

**DAX'S *DEAR GOD*, RELIGIOSITY, SPIRITUALITY,
AND THE CHRISTIAN PREDICAMENT***

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ABSTRACT

The song “Dear God” by Dax is a masterpiece that can be seen to portray adequate philosophical and religious connotations. The phrase, ‘I don’t want religion, I need that spirituality’, becomes the driving force as it could be seen to be a concern for every genuine modern Christian. Religion has so much blindfolded many people. Recently, there has been a quest for spirituality against the backdrop of religiosity among many scholars and lay people, who understood the distinctive nature of such dualized concepts when making heaven. While many people speak about religiosity and mere reading of the Bible, such attempts have not quenched the quest of the modern person to compare ancient Christianity and what is being practiced in modern Christianity. It has become obvious that making heaven does not rely on such religious beliefs but on the ideals of practical life as inscribed in the sacred word of God. This is why Dax expressed that one needs genuine spirituality and not mere religion in his interaction with God, contrary to what the modern church seems to offer. Applying such a discourse analysis, this work reviewed the position of Dax and argued that hypocritical religion is detrimental to God, but rather a compassionate aspect of such religion, as God intended, is what would make the belief in the afterlife a reality. The work also argued for religio-religion amid such complex and hypocritical religious practice for a revitalised ambition for heaven.

KEYWORDS: Religiosity, Dax, Spirituality, Bible, and Human Predicament.

INTRODUCTION

The world, and particularly Africa, has taken a religious turn, with many people surrendering to either of the available religions. Many atrocities and crimes are being committed in the name of religion today. One wonders whether what is called religion is religion in its real sense. The assumption is that this concern is only understood within the context of the study of religious beliefs and practices, and what is expected from

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every religious adherent. However, such a concern has attracted even people within the field of Hip-hop music (as most times considered worldly music by some stringent religious people). This is expressed particularly in the music of Dax entitled, *Dear God*, whose heart of the music is summarised in his quest for spirituality rather than religion when he stated, 'I don't want religion, I need that spirituality.' This saying becomes the point of attraction for the author, as it carries a deep sense of quest for the heavenly and celestial being.

Though hearing the music by any religious being, particularly Christians, the spirit of atheism may surface in the mind, as the song could be seen to be challenging the deity of God, Jesus, the *Parousia*, and the Christian faith, among many others, as we shall analyse. Such can be seen within the context of religiosity, where a lack of spiritual ingredients hinders sound judgment in evangelism and exhortation, rather than challenging the deity of God. Is God angry with Dax? I am not sure. Are religious Christians angry with Dax? The answer could be affirmative. Whether Christian evangelism and exhortation should be done only within the sphere of the church or any religious gathering has become a concern that has cast darkness on the Great Commission of Jesus to his followers (Matt. 28:19-20).

DAX AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

To understand and appreciate the song, it is important to study the musician and poet who wrote and sang the song. Dax is a Nigerian Canadian musician, rapper, singer, and songwriter. He was born on the 22nd of March, 1994, in a city, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, but currently resides in Los Angeles, United States of America. He first gained public recognition in 2017 with his record hit song "Cash Me Outside" featuring Danielle Bregoli. His official name is Daniel Daxton Muzi Clay Nwosu Jr, and he is also known for his freestyle remixes of famous tracks such as "What's Poppin" and "Godzilla." Before venturing into music, Dax had a passion for basketball during high school, where he played the guard position for his school's team. In his senior year, he was named the *Most Valuable Player* (MVP). Additionally, he was a member of the *Newman Jets National Basketball Association* at Newman University, where he played defence (Mbuthia, "Dax's biography").

Dax worked as a part-time Janitor and enjoyed doing spoken word poetry, and has been a traveling motivational speaker. This early life has really shaped his understanding of life, poetry, and music, and led him to encounter life from the angle of reality rather than an abstract view. Of course, this is reflected in the questions he asks in his songs, apart from his life experience living with his parents at home.

His first released album was "It's Different Now" in August 2018, where he featured Futuristic and O.T. Genesis. Also, he released his second album, *I'll Say It for*

You,” in 2020, which was supported by the songs “Dear God” and “Book of Revelation.” He also released “The Next Rap God 2” in 2021, and he continued to release songs independently, though he has a connection with Columbia Records. In August 2023, Dax released his first major label and his third overall, “What is Life,” which marks his continued quest for God and life (Dax, “Dear God”).

Dax is a Christian, or to put it, he is a believer. Of course, one would expect such from a man who has an African origin and has seen the troubles engulfing the African continent, yet could not find answers for the human predicament facing human beings on earth. While it is hard sometimes to live as God wants, Dax has repeatedly mentioned that he has been trying to please God with his way of life, though sometimes life seems hard.

The song “Dear God” was inspired when he started writing poetry, and the idea of Dear God came to him when he was beginning to ask questions about God. At the beginning, it didn’t look like it was going to be a song, but he later converted it. He stated that,

So the idea for 'Dear God' was actually like three years ago when I started writing poetry. But it didn't seem like it was ever going to be a song. I've always had multiple moments in my life where I said, “Dear God,” like during the positive times and during negative times, you know what I mean? (Dax, “Dear God”).

The song was a reverse reaction to the poetry he wrote, “Dear Alcohol”.

So when I started writing poetry, I had a poem that was called Dear God, and then dear alcohol—I have all these different poems. So “Dear God” was one, but there was just never a beat to it. And then there’s a guy named Encore Beats, and he’s the one who got the beat from. It was on YouTube. It was like a MF/G-Eazy beat or something like that. I played it in the car, and as soon as it started, I said, Dear God. And I was like, wow. So this poem that I’d had for three years finally fit to a beat. It was dope (Dax, “Dear Alcohol”).

A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF DAX’S *DEAR GOD*

The song “Dear God” has been a remarkable soundtrack that has been so influential in the hip-hop music industry. It has been a song that raises the atheistic antennae of the stringent religious people and has equally influenced many who understood the motive of the song. While the Christian journey can be seen to be a practical-based faith, it has become significant that Christians understand that raising questions about God and his existence and the existence of certain ills in society is never wrong, but an act to situate the mind into the things of God in search for clarity. No one can say he or she understands God totally, as the human mind is limited in the

things about God to comprehend. Therefore, “Dear God” is a walk in the believer’s life of faith, which is engulfed with uncertainties.

Song’s Introit

Dax introduced the song by stating his position on God as a believer. He is not an atheist or an agnostic but a theist who believes in the activities and celestial endeavours of God. This was an important point to make as he started the lyrics of the song. He also made it clear that sometimes the journey of the Christian gets too hard, and certain questions abound. He sings:

I just want to make this clear

I am a believer

But sometimes it gets hard (listen)

My name is Dax (Dear God) (Dax, “Dear God”).

It is also clear that the place of the Christian does not mean that life will always be smooth without challenges and tribulations. Jesus made it clear to the disciples that anybody who wants to follow him, must carry his cross, a significant teaching which is rooted in the symbolism of Jesus carrying his cross for the sins of the world (Matt. 10:38; Mk. 8:34; Lk 9:23; 14:27; 16:26). Commenting about the song, Dax himself expressed his thought of the introit that he has always believe in God and still does but as one grows older, one begins to see the world differently and think for himself rather swallowing all the parents have given. He commented that:

I think I say it at the start of the song, I am a believer, but sometimes it gets hard. So I think my relationship with God, and also I think a lot of people’s relationships is that like when you’re born, you’re so malleable, you know what I mean? So you learn to speak from your parents, you take on their accent, and basically whatever their beliefs are you adopt. So I’ve always believed in God and I still do, I’ve never not believed in God, but I think as you grow older and you start to figure out there’s a world around you and you can think for yourself, you develop these questions. So I think that’s where Dear God sort of came from. It’s the walk through a believer’s life. You develop these questions when you start to get a mind of your own, and you have these questions. But it’s like, “okay, but I’m still a believer, but I-” Dear God is basically just like a walk in a believer’s life (Dax, “Dear God”).

Also, in another comment, he stated that it’s important for people to understand his place of faith because he has people who follow him and he has had influence, so it was important for his beliefs to be clarified at the beginning of the song. Dax stated that:

I think it was important to know so people could follow a storyline. I think it’s important for people to know Dax believes in God because I have a lot of people who follow me and I have influenced. So I want them to know what my belief is. I

just wanted to make it clear from the beginning, but just to let them know and it also gets hard sometimes (Dax, “Dear God”).

The essence of the song can be seen to have been exposed by Dax when he stated that life gets hard sometimes, which contributed to becoming one of the central messages to be learned in listening to the song and reading through the lyrics. Christianity or religion without some hardship is not pure religion or Christianity (Tambiye, *The African Church* 51, 243). Hardships are part of the journey and can never be separated from the uniqueness of following someone whom you only believe in but have not gotten the chance to see.

Verse 1 of the Song

Dax, in this verse, has clear knowledge and focus of what he wanted to achieve at the end of the day in the song, and he has raised some vital questions God, his love and love for humans, the Bible, heaven or hell, the Parousia, the place of religions, moral injustice, and the whether God is white or black.

Search for the Realities about God

Asking God questions is never out of place for any student of theology, whether as a Christian or follower of any other religion. The truth is that the human mind has its limitations when it comes to the things of God. Dax is also a human being. He addressed God and made his points known that he has been asking people questions about God, but it seems there have not been convincing answers; hence, even the teachers of faith don't seem to know the answers to the things that happened in the past about his life and the world. He sings:

Dear God

There's a lot of questions that I have about the past (Can you hear me?)

*And I don't want hear it from a human you made so you're the last person
that I'm ever gonna ask*

Tell me what's real, tell me what's fake

Why is everything about you a debate? (Why?) (Dax, “Dear God”).

It is true that answers about the questions surrounding God and the universe are provided by human beings, who themselves do not have an accurate understanding of who God is. This made us have variations and sometimes opinions about God. Another philosopher and a songwriter is Hopsin, who has similar thoughts about the place of God and the questions that he has, and it seems humans cannot provide answers to his thirst: “I need an answer and humans can't provide it.” To Hopsin, there are many opinions in Christianity and other religions. Everything about Christianity and the church is all about “what if” (Par. 11). The whole idea of “what if” seems to apply to several aspects of Christianity. On planet Earth, the universe, sacrifice, and afterlife are all spoken about using “what if”, which means they are suspected (Hopsin, “Ill Mind of

Hopsin 7”; Tambiyi, “Hopsin’s *Ill Mind of Hopsin* 7, 230-345). Unlike Hopsin, whose mental state was eating him up as a result of crying to God for some answers but saw himself as not sharing that type of bond with God, Dax depicted God as the only person who has answers to some of those questions, as he is tired of searching for answers from human ideologies and traditions. Dax added that:

That was the start of the poem. I grew up in church. I was an altar boy, I was in the choir, confirmation, everything, everything underneath the sun that does, and going to church on Sunday. Then I went to a private Catholic Christian school when I went prep School for basketball. And then I ended up finishing at a private catholic school at my D2 when I transferred from D1. So it was just like, I’ve been in so many Bible classes, I’ve been in front of so many pastors. It’s like, yo, I’m tired of just hearing it from people. Not disrespectful, I’d rather talk to you about it my G. So that’s where that came from. And it’s like, man, I’m just sick of talking to people about it (Dax, “Dear God”).

These comments by Dax summarised his thoughts and experiences with God, as he had been hearing about God and wanted God to speak to him like he did with Adam and Moses, and most of the prophets, but such luxury had not been granted to him. It became necessary for such an enquiry from God and such an insistence on the nature of what is real about God and what is not.

Love of God

Another aspect of the song is love. One wonders whether he meant the love for God or the love for humans. Love is the opposite of hate. Dax seems to understand such dualistic concepts and the opposing force between love and hate. To him, there is no point in love again, because he has shown love, and he was broken; people failed him. It then means the love mentioned was a reference to love for human beings, which he attempted to show, but ended up being disappointed in the process. He sings:

What’s the point of love?

Every time I’ve showed it I was broken and it’s forced me just to only wanna hate
(Dax, “Dear God”).

Dax has been heartbroken several times. He is not a stranger to broken relationships, and it made him compose the song “She Cheated Again,” a track in which he discusses his ex-girlfriend’s betrayal of his trust and loyalty (Dax, “She Cheated Again”). While human beings can fail a man, God does not fail a man in his love.

One of the key teachings in the Bible is love. Through the books and pages of the Bible, love has dominated the pages of the Bible and, in fact, any other sacred book belonging to any religion. The word love is used 551 times in the New International Version of the Bible. God has given the Israelites ten commandments in Exodus 20, but Jesus came and summarized the ten commandments into one with two diverse effects: that is, love, which is for God and the neighbours. Matthew reported that:

One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matt. 22:35-40).

Apostle John reinterpreted it thus: "This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another" (1 John 3:11) and showed that Jesus put such a message into practice, "Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers" (1 John 3:16-17). Unfortunately, Dax did not find such a sacrifice among humans as Jesus did for humanity. That affected his perception of sacrificial love for humans.

One God but many religions

Dax has also been struggling with the question of one God or many religions. Human beings have reached a level where they want to worship anything available. The ancient people and the children of Israel have engaged in the worship of different gods apart from Yahweh. God felt that his name was profaned by such an act (Lev. 18:2; 20:3; 2 Kg 19:6-7; Isa. 37:6; 52:5; Ezek. 36:22). Like Dax, similar questions were raised by Hopsin, who made clear in his song that there are many religions with vivid descriptions and begging men and women to listen and follow them (Hopsin, "Ill Mind of Hopsin 7"). Dax sings that:

Why's there only one you but multiple religions? (Why?)

Why does every conversation end in a division? (Why?)

*Why does everybody want to tell us how to live but they won't listen to the same damn message that they giving? (F**k them)*

Tell me how to feel, tell me what's wrong

I tried to call, pick up the phone

I'm on my own (Dax, "Dear God").

Dax depicted that there is one God with many religions, some are monotheistic, while others are polytheistic in nature. This could be that either we do not get the message of God, or because we are operating upon the free will that is given to humankind. Commenting on the idea of many religions, Dax commented that:

We've been here for so many years, so messages are getting passed through different generations and through different people, through different countries with different heights, races, all these things, climates, so everyone is going to create their own version of what I guess the original message is, which is what we've all somewhat confused about in the first place. So, I think that's why there are multiple religions, it's a big game of telephone (Dax, "Dear God").

Of course, the whole idea of many religions is creating many problems for humanity in the aspects of many lacking tolerance and coveting superiority over others, and has contributed in fuelling division among so-called religions. Also, Dax stated that:

I've seen divisions where people are like, What, wait, I see them going "in the name of Jesus." I've seen divisions over so many things. Religion-based, you know what I mean? Basically, what you eat, the blood of Christ, there's just so many different conversations that I feel like divide people (Dax, "Dear God").

The idea of "One God, many religions" has been the concern of mankind. Human beings have initiated the concept of worship among the Ancient Near Eastern people. Scholars have argued that religions should be used rather than the word 'religion.' The ancient world prescribed what is called religion. Adam, as the Bible states, was the first man to worship God. But with the Tower of Babel experience, human beings adopted various languages and religions (Gen. 11:1-8). Tambiyi added that, "The recorded act of worship, which was first started by Cain and Abel, was adopted by the Babylonians, although they might have emulated worship from their parents. Worship among the Babylonians is as old as the origin of Shinar and Assyria (Gen. 10:8-11)" (Tambiyi, *Priesthood* 23; Tambiyi, *The African Church* 17; Walke 363-372; Kafang 6-7). Worship of gods was not foreign to the Jewish people as they tried to worship other gods in the days of Jacob, Moses, the Judges, and the Prophets, and even in the New Testament (Gen. 35:2; Exo. 18:11, 20:3-33; 32:1-31; Deut. 6-32; Josh. 23-24; Judg. 9-10, 18; 1 Sam. 4-6; 1 Kings 9, 11, 20; Isa. 36-37; Jer. 2, 5, 16, 44; Dan. 5,11; Acts 7:40; 17:18; 19:26; I Cor. 8:5; Gal. 4:8). Worshipping other gods and carving religious beliefs amid a religion or religions is not foreign to humankind. The same can be said of other existing religions, such as Islam, African traditional Religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and many others.

Issues of making heaven and religious authenticity have been challenging. Such dimensions of making heaven, which is the central message and hope for the afterlife, have become a problem among these religions. Each of them has its unique means of entering heaven, and the quest for superiority becomes evident as each feels its adherents will make heaven while the adherents of other religions will make hell.

It is not just within religions that there are doctrinal divisions and conflicting belief systems. Even with Christianity, there are divisions on beliefs and doctrinal grounds. The reformation was to change things and break away from the practices and beliefs that were a deviation from the beliefs of Jesus and the early church.¹ Today, the Roman Catholics, the protestants, and the Pentecostal movements are holding onto conflicting beliefs which are all claimed to have their roots in the Bible. Even the Roman Catholics are divided with new branches like the charismatic Catholics, the Protestants also have many branches, such as Orthodox, ECWA, COCIN, with the Pentecostals generating their various winds of conflicts in beliefs. It is becoming rapid

with new waves of modern churches, which lack a foundation, and many other issues are all in the name of God, Jesus, The Holy Spirit, and carrying the name Church. This becomes a concern for Dax and Hopsin.

The Parousia

Another issue raised in this song by Dax is the Parousia, particularly the imminent coming of Jesus, which has been recorded in the New Testament. Research has shown that it was only Apostle John who stated that Jesus said, "I am coming soon." It is also evident that such an imminent nature of the coming has been the problem since the early church, which thought Jesus was coming the following week. Such a wait continued through the medieval ages to the Age of Enlightenment and to the modern church. Dax stated that the coming of Jesus is taking time, and the pain and hate in the world seem to be on the increase. He sings that:

Everybody says you're coming back, then man why the hell's it taking so long?

Why do I hurt?

Why is there pain?

Why does everything good always have to change? (Why?) (Dax, "Dear God").

Such a world of uncertainty concerning the return of Jesus, the wickedness of human beings, and the elimination of God at the mercy of evil are enough reasons for every human being to raise a concern. Tambiyi has argued that:

With the lack of multiple attestations, particularly in the Synoptic Gospels, it is likely that Jesus never used the word *ταχύ* as an adverb in reference to his second coming. It seems to be a later idea of the church, particularly in the book of Revelation (Rev. 3:11; 22:7); the early church thought highly and said much about Jesus Christ than Jesus thought and said about himself" (Tambiyi, "Did Jesus really say").

And as a result,

To understand the usage of 'soon' in the New Testament, one must reckon with the fact that the New Testament does use the language of imminence. "Surely I am coming soon," said the risen Lord to the seer (Rev. 22:20), and similar words cannot be found elsewhere, particularly in the biographies of Jesus. Such words, of course, could mean that the *Parousia* is near on our ordinary time scale. But it is also possible that the language of imminence is used of the Parousia because it refers to an action of God rather than an action of man, and the imminence is on God's time scale, not man's. To live with the conviction that the Parousia is imminent does not mean to be in a continuous ecstasy of enthusiasm. It means to have a deep-seated hope and to occupy oneself in doing what pleases the Master so that when He comes, His servant will be found ready (Tambiyi, "Did Jesus really say").

Cheating each other

The love for money has been the force of the day. Many people are craving money illegally. People are craving the success of other people and are destroying others in the name of making money. Dax was also concerned about that in the song, and he could see that in everyday life.

Why does everybody try to profit off another man's work then destroy it just for monetary gain? (Dax, "Dear God").

To support the assertion by Dax, the Bible has injunctions about the love for money and the place of contentment (I Tim. 6:1-10, with emphasis on verses 5, 6, and 10). Tambiyi has argued that "godliness with contentment is great gain...Contentment depends solely on our belief in the future world to come, which is independent of material things. This way, he taught that we fall into temptation because of the desire to become rich by any means, and that 'the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil' (v. 10)" (Tambiyi, *The African Church* 231, 301; Guthrie 125).² One can progress in life without destroying the lives of other people.

Black or White God

"Was Jesus black or white?" has been a question that many people in the 19th and 20th centuries have battled with. Such arguments are not on the table of modern people, as the focus of life and the quest for God has taken different dimensions. This question was also raised by Dax in search of the true identity of God/Jesus. While feeling oppressed, the black communities began the search for the true picture of Jesus; hence, the circulating pictures of Jesus were of a white Jesus. He sings:

Tell me are you black or are you white?

I don't even really care I just really want to know what's right (I don't Care)

(Dax, "Dear God").

This was a quest sometimes past as the fight for survival between the whites and the black people continued to be a fierce battle in the midst of racism and oppression. Dax commented that:

Growing up in schools, I remember I mover from the inner city of Ottawa, Canada to the suburbs and obviously God is everywhere in the schools and all the things and you see this picture of a white God....but then you get older, right? And all of a sudden one day someone's like, 'yo, you know they're lying, right? God was black, bro.'...and as soon as you got to Google, that do you put? Is God black? And thousands of things come up and I'm talking about, people write books on this. So you go through once again, that questioning period, then I'm just like, 'at the end of the day, I really don't care whether God is black or white, but I know I would like to know (Dax, "Dear God").

Just like Dax would like to know, many people also would like to know in the midst of the existing arguments and the search for superiority, and each race, whether black or white, would like to be associated with the colour of the divine personality, God/Jesus (Siker 26-53; Lyons 139-54; Harley 221-58). Some of the arguments are reflected in movies.³ Such racial views were captured by Howard Thurman, where he demonstrates and attests the mindset, particularly the explication breaks from traditional theological categories and positions Jesus as a “religious subject rather than a religious object” (15). and also presented a socio-spiritual Christological view of Jesus within the context of oppression, injustice, and inequality. Although Thurman’s work is not fully appreciated and publicized in Jesus studies today, it has influenced many people and brought radical change in society. Thurman reacted to the racial difference, discrimination, and the unjust treatment of blacks by whites in society (Tambiyi, *The Historical Jesus*, 63; Tambiyi, “The Disinherited” 36-49). This radical transvaluation denotes Jesus to be a fellow participant and exemplar in community as opposed to a relic or icon over and above the community (Neal 1-6). Sometimes one feels these arguments don’t matter in a modern society; hence, an equilibrium is almost reached within the question of racism. But why Dax is raising such a question in the 21st century could seem a mystery.

The Bible

When it comes to the Bible, Dax felt like the pastors and teachers of the word have been lying to him about the reality of things expressed in the Bible. It is good to say that the Bible is a human guide for a practical life in Christianity. Dax sings:

They been saying one thing but I’ve been looking in the book

And it seems like they’ve been lying for my whole damn life (Dax, “Dear God”).

The reality of the versions of the Bible, considering our modern versions, cannot be hidden under the carpet. These versions contain different things, and some on the grounds of being textual variations and interpolations by ancient scribes during the early church. The modern quest for the original text of the Bible has involved putting effort into reconstructing the text of the Bible. Dax does not seem to understand these variations in the various available versions of the Bible. He commented that:

I do know that there’s a lot of different versions of the Bible and a lot of people questioning, well, which one should I read? So when I say that I started looking at the Bible, obviously I’ve read and I do sometimes, but I just feel that there’s different versions. So how do you know, once again, what’s right? (Dax, “Dear God”).

The issues of versions of the Bible is a fact and that even in the original Greek language, some of the Greek editions have paved their ways to be the accepted versions in our modern time, upon which many of the modern English versions which I believed Dax has been reading were interpreted from (Tambiyi, “Exiling” 179-191; Walter 311-

31; Metzger, *The Early Versions*). These Greek versions (Universal Bible Society's Greek New Testament⁵ and Nestle-Aland²⁸), the text Textus Receptus of the King James of 1611 have all being criticised to have diverted our attentions and provided a text that is based on older manuscripts rather than being the original text of the New Testament (Epp, "Multivalence"; Epp, "Issues" 75; Robinson 126; Botha 564-9; Tambiyi, "The Text" 211-233), which cannot be retrieved (Greenlee, Ladd, Metzger, Holmes, Fee, Tambiyi, "Metzger" 51-72). For the Old Testament, the Masoretic text has shed light on the careful scribal preservation, which can be somewhat trusted (Würthwein, *The Text*; Tov, *The Greek*; Wegner, *The Journey*; Walter 311-31). Such knowledge was lacking in Dax's inquiry in the song.

Heaven or Hell

The concept of heaven and hell was also raised by Dax in his song. Such an understanding had made Dax wonder whether he would make heaven or hell and demanded that God should tell him in clear terms where he is going between heaven and hell. He sings:

Tell me where I'm going (Where?)

Is it heaven or hell?

I just hope this message greets you well

I had a dream that I was walking with the devil

Don't remember how it feels but I swear that I remember the smell

Looked me right into my eyes and told me everything I wanted could be mine if I gave up and decided to sell

But I said I'd rather die then get mine now I'm here no fear one man with a story to tell (Dax, "Dear God").

Metaphorically speaking about life, Dax also said in the song that he had dreamt walking with the Devil, though he could not remember the feelings, but the smell of walking with the Devil, and all that the Devil had offered him, everything, should he decide to give up in the Christian journey and decide to sell his soul to the Devil. However, Dax preferred to die for his belief rather than cooperate with the Devil. He commented that:

That's a metaphor for life. It's not me saying, I actually had a dream where I saw the Devil. Its me saying that in life, there's so many temptations and things that try to take you away from what your purpose is...its just me saying that I'm choosing to consciously be aware that there's all influences that can cause me to do negative things and I'm doing my best to be like, 'no, I'm going to go this way.

To an extent, one does not blame Dax for such an enquiry and metaphorical usage of words. The "One God, many religions" understanding has some effect on the understanding of making heaven or hell. I know some stringent and arrogant Christians

who think they will make heaven, will criticise Dax for not being a believer of Jesus, who has a personal relationship with Jesus; hence, he would have known where he is going in the afterlife. But the question is, is it that easy? But some of these Christians would say that it is very easy if he has a personal relationship with God. But we find Dax commenting that he hopes he will make heaven because, even though a sinner, he has been trying and seeking forgiveness. Despite his effort, social media makes it difficult and demanding for almost everything to be public. He stated:

I hope I'm going to heaven. We're all innate sinners and I think I'm for the most of the times aware of when I do things wrong and try to ask for forgiveness and all the times, sometimes even apologize. Social media makes it tough with apologizing, because everyone wants you to f**king do things in public, when in reality most things are better handled with two people. But like I said, we all make mistakes. I think I'm going to heaven (Dax, "Dear God").

Verse 2 of the Song

Dax has expressed his heart's desire to God, and he feels God and people have treated him for the past years. Life has had its influence on him. He also discussed his quest for spirituality rather than religion, family of God rather than church, and the problem with public confession in the church.

The Human Decision and the Burden of Life

Dax made it clear that he always needs God around, but it seems he does not get to see God attend to him. When he goes the wrong way, he discovers that he repeats such wrongdoings without God to help him out. It is just clear that he feels God does not act swiftly as he expects. People seem to judge him even without knowing who he is in real life. Dax feels God should have been closer to him than he is now. He is opting for a closer relationship. He sings:

Dear God

Where were you when I needed it?

*When I f**ked up and repeated it?*

When they set the bar and I exceeded it?

*My life is like a book that they've been judging by a cover but have never took the time to f**king read the shit (F**k)*

I remember telling you my goals and my dreams but you didn't even answer so I guess you didn't believe in it

I remember sitting with a gun to my head trying to ask you for some help but I guess you didn't believe in it! (Dax, "Dear God").

Life must have reached its peak for Dax at some point. His expressions here explain that, and of course, that is common to many people who pass through difficult times in

life; the weight of the burden does not get lifted, but the good thing about it is that all these things are temporary. According to Dax,

The gun was a metaphor of burden of life, you know what I mean? There's a couple of different metaphors in the song for burdens. The cross was people's burdens. That gun to my head was when you're just feeling like it's about to be over and you're not going to make it and nothing's going your way. Where were you at this point before you're about to pull the trigger, a.k.a. being me quitting? Whether that be on your dreams, your goal as a person. So that's what the gun was about (Dax, "Dear God").

The joy of the journey of life is that there is hope for a better life in the future for all Christians. The Bible made it clear that all the burdens of life should be cast upon the burden carrier, Jesus. He said in Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." When we surrender our lives and endure the burdens of life, there is a better life where the pains of life do not exist. This is the Christian's hope in Christ, as Apostle John wrote:

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Rev 21:3-4).

The Quest for Spirituality and Family

Dax's enquiry in this section is the heart of the Christian message, and it has been a concern for many people, considering the state of the church and religion today. The church of old has lost its place in the modern world. The church has become a place for religiosity rather than spirituality. Instead of being the family of God, it has become a place where a lot of religiosities are practiced without the sense of olden days spirituality. Christianity has lost such an ancient *aroma* when it comes to worship, preaching, Bible studies, visitation, caring for one another, humility, taking the burden of others, among many others. Dax sings:

*I don't want religion I need that spirituality
I don't want a church I need people to call a family
I don't wanna tell my sins to another sinner just because he's got a robe and he
went to some academy
I don't wanna read it in a book, I wanna hear it from you
Don't wanna learn it in a school because they're hiding the truth* (Dax, "Dear God").

The whole thing about the modern church is that it has become a routine. He described it as a chore, something one does every day. And coupled with parents' pressure, one must go to church whether one wants to go or not, but again, sometimes, children tend to fake sick, and parents would still insist that one must go to church. Dax experienced such and commented:

I started to feel that, when it started to feel like a routine and it started to feel like a chore. I remember waking up on Sunday and trying to fake sick, not to want to go to church and then getting beat and being like, "nah, you have to go." You know what I mean? Once it became like, ugh, ugh. And it was every Sunday, right? But the week would go by so fast and every Sunday it would feel like, it just was there again. So at that point it was like, "man, this is too much, bro." And then by the time I moved out, it was like, "okay, I am not going back."

Dax made another point about public confession to the priests and feels that his sins are not meant for any priest to hear, for God alone. I concur with his ideology as it finds its roots in the Bible, particularly the eternal priesthood of Jesus for the church. Every believer needs to take his or her sins directly to God, as it is the will of God. The tearing of the curtain of the Holy of Holies, when Jesus died on the cross, gives every believer the right to act as his or her own priest with Jesus as the High Priest. Tambiyi also makes this point clear when he writes:

Jesus offered himself to the Father in heaven and provided us with eternal redemption. This happened on the day he died on the cross when the curtain of the Holy of Holies torn into two (Matt. 27:51). He made all of us priest. We all now have accessed to the Holies of God which even the High Priest in Israel had accessed once in a year on the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*). We can now go and present our sacrifices of praise, good deeds, self, and soul won for the Lord (Heb. 13:15-16; Rom. 12:1; 2 Tim. 4:6; Rom. 15:16) (Tambiyi, *Priesthood* 75).

Once a person becomes a Christian, he or she takes the full responsibility of being a priest and can offer prayers to God without having to channel his or her prayers through a pastor or a church priest. Tambiyi also wrote that:

Becoming a Christian opens the priestly gate for all who believe in the New Covenant, which is in the pattern of Jesus not in the pattern of Levi but that of Christ, which gives life in abundance. Though we are not biological descendants of Levi, like Jesus, we have been awarded the priestly positions which are above the priestly orders of Levi. This priesthood is greater than that of Aaron. It is in the order of Melchizedek. We have now become priests with Jesus as our High Priest who pleads before the Father on behalf of our sins daily (1 Jn 2:1-2). Christ has made all of us to be priests and He is our eternal High Priest (Tambiyi, *Priesthood* 222).

Such a place of priesthood is what everyone anticipates, and Dax also was looking forward to attending such a height rather than relying on some pastors and priests. But to help the person get rid of some obvious and repeated sins which are causing illnesses, there is a need to confess before the elders to get healed. James made it “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16). The focus should be living a spiritual life rather than living out religion. Fake religious life has become common among many church members. The church is after becoming a family for believers, not as an earthly organization where a lot of atrocities occur. Such spirituality as practiced by the early church is what creates an assurance for an afterlife in heaven, rather than practicing religiosity, which is against the plans of God for the church.

Verse 3 of the Song

Dax makes it clear on his concern for the poor and religious hypocrisy in verse three of the song. This concern is genuine and necessary, considering the current state of the church in this modern dispensation.

The Quest and Desire for Evangelism

Another major issue was the desire to convert darkness into light. Such dualistic concepts have been against each other since the beginning of creation (Gen. 1:2-4). While trying to live the Christian life, one finds challenges of life to lure human beings into practices of some dark part of life. Dax’s desire was to be able to conquer that darkness in his life and even help others to conquer their darkest parts of life. He sings that:

Dear God

How do I take this darkness and turn it into light? (talk to me)

How do I believe in a concept where I speak to a man I’ve never seen with my own two eyes? (How?) (Dax, “Dear God”).

Dax is conversant about the thing about life as he early stated. One finds him reflecting such a dimension of life, the constant struggle between light and darkness, which Christians always believe that light would conquer darkness at the end of life. Dax commented that “...what I would just try to do just stay true to myself and that’s always been motivating people, trying to affect others and just motivate them to chase their dreams. So I try to turn my darkness into light by staying true to myself...” (Dax, “Dear God”).

On speaking to God and believing that God has answered us, Dax made it clear that though he has seen God, he believes God listens to all his desires. He commented that: When I talk to God, I just assume he’s listening because that’s what I’ve been told. When we talk to God like he says we can’t see him so how he can believe he’s listening

if he can't see him" (Dax, "Dear God"). Christians always believe that God listens to their prayers, and so also people of other religions. The light in the life of the Christian should reflect in everything he or she does so that men and women will see and praise the Father who is in heaven (Matt. 5:14).

Concern for the poor

Although prayer is good, Dax, in the song, believes that it has become an act for the poor, because he sees religion being dominated by the poor people in society as Karl Marx sees it as an opium of the masses (Youvan, "Religion"; Omonijo, Uche, Nnedum and Chine 1-7; Pedersen 354-387; McKinnon 15-38; Rogers and Konieczny 1-11; Chikumbu, "Religion"; Cline, "Karl Max"; Baader 19). The rich are becoming richer while the poor are left on the altars, praying day and night with no results, and that perhaps would make religion some joke; hence, it does solve the outcry of the poor. He sings:

How do I know that religion wasn't made just to separate the world and create a whole disguise just to keep us in these chains while the rich get richer and the poor pray to you and perpetuate a lie?

How do I know this ain't some big joke?

How can I have faith when there is no hope?

How the hell does one man have 100 billion dollars and we still have people on the street that are broke? (Dax, "Dear God").

To Dax, the essence is to know the motive behind religion, as he does not see it fulfilling its goals. Such religious efforts should make the rich take care of the poor, but it seems the contrary. People have so much yet in their society, where there are so many homeless people who cannot cater to their needs. Irrespective of the motive behind the homeless being on the streets, it is deeper than food. And when one wants to help, he or she should just help without demanding to know what the person would use the money for. Dax keeps on reminding the rich to give back to the poor in society.

Religious Hypocrisy

Dax continued his song with some inquiry about his life, as he has so much to say to be free. There is so much pressure from the Devil to suppress Christians from living a good life. He went on to talk about the place of hypocritical religion, where child molestation is very common, particularly among the clergy. Such an act alone won't allow him to sleep. He sings that:

There's a lot of things I wanna talk about and get off my chest

I can't sleep 'cause the devil won't let me rest

*I used to know a f**king pastor in a church and I can still hear the screams of the kids he would f**king molest (Dax, "Dear God").*

The weight of religious hypocrisy is growing in the modern church today, so that many pastors and members are no longer afraid of God anymore. The church really needs to get those olden days religions, where spirituality was the focus.

Verse 4 of the Song

Dax also returned to some enquiries he had made before, and one would wonder why the repetition. Repetition is an important element in music, whether individual notes, small groups of notes, or even complete hooks, are meant “to fix the tune firmly in your listener’s ear, so that they both expect it when it happens again and remember it once it’s over” (Computer Music, “Songwriting Basics”). Repetition serves as a restatement of the musical theme, and it involves the repetition of sounds, sequences, or themes within a piece of music. Dax employed repetition to have the message sink deep into the minds of the listeners.

Religious pluralism

Dax needed God to hear as he made his case. Usually, God is supposed to be feared among humankind, but it seems Dax is not afraid of God again since God has not replied to him. The voice of God has terrified men and women in the history of the world. Even in the Bible, we find man afraid of the voice of God, people trembled at the hearing of the voice of God and his presence (Exo. 15:14; Ezek. 38:20; Jer. 5:22; Isa. 66:5). But it seems Dax is not yet afraid because he has not heard God say a thing. He sings that:

Dear God

Do you hear me? (Do you hear me?)

I’m supposed to fear you but you ain’t said shit so maybe it’s you who actually fears me?

I don’t know the answer I just want to see it clearly

So many lies there’s a 1000 different theories

All I want to know is who really made religion because I know it wasn’t you but don’t nobody believes me (Dax, “Dear God”).

Religions are the birthplace of theories about life and God.⁴ Each religion has provided numerous answers to the problems of humankind, making the whole enterprise and people confused about which is right and which is wrong. At the end, he concludes that God did not create religion; human beings did, and it seems people don’t seem to believe him about such a depiction of religions not being the creations of God.

Afterlife

Dax also cast his mind into the future, and he could see that a time would come when there would be no more lies and no more death. This is captured in the book of Revelation 21 and 22, which forms the recap of the garden of Eden for humankind.

Tambiyi has argued about the garden being mentioned in three books of the Bible: Genesis, Proverbs, and Revelation, and that the Bible opens with the garden of Eden and closes with the discussions about the Garden of Eden as a means of hope for the hopeless in God (Tambiyi, "The Tree of Life" 22-34). He sings:

No more lies, no more death

Bring back King, bring back X

Please dear God let their souls rest

Protect who's left and watch their steps (Dax, "Dear God").

One could see Dax after the souls of good people; unfortunately, they are all taken away by God, and the wicked ones are still hovering the streets of the earth. He asked God to bring back two personalities who perhaps have influenced his life: Martin Luther King Jr and Malcolm X. These men have fought for the freedom of black people in American society. Dax also prayed that God should protect and watch the steps of the remnant, perhaps in the Music industry or the entire good people.

The Coda of the Song

Dax ends the song with a *coda*, a musical term for the final statement or summary of the main musical material, which revisits themes or motifs from earlier parts in the entire song composition. Coda usually presents a good sense of completeness through reinforcing familiar musical elements with the formal structure of coda being either short or extended, depending on the piece's structure (Yousician, "74 Musical Terms"). This forms the end of Dax' song.

Faith affirmation

The song begins and ends with Dax's faith affirmation. Dax repeated the "Dear God" and insisted that God needs to answer him; hence, he does not have to ask again. He stated that people should know that he is still a believer and of course, he ends the song by saying "amen." Dax sings:

Dear God

I don't want to have to ask you again

*I just hope that you know that I'm still a believer so I'll end this all by saying
amen*

It's Dax (Dax, "Dear God").

Of course, hearing the song, people with stringent religious beliefs would think and assume that Dax is not a Christian, hearing the way he questions God. Like Hopsin, who concludes his song acknowledging that he is still human and he will stay on his lane (Hopsin, "Ill Mind of Hopsin 7"), Dax repeats the affirmation of his faith by saying amen, making all he has said to be a prayer rather than an enquiry. The word "amen" means "let it be" or a certain affirmation to something, which is used in Christianity, Judaism, and even Islam. For Christians and followers of Judaism, amen is used as an

affirmation of thoughts or agreement over a particular proclamation (Num. 5:22; Ps 72:19; Jn 5:24; Matt. 6:13; Rom. 11:36; Rev. 3:14) (Rhoades, "You might Say). At the end, one would be safe to say that Dax philosophically and metaphorically prayed to God rather than challenged God.

DEAR GOD, REALITIES OF GOD AND HUMAN PREDICAMENTS

The place of God in the life of humans has been a thing of concern as the realities of the existence and nature of God have always been a bone of contention among Christians and scholars of religion, both theists, agnostics, and atheists. Most of the atheists could not regulate their beliefs about God, which led to their radical view about God, denying his existence, and the agnostics who doubt his existence. But while the arguments have been ongoing, various positions have been at the forefront to maximize the thoughts in search for a common ground, which has not been possible. This becomes the genesis of human predicaments in search for light at the end of the tunnel.

There are theists, what I call stringent Christians, who feel that the place of God should be accepted by faith rather than being questioned. To an extent, accepting those realities of God has not been easy with every human being considering its complex nature, from his existence, his dealings with humans, knowledge of all to the transcend incarnation of Jesus and the diversified role often called the Trinity (Marmion and Nieuwenhove 5-7104; Williams 317-332; Brown 5-180; Davis, Kendalla SJ, and O'Collins 1-327; Kärkkäinen 10-180; Nyamiti 21-22; Nyamiti, *Christ Our Ancestor* 9-11). Within the context of the human mind, it is not easy to comprehend such thoughts; hence, the human mind is limited in terms of comprehending the existence and the nature of God. It then means that such human limitations would prompt humans to venture into venturing to raise questions they do not comprehend. It is rather unfortunate that when an attempt is made to raise religious questions surrounding the existence and nature of God, one is being tagged an unbeliever because such stringent Christians feel God should not be questioned, rather humans are to believe everything irrespective of whether humans have seen or understand what they are to believe or not. Personally, I don't think making enquiries about the things one does not understand should be a welcome idea rather than being tagged. Unfortunately, those who tag people are not really knowledgeable in such areas of arguments, but they allow their so-called faith to become a yardstick for judging people's intent when it comes to the existence, nature, and things of God.

God has revealed himself to the Jewish people as being one (Deut. 6:4), and he expected the people to remain married to him in such a monotheistic form of religion, Judaism. Such understanding has been passed in the early formation of Christianity, and even when Islam came, the thoughts of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) were shaped by such monotheistic knowledge of God (Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ* 103-116; Hayman 1-

15; Fredriksen 231–46; Hurtado, *One God* 128-129; Dunn 303–36). But whether these religions are such monotheistic has been an area of contention. Dax is asking about the origin of such diverse religious connotations among the formations of other religions (African traditional religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, atheism, Taoism, Jainism, Sikhism, Dharma, Shinto, cults, new movements, Confucianism among others), which we have today in the world as the minds of humans are bend to worshipping anything available (Adams, “Classification”; Britanica, “Which Religion”; “How many Religions”). As a result, “one God, many religions” becomes a concern for Dax and many other people, who are interested in the understanding of the formations of such multi-religions. One could say that if God is one, then he is expected to be worshipped alone, as revealed in the Jewish Old Testament. But the human mind has found out that the alternative of worshipping only God does not provide all the necessary curiosity needed, which resulted in the formation of many religions. I would believe that there is truth in one of the variants of religions in the world today, even though the quest for superiority would not allow us to concentrate and search for the ultimate solution.

This understanding of many religions and their superiority quests raises the question of the afterlife, which all religions seem to have different descriptions about eternity, whether hell or heaven, or any better life to come. How to get to that eternity has also become a concern among many religions. Christians believe they are only ones that will make heaven; hence, Jesus said he is the *only* way, the truth and the life, the resurrection and the beginning and the end (Jn 14:6; 11:25; Rev. 22:13) and for one to enter the Father’s kingdom, he or she must be born again (Jn. 3:3), an understanding one finds only in the works of Apostle John lacking such multiplicity of attestations. While other religions have various descriptions about the entrance into heaven, the question would be: are all the religions referring to the same heaven (kingdom), or do each believe their own heaven? Does that mean there are several heavens or hell? Paul’s understanding of the various heavens as he was caught up into the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2) could suggest a variance of heavens, but whether such understanding is related to other religions would become a point that needs to be addressed. These could be seen to be some of the questions Dax had in his heart and needed answers for.

As a result of these various religious thoughts, Dax had inquired about the need for spirituality, not religiosity. He asked God for a family of God rather than a church, which does not understand the basics of God’s intention for humankind. Christians and believers should be after the spirituality that is heavenly focused and a better society. The church, as the family of God that is concerned about the welfare of fellow people, should be given priority. It won’t be right to call ourselves Christians yet we have homeless people in our midst yet we have vacant rooms in our homes, the number of the poor in the society is growing, corruptions everywhere, cheating one another at different levels, molesting members of the church, killing each other for no reason, ruthless

politicians coveting what belongs to the masses that voted for them, yet they either form part of the Church or the Mosques or the traditional religions.

There is a need to love each other within society, irrespective of our social class, whether poor or rich. Hatred for each other should not be an option within the frontiers of the church. The church needs both social statuses to prepare it for the groom. The same understanding is needed for other religions. We need to ensure that inequality in life finds its place among the worshippers. God must be the central figure, and we should ensure that whatever we get or have falls back on society.

There is also a need for religio-religion, a concept I believe explains a religion within a religion. With the level of religious hypocrisy currently in the church and other religions, there is a need for a modelled religion with a different religious focus and initiatives. Such a religion is born from a sincere heart, with genuine concerns, and relatively pure motives towards God and one another. People lie and cheat in the name of religion. People covet and steal in the name of religion. People even kill in the name of religion. When religion cannot defend its dignity with its gods or God defending his pride and his name amid the adherents, then such a religion has lost its place and really needs its tentacles to be redefined.

The world today is filled with burdens of life, and it is evident that such burdens have become weighty on people's minds. Life's challenges will always accompany people's actions, but religion should be willing to relieve people of such burdens. When religion makes you a slave to its ideologies, such a religion is incapable of promising an eternity or an afterlife that offers hope. Christianity has urged its followers to cast their burdens upon the master, Jesus, and he will provide rest to the heaven-laden. Whether such cast burdens are lifted would make us look at the societies and the church to see whether there are or not people who are Christians but are entangled with the problems of this world.

Lastly, this song by Dax should be viewed within the context of prayer rather than a challenge to God, his nature and existence, and his complex transcendent relationship embedded like the Son and Holy Spirit. Such a view of the song makes one think positively about the issues raised in the prayers rather than criticising the intention and thoughts of the person making the enquiry. For Dax, prayer was the focus in a poetic mode, clutched within the winds of reasoning and search for answers for the human predicaments in our society and the church, which are similar in other religions unless such a religion is carved within the boundaries of indoctrination.

CONCLUSION

This work concludes that Dax's song, "Dear God," is a prayer rather than a challenge on the nature and existence of God, his tripartite nature, and the outcome of his existence that is religion. While Dax did not compose the song as a religious song,

the lyrics of the song cover a wide variety of issues, which are socially, religiously, economically, and culturally motivated in the religious sphere and space, and the society. While these issues confront us daily in our day-to-day walk and activities with God, the essence was not challenging God but to raise concerns that are common to humankind in search of lifelong solutions amid the burdens associated with life. For the members of the church or adherents of any religion to succeed and have hope in the present realities of life, and focus on the afterlife, which is eternal, spirituality, not religiosity, must be reinstated in all spheres of human existence to curb the predicaments of human existence. Also, the “one God, many religions” concept must be reviewed to align with the initial intent of God for humanity. The church, mosque, shrine or any place of worship belonging to any religion needs to be deconstructed of stringent belief systems and hypocritical religious thoughts that are primarily intended to subdue the human mind into indoctrinated slavery rather than freedom for Jesus said, you shall know the truth and the truth that you know shall set you free (Jn 8:32). Only religio-religion can help the adherents of any religion achieve such freedom.

ENDNOTES

1. For more study on the various reformations and their roles in different countries, see W. P. Stephens ed., *The Bible, the Reformation and the Church: Essays in Honour of James Atkinson* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995). Esther Chung-Kim, *Inventing Authority: The Use of the Church Fathers in Reformation Debates over the Eucharist* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2011). Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Volume VII. Modern Christianity. The German Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1882). Tyler Lange, *The First French Reformation: Church Reform and the Origins of the Old Regime* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984). Dominic Janes, *Victorian Reformation: The Fight over Idolatry in the Church of England (1840-1860)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
2. This biblical assertion has been viewed on the other side. Matthew H. Kukah argued that it is a lack of money that is the root of all kinds of evil and that the love of money is not entirely bad. See Matthew H. Kukah, “The Politics of Money in Nigerian Election” (A Paper Presented during the National Conference on National Election organized by INEC in Ladi Kwali Hall, Abuja Sheraton Hotel and Towers, Aug. 29th –Sept. 1st, 2006). Also see Katung Ishaya, “The Love for Money” in *Kafanchan Times* (25th December 2008-25th January 2009), 18. On the theological

treatment and response of these papers, see Gideon Yohanna, “Re: The Love for Money” (Unpublished, 2009).

3. The movie, *The Colour of the Cross*, is a production of the blackChristianmovies.com in collaboration with Nu-Lite Entertainment, which presents a Jean Claude Lamarre film. This movie features Arimathea AD 33 and depicts Jesus being a black man with some black disciples. This movie, at the end, does not really align with the facts that we have about Jesus in the Gospels; Mary Magdalene was never a girlfriend of the Gospels’ Jesus.
4. When it comes to theories, the Bible made it clear that no one knows when God/Jesus will come back; only the Father knows (Matt. 11:27; 24:36; Mk 13:32; Lk 10:22; 1 Cor. 2:11). However, some famous modern examples in modern times are worth citing. Jesus was said will come in 2000 following some prophetic insights in 1999 about the millennium. Many people sold their properties and belongings as they await the coming of the Lord. The year 2000 came and went, and life continues, and 2014 was also set as an option, which also came and went. Similarly, Family Radio was started by the late Harold Camping in 1958, and it has been a means of evangelizing the world with the gospel message. The Radio has revealed that the end of the world is almost at hand, for the Holy God will bring Judgment on May 21st, 2011. Also, the Mayans predicted the end of 2012, specifically 21st December 2012, to be the end of the world based on their calendar and calculated predictions. This has been documented to be preparatory ground for other prophetic voices that will come. See, Jeremy Myers, “The Date Jesus will Return is finally Revealed” <https://redeeminggod.com/date-jesus-will-return/> Accessed 12th September, 2023. “Family Radio,” www.familyradio.org. Accessed 6th September, 2010. Mark Hitchcock and Alton Gansky, *The Mayan Apocalypse* (Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2010), 68-73.

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