



**All Nations University Journal of Applied Thought (ANUJAT)**  
A Multidisciplinary Approach

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Volume 8/ Number 2

May 2021

Article 11

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**Sacrifice-Service as a *Telos* of Life**

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Recommended Citation:

Mate-Wayo, R. O. (2021). Sacrifice-Service as a *Telos* of Life. *All Nations University Journal of Applied Thought (ANUJAT)*,8(2): 159-174. All Nations University Press. doi:<http://doi.org/10.47987/YCZK9944>

Available at: <http://anujat.anuc.edu.gh/Vol8/No2/11.pdf>

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### ***Abstract***

*The concepts of sacrifice and service are subjects that have their formation in the social, historical and religious settings of the Old and New Testaments. Sacrifice and service were conceived as Telos of human survival in the Bible. Sacrifice and service were largely engaged by Paul in the book of Philippians to mean the use of fragrance in the OT sacrificial system. Paul calls the death of Christ for us an offering and a sacrifice to God a sweet-smelling savour. Paul's view of sacrifice is similar to the understanding of the Krobo people. The concept of sacrifice and service in the socio-historical and religious life of the Krobo people of Ghana would be considered in this study to explain the biblical idea of sacrifice and service. This paper argues that sacrifice-service is as the Telos of personal and or public way of life. This paper explores how Christian sacrifice-service is as offering being "pour-out" in a person's life draws attention to the daily suffering and service in Christ. The overall objective of this paper is to appreciate and promote sacrifice-service in the Bible as the Telos of life to influence moral life and good behaviour.*

**Keywords:** *Sacrifice, Service, Offering, Life, Telos.*

### **Introduction**

This paper will explore the Jewish system of sacrifices in both the Old and New Testaments, using the passage found in the book of Philippians 2:17-30; 4:18. Paul's usage of sacrifice and service in 2:17, suggests that he is pretty much aware of the political-religious diversity of the city of Philippi in communicating those words to them. And that, the Philippians virtue list of gift and giving is an odour of a sweet smelling, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God and this is a catalogue of good behaviour that would be praised in any human environment. It is a sacrifice-service of well-being, a combination of suffering and service in Christ Jesus (Phi. 2:17-18).

The definition of the word sacrifice (*thusia*) in the New Testament denotes the "act of offering" or more accurately, "that which is offered" (Acts 7:41).<sup>1</sup> Metaphorically, Paul used "sacrifice" of the body of the Christian presented to God as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1), sacrifice of faith (Phi. 2:17), sacrifice of material assistance rendered to servants of God (Phi. 4:18), sacrifice of doing

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<sup>1</sup> Vine, W. E., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1996), 543.

good to others and communicating with their needs (Heb. 13:16) and in general spiritual sacrifices offered by Christians as a holy priesthood (1 Pet.2:5).<sup>2</sup> The scripture states, ‘How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb. 9.14) And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Heb. 9.24). And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9.12). Therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate (Heb. 12.13).

Service (*diakoneo*) in the NT is to render any kind of service, that is “to serve” or “to minister.” Again, (*leitourgia*) is rendered service (2 Cor. 9:12; Phi, 2:17). This is a divine service offered in the temple of God and of the Christians in presenting their bodies to God, as an acceptable and a living sacrifice in worship.<sup>3</sup> In this case, the sacrificial service and gift giving of the Philippian church is the power that impact their behaviour and moral life, which is pleasing to God.

*Telos* is a Greek word meaning “the aim or purpose,” or an end of a thing, and the goal of a thing or person, “Now the end (*Telos*) of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Tim. 1:5).<sup>4</sup> It is as well signifies what is paid for public ends, like toll, custom, and tax, “What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom (*Telos*) or tribute? Of their children, or of strangers? (Matt.17:25). In the NT, the half shekel was levied (tax) on all Israelites 20 years of age and above (Exod. 30:13-16). And this amount was used to pay the temple tax, and not paying it may have been considered “robbing” the temple.<sup>5</sup>

Sacrifice in *Webster’s New World Pocket Dictionary* is defined as to “offer (something) to a deity, to give up something for another.”<sup>6</sup> Sacrifice can be described as the act of giving up something that you want to keep especially in order to get or do something else and to help someone. Sacrifice is an act of killing a person or animal in a religious ceremony as an offering to please a god.<sup>7</sup> It is a person or animal that is killed in a sacrifice. Sacrifice can also be an act of offering to a deity something precious, especially; the killing of a victim on an altar. It can be said to be something offered in sacrifice. In sacrifice we have the destruction or surrender of something for the sake of something else.<sup>8</sup> Paul stated that, “For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain” (Phi. 1:21). In other words, he said, for me to live in active Christian service is Christ at work in me and through me, and to die is a gainful sacrifice-service acceptable and pleasing in the sight of God.

<sup>2</sup> Vine, *Vines Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament*, 543.

<sup>3</sup> Vine, *Vines Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament*, 563.

<sup>4</sup> Vine, *Vines Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament*, 142, 199.

<sup>5</sup> D. A. Carson, et.al. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. (Michigan: Zondervan Press, 2015), 2295.

<sup>6</sup> *Webster’s New World Pocket Dictionary*, Second Edition, (Prentice Hall, 1993).

<sup>7</sup> Ted Nelson-Adjakpey, *Penance and Expiatory Sacrifice among the Ghanaian-Ewe and their Relevance to the Christian Religion*, (Rome: Tipografia Olimpica, 1982), 109-113.

<sup>8</sup> Nelson-Adjakpey, *Penance and Sacrifice*, 111.

## The Old Testament System of Sacrifice and Service

In Israel, the laws of sacrifice i.e. the Book of Leviticus are part of the scriptures that belong to everyone. And in fact, in Israel, most of the sacrifices were carried out by the worshipper, and by the priest. There are limits to the effectiveness of sacrifice. In most cases, the sacrifices could only compensate for accidental sins. For deliberate disobedience sacrifice could only express repentance. If a sinner is to be pardoned, he must seek directly from God in order to enable “him to win back the favour of the holy.”<sup>9</sup>

Sacrifices were a regular part of life in ancient Israel. People offered them not only at regular festivals (Lev. 16; 23) but also throughout the year in response to sin (Lev. 4 – 5) or for answered prayer (Ps. 66: 13-16; 107: 19, 22). As a result, almost every OT book mentions or alludes to sacrifice. ... Naturally, it is not only ancient Israel that should give such costly sacrifices in response to the Lord’s goodness. Paul picks up on the idea when he exhorts Christians, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship” (Rom. 12:1). God’s mercies in Jesus are so great (Rom. 9 – 11) that the only appropriate response is whole-hearted devotion [service] to him.<sup>10</sup>

The practice of animal sacrifice goes back to very early times. The book of Genesis chapter 4 tells how Abel killed one of his lambs and gave the best parts as an offering to God. Noah made a sacrifice of animals and birds after his escape from the flood. The agreement (covenant) between God and Abraham was sealed with a sacrifice. The details of the sacrifices are described in the Book of Leviticus.

Burnt-offering (Leviticus 1). The whole animal, except for the skin, which went to the priests, was sacrificed and burnt by fire on the altar to God. The worshipper placed his hands on the animal to show that it was a sacrifice for his own shortcomings or sin.<sup>11</sup> “It is expedient that one man should die for the people,” and not that the whole nation should perish (John 11:49-50). Jesus comes to give life; men give him death.<sup>12</sup> Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice to God in joy to do his Father’s will even in death. This act of Christ is a typical burnt-sacrifice to God.

Grain-offering (Leviticus 2). This act was an offering of flour, baked cakes, or raw grains together with oil and frankincense. The frankincense accompanying the grain-offering was not meant to be eaten by the people but when burnt, it is an acceptable fragrance to God. A sacrifice-service is an aroma to God.

Peace (fellowship)-offering (Leviticus 3). This ritual act was similar to that of the burnt-offering, except that here only the fat-which the Israelites considered the best portion-was burnt on the altar,

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<sup>9</sup> Nelson-Adjakpey, *Penance and Expiatory Sacrifice*, 114.

<sup>10</sup> Jay A. Sklar, *Sacrifice* in NIV Zondervan Study Bible. (Michigan: Zondervan Press, 2015), 2656.

<sup>11</sup> Nelson-Adjakpey, *Penance and Expiatory Sacrifice*, 122.

<sup>12</sup> Niebuhr, H.R., *Christ and Culture*. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), 199.

and the meat was shared by the worshipper and his family. Since God also shared in the sacrifice, it was thought of as a friendship meal with God too.<sup>13</sup>

Sin-offerings (Leviticus 4, 5, 7). These sacrifices were offered when a person had sinned against someone else or against God. This sin “defiled” (contaminated) the holy place of tabernacle or temple, and so it needed to be cleansed. The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled as a sign that the defilement had been removed through the death that had taken place. Some of the sacrifice was taken as food by the priest. When the worshipper saw the priest eat the meat without being harmed he knew that God had accepted his act of repentance.<sup>14</sup>

Human sacrifice was disputed and condemned by some scholars as constituting an authentic aspect of Israelite sacrifice.<sup>15</sup> However, there are numerous references to human sacrifices in the Old Testament which indicated that the concept was known and practised in Israel. For instance, Mesha of Moab caused the army of Israel to withdraw by sacrificing his son in their presence (2 Kings 3:27). Ahaz sacrificed his son (2 Kings 16:3); and all Israel is accused of this barbaric practice (2 Kings 17:17). Jephthah sacrificed his daughter to fulfil his vow to God (Judges 11:29-40) and Hiel’s son were additional instances (1 Kings 16: 34; 2 Kings 21: 6; 23: 10; Isa. 57: 5; Jer. 7:31). “Human sacrifice seems also to have been practised at times of crisis, for example, in war.”<sup>16</sup> The instance about God testing Abraham is best interpreted not as about child sacrifice or surrender of the will, but rather as describing the supreme test of Abraham’s life.<sup>17</sup> Sacrifice is always made to God himself. So only the best gift is good enough. Sacrifice was also a way of setting apart for God something belonging to humanity. Sacrifice is a way of approach given by God. He gave the rules for sacrifice. It is not simply human’s own attempt to earn favour with God. It is God’s way for humans to make their peace with him.

### **The New Testament System of Sacrifice and Service**

The New Testament makes it clear that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin (Heb. 10:4). The ideas of sacrifice as an Atonement found in the Old Testament form much of the basis for the New Testament Christian conceptions of sacrifice. In the Old Testament, the God-given means of expiation was the sacrificial blood. The idea of a dying God (Jesus) whose sacrifice results in eternal life for followers is Jesus’ *Telos* of life; this is also found in the Greco-Roman religions life of the people. In its early years, Christianity struggled to distinguish itself from Judaism. Although they took many ideas from these socio-historical traditions, and Christians developed a unique Sacrificial/Atonement tradition. Christians understand Christ's death on the cross to be a necessary atonement for the sins of humankind. In the first generation after Jesus'

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<sup>13</sup> Nelson-Adjakpey, *Penance and Expiatory Sacrifice*, 111.

<sup>14</sup> Nelson-Adjakpey, *Penance and Expiatory Sacrifice*, 114.

<sup>15</sup> H. Seebass, ‘Opfer’, 260. In J.D.K. Ekem, *New Testament Concepts of Atonement in an African Pluralistic Setting*, (Accra: SonLife Press, 2005), 24.

<sup>16</sup> W. Eichrodt. *The Theology of the Old Testament*. Vol. I. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), 148.

<sup>17</sup> Charles M. Laymon et al, *The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1971), 18.

death, the apostle Paul wrote: “For I delivered to you first of all, what I also received, that Christ died (sacrifice) for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again on the third day according to the scriptures” (I Cor. 15: 3-4).

### **The Sacrifice and Service of Jesus**

A widespread Christian thought is that of the death of Christ is a death for sin (Heb. 5). It is not simply that certain wicked men rose up against him. It is not that his enemies conspired against him and that he was not able to resist them. He “was put to death for our trespasses” (Rom. 4:25). He came specifically to die for our sins. His blood was shed “for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt. 26:28). He “made purification for sins” (Heb. 1:3). He “bore our sins in his body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24). He is “the propitiation for our sins” (1 John. 2:2). The cross of Christ will never be understood unless it is seen that the Saviour was dealing with the sins of all humans.

In doing this, Jesus fulfilled all that the Old Testament sacrifices had foreshadowed and the New Testament writers love to think of his death as a sacrifice and service to God. Jesus himself referred his blood as “blood of the covenant” (Mark. 14:24), which points us to the sacrificial rites for its understanding. Indeed, much of the language used in the institution of the Holy Communion by Jesus Christ is sacrificial, pointing to the sacrifice to be accomplished on the cross. Paul tells us that Christ “loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Eph. 5:2). On occasion he can refer, not to sacrifice in general, but to a specific sacrifice, as in 1 Corinthians 5:7, “For Christ our paschal lamb (Passover) has been sacrificed.” Peter speaks of “the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Pet. 1:19), which indicates that in one aspect of Christ’s death was a sacrificial service to God.

And in John’s Gospel we read the words of John the Baptist, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29). Sacrifice was practically the universal religious rite of the centuries. Wherever men were and whatever their background, they would discern a sacrificial reference. The New Testament writers made use of this, and employed sacrificial terminology to bring out what Jesus Christ had done for humanity. All that to which the sacrifices pointed, he had fully accomplished by his death.

Sacrifice is a substitution. Sometimes, the death of the sacrificed animal was seen as taking the place of the person who brought the sacrifice. Sin that deserved death could be atoned for by the sacrifice of a person, who had repented of his or her sin and had been forgiven by God, would often bring a sacrifice as a sign of his or her sorrow for sin. The death of Jesus Christ was understood as a sacrifice which did take the place of the sinner and “that there is a substantive but critical continuity between many African religio-cultural traditions and Christianity in the political and religious city of Philippi.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Dale M. Schlitt forward in Emmanuel Asante, *Toward an African Christian Theology of the Kingdom of God, The Kingship of Onyame*, (New York: The Edwin Press, 1995), iii.

The concept of sacrifice among the Krobo people of Ghana could be used to talk about God's act of sacrifice-service in Jesus Christ. This ancient tribal group - the Krobo, can be made to understand that people of all tribe, race, colour, and tongue are helpless to escape from the situation, crisis and death in which sin, defilement, abomination has ensnared them. Only Mawu, the Supreme Being, who has no sanctuary or priests among the Krobo people, can bring deliverance through the sacrifice-service of his son, Jesus Christ. Certainly, "Christianity has become the internal light which can change the national life of the Krobo, if only the soul of a nation will accept Jesus Christ as her personal saviour and the light of the world."<sup>19</sup>

### **The Sacrifice and Service of Paul**

In Philippians 2:17-18, we also found that Paul's stated desire was to be able to rejoice when he would see Jesus Christ and to be sure he had not laboured in vain. He also makes a statement about his joy in the midst of suffering. The apostle knew that death as a martyr was a real possibility for him. Paul viewed himself as being "poured out" like a drink offering on behalf of the Philippians Church (v. 17). But instead of sorrowing he rejoiced. "Poured out" is from the Greek word *spendoma*, "poured as a libation" used of a drink offering given as a sacrifice to God.<sup>20</sup> The possibility of release from prison was not topmost in Paul's mind as it had been before in 1:24-26. Paul's death is a sacrificial offering. The stricter translation of AV and RV is "sacrifice and service."<sup>21</sup> Later, near the actual time of his death, he used this same language in 2 Timothy 4:6, he says, "for I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." He now viewed his death as imminent sacrifice-service to God.

The sacrifice and service (perhaps this could be understood as sacrifice-service) stemmed from the faith of the Philippians. Paul used the same word for sacrifice (*Greek: thusia*) in Romans 12:1 and Phi. 2:17. There the sacrifice the believer-priest offers is his body. "Service" (*Greek: leitourgia*) is the same word translated in Phi. 2:17 and "ministry" in Heb 9:21; it "was originally a service performed by an individual for the state; it came to be applied to the service of God" (Phil 2:25, 30).<sup>22</sup> This means that the work of the Philippians did for God was considered an act of sacrifice and service of worship to God. All of this brought rejoicing to the apostle's heart even though it resulted in his coming up death. Certainly, the Christian life and service of the Philippians is here considered as sacrifice offered to God, thus, a sacrifice-service to God.<sup>23</sup> The methods, by which modern Christians presented themselves as purified of sin, could be understood as a form of

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<sup>19</sup> Odjidja, E.M.L., *Mustard Seed, The Growth of the Church in Kroboland*. (Accra, Ghana: Waterville Publishing House, 1973), 75.

<sup>20</sup> D. Guthrie, ed., al, *New Bible Commentary, Third Edition*, (New York : Guideposts with Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.. 1970), 1134.

<sup>21</sup> Guthrie, ed., al, *New Bible Commentary, Third Edition*, 1134.

<sup>22</sup> Guthrie, ed., al, *New Bible Commentary, Third Edition*, 1134.

<sup>23</sup> Guthrie, ed., al, *New Bible Commentary, Third Edition*, 1134.

sacrifice-service. According to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “when Christ calls a man, he bids him to come and die” for him.<sup>24</sup>

Paul used the terms “poured out” like a drink offering on the sacrifice and or “libation” as a sacrificial service in Philippians 2:17 (NIV). In that, drink offerings were an integral part of the Old Testament sacrificial system, and the image also be partially comprehensible to Gentiles unfamiliar with the Old Testament because these “libations” were also offerings in Greek religion.<sup>25</sup> Here as in the Old Testament daily offerings (Exod. 29: 40-41) or harvest offerings (Lev. 23), the drink offering accompanies a “sacrifice.” Paul’s being “poured out” also draws attention to his suffering as a sacrifice-service to God (2 Tim. 4:6).<sup>26</sup>

### **The Krobo Christian Sacrifice-Service**

Christianity in the non-western world has come to face the facts of biblical exegesis, hermeneutics, ideas or evidence that is similar to the religious, culture, and traditions of the African people. According to Ukachukwu Chris Manus, the cultural dimension of hermeneutics is expected to guarantee within cultural traditions the possibility for self-understanding of individuals groups in their own settings as the biblical record. He adds that, the Bible has a two-fold authorship: the divine and the human – which together co-operate to produce a single text that is read or shared in the context of the readers’ own cultures.<sup>27</sup>

The Christian faith has been in Africa, south of the Sahara Desert, since the fifteenth century C. E. the thrust was from the North Atlantic and, therefore, necessary transplanted in Africa fabrications, interpretations and translations of the One Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the nineteenth century, there emerged the Ethiopianist Movement whose pitch is captured by the Nigerian David Brown Vincent, ‘to render Christianity indigenous to Africa, it must be watered by native hands, turned by native hatchet, and tended with native earth ...’ This is a quest for cultivating the Christian faith in the African soil in a plea that is consistent with the Christian central affirmation of the Incarnation.<sup>28</sup>

The essence of this work is to respond to different needs of the local people in the jurisdiction of Christian ministry in the non-western world especially in the area of sacrifice and service (sacrifice-service) as a *telos* of life among the Krobo people of Ghana. The sacred biblical text has experienced some kind of interpretations and reinterpretations in response to changing

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<sup>24</sup> Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961), 79.

<sup>25</sup> Carson, et.al. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, 2419.

<sup>26</sup> Carson, et.al. *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, 2419.

<sup>27</sup> Ukachukwu Chris Manus, *Intercultural Hermeneutics in Africa, Biblical Studies in African Scholarship Series*, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2003), 32

<sup>28</sup> John S. Pobee forward in J. D. K. Ekem’s *New Testament Concepts of Atonement in an African Pluralistic Setting*, (Accra: Sonlife Press, 2005), vii.

circumstances. These interpretations, reinterpretations, and repackaging of scriptures are to communicate biblical truths to speak to relevant issues of the local people, and at the same time “modern expositors must first encounter the text in its original socio-historical situation and then the significance of that original meaning for themselves in their local settings.”<sup>29</sup> The Holy Scriptures as we have them today in various translations and interpretations are the products of serious engagements with oral and written materials that were in circulation amongst communities over the centuries, whose socio-histories had been marked with changing time and place.

These concepts or beliefs of sacrifice of the Krobo traditional area and Christian traditions illustrate the importance of sacrificial blood in spiritual cleansing, self-sacrifice, and sacrificial service. For instance, a distinguished concept of sacrificial service or selfless service of an eminent traditional chief in Kroboland, is in the person of “Nene Odonkor Azu, the King and founder of Odumase Krobo.”<sup>30</sup> Nene Odonkor Azu was a Paramount Chief of the Krobo traditional area whose name was associated with the coming of Christianity to the Kroboland. In 1856 the Basel Missionaries arrived for the first time in Many Krobo where he was the Konor, a King of this ancient tribal people. Nene Odonkor Azu received the missionaries in a friendly way and to further promote the Bible as *Telos* of life or Christianity in his kingdom, offered one of his princes Christian Akute Azu to be christened and trained as Teacher/Catechist by the missionaries in Christiansburg castle at Osu in Accra.<sup>31</sup> Christian Akutei Azu was the first pioneer to be offered by his father for missionary work in Odumase Krobo.<sup>32</sup> Later the missionaries asked Chief Odonkor Azu for more boys to be trained. By way of the King’s understanding of self-sacrifice, service or as his *Telos* of life, he being eager to be of assistance to the Christian ministry, he gave away (offered/sacrificed) two more boys, namely; Noah Akunor Aguae Azu, the second product who was also offered and followed by his half-brother Peter Nyarko who was sacrificed (offered) for Christian ministry against Paramount Chieftaincy with seven divisional palanquin sub-chiefs serving under him. They were all royal sons of Nene Odonkor Azu, the King of Many Krobo. “This sacrificial service and gesture was in response to a special appeal made to Nene Odonkor Azu by Rev. J. Zimmermann, a German Missionary to Kroboland.”<sup>33</sup>

The modern concept of sacrifice-service has been long-established in Christian Akutei Azu as well. He was the first Krobo young man to be trained by Rev. Zimmermann to become one of the foundation members of the Presbyterian churches in the Krobo traditional area of Ghana. When the occasion had arrived for the Princes to ascend the throne of their father as King, they declined and sacrifice the monarchy for others to rule instead.

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<sup>29</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral, A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1991), 12.

<sup>30</sup> Odjidja, *The Mustard Seed*, 46.

<sup>31</sup> Odjidja, *The Mustard Seed*, 37.

<sup>32</sup> Odjidja, *The Mustard Seed*, 73.

<sup>33</sup> Odjidja, *The Mustard Seed*, 68.

After the death of Nene Odonkor Azu on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September, 1867, the Kingmakers named Christian Akutei Azu to be the prospective ‘KING’ but when the missionaries were informed of it they said that the Prince was too young for the post and that his elder brother Akute should be chosen to succeed his father. Akute declined and said that in as much as his half-brother Sakite, who was older than he was still alive, it would not be proper for him to accept the stool. The stool was therefore given to Sakite in 1867, December 29, with the understanding that after his death Akute should reign.<sup>34</sup>

We have acknowledged that the concept of self-sacrifice in this instance was an inherent notion of sacrifice-service as the *Telos* of life in which they have contributed to the practice of giving up something precious for others. These are good example of indigenous Krobo Christian brothers, Akute and Akutei Azu when it comes to the choice between Christianity and a Paramount Chieftaincy in Kroboland. Through the self-sacrificial and service of Nene Odonkor Azu that were also found in his children, many more highly regarded descendants served the Christian Church in no small way including two ex-moderators and one synod clerk of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, in the persons of late Rev. S.S. Odonkor, three term moderator, Rev. E. M. L. Odjidja, a moderator and Rev. E. K Mate-Kodjo, synod clerk of the General Assembly. All the way through the King’s sacrifice-service, his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren who had Christian education are serving the Church and country in various fields of accomplishments.

Prominent personalities in Nene Odonkor Azu’s lineage whose names need to be documented are Nene Sir Emmanuel Mate-Korle, K. B., K.M.C, a teacher, and a catechist of the Presbyterian Church at Abokobi 1880-1883, and an illustrious grandson of Nene Odonkor Azu and the late Konɔ Nene Oklemekuku Azu Mate-Korle. On the death of his uncle King Sackitey of Manya Krobo, he was elected and enstooled Konɔ of Manya Krobo on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1892.<sup>35</sup> Nene Sir Emmanuel Mate-Korle was awarded the Insignia of a Knight Bachelor by the British Monarch in 1930.<sup>36</sup> His main activities of governance were in the field of Agriculture, Education, and the abolition of some traditional rites and practices in Kroboland.<sup>37</sup> He was a Christian Paramount Chief who did much for Krobo traditional area. The late Konɔ of Manya Krobo, Nene Oklemekuku Azu Mate-Korle was his son, who was also a selfless Christian Chief of Kroboland that stood up against or abolished the celebrations of both Nadu and Kotoklo deities, the war-gods of the Yilo and the Manya Krobos which demanded yearly human sacrifices in Kroboland during his reign.

The concept of sacrifice among the Krobo is similar to the Christian concept of sacrifice. The Krobo idea of sacrifice is to reverence God both in private and public worship services. The sacred animal of the Krobo for sacrifice had to be in perfect condition to be offered. The Krobo beliefs in

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<sup>34</sup> Odjidja, *The Mustard Seed*, 47.

<sup>35</sup> Odjidja, *The Mustard Seed*, 37

<sup>36</sup> Odjidja, *The Mustard Seed*, 65.

<sup>37</sup> Odjidja, *The Mustard Seed*, 65.

propitiatory sacrifice. This is a sacrifice of appeasement or pacification in reply to save the situation during national crisis such as epidemic, famine, floods, drought etc. Substitutionary sacrifice among the Krobo is also performed when a person is believed to be under the “wrath” of a deity or some evil spirit which could end up in death of a person. In this case, a sheep is offered as a substitution for the victim to be saved illness and death. The Krobo believes only the best gift is good enough for God. This One God, the Father, which the Krobo called Mawu offered or sacrifice his only begotten (best) son – Jesus. This Sacrificial Lamb in a person of Jesus, the Christ, was sent by his father into the world to “save his people from their sins.” Sin was dealt with by Jesus in his death and resurrection; he has become the “Victim and Victor.”<sup>38</sup> Now that “He has revealed Himself to us in a unique way through the representative/substitutionary sacrifice that Jesus offered by means of His blood,”<sup>39</sup> no other human blood sacrifices are needed again to save humanity. By faith (*hami ke yemi*) in Jesus, the Christ, we can now be saved and “that through His sacrificial self-offering, we might obtain forgiveness of sins and enter into a new relationship with God.”<sup>40</sup> This free gift (sacrifice) is offered to all, including the Krobos, no matter their religious, cultural, social and traditional backgrounds. Everyone who calls out to the Lord for help will be saved. Krobo Christians are already saved because they already have forgiveness and have received new life in Jesus Christ.

Sacrifice is the act of offering something to a deity as an expression and manifestation of one’s total dependence on that deity. Because of the close relationship existing between the deity (God or the gods) and man through a special covenant, man uses sacrifice, a precious gift, as a means of renewing this covenant, or for the re-establishment of the covenant, which might, meanwhile, have been disrupted through man’s human weakness. Nonetheless, since it is the mark of all men to establish and live in communities, sacrifice also serves as a means of binding men together through their corporate encounter with the supernatural.<sup>41</sup>

The Krobos believe they encounter the Supreme Being’s power and presence through the socio-religious activities of sacrifice among the people.<sup>42</sup> The Krobo’ common understanding of one a divine intervention by Mawu – the Supreme Being after a sacrifice was made is when, for instance, a “Sacrificial One” comes to their rescue in times of trouble. This traditional understanding of the active involvement of Mawu – the Supreme Being in the daily life of the people through the deities, ancestors and the religious functionaries by the performance of sacrifice among the Krobo should be taken seriously. In that, because the Krobo Christian reads the Bible, an analogy should

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<sup>38</sup> J. D. K. Ekem’s *New Testament Concepts of Atonement in an African Pluralistic Setting*, (Accra: Sonlife Press, 2005), 50.

<sup>39</sup> Ekem’s *New Testament Concepts of Atonement in an African Pluralistic Setting*, 64.

<sup>40</sup> Ekem’s *New Testament Concepts of Atonement in an African Pluralistic Setting*, 71.

<sup>41</sup> Nelson-Adjakpey, *Penance and Expiatory Sacrifice*, 111.

<sup>42</sup> J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu. “Spirit and Spirits in African Religious Traditions.” In *Interdisciplinary and Religio-Cultural Discourses on a Spirit-Filled World*, Veli-Matti Karkkainen. (eds). (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 42-43.

be made between their understandings of sacrifice with the following Biblical ones are as examples of sacrifice which need to be compared:

Burnt-offering “Lohwe bɔ sami” (Leviticus 1). The sacred animal “Bɔ” (roan or royal antelope) of the Krobo for sacrifice had to be in perfect condition (only the best is good enough for God), just as the Nadu Priest and his “Labiahi” or servants (priestly assistant) are to offer the prescribed sacrifice in the olden days of a man or boy who is not circumcised, but today, they offer “bɔ” (roan or royal antelope) to be wholly burnt (*bɔ ɔ sami*).<sup>43</sup> This sacred animal “bɔ” (roan or royal antelope) is a specific kind of animal from the antelope family which is used instead of human being in the modern times among the Krobo. The blood of the animal was sprinkled on the altar as a further sign that the life of the animal given in death had been dedicated to Mawu, the Supreme Being and the deity.

Grain-offering “Ngma bɔ sami” (Leviticus 2). The traditional priests, particularly those who are connected with the worship of Nana Kloweki and Okumo are, however, still bound to keep their own millet farm especially for ritual use. It was a good-will offering to God. Part of it – a memorial portion – was burnt on the altar. So it was a way of asking God to “remember” the worshipper for good. It was also a contribution to the upkeep of the priests. Again, it was a sacrifice of the best the worshipper could give. At present very little significance is attached to the cultivation of millet. The Krobo have learnt that maize is an easier and better yielding substance crop, and that the growing of cocoa beans is much more profitable in modern economy. In the past, however, millet was their staple food. This is testified to the place this cereal still occupies in their religious and socio-religious ceremonies. Up to now, the pouring out of millet-beer (*ngma da*) or of millet-flour mixed with water (*ngma-mamu-nɔ-nyu*) as libation has always been regarded as an intrinsic part of most communal and private ritual services. It is now being replaced by maize-beer. The traditional priests of Nana Kloweki still grow and keep their own millet farm within the shrines for ritual use, for instance, at Okumo shrine at Akwenɔ-Mampɔ in the Manya Krobo traditional area.

Peace (fellowship)-offering “Tue mi jɔmi bɔ sami,” (Leviticus 3), Sin-offerings ‘Yayami pami bɔ sami’ (Leviticus 4, 5, 7) among others, were sacrifices that the people offered anytime they had sinned against God or the deities. Generally speaking, majority of the Krobo Christians still patronise the activities of culture and traditional practices such as customary marriage, birth, infant naming ceremony, purification, libation prayers, death rites, harvest, widowhood, chieftaincy, priesthood and puberty (Dipo) rites. They show evidence of all the signs of people not yet liberated from the “old ways,” beliefs and *telos* of life.<sup>44</sup> Beliefs and practices of the Krobos are religious activities which aim at the propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of the end (*Telos*) of human life in general.

<sup>43</sup> Nelson-Adjakpey, *Penance and Expiatory Sacrifice*, 116.

<sup>44</sup> Williamson, S.G., *Akan Religion and the Christian Faith*. (Accra, Ghana: Ghana University Press, 1965), 82.

### **Sacrifice-Services in Public Life**

Significantly, Jesus summarizes his own mission (*Telos*) of life with these words, “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered (served) unto, but to minister (serve), and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mk. 10:45). His sacrifice and service ransom sinners from the just penalty their sins deserve.<sup>45</sup> There are various established public institutions in Ghana such as: Ghana Police Service, Ghana Immigration Service, Ghana Health Service, Ghana Fire Service, Ghana Judicial Service, Ghana Education Service, and National Service Secretariat among others to provide public services to the good people of Ghana. Majority of workers in these public services are Christians, in which they must have a natural feeling to serve others first as an acceptable service to God. They must have a burning desire of sacrifice-service as the purpose (*Telos*) of life pleasing to God, to do His will and to advance His glory at the workplace in every possible way in their personal and public sacrificial service.

We also have various types of Christian church groupings and their services around the world such as: Protestants Church Service, Pentecostal Church Service, Charismatic Church Service, African Indigenous Church Service among others. These churches were established to provide Christian worship services to the people in their respective communities in Ghana. God placed a burning desire in the heart of every Christian when he/she is converted which no one can feel naturally. Some Christians feel so much more strongly than others that they alone can describe their experience. It is not enough for the Christian church to say that they are earnest, burning desires, hearty, and fervent in spirit, then to be swallowed up in one purpose (*Telos* of life), and that one purpose or end (*Telos*) of life is to offer sacrifice-service pleasing to God.

### **Sacrifice-service as the *Telos* of Christian Living (Rom. 12:1; Phi. 2:17)**

Paul singles out women who sacrificially offered themselves to struggle beside him in the work of the Gospel (4:8). The prominence of those noble women in a sacrificial service account in the founding of the Philippian church in the book of Acts of the Apostles and in the subsequent narrations of the book of Philippians. In that, it is a commonplace of scholarship that Greek women enjoyed increasing freedom during the Hellenistic and Roman periods because they were in all respect the counterparts of men.<sup>46</sup> Paul instructed the church in Philippians to humbly live toward humanity and servanthood which he calls for the application of “Christ-mind” to personal and public *Telos* of Christian life that which is worthy of the message of the Bible.<sup>47</sup> The scripture states, ‘How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered (sacrifice) Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve (service) the

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<sup>45</sup> Sklar, *Sacrifice*, 2657.

<sup>46</sup> Thurston and Ryan, *Sacra Pagina*, 19.

<sup>47</sup> Thurston and Ryan, *Sacra Pagina*, 67.

living God? (Heb. 9.14) And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Heb. 9.24).

Jesus offered sacrificial service, not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9.12). Therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate (Heb. 12.13). All of these acts are necessary for redemption. This is what and how the Bible seeks to promote as the *Telos* of individual or communal Christian living in this present world.

### **Conclusion**

The cost of sacrifice and service does not, however, require the seeking out of needless suffering, yet it does involve a “denying of self” that occasions the suffering of temptation, the bearing of the sins and burdens of others and it is unreserved, unconditional love for our enemies. Using Jesus as our example, Paul exhorts Christians in the social, historical and political city of Philippi to believe that one could only gain complete redemption in Christ with their deeds or acts of sacrifice-service after they have received salvation. The Krobo are one of the ancient tribal groups in Ghana that are known to have practised various religious sacrifices extensively when they sought refuge on the Krobo Mountain. Sacrifice is a religious practice among the Krobo; it draws them to the Supreme Being – God, and the deities. The arrival of the Christian missionaries had downplayed the socio-religious activities that the Krobo practise to connect with the various power sources in the *telos* of life as individuals and as a community. Although Christianity and other religious groups disregard the Krobo traditional religious act of sacrifice, the practice of sacrifice and service among the contemporary Krobo continues to contribute meaningfully to the socio-historical and religious life of the people. The practice of sacrifice among the Krobo in reverence to God is similar to the Christian concept of sacrifice. In every case, it is the love which was fulfilled in the cross of Christ. We are to offer “sacrificial service” not “sacrificial murder” again to any deity. Baptism, the Lords Supper (the Eucharist), and martyrdom are major traditions of Christian sacrifice and service.

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