

# Arise and Walk! A Theological Reflection on the Healing of the Lame Man at Bethesda in John 5:1-9c and Lessons for Nigeria

*Emmanuel Maigari*

## **Abstract**

Healing the sick is a sign of the messianic times which is seen manifested and fulfilled in Jesus Christ (cf. Is 35:5-6; 61:1; Lk. 4:18-19). The healing of the lame man in John 5:1-9c and the controversy and discourse that follow show Jesus' relationship with the Father and reveal what the Father does in and through him. This healing shows the power of God at work in and through him who was always moved with compassion to attend to the needs of the people. Jesus Christ, being the son of God does what he sees the father doing (cf. Jn 5:19). The paper does an exegetical and theological analysis of the text of John 5:1-9c; the governing exegetical method in this paper is, firstly, the New Literary Criticism which interprets the text exclusively within itself. Secondly, it is also a contextual study, taking into consideration the Nigerian and African present situation. The precarious situation in Nigeria as well as other African countries calls for serious attention and action. The paper concludes that the text of John 5:1-9c is relevant to the Nigerian situation and when used and applied well, it will increase the confidence of Nigerians and Africans as a whole in achieving their potentials and proffer a path towards the attainment of growth and development.

*Key words: Healing, Bethesda, Potential, Development*

---

## **1.0 Introduction**

Chronologically, the healing of the lame man at Bethesda in John 5 is the third sign recorded in John's Gospel. The first two signs recorded being the changing of water into wine (Jn 2:1-11) and the healing of the official's son at Capernaum (Jn 4:46-54). The healing in John 5 shows the fulfillment of the messianic promise, where the lame will walk (cf. Is 35:5-6; 61:1). The intimate relationship between Jesus and the Father is greatly emphasized in John 5 and this authenticates and qualifies whatever Jesus does. In the synoptic Gospels, Jesus performed many miracles based on the sympathy and love he had for the people, but the healing in John 5 and the discourse that follows, shows that Jesus wants to show his relationship with the Father as the basis and he reveals what

the Father does in and through him. But that does not rule out the fact that Jesus also had pity on the lame man he healed here. The approach in this article is synchronic and the governing exegetical method is the New Literary Criticism. This healing story also has socio-political implications for contemporary times and challenges us to 'rise and walk' in order to actualize our potentials. The paper concludes that the salvation wrought by Jesus Christ is both for body and soul, and this healing story serves to heal Nigerians and humanity in general.

## 2.0 The Text in its Context

<sup>1</sup>After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.  
<sup>2</sup>Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Hebrew called Bethzatha, which has five porticoes. <sup>3</sup>In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed. <sup>4</sup>... <sup>5</sup>One man was there, who had been ill for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup>When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" <sup>7</sup>The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me." <sup>8</sup>Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your pallet, and walk." <sup>9</sup>And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked (John 5:1-9c, RSV).

With the mention, 'there was a feast of the Jews' in Jn 5:1a, a new temporal setting and consequently a new episode is being introduced (Jn 5:1-47). In Jn 4:43-54, Jesus was at Galilee, now in Jn 5:1 he has relocated to Jerusalem, that implies and confirms a new scene and episode. In the immediate past passage, namely, Jn 4:43-54, the main characters were: Jesus, the Galileans, a royal official, the official's slaves and the official's household. In John 5, we have Jesus himself, a multitude of sick people, a particular sick man at the pool (cf. Jn 5:1-9a), and the Jews -cf. Jn 5:10-47 (Lozada, 2000).

An episode has a beginning and an end. It has been established that Jn 5:1 is the proper beginning to this episode, it is worthwhile establishing the fact that Jn 5:47 is the proper end to this particular episode. The internal coherence in Jn 5:1-47 also supports the fact of the unity therein in John 5. After the story of the healing in Jn 5:1-9c, the mention of Sabbath in v. 9d connects the subunits Jn 5:1-9c and Jn 5:9d-18 together. While Jn 5:19-47 is a discourse and serves as a response to the events in Jn 5:1-18. This coherence depicts the unity in Jn 5:1-47. But this paper shall focus basically on the healing story in Jn 5:1-9c.

## 3.0 The Healing of the Lame Man (Jn 5:1-9c)

John 5:1-9c presents the healing of the lame man at Bethesda in Jerusalem during an unnamed feast; this can be taken as an independent subunit in this episode. As indicated earlier, the very fact that Jn 5:1 begins with *meta tauta* is a sign that it is the proper beginning of this episode. Also, at the end (Jn 5:9c), there is the confirmation of the lame man's recovery.

The text of John 5:1-9c is a typical miracle story (sign in John) and follows the Genre of miracle stories. Some scholars are of the view that while this healing sign maintains the Johannine tradition, it shows signs of some 'reworking' by the evangelist (Witkamp, 1985). Many scholars believe that this miracle story is from the sign source (Brown, 1966; Bultmann, 1964; Schnackenburg, 1971). There are various approaches to reading sign / miracle stories, this paper will adopt the commonly acceptable fourfold pattern of reading or examining miracle stories as used also by Lozada (2000, p.73): (1) Setting, (2) The description of a difficult situation, (3) Jesus' intervention and, (4) The confirmation of a miracle. Thus, Jn 5:1-9c shall take this pattern as seen below.

### 3.1 The Setting (Jn 5:1-3)

John 5:1-3 gives the setting of this Sign. The episode begins with *meta tauta* (after these), a phrase which serves as a break between passages or within an episode and always creates a subunit. Here, the phrase *meta tauta* implies after some particular events and introduces the scene of Jesus' conflicts with the Jews in John's Gospel. Here in Jn 5:1, Jesus went up to Jerusalem on the occasion of a Jewish feast (cf. also Jn 2:13; 7:2; 11:55). The particular Jewish feast in Jn 5:1 is not mentioned, it is surprising and interesting to note that this is the only case in John's Gospel where the particular Jewish feast is not mentioned. Even the definite article which would have made it mean "the feast" is also omitted. The unnamed feast is even more surprising considering the fact that the synoptic Gospels mention only Passover feasts and Sabbath days, while John's Gospel mentions several other feasts (e.g. feast of Weeks, feast of Tabernacles etc). This tells clearly how John's Gospel emphasizes Jesus' participation in Jewish activities and his close association with Jerusalem and the Temple in particular. It is also noteworthy that in the Synoptic Gospels, the ministry of Jesus began in Galilee, but in John's Gospel, Jesus was already in Jerusalem at the beginning of his public ministry after his first Sign in Cana (cf. Jn 2:13).

Different authors have given their speculations on what feast it could be. The debate on the unnamed feast is inconclusive, but amongst many views, Schnackenburg's position seems convincing; at the end of his efforts at contributing to a likely solution, he settled at the conclusion that, for the evangelist, the most important thing here is not on the chronology of the events as they took place but the importance of the event in relation to Jesus' self-revelation (Schnackenburg II, 1971, p.119).

The fact that the healing took place within a Jewish feast stands out as Asiedu-Peprah (2001, p.54) states that "a Jewish feast always depicts a certain understanding of the people in relation to their God and to His saving work in the past and in the present." After establishing the fact that Jesus is in Jerusalem, the author now gets ready to begin the story. Still on the Setting, the author goes ahead to describe the place or the stage of the sign that is about to take place, thus: 'and it is in Jerusalem at the sheep (gate) in Hebrew Bethzatha (Bethesda) which has five Porticoes'. Bethesda which means "House of Mercy" fits well to

the situation of the place and what takes place there. The description of existing structures or buildings at the sheep gate presented in the present tense raises so many questions here about the dating of the writing of John's Gospel. Scholars who argue for an earlier date for the writing of John's Gospel argue that the Gospel was written before 60 AD, especially, based on the argument that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. But this view is considered very weak by scholars who argue for a later date for the writing of this story in John's Gospel or the writing of John's Gospel as a whole. The position of Schnackenburg who opines that the use of the present tense (*estin*, it is) in Jn 5:2 may be in the sense of a 'historical present', is convincing here. The 'historical present' is the employment of the present tense instead of past tenses when narrating past events; Schnackenburg (1971, p.117) writes: "Aus der Präsensform *estin* darf man kaum darauf schließen, daß zur Zeit der Abfassung der Erzählung die Anlage noch bestand, da es auch ein praesens historicum sein könnte."

In Jn 5:3, the narrator lists / mentions the group of people who were gathered there, namely, the blind, the lame and the weak / paralyzed. This group of people is in a particular need. Lozada (2000, p.75) adds that "the pool is home to the physically handicapped and social outcasts." In any case, the pool is about healing, thus the name Bethesda (house of mercy).

John 5:4 is omitted, Metzger (1998, p.179) observes that "it is a later addition based on its absence in the earliest readings, manuscripts and witnesses (P<sup>66,75</sup> a B C\* D W<sup>supp</sup> 33 it<sup>d,l,q</sup>, the true text of the Latin Vulgate [vg<sup>st</sup>] syr<sup>c</sup> cop<sup>sa, bomss, ach2</sup> ...)." Some Bible versions have the verse of Jn 5:4, it reads: "For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had" (KJV). Brown (1966) observes that in the West, Tertullian (ca. 200 AD) claimed to have known this verse, but Chrysostom (ca. 400) was the first of the Greek writers to do so. The presence of non-Johannine vocabulary is another strong evidence for its later origin. Metzger (1998, p.179) observes that "the last four words appear only here and no other place in the entire NT." In any case, the lack of unity in the manuscripts which transmits this verse is a proof of its later origin. Lastly, Barrett (1955, p.211) maintains that "There can be no doubt that the verses were added (possibly on the basis of old tradition) to explain v. 7 (...)."

### 3.2 The Description of a Difficult Situation (Jn 5:5-7)

With the statement, "there was a certain man there", the focus is now on a particular man. The lame man has been in this condition for thirty-eight years. Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40 - ca. 120) observes the difficulties encountered at healing such a sickness that has existed in the body for a long time especially when one wants the sickness cured without pains (Or 41,9). Despite all the complications, Jesus was able to heal the lame man, this tells the power and authority of Jesus Christ. We are not told the exact age of the man, but I suppose that he became

lame in time and not from birth, thus as mentioned, thirty-eight years refers to the years of his sickness and not his actual age. There are some other healing stories in the NT that indicate the duration of sickness (cf. Mk 5:25; 9:21; Lk 13:11; Jn 9:1; Acts 3:2; 4:22; 9:33; 14:8).

The number of years that the unnamed man had already spent there and the uncertainty that he will leave there soon, calls for pity on him because he was in a state of urgent need. All his efforts to get cured all these years were not fruitful. But with the intervention of Jesus, what was impossible for the man for many years will now be made possible by Jesus. The specific sickness of the man was not mentioned in Jn 5:5, it was simply stated that the man has been sick. But going back to read Jn 5:3, three categories of the sick were mentioned: the blind, the lame and the weak / paralyzed. It was out of the question that the man was blind. As a result it was between being lame and being paralyzed which are closely related to each other, in the sense that it has to do with bodily deformity or paralysis; the verses that follow will support this position (cf. Jn 5:5-7).

It is worthwhile mentioning that in this healing story, Jesus is very active while the healed man is seemingly passive. Jesus saw (*horaō*) the man and came to know (*ginōskō*) that he has been sick for many years. Jesus' supernatural / extraordinary knowledge of humans is a Johannine theme that is very evident (cf. Jn 1:47-50; 2:25; 4:16-19). In both Jn 5:6 and Jn 2:25, the verb *ginōskō* is used for knowing. Jesus saw the man and had pity on him. There were many sick people there, but why did Jesus choose this particular sick person and not any other? Probably, the man's situation was worse than the others or his situation simply captured Jesus' attention. It is also possible that the man was just lying on the ground alone, in contrast to others who had friends or relations to assist them (cf. Jn 5:7).

To indicate that the healing was not an imposition on the man, Jesus interacted further with him to know more about his experience so far and his present wish. Jesus asked him: "Do you wish (*thelō*) to become healthy?" It was an offer from Jesus and Jesus himself controls the healing process. Here, the manner in which Jesus asked the man if he wished to be healed, can be compared with Jn 6:5-6, where Jesus knows what he is about to do but asks the question as a test. Witkamp (1985, p.22) observes this common trend from Jesus, he writes: "In the Johannine sign-stories, Jesus often takes the initiative: 6.5ff.; 9.1ff.; and also 2.4, 7; 4.50; 11.3ff., 6 because here Jesus reacts differently from what is expected." Rather than respond to the question that Jesus asked him with a "yes" or a "no", the sick man went ahead to explain his predicament to Jesus. The man addressed Jesus as 'Sir' (*kyrie*), which suggests that, most probably, the man does not know the identity of Jesus at this point in time. *Kyrie* could mean either "Lord" or "Sir" depending on the situation. In most cases in the Gospels, those that never knew Jesus used it as "Sir" (cf. Mt 15:22.25.27; Mk 7:28; Lk 7:6; Jn 4:49). While those that knew Jesus Christ especially his disciples used *kyrie* translated as "Lord" (cf. Mt 8:25; 26:22; Lk 10:40; Jn 11:21.27.39). In a sense, secular *kyrie*

took on a religious nuance (Fitzmyer, 1991). It is nevertheless also possible that the man heard people speak about Jesus earlier but never knew that it was the same Jesus who was speaking to him.

When Jesus asked him if he wanted to be well, perhaps he thought Jesus wanted to assist him to get into the pool the next time the water is troubled. The man was really in a helpless situation and perhaps he also felt hopeless. It was very clear that he had neither friends nor relations that could have been ready to assist him to the pool. The fact that the man himself said: "before I come, another goes down before me" (Jn 5:7), implies that he has been making frantic efforts to get to the pool because he believes in the healing power of the pool but he is incapacitated.

### **3.3 Jesus' Intervention (Jn 5:8)**

After he had listened to the man explained his predicaments, Jesus acted immediately, he said, "rise up, take up your mat and walk!" All three commands are in the imperative. The Healing command here is similar to the one in Mk 2:9,11 (cf. Mt 9:5-6; Lk 5:23-24). The passage in Mk 2 is the only other healing of a lame man by Jesus recorded in the Gospels. In Acts, a similar form is also used (cf. Acts 3:6; 9:33-34). Perhaps, the man in John 5 saw no other possibility of healing apart from the pool earlier. "Rise up", implies that the man was on the ground lying helplessly. Jesus did not ask him if he could rise up, but he was sure and confident of the command and the authority he has. Jesus was willing to heal him, despite the fact that one cannot say categorically if the man expressed some signs of faith or not. "Take up your mat", also implies that the man had the strength to take his property along with him. "And walk", also implies that the man should be able to walk as a result of the healing. Theobald explains further that by Jesus telling the lame man to rise up, take up and walk, it means further than total healing, it also implies the man's independence from the sheep (gate) and the power of Jesus to heal him independent of the pool. Theobald (2009) emphasises that the healed man's freedom independent of the pool is important for the evangelist John. The man was so much attached to the pool and depended on it for healing. Despite the fact that hope was not in sight due to certain factors, the man remained there. But Jesus liberated him from his predicaments through his word. The imperative "stand up, take up your mat and walk" does not just mean to move about, but to go forth; the healed man is expected to go forth and proclaim the wonders the Lord has done to him.

The closest text to Jn 5:8 is Mk 2:9. Despite the parallelism between the two (2) texts, it does not automatically imply that John was dependent on the text of Mark's Gospel. Moreover, the healing story is different and it is clear that it was a different occasion altogether except the command that Jesus gave, which is similar in both passages. In Mark, the healing took place at Capernaum and the paralytic was brought to Jesus; and, Jesus forgave the man his sins before the healing, the same could also be implied in Jn 5:8 but not stated. Also in Mark,

Jesus asked the man afterwards to go home, while in John, Jesus did not say that. The discourse that follows from the healing of the lame man in John's Gospel is absent in Mark.

### **3.4 The Confirmation of a Miracle (Jn 5:9a-c)**

“And the man immediately became healthy”, this sentence confirms the healing of the man which occurred immediately Jesus gave the command in Jn 5:8. The adverb in v. 9a, thus, *eytheōs* (immediately) implies that apart from the healing command to the man by Jesus, there was nothing else from another source that happened in-between Jesus' command and the healing of the man. The fact that the man took up his mat and was walking was a testimony and a proof of the man's eventual recovery and healing by Jesus.

This healing attests to the fact that Jesus has the authority to heal as he wills, in the sense that he himself initiates the idea. The healed man could carry his mat and walk again; he was not just healed physically but mentally as well. He now has the physical and mental capacity to pursue and actualize his potentials; he has been freed from that, which held him captive. We shall look at the present situation in Nigeria and Africa at large and see how the text is relevant in solving the present problems.

### **4.0 A Summary of the Present Situation in Africa and Nigeria in Particular**

The present situation in Nigeria will be evaluated here politically, economically, religiously and security wise as well. Politically, most African countries claim to practice democracy but in the real sense they are far from true democracy. The structures set in place by their former colonial masters are so imperfect that they pose serious problems for national integration, unity and meaningful development. The past military regimes in many African countries have left substantial marks of its aftermath. The post military era in such countries is not too different from what has been. We still experience elements of dictatorship, lack of transparency, impunity and the likes. Elections seem to be a mere formality, because the political elites continue to circulate power amongst themselves, an example is the slogan of the declared winner of Nigeria's last presidential elections Bola Ahmed Tinubu, thus: 'emi lokan', a Yoruba phrase translated as 'it is my turn'. Politicians are involved in vote buying and all forms of electoral malpractices. They manipulate the susceptibility and vulnerability of the poor to their advantage. The bribery and corruption by politicians in Africa is second to none in the world, this is also reflected in their salaries and allowances and self-awarded projects.

Economically, the interests of Europe, Asia and America in most African countries have been criticised to be of 'parasitism', they only think of how to exploit such countries, rather than how to assist them grow and develop. Even when such countries offer loans to the so called developing countries, they are not without some ulterior motifs. They take raw materials and resources from such developing countries at so minimal costs to their countries, process them for their use and still export the finished products back to the countries where

they took the raw materials from and sell at exorbitant costs. They systematically cause inflation in these developing countries to make them perpetually dependent on the so called advanced countries. Their manipulations only breed insecurity, unemployment and above all poverty. The Coalition for Africa's Liberation and Restoration (CALAR) in her 'Call for Action on Africa's Liberation Day on 25th May 2021 asserts: "As long as we Africans continue to allow ourselves to be used as self-destructive agents by these exploiters, Africa's resources will continue to be depleted; Africans divided and weakened, and thus lack the combined energy and Will needed to utilize our wealthy resources for our own good."

In terms of religion, Christianity and Islam came to Nigeria centuries ago. Both came with different methods and agenda. Scholars in the area of comparative religious studies give their assessments of both religions in history and in the present situation. The beginnings and historical development of these two religions have great impacts on the present situation either positively or negatively as the case may be. In contemporary times, there have been serious societal problems which were rooted in or originated as a result of some bad influence of religion, especially the case of religious extremism. In the last four (4) decades, the world has been battling with and fighting against Islamic fundamentalists in many countries (Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Palestine, Syria, Somalia, Sudan, Mali, Nigeria etc.). This has raised many questions on the role of religion in the society. What are the values taught in mosques and churches? Are there some regulations as regards the practice of religion in relation to peaceful co-existence in the society? What is the role of the Government in the aspect of curbing religious extremism? Religion must be used as an instrument of fostering unity and peaceful co-existence in the society.

In terms of security, the West has done more harm than good to the African continent in this regard. The West has always had its interests behind any intervention as regards security. It always seeks for influence and dominance in order to perpetuate control over such countries she pretends to assist. For instance, King (2023) wrote on the situation in Mali where the French soldiers claim to have intervened but the situation worsened. Some African leaders have risen to the challenge and begin to see the need to be serious and committed. In line with this, CALAR (2023, p.1) asserts thus, "Some African leaders are realising the need to look inwards and harness the abundant human and material resources with which God has generously endowed *Mama Africa* for the growth and development of their countries." There are some movements and coalitions all over Africa calling on Africa to 'Rise Up!'. If African sons and daughters are doing extremely well all over the world, why can't the enabling environment be created for them here in Africa to return home and replicate what they have been doing in other parts of the world? Interesting, CALAR (2023, p.1) further observes that: "In the Diaspora, many individuals and organisations are increasingly recognizing that they have an indispensable role to play in the liberation and restoration of their beloved continent. Some have

returned to the homeland to set up businesses and help raise up and build their beloved continent". At the end, CALAR (2023, p.2) cries out in unison and concludes its call thus:

Africans arise! Take up your lives and live! Lift up your continent and embrace it! Appropriate and celebrate the wealth in abundance that God has given to you for your total liberation and restoration. Long live liberated Mama Africa in service firstly to her own children, then to the world!

### 5.0 The Relevance of the Text of Jn 5:1-9c to the Nigerian Situation

The text of John 5:1-9c is very relevant in many respects and it proffers solutions and lessons to be learnt: spiritual, moral, social, psychological, economic, political and otherwise. This is applicable both locally and globally. In Lk 4:18-19, Jesus presents his manifesto, thus: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Jesus went about fulfilling this manifesto by doing good everywhere. He called his Apostles and challenged them to follow in his footsteps. As *Dei Verbum* states, "Therefore Christ the Lord in whom the full revelation of the supreme God is brought to completion (see 2 Cor. 1:20; 3:13; 4:6), commissioned the Apostles to preach to all men that Gospel which is the source of all saving truth and moral teaching, and to impart to them heavenly gifts" (no. 7). Jesus was always moved with compassion during his earthly ministry, and he did everything in union with the father, he never sought for self-glory.

Just as Jesus told the lame man at Bethesda, "Arise and walk" (Jn 5:8), Jesus is also telling Nigerians, and indeed Africans: "Arise and walk," and be liberated from the chains that hold us captive, the chains that deprive us from achieving and attaining our full potentials, and the chains that hinder us from bearing authentic witness to him. Interestingly, in line with the foregoing, Pope Benedict XVI (2011, no.149) makes reference to the scene of the healing of the lame man in Bethesda / Bethzatha (cf. Jn 5:1-9) and challenges Africans, saying:

Echoing the Apostle Peter in the Acts of the Apostles (3:6), I repeat what Africa needs most is neither gold nor silver; she wants to stand up like the man at the pool of Bethzatha; she wants to have confidence in herself and in her dignity as a people loved by her God. It is this encounter with Jesus which the Church must offer to bruised and wounded hearts yearning for reconciliation and peace, and thirsting for justice. We must provide and proclaim the word of Christ which heals, sets free and reconciles.

Without an iota of doubt, the text of John 5 is relevant in addressing the present problems Nigeria and Africa is facing at the moment; Jesus has come to bring salvation for both body and soul. He has presented to us the path to follow. But

greed, corruption and man's inhumanity to man continue to hold us back from achieving our potentials as a people. Learning from Jesus Christ, our Lord and master and following his footsteps, our society will be far better than where it is at the moment, for he is the Way, the Truth and the Life (cf. Jn 14:6).

### **Conclusion**

The healing of the lame man at Bethesda is a reality that shows the power of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Lord over the Sabbath; he is the witness to what he has seen and heard. Both the Father and the Son are doing good even on Sabbath day. Jesus does everything not to his personal praise and Glory, but to the praise and glory of the Father. Jesus is always moved with compassion and heals humanity both in body and soul. Faith in Jesus Christ should be a response by humanity to his love and compassion. Faith and Witness in John's Gospel are two concepts that go hand in hand. Faith in John's Gospel centres on Jesus Christ. Genuine witness to Jesus is only possible when one has a solid faith in him. One must believe in Jesus based on what the scriptures witness of him and based on one's personal encounter with him which is possible in a variety of ways. Therefore, faith in the person of Jesus is the basis and not in signs (/Miracles). Jesus seeing the shallowness of a faith that is based on signs, warns of its danger (cf. Jn 2:18; 4:48; 6:30; 20:29).

In Jn 14:12, Jesus promises that he who believes in him will do greater works (Cf. Jn 14:12). The church in every age continues in this noble endeavor; this tells of the importance of a solid faith as a prerequisite for an authentic Christian witnessing. Christians are challenged to follow the footsteps of their master Jesus Christ to heal the world of its ills. She is challenged to arise and walk and stop being a toddler. The church must continue to improve its strategies for a new evangelization that takes cognizance of the present challenges. An African synod on an African soil will be more meaningful and encouraging; this will make Africans feel the impact more. As we develop and work with the recommendations of the last African Synod, we are challenged to research more and suggest better ways of tackling our problems based on our present experiences. This is realizable with a collective determination, taking into cognizance all that has been recommended so far in this paper. The journey will not be easy, but we are hopeful of a successful landing!

### **References**

- Asiedu-Peprah M., (2001). *Johannine Sabbath Conflicts as Juridical Controversy* (WUNT II/132), Tübingen.
- Barrett C. K., (1955). *The Gospel According to St. John. An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, London.

- Benedict XVI., (2011). AFRICA'S COMMITMENT: Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus* of his Holiness Pope Benedict XVI: Part 2, chapter 3, no. 149. [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_exh\\_20111119\\_africae-munus.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20111119_africae-munus.html), retrieved on 10th February, 2024.
- Brown E. R., (1966). *The Gospel According to John I-II (AncB 29-29A)*, New York.
- Bultmann R., (1964). *Das Evangelium des Johannes (KEK II)*, Göttingen<sup>18</sup>.
- Coalition for Africa's Liberation and Restoration (CALAR)., (2021). <https://afjn.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/calars-call-for-action-on-africas-liberation-day-2021.pdf>. Retrieved on 2nd August, 2023.
- Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40- ca. 120) (2013) *On the Healing of the lame man at Bethesda* [http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Dio\\_Chrysostom/Discourses/41\\*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Dio_Chrysostom/Discourses/41*.html), retrieved on 23 January, 2013.
- Fitzmyer J.A., (1991). *kyrios*. in: *Exegetical Dictionary New Testament II*, 328-331.
- King I., (2023). *How France failed Mali: The End of Operation Barkhane* <https://hir.harvard.edu/how-france-failed-mali-the-end-of-operation-barkhane/>, retrieved on 2nd February, 2024.
- Lozada F., (2000). *A Literary Reading of John 5 (SBL. 20)*, New York.
- Metzger B. M., (1998). *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Stuttgart<sup>2</sup>.
- Schnackenburg R., (1971). *Das Johannesevangelium I-IV (HThKNT IV, 1-4)*, Freiburg.
- Theobald M., (2009). *Das Evangelium nach Johannes. Kapitel 1-12 (RNT)*, Regensburg.
- Witkamp L. Th., (1985). *The use of Traditions in John 5.1-18*. In: *JSNT* 25, 19-47.