

**FRIENDSHIP AND BETRAYAL: A NARRATIVE READING OF MATTHEW 26: 47-56
IN THE LIGHT OF THE CONCEPT OF *OREODALE* OF THE YORUBA PEOPLE IN
NIGERIA.**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR
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ABSTRACT

The theme of friendship and betrayal cuts across many disciplines and cultures. This research focuses on the theme of friendship which is fundamentally related to the theme of the church (Matt.16, 18) and love as contained in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt.5-7), and is clearly expressed in Matthew 5:23-26 and 7:12. This theme rings through in Matthew's Gospel as a narrative or story. This then forms the background to our search for a new understanding of the theme of friendship and betrayal in the Matthean Gospel with a focus on Matt.26:47-56 in light of the socio-cultural perspective of the Yoruba people in Nigeria. Friendship cuts across different societies with its diverse cultural distinctiveness. We find in the Matthean community, a model of friendship as exemplified by Jesus with his disciples as well as with the people of his day that is informed by love, mutual trust, loyalty, commitment, forgiveness, and which revolves around discipleship and equality. Although Jesus took on the role of a servant and friend with his disciples he remained the leader of the group. But his disciples abandoned him at the very critical point of his life with Peter even publicly denying knowing him. And the worst of all, a very close confidant of his, Judas Iscariot, chose to sell him to his enemies to be killed by crucifixion. In other words, all of the disciples, as Jesus' friends therefore appear to have betrayed him in one way or the other. But Judas' role in the Matthean Gospel, especially in connection with the confrontation between Jesus and the religious leaders of his day, stands out in quite a significant manner.

However, some critical interpretations rooted in post-Enlightenment Western culture championed by William Klassen, Kim Paffenroth and Michael Cook have tried to make sense of the friendship and betrayal between Jesus and his disciples, especially by sympathetic explanations of the action of Judas, in a way which poses serious challenges to African cultural understandings of friendship. This is because Judas' action of betrayal has left us with more questions than answers. Could Judas have been right in any way by his action of betrayal of Jesus, because as a disciple of Jesus he also shared his loyalty with the state? Could he have betrayed Jesus in order to precipitate God's intervention on Israel's behalf? Friendship sometimes involves a network of complexities of loyalties; and for that reason the question is whether friendship should be regarded as a private or public relationship, and which should be accorded primary loyalty in such complex circumstances.

This study has argued that the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal offers a relevant model on which to build a counter African postcolonial interpretation of friendship and betrayal in Matthew based on the Yoruba cultural worldview. Insights from cultural studies and Postcolonial theory, especially the work of Edward Said, have been combined with new methods of re-reading and re-interpreting the Bible along the cultural line of an African Contextual theology, which is called postcolonial inculturation-conversional theoretical approach to explore a new understanding of the theme of friendship and betrayal in the Matthean Gospel from the cultural perspective of the Yoruba people in Nigeria.

Consequently, in this study, Judas' action of betrayal is brought into "conversation" with that of *Iya Olofi*, as one of the *Ifa* oracular texts in the Yoruba cultural context to explore Matthew's portrayal of a true friendship and betrayal, especially at the point of complex or confusing loyalties. This attempt, in addition to offering a new understanding and interpretation of the chosen Matthean text through contrapuntal dialogical interactions with Yoruba cultural context and post-Enlightenment Western cultural context, has also widened our horizon on the concept of friendship and betrayal from cross-cultural perspectives.

Friendship is an important aspect in the social life of the Yoruba people as in most cultures of the world. Its distinctiveness, however, is seen in its covenantal nature usually sanctioned by the earth (*ile*) as a witness. The Yoruba cultural concept of friendship is based on trust, commitment, loyalty and forgiveness as the essential ingredients of any relationship with its attendant repercussions for any erring one in case of a breach of trust in such a relationship. Hence, the Yoruba concept of friendship is strongly opposed to betrayal and fosters peaceful co-existence, harmony and progress in so far as the bond of friendship or trust conforms to the moral values and norms of the society and it is faithfully kept against the individualistic nature and personal freedom of the post-Enlightenment Western culture of friendship. On the other hand, post-Enlightenment Western culture has also shown the social and psychological aspects of friendship for the individual as well as the clinical pathology of suicide in the context of friendship and betrayal as against its outright condemnation in the Yoruba cultural context.

We also discovered that the aspect of confidentiality in friendship according to the Yoruba cultural practice could have negative effects, because of its potential avenue for covert associations or exploitation of friendship for personal gains that may make betrayal difficult because of the blood-oath that is involved.

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Samuel A. O. Osungbeju (Ven.)

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to the glory of God and Jesus Christ, who is the paragon of true friendship, as expressed in the popular hymn believed to have been written by Joseph Scriven (1819-1866):

What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Every thing to God in prayer
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Every thing to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged,
Take it to the Lord in prayer:
Can we find a friend so faithful?
Who will all sorrows share?
Jesus knows our ev-ry weakness,
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden?
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge;
Take it to the Lord in prayer
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in Prayer:
In His arms He'll take and shield thee;
Thou wilt find a solace there.

Then, to those who follow conscientiously and consciously after the example of Jesus Christ in keeping the bond of friendship from breaking in spite of the challenges. Nevertheless, the truth still remains that: "The dearest friend on earth is but a mere shadow compared to Jesus"

I also dedicate this work to the memory of my dear late mother, Mrs. Mary Oluwabunmi Osungbeju, for all that she was to me. May her soul continue to rest peacefully on the bosom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

DECLARATION

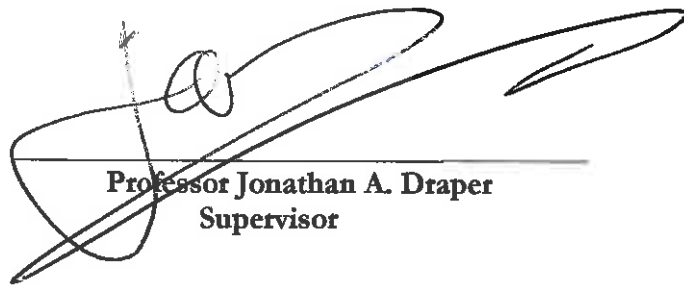
I declare that except for where acknowledgements have been duly made for the materials and quotations used, this research work titled:” **Friendship and Betrayal in the Gospel According to St. Matthew: A Narrative Reading of Matthew 26: 47-56 in the light of the Concept of *Oreodale* of the Yoruba people in Nigeria**, submitted to the University of KwaZulu-Natal, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Human science (Biblical Studies in New Testament) in the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, has been wholly and originally undertaken by me under the supervision of Prof. Jonathan A. Draper for the aforementioned purpose.



Samuel Adekunle Ola Osungbeju

I satisfy that this thesis on the above theme has been carried out under my supervision by

Samuel Adekunle Ola Osungbeju.



Professor Jonathan A. Draper
Supervisor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE-----	1
ABSTRACT -----	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT-----	4
DEDICATION -----	6
DECLARATION -----	7
TABLE OF CONTENTS-----	8

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 AN OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS-----	11
1.1 THE MOTIVATIONAL IMPETUS FOR THIS STUDY-----	13
1.2 THE REASONS FOR THE CHOICE OF TEXT/RESEARCH PROBLEMS AND OBEJECTIVES-----	14
1.3 THE HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY-----	17
1.4. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS STUDY -----	18
1.5 METHODOLOGY-----	22
1.6 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW-----	27
1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY-----	37
1.8 ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY-----	8
1.9 THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS-----	38

CHAPTER TWO: DEVELOPING THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES FOR THE STUDY

2.0 PREAMBLE-----	41
2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY -----	41
2.2. POSTCOLONIAL CRITICISM -----	47
2.3 CONTRAPUNTAL READING OF A TEXT-----	56
2.4 METHODOLOGICAL MODELS-----	59
2.5 NARRATIVE READING METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH-----	61
2.6 IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE IN BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION-----	69

**CHAPTER THREE: FRIENDSHIP AND BETRAYAL IN CROSS-CULTURAL
CONTEXT: IDENTIFYING THE CONTENDING CULTURAL CONTEXTS FOR THE
STUDY**

3.0	PREAMBLE -----	77
3.1	HISTORICAL AND RELGIOUS BACKGROUND OF THE YORUBA IN NIGERI-----	77
3.2	YORUBA CONCEPT OF “OREODALE”-----	81
3.2.0	SUMMARY OF THE CHOSEN ORACULAR TEXT ON THE YORUBA CONCEPT OF FRIENDSHIP-----	83
3.2.1	ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED ON THE YORUBA CONCEPT OF FRIENDSHIP-----	88
3.3	POST-ENLIGHTENMENT WESTERN CONCEPT OF FRIENDSHIP-----	98
3.4	EXAMINATION OF THE CONCEPT OF FRIENDSHIP IN THE GRECO-ROMAN CULTURE-----	106
3.4.0	CONCEPT OF FRIENDSHIP IN THE MATTHEAN CONTEXT-----	112
3.5	EXAMINATION OF THE DIVERSE CONCEPTS OF BETRAYAL-----	116
3.5.0	YORUBA CONCEPT OF BETRAYAL-----	116
3.5.1	POST-ENLIGHTENMENT WESTERN CONCEPT OF BETRAYAL-----	119
3.5.2	BETRAYAL IN THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF MATTHEW’S GOSPEL-----	123

**CHAPTER FOUR: A NARRATIVE READING OF MATTHEW’S GOSPEL AS AN OPEN
TEXT WITH “GAPS” AND RHETORICAL DIRECTION**

4.0	BRIEF BACKGROUND TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW-----	127
4.1	AUTHORSHIP AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MATTHEW’S GOSPEL-----	127
4.1.0	DATE, PLACE AND SOCIAL SITUATION OF THE GOSPEL’S COMPOSITION-----	128
4.1.1	THEME OF THE CHURCH IN THE MATTHEAN GOSPEL -----	133
4.1.2	OUTLINE OF THE MATTHEAN GOSPEL-----	137
4.2	NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL-----	141
4.3	EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF MATT. 26:47-56-----	160
4.4	WESTERN CRITICAL COMMENTS OR POSITIVE INTERPRETATION OF THE ACTION OF JUDAS-----	168
4.4.0	WILLIAM KLASSEN-----	170
4.4.1	KIM PAFFENROTH-----	172

4.4.2 DIRECT-REQUEST THEORY BASED ON THE GOSPEL OF JUDAS-----	173
4.4.3 JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR FILM-----	175

**CHAPTER FIVE: A CONTRAPUNTAL ANALYSIS OF THE CROSS-CULTURAL
CONCEPT OF FRIENDSHIP AND BETRAYAL: COMPARATIVE CONCLUSIONS**

5.0 DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE MATTHEAN TEXT AND THE YORUBA ORACULAR TEXT ON FRIENDSHIP AND BETRAYAL-----	177
5.1 CONTRAPUNTAL ANALYSIS OF THE CROSS-CULTURAL CONCEPT OF FRIENDSHIP AND BETRAYAL-----	179
5.2 COMPARATIVE CONCLUSIONS-----	201

CHAPTER SIX: GENERAL CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

6.0 GENERAL CONCLUSION -----	215
6.1 SUMMARY -----	218
6.2 FURTHER FUTURE RESEARCH-----	225

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE (IFA ORACULAR TEXTS) -----	226
LETTER OF CONSENT -----	233
THE QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW-----	234
APPENDIX TWO (FULL TEXTS OF THE INTERVIEWS)-----	235
BIBLIOGRAPHY-----	272

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 An Overview Of The Thesis

The major task in this chapter is to set out the structure and overview of the entire thesis in relation to the motivational impetus for the study, reasons for the choice of the topic and the Gospel of Matthew as the focus of the study. It also highlights how I intend going about the study through various hermeneutic and cultural theoretical and methodological approaches in the interpretation process of the chosen pericope in the Matthean Gospel.

Until very recently with the emergence of postcolonial studies and postcolonial criticism¹ in the 20th century, the former colonial masters had exercised a great deal of influence and domination on the formerly colonized nations in virtually all facets of life, especially in the area of scholarship and the biblical interpretation which accompanied and supported the Christian missionaries. However, postcolonial studies have emphasized the importance of a re-assessment of that trend by challenging the assumptions of the former colonial masters of superior and objective knowledge. Postcolonial criticism therefore challenges the formerly colonized nations to re-define their national identities and social value in light of their present independent status to break free from the domination of the WesWestern culture imposed on them by means of colonization.

One clear and important way to achieve that is through an affirmation of their cultures, which the former colonial masters had branded as evil, pagan and inferior. Therefore, for the formerly colonized peoples, especially in Africa, the particular concern of this study, the best way to their national dignity and affirmation of their own worldview against the dominant worldview of the former colonial masters, is through the re-valuation and critical re-appropriation of their cultural heritage. Since the Bible was one of the major tools of the missionaries in their negative valuation of African culture, it is an important task of African hermeneutics to reread the texts

¹ Postcolonial criticism deals with the attempt at constructing new national identities and ways of understanding and perceptions of life in every sphere-education, economy, human dignity, literary engagement individual psychology and biblical interpretations of the formerly colonized nations through reawakening that came with independence from the colonization. But in this study, with regard to postcolonial criticism, our focus is on biblical interpretation from cultural perspectives. We shall discuss this further in chapter two of this thesis as we look at Edward Said's contributions to postcolonial studies.

which underpin Christian community life in postcolonial Africa in the light of a positive valuation of African culture and against the grain of missionary interpretation when necessary.

Friendship can be seen as one important aspect of that cultural life of any group and tribe. The cultural embeddedness of the concept of friendship and its negation, betrayal, which is the topic of this study, can then be seen in the various traditions, practices and norms of different cultures of the world that have an influence on how people conceive friendship from place to place. Friendship is one common factor or means of socialization in human society. We hardly can find a culture without an idea and practice of friendship, which is a means of promoting good neighbourliness, mutual society and peaceful co-existence that is a *sine qua non* for socio-political development. Nevertheless, its valuation and practice is culture-specific.

The word “friend” has wider range of usage with different meanings depending on the context. In this thesis, we mean by friendship, at its most basic level, a relationship that involves mutual knowledge, esteem, affection and respect that goes with a degree of rendering service to one’s friend in times of need and crisis. In that sense, friendship entails sharing one’s thoughts, hopes and vicissitudes of life with one’s friend.

In whichever way friendship is defined, our conception of friendship and betrayal is normally conditioned or influenced by our cultural beliefs and orientations. Consequently, as an African, I have been culturally challenged to engage in this study, by critical interpretations of the chosen pericope for this study: Matt. 26:47-56, by some critical Western biblical scholars and interpreters like William Klassen (2000) and Kim Paffenroth (2001). This is because such interpretations assume from the outset Western patterns of social formation which challenge and offend African culture and cultural experiences and practices, especially as related to the concept of relationship in friendship and its inherent expectations.

Western concepts of friendship and betrayal are seen to have emanated from a kind of cultural background and worldview that emphasizes individualism, equality, free thinking, democracy and freedom which is taken for granted by Western scholars but which cannot be taken as representing a general idea of life across all cultures. If our cultures add value to our life and show who we are as Africans, we need to base our biblical interpretation on a concept of friendship and betrayal that reflect our cultural understanding and worldview as a people.

A particularly striking example of the influence of a Western perspective of friendship and betrayal can be identified in responses to the recent publication of the Gnostic *Gospel of Judas* (Kasser & Wurst, 2007) which has produced a number of attempts to explore and defend Judas’

action. Many of these extended works focus largely on reconstructions of the person of Judas by trying to figure out what might have prompted his action and even to justify it. This is a strange phenomenon given the late date and nature of the text itself, which is unlikely to have much historical value in reconstructing the period of Jesus' life and ministry. This thesis will therefore explore and critique the reasons for this Western interest in Judas as well as the vexed responses which such Western interpretations have produced in some Africans, including this researcher.

In other words, these Western attempts at a sympathetic critical historical reconstruction of the action of Judas has provided the motivational impetus for this study, which focuses on the Yoruba cultural understanding of the concept of friendship and betrayal in dialogue with Matthew's Gospel and its critical Western interpreters.

1.1 The Motivational Impetus

This study seeks to respond to some of the challenges raised by various Western critical interpretations of the chosen text, namely Matthew 26:47-56, for this study on the concept of friendship and betrayal in the light of the Yoruba cultural understanding and orientation. I have been motivated to engage in this study by the various comments and theoretical assumptions developed to explain the action of Judas by Western scholars like William Klassen (2000), Kim Paffenroth (2001) and Michael Cook (2008). Although, most Western Biblical scholars do not hold such critical views like the aforementioned scholars, which have posed a challenge to African Biblical scholarship, and particularly, an African cultural understanding of the concept of friendship and betrayal.

The argument in the *Gospel of Judas* is particularly challenging because it tries to maintain that Judas, by his betrayal, helped Jesus to fulfill his mission; and so Judas also fulfilled God's purpose as a betrayer. While the *Gospel of Judas* is an interesting historical example of Gnostic biblical interpretation, it has raised important questions on the concept of friendship and betrayal through modern Western responses which have stimulated our cultural critique of such interpretations; and to which we shall respond in this study.

For example, Western scholars have raised the question of friendship as a network of complex relationships, all which are clamouring for our attention. This challenge to characterize such a notion culturally has also stimulated my interest to see how we can understand and handle these complexities in friendship from the perspective of the Yoruba cultural concept of

friendship and betrayal. All issues are, therefore, calling for our response as Africans based on our understanding of the Bible from our cultural perspective. I see also this as an opportunity and as well as a challenge for us as Africans to contribute to the dominant discourse which has long been dominated by Western scholars.

One of the questions which arise from this challenge is the question of what role the critical historical approach of biblical interpretation has to play in our quest for an African way of understanding and interpreting the Bible.

1.2 Reasons For The Choice Of This Study And Research Problems And Objectives

The choice of this topic is in response to the challenges posed by the cultural assumptions underlying Western critical interpretations of the Bible to Yoruba culture, especially with regard to the pericope for this study, which is Matthew 26:46-57. Such assumptions may objectify Western conceptions of friendship and betrayal as universal when they are in reality informed by their own cultural orientation, which emphasizes equality, freethinking, individualism and freedom. Therefore, the reason for the choice of the topic is to explore a new meaning of the concept of friendship and betrayal from African perspective or worldview of the Yoruba people in Nigeria as we respond to those challenges. A re-reading of the story of Judas, based on a juxtaposition of the Matthean and Western cultural understandings of friendship and betrayal in the light of the Yoruba cultural understanding can then enable a fresh and enriched African culture-based interpretation or meaning of friendship and betrayal.

Western anthropologists, sociologists as well as psychologists have pointed to friendship as becoming an increasingly important form of social glue in contemporary society, because the tie of kinship is merging with that of friendship (Pahl:2000). In other words, kinship is losing its place in the family social setting which it enjoyed before, because the primary bond in friendship, unlike in kinship, is not forced in an ascribed manner. Rather friendship is achieved. This way of thinking reflects one of the primary features of Western culture which consist of an emphasis on individualism, free lifestyle and equality, whereby everyone seeks to live independently on his/her own in the light of their own self constructed package of beliefs and ethics². Descates' basic

² Western culture, which is sometimes equated with Western civilization, Western lifestyle or European civilization, is a wide and broad term which refers to a heritage of social norm, ethical values, traditional customs, belief system, political systems, and specific artifacts and technologies that have some origin or

dictum, *Cognito ergo sum* meaning “I think therefore I am” captures the essence of the basic trend of Western culture of Enlightenment. The case is opposite in Africa, particularly within the Yoruba cultural system, where the pattern of life is still communal. Relationships and life are based on the principle of “they are so I am”. This means that relationships are focused on a communal life of sharing and mutual responsibility which is regulated by social norms and values, which are to be observed religiously for the sake of the wellbeing of the individual members of the community as well as for the general wellbeing of the community.

This then leads to the major objective of this study, which is to bring this Yoruba cultural principle of communal life into dialogue with that of the text of Matthew and the cultural assumption of individualism and freedom of Western culture in order to gain a new understanding of the concept of friendship and betrayal that is Yoruba-culture based and yet without any contradiction to the biblical text. In this regard, this attempt will enable us to contribute to the on-going discourse in African contextual theology and African contextual Biblical interpretation.

But then, what informed our choice of Matthew’s Gospel for the study? I have chosen the Gospel of Matthew, in spite of the apparently greater motif of friendship in John’s Gospel and Luke’s Gospel, because I find the Gospel of Matthew quite appealing in his narrative. The Gospel shows the narrator’s interest in relationships, as evident in his account of the birth of Jesus and the name given to him “Immanuel” which means “God with us” (Matt.1:21b). This expression portends God descending and condescending into a relationship with humanity, which is based on love. In this regard, the theme of the church which revolves around relationships can be seen to be very important to the narrator’s message with regard to the fulfillment of the promised kingdom of God, which he set out to show that Jesus has come to fulfill. Although that relationship may be seen to be deeper than friendship, it has an implication for friendship at the ordinary level. The reason being that is based first and foremost on the love of God towards humanity that should be reciprocated by positive response towards God and one’s neighbours. In other words, Jesus has come to reconnect God and humanity. The name

association with Europe. The term has also been applied to countries whose history is strongly marked by European influence like the Americas and restricted to the continent of Europe. Western culture has developed over several centuries in ancient times and then Middle-Ages and the Renaissance onward as a tradition of rationalism in various spheres of life. The values of Western culture have throughout history, been derived from political thought, widespread employment of rational argument favouring free thought, assimilation of human rights, the need for equality, democracy and individual psychology. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_culture)) (Accessed 25th January, 2014).

'Immanuel' would therefore imply a dawn of a new era of relationship between God and man on one hand. On the other hand, that God-human relationship will also constitute the basis of new relationships among human beings.

We can therefore see Matthew's emphasis on the subject of love as fundamental to the theme of friendship in his narrative that is clearly spelt out in the Sermon on the Mount. Firstly, it points out that an acceptable worship can only be offered to God in an atmosphere of friendliness and rapport: "So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first reconcile to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Make friends quickly with your accuser..." (Matt. 5:23-26). Secondly, it points out how to achieve such a friendliness: "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt.7:12). These texts are the underpinnings of friendship because they contain principles for relationships, especially within the Matthean community.

Hence in the Gospel of Matthew, both John the Baptist and Jesus are seen inviting their hearers into that new experience of relationship that will culminate into a new life in God's kingdom. Although that relationship may have deeper spiritual implications, it begins at the point of friendship with Jesus and then with one's neighbors with the community of the believers. Those who responded, mostly the ostracized members of the society like fishermen, tax collectors and sinners with little or no religious piety, are regarded as Jesus' friends in his bid to fulfill his mission on earth. One would expect that the religious leaders of Jesus' day would have been the first to respond in view of their expectation of the coming kingdom of God, however they refused his invitation.

This is quite evident in the way Matthew has used Mark in his narratives. Mark reports that: "And he (Jesus) went up on the mountain, and called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him. And he appointed twelve to be with him, and to be sent out to preach..." (Mk. 3:13-14). We shall see that for Jesus, friendship is embedded in discipleship, which Matthew tries to expound in his own Gospel with regard to his theme of the church and love as the condition to participate in the kingdom of heaven. Besides, the way Matthew has used the Markan materials in his Gospel with regard to the person and action of Judas in that Gospel shows his special interest in Jesus - Judas relationship. This aspect of special redactional touch can be seen in the way he retells the story of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas in a distinctive and dramatic way that puts Judas in the dark, and which calls for an assessment in relation to Markan portrayal of

Judas. Hence, Matthew 26:47-56 is seen as a relevant pericope for us to explore the concept of friendship and betrayal in the Gospel of Matthew very closely in this study.

We will therefore need to set out our theoretical and methodological models for the realization of the objectives of this study.

1.3 The Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is that the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal as contained in the Yoruba traditional religious system and embedded in the Ifa oracles offers a cultural model and socio-cultural context that is an appropriate dialogue partner for the concept of friendship and betrayal in Matthew in general and Matthew 26:47-56 in particular, in juxtaposition to Western conceptions. In other words, the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal provides a model of an African culture to cast a counter African postcolonial concept of friendship and betrayal such as it is seen in the Gospel of Matthew. In that light, as we read the Gospel of Matthew as a narrative, the Yoruba cultural context will enable us to respond to the text in the following areas in this study:³

a. The Yoruba cultural context will help us to gain a new understanding and interpretation of the concept of friendship and betrayal in Matthew's Gospel, which is the aim of African contextual theology, by coming into dialogue with Matthew's text and Western critical interpreters. We shall explain how we hope to go about this in our discussion of the theoretical and methodological approaches for this study.

The Yoruba cultural context as a model for this study will therefore provide a background from which to respond to the "gaps" and "blanks" that are inherent in the narrative of the Gospel of Matthew in a reader-response approach of a narrative reading, which will challenge and be challenged by the way the same gaps have been filled by modern (Western) critical scholars.

b. In a similar manner, it will enable us to respond to the challenges raised by Western understandings of the concept of friendship and betrayal in their interpretation of the story of Judas in Matthew's Gospel. We shall see how the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal can

³ Although it is true that there are some slight differences among the entities that constitute the Yoruba nation that are most apparent in the area of linguistic differences like "Yoruba Oyo", Ibadan, Egba, Ijebu and Ekiti, the underlying Yoruba ethical values and social norms are essentially the same. In other words, the same factors informed their ethical and communal value and life.

help us wrestle with answers to those questions raised by the individualistic and freedom-oriented tendency of Western concepts of friendship and betrayal, and particularly how Judas' action is to be understood and interpreted from the Yoruba understanding of the concept of friendship and betrayal. What does the Yoruba cultural context offer with regard to what could have prompted the action of Judas in the context of friendship? By the same token, what insights do the biblical text and Western interpretations bring to our understanding of friendship and betrayal in Yoruba culture?

Therefore, as we read about Jesus in relationships with the people of his day, the disciples, and particularly Judas Iscariot in Matthew 26:47-56, in the light of the Yoruba cultural context and Western critical biblical interpreters, we will have a clue to a new understanding of the concept of friendship and betrayal from an African perspective that will demonstrate the distinctiveness of our culture as Africans and its value for biblical interpretations. The Yoruba cultural concept of friendship and betrayal understands friendship as a network of complex social relationships and this study will explore those dynamics in relation to the biblical text and Western understandings.

1.4 The Theoretical Framework For This Research

The theoretical framework for this study will be an African postcolonial theoretical framework, which is based on a combination of conversational-inculturation hermeneutics and Said's contrapuntal theory. This theory hinges on the importance of culture for African Contextualization theology that has resulted from postcolonial criticism.

Examining the background to this theory as it is contained in African Contextualization theology, Justin Ukpong has observed that the significant contribution of the Christian missionaries in the 19th century was the translation of the Bible into various African languages. This facilitated the easy reading and understanding of its message and the wide spread of the Christian faith across Africa. Africans also discovered features in the life and ministry of Jesus that fit into their social situation and cultural experience involving spiritual healing, exorcism and condemnation of oppression. These they sought to actualize in their socio-religious life from the perspective of the Bible. However, the way the mainline or established churches that resulted from the Reformation and the Roman Catholic Church, as very strong organized institutions, handled the Bible did not allow for that kind of actualization. This was a consequence of Western

classical theology and the historical–critical methodological approaches to interpret the Bible, especially in the Twentieth century in various seminaries set up later in the mission field. Professor Ukpong has therefore rightly observed: “The traditional mode of the official church’s reading of the Bible is not capable of responding adequately to the questions that African Christians are asking about their life in Christ and their experience with the Bible” (Ukpong, 1995:3-4). In other words, traditional methods of Western biblical scholarship have greatly affected the African way of understanding the Bible and interpreting its meaning, because the Bible was read by seminary-trained Africans through the mirror of Western culture and its interpretative methods without any significant reference to their own cultural orientation. And what this meant was that the approach did not take care of the social and religious concerns of Africans. Hence, there was a need to evolve a new grid or method that would enable Africans to read the Bible in the light of their own social context and cultural eye for the message of the Bible to bear positively on them (Abogunrin, 1980).

The outcome of that attempt was a development of various hermeneutic methodologies, such as Black and contextual hermeneutics, as the basis for African Contextualization theology and African Biblical scholarship (West, 1992). And in choosing a particular method for such an African hermeneutical approach, I have found the conversational model of biblical interpretation by Jonathan A. Draper and the inculturation Biblical hermeneutical approach by Justin Ukpong strongly appealing and compatible as a starting point. Professor Draper has proposed a theory for contextual interpretation of the Bible in Africa, which he calls “Conversational Exegesis”. It is a method that is focused on social reconstruction and development of African society following the attainment of freedom after the period of colonization and marginalization. The theory works on three principles or poles as explained by Draper, which is a step forward from the bi-polar model of interpretation by the dialectical theology of Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann which claimed some kind of objective universality. The bi-polar model of biblical interpretation hinges on two contexts: the historical reconstruction of the context of the text and interpretation based on existential experience, which implies that a biblical text has a kind of universal and fixed meaning for every culture because it does not recognize the social condition and cultural context of the reader and interpreter of that text.

The conversational model is, therefore, an improvement on the bi-polar model as it hinges three principles of: *context, distantiation and appropriation*, which makes tri-polar. This tri-polar method thus allows for dialogue between the textual context and the cultural context of the

reader. Prof. Draper argues that: “no biblical text has an absolute or neutral meaning applicable from age to age in the same way. The same text will have significantly different meaning depending on who is engaging in a conversation with it.” (Draper, 2002) In effect, African Contextual theology, which aims at making the Christian faith more meaningful and relevant to Africans finds such a conversational model an appropriate tool, because it gives recognition to an additional source of information, and that is, culture and context. Hence, the conversational exegetical theory as propounded by Draper works well for the African contextual biblical interpretation because it encourages dialogue between the social context of the scripture and the social context of a reader for a new interpretation and rewarding appropriation of biblical texts.

Draper’s tri-polar methodology emphasizes culture as an important tool in theological reflection or biblical interpretation thus: “our context does not say the same. It is not just that the culture of Western Europe and North America is different from that of African experience, which it is of course, but that even our own African cultural context does not say the same” (2002:16). In other words, the diversity of African cultural contexts must also be recognized as an aspect of contextualization. The tri-polar methodology by Draper was developed to take care of the inadequacies of the bi-polar methodology of biblical interpretation, which consists of reconstruction of the world of the text and interpretation as the only poles of exegesis, because it assumes that human society is the same everywhere and always. This means that the historical Bible message as reconstructed and interpreted by Western scholars should therefore apply to people everywhere in the same way regardless of their different social situations or cultural backgrounds.

Secondly, Justin Ukpong provides another interesting hermeneutic theory, which he called inculturation theory. The theory designates an approach to biblical interpretation that “seeks to make the African context, and for that matter any socio-cultural context the subject of interpretation”. It emphasizes the place of the cultural context of the interpreter, allowing the exegete a greater opportunity to bring his cultural experience to bear on the interpretative process of the Bible. It operates on the basis of interpreter, the cultural context and the text, and its basic assumption, and starting point is the worldview of Africans that reflects largely on the traditional religious beliefs and social practices of the people. The inculturation biblical hermeneutic operates on five steps of hermeneutical procedures that seek to unearth the social, religious, economic and political messages or meanings of a text in biblical interpretation.

Basically, the two approaches share striking similarities in that the Bible cannot be tied down to a fixed or universal interpretation or meaning. Therefore, both hermeneutic methodological approaches also agree that the cultural context of a particular people, their social situation and experience play a significant role in the interpretative process of the Bible for a contemporary society: “Our social location determines what questions we ask the text, what tools we use to interpret (the text) and what counts as an answer from God” (Draper, 2002/2:16).

But conversational-inculturation theory may not be enough for our exploration here in view of the fact that it only allows for a conversation between two cultural contexts: that of the Bible as it is contained in the text being read and the cultural context of the reader or the interpreter, such as in this study, that of the Yoruba. However, we realize that for African contextual theology to avoid the pitfalls of Western historical-critical method with its hegemonic interpretation, styles and assumption of superiority, we would need also to foreground that Western critical context so as expose its hegemony and open up the way for an African way of reading, understanding and interpreting the Bible. For that purpose, we would require the contribution of another theory that will expose the Western cultural context of most published commentaries and interpretations and bring them critically into the dialogue with the African context.

We therefore find Edward Said’s postcolonial method of contrapuntalism very relevant and compatible with the hermeneutic theory of conversational-inculturation for this purpose. Contrapuntalism, as a literary theory, is understood to mean an acknowledgment of irreducible differences between culture and experiences, but which seeks to find a way in which these differences can be brought into mutual recognition and mutual interaction since they belong in one single human “musical composition” where these differences play off each other “rhythmically” and highlight each other’s value, producing new mutual recognition and understanding, indeed a new beauty by their interaction.⁴ This thus speaks about a unity which

⁴ Our focus here is on the biblical interpretations; and as a strong voice in postcolonial studies, Said describes the point of reading the canonical works, whether biblical or any other literature, as the most interesting development of the studies. Postcolonialism, therefore, is not to destroy but to engage in re-examining some of the colonial assumptions. It thus boils down to the fact that this kind re-assessment or re-examination also constitutes the goal of biblical interpretation (Said, 1978:352).

I am aware that there are many sides to this pursuit, but in this study, the above will form our opinion and I shall maintain the form “postcolonialism” or “postcolonial studies or “criticism” throughout the study.

⁵ Nelson (2012:58) observes that Foucault has enabled us to see how the former colonial masters, with their dominance, exercised control over the former colonized nation and their history by a way of describing their actions systematically in the language of truth and discipline.

recognizes and values a new kind of unity within diversity. Although, a critical discussion of Said's contrapuntal theory shall be attempted later in this thesis, it will suffice to just point out here briefly that the theory focuses on the need for the cultures and perspectives of the former colonial powers and those of the newly liberated nations to seek to give space and time to each other in a sense of a rich musical score, so that they play off each other in a creative new synthesis like a piece of classical music. In other words, contrapuntal refers to the way in which two different musical patterns or themes play against each other, yet within the same musical composition in a way in which each is enriched by the other - indeed each depends on the other for completeness. And in a postcolonial world all cultures have been brought into one global framework which cannot be ignored.⁵ It is an understanding which comes close to the analogy of dialogue and provides a fitting model of cultural conversation between the Matthean text in its own context and the Yoruba socio-cultural context on friendship and betrayal as well as giving opportunity to the context of historical-critical interpretation derived from Western culture to be heard within one "composition" or dialogue. It highlights the existence of multiple contexts interacting in the interpretative process. According to Said, contrapuntalism anchors itself on "integration, as opposed to assimilation or exclusivism ... It is not an effort to contrast parallel discourse, or promote assimilatory melting-pot, multiculturalism, but to include dissenting voices in the dominant discourse with the aim of decentring the dominant" (Said, 1993:xxvii).

This literary theory that is anchored in Postcolonial criticism focuses on Western literature and writings, but we are here borrowing it for biblical interpretation, particularly from the perspective of an African contextual theology that is culturally conditioned in order to clarify the need to accommodate cultural interaction in our quest for a new meaning of the chosen text for this study. Contrapuntalism is thus a method which creates a space for many contending voices to be heard in such a way that no one will dominate the other. By this method, we shall explore the social background that informed the Matthean pericope and the socio-cultural context of the Yoruba people that informed their concept of friendship and betrayal to achieving a new understanding and interpretation of the text. But we shall also explore the Western presupposition that informed their biblical interpretations, mostly unawares. The method thus foregrounds the socio-cultural values of the Yoruba culture in the exploration of the concept of

friendship and betrayal in Matthew's Gospel without ignoring the scholarship and insights of Western biblical interpretation.

1.5 Methodology

In order to achieve the objective of this study, we would require a method that works with the theoretical hermeneutical approach of conversational-inculturation of the African postcolonialism as explained above. Therefore, we shall employ narrative reading methodology for the study of the Matthew's Gospel coupled with Said's literary contrapuntal method in our interpretative process. Narrative methodology is an aspect of literary effort that emphasizes the reading of the Bible as a historical literary narrative i.e. as a story. This is particularly relevant to Yoruba cultural practice of story-telling and witty or proverbial sayings. In other words, Yoruba people attach a great deal of importance and prominence to story-telling and proverbial statements, as part of their socio-cultural life to communicate messages as well as to teach morals as embedded in their value and religious systems, like *Ifa* oracles (Abimbola, 2005).⁶

According to David Barr (1987), narrative method enables any reader to read the biblical text as literature with a sense of direction in order to be able to grasp the text as a literary work with meaning. He further points out that many of the New Testament books, especially the Gospel, have a literary quality for them to be regarded as a literary piece. He points out that the Matthean Gospel in its present form possesses literary qualities for it to be regarded as a narrative that can be read as a story. We will see that Matthew's Gospel fulfills all of the six literary principles advanced by J. Phelan and P. Rabinowitz to determine a narrative (Herman, 2012).

This method does not ask critical questions about authorship, date and provenance, except in so far as it provides the *mimesis* of the narrative. We shall explain more on this later in this section. In addition, we also find W. Iser's *Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1978) very relevant and appealing in this regard. Iser makes a case for the reader-involvement or oriented approach in literary works in the sense that such literary works can no longer be regarded as fixed or closed in meaning. In that sense, reading should not be seen as a passive engagement of just going over a

⁶ Abimbola points out that the Yoruba religious beliefs include *Itan*, i.e. story, the total complex of songs, histories and other cultural concepts, all of which make the Yoruba society.

piece of literary work, but as an active engagement in which the reader is involved. It thus follows that such literary work finds its new meaning in the real reader or response (Iser, 1978:231).

In reading a text narratively, Iser has argued that the reader, whom he calls the real reader, is involved actively in the text in such a way that interaction between the implied reader and the text provides “gaps” or “blanks” to which the real reader must respond in order to make sense of the narrative. In other words, theory is based on the evaluation of the trio of implied author and implied reader, text and a real reader such that the reader could apply the techniques contained in the text not to locate a hidden meaning but rather facilitate a meaning that is a function of the interplay between an authorial construct here referred to as the implied reader and the real reader of the text. In this regard, the implied reader and the implied author are both (in the case of the Bible) literarily and figuratively “dead”. Narrative critics thus speak of the “death of the author” in order to indicate that once a narrative work is completed it passes out of the control and censorship of the real author, except in so far as he/she is included in the text. Hence, the method is called a reader-response approach for reading a text, because it is focused on a high degree of participation from the reader. This is why the method is appropriate for our study of Matthew, as it will help the real Yoruba reader of the Gospel today to identify the “gaps” in the narrative. In addition, the method will also afford us the privilege of filling in those “gaps” by responding to the questions that might be raised by those gaps consciously or unconsciously from the perspective of our culture. And that will be constitutive of the new cultural understanding and interpretation of the text.

The relevance of this theory is that it fits perfectly into the narrative methodology for this study in two ways. Firstly, it gives room for us as the real readers of the Gospel of Matthew today as a literary work to be actively involved in that reading. But more than that, secondly, it also challenges us to respond to “gaps” or “blanks” in the story. According to Iser such gaps exist at the thematic level regarding what is said in the text and at the textual level regarding how it said that calls for the reader’s response. Therefore, there is a kind of text/reader interaction on the plains of instruction-giving and meaning-assembly. This kind of relationship inspires a response as the reader grasps the text. Hence, the real reader’s task has been described by Iser as twofold. One is paying attention to the construct of the implied reader in the text, and two, trying on that premise to achieve understanding of the text so as to be able to respond to the gaps created in the text (Iser, 1978:231). Therefore, as we also read the Gospel of Matthew for this study, we will

endeavour to respond to those gaps in the story based on our cultural experience, to make it meaningful to us.

J. Kingsbury's *The Plot of Matthew's Story*" is a popular attempt at a narrative reading of the Gospel of Matthew, especially with beginning, middle and end. But the work of a number of biblical scholars, like Herman C. Waetjen (1976) and Daniel Patte (1987) who have both explored further on Matthew's Gospel as a narrative that is focused on the structure of the entire Gospel, is relevant to our narrative reading of the Gospel. It goes beyond just the beginning, middle and end approach adopted by Kingsbury. Waetjen and Patte's approaches therefore afford an opportunity of a narrative reading of Matthew's Gospel as a story with a view to identifying and responding to "gaps" in the Gospel from the perspective of a reader-response method. This is why we are adopting a narrative method of reading a text for our task here to explore a new interpretation of the periscope. Because according to Iser, the meaning of any text is not embedded in the text like a gold nugget in a mine, and so meaning cannot be thought to be static, fixed or closed but it dynamic and evolving (Iser, 1978). We shall discuss this further in chapter three.

In summary, conversational–inculturation theory and the contapuntal narrative reading approach will enable us to bring together the two contending cultural contexts of the Matthean text and the Yoruba social situation of this researcher into a dialogue with the WesternWestern cultural context that is often reflected in the historical critical interpretations of the biblical texts with a narrative reading method. This interpretative exploration is, therefore, cultural in the sense that we need a very good knowledge of our culture for this kind of engagement, but also of the culture and situation of the "implied readers" of the biblical text. Beyond this, the implicit Western historical-critical hermeneutical framework remains the "elephant in the room" which must be addressed. In effect, it means that we have seen it as a "third context" of the African reader. The various African hermeneutic theories like conversational and inculturation that came with postcolonial criticism, have sensitized us to the importance of culture in Biblical scholarship generally and African Contextual theology in particular. On the whole, this endeavour will enable us to see why African Contextual theology also stands to benefit from an engagement with Western critical interpretations in dialogue with the biblical text and our culture to produce a new African culture-based understanding of the Bible. One of such benefits will be to strengthen the ties of relationship between African scholars and Western scholars as they continue to learn from one another with respect and dignity that was not there before. In addition, this kind of rapport

will also place the African scholars on the same level of recognition with their Western counterparts.

This explains the objective of this research which is to read the chosen pericope in Matthew on friendship and betrayal contrapuntally in the light of the Yoruba concept of *Oreodale* and Western critical interpretation of the pericope, against the background of the *mimetic* orientation of the implied readers for whom Matthew was composed, in order to gain a new Yoruba culture-based concept of friendship as it is contained in the belief systems of the Yoruba people.

The word, *Oreodale* literarily means “a betrayal of the earth (land)”,⁷ because the land is usually considered to be the third party in friendship, especially a covenantal friendship in the Yoruba cultural setting. It could also be argued that the kind of friendship between Jesus and his disciples reflects something similar to Yoruba covenantal friendship based on shared meals and communal fellowship that normally characterize their life. And in the light of that, it casts a new understanding of what friendship and betrayal entails from an African perspective of the Yoruba people of Nigeria against the background of the chosen pericope with its possible socio-political implications for social transformation (Matt. 26:47-56). This pericope, seen against the backdrop of the choice of the twelve disciples in Matt. 4: 18 -22 and Jesus’ close personal interaction with them is what follows as a reflection of the height of the friendship and the depth of the betrayal between Jesus and the disciples, and particularly Judas Iscariot. The pericope thus carries a note of friendship and betrayal as Jesus is seen as to have addressed Judas Iscariot as a friend even in a moment of betrayal.

A study of friendship and betrayal together as seen in the Matthean Gospel from an African cultural perspective of the Yoruba people in Nigeria in dialogue with both the context of the Bible and the context of Western interpreters will, therefore, be a step towards the cultural emancipation of Africa as a hitherto marginalized nation.

In summation, our attempt at gaining a new understanding and interpretation of the Bible, particularly the chosen text in the Gospel of Matthew from our African cultural experience and understanding is informed by the new waves of cultural emancipation in all facets of life for the formerly colonized that has come with postcolonial criticism- a study that is focused on cultural re-orientation of the hitherto colonized to rediscover and redefine their worldview in the

⁷ See Appendix 1, on pgs. 223-229: Interview conducted with Chief Yemi Elebubon, a renowned Ifa priest in Osogbo, Osun state in Nigeria on 25th April, 2011

face of the devaluation of their culture which had been branded barbaric by the former Western colonial master. Postcolonialism has thus challenged European assumptions of superiority over the people that they had colonized. This kind of challenge also has its place in biblical scholarship and interpretation that has led to the emergence of African Contextual theology or African contextualization interpretation. With its focus on methodological approaches, it allows for the reading and interpretation of the Bible along one's cultural experiences and understanding of the world.⁸

And as already pointed out, the relevance of this study can be seen in the sense that it will continue to enrich African theological reflections and biblical interpretations beyond the traditional classical methods of doing theology in the captivity of imperial cultures to which it had been hitherto subjected (Bevans, 2009:25).

This study is largely dependent on books and interviews of people for the collection of relevant data. In this regard, the fieldwork among the Yoruba people of Nigeria in West Africa to obtain relevant information involved interviews with some priests of the oracle divinity for the relevant texts of the *Ifa* oracles on the subject of friendship and betrayal in an investigative and dialogical form. One of such people is Chief Yemi Elebubon, a renowned traditionalist and *Ifa* priest in Osogbo, Osun state in Nigeria. Others consulted for this study will be discussed later. The importance of this is that the *Babalawo* i.e. "Ifa priest" is the custodian of the Yoruba traditional religious beliefs, especially the devotees of *Obatala- the god of divination*. It should also be noted that the socio-religious life of the people in the traditional setting has traditionally been guided by these indigenous oral texts, as they are usually recited from memory by *Ifa* priests and priestesses.

Consequently, some of the oracular texts obtained in the vernacular with their translations in the English language are put together under Appendix 1, pgs. 221-227, and will be analyzed and summarized as the cultural context of this researcher. This is because it is not easy to recite the texts in the English language conveniently and fluently as in Yoruba language. In addition, all the information obtained from the interviews conducted with the following

⁸ But as I have already explained, our aim in this study is not to seek a new understanding of the Bible, but a culture-based understanding or interpretation of the text. This is because we will not like other cultures to impose their cultural understanding on us just as we will not impose ours on them. But we seek a kind of cross-culture interaction, by allowing each culture to relate together so as to improve our understanding in such a way that our individual's position is recognized and honoured.

categories people: (i) the elders (60 years and above) based on their knowledge of the cultural practices and rich life's experiences in Yoruba culture, (ii) young men and women (40 years and above), and (iii) students and youths (20 years and above), obtained in the vernacular are also put under Appendix 2, pgs. 229-265 with their translations in the English language. Then both the *Ifa* texts and the information gathered from the interviewees will also be brought into dialogue to identify possible similarities and dissimilarities between them. Nevertheless, they also form part of the cultural context of this researcher for the purpose of exploring the people's belief contained in the concept of *Ifa*, and will be engaged in a dialogue with the Matthean cultural context and Western critical interpretation, so as to be able to make acceptable conclusions for this study.

1:6 Preliminary Literature Review

The word 'friend' has a wider range of meanings and it can mean different things depending on the context. For the purpose of this thesis, we mean by friendship, a relationship that involves mutual knowledge, esteem, affection and respect along with a degree of rendering service to one's friend in times of need or crisis.⁹ So, friendship is about sharing one's thoughts, hopes fears and vicissitudes of life with one's friend.

Approaches to the subject of this thesis, that is friendship and betrayal, differs from one discipline to the other. In Psychology, two kinds of friendship are distinguishable. First, what is described as Expressive or Emotional friendship, involves a relationship between an ego and an alter ego in which a friend satisfies some emotional needs in his or her partner. This experience is regarded as the psychological aspect of friendship. Instrumental friendship is aimed at meeting some physical needs in one's own life and in the life of one's friend (Brown, 1993:171-172). It is not the intention of this study to emphasize these seeming differences regarding expressive and instrumental friendship as both primarily involves meeting the needs of one's friend. This study sees friendship generally as a relationship that is aimed at mutual support and encouragement.

Consequently, friendship can be seen as a cooperative and supportive relationship between two people in thoughts and aspirations, in loyalty and trust. This will require understanding which may reflect in their tastes and activities that can keep them together with the

⁹ <http://dictionary.sensagent.com/friendship/en-en/> pg 2 (Accessed 20th January, 2014).

ability to engage in mutually helpful behaviour, such as exchange of advice and the sharing of each other's challenges of life. A friend is someone who may often demonstrate reciprocating and reflective behaviour¹⁰. Simply put, the value of friendship is involved in affection for one another that can be demonstrated through sympathy and empathy towards each other, mutual understanding and compassion, positive reciprocity, desire for each other's best and trust in each other to confide or seek emotional support from each other - friendship is quite all embracing in its purpose

In the article: *Kinship, Friendship and Patron-client relations in complex societies*, Eric R. Wolf examines how the diverse complex societies affect relations, especially kinship and friendship. However, we shall emphasize the aspect of friendship in order to keep with the focus of this study. In regard to friendship, which is contrasted with kinship, is described as an experience that is achieved rather than forced like kinship. Wolf discusses in details two major concerns of friendship: expressive and emotional purposes or instrumental.

Emotional concern in friendship is focused on psychological needs while instrumental deals with physical concerns. Wolf points out that the social structure affects the practice of friendship. Citing the example of his own experience about the behaviour of Indians who live in what he called closed corporate communities in America. The communities are depicted as solidary, i.e. closed towards outsiders and against the outside, by maintaining monopoly of resources that tend to defend first the rights of insiders against competition from outsider. Although this tend to prevent differences and check the risks of life, it does not lead to the communal relations that such social structure intends to achieve. In contrast, it rather encourages envy and suspicion in the process of maintaining equality in life chances. Therefore, this kind of communal structure encourages a kind of friendship that provides an escape from the struggle of life and hinders the distribution of resources and its members (Fitzgerald, 1996:172).

Another example mentioned by Wolf is that of a community in Guatemala, where for the Indian community or residents, friendship offers an emotional fulfillment and a means of self-assurance that one is being supported by a friend. This kind of feelings in friendship is mostly noticeable before marriage and after childhood to adulthood. However, this feeling can be affected by the intensity of the relation because those Indians normally seek extreme confidence in friendship. Although they often expect reciprocal affection, the friend will act in a manner which will give pleasure to his friend.

¹⁰ <http://dictionary.sensagent.com/friendship/en-en/> pg 2 (Accessed 20th January, 2014).

The dark side of this kind of emotional friendship is that once a high intensity of friendship has been attained, jealousy and frustration can easily set into the relation that may eventually lead to enmity. Nevertheless, they are proud of the relationship and affection that is involved in it, although with mixed feelings. This is because the friend is a potential enemy when expectations are not met, i.e. the prescribed role and status involved in friendship. In this regard, friendship involves some reservations in the areas of family secrets and plans, which point to the fact that friendship is mostly focused on an emotional fulfillment rather than for economic, political or practical purposes (Fitzgerald, 1996:172). Wolf therefore observes that emotional friendship is self-limiting because it is often threatened from within, just as it is subjected to limitation from the outside. For example, in a closed community referred to earlier, such solidary groups normally feel that cross-cutting friendship may be a threat and a means of limitation.

On the other hand, instrumental friendship is not entered into primarily for the purpose of gaining access to the communal resources, whether natural or social, but it believes that access is very important experience. Unlike emotional friendship, instrumental friendship does not restrict relation to any classes or groups in friendship. But each member of the group acts as a potential connecting link to other persons outside the group. In other words, each participant in the group is a sponsor for the other. In the light of this, unlike emotional friendship with its characteristic tendency to close up the social circle, instrumental friendship reaches beyond the existing boundaries and even tries to establish new sets.

Dwelling on the work of one Reuben Reina which contrasts the Indians in Chinauta with the Ladinos, Wolf observes that for the Ladinos, "Friendship has practical utility in the realm of economic and political influence (Fitzgerald, 1996:173). This kind of friendship has a mechanism that is focused on personal benefit. For example, Wolf refers to the word *cuello*, which is a popular expression among the Ladinos, meaning that through the personal influence of an acquaintance who is very powerful and influential to a third party, hearing of a litigation could be influenced in a way or job be given to someone who is not qualified for it. This kind of friendship known as *cuello* is dependent on the strength of friendship involved and is usually accessed in terms of the number of favours offered to each other. It is therefore defined by its main support according to the nature of a convenient social relationship (Fitzgerald, 1996:173).

However, according to Wolf, friendship is generally inspired or based on what he describes as a minimal element of affect, i.e. a need which forms the basis for the reciprocal dealing in friendship. Wolf identifies a more generalized reciprocity in friendship from that of the

tit-for-tat kind of reciprocity, which is described as balanced reciprocity. The former is based on the initial situation of friend as the aim of the relation, and is addressed through series of performances of mutual assistance. This makes the friendship open and based on trust. However, that kind of symmetrical reciprocal relationship between the two parties may develop or result in class disparity when by sheer luck or skillful management one party attains a position of strength and the other party remains weak. Then the hitherto character of balanced reciprocity between the two equals may degenerate into imbalance; and this will invariably threaten the friendship too when one party becomes exploitative of the other. In other words, if a favour is no longer forthcoming, the friendship may be broken and lead to realignment of friendship bonds. It thus becomes obvious that equality at the initial stage of friendship could be threatened with time, especially due to change in status.

Furthermore, Wolf examines how mobilization of friendship ties can be restricted by the persistence of corporate group in a society. However, there are some issues that can push someone beyond the orbit of the community or even beyond corporate groups. This usually affects migrant population in striking friendship ties in such communities. Conversely, in open communities the case is different, because there is no such restriction. Therefore, a person is free to mobilize friendship ties to advance his or her condition within and outside the community. In this regard, just like kinship ties for migrants, so also friendship ties in open communities, will become an invisible avenue or process for the transmission or distribution of goods and services (Fitzgerald, 1996:173).

In the light of the foregoing, instrumental friendship can be seen to thrive best in social situation that is relatively open, and where friends can act as sponsors for each other in an attempt to improve their social status. Wolf observes that in the 20th century, a new form of social closure has however emerged in the area of large-scale bureaucratic organizations that try to reduce access to industrial and military concerns.

I like to conclude with the other two forms of friendship identified by Wolf in his article: Cliques and Patron-client relations or friendship, and lay emphasis on the latter because of its relevance and implication for this study. Clique friendship involves primarily the set of roles associated with a particular job, which also has an affective element that may be used to counter-balance the formal demand of the organization to render life within it more acceptable and meaningful. It therefore helps to remove the feeling of domination in an individual while it encourages his ego in the interplay of tit-for-tat of the small group (Fitzgerald, 1996:174).

Lastly, we have patron-client friendship that has been traced to a maximum point of imbalance, because one partner is seen to be superior to the other. This is a challenge to the question of equality in friendship as patron-client friendship is seen to be a lop-sided friendship experience. As in the case of instrumental friendship, patron-client friendship has to do with a minimal charge of affect, i.e. the desire to meet a particular need as the basis for trust for future mutual support in friendship.

Patron-client friendship operates on certain principles. Behind the material gains in patron-client friendship, there is also the challenge of trying to get-over the accompanying inequalities and fighting against anonymity. This is because the two parties in patron-client friendship are no longer exchanging equivalent goods and services. The patron in this kind of friendship is very prominent because of the tangibility of his /her offerings, by providing almost everything; whereas the client only pays back with intangible assets. This development thus portends a demonstration of esteem for the patron, while the client should demonstrate a strong sense of loyalty to his her patron. He/she also regularly stimulates the channels of loyalty, creates good will, add to the name and fame of his /her patron by making a god out of him/her. The client is also expected to offer his /her patron regular information as well as political support against his/her will.

Patron-client friendship therefore encourages power even in the face of reciprocities. A client in this regard, is not only required to vote or give strong political support to his /her patron in the political process, he/she is also expected to entertain no other patrons than the one from whom he/she is receiving favour or assistance. Hence the client is duty-bound, not just to express loyalty, but he/she is also to demonstrate that sense of loyalty. A client in patron-client friendship becomes a server of the competitive purpose of a faction leader, i.e. an object of the patron (Fitzgerald, 1996:174).

We shall see how our discoveries in this discussion work for the purpose of our search for the Yoruba-culture based interpretation and meaning of friendship in the chosen Matthean pericope.

Ray Pahl (2000), in his book entitled: *“On Friendship”*, has undertaken an extensive treatment of the subject of friendship from a strong sociological perspective. He looks at various aspects of friendship as involving all strata of human life, the development of friendship, the importance of trust in modern friendship, recent philosophical interpretations of classical friendship and the contributions of sociology and psychology to the study of friendship. Pahl also

argues like others that there is little or no agreement as to what constitutes a true friend, but that friendship is usually based on the kindness done to us by our friends. Pahl, however, observes that since there is no qualitative scale by which to measure or assess true friendship or best friend, the notion is open to different interpretations (Pahl, 2000:15). But friendship implies responsibilities and limits (Pahl, 2000:86).

Bettina Beer in her article titled *Anthropology of Friendship* (2001),¹¹ while commenting on the notion of friendship from the anthropological point of view, discusses whether friendship should be regarded as a public or private phenomenon like marriage. But we shall see how best to regard friendship later in our discussion of the various cultural contexts of friendship. In terms of research, Beer laments the concentration on instrumental friendship by Anthropologists to the abandonment of the concept of Expressive friendship. Also, the little research done so far on friendship is focused on industrialized societies and only a few studies have been done on traditional cultural aspects. In other words, Anthropologists have always concentrated on formal relationships with well-defined mutual obligations such as ritual kinship, exchange, trade or working instrumental usage.

Interestingly, Beer takes the discussion of the different dimensions of friendship on emotional and instrumental relations beyond that of the sociologists. She observes that the terms “emotional” and “instrumental” are somewhat confusing, because both of them actually have instrumental qualities.¹² However, most societies betray different kinds of deficits that different types of friendship try to satisfy. In some cultures, friendship is patterned along age group, sex, social status or profession. She points out a marked discrimination between men and women in friendship in some cultures. This highlights the cultural distinctiveness of friendship from one culture to the other, which is required of an interpreter in order to be able to make biblical messages more meaningful to people concerned. We shall discuss further on this in this study.

Agnes Brandt and Eric Anton Heuser in the article entitled “*Friendship and Socio-cultural context Experiences from New Zealand Indonesia*”, reflect on the investigative research on the concept of friendship that is focused on the cultural embeddedness of indigenous forms of sociality.¹³ And that in order to grasp the dynamics of friendship relations, the socio-cultural context needs

¹¹ International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioural Sciences, 2001:5805-5806.

¹² Ibid., 5806.

¹³ In the article, Brandt and Heuser attempt a detailed discussion of their findings on the cultural embeddedness of friendship in New Zealand and Indonesia which has also general applications in any cultural aspect of friendship.

to be considered as well as the actors' individual life i.e. worlds and self-conceptions. This revolves around such questions as: how do actors conceptualize their friendship within their wider social-cultural environment? How do they engage in friendship with others? How do they experience and place their friendship in their wider net of social relations? We shall therefore find these questions to be relevant for our study of the concept of friendship as we bring it into a dialogue all the contending cultural contexts

Adele Ryan McDowell, a psychologist, in her article entitled *Anatomy of Betrayal* (2011), describes betrayal thus: "its very name conjures up deep hurt and heartache. It is relational, requiring connection...it cuts at the essential cord that attaches us to another. It breaks a bond predicted on trust."¹⁴ This best describes the kind of harrowing experience or the depth of disappointment that is often associated with betrayal. Friendship should normally operate on the basis of trust and loyalty, whereby friends share together their material values, problems, plans, hopes and struggle. Often when in a problem, we turn for advice from friends we can trust. And in that case, betrayal of one's friend can have very devastating effects on such an individual. In other words, betrayal as a denial of trust, love and loyalty which are basic requirements for friendship, is indeed a negation of friendship (Kennedy, 1986:128f). In order to corroborate McDowell above on betrayal, we can also consider Jackson's statement on betrayal: "...There is a characteristic 'feel' to betrayal. The betrayed experience powerful sensations of violation; they feel used and damaged." But then, McDowell explains that there are times when betrayal may serve a good purpose, in order to be true to oneself. She believes that at such a time betrayal is not always to hurt but to attain emotional balance and safety, except when the betrayer is a psychopath (Jackson, 2000:72).

This question about when a betrayal may be considered reasonable or acceptable forms part of our research in this study. The point therefore is that friendship and betrayal seem to operate on the same dynamic or basis but in quite an opposite directions to each other at the point in which the principles of love, loyalty and trust upon which friendship is generally based, are violated. In that regard, it may be argued that betrayal is naturally embedded in friendship but its effects do not come to the fore until the guiding principles of friendship are negated - which can be linked to conflict of interests in the psyche of anyone who betrays. A person so troubled

¹⁴ http://www.v-r.de/_file_mediathek/downloads/486/9783899717877_probekaptch.pdf. (p. 146, accessed 20th April, 2012).

may therefore be acting out a genuine internal conflict, although this does not exonerate a betrayer of one's friend.

Rodger L Jackson, in his work (based on Jane Austen), *Sense and Sensibility of betrayal: Discovering the meaning of Treachery* (2000), has tried to unravel the ambiguities surrounding the concept of betrayal and especially about the need to distinguish between genuine and merely perceived betrayal. He describes betrayal as a case in which "one person should have both intentionally convinced another person of his future loyalty and then deliberately rejected him" ((Jackson, 2000:73). He therefore argues that a case of betrayal must be seriously addressed, because people often put up defensive arguments to defend their actions when charged with betrayal. The complexity of betrayal from the perspective of its theoretical analysis by Jackson as well as in the body of this thesis underlies the seriousness of the action.

To this end, betrayal can be seen as a moral issue as it is suggestive of a negation of the principle of trustworthiness in friendship because a betrayer has thrown his friend into an emotional trauma, just as the betrayed could also possibly have done to the betrayer.

Konstan (1996) on *Relationship of frankness and flattery to Friendship* from the background of Hellenistic history, stresses the need to differentiate a flatterer from a true friend, which is based on candour and honesty as basic characteristics of friendship as opposed to deceitfulness embedded in betrayal. A flatterer is seen to be lacking in self-respect. Konstan, therefore, points out the importance of frankness in friendship in the area of personal improvement of friends through constructive correction. This kind of improvement agrees with what Aristotle and Cicero termed as sharpening of moral status in friendship as evident in this statement attributed to Cynic philosopher, Diogenes: "Other dogs bite their enemies, I (bite) my friends - so that I may save them" (Konstan,1996: 12). This kind of instrumental friendship and betrayal respectively will suggest that friends have to be chosen carefully. In this regard, Konstan speaks further on how a true friend can be distinguished from a flatterer by referring to Plutarch as saying: 'frankness is the primary indicator of the openness and honesty characteristic of friend as opposed to the dissimulation that marks the toady" (Konstan, 1996:7). This is to say that the concepts frankness and flattery are related to the concept of friendship. Therefore, "candour is the sign of the genuine friend, while pretender gives himself away by self-interested adulation that is exploitative rather than altruistic" (1996:7). In this connection, the place of moral uprightness or trustworthiness in friendship shall be explored from the perspective of the socio-cultural context of the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal in this study.

The question about Judas' action in betraying his Master, coupled with the recent publication of the *Gospel of Judas*, has inspired different comments and reactions by scholars from two major different perspectives. On one side are those scholars who have condemned the action of Judas as evil and nothing but a strong act of betrayal. We find such a note of condemnation in the comments on Judas' action by R. Brown (1993) and B. Halas (1946), who in his doctoral thesis on Judas Iscariot is even harder on Judas.

But recently, we have some other exponents of a new theory on Judas. One of such scholars include William Klassen (2000), who dwells very extensively on the etymology of the Greek word used to describe the action of Judas, which according to him, does not really imply "betrayal" but connotes a sense of "handing over." Klassen attempts an extensive and critical textual assessment of the Greek word, *paradidomai* used to describe the action of Judas. He pointed out that the word as used for Judas connotes the sense of "handing over" and not as betraying. The reason being that according to him, there is no information about Jesus being given to the Jewish Religious Leaders, except that Judas led them to Jesus. And again, he did not appear as a witness against Jesus. And so the proper Greek word, often used for betrayal, according to Josephus is *prodidomi* or *prodosia*.

However, in contrast, another author, Raymond Brown (1993) believed that Judas did not appear because Jesus was hurriedly handed over to the Roman Authorities to hasten his death, as if he did not know that would be the outcome.

Another recent attempt in this regard is Kim Paffenroth, in his book: *The Images of the Lost Disciple* (2001), written just before the publication of the discovered *Gospel of Judas*. Paffenroth's unique effort is contained in his portrayal of Judas beyond the usual dark depiction, as an object of emulation in view of his regret and penitence as recorded by Matthew that Paffenroth believes might have inspired Judas' subsequent suicide.

Liz Carmichael in her book entitled *Friendship: Interpreting Christian Love* (2004), observes that friendship in Christian understanding is a departure from *philein* or *amicitia* of both Greek and Roman friendships respectively, it is anchored in *agape* with its distinctive Christian relationships between God and human on one hand, and with others on the other hand.

Finally, it should also be pointed out that Martin M. Culy has also published a major work on friendship. "*Echoes of Friendship in the Gospel of John*" (2010), which focuses on a general objective view of friendship between Jesus and his disciples as exemplified by the friendship between Jesus and God based on the Gospel of John, without much reference to culture.

However, this study on the theme of friendship and betrayal in the Matthean Gospel explores further the concept of friendship with a focus on culture, on the basis that our cultural background has an influence on our understanding and practice of friendship, and also how betrayal is related to that experience

However, on the whole, it appears as if, in Matthew's opinion, all of the disciples betrayed their master and friend Jesus, though in quite different ways, as seen in the narratives. This is because, for Jesus, discipleship portends friendship in the first instance regardless of status. Therefore he condescends to the level of a servant so as to enjoy their fellowship as friends. We shall discuss this further in this study. Led by Peter, who under oath denies ever knowing Jesus, all the other disciples also abandon him at the most trying period of his life - the point of his arrest, trial and crucifixion (cf. Matt. 26: 56b, 69-75).

1.7 Delimitation Of The Study

The ramifications of friendship and betrayal are not only wide, but also culturally conditioned. So this study is focused on the concept of friendship and betrayal in the culture of the Yoruba people of Nigeria as an African case study for our "conversation" or "dialogue" with both Matthew's Gospel and Western critical interpretations of the concept. This study will attempt an examination of friendship and betrayal patterns in the Gospel with a focus on Judas and the analysis of the text: Matt. 26:47-56 with regard to: its meaning, nature, limits and implications. The study seeks a new understanding of the concept of friendship and betrayal in that text by bringing it into a dialogical reflection with the two contending cultural contexts of the Yoruba culture and Western critical interpretation.

In addition, the relationship of friendship and betrayal to repentance and forgiveness emerges in this study, as Matthew suggests in his narrative on the aftermath on the denial of Jesus by Peter and his betrayal by Judas.

Therefore, the research attempts to identify friendship and betrayal patterns in the Gospel generally while focusing on the pericope Matthew 26:47-56. This research seeks a new culture-based understanding of the subject of friendship and betrayal that will contribute to the project of the development of African hermeneutics.

To this end, the researcher will gather information concerning traditional Yoruba understandings of friendship and betrayal from a selected number of people as indicated earlier.

1.8 Original Contributions Of The Study

As Graham Allan (1996:3) has observed, in spite of the researches on friendship already undertaken, based on the use of fairly rudimentary tools and models, the basis of our knowledge about friendship is open to many ideas or interpretations as attested to by both Pahl and Beer. However, this research on friendship and betrayal in Matthew's Gospel is to explore the riches of the ancient concept of friendship and betrayal within the socio-cultural context of the Yoruba in Nigeria. This cultural context will however be brought in dialogue with the Matthean context and the Western cultural context, seeking to achieve a new understanding of the text as a contribution to emerging African biblical scholarship. The "conversation" between the biblical text and the Yoruba cultural context may challenge and suggest new understanding and praxis with regard to friendship for Yoruba Christians.

Besides this, the thesis seeks to strike a new ground for rapport and understanding between the former colonial masters and the Christian missions and the formerly colonized, in Africa, in the face of the past experiences of cultural domination. Hence, our project is to bring the Western cultural context into dialogue with the Matthean and Yoruba cultural contexts in our quest for a new and African culture-based understanding and interpretation of the chosen text for this study.

In addition, the African postcolonial theoretical and methodological approach of this study itself is an effort geared towards the promotion of African contextual biblical scholarship by bringing together Western and African biblical scholarship in a new dialogue that is beneficial to both in the postcolonial era. In other words, beyond the end of colonization, Africa and the West can continue to learn from each other through mutual understanding and respect rather than domination.

1.9 The Structure Of The Thesis

This research study is divided into six chapters. Chapter one will focus on a general introduction to the study regarding the hypothesis of the study, which is to argue that the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal as contained in the Yoruba socio-religious system offers a cultural model that is appropriate to engage in dialogue with the Matthean pericope and Western

conceptions for a new understanding of friendship and betrayal from an African perspective. It therefore examines the motivation and reasons for the choice of the topic and the pericope in Matthew as well as identifying the research problems or questions to be addressed. It goes on to describe briefly the theoretical approach and methodology of the contrapuntal model employed for this study. It closes with the literature review and the delimitation of this research.

Chapter two sets out the theoretical framework and methodological approaches for this study, and that is African postcolonial theoretical framework as contained in the hermeneutical theory of conversational-inculturation. This theoretical approach evolving from the postcolonial criticism, as developed by Justin Ukpong and Jonathan A. Draper will be combined with the narrative methodology as advanced by J. Phelan, P. Rabinowitz, David Barr and W. Iser for the reading of the Gospel of Matthew as story. Then it will engage with the literary method of contrapuntal interaction as developed by Edward Said in the interpretative process of the pericope for this study, Matthew 26:47-56.

Chapter three provides a survey of the concepts of friendship and betrayal in the three contending cultural contexts for this study and examines the cultural orientation and worldview that informs each of them. In view of the diversities involved in what is known as Western culture due to various forms of influence, we will need to set out our understanding of Western culture as this impacts on the discussion of friendship and betrayal. We show how post-Enlightenment Western culture with its particular worldview has informed the critical nature of its perception of the ancient world and text of Matthew. While the Yoruba cultural worldview that informs its concept of friendship and betrayal is contained in its underlying religious belief systems, so too has the gospel of Matthew been influenced by its own cultural setting as a diaspora Hellenistic Jewish text. A number of people among the Yoruba in different categories were interviewed to ascertain their understanding of this concept as it is contained in the *Ifa* corpus which is largely oral. For the same reason, a few number of custodians of *Ifa* Oracle divinity i.e. *Ifa* priests were interviewed as the basis for a discussion of Yoruba ideas of friendship and betrayal.¹⁵

Chapter four attempts a narrative reading of Matthew's Gospel as a story with a view to identifying the "gaps" with respect to friendship and betrayal that call for our response. A brief survey of the background of the Gospel with regard to authorship, date, the theme of the church,

¹⁵ The interviews will be set out in Appendices 1 and 2, while analyses and summaries will be given in the discussion.

is provided only in order to outline the “narrative world of the text”, the social situation of the Matthean community within which the theme of friendship and betrayal plays out. It also gives a critical exegetical analysis of the text of study: Matthew 26:47-56, and closes with the Western critical comments on the action of Judas.

In chapter five, the focus is on the contrapuntal interaction among the three contending cultural contexts on the concept of friendship and betrayal. It applies the principle of contrapuntal model with a relevant Yoruba oracular text to dialogue with the Matthean text and the Western context for them to play out their similarities and differences rhythmically. We then attempt a synthetic and comparative analysis of the contrapuntal dialogue on friendship and betrayal among the three cultural contexts and how they relate to each other. The result then constitutes our new understanding and interpretation from the cultural perspective of the Yoruba on the concept of friendship and betrayal in Matthew’s Gospel as part of our contribution to the emerging African contextualization of biblical scholarship. We identify and respond briefly to some of the challenges raised by the new interpretations and then close with some general comments

Chapter six is a general conclusion to the entire study. It therefore gives a succinct summary of the whole work, providing the findings of the study and pointing the way forward for further future research into the topic.

CHAPTER TWO

DEVELOPING THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES FOR THE STUDY

2.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the development of the appropriate theoretical framework and methodological approach for our study. And we shall begin by examining the background to the emergence of African Contextual theology through postcolonial criticism that has resulted in various theoretical frameworks and methodologies of studying the Bible such as, postcolonial hermeneutical theories like conversation and inculturation theories and literary or socio-cultural theory as formulated by Edward Said. But specifically for this thesis, we shall construct an African postcolonial theoretical framework that has evolved from a blend of Draper's Conversational hermeneutic theory and the Inculturation theory of Ukpong together with aspects of Said's postcolonial theory.

2.1 Theoretical Framework For The Study

The theoretical framework for this study will be a form of African postcolonial contrapuntal theory, which is developed from a fusion with Prof. Draper's conversational hermeneutic theory and Prof. Ukpong's Inculturation hermeneutic theory, both of which emphasize the importance of culture for African contextualization theology, to be referred to in this study as conversational-inculturation theory. This theory also takes up Edward Said's postcolonial theoretical framework, and in particular his proposal for contrapuntal reading of cultural texts, which has also resulted from postcolonial criticism. This thesis explores the possibility of an African postcolonial contrapuntal reading of friendship and betrayal in Matthew's Gospel.

Examining the background to this theory as it is contained in African contextualization theology, Ukpong has observed that the significant contribution of the Christian missionaries in the 19th century was the translation of the Bible into various African languages. This has facilitated easy reading and understanding of its message and wide spread of the Christian faith

across Africa. Africans also discovered features in the life and ministry of Jesus that fit into their social situation and cultural experience involving spiritual healing, exorcism and condemnation of oppression. These they sought to actualize in their socio-religious life from the perspective of the Bible. However, the way the mainline or established churches that resulted from the reformation and the Roman Catholic Church, as strong organized institutions, did not allow for that kind of actualization. This was in consequence of the Western classical theology and historical–critical methodological approaches adopted by the missionaries to interpret the Bible. Ukpong has therefore rightly observed: “The traditional mode of the official church’s reading of the Bible is not capable of responding adequately to the questions that African Christians are asking about their life in Christ and their experience with the Bible.” (Ukpong 19xx: nn-oo)

In other words, the traditional method of the Western biblical scholarship has greatly affected African ways of understanding the Bible and interpreting its meaning, because the Bible was read through the mirror of Western culture and its interpretative methods without any significant reference to their own cultural orientation. And what this meant was that the approach did not take care of the social and religious concerns of the Africans as it ought to. Hence, there was the need to evolve a new grid or method that would enable the Africans to read the Bible in the light of their own social context or cultural eye for the message of the Bible to bear positively on them (Abogunrin, 1980).

And, as Gerald West has also argued, interpretation matters, and it may inspire a cultural crisis because according to him, “the older ways of understanding and practice even experience itself, may no longer seem to work” (West, 1991: 15). This is corroborated by Dube: “A postcolonial approach to the study of the Bible is to be undertaken within the context of African understanding towards politico-economic and socio-cultural emancipation of Africans from imperialism (Dube 1996:37-59). Dube’s idea of postcolonial criticism in Biblical scholarship is aimed at challenging the context and basis of the biblical interpretation in the prevailing notions and preconceptions of the European Biblical scholars (1998:131). In this regard, both Dube and West agree: “The theological debate of today is viewed as a conflict between an established, hegemonic paradigm and a counter hegemonic approach, emerging from what is called the periphery of power” (West, 1995: 83). The outcome of that attempt was a development of various hermeneutic methodologies such as, Black and Contextual hermeneutics as the basis for African contextualization theology or African biblical scholarship (West, 1995). The Ecumenical

Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) Declaration of 1976 clearly strikes home this point.¹⁶

The point, therefore, is that our efforts as Africans at casting a new biblical understanding should rather be geared towards evolving new methodological approaches that will emphasize African cultural understanding, and the need to be aware of the good part that Western ideas can play to enrich our African understanding of the Bible for the purpose of gaining new interpretations from our African perspective. In other words, as African scholars, both biblical and literary, we should give room for interaction between the two cultures, Western and African as well as the biblical cultural background for a new understanding of the Bible to emerge.

For this purpose, we have decided to adopt Jonathan A. Draper's theory for contextual interpretation of the Bible in Africa, which he calls "conversational exegesis" and Justin Ukpong's inculturation theory of hermeneutics, both of which give room for culture to determine biblical interpretation as discussed earlier on pages 18-21 of this thesis. This theory is therefore christened conversational-inculturation theory.

The two methods agree that the Bible, especially for those for whom it is an authoritative sacred text and the cultural context, social situation or experience of the people are brought into a dialogue for a new understanding of a particular biblical text to emerge. While Draper draws on Gadamer's hermeneutics to explain conversation as a relevant tool for an African contextual hermeneutic of the Bible, Ukpong also strongly advocates an inculturation biblical hermeneutic that emphasizes the importance of culture in the process of biblical interpretation (Ukpong, 1995:10). This idea finds agreement with that of Gadamer who has argued that a new understanding can only occur and be possible in the process of dialogical interaction, when a reader of a particular text brings an understanding of his own social situation to bear on the text and allows them to interact together with a view to developing an appropriate interpretation. The process thus involves what is called "a fusion of horizons" in the words of

¹⁶ "The theologies from Europe and North America are dominant today in our churches and represent one form of cultural domination. They must be understood to have arisen out of situation related to those countries, and therefore must not be uncritically adopted without raising question of their relevance in the context of our countries. Indeed, we must in order to be faithful to the gospel and to our people, reflect on the realities of our own situation and interpret the word of God in relation to these realities. We reject as irrelevant an academic type of theology that is divorced from action. We are prepared for a radical break in epistemology which makes commitment the first act of theology and engages in critical reflection on the praxis of the reality of the third world" (Torres and Fabella, 1978:269) cited in West, 1995:84.

Gadamer, that will not just lead to a mere reproduction of another text but rather an emergence of something new which can be regarded as textual appropriation (Shed & Ward, 1989: xxviii).

Gadamer's philosophical project as it is contained in *Truth and Method* (1975) was to elaborate on the concept of philosophical hermeneutics to uncover the nature of human understanding. Before Gadamer, a notion of the hermeneutics of understanding had existed that was based on an organized and detailed sequence of steps that when followed in the correct manner would lead to the correct result, a meaning that was fixed by the author at the time of its writing. But according to Gadamer, such a process could be misleading. Then, for Gadamer there are two ways to understanding. One was to first challenge the critical modern approaches to humanities that are patterned on natural sciences i.e. scientific methods. The second hinges on the argument that correct interpretation of a text implied a recovery of the original intention of the author who wrote it. Gadamer then adopted a descriptive approach that is more holistic about what the author wrote and the experiences in the life of the reader. The outcome in that regard is not prescriptive speculation of a text's purported meaning but a reflective evolution of what normally occurs within a reader's mind each time he/she addresses a text. This kind of interpretative process propounded by Gadamer is to discourage readers from assuming that a standardized meaning of the text existed prior to and autonomous from the text itself. Essentially, Gadamer's approach encourages the reader's participation in the production of meaning of a text through dialogue with the text, himself and others (Gadamer, 1975:267).

Therefore, in order to achieve hermeneutical understanding of a text that is culture-based, Gadamer has recommended an approach modeled on "legal interpretation". This emphasizes that any literary text should be allowed to interact with each specific cultural situation in the same way that a law interacts with a specific case to be decided and not just an abstract interpretation of the law towards a particular legal decision. In other words, a legal decision should not be based on an abstract interpretation of a law but through a lively engagement of a law with a particular situation (case law); in the same way that biblical interpretation should not be done in abstraction, but through a lively engagement of a biblical text with the social situation of a reader for an appropriate meaning to emerge. This thus allows for the model of relationship between the past and present required to bring out a new understanding. The point is that interpretation of a text is informed by the cultural situation or social context of the reader through a unity of understanding, interpretation and application of the text (West, 1995:104- 105)

Significantly, the two contextual hermeneutical approaches stress that neither the Bible nor any text is acultural i.e. without a culture or cultural context; even the conceptual frame work of theologizing is culturally conditioned. Hence, the Bible needs to be brought into dialogue with every receiver's culture and context in order to discover its message anew and challenge the contemporary society in the light of that message while the receiver's culture also makes the Bible "translatable" Word, as Lamin Sanneh (1989) and Kwame Bediako (1999) argue.

The point, however, is that inculturation biblical hermeneutics puts a stronger emphasis on the freedom that a reader of the Bible has in bringing his /her influences, questions and experiences to bear critically and creatively on the interpretative process of a text. It thus implies that such an exegete must have a mastery of both cultural contexts, his/her own and that of the biblical context to be able to reach a convincing appropriation of the text in the "target" cultural context. This understanding informs the theoretical basis for the African inculturation hermeneutics (Ukpong 1995:10), while Draper's pole of "Distantiation" attempts to avoid arbitrary readings of a text to be used as a convenient springboard without paying adequate attention to the signal and rhetoric of the text itself in due process of interpretation. In view of this, we shall explore the place of the socio-religious beliefs of the Yoruba people of Nigeria in West Africa as a background for a culture-based understanding of the theme of friendship and betrayal as seen in the Matthean pericope of Judas' betrayal.

Although this theoretical approach emphasizes the strong role of culture it also works with principles of conversation, dialogue or interaction that is facilitated by the reader between a biblical text and the reader's cultural context. In other words, the strong impact of any culture in theological interpretation can be seen only as that culture is brought into dialogue with a biblical text, just as we shall attempt here to bring the Matthean cultural context and the Yoruba cultural context of this researcher together in a dialogue on the concept of friendship and betrayal for a new understanding of the text that is African culture-based to emerge

Therefore, Draper is right in arguing that the new challenge in African biblical scholarship is to forge a cultural identity through social reconstruction and development for Africans (Draper 2002:16). Basically, it seems to me that postcolonial criticism is not just about an outright condemnation of all aspects of the past i.e. of what we now call Western ways of interpretation of the Bible, but about engaging that past critically as a search-light for a new understanding through dialogue with the present. In other words, postcolonial criticism, in which Africans are also involved, is concerned about methods for the interpretation of the biblical texts through an

understanding that is based on a synthesis or counterpoint of all relevant contending cultural contexts with a focus on the African cultural understanding.

Furthermore, Gerald West discusses the stages of biblical scholarship from the point about the question of origin, source, authorship, historical reconstruction, textual criticism, historical-critical to interest in text itself. He therefore stresses the basic current interest as “the synchronic analysis of the text to strip it of any *genetic and referential fallacies* arising from question of origin and extra textual reality” (West, 1995:23). The expression: “genetic, referential fallacies and extra textual reality” refers to the idea that if we could arrive at the original meaning of the text or the intention of the author we would have obtained its meaning. Although this involves a very difficult and complex process, we would do well to recognize this Western interpretation as a cultural context that can enrich the budding African contextualization theology as Ukpong also recognizes. We can achieve this by getting rid of the colonial, oppressive and cultural superiority traits within interpretation, here referred to as genetic and referential tendencies in the historical-critical interpretation model, by the adoption of African contextual biblical interpretation models or approaches that emphasize African culture. African scholars and theologians should therefore not allow the negative effects of colonialism to discourage them so as to lose sight of some positive contributions of Western biblical scholarship in their bid to explore new approaches to the study of the Bible in the African cultural context. Used in this way the historical dimensions of the text can serve to provide a spotlight on the context of the text without necessarily determining its “meaning” for Africa today.

In view of the above, West has rightly argued that “the circle of understanding is not complete until it has reached its final end which is described as a concrete reader” (West, 1995:23). The implication is that the circle of understanding of any biblical text is based on the cultural exploration of the reader into that text which is a continuous exercise. It is, therefore, in view of this fact that the Matthean text chosen for this study will be brought into a dialogue with the Yoruba culture of this researcher for an exploration into a new understanding of the text according to the cultural worldview of Africans, particularly here, that of the Yoruba people of Nigeria. And as already indicated, postcolonial criticism focuses on this kind of engagement through a co-ordination of different kinds of methodologies for reading and re-reading of the Bible in the context of African cultural practice or understanding.

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that Conversational-inculturation hermeneutic theory will not be sufficient for our purpose here, as there is yet another cultural context that

should be recognized; and that is Western cultural context as this has pervaded the context of the colonized. Hence, I find Edward Said's discussion of "contrapuntalism" in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) to be relevant for this purpose. This method is particularly relevant for this study as it will enable us to bring into a dialogue the cultural context of the Matthean text, the cultural context of the Yoruba and the Western cultural context. This in recognition of the fact that the Western interpretation of the Bible emanating from a different cultural background, other than that of the Bible itself can also contribute to achieving new understanding of the biblical messages even when reading the texts from African cultural perspective so that the hegemonic potential of Western scholarship is identified and neutralized. In other words, the Western context which pervades commentaries as manuals of interpretation are a "sub-context" of the Nigerian reader's context, which influences the reading consciously or unconsciously. Its effect can be toxic or dangerous, but if brought explicitly into the conversation is potentially beneficial. In that light, we intend to look at three contending cultural contexts in order to achieve a new understanding of the chosen text for this study, which is Matthew 26:46-57.

This is because the tri-polar method, which involves an interaction between a text, tradition and the culture of a reader, is a critique of the hegemonic interpretation of the Western biblical interpreters and scholars. But here, we shall listen to the voice of that culture in a dialogical interaction with the Matthean cultural context and the Yoruba cultural context in order to gain a new understanding of the Bible, particularly the chosen pericope for this study. What then is contrapuntal theory?

2.2 Postcolonial Criticism

Postcolonial theory provides a hermeneutics for reading texts in the aftermath of colonialism and the demise of the world empires. In other words, postcolonial criticism examines the influences of the Western colonialism on the colonized world with a view to recovering their national identities and cultural relevance in the face of the dominant neo-colonial worldview which affects almost every facet of life's endeavours. Our particular concern here lies in the area of biblical scholarship and the Western cultural domination which continues to affect biblical interpretation in Africa through the West's domination of the academy and its publishing apparatus.

Edward Said was a powerful proponent of this critical engagement with the West through critical postcolonial studies, at least, as the one who popularized the study. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Said found inspiration for aspects of this study in the works of other thinkers like Michael Foucault (1972) that underpin some of his theories. Said's concept of knowledge and power was influenced by Michael Foucault's assertion that knowledge is power. Said thus stressed the relationship between the two in a scholarly and reflective manner to draw out the basis for the European dominance over the East or more precisely the Arab world. His book: *Orientalism* written in 1978 was formative for Postcolonial studies and contains his stance on the negative impact of the ideas of colonialism on the history and culture of the Arab world. Said describes orientalism as a fundamentally political agenda of the West through literature and music (consciously or unconsciously) to draw a line of demarcation, primarily in order to cast a class or status differentiation between herself (the West), described as occident as superior and enlightened and the East, described as orient, regarded as inferior and unenlightened. Said's own word, "orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the orient because the orient was weaker than west, which elided the orient's difference with its weakness" (Said, 1978: 204). He also formulated a number of definitions of orientalism; all of which reflect domination, superiority and oppressive tendencies in the concept of orientalism. Said also defines orientalism "as a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the "orient" and (most of the time) "the occident" (Said, 1978:2). He emphasizes its hegemonic role: "A Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the orient" (Said, 1978:3). This involved a system of conception of the orient as culturally weak, backward, vulnerable and therefore at the mercy of the occident i.e. the West for protection and education which prepared the ground and led to the eventual colonization of the orient. The 'orient' was also portrayed as exotic and mysterious and hence desirable, something to be discovered and possessed. In other words, the West essentialized the "orient" portrayed the "other" as exotic, defenseless, needy, childlike and needing the Western empire for "protection and education" as the basis for the adoption of colonialism.

Said argues that the Western "knowledge" about the Eastern world that formed the basis of their opinions about the East was not based on facts or reality of the situation but stemmed from preconceived ideas which appeared to regard all the Eastern societies as fundamentally belonging together and quite different in comparison to the Western societies. Said points out that these discriminatory ideas were vigorously portrayed in a great deal of the literary texts and

historical discourses which emanated from the West, reflecting the supposed Western knowledge, which was not true about life in the East after all (Sethi Arjun, *Edward Said and the Production of Knowledge*, 2007).

Although Said may have focused on academic studies regarding the history and culture of the Middle East, Africa and Asia, his critical analysis of the essentialization of the East in what he terms “orientalism” has inspired what is known to us today as postcolonial criticism or theory in the area of modern political and intellectual culture (Bernard, 1993:126). Said later developed and modified his idea of postcolonial methodology in his book: *Culture and Imperialism* written in 1993, in which he introduces the concept of “contrapuntalism” to address the “rhetoric and politics of blame” in which postcolonial critics in rejecting the “essentialism” of the colonizers, provide (counter) essentialisms which “essentialize” their colonizers in their turn. This aspect of Said’s postcolonial theory will be particularly taken up in this study.

It should be noted that the same kind of principle of Essentialism was the basis for the treatment of the colonized by the colonialists in Africa. This is to say that the Western engagement with Africa afterwards was informed by the same kind of Essentialism, which romanticized and exorcized the “primitive African” as needing the protection and control of the “white man’s burden”.

Said’s *Orientalism* has attracted a great deal of reactions and criticism from Western scholars such as Bernard Lewis and George Landow. For example, Bernard Lewis (1993) who was an historian described Said’s argument as containing “many factual, methodological and conceptual errors”; and that Said ignored the Western contributions to the study of Eastern cultures during the Enlightenment and Victorian eras. Lewis also pointed out that it was out place to argue that it is only those within a particular culture who could usefully discuss about it (Kramer 1999). Similarly, George Landow (2007) also accused Said of ignoring the occidental ideas that were prevalent in the East against Western and gender issues. But more importantly, Landow’s criticism of Said was in the sense that Said emphasized only the influence of the West on the East in regard to colonialism; whereas according to Landow such influences should be seen not simply one-way but as cross-cultural influence. And finally that Said did not allow the opinions of the scholars to be reflected in his argument on the issue of the relationship between the West and East.¹⁷

¹⁷ Landow, George P. *Political Discourse –Theories of Colonialism and Postcolonialism*. Edward W. Said’s Orientalism (<http://www.scholars.nus.edu.sg/landow/post/poldiscourse/said/orient14.html>), Accessed 20th

What was important to Said in his assessment of the impact of the colonization on the East by the West was what could be described as the internalized or technical oppression suffered by the East with its attendant cultural inferiority complex. This was very crucial to Said's view on the effects of the colonization; hence he sought for a new orientation for the colonized through a dialogue with the former colonialists.

As a general theory of literary criticism, therefore, postcolonial theory focuses on cultural groups, practices and literary discourses in the hitherto colonized world. It is an attempt at a critical analysis of materials, texts and other cultural discourses produced at the end of the colonial era within the cultures of both the colonized and the colonizer to cast a new worldview especially for the colonized after the attainment of independence and liberation from domination and oppression that were associated with colonialism.

Western colonialism succeeded in putting the colonized nations under an umbrella as a homogenized entity with a derogatory label of "third world", and later as "developing world". This is nothing but a kind of "neo colonialism", which implies that even though colonization itself is gone in a way, the West still retains economic and political power to control its former colonies around the world. Against this backdrop, Post-colonialism underscores the heterogeneity of the colonized places by analyzing the uneven impacts of Western colonialism on different places, peoples and cultures, and by studying the variety of ways in which relations, practices and representations of the past can be reproduced or transformed by their cultures (Sharp 2008). It addresses matters of identity, gender, tribe, race, racism and ethnicity with the challenges of how to develop a post-colonial national identity. It examines how the knowledge of the colonized people was used against them by the Western colonialists to promote their own interests through the use of the Bible as a tool of authority to achieve that goal. In addition, postcolonial theory examines how the knowledge of the world was generated and the dominant worldview was formed through the concept of the powerful and powerless to legitimize imperial interests.

Postcolonial criticism in Africa thus deals with the cultural identity struggle in the colonized societies: involving reconstruction of African identities after the oppressive period of colonial rule, the ways in which postcolonial writers, especially Africans, articulate that freedom and interpret their new identities after reclaiming them from Western influence that had used

literature, including the Bible to justify and perpetrate colonialism and cultural superiority over the colonized as a perpetually inferior society and culture.

It is noteworthy that some products of colonization in the hitherto colonized countries, especially of the British Empire, who had access to education having attended universities in Britain, later joined in postcolonial campaigns through nationalism and contributed significantly to the struggle by different methods. In Nigeria, we have the examples of nationalists like the Late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the Late Dr. Nnamid Azikwe who strongly criticized the oppressive nature and the cultural superiority tendencies of the Western colonialism and eventually succeeded in achieving political independence for their country. Hence, Postcolonial criticism recognizes an on-going struggle against the West and its accompanying influences by all the hitherto colonized and marginalized groups of the world. This began with an indigenous decolonization through production of post-colonial literature that later developed into post colonialist theory against Western influences. For example, in Nigeria, the first of such attempts at the history of reconstructing the postcolonial identity of the people literally was undertaken by Chinua Achebe in his book *“Things fall Apart”* (1994), where unpleasant features of colonial cultures are satirically criticized.

However, most of those literary efforts to counter imperialism and Western influences on African cultures, indirectly tended towards promoting colonialism in a way in some African countries, where efforts were made by the indigenous people or postcolonial critics to write their own histories, legacies and theories using the language and critical tools of the colonizers (Ashcroft, 1990) as we well see here.

To this end, postcolonial criticism is concerned to destabilize the hitherto Western way of thinking in order to create a space for the subaltern or marginalized groups to speak and produce alternative opinions to the dominant discourse (Johnston, 2009: 561). However, as pointed out above, neo-colonialism has continued to show itself in different or new shades of relationships regarding power and the control or production of knowledge by the West (Sharp: 2008). Postcolonial authors are usually dependent on Western presses and media to disseminate their ideas.

The ultimate goal of postcolonial criticism is accounting for and combating the inherent effects of colonialism on cultures, especially of the hitherto colonized people of the world. It is therefore concerned with salvaging past worlds with an attempt at moving the world beyond the imperial period towards a place of mutual respect. It is believed by some post-colonialist thinkers

that most of the underlying assumptions of the logic of colonialism are still active forces today. Post-colonialist writers are therefore engaged in exposing and deconstructing the racist, imperialist and superiority tendencies embedded in those assumptions in order to remove their power of persuasion and coercion. The need for a global sense of equality where every culture will be recognized makes this project very worthwhile and urgent. This implies clearing the space for multiple voices, especially those that have been hitherto silenced by dominant ideologies (Mackenzie, 1995:11).

We should also note the contribution of Frantz Fanon (1961) to the debate on postcolonial criticism. In his book: *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), he points out the harsh effects of colonialism on its victims as well as portrays the suppressive nature of the systematic relationship between colonialism and suppression of dignity of man. Fanon also depicts colonialism as “a source of violence rather than reacting violently against resistors which had been the common view” (1961: 37).

Gayatri C. Spivak in her book: *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a history of the Vanishing present* (1999), has also made a significant contribution to the study of postcolonial criticism with regard to essentialism and strategic essentialism. According to her, essentialism refers to the danger of subaltern voices being simplified as stereotyped impressions of the group. But for Spivak, essentialism may imply strategic use of the term to enable the subaltern to be heard with a clear identity acceptable by the majority. On the other hand, strategic essentialism denotes diversity of voices that are being de-emphasized in order to emphasize the essential character of the group. Furthermore, Spivak also coined what she described as “epistemic violence” which points to an attempt at destroying all non-Western ways of knowing in order to entrench the domination of Western ways of understanding. This Spivak saw as an attempt at cutting off the subaltern from being able to express herself as a result of the destruction and marginalization of her way of understanding (Sharp, 2008). She therefore criticized those who are opposed to the ‘cultural others’ and then offered constructive theories that will enable the West to examine her current position through self-criticism of her methods and ideals of understanding as well as to explore the alternatives offered by Post-colonialist theories (Spivak,1990:62).

In this regard, mention can be made of another strong voice in Postcolonial criticism, Sugirtharajah in his book: *The Bible and Post Colonialism* (1998), has identified the different stages of biblical scholarship like narrative, historical, author-centered, text-centered and reader-

centered, which have been the basic conception of Western biblical scholarship. Sugirtharajah argues that the history of the oppression and marginalization of the colonized by the colonial imperialists should lead postcolonial critics to struggle towards a new understanding of the Bible through a re-reading of the book in the light of the cultural contexts of the hitherto colonized nations. For example, like for Sugirtharajah himself who has engaged in the study of the influence of Indian culture on the interpretation of the New Testament, as a way forward in biblical studies for the formerly colonized world, especially Africans, is to ensure that what they have been is to be re-examined in the light of their own culture to make for what they ought to be (Sugirtharajah, 1998:15).

Therefore, our efforts as Africans at casting a new biblical understanding should be geared towards using new methodological approaches that will emphasize African cultural understanding, while taking note of the good part that Western ideas can also play to enrich our African understanding of the Bible for the purpose of gaining new interpretations from our African perspective. In other words, as African scholars, both biblical and literary, we should give room for interaction between the two cultures, Western and African as well as biblical culture for a new understanding of the Bible to emerge.

Influenced by Said's contrapuntal method, like many other postcolonial critics Sugirtharajah also supports a biblical methodological approach that allows for a dialogue with social situation of the victims of colonialism and that of the text (1998). Therefore, as a postcolonial theory, postcolonial reading of the Bible is an attempt at looking at the cultures of the formerly colonized, like Africa, for the purpose of reconfiguring basic assumptions or dominant discourses, especially with African influence. In this regard, Sugirtharajah (1998) tries to emphasize his own cultural context, which is Indian/Asian influence on the New Testament thought (1998). This methodological approach is to free the Bible from the false notion that it is a Western text; and then a challenge to an engagement in anti-colonial and anti-global construction of its messages.

The implication, therefore, is that postcolonial criticism gives room for the text of the Bible is to be read in the light of the African culture through a dialogue or conversation with the biblical cultural background for a new meaning to emerge instead of having to juxtapose the different interpretations for the purpose of determining the dominant one. To use the words of Humphrey Waweru (1996:21): "The cosmology that emerges in such a conversation will offer a space for those once colonized". The point is that the Bible occupies an important place in the

regulation of the socio-economic life of the people in Africa, even in the face of the strong influences of the African traditional religions. Waweru concludes that “the challenge that postcolonial criticism throws to us in biblical scholarship in this century is to bring into interaction the culture of the colonizer, biblical culture and our own culture as a way of developing new understanding and interpretations of the Bible beyond the limitations of those two cultures” (Waweru, *Ibid.*).

But in doing this, Waweru draws our attention to the fact that we should guard against cultural subjugation whereby we become guilty of what we are condemning in others. This is particularly true from the perspective of Said’s argument mentioned earlier that he was not against cross-cultural relationships but cultural domination of others by one particular culture. In order to emphasize the importance of this point, Waweru gives examples of some African postcolonial critics who in an attempt at decolonizing African cultures from the imposing European cultural influences turned out to be extremists by advocating outright condemnation of anything Western, even to the jettisoning of the English Language as a vehicle of expression of cultural ideas. Waweru specifically discusses the fruitless efforts of James Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o of Kenya in this regard who got entangled in an attempt to condemn what he believed to be undue influences of the Western culture on his own culture (Waweru, 1996).

As already noted, African postcolonial critics stand to gain a great deal from the Western cultural context that informed their hegemonic interpretative style, by considering it as another cultural context to be brought into a dialogue with the text and the reader’s cultural contexts—such an exercise will actually enrich our understanding of the text and the interpretation that may result from it. West (1995), dwelling on the work of Croatto, though from the perspective of liberationist hermeneutics, makes a relevant point that fits into this discussion on how the Western cultural context is to be treated in African contextualization theology. His argument is that, a hermeneutic reading of the biblical message occurs only when the reading supersedes the previous contextual meanings (both of the author and of the first reader); this happens through the unfolding of a surplus-of-meaning disclosed by a new question addressed to the text (Croatto, 1978:3). Here the contextual meanings may refer to the Western cultural context and its concomitant interpretations.

The whole idea, therefore, is to free the colonized from dependency on the colonizers, and the colonizers from their imperialism, racism and superiority tendencies through an all-embracing interpretative process that recognizes the three constitutive cultural situations and

contexts. In this regard, postcolonial criticism has made an appreciable impact on African biblical studies, which is focused on the idea of an end to colonialism and imperialism in all its forms, but without necessarily discarding the past in its entirety.

In the light of the foregoing, we agree with a scholar like Pablo Richard in his book: *Apocalypse: A people's Commentary on the Book of Revelation (Bible & Liberation)* (1995), who has also argued that the Bible has not only come to us as the testimony of the word of God, but also as a means to be able to discern who we are, because the same Bible had been used by the colonizers as a tool for civilization of the colonized. Therefore, postcolonial criticism is not limited to liberationist struggle against the forces of oppression as the only challenge contained in the Bible, but that the message of the Bible also concerns cultural enlightenment, emancipation or discernment of things to be retained and those things with post-colonial colourations to be discarded.

Therefore, postcolonial criticism focuses on how to effectively and fairly incorporate the subaltern voices in the dominant discourses as Spivak has argued: "To refuse to represent a cultural other is salving your conscience, and allowing you not to do any home work" (Spivak, 1999:62-63). Since we are here primarily concerned about biblical scholarship and hermeneutics, we can then attempt to see how postcolonial theory has influenced that endeavour. As a critical approach to biblical interpretation as well as to other literary texts and discourses, postcolonial criticism serves as a vehicle for decolonization of the Bible from the traditional Western way of its reading and interpreting it through those generally known critical methods of textual, form, source and redaction criticisms. Nevertheless, what is most important in this regard is that we must seek alternative ways and means of understanding our past and to gain new insights by developing new ways of biblical interpretation from the point of view of our cultural experience.

The place of the Bible in the socio-religious life of the Yoruba cannot be over-emphasized, in spite of the pervasive influences of the Traditional Religion and Islam. This makes the biblical message or interpretation very important in the ordering of the socio-political and religio-economic life of the people. The idea of opposition or rejection of the Bible as the European instrument of oppression and marginalization is only pronounced in the academic milieu, but not at the grassroots in the socio-religious life of the people.

In view of the foregoing, the importance of postcolonial criticism is the encouragement it offers for the positive reading of the biblical texts in one's cultural context in order to create a counter view or a new understanding to the dominant discourse or interpretation of the Bible in

African biblical scholarship. In this regard, we shall draw on the cultural worldview of the Yoruba as part of the social context of this researcher to be brought in a dialogue with the cultural context of the Matthean cultural context and that of the colonizer's culture.

2.3 Contrapuntal Reading Of A Text

In order to achieve the objective of this study, we supplement our Conversational-inculturation theoretical framework Said's methodology of contrapuntalism which hinges on the musical metaphor of counter point. We have already referred to two major works of Edward Said in our discussion of postcolonial criticism in which he advocates this new interpretative method where different cultures played together in tension, opposition, contrast or syncopation within the composition as in the work of Heinrich Schenker's *New Musical Theories and Fantasies* in two volume first published in 1910 and then in 1922.

Contrapuntalism is a reference to "the musical technique of counterpoint, where as one plays the piano, the right and left hands play different notes or melodies rhythmically."¹⁸ Although the term was older than Edward Said himself, he adopted it "to describe an attempt to connect and relate ideas that initially appear to be different or in direct opposition". In other words, Said's usage of the term contrapuntal is in the sense of "how there may be connections between opposing ideas that are not immediately apparent"¹⁹. This will suggest an attempt at bringing together counter views or opinions in a way which does not violate their integrity.

In his literary criticism and cultural studies, especially his lucid explanations of what he described as discrepant experiences as contained in his book: *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said has argued for comparative studies of cultures in all their diversities in order to forge a new relationship between the Western colonizers and the formerly colonized world. In other words, the idea of contrapuntalism for Said is to synthesize divergent opinions in order to avoid mutual "essentialization" and instead to see the way in which those divergencies together form a new whole which is greater than the sum of its parts. In the light of this, Said's theory of contrapuntalism is suggestive of a dialogue rather than a "winner takes all" debate in the face of

¹⁸ <http://answers.Yahoo.com/question/index?qid> pg.1 This theory finds relevance in the Yoruba socio-cultural context which gives credence to how the theory works in general life situation as it is expressed in this proverb: "A i ko fele kebosi ni ko jeki a ri eniti yoo jo", which literarily means there is a way in which what is regarded as a mere noise can be rendered musically rhythmic as to inspire dancing (Accessed 20th September, 2012).

¹⁹ <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?quid> p.1 (Accessed 25th September, 2012).

divergent opinions that are required to be solved. Dialogue allows for incorporation of different views, while a debate trying to suppress different opinions. Consequently, contrapuntal as used by Said in his book is suggestive of a comparative analysis of what he depicted as “discrepant experiences” i.e. contending, cultures, opinions or ideas with a view to gaining a new understanding and common ground for a renewed fellowship (Said, 1978: 31-61). This best represents Said’s idea because it tends to suggest a positive interaction of varying ideas calling for attention.

Said further points out that his insistence on “integration and connections between the past and the present, between imperialist and imperialized, between culture and imperialism, is to bring out a new sense of interdependence between them” (Said, 1993: 61). It thus shows that, according to Said, the best way to forge a new understanding in the postcolonial period is not to outright condemn or jettison all that the West had offered the newly independent nations of the world, but to utilize such ideas, no matter how seemingly foreign, to their own advantage by critiquing them rigorously yet in such a way as to appreciate their inherent value as well as highlight their hegemonic aspects and thus inspire new understanding and relationship in order to be able to create a counterpoint worldview.

In the light of the foregoing, we shall combine the contrapuntal model with the theoretical approach of Conversational-inculturation theory to form an African postcolonial theory for this study. This thus means that this researcher’s cultural context of the Yoruba people will be engaged in a dialogue with the Matthean cultural context and Western context as a mode of biblical interpretation for an African culture-based understanding and interpretation of the chosen pericope on the concept of friendship and betrayal to emerge.

Arguably, this methodological approach agrees with the spirit of postcolonial criticism which is opposed to any claim of cultural superiority regarding the interpretative process, but seeks that all contending cultural contexts should be brought in dialogue together in order for a new understanding and interpretation to emerge against the dominant view or interpretation. This method will enable us to identify points of dissimilarities and similarities and uniqueness or peculiarities to create a new understanding on friendship and betrayal from the cultural perspective of the Yoruba people, by giving attention to all the contending cultural contexts according to Said’s theory of comparative study and analysis of different ideas referred to above.

The choice of a contrapuntal theoretical model as an aspect of postcolonial criticism for this study is focused on biblical interpretation in the light of African experience and

understanding towards a cultural emancipation and a postcolonial new African identity. The aim, therefore, is concerned with the emancipation of Africa from the neo-colonialism which continues to produce internalized oppression through cultural hegemony. This struggle for socio-cultural emancipation and development of the hitherto colonized world, especially Africa, is ongoing in its different facets. Most postcolonial critics or scholars believe that the Bible had been used as an instrument of oppression, cultural degradation and exploitation by the colonizers against the colonized. This is because the colonizers had read and interpreted the Bible in the light of their own cultural background and seemed to have fixed its meanings in order to justify their various actions of domination and oppression by creating a worldview that recognized European cultural superiority over the cultures of the formerly colonized, depicted as dark and pagan in nature.

The contrapuntal model of Edward Said, therefore, tends in the direction of this new struggle for an African biblical scholarship that seeks to allow the Bible to come alive through contact or interaction with the indigenous culture in order to construct a new critical yet appreciative understanding of the dominant view of the colonizers through new methods of biblical interpretation drawn from the worldview of the Africans (Michael & Andrews, 2004).

The contrapuntal mode of interpretation as applied to Africa is, therefore, a practical step towards the realization of this objective for African contextualization theology. It will enable us to read the Bible generally, but particularly the chosen pericope for this study in the light of our African understanding in such a way that a new understanding and interpretation of the text on friendship and betrayal may emerge from what has already been offered by Western interpreters. Part of the motivation for this study has to do with the way the role of Judas in connection with the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus has been interpreted by some Western scholars or interpreters. And this has called for a new understanding of the text on friendship and betrayal in the cultural context of the Africans.

To this end, in order to achieve the focus of this study, which is to analyze the concept of friendship and betrayal, the contrapuntal methodology which flows from postcolonial theory that emphasizes a comparative approach to a text will be adopted alongside the theoretical approach of Conversational-inculturation to synthesize the contending cultural contexts of the Matthean Gospel, Yoruba culture and Western culture through a narrative reading methodology of the Gospel of Matthew. This is because a new understanding of a biblical text is only likely to emerge where two or three cultural contexts meet in a dialogue, with a focus on the relevance of the

African culture generally to the emerging African contextualization theology or biblical scholarship. It thus follows that the contrapuntal model of biblical interpretation de-emphasizes cultural superiority and emphasizes, the interaction of different but equal cultures. In other words, the model recognizes value in every culture because no culture should be regarded as better than any other. This explains why, in this study, the Matthean text will be read in the light of the Yoruba cultural understanding by a juxtaposition of a corresponding oracular text in Yoruba culture. This, and empirical data gathered from a sample of Yoruba people, will be brought into dialogue with the Western critical interpretation of the pericope and theoretical assumptions on Judas' action.

The importance of this endeavour is that it allows for an engagement in biblical scholarship that is culturally based as a step away from the Western form of biblical scholarship that emphasized mainly historical reconstruction based on textual criticism, source criticism, form criticism and redaction criticism. With the emerging African biblical scholarship, the Bible has come to be recognized as a text to be appropriated in any cultural context or situation with which it comes in contact, whether written or oral (as in the oracular text or Ifa corpus of the Yoruba traditional religion under study here). Hence, both are read as well as re-read (especially with a new mind after the end of the period of cultural oppression of colonialism that was perpetrated by the West. But then, we do mean by model?

2.4 Methodological Models

Model is open to diverse definitions from different disciplinary perspectives. A relevant definition to our study here, however, describes a model as a simplified representation or description of a system or complex entity, especially one designed to facilitate calculations and predictions. This implies that a model is not just a reproduction of itself, but it is also something that is really new.²⁰

Models are of central importance, not only in many scientific contexts, but also in literary studies. Scientists spend a great deal of time building, testing, comparing and revising models, and much effort is devoted to introduction, application and interpretation of these valuable models. In this regard, models have been found to be one of the principal instruments of modern science—but this is also true of all other disciplines like biblical studies. Models are generally

²⁰ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com> (Accessed 10th November, 2012).

representational but they function in two senses: as a representation of a selected part of the whole tagged the “target system”; and secondly, that target system helps to interpret the law surrounding the entire theory or helps to clarify facts between two similar or different things”²¹.

Hughes (1997:325-336) further throws more light on the importance of learning through models by identifying three stages in learning through what he called DDI account meaning: Denotation, Demonstration and Interpretation. He points out that one begins by establishing a representation relation or relationship between the model and the target (denotation); and then investigates the features of the model in order to demonstrate certain claims about its internal constitution or mechanism i.e. learning about the model, which Hughes calls ‘demonstration’. One’s findings in this regard are converted into claims about the target system which Hughes refers to as ‘interpretation’. In this way, a model could be regarded as an abstraction from reality.

This process fits into Ukpong’s inculturation approach to African biblical scholarship which operates on the basis of a corresponding cultural context to a particular biblical text for the purpose of achieving a new understanding and interpretation that is culturally conditioned. In other words, a case in a particular culture can be used as a model that corresponds to a biblical text be brought together in a dialogue to achieve a meaning relevant to that culture. Models thus inspire a new knowledge that has to be translated into a meaning about the target i.e. the text. In other words, a new understanding of the intricacies of friendship and betrayal will enhance our knowledge of the Bible and its inherent messages from the perspective of the Africans generally; and particularly a new understanding of the concept of friendship, especially from the cultural perspective of the Yoruba people of Nigeria. Moreover the dynamic parallels between the Yoruba culture in Nigeria and Biblical culture might equally open up new understanding of the biblical text.

For the purpose of this study, the representational model of data is found to be relevant in the sense that it operates synonymously with such terms as ‘analogy’, ‘symbol’, ‘metaphor’, ‘image’ or ‘paradigm’ (Elliot, 1983).

Models are vehicles by which hidden facts are made evident, similarities and differences in two objects are clearly brought out or complex issues are graphically analyzed. But then, it should be noted that this also takes different forms depending on the kind of model adopted. There are different kinds of representation, such as, analogies, idealizations, and symbols, each with its own learning process. In symbolism, a transfer of knowledge from the model to the

²¹ Stranford Encyclopedia of Philosopy, 2006:13.

target is more easily achievable than in an analogous or idealizing way (Frigg and Hartmann 2012). The point, however, is that there is no fixed process about how this transfer of knowledge works in a particular situation. But what appears important in this connection has to do with the explanatory and predictive functions of model. According to Woodward's approach to causal explanation from the point of view of natural science (2003), models are tools to find out about the casual relations that hold between certain facts or processes and it is those relations that do the explanatory job or leave the explanation to the model itself.

Gerald West, based on the analysis of the effects of Enlightenment on how scientific research is conducted, observes that science has produced the dominant model for talking about the world, and indeed any text. In the same way as in most other disciplines, biblical studies too have also embraced the use of the model as an interpretative approach (West, 1995). Referring to Herzon (1983:106) to substantiate his argument, he says: "Following this paradigm, biblical studies constructed a model for interpreting these texts in a way that is paralleled to the way scientists were interpreting the world... if examined with appropriate methods would reveal their meanings to the unbiased observer." (West, 1995: 24)

While it may not be entirely true that models will always reveal the meanings of the objective realities of the world, it is nevertheless true that the heuristic use of such models will normally enable us to have ideas about such realities by simplifying the complexities that usually characterize those realities. I think this is what is most important to us here.

In other words, as we engage in comparative analysis of the concepts of friendship and betrayal from the designated cultural contexts, by a means of contrapuntal model, a new interpretation of the biblical pericope that is informed by our cultural orientation and understanding is likely to emerge.

2.5 Narrative Reading Methodological Approach

We require a methodological approach that is appropriate for what we are set to achieve here. Hence, for his study I shall adopt a narrative reading method for the study of the Matthean Gospel for the purpose of achieving a new interpretation of the chosen pericope on friendship and betrayal that is African culture-based.

What then is a narrative method? The word narrative is derived from the Latin word *narrare*, which means "to tell" and is related to the adjective *gnarus*, meaning "knowing" or

“skilled” (Oxford English Dictionary online, 2007). In this light, narrative which synonymously means storytelling can be defined as any account of connected events or chains of events that are usually in different forms or categories of literature such as biographies, historiography, historical events, and so on.

Coleridge (1993) points to the intriguing phenomenon of the present time whereby literary critics and biblical critics are crossing each other’s way by borrowing insights from each other. In other words, literary critics are turning their attention to the Bible while biblical critics are also borrowing methods of literary criticism in biblical scholarship. He further observes that literary method called “narratology” developed from the study of the novel, and that the method has continued to offer new perspectives and questions to the study of biblical narrative. He identifies the origin of narratology with a French term: “neologism” which refers to the poetics or system of narrative in general.

Consequently, according to Coleridge, narrative is to be understood as “a system in a way which is often, though, not always, under the influence of structuralism” (Coleridge, 1993:14). He appreciates the good contributions of narrative method in Biblical study, but points out that the way it is employed in biblical scholarship differs from how narratologists practice it. In other words, in biblical scholarship, a narrative method functions as an approach that works from the theory back to the text not the other way round which how it works for a narratologist (Coleridge, 1993:15). We agree with Coleridge’s argument, because this is how we are also going to apply the method in this study-by applying the principles of narrative method to study of the text in order to understand the text and contribute to whatever issue raised in the text.

Finally, Coleridge observes that narrative criticism in biblical scholarship developed against the backdrop of the challenges raised by disciplines such as text linguistics, speech-act theory and communication theory; and that narrative criticism works with redaction criticism but with different focus. While redaction criticism seeks to examine the work of the evangelists as an implied author of the Gospel and as a theologian, narrative criticism concerns itself primarily with the work of the evangelist as artist; although also with an eyes on the theology of the work (Coleridge, 1993:16). He concludes that while redaction focuses on content of the Gospel narrative focuses on form (structure). Nevertheless, the content and form, theology and techniques are two inseparable entities that are involved together. But the point is that narrative criticism deals with the choices that any writer including evangelist has to make in order to shape a narrative: “At the simplest level, the writer must decide what to include and what to exclude,

and once those decisions have been made, he or she must decide how to frame and arrange the chosen elements” (Coleridge, 1993:17)

Although the basic assumption of most historical-critical scholars is to regard the text as a collection of different elements which can be carefully separated into their different strands, narrative criticism works on the assumption that in spite of the fact that a text is a composition of a variety of elements with a long process of redaction, a text in its present final form can be taken to have assumed a coherent unity though there may still be gaps (1993:18). We shall see how this works in the Gospel of Matthew with regard to its outline in chapter three of this study.

Although we have referred to Coleridge we shall adopt narrative theory as set forth by J. Phelan and P.J. Rabinowitz for this study. Phelan and Rabinowitz (2012:3) as narrative theorists regard narrative primarily as a rhetorical act rather than an object. This is because narrative involves a kind of purposeful communication from somebody to another person or group of people. Hence, they define narrative as “somebody telling somebody else, in some occasion, and for some purposes that something happened to someone or something” (2012:4.). Narration can therefore be seen in all facets of human creativity and art and constitutes an important aspect of culture, focusing on the kinds of methods adopted in expressing or communicating stories through that narration process. Narration as a form of rhetorical discourse is, therefore, a common method in expository, argumentative and descriptive writings or speeches.

We can then see that stories are an important aspect of human culture and activities, as many works of art and literature have come to us in the form of story-telling. In other words, stories have a common place in most of the world cultures: Egyptian, Greek, European and African, and in their mythological beliefs as a general form of human communication by using parables and illustrations to teach, encourage as well as to establish certain points. For example, story-telling can be seen, especially in majority of African communities as part of their social life in the form of entertainment, especially among the Yoruba of Nigeria in West Africa which is called “*Ere Ale*” i.e. *Moon play* as we have already pointed out in chapter one (Abimbola, 2005).²²

Stone (1979), from a historiographic perspective defines a narrative model as “organized chronologically, focused on a single coherent story; descriptive rather than analytical, concerned with people and not abstract circumstance, and dealing with the particular and specific rather than the collective and statistical”. Besides story telling can be seen, especially in majority of

²²Abimbola points out that the Yoruba religious beliefs include *Itan* i.e. story, the total complex of songs, histories and other cultural concepts, all of which make up the Yoruba society.

African communities as part of their social life in the form of entertainment like the moon play among the Yoruba of Nigeria in West Africa. Indeed, the oracles to which we shall refer in our Yoruba contextual reading consist for a large part of narrative, in which profound socio-religious tradition is embedded, and which must be interpretatively applied to a particular situation.

There are many sides to a narrative model in literary writings, such as literary theory, narrative aesthetics, psychology of narrative, narrative inquiry and narrative fallacy. Literary theory of narrative models speaks about the form of story-telling with two distinctive types: first-person and third-person forms. In the former, a narrator discusses his experience as a character in a story, whereas in the latter, a narrator discusses the experiences of other characters in a story.

There is also an element of structuralism that allows for the analysis of a narrative into different parts, their relationships with one another and their functions. This is particularly true of the Gospel of Matthew, the text for this study regarding its structure, the arrangement of the materials and the purpose of that structural setting of the Gospel as well as the intended messages.

Narrative aesthetic implies that a narrative model functions in the same way as artistic works with a number of literary embellishments that integrate different parts of the story together. Essentially, such aesthetic elements, like structures in narrative have to do with how the beginnings, the middles and the ends of literary pieces are aesthetically tailored together. In other words, the focus of narrative aesthetics is the formation of the whole story by taking cognizance of incidents, retention of the past, present and future actions and the place of characters in the narrative. These aspects are also embedded in the Matthean Gospel.

A fiction-writing model as an aspect of a narrative model simply implies the mood or process of narration or story-telling of an event or series of events. Psychological reading of a narrative speaks about narrative as a psychological engagement for a reader, which deals with an individual's sense of his/her person, mental health and cultural identity in creation or construction of memories as an important aspect of a narrative model (Heven, 2004). This has to do with the mental state or disposition of a narrator as it reflects in the coherence or otherwise of the story being related. It thus means that this aspect of narrative is focused on helping to find a cure for one's illness through restitution. We shall see how this idea has influenced the perception of a class of post-Enlightenment Western scholars in their interpretation of the person and action Judas in Matthew's Gospel. Hence, it is called cure narrative from any form of psychological

illness or challenge as well as how to manage any such case that might have reached a crisis or chaotic point.

The last aspect in this category is the quest narrative that is aimed at regaining strength and meaning to life after a period of crisis or trial (Gayle, 2000).

To this end, the narrative model is also one of the methods being used in research study across all disciplines, mostly in the human and social sciences. And in this regard, there is also what is called narrative inquiry as a tool for research that hinges on the “epistemological assumption that we as human beings make sense of random experience by the imposition of story structure” (Bell, 2002:297). On the other hand, Cole (2000) has also noted the significant contributions that narrative inquiry has made to the social sciences by its experiential nature and quest for qualities.

In view of the foregoing, Peacock and Holland (1993), agree with Bell (2002) that the story in its detailed structure and content reflects significantly the story teller in his/her social, cultural and historical context. This is what we seek to work with in the Matthean text as we mirror it through the Yoruba cultural context for a new understanding of the chosen pericope on the theme of friendship and betrayal.

Regarding the advantages of the narrative inquiry, we can refer to Bell who has identified a number of such advantages. The model affords the researchers the opportunity of having an understanding of a particular experience, simply by having access to stories, themes or lessons contained in the stories. Secondly, a narrative model helps to show how people perceive or understand events as well as how they evaluate that experience per time (Bell, 2002). Conversely, a narrative inquiry model has also been identified with some challenges or limitations. These include the time required for the conduct of an in-depth research into a piece. Secondly, there is also the possibility of reading meaning into the context of such a story (Cole, 2000). The last limitation is what is known as a narrative fallacy, which implies a misrepresentation of a series of data that stories may contain. This points to the inability on the part of a reader to decode certain terms in the story being told order to be able to grasp their meanings properly.

David Barr (1987) observes that a new method of studying the Bible came with the development of printing technology and oral narrative performance. In other words, with the invention of new instruments it became possible to engage in analytical biblical study that was hitherto impossible. This kind of close textual reading of the Bible enables a reader to get in

touch with the original contexts and meanings, more importantly than before. By reading and discussing the Bible aloud by means of story-telling thus makes it a living book for the readers.

A certain aspect of a narrative reading sometimes explores the oral nature of the New Testament world to discover how good stories were told and retold. It surveys the stories in, and behind the New Testament writing and analyses such writings as a connected series of stories. Barr recalled: "As I struggled to understand the Bible, I encountered a bewildering array of modern approaches... But these approaches were important, for they aimed to uncover what the biblical writing meant in their original setting." (Barr, 1987:3)

Hence, Barr argues that the goal of a narrative reading is to enable the reader reads the biblical literature with a sense of direction; so as he reads it for himself or herself, such an individual could achieve a proper grasp of the text as a literature work (Barr, 1987: xi-xiii). He observes that many students have abandoned the historical interpretation method to the professionals because of the enormity of the efforts required by the method, and the small and uncertain results achieved. This has therefore led to the quest for a new paradigm in biblical studies, which unlike the historical-critical approach will not emphasize the questions of authorship, addressees of a particular book and the rest as the basis for the understanding of the intended message of the Bible. The point is that such an objective probing of the Bible creates a kind of distance between the author and the reader, even though it helps the reader to get to know what the biblical writer intended to say.

Again Barr's observes: "Before the historical and social study of the Bible developed, less than centuries ago, people naively lived in the stories of the biblical texts. They delighted in them, and today we need to recapture some of their delight without their naivete, in line with the current trend of biblical studies by means of a literary study of the text" (Barr,1987:3). This is particularly appealing because of the socio-cultural practice of the Yoruba which cherishes story-telling and use of proverbs as part of their daily life.

However, Barr points out that because so much of the New Testament lacks such conscious literary techniques, or literary approaches, they have to be used selectively by concentrating on the narrative aspect. But Barr argues that the Gospels particularly, like the Matthean Gospel in their present forms reflect sufficient literary qualities for them to be regarded as narratives.

As an aspect of literary criticism, narrative reading operates on two grounds: structure and stories it tells. The Gospels are indeed stories or narratives. The goal of the narrative reading is

not therefore just to read the text, but first to understand what the original text as a story would have meant to the original recipient and what meaning they have for us today as we read the text as a story again. In a way, this would imply a kind of probing into the story, but not in the same way the critical-historical method does. The critical-historical methodology engages in textual criticism in order to establish the historical basis or authenticity of such a text, whereas a narrative reading seeks to better understand a text by asking some questions without necessarily engaging in historical reconstruction of the text. This approach has a role to play in this study, because it opens opportunity for a better understanding of the message inherent in a biblical text.

We can then conclude this discussion on the narrative theory in the work of James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz: "*Narrative as Rhetoric*" in which they identify six aspects or principles of narrative theory (Herman, 2012). Although not all of them are relevant for our study here. The first of those principles is that "narrative is often treated as a representation of linked sequence of events"; while they argue that "a traditional viewpoint under a broader conception of narrative could also be regarded as event in itself" (Herman, 2012:3). Consequently, the narrative approach, as a form of purposeful communication is concerned about the relationship of the various elements of any narrative, which points towards the affective, ethical and aesthetic effects of the story and the meaning of the experience it expresses.

Secondly, in interpreting narrative, rhetorical narratologists seek to understand the story by examining the various things done in the narrative as well as the different ways they are done. In this regard, deciphering meanings in the narrative theory is based on understanding the text. This is to say that the narrative theory makes no selective analysis, but always seeks to achieve its purpose by being flexible in responding to the diversity of narrative acts (Herman, 2012:4).

The third principle upon which narrative theory is based has to do with how the effects of narrative are explained through a method of "a feedback loop among authorial agency, textual phenomena i.e. inter-textual relations and reader's response" (Herman, 2012:4). This hinges on the belief that texts are designed by author, whether consciously or otherwise to affect the readers of the text in some specific way, and such authorial designs are expressed through words, structures, techniques and forms for the readers to understand the text and then respond in a way. The point, according to Phelan and Rabinowitz, is that such authorial designs can be a helpful guide to the working of the text but may not necessarily guarantee its meaning. In any case, we shall find this third principle a very relevant tool for our quest for a new interpretation of the chosen text for this study.

The fourth principle of rhetorical narrative theory focuses on the progression of a narrative as it anchors on the correlation between textual and readerly dynamics as the means by which an author achieves his/her purpose. Phelan and Rabinowitz describe textual dynamics as the internal flow or process by which a narrative moves from beginning through middle to an end, while readerly dynamics are the corresponding cognitive, affective, ethical and aesthetic responses of the audience to those textual dynamics. The interaction between the two dynamics also constitutes the bridge for narrative judgment with regard to the interpretative, ethical and aesthetic responses of the readers (Herman, 2012:5). In this regard, the approach deals with a study of progression as a way of understanding how narrative works and the principles of its construction as a story, which can afford us an excellent means of understanding the designs and purposes of such a narrative. This can be seen as a correlation to the above third point as it emphasizes the point of a dialogue or interaction between the story and the response prompted by that story.

The fifth principle of narrative theory identifies three key audiences, especially in fictional narrative, although the focus is usually on the actual audience (the readers, both individuals and as a group), there is also an assumed authorial audience who are the hypothetical group for whom the author writes. This group shares the author's prejudice, values, knowledge, fears and experience which the author expects his reader to have. And again, there is the third group described as the narrative audience that exists in the narrator's world for whom the characters and the events are regarded as real rather than invented. So a narrator can be seen as addressing an inter-textual audience as in the case of the Gospel of Matthew. Phelan and Rabinowitz therefore argue that the actual readers usually perform the role of the narrative audience while reading the text. The narrator is positioned in the narrative as a character being observed by the narrative audience. For example, the Gospel of Matthew is a story being told by a narrator who may not necessarily have been an eyewitness. The Gospel could therefore be regarded as a story about Jesus by a narrator to the authorial audience, here regarded as the Matthean community, while we are the narrative audience reading or listening to the story again.

The final principle has to do with the development of interests and responses of the audience about the narrative, which Phelan and Rabinowitz identify to be three kinds: mimetic, thematic and synthetic in relation to a particular component of narrative. First, the mimetic axis of a narrative deals with the intended message in the "world" of that narrative through the rhetorical flow or progression of the narrative from the beginning to the end. The thematic

aspect in the narrative theory deals with reader's interest in the functions of the characters and in the cultural, ideological, philosophical and ethical issues addressed by the narrative. Therefore, there is the tendency to want to share in their emotions, desires, hopes, satisfaction, disappointment and expectations. And finally, the synthetic component points to the idea of fusion of many parts or ideas through synthesis, that is not isolated or being treated independently. Therefore, the synthetic component in the narrative theory deals with an audience's interest in and attention to the characters in the larger narrative with regard to artificial constructs and interest that link up with aesthetic judgment from one narrative to the other depending on the nature of genre and progression of the narrative (Herman, 2012:6-8).

What is important to us, however, about these principles of narrative theory is that they are an aspect of "mimesis", which also works with first principle as a representation of linked sequence of events, that is of the various parts of the story as a whole. Hence, "mimesis" is concerned with the reference to a world beyond the text in which the narrative can take place, while rhetorical flow refers to the way the narrative is connected in terms of its structure to the strategy of the implied author to engage and influence the reader in the way he/she signals within the text.

2.6 The Importance Of Culture In African Biblical Interpretation

We have noted from our study of postcolonial criticism that the theory basically involves a social struggle for the purpose of redefining cultural identities of formerly colonized societies through national reconstruction following attainment of independence from the European empires. The effects were more pronounced in Africa where African cultures and religions were condemned as evil and demonic, and so having to be destroyed to give way for the imposition of the European culture and religion (Bewes, 1952:20)²³.

²³ The word culture is derived from the Latin word, *cultivare*, which means "to till the soil". This etymology in terms of cultivation informed the original usage of culture as "the care of and teaching of crops and animals", especially with a focus on improving or perfecting these objects (Carter, 1997:41). Hence, when this is applied specifically to human culture, it is a metaphorical extension of the idea of a tending process. Consequently, culture would imply a process of educating and refining an individual through education. It also referred to the artistic and intellectual products, such as art and literature, which were the means for refining to become what might be called "high culture". This was normally used as a mark of contrast to less sophisticated practices, customs and language of the uneducated lower classes. Consequently, culture was often used interchangeably with civilization, especially among French thinkers (Grenz, 2000: 303).

Our general conception of culture now has to do with the arts, customs and institutions of a nation, people or group. In other words, culture entails the way of life of a particular set of people within a geographical location. But from its etymological background, culture is seen to have developed from an agricultural perspective and later to literary involvement.

Other definitions of culture include that given by Melvin Herskovits as “essentially a construct that describes the total body of belief, behaviours, knowledge, sanctions, values and goals that mark the way of life of a people.” In other words, culture is contained in what people have, the things they do and what they think (Herskovits, 1948:625). Another one ascribed to Clifford Geertz suggests that culture “denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols; a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (Geertz, 1973:89). In other words, culture can be seen as an organized way of life of a particular set of people in relation to their worldview, as attested to by Raymond Williams, “culture functions as a signifying system through which a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored” (Williams, 1982:13). Therefore, through culture, people in a particular society are bound together by common attachment to and investment in items that constitute common reference points for making sense of the world and of social order (Tanner, 1997:57).

Grenz in the article entitled: *The Place of (Pop) Culture in Theological Reflection*, (2000), refers to Peter Berger and maintains that with non-linguistic modalities, such as, metaphorical images, language as inherited by succeeding social communities provides the conceptual tools through which our world view is constructed and become a vehicle for communication with the other. He further explains the significance of such communication by describing word construction as the imposition of a meaningful order upon our variegated experiences, and that we impose this common order of interpretation by means of cultural tools our society makes available to us. So cultural expressions speak about what a particular social group believes to be the ultimate which in a way is a theological expression (Berger, 1969:20).

Another important contribution to the subject of the relevance of culture in biblical interpretation is that of Charles Kraft. He also agrees to the early usage of the term “culture” in the sense of an academic and artistic dexterity, as the expression of the “moreness” in human beings that distinguishes him from the animals. In that way, as pointed out earlier, culture

originally was conceived in terms of human ability to reason, as well as artistic or musical creations as the proof of their superiority to and over animals and their closeness to the Creator God. Kraft argues that this kind of usage reflects an English borrowing from the French that refers to a knowledgeable person in art, music and philosophy as cultured (Kraft, 1979:45). However, influenced by Kluckhohn and Kroeber, Kraft describes the cultural concept as consisting of explicit and implicit pattern of behaviour acquired, transmitted by symbols, distinctive human achievements, artifacts, values and other conditioning elements . In other words, culture could be seen as the total non-biologically transmitted heritage of humanity (Kraft, 1979:46).

Kraft further observes that the most significant contribution of anthropology is the extension and clarification of the concept of culture which has invariably inspired a development of better theological understanding through culture (Kraft, 1979:45). This understanding is obvious in three major areas: the influence of culture on us and the need to determine the level of such influence with regard to our worldview. Secondly, it enables us to understand how the cultures of other people affect and shape their life and, lastly, it enables us theologians to determine the place of culture in God's dealings or interaction with human beings.

To this end, in order to better appreciate other people's culture, we must avoid ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is a term used to describe the practice whereby one views the way of life of other people in the light of one's own cultural practice. Although it takes a great deal of effort before anyone can come to term with the culture of other people, one should make efforts by learning about their cultures through their own glasses in order to be able to gain insight into their worldview. Such an attempt often results in a cross-cultural perspective as against a mono-cultural perception of reality, because there are varieties of perceptions of reality informed by different cultural practices. This is why Said's contrapuntal theory is relevant to our study. Its focus is on cross-cultural enrichment that is devoid of superiority and inferiority complexes.

Therefore, Kraft argues against cultural superiority by stressing what he calls cultural validity. Cultural validity is an anthropological coinage implying cultural relativism that entails taking cognizance of other cultures first in terms of their own values and goals before comparing them with one's own culture (Kraft:1979, 45). Consequently, Kraft debunks the Western tendency to evaluate and describe all cultures that do not show any level of conformity with its own technological advancement as primitive. Cultural validity, therefore, emphasizes the fact that

there is no culture without its strengths and weaknesses in one area and the other. A world-wide level of cultural progress may be realistic but cultures are equal to each other simply because they are able to meet the needs of members within different social groups. Culture could therefore be seen as both good and bad in shaping the way of life of a society. According to Kraft, “None is anywhere near perfect, since all are shaped and operated by sinful human beings. But none in its healthy state is to be considered invalid, inadequate or unstable by God and humankind” (1979:49).

Furthermore, Kraft also discusses the aspect of worldview in relation to culture. Worldview of a particular culture deals with- “the central systematization of conception of reality to which members of a particular culture assent (largely unconsciously) and from which stems their values system” (1979:50). Cultural worldview is often passed to subsequent generations through a process of teaching and learning. Hence every one born into that culture is influenced culturally to explain reality in terms of the conceptual system of that culture. In this thesis such a worldview of the Yoruba people will be identified as a model of an African worldview for achieving a culture-based understanding of the Matthean pericope.

A similar concern about the relationship between theology and culture is addressed by Paul Crowley. The article focuses on the need to introduce the students of the university to a culturally-informed theology because the students in the university reflect a world of religious and cultural diversity.²⁴ Crowley observes that although theology seems to have lost its hitherto leading or first place in the ranking of the university’s academic discipline, the truth remains that it still serves as a synthetic discipline between many other academic disciplines. He further claims that the relationship between theology and culture constitutes a major problem in theology today, both in academic and everyday faith. He therefore advocates the need to urgently resolve it because of its implications for peace in the world. This is because the current global conflicts have both religious and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, there is the need to understand one another from the religious and cultural perspectives for peace to reign.

Referring to Sanneh, Crowley argues that Christianity is changing radically, so that it can be better understood only in relation to other cultural expressions that also influence its reshaping (Sanneh, 2003). In this regard, theological engagement now has to be done in such a

²⁴ “Theology and Culture” drafted by Paul Crowley, S J:
<http://www.scu.edu/strategicplan/futuredirections/themes/upload/theology.pdf> (Accessed 18th March, 2013).

way that the doctrines and practices of the Church can be understood in relation to other religions, and especially within the context of the cultures in which the Christian faith exists.

Consequently, there is no such thing as a pure gospel by itself if it is devoid of cultural embodiment because every interpretation of the gospel is embodied in some cultural form. A strong confirmation of the above assertion is seen in Justo Gonzales' statement, "The knowledge of Christ never comes to us apart from cultures, or devoid of cultural baggage (Gonzales, 1992: 30). Gonzales' statement thus implies the culture-specific nature of divine truth that arises directly out of the doctrine of the incarnation when the Word became flesh within a particular cultural context as contained in the scripture (cf. John 1:14).

Therefore, Colin Gunton's statement is also worthy of note: "we must acknowledge the fact that all theologies belong in a particularly context and so are to a degree, limited by the constraints of that context. Consequently, the cultural context is one important factor of the authorities to which the theologian must listen or pay attention" in understanding the way of life of a particular people (Gunton, 1990:253).

In short, culture provides insight into the faith and way of life of people and so an adequate knowledge of the culture of the people can be of help to us in reading the biblical texts and allowing them to speak to us afresh in a clearer way. For this reason, we must realize that God's Spirit as the Creator is present everywhere in the world, and so the Bible can speak through many means or in diverse forms, particularly through other cultures aside from that of the Bible itself or that of the preacher. In this connection, the social context constitutes an important authority to which a theologian must accord recognition in biblical interpretation. This is what Lamin Sanneh calls cross-cultural acclimatization, referring to how missionaries learned the vernacular and culture of the Africans in order to be able to reach out to them with the Gospel. He cited the example of Donovan who was able to shun the Western assumptions about Africans and cultural superiority, which were in conflict with the African culture and destiny and the gospel (Sanneh, 1993:159).

In this way, Donovan discovered the relevance of culture as a tool not only for a successful mission, but also for a culturally-relevant theologizing: "all cultures are essentially equal in their potential or lack of it, for receiving the gospel and that the ordinary way of salvation lies in the cultures of the world and in the church" (Sanneh, 1993:161). He therefore observes that this cultural interaction has greatly influenced the African perception of Christianity and their

interpretation of the Bible, which is largely informed by their cultural backgrounds (Sanneh, 1993: 152).

But we shall see how some post-Enlightenment Western scholars with critical approach based on individual psychology and motives, have challenged such African understanding of the Bible by their radical interpretations of the action of Judas in Matthew's Gospel; and which has called for a response from our African cultural perspective. This is because with the emergence of postcolonial criticism, the situation is changing fast as a great number of theologians have come to recognize the imperative of culture for effective interpretation of biblical texts generally in the light of people's culture. Therefore, contextualization theology does not only encompass both inculturation and indigenization, but it is wider in scope than the two, because it aims at a counterpoint meaning by bringing the cultural context with cultural practices into a dialogue to create a culturally relevant interpretation of biblical texts. One particular evidence of the effectiveness of contextualization is that it allows for interaction, conversation and dialogue with traditional values, social change, and ethnic identities associated with globalization, but not in such a way as to be swallowed up again by these influences, but rather to assert its own influence over them for something new to emerge.

Kraft concludes that there is the need to create a common ground for everyone to be recognized and not to be swallowed up by any claim to superiority or esoteric knowledge. Hence his argument on cultural validity, which involves taking customs or practices within the cultural context of other people into consideration with a view to appreciating the importance of their functions in the light of that cultural worldview. Nevertheless, cultural validity does not imply changing one's worldview in the direction of the values, customs and practices embedded in the culture of other people (Kraft, 1979:50). Therefore, Kraft condemns the ethnocentric theological thinking of the Western church arising from cultural evolutionism which seeks to explain individual cultures in a world-wide evolutionary sequence, and therefore denies the validity of other cultures. But the truth is that there is no culture that has graduated from a point of overall inferiority to a point of overall superiority (Kraft, 1979:52).

In this sense, contextualization is a theological stance that takes into serious consideration the need to strike a balance between human experience, social change, culture and social location and the scripture. With this kind of theological stance, Africans can always seek a new understanding of the biblical truths through their cultural identities because all cultures exhibit some similarities, in spite of obvious differences, although they end with different conclusions

about reality due to different assumptions (Kraft, 1979:49). And this is also what we seek to affirm in this study that, as Africans, we have a cultural heritage that can help us gain fresh insight into the Bible and challenge the ethnocentric perspective of Western scholarship; yet without completely neglecting the possible contributions of the Western culture as a whole to our quest.

Therefore, for the church to regain its influence on the lives of the people in terms of spirituality, theological discourse must practically engage culture in order to find effective and lasting solutions to the menace of strange cultural influence or practice on the lives of the people. There is the need for discernment in order to be able to properly appraise underlying meanings, ideologies and agendas of any particular cultural expressions about how they provide a clue to the contemporary world, and act as a tool for engaging in critical theological discourse with our contemporaries that can lead to a new understanding of the scripture generally. This is one way African contextualization theology can blossom and contribute to the global discourse and create a counterpoint to the dominant Western worldview in the area of biblical scholarship as well as to avoid the pitfall of assuming cultural superiority like the Western colonialists and missionaries of the past, which sometimes continues to find expression (mostly unconsciously) in the work of Western biblical scholars.

Some African scholars have therefore tried to correct the negative impression about African religions and cultures by evolving methods to draw correlations between African traditional beliefs and the Christian faith. One of such attempts was that made by Ukpong through comparative studies aimed at showing that African religions and the Bible are involved in both continuities and discontinuities especially because of the close relationship between the African beliefs and the Old Testament practices (Ukpong, 2000:12). This is to say that African religions and cultures and the Bible exhibit similar elements in the areas of practices, feelings and thoughts, expressions and even language that did not warrant the outright condemnation of the African cultures and religious systems as evil and demonic by the European missionaries (Ukpong, 2000:13). Although these efforts at showing the good aspects of African culture were neglected, they opened the way for a further attempt at bringing the two cultures together in order to make Christianity relevant to Africans, even within the context of their cultural background. This is largely reflected in the hermeneutic approach of inculturation propounded by Kwame Bediako (1997) and later developed by Ukpong as an African conceptual framework for re-reading the Bible with the focus on African culture as the subject of interpretation. He takes

the African socio-cultural context as a text to be read in the light of a corresponding biblical text to cast a new understanding of the biblical text (2001:191).

Bevans, quoting M.A.C. Warren on the place of culture in relation African biblical scholarship, points out: "...When we approach the man of another faith than our own it will be in a spirit of expectancy to find how God has been speaking to him and what new understandings of the grace and love of God we may ourselves have in this encounter..." (Bevans, 2001:54)

The above statement thus succinctly summarizes the importance of our attempt in this study, which is to look at the socio-religious beliefs and cultural practices of the Yoruba people in Nigeria, and to see how they throw light on our understanding of the Bible, especially the chosen text in the Matthean Gospel for this study on the subject of friendship and betrayal, and what it might speak to Western interpretations rooted in Western cultural assumptions. It thus presupposes that a good contextualization theology, such as is our focus here, should not close its mind against the importance of the culture and social situation of the people concerned as a model for casting new understanding of biblical texts.

In summary, the importance of culture can therefore be seen in the fact that it constitutes a vehicle for a person's perception of reality in the light of the culture into which he or she has been fully embedded right from birth. In other words, a person is shaped by the non-biological portion of the culture into which he or she has been born and which he expects to continue to transmit; hence, a person is depicted as a culture-shaped and culture-transmitting being (Kraft, 1979:47). In this regard, a person could be seen as not only participating and transmitting culture but even shaping it. And it is this aspect of the ability to influence culture in a way that makes the difference between humanity and animals. Culture thus provides the models of reality that governs one's perception or worldview, but such conceptual perceptions will be different significantly when one is exposed to other cultures (Kraft, 1979:56). Hence, there is the need to guard against the tendency to look down at the behaviour of other people that is informed by different conceptual perceptions as strange, irrational or even wrong. In other words, no culture should be regarded as bad or wrong while just coming into it. We have given such attention to the question of culture because this research is culturally embedded with deep-seated cultural implications as an aspect of the African contextual biblical interpretation.

CHAPTER THREE

FRIENDSHIP AND BETRAYAL IN CROSS -CULTURAL CONTEXT: IDENTIFYING THE CONTENDING CULTURAL CONTEXTS FOR THIS STUDY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter is focused on our attempt to identify the three contending cultural contexts for this study, which will be brought into a dialogue with one another in our quest for a new African culture-based understanding of the concept of friendship and betrayal as contained in the text-Matt: 26:47-56. These include: the Yoruba cultural context, Western cultural context and the cultural context of the Matthean text. But before we attempt that we need to first look at the meaning of the word “friendship” and later “betrayal”. It may be necessary to also examine the extent to which these cultural contexts might have influenced one another or have been influenced in any way by any other factors. In other words, we want to know what may have informed the kind of the concept of friendship and betrayal found in each of the three cultural contexts.

We shall begin our exploration in this regard with the socio-historical and religious background of the Yoruba people in Nigeria.

3.1 Historical And Religious Background Of The Yoruba In Nigeria

The Yoruba people constitute one of the three major segments of the Nigerian population located in the south-Western part of the country, stretching from the upland area to the hinterland of the lagoon and in the East of adjacent Benin formerly known as Dahomey. They also spread to Togo and Ghana (Massa, 1999). The Yoruba represent one of Africa’s largest groups and is the second most populous in Nigeria and in West Africa. They are called by their local dialect, which is Yoruba language. They have a very interesting history, characterized by wars and the quest for political power and domination. The Yoruba people are rich in cultural practices like many other people in Africa, which is reflected on their mode of dressing, family structures, moral conduct, socio-religious beliefs and politico-economic worldview. The Yoruba

command a great deal of influence in Nigerian politics, because Western education and Christianity entered into Nigeria through the region - from Badagry – Lagos – Abeokuta - Ibadan – Oyo.

The Yoruba traditional religion still retains some adherents till today, and its membership includes not only the rich but even university dons like Professor Wale Abimbola and Chief Yemi Elebubon, who is a renowned *Ifa* priest based in Osogbo, Nigeria. This is in spite of the strong influences of Christianity and Islam. The effects of the religion can therefore be seen in the general traditional cultural setting of the Yoruba communities and the lifestyle of the people. This is based on a holistic philosophy of life. The spiritual life is based upon its religious beliefs, involving all aspects of life: health, family, marriage, possession, social relationships, rituals of daily life and creative lifestyle. Hence, dancing, singing, drumming and art within the Yoruba cultural context are significant and more meaningful than merely learning techniques – they represent a journey to one’s own roots, for one to find one’s own space in the world, to create, develop and help it. Because those who know their roots will be able to obtain security in the present and can look with hope into the future.²⁵ Although Christianity and Islam must have had a degree of influence on the Yoruba traditional religion, it should be noted that the socio-religious evolvement of the Yoruba people was much earlier than 18th or 19th centuries when it came in contact with Christianity and Islamic religion.

The Yoruba are traditionally farmers; but with the influence of Western education on the people, most of them are now engaged in government jobs and different kinds of businesses, leaving farming to the few elderly ones who remain in the villages. Religiously, the Yoruba, like most other African tribes, were once predominantly traditional worshippers of different kinds of deities and gods, before the advent of Christianity and Islam. They have a religious worldview that recognizes the ultimate power of the Supreme God, called *Olodumare*, which literally means, *the ultimate, supreme and all-powerful one*. According to Yoruba lore, the Yoruba lay claims to a common ascendancy from *Oduduwa*, and *Ile-Ife*, an ancient city in the present Osun state of Nigeria as the cradle of their origin with all her civilization. Their forefathers migrated from the East and settle at Ife, where their almighty god *Olorun* also known as *Olodumare* created mankind (Idowu, 1973).

Regarding the characteristic nature of the Yoruba socio-religious beliefs, an early classification of the religion can be seen in the work of Mbiti (1969), though certain aspects of

²⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoruba_religion (Accessed 19th May, 2013).

that classification have been modified by modern scholars. Like other African societies, the Yoruba people with their common ancestors, as observed by (Mbiti 1969), have five distinctive features that characterized their socio-religious and political worldview, which include:

- a. God as the ultimate or supreme power who alone has the final explanation in matters of existence, sustenance of human life and all things. Hence, God is called *Olodumare*, that is the one who has all things.
- b. The spirit world, comprising of both primordial (ancestral spirits) and deified spirits (superhuman beings).
- c. Man, inclusive human beings who are alive, the dead and those yet unborn. The importance attached to the living dead is seen in the response of a friend to *Olubi* about the motive of funeral expenditure for the dead as something to be applauded by man even if they would have to pawn their children, that is “to give their children away as a collateral for borrowing money” for such funeral rites or ceremonies (Peel 2000:62).
- d. Animals and plants with biological life
- e. Phenomena and objects without biological life.

However, it should be noted that the above five features are based on a twin belief system within the African traditional religion of the Yoruba tribe. First is the concept of a supreme deity called *Olodumare* or *Olorun* and the second, belief in a series of “*orisa*”.²⁶ There is also a strong belief in immortality and reincarnation of souls based on the animistic cult of ancestors.

The history of the Yoruba in diaspora has been traced to the aftermath of slavery in Africa from the late 1500’s to the late 1800’s when millions of Yoruba people were forcibly taken

²⁶ But then a different view of God is seen in one of the Yoruba mythologies of creation that presents *Olorun* i.e. “God” as rather a distant figure, who seems to play little part in the daily affairs of his people. This accords with the Yoruba concept of kingship, whereby the king is responsible for the affairs of his kingdom but has little contact with his subject as most of his duties are carried out by the *orisas*. Peel (2000: 50) also refers to a remark by a Sango priest during the period of confusion in Yoruba land as the aftermath of the wars that sacked Oyo Empire in response to Hinderer’s call to the people to turn to God. The Sango priest is reported to have said that the world is like a worn-out and cast off garment, it is too old for God to care about, he has abandoned it and, therefore, everyone must do as he/she pleases. However, Idowu argues that the *orisas*, to whom *Olorun* seems to have abandoned his duties, are only his ministers. In this regard, *Olorun* or *Olodumare* is still recognized as the supreme God as there are no shrines for God throughout Yoruba land. He is worshipped through the *orisas* as the intermediaries. But he is the final arbiter in all affairs. He is therefore seen to be omniscient, immortal and the source of all benefits to mankind (Idowu, 1962:38-56).

away as slaves by the European powers to Britain, America, France, Spain, Portugal. Today, the Yoruba people are all over the world and their culture is found everywhere, especially in America, Latin America and Europe.

According to Olabimtan (1973), Lucas (1996) and Abimbola (2005), the Yoruba religious belief thus comprises traditional religious and spiritual concepts and practices of the Yoruba people, with diverse traditions and without a single founder. They argue that these complex traditions involve the totality of songs, histories, stories and other cultural concepts which make up the Yoruba society. This Yoruba religious belief system therefore functions in two ways: first, in the formation of social group and secondly, as an ideology and guide to individual action.

As pointed out earlier, some modern scholars have tried to modify certain aspects of the classification by Mbiti. One of such scholars is J.D.Y. Peel (2000), who presents a detailed historical account of the evolvment of the Yoruba cultural life within the latter half of the nineteenth century during which many Yoruba became Christians or Christianity became a major element in the Yoruba religious system (Peel: 25). Peels recalls how the fall of the old Oyo Empire in the 1820s led to a new development of social forms in Yoruba land, especially the idea of- “A big man” as a warrior. This was in the aftermath of the war that sacked the Oyo Empire. He points out that in the pre-war Yoruba land, that in spite of the shared linguistic and cultural traits and regard for Ile–Ife as their common origin of their most sacred traditions, as speakers of Yoruba dialects they did not yet share a common and distinctive name. They were simply referred to as Egba, Ijesha, Oyo or Awori, i.e. by the name of their *ilu* “towns”. However, the Yoruba later developed a unified ethnic identity based on their language through the activities of the missionaries (Peel, 2000:28).

The foundational concept of the Yoruba political sociology is described as *ilu*, i.e. “town” or “community”. The Yoruba have long been known as an urban people living in large permanent nucleated settlement following the social quality of those towns. The political design of a major *ilu* i.e. “town”, is seen in the position of its *oba* i.e. “king”, whose title, in most cases, often designated him as the symbol and owner of the town, e.g. *Olofa of Offa*. Essentially, the position of a Yoruba *Oba* is that it symbolizes the unity of the *ilu*, i.e.town.

Peel further discusses the nineteenth century social relations of the Yoruba towns in which the missionaries set in to work. The Yoruba communal life is made up of *ajobi*, i.e. “born together” and *ajogbe*, i.e. “residing together”. Nevertheless, the central idea is focused on *ajobi* which is “kinship”, while *ajogbe* points in the direction of “friendship”. Relying on the CMS

archive, particularly, from W.S. Allen, a catechist in Ibadan, Peel recounts a number of incidents that reveal the basic principles of social action among the Yoruba which included the search for protection, the importance and frailty of friendship and obligations of communal life (2000:30)

In spite of the strong influence of Christianity and Islam that is very pronounced in the region, the Yoruba have their own traditional religious beliefs and cultural practices with their strong influence on the people. In other words, although the majority of the people in Yoruba towns are now Christians and Muslims, at the individual level traditional beliefs are more tenacious. People sometimes try to combine traditional rites with Christian faith and Islamic religion, because many people secretly patronize *Ifa* diviner or *babalawo*, even though this development is not acceptable to the church and the Muslims.

But for the Yoruba in the traditional setting, these beliefs and their attitudes to them still shape their worldview, reflected significantly in their daily activities and interpersonal relationships. This is because the fulfillment of one's destiny is achieved by avoiding the wrath of the *orisas* and the attack of witches and sorcerers. This is done with the help of the *orisas* and the ancestors through piety, divination, regular sacrifices to them and even to the *Esu*, "the confusionist". These religious beliefs therefore constitute the spiritual worldview of the Yoruba. The human is believed to be made up of both corporeal and spiritual elements which are related to Yoruba beliefs about destiny and fulfillment in life. Put together, this is the cultural heritage that has informed Yoruba ethical norms and social values and has shaped their concept of friendship and betrayal, which we are set to examine in this study.

To this end, we can see from Mbiti's classification of the Yoruba religion and Peel's description of the Yoruba social setting which informs their worldview, this has to do with humans and their relationships, especially that which defines the nature and practice of friendship among the living, particularly, and the spirit-beings in general. In other words, the concept of friendship is very pronounced and of great importance among the Yoruba just as in any other African culture.

3.2 Yoruba Concept Of Friendship In Nigeria: "Oreodale"

The concept of friendship in Yoruba cultural context is embedded in the Yoruba religious system of *Ifa* oracles and the daily experiences of the people as attested by the oracle corpus: i.e. *ese Ifa* as gathered from the *Ifa* priests interviewed. The full texts are contained in the Appendix 1 on pages 223-229.

This research explores a largely neglected aspect of the Yoruba culture. It is gathered from the investigative discussion with a renowned traditionalist and an *Ifa* priest in Nigeria, Chief Yemi Elebubon, and some other *Ifa* priests including *Baba Awo* “*Ifa* Priest” Faseesin, they revealed that the Yoruba concept of friendship is contained in the ancient wisdom of their forbears, now embedded in the oracular divinity known as Orunmila.²⁷ Friendship in the Yoruba context touches on many aspects of life, because a friend plays an important role in adding meaning or otherwise to the life of the other person. The word *Oreodale*: is a combination of two ideas: “*Ore*” meaning “*friend*” which is a noun and the word “*odale*” meaning “*to betray*”, which as a verb means “*to point out*” or “*to sell out*”. So both put together function in a descriptive sense. But the word “*odale*” may also function as a noun to mean simply “*a betrayer*.” Hence, the word: “*Oreodale*” is an adjectival noun, meaning, literally, “*a friend who betrays* or simply *a betrayer*. But it can also be interpreted to mean figuratively, “*an unreliable friend- one who cannot be trusted*.” The opposite is *oreotito* i.e “*a faithful*” or “*trustworthy friend*.”²⁸ According to Peel personal friendship in Yoruba land entails visits and exchange of presents, which have no any ritualistic implications (Peel, 2000:54).

In light of the foregoing, friendship in Yoruba understanding appears to have strong implications for individuals as well as for the entire community, because it has to do with life generally. Hence it is conditioned by such factors as behavioural conduct, moral values and personal lifestyle as we shall see later in this study. Although friendships and clubs are voluntary and they could not generate the binding attachments of the lineage or kinship, it points to the fact that friendships in Yoruba land are not purely a personal matter between the individual actors, because friendship is part of the texture of public life (Peel, 2000). The bonding power within the community is underscored by the fact that it could transcend township boundaries. Peel shows how this played out among the Yoruba warlords of the different segments of the Yoruba nations. Therefore, friendship finds expression in *egbe*, i.e. “*gangs*” or “*clubs*” or *oredogbe*, i.e. “*friends become a club*” which is a common name for social club today. This points to the enduring cultural disposition of the Yoruba groups of friends usually with gender specification, but there can be an exception (2000:55-57).

²⁷ The interview was conducted on Thursday, 21st July, 2011 at the residence of Chief Yemi Elebubon, a renowned *Ifa* priest and the head of the worshippers of *Orunmila* deity in Osogbo in Osun State of Nigeria. The interview was on the theme of friendship and betrayal from the Yoruba socio-cultural and religious perspective as embedded in the *Ifa* Oracle Divinity. The details shall be discussed in the thesis.

²⁸ Appendix 2, pgs. on 232-267

In the Yoruba religious practice, there are many different texts that speak about friendship and betrayal in the *Ifa* oracles. Although largely oral in nature, there are 256 texts all together beginning from *Ejiogbe* to *Ofuse* across the Yoruba land.²⁹ However, there are evidences of environmental influences on the recitation of the texts from one area to the other where the deity is being worshipped. In other words, it is oral and it has not yet been put into writing in book form. Hence, the custodians or every priest of *Ifa* is expected to learn the whole text by heart and recite it for divination as occasion dictates.³⁰

The *Ifa* divination systems involve an extensive use of corpus of texts. The word *Ifa* is a reference to the mystical figure, known as *Irunmole*, i.e.the primordial figure known as *Orunmila*, who is regarded as the chief or grand priest who revealed oracle divinity to the world. In this regard, *Ifa* is regarded by the Yoruba as the deity of wisdom and intellectual development. Consequently, *Orunmila* is often used interchangeably with *Ifa* (Abimbola, 1976).

The actual process of *Ifa* divination is usually based on a system of signs that are interpreted by a diviner, known as *babalawo*, literally meaning “the priest’s father”, but actually implying “the *Ifa* priest”. Interestingly, there can also be a female *Ifa* priestess known as *Iyanifa*, i.e. “mother of secret”. The assistance of *Ifa*, as we have seen in the case of the use of ephod in the Old Testament, is usually sought whenever important decision is to be made either individually or collectively.³¹ The *Ifa* literary corpus, which is known as *odu*, i.e “chapter”, is made up of 256 parts, subdivided into “*ese*” like verses in the Bible; but the exact number of verses is not known. The process is thus described: “Each one of the 256 *odu* has its specific divination signature, which is determined through a procedure held by the *babalawo* using sacred palm-nuts and a divination chain. The verse, which is the most important part of *Ifa* divination, is chanted by the priest in poetic language, reflecting the history of the Yoruba, language, beliefs, contemporary situation, etc.”³²

The *Ifa* priest will then determine the appropriate *odu* relevant to the situation or case of the client. The priest analyses, explains and then makes the appropriate sacrificial prescriptions to be offered to gods. Although largely oral in nature, the knowledge of *Ifa* has been preserved

²⁹ The information was gathered from Dr. Obafemi Jegede, a lecturer on Traditional African belief systems and Indigenous knowledge in the Institute of African Studies of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

³⁰ Bade Ajayi, “Ifa Divination Process”, <https://www.unilorin.edu.ng> Cached .pdf/Ifa Divination System in Nigeria (Accessed 14th June, 2013).

³¹ “And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech. “Bring me the ephod.” So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. And David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I pursue after this band? Shall I overtake them?” He answered him, “Pursue, for you shall surely overtake and shall surely rescue” (I Sam. 30:7-8).

³² See the internet article cited above by Ajayi.

within the Yoruba communities and transmitted among *Ifa* priests. Therefore, *Ifa* divination has gone through challenges in order to maintain the tradition, and to transmit the complex knowledge to the younger generation. Thus, in the Yoruba religious system, *Ifa* divination gives ample and unreserved access to the teaching of *Orunmila* who is believed to be God's mouthpiece in the world among the traditional worshippers.

Although many Yoruba people have also been influenced by Western culture, as we shall see in their responses to the questions on friendship and betrayal during the interviews, the few adherents of the traditional religion have helped to preserve not only the beliefs but also the culture that goes with it.

Consequently, we shall need to look at some of those oracular texts for our background knowledge in this study about the Yoruba cultural context of friendship and betrayal. It should be noted therefore that the contents or texts of the oracles cited here function like the texts of the Bible in the Yoruba traditional religious systems.³³

3.2.0 *Summary Of Some Relevant Oracular Texts On The Yoruba: Concept Of Friendship.*

Yoruba traditional religious systems are diversely expressed through the worship of many different deities, (ancestral and superhuman) such as *Sango, Oya, Ogun, and Obatala*. *Ifa*, as a revealer is usually consulted in time of difficulties and dangers by the adherents of the Yoruba traditional religion and, sometimes including Christians and Muslims, but in secret for guidance and instructions. The oracle normally prescribes sacrificial rites and states to which of the gods they are to be offered, through *Esu* i.e. "Satan", as the intermediary for the wellbeing of an individual or the community on many matters.³⁴ Hence, the *Ifa* priests are known as diviners.

But more than that, *Ifa* oracle is all embracing about the socio-religious and politico-economic life of the Yoruba people. In other words, it covers even the minutest aspect of the lives of the people. It is in this context that we need to appeal to the *Ifa* oracles for enlightenment

³³ The full texts of the few chosen *Ifa* Oracles on friendship and betrayal are contained in the Appendix 1 on pgs. 223-229.

³⁴ In the Yoruba traditional religious beliefs, *Esu* i.e. "Satan" is believed to be responsible for the confusion in the world having been sent down by God to punish humanity for their disobedience. *Esu* is therefore conceived by the Yoruba as "Aseburukuserere", i.e. "**the one who does both evil and good depending on the circumstance**". As the agent in between the gods and the people, if one obeys and honours *Ifa*'s sacrificial prescriptions, the devil is the one who will defend such a person against any adverse consequence. But on the other hand, if one fails to observe or offers the prescribed sacrifice, it is the same *Esu*, i.e. Satan, that is empowered to punish such a person for his or her disobedience to the gods.

as to what the Yoruba socio-religious system holds in terms of relationships, especially in the area of friendship and betrayal.

The Yoruba concept of friendship is contained in the moral values and societal norms of the people as enshrined in the wit sayings, folklores, proverbs, parables, etc. These are illustrated in the various oracles for the purpose of teaching and guidance. Therefore, the attempt at identifying some of these oracles will afford us the opportunity to see practical cases of friendship and its involvements within the Yoruba cultural setting.

My fieldwork involved consultation with some *Ifa* priests for the collection of the relevant *Ifa* oracular texts on friendship and betrayal for the purpose of this study. But only a few could be identified and only the most relevant text will be engaged in a dialogue with the Matthean cultural text, and later together with some post-Enlightenment Western critical comments, for a culture-based understanding and interpretation of the pericope. Consequently, I shall attempt a general explanatory account of the various selected oracular texts in order to paint a general picture of the concept of friendship and betrayal in the context of the Yoruba cultural beliefs and practices as contained in the *Ifa* oracles.

According to Chief Yemi Elebubon, in the Yoruba traditional religious systems, friendship is as old as human themselves, and it is usually based on a kind of covenant agreement between people who are involved in a relationship³⁵. Friendship in the Yoruba context is thus conceived as a private involvement between two friends because it entails sharing of confidentiality or secrets about their lives together, which must not be divulged to a third party.

Usually, the process of such covenant or agreement entails oath taking between the two of them, because there is not supposed to be a third party who shares in the relationship.³⁶ The various oracular texts considered show that friendship is embedded in the social system of the Yoruba people. Therefore, there was the need to consult with the custodians or *Ifa* Priests who could help us with some of the required relevant texts. According to these sources, it is generally believed that the earth is the witness to such an oath between the two friends, as implied in the Yoruba popular statement: “*The earth of friendship will favour you*”, particularly when the bond of friendship is jealously kept by them. But if it is not kept by either of the parties, a breach of the bond of friendship has been committed and the guilty one will face the consequences to be meted out by the earth on behalf of the gods.

³⁵ Appendix 2, No i on pg. 232.

³⁶ Appendix 1 No ii on pg. 224.

It should also be noted that this kind of oath-making in friendship may involve sacrificing a victim to seal the deal especially when the deal involves the powerful ones like kings, the rich and nobles, and the hunters who normally swear with their guns, stand barefooted on the ground or make a cut on their bodies for blood to lick. This is to safeguard the secrets involved in friendship. The implication is that if any one goes back on his/her word regarding the oath as far as the friendship is concerned the person will face the consequences. The whole idea of friendship and betrayal is therefore intertwined in the Yoruba cultural practices with all the accompanying implications. It is expressed in this statement: “A thief is liable to death by a curse; a friend by reason of betrayal, while a blood relation is liable to death by wrong-doing or evil committed.”³⁷

These truths regarding the intricacies of friendship and betrayal are reflected in all of the selected *Ifa* oracular texts on the subject matter of this thesis as contained in the Appendix I on pgs. 223-229. To start with, the Yoruba concept of friendship is hinged on love as evident in the oracular text known as “Osun Ogbe”.³⁸ This *ese ifa*, i.e “oracular text”, relates the story of two friends known as *Eledero* and *Elerimo*. *Elerimo* was very powerful and influential because he had charms to harm anyone at will. And for that reason he often gave no regard to the bond of friendship between him and his friend. But on the other hand, *Eledero* not only gave attention to the terms of their friendship but also adhered strictly to the warnings of the god to avert possible conflict between them. The conflict eventually erupted when *Eledero* was selected as a king because of his obedience to the instructions of the god against the candidature of *Elerimo* who had no regard for such instructions, trusting in the power of his charms. Consequently, against the spirit of friendship, *Elerimo* made an attempt on the life of his friend, *Eledero*, but it bounced back on him as he was struck to death by the *Esu* i.e. “Satan” who turned into a piece of wood and fell on him. It thus follows that friendship is about seeking the wellbeing of one’s friend and to guard against jealousy and envy against one’s friend, because of its possible adverse consequences.

Secondly, it is also obvious that the Yoruba concept of friendship is based on the ability to maintain confidentiality or keep secrets as illustrated by the friendship between *Okete* and *Orunmila*³⁹, the chief custodian of the oracle divinity. The text warns against divulging the secrets

³⁷ Appendix I No ii on pg. 224.

³⁸ Appendix 1, No i on pg. 223.

³⁹ Appendix 1 No ii on pg. 224.

of one's friend to an outsider as it was the habit of *Okete*, divulging the secrets of his friend, *Orunmila* to outsiders until he was trapped to death.

Furthermore, the Yoruba concept of friendship is also characterized by faithfulness as illustrated in the oracle known as "Efun Ifa", which reflects on friendship between a master and a disciple.⁴⁰ The text of the oracle reveals that *Efun Ifa* is the wife of *Ifa*, and *Ifa* left her at home⁴¹. One of the students known as *Ipin* touched the breast of *Efun Ifa* his master's wife. When *Ifa* returned, *Efun Ifa* reported to her husband what one of his students, *Ipin*, did. Consequently, *Orunmila* cursed him that he would have nothing for his service forever as he would be made to serve others for life. Therefore, it is a general belief that in Ifa divination, *Ipin* has never benefited from the gifts to *Ifa*. The oracle thus has a warning against unfaithfulness in relationship, particularly friendship as reflected in the action of the *Orunmila's* student, *Ipin* for touching the breast of *Efun Ifa*, the wife of his master-friend.

It is very pertinent, therefore, to stress the importance of the connection between friendship and discipleship as we have seen here in the case *Ipin* and *Orunmila* just as we shall see in Matthew's Gospel between Jesus and Judas, which shows that friendship is embedded in discipleship regardless of status. Discipleship will thrive only where the relationship is cordial and friendly between the master and the disciple.

Another aspect of the Yoruba concept of friendship is steady loyalty. The truth of this is seen in the Ifa oracle known as *Odua and Adubi*, which illustrates that is friendship hinged on perpetual loyalty. It implies that at no time should friends withdraw their loyalty from each other, the fire of friendship should be kept burning⁴². *Odua and Adubi* were friends, because *Adubi* used to supply palm wine to *Odua* for sacrifice to gods in order to maintain peace in the land. Unfortunately, *Adubi* who had been loyal to *Odua* up to a point in their collective efforts to build a peaceful society by constantly supplying the palm wine, suddenly changed and no longer supplied palm wine to *Odua* again. Consequently, the peace of the land was disrupted. Later, through divination, *Odua* discovered that *Adubi*, his friend, was responsible and while he went to see him on the farm he saw him tapping palm wine on the palm tree so as to hoard it. There and

⁴⁰ Appendix 1 No iii on pg. 225.

⁴¹ Although it is not clear here whether there is a kind of Jesus-disciples friendship as in the Matthean cultural context in the Yoruba cultural context, the point we are trying to make is that the Yoruba cultural concept of friendship, generally entails faithfulness in any relationship. However, it not entirely strange to have a case of master-disciple friendship even in the Yoruba cultural setting.

⁴²Appendix 1 No v on pg. 228.

then, *Odua* cursed *Adubi* to get glued to the palm tree. And *Adubi* died immediately by getting glued to the tree.

Against this background, as evident from some of the oracles considered above, friendship is a very important social factor that must be handled with all seriousness among the Yoruba people. In other words, friendship should not be treated with triviality because every decision and action is considered to be consequential in the light of the bond of that relationship for both the actors and the society. Secondly, among the Yoruba people, based on the evidence in the oracles examined above, friendship has communal implications for the collective wellbeing and progress of the entire community. Hence it is regulated by the Yoruba societal values and norms as the conscience of the community. The truth of this can be seen how *Adubi* and *Odua's* friendship affected their community. On the whole, we can see from the few examples of the oracular texts on friendship from the Yoruba religious system that the Yoruba concept of friendship entails loyalty, faithfulness, secrets, discipleship, trust and love.

The *Ifa* corpus, therefore, will give us the opportunity of getting an appropriate model of the text on friendship and betrayal that is relevant for the contrapuntal reading with the other cultural contexts in this study.

3.2.1 Analysis Of The Interviews Conducted On The Yoruba Concept Of Friendship

The underlying ideas in the Yoruba concept of friendship as seen from the *Ifa* corpus were tested against the understanding of twenty people who were engaged in personal interviews on the subject of the Yoruba cultural understanding and practice of friendship. These individuals included different segments of people in the Yoruba social groups: men and women, experts in the socio-religious life of the Yoruba people, the custodians of the Yoruba religious belief systems and young adults and youths; all of whom expressed their opinions and bared their minds on the issues as contained in the Appendix 2 pages 232-266. In other words, to ascertain the understanding of the people in Yoruba land on the concept of friendship and betrayal, these individuals, within the age bracket of over 18years and 80 years, belonging to different professions, as elders, students, youths, artisans, Anglican priests, church members and Muslims, were interviewed.

It should be noted that, although the oracular texts reflects the basis of the cultural beliefs and practices of the people as the guiding principles of the behavioural conduct as embedded in

the cultural values and societal norms, the *Ifa* oracular corpus can change somehow, particularly in the way the texts are interpreted by the *Ifa* priests from time to time in according to the principle of cultural dynamism. But there is usually no a tangible way of checking such a change as one can do in Christianity and Islamic religion, because they are oral. This is to say that cultural practices may change, usually due to exposure to some influences, as the Western culture through Christianity. And of course, Islam may have influenced the Yoruba culture.

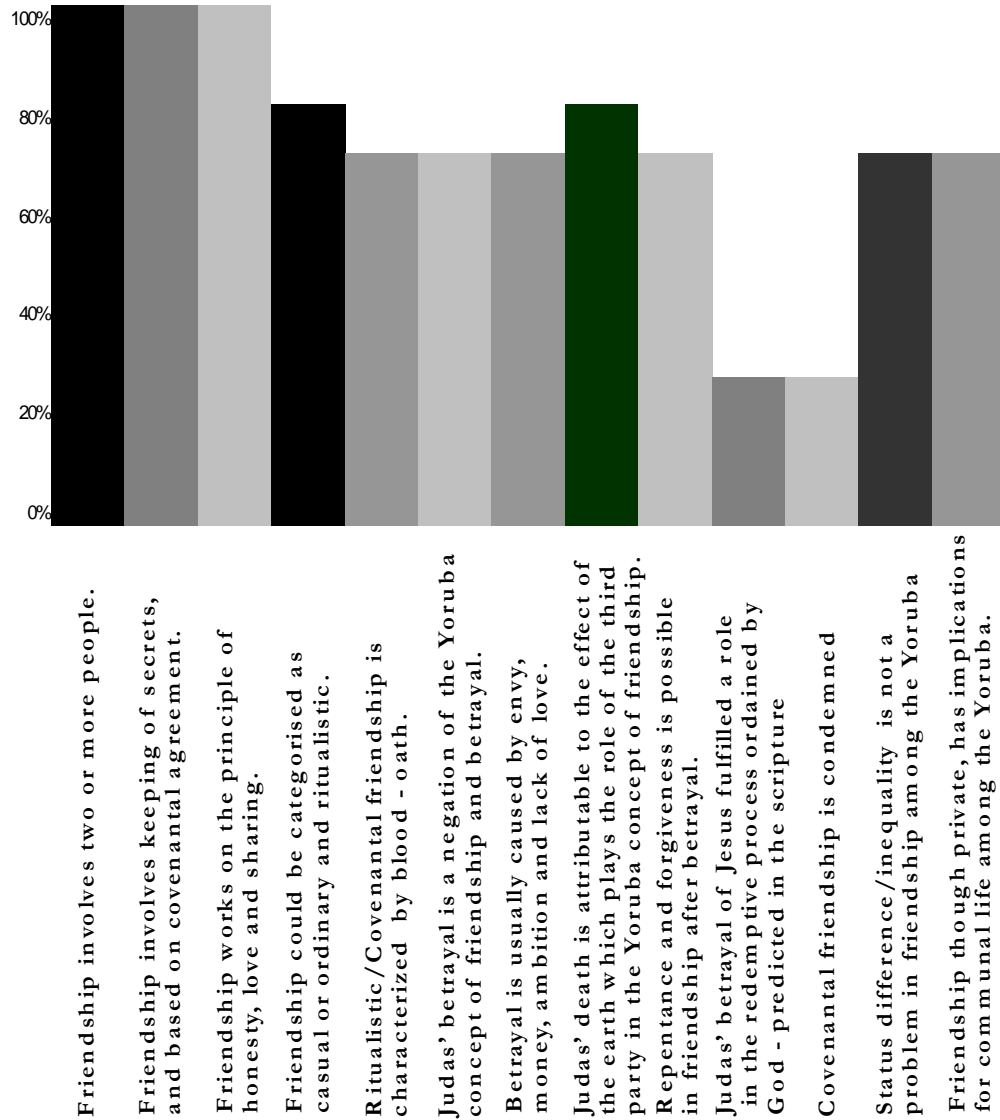
Therefore, having seen what the societal norms and cultural values prescribed as the essentials of the Yoruba concept of friendship as contained in the *Ifa* oracles, we tried to find out how ordinary Yoruba conceive what friendship means to them, regardless of their religious persuasions but especially looking at Christian and Muslim, who are the same according to their Yoruba background and perception of the Yoruba traditional religion. However, this attempt is not just to determine a new meaning of the concept of friendship for the people but to explore the age old understanding of the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal in order to see how it helps to regulate their lives in the light of the Matthean text.⁴³

The questions for the interview were focused on or revolved around issues such as name, the meaning of a true friendship and betrayal, and the relationship between the two as seen in the case of Jesus and disciples, especially in Judas' action in Matthew 26:47-56. Other issues included: the awareness and understanding of the Yoruba concept of friendship- *oreodale* or *odaleore*, the level of the influence of that concept in their relationship with others, what is betrayal and its influence of friendship, confidentiality in friendship, whether betrayal is avoidable in friendship, the communal implication of friendship and betrayal, the place of repentance and forgiveness in friendship, and the place of the "earth" in the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal.

The chart below gives a clear illustration of the responses by the interviewees, selected from the various classes of the society, including youth (25-35years), mid-age (40-55years) and the elderly (60-80years), in order to ascertain their different levels of perceptions and understandings of the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal.

⁴³ See the questions for the interview in the Appendix 1 on page 231.

A chart illustrating the responses of the interviewees on the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal



I will begin with the explanation of the chart and then conclude with the comparison between our findings from the texts of the oracles and that of the people's understanding of the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal. This will enable us to ascertain the level of possible influences between the two and the level of continuity of the concept in the understanding of the people as contained in the *Ifa* oracles.

Gathered from the above chart, it is evident that more than 90 percent agreed that friendship involves two or more people who are interested in their wellbeing. They also identified that there are two or three types of friends, mainly casual or ordinary friendship and serious friendship. Serious Friendship involves the keeping of secrets, based on a covenant agreement to seal that relationship, that often involves a blood-oath. In any event, friendship is generally concerned with meeting the needs, whether emotional or material of one's friend.

Similarly, more than 90 percent of the interviewees pointed out that friendship is based on the principles of honesty, love and sharing. They agreed that friendship involves the keeping of secrets about the lives of friends that must not be divulged to an outside party. About 80 percent agreed to the fact that hatred, jealousy, selfish interest and inordinate ambition among friends also influence betrayal in friendship. They described betrayal as going back on one's word – something has serious implications, especially in the case of serious friendship. In the case of ordinary friendship, the implication of betrayal might not be all that serious.

About 70 percent of the interviewees believed that status difference or inequality may not necessarily preclude friendship, as long as the actors in friendship understand themselves; just as they believed gender or sex is not barrier to genuine friendship. Similarly more 70 percent believed that friendship among the Yoruba is more than a private engagement between two friends as it holds implications for the general wellbeing of the society

Furthermore, more than 70 percent of those interviewed agreed that a covenantal/ritualistic friendship is usually characterized by a blood-oath, and about 20 percent condemned covenantal or ritualistic friendship because of the blood-oath involved. They saw no reason why people should go into a blood covenant in order to seal a friendship. Furthermore, about 70 percent of the interviewees condemned Judas as a betrayer because he was believed to be a friend of Jesus. They attributed the cause of betrayal to envy and ambition. Therefore, they believed that Judas' action was a negation of the Yoruba concept of friendship, because it was caused by envy, covetousness and ambition. In addition, they all agreed that the "earth", standing as a third party, functions as a witness in friendship. Again, as human beings we live in and walk about on it; all that we eat also come from it. Hence, the earth exercises some judicial roles in the case of betrayal as seen in the case of Judas.

On the question of repentance and forgiveness in case of betrayal in friendship, more than 70 percent of the interviewees agreed that repentance and forgiveness are possible, but the friendship might not remain the same, and that is if that betrayal has not claimed the lives of

friends involved. However, they also agreed that Judas' action did not really show that he repented; so they condemned him for committing suicide. Consequently, they attributed Judas' death to the retributive power of the "earth", in view of the Yoruba belief that "whosoever betrays the earth will be swallowed by the earth".

However, about 20 percent of the interviewees expressed the opinion that Judas in his action could be seen to have fulfilled a role in the redemptive process as ordained by God. Finally, all of them backed up their opinions with their individual experiences marked with different blessings and disappointments in friendship.

Most of the ideas expressed by the people agree with what we have in the *Ifa* oracles regarding the characteristic nature of friendship in the Yoruba cultural practice. In the opinion of the majority of the twenty interviewees, friendship among the Yoruba, like most other tribes in Africa, is basically about relationship between two people who understand each other, who can flow together, encourage each other and share confidentiality or keep their secrets together, regardless of their age and status. For example, in the opinion of the Rev. Olufemi Ojeniyi, friendship "anchors on relationship between two people who are committed to each other. Friendship is about assisting each other towards fulfillment in life. Friendship may be between two equals or different in status. In other words, friendship especially among the Yoruba is not necessarily determined by age, status, position and sex."⁴⁴ However, although the majority of those interviewed believed that such a relationship is easier between people of the same status and probably of the same age, they also expressed the belief that the Yoruba concept of friendship is not rigidly fixed on the principle of the Yoruba popular saying: *Egbe eye l'eye nwoto*, i.e. "Birds of the same feathers flock together". In the understanding of the Rev. Canon Dele Oyetunji friendship "is not fixed among the Yoruba, that is, friendship could be between people of different status. In other words, it is not based on the principle of "Birds of the same feather flock together" which means a farmer could be a friend of a university lecturer."⁴⁵ Some of the young adults or youths even pointed out that they found the cross-age or cross-status friendship, particularly with those who are older than them, to be very rewarding". Mr. Kayode Alabi, explains that "it is very advantageous to befriend someone who is older than oneself; I have found it to be very rewarding."⁴⁶ Although friendship fares well when friends share equality the

⁴⁴ Appendix 2 No viii on pg. 246.

⁴⁵ Appendix 2 No xiv on pg. 257.

⁴⁶ Appendix 2 No xvi on pg. 260.

Yoruba believe that there can be an exception to this rule as there are cases of cross-status and even cross-gender friendship among people. We have examples of such friendship in the oracle of *Ika Osun*, where *Orunmila* is a friend to a woman and not of the same status with him.⁴⁷

On the question of types of friendship, the majority of the people interviewed expressed the opinion that friendship is basically of two types: Ordinary and Covenantal friendships. According to Mama Abeke Martins, “There are two sides to friendship among the Yoruba: covenantal and ordinary friendships; and both carry some implications of friendship in terms of expectations and consequences in case of betrayal”.⁴⁸ However, there seems to be no such categorizations in the oracles; then the categorization might have resulted from the experiences of the people. Nevertheless, both ordinary and covenantal friendships, according to the Yoruba cultural concept of friendship, carry some implications in both the oracles and in the understanding of the people; except that that of ordinary friendship is not always as severe as that of covenantal friendship. This is because ordinary friendship does not necessarily entail any form of oath or ritual, such as friends from childhood, soul mates school or course mates, and business partners who are committed to each other to better their lots through assisting and encouraging each other.

Covenantal friendship on the other hand, is a kind of friendship that is ritualistic, as it requires an oath, usually with the blood of a victim or swearing by different kinds of means to solidify the bond of friendship. This was already seen from the explanation of the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal by Chief Yemi Elebubon. He explained that from time immemorial when the friendship began according to Yoruba religious belief, friendship has usually been based on a kind of covenant agreement between two people as a private engagement between the two of them. It may involve sharing secrets that must not be known to any other person, yet it also has implication for the general wellbeing of the entire community. In this kind of situation, the earth is usually taken to be the witness between the two of them as seen in this statement: “The earth of friendship will favour you, particularly when the rules of the game are observed. Conversely, if there is any breach or betrayal of any form, the one who is guilty is bound to face the consequences to be meted out by the earth. The earth here may stand for the gods who still have influences upon the lives of the people and can adjudicate in such a situation and between such people. Sometimes, this kind of oath-making may involve sacrificing a victim

⁴⁷ Appendix 1 No iii on pg. 225.

⁴⁸ Appendix 2 No v on pg.. 241.

to seal the deal, especially among the powerful people like kings, the rich and the nobles. For example, the local hunters who normally swear by kissing their dane guns or remove their shoes and kiss. Or sometimes it may just be that the people will stand on ground bare footedly in the process.”⁴⁹ The oath or swearing is usually sealed with blood, either of a victim or that of their own, just to safeguard the confidentiality of their friendship. However, in both cases, the earth is seen as a witness in friendship according to the Yoruba belief, which makes betrayal in friendship, carries serious consequences, though in varying degrees. We shall get to know the implications of this when we come to treat the aspect of betrayal in friendship.

But a few others, like the Rev. Canon Dele Oyetunji identify another kind of friendship called Casual friendship apart from Ordinary and Covenantal friendships.⁵⁰ His belief is that the casual friend is not a serious relationship. These are friends that are picked occasionally without any serious commitment. The ordinary friendship is the opposite of casual friendship; ordinary friends are committed to each other and cannot miss each other even for a day. It is tagged ordinary because it does not usually require any oath or ritual to solidify the bond, having already been witnessed by the earth. In ordinary friendship, friends also maintain confidentiality, and hopes and plans for the betterment of each other. However, ordinary and casual may mean the same thing. The third one, the covenantal friendship as explained earlier carries with it an oath or rituals to seal the bond of friendship. This usually encourages questionable activities, which is why it is covenantal and ritualistic. It makes betrayal difficult, enables the concealment of the activities and prevents them from being exposed.

One common feature of all these kinds of friendship, however, is the ability to keep secrets, i.e. to be loyal as one important condition of friendship. According to Miss Nike Ola, “A friend in Yoruba land is one’s companion or confidant; one who can be trusted and one who is an encourager. Friendship begins with two persons or more; and there are different kinds of friendships in Yoruba land, all of which anchor on trust and loyalty. There are many benefits in friendship such as safety from dangers, or in time of difficulties, friends normally help each other”⁵¹. But then, one of the youth, Mr. Ope Opedare was of the opinion that covenantal friendship is no longer fashionable to him. Another youth saw no reason for entering into that kind of blood covenant just for the sake of solidifying the bond of friendship: “The covenantal or

⁴⁹ Appendix 2 No i on pg. 232.

⁵⁰ Appendix 2 No xiv on pg. 257.

⁵¹ Appendix 2 No xviii on pg. 263.

ritual friendship is always strange to me. I just think that if friends are loyal and trustworthy to each other, it is out of point to employ ritual means to sustain such a friendship. I believe there is such a friendship but I don't think it is proper in any way.”

Friends expect love, intimacy, trust, encouragement and goodwill from each other, which is anchored in loyalty. For example, Mrs. Comfort Olalowo observes, “Friendship among the Yoruba hinges on having friends at the place of work, within the society among the political associates. Love is a sine qua non to friendship in Yoruba land. What friends hope to benefit in their friendship includes counseling in times of needs concerning their lives, encouragement and assistance for material and spiritual wellbeing”.⁵² In other words, there is no such categorization like emotional and material needs in the Yoruba concept of friendship. It thus follows that in the Yoruba concept of friendship, loyalty is the heart of a sustainable relationship. For example, in the oracle on *Okete Orunmila*, *Okete* lost his life for not being loyal to his friend, *Orunmila* by revealing the secrets of *Orunmila* to those who were not their friends.⁵³ Conversely, the following vices portend serious dangers to friendship: deceit, inordinate ambitions, hypocrisy and greediness. According to Mama Abeke Martin: “... Lack of satisfaction, covetousness and the likes are usually responsible for betrayal. Friendship among the Yoruba is not based on age; but if such friendship is characterized by envy and lack of love, there is likely to be a betrayal.”⁵⁴ The truth of this is seen in the case of *Eledoro* and *Elerinwo*.⁵⁵ Even though, people will always find reasons for their actions.

A typical example of genuine love in friendship in the Yoruba socio-cultural context is seen in the action of *Iya Olofi* as contained in the oracle known as *Ika Osun*. *Iya Olofi* could be seen to have demonstrated exceptional love required in friendship by resolving to save the life of her friend, *Orunmila*. This would be a sign of genuine personal commitment to the bond of friendship between her and her friend, *Orunmila* instead of handing him over to the community as a victim for the restoration of the communal god.⁵⁶ Although *Iya Olofi*'s action here might have appeared as a disregard to the god of the community, it should be noted that *Iya Olofi* was not specifically requested or ordered by the god to release *Orunmila* as a victim. The god simply made a prescription of what was required for the sacrifice, but it was the responsibility of the

⁵² Appendix 2 No xii on pg. 254.

⁵³ Appendix 1 No ii on pg. 224.

⁵⁴ Appendix 2 No v on pg. 242.

⁵⁵ Appendix 1 No i on pg. 223.

⁵⁶ Appendix 1, No iii on pg. 225.

stakeholders to provide the victim. In that regard, *Iya Olofi* had no primary responsibility to make the provision; the community is generally supposed to do that. Therefore, for the Yoruba, the essence of friendship is all about to the wellbeing of actors in friendship and the common good of the society by not engaging in negative activities that can disrupt the peace and progress of the society. It thus follows that by not releasing *Orunmila* as her friend, *Iya Olofi* could not be accused of any wrong doing that could have affected her community negatively. We will further discuss this point in the study.

In the light of the foregoing, stress is laid on the place of the earth (land) in the Yoruba concept of friendship as seen in the word *Oreodale* or *Odaleore*. This shows that the earth occupies a very significant part in friendship according to the Yoruba belief and is embedded in their religious systems as seen in the oracular corpus⁵⁷. All the interviewees appeared to have shared the belief that the earth upon which a person walks about, from which he or she is made, and into which he or she will finally return at death, functions as a witness in all of a person's dealings in life. The general opinion of those interviewed concerning the place of the earth in friendship can be summed up in the words of Chief Kosemani: "The place of the earth in friendship according to the traditional religious beliefs and cultural practices is that man was made out of the earth and into it he shall return at death. In addition, as human beings we walk about on the earth, all that we eat, drink and use also come from it. Hence, the Yoruba often say: *The earth of friendship will favour you*. Against this backdrop, the earth is believed to exercise some judicial power in the case of betrayal between two friends. Consequently, the Yoruba again will say: *Whosoever betrays the earth will be swallowed by the earth.*"⁵⁸

The Yoruba belief regarding the place of the "earth" in friendship may be as a result of the traditional experience of the people about *Olodumare* (God), because they are very religious people even in their traditional religious system. The place of the earth in friendship, therefore, provides a common ground for all of the three cultural contexts to dialogue for a Yoruba-based understanding of friendship and betrayal.

As we bring together our findings from the oracles with the general understanding of the people, we can notice some influences of both Christianity and Islamic religion on the people's perceptions and understanding of the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal. Such influences are possible because of the long term interactions among the three cultures - Christian, Islam and

⁵⁷ Appendix 1, on pgs. 223-229.

⁵⁸ Appendix 1, No i on pg. 223.

Yoruba. For example, we can identify some points of convergence or agreement in a number of aspects on the concept of friendship and betrayal as enshrined in the *Ifa* oracles and in the understanding and practice of it by the Yoruba people in the following areas:

- (i) Friendship involves two or more people. For the people, friendship can be categorized as casual, ordinary and covenantal. In this regard, betrayal in the context of friendship has its consequences, but with different levels of severity depending on the type of friendship.
- (ii) There is a common theme of secrecy that must be kept. Secrets must not be divulged to any outsiders to the friendship.
- (iii) There is a common theme regarding the purpose of friendship, which is to meet the needs of friends, both material and emotional in the context of friendship.
- (iv) Betrayal, which is usually caused by envy, jealousy and mistaken identity, is condemned. But it might be necessary sometimes for the good of actors in friendship and the society at large.
- (v) Forgiveness is possible in the case of betrayal, if the offender repents. In the case of Judas, his repentance has sparked off a great deal of controversy.
- (vi) Friendship thrives well among equals, yet there can be exceptions to this rule, because inequality is not always a hindrance to friendship: “Among the Yoruba as it is also evident in the one of the oracles, there can be friendship between a master and a disciple; it all depends on their interest”. For example, we shall see later in this study how this idea applies in the case of Jesus-disciples friendship.
- (vii) Friendship is not always determined by genders and age.
- (viii) The earth has a very key role as the third party and a witness in the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal with the power of adjudication in the event of betrayal.
- (ix) A few people also believed that Judas, by his betrayal of Jesus, fulfilled a prophetic role, an action which he carried out and that had been predicted as part of the redemptive programme of God: “In my own opinion, it is like Judas had been predestined for that assignment” – to betray Jesus (Appendix 2, No.iv on pg. 239). This opinion points to the level of hybridity between the Yoruba traditional religion, Christianity and other cultural influences on the people. We shall discuss this further in the next chapter.

Although some of the above similarities between the *Ifa* oracles and the people’s idea of friendship and betrayal could be traced to the influences of Christianity, Western culture and Islam on the Yoruba culture and religion, certain aspects of the socio-cultural and religious beliefs

and practices, such as the place of the earth in friendship, judgment after death, with sayings like “*Birds of the same feathers flock together*” may have been part of the cultural evolution of the Yoruba people long before they came in contact with those cultures and others. Therefore, they could be seen as natural coincidence arising from the unity or common experiences of life about God and nature as human beings generally.

There are, however, a few cases where the *Ifa* oracles and the general understanding of the people on the concept of friendship and betrayal diverge. For example, betrayal might sometimes be necessary for the good of the actors in a friendship and the society at large.

Secondly, with regard to the seeming strange expression on friendship by one of the interviewees- “A friend kills and a friend saves”,⁵⁹ it should be noted that the Yoruba have a body of witty sayings that are meant to be guiding principles of life for every situation. Although it is true that Christianity and Islam may have had an influence on these sayings, it is also possible that some of them may have developed naturally by the Yoruba themselves. The above proverb is just one of the witty sayings of the Yoruba about the general disposition of honesty and dishonesty in friendship, implying that while some people will naturally want to protect their friends, some other friends may naturally want to harm them.

3.3 Post-Enlightenment Western Concept Of Friendship

Our concern here is to identify and clarify Western understandings of friendship as it relates to this study, because of the diversities of opinions involved in what is today known as Western culture. In fact, Western culture is a complex phenomenon that developed through different cultural backgrounds from the ancient world till today, and it has continued to absorb and influence other cultures of the world.

Therefore, we need to exercise some caution in view of our attempts to examine the Western concepts of friendship and betrayal, and possibly identify the cultural context that might have informed those concepts. The best way to address the issue, in view of the complexities associated with that culture, is to trace the trend of its development. Just as Western culture generally cannot be pinned down to one concept so also its concept of friendship and betrayal is not fixed due to diverse cultural influences over several centuries: “Western culture is neither homogeneous nor unchanging. As with all other cultures it has evolved and gradually changed

⁵⁹ Appendix 2 on pgs. 230-267.

overtime. All generalities about it have their exceptions at some time and place. The polis of the Greeks is not the same as the American superpower of the 21st century. The gladiatorial games of the Roman Empire are not identical to present day football. The art of Pompeii is not the art of Hollywood. Nevertheless, it is possible to follow the evolution and history of the West and appreciate its similarities and differences, its borrowing from and contribution to, other cultures of humanity.”⁶⁰

Consequently, we need to identify a broad-based flexible conception that is relevant for our study, and that is to explore the idea of a post-Enlightenment Western concept of friendship and betrayal.⁶¹ Western culture is marked by a great cultural diversity, although Christianity played the major role in shaping Western culture and civilization since the fourth century C.E.

However, with the effects of the Enlightenment in the 18th century and subsequently, there was a change in the cultural orientation of Western culture that brought about a change in Western worldview. This change also reflected in the Western conception of friendship: “The Early Modern “Age of Discovery” first led by Portugal and Spain in the 15th and 16th centuries with France...faded into the “Age of Enlightenment of the 18th century, characterized by the military advantage of Europeans from the development of firearms and other military technologies”. We shall focus on the post- Enlightenment period of Western culture. This is an understanding of Western culture from the Enlightenment, marked by “political thought, widespread employment of rational argument favouring free thought, assimilation of human rights, the need for equality, and democracy”.⁶² This is very important for us because it constituted the cultural orientation, perception and worldview of the post-Enlightenment period with regard to how Western scholars perceived, understood and explained things. This includes the idea of friendship and betrayal as reflected in the works of some Western critical scholars and authors whom we are going to look at in this section of our study. This is to say that although

⁶⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_culture_pg.2 (Accessed 28th January, 2014).

⁶¹ “In other words, what we think of as Western thought today originates primarily from Greco-Roman and Germanic influences, and includes all the ideals of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment as well as Christian culture.” <http://en.wikipedis.org/wiki/Western.culture> pg.5 (Accessed 28th January, 2014). “Western culture has a long history that spans several centuries, and we cannot engage ourselves with such details because it not necessary for our study. In fact, we are concerned with Western scholars’ opinion on the subject matter of friendship and betrayal from the period after the Enlightenment in the 18th century. Western culture is usually referred to synonymously with Western civilization involving a heritage of social norms, ethical values, belief systems, political systems and much more. Through the influence of Hellenistic philosophy, scholasticism, humanism, the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment, a tradition developed out of rationalism in all spheres of life”. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_culture_pg.1 (Accessed 28th January, 2014).

⁶² Ibid. pg. 1.

most main stream Western scholars such as Luz and others would generally maintain the traditional negative evaluation of Judas' action in their exegetical analysis of the pericope for this study, a rather different radical opinion has been advanced by some other post-Enlightenment Western cultural scholars such as Klassen, Cook and Paffenroth.

There are varying degrees of understanding of the concept of friendship from different disciplinary perspectives, representing different Western ideas of the concept. As already hinted, the Aristotelian concept of friendship of virtue which is distinguishable from the kind of friendship referred to as friendship of utility and pleasure has become a reference point for sociologists and philosophers with regard to the study of human relationships in the postmodern times (Pahl, 2000:21).

For example, Robert Bellah (1996), based on his study of Aristotle's work on friendship with its three components of fellowship, usefulness and commitment to common good, he argues that the third component is difficult to understand because it is not easy to identify a point of common moral commitment in friendship the same way we can identify the point of pleasure and usefulness (1996:115). In contemporary Western society, friendship is understood as a private and voluntary involvement between two people. In that sense, friendship would appear to be a relationship between two equal individuals (Bell and Coleman, 1999:8). Nevertheless, friendship is also seen to have been influenced by such factors as class, gender, status, ethnicity, and age. This is one of the issues that this thesis seeks to address with regard to African cultural understandings of the concept of friendship and betrayal, having noticed equality in friendship was also a vital aspect of the Greco-Roman concept of friendship.

Ray Pahl supports Cicero's idea of friendship when he argues that virtuous friends "enlarge and extend each other's moral experience and that they are bound together by the recognition of their moral excellence" (Pahl, 2000:22). Friendship thus provides a mirror for friends to be able to assess themselves, and can be sustained by conversations about their wellbeing regarding what is involved in good living. Friendship thus entails sharing ideas about what good is all about and the pursuit of the same.

Hill and McCarthy (1999), referring to David Hume, point out that friendship is about common experience of pleasures and politeness. This is because one is most touched by extraordinary shows of love in friendship where the smallest concern of one's life is attended to, even by having to sacrifice one's own interest for that of one's friend. But for Adam Ferguson, such experiences of friendship may be difficult to sustain because of competition (Hill and

McCarthy, 1999). This may be true in view of the fact that friendship entails a network or complexities of loyalties clamouring for attention. Therefore, friendship thrives well with factors such as trust, security, self-esteem and feeling of being loved as the economic, social and cultural context of friendship and its sustenance (Pahl, 2000:148). This is another very pertinent question we want explore in this study regarding who should receive our attention in the case of complex friendship ties.

For C. S. Lewis, friendship is conditioned only by companionship. So, ordinarily friends will refer to companions. Friendship results from companionship as two people meet and discover that they have some interests that are common. Such common interests may be religious, business, and the likes (Lewis, 2002:78-79).

However, as we have pointed out earlier, Western culture has continued to absorb from others as well as to be influenced by others. With this cross cultural influences, especially during the Renaissance in the 15th-16th century through 18th and 20th centuries with the Enlightenment, what was known as Western culture, and that which informed the worldview of the above Western scholars had changed: “With the rise of Christianity, much of Rome’s traditions and cultures were reshaped by that religion and transformed into something new, which would serve as the basis for the development of Western civilization after the fall of Rome”.

The point we are trying to make here is that as Western culture passed through changes and transformations through its contact with different cultures of the world at different times, so also the worldview that informed Western perception and ideals changed. Hence, our classification of Western concept of friendship and betrayal into two classes: pre-Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment periods. In this study, the focus is on the latter since the Enlightenment informs virtually every aspect of Western culture today.

By pre-Enlightenment, we mean the period when Western worldview and perception was largely informed by Greco-Roman and Jewish-Christian cultural influences. The Post-Enlightenment refers to a period when the Western culture was based on the principles of freedom, individualism, democracy human rights, assimilation and equality following the effects of the Renaissance, industrialization and the Enlightenment. These kinds of principles formed the worldview of Western culture of the period, as the tool through which issues were perceived, understood and explained. This was not only in the areas of politics and the economy, but also in the area of scholarship including biblical scholarship which is our area of concern in this study.

In modern and postmodern times, anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists agree on the fact that friendship has become an increasingly important form of social glue in postmodern societies (Pahl, 2000: Introduction, xi). They see the tie of kinship merging with the tie of friendship, because the primary bond in friendship, unlike in kinship, is not forced in an ascribed situation. Rather friendship is achieved. In the Western world, however, friendship is seemed to have been influenced by more competitive and individualistic tendencies. Similarly Tonnies (1987) has identified friendship and kinship as important pillars of the traditional community. However, this has greatly been influenced by industrialization, urbanization and capitalism which means that friendship has become more of a personal relationship. Pahl has also shown that there has been a significant shift among many groups in the way they conceive and experience friendship. He noted that friendship has moved from being instrumental in commercial society to being a moral concern that is based on moral values (Pahl, 2000:53-58).

Against this backdrop, friendship is generally influenced by people's social and economic lives or conditions. However, the following points call for our attention. There is a significant difference in the way social groups organize their friendship ties. Second, there is the tendency for over-emphasizing gender differences in friendship patterns and contents. According to Ray Pahl, sociologists have made some over generalizations about friendship patterns among men and women. There is also the influence of instability and fluctuations in the world that causes competition and rivalry rather than friendship. This has to do with one's status being based on economic condition in a world of economic uncertainty. In other words, these factors constitute negative influences on the development of friendship. The third point has to do with the influence of growing age on the experience of friendship pattern. As one grows in age it affects his or her experience of friendship. It should be noted that this opinion is basically Western with its characteristic principle of freedom and individualism but for us as Africans, this may not be a problem because we often grow together with our friends within the communal life setting and so friendship can be sustained with seriousness and commitment.

Graham Allan has also followed that line of thought in his article, *In Friendship and social structures* (1998). He explores cross-cultural effects on friendship and how social scientific methods can help us to interpret ancient concepts of friendship within our modern cultural understanding. He explores how sociological perspectives influence the general analysis of friendship as a form of personal ties. He focuses on the social construction of friendship from the perspective of working class male sociability, status and identity and the influence of

modernity on friendship. Allan has some points that we shall address in this study, especially about social construction and the influence of modernity on friendship.

Allan further observes that social and economic conditions have some influence on friendship, just as class and status are also very important factors in informal relationships. Yet these factors are not fixed but dynamic because they often change with time, historically and in background. Consequently, they often affect the structure of any form of friendship. Referring to the works of Milardo and Wellman (1992), Allan recalls recent sociological attempts to demonstrate that friendship is socially determined rather than just being personal. In other words, friendship is patterned according to social rules rather than by the concerns of the individuals involved. This idea evolved from the belief that friendship is influenced by the social context in which it develops. It means that an individual's actions in friendship are bound to the socio-economic environment in which the friendship tie is being knotted.

While friendship could be studied from such a wider sociological perspective, Allan has also identified four different contexts of friendship: Personal environment level, network level, community level and societal level. I observe that these contexts are overlapping, but more significant is the fact that industrialization and urbanization have also come to have a major influence on the nature of friendship as new conditions and patterns evolve. In this regard, friendship can no longer be based on calculated interest but tends to be based on sympathetic compatibility with each or one another. Allan observes that a working class male non-kin sociability may not inspire close relationship or friendship, but middle class sociability does. The point, therefore, is that friendship is not only conditioned by social and economic conditions alone, but also by individual choice, feeling and commitment (Allan, 1998:692). Two reasons have been adduced for this argument.

There is no stipulated uniform way or model of behaviour and fixed social status in friendship which accounts for the obvious variation in the way (Western) friends behave. In other words, although clear position or status can influence friendship in a particular social context, there cannot be a permanent pattern of social position and status as that is also dynamic in nature. Similarly, cultural patterns have also been found not to be static, no matter the level of stability. This means that "patterns of behaviour" typical of a culture at a given time are also subject to modifications along with changes in socio-economic conditions. In this sense, there can be no routine cultural practice as new practices evolve with alteration of the overall social formation (Allan, 692).

We can see the complexities of the post-Enlightenment understanding of friendship in Allan's arguments. But we want to underline that these arguments represent Western cultural understanding. Here, we would like to reiterate one important social setting of most African societies, particularly the Yoruba, and that is a communal life. Allan may be right that a friend may not be forced to behave in a particular way, but his/her behaviour is generally regulated by the societal norms as prescribed within a particular African social setting whether in the context of friendship or in daily living. This is the basis of the concept of *Omoluabi*, i.e. virtuous child, within the Yoruba social system. To behave otherwise is to be seen as lacking in decorum. I think the same is true of the Matthean community. As we shall see later in the narrative, the Matthean church reflects a communal organization with a prescribed set of rules and regulations to regulate the life of its members. The rules and regulations form the basis for the patterns of behaviour, and have a place in all forms of relationships within that social setting or community. Again, we shall see how the concept of Yoruba friendship and betrayal within the whole range of their social systems responds practically to this issue.

Furthermore, although Allan also subscribes to the Cicero's idea that equality is an important factor in the construction of friendship requiring that friends should treat each other or one another as equal, even while recognizing their differences. His argument shows that discrepancy in status could be quite problematic in friendship. Similarly, Allan concludes that "friendship plays a significant role in shaping people's social identities through building up affinities with others who occupy similar social and economic locations is not entirely true (Allan, 693). This is because, as pointed out above, social positions that often inform social status are not fixed. Therefore, the idea that friendship networks also alter in relation to changes that occur in individuals' social and economic locations or conditions such as, leaving one's parents, getting married, get a new job, relocating, is also attributable to the post Enlightenment influence on Western culture.

Allan further observes that dynamism of social and economy in the postmodernity or late modernity has its effects on friendship patterns. The significance of this influence is seen in the fact that it has changed the focus of friendship from that of a collective commitment inspired by the society to that of individual fulfillment of those involved in a friendship. Modernity inspired by rapid technological development, globalization of markets, high level of job change, has negated the old patterns of life. In view of this development traditional aspects of class structure have come to be challenged, because the technological challenge has a great deal of influence on

the course of life of individuals; and with its attendant socio-economic change, new social divisions and status have emerged, although they are also subject to a change. Nevertheless, the effects are noticeable in all social concepts involving marriage with its attendant sexual orientations and generally on the question of relationships, particularly friendship. Friendship, especially in the modern and postmodern times, is a personal and free choice with all the accompanying responsibilities. It offers practical and emotional support and significant influence on personal identities. Friendship is thus a resource to enable people to cope effectively and courageously with certain events of life that pose themselves as challenges to us, and it helps us to integrate these (Allan, 1996:114). Allan therefore concludes that with this development, social formation informed by late modernity has brought about changes that tend towards individuality to the end that self-expression and identification in associations is the most important social organization.

It thus boils down to the fact that friendship will continue to be the main arena in which friends can express themselves as who they are, Allan maintains that with new developments in social and economic formation and the theories of late modernity, the whole sphere of personal relationships, especially friendship, seems to have assumed a greater significance in the consciousness of the people and in the construction of their social and personal identities. From Allan's argument, it seems that nothing is fixed about friendship as it waxes or wanes according to the people's circumstances and changes along with their interests. But the place of friendship remains indisputable. In other words, the process of change in friendship seems to be endless as one redefines himself or herself in the light of a new understanding of who he or she is, and a new friendship is made that is consonant with that new understanding as a replacement of the old, or as a refurbishment of the old identity.

But as we have pointed out earlier, Allan is expressing the perception and worldview of the post-Enlightenment Western culture which tends to promote individualism, freedom and equality for freethinking. The relative absence of communal involvement in friendship is also a very pertinent one to this study as it raises the question about the nature of friendship whether it is to be seen as a private involvement or public engagement. We shall respond to this later when we come to see how African culture conceives friendship as a social factor.

Although, the cultural orientations in Africa may be diverse and different from one society to the other, the underlying common factor is that they cherish communal life rather than individualism. The institution of family life still has its place as one important features of the

Africans way of life. The principle by which most African communities operate is that of “*because they are so I am*”, and friendship in most African social systems, especially among the Yoruba operates on the same code. A Yoruba proverb brings home this point: “*Fi ore re ban mi, ma so iru eniyan ti o je*”, meaning that “*Show me your friend, and I will tell you the kind of person you are*” One should not be surprised to find the practice of extended family life in most African communities today. This is particularly true of the Yoruba in Nigeria, whom we are going to use as a model of African culture in our study of Matthew’s Gospel and the concept of friendship and betrayal.

3.4. Examination Of The Concept Of Friendship In The Greco-Roman Culture

The major task here is to examine the concept of friendship from the cultural perspective of the Matthean Gospel. It presents a fundamental Jewish perspective which had been influenced by Greco-Roman culture. By the first century C.E, the Mediterranean world generally reflected the influence of Hellenism to varying degrees. As a step toward our task, we shall look at how the word “friend” was used in the Greco-Roman, Jewish and Rabbinic cultural contexts.

According to Kittel (1969:22), in Greek, friendship has its roots in the Greek word *philos* that denotes a general type of love. It is used for love between family, between friends or desire or enjoyment of an activity. The word is more extensively used in the Lucan Gospel than in the Matthean Gospel. *Philos* is commonly found in secular circles of the ancient world to denote personal friend or what Kittel (1969), calls “boon companion” or “a guest” (cf. Lk. 11:5-6). In addition, *philos* may also have a special meaning as a friendship with the kiss as a sign of loving fellowship. However, in the Old Testament and Judaism, *philia* is said to have the Hebrew equivalent of either erotic love (cf. Prov. 15:19) or political friendship (cf. I Macc 8:1; 2Macc. 4:11). Kittel explains that it is from *philia* that *philiazo* as a word is formed, and is used in the LXX in the sense of “to be, act or become a friend” (Kittel, 1969:1267). In this regard, *philia* refers to the love springing from friendship, affectionate regard which has ‘give and take’ in both ancient and modern Greek for dating relationships as well as in marriage.

Another word is *storge* which means “affection” in ancient and Modern Greek. It is a kind of affection that is felt by parents for their children. It is rarely used in ancient works, but usually as an exclusive description of relationship within the family. *Agape*, on the other hand, means love “in a kind of spiritual sense”. It denotes a general affection or deeper sense of “true unconditional love” rather than the attraction suggested by *eros*. This denotes a sacrificial love that

does not seek any reward in return. *Agape* is also used in ancient texts as a description of feelings for one's children, spouse or to mean a love feast (Liddell and Scott, 1968:6).

David Konstan (1996), his work on the relationship of frankness and flattery to friendship, observes that the Greek *philos* in the classical period of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE could mean so many things such as “friend”, as a noun, “dear” as an adjective or “loving” as a participle; while *etairos* refers to a comrade-in-arm without reference to any bond of amicable feeling. However, a combination of the two terms *philos-etairos* points to a beloved person quite different from kinship, and usually one who is of the same age and status with oneself. Konstan thus sees *philos* as a member of various groups and status including kin, fellow workers who are held in a special affection. Therefore, in classical period *philos* usually referred to intimate associates who were not closely related by blood or marriage. He further explains how the idea of city-state characterized by the codification of law of status has inspired a clear differentiation between immediate kin who are regarded as heirs and those outside the family setting. To this end, the term *philos* is still subject to a variety of usages as an adjective to mean “dear”, while *philein* means “to love” and *philia*, as an abstract noun means “friendship”, covering even a relationship between parents and children, comrades in arms and formal connections; and *philos* as a noun meaning “a friend” (Konstan,1996:8).

Other familiar terms or words related to friendship include: *philos* and *agapan*. The Septuagint used the Hebrew word *ahab* for love translated as *philos* (I love) with reference to persons, things as well as actions (Pfeiffer, 2008: 1058). The Septuagint, however, uses *agapan* mostly and *philein* seldom in a secular context. Kittel observes that love in the Old Testament, based on Jer. 31:30, can be conceived as “a spontaneous feeling which implies self-giving or seizure by an object which awakens the feeling or performance of an action in which pleasure is taken”. In other words, love can be described as an “inexplicable power of the soul given in the inward person”. Hence “love and hate are the poles of life (Kittel, 1969:22-23).

But *philein* also had other usages in the LXX such as profane, religious, personal and theological. Profane use relates to mutual relation of sexes, then to parents and children, then friends to masters and servants and society at large. It refers generally to the vital impulse of the sexes towards one another. We find examples of profane usage in the Septuagint like in Ezekiel, Hosea and Jeremiah with reference to love in the sense of sexuality as in Hos. 3:1. Although it is expressed in an euphemistic form, this conception has a sense of love of man and woman, particularly husband and wife such as it is found in the Song of Solomon 8:6. However, *philein*

has also been used to denote personal relationship that is devoid of sexuality, such as parenthood, blood relationship, legal partnership and friendship (Kittel, 1996:24).

Kittel further identifies religious usage of *philein* as when love refers to love of persons for persons, especially between God and humanity. This kind of religious conception of love also has theological value, because it is related to the covenant relationship between God and humanity, especially the nation of Israel. This covenant relationship is conditioned by God's love on the basis of His people's obedience and faithfulness to the covenant (cf. Deut. 10:14-16). Again, φιλεῖν could also be used metaphorically in the sense of the love between two people who are not intrinsically related. It is not sexually connected and without any religious connection, for instance, in the friendship between David and Jonathan (I Sam. 18:1, 3).

The various usages of the word "love" in Hellenistic Judaism following the influence of both Greek and oriental culture on the word are also noteworthy. In the LXX i.e. Septuagint, *philos* is rendered with different meanings ranging from 'personal friend', 'friend of the family' and 'best man' to 'client' or 'political supporter' as well as 'friend of the king'. Related terms are *adelphos*, *betairos*, *symbolos*, and *symmachos* (Kittel, 1969:1267). Kittel points out that the love of the Hebrew text, *āheb*, is rendered by *agapan*, in the LXX, which suppresses *eros* and *philia*. He refers to *agapan* as the substantive of *agapan*, which is now commonly in use but not in the LXX. Generally, all the words associated with *agapan* are given new meanings by the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

In Hellenistic Judaism, the love for one's neighbour is also a major theme, as it is also rooted in love for God Himself according to the belief that "hatred derives from the devil, love from God; it is only the man who loves God that is secure against the assaults of Belliar" (Kittel, 1996:24). However, this kind of love, in most cases, is directed towards one's family but only rarely towards one's neighbour. On the whole, Kittel observes that in spite of whatever may appear as differences in the concept of love between older Jewish writings in Hebrew and the Greek LXX, love can still be understood on the basis of its character as love of one's neighbour as in the older Jewish understanding of the word.

Kittel also refers to Josephus' use of the word *agapan* to mean "penitent" in a more biblical sense in order to earn God's love by fulfilling the commandments such as taking care of an orphan like his father. The word *agapan* thus expresses a faithful relationship between God and humans that can lead to various kinds of persecution because of its special nature.

However, to continue in that faithful relationship with God in spite of persecution will culminate in eternal life in the future world. In another sense, in the Hellenistic period *agapan* also has reference to the love of wisdom as in the expression: “He who loves wisdom keeps the commandment” (Wis. 6:18f) (Kittel, 1969:40).

Kittel points out that the injunction to love in Lev. 19:18 should not be conceived legally, because love is not achievable by legislation - it is a natural feeling. However, the injunction is complimentary to the ultimate concern of social legislation to protect and promote the sense of togetherness in the community which can better be achieved through love rather than by legal imposition (Kittel, 1996:25). This is quite relevant for this study as it hints at the socio-religious implication of our quest for a new African culture-based understanding and interpretation of the concept of friendship and betrayal in the Matthean Gospel.

These many factors that characterized Greco-Roman ideal friendship, such as unity, mutuality, reciprocity and equality, are relevant to our study. Referring to Culy’s extensive discussion of these factors (2010:34-61), I examine them briefly here.

1. **Reciprocity:** The Greco-Roman concept of friendship entailed a broad range of relationships that are characterized by reciprocity, often demonstrated in the forms of hospitality, gift giving, loyalty and political support (2010:41). Culy further points out that reciprocity constituted the common feature in all Greco-Roman friendships whichever it might be: personal, political or business. He refers to L. Pearson to affirm this point: “The whole ancient theory of friendship is based on the assumption that favours will be returned: a man who helps his friend usually does so with the expectation that some return for his favour will be made” (2010:41). However, this should be guided by the desire to do good to someone simply for the benefit of the person who is loved (2010:18). But for Cicero, mutual affection rather than reciprocity should condition the basis for a friendship.

2. **Unity:** The Greco-Roman concept of friendship also demonstrated that ideal friendship is based on shared interest. Culy refers to Cicero as saying that, “friendship is nothing else than accord in all things human and divine, conjoined with mutual goodwill” (Culy, 2010:50). The point is that friendship that is built on mutual confidence and trust and leads to unity in views and feelings – an experience depicted as “sharing one soul” by Aristotle: “Friends have one soul between them”; and Cicero: “the effect of friendship is to make, as it were, one soul out of

many” (2010:50). Culy thus concludes: “the notion of absolute unity was a part of the concept field of ideal friendship prior to the time of Aristotle and persisted throughout the Hellenistic period” (2010:51).

Friendship is basically anchored in loyalty, which is the ability in a friend to keep the bond of friendship in whatever circumstance of life. It is an ability to stand by one’s friend, to defend his or her cause by all means and protect his or her interest. However, as we have already noticed in our word study, loyalty in friendship is based on love, and love is the cord of unity. In other words, love plays an important role in solidifying and cementing relationship and makes loyalty achievable. This thus implies that there are responsibilities attached to friendship which therefore determine the limit of such friendship ties.

3. Mutuality: Mutuality is a product of unity in relations, because according to Aristotle, “friends have all things in common”; and Seneca: “he that has much in common with a fellow-man will have all things in common with a friend (Culy, 2010:51). The interesting thing about mutuality is that it inspires sharing as true friends do not view their possessions as their own private properties. But they are given to sharing; not only their possessions and their experiences of life, but also vicissitudes of life. This is the kind of mutual love and kind affection that friends should always demonstrate for one another. This kind of mutuality differentiates a genuine friendship from friendship of pleasure or political friendship.

In this regard, mutuality also points to trust in friendship. This means that betrayal is ruled out in friendship. Such a demand for personal trust has serious moral implications just like loyalty, because friendship support often transcends the moral boundaries of a particular social world. The difficulties and complexities of friendship should normally be overcome through trust. Trust always involves taking a risk because of our inability to monitor other people’s behaviour and our inability to have complete knowledge about other people’s motivation.

Furthermore, mutuality can also imply confidentiality. Confidentiality has to do with keeping some secrets about the lives of those involved in friendship, positive or negative that must not be divulged under any circumstance. What constitutes a secret in friendship may touch so many issues of life depending on the actors. These include: family life, businesses, properties, etc. The point about confidentiality in friendship can be understood similarly with loyalty and trust in friendship. Konstan shows the aspect of secrecy in friendship in a statement attributed to

Seneca: “Speak as boldly with him as with yourself...share with your friend all worries, all your thoughts...why should I hold back any words in the presence of my friends” (Konstan, 1996:14).

On the whole, one important thing to note about frankness, according to Culy, is that it has to be exercised with caution in ideal Greco-Roman friendship: “frankness was a right and responsibility that had to be exercised with care...about the use of frank speech toward a friend before a large company...too much frankness could cause problem in a friendship” (2010:54). In view of this, frank criticism had to be offered in the appropriate manner, free from harshness and insult.

4. Equality: This is another important factor in ideal Greco-Roman friendship which occurred only among the social equals. The general idea among the Greco-Roman writers was that friendship in equality made for harmonious relationship. For Aristotle: “Friendship could not be maintained where a wide gap in status existed” (2010:56). This is because reciprocity in friendship would be possible only in a situation where the two could afford it. Culy, however, points out that this was not fixed in the Roman period, because equality was not a strict requirement for friendship. According to Cicero, “where such a condition of inequality existed in friendship the superior should condescend to the level of his (her) inferior friend”, to enable them to relate at a plain where they could act together based on the ability of the superior to bridge the social gap or distance (2010:58).

In the classical period of the democratic city-state, Konstan observes that the idea of friendship was determined by the principle of equality and freedom from dependency. In other words, friendship was characterized by being able to assist in times of crisis; the idea of equal status with mutuality in friendship entailed a systematic kind of obligations to each other. This kind of development is believed to promote friendship, because the relationship allows for frankness or liberty of speech, i.e. *parresia* based on equal status of friends; in which case no one is afraid of his friend in power.

On the other hand, it has been observed that friendship that spans class difference, arising from wealth or social status cannot be considered as true friendship because such a friendship cannot be said to be based on the principle of equality. Status or equality is central to the Greek concept of friendship, and it later became the basis for the Christian form of *isotes*, i.e.

for sharing among members of the Christian communities in conformity with the Aristotelian principle of reciprocity.⁶³

3.4.0 Concept Of Friendship In The Matthean Cultural Context

We have already see how the word “friend was variously used in the different cultural contexts of the ancient world. These had an influence on the Matthean cultural context and informed the kind of concept of friendship and betrayal prevalent in the Gospel. According to Jonathan A. Draper, the Matthean community could best be described as a proto-Christian community, because it had not completely broken away from the Jewish Group. In that regard, the Matthean cultural context that informed the kind of concept of friendship and betrayal found in that community could be traced back to many cultural influences, such as Greco-Roman, the Jewish, and of course, the Jesus tradition.

In addition to the above Greco-Roman cultural influence, we could see further influences on the Matthean cultural context by Hellenistic-Jewish influence as an offshoot of the Jewish religion. It should be noted that the Jewish influence on the Matthean cultural context could further be seen through the Non-canonical books (Apocryphal) which were written in Greek.

We can also see a distinct note that the Hellenistic-Jewish culture brought into the Matthean cultural context, particularly on the theme of friendship. It was the idea of friendship between God and humanity as seen in the case of the God-Abraham and God-Moses friendship. Culy (2010:62) points out that discussions on friendship were not as common in Jewish literature as in Greco-Roman literature. Nonetheless certain traditions, especially within the Wisdom Literature, highlight important features of friendship prevalent in the Jewish traditions. In the LXX, both canonical and Apocryphal texts, the term φίλος is used to describe a range of relationships from intimate friend (Deut.13:6), family friend or “best man” or friend of the bridegroom (I Macc. 9:39), of a client or political supporter (Est.6:13) and of King’s advisor (I Chron.27:33).

In other words, in the Canonical Old Testament, a number of texts reflect the sense of an intimate friendship that is similar to Greco-Roman friendship language. For example: the

⁶³ The Apostle Paul developed this act of *koinonia* among the churches he founded both in Asia Minor and Macedonia on the basis that people with spiritual riches can benefit from the material riches of others, and vice versa (I Cor. 9:1-12; 2 Cor. 9).

friendship between David and Jonathan in both the Hebrew Bible and the LXX . In addition, the command to “love your neighbor as yourself” in Lev. 19:18, is to be seen as a reflection of the “one soul” type of relationship extolled by Greco-Roman writers (Culy, 2010:62).

But Culy points to one significant influence of the Greco-Roman cultural idea of friendship on Jewish/Christian Literature in the work of Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus), which is the earliest of the Deuterocanonical / Apocryphal books of the Old Testament in the early second century BCE. It highlights guiding principles for making friends and dealing with them (2010:64). He explains that the influence of the Greco-Roman notion of friendship that is reflected in the works of Ben Sira was borne out of the desire to reflect, affirm and interpret such notions of friendship, but consistent with Jewish piety, in such a way that it would make it understandable to the Greco-Roman audience. Hence, while Ben Sira shares the Greco-Roman notion of friendship, he sought to teach those notions in a way that made them fit into the Jewish faith.

So from the Jewish perspective, Ben Sira noted that friendship is an important ingredient for a happy life, but emphasized the need for caution in choosing friends (2010:65). It is interesting that Culy noted the same trend in the works of Philo and Josephus as Hellenistic-Jewish writers on the concept of friendship to make Christian notions, especially on friendship understandable to a broader Greco-Roman audience. And for Philo, God’s friendship with Abraham demonstrated the “one soul” friendship of the Greco-Roman friendship, which by extension came to include an entire group (2010:67). We can see here the distinctive Jewish feature of friendship which is relevant for this study. Abraham and Moses’ friendship with God shows that to those whom God loved, God also gave special revelations (Exd. 3:1-22, 33:11; Num.12:8; Deut. 34:10). That provided that basis for the relationship of God and Israel on the one hand, and for a covenant relationship with mutual responsibilities between them and God on the other. And that God-Abraham friendship would be the vehicle through which the nations of the earth would also come into friendship with God. In other words, this is to be regarded as God’s invitation to people to come into fellowship with him and that such friendship with God will naturally lead to friendship within the community of faith (2010:68).⁶⁴ Meals are something that human beings have devised as the sign of genuine friendship, because it represents the common link between the meals and the friends. This is particularly important for our study of

⁶⁴ Hilary of Poitiers argued that the kind of friendship that Abraham and Moses enjoyed with God has now, through the Gospel, been extended to all Jesus’ followers: “Indeed we know that Abraham was a friend of God. And the law said Moses was a friend of God. But the Gospels show many are friends of God” (Enarrat.Ps.138,38) (Culy, 2010:82).

Matthew, especially as to how the community has regarded its calling into friendship with Jesus through discipleship. We shall explore this further shortly.

Although Culy goes on to examine the influence of the Greco-Roman friendship in the New Testament and Pauline letters, our concern here is Matthew's Gospel. This leads us to the final or climax of the influence on the Matthean cultural context that informed its concept of friendship and betrayal, and that is Jesus who came to fulfill the promise of a renewed relationship with God symbolized by Abraham and Moses' friendship with God: "ultimately, however, Christians put a distinctively Christian spin on Greco-Roman notions of friendship; *and Jewish too*" (Culy, 2010:84).

Just as the ancient cultures and practices must have influenced Western cultural development, so also we can argue that the Matthean cultural context might have been influenced by the kind of concept of love or friendship that was prevalent in the Jesus' tradition and the New Testament.

Friendship in the Jesus' tradition and New Testament is marked by the example of the relationship between Jesus himself and the people around him. Although Christianity as a religion evolved largely from within the Jewish culture, there is still a note of distinctiveness in its concept of friendship. In other words, the life of Jesus reflects a radically new structure of love. According to Kittel, Jesus' teaching on love shares similarity with Hillel's famous golden rule, but in the opposite direction: "whatever you wish men do to you do also to them". But Jesus demands exclusiveness that makes all other commands lead to this rule and all righteousness finds fulfillment in its norm. Kittel points out that love to Jesus "is a matter of will and action, which calls for decision and readiness for God and God alone in an unconditional manner that startles His hearers" (Kittel, 1969:45). And in order to fulfill this, it is required that one would have to renounce mammon, vainglory and the stress of persecution, because the disciple's loyalty will be tested by a series of persecutions for the love of God to be proved (Matt. 10:17ff). We can see that these basic rules reflected within the Matthean social context as seen in the Gospel.

Therefore, friendship in the New Testament seems to have summed up all of the ideals of the Greco-Roman and Jewish concepts of friendships and transformed them into a special and distinct type of Christian friendship that is evident in the Matthean Gospel. We therefore agree with Carmichael that the Christian concept of friendship that is anchored in love is the core of relationships which is a challenge to the Western modernist idea of friendship. Such love is grounded on 'shared being', goodness expressing itself in action, and order directed toward a

fulfillment in joy. She is of the opinion that a Christology of friendship would emerge when friendship itself is recognized as being transfigured by Jesus' actions. Friendship is a strong and practical way to understand Christian expressions of *caritas* or *agape* (Carmichael, 2006). For Carmichael, friendship can be seen as a development of the new understanding of the Christian concept of *agape* which is evident in the Matthean community.

We may ask, what is the relevance of the analysis of the three contending cultural contexts with regard to our quest to gain a new understanding and interpretation of the chosen periscope: Matt. 26:47-56 from the perspective of the Yoruba cultural concept of friendship and betrayal in the face of apparent relationships and overlapping of those cultural contexts?

A closer examination of these cultural contexts shows degree of distinctiveness of each of the three that can make them engage in a dialogue together contrapuntally in Said terminology. For example, as mentioned earlier, the cultural context that informed the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal is based on its unique traditional religious systems as it is preserved in the *Ifa* oracle divinity. This is expressed in five modules of beliefs: in the Supreme Being (God) with ultimate power, in deified gods, the living dead members of the family or community, family ties and relationships with living and non-living objects. Beliefs such as these establish common ground for the comparison between the Yoruba and the Matthean cultural contexts with that of the West concerning the place of the earth in friendship. This common ground points towards an interaction between the Western culture and the Yoruba and even the Matthean cultural contexts.

Second, we are going to bring the post-Enlightenment Western cultural context with its critical stance into a dialogue with both the Matthean and the Yoruba cultural contexts. It is our opinion here that the post-Enlightenment cultural contexts informed the kind of critical concept of friendship and betrayal that gave rise to this study. In other words, post-Enlightenment Western culture has presented a concept of friendship that has challenged us as Africans. This explains why post-Enlightenment Western culture is recognized as a welcome partner in the dialogue in the search for an African cultural understanding of the Bible.

Lastly, the cultural context of the Matthean Gospel reflects that of the early first century proto-Christian community, largely influenced by both Greco-Roman cultural and Hellenistic-Jewish background. This is seen reflected in various ideals of the Greco-Roman conceptual field of friendship such as, unity, mutuality, reciprocity and equality. For example, we shall look at how equality as a factor, generally influences friendship from the example of Jesus-disciples relationship as evident in the Gospel of Matthew.

However, the distinctive mark of Matthew's cultural context lies in the uniqueness that the Jesus' tradition brought into it in the first century C.E. regarding the kind of unrestricted love that is neither limited nor necessarily reciprocal. For these reasons, it is hoped that each of these three contending cultural contexts will have something unique to contribute to our search for a new cultural understanding of the text chosen for this study, when they are brought into contrapuntal dialogue.

3.5 Examination Of The Diverse Concepts Of Betrayal

Here we examine the concepts of betrayal as we later discuss it in the Yoruba cultural context, Western cultural context and the Matthean cultural context.

Attempts at definitions or meanings of the word "betrayal" will be pushed to the end of this discussion in order to avoid basing our definition on a particular culture right from the beginning. We will then conclude with a discussion on how our findings on betrayal, from the three cultural contexts agree with whatever definitions of betrayal we can find.

Betrayal deals with divulging secrets of one's friend to another person. It is one of the worst of all crimes and carries the most destructive effects. Betrayal is the denial or absence of love, trust, loyalty and confidentiality. The important question now is how do we identify betrayal patterns in the Yoruba cultural context, Western cultural context and the Matthean textual context for this study? We will begin by looking closely at each of the cultural contexts to analyze the concept of betrayal evident within them. We shall begin with the Yoruba context, Western context and then Matthew's context.

3.5.0 Yoruba Concept Of Betrayal

What do the Yoruba consider as betrayal in their socio-religious systems and cultural practices? The Yoruba concept of betrayal is embedded in the religious systems and cultural values of the people as contained in the *Ifá* oracles as we have noted, and this idea is confirmed in the interviews conducted in this study. According to the Yoruba cultural practices, especially in a covenantal friendship, betrayal, as explained by one of the interviewees is simply "going back on one's words" or "to divulge the secrets of one's friend to another person". In this light, the Yoruba cultural concept of friendship does not encourage betrayal in any matter that is congruent

to the wellbeing of friends and the community at large. A Yoruba proverb succinctly expresses this fact: “The yam that is not properly done should not be announced by a *bata* drummer”. This ironically implies that friends should engage in those actions that can promote personal and communal peace and progress and not otherwise. This kind of philosophy discourages friends from engaging in any action that can cause betrayal. In other words, while it tries to solidify the ties of friendship, it does not in any way preclude betrayal when the situation demands.

This brings to the fore the aspect of confidentiality in the Yoruba concept of friendship: what does the culture consider as confidential or secret in the context of friendship? The general opinion is that there are a plethora of issues that can be considered as confidential in friendship among the Yoruba people. These include: women (concubines), money, positions or chieftaincy titles, properties, business matters, bodily sickness, such as impotency, etc. For example, a man who has sexual weakness or is impotent can engage his friend with his wife in order to conceive children for him. This kind of secret should not be divulged to another person.

It will be noted that all the oracular texts considered have a note of warning against divulging one’s friend to others, particularly as seen in the case of *Okete* who lost his life for divulging the secrets of his friend, *Orunmila*.⁶⁵ The same warning against unfaithfulness is obvious in the case of *Ipin* who touched the breast of his master’s wife while he was away on a journey and was cursed. Similarly, in *Odua and Adubi*, *Adubi* broke his loyalty in friendship to *Odua* and it turns out negatively for him.⁶⁶

But then, the point is that betrayal cannot be absolutely ruled out in friendship, because it has to do with human frailty or weakness against which no one can legislate. Hence, in Yoruba cultural context, betrayal can be prompted by an action involving the question of morality that is related to the breach of the societal norms and values. In the first instance, friendship is generally about the wellbeing of the two friends and of course of the larger society. In a situation whereby one’s friend’s action raises a moral question like murder, he or she may have to devise a means to handle that carefully in order to keep a balance between his or her friendship and his or her moral probity. Sometimes, a person may be moved under some kind of spiritual influence to confess and renounce his or her questionable secret activities, such as ritual activities that may endanger the lives of other people or implicate him and his friend within the group. However, it is not stated expressly anywhere in the *Ifa* oracles that betrayal is allowed, even when such

⁶⁵ Appendix 1, No ii on pg. 223.

⁶⁶ Appendix 1, Nos 1-5 on pgs. 223-229.

contradictions are acknowledged. It is a matter of personal decision among the Yoruba, what to do in order to keep one's conscience at peace, especially when one's friend's action contradicts the social norms or moral values of the society.

In the Yoruba cultural concept of friendship, betrayal usually carries with a very serious aftermath for the betrayer, especially in the case of covenantal friendship. However, some of those interviewed believe that in case of casual and ordinary friendships, the consequence of a betrayal might not be so serious. Nevertheless, no betrayal can be regarded as less-consequential in Yoruba cultural beliefs and practices, just as it is evident in some of the selected oracular texts. An example is the case of *Adubi* who got glued to the palm tree by the curse of *Odua* for betraying him⁶⁷; and *Ipin* who was also cursed by *Ifa* for touching the breast of his wife while he was away⁶⁸. *Ipin* is still going about under that curse till today. This is to show that betrayal could be very devastating or consequential.

But then, if betrayal cannot be absolutely ruled out in friendship, what happens when betrayal occurs? The general idea of those interviewed is that in certain cases where the consequence of betrayal is not so fatal and did not involve loss of life, i.e. to have claimed the life of an erring party, there is the likelihood of forgiveness and reconciliation between two friends according to the Yoruba cultural practice of friendship and betrayal. However, the relationship might not be exactly the same again. For example, a woman whose friend cleverly took over her husband because she felt she was not caring for him enough would surely find it hard to reconcile and continue in friendship with such a woman in the way it was before the betrayal. Those who were interviewed expressed the belief that if the two friends are Christians it might be possible for them to be fully reconciled, except that the friendship may not be same again. But it should be noted that in a covenantal friendship, betrayal may result in a loss of life, as in the case of *Okete* and *Adubi*, and in that case forgiveness and reconciliation between the two friends may appear to be impossible.

In the light of the foregoing, how then would Judas' action constitute a betrayal in the context of the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal? This question shall be addressed in the next chapter. But so far, friendship in Yoruba cultural practices and socio-religious beliefs can be seen as a very important social aspect. It requires care and commitment for it to work in the interpersonal relationships of the people for the wellbeing of friends as well as for the larger

⁶⁷ Appendix 2, No 5 on pg. 241.

⁶⁸ Appendix 2, No 4 on pg. 239.

society. We can see a significant correlation between the selected relevant oracular texts and the understanding of an average Yoruba on the Yoruba cultural beliefs on friendship and betrayal, whether young or old, male or female; there is the need to safeguard this social experience in all its different forms. Friendship promotes mutual understanding, progress and social wellbeing when the bond of friendship is properly kept, but when the bond is disregarded or betrayed, it usually carries serious consequences.

We shall now look at the betrayal pattern in the post-Enlightenment Western cultural context.

3.5.1 *Post-Enlightenment Western Concepts Of Betrayal*

Western concepts of betrayal are explored here in the work of some Western scholars. One Western analyst of betrayal is Rodger L. Jackson, who observes that betrayal has become too common; yet like friendship little has been written about what the term actually means, probably because it is culturally conditioned. Betrayal is fundamentally a violation of trust. He then puts forward a conceptual framework of betrayal as a means for the assessment of what could be regarded as actual betrayal as distinguishable from perceived betrayal.

Jackson's (2000) attempt in this regard involves a critical assessment of the concept of betrayal based on Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility of betrayal: Discovering the meaning of treachery*. Referring to Dante's inferno, Jackson speaks about the reservation of the hottest part of such an inferno for a betrayer. To him, this indicates the gravity of the offence of betrayal, which he describes as an experience of a powerful sensation of violation. He sees betrayal as an assault on the integrity of individuals. It is capable of affecting one's capacity to trust, it causes a dent in confidence in a matter of judgment which affects one's perception of the world and opinion towards it generally (Jackson, 2000:72).

He attempts to differentiate a genuine betrayal from a merely perceived case because of the damaging nature of betrayal. No one will easily accept an accusation of being a betrayer because it is a heinous offence that touches on one's moral state. He appreciates Judith Shklar's *The Ambiguities of Betrayal* and Peter Johnson's *Frame of Deceit* as in-depth discussions on betrayal because they provide a good ground for the assessment of the theme of forgiveness and betrayal respectively, but without giving a precise meaning of betrayal.

The crux of the matter, therefore, is how to actually identify what constitutes a genuine betrayal, because such a clear sense of what is involved in betrayal will enable us to put it in a proper context in relationship. According to Shklar, betrayal is when “one person should have intentionally convinced another person of his future loyalty and then deliberately rejected him” (Shklar 1984:141). Jackson finds relevant background to establish the truth of that definition from different examples contained in literature rather than from a philosophical perspective. Betrayal is seen as a common event in literature on the theme of trust involving two or more characters. Jackson believes that the best way to approach the issues is to devise what he calls conceptual clarity and contextual adequacy as a principle for identifying a true case of betrayal. Guided by Jane Austen’s idea of trust and betrayal in the complexity and subtlety of human relationships with quite a number of examples of trusting relationships, Jackson tries to examine various aspects of betrayal by approaching it from the perspective of the definition of trust. He thus defines trust as a: “Disposition on the part of one person (the trusting party) to extend to another (the trusted party), discretionary power over something the truster values (the object of trust) with confident expectation that the trusted party will have the goodwill and competence to successfully care for it” (Jackson, 2000:76).

The above definition shows that under this condition, the truster has become dependent on the trusted, with a possibility of disappointment in quite a number of ways. Hence, Jackson argues that a trust relationship of this nature involves responsibilities between the two of them. In this light, Jackson identifies two types of trust: Warranted and Justified. Warranted trust has to do with a situation whereby the trusted party indeed has the goodwill and requisite competence to actually take care of the object of trust. The argument is that where the truster has no sufficient ground for trusting or for what Jackson calls plausible grounds for believing or justified means, any disappointment in that regard cannot be regarded as betrayal. Jackson thus argues: “we want those trusting us to remember that as finite beings with limited knowledge, we can neither anticipate nor surmount every contingency. Therefore, a truster may be disappointed even though we have done all we could to care for the object of trust” (Jackson, 2000:77).

However, in regard to how to develop necessary skills that the trusted party needs to have in order to be able to keep the object of trust, and the correct methodology to be adopted in order to determine whether the trusted party has the necessary skills and goodwill for warranted trust, Jackson argues that there seems to be no such methodology except our previous knowledge of the character and ability of the person we are trusting. Because even though we may trust

people it is not a guarantee that they will not disappoint us. Therefore, the fact that we value the object of trust in a relationship is not a guarantee that another person will accept a discretionary responsibility for such trust.

Therefore, there is the need for an acknowledgement or acceptance of trust on the part of those involved in a relationship. If there is no formal acknowledgement then there may be disappointment but not violation of trust. In some cases such acceptance and acknowledgement of trust may not be explicit, but in certain cases it is quite explicit. Such explicit cases of trust acceptance can be seen in the case of particular professional roles adopted by the trusted party such as, doctors, lawyers, and priests who undertake to represent the interest of others faithfully because it concerns their lives.

To this end, in order to have a proper grasp on what betrayal means, we need to refer back briefly to our study of friendship because of their interrelatedness. In friendship, trust rooted in love constitutes the basis of relationship, and for understanding and interpreting of each other's actions and words- a case of mutual commitment in friendship. In this case, it is not necessary to make a kind of advance stipulation about issues, since no friend is expected to disappoint the other as in the case of justified trust, "the exact extent and scope of the trust can only be completely understood within the context of the specific relationship" (Jackson, 2000:81).

Against this background, for a disappointment to count as a violation of trust, Jackson (Jackson, 2000:72) argues that there must be an element of justification and acknowledgement to distinguish a case of simple trust from that of trust in relationship. He maintains that it is only in the context of a relationship of trust that a disappointed trust can reasonably be regarded as a genuine violation of trust. It is the violation of the relationship of trust that has moral implications or significance. But then, Jackson argues further that before a violation of trust could be regarded as a betrayal, the role of a trusted party in the administration of acknowledged trust must be considered. How then do we determine this?

According to Jackson, a case of betrayal must be traceable to negligence on the part of the trusted party, "the last necessary condition for a genuine trust violation is that the cause of the disappointment must be linked to some neglect or indifference or to an intentional decision on the part of the trusted party to disappoint the trusting party." (Jackson, 2000:82). Hence to Jackson, betrayal can be described as having the "nature of an intelligible purposive event, a specific kind of manipulation of relationship of trust requiring a more deliberate character and a more cultivated understanding" (Jackson, 2000:84).

Consequently, betrayal would normally be regarded as a premeditated action. Betrayal is basically the distortion of trust by the trusted party in a relationship of trust which differentiates betrayal from mere disappointment. A betrayer sees a relationship as an opportunity for the gratification of self-interest i.e. for ulterior purposes, manipulating the relationship to his or her advantage. The betrayer lies or misleads the trusting party about the purpose of the relationship in order to achieve their selfish interest. The focus of a betrayer is not to sustain a relationship or care for the object of trust but to use it to achieve his or her own ulterior purpose. In betrayal, relationship is characterized by deception, suspicion, pretense, envy, and a foreknowledge of the consequence of the inevitable violation of trust on the part of the trusted party. But it is also true that betrayal may not be a deliberate intent and action to harm, but a failure to do what should be done, a dereliction of duty rather than an outright decision.

Although still influenced by Austen, Jackson tries to differentiate between mere abandonment and actual betrayal. He submits that they both have almost the same devastating effects on their victims. Abandonment is when one withdraws his or her care in a relationship of trust, which may also be regarded as a violation of trust but not a betrayal. In the Yoruba cultural context as well, it may be hard to draw a demarcating line between abandonment and betrayal. Abandonment by itself sounds negative and is no better than betrayal. But interestingly, in spite of the foregoing, Jackson indicates that betrayal may have a positive use but only when it is used to suppress evils that are destructive to the bond of friendship (Jackson, 2000:86-88).

Dr. Adele Ryan McDowell, a psychologist, in an article titled *Anatomy of betrayal* (2001), describes betrayal as an experience that conjures up deep hurt and heartache and cuts at the essential cord that attaches us to another. Therefore, betrayal breaks a bond that is predicted on trust⁶⁹. This best describes the kind of harrowing experience or the depth of disappointment that is often associated with betrayal in the Western context. Friendship should normally operate on the basis of trust and loyalty, whereby friends share together their material values, problems, plans, hopes and struggle. Often we turn to friends we can trust for advice in a problem. And in that case, betrayal of one's friend can have very devastating effects on such an individual. In other words, betrayal as a denial of trust, love and loyalty which are basic requirements for friendship is indeed a negation of friendship (Kennedy, 1986:128f). With respect to McDowell's analysis of betrayal, we can also consider Jackson's statement: "...There is a characteristic 'feel' to betrayal. The betrayed experience powerful sensations of violation; they feel used and damaged"

⁶⁹ http://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/anatomy_of_betrayal.html_pg2 (Accessed 25th August, 2014).

(Jackson, 2000:72). But then, McDowell explains that there are times when betrayal may serve a good purpose, in order to be true to oneself. She believes that at such a time betrayal is not always to hurt but to attain emotional balance and safety, except when the betrayer is a psychopath (Ibid., 2)

This question about when a betrayal may be considered reasonable or accepted forms part of our research in this study. The point therefore is that friendship and betrayal seem to operate on the same dynamic or basis, but in opposite directions to each other at the point in which the principles of love, loyalty and trust upon which friendship is generally based are violated. In that regard, it may be argued that betrayal is naturally embedded in friendship, but its effects do not come to the fore until the guiding principles of friendship are negated. But then how do we determine a positive betrayal given its negative implications? In contrast to the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal, it is clear that inner personal conflicts and motivation are the main focus of the discussions we have observed and reflect the general individualistic nature of Western culture. Yoruba understandings place the emphasis more closely on the objective fulfilment of cultural obligations, even though it recognizes that obligations may sometimes conflict.

3.5.2 Betrayal In The Cultural Context Of Matthew's Gospel

In the Gospel of Matthew, we have neither a theory or definition but practical evidences of betrayal. The general knowledge we have gathered above will help us to identify some specific aspects of lifestyle or relationships on the theme of friendship and betrayal in the Matthean community as a proto-Christian community.

To start with, we have already identified the fact that the church in the Matthean community is faced with the danger of disloyalty from within just as the kingdom is also faced with hostility from without. This picture can then offer some help to determine the nature of betrayal within the Matthean community.

Matthew's Gospel has a vivid picture of friendship within his community that is based on love towards one's neighbor. However, that friendship is also prone to betrayal when that love is denied as can be seen from the extensive exhortation on the missions of the church (Matt. 10:1-end). Although the theme of betrayal is not as pronounced as that of friendship in the Matthean Gospel, the passing references to it in chapter 10 calls for our attention. The Matthean community was a product of the post Roman-Jewish war of AD 66-70, and that the church was

constantly involved in conflicts with the parent Jewish group. Consequently, there was the tendency in the Matthean community for some members of the group to want to bolt out or betray fellow members. This text suggests this may be the case: “Brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But he who endure to the end will be saved.” (Matt. 10:21-22)⁷⁰

Against this backdrop, further evidences of betrayal within the Matthean community can be seen in the following parables in the Gospel. For example, in Matt. 21: 33, the actions of the tenants in that pericope reflected a kind of development involving a betrayal of trust against the landlord with regard to their contractual deal according to the practice in the first century.⁷¹ Or it can also be seen as a warning against such a betrayal of trust in contract or friendship within the Matthean community, as may be prevalent at that time.

In a similar vein, the parable of the marriage feast in Matt. 22:1- 14 also portends a note of betrayal in certain respect just as we have seen a note of friendship in it earlier. We know from the story that those guests originally invited to the feast must have been friends of the king. He may have related well with them before. That the guests disappoint the king eventually by advancing flimsy excuses is no doubt a betrayal of trust, love and confidence that the king must have given to them. The narrative thus portrays a tone of deliberate abandonment or betrayal of the king by those carefree guests: “But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them” (Matt. 22: 5-6). The devastating effects of that betrayal could be seen in the king’s loss of honour by the refusal of those already invited to the banquet. That loss of honour for the king and the loss of lives of his servants could also explain the action of the king against them.

Matthew also portrays that all of the disciples of Jesus betrayed him on one occasion or the other and then collectively at the time of his arrest, as we are going to see in the textual analysis of the pericope later: “Then all the disciples forsook him and fled” (Matt. 26:56). Even Peter, in spite of his apparent boldness publicly denied ever knowing Jesus, even by swearing

⁷⁰ In the same way, the community is warned against the menace of false prophets who might lead them into error and fear that may lead into betrayal (Matt.7:15).

Although the parable may have had its specific political message for some group within the Jewish community at the time, it can also be understood as a motif of friendship, which calls for loyalty and respect for one’s friend.

⁷¹ Although the parable may have had its specific political message for some group within the Jewish community at the time, it can also be understood as a motif of friendship, which calls for loyalty and respect for one’s friend.

(Matt. 26: 69-75). However, the most significant case of betrayal seen in the Matthean account is that of Judas Iscariot. Although we cannot deny the fact that the disciples' denial of Jesus, one way or the other in the course of his public ministry as well Peter's outright denial of him, must have affected the life and ministry of Jesus, Judas' betrayal appears to carry more weight or implications, especially as far as friendship is concerned. However, this is attributable to the special way Matthew seems to have portrayed Judas in his Gospel.

It appears that for Matthew, the implications of friendship and betrayal within his community can be better understood in the light of the betrayal of all the disciples of Jesus when they abandoned him and ran for their dear lives, Peter publicly denied ever knowing him and Judas betrayed him to his captors. And of course, the beauty of a true friendship is also better understood in the light of betrayal like the case of the disciples, Peter and Judas. In this connection, Matthew seems to compare the friendship characterized by love, trust and loyalty within his community with that of friendship between Jesus and his disciples in the light of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. He seems to do this in order to demonstrate the negativity of betrayal in friendship and warn to his community to always try to avoid it in any form. Betrayal as a violation in a relationship of trust, loyalty and love can have very serious consequences. It is a selfish use of one's friend for personal comfort and gain. It is a deliberate withdrawal of trust, love and fellowship from one's trusted friend. We shall get a better grasp of what this truth is all about while we consider the exegetical analysis of the chosen pericope, where we find the climax of betrayal with the action of Judas according to the narrative in the Gospel of Matthew.

In conclusion, gathered from our discussions on the concept of betrayal from the three different cultural perspectives of Yoruba, Matthew's Gospel and post-Enlightenment Western cultures, the general opinion is that betrayal involves denial of trust or going back on one's word which has serious implications for both friends and the society at large. This general opinion about betrayal is reflected in some of the meanings or definitions of betrayal below.

The New Testament Greek Lexicon, defines the Greek word *paradidomi*, i.e. to give over or "tradere", i.e. to hand over, to mean different things, such as "to give into the hands" (of another); "to give over into (one's) power, or "to deliver to one something to keep, use, take care of, manage"; "to commit or commend, to deliver verbally, to permit, allow"; "give itself up or present itself". However, a more popular meaning in line with the focus of this study is that which defines *paradidomi* (tradere) as "to deliver up one to custody, to be judged, condemned, punished, scourged, tormented, put to death"; "to deliver up treacherously by betrayal, to cause

one to be taken” (Gerhard, 2003:619-620). These meanings will therefore help us to put the actions of the disciples, Peter, and especially that of Judas Iscariot in the right perspective in this study.

In the light of the foregoing, there are no clear differences in the concepts of betrayal of the Yoruba, Matthean and Post-Enlightenment cultural contexts as they all point to betrayal basically as a violation of the principles of love, loyalty and trust upon which friendship is generally based. However, we need to note that, as evidenced by Jackson’s discussion, which differentiates between mere disappointment and actual or genuine betrayal, Western discussions highlight the psychological aspects of the individual as a subject caught between social obligations and individual fulfilment, between what Jackson calls, “warranted betrayal” and “justified betrayal”, as we have seen. Justified betrayal is differentiated from warranted betrayal, i.e. mere disappointment, because the trusted party indeed has the goodwill and requisite competence to actually take care of what the trusting party values so much, i.e. the object of trust. Friendship obligations are internalised and ethical conflicts are therefore heightened and problematised. But in both Yoruba and Matthean contexts there is no such problematisation at all- betrayal is simply betrayal, i.e.denial of trust.

CHAPTER FOUR

A NARRATIVE READING OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL AS AN OPEN TEXT WITH "GAPS" AND RHETORICAL DIRECTION

4.0 Brief Background To The Gospel Of Matthew

The major task of this chapter is to attempt a narrative reading of the Gospel of Matthew with a view to identifying the 'gaps' in the narrative that may call for our response as the reader of the story today according the reader-response approach. This section also takes a look at some of the opinions of Western critical scholars on the action of Judas as our study moves towards a contrapuntal dialogue among the three contending cultural contexts for this study.

But before that, this kind of study will require a brief examination of the background of the Matthean Gospel in terms of its authorship, the date of its writing, the social situation, and especially the themes of the Gospel, as far as these things can be determined, is only necessary as the "mimesis" reference of the narrative to a "world". These questions are not central for a narrative reading; save that it will afford us an appropriate background (mimesis) on which to base our study of the theme of friendship and betrayal within the narrative of Gospel of Matthew. Like other books of the Bible, the Gospel of Matthew was addressed to a specific community or group of communities in the first century CE. It has its own particular social location that can help us understand its message.

The difficulties and complexities involved in Matthean scholarship are well known, particularly with regard to the questions of authorship, date and social situation of the Gospel in the first century. Most scholars see it coming from about 85 C.E. These involve arguments and counter-arguments that are characteristically hypothetical in nature. Inevitably, what Rudolf Bultmann calls the *Vorverstandnis* (pre-understanding) of the interpreter affects the way they make use of available materials and evidence (Luz, 2001). But since our overall concern in this study is not primarily the authorship, date and related issues; this section offers a brief survey to underpin our study for the purpose of reading the Gospel narratively or as a story.

4.1 THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

In critical biblical studies, the question of authorship of biblical books usually forms an important but controversial and hypothetical exercise. This is also true of the Matthean Gospel. Discussions have centred on the attribution of the Gospel to “Matthew” and whether this identification could refer to an apostle and eyewitness. This argument remains inconclusive.

Many scholars have argued that the title, “The Gospel According to Matthew”, is a later addition or attachment to the Gospel as there is no direct indication of the Matthean authorship within the Gospel itself, and the title is absent from the two earliest witnesses to the text from the fourth century, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus. Hence little evidence can be drawn from the title in the textual tradition. Besides this, the external tradition derives exclusively from the comments of the church fathers in the second century; while internal evidence revolves around the information that may point towards an author within the Gospel itself. The most important piece of external evidence is drawn from Eusebius who reports a comment attributed to Papias, the Bishop of Hierapolis on Matthean authorship: “Matthew collected the oracles in Hebrew language and each interpreted them as they could” (Hist. Eccl. 3: 39, see Farley, 2009:16).

Papias’ statement has however been depicted as doubly problematic for two reasons. On the one hand, because the Gospel itself bears no direct evidence in support of the Matthean authorship, as we have seen. On the other hand, Papias’ statement that Matthew wrote in Hebrew has also been described as puzzling because Matthew’s Gospel does not betray any sign that it had once been written in Hebrew. For instance, all its citations of the Old Testament are drawn directly from the Old Testament Septuagint. Hence, while Papias’ testimony raises question as to the original language in which the Gospel of, it provides little more to the discussion of authorship.

But then, do we have any internal evidence within the Gospel that supports the Matthean authorship of the Gospel? In other words, can Papias’ comment or ascription of the Gospel’s authorship to Matthew as contained in the title be sustained from within the Gospel itself? This is a difficult exercise as it is also based on hypothesis because there is no direct evidence here either.

Nevertheless, we may consider some of the arguments of scholars on this issue briefly. For example, the Gospel of Matthew exhibits quite strong evidence that it was originally written in Greek and that Matthew is not a direct translation of Hebrew or Aramaic (Filson, 1971:18). Filson goes on to raise three conjectures to explain the fact that Matthew may have made use of

some sources translated from Hebrew or Aramaic, but that they also lack conviction. Similarly, the seeming internal evidence in reference to one of the twelve disciples named as Matthew, and described as a Tax Collector, also does not offer evidence of possible connection of the Apostle Matthew with the Gospel that bears that name: Matthew. Matthew is called to be a disciple according to Matt.9:9 and that a feast possibly takes place in his house. But in a parallel account in Mk 2:13-17 and Lk.5:27-32, the same Matthew is referred to as Levi, the son of Alphaeus. Filson argues: “For a Greek-speaking Jew to have both a Jewish and Greek name was nothing unusual. The difficulty here is that both Matthew and Levi are Jewish names and no Gospel clearly uses both names” (Filson, 1971:19)

Therefore, it is quite difficult to connect this Matthew with Levi or with the apostle Matthew who was actually one of the twelve. Some scholars have also argued in support of a Gentile-Christian authorship, at least in its final stage, because the Gospel reflects a Gentile-Christian outlook due to its break with Judaism. But this is not convincing either. Farley (2000) refers to J. P. Meier’s claim about the Gentile authorship of the Gospel by pointing to the author’s use of passages like Zec. 9:9 in Matt. 21:5, where Jesus is reported to have ridden on two donkeys as posing some difficulties. Meier also refers to a strange rapport between the Sadducees and Pharisees in Matt. 3:7, 16:1, in spite of their religious and ideological differences as a blatant demonstration of the lack of knowledge of the Old Testament by the author. In other words, the author could not have been a Jewish writer because of those mix-ups in the narratives. For Meier, therefore, the loopholes then point in the direction of a Gentile-Christian authorship, because only a Gentile writer would have brought the Sadducees and the Pharisees together. This is because although they were both prominent Jewish religious groups at the time of Jesus’ public ministry in the early first century, they are ideologically at variance with each other. A Jewish-Christian writer with an adequate knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures and the various Jewish religious groups in the early first century therefore would not have made such mistakes.

However, Farley explains that those features only reveal the interests of the author to demonstrate the fulfillment of scriptural traditions in the life of Jesus; but with a note of exaggeration. With regard to the second point raised by Meier on the strange Sadducees-Pharisees fellowship between distinctively ideologically different groups, Farley also explains this development as Matthew’s attempt to portray the two Jewish groups as hardened and perpetual opponents of Jesus who saw him as their common enemy that must be dealt with; more-so that he appeared to be a threat to their position and popularity (Farley, 2009:18-19). But then,

Matthew appears to have lessened the hardness of the Scribes by describing them as sitting in the seat Moses, and so required the obedience of the people (Matt 23:1-7). In this regard, the author is unlikely to be a Gentile convert, because of the extensive quotations from the Greek OT and the carefully argued legal interpretation.

Having therefore weighed all the pros and cons regarding the question of the authorship of the Matthean Gospel based on the external and internal evidences, Carter concludes that the claims that a disciple of Jesus by the name Matthew has written the Gospel is very difficult because such a claim is undermined by question of date (Carter, 2004:17). Filson also argues that the possible use of Hebrew or Aramaic sources, which were probably translated into Greek before use, coupled with the use of Mark who was not an eye-witness by the would-be author of Matthew' Gospel implies that the author of Matthew was not himself an Apostle i.e. a direct disciple of Jesus.

Again, most of the scholars like Filson (1971), Carter (2004) and Farley (2009) appear to agree in their opinion about the general nature of the Gospel of Matthew. Farley observes: "The author was an educated Jewish Christian, and probably trilingual. He wrote competent Greek, and it seems he knew both Aramaic and Hebrew. The last observation makes his Gentile identity unlikely, though not impossible" (Farley, 2009: 21). Similarly, Carter points out that the traces of Semitic features that pervade the Gospel coupled with evident knowledge of the Old Testament scripture in its Hebrew text and the Greek version tends to suggest a converted Christian-Jewish writer with a mastery of three different languages: Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek (Carter, 2004: 20). While Filson argues that the author of the Gospel of Matthew demonstrates an interest in relations between the Jewish Law and the Christian Gospel, the note of controversy with the Jewish sects are all indications that he was a Jewish Christian, though with an interest in the world mission of the Church to the outside - both the Roman Empire and the Gentile world. His Jewish roots and loyalty to the Law coupled with the skillful organization and grouping of the materials mark him as a Christian teacher with experience (Filson, 1971: 20).

The point is that we do not know who the author of the Gospel of Matthew was, and the general context for a narrative reading of the "world of the text" (its mimetic reference) must be deduced from the text itself rather than on speculation about author. However, we will continue to refer to the Gospel as Gospel of Matthew, the Matthean Gospel or Matthew's Gospel; and the name Matthew to refer to the author, without this signifying any claim to authorship but for ease of reference.

4.1.0 Date And Place Of The Composition Of The Gospel

The date and place of the composition of the Matthean Gospel depends largely on the question of its authorship, since the Gospel itself does not directly reflect any date when it was written. However, Matthew appears to have used Mark in the composition of his Gospel. If Mark is dated between 64-69 CE as the likely dates of its writing, then the Gospel according to Matthew must have been written later than 64-69 CE and likely after 80 C.E. The Gospel seems to have been known to Ignatius of Antioch around 110 C.E., so that it must have been written before the end of the first century, C.E. (Farley, 2009:15-17). We will accept this date as the most likely hypothesis, even while acknowledging that the question has not been finally resolved.

The following have been identified as the possible places of the writing of the Gospel of Matthew: Jerusalem, Alexandria in Egypt, Caesarea Maritima on the coast of Palestine, the Transjordan at Pella or Sepphoris or Tiberia in Galilee, Tyre or Sidon and Antioch in Syria (Farley, 2009:21).

Scholars such as Farley (2009) and Sim (1998:4) propose that the Gospel must have been known in the city of Antioch-on-the-Orontes in Syria with its cultural and ethnic diversity. Farley argues further on this suggestion: “While no certainty is possible, several factors point to Syria and the city of Antioch” (Farley, 2009:21). The strong point in support of Antioch is contained in the fact that the scanty internal and external evidences about the Gospel seem to support the idea. For example, Farley (2009:22) refers to the letters of Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch, which contains the earliest citations from Matthew’s Gospel in the first decade of the second century. He adds that these references suggest a widespread use of the Matthean Gospel or at least that it was being used in the churches of Antioch during the period. This point is further strengthened by what could be regarded as internal evidence from within the Gospel itself, where reference is made to the fact that following Jesus’ teaching and miraculous deeds in Galilee “his fame spread throughout all Syria” (Matt. 4:24), because no such reference can be found in the parallel accounts in Mk. 1:28 Lk 4:31-44. In addition, the prominence attached to this church may also have been due to the influence or role of Peter in the local community in Antioch, viewed against the backdrop of the incident referred to by Paul in Gal. 2: 11- 14 (Carter, 2004:22).

Further evidence in support of Antioch as the likely location of the Gospel is seen in Matthew's preference for the use of certain words not used by Mark, such as, "gold", "silver", "talent", "city". These may seem to betray the urban and prosperous setting or background of a city like Antioch (Balchi, 1998:116). However, we have been confronted with the challenge of how to determine the social location of the Matthean community. In other words, this has to do with the identity of the Antiochene community, whether it was a Jewish community, i.e. Jewish community or Jewish-Christian community.⁷² We need to take note of the observation of Farley who has rightly pointed out that the question of ethnicity of the author of the Gospel of Matthew is related to the issue of its social location, but it is shrouded with some difficulties. This is because, according to him, the first century Mediterranean world reflects a great deal of cultural complexity; and scholars like Martin Hengel have argued congruently that the first century Jewish and Hellenistic world cannot be distinctively or clearly distinguished from each other (Farley, 2009:20). It is not clear exactly when the community of Jesus' followers ceased to be part of Judaism and began to assume its distinctive Christian status as a separate group.

To this end, we can turn to the work of Draper who has proposed a moderate position. He believes that the Matthean community must have indeed been in conflict with the proto-rabbinism which had gained prominence in Jafia, Galilee and many cities of the Diaspora following the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. But the Matthean community should not be described as "Christianity" which did not exist in the first century CE, but as proto-Christianity, if we are to move a step beyond "the Jesus movement".⁷³

⁷² David Sim picks up an extensive scholastic discussion on this issue from the point of views of three scholars: G.N. Stanton, who stands on one side and J. A. Overman and A. J. Saldarini who seem to have agreed together against Stanton. While Stanton suggests that the Matthean community was a Christian-community group both Overman and Saldarini take the opposite view that the group was a Jewish community. They maintain that the conflict between the parent body and the group was intra-Jewish and had not inspired a break; except there was a kind of ideological difference between the two groups. However, Saldarini and Stanton agree with the fact that the Matthean community was a separate Jewish group. But while Saldarini identifies the Matthean community as an intra- Jewish group, Stanton identifies the group as off shoot or similar to the Qumran community. In other words, the Matthean community would look like the heretic, ascetic or separatist Essenes of the Qumran community in the first century. The first century C.E. Judaism was a very diverse phenomenon, especially prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.

⁷³ J. Draper in his unpublished paper given to the SNTS meeting in Vienna in 2012 titled: "Matthew's Theological Location in the light of Matthew's Soteriology and Eschatology: A Redaction critical study" on the theme of the social location of Matthew's Gospel, pg. 2

4:1.1 Theme Of The “Church” In The Matthean Gospel

There are a number of important themes in the Gospel according to Matthew. These include the themes of the person of Jesus Christ, whom the writer presents as central to his Gospel with different titles in order to enable his audience understand who Jesus was.

He presents a portrait of Jesus who is both divine and human against the backdrop of the indifference and hostility of the Jewish religious leaders of his days. This can be seen in the theme of miracles that is given prominence by the author to portray Jesus’ great power over the powers of darkness and sickness by his miraculous healings of people with different challenges of life. Jesus also demonstrates God’s mercy and forgiveness with regard to a tax collector, a socially ostracized person, as seen in the narrative (cf. Matt. 18:27).

Matthew also betrays a great preference for the law and the Old Testament prophetic fulfillments. The theme of the church is however given prominence in Matthew and is not referred to in any other Gospel: “...And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church...” (Matt. 16:16-19 cf. 18:15-21).

Matthew uses the word church against the backdrop of the Peter’s confession at Caesarea Philippi in Matt. 16:13-23. Moreover Matthew 18 provides a kind of “constitution” for church community and discipline in which disputes are to be settled by the church. It seems therefore that by the time of the writing of the Gospel of Matthew, the group had almost developed as an organized institution (Filson, 1971: 8-10).

Matthew clearly views events in the life of Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. Such fulfillment can be seen in the nativity of Jesus, his public ministry, entry into Jerusalem, and his passion and death. In addition, such an extensive use of the Old Testament citations is intended to throw light on events in the life and ministry of Jesus that would otherwise have remained in the dark and difficult to understand for his community. Such events include the rejection of Jesus by the Jewish leaders and his death on the cross. All of these events set by the Gospel, against the backdrop of the relevant Old Testament citations, portray Jesus’ life and work as part of God’s eternal plan for the eternal salvation of humanity.

The author of the Gospel carefully uses the prophecies to demonstrate his conviction that Jesus has indeed come not to abolish the law and the prophets but to fulfill them (Matt.5:17). Nevertheless, the author’s Jewish-Christian identity is tempered by his belief that the gospel is for all people and not just Jesus as seen in Jewish ceremonial law (Matt. 28: 16-20). Matthew’s

interest in the church appears to show that it is constituted as a separate fellowship although still with ties to Judaism. This church therefore has the true gospel and mandate to spread it to the outside world. Consequently, each member of the group should see the communal life of the church as their primary reference point even over family ties (Matt. 12:49). The church may have within the group unworthy people (Matt. 18:17), including false prophets (Matt. 7:22), but it represents the community of the new covenant in Jesus' blood (Matt. 26:28), the eschatological remnant of Israel together with righteous followers from among the Gentiles.

Matthew thus presupposes a second or probably a third generation of community of faith in Christ, and tries to provide that community of believers with rules and regulations and authoritative leadership.⁷⁴ These rules and regulations as the guiding principles of that community of faith are spelt out in chapter 18 in the community discourse. These include: decision making, procedures for conflict resolution, concern for the straying sheep or the little ones, forgiveness, and service in humility. The church appears to have served as a court of final appeal (Matt.16:19), since the entire church is a mixture of both wheat and tares, i.e. saints and sinners, that should grow together until the final sorting at the consummation of the kingdom of God (Matt. 13:36-43). Furthermore, with regard to the nature of the ministry of the church, Matthew emphasizes a kind of scribal or apostolic leadership of the church with Peter as the head (Matt. 10:2), and who shares authority with prophets, scribes and sages as the representatives of Christ over his church (Matt. 10:41; 13: 52; 23:34).

The purpose of the church according to Matthew is to be the agent of salvation in the world with a universal mission to make disciples of all nations through baptism in the name of the Triune God, and to teach all that Christ has commanded especially his new interpretation of the Decalogue as contained in his Sermon on The Mount (Matt. 5-7). In this regard, God's promise of a new people for Himself has been fulfilled through the redemptive work of Christ who has brought together the remnants of Old Israel and the new converts from the Gentile world (Matt. 21:31- 33 cf. Eph. 2: 11-16). Therefore, in spite of the strong Jewish character of the Gospel of Matthew, it proclaims an inclusive gospel focusing on salvation for all humankind regardless of their geographical locations, cultural situations or tribal belongingness.

⁷⁴ Consequently, Stendahl has observed that the Gospel of Matthew to its audience could best be described as, "A handbook for teaching and administration within the church derived from a "milieu of study and instruction" and issued by the leaders of a "school for teachers and church leaders. The school preserved and expounded the doctrines and rules of its founder" (Stendahl, 1968:35).

These are important features of the Matthean community that are relevant to our study of the theme of friendship and betrayal. In other words, the theme of the church outlines the way of life within the Matthean community as a people of faith, the ecclesia, i.e. the assembly of the redeemed people of God. This community is based on discipleship, in fellowship and friendship with Jesus and with one another. Therefore, Matthew's focus on discipleship or friendship with Jesus as the foundation of the new community will form the centre of our study.

Our understanding of the theme of friendship and betrayal in Matthew's Gospel is based on how Matthew' has used certain terms in his narrative which correlate with friendship generally. These terms include: discipleship, love and kinship.

1. Discipleship: The term discipleship is derived from the Greek word "mathetes" which means a pupil (of a teacher) or an apprentice (to a master craftsman), all of which translate to mean a student in English. The New Testament records Jesus had many followers during his public ministry but only some became his disciples. Therefore, discipleship refers primarily to students of Jesus and is found only in the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. Discipleship entails training for a particular cause for a specific period of time. It points to followership and learning from a master, which implies a relationship, usually described as a "master-student relationship". But for Matthew, he presents Jesus, by the nature of his relationship with his disciples, to have redefined discipleship beyond master-student relationship for the members of his community. As we have seen, Jesus called and chose the disciples that they might be with him and then send them out (Matt. 4:22). This shows the kind of intimacy and love that is beyond just master-student relationship. This intimacy and love must have informed Jesus' action to condescend to the level of his disciples, describing his mission among them as that of a servant (Matt. 20:28). He also challenged them to have the same spirit (Matt.20: 26-27). Rick Warren in his article titled *Definition of Discipleship* (2012), describes discipleship as intentional, incremental, rational, covenantal, habitual and incarnational.

We can therefore conclude that for the Matthean community, discipleship implies genuine love as demonstrated by Jesus' self-referential example (Matt. 20:28). Therefore, discipleship entails transformation, because it is synonymous to following Jesus to share in his life. Discipleship involves a new family experience. Jesus called on a would-be disciple to give up his/her wealth, familiar ties, individual values and identity, so that he/she may assume a new family status with him, as members of his community (Matt. 10:37). Finally, discipleship entails

service: “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19). This forms the basis of the wider world mission in Matt. 28:19-20 as part of the consummation of Jesus’ public life and ministry (Longerecker, 1996).

2. Love: Matthew further shows how Jesus redefined friendship within his community on the basis of *agape* love – a special love of God upon which the new community of God’s people in the Matthean community is based. As we have pointed out, the *agape* love of the community is anchored in the code of conduct, i.e. catechism for the new community as contained in Matthew 5-7. For that reason, the members of that community must avoid anger (Matt. 7: 22), litigation (Matt.5:25), avoid violence (Matt.5: 38), love their enemies (Matt.5:43) and assist one another (Matt.6: 1). Therefore, for Matthew, friendship induced by discipleship is conditioned by *agape* love. This bound the new community together with Jesus and with one another. This is why Carmichael describes *agape* love as the distinctive dominant paradigm for the kind of relationship between Christians and God and among themselves (2006:250).⁷⁵

3. Kindship: In view of the foregoing, we can also identify a new kind of kinship within the Matthean community, which is based on the kind of intimate relationship between Jesus and his disciples, and between the disciples themselves that transcends family ties. Therefore, members of the community see themselves as belonging together through their relationship with Jesus as his disciples, and friends and with one another, strengthened by a shared communal meal (Matt. 26: 17, 20). Patte (1987) argues that Matthew conveys to his readers his story with conviction, which is usual, but in a technical way. His concern is about the ultimate meaning of individual and community life in relation to God and Jesus Christ. The point is that friendship, resulting from discipleship, has also brought about a kinship experience within the group that is far beyond discipleship: “He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt. 10:37). Friendship within the Matthean community therefore is seen to be beyond the time of Jesus’ public ministry to the time of the consummation of the kingdom of God: “When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations...” (Matt. 25:31-32).

All of these points are connected together to give Matthew’s narrative its peculiar marks of friendship in the context of discipleship that is evident within the Matthean community. We shall explore this as we attempt a narrative reading of the Gospel later in this study.

⁷⁵ See the discussion above on love in relation to friendship in Matthew’s Gospel on pages 111-115.

4:1.2 *Outline Of The Matthean Narrative*

For Matthew, the focus of his narrative was to instruct and exhort members of his community to faith in Jesus Christ, by providing them with the teaching and ministry of Jesus useful for communal life. However, this community was also involved in a mission to the outside world, which is reflected in Matt. 28:16-20.

The way Matthew has structured his Gospel has attracted the attention of many scholars. In other words, the outline or structure of the Gospel has been a subject of debate among different scholars. But the issue does not seem to have been resolved like others aspects of the Matthean Gospel. A number of outlines of the Gospel have been proposed by recent studies of the Gospel. One such suggested outline is a simple three part structures, which is a broad based analysis of the Gospel as shown below:

- 1: 1- 4:16: Introducing the person of Jesus Christ
- 4:17 – 16:20: Proclamation of Jesus Christ
- 16: 21-28:20: Suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There is, however, an objection to the above suggested outline of the Gospel because follows the Markan order too rigidly without recognising the peculiar and special materials incorporated into the Matthean Gospel.

Although narrative reading does not depend on redaction criticism, it is helpful to note how Matthew has creatively used the Markan materials in the compilation of his own Gospel, especially as reflected in chapters 1-9 of Matthew's Gospel. It is also important to note the contribution of David Bauer on this topic. He has attempted a scholarly treatment of the structure of the Matthean Gospel by referring to W. D. Davies (1964:25) who said: "There are documents which are so closely knit that their parts can only be adequately understood in the light of the whole. Such is the fourth Gospel, just as it is for Matthew. It reveals not only a meticulous concern, numerically and otherwise, in the arrangements of its details but also an architectonic grandeur in its totality" (Bauer, 1988:21).

Bauer (1988) further observes that the outline or structure of the Matthean Gospel has been analyzed in several different ways. These include the geographical/chronological method

adopted by the earlier scholars, the topical method, adopted by scholars in the 21st century, and lastly that of alternation of discourse and narrative materials in the Gospel of Matthew.

Many scholars, such as Waetjen (1976:32-34) and Allison (2005:135) believe that Matthew's outline reflects alternating rings of narrative and sermons or discourses which are built up around the central theme of the Kingdom of God expressed in parables in order to achieve its liturgical purpose on one hand and provide a handbook for effective leadership on the other. This implies that the Gospel was written in order to serve as a manual or book for communal worship, teaching, preaching and as an interpretation of history patterned after the deuteronomistic works in the Old Testament.

Although this gives recognition to the five major great discourses in Matthew's Gospel in a way that reflects the Old Testament Pentateuch of five books in his narrative, such an idea would leave out the passion and resurrection stories in the structure.

The question of outline for the Gospel of Matthew remains a matter of ongoing debate in biblical scholarship. The outline for the Gospel of Matthew is unlikely to play a major role in the discussion of friendship, except to show that references to friendship and betrayal occur throughout the Gospel and, for that reason, I would like to make an attempt of an outline of the Matthean Gospel as gathered from the discussions above

1. The beginning of Jesus' public ministry: His birth, temptation and the choice of the disciples – Matt. 1:1-4:22
2. Jesus' teaching ministry – Matt. 4:23-7:29
3. Demonstration of his power – Matt. 8: 1- 9: 38
4. Teachings on the mission of the church– Matt. 10: 1-42
5. Jesus' rejection by the Jews – Matt. 11: 1-12: 50
6. Parables of the Kingdom – Matt. 13: 1-52
7. Revelation of Jesus' identity – Matt 13: 53- 17: 27
8. Teachings on the communal life of the church– Matt. 18: 1-35
9. Encounter with the Jewish authorities – Matt. 19: 1- 22: 46
10. Jesus' eschatological teachings - Matt. 23: 1- 25:1-46
11. Betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus– Matt. 26: 1- 27:20
12. The resurrection and the Great Commission – Matt. 28:1-20.

It should be noted that the above suggested outline is also based on the narrative-discourse pattern which is quite obvious in the Gospel of Matthew. The relevance of a suggested outline like the one above for the purpose of our narrative reading of the Gospel can be seen in the following areas:

1. It helps us to see the general characteristic nature of Matthew's Gospel as a story or narrative. This will enable us to see how the different parts of the story connect together as one continuous story in a rhetorical order with mimesis to the world of the readers with its intended message for them, and the importance of friendship-betrayal, linked with the role of discipleship, is in the narrative.
2. Closely related to the above point is that the suggested outline will enable us to see how the evangelist has carefully selected his materials for the purpose of his Gospel. This agrees with Coleridge's argument that narrative criticism deals with the choice of materials by the writer in order to shape a narrative: "At the simplest level, the writer must decide what to include and what to exclude; and once those decisions have been made, he or she must decide how to frame and arrange the chosen materials" (Coleridge, 1993:16-17). Hence, Matthew's heightening of Judas' betrayal and its consequences plays a significant role in Mathew's rhetorical purpose. Structure is a key for a narrative analysis. Coleridge further explains that while most historical-critical scholars would normally assume that such a text is a collection of many different strands that can be carefully separated into their various layers, narrative criticism however believes in their coherent unity as they stand in their present form. This is because although a text is a composition of a variety of elements with a long process of redaction, the concern of narrative criticism is that in its present final form, such a text is assumed to have a unity and coherence. On the other hand, there are always "gaps" between the rhetoric of the(implied) author and the reception of the reader, due to assumptions of common understanding between author and readers and the inevitable cultural differences in perception (Coleridge, 1993:18). The presence of "gaps" in a text provides a key aspect in our discussion which follows.
3. Following the above, the third point of relevance of the outline to our study in Matthew's Gospel is that a narrative, as a coherent unity of many parts, presents an opportunity for

relationship or interaction between the implied reader who is assumed by the “implied author”, encoded in the text and the “real author”, so that narrative theorists speak of the “death of the author” the moment the text leaves his/her hands. There is a similar gap between the “implied reader” encoded in the text and the “real reader”. Whoever the “real reader(s)” may have been in its original context, a piece of writing continued to find its realization the real reader in successive generations of readers, who pick up the signals provided by the “implied author” to the “implied readers” and also respond to what are called “textual gaps” or “blanks” in the text. These gaps occur in the text through what is said at the thematic level and how it is said at the level of textual strategies. Although the signals to the “implied readers” mean that reading is not an entirely arbitrary process, each new set of readers are required to fill the gaps and hence to connect a story together when they are filled.

W. Iser (1978: 231), the proponent of the theory argues that the real reader is actively involved while reading a piece of writing and his or her assignment in that regard is twofold. One, he/she is expected to listen to the implied author; and two to try to understand the message in order to be able to respond to the “gaps” or blanks contained in the literary piece.⁷⁶ This is particularly important for us as the real reader of the Gospel today as the point of entry for us in order to be able to respond to the “gaps” in the Gospel. This then points to another very important part of our study

4. As we participate actively in reading the narratives in the Matthean Gospel, the text challenges us to identify the “gaps” in the narratives, and then respond to them from the perspective of our cultural understanding of the text.

Iser has pointed out that the meaning of a text is not inherent in itself like a gold nugget in a mine as a static answer in a compartment, but dynamic and evolving. In other words, the meaning of the text is not fixed in any particular historical culture as historical critical

⁷⁶ Wolfgang Iser’s (1978) theory as contained in his book *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* emphasizes that there is a reader in any text, which points to a reader-oriented approach in any literary work. Iser points out that literature can no longer be seen as a fixed object or products. This is because reading a literary piece involves active participation. Thus the realization of a literary works relies on the real reader and not necessarily the implied author. Furthermore, the theory points to the fact that there is a kind of text/reader interaction which reflects a relationship of instruction given and assumed meaning between the implied reader and the real reader. This interaction, therefore, implies a network of response that enables the reader to grasp the text.

scholars have sometimes assumed, but emerges afresh whenever a different culture brings its world views into conversation with the Bible. In this study, we will bring Yoruba culture into a dialogue with the text of Matthew's Gospel in an interaction with the Western cultural context in our search for a new Yoruba culture-based interpretation and meaning of the text

The next section is concerned with the narrative analysis of the Gospel which is central to our study of friendship and betrayal in the Gospel of Matthew.

4.2 Narrative Analysis Of The Gospel

Jack Kingsbury's *Plot of Matthew's Story* presents a good attempt of a narrative reading of the Gospel of Matthew, which focuses on Matthew's Gospel as a story with the characteristic features of a beginning, middle and an end. However, Herman Waetjen (1976) and David Patte (1987) have also undertaken a narrative study of Matthew that is focused on the structure of the Gospel that pays more attention to the nature of the composition of the Gospel. Waetjen points to the fact that Matthew reproduced well over 600 words taken from Mark's Gospel along with a general outline of Jesus' public ministry. However, Waetjen argues that Matthew has a literary composition, character and structure that are peculiarly its own: "This Book of origin possesses an originality of conception and purpose which was generated by the author's consummate interaction with singular set of social-religious circumstance" (Waetjen, 1976:22-23). Therefore, Waetjen concludes that the Gospel of Matthew must be interpreted in and for itself, and stresses how redaction-criticism and literary-critical methodologies can contribute to such interpretation or understanding of the Gospel.⁷⁷ Although David Patte (1987:40) seems to have adopted the same narrative structure in his commentary on Matthew, his focus is quite different.⁷⁸ Patte

⁷⁷ H.C. Waetjen (1976:16-23) in his book, *The Origin and Destiny of Humanness*, raises the question of methodological approaches to the interpretation of the Gospels, particularly Matthew's Gospel. He noted the contributions of the various methods such as source criticism and form-criticism, while he dwells on the redaction criticism that focuses on the role of the evangelists as interpreters of the tradition rather than mere editors (Ibid.:16). But he noticed some of the difficulties involved in redaction criticism, particularly that of the differentiation between the tradition and redaction which is believed to determinate the cultural conceptions of the evangelist that affect interpretation.

⁷⁸ D. Patte in his book: *"The Gospel According to Matthew-A structural Commentary on Matthew's Faith"* (1987:2-4), focuses on the structural theme of the Gospel which is Matthew's faith and not just on the arrangement of the materials. In other words, Patte's focus is on what he calls "structural exegesis", which he points out to be different from the traditional exegesis. He emphasizes that his attempt is based on a research field known as *semiotics*, i.e. meaning or signification. Consequently, his analysis of the Gospel of

appears to be more concerned about the interpretation of the Gospel, therefore his own structure of the Gospel of Matthew is elaborate and detailed.

A recent study on narrative approach has been done by Phelan and Rabinowitz (Herman, 2012). The first principle of the narrative approach has to do with a form of purposeful communication structured by the relationship of the various elements such as characters, plots and setting in the narrative which may be relevant to Kingsbury's approach.

We can see a point of connectivity of the events in the narratives in Matthew's Gospel through the outline suggested above, which enables us to follow the trend of the story based on alternation of narrative and discourse, focusing on the theme of friendship and betrayal. Although the real author of the Gospel does not say he or she is writing on friendship and betrayal, a careful study of the Gospel shows a tone of friendship and betrayal throughout the Gospel as evident by his use of words like love, forgiveness, discipleship and kinship⁷⁹.

As we already pointed out there are many themes in the Gospel of Matthew, especially the theme of the person of Jesus as the long expected Messiah which is central to the entire message of the Gospel. Clearly related to this is the theme of the church which is found only in Matthew's Gospel: "...And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18); in consequence of which the Gospel has been tagged the "ecclesiastical gospel". The purpose of the church, for Matthew therefore in relation to Jesus' ministry as the Messiah, is to present the church as the agent of salvation in the world as evident in the universal mission the church is commissioned to do by Jesus (Matt.28:19-20).

The point is that God's promise of a new people for Himself has been fulfilled through the redemptive work of Jesus, by bringing together the remnants of old Israel and the new converts from among the Gentiles into one community of people of faith in fellowship, leading to a friendship informed by discipleship that transcends the time of Jesus' public ministry, and continues into the Christian community today.⁸⁰

Matthew is based on semantic rule that gives expression to the author's faith rather than the arrangement of the materials contained in his Gospel.

⁷⁹ See the discussion on this above on pg. 111-115

⁸⁰ An idea that had been developed by the Apostle Paul in some of his epistles: "For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and had broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone..." (Eph. 2:14-20)

It is in this context and against this background that we shall attempt to peep into the way of life within the Matthean community as a community of faith in a special relationship of friendship with Jesus and with one another. And of course, this friendship is reflected in different sections of the narrative-discourse alternation of the Gospel as follows: In doing so, we will identify five “gaps” in the rhetoric of the narrative which allow for, or rather force, the reader to make decisions as to the meaning of friendship in Matthew’s narrative. These “gaps” bring the cultural understandings of the reader into play in the creation of new meaning, as we have already observed from Croatto’s discussion.⁸¹

a. The God–man relationship restored by Jesus’ coming into the world as “Immanuel, God with us” (Matt.1:23) provides the basis of all the friendship ties found in Matthew’s Gospel.

We have a prototype of this kind of friendship in the context of Jewish belief about the friendship between God and Abraham and Moses as we have discussed in chapter three (Matt.2 - 4). Thus, in Matt. 1:1- 4: 22, Matthew presents the story with a theme, which could be regarded as “A New Dawn or Restored Relationship” between God and humanity and among humanity through Jesus by his incarnation. This is fundamental for both Jesus and his mission as the Messiah and for the Matthean community as members of the new community.⁸² In this regard, Jesus is seen as creating new foundations for all forms of relationships, especially within the community he has come to found as the head. This is therefore taken up in the theme of the church, which is unique to the Gospel.

In that light, Matthew presents his hearers with the story of a man named Jesus who has come to fulfill a divine purpose on earth as the Christ or Messiah, tracing Jesus’ pedigree to Abraham, because “in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed’ (Gen. 18:18), and to David in order to establish the prophetic fulfillment attached to that expectation, not only for the Jewish nation, but to the whole world because “he (Jesus) will save his people from their sins” (Matt.

⁸¹ See above page 54.

⁸² This reflects back to what we have known about friendship between God and Abraham in our previous discussion. Thus according Philo, God-Abraham friendship, like Moses too, and later God-Israel friendship is the vehicle through which other nations will also come to enjoy friendship with God. This could therefore be regarded as an invitation to other people into fellowship with him and that such friendship naturally leads to friendship within the community of faith (Culy, 2010:68).

1:21), which would seem to refer to the Jews. Consequently, for Matthew, every event in the life of Jesus is seen as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, which explains the significance of his name “*Immanuel*” in fulfillment of the Isaianic prophecies (Isa. 7:14, 8:8). Jesus is seen to have escaped the antics of those who sought to kill him, including Herod the Great, and his son Herod Archelaus who succeeded him. Jesus’ ministry did not take place in a vacuum because Matthew shows how John the Baptist prepared the ground for him with his ministry of repentance which, to Matthew, is also a fulfillment of the prophecy by the prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament (Isa 40:1f). Jesus’ victory over the Devil by resolving to be a suffering Servant of God therefore sets him out for his public ministry after his baptism by John and following the incarceration of John the Baptist in Matthew 4:17.

b. Jesus’ friendship with his disciples: This is particularly important for our study on the theme of friendship and betrayal. This involves how Jesus relates with those whom he called to be his disciples and friends, especially those who responded to that call.

As we already pointed out, friendship involves a relationship between two or more people for both the individual wellbeing of the actors as well as the society at large. Going by this principle, we can see how the motif of friendship plays out in the narratives of Matthew in a communal setting as seen in Matthew’s Gospel. In other words, Matthew paints a picture of a community where friendship is anchored on love, by the way he presents Jesus’ message otherwise known as the Sermon on the Mount. For Matthew, his community is being regulated by the re-interpreted Decalogue, which is centered on divine love as the guiding principle (Matt. 5-7) with a focus on service and reconciliation (Matt. 18:15-21).⁸³

In this regard, we find Matt. 5:21-25 particularly appealing because it defines clearly the nature of the relationship in the Matthean community, pointing to friendship in the context of discipleship. D. Allison (2005: 65-78), while trying to establish the influence of the story of Cain’s murder in Gen. 4: 1-16 on Matthew’s injunction here, points out that Matthew is warning members of his community to avoid anger and murder. Allison believes that Matthew’s emphasis on reconciliation and the heightened punishments for anger and scolding of one’s brother alludes to Cain, who out of unresolved anger toward his brother, led him to commit murder (Allison,

⁸³ See above pgs.131-135.

2002:69). Hence, by making even anger and scolding culpable and punishable, Matthew tries to prevent his hearers from becoming angry to the extent of committing murder like Cain.

Why is this connected to friendship? This is because it has implications for worship and friendships within the Matthean community. Therefore, Allison concludes that the injunction to “to leave your gift before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother (sister), and then come and offer your gift” (Matt.5:24) is addressed to the offender (Allison, 2005:77).⁸⁴ But interestingly, later in the narrative, Matthew also challenges the offended to take the initiative to reconcile with the offender: “If your brother (sister) sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone” (Matt. 18:15); doubtless, to sustain the spirit of genuine friendship within his community.

We therefore agree with U. Luz’s understanding the Sermon on the Mount as taught by Jesus and its implications, particularly for the Matthean community, regarding friendship in Matthew’s Gospel. It is based on the Golden rule, which is love of one’s neighbor as one’s love towards God (Matt. 7:43-45). The guiding principle attached to it as reflected in the body of the Sermon: “So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets” (Matt.7:12). This love is, therefore, fundamental to the kind of friendship lived out in the Matthean community and the way they understood their discipleship as followers of Jesus (Luz, 1995:54).

Consequently, at the very heart of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus stresses the implications of love in interpersonal relations concerning: retaliation (Matt. 5:38), violence (Matt. 5:39), legal responsibility (Matt. 5:40-41) and charity (Matt.5:42). Therefore, for Matthew, love is the foremost precept by which Jesus and his teachings are to be interpreted, because the whole Torah is also hinged on love, i.e. Leviticus 19:18 (Luz, 1995:52). This therefore portends friendship because true friendship is basically conditioned by genuine love as we have seen in this study.

This aspect runs throughout the narratives (4, 10, 26-28), reflected in different levels of relationships between Jesus as the main actor in the story with other segments of the people in the story. The first level of relationship is that between Jesus and his disciples as the members of

⁸⁴ Allison (2005:77) argues that the context in Matt. 5:21-22 shows “some degree of anger in the person offering the Sacrifice”. Then, applying that to Gen. 4:1-16, the Old Testament text believed to have influenced Matthew’s injunction, the main actor in verses 23-24 is implicitly likened to Cain, who was in the wrong not Abel. Therefore, it was Cain who had to leave his gift at the altar and seek reconciliation with his brother; because Abel, according to tradition, had done Cain no injustice. Hence, by reading Matt. 5:23-24 in the light of Gen. 4:1-16, the injunction will point naturally to the “unjust offender”, not to the “unjustly offended”.

the new community he has come to establish. At the beginning following his triumph over the Devil, we see Jesus' relationship with his disciples whom he gathered around himself. These included Simon Peter and Andrew, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. Although they are called to be disciples, they are also expected to share relationship with Jesus as his friends (Matt. 4:18ff). Matthew is likely to have been influenced by the material he took from Mark: "And he went up on the mountain, and called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach" (Mk. 3:13-14). Matthew seems to have interpreted this to mean an intimate relationship of friendship induced by the call to discipleship in the narratives. This formed the basis of the continued communal life of friendship found among the members of that church as seen in Matthew's Gospel. Jesus then spells out the importance of relationship as a *sine qua non* for a worthy and acceptable worship (Matt. 5: 23- 24). In Matt. 5: 44, Jesus uses the Greek word: "*agape*" which points to a special and unconditional love of God, to depict the kind of relationship God expects from the people towards God and one another. Importantly, the word *agape* is stronger than *phile*, and the use of the word evokes the special, deep and intimate relationship between God and people and the foundational basis for their interpersonal relationships.

Jesus therefore defines friendship here to mean a relationship that is based on love, trust and loyalty in the context of discipleship as exemplified by him in his relationship with his disciples and those who followed him. For the Matthean community, *agape* portends a different kind of friendship relationship that is beyond discipleship. This agrees with Carmichael's observation that friendship in Christian understanding is a departure from the Greek and Roman idea of *philein* or *amicitia*. Therefore, *agape* love should be seen as a distinctive dominant paradigm for speaking of Christian relationships, both with others and with God (Carmichael, 2006:250). And that is true of the Matthean community.

Matthew then recalls the prompt response and commitment of the first sets of disciples to Jesus' call- Simon Peter and Andrew, who abandoned their nets; and James and John, who also abandoned their father and boat to follow Jesus. Therefore, we can see some gaps here in the narrative of Matthew.

GAP ONE: The first "gap" in the narrative is related to the question of acceptance or rejection of an offer of friendship as seen from the action of James and John, particularly the call to abandon their father in order to follow Jesus (Matt. 4:22). In

other words, the gap asks the question: “How do we respond to the question of choice and acceptance in friendship?”

Although these people are called to be disciples in the first instance, it is intended to also involve an experience of friendship. This we see evident in the action of Jesus, which is sealed with the communal sharing of meal and drinks between them and Jesus. For Matthew, this communal sharing of a meal, the climax of which is recorded in Matt. 26:20-29, is a mark of the bond of friendship between them and Jesus, implying total commitment to Jesus and to one another within the group in covenant relationship.⁸⁵ The effect could be seen in what happened to Judas after that communal meal. But the sharing in the community is not about a meal, it also about sharing goods and services, especially with the needy and poor members in the community (Matt. 25:31-46).⁸⁶

c. Another evidence of friendship in Matthew’s Gospel is seen in Jesus’ relationship with religious groups of his day, which is quite negative (Matt. 11:1-12:50). Through teachings, parables and miracles, Jesus invites the people of his day - including the Jewish religious leaders, the Pharisees, Scribes, and Elders to enter into friendship and discipleship. But the religious leaders’ reaction is negative.

The teachings and miracles of Jesus are sent out without discrimination to all and sundry like in the parable of the sower (Matt. 13:1-23). These are meant to challenge the hearers to repentance and faith in Jesus (Matt. 21: 28-45, 22:1-14). But the Jewish elders and scribes turned down the invitation with stiff opposition against Jesus and later planned to kill him (15-16:4, 19, 22, 23, 26:1-5).⁸⁷ The Pharisees passed unpleasant comment on the activities of Jesus, stating that he was casting out demons by the prince of demons (9:34b). Matt. 11:1-12: 50 could be seen as the beginning of the middle part of the story regarding the reactions of the elders of Jesus’ day to

⁸⁵ It is interesting to note that apart from the daily sharing of meals and drinks by Jesus and his disciples, the climax of such a meal is the Last Supper which carries significant covenantal implication; more so that it developed against the background of the Old Testament Passover.

⁸⁶ Here, the picture of the first century church readily comes to mind where Luke reports that “And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need” (Acts 2:44-45).

⁸⁷ This is the argument of Farley in defense of the Christian-Jewish authorship of the Gospel of Matthew as against Meier’s Gentile-Jewish authorship with regard to the Sadducees-Pharisees rapport in spite of their ideological differences, evident in the narrative. Carter points out that it shows Matthew’s attempt to portray how the Jewish groups turned down Jesus’ call to friendship but rather united against him as their common enemy that must be dealt with as a threat to their position and popularity (Farley, 2009).

his teachings; that is the beginning of the hostility against Jesus in reaction to the great miraculous power he displayed. It is a reaction of hatred, envy and rejection culminating in their resolve to do away with him. (Matt.11:28).

GAP TWO: The second “gap” in the narrative asks the question: “What should be our focus and expectations in friendship?” In other words, what should normally be the purpose of friendship in any context?

The narrative continues with the account of the second encounter of Jesus with the elders. This concerns Jesus’ specific teachings on the laws, i.e. on the interpretation of the Sabbath law. This encounter sparked off another accusation against Jesus and his disciples they plucked the heads of grains while walking along the field on the Sabbath day. Earlier, the Pharisees and the Scribes had accused him of healing by the power of Beel-ze-bub. But Jesus argues that his power of exorcism is a direct demonstration of the power of God, which then means that the kingdom of God had come upon them. And now the accusation has challenged him about the wrong use of the Sabbath day.

Nevertheless, Jesus continues with his teaching, especially on the nature of the kingdom of heaven (God) and the implications for his hearers in Matt. 13:1-52. Following rejection in his own town, in Matt. 13: 53-17:27, Jesus reveals his identity as the Messiah by demonstrating greater miraculous power. He feeds the multitudes, heals the sick and teaches the people. Then, further heightening the conflict between him and the Elders, he reveals himself at Caesarea Philippi and on the mount of the transfiguration.

But for his disciples, as members of the new community of God’s people, they are to live in love and service in their friendship with Jesus and with one another. However, there are misunderstandings among them with regard to position and leadership, probably caused by Jesus’ praise and promise of leadership to Peter arising from his confession about the person of Jesus. Matthew shows how James and John betray their friends by going behind their backs to ask for positions from Jesus. Therefore, Jesus addresses them about the true greatness within the community life as God’s people (Matt. 18:1-5, 20:20-28).

GAP THREE: The third “gap” in the narrative points to the question of equality and commitment in friendship. We have seen that equality is one important factor in friendship. How then does equality apply in the case of Jesus-disciples’ friendship?

It is particularly striking the way Jesus presents himself to the disciples in Matthew's Gospel: "Even as Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt.20:28). And on that basis, he also challenges his disciples: "It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave" (Matt. 20:26-27). Matthew thus demonstrates the fact that there is no disparity of status or position among the disciples, because they are all considered to be equal on the basis of their being disciples of Jesus.⁸⁸ This is evident in the communal life characterized by equality between Jesus and his disciples based on love, mutual trust, respect and humility. But later in the narrative, we noticed a breach of this idea among the disciples as they quarrel frequently among themselves about who is the greatest among them (Matt. 18:1ff, 20: 20-28). Similarly, we see James and John, through their mother appealing to become Jesus' trusted lieutenants by sitting at his right and left hand (Matt. 20: 20-28). Nevertheless, the question of equality in friendship which is associated with humility is thus a recurring one in the Gospel (Matt. 18:1-4, 20:20-28). It should also be noted that those who responded to his call to be his disciples are also taught about the kingdom of heaven (God) (Matt. 5-7, 13); and how they are live within that community in humility and loyalty to Jesus and to one another (Matt. 18: 1, 20:20-28). Jesus thus rejects the patron-client relationship as the basis for friendship in discipleship. But as the story progresses we see that they sometimes disappoint him one way or the other, and even later betray him.

d. This leads us to the aspect of the general relationships within the Matthean community as a community of friends that transcends the time of Jesus on earth (18, 20, 24-26: 17-29). Matt. 18: 1-35 opens the section on another level of relationship in the

⁸⁸ Further evidence about equality as one of the characteristic features of the early Christian movement could be seen in some of the Pauline epistles which were earlier than the Gospel accounts. First, in Paul's appeal to Philemon about his run-away slave, Onesimus it reads: "*that you might have him back for ever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother, especially to me but now much more to you both in the flesh and in the Lord*" (Phil. 15-16). It should not be thought that the new status that Paul is trying to advocate for Onesimus here is figurative, as implied in those phrases: "*in the flesh*" i.e. "in reality"; and "*in the Lord*" i.e. spiritually. Secondly, the equal status of all those in the church as seen in Paul's appeal to the Galatian church to break all barriers of status differences: "*For you are all one in Christ Jesus*" (Gal. 3:28-29). Although, one may also argue that the appeal may also imply an appeal for unity rather than equality; however both are intertwined or implied. This is because unity is conditioned by a humility that accords equal right to everyone within a group. Hence, Paul's appeal is preceded by him begging them to avoid disparity informed by tribal or status differences among themselves, but they should be guided by the love that is of God based on their common experience of salvation through Jesus symbolized sby the common rite of baptism (Gal.3:25-29).

narrative of Matthew which focuses on the relationship within the Matthean community. So, here we have the account of Jesus' teaching on the communal life of the disciples i.e. how the members of the new community should live together as both disciples and friends of Jesus and friends of one another as members of the new community of God.

The idea is that discipleship presupposes friendship as it helps to solidify the faithfulness, love and commitment required in discipleship. This is central to our study, because here we find issues involving friendship and betrayal, procedures for conflict resolution and the place of forgiveness for continued fellowship within the new community.

In Matt.10:21, Matthew makes a reference to betrayal of different kinds, especially within the family as a result of persecutions. It thus appears that, threatened by persecutions, the Matthean community's Christian friendship also carried within it the tendency for betrayal among its members. As observed earlier, this might have been as a result of the Matthean community's conflict with the Rabbinic Jewish Group at Jamnia. The reconciliatory procedure in Matt. 18:15, suggests there may have been cases of betrayal due to persecutions arising from that conflict.⁸⁹ The relevance of the reconciliatory procedures is that it enables forgiveness in the event of betrayal and disappointment in friendship among the members of the Matthean community. But as we already noticed in our previous discussion, friendship is sustained in an atmosphere where friends have a forgiving spirit towards one another as the situation suggests in the Matthean community. We have seen how Matthew has enjoined the offender to leave his gift at the altar and reconcile first with his offended brother; now he also challenges the offended to take the initiative of reconciling with the offender.

It should be noted, however, that the reconciliatory procedure in Matt. 18: 15-18 has become a subject of interesting debate among biblical scholars, following the responsibility it places on the offended to seek every avenue to correct an erring brother or friend in the hope of spiritual gain. But if in the first instance, then the second attempt is made with two or three other members to confront the erring brother. Perhaps this is to make the rebuke more severe to shame the offender in the presence of the witnesses and to show that the accuser has done his duty. In other words, the corrector should ensure that he is not alone, but there are two or three

⁸⁹ This procedure reflects the kind that is also found within the Qumran community, a Jewish sect in the early first century that withdrew to the shores of the Dead Sea in order to preserve their own brand of Judaism. Stanton has linked the Matthean community with the Qumran community (Sim, 1998:4).

others to support him. This practice will seem to agree with the Old Testament injunction in Deut.17:6: “In the mouth of two or three witnesses”. However, there is the question as to whether the witnesses are to be called in succession or all at once.

In other words, members of the Matthean community are to be regarded as brothers and sisters in friendship as in their special relationship with God. It is therefore strange to treat a brother as a heathen or a publican, because even the little one is addressed as a brother; and that if such does anything wrong, the person should rather be treated with mercy like a brother just as he is also being treated with mercy by the Son of Man, i.e. Jesus (Maldonatus,1888:113). The note of love in friendship is quite evident here with an emphasis on the need to first rebuke an erring friend personally in view of the relationship between them before taking the person to the whole church.

Philips (2005:367) also point out that in Matthew 18: 15-20, the concern is with restoring the lost person who has been seduced from the protection of the church, in order to prevent him/her from getting lost completely and from perishing in the end. In the same way, members of the Matthean community have the responsibility to look for those who wander away and restore them to the fellowship of the church; just as new entrants are also incorporated into the membership of the church. Therefore, Matt. 18: 15-20 on reconciliation should be read in the light of the preceding section, Matt. 18: 10-14, which borders on how to deal with one’s brother/sister on the basis of divine love in action within the community. Of course, to regard one’s friend as one brother or sister is the best thing to do in any relationship. Nevertheless, this does not mean indifference to the sin of a fellow brother/sister.

However, U. Luz (2001) has a more critical explanation that goes beyond the limits of the relationship between two members within the Matthean community. He explains that erring behaviour affects the entire life of the community. Luz observes that Matt. 18:15-18 appears to be awkwardly related to what precedes it – search for the lost sheep, forgive seventy–seven times where here it talks of ex-communication. However, referring to Galot, Luz maintains that the section implies winning the lost back to the church rather than ex-communication. It speaks about reconciliation without limits (Luz, 2001:450). Luz notes that the text specifically speaks about a brother’s sin which members of the Matthean community are expected to take initiative to correct, because the action of the brother has affected the community. In other words, the sin so committed by a brother has communal implication. The reconciliation process first requires a

private conversation with the erring brother in order to protect the brother's feelings without witnesses present, so as not to be embarrassed.

But then, if that fails, there is the need to involve two or three witnesses to convict the erring member, a practice that is based on the command to love one's neighbour as enshrined in Lev. 19:17. Luz explains that in Judaism, the essence of such public admonition of an erring brother is an expression of the love for him and of solidarity within the community of the people of God, which can have a positive result, especially when a sinner is restored to God or the community of His people - the church.

However, Luz wonders the purpose of the second conversation involving the witnesses with the accused since they are not eyewitnesses of the sin committed by the accused. The reference to two or three witnesses, in its rabbinic sense, can be seen as a way of warning the offender about his deed as argued by Maldonatus and Bruce. Luz, like others, maintains that in the event that the erring brother proves to be recalcitrant even with the intervention of the church, then the offender should be treated as a tax collector and Gentile, which of course, is not a final condemnation. From the perspective of Jewish Christians, this would mean having nothing to do with the recalcitrant brother/sister. But in a practical sense, such a severance of private contact from the person and expulsion from the communal life does not preclude a later restoration as I Cor. 5:5 suggests (Luz, 2001:412).

Luz then discusses discipline within the church in detail, beyond the matter of friendship which is our focus in this study (452-460). But significantly, Luz maintains that the practice in Matt. 18:15-18 allows for remorse and penitence in an erring brother that makes restoration and reconciliation possible, because the covenant model of the community also works side by side with the grace model. Nevertheless, expulsion from communal life may also be necessary, especially when a sinner refuses to ask for or obtain forgiveness as implied by Matt. 18: 17 (Luz, 2001:455). Luz also raises the question of *corpus permixtum* in Matt.13:37-43, 47-50, 22:11-14, i.e. righteous and unrighteous co-existing in the church, as not enough of a reason not to make effort towards a realization of the law of love of Christ within its midst. Hence, the idea of expulsion may not be contradictory to the command to love or to restore an erring brother, except that it has nothing to do with the binding and loosing ministry of the church.

Davies and Allison (1991), in addition to what other commentators have said on Matt. 18: 15-20 regarding reconciliation in the Matthean community, pointed out that the offended is expected to take the initiative for reconciliation privately. If that fails, he/she should seek

assistance of two or three other brothers/sisters as witnesses, a practice that can be traced to Deut. 19:15. But if that initiative also fails then the case should be brought to the church community, before the unrepentant brother/sister could be treated as a Gentile or tax collector. Reconciliation should be sought by bringing the offender to penitence like a shepherd goes after his lost sheep (Allison & Davies, 780-786). Such an erring brother/sister should be reproved as an expression of love or obedience to love one's brother/sister as enjoined in Deut. 19:15-18. It is also emphasized by Jesus in his teaching as an antidote against anger (Lev.19:17c) and reflected in Gad. 3-5: "Love one another from the heart...and if any sins against you, speak to the person in peace... If any confesses and repents, forgive him/her...Otherwise the person may start cursing, and you would be sinning doubly. In a dispute, do not let an outsider hear your secrets" (Davies:780). Allison and Davies conclude that Matt. 18:15-17 demonstrates an influence of Judaism, and so the procedure must have been composed by an individual greatly influenced by Jewish tradition.

To this end, there is a way the practice of reconciliation in Matt.18: 15-20 affects the communal life of the church within the Matthean community. First, it allows for obedience in the church, because separation from the church calls for repentance so that the soul of the erring one may be saved, just as it helps to prevent the entire community from being contaminated. In this regard, it must have also helped to strengthen relationships within the Matthean community.

Draper examines the usage of the expression, 'the Lord's Day' in the Didache, as to whether it points to the Day of Atonement or Passover/Easter celebration. He then examines the implications of the fellowship/eucharist as a spiritual meal that emphasizes the purity of the community and its lifestyle (Draper 2012: 242-249). Draper's study throws light on the background to the reconciliatory procedures found in the Matthean community in the pre-Jesus' tradition, which finds echoes also in the first century community of the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Didache, suggesting that it derived from the key text of Leviticus 19:17-18 and played an important role in first century Jewish Christian thinking. Reconciliation with an erring member was required of quarreling members of Matthew's community before they were allowed to participate in the eucharist so that a pure and therefore acceptable sacrifice could be offered to God in the communal worship. No guilt offering would not be acceptable to God if the appropriate reparation had not been made to an offended member within the community and the quarrel settled.

In this regard, the Didache distinguishes between offences committed against God, which are regarded as ritual offences and offences against a member of the community, which are regarded as moral offences. However, both offences are regarded as rendering quarreling members unclean and therefore unable to make sacrifices or offerings in the community unacceptable to God. Nevertheless, the former offence can be settled by repentance and spiritual sacrifice of the community, whereas offences against fellow members of the community could be settled by apology, restitution and sacrifice. The importance of this is that the overall purity of the entire community as a holy assembly was predicated on the purity of sacrifice offered to God which required the reconciliation and restitution offered by a member for offending another member within the community.

Against this background, both a recalcitrant or an offender and unforgiving member of the community would be banned from participating in the pure meal (tohorah) in both Qumran community and the Didache as an eschatological temple of God that should be kept pure from all forms of impurities. Hence the kiss of peace as part of the eucharist is meant to be an outward liturgical symbol of the requirement for reconciliation between the offended and the offender within the community. The same understanding can be seen in Jesus' teaching on the importance of reconciliation even in the course of worship in Matt. 5:23-26; and the need to forgive an offending member in order to avoid being impure for communal worship by sin of unforgiveness as enshrined in the Lord's Prayer in Matt. 6:9-13.

Here the Matthean community is seen to have required such a practice of forgiveness and restoration that goes along with friendship. In other words, the Matthean community is seen to be a community where forgiveness is practiced and embraced as a virtue, as records of wrongs should not be kept by its members. They are to learn to practice forgiveness after the example of Jesus, as God has also forgiven them through Jesus Christ (Matt.18:21-23). Consequently, Jesus reverses the retaliatory procedure implied by Peter's question on forgiveness: not vengeance but unlimited forgiveness is required of members of the community. In the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matt.18:23-35 there is the same emphasis on the importance of reconciliation and forgiveness as in the Lord's Prayer in Matt. 6:12, 14; to underline the importance of forgiveness in the communal life of the Matthean church. There is also a "gap" being raised here about the need for forgiveness in friendship. It raises the question, "Is forgiveness possible after betrayal?" This is of particular importance in Matthew's Gospel as it relates to Judas.

The implication for the Matthean community is that there should be no issue that can be regarded to be beyond forgiveness in friendship, as implied by the enormity of the servant's debt to the king (Matt. 18:23-35). The note of forgiveness is essentially related to friendship, because it promotes continuity and mutuality in communal life. Therefore, for the Matthean community particularly, part of its evangelistic calling in the world as the light of the world and salt of the earth, is that it must demonstrate the spirit of friendliness and reconciliation borne out of forgiveness through God's love, as contained in the Gospel of Jesus, to those outside of the group (Matt. 5: 13-16).

The practice of forgiveness in friendship within the Matthean community will, therefore, help us to place the stories of the betrayal of Peter and Judas in the right perspective in the Gospel. These two episodes in the Gospel seem to suggest that there might have been some cases of disappointment or betrayal, and in that case what should a betrayer do? In this case, Matthew may be contrasting Peter's actions at the time of the arrest and trial of Jesus. When it dawned on him that he has betrayed his master, "he went out and wept bitterly" (Matt. 26:75b). With Judas, when it dawned on him that he has betrayed his friend, he repented. Judas "brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders...and throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself" (Matt. 27:3-5). We can argue that Matthew might be saying that while Peter's denial may not in any way be less offensive than Judas' betrayal, the important thing is the outcome of their individual reactions and decisions regarding their mistakes. This become evident as we contrast Judas' resolve to commit suicide, doubtless, out of depression, with Peter's cry of penitence and repentance - "*And he went out and wept bitterly*" (Matt. 26: 75b cf. Psal.51: 10- 14). We shall look at this in detail later in the study.

Forgiveness in the Matthean community works with a reconciliatory procedure that is peculiar to it; and which shows a correlation between friendship and forgiveness especially in the event of a disappointment or actual betrayal. Therefore, for Matthew's community, it appears that recognition is given to the church as the final arbiter or supreme court where all cases of misunderstandings, especially involving broken relationships or friendships, should be settled (Matt. 18:17).

GAP FOUR: The fourth "gap" has to do with the place of society, repentance and forgiveness in friendship ties, even when we agree to the fact that friends are personally chosen. It appears there is a limit to this reconciliatory procedure in Matthew's Gospel,

because of the note of ex-communication in the event of recalcitrance or adamancy of an erring member.

In this regard, an unrepentant member should be regarded as a Gentile or publican, i.e. to be excommunicated or excluded from the fellowship of the local community. But this has to be exercised as a last resort when such recalcitrance becomes a threat to the wellbeing or peace of the community. It also does not preclude the possibility of return. On the whole, the reconciliatory procedure shows that there should be no end to forgiveness as it seems to imply by Jesus' response to Peter' question seems to imply: "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:22).

The Matthean community reflects the early Christian movement in the first century church, which later came to be known as ekklesia, i.e. an assembly of those who are called into special fellowship, experience and purpose. The Matthean church or community generally has its background in the assembly of God's people in the Old Testament, beginning from the call of biblical figures like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob into a special relationship with Him, and subsequently developed into the congregation of the people of Israel as His own chosen nation. Matthew thus presents his community as the continuation of that Old Testament community as a community of faith with Jesus at the centre of that assembly.

However, the mission of the church according to Matthew extends beyond the limits of its initial Jewish focus; even though it is very hard to determine the actual point at which this group separated from the Jewish group at Jamnia. It is however clear from the Gospel that Matthew presents Jesus as drawing many people to the Father beyond the normal limits of Jewish cultural boundaries, as a reference to the mission of the church. Matthew tries to establish a connecting link between the Old Testament and his community by pointing to his new message of the kingdom as being the fulfillment of the old. This new message of the kingdom is a demonstration of God's love to humanity which is without restriction to those who share fellowship with him. This love of God for all across tribal lines is illustrated by such events as the visit of Magi (Matt. 2) and Jesus' choice of Galilee as the base of his public ministry (Matt. 4:12-18).

The point then is to show that Matthew's community provides a point of continuity between the Old Testament people of God and the New Testament church which Jesus has founded through his life and ministry and to which the Gospel of Matthew was addressed. We have a picture of a community of people in relationship with God and with one another as the

basis of the relationship between Jesus and his disciples as well as among the disciples themselves (Reid, 2004:81-82).⁹⁰

The implication of this for our study is that friendship is conditioned by love, unity and mutuality as we have seen in our previous discussion.⁹¹ In other words, love, unity and mutuality, though experienced in particular cultural ways, are important factors for sustaining friendship. Especially for the Matthean community as a budding community in the face of persecution, the motif of unity and mutuality would be clear and understandable for the sustainability of their communal life. We can then see that the Matthean community is being regulated by *agape* love, which is described as God's unrestricted love that seeks to bring every one into fellowship with him. Matthew then could be seen to be making the same demand on the members of his community to develop this kind of *agape* love first among themselves for it is only then that they could be in friendship that can work. For Matthew, *agape* love transcends mere friendship; it expresses the totality of relationships because it is based on God's love.

Later, members of the community would have to go and make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18-20). In the light of this, friendship within the group and of course, the membership of the same is unrestricted as Gentiles are also welcome (Filson, 1971:42-44). In this connection, Jesus calls every one into friendship with himself in order that they might be part of that kingdom of God. Jesus came to demonstrate divine mercy through the sacrifice of himself as the ransom for many, which is the highest point of expression of love (Matt. 9:13, 12:7). Consequently, Jesus is branded "a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" (Matt. 11:18-19). The Greek word used here, "*telonon philos*" speaks broadly about friendship. And this trait is anchored in *agape* love towards these sets of people.

Matthew also relates that friendship with Jesus is about sharing in the life of Jesus in loyalty and faithful service for the good of the community. The community is therefore characterized by a kind of friendship that is marked by humble service. Members of the community should learn to become like servants in order to be able to enter into the experience or to continue in the experience of relationship within the community. It is a community where response to the Gospel is considered to be a yardstick for the incorporation of new entrants into the membership of the church as well as friendship with Jesus in the context of discipleship. The

⁹⁰ Matthew is trying to show that his community has come to be the church (new community) founded by Jesus.

⁹¹ 98 See the discussion above on the concept of friendship in the Matthean cultural context, pgs.111-115.

community could therefore be regarded as highly disciplined as members try to live according to the norms of the community. Besides, the lost are lovingly and jealously sought (Matt. 18:10-14).

Matthew 19:1-22:41 forms the height of the reactions of the Pharisees, Scribes and the Jewish elders against Jesus with their confrontational stance, when they ask for a sign. But Jesus reminds them of the sign of Jonah, and later declares his messianic calling by riding on an ass to Jerusalem. There, he confronts the Jewish elders on quite a number issues by rebuking them through his various teachings as well as in his eschatological predictions regarding the signs of the end and of his second coming to consummate the kingdom of God (23:1-25:46).

In Matt. 26: 1-27:20, the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders of his day has reached a climax which is the consummation of the narrative. Hence here the plan to kill Jesus is hatched with the help of an insider among the disciples of Jesus named Judas Iscariot, who had offered to deliver him to the religious leaders for a gratuity (Matt. 26:14-16). This eventually led to Jesus' arrest, trial and crucifixion.

GAP FIVE: The fifth gap points to the question about the limit of loyalty in friendship by examining the role of Judas in Jesus' arrest and his subsequent crucifixion. This deals with the popular question about what could have inspired Judas' action of betrayal?

Could it be true, according to Matthean depiction of Judas as against Mark's description, that he was the one who asked what he would be given by the Jewish elders in order to betray Jesus? And following the arrest of Jesus with the help of Judas, the Jewish elders thought they had succeeded in putting an end to the ministry and power of Jesus. But it was a temporary triumph and short lived as Jesus was later resurrected. Jesus actually has the ultimate victory (Matt. 28:1-20).

The disciples of Jesus who enjoyed intimacy with him should have identified with him in his travails with his antagonists, particularly the Jewish religious leaders. However, they are seen to have exhibited one weakness or the other, especially their faithlessness in Jesus' public ministry. He often rebukes them. Peter in spite of his apparent boldness denies ever knowing Jesus. He also misunderstands the nature of mentorship and leadership (26:69-75). And of course, all of the disciples abandon him at the most critical moment of his life. Jesus can be seen to have greatly lamented this disappointment on the part of his disciples: "Sit here, while I go yonder and pray..." he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me..." And again he came and found them

sleeping, for their eyes were heavy ...Then he came to the disciples and said them, ‘Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son man is betrayed into the hand of sinners...’ (26: 36-46). Although other disciples, including Peter, bounced back later; Judas did not.

The Matthean narrative therefore requires our response as to how and why Judas should suddenly turn to be Jesus’ betrayer since Judas did not begin as a betrayer in the narrative. According to Matthew, Judas is seen at the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry like other disciples. He has taken an active part in all the activities of the group, particularly in the preaching mission and the attendant miracles that marked the mission. Judas’ choice as the treasurer of the group would also suggest that Judas was a responsible person, even though how he got so appointed is not known to us (cf. John 12:4-6). Judas thus appears at the beginning of Matthew’s narrative as both a trusted disciple and friend of Jesus. The point is that Jesus must have seen potentials in him to be a great apostle just like any other member of the group. Judas is seen to have maintained his friendship with Jesus and other disciples, although there are references to occasional misunderstandings among the disciples such as forgetting to take bread with them on their journeys, envy arising from the Jesus’ praise of Peter for his confession and arguing who was greater among them as seen in the request of James and John. Then however, as Matthew shows in his narrative, Judas later loses his focus and vision, only to become a betrayer because of his love of money: “Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot went to the chief priest and said, “What will you give me if I deliver him to you...” Matt. 26:14-16).

Matthew further shows how Judas also defies the friendly warnings by Jesus not to be disloyal to the cause of friendship by betraying him. Although Jesus’ statement about Judas’ action in Matt. 26:20-25 sounds ambiguous, we can conclude that Jesus warned Judas against getting involved in his conflict with the religious leaders as an informant or betrayer. But it seems that Judas had determined to betray Jesus. His participation at the Last Supper could therefore have been a way of concealing his action. The argument is that the Son of man would not need to be betrayed as it is implied by Jesus’ statement: “the Son of man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed...” (Matt. 26: 24). The traitor’s guilt in this regard is not in any way lessened. Woe is pronounced on him as the divine punishment awaiting his impenitence that it would have been better for him not to have been born. In saying this, Jesus was not in any way threatening Judas, but trying to help him retrace his step and his actions. Part of what we have learnt about the benefits of friendship is the ability to advise one’s friend or for

friends to be able to sharpen each other's moral capabilities; or what is called frank speech in friendship such as was being practiced in the Greco-Roman friendship in order to improve their character and sense of uprightness.

The other disciples express fear at the revelation of such serious wrath, but Judas seems not to be moved by the note of warning. It should be noted that all the members of the community are warned against questionable rapport with the Jewish elders and false prophets in order to avoid being misguided by them (Matt. 7:15, 23).

In view of the foregoing, we can conclude that the Matthean community presents an example of a community of an ideal friendship in the context of discipleship as demonstrated by Jesus himself. It raises challenges relating to relationships in the context of friendship in any cultural context of the world. According to Matthew therefore Jesus could be seen as an embodiment of a good friend by the example of his lifestyle with his disciples. In this regard, Matthew, as a pastoral theologian and a leader, is in his narrative impressing on his community, and on us as well as the readers of the story today the need to practically imbibe those attributes of ideal friendship such as love, trust, loyalty, forgiveness, service and equality within and outside as God's chosen people in the world in the hope of our eschatological salvation.

4.3 Exegetical Analysis Of Matt. 26:47-56: Judas' Betrayal Of Jesus

This section provides exegesis of the pericope for our study as a prelude to achieving a new and culture-embedded interpretation of the concept of friendship and betrayal. The exegesis is a reflection of the Matthean Semitic-Hellenistic cultural background, but with a possible influence of Western biblical scholars who have tried to interpret the pericope from the critical-historical perspective.

Having already examined the theme of friendship and betrayal in the Gospel of Matthew generally, we shall now look in detail at the concept in this chosen pericope; hence the need to explore the text. In addition, the action of Judas in this pericope has attracted the attention of few Western critical scholars, who have tried to explain the pericope or understand Judas' action from the psychological perspective. This attempt has inspired this study, because it has challenged our cultural understanding of Judas' action as Africans.

Immediately after the Passover, at which Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:17-35), Jesus and his disciples went eastward out of the city gate, down to and across the brook

Kidron to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray; and it was there that he was arrested (Matt. 26:36-46). U. Luz (2005:412) also explains that while Jesus was still speaking with the disciples, Judas appeared accompanied by a large crowd sent by the chief priests and elders. He observes that the conspiracy conceived in chapter 26:3 is now being hatched against Jesus admittedly with the assistance of Judas Iscariot and with a sign of a kiss to guard against the error of identity. Similarly, R.T. France (1985:374-376) opines that the betrayal plan followed through Jesus refuses prevent it; he simply warns Judas against it. The captors led by Judas, who is described as one of the twelve, shows Matthew's depiction of Judas in connection with the betrayal and arrest of Jesus. The guard Judas leads to arrest Jesus probably belonged to the Levite temple guard (Matt. 26:55 cf. Lk. 22:4, 52; Joh. 7: 32) (Jeremias, 1969:210), and the armed auxiliary police with whom they worked together (Lane, 1974:524). Reicke (1974:148) recalls that the captain of the temple guard was a high officer who sometime even rose to be a higher officer, and that the Jewish soldiers normally used swords (m. Shab.6:4), and that the high priest's servants were notorious for their use of clubs in the temple, as they use clubs to quench unrest. Craig S. Keener has observed that it was unlikely that Pilate would not have ordered the Roman troops from the Fortress Antonia at the request of the Jewish religious leaders (Klasuser, 1979:337).

The captors who came to arrest Jesus were heavily armed as if Jesus were "a robber". Josephus, the Jewish historian normally used the term for those believed to be "revolutionaries", such as those who desecrated the temple like a social bandit as referred to by Jesus in Lk.22:52, or common thieves, but more especially political rebels (Moule, 1965:119).

The secretive capture of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane resembled the ways the Roman authorities used to deal with guerilla revolutionaries (Stauffer, 1960:119). Keener thus describes the action of the captors of Jesus as ironic. They had come to arrest Jesus as if he were a robber but it was their action that rather reflected those of a robber because they came to arrest him heavily harmed just as Jesus had earlier compared them with "robbers" who invited the judgment of God for their improper use of the temple (Matt. 21:13).

But significantly, Judas' action shows that Judas betrayed Jesus in a way that outwardly symbolized friendship (Matt. 26:49). Matthew's account of the betrayal by Judas is presented to us as an integral part of the passion narrative, yet one observes that Matthew also stresses the moral instruction to teach his audience that persecution often occasions betrayal among the disciples (Matt. 24:10). Filson observes that Judas calls Jesus "Rabbi" (Teacher), which is an expression that conveys friendliness, love, trust and loyalty. Therefore no one would have

suspected any betrayal attempt on his part. Consequently, Judas' greeting of Jesus as rabbi in this context is heavily ironical (France, 1985:375). Senior describes the title "Rabbi" used for Jesus by Judas as "an inadequate title", but gives no further explanation about what it meant in this context either for Jesus or Judas (Senior, 1977:254).

Brown (1994:225) has also argued that Judas' kiss could neither be historically established nor refuted, but that it makes sense to us. He observes the inadequacy of the moon light during the Passover the country-side would normally have been illumined by the moon except when obscured by clouds. In this sense, the shade of olive trees may have caused some darkness and it would be important to get the right person immediately before resistance or flight could allow his escape; hence the authorities would require the help of Judas to specify the person to the arresting party in the Garden. Buttrick (1978:581) explains that Jesus might have been recognized without a sign, but his captors wished to avoid committing an error of identification at night and to avoid a possible struggle with Jesus' group. Davies and Allison (1991:508) maintain that Judas' kiss marks Jesus out for his captors who seemed not to have known him because it was dark. Barclay has argued that Judas Iscariot was responsible for Jesus' arrest by leading the Jewish authorities to the place where his master-friend could be found⁹² (Barclay, 1975:47-49).

The emphatic point of the narrative therefore is that it was a disciple who betrayed Jesus: "Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude..." (Matt. 26:46). The implication is that one's present commitment to any cause is not at all a guarantee that one cannot later turn out to be a traitor. Judas had given the captors a convenient sign to identify Jesus in order to point him to his enemies: "the one I kiss is the one" (Matt. 26:48). Although Matthew makes no reference to that kind of practice in his community, Luke does in his Gospel (Lk.7:45).

But then, nowhere else apart from the case of Judas has any other known Gospels depicted a disciple as kissing Jesus. They maintain that even among the Jews, kissing was seldom done in the public, but reserved for solemn and formal occasion as typically a token of respect

⁹² Culy (2010:57) refers to Seneca's comment on the topic of masters and slaves friendship that such a friendship could be established across social boundaries. He was of the opinion that slaves could be allowed to share meals with their masters. Nevertheless, he pointed out that such slaves/masters relationships may not necessarily develop into a true "one soul" type of friendship of the Greco-Roman genuine friendship. But that opinion was seen as a movement away from the Aristotelian view that limited true friendship to particular social ranks. In this case, we have seen how Jesus with his teaching of agape love has come to demonstrate that kind of what we can call master/disciples relationship (because the disciples are not slaves), by condescending to their level and even serving them (Matt. 20:28). Consequently, by referring to Jesus here as master-friend is only descriptive of his dual position/status within the group; although he has condescended to level of the disciples, he remains the leader of the group in order to be able to give it the appropriate direction.

and reconciliation. However, Lane (1974:525) and Anderson (1976:323) point out that the rabbinic disciples usually greeted each other with a kiss as a sign of intimacy and respect. For example, kissing was a usual Jewish form of greeting between a host and his guest at a solemn and formal occasion (Lk.7:45). It was typically a token of respect and reconciliation as seen between rabbis like Rabbi Gamaliel kissing Rabbi Joshua on the head (Hash. 2:9). Furthermore, the kiss of peace was also a way of greetings among the early Christians signaling “being at peace and charity with one’s neighbor” (I Thess.5:26). Although there is no evidence of the use of kissing as a style of greetings between Jesus and his disciples or about the frequency of that practice, but it is likely that Jesus and his disciples may have greeted one another this way.

It thus becomes confusing how to understand Judas’ kiss of Jesus in this particular context. As Luz has observed, the kiss of Judas in the history of text’s interpretation has become the symbol of a sordid and hypocritical betrayal according to the expression in the Lucan Gospel: “Judas, do you betray the Son of man with a kiss?”⁹³ (Lk. 22:48). This is because according to Luz, for Matthew and his readers, kisses in Jewish society were a common practice among the people, apart from between lovers as a sign of respect and toward those in higher positions such as kings or rabbis at a departure or a return as well as a sign of reconciliation. There were also references to a kiss of the head, hands and feet. Luz concludes that it is very hard to say that a kiss of greeting was uncommon or a meaningless ritual in the Jewish society of that day. It should be noted that a kiss was also a clear sign of honour and solidarity with someone, but how Judas used it has inspired endless speculation (Luz, 2005:417); just like Joab who killed Amasa by kissing him treacherously (2 Sam. 20:9-10). This understanding is informed by the fact that, ordinarily, a kiss is seen as an expression of love and should not in any way inspire an arrest and death. Judas’ action therefore could be taken to portray something of the depth of pain that is associated with betrayal.

Buttrick (1978) further explains that the Jewish authorities needed to capture just the leader of the group or the ringleader, in order to prevent confrontation and bloodshed (Matt. 26: 31 cf. Lk. 22: 37). They were probably influenced by the practice of the Roman authorities where instead of attacking the whole people, usually only the ringleader of a revolt was arrested and executed as warning to others. And so in the case of Jesus, the same method was used with the

⁹³ Ulrich Luz (2001:415) raises the question of the historicity of Judas’ kiss as it is an intensely controversial issue in New Testament scholarship. Luz, however, maintains that the fact that this aspect of Judas’ kiss does not appear in the Gospel of John (18:1-11) is not a strong argument against the historicity of the action or for it to be regarded as mere early narrative embellishment of the story of the arrest of Jesus.

help of a trusted member of his group. The religious authorities were confident that by putting the disciples of Jesus off guard they could arrest Jesus with ease, trusting in the dependability of Judas as he had received payment for this deal. Buttrick argues that Judas betrayed Jesus for the price of a slave in fulfillment of the Jeremiah prophecy in the Old Testament (Buttrick, 1978:571).

It still remains puzzling why Judas should have agreed to a deal with those he knew were the enemies of his friend and master. But George Buttrick describes Judas' action as a mixture of motives: ambition, loneliness, jealousy and greed (Buttrick, 1978:582). This is one response to the question of why Judas did what he did. It also points to one of the narrative gaps we are going to respond to in this study from the perspective of the Yoruba cultural concept of friendship and betrayal.

Biblical scholars have tried to understand and explain Judas' action in different ways. The Greek word is *kataphleo*, which is a verb simply meaning "to kiss", for example, to kiss someone in greeting or in farewell. D. S. Sharp says the stress is laid "not on kissing fervently", but on the very fact of kissing at all. On the other hand, a passage is cited elsewhere where the word is used in the sense of passion of gratitude. Or to corroborate Sharp (1992:674) who explains that "to kiss fervently" is to kiss affectionately. Matthew's use of the verb φιλέω in verse 50 to describe the action of Judas in the expression: ἐφ' ᾧ πάρει, which literally means "Upon which you are present" implies the implications of that action for Jesus. This statement by Jesus has attracted some critical discussion.⁹⁴ This may be a statement, in which case we should understand it as an imperative: "For which you are here or what you came for". Or it may be in a question form: "For what are you here?" (Why are you here?). The problem with this way of taking the statement is that 'ὅ' is a relative pronoun, not interrogative. The words are found in Matthew only. Matthew thus shows a particular interest in what Jesus said to Judas in the Garden. France however explains that the expression: "For which you are here" is obscure, elliptical and can be interpreted to mean either a command, a wish - "Let what you have come for be carried out" - or even an exclamation - "What an errand you have come on!" (France, 1985:376).

What is clear, however, from the above, in spite of the syntactical problem, is that Jesus here seems to be saying to Judas according to the picture painted by Matthew in the periscope, to

⁹⁴ Luz (2005:419) describes it as an old *crux interpretum*, for which he finds it difficult to suggest a plausible interpretation. He explains that it can simply be interpreted as a statement meaning: "You have come for this purpose, that is to betray me".

get on with the job of betrayal and arrest, rather than inquiring why he had come with a questionable kiss: “My man, do your errand” (Morris, 1992: 674).

This is another gap in the narrative by Matthew that we shall address in our attempt at a cultural understanding of friendship and betrayal from the cultural perspective of the Yoruba.

But it is interesting that, in contrast to treacherous Judas’ kissing, Jesus rather greets Judas by addressing him as his friend. This expression: “friend”, according to Filson, is not sarcasm but recognition of their close association (Filson, 1971:281). However, in reality he is far from being a real friend, for his kiss was a means of handing his master over to the enemies (Brown, 1994:254). R. France describes Jesus’ response with the word “friend”, which is sometimes used for a table-companion, probably to remind Judas of his presence at the supper-table earlier in the evening, thereby carrying a sense of rebuke. But he also points out that in the other two places where the word is used in Matthew’s Gospel (20:13, 22:12), it is without an element of rebuke. Luz would seem to agree with France, because unlike Filson, the term *ἑταῖρος* used for Judas is a term of friendship but promises nothing good. (Luz, 2005:418).

However, one of the disciples whose name is not mentioned by Matthew tries to use force to resist the arrest (Senior, 1977:255). He seems not to have understood the teaching of Jesus against the use of force to advance the course of God as in Matt. 5:38-43. In fact what could a disciple be doing with a sword at that point? But then, Luz argues, in those days it was not unusual to carry a sword on a feast day as part of one’s dress because since the Maccabean period, self-defense was permitted even on the Sabbath. Therefore, it would be a credit to that disciple here for appearing as a brave fighter (Luz, 2005:419). Carter maintains that the high priest’s slave is a slave with considerable prestige in the light of the prestige, power and honour attached to the office of his master (cf. Matt. 20:27). But he is however kept away from the centre of that power. To Carter, this could be taken as a satire against the powerful regarding how they use and marginalize their servants (Carter 2001, 531). France, like other commentators, points out that Jesus demonstrates his power to the contrary because he discourages the use of violence. Jesus could also have appealed for supernatural aid if he had wished. This illustrates Jesus’ sovereign control of the events. He is seen as the helpless victim in order to achieve the purpose appointed for him (France, 1985:375). Luz also points out that Jesus’ refusal to resort to violence should be seen as against *lex talionis* (Gen. 9:6), which expresses the basic Jewish principle “measure for measure” as also recalled by Jesus in his teaching in Matt. 7:2. His maxim of

absolute defenselessness and rejection of violence should therefore be a general rule for Christians (Luz, 2005:420).

Jesus' passivity and non-resistance agrees with his decision in the Garden of Gethsemane to allow his Father's will to prevail. His earlier moral instruction in Matt. 26:54-56 resonates entirely with the Matthean theological purpose: "All takes place that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." In other words, Jesus does not encourage violence, but he maintains his position and thus gives an example for his followers. They should also renounce violence and prefer to suffer injustice (Matt. 5:39-41). The use of the sword cannot really protect, but it would evoke a violent reaction. Jesus is not pretentious in his renunciation of force and comments on the power of God as the ultimate triumph over evil. Jesus backs up his teaching with action at his passion, and thereby lays conditions for real obedience in his community. Jesus could therefore be seen as fulfilling Isa. 50:11. The disciple who tries to resist Jesus' arrest is seen to have simply misunderstood Jesus' situation and that he is not a helpless victim. After all, Jesus has all the power at his disposal. According to France (1985:376), Jesus allows himself to be arrested deliberately, because he could have appealed to a Legion of army made up of 6,000 angels if he had so desired. His resolve is reminiscent of the second temptation in Matt. 4:5-7 where Jesus refused to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple and call down the support of angels. But as the Son of God, Jesus preferred the will of his Father to his own will – a demonstration of his power so that the plan of God might be fulfilled, as evident in his experience at Gethsemane (Luz, 2005: 421). Jesus is not to be seen as an insurrection leader though the charge brought against him implies a Zealot-type of insurgent - something from which Jesus has already dissociated himself. He has always been around, sitting with people and teaching them as the rabbis did (France, 1985:376 cf. Luz, 2005:421).

Matthew thus describes Jesus as having exercised genuine love and faith in God here even when God refused to accede to his request. In this way, Jesus would be encouraging the disciples, by his action, to embrace martyrdom without resistance and genuine love and faith in God in whatever circumstance realizing this to be part of the price of discipleship (cf. Matt. 5:25, 10:17-22). In this regard, Matthew portrays Jesus' obedience. As he has taught in his Sermon on the Mount, his actions are anchored in love, even for one's enemies (Senior, 1977:255).

The point is that Jesus' passion occurs in the context of a series of events that must go with the fulfillment of the plan of God for the consummation of the kingdom of God. Luz therefore observes that Matthew's closing account of Jesus' life which connects all the events

together with the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus, took place so that the scriptures might be fulfilled as indicated in Matt: 1:22: "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophets". This forms a frame around which the story of Jesus has been woven from the beginning to the end in a narrative sense (Luz, 2005:421). Finally, Luz concludes that Matthew's story of Jesus' arrest shows a narrative sequence of the Gethsemane section from Matt. 26: 31 with a reference to the blow against the shepherd that will result in the scattering of the disciples. Keener observes that the total abandonment of Jesus by all the disciples after one of them had already given him up would have implied a betrayal of their bond of intimacy and a serious embarrassment for Jesus in the social order of his day (Keener, 1999:640-643).

But while all the disciples might have been guilty of abandoning their master and friend, Judas is doubly guilty as the one who spearheaded the arrest even though a disciple and friend of Jesus. Josephus was said to have made a comment on a similar incident regarding the loyalty of the Galileans to him, because according to him, to be betrayed by one's troops, whose trust one ought to have enjoyed, could be very tragic and devastating. He recalls specifically how the goodwill and loyalty of his guards saved him from the antics of John of Giscala who had plotted to get rid of him, even though he had earlier demonstrated a great magnanimity by sparing him when they met in battle (Whitson, 2009:6).⁹⁵ Although Josephus' statement is open to different interpretations, for the purpose of our study here, we can interpret Josephus' argument to mean that it is not good to be abandoned or betrayed by one's friend; and that in time of great change such a traitor merited death.

In conclusion, it is quite clear from the above discussion that the Matthean community exhibits a great deal of the characteristics of friendship such as trust, loyalty, love, equality, and forgiveness. Similarly, we have also seen from within the Matthean community such an action that could best be regarded as betrayal, as evident in the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples,

⁹⁵ The story shows a contrast between the experience of Josephus with his guards and friends in Galilee and that of Jesus with his disciples, particularly Judas Iscariot, which affords us a right perspective through which to look at Judas' action. Josephus recalls further: "And when I had subdued and taken John, who often laid treacherous snares for me, I did not punish (with death) either him or any of the people forenamed". John later plotted to kill Josephus but he did not succeed because Josephus' guards were loyal to him: "But before I had spoken all I designed, I heard one of my own domestics bidding me come down to provide for my safety and escape my enemies there; for John had chosen the most trusty of these armed men that were about me ... and had given them order when he sent them to kill me; having learned that I was alone excepting some of my domestics. So those that were sent came as they were ordered, and they had executed what they came about, had I not leaped down from the elevation I stood on, and with one of my guards, whose name was James, being carried (out of the crowd) upon the back of one Herod of Tiberias, and guided by him down to the lake, where I seized a ship and got into it and escaped my enemies unexpectedly" (Whiston 2009:1-7).

and by Judas' collusion with the religious leaders to arrest and kill Jesus whom he should ordinarily have shielded and protected from them. This action could best be seen as a violation of trust in their relationship or friendship with Jesus, their master and friend, and trust is one of the principles upon which genuine friendship is built. In this regard, according to Jackson's idea of betrayal, Jesus' arrest and subsequent death was as a result of Judas disloyalty by identifying with the enemies against him.⁹⁶

In all of his actions, Jesus is seen to have conformed to his earlier resolve to do the will of his Father, who would have granted him legions of angels to defend him if he had so requested. But he had been called to die sacrificially for those who had betrayed or abandoned him. Therefore, according to Jesus, even though the arrest is a tense moment for him, he does not approve of violence in the face of betrayal.

The important question for us in this study is how do we conceive the action of Judas, especially his controversial kiss? Although most of the Western scholars we have considered in the exegetical analysis of the pericope appear to have viewed Judas' action negatively, as we have pointed out earlier, there are a number of Western biblical scholars who are engaged in what is today known as "objective scholarship". They have attempted critical interpretations of his Judas' action from individualistic and psychological perspectives, which have challenged our African understanding of the concept of friendship and betrayal. This study is therefore a response to those challenges.

In the next chapter, we shall engage in a dialogical textual comparison of the contending Yoruba cultural context and the Matthean cultural context with Western critical context for all of them to play out their similarities and differences rhythmically and independently of one another. From this we will seek for a new meaning and interpretation of the text from an African cultural perspective, especially that of the Yoruba people in Nigeria.

In conclusion to our study in this section, we can conveniently point out that the cross examination of the contending three cultural contexts of our study will help bring to light factors that generally determine friendship and betrayal. But before we attempt that let us see the contributions of the critical biblical scholars we have identified for this study.

⁹⁶ See the discussion on the concept of betrayal by Jackson on page 119-123.

4.4 Western Critical Comments Or Positive Interpretations Of The Action Of Judas

This section identifies a number of Western biblical scholars who have tried to explain Judas' action systematically, from the perspective of individual psychology and freedom. They are concerned with understanding the action of Judas from a psychological perspective and in terms of freedom, rather than attempting to establish the reality of the historical Judas like the critical-historical scholars we have considered in the exegetical analysis of the pericope above. Although Western biblical scholars can be regarded as belonging to the post-Enlightenment period as we have indicated earlier in this study, there are two divergent strands of biblical thinking around the betrayal of Judas informed by different orientations. First, there is the historical critical approach into which most studies fall; for example, the commentaries, which examine what is like to be true historically in Matthew's account or how Matthew must have redacted Mark's Gospel as his source in order to ascertain the historical context of Matthew's Gospel. Second, there are scholars employing a psychological approach which emphasizes motive, psychological state of an individual, and speculate on why Judas may have done what he did. The approach thus seeks to be sympathetic to the misfortune of those who are involved in disasters.

Western scholars such as Luz, France and Brown belong to the critical-historical group, while William Klassen and Kim Paffenroth belong to the second group taking a psychological approach. This second group seek to find a new and different reading of the Judas story, in which they find new questions important in their twentieth century cultural context. They cannot be regarded as entirely representative of "Western" readings. Nevertheless, our attention is primarily drawn to the second group because this kind of stance on Judas has been given international exposure by the media and has challenged traditional understanding of friendship and betrayal as Africans, particularly for this researcher, as a Yoruba man. Although they are in a minority compared to the first group, their contributions to our study on friendship and betrayal is very important. They have inspired our reactions and contributions from our African perspective to the concept of friendship and betrayal by providing a reading is based on Western notions of psychological understanding and personal freedom in ethical decision making.

Over the centuries Judas' action has inspired different kinds of reactions and probing about the questions of loyalty in friendship, repentance, forgiveness and predestination in response to the most often-asked question about why Judas had done what he did in the context

of friendship. These reactions to Judas' action have recently been re-ignited by Gnostic texts which belong to a later strata in the historical development of Jesus' narrative. They can contribute to our understanding of what is involved in true friendship and the true meaning of betrayal, by bringing that concept of friendship that emphasizes individual psychology and freedom into a dialogue with the concept of friendship in Matthew's Gospel in the light of the Yoruba cultural understanding of friendship and betrayal as an aspect of African biblical scholarship.

Because as already pointed out, the cultural background of these post-Enlightenment Western scholars has informed their worldview. It explains how they perceive and react to issues and is at play in the way they perceive and interpret the action of Judas as a betrayer. They probe into the individual psychological condition, motive and freedom that may have influenced how and why an individual has behaved in a particular way. This approach therefore tries to understand the motive behind an action of a person, by emphasizing a reading different from the traditional one, i.e a reading that is suspicious of tradition and even of the traditions reflected in the Gospel.⁹⁷

We shall look at how this kind of different reading away from the traditional way of reading by these scholars has challenged us as Africans with regard to our understanding of the concept of friendship and betrayal. And in responding to this challenge, we will also make our cultural and pastoral concerns to bear on our interpretation of the action of Judas as seen in the pericope for this study.

4.4.0 *William Klassen*

In book titled, *Judas: Betrayer or Friend?* (2000:106), William Klassen agrees with the way that Judas is portrayed by Matthew as a disciple, an apostle and a friend of Jesus. But he condemns the way Matthew has used the Hebrew scriptures at his disposal, especially with regard to the role played by Judas in Jesus' passion. He maintains that Judas died as a faithful disciple to the end having carried out the command of his master-friend. This is because neither Jesus nor Matthew condemns Judas for his action when he went away after the Last Supper and did not return. Klassen is of the opinion that Matthew did not properly sort the materials at his disposal.

⁹⁷ See above on the post-Enlightenment Western cultural of concept of friendship, pgs.105-111.

For Klassen according to the narrative in Matthew, Jesus relates with Judas in a friendly manner by addressing him as a friend while in the garden of Gethsemane. He further points out that the Greek word used here, *betairos*, meaning ‘friend’ (Matt: 26:50), occurs only in the Matthean Gospel in direct form as also seen in Matthew 20:13, 22:12), to express friendliness as against the seemingly sharp interrogation in Luke: “Judas, do you hand over the Son of man with a kiss” (Lk. 22:48). The statement, *epb’ ho parei*, for Klassen, as we have already analyzed in the exegesis of the pericope, suggests that Jesus had known about the betrayal and how it would be done through a kiss. And Matthew does not seem to condemn or pass judgment on Judas as Satan–incarnate or covetous, because he actually returned the money. According to Klassen, the money was too small an amount for such a big deal; but was a routine for an act of informing (Klassen, 2000:103).

Klassen argues that Judas in betraying Jesus could be seen as the only disciple who could do what Jesus required of him, by allowing himself to be used as an instrument to achieve the divine will. Consequently, Judas’ action portends a true sense of friendship and agreement, Judas fulfilled the same goal in handing Jesus over to the religious leaders, just as Jesus had fulfilled the divine will of God by his death. And it was not until Jesus had given his approval of the action of Judas that the arresting party of the Temple Police proceeded to arrest him (Klassen, 2000:105).

With regard to the divergences in the account of the kissing, which is missing completely in the Johannine account, Klassen points out that Judas’ kiss in that context could be regarded as an ordinary kiss demonstrating a breakdown of barrier and so a reflection of the “kiss of peace” or “holy kiss” as practiced later by the early church. In this light, Judas’ kiss of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane could be seen as sign of solidarity of purpose, and unity between him and Jesus. Klassen thus maintains that a kiss could also be seen in the modern day sense of embrace in greeting and the exchange of salt of peace. In Mk. 9:50, this implies salt of friendship for a table fellowship within the group for keeping the community together. In the context of discipleship, Jesus and Judas had been together; and by eating together, a common covenant of peace was between them. Judas, therefore, has only agreed to carry out Jesus’ desire. His conclusion in this regard is very striking and debatable: “The tragedy in the act is not in what was being done by the partners in the deed. Each one was simply carrying out his assigned duty and playing out his role. In other words, from the perspective of tragic heroism, Klassen argues that the tragedy in the event of Judas’ arrest came about when two good people seeking to do their duties, came into

conflict with each other and when their perceptions of God's will and Kingdom clashed" (Klassen, 2000:111).

Although we have already discussed the issue of the kiss earlier, there is a difficulty with this opinion on the kiss and its practice among the disciples and Jesus as a form of greeting. This form of greeting would have been practiced in the early church in the first century as referred to in some of the Apostle Paul's letters, which were earlier than the Gospels. Besides, there are other indications that the practice was common in Jewish culture.

Klassen (2000:112) further observes that Judas did not receive enough of the care of the community of the disciples who should have sought him when he went away, because he argues that Judas was the only Judean among the twelve disciples; although this remains a subject of debate among the biblical scholars. Such a kind gesture might have saved him from committing suicide. In other words, Klassen is of the opinion that there was already a loss of love in that community among the disciples even while Jesus was still among them, because they seemed not to have addressed themselves to Jesus' instructions on love and care of the brotherhood. He wonders whether Jesus himself would have watched Judas walk away from the group without stopping him; and therefore concludes that the notion of betrayal by Judas is doubtful. On the whole, this kind of uncaring attitude is considered to be a contradiction of Jesus' teaching on communal life characterized by friendliness and love that has been identified as a feature of the Matthean community, where the disciples should love one another—and even their enemies like themselves (cf. Matt. 18: 15f) (Klassen, 2000:112).

In view of the foregoing, Klassen believes that Jesus and Judas—each fulfilled the role that God apportioned to him; and it thus Judas was a strong and good man. Luz also refers to one Walter Jens who held that the kiss of Judas was a sign of agreement between him and Jesus, who together accomplished the work of redemption rather than “a furtive wink - the hug; instead of secret sign— the kiss” (Luz, 2005:413).

4.4.1 *Kim Paffenroth*

Kim Paffenroth observes that some scholars have attempted positive portrayals of Judas, which are regarded as part of the tradition. This attempt surfaced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with the depiction of Judas, from a modern and psychological perspective as a revolutionary and patriot, who was disillusioned with Jesus' refusal to establish an earthly

kingdom. (Paffenroth, 2001:xiii). Paffenroth seems to have a different version of the account of Judas' betrayal, describing him as an absent and obscure man; and even though he was involved in the arrest of Jesus, he only had the misfortune of having to watch his friend arrested. This is because Judas himself was humiliated by hiding behind a bush and not able to respond to Jesus' cry for help (2001:143). While he gives various possible meanings of the name "Judas", he also argues about the difficulties involved in locating the name of Judas Iscariot. He subscribes to Klassen's interpretation of the word used for Judas' betrayal of Jesus as "paradidomi" as pointing to "hand over" rather than "betrayal", and argues that Judas' narrative role is part of the later tradition and not really a historical character. He points out that his work on Judas is not to tell readers about what really happened, but instead what people have said happened, which he has to dress up and present as biblical scholarship. Paffenroth (2001:143-145), describes his work on Judas as a response to divergencies of tradition which is aimed at entertaining the readers. Therefore, in his version of Judas' betrayal, Judas met Jesus after the resurrection, and Jesus promised him that the two of them would meet in paradise.

In his book: *The Images of the lost Disciple* (2001), Paffenroth argues that the figure of Judas both depicts penitence and also represents an object of hope and emulation.⁹⁸ Paffenroth also argues that Judas' story may have been a development by the Christian writers for the purpose of depicting Judas as an arch-sinner and object of horror in order to "satisfy moral and aesthetic sensibilities as well as to provide a much more powerful and memorable lesson on the result of sin", especially by Matthew for the members of his community (Paffenroth, 2001:23). This may agree with Cook's argument that the church has always looked for parallels in the Old Testament in order to explain the prophetic fulfillment in the life of Jesus. Such a parallel, according to Cook, could be seen in the role played by Judah in the case of Joseph who was sold away to Egypt, which also occurred in the context of a communal meal (Gen. 37:25-28).

4.4.2 Direct-Request/ Good Motive Theory

What I have termed the "Direct-Request/ Good Motive Theory" is based on the *Gospel of Judas*, which represents an attempt at popularizing Gnosticism. In other words, the theory is anchored on the *Gospel of Judas* believed to have been written by a Christian with Gnostic persuasion.

⁹⁸ See pgs. 30-33.

The ancient uncanonized document that dated back to 5th century CE was discovered in 1970 near Beni Masah in Egypt. Now known as the *Gospel of Judas*, it was published in 2006 when the US *National Geographic Magazine* brought it into the lime light with a feature article on the Gospel. The *Gospel of Judas* retells the story of Jesus' crucifixion from the perspective of Judas, and portrays a different claim than that of the canonical gospels that in view of the intimacy between Jesus and Judas, the *Gospel of Judas* reads it was Jesus who himself specifically commissioned Judas to betray him to his enemies. In doing this, Jesus further warns Judas not to be frightened by what might be the reaction of the people, as he would be honored among the disciples in the spirit realm for that act. This, therefore, implies that Judas' action in betraying Jesus was not his own personal initiative but a request from his master-friend. Hence, the betrayal by Judas was in obedience to the request or order of Jesus.

In view of the above, the *Gospel of Judas* seeks to argue that Judas Iscariot did not act from treachery and greed but on the basis of an honest intention to spur Jesus into action in an attempt to hasten his messianic claim or triumph. And that was the good motive behind his action. This is to say that Judas' action was after all well-intentioned; but it was based on a poor judgment of Jesus by Judas. Judas was said to have been engulfed by patriotic nationalism, and expected that Jesus should be the one to lead the nation of Israel in victory against their Roman overlords. However, Jesus seemed to be hesitant, timid and reluctant. It has therefore been argued that Judas thought he could move Jesus into that struggle by putting him at serious risk so that Jesus would react by gathering troops against the Romans, or get him into a public trial in order to cause a mob reaction and then spark off a revolution in that process. The story of Judas is therefore to explain that Jesus, as a powerful man, was killed only as his enemies were aided by an insider, who was one of his twelve disciples.

The difficulty with this theory is how it helps us to understand the elements of loyalty, faithfulness and genuine love in the African concept of friendship.

As evident, most of the issues raised by Paffenroth and Klassen tend towards psychologizing interpretations, reflecting aspects of the post-Enlightenment Western culture influenced by individualism and the trope of the tragic hero of understanding the concept of friendship and betrayal, particularly the action of Jesus. This critical Western interpretation of friendship and betrayal and the Direct-Request argument based on the *Gospel of Judas* have challenged us as Africans on our perceptions of the concepts of friendship and betrayal as Africans.

4.4.3 *Jesus Christ Superstar Film*

Jesus Christ Superstar is a 1973 British musical film directed by Norman Jewison, which seeks to portray Jesus as a superstar. Although the film seems to follow the account of the passion of Jesus as presented in all the Gospel accounts, there are many embellishments regarding the person of Jesus and the role played by Judas. Jesus is portrayed as having had a relationship with Mary Magdalene and that Judas together with the Jewish religious elders were jealous of Jesus because of his popularity and because he was to be made a king. Eventually he was arrested with the assistance of Judas and killed. Judas asks Jesus about his opinion on other religious leaders and prophets and whether he is indeed who people say he is - superstar. However, Jesus gives no reply to Judas. Judas is portrayed as having blamed God for his woes, for giving him the role of the traitor and consequently hangs himself.⁹⁹

Another version of Judas' story referred to by Paffenroth says that Judas was engaged to watch over Jesus' grave and that he was the first to see Jesus after his resurrection. But the Jewish religious elders bribed him not to let people know that Jesus had resurrected. Having been forgiven by Jesus, Judas was promised a place in paradise. Judas therefore went away while maintaining the lie that he has committed suicide (2001:144).

It is very important that such critical opinions or mutilations of Jesus-Judas stories should be clarified because of its possible influence they may have or may have already had on those who may have seen the film. Such influence is evident already in the perceptions that some Yoruba in Nigeria have of the action of Judas. In other words, there are hints that some people's understanding of the action of Judas as betrayal in the Yoruba cultural context tends towards the critical views on Judas like those of Klassen, Paffenroth as well as those portrayed in the *Gospel of Judas* and the film on *Jesus Christ Superstar*. These hints must have resulted from different kinds of influences on the people, which demonstrate hybridity between the Yoruba cultural beliefs, Christianity and cultural influences like the film *Jesus Christ Superstar* and the *Gospel of Jesus* that come the West. One of such hints, as expressed by one of the interviewees, is that Judas is believed to have fulfilled a prophetic role in betraying Jesus¹⁰⁰. In other words, Judas was

⁹⁹ See *Jesus Christ Superstar* (A) CIC British Board of Film classification. Retrieved, May, 2014 and Greenhouse, Linda (8 August, 1973) *Superstar Film Renews Disputes*.

¹⁰⁰ Appendix 2, No iv on pg. 239

predestined to betray Jesus. Therefore, we shall react to these challenges from our Yoruba cultural perspective. For that purpose, we have adopted an African postcolonial contrapuntal theory based on the hermeneutical theories of Conversational-inculturation. Together with Said's theory of contrapuntalism, it will allow this critical Western voice to dialogue with the Matthean cultural context in the light of the Yoruba cultural context.

In the next chapter, we shall attempt a contrapuntal dialogue between the three contending cultural context of the Matthean text, the Yoruba cultural context and critical Western culture, which we have identified in chapter three to achieve a new and Yoruba culture-based understanding and interpretation of Matthew 26:47-56 with a focus on friendship and betrayal.

CHAPTER FIVE

A CONTRAPUNTAL ANALYSIS OF THE CROSS- CULTURAL CONCEPT OF FRIENDSHIP AND BETRAYAL: COMPARATIVE CONCLUSIONS

5.0 A Dialogue Between The Matthean Text And The Yoruba Oracular Text On Friendship And Betrayal

The focus of this chapter is on a contrapuntal interaction between the contending cultural contexts of the Matthean text, the Yoruba culture and the Western post–Enlightenment cultural context, to see how they play out their similarities and differences rhythmically for a new Yoruba culture-based understanding and interpretation of the chosen text for our study.

The African postcolonial theoretical framework adopted for this study, resulting from a combination of Draper’s Conversational and Ukpong’s Inculturation hermeneutic theories, coupled with Said’s cultural theory of Contrapuntalism, emphasizes a dialogue between a text of the Bible and the culture of the reader on one side; and on the other side, emphasizes the interaction among the many cultural contexts which influence the reader as a step to gaining a culture-based understanding of a text of the Bible.¹⁰¹ Hence, this section will focus on a dialogue between the cultural context of the Matthean text and the Yoruba cultural context of this researcher by using a model of textual comparison outlined in chapter two.¹⁰² I will pick one of the most relevant Yoruba oracular texts that we have summarized on friendship and betrayal and juxtapose it with the Matthean text to engage them in an intertextual dialogue as the first step to gaining a new understanding and interpretation of the chosen pericope for this study. This will then launch us into a contrapuntal dialogue between the three contending cultural contexts as we bring the Western cultural contexts, which provide the presuppositions for most of the printed commentaries and monographs on Matthew’s Gospel into the conversation.

The chosen *Ifa* oracular text reflects the characteristics of friendship in the Yoruba cultural context; and for the sake of this comparative analysis, a summary of the oracular text may be necessary: The oracle is known as *Ika Osun*, which says that *Orunmila* was invited from *Otufo* by the king of *Alara* for divination; although he was warned not to go to *Ijero*, he eventually found

¹⁰¹ See pgs. 19-23

¹⁰² See pgs. 58-68

himself there.¹⁰³ He became a friend of a woman known as *Iya Olofi*, a maker of traditional dresses known as *Aso oke* where he lived, while he continued to assist the people with his art of divination. *Orunmila* had however forged strong friendship ties with *Iya Olofi* by sharing the gifts from his art with her. In the course of time, there was the need for a foreigner to be used as sacrifice in order to raise the fallen object of worship of the god of iron, *Ogun*, in the community. There was the practice whereby slaves were usually kept in Yoruba land not just for domestic use, but also for sacrifice in order to ensure the survival and preservation of the social order (Peel, 2000:63, 69).

Orunmila was also a foreigner in that community who could have been used for that purpose, but his friend, *Iya Olofi* assisted him by planning his escape from that community. She alerted him by a symbolic message through her dog, but the message was not immediately understood by *Orunmila*. She then resorted to singing, warning him to get out of the community fast in order to avoid being used as a victim to appease *Ogun*, the god of iron of the community, whose object of worship had fallen off. In this way, *Iya Olofi* proves her commitment to the bond of friendship as normally required in such a close relationship. She remembered, as expressed in her song to *Orunmila*, that whoever betrays the bond of friendship will be swallowed up by the earth, the witness to that bond between them. It should be noted that *Iya Olofi*'s action must have been informed by her regard for the social values and the norms of the society as the guiding principles in ordinary daily living among the Yoruba as earlier on stressed. Therefore, this has nothing to do with the sexual or gender status of any individual, but is based on conviction and adherence to the social values and the application of moral teachings of the society.

To this end, we can see in the above a demonstration of personal commitment, loyalty, trust and communal or public involvement that characterized the Yoruba concept of friendship as in the Matthean community, where friendship was exemplified by Jesus in his relationship with his disciples and the people who were associated with him during his public ministry. The Yoruba concept of friendship generally encourages loyalty in friendship to guard against betrayal by emphasizing factors that promote friendliness informed by the society's codes of conduct, i.e. the social values and norms set up by the society; just as the Matthean community is also guided by the teachings of Jesus that strengthened their communal life of friendship and prevent betrayal as we have discussed. The hallmark of friendship according to Yoruba belief is, therefore, based

¹⁰³ Appendix 1, No iii on pg. 225

on loyalty that is anchored on genuine love and which seeks the wellbeing and good of one's friend and of the community, as it is the case within the Matthean community.

Therefore, we can now engage the three contending cultural contexts to react to these facts about the concept of friendship and betrayal, against the background of their particular cultural worldviews marked by their peculiarities as we have seen in chapter three of this study.

5.1 Contrapuntal Analysis Of The Cross-Cultural Concept Of Friendship And Betrayal

As we have already examined, there are similarities and differences between the Yoruba concept of friendship as embedded in the *Ifa* oracles and friendship in the community of Matthew's Gospel. For example, in Matthew's Gospel, friendship is exemplified by Jesus' relationship with his disciples. As the Messiah and Son of God, Jesus called the disciples to be his special core group of friends to be shaped and taught by him, and gave them the "secrets of the kingdom" hidden from outsiders and then sent them on a mission to all nations (Matt.13:11). According to Olumide Lucas (1996), in the Yoruba religious system, *Orunmila*, is regarded as the "grand priest and custodian of the mysteries of ifa oracle, source of knowledge and the overseer of knowledge of human form, purity and a healer of illness, who also have subordinate priests or disciples like Jesus.¹⁰⁴ However, his friendship with *Iya Olofi*, as seen in the oracular text may not be regarded as a master-disciple friendship like that of Jesus and his disciples. Nevertheless, a critical assessment of the Yoruba concepts of friendship and that of Matthew presents common grounds upon which genuine friendship is to be built or understood as we shall soon see in this study.

¹⁰⁴ On pages 76-78 above, a reference is made to the Yoruba worldview with the belief in God at the very top. God is believed to be supreme and ultimate in all matters of existence and sustenance. In that regard, the Yoruba have no object of worship for the Supreme Being who cannot at all be represented by any object. They only have in their traditional religious system, objects of worship for many community smaller gods – primordial and deified, who are believed to be intermediaries between them and *Olodumare*, i.e. God. This is because God is considered to be too great and higher above to be approached by any mortal. Hence, *Orunmila* is believed in the traditional religious setting to have been sent to the earth by God as his mouth-piece with the art of divination. *Orunmila* is, therefore, the chief custodian of the *Ifa* oracles through which he helps people find solutions to whatever is hidden in life as well as proffer solutions to their problems usually through sacrifices. To this end, *Orunmila* is being worshipped today in many parts of the Yoruba land as one of the major primordial gods according to the Yoruba traditional religious beliefs. The primordial gods were those gods who originated from the Supreme God or who were with him from the beginning of creation to be worshipped or venerated, while defied gods were people who once lived as powerful men and women and had positively influenced their communities by such acts of bravery. In consequence they were made gods after their death (Ifa-Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, pg. 6).

In friendship, personal commitment, loyalty and trust characterize friendship as evident in the Yoruba concept of friendship and in the Matthean cultural context. This is because friendship is sometimes involved in complex circumstances of loyalties, which pose challenges to one's trust and genuineness. We can see an example of such a complex circumstance of loyalties in friendship even from the perspective of the Yoruba cultural concept of friendship.¹⁰⁵ We shall see how a friend should react in such a difficult time as we respond to the gaps we have identified in Matthew's Gospel, bringing this into dialogue with the Yoruba concept of friendship and Western post-Enlightenment concept of friendship.

a. The first gap: Choice and acceptance in friendship

The first gap we identified in our narrative reading of Matthew is that of choice and acceptance in friendship. This is related to the question raised by Graham about the nature of friendship, i.e. whether it is a private or public engagement. In the Matthean social context just as in the Yoruba cultural practice, friendship is first to be seen as a private choice or decision, i.e. a personal commitment to the bond of that friendship. But then, that friendship has public implications because it has to conform to the societal codes of conduct, i.e. social values and norms of that particular society. It thus follows that in any situation, whether simple or complex, it is required of the Yoruba people that they should keep the bond of friendship at all costs in conformity with the social norms and practices of the Yoruba socio-cultural setting. This shows that in the Yoruba social context, any friendship tie has implications for both the friends and their community or society as well. In other words, friendship, though a personal or private relationship, also has communal or societal implications, because actors in a friendship are also part and parcel of the complex social system. Sharing in the life of that community, they should therefore ensure that they help to promote peace and orderliness in that community. Similarly, as far as Matthew is concerned, drawing on his own cultural context, Jesus, by the nature of his relationship with his disciples was also forging new social values and norms that be reflected in the life of the new Christian community implied for his implied readers, even though they stood in the tradition of God's covenant with Israel. It thus implies that there are actions and inactions in friendship that can affect their lives as individuals and that of their community as well.

¹⁰⁵ Appendix I, No iii on pg. 225.

The Greco-Roman conceptual field of friendship also addressed the issue from the perspective of a friend's demand that tends to jeopardize the interest of the community.¹⁰⁶ Culy refers to Cicero as saying: "Doing something wrong because of loyalty to a friend provided no justification whatsoever" (Culy, 2010:46). Conversely, doing something wrong against one's friend because of loyalty to the community or state is not justifiable either (cf. Matt. 10:21). We shall see the truth of this statement in the action of *Iya Olofi* shortly. In both the cultural context of the Yoruba and the Matthean social context, friendship is made and accepted by personal choice, and marked with a deep sense of commitment to that choice in conformity to the moral values and societal norms in both communities. Hence, the disciples, like members of that community, were individually chosen by Jesus and they personally accepted that call into friendship with him in the context of discipleship. The first gap in the Matthean narrative thus raises the question of the disciples' personal commitment to Jesus who has also personally chosen them to be members of the new community he has inaugurated. Yes, this is a gap in the sense that such a "called" group of friends might be regarded with suspicion as closer to a "gang", comparable to Zealots who were engaged in incessant riots for the political emancipation of the nation of Israel.¹⁰⁷

This is because we see in the Matthean narrative that some of those whom Jesus personally called also personally refused or rejected the call to be his disciple-friends, especially the Pharisees, Scribes and the elders, probably because they found the call to be unappealing to them. We have an example of a rich young man in Matthew 19:16-30, who personally approached Jesus, but when Jesus challenged him to discipleship i.e. a common life of *koinonia* of true friends, he refused. Jesus did not force discipleship or friendship on him. Hence, discipleship as the basis for the Jesus-disciple friendship is neither imposed nor forced on anyone, unlike some kinds of kinships which are imposed through family ties, even though there are different kinds of kinships. Hence, the kind of friendship implied by the rhetoric of

¹⁰⁶ Culy (2010:46) refers to Cicero's statement that further marks the place of morality in friendship as the basis for action towards the community or one's friend: "But an upright man will never for a friend's sake do anything in violation of his country's interest or his oath or his sacred honour... Well then, when we are weighing what seems to be expedient in friendship against what is morally right, let apparent expediency be disregarded and moral rectitude prevail; and when friendship requests are submitted that are not morally right, let conscience and scrupulous regard for the right take precedence of obligations of friendship. In this way we shall arrive at a proper choice between conflicting duties." This statement is fundamental for our interpretation of the action of *Iya Olofi*, because it stresses the truth of the above statement.

¹⁰⁷ Gamaliel's argument in defence of the apostles will support this idea when he tried to differentiate them from those freedom fighters groups in Acts 5: 33-39.

Matthew's rhetoric, though it started between Jesus and each of the disciples, it also provided the basis of friendship within the new community implied by the text. Therefore, the Matthean community continued as a community of friends even after the death and ascension of Jesus. In the same way, friendship in the Yoruba cultural context, though based on mutual agreement between two individuals, is generally believed to carry with it responsibilities towards the society. This must have informed the moral aspect and need for commitment to the ideals of friendship among the Yoruba.

Thus, in both the Yoruba and the Matthean cultural contexts, friendship operates on the basis of freedom whereby one can personally accept or reject a call into friendship or discipleship, as in the case of Jesus and his disciples. Friendship can therefore be regarded as a private choice, which largely carries with it communal or public implications. In other words, the privacy in friendship for the good of friends should not, in any way, jeopardize the general wellbeing of the society or disrupt the communal peace and progress. It might be for this reason that friendship has been regarded as a public social engagement.

This is clearly seen in the oracular text of *Ika Osun*, where *Iya Olofi* chose the moral path to prove her special commitment to the tie of friendship between her and *Orunmila* rather than act against her friend because of her loyalty to her community.¹⁰⁸ She had no obligation to be the one to produce a foreigner in her care as a victim for the sacrifice to restore the fallen community's god of iron. It is the general responsibility of the entire community or the leadership to do that in whatever way possible. But she was personally committed, and in quite a peculiar way, to her friend by reason of the bond of friendship between them as challenged by the social norms and values; in the same way Jesus challenged and provoked his disciples as evident in Matthew's Gospel (Matt. 5-7).

Against this background, we can see that friendship as implied in the narrative by Jesus-disciples' relationships in Matthew's Gospel and the one demonstrated by *Orunmila* and *Iya Olofi* in the Yoruba context of friendship and betrayal, reflect generally a relationship that is based on personal commitment on the parts of actors in the friendship. In other words, Matthew implies that Jesus found Judas to be a friend when he appointed him an apostle like the rest of the disciples at the beginning of his public ministry (Matt.10: 4), just like *Orunmila* also found *Iya Olofi* to be his friend. The difference between the two of them lies at the point when complex circumstance led to their having to demonstrate their loyalty to their partners in friendship.

¹⁰⁸ Appendix 2, No iii on pg. 225

Although scholars such as Buttrick (1978) and France (1985) believe that all of the disciples of Jesus are guilty of betrayal in one way or the other, like Peter who denied ever knowing Jesus, Judas' action of betrayal as reported by Matthew, stands out significantly as a distinctive case of betrayal, because it shows how Judas went back on his commitment and loyalty to Jesus by pointing him out to his captors. As we have already noticed in our study, such a sudden withdrawal of commitment or loyalty by one's friend is regarded as a negation of the spirit of genuine friendship. The point is that the disciples of Jesus, especially Judas, were not like *Iya Olofi* who kept her loyalty to her friend even when it appeared to be difficult. However, Peter repented (Matt. 26:75), and probably the remaining ten disciples also repented when Jesus finally appeared to them after his resurrection in Matthew 28 and were all restored to fellowship and friendship. Therefore, Judas' inability to maintain his commitment or loyalty to Jesus as both a disciple and friend led to the eventual betrayal of his master-friend. Western critical scholars claim that the portrayal in this light has a special redactional purpose. We shall address this claim shortly, because it throws a challenge to us as the real readers of the story in Matthew's Gospel today with regard to our loyalty to our Christian calling and relationships with God, Jesus and with one another.

b. The second gap: Focus or purpose of friendship

The second gap identified in Matthew's narrative is directly related to the first gap in the sense that it challenges us about what should be our focus in accepting the offer friendship. The Jewish religious leaders blatantly rejected Jesus' offer of friendship because they seemed not to have an understanding of what friendship in the context of discipleship with Jesus entailed. They are rather engrossed with maintaining the status quo and therefore regarded Jesus as an enemy to be removed out of their way. Friendship should be seen as an opportunity to open us to new experience of life as we have seen in the case of the disciples of Jesus. It shows that the Jewish religious leaders rejected Jesus' offer of friendship because of his radical interpretation of the Decalogue as the condition for the new social order and the community he came to inaugurate. The same can be said of the young rich man who wanted to enter into God's kingdom, but he was not ready to accept an experience of sharing in friendship with Jesus in the context of discipleship (Matt. 19:16-22).

One may then argue that this issue reflects back to the point about personal interest and status in friendship. We have seen that friendship is anchored in love with a focus on mutual

assistance and commitment to common good and the need for understanding and respect for each other or one another. But if this is not the understanding, focus and expectations in friendship, it might be difficult to accept a friendship offer as we shall see in the next gap.

I don't think this point poses any problem in all of the cultural contexts we are examining in this study. This is because both the Yoruba cultural context as seen in the case of friendship between *Iya Olofi* and *Orunmila* and the Western cultural context of friendship agree with the Matthean cultural context on the mutual benefits and commitment to the common good as the basis of friendship.¹⁰⁹

c. The third gap: Humility and equality/status in friendship

The third gap identified in the narrative by Matthew has to do with the place of humility and equality/status in friendship. These are important factors of friendship within the Matthean community. The humility is informed by a sense of equality of all the disciples on the basis of their relationship with Jesus characterized by service (Matt. 18:1-4, 20:20-28). However, equality as a factor in the Yoruba concept of friendship, and of course, all the other factors, is not clearly or specifically stated in the *Ifa* oracles, but it can be argued that they are implicitly embedded in it. This is clear in the opinions of some Yoruba people in their responses to the interview. They pointed out that although friendship thrives well with friends who are equal there is an exception to this rule or belief. In other words inequality is not a hindrance to friendship as is evident in the case of the *Iya Olofi-Orunmila* friendship- they are neither of the same sex nor equal in status. The same is true about friendship in the Matthean community as exemplified by Jesus' friendship with his disciples. But on the other hand, the Western cultural context emphasizes equality as an important condition for any friendship to work.

d. The fourth gap: Communal life in friendship

The fourth gap identified in our narrative reading of the Gospel of Matthew is that of communal life in friendship, sealed by sharing common meals and drinking, as a kind of covenantal relationship with the practice of repentance and forgiveness. Jesus' relationship with his disciples reflects this kind of intimate relationship that was based on shared meals and drinking in a communal lifestyle, which is characterized by giving up normal ownership and family to follow Jesus (Matthew 19:27-30) - a fellowship of true friends, with the climax in Matt. 26: 17-29. And

¹⁰⁹ See the discussion on friendship in chapter 3.

this is directly linked with the question of personal commitment and loyalty to Jesus based on the new societal norms and moral values he came to introduce.

The importance of this is that the moral values and societal norms constitute the basis of behavioural conduct of the individuals within any Yoruba society as in the Matthean community. But the attempt by Jesus to redefine the social system with his radical interpretation of the Decalogue got him into trouble with the Jewish religious leaders of his day and eventually led to his death by crucifixion. The same principles guide relationships, especially friendship even though individuals may personally choose who their friends would be. In the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal, both community and individuals are involved in matters of relationships and friendships; hence it is seen as a public engagement. It thus follows that among the Yoruba, the society still has some influence or control over friendship within the community. This is because the Yoruba society is bound together by shared interpretation of experiences of life which must be protected to prevent society from disintegrating. This covenantal experience thus calls for commitment to one another as well as to the community, and also encourages repentance and forgiveness of one another. In Matthew's community, both the offender (Matt. 5: 23-25) and the offended (Matt. 18:15) are encouraged to take the initiative to repent and forgive. Therefore, repentance and forgiveness are essential in friendship and betrayal, which is also a common feature of the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal. The kind of covenantal relationship, seen in Matthew's Gospel between Jesus and his disciples who were bound together through communal meals and drinking, is therefore the seal of their friendship union.¹¹⁰ This covenantal experience calls for commitment to one another as well as to the community.

It is against this background that Judas' action can best be understood, because his betrayal was conceived in the context of the communal meal and sharing. By offering the disciples, including Judas a morsel, Jesus tried to remind them about their commitment to each other and to the entire group: "Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body'. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you; for this my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins...'" (Matt. 26: 26-29). Although the action of Jesus could be seen to have deeper implications for the Matthean

¹¹⁰ Philo comments on meals in sthis opinion: "Meals are something that humans have devised as the genuine friendship, it reflects the common link between meals and friendship in Greco-Roman literature" (Culy, 2010:67).

community beyond friendship, it also points to what we have noted about the covenantal or ritualistic kind of friendship in the Yoruba cultural context which is often sealed by blood-oath, and which carries serious retributive effects.¹¹¹ This reflects Jesus' frank advice to Judas not to get entangled in the webs of betrayal by allowing himself to be used in a questionable way by the Jewish elders who were desperate to kill Jesus: "The Son of man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed. It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." Judas, who betrayed him, said, "Is it I Master?" He said to him, "You have said so." Judas' acceptance of the morsel along with the rest of disciples implied his acceptance or re-affirmation of that commitment, having already pledged loyalty when he was first called to be Jesus' disciple. By going back on that commitment, Judas' action amounted to betrayal. We shall discuss this further on the post-Enlightenment conception of betrayal in this section.

Consequently, the majority of the Yoruba people interviewed on this issue drew a correlation between the aftermath of Judas' action and the Yoruba socio-religious belief that whoever betrays his friend betrays the earth as the witness to the bond of friendship between them, and such a person will also be consumed by the earth, i.e. swallow his/her blood.¹¹² This idea is affirmed by the fact that the burial site of Judas is called *Akel dama* i.e. "Field of blood", because his blood was split and swallowed by the earth (Acts 1:19).

e. The fifth gap: The role of Judas in Jesus' arrest and crucifixion

The fifth role identified in Matthew's narrative has to do with role Judas in Jesus' arrest and subsequent crucifixion, which is concerned with the popular question of what could have prompted Judas' action of betrayal against Jesus. Matthew recalls that Judas accepted money from Jesus' enemies to get Jesus arrested, which Matthew sees as a fulfillment of a prophecy by the Prophet Zechariah.¹¹³ We have explained that because of the intimacy and covenant relationship between Jesus and his disciples, they should have identified with him in his travails against his antagonists, particularly the Pharisees, the Scribes and the Elders. Why would Judas then align himself with these people against his master-friend? Opinions differ and are largely speculative.

¹¹¹ See Appendix 2, No i on pg 232.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Zec. 11:12.

A Yoruba popular idea on this is that Judas must have been prompted by his personal human weakness which has to do with covetousness.¹¹⁴ Or that he had a wrong idea about the power of Jesus and the exercise of the same.¹¹⁵ In which case, he thought that Jesus would be invincible to the enemies whenever they tried to arrest him. This covetousness is explained by Judas' implied assumption that he could play on the Jewish religious leaders by just getting their money and simply identifying Jesus to them with a kiss and then getting out of the scene. In other words, if the attempt should fail he would not be held responsible. And it is possible that Jesus would resist the arrest or disappear as usual, as implied by his comment: "Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I shall kiss is the man; *seize him*'" (Matt. 26: 48 cf. Lk.4:30).

One of the Yoruba elders interviewed, Chief Kosemani explained that the Yoruba believe that the spirit of money and that of the devil are walking together.¹¹⁶ Judas, having therefore got involved in the heinous deal only to realize that he had guessed wrongly, and was troubled by a guilty conscience afterwards, resolved to commit suicide. But he did not escape the judgment of the earth that required his blood for being a traitor, according to Yoruba belief on the breach of bond of friendship.

It should be noted that a few of the Yoruba people interviewed expressed the opinion that they believed Judas to have fulfilled a prophetic role in God's redemptive programme through his action of betrayal, though they did not have a relevant biblical text or any specific theological argument. Their submission simply hinged on the fact that without someone, presumably an insider in the camp of Jesus, it might have been impossible to succeed in either arresting or killing him. And then Jesus would not have fulfilled his mission of redemption either. In other words, Judas must have been predestined to act the way he did. To such people, Judas would seem to have fulfilled a role that any one among the disciples could have fulfilled if Judas had not fulfilled it.¹¹⁷ We shall react to this opinion about the Yoruba concept of predestination later in this study. However, about 70 percent of the interviewees maintained that Judas Iscariot, as a close friend of Jesus and as an evangelist within the group, could not possibly be exonerated because he should not have been a traitor against his master-friend.

¹¹⁴ Appendix 2, No. xi on pg. 252.

¹¹⁵ Appendix 2, No. xx on pg. 266.

¹¹⁶ Appendix 2, No.ii on pg. 233.

¹¹⁷ Appendix 2, No. iv on pg. 239.

In any event, we can see in the above opinions of some Yoruba people the growing influences of Christianity, as well as Western culture and other cultures on the Yoruba culture, which is why we have adopted contrapuntal interpretation method of reading the chosen pericope for this study. Other cultural contexts such as those produced in the Western post-Enlightenment culture, particularly the critical biblical scholars, can contribute to our new understanding of the concept of friendship and betrayal as they interact with the Yoruba cultural context.

In the light of the foregoing, it is apparent that friendship in Yoruba socio-cultural practices and religious beliefs is a very important social aspect that requires care and commitment to the bond of friendship on the part of the actors in friendship for it to work for their wellbeing as well as for the peace of the larger society. Friendship promotes mutual understanding, progress and social wellbeing when it is sustained by loyalty and commitment. But lack of loyalty in friendship usually carries serious consequences, not only for the friends, but even for the society at large.

To this end, Matthew's depiction of Judas in his narrative would appear to have been deliberately chosen to align him with the Jewish leaders of his day against his friend, Jesus. The action appears to be culpable as Judas is seen in the narrative to have accepted money, whether at his own insistence or at that of the Jewish leaders. This is how Matthew is to be understood when we consider how he has redacted the Markan material in Mk. 14: 10-11 to achieve his own purpose. Matthew points to Judas as employing a friendly sign of a kiss in order to conceal his negative mission. And even if he had been involved in a complexity of loyalties in any way, his sense of morality of what is right should have guided him in the right direction as required by social norms and values as exemplified by *Iya Olofi's* action. Therefore, based on our knowledge of the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal, Judas might not have committed suicide if he had also acted the same way Peter did. We can then argue that friendship in both Matthew's social context and the Yoruba cultural context is being guided by the catechism supplied by Jesus, contained in the Decalogue. It is in the norms and values of the Yoruba cultural context. Similarly, Western culture also emphasizes the need for the application of moral principles in the context of friendship.

Consequently, from the perspective of the Yoruba cultural practice of friendship, *Iya Olofi's* action is in contrast to that Judas, and can serve as a point of reference for how friends should act in time of complex circumstances of loyalties. She employed all possible means to

ensure the safety of her friend, as friendship is about enjoyment of each other, usefulness for each other and a commitment to the common good. But we see a different picture in the action of Judas, who gave up his friend and even warned the captors to handle him properly so that he might not disappear (Matt. 26:48). As earlier mentioned in the exegesis of the pericope, Jesus could have been recognized by his captors, but Judas readily offered the required assistance to ensure that the right person was captured.¹¹⁸ Therefore, unlike *Iya Olofi*, Judas' offence of betraying his friend could be seen in the fact that he led the arresting party to where he thought Jesus could be found, and identified him to them.

How then could Judas be adjudged guilty of betrayal according to the Matthean Gospel and the Yoruba practice of friendship? In this attempt, we shall find Jackson Rodgers' argument on how to establish a genuine case of betrayal very helpful, even though it is also a product Western culture.¹¹⁹ We can see that Judas at the point in which he was called like the others to be a disciple of Jesus, acknowledged and accepted the responsibility to keep the object of that trust or bond of friendship with Jesus - to protect the life and interest of his master-friend and of the entire group. But Judas failed in keeping the trust even though he had the wherewithal to keep it if he had chosen to do that; whereas *Iya Olofi* is seen to have kept that trusted value or bond of friendship between her and her friend, *Orunmila*. Judas' action could therefore be described as a deliberate act of manipulation of friendship in the sense that Jesus' arrest and subsequent crucifixion could be traced to Judas' negligence or heinous act as it stands in the narrative. He was the one who led the arresting party to where he believed Jesus could be found at that time of the day when Jesus was arrested according to the Matthean narrative. Conversely, *Iya Olofi* refused to hand over or show *Orunmila* to those who sought to kill him.

Judas thus appears in the narrative to have feigned honesty and love in friendship by kissing, a symbol of friendliness, only to lead Jesus into trouble. Sherman and George (1978: 582-3), commenting on the arrest and betrayal of Jesus, "...But even though Judas' act was not unusual, it was betrayal. It may not have been utterly insincere, for the base and the noble strangely intertwined." This kind of pretense is against the spirit of the Yoruba cultural concept of friendship as well as Jewish and Western ideals of friendship because it portends dishonesty and betrayal. This may have informed Konstan's conclusion as noted earlier about the harmful nature of flattery or pretense in friendship, which he says is stronger than even a betrayal as the

¹¹⁸ See the exegetical comments on the pericope on pgs. 159-167.

¹¹⁹ See pgs. 118-122 above for the discussion on Rodgers' argument.

exploitation of an intimate relationship. It is “a failure of sincerity that presents a false image to the admirer...it is revealed not in action or motive so much as in a fundamental bad faith with oneself” (Konstan, 1996: 17-18). Konstan here sees flattery rather than betrayal as the opposite to friendship, but it can be argued that flattery precedes or endangers betrayal.

Iya Olofi's action thus appears as the opposite to Judas' action. Her action demonstrates the kind of sincerity, commitment and genuine love that characterizes the Yoruba concept of friendship, especially in a complex and conflicting circumstance of life. Consequently, Judas' pretentious friendliness led to a ruptured friendship and untimely termination of his own life while *Iya Olofi's* sincere friendliness led to the preservation of *Orunmila's* life and the sustenance of their friendship.

There is also the aspect of frank speech in friendship that sharpens the moral excellence of the actors in friendship as Konstan has pointed out. As earlier mentioned in the case of Judas, Jesus could be seen to have been frank when he appealed to Judas to jettison his plan of betrayal (Matt. 26: 24-25), because his involvement would not be required in what could best be seen as a divine project. There is also a note of frank speech in the Yoruba concept of friendship, because friendship, in addition to sharing and assisting each other, it also helps us in building up and training moral soundness. For the Yoruba people, being frank and able to rebuke and reprove all kinds of wrong choices is part of the experiences embedded in friendships.

Consequently, it is always good to listen to the counsels of one's friend, especially when the advice tends towards helping one to make an important decision, in order not to fall into serious error like Judas did. We have gathered thus far in this study that friendship is about friends helping each other to improve one way or the other through their interpersonal relationships and influences.¹²⁰ It is quite evident in Matthew's narratives that Judas defied all of the warnings and appeals of his master-friend against betrayal, keeping in mind that Jesus insisted that his mission to be a ransom for the salvation of many people would be accomplished unassisted according to the plan of God (Matt. 26:24). When Matt. 26:24 is taken along with the subsequent verse 25, Matthew is seen to have shown that the warning in verse 24 was actually directed to Judas as the one who would betray Jesus.

¹²⁰ See pg. 100 above for Pahl's argument that the virtue of friendship is being able to enlarge and extend, i.e. sharpen each other's moral experience as friends having been bound together by the recognition of their moral excellence as a means of sustaining them in what is regarded as a good living.

Therefore, Judas' action of betrayal could be seen as negative when viewed in the mirror of the Yoruba cultural context of friendship and the manner of the Christian communal love and loyalty of the Matthean community. The Matthean community, as we have seen above, is marked by love, care, trust and honesty towards one another. So, it is a negation of the life within the Matthean community, in the same way as in the Yoruba cultural context, just as in any human culture, for anyone to sell off his friend to an enemy or collude with enemies to get his/her friend harmed or killed for whatever reason. However, since Jesus' mission was to seek and to save the lost according to God's design for him, his disciples must also share in that mission. In other words, we can understand Jesus' statement in Matthew 20: 28, "Even the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many", to refer to his mission in the world. So also the members of the Matthean community are expected not only to seek the sinners, but even to go after the wayward members of the group and bring them back just as they encourage one another to improve on their spiritual lives and that of their community (cf. Matt.18: 1ff).

However, William Klassen's claim that Judas' kiss was a demonstration of solidarity and reconciliation with Jesus must have been based simply on the action of the kiss itself without consideration for its outcome. Contrarily, in the Yoruba cultural practice of friendship, an action is viewed in its whole spectrum with its concomitant effects. Hence, the Yoruba cultural context tends to address Judas' action of betrayal from the perspective of its moral implications. For example, although kissing is not a Yoruba customary way of greetings, its practice is not entirely strange to the people who are used to embracing each other while greeting, a practice that could be traced back to the influence of the Western civilization.

Kissing is common, especially among the elite, equals and family members, as the Yoruba have their customary ways of greeting in the cultural setting. Nevertheless, what is quite clear about kissing, even in the context of the Yoruba cultural practice of friendship, is that it is a positive sign depicting warmth, love and peace. Although, in the Yoruba context of a leader-disciple relationship, Judas would normally have had to prostrate or bow to Jesus, as a sign of respect and honour to him, and moreso, of love and loyalty between the two of them. Although Jesus condescended to the level of the disciples as co-servant and friend, he remained the leader of the group; because there just must be someone to continue to give the group a sense of leadership. There are such exceptional cases of friendships or relationships where a follower can greet his leader by kissing or at least by embracing each other, even in the Yoruba cultural setting.

But as we have already pointed out, it is not quite clear from the Matthean narratives that kissing was the usual way of greeting between Jesus and disciples. It will therefore be a matter of probability only as we consider the peculiarity of Jesus' relationship with his disciples by seeing himself as a servant like them as well as their friend (Matt.18:1-6, 20:25-27).

We have seen that kissing was a form of greeting among the Jews, but Matthew shows no evidence of it in his narrative between Jesus and his disciples. There is evidence of its practice in the early church, especially in the Pauline churches before the writing of the Gospel of Matthew.¹²¹ But whatever the form of greeting, from the perspective of the Yoruba cultural practice of friendship, it becomes problematic when such a greeting eventually leads to an unwarranted arrest and eventual death of the one being so lovingly greeted as in the case of Jesus and Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane. It is seen as a betrayal because the action was wrapped in pretense.

The Gnostic theory called the Direct-Request which is based on the *Gospel of Judas* argues that Jesus must have personally requested Judas, as a close friend, to betray him to his enemies¹²². And for carrying out the instruction of his master-friend in that regard, his action could be adjudged good, but this idea runs contrary to what the Yoruba believe demonstrates true friendship - for a friend to betray him to be killed by his enemies in order to fulfill a particular mission?

Furthermore, with regard to the hints from within the Yoruba cultural context itself about how some people are trying to perceive and interpret Judas' action, a result of hybridity of cultural beliefs, Christianity and cultural influences, particularly in relation to the question of predestination also calls for our reaction. How then does the Yoruba concept of predestination help us to understand the action of Judas in the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus?¹²³

The concept of predestination among the Yoruba has been described in four different ways or with different four different terms which are nonetheless interrelated. First, we have "Akunleyan," literally meaning "kneeling to choose", which according to Bolaji Idowu (1962:174) is associated with one destiny that is unalterably one's portion throughout life. In other words,

¹²¹ "Greet one another with a holy kiss" (2 Cor. 13: 12). This is a reference to an earliest practice before the writing of Matthew's Gospel.

¹²² See the discussion on the *Gospel of Judas* on pg. 171

¹³¹ We recollect how in the film, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Judas is portrayed as having blamed God for his woes by being given the role of a traitor. In other words, Judas would appear to have fulfilled the role of betrayer of Jesus as allotted to him by God (See pgs.172-173 above).

whatever one so kneels and chooses is what the person goes to the world to fulfill. Therefore, any attempt at achieving anything contrary to what he has chosen becomes impossible or unachievable. The belief of the Yoruba in the inalterability of destiny is contained in this expression: “*a kunleyan a d’aye ba; a d’ele aye tan oju nkan-ni*”, i.e. “It is what we have knelt down to choose in heaven that has turned out to be our portion, but arriving on earth we become impatient”. Similarly, in another sense, *Eleda* i.e. God the Creator, is believed to have summoned all the creatures in heaven to come together to think about what they would like to do while they are on earth. Consequently, each one is allowed to make a personal choice which is finally sealed by God (Adeoye, 1971:2-3). In this case what eventually turns out to be one’s destiny was his/her personal choice in heaven.

The second idea of the Yoruba concept of destiny is known as “*Akunlegba*”, literally meaning “kneeling to receive”. Therefore, the term is used interchangeably with “*Akunleyan*”, i.e. “something received from somebody who is most likely to be “*Olodumare*” (Almighty God). The idea looks like someone, presumably the Supreme God making a choice and giving it to somebody else as his/ her sealed destiny. In this regard the recipient could not be seen to have been involved in the choice-making process - a kind of imposed destiny. This kind of destiny also is believed to be unalterable anyway.

The third idea is that which is describes as “*Ayanmo*,” i.e “something that is affixed to someone without his/her knowledge or consent”. In this case too humanity is seen to be inactive in the process of choice, but it is believed to have been imposed by God. Hence, we often hear such comments among the Yoruba as: “*ayanmo tire ni*” literally meaning “that is what has been affixed to him.” In this regard *ayanmo* is often strictly identified with destiny much more than *akunleyan* or *akunlegba*, which is seen as involving a sense of personal choice. However, the Yoruba take all of these concepts to be related and identically similar in association with “*ori*,” i.e. personality being as the content of one’s destiny as evident in this expression: “*ayanmo mi, ko si eni to le yi pada*,” i.e. “my destiny is from God, hence no one can alter it.” Therefore, no event in one’s life should be seen as accidental but rather as an inevitable part of the content of his/her destiny.

The fourth terms, known as “*kadara*” which simply means “destiny”, is often associated with predestination. However, Gbadegesin (1998:144) explains that “*kadara*” is the real destiny which is woven into the *ori*, i.e. personality being (the real person), which sometimes can also be used to depict a person’s destiny. But then, Gbadegesin believes that *ori* stands out as the actual

bearer of the *kadara* i.e. destiny. In this regard, the difference between *ori* and *kadara* will be that *ori* is the receptacle which houses or contains or carries the person's destiny. The idea agrees with Wande Abimbola's (1976:113), a scholar and renowned *Ifa* priest, in his *Ifa* corpus that reads: "...*Ibikan naa la ti gbe yanri o, kadara o papo ni*", meaning "Ori", i.e. the inner person or personality being is chosen in the same way, but destiny is quite different". Hence, *kadara* would mean destiny that has been sealed up in *ori* in heaven that cannot be altered.

There is yet another idea of the Yoruba concept of destiny that is described as "*akosile*", implying what has already been written down. This means that all that has been written down about an individual in the Book of Destiny in heaven will surely come to pass in any way. In other words, *akosile* will function in the same way as *ayanmo*, implying that an individual has no any input with regard to what becomes his/her destiny because they have been written and just passed to him/her; more so that it is believed that *Olodumare*, i.e. Almighty God, must have been responsible for that kind of writing.

Against this background, the idea of *akosile* has raised a dust of controversy because it has brought God to human level as having hands to write. But if on the other hand we believe that God is not human and does not do things the way humans do them, then this idea raises some questions. But in order not to invalidate the strong belief of the Yoruba people that *akosile* is the work of God, then we also need to realize that God has a special way of writing supernaturally that is quite different from human's ways of writing. Again, if we agree that God is responsible for *ayanmo*, *akunlegba* and *akosile*, it also raises the question of moral justification in a person's action like that of Judas.

First, we need to realize that the Yoruba concept of human personality as expressed in such terms as *akuleyan*, *akunlegba*, *ayanmo*, *kadara* and *akosile* appears to be very clear concerning a person's destiny. Although, we need to resolve the question of imposition of destiny on people because God is seen to have been at the centre of the issue. If that is the case, Judas could not be held responsible for having fulfilled what he was destined to achieve on earth.

From the point of view of Yoruba understanding of human destiny as contained in all of the terminologies, it can be argued that it is not God at all who imposes any choice on any one. But as is implied by the word *akunleyan*, i.e. *kneeling to choose*, we can see that whatever has been personally chosen by anyone becomes his or her sealed destiny *kadara*. This is then affixed into his/her *ayanmo*, and the same thing he kneels down to receive eventually becomes his/her destiny on getting to earth.

In view of the foregoing, the Yoruba cultural understanding of predestination, therefore, is opposed to the idea of God's arbitrary imposition of destiny on a person in heaven. Each person makes a choice which is confirmed and sealed by God Almighty the Creator. In this regard, God could not have destined Judas to be the betrayer of Jesus. So Judas would seem to have fulfilled a destiny as chosen by him.

According to the Yoruba cultural practice and religious belief, Judas' action could be explained from the perspective of magical power in Yoruba medicine known as "*eedi*", i.e. abnormal performance¹²⁴- a kind of diabolical spiritual manipulation through some forces to misbehave without knowing it until the act is done. In other words, when one acts or engages in an action that is against common sense and which is mysteriously difficult to explain like the case of Judas, it is believed that the person must have been remote-controlled or influenced by some spiritual evil forces to behave in that irrational, funny or embarrassing way, probably to disgrace him/her. But the point is that this does not usually happen naturally as Satan is believed to be responsible for such diabolical acts through the agency of some other forces as postulated by the Satan-Incarnate Theory. Or someone with traditional magical power can inflict somebody with that kind of abnormal influence.

But then, this again raises some questions in the case of Judas. Even if we agree on the point that some diabolical influences of certain wicked spiritual forces were acting on Judas, which we call *eedi*, as the reason for his action, who would have been responsible for that kind of influence on Judas? Because those wicked spirits can only be instigated into action by an individual. Definitely, it was not God or the Devil? It should, however, be noted that it is true that in Yoruba belief someone may be spiritually remote-controlled to behave abnormally in a way. But as we have maintained the devil, in Yoruba belief, as the minister of justice and order, always finds reasons for his actions and so does not act arbitrarily; just as God does not also impose destiny on anyone arbitrarily.

What about Judas' suicide? Although there are different ways of understanding this seemingly negative action in many cultures, the Yoruba cultural context sees suicide as a curse. So the victim is not usually buried in the same way as someone who dies properly, even though

¹²⁴ In his article titled: "Yoruba Traditional Medicine and the Challenge of Integration", Oyelakin Richard Taye (2009) makes case for the peculiarity of the Yoruba medicines and their potencies in curing different diseases, and why they should not be merged with orthodox medicine based on the question of efficacy of those medicines. In that regard, Taye wonders at the efficacy of the Yoruba traditional medicines such as *epe*, i.e. "curse, *magun*, i.e. "don't climb" and especially *eedi* i.e. "abnormal performance", which has the causal connection between the *oro*, i.e. "word uttered" and the actual event or action which purportedly follows the word.

Western scholars have argued that suicide has psychological effects that can be clinically explained (Paffenroth, 2001:xiii). Paffenroth's view of Judas as an example of penitence, courage, emulation and hope, can be seen as representing an aspect of Western psychological interpretation which attributes his action to depression, disappointment and lack of courage. In other words, for such Western scholars who adopt a psychological approach to issues, there are medical explanations for suicide which try to address depression, shame and hopelessness as evident in the case of Judas.¹²⁵ But for the Yoruba, suicide holds a bad omen for the entire family and the community, in consequence of which a prescribed sacrifice must be made even before the corpse is buried. Therefore, in the Yoruba concept of friendship, as seen in most of the *Ifa* oracular texts cited for this study, are full of references to the fact that suicide is a pollution of any community or town wherever it occurs; hence the sacrifice of slaves (victims) to appease the spirit of the deceased (Peel, 2000:62).¹²⁶

Although in the Roman world, which must also have had its influence on Matthew's Gospel, it was considered noble to commit suicide instead of falling into the hand of one's enemies, it can be argued that Matthew has presented Judas' action of betrayal and its aftermath suicide as a warning, not only against betrayal but even against suicide. This point becomes evident when you juxtapose Judas' suicide with Matthew's depiction of Peter's betrayal when he denied Jesus and then he repented by weeping bitterly for his offence (Matt. 26:75). This portends an important message to the Matthean community on repentance and forgiveness within his community, as we have already noted was practiced within the group. It takes courage, perseverance and hope for repentance to bring about a turn-around for the better.

¹²⁵ Chief Supo Kosemani, an elder and expert in Yoruba culture explained how suicide is regarded among the Yoruba in an interview conducted with him on Tuesday, 4th September, 2012. He said that it hinges on morality. The Yoruba are highly cultured people and every one ensures that the name of the family is not dragged through the mud in any form. In other words, the Yoruba place a high value on cultural ethics and moral values that revolve around good behaviour. Hence, when an offence that negates the cultural or societal ethical values such that can tarnish the name of the family is committed, such an action may inspire suicide in order to avoid the accompanying shame or disgrace. However, people sometimes commit suicide if their rights are infringed upon without finding a way out to exonerate themselves. Chief Kosemani, therefore, identified some of the causes of suicide which basically revolve around criminality such as, murder, stealing, adultery, embezzlement, imprisonment, etc. In other words, all forms of corruption are regarded as criminal offences by the Yoruba as negation of the societal ethical values which are punishable by the society. Therefore, they can lead to suicide usually to cover up the accompanying social dent on the person and the family generally. However, suicide is not really the best way out because it will only further dent the image of the person as well as that of the family. Consequently, for whatever reason, suicide is abhorred by the Yoruba because it operates on the basis of self judgement informed by hopelessness.

¹²⁶See Appendix I No i on pg. 223

Consequently, we can argue that Matthew's intention in the way he has depicted Judas' action in contrast to Peter's weeping is to warn members of his community against suicide in any situation, just as the *Ifa* oracle discourages betrayal in order to forestall a suicidal move. And second, in response to the challenge of Western culture's perception of suicide, we can also argue that Matthew has tried to suggest repentance instead of suicide in the event of an error, particularly that of betrayal.

On the other hand, what does the Yoruba cultural practice hold about betrayal? Although neither the *Ifa* oracles nor the societal moral values prescribe specific actions that would necessarily inspire betrayal, betrayal occurs as dictated by events in the context of friendship, particularly when an action of a friend contradicts the spirit of friendship so as to jeopardize the wellbeing of the other friend in particular, and that of the society in general. And this is largely informed by the knowledge and the understanding of the moral values and the societal norms as the codes of conduct within a given society. In other words, an individual is guided in such a difficult matter by his/her knowledge of the moral values of the society and the influence they have on him/ her to know the right way to act in a particular situation.

Another important factor has to do with the kind of friendship involved, because there are different kinds of friendships as we have pointed out in this study, ranging from an ordinary friendship to more complex and extremely covenantal ones. Each of these carries implications in the event of betrayal because of their peculiarities and involvements. However, it should be noted that the Yoruba cultural concept of friendship encourages repentance and forgiveness if betrayal has not already involved the loss of life of any the parties, just as the case in the Matthean social context. (cf. Matt. 18: 15-35, 27:3-10). In case of the Yoruba, the procedure may sometimes require offering a sacrifice. Hence, the popular Yoruba adage that says: "An offender who realizes his fault will not stay too long on his/her knees."

Repentance as a process involves two steps. First is the sense of remorse following a personal conviction that a wrong has indeed been committed and that there is the need to turn around to ask for forgiveness as it is prescribed by societal norms and practices or by the way the offended friend would want it done according to the Yoruba cultural practice. The second step is to actually take action or a practical step towards repentance.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ A similar example in the Yoruba cultural context is seen in the case of Eleriwo in the oracle of *Osun Ogbe*, who also refused to repent of his evil against his friend or Adubi who was cursed by Odua for the same reason (Appendix 1 on pgs. 223 & 225). The Yoruba belief is that a genuine and complete repentance is a sine qua non for forgiveness as it is also enjoined in the Matthean cultural context (Matt. 18: 15). The Lukan Gospel has a

In this regard, the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal is like that of the Matthean concept which shows that Judas became remorseful when Jesus was arrested and condemned, which prompting him to return the money that he had collected from the Jewish elders: “When Judas, his betrayer, saw that he was condemned, he repented *metamelomai*, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priest and the elders, saying I have sinned in betraying innocent blood” (Matt. 27:2-4). The meaning of the Greek word, *metamelomai* used in the text means “to regret, be sorry; to be remorseful” (Douglas, 1993:313). But it appears Judas could not get beyond that point of remorse, probably because of the accompanying psychological trauma or depression, and that prevented him from completing the process of repentance, leading to his eventual suicide. The return of the money could be regarded as the proof of Judas’ conviction or realization that he had done something wrong, which is the first step or action in the process of repentance. We have also seen this in the case of Peter who wept bitterly, when it dawned on him that he has betrayed his friend by denying ever knowing him (Matt.26:75). We can argue that this experience, unlike in the case of Judas, enabled him to overcome any psychological trauma or depression, and go beyond the level of remorse to complete the process to the point of obtaining forgiveness for his sin. Peter was therefore restored in fellowship with Jesus and others within the group. The point is that in both Yoruba cultural context and the Matthean community, to repent and then commit suicide is a contradiction. It follows that there is always the need to develop a strong will and trust so as to be able to overcome psychological trauma and depression in time of difficulties, such as in the case of betrayal in order to avoid making a drastic or desperate decision.

Therefore, remorse is good only as it inspires a genuine repentance that leads to forgiveness. One may wonder what could have happened if Peter had also acted otherwise after he had already confessed his sin by weeping bitterly for denying Jesus. The Greek word, *metanoia*, meaning “repentance”, “change of heart”, “turning from one’s sin”, “change one’s way”, is differentiated from *metamelomai*, which points to “being sorry or sorrowful” In that sense, *metanoioeo* will mean “repent”, “have a change of heart”, and to “turn from one’s sins”, “change one’s way” (Douglas, 1993). Judas’ repentance could be described as just remorse or regret. One would therefore have expected Judas to have taken a clue from Peter, taking the initiative of

clear example in the prodigal son in Lk. 15:11-32. In verse 17, the prodigal son discovers his folly and resolves to go back to his father to ask for forgiveness and restoration. However, he did not just stay there rehearsing the confessional statement, but in verse 20: “And he arose and came to his father...” This explains the two-ways involved in forgiveness.

turning to Jesus for forgiveness no matter how difficult that would have been for him. But by terminating his own life, Judas is again seen to have taken an action which is regarded as an abomination in both the Matthean and the Yoruba cultural contexts. However, as noted earlier, Western cultural critical and psychological interpretation understands suicide differently, as the result of chemical imbalance or temporary loss of normal psychological balance in an individual due to despair. Hence there has been a move towards understanding Judas' suicide from a psychological or medical point of view, based on modern definitions of depression. Some Western scholars like Paffenroth have described Judas' suicide as a symbol of penitence and to be understood sympathetically (Paffenroth, 2001: xviii), since suicide is a form of relief from the burden of depression, hopelessness and shame. Judas' suicide therefore is to be removed from the sphere of ethical decisions and understood in the light of his depressed state of mind, i.e. he is not in the right mind, and so he should not be regarded as culpable for committing suicide.

Such interpretations are far from the viewpoint of the Matthean and Yoruba cultural contexts. For them, repentance is a two-step experience – remorse, i.e. a sense of realization that a wrong has been committed, and then taking a practical step towards obtaining forgiveness. Why this is relevant to us here is because of the challenge the kind of repentance and forgiveness in the Matthean cultural context poses to the kind of *lex talionis* i.e. “an eye for eye” principle of retributive judgment we find in the Yoruba cultural practice with regard to the role of *ile* i.e. earth in friendship. Although this is not to say that the Yoruba cultural context has no idea of repentance and forgiveness, it is all about taking the initiative to repent in order to be forgiven. The question is then could Judas' resolve to commit suicide be attributed to the influence of the judicial power of the earth as a witness and mediator in the event of the betrayal of the bond of friendship between him and Jesus as contained in the expression: “Whoever betrays the earth will be swallowed by it.”¹²⁸ Whatever our opinion might be, it is quite clear that this cultural belief of the Yoruba people has some lessons for us to learn in matters of friendship and betrayal.

In the light of the foregoing, we can conclude that, although Matthew may have had his redactional purpose for the nation of Israel in the way he depicts Judas in his narrative, the way he has set the story in his narrative is a warning to the members of his community on the adverse effects of betrayal within that community for them as individuals and the community at

¹²⁸ There is a legend that describes Judas as wandering about through the night in a blank frenzy, and in that process stumbled on a group of workers who were engaged in producing a cross. Judas, however, realizing the implications of his action rather decided for another gallows (Guerber 1896: 150-9).

large. Second, it is quite evident that Matthew has also set the story of Judas in order to teach the members of his community about the true nature and importance of friendship that is anchored on love, loyalty, trust and service. It is only on this note that we can agree with Paffenroth that Matthew has set his story as a mimesis for the world of his readers, to teach them lessons about right relationships, especially friendship within the new community of God's people that Jesus came to set up as part of his mission on earth (Paffenroth, 2001).

Betrayal seems to be part of the human experience, arising from the frailty of human nature. And moral laxity often leads to disloyalty and unfaithfulness. Since betrayal is unavoidable in friendship, forgiveness should also be seen as inseparable part of friendship. For this reason, one can argue that Matthew has also presented the picture of Judas in his narrative to his community and to all its readers in any cultural context for pedagogical purpose, i.e. in order to teach them about the nature of true repentance and forgiveness in order not fall into the error of suicide. This is illustrated in the parable of the Unforgiving Servant in Matt.18:21-27, where the king forgives his servant with a huge debt which he would never have been able to pay. This is then followed by Matthew's teaching on the need to imbibe the practice of forgiveness within his group, in Matt.18:28-35.

It is also clear from our discussion that there are no prescribed conditions for betrayal in all of the cultural contexts, because it is dependent of events around friendship. Actors are guided by their knowledge of societal norms and moral values or the communal codes of conduct to make appropriate choices and decisions in any given situation. This is because humanity is generally prone to mistakes in whatever circumstance of life, particularly in friendship with regards to the use of his/her freedom or freewill, and in spite of their knowledge of the codes of conduct of the society that regulate their lives. Consequently, this raises the question of forgiveness in betrayal. In that way, both Matthew's Gospel and Yoruba culture enjoin that betrayal must be genuinely and penitently regretted or confessed in order to obtain forgiveness. That is if such betrayal has not already claimed the life of the victim or that of his or her friend or even sometimes both of them. The point is that even with such forgiveness the friendship might not remain the same.

But before we draw the final conclusion, there is yet an allusion to betrayal in the Matthean Gospel that must engage our attention here. This has to do with the parable of the ten virgins. Five out of the ten virgins are adjudged wise because they took extra oil with them in the hope that the bridegroom might delay in coming, but they refused their friends a share in that oil

when bridegroom was delayed (Matt. 25: 8-9). In the end, the five unwise virgins could not enter with the bridegroom who had come before their return from where they had gone to purchase oil. The best that we can say about the parable in relation to the theme of our study is that it supports the idea that although friendship is based on the principle of reciprocal assistance, there is a limit to the kind of assistance friends can render to each other. This supports the view that we have raised in this study that in some cases even involving spiritual issues with eternal value, betrayal or disappointment may be considered justifiable regardless of the commitment to the bond of friendship.

In view of the foregoing, compared with Judas, we can see from *Iya Olofi*, a demonstration of a true sense of commitment, genuine love and satisfaction in friendship. She considered any other form of gratification outside the friendship ties as unwholesome and a negation of the moral principles guiding the Yoruba concept of friendship within communal life. And for that reason, she felt the challenge to reciprocate *Orunmila's* kindness and benevolence by saving his life when the occasion called for that. In contrast, Judas did not seem to remember or feel any challenge for any form of reciprocity or good gesture towards Jesus for the benefits he must have received from him. He seemed to have been so depressed by the outcome of his betrayal that he lost sense of justice and the moral integrity upon which friendship is based and was practiced within the Matthean community. He was completely overwhelmed by his serious error of wrong judgment about Jesus' power, and of the principles of friendship generally. It thus becomes obvious that it is not good to take advantage of one's friend unduly as Judas seemed to have done with Jesus.

5.2 Comparative Conclusions

What sense can we then make from the above new understandings of the Matthean pericope in the light of the Yoruba cultural practice of friendship and betrayal as we bring it into interaction with that of the critical Western context?

So far, we have seen that although friendship is chosen personally, it has communal or public implications for the general wellbeing of the society. This is evident in both the Matthean and Yoruba cultural contexts. It is in the way Matthew portrays the image of Judas in order to bring home the importance of their communal life to the members of his community. This is to

say that an action of two friends in the privacy of their relationship can affect not only the two of them, but even the entire community to which they belong.

Friendship involves a network of loyalties informed by the complexities of our social systems as seen from the discussion above. In this regard, in friendship, when one finds himself or herself at cross-roads with the challenge of having to make a proper decision, particularly when many situations are calling for one's loyalty, which direction should one go? In this connection, the Yoruba cultural concept of friendship as seen from the action of *Iya Olofi* has offered some clues as to what should be done in such complex circumstances of conflicting loyalties in friendship. Friendship, in the Yoruba cultural context, is embedded in the moral values and norms of the society, which requires that one's loyalty should be guided by the dictate of those moral values and norms as in the case of the Greco-Roman concept of friendship. But unless the demand of friendship, in a particular circumstance, is contradictory to the societal values and norms which form the communal codes of conduct, one's loyalty should primarily be towards his/her friend because of their personal commitment to each other as we have expected from Judas.

The Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal in this study is based on the experiences and practices of the traditional religious worshippers in a purely Yoruba socio-religious setting. It predates that of the Christo-Islamic context and works at a deeper level of Yoruba consciousness. It should be pointed out that these people share a deeper spiritual fellowship within the group that deepens their faith, practice and focus, as in both Christianity and Islam. In other words, the Yoruba traditional system is very much alive, but has continued to share in diverse ways with Christianity and Islam. This is reflected in the socio-religious perceptions of people in the three religions - Yoruba traditional religion, Christianity and Islam.

Therefore, friendship ties among the Yoruba people carry with them the same kind of devotion and commitment required in the practice of their religions. These discourage betrayal. Friendship at this level is usually seen to be covenantal as embedded in the various *Ifa* oracles, although all other forms of friendships are also recognized. This kind of devotion and commitment is reflected in the friendship between *Orunmila* and *Iya Olofi*. In Matthew's Gospel, we see Jesus also making that kind of demand and devotion from those who might have responded to be his friends in the context of discipleship. In this sense, those who accepted to be his friends as his disciples must give him first place in their lives by making all other commitments secondary, even family responsibilities (Matt. 10:37). Although Jesus' call to

discipleship in Matthew's Gospel is more than a call to be his friends, the same level of commitment required of a would-be disciple-friend is also required in the context of friendship among the Yoruba in the traditional settings.

Hence, in the Yoruba cultural context, *Iya Olofi* is seen as a very good example of someone who has genuine commitment to the bond of friendship between herself and her friend, *Orunmila*. Her action of commitment, genuine love and satisfaction in friendship is, therefore, a challenge to those who are reading Matthew's Gospel as a story today their different socio-cultural contexts. In any difficult circumstance of life, their love, loyalty and devotion should primarily be to Jesus, their master-friend.

However, we are faced with the question concerning the implications of her action for the entire community where sacrifice was required for the continued wellbeing of that community. How would her community survive without the sacrifice?

Socio-culturally, although *Iya Olofi's* kind gesture to *Orunmila* might appear as an action against her communal obligations, it is not. This is because her action helped in preventing her community from the possible havoc that may have resulted from using a wrong (or in the case of *Orunmila*, a sacred) person for sacrifice. In the first instance, this incident has raised an important issue concerning human sacrifice, especially in the traditional religious setting. The intricacy of the matter however is not just the issue of sacrifice but also that it could spell doom for the community if a wrong or mistaken sacrifice is offered to a god. This is particularly true if *Iya Olofi* had acted otherwise against her friend, *Orunmila*. The is because in the traditional religious setting among the Yoruba, where the communal gods are also usually responsible for the maintenance of justice, law and order within the community, such sacrifices are very vital to the continued existence of the community. But in this case, it involved *Orunmila*, who was her friend.

This is why friendship should be seen as a public engagement although based on private choice; the lives of the individuals are intertwined with that of the entire community. Nevertheless, when there is a clash of interest, the moral values and norms of the society should be allowed to take the appropriate course. So the resolve of *Iya Olofi* to save her friend is not a violation of the law of the lands. Since *Iya Olofi* did not have the primary responsibility to be the one to produce a foreigner as a sacrificial victim to the iron god of the community, the community would have to find a way of getting the victim. This is point of Aristotle's argument that one must not injure one's friend because of an undue loyalty to his/her community and vice versa.

For the Yoruba society, as for many other African communities, the traditional religious systems usually involve sacrifices in different forms to various gods, which are very important for the continued existence and wellbeing of the community. In the Yoruba traditional religion, human sacrifice was seen to be the highest form of any religious act to the gods. This shows the importance the religion attaches to blood as a means of preservation and purity. However, there is no clear reference to such a sacrificial system in Matthew's narrative as the tearing of the temple's curtain may have suggested an end to that practice within the community: "And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split..." (Matt.27:51). But then there is a reference to one case of blood sacrifice made for humanity by God through Jesus, which has spiritual implications for the readers of the Gospel. For Matthew, this idea of unique sacrifice in Jesus is central to the message of the Gospel, because it explains the mission of Jesus who has come as a ransom for all as the highest gift from God (Matt. 20:28). Matthew's redaction of the words of institution express his understanding of Jesus' death as a unique "once for all" blood sacrifice for atonement, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (26:28). Hence God's gift of his own Son, Jesus as a ransom for many may be regarded as pointing to an end of all forms of blood sacrifices in any culture when people accept the message of the Gospel. Consequently, this can be seen as particularly challenging to the very root of Yoruba cultural religious practice, which has greatly influenced the perception of many Yoruba people, especially in the area of sacrifices. In other words, it can be argued that Matthew, by presenting Jesus as the highest and final sacrificial substance or victim offered by God Himself, it can be regarded as presenting a challenge to the Yoruba religious belief against human sacrifices and any other forms of sacrifices. Consequently, even though the practice has not completely disappeared from the traditional religious practices, it has reduced drastically to the barest minimum. Matthew presents Jesus as the last and highest form of substitutionary sacrifice for his community as well as for the readers of his story. Matthew's message in his narrative to all people is therefore that God has offered his own Son once for and all; hence there cannot be any other sacrifice greater or smaller apart from that which God has already offered for all (Matt. 26:24).

Seen in the light of Matthew's message about Jesus as the perfect sacrifice for many, the action of *Iya Olofi* in saving the life of *Orunmila* strongly appeals to us regarding a new Yoruba culture-based understanding of friendship that human sacrifice for whatever reason, is condemnable. Here is one of the key differences between the Matthean community and the

Yoruba traditional cultural context as there is no any reference to a sacrificial system in the Matthean community like that of the Yoruba traditional religious practice. As a proto-Christian community, it is not likely that the Matthean community would have engaged in the regular temple sacrifices that were associated with Judaism. The death of Jesus on the cross as a special sacrifice by God could therefore be seen as a significant development for the Matthean community as well as for the readers of the Gospel. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews has however developed this significant event of the tearing of the temple's curtain to show more clearly as indicating an end to the Old Testament Levitical sacrificial systems (Heb. 10:1ff). That aspect of the Matthean narrative continues to speak to the people about the unwholesome practice of sacrifice generally. The Yoruba cultural context can therefore be seen to provide an important corrective to pre-Christian Yoruba sacrificial systems.

Second, *Iya Olofi's* action shows why the Yoruba cultural context discourages betrayal in friendship a betrayer can be seen not to be any better than a murderer, especially when such a betrayal involves a loss of life. We can also see from the Matthean cultural context that Judas, seeing what had become of Jesus after his arrest by the temple police sent by the authorities of the Jewish religious leaders lamented that he had become guilty of shedding innocent blood (Matt. 27: 1-4). How much more then should friends guard against killing each other or shedding blood in order to save themselves from the agony of any evil action!

Therefore, for Matthew and his community, communal peace and tranquility are dependent on obedience to the law of God and the love of people in any community. In other words, personal and communal peaceful co-existence and progress can only be achieved within any society as long as the community maintains a high sense of loyalty, love and trust as evident within the Matthean own group (Matt. 5-7; 18:15-22).

The implication is that Christian theology as seen in the story of Jesus by Matthew regarding friendship offers principles for interpersonal and intra relationships. That kind of friendship in the Matthean community is unique to enhance human life. And there is a way our culture can also contribute to our understanding of these demands and the practical demonstrations of this kind of friendship. This is an important message for our generation as these inhuman practices are very rampant in many societies today with the accompanying destruction of many lives, disintegration of many families and the resultant catastrophic consequences. This issue is relevant, particularly to us in Nigeria where ritual killings and

kidnapping are the order of the day in some parts of Yoruba land as well as in other parts of the nation and across the African nation generally.

To this end, *Iya Olofi's* action in saving the life of her friend is not only commendable, but also should be seen as a practical demonstration of the kind of teachings found in Matthew's narrative. These include genuine love, peace, commitment and loyalty as the better way to achieve, entrench and safeguard peace in any community.

On another level, the Yoruba cultural context as contained in the oracular text supports leader-disciple and cross-gender friendships as evident between *Orunmila* and *Iya Olofi* just as between Jesus and Judas and the other disciples. Consequently, from the perspective of the Yoruba cultural context, even if Jesus had to die in order to fulfill his special mission on earth, in view of the bond of friendship between him and Judas, Judas should not have been the one to betray Jesus because such an action negates the moral principles of friendship. This refutes those critical Western scholars who argue that there was nothing wrong in Judas' kiss, even though it led to Jesus' arrest. We believe that the bond of friendship would normally require that a disciple should support his master and protect his interest and life from danger, and vice versa.

On a different point, *Orunmila and Iya Olofi's* friendship shows that cross-gender friendship is possible without any illicit affairs being involved. There are some societies where women are restricted to other women for friendship, for whatever reasons; but cross-gender friendship ought to be encouraged for the well-being of the society.

The Matthean concept of friendship and the Western post-Enlightenment individualistic concepts of friendship also challenge the Yoruba cultural concept of friendship where sometimes friendship can be contracted for ulterior motives by some people against the general wellbeing of the society. In this light, esoteric kinds of friendships based on oath and sealed with blood for the promotion of the material interests of those involved should be discouraged or jettisoned. This kind of friendship that unduly promotes individual interest against that of the large society and vice versa, is condemned in the Matthean cultural context just as in the Greco-Roman context.¹²⁹ As one of the youths interviewed, Ope Opedare, has rightly observed, this kind of esoteric friendships, which often involve splitting, shedding or licking blood for the sake of concealment and secrecy in friendship, is uncalled for¹³⁰.

¹²⁹ See Matt. 20: 20-28.

¹³⁰ Appendix 2, No xx on pgs. 266.

Furthermore, friendship for the Yoruba people and Matthean community is conditioned by the moral values and social norms of the society. These must be adhered to, not only by the people, but also by the leaders in any given community. Both the Matthean and Yoruba cultural contexts challenge each other in this area. In the story of *Iya Olofi* and *Orunmila*, the local community leadership is seen to have supported the practice of human sacrifice because the god prescribed it, which is not the proper way to promote societal wellbeing anyway. Although such sacrificial or ritual killing according to the traditional religious belief of the Yoruba has the potency to restore peace in the community, according to their belief, the biggest problem that has to do with this is the fate of the victim and his/her family. Similarly, in Matthew's Gospel, we see the Jewish leaders of Jesus' day instigating the populace against him. They should have taken the implications of Jesus' invitation and his public ministry more seriously, but they were the ones, according to Matthew, who condemned him to the usual Roman capital punishment, death on the cross. Matthew even points out that they accepted the responsibility for his blood to be upon their heads and their children (cf. Matt.27: 18-25). Consequently, Matthew seems to be warning the members of his community to avoid the kind of hypocritical life exemplified by the Jewish leaders and the Pharisees in their relationships with God and one another within the group.

The leadership in any community and at whatever level is seen as the moral conscience or watch dog of the society in respect of the moral values and norms to be observed by members for the wellbeing of that community. Hence, the leadership should be at the fore front in observing those values and not pulling them down. It is socially destructive when those who have the responsibility and the support of the powers and the authorities of the state to administer the laws of the land are those who are flouting or disregarding them. Those who are supposed to defend the people from assaults are found to be the ones who are actually assaulting them; either trying to get rid of them for selfish interests or instigating others people to get them arrested and unduly imprisoned or even killing them just for ulterior motives. During the Abacha regime in Nigeria, most of those who were opposed to the government because of their high-handedness or undemocratic actions and disposition, were being hunted by the government. Leadership must rather understand the right thing to do at the right time, and the right way to do it. Why these

points are very important is that they are related to issues about relationships, and therefore they can be seen as important factors for rewarding friendships at various level.¹³¹

Another area of challenge to the Yoruba concept of friendship by the Matthean cultural context is in the area of equality, an important factor in friendship. It is not clear whether the Yoruba cultural context has any basis for such a condition of equality, as required in true friendship within their community. Most of those interviewed maintained that although friendship can thrive between two people of different status, it will thrive best in a situation where two people share equality. Matthew, like Cicero advised that people of high status must strip themselves of their status and condescend to the level of their friends with low status in order to make the friendship works. While we can say that equality in the context of the Yoruba cultural concept of friendship is not based on a particular principle or rule, the concept of friendship in the Matthean community is based on Jesus' example of humility. This is foundation and symbol of the equal status of the members upon which friendship within the community is based. Jesus condescended to the level of the disciples, giving up his right as the leader to become a servant and friend to them in order to demonstrate as well as to challenge them that leadership and friendship, entails service and not in lording-over others as it is the practice in the world (Matt 20:26-28). For this reason, even the authority and power given to Peter should be exercised collectively by all members of the community (Matt.18:18-20). And any would-be disciple and friend of Jesus should be ready to "go and sell what you possess and give to the poor, ...and come, follow me" (Matt. 19:21). The point is that there is no such common ground for equality in the Yoruba cultural context of friendship as we see it operating within the Matthean community.

Friendship in the Yoruba cultural context is regulated by the social norms and moral values as enshrined in the *Ifa* corpus to restrict the people from getting involved in actions that may amount to or lead to betrayal at both personal and public levels, in the same way that friendship within the Matthean community was being guided by the newly reinterpreted Decalogue by Jesus as the codes of conduct for the community to guard against betrayal of any

¹³¹ Among the Yoruba, people are generally expected to be "**Omoluabi**" – a word literally meaning "a child born by Noah". How the word got into the vocabulary of the Yoruba language I do not know, but it may well have been as a result of the influence of Christianity on the people. We find this expression to have biblical colouration, because we know that Noah lived to please the Lord at his own time in the mist of the corruption of his day as one who obeyed the Lord (cf. Gen. 6-7). In that light, for the Yoruba people, the term: "**Omoluabi**" means a "**virtuous child**", i.e. a law-abiding and well-behaved person.

kind.¹³² The post-Enlightenment Western view of friendship emphasizes the individual psychology, motives and freedom regarding why an action has been performed.

Both the Yoruba and the Matthean contexts agree in their contradiction to the post-Enlightenment Western conception of Judas' betrayal as represented by Klassen. This view propounds that, "to point one's friend" to his enemies is not the same as "to betray him" to his enemies, because the particular Greek word, "paradidomi" used to describe the action does not really express "betrayal" but rather "to hand over."¹³³ It also puts forward that someone can suggest to his friend to betray him to his enemies in order for him to fulfill a particular cause. While this kind of action may be possible in the case of an individual's psychological status, sense of freedom and personal motives, it does not seem to be an acceptable way of behaviour either in the Yoruba or the Matthean cultural contexts as our study has shown. This is because, in both contexts, it is believed that it is not right for a friend to use a subtle means to take advantage of his friend; so how much more is it wrong to deliberately go against his friend to achieve an ulterior motive, or negatively suggest to one's friend to use an unreasonable means to achieve a feat?

In addition, while both the Yoruba and Matthean cultural concept of friendship and betrayal emphasize communal or public wellbeing and fulfillment in friendship, Western post-Enlightenment cultural concepts of friendship emphasize individual fulfillment, deep interpersonal relations and a freedom-oriented concept of friendship.

In the light of the foregoing, it could be gathered from the narrative study of the Matthean Gospel that Matthew is emphasizing the distinctiveness of the friendship among the members of his community, patterned after the example of Jesus with his disciples, as a model for all, because it transcends the time of Jesus' public ministry to life in the kingdom of God today: "When the Son of man comes in glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne" (Matt. 25:31). That kind of friendship is characterized by factors such as, equality, loyalty, trust, love and forgiveness. Consequently, Jesus has to speak in strong terms against actions that might lead to disloyalty or betrayal within the group in view of the prevailing difficulties caused by persecution at the time. In other words, there was the tendency for the members of the group to betray each other in the face of persecution; hence the need for such

¹³² An adage in Yoruba helps to put this truth in perspective: "*Aguntan to ba aja rin yoo je igbe*", which means literally "if a sheep befriends a dog it would be made to eat dung". This expression carries the same implication as that of Paul's statement: "*Bad company ruins morals*" (I Cor. 15:33).

¹³³ See discussion on Klassen above on pgs. 168-170.

warnings and strong encouragement that Matthew has set forth in his gospel. We also have it in the moral codes or societal norms of the Yoruba culture even though those codes of conduct in the Matthean community may carry deeper spiritual implications.

In order to achieve this purpose, Matthew has not only stressed, but also painted a vivid picture of the negative consequences of betrayal by using the person of Judas to draw home his warnings for any betrayer as well as for his community. By setting Judas as a deterrent to the community through the role he has played in the narrative, Matthew sought to teach the community, warn them and discourage them from getting involved with the unjust ruler as Judas did (Matt.26:14-16).

The Yoruba cultural concept of friendship has many cases of betrayal in friendship as evident in other oracular texts obtained for this study, such as that of *Okete* and *Orunmila*, to warn the people of that community against the adverse effects of betrayal. In the oracular text, *Okete* is found to be persistently untrustworthy to his friend *Orunmila* by revealing the secrets of *Orunmila* to outsiders and so in the end he lost his life. The case of friendship between *Iya Olofi* and *Orunmila* is also seen to teach the people the positive aspects of what true friendship involves and what is required for its sustenance by the people. The story gives clues as to what one should do when at a crossroads or immersed in a network of complex and conflicting loyalties involving personal commitment to a bond of friendship, as well as loyalty in a way to one's community. And as already pointed out, at that challenging moment one is to be guided in the difficult decision-making process by considering the appropriateness and eventual implications of his/her decision as required by the societal norms and moral values; as demonstrated by *Iya Olofi*.

Thus far, the Yoruba cultural context demonstrates that personal commitment or loyalty to one's friend is the heart of a true friendship even in the face of the complexities of conflicting loyalties. But Judas seemed not to have grasped that fact, and in spite of having entered into a bond of friendship with Jesus, sealed up by communal meals and personal acceptance of commitment to trust, he failed to make good his words and turned out to be a traitor. Therefore, unreliability or disloyalty in relationships and lack of genuine commitment or trivialization of the bond of friendship, even after having pledged such a commitment, can have dire consequences. Hence, it is not good to take chances blindly in friendship by taking undue advantage of one's friend in any situation. One should rather imbibe the virtue of contentment, trust, love, honesty and faithfulness in friendship as *Iya Olofi* did.

Closely related to the aboves is that friendship entails having a right sense of judgment about certain issues of life, especially about our friend. As a Yoruba maxim states: “Show me your friend, and I will tell you the kind of person you are.” For example, would anyone have really judged Jesus to be a threat to the society in which he had lived? Especially in such a way as to warrant his friend betraying him as the Gospel of Matthew relates? Although the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus’ day would have surely adjudged Jesus as a threat, particularly to their own positions and authorities, Judas as a friend of Jesus would have had a true assessment of him. It might be for that reason that they encouraged Judas to betray Jesus to them (Matt. 26: 14-16). Conversely, *Iya Olofi* would seem to have had a right sense of *Orunmila’s* action in her community as a mouth piece of *Olodumare*, i.e. God, and allowed that to determine her decision in the matter relating to their friendship. It is likely that Judas’ inadequate knowledge of Jesus’ power and mission in the world must have influenced him in a way to act the way he did, i.e. hand Jesus over to his captors. We also noticed in our study that jealousy, envy and inordinate ambition are cancerous to the spirit of true friendship. It thus suggests that friends should not be unnecessarily jealous or envious of each other, because jealousy and envy breed animosity that can turn sour the wonderful experiences that normally go with friendship. The friendship experience, like that of marriage should necessarily be a means whereby friends complement as well as criticize themselves constructively for their own good and to prevent each other from making serious mistakes. They must also guard against unhealthy competition or rivalry. Why is this important for our study? It is because there were references to jealousy, envy and ambition which affected, in a way, the community of friends Jesus tried to build in Matthew’s Gospel, and that Judas might be seen just as a victim of such ugly circumstance.

In this connection, *Iya Olofi* again presents an example of good conduct and love as a means to deal with such vices that threaten the spirit of true friendship. The challenge, therefore, is about learning from *Iya Olofi* how to always control one’s personal interests and ambition in line with the bond or trust in friendship and on the basis of the social norms and moral values in order to guard against negative influences that can disrupt the spirit of true friendship. For example, if *Iya Olofi* had been unnecessarily jealous of *Orunmila* because of his fame, success and gains as a diviner, and not satisfied with the benefits she had received from *Orunmila* on the basis of their friendship, she could have chosen to get rid of him by betraying him to her community to be used for sacrifice. The Yoruba cultural concept of friendship, therefore, teaches that friends should necessarily learn how to appreciate each other always, as well as identify with each other’s

success, progress and even difficulties, as in the case of *Orunmila* and *Iya Olofi* in order to keep going in spite of challenges. Then the idea of betrayal will not surface; but even if it surfaces, it could easily be controlled or avoided.

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that there is also a psychological aspect to betrayal. Again, we refer to Ryan McDowell's *Anatomy of Betrayal*, which examines betrayal from a psychological perspective. It points out that betrayal can sometimes give psychological relief to any person from the heavy burden of stress or emotional disturbance. In other words, such betrayal may take the form of public confession for one to clear his/her conscience of an evil that might have been concealed by him/her or done by his/her friend. Although it may be regarded as a betrayal anyway, it usually gives a great deal of emotional relief.¹³⁴ To this end, we maintained in this study that friendship should primarily promote good behaviour, progress, wellbeing and peaceful co-existence of individuals at private level as a *sine qua non* to the general wellbeing and progress of the larger society. For this reason, McDowell has described betrayal as a break of the bond of friendship predicted on trust.

Our vantage point from which the dialogue between the three contexts, the Matthean, the Western and the Yoruba, has a deep underlying pastoral concern for the impact of Western ideas on Yoruba Christian communities. This pastoral concern determines what Gerald West calls our “ideo-theological” choices or viewpoint. While Western culture is not seen in an entirely negative light, our goal is to interrogate it from the perspective of Yoruba culture and to bring both into dialogue with the position of Matthew and his community in the Gospel. In light of the foregoing, based on our vantage point of our Yoruba cultural context, we note the similarity between the cultural contexts of Yoruba culture and Matthew and his community. We can see that true sense of friendship, characterized by love and loyalty, can help us to guard against becoming a betrayer and saves us from the agony of guilty conscience that often goes with it, as the case of Judas has proved. Interestingly, however, Matthew goes on to offer a hope that even if one falls into the error of betrayal, it is expected that an offender should be penitent and summon courage to seek for forgiveness from the offended – Judas from Jesus, like Peter from Jesus. But instead of being penitent and courageous to seek forgiveness appropriately, some people who have fallen into betrayal are going about remorsefully with a guilty conscience like Judas. The point here is that remorse should be seen as only a step to total repentance, such as that seen in Peter's cry when he realized his denial of Jesus: “And he went out and wept bitterly”

¹³⁴ See Ryan McDowell's idea on betrayal on page 122.

(Matt. 25:75c). One should therefore learn about what is involved in true repentance from Peter rather than going about with remorseful feelings when one falls into any sin, no matter how heinous. In this light, we gathered from the Matthean and Yoruba cultural contexts that suicide is not to be seen as an answer to any challenge or problem of life, even in case of betrayal in friendship, because as the saying goes: “No condition is permanent”. In other words, life itself is not fixed on a particular condition. It thus follows that right actions or even genuine repentance from error or sin will normally lead to joy and fulfillment as for *Iya Olofi*, but wrong actions or impenitence in error will usually inspire sorrows.

The case of suicide, like betrayal, as we have seen in Judas’ action, also has its psychological aspect. As we have pointed out in this study, Western post–Enlightenment cultural concepts of friendship, as evident in the arguments of scholars like William Klassen and Kim Paffenroth have attributed suicide to psychological or mental disorder which can be explained medically as a form of relief from depression.¹³⁵

Therefore, from the perspective of the the Yoruba cultural concept of friendship, friendship is about the enjoyment of friends, their wellbeing and their commitment to a common good. This raises the important question about what is regarded as “a common good”. Although this may mean different thing to different people within different cultural settings, for us in the Yoruba cultural context, our understanding of a common good is basically that which

¹³⁵ Dr. Mrs. R. B. Asagba of the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social sciences, University of Ibadan, explained that Psychologists have many approaches to the issue of suicide. But generally, it is seen as a psychological problem traceable to depression or mental disorder whereby a person considers suicide as the best solution to his/her problem. Therefore, such an action is not judged on face value, but through a process of medical examination to ascertain its cause. (Interview conducted on Monday, 26th May, 2014).

Furthermore, one Dr. Alex Lickerman, in his article: “Happiness in the world” identifies some reasons for suicide. These include: sever depression that is often accompanied by a pervasive sense of suffering which is considered to be hopeless. He argues that the state of depression affects their thinking, leaving the idea tha life could be better without the person. Therefore such people could not be blamed for that kind of distorted thought just as a heart-patient could not be blamed for experiencing chest-pain.

Second, Lickerman describes those who commit suicide as psychotic which is harder than depression. It involves a kind of malevolent inner voices which often command self-destruction for unintelligible reasons.

Third, they are also impulsive, which is related to drug and alcohol use, whereby people impulsively attempt to terminate their own lives, because of the resultant shameful outcome of their action. Therefore, those who commit suicide have psychological desire to die based on a reasoned decision, often motivated by the presence of a painful terminal-sickness from which little or no hope of relief exists. Hence, they often attempt to take control of their destinies and alleviate their own sufferings by committing suicide, which they consider as a way to shorten a death that will happen eventually.

Dr. Lickerman observes that if such people are evaluated by a qualified professional, we would probably see the reason why they may not be blamed for taking such a drastic step. (<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/happiness-in-world/201004/six-reasons-people-attempt...>) (Accessed 10th September, 2014).

promotes the wellbeing of friends in particular (whether emotional or material), as well as the wellbeing and progress of the society at large. But then, it is quite clear that not all friendships are informed by a genuine commitment to a common good especially for the general society. As already pointed out from the Yoruba cultural context, there are some nocturnal associations or friendships that only promote the esoteric interests of those involved in that friendship at the expense of other people's interest and even that of the society generally.

Betrayal will be morally reasonable and accepted in a situation where a friend's action is against the moral values of the society and the wellbeing of the other friend. In other words, a friend may be adjudged morally right in betraying his or her friend only when the action of his friend runs contrary to the societal norms and principles and the wellbeing or common good of the society as to adversely affect him too or even his friend. Therefore, betrayal in the Yoruba cultural context of friendship is determined by the right (or otherwise) action of one's friend in the light of the Yoruba moral values and norms, like the re-interpreted Decalogue by Jesus for the Matthean community.

It should be noted that betrayal might be difficult in a typically covenantal friendship, especially among the Yoruba traditionalists under any circumstance, especially when it is an esoteric kind of friendship. But the point is that whatever form of friendship, even a covenantal friendship, which is usually strictly confidential because it is often sealed with a blood-oath, it should normally aim at promoting the wellbeing of friends and progress of the society. But often times it is not, and that is the reason for the involvement of blood-oath - to keep the confidentiality or secrecy of such a friendship tie should it fails eventually. In such a situation betrayal might be very difficult.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 General Conclusion And Summary

Friendship as a social practice occupies an important place in the socio-economic and politico-religious life of any social group, such as we have seen in the Matthean community and among the Yoruba people of Nigeria in Africa. However, while friendship may appear generally as a form of relationship, it carries peculiarities that are informed by the differences in each social group or cultural context or social situation of a particular people.

Such cultural particularities are very important in attempting to understand the concept of friendship as embedded within any particular cultural context. Similarly, we realize that for biblical interpretation to have a cultural relevance and impact, it has to be approached from the perspective of the culture of the real reader as well as the “implied reader” of a text’s original context. In the case of postcolonial Africa, the impact of the Western missionaries and the Western hermeneutical tools which are still taught in the denominational seminaries, and Western culture generally continues to play a role (often unawares) in African reading of the Bible. Since it is part of the context of the real readers in Africa, it has been necessary to undertake a brief cultural analysis of friendship in Western culture, so as to be able to explore a new understanding and interpretation informed by African cultural beliefs and practices.

In this study, we have employed the Yoruba cultural context as a model of an African cultural context to examine the concept of friendship and betrayal in the Matthean pericope of Matt. 26:47-56, while we also explored the way in which the Western cultural context played out in this matter through the kind of books read by African students and scholars, as much of the literature were produced in the West. We have sought to understand the concept of friendship and betrayal in Matthew’s Gospel, using African postcolonial theory that was developed from a combination of conversational and inculturation hermeneutic theories and Edward Said’s theory of contrapuntalism. Within this theoretical framework, we have used narrative methodology and bring these contending cultural contexts to respond to the gaps identified in Matthew’s narrative through contrapuntal interactions in order to gain a new Yoruba culture-based understanding of the chosen pericope on the concept of friendship and betrayal.¹³⁶ Our new understanding or

¹³⁶ See chapter 3 above for the discussion on friendship and betrayal from the perspective of the three contending cultural contexts.

meaning of the concept of friendship and betrayal is that friendship in the Yoruba cultural context is anchored in the societal norms and cultural values. This means that friendship is based on communal or public commitment, even though it is a relationship between two people. It aims at enjoyment, usefulness to each other as well as commitment of the two friends to a common good or goal, in conformity with the societal values and norms for the general wellbeing of the society. And unless the demands of friendship runs contrary to the dictates of the societal values and norms, one's primary commitment of loyalty should be to his/her friend even in a conflicting network of loyalties. Although friendship is based on a private choice, it focuses on responsibilities towards the general good of the society; hence friendship is regarded as a public engagement deliberately chosen and accepted by actors in friendship for the promotion of their wellbeing and fulfillment, as well as that of the society in general.

In this study we have pointed out that any action in both the Matthean cultural context and Yoruba cultural context of friendship, has implications not only for the friends as individuals but also for the community generally. For this reason, friendship ties or bonds are usually expected to be kept within the confines of the social values and norms of any particular society and must conform to the same. Betrayal occurs when a friend fails to keep the object of trust in friendship for which one has already accepted responsibility within the social system, thereby resulting in consequences for the other friend, and the larger society.

On a general note, the contrapuntal comparative approach for this study has contributed to our better understanding by widening our horizon on the concept of friendship and betrayal from different cultural perspectives. The contrapuntal approach has thrown light onto hidden areas of the texts by enabling us to explore them from the perspective of our African cultural worldview, and particularly the Yoruba cultural worldview adopted for this study, together with what we have already gained from the Western cultural background and historical critical methodology of biblical hermeneutics. The exercise of cross-cultural dialogical interaction and sharing rather than debate has turned out to be very enriching and rewarding.

Western scholars who emphasize the human psychology and motives, have enlightened us about why an action can be regarded as a betrayal and how it can be differentiated from just a disappointment; even though in the Yoruba cultural perception there is hardly a difference between the two. Similarly, we have also gained new insight into the idea of suicide from the perspective of the post-Enlightenment Western culture - as a form of relief from depression and shame.

Similarly, the choice of narrative reading methodology has been very helpful and rewarding as complementary to the historical-critical methodology of biblical hermeneutics. It has helped us to identify the “gaps” in the rhetorical flow of the story as told by Matthew and to respond promptly to them in the light of our cultural background and worldview as Africans generally, and Yoruba people. At the same time, we also appreciate the alternative ways to “fill the gaps” from our cultural perspective as an improvement on what we already know of the text, as a kind of contribution to the African contextual theology.

Our study has also shown that there is no fixed method of reading and interpreting the Bible, but that culture has its place in interpreting the Biblical texts through a combination of two or more methods as demonstrated through the contrapuntal synthetic methodology adopted for the study of Matthew. Such an approach allows for interaction, enrichment and sharing among different cultures resulting in clarity and better understanding of a particular text of the Bible. It thus shows that biblical texts do not have fixed and universal meanings attached to them, but that a text or pericope can have more than one meaning and that these can fit together in a given cultural setting.

Finally, in view of the foregoing, our study has also shown the cultural implications of the message of the Bible, which implies that every culture has a role to play in order to make that message relevant in terms of their cultural worldview and perceptions into its reading as well as its understanding and interpretation if it must have the desired effects and transformation upon their lives.

However, we need to emphasize that this kind of cultural interpretation of the Bible is not to encourage relativism as if to subject the Bible completely to culture. The Bible remains normative in the interpretative process of its message. The fundamental reference of the Bible for the “implied readers” remains encoded in the rhetoric of the text by the “implied author”, despite the ambiguities and opportunities provided for interpretation by the “gaps” in the narrative. As we have already argued in setting out our “tri-polar” theoretical framework, contextual biblical interpretations need always to be cross-checked dialogically against the primary reference of the Bible itself in its own cultural background, not just in one place but in the whole consistent “axis” of the Bible, its fundamental message and focus. In this way, the authority of the scriptures in contextual biblical interpretation is affirmed against reckless and arbitrary culture-based interpretations.

This study therefore anticipates further future research on cultural impacts of the Bible on Africans in other aspects of their socio-cultural life and religious beliefs, such as life after death, rewards and final judgment based on contextual Bible Study.

6.1 Summary

This thesis is focused on the study of friendship and betrayal in the Gospel of Matthew with a particular reference to Judas' action in Matt.26:47-56 in the light of the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal. It examined the theme of friendship and betrayal in Matthew's Gospel against the backdrop of the theme of the church, which is peculiar to Matthew as a way of demonstrating the Messianic calling of Jesus and his inauguration of a new group of God's people in the regard to the coming kingdom of heaven. We found in the name of Jesus-Immanuel- "God with us" - the basis of the renewed fellowship between God and humanity by the reconciliation brought about by Jesus on the cross. We looked at the various levels of relationships or friendships in the Matthean narratives, starting with Jesus and his disciples, with a focus on Judas' action of betrayal on one hand, then Jesus and the people who followed during his public ministry, including the Jewish elders, who were hostile to him. On the other hand, we also looked at the friendship within the Matthean community. The thesis therefore argued that the Yoruba cultural mode of friendship provides a relevant African cultural model for a new cultural understanding of the concept of friendship and betrayal in the Matthean pericope of this study. And this attempt has inspired new interpretations through a contrapuntal dialogue between the Matthean context, the Yoruba cultural context and the Western cultural context.

The whole thesis is in six chapters to address each of the pertinent aspects of the topic. In chapter one, the focus was on a general introduction to the entire thesis, including the motivational impetus for the study, the reasons for the choice of topic and text, and the research problems. It went on to discuss the hypothesis for the study. Also in this section, we examined the theoretical framework and methodological approach adopted for the study. The chapter then closed with a literature review, limitations to the study and original contributions of the study.

Chapter two dealt with the details about the development of the theoretical framework and the methodological approach for this study by tracing the background of the evolvement of the African contextual theology to the aftermath of Postcolonial criticism. We adopted what we

call an African postcolonial framework which evolved from the theoretical approach of Conversational-inculturation hermeneutics as propounded by Draper and Ukpong respectively. It was coupled with Edward Said's contrapuntal theory, with a focus on the importance of culture, and based on the narrative method in the interpretative process as an aspect of African contextual theology. It sought to make the biblical message culturally relevant. We then discussed Edward Said's theory of contrapuntal analysis of the different cultural contexts with a view to developing a new understanding or interpretation of the chosen text for this study by bringing the three contending cultural contexts - Matthean, Yoruba and Western together contrapuntally in a dialogue.

In chapter three, we attempted a survey of the concepts of friendship and betrayal in the Matthean cultural context, the Yoruba cultural context and Western cultural context, by examining the cultural worldviews that informed each of them in their cultural settings. We provided a brief account of the development of post-Enlightenment Western culture in its diversity which shaped what is known as Western culture today. These cultural ideals of individual psychology, motives, freedom, rationality and equality of the Enlightenment have informed the worldview and perception of Western scholars (often unawares) in their biblical interpretation and comments on Judas' action.

In chapter four, we provided a narrative reading of the Gospel of Matthew as a story with a rhetorical flow with a view to identifying the 'gaps' in the mimesis to the world of his readers. We looked at the authorship, date and social location of the Gospel. We stressed the theme of the "church" in Matthew's Gospel, because it provides the basis on which to explore the concept of friendship and betrayal in the Matthean community. We also looked at the outline for Matthew's Gospel, providing a suggested outline for the Gospel that launched us into the actual narrative reading of the Gospel through Patte and Waetjen's structure of Matthew. This was in a schematic form to examine the theme of friendship and betrayal throughout the Gospel as well as identify "gaps" in the story which require our response as the reader of the narrative today in the light of our cultural understanding. Such responses would then constitute our new understanding and interpretation of the text for our study from the Yoruba cultural perspective.

In chapter five, in the first instance, we attempted a contrapuntal reading of the Matthean text with the Yoruba cultural and Western cultural contexts identified in the previous chapter. They played out their similarities and differences to produce our new culture-based understanding and interpretation of the chosen pericope on the concept of friendship and

betrayal from the perspective of the Yoruba cultural understanding, beliefs and practices. Central to our new understanding is that friendship is a form of relationship between at least two or more people who are committed to the bond of friendship by choice. Although their commitment is to each other, especially in the face of complex circumstances of loyalties, their actions and inactions have effects on the society generally, and not just for them alone. This is to show that there is a way the actions or inactions of the two friends can affect their own wellbeing as well as that of the society. It is in this regard that friendship has been depicted as a public engagement or relationship in the Yoruba and the Matthean cultural contexts. The post-Enlightenment Western cultural context, on the other hand, emphasizes personal wellbeing and fulfillment, because it is based on the individual psychological wellbeing and motive.

We then tried to identify the three contending cultural contexts that called for our contrapuntal reading and interaction towards achieving a new understanding and interpretation of the text from the cultural perspective of the Yoruba by adopting a textual model from the Yoruba cultural context of *Ifa* oracular text of *Ika Osun*, which focuses on the friendship between *Orunmila* and *Iya Olofi*. The story shows how *Iya Olofi* saved *Orunmila* from being killed because of her commitment to the bond of friendship. The oracular text was as an intertextual reference point for our interpretation of Matthew and in particular the Matthean periscope, Matt. 26:47-56; Judas' betrayal of Jesus was read against the three contending cultural contexts to create a contrapuntal dialogue. This brought out some similarities and differences in the practice of friendship and what is perceived to be a betrayal in each of the cultural contexts. We concluded with the different ways each of the three contending cultures has enabled us to have a proper understanding of the concept of friendship and betrayal by throwing a light on the concept from their different cultural perspectives. While both Yoruba and Matthean cultural concepts emphasize the aspect of communal implications of friendship and restrictions, post-Enlightenment Western culture emphasizes individualism, depth, personal fulfillment and freedom in friendship.

Chapter six is focused on comparative conclusions on the basis of the new understanding as we bring all of the three cultural contexts together. We discovered that in the context of the Yoruba people, friendship as a form of association between two people is regulated by the social norms and cultural views of the community, just as in the Matthean Gospel as evident in the determinant factors of friendship such as, love, trust, faithfulness, service and forgiveness as embedded in the teaching of Jesus (Matt. 5-7). In both Matthean and Yoruba cultural contexts,

friendship seeks to promote the wellbeing of both friends in particular, and that of the society at large. However, Klassen and Paffenroth, representing some critical interpretations of post-Enlightenment Western culture, emphasized individual psychology and freedom in friendship by interpreting Judas and his action in terms of his psychological condition as a person.

We discovered that for Yoruba people what is important is not just the action the outcome of such an action is equally very important. While in post-Enlightenment Western culture Judas' action of a kiss could be understood as a sign of reconciliation or solidarity, as argued by William Klassen, it is rather understood in the Yoruba cultural context as a betrayal. This is because a kiss is a sign of love, warmth and goodwill and therefore cannot be used at the same time treacherously or heinously the way Judas appeared to have used it.

We also argued against the theoretical assumption that tried to attribute Judas' action of betrayal to predestination, i.e. as having been ordained by God. This is not congruent with the Yoruba belief about how predestination works in life. In Yoruba understanding, God does not fix a person's destiny arbitrarily, because of the process involved in the making of human personality being, i.e. a person's worth or essence in life which is affixed to his/her head. Everyone chooses his/her destiny in heaven before birth and is sealed for him/her to fulfill on earth. Hence God is not responsible for whatever destiny chosen by anyone. Therefore, it is not clear in Yoruba belief how God could have predestined Judas to be a betrayer. Similarly, we found out that the Yoruba concept of Satan does not support the claim of the Satan-incarnate/ Good Motive Theory that Judas' action was prompted by the devil and Jesus' good. This is because the Yoruba people have a concept of Satan that is different from that of Christianity and Islam. As a minister of justice, Satan does not inflict punishment on people without a cause, and so could not have induced Judas against Jesus because there was no basis for that according to the Matthean narratives.

We observed that the action of Judas may be explained as *eedi* according to the Yoruba traditional magical power that works like a remote control in an abnormal way. *Eedi* is usually inflicted as a kind of punishment through spiritual forces. Although Judas' action appears to be abnormal, it is not clear who could have inflicted him with that kind of abnormal behaviour or action- Jesus, the disciples or the religious leaders? It thus appears that Judas should be held responsible for his action.

We concluded that the Yoruba concept of friendship and betrayal encourages loyalty in friendship, except when the focus of a friendship runs contrary to the promotion of personal and

societal wellbeing in all its ramifications. Therefore, according to the Yoruba mode of friendship one's loyalty should primarily be to his/her friend in any complex circumstance, if such loyalty does run contrarily to the social values and norms of the society, because of their personal commitment to each other. We do not really know what kind of personal relationship existed between Judas and the religious leaders to have made him to be so drawn to them against his known friend, Jesus.

We resolved that the Matthean cultural context has challenged the Yoruba religious belief involving the practice of human sacrifice, showing it to be archaic. This is because their belief was that human sacrifice was the highest religious gift they could give to the gods for them to be able to receive the favour of the gods, especially in times of difficulties. But according to Matthew, Jesus has been presented as the greatest substitutionary victim for all, because his mission on earth was to “seek and save the lost and to die as a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28). In view of this, there should not be any form of sacrifice again as symbolized by the curtain in the Temple tearing into two pieces at the point of Jesus' death: “And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split” (Matt. 27:51). Therefore, to enjoy peace at personal level of friendship and the communal level of relationship rests on obedience, loyalty, trust and love in whatever relationship, rather than on the endless sacrifices of animals. In this connection, it also challenges the leadership as the moral conscience or the watch dog of the society, to be at the forefront of upholding the societal values and norms. They should not be pulling them down, as seen in the case of the Jewish religious leaders in Jesus' day with the resultant effects upon them and the nation.¹³⁷

It shows that no culture is fixed for ever, as we have seen in the Yoruba culture for it has also been influenced one way or the other through interactions with Christianity, Western culture and even Islam.

We explained the importance of moral values or social norms in friendship in both the Yoruba cultural context and Matthean context to assess the moral implications of the action of Judas. There is no basis in the text for arguing that betrayal was “not an offence at all” because the Greek word *paradidomi* (to hand over) was used to describe it. We pointed out that in the

¹³⁷ It might even be in consequence of this incident that some scholars, like Cook have argued that Matthew has set the story of Judas in the way he did in order to explain that various calamities that subsequently came upon the nation of Israel was the result of the crucifixion of Jesus by the Jews themselves, and for accepting that his blood should be upon them and their children.

Yoruba cultural context, there is hardly a significant difference between the two terms or expressions because “to hand over”, is conceived to be as bad and wicked as “to betray”, Judas could be seen to have handed Jesus over to the Jewish religious leaders to be punished and yet he was killed in the process.

Friendship in both the Matthean context and the Yoruba cultural practices therefore is anchored in genuine love, faithfulness, trust, equality and loyalty. While Western cultures would identify these same values in friendship, we have seen that their emphasis on the individual has tended to relativize the communal aspects of these values. Although friendship may thrive between two unequal persons, it does thrive very well among two equals - hence, the need to learn from Jesus about condescending in status in order to make a friendship tie work. But friendship can also cut across genders, tribes and other influences. Hence, friendship should ordinarily be devoid of jealousy and inordinate ambition among the actors, as seen in *Iya Olofi*, who chose to save the life of her friend, *Orunmila* instead of giving him up to be sacrificed as a victim to a god. But according to Matthew, Judas would seem to have been troubled or influenced by leadership tussle, jealousy and ambition prevalent among the disciples, as we have discussed in this study.

We concluded that both the theoretical and methodological approaches have contributed to our study of the concept of friendship and betrayal from the Yoruba cultural perspective by a kind of contrapuntal comparative analysis. This has enabled us to see many parts that are involved in friendship from different cultural contexts and to synthesize them. The narrative reading methodology has also enabled us to see the different gaps in the narratives of Matthew and to respond to them from our cultural perspective. This has enriched our cross-cultural understanding of the concept of friendship and betrayal as a complement to the critical-historical reading of the Gospel narratives. And finally, we see that after all, the Bible does not have fixed and universal meanings. Rather it is open to many meanings depending on the cultural worldviews and the methodologies that are brought in contact with its narrative “gaps” to interpret its message. But this does not encourage relativism as every interpretation, culture-based interpretation inclusive, must also interact and respect dialogically with the encoded reference of the rhetoric of the Bible itself, so that meaning is produced between the implied author and the implied reader and the real reader in his or her contemporary context.

We also noticed that betrayal may not be entirely avoidable in friendship in view of the unpredictable nature of human behaviours. Hence, there should be room for repentance and

forgiveness in friendship, which of course, involves a process. We noticed that according to the Matthean depiction, Judas' repentance appears to be controversial in view of his subsequent action of suicide. According to the Yoruba cultural understanding of repentance, also seen in the Matthean cultural context, we argued that although Judas might have repented, he should not have committed suicide. We looked at the example of Peter's repentance. Peter's action in running away after he had sworn he would never abandon his friend is as heinous as that of Judas. He also denied Jesus at the point when he was being tried by the Jewish authorities. This explains the belief in both the Yoruba and Matthean cultural contexts, that suicide portends a bad omen for the immediate family of the victim in particular and the community at large; hence the need for a sacrifice to ward off the negative aftermath of such an action. The Yoruba are aware of the gravity of the pains and sorrows involved in suicide. Their socio-religious systems have tried to prevent it in the first instance, because it is very hard to manage.

However, in the opinion of some Western critical scholars like Klassen and Paffenroth, suicide has a medical or psychological explanation, as seen in Paffenroth's argument that described Judas' suicide as an expression of penitence that is worthy of emulation. This description can be seen as an attempt to make a tragic hero of Judas, because of the opinion that his action must have been influenced by his psychological state of mind.

Because the Yoruba cultural practice of friendship generally encourages faithfulness in friendship but discourages betrayal, some people within the cultural setting might like to capitalize on the aspect of confidentiality in friendship, to engage in friendships that are manipulative and exploitative for their own selfish interests. Such friendships usually tend to promote the esoteric interests of a group to the detriment of the wellbeing of the society. These kinds of friendships usually involve membership of a secret society, witchcraft or an occultic group. In such relationships, betrayal may be extremely difficult. In an actual sense, one wonders whether these kinds of relationships should be regarded as friendship at all because it is usually characterized by blood-oath which tries to prevent betrayal.

6.2 Further Research

Significantly, the theme of this thesis offers opportunities for a future research for further cross-cultural enrichment between the Yoruba traditional religious practice and the Christian faith as this study has revealed. In other words, there is ample opportunity to explore in greater

detail how the residual Yoruba traditional culture affects the way Christians read the Bible within the Yoruba communities and to what extent Christianity and the Bible have also influenced or modified and continues to influence and modify the residual oral cultural beliefs and religious practice as embedded in the *Ifa* oracles. As evident in this study, interactions between Christianity and the Yoruba traditional belief system have produced some positive results, such that the Bible has clearly changed the understanding and perceptions of some Yoruba people regarding certain traditional beliefs and practices, particularly human sacrifice or sacrifices and esoteric friendships generally. On the other hand, the Yoruba traditional belief system, especially from its rich cultural value system, has also enabled us to respond to some of the challenges thrown to us on friendship and betrayal by other cultures from our Yoruba cultural perspective. In other words, this attempt has enabled to us see the distinctiveness of the Yoruba culture, and how it can be explored further to enhance our understanding of the Bible; by enlightening us to identify the good aspects of the Yoruba traditional practices and beliefs that can be utilized for the future benefits of the people and jettisoning those aspects that are not beneficial or helpful to us.

This attempt can, therefore, be seen as a beginning of a new rapport between Christianity and Yoruba traditional religion. This can lead to an opportunity for a contextual biblical study among the people, focusing on some aspects of the Yoruba socio-cultural and religious practices for greater cross-cultural understanding and enrichment that can enhance the effectiveness of evangelism among the Yoruba in Nigeria.

APPENDIX ONE – ORACULAR TEXTS

These are some of the texts of the relevant Ifa oracles on the Yoruba beliefs and practices on friendship and betrayal as embedded in the Yoruba traditional religious system.

i. EŞE IFA OSUN OGBE¹³⁸

Gegebi odu Ifa ti a da fun Eledero ti oun ati Eleriwo njo ş'ore. Awon mejeji je korikosun ore. Eleriwo je alagbara okunrin nitori o ni oogun lati fi ba nkan-an go. Şugbon ore re, Eledero ko ni oogun kankan. Eleriwo ko lo oogun lati fi pa ore l'ara. Awon eniyan si nwo won bi won ti nşe ore won. Awon mejeji jo ni oko nla kan ti won jijo nda papo; ti won si nşe abojuto re nipa iranlowo awon ore won gegebi asa Ile Yoruba nipa biba-ara-eni şise asepapo. Şugbon akoko to ti won yoo yan oba; won si pe gbogbo awon omo-oba ninu eyi ti Eledero ati Eleriwo wa. Şugbon Eledero lo ja'we olubori. Şaju ni won ti kilo fun awon mejeji lati rubo lati dena ede-aiyede ti koni le pari laarin awon mejeji; nitori okan ninu won yoo ri nkankan gba ti enikeji ko ni ri gba. Eledero wa gba ore re, Eleriwo, ni imoran lati lo se irubo ti won la silẹ fun won, şugbon ore ko lati sebe nitori pe o gbekẹle oogun re. Eleriwo si ni oko nla kan nibiti o ti ma huwa laabi re, ti o si le pe eniyan pa lojiji. Nitori idi eyi, Eledero nikan lo se etutu tabi irubo naa nitori pe o mo ohun ti o le je abajade ikuna lati se irubo naa.

Bayi ni Eleriwo ba yipada si ore re nitori pe won ti fi Eledero je oba. O si gbiyanju lati gba emi re pelu agbara oogun re. Şugbon nibiti o ti nfe pe ore re l'apepa (eyi ti ore re ko gbodo dahun si ko ma ba ku leşekese), nitori pe Eledero gboran nipa riru ebo, seni Esu parada lati di igi nla ti o wolu Eleriwo lori to si ku fin-fin leşekese.

O si ti wadi asa loni pe "Eledero, lalai ni oogun, o lu Eleriwo pa finfin nitori otito re ati nipa igboran si Ifa.

Translation:

According to the divination made for Eledero (name of a person in friendship with) Eleriwo (a name too); they were both very close friends. Eleriwo was a powerful man because he had charms to do havoc. But his friend, Eledero had none. But then, Eleriwo did not try to

¹³⁸ The information on the oracular texts was obtained from the interview with the Baba Awo Faseesin (Male, 60 years, an Ifa Priest), conducted on the 7th April, 2011 at Inalende Area of Ibadan in Oyo State, Nigeria.

harm his friend in any way. However, people observed that they are indeed very close friends. They both had a very big farm they made together; maintaining it through the assistance of their friends according to the usual practice among the Yoruba. But then, a time came to select the king for their community; and all the princes were summoned including Eledero and Eleriwo. But it was Eledero who was selected. Hitherto, they had been warned to offer a sacrifice in order to avert a conflict that might be difficult to settle, because one of them would obtain something which the other might not be able to obtain. Eledero thus advised his friend Eleriwo that they should go and offer the prescribed sacrifice, but his friend refused, relying on his charms. He had a big farm where he used to carry out his malevolent acts; and he could command a person to die at will. Hence, Eledero went alone to offer the sacrifice because he considered the consequence of the refusal to that order.

Consequently, Eleriwo turned against his friend because he had been made the king and sought to kill him. He therefore made an attempt on his life through his malevolent magical act. But in the process of calling on the name of his friend (to which he must not answer otherwise he would die instantly), because of obedience of Eledero to have offered the prescribed sacrifice, Esu (Satan) turned into a piece of hardwood and fell on Eleriwo on the head and crushed him to death instantly.¹³⁹

Thus, it has become a popular saying today: “Eledero, without any charm, yet he crushed his friend, Eleriwo to death because of his sincerity and obedience to the sacrificial prescriptions by the Ifa oracle.”

ii. OKETE ATI ORUNMILA¹⁴⁰

Okete ati Orunmila ni wọn bọ ara ẹ̀rẹ. Ẹ̀gbọ̀n Okete ma nlọ fi aṣiri Orunmila han fun awọn eniyan. Wọn si gba Orunmila ni imọran pe ki o yi ibi ọpọn Ifa rẹ pada si odikeji. Lẹhin naa ni Okete tun wa gbẹ iho labẹ ilẹ lọ si ọgangan ibiti Orunmila tun gbe ọpọn ifa rẹ si; ki o ba le mọ gbọ gbogbo ohun ti Orunmila ba nsọ. Wọn ki Orunmila mu irin ẹ̀nẹ kan ki o kan mọlẹ ẹ̀nẹ; nigba ti o fayọ, o ri eṣe lara irin naa. Nigba ti o w’alẹ wo, o wa ripe Okete ni ti o ti ku. Nitori idi eyi ni wọn se ma nkọrin pe:

¹³⁹ The Yoruba concept of Esu i.e.the Devil is quite different from that of the Christian belief. In Yoruba belief, the Devil is conceived as one who does both good and bad depending on the obedience of an individual to the instructions of God. In short, he is the minister of justice.

¹⁴⁰ The oracular text was obtained from the interview conducted with Chief Yemi Elebubon, a renowned Ifa Priest at his residence in Osogbo, Osun State in Nigeria on Thursday, 21st July, 2011.

*“Okete bayi n’iwa re,
O ba ‘fa mulẹ o da’fa;
O ba ‘fa mulẹ o da’fa”.*

Translation:

Okete and Orunmila (Ifa Chief Priest) were friends. But Okete used to divulge his secrets to the people. Orunmila wondered who could be have been divulging his secrets to the people; hence he was advised to change the position of his temple and turn it the other way round. Yet Okete made an underground hole to the very point where he placed the Ifa accessories; so that he would be hearing Orunmila while worshipping in the temple. Orunmila was again advised to get a pointed iron and nailed it downward at the very point where he put the Ifa accessories. When he did that and removed the iron, he noted that it was stained with blood; and when he dug out that portion he found Okete laying already dead there. Hence, the popular lyric:

*“Okete this is how you are,
You entered into a friendship bond with Orunmila and betrayed him;
You entered into a friendship bond with Orunmila and betrayed him.”*

iii. IKA OSUN¹⁴¹

Otufẹ ni Orunmila wa, nigbati Oba Alara ranşe pe e lati wa ba oun d’afa. Wọn si kilọ fun Orunmila lati maşe lọ si Ijero. Şugbon nigbati Orunmila de Ilara, Ajero ranşe sipe ki o wa ba oun d’afa fun igbe aye oun.

Nigbati Orunmila wa ni Ijero, opo Ogun wo lulẹ, Orunmila si nşişelọ fun awon eniyan. Won si nwa alejo ti won yoo fi rubọ lati fi gbe opo Ogun dide. Orunmila nikan si ni alejo. Şugbon obinrin ti won fi Orunmila si ile re ti ore timotimo Orunmila nitori gbogbo ebun ti awon ti won ba şişe lodọ re ni o maa fun obinrin naa ninu re. Nitori naa, Obinrin ti a npe ni iya Olofi, nitori aşo ofi hihun ni işe re; wa mu aja re, o kun ni osun ni eşe osi, o kun fun ni eşe otun lati fi se apeere fun Orunmila, nitori ko gbodo s’oro.

Şugbon nigabti o dabi enipe amin naa ko ye Orunmila, Iya Olofi mu ipin ti o fi nwunşo, o si beresi nkọrin bayi pe:

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

*“Oluko mi, opo Alaro wo l’alẹ ana, oluko mi,
Wọn o fi Ifa gbogun dide l’ọla;
B’ile ba ti mọ ko maa lọ,
Ifa l’ẹru s’oko,
B’oṣeran bi o Ṣ’eran,
B’Ile ba ti mọ,
Ko ya maa lọ.
Oparankan nigbati wọn mulẹ, ẹni t’o ba dale k’ile ma gbe lọ”.*

Bi Orunmila ẹe bọ niyẹn, ti wọn ko fi ri lati fi I rubọ nitori pe Iya Olofi, ọrẹ rẹ ran lọwọ.

Translation:

Orunmila was at a place known as Otufe, when the king of Alara summoned him to come make divination for him. But while he was leaving, Orunmila was warned not to go to Ijero, a nearby town. However, while Orunmila was at Ilara, the king of Ijero also sent for him to come and help him concerning his life with Ifa divination. While Orunmila was at Ijero, the stool or the object of the Ogun (god of iron) fell, but Orunmila, unaware of that development continued with his art of divination for the people.

However, it was discovered that a foreigner would be required as a sacrifice to raise up or restore the object of god of iron (Ogun) that had fallen; and the only foreigner was Orunmila. Meanwhile, Orunmila was housed with a woman with whom he had become a friend, because he used to share with some of the gifts that were given to him by people who came for consultation and assistance from Orunmila. The woman’s work is weaving of traditional dresses called “Aso oke” or “ofi”; and so she is called “Iya Olofi” i.e. “the woman weaver”.

In order to repay Orunmila, the woman took her dog painted it a black colour on the left leg and a white colour on the right leg as a sign to Orunmila, who however, seemed not to

understand the sign.¹⁴² She therefore took her weaving instrument called “Ipin” and started to sing thus:

*“The object of Alaro fell yesterday’s night, my friend;
Orunmila would be sacrificed to restore the god of iron (Ogun) tomorrow,
As soon as it is dawn, you should leave very quickly,
Ifa has property in his farm,
Whatever that may be; when it is dawn,
You should leave very quickly.*

Oparankan when they had a bond, whosoever betrays the other would be swallowed by the earth.”

Thus, Orunmila managed to escape from being made a victim for the restoration of the fallen god of iron at Ijero because Iya Olofi, as a friend saved his life.

iv. ẸFUN IFA¹⁴³

Ẹfun Ifa ati Ifa ṣeṣe gberawon niyawo ni. Ṣugbon Ifa fi aya re silẹ nile lo si irinajo. Awon mejeji wa lo d’ifa bi won o ba tunle ri ara won.

Won ni ki won fi okete rubo. Ẹfun Ifa wa wa okete lo s’oja, Ṣugbon ko le ra nitori aroro re. Lehin naa ni omọ Ifa de lati Akure, ti won si ra okete naa lo. Lehin naa ni Ẹfun Ifa pada lati lo ra okete naa ti won si wi fi fun pe, awon eniyan kan ti ra lo. O wa sa tele won. Nigba ti o ba won, o bi won lere: “Talo ni kera okete naa? Won si dahun pe: “Oga wa loni k’ara”. Ẹfun Ifa tun bi won lere pe: “Tani oga yin?” Won ni ayafi ki o tele awon de’le. Ẹfun Ifa si tele won titi ti won fi de Akure, ti oun ati Ifa si tun wa ri arawon. Nigbati won si f’aju kan arawon tan ni Ẹfun Ifa so fun Ifa pe Opele fi owo kan oun l’omu nigbati Ifa ko s’ile. Orunmila si wi fun Opele re pe yoo maa sin lasan ni lalaini ni eto kan.

Nitori naa ni ko se dara lati d’ale oga eni. Iku ni ere odale. Ṣugbon bi eniyan ba tuba koto peju, o leri idariji gba.

Translation:

¹⁴² This is one traditional means of communication known as “Aroko”. The colours: white and black imply contradiction, and it suggests or portends that danger or trouble is lurking around the corner. Hence, he must run away immediately.

¹⁴³ The oracular text obtained from Chief Yemi Elebubon from an interview conducted with him on 21st July, 2011.

Efun Ifa and Orunmila just got married. But Ifa had to leave his wife and travel. The two of them therefore went to inquire by divination if they would ever see each other again. They were both asked to offer a sacrifice with okete. Efun Ifa went to the market to buy okete but she couldn't buy it because of stinginess. Just as she left Ifa's adherents came and bought the animal.

Efun Ifa later returned to buy the animal (okete), only to be told that some people had already bought it. She therefore pursued them and when she got them, she inquired about who sent them to buy the animal. But the people asked her to follow them to their master. Efun Ifa therefore followed them to Akure, where she eventually met with her husband Ifa. When she met her husband, Efun Ifa reported to Ifa that while he was away, Opele, one of his students or servants touched her breast. There and then, Orunmila cursed Opele that he would remain a servant who would merely be working without having any significant portion in the gains of that work. Hence, it is not good to betray one's master.

Betrayal is a serious offence that attracts death as a reward. But if one is lucky to confess in time before it is too late, it might be possible to avoid such a fatal consequence.

v. ODUA ATI ADUBI¹⁴⁴

Odua Atẹwọrọ pẹlu okun aye fi mọ pọ lati tun aye ẹ. Wọn ni ki won rubo, wọn si rubo ẹbọ wọn si gba. Wọn wa kilọ fun –un pe ki o kiyesara nipa awọn eniyan rẹ ki o maa bọ sinu ikekun. Lati igba naa lọ ni gbogbo nkan-an tuba tuṣe; ti alaafia si wa nibi gbogbo. Inu Odua atẹwọrọ sin dun. Ede ni o maa nlọ gb'emu wa ni gbogbo gba lati oko wa fun Adubi ti oun naa yoo si gbe wa fun Odua. Odua a si maa fi ẹmu naa rubo loorekoore. Alaafia si wa nibi gbogbo; wọn si ngb'adura fun.

Ṣadeede ni Adubi kan pinnu lati ma gb'emu lọ fun Odua mọ. O si ng'emu naa pamọ fun bi oṣu męta gbako. Nigba ti ko si ẹmu ti Odua yoo fi rubo mọ ni wahala ba de, ti ko si alaafia n'ilu mọ. Odua wa ẹ iwadi, wọn ni ko bẹ Laalu lẹwẹ ti yoo fi oju asebi han; ki o wa lọ si oko fun ara rẹ. Nigba ti Odua de oko, o ri Adubi lori igi ope ti o nd'emu bi o ti ma nse tẹlẹ ti o si ngbe pamọ. Odua si gegun fun Adubi pe ki o lẹ mọ'gi. O si ribe.

¹⁴⁴ This oracular text was gathered from a radio programme on Yoruba traditional religion on Ifa, when an Ifa priest was invited for an interview on Ifa oracles. The practice was that the Ifa priest would give a particular Ifa text and analyze it, usually with a story in order to bring out the inherent lessons in the oracular text.

Translation:

Odua Ateworo with Okun aye came together to re-organize the world. They went to find out from Ifa what they needed to do; and they were asked to make a sacrifice. The sacrifice was accepted but with a warning for Odua to beware of his people so as not to fall into a trap. Afterwards, everything went well and there was peace everywhere. Odua himself was very happy. There was a regular supply of palm wine by Adubi to Odua through Ede, which was used for sacrifice; in consequence of which there was peace everywhere, and Adubi was being regularly prayed for.

However, Adubi just suddenly decided to stop the supply of palm wine to Odua by hoarding it for about three months. Consequently, the peace of the land was disrupted and everything turned upside down. Therefore, friendship holds implications for the community.

Adubi, therefore, again sought the help of Ifa by engaging Laalu, i.e. Satan. He was assured that the culprit would be shown to him should he go to the farm. And truly, Adubi was discovered on the palm tree while tapping palm wine so as to go and hide it again; but Odua cursed him to get glued to the palm tree as he was tapping palm wine on it. And it happened just like that.

School of Religion and Theology,
Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social sciences,
University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Private Bag XO1, Scottsville
Pietermaritzburg 3209
South Africa.
15th March, 2011

Dear Respondent,

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Warmest greetings to you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

This is to formally seek your assistance in respect of a doctoral research work being undertaken at the above named university that will require you being interviewed just to gather first hand and experiential information from you for the writing of the project. This is part of the regulatory procedures of the University for this kind of engagement.

The duration of the interview will be determined by the level of the progress, but it will not at all be unnecessarily stressful; at most one hour for a session, and if need be to continue afterwards. Since this has to do with personal experience on friendship and betrayal, which is not at all a political issue or implicating in anyway, I don't see any risk whatsoever that is involved here - except for your time. In addition, the interview will be fixed so as not to affect your private programmes adversely.

By this effort, you will be making yourself a blessing to many other people with your wealth of experiences on issues of life and adding weight to the argument of this work; and eventually share the joy and honour of this undertaking together when it is successfully completed.

There may be the need to use a recorder in the course of the interview in order to allow for clarity and proper grasp of the information. However, such information shall not be used for anything else apart from this project. But the University has the practice of retaining the record in order to authenticate the work of the student concerned just for record purposes.

Again, I would like to assure you that every bit of information received will be jealously protected with an absolute sense of confidentiality. In the event of any information that may need to be incorporated into the research, such shall be well coded to allow for anonymity.

In addition, I want to emphasize that there is NO compulsion in this assignment. The engagement is entirely voluntary, and you are at liberty to withdraw at any point of the interview. You are free to express your mind as you see whatever issue that is raised, as there is no penalty, victimization or punishment of any kind for expressing your mind.

This is to suggest to you that there is nothing to fear about it, and that you are free to make your own decision whether to accept or reject this appeal - but it just an opportunity to make an impact on the world around and of other people as well make your voluntary contributions to the writing of this research work.

Many thanks in anticipation of your favourable treatment of this appeal. Blessing!

Yours Sincerely,

Samuel A. O. Osungbeju (Ven.) Student No: 211524743

School of Religion and Theology

University of KwaZulu- Natal

Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg

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Postal Add.: P.O. Box 28473, Agodi, Ibadan. Nigeria

QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW

Focus: Friendship & Betrayal in the Yoruba cultural understanding and practice.

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you, and do you have a friend?
- 3i. What, in your opinion, makes a true friendship?
 - ii. What is your understanding of betrayal?
- 4i. What is the relationship between friendship and betrayal?
 - ii. How would you explain the action of Judas in Matt. 26: 47-56?
5. Are you aware of the Yoruba concept of *Oreodale*?
6. How far has that concept influenced your relationship with your friends?
 - b. Does friendship has any implication for the community?
7. Do you think it is possible to totally avoid betrayal in friendship?
8. What is the place of repentance in friendship and betrayal?
9. What is the place of forgiveness in friendship and betrayal?
10. What is your personal experience in friendship and betrayal?

Thanks for your patience and corporation. May God bless you in Jesus' name.

Osungbeju, Samuel A. O. (Ven.)
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Student Number: 211524743
September, 2011

APPENDIX – TWO

These are the texts of the views and opinions of the individuals interviewed on the Yoruba cultural concept and practice of friendship and betrayal as contained in the daily living of the Yoruba people of the south Western Nigeria based on the above questions.

*Chief Yemi Elebubon explains the background to the Yoruba concept of friendship as follows:*¹⁴⁵

(i) Nigba iwase ti idore bere, idore sa ba ma nda lori gbolohun imule larin awon ti won ba fe ba arawon d'ore maa ni nitori arin awon mejeji ni idore naa wa ti kosi han si elominran, paapaa nigbati ohun asiri kan ba wa larin won. Nitori naa, ninu idore bee, ile ni won saba ma fi nse eleri imule naa pelu gbolohun pe: *'Ile ore yoo gbe lo'*. Eleyi ni wipe bi awon mejeji ba duro lori imule ore won, ibukun idore yoo wa fun won, sugbon bi won ba dale tabi ye majemu idore won, ile ti se eleri larin awon mejeji ni yoo se idajo. Ile nihin le duro fun awon oriSa ile Yoruba ti won si ni agbara lati se idajo larin iru awon eniyan bee ati ni iru akoko bee.

Iru imule yi maa nni ibura ninu tabi ifi nnkaan- an rubo lowogege bii edidi majemu naa paapaa larin awon ti won baje alagbara bi oja, olola, olowo, awon ode ati beebee lo. Fun bi apere: awon ode a ma fi ibon se ibura. Sugbon nigba miran, iru ibura be le je pe ki awon mejeji bo bata ese won lati fi bura tabi duro lori ile lasan laiwo bata. Sugbon nigba miran idore le ma mu imule nipa ebo tabi itaje sile lowo.

A ri ifesemule asa yi ati iru ipa ti o nko ninu asa oresise, eyi ti o fihan pe idore ni i se pelu awujo ni ni ile Yoruba bi a ti ri ninu asayan oro yi tabi owe yi:

“Epe nii p’ole;

ile dida nii p’ore;

alajobi nii pa iyekan to ba sebi.”

Translation:

From the time immemorial when the friendship began according to Yoruba religious belief, friendship is usually based on a kind of covenant agreement between two people getting involved in friendship, because the friendship is a private choice between the two of them especially when it involves sharing secrets about their lives that must not be known to

¹⁴⁵ The interview was conducted on Thursday, 21st July, 2011 at the residence of Chief Yemi Elebubon (70 years), a renowned Ifa priest and the head of the worshippers of *Orunmila* deity in Osogbo in Osun State of Nigeria on the theme of friendship and betrayal from the Yoruba socio-cultural and religious perspective as embedded in the *Ifa* Oracles.

any other person, but this has effects on the community generally. In this kind of situation, the earth is usually taken to be the witness between the two of them with this statement: “The earth of friendship will favour you,” particularly when the terms of that friendship are sincerely adhered to. Conversely, if there is any breach or betrayal of any form, the one who is guilty is bound to face the consequences to be meted out by the earth. The earth here may stand for the gods who still have influences upon the lives of the people and can adjudicate in such a situation and between such people. Sometimes, this kind of oath-making may involve sacrificing a victim to seal the deal, especially among the powerful like kings, the rich and the nobles. For example, the local hunters who normally swear by kissing their dane guns or remove their shoes and kiss. Or sometimes it may just be that the people will stand on the ground bare footedly in the process. However, ordinarily, it may not involve sacrificial covenant at all.

There is a confirmation of this practice and its implicationsf both the friends and the community at large in the concept of friendship among the Yoruba in this popular maxim:

*“Curse kills a thief;
betrayal kills a friend;
blood relationship kills a family member who does evil.”*

(ii) Lati igba iwa sẹ ni ede ọrẹ ti wa. Ọrẹ da lori ibasepọ laarin eniyan meji – okunrin s’okunrin. To ba ẹ obinrin s’okunrin, o ti di idọrẹ ololufe.

Imule ọrẹ tun se pataki ninu asa ibile Yoruba gege bi iru ọrẹ Ẹṣe kan. Nipa ọrẹ’ọrẹ, idagbasoke, ifara-ẹnilowosoke wa ninu rẹ. Ibi ti o wa ninu ọrẹ Ẹṣe ni ifẹ ẹtan, ifẹ lati fẹ debi giga ni kiakia, ka fi arekereke gbe ẹni to wa niwaju Ẹbu. Wiwa owo ati ipo ni tipatipa lo maa mu idale wa. Awon eniyan a si maa di ẹbi ru esu.

Odiwon ọrẹ ni ki a le r’eni barin, ẹni to le gbe wa lori soke, Ẹṣe iranlowo fun ara-ẹni, fifa ẹnikan lowo soke lati le ran ẹlomiran lowo be gege.

Odale ni i ẹ pelu igba iwase ninu ẹsin ibile, awon Yoruba gbagbo pe inu ile ni won ti da wa, ninu rẹ naa la si pada si, orile ni a nrin. Ori rẹ lati nje, ori rẹ lati nmu. Gbogbo ohun kan ti a nje inu ile lo ti n wa. Nitori naa, awon Yoruba a ma wipe “ile ọrẹ yoo gbe o”. Ẹsin

kristiani ati ti musulumi naa si fi idi eyi mulẹ. Awọn musulumi a tilẹ ma foribale ni akoko ijọsin wọn gege bi eni ti o n juba ile.

Ninu idore ni ile Yoruba, ko gbodo si didale rara. Nigba ti otito ba wa ninu idore, gbogbo nkan a maa lo deede. Sugbon nigbati eniyan ba fe ni nkan-kantipatipa, a ma mu gbigba ona aito lati fowo fa ohun towo eniyan koto. Eniyan le ji omo gbe pelu igbagbo pe eniti omo ba dagba si lowo ni yoo mo gege obi re.

Ile dida ni ki eniyan meji ti won je ore ara won ki enikan ti o mo alebu enikeji re ki o wa bere si so nipa alebu ore fun awon elomi lati yepere re. *“Isu yi ko jinna ki s’enu onibata loye ki a ti gbọ.”* Nigba ti isu ko jina se lo ye ko ge igi bata si wewe lati fi se. Eni to ba paniyan, ko ye fun ore re lati so asiri re fun elomiran nipa ilana idore in ile Yoruba. Idale a ma bore je – bi ile dida ba wo arin won, ko le ri bakan naa mo. Aye ilaja wa, Sugbon ore naa ko le ri bi ti tele mo. Bi ki ore kan ba fun iyawo ore re loyun, iru iwabaje bayi ko se gbagbe laelae.

Ore sise ni pe ki iwa odale ma waye paapaa. Iru iwa odale yi laarin Awolowo ati Akintola lo mu wahala ba oro oselu nile wa. Gbogbo iran lo ni asa ti won; awon larubawa maa nwe lawani nitori oorun ati ategun ti nfe ekuru si oju ati enu. Yoruba ma do bale fun agba pe oun juba k’oun na le dagba.

Fun Judasi, ife owo lo mu ko dale oga re. Awon Yoruba gbagbo pe Eshu ati owo lo ji njorin; nitorina nigbati Judasi dale Jesu tan, eri okan re ko je kogba dun. Ohun to sele si Judasi wa ni ibamu pelu didale- ore ni ile Yoruba nitori ile ti lanu gba eje re.

Iri mi lori ore si se da lori ore mi to lo se tanadi fun mi lati gba itesiwaju si kilasi miran lehin ti o ti lo fi kaadii mi han awon alase pe maaki ti mo gba ko kun ojuwon lati gba igbega si kilasi miran. Sugbon won le ore mi naa kuro ni ile iwe nigbehin ni nitori o tun wu iru iwa be laarin awon oluko meji; eyi ti o fihan pe oresise ni ipa lori awujo ni ile Yoruba.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ This interview was conducted with Oloye Supo Kosemani, (80years, a Yoruba elder and expert in Yorubs culture), on Thursday, 9th February, 2012 in Ibadan. Oyo State. Nigeria.

Translation:

The word, “friendship” has been from the time immemorial. Friendship anchors on relationship between two people, which can be a man and a man. If it is a woman and a man, then that may involve a love relationship.

Covenantal friendship is one important aspect of friendships in Yoruba land. Friendship is about progress, support and wellbeing of each other. The dangers of friendship are deceit, inordinate ambitions, hypocrisy, love of money, positions; even though people would normally blame the devil for all these shortcomings in friendship.

The basis of friendship in Yoruba land is to be able to find someone to share one’s burden with, someone who can assist to raise one up in such as way as to be able to assist others.

Betrayal has been from the time immemorial like friendship itself. The place of the earth in friendship according to the traditional religious belief is that man was made out of the earth and into it he shall return at death. In addition, we walk about on the earth and do all sorts of things on it - eating, drinking, etc. All that we eat, and drink come from the earth. Hence, the Yoruba often say: “The earth of friendship will favour you”.

All the above Yoruba beliefs about the earth are confirmed even by the Christian and Islamic religious teachings. Friendship in the Yoruba context is opposed to betrayal generally. When there is faithfulness, everything is well with friendship, but betrayal makes one loses the sense of decency and faithfulness. Betrayal is to divulge the secret of one’s friend to another person or persons. A Yoruba saying goes thus: “The yam that is not properly done should not be announced by a bata drummer”, which implies that even when a friend commits a murder, the secret should not be divulged by his close friend according to the Yoruba concept of friendship. Yet this does not encourage evil practices in the context of friendship. Although there is a room for reconciliation in case a betrayal has occurred, the friendship may, however, not remain the same. For example, if someone impregnates his friend’s wife, it will definitely create a serious enmity or wound that may not easily heal up in the heart of the betrayed friend.

The only way to safeguard friendship is to ensure that there is no betrayal at all. We witnessed a serious political conflict in the old Western region of Nigeria, because of such a betrayal of trust between Late Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Late Chief S. L. Akintola.¹⁴⁷

Every tribe has its own cultural practices, just as the Yoruba would normally prostrate before an elder as a sign of respect; this cultural peculiarity also reflects in the Yoruba system of friendship.

Judas must have betrayed Jesus following his love of money by allowing himself to be tricked by the devil into committing such a heinous act against his master. The Yoruba believe that the spirit of money and the devil are walking together. And being troubled by a guilty conscience after he had committed the crime, he did not escape judgment as the earth required his blood for being a traitor. This agrees with the Yoruba belief on retribution.

My personal experience on friendship has to do with a friend who almost hindered my promotion to the next class during my primary school days. He tricked me to collect my card and went to complain that my mark in a particular subject was below what was required as pass mark for promotion. Although he did not succeed in the long run, I felt highly embarrassed by his action, which shows that friendship has a general social implication among the Yoruba.

Interestingly, he was caught in the webs of divine judgment as he was sent out of the school eventually for an unruly behaviour toward two of our teachers afterwards.

(iii) Ẹni mejì tí wọ̀n jọ̀ ní àṣẹ̀pọ̀ tó dà lórí ifẹ́. Ọ̀rẹ́ sísẹ̀ a máa wá nípá bíbá ara- ẹ̀ni Ẹ̀rẹ̀ bí ọ̀mọ̀dẹ̀. Ọ̀rẹ́ Ẹ̀sísẹ̀ a máa wá nínú ẹ̀bí, Ẹ̀gbọ̀n ọ̀rẹ́ Ẹ̀sísẹ̀ kí Ẹ̀dandan nínú ẹ̀bí. Àwọ̀n ọ̀rẹ́ kó ọ̀n dandan kí wọ̀n jẹ́ ẹ̀bí.

Ipo a ma Ẹ ilana iru ọ̀rẹ́ tí eniyan ní, Ẹ̀gbọ̀n nígbá miran ipo kó sọ iru ọ̀rẹ́ tí eniyan gbọ̀dọ̀ ní. Orisirisi ọ̀nà ní wọ̀n gba ní ilẹ̀ Yoruba lati sọ̀rẹ̀: agbalagba le ba ọ̀mọ̀dẹ̀ s'ọ̀rẹ́.

¹⁴⁷ Chief Obafemi Awolowo and chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola were very good friends, and they belonged to the same political party - Action Group, until trouble started when Chief S.L. Akintola was believed to have betrayed Chief Obafemi Awolowo by taking over the premiership of the then Western Region from him when the later went to contest the federal office. He refused to vacate the office when Chief Awolowo returned to Western Region. This led to a serious indifference between the duo that led a political disturbance for the region.

Imulẹ ninu ọrẹ sise da lori aṣiri to tayọ oju ọrẹ lasan. Imulẹ be a si maa mu adehun tabi ohun aṣiri nla lọwọ. Imulẹ nipa ki awon ọrẹ mejeji bu erupe sinu omi, ki won gbe mu gege bi edidi ọrẹ won tabi ki won fi abe bu ara won lara lati mu eje naa.

Ilana ọrẹ dida ni ile Yoruba ko faye gba didale rara, Ṣugbon nitiori ailera awon elomiran won le dale ọrẹ won. Laye atijo awon ọrẹ le fi ohun aṣiri pamọ saarin ara won. Bi ki enikan fe iyawo miran pamọ ki iyawo tile ma mo, tabi ki elomiran le fi nkan-kan pamọ si owo ọrẹ re. Fun apeere, baba mi fi ohun silẹ fun aburo re pe ki o ta koko ti oun ko pamọ lati fi san owo ile mi nitori o fura pe oun fe ku. Ṣugbon nigba ti baba ku, awon egbon mi ni awon yo ta koko naa lati fi se inawo oku re, sugbon aburo baba mi ni rara nitori kii se ohun ti baba mi so niyen. O si ta koko naa, o si fi san owo ile mi.

Didale lewu loṣoṣo ni le Yoruba. Ipa ti ile ninu ọrẹ nipe ile ni eleri laarin awon mejeji. Bi enikan ba dale, ile ni o se idajo – won a saba ma lo eleyi ninu ege imule miran. Ore Imule ko faye silẹ fun titu asiri ọrẹ eni nigba ti o pa eniyan. Ṣugbon fun idi miran ọrẹ le tu asiri ọrẹ re to pa eniyan. Ṣugbon ipaniyan ko si ninu koko idore ni le Yoruba. Idore larin awom eniyan meji ni ipa ti o nko lori awujo ni ile Yoruba.

O seese ki atunse wa larin ọrẹ meji to ti dale ara won. O seese ki ọrẹ won si tun danmoran bi won ba kiyesi koko ọrẹ won. Nitori ilana isin ibile Yoruba fi aye silẹ fun idariji bi o tile se pe awon kan wa ti o se lodi si iru ilana yi nitori awon Yoruba gbagbo ninu idajo lehin aye. Oga ati omose le ba ara won sore paapaa ti imule ba wa larin won lati ran ara won loto.

Iha kan naa ni Jesu ko si gbagbo awon omọ-ehin re, Ṣugbon Judasi je olojukokoro, ife owo lo mu ki o fi Jesu han; Ko si ronupiwada ko to lo pokunso. Ibasepo wa larin pipokunso ti Judasi pokunso ati iru idajo ti o le wa s'ori odale ọrẹ ni le Yoruba.¹⁴⁸

Translation:

Friendship is about two people who are involved in a relationship that is based on love. It can sometimes begin like a play group or children playing together and may later blossom into full-fledged friendship. In my opinion, there can also be a kind of parental

¹⁴⁸ This interview was conducted with Mrs. Moradehun Oladapo (68years), on Thursday, 9th February, 2012 in Ibadan. Oyo State. Nigeria.

influence in friendship. Friendship is not necessarily limited to the family circle. It is therefore not necessary that friends should be members of the same family. It is also true that while status, position and money are strong factors in friendship, they do not always determine one choice of friendship in Yoruba land.

The Yoruba concept has many sides to it: the old can be a friend to the young depending on the understanding and vice versa. However, covenantal or ritual friendship is usually stronger than ordinary. The former is usually based on ritualistic oath; swearing with sand and blood while the latter, though also strong, does not necessarily involve any ritual.

Friendship in Yoruba land encourages loyalty, but betrayal cannot be absolutely ruled out in friendship due to human frailty. Friends will normally share their secrets - like having a concubine outside the matrimonial home, properties, money, business dealings, etc. A friend can keep something vital with his friend without anyone else knowing about it. For example, my late father before his death instructed his younger brother that the cocoa he had kept in the store should be sold to pay my school fees because he had the premonition of death. But after his death, my elder brothers wanted to spend the proceeds for his burial ceremony. However, his younger brother insisted on the instruction of my father, sold the cocoa and paid my school fees. Betrayal is thus a dangerous thing in Yoruba land.

The place of the earth in friendship among the Yoruba is that it stands as a witness between two friends in friendship ties; and thus it functions as a judge. Friendship between two people has implications on the society generally among the Yoruba.

Reconciliation is possible in case of betrayal and they could get on again if only they have learnt their lessons and would be seriously committed to their bond of their friendship. The Yoruba traditional religion allows for forgiveness in case of betrayal if the betrayer repents.

Jesus generally treated his disciples the same way as his friends, but Judas was covetous and so he was caught in the webs of his love of money which led him to sell his master into death. But then, he did not repent before committing suicide. There is, therefore, a correlation between Judas' suicide action and the kind of retributive judgment that is associated with betrayal in the Yoruba context of friendship according to the judgment of the earth as a witness.

(iv) Idore nile Yoruba tumo si eniyan meji ti won finukonu, ti won le fi oro lo ara won. Ore siSe le je laarin awon ti won je egbe tabi laarin awon ti won ju ra won lo. Ooto inu lo Se pataki ninu ore siSe nile Yoruba.

Idore duro lori ki a renifehinti, eni ti a le satog nigma isoro. Ore a si maa dun ju iyekan lo nigba miran. Ore wa lorisirisi; sugbon ni ile Yoruba ore nini ko da lori ojo ori tabi ipo tabi esin. Ni atijo ri, ore sise bere lati ibi ojo ori, sugbon awon kan summo ara won timotimo nipa siSe ore ti ko da lori ojo ori. Eyi a si maa farahan nipa jijehun po, rira aso po ati iru awon iwa be.

Didale ni ki ore ti o ti mo asiri ore re ki o wa lo gbekin beboje, ki o Se tanadi ore re tabi Se idena ire ore re.

Ohun ti maa npa awon ore po bere lati ori fifa aya; ti ore ba wa gbekin lo ba ibe je, idale ni. Bi ore kan ba wa ti ko le Se, ti o si wa lo so fun aya afesona re pe okobo ni ore oun, o ti dale re. Oniruuru ona ni ore ngba dale arawon loni paapaa lori owo, ipo, oro, dukia, ati bebeelo.

Ona kan ti didale le gba je itewogba ni nigba ti ko bamu iwa omoluwabi lowo tabi ti o fi asiri iwa buburu han. Didale a saba maa mu iku dani nigbati iru idore be bamu imule lowo. Bi orin Ifa pe, *“Okete ba yi ni iwa re, o ba fa mule o da fa”*.

Bi enikan ninu won ba ku, o seeSee ki ona abayo ma wa. Sugbon bi o ba Se idore lasan ni, o seeSee la ti Se ilaja lati so okun ore won pada. Sugbon oju apa ko le jo oju ara mo bi ti atijo. Idore ni ile Yoruba ni ipa lori awujo.

Jesu ati Judasi je ore timotimo bi a ti ri laarin won pe Judasi ni akapo awon omoghin. Ojukokoro owo lo mu Judasi fi Jesu han pelu ero pe Jesu ko ni Se mu fun won. Sugbon nigbati won mu Jesu tan iwa idale Judasi farahan.

Ninu ero temi o dabi enipe Judasi ti yan lati fi Jesu han, ile si gba fun. Mo ni ore kan ti a jo Se omode sugbon o saaju mi wo yunifasiti. O si tete ri ise ti o si tun tira moto; sugbon emi si nfi iwe eri onimewa mi siSe. Sadede lode lojo kan lati soro si mi pe bi okun ore o ba ja, ko ja nitori oun ko le maa gbe moto oun fun mi ki oun ma si ma ri moto temi naa. Nigba naa,

ede Geḗsi lo ku kin tun Ṣe, oṛe si gba mi niyanju lati tun Ṣe ki n si wọ yunifasiti ọdun naa dandan. Nitori oṛo re, mo si se idanwo naa, mo si wọ yunifasiti.

Bi o tilẹ jẹ wipe ẹru ba oṛe mi pe oun gbe iru igbese be, Ṣugbon mo dupe pe o jasi ipenija rere fun mi nitori mo ni tesiwaju.¹⁴⁹

Translation:

Friendship in Yoruba land means two people who share close relationship, and so share their secrets together as confidants. Friendship can be between two equals or different in status; honesty is therefore the live wire of friendship.

Friendship has to do with finding someone to stand by him; someone who can assist when it is very hard. Friendship sometimes pays off better than kinship. There are different kinds of friendship. But friendship in Yoruba land has nothing to do with age and religion. In the time past, age was indeed a condition for consideration in friendship, but experiences have shown today that friendship is no longer being guided by age. Many people are into friendship today but are not necessarily age mates. Friendship between two people has an impact on the society in Yoruba land.

Betrayal is simply to divulge the secret of one's friend to others. There are many issues that can inspire secrecy in friendship, ranging from issue of women, money, positions, and properties to bodily sicknesses or weaknesses like impotency. It is therefore a negation of the friendship bond to divulge any of these secrets to anyone outside of the friendship ties. However, the only condition, to me, when betrayal may be justified is when an action negates a true sense of friendship and decorum.

In most cases, if a relationship is a ritualistic or covenantal friendship, betrayal may be very dangerous, i.e. having serious adverse consequences as expressed in the popular Ifa song about the mouse that betrayed Ifa and suffered the consequence. In case one of the two friends is dead, reconciliation might be very difficult, but in the case of ordinary friendship, the situation might not be so complex.

Jesus and Judas, like all other disciples were close friends, and Judas was even the Treasurer of the Group. Covetousness or love of money must have pushed Judas into

¹⁴⁹ This interview was conducted with Mr. Foluso Olomola (62 years, a Retired custom officer) on Wednesday 8th February, 2012 in Ibadan. Oyo State. Nigeria.

becoming a betrayer of Jesus, his friend and master. He probably thought that Jesus would be invincible for his enemies to arrest him, but he resolved on suicide when it dawned on him that Jesus would not resist the arrest.

In my personal opinion, it is like Judas had been predestined for that assignment and the earth approved it.

I had a friend many years back, who got into the university before me while I was working. He just surfaced one day to scold me and challenged me to find a way of making progress, i.e. going to university, otherwise he would no longer allow me the use of his car. Although my friend later realized that he was too harsh and hard on me the way he spoke to me, his challenge that day marked a turning point in my life as I later succeeded in making my papers and gained an admission into a reputable university that year. The seeming betrayal was indeed a blessing in disguise for me.

(v) Oṛẹ sise pe meji – oṛẹ ọkunrin oṛẹ obinrin. Ainitẹlorun, ojokokoro ati beẹ beẹ lọ le mu idalẹ wa. Oṛẹ sise ko da lori oṣo ori; sugbọn bi ilara, ainifẹ ati ara gbibona ba wa larin awọn oṛẹ meji le fa idalẹ. Ohun miran to tun le fa idalẹ ni ki ẹnikan ma wa oṛẹ lọ ni gbogbo igba, Ẹugbọn ki oṛẹ keji ki o ma wa ore rara. Oresise ni ile Yoruba ni ipa ti o nko ninu awujo lapapo bi o tile je pe larin awon eniyan meji ni.

Ipa meji lo wa ninu oṛẹ ẸiṢe niṣe Yoruba: oṛẹ imulẹ ati oṛẹ lasan; Ẹugbọn bakanna ni ipa oṛẹẸiṢe niṣe Yoruba. Idalẹ wa larin awọn oṛẹ imulẹ, bi o tiwa laarin awọn oṛẹ lasan. Bi awọn oṛẹ kan wa ti wọn niṣe ara wọn ti ọkan si dalẹ ẹnikeji, sugbọn ti wọn ko ba ti ku, wọn si le Ẹe ilaja laarin ara wọn; nigba ti awọn mejeji ba sọ ohun ti o ndun wọn lọkan.

Iru awọn oṛẹ ti mo fẹ ni awon oṛẹ ti a le jojumọ maa ba ara wa Ẹe ohun rere; ti a o ma wara wa. Judasi jẹbi idalẹoṛẹ nitori pe oun ni o fi Jesu han.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ This interview was conducted with Mrs. Abeke Martins (56 years, a trader) on Wednesday, 8th February, 2012 in Ibadan. Oyo State. Nigeria.

Translation:

Friendship among the Yoruba is of two types: friendship among men and friendship among women. Lack of satisfaction, covetousness and the like are usually responsible for betrayal. Friendship among the Yoruba is not based on age; but if such friendship is characterized by envy and lack of love, there is likely to be a betrayal. Another thing that can cause betrayal is for a friend to be visiting his friend regularly and for that gesture not to be reciprocated by the other friend even once. Friendship has its roles in the collective wellbeing of the community, even though it is a relationship between two people.

There are two sides to friendship among the Yoruba: covenantal and ordinary friendships; but the implications of friendship remain the same. There is a betrayal in both aspects of friendships. If there are two friends who love each other and one betrays the other, if they are still alive they can reconcile by resolving their differences.

The kind of friends I desire are such friends that we will be able to work together for our wellbeing and progress; visiting each other regularly. Judas was guilty of betrayal because he actually sold away his master, Jesus.

(vi) Oṛẹ sise ni ifinu han ara-ẹni lati igba ọmọde ti o fẹrẹ dabi ẹbi paapaa nigbati oṛẹ naa ba gbilẹ daadaa. Oṛẹ a si ma fẹrẹ dara ju mọlẹbi gan-an nigba miran.

Oṛẹ imulẹ ni nini asiri laarin ẹni bi ẹgbẹ awo ti wọn ko gbọḍo sọ sita. Iru imulẹ bẹ a maa mu ibura dani bi ki awọn mejeji bọ bata silẹ ki wọn si duro lori ilẹ lasan gẹgẹ bi ẹlẹri tabi ki wọn fi ọbẹ bu ara wọn lara titi eje yoo fi jade ti wọn si pọn la lati fi se edidi majemu wọn.

Idọrẹ ko fayegba idalẹ laarin oṛẹ. Oṛẹ daadaa gbọḍo da lori otitọ. Iru aṣiri to maa nwa laarin oṛẹ le jẹ lori iṣẹ, owo tabi owo sise. Bi wọn ba dijo ṣeso lati lowo ti wọn si ti mulẹ ki ẹnikan ma se mọ nipa rẹ, ẹni to ba dalẹ nipa yẹn wahala ni. Idalẹ ni dida majemu ti eniyan fi pamọ sọwọ oṛẹ rẹ, ti o si mu wahala wa fun.

Oṛẹ ṣiṣe ko da lori ipo tabi ohun ti eniyan jẹ, ṣugbọn oṛẹ ṣiṣe larin awọn eniyan meji to ba jẹ ẹgbẹ a ma rọrun. Idọrẹ ni ilẹ Yoruba ko f'aye gba didalẹ oṛẹ koda to ba mu ipaniyan dani. Ilana idọrẹ Yoruba lagbara debi pe asiri bẹ ko gbọḍo tu lati ẹnu oṛẹ.

Ilaja le wa lehin ti oṛẹ ba ti dalẹ ara wọn. Ṣugbọn oṛẹ wọn le ma dan mọran mọ nitori wọn le ma fi inu tan r'awọn mọ.

Emi ati ọrẹ kan ti nbara bọ lati ọpọlọpọ ọdun titi di oni nitori a npa ilana idọrẹ wa mo, bi o tilẹ jẹ pe ko si aṣiri ohun ikọkọ kankan larin wa bi ko ẹ ki a jọ maa ran ara wa lọwọ. Gbedeke idọrẹ naa ni ifẹ pe ki wọn le maa ran ra wọn lọwọ lati wa itẹsiwaju tabi ọna abayo si iṣoro arawọn.

Ohun ti Judasi ẹ si Jesu ku diẹ kato, nitori oun ati Jesu ti jijo jẹ ti wọn si ti jijo mu. Ojukokoro lo mu ki o ẹ ohun ti o ẹ, ti o si lodi si aṣa idọrẹ nilẹ Yoruba.¹⁵¹

Translation:

Friendship among the Yoruba has to do with sharing each other secrets or depending on each other from the youthful age and especially when the friendship has taken a firm root. Friendship is sometimes even stronger than kinship among the Yoruba.

Covenantal friendship is like a secret cult whose secrets must not be known to non-members. Such a friendship is usually based on a oath, like the two of them putting off their shoes and standing on bare ground as a witness to their oath; or cutting themselves with a sharp object for them to lick their blood as a seal of the oath of their friendship.

Friendship among the Yoruba, ordinarily, does not permit betrayal. Good friendship is hinged on sincerity or faithfulness. The kind of secrets between two friends among Yoruba may be on their work, money or business. If they engage in rituals to make money, it should not be divulged in order to avert negative consequences. Betrayal is simply divulging the secrets of one's friend to another person in such a way as to harm him or which can adversely affect his life.

Friendship in Yoruba context is not necessarily based on equality; although friendship among equals is considered the most convenient. Friendship does not allow that one betrays his friend even when it involves a murder.

There can be reconciliation between the two friends whose friendship got strained by reason of betrayal, but their friendship may not be as strong as before because they may no longer be able to trust each other as before.

Judas was guilty of betrayal against his friend, Jesus, following his personal weakness. It would seem to me that he fulfilled a prophetic role.

¹⁵¹ The interview was conducted with Mr. Joshua Towoju (65years, a Driver) on Wednesday, 8th February, 2012 in Ibadan, Nigeria.

I have had a friendship for several years now which has been sustained till today because we try to keep the principles of our friendship; even through there are no secrets attached to it. More than that we try to help each other to proffer solutions to our problems and to find a way forward in life.

The basis of friendship in Yoruba context is love geared towards assisting each other for progress and for finding solutions to challenges of life.

Judas' action in relation to his betrayal of Jesus leaves much to be desired- it's a typical case of betrayal of a close friend with whom he had dined and wined. Judas Iscariot must have been prompted by a covetous spirit which runs contrary to the spirit of friendship according to the Yoruba belief.

(vii) Ọrẹ Ẹ̀ṣe pin si orisirisi – meṭa meṣin ọrẹ dun mọ ọtọ l'ọrẹ tootọ, ọtọ l'ọrẹ dabeyankọ. Iru awon re miran ni ọrẹ ti a pade nibi ayeye; ọrẹ ti a jijo bere lati igba ewe titi a fi di loṣolaya ti won a si b'ara d'ojọ ogbo.

Ọrẹ le je lati eya kan si ekeji ti o si le dun ju ọrẹ larin awon eya kanna lo. Ohun kan ti ọrẹ le jere loṣo ara won ni lati fi imọ kun imọ, iranlowo nipa ti owo, kiko ile fun ọrẹ tabi ki ọrẹ ra mọto fun ọrẹ re tabi ki o da ọrẹ lokoowo. Oresise ni ile Yoruba ma nko ipa pataki lori awujo lapapo.

Ọrẹ a maa dale ara won. Ninu iriri mi, ọrẹ kan ran ọrẹ lowo lati se inawo ikomojade. Ọrẹ naa ko si da owo re pada. O si tun pa ọrẹ naa ku raurau. Ọrẹ ko gbodo dale ara won ninu ohunkohun to wu kole Ẹ̀le; koda nigba ti o ba je mọ ipaniyan.

Ipa ti ile ko ni asa idore nile Yoruba ni pe o duro bi eleri larin awon ọrẹ meji ti won bo mule lori ohun asiri idore to wa larin won. Nitori wipe ori ile laduro le lori gege ti orun si wa loke gege bi eleri. Eni ti ile ba binu si o ti ku ni yen. Ọrẹ odale ni eniyan ti a fi ohun asiri le lowo ti o si so fun elomiran yatọ si ọrẹ re.

Ọrẹ ti da emi naa leri, nitori a jijo maa nfi asiri ara wa han si ara wa. Nigba ti mo loyun mo so fun ọrẹ mi pe mo loyun. Sugbon n ko so fun eni to je oga wa, mo si pinnu lati lo si isimi odun meji

Awon ore mi miran ma nwa wo mi sugbon ore mi ko wa wo mi, sugbon oun naa ti loyun lai so fun mi. Emi ni oga ninu awon marun to je obinrin to wa eka ibi ise wa. Gbogbo awa obinrin to wa ni eka naa lo loyun si owo kan de bi pe won fe ti eka ti wa pa. Ariyanjiyan wa wa lori eniti o koko loyun sugbon nko so fun won ati oga wa ayafi ore mi nikan lo mo. Sugbon oga wa wa ngbe ore mi lehin pe oun lo ko loyun, nitori pe emi ko so fun nigba ti mo loyun, Sugbon ore mi ko jowo pe emi lo ko loyun.

Ati olowo ati talaka lo le s'ore po. Bi olowo ba ba olowo nikan sore, o le je ntiori owo re. Sugbon owo wa loto ore wa loto nitori talaka miran ni ebun ogbon to le je iranlowo fun olowo ni akoko idanwo.

Oga ati omose le s'ore po. Fun apere emi ati Baba Obenbe ti o to baba fun mi ni a da bi ore si ara wa – won maa ngba mi nimiran, emi naa a si ma gba won nimiran.¹⁵²

Translation:

There are many sides to friendship. Three and four friends are the best - there are honest friends and there are friends for just a moment. Friends could be made at ceremonies, and friends can grow together as playmates from childhood. Friendship could be across tribal lines and be more rewarding even than friendship within the same tribal lines. One basic thing that promotes friendship is what friends stand to benefit from each other. This benefit is multi-dimensional, such as, adding to their experience and knowledge, assistance in any form, especially financially, material gains like car, house, and setting up of a business. Friendship has a significant impact on the community in Yoruba land.

Friends can betray each other. I have seen a situation whereby a friend assisted her friend in the naming ceremony of her child with a promise to refund her money after the ceremony. But she failed to honor her promise; and she even did the worst by killing the woman, her benefactor or friend.

Generally, it is against the norm in the context of Yoruba friendship to betray one's friend in any circumstance.

The place of the earth in Yoruba friendship is that it stands as a witness between the two friends in any friendship whatsoever. This is because we all walk about and stand on the

¹⁵² This interview was conducted with Mrs. Hamed (56years, a trader) on Friday, 10th February, 2012 in Ibadan. Oyo State. Nigeria.

earth (ground) and the heaven is also above as a witness. The wrath of the earth usually results in a kind of mysterious death of a betrayer. A betrayer is someone who is not trustworthy for divulging the secrets of his friend to another person in such a way as it can affect him negatively.

I have been betrayed by a friend while in public service. When I became pregnant, I did not tell our boss within our department except my friend. Then I decided to go on two years maternity leave as a sectional head. My friend did not visit me while at home, and I later got to know that she had also conceived. When I left for my maternity leave she had also become pregnant, but she did not tell me but she told our boss. And it was like that all of us five women in my section became pregnant during that period, and the section would have been closed and all of us laid off because of the resultant conflict about who became pregnant first. Our boss took sides with my friend that she became pregnant first because she informed him. But my friend knew that I was the first to become pregnant only that I did not inform our boss. But my friend did not tell the truth which almost cost me my job.

Status or age difference does not constitute a barrier in the Yoruba context of friendship. Although friendship on the basis of same status or class, money or age may be more convenient, such factors do not hinder friendship generally in Yoruba land. This is because a poor man can be a blessing to his rich friend with his wealth of experience or fountain of wisdom. Similarly, an apprentice can be a friend of his master if there is an understanding between them, just as I am to Pa Obembe who is old enough to be my father. He enjoyed listening to me as I have always benefited from his wealth of experience and fatherly advice.

(viii) Idore duro lori ibaṣepo laarin awon eniyan meji ti won ba ara won ni adehun. Idore duro lori iranlowo ti enikan le ri lowo enikeji. Sise anfaani fun ara eni. Idore le je larin awon ti won jo j'egbe, ũgbon nigba miran idore ko mu ipo tabi ojo ori lowo.

Odiwon ore ni ile Yoruba ni ife tooto ati igbekere laarin awon ore meji. Nitiro ore sise da lori ona lati ran ara-eni lowo tabi tun aye-eni se, ki ise ojulari ore o denu tabi nitiro nkan-an teniyan yoo ri je. Idore ni ile Yoruba ni ipa lori alaafia awujo.

Idorẹ duro lori majemu laarin eniyan meji bi ẹnikan ba yese lori adehun yi; idale lo se yen. Nitori naa, didale le waye nitori ilara tabi ife owo afeju. Ipa ti oresise ni ile Yoruba nko l'awujo lapapo se pataki lopolopo.

Akawe idore laarin Jesu ati Judasi jo r'awon gan-an nipa idore ni Ile Yoruba. Asepo to lagbara wa laarin Jesu ati awon omohin nipa wole-wode ati biba eni jeun. Judasi dabi eni ti o ni ojokoro owo; nitori naa o see see pe nipa aikiyesaya nipa ojokoro re to mu ko se Jesu. Nitori naa Judasi jebi didale ore.

Ona kan t'eniyan le gba bo lowo didale ore ni paapaa nigbati ẹnikan ba jebi esun ipaniyan, o see see ki ore iru eni be jewo fun awon eniyan nipa eni to paniyan, bi o ti le je ore re ni. Nitori naa, ko ye ki idale wa ninu ore sise, ayafi ti iru idore be ko ba ba iwa omoluwabi mu.

Awon ti o le je ohun asiri laarin awon ore meji po lo yanturu. Fun apeere, okobo ti ko le ba obinrin se, ta bi eni to se ogun owo tabi ti owo kan pa won po ti eniketa ko gbodo gbodo rara.

Nigbati idore ba mu idale lowo ijanba le sele laarin ore. Nitori owe Yoruba kan so pe: "Ile dida lo npa ore ibi si se nipa iyekan eni to ba nse ibi". Sugbon ahon ati enu ma nja ati pe bi a ba si nja bi ki a ku ko, ore le dariji ara won. Ore le dariji ara won sugbon o see see ki idore won ma lo deede mo. Nitori naa, ile dida lewu ninu idore ni ile Yoruba. Ile si ni agbara lati gbesan lara eni to ba dale paapaa laarin awon ti won ba ba ara won mule.

Ninu iriri temi gege bi oluṣo aguntan eniti a jijo peropo lati ra awon nkan –an to ye fun ilo ile alufa titun ti a fe gba, ja mi kule ni ipade nibi ti a ti fe pinnu lori oro naa. Gbogbo awon to ye ki o gbe lehin mi se ni won tako mi nigba ti eni ti a jijo pamoran po ko tile dasi oro naa rara. O je ijakule ati ohun edun nla fun mi ti mo si fe le ma bomi loju.¹⁵³

Translation:

Friendship anchors on relationship between two people who are committed to each other. Friendship is about assisting each other towards fulfillment in life. Friendship may be between two equals or those different in status. In other words, friendship, especially among the Yoruba, is not necessarily determined by age, status, position and sex.

¹⁵³ This interview was conducted with the Rev. Olufemi Ojeniyi (38years, a clergy) on Tuesday, 7th February, 2012 in Ibadan. Oyo State. Nigeria.

The basis of friendship in Yoruba land is genuine love, faithfulness and trust between two friends. This is because the basic aim of friendship is to seek the wellbeing of one's friend and to assist him to make a progress in life. Friendship should be devoid of deceit and selfish interest. Friendship has its role on the wellbeing of the community at large. The place of friendship among the Yoruba regarding the general wellbeing of the society is quite significant.

Friendship is often characterized by agreement between two people. If anyone therefore fails to honour that agreement, he will be seen to have betrayed his friend. Betrayal may be due to a number of reasons, such as envy, love of money, inordinate ambitions, etc.

The example of Jesus-Judas friendship fits into the Yoruba context of friendship. It is quite clear that Jesus and Judas, like other disciples, were very close friends, and that intimacy would explain why Judas was the Treasurer of the Group. But Judas has been seen to be a very covetous person; a weakness that must have led him to betray his friend and master.

The only way to prevent betrayal is that friends should be conscious and committed to their friendship dealings, diligently and faithfully. The Yoruba concept of friendship is generally opposed to betrayal in any form; even when it involves murder it is not allowed that a friend should be the one to reveal the secret of such action. However, he may try to find a better way to handle the situation. But then, it is likely that someone under the influence of a greater religious conviction may be moved to tell the truth in spite of the bond of friendship.

There are a thousand and one secrets which friends try to keep among themselves that must not be divulged to others outside the friendship ties. These may include: sexuality like someone who is impotent, homosexuality, ritual money, properties, membership of secret societies, etc. If any of these secret issues is divulged, it amounts to betrayal and is punishable. However, there may be room for reconciliation on the basis of the popular Yoruba maxim: "Tongue and teeth sometimes fight, which is usually quickly resolved". Again it is often said among the Yoruba that: "When we are quarrelling, we don't intend that any one should die." Hence, we should look for a way of solving our differences amicably, especially if the betrayal has not resulted in the death of the betrayer. It is, therefore, possible that the betrayed can forgive the betrayer, except that the friendship may not be as healthy and intimate as it used to be. Consequently, betrayal is a dangerous thing in the Yoruba

concept of friendship, because it can kill through a violent reaction of the earth which is vengeful.

In my experience as a priest, I worked with someone, and we both agreed together on the renovation of the Pastor's Lodge as well as purchase certain essential items for the use of the new pastor to be engaged. But I felt betrayed because when the matter came up for discussion with the Authorities of the church, my friend kept quiet as if he knew nothing about the matter and the request was eventually turned down.

(ix) Ni ilẹ Yoruba, bi eniyan ti ngbe aye ti o si ndagba ni o ni ọrẹ ninu awọn alajọserepo ti wọn ba ara wọn mu nipa eyi ti wọn di ọrẹ ti wọn si nsọ inu ara wọn fun ara wọn; ki wọn si maa yago fun awọn nkan-an ti wọn ko ba fẹ.

Oniruru anfaani lo wa ninu ọrẹṣiṣe. Nigba ti ẹnikan ba rẹwesi, ọrẹ rẹ le gba niyanju lati tujuka ninu iporuru ọkan. Riranraenilowo ti asiri ẹni yo fi bo. Ọrẹ a ma gba ni kuro ninu ijamba.

Ijanikulẹ tabi idalẹ jẹ nkan-an nla ni ilẹ Yoruba. Ọrẹ le dalẹ ọrẹ nipa ojukokoro, abosi, ero ibi, ainitelọrun, owo tabi ipo le mu ki ọrẹ ko dalẹ ara wọn.

Ipa ilẹ ninu ọrẹ ṣiṣe ni pe ilẹ ni a duro le lori, ire gbogbo orilẹ ni ati nse, lati inu ilẹ ni ati wa ati pe inu ilẹ ni a o pada si. Nitori naa ilẹ duro bi ẹlẹri laarin awọn mejeeji nipa majemu idọrẹ won. Ilẹ a si maa gbọ ohun ti wọn nsọ ati ohun ti wọn nṣe.

Nigba ti wọn ba kuna lati duro lori majemu wọn idalẹ ti selẹ niyẹn. Ni ilẹ Yoruba, ọrẹ ṣiṣe ma mu imulẹ lowo ki o ma ba ṣeeṣee fun wọn lati yẹ lori majemu wọn.

Ko si aye fun didalẹ ara-ẹni ọrẹ ẹni nitori adehun ọrẹ to wa laarin wọn. Sugbon nigbati o ba mu ewu ẹmi lowo, ọrẹ le gbona miran lati gba ẹlomiran kuro ninu iwa ibi ti ọrẹ rẹ ngbero si eni naa. Oresise se Pataki fun alaafia gbogbo awujo ni ile Yoruba.

Aye ipari ija wa nigbati idalẹ ba selẹ ti ẹni to dalẹ ko ba ti ku. O seese ki awọ agba ba wọn pari ija wọn. Sugbon ti o ba mu iku lowo ko si ọna abayo mo.

A le sọ pe Jesu ati awọn ọmọ-ẹhin rẹ jẹ ọrẹ, ninu eyi ti Judasi di si di ipo akapo mu gege bi ọrẹ korikosun Jesu. Nitori naa ọrẹ Jesu pataki ni Judasi nṣe Sugbon ojukokoro lo mu lati dalẹ Jesu. Ibi ti iwa ọdalẹ wa ninu ise Judasi nipe o gba owo lowo awọn ọta Jesu, oun lo si ba wọn lati bere ohun ti wọn yoo fi fun oun lati fi ọrẹ rẹ han.

Emi ko gbagbo pe asotele kankan wa nipa pe enikan yoo fi Jesu han; idi ni yi ti Jesu fi pe Judasi ni omo egbe. Enikookan ni yoo yan ninu iku tabi iye nitori Olurun ki fi buburu dan eniyan wo.

Iri mi nipa ore mi ni pe ore mi dami nitori o ko lati mu ileri re se; lootu ko mu ipalara lowo lo titi; a si pari ija naa.¹⁵⁴

Translation:

In Yoruba land, friendship runs throughout life and one passes through one stage of friendship to the other as one chooses from among those whom he feels are compatible with him. Friendship will therefore last as friends try to keep the rules of the game, i.e. the tenets of their friendship, which include walking together, sharing fellowship and deciding together on issues affecting their lives.

There are many benefits derivable from friendship in Yoruba land. For example, a friend who feels depressed and discouraged can be encouraged to get back on track through the comforting words of his friend. Friends do help each other in meeting certain necessities of life; a friend can deliver his friend from danger or death.

Therefore, betrayal is a big problem in the Yoruba context of friendship. Many factors may be responsible for betrayal, such as covetousness, evil thoughts, inordinate ambition, evil desire and love of money.

The place of the earth in friendship in Yoruba land is that it constitutes the platform or pedestal upon which we are standing; all forms of blessings spring from the earth. Man was brought forth from the earth and into it he shall return at death. Therefore, the earth stands as a witness in friendship, especially in the case of covenantal friendship sealed by rituals. The Yoruba believe that the earth can hear every conversation that is done upon it, and can therefore adjudicate in such a matter.

The swearing or making of covenant, marked by rituals, is to safeguard the secrecy of the friendship from being easily divulged by those concerned. Yoruba concept of friendship does not permit betrayal, but friends do still betray each other. However, there is room for reconciliation in case a betrayal has not already involved death, but it is not likely that the

¹⁵⁴ This interview was conducted with the Evangelist Amos Tope Oluremi (36 years, a Church Agent) on Thursday, 16th February, 2012 in Ibadan. Oyo State. Nigeria.

friendship will remain the same. But if betrayal involves death, reconciliation cannot be possible, because there will be no one to reconcile with.

Jesus and his disciples were best of friends and Judas even held a very important position among the disciples - he was in charge of the treasury. Judas' heinous act of betrayal is evident in the fact that he solicited and actually took money from the antagonists of Jesus, the Jewish religious leaders, and also led the captors to where he thought Jesus could be found as an insider.

I do not believe that Judas as a betrayer fulfilled a prophetic role, i.e. the betrayal had been predicted in the Bible. But such a claim cannot be substantiated scripturally. Judas would appear to have fulfilled his personal ambition or choice, because God does not tempt his creatures with evil.

I have been betrayed by a friend who failed to keep his own part of our friendship dealing. Even though it did not cause me much harm, I felt seriously disappointed. However, the matter was later resolved amicably.

(x) Nipa idọrẹ ni ilẹ Yoruba, awọn agba gba pe ọrẹ sise ma n mu ki a ẹ iranlọwọ fun ara ẹni. Ninu idọrẹ bẹẹ, wọn maa n sọ asiri ara wọn ti ẹnikẹta ko gbọdọ mọ nipa rẹ. Bi ẹnikan ba sọ asiri naa sita o ti dale niyẹn o si le la ija lọ. Idọrẹ a maa mu imule lọwọ ti o nişe pẹlu ibura ti o le ni ipa lori ẹnikẹni to ba dale.

Ni ilẹ Yoruba awọn nkan-an asiri laarin awọn ọrẹ meji pọ: o le jẹ nipa ẹya ara ti o ni ailera. Fun apeere, ẹni ti ko le ba obinrin se ti ọrẹ ko si gbọdọ sọ sita. O le ẹ dukia ti ọrẹ ni pamọ ti ko gbọdọ sọ fun ẹnikẹni. Tabi ẹni ti oniyawo meji tabi meṭa ki ọrẹ ko gbọdọ sọ fun iyawo tile pe ọkọ rẹ ni ale sita. Idore ni ile Yoruba ni ipa lori gbogbo awujo.

Asa idọrẹ ni ilẹ Yoruba ko faye gba ki ọrẹ tu asiri ohun buburu ti ọrẹ fẹ se tabi to ti se nitori majemu to wa laarin wọn. Şugbọn ti o bamu ipalara ti ẹmi lọwọ, ọrẹ rẹ le gba ọna miran lati ran ẹni ti ọrẹ rẹ fẹ se buburu si lọwọ Şugbọn ki i ẹ lona lati tu asiri ọrẹ re.

A ri ibamu asa idọrẹ Yoruba laarin Jesu ati Judasi nitori Jesu finu tan gbogbo awọn omo-ẹhin. Şugbọn Judasi dale Jesu nipa li la ona ti wọn le gba lati mu Jesu pẹlu amin.

Emi ko ni ọrẹ timọtimo kan lọ titi. Mo kan ni awọn ọrẹ Şugbọn ko si ohun aşiri kankan nitoti naa ko si ẹni to da mi.¹⁵⁵

Translation:

Friendship in Yoruba land entails having to trust someone more than the others, the one whom one enters into friendship. In that kind of friendship, the players may share certain secrets about their lives, which must not be made known to the outsiders. When such a secret is divulged, then one is guilty of betrayal and it can affect the friendship negatively.

In certain cases, friendship could be deeper as to involve making a covenant that may be ritualistic in nature to solidify the ties. Betrayal in that case usually has a severe consequence for who the betrayer might be.

There are many things that friends may want to keep secret about their lives in the context of friendship, such as bodily deformity, sickness (not easily noticeable), impotency, family properties, money, having a concubine outside the matrimonial home.

However, friendship in Yoruba land does not allow betrayal in any form because of the commitment to each other; and this commitment is even stronger in the case of covenantal or ritual friendship involving blood as a seal of that friendship. But when there is a negative development, a friend should demonstrate a great deal of wisdom by trying as much as possible not break the bond of friendship by exposing his friend. Friendship has its place in the collective wellbeing of the entire community.

There is a correlation between the concept of friendship in Yoruba land and the kind of friendship witnessed between Jesus and his disciples, and especially Judas Iscariot, who eventually turned to be a betrayer. Jesus, no doubt, trusted all his disciples, but Judas, even as an officer in the Group disappointed him by leading the captors to the place where Jesus could be found to be forcefully arrested. I do not believe Judas fulfilled a divinely inspired role as the scripture does not give any clear evidence in support of that stand or opinion.

I have no close or intimate friend so as not to be betrayed by anyone, since I have no secret things to hide from anyone.

¹⁵⁵ This interview was conducted with the Rev. Gbenga Adebambo (44 years, a clergy) on Thursday, 16th February, 2012 in Ibadan. Oyo State. Nigeria.

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(xi) Oṛẹ sise ni ilẹ Yoruba jẹ aṣẹpọ tabi aṣẹrinpọ to duro lori ifẹ laarin awon eniyan meji. Oṛẹ korikosun jẹ oṛẹ timotimo larin awon eniyan Ṣugbon oṛẹ imule wa ti o mu majemu dida lowo ati ilo eje. Nitori naa, oṛẹ sise mu fifi asiri pa mo s'owo ara-eni dani.

Ipa ti ilẹ nko ninu oṛẹ sise nipe ilẹ lagbara pupo nitori lati inu ilẹ ni Olorun ti mu eniyan jade, ori re si ni a n duro le lori, nitori naa o duro bi eleri. Ifokantan ati ifẹ jẹ ohun meji pataki ti oṛẹ Ṣiṣe duro le lori.

Ni ilẹ Yoruba ohun asiri ti o le wa laarin awon oṛẹ meji le jẹ oro, owo tabi obinrin ti won ko gbodo so sita. Niti oṛẹ imule, dida ilẹ oṛẹ le mu abajade nla lowo; sugbon niti oṛẹ korikosun, ilẹ dida kan le ba oṛẹ jẹ.

Nibiti ifẹ ba wa, oṛẹ ṣiṣe ko duro lori ipo ti eniyan wa. Looto Yoruba wipe: “Egbe eye l’eye nwoto”, sugbon sibe o seese lati foju fo iru iyato be ki a si ma bara sore laiwo ti iyato laarin ara-eni. Oresise ni ona ti o ngba lati ran alaafia ilu lowo lapapo ni ile Yoruba.

Ninu ibaṣepo Jesu pelu awon oṛẹ re, o re ara re silẹ bi o tilẹ jẹ oga ni, Ṣugbon o fa gbogbo won mora timotimo. Mo gbagbo pe Judasi dale oṛẹ re, Jesu nitori ifẹ inu tara tire.

A ri ifarajo asa idale oṛẹ laarin Yoruba ninu ohun ti Judasi se pe ilẹ a ma bere lowo eni to ba dale oṛẹ re; nitori pe Jesu pokunso o si ku, ilẹ si lanu gba eje re.

Oṛẹ temi ko koja oṛẹ lasan, nitori ng ki saba ri aleebu ninu igbesi aye elomiran.¹⁵⁶

Translation:

Friendship in Yoruba land implies fellowship, relationship and intimacy that are anchored on love between two people. Intimate friendship is common among many people, but there is also a covenantal friendship that is informed by oath-making or ritual involving blood as a seal of the friendship bond.

Friendship also involves keeping of secrets between two friends or more.

The place of the earth (or ground) in friendship in Yoruba land shows its importance as the substance out of which man was made, upon which we all stand and walk about. The earth thus stands as a witness in any friendship ties, especially in a covenant-related friendship. Friendship among the Yoruba has a way of helping the peace of the society

¹⁵⁶ This interview was conducted with the Rev. Remi Afosi (55 years, a clergy) on Thursday, 16th February, 2012 in Ibadan. Oyo State. Nigeria.

Trust and love are two basic conditions that hold up friendship, and it also shows the importance of friendship among the Yoruba as a means by which secrets can be kept between two people concerning their lives. Such secrets must not be divulged at all to those out of the friendship ties.

Concerning covenantal or ritual friendship, betrayal in that context can be fatal, but in the case of intimate friendship, betrayal may not negatively affect or even destroy a friendship tie.

Where there is love, friendship may not necessarily be based on status, position, sex and age. It is true that Yoruba maxim says: “Birds of the same feathers flock together”; yet it is also true that sometimes such obvious differences can be overlooked in order to enter into a friendship that is inspired by love and trust.

Regarding Jesus and his disciples Jesus, no doubt, has demonstrated an exceptional form of humility so as to relate with his disciples as his friends, including Judas who later turned out to be a betrayer. I believe Judas was guilty of betrayal because of his own personal selfish interest informed by a covetous spirit.

I only have friends generally because it is always hard for me to find fault with anyone.

(xii) Aṣa ọrẹ-ṣiṣe da l’ori nini ọrẹ nibi iṣe, ninu ijo, ni awujo ati larin awon oloṣelu. Ife ni koko ọrẹ-ṣiṣe. Ohun ti awon ọrẹ nfojusona si ninu idore won ni gbigba ara-eni nimoran lori oro aye-eni tabi siṣe iranlowo fun ara-eni.

Ohun kan ti o saba maa nfa ile dida ni pe ki ife sonu larin awon ọrẹ meji tabi ki won kuna ninu majemu idore won, nigba ti enikan fi asiri aye re han fun ọrẹ re ti o si wa tu asiri naa sita f’aye gbọ. Awon nkan-an asiri ti o saba maa npa ọrẹ meji po ni owo, ile, oro lori idile ati awon ohun asiri miran.

Ipo tabi iyato larin awon eniyan meji ko le se idiwo fun ọrẹ siṣe ni ile Yoruba. Looto ni Yoruba maa npa owe pe: “Egbẹ ẹye ni ẹye nwo to”, ṣugbon ki se odiwon fun idore nigba gbogbo. Idore ma ran ibagbepo alaafia awujo lowo.

Nipa ti Jesu ati awon omọ eyin re; a ri won gegebi ọrẹ. Jesu wa s’aye lati se iṣe igbala fun araye, awon omọ eyin re si je alabaṣiṣepo pelu re. Ṣugbon Judasi fi iwa odale han nipa fifi

Jesu han nitori ojukokoro ati ife owo. Igbesi aye Judasi fi aigbagbo han nitori o kuna lati gba idariji o si lo pokunso. Nitori naa, gegebi aṣa ile Yoruba: “*Judasi dale o si b’ale lo*”.

Ṣugbon ki i ṣe gbogbo ileḍida ni o maa mu iku lowo, nitori ija le pari larin awon ore meji ti won dale arawon.

Nitori idi eyi, ninu isedale Yoruba, ile lagabara pupo; o si le bere esan lowo eniti o ba dale ore re.

Ore ti emi ni, ore atata tabi ore daradara ni ki i ṣe ore odale rara, nitori naa ko si ifoya fun didale ara-eni.¹⁵⁷

Translation:

Friendship among the Yoruba hinges on having friends at the place of work, within the society and among the political associates. Love is a sine qua non to friendship in Yoruba land. What friends hope to benefit in their friendship includes counseling concerning their lives, encouragement and assistance to make it in life generally. What usually causes betrayal between two friends is when love has grown cold between them; or if they fail to honour the bond of friendship between them. This often happens when a friend divulges the secret of his friend to another person who is an outsider.

What usually constitutes secrets among friends include: money, land, landed properties, family matters and some other secret matters.

Status, position, etc do not necessarily determine or hinder friendship among the Yoruba. Even though it is true that according to a Yoruba maxim: “Birds of the same feathers flock together”. This is not to say that it is a fixed condition for friendship in Yoruba land. Hence there can be cross-border friendships. Friendship can help the peaceful co-existence of the society.

Jesus came for a God-appointed redemptive mission on earth; and he gathered around himself a group of followers who were to assist him as his friends. But Judas disappointed Jesus by turning into a traitor or betrayer because of covetousness and uncontrollable love of money. But more painfully, he missed the grace of forgiveness as he went to commit suicide. Consequently, the truth about the earth as a witness in any friendship

¹⁵⁷ This interview was conducted with Mrs. Comfort Adetutu Olalowo (35years, Diocesan Lady-worker) on Wednesday, 21st March, 2012 in Ibadan, Nigeria.

bond is proved in the life of Judas as the earth sucked his blood. However, it should be noted that not all cases of betrayal usually attract death. It is more common with covenantal or ritualistic friendship. My friend is a faithful friend; so there is not any fear of betrayal.

(xiii) Ọrẹ ẹ́sẹ ẹ́ bíbá ẹ́nikan tabi meji rin nipa idi kan tabi meji to ba da wọn papọ. Ọrẹ ẹ́sẹ ni i ẹ́ pelu riran ara-ẹ́ni lọwọ tabi gbigbe ara-ẹ́ni lori soke. Lootọ ni owe Yoruba to ẹ́ pe: “*Egbẹ ẹ́yẹ ni ẹ́yẹ nwo to*”, Ẹ́gbọ́n o kan jọ bẹni nitori iru idọrẹ bẹ le rorun lootọ; nitori awọn Yoruba a si tun maa ẹ́ pe: “*ọrẹ ẹ́sẹ ko dun bi ẹ́nikan ko ba ni*”. Sibẹ awọn Yoruba kannaa lo tun ẹ́ pe: “*Aṣọ nla kọ ni eniyan nla*”. Eleyi tumọ si pe owo, ọla ati bẹẹbẹlọ le ma ẹ́ odiwọn ọrẹ ẹ́sẹ larin awọn eniyan meji ni gbogbo igba paapaa ti wọn ba ti ni ifẹ ara wọn denu. Olowo ati ọlọgbọ́n talaka le ẹ́ ọrẹ awọn wọn ki wọn si ẹ́ anfaani ara wọn daadaa.

Awọn ohun aṣiri ti o ro mo ọrẹsẹ ni ilẹ Yoruba le ẹ́ ile ajogunba ati awọn dukia miran ti o le mu wahala lọ ninu ẹ́bi.

Didalẹ ni ki ọrẹ kan fi aṣiri ọrẹ rẹ han fun elomiran ki ẹ́ ọrẹ wọn. Fun apeere, ki ọrẹ fi aṣiri owo ti ọrẹ rẹ lọ gba ni ile-ifi-owo pamọ han ti o si le ẹ́ okunfa idigunjale fun ọrẹ rẹ naa. Yiyan ore ni awujo ni ile Yoruba ni i se pelu alaafia ati ilosiwaju awujo naa.

Ọrẹ-ẹ́sẹ ni ilẹ Yoruba ko fi aye gba didalẹ, Ẹ́gbọ́n ilana ẹ́sin le mu ki eniyan dalẹ tabi ki o ma dalẹ ọrẹ rẹ, paapaa nigba ti mu iwa ipaniyan lọwọ. Ọrẹ imulẹ l’agbara lopolopo; a si maa ni agbara okunkun dani igba miran.

Jesu wa ẹ́ iṣẹ igbala ninu aye pelu iranlọwọ awọn to ko jọ gẹgẹbi omọ ehin rẹ ti wọn si dabi oluranlọwọ ati ọrẹ fun. Ẹ́gbọ́n Judasi wu iwa ọdalẹ nipa gbigba owo ẹ́mi Jesu lọwọ awọn ọta rẹ. A si ri ifarahan idajọ fun ọdalẹ ni ibamu pelu aṣa ilẹ Yoruba gẹgẹbi ipa ti ilẹ. Ọrẹ ti emi ni ki i ẹ́ ọrẹ ọdalẹ.¹⁵⁸

Translation:

Friendship entails close relationship between two or more people, who share one thing or the other together. It involves assisting each other towards fulfillment in life.

¹⁵⁸ This interview was conducted with Mrs. Taiye Adeniran (45 years, a secretary) on Wednesday, 21st March, 2012 in Ibadan, Nigeria.

There is a popular saying in Yoruba that is suggestive of a status or influence in friendship: “Birds of the same feathers flock together”. However, this is not always the case in reality as there are exceptions to the rule. While it is true that when one of the friends has nothing to contribute, there is the tendency for the friendship to be sloppy nonetheless another Yoruba proverb says: “A big man is not contained in big clothing”. In other words, money, position, social status, etc may be hindrance to friendship between two people who are closely drawn to each other in friendship, in spite of their differences in status. It thus follows that a rich man and a poor man can be friends and gain a great deal in such a friendship.

Friendship in the Yoruba context usually involves sharing some secret things between two friends. These secrets may include: family properties or inheritance, money, especially when it is withdrawn from the bank or kept somewhere, as it is capable of igniting future trouble or affecting the life of a friend negatively. Choice of friends among the Yoruba calls has an implication for the wellbeing of the community.

There is no room for betrayal in the Yoruba concept of friendship; except on the basis of personal conviction, especially when the action of one’s friend contravenes the principles of friendship or the social norms and values.

Covenantal friendship is a serious friendship involving rituals and caring serious spiritual implications. Jesus came to carry out a special assignment involving the redemption of humanity. In this engagement, Jesus enjoyed the support and friendship of his disciples, but one of them, Judas Iscariot turned out to be a betrayer because he sold his master and friend to his enemies.

But then, he did not escape the wrath and judgment of the earth. Judas’ fate therefore reflects the Yoruba idea of judgment usually carried out by the earth on a betrayer.

(xiv) Ore sise ni fifinukonu larin enimeji. Anfaani ti o wa ninu iru ifinukonu be ni ife aisetan. Orisirisi ore lo wa: ore lasan ati ore imule. Fun apeere, awon baba wa laye atijo ma fi obi se edidi ore won. Be gege awon ode ma fi ibon se edidi ore won, won ko si gbodo da’ra won nitori o lewu lati se be. Fun apeere enikan ti ko ba le ba obinrin se, ore re maa ran lowo lati ba aya re se. Ki ise gbogbo ore sise naa lo da lori ‘Egbe eye l’eye nwo to’. Agbe le se ore pelu omowe.

Didale nipe ibi ti a fi oro si, ibe ko la ba mo. Fun apeere, iru ore ti ko le ba obinrin se, ti o si fi asiri han fun ore re lati maa ba se ti o si lo fi asiri naa han, o ti dale ore re. Ore lasan le ma mu ewu nla lowo nigbati ore ba le da'ra won.

Ipa ti ile ninu ore sise nipe ile dabi eleri laarin awon ore meji ti o si le se Idaho laarin awon mejeji. Ki i saba r'orun lati ri ona abayo nigba ti ore ba dale ore re paapaa ni ti ore imule. Idore ni i se pelu gbigbe lalaafia ni awujo ni ile Yoruba.

Nipa ti Judasi, Jesu mo iru eni ti Judasi je; a ri pe Judasi feran owo pupo. Eleyi lo ti si ohun ti o se. Bi Jesu ti feran awon omo ehin re to, a ri pe Judasi so ara re di odale nitori naa a ri pe Judasi ba ile lo gege bi igbagbo Yoruba nipa didale ore re, pe 'eni ti o ba dale yoo ba'le lo'. Ore temi kiise ore kan to lo daindain; nitori gbogbo eniyan ni ore temi.¹⁵⁹

Translation:

Friendship is having the same mind between two people, which is anchored on a genuine love. There are different kinds of friendship – casual friend and covenantal friend. In the olden days in Yoruba land, our forefathers often used kola nut as the seal of their friendship. Similarly, the hunters would normally use their dane guns to swear and seal up their friendship, which implies that they should not betray each other because it could have a serious consequence. For example, a friend who had sexual difficulty, i.e. who is impotent, could be assisted by his friend and this should not be divulged to another person.

Friendship is not fixed among the Yoruba, that is, friendship could be between people of different status. In other words, it is not based on the principle of “Birds of the same feather flock together”, which means a farmer could be a friend of a university lecturer. Friendship calls for caution and peaceful co-existence among the Yoruba.

Betrayal is to go back on one's oath or agreement upon which friendship is based. For example, if a friend who has agreed to assist his friend with his sexual difficulty divulges the secret between him and his friend to another person, he is guilty of betrayal. However, betrayal in the context of a casual friendship may not have any serious consequence as in the case of covenantal friendship.

¹⁵⁹ This interview was conducted with the Rev Canon Dele Oyetunji (68years, a clergy), in Ibadan, Nigeria on Tuesday, 3rd April, 2012.

The place of the earth in friendship in Yoruba land is that it serves as a witness between the two friends, and could react in the case of betrayal. It is not always easy to forgive in the case of betrayal, especially when it is a covenantal friendship.

Concerning Judas, Jesus knew the kind of person Judas was; and we have also seen that Judas loved money too much, which must have prompted his action of betrayal of his master. Hence, Judas was swallowed up by the earth according to the Yoruba belief that a betrayer will normally be consumed by the earth.

I have never had a betrayer as a friend, because I don't get too much involved in friendship.

(xv) Ore dabi ibasepo laarin eniyan meji ti ede won ye 'ra won; ti imo won wa ni ipele kanna; ti won le gbara won ni imoran. Awon ore tooto le ba ara won so ooto oro. Awon ti ko le bara won so ooto oro kii se ore tooto.

Ilana asa Yoruba gba pe olowo le se ore talaka. Lotoo, o le nira die, sugbon ti okan won ba mo si ara won, won le jo se ore papo, nitori ko si ani-ohun gbogbo tan. Ko si eni to mo gbogbo nkan tan. Olowo le nilo iranlowo talaka. Ohun ti awon ore nbere lowo ara won ni igbani nimoran, iran-ara-eni lowo ati itunu nigba isoro.

Awon ohun asiri ti o le wa laarin ore meji le je ohun bonkele. Fun apeere, boya ona ogbon idokowo kan ti ko fe fi asiri re han si gbangba tabi pe o ri owo nla nkan tabi ki o ri obinrin kan ti o rewa, o le fi pamo sowo ore re. Ni temi, emi ki i saba ni ohun asiri ti mo le fi pamo sowo ore. Oresise ni ipa pataki ni awujo ni ile Yoruba

Ti idale ba sele, o saba ma nje nitori ojokokoro tabi owu jije. Ohun ti o ye mi nipa ile dida nipe ki a so nkan-an asiri fun eniyan ti iru enibe ko ma si ri ona abayo kuro ninu iru isoro be.

Ile dida ni jija ore eni tile. Eni to ba si dale a ba ile lo. Ki i saba rorun lati dariji eni ti o ba dale eni, nitori pe ni opolopo igba ore naa ki i dan moran mo. Judasi dale Jesu, nitori o ta oga re pelu ero pe ko si eni to le mu Jesu nitori alagbara ni, oun o kan gba owo naa lasan ni. Judasi ko ronupiwada nitori o ro pe o ti tan fun oun o si pa ara re.

Nko ni ore to se ika si mi, sugbon mo ni ore kan ni ile iwe giga yunifasiti ti a jijo nse wolewode, ti a si sunmo ara wa timotimo. Bi o ti le je pe omo Igbo ni kii se Yoruba sibe a si jijo nse ore wa doni.¹⁶⁰

Translation:

Friendship is a dealing between two people, who understand each other, who are united in thoughts and can conveniently counsel and scold each other. True friendship implies that friends can genuinely advise each other; otherwise such a friendship is not genuine.

The Yoruba cultural practice of friendship allows for friendship across different social group. In other words, a rich man can be a friend to a poor man. Because an adage says “No one is an Island to himself”, a rich man may be enriched by the counseling of a poor man, as the poor man is enriched by the riches of his friend.

Hence, the benefit of friendship include advices, support and encouragement that friends may receive from each other. Regarding, secrets between two friends, there are one thousand and one such secrets such as business ideas, love of a lady, big money which one may want to be kept secret by his friend. As for me, I don't usually have any secret to be kept with a friend. Friendship has a significant role to play in ensuring the peace and development of the society.

Betrayal in friendship is often cause by envy or covetousness which often creates that it usually serves as a witness and that at death man will normally turn to dust.

Whosoever betrays his/her friend will be consumed by the earth according to the popular Yoruba adage, “whoever betrays the earth will be consumed by it”. Forgiveness after betrayal is always very difficult because the friendship is not usually the same.

Judas was guilty of betrayal as he sold his friend because of his covetous spirit and misconception that Jesus could not be arrested as a powerful man. He did not repent, but he rather committed suicide.

My friend in the university still remains my friend till today, even though she is an Igbo lady.

¹⁶⁰ This interview was conducted with Miss. Ayodele Akinfe (28years a physiotherapy Student), in Ibadan, Nigeria on Sunday, 13th May, 2012.

(xvi) Ohun ti Yoruba npe ni idore ni awon eniyan meji ti oro won ye arawon, ti won si le ba ara won rin. O rorun ki eniyan ma ba iro eniyan sore, ko si tun rorun lati se be sugbon fun emi nigba ti mo wa ni ile, awon to jumi lo ni mo nba se ore, nitori iru iranlowo ati imoran ti won maa ngba mi. sugbon ni gba miran ko rorun nitori won a ma wo eniyan bi omo kekere. Ati pe, iru ore be ki dun bi enikan ko ba ni.

Ore imule tun jinle ju ore lasan lo a si ma mu ewu nla lowo. Ninu ore imule, nnkan-kan wa be ti won ko gbodo so sita.

Didale ore a ma mu edun okan nla lowo gege bi iriri ti mo ti ri nipa nkan-an ti mo ti gbiyanju lati se ti mo si fi lo ore mi. Sugbon nigba miran iru asiri be le ma tu sita lati odo ore eni.

Idariji le wa nigba ti ore meji ba dale ara won, sugbon ore won ko ni le lo deede mo.

Judasi dale Jesu nipa jinjin lese. Ko ye ki omo-ehin maa dale tabi jin oga lese. Nitori o ro pe won ko ni le ri Jesu mu.

Mo ni ore ti o dale mi nitori emi pelu ore mi jo pinnu lati jo lo nkan-an, sugbon nigba ti o kan mi lati lo nkan naa ore mi yi se lo yi iwa re pada. Sugbon lehin orehin a pari re nitori naa bi ore buburu se wa bee na ni ore daadaa wa.¹⁶¹

Translation:

What the Yoruba consider to be friendship is two people who understand each other and could walk together.

It is very advantageous to befriend one who is older than oneself; I have found it to be very rewarding. Sometimes friendship between two people who are of the same status may not be so rewarding, because the fact that as youth they may be regarded as inexperienced. In other words, Yoruba cultural friendship allows for this kind of cross-status/social class friendship. However, the disadvantage of this kind of friendship is that one is often looked down upon as a kid, and that when one has nothing to contribute it may affect that friendship.

Covenantal/ritual friendship is deeper and holds very serious implications, especially in case of betrayal. In this kind of friendship, there is usually something hidden or secret - and this may involve a number of issues.

¹⁶¹ This interview was conducted with Kayode Alabi, (30years, self-employed), in Ibadan in Nigeria, on Sunday, 13th May, 2012.

Betrayal is always very painful according to an experience I had with my friend who disappointed me when he should have released a certain thing to me for my use when he had already used it himself.

There may be forgiveness after betrayal between two friends, but the friendship will certainly not be the same.

Judas was guilty of betrayal because he conspired against his master, Jesus. He sold him out to his enemies, because he thought Jesus would be invincible to his enemies.

Like I said earlier, my friend betrayed me by denying me the use of certain material as we had agreed together. But we later resolved the matter. To this end, there are both good and bad friends all over the place.

(xvii) Ore je eniti eniyan maa ba k'owo rin, bi eni ojo ori eni, ti a le jo ba ara wa soro po, lati jo ma jade po, gba ara-eni-niyanju ati beebeelo. Ore sise laarin olowo ati talaka ki fi i gbogbo ara rorun nitori o niise pelu iwa olowo be nitori pe olowo miran ki i fe ri talaka rara. Ohun ti ore nbere lowo ara won ni iranlowo, ijiroro papo.

Orisirisi ore lo wa, sugbon eyi ti emi mo ni awon ore ti a jijo dagba po. Ore ijinle ni awon ore ti ohun asiri jijo pa won po.

Orisirisi nnkan lo le je ohun asiri laarin ore meji. Fun apeere bi won ba seso ti won ko si fe ki elomiran mo nipa re tabi ohun ti o le mu idagbasoke ba awon mejeeji sugbon lona ti ko dara.

Idale ni ki eniyan fi asiri ore re han si elomiran; o ti dale niyen. Oro lori ile kan dabi ile ti gbogbo eniyan nte gege bi eleri pe gbogbo ibi ti a ba gbe wa ile mo nipa ohun ti nbe larin wa.

Idariji le wa larin ore meji ti won ti dale ara won, sugbon ore won ko le dan moran mo bi ti isaaju. Judasi dale Jesu nitori Jesu ti finutan awon omo-ehin re.

Mo ti ni iriri idale nipa ore mi ti o da mi nipa moto ti mo ni ko ba mi ta, sugbon ti o gbehin bebo je. Lati igbana, ore wa ko danmoran mo.¹⁶²

¹⁶² This interview was conducted with Wale Ogunlola (Male, 32years, an Engineer), in Ibadan, Nigeria on 13th May, 2012.

Translation:

A friend is someone with whom one is moving or is associated, usually one's age mate with whom one discusses issues of his life, move about, encourage each other, etc. Although friendship in Yoruba land is not fixed on status, friendship between the rich and the poor is not always without some difficulty. This is because it all depends on the character of the rich man who may want to look down on his poor friend.

Friends expect that the friendship will be beneficial to them by way of encouraging, supporting and sharing experiences together. In Yoruba land, there are categories of friendships. But the common one that I know is that of age-group with whom we grew together. The other one is that of covenantal or ritual friendship which implies that there are some secrets between them. Such secrets things may be anything involving their lives. For example, they may engage in a money ritual which must not be known to anyone else or anything that can enhance their status, though in a negative way or by negative means.

Betrayal is to divulge the secret of one's friend to another person. The earth is just like the surface (ground) upon which everyone walks about. It is therefore believed by the Yoruba that the earth is a witness between two friends wherever they may be on the surface of the earth.

In case of betrayal, friends may forgive each other but their friendship may not remain the same. Against this backdrop, Judas is guilty of betrayal because Jesus trusted all of his disciples.

I have also had an experience of betrayal by my friend, who disappointed me when I engaged him to help me dispose of my old car. And we have since then been keeping a distance from each other.

(xviii) Ore ni ile Yoruba ni alajosepo eni, eniti a le finutan, eniti o le gbaniyanju. Ore bere lati ori eniyan meji, meta ati beebeelo. Ore sise ni ile Yoruba da lori fifinutan ara eni. Anfaani ti o wa ninu oresise po: ore a maa gbani, awon ore a ma ran ara won lowo. Oniruru oresise lo wa nile Yoruba. Ore ti iwa won jo ara won ni ore imule ti 'a' won ki yato si ara won. Ore imule naa ni ore korikosun. Emi ko gbagbo pe asa tita eje sile lori ore sise tun wopo mo bi ti atijo. Awon ore a maa fi ohun ti nlo ninu ile won han fun ore won gege bi ohun asiri.

Ipa ti ile nko ninu asa ore sise ni ile Yoruba ni pe ori ile ni gbogbo wa nte nitori eyi ni Yoruba se maa nwipe “ile ore a da” Odale wa nibi gbogbo ati ninu molebi naa gege bi odale ore. Oresise nko ipa pataki nipa ibagbepo alaafia ni awujo ni ile Yoruba.

Ko si iru idale kankan ti a le so pe o dara. Odale ni odale yoo maa je – bi ore ti o gba oko ore re nitoripe o ni ko ma se ounje fun. Ntiori naa oun maa ba toju re.

Bi ore meji ba dale ara won, won le dariji ara won paapaa laarin awon ti won ba je Kristiani, sugbon nipa ti imule ore, n ko mo bi o ti le ri larin won. Judasi dale Jesu gege bi omo-ehin re nitori pe ko ye ko se be gege bi eni ti Jesu finutan. A ri ifarajo ipa ti ile nipa ohun ti o sele si Judasi nitori ile ti o lanu gba eje re nigba ti o pokunso.

Ni temi, nko ni ore ti o dale mi ati pe yoo nira die fun ore kankan lati dale mi. Sugbon gbogbo awon ore mi won je ore daradara.¹⁶³

Translation:

A friend in Yoruba land is one’s companion or confidant; one who can be trusted and one who is an encourager. Friendship begins with two persons or more. And there are different kinds of friendships in Yoruba land, all of which anchor on trust and loyalty. There are many benefits in friendship such as safety from danger or in times of difficulty, friends normally help each other.

The covenantal or ritual friends are those who trust each other; their words do not contradict. In my own understanding, a close friend is the same as the covenantal friend. I do not believe that people still engage in rituals all in the name of friendship nowadays as in the olden days. Friendship has a significance in regard to the wellbeing of the society in Yoruba land.

Friends can reveal the secrets of their family life to each other such as challenges involving their businesses and sexuality. These are to be kept secret from a third party.

The place of the earth in Yoruba cultural friendship is that we all move about on the surface of the earth and as the third party, therefore, it plays the role of a witness and judge. Hence, the Yoruba would normally say in that context: “The land of friendship would favour you” or “The land of friendship will judge”. These statements are pregnant with meanings.

¹⁶³ This interview was conducted with Miss Nike Ola (Female, 30year, a Journalist), in Ibadan, Nigeria on Sunday, 13th May, 2012.

There is betrayal everywhere, even within the family setting – kinship. There is no betrayal that can be considered positive. Betrayal is betrayal and it is negative. For example, a friend who snatched her friend’s husband because her friend was not caring enough, and so that she could demonstrate her care in that regard, cannot be seen to be a positive step in that situation.

In the event of betrayal between two friends, it is possible to forgive, especially if they are Christians. But in the case of a covenantal friendship, I wouldn’t know what the case would look like.

Judas betrayed Jesus as one of his trusted disciples he ought not to have done so for the sake of that trust between the disciples and Jesus. We can see a correlation between the idea of the Yoruba - the earth as a judge regarding betrayal in friendship and the manner of Judas’ death. As for me, I am always careful to ensure that no friend betrays me.

(xix) Ore je awon eniyan ti a njo s’asepo lona kan tabi lona miran ni ona lati ran ara wa lowo, ki a maa jijo jade ati beebeelo.

Ore pe orisirisi: ore korikosun ni awon ore ti won sunmo ra won daadaa. Awon kan si wa ti won jinna si ara won. Awon korikosun ko le sai ma ri ara won lojo kan. Ore imule tun jinle gan ju ore korikosun lo. Orisirisi nkan-an lo ma pa ore po gege bi ohun asiri – o le je ise, aya, tabi gbigba ona kan tabi omiran lati ni owo.

Ile je nkan-an pataki gege bi ori ibi ti gbogbo eniyan ti nrin; o si duro gege bi eleri. Awon ore meji ti won dale ara won le dariji ara won bi emi idariji ba wa ninu won.

Ohun ti o sele laarin Judasi ati Jesu je ifarahan ore odale ni ile Yoruba. Jesu fi tinutinu tan Judasi lo se gbe apo owo le lowo; sugbon Judasi dale Jesu o si ta a fun awon ota re. Ipa idajo ti ile ma nse lori odale ore han nipa ohun ti o sele si Judasi.

Mo ni awon ore ti won nma gbami nimoran lori oro aye mi, paapaa nigba ti mo ni ipenija lori eko mi. awon oro isiti won lo ran mi lowo lati le tsiwaju ti mo si se asejori si rere loni.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ This interview was conducted with Mr. Ajibola Idowu (35years, self-employed), in Ibadan, Nigeria on Sunday, 13th May, 2012.

Translation:

Friends are those with whom we are involved together in a relationship one way or the other so as to assist each other, move together, etc. There are different kinds of friendships: close friends are those who cannot but see each other in a day. Even when they are far away, they can speak together on the phone. The covenantal friendship is deeper than the close friendship.

There are different things that can serve as secrets between two friends, such as, business, women, getting rich through rituals, etc. The earth is very important as the surface upon which everyone moves about and from which man is made; it thus stands as a witness.

Two jolly friends who betray each other can forgive each other, especially if they have the spirit of forgiveness, even though, their friendship may not remain as usual.

What transpired between Jesus and Judas is quite an example of betrayal, because Jesus trusted Judas, like all other disciples, and made him the Treasurer of the group. But Judas still went ahead to sell Jesus out to his enemies.

Consequently, we can see the proof of the role of the earth in case of betrayal in the way Judas ended his life.

I have had friends who had positive influences upon my life, especially when I had challenges with my studies. They encouraged and supported me and today, I am better for it. I think this is the best way friendship should be handled.

(xx) Ore sise je ohun ti o ti wa lati ibere. Idi ni pe, enikankan ko le dagbe, a nilo lati wa eniti a o jijo ma gbe nitori Yoruba wipe “*ore ni pani, ore ni lani*”. Orisirisi ore sise lo wa. Fun apeere, ore lati kekere ti e jijo dagba. Ore korikosun gan-an ni ore, nitori bi a ko ba tiri ara wa lojo kan okan wa ko le bale. Nisisiyi ero ibanisoro ti mu ki iyen ko rorun.

Ore imule a ma se mi ni kayefi. Mo ro pe bi ore ba je olooto si ara won, a ko nilo lati ma mule. Ore imule wa, sugbon emi ro pe ko ye lati ma mule. Oresise ni ile Yoruba ni ipa pataki fun Alafia ati ire awujo.

Ile ni ori ibiti gbogbo eniyan nte, o si duro gege bi eleri, nitori eni ti o ba da ore re, ile lo da. Ile a si ma binu si iru eni be. Ohun ti awon ore nreti lodo ara won ni ifokantan.

Ko si iru igbese ti eniyan ba gbe nipa ore eniyan gbodo da lori idi ti eniyan fi gbe iru igbese bee. Sugbon bi ore eniyan ba so ni emeji tabi emeta pe ore oun dale oun a se pe o ti dale ore looto nitori ohun ti yoo ba se ore eni laanfani lo ye ki eniyan ma se.

Judasi dale Jesu lehin ti Jesu ti kilo fun. Judasi rope won ko le ri Jesu mu sugbon o ti se tan ki o to mo bi nkan-an ti o se se buru to. Idi niyi ti o fi lo pokunso.

Mo ni ore korikosun ti a jijo feran ara wa ti o je pe ki o to se ohunkohun bi o tiwu ko dara to tabi ko buru to ti ko ni saiso fun mi. Sugbon Jesu nikan ni ore korikosun ti o ga julo.¹⁶⁵

Translation:

Friendship has been with humanity from time immemorial. This is because it is not possible for anyone to live alone. We need the fellowship of another person. As the Yoruba would say: "A friend kills, a friend saves".

There are different kinds of friendship. For example, childhood friends, the jolly or close friends – this is the real kind of friendship.

For these ones, they just must see each other in a day otherwise their minds are not at rest. This is even being made possible in this day of global telecommunication system (GSM).

The covenantal or ritual friendship is always strange to me. I just think that if friends are loyal and trustworthy to each other, there is no point in employing ritual means to sustain such a friendship. I believe there is such a friendship but I don't think it is proper in any way.

Regarding the place of the earth in friendship, we all walk about on the earth as a witness to all that we say and do. Hence, whoever betrays his friend, betrays the earth and the earth will react. In Yoruba land, friends expect that both of them should be trustworthy, loyal and reliable. Friendship is very important for the peace and progress of the community among the Yoruba.

Consequently, every action against one's friend must be informed by a very good motive. But if one's friend keeps saying repeatedly to his friend that he has betrayed him, then, it is true that betrayal has actually taken place.

¹⁶⁵ This interview was conducted with Ope Opedare (Male, 26years, a graduate of Philosophy), in Ibadan, Nigeria on 13th May, 2012.

Judas actually betrayed Jesus after being severally warned against it. He might have thought that Jesus would be invincible to arrest by the Jewish religious leaders. But he had done it before he realized that he was mistaken.

Hence his resolve to take his own life by way of hanging. This correlates with the Yoruba belief that he who betrays the earth would be swallowed by it.

I have a very close friend who wouldn't do anything, whether good or bad, without confiding in me. However, the truth is that Jesus alone is the closest friend one can have.

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