Americas and exposes how African American Christians faced a dilemma of locating themselves in 'biblical history' through Ham. On the one hand, within the rhetoric of 19th Century racism, to deny Hamitic descent would have denied blacks of human status and historical significance;[11] on the other hand, accepting it assigned blacks to heathenism and the so-called curse of Ham which was part of the same narrative.

Johnson's concern about the strategies that African Americans have employed in reading modern racial identities into 'biblical history' as a means of authenticating themselves as legitimate with God, may also be relevant to African Christians. In the struggle for political independence, some nationalists in Africa imputed racism to scripture and rejected the Bible as a pivot of white racism against Africans. Neo Indigenous Religious Movements in Africa, such as Godianism in Nigeria and Afrikania Mission in Ghana, express similar views. They see the Bible as scripture forged by Whites and used against Africans as an

[10] Ayanna, "African Diaspora: The Hamitic (Semitic) Hypothesis and Scientific Racism," Rasrafari Speak Interactive, Thursday, December 30, 15:51:33 UTC, accessed April 1, 2015, http://www.rastafarispeaks.com/community/modules. php? Name=News&file=article&sid=90
[11] Johnson, *The Myth of Ham*, 93.

instrument of slavery, colonization, apartheid and subjugation.[12] Therefore, they urge that one cannot authentically and spiritually be an African and be a Christian at the same time.[13]

However, many African Christians do claim positive identities from scripture and identify themselves as authentic heirs of biblical legacy. Similar to claims by African Diaspora religious groups, these continental African Christians have gone into scripture to claim a respectable place for blacks and have even contributed to the struggle for African liberation on the basis of the Gospel's promise of redemption and salvation to all peoples.[14]

Moreover, most ordinary Christians in West Africa would not read race into scripture. They read identity more in terms of redemption and grace, and appropriate for themselves biblical notions of 'people (of) God' as people whom He redeems.

But herein lies the dilemma Sylvester Johnson has wittingly pointed out, that black Americans' motivation for embracing Christian identity were informed by a religious desire to escape from the label of spiritual darkness, associated with the non-Christian. This, Johnson noted, informed ambivalence towards black pre-Christian and non-Christian religious forms by even African American missionaries of the AME Zion Church in Africa.[15] The same attitude is often manifested by African Christians on the continent towards those who are traditionalists and therefore remain the 'other'.

This paper reviews how Africans in the Diaspora and in Ghana have interpreted race and identity within the context of scripture. It discusses some of the influences of African Diasporic religious movements on Ghanaian biblical identity construction. But our main aim would be to probe, using Ghana as our example, how continental Africans have constructed positive identities from scripture in the light of the question of

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[12] Osofo Kofi Ameve, *The Origin of the Bible: The Old and New Testament* (Accra: Afrikania Mission, 1991).
[13] Osofo Kofi Ameve, *The Divine Acts: Holy Scripture for the Sankofa Faith (Afrikanism*) (Accra: African Renaissance Mission, nd.) and Osofo Okomfo Damuah, *Miracle at the Shrine: Religious and Revolutionary Miracle in Ghana* (Accra: Afrikania Mission, nd.).
[14] See John S. Pobee, *Kwame Nkrumah and the Church in Ghana: 1949-1966* (Denver: Academic-Books, 2000), and Harris W. Mobley, *The Ghanaian Image of the Missionary* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970), for details of Ghanaian clergy who were part of the struggle for Independence and its aftermath.
[15] Johnson, *The Myth of Ham*, 88.

race. Our deliberate choice of Ghana is to use a familiar context which is different from the extremely suppressive history of the Americas and Apartheid southern Africa, yet has a long history of religious exchange with the African Diaspora.

The African Diaspora Dilemma

The myth of Ham is the main narrative in scripture used by Europeans to mask racism against Africans worldwide. Sylvester A. Johnson and several other scholars point out how the Hamite myth about blacks is used as justification for subjugation of blacks in the Americas. This has been the case in Apartheid South Africa as well.[16] Johnson has problematised the dilemma of African American Christians, who had to claim Ham as an ancestor to locate themselves in 'biblical history' and by default, the attending meanings vilified Ham and Ham's descendants as the evilest human beings in history.[17]

Interestingly, rather than turn away from scripture, African Diaspora Christians locate their identity in biblical history by accepting the designated descent from Ham. But the myth of Ham was reinterpreted in the Diaspora. Colin Kidd posits that the African Christian response had two thrusts. He associates Dr. Martin Luther King Junior with one stream that "emphasised the universalist message of the Gospel and black equality and kinship with whites."[18] The other stream "… reflected black disenchantment with the hypocrisy of white Christianity and instead promoted separatism and an ethnocentric reading of scripture which highlighted the special role of the black race within the unfolding drama of sacred history."[19] Either way, as Kidd argues, that curse denial was a central theme of nineteenth century black theological literature, and "The confident black assumption of Hamitic identity was part of a wider re-appropriation of scripture from its white interpreters."[20] This view is backed by Johnson who write,

> The figure of Ham was not, however, entirely negating. Ham signified historical, ancient existence of the Negro race and technological, cultural, civilizationist ideals of accomplishment. It is this more positive,

[16] T. Dunbar Moodie, *The Rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, Apartheid, and the Afrikaner Civil Religion* (Berkeley - Los Angeles - London: University of California Press, 1975).
[17] Johnson, *The Myth of Ham*, 19.
[18] Kidd, *The Forging of Races*, 247.
[19] Kidd, *The Forging of Races*, 247.
[20] Kidd, *The Forging of Races*, 252.

> historicist interest in Ham that animated Negro Christians' participation in the Hamitic idea. This resort made feasible arguments for Negroes' humanity and historical existence, and it allowed for Negroes' participation *Geist* (i.e., in the History that mattered). Part and parcel of this historical interest was the fact that Negroes could be accounted for in the biblical records.[21]

This re-appropriation also made them locate African peoples in biblical history earlier or later than Ham and not necessarily only with Ham. In the Americas, the 'Exodus motif,' which was the central theme in African Diaspora Christianity, did not only identify the African experience of slavery with Israelite experience of slavery, but also assimilated the idea of being a *chosen people* as a potent symbol of identity for African slaves.[22] A prominent figure like Booker T. Washington saw the African experience and inner pride similar to that of the Jews noting,

> We have a very bright and striking example in the history of the Jews in this and other countries. There is, perhaps, no race that has suffered so much ... But these people have clung together. They have had a certain amount of unity, pride and love of race.[23]

Gerber mentions that leaders such as Benjamin Tucker Turner and Washington therefore encouraged blacks to

> …emulate the Jews, especially with regard to inner pride and mutual supportiveness. The implication was that this would lead to their financial success and social acceptance; that it would serve as an antidote to the disorganization that was rampant among blacks; that it would promote a cohesiveness among them and strengthen their emotional and structural bonds.[24]

These notions were strongly politicized in Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A) of the 1920s. As Gerber states,

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[21] Johnson, *The Myth of Ham,* 124.
[22] Albert J. Raboteau, "African American Exodus, and the American Israel," in *African American Christianity. Essays in History*, ed. Paul E. Johnson (Berkeley - Los Angeles - London: University of California Press, 1994).
[23] Cited by Louis R. Harlan, "Booker T, Washington's Discovery of Jews," in *Relationship between Blacks & Jews in the United States*, ed. Maurice Adams & John Bracey (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 289.
[24] Israel J. Gerber, *The Heritage Seekers: American Blacks in Search of Jewish Identity* (New York: Jonathan David Publishers, 1977), 190.

> His many faceted Universal Negro Improvement association aimed "to work for the general uplift of the Negro peoples of the world", and fostered a strong sense of black racial pride. The UNIA was the first significant Black Nationalist movement that responded to the needs of the blacks in the economic, political, religious, social, cultural and recreational areas. In Garvey's theology, blacks were the chosen people of God.[25]

Coupled with a call to 'return' to Africa, Garveyism came to be known as Black Zionism, an African version of Theodore Herzl's political Zionism. Garvey, as Gerber states, called his followers Zionists and even won the accolade Black Moses in his bid to lead the Africans in Diaspora back to the continent. [26] According to Kidd, this

> …temptation to read the Bible in ethnological terms was exacerbated by the messianic appeal to black nationalists is the Afrocentrist ideology of Ethiopianism. The apocalyptic ideology of Ethiopianism involved a Black Nationalist vision of Africa redeemed –not only released from the bondage of white colonialism, but also sanctified, the destiny of the race had profound theological significance for the regeneration of Africa was part of God's plan for humanity.[27]

Psalm 68:31 became the bedrock of "the next phase of God's divine scheme."[28] This strong notion of identity with the Israelite experience was forged from early 1900s when Black preachers in the US and Caribbean, begun to teach that Negroes were actually the *lost sheep of Israel* or the *ten lost tribes of Israel* and therefore direct descendants of the Old Testament Patriarchs.[29] These notions were literally adopted at the beginning of the 20th century when black Hebrew communities begun to develop in the US. The African Hebrew, known as the 'reclaimers' to Jones, were among those who disappointed in the racist attitude of White Christians, became alienated from Christianity and decided to 'reclaim' the biblical identity of being Hebrew.[30] Among their leaders were Prophet William S. Crowdy (1847-1908), Arnold Josiah Ford

[25] Gerber, *The Heritage Seekers,* 12-13.
[26] Gerber, *The Heritage Seekers*,13.
[27] Kidd, *The Forging of Races*, 256. See also Johnson, *The Myth of Ham,* 110.
[28] Kidd, *The Forging of Races*, 256. See also Johnson, *The Myth of Ham,* 110.
[29] Elias Fanayaye Jones, "Black Hebrews: The Quest for Authentic Identity," *The Journal of Religious Thought* 44, no. 2 (1988), 35.
[30] Jones, "Black Hebrews," 37.

(1876-1935), Rabbi Wentworth Matthew (1892-1973), and Prophet Frank S. Cherry (d.1965).[31]

Arnold Josiah Ford, for instance, was once the Musical Director for UNIA. He founded the Beth B'nai Abraham (BBA) in 1925, and taught that Africans were the only real Hebrew since the Bible calls Ethiopia the land of the Hebrews.[32] He subscribed to the notion that Africans were the lost tribes of Israel and considered white Jews to be descendants of black ones. He maintained that intermarriages between the black Hebrew in Carthage to northern Mediterranean produced white Jews, a racial mixture. He reserved the term Jew for whites who according to him had been converted by blacks and Hebrew for Blacks. What is notable about the development of Hebrewism in the African Diaspora is that the word Jew came to imply European ancestry and white skin color. The black Jews uplifted the color black above white, a colour of honor associated with the patriarchs of the Old Testament of which they could be proud. Black came to represent good and white became symbolic of evil.

Ford also tried to trace a relationship between Africa and Hebrewism. He identified a close connection between Hebrew theology and language and African or Ethiopian (the original name of Africa) ones showing links between Hebrew, Arabic and the present-day Hausa; etc. He pointed out that there were still elements of Hebrewism in Africa. Amongst them he included:

> …the Star of David, found in West Africa and imprinted on British West African coins; the facial markings of certain indigenous Nigerians, which are marks of the Ten Commandments and the stools of West African Kings, which were like those in the ancient Jewish sanctuary.[33]

Ford's claims were boosted especially when he learnt about the Ethiopian Jews, the Falashas.[34] Though Ethiopia was conceived as the prime biblical and natural home to return to in the African Diaspora, Ghana

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[31] Kidd, *The Forging of Races*. Chapter 3 offers a detailed discussion of the beliefs propagated by these founders of African American Hebrew groups.
[32] Gerber, *The Heritage Seekers*, 14-17; Jones, "Black Hebrews," 41-43.
[33] Jones, "Black Hebrews," 43.
[34] Jones, "Black Hebrews," 44. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, "The Falasha call themselves House of Israel (Beta Israel) and claim descent from Menilek I, traditionally the son of the Queen of Sheba (Makeda) and King Solomon," accessed April 1, 2015. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/200649/Falasha.

became the preferable choice because it was the first nation south of the Sahara to be independent. Moreover, the shores of Ghana are littered with the many forts and castles that notoriously landmark the exit points for many slaves into the Diaspora. Ghana has therefore attracted individuals of African descent and religious groups such as the Rastafaria and the African Hebrew Israelites among others.

The Rastafari, also linked with Marcus Garvey, is the most popular Diaspora religious group in Ghana and worldwide. Michael Molly has observed that,

> All Rastafarians believe that the Bible not only is the word of God but that it also has hidden meanings that are important for people of African descent. These passages can be found in the Psalms and the prophetic books of Daniel and Revelation, which speak of a messiah and a "golden age" in the future. Rastafarians hold that people of African descent, like the Israelites who were held in captivity for seventy years in Babylon must seek liberation from any society that oppresses them.[35]

The Rastafaria are renowned for possessing well thumbed personal bibles, worn out from regular reading. Hinidza writes that "Members are admonished to read a Bible chapter each day so as to cover the whole Bible within three years and six months."[36] Out of the Bible, and with a predilection for the Old Testament, the Rasta have carved out a Hebrew identity which is expressed in all of them but poignantly by the group known as the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

An important Rastafari expression of identity is dreadlocks currently known in Ghana as the Rasta (hairstyle). As noted by Dovlo,

> In Ghana the movement has retained its identifying mark as a movement of resistance to racial oppression and the European culture. The main outward sign of identity are dreadlocks (matted hair), which is a symbol of resistance to colonial oppression. They explain that Europeans forced Africans to cut their hair and propagated African hair, features and skin as abnormal and ugly. They trace dreadlocks to the

[35] Michael Molloy, *Experiencing the World's Religions, Tradition, Challenge and Change* (New York, McGraw Hill, 2010), 478.
[36] Hilda Adjoa Tenu Hinidza, "Rastafaria in Ghana" (BA Long Essay, University of Ghana, 2002), 30.

> Nazarite vow, which they rightly posit is retained in Traditional African Priesthood and reflect authentic African spiritual personality.[37]

The link of the African Diaspora with Hebrewism is naturally through Africa, especially West Africa, from where many were transported as slaves to the Americas. Many African Diaspora Hebrew groups, therefore, reconnect back to Hebrew identity *through* Africa by establishing Hebrew presence on the continent. J.J. Williams' book, *Hebrewisms of West Africa* — which sought to demonstrate Jewish elements in Ashanti culture by comparing the concepts of God, marriage rites, cleanliness codes, purification ceremonies and ritual ablution — was seen as authenticating the link with West Africa.[38]

Some Ghanaians have been attracted to the Rastafari, adopting their lifestyle and identity. Reggae music which is associated with the Rastafari is popular on many radio stations in Ghana. These stations also have a variety of programmes that intersperse the music with discussions on issues of African identity, perennial post colonial problems, and development. The movement also virtually dominates the artifacts industry and market, particularly in the cities, thus indicating its rootedness in the heart of Ghanaian material culture.

Another Diaspora group in Ghana that upholds the Hebrew heritage of some African peoples is the African Hebrew Israelites (AHI). The group emerged from a movement known as the Ethiopian Hebrews in 1966 under Rahbee Ben Ammi in Chicago. They are rooted in the quest for an authentic African American cultural and spiritual identity and trace their roots through Africa to Hebrew origins.[39] They hold that originally Israel was geographically part of African, not Asia and was populated by dark-skinned, African People.[40] Fran Markowitz notes that though scholars such as Martin Bernal and Ali Mazrui had made such claims earlier, the Hebrew group "find all the proof they need in the Bible…invoking Divine Geography…encompassing all the lands in

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[37] Elom Dovlo, "Rastafaria, African Hebrews & Black Muslims: Return 'Home' Movements in Ghana," *Exchange* 31, no. 1 (2002): 4-5.

[38] Jones, "Black Hebrews," 47; J.J. Williamson, *Hebrewisms of West Africa* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1930). See also K.A. Dickson's critique of Williamson in his "Hebrewisms of West Africa - The Old Testament and African Life and Thought," *Legon Journal of Humanities* 1 (1974): 23-34.

[39] Jones, "Black Hebrews," 35.

[40] Fran Markowitz, "Israel as Africa, Africa as Israel: 'Divine Geography' in the Personal Narratives and Community Identity of The Black Hebrew Israelites," *Anthropological Quarterly* 69 (October 1996): 193-205.

which the ancient Israelites dwelled, according to the first five books of Moses."[41] She also noted that this map of Africa including Israel is "a key statement of the Black Hebrews identity displayed throughout the community of posters and signboards as a framed picture in homes, worn as pressed metal earrings and wooden pendants."[42]

In 1967, Rahbee Ben Ammi led the pioneer community of 400 Hebrew Israelites from Chicago on an exodus to Israel, via Liberia and Ghana where they settled and founded the movement. The community sees African culture as ritualistic and Hebraic in origin.[43] They, however, hold that Africans lost their spirituality by worshipping idols and ancestors. They particularly frown on the practice of pouring libation to the gods and ancestors. Hence, they see their task to be the reconnection of Africans to the real spiritual source, God and to move them back to pure monotheism. Thus, they made attempts to redirect African Independent Churches (AICs) towards Hebrew rather than Christian Identity, in a bid to make them the hub of Hebrew revival in Ghana.[44]

Two of the AICs and the AHI came into affiliation with 'The Peaceful Healing Church' at Agate in the Volta Region and the Mt. Sinai Deliverance Church at Korle Gonno in Accra. According to Agbadi, contact with Peaceful Healing Church was established by coincidence when two assistants of Rabbi Ammi, Nacy Arkizer and Nacy Saram, saw members of the church in a procession on the streets of Agate during a convention in 1976. In July 1977, the leader of the church, Prophet Timothy Bokumah honored an invitation and visited the African Hebrew Community in Israel with Prophetess Elisabeth Obube. According to Agbadi,

> He spent about two months and was baptized by Rabbi Rabin in Jordan River. The Rabbi laid hands on the prophet and ordained and commissioned him as a prophet of the Lord…During his visit, he was taught a lot about the prophetic and healing ministries- how to go about his prophetic ministry and the healing of the sick persons (sic).

[41] Markowitz, "Israel as Africa," 193.
[42] Markowitz, "Israel as Africa," 195. In 1997 the AHI held exhibitions on the divine geography of Israel as part of Africa across several cities in Ghana.
[43] The AHI does not, however, see all Africans as sharing in this Hebrew heritage.
[44] Dovlo, "Rastafaria," 10.

> He returned to Ghana after his visit to Jerusalem with more zeal to continue his work.[45]

Prophet Bokuma also visited the African Hebrew Israelites in Monrovia, Liberia in 1987, while in October 1994 Rabbi Ammi paid a reciprocal visit to the Church's head office at Agate.[46] Other visitors to the Hebrew Community in Israel were Sylvester Bokuma, who succeeded his Father as leader of the church in 2008. Prophetess Mary Akagbor and Pastor Reginald Sarku, who gained the accolade Hebrew Sɔfo (Hebrew pastor) made the pilgrimage in 2009.[47] In all these cases, it was claimed that they were taken through teachings in "prophetic ministry and other doctrinal beliefs". Specifically noted were adult baptism and the preparation of unleaven bread for the Lord's Supper, prayer and fasting.[48]

Interestingly, though he had earlier observed that "To members the invitation of the representatives of the Hebrew Communities was divine design – it was God who sent them in order to train him (the prophet),"[49] Agbadi without offering explanations in his conclusions notes:

> There must also be written Mission Statement, Statement of Beliefs, and a Code of Conduct for the church, as well as the churches practices. This will help the church avoid any unnecessary affiliation in future which might cause confusion in beliefs and practices. It is clear that most the practices of the church were derived from the 'Hebrew' Group which later got the church into tight spots from which the church later have to escape with great difficulty. The Church as AIC must remain to genuine, positive African values.[50]

This indicates that the AIC preferred its strong and familiar African Ethos to the Hebraic one of the Diaspora movement. This ethos is similar to that of the Old Testament hence the preference of AICs for the latter scripture and culture. Clearly, the composite context of the emergence of AICs does not fully consign the traditional African context as completely "other", an epitome of Heathenism. This is especially so

[45] Bruce Agbadi, "The History of the Peaceful Healing Church, 1948-2011" (BA Long Essay, Good News Theological College and Seminary, 2011), 37.
[46] Agbadi, "Peaceful Healing Church," 38
[47] Agbadi, "Peaceful Healing Church," 96
[48] Agbadi, "Peaceful Healing Church," 137, 159.
[49] Agbadi, "Peaceful Healing Church," 69, 152.
[50] Agbadi, "Peaceful Healing Church," 247

considering that some African peoples explain these similarities as due to kinship with or identity as the lost *Tribes of Israel*.

Ghanaian Ethnicity, Race and Biblical Lore

Several African peoples claim to be remnants of the lost tribes of Israel. Many through knowledge of the Old Testament see the similarities between African Traditional culture/worldview and Israelite culture as due to kinship. There are complex identities of peoplehood and linkages based on these reading of the Bible, including ethnic identities with the Israelites. The formation of African Hebrew/Jewish groups to reclaim this heritage and African Christian identities constructed from the Bible as "people of God."

Quite a number of West African ethnic groups attempt to trace their origins to Palestine, some claiming Hebrew/Israelite origins.[51] In Ghana, for instance, this has been the case with the Ga of the Greater Accra Region. Their main festival, the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is said to be similar to the Jewish Passover.

Debrunner cites C.C. Reindorf who in his *History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, stated that Ga religious rites, including the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival, appear to resemble Jewish rites.[52] This has been re-echoed by Opoku who writes:

> According to a second claim, *Hɔmɔwɔ* is derived from the Jewish Passover. This second claim is based on the use of unleavened cornmeal for the ritual food, the application of red clay to the door posts, and the hurried and communal manner in which the food is eaten.[53]

Rev. Ebenezer Allotey-Pappoe, though careful not to attribute identity, states that "there are two beliefs attached by some to its origin. It is believed by some that the Ga people have an affinity with the Jewish

[51] See for instance, E.O. Akak. *The Palestinian Origins of the Efiks* (Calabar: Akak and Sons, 1986); Dierk Lange, "Origin of the Yoruba and 'The Lost Tribes of Israel,'" *Anthropos* 106 (2011): 579-595.
[52] Hans W. Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana* (Accra: Waterville Publishing House. 1967), 6-7.
[53] A.A. Opoku, *Festivals of Ghana* (Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1970), 52.

people, and however that might be, there are some strange features of this feast that are quite Jewish in their nature."[54]

This discussion continues in contemporary times and recent publications by Dr. Joseph Nii Abekar Mensah contend that from the oral traditions of the Ga Adangme it can be garnered that they are 'Hebrew Israelites' descendants from Dan and Gad, the fifth and seventh sons of Jacob. He contends that even the names Ga and Dangme are renderings of the Hebrew word Gad and Dan. According to him they "migrated from Israel about 6th Century B.C through Egypt, then to Ethiopia, having been expelled or exiled by the Assyrians." He also supports his views with examples of Ga-Dangme names which he finds similar to names in the Old Testament and the custom of circumcision of male born, funeral rites as well as values and proverbs that according to him point to Hebrew Israelites origins.[55]

Recently, Daniel Lis explored "two tales of Jewish origin among the Ga-dangme…"[56] He examined the narratives by the royal Nikolai family of Asere tracing the migration of their ancestors from Israel and the heritage of the Wulff family "descendent from a Dutch Jew who settled in Osu in 1836."[57] Lis rightly interpreted such narratives as having the function of contributing to "an apparent emergence of Judaism as a religious option in Ghana."[58]

Clearly, the issue of identity with Hebrew/Israelites is ultimately meant to signify an authentic humanity as a 'people of God'. Though prevailing Christian influence contributes to these claims, to what is deemed legitimate human history, such identity construction is not propagated solely by Christians on behalf of their ethnic groups. Some traditionalists, Neo-Traditionalists, and Pro-Traditionalists also do so though they would often deny the influence of biblical lore on their perceptions.

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[54] Ebenezer Allotey-Pappoe, "The 'Homowo' Festival (The Harvest Festival of the Ga People)," *Ghana Bulletin of Theology* 1 no. 7 (December 1959), 1-3.
[55] Joseph Nii Abekar Mensah, "Hebrew Israelites Origins of Ga-Dangmes of Ghana in Brief," accessed January 27, 2015, http://www.ghanadot. com/Review.mensah.gahebrew.032111.html. The author has also published a book entitled *Traditions and Customs of Gadangmes of Ghana: Descendants of Authentic Biblical Hebrew Israelites* (Houston: Strategic Book Publishing, 2013).
[56] Daniel Lis, "In my Father's House: Two Tales of Jewish Origin Among the Ga-Adangme of Accra in 2015," *Ghana Bulletin of Theology* 5 (July 2016): 91-112.
[57] Lis, "In my Father's House," 91.
[58] Lis, "In my Father's House," 92. 112.

Dartey Kumordzi of the Hu-Yehwe Society and Togbuivi Kumassah,[59] for instance, have tried to posit that the Ewe of the Volta Region of Ghana were originally from the area of the Holy Land.[60] Kumassah posits direct heritage for the Ewe through Ham whereas Kumordzi claims contact with the Israelites during the sojourns of the Ewes to their present home from the Far East. Kumordzi, for example, argues that it was the Ewes who bequeathed the traditions found similar to the Israelites rather than learnt from them. Both, however, hold that the Yewe cult, popular among the Ewe along the West African coastline including South Eastern Ghana, is a form of Yahweh worship dating back to contact and connections with the Israelites.

Such belief in biological or historical connections with Israel have also produced a group of heritage 'reclaimants' in Ghana, a local Jewish community called the 'The House of Israel.'[61] Founded in Sefwi Adiembra in southwestern Ghana in 1976, Aaron Ahomtre Toakyirafa, the founder attributed the formation of the group to a vision in which some spirits told him that he and his people were descendants of the *Lost Tribes of Israel*. He was convinced that some beliefs and practices of the Sefwi, for instance, relating to Saturday, were similar to Jewish tradition.[62] Though ridiculed at first, some others came to accept his vision and joined him. According to Gershowitz,

> Because there are few converts, it's not surprising that the Jews are genetically different from their Christian neighbors. Most Ghanaians have broad noses with round nostrils, but nearly all of the Jews, although having quite dark skin, have long, narrow Semitic noses. The difference is immediately apparent.[63]

The group has an oral tradition that claims the heritage to migration of Jews across West Africa for over four centuries. They believe that they

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[59] Agbotadua Kumassah, *The Migration Saga of the Anlo-Ewes of Ghana* (Keta: Photo City Press, 2003).

[60] Personal conversations with Dr. Seth Dartey Kumordzi on several occasions.

[61] Janice R. Levi, "The House of Israel: Judaism in Ghana," in *African Zion: Studies in Black Judaism*, ed. Edith Bruder and Tudor Parfit (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 117-137.

[62] Saturday among the Akan is associated with God (Supreme Being) whose personal name is Onyankopon Kwame. Members of the Seventh Day Adventist church attribute the spread of the denomination in Asante to the same traditional notions of God.

[63] Michael V. Gershowitz, "Kulanu: A Visit to the Jewish Community of Sefwi Wiawso, Ghana," accessed June 29, 2015, hppt: www.kulanu.org.ghana.visit.to.ghana. See also Mara Weiss, "The Jewish Virtual History Tour – Ghana," accessed June 29, 2015, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/ghana.htm l.

have lived in Ghana for about 150 years, and before that in the Ivory Coast. This tradition traces their roots through Mali to Timbuktu and beyond.[64] Aaron Ahomtre Toakyirafa died in 1991. He was succeeded in 1993 by David Ahenkorah who relocated the community close to Sefwi Wiawso, known as the Jewish neighborhood or New Adiembra. The group numbering around 200 members have built a synagogue in 1998 and established ties to worldwide Jewry.[65]

It is important to note that all these persons/groups in their reading of the Bible choose to identify with the Israelites and for most of them, except for Kumassah, Ham hardly comes up in their discourses. Further, being the 'Children of Israel' may be seen as synonymous with being 'people of God' without necessarily becoming Christians. This supports Lis' contention that such narratives present Judaism as a religious option in Ghana.

Ghanaian Christians and Biblical Identity

African Christians also read their own identities into scripture and view their place within it in diverse ways. One determinant factor facilitating this from missionary times is the translation of the Bible into local languages. Vernacular (Mother tongue) translations according to Sanneh[66], Bediako[67] and Walls,[68] were very instrumental in the repositioning of African Christians as a 'people of God.'

In Lamin Sanneh's seminal work on Vernacular Scripture, he maintains that an unintended outcome of translation is that cultures, including African culture, are de-stigmatized.[69] Further, translation revitalizes the culture, offering "…self understanding, vernacular pride, social awakening, religious renewal, cross cultural dialogue…,"[70] which are all matters relating to identity. An important outcome of translation, Sanneh highlights, is the instrumental role played by the pre-Christian

[64] Weiss, "The Jewish Virtual History."
[65] Gershowitz, "A Visit to the Jewish Community."
[66] Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (New York: Orbit Books, 1989).
[67] Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995).
[68] Andrew F. Walls, "The Gospel as the Prisoner and Liberator of Culture", *Faith and Thought* 108, no. 1-2 (1981).
[69] Sanneh, *Translating the Message*,1.
[70] Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 2.

religion in offering comprehension to the Christian faith through its idioms and symbols so that "...Missionary adoption of the vernacular, therefore, was tantamount to adopting indigenous cultural criteria for the message…"[71] To Sanneh, this proved that the traditional faith had relevant salvific values.[72]

An example is that God took on the local names of the Supreme Being in the vernacular Bible, thereby unconsciously promoting a common denominator of faith. As Sanneh rightly points out,

> The central premise of missionary preaching is the reality of God: Creator, Sustainer, Judge, and Redeemer. The specific Christian understanding of this is expressed in the understanding of Jesus Christ as the historical personal manifestation of God's power. When they came to Africa, missionaries began with a methodological inquiry into the nature and character of God among Africans, and before long it was obvious Africans had a deep sense of the reality of God.[73]

Earlier recognition of the role of African Indigenous Religion in comprehending Christianity led to the stance of African theologians, such as John Mbiti and Bolaji Idowu, that the indigenous religion must be seen as preparatory to the reception of the Gospel which fulfils it.[74] The Ghanaian Theologian Kwame Bediako subscribes to this view and sees "the God proclaimed by the missionaries was already worshipped in traditional religion."[75]

Kwame Bediako writes that "There is probably no more important single explanation for the massive presence of Christianity on the African continent than the availability of the Scripture in many African Languages."[76] He argues for the probability that this is because vernacular scripture empowered Africans to respond to the Word "on their own terms."[77] Bediako therefore sees the task of African theology to be

[71] Sanneh, *Translating the Message,* 3.
[72] Lamin Sanneh, "The Horizontal and the Vertical in Mission: An African Perspective," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 7, no. 4 (1983), 170.
[73] Sanneh, *Translating the Message,* 158.
[74] Keith Ferdinando, "Christian Identity in the African Context: Reflections on Kwame Bediako's Theology and Identity," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Soci*ety 50, no. 1 (2007), 1.
[75] Ferdinando, "Christian Identity," 125.
[76] Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, 62
[77] Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, 62

"…nurturing and equipping *a people of God*, who have heard in their own languages the wonders of God."[78]

Placed within the discourse of scripture and race, a consequence of de-stigmatization is that though originally the culture of Africans posted them as the 'other' and heathen to missionaries, translation begun a process of bridge building that unconsciously and at times consciously recognized the 'other' as having the 'sense of God.' This highlights the Sylvester Johnson's problematique regarding Africans in the Diaspora: "…embracing Christian identity were informed by a religious logic or desire to distance themselves from the condition of spiritual darkness, represented by the non-Christian,"[79] and "ambivalence towards black pre-Christian and non-Christian religious forms."[80] The difference in Africa is that translation led to the claim that the traditional faith is preparatory for Gospel, not alien to it. The debates that raged about whether AIR was polytheism, monotheism or diffused monotheism in my view are all part of the discourse of whether Africans had enough 'sense of God' to be counted as a 'people of God.'

The advantage on the African continent, unlike the Diaspora, is that the culture is overwhelmingly African. The missionaries were in minority, and the church started as a minority but growing movement. Indeed, as Sanneh argues "Missionary paid huge vernacular" compliments to Africans, enabling many peoples to acquire pride and dignity about themselves in the modern world, and opening up the whole social system to equal access.[81] Naturally, the sense of human dignity and pride aroused would erode the sense of 'otherness' that was initially insinuated by the missionaries.

Moreover, Sanneh maintains that translation gradually reduced the role of European missionaries as the sole interpreters and transmitters of scripture and the Gospel, as Africans "… insisted that missionary attitudes should continue to be scrutinized in its (i.e., the Bible's) revealing light,"[82] and that "…Africans acquired from vernacular resources a strengthened determination to reject foreign interpretations of the religion."[83] Translation thus technically began the process of inculturation

[78] Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, 73. Emphasis is mine.
[79] Johnson, *The Myth of Ham*, 92.
[80] Johnson, *The Myth of Ham*, 88.
[81] Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 172.
[82] Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 163.
[83] Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 173.

of the Gospel in Africa by making the culture, the career of the Gospel and then also empowering African Christians to become interpreters of the Gospel at both the popular and scholarly levels.

The popular constructions of biblical identity in Church life at the level of ordinary Christians partly emerged into African independent churches leaving traces behind in the Mainline Churches. For example, *Israelite* identity is part of the culture of a group in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in the Volta Religion of Ghana. The group is known as *Israelviwo* (Children of Israel). This group occasionally re-enacted the Exodus from Egypt in clothes reminiscent of what is seen in pictures and films as worn by the Israelites. Members would normally parade through the community with bundles of belonging, holding staffs and singing songs which celebrate God's mighty act of the redemption of Israel and blowing the *shofar*. Naturally, this re-enactment would have had a cultural and historical resonance among the Ewe whose history includes an exodus from the tyrannical rule of King Agorkorli in Notsie (in the Republic of Togo). This dramatic show which brought the public unto the streets was also enacted during funerals of members, especially with songs depicting their transition to a better world.

The Semitic clothing style was adopted by many African Independent Churches for both clergy and members. These churches marked a second phase of the development of Christianity in Africa. AICs saw themselves as Israelites in the sense that, as noted by many scholars they had a predilection for the Old Testament especially its rituals pertaining to purity and sacrifice. One was the removal of sandals on holy grounds associated with the Moses experience and appreciated within a culture where footwear must be removed at sacred places such as shrines and before sacred persons such as chiefs etc. Identity with the patriarchs was therefore more paramount than with Ham for the AICs. More so, AICs did not carry out scholarly theologies on the interface of Gospel and Culture, but practically mixed up the two leading to accusations of syncretism on the one hand and more recently recognition as the pioneers of inculturation.[84]

[84] See Raymond Awadzi "From Syncretism to Inculturation: Changing Approaches to African Indigenous Cultural Elements in the African Instituted Churches. The Case of the Apostles Revelation Society" (M.Phil Thesis, University of Ghana, June 2011).

Another phase of Christianity in Ghana and most of Africa is the Charismatic Renewal Movement and Churches. Charismatic renewal appropriation of scripture may also be seen within the domain of the theology of the *New Israel*, not only redeemed but fully entitled to the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. This is remarkable since the teachings and practices of deliverance are often very anti-African culture. Paradoxically, the same teachings and practices are thoroughly infused with African demonology closeted in Christian thought.

Within the democratic dispensation of charismatic renewal in Africa that has produced many pastors, the place of the African as a Christian leader has often come up against racial stereotypes. Many charismatic leaders who have traced the history of Classical Pentecostalism proudly claim a heritage in the pivotal role played by a person of African descent, William J. Seymore of Azuza Street in the emergence of the older movement.

A leading charismatic preacher in Ghana, Pastor Mensah Otabil of the International Central Gospel Church, addressed the issue of race and identity in his book *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia* which I will now discuss at some length to draw out how African identity is read into scripture by a contemporary African churchman. Obviously, the nature of Charismatic renewal challenges theories of transmission and of spiritual authority since it (initially) advocates for direct transmission through the Holy Spirit. In the case of Otabil, it also questioned European monopoly over the Gospel, just as translation of Scripture into vernacular according to Lamin Sanneh relativised the role of missionaries.[85]

In this book, Otabil took pains to authenticate the mission, the calling of the black charismatic leader and African peoples biblically against the background of the Myth of Ham and its concomitant justification of colonialism, apartheid, slavery and the subjugations of Africans worldwide. Otabil notes that "The spirit of racism thrives on misinformation and stereotyping. Instead of portraying people in the likeness of God, it seeks to devalue the worth of people who are different from us as not being as good as us."[86] It is not insignificant that Otabil wrote this book when as he noted "The mighty pillars of Apartheid are crumbling before

[85] Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 88, 92.
[86] Mensah Otabil, *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia*: *A Biblical Revelation on God's Purpose for the Black Race* (Accra: Altar International, 1992), 2.

our eyes and the prisoners are coming out free."[87] He noted that, it is a shame that the teachings of the Dutch Reformed Church provided the pillars for Apartheid and that he had actually read a book authored by a Canadian minister who claimed that the black man is what the Bible calls the "beast of the field."[88]

Otabil advocates that for the truth, we should turn to the Bible: "As we look again into the word of God, He would let the truth in His word about us as a people restore the broken confidence and dignity." To 'take the veil off', the author dismisses the myth of Ham (Gen 9:18-27) which is misused to claim that the black race is cursed. Like some black preachers who preceded him in the African Diaspora, he explains that Noah never cursed Ham in the Bible. He cursed Canaan, the son of Ham. That was because "Ham had already been blessed by Almighty God in Genesis Chapter 9 verse 1, and Noah knew he could not undo that blessing with his curse, so he made Canaan the scapegoat for his father's sins."[89]

Pastor Otabil then explores black connections with Abraham through his wife Keturah who herself was a Cushite and with whom Abraham had 6 children. Otabil's contention is that even though Abraham sent these children away to the East with gifts, they were still bearers to his spiritual heritage in which they were raised. They became its repositories from which his other descendants drew knowledge when they lost it. He argues,

> It is an irony of history to realize that of all the children of Abraham it was the disinherited sons of Keturah who kept the faith of their father. They kept the flames of the Abrahamic flame alive to rekindle hope for Israel. A true case of the stone which the builders rejected becoming the head of the corner.[90]

Otabil, therefore, advocates that it is important to explore the role black people play in the Bible. This would debunk assumptions that all the characters in the Bible are white.[91] He comes up with a number of black

[87] Otabil, *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia*, 9.
[88] Otabil, *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia*, 10.
[89] Otabil, *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia*, 11.
[90] Otabil, *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia*, 46.
[91] Otabil, *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia*, 12.

figures such as Mechizedek, Jethro, among others to draw the conclusion that

> Whenever the world has been in crisis the blackman has always appeared on the scene. After the flood, when the world needed a leader, He named Nimrod the son of Cush. When Moses was taken out of Pharaoh's camp, it took a black man Jethro to teach him the ways of God. When the people of Israel were going to the Promised Land it took a blackman Hobab to direct them to the Promised Land. They have always been around. God has always relied on these black people in times of crises.[92]

The thrust of the entire book is that "God is going to visit black peoples of this world to bring them out of the state they are in, into their portion."[93] Gifted through the children of Keturah with music and praise, Africans must therefore fulfill the prophecy of the Cushite Prophet Zephaniah that "From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mind offering" (Zeph 3:10).[94]

Otabil sees Africans as part of God's redemptive history all the time, As Medianites taking Joseph into Egyptian slavery, As Kenites scouting for Moses back into the Promised Land where they shared an inheritance with Judah. As part of Messianic History, Simon of Cyrene helped to bear the cross to Calvary. As part of apostolic history, at Antioch, represented by Simeon called the Nigger and Lucius of Cyrene they lay hands on Paul and Barnabas to dispatch them on apostolic mission.[95] In the current charismatic outpouring, God is telling Africans that it is time for them to run as the Cushite was told in the narrative of 2 Samuel 18:19-32. In these he argues, "It is as if God was saying, 'Abraham did not give you an inheritance, he sent you off, but I am going to put you in the centre of my redemption plan to bring salvation to mankind.'"[96]

Many of Otabil's propositions independently made on the basis of his reading of scripture are similar to those made earlier in the African Di-

[92] Otabil, *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia*, 87.
[93] Otabil, *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia*, 9.
[94] Otabil, *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia*, 63.
[95] Otabil, *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia*, 62-63.
[96] Otabil, *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia*, 61.

aspora. They include curse denial, the crucial roles of Africans in biblical history, and the Ethiopianism that forms the title of his book. In all these, Otabil straddles what Kidd labels as reading the bible in "ethnological terms" with attraction to "the afrocentrist ideology of Ethiopianism."[97] Otabil's main contribution to this discourse on the people of God however lies in his interpretation and integration of the story of Keturah, her descendants and the Cushitic place in God's scheme.

Otabil's discourse suggests indirectly that being the 'people of God' does not mean arising independently of God and therefore being the 'other,' and then coming into the fold of God to become the 'people of God.' Biblical monogenesis suggests rather that all creation is of God. This is confirmed in Acts 17:26-27 which declares that "From one man he made all nations; and he marked out their appointed times in history and boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out to him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us." Though people may stray outside his fold, and become 'other sheep,' they may be led back into the fold. This is the story of redemption and salvation that ends in people who have washed their robes in the blood of the lamb from "every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, "…wearing white robes" (Rev. 7:9).

Conclusion

African Christians exemplified by Ghanaians do not necessarily seek biological links when they read the bible. They rather seek to explain and give theological shape to their experiences of receiving the Gospel especially in their own vernacular. Literally, their experiences reflect the importance of scripture, but at the same time raises them beyond being 'people of the book,' as the "the word becomes flesh" (John 1:14) in their lives, affirming them as 'people of God' whoever they are and wherever they live. What people receive through the word is first and foremost the Gospel of Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord. Faith comes by hearing this message and when it is relayed in one's own language it proves that God does not discriminate in saving his people.

[97] Kidd, *The Forging of Races*, 256.

Notions of African servitude, poverty, find parallels with the Israelite experience of slavery and subjugations, not necessarily as an outcome of the Hamite Myth, but due to disobedience to God. But more importantly, the parallels found with culture and rituals of the Israelites, led to many African peoples, AICs and even some groups within mainline churches claiming affinity with the Israelites as 'people of God.' On the other hand, the newer churches, mainly the Charismatics, carve their identity with notions of the 'New Israel' which makes the 'people of God,' people redeemed because of their faith in the universal redemption wrought by Jesus Christ at Calvary.

Indeed, within this notion of 'New Israel,' arise questions as to how the discussion shift in the centre of Christianity from the West to the non-Western world, partly as an outcome of translation, affects the stereotyping of the 'people of God' and the 'other.'[98] Johnson may therefore be right in holding the view that the question of scripture and race is a phenomenological question, an existential one that does not posit a pure people of God since, "The power of divine identity is not located or propertied with particular people but is created through a field of narrative knowledge, a web of meanings, in which differently located peoples become entangled,"[99] and that "Being the people of God means assuming a phenomenological posture…the phenomenal posture of ecclesiology."[100]

Prof. Elom Dovlo

Department for the Study of Religions,
University of Ghana, Legon;
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences,
MountCrest University College, Kanda
(edovlo2001@yahoo.com)

[98] For a discussion of the shift in the center of Christianity to the Non-Western world see Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 2002), 30-31; Andrew F. Walls, "Towards understanding Africa's place in Christian History," in *Religion in a Plural Society*, ed. J.S. Pobee (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976),180-189.
[99] Johnson, *The Myth of Ham,* 129.
[100] Johnson, *The Myth of Ham,* 129.