AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE OF THE CONCEPT OF SALVATION IN THE PSALTER

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This article is the author's adaptation and re-direction of an article ("A Comparative Study of Salvation in the Psalter and African Indigenous Churches") by him that appeared in the journal, *The Living Word* May-June 2009, Vol. 115, No.3 (pp.137-153).

Introduction:

There is little doubt that "salvation is the central theme of the whole Bible."[1] However, there is a fundamental difference between the concept of salvation in the Old and New Testaments. For the latter salvation primarily means deliverance from the bondage of sin. This salvation is through the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:21; Act 2:21; I Tim 1:15; etc.). In other words, each person must come to him personally. It is this understanding that Christians have today whenever the word salvation is mentioned. The Old Testament concept of salvation on the other hand is generally understood as deliverance from physical calamities such as oppression, sickness, fear, death, etc. This concept is applicable to individuals as well as a nation. It is twofold in nature, as rightly described by Otto J. Baab, as "national victory'' and "long life and prosperity'' of an individual.[2]

One important thing that strikes the mind of the readers of the Bible, particularly the Psalter, is the predominant occurrence of the word יְשׁוּעָה (usually *salvation* or *deliverance*) and its cognates. The word appears 78 times in the Old Testament, predominantly in the book of Psalms where it occurs 45 times and in Isaiah where it appears 19 times.[3] One wonders why the concept of salvation is so pronounced in the Psalter. Is it because the Psalter is a liturgical document dealing with the private and public worship of the people of Israel? What is the real concept of salvation which the Psalmists advocated? Is it spiritual salvation as understood by the writers of the New Testament or physical salvation from problems such as threats, war, evil, enemies, etc.? This paper seeks to find solutions to the questions raised above. The paper is divided into four major parts namely: the meaning of salvation; salvation in the Psalter; the Psalmists' understanding of the saviour; and the application of the work to the present political and economic situation in Africa. The words salvation and deliverance are used interchangeably in this work.

1. The Meaning of Salvation

The three Hebrew words that are used for salvation are תְּשׁוּעָה, יְשׁוּעָה, and יֵשַׁע . Incidentally each of the three words has connection with the verb יָשַׁע (*to deliver*) and its derivatives that are used some 353 times in the Old Testament.[4] The words connote freedom from distress and the ability to purse one's own objectives. There are four different meanings given to the feminine noun יְשׁוּעָה in the Old Testament.[5] Firstly, יְשׁוּעָה means *welfare* and *prosperity*. This is the usage in Job 30:15 when he says that "... his prosperity has passed way like a cloud." Secondly, it means *deliverance* from battle. This salvation is connected with assistance rendered at a critical time of war as in 2 Samuel 10:11 and I Chronicles 19:12 where Joab and Abishai his brother plan to assist one another against the Arameans. Thirdly, it refers to *salvation* from external evils. This salvation, to which some spiritual ideas are added, is best illustrated in the statement of Jacob in Genesis 49:18: "I look for your deliverance, O LORD.'' Also, a similar idea is expressed by the Psalmists in Psalms 3:3, 9; 14:7; 53:7; 22:2; 35:3; 62:2; 69:30; 70:5; 78:22; 80:3; 91:16; 96:2; 106:4; 140:8; etc. Finally, it means *victory*. This aspect of salvation is linked with victory won in battle, as seen in the victory won for Israel in I Samuel 14:45. There are many other occasions where the LORD Himself wrought victory for His people, (cf. Exod. 15:2; Isaiah 12:2; Hab. 3:8; Psalms 20:6, 21:2, 6; 44:5; 68: 20, etc).

The second Hebrew word for salvation is the feminine noun תְּשׁוּעָה which occurs about 34 times in the Old Testament and it means *deliverance* or *salvation*.[6] It can be used to describe salvation by God through human agency. This salvation is from oppression (I Sam. 11:9) and battle (I Chron.19:12; Psalms 60:13; 108:13). At times, it is deliverance from personal trouble (Psalm 37:39). It can also be spiritual salvation as expressed by David in Psalm 51:16 cf. Psalms 119: 41; 132: 16; 2 Chron. 8:41.

The third Hebrew word for salvation is the masculine noun יֵשַׁע which appears 36 times in the Old Testament. It means *deliverance, rescue, salvation, safety* and *welfare* as illustrated in 2 Samuel 23:5; Psalm 12:6 and Job 5:4, 11.[7]

It is indicative from various meanings given to יְשׁוּעָה that salvation usually comes from somewhere outside the oppressed party. In other words, it is hardly possible that deliverance can come from the person being oppressed. Also, from the above meanings, the emphasis in the Old Testament is on physical salvation. Very little is said on spiritual salvation in the Old Testament. But there is a general consensus among the students of the Old

Testament that elements of spiritual salvation are found. Two of the passages are Psalms 130:8 which says, "And he will save Israel from all his iniquities" and Ezekiel 37:23 which says, "I will save them from all the backsliding in which they have sinned."

The actual word for *salvation* in the New Testament is σωτηρία, which also has the following meanings: *deliverance*, *preservation*, and *safety*. There are three different meanings given to the word σωτηρία in the New Testament.[8] Firstly, means *salvation through Jesus Christ* as preached by the Apostles. For instance, Peter says that "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). It is this salvation that is even extended to the Gentiles cf. Act 13:47; Rom 11:11 etc. Secondly, it means *salvation as the present possession* of all true Christians. For instance, the Apostle Paul says "If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation'' (2 Cor. 1:6). Finally, it refers to *future salvation* that is the sum of the benefits and blessings that Christians will enjoy after the visible return of Christ from heaven in the consummated and eternal kingdom of God. Examples include the Apostle Paul who speaks of a salvation which is nearer to us now than when we first believed in Romans 13:11. Hebrews 9:28 says, "So Christ having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him."

Obviously σωτηρία, unlike יְשׁוּעָה, has its emphasis on spiritual salvation. σωτηρία is the salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ that every Christian possesses and it connotes the blessings to be enjoyed now and at the return of Jesus Christ.

A brief look at how some theologians use the term shows that *salvation* means different things to different people. John L. McKenzie understands salvation as the Israelites' freedom from their bondage. In his argument for the physical aspect of salvation, he says, "the meaning of salvation is best seen in the paradigmatic saving act, the exodus from Egypt."[9] Wilbur O'Donovan argues that salvation in the African context includes "deliverance or protection from witchcraft and evil spirits and the possession of life force".[10] But it is not possible for man to save himself. God makes it possible through Jesus Christ. O'Donovan contends that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation for God's plan of salvation.[11]

Byang H. Kato, an African biblical scholar, argues that "man's fundamental problem is sin against God and that salvation is only through Jesus Christ."[12] In other words, he takes seriously the statement of Peter in Act

4:12, "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Another African view of salvation is that of John Mbiti who argues that:

> God rescues people when all other help is exhausted, and that this rescue is primarily from material and physical dilemmas. God does not save because he is Saviour; rather, he becomes Saviour when he does save.[13]

It is particularly very interesting to note how liberation theologians define salvation. They believe that liberation is salvation. This view is well represented and summarized by Hartmut Schonherr:

> Liberation is salvation. It is for Here and Now, and has to take place in any human situation which is characterised by a fundamental corruption of the social-political context of man. The Church has for too long concentrated on the 'soul' of the individual believer. It did not see that the plight of man is rooted in the perversion of his social and political structures. They enslave him, deprive him of his dignity, and violate his rights. Because of this structural perversion there is poverty, hunger, neo-colonial domination, racial discrimination, economic exploitation, and social injustice in many variations. This structural perversion reveals the evidence of sin and causes the fundamental alienation of man.[14]

From the above views on salvation, I would like to submit that the need for salvation arises from the state of depression in man. The depression can be spiritual or physical. Spiritually, an individual, who yields to the temptation of the wicked one, will certainly find himself in the bondage of sin. He will be depressed until he is delivered and finds peace with God. Physically, an individual or nation may be depressed because of the distressful situation he finds himself in - possibly sickness, hunger etc. The depression will continue until there is help from somewhere. Therefore, salvation is bringing assistance into any distressful situation. It is an experience of relief to the person involved or victory to the nation concerned.

II. Salvation in the Psalter

Having discussed the meaning of salvation, it is pertinent to consider various aspects of salvation in the Psalter. The word Psalter originally referred to a stringed instrument but later it came to mean a 'collection of songs', and it was used in the Codex Alexandrinus as the title the book of Psalms.[15] The Psalter is like a hymnbook, comprising of 150 canonical Psalms, written by different people like David, Moses, Asaph, Solomon and others over a period about 1000 years. Psalm 1 serves the purpose of introducing the whole Psalter while Psalm 150 forms a conclusion to the Psalter. The Psalter is divided into

five major books, namely: Book I (Psalm 1 – 41), Book II (Psalms 42 – 72), Book III (Psalms 73 – 89), Book IV (Psalms 90 – 106) and Book V (107 – 150). Each book concludes with a doxology (Psalm 41:13; 17:18-20; 89:52; 106:48; 150). The Psalter belongs to the third division of the Hebrew Canon and it occupies a unique position in that section, shown when Jesus Christ refers to it as representing the section while affirming the canonicity of the Old Testament (Luke 24:44). The Psalter is primarily a book of prayers that are used in worship in which the Psalmists expressed their adoration, confession, faith and confidence in Yahweh whom they believed was able to deliver them from all their problems, fears and threats.[16]

Hermann Gunkel who championed form critical research on the Psalter "perceived that the Psalms did not originate as literary works, but arose in worship; they were spoken or sung in various ways and on various occasions of worship and were transmitted orally before they acquired written form in small collections."[17] Gunkel saw five major types of psalms in the Psalter: hymns, community laments, thanksgiving songs of the individual, spiritual laments of the individual and mixed types.[18]

It is interesting to note that more than one-third of the Psalms in the Psalter are lamentations or petitions. These Psalms, used either by individuals or the community, had their origin in the troubles and dangers to which the Psalmists were exposed. The chief misfortune that caused the Psalmists to lament and turn to God for salvation was the threat of death.[19] The Psalmists went through various kinds of oppression as seen in the texts. It is not an exaggeration that nearly half of the Psalms contain one or more occurrence of ישע which is the root form of יָשַׁע (*deliver*) and יְשׁוּעָה (*salvation*).[20] This explains why there are many themes on salvation in the Psalter. Some of the themes include salvation from wicked ones (Ps.37:40; 43:1; 71:4; 140:1-2); from foes (Psalms 7:1; 25:19-20; 44:7; 78:42); from oppression (Psalms 72:4; 13; 76:9; 109:31; 119:134; 142:6); from enemies (Psalms 3:7; 18:16-19; 28;56;59:1-2; 9:14 43:9); from death (Psalm 6:4-5; 30;49:15;56:13; 86:13; 116:8,) from transgressions (Psa. 39:8), from battle (Psalm 33:16-19;44;4-8;55:18); from blood guiltiness (Psalms 51:14;59:2) from affliction (Psa. 119:153); from liars (Psalms 144:7,11); from fears (Psa. 34:4,7); from trouble (Psalms 32:7; 34:6;19; 41:1; 50:51; 54:7; 81:7); from distress (Psalms 107:6,19-20; 118:5); from loneliness and abandonment (Psalms 31:11; 38:11); from shame and humiliation (Psalms 4:2;22:6-7;69:19); and from sickness (Psalms 6 and 31). Our space is too limited to do a thorough study on each of the themes enumerated. However, emphasis will be placed on salvation from

oppression, trouble, enemies and death as each form a threat to the life of the Psalmist.

Salvation from oppression: The Hebrew word for *oppression* is עִנָּה which is a piel verb. The idea is to frustrate or do violence to another person. It is to mishandle or afflict an individual. A very good example is recorded in Exodus 1 when the Israelites were afflicted and oppressed with heavy burdens (Exod. 1:11-12). *The Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* defines *oppression* in two ways: as "unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power especially by imposition of burdens" and "a sense of heaviness or obstruction in the body or mind."

The Psalmists seem to have the first definition in mind in their understanding of oppression. The fact that oppression is a threat is illustrated in Psalm 94:5 where the Psalmist complains to God that the evildoers crush and afflict the people of God. The theme of oppression is equally portrayed in Psalm 72 which is a prayer for the righteous king. The Psalmist believes that it is this righteous king who shall defend the cause of the poor, deliver the needy and crush the oppressors (Ps. 72:12-14). The Psalmist has confidence in God that He will establish judgement and save all the oppressed of the earth (Ps. 76:9). He prays to God to redeem him from man's oppression that he may keep His precepts (Ps. 119:34). He also prays to God to deliver him from his persecutors who are too strong for him.

Salvation from trouble or distress: This is another threat to the life of the Psalmists as seen in some of the Psalms. The Hebrew word for *trouble* is צָרָה and it means to be *in straits* or *distress*. צָרָה is an intense inner turmoil (Ps. 25:17). Generally the person in trouble is disturbed physically and mentally. The fact that the day of trouble is certain is seen in the promise given to the one who considers the poor. The LORD will deliver him in the day of trouble (Ps. 41:1). The Psalmist in 120:1-2 cries to God in his distress because of the people with lying lips and deceitful tongues that surround him. It was at the time of trouble that the Israelites usually called upon God who on every occasion delivered them out of their trouble (Ps.107:69). It is only Yahweh who preserves people from troubles (Ps. 32:7). He saves the poor people from all their problems especially when they call on him.

Salvation from enemies: The basic meaning for the Hebrew verb אָיַב is *to be hostile* to a person or to treat a person as an enemy. This meaning is obvious in Exodus 23:22 where God becomes an enemy to Israel's enemies. Obviously the Psalmist seeks salvation from various enemies as rightly put by John Mbiti:

> The enemies in the traditional life are innumerable and include: sickness, witchcraft, sorcery, magic, barrenness, failure, troublesome spirits, danger, misfortune, calamity, and death, as far as the individual is concerned; and drought, war, oppression, foreign domination, slavery, locust invasion, epidemics flood, and so on, as far as the wider community is concerned.[21]

Sigmund Mowinckel has equally considered these enemies as "supernatural beings, demons, or evil spirits."[22] The fact that these enemies are hostile to man and are sources of threat to him, we may regard them as godless ones who have no fear of God in them. Consequently, they are enemies of both God and man. In Psalm 59, which is a lament,[23] the Psalmist called his enemies "workers of evil" and "bloodthirsty men" (59:2). Verses 1-5 are a prayer of David for salvation from a desperate situation. The wicked men in the Psalm lie in wait for his life. In 59:6-7, David compared them to snarling dogs that prowl about at night. They even uttered terrible words at him. Hence David called upon the LORD of hosts who is also his strength and fortress to come to his help (59:8-10). The Psalmist then prayed that God should punish the wicked in a way that people would learn that He is sovereign. These enemies or wicked ones should not simply perish, because they would be forgotten; rather they should be made to wander in humiliation as outcasts and fugitives (59:11). It is encouraging to note that in spite of the presence of the enemies again and again (59:14-15), the Psalmist vowed to sing praises to God for his strength, love, fortress and refuge (59:16-17). In other words the enemies may be many but with confidence in God, the Psalmist would continue to rejoice. He knows that God is in control.

Salvation from death: Death constitutes the greatest danger from which the Psalmists seek deliverance. To the Psalmists, all other calamities such as persecution, hatred by enemies, sickness, sin, suffering of all kinds, if not prevented by God, will in the final analysis terminate in death.[24] The Hebrew word תָּמָוֶ means *death* which is the opposite of life (Deut. 30:15,19; II Sam. 15:21; Isa. 53:9).[25] According to Desmond Alexander, the word מָוֶת has three basic connotations in the Old Testament. Biologically, the word indicates the end of historical life (Gen. 21:16). in mythological terms, the word is used as a power, agent or principle (Job 18:13; Jer. 9:21). Symbolically, the word is used as the loss of rich joyous existence as willed by God (Deut. 30:15; Ps. 13:3-4).[26]

As far as salvation from death in the Psalter is concerned, we need to see the Psalmists as committed men of God. In their commitment they desire to serve God but they recognise they cannot serve Him when they are no longer

in His presence. In other words, nothing alarmed them more than the thought of an early and untimely death. Their idea was to live, to live long and to achieve the full number of their days.[27] The dead can neither serve nor praise God. This certainly calls for the kind of pleading we see in Psalm 6:4-5:

> Turn, O LORD, save my life;
> Deliver me for the sake of thy steadfast love.
> For in death there is no remembrance of thee:
> In Sheol who can give thee praise?

III. The Psalmists' Understanding of the Saviour

The Psalmists, like other men of God in Israel, have a very high conception and a deep knowledge of God who has made Himself known to them as the all-powerful, all-knowing and ever present God. They know Him as the God of history who guides everything towards the final goal which He has purposed to fulfil. They equally know Him as "the Vindicator of all who are oppressed."[28] The word *salvation* has a strong religious meaning in the Old Testament and particularly in the Psalter. It has even been said that the Israelites' encounter with Yahweh revolves around two poles, namely salvation and judgement.[29] Incidentally, this concept of salvation is as early as at the time of the flood when God saved Noah (Gen. 8). David J. Clines notes:

> God tells Noah how he can escape the flood, God commands him to make an ark, God sends him into the ark, God shuts him in, God remembers him and God tells him to leave the ark when the waters have subsided. In short, God saves Noah (and with him, humanity) from the flood.[30]

The understanding of Yahweh as the Saviour of the Israelites is equally highlighted by Gerhard Von Rad who found the core of the Hexateuch in the confessional statement in Deuteronomy 26:5-9 which deals with the salvation history of the Israelites from the time of the patriarch to the conquest.[31] Even in the prophetic literature, Yahweh is seen as the Saviour, Healer, Comforter and Redeemer.[32]

An inductive study of the Psalter shows that the Psalmists recognize God as their Saviour and Deliverer (Psalms 18:46;24;5; 25:5; 27:9; 38:22; 42:5,11;43:5;65:5; 68:19; 79:9; 85:4; 89:26). This God has saved different individuals. He saved the humble and brought low those whose eyes are haughty (Psalm 18:2). He saved His people (Ps. 28:9) and His servant (Ps. 31:16). He saved the Psalmist from trouble and danger (Ps. 71:2; 91:3). He saved weak and the needy (Ps. 72:13; 109:31). He saved the poor (Ps. 34:6) and the simple hearted (Ps. 116:6).

In all the above mentioned cases and references on the one hand, it seems that a personal or individual salvation is emphasized in the Psalter. To buttress the fact of personal or individual salvation in the Psalter, the pronoun "my'' is often used with the word salvation or other related words such as "Saviour" and "Deliverer." Hence, such phrases like "my salvation" and "my deliverer" are generally used (Psalms 18:2; 25:5; 27:1; 38:22; 62:1; 2, 7; 91:16; 148:14, 21 and 140:7).

On the other hand, a collective concept of salvation is equally emphasized in the Psalter. The people of Israel were collectively saved by God from their bondage in Egypt (Ps. 106:21). Also, there are Psalms (65:5; 68:19-20; 79:9; 85:4 and 95:1) where the pronoun "our'' is used with the word salvation. To stress this point further, we can also take those Psalms that have elements of an individual concept to be a collective or corporate concept of salvation. This is because most of the Psalms that have "my salvation or Saviour'' are ascribed to David who is believed to the representative of God before the people. Thus inasmuch as he represented the people God, his "I" or "me'' in the Psalms referred to the community.

Also looking at the point from an African perspective, one would strongly argue for the collective concept of salvation in the Psalter. There are two points that are obvious from the collective concept of salvation in the Psalter which are closely related to the African culture. First, as far as African society is concerned, things are usually done collectively and corporately. Second, the chief or king of a particular community or town has the freedom to represent his people anywhere and at anytime. He makes decisions for the people and usually they abide by such decisions.[33] This is the reason why the salvation of a community chief or king usually leads to the salvation of the whole community. However, when a king resists the gospel it is usually difficult for a missionary to make converts in such a place. Furthermore, the physical salvation the people of Africa seek cannot be applied only to an individual but must also be applied to the whole continent.

IV. Salvation from the Present Political-Economic Situation in Africa

Africa, which consists of 53 different countries, is the second largest of the earth's seven continents, covering 23 percent of the world's total land area and containing 13 percent of the world's population. It is a land of great diversity. Africa hosts diverse peoples with a wide range of cultures and backgrounds who speak hundreds of different languages. Most nations in Africa won independence in the1950s and 1960s through slow reform or by violent struggle. Unfortunately, many African nations are still struggling politically

and economically. Several nations are confronted with various problems which have made life difficult for many helpless citizens who no doubt are looking forward to a physical salvation from the hands of their oppressors. Three of these nations include Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Sudan.

Somalia: Somalia, on the "horn of Africa", is located at the Eastern part of Ethiopia and Kenya. The nation has been without a stable central government since a dictator Mohammed Siad Barre fled the country in 1991. Subsequently, there has been fighting among rival faction leaders which have led to the killing, dislocation and starvation of thousands of Somalis. It has been estimated that the political violence has led to the death of 350,000 to 1,000,000 Somalis since 1991.[34] Indeed the population is traumatized by suffering, death, famine and savagery of the fighting. About 3.5 million of Somalis live in surrounding nations like Ethiopia, Kenya, etc. Therefore, the Somalis are desperate for peace and restoration of civil order.[35]

The Democratic Republic of Congo: This nation was formerly called Zaire. It is another nation in Africa confronted with a serious political crisis. The current war, which is known as the second Congo war or Africa's world war or even the Great War of Africa, started in August 1998. It involved eight African nations as well as about twenty-five armed groups. By 2008 the war and its aftermath had killed 5.4 million people, mostly from disease and starvation. Also, millions of people have become internally displaced and have sought asylum in neighbouring countries.[36]

The Republic of Sudan: This is the largest country in the African continent. The country's north and south stand in stark contrast to one another. The dry, desert north is populated largely by Arab Muslims, while the wet, swampy south is populated by black African and animists. Sudan's Civil war started in 2003 when rebel groups attacked government garrisons in the Darfur region. The rebels complained of being neglected by Khartoum and thus demanded greater autonomy for Darfur and the settlement of many local grievances, especially over land sights.[37] The government responded to the garrison attacks with a ferocious counter insurgency campaign involving an Arab militia known as the Junjaweed as well as government troops. In the process, entire villages were destroyed and many civilians were brutally tortured, raped and killed. The United Nations estimated that as a result of the conflict in Darfur, more than 200,000 people, mostly civilians, died from violence, starvation, or disease. In addition, more than 2 million people crowded refugee camps in Darfur and neighbouring border areas in Chad.[38] In

addition to the suffering and disruption of lives of common people, the government seems to have sanctioned the re-institution of slavery. Many people especially in the southern part have suffered from slave raiders. An estimated of 60,000-200,000 are now chattel slaves.[39]

Conclusion

The concept of salvation discussed in the Psalter is more applicable to us in Africa than to any other continent of the world. The political and economic crises have brought fear and insecurity to many lives as hunger, poverty, sickness and death are rampant. The current situation is very similar to those of the Psalmists who prayed to God for salvation from trouble, oppression, enemies, death, etc. So in Africa, Christians should spend more time using the Psalms in prayer, asking God to deliver them from their political oppressors. Even though African Christians do not ignore the spiritual aspect of salvation, yet they place much emphasis on physical salvation. Like the Psalmists, African Christians want to be saved from various enemies confronting them.

African Christians cannot be expected to have the same understanding of the word *salvation* as is found among Christians in North America or other developed nations. This is because the things that are creating problems for us in Africa are comparatively non-existent in North America. The majority of Westerners do not know that poverty is all about. They do not experience what it means to be oppressed politically as demonstrated in the just concluded U.S. election in which Obama was elected. Speaking of sickness and death, they have an excellent medical system and their life span is longer than that of the Africans. Therefore one should not be surprised to know that their basic understanding of salvation is usually limited to the New Testament view - deliverance from the bondage of sin.

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[12] Byang H. Kato "The Theology of Eternal Salvation" in *Biblical Christianity in Africa: A Collection of Papers and Addresses.* (Achimota, Ghana: African Christian Press, 1985), p. 22. Byang H. Kato was the general secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA).

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[14] Hartmut Schonher, "Concept of Salvation in Christianity." *Africa Theological Journal* Vol. 12 Nov. 3 (1983); 160-1. The idea of liberation as salvation started in the Catholic Church in Latin America. It has since spread to many denominations of the world particularly in the Third World countries. Cf. Ibid. p. 160.

[15] The words 'Psalms' and 'Psalter' are anglicized forms of the Latin *Psalmi* and *Psalterium*, which in turn are derived from the Greek *Psalmoi* and *Psalterion*. Cf. A.A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms, Volume 1, New Century Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co. 1972), p. 23; and C.O. Ogunkunle, "The Psalter and its Hermeneutics in the African context" *African Journal of Biblical Studies* Volume XVI, Number 1, (April 2001), p. 36.

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[21] Mbiti, "Ο σωττηρ ήμων as an Africa Experience" p. 406.

[22] As quoted by F.M. Mbon. "Deliverance in the Complaint Psalms: Religious Claim or Religious Experience." *Orita* 14/2 (December 1982), p. 124.

[23] It is difficult to say whether Psalm 59 is an individual or community lament. The Psalm shows the characteristics of both types. Its historical setting is identified as Saul's siege of David's house (I Sam. 19:8-11) but Michal helped David to escape through the window (I Sam. 19:12-14).

[24] Mbon, "Deliverance in the Complaint Psalms", p. 120. Cf. Pius Drijvers, *The Psalms: Their Structure and Meaning*, p. 104.

[25] *BDB*, p. 560.

[26] Desmond Alexander, "The Old Testament View of Life After Death" *Themelios* 11/2 (January 1986), p. 41.

[27] Drijvers, *The Psalms: Their Structure and Meaning*, p. 105.

[28] J.G.S.S.Thompson & F.D.Kidner, "Psalms" in *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd Edition edited by J.D. Douglas, (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1962), p. 1995.

[29] McKenzie, *A Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 150.

[30] David J.A. Clines, "Images of Yahweh in the Pentateuch" in *Studies in Old Testament Theology: Historical and Contemporary Images of God and God's People.* Edited by Robert L. Hubbard, Robert K. Johnson, Robert P. Meye (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992), p. 84.

[31] Clines, "Images of Yahweh in the Pentateuch" in *Studies in Old Testament Theology*, p. 92.

[32] Carl E. Armerding, "Images for Today: Word from the Prophets" In *Studies in Old Testament Theology: Historical and Contemporary Images of God and God's People,* pp 177-179.

[33] For details see Rotimi Omotoye, "An Examination of the Attitudes of Traditional Rulers in the Introduction of Christianity in the Pre-Colonial Era in Yorubaland", *Centrepoint,* Volume II, No. 1, (2002/2003), pp. 1-12.

[34] See "Somalia" Microsoft® Encarta® 2008. © 1993-2007 Microsoft Corporation.

[35] Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, *Operation World: 21st Century Edition,* (Carlisle: Paternoster Lifestyle, 2001), p. 575.

[36] See "Democratic Republic of Congo" Microsoft® Encarta® 2008. © 1993-2007 Microsoft Corporation.

[37] Two main rebel groups are the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

[38] See "Sudan" Microsoft® Encarta® 2008. © 1993-2007 Microsoft Corporation.

[39] Johnstone and Mandryk, *Operation World: 21st Century Edition.* p. 597.