

**THE WAY OF LOVE: AN EXEGESIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4 -7 AND ITS
RELEVANCE TO CHURCH MINISTRY**

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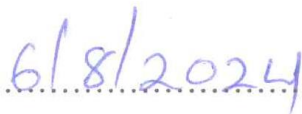
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DECLARATION

I, Sandra Musenero do here by declare that this dissertation is original and has not been submitted for award of a degree or any other qualification in any University.

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APPROVAL

This dissertation by Sandra Musenero has been under my supervision, and is ready for submission to Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a degree of Master of Divinity of Uganda Christian University.

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Date 

DEDICATION

To my Husband Edrine Wanyama and my children Aliyo Shammah Wanyama, Malaika
Arella Edith Wanyama and Ayedah Jireh Giannis Wanyama.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AD:	Anno Domini
AV:	Authorised Version
CoU:	Church of Uganda
Cor:	Corinthians
ESV:	English Study Versions
KJV:	King James Version
LGBT:	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LXX:	Earliest extant Greek translation of the original Hebrew Bible
N.T:	New Testament
NASB or NAS:	New American Standard Bible
NEB:	New English Bible.
NIV:	New International Version
NKJV:	New King James Version
NRSV:	New Revised Standard Version.
O.T:	Old Testament
RSV:	Revised English Bible.
RV:	Revised Version.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the “way of love” and its relevance to Church Ministry portrayed in 1 Cor 13:4-7. This love is without limitation in its mode of practice towards all, it extends sweetness to all people, does not subscribe to envy, pride and self-importance but rather cares about the wellbeing of others, it fails to exasperate into pique partly because of patience and rejoices over truth. By so doing it is always looking out for the good in others just as Christ did on the cross.

The objectives that guided the study delved into the historical, literal and exegetical analysis, of Paul’s letter while delving into their relevance to the Church. The study employed a qualitative research design in conjunction with a variety of biblical studies techniques which enabled evaluation of the importance of the historical and cultural settings that inspired the letter's composition. The historical critical approach was used to collect and analyse data so that the researcher could fully comprehend the text. The textual criticism approach enabled the researcher to contrast and modify the many sources of 1 Corinthians.

The study establishes one major cardinal outcome; that love solves all things and differences and should be emulated as presented in 1 Cor 13:4-7 through extending patience, kindness, desist from envy, boasting, arrogance, rudeness, insistence in one’s own way, resenting others, rejoice with the truth and be able to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things and endure all things.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the general introduction and background to the study. It presents the research problem, the research aims and objectives, the research questions, the research justification and significance and the study methodology and literature review.

1.2 Background Of The Study

The church of Uganda (CoU) was essentially built on godly principles of love and care. However, over the past decades has been widely characterised by flaws that do not reflect the love that God has commanded us to share and express in the community. Adultery, immorality, idolatry, and division and factions have continued to dominate the life of Christians

The CoU is largely devoid of love. It being devoid of love portrays a number of traits that are vivid to all people and their effect felt by many such as: recurrent divisions and conflicts stemming from the House of Bishops and House of clergy which trickle down to the Laity; legalism which emphasises strict adherence to rules and doctrines over relationships; Judgmental attitudes - a preference for passing judgment on other people's actions over extending forgiveness and compassion; hypocrisy which involves the preaching compassion and love from the pulpit yet acting hypocritically in daily encounters; and double standards – holding people to standards that powerful people and leaders do not follow.

Furthermore, there is authoritarian leadership - which exhibits domination over care, instead of leaders showing compassion and helping the church, they impose authority and domination. This

form of leadership has exhibited a lack of empathy because they are aloof, unapproachable, demonstrating little or no regard members' individual hardships. Surface level connections resulting into the lack of depth and true connection in relationships within the church thus lack of intimate fellowship have also been evident.

There is also a manifestation of unforgiving and holding grudges in which mistakes are brutally condemned and are not dealt with grace or understanding. This unwillingness to forgive past offenses, results into enduring bitterness and animosity. Yet again gossip and slander is prevalent damaging reputations and trust within the church. Additionally, there is clear lack of confidentiality as personal matters are not kept confidential, leading to mistrust and fear of sharing. All these issues have led to increased opposition to change through stagnant practices and fear of innovation thus hanging on to customs and methods that might not be useful or applicable today.

This kind of conduct strongly contradicts with the Love God expects the church to manifest and portray towards one another. All of humanity should be governed and judged according to the principle of love. According to God's design, love, or *αγαπε* (agape), is the absolute necessity of the Christian life. Paul's description of the nature of love revealed God's intention for the church to be run exclusively by love, which is the fulfilment of the love enumerated in the Bible. This love is a prerequisite for the church's ministry and has greater significance than the gifts of the Spirit. It is too basic for mystic intensity; it is something that all Christians should demonstrate.

While the rest of the world struggles with divisions, the hunger for exercise and dominance over spiritual gifts, and immoral conduct, it is imperative that the church intervenes as the body of

Christ to restore sanity in the church and amongst the community of believers so that love abounds.

The writings in 1 Cor. were inspired by troubles that were regressing love amongst the believers yet they were unavoidable. Paul's letter is part of the efforts that were instrumental in addressing the mayhem that was threatening the church that had been left by the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, the text and flow in 1 Cor 13:4-7 is to admonish the Christians and give them a hope of change for a life deserving of a Christian. It is on this basis that this study sought to uncover the nature and action of love and, its relevance to the CoU as well as the would be masterly of love in 1 Cor 13:4-7 and its relevance amongst believers worldwide and to the church.

1.3 Statement Of The Problem

Today there are divisions in the church with multiple churches mushrooming and attacking one another. Sexual immorality including prostitution and human trafficking, incest, homosexuality, adultery and divorce are now dominant amongst the Christians. There is very high level of criticism and judgement of the church leaders as well identifying with specific church leaders while shunning others. On the other hand, religious leaders including Christians have been put on the spot for failing to speak for the weak. Idolatry, witchcraft, drunkenness, corruption and embezzlement of church funds are very evident in today's church. Wars and killings have become a clear display of loss of love for God and humanity. These acts and the trend of events defeat the purpose for which Paul wrote 1 Cor.13:4-7 due to the benefit of selfish believers. These unspeakable acts go to the root of the evil foundations of destruction of love and eventually, the church may be sold out to the devil who hates to see love flourish in the church.

My study therefore score the key fundamentals through which 1 Cor. 13:4-7 can be revived, entrenched and utilised by the Church to ensure that God's greatest commandment of love not only thrives but also builds a church that is God centred and based on biblical principles.

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objective of the study was to determine the original meaning of 1 Cor. 13:4-7 to the original audience and its relevance to church ministry.

1.4.1 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by specific objectives which helped the researcher to attain the main goal.

The specific objectives that guided the study were.

1. To discuss the historical, literal analysis and analyse the nature and purpose of Paul's letter to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 13:4-7
2. To examine the meaning of 1 Cor. 13: 4-7 to its original audience
3. To discuss the relevance of 1 Cor 13: 4-7 to the CoU today

1.5 Research Questions

The questions that guided the study to enable it reach the intended aims and objectives were:

1. What is the historical, literal analysis and the purpose of Paul's letter to the Corinthians (Cor.13:4-7)?
2. What is the detailed exegesis and meaning of 1 Cor 13: 4-7 to its original audience?

3. How relevant is 1 Cor 13: 4-7 to Church Ministry and CoU today?

1.6 Justification Of The Study

The love that God has called us to exhibit towards one another has been derailed by the selfishness of the church members. The church today is devoid of love and has progressively strayed from its central goals and tenets with disastrous consequences that impact the congregation as a whole as well as its public witness. CoU being devoid of love portrays a number of traits that are vivid to all people and their effect felt by many.

As earlier observed, the church has completely swayed away from Gods primary purpose which is love with recurrent divisions and conflicts stemming from the House of Bishops and House of clergy which trickle down to the Laity, legalism which emphasises strict adherence to rules and doctrines over relationships, Judgmental attitudes, hypocrisy, double standards, authoritarian leadership, surface level connections, un forgiveness, gospel slander, lack of confidence and increased opposition.

As witnessed from current reports, while the church is expected to spread the gospel of love and help Christians to become better by transforming them from ungodly acts to what God wants as espoused in 1 Cor. 13: 4-7, the Church has continually done the total opposite. Church leaders and Christians are overly involved in sexual immorality and acts of homosexuality, adultery and divorce are now a common feature amongst the churches and believers, wars, murders and killings are currently a common place for Christians. Idolatry, witchcraft, corruption, embezzlement of church funds and extortion of money from unsuspecting individuals have not

spared the church either. The aforementioned acts totally undermine the biblical principles and foundations of love.

This study is therefore timely as it provides insights and potential solutions to reviving the principles of love as written in 1 Cor. 13:4-7 and the entire Bible. Moreover, the study comes at a time when the CoU is at test if it can actually go back to the love that Christ left, and commanded the church to emulate.

1.7 Significance Of The Study

This study has examined the relevance of love as espoused in 1 Cor. 13:4-7 to the church of Uganda. It has also taken historical and literal, and exegetical nature of Paul's First letter to the Corinthians. This study is thus monumental since it is a call to the restoration of near lost love.

The study exposes the pertinent issues that have been responsible for the destruction of love in the church. Using this study therefore, churches and the entire body of Christ will be able to bridge the gaps that have been created with an ultimate aim of restoring love amongst the church and between believers.

Similarly, the study makes strides to trace love as preached by Paul in a community that was divided based on controversies of faith, belief, and practices. With this study highlighting the negative implications of such occurrences, the church today will use the study establishments to avoid any reoccurrences of such mistakes or flaws that saw the body of Christ greatly threatened.

This study is built on earlier existing studies. This means it has brought in new knowledge which can be used by future researchers to explore more and deeper into issues that undermine love in the church. Moreover, it can completely be used to develop new studies by bible scholars.

This study also focussed on the meaning of 1 Cor. 13:4-7 to its original audience yet delving deeper into the whole book of 1 Cor. and also what the Bible speaks on love. With this, it provides expansive knowledge on love within the context of 1 Cor. 13:4-7. This context is important for further exploration into love as proclaimed by the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

1.8 Scope Of The Study

This study covered one major dimension, and this includes the content scope as discussed below

1.8.1 Content Scope

The study examines the relevance of love as espoused in exegeting 1 Cor. 13:4-7 to the church of Uganda. It further goes into discussing the historical and literal analysis of 1 Corinthians. It also analyses the nature and purpose of Paul's letter to the Corinthians, examines the detailed exegesis of 1 Cor. 13: 4-7 and discusses its relevance to the Church of Uganda today.

The Greek New Testament and ESV were the major references alongside with other commentaries, journals and relevant books.

1.9 Literature Review

This section lays out information and findings from existing writings in books, journal articles, and unpublished works that relate to the text of 1 Cor 13:4-7. It provides the researchers understanding of the topic and its comparisons with existing works. To enrich this study, relevant themes were developed as a basis for the review.

1.9.1 Meaning Of Love

The word love has many different meanings, as shown in popular culture however, Paul portrays love's supremacy in church ministry.¹ ἀγάπη (agápē) from Ancient Greek constitutes "the highest form of love, charity" which is "the love of God for human beings and of human beings for God."² In comparison, this embraces a deep selfless love that endures and transcends all circumstances, as opposed to philautia, or brotherly love, or philia, or self-love.³ Agape, erotic and ecstatic love are depicted by Nyegren and Moffat as being quite different from one another.⁴ Paul, however, explicitly disengages agape from these nuances.⁵ The self-giving love of the cruciform described in 1 John 3:16 is the agape that is being discussed here; "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers". This Exegetical study greatly emphasises and agrees with Paul, Nyegren and Moffat for this Agape involves dying for one another daily in various aspects.

¹ Robinson, R., 2020. *What is Love?: An Exegesis of Love in 1 Corinthians 13: 1-10*. Rosealie Robinson.p.1

² Liddell, Henry George; Scott, Robert (1901). "ἀγάπη". *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p. 6

³ Moffatt, J., *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, London: Hodder & Stoughton 1983); C.f; Streiker, L.D., 1964. The Christian Understanding of Platonic Love A Critique of Anders Nygren's" Agape and Eros". *The Christian Scholar*, pp. 331-340. 48

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

Similarly, Mitchell and Knox define Agape and liken it to; "the mortar between the bricks of the Christian building."⁶ Therefore, the Agape that Paul emphasizes to the Corinthians is accepted and is essential to overcoming factionalism, conflict in the Greco-Roman world, and Hellenistic Judaism. It is assumed that this historical context shaped Paul's call for love to be the remedy for factionalism in the church.⁷ This study entirely agrees with these authors because where there is love division cannot suffice since love celebrates others achievements, patient and tolerant with one another, seeks only the good and kind. Therefore, where love resides only unity can suffice. This study continues the discussion based on the same parameters of love. 1 Cor. 13:4-7 is therefore an appeal for a lifestyle that tackles actual issues within the church.

The meaning of Agape strongly disproves "self-centred spirituality",⁸ and encourages the Corinthians to seek love.⁹ If someone extols the virtues of their own unique gifts, Paul shows how worthless these gifts are in the absence of love. Thus, trying to make a name for oneself by displaying one's spiritual strength in whatever manner undermines community and is counterproductive. This aspect of Agape benefits this dissertation study since the church is reminded just like Paul reminded the Corinthian church that spiritual gifts are not the marrow of their Christian existence but love.

Similarly, Sorokin's classic, in defining love examined the five "dimensions" of love; adequacy, truthfulness, extent, strength, and pureness.¹⁰ Even though he claimed that love could not be

⁶ Mitchell, M.M., 1993. *Paul and the rhetoric of reconciliation: An exegetical investigation of the language and composition of 1 Corinthians*. Westminster John Knox Press. pp. 165-71, 273-77

⁷ Ibid., at p.8

⁸ Raubenheimer, J.E., 2002. *Structural modelling of the interrelationships between Christian faith, religious orientation and love styles* (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Free State).

⁹ Heath, T.R., 1966. Ceslaus Spicq, OP "Thologie Morale du Nouveau Testament"(Book Review). *Thomist: a Speculative Quarterly Review*, 30(1), p.89.

¹⁰ D'Ambrosio, J.G. and Faul, A.C., 2013. Love: Through the Lens of Pitirim Sorokin. *Analytic Teaching and Philosophical Praxis*, 34(2), pp.36-46.

quantified in a linear fashion, he also insisted that individuals could distinguish between displays of love that fell on and off of the five dimensions that are briefly described;

The requirements that any specific act of love places on the one expressing it are the first indication of how adequate a person's love is. Second, the degree to which an act of love transcends the giver and recipient is a measure of the sincerity of the love. Thirdly, the length of time invested in an act of love is referred to as the duration of love. Fourth, according to Sorokin's approach, the motivation behind a loving act determines how pure a person's love is and lastly, the effects of the loving act are what determine whether a love is adequate.¹¹

In this measurement, the only meaningful aspect of love was its impact on the one receiving it. This study is in support of the Sorokin's view because the love Paul insinuates is impactful on the people receiving it. It binds people together, breaks the codes of un-forgiveness and leads to forgiveness.

1.9.2 Love In 1 Corinthians

The Love of God in 1 Cor.13:4-7 is portrayed as patient, kind, not arrogant or rude, does not envy or boast, does not insist on its own way, not irritable or resentful, it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all thing and endures all things.

The book presents love as patient, thus described by Strobel¹² and Barr as; “*to be slow to anger*”¹³ and to take time patiently.¹⁴ These authors provide examples of this patience as the patience exhibited by the Lord towards us, always waiting for us to change, study the word and get transformed. This patience is clearly portrayed by Abraham in Heb. 6:15 and his commended

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Strobel, A., 1989. *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*. Theolog. Verlag.,p 203

¹³ Barr, A., 1950. Love in the Church: A Study of First Corinthians, Chapter 13. *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 3(4),. pp. 416-425.

¹⁴ Ibid

for patiently waiting for God's timing.¹⁵ Paul exhorts love to wait patiently because it not only treats the loved one with patience but also acknowledges that time is crucial in ensuring the other person's well-being.¹⁶ This study continues the discussion on why the exercise of patience for one another is important. Patience is applicable in a variety of circumstances, including the act of patiently waiting, being patient in times of hardship or suffering (Rom. 12:12, Col. 1:11), accepting justice without looking for revenge, bearing injustice with kindness. This study encourages Christian in the CoU to exercise patience with one another as a way of showing love that God has commanded us to express towards one another.

Spicq observes that the kindness of love is; the warm, generous welcome the Christian always gives a brother¹⁷ by trying his hardest to be considerate, helpful, and kind, always in a cheerful manner and validates the generous component of agape. This study strongly agrees with Spicq and views kindness as selfless, compassionate, and merciful conduct extended to others. Kindness is a lifestyle and is supposed to be a part of our lives and daily practiced by choice. Kindness being one of the fruits of the Spirit, we should grow in it deliberately (Gal. 5:22) and, it is that which breaks the spiral of passion, anger and resentment by showing kindness: "*not only by enduring nobly, but also by soothing and comforting do they cure the sore and heal the wound of passion.*"¹⁸

Furthermore Charles B. Williams views Agape as; that which never boils with jealousy. This envy which was carried over from status seeking, non-Christian Corinthian culture into the Christian church was not "of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 3:1-3), and is deemed to be incompatible

¹⁵ Harned, D.B., 2015. *Patience: How we wait upon the world*. Wipf and Stock Publishers. pp.1-21

¹⁶ Crabb, L.J. and Crabb, L., 1987. *Understanding people: Deep longings for relationship*. Harper Collins. pp.35-46

¹⁷ Spicq, C., 1991. *Lexique théologique du Nouveau Testament*. Saint-Paul. p.151.

¹⁸ Chrysostom, S., 1889. *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*. Lulu. com. p.44

with love, which “does not begrudge the status and honour of another but, delights in it for the sake of the other”. Moffat and Spicq¹⁹ emphasise that because there was an issue of status seeking and triumphalism at Corinth, many believers seemed to come to act the part of braggarts, which was at odds with cruciform, Christ like love. The study greatly supports this assertion; the fact that agape is not concerned about self, it has no need to call attention to its display. The moment we want a pat on the back or recognition for some good thing we have done, we are moving away from agape. This is where the ultra-rich often fail miserably. They give millions of dollars to some charitable work or noble cause, then issue a press release about it thus bragging. This study makes clear that indeed with the dwelling of envy, Christian love cannot abound because envy can lead to a destructive emotion both physically and mentally.

Love does not focus on self-interest,²⁰ to Paul, agape is against self – love. Agape does not pursue its own interests (1 Cor 13:5), but rather, this is the obvious outcome of its theocentric concept of love. Agape brings judgment upon the life that revolves around the ego and its desires. When God's agape is poured into a person's heart through the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5), their life is refocused on a new centre. The focus shifts from their own ego to Christ,²¹ because Eros pursues its own interests, eros cupid is portrayed in Graeco-Roman mythology not only as a suitor but also as possessing clever, seductive, and charming ways.²² This study disagrees with Eros and is in support of Agape because Eros is depicted armed with bows and arrows, symbolizing a cunning hunter.

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Streiker, L.D., 1964. The Christian Understanding of Platonic Love A Critique of Anders Nygren's" Agape and Eros". *The Christian Scholar*, pp.331-340.

²¹ Ibid

²² Tollefsen, T.T., 2021. Eros and agape—a critique of Anders Nygren. *Love—ancient perspectives. Oslo: Cappelen Damm Akademisk*, pp.17-29.

1.9.3 Relevance Of Love Today

Love is a timeless guidance for relationships; healthy and long-lasting relationships are based on the qualities of love that have been mentioned: perseverance, humility, kindness, patience, and forgiveness.²³ These characteristics, which offer a guide for treating people with respect and compassion, are just as important now as they were in the past.²⁴ These tenets make all the difference in all forms of relationships. Church leaders, friends, couples etc. can mend fences, improve communication, and deepen their emotional bond by letting go of hurt, resentment, and anger. This leads to healing and understanding. This study is in support of Hemfelt and Minirth as it draws the thinking into the love relationship that is more sympathetic, and satisfying.

Love helps in combating adverse influences; the unselfish and enduring nature of love depicted in this text presents a counter-cultural perspective in today's society, which strongly focused on individualism, rapid gratification, and competition.²⁵ This study of 1 Cor 13:4-7 therefore calls people to put aside their vanity, conceit, and selfishness in order to live a more giving and community-focused existence.

In terms of conflict resolution, the characteristics of love that are listed in the scripture are essential for settling disputes and promoting peace.²⁶ In social, professional, or personal settings,

²³ Hemfelt, R., Minirth, F. and Meier, P., 2003. *Love is a Choice: The definitive book on letting go of unhealthy relationships*. Thomas Nelson. p. 107-118

²⁴ Bennett, J.B., 2000. *Time and intimacy: A new science of personal relationships*. Routledge. p.52

²⁵ Aumer, K., Sato, J., Jaksuwijitkorn, M., Austli, M., Krizizke, J., Erickson, M.A., Gray, K., Fugett, N. and Blake, R.A., 2024. Mixed-methods analysis of cultural influences on the attitudes of love and hate. *Current Psychology*, 43(3), pp.1994-2004.

²⁶ Graber, E.C., Laurenceau, J.P., Miga, E., Chango, J. and Coan, J., 2011. Conflict and love: predicting newlywed marital outcomes from two interaction contexts. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 25(4), p.541.

mending damaged relationships and getting past misunderstandings require kindness, patience, and the capacity for forgiveness²⁷ which are the main focus of this dissertation study.

Better mental and emotional health can result from putting 1 Cor. 13:4-7's teachings on love into practice. Reducing tension and anxiety and fostering a sense of contentment and serenity are the results of practicing patience, kindness, and forgiveness.²⁸ This study presents a more upbeat and peaceful way of thinking by encouraging people to let go of their grudges and negativity.²⁹

Furthermore, love is vital to building resilient, supporting communities and church ministry in particular. People may help create a society and church ministry that is more compassionate and harmonious by living up to the values of 1 Cor. 13:4-7.³⁰ In any community, love that endures, hopes, trusts, and protects can serve as a foundation for resilience and mutual support³¹ just as it has been clearly indicated by Elizabeth this study contends the same arguments with expansion.

1 Cor 13:4-7; presents a roadmap for spiritual development and maturity for people who identify as religious.³² By encouraging believers to show God's love in their contacts with others, it helps them feel more connected to their religion and to the body of believers.³³ Love can model and influence in the fundamental of love which sets a strong example for others.³⁴ Through exhibiting selflessness, kindness, and patience in their own lives, people can encourage those around them

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Arias, B., Ovejero, A. and Morentin, R., 2009. Love and emotional well-being in people with intellectual disabilities. *The Spanish journal of psychology*, 12(1), pp.204-216.

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Elizabeth, L., 2012. Building Respect, Building Community. *Beyond Zuccotti Park: Freedom of Assembly and the Occupation of Public Space*, p.170.

³¹ Ibid

³² Ai, A.L., 2000. Spiritual well-being, spiritual growth, and spiritual care for the aged: A cross-faith and interdisciplinary effort. *Journal of Religious Gerontology*, 11(2), pp.3-28.

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Carvalho, F.K. and Mulla, Z.R., 2020. Power of Love (AGAPE) in Leadership: A Theoretical Model and Research Agenda. *South Asian Journal of Management*, 27(4).

to embrace similar values, spreading beneficial behaviour and attitudes throughout society.³⁵ This study on 1 Cor. 13:4-7 is indeed in agreement with Laude and Jonkers since it dwells on love as a foundation for behaviour and character.

Global relevance; in a world where conflict and division are common, 1 Cor.13:4–7's message of love is applicable. It demands that everyone treats people with respect and decency, regardless of their cultural, religious, or social background.³⁶

1.9.4 Literature Review Summary

1 Cor. 13:4-7 therefore is a call to a way of life that addresses real problems in the church. The purpose is to debunk “self-centred spirituality” and to exhort the Corinthians to pursue love. If any exhort their own particular gifts as the highest and best, Paul demonstrates how devoid of value these gifts are without love. To seek personal distinction by showing off one’s spiritual prowess in some way is a self-defeating exercise that destroys community.³⁷ Paul reminds the Corinthians that love, not spiritual gifts, is the marrow of their Christian existence.

1 Corinthians 13:4–7 is still incredibly applicable today, providing ageless guidance on how to develop love in all facets of life. Its tenets encourage happier interpersonal interactions, more robust communities, and individual wellbeing, which makes it an invaluable manual for navigating the complexity of contemporary life.

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Laude, P. and Jonkers, P., 2019. Philosophy as Love of Wisdom and Its Relevance to the Global Crisis of Meaning. pp.36-38

³⁷ Godet, F. and Cusin, A., 1957. Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. p.237

1.10 Methodology

This study employed a purely qualitative research design using the various biblical exegetical studies methods to help the researcher gain deeper understanding of the text studied. It was also necessary for scoring the significance of the study within the historical and cultural contexts that prompted the writing of the letter.

The study employed exegetical research design which is a thorough, inductive analysis of a biblical text in which the exegete methodically uses recognized exegetical processes to ascertain the interpretation and consequences of the text (1 Cor.13:4-7). A competent biblical exegete satisfies every research requirement.³⁸ Important to note that the biblical text is the subject of investigation and the goal is to find the text's meaning and relevance by solving an interpretive puzzle.³⁹

Information was gathered and analysed using the historical critical approach to enable the researcher understand the text in its fullness. This approach focuses on the historical context which emphasises on the “the culture, customs, languages, beliefs, and history of the author and his original audience”.⁴⁰ It further gives an insight into how a portion of the Bible fits into its world.⁴¹ It provides the background information that may explain the significance of words, phrases, customs, people, places, and events that the biblical author refers to.⁴² Our understanding of the Bible itself improves with more knowledge of its setting. The lives and eras of the peoples and cultures described in the Bible can provide us with important context for understanding

³⁸ Smith, K.G., How to do an exegetical study. *Sparknotes Bible “Old Testament, Job”*. p 11.

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Doriani, D., 2002. Doctrinal preaching in historical perspective. *Trinity journal*, 23(1), p.35

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Bieringer, R., 2002. Biblical revelation and exegetical interpretation according to Dei Verbum 12.

biblical ideas.⁴³ Important to note is that this historical context approach is not explicitly mentioned in the bible and the reason is because the historical circumstances were well known by the authors and original readers of the time.⁴⁴ Majority exegetes advise that bible readers should always look for historical context within the text itself. This is a call is to read with an inquisitive attitude in order to inquire into what the historical circumstances of the given text were which draws the reader into further study of the text. The comprehension of a piece can be deepened or even altered by the historical context. This approach enabled the researcher to understand the historical setting of 1 Corinthians and why it was written. It was also important in scoring the issues that were pertinent to love since Christians were divided and going off track the message that the Lord Jesus left for them.

The study further employed Cultural criticism by considering the cultural norms then and values, and beliefs the Christians in Corinth embraced. This was taken from a perspective of the manner and nature in which the text under study and the entire Book of 1 Cor. reflects the cultures then.⁴⁵ By this approach, the researcher was able to reflect and compare the current cultural practices *vis-à-vis* those of the time at the writing of 1 Cor and how they were interpreted as well as their impact on the audience of the Church in Corinth.

The researcher further made use of textual criticism which is a field of study that examines the text of the Bible and draws inferences from its observations. Since none of the N.T. books had original manuscripts, textual examination was required.⁴⁶ What is present are copies that were

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Conrad, E.W., 2007. The Bible and Culture: The Role of The Text in Interpretation. *Canon&Culture*, 1(1). pp.43-71.

⁴⁶ Ehrman, B.D., 2006. Text and Interpretation: The Exegetical Significance of the "Original" Text. In *Studies in the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*. pp. 307-324

created a long time after the originals, but they were not created using the autographs.⁴⁷ They were made from copies of the autographs. These copies differ from one another, to a greater or lesser extent.⁴⁸ As a result, textual criticism looks at the hundreds of manuscripts that have survived and attempts to determine what the original authors themselves must have said using accepted critical concepts.⁴⁹ Wherein, there was a deliberate effort to compare and make variations of the different writings about 1 Cor. various Greek manuscripts- the papyri the earliest available witnesses, Majuscules – written on parchment and early versions – there are a large number of NT manuscripts produced in other languages;⁵⁰ which were looked into to help the researcher understand the original texts to ensure accuracy in the study reporting.

The study also employed the literal investigation: such as the genre, narrator, character, events, plot and meaning. In interpreting 1 Cor. 13:4-7, the study begins by sequentially explaining the text according to its sub-themes as dependent on the thoughts expressed in this study. In this explanation, the researcher examines the meanings of the text's individual grammatical elements, particularly, word, phrases, figures of speech, and sentences, as used by the messenger.⁵¹ Thereafter, on the basis of the previous examination, the original message, meaning and expected response were considered. The effectiveness of this textual interpretive study necessitates consulting the original languages by use of Greek lexicons.⁵²

⁴⁷Ibid

⁴⁸ Ehrman, B.D., 2006. *Studies in the textual criticism of the New Testament* (Vol. 33). Brill. pp. 127-130

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Epp, E.J., 2005. Textual criticism in the exegesis of the New Testament. In *Perspectives on New Testament Textual Criticism*. pp. 461-495

⁵¹ Schneiders, S.M., 1978. Faith, Hermeneutics, and the Literal Sense of Scripture. *Theological Studies*, 39(4), pp.719-736.

⁵² Ibid

1.11 Conclusion

Love as portrayed in 1 Cor. 13:4-7 is built on the love between God and man and between man and man. It calls for tolerance of one another even where one is at fault. Indeed, as shown in the various existing texts and literature, the church including the C.o.U can draw wide lessons that are not only relevant for relationships but also for building God's kingdom such as through exaltation of love above spiritual gifts and evangelism.

CHAPTER TWO

EXEGESIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7

2.1 Introduction

This chapter of the study presents a brief background of the book, historical and literal study and a detailed Exegetical analysis of 1 Cor 13: 4-7. It is one of the significant passages that entails insights on Love that Paul portrayed to the Corinthians following reports from Chloe's household and the Christians at large. This chapter therefore emphasises; "what love is?" and "what love is not?" according to Paul's understanding of love.

2.2 Background Of The Book 1 Corinthians

The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, was probably written about 53–54 CE at Ephesus, Asia Minor and majority of the theologians agree to the fact that; he is the original and authentic author of this epistle. There were times when the Corinthian church seemed to operate on several levels against what was expected of it as the body of Christ, leading to crises. Paul felt a pastoral duty to confront the issues that were prevalent in order to restore sanity and order, having founded this church. Thus, the letter is Paul's answer to the issues that the Corinthian Church was facing at the time, offering counsel and correction in an effort to aid in their recovery and assist them achieve a "disciplined unity in the faith."⁵³

⁵³Hays, R.B., 2008. *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honor of Richard B. Hays*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing. p. 6

Among the worries was the exaltation of spiritual gifts above love yet love is a basis upon which spiritual gifts are exercised in the church body. To Paul this love connects every act with God and makes our actions and gifts useful. Despite different gifts, expressing God's love should be the ultimate purpose of every gift.

2.3 Historical And Literary Study Of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

The historical, and literal study of 1 Cor. presents great reflections on the message as portrayed by Paul. The purpose is to ensure that the reader fully comprehends 1 Cor. 13:4-7 and its tenacity to the original audience.

Literally, for Paul to effectively drive his message accurately to the Corinthians, he intentionally writes in a methodical way. He structures 1 Corinthians as a unified literal composition offering logical and theological unity and further displaying unified thematic, rhetoric, and chiasmic ABA' pattern or parallelism in its argumentation that can be seen throughout the entire letter.⁵⁴ Thus, he displayed a unique document because the letter is seen as an appeal to unity of the Corinthian community.

History has it that; various, sociological, economic, and religious factors that made up the environment of the city of Corinth had a profound influence on one's understanding of Paul's letter to the Church there.⁵⁵ The general layout of the Corinthian metropolis, where Paul's audience was situated, is herein discussed; the city was ideally situated for overland trade traffic since it was near two important harbors, Lechaem to the west and Cenchreae to the east.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Raymond Francis Collins, *First Corinthians*, Collegeville, 1999. pp.10–14

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ Fee D. Gordon, *The First Epistle to Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1993). p.35

⁵⁶ Ibid

According to David Garland, the people of Corinth were well-known for their ostentation and luxury during Paul's time there. The opportunity to become wealthy through commerce was granted to several assertive freedmen and their progeny, who would have been entitled to freedom, by the city. As they ascended the social ladder, settlers from all over the empire were drawn to the favourable economic environment. However, this civilization was not equitable. From a Roman perspective, it was an elite and hierarchical oligarchy that was secure. The elites limited access to their group by a variety of social control techniques, such as social ties, marriage, and wealth.⁵⁷ This kind of luxury and ostentation was greatly manifested in the Corinthian Church and led to a devoid of love within the congregation.

As the essential conduit between Rome and her eastern provinces, Corinth was bustling with trade with wealthy residents when Paul arrived to start his missionary work, drawing traders from all across the empire. These became members of the Corinthian Church. Greeks made every effort to maintain their ancient culture, whereas the Corinthians engaged in new mind-sets and lifestyles driven by their newfound wealth and unrestrained by ancestors' customs.⁵⁸ This led to conflicts amongst the church members.

2.4 Detailed Exegesis Of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

This study follows the widely acceptable division and exegetes vv. 4-7 below.; The study further uses key words and phrases in exegeting the text and this will be divided into two thematic sections; “what love is” and “what love is not”. This love is a determinant of Human life and love alone that endures, triumphs and with eternal content.

⁵⁷Garland E. David. *1Corinthians*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on New Testament. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.2003) pp 2-3

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.3

2.4.1 What Love Is

2.4.1.1 Meaning Of Verse 4

“^eLove is patient and ^fkind; love ^gdoes not envy or boast; it ^his not arrogant” (1 Cor 13:4).

The study goes ahead to exegete and give the meaning to love, patient and kind which are core attributes of Agape.

2.4.1.2 ἀγάπη

“ἀγάπη” is the quality of warm regard for and interest in another, esteem, affection, regard, love without limitation to very intimate relationships, and very seldom in general Greek of sexual attraction.⁵⁹ With this definition, Paul clearly disengages agape from the erotic, sensual and ecstatic nuances which the verb ἀγαπᾶν can portray in non-Christian Greek texts.⁶⁰ Agape comes to us as a quite new creation of Christianity, without it nothing that is Christian would be Christian.”⁶¹

Important to note, that; Ἀγαπᾶν enters Paul’s thinking as the usual LXX translation for Heb אהב (‘ahab), to love, and the noun ἀγάπη translates אהבה (‘ahabah), love, sixteen times in the LXX.⁶² In this context, the third occurrence of agape is ranked “C,” and the UBS 4th ed. Places it in square brackets as incapable of a clear decision. It is omitted by p 46, B, and 33, but was included by majority of the Committee.⁶³ Agape therefore draws us to the cross and the fact that the cross is the standard of an act of will and position that prioritizes the welfare of others over one's own

⁵⁹ Danker, F.W., 2004. *Biblical Greek Language and Lexicography: Essays in Honor of Frederick W. Danker*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, p.20.

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ Moffat, R.M., 1902. Love in the NT. *The Expository Times*, 13(4), pp.174-178. Cf. Streiker, L.D., 1964. The Christian Understanding of Platonic Love A Critique of Anders Nygren's" Agape and Eros". *The Christian Scholar*, pp.331-340.

⁶² Elliott, J.K., 2001. The Dead Sea Scrolls. Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations, Volume 4B: Angelic Liturgy: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice. 1:6-7

⁶³ Metzger, B.M., 1971. *A textual commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Vol. 28). London: United Bible Societies. Metzger, pp. 498-99.

interests, it is deeply Christological. This is the selfless grace of the Christomorphic, cruciform God, which eloquently illustrates how agape enters a world that has already been shaped by Eros. This is the Love Paul is calling all the Corinthians to; the strange kind of love that would cause a father to put his only son to death for the sins of wicked people, especially when the Son himself is righteous and Holy.⁶⁴

The Corinthians were green about this strange kind of Love, and to them the practice of spiritual gifts was more important than love, "*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*" (1 John 4:10). That foreign kind of love boggles our minds. Whether or not we can understand it, the amazing fact remains that it is blessedly real – God sent his sinless Son to die for us sinners. What manner of Love?⁶⁵

Paul calls the Corinthian church to embrace and practice this manner of Love to one another and die for each other in many aspects. Most importantly, as we lay down our lives for others, we communicate to the world, the incredible love of God; this can be through giving, caring for the widows, poor, pastoral visits, discipleship, mentorship, visiting the prisoners, defending the innocent or poor.

2.4.1.3 Love Is Patient

The verb μακροθυμέω means to be patient or to have patience.⁶⁶ To Paul he meant; the ability to wait calmly and to be patient.⁶⁷ The verb also insinuates; to bear up under provocation without

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Thiselton, A.C., 2000. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A commentary on the Greek text* (Vol. 1). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, p. 1046

⁶⁷ Thayer, J.H., 1889. *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament*. p.543

complaint, to be patient forbearing.⁶⁸ To Paul this was very important and necessary for Christian living and the exercise of our spiritual gifts as was in Corinth.

Different Bible versions refer to this aspect as follows; first the older English *suffereth long* (AV/KJV, RV) more strictly conveys the compound form made up of μακρός insinuates; “long in time or extended space” and θύμος, which denotes passionate longing resulting in the translation “long tempered.” Secondly the LXX μακροθυμείν translates as ַרְאִיָּהוּ אֵל meaning (he’ erik aph), “to be slow to anger” (Prov. 19:11) and to take time patiently this has been witnessed in Prov. 25:15; Eccl. 8:12.⁶⁹ More notably, in Ecclesiastes 7:8, those who are patient in spirit or in disposition –to –act (LXX, μακρόθυμος πνύματι, Heb. אַרְךָ, arek) are better than the proud in spirit (LXX, ύψηλόν); hence meaning not to be quick to anger expresses the negative parallel (Eccl. 7:9).

Similarly, Paul enjoins believers to give their support to “the weak” and to act patiently (μακροθυμείν) towards all (1 Thess 5:14).

It is important to note that elsewhere in the N.T the word occurs only on Jas 5:7-8 wait patiently, therefore brothers and sisters, (έως τής παρουσίας τού κυρίου) according to Matt. 18:26, 29). In other books of the bible it has been defined as; “wait patiently for me, and I will pay you everything” (Lk. 18:7, Heb. 6:15, and 2 Pt. 3:9).⁷⁰

The patience Paul insinuates has been likened to that written about in in 2 Peter 3:9. Thus, the patience of the Lord is exhibited in his waiting for the time appropriate for the readers

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Hatch, E. and Redpath, H.A., 1897. *A concordance to the Septuagint and the other Greek versions of the Old Testament (including the apocryphal books): Supplement* (Vol. 2). Clarendon Press., p.893. Cf. Strobel, K., 2014. In Your Light They Shall See Light: A Theological Prolegomena for Contemplation. *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care*, 7(1), pp.85-106.

⁷⁰ Ibid

themselves, not in mere delay in fulfilling a promise; while similarly in Hebrews 6:15 the writer commends Abraham as a model of one who waits patiently for God's timing, leaving that to God. Traditions which attempt to stress "eschatological urgency" need to ensure that this quality is not undermined.

The Agape Paul urges the Corinthians to portray, waits patiently not only because it deals patiently with the loved one but also because it recognises that the right timing plays a huge part in securing the welfare of the other. Love does not blunder. In the Corinthians, by contrast, were all too ready to jump the gun both in their assumptions about Paul and other ministers (1 Cor. 4:5) and in anticipation their own triumph (1 Cor. 4:8).

Paul intended to make vivid that love produces necessary passive and active responses towards others, and also insinuates active goodness on their behalf. Therefore, representing the two sides of divine attitude toward human kind (Rom 2:4) because these two cognate nouns appear together. It is also one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, Col. 3:12) as well as a description of Paul's Apostolic ministry in 2 Cor. 6:6.

Paul urges, that love waits, and calls upon the Corinthians to act patiently (μακροθυμέω) towards all; the faint hearted and the weak (1 Thess. 5:14). The patience of the Lord is exhibited in his waiting for the time appropriate for the fulfilment of His promise (Heb. 6:15). This patience can be used in a variety of circumstances, including the constructive act of waiting, being patient in the face of hardship or difficulty (Rom 12:12, Col 1:11), accepting justice without demanding revenge,⁷¹ endures injustice with compassion and is patient with people (1 Cor. 6:7). The exhortation "to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak" is capped off

⁷¹ Carson, D.A., 1994. *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition*. Inter-Varsity Press. p.1181

with the exhortation “to be patient with all of them” (1 Thess. 5:14). Paul further says that he was able to carry out his mission because of patience (2 Cor. 6:6, 12:12, 2 Tim. 3:10). Nouwen concludes by saying that it means willingness to live the situation out to the full in the belief that something hidden there will manifest itself to us.

2.4.1.4 Love Is Kind

Paul portrays that love is kind and its verb *χρηστευεται* (kindness) occurs only here in the NT and otherwise only in *χρηστεύεσθε, ούτως χρηστευθήσεται ύμίν*, he portrays this kindness as a dynamic action, as opposed to the more static adjective, being kind.⁷² The adjectival form *χρηστός*, in the first century, the adjectives kind, friendly, and benevolent were frequently employed, but not the verb (Philo, Embassy to Gaius 67; Josephus, Antiquities 6.92; 9.133; in Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 642; Dio Cassius 66:18).⁷³ Findlay believes Paul might have created the verb for his own intention. However, in Hellenistic literature, the related noun *χρηστότης*, compassion, charity, and uprightness, frequently appears with this adjective.⁷⁴

Paul insinuated that; “Love is Kind,” “*suggests the warm, generous welcome the Christian always gives his brother. Does his utmost to be thoughtful, helpful, and kind, always in a pleasant way.... And confirms the element of magnanimity in agape.*”⁷⁵ Following the conditions of the Corinthians, Paul also meant “*sweetness to all persons*”.⁷⁶ Notably, among the myriad problems in the Corinthian church were: claims of spiritual superiority over one another, suing one another in public courts (1 Cor. 6:1–3), abusing the communal meal (1 Cor. 11:17-34) and sexual

⁷² Schrage, W., 2012. *Der erste Brief an die Korinther/3 1 Kor 11, 17-14, 40* (Vol. 7). Patmos. pp. 295-96

⁷³ Findlay, GG *St. Paul's First epistle to the Corinthians* (Vol. 2). Hodder and Stoughton.p.899. Thiselton, A.C., 2011. *1 Corinthians: A shorter exegetical and pastoral commentary*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing. p.886

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Spicq, C., 2006. *Agape in the New Testament, Volume 2: Agape in the Gospel, Epistles and Apocalypse of St. John*. Wipf and Stock Publishers. p. 151.

⁷⁶ Jenkins, C., 1908. Origen on I Corinthians. III. *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 9(36), pp.500-514.

misbehaviour (1 Cor. 6:12-20). These were all acts of unkindness. Little did they know that extending kindness, exemplifies God's character (Rom. 2:4, 11:22, Eph. 2:7) and presence (Eph. 4:32) something they were supposed to imitate (Col. 3:12).

In this Paul intended to urge the Corinthians to be in position to respond to others with the same tender heart and forgiveness just as God has shown us through Christ (Eph. 4:32). Kindness therefore appreciates the fact that everyone is carrying a heavy burden.

To Paul this love is not only enduring nobly, but also soothing and comforting thus do curing sores and healing the wound of passion.”⁷⁷ The Corinthians are called upon to; kindness and selfless, compassionate, and merciful conduct extended to others.

Acts of kindness warm our hearts, bring smiles to our faces, and stick with us for years to come. Kindness is a lifestyle and is supposed to be a part of our lives and daily practiced by choice. Kindness being one of the fruits of the Spirit we are to become deliberate to grow in it (Gal. 5:22).

2.4.1.2 Meaning of Verse 7

“^mLove bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (Verse 7).

In v.7 of 1 Cor. 13, Paul ends this unit with four strong verbs that illustrate absolutely the action of agape. “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things”. Paul has already used the first of these verbs to characterize his own conduct as an apostle: he will “bear anything rather than put an obstacle in the way, of the gospel of Christ”. Paul himself models authentic agape in his long-suffering apostolic role. Paul shows them “a more excellent

⁷⁷ Mitchell, M.M., 2022. John Chrysostom and Christian Love Magic: A Spellbinding Moment in the History of Interpretation of 1 Cor 7.2–4. *New Testament Studies*, 68(2), pp.119-143.

way” not only through his word-picture of love but also through his example, which he wants them to imitate (11:1).

Paul intended to show the Corinthians that there is nothing that love cannot face, it perseveres and is able to live in every kind of circumstance because the spirit makes it possible for this life, which is so affected by God's ceasing mercy in Christ, to love others in return. It puts faith in God to act on behalf of the one it loves, hoping that God would ultimately extend mercy to them.

Paul uses the verb in 1 Cor. 9:4 where it means to bear in the sense of to put up with—to provide some support for the latter. However, it is generally acknowledged that the verb does not usually indicate this. Perhaps in 13:7 *στέγει* meaning "love throws a cloak of silence over what is displeasing in another person,"⁷⁸ This interpretation is taken up by Peter Lombard and several medieval interpreters who hold that Paul provides an example of God's love for individuals.

In other translations, the word "roof" is associated with the idea of protecting rather than covering; that is, bearing refers to carrying or sustaining as opposed to putting up with. The NIV always provides protection; the NRSV uses bears in everything to play a lexicographically safe but theologically risky game; and the NJB develops the idea of "covering" by stating that it is always willing to make accommodations, which symbolizes a concept of support.⁷⁹

Paul insinuated that; to bear, in the sense of to put up with, is tautologous in relation to *ὑπομένει* and hence means to cover in the sense of to excuse.⁸⁰ This means to struggle without ceasing thus; loving all burdens, privation, trouble, hardship toil occasioned.

⁷⁸ BAGD, pp. 765-66

⁷⁹ Whitaker, "Love springs no leak," Exp. 21, 8th ser. (1921):126

⁸⁰ Godet, F. and Cusin, A., 1957. Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians., 2:247

Paul also meant; love's support in enduring everything for an endless duration.⁸¹ In this instance his assumption of love is that Paul believes he is so manifesting his love and concern for Corinth because this love never runs out of support, never loses faith, never runs out of hope, and never gives up.⁸² None of the authors gives this chapter the consideration it deserves. Paul successfully claims to be the paradigm through which God's love is experienced by identifies love more with truth and detached concern in general than with particular circumstances. However, it is undeniable that Paul endeavours to embody the qualities he attributes to love in 1 Cor.13.

Paul intended to show the Corinthians and the church today that there is nothing that love cannot face, it perseveres and is able to live in every kind of circumstance because the spirit makes it possible for this life, which is so affected by God's ceasing mercy in Christ (Rom 8:9), to love others in return. It puts faith in God to act on behalf of the one it loves, hoping that God would ultimately extend mercy to them.

2.4.2 What Love Is Not?

2.4.2.1 Meaning of Verse 4e & f

“Love ^edoes not envy or boast; it ^his not arrogant” (1 Cor 13: 4 ^e & ^f).

Here, Paul attempted to demonstrate to the Corinthians that jealous people always want what others have, and that envy of others with superior gifts appeared to be the root of the issue in Corinth. Those with the "greater" gifts may have struggled with boasting or conceit, while other

⁸¹ Meyer, H.A.W., 1884. *Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistles to the Corinthians* (Vol. 6). Funk & Wagnalls. p.393

⁸² Stuart, “Love Is... Paul,” *Exp Tim* 102 (1991);pp. 264-66. Goh, M.H., 2014. *The Middle Voice of Love in 1 Corinthians: Reading Singularity and Plurality from Different Cultures*. Vanderbilt University.

believers may have struggled with envy. As a result, this study exegetes and discusses these issues in the section that follows.

2.4.2.1.1 Does Not Envy

Paul intended to make clear to the Corinthians that the envy which is carried over from a status seeking, non-Christian Corinthian culture into the Christian church is not “of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 3:1-3) and, is deemed to be incompatible with love, which “does not begrudge the status and honour of another but, delights in it for the sake of the other.”

The Greek word for envy; Ζηλόω means; to have intense negative feelings over another’s achievements or success, and to be filled with jealous.⁸³ It is noteworthy that lexicographical research reveals that ζηλούτε has many meanings; it can also be used positively to mean; strive, desire something really, strain oneself, or negatively to envy or covet.⁸⁴

English versions employ strive for (NRSV), eagerly desire (NIV), desire earnestly (RV), and covet (AV/KJV). REB adeptly tries to remove the pejorative sense of envy or covet by translating prize, while NJB translates it as; “set your mind on” it connotes to be deeply concerned about or zealously concerned about something. It can therefore convey the meaning of the Greek usually when the accusative or object of concern is personal.

Furthermore, the LXX ζηλόω translates קינע (qinne) and applies the notion of burning or boiling emotions, stance, or will for earnest striving, for passionate zeal, or for burning envy. Again, Paul chooses the verb; “does not burn with envy” and it is translated as; “to be filled with

⁸³ Thayer, J.H., 1889. A greek-english lexicon of the New Testament. p. 377

⁸⁴ BAGD.,Thayer, J.H., Grimm, C.L.W. and Wilke, C.G., 1996. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Hendrickson Publishers. pp. 338

jealousy or envy, but burning conveys the intensity more precisely than the hydrodynamic metaphor of filling.⁸⁵ Love never boils with jealousy, seems to retain this nuance explicitly. Clearly the word alludes to 3:3; όπου γάρ ἐν ὑμῖν ζήλος καί ἐρις.

It is important to note that indeed with the dwelling of envy, Christian love cannot abound because envy can lead to a destructive emotions both physically and mentally. Envious people tend to feel resentful, angry, hostile, irritable, depressed, anxious and ungrateful about their achievements and circumstances.

2.4.2.1.2 Does Not Boast

According to Paul this love does not make parades and Corinthians are encouraged not to engage in such show off acts. Important to note that, most English translations render οὐ περπερεύεται as; “love is not boastful” and the NRSV, RED, NJB) NIV, stipulates that “love does not boast” demonstrates the impactful decision to use a verb instead of an adjective. Although this is the first recorded instance of the verb περπερεύομαι, it also appears in Epictetus, Dissertations 2.1.34 and 3.2.14, in Polybius 32.2.5 and 39.1.2, and subsequently in Marcus Antoninus 5.5. Its purpose is evidently to convey the verbal action cognate with the form πέρπερος (Lat. Perperus), braggart.⁸⁶ However, this appears too dense and complicated for the rhythm and the verbs' generally clear order.

Paul alongside the verb underlines the issue of status seeking and triumphalism at Corinth. Even believers seemed to come to act the part of braggarts, which was at odds with the cruciform's

⁸⁵ Thiselton, A.C., 2000. The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A commentary on the Greek text (Vol. 1). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing. p. 1046

⁸⁶ Ibid

Christ like love. The fact that agape is not concerned about itself, it has no need to call attention to its display. The moment we want a pat on the back or recognition for some good thing we have done, we are moving away from agape. This is where the ultra-rich often fail miserably. They give millions of dollars to some charitable work or noble cause, then issue a press release about it thus bragging.

2.4.2.1.3 Is Not Arrogant

In the context which has steadily been built up, οὐ φυσιοῦται is best rendered by combining the metaphor inflating. AV/KJV, is not puffed up with the implicit emphasis on its own importance. Therefore “gives no airs”; NRSV, arrogant; RED, NJB, conceited; Collins, inflated. NIV proud, is too wooden and loses the metaphor.

In this Paul intended to mean that this love does not value exaggerated notions of its own significance. The verb φυσιόω is a key term of the letter. Of the seven uses of this verb in the entire NT, six occur in these references in the epistles and the other is Col 2:18.

Paul hammers home the incompatibility of love as respect and concern for the welfare of the other and obsessions about the status and attention accorded to the self. Paul had noticed that the behaviour of ministers was actually that of “attention seeking” designed to impress others with one’s own supposed importance, thus preoccupation with the self- rather than with others and with God.

Paul sets in contrast with love “the thoughtlessness of “all things are permissible.”⁸⁷ He emphasises the incompatibility of love as respect, concern for other’s welfare and fascinations about the eminence and attention accorded to the self. Many ministers were and are today attention seekers with the intention to impress their supposed importance. They were and are arrogant thus portraying an attitude of superiority and being full of self or having an extreme form of pride thus making others avoid such a character because they usually have an inflated ego and a sense of self-worth and presumptuous superiority over others.

2.4.2.2 Meaning Of Verse 5

“It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful” (Verse 5)

In this verse Paul intended to clearly show the Corinthians that love does not act in an unseemly way this meaning that it does not act impolitely, discourteously or cruelty. This study therefore goes ahead to dig deeper into what Paul exactly meant in the section below.

2.4.2.2.1 It Does Not Insist On Its Own Way

The traditional AV/KJV, (Love) seeketh not her own, correctly conveys the structure of the Greek ζητεί τά έαυτής. Yet most modern translation prefer a more explicit reference to the self; hence, is never selfish aims (O.M. Norlie); is not self-seeking (TCNT); does not pursue selfish aims (O.M Norlie); is not self-seeking (NIV); does not insist on its own way (NRSV). To seek the affairs of one’s own self (reflective pronoun), however, also conveys the idea of seeks its own self advantage (NJB).

⁸⁷ Spicq, C., 2006. *Agape in the New Testament, Volume 2: Agape in the Gospel, Epistles and Apocalypse of St. John*. Wipf and Stock Publishers. p. 151.

Here Paul emphasises that this love is not preoccupied with the interests of the self and this conveys to our culture what the Greek conveyed to first - century readers, combining self - centeredness with self-interests (neuter plural τὰ). The lexicography research emphasises that love as Eros does not indeed seek its own satisfaction; Eros seeks to “possess” the object of love; in myth, Eros is the suitor, ever in need of the gratification of its own desires. Therefore, agape in Paul’s theology stands in “opposition of all that be called self-love.”⁸⁸ It is therefore the direct opposite of acquisitive love.

Agape seeks not his own (1 Cor 13:5), but this is the self-evident consequence of the theocentric nature of Paul’s idea of love. Agape spells judgment on the life that centres round the ego and its interests. For when God’s agape is shed across a man’s heart through the Holy Spirit his life thereby gains a new centre. The emphasis is transferred from his own ego to Christ. ⁸⁹ It is because Eros does “seek its own interest” that Eros Cupid is depicted in Graeco – Roman myth not only as a suitor, but as one with cunning seductive and winning ways.⁹⁰ That is why love is shown as armed with bows and arrows which portrays a clever hunter. Even the love of Eros piety, therefore to Paul it seeks to grasp the object of its own desire.

One would affirm to the fact that this love is without personal interests for advantage in this it suggested that he alludes to Matt 5:38-42, where the giving up of rights corresponds with Paul’s injunctions about rights to do anything (1 Cor 6:12). Christ did not please himself. No one should look at his own advantage, but after that of his neighbour” (1 Cor 10:24).

⁸⁸ Nygren's " Agape and Eros". *The Christian Scholar*. p. 130

⁸⁹ Ibid.,130-31

⁹⁰ Ibid

Paul's agape is not looking for its own advantage, but the perfect good of others just as Christ did not pleasing himself therefore everyone should look into other people's advantage (1 Cor 10:24). Paul noted that the Corinthians often insisted on their own way by insisting their love for idol food (10:24,33), interrupting speakers with supposed instant revelations during worship (14:29 - 33), individual welling in tongues without interpretation during worship (14:27-28). All this conduct pointed to the seeking of self-affirmation.

2.4.2.2.2 Is Not Irritable Or Resentful

Paul had noticed a wave of easily annoyed people because of problems that arise that cause quick irritability and resentment. The Greek word that expresses both irritable and resentment is *παροξύνεται* which expresses the metaphorical extensions of sharpen, point, and aggravate, as well as the semantic force of exasperation and irritation.⁹¹ The traditional translation in the papyri is easily provoked (AV/KJV). Furthermore, in the LXX the verb can mean to provoke to anger, and in the only other instance of *παροξύομαι* to occur in the NT (besides 1 Cor 13:5). Paul is provoked to anger (RED, outraged) to see the city so full of idols" (Acts 17:16).

Almost all dictionaries and primary sources mention the idea of becoming irritated. However, how does this manifest itself? The English pique combines the same range of nuances of the Greek: something between irritation and anger which takes offense because one's self-regard has been irritation and anger which takes offense because one's self-regard has been dented, wounded, or punctured by some sharp point.

⁹¹ Spicq, C., 2006. *Agape in the New Testament, Volume 2: Agape in the Gospel, Epistles and Apocalypse of St. John*. Wipf and Stock Publishers. p. 156.

The love, Paul urges, does not become exasperation into pique, partly because patience delays exasperation and partly because lack of self – interest diverts a sense of self – importance away from reacting on the grounds of wounded pride: “it is not embittered by injuries, whether real or supposed.”⁹²

At Corinth, one group carelessly ignored the happiness and feelings of others as they flaunted their gifts and status. Meanwhile, the less fortunate group allowed themselves to get irritated and piqued at the others' aggressive triumphalism and ostentation because they were more concerned with their own emotions than with sharing the happiness or liberation of others. Some people flaunt their gifts in several local churches and theological colleges, while others tend to their wounds. Paul questions whether either side truly puts the other above themselves.

2.4.2.3 Meaning of Verse 6

“It ^kdoes not rejoice at wrongdoing, but ^lrejoices with the truth” (Verse 6) .

Paul shows the Corinthians that love does not delight in evil, either by showing superior morality over it or by taking pleasure in another’s fall. The section below keenly exegetes and highlights the true meaning of verse 6.

2.4.2.3.1 It ^kDoes Not Rejoice At Wrongdoing

Paul intended to make clear that Love does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. The original Greek language use τῆ ἀδικία (adikia) for wrongdoing. This is translated as “unjust” or “unrighteous”. And “truth” is αὐτῆς ἁληθείας which is the truth pertaining to God. Truth pertaining to

⁹² Robertson, A.T., 1960. *Word Pictures in the New Testament-Matthew*. CCEL. p. 294; cf. Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 3:298-99, where he compares the LXX and Hebrew background further.

God are things that are righteous or “right with God”. Paul's use of ἀδικία conveys a whole theological notion of unrighteousness (Rom 1:32).⁹³ But Paul most likely refers to a condition of contrast at Corinth, as he does with almost every other statement in these passages. This could be either; i) the people at Corinth's inflated sense of self-importance and complacency (πεφουσιωμένοι), particularly if patronage property or social status was involved, or ii) their overt approval of the injustice involved in attempting to use the shady tactics of a local Gentile magistrate's court in order to acquire property rights (1 Cor. 6:1-11). Or, more widely, to Corinth's competitive, status-seeking society, which would promote relishing in another person's loss of respect should their collusion or involvement in any wrongdoing come to light (1 Cor. 12–17).

Contextual considerations imply that transgressions encompass a broader spectrum of possibilities than either moral injustice or theological unrighteousness. Additionally, these characteristics imply that spiteful joy, or gloating - that is, lamenting people's failures - covers a large portion of the territory, but possibly not all of it.⁹⁴ In addition to the question of superiority, Paul makes clear that part of the problem is "being censorious" - if we truly love someone, we should not enjoy actions that allow us to correct them or lecture them about their transgressions. This is another instance where there can be a mistaken belief that prophetic admonition and passing judgment on congregational shortcomings are too easy. Is the welfare of people whom such a prophet or preacher professes to cherish truly loved if doing so brings them joy.

⁹³ Martin 3rd, I.J., 1950. I Corinthians 13 interpreted by its context. *Journal of Bible and Religion*, pp.101-105.

⁹⁴Harris, M.J., 2013. *Love in the New Testament*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, Moffatt, pp. 180-81

2.4.2.3.2 But Love Rejoices With The Truth

Here Paul expresses resistance to evil in the sense of "behaviour that reflects the gospel and all that is opposed to it."⁹⁵ He gives us an overall meaning of truth with goodness.⁹⁶ Would Paul expect the people to understand this passage in either of these ways, and how would the addressees understand it? Wolff refers to the joining of ἀδικία and ἀλήθεια in 3 Ezra 4:33-39, which would clarify a few things about the partnership.⁹⁷ Spicq, however, gets closer to the core of the issue when he investigates the meaning of the compound verb συγχαίρει, which is rendered as "joyfully celebrates." The συν - (συγ-) prefix is primarily seen by Spicq as intensive when it comes to Barrett and Fee, as it "shows the intensity and expressiveness of the joy in truth."⁹⁸ However, he correctly interprets the "with" component of συν-to signify "active participation," which is the traditional meaning of "congratulate," going beyond Barret and Fee; "rejoice and applaud –therefore agape's basic definition of "to acclaim" is evident.⁹⁹

What is it that love exclaims or celebrates with such joy? On one level, Chrysostom skilfully draws a distinction between accounts of someone's purported failure and the reality regarding their wellbeing.¹⁰⁰ As opposed to taking pleasure in someone else's fall from grace, love "*feels pleasure with people who are warmly spoken of.*" However, it is most likely the agape's disinterested nature that is at fault. We are in a better position to understand Paul's meaning than commentators from the medieval era to the 1980s because of the close relationship between postmodernity following Nietzsche and Derrida and the rhetorical statements praised at Corinth.

⁹⁵ Fee, G.D., 2001. *To what end exegesis?: Essays textual, exegetical, and theological.* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing. p. 639

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, at 35

⁹⁷ Wolff, C., 2013. *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (Vol. 7). Evangelische Verlagsanstalt. p. 320.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, at 253

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ De Wet, C.L., 2011. John Chrysostom's exegesis of the spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12: 27-13: 3): a commentary on Homilia in I Epistulam ad Corinthios 32. *Ekklesiastikos Pharos*, 93(1), pp.104-117.

Critical theorists and postmodern philosophers see things just as Paul did; almost every behaviour and position have some connection to one's peer group or one's own power interests.

In my interpretation of God and the Postmodern Self, I contend that genuine love is the only force that can decentre the power of "interests" of the self and its peer group. By focusing these interests on the other (mostly on God, but also on the other person), genuine love disengages from self-interest.¹⁰¹ Truth can only now be seen as independent of a power agenda. When someone has true disinterested integrity, they are unafraid to pursue the truth without worrying about how it will affect their own goals. Paul says love has found its integrity. As Nyegren says over and over, it enjoys the truth since it is uninterested and creative of worth.¹⁰² The definite article with the abstract noun, τῆ ἀληθεία, does not force us to translate the truth, even when it is undeniably true. If the article is translated, it most likely refers to the truth in that particular circumstance rather than the gospel truth in its entirety. Therefore, the practical core of love's happy celebration of truth is that love refrains from using deceptive tactics and covert meanings to shield itself from the truth or from the truth itself.

Since it has put the good of the other before the good of the self, it is sincere and open rather than defensive. Contrary to what most analysts anticipate, theology enters the picture in a different way. The individual who has given everything to God, as noted by Karl Rahner, has no need to run from or be afraid of the truth. For God is already aware of it and has welcomed the believer just as they are.¹⁰³ When love is true, no evil can enrich or make it more enjoyable. Love is true and honest and does not take pleasure in the failure of others. Love wants to rejoice when things

¹⁰¹ Thiselton, A.C., 1995. *Interpreting God and the postmodern self: On meaning, manipulation, and promise.* pp. 3-45 and 121 -64

¹⁰² Prescott, W.B., 1986. *The Symbolism of Love: An Application of Paul Ricoeur's Phenomenological Hermeneutic (A. Nygren, R. Solomon, Christology, Plato).* Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, pp. 77-78

¹⁰³ Jowers, D.W., 2001. *The theological method of Karl Rahner as a response to gnoseological concupiscence and cryptogamic heresy.* The University of Edinburgh (United Kingdom).pp 229-59

are good and wants to help when things are terrible. It has no desire for covert agendas that distort the truth to be something it is not. Deluz connects this passage to the idea expressed in verse 7, which is that love “does not exaggerate, but it attempts to understand.”¹⁰⁴ Paul is thinking on God's character once more, which his people are supposed to exhibit. A loving Christian rejoices with behaviour that exemplifies the gospel at each victory won, each act of kindness performed, and each forgiveness given (Rom. 12:15). It is important to remember that love celebrates excellent situations and lends support when things are going wrong.

As a result, Paul urges the Corinthians to follow the straight and honest road. They were envious, competitive, boastful, and split. He invites them to experience healing from the sins of the Corinthians and to become a transformed Corinthian church. The church now finds attraction in this as well.

On the other hand, the NIV indicates that love is unable to remember wrongdoing; “*does not keep record of wrong.*” However, there might be a connection between the idea of reckoning up and Spicq's interpretation. He notes that love ignores the fact that anything has happened, rather than allowing the memory of a harm to fester.¹⁰⁵ Conzelmann supports the idea of accounting for wrongdoing by translating it; he does not maintain a score of transgressions (nor does REB, NIV, or NJB accumulate grievances). The angry NRSV probably tries to find a middle ground between the move toward keeping no score and the thinketh no ill (AV/KJV) or taketh no account of evil (RV). However, the NRSV lacks the dynamic pictorial imagery in which each verb expresses a position or an action, typically through the use of a metaphor or visual image. Images of boiling

¹⁰⁴ Deluz, G. and Watt, G.E., 1963. *A companion to 1 Corinthians*. p.193

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

or burning (ζηλόω), expanding or filling with air (φυσιόω), acting impolitely and unpleasant (άσχημονέω), being prodded with a sharp spike to agitate someone (παροξύνομαι), and now an accountant tallying accounts (λογίζοομαι). The majority of English translations, particularly NRSV and frequently NIV, merely detach the metaphor's powerfully evocative imagery from its logical core. Although he views it as a matter of "paying the offender back in his own coin,"¹⁰⁶ F.F. Bruce concurs that reckoning up plays a role. On the grounds that μογζεσθαι relates to חשב (chashabh), "to set to someone's account," Conzelmann argues in favor of keeping no score.¹⁰⁷

This is not the only opinion; love does not possess "the habit still widespread even among Christians of keeping a reckoning of the faults of the others."¹⁰⁸ "Not keeping a score," which is considered coherent when considering behaviours or attitudes as wicked, encourages ambiguity, and is therefore not exclusive to Christianity.¹⁰⁹

2.5 Conclusion

Paul highlights in 1 Cor. 13:4–7 that agape is limitless in its mode and capacity to extend sweetness to all people. This love does not subscribe to envy or pride in self-importance but rather cares for the wellbeing of others; it fails to exasperate into pique partly because patience delays exasperation and rejoices over truth; by doing this, it is always looking out for the good in others, just as Christ did on the cross (Rom. 15:3). Paul wanted to convey to the Corinthians that love is resilient and able to live in all situations. It believes the best in all people, never ceases faith, hope, and most importantly, spiritual gifts.

¹⁰⁶ Bruce, F. F. 1 and 2 Corinthians, NCBC (London:Oliphants, 1971) p. 127

¹⁰⁷ Conzelmann, H, 1975 1Corinthians: A commentary Hermeneia,(English translation, Philadelphia: Forteress Press.p. 224.

¹⁰⁸ Héring, J., 1962. *First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*. Epworth Press. p.139

¹⁰⁹ Wolff, Der erste Brief, pp.319-20

CHAPTER THREE

RELEVANCE OF 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7 TO CHURCH MINISTRY

3.1 Introduction

Having exegeted 1 Cor 13:4-7, this study can now apply this message through a correspondence of contexts method. The study therefore points out the central message of the text before contextualising and suggesting lessons that can be applied to the CoU to the current practice of love. The synthesis above of exegesis of 1 Cor 13:4-7 clearly portrays that love exceeds all other spiritual gifts.

Paul emphasizes that agape is limitless in its ability to provide tolerance and tenderness to everyone in 1 Cor. 13:4 - 7. The fact that patience piques curiosity rather than inflaming it, this love rejoices over the truth and rejects pride and jealousy in favour of caring for the well-being of others. By doing this, it is constantly seeking for the good in people, just as Christ did when he was crucified. Paul wanted the Corinthians to see that love endures and can survive in any kind of situation. It can triumph above all obstacles. Faith, hope, and above all, spiritual gifts, believing in the best aspects of everyone and never fades.

3.2 Paul Calls The Church To Humility

Paul teaches us to be humble and avoid pride at all costs. His idea of love not being proud and dishonoring others is highly relevant in a world but more particularly to the CoU, where ego and self-centeredness usually leads to conflicts. Today in the Anglican Church of the Province of Uganda, there are many incidences of conflicts steered by power struggle and selfish desires in taking up the top positions in the church. Many priests are fighting their way to becoming

Bishops, Archdeacons, Vicars, and Diocesan Secretaries and so on. Due to lack of humility it has culminated into power struggle which has escalated multiple break ups from the main stream church because of the desire to be in power. A case in point was a formation of the Reformed Anglican Church by the former Archdeacon of the Rwenzori Diocese, Prof. Jonathan Kyangasha after he was defrocked by the Rwenzori Diocesan Bishop. The Rt. Rev. Reuben Kisembo in 2017.¹¹⁰ This is all as a result of power struggle. As if that is not enough, Rev. Charles Okunya from Kumi Diocese decided to form his own group called the Reformed Anglican Church of Upper Nile Diocese after he was elected in 2019.¹¹¹ He decided to break off and form his own group of Christians called the Reformed Anglican Church of Upper Nile Diocese.¹¹² This was all due to the desire to become Bishop. The Church of Uganda in Kumi Diocese and this new group have since continued to attack each other.

It was on this basis that Paul calls us to refrain from the Corinthians' conduct of always judging the ministers including Paul and themselves (1 Cor.4:5) because they were proud of their own achievements (1 Corinthians 4:8). Therefore, practicing humility and respecting others can lead to better interactions and understanding one another.

3.3 Forgiveness, Empathy, And The Ability To Move Beyond Conflicts

Paul's teaching encourages forgiveness, empathy, and the ability to move beyond conflicts. In the province of Uganda there has been little or no tolerance and patience with our leaders for

¹¹⁰ 'Rebel' Church of Uganda priest starts own church, names himself Bishop
Wednesday, January 10, 2018 — updated on January 13, 2021; <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/-rebel-church-of-uganda-priest-starts-own-church-names-himself-bishop-1734822>

¹¹¹ Anglican Church of Uganda Warned Against Fighting One Another; By Godfrey Olukya-VOL African Correspondent
www.virtueonline.org April 4, 2023

¹¹² Ibid

example; the Retired Archbishop of the Church of Uganda Stanley Ntagali was banned from carrying out priestly duties following his alleged involvement in an extra-marital affair with a married woman.¹¹³ Furthermore; the High Court in Luweero summoned 37 bishops of the Church of Uganda, including Archbishop Dr. Stephen Kaziimba Mugalu, to defend themselves against their decision to nullify the election of Rev. Canon Godfrey Kasana Ssemakula as the 4th Bishop of Luwero.¹¹⁴ The summons arose from the latest petition from four Christians from Luwero, including Moses Kakembo, Christopher Ssajjabbi Kakande, Moses Bemba, and John Sight Sendowooza, who filed the case on 11th December.¹¹⁵ Herbert Kamoga studied the matter and brings us to the genesis of this matter from the time Canon Kasana was elected on 4th April 2023 and later stopped.¹¹⁶ They nullified his Bishop because of accusations over having children out of wedlock. In both cases there was no tolerance, extension of mercy and nurturing them to overcome and outgrow these sins.

Therefore, there is a vivid lack of forgiveness and empathy in the church. It is on this ground that Paul called the Corinthians and the CoU to a love that; *“It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres”* (1 Cor 13:7 NIV) because the Corinthians had extended judgmental tendencies to the weak and still bound in sin, they were not patient to wait for their spiritual growth and be in position to refrain from sin, but were merely punished and excommunicated from their midst.

¹¹³<https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/retired-archbishop-ntagali-banned-from-priestly-duties-3261816>

¹¹⁴<https://www.ntv.co.ug/ug/news/national/how-rev-godfrey-kasana-ssemakula-failed-to-become-luweero-bishop-4478394>

¹¹⁵ Ibid

¹¹⁶ Ibid

3.4 Warning Against Preaching The Non-Christ Gospel

Paul warns against preaching the gospel that is not of Christ by showing off gifts because love is most important and rejoices with the truth. He warns against being easily enraged, which is crucial given the times we live in, when arguments and misunderstandings are frequent, and the Corinthians' propensity to show off their gifts and status in an impolite manner because they disregarded the needs and feelings of others for example the less gifted allowed themselves to be exasperated into pique at the aggressive triumphalism and ostentation of the others since they were preoccupied with their own emotions rather than spreading their happiness to others. Likewise, the church of the province of Uganda has fallen prey. Paul is seen writing to encourage the Christians to ensure that the gospel they preach should originate from God, its authority from the Bible, useful for spiritual growth and godly living this is the kind of doctrine that should be preached.

As noted earlier false teaching and doctrine originate with someone or something created by God. I have vividly noted on many occasions that the false teachers, or heresy in the church of Uganda has rampantly grown due to copying from other religious groups. I have personally noticed that; when some clergy associate so much with those from different religious groups they end up falling prey to the wrong teachings. Some of these questionable teachings include; praying during seasons and times, altars, foundations, watch hours, Demonization, Cheap Grace, emphasis on Altars, prosperity Gospel and many others. All these teachings aim at emphasising idol worship and acts as opposed to embracing God's saving grace. It was on this basis that Paul's teaching becomes relevant to the church ministry.

3.5 Preaching Against Self – Interest That Deflects A Sense Of Self-Importance

Paul preaches against self - interest that deflects a sense of self - importance that has drawn the church into falsehood. As this study has already showed 1 Cor. 13:4-7, it is clear how Paul assists these Christians go from being self-centred to selfless. The problem in Corinth is that they are divided (1 Cor. 1:10), and they fight and are jealous (1 Cor. 3:3). These conflicts arise from their self-centred and haughty behaviour (1 4:6, 18; 3:18). The first solution Paul offers is to see ourselves as merely servants carrying out the task God has given us. However, their conceit and selfishness have permeated other areas of their lives, including their relationships within the church and in the church ministry. The church is called upon to selflessness, if the church ministry is to go forward. The ministers are to embrace the Grace of God to enable them conduct themselves in such a selfless manner (1 Cor 3:16) through communing with God and His available grace he is position to make us what he wants us to be; a better people.

3.6 Patience with One Another

Paul teaches that love is patient, this he intended to describe what actually love does. The KJV translates it as love suffers long. Although love endures hardships for a long time in KJV, the question is what happens to love in the face of opposition or abuse? Paul gives the church an answer that; Love does not aim to retaliate as soon as it can. When it comes to being hurt and insulted, love is patient and will endure a great deal. Then, it becomes clear that this is the first instance in which God's nature is revealed. It is interesting to note that when God speaks of himself, he begins by describing his nature as a patient God. Love has a passive nature like this.

As the church of Christ, we ought to exhibit this nature towards one another. The church is full of the spiritually sick and impaired these are the sick, thieves, corrupt, sexually immoral, in disciplined, rude, jealous, etc but Paul encourages us to be patient with them and this way they can easily be won to God by forsaking their sins.

Paul teaches us to have patience towards one another and he calls Christians to bear up keep their cool under pressure and exercise patience and tolerance. With this he meant that people should be able to suffer long and in an extended space in this Paul enjoins believers to support the weaker Christians (sinners). This is because God has already portrayed patience towards us while we were yet sinners Christ died, he has waited for us to believe in his word and promises. Paul insinuates that this waiting plays a big part in ensuring the wellbeing of others. However, today the church ministers and lay people act to the contrary; many have been thrown out of the church because of failure to meet the acceptable conduct of the church. For example, Christopher Senyonjo, born on December 8, 1931, commonly known as Ssenyonjo, is a Ugandan pastor who advocates for the rights of LGBT people.¹¹⁷ In the CoU, he was made a bishop in 1974 and retired in 1998.¹¹⁸ He was prohibited from rendering services in 2001. The church asserts that this was caused by his involvement in the consecration of a man to be a bishop of a church that the CoU is not in communion with, despite the widespread belief that this is due to his position on homosexual rights.¹¹⁹ It was crucial to mentor him and educate him about the real gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. By doing so, prayer would enable healing and influence him to desist from such heinous deeds. Numerous people have been transformed by the preaching of the

¹¹⁷ *Pro-gay bishop Ssenyonjo Defies Archbishop Orombi*, *New Vision*, archived from the original on 2012-06-07; <https://www.newvision.co.ug/news/1151735/pro-gay-bishop-ssenyonjo-defies-archbishop-orombi>

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*

¹¹⁹ Church of England Newspaper April 14th 2011

gospel which brings healing and change their mind from such evil acts. Many have been transformed by the power of God. Another example is of a Ugandan bishop's wife petitioned the High Court for divorce,¹²⁰ citing adultery, abuse, and an attempted murder. Rev. Oboketch was a CoU provost who was affiliated with all Saints Cathedral Nakasero prior to joining the Charismatic Church. In 1994, he was defrocked for reasons that were difficult to determine. According to Paul's teaching, the church probably needed to wait for him to discover the wrong and repent of his sin.

3.7 Love Is A Christian Obligation And God's Calling For The Church Is To Act In Love

Paul teaches that Love is a Christian obligation and God's calling for the church is to act in love. The church today is interfaced with a number of issues just as the Corinthian church did; some of these are; racism, sexism, patriarchy, Christian nationalism, gender and sexual diversity, religious trauma and spiritual abuse. These have posed divisions, and many have abandoned the church. But Paul calls us to a love that puts the welfare of others above the interest of self (1 Cor 13:4). According to the Bible, true love is demonstrated "not in word or with the tongue, but in-deed and truth." Does this imply that we are unable to communicate our love verbally? Not at all! Instead, it means that we must show our love via deeds as much as words, particularly when the situation demands it. For instance, a fellow Christian needs more than just our best wishes when he is without the necessities of life. (Jas 2:15, 16) In a similar vein, love for Jehovah and our neighbour inspires us to fully participate in the preaching job in addition to asking God to "send out workers into the harvest." We must love in deed and truth our love must therefore be "free

¹²⁰ <https://allafrica.com/stories/200706180227.html> ; The Sunday Monitor has a copy of Catherine's petition dated May 7, 2007

from hypocrisy," or "without hypocrisy." Paul in 12:9; 6:6 indicates that, much like with a mask, we cannot pretend to be someone we are not and still exhibit true love. Is it possible to be in love while acting hypocritically? Not in a big way. This would be a useless imitation of love instead of love at all. There are many instances of fake love highlighted in the scriptures; while acting self-serving and hypocritically, for example Satan professed to be watching out for Eve's best interests in the Garden of Eden. Similar to this, apostates and other people who sow discord in the church today employ "smooth talk and flattering speech" to give the impression that they are caring, but their underlying motivation is self-interest.

Therefore, we are called to conduct ourselves in a manner that shows love by forgiving freely, sacrifice personal advantage, make peace, support the weak, extend hospitality, commend everyone sincerely, honour one another, confess and abandon secret sin.

3.8 The Greatest Christian Virtue Is Love

In addition, the apostle Paul discusses faith, hope, and love three Christian virtues. Paul lists these qualities in 1 Corinthians 13:13, saying, "And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love." It is obvious that love is a key concept in comprehending both God and the core of Christianity. Because the cross is the archetype of an act of will and position that prioritizes the welfare of others over one's own interests, it is deeply Christological.

This is how agape penetrates a world that has already been touched by Eros, as exemplified by the self-giving grace of the Christomorphic, cruciform God. Paul's core message when writing to the Corinthians was the Johannine dictum that "God is love" (1 John 4:7–21). The foundation of true love is a dedication to the welfare of others, and it is important to note that "agape" is an

action rather than only a feeling. We know love because He gave His life for us, according to 1 John 3:16. Furthermore, we must give our lives in order to protect the brethren.

3.9 Love Is One Of The Major Attributes Of A Good Shepherd

According to Paul's teaching on Love (1 Cor 13:4-7) most specifically that it does not seek its own interest but that of others He is indirectly calling upon us to lay down our lives for others and this is similar to the good shepherd emphasised in (Jn 10: 1-10). The sheep recognize and are cared for by the good shepherd, who comes in via the gate. The good shepherd also lays down his life for the sheep. The shepherd's job is to provide the sheep with a bountiful life in which is a translation of love. In Paul's lens of love is the direct portrayal of love through shepherding God's people. Love is a godly idea and God is the overall shepherd, David the Psalmist illustrated this through Ps. 23; a shepherd's role is to guide, feed, lead, comfort, protect and teach. All these are Paul's attributes of love according 1 Cor 13:4-7).

As Pastors, Paul's teaching on love insinuates that we ought to love unconditionally through; manifesting and ably carrying out all activities of a social, physical, emotional and psychological nature that can be broadly categorized as shepherding, overseeing, being exemplary, and willingly doing the will of God. He therefore calls God's servants such as priests, pastors, clergy, and chaplains for God's people to unconditional love.

3. 10 Conclusion

In summation, because of the same circumstances of lack of love among Christians that have bred divides within the church, the message of 1 Corinthians 13:4 - 7 is appropriate to both the current church ministry and CoU.

CHAPTER FOUR
SUMMARY OF MAJOR STUDY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Summary Of Major Findings

There is a wealth of literature on love portrayed in 1 Cor 13:4-7. Nevertheless, there seems not to be a straight answer to the challenges the churches face in their interface with love as required. A lot is at play in church from the historical to the current trends, experiences and practicalities amongst believers. Power and authority, criticism, division, intolerance, sinfulness, idolatry, and theological confusion continue to dominate the church. That said, the motivation to restore that biblical principles of love are clear as they run through the scriptures and writings of the different scholars.

Love as portrayed in 1 Cor 13:4-7 is built on the love between God and man and between man and man. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. It is, not irritable *or resentful, arrogant or rude, envious does not see its own way*, and it is truthful, kind, patient and never losses faith. Love should be taken and treated as such. Believers and the church should never divert from these principles of love.

The authorship of 1 Cor. 13:4-7 is not doubted. Paul is the proven author of 1 Cor and shares intimate details and particular allusions of his interactions and experiences with the Corinthians that are consistent with the information that is known about his life and ministry. He also voices disciplinary recommendations and pastoral concerns that are appropriate for his position and relationship with the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 1:10) These are reflective of the times he

lived yet their relevance trickle into today's church including his conversion while on the way to Damascus, the missionary journeys that he took and, his choice of ministry, relations and influences of the time and the various dilemmas that he faced including expulsion.

Paul's letter of 1 Cor is practical and applied to today's church since the challenges church is facing today are similar to those of Paul's time. The letter was a warning to perils that were affecting the church as they are today including power factions and sabotage of church worship. Intrinsically, church's unity (1:10-4:21), of sexual immorality (5:1-7:40), of idolatry (8:1-11:1), and denying the resurrection of the dead (15:1-58) are a common finding in the church today. Inversely, there is tendency to believe and trust in the wisdom of men, an issue that Paul deals with to check on competition and identification with specific church leadership.

Chapter 13 of 1 Cor. Is one of the most important scriptures in the NT since it dwells on charity which is a way of expression of love. It is a call to a way of life that attempts to address real problems in the church today by asking Christians to pursue love without limitation. Paul shows us that the church including the CoU today must be prepared to embrace love in order to be in position to face everything. It perseveres and is able to live in every kind of circumstance with unceasing faith, hope and above all spiritual gifts.

4.2 Conclusions

Chapter one of this study, presents the general introduction and background, the research problem, aims and objectives, the research questions, the research justification and significance of the study. It further stipulates the study methodology and literature review. It makes emphasis that; the love described in 1 Cor. 13:4-7 is based on the affection between God and humanity and

among individuals. It requires patience with each other, even when one errs. In fact, the church, including the CoU, can learn valuable insights from various texts and literature. These insights pertain not only to relationships but also to the advancement of God's kingdom, for example, by prioritizing love over spiritual abilities and spreading the gospel.

The exegesis of 1 Cor. including the historical and literal analysis under chapter two present the meaning of 1 Cor. 13:4-7 and help in insuring that the reader comprehends 1 Cor. 13:4-7 and its tenacity to the original audience. It is a message that presents both lessons and opportunities for emerging for preachers, evangelists and leaders of the church since it presents the need for them to understand the church setting and the targeted audiences as portrayed by Paul. It offers insights into agape love as limitless in its mode of patience toward all and its capacity to extend sweetness to all people since it emphasises minding others as opposed envy or pride in self-importance and with patience.

First Corinthians is important to the CoU and the entire body of Christ since it delves into and resonates with contemporary issues that affect the church according to chapter three. In following the 1 Cor.13:4-7 therefore, the church should be filled with love which is kind, patient, with humility and not envious, exercise unity and remain united, put spiritual gifts to proper use and ensure they do not divide the church, adhere to ethics and morality, reflect on the risen Lord and be comforted in the hope of resurrection as a basis for creating and continuing love for one another. Most importantly, this love should be extended to the church leadership.

Love as presented in 1 Cor 13:4-7 patient, kind' does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful; does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all

things. Such should be the manner accruing to chapter four in which the church including the CoU treats love in respect of its believers and the neighbouring communities including the poor and non-believers. The church should be prepared to, at all times take on the challenge of love as portrayed in 1 Cor 13:4-7. By taking on this challenge, many will be won to Christ which will be a fulfilment of the greater call that he left for the church (Matt 28:16-20). It will also essentially defeat the common challenges to love and unity in the church and the entire characterisation of the church during the time of Paul's authorship of 1 Cor, as is common in today's church would meet its end with love prevailing.

4.3 Recommendations

This study has established that the characterisation the Church in Corinth is not different from the current practices in the church. Divisions based on leaders and pastors which further perpetrates attacks on brethren, prostitution, human trafficking, incest, homosexuality adultery and divorce, idolatry, witchcraft, drunkenness, corruption and embezzlement, and wars and killings are predominant challenges in the church. This continue to make love difficult. It is important for the church to reflect on the foregoing issues if love is to be restored in the church. As such the following can be key considerations for a fully reformed church that is built on the love of God as reflected in 1 Cor 13:4-7.

4.3.1 The Love Of God

The CoU and the entire Christian community across the globe should seek the knowledge of God about His teachings, scriptures and traditions, put them to practice through constant prayer, embrace integrity in their goings while at the same time keeping in fellowship alongside full

surrender while serving others in full dependence on God, for His guidance. Once the Love of God is renewed, the commission of Love that God has given will automatically trickle to His people.

4.3.2 Dealing With Division

Division among Gods people can be very damaging to unity and undermines spiritual growth. With prayer, patience, commitment and love, division can come to a complete stop. It is therefore imperative that the whole body of Christ including the CoU continue praying and seeking God's guidance alongside depending on the church leadership including leaders as the beginning point to deal with division. The leaders should also take on the call of leadership by example by fronting unity as a priority for the church.

Additionally, disagreements, conflicts with the church should be approached with love and humility as Jesus commanded meekness and tolerance such as through seeking the leadership and elder's guidance, constant mediation and counselling. Thus, gossip and negativity should be ignored while encouraging, clear communication channels, positive, respect, forgiveness and open dialogue as a means to building, and restoring a common ground for beliefs, values and goals that not only build but also unite the church.

4.3.3 End Of Judgmental Practices

Constant commitment and effort are critical for growing and nurturing a growing church. It has the capacity to create acceptance since member believe they are welcomed because of the experience of value, love despite different origins, make and status. Once Gods people are treated with common sensitivity and empathy. As such the CoU should firstly accept the existence of a

judgmental generation of Christians, teach them the grace of God and the ability to accept and understand fellow believers and the church leadership and humans who need tolerance and understanding within the love of Christ while paying particular attention to the scriptures (Matthew 7:1-5 that discourages judging others), (John 8:7 casting the first stone if one has no sin), and (Romans 14:1-13 which also discourages judgmental practices over disputable matters). The mission to end judgmental practices should be approached with humility in the entire church, dealing with assertions and misconceptions strongly and thoroughly, while at the same time establishing clear guidelines such as in the church canons to deal with judgmental practices, providing room for diversity and dialogue to deal with issues that tend to open room for human judgment often perceived correct yet wrong.

4.3.4 Obeying The word of God

God's love for humanity expressed in the Ten Commandments. God through his son Jesus Christ has summarised the commandments for humanity in Matt. 22:36-40 (KJV), which are to; "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart" and "love thy neighbour as thyself." Since obeying the commandments is part of the Christian traditions, believers in the entire body of Christ should be taught to ensure they understand them including in meaning and spiritual connotations. Similarly, the entire Church should engage in regular commitment to the call to holiness, constant self-examination while seeking divine help from God to grant them the knowledge and wisdom in the journey to lead holy lives.

Additionally, Christians, should be accountable to the rest of the community, practice repentance and forgiveness as a means to live as witness and display the following after God's word. They should also show growth and transformation by allowing God to work through them and being in

total obedience while assured that they are growing closer to God. These aforementioned exemplary and ideal practices should see the church grow with minimal limitations that spring from divisions, judgmental practices, factions, human trafficking, incest, homosexuality, adultery, divorce, idolatry, witchcraft, drunkenness, corruption and embezzlement, wars and killings, and intolerance among believers.

4.3.5 Engaging In Constant Prayer

Engaging in constant prayer can create awareness and constantly connect believers to God through communication and communion. It also has the capacity to restore lost relationships. As 1 Thess. 5:17 call on Christians to engage in prayer without ceasing. Once the church is engaged in prayer, it has the potential to grow, navigate common challenges and setbacks, stay grounded with hope while receiving and exercising spiritual gifts. The CoU, believers and leadership should constantly seek God's guidance and wisdom, cultivate forgiveness and compassion amongst them as step to nurturing the growth, unity, healing and restoration, and commitment of all believers with love in 1 Cor 13:4-7 at the helm.

4.3.6 Caring For One Another

Love, compassion, empathy and community service is at the core of a caring church. A caring church is a true reflection of commitment to the teachings of Jesus Christ which emphasized true neighbourliness and love. The CoU and the entire body of believers should at the front of promoting mutual support for all believers in unity and non-discrimination, building relationships that promote a sense of love and value among believers, offer practical assistance to Christians, provide spiritual encouragement, being stewards of church resources and facilities as well as

creating safe spaces for believers especially the vulnerable to come out when faced with problems and get help. Where there is care, divisions and criticisms and no Christian practices cease while giving room for love to prevail.

4.3.7 Preach The Gospel

One of the major signs of love is preaching the gospel by sharing the teachings of Jesus Christ. It brings hope and transformation in the lives of God's people. It is also a sign of concern and the desire to expand God's kingdom by winning more to God. It is also a sign of showing God that we care for His people because by preaching, we are also expressing our love for Him. Jesus Christ commissioned us in Matt 28:19-20 for the gospel. The church is therefore called upon to continually preach the gospel by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, His life, death, and resurrection to the world. The church should aim to care for the spiritual needs of believers while at the same time preaching transformation, peace, respect and compassion and being actionable in their love by caring for the vulnerable, serving the rest of the community and extending kindness and service to the rest of the world.

4.3.8 Transparency And Accountability

Openness, transparency and accountability are essentials that create trust and foster love in institutions including the church. It also demonstrates commitment of the church to building trust and good governance within the church established structures. Transparency and accountability in the church is a sign of display of the commitment of the church to its spiritual integrity, mission and objectives of dedicated service to the community. The church is expected to open in

its dealings with the rest of the community so as to build trust amongst the believers. By so doing the church can be expanded since believers trust the church, its leadership.

Thus, church in extending love to the community, it should embrace financial, decision making, policies and procedures, information sharing and leadership transparency. Additionally, there should be spiritual accountability by excellently doing what Christ has commissioned the church to do, being ethical in conduct, swiftly, resolving conflicts and complying with the church governance principles and policies. It is as such imperative for the church to engage in education and training, open communication and exercise independent and external oversight in accountability. Such will be the basis for the extending and expanding love and spiritual growth to the rest of the community of believers.

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"THE WAY OF LOVE": AN EXEGESIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7 AND ITS
RELEVANCE TO CHURCH MINISTRY

BY

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