

**TANGAZA COLLEGE**  
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**PAUL'S CONCEPT OF JUSTIFICATION ACCORDING TO  
ROM 3: 21-26 AND THE PROBLEM OF  
FUNDAMENTALISM**

**Moderator**

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A Long Essay in Partial Fulfilment of the  
Requirement for the Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies

**NAIROBI 2003**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my mother Reta Mkemtsawi Stephen who has been always an inspiration to my love for the Bible and word of God.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research work is presented to the Biblical Studies Department in Tangaza, it was my effort to fulfil something that my mother had started in my childhood.

Due to the challenging Pentecostal movements in our world today, I find that we cannot eliminate them nor avoid meeting or being with them. So I took this chance to personal learn what fundamentalism is all about, and how I can manage to live, work and help other and even themselves. The whole research is interesting and enriching something I highly uphold.

In a special at this point I benefited from my moderator Fr. Aelred Lacomara, who helped me all through my research work. As a teacher too he was more than that, indeed a friend.

My mother Reta Mkemtsawi Stephen whose best stories were from the OT. I real enjoyed and gave me encouragement of reading the Bible every time I am able to. May God continue to help and bless her.

I am also grateful of Madam Maureen Busolo for her help in correcting my work.

Also Stella Wama for counter checking.

I am also grateful for the Capuchin Students brothers and the Chemchemi sisters.

## STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed: .....

Name of Student: Kamrata Emmanuel Ndatta

Date: .....

This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

Signed: *Aelred Lacomara, C.S.C.*

Name of Supervisor: Aelred Lacomara

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## **General Introduction**

Roman 1:16-17 is the statement of the thesis as it introduces the thesis with key words explained in the thesis, like righteousness of God, faith and salvation. These words are very important in the Gospel of God proclaimed by Paul boldly to all people. For Paul, the new righteousness that is necessary for salvation requires faith. This distinguishes it from the old way of being righteous, and the new way that comes through faith in Christ Jesus. In explaining the righteousness of God, Paul touched the whole Christ event as the only way for salvation. In doing so, Paul through rabbinical techniques uses the Old Testament liturgical words to show the whole process. The gospel that Paul preached has a divine force that brings salvation to the believer. Something different from the righteousness that comes through the recommendations of the law.

The meaning of the term righteousness in both ancient civil society and Jewish religion has got similar meaning. The observance of the law and the duty bound by it, are pertinent to being righteous (right conduct). The righteousness of

God has a relational aspect, as there are parties involved, as there is faithfulness between them. But when used in the religious circles, righteousness adds on it truth, mercy, faithfulness and salvation. To be in good standing in civil society and salvation could be easily distinguished by the term same righteousness. God was seen as a judge, and rectitude was determined by what one does.

In the NT too, had the idea of retributive justice was mostly connected with Christ's second coming. Paul struggled to change the meaning and understanding of righteousness. He had to show that justification cannot be earned as thought of through the observance of the law, but it was a gratuitous gift of God to believers. This is to be understood in the Christ-event, thus changing the whole meaning of salvation, which has a history of God's intervention. Now Paul in showing the new righteousness of God, he had to show its difference with the righteousness of the law. The explanation that Paul gave is what came to be our text (Rom 3:21-26) and the thesis of the whole section.

The righteousness of God gave birth to the doctrine of justification from which others doctrines came from. The doctrine of justification has been given a number of interpretations and understandings in the history of Christianity that brought division among Christians. Now the mainline churches are committed to work for unity after long discussions to see where they went wrong. This brought certain amount of agreement, but this is destabilised by new religious movements.

So it is the work of this paper to see the needs posed by fundamentalism in our pastoral area, and get some idea on how to handle them. They are our brothers and sisters living together though different in the way of understanding scriptural texts. God loves them too, and want to save them also, so it becomes our pastoral duty and concern to learn how to live, work and move together toward God.

The first chapter will look brief at the history of Paul and his letter to the Romans' background. This will involve reasons on what influenced the writing of the letter to the Romans and its purpose. Also its literary style and devices used to portray the message. Then in the second chapter our text will be thoroughly looked into its contents through modern skills of Biblical criticisms. Basing most on the history method. Then finally, we will have to read the same text through history today. This is aimed at putting us into context of fundamentalism today. Probably this chapter is most important, and is the purpose of doing this research. It involves practical suggestions to be used in the pastoral field. This idea is brought by the alarming situation of fundamentalists in our pastoral field.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **SITUATING THE TEXT**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This is an exegetical introduction chapter. The first chapter is a preliminary exegesis of the text. This chapter usual comes first in a Biblical paper, so as to lay a good background for understanding of the text. The text is singled out from other chapters and verses of the same letter to the Romans. In doing so, there has to be reasons for choosing this particular text, and why only those verses, from the whole letter of Romans. This chapter deals with the external environment of the text in which it is found. That is other information other than that of the text, but concerning the letter of the Romans.

In delimiting the text, we try to show exactly where the text begins, and where it ends. This is what we are intending to obtain from this chapter about our text. In this chapter we will also look at the literary genre and structure of our text in



the letter. This literary genre checks for the literary devices used in order to enforce the message. There is also need to see if the text has a structure, which enhances the flow of ideas. In the context we see the development of idea(s) that build up our text. It is also important to check if we can have any other text either in the books of the Bible or other extra Biblical texts that are parallel to our text. This will help us to know the original idea of our text. Finally in this chapter we will look at the history in which the letter to the Romans came to be written.

## **1.1 DELIMITATION OF THE TEXT**

In this paper we are working on the text of Romans 3:21-26, as it is given in the NJBC. In this text Paul is making a kerygmatic proclamation of a new era in the salvation history. Unlike former times, now God's salvation comes through the Christ event, that is, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God's salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

Therefore it is important to find out why we should limit ourselves to this text alone. In this section we try to put this limit by trying to show that it is exclusively this part that has this great proclamation of the new era salvation.

### **1.1.1. Where the text begins:**

In Rom 3:21-26 Paul is explaining positively what can bring salvation. Formerly in Rom 1:18-3:20 he was explaining what couldn't bring salvation. Now

the idea of Rom 3:21-26 is opposed to the former, that is, Rom 1:18-3:20. This drastic change is emphatically introduced by the adverbial clause “but now”. This is presented in a dialogical argumentation in a very rhetorical way, in order to arrive at the point intended by the author.

V.21 is where our text begins. This is indicated by the use of the adverbial clause “But now”; it gives a hint of a new or contrasting idea(s) coming in play. Even in ordinary dialogue “but now” could point to a new decision being made after something else. This adverb being in the emphatic form also shows the time limit. That is, there is a change from the past to something in the present.<sup>1</sup> It is also very juridical, showing a command of something being put in place of something else instead of the former.

The text in fact falls in a unit of its own which is in a subsection (Rom 1:18-4:25), which too is in a wider section (Rom 1: 18-11:25). This mode of composition is revealed after a close examination of the text as you place it in the letter.<sup>2</sup>

The adverbial clause “but now”, also marks a transition to a new reality. Something different from what Paul has been explaining. This is, a positive explanation of the statement of the thesis (Rom 1:16-17).

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<sup>1</sup> J.A.EERTON – C.E.B.CRANFIELD – G.N.STANTON, *Romans I-VIII*, 199-201.

<sup>2</sup> J.N. ALETTI, “*Romans*,” In *The International Bible Commentary*, ed., W.R. FARMER, 1553.

### **1.1.2. Where the text ends:**

This part concludes what was being discussed from Rom 1:18 on what can bring justification for both Jews and Greeks. What comes before is a discussion on how Jews and Greeks used to think on how to obtain salvation (Rom 1:18-3:9), and its negation (Rom 3:10-20). Then what comes after the text (Rom 3:27-4:25) is a defence to back up the text (Rom 3:21-26). This is a small unit that Paul made an extensive use of the Hebrew Scriptures to support his argument.

Fitzmyer agrees with many scholars that Rom 3:26 is the climax of the thesis, thus forming the end of our text.<sup>3</sup> V.26 is the end of the topic of the divine uprightness, as what follows immediately (v.27) presents polemical consequences of God's uprightness, which is in the same line of thought with v.20 above it. Similarly v.27's statement that says, "What becomes of our boast," indicates a beginning of a new thought or discourse.<sup>4</sup> Paul concludes that justification will be the benefit of those who believe in Jesus. Faith in Jesus now becomes the new way that God accepts human being.

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<sup>3</sup> J.A. FITZMYER, *Romans*, 262.

<sup>4</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, 352-353.

## 1.2. FORM AND STRUCTURE

### 1.2.1. The Form

After finding the delimitation of the text, the next preliminary exegetical step is to find the literary genre of the text. All scholars agree that Paul's letter to the Romans complies to the letter form written in ancient times. It has all conventional characteristics of a letter in the Hellenistic era, That is, the opening has got greetings and identity of the sender and recipient(s), then comes the body that holds all that the sender wanted to communicate to the recipient(s). Then the closing section that is usual composed of stereotype conventions and greetings to and from to both the sender and recipient(s).<sup>5</sup> This too, is very Pauline as it complies with all authentic letters of Paul in style.

Paul's letters usually have features just as the ones named for the Hellenists' letters. Furthermore, Paul's letter to the Romans according to the qualification of letters is a general occasional epistolary, different from personal letters in antiquity. It has an opening section, the doctrinal and ethics section, which form the body of the letter, and deals with the precise matter of the communication. Then the closing section, that has greetings from Paul to some members of the Roman community-

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<sup>5</sup> J.L. SUMMEY, "Letter" In *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, D. N. FREEDMAN, ed., 801- 802.

probably from those whom he comes to know much about from that particular community. Our text falls on the doctrinal section that is in the main body of the letter.

Application of ancient rhetoric skills to this letter concludes Romans to be predominantly epideictic, deliberative, juridical as well as an ambassadorial letter. Our text is more juridical as it has a judgmental tone, of a justification through faith in Jesus Christ. It is also diatribe, in that it tries to eliminate any prestigious views on the Jews and Greeks. Paul also uses the scripture so to give authority over what he is teaching, like that of Abraham's in Romans 4. He employed this in order to persuade the readers who are unknown to him, but have strong Jewish influence.

Our text holds some citations from Hebrew Scriptures that Paul used to establish a common ground of understanding with the believers in Rome. The use of these citations universalises Paul's letter to the Romans.<sup>6</sup> In doing so, Paul employs a dialogical tone as an art of persuasion, a literary device to make the reader feel his presence. In fact our text has a strong proclamatory tone, which is much supported by the adverb clause "But now".

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<sup>6</sup> J REUMANN, "*The Letter to Romans*" In *EDB*, D. N. FREEDMAN, ed., 1136-1137.

### 1.2.2 Structure

The letter of Paul to the Romans exhibits a clear structure that is acknowledged by scholars, that is opening, body conclusion of the letter. The body of the letter is divided into two main sections; the first begins in Rom 1:18 –11:36. This section is widely accepted as the doctrinal section, of which Paul explains his gospel. It is here that our text comes from. The second section is Rom 12:1-15:13. This is commonly known as the ethical or recommendation section. After this is just the common concluding section of greetings to and from a feature common to Pauline letters.

The letter's body is divided into subsections, from which there are some smaller units. It is in the first subsection (Rom 1:18-4:25) that our text (Rom 3:21-26) falls in. If we divide it according to the independence of thought, we can get about five units; Rom 1:18-3:9 the first, Rom 3: 10-20 forms the second, then Rom 3:21-26 forms the third, Rom 3:27-31 the fourth, and finally Rom 4:1-25 forms the fifth unit.<sup>7</sup>

The argumentative compositional model, it possible to find a structure in our text. Fitzmyer provides a clear simple outline of the text of Romans 3:21-26. First

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<sup>7</sup> ALETTI, al., 1557-1560.

in v.21 Paul distinguishes God's righteousness with the Mosaic Law. Secondly he put the universal status of the righteousness of God 3:22. Thirdly, is the necessity of God's grace because all have sinned 3:23. Fourth, in v.24a he puts the nature and gratuity of God's righteousness. Then there is the mode of this God's revelation vv.24b-25a. At last he put the finality of god's righteousness vv.25-26.<sup>8</sup>

### **1.3. ON THE CONTEXT**

#### **1.3.1. Remote Context 1:18-4:25**

Our text (3:21-26) is the thesis for our exegesis. The remote context of this thesis is Rom 1:18-4:25, for the following reasons. The author first announced the statement of the thesis in Rom 1:16-17, and immediately picks up the development of the thesis by first presenting what cannot bring salvation to both Jews and Greeks (Rom 1:18-3:9). This is a negative explanation of the thesis. Then he put a neutral line (Rom 3:10-20), so as to put both Jews and Greeks on the same plane, in order to show that they are all sinners in God's presence. This is in trying to show that all are lacking something, which the author will now have the chance to introduce it. In doing so he created suspense that he needs to explain. The explanation is our text (Rom 3:21-26), which "the centre and heart of the main division to which it

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<sup>8</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, 342.

belongs.”<sup>9</sup> This is the positive explanation of the statement of the thesis (Rom 1:16-17), and the thesis is our text.

This could be a way of bringing Jesus Christ into the scene, as the new way for obtaining salvation to both Jews and Greeks. The story of Abraham (Rom 4:1-25) is in the same line of showing equality of Jews and Greeks in God’s sight.

Furthermore, this remote context (Rom 1:1- 4:25) is centred on Jews and Greeks, as there is no mention of them in the following chapters. This remote context is dominated by the attribute of divine ‘uprightness’ (*dikaiosyne*). In the whole of this remote context there is also a juridical and forensic notion that appears to be dominant.<sup>10</sup>

### **1.3.2. Immediate Context (3:10-20 and 3:27-31)**

Rom 3:10-20 and 3:27-31 forms the immediate context of our text. In Rom 3:10-20, Paul tries to show in a summary how all human beings are involved in sin and are sinners in God’s sight. Also “that the whole human being has participated in evil”<sup>11</sup> the reason for their need of the revelation of God’s righteousness. This paragraph concludes the negative explanation of the statement of the thesis (Rom

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<sup>9</sup>J.A.EERTON –C.E.B.CRANFIELD – G.N.STANTON, 199.

<sup>10</sup>J. A. FITZMYER. *Romans*, 96-97.

<sup>11</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, 334.



1:16-17), which comes after a lengthy discussion on why and how Jews and Greeks are under sin. In doing so, the author minimises the pride of the Jews that they had on the Mosaic Law, and put them all on the same level with the Greeks; in need of God's grace. So that this put a new way on receiving God's grace, that is through God's gospel and about the role of Christ in human beings.<sup>12</sup>

The second part of the immediate context concludes that God's new plan of salvation through Christ removes all boasting either because of the Mosaic Law, or Greek's natural law (Romans 1:18-3:9). Paul here is bringing an understanding of what formerly used to be thought as bringing salvation, but was improper. Something new has replaced the Mosaic Law of the Jews and the natural law of the Greeks. There is no other principle apart from faith, and this is faith in Christ Jesus. Faith in Christ is the new criterion provided for obtaining salvation, a thing one cannot merit on his/her own, not even in doing the works of the law as formerly thought and taught by the Rabbis. Paul continues to tell what is faith in the following chapter on the story of Abraham. Faith that brings about rectitude and

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<sup>12</sup> J. A. Fitzmyer, 334.

uprightness is in God's grace and faith in Jesus Christ. Faith helps one achieve what the law was intended for.<sup>13</sup>

In summary, Paul gives the new teaching on the new standard for obtaining salvation in a common understanding of Rom 3:21-26. In Rom 3:27-31, he gives a polemical defence for the teaching on justification through faith in Jesus Christ. In a way Paul tried to explain what he meant in the story of Abraham, the quest of what faith is.

#### 1.4 PARALLEL TEXTS

Our text has no direct parallel text in biblical literature. This is acknowledged by a number of scholars. But this does not only apply to our text, but also to the whole central argument in Romans.<sup>14</sup> What we can find to be relating to other parts of the scriptures are citations of single ideas whose purpose is to give weight to the argument. These words drew their meaning in the Hebrew Scriptures. V.25 of our text has words which brings meanings parallel to text in the Hebrew Scriptures like Leviticus 16:14-16 and Exodus 24:5-8. In the New Testament, There is nothing that

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<sup>13</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, 359-360

<sup>14</sup> C.D. MYERS, Jr., "*Epistle to the Romans*", In *ABD*, 821.

is parallel to the text; only on thematic ground can we find some relations on the function of Jesus and the High Priesthood title of Jesus in the letter to the Hebrews.

In the letter of James what we read seems to contradict Paul's text. Scholars say that James' text and that of Paul come from an exegesis of Gen: 15:6, a passage that is associated with faith and righteousness. In a way, Gen 15:6 can be a parallel to this text, though indirectly, because of the two similar words used here and their circumstances.

There are extra biblical passages that we can take for the parallel to our text. The two passages below are taken from Aletti, and they are from rabbinical writings instructing fellow Jews on the works of the law and divine grace;

“And also we have written to you some of the works of the Torah which we think are good for you and for your people, for [we saw] in you intellect and knowledge of the Torah. Reflect on all these matters and seek from [God] so that he may support your counsel [= will] and keep far from you the evil scheming and the counsel of Belial, so that at the end of time, you may rejoice in finding that some of our words are true. And it shall be reckoned to you as justice when you do what is upright and good before him, for your good and that of Israel.”<sup>15</sup>

The passage below too, shows divine grace to be a gift and a trust in the justice of God, is not meritorious but flows from the mercies of God.

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<sup>15</sup> F. G. MARTINEZ, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*. The Qumran Texts in English, W.G.E. WATSON, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 84-85. In J.N. ALETTI, “Romans”, In *The International Bible Commentary*, 1566.

“As for me, if I stumble, the mercies of God shall be my salvation always; and if I fall in the sin of the flesh, in the justice of God, which endures eternally, shall my judgement be; if my grief commences, he will free my soul from the pit and make my steps steady on the path; he will draw me near in his mercies, and by kindnesses set in motion my judgement; he will judge me in the justice of his truth, and his plentiful goodness always atone for all my sins...”<sup>16</sup>

But Aletti shows the difference to have existed on the distinction of faith in or of Jesus and the works of the Mosaic Law.<sup>17</sup>

## 1.5 HISTORICAL SETTING

The letter to the Romans is beyond doubt by Paul, though some few nineteenth and twentieth century scholars could doubt the entirety being Paul's work. A reference to it by apostolic fathers from an early date, acknowledges it to be Pauline. Another question that arose from the letter is, whether the whole letter was from Paul, or the secretary added his own things. For chapters 15 and 16 are recognised by a number of commentators to have been added later by the secretary.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> J. N. ALETTI, 1566-1567.

<sup>17</sup> J. N. ALETTI, 1566-1567.

<sup>18</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, 40-42.

Commentators are divided on the place of the writing of the letter. But evidence from within and without shows that it was written in Corinth. From Acts of the Apostles, during Paul's third missionary journey he spent three months of the winter between 57 and 58, before leaving for Jerusalem through Macedonia. It is between these years that scholars like Fitzmyer, Sanday and Headlam hold firm that Corinth is the place of the writing, and the winter of 57 or 58 C.E. as the date of the writing of the letter to the Romans.<sup>19</sup>

#### **1.5.1. Situation of Paul's Life that Served as the Context of the Letter**

A survey at this point showed a climax of Paul's apostolic mission work in the Eastern part of the empire, which is Asia Minor and Greece. A new vision to work in the West, that is Spain and other parts of Western Europe, is now clicking in Paul's mind as part of the gentile world mission. Paul appeals for help as he goes to Jerusalem (Rom 15:30-32), as he looked not to be sure of the reaction he will face there. Up to this time, Paul has been "...highly controversial figure, suspected of playing fast and loose with Jewish heritage of Christianity."<sup>20</sup> This could be one of the reasons for requesting for their prayers. Up to this moment, the Roman community was the only one that was sympathetic to the Jewish heritage for they

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<sup>19</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, 85-87.

<sup>20</sup> B.BYRNE, *Romans*, 9.

were nurtured by it. This great Jewish heritage in the Christians is credited probably to the founders of the community. It is for this strong Jewish heritage in the community that Paul wrote so as to straighten things out. Paul who from the on set was opposed to Jewish practices in Christianity, has to give an authentic and acceptable account of his view of the Gospel in the letter as an apostle to the gentiles. This too will correct the image the community about Paul before.

The consequence of this letter is to help the Christian community know who he is, his understanding of the Gospel and his position in the Christian sphere. For which they will be able to receive him, as well as help him in the mission to Spain; both material and moral support. In synopsis this letter is a self-presentation of Paul to the community in Rome. For this would result to a great success of his mission to Spain and other places in the West.

### **1.5.2 History of the Roman Community that received it**

This is the other side of the coin. There is no particular apostle or disciple of the Lord that is particularly attributed to the founding of the Christian community in Rome. Paul too wrote to a community that he had not founded or visited.

From the Pentecost event we have the evidence of the existence of many people from “all over the world” (Acts 2). In the group from Rome there were Jews and converts to Judaism. Their reason for being in Jerusalem may have been religious

and commerce. There was a group of gentiles called proselytes who could have the opportunity to worship the Jewish God without becoming Jews (circumcised). All these people being in Jerusalem and moving to Rome, they formed a group of believers “of the way”<sup>21</sup> within the Synagogues of the Jewish community.<sup>22</sup> The Jewish influence is felt more especially as Paul is seen to be addressing gentiles who seem to know well the Hebrew Scriptures.

From the beginning of the letter, Paul seems to be clarifying issues to the group that sound to be of gentile origin, but have knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures. Suetonius, a secular historian tells us of the agitator called Chrestus among the Jews who brought about rioting until the emperor Claudius expelled them from Rome. This Chrestus is said to be Jesus Christ. Evidence from the letter shows some of these people like Priscilla and Aquila among a list in Rom 16:3ff, who went back later after the death of Claudius in 54 C.E. For after having been expelled they stayed in Asia Minor, and worked with Paul in Corinth.

The community is composed of mostly merchants, who spoke Greek, a language of a well off people in society. Latin still at this time was an inferior native language, but merchants and learned men and women were expected to speak

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<sup>21</sup> Formerly Christians were called “the people of the way,” it was in Corinth where they were for the first time called Christians.

<sup>22</sup> B.BYRNE, 11.

Greek. The Christianised group had a hot debate with Jews on the messianic status of Jesus Christ. This brings Paul on stage using his Jewish techniques of interpretation of scriptures to cool down the situation. In fact this became an immediate factor for writing the letter. In doing so, Paul tried to find a middle line between the two extremists. This middle line is that which put us exactly to our text. Paul's major aim was to bring acceptance and tolerance between the Jews and gentile Christians, but still maintaining his stand of not bothering the gentiles on Jewish's legalities.

One thing that should be clear at this point is that Paul had no clear knowledge of what was exactly happening in Rome. The situation of the Roman community is different unlike others, which Paul knew quite well, because he was neither the founder nor had he visited the community, so that he could have known the problem very well. There are also other problems secular in nature like the payment of taxes (Rom 13:1-7), which he had to address among others.

All these issues are considered by scholars to be the reasons that fostered the writing of the letter to the Romans. In doing so Paul cleared up the air, first of all, his doctrine was to be understood and then he would be welcomed by the



community, as this will guarantee the support he needed for the mission to Spain; the end of the world.<sup>23</sup>

## **1.6 CONCLUSION**

What we have done so far defines our text, and single's it out from the rest of the letter. It is important to create an understanding of what we are going to do to the text. This clears up the way for a proper scrutiny of the text in the following chapter.

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<sup>23</sup>B. BYRNE, 8-13.

## CHAPTER 2

### ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we are going to deal with the text, which is our main focus in this paper. The climax of this text is to find the original meaning of the text, and the effects the text was intended to produce when Paul wrote this text.

As you might have known that the printing press is just a 15<sup>th</sup> century discovery, and all ancient copies were done by hand. A work that demanded a good skill gained through hard training, since the ink used and the writing material, were all crude and undeveloped.<sup>24</sup> This made lots of variations from one manuscript to another of the same text or letter. The copyist would also sometimes manipulate at some parts so as to suit his needs and answer the question(s) of his community. This is a common feature in Biblical writings roused by the need to pass the same

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<sup>24</sup> The writing material used at that time when the Bible was being written, that is even many years before Christ, were skin parchments and papyrus. The papyruses were reeds that in ancient times grew up abundantly in the marshes in the Nile delta in Egypt. They were used as writing material just like paper, and best paper when stored in dry area. They were used mostly in Egypt, Greece and in the Palestine. J.L. McKENZIE, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 634-635.

message to a number of people. To check the variations in the text helps one to get the original text and message as conveyed by Paul.

This step is important, as it will help us to get almost the exact text of the Romans in which Paul's intention is in it.

## 2.1 TEXTUAL CRITICISM

In textual criticism we try to look at origin and variations of the text. That is of the whole letter of the Romans, so that we may get an idea of the variations found in our text. This is made possible because of the manuscript traditions.

According to manuscript sources for the letter to the Romans, there are eight main different forms of Romans. This comes from the manuscripts found; some were having up to ch 14, others up to ch.15, and still others up to ch.16.<sup>25</sup> But Fitzmyer<sup>26</sup> attests that the text or parts of Romans are preserved (part or whole) in twenty-nine manuscripts. The papyrus manuscripts that had an earliest date were eight as confirmed by Murphy-O'Connor (above). The date goes back to the ninth century, and three of which are of a much earlier date as to the third century. These eight Greek manuscripts are held in greater esteem because they are from highly

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<sup>25</sup> J.M.O'CONNOR, *Paul A Critical Life*, 324.

<sup>26</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, *Romans*, 47.

credited manuscripts. The parchment manuscripts, which their date comes later, are about twenty-nine in number. Their date is between third and ninth century. But the Greek manuscripts and the patristic writers are the most ancient. The one that is most reliable, as agreed by many scholars is that of Aland.

Generally, Fitzmyer pinpointed three major textual problems in the letter to the Romans' text. That is, the address Rom 1: 7,15, the doxology Rom 16:25-27, and finally the blessing Rom 16:20b or Rom 16:24 or Rom 16:28 were missing in some manuscripts.<sup>27</sup> Copyists who intended to address the letter to others or their own Churches could have done this. For when you remove these verses, the letter becomes so generic fitting for any Church, as these verses contain the particulars to the Romans.<sup>28</sup> Also the conciliatory tone that is in the claims, doctrine and practice made it look more like a circular letter or a general treatise.

There are a number of forms of the letter due to additions and omissions found in these manuscripts. This brings about the shorter form of the letter to the Romans that has fourteen chapters. But all manuscripts so far discovered have the longer form, but ancient commentators show the existence of a shorter form of Romans. There is another form of the letter to the Romans that has fifteen chapters.

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<sup>27</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, *Romans*, 47.

<sup>28</sup> J. M. O'CONNOR, 324 .

Finally, there is a form of Romans in the extant Greek manuscript that is longer. It has sixteen chapters that end with either verse 27 or 28. Fortunately this longer form is the most common found whenever there is the fuller text of the Romans. It has been agreed by textual critics that this longer form of the text of the Romans to be the original form. This assertion is open for new discoveries in the future.<sup>29</sup>

This brings the conclusion that both literary and textual evidence would not support fourteen chapters form of Romans to be of Paul's original composition. Generally, today commentators agree on a sixteen chapters form of Romans. This assertion is supported by the Greek manuscripts of Romans, which affirm a sixteen chapters form of Romans sent to Rome. But this does not deny the existence of a fourteen chapters form of Romans at one time.<sup>30</sup>

Turning to minor exegesis in our text, there are three major variations in our text that come about probably by copying errors. These variations also are caused by theological message the author wanted to convey to his audience. In our text there are three words added or omitted in three verses (3:22, 25, 26.). These could affect the meaning of the verse in the presence or absence of the word.

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<sup>29</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, *Romans*, 48-50.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. J. A. FITZMYER, 55-65.

In v.22 there is the word εἰς πάντας “for all” that is found in more than ten manuscripts.<sup>31</sup> There is another form of the same word with a different article that read ἐπὶ πάντας “upon all”, found in the Vulgate.<sup>32</sup> In contrast to the other two, some manuscripts<sup>33</sup> put in the *Textus Receptus*, combine the two reading “εἰς πάντας, ἐπὶ πάντας, and thus generate a basically unnecessary and tautological expression. The committee reached a textual decision that the text is almost certain to the original text.<sup>34</sup>

In v.25 διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως. There is addition and omission of the article τῆς in the manuscripts. These copyists intended to point back διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in v.22. But majority of the committee decided to maintain the article τῆς in brackets because from internal and external evidence, this will give a middle line. This brackets gives the reader a hint that the reading is doubtful. The committee had a difficulty in deciding which variation to place in the

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<sup>31</sup> B. M. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary*, P40 ♦\* B C P Ψ 81 1739 al., 449.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. B. M. METZGER, vg Pelagius John –Damascus, 449.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. B. M. METZGER, ♦c D G K 33 al., 449.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. B. M. METZGER, 449.

text.<sup>35</sup> Also omission of the clause in MSS A and 2127 should have been accidental.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, v. 26 too has a problem with the reading of Ἰησοῦ. In some MSS the copyists did some expansion of Ἰεσοῦ<sup>37</sup> by addition of Χριστοῦ<sup>38</sup> is a natural scribal accretion. In the MSS syr<sup>p</sup> reads κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ a thing that brings resemblance to the Syriac ecclesiastical expression. Also the copyists made some error in the copying. So in some of the MSS the Ἰησοῦ is omitted<sup>39</sup>, and they wrote Ἰησοῦν<sup>40</sup> instead.

## 2.2 EXEGESIS

The traditional understanding of Jesus' suffering and death was for the payment made to God for human sin. But, Paul in giving an understanding of Christ's suffering and death, he aligned Jesus Christ with the Father in the OT events. In that, Christ now embodies the justice and fidelity of God, since God works in him. Here, Christ represents the power of God's victorious righteousness

<sup>35</sup> Cf. B. M. METZGER, 449.

<sup>36</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, 449.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. B.M. METZGER, ◆ A B C K P 81 1739 Byz al., 449.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. 629 it(d\*), 61 Copbo al, B. M. METZGER, 449.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. B. M. METZGER, F G 336 itg, 449.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. B. M. METZGER, Dgr Ψ 33 614 Lect al, 449.

in his death. Biblical images give background knowledge of events in the OT that help in the understanding of the text of Rom 3:21-26<sup>41</sup>

In the following six verses of Romans, we are going to look at what Paul is saying in the process of answering the question why all humanity stand in need of God's salvation, and the revelation of God's righteousness. Paul did this first by putting God's righteousness in relation to the Mosaic Law, then it's universal destination, it's necessity, and it's nature and gratuity. Also we will see the mode of its revelation and lastly it's finality.

V.21 "*But now...*" – Paul begins this section with the adverb "*now*" marking a new step in the salvation history, in relation to the Mosaic Law. This "*now*" is temporary and marks a new era being inaugurated.<sup>42</sup> The new era and the old era overlap at the Christ-event. Paul in talking about the new era is thinking in the light of the Christian gospel, that is, on the onset of the proclamation of the gospel that inaugurates the new era.<sup>43</sup> In this new era there is a different means of salvation that supersede the law, circumcision, and the promises of the old covenant. The divine wrath too gives way to divine uprightness.

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<sup>41</sup> B. BYRNE, *Reckoning With Romans*, 86.

<sup>42</sup> J.A. FITZMYER, "*The Letter to the Romans*," In *NJBC*, R. E. BROWN, J. A. FITZMYER, R. E. MURPHY, ed., 839.

<sup>43</sup> B. BYRNE, *Romans, Sacra Pagina*, VI, D. J. HARRINGTON, ed.,



The adverbial “*now*” is eschatological, which according to Paul, eschatological time is at hand, and Jesus is the forerunner of the new aeon, new apocalyptic era. This clicks in our minds, a time or period that is beyond our ordinary time, of a place that its locality cannot be traced here, of a time where everything has been transformed by the power of the gospel. A time where there is an imminent coming of the kingdom of God, to salvation in the world, to acquittal in condemnation, to time in eternity, and as it is written in the book of Revelation of the new heaven and new earth.<sup>44</sup> The coming of Jesus and the role he played was first for humanity, but most important of all, was for the inauguration of the new aeon. So the old age and the new age meet at the Jesus’ event, and therefore inaugurating an age where faith in Jesus reigns supremely.

“...*Apart from the law...*” – The phrase “a part from law” put a contrast between the law and Jesus Christ.<sup>45</sup> The law has got a different function, which is to make the person conscious of sin (Rom 3:20). It brings real knowledge of sin, and has nothing to do with the revelation of God’s uprightness. This phrase also could mean something beyond the law. What Paul is putting across is the prescriptions and prohibitions in doing the deeds of the law that are no more. That

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<sup>44</sup> K. BARTH, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 92.

<sup>45</sup> B. BYRNE, *Sacra Pagina*, VI, D. J. HARRINGTON, 129.

is, the law has got nothing to do with the manifestation of God's uprightness.<sup>46</sup> There is a righteousness that sidesteps the righteousness obtained from the works demanded by the law and the blessings in Rom 4:6, foreshadow faith in Christ. The Christian dispensation of justification is independent of and destined to supersede and fulfil the law. Barth on the same phrase sees God's word to be free and not only confined to a certain jurisdiction. But is free to speak even where the law is not, that is, where he wills.<sup>47</sup>

*"...The uprightness of God has been disclosed..."* – That is divine quality of uprightness is revealed. The sovereign plan of God for the salvation of all humanity is revealed. This divine uprightness is realized through preaching and the spreading of the gospel. It is God's bounteous and powerful uprightness, whereby he acquits his sinful people in a just judgement. This is an act done in the past (cf death of Christ) but its effects are lasting because of the proclamation of the gospel.

*"...Though the law and prophets bear witness..."* – The OT was privileged to prepare for the manifestation of God's uprightness<sup>48</sup>. The law and prophets represent the whole scripture (cf Matt 11:13//Luke 16:16; Matt 5:17; 7:12; 22:40).

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<sup>46</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, *NJBC*, R. E. BROWN, J. A. FITZMYER, R. E. MURPHY, 839.

<sup>47</sup> K. BARTH, 92.

<sup>48</sup> The main verb *witness* is in the present Participle, expressing contemporaneity.

The law and the prophets were concerned in giving a standard way of life, in a prescribed mode of conduct. Paul here is exploiting the ambiguous meaning of the term *νομος* “law”, as there are different meanings in other places (cf 3:27; 7:23).<sup>49</sup>

V.22 “...Through faith in (of) Jesus Christ” – In Greek noun *πιστις* “faith” and the verb *πιστεω* “believe”, have the same root. The genitive *Ιησου* “Jesus” is disputed by scholars, it gives ambiguous meaning. Some would understand it in the subjective, and it would mean through the fidelity (or obedience) of Jesus Christ. This meaning doesn’t go with Pauline theology. Instead many commentators prefer to take the objective sense as in Rom 3:26. Another text that helps to clarify the meaning is the genitive construction in Galatians 3:26, which clearly means faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>50</sup> Also, Mark 11:22 “faith in God” has an objective sense of the genitive. To find the meaning of the genitive use in the text depends on the context.<sup>51</sup> It is here that for the first time in the epistle, Christ is referred to as the object of faith. Christ himself is rather the corporeal manifestation of divine uprightness, and human beings benefit and acquire for themselves the effects of that

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<sup>49</sup> B. BYRNE, VI, D. J. HARRINGTON, 130.

<sup>50</sup> G. BARTH, “*Πιστις*” In *EDNT*, III, H. BALZ – G. SCHNEIDER, ed., 93-96.

<sup>51</sup> B. BYRNE, 130.

manifested uprightness by faith in Jesus Christ. Only those who have the eyes of faith comprehend indeed the divine uprightness.<sup>52</sup>

*“For all who have believe”* – Universal destination of the effects of God’s uprightness is without distinction, to both “Jews and Gentiles” (10:12). This phrase could be and perhaps was a slogan of Pauline missionary movement. In a single short and snappy phrase Paul denotes the theme of his gospel and letter to Rome, that is, universal destination of the letter.<sup>53</sup> At this point it is clear that the righteousness God is the power for the justification of all.<sup>54</sup>

V: 23 *“...All have sinned”* – The human need for salvation is necessitated by the existence of sin in all human beings. The *“all”* is to be considered as encompassing Jews and Greeks as they were the historical groups in that time. Paul’s formulation of *all have sinned* points to all humanity an idea that still counts to individuals, that is, as Jews, as Greeks or even as Barbarians. In this phrase all human beings are characterised by sin.<sup>55</sup> The Greek *ἡαμαρτον* retains in the NT its fundamental meaning; to “miss the mark”, something that indicate that there is a failure in attaining certain moral goal standards. Also transgression

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<sup>52</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, *NJBC*, R. E. BROWN, J. A. FITZMYER, R. E. MURPHY, 840.

<sup>53</sup> B. BYRNE, 130.

<sup>54</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, 346.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. J. A. FITZMYER, 346.

against the laws, customs or divine will count as sin. To sin means to commit personal, individual acts in thought or execution from which evil results. But this has no reference to original sin or sin as habitus.<sup>56</sup>

*“Fall short of the glory of God”* –This is the second half of the sentence. What joins the first and the second is the Greek connective clause καὶ “and”. This connective clause shows that falling short of God’s glory is a consequence of sin. Byrne put an analogy on how sin estranges a person in the story of Gen 3; that Eve was clothed with God’s righteousness but when she sinned, sin stripped her naked.<sup>57</sup> As is the situation of all human beings that sin denies them a share in God’s glory. For Paul, this expresses the eschatological destination of human beings, which is glory. Glory is what equips human beings to share the eternal life, which is the original idea of the creator (cf. 2:7,10). Sin estranges human beings from the intimate presence of God, that is what they are deprived of, that which they were destined. To fall short here means that human beings by their sinful actions have fallen short of this moral goal.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. J. A. FITZMYER, 130.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. J. A. FITZMYER, 130-131.

Cf. J. A. FITZMYER, *NJBC*, R. E. BROWN, J. A. FITZMYER, R. E. MURPHY, 840.

The section beginning from v.24 to 26a has been regarded to be an insertion of pre-Pauline creedal statement about justification, which goes like,

“Being justified gratis through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forth as a means of expiation with his blood, for the manifestation of God’s uprightness, for the sake for the remission of bygone sins (committed) in the forbearance of God.”<sup>59</sup>

For which Paul modified by adding phrases like ‘by his grace’, ‘to be received through faith (after blood 25a), and for the demonstration of his uprightness at the present time so that he might be upright even while justifying the one (who lives) on faith in Jesus” v.26b-c. Paul affirms God’s uprightness in the light of his own personal life experience of his conversion. He comes to the conclusion that doing the deeds of the law cannot acquit sin, for justification is not something that is within human beings or within their own power. Justification as a Christ event makes one upright, brings about new creation; the sinner is made to the very uprightness of God. This pre-Pauline statement about justification excludes any chances of meriting justification on one’s own. It is completely God’s gift, under God’s own initiative.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>J. REUMANN, “*Righteousness*” In *ABD*, 840.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. J. REUMANN, 840.

V.24 “...By his grace as a gift...” – The Greek word *δορεαν* “freely, without cause” adverb derived from the accusative of *δορεα* “gift” as used here in the sense of gratis without payment (cf Matt 10:8; 2Cor 11:7). Paul is speaking of the gift of righteousness given freely by God. He sees the Christian dispensation as owing wholly to the merciful and gratuitous benevolence of God the Father. The concept of *χρηρις* “grace” stands in continuity with the pervasive of the OT tradition, but grace in Paul has a dynamic character. Functioning later in Romans (5:20-21; 6:14-15) as a personified, liberating divine power set over against the power of *ηαρματια* “sin”. This *χρηρις* “grace” has no connection with OT (Heb) *hesed* “benevolence”.<sup>61</sup> Grace as a gift indicates that it is not merited and it is out of human power, unlike in the doing of the deeds of the law, it comes from God.<sup>62</sup>

“...Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” – Human beings are not only justified by Christ Jesus, but they are also redeemed by him. The Greek word *’απολυτρωσεως* “redemption” denoted in the Greco-Roman world the buying back of a slave or captive by the payment of a ransom. Liberation or ransoming of humanity is by Christ Jesus. An act achieved by God himself for Israel in the exodus (Ps 78:35). In principle, this ransoming has taken place in the death and

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<sup>61</sup> B. BYRNE, 131.

<sup>62</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, 347.

resurrection of Jesus (3:25), but its definitive phase is still awaited (8:23).<sup>63</sup> Paul's use of redemption from a given context 1Cor 1:30; in Rom 8:23 and 3:24 imply the liberation of our bodies from captivity of corruption. This is redemption achieved by God is a directly of the extension of the Exodus now to all human beings through the Christ-Event.<sup>64</sup>

*"In Christ"* expresses a union with the risen Christ. Christ in his glorified body constitutes a sphere of salvation *"in"* which believers live in the interim between justification and the full eschatological salvation. In this there is a retrieval of the Calvary event, which gives an objective picture of *"redemption"* brought by God. In applying this to Christians, we can refer to the benefits of the union with Christ that is in Faith and baptism for the believers.<sup>65</sup>

V.25 *"Whom God put forth..."* – This could mean "God designed him to be ...", This is because of the verb προεθετο *"put forth"* has a middle voice in Greek and can mean proposed to oneself, purpose, put forward publicly display, a meaning which is not clear. Proposed him to oneself, show divine initiative and a long

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<sup>63</sup> J.A. FITZMYER, *NJBC*, R. E. BROWN, J. A. FITZMYER, R. E. MURPHY, 840.

<sup>64</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, 348.

<sup>65</sup> B. BYRNE, 132.



purpose behind the death of Christ for salvation.<sup>66</sup> If you stress the *pro* of the verb, then it could mean, “God set him forth,” that is displayed him publicly. It would then be a reference not so much to the divine plan of salvation as to the crucifixion. In any case, the redemption is ascribed to the Father (ὁ θεός - God). This brings out, as seems intended, a contrast with the rites performed in the inner recesses of the Temple.<sup>67</sup>

“...*As a means of expiation...*” – God set forth Christ on the cross as ἱλατεριον (msc. Adj. -as expiation). The neuter could mean, “as a means of expiation”. ἱλαστεριον in LXX is the name for the “mercy seat” in the Holy of Holies (Lev 16:2, 11-17). The mercy seat is one of the Temple furnishing symbolises God’s beneficent power (Heb 9:5). Paul without any doubt is saying that Christ’s crucifixion has become the mercy seat of the new dispensation, the means of expiating (wiping away) the sins that had estranged human beings from God. The “melchizedek scroll from Qumran supports the expiatory interpretation, in the line of the function of the high priest that culminated in the Day of Atonement.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> B. BYRNE, 132.

<sup>67</sup> J.A. FITZMYER, *NJBC*, R. E. BROWN, J. A. FITZMYER, R. E. MURPHY, 840.

<sup>68</sup> B. BYRNE, 133.

In 4Macc 17: 21-22, the blood of the martyrs atones for the sins of the nation of Israel, a thing that brings about preservation of Israel. The death of Jesus takes up the atoning role previously associated with the Temple feast of Atonement.<sup>69</sup>

*“...Through faith...”* – This is a cryptic phrase difficult to translate, furthermore is an addition to the pre-Pauline liturgical text, and it is very important in this argument. The benefits of the Christ event are only shared through faith.<sup>70</sup> Faith is the precise indicator of the existence of grace. It is the tool that believers respond to God. Faith in the absolute sense excludes the law and its works. The faith in Jesus is the one that restores the right relations of God to his people.<sup>71</sup>

*“For the manifestation of his uprightness...”* – This is the first of two parallel statements revealing the finality of the cross. Christ’s expiatory death makes public the father’s bountiful acquittal, and human uprightness flows from the uprightness of God himself. Now Christ’s death is to be seen in the new way of revealing God’s plan of salvation, which is the revelation of his righteousness. Similarly, the Essenes of Qumran also attributed the acquittal of sinners to God’s uprightness. This finds its roots back to the OT (Ps 143:1-2, 11; Ezra 9:13-15; Dan

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<sup>69</sup> Cf. B. BYRNE, 133.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. B. BYRNE, 133.

<sup>71</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, 352.

9:16-18). In Paul the act of acquittal has taken place in Christ, and not an act being awaited for in the eschaton.<sup>72</sup>

“...*For the sake of the remission of bygone sins*” – if this phrase is given a direct translation it could mean that God had to show righteousness (in the sense of judicial or punitive justice) in the Christ event. This is because previous sins left unpunished were passed over. But this could indicate divine causality to human sin, instead it should be understood as undealt with, in the sense that not yet about the expiation finally worked in the Christ event. Accordingly, Christ’s death would have been a demonstration of divine uprightness that remitted the sins committed in the past, that is, even the sins that were not expiated on the great Day of Atonement (cf Acts 13:38-39; Heb 9:15). Christ’s death would demonstrate God’s uprightness in wiping out sins past, present and those to come.<sup>73</sup>

V.26 “*(Committed) in the forbearance of God*” – This phrase has a reference to the preceding clauses. Sin according to the law has its own punishment, but the unpunished sins here is Though up to Christ’s coming, sinful human beings were subjects to God’s wrath (1:18), that wrath did not always manifest itself in the punishment of sin, for it is eschatological in nature. God’s tolerance was in his

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<sup>72</sup> Cf. J. A. FITZMYER, 351.

<sup>73</sup> B. BYRNE, 133.

salvation plan, according to which he knew that these sins would be expiated in the Christ-event. Even the expiation of sin on the yearly Day of Atonement made sense only in prefiguring the shedding of Christ's blood on the cross. This has a meaning that it did not remit sin.<sup>74</sup>

*"...For the demonstration of his uprightness in the present time" – Kairos* "time" has a meaning of a particular significant time. This has the sense that the new age has dawned, and has made a fundamental claim upon the lives of believers, but the old era lingers in the mode of weakness, suffering and death.<sup>75</sup> This phrase accompanies the eschatological "now" which here is coupled with *kairos* "time", critical time, as in 11:5. The demonstration of God's righteousness as revealed in the Christ-event has effects to past and present eras. This verse (26) contains the second statement about the finality of the cross of Christ; it had effect not only in the past but also "now".

*"to show that he is upright himself" – δικαίον και δικαιουντα* "righteous and even though justifying" is the main Greek phrase. The new status of rectitude, innocence, and acquittal of human beings obtained through Christ's death, God

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<sup>74</sup> J.A. FITZMYER, *NJBC*, R. E. BROWN, J. A. FITZMYER, R. E. MURPHY, 841.

<sup>75</sup> B. BYRNE, 134.

justified his assertion that he is the acquitter and saviour of his people (Is 59:15-20).

This is an attitude of God and flows from what he is.<sup>76</sup>

*“Even in making upright the one who has faith in Jesus”* – Paul is saying that the divine intervention in human history proves that God is upright. He even makes human beings upright and members by sharing the new life with him through faith in Christ’s expiatory death. This is similar to the construction of Rom 4:6, which refers to Abraham’s own faith.<sup>77</sup>

### **2.3 THE THEOLOGICAL MESSAGE OF ROM 3:21-26**

In the text of Rom 3:21-26, Paul’s theology of justification emerges. In this text, Paul wrestles first to establish the reason for humanity’s need for salvation, a thing that crystallizes Paul’s gospel. The existence of the phenomenon of sin comes about in the ignorance of God, evil working, deceitful, murderous amongst others. This is what brings the need for salvation. This is a failure that is caused by the power of sin that Paul himself experienced in his personal weaknesses. This sinful phenomenon has a massive disorientation, but its origin too, is to be traced at the human person. Accordingly, Rom 5:12a, 19 and Gen 3, shows that at one point in the history of humanity a wrong decision was made. So the prolonging of the

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<sup>76</sup> J. A. FITZMYER, 353.

<sup>77</sup> B. BYRNE, 134.

existence of sin is as a result of inheritance of sin. This demanded God's intervention in the giving of the covenantal law, in order to re-establish a disintegrated relationship with humanity. The re-establishment of the broken relationship flowed from God's mercy, a thing opposed to buying of one's own salvation in the doing of the prescriptions of the works of the law. That is, one is judged righteous through the observance of the deeds to the law. In fact in the rabbinical cycles, it was a holy thing to do when one engages oneself with the Torah at least three hours in a day.<sup>78</sup> The law guarantees salvation, and despite that it was a national imperative. Violation would imply punishment according to the prescription of the law.<sup>79</sup>

This understanding of the law sidelined God, in other words God was no more important, instead the rabbis took God's position amongst his own people. They conditioned God to follow their decision through their judgement of what is good to do. The law monopolised the worship of God. Paul refutes the significance of the law in this ground, in order to restore God's primacy and God's gracious gift in Jesus Christ. Gentiles too were not on the safe side because of their egocentric

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<sup>78</sup> J. M. O'CONNOR, 33.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. J. M. O'CONNOR, 334-339.

values in society. It is in this situation of sin that Paul gives the authentic response to God's grace as revealed in the self-sacrifice of Christ.<sup>80</sup>

Our text explains the whole process of God's action in Jesus Christ. In the manifestation of the righteousness of God, as is in the exegesis of the six verses above. From this, three or four effects of the Christ event came out. That is justification, redemption, expiation and pardon. Human beings through faith in Christ Jesus become the owners of these four effects, and Paul insists only through faith.<sup>81</sup>

The righteousness of God is an OT attribute of God, manifested in action of Christ. This is to be understood in the moral sense, following the origin of the word that is judicial.<sup>82</sup> Its present meaning though, comes from the Qumran. The genitive construction brings the sense of an uprightness that comes from God, and given to human beings which forms the ground of their relationship with God. This relationship is covenantal, that is, the parties involved in this relationship are human beings and God.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Cf. J. M. O'CONNOR, 338.

<sup>81</sup> B. BYRNE, VI, D. J. HARRINGTON, ed., 122.

<sup>82</sup> J. ZIESLER, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 62.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. J. ZIESLER, 63.

The phrase righteousness of God has a postexilic use where God acquits his people; manifesting a gracious, salvific power in a God's just judgement.<sup>84</sup> This usage Paul adopted to fit his personal situation. A righteousness that God manifested through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that brings acquittal of sinful human beings. This is a manifestation of God's saving and acquittal power.<sup>85</sup>

Paul's idea of justification of sinners is therefore rooted in the divine attribute of God's righteousness. An idea of God's uprightness verges on God's mercy. Thus manifesting God's righteousness through Christ crucified, that He (God) is upright and justifies the one who puts faith in Jesus (3:26). Justification is the effect of the righteousness of God that comes through the Christ-event. It gives an image of one who stood acquitted before a judge, and now stands in right relationship with other human beings. It has an ethical tendency that lies on the human conduct.

Paul applied justification to the historical event of Jesus Christ. Qumran taught that justification comes about *sola gratia* "only by grace", and Paul taught that it comes through *solo Christo* "only by Christ" and *sola fide* "only by faith". When Paul said that Jesus Christ justified human beings by his blood (3:25), he

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<sup>84</sup> B. BYRNE, VI, D. J. HARRINGTON, ed., 105.

<sup>85</sup> B. BYRNE, VI, D. J. HARRINGTON, ed., 107.



meant that by Christ's sufferings; in his passion and death he has brought to sinful human beings acquittal before God's tribunal.<sup>86</sup>

God's uprightness is manifested through justification in Christ being handed over to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification. This is done freely by his grace (v.24). God displayed Jesus in death (by his blood) as a manifestation of God's uprightness, and justifies the one who puts faith in Jesus. This is an utter act of gratuity because all have sinned (v.23), and man didn't merit it, only because of what Christ did, an attribute to us but quite a part from the deeds of the law. Justification comes by God's grace (v.24) and through faith (v.25).

Augustine regards righteousness effected in justification to be intrinsic rather than imputed. This sense of δικαιοῦν persisted throughout the early and late medieval period. Contemporarily known as transformist: meaning human sinfulness is made upright, and the sinner's condition is changed. Also through justification the *δοξα* "glory" is restored to the sinner (v.23). Through faith the sinner experiences the manifestation of God's uprightness and 'becomes' concrete the uprightness of God. Salvation of sinners is in Christ-event. It is evident that

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<sup>86</sup> B. BYRNE, VI, D. J. HARRINGTON, ed., 117.

God or Christ is reconciling human being. God took the initiative to bring harmony to a once broken friendship.<sup>87</sup>

Expiation is another biblical image used by Paul in the text. It first occurred in Exodus 25:17. It refers to the lid made of fine gold that was erected on top of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies for the footstool for the two cherubim. Expiation comes from the Hebrew word *bet hakkapporet*, which means, a place of expiation or a means of expiation. It used to be smeared with blood of the sacrificed bull by the high priest who entered the Holy of Holies once a year to make expiation for the sins of Israel on the day of expiation (Lev 16:14-20).<sup>88</sup>

In the LXX the Hebrew word translated for expiation is *Kapporet*, which means propitiation, had a meaning of appeasing God's anger. An illustration of this is in the sensational expiation in 4Macc 17:22, which is in the sense of averting God's wrath from Israel. This LXX translation had the same meaning in the Latin theology, that is, of appeasing God's wrath. Luther changed this to mean "mercy seat" which is a better meaning and had the same sense with the OT (Lev 16), which is in the same use as in the Pauline passage. That is of the effects of the Christ-event in relation to the Day of Atonement ritual (v. 23) which God set forth Christ Jesus

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<sup>87</sup>Cf. B. BYRNE, VI, D. J. HARRINGTON, ed., 120

<sup>88</sup>Cf. B. BYRNE, VI, D. J. HARRINGTON, ed., 120.

on the cross as a mercy seat of the new dispensation, new means of expiation (wiping away) the sins of human beings. In this sense, Jesus' death surpasses and supersedes the ritual of expiation in the old Temple (Lev 16). The blood of Christ achieved once and for all the effects obtained in the Day of Atonement. In this comparison, Paul is not only comparing the cult and object or Temple furniture, but also the place where God reveals himself to his people and where his expiating power in regard to their sins is made known (Exod 25:22). Also there is the image of Christ as the high priest who brought the incense and blood of the bull to make expiation (Lev 16:13 –p.121), now on the cross. Paul here is not saying that Christ was sacrifice for our sake, a concept taken up in Deutero - Pauline and the letter to the Hebrews (cf Eph 5:2). This is a later theological tradition. It's a reformulation of *ἱλαστέριον* "expiation", Christ's blood substitute the blood of animals.<sup>89</sup>

Redemption is another Paul's Biblical image used in the text. In the Greco-Roman world it used to mean freeing of a prisoner of war and the sacral manumission of slaves. But Paul's use of this Greek word didn't have this meaning. Its meaning flows from the LXX, where there is redeeming of slaves (Exod 21:8). But behind this OT usage, lies the idea of Yahweh as the redeemer (Heb. *Goel*) of Israel, an image of a kinsman who had a duty of buying back an enslaved or captive

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<sup>89</sup>Cf. B. BYRNE, VI, D. J. HARRINGTON, ed., 120-122.

Jewish relative (Isa 41:14; 43:14; 44:6; 47:4; Pss 19:15; 78:35). Israel was first freed from Egyptian slavery (Deut 6:6-8; Ps 111:9), then when Yahweh acquitted a people as a possession for himself (Exod 15:16; 19:5; Mal 3:17; Ps 74:2), and later during the return of Israel from Babylon (Isa 51:11; 52:3-9). There is also an eschatological use on God's will for Israel at the end of days (Hos 13:14; Isa 59:29; Ps 130:7-8). Now Paul used this image to Christians to mean that they are justified freely by his grace "through the redemption that comes in Christ Jesus" (v. 24).<sup>90</sup>

There is a new way of life that is a share in the life, by which Christ now lives, a life lived in "the glory of God" (v.23b). Thus Christians enjoy proleptically the very life of the risen Christ, which is eternal life. Paul uses *δοξα* "glory, splendour" to express the destiny of Christians, that sinful humans fall short of (v.23).

The last theme that flowed from our text is *παρεσις* "pardon" as an effect of the Christ-event. There is doubt whether it means "passing over" or "remission or pardon" of a debt due to human sinfulness. But the latter use is preferred, that is pardon. For Paul these effects flow from "the love of Christ" (8:35) achieved by the act of righteousness.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Cf. B. BYRNE, VI, D. J. HARRINGTON, ed., 122.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. B. BYRNE, VI, D. J. HARRINGTON, ed., 122.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **INTERPRETATION OF THE TEXT AND FUNDAMENTALISM TODAY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter we will be looking at the influences brought by the interpretation of the text and the problem of fundamentalists today. The fundamentalists pose a big pastoral concern today, since they fill the streets and tents with their vibrant teachings. They undermine the efforts of the pastors and priests of the established churches in their work of building up of strong Christian communities in their localities. The results of their influences are not to be ignored, since they are dangerous and overwhelming.

Since our text (Rom 3:21-26) was involved in the controversy about the doctrine of justification in the time of the reformation, we are going to look briefly at the history of its interpretation. Basically, there are two key figures involved that

shaped the understanding of justification down the centuries, that is, St. Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther. They influenced the building of doctrines that shaped the Catholic and Protestant teaching on justification, a doctrine that is very important of all Christian doctrines. Though a consensus has been reached between Catholics and the Lutheran Federation on the doctrine of justification, fundamentalists are still a problem and need to be checked.

### **3.1 How The Text Has Been Interpreted Down The Centuries**

In the Catholic Church Scriptural interpretation was determined by the established tradition on the understanding of a text. This tradition mostly comes from the Fathers of the Church who understood the text in their own time, or had been combating certain heretical movements. But was considered to be in line with the apostolic tradition. St. Augustine's interpretation of Romans as agreed by a number of fathers and imposed, as the only way the text was to be understood, and went on for centuries. This ignores the fact that Augustine's exegesis was a polemic reaction against the Manicheans.

#### **3.1.1. St. Augustine of Hippo**

St. Augustine lived and faced the situation of his own time. In this time there were groups of well-organised heretical sects like the Donatists and Manicheans who contradicted the teachings of the fathers. They taught a doctrine of

dualism and found its rooting in the NT especially in the writings of Paul. Their determinist approach was based on a philosophical concept of free will and individual virtue. So in his commentary on Romans, Augustine tries to rescue Paul from these heretics. That is the reason that the commentary is so synthetic and polemic. In it Augustine included the issue of the origin of evil and the nature of man's will. He stresses the necessity of God's divine call and grace for salvation. In the process he emphasised human person's moral autonomy while like Paul preserving the goodness of the Old Law and the gratuitous nature of God's grace.<sup>92</sup>

Works of the Law and of grace form the main topic in Augustine's commentary to the Romans. In developing this topic he emphasized the basic necessities for salvation, which are God's divine call and grace. For Augustine, man collaborate with God's grace, earns salvation a situation that comes through the merit of freely willed faith. A thing that is deliberated through human free choice. Augustine dropped this position after two years again through the text of Romans.

The Manicheans saw Paul as condemning the status of the Law and the role of human moral autonomy. So Augustine, in responding to the heretics, developed four stages of salvation history. The first was the stage before the Law, where

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<sup>92</sup> P. F. LANDES, *Augustine on Romans: Propositions from the Epistle to the Romans* : Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, ix-x.

humans were ruled by the desires of the flesh. Secondly, comes the stage of the Law that determines all actions. Then comes the stage of grace that came with the Christ-event. Finally, is the stage of peace, where we are in heaven with all the saints. In this way Augustine continued to show the importance of the Law as something important since it initiates the process of salvation.

The weakness of the Law is that it did not give the power to overcome sin. This power comes only when one receives grace that is in Christ. This is made possible by the exercise of free will. Through the Law one comes to know his or her sin and then chooses God's call, which makes him turn to Christ as his or her saviour through faith. Here free will is the tool of faith. Christ, who is the liberator and dispenser of grace, assists the person to stop sinning. In this way the person dies to sin, so that now the believer, through grace enjoys a foretaste of that eschatological peace to be shared with all the saints. Therefore, at the resurrection of the body, man's nature will be transformed from mortal to spiritual. The important thing is that removal of sin comes through grace alone.<sup>93</sup>

In Christian history, which was attached to Roman Empire, the text of Romans had a role to play, and its range of theological topics enables it to do so. St. Augustine learnt from the text of Romans about a view of human nature and of the

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<sup>93</sup>Cf. P. F. LANDES, 5-6.



state that could survive the demise of civilization of the Roman Empire's crumbling institutions.<sup>94</sup>

### 3.1.2 Martin Luther

Luther, a former Augustinian monk, was a lecturer of New Testament studies, and he first started lecturing on the gospel of Matthew and then later came to lecture on the Paul's letter to the Romans. The letter to the Romans is considered to have had great influence on transformation of his personal life.

As a lecturer Luther had gone through the writings of Augustine, and came to know well the commentary on Paul's Letter to Romans. In his own commentary he tried to react against the teaching of Augustine especial on grace and salvation, he abhor any human effort in obtaining salvation, and instead absolutised God's grace.

Reading Luther's commentary on Romans, especial the scholia<sup>95</sup>, reveals some elements that exhibit his personality, that is a man who had a personal problem with sin and God's forgiveness of sin. This made him deny the importance of the

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<sup>94</sup> P. J. ACHTEMEIER, "*The Letter of Paul To The Romans*", In *The Oxford Companion To The Bible*, B. M. METZGER-M. D. COOGAN ed., 662.

<sup>95</sup> The commentary is divided into two section one is the glossia and scholia and each has its own way on commenting to the text of the Romans.

law since “the works of the Law do not justify.”<sup>96</sup> Instead, in quoting Rom 7:7, that say, “...I would not have known what sin was except through the law.” Therefore the Law is the one that makes one know what sin is. Since the Law and its works provides a convenient environment to sin, human will is inclined to evil, it “...loves evil” as “sin and evil are rooted in him...”<sup>97</sup> This phenomenon is experienced on the resistance displayed on the prohibitions laid by the Law.

But only the grace of Jesus Christ helps human beings to fulfil the Law. This fulfilment of the Law it is apart from its works. So the Law on its own point for us what we ought to do, and the doing reflects our faith. Grace comes through the doing of what we are commanded in faith. Therefore through the Law we become conscious of sin, and the removal of it (sin) comes through grace.

On the contrary, the doing of the works of the Law comes with servile fear, but the inclinations of the will remain wicked. In this situation when one obtains little success in fulfilling the works demanded by the law, he or she considers oneself righteous, and stops seeing the need of God’s grace. In the state of self-righteousness, the soul remains inclined to desires of the flesh, because the person’s soul is not in God. So only the grace of God frees the soul at death. The soul has to

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<sup>96</sup> H. C. OSWALD, *Luther's Works*, XXV, 240.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. H. C. OSWALD, 140.

take flight to God for it to be able to fulfil the law (not the works of the law). In this state it becomes humble and seeks God's help in that it may fulfil the law. This is now seeking God's grace in life.

The righteousness that human being possess in this world is not perfect, that is, justification on the earth is incomplete, though God had just began the process of justification in the human person. Otherwise there is a depravation that prevails in the lives of human beings, which is characterised by the personal pursuit for individual gratification. But still the need for justification still clicks, and people end up taking the works of law to the works of the grace, and man's righteousness instead of God's righteousness. At this dangerous point Luther gave an advice that people should "...pray and work so that grace and the Spirit may increase..."and "...the body of sin decreases and be destroyed..."<sup>98</sup>

Therefore perfection comes only at the end of life in this world, and there will be an opportunity to be cleansed of sin and the end of evil inclinations. The Law is both extrinsically and intrinsically overthrown since faith fulfils everything and only need "...the grace of God through Christ."<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> H. C. OSWALD, 146.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. H. C. OSWALD, 251.

Luther understanding of grace and salvation marked the Lutheran understanding of justification. Though it maintained its position even after the agreement reached by Lutheran- Roman Catholic Dialogue.<sup>100</sup> Luther's emphasis is on justification by faith alone. This would in a way construct a worshipping community that allowed God's gracious Lordship to be more clearly expressed.<sup>101</sup> On the other side the Catholics took St. Augustine's idea of justification. This went on until in the twentieth century whereby ecumenical dialogue came up to establish a common understanding on the doctrine of justification. Also scripture scholars played an important role on scientific critical methods that would give a proper interpretation of a text.

### **3.1.3. Common Understanding Of Justification**

The Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church set a committee, to look on the doctrine of Justification, which was central in the disputes of the sixteenth century's Lutheran reformation. The council of Trent put some doctrinal condemnations that stand valid to this day. This is because of the still existing division between the two churches.

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<sup>100</sup> Joint Declaration on The Doctrine of Justification by the Lutheran world Federation and the Catholic Church, 1999, 1.

<sup>101</sup> P. J. ACHTEMEIER, 662.

For many years now dialogues had been going on between the Catholic Church and the Lutheran Federation, in whose feedbacks were positive in its “approaches and conclusions”. In 1998, the committee sat to draw the points of the different sittings for the past years of great discussions. This does not mean that all the differences of the past have been reached, but it’s a step to new sights by both parties that flashes light to a further point of examining on the division and condemnations in the new light.

Biblical criticism methods give a “common way of listening to the word of God in scripture...”<sup>102</sup> a thing that gives us new insights of understanding our text of Rom 3:21-26. The Joint Declaration on The Doctrine of Justification document on the Biblical message, found its centre stage in the text of the letter to the Romans. It was partially discussed in other books of the Bible, but what was most extensive was in the letter to the Romans. It is in the text (Rom: 21-31) that the thesis of justification is more expounded, thus forming the gospel of God for salvation that Paul preached. In this letter, Paul tried to show why are human beings need God, how the righteousness of God is revealed in the Christ-event, and how it justifies human beings. Faith in God was testified by Abraham’s faith, which is taken as the

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<sup>102</sup> *Joint Declaration on The Doctrine of Justification by the Lutheran world Federation and the Catholic Church*, 1999, 3.

model of all who believe in God.<sup>103</sup> But this did not give a lasting solution that now Christians would be fixed on praying for unit and peaceful co-existence, because of fundamentalists.

### **3.2 Fundamentalism A Problem In The Church Today**

As in Paul's time was with the Judaisers, so is the problem of pastors of established Christian Churches with new-Pentecostal movements. Fundamentalists are obvious to most of us find engaged involved with hot debates about a text from the Bible. We call them fundamentalist, first and foremost because of the literally interpretation of scripture, thus having a naive understanding of a scriptural text, since they ignore the history of the origin of the Biblical text. They take the Bible to be a perfect and absolute inspired text, they eliminate all possibilities of error in the text.<sup>104</sup>

Though Christians of good standing agree that the encoded the word of God in the Bible is inspired, and hold firmly that is without error, the human fashion that was used to encode it cannot be ignored. That is, the sacred author used literary

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<sup>103</sup> *Joint Declaration on The Doctrine of Justification by the Lutheran world Federation and the Catholic Church*, 1999, 3-4

<sup>104</sup> PBC, The Interpretation Of The Bible In The Church, 49-50.

skills to communicate the message of God using human words.<sup>105</sup> This was due to the skills for handling scripture, which enable get the truth that coincide with the message from God for salvation.<sup>106</sup>

Fundamentalists affect the understanding of the message of justification to Christians. Most street preachers have a very short training of about six months or even none completely. For the fortunate ones go to Bible schools and others go to Bible fellowship centres where they do “Intensive Full Gospel Training”, and is not enough to equip one to interpret scripture.<sup>107</sup> Their Bible study is characterised by memorizing Biblical passages, and as they preach, they try to relate the Biblical passages to their lives. But some as is the case of self-ordained preachers just learn by heart passages of the Bible and see how other pastors are doing and move on to start their own Church<sup>108</sup>. There are many examples of this kind, as most of them are casual workers. This is caused by lack of money to go to the Bible schools. But most of all these people do not manage to go to colleges or universities and could not find work. So in their problems they come to God to get absolute answers to their problems.

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<sup>105</sup> A. FLANNERY, “*Dogmatic Constitution On Divine Revelation*”, 668-669.

<sup>106</sup>Cf. A. FLANNERY, 668.

A. SHORTER- J. N. NJIRU, *New Religious Movements In Africa*, 41.

<sup>108</sup>Cf. A. SHORTER, J. N. NJIRU, *New Religious Movements In Africa*, 39-40.

The preaching is mostly in testimonies of how they experienced God in life. These are decorated with short verses to support them. An observation records concludes that the use of the Bible as a whole in their preaching is used minimal, but the rest is covered with testimonies and justified by small “Bible sound bites” are used manipulatively so as to support whatever they are saying<sup>109</sup>.

The testimonies are made of conversion experience(s) of the believer and are very important since they open the message of the Bible to the congregation. This flies the face of a critical person who would expect a good theology of the Bible. Also big talk about other churches especially the Catholic Church fill the air. This creates fear to many Catholics from identifying themselves as Catholics to public gatherings that they know not the faith of its members.

Anyway we should congratulate them for their “highly developed skills at mass communication”<sup>110</sup> that pull many people in their gatherings even those who did not to do choose so. Also communication equipments like loud speakers, music and dancing which is like discos adorn the whole celebration.<sup>111</sup> In one of my visit to a protestant college, the principal was urging student to join singing practice, as

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<sup>109</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER, J. N. NJIRU, *New Religious Movements In Africa*, 41

<sup>110</sup> E. LaVERDIERE, “*Fundamentalism: A Pastoral Concern*”, In *The Bible Today*, 5.

<sup>111</sup> A. SHORTER, J. N. NJIRU, 41.



“singing is a strong power of spread the gospel today.”<sup>112</sup> This is exactly what we see in the streets, is more of an attraction than spreading the gospel. It is here that many people given promises like employment, marriage, and wealth among others. This is accompanied by OT quotations to support their free Biblical quotations, and unconnectively Jesus is mentioned inline with these promises<sup>113</sup>. But the biggest promise is that Jesus is coming in glory. In the coming of the triumphant Jesus takes off the Cross, and suffering, an incomplete Christology.

Baptism has no meaning of salvation as is known to most of us. There is baptism of water that has no connection with salvation. Then there is baptism of the Spirit, which is a gift from God promised to believers. Only born-again Christians receive this baptism. This kind of conversion is more enduring in established Pentecostal churches than neo-Pentecostals. So salvation is understood as a decision made here and now, and not a life long as understood.<sup>114</sup> Observation tells us there is no pastoral care after one had made his decision. Also most of them real life don't rhyme with life

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<sup>112</sup> Dr. D. KISALI, *Assembly Speech*, NEGST.

<sup>113</sup> A. O. OJORE, “*Religious Fundamentalism*,” In AFER, XLIII, no.vi, 268.

<sup>114</sup> A. SHORTER- J. NJIRU, 56-58.

This scares many Catholics because they not know the teaching about salvation. This makes many youth especial while in high school here in Kenya become saved. Most of the time catholic students (even working people) are intentionally challenged by their fellow students or workers to revert their decision. This issue of being saved has an understanding of who has won the battle of this world, a thing that is naïve, instead of being on the way to full salvation.<sup>115</sup>

There is what is known as the Gospel of prosperity, and this has taken the centre stage in the increase of street preachers and the opening of new full gospel churches. Money and blessings with wealth is more vulnerable than the preaching of the word of God and the salvation of souls. The payment of tithes are more emphasised, also promises that God is going to reward you more than what you have given are made to the people. The OT finds a favourable place in relating promises of present situations with people in the OT that God had favoured, especially the patriarchs.<sup>116</sup> In these promises they are aware that some of the congregants are having a financial problems. That is the way they do every day in the streets of Nairobi and even inside the buses.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> M. VOLF, "The Challenge of Protestant Fundamentalism" In Concilium, 104.

<sup>116</sup> A. SHORTER- J. NJIRU, 42.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER- J. NJIRU, 31-32.

These preachers they can start as a group and then after gaining popularity, one separates from the group to start his or her church. The aspirations are always to be rich to many of them. OT concepts of prosperity are used to justify the acquisition of wealth, like "...God wants Christian to be wealthy and that poverty is an indication of personal sin."<sup>118</sup> A woman pastor after hearing of a fellow pastor who has grown so rich, without questioning how, she said "me too when God gives me such a blessing I cannot refuse." But she also admit that there is individual's greed, personal interest and ignorance<sup>119</sup>

After collecting the money he/she can spend it the way she/ he wants, drive the car she /he want.<sup>120</sup> In Nairobi Pentecostal Church- Jesus is the Answer, one of the faithful there said on Monday a security car come to collect the money Sunday collection to the bank. The pastor is supposed to be accountable, though they are supposed to do so. But this problem affects even Catholic priests, many are not accountable to the parishioners.

In the same line of faith formula movement or gospel of prosperity, groups of pastor organises crusades and rallies, and prominent preachers are invited to

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<sup>118</sup> Cf. A. SHORTER- J. NJIRU, 32.

<sup>119</sup> Interview with one of the student who is a pastor at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology.

<sup>120</sup> A. SHORTER- J. NJIRU, 31-32.

reside over. In these crusades with all the healings and testimonies that goes on there, they leave room for doubt if they are not stage managed, so as to attract more people. Though they spent large amount of money in the preparation, but what they get after is enormous. This is witnessed here in Nairobi when there were double bookings for Uhuru Park done with corrupt City Hall officials. One of the affected pastor said he had lost more than three million shillings. Also the KTN television media that covered the controversy said being a pastor and finding your church with the name of a prophet, patriarch or apostle, and naming yourself as a bishop could earn for you a great fortune of money.<sup>121</sup>

### **3.3 Precautions on our Catholic parishes to consider**

Just to begin with is to view the phenomenon of fundamentalism as a theological one. Understanding of the Bible is presupposed to be automatic. Also the biblical word has all the truths of faith, an understanding that denies any development of revelation. Interpretation is always apocalyptic, in putting into action brings inhuman results that are unacceptable, like the Kanungu massacre in

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<sup>121</sup> KTN 9.00pm News bulletin, 2000.

Uganda.<sup>122</sup> Ojore on citing the reason for the coming up of fundamentalism hinted that the situation is triggered by bad life experiences of these people. This is the reason that they sought for an absolute answer from the absolute divine word, which they believe is absolutely inspired and divine.<sup>123</sup>

But all in all fundamentalists are human like anyone of us with human needs. There is problem is a pastoral problem. Taking the daily life situation of these people, some have lost loved ones, divorced, separated, single parents, AIDS, drug addiction, for those who finished school or college are faced with unemployment, these are some of the root cause of fundamentalism. These are faced with lots of frustrations, and so they sought for a solution to their problems, if possible a miracle is most preferable. Organising in parish level good arguments to confront fundamentalists “would do little to nourish Christian community.”<sup>124</sup> Instead we should “respond to their needs and reach out to them with Lord’s loving mercy.”<sup>125</sup> God loves us all and it is His will and pleasure that we are all saved.

The thing we should ask ourselves is, why does fundamentalism appeal to many Christians today? This appeal encompasses all classes of people; rich and

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<sup>122</sup> E. LaVERDIERE, 5-7.

<sup>123</sup> A. O. OJORE, 272.

<sup>124</sup> E. LaVERDIERE, 7.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. E. LaVERDIERE, 8.

poor. The reason to most of these people insecurity; the poor are struggling to make life bearable, the rich feel isolated, living in a hostile environment, loosing a position in authority, normal social problems. So social problems should be approached with social solutions of similar weight and gravity. <sup>126</sup>

Therefore our respond should be concerned with those issues that are for building the kingdom, that is embarking to those values that focus on uplifting the situation of the whole human person; fight against poverty and human degradation, and also create communities where people find support and basic security. All these call for a kind of evangelization which enables people to see their worth as God's creatures and which leads to genuine concern for others. I asked a priest how is he handling the question of fundamentalists? He said he doesn't bother himself about them, but he show the people love of God. Not only preaching (is building the Church), but also other things like medicine, food, education and other things, they are the ones we are calling the things that building the Kingdom of God. From these people see the love of God. This is what builds the Kingdom of God and not only the Church. <sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Cf. E. LaVERDIERE, 8-10.

<sup>127</sup> The Parish Priest of St. Augustine Cathedral Lodwar in Lodwar Diocese, Rev. Fr. Manolo.

Some other practical approaches that arise from interviews are like set up of counselling sessions and personnel, youth programmes and participation in liturgy. Marriage should be well prepared, also seminars and counselling for couples is needed. Programmes for upbringing and guiding should put in place to help parents. The workload of the parish should be shared in the parish councils and extended to SCC. The lay faithful should be represented in meetings of diocesan and Episcopal conferences as they play a key role in implementing their deliberations.<sup>128</sup> The most important of all is to improve and develop the theology of preaching. Since priests are equipped with good theology but most are poor preachers<sup>129</sup>

## **Conclusion**

A pastor during winter driving along the street saw a man in the cold and does not have much to cover him. So he asked God why that should happen? God answered him, “that is why I called you to be where you are!” When the question of fundamentalism is becoming rampant in our pastoral fields, we should focus our gaze on their root causes. We are called to build the Kingdom of God, which

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<sup>128</sup> Interview with Aloys Otieno Ojore.

<sup>129</sup> A concern put forward in a class of students by Fr. Aelred Lacomara, the head of department of scripture in Tangaza College.

encompass all people and creation at large and not only limited to preaching which mostly centred on building of the Church.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

From analysis and historicity of the text and the letter to the Romans as a whole, it is made clear that the righteousness of God is meant for all humanity. This comes in because of its divine nature centred on the cross of Christ. The Christ-event replaces the righteousness of the law. In this righteousness, God is shown to be righteous, an attitude proper to Him.

This gives God the power of forgiving sin, also of being merciful in His justice. It is because of God's righteousness that human beings are made righteous



before him. This privilege is offered to believers, that is, those who have faith in Jesus Christ. For God in the judging, does not use the law as the criteria to measure ones righteousness, but all through the grace of God in Christ we are made righteous. The righteousness of God goes beyond the righteousness offered by the law. For God is a supreme king and father, that is why Paul's message is completely opposed to that of the Jews.

The free gift of grace has a relational element, that is, God gives and we received what is offered to us. That is the way Paul sees the grace of God, a characteristic of a life of faith, in the whole process of receiving justification. We enter in the process of salvation through faith, both as a community and individual we respond to God's offer through faith. It is through faith that an individual is justified, and automatically becomes a member of the body of Christ.

Most important of all this, justification is an object of hope. The process of salvation already began in us, reflects a future salvation. So the hope that we hold now is a hope of the future, it is dynamic in nature. That is, it is active in nature, since to us all we are not absolutely sure of what is to come, so we wait for the future in preparation for the final judgement.

So for anyone who pays careful attention to Romans, continues to be an important guide for all who seek to make sense of their lives in the midst of

historical change and cultural conflict. To our fundamentalist brothers and sisters, we should continue to show them the love of God, and live with them without discrimination. See to their needs and help whenever we are in a position to help. Put structures that everybody is helped in the pastoral field. In this way we will be granted a peaceful co-existence until Christ comes again.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary
EDB	Eerdmanns Dictionary of the Bible
Cf	Confer
LXX	Septuagent
NJBC	New Jerome Biblical Commentary
EDNT	Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament

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KTN 9.00pm News bulletin, 2000.

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