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**AGAPATE ALLĒLOUS . . . (JOHN 13:34-35) EVALUATION OF LIVING  
OUT AGAPATE AMONG CHRISTIANS IN ANAMBRA STATE**

Anaebene, Bernard Chukwujekwu  
&  
Ezeogamba, Anthony Ikechukwu

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**ABSTRACT:** *This work studies how Christians in Anambra state obeys the injunction "love one another." Anambra state is majorly a Christian state. Love one another, as I have loved you, is an injunction given by Jesus to his followers (disciples/Christians). The love he means here is sacrificial: selfless love. It is this sacrificial love that will prove to the world that his disciples are authentically his followers. This injunction or commandment to love is part of the farewell discourses of Jesus; this is to show how important it is to his heart. This was the guiding principle of the early Christians, but today the greatest problem is that there are dissensions among Christians. These include political, economic, social and even religious dissensions. The commandment of Jesus seems to have been jettisoned or relegated to the background. This work aims to investigate the genuineness of Christians (disciples) with the injunction of Christ who said: "By this, all men will know that you are my disciples"(v.35) and proffer solutions on how to be genuine Christians. To achieve this, data were collected from primary and secondary sources. To analyze the data so collected the researcher employed the Historical-Critical Method of Exegesis since a biblical text is involved. Through interviews and participant observations, the researcher discovers that there are dissensions among Christians in Anambra state which includes political, social and religious quarrels thereby casting doubts on the authenticity of their Christianity. This implies that the present-day followers of Christ no longer embrace the above divine injunction. The study made the following recommendations among others: Ministers should intensify catechesis to bring their followers back to the basis. Christians are advised to settle their domestic, social, and political disputes among themselves instead of court settlement knowing that they are brothers and sisters in Christ. Significantly, this work will be of immense benefit to all Christians in Anambra State in particular and Christians everywhere in general.*

**KEY WORDS:** agapate, allēlous, christians, christianity

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## INTRODUCTION

Jesus, the founder of Christianity, gave a sort of badge to his followers before he left the world. A badge as we know can never be hidden. It is what identifies an individual. A flashback from the early period of the Church shows that they were fully aware of this badge and they were living

according to the demands of this badge, which is love. For instance, the followers of Christ (Christians) had everything in common from inception (Acts 4:32-35). None lacked anything then. Even when problems emanated from that, it was settled amicably (Acts 6:1-7). It was the behaviour of these followers of Christ. i.e. their badge, which is the love they showered on one another, the cohesion that existed in between them, the conviviality they manifested towards one another that merited them the name “Christians” (Acts 11:26). The first manifestation of their Christianity could be noticed in how they handled a greater problem that nearly rocked the foundation of the church. The problem hinged on how to admit Gentiles into Christianity, whether they will be circumcised or not. Eventually, a council was convoked and at the end of the meeting unity and peace returned to Christendom (Acts 15).

Intermittently at various times of the Christian history, there were cases of divisions, dissensions, oppositions, conflicts and separations among Christians. For example, in the middle of the eleventh century, the church witnessed the problem of the Greek or Eastern schism which broke the unity of the Christendom and cut off an appalling large fragment from the Catholic Church. Attesting to this, Padinjarekutt (2005) stated thus:

Of all the divisions within Christianity until then, this was the most damaging and the most tragic. The gradual alienation between East and West which had begun centuries before, reached its culmination when the legate of Pope Leo IX (1048-54), Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida, and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Cartularies, pronounced ex-communication on each other. The biggest group of Eastern Christians, the Byzantine Churches (in ecumenical language, Eastern Orthodox Churches or simply Orthodox Churches), were separated from communion with Rome. Several events led to this as we have seen, but the most important cause has been the question of Roman jurisdictional primacy, which, the Eastern Churches never accepted and still do not accept. The ex-communications were lifted in 1965 by Pope Paul VI. (P.65)

Also, there was the great schism of the West, from 1378-1417. This punctured church’s unity even further for forty years, and brought untold calamities and misfortunes upon the church. This was the time of two or even three popes at a time, setting up rival papacies. Another great rift in the Church was caused by the marriage that had existed between Henry the VIII and Catherine of Aragon that produced no surviving son. The unlawful breakup of that marriage and subsequent infatuation between Henry the VIII and Anne Boleyn around 1533 remotely and immediately gave rise to Anglicanism (Catherine of Aragon, Wikipedia en.m.wilipeida.org). From thence, the rift was no longer a stranger to the church. Put differently, the Christian church had also the protestant revolt and even the French revolution from 1517-1789. The one and the central badge – love is now subjective and no longer universal. These were trying periods for the Christian Church. They were indicative of the absence of love among Christians. This situation is contrary to the prayer of Jesus in John 17:20-26 for his followers to be one. The implication is that the Christianity that

came to Nigeria in 1800 was divided. They came in as Roman Catholic Mission (RCM), Church Missionary Society (CMS), and Orthodox Church. It is good to note that from the 1990s to the 2000s, there has been significant growth in protestant churches especially here in Nigeria (Religion in Nigeria, Wikipedia en.m.wikipedia.org).

Today, therefore, it is unfortunate that love seems no longer the badge of the followers of Christ. It has gone into oblivion. It constitutes a situation to be worried about for the reason that there is a lot of evil in society today as a result of the absence of love. Christianity in Anambra State is Christianity in Nigeria writ large. Hence, what is happening in Christianity that is in Nigeria is no different from Christianity that is in Anambra State. Anambra state is highly dominated by RCM, followed by CMS or Anglicans. Apart from these two, there are innumerable shades of Pentecostal churches scattered all over the state.

Hence, there are factions among Christians in Anambra state namely, Catholics, Anglicans, and Pentecostals. Even amid these denominations, there are also factions, which means there is no peace. The relationship between them often reveals that they are not from the same stock. Even in various towns and communities are cases of bitterness and rancour, conflicts, anger, hatred and quarrels among Christians, yet, they gather always in the name of Christ. The rift among various Christian denominations in the Anambra state makes one feel that the Anambra state has no problems of ethnicism but religious problems. This is because the number of none Christians is highly infinitesimal when compared with the population of Christians in the state. Today, all political leaders in Anambra state are Christians; yet, there are gross manifestations of injustice, greed, hatreds, lies, embezzlement, wickedness of all kinds, fanaticism, court cases etc. All the above makes one question, whether there are real Christians around, hence, the question mark on the "Christianity of Christians" (Ezeogamba, 2019) especially in the light of living out *agapateis*. This thesis, therefore, wants to study John 13:34-35 in the context of Christians in Anambra State.

Christ the founder of Christianity through his words and deeds prepared his followers to be one. He even prayed for them to be one before his physical exit from the earth. But, today Christians are not united. They are divided, thereby giving way for a high level of disparity between their beliefs, utterances and way of life. This division among Christians today propels one to question whether there are real Christians in Anambra state since Christ has said that through the love which they will have among themselves, people will be convinced that they are his followers. Hence, this work questions the Christianity of Christians especially, as it concerns living out *agapate* among Christians in Anambra State.

This work aims at questioning the genuineness or realness of Christians especially those in Anambra State and proffer solutions on how to be genuine. In doing this, as the specific objective of this paper, it will at the same time investigates the reason behind the jettisoning or relegating to the background this all-important new commandment of Christ by his followers. It equally envisages achieving a situation among the Christians in Anambra State where there are no more

dissensions, factions, bitterness and rancour, slandering Victimization, religious intolerance and antagonism because of many denominations in the Christendom. It, therefore, aims at reminding Christians of all denominations of this important demand of their founder, that by not being one, they are scandalizing the non-Christians. It then establishes grounds for making Christians realize the enormity of this call by Christ, how their shortcomings in this regard, challenges their identity, the depth of these challenges and how they can confront it head-on as it presents love as commanded by Christ in John 13:34-35, as a response and panacea to all the bickering, backwardness and wars in Anambra state, making its society a place for brotherly and sisterly conviviality and harmony.

This work concentrates on the study of Christians in Anambra state and the Practice of their religion (Christianity) concerning the fulfilment of the new commandment of love as given by Christ in John 13:34-35. It cuts across all Christian denominations – Catholics, Anglicans, Pentecostals and indeed all Christians in Anambra state. This notwithstanding, some helpful references or remarks could be made in passing, to help us deepen our study. The significance of this work is enormous. It will be of immense benefit to all Christian families in all kindred, Villages, towns, local governments in Anambra state, and indeed the whole states in Nigeria. And this implies that the fruits of this work will be useful or beneficial not only to the Christians living in Anambra state but to all Christians all over the world.

**Explication of Terms:** For a better understanding of this work, these words: *agapate* (you, love), *allēlous* (one another), Christians, and Christianity, are defined and elucidated as follows:

***Agapate* "you love!":** Etymologically *agapate* is second (2nd) person plural, present indicative, active mood, subjunctive, but used here as imperative – you, love! It comes from the Greek word *agapaō*. It is a Greco-Christian term referring to love. It is the highest form of love, charity, and the love of God for mankind and mankind for God. In Christian parlance, it is seen as the love originating from God or Christ for humankind. It is a love that is beyond reason (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>). In other words, it is an unconditional, selfless and eternal love. And where it is translated to English it becomes *agape*. According to the New Concise Catholic Dictionary (2010), it means to love or a sacred love feast. In the same vein, Chambers 21st Century Dictionary (2007) defines *agape* as Christian brotherly love, as distinct from erotic love. Pazhayampallil, (2004) defines *agape* as:

A deliberate desire for the highest good of the one loved, which shows itself in sacrificial action for that person's good, ...a love for the utterly unworthy, a love which proceeds from a God who is love. It is a love lavished upon others without a thought of whether they are worthy to receive it or not. It proceeds rather from the nature of the lover than from the merit of the loved (pp.709-710).

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According to Harper's Bible Dictionary (2002), the word *agape* is the principal Greek word used for "Love" in the NT. Of the three words for love in the Hellenistic world, it was the least common. It could be used in NT to designate the unmerited love God shows to humankind in sending his son as a suffering redeemer. When used of human love it means selfless and self-giving love (pp.579-581).

**Allēlous "one another":** Etymologically, it is accusative masculine plural. It is a reciprocal Pronoun from the word *allos*. It means "one another", "each other" (Rom 2:15, John 13:34) (Perschbacher, 1990). The Concept of one another is firstly particularized to the apostles of Jesus, not the immediate people of the outside world. According to the New Jerome Biblical Commentary (2000), "The formulation of the Commandment as the distinctive mark of Christian Community among outsiders in John 13:35, differs from its use in 1 John to castigate those who create internal division within the Community". In John 17:20-23, Jesus prays for unity among the apostles and those who will believe in him through the apostles' words, that is, the later followers of Christ. In other words, what Jesus means in the issue of one another would mean the apostles first and other subsequent believers or followers. The implication is that you ought to love another so as to attract others who are outside the fold.

In the understanding of the 'one another' concept, it means that in loving one another, one sees in one's neighbour another self. It is this love practised by one another that acts as a mirror through which one sees in another oneself, as it concerns the apostles and other followers of Christ. On another important note, what provoked the issue of 'one another' was the betrayal of Christ by Judas Iscariot who was a traitor, and therefore to avoid the repeat of such betrayal, which if allowed to continue, would spell doom for the takeoff of the church, and its sustenance, Christ brought in the concept of 'one another'

**Christians:** The word Christian is commonly accepted to be derived from *Christos*, the Greek translation of Messiah, "the Anointed." This word was first used in Antioch in Syria to identify the followers of Christ (Acts 11:26). King Agrippa also used it in Acts 26:28 to warn Paul not to convert him and make him a follower of Christ. Hence, Catholic Bible Dictionary (2008) defines it as a follower of Christ. On its own part, Chambers 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dictionary (2007), beautifully defines it as someone who believes in and follows the teachings and examples of Jesus Christ. Also, Merriam Webster Dictionary (2016), sees it as one who professes belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ. In the same vein, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2015), defines the word Christian as a person who believes in the teachings of Jesus Christ or has been baptized in a Church.

**Christianity:** It is an accepted fact that the simple way to express the definition or meaning of Christianity is to say that it is the act of being a Christian. Catholic Dictionary (2010), defines Christianity as the religion of, the body of faith and morals taught by the Catholic Church of Christ. Also, according to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2015), Christianity is defined as a

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religion that is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and the belief that he was the Son of God. A Dictionary of Philosophy of Religion (2010), sees Christianity as "...a ritual of initiation (baptism) and the Eucharist, a rite that re-enacts or recalls Christ's self-offering through sharing blessed bread and wine (sometimes called Communion or Mass)." In furtherance of its definition, *Sacramentum Mundi*, an Encyclopedia of Theology (1989), treats Christianity as a historically revealed religion, in which the infinite, personal, holy God acts in man and with man. It further describes it as the universal religion of mankind, higher than other religions.

**Brief History of Anambra State from Political Point of View:** We are going to tackle this history right from when the present Anambra state was still part of Old Anambra with its capital at Enugu till the time of the present governor of Anambra state. Politically, it can be called Old Anambra and New Anambra State. From East Central State, in 1976, Old Anambra State with Enugu as the state capital was created during the military regime of General Olusegun Obasanjo, and this began the political development of Anambra State ([en.m.wikipedia.org](http://en.m.wikipedia.org)). In March 1976, Brigadier-General John Atom Kpera was appointed the first Military Governor of Anambra State and in July 1978, he was removed (<https://www.legit.ng>). Odimayo (2019), writes, "They tried to implement a policy of forcing citizens to clean the cities being supervised by soldiers." After he was dismissed from the position of governor, he said that he left the State treasury empty because it was empty when he started his rule (<https://www.legit.ng>). Then, Colonel Datti Sadiq Abubakar took over and ruled from July 1978 to October 1979. And this regime marked the end of military rule in the State. (<https://www.legit.ng>).

In 1979, there was a major political arrangement to allow the citizens to choose their leaders and the Anambra people elected James Ifeanyichukwu Nwobodo (popularly known as Jim Nwobodo) of the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) and on 1 October 1979, he was sworn in as the first executive Governor of Anambra State. In October 1983, he presented himself for reelection but Christian Onoh, (also known as CC Onoh) of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) won the election ([en.m.wikipedia.org](http://en.m.wikipedia.org)). The election was challenged in the court because according to Ubani (2001): "The election was marred by widespread intimidation, violence and vote-rigging." ([www.thisdayonline.com](http://www.thisdayonline.com)). CC Onoh won again in the Supreme Court but was removed on 31 December 1983 through the military takeover of General Muhammadu Buhari. This military-come-back ended civilian government in Anambra State and again, brought another set of military governors and administrators ([en.m.wikipedia.org](http://en.m.wikipedia.org)).

From January 1984 to August 1985, Rear Admiral Allison Amaechina Madueke served as military governor of Anambra State and in August 1985 Air Commodore Samson Emeka Omeruah took over and ruled till December 1987. The appointment of Colonel Robert Nnaemeka Akonobi in December 1987 by General Ibrahim Babangida and his regime that ended in August 1990 created turns of political events in the State like the struggle between Anambra South (Ijekebee group) and Anambra North (Wawa group) [[en.m.wikipedia.org](http://en.m.wikipedia.org)]. In August 1990, Lt. Colonel Herbert Obi-Eze came in and his tenure witnessed a major political restructuring that led to creating Anambra State with Awka as State Capital out of the Old Anambra State on 27 August 1991, during the time

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of General Ibrahim Babangida (en.m.wikipedia.org). On 27 August 1991, Navy Captain Joseph Abulu was appointed the first Military Administrator of Anambra State and ruled till 1 January 1992. During his tenure, another election was conducted for civilian takeover and Dr. Chukwuemeka Ezeife of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) won the election. On 2 January 1992, he was sworn in as the first elected executive governor of new Anambra State and his tenure was cut short in November 1993 as a result of military return through General Sani Abacha (en.m.wikipedia.org).

From November to December 1993 AIG Dabo Aliyu served as acting Administrator of Anambra State. From 9th December 1993 to 21st August 1996 Anambra State witnessed the military administration of Colonel Mike E. Attah with shades of political development. On 21st December 1996, Group Captain Rufai Garba became the Military Administrator of Anambra State and his administration ended on 6th August 1998. The last Military Administrator of Anambra State was Wing Commander Emmanuel Ukaegbu. He ruled from 6th August 1998 to 29th May 1999 during the transitional regime of General Abdulsalami Abubakar (en.m.wikipedia.org).

On 29 May 1999, the transitional regime ushered in a new dispensation of democratic government in Anambra State. At this stage, the State witnessed a panoply of political precedents and bequests. The current history of political development of Anambra State started with the emergence of Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) as the democratic governor of the State after the military era. He served from May 1999 to May 2003 and his government was marred with "godfatherism" and kingmakers activities. Then came, the power struggle between the government and powerbrokers in the State which incapacitated the government and immobilized the vehicle of good governance in the state. The State was faced with the problems of settlement of godfathers, non-payment of teachers' salary, strike action of both primary and Secondary School teachers, insecurity and so on. During the time of the election in 2003, he stood against the powerbrokers even when they denied him a PDP ticket, he contested under the platform of Alliance for Democracy and lost. Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju, the former governor of Anambra state accused former president Olusegun Obasanjo as the one who introduced negative godfatherism in Anambra politics because he wanted his boys on the helm of affairs on the State (<http://africa.reuters.com/wire/news/usnL14239133.html>)

The writers witnessed the electioneering of the 2003 election, in which, Mr. Peter Obi posed the question "Are we cursed or the cause?" to the Anambra people. This then was a mind striking and political reawakening question that occupied the political space of Anambra State. The declaration of Dr. Chris Nwabueze Ngige, the candidate of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as elected governor of Anambra State was at issue because the electorates believed that the proclaimed winner was not their choice. And Mr. Peter Obi of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) claimed that he was the winner of the election and not the proclaimed winner and headed to Election Tribunal to reclaim his mandate. However, Dr. Chris Nwabueze Ngige was sworn in on 29 May 2003 (en.m.wikipedia.org). After 2 months in office, he failed to maintain the lines drawn by the self-acclaimed political godfather of Anambra politics, Chief Chris Uba. He tried to unseat

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him via a falsified resignation letter presented to the State House of Assemble - though the House accepted it but the people and their leaders (traditional and religious) rejected the purported letter of resignation (en.m.wikipedia.org). After the unsuccessful attempt to remove the governor on 10th July 2003, the godfather and co made another failed attempt to depose him through a civilian coup. Odili (2003) posits: "In the context of Anambra politics, it can be inferred that a hijack operation is in progress" (Allafrica.om). In the same vein, Hoffmann (2010) states that a civilian coup was attempted in Anambra state in South-East Nigeria. Barely two months after Chris Ngige was sworn in as the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) governor of Anambra, a team of armed policemen disarmed his security detail and took him into custody. The governor's attempted ousting made public the breakdown of his relationship with his political godfather, Chief Chris Uba, and sparked a debate on godfather politics in Nigeria (www.jstor.org).

Mr. Peter Obi reclaimed his mandate through the Election Tribunal after almost 3 years of a tough legal challenge. He won in August 2005 at the Election Petition Tribunal and won his final legal victory on 15th March 2006 at the Federal Court of Appeal where no further appeals were possible (en.m.wikipedia.org). He then took over the leadership of Anambra State on 17th March 2006 (en.m.wikipedia.org). On 2nd November 2006, he was impeached by the State House of Assembly after seven months in office and was replaced by his deputy Dame Virginia Etiaba, making her the first-ever female governor in Nigeria's history. Obi successfully challenged his impeachment and was re-instated as the governor on 9th February 2007 by the Court of Appeal sitting in Enugu. She transferred her powers back to Obi three months later when an appeal court nullified the impeachment (en.m.wikipedia.org). Obi once again left office on 29th May 2007 following the general elections, which Andy Uba won (en.m.wikipedia.org). Obi returned to the courts once more, this time contending that the four-year tenure he had won in the 2003 elections only started to run when he took office in March 2006. On 14th June 2007, the Supreme Court of Nigeria upheld Obi's contention and returned Obi to office. This brought to an abrupt end the tenure of Obi's successor, Andy Uba whose April 14th, 2007 election the Supreme Court nullified on the grounds that Obi's four-year tenure should have remained undisturbed until March 2010. On 7th February 2010, Mr. Peter Obi won that election and started his second term as the governor of Anambra State and ended on 17th March 2014. (en.m.wikipedia.org)

During the 2013 election, Mr. Peter Obi championed power a shift to Anambra North and this zoning arrangement favoured Chief Willie Maduaburochukwu Obiano of APGA and he was sworn in on 17th March 2014 as the new governor after he had won November 2013 election (en.m.wikipedia.org). In November 2017, he contested for a second term and won and on 17th March 2018, he took his second oath of office for his final four-year term (en.m.wikipedia.org). All the mentioned past and present democratically elected governors of Anambra state and even those who usurped another person's position are all Christians and the political contests done among themselves.

Today, another electioneering campaign that will usher in a new administration is on and all those who are vying for this single-seat are all Christians. The election proper is coming up on 6<sup>th</sup>



November 2021. But already, though the contest is between Christians, falsehood, insincerity, antagonisms, and rivalry, jealousy, bad temper and quarrels, disagreements, factions and malice are becoming the order of the day. There is no political party that has not more than two rival candidates and each claiming to be the most qualified. This is to the extent that each of the candidates is ready to do whatever to be the ultimate winner at the end of the day. It is never a rancor-free contest. Money is also greatly employed to induce the electorate.

**Brief History of Christianity in Anambra State:** In the first place, the history of Christianity is traced back right to the life and times of Jesus Christ himself when he started to call his first disciples/apostles (Mark 1:16-20). In other words, he gathered around himself people who accepted and believed the good news of the kingdom of heaven which he was preaching (Matt.10:2-10). He brought a new teaching and a new way of life as seen in the Gospel of Matthew (Chapters 5-6). Jesus continued with them until the time he was about to go back to the Father. At that time their number had increased from 12, 72, to 120 (Acts 1:15). Attesting to this, Bassey (1997) observes that to this number, he renewed the mandate he made earlier by sending them to bring the good news to the entire world. Along with this mandate, he gave them the authority and promised to send them the Holy Spirit that will fill them with the power to evangelize the world [Mtt.28:18-19; Mk.16:15-16; Acts 1:8] (p.17).

Also, it is good that we mention in passing a brief history of Christianity in Nigeria before proceeding to that of Anambra State which is the focus here. As a matter of fact, Christianity was at first time introduced in Nigeria in 1515 with missionary activities being put in place by some Catholic missionaries who first set up a school in the Oba of Benin's palace. These missionaries were led into Nigeria by the first Portuguese traders who landed in Benin in 1485. The school which was opened was meant to serve the Oba's children and the sons of his palace chiefs (Fafunwa, 1974 p.27). At that time, the same Catholic missionaries also established a Seminary School on the Island of Sao Thome off the West Coast of Southern Nigeria (Fafunwa, 1974 p.27). All these lasted for a short while because of the influence of the slave trade which was not favourable to the missionary. Attesting to this, Onwubiko (1973) comments that the Portuguese influence remained for long in Benin after 1520. In 1540, the king of Benin sent an ambassador to pay a visit to the Portuguese Capital. The king of Benin allowed his son and some of his chiefs to become Christians and ordered a church to be built but he himself showed little interest in the new religion." (p.140). After this first attempt of establishing Christianity in Nigeria, there followed suit another one after some centuries. Later in 1842, Rev. T.B Freeman, of Methodist Mission in response to appeals and calls from Egbaland landed in Badagry to start missionary work. In December that year (1842), he opened a school with the help of Mr. and Mrs. De Craft of the same Mission. In 1845, Rev. Henry Townsend of C.M.S Mission opened a mission school at Badagry (Fafunwa, 1974 p.140). In 1846, Rev. Ajayi Crowther of the same mission opened a church and two schools in Abeokuta. Also, in 1846, Rev. Hope Waddell of the church of Scotland mission opened a mission school which eventually gave rise to the famous Hope Waddell Training Institute, Calabar. Thomas Bowen and J.M Haden of the American Baptist Mission in 1850 arrived

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Badagry opened up mission schools around Lagos and Oyo area including Ogbomosho up to Ilorin. The Brazilian ex-Slaves who had settled in Lagos also wanted a Catholic Mission school there in Lagos (Taiwo, 1982 p.15). According to Fafunwa (1974), in 1868, the Roman Catholic Mission (R.C.M) granted their request and a mission school was opened. This second attempt succeeded and has lasted till today (p,17).

The history of Christianity in Anambra State particularly speaking from its remote standpoint could be traced back to the 1854 Niger Expedition in which Ajayi Crowther of Church Missionary Society (CMS) was instrumental. During that year, Crowther made exploratory contacts for the founding of Missions on the Niger. These contacts opened the way for Crowther and Rev. J.C Taylor in July 1857 as they founded Missions at Onitsha under the C.M.S (Onwubiko, 1973 p.18). Also according to Onwubiko (1973), it was in appreciation of the progress of Christianity in the Niger territories, especially at Onitsha under Crowther's leadership that he was made a Bishop in 1864 and appointed to head the C.M.S Niger mission.

After some twenty-eight years of the establishment of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S) now Anglican Communion at Onitsha, the Catholic Missionary activities followed suit in 1885, not counting the fact that Onitsha was once visited by some Holy Ghost fathers from Fernando P.O in 1865. Affirming this fact, Onwubiko (1973) Comments: "Although Onitsha had been visited by Holy Ghost Fathers from Fernando P.O in 1865, the real history of the Catholic Mission in Onitsha began with the arrival of Father Lutz on December 5, 1885." (p. 204). That year, Father Lutz opened a station on the land donated by Obi of Onitsha. This came as a result of the request for land by the Catholic Missionaries on Eze Anazonwu, Obi of Onitsha who directed them to approach the C.M.S Missionaries to accommodate them in the land he had earlier given to them. This they did and got a positive response from the leader of C.M.S Missionaries, Samuel Ajayi Crowther who with his group agreed to accommodate the Catholic Missionaries by giving them some part of their land. According to Njoku (1980), the Leader of the C.M.S Missionaries, Crowther, said as follows, on the day they gave the land to the Catholic Missionaries: "I acquired the land for the cause of God, take it." (p.29). So, they gave the Catholics the Southern portion of the land till the River Niger, and that is the present site of the Holy Trinity Basilica Onitsha. This is a practical sign of *agapaō* which is lacking today among various so-called Christian denominations in Anambra state. Catholic Missionaries after settling down on the land they were given started moving into the hinterland for their missionary enterprise. Attesting to this, Onwubiko (1973) observes: "From here, the Catholic Mission spread to Nkwelle in 1888 and Aguleri in 1890. Under Father, Joseph Shanahan (who later became the first Catholic Bishop of Eastern Nigeria) the Catholic Mission spread to all parts of Igbo land and beyond." (p.204).

Since then, Christianity had been on steady progress ever till today in the present Anambra State, with some tremendous increase in the number of other churches which were being founded or established. Before and immediately after Nigerian – Biafra civil war there had been the presence of some European and American evangelical groups in what we call Anambra State now.

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From the late 1980s and early 1990s, even till today, Anambra State has witnessed a noticeable and significant upsurge and proliferation of Pentecostal and Mushroom churches which are virtually located in every available corner, of which classrooms, mechanic workshops and warehouses, and even uncompleted houses are very helpful. Consenting to this fact, Obiora (1998) observes: “Each day heralds familiar terrains turn into temples of God. It is hallelujah everywhere. Every nook and Cranny is spilt with proclamation and announcement of Salvation. Thousands of new wave churches are registered daily in Abuja. Prayer cells abound everywhere.” (p.xii). Even in some quarters of this Christianity, it is a Christianity of business in religion which has resulted in mortally wounded humanity that is cut off from God, his creator. This is Christianity as it stands today whose membership is questionable as it has failed to live out *agapate* (John 13:34-35). The ugly picture the above paints is the fact that instead of Anambra state being a harmonious state where peace and justice are at home, it is like a house of commotion and dissension. Some seem to believe that they cannot grow without destroying others; their dreams cannot be fulfilled without sabotaging others. In fact, love is scarce.

**Background of John’s Gospel:** Here, we consider the circumstances or factors that prompted the writing of this Gospel or what influenced it's being written. Let us consider them as follows: According to Harper’s Bible Dictionary (2002):

...a number of scholars came to believe that John was influenced by or written to refute, an earlier form of the so-called Gnostic heresy that flourished during the second century and threatened for a while to become the dominant form of Christianity. Gnosticism tended to equate creation with the fall, to regard the material world as evil, and to see in Jesus the emissary from an alien God who had descended into this world to save his kindred spirits, the elect. Some elements of this view, especially its Christology and concept of salvation seemed to find an echo in the Fourth Gospel, (p.498).

In his contribution to this, Barclay (2016) comments as follows:

By that time, two special features had emerged in the situation of the Christian Church. First, Christianity had gone out into the Gentile world. By that time, the Christian church was no longer predominantly Jewish; it was in fact overwhelmingly Gentile. The vast majority, of its members, now came not from a Jewish but a Greek background. That being so, Christianity had to be restarted. It was not that the truth of Christianity had changed; but the terms and the Categories in which it found expression had to be changed, (pp. 7-8).

Really, there were Gentile Christians who came from Hellenism to embrace the faith in Christ, presumably John wrote to square with their mentality and interest.

Also, the International Bible Commentary (2016) aptly attests: “... the occasion for writing the Gospel includes the mission to Samaria ( John 4:1-42), an anti-docetic polemic (that is, a polemic against those who denied the humanity of Christ and held that he only appeared to be human, ( 1 John 4:2)...” (p.1522). Equally commenting on the traditional history of the fourth Gospel, The

New Jerome Biblical Commentary (2000) observes: “The Gospel was composed after the crisis caused by the expulsion of Christians from the Synagogue” (p.946). Continuing, the New Jerusalem Biblical Commentary (2000) adds: “The Severity of its condemnation of ‘the Jews’ indicates that the persecution had been a costly one. Perhaps it was even followed by a geographic move from the Palestine of the Original Johannine Christianity in later Church traditions” (p.946).

So, from this standpoint, the Gospel came up really as a response to the hostility from the Jews and their leaders against Jesus and his ministry as seen in John Chapter 8:12-56, and also chapter 9 of the same John’s Gospel as it concerns the cure of the man born blind. This hostility from the Jews came from outsiders to demarcate the one called heretical insiders that developed from within the Johannine community which the letters of John were written to confront, and whom the author calls ‘antichrist’ and children of the devil as he warns against them in 1 John 2: 18-29. In the same vein, Bassey (1997) submits as follows:

This gospel was originally addressed to a community of Christians who were faced with three currents of influences that threatened their faith in Jesus. These include the Jewish neighbours who engaged them in controversies, Gnosticism, which upheld that salvation is acquired through a knowledge (Greek Gnosis) which is reserved for those who have been initiated. The community also lived in an atmosphere where Greek Philosophy and Hellenism was the order of the day, (p.62).

In furtherance of his points and explanations, Bassey (1997) Continues to maintain that the Gospel was intended to address these influences and help the Christian Community to hold onto their faith in Christ in the face of these influences, as the one who reveals God’s secret and the fulfiller of Jewish aspiration. John made use of Greek philosophical ideas to make this point clearer (the use of logos for Jesus), (p.62). In resume, the Gospel of John was written when Christianity was under attack from several different quarters, including Jews, Romans, sceptics, and others making charges against it. The Gospel presents an interpretation of Jesus that reflects ideas and situations that prevailed in the Christian community towards the end of the first century of the Christian era, (www.cliffsnotes.com).

**Authorship:** In our effort to find out who wrote or composed the Fourth Gospel (FG), which is the Gospel of John, a positive response or answer was given unanimously by tradition which has always believed and accepted John, son of Zebedee, the brother of James who was one of the twelve apostles (Matt.4:21-25) as the writer or author. In all the books or authors consulted, only an author differed from others when it comes to the authorship of this gospel. Other authors consulted are unanimous in agreeing with the tradition ascribing or attributing the authorship of John’s Gospel to John the Apostle, son of Zebedee. The dissenting author said of the Gospel of John, "Written by a Christian named John, then contents of the book indicate quite clearly that the author was not the John who was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, for it contains no direct personal reference of the type that one would expect from an intimate associate of Jesus" (www.cliffsnotes.com). Despite this dissenting voice, the present authors align themselves with

those that accept John the apostle as the author of the FG. Such authors that point John the author are as follows: In his contribution, Kizhakkeyil (2008) observes as follows: “The fourth Gospel is traditionally known in the name of Apostle John, ...the ‘beloved disciple’ who appears several times in this Gospel has been identified with John and with the author of this Gospel” (p.120) In the same vein, The New American Bible (1977) has it that:

The reputed author of the fourth gospel was John, Son of Zebedee, who published it in an Ephesus in the last years of his life. Within the Christian Community, this is the only important tradition that has come down from antiquity concerning this gospel. In its essentials, the tradition is found in Irenaeus (*Adversus Haereses*, 3:1, 1) toward the second century. He claims to have had it from Polycarp of Smyrna who knows John... While the attestation of this tradition is impressive, it should be remembered that for the ancients authorship was a much broader concept than it is today. In their time a man could be called the ‘author’ of a work, if he was the authority behind it, even though he did not write it, (p.1172).

**Date and Provenance of the Gospel:** There are some controversies concerning the date and place of composition of the Gospel of John, as in the case of the authorship. So, there is no unanimity among Scholars on the date and place of composition. As regards date, nevertheless, as it were, tradition places the date between 90 and 100 A.D. Giving credence to this fact, Bassey (1997) attests that the Gospel according to John was written probably at the end of the first century between 90 and 100 AD, (p.62). Also, on its own part, The New American Bible (2005) comments that the final editing of the Gospel and arrangement in its present form probably dates from between A.D 90 and 100, (p.1136). And some other scholars or authors say one date or the other which still hovers around 90 and 100 A.D as seen below:

Okure in *International Bible Commentary* (2016), writes “Nevertheless, the most recent studies date the final composition of the Gospel between 98 C.E., in the time of Trajan (to which period Irenaeus dates the last days of John son of Zebedee), and 100 C.” (p.1524). In the same Vein, KizhaKKeyil (2008) observes: “It is believed that this gospel was composed in the mid-90s of the first century A.D.” (p.121). Bake (1998) holds that most scholars place it about A.D 90 when John was an old man, (p.253). Still on the date of composition, *Catholic Bible Dictionary* (2009) comments as follows: “As it would have taken time for the Gospel to gain circulation and widespread acceptance, there is a strong likelihood that it was composed before A.D 100. But how long before A.D. 100? Most scholars believe that the Gospel was written toward the end of the first century” (p.459).

As regards provenance, again, according to tradition and Patristic witness, the Gospel was written in Ephesus. Giving credence to this, Okure in *International Bible Commentary* (2016) observes thus: “Though this has also been disputed there is not sufficient evidence to challenge Patristic witness that the Gospel was written in Ephesus where John the son of Zebedee is believed to have lived and exercised his apostolic Ministry” (p.1524). Commenting on the place of composition of the Gospel, Kizhakkeyil (2008) opines that as the Gospel reflects the historical situation of the

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Johannine community at the end of the first century, the place of its composition might be Ephesus, (p.121).

**Purpose of the Gospel:** John in chapter 20:31 answers the question regarding the purpose of writing this Gospel as follows: “These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and that by believing, you may have life in his name.” At that time, the community of Christians were faced with three currents of influences that were seriously threatening their faith in Christ Jesus. Giving his support and credence to this fact, Bassey (1992) observes:

These included the Jewish neighbours who engaged them in controversies; Gnosticism which uphold that salvation is acquired through knowledge, (Greek Gnosis) which is reserved for those who have been initiated. The Community also lived in an atmosphere where Greek Philosophy and Hellenism were the order of the day. The Gospel, therefore, was intended to address these influences and to help the Christian community to hold to their faith in Christ... (p.62).

**Sources of John’s Gospel:** As regards the sources of John’s Gospel, it is believed that many sources came into play for its composition as can be seen from its geographical, chronological, and literary transitions, among them included the Miracles Source. Giving credence to this, the New Jerome Biblical Commentary (2000) observes: “The miracle stories have probably been derived from a collection of Jesus’ miracles. The Miracles Source is often referred to as the Signs (or Semeia) Source.” (pp. 942-943). So, Johannine Gospel not minding that it differs from the Synoptic in its style and content draws on the tradition which is contained in the Synoptic Gospels and their sources. Also, it is reasonably believed that one of John’s sources for the composition of his Gospel has something significant to do with the Qumran world view. Commenting on this, Okure in the International Bible Commentary (2016) observes: “...possibly the Qumran worldview indicates that the gospel did not exist in a vacuum but related naturally to its own religious and socio-cultural world” (p.1528). Continuing, Okure (2016) says:

The contemporary reader has the task not only of seeing how the gospel related to its world in history but of making serious efforts to relate this gospel to the thought patterns and Scriptures or oral traditions of his or her own people without betraying the message of the Gospel. This is the task of enculturation, which has become a necessary aspect of proclaiming the Gospel, (p.1528).

**Literary Genre and Character of John’s Gospel:** John’s book which is under study is classified as a Gospel. Attesting to this, Okure (2016) observes: “John’s ‘book’ is classified as a Gospel.” Though the term ‘gospel’ exists outside Christian literature, its distinctive usage as a genre is uniquely Christian.” (p.1513). In furtherance of her explanation, Okure (2016) says that it applies specifically to the account of Jesus’ origin, both divine (1:1-2,18) and human (1:14,45), his Galilean and Judean ministry, his passion, death, and resurrection, and his commissioning of his

spirit-filled disciples to proclaim this good news to the whole world (20:21-23), (p.1513). In the opinion of Okure (2016), John's Jesus is the Good News because he liberates people from all death-dealing forces that oppress humanity and constitute the real threat to true (eternal) life. The heart of this good news is found in such passages as John 3:16; 10 and 11:52, (pp.1513-1514).

**Delimitation of John 13:34-35:** Here the researcher looks at the unity of the text. This small unit falls with the Book of Glory which covered chapters 13:1-20:31. This encompasses other smaller units or subunits. To divide this text into its constituent parts, Ezeogamba (2015) relying on some authorities like Okure, T. (2004) and Perkins, P. (1997) has this to say,

This is divided into three bigger units namely (1) the Last Supper discourse (13:1-17:26). John 13 introduces the Last Supper discourse which extends to chapter 17. These five chapters narrate Jesus' last and most intimate conversation with his disciples before his physical departure from the earth; (2) the Passion Narrative (18:1-19:42); and (3) the Raising of Jesus (20:1-29). Our interest lies in the first part which divides further into five subunits.p.24

This first part is where the interest of this paper lies. According to PHEME, (1997), this first part, which is the Last Supper Discourse (13:1-17:26), divides further into five subunits. The fivefold divisions include (a) The Activities of Last Supper (13:1-30); (b) Jesus' return to the Father (13:31-14:31); (c) Jesus the True Vine (15:1-16:4a); (d) Consolation for the Disciples (16:4b-33); (e) Jesus' Prayer for the Disciples (17:26-27). A closer look reveals that our text lies with the second section of the Last Supper Discourse which is Jesus' return to the Father (13:31-14:31). This can also be divided into four other smaller subunits but our interest lies in the very first smaller unit out of the four, which is the announcement of the hour (13:31-38). This research work will not consider the whole 'Announcement of the Hour' but dwells with the smaller portion seen in Verses 34-35 which Okure (2004) calls, "Love: identity card of the true disciple"p.1532. Jesus began the statement and concluded it without any interruption, hence, it is a sort of monologue if we consider only Vv 34-35 since intervention from Peter only comes in verse 36. Without mincing words, Vv 34-35 is a unit of its own.

PHEME, (1997) does not see Vv 34-35 as properly located. According to him, "The commandment fits awkwardly into this position, since what follows deals with the theme of Jesus' departure. The commandment returns in 15:12-17 and is identified as the criterion of salvation and of the knowledge of God in 1 John 2:7-8; 3:11, 23)p". The present researcher does not buy the above idea. Instead, he believes that Vv 34-35 were properly placed. It shows that Jesus knows that the hour is short and in no distance time he would be taken away from their midst. He had to start preparing them for life after his departure. This view is confirmed by Lee, (2010) when she says, "In view of his (Jesus') imminent departure, Jesus gives his disciples the love command (33-35) as a sign of his presence and a sign to the world" p.724.

**Remote and Immediate Context of John 13:34-35:** Few moments before Jesus' departure from this world, deep within him, he knew that the only thing that will keep his followers together is a sacrificial love that is encapsulated in the word *agapē*. A leader among them must be their servant hence he washed their feet to teach them this hard lesson. So the remote context of John 13:34-35 is the knowledge that moved him to wash the feet of his followers and the act of washing their feet even to the extent of washing the feet of his would-be betrayer, the one that would deny him and the ones that would desert him. The immediate context of John 13:34-35 can easily be seen in Jesus' statements in verse 33. It was clear to Jesus that his presence with his followers was like a central beam that holds the structure of a construction. If the beam is destroyed, the building cannot still stand, it will fall asunder. Since nature abhors vacuum Jesus tries to provide an alternative, a replacement of himself which he hinges on *agapē*.

### Textual Criticism of John 13:34-35

Verse 34 has one critical problem whereas verse 35 has two critical problems. The researcher wants to tackle them verse by verse. In verse 34 there is a sign of insertion. This sign "p" marks the location where one or more words, sometimes a whole verse, is inserted by the witnesses cited. In this verse, it is an insertion of *egō* which is first person singular, personal pronoun meaning "I". It was inserted by the following manuscripts, P<sup>66</sup> pc it. To insert it is not really superfluous but they must have added it to show the emphasis with which Jesus spoke. What is very clear is that adding it or subtracting it cannot change the meaning of the sentence. Yet another manuscript namely, Codex Bezae (D) inserted *kagō* which is a contracted form of *kai egō* meaning, "and I". But Nestle-Aland's Novum Testamentum Graecum, 27th Edition, the text we relied on did not add any of them. It will not give better translation if added but not adding it will not subtract anything from the sentence as it is. Verse 35 has first of all alternative reading of a word as well as the transposition of the phrase *emou este mathētai* where *emou* or *mou* is the genitive case, singular of the word *egō* meaning "I". Literally, the phrase means, "you are disciples of me." Nestle-Aland has *emou mathētai este* where *emou* is the dative case. Hence the phrase in our text can literally be translated to mean, "you are disciples to me". It is P<sup>66</sup> that has the alternative and transposition reading. Our text is supported by more ancient manuscripts. Its reading is a better reading though the other reading gives us possession, i.e. the disciples belong to Jesus.

There is yet another alternative reading in verse 35 where our text has *en allēlois* where *allēlois* is dative plural masculine, reciprocal pronoun meaning "another". *en allēlois* meaning, "among one another" but manuscripts like Ephraemi (C) has *en allois* where *allois* is dative plural, a masculine adjective meaning "others." There is no doubt that this must have been caused by aural mistakes (hearing one thing and mistake it to some other thing). The reciprocal pronoun our text has is better. Finally, manuscripts like Ξ pc have an alternative reading which is different to what Nestle-Aland and supporters have. They have *metallēlōn* which is a combination of *meta allēlōn* where *meta* goes with the genitive. The use of *metallēlōn* must have resulted from deliberate alteration of the text for purposes of clarification, correction, and apologetic as well as from what one may call



exegetical misjudgment. For the present writing, it is more plausible to accept the content of Nest-Aland in these two verses as it is.

**Content Analysis of John 13:34-35:** Here the writers expose the contents of these two verses. The researchers study and interpret them as they affect the whole work. The majority of Scholars agree that the order to love one another as he has loved them stems from the Mosaic Laws namely, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deut. 6:5) and "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Lev. 19:18). Hence, we shall try to explain what then makes the commands of Jesus in John 13:34-35 to be a new commandment.

**The New Commandment (V 34):** The question is, is this commandment really new? This commandment has been in existence and almost as old as mankind or put succinctly, it has been in existence right from the Levitical times to the present. We have such laws in the Old Testament that point towards the extension of love one has for oneself towards others namely Lev. 19:18 which says, "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord." In the New Testament, we have Mark 12:31 which says, "The second is this: Love your neighbour as yourself." This can also be seen in Matt 7:12; 22:39; 25:40; 1 John 4:21; Rom. 13:8-10; 15:2; Eph 4:25 and so on. This law in Lev. 19:18 on its own looks like ethnic love and not universal love. The Jews did not understand the above law. That may be the reason why a lawyer of the law asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" On this Jesus answered with a story that ended with the question, "Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" (Luke 10:28-37 especially verse 36). The questioner answered and answered right, hence, the response, "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37).

In John 13:34-35, therefore, the love Jesus was referring to was meant for people of all nationalities who are his followers. It is this love that will eventually cause a revolution that will bring all mankind under the same umbrella. The contents of Matt 5:13-16 are called to mind here. Barness to explain the newness of this commandment says,

The Jew was known by his external rites, by his uniqueness of dress, etc.; the philosopher by some other mark of distinction; the military man by another, etc. In none of these cases had a love for each other been the distinguishing and special badge by which they were known. But in the case of Christians, they were not to be known by distinctions of wealth, or learning, or fame; they were not to aspire to earthly honours; they were not to adopt any special style of dress or badge, but they were to be distinguished by tender and constant attachment to each other (Barness).

Gill in his exposition of the entire Bible sees the newness from the point of view that it will "be observed in a new manner, not in the oldness of the letter, but the newness of the spirit"(Gills'

Exposition). John, Paul and Peter reminded their various communities of this all-important and equalizing badge in the following passages: 1John 3:23; 1Thess. 4:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2 Thess. 1:3; Gal. 6:2; 2Pet.1:7. For PHEME (1997) "This Commandment is new because it is grounded not in the love commands of the Jewish tradition (e.g., Lev. 19:18; 1QS 1:9-11) but in the self-offering of Jesus" p. 974. Again, Lee says, "What is 'new' about this command is not the notion of love within the community, which belongs firmly within the Mosaic Law but rather the expression 'just as I have loved you.' The love of Jesus has been demonstrated ritually and symbolically in the foot-washing and will be enacted on the cross".p.725. In the same vein, Okure, (2004) this commandment is new because "the measure of love required is the measure by which Jesus loves us, not how we love ourselves", p.1561. It is also the view of Craig, (1993), p. 298. This makes more convincing meaning and more plausible. Also, for the researcher, the newness should be noticed from the point of view that the law started and understood as an ethnic law and becomes universalized especially as it is presented in the Gospel of Luke 10:28-37 or in the New Testament as a whole.

V.34. "As I have loved you" is a statement that touches the heart deeply. The speaker was not saying what has not done but he has done. The particle *kathōs* is a combination of *kata* and *ōs* which in the context it was used in this passage means "as", "in the manner that." It implies here that Jesus was not asking his disciples or followers to do an impossible, instead, they should sacrificially love one another as he has done. It is *kathōs* makes to appear as what is possible to be done. Okure (2004) Says,

The new commandment to love as Jesus loves (Vv 31-35) is sandwiched between the prediction of Judas' betrayal and of Peter's denial (Vv 21-30, 36-38). This implies that the disciples are to follow Jesus the whole way, learn from him how to love intensely in the face of hatred, serve one another humbly and cleanse one another from sin (washing of the feet), p.156.

What makes the washing of the feet and this statement to "love as he loved" is the fact that he was fully aware of all that was about to happen to him, the betrayal, denial, as well as that he was about returning to his Father. In the instruction, one notices the voice of a dying one. This is one of the reasons it must be taken seriously by his followers and would-be-followers. Maclaren in his exposition captures Jesus' mood thus, "Wishes from dying lips are sacred. They sink deep into memories and mould faithful lives. The sense of impending separation had added an unwonted tenderness to our Lord's address, and he had designated his disciples by the fond name of 'little children'" (Maclaren's Exposition). To love ourselves as Jesus loved us should not be just in mere words but in truth and deeds. Maclaren graphically puts it thus, "Christian love is no mere sickly maiden, full of sentimental emotions and honeyed words. She is a strenuous virgin, girt for service, a heroine ready for dangers, and prepared to be a martyr if it is needful. Love's language is the sacrifice. 'I give thee myself' is its motto" (Maclaren's Exposition). Barnes in his commentary

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sees the phrase, 'New Commandment' as a commandment Jesus gave to his followers when he was about to leave the universe "to be a badge of discipleship, by which they might be known as his friends and followers, and by which they might be distinguished from all others" (Barness' Notes). This commandment has been in existence and almost as old as mankind. We have laws in the Old Testament that point towards of extension of love one has for oneself namely Lev. 19:18 which says, "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord." This law on its own looks like ethnic love and not universal love. In John 13:34-35, the love Jesus was referring to was meant for people of all nationalities who are followers of Christ. It is this love that will eventually cause a revolution that will bring all mankind under the same umbrella. The contents of Matt 5:13-16 are called to mind here. Barness to explain the newness of this commandment says,

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Other passages such as 1 John 3:11-18 and 1 Cor. 13 spell out in some detail what this love entails. Central to it is the readiness to serve and forgive one another even as Jesus served, forgave, and purified his disciples, knowing that they would soon abandon him and flee. We may not really appreciate the challenge of this commandment unless we have a full grasp of the depths of Jesus' love for us. p.1561.

**Agapē As Badge for the Covenant:** In the Old Covenant, God gave the Israelites a law that is recorded in Deut. 6:4-9. The emphasis of that law is that you will always be with that law unceasingly. This instruction was given to the extent that the above law must be worn on their wrists as we wore wristwatches today. Just as wristwatches guide the wearer on the use of time, it was meant to guide them on their relationship with God. But the new commandment is meant to be worn not as a wristwatch, rather be engraved in the hearts of every Christian. The badge will not be worn in such a way it will be visible to the eye but can be noticed and experienced through the behaviour of Christians. According to PHEME (1997), "The formulation of the commandment

as the distinctive mark of Christian community among outsiders in v 35 (cf. 17:23b) differs from its use in 1 John to castigate those who create internal division within the community" p. 974. Reflecting on the content of verse 35, Matthew Henry in his commentary says, "By this, it appears, that if the followers of Christ do not show love to one another, they give cause to suspect their sincerity" (Matthew Henry's Commentaries).

**Evaluation:** This work has been an attempt to bring to focus and equally as it analyzed the relevance and import of John 13: 34-35 in the lives of Christians in Anambra state. As a matter of fact, this study really examines the situation of Anambra Christians today and their position in relation to the command of Christ to love one another as He has loved them (John 13: 34-35). The study is therefore undertaken within the context of hate, rivalry, and bickering among the followers of Christ in Anambra state in particular, and Nigeria in general. The fact, be that as it may, is that many who go by the name Christians are not truly converted to the faith. Their Christianity appears to be very shallow and superficial. They fail to understand that the essence of Christianity is love. The love must come from the ontological human-divine related nature of man. It is this love that made the founder of the Christian religion, Jesus Christ, sacrifice His life for the salvation of the world.

Unfortunately, today, Christianity looks as if it is just a social symbol among the people. People wish to be called Christians because it has become fashionable to be so addressed; they only want to join what is in vogue, and not out of the conviction of the value of the religion in their lives. The work, therefore, reveals that we only pretend to follow Christ if we do not find a way of making this command alive among us and noticeable in our life in society, especially the Anambra state. It is against this background that this work proposes a rethink, and return especially for Christians to the command of Christ, to love one another as He has loved us. That is the kind of love He proposes for us; a love without measure; a love without limit; a love that endures even in the midst of affliction and threats of persecution and death. The text under study, therefore, challenges Christians in Anambra state in particular, and even every Christian anywhere, any time to live out *agapate* as commanded by Christ in the Gospel of John 13:34-35. This is because the essence of Christianity is love. It then establishes grounds for making Christians realize the enormity of this call by Christ, how their shortcoming in this regard challenges their identity, the depth of this challenges and how they can confront it head-on as it presents love as commanded by Christ in John 13:34-35, as a response and the panacea to all the bickering, backwardness and wars in Anambra state, making its society a place for brotherly and sisterly conviviality and harmony.

### **Recommendations:**

1. **Human Formation:** By this formation, an individual is led to appreciate his true dignity as a Christian and uniqueness as a person. This formation facilitates education in moral conscience. In this human formation, the formation of the conscience is of prime importance. What is conscience?

Conscience is a reflection of the mind as to whether an action, word, thought, desire or omission is good and maybe consented to or evil and must be avoided (Morality Today, 1985 pp.157-158). Our conscience is a *conditio sine qua non* in our daily moral and spiritual life. We should always respect our conscience, it should be held very highly since it is a right norm or standard of morality.

**2. Spiritual Formation:** This enables the Christian to structure and get committed to the religious dimension of his being and let his consciousness influence his daily life. The Christian experiences conversion or renewal and now helped to personally relate to God. He grows in faith, hope and charity, the art of prayer, meditation, contemplation and discernment to deepen the interior life.

**3. Proper Catechesis by the Ministers:** The domain of the Priestly ministry as it concerns ministers is very wide and comprehensive. In this regard, the role of Priests in Catechesis is of prime importance in their duties or responsibilities. This duty as a matter of fact and necessity really derives from the Sacrament of Holy Orders which the Priest has been endowed with. So, ministers are duty-bound to give proper catechesis to the people of God under their care. Attesting to this fact; The Congregation for the Clergy, General Directory for Catechesis emphasizes as it states: “The function proper to the presbyterate in the catechumenal task arises from the Sacrament of Holy Orders which they have received. ...In catechesis the Sacrament of Holy Orders constitutes priests as educators of faith” (no.224). Also emphasizing the need and importance of this (Catechesis) in the mission of the priest or minister, Agu (2009) references Pope Gregory the Great as lamenting: “It grieves us to say that the labourers for the great harvest are few because there are not enough people to preach the Good News, although there are people waiting to hear it” (p.63). Continuing, Agu (2009) references him more: “We see around us a world full of priests, but it is very rare to find a labourer in God’s harvest because we are not doing the work demanded by our priesthood, although we accepted this office” (p.63).

So, it is important for the minister to teach the faithful the importance of catechesis at the various stages or levels of life in order to help them be good Christians who are ready to listen to the Master, Jesus. The priests must see it as an important task in their mission for the salvation of the souls (*Salus animarum*) of their faithful. They should make effort to avoid a repeat of what God says in the book of Hosea 4:6 “My people perish for want of knowledge.”

**Conclusion:** The writers have used this work to prove that the differences of doctrine, modes of worship, belief and denominations should not be an opportunity for selfishness, rivalry, unhealthy political competition and distrust of one another. Indeed, belonging to different Christian denominations or groups is a beauty that must be harnessed for the good of all, and used for the progress and prosperity of our state (Anambra) and society, and not become fertile ground for strife and enmity, unhealthy rivalry and bickering among the Christians. The writers have argued and shown how love can stimulate the genuine desire for progress, bring about unity and togetherness among Christians and make them one in heart and mind in the pursuit and

achievement of their goals in life. Love is presented as commanded by Christ in John 13:34-35 as a positive response and panacea to all the problems of disunity, bickering, backwardness, selfishness, unnecessary rivalry, unhealthy political competition and wars among Christians in Anambra state, believing that if Christians are able to realize in their lives what they are and should be as followers of Christ, advocates and champions of love, things will not remain the same among Christians especially those in Anambra state as it leads them into the way of living out *agapate*.

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