

**UNETHICAL CONDUCT AS A PRECURSOR TO ECOLOGICAL CRISIS IN  
HOSEA AND ITS RELEVANCE TO RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

BY

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## CERTIFICATION

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## DEDICATION

To You,  
Almighty and Benevolent God whose child of His brain I am,  
And  
Mrs. Olubunmi Modupe Josiah  
My incomparable Treasure - a Gift indeed from God,  
I dedicate this work

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## ABSTRACT

The book of Hosea, popular for its marital metaphor, presents a link between unethical deeds and ecological crises in ancient Israel. However, existing studies on the book have focused mostly on its nuptial imagery with less emphasis on the ecological consequences generated by unethical deeds in Israel of the period, which could be relevant to understanding the ecological problems in selected communities in contemporary Rivers State. This study, therefore, interpreted the Book of Hosea from an ecological standpoint with a view to establishing the consequences of unethical deeds brought on ancient Israel's land, air, and water, and the relevance of these for understanding the environmental challenges in selected communities in Rivers State.

The study adopted Habel's ecological hermeneutics, which stresses that human deeds have ecological consequences. The Historical-Grammatical Method was utilised as exegetical platform to interpret the purposively selected text of Hosea 4:1-3. Two sets of questionnaire were administered: 583 copies to purposively sampled residents in Andoni, Ahoada-East, Etche, Khana, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni and Port-Harcourt local government areas of Rivers State, which are highly vulnerable to environmental degradation, and 26 copies to Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) of Saipem/Agip, Total/Elf, Shell and Chevron. Media reports were consulted, and observations were made. Data were subjected to exegetical analysis and percentage scores.

Hosea 4:1-2 outlined dysfunctional community relationships (*w<sup>e</sup>'en-chesed*) manifested in destructive activities (*pārats*), blood-bath (*rātsach*), and stealing of humans/natural resources (*gānab'*) as prevailing human misdeeds with environmental consequences in ancient Israel. Similarly in Rivers State, dysfunctional community relationships underpinned by pipeline vandalism, oil spillage, oil theft, indiscriminate gas flaring and unethical use of chemicals and explosive exemplified unethical behaviours with environmental consequences. These were attested to by 89.4% of Residents and 88.5% of the CLOs. Hosea 4:3 echoed the attendant environmental consequences of such moral decadence: on land, human beings and beasts were adversely affected by man-induced drought; birds either migrated or became extinct as a result of atmospheric imbalance; in water, fish migrated or became extinct owing to excessive fishing motivated by greed. Equally, in Rivers State, community youths engaged in pipeline vandalism while oil companies also engaged in oil spillage and dumping of high level hydrocarbon pollutants on the ground, thereby preventing the growth of vegetation, animal and human populations. This violation of ethics of environmental stewardship was affirmed by 80.4% of the residents, 73.1% of the CLOs and the media report of August 22, 2011 on United Nations Environmental Programme. There was bird mortality arising from indiscriminate gas flaring by oil companies. Community residents from fresh water zone applied chemicals while those of saline water zone used explosives as fishing techniques. This results in non-selective mortal damage, which leaves water sources stinking after two days. This was confirmed by 84.9% of community residents.

Unethical deeds, which account for ecological disasters in the land, air and water in Hosea and selected communities in Rivers State, resulted from the violation of ethics of environmental stewardship. Therefore, practical adherence to moral tenets espoused in Hosea is imperative for environmental remediation in Rivers State.

**Keywords:** The book of Hosea, Unethical deeds, Rivers State ecological zones, Environmental Stewardship, Environmental consequences

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO STUDY

All through the creation tradition, especially Genesis 1:1-2:4a, we see a depiction of creation as an institution of order from chaos; and that אֱלֹהִים (<sup>e</sup>*lōhîm*) - God, created the cosmos by establishing order<sup>1</sup>. However, the book of Hosea 4, presents a reversal of this order. The prophet presents the theme of *reversal of creation* as tied within Hosea 4:1-3 as a whole to unethical conduct in ancient Israel.<sup>2</sup> In Hosea 4:1, Yahweh indicts Israel for the lack of attributes, such as, אֱמֶת *'emeth* – reliability, חֶסֶד - *Hesed* – functional community relationship, though these qualities can be interpreted either morally or religiously<sup>3</sup>. However, the indictment reaches its peak with Hosea's accusation at the end of verse 1 that there is אֵין-דַעַת אֱלֹהִים - *'en-da'ath <sup>e</sup>lōhîm* – “no knowledge of God” in the land.

As a faith community, the ‘knowledge of God’ to ancient Israel, was to be ‘knowledge interiorized, knowledge issuing in conduct and conduct determined by fundamental understanding’<sup>4</sup> of, especially, the *Torah* which stipulates the requirements needed for the preservation and promotion of life in ancient Israel. In other words, the phrase (*'en-da'ath <sup>e</sup>lōhîm*) – “no knowledge of God” in the land as found in Hosea, is not the mere absence of “knowledge of God”, but the prevalence of human misdeed. Nevertheless, that this “lack of knowledge of God” in the land, is a dominant theme throughout the whole book of Hosea, is attested to, by Wolff,<sup>5</sup> Beeby,<sup>6</sup> and Wittenberg.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G. V. Rad. 1966. *Genesis: A Commentary*, London: SCM Press, 49.

<sup>2</sup> Hayes, Katherine M. 2002. *The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic*. *SBL Academia Biblica* 8, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature. 60. Retrieved Dec. 30, 2012, from [http://books.google.com.ng/books/p/8252592953561564?id=ldfw7nYUe7wC&pg=PA128&dq=Hayes.+Katherine+M.+The+Earth+Mourns&cd=1&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Hayes%2C%20Katherine%20M.%20The%20Earth%20Mourns&f=false](http://books.google.com.ng/books/p/8252592953561564?id=ldfw7nYUe7wC&pg=PA128&dq=Hayes.+Katherine+M.+The+Earth+Mourns&cd=1&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Hayes%2C%20Katherine%20M.%20The%20Earth%20Mourns&f=false)

<sup>3</sup> K. D. Sakenfeld. 1978. *The Meaning of Hesed in the Hebrew Bible*. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press. 170-171.

<sup>4</sup> Walter, H. 1976. Knowledge of God in the Church. *Interpretation*, 30.1: 12-17, Retrieved Dec. 28, 2012, from <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&hid=107&sid=5cc3cba2-f7ae-49b4-8e52-f5fef8707793%40sessionmgr104>

<sup>5</sup> H. W. Wolff. 1974. *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. 67.

<sup>6</sup> H. D. Beeby. 1989. *Hosea: Grace Abounding in International Theological Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 47.

<sup>7</sup> Witenberg, G. 2009. Knowledge of God: the Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change. *Old Testament Essay, a Journal of Old Testament Society in South Africa*. 22/2. 493.

Unfortunately, in verse 2, Yahweh is portrayed by the prophet, as accusing ancient Israel of contravening the known contents of the *Torah*.<sup>8</sup> Within this same verse, Yahweh is pictured as recounting the people's evil deeds against one another as portrayed in the use of five *infinitive absolutes*: 'They were always *cursing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery*' (Hos 4:2). However, most commentators note, that the above five *infinitive absolutes* are more than a list of social evils.<sup>9</sup> The last three are categorically forbidden by the moral law, that is, the Decalogue (Exo 20:13-15) which reads לֹא-תִרְצַח *lo'-thiritsach* (vs.13), לֹא-תִגְנוֹב *lo'-thignob* (vs.15), לֹא-תִנָּאֵץ *lo'-thina'ap* (vs.14) literally meaning: "do not kill" (vs. 13), "do not steal or kidnap" (vs. 15)," "do not commit adultery" (vs. 14). Moreover, the first *infinitive*, אָלֵה *'aloh* used by Hosea in 4:2 denotes the ceremonial use of Yahweh's name in *cursing* someone and is therefore a violation of the *Torah* in Exodus 20:7.<sup>10</sup> The Prophet's second accusation, שָׁקֵר וְכַזֵּב *-lying* is explicitly banned in only one Old Testament law especially, in Leviticus 19:11: וְלֹא-תִכְחָשׁוּ *w<sup>e</sup>lo'-th<sup>e</sup>kāHaš* which literally means "do not lie." Hence, from the above, we see that man's sins against his neighbours are looked upon also, as a violation of Yahweh's stipulations. Therefore, Israel's breaking of the *Torah* manifests itself in two ways: wrong attitudes to Yahweh, and wrong actions amongst one another- vertical and horizontal relationships.

As a result of such breach on those stipulations, Yahweh in vs. 3 is perceived of, as pronouncing "judgment" upon the אֶרֶץ-*land* that is, Israel in the immediate context. Three terms: אָבַל *'ābal* -"mourn," אָמַל *'āmal* - "languish," and אָסַף *'āsap* - "migration" are used to depict the lamenting condition of land and population<sup>11</sup> in the land, air and water habitats, which the Prophet identifies as: the languishing of everyone that dwells therein, with the "beasts of the field" (land), while the "birds of the sky" and the fish of the sea" are being "taken away" (air and water) (Hos 4:3). Therefore, it could be asserted that the book of Hosea 4:1-3, presents a devastating, and chaotic condition of the ancient Israel's environment with an assumption that there is a link between unethical conduct in ancient Israelite society, and environmental chaos. The environment, in this regard according to

<sup>8</sup> K. M. Hayes. 2002. *The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic*. *SBL Academia Biblica* 8, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature. 60.

<sup>9</sup>J. Luther Mays. 1969. *Hosea: A Commentary*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press. 64-65.

<sup>10</sup>J. Luther Mays. 1969. *Hosea: A Commentary*.

<sup>11</sup>J. Luther Mays. 1969. *Hosea: A Commentary*.65.

Dewitt includes human, animals, birds, fish and other non-human elements.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, Wittenberg observed that there is a broad unity between cosmic, political, and social order in the ancient Near Eastern concept of creation. Therefore, disorder in the social realm remains detrimental to the cosmic realm.<sup>13</sup>

Interestingly, Mays,<sup>14</sup> and Anderson<sup>15</sup> had linked the “mourning” of ancient Israelite ‘land’ directly with moral decay in the society. Moreover, Wolf identifies the root of the moral decay as resulting from אֵין־דַּעַת אֶל־יְהוָה (*'en-da'ath 'elohim*) – violation of Yahweh’s stipulations. Little wonder, Anderson classified the failure of the Israelites in applying God’s saving action and justice, as well as in formulating and executing foreign policies in accordance with the will of Yahweh as the sin of ‘omission’ (ignoring right standards) which obviously led to those of ‘commission’ (five *infinitive absolutes* used by the Prophet in Hos 4:2),<sup>16</sup> which in turn resulted in environmental chaos in ancient Israel (Hos 4:3).

Nevertheless, environmental challenges are not restricted to the Ancient Israelites’ environment. The ארץ–earth, including the Rivers State environment, suffers degradation in such magnitude that it has become an issue of global concern. In fact, the converging of world leaders at the United Nations’ headquarters in New York between September 6-8, 2000, and their signing of the Millennium Declaration with the target of meeting among others, the Millennium Development goal of ‘environmental sustainability’ by 2015,<sup>17</sup> is an indication that the environment is *mourning* and in need of remediation.

A diminutive clue to the rate of environmental damage in Rivers State is revealed in a report submitted by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)<sup>18</sup> on the

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<sup>12</sup>C. B. DeWitt. 1991. The Religious Foundations of Ecology. *The Mother Earth Handbook*, Scherff, Judith S., Ed. New York: Continuum. 253.

<sup>13</sup>Witenberg, G. 2009. Knowledge of God: the Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change. *Old Testament Essay, a Journal of Old Testament Society in South Africa*. 22/2. 504

<sup>14</sup>J. L. Mays. 1969. *Hosea: A Commentary*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 12-13

<sup>15</sup>F. I Anderson. 1980. *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. NY: Douleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc. 331-341.

<sup>16</sup>F. I. Anderson. 1980. *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. 331-341.

<sup>17</sup>Anon. 2000. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly United Nations Millennium Declaration <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm> (Accessed 30th December, 2012).

<sup>18</sup>Afonne, E. 2011. Ogoni: Justice at Last. August 22. *Nigerian Newsworld* 15.025:14-20. [www.nigeriannewsworld.com](http://www.nigeriannewsworld.com). The report reveals a great deal of degradation. This fourteen-month scientific assessment of the Ogoni land to be precise unveils the following findings: surface water contamination and up to eight centimeters in underground water that feed drinking wells at fourteen sites. The water is said to have contained dangerous concentration of benzene (toxic liquid from petroleum) and other harmful chemicals; soil contamination of more than five meters deep in many areas. Although the UNEP has

Ogoni-land of Rivers State. Furthermore, a study carried out by Isiche,<sup>19</sup> unveils the destructive effects of hazardous chemicals on both terrestrial and aquatic habitats. Moreover, Schael<sup>20</sup> focusing on the arboreal habitat observes that regions (like Rivers State) with a common practice of gas flaring, record substantial rate of bird mortality. In fact, the quality of life and even life itself would eventually go toward *דָּמָה*– *dāmah* (extinction), as was evident in ancient Israel, if the Rivers State environment is left to further degenerate. It is therefore, against this backdrop, that this work explores the ecological relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 to selected communities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The book of Hosea has been so popular for its marital metaphor that the evidence of a link between human unethical deeds and ecological crisis in ancient Israel which could be so meaningful for understanding the environmental situation of Rivers State has been somewhat, minimized. This is seen in existing studies on the book, which have focused mostly on its nuptial imagery with less emphasis on the ecological consequences generated by unethical deeds in Israel of the period, which could be relevant to some selected communities in contemporary Rivers State of Nigeria. Works on the book of Hosea by scholars such as Rowley<sup>21</sup> and Kakkanattu,<sup>22</sup> have focused on the nuptial imagery of the book, with little or no emphasis on the consequence of ethical breaches in ancient Israel brought on the environment. However, with reference to Hosea 4:1-3, scholars like Mays<sup>23</sup> and Anderson<sup>24</sup> had linked moral decay, stemming from ethical breaches in ancient Israel, directly with the crisis in the social environment. Moreover, Wolff,<sup>25</sup> Hoerth,<sup>26</sup> Andersen and

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recommended the need for the provision of initial \$1billion for the clean-up of the area which would last 30 years, the fact remains that the Niger Delta land is indeed “mourning.”

<sup>19</sup>Isiche, A. O. and Stanford, W. W. 1976. The Effect of Wastes Gas Flares on Surrounding Vegetation of South-eastern Nigeria. *Journal of Applied Ecology* 13: 177-187.

<sup>20</sup> M. Schael, 2000. On the Horizon: Canada’s Oil and Gas Potential. *Ocean Resources* 18: 16-20. Retrieved Dec. 27, 2012, from <http://play.psych.mun.ca/~mont/pubs/seabirds.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup>H. H. Rowley. 1963. The Marriage of Hosea. *Bulletin of the John Ryland’s Library* 39: 200-233, reprinted in *Men of God*. London-Edinburgh: Nelson. 66-97.

<sup>22</sup>Kakkanattu., P. J. 2007. God’s Enduring Love in the Book of Hosea: A Synchronic and Diachronic Analysis of Hosea 11:1-11. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 31.5: 130.

<sup>23</sup>J. L. Mays. 1969. *Hosea: A Commentary*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press. 12-13

<sup>24</sup> F. I. Anderson. 1980. *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, NY: Douleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

<sup>25</sup> Wolff, 1974. 68

Freedman<sup>27</sup> in their studies on the book, attributed the *mourning* of ancient Israel's *land* to the judgement of Yahweh because of the prophet's use of the adverb עַל־כֵּן 'al-ken – “therefore” to introduce the consequence of 'en-da'ath <sup>28</sup>lōhîm - which literally reads “there is no knowledge of God” (Hos 4:3). Concomitantly, Gemser had observed, that Yahweh, in Hosea 4:1, is portrayed by the prophet, as an accuser (prosecutor) who presents the evidence and also brings the summons and decides the sentence.<sup>28</sup> This position however, attributes the ecological crisis in ancient Israel to Yahweh's judgement with no allusion to the people's unethical conduct which this research claims as responsible for the mourning of ancient Israel's land.

Notably, in Rivers State, economically-induced factors such as oil Exploration and Exploitation<sup>29</sup> though not precluding modern industrialization<sup>30</sup> and poverty<sup>31</sup> have been alleged the major causes of environmental degradation, with no reference to ethical breaches as seen in Hosea 4:1-3. Nevertheless, researches carried out by Isiche,<sup>32</sup> and Schael<sup>33</sup> suggest that the Rivers state environment is *mourning*. These works unveil the destructive effects of hazardous chemicals from oil activities on the land, air and water habitats. And as such, both the Nigerian government<sup>34</sup> and the Rivers State- Niger Delta people<sup>35</sup> had

<sup>26</sup> A. J. Hoerth. 1998. *Archaeology and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. Rpt. 2004. 329-335.

<sup>27</sup> Andersen and Freedman. 1980: 334.

<sup>28</sup> B. Gemser. 1955. The *Rîb* - or Controversy-Pattern in Hebrew Mentality. *Wisdom in Israel and the Ancient Near East (Vetus Testamentum, Supplement, Martin Noth and D. Winton Thomas, eds.; Leiden: E. J. Brill):* 122-137.

<sup>29</sup> Nwaomah, S.M. 2007. Biblical Ecology of Stewardship: Option in Quest for Sustainable Environment in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. *The Living Word: Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 113.2:89-103.

<sup>30</sup> Larry Rasmussen. 2000. Global Eco-Justice: The Church's Mission in Urban Society *Christianity and Ecology Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*, Dieter Thessel Eds, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. 515-527.

<sup>31</sup> Harry Spalling. 2001. Earthkeeping and the Poor: Assessing the Environmental Sustainability of Development Projects. *Prospectives on Science and Christian Faith*. 53.3: 142-151.

<sup>32</sup> Isiche, A. O. and Stanford, W. W. 1976. The Effect of Wastes Gas Flares on Surrounding Vegetation of South-eastern Nigeria. *Journal of Applied Ecology*. 13: 177-187.

<sup>33</sup> Schael, M. 2000. On the Horizon : Canada's Oil and Gas Potential. *Ocean Resources*, 18: 16-20. Retrieved Dec. 27, 2012, from <http://play.psych.mun.ca/~mont/pubs/seabirds.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> Abodunrin, A.O. 2008. Anti-Pollution Laws in Deut 23:13-14. *Biblical Studies and Environmental Issues in Africa. A Publication of Nigerian Association of Biblical Studies (NABIS), NABIS West Biblical Studies*. Ukachukwu C. Manus, Dairo, A.O, Bateye, B. Eds. Chapter 5:137-145. He enumerates those Acts as follows: Oil pipeline Act 1958, Petroleum regulation of 1967, Oil in navigable waters Act No34, 1968, Oil in navigable waters regulation of 1968, Petroleum Act of 1969, Petroleum (drilling and production) regulation of 1969, Petroleum (drilling and production) Amendments Regulation of 1973, Petroleum Refining Regulations of 1974.

respectively, made attempts through the promulgation of laws, and agitations for control of resources as means of salvaging the situation, yet, the region continues to degrade. Like ancient Israelites' ארץ-ecosystem, the Rivers State environment *mourns*. But could the *mourning* of the ancient Israel ארץ – land be attributed to God's judgement as alluded to, by Gemser, or could it be as a result of 'en-da'ath <sup>ע</sup>lōhîm – ethical breaches as suggested by Hosea?

Consequently, if sustained that אֵינְדָא'אֵת אֱלֹהִים -'en-da'ath <sup>ע</sup>lōhîm (ethical breaches), resulted in environmental damage especially in ancient Israel, could some selected communities in Rivers State of Nigeria mirror ancient Israelites' environmental situation? Here, however, lies the thrust of this study which is, to interpret the Book of Hosea from an ecological point of view with the aim of establishing the consequence of ethical breaches brought on the land, air and water habitats of ancient Israel and by extension, those of the Rivers State environment.

### 1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study therefore, interpreted the Book of Hosea from an ecological standpoint with a view to establishing the consequence of unethical conduct, brought on the land, air and water habitats of ancient Israel and the relevance of these for understanding the environmental challenges in selected communities in Rivers State. It further seeks to establish that the economically-induced environmental degradation prevalent in Rivers State is a product of unethical conduct of some residents, as well as Oil Companies in selected communities in Rivers State. The study investigated the socio-cultural history of Israel in connection with the text of Hosea 4:1-3. The research further engaged on the exegesis of key words in the text, and as well applied the meaning of the text in the Rivers State-Niger Delta context.

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<sup>35</sup>Clement Ikat. 2001. The Niger Delta Problems and Solutions: The Equilateral Resource Control (ERC) model as an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) concept. Some groups in the region had resorted to a struggle for resource control as a means to enhancing the Region. Retrieved June 5, 2011, from [http://nigerdeltacongress.com/narticles/niger\\_delta\\_problems\\_and\\_solutio.htm](http://nigerdeltacongress.com/narticles/niger_delta_problems_and_solutio.htm).

#### 1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is delimited to Hosea 4:1-3, 6 which presents the theme of reversal of creation tied within the same corpus (Hos 4:1-3) as a whole to the violation of law and ethical principles in Israel;<sup>36</sup> and its importance to the search for environmental sustainability in contemporary Rivers State. Hosea 4:1-3 is chosen as the scope because understanding the ‘lack of Knowledge of God’ (*'en-ḏa'ath 'ēlōhîm*) as the fundamental indictment of Hosea 4:1-3, provides the lens to the understanding of the main corpus of the Book of Hosea.<sup>37</sup> In relation to Rivers State, six Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the State are considered as study area. Rivers State is chosen for study because of its high vulnerability to environmental degradation though acclaimed to be as a result of oil exploration and exploitation,<sup>38</sup> poverty,<sup>39</sup> and modern industrialization<sup>40</sup> however, with preclusion of possible ecological crisis occasioned by ‘unethical conduct’ (*'en-ḏa'ath 'ēlōhîm*) among stakeholders in the state. The six LGA's chosen from the three Senatorial Districts (Rivers: West, Central and East) of Rivers State consisting of upland and coastland which is for the purpose of representation are indicated on figure one (1).

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<sup>36</sup> Hayes, K. M. 2002. “The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic” *SBL Academia Biblica* 8, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 60.

<sup>37</sup> Wittenberg, G. 2009. “Knowledge of God: the Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change” in *Old Testament Essay, a Journal of Old Testament Society in South Africa*. 22/2. 493.

<sup>38</sup> Nwaomah, S.M.. 2007. “Biblical Ecology of Stewardship: Option in Quest for Sustainable Environment in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.” 89-103.

<sup>39</sup> H. Spalling. 2001. Earthkeeping and the Poor: Assessing the Environmental Sustainability of Development Projects. *Prospectives on Science and Christian Faith*. 53.3: 142-151.

<sup>40</sup> Rasmussen, L. 2000. Global Eco-Justice: The Church's Mission in Urban Society. *Christianity and Ecology Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*. Dieter Thessel Ed. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. 515-527.





Fig.1. Map of Rivers State showing the areas of study  
 Accessed from Nigerianland.com

## 1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Historical-Grammatical Method<sup>41</sup> was utilised as exegetical platform to interpret the purposively selected text of Hosea 4:1-3. This exegetical model is premised on the stance that no event or text can be understood unless it is seen in terms of its historical and grammatical context. It also approaches the text in its final form and at face value, with no recourse to textual evolution.

Nevertheless, a survey was carried out among the Rivers State residents and the oil companies residing in Rivers State. Thus, two sets of structured questionnaire were administered to generate information regarding the interrelatedness between unethical conduct (*'en-da'ath* *lōhîm*) and ecological damage in Rivers State. The sample size was calculated from the total population of six (6) Local Government Areas (LGAs) within the three (3) senatorial districts of Rivers State. They were: Rivers East (Andoni and Khana LGAs), Rivers Central (Etche and Port Harcourt) and Rivers West (Ogba-Egbama-Ndoni and Ahoada East LGAs) Senatorial districts. According to the 2006 population census<sup>42</sup> in Nigeria, the populations of these local government areas are as follows: Ahoada-East

<sup>41</sup>M. S. Terry. 1976. *Biblical Hermeneutics* NY: Philips and Hunt; reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 231.

<sup>42</sup>Anon. 2007. *National Bureau of Statistics, (NBS), Annual Abstract of Statistics*. Produced under the Auspices of Federal Government Economics Reform & Governance Project, (ERGP) Federal Republic of Nigeria. 39.

(166,747), Andoni(211,009), Etche (249,454), Khana (294,217), Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni (284,010), and Port-Harcourt (541,115). These individual populations sum up to 1,746,552 people living in these Local Government Areas.

The formula applied in calculating the sample size is Gonzalez<sup>43</sup> sample size formula:  $n = N/1+[N(e^2)]$ , where  $n$  = sample size,  $N$  = total population of the understudied universe, and  $e$  = percentage margin of error at 4 percent error margin (which implies 97 percent accuracy), the total population size ( $N = 1,746,552$ ) produced a sample population of  $n = 624$ ; Making the sample population size for this study as 624 respondents from the Rivers State residents. And randomly, 30 opinions of Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) of oil companies as well as oil servicing companies, served as the sample population for the companies within this territory of study.

Out of the 624 (100%) copies of the questionnaire administered to study sample representing the opinions of Rivers State residents, 583 (93.4%) opinions were generated for analysis, while out of the 30 copies (100%) of a separate questionnaire administered to Community Liaison Officers of some firms within same territory, total of 26 copies (86.7%) were retrieved for analysis.

In the course of analyzing the data collated, Simple Percentage Rating was used to analyse the data collated, leading to the estimations and conclusions reached in this study. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools such as tables, averages and charts were adapted for needed data analyses.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study adopts Habel's ecological hermeneutics<sup>44</sup> as the theoretical framework. This ecological hermeneutics moves beyond a simple discussion about Earth and its constituents as topics to a reading of the text from the perspective of Earth thus, stressing that human deeds have ecological consequences. For instance, according to Loya as quoted in Habel<sup>45</sup> the *mourning of the Earth* in Hosea 4:3 should be read from the perspective of *Earth* since the *Earth* becomes an actor in the ongoing relationship between Yahweh and

<sup>43</sup>P. Gonzalez and A. Caldelon . 2008. *Methods of Research and Thesis Writing*, Manila: National Book Store.

<sup>44</sup> N. C. Habel and P. Trudinger. Eds. 2008. *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, xiv -183. Retrieved June 12, 2013, from <http://www.brill.com/exploring-ecological-hermeneutics>

<sup>45</sup> N. C. Habel, and P. Trudinger, (Eds.) 2008. *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*.

Israel. Furthermore, this hermeneutics recognises that God has created the world in such a way that deeds will have consequences. Laurie Braaten in Habel<sup>46</sup> reiterates the above point, using Joel 1–2 as a context. He holds that there is interconnectedness among the three members of the Earth community: Earth, humans, and God. The locusts are not just a “problem”; they are full members of the Earth community themselves. Accordingly Marlow<sup>47</sup> observes that this is precisely what the book of Amos conveys: Earth is part and parcel of a cosmic dialogue between Creator and creation.

## 1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This work *Unethical Conduct as a Precursor to Ecological Crisis in the Book of Hosea and its Relevance to Rivers State, Nigeria* is relevant because it deals with hermeneutical principles that would aid the ordinary reader of the text toward understanding the meaning of the Hebrew corpus of Hosea 4:1-3 in an Afro-centric (Rivers State) perspective.<sup>48</sup> Indeed it is of importance because it contextualises the biblical text of Hosea 4:1-3 in the Nigerian-African viewpoint.

This work is significant because, it explores the nexus between אֵינְדָעַת אֱלֹהִים (*en-da'ath 'ēlōhîm*) which is violation of ethical principles and Ecological crisis in Hosea which could be meaningful for the understanding of the environmental problems in selected communities the Rivers State, Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. It is relevant because it accentuate the need for adherence to life supporting principles as this will enhance the wellbeing of the Rivers State ecosystem.

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<sup>46</sup> N. C. Habel and P. Trudinger, Eds. 2008. *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*

<sup>47</sup> H. Marlow, *Biblical Prophets and Contemporary Environmental Ethics*. 109. Retrieved June 19, 2013, from [http://aejt.com.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/512809/Bergmann Ecological Appropriation of Joel April 13\\_Vol20.1.pdf](http://aejt.com.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/512809/Bergmann_Ecological_Appropriation_of_Joel_April_13_Vol20.1.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> D. T. Adamo. 2005. *Explorations in African Biblical Studies*. Benin City, Nig.: Justice Jeco Press & Publishers. 1-43.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

A thematic approach was employed in the review of literature. Two main themes were examined in this chapter. They are:- Ancient Israel and Ecological Crisis as in Hosea 4, and Eco-Justice and the Rivers State environment. These will be treated in relation to this research aims.

#### 2.2 ANCIENT ISRAEL AND ECOLOGICAL CRISIS AS IN HOSEA 4

According to Rowley,<sup>49</sup> no part of the book of Hosea arouses interest as Hosea's marriage in chapters 1-3, and at the same time nowhere in the book have the opinions of scholars differed as widely as they do here. He continues, 'in a number of respects it has become the foremost question of introduction concerning Hosea's prophecies, and the key by which the entire character of the prophet's message is assessed.' Similarly, scholars like Itapson and Janvier,<sup>50</sup> Folarin,<sup>51</sup> Schmidt<sup>52</sup> and Kakkanattu,<sup>53</sup> further project God's Enduring Love in the Book of Hosea.

Nevertheless, these scholars' concern here is more on the nuptial imagery of the book of Hosea without emphasis on the consequence of the people's unethical conduct brought on the environment, which of course is fundamental in Hosea 4:1-3, and which further provides the lens to the understanding of the main corpus of the Book of Hosea.<sup>54</sup> In

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<sup>49</sup>H. H. Rowley. 1963. The Marriage of Hosea. *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 39: 200-233, reprinted in *Men of God*. London-Edinburgh: Nelson. 66-97.

<sup>50</sup>Emmanuel Itapson and George E. Janvier. 2005. *A Study of the Major and Minor Prophets of the Old Testament*. Bukuru, Plateau, Nigeria: Africa Christian Textbooks (ACTS). 81-87.

<sup>51</sup>George O. Folarin. 2004. *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy*. Bukuru, Plateau, Nigeria: Africa Christian Textbooks (ACTS). 50-57.

<sup>52</sup>Werner H. Schmidt. 2008. *Old Testament Introduction*. Brandra, Mumbai: St. Paul Press Training School. 233-241.

<sup>53</sup>Kakkanattu, P. J. 2007. God's Enduring Love in the Book of Hosea: A Synchronic and Diachronic Analysis of Hosea 11:1-11. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 31.5:130.

<sup>54</sup>Witenberg, G.. 2009. Knowledge of God: the Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change. *Old Testament Essay, a Journal of Old Testament Society in South Africa*. 22/2. 493.

Hosea 4, we see that the reversal of creation<sup>55</sup> is tied to אֵי-דָעַת אֶל-הָיִם ('en-da'ath 'elohim) which is *unethical conduct* in northern Israel.<sup>56</sup>

During the reign of Jeroboam II, the kingdom of Israel was preoccupied with the facets of what scholars referred to as the “good life” (Amos 6:4-6), but when Jeroboam II died, Israel quickly sank into a period of bloodshed and confusion from which it never recovered. Hoerth<sup>57</sup> observed that the peaceful period of Israel during Jeroboam’s reign was partly a result of Assyrian weakness. But during the reign of Menahem king of Israel, it dawned on the kingdom of Israel that the weakness of Assyria has ended. This was so because Assyria had found a strong leader in Tiglath-pileser III (the Biblical Pul of 2 Kgs 15:19-20). Hoerth records Tiglath-pileser’s boastful words as shown below:

I received tribute from...Rezon of Damascus, Menahem of Samaria, Hiram of Tyre... to wit: gold, silver, tin, iron, elephant hides, ivory, linen garments with multicolored trimmings, blue-dyed wool, purple-dyed wool, ebony wood, boxwood, whatever was precious enough for royal treasure; also lambs whose stretched hides were dyed purple and wild birds whose spread-out wings were dyed blue, furthermore horses, mules, large and small cattle, male camels, female camels with their foals.... As for Menahem (King of Israel) I overwhelmed him like a snowstorm and he fled like a bird, alone, and bowed to my feet. I returned him to his place and imposed tribute upon him, to wit: gold, silver, linen garments with multicolored trimmings.<sup>58</sup>

He further gives a run down on how Israel, little by little faded away. He states that as of 722 BC, the country of Israel ceased. The extinction of the Israelites, he said, was as a result of King Hoshea’s disloyalty to the Assyrian king (2 Kgs 18:11). He further asserts that the ecological crisis mentioned in Hosea 4:3, had been prophesied by Ahijah the prophet even before it came to pass in 722 BC (1Kgs 14:15-16). In addition, scholars like Wolf,<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>M. Deroche. 198. The Reversal of Creation in Hosea. *Vetus Testamentum*. XXXI.4:400.

<sup>56</sup>Hayes, K. M. 2002. The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic. *SBL Academia Biblica* 8, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature. 60.

<sup>57</sup>Alfred J. Hoerth. 1998. *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, Rpt. 2004. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. 329-335. Also see, <http://www.ancientcash.info/page-2/Tyreference.html> (Accessed 26th October, 2012).

<sup>58</sup>Alfred J. Hoerth. 1998. *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, Rpt. 2004. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. 329-335.

<sup>59</sup>Wolff. 1974: 68.

Hoerth,<sup>60</sup> Andersen and Freedman<sup>61</sup> also see the judgment of Yahweh playing out in Israel because of the prophet's use of the adverb עַל־כֵּן – “therefore” to introduce the consequence of the אֵין־דַּעַת אֱלֹהִים ('en-da'ath - 'lōhîm),- literally stated “there is no knowledge of God” (Hos 4:3). To them the whole earth (humans and nature in Israel) suffers because of Yahweh's judgment. In fact, Andersen and Freedman even go further to claim liability on the part of the animals, holding that “when the covenant virtues (reliability and functional community relationship, which are the outcome of דַּעַת אֱלֹהִים da'ath 'lōhîm (literally, ‘knowledge of God’) are lacking in the land, even animals behave outside the bounds of knowledge.”

From the foregoing, we can deduce that the ecological crisis in Israel seemed to be a judgment of Yahweh on Israel since it was a message from Yahweh through his prophet Ahijah. Although a prophecy was given by Prophet Ahijah (1Kgs 14:15-16) concerning the fate of the Northern kingdom of Israel which was eminent due to idolatry as claimed by Hoerth, could God be responsible for such calamity on the entire nature including humans? Nevertheless, we see in the previous paragraph, that Israel had sunk into social rottenness which affects human ecology. We also see how nature is affected by human activities. We could therefore agree with Hayes<sup>62</sup> who points out that the consequence in Hosea 4:3 (mourning of the land), was as a result of the evil acts done on the land by the people. He further argues, that the introduction of the word עַל־כֵּן 'al-ken (‘therefore’) as a link word in Hosea 4:3, strengthens the interrelatedness between unethical deeds and ecological crisis in ancient Israel. However, it is true that both עַל־כֵּן 'al-kēn and לָכֵן -laken may mean “therefore” but usually, לָכֵן introduces prophetic judgment speech as found in 1 Samuel 3:14 (where Yahweh pronounces judgment upon the house of Eli).<sup>63</sup> However, עַל־כֵּן generally introduces a statement of fact, designating the result of the action. It has its Greek equivalent

<sup>60</sup> Alfred J. Hoerth.1998.*Archaeology and the Old Testament*, Reprinted 2004.Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. 329-335.

<sup>61</sup> Andersen and Freedman. 1980: 334.

<sup>62</sup> Hayes. 2002. *The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic*.45.

<sup>63</sup> William I. Holladay. 2000. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* based upon the Lexical work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner. The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, 177.

in the BGT version of the bible rendered as  $\text{dia}\epsilon$  — *dia*, which is a “marker of intermediate agent with implicit or explicit causative agent.” It is used ‘to indicate a reason on account of’ (something).<sup>64</sup>

Accordingly, Koch, as quoted in Wittenberg<sup>65</sup> holds that rather than accepting that the fateful consequences in nature are due to an active punishment by Yahweh, it rather follows that “Yahweh merely watches over the organic connection between human deed and the fateful consequences that follow organically out of it.” So we could say that the ecological crisis in Hosea 4 was not as a result of Yahweh’s judgment but rather an outcome of the people’s activities on the land.

Conversely, Lundblom,<sup>66</sup> holds that although Hosea 4:1 speaks of the-  $\text{רִיב}$  – *rib* - *controversy* of Yahweh with the inhabitants of the land, the new unit Hosea 4:4-6 aims the judgment immediately at those who bear primary responsibility for the people’s lamentable state, that is, the priests. Similarly, Wolff<sup>67</sup> blames two groups in the Israelites’ society for the ecological crises of Hosea 4:3- ‘the mourning of the Land’. He identifies culpable groups as religious as well as political. The priests, he posits were expected to teach and adhere to the  $\text{תּוֹרָה}$ -*Torah* or *ethical principles* in a way to create in the minds of the people the certainty of God’s saving action and justice, while the political leaders were to formulate and execute foreign policies in accordance with the will of Yahweh yet these groups failed in their duties and became culpable of the sins of ‘omission’ and ‘commission’ as Andersen<sup>68</sup> puts it. Mays<sup>69</sup> in conjunction with Andersen, and Wolff, adds that the Northern Kingdom had already sunk to the level of a chaotic society due to the proliferation of such crimes as ‘swearing, lying, killing, stealing and committing adultery’. Social violence he holds, had become the content of their life as Hosea eloquently puts it, no moment was left free of their crime as one bloody deed followed another (Hos 4:2b).

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<sup>64</sup> Barbara Friberg, Timothy Friberg, Neva F. Miller. Ed. 2000. *dia*. *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Electronic edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 6164.

<sup>65</sup>Wittenberg. 2009. 504.

<sup>66</sup>Jack R. Lundblom. 1986. Contentious Priests and Contentious People in Hosea IV, 1-10. *Vetus Testamentum*. XXXVI: 52-70.

<sup>67</sup>Hans Walter Wolff. 1974. *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*. xxvi-xxvii.

<sup>68</sup>Francis I. Andersen. 331-341.

<sup>69</sup> Mays, 65.

In a nutshell, אֵי-דָעַת אֱלֹהִים – (*'en-da'ath 'lōhîm*) which is, disobedience to existing law and ethical principles) in the spheres of both religion and politics in the Northern kingdom of Israel led to an outbreak of 'stealing, killing, lying,' and so on (sins of commission), the consequences of which in turn was transferred to nature as found in Hosea 4:3- 'the mourning of the land, wasting of both humans and beasts of the field, birds of the air and even fish of the sea'; an obvious ecological disaster brought to fruition by the Assyrians at about 721 B.C<sup>70</sup>.

The above scholars' view presents an interplay between the אֵי-דָעַת אֱלֹהִים – (*'en-da'ath 'lōhîm*) and ecological crisis in ancient Israel. It infers that a breach in general morality as well as in normative tradition of Israel leads to ecological chaos especially in ancient Israel. Given the above stand, that the אֵי-דָעַת אֱלֹהִים – (*'en-da'ath 'lōhîm*) which is, contravention of law and ethical principles) is responsible for ecological crisis in Israelites' society; could the related environmental realities in the Rivers State of Nigeria be blamed on the אֵי-דָעַת אֱלֹהִים (*'en-da'ath 'lōhîm*, which is, contravention of law and ethical principles)? The next segment looks at the quest for environmental justice and how the corpus of Hosea 4:1-3 could be meaningful in the quest for environmental remediation in the State.

### 2.3 ECO-JUSTICE AND RIVERS STATE ENVIRONMENT

Eco-justice as a concept, according to Nwaomah<sup>71</sup> could be traced to the concern of a group of North American, ecumenically-engaged Christian ethicists who in the 1970s after the first Earth Day were burdened with the lack of adequate principles of social ethics to address the environmental challenges of society. A strategy to integrate ethics of ecology and justice became the focus of an ecumenical campus ministry initiative at Cornell University called the Eco-Justice Project and Network (EJPN) by 1970. Nwaomah, thus, echoes the words of social ethicist William E. Gibson, a leading proponent of eco-justice as shown below:

<sup>70</sup>E. W. Heaton. 1958. *The Old Testament Prophets*. Edinburgh: R&R. Clark Ltd. 18.

<sup>71</sup>Sampson M. Nwaomah. 2013. "Eco-Justice and the Niger Delta Environmental Challenges: Reflections on Matthew 7.12" *Philosophy Study*, Vol. 3. 4. Pp. 291-299.



the well-being of humankind on a thriving earth,...an earth productive of sufficient food, with water fit for all to drink, air fit to breathe, forests kept replenished, renewable resources continuously renewed, nonrenewable resources used as sparingly as possible so that they will be available [to future generations] for their most important uses...On a thriving earth, providing sustainable sufficiency for all, human well-being is nurtured not only by the provision of these material necessities but also by a way of living within the natural order that is fitting: respectful of the integrity of natural systems and of the worth of nonhuman creatures, appreciative of the beauty and mystery of the world of nature.<sup>72</sup>

Gibson's excerpt above is very instructive. As earlier on stated, the Hebrew scriptures of Judaism do not provide for an objective environment set apart from human beings but rather recognises that we too as creatures are part of.<sup>73</sup> It therefore follows that any deviation from the outlined means for maintaining eco-justice as enumerated by Gibson, is suicidal. It is thus the attempt to maintain an ecological balance that this work explores the ecological consequences of unethical conduct in the book of Hosea seeing that God's intention for man is that he lives within the bounds of natural order for his survival.

Similarly, Robert D. Bullard opines that "Eco-justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, nationality, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies which actually carries the idea of אֲלֻהִים דְּעָתָה (*adherence to the הַתּוֹרָה-Torāh or law*)."<sup>74</sup> Fair treatment here means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socio-economic groups should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies. This implies that all humans are entitled to equal protection and equal enforcement of environmental, land use, energy, laws and regulations. These concerns thus lead to social responsibility and ethical considerations in the use of the environment. Clearly put, eco-justice, calls for decision-making that incorporate social, economic, cultural and

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<sup>72</sup>William E. Gibson quoted in Dieter T. Hessel "Eco-Justice Ethics" Retrieved Oct. 26, 2012, from <http://fore.research.yale.edu/disciplines/ethics/eco-justice.html> .

<sup>73</sup>C. B. DeWitt. 1991. 'The Religious Foundations of Ecology' *the Mother Earth Handbook*, edited by Judith S. Scherff, New York: Continuum. 253.

<sup>74</sup>R. D. Bullard. Environmental Justice for All. Retrieved June 17, from <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nattrans/ntuselnd/essays/envjust.htm>.

environmental concerns and issues in the quest for humankind to appropriate to itself the abundant resources that nature provides. But how could such social responsibility on the part of the Rivers State residents and companies' operators be realized if there is no practical adherence to ethical principles? Here is one of the concerns of this research work.

Given the decision to incorporate the social concern into the quest for eco-justice,<sup>75</sup> Rasmussen<sup>76</sup> sees the Nineteenth Century as a period of wealth creation through man's ingenuity. He writes of Pastor Walter Rauschenbusch who joined in what he calls "Social Gospel." A movement formed to give voice to what Ernst Troeltsch calls "the social question" or 'social modern problem.' This phenomenon, Rasmussen highlights, is seen as an effort to name the exploitative character and massively dislocating effect of rapidly developing industrial societies (like the Nigeria's Rivers State region).

He opines that the nineteenth century's domestic problems of industrializing nations had gone global, manifesting in mass unemployment, rapid-fire investment, mobile business, a spreading distance between the rich and the poor, a reality of limited revenues for limitless needs in most societies, violence which has lingered to the twentieth (and even twenty-first) centuries. He calls attention to the amalgamation of 'the social question' with 'the ecological question' which is obviously the result of the destructive nature of modern industrialized society, (Nigeria's Niger Delta inclusive) dressed in the garb of capitalism. The 'social question' to him, is the social justice question while the ecological question is the question of sustainability, which must be addressed as a whole, as the global eco-justice question.

In a nutshell, this author argues that the impact of globalization in its three main streams (of colonialism, development, and free trade global capitalism) on cities and on the biosphere itself has created the need for eco-justice. He admits that globalization has always been transformative though sometimes destructive in the sense that it leaves many impoverished, while few become wealthy at the expense of the populace. He calls humans to subscribe to the mission of care for the society, bio-physical and geo-planetary, rather than being anthropocentric. He sees "Development" (the second wave of globalization), as

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<sup>75</sup>Dale & Sandy Larsen. 1992. *While Creation Waits: A Christian response to the Environmental Challenge*. Wheaton, Ill.: Harold Shaw Publisher. 151. The term Eco-justice means ecological health and wholeness together with social and economic justice. It means the wellbeing of all humankind on a thriving earth.

<sup>76</sup>Rasmussen, L. 2000. *Global Eco-Justice: The Church's Mission in Urban Society. Christianity and Ecology Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*, Dieter Thessel Ed. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. 515-527.

detrimental to the society. He presents a shift from “Development” as evolution (with the idea of self organization) to “Development” as the way of life of capitalist democracies, which has separated cultures into two main categories-“developed” and “underdeveloped,” “developing” or “societies in transition” using the term of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This shift sooner on one winter day he says, made two-third of the planet’s space and two billion of peoples “underdeveloped” and in need of another way of living. Nature itself, he continues is increasingly colonized by capital. Life-forms are more and more the organic plastic of engineering. Rights for nature are favoured over the Rights of nature. Hence he calls for a decolonization of nature- eco-justice.

Indeed, Rasmussen’s position is relevant to our study. He speaks of eco-justice. He sees a correlation between maintaining rights- *adherence to stipulated rules* and “ecological questions.” He however has opined that there is a global social crisis (resulting from the neglect of rules and regulations) which indeed had led to environmental crisis. He calls for the need to give a voice to modern social problem. Although he identified one of the ways of giving a voice to this global issue as tackling it theologically, he did not do so in his work. There remains therefore, the need to fill this gap of using theological measure to give a voice to modern social problems, and this research in response, uses the Judeo-Christian Moral Standard- the Hebrew Text, in a bid to achieve this aim. The text of Hosea 4:1-3 which presents a link between unethical deeds and environmental illness will be used to foster eco-justice through a transformative society which could by practice and policy, build a sustainable environment.

Interestingly, Rivers State region has experienced grave environmental depletion. Anderson<sup>77</sup> associates the degrading environment (of the Rivers State region) with social factors which he classified as: capitalism, growth of affluence and increased rate of consumption, emergence of new technologies and methods of production and finally, culture. Here, in the context of the Rivers State environmental discourse, he sees capitalism (an economic system) which determines what is produced, how it is produced and what way it is distributed as detrimental to ecological health. On the other hand, the false sense of financial security; the abundance of oil wealth breeding a corrupt government and society

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<sup>77</sup>Anderson, T. R. 1986. Environmental Ethics. *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, J. Macquarie and J. Childress Eds. Westminster Press. 196-198.

has led to inevitable ecological crisis. Moreso, industrial revolution resulting in new technologies used with the objective of harnessing the power of nature for the maximization of goods for humankind, has also led to environmental degradation in the area of massive scale extraction of crude oil from the land. Finally, the culture of consumerism has led to the belief that natural resources are inexhaustible since some natural resource as plants, animals and fish are renewable by reason of their capacity for self-regeneration.

Succinctly, Anderson is right to associate environmental crisis with social and economic issues like capitalism, growth of affluence and increased rate of consumption and the abundance of oil wealth breeding a corrupt government and society. In fact, these social issues are economically driven, and indeed affect the environment adversely. However, Anderson did not give us an escape route from these socio-economic-ecological crises. This work explores the relevance of practical adherence to moral tenets as shown in Hosea 4:1 in the quest for ecological wellbeing in Rivers State.

In the bid to address the ecological crisis resulting from the social problems, Berry<sup>78</sup> reaffirms the need for environmental sustainability. He tries to offer a Christian approach to living now in the hope that tomorrow is inevitable; he presents a Christian frame work for sustainable development. He traces sustainability to God, stating that in biblical narrative, there is no complete theology (study & science about God) without ecology. He presents ethical attitudes of respect, and rest which would bring environmental sustainability as products of understanding God as Creator and Sustainer. He thus makes reference to Genesis 2:15 as an invitation to “till and keep” the Garden. He sees this invitation as the heart of a practical Christian understanding of sustainable stewardship, holding that ‘tilling’ is all about working responsibly and it includes all human endeavour in managing the earth, and using natural resources which encompasses but not limited to farming, animal husbandry, forestry, mining, resource extraction, hunting, fishing and industry, while the “keeping”, he holds, is about ‘restrain’ and ‘respect’, which allows natural resources the capacity to renew and replenish.

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<sup>78</sup>R. J. Berry. Ed. 2007. *When Enough is Enough: A Christian Framework for Environmental Sustainability*, Gosport, Hampshire: Ashford Colour Press Ltd. 1-213.

Furthermore the author puts forward the concept “sustainability” as it relates to non-human elements. He states how water creatures like fish and soil are being depleted and unsustainably used around the world. He shows how erosion and loss of soil is a major concern. He also projects ecotourism, use of non-timber forest product, conservation, the enterprise of showing the vital importance of plants to people and promote their sustainable use which he calls “The Eden project,” as important parts of achieving a sustainable world. He summarizes his point that God is the creator and sustainer of the universe; that humans are created in his image and designed for *right relationships*: (up, out and down), where “up” stands for ‘God’, “out” for ‘Neighbours’ and ‘down’ for ‘the earth’; That there is salvation for all creation in spite of sin.

Following his point above on “right relationships” he indeed accentuates on  $\text{חֶסֶד}$  *Hesed* - right relationship which obviously cannot thrive if there is no  $\text{אֱמֶת}$  ‘*emeth* – reliability in a given society.<sup>79</sup> However, he failed to establish the source which makes  $\text{אֱמֶת}$  and  $\text{חֶסֶד}$  in a given society possible. Thus, this work aligns with Wolff’s assertion that the  $\text{דְּעַת אֱלֹהִים}$  is the source which makes  $\text{אֱמֶת}$  and  $\text{חֶסֶד}$  in a given society possible;<sup>80</sup> hence, any deviation from such standard results in disaster just as a ‘wrong relationship’ with the ‘out’ (man) and ‘up’ (God) affects the ‘down’ (environment). This work therefore, seeks to address the place of  $\text{דְּעַת אֱלֹהִים}$  *da’ath ‘lōhīm* (obedience to the  $\text{תּוֹרָה}$  {*Torah or law*}) in the actualization of the “The Eden project,” in the face of environmental realities in the Rivers State region of Nigeria.

Berry further holds, that greed can apply equally to production and consumption; that rural development needs to provide capacity to care for creation; share with those who do not have enough; work in harmony with God, be in place (relate locally to land community) , access enough (avoid excessive expansion, Isa. 5:8); that Christian ethics are required in agriculture to reconcile simultaneously economy, ecology, energy efficiency, equity and employment; and finally, that agriculture is a vocation, since Earth is God’s farm. He concludes this section of the book by stating that sustainable agriculture requires collective humanity and repentance, followed by disciplined farming that brings “healing to the land”

<sup>79</sup> H. W. Wolff. 1974. *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. 67.

<sup>80</sup> Wolff. 1974. *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. 67.

(2 Chr 7: 14). Here is where this literature speaks directly to this research. It gives a correlation between repentance, humanity, discipline and healing of the land. How could a social problem (in terms of decrepit relationship) which stems from *'en-da'ath 'lōhîm*, that is, contravention of ethical principles, make the land sick so much so that the land requires healing? This work has the burden of putting this link in perspective, a crucial aspect which is missing from Berry's work.

Finally in his thesis, he sees sustainable consumption and production practices with roots from Judeo-Christian teaching about stewardship, as fundamental to environmental sustainability. Conversely, he posits that unsustainable patterns of consumption and production could lead to negative impact on individual's well-being and happiness. He summarizes his thoughts thus: "consumption although necessary for human welfare, is not a sufficient requirement for happiness, while prosperity gained at the expense of the habitability of the planet is perverse."

From the above summary, we notice a caution against greed in pursuit of "happiness" but at the detriment of the environment. In addition, he states how self-interest, greed and exploitation were evidently among the Israelites as they settled in the Promised Land. He shows how the rich appropriated the wealth of the land for themselves, abandoning the just laws of good governance, neglecting and marginalizing the poor and down trodden. He makes reference to Isaiah 5<sup>8-10</sup>; 24<sup>1-6</sup> which links environmental degradation with social injustice. Perusing through the above text of Isaiah 5<sup>8-10</sup>; 24<sup>1-6</sup>, we see how greed, self-interest and exploitation lead to low production and will eventually lead to desolation of the earth (the human and non-human elements inclusive). The author thus states that there are many other biblical passages that reveal the distorting connections between human (social) injustice and the distribution of wealth and environmental exploitation and the degradation of the created order (ecological well-being).

It is indeed against this back drop that this literature is relevant to the investigation of the corpus of Hosea 4:1-3 in light of the environmental degradation in Rivers State seeing that exploitation could adversely affect ecological wellbeing. Furthermore, this work seeks to examine the cause of exploitation. Could it be that the *'en-da'ath 'lōhîm*, that is the breach the ethical principles governing the environment and society is responsible for degradation in Rivers State? This question will no doubt interest scholars of environmental

and social issues as well as the Rivers State people of Nigeria confronted with these socio-environmental realities.

In addition, commenting on the unsafe condition of the environment, White, in his work blames Christian principles. He holds culpable what he calls “Christian Axioms” for the environmental crisis we face. In his thesis, he claims that the ‘Christian axioms’ led to the combination of technology and science as normal life pattern for a befitting *telos* – end, thus resulting in exploitation of the environment. The heart of his thesis as stated below is very instructive:

We continue today to live as we have lived for about 1700 years, very largely in the context of Christian axioms. Our daily habits of action are dominated by an implicit faith in perpetual progress which was unknown either to Greco-Roman antiquity or to the Orient; it is rooted in, and is indefensible apart from Judeo-Christian teleology. Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen... Christianity in absolute contrast to ancient paganism and Asia’s religions (except, perhaps Zoroastrianism), not only establish a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper ends.<sup>81</sup>

In his statement, White supposedly shows how Christian principles are devastating to natural environment. He also posits that Christians perceive human history as not circular but linear (progressive) in nature; that because of the Christians’ assumption of the image of God and the resultant claim of dominion over nature for the good of man, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion in the world. However, he makes this statement in reference to ‘Western Christianity.’

There seem to be some credibility in White’s assertion that ‘Western Christianity’ is anthropocentric in view of the fact that the pre-colonial African culture had respect for humans as well as for nature. “African religious ideas were very much ideas about relationships, whether with other living people, animals, cleared land, or with the bush.”<sup>82</sup> In essence, the way we relate to one another or to other elements within the environment, reveals the extent to which we apply or violate relational principles in our daily dealings, which constitute the *דְּעַת אֱלֹהִים* (adherence to the *תּוֹרָה* {*Torāh* or law}). It is also a fact that the African value

<sup>81</sup>L. White. 1977. The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis. *Pollution and the Death of Man: The Christian View of Ecology*. Schaeffer F. A. Ed. Wheaton, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition.

<sup>82</sup>T. O. Ranger. 1988. African Traditional Religion. *The World’s Religions*, Stewart Sutherland Eds. London: Routledge. 687.

(regard for fellow humans and nature) was subjugated by the Western aberration of Christianity which particularly was introduced to Africans through colonial imperialism.<sup>83</sup> Perhaps one may argue that independence from European hegemony has been got, but the words of Freudenberger below, remain relevant:

The international business organizations were quick to fill the vacuum created by decolonization. As the Western European colonial ministries withdrew to Europe, international business firms- accountable to no one- moved in. Western industries needed raw materials. So even though the Western nations relinquished political control, the business firms exerted economic control. Neocolonialism was born. Agriculture and other production (including natural resources) is still run for the benefit of global market, generating wealth for corporations and their stockholders. Outsiders continue to control indigenous peoples and occupy their land... The situation is now compounded by new realities of international debt, debt service, and trade deficits. Colonialism and neocolonialism continue to bear the fruits of poverty, injustice, and desertification.<sup>84</sup>

From the above we could see the contribution of the international bodies in the degrading of the Nigerian nation including Rivers State. There is indeed a paradigm shift from political control to economic- a new form of colonialism, a fact which White did not consider. Of course, White's concern is with seeming scriptural endorsement of man's ingenuity in the combination of technology and science as detrimental to environmental health. But he overlooked the fact that **אֵין-דַעַת אֱלֹהִים** - 'en-da'ath <sup>e</sup>lōhîm, that is, disobedience to existing law and ethical principles governing the combination of science and technology could also be detrimental to environmental health. Combination of Science and technology while neglecting environmental policies could result in environmental damage. Thus, the responsibility of this research is to emphasise the place of **דַעַת אֱלֹהִים** (*adherence to the תּוֹרָה* {Torāh or law}) in the quest for environmental remediation in Rivers State of Nigeria.

Similarly, Dyk<sup>85</sup> contends that ecological issues played insignificant role in Biblical theology, and that the Bible is often accused of being hostile or indifferent to the

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<sup>83</sup> R. Walter. 1972. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Tanzania: Tanzania Publishing House.

<sup>84</sup> C. D. Freudenberger. 1990. *Global Dust Bowl*.

<sup>85</sup> P. VanDyk. 2009.



environment. He generates his accusation from the idea expressed in some Bible passages particularly Genesis 1:28 which states:

Genesis 1:28

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים וַיֵּאָר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וַיְרַדּוּ בַדְּגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל־חַיַּה הָרִמָּשׂוֹת עַל־הָאָרֶץ:

<sup>28</sup> And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and *subdue it* (וַיְרַדּוּ); and have *dominion* (וַיְבָרֶךְ) over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Dyk holds the above scripture blameworthy for man's exploitative act on the environment. His concern is on the two Hebrew words- וַיְרַדּוּ and וַיְבָרֶךְ. Interestingly, regarding this seeming anthropocentric declaration of Genesis 1:28, professor Manus<sup>86</sup> had stated that the text in question is a sixth Century BCE text that followed the Babylonian exile. He identified the problematic words as וַיְרַדּוּ and וַיְבָרֶךְ holding that וַיְבָרֶךְ > transliterated *w<sup>e</sup>kibšù<sup>h</sup>ä* is from *kābash* meaning "to subdue" while וַיְרַדּוּ transliterated *ûr<sup>e</sup>dû* is from *rādah*, meaning "to have dominion." He further explains that the above text presupposes a post-exilic composition made to counter the Babylonian creation myth in which the goddess *Tiamat* represents the *tehom* (deep) of Genesis 1, and which the universe was created by *Marduk* from *Tiamat's* lacerated corpse that generated embodied humans with no biological origins. Whereas, in Genesis account, we see a demythologization in play- the Hebrew author recasts the mood of the Babylonian myth, humans became created by אֱלֹהִים - got conferred with royal attributes and given the gift of dominion (*rādah*), to rule over nature- the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, all animate and inanimate creatures on the earth.

<sup>86</sup>C. U. Manus. November, 2009. Dark Vibrations: Eco-feminism and Democracy of Creation. *Annual Howard Harrods/ CRSC Lecture*. Biblical Basis for Ecofeminism: A Challenge in the Nigerian Context. a Commissioned Paper read at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS) on the Theme: Biblical Studies and Environmental Issues in Africa, Tuesday 17- Friday 20, at Institute of Church and Society. Samonda, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, 1.

He therefore concludes that what the Hebrew author teaches us here with the verb *rādah* is that, it is a divine injunction to handle nature *responsibly* so that it can be productive to support life on earth.

Echoing Keller's<sup>87</sup> view, Manus asserts that the Christian principle of "dominion" in its textual context can only mean *responsibility*. Illuminating on the mandate to "subdue and have dominion over," Hamilton posits that of the twenty-four usages in the Old Testament of "dominion," it is "to be exercised with care and responsibility. Nothing destructive or exploitative is permissible."<sup>88</sup> Although the text in question calls attention to *responsibility*- a moral obligation to care for the environment- it may interest biblical scholars as well as environmentalists to know that moral *responsibility* of the members of a given group or society, is only effective on their application of the requirements for such responsibility which negligence of, could hamper environmental health. It is indeed the nexus between the אֵין־דַּעַת אֱלֹהִים ('*en-da'ath 'lōhīm*) and environment damage that this work addresses, especially as it relates to the Rivers State region of Nigeria.

Olanisebe<sup>89</sup> presents humans as "security men" or "watchmen" for the environment, thus stating that the breach in the interrelatedness between man and all other creatures in the environment is culpable for the environmental malady. He further posits that for the country 'to be able to attract foreign investors, there must be a conducive atmosphere through which they can operate' He succinctly puts that if man's misuse and abuse of environment in the areas of: refuse dumping, defecating in undesigned areas, bush burning, kidnapping and insecurity of lives and property especially in the Rivers state region is not attended to with seriousness, development cannot be attained.

Following Olanisebe's position above, it could be said that the present degrading state of the Rivers State is attributed to man's unfair attitude toward the environment which he calls "environmental corruption."<sup>90</sup> The above assertion indeed opens his work to such questions as follows: What Could have led to this "environmental corruption?" This work links Man's

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<sup>87</sup>Manus. 2009. *Dark Vibrations: Eco-feminism and Democracy of Creation.*, 6.

<sup>88</sup> V. P. Hamilton. 1982. *Handbook on the Pentateuch.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House. 27-28.

<sup>89</sup>S. O. Olanisebe. March, 2008. Revisiting Creation Accounts in Genesis 1-2 and the Dominion Theology in Relation to the Environment in Nigeria. *Biblical Studies and Environmental Issues in Africa.* Chris Ukachukwu Manus Ed. 86-100.

<sup>90</sup>Olanisebe. March, 2008. Revisiting Creation Accounts in Genesis 1-2 and the Dominion Theology in Relation to the Environment in Nigeria, 100.

unfair attitude such as אֵי-דָעַת אֱלֹהִים ('en-da'ath 'lōhîm - unethical conduct) to environmental degradation in the Rivers State region of Nigeria, a dimension which Olanisebe did not explore.

Moreover, in a book published by “The John Ray initiative”<sup>91</sup> the authors attempt to educate humans on proper understanding of the environment and how they should relate to it, based on observation, study and an ethical approach to decision making and stewardship. Here, the authors focus on the doctrine of creation, stating that man being created in the image of God rather includes the ability to relate to God and implies some kind of likeness, between God and humans, than identity. The authors emphasize that as humans, we are called to be earth-keepers, people who ‘tend’ what God has made and entrusted to us. They state that the earth is God’s not ours therefore; we have no right to exploit the world for our own project.

More so, they posit that creation is God’s, holding that though there is a call to care for nature, and such does not suggest nature worship. They advocate the use of “creation” than “nature” to avoid the temptation of using language which conforms to the predominant idiom of the natural sciences. They conclude by portraying a symbiotic relationship between a right understanding of the doctrine of creation and a right attitude toward that creation. In other words, what the authors imply is that there is a relationship between the attitude of man (informed by knowledge) and ecological wellbeing. The work also presents a theology and ethics of the land. It begins by ex-raying the goodness of creation as enshrined in Genesis 1, 2. The authors make reference to Psalm 19, 29, 50<sup>6</sup>, 65, 104, 148, Job 12<sup>7-9</sup> that the meaning of “goodness” of creation in the Bible is ‘reflecting something of God’s character.’ In an analogy, they see a similarity between the statements ‘He who shows contempt to the poor shows contempt for their maker’ (Prov. 14:31) and “He who destroys or degrades the earth dirties its reflection of its maker”

In essence, the authors of this literature under review are of the opinion that man’s responsibility of “becoming stewards” or “earth keepers” has great impact on the environment because it is statutory for man to be stewards; thus, any omission of this responsibility which is seen as אֵי-דָעַת אֱלֹהִים ('en-da'ath 'lōhîm) could hinder

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<sup>91</sup>S. Berry. 2005. *A Christian Approach to the Environment*. London: The John Ray Initiative. 1-145

environment health. However, are the 'players' in Rivers State of Nigeria culpable of אֵין־דַעַת אֱלֹהִים ('en-da'ath 'lōhîm) which had unsympathetically affected ancient Israel's environment? It is the effects of man's irresponsible attitude on environmental wholeness in the Rivers State region of the Niger Delta that this research investigates using the text of Hosea 4:1-3 as the launch pad.

Davis Jr.<sup>92</sup> provides guide for social life. He links peace, power and justice together when he states "there is no peace without justice but no justice without power," this, he did in response to liberalism which sees property as servant of justice; Marxism which sees property as the basis of all evil, and; collectivism which sees property as benevolent. His idea about justice is instructive. Justice does bring peace not only to humans but also to ecology. And when there is no "oppressor" there is no need for justice. So in other words, justice implies there is oppression, marginalization, social maladies which suggest a deviation from the standard of fairness.

Davis looks at man's nature as the starting point for ethics. He sees man with "capacity for justice" as well as an "inclination to injustice." Stating the norm for ethics, he differentiates between mutual love and sacrificial love (agape). He sees mutual love as being one step lower than sacrificial love and the highest approximation of sacrificial love- that is possible in history. He sees this love as selfless and includes justice (reciprocal claims). He also speaks of "imaginative justice" which involves a real caring for the welfare of all our neighbours, even those whom we have never seen. The term justice to him has to do with the calculation of interest and claims, the permanent obligations, and impartial methods for determining rights and interests. He claims that if man were not limited in knowledge by his finite nature and self-centeredness, then there would be no need for justice because love would be fulfilled in every situation. He holds that only imaginative justice (the justice done to people you see and the ones you do not see, the justice devoid of self) that can achieve a fairly small amount of fairness.

In discussing the link between justice and power, Davis sees physical power as not limited to military power or the threat thereof, but also economic power as well. He holds that this economic power is both physical and spiritual. It is physical because of the wealth

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<sup>92</sup>W. T. Davis Jr. 1974. A Method For Social: An inquiry into the usefulness of Reinhold Neibuhr's Ethical Model for Social Justice in developing Nation. *ORITA Journal of Religious Studies* Ibadan, 1 June. 22-44.

created by the economic process and spiritual because it is enforced by law, custom, and other similar considerations. He notes that unless there is a tolerable equilibrium, no moral suasion or social restraints can prevent the balance of power from decaying into mutual hostility. He sees “order” as the prerequisite for any form of social life. He holds that “order” cannot exist except as it is undergirded by justice – “only an order which connects justice can achieve a stable peace.”<sup>93</sup> He opines that justice in one area is liable to produce dislocation (injustice) in another area, unless the entire picture is seen as a whole and various social norms are measured, weighted and balanced off against each other systematically.

Davis’ opinion above could be summarized thus: there is need for justice if order should thrive. But there cannot be order if law and ethical principles - דַעַת אֱלֹהִים - are breached, there would only be a ‘reversal of creation’ (opposite of creation order) since creation is ordered by law.<sup>94</sup> He holds that freedom involves self-reliance; that in developing nations (like Nigeria) freedom does not only mean escape from external domination by Western economic giants but also self-reliance on the part of the various groups within a nation. Freedom, he says also means participation in the development process (including the political process) which affects life.

Davis indeed has raised an issue of urgent attention when he said freedom means ‘participation in the development process as well as the political process.’ We see earlier that some groups in Rivers State (Niger Delta)<sup>95</sup> resorted to the struggle for political freedom which some impostors had capitalized on, as seen in the crimes of pipeline vandalism, kidnappings, loss of life and property, leaving the Nigerian Nation with the quest for stability. The point here now is: could Rivers State region when allowed the freedom to control her resources be salvaged from further environmental damage? Will this freedom avert structural injustice in the society? The quest for environmental remediation in the Rivers State region goes beyond the quest for political freedom and resource control because

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<sup>93</sup>Davis Jr. 1974. *A Method For Social: An inquiry into the usefulness of Reinhold Neibuhr’s Ethical Model for Social Justice In developing Nation*, 28, 29.

<sup>94</sup>T. Aquinas, 1993. *Commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. C. I. Litzinger. South Bend, Ind.: Dumb Ox Books.16. Retrieved Oct. 25, 2012, from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/natural-law-ethics/#KeyFeaNatLawThe>.

<sup>95</sup>Clement Ikpatt. 2001. *The Niger Delta Problems and Solutions: The Equilateral Resource Control (ERC) model as an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) concept*.

without דַעַת אֱלֹהִים that is, knowledge interiorized, and issuing in conduct: conduct determined by fundamental understanding,<sup>96</sup> the region may continue to suffer degradation as there would remain the prevalence of ethical breaches without bounds. It is in this light, that this work investigates Hosea 4:1-3 and its relevance of for ecological crises in Rivers State.

Addressing the link between morality and environmental wellbeing, Berry<sup>97</sup> see Israel's land as microcosm of the earth; and God being the divine landlord makes Israel's whole economic system subject to moral critique. He states a major concern of the Old Testament law to be "justice in the use and distribution of the products of economic activity" He postulates that the Old Testament law's seems to address the economic balance by structural measures aimed especially at the control of debt (Exo 22:25; Lev 25: 36; Deut. 23:19; 24:6-10) and other factors to relieve poverty and to restore the poor to dignified participation in the community gleaning rights (Lev. 19:9; Deut. 24: 19 - 22), etc. The work postulates that all of this was part of the structures of Israel's economic system, to encourage justices and compassion in the ordinary vicissitudes of a functioning economy.

Because the land functioned like a moral and spiritual barometer in the Old Testament, much of the prophetic anger is directed at economic injustice (done in the social realm) and oppression in which the abuse and misuse of the land is dominant. Berry further states, that the combination of idolatry and injustices is still much in evidence in our own world.<sup>98</sup> It is in light of the foregoing statement, that this literature is relevant to this research. The nature of self-satisfaction and injustices in the contemporary Rivers State Region of Nigeria needs attention. In addition, the relationship between אֵין־דַעַת אֱלֹהִים ('*en-da'ath 'lōhīm*) as stated in Hosea 4, and the wellbeing of ancient Israel's land is explored in connection with those of the Rivers State region of Nigeria.

Berry<sup>99</sup> focusing on the concern for humanity (Social sphere), sees the problem of poverty as what he calls "culture of poverty" which needs to be eradicated. He posits that the Sabbath principle contradicts the notion that we have a duty to maximize our productivity.

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<sup>96</sup>Walter, Harrelson.1976. Knowledge of God in the Church. *Interpretation*, 30.1: 12-17, <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&hid=107&sid=5cc3cba2-f7ae-49b4-8e52-f5fef8707793%40sessionmgr104> (Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2012 )

<sup>97</sup>S. Berry. 2005. *A Christian Approach to the Environment*, 37ff.

<sup>98</sup>S. Berry. 2005. *A Christian Approach to the Environment*, 41.

<sup>99</sup>S. Berry. 2005. *A Christian Approach to the Environment*, 137.

Resources are also given for relaxation, celebration and rest. The tithing, jubilee and gleaning principles similarly contradict the maximization of efficiency in the use of resources. The tithing principle stipulates that the first tenth and remainder belong to God and the poor; the jubilee principle liberates one from greed for more; while the gleaning principle calls us to trust in God to provide what we need for life.

He concludes that the loss of God in the consciousness of a society increases the need for intrusiveness into peoples' affairs.<sup>100</sup> In other words, Berry recognizes that laws and principles are of God and that they remind us of God who establishes government of all levels (Prov 8:15; Rom 13:1). In a nutshell, Berry subscribes to the fact that the  $\text{אֵין־דָּעַת אֱלֹהִים}$  ('*en-da'ath 'lōhîm*) in the society is detrimental to ecological wellbeing. But how could  $\text{דָּעַת אֱלֹהִים}$  (*da'ath 'lōhîm*) in the Rivers State 'land' foster ecological health in the region? This is the thrust of this thesis.

Dale and Sandy<sup>101</sup> forthrightly, link morality with ecological wellbeing, stating that "humankind's continuing sins have damaged the earth through wasteful and *greedy* practices." They further argue that worshiping God (having the knowledge of God in the conscience) means caring for his land, and that anyone claiming to worship God and does not care for the land owned by God, in reality does not worship God. They emphasised further that worshiping God also means caring for his people because land and people, both made by God are inseparably connected.

From the above, we see how ecological health is tied to  $\text{דָּעַת אֱלֹהִים}$ . We see how these authors advocate social justice as it has effect on ecological wellbeing since both are inseparably connected. It is such inseparable connection between the  $\text{דָּעַת אֱלֹהִים}$  and environmental wellbeing of the Rivers State region that this study evaluates.

Nevertheless, Dada seeking for societal transformation surveyed the activities of Prosperity Gospel exponents and thus and claims as follows:

These preachers should rather be the outspoken champions of the poor in their demand for social justice... As earlier observed, socio-political and economic problems of our country are results of structural injustice. There is more in our nation for everybody's

<sup>100</sup>S. Berry. 2005. *A Christian Approach to the Environment*, 141.

<sup>101</sup>Dale & Sandy Larsen. 1992. *While Creation Waits: A Christian response to the Environmental Challenge*.

need, but majority is denied their rights, because of greed and avarice of the few, who claimed to be leaders.<sup>102</sup>

From Dada's excerpt above, he identifies the fact that the poor, and marginalized are denied their rights. He attributes the socially degraded state of the nation to greed- a strong desire and quest for more wealth to the detriment of the poor and marginalized. In other words, he identifies the root cause of country's social malady as greed. Although Dada's quest in this regards is for social transformation, it may not be out of place to state that the environmental crisis in the Rivers State region could be linked with the social rottenness, which also suggest **אֵי-נְדָאֹת אֱלֹהִים** - 'en-da'ath <sup>le</sup>loh'im. This could be so, because he implies that social injustice is our country's problem, when he said "...As earlier observed, socio-political and economic problems of our country are result of structural injustice." It is in line with such social transformation search, that this work investigates the place of **דְּעַת אֱלֹהִים** in the society in relation to the quest for eco-justice in Rivers State of Nigeria. On the other hand, there is another reason why destructive conduct with respect to the environment is as pervasive as it is. Feinberg<sup>103</sup> asserts that severe environmental damage is often the result of the accumulation of individually negligible effects; even the health effects of an individual act of air, water and land pollution, are typically negligible. In other words, when laws and ethical principles are continuously minimised, no matter the degree, the effects tend to accumulate, and could result in severe environmental damage.

## Conclusion

This chapter focused on two segments: Israel's environment and the Rivers State environment. Scholars like Wolf,<sup>104</sup> Hoerth,<sup>105</sup> Andersen and Freedman<sup>106</sup> see the judgment of Yahweh playing out in Israel because of the prophet's use of the adverb **עַל-כֵּן** – "therefore." To them the whole earth (humans and nature in Israel) suffers because of

<sup>102</sup>Adekunle Oyinloye Dada. June and December 2004. Prosperity Gospel in Nigerian Context: A Medium of Social Transformation or An Impetus for Delusion? *ORITA: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. XXXVI.1-2: 95-107.

<sup>103</sup>Joel Feinberg. 1984. *The Moral Limits of the Criminal Law: Harm to Others*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1:225–32. and Andrew Kernohan. 1995. Rights against Polluters. *Environmental Ethics*.17: 245–57.

<sup>104</sup>Wolff. 1974: 68.

<sup>105</sup>A. J. Hoerth.1998. *Archaeology and the Old Testament*. Reprinted 2004. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. 329-335.

<sup>106</sup>Andersen and Freedman. 1980:334.



Yahweh's judgment. In fact, Andersen and Freedman even go further to claim liability on the part of the animals, holding that "when the covenant virtues (integrity, mercy, and the knowledge of God) are lacking in the land, even animals behave outside the bounds of knowledge."

Contrarily, Hayes<sup>107</sup> points to the fact that the consequence in Hosea 4:3 (mourning of the land) of the evil acts done on the land are introduced by עַל-כֵּן and not לָכֵן. Although both may mean "therefore" usually, לָכֵן introduces the prophetic judgment speech whereas עַל-כֵּן generally introduces a statement of fact, designating the result of the action. Accordingly, Koch (1955:1-42) as quoted in Wittenberg<sup>108</sup> holds that rather than accepting that the fateful consequences in nature are due to an active punishment by Yahweh, it rather follows that "Yahweh merely watches over the organic connection between human deed and the fateful consequences that follow organically out of it- an obvious connection between the 'en-da'ath *lōhîm* and environmental chaos." Interestingly, the environmental challenges in Rivers State have been traced to oil exploitation and exploration, as scholars such as Nwaomah,<sup>109</sup> Gibson<sup>110</sup>, Hamilton<sup>111</sup>, and Bullard<sup>112</sup> call for a rethink on the responsible use and management of natural resources. Moreso, other scholars like Rasmussen<sup>113</sup> and Anderson<sup>114</sup>, blame ecological crisis on social issues, while Spalling, attributes environmental degradation to poverty.<sup>115</sup> However, Berry<sup>116</sup>, Keller<sup>117</sup>, Davis Jr.<sup>118</sup>, and

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<sup>107</sup> Hayes. 2002. *The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic*. 45.

<sup>108</sup> Wittenberg. 2009. 504.

<sup>109</sup> Nwaomah. 2013. *Eco-Justice and the Niger Delta Environmental Challenges: Reflections on Matthew 7.12*.

<sup>110</sup> Gibson quoted in Dieter T. Hessel "Eco-Justice Ethics" <http://fore.research.yale.edu/disciplines/ethics/eco-justice.html>

<sup>111</sup> Hamilton. 1982. *Handbook on the Pentateuch*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House. 27-28

<sup>112</sup> Bullard. "Environmental Justice for All" from the *World Wide Web*: <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nattrans/ntuselnd/essays/envjust.htm>, (Accessed June 17, 2011).

<sup>113</sup> Rasmussen. 2000. *Global Eco-Justice: The Church's Mission in Urban Society. Christianity and Ecology Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*.

<sup>114</sup> Anderson. 1980. *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. 331-341

<sup>115</sup> Spalling. 2001. *Earthkeeping and the Poor: Assessing the Environmental Sustainability of Development Projects. Prospectives on Science and Christian Faith*. 53.3: 142-151.

<sup>116</sup> Berry. Ed. 2007. *When Enough is Enough: A Christian Framework for Environmental Sustainability*, 1-213

<sup>117</sup> Keller. April, 2005. "Dark Vibrations: Eco-feminism and Democracy of Creation" *Annual Howard Harrods/ CRSC Lecture*, in, "Biblical Basis for Ecofeminism: A Challenge in the Nigerian Context," a Commissioned Paper read at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS) on the Theme: Biblical Studies and Environmental Issues in Africa, Tuesday 17- Friday 20 November, 2009 At Institute of Church and Society, Samonda, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, 1.

Olanisebe<sup>119</sup> call for responsible, peaceful coexistence and a healthy interpersonal relationship- vertical and horizontal (even with nature).

Essentially, this research work allies with Feinberg's<sup>120</sup> view that severe environmental damage is often the result of the accumulation of individually negligible effects. Given the foregoing position, this chapter therefore, submits that there is an organic connection between human deed and the fateful consequences that follow organically out of it which comes as a result of<sup>121</sup> in a given society. However, the aftermath of such 'en-da'ath 'elohim which manifests in human deed does not only affect adversely, the human society, but nature as well.<sup>122</sup>

The next Chapter looks at the socio-cultural background of Israel at the time of the eighth century prophet Hosea, a younger contemporary of prophet Amos.

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<sup>118</sup> Davis Jr. 1974. A Method For Social: An inquiry into the usefulness of Reinhold Neibuhr's Ethical Model for Social Justice In developing Nation, 28, 29

<sup>119</sup>Olanisebe. March, 2008. Revisiting Creation Accounts in Genesis 1-2 and the Dominion Theology in Relation to the Environment in Nigeria, 100.

<sup>120</sup> J. Feinberg.1984. *The Moral Limits of the Criminal Law: Harm to Others*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1: 225–232 and Andrew Kernohan. 1995. Rights against Polluters,” *Environmental Ethics* 17: 245–57.

<sup>121</sup> H. W. Wolff. 1974. *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press. The lack of this אֵינִי יְדַעַת אֱלֹהִים (knowledge of God) is what Wolf identifies as the root of the decay in Israel's society. It is the source which makes אֱמֶת –trustworthiness, reliability, mercy, and רַחֲמִים – mutual obligation in Israel possible.

<sup>122</sup>Wittenberg. 2009: 504.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND TO HOSEA 4

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background to the eighth century Israel with emphasis on their social and economic life especially during the period of the successors of King Jeroboam II of the northern kingdom of Israel. It will investigate the Text, Date, Composition and Structure of the text of Hosea 4:1-3.

#### 3.2 THE HISTORICAL SETTING OF HOSEA

The historical setting of the book falls for the most part between 747 and 722 B.C. in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.<sup>123</sup> According to Hosea 1:1, the beginning of Hosea's prophetic ministry is placed before the death of Jeroboam II of Israel (746 B.C.) and ending after Hezekiah of Judah began his reign (715 B.C.). In Hosea 5:8-15, there are possible allusions to the Syro-Ephramite invasion of Judah (735-733 B.C.). Also, in Hosea 7:3-7 and 8:4-10, the political instability of Israel's last years is alluded to. Accepting that Hosea 4:1-3 is a part of the oral material originating with Hosea, thus, places the origin of the oracle sometime before the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 721 B.C. Moreover, the mention of *וְאֶחָד אַחֲרָיו יִשְׁפָּק דָּם* "and one deed of blood after another" in Hosea 4:2, may be a reference to the internal political intrigues of 745/746 B.C which resulted in the assassination of Zechariah and Shallum, two successive kings of the Northern kingdom of Israel. Additional strength to the above claim is the observation that the transgressions mentioned in Hosea 4:2 have to do with wrong attitudes to Yahweh, and wrong actions amongst one another.<sup>124</sup> Thus, the emphasis seems to be on internal difficulties rather than international strife. This description best fits the period prior to the death of Jeroboam II and further presents the focus of Hosea's prophecy in 4:1-3 rather than on external threats, as centering more on the problems of internal societal decay.

At the commencement of the prophet's ministry, the Northern Kingdom was enjoying prosperity and running into the excesses consequent on the victories of Jeroboam

<sup>123</sup>J. M. Ward. 1969. The Message of the Prophet Hosea. *Interpretation*.XXIII:388f.

<sup>124</sup>M. Doroche. 1981. The Reversal of Creation in Hosea. *Vetus Testamentum*. XXX1.4:402.

II. After the reign of the famous queen of Semiramis and her son Adadnirari III (810-783 B.C), the power of Assyria declined. Shalmaneser IV (782-773 B.C.), Ashurban III (772-755 B.C.) and Ashurnirari V (754-745 B.C.) were weak rulers and offered no danger to the west. Under their pre-occupation with internal problems, Jeroboam II of Israel was able to extend his power in Syria almost unchallenged.<sup>125</sup>

According to Unger<sup>126</sup> the biblical notices dealing with Jeroboam's military proficiency plainly imply such a conquest, and it is supported by other lines of evidence proving the extraordinary prosperity of Jeroboam's reign. Moreover, excavations at Samaria have confirmed the splendour of the Israelite capital in the eighth (8th) century B.C. Artifacts show that Jeroboam II refortified the city with a double wall, reaching to as much as thirty-three feet in width in exposed sections, comprising fortifications so substantial that the Assyrian army took three years to capture the city (1Kgs 17:5).

In addition to Archeology, Unger posits that Amos' prophecies give insight into the vastly increased commerce and wealth of Jeroboam's realm with consequent luxury and moral decline. He holds that tribute from a greatly augmented territory flowed into the coffers of Samaria and created a very wealthy class, consisting largely of the ruling strata and court favourites. Glaring social and economic inequalities were fostered by the selfish and unscrupulous conduct of the rich (Amos 2:6; 8:6). Simple dwellings of unburned brick gave way to "houses of hewn stone," and Ahab's ivory palace (decorations only meant) was imitated by many of the wealthy of the land (Amos 3:15; 5:11; 1Kgs 22:39). Luxurious feasts were the order of the day (Amos 6:4-6). Religion degenerated into ritualism devoid of righteousness and morality (Amos 4:4; 5:5; 8:14).

He further holds that Amos had foreseen that this unhealthy prosperity, engendering a false sense of security and erected upon a weak foundation of moral and social injustice was not destined to be permanent. As a result, the house of Jeroboam was to be visited with the sword (Amos 7:9) and the people were to be carried into captivity (Amos 5:27), predictions which the next quarter of a century was to justify fully. Subsequently, about 746 B.C. Jeroboam died a natural death, but after a brief reign of only six (6) months his son and

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<sup>125</sup> M. F. Unger. 1954. *Archeology and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House. 253.

<sup>126</sup> M. F. Unger. 1954. *Archeology and the Old Testament*.

successor, Zechariah, was murdered by a usurper. This, he submits initiated a period of sharp decline and destructive civil strife.

The glaring social corruptions of the times are exhibited and castigated by Amos, as seen in the foregoing paragraphs as they would most impress a stranger from the south; but Hosea, a native, as suppose, of the Northern Kingdom, saw more deeply into the malady, and traced all the crime and vice of the nation to the fundamental evil of idolatry and apostasy from the true God (lack of knowledge of the true God). What he describes under the repulsive figure of whoredom was the rampant worship of *be`alim*, which had practically obscured the recognition of the sole claims to worship of Yahweh the national God.<sup>127</sup> The worship of *ba`al*, however, was an older and more insidious form of idolatry. This worship of the Canaanite tribes, among whom the Israelites found themselves on the occupation of Palestine, was a reverence of local divinities, known by the names of the places where each had their shrine or influence. The generic name of *ba`al* or “lord” was applied naturally as a common word to each of these deities. In the Canaanites’ pantheon, *Baal* was the son of El, and the reigning king of the gods. The underlying words of Unger are very instructive:

The Ugaritic epic literature reveals the depth of depravity which characterized Canaanite religion. Being polytheism of an extremely debased type, Canaanite cultic practice was barbarous and thoroughly licentious. It inevitably had a most serious retarding and debilitating effect on every phase of Canaanite cultural and community life. It was inescapable that that people should gravitate to the moral level of sordid gods they worshiped. “Like gods, like priest; like priest, like people” expresses the law that operates unfailingly. The brutality, lust... And the astounding characteristic of Canaanite deities, that they had no moral character whatsoever, must have brought out the worst traits in their devotees and entailed many of the most demoralizing practices of the time, such as sacred prostitution, child sacrifice and snake worship.<sup>128</sup>

This state of the Canaanite cult which involves demoralizing practices such as sacred prostitution, child sacrifice and snake worship could have been responsible for the reference to the land as such which “vomits out its inhabitants” (Lev 18:25). Thus the Israelites were warned by Yahweh as we find in Leviticus 20:22, to keep all his statutes and ordinances “that the land” into which he was about to bring them to dwell, “vomit” them not out.

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<sup>127</sup>G. W. Bromiley Ed. 1987. The Book of Hosea. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 2, E-J

<sup>128</sup>M. F. Unger. 1954. *Archeology and the Old Testament*. 171-172,175.

Nevertheless, at their entrance into Canaan, the book of Judges 1:21-36 states emphatically that several of the Israelite tribes, the northern tribes in particular, where the land was most fertile, “did not drive out” the native inhabitants rather, they tolerated a large native admixture.

Moreover, Judges 2:7, records that the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and of the elders who outlived Joshua; and this hint of a gradual declension no doubt points to what actually took place. For a time they remembered and thought of Yahweh as the God who had done for them great things in Egypt and in the wilderness; and then, as time went on, they had to think of him as the giver of the land in which they found themselves in, with all its varied produce. But this was the very thing the Canaanites ascribed to their *ba`alim*. When Joshua and the Israelites entered Palestine in the fourteenth (14th) century B.C., Canaanite civilization was so decadent that it was small loss to the world that in part of Palestine it was virtually exterminated.<sup>129</sup> Gradually, the Israelites were contaminated with the Canaanite cult practices. Gehman<sup>130</sup> sums it up when he said: “The failure of the Israelites to execute God’s command fully was one of the great blunders which they committed, as well as a sin, and it resulted in lasting injury to the nation.”

Such was the condition which Hosea describes as an absence of the knowledge of God (Hos 4:1). Both Hosea and Amos express in clear terms how the devotees of the ‘impure’ worship gave themselves up “to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Amos 2:7f; Hos 4:14); and how deeply unfaithfulness had worked into the body politic is proved by the rapid collapse and irretrievable ruin which followed soon after the strong hand of Jeroboam was removed.

The twenty-one (21) years that followed the death of Jeroboam in 743 BC saw no fewer than six successive occupants of the throne, and the final disappearance of the kingdom of the ten tribes. Zechariah, his son, had reigned only six months when “Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him and slew him, and reigned in his stead” (2Kgs 15:10). Shallum himself reigned only a month when he was in the same bloody manner removed by Menahem. After a reign of 10 years, according to 2 Kings 15:17, he was succeeded by his son Pekahiah (2 Kgs 15:22), and after two years Pekah “his captain”

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<sup>129</sup> M. F. Unger. 1954. *Archeology and the Old Testament*. 176.

<sup>130</sup> H. S. Gehman. 1944. *The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, Philadelphia, 89.

conspired against him and reigned in his stead (2 Kgs 15:25). This king also was assassinated, and was succeeded by Hoshea (2 Kgs 15:30), the last king of the ten tribes, for the kingdom came to an end in 722 BC.<sup>131</sup> Hosea must have lived during a great part of those turbulent times; so one may expect to hear resonances of those events in his book.

### 3.3 Text, Date, Composition and Structure

#### 3.3.1 Text (Hos 4:1-3)

1 שְׁמַעוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי־רַב לִיהוָה  
 עַם־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ כִּי אֵין־אֱמֶת וְאֵין־חֶסֶד וְאֵין־דַּעַת אֱלֹהִים בְּאָרֶץ:  
 2 אֵלֶּה וְכַחַשׁ וְרִצָּח וְגָנַב וְנָאֵף פָּרְצוּ וְדָמִים בְּדָמִים נָגְעוּ:  
 3 עַל־כֵּן תֵּאָבֵל הָאָרֶץ וְאִמְלֵל כָּל־יֹשֵׁב בָּהּ בַּחַיִּת הַשָּׂדֶה וּבְעוֹף  
 הַשָּׁמַיִם וְגַם־דְּגֵי הַיָּם יֵאָסְפוּ:

<sup>NLT</sup> Hosea 4:1 *Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel! The LORD has brought charges against you, saying: "There is no faithfulness, no kindness, no knowledge of God in your land. <sup>2</sup> You make vows and break them; you kill and steal and commit adultery. There is violence everywhere-- one murder after another. <sup>3</sup> That is why your land is in mourning and everyone is wasting away. Even the wild animals, the birds of the sky, and the fish of the sea are disappearing.*

The textual problems in the book of Hosea are many and notoriously difficult<sup>132</sup>. Nevertheless, Stuart<sup>133</sup> asserts that “frequently the Masoretic Consonantal Text (MT) proves largely correct and must simply be re-vocalized on the evidence of the Septuagint with regard for the Mosaic covenant vocabulary.” In other words, one must approach the idea of altering the MT with utmost caution, being careful not to impose one’s own interpretation of the passage at hand on the text itself. As elsewhere in the Hebrew Old Testament, the safest course of action is to prefer the MT, which is well attested in the Qumran texts and has been

<sup>131</sup> G. O. Folarin. 2004. *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Plateau, Nigeria: Baraka Press and Publishers Ltd., 51-52

<sup>132</sup> J. H. Tullock. 1992. *The Old Testament Story*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. 194.

<sup>133</sup> D. Stuart. 1989. Hosea-Jonah. *Word Biblical Themes*. Dallas: Word Book. 13.

handed down faithfully in the major Hebrew codices for centuries.<sup>134</sup> In the same vein, although, Würthwein<sup>135</sup> does not claim impeccable infallibility for the MT he goes on in his work to demonstrate that “if a reading of MT is rejected, every possible interpretation of it must first have been fully examined.” He further explains that:

“Our main interest centers in MT. In every instance it deserves special attention because it is based on direct transmission in the original language, and it has been handed down with great care...Any deviation from it therefore requires justification.”

Despite the difficulties attendant to the text of Hosea, one may say with confidence that as with the textual criticism of the Hebrew Old Testament in general, “Although variant readings have become obvious through the publication of so many manuscripts, inadequate, inferior, and secondary readings have been largely eliminated. In relatively few places is conjectural emendation necessary.”<sup>136</sup>

While there are no serious problems in the Hebrew text of Hosea 4:1-3, several differences are apparent when the English translations are compared. The first is that while the RSV and KJV refer to a “controversy” in verse 1, the NEB uses the word “charge.” The latter emphasizes the formal legal character of verses 1-3 which might be overlooked in a quick reading of the other two texts (that is, RSV and KJV). In verse 2 there are serious differences in the translations of the RSV, KJV and NEB. A series of specific transgressions is followed by “license” (NEB), “they break out” (KJV), or “they break all bounds” (RSV). The intention of the RSV and KJV seems to be to add a general transgression. The NEB, on the other hand, interprets the Hebrew word under question as adding force to the specific charge of adultery. At this point the interpreter working from the English reaches a bottleneck, the solution to which is dependent upon knowledge of Hebrew. If such exegete

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<sup>134</sup>M. Abegg, Jr., P. Flint and E. Ulrich. 1999. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*. San Francisco: Harper.419-32 for the translation of the existing Qumran manuscripts of Hosea. See also, Emanuel Tov.1992.*Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress. 155-197, for a concise history of the text of the Old Testament and the problems relative to the establishment of a original Hebrew text.

<sup>135</sup>E. Würthwein. 1979.*The Text of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 113-114.

<sup>136</sup>M. R. Norton. 2003. Texts and Manuscripts of the Old Testament. *The Origin of the Bible*. Philip Wesley Comfort. Ed. Wheaton: Tyndale. 182. See also the insightful study by Martin Jan Mulder. 2004. The Transmission of the Biblical Text. *Mikra*. Martin Jan Mulder and Harry Sysling, Eds.Peabody: Hendrickson. 87-135.



turns to the commentaries, it is clear that none of the three English translations cited is acceptable to the commentators. Mays,<sup>137</sup> Wolff,<sup>138</sup> and Ward<sup>139</sup> all understand the five transgressions as the collective subject of the disputed element, which they translate as a verb. However, we are confronted with a translation difficulty rather than a textual problem. In the discussion of “Tradition History” attempt has been made to solve this difficulty.<sup>140</sup>

In Hosea 4:3 there are two differences in translation which have a profound bearing on the outcome of the exegesis. The first is the difference between “dried up” (NEB) and “mourn” (KJV and RSV). Here it is not a matter of the interpretation of the Hebrew but of identifying the verb in the Hebrew text. It is one of two identical roots which have different meanings. One verb means “mourns” and the other means “dried up.” At this point consultation of commentaries becomes so important especially for the exegete working with the English text. Harper<sup>141</sup> adopts the translation “mourns.” In a note on the text, however, he indicates that the reason for this ‘mourning’ by the people in the land is a severe drought. This reference to a condition of drought is incorporated into the translations of Mays (“dry up”),<sup>142</sup> Wolff (“wither”)<sup>143</sup>, and Ward (“wither”).<sup>144</sup> Ward also provides a sketch of the reasons behind his choice of “wither” (that is, the way in which the Hebrew word is used in other places in the Old Testament). This methodology may be practiced to a limited degree in English exegesis by consulting a good concordance.<sup>145</sup> When this is done it is discovered that when this ambiguous verb is used in connection with soil, land or plants (as it is in Hos

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<sup>137</sup>J. L. Mays. 1969. *Hosea, A Commentary*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press. 60.

<sup>138</sup>Hans Walter Wolff. 1974. *Hosea*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. 65. This volume is a part of the new series, Hermeneia, which promises to provide an excellent resource for both pastor and scholar.

<sup>139</sup>J. M. Ward. 1966. *Hosea, A Theological Commentary*. New York: Harper and Row. 75. Unfortunately now out of print, this is very useful, whether or not one is limited to English translations.

<sup>140</sup>Both Mays (1969:60) and Wolff (1974:65) add “in the land” following the disputed verbs of v. 2, in agreement with the LXX (the so-called Septuagint or Greek version of the Old Testament). The omission of this phrase is explained on the basis of homoioteleuton (the accidental omission of a word at the end of a line because of its similarity to another word at the end of a preceding or following line—in this case “in the land” appears at the end of v. 1, and it is argued that this caused the omission in v. 2 at the time of copying). While this particular example is significant for the restoration of the text, its impact on the interpretation of the text is minimal.

<sup>141</sup>William R. Harper. 1905. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea: The International Critical Commentary*. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark. 251. Although the theological and historical discussions of this series are dated, its work with the Hebrew text is in general helpful and accurate.

<sup>142</sup>Mays. 1969:60.

<sup>143</sup>Wolff. 1974:65.

<sup>144</sup>Ward, 1966:75.

<sup>145</sup>R. Young. 1936. *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 22nd American Edition Revised. This volume is especially helpful since it provides the form of the word in the biblical languages as well as its English translation as found in the KJV.

4:3) it is usually associated with parallel verbs meaning “to be dry” or “to wither.” Therefore, it may be concluded that the translation “dried up’ (NEB) is the more accurate although in this work, “mourns” will be preferred.

The other verbs in the verse (NEB: to pine away, to be swept from) indicate a physically disastrous change. This is clarified by Wolff, who argues for the translation “fade away” for the second of the three verbs in v. 3.<sup>146</sup>

### 3.3.2 DATE, COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE

The dating of Hosea 4:1-3 centers on Hosea 4:3 according to Hayes<sup>147</sup>. Schmidt holds that the book of Hosea is the first of the Twelve Prophets (the *Dodekapropheton*) possibly because a later age thought Hosea to be the earliest in the series. Hosea as a matter of fact, was Amos’s younger contemporary and exercised his ministry about a decade later, during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel, whom Amos mentions (Amos 7:9-11) and of king Uzziah of Judah, in the year of whose death Isaiah received his call (Isa 6:1).

He further observes that in the preaching of Hosea in 5:8f, we see a reflection of the Syro-Ephraimite War of 734/733 B.C. On the other hand, it is likely that he lived to see the fulfillment of his threat against Samaria (Hos 14:1) in the destruction of the northern kingdom by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. Although he gives no specific date for the composition of the book, he thus concludes that Hosea’s prophetic ministry lasted approximately from 750-725 B.C. and was therefore much longer than that of Amos.<sup>148</sup> Briefly we may say that, though there is uncertainty as to the precise dates of the beginning and end of his activity, he began his work before the middle of the 8th century, and that he saw the rise and fall of several kings.

The Book of Hosea can be subdivided into two main sections, chapters 1-3 and 4-14. The first three chapters are mainly concerned with Hosea’s marriage and use of such as a metaphor for the relationship between Yahweh and Israel. Chapters 4-14 are a collection of Hosea’s oracles. According to Jeremias quoted in Wittenberg<sup>149</sup> chapter 1-3 had a different

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<sup>146</sup>Wolff. 68.

<sup>147</sup>Hayes M.K. 2002. *The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic*. 40.

<sup>148</sup>W. H. Schmidt. 2008. *Old Testament Introduction India: The Crossroad Publishing Company*, 233-234.

<sup>149</sup>Wittenberg, G. 2009. Knowledge of God: The Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change. *Old Testament Essays, a Journal of the Old Testament Society in South Africa*, 22.2: 488-509.

transmission history from chapters 4-14 and were joined with these at the earliest during the exilic period. In Hayes<sup>150</sup> view most of the discussion about the composition and dating of Hosea 4:1-3 centers on 4:3. Wolff<sup>151</sup> sees a sign of editorial revision only in 4:1a. Whereas to Jeremias, as quoted in Wittenberg,<sup>152</sup> the whole verse 3 is a later Judean addition. Rudnig-Zelt, also quoted in Wittenberg<sup>153</sup> claims that Hosea 4:1-3 is a highly composite text displaying different strata from periods as late as the post-exilic period. This however, supports Jeremias<sup>154</sup> basic contention that Hosea 4:1-3 was not meant by editors of the book of Hosea merely to be understood as a single indictment, but rather as the hermeneutical key for the theological understanding of the whole book. However, verse 3 cannot be excluded simply as a late addition. It is an integral part of the theological thrust of Hosea 4:1-3.

In spite of the intricacies associated with the text of Hosea, one may say with confidence that as with the textual criticism of the Hebrew Old Testament in general, although variant readings have become obvious through the publication of so many manuscripts; inadequate, inferior and secondary readings have largely been eliminated.<sup>155</sup>

Conclusively, Hayes<sup>156</sup> rightly observes that the repetition of אֶרֶץ *'erets* (earth) in verse 1a, and in verse 3 reinforces the connection between the actors, that is, those “who dwell in the land,” and the people of Israel, and the respondents “all who dwell in it” which refers to the Israelites and to all other living creatures as well.

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<sup>150</sup>K. Hayes M. 2002. The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic, *SBL Academia Biblica*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature. 8: 40.

<sup>151</sup>H. W Wolff. 1974. *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*. 66.

<sup>152</sup>Wittenberg. 2009. Knowledge of God: The Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change. *Old Testament Essays, a Journal of the Old Testament Society in South Africa*, 22.2: 488-509.

<sup>153</sup>Wittenberg. 2009. Knowledge of God: The Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change. 488-509.

<sup>154</sup>Wittenberg. 2009. Knowledge of God: The Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change.

<sup>155</sup>M. R. Norton. 2003. Texts and Manuscripts of the Old Testament. *The Origin of the Bible*. Philip Wesley Comfort. Ed. Wheaton: Tyndale. 182. See also the insightful study by Martin Jan Mulder. 2004. The Transmission of the Biblical Text. *Mikra*. Martin Jan Mulder and Harry Sysling, Eds. Peabody: Hendrickson. 87-135.

<sup>156</sup>Hayes M.K. 2002. The Earth Mourns. Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic. 41.

### 3.3.3 LITERARY FEATURES OF THE BOOK

Hosea was a master literary craftsman. His prophetic style is so elevated that it is often difficult to distinguish between his prose and poetry. Andersen et.al<sup>157</sup> assert that chapters 1-3 are basically written in prose narrative, while chapters 4-14 are typical of poetry. Although this is largely helpful, it has been observed that “most of the prophets were poets and their oracles were delivered and have been preserved in poetic form.”<sup>158</sup> Accordingly, Patterson<sup>159</sup> observed that “one may expect that all of the major genres with the exception of some types of instructional accounts will take on the heightened speech, literary richness, and urgency of tone and message that so characterized poetry.” For example, chapters 1-3 are distinctly more narrative in style, and the oracles embedded in them are brought together as clusters within the narrative. The narrative structure itself is diagonally arranged around the nuptial theme.

We see this connubial theme not only in chapters 1-3 but in various places in Hosea’s prophecy. For example, in Hosea 2:2-13, God is portrayed as a jealous husband due to the infidelity of his wife Israel (as symbolized by Gomer). In Hosea 4:10-18; 5:3-4; 6:10; 7:4; 8:4-6, 9; 9:1, 10, 15; 10:5; 11:2, 7; 12:11, Israel is said of playing the harlot by flirting with pagan idolatry as well as in its unwise political alliances and unrighteous social immorality. In Hosea 2:14-3:5; 9:1; 14:4, Yahweh is exemplified as a faithful and loving husband who longs for and is willing to forgive Israel. The marriage theme is closely associated with the covenant theme. Hosea also uses imagery drawn from the agrarian and animal worlds. In 2:3; 8:7; 10:12, 13; 2:6, 8-9, 11, 22-23; 6:11; 9:2; 2:9, 12; 9:2, 4, 10; 10:1; 14:7, Hosea uses some agrarian imageries such as “sowing and reaping;” “threshing and harvest” and “vine, vineyard, and wine.” He also uses other images that reflect the animal world. In Hosea 4:16; 10:11, Israel is equated with a “stubborn, trained heifer” while in Hosea 8:9-10, she is seen as a “wild donkey in heat” and in Hosea 7:11, Israel is likened to a “senseless dove” in her political alliances.

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<sup>157</sup>F. L. Andersen and D. N. Freedman. 1980. *Hosea, AB*. Garden City: Doubleday. 60-66.

<sup>158</sup>David Noel Freedman. 1980. *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns. 18.

<sup>159</sup>R. D. Patterson. 1993. *Old Testament Prophecy. A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*. Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III. Eds. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 305-306.

Interestingly, Johnson<sup>160</sup> notes that, a thorough treatment of all of the genres would practically amount to a commentary on the whole book.” Landy<sup>161</sup> on the other hand observes that the prophet’s use of metaphor is indeed striking. Landy continues by stating that Israel is not only spiritually but morally corrupt. Israelite society is so plagued by legal disputes that it resembles “poisonous weeds in the furrows of a plowed field” (10:11). Spiritually and morally bankrupt, Israel will fall to the Assyrians and her king will be carried away like a twig caught in water’s current (10:7). Israel is facing a swift and imminent judgment.

### 3.3.4 THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE BOOK OF HOSEA

Hosea’s theological perspective begins with the opening verses. Israel’s spiritual harlotry will bring God’s certain judgment of exile to the nation (Hos 1:1-9). Yet the prevailing theological truth is that of God’s love. The Lord’s great unfathomable love will one day result in Israel’s forgiveness and restoration that will bring his people back the their land (Hos 1:10-11). Moreover, Israel has repeatedly violated the terms of the law. Thus Stuart rightly points out, “Understanding the message of the book of Hosea depends upon understanding the Sinai covenant. The book contains a series of blessings and curses announced for Israel by God through Hosea. Each blessing or curse is based upon a corresponding type in the Mosaic law.”<sup>162</sup> The underlying theology here is that, though, God is Love, every human deed has corresponding consequence as revealed in Hosea 4:1-3.

### 3.4 THE PLACE OF LAND IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

Robertson<sup>163</sup> in addressing the theme of *land* under the Old Covenant holds that *Land* began with Paradise theologically though its paradisiacal nature was lost in the fall of humanity. He further posits that this *land* belongs to the *Lord of the covenant*. In Leviticus 25:23, *Lord of the covenant* declares “the land is mine, and you are strangers and my

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<sup>160</sup>Rick Johnson. 1993. Hosea 4-10: Pictures at an Exhibition. *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, 36: 20.

<sup>161</sup>F. Landy. 1995. “In the Wilderness of Speech: Problems of Metaphor in Hosea,” *Biblical Interpretation*, 3:35-39.

<sup>162</sup>Douglas Stuart. 1989:6-7

<sup>163</sup>O. Palmer Robertson. 2000. *The Israel of God*. USA: P&R Publishing Company. 7-11.

tenants.” He further states that “all the blessings flowing from the land come ultimately from the hand of the Lord.” Moreso, this *land*, is uniquely holy. In other words, the holiness of the land is derived from the presence of the holy God. The holiness of the Lord so penetrates the land, that it may be said that it is proactive in maintaining its own sacredness. The book of Leviticus presents the consequence that befell the Canaanites for polluting the land. It states *the land* vomited them from its midst (Lev 18:25). In a similar breath, Israel must be careful to keep all the Lord’s commandments, or *the land* will vomit them out (Lev 18:28; 20:22).<sup>164</sup>

In relation to ancient Israel’s Land, Brueggemann<sup>165</sup> shows the importance of land in the Bible, as well as its importance in contemporary society. The main thrust of his work is that land is the “primary category of biblical faith.” He sees faith in Yahweh as land as central to land ownership since there is a strong connectedness between Yahweh, the land owner and Israel his chosen people. He further explores important theological trends that have an immense influence on and practical implications for the study of land.<sup>166</sup> He stresses the Hebrew term אֶרֶץ *’ēreṣ* which refers to both “earth” and “land” and the interrelationship between earth and land. Moreover, he holds that to Israel, *’ēreṣ* thus refers to *all land*. He sees a second theme on land in the Old Testament as the claim of “promised land” as representing a “vigorous ideological assertion” on a large political scale. Brueggemann asserts that “land entitlement leads to earth occupation.”<sup>167</sup> Interestingly, he describes two modern day examples where the ongoing ideological force and cost of the claim of the “promised land” leads to violence. The first example concerns the territorial ambitions of the state of Israel that lead to unrestrained violence against the Palestinian people. The second is that the same ideology of entitlement has in a derivative way served the Western powers grounded in this broad ideological claim who used this claim as a rationale for the colonization of other parts of the earth.

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<sup>164</sup>P. Robertson. 2000. *The Israel of God*.12.

<sup>165</sup>Brueggemann, W. 2002.*The land: Place as gift, promise, and challenge in biblical faith*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, Retrieved Dec. 3, 2012, from <http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/viewFile/496/395>

<sup>166</sup>Brueggemann, W. 2002.*The land: Place as gift, promise, and challenge in biblical faith*. xiii.

<sup>167</sup>Brueggemann, W. 2002.*The land: Place as gift, promise, and challenge in biblical faith*.

Accordingly, Brueggemann holds that Western colonization takes place under the guise of an entitlement rooted in this biblical tradition.<sup>168</sup> He posits that *Land-care* goes hand in hand with this “ideology of land promise”. He presents two dimensions of “land theology” which are of contemporary importance. Firstly, he claims that the care or the abuse of the land or creation is generally recognized as a biblical and theological concern. Secondly, the crisis of agribusiness is of particular concern, because land-care and land-management are transposed into a commodity without any human dimension or interrelationship with God or the Torah. He holds that the problem is created by the collusion of commercialization of farming and the family farm or subsistence farming.<sup>169</sup> He further emphasizes the interrelationship of God, land, Israel and the Torah. This important interrelationship is structured in a triangular manner.<sup>170</sup> He categorically states that land is *the central theme* of biblical faith. Land is a way of organizing biblical faith. The contemporary concern is on the human need of place, rootedness and attachment to land.<sup>171</sup> Brueggemann describes the importance of place as follows:

Place is space that has historical meanings, where some things have happened that are now remembered and that provide continuity and identity across generations. Place is space in which important words have been spoken that have established identity, defined vocation, and envisioned destiny. Place is space in which vows have been exchanged, promises have been made, and demands have been issued. Place is indeed a protest against the unpromising pursuit of space. It is a declaration that our humanness cannot be found in escape, detachment, absence of commitment, and undefined freedom.<sup>172</sup>

The above excerpt reveals the utmost need for the land to be understood as space with Yahweh. In other words, Biblical faith has to do with Yahweh, his people, his covenant, and his land.<sup>173</sup> The Bible thus describes the relationship between God and Israel. Israel is a landless people whose whole history and life must be understood in terms of the hope for, and in response to the promise of land. Israel is the landless on the way to the

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<sup>168</sup>Brueggemann, W. 2002. *The land: Place as gift, promise, and challenge in biblical faith*.

<sup>169</sup> Brueggemann, W. 2002. *The land: Place as gift, promise, and challenge in biblical faith*. xix-xx

<sup>170</sup>G. J. Volschenk. 2001. Eksegeties-metodologiese vooronderstellings van die ondersoek na die ekonomie in die leefwêreld van Matteus: Toegepas op land, grondbesit en die jubilee. DD proefskrif, Universiteit van Pretoria, 180, Retrieved from <http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/viewFile/496/395> (Accessed 3rd December, 2012).

<sup>171</sup>Brueggemann, 2002. *The land: Place as gift, promise, and challenge in biblical faith*. 3.

<sup>172</sup>Brueggemann, W. 2002. *The land: Place as gift, promise, and challenge in biblical faith*. 4

<sup>173</sup>Brueggemann, W. 2002. *The land: Place as gift, promise, and challenge in biblical faith*. 5

Promised Land. As a landless people, yearning for land, Israel is presented by means of several images, namely as sojourners, wanderers and exiles.<sup>174</sup>

Brueggemann describes this interrelationship through the history of Israel in the Old Testament as follows: “And its destiny in relation to the land is always on the move toward fulfillment: from promise to the security of *slavery*, from desert to the destructive power of *kingship*, from exile to the weariness of *moral management*”.<sup>175</sup> Ancient Israel’s land was one of covenant. This came after the chaos on the land as a result of man’s sin.<sup>176</sup> Out of 46 references to the promise in Genesis to Judges, only seven (7) do not mention the land while twenty-nine (29) refer solely to it. For instance, in Genesis 28:4, the ‘blessing of Abraham’ is simply possession of the land.<sup>177</sup> In Leviticus 25:23, we understand that although the land was given as a gift to Israel, it was still owned by God, so as divine landlord God retained authority over how it should be used. Hence Israel’s whole economic system was subject to God’s moral critique. The gift of the land to live in and law to live by were intrinsic to the way God shaped Israel to be a ‘model’ people. This important hermeneutical principle helps to unlock the relevance of the Old Testament for our own ethical construction in many areas, including ecological concerns.<sup>178</sup> The land functioned as a moral and spiritual barometer in the Old Testament. So much of the prophetic anger is directed at economic injustice and oppression, in which the abuse and misuse of the land is dominant. In other words, the land stood at the junction of the vertical and the horizontal covenant relationships.<sup>179</sup>

According to Brueggemann, there is an intimate connectedness between God, humankind, land and covenant. Men and land are linked in a covenantal relationship. “The operating land ethic in our society denies that relationship at enormous cost not only to land but to our common humanity.” The conclusion that we (males) treat land in the way we (males) treat women, is reached. There is thus a direct interrelation between sexuality and fertility; between economics and justice. Economics cannot be separated from sexuality, nor

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<sup>174</sup>Brueggemann 2002:5-8.

<sup>175</sup>Brueggemann, W. 2002. *The land: Place as gift, promise, and challenge in biblical faith*, 12.

<sup>176</sup>C. Wright. 2005. *Theology and Ethics of the Land. A Christian Approach to the Environment*, The John Ray Initiative. London: Guilders Graphics Ltd., 34.

<sup>177</sup>G. Von Rad. 1984. The Promised Land and Yahweh’s Land in the Hexateuch. *The Problem of the Hexateuch and other Essays*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 79-93.

<sup>178</sup>Wright, C. 2005: 38.

<sup>179</sup>Wright, C. 2005: 41.



can sexuality be separated from economics. A new land ethic, he says, requires a new sexual ethic, free from both *promiscuity* and *domination*. “Applied to land, we shall not have fertility until we have justice toward the land and toward those who depend on the land for life, which means all the brothers and sisters.”<sup>180</sup> It is within this context that Brueggemann connects Freud and Marx when he said: “They understood that modern civilization is grounded in an extraordinary self-deception that distorts both sexuality and economics, and that ends in deep alienation from self, from neighbor, from land.”<sup>181</sup> Contemporary, *isolated land reform programs* ignore the systemic interrelationship between God, land, people and covenant at its own peril. He further holds that productivity requires attention to justice.

He concludes by stating that the ignorance of the relationship with God or the transgression of the Torah/covenant/family leads to “landlessness”, homelessness and eventually to death. Land is a primary category of faith and a promise from Yahweh. God initiated the covenant relationship between humankind and God himself. The Torah is the principle and norm for a full life in the Promised Land. The Bible story is thus about the relationship of Yahweh with God’s people in God’s land.

## Conclusion

This chapter unveils the social rotteness in Israelites society during the time of the prophet Hosea. It further reveals that the understanding of Hosea 4:1-3 could serve as the hermeneutical key for the theological understanding of the whole book of Hosea. With reference to the repeatedly used word- ארץ (earth) Hayes<sup>182</sup> rightly observes that the repetition of ארץ (earth) in verse 1a, and in verse 3 reinforces the connection between the actors, that is, those “who dwell in the land,” and the people of Israel, and the respondents “all who dwell in it” which refers to the Israelites and to all other living creatures as well.

It further presents two dimensions of “land theology” which are of particular contemporary importance. Firstly, the claims, that the care or the abuse of the land or creation is generally recognized as a biblical and theological concern. Secondly, the crisis of agribusiness is of particular concern, because land-care and land-management are transposed

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<sup>180</sup>Brueggemann, 2002: 173-177.

<sup>181</sup>Brueggemann, 2002: 177.

<sup>182</sup>M. K. Hayes. 2002. *The Earth Mourns. Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic*. 41.

into a commodity without any human dimension or interrelationship with God or the Torah.<sup>183</sup> It further emphasizes the interrelationship of God, land, Israel and the Torah.

In summary, this chapter holds that ignorance of the relationship with God or the transgression of the Torah/covenant/family (*'en-da'ath <sup>le</sup>lōhîm*) leads to “landlessness”, homelessness and eventually to death. Land is a primary category of faith and a promise from Yahweh. God initiated the covenant relationship between humankind and himself. The Torah is the principle and norm for a full life in the Promised Land. The Bible story is thus about the relationship of Yahweh with God’s people in God’s land.

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<sup>183</sup> M.K. Hayes. 2002. *The Earth Mourns, Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic*, xix-xx.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 EXEGETICAL EXPLORATION OF KEY WORDS IN HOSEA 4:1-3

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes key words in the text of Hosea 4:1-3, 6 so as to understand the meaning of certain word usage in the text.

#### 4.2 FUNDAMENTALS FOR EXISTENCE AS IN HOSEA 4:1

##### 4.2.1 דַעַת אֱלֹהִים { *da'ath* <sup>elohim</sup> }

דַעַת (*da'ath*) is a feminine noun from the root יָדָעַ ( *yāda'* ) “to know.” The root expresses knowledge gained in various ways by the senses. The noun occurs ninety-three (93) times in the Old Testament, most frequently in the Wisdom Literature, with forty-one (41) instances in Proverbs, ten in Job and nine in Ecclesiastes. It is used forty-two times in the Qumran Materials. Of the 41 occurrence of *da'ath* in Proverbs the BGT<sup>184</sup> presents its equivalent in Proverbs 1:4, 22; 2:10; 3:20; 5:2; 10:14; 12:1; 15:14; 19:25; 22:12; 23:12; 23:12; 14:18, as αἴσθησις which is translated to mean: *insight, experience, or discernment* (Phil 1:9). In Proverbs 1:7, the equivalent used is σύνεσις which could mean *the faculty of comprehension, intelligence, shrewdness* (Mk 12:33; Lk 2:47; 1 Cor. 1:19).<sup>185</sup> Moreso, from Proverbs 1:29; 2:6, we see another equivalent word as σοφίαν - the *wisdom* found among people, whether natural or imparted by God (see, Mt 12:42; Ac 6:3, 10; 7:10, 22; 1 Cor. 1:19f; 2:13; Col 1:28; Jas 3:13, 15, 17; 2 Pet 3:15). It could also mean *wisdom* of Christ and of God (see, Mk 6:2; Lk 2:40, 52; 1 Cor. 1:21a, 24, 30; Col 2:3).

It could possibly too, mean *Wisdom*, probable personification as found in Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:35; 11:49.<sup>186</sup> Following Proverbs 2:5, it is discovered that *da'ath* is represented in the BGT as ἐπίγνωσις meaning *insight, knowledge* (see, Col 1:9f; 1 Tim 2:4;

<sup>184</sup> BGT is a combination of the BNT and LXT databases. BNT - Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland 27th Edition. Copyright (c) 1993 Deutscher Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart and LXX Septuaginta (LXT) (Old Greek Jewish Scriptures) edited by Alfred Rahlfs, Copyright © 1935 by the Württembergische Bibelanstalt / Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft (German Bible Society), Stuttgart.

<sup>185</sup> F. Wilbur Gingrich 1983. *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* Second Edition Revised by Frederick W. Danker, Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press, 5.

<sup>186</sup> F. Wilbur Gingrich 1983. *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* Second Edition Revised by Frederick W. Danker, Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press, 184.

Tit 1:1; Phil 6; Heb 10:26; 2 Pet 1:2); *consciousness* (Rom 3:20). In Proverbs 17:27, *da'ath* is substituted with ἐπιγνώμων, meaning *understanding, intelligent, an arbiter, umpire, judge*. In Proverbs 8:9; 8:10, 12; 21:11; 29:7, γνῶσιν (BGT) is used in place of *da'ath* carrying the idea of *knowledge* (see, Lk 1:77; 11:52; Rom 11:33; 1 Cor. 8:1, 7, 11; 12:8; 2 Cor. 6:6; 10:5; 2 Pet 1:5f; 3:18). It could also mean *personal acquaintance with* (Phil 3:8). It also means *Heretical knowledge* of sectarians (See, 1 Tim 6:20).<sup>187</sup> In proverbs 14:7; 15:2; 15:7; 18:15; 24:5, the words used for *da'ath* in the BGT are σοφία, σοφῶν as well as their root word σοφός meaning *clever, skillful, experienced* (see, 1 Cor. 3:10; 6:5). It could also stand for *wise, learned* that is, of wisdom from a natural or divine source (see, Mt 23:34; Lk 10:21; Rom 1:14, 22; 1 Cor 1:19f, 26f; 3:18; Eph 5:15; Jas 3:13). In essence, from wisdom literature, *da'ath* is the contemplative perception of the wise man (Prov 1:4; 2: 6; 5:2; Eccl 1:18).<sup>188</sup>

Coming to the Prophets, *da'ath* in Isaiah 5:13 (BGT) is rendered as εἰδέναι derived from οἶδα meaning to *know (about)* (see, Mt 6:32; 20:22; 25:13; Mk 1:34; 6:20; Lk 4:41; 11:44; Jn 4:25; 9:25; Acts 2:22; 3:16; Rom 8:27; 1 Cor 13:2; 16:15; 2 Cor 12:2; Gal 4:8; Col 4:6; 1 Tim 1:8; 2 Pet 1:12. It also mean to *be (intimately) acquainted with, stand in a close relation to* (see, Mt 26:72, 74; Lk 22:57; Jas 8:19; 2 Cor. 5:16; 2 Thess. 1:8; Tit 1:16). It could be to *know or understand how, can, be able* (Mt 7:11; 27:65; Lk 12:56; Phil 4:12; 1 Thess. 4:4; 1 Tim 3:5; Jas 4:17). It could further mean to *understand, recognize, come to know* Mt 26:70; Mk 4:13; 12:15; Lk 22:60; Jn 6:61; 16:18; 1 Cor. 2:11; Eph 1:18. Other uses are *remember* (1 Cor. 1:16), *Respect or take an interest in* (1 Thess. 5:12).<sup>189</sup> From Isaiah 40:14 (BGT), *da'ath* is ἔδειξεν from δείκνυμι meaning to *show, point out, make known* (see, Mt 8:4; Lk 22:12; Jn 14:8f; 1 Cor. 12:31; Heb 8:5; Rev 1:1). It also means to *Explain, prove* (Mt 16:21; Acts 10:28; Jas 2:18).

In Isaiah 44:19 (BGT) *da'ath* is represented by ἔγνω derived from γινώσκω which means to *know, come to know* (Mt 13:11; Lk 12:47f; J 8:32; 14:7; Acts 1:7; 19:35; 1 Cor. 3:20; 13:9, 12; 2 Cor. 5:16; 1 Jn 4:2, 6). It also means to *learn (of), ascertain, find out* (Mt 9:30; Mk 6:38; 15:45; Lk 24:18; J 4:1; Acts 17:20; 21:34). It could mean to *understand,*

<sup>187</sup> F. Wilbur Gingrich, 73.

<sup>188</sup> R. L. Harris, (Ed.) {Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce K. Waltke} 1980. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Chicago: Moody Press. 1: 366.

<sup>189</sup> F. Wilbur Gingrich, 136.

*comprehend* (Mk 4:13; J 8:43; 10:6; Acts 8:30; 21:37; 1 Cor. 2:8, 11, 14). Interestingly too, it means to *have* the law *at one's fingertips* (Rom 7:1). Furthermore *da'ath*, from this perspective could mean to *perceive, notice, realize* (Mk 5:29; 7:24; Lk 8:46; J 6:15; Acts 23:6), *acknowledge, recognize* (Mt 7:23; Jn 1:10); *choose* (1 Cor. 8:3; Gal 4:9). Also, *da'ath* could be used euphemistically, of sex relations- to *know* {carnally} (Mt 1:25; Lk 1:34).<sup>190</sup>

In Isaiah 11:2 BGT the equivalent word used for *da'ath*, is σοφίας derived from σοφία meaning *wisdom* found among people, whether natural or imparted by God (Mt 12:42; Acts 6:3, 10; 7:10, 22; 1 Cor. 1:19f; 2:13; Col 1:28; Js 3:13, 15, 17; 2 Pet 3:15). In Ezekiel 38:16; Micah 6:5; Malachi 2:7 (BGT), respectively, γνῶσιν, γνωσθῆναι, γνῶσιν are used to represent *da'ath*. These respective words are derived from γνῶσις meaning *knowledge, personal acquaintance with* or Heretical *knowledge* of sectarians. In Daniel 1:4 BGT, *da'ath* is represented by ἐπιστήμονας derived from ἐπιστήμων, meaning *expert, learned, understanding* (Jas 3:13).

Practically distinctive is the concept of אֵלֹהִים יְדָעָה (knowledge of God) which is prominent in Hosea 4:1, 6; 6:6. “Knowledge of God” is derived from those outstanding historical events in which God has evidently revealed himself to chosen individuals such as Abraham and Moses. “Knowledge of God” appears in parallel with “fear of the Lord” (*yir'at YHWH*, Isa 11:2; cf. 58:2; Jer 22:16) as a description of true religion. From Hosea 4:1, 6 in highest sense, *da'ath 'elohim - knowledge of God - includes obedience*.<sup>191</sup> Here is the crux of this work. We find here in Hosea 4 that *da'ath 'elohim - knowledge of God-* is not the mere ‘head’ knowledge but the ability to apply or live by the acquired knowledge. Clearly, the book of Hosea calls for a move from ‘head’ knowledge, especially about God and the requirements of the *Torah* - law to orthopraxy (right action, ensuing from acquired knowledge). This is what Olu-Owolabi in his inaugural lecture identified from a broader sense as epistemology- “applied knowledge”<sup>192</sup>.

Hence, to do justice and righteousness and to judge the cause of the poor and the needy is to know God (Jer 22:15-16). On the other hand where there is the lack of this

<sup>190</sup> F. Wilbur Gingrich, 39.

<sup>191</sup> F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C. A. Briggs. 1907. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 395.

<sup>192</sup> An inaugural lecture titled: ‘My People Perish for Lack of Philosophy’ delivered at the University of Ibadan by Kolawole A Olu-Owolabi Professor of Philosophy, Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2011, p.10.

“knowledge of God,” there is swearing, lying, killing, stealing, committing adultery and destruction upon a people (Hosea 4:6; cf. Isaiah 5:13). In fact, the “Knowledge of God” (orthopraxy), is more pleasing to him than sacrifice (Hos 6:6).<sup>193</sup>

The indictment of Yahweh’s law suit, his רִיב (controversy) with “the inhabitants of the land” is summed up in verse 1b of Hosea 4. “there is no reliability” (אֱמֶת – *emeth*) or “mutual obligation” (חֶסֶד – *Hesed*) “no knowledge of God” אֵלֹהִים יָדַעַת (en-*da’ath* - *lōhīm*) in the land. According to Wolff,<sup>194</sup> “knowledge of God” does not refer to a second “religious” sphere in addition to the “ethical” of the first two concepts (of אֱמֶת and חֶסֶד), but as a concept in final position of the phrase, it is rather the root and the source which make אֱמֶת and חֶסֶד in Israel possible. In other words, the absence of אֱמֶת and חֶסֶד in Israel is an indication of the fact that there is the lack of “knowledge of God” in a given faith community. Thus, it could be said that the phrase “there is no אֵלֹהִים יָדַעַת in the land” is really the fundamental indictment of Hosea 4:1-3 and as such, provides the key to the understanding of the corpus of the book of Hosea. The phrase אֵלֹהִים יָדַעַת occurs twice in the book of Hosea, in 4:1 and 6:6. In both cases, as Wolff<sup>195</sup> observes, it is the succinct formulation of what Yahweh demands of the Israelites worshipers.

In the book of Hosea, we may find at least, some dimension of the אֵלֹהִים יָדַעַת the Israelites were to have. Firstly, it means remembering Yahweh as the Creator as opposed to Baal. Accordingly, Wolff<sup>196</sup> holds that one of the fundamental distinguishing marks between Yahweh and Baal as it relates to the priestly functions is the יָדַעַת of the priest. Furthermore, he submits that, forgetting the תּוֹרָה (law) of Yahweh means rejection of the אֵלֹהִים יָדַעַת - the knowledge of God, and this, according to him, is the original sin.<sup>197</sup> According to Zobel,<sup>198</sup> חֶסֶד (kindness) is linked with the תּוֹרָה (law). He holds that the setting of this חֶסֶד

<sup>193</sup>R. Laird Harris, (Ed.) {Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce K. Waltke} 1980. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 367.

<sup>194</sup>Wolff, 1974: 67

<sup>195</sup>Wittenberg, G. 2009. Knowledge of God: The Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change. *Old Testament Essays, a Journal of the Old Testament Society in South Africa*, 22.2: 488-509.

<sup>196</sup>Wolff, 1964: 195.

<sup>197</sup>Wolff, 1964:191.

<sup>198</sup>H. J. Zobel. 1986. חֶסֶד -Chesed, *TDT*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 5:52.

is the family or clan. He further posits that the fruitful and productive common life of people in such a clan, family or close human society requires constant mutual kindness on the part of all its members. Moreso, that kindness is part of social norms that function to preserve and promote life thus strengthening society. *דִּקְדֻקָּה* as part of social norms, he holds, tended to be an integral element of Yahweh's *תּוֹרָה* (law). From the foregoing therefore, we can deduce that what constitutes the right and good social conduct was most probably the content of the *Torāh* (law) according to Hosea 4:6.<sup>199</sup>

Also, forgetting God as creator in favour of Baal (deity of fertility) as seen in Hosea 5:4, is also held by Andersen and Freedman,<sup>200</sup> and Von Rad,<sup>201</sup> although Von Rad asserts that the Israelites' adaptation to the new agrarian environment as against their religion of desert nomads (through which their God Yahweh had made a covenant with them), brought about a "crisis" of their faith. However, Keefe,<sup>202</sup> states that because the Israelites had difficulty in believing that their desert religion God could provide for the fertility of their fields (the new vocation) they turned to Canaanites' fertility religions, primarily to the worship of Baal. She holds that the desert deity Yahweh is not bound to the cycles of nature, but rather is the creator who transcends nature. Thus, she submits that the key distinction between Yahweh and Baal is that Yahweh, the Lord of History acts in history, while Baal is primarily a fertility God who acts in nature.<sup>203</sup>

According to Renteria, Israel had to produce surplus in order to export agricultural products. They cultivated grains efficiently in the valleys and plains areas (like Esdraelon and Sharon), where the land was owned by the urban elites who benefited from the new system<sup>204</sup> whereas, vineyards and olive orchards, according to Chaney, were much better suited for the terraced uplands. But the Israelite peasants had been involved in small-scale

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<sup>199</sup>Wolff. 1964: 193f gives a suggestion that the priests might have been involved in teaching an ancient Israel religious material dealing with the norms of right living according to the ten Commandments.

<sup>200</sup>F. I. Andersen & David Noel Freedman. 1980. *Hosea* AB. 24, New York: Doubleday, p. 49

<sup>201</sup> Gerhard Von Rad. 1962. *Old Testament Theology: The Theology of Israel's Historical Tradition*. New York: Harper & Row. 1.

<sup>202</sup>A. A. Keefe. 2001. *Woman's Body and the Social Body in Hosea*, JSOSup, 113, Gender, Culture, Theory 10, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press. 66f.

<sup>203</sup>A. A. Keefe. 2001. *Woman's Body and the Social Body in Hosea*. 68.

<sup>204</sup>H. T. Renteria. 1992. *Elijah/Elisha Stories: A Socio-Cultural Analysis of Prophets and People in Ninth-Century B.C.E. Israel. Elijah and Elisha in Socioliterary Perspective*, SBL Semeia Studies, Robert B. Coote. Ed. Atlanta: Scholars Press. 89.

subsistence farming and animal husbandry for generations.<sup>205</sup> And agriculture in the hill country depended on rain and was therefore subject to vicissitudes of periodic drought and agricultural pest.<sup>206</sup> These realities indeed made Israel “forget where the gifts of the land come from” as Wittenberg<sup>207</sup> states.

Moreso, זָכַר אֶת אֲלֹהֵיָם could mean remembering where the gifts of the land come from. Scholars like Chaney,<sup>208</sup> Renteria,<sup>209</sup> and Todd<sup>210</sup> had linked the violent conflicts between Elijah and Elisha, the prophets of Yahweh, and Ahab and the house of Omri leading to the revolution of Jehu in the ninth century, to socio-economic conditions that had developed in the Northern Kingdom after the divided monarchy. The revolution of Jehu saw the abolition of *Ba'al* worship in Israel, but did not change the underlying economic structures where economic and political policies of Israel's monarchical establishment during and subsequent to the reign of Jeroboam II aggravated the situation of conflict and crisis. Todd<sup>211</sup> observed that in order to gain control of the production of the uplands, the monarchy and the elites began devising ways to bring the village land into commercialized system. Accordingly, Keefe,<sup>212</sup> asserts, that the deepening involvement of Israel in interregional trade and commercial agriculture brought much profit to the royal house and ruling elite, it led to an increased impoverishment of the rural peasant population. Human relationships were governed more and more by profit motives, and the solidarity of society in general disintegrated, while the pressure of a rising market economy and the crown's deepening investment in cosmopolitan orientations led to a breakdown of traditional values.<sup>213</sup>

Lastly, “knowledge of God” could mean “adherence to the תּוֹרָה (*Torah*) of Yahweh” (Hos 4:6) since, it is this *Torah* that stipulates the divine requirements needed for the preservation and promotion of life. Accordingly, Crusemann sees *Hesed* as concerned with

<sup>205</sup>M. L. Chaney. 1986. Systemic Study of the Israelite Monarchy. *Semeia*, 37:73

<sup>206</sup>M. L. Chaney. 1986. Systemic Study of the Israelite Monarchy, 68.

<sup>207</sup>Wittenberg, G. 2009. Knowledge of God: The Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change. *Old Testament Essays, a Journal of the Old Testament Society in South Africa*, 22.2: 497.

<sup>208</sup>M. L. Chaney 1986. Systemic Study of the Israelite Monarchy. *Semeia* 37: 53-76.

<sup>209</sup>T. H. Renteria. 1992. The Elijah/ Elisha Stories: A Socio-Cultural Analysis of Prophets and the People in Ninth-Century B.C.E. Israel. *Elijah and Elisha in Socioliterary Perspective*. SBL *Semeia Studies*. Robert B. Coote. Ed. Atlanta: Scholars Press. 75-126.

<sup>210</sup>J. Todd. 1992. The Pre-Deuteronomistic Elijah Cycle. *Elijah and Elisha in Socioliterary Perspective*. SBL *Semeia Studies*. Robert B. Coote. Ed. Atlanta: Scholars Press. 1-36.

<sup>211</sup>J. Todd. 1992. The Pre-Deuteronomistic Elijah Cycle. *Elijah and Elisha in Socioliterary Perspective*.

<sup>212</sup>Keefe. 2001: 32, 191.

<sup>213</sup>Keefe. 2001.



the fruit and productive life of a close human society. He sees it as part of social norms that function to preserve and promote life, thus strengthening society. These social norms tended to be formulated as divine requirements, as מִשְׁפָּטִים (justice) - an integral element of Yahweh's תּוֹרָה (Torah).<sup>214</sup> Interestingly, in Ancient Israel, the dichotomy between society and nature which is so common in modern thinking is totally absent. In view of this, the same element of mutuality that is a prerequisite for attitude of רַחֲמִים, according to Midgley<sup>215</sup> also applies to animals, in particular domesticated animals. Accordingly, Wittenberg observes that mutual relationship of community does not only determine traditional norms of conduct but becomes part of the תּוֹרָה (Torāh) of Yahweh. This he posits can be seen in the different stipulations in the Covenant Code, Deuteronomic, and Holiness Code.<sup>216</sup>

Succinctly, דַּעַת אֱלֹהִים means recognition of the truth and the power of God's dealings with his people, and action by his people reflecting this recognition. It is knowledge interiorized, knowledge issuing in conduct: conduct determined by fundamental understanding.<sup>217</sup> Hence, אֵין-דַּעַת אֱלֹהִים ('en-da'ath 'lōhîm), literally translated as "lack of Knowledge of God" which is not the mere absence of the *knowledge of God* but failure to apply and act in accordance with Yahweh's stipulations, will in this work, be referred to in a pragmatic sense as *contravention of, disobedience to law and ethical principles or unethical conduct*. It is therefore, the deviation from adhering to existing rule in ancient Israel that caused dislocation in the entire the ecosystem of the northern Israel.

Nevertheless, the next segment shows the ingredients of the דַּעַת אֱלֹהִים where and when these are missing, it suggests the 'en-da'ath 'lōhîm (violation of certain principles) in such society.

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<sup>214</sup>F. Crusemann. 1992. *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

<sup>215</sup>M. Midgley. 1992. *The Mixed Community. The Animal Rights/ Environmental Ethics Debate*, Edited by E.C. Hargrove, Albany: State University of New York press. 211-226,

<sup>216</sup>Wittenberg, G. 2007. *Resistance Theology in the Old Testament: Collected Essays*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications 162-171.

<sup>217</sup>H. Walter. January 1, 1976. Knowledge of God in the Church. *Interpretation*. Retrieved Dec. 28, 2012, from <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&hid=107&sid=5cc3cba2-f7ae-49b4-8e52-f5fef8707793%40sessionmgr104>.

#### 4.2.2 אמֶת { 'emeth }

A fundamental principle of the Old Testament (Biblical) ethics is the imitation of God; as Yahweh is, likewise Israel is to be. This is famously expressed in Leviticus 19: 2 “Be ye holy because I, the LORD your God am holy.” Even in the New Testament, this principle is evident (Mat 5:43-48; 1 Cor 11:1). It is therefore no surprise that if Yahweh is faithful, it is expected of Israel to be faithful too. Sadly, in Hosea 4, the Prophet begins his general indictment of Israel. The first thing he identifies is that there is no אמֶת – 'emeth (reliability) no חֶסֶד – *Hesed* (mutual obligation or kindness) no דַּא'אֵת – *da'ath* - *lōhîm* the land.

This form 'emeth is of the nominal derivative of the root 'mn. The derivation seems to be assured by the suffix form. The construct form 'amath appears in place of the absolute form, for which there are any examples elsewhere. The word 'amath was intentionally changed to 'emeth because it was identical with 'amath- 'maid.' Moreso, the *seghol* ('e') is changed to *pathach* ('a') when the accent shifts with the addition of the suffix. The word is found 126 times in the Old Testament. It occurs 37 times in the Psalms, 12 times in Isaiah, 11 times in Jeremiah, 11 times in Proverbs and 6 times each in Daniel and Zechariah. In other books, it appears from 1-6 times each but does not appear in Leviticus, Numbers, some part of Genesis, and Joban poet.<sup>218</sup>

Tracing this word in the prophets, we see that in Isaiah 43:9; Daniel 8:26 (BGT), 'emeth is represented by ἀληθῆ derived from ἀληθής, meaning *true, dependable, Truthful, righteous, honest, Real, genuine*.<sup>219</sup> In Jeremiah 2:21 (BGT), 'emeth is rendered as ἀληθινὴν derived from ἀληθινός, meaning *true, dependable, true, in accordance with truth, genuine, real*.<sup>220</sup> In Jeremiah 42:5 (BGT) the word for 'emeth is πιστόν derived πιστός meaning *trustworthy, faithful, dependable, inspiring trust or faith* (Mt 25:21, 23; Lk 16:10–12; 1 Cor. 1:9; 7:25; Col 4:7; 1 Tim 1:12, 15; 2 Tim 2:2, 13; Tit 3:8; Heb. 2:17; 10:23; Rev 2:13). It also means *trusting, cherishing faith or trust, believing, faithful* (Jn 20:27; Acts 16:15; Gal

<sup>218</sup> G. Johannes Botterweck, Ed., 1990. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: WilliamB. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1: 309-316.

<sup>219</sup> F. Wilbur Gingrich, 8.

<sup>220</sup> F. Wilbur Gingrich, 8

3:9; Eph 1:1). It could also be used of Christian *believers* (Acts 10:45; 16:1; 1 Tim 4:3, 12; 6:2).<sup>221</sup>

In Daniel 10:21; 11:2 *'emeth* is rendered as ἀληθείας, ἀλήθειαν from ἀλήθεια meaning *truth, truthfulness, dependability, uprightness* (Rom 15:8; 2 Cor 7:14); It means also *truth* as opposed to falsehood (Mk 5:33; Eph 4:25). Moreso, it means *Truth* as characteristic of divine or human action (Jas 1:17; 3:21; 1 Cor 13:6; Eph 4:24).<sup>222</sup> In Zechariah 7:9 (BGT) *'emeth* is rendered as οἰκτιρῶν a word derived from οἰκτιρμός translated as *pity, mercy, compassion* (Rom 12:1; 2 Cor 1:3; Col 3:12; Phil 2:1; Heb 10:28).<sup>223</sup>

In the book of Hosea, *'emeth* appears in chapter 4:1. In the LXX, *'emeth* is rendered *alētheia* which carries the idea of *Truth* as characteristic of divine or human action.<sup>224</sup> And the Aramaic equivalent *qushta'* have largely been responsible for the translation “truth.” According to Baumgartner<sup>225</sup> *'emeth* has several shades of meaning which he renders as “stability, reliability, durability, permanence, faithfulness” and “truth.” In addition, Wolff<sup>226</sup> sees *'emeth* as “trustworthiness.” A word that denotes an unconditional reliability in which one has confidence in the other especially in his word, and service (see, 1 Kgs 10:6; 22:16; Josh 24:14; 1 Sam 12:14). *'emeth*, according to him emphasizes the enduring quality of responsible relationships while *Hesed* underlines its intensity. He further holds that both words are often combined in a formula representing an indissoluble bond of loyalty. He succinctly states that the meaning of “there is no *'emeth*” in Hosea 4:1 is a lack of community responsibility among those who live together in the land. *'emeth* is frequently applied to God as a characteristic of His nature (Exo 34:5-7). It is a term fittingly applied to God’s words (Ps 119:142, 151, 160; Dan 10:21). It is a characteristic of God revealed to men. And as such, it becomes the means by which men know and serve God as their Saviour

<sup>221</sup> F. Wilbur Gingrich, 160.

<sup>222</sup> F. Wilbur Gingrich, 8.

<sup>223</sup> F. Wilbur Gingrich, 137.

<sup>224</sup> Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Ed.] 1987. *The international Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, E-J, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 2: 273.

<sup>225</sup> L. Koehler -W Baumgartner, “הֶשֶׁד” in G. Johannes Botterweck, Ed., 1990. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1: 310.

<sup>226</sup> H. W. Wolff. 1974. *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*, 67.

(Josh 24:14; 1 Kgs 2:4; Ps 26:3; 86:11) and then, as a characteristic to be found in those who have indeed come to God (Exo18:21; Neh 7:2; Zech 8:16).<sup>227</sup>

The noun *'emeth* is the most common from the root *'mn*.<sup>228</sup> The Old Testament usage of *'emeth*, takes on a wider moral implication. This word is often combined with a keyword of similar import-  $\text{חֶסֶד}$  (*Hesed* - the NIV 'Love,' RSV 'Steadfast love' etc.). Elsewhere, it is often linked with *cedaq* or *s<sup>e</sup>däqa* (righteousness) and sometimes also *mišpaṭ* ('justice'), and other moral terms. Similarly, *'emeth* is the firmness and the reliability of a man whose word is as good as his bond, one who is consistent in his responsibility.<sup>229</sup>

#### 4.2.3 $\text{חֶסֶד}$ { *Hesed* }

The word *Hesed* connotes mutual obligation on the part of individuals or groups. It denotes human behaviour in the secular realm, religious sphere and especially as directed toward God. It is seen as the "essence" of covenantal relationship. It is rendered kindness, steadfast love, love, loyalty, faithfulness, mutual obligation. *Hesed* also comes to feature in statement of moral or ethical.<sup>230</sup> This noun *Hesed* occurs 245 times in the Old Testament. Its distribution by individual books is as follows: 11 times in Genesis, 4 times in Exodus, 2 in Numbers, 3 in Deuteronomy, 3 in Joshua, 2 in Judges, 3 in Ruth, 16 in 1&2 Samuel, 5 in 1 Kings, 15 in 1&2 Chronicles, 3 in Ezra, 5 in Nehemiah, 2 in Esther, 3 in Job, 127 in Psalms, 10 in Proverbs, 8 in Isaiah, 6 in Jeremiah, 2 in Lamentations, 2 in Daniel, 6 in Hosea, 1 in Joel, 2 in Jonah, 3 in Micah and 1 in Zechariah. It does not occur in Leviticus, 2 Kings, Ecclesiastics, Song of Songs, Ezekiel, Amos, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai and Malachi. The word *Hesed* as a rule appears in singular. The plural is found only 18 times.<sup>231</sup> *Hesed* is a relational concept. In Ruth 3:10, it points to the relationship of Ruth to her mother-in-law and to Boaz whom she prefers to the young men. It is a word used to

<sup>227</sup> R. Laird Harris, (Ed.) {Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce K. Waltke}. 1980. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press. 1: 52-53.

<sup>228</sup> W. A. VanGemeren (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House. 1: 428-429.

<sup>229</sup> Mays: 62.

<sup>230</sup> VanGemeren (Ed.), 2: 211-218

<sup>231</sup> Botterweck. 1988. Reprint, 5:46, 47.

demonstrate relationship among individuals.<sup>232</sup> According to Jepsen, *Hesed* “always designates not just a human attitude but also the act that preserves or promotes life.” It is demonstration of friendship or piety.<sup>233</sup>

VanGemerens<sup>234</sup> holds that *Hesed* is not a mechanical tool to be used in crises, nor is it a philosophical absolute to be taken for granted, but rather a quality of relationship that is to be sought again, appropriated and treasured in the covenantal partner’s every needy moment. It is therefore clear that the concept lies in the realm of interpersonal relationship. With relation to בְּרִית (b<sup>e</sup>rîth) -covenant- *Hesed* is practically defined as the very content of בְּרִית (b<sup>e</sup>rîth) and as “conduct in accordance with the mutual relationship of rights and duties between allies<sup>235</sup>

In Jeremiah 2:2 (BGT) ἔλεος is used as an equivalent word for *Hesed* and it carries the meaning of *mercy, clemency, compassion, pity* (Mt 23:23; Lk 1:72; Rom 15:9; Gal 6:16; Eph 2:4; Heb 4:16).<sup>236</sup> In Jeremiah 38:3 (BGT) the word for *Hesed* is οἰκτίρημα which means *mercy, compassion*. A common word is used in the BGT version in Jeremiah 9: 23; 39: 18; Micah 6:8; 7:18; 7:20; Hosea 4:1 ; 6:6; 12:7. The word used in the above texts for *Hesed* is from the word ἔλεος which carries the idea of godly deeds by men (Neh 13: 14).<sup>237</sup>

As in Hosea 4:1, *Hesed* is portrayed as “conduct (of men) towards other human beings.” The social nature of *Hesed* need not be overemphasized because it shapes not only relationship with human beings, but also that of human beings among themselves.<sup>238</sup> As earlier on stated, the “knowledge of God” according to Wolff, does not refer to a second “religious” sphere in addition to the “ethical” of the first two concepts (of תָּמָה and דָּקָה, as seen in Hos 4:1) but as a concept in final position of the phrase, it is rather the root and the source which make תָּמָה and דָּקָה in Israel possible.<sup>239</sup> Hence, the absence of תָּמָה and דָּקָה in a society, is suggestive of 'en-da'ath - 'lōhîm (disobedience to law and ethical principles) in such community.

<sup>232</sup> Botterweck. 1988, 49.

<sup>233</sup> Jepsen, In Botterweck’s 1990. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament Reprint*, 5

<sup>234</sup> W. A. VanGemerens, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2: 216.

<sup>235</sup> Botterweck. 1988. 52

<sup>236</sup> F. Wilbur Gingrich, 62.

<sup>237</sup> F. Wilbur Gingrich, 62.

<sup>238</sup> Botterweck. 1988. 63.

<sup>239</sup> Wolff. 1974. *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*. 67

#### 4.2.4 מָאַסַּ { *mā'as* }

The verb מָאַסַּ occurs 76 times in the Old Testament most commonly with a simple direct object but frequently also with a following preposition *b<sup>e</sup>* and noun or suffix, a secondary way of forming direct objects. In the Qal, it means “reject, refuse”. It is commonly used in religious context with both human and divine subjects. Human beings as persons with freewill could choose or reject certain things. If Israel reject Yahweh’s decrees, that would be tantamount to covenant violation (Lev 28:15), an act of rebellion that would result in massive deportation (Lev 26:43).<sup>240</sup> In Hosea 4:6, it is echoed:

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shall be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

From the above text, a stern word is delivered by Yahweh against religious leaders who had rejected knowledge (of God- standards set by God).<sup>241</sup>

### 4.3 SOCIAL CORRUPTION AS IN HOSEA 4:2

#### 4.3.1 אָלַח { *'alah* }

This word is a ‘curse’ by which a person is bound to an obligation that is most often contractual in nature. At Gerar, the Gerarites requested from Isaac that there should be “a sworn agreement between us” (Genesis 26:28), that is a covenant sanction by curse clauses in case of default by either party. Where this covenant is broken, “a curse consumes the earth” (Isaiah 24:6; Ezekiel 16:59).<sup>242</sup> This ‘curse’ also operates outside the areas of formal contract, as when the owner of a stolen goods might pronounce a curse on the thief (Judges 17:2), or a person withholding important information might be similarly threatened (Leviticus 5:1; cf. Proverbs 29:24). In 1Kings 8:31 cf. 2 Chronicles 6:22 we observe, a man claiming to have been wronged by his neighbor, invoking Yahweh as judge.<sup>243</sup> The

<sup>240</sup>W. A. VanGemen (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 2: 833-834.

<sup>241</sup>VanGemen (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology*, 834.

<sup>242</sup> VanGemen (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 1: 403-404

<sup>243</sup>VanGemen (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology*, 1:404.

occurrence of הָלַף in the BGT version especially in Hosea, is shown by the word ἀρά, which carries the idea of *prayer* especially *a prayer for evil, a curse, imprecation*. It is more commonly a prayer for evil to come on someone (Rom. 3,14).<sup>244</sup> The word in view, suggests the prevalence of imprecations, where the aggrieved and the oppressed of the society are left with no option than to render curses in prayer on their mindless oppressors.

#### 4.3.2 שָׁחַשׁ { kāHaš }

The verb שָׁחַשׁ occurs 22 times in the Old Testament. This verb is used in the text as Piel infinitive absolute, it occurs 19 times in this form, and consistently means “to lie” that is to “deceive in words and actions” sometimes by denying a reality while knowing better. שָׁחַשׁ in the Qal form means “to fail, deceive, grow lean;” when used in Niphal it means “to act deceptively, do false obeisance;” when used as a noun, means “lies, lying, gauntness, deception;” when used as adjective, it carries the meaning “false, deceitful;” when used in the Hitpael form, it means “feign obedience.”<sup>245</sup> It could further mean “to deceive, deal deceptively, to cringe, to disappoint, to fail.”<sup>246</sup> From the BGT version, *chacash* is represented by ψεύδομαι in Leviticus 5:21, 22; and it means: *lie, tell a falsehood, try to deceive by lying, impose upon.*<sup>247</sup> In Hosea 4: 2, same root- ψεύδος - was used.

#### 4.3.3 אָפַן { nā’ap } and זָנַח { zānah }

This verb אָפַן occurs 34 times in its noun and verb forms: 3 noun forms, 16 Qal stem and 15 Piel (verb) stem. In the Qal form, it means “commit adultery,” metaphorically it means “idolatry.” ‘Adultery’ was like ‘idol worship, a turning away from commitment to Yahweh.’ The Old Testament prophets include adultery in a list of expressions of covenantal infidelity. Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel vividly condemn religious idolatry as spiritual adultery, the epitome of unfaithfulness. When Hosea portrayed the relationship between

<sup>244</sup> Barbara Friberg; Timothy Friberg; Neva F. Miller. 2000. ἀρά, in *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Electronic edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Books 3420.

<sup>245</sup> VanGemeren (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 2: 632

<sup>246</sup> VanGemeren (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology*, 2.

<sup>247</sup> F. Wilbur Gingrich, 219

Yahweh and Israel as a marriage, and condemned the Canaanite fertility Cult, the emotionally loaded concept became appropriate for apostasy.<sup>248</sup>

Nevertheless, Hosea uses  $\text{הָיָה}$  in contrast with the ‘knowledge of God’ as seen in his observation: “They do not direct their deeds toward turning to their God, For the spirit of harlotry ( $\text{רוּחַ זְנוּנִים}$ ) is in their midst, and they do not know ( $\text{לֹא יָדְעוּ}$ ) Yahweh (Hos 5:4). In response to the prophet’s concern, Wolff posits that the priests have replaced  $\text{אֱלֹהִים}$ , “the true object of their careful observance and cultic practices with  $\text{זְנוּנִים}$ , that is, with Canaanite sex rites.”<sup>249</sup> But Keefe puts forward a question. She asks, ‘But if Hosea’s main purpose was to challenge a syncretistic cult, why is it that Hosea’s language about Yahweh’s  $\text{דְּעַת}$  so richly intertwined with sexual and fertility motifs?’<sup>250</sup> She continues, Yahweh, like Baal, is married to the land and is the source of its fertility (Hos 2:8-9; 4:5-7). Israel’s God is certainly not only a god of history, but a god of fertility as well.<sup>251</sup>

Keefe further argues that the extensive scholarly investigation of the Ras Shamra text has furthermore shown that Baal was no simple nature deity, but “Lord of the Earth” and specifically, lord of the city-state of Ugarit. She further insists that the priests had a central and critical role of establishing and maintaining social order and the symbolic relationship between the priestly and royal class. She holds that the priesthood controlled power at all the numerous shrines at the traditional worship sites.<sup>252</sup>

Therefore, rather than attacking supposed fertility cult practices, Keefe posits that Hosea’s passionate critic is directed at the official state cult and at the structures of royal power of which the cult is a primary sign.<sup>253</sup> She however suggests, that the indictment that “Israel has forgotten its maker” be seen in a wider context of chapter 8:1-14 where rulers and the calf of Samaria (Hos 8:4-5,6b) are condemned in the same breath. Holding that “The ‘calf of Samaria’ is false not simply because it is an idol, but because of what it stands for: ‘the structures of power which are seated in Samaria;’” it is the corruption of Samaria’s government which has tainted the priesthood that has roused the resentment of Hosea and

<sup>248</sup>VanGemeren (Ed). 1997 *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 3: 3.

<sup>249</sup>Wolff. 1974. *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*. 82

<sup>250</sup>Wolff. 1974. *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea* 47.

<sup>251</sup>Wolff. 1974. *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea* 75.

<sup>252</sup>Keefe. 2001. *Woman’s Body and the Social Body in Hosea*. 71

<sup>253</sup>Keefe. 2001. *Woman’s Body and the Social Body in Hosea*, 86-87, 95.



led to this polemic against the state cult.<sup>254</sup> We could therefore in line with Bird state that the “spirit of harlotry” רַחֵם רְחֵם in Hosea 5:4 could then preferably be rendered “spirit of corruption” emanating from the State cult rather than referring to “Canaanite sex rites.”<sup>255</sup>

Accordingly, Hooks<sup>256</sup> further adds that until recently, scholarly discussions of Hosea’s nuptial imagery have centered on the correctness of the use of sexual language to condemn apostasy that was purportedly sexual in nature. Many of these same scholars, however, persist in positing that Hosea’s language in 5:4 targets literal (though not cultic) sexual offenses.<sup>257</sup> Differentiating between רַחֵם (prostitution) and רַחֵם (adultery), we notice that the former does not transgress the authority of any man and is therefore not subject to legal condemnation. Whereas, Adultery (רַחֵם), on the other hand, which is defined as a married or betrothed woman’s engaging in extramarital sexual relations, was certainly a legal offense in ancient Israel, and elicited severe condemnation (e.g., Deut 22:22).<sup>258</sup> Since a married woman was considered the property of her husband, adultery shamed him (the husband), who would likely be perceived by the community as one not being able to exercise adequate control over his property (his wife, see, Gen 20:3; Exo 20:17; 21:3).<sup>259</sup>

Basically, adultery was a “property valuation and not an ethical issue” that directly and adversely affected individual males and corporate (male) Israel.<sup>260</sup> In the context of the marriage metaphor, רַחֵם *nā’ap* (“adultery”) is clearly the appropriate metaphorical vehicle for apostasy (i.e., like adultery, religious apostasy is an act of disloyalty toward one’s “master,” with whom one is expected to have an exclusive relationship). In summary, just as a husband might, in his anger, hurl the insult- רַחֵם (“prostitute”) - at his adulterous wife, Yahweh calls Israel a “prostitute” for her adultery (i.e., cultic apostasy although literal

<sup>254</sup>Keefe. 2001. *Woman’s Body and the Social Body in Hosea*, 97

<sup>255</sup> Phyllis Bird. 1989. “To Play the Harlot’: An Inquiry into an Old Testament Metaphor.” Pp.75-94 in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*, Ed.by Peggy L. Day, Minneapolis: Fortress.

<sup>256</sup>Eugene Fisher. 1976. “Cultic Prostitution in the Ancient Near East. A Reassessment,” *BTB*.6: 225–36; Stephen Hooks. 1985. *Sacred Prostitution in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Ph.D Dissertation, Jewish Institute of Religion. 10–45.

<sup>257</sup>Mayer I. Gruber. 1986. “Hebrew *Qēdēša* and Her Canaanite and Akkadian Cognates,” *UF* 18: 134.

<sup>258</sup>Raymond Westbrook. 1990. “Adultery in Ancient Near Eastern Law” *RB* 97: 542–80.

<sup>259</sup>G. A. Yee. 1996. “The Book of Hosea.” *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol.7, Nashville: Abingdon.197–98.

<sup>260</sup>G. A. Yee. 1996. “The Book of Hosea.” 89.

adultery may not be ruled out). There was no stronger terms, especially when combined with harlotry language זָנַח (prostitution) (Hosea 4:13; 5:4) for Israel's unfaithfulness.<sup>261</sup>

#### 4.3.4 רָצַח { *rāṣaH* }

The initial use of this word appears in the Qal stem in the Decalogue “you shall not murder” (Exo 20:13). *rāṣaH* appears in Mosaic legislation, as though the term bore a special connotation of premeditation.<sup>262</sup> The root *rṣh* appears 38 times with the sense of murdering or killing. This term traces its root in the practice of blood vengeance.<sup>263</sup> Numbers 35 ends on a dramatic note: “Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it” (v. 33). Significantly, Jesus in the New Testament, ranks humiliation, degradation, and dehumanization along with murder (*rāṣah*) the LXX *phoeneuō* (Mt 5:22).<sup>264</sup>

#### 4.3.5 גָּנַב { *gānab* }

When used in the Qal form, גָּנַב means “steal, rob, kidnap”. The Decalogue prohibits גָּנַב with a simple apodictic formula (Exo 20:15; Deut 5:19). The Rabbis argue that this was a prohibition against kidnapping. More likely, the command is a general dictum against the taking of anything that belongs to someone else or to the community at large. This could also be extended to the protection of the natural resources of this world and the dignity and reputation of people.<sup>265</sup>

The prophets use גָּנַב (both in Qal and Noun) in a literal sense (Jer 7:9; Hos 4:2, parallel with killing). In the legal regulations of the Talmud, גָּנַב may refer to ‘kidnapping’ or normal theft of property, where the law adds that two witnesses are required. גָּנַב may also mean to “create a false impression or delude.” If the crime of גָּנַב takes place in the sight of the owner of property, then it is robbery. If it takes place in sight of other witnesses but not

<sup>261</sup> VanGemeren (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 3:4.

<sup>262</sup> Harris, (Ed.) {Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce K. Waltke}. 1980. *Theological Wordbook of the O.T.* 2: 860

<sup>263</sup> VanGemeren (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 3: 1188.

<sup>264</sup> VanGemeren (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology*, 3:1189.

<sup>265</sup> VanGemeren (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology*, 3: 879.

the owner, then it is theft. Thus robbery is seen to include the loss of dignity inflicted on the owner, a personal sense of affront. By contrast, theft is a devious action conducted out of sight of the one robbed.<sup>266</sup> In essence, נָגַב could mean: robbery, theft, kidnapping, as well as stealing.

#### 4.3.6 פָּרַץ { *pāraṣ* }

פָּרַץ as a verb occurs about 49 times in the Old Testament. It occurs about 45 times in Qal with the meaning “break through, burst out.” A good case could be made for understanding the basic meaning to be “break through (a wall).” A city wall provides defense. Thus, to breach a wall is to render the city defenseless. The verb is further used for breaching of any restraint (or of invisible walls of restriction). This use occurs in various contexts including that of blessing and judgment. When there is no restraint or contentment on sin, wickedness multiplies, and they “break all bounds (פָּרַץ)” (Hos 4:2).<sup>267</sup>

### 4.4 REPERCUSSIVE EFFECTS OF A CHAOTIC SOCIETY AS IN HOSEA 4:3

#### 4.4.1 אָמַל { *’āmal* }

אָמַל (*’āmal*) in Qal means “be weak”; in Pual waw, it means “be feeble, languish”. *’āmal* -I, occurs as *’umlah* (in the pual form) fifteen times.<sup>268</sup> This form describes a state of exhaustion or extremity. Most particularly, it describes the state of Israel and its people after the punishment of God has fallen. (Jer. 14:2). Clearly God’s objective in such discipline was to bring his people to their knees as a warning and to humble them (Hos 4:2, Joel 1:10, 12).<sup>269</sup> Word associated with *’amal* are “wither”, “mourn” and “lament” (Isa. 24:4; 33:9; Jer. 14:2).

<sup>266</sup>VanGemerén (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology*, 3.

<sup>267</sup>VanGemerén (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 3:691-692.

<sup>268</sup>VanGemerén (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology*, 3: 426, 427.

<sup>269</sup>Harris, (Ed.) {Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce K. Waltke}. 1980. *Theological Wordbook of the O.T.* I: 50.

#### 4.4.2 סָדֵה { *sādeh* }

This masculine noun broadly designates the open field, country, or a definite portion of ground, a field. In the former notion, it is used of pasture land (Gen 29:2); unfrequented country exposed to violence (Gen 4:8; Deut 21:1; 22:25) or wild beasts (Exo 22:31); land containing flora and fauna (Gen 25:27; Gen 30:14; Exo 10:15); open country outside a walled city (Jud 9:32, 42; 1Sam 19:3) and an expanse of country in contrast to mountains (Jud 5:18; Jer 17:3). As a definite portion of ground, it may denote cultivated ground (Gen 37:7; Ruth 2:2); private property (Gen 47:20; Isa 5:8); city land, adjacent to the town and subject to its control (Gen 41:48; Lev 25:34); the territory of a nation or tribe (Gen 41:48; Lev 25:34); and the personal estate of a king (2 Sam 9:7; 2 Sam 19:29, 30).<sup>270</sup> This therefore is taken specifically to mean the cultivated field as against land in general.

#### 4.4.3 עֵרֶשׁ { *'ēreṣ* }

'*ēreṣ* could mean 'earth' or 'land'. It occurs some 2505 times in the Old Testament, having a broad range of meaning, from the whole earth, through particular counties, especially the land of Israel, local districts, the soil, to the ground inside a tent (Josh 7:21). Though it is not clear whether the '*ēreṣ* means the whole earth rather than "the whole land" (cf. Gen 1:26; 11:4, 8, 9; Ps 8:1, 2, 9, 10).<sup>271</sup>

'*ēreṣ* could mean human dwelling. While God's universal ownership is the basic truth, the more direct fact is that the '*ēreṣ* is where human beings live (Psalm 115:16). The '*ēreṣ* is there to be filled by God's human creation (Genesis 1:28), and God's rich provision of the resources of the earth and its climate are for human benefit (Genesis 1:29; 9:1-3; Job 28:5; psalm 65:9-13; 67:6). In the creation tradition, the link between humanity and the '*erets* is clearly stated: that God fashioned man ('*ādām*) from the dust of the ground ('*dāmah*) (Gen 2:7). The '*ēreṣ* then, while belonging ultimately to God who made it, is entrusted to humanity, to serve ('*bd*) and keep ('*mr*) (Gen 2:15).<sup>272</sup>

<sup>270</sup> Harris, (Ed.) {Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce K. Waltke}. 1980. *Theological Wordbook of the O.T.* .3:

<sup>271</sup> VanGemeren (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis.* 1:518-519.

<sup>272</sup> VanGemeren (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis.* 1:520.

When personified, *'ēreṣ* can refer to the whole earth, to the land of Israel, or to their inhabitants depending on the context, which is usually clear. Human evil and injustice make the *'ēreṣ* (land) mourn (Hosea 4:3) and cry out and weep (Job 31:38) and most vividly of all, even vomit (Lev 18:25-28).<sup>273</sup> *'ēreṣ* (land) on which Israel lived, forms one of the primary theological and ethical foci of the faith of Israel and of the old Testament scriptures. The concept of divine ownership of land rests not only on possessive word forms (Lev 25:23; Isa 14:25; Jer 2:7), but also on the prominent description of the land as Yahweh's "inheritance" (Isa 26: 19; 2 Sam 14:16; Ps 68:9, 10), a term used to describe family property.<sup>274</sup>

*'ēreṣ* serves as a fulcrum in the covenant relationship. Given its intimate relationship to both Yahweh and Israel, *'ēreṣ* (land) functions as a midterm in the relationship between them. The description of the land as Israel's inheritance underlines the status of Israel as Yahweh's "first son" (Exo 4:22), a relationship that partly parallels but also surpasses the covenant metaphor (Jer 3:19). Israel's behaviour on the land determines Yahweh's response to Israel in the land, and the land will "respond" to both. For instance, the king's just and benevolent government would bring environmental and agricultural benefits to the land (Ps 72:2-4, 12-16). But the people's social evil made the land mourn (Hos 4:3).<sup>275</sup>

In summary, *'erets* in the context of Hosea 4:3 refers to Israel's land including its inhabitants: man, animals, birds, fish and other elements therein. It is the ecosystem in general.

#### 4.4.4 אָבַל {*'ābal*}

This verb appears in Qal (mourn, lament), Hiphil (cause to mourn) and Hitpael (to observe mourning rites) forms in the perfect and imperfect tenses. The Qal form is restricted to the Prophetic literature, except for its occurrence in Job 14:22 (a wisdom literature). The nouns of the Qal perfect forms are: her (Zion's) gates (Isa 3:26); the fishermen (Isa 19:8); the earth (Isa 24:4; Jer 23:10); the new wine (Isa 24:7); vine yard and field (Jer 12:11, 12); Judah (Jer 14:2); People (Hosea 10:5); the Priests (Joel 1:9); everyone who lives in the earth (Amos 8:8; 9:5). While the nouns of the Qal imperfect forms are: he (man) (Job 14:22); the

<sup>273</sup>VanGemeren (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 1:520

<sup>274</sup>VanGemeren (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 1:522.

<sup>275</sup>VanGemeren (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 1:523.

earth or land (Jer 4:28; 12:4; Hosea 4:3).<sup>276</sup> The theme of mourning is emphasized in a number of ways. First it is used to depict the response of some loved one to the death of a friend, relative or admirer.

Secondly, people mourned because of separation from a loved one (2 Sam 13:37), an unfavourable report or vision (Exo 33:4; Daniel 10:2), the loss of privilege (Num 14:39), an announcement of judgment (Hos 10:5; Joel 1:9), or contrition after transgression against God (Ezra 10:6). Thirdly, inanimate objects are characterized as mourning on account of God's judgment on the land, nature, wine, or the gates of a city (Isa 3:26; 24:4,7; Jer 4:28; 12:4,11; 14:2; 23:10; Hos 4:2). Jeremiah employs four synonymous phrases to describe the effect of famine on the land of Judah: Judah mourns ('*bl*'); her gates languish ('*ml*'); they wail (*qdr*) for the land; a cry ('*lh*') goes up from Jerusalem. It should be noted that the intense drought affects noble, the ground, and the animals (Jer 14:3-6). Nevertheless, in Job 14:22 (BGT version), ἤλγησαν from ἀλγέω, is used as *to feel bodily pain, suffer, to suffer hardship, to feel pain of mind, to grieve, be troubled or distressed, to be pained at a thing*. In Jeremiah 4:28; 12:4 (BGT version), πενθεῖω with the meaning: *be sad, grieve, mourn, mourn over* is used.<sup>277</sup> Even in Hosea 4:3 BGT, πενθεῖω, carrying the same meaning as *be sad, grieve, mourn, mourn over* is used. However, to *mourn, lament* as used in Hosea 4, reveals a poetic and higher style. When used in the absolute state, *humans* become the subject (Amos 8:8; 9:5; Isa 19: 8). When used more often in the figurative form, inanimate objects such as the *gates* (Isa 3:26), and the *land* (Hos 4:3), becomes the subject. Moreover, Breuer quoted in VanGemeren<sup>278</sup> notes the nexus between human sin and natural calamity. He posits "the healthy development of nature is dependent on whether man fulfills his moral destiny." In other words, unethical conduct in ancient Israel was detrimental to the environmental wellbeing (Hos 4:1-3; Jer 4:28; Joel 1:19) thus causing the land to *mourn* metaphorically in the form of disaster that accompanied the human induced drought and the exile.

<sup>276</sup> VanGemeren (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 1: 244.

<sup>277</sup> F. Wilbur Gingrich, 155.

<sup>278</sup> VanGemeren (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 1:246.

#### 4.4.5 אָסַף { 'āsap }

This word occurs some 199 times in the Old Testament and is used in Qal, Niphal, Piel, Pual and Hithpael with a variety of meanings and context. It could mean “to gather” in the sense of “to remove, take away.”<sup>279</sup> But with the Niphal form as in Hosea 4:3, it seems to generally have a passive meaning “to be gathered.” It could also mean to be “returned to a place.” The expression “to be gathered” could also refer to death, that is, “burial”. It occurs in such phrases as “to be gathered to one’s people” (see, Gen 25:8, 17; 35:29; 49: 29, 33; Num 27: 13; 31:2; Deut 32:50).<sup>280</sup>

From the foregoing therefore, the fish to be “gathered” or “taken away” in Hosea 4:3 could simply be said of going into extinction or disappearing by migration process.

#### 4.4.6 דָּמָה { dāmah }

In the Old Testament, the root דָּמָה occurs 19 times- 15 times in the verb and 4 times as noun. The most frequent verb form is the niphal (13 times). All the occurrences (both verb and noun) are in the psalms and the Prophets. Since it is used in the niphal form in Hosea 4, it carries the meaning to “be dumb” or “silent.” Nevertheless, the ‘silence’ that the verb produces is in most instances, total. The New International Version (NIV) of the English Bible portrays this “total” nature of the ‘silence’ by translating 12 times with “destroyed,” “ruined,” or “perished.” Three (3) times, the reference is to an individual (Ps 49:12, 13, 20, 21; Isa 6:5). Four (4) times, it is a city that is silenced (Ar and Kir, Isa 15:1; Jerusalem, Jer 6:2; Samaria, Hos 10:7). Six (6) times it is the sinful people of God, or their representative (their king, Hos 10:15 or their merchants, Zeph 1:11), that will be destroyed (Hos 4:5, 6; Obadiah 5). This verb is also used to describe the results of divine judgment- for instance, in the ruin of a northern and southern Moabite city, thus indicating the destruction of the entire land (Isa 15:1) in the overthrow of Samaria and her king (Hos 10:7) and in the ruin of merchants in Jerusalem (Zeph 1:11). דָּמָה is used with niphal in Psalm 49:12, 20, 21 of a foolish rich man who “is like the beasts that perish (dmh).” This is an appropriate reminder that like the beasts, such a person will succumb to death. Death becomes his

<sup>279</sup>VanGemeren (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 1:221.

<sup>280</sup>VanGemeren (Ed). 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 1:470.

shepherd (Psalm 49:15, 16) and will separate him from his riches (Ps 49:10, 14, 17 [11, 15, 18]). Therefore, one could conclude that  $\text{דָּמָה}$  (*dmh*) is total ruin or destruction.

#### 4.5 UNETHICAL CONDUCT AND ITS ATTENDANT CONSEQUENCE AS IN THE BOOK OF HOSEA

##### 4.5.1 Unethical Conduct and the Attendant Consequence in the Social Environments of Ancient Israel

As stated earlier, the Book of Hosea enunciates the disaster that befell the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. Israel had not been able to withstand the colossal attack of the Assyrian Empire. The indictment that there was no “knowledge of God” provided the lens which clarifies the message of Hosea and thus reveals the real reason for the disaster in Israel’s society and in nature. At that time, the worship of the power of the state replaced the worship of Yahweh. This came to be when the prosperous period of Jeroboam II elapsed, when the monarchy with its priesthood through the new economic system had corrupted the unity and community spirit of Israelite society. The new situation under Jeroboam’s successors according to Andersen and Freedman<sup>281</sup> revealed that the false worship of the true God had its counterpart in false politics both internally and externally.

Mays<sup>282</sup> puts it clearly that  $\text{חֶסֶד}$  –*Hesed* (mutual obligation) and  $\text{אֱמֶת}$  –*emeth* (reliability), had been supplanted by “the bloody art of politics by conspiracy and murder which marked Israel’s waning history.” The book of Hosea 4:2 gives a vivid description of the chaotic state of the eighth (8th) Century Israel. The Prophet emphasizes this by the listing of five (5) *infinitive absolutes*; that is,  $\text{אָלַף}$  –cursing,  $\text{פָּחַשׁ}$  –lying,  $\text{גָּנַב}$  –stealing or kidnapping,  $\text{רָצַח}$  –killing, and  $\text{נָאֵף}$  or  $\text{זָנָה}$  –adultery or prostitution. He uses the phrase  $\text{פָּרְצוּ}$  “they break all bounds” to stress the violent nature of these five *infinitive absolutes* listed. By using the verb  $\text{פָּרַץ}$  the Prophet, according to Andersen,<sup>283</sup> refers to destructive actions such as breaking into a house, the breaking of water and breach of defense works. Accordingly,

<sup>281</sup>F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman. 1980. *Hosea*, 48

<sup>282</sup>Mays. 1969. *Hosea: A Commentary*, 4

<sup>283</sup>Andersen and Freedman. 1980. 337.



Hayes<sup>284</sup> posits that the usage of the phrase וַיִּגְעוּ בְדַמַיִם בְּדַמַיִם “and bloodshed strikes against bloodshed” presupposes a society in total disorder with all community relationships dislocated, opening the floodgates of crime, corruption, and other forms of social vices. In other words, the eighth (8th) century Israelite society was indeed a chaotic one even before her final destruction at about 722 B.C.

#### **4.5.2 Unethical conduct and the Attendant Consequence in the Physical Environments of Ancient Israel**

##### **4.5.2.1 Effect of Unethical Conduct on the Land Habitat**

The consequence of the unethical conduct was not restricted to the social environment of the northern Kingdom of Israel as we see in Hosea’s polemics, but also extended to her natural environment. But one may wonder why nature bears the consequence of Israel’s sin. Eminently, it is evident in the Prophet’s choice of words that nature bears a part in the consequence. In Hosea 4:3, the condition of the earth is showcased by the use of three words- אָבַל “mourn,” אָמַל “languish” and אָסַף “take away.” In this regards, Hayes<sup>285</sup> sees the verb אָמַל - “to be weak, to languish” in the sense of the earth’s loss of fertility and life-bearing capacity. Furthermore, when the verb אָמַל - “to be weak, to languish” is read to mean “mourn” or “lament,” then the psychological sense of אָמַל is heightened and thus Hosea 4:3 portrays a vast sorrow that touches all elements of creation.<sup>286</sup>

On the land, the prophet paints a picture depicting the languishing of the “beasts of the field and the human populations - וְאִמְלַל כָּל-יֹשֵׁב בָּהּ בְּחַיֵּית הַשָּׂדֶה. This was probably because of the destructive activities mated on the land by the people. Interestingly, the climate played a vital role in the Bible land of ancient Israel. It impacted greatly on agriculture. Ancient Israel’s weather was subtropical in nature. And this climactic condition had not been altered since biblical times. The land is divided into segments. In addition to the west of Jordan region, the Mediterranean zones east of the Jordan valley, which

<sup>284</sup>Hayes M.K. 2002. The Earth Mourns. *Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic*. 48.

<sup>285</sup>Hayes M.K. 2002. The Earth Mourns. *Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic*, 44.

<sup>286</sup>Hayes M.K. 2002. The Earth Mourns. *Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic*.

comprise Gilead, Ammon, and Moab, experienced much rainfall. In Palestine, only two seasons were operational: dry (summer) and wet seasons. The periods between May-June through September, there is usually no rain (it is the dry season) and the wet season being the period between mid-October through March, though, much of the rainfall occur between November and February.<sup>287</sup>

Moreso, dew (*tal*), the condensation of atmospheric moisture, became supplementary to rainfall especially in areas where there was no rainfall or where it was limited. Nevertheless, in spite of ample rain and dew, crops were subject to failure due to vicissitude of drought.<sup>288</sup> This was imminent since the Israelites who settled in the hilly terrain had to deforest the slopes and replace the trees with artificial porches in order to create enough arable land.<sup>289</sup> More to this, in the northern kingdom, there were businessmen in the urban areas who manipulated the small farmers by buying crops at low prices, in exchange for a high interest rate on loans given to these poor farmers. This they did with the understanding that the poor farmers could not repay these loans. Nevertheless, small landowners were forced off their land, and the merchants purchased it, cultivated it, using their debtor-slaves as the work-force. The crops were harvested and sold at high rate to the displaced peasants who stayed on their own land as tenants, paying rent to the new land-lords. This rent sometime absorbed the major portion of their crops.<sup>290</sup>

According to Renteria, Israel of that period had to produce surplus in order to export agricultural products. They cultivated grains efficiently in the valleys and plains areas (like Esdraelon and Sharon), where the land was owned by the urban elites who benefited from the new system<sup>291</sup> whereas, vineyards and olive orchards, according to Chaney, were much better suited for the terraced uplands. However, the Israelite peasants had been involved in small-scale subsistence farming and animal husbandry for generations.<sup>292</sup> Moreover,

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<sup>287</sup> Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager. 2001. *Life in Biblical Israel*. Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press. 86.

<sup>288</sup> M. L. Chaney. 1986. Systemic Study of the Israelite Monarchy. 68.

<sup>289</sup> Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager. 2001, 87.

<sup>290</sup> R. Gnuse. 1985. *You Shall Not Steal: Community and Property in the Biblical Tradition*. New York: Orbis Books, 76.

<sup>291</sup> H. T. Renteria. 1992. Elijah/Elisha Stories: A Socio-Cultural Analysis of Prophets and People in Ninth-Century B.C.E. Israel. *Elijah and Elisha in Socio-literary Perspective*, SBL Semeia Studies. Robert B. Coote, Ed. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 89.

<sup>292</sup> M. L. Chaney. 1986. Systemic Study of the Israelite Monarchy. *Semeia*. 37:73.

agriculture in the hill country depended on rain and was therefore subject to vicissitudes of periodic drought and agricultural pest.

The composition of their local courts included elders and judges. At this level, these fellows who were to safeguard and protect the interest of the poor of the land, were receiving bribe as well as ignoring the prevailing injustices. They condemned the innocent people because of petty debts. The case of Naboth in 1 Kings 21 even reveals the possibility that the courts might have charged small landholders with capital crimes and their land seized regardless of the fact that to these peasants, the family land was very necessary for survival.<sup>293</sup> The role of greed in survival is made clear in the activities of these fellows who over used the available lands for profit reasons thus, ignoring the environmental effects of their abuse of land.

#### 4.5.2.2 Effect of Unethical Conduct on the air Habitat

הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְעוֹף יְאֻסָּפוּ - the “birds of the sky are taken away.”

In Palestine, there was abundance of several varieties of birds. So significant among these, were the “doves” and “pigeons.” Their devotion to each other and their tender, gentle characteristics had marked them as a loved possession of the land. The clay cotes of pigeons however, were reckoned in establishing an estimate of a man’s wealth.<sup>294</sup> In fact, they had professional bird-catcher called a *fowler*, the Heb. *Yoqesh* who devices various means of catching birds. Sometimes, these birds were captured with nets spread on the ground, in traps and snares. Other times, young birds were taken from a nest, and raised by hand (Deut 22:6), and when they had become very tame, they were confined in hidden cages so that their voices would call others of their kind to the spot and they could be killed by arrows of concealed bowmen or the use of the throw-stick as expressed in Ecclesiasticus 11:30. The fowlers supplied the demand for doves and other birds used for caged pets, and furnished the market with wild pigeons and doves for sacrifice and such small birds as were used for food. It is the imagery of the bird-catcher or the fowler that Psalm 91:3 projects as thus “For he

<sup>293</sup> C. A. Otuibe. 2003. *Amos: A Challenge to Nigerian Church and Society*. 39.

<sup>294</sup> James Josiah Reeve. Birds. in *ISBE* 1508.

will deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence.”<sup>295</sup> Here we see the importance of bird to the people.

Nevertheless, it is observed that ancient Israel had a very conducive habitat for these birds. The area had much more extensive forests with trees like the evergreen oak, the Aleppo pine and the terebinth.<sup>296</sup> There were no barren hills in the human habitation of that area. But as time went on, and the society changed (in terms of economic drive), deforestation became the bane of the time. The increased need for wood charcoal for pottery making, lime slaking, and metallurgy led to more deforestation. Also, the need for arable land further increased the felling of trees.<sup>297</sup> All these, further caused atmospheric imbalance and thus informed the migration and extinction of birds which could not have an environment conducive for their habitation.

#### 4.5.2.3 Effect of unethical conduct on the Water Habitat

וְגַם־דְּגַי־הַיָּם יִקָּחֻם - “and the fish of the sea are taken away”

Reflecting on the wilderness experience, during the exodus, it is germane to highlight the complaint by the Israelites: “We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt” (Num11:5). This complaint summarises the economic as well as dietary importance of fish to these group of ancient people. Nevertheless, fish provided an important source of protein for the ancient Israelites. Fish were largely used as food (Hab 1:16), hence, the lamentation of the fishermen, who provided for all, typified general desolation (Isa 19:8). On the other hand, abundance of fish and many fishermen indicated general abundance (Ezek 47:10).<sup>298</sup> Fish, the Hebrews *dag*, is a word denoting great productiveness (Gen 9:2; Nu 11:22; Jonah 2:1, 10). Fish abounded in the Mediterranean and in the lakes of the Jordan, so that the Hebrews were no doubt acquainted with many species. At least, two of the villages on the shores of the Sea of Galilee even derived their names from their fisheries: Bethsaida (the “house of fish”) on the east and on the west. In fact, there was a regular fish-market

<sup>295</sup> Gene Stratton-Porter. Birds, in *ISBE* 3551.

<sup>296</sup> John D. Currid, 1984. The Deforestation of the foothills of Palestine. *PEQ*, 116:1-11.

<sup>297</sup> Philip J. King, 2001. *Life in Biblical Israel*. Louisville, LN: Westminster John Knox Press. 111-112.

<sup>298</sup> James A. Patch . Fish. in *ISBE* 3442

apparently in Jerusalem (2 Ch 33:14; Ne 3:3; 12:39; Zep 1:10)<sup>299</sup> and also a fish-gate which was probably adjoining to the market where fish were supplied chiefly through Tyrian traders who imported it (Neh. 13:16; 3:3; 12:39; 2 Chr. 33:14).<sup>300</sup>

In the course of fishing, the net was used among the Hebrews as fishing gear. The fishing-net was probably constructed after the form of that used by the Egyptians (Isa 19:8). There were three kinds of nets in use then. They were: (1.) A long net or seine (Gr. *sagene*), of one or two fathoms depth, with lead on one edge and provided with floats on the other, was laid out from boats in such a way as to surround a school of fish. Long ropes fastened to the two ends were carried ashore many yards apart, and from five to ten men on each rope gradually draw in the net. The fish were then landed from the shallow water with small nets or by hand. This method was commonly practiced by ancient Israelites (Mt 13:47, 48).<sup>301</sup> (2.) The hand-net or casting-net (Gr. *amphiblestron*), which was thrown from a rock or a boat at any fish that might be seen (Mt 4:18; Mr 1:16). It was of circular form, like the “top of a tent.” (3.) The bag-net (Gr. *diktyon*), used for enclosing fish in deep water (Lk 5:4-9).<sup>302</sup>

Indeed, fishing was an important industry in Western Palestine.<sup>303</sup> Because fish provided an important source of protein for the ancient Israelites, and were largely used as food (Hab 1:16), and as well provided a source of livelihood for them (2 Ch 33:14; Ne 3:3; 12:39; Zep 1:10),<sup>304</sup> the increase need for more profit, led to the excessive fishing motivated by greed which ended up in the reduction of the catch. This is what Feinberg intended when he said that severe environmental damage is often the result of the accumulation of individually negligible effects.<sup>305</sup> Moreover, Gibson, a leading proponent of eco-justice, asserts that it is expected of mankind to maintain a thriving earth productive of sufficient food, with water fit for all to drink, air fit to breathe, forests kept replenished, renewable

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<sup>299</sup> H. Lernau and O. Lernau. 1992. “Fish Remains”, in A. de Groot and D. T. Ariel, eds., *City of David Excavations Final Report III*. Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University. 131-148.

<sup>300</sup> Easton’s Bible Dictionary ‘Fish,’ 1343.

<sup>301</sup> Thomas Nelson, 2006. *Everyday Living: Bible Life and Times*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers. 260-261.

<sup>302</sup> Easton’s Bible Dictionary. Net. 2711

<sup>303</sup> Alfred Ely Day. Fish, in *ISBE*. 3442.

<sup>304</sup> H. Lernau and O. Lernau. 1992. “Fish Remains”, in A. de Groot and D. T. Ariel, eds., *City of David Excavations Final Report III*. Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University. 131-148.

<sup>305</sup> Joel Feinberg. 1984. *The Moral Limits of the Criminal Law: Harm to Others*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1:225–232.

resources (like fish) continuously renewed, non renewable resources used sparingly as possible so it could be reserved for future generations. But this was not the case. Hence, Schmid (1968) quoted in Wittenberg,<sup>306</sup> sees a broad unity between cosmic, political, and socio-economic order in the ancient Near Eastern concept of creation.

Commensurately, Hayes<sup>307</sup> holds that the consequences in Hosea 4:3 are direct results of the unethical deeds done on the land by the ancient Israelites. Therefore rather than accepting that the fateful consequences in nature are due to an active punishment by Yahweh, it rather follows that “Yahweh merely watches over the organic connection between human deed and the fateful consequences that follow organically out of it.”<sup>308</sup> Given the foregoing position, it therefore suggests that “lack of knowledge of God” (unethical conduct) in a given society does not only affect adversely, the society but nature as well.

## Conclusion

This chapter looks at the glaring social corruptions of the time of Prophet Hosea which are exhibited and castigated by his older contemporary, Amos, as seen in the foregoing paragraphs. It shows the concerns of Hosea, a native, as supposed, of the Northern Kingdom. It further reveals Hosea’s claims on the root of the social malady in Israel, and traces all the crime and vice of the nation to the fundamental evil of idolatry and apostasy from the true God (lack of knowledge of the true God).

According to Wolff,<sup>309</sup> “knowledge of God” does not refer to a second “religious” sphere in addition to the “ethical” of the first two concepts (of  $\text{תָּמִיד}$  and  $\text{דָּקָה}$ ), but as a concept in final position of the phrase it is rather the root and the source which make  $\text{תָּמִיד}$  and  $\text{דָּקָה}$  in Israel possible. In order words, the absence of  $\text{תָּמִיד}$  and  $\text{דָּקָה}$  in ancient Israel is a reference to the fact that there is “lack of the knowledge of God” in the Land. This could also serve as a template for any given religious society. Thus, it could be said that the phrase “there is no knowledge of God in the land” is really the fundamental indictment of

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<sup>306</sup>Wittenberg. 2009. “knowledge of God” *OPE* 22.2: 504.

<sup>307</sup>Hayes. 2002. “*The Earth Mourns*”, *Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic*, 45.

<sup>308</sup>Wittenberg. 2009:504.

<sup>309</sup>Wolff. 1974. *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*, 67

Hosea 4:1-3 and as such, provides the lens to the understanding of the corpus of the book of Hosea since the phrase *דַעַת אֶל־הוֹיִם* as Wolff<sup>310</sup> observes, is the succinct formulation of what Yahweh demands of the Israelites worshipers.

In Hosea 4:3, the condition of the earth is presented by the use of two words- *אָבַל* “mourn” and *אָמַל* “languish.” In this regards, Hayes<sup>311</sup> sees the verb *אָמַל* -“to be weak, to languish” in the sense of the earth’s loss of fertility and life-bearing capacity. Furthermore, when the verb *אָמַל* -“to be weak, to languish” is read to mean “mourn” or “lament,” then the psychological sense of *אָמַל* is heightened and thus Hosea 4:3 portrays a vast sorrow that touches all elements of creation.<sup>312</sup> Moreover, the languishing of *בְּחַיִּית הַשָּׂדֶה* - the “beasts of the field”, *הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְעוֹןָ* - the “birds of the sky” and *הַיָּם דָּגָי* -the “fish of the sea” suggests the faltering of all creation. Hayes<sup>313</sup> posits that the theme of reversal of creation is tied within Hosea 4:1-3 as a whole to the abrogation of law and ethical principles in Israel.

It therefore follows, that the ignoring of these “principles” demanded of Yahweh (that is, sin of omission), leads to the proliferation of crimes (sin of commission) which organically, result in the *morning of the land* (both humans and nature) in ancient Israel and could eventually culminate in *דָּמָה* (*dmh*) that is, total ruin or destruction.

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<sup>310</sup>Wittenberg, G. 2009. Knowledge of God: The Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change. *Old Testament Essays, a Journal of the Old Testament Society in South Africa*, 22/2, 488-509.

<sup>311</sup>Wittenberg, G. 2009. “Knowledge of God: The Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change. 44.

<sup>312</sup>Gunther Wittenberg, 2009. “Knowledge of God: The Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change”

<sup>313</sup>Gunther Wittenberg, 2009. “Knowledge of God: The Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change.” 60.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 UNETHICAL CONDUCT AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN RIVERS STATE

#### 5.1 BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENTS (COMMUNITY RESIDENTS) RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

**Table 1: Demographic information (Rivers Residents)**

Demographic characteristics		Frequency	Percentage %
L.G.A	Ahoda East	62	10.6
	Andoni	76	13.0
	Etche	82	14.1
	Khana	106	18.2
	Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni	95	16.3
	Port-Harcourt	162	27.8
	<b>Total</b>	583	100.0
	No. of years of Residence	5-9	79
10-14		48	8.2
15-19		119	20.4
20 and above		335	57.5
<b>Total</b>		581	99.7
Religion	Christianity	549	94.2
	Islam	15	2.6
	African Indigenous Religion	13	2.2
	Others	6	1.0
	<b>Total</b>	583	100.0
Age Profile	15-24	129	22.1
	25-34	174	29.8
	35-44	115	19.7
	45-54	91	15.6
	55-above	74	12.7
	<b>Total</b>	583	100.0

**Source:** Field Survey 2012



Rivers state is one comprising of 23 local government areas (LGAs) subdivided into three (3) senatorial districts: Rivers East, west, and central. But in this work, Ahoada-east and Ogba-Egbema-Ndoni L.G.As fall within Rivers West; Khana and Andoni, within Rivers East while Etche and Portharcourt L.G.As are located in Rivers central senatorial district. Within these senatorial districts, the sample profile and coverage of the respondents reveal the different backgrounds of respondents taking into cognizant the Local Government Area where 62 (10.6%) were from Ahoada East; 76 (13%) Andoni; 82 (14.1%) Etche; 100 (18.2%) Khana; 95 (16.3%) Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni; and 162 (27.8%) Port-Harcourt. Out of these 583 respondents, majority numbering about 335 (57.5%) had lived over 20 years in their present location while 119 (20.4%), 48 (8.2%) and 79 (13.6%) had stayed in their location for 15-19 years, 10-14 and 5-9 years respectively.

The religious affiliation of the people is not surprising because the people of Rivers State are predominantly Christians. This is evident in their responses of which 94.2% are Christian while 2.6%, 2.2% and 1% are Muslim, African indigenous religion observers and others respectively. Majority of the respondents (29.8%) falls between the age categories of 25-34 years, 22.1% are 15-24 years of age, 19.7% are of 35-44 years of age, 15.6% are 45-54 years of age and 12.7% are of 55 years and above.

## 5.2 דַעַת אֱלֹהִים - *da'ath 'elohim* - Knowledge of God (Hos 4:1) in Rivers State

**Table 2: Test on Respondents' awareness of the Knowledge of God**

S/N	Test Items	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total (%)
1	God is still interested in our actions whether good or bad	507 (87.0)	25 (4.3)	51 (8.7)	583 (100)
2	God still relates to us in line with our actions whether good or bad	481 (82.5)	33 (5.7)	69 (11.8)	583 (100)

Response to Test Items 1-2 on Table 3 reveals that Rivers State residents had a 'head' *Knowledge of God* especially as informed by their religious thoughts which may classify actions as good or bad. This is apparent in the affirmative response of 87% (507) and 82.5% (481) of respondents respectively. However, (51, 8.7%; 25, 4.3%, and 69, 11.8%; 33, 5.7% respectively) responses from the Rivers State dwellers were undecided about, and

had no ‘head’ *knowledge of God* respectively. These claims could be expected in any society.

The affirmative responses of 87% (507) and 82.5% (481) of respondents illuminate Mbiti’s claim that “Africans (including the Rivers State residents) are notoriously religious and each people have its own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices.”<sup>314</sup> In other words, the African people know naturally, what to do and what to avoid. These responses further accentuate Aquinas’ paradigmatic theory of Natural Law which posits that the natural law is given by God and it is naturally knowable by human beings.<sup>315</sup>

With the 94.2% majority of the residents being Christians, it therefore follows that these residents of Rivers State, were aware of their set of religious beliefs and practices at least ‘head’ *knowledge*.

	Test Item	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total (%)
3	Corruption, unfaithfulness, killing of the innocent, and kidnapping are not sins before God	25 (4.3)	30 (5.1)	528 (90.6)	583 (100)

While 4.3% (25) agreed to the statement above and 5.1% (30) were undecided, 90.6% (528) of respondents were aware that corruption (ḥḥḥ), deception or lying (ḥḥḥ), unfaithfulness (ḥḥḥ), killing (ḥḥḥ) of the innocent, and kidnapping or stealing or exploitation of both natural and economic resources and other economy (ḥḥḥ) are sins before God. This also indicates that at least they knew those crimes point to the fact that *'en-ḥa'ath 'lōhīm - lack of knowledge of God* is prevalent. It could therefore be deductively stated that the Rivers State residents were specifically aware of the implications of those social vices in their society. Those responses further elucidate Aquinas<sup>316</sup> view, that killing (ḥḥḥ) of the innocent is always wrong, as is lying or deception (ḥḥḥ), adultery or unfaithfulness (ḥḥḥ)

<sup>314</sup> John S. Mbiti, (1969), *African Religions and Philosophy*, Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 1.

<sup>315</sup> Murphy, Mark, "The Natural Law Tradition in Ethics", in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (winter 2011 Edition)*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/natural-law-ethics/> (Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2012).

<sup>316</sup> Murphy, Mark, "The Natural Law Tradition in Ethics", in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

since they are a matter of natural law though, there are still long lists of absolutely forbidden actions naturally made manifest to humans, which could affect adversely the human as well as the natural community.

	Test Item	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total (%)
4	God is not concerned about how we relate to him, others and our environment	39 (6.7)	33 (5.7)	510 (87.5)	582 (99.9)

Although 6.7% and 5.7% of the respondents saw no connect, and were undecided on the relationship between God, man and the environment, the overwhelming 87.5% (510) response on the above statement, synthesizes with Ranger's view that "African religious ideas were very much ideas about relationships, whether with other living people, animals, cleared land, or with the bush."<sup>317</sup> In essence, the way we relate to one another or to other elements within the environment, reveals the extent to which we apply or contravene relational principles in our daily dealings. This constitutes what Hosea sees as דַעַת אֱלֹהִים - *da'ath 'elohim* - "knowledge of God".

	Test Item	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total (%)
5	Disobedience to God's rules has nothing to do with our environmental problems	71 (12.2)	40 (6.9)	469 (80.4)	580 (99.5)

In view of our subject matter, on the perception of respondents on the applicability of the "knowledge of God" in relation to environmentalism, 80.4%(469) clearly agreed to the fact that inadvertent or purposeful negligence in rightly participating in the eternal law, that is, the rational plan by which all creation is ordered<sup>318</sup> which constitute the דַעַת אֱלֹהִים - *da'ath 'elohim* - "knowledge of God" could have an adverse effect on the environment, at least in Rivers State of Nigeria.

<sup>317</sup>Terrance O. Ranger, (1988) 'African Traditional Religion', in: Stewart Sutherland et al. (eds.), *The World's Religions*, London: Routledge, 687.

<sup>318</sup>Murphy, Mark, (winter 2011 Edition), "The Natural Law Tradition in Ethics", in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/natural-law-ethics/>

The next segment looks at the levels of effect of 'en-da'ath 'elohim - “lack of knowledge of God” in Rivers State region of Nigeria.

### 5.3 EFFECT OF 'EN-DA'ATH 'ELOHIM - LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (HOS 4: 2-3) ON RIVERS STATE ECOLOGY

#### 5.3.1 Social Disorder (Hos 4: 2) in Rivers State

**Table 3: Test on Respondents' experience of the knowledge of God**

	TEST ITEMS	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
6	Corruption/deception do not exist in my community	43 (7.4)	27 (4.6)	512 (87.8)	582 (99.9)

While 7.4% and 4.6% disagreed and were undecided respectively on the presence of corruption in their society, 87.8% (512) of the respondents identified some indicators of lack of “knowledge of God”. One of the indicators revealed is ᠙᠒᠒ –corruption which they identified as being part of their everyday life. In fact, a careful observation on the Rivers State Land Use (Prohibition of Extortion) suggests that this form of corruption is rather a “tradition” or “custom.”<sup>319</sup>Undoubtedly, it has become an attitude or a perpetual means of livelihood at the expense of their victims with its attendant consequence on the environment. In a nutshell, one could say, in line with Mays regarding the economic mishap on the Rivers State land, that these fellows had already sunk to the level of a chaotic society due to the proliferation of such vices as (᠙᠒᠒) corruption that no moment was left free of their crime as one corrupt deed followed another (Hosea 4:2b).<sup>320</sup>

<sup>319</sup>Anon. “Rivers State Land Use (Prohibition Of Extortion) Law No. 5 Of 2010” <http://governor.riversstate.gov.ng/bills/land-use-prohibition-of-extortion-law-no-5-of-2010/> (Accessed 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2012).

<sup>320</sup> Mays, 65.

	TEST ITEMS	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
7	There is a concrete cordial relationship among people in my community	139 (23.8)	52 (8.9)	391 (67.1)	582 (99.9)

Whereas, 23.8% (139) of respondents agreed that there is a concrete relationship among people in their community and 8.9% (52) were undecided on the issue, 67.1% response attests to the lack of *חֶסֶד* (*Hesed*)- mutual community responsibility which aids proliferation of social vices. Accordingly, VanGemer<sup>321</sup> holds that mutual community responsibility is a quality of relationship that is to be sought again, appropriated and treasured in the covenantal partner's every needy moment. It is therefore clear that the concept lies in the realm of interpersonal relationship. Butterweck further sees *חֶסֶד* (*Hesed*) - mutual community responsibility as the very content of *בְּרִית* (*b'rit*) (covenant that binds a community together) and as "conduct" in accordance with the mutual relationship of rights and duties between allies.<sup>322</sup> The social nature of this responsibility need not be overemphasized because it shapes not only relationship with human beings, but also that of human beings among themselves.<sup>323</sup> In fact, Rasmussen goes further to add that there is a link between social issues and ecological wellbeing.<sup>324</sup> This could further provide the lens to understanding the level of social degradation in Rivers State of Nigeria. Because there is the lack of *חֶסֶד* (*Hesed*) mutual community responsibility, which also is a breach of the Natural Law, the attendant effect is revealed.

	TEST ITEMS	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
8	People in my community have always been faithful to keeping agreements	101 (17.3)	62 (10.6)	417 (71.5)	580 (99.5)

<sup>321</sup> Willem A. VanGemer, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, Vol. 2, 216.

<sup>322</sup> Botterweck, 1988. 52.

<sup>323</sup> Botterweck, 1988. 63.

<sup>324</sup> Larry Rasmussen. 2000. "Global Eco-Justice: The Church's Mission in Urban Society" in *Christianity and Ecology Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*, Dieter Thessel {Ed.}, (et.al), Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 515-527.

In responding to the test item on the people's take on faithfulness in agreement, 17.3% (101) of the respondents believed people in their community have always been faithful to keeping agreements while 10.6% (62) were undecided on the issue. However, 71.5% (417) respondents shows that lack of אֱמֶת {*'emeth*} - unfaithfulness thrives in the society. This could further inform the lack of community mutual responsibility. Accordingly, Wolff<sup>325</sup> sees *faithfulness* as a word that denotes an unconditional reliability in which one has confidence in the other especially in his word, and service. Moreso, the word emphasizes the enduring quality of responsible relationships. And as such, it becomes the means by which men know and serve God as their Saviour and then, as a characteristic to be found in those who have indeed come to God.<sup>326</sup>

S/N	TEST ITEMS	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
9	Kidnapping and Cursing is a non-existent in my community	87 (14.9)	41 (7.0)	450 (77.2)	578 (99.1)

From the responses to the test item above on kidnapping and cursing, 14.9% of the respondents held that kidnapping and cursing do not exist in their community while 7.0% were undecided on the issue. However, 77.2% of respondents believed that נִבְזָז –kidnapping or stealing, and אֲלֵזָז -cursing are issues in their community. This overwhelming affirmative majority response further serves as a reference to the fact that there exists the “lack of knowledge of God.” Moreover, ‘kidnapping’ here, which is the Hebrew נִבְזָז may refer to theft of property, where the law adds that two witnesses are required. It may also mean to “create a false impression or delude.” If the crime of נִבְזָז takes place in the sight of the owner of property, then it is robbery which also includes the loss of dignity inflicted on the owner, a personal sense of affront. In essence, נִבְזָז could mean: robbery, theft, kidnapping, and stealing. The Decalogue prohibition against נִבְזָז with a simple apodictic formula (Exo 20:15; Deut 5:19) is more likely, the command of a general dictum against the taking of anything

<sup>325</sup> Wolff, H. W. (1974), *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*, 67.

<sup>326</sup> Harris, R. L. Ed. {Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce K. Waltke} (1980), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, Chicago: Moody Press, 52-53.

that belongs to someone else or to the community at large. This could also be extended to the protection of the natural resources of this world and the dignity and reputation of people.<sup>327</sup> So, the presence of **קנין** -kidnapping, stealing, theft, and stripping off the human dignity- in the society further proves the “lack of knowledge of God” in the Rivers State society- indication of social disorder.

S/N	TEST ITEMS	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
10	The incidences of shedding innocent blood have never been rampant in our society	49 (8.4)	38 (6.5)	496 (85.1)	583 (100)

On the issue of shading innocent blood, 8.4% (49) of the respondents believed that incidences of shedding innocent blood has never been rampant in their society while 6.5% (38) were undecided on the issue. Contrarily, 85.1% (496) of the respondents affirmed that there has been rampant **קנין** -shedding of innocent blood in their society. We can therefore state affirmatively, that the “lack of knowledge of God” is not necessarily the absence of the “knowledge” of those natural and societal norms, but outright abrogation of those natural standards for communal living. Standards which also protect animals as well since they are not objects that can simply be exploited but are also part of the community.<sup>328</sup> Aside having effect resulting in the form of social disorder, lack of “knowledge of God” also has effect on the natural environment. Such effect will be discussed in the next section.

<sup>327</sup> VanGemeren. Ed. 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 1:879.

<sup>328</sup> Mary Midgley. 1992. “The Mixed Community,” in *The Animal Rights/Environmental Ethics Debate*, (Ed.), E. C. Hargrove, Albany: State University of New York Press, 211-226.

### 5.3.2 Effect of Unethical Conduct on Land, air and water in Rivers State

**Table 4: Test on Respondents' affirmation on evidence of land, air and water Degradation Resulting from Unethical Conduct**

S/N	ITEMS	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
11	Humans, animals, fish and trees are becoming healthier these days than some 20 years ago in spite of harmful activities and pollution in my community.	57 (9.8)	36 (6.2)	490 (84.0)	583 (100)

The situation of air pollution in test item 11 above, could also inform the 84% (490) respondents who disagreed with the statement, that human beings, animals and trees are becoming healthier these days than some 20 years ago while a few respondents 9.8% agreed to the statement. According to Watts, life expectancy in the Rivers State (Niger Delta) region has actually fallen in recent decades because environmental degradation has undermined community livelihoods. Beyond the pollution of local farmland and water supplies, the extraction and processing of oil have also had serious environmental consequences at a global level.<sup>329</sup>

S/N	ITEMS	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
12	Our farmlands are more fertile than before despite land pollution by oil spillages, burning and over-cultivation of our farmlands	63 (10.8)	21 (3.6)	495 (84.9)	579 (99.3)

Some 84.9% of respondents in Rivers State attested to the prevalent ecological degradation in Rivers State. They were aware of the effect of land pollution by oil spillages, bush burning and over-cultivation of the little farmland in their disposal (especially for those who have farmlands, that is, those within upland region of Rivers State). The response from

<sup>329</sup>Michael, Watts. 2007. 'The Rule of Oil: Petro-Politics and The Anatomy of an Insurgency', a paper delivered to the *Oil and Politics Conference*, Goldsmiths College, University of London, May 10-11<sup>th</sup>, 15 [www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/csisp/papers/Watts\\_petropolitics\\_insurgency.pdf](http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/csisp/papers/Watts_petropolitics_insurgency.pdf) (accessed 10/10/2012).



the residents further suggests that they were aware that their land is not polluted only by oil companies' activities but by their own activities as well. The 10.8% and 3.6% who denied or were undecided respectively, about the presence of ecological degradation on land, probably do not farm or have no land of their own for farming and hence could not attest to what they are not acquainted with.

Aside the fact that oil spillages and over-cultivation of farmland, degraded the land, these respondents agreed that fire scourge on land (from bush burning) also affected the land negatively. This position is held by some scholars, who in a study carried out ascertain the effect of fire scourge on the soil. According to them, it was discovered that contrary to the popular opinion that fire improvises bush fallowing for cropping, the site under study suffered severe impoverishment not only from the fire incidence, but also from the oil spill on the site.<sup>330</sup> Zabbey, making reference to a fire incident that took place in Okirika community of Rivers State Central, holds that its effect was the destruction of plants and animals inhabiting the affected area.<sup>331</sup> Here, we see that the unethical conduct of oil spillage and the likes have some environmental consequences.

S/N	ITEMS	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
13	It appears the weather is getting hotter these days than some years back due to bush burning and gas flaring	349 (59.9)	31 (5.3)	203 (34.8)	583 (100)

Also, looking at the responses to Test Item 13, 59.9% (349) of the respondents agreed that the weather is getting hotter than past years while 34.8% (203) and 5.3% (31) respectively disagreed completely and were not sure that the weather is currently hotter. The varied responses could be due to climatic conditions of the various locations in Rivers State as some areas of the coastland have mild weather compared to the uplands. Nevertheless,

<sup>330</sup> Osuji, L. C. and Ukale, E. E. 2000. Post-oil Spill Fire at Ugbomro (Niger-Delta): A New Vista in Soil Pollution Studies, Port-Harcourt, Petroleum Chemical Research Group.

<sup>331</sup> Zabbey, N. 2004. Impacts of Extractive Industries on the Biodiversity on the Niger-Delta Region, Nigeria. Eleme. Centre for Environment, Human Rights and Development.

areas primarily affected by the flaring of natural gas have also been negatively impacted especially on surrounding vegetation.<sup>332</sup>

S/N	ITEMS	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
14	The roofing sheets are rusting faster now in my community compared to some 20 years ago because of acid rain	408 (70.0)	56 (9.6)	117 (20.1)	581 (99.7)

The destructive act of gas flaring and other forms of gas emission as identified on test item 14 above, could be responsible for the 70% response from the residents who affirmed that the roofing sheets are rusting faster now in their community compared to some 20 years ago. According to IPCC, gas flaring pollutes the air and it is a common practise among companies in Nigeria especially in the Rivers State region. This has been hazardous to the ozone layer of the area and leading to climate change. The flaring of gas has been practiced in the Niger-Delta (especially, Rivers State) for over four decades. This is the major source of air pollution in the area.<sup>333</sup> The preliminary survey by Akoroda<sup>334</sup> indicates that an evolving trend of carcinogenic diseases in the Niger-Delta is traceable to the exposure of these people to the radioactive elements of gas flaring. He further holds that these people are beginning to develop symptoms of bronchial and respiratory diseases which are a consequence of long exposure to gas flaring. Nevertheless, Schael opines that gas flaring as a common practise, (as we find in Niger Delta Region particularly in Rivers State), results in bird mortality<sup>335</sup> thus affirming Hosea's pronouncement that the "birds of the air are taken away" (Hos 4:3).

<sup>332</sup>A. O. Isiche, and Stanford, W. W. 1976. "The Effect of Wastes Gas Flares on Surrounding Vegetation of South-eastern Nigeria".

<sup>333</sup> IPCC. 2007. Climate Change: Synthesis Report. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>334</sup> M. Akoroda, 2000, August. *Remediation response in the Niger-Delta*. Paper presented at a seminar to mark the anniversary of Jesse fire disaster, Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, Lagos.

<sup>335</sup> M. Schael. 2000. On the Horizon : Canada's Oil and Gas Potential, *Ocean Resources*, 18:16-20 Retrieved December 27, 2012, from <http://play.psych.mun.ca/~mont/pubs/seabirds.pdf> .

S/N	ITEMS	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
15	The amount of fish brought home from fishing outing in our river is plentiful these days than before in spite of recent waste disposal into water source and oil spillages and the use of chemicals, explosives as fishing mechanism	57 (9.8)	30 (5.1)	495 (84.9)	582 (99.9)

Moving from the air to water bodies, 84.9% believed that there is a reduction in the amount of fish brought home from fishing activities as against 9.8% and 5.1% who disagreed on the reduction and were not sure of the reduction respectively. The 9.8% and 5.1% who respectively, disagreed and were not sure, may not depend on fishing resulting in their uncertainty. The majority affirmative response that there is a reduction in the amount of fish fetched home from fishing activities, did further confirm that apart from oil related water pollution, the recent use of chemicals and explosives as part of fishing strategies is also detrimental to the water bodies. This response agrees with Powell<sup>336</sup> who observed that the explosion of dynamites in water bodies produces narcotic effects and, readily, outright mortality of fish and other fauna. Mortal damages arising from dynamite shooting is non-selective, killing all stages of fishes and other edible and non-edible living materials within the system. Furthermore, in a study carried on fish and fisheries in Ikata, Okoma and Oshika all of Rivers State West, Powell reports a reduction in fish abundance, total loss of species lacking accessory air-breathing organs and major loss of species without any obvious physiological pattern. Other scholars like Hart (et al.),<sup>337</sup> in their Study on Water quality, species composition and abundance of phytoplankton (like algae) indicated that the condition of Ejamah-Ebubu Swampland (located in Rivers State East) polluted in 1970 had not improved significantly. Regarding the effect of chemicals on water bodies, Owabukeruyele<sup>338</sup> argues that the compounds from the numerous petroleum wastes contain

<sup>336</sup> Powell, C. B. 1988. Effects of Freshwater oil spillages on fish and fisheries. In the Petroleum Industry and the Nigerian Environment, Proceedings of 1987 international seminar.

<sup>337</sup> A. I. Hart, E. Amah, and N. Zabbey. 2007. Biocenosis of Planktonic Flora in a 36 years Old Crude Pollution freshwater pond in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. *African Journal of Zoology and Environment Biology* 9: 63 – 69.

<sup>338</sup> Stanley Worgu Owabukeruyele. 2000. "Hydrocarbon Exploitation, Environmental Degradation and Poverty in the Niger Delta of Nigeria" a paper presented the Lund University LUMES Program, Lund

organic chemicals such as phenol cyanide, sulphide-suspended solids, chromium and biological oxygen.

Complimentarily, Isiche (et.al)<sup>339</sup> observe that these chemicals leave destructive effects on both land and water. The above submissions could give a clue to why the amount of fish harvested from the river is reduced due to the recent trend of using explosives, chemicals (by residents) and petroleum waste (by oil companies). In essence, these hazardous activities had brought to fulfillment Hosea's submission that - "the fish of the sea are taken away" (Ho 4:3) - that is, the fish of the sea have been reduced and some have migrated while others have gone into extinction due to the un-conducive environment necessitated by the use of chemicals and explosives as fishing mechanism.

With the forgoing facts that even Rivers State residents contribute to environmental degradation in various forms, the next segment looks at the involvement of a sample of Oil & Oil servicing companies in Rivers State.

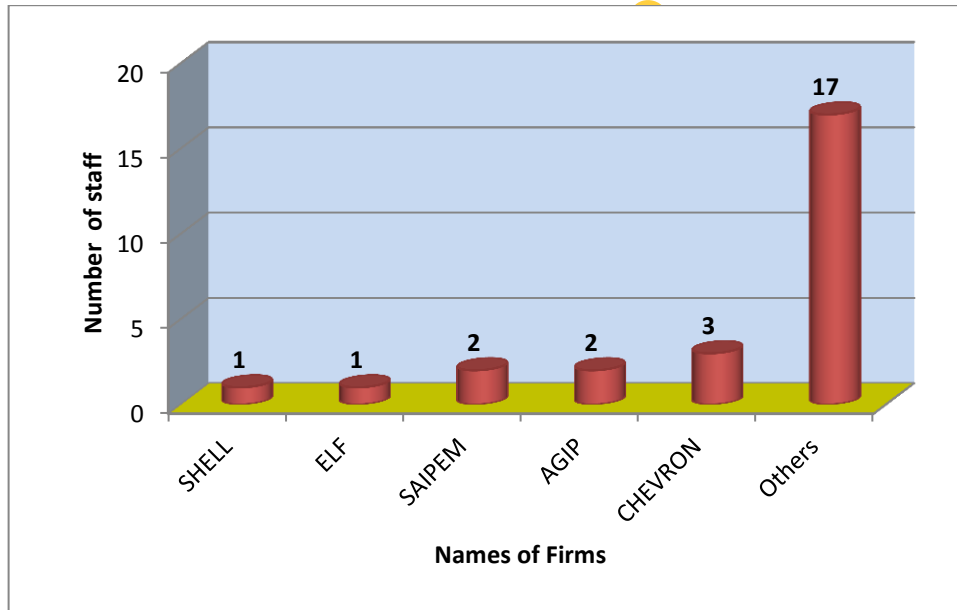
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Sweden Retrieved October 10, 2012, from

<http://www.waado.org/Environment/PetrolPolution/EnvEconomics.htm>

<sup>339</sup> A. O. Isiche, and Stanford, W. W. 1976. "The Effect of Wastes Gas Flares on Surrounding Vegetation of South-eastern Nigeria" in *Journal of Applied Ecology*, vol. 13, 177-187.

**5.4 TEST ON THE EVIDENCE OF LAND, AIR AND WATER DEGRADATION RESULTING FROM UNETHICAL CONDUCT AMONG OIL & OIL SERVICING COMPANIES IN RIVERS STATE**



Source: Field Survey, 2012

**Figure 2: Demographic Information of Oil & Oil servicing Companies**

From figure 2 above, we see at least a representation of prominent oil exploration and servicing companies in Rivers State. Rivers State in particular and the entire Niger Delta Region of Nigeria has been particularly attractive to major oil international, including Shell, Chevron, ExxonMobil, TotalFinaElf, Saipem/Agip and Texaco. These major oil companies have all been involved in joint ventures with the Federal Government of Nigeria in connection with oil exploration and production.<sup>340</sup> Of the six (6) major oil exploration and exploitation companies, the research covers at least Four (4). On the chart, Saipem is separated from Agip although they have been merged. The other seventeen (17) are the oil servicing companies. This shows representation of the companies bringing all to 26 companies.

<sup>340</sup>Anon. "Major International Oil Companies Operating in Nigeria" Retrieved October 12, 2012, from <http://epu.ac.at/fileadmin/downloads/research/Ejibunu.pdf>.

**Table 5: Companies' length of stay in Rivers State**

Companies length of stay in Rivers State	Frequency	%
5-9 yrs	4	15.4
10-14 yrs	2	7.7
15-19 yrs	2	7.7
20 yrs and above	18	69.2
Total	26	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Regarding the length of stay of these companies in Rivers State, 69.2% (18) of these companies (exploration, exploitation and servicing companies) have stayed for over 20 years in Rivers State. The foregoing suggests that the activities of these companies have strong impact on the communities in which they are located as against the other 15.4% (4) and 7.7% (2) who have stayed 5-9 and 10-14, 15-19 years respectively.

#### **5.4.1 'en-ḡa'ath \*lōhīm - Lack of Knowledge of God as evident in Oil exploration/exploitation and servicing Companies**

**Table 6: Test on the knowledge of God amongst the firms**

S/N	TEST ITEM	Responses	Frequency (n=26)	Percentage (%)
16	Our activities as oil firm has nothing to do with God	Disagree	21	80.8
		Undecided	3	11.5
		Agree	2	7.7

On the test item 16, the responses from the Oil Companies' Liaison Officers (CLOs), 80.8% of the respondents show their mental "knowledge of God," while 11.5% and 7.7% responses reveal that the oil companies were undecided about, and had no mental "knowledge of God" at all respectively. The 7.7% and 11.5% responses could be informed by the level of mental alertness of the respondents as it relates to their religious thoughts. That is, these ones could either be nominal religious observers who affiliate themselves to a religion but do not understand what their religion teaches.

S/N	TEST ITEM	Responses	Frequency (n=26)	Percentage (%)
17	There is no area of land sacred than the others	Disagree	10	38.5
		Undecided	5	19.2
		Agree	11	42.3

A keen observation on test item 17 reveals that 42.3% of the respondents agreed that there are no certain portions of land regarded as sacred while 38.5% disagreed to such and 19.2% were not sure respectively. The majority 42.3% response in addition to 19.2% who were undecided (that is, 61.5%) suggest the reason for the conflict between some host communities and the companies. Accordingly, Nwaomah<sup>341</sup> observes that there are certain provisions in CAP 350 prohibiting oil-based activities in certain areas of the human community. Specifically Section 17 of the Act prohibits oil-based activities in any area held to be sacred. Some Traditional communities have land they regard as sacred which these companies do not regard as such and as they venture into those, conflict ensues and further calamities endanger the land.

S/N	TEST ITEM	Responses	Frequency (n=26)	Percentage (%)
18	The land cannot be cursed by God for being exploited because it is simply reacting to pollution	Disagree	7	26.9
		Undecided	7	26.9
		Agree	12	46.2

Responding to test item 18, 26.9% agreed that the environmental degradation in Rivers State is a result of the curse from God for exploitation of the land and not necessarily a reaction to pollution while 26.9% were not sure whether it is as a result of curse from God or as a reaction to pollution. The 53.8% respondents, (that is, 26.9% who held that the land is cursed and the 26.9% who were undecided), tend to exonerate themselves from the environmental crisis in Rivers State thereby affirming Aquinas' theory of natural law<sup>342</sup> which succinctly asserts that right participation in the eternal law (that is, the rational plan by which all creation is ordered) results in goodwill while any deviation from this order

<sup>341</sup>Sampson M. Nwaomah. 2007. Biblical Ecology of Stewardship: Option in the Quest for a Sustainable Environment in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. *Living word: Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, March-April, 113.2:89-103.

<sup>342</sup> Aquinas' Natural Law.

causes disaster and not necessarily a curse from God. However, 46.2% disagreed that the land is cursed by God. They rather believed the land is reacting to pollution. This 46.2% response illuminates Hayes' observation that the theme of reversal of creation (degradation) is tied within Hosea 4:1-3 as a whole to the contravention of law and ethical principles ('*en-da'ath* *lōhīm* – “lack of knowledge of God.”).<sup>343</sup>

S/N	TEST ITEM	Responses	Frequency (n=26)	Percentage (%)
19	If the causes of degradation are removed the land will improve even without God	Disagree	19	73.1
		Undecided	0	0
		Agree	7	26.9

From the above item, 73.1% of the respondents had the knowledge of God in that they believed that the knowledge about the environment is tied to the *דַעַת אֱלֹהִים* – *knowledge of God*. In other words, these 73.1% of respondents were aware that the land functions as a moral and spiritual barometer. They knew that the land stood at the junction of the vertical and the horizontal covenant relationships<sup>344</sup> thereby suggesting that *דַעַת אֱלֹהִים* – ‘the knowledge of God’ (which to Hosea is obedience), could improve environmental wellbeing.

#### 5.4.2 Companies-Community Relations in Rivers State

**Table 7: Companies' relationship with the community**

S/N	TEST ITEM	Responses	Frequency (n=26)	Percentage (%)
20	We have no business with communities outside our host community	Disagree	17	65.4
		Undecided	1	3.8
		Agree	8	30.8

<sup>343</sup>Katherine M. Hayes. 2002. “The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic” *SBL Academia Biblica* 8, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 60. See also, the website below: [http://books.google.com.ng/books/p/8252592953561564?id=ldfw7nYUe7wC&pg=PA128&dq=Hayes,+Katherine+M.+The+Earth+Mourns&cd=1&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Hayes%2C%20Katherine%20M.%20The%20Earth%20Mourns&f=false](http://books.google.com.ng/books/p/8252592953561564?id=ldfw7nYUe7wC&pg=PA128&dq=Hayes,+Katherine+M.+The+Earth+Mourns&cd=1&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Hayes%2C%20Katherine%20M.%20The%20Earth%20Mourns&f=false) (Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> December, 2012).

<sup>344</sup> Chris Wright.1999. *Theology and Ethics of the Land: A Christian Approach to the Environment*. 38.



65.4% of the Companies' CLO's claimed they had good relationship with communities outside their host communities while 30.8% claimed other wise and 3.8% were undecided on the issue. However, the recent incident that happened in Rivers State-west on April 2, 2012 in Egita, a host community and by extension to neighbouring communities, reveals the companies' lack of *ṛṛṛ* (*Hesed*)- mutual relationship. One of these companies aware of the implication and abolition of diversionary drilling operations, damned such prohibition and implication of such operation and embarked on diversionary drilling which had left the host community and surrounding ones homeless. Not only that they were rendered homeless, their drinking water sources were contaminated, fire burned underground, the air was polluted, cassava farms already cultivated were destroyed, some animal species killed, and trees also damaged.<sup>345</sup>

S/N	TEST ITEM	Responses	Frequency (n=26)	Percentage (%)
21	We always execute community projects promptly.	Disagree	14	53.8
		Undecided	2	7.7
		Agree	10	38.5

As it relates to prompt execution of community project by the companies, 53.8% disagreed with the statement “we always execute community projects promptly”, while 38.5% agreed to that statement and 7.7% were not sure whether or not they promptly executed community project. These responses show a kind of inconsistency and disorderliness on the part of the companies and this could affect *ṛṛṛ* (*Hesed*) - mutual relationship.

S/N	TEST ITEM	Responses	Frequency (n=26)	Percentage (%)
22	Some of our sites are situated within the village or town areas	Disagree	2	7.7
		Undecided	1	3.8
		Agree	23	88.5

<sup>345</sup>Anon. “Field Report #295:Total/Elf’s Facility Causes Multiple Eruption in Egiland” Thursday 19 April, 2012. Retrieved Aug. 8, 2012, from <http://www.eration.org/component/content/article/391>.

To further complicate the relational ideals, 88.5% of these respondents agreed to the fact that their companies' sites are located within the village or town areas where people live. Indeed they are sincere although such is against the 1969 Petroleum Act (CAP 350). Lending credence to Nwaomah,<sup>346</sup> certain provisions in CAP 350 prohibited oil-based activities in certain areas. Specifically, Section 17 of the Act prohibits oil-based activities in the following areas:

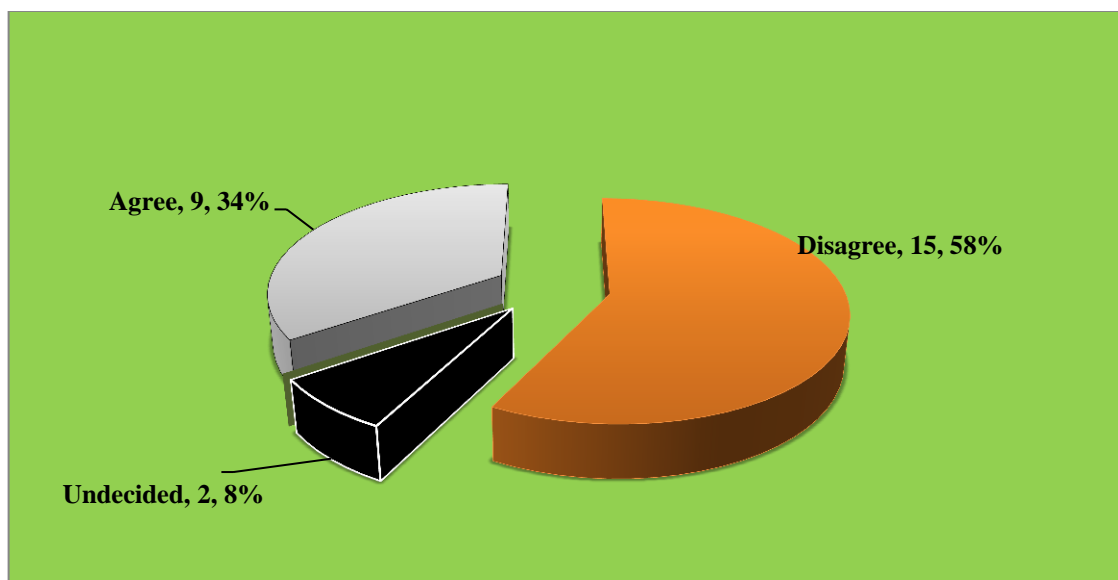
- 1) any area held to be sacred;
- 2) any part set apart for use or appropriated or dedicated to public purpose;
- 3) any part situated within a township, town, village, market, burial ground or cemetery;
- 4) any part which is the site of within fifty yards of any building, institution, reservoir, dam, public road or train way or which is appropriated for or situated within fifty yards of any rail;
- 5) any part consisting of private land;
- 6) any part under cultivation.

In fact, the majority 88.5% affirmative response to location of site shows in reality, a violation of environmental rules- 'en-da'ath <sup>el</sup>lōhīm – “lack of knowledge of God.” This further explains why there are continuous friction between these companies and the communities and as well obvious degradation.

Moreover, Figure 2 below further explains the reason for some kind of social disorder in Rivers State of Nigeria

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<sup>346</sup>S. M. Nwaomah. March-April 2013. Biblical Ecology of Stewardship: Option in the Quest for a Sustainable Environment in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. *Living word: Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, 113.2: 89-103.



Source: Field Survey, 2012

**Fig. 3: Responses on the question-It is better to liaise with the Community chiefs than liaising with the youths**

From figure 3 above, 58% preferred liaising with the Youths while 34% preferred to liaise with the chiefs and 8% felt at home liaising with both chiefs and youths. The responses from these Community Liaison officers of the companies as represented in the chart above raise a concern as to why 58% respondents of these companies preferred to liaise with the youths instead of the community chiefs who are duly appointed to bridge the gap between the community and external forces. However, the observation of Alamiyeseigha<sup>347</sup> gives a clue as to why the companies chose to liaise with the youth. He observes that there has been a long standing neglect of the Niger Delta by successive governments at all levels, federal, state and local government; there has been the unwholesome activities of oil and gas companies which have employed the option of divide and conquer to deny the communities growth and development. He continues that these companies identify key opinion leaders (chiefs) in their host communities, and use them against the rest of the community, resulting in the emergence of rival groups. In other words, 58% of companies operate in areas where the youths are in charge, while 34% operate in areas where the chiefs are in charge, and the 8% have been surviving with both

<sup>347</sup> D.S.P. Alamiyeseigha. 2005. "Youth Restiveness on Oil Companies" in *Vanguard*, April 8, 29-30.

conditions (liaising with chiefs and youths). The forgoing explains the varied responses of the respondents. In essence, their responses suggest that there is the lack of *ṛṛṛ* (*Hesed*) mutual community responsibility in their community. Nevertheless, the next segment shows the resultant effect of lack of *ṛṛṛ*-mutual community responsibility- a soured company-community relationship is an evidence of a dysfunctional relationship which could result in ecological dislocation. The subsequent section deals with the ecological effect of *lack of knowledge of God* in Rivers State

#### 5.4.3 Effect of the relationship between firms and communities in Rivers State

**Table 8: Test on the relationship between firms and communities in Rivers State**

S/N	TEST ITEM	Responses	Frequency (n=26)	Percentage (%)
23	We are sometimes resisted when we operate on private lands	Disagree	3	11.5
		Undecided	3	11.5
		Agree	20	77

A keen observation on test item 1 on table 8 reveals that these companies were resisted by landlords. 77% of the respondents agreed that they were sometimes resisted when they operate on private lands. In the first place, these companies have breached a provision in CAP 350 which prohibits oil-based activities on private lands.<sup>348</sup> It therefore follows, as Walter<sup>349</sup> observes that *'en-da'ath 'elohim* - the "lack of knowledge of God" is the people's *violation of law and ethical principles* (standards that promote life) which Andersen<sup>350</sup> calls the sin of 'omission' (ignoring right standards) which eventually leads to those of 'commission' (five infinitive absolutes used by the Prophet in Hos 4:2). We can therefore submit that, the failure to abide by "Natural Laws" (which deals with proper way

<sup>348</sup>Sampson M. Nwaomah, 2007. "Biblical Ecology of Stewardship: Option in the Quest for a Sustainable Environment in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria" in *Living word: Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, Vol. 113.2, March-April 89-103.

<sup>349</sup>Harrelson Walter. January 1, 1976. "Knowledge of God in the Church" in *Interpretation*, Retrieved December 28, 2012, from <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&hid=107&sid=5cc3cba2-f7ae-49b4-8e52-f5fef8707793%40sessionmgr104>

<sup>350</sup>Francis I. Andersen, 331-341.

of living in a given community) is regarded as “sin of omission” which gives birth to proliferation of crimes in the society. In other words, although the Rivers state residents have their contribution to degrading the environment, the oil companies are not in any way exonerated either, as their breach on existing standards for living had affected both the human and natural environment in Rivers state. The paired 11.5% who disagreed and were undecided respectively regarding the statement “we are sometimes resisted when we operate on private lands” may not be truthful because the statement does not suggest all times. At least, they may have been resisted at some point in time but are being economical with the truth.

S/N	TEST ITEM	Responses	Frequency (n=26)	Percentage (%)
24	Some of our host communities have full understanding of their rights	Disagree	5	19.2
		Undecided	2	7.7
		Agree	19	73.1

Responding to the statement on the people’s awareness of their rights, 73.1% agreed that the communities have full understanding of their rights while 19.2% disagreed and 7.7% were undecided whether or not the communities know their rights. This also could be a source of friction especially as shown in the response to test item 22 on table 7, where 88.5% agreed that they have violated the rights of the residents of the communities their sites are located within.

Any given community with a clear understanding of their rights, will always fight for such rights hence we see the height of tension resulting in vandalism of pipe-lines and destruction of lives and property by the residents (especially youths) of such communities. The forgoing thus suggests that the *Mourning* (אָבֵר) of Rivers State land (אָרֶץ) and the languishing (אָמל) of the inhabitants as well as the beasts of the field could also be blamed on the oil companies. The responses to test items 25, 26 and 27 affirm the above position.

S/N	TEST ITEM	Responses	Frequency (n=26)	Percentage (%)
25	Some oil spillages are as a result of community youth restiveness	Disagree	3	1.5
		Undecided	3	1.5
		Agree	20	77

In test item 25, the 77% majority of the companies' response agreed that although oil spillages may be blamed on them, the community youths were also culpable for oil spillage.

S/N	TEST ITEM	Responses	Frequency (n=26)	Percentage (%)
26	Our activities as a business corporation are not responsible for all the pollution in this area	Disagree	10	38.5
		Undecided	3	11.5
		Agree	13	50.0

Responses on test item 26 revealed that 50% agreed that they have a part in degrading the Rivers environment while 38.5% and 11.5% disagreed and were undecided respectively.

S/N	TEST ITEM	Responses	Frequency (n=26)	Percentage (%)
27	Shedding of innocent blood and violent acts are not responsible for degradation of the environment, but oil spills are	Disagree	9	34.6
		Undecided	2	7.7
		Agree	15	57.7

Here, 57.7% respondents on test item 5 agreed that oil spills are responsible for the environmental degradation in Rivers State while 34.6% agreed that apart from oil spills, shedding of innocent blood has indeed affected their environment. The 38.5% who held that their activities as business corporations are responsible for all the pollution in Rivers State may not be realistic because contrarily, Anderson,<sup>351</sup> Rasmussen,<sup>352</sup> and Spalling,<sup>353</sup> had

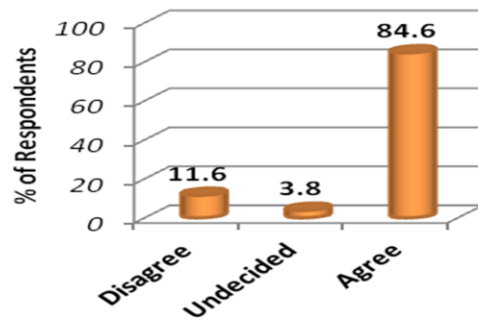
<sup>351</sup>Terence R. Anderson, (1986), "Environmental Ethics" in *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, J. Macquarie and J. Childress (Eds.), Westminster Press, 196-198

<sup>352</sup>Larry Rasmussen, "Global Eco-Justice: The Church's Mission in Urban Society" in *Christianity and Ecology Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*, Dieter Thessel (2000) {Ed.}, (et.al), Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 515-527.

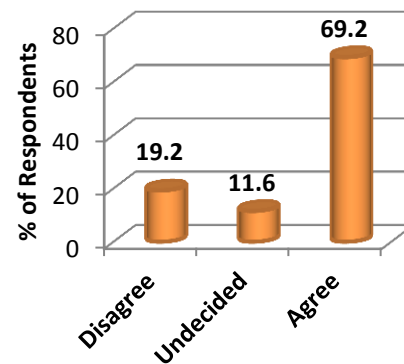
linked the degrading state of the Niger Delta (Rivers State) ‘land’ with modern industrialization, poverty, while Onuorah,<sup>354</sup> Nwaomah<sup>355</sup> and Feinberg<sup>356</sup> associate the degradation with oil exploitation and exploration but not with “Lack of Knowledge of God” as in Hosea 4:1-3 which is the focus of this work. We can therefore, submit that the oil-related environmental pollution and poverty could be viewed from a perspective that the *’en-da’ath ’elohim* “lack of knowledge of God” (ignoring life-supporting principles) could also inform those listed cursors to environmental degradation in Rivers State.

The next survey deals with the connection between contravention of law and chaotic environment.

**Figure 4: Respondents who indicated that they followed environmental policies as prescribed**



**Figure 5: Respondents who indicated that Host community is somewhat hostile**



Looking at the responses from figures 4 and 5, we see that in figure 4, a majority 84.6% agreed that they followed environmental policies as prescribed, while 11.6% disagreed and 3.8% were undecided. In figure 5, the majority 69.2% indicated that their

<sup>353</sup> Harry Spalling et.al (2001) “Earthkeeping and the Poor: Assessing the Environmental Sustainability of Development Projects,” in *Prospectives on Science and Christian Faith*, Vol. 53, No.3, 142-151.

<sup>354</sup> M. Onuorah “UNDP Deplores Poverty Level in Niger Delta” *The Guardian*, (July 19, 2006).

<sup>355</sup> S.M. Nwaomah (2007), “Biblical Ecology of Stewardship: Option in Quest for Sustainable Environment in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria” *The Living Word: Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, March- April, Vol.113/2, 89-103.

<sup>356</sup> See, Joel Feinberg,(1984) *The Moral Limits of the Criminal Law*, vol. 1: *Harm to Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 225–32; and Andrew Kernohan,(1995) “Rightsagainst Polluters,” *Environmental Ethics* 17: 245–57.

Host communities are hostile to them while 19.2% disagreed and 11.6 % were undecided. The foregoing responses point more to the fact that a breach in set principles could lead to a chaotic society and even extending to the physical environment. The response on test item 22 in Table 7 reveals that 88.5% of these companies' respondents agreed that they have breached the legislation prohibiting the establishment of their sites within the village or town areas. This is just one of the indicia to many more breaches done by these companies which has resulted in an unstable society and has also affected the Rivers State environment adversely. Therefore, we may conclude that the 84.6%, who claimed they followed environmental policies as prescribed, may not be saying the truth- an indication, that שָׁרָר - lying or deception exists among them. Simply put, they lack אֱמוּנָה -reliability as well as דָּבָר -conduct in accordance with the mutual relationship of rights and duties between allies.<sup>357</sup>

Commensurately, the next segment of this work shows possible mean of remediation to the environmental challenge in Rivers State of Nigeria.

## 5.5 ECOLOGICAL REMEDIATION IN RIVERS STATE

**Table 9: People's View on Remediation**

	ITEMS	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
28	If we change our negative attitude to God's rules, the conditions of our environment will improve	498 (85.4)	28 (4.8)	57 (9.8)	583 (100)

A look at test item 28 reveals the fact that the majority 85.4% of the respondents agreed that a change to positive attitude towards set rules given by God can indeed improve our environment. This idea of change of attitude is also championed by Berry<sup>358</sup> who reaffirms the need for environmental sustainability. In his work, he presents a Christian frame work for sustainable development. He traces sustainability to God, stating that in biblical narrative, there is no theology without ecology. He presents ethical attitudes of respect, and rest which would bring environmental sustainability as products of

<sup>357</sup>Botterweck, (1988), 52

<sup>358</sup>R. J. Berry (Ed.), (2007), *When Enough is Enough: A Christian Framework for Environmental Sustainability*, Gosport, Hampshire: Ashford Colour Press Ltd. Pp. 1-213.



understanding God as creator and sustainer. In essence, when God is put at the center of all dealings, this would positively affect both humans and the natural world especially in Rivers State of Nigeria. Such attitude would gear towards responsibility in form of restraint and respect, which allows natural resources the capacity to renew and replenish. It also includes all human endeavour in managing the earth, and using natural resources which encompasses but not limited to farming, animal husbandry, forestry, mining, resource extraction, hunting, fishing and industry.

	ITEMS	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
29	My relationship with God and others, has nothing to do with my environment	62 (10.6)	47 (8.1)	472 (81.0)	581 (99.7)

Response to test item 29 shows that vertical and horizontal relationships are needed for the environment to thrive. This is seen in the majority 81.0% who disagreed with the contrary statement of test Item 29. In other words, these respondents attested to the fact that *Hesed* is rather a quality of relationship that is to be sought again, appropriated and treasured in the people's every needy moment. It is therefore clear that the concept of  $\text{חֶסֶד}$  lies in the realm of interpersonal relationship.<sup>359</sup> In fact, this response further validates Wolff's position on the "knowledge of God" in relation to this relationship. Wolff sees this 'knowledge of God' as the root and the source which makes such 'relationship' possible.<sup>360</sup> This "Knowledge of God," also means 'recognition of the truth and the power of God's dealings with his people and action by his people reflecting this recognition.' It is knowledge interiorized, knowledge issuing in conduct: conduct determined by fundamental understanding.<sup>361</sup> And where  $\text{חֶסֶד}$  (*Hesed*) mutual relationship and  $\text{אֱמֶת}$  {*'emeth*} reliability are far from reach, then it suggests the *'en-da'ath 'lōhîm* "lack of knowledge of God" (ignoring of set principles or abrogation of law and ethical principles) which in turn results

<sup>359</sup> Willem A. VanGemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, Vol. 2, 216.

<sup>360</sup> Wolff. 1974:67

<sup>361</sup> Harrelson Walter. January 1, 1976. Knowledge of God in the Church. *Interpretation*, <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&hid=107&sid=5cc3cba2-f7ae-49b4-8e52-f5fef8707793%40sessionmgr104> (Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2012 )

in a chaotic environment. Furthermore, the lack of this ‘knowledge’ which brings about resentment in a given interpersonal relationship could also breed dishonesty and corruption in a society.

	ITEMS	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
30	Dishonesty and corruption do not in any way affect our environment	30 (5.1)	29 (5.0)	521 (89.4)	580 (99.5)

As a matter of fact, 89.4% of the respondents agreed that  $\Psi\eta\eta$  - dishonesty and  $\eta\eta\eta$  - corruption affect the environment negatively. This view could be deduced from Dada’s work<sup>362</sup> where he highlights how  $\eta\eta\eta$ -corruption- even in the religious sphere could lead to a chaotic society, in which people are dispossessed of their property by their church leaders and even sending assassins after them, while other leaders, led by inordinate lust for money, device strategies for extortion, they aide “criminals and men of shady character because of economic gains.” In a nutshell,  $\eta\eta\eta$  -corruption- is detrimental to growth (development) and where there is no growth in a given society then such society is doomed to  $\eta\eta\eta$  - total ruin or destruction or extinction which definitely reflects on such environment (human and nature).

	ITEMS	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
31	Shedding of human Blood does not in any way affect our land	47 (8.1)	38 (6.5)	495 (84.9)	580 (99.5)

As stated, corruption could lead to many other vices like shedding of human blood which depletes the human population in any given environment. This is evident in the response to test item 31 where 84.9% agreed that  $\eta\eta\eta$  - shedding of human blood had effects on their land although 8.1% disagreed while 6.5% were undecided. The 84.9% respondents who agreed that murder is harmful to the environment do suggest that where this is eliminated, the environment will improve. Interestingly,  $\eta\eta\eta$  (murder) appears in Mosaic

<sup>362</sup>Dada, Adekunle Oyinloye. 2007. Priestcraft in Ancient Israel and Contemporary Nigerian Society: The Sons of Eli and Samuel as Exemplar. *Biblical Studies and Corruption in Africa* a Publication of Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS). Rev. Prof. Abogunrin, S. O. (Ed.) Nigeria: M. Alofe Nig. Enterprises. 141-157.

legislation, as a term bearing a special connotation of premeditation.<sup>363</sup> This term traces its root in the practice of blood vengeance.<sup>364</sup> In Numbers 35:33 we see that דָּמָאִי “Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it.” When in the consciousness, there is a no place for dignity of human live, then blood vengeance becomes the order of the day. The recent murderous act on the four (4) students of the University of Port Harcourt on October 5, 2012, which was even supported by a Nigerian Police officer,<sup>365</sup> is a clear indication that there is no respect for human live.

	ITEMS	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
32	Neglecting ‘trivial’ but life supporting principles can affect our environment negatively	448 (76.8)	56 (9.6)	79 (13.6)	583 (100)

Looking at test item 32, we see that 76.8% of the respondents agreed that neglecting trivial but life supporting principles could affect their environment negatively. This majority response on Item 5 supports Feinberg’s<sup>366</sup> view that severe environmental damage is often the result of the accumulation of individually negligible effects. In other words, when people neglect certain life-giving principles, no matter the degree, its effects tend to accumulate and thus result in environmental damage.

Therefore, by inference, the people’s view for remediation is simply “follow set rules or life supporting principles and our environmental condition will improve.” Moreso, the prevalence of the *lack of knowledge of God* (that is, abrogation of law and ethical principles) in a given society results in the increase in environmental damage thus affirming Hayes position that the theme of reversal of creation is tied within Hosea 4:1-3 as a whole to the

<sup>363</sup> Op. Cit, *Theological Wordbook of the O.T.*, Vol. 2, 860

<sup>364</sup> Op. Cit, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, Vol. 3, 1188.

<sup>365</sup> Anon. October, 2012. Uniport 4: The Police and Jungle Justice. Retrieved October 22, 2012, from <http://pmnewsnigeria.com/2012/10/18/uniport-4-the-police-and-jungle-justice/>

<sup>366</sup> Joel Feinberg. 1984. *The Moral Limits of the Criminal Law: Harm to Others*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1:225–232.

abrogation of law and ethical principles at least in Israel.<sup>367</sup>

## Conclusion

From this chapter, it is revealed that both the Rivers State residents and the oil companies have a share in the degradation of the Rivers State environment. Given the religious persuasion of the Rivers State residents who predominantly are Christians (94.2%), it is expected that the environment would thrive since their religious beliefs especially, as based on their Scriptures should inform their actions. Nevertheless, the work reveals the adverse environmental effect of the prevalence of unethical conduct among the residents as well as the oil companies within the selected communities in Rivers State. It reveals that environmental degradation especially in some selected communities in Rivers State is a reflection of a disconnection between the people's religious belief and their behavior.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>367</sup>Katherine M. Hayes(2002), "The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic" *SBL Academia Biblica* 8, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 60. See also, the website below: [http://books.google.com.ng/books/p/8252592953561564?id=ldfw7nYUe7wC&pg=PA128&dq=Hayes.+Katherine+M.+The+Earth+Mourns&cd=1&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Hayes%2C%20Katherine%20M.%20The%20Earth%20Mourns&f=false](http://books.google.com.ng/books/p/8252592953561564?id=ldfw7nYUe7wC&pg=PA128&dq=Hayes.+Katherine+M.+The+Earth+Mourns&cd=1&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Hayes%2C%20Katherine%20M.%20The%20Earth%20Mourns&f=false) (Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> December, 2012).

<sup>368</sup> Ucheawaji Godfrey Josiah & Loveday Chigozie Onyazonwu. April 15, 2014. "‘Dress and Keep’ the Garden: Environmental Stewardship as a Biblical Motif for the ‘Great Commission’" in Byungho Jang (Ed.), *Asia-Africa Journal of Mission and Ministry*, vol. 9, [www.http://aamm.kr/x/](http://aamm.kr/x/)

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 SUMMARY

Chapter one gives a general introduction while chapter two focuses on two segments: Israel's environment and the Rivers State environment. The environmental Challenges in Rivers State have been traced to oil exploitation and exploration, on which scholars like Nwaomah,<sup>369</sup> Gibson<sup>370</sup>, Hamilton,<sup>371</sup> and Bullard<sup>372</sup> call for a rethink in the use of natural resources. Moreso, other scholars like Rasmussen<sup>373</sup> and Anderson<sup>374</sup>, Dada<sup>375</sup> blame ecological crisis on social issues, while Spalling<sup>376</sup> attributes environmental degradation to poverty. However, Berry<sup>377</sup> and Keller<sup>378</sup>, Davis Jr.<sup>379</sup>, Olanisebe<sup>380</sup> call for responsible, peaceful coexistence and a healthy interpersonal relationship- vertical and horizontal (even with nature).

Chapter three reveals that the understanding of Hosea 4:1-3 could serve as the hermeneutical lens for the understanding of the whole book of Hosea. This Segment, further

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<sup>369</sup>Nwaomah S.M (2007), "Biblical Ecology of Stewardship: Option in Quest for Sustainable Environment in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria" *The Living Word: Journal of Philosophy and Theology*,

<sup>370</sup>William .E. Gibson quoted in Dieter T. Hessel "Eco-Justice Ethics" <http://fore.research.yale.edu/disciplines/ethics/eco-justice.html> (Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2012)

<sup>371</sup>V. P. Hamilton. 1982.*Handbook on the Pentateuch*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House), 27-28.

<sup>372</sup>Robert D. Bullard. "Environmental Justice for All" Retrieved June 17, 2011 from <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nattrans/ntuseland/essays/envjust.htm>.

<sup>373</sup>Larry Rasmussen. 2000. Global Eco-Justice: The Church's Mission in Urban Society.*Christianity and Ecology Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*, Dieter Thessel {Ed.}. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. 515-527.

<sup>374</sup>Francis I Anderson. 1980. *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*,

<sup>375</sup>Dada, A. O. 2004. Prosperity Gospel in Nigerian Context: A Medium of Social Transformation Or An Impetus for Delusion? *ORITA: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XXXVI.1-2: 95-107.

<sup>376</sup>Harry Spalling. 2001. Earthkeeping and the Poor: Assessing the Environmental Sustainability of Development Projects," in *Prospectives on Science and Christian Faith*.

<sup>377</sup>R. J. Berry. Ed. 2007.*When Enough is Enough: A Christian Framework for Environmental Sustainability*, Gosport, Hampshire: Ashford Colour Press Ltd., 1-213.

<sup>378</sup>Catherine Keller. April, 2005. "Dark Vibrations: Eco-feminism and Democracy of Creation" *Annual Howard Harrods/ CRSC Lecture*, in, "Biblical Basis for Ecofeminism: A Challenge in the Nigerian Context," a Commissioned Paper read at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS) on the Theme: Biblical Studies and Environmental Issues in Africa, Tuesday 17-Friday 20 November, 2009 At Institute of Church and Society, Samonda, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, 1.

<sup>379</sup>Walter T. Davis Jr. 1974. A Method For Social: An inquiry into the usefulness of Reinhold Neibuhr's Ethical Model for Social Justice In developing Nation.*ORITA Journal of Religious Studies*, Ibadan, 1 June, 22-44.

<sup>380</sup>S. O. Olanisebe. March, 2008. "Revisiting Creation Accounts in Genesis 1-2 and the Dominion Theology in Relation to the Environment in Nigeria" in *Biblical Studies and Environmental Issues in Africa*, Ed. Professor Chris Ukachukwu Manus. 86-100.

presents two dimensions of “land theology” which are of particular contemporary importance. Firstly, the claims, that the care or the abuse of the land or creation is generally recognized as a biblical and a theological concern. Secondly, the crisis of agribusiness is of particular concern, because land-care and land-management are transposed into a commodity without any human dimension or interrelationship with God or the Torah.<sup>381</sup> It further emphasises the interrelationship of God, land, Israel and the Torah.

This chapter holds that ignoring the relationship with God or the transgression of the Torah/covenant leads to “landlessness”, homelessness and eventually to death. Land is a primary category of faith and a promise from Yahweh. God initiated the covenant relationship between humankind and Himself. The Torah is the principle and norm for a full life in the Promised Land. The Bible story is thus about the relationship of Yahweh with God’s people in God’s land.

Chapter four, looks at the glaring social corruptions of the time of Prophet Hosea, a native, as suppose, of the Northern Kingdom. It reveals Hosea’s claims on the root of the social malady in Israel, and traces all the crime and vice of the nation to the fundamental evil of idolatry and apostasy from the true God. According to Wolff,<sup>382</sup> “knowledge of God” as in Hosea 4:1-3 does not refer to a second “religious” sphere in addition to the “ethical” sphere of the first two concepts (of אֱמֶת and דִּקְוָה), but as a concept in final position of the phrase (see Hos 4:1b), it is rather the root and the source which make אֱמֶת and דִּקְוָה in Israel possible. In other words, the absence of אֱמֶת and דִּקְוָה in Israel is a cursor to the reality of the lack of “the knowledge of God” in the Land. This could also serve as a template for any given religious society. Similarly, יְדַעַת אֱלֹהִים - “Knowledge of God” is taken to mean the recognition of the truth and the power of God’s dealings with his people and action by his people reflecting this recognition. It is knowledge interiorized, knowledge issuing in conduct: conduct determined by fundamental understanding.<sup>383</sup> Hence, the “lack of Knowledge of God” is not the mere absence of, but failure to, apply and act in

<sup>381</sup> Ibid, xix-xx

<sup>382</sup> Wolff. 1974. *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea*, 67

<sup>383</sup> Harrelson Walter. January 1, 1976. Knowledge of God in the Church. *Interpretation*, <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&hid=107&sid=5cc3cba2-f7ae-49b4-8e52-f5fef8707793%40sessionmgr104> (Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2012 )

accordance with Yahweh's stipulations. Thus, it could be said that the phrase "there is no knowledge of God in the land" is really the fundamental indictment of Hosea 4:1-3 and as such, provides the key to the understanding of the corpus of the book of Hosea.<sup>384</sup>

Nevertheless, in Hosea 4:3, the condition of the earth is showcased by the use of two words- אָבַל "mourn" and אָמַל "languish." In this regards, Hayes<sup>385</sup> sees the verb אָמַל -"to be weak, to languish" in the sense of the earth's loss of fertility and life-bearing capacity. Furthermore, when the verb אָמַל -"to be weak, to languish" is read to mean "mourn" or "lament," then the psychological sense of אָמַל is heightened and thus Hosea 4:3 portrays a vast sorrow that touches all elements of creation.<sup>386</sup> Moreover, the languishing of the "beasts of the field", the "birds of the sky" and the "fish of the sea" suggests the faltering of all creation. He further posits that the theme of reversal of creation is tied within Hosea 4:1-3 as a whole to the abrogation of law and ethical principles in Israel.<sup>387</sup> Similarly, Schmid, as quoted in Wittenberg,<sup>388</sup> observed that the relationship between the reversal of creation and the abrogation of law and ethical principles in Israel is fundamental.

It therefore follows, that the ignoring of these "principles" demanded of Yahweh (that is, sin of omission), leads to the proliferation of crimes (sin of commission) which follows organically, resulting in the *mourning* of the land (both humans and nature) in Israel.

It is indeed disheartening that both residents of, and oil companies situated in Rivers State, "lack the knowledge of God" (that is, adherence to the law and ethical principles). Such requirements like אֱמוּנָה (reliability), and חֻקֵּי (mutual obligation) which are indicators of a practical אֵלֹהִים דַּעַת -"knowledge of God" were lacking. Although these residents were aware of the right principles (of interpersonal relationship as well as environmental prohibitions), they showed in their responses that they abrogated those principles, which eventually had resulted in social disorder as seen in the proliferation of

<sup>384</sup> Gunther Wittenberg. 2009. Knowledge of God: The Relevance of Hosea 4:1-3 for a Theological Response to Climate Change. *Old Testament Essays, a Journal of the Old Testament Society in South Africa*. 22.2: 488-509.

<sup>385</sup> Hayes. 2002. The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic" *SBL Academia Biblica*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature 8: 44.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid, 60.

<sup>388</sup> Wittenberg. 2009. Knowledge of God. *OTE* 22.2: 504.

crimes like גַּנְבָּ (kidnapping, theft), כְּזָב (lying, falsehood, deception), אָלָה (cursing especially from those affected by the crimes), זָנוּה (corruption), רִצּוּחַ (murder), פְּרִיץ (lawlessness) all these representing the level of the societal decay which also extends to the physical environment. This is so because the same attitude exhibited within the social environment is transferred to nature, where natural laws governing the ecosystem are breached thus leading to chaos in the physical environment, where the אֲרֶץ (land) אָבַל (mourns), and בְּחַיֵּי הַשָּׂדֶה - the “beasts of the field” and הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְעוֹף - the “birds of the sky” אָמַל (languish), while הַיָּם דָּגָי - the “fish of the sea” אָסַף (go into extinction) as a result of the accumulation of individually negligible effects in relation to laid down life supporting principles.

Chapter five deals with a survey on the effect of unethical conduct among the Rivers State residents as well as the Oil Companies within the State, on the Rivers State environment, while chapter six summarises, concludes and makes recommendation for the Rivers State residents.

## 6.2 CONCLUSION

The majority responses from residents and Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) of oil exploration and exploitation, and some oil servicing companies in Rivers State revealed the extent to which the *lack of knowledge of God* - contributes to environmental degradation (society and nature alike). It further submits that severe environmental damage is often the result of the accumulation of individually negligible effects.<sup>389</sup> Lending credence to William E. Gibson, a leading proponent of eco-justice, it is expected of mankind to maintain a thriving earth productive of sufficient food, with water fit for all to drink, air fit to breathe, forests kept replenished, renewable resources continuously renewed, non renewable resources used sparingly as possible so it could be reserved for future generations.

Nevertheless, when people neglect certain life-giving principles- יְדַעַת אֱלֹהִים “the knowledge of God” which naturally exist and is made known to all as Aquinas’

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<sup>389</sup>Joel Feinberg. 1984.*The Moral Limits of the Criminal Law: Harm to Others*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1:225–232.



paradigmatic theory of Natural Law<sup>390</sup> stipulates, no matter the degree, its effects tend to accumulate and thus result in environmental damage. Therefore, by inference the search for environmental remediation in Rivers State could be realistic if natural laws regarding vertical (with God) and horizontal (with man and nature) relationships are observed and not ignored. But if ignored, *דָּמָה* (*dāmah*) which is total ruin or destruction remains inevitable. This further accentuates Hayes' view that the theme of reversal of creation is tied within Hosea 4:1-3 as a whole to the contravention of law and ethical principles at least in Israel.<sup>391</sup>

In conclusion, unethical conduct which accounts for ecological crisis in the land, air and water in the book of Hosea and selected communities in Rivers State, resulted from the violation of ethics of environmental stewardship which stresses that the ecological problems, so evident today, such as deforestation, air and water pollution, and land degradation are not only environmental but also theological as well as moral problems. Hence, environmental degradation in selected communities in Rivers State is a reflection of a disconnection between the people's religious belief and their behaviours. This indeed validates "Habel's Ecological Hermeneutics" which stresses that human deeds have ecological consequences. Clearly, the book of Hosea calls for a practical application of moral norms broadly identified as 'epistemology' - "applied knowledge"<sup>392</sup> or "knowledge" translated into right conduct.

### 6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Consequent upon the above findings, the following recommendations are made:

Unethical conduct on the part of the Rivers State residents as well as on the part of the oil companies had led to environmental pollution in Rivers State. Therefore, religious bodies should take the responsibility of sensitising their adherents through sermons,

<sup>390</sup>Aquinas, Thomas. 1993. *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. C. I. Litzinger. South Bend, Ind.: Dumb Ox Books.16. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/natural-law-ethics/#KeyFeaNatLawThe> (Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2012).

<sup>391</sup>Katherine M. Hayes. 2002. The Earth Mourns: Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic" *SBL Academia Biblica* 8, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 60. [http://books.google.com.ng/books/p/8252592953561564?id=ldfw7nYUe7wC&pg=PA128&dq=Hayes,+Katherine+M.+The+Earth+Mourns&cd=1&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Hayes%2C%20Katherine%20M.%20The%20Earth%20Mourns&f=false](http://books.google.com.ng/books/p/8252592953561564?id=ldfw7nYUe7wC&pg=PA128&dq=Hayes,+Katherine+M.+The+Earth+Mourns&cd=1&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Hayes%2C%20Katherine%20M.%20The%20Earth%20Mourns&f=false) (Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> December, 2012).

<sup>392</sup>An inaugural lecture titled: 'My People Perish for Lack of Philosophy' delivered at the University of Ibadan by Kolawole A. Olu-Owolabi Professor of Philosophy, Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2011, p.10.

seminars and workshops on their role as environmental stewards while the government should enforce penalties for defaulting oil companies.

The society should also thrive to restore the trust needed for communal living as this will enhance the mutual relationship among the residents, between the oil companies and the residents in Rivers State. If this is done, the youth will have confidence in their elders and this will keep a check on the lawless activities of oil companies within the State. It will further minimize, if not eradicate youth restiveness and pipeline vandalisation.

Environmental degradation resulting from oil exploration and exploitation by oil companies in Rivers State could only be curtailed if the people of Rivers State assume custody of their environment as stewards. Claiming ignorance of the economically-induced environmental degradation in Rivers State could be wrong. Therefore, it is within the powers of the people to corporately protect their environment and as well, safeguard their existence through ethical living.

Avenues should be created for awareness possibly through campaigns, media, on pulpits, in schools on the effects of negligence, highlighting the fact that the prevalence of the *lack of knowledge of God* (that is, disobedience to law and ethical principles) in a given society results in increase in environmental damage.

Further research is needed to determine the extent of influence of *'en-da'ath 'lōhîm* “lack of knowledge of God” on the environment in Rivers State and also, the predictive nature of “lack of knowledge of God” on the environment of Rivers State.

**APPENDIX 1**

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES,  
UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, IBADAN, OYO STATE  
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR A STUDY ON “UNETHICAL CONDUCT AS A  
PRECURSOR TO ECOLOGICAL CRISIS IN THE BOOK OF HOSEA AND ITS  
RELEVANCE TO RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA”**

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is for a Ph.D. research aimed at sampling views of the people in Rivers State regarding the relationship between Unethical Conduct and Environmental Degradation in the region. It is purely an academic exercise and thus will maintain your confidentiality. I therefore request for your objective response.

Thank you.

UcheAwaji G. Josiah  
Researcher.

**SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

**Instruction:** Please tick the appropriate box (Tick  $\surd$  as appropriate).

1. Age (in years): 15-24  25-34  35-44  45-54   
55 and above
2. How long (in years) have you been living in the Rivers State?  
5-9  10-14  15-19  20 and above
3. Which is your Religious affiliation? Christianity  Islam  African Indigenous   
Religion Others
4. L.G.A.: Ahoada East  Andoni  Etche  Khana  Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni   
Port-Harcourt

**SECTION B**

**Instruction:** Please tick the column that best expresses your opinion on a scale of 1-5.

**Table 1: (Tick  $\checkmark$  as appropriate).**

**Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Undecided (U); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD).**

**\*Awareness of the Knowledge of God**

S/N	TEST ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	God is still interested in our actions whether good or bad					
2	God still relates to us in line with our actions whether good or bad					
3	Deception, corruption, unfaithfulness, killing, and kidnapping are not sins before God					
4	God is not concerned about how we relate to him, others and our environment					
5	Disobedience to God's rules has nothing to do with our environmental problems					

**Table 2 (Tick  $\checkmark$  as appropriate)**

**Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Undecided (U); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD).**

**\*Prevalence of the "lack of knowledge of God"**

S/N	TEST ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Corruption/ Deception do not exist in my community					
2	There is a concrete cordial relationship among people in my community					
3	People in my community have always been faithful to keeping agreements					
4	Kidnapping is a non-existent in my community					
5	Incidences of shedding innocent blood have never been rampant in our society					

**Table 3 (Tick  $\checkmark$  as appropriate)**

**Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Undecided (U); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD).**

**\*Evidence of Environmental Degradation**

S/N	TEST ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Our farmlands are more fertile than before despite land pollution by oil spillages, burning and over-cultivation of our farmlands					
2	The amount of fish brought home from fishing outing in my community river using the same technique is the same as before					
3	It appears the weather is getting hotter these days than some years back					
4	The roofing sheets in my community are rusting compared to some 20 years ago					
5	Man, animals and trees are as healthy now as before					

**Table 4 (Tick  $\checkmark$  as appropriate)**

**Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Undecided (U); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD).**

**\*People's View on Environmental Remediation in Rivers State**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	If we change our negative attitude to God's rules, the conditions of our environment will improve					
2	My relationship with God and others, has nothing to do with my environment					
3	Deception and corruption do not in any way affect our environment					
4	Shedding of human Blood does not in any way affect our land					
5	Neglecting 'trivial' but life supporting principles can affect our environment negatively					

**APPENDIX 2**

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES,  
UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, IBADAN, OYO STATE**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR A STUDY ON “UNETHICAL CONDUCT AS A  
PRECURSOR TO ECOLOGICAL CRISIS IN THE BOOK OF HOSEA AND ITS  
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Dear Respondent,

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Thank you.

UcheAwaji G. Josiah  
Researcher.

**SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION**

Instruction: Please tick the appropriate box (Tick  $\surd$  as appropriate).

1. Company: Shell  Elf  Saipem  Agip  Chevron  Others
2. How long (in years) have you been operating in Rivers State?  
5-9  10-14  15-19  20 and above

**SECTION B: (Tick  $\checkmark$  as appropriate).**

**Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Undecided (U); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD).**

S/N	TEST ITEMS	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Our activities as oil firm has nothing to do with God					
2	It is better to liaise with the community chiefs than liaising with the youths					
3	Bloodshed and violent acts are not responsible for degradation of the environment, but oil spills are					
4	We have no business with communities outside our host community					
5	We always execute community projects promptly					
6	Some of our sites are situated within the village or town areas					
7	We are sometimes resisted when we operate on private lands					
8	Some of our host communities have full understanding of their rights					
9	Some oil spillages are as a result of community youth restiveness shown in pipe vandalization					
10	Our activities as a business corporation are not responsible for all the pollution in this area					
11	There is no area of land sacred than the others					
12	The land can't be cursed by God for being exploited because it is simply polluted					
13	If the causes of degradation are removed the land will improve even without God					
14	Our host community is somewhat hostile					
15	We do follow environmental policies as prescribed					

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