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OD Series: Volume Three

*Fellow
Ghanaians,
Let's Stop
OPEN DEFECATION,
else...*

by
Rev James Yamoah (PhD)

Dedication

All the former Presidents of the Republic of Ghana have been outstanding in the demonstration of unhappiness about the negative attitude of some Ghanaians towards ensuring environmental cleanliness and have fought against some of the negative contributive practices.

However,
the current President
has gone to the extreme by
setting a whole ministry for Sanitation
and has also singled out and specifically spoken
against Open Defecation in his State of the Nation Address.
For being an outstanding President of Ghana in the fight against
Open Defecation, this OD Series: Volume Three, which is titled:
Fellow Ghanaians, Let's Stop Open Defecation, else...,
is hereby and wholeheartedly dedicated to:

His Excellency President Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo

Acknowledgement

All the people that have been part of my life, right from my birth till date, have contributed greatly to bringing me to this stage of authoring such a book. Therefore, my foremost appreciation goes to everyone who falls within this bracket. I wish to let those whose names are not mentioned know that it does not in any way mean that I have forgotten their prayers, encouragement and generous contribution in divers forms that have brought me this far. My prayer is that the Good Lord himself reaches out to you with immeasurable blessings for all you have done for me.

However, specific names that constantly ring bells in my spirit are and who constitute my very foundation are worthy of mention here. They are: Madam Mary Nyarko (my mother), Messrs Francis Gyamera Akwaw (of blessed memory) and Peter Yamoah Akwaw (my uncles), Mrs Rose-Vida Danquah and Ms Georgina Achiaah (my aunts), my siblings, cousins and the entire family. The families of Mr Obiri-Yeboah, Mrs Rita Amakye-Ansah, and Madam Charity Nyarkoah (my mother-in-law) deserve mention together with Madam Ernestina Addo, and Dr Victor Okoh.

There are also galaxies of Christian leaders and countless people through whose hands I passed to this humble height. Worthy of appreciation are Reverend Charles Soso, his ministerial team and entire members of the Church. Another group are the members of Christian University Campus Church, Accra, and Reverend Ministers Martin Obeng, Samuel Doe-Akogo, Stephen Acheampong, Emmanuel Dunyo, Andrews

Karikari, Martin Semordzi, and Fred Asare. Included also are the many foster children particularly Dr Cecilia Boateng, Mr. Fred Effah Yeboah, Ms Ataa Kwartemaa-Adjei Jnr., and a tall list of others whom I cannot mention but who are embedded in my heart.

To the special lady, Mrs Florence Yamoah, I am short of words to express my indebtedness for her immense support that has generated this book. Her presence has been more than enough to provide the needed comfort for this work. And how can I forget the constant interactions of my beloved children: Jemima, Emmanuel, and Joseph, which constituted the source of power that catapulted me to the finishing line. May God's abiding presence be with all of you. I pray that the bond of love within the family stays strongest.

Above all, it is my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ faithfulness that has brought me to this humble height. Indeed, His faithfulness is great (Lam 3:23). All the glory goes to Him. **Amen.**

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations for various Bible versions

ESV	2001. <i>English Standard Version</i> . Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.
	2012. <i>Global Study Bible</i> . Wheaton: Crossway
GNB	1992. <i>Good News Bible</i> . New York: American Bible Society.
	1994. <i>Good News Bible</i> (with The Deuterocanonical Books). Africa: The United Bible Societies.
KJV	1611. <i>King James Version</i> .
NAB	1970. <i>New American Bible</i> . Paterson, NJ: St Anthony Guild Press.
NASB	1995. <i>New American Standard Bible</i> . La Habra: Lockman Foundation.
NET	2006. <i>New English Translation</i> . Biblical Studies Press.
NIB	<i>New International Bible</i> (UK).
NIV	1984. <i>New International Version</i> . Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
NJB	<i>New Jerusalem Bible</i> .
NKJV	1982. <i>New King James Version</i> . Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing.
NLT	2004. <i>New Living Translation</i> (2 nd Ed.). Wheaton Tyndale House.
RSV	<i>Revised Standard Version</i> . Oak Harbour: Logos Research Systems.

Common Theological abbreviations (Abb)

Abb	Full meaning	Abb	Full meaning
AD	In the year of our Lord	HB	<i>Hebrew Bible</i>
ANE	Ancient Near East(ern)	LXX	<i>Septuagint</i>
BC	Before Christ's advent	NT	New Testament
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls	OT	Old Testament

et al	and others		
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Abbreviations for Bible books used in parentheses

<i>Genesis</i>	Gen	<i>Nahum</i>	Nah
<i>Exodus</i>	Exod	<i>Habakkuk</i>	Hab
<i>Leviticus</i>	Lev	<i>Zephaniah</i>	Zeph
<i>Numbers</i>	Num	<i>Haggai</i>	Hag
<i>Deuteronomy</i>	Deut	<i>Zechariah</i>	Zech
<i>Joshua</i>	Josh	<i>Malachi</i>	Mal
<i>Judges</i>	Judg	<i>Matthew</i>	Matt
<i>Ruth</i>	Ruth	<i>Mark</i>	Mark
<i>1 Samuel</i>	1 Sam	<i>Luke</i>	Luke
<i>2 Samuel</i>	2 Sam	<i>John</i>	John
<i>1 Kings</i>	1 Kgs	<i>Acts</i>	Acts
<i>2 Kings</i>	2 Kgs	<i>Romans</i>	Rom
<i>1 Chronicles</i>	1 Chr	<i>1 Corinthians</i>	1 Cor
<i>2 Chronicles</i>	2 Chr	<i>2 Corinthians</i>	2 Cor
<i>Ezra</i>	Ezra	<i>Galatians</i>	Gal
<i>Nehemiah</i>	Neh	<i>Ephesians</i>	Eph
<i>Esther</i>	Esth	<i>Philippians</i>	Phil
<i>Job</i>	Job	<i>Colossians</i>	Col
<i>Psalms</i>	Psa	<i>1 Thessalonians</i>	1 Thess
<i>Proverbs</i>	Prov	<i>2 Thessalonians</i>	2 Thess
<i>Ecclesiastes</i>	Eccl	<i>1 Timothy</i>	1 Tim
<i>Song of Songs</i>	Song	<i>2 Timothy</i>	2 Tim
<i>Isaiah</i>	Isa	<i>Titus</i>	Titus
<i>Jeremiah</i>	Jer	<i>Philemon</i>	Phlm
<i>Lamentation</i>	Lam	<i>Hebrews</i>	Heb
<i>Ezekiel</i>	Ezek	<i>James</i>	Jas
<i>Daniel</i>	Dan	<i>1 Peter</i>	1 Pet
<i>Hosea</i>	Hos	<i>2 Peter</i>	2 Pet
<i>Joel</i>	Joel	<i>1 John</i>	1 John
<i>Amos</i>	Amos	<i>2 John</i>	2 John
<i>Obadiah</i>	Obad	<i>3 John</i>	3 John

<i>Jonah</i>	Jonah	<i>Jude</i>	Jude
<i>Micah</i>	Mic	<i>Revelation</i>	Rev

Some Deutero-canonical book

<i>Tobit</i>	Tob	<i>1 Maccabees</i>	1 Macc	<i>2 Maccabees</i>	2 Macc
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Abbreviations of theological research & reference resources

<i>ABC</i>	<i>African Bible Commentary</i>
<i>ACE</i>	<i>African Christian Ethics</i>
<i>AJET</i>	<i>Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology</i>
<i>AJPS</i>	<i>Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies</i>
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
<i>BDB</i>	<i>Brown, Driver and Briggs, Hebrew-English Lexicon</i>
<i>BHS</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
<i>BR</i>	<i>Biblical Research</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>EBC</i>	<i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>
<i>EQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>ISBE</i>	<i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>
<i>JACT</i>	<i>Journal of African Christian Thought</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JRE</i>	<i>Journal of Religious Ethics</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JTI</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>
<i>JTSA</i>	<i>Journal of Theology for Southern Africa</i>
<i>NDBT</i>	<i>Alexander, New Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i>
<i>NIBC</i>	<i>New International Biblical Commentary</i>
<i>NICOT</i>	<i>New International Commentary on the Old Testament</i>
<i>NIDB</i>	<i>The New International Dictionary of the Bible</i>
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
<i>SBL</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>SBLDS</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series</i>

<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TWOT</i>	<i>Archer, Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>WBC</i>	<i>Word Biblical Commentary</i>
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>

Introduction

In my first volume, *Thus says the LORD: 'No Open Defecation, else...'*, I dealt with very pertinent issues that arise from one of the OT Laws, Deuteronomy 23:12-14, in order to settle on the issues of connectivity between some of the OT laws, such as the ones on holiness, to the NT, and the interpretation of the latter in the light of the former. In fact, the discussions in the book were geared towards tackling the theological, socio-cultural, and doubtless, ethical implications of the OT for NT users. Thus, all the argument presented in the book were not only meant to relate the implications of such a law to the NT context, but also lay the platform for their application to larger society of today.

Therefore, the multi-disciplinary approach that was used helped in unearthing key concepts such as environmental cleanness, hygiene and health, holiness or ritual purity, 'place theology', 'name theology', and 'YHWH war' or 'holy war', as undergirding the sanitation laws which produced an interpretation for the original and other OT audiences. It also helped in determining the interconnections between them and integrating them meaningfully. At the end of the first book, not only was YHWH's presence in the camp emphasised but the 'Holy war' that He would execute on behalf of His covenanted community was argued as the overall motivation for the law.

In the second book, *"Holy War": The Consequence of Open Defecation*, the concept of 'holy war' from the OT passage was connected to the NT context, with the discussion linking the pericope to appropriate passages. Ultimately, the concept was

alluded to in the eschatological camp (Rev 19:11-21:27), where God's final war is described. It came to light that Israel's obedience was required as spelt out by the stipulations of this law that called for avoidance of open defecation. This was necessary to ensure the needed holiness (or purity) of their camp or immediate environment and thus pave the way for YHWH to fight His enemies in a 'holy war'. However, any disobedience on the part of the covenant community would have grievous consequences for them. The consequences of Israel's obedience or disobedience has necessitated another book which also serves as a contextualisation of the biblical experience.

This third volume, ***Fellow Ghanaians, Let's Stop Open Defecation, else....***, explores the link between improper disposal of excrement or faeces and the outbreak of disease, which is a well-known fact in Public Health (cf. Andoh 2014:26; Faniran and Nihinlola 2007:50), and the link which also exists between desecration of Israel's sacred space/place and 'YHWH's war' spelt out in Deuteronomy 23:12-14, to argue that there is a link between 'YHWH's war' and some epidemics or disasters in the world today (cf. Wright 2008:47-48). Thus, my position is that not only is the stipulation demanding obedience to YHWH; but also in practical terms, it is meant to ensure proper sanitary lifestyle and acceptable practices of environmental cleanness and hygienic conditions together with all their public health concerns among Ghanaians.

Thus, this book is to be regarded as a practical application of the issues mentioned earlier, which are relevant in many ways to a larger present-day society. While both volume I and II lay the biblical foundation of the prohibition of 'open defecation', this volume serves as a contextualisation of the OT pericope since it

discusses the issues in a typical contemporary situation, i.e., the Ghanaian context. Chosen as the field to apply the stipulation of the OT text, the discussions hope to bring to the fore, the challenges that ‘open defecation’ poses to the efforts towards sanitation in the country.

Looking beyond the borders of Ghana, the discussions will help in dealing with the current global sanitation challenges focussing directly on the menace of open defecation and advocating acceptable environmental and hygienic practices. Of much significance to our discussion is the call for due steps to be taken in order to explore the recommendations here to the advantage of larger society. Not only are the findings significant and applicable to contemporary Ghanaian circumstances but also to other countries with similar challenges can derive benefits from the recommendations on the practice of acceptable sanitary habits that are made accordingly. The bottom-line is that the practical underpinnings of YHWH’s call for “No open defecation” will be applied to all our environments because of the presence of God with His people on the earth, which is His footstool.

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Chapter 1

No Open Defecation because of God's Presence

One of the fundamental questions in a world that is crazy for advancement of information technology is whether Religion has got anything to do with our contemporary everyday lifestyle. But the answer has always been different, depending on the particular context under consideration. With Africa, in particular, religion permeates every aspect of life such that it is hard to divorced it from secular life. This no doubt has led to some of the fundamental sayings in most studies in Religion such as: "The average African is 24-hour religious"; "The average African is notoriously religious".

Indeed, beneath everything that is secular is religion. This is typically exemplified by situations where not only Presidents of many states swear to defend their secular constitutions by the Bible or Koran (both of which are regarded as sacred constitution), but even in the courts of law similar beliefs are expressed. Thus, the bridge between sacred and secular should be explored not only for continuous existence but also for sustainable development. Sustainable development is important because it is the guarantee to our life in the present and future. Development cannot be taken out of the life of everyone and this necessitates behavioural change.

Theology to the arrest of Open Defecation

It is therefore imperative to bring to the fore the significance of religion, particularly theology, in our contemporary development. Of course, there are many areas of present day life that may benefit directly or indirectly from the application of

theology. But one area of great interest is sanitation, specifically, how biblical principles based on an OT law against open defecation¹ is applied to our contemporary context. The discussions in the book bring into practice this sacred laws of Scriptures and stretches it to cover creation care in general with specific interest in the life the human race. The conclusion of all the arguments is an assertion that theology offers great contribution to sustainable development, thus affirming the bridge between the two.

Indeed, the exegetical work from which the book evolves will be worthless and incomplete if it fails to address the current significance of the improper disposal of faeces that the passage addresses. Thus, this first chapter revisits some of the underpinnings of YHWH's law on open defecation with the aim of opening up discussions into the application of this law to any generation. The discussions are meant to conclude that the OT law that forbids open defecation with all its negative consequences is still applicable to our contemporary world context. Meaning that, like the biblical period, every possible step needed to arrest and completely annihilate such a degrading practice from our society should be done.

The particular sanitation law or passage or pericope (i.e. a chosen passage that conveys a complete message) which is

¹ It is becoming increasingly difficult to stick to one track in the use of British or America English as large volumes of work in one track with quotes from the other need to keep changing spelling all the time. While a differentiation between the two, in many jurisdictions, is not negotiable, this work makes room for a blend.

under discussion here is Deuteronomy 23:12-14. In the NIV² the text reads:

¹² Designate a place outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself. ¹³ As part of your equipment have something to dig with, and when you relieve yourself, dig a hole and cover up your excrement. ¹⁴ For the LORD your God moves about in your camp to protect you and to deliver your enemies to you. Your camp must be holy, so that he will not see among you anything indecent and turn away from you.

The historical-grammatical analysis of this law against open defecation which instructed the people of Israel to bury their faeces outside their camp reveals various underpinning concepts and or motivations. Now, a very relevant issue is whether all the underpinning concepts of the passage are interconnected or not, and if so, then their interconnectivity needs to be explained holistically. Additionally, how do these interrelations elicit a 'holy war' by YHWH? The intention here is to answer the question of what YHWH wanted to communicate to the Israelites concerning the overall effect of open defecation.

Various concepts that underpin the Sanitation Law

Providing the significance of these concepts and integrating them is the way forward to establishing the full meaning of the text and its implications for its audience. Therefore, it is appropriate that before any detailed discussion

² Unless otherwise stated, all translations are from the NIV, though the specific text provided here is only provisional pending the outcome of the translation of the exegesis of the original text.

on how the direct recipients of the message reacted to it, all the identified underpinning thematic issues of the passage (also referred to as a pericope) are revisited in order to holistically integrate and also establish their significance. In all, factors outlined below are observed to implicitly underpin the law against open defecation under discussion:

- a) A major underlying motivations for this law is that the environment of the Israelites camp should be clean
- b) Another underlying motivation of the law is to ensure hygiene and health, thus lead to prevention of disease and contagion
- c) The law is also meant to enforce both moral and ritual holiness which is required at the camp
- d) A significant motivation for such a law is that the camp of the people is a sacred space ('Place theology')
- e) The reason why the camp is considered a sacred space is because of God's presence ('Name theology')
- f) The overall motivation for God's presence among His people at their camp (the divine presence) is to engage in a 'holy war' which is argued as divine judgement on two fronts:
 - i. 'holy war' as divine judgement against the enemies of His people when they obey Him
 - ii. 'holy war' as divine judgement against His own people when they break/disobey His law.

At this juncture, it would be proper to re-echo what is said by way of definition of 'holy war' in the Volume One of this OD Series. In that book, the note below is indicated in the Chapter 1:
...In Israel's observation of God's instructions stated in Deuteronomy 23:12-14, He is present in their camp to protect them and deal with their enemies (cf. Liroy

2010:27). And rightly so. This promise is not to protect them only but also bring judgement on their enemies through a special kind of war declared by YHWH, and appropriately called 'YHWH war'³ or 'holy war'. The danger, perhaps, is the consequence that awaits the people of Israel in the event of their failure to heed the instructions, that is, soiled the camp through open defecation – the same 'holy war' is declared by YHWH, against them.

Of course, the whole camp of the Israelites requires the highest form of environmental cleanliness and maintenance, the practice of personal hygiene and total ritual purity. Ensuring these as a result of covering excrement outside of the camp would establish the fact that the camp is a sacred space that needed to be kept holy. In other words, the injunctions to defecate and have the faeces buried outside the camps is required for the people's continued stay in the camp, since persons regarded as unclean were dealt with by being sent away from the camp (Lev 14:40-41; Num 5:1-4). The people's obedience to the law is required to sustain the presence of YHWH, who is in their midst not only to protect them but to also grant them victory in a 'holy war' against their enemies.

Not Israel's camp now but the land of Ghana

As articulated earlier, the aim of this first chapter of the book which is to focus on how the major concepts of our text on sanitation become relevant for the current life. Precisely, our

³'YHWH war' or 'holy way' is so named because it is a special war declared by YHWH or the Lord Himself.

main submission is to show that 'holy war', regarded as the final motivation of the law against open defecation, has implications not only for the Israelites but also for subsequent generations. From the foregone arguments, it is no longer in doubt that this concept is the final motivation for the OT law on sanitation of Deuteronomy 23:12-14.

Bruce (1979:7) argues that though the practical application of some disciplines of life in the Scriptures occurred in specific contexts that are widely removed from ours, they are still applicable to present situation. Indeed, Scripture reveals God as universally sovereign and does not limit Him to only a specific group of people, so His law on open defecation contained in Deuteronomy 23:12-14 equally applies to all people. Clearly, the discussions have shown that all the issues of this particular law on sanitation are appropriate to current life circumstances irrespective of the fact that they were issued many centuries ago. In other words, the call for discipline with regards to disposal of human waste in the biblical period is so relevant to present day living that it opposes the current unhealthy practice of open defecation in most developing or under-developed communities of the world.

At this juncture, it is not out of order to agree with Bruce and iterate our fundamental position. This is that the underpinnings of this text which summarily oppose defecating openly in the camp of Israel because of YHWH's presence are theologically, morally, and socio-culturally applicable to present life situations. Meaning that not only 'the words but the Spirit' of the stipulations of the pericope under discussion here can be extended and applied to other contexts. This is where a developing country like Ghana is brought into the picture. That is

to say, attention is focused on the impact that these issues make on the life of people, using the situation in Ghana as a case in point.

As a preamble to the discussions related to the Ghanaian context, there are a couple of questions which are of extreme significance to our discussion: How will Ghana as a nation fare before YHWH in the light of His requirement for proper sanitation? How does the nation expect Him to deal with us considering the current situation where the land is virtually engulfed in open defecation? How would God see all who are involved in the practice and thus desecrating of His holy 'camp'? These are food for thought as we roll out the arguments in this book in an interactive manner.

Key factor that determines response to a message: Worldview

The question of how the Israelites, who are the direct recipients of the laws of YHWH, would receive and/or respond to a message like the instructions on open defecation found in Deuteronomy 23:12-14 needs to be answered. This is necessary in the light of the fundamental aim of this book which is to let Ghanaians accept that God's instructions against all forms of open disposal of human excreta spelt out by the text to the OT Israelite community by extension apply to them. In other words, Israel's reaction to the message of the text is likely to inform us as to how the response of the Ghanaian citizenry will be.

The answer would no doubt be determined by the worldview of the Israelites. Hiebert's (2008:11-28) comment, quoted by Watt (2011:93-94) that people's behaviour and beliefs are underpinned by their worldview is also appropriate. The significance of worldview to our discussion is that it

establishes the basis of the understanding of the immediate audience of the OT passage, that is, the Israelites, and their interpretation of God's instructions. Indeed, the historical-grammatical exegetical method which produced the findings presented in this book focused on the background of the text, its author, and its first readers (the Israelites) and their worldview, at the explication stage.

In simple and yet applicable terms, Wright (2004:17-19; 2010:16-19) defines worldview as: 'a comprehensive set of assumptions that a person or culture makes in answer to several fundamental questions that face humans everywhere'. Worldview addresses certain questions of life's interactions and experiences of people such as who, where, what, when, and also, how. It is in this fashion that humans become shaped by worldview. It has to do with people's perception of things around them. While worldview is present in every culture, it is unique and at the same time dynamic. Interestingly, 'no worldview is immune to errors' (Asumang 2008, quoted by Watt 2011:93-94).

As indicated already, it is in the light of worldview that any group of people would assess a message or text presented to them. That is, it would constitute the lens through which they would understand and evaluate any message such as the one contained in the pericope. For Israel in particular, their understanding of the text was posited against the backdrop of a peculiar worldview. According to Hill and Walton (2000:105-6), 'applying the concepts of the holy, common, clean, and unclean to the physical, moral, and spiritual realms of life was basic to the ancient Hebrew worldview'.

Wright rightly observes that one cannot explain how and why the Israelites would live as they did until the person sees

‘how and why they believed what they did’ (2004:17-19). God had promised to lead them to conquer and possess the ‘land flowing with milk and honey’ (Exod 3:8, 17). He had treated them as a community (Exod 12:3, 6, and 19). During the exodus, the Israelites moved and did everything as a community such that even when one offended, it could have grave consequence for the whole community. This is not in any way to conclude that there were no individual experiences; such experiences could, however, assume a group proportion.

On the contrary, what affected individual(s) affected all, except where such individual(s) were isolated (Num 16; cf. Josh 7). Thus Israel’s cultural practices could hardly be described as individual phenomena; they were rather those of a society, or better still, a community. By agreeing to His covenant, not only did God become the spiritual centre of the nation of Israel, He also became their hope for victory in all their battles and for survival. With such a mind-set, then, this survival generation was ready to cross, conquer and possess the land. Therefore, they would not hesitate to satisfy the requirements of Deuteronomy 23:12-14 in order to possess the promise.

Watt’s (2011:93-94) argument based on Hiebert’s view that worldviews provide psychological reassurance ‘as people seek for continuity between what they believe and what they experience as reality’, applies here. Israel was ready to move with YHWH himself leading the battle. Hence, the instruction on the management of their camp would be one of their passwords to defeating their enemies and living successfully in the land. One can thus conjecture that these survivors would regard the instructions spelt out in the text as nothing less than ‘the key’ to possessing the land promised to their forefathers under the

victorious banner of YHWH (cf. Wright 2010:16-19). No wonder Scripture says that 'about forty thousand armed for battle crossed over before YHWH to the plains of Jericho for war' (Josh 4:13). This means that they were psyched up for maximum action – to possess the land through war.

Another issue of interest is that people's worldview is connected to their culture. The link between worldview and culture is acknowledged by Watt (2011:93-94), who reiterates the position of Hiebert that worldviews not only validate cultural norms and integrate culture, but 'allow us to monitor cultural change over time, given that no culture is static in nature'. Consequently, culture is accepted to help nations and people groups to navigate the dangerous/uncertain waters of life and also show great dynamism and diversity in the process.

Ghana to learn from the Israelites' response

Since culture evolves from people living as social beings (cf. Edu-Bekoe and Wan 2013:23), and is 'transmitted from one generation to the next' (Myers 2004:47, 121), the social impact of the message is significant. In his comment on a tie between culture and social life, Longman III (2006:20-21) notes that culture 'represents the tastes not of individuals, but of society at large'. This connection is important here since the instruction to avoid open defecation and practice acceptable sanitary lifestyle was given to Israel as a social group engaged in a community life and not only to individuals.

For Israel as the immediate or first audience, their worldview would be affected by the way in which they would assess and/or interact with the inhabitants of the Promised Land who had practices that were different and foreign to theirs. It also

stands to argue that the response of other specific recipients would usually be as result of their own appropriation of any message and their worldview. What this means is that all the audience connected to the text: the direct recipients (the Israelites), subsequent users in the OT period, those of the NT period (Christians and Jewish HB believers) and even Bible believers of the contemporary period including Ghanaians, will interpret it in the light of their worldviews.

An appreciable understanding of the foregone discussion will definitely be beneficial to our discussion, especially as the context shifts from the OT Israelite community in particular to that of Ghanaians, which is our main goal. As indicated earlier, since the aim of this book is to let Ghanaians accept that God's instructions against open disposal of human excreta in Deuteronomy 23:12-14, also applies to us as a nation, specific groups, or individuals, we need to determine how the response of the citizenry will be. This is because the understanding and application of the sanitation law will ultimately be influenced by the culture (or way of life) of Ghanaians, especially their reaction towards the word of God.

Chapter Conclusion

The initial discussions here have unearthed a couple of pertinent issues, especially, the link between open defecation and 'holy war'. So judging from the current sanitation challenges, especially with regards to open defecation, is Ghana as a nation already experiencing 'holy war' from the Almighty or is just at the verge of experiencing it? If so, what can be done as a nation to avoid any catastrophes or disasters from the Lord as divine judgement? Are there any indications of goodwill towards this

message in the light of the God-fearing and religious nature of the larger Ghanaian community?

It is to find acceptable and pragmatic solutions to these and many more of such questions that the subsequent chapters of this book are open for discussions. The discussions will end with implications for Ghana, a typical Sub-Sahara African country which is battling with open defecation, and by extension, the African and larger global community. The discussions have opened with an explanation of what YHWH's presence and name means to us wherever we find ourselves. It is realised that the reliance of Israel on YHWH's presence in their sanitary camp serves as the basis for a connection between 'Divine Name' and 'Divine Place' theologies both of which will be considered in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2

God's Presence makes the Earth a "Divine Place"

As has been mentioned previously, there are significant occasions where the presence of the deity stresses not only His divine name but it is also observed that the presence of the deity signifies the holiness of a place. Thus, in the preceding chapter, we discussed the concept of 'Place theology' which carries the idea that once YHWH is associated with any place, such a geographical area is considered holy. In such cases, YHWH himself will let people observe such a place as holy because of His presence. Indeed, Heaven is generally acknowledged as the dwelling place of YHWH, so His presence there is obvious (cf. Job 2:7). However, the issue of 'place theology' takes the centre stage of deliberations when YHWH's presence is associated with specific earthly places.

In the current chapter, we want to extend our argument about the divine presence to cover the earth as a unit. Our position here is that the presence of God makes the whole earth a divine place.

The Earth is a 'Sacred' Place/Space

To begin with, Macdonald (2006:217) notes that there is ample evidence to show YHWH's earthly and heavenly presence, though this concept is contested by von Rad (n.d.:37-44). For YHWH's presence in both places is firmly established: 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool' (Isa 66:1). Liroy describes the whole universe as a unit that serves as a palace

and/or temple of the Creator. As YHWH's palace, Heaven is the throne, while the earth, with its foundations specially fixed by the Creator (Psa 102:25; 5; cf. 93:1-2), serves as the footstool. What this means is that the two places sandwich the vast well-decorated heavens in what he describes as 'a vertical cosmic axis'. As a temple, he observes that not only the earth but the entire universe is regarded as a sacramental place for God. Lioy (2010:31; cf. Levenson 1994:86; Lioy 2005:27) notes that the entire world has been God's sanctuary since the dawn of time.

Macdonald (2006:214-17) notes that, 'many people have an abstract notion of revelation in which YHWH remains in heaven making himself known through speech and not visually'. However, he points to an earlier Israelite theology which envisaged a more anthropological and immanent presence of the deity in the Temple, and advances many reasons in defence of YHWH's earthly and heavenly presence in some earthly places. This also supports Wright's (1999:355-57) view on place holiness which is in contrast to Minear's (n.d.:18-26) position that 'holiness is a term that is rightly used only of persons and not of things', and that 'it is not a *thing* to possess but an *action* by which to be possessed' (his emphasis).

For Lioy (2010:25-29), 'such a terrestrial shrine in Scripture is regarded as a sacred point of contact between God and His creation, and each of these sanctums is a physical localisation of earth that establishes a link between heaven and earth'. Lioy's (2010:31) view on sacred spaces is definitely a cutting-edge contribution to our discussion here. His reference to the earth as God's temple serves as a stronghold for my arguments in this section. The basis of his argument is Isaiah 66:1 which declares the Heaven as God's throne and the earth

is His footstool. According to him, a variety of terrestrial shrines in Scripture are regarded as sacred points of contact between God and His creation, and each of these sanctums is a physical localisation of earth that establishes a link between heaven and earth.

Moreover, Liroy (2010:25-29) points to Eden as a sacred centre, noting that 'it was the earthly reproduction of the heavenly reality'. In the abstract to his work, he states: 'Eden as the earliest-occurring sacred space is a prototype and archetype of future temples' where 'God intended Adam and Eve to serve as His sacerdotal vice-regents'. Describing Eden as a geographical designation which serves as 'the metaphysical link extending from earth to heaven', he notes that it was a primordial temple for humankind that was not strictly meant for the habitation of humans. Instead, humanity, beginning with Adam and Eve, was to serve as stewards whom God invited to enjoy and cultivate it.

God, the Creator, is revealed by Liroy as originally wanting Adam and Eve to perform sacerdotal responsibilities in the sacred space, the Garden of Eden, including its cultivation and upkeep. He argues that the creation mandate given to the first couple before 'the fall' was for the purpose of the expansion of the contours of the sacred space to all parts of the earth. This was when the Creator transformed the chaotic creation into a holy and blessed world (Gen 1:31), and commissioned humanity to be His vice-regents and manage responsibly.

Against this background, Liroy's presentation of Eden as a sacred centre which becomes 'the earthly reproduction of the heavenly reality' is understandable. It reveals the experience of heaven on earth and serves as 'a prototype and archetype of

future temples' where the first couple become God's sacerdotal vice-regents. However, after 'the fall' of humankind, the localisation of the divine presence, though only very representational, became a feature in God's encounters with His 'fallen beings'.

The Earth is the 'Footstool' of God

With God enthroned in the heaven, His dwelling place (2 Chr 6:21-39; cf. 30:27), Scripture describes the earth as part of this sacred palace and from heaven 'he looks down on all who live on earth' (Psa 33:14, GNB), and YHWH's presence carries with it such a weight as demanding a response from 'the earth' as a whole (cf. Psa 99:1; Hab 2:20). It is a demonstration of His position not only as the owner of the earth (Psa 24:1) but also the fact that it is His footstool (Isa 66:1). It also confirms what Lioy (2010:25-26, and 29) notes as 'a link between the Heaven and the earth' (cf. Waltke 2007:255).

It might be hard to point to any scriptural text that specifically points to the earth as a temple of the Creator. However, Lioy's use of Isaiah 66:1 to describe the whole universe as a palace and/or temple (Hb □□□□, Holladay 1988:79; BDB 1964:228) unit of the Creator, is reasonable. It means that the earth forms part of this single divine sanctuary. As a palace of the Universal King, YHWH Heaven serves as the throne while the earth becomes the footstool (Mic 1:2-3; cf. 2 Chr 6:21-39; 30:27; Psa 132:7).

This description is also observed when some earthly kings sit in state, especially, kings or traditional heads in Africa, typified by the kings of the Asante Kingdom in Ghana. They usually sit on thrones with their feet firmly resting on footstools. As a temple,

the entire earth, which forms part of a well-designed architectural unit of the Creator, is seen as a smaller sacred space in the light of the universal sanctuary.

While no geographical place/space in the OT is argued as a permanent sanctuary of the deity because 'the whole earth is even too small for Him' (1 Kg 8:27), some places, such as certain mountains: Sinai and Carmel, and the tabernacle (later, temple), nevertheless, served as localized sacred places for fellowship between Him and some chosen people. Indeed, Scriptures testify to such 'holy grounds' (Exod 3:5; cf. Josh 5:15). The earthly temple was used as a sanctum for human sacerdotal activity; it also became a 'temporal abode' of the deity (cf. Exod 25:8; Lev 26:11; 2 Sam 7:6-7). For, God dwelt in the midst of His people, represented by the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies, and communed with them (Num 7:89).

Such references to the temple as: 'the temple of the Lord in Shiloh' (1 Sam 1:9; 3:3; 2 Kgs 18:16); 'the Lord from his Holy temple' (Mic 1:2); 'the Lord is in His holy temple' (Hab 2:20); 'the Lord has taken vengeance for His temple' (Jer 50:28) and other similar phrases, are not directed at just a physical structure, since 'it is not necessary for a sanctuary to be an edifice or structure' (Parry 1990:482). Rather, they are descriptions in relation to a sacred space/place, whether heavenly or earthly, permanent or temporal, where the deity is enthroned and speaks with His people here on earth (Psa 80:1; 99:1; Isa 6:1).

The argument that the earth is God's sanctuary is also understood in terms of the divine presence, not after 'the fall' of humankind in Eden, but rather the period before, and the period after the inauguration of the NT. This time frame involves both when creation was perfect and the present when humanity has

been offered the opportunity to become a new creation. It also looks forward into the future, i.e., the eschatological or apocalyptic age, and indicate God's plan for creation to experience His eternal purposes of a blessed and enjoyable life.

Furthermore, the description of the entire earth as 'God's temple' is very relevant at the present time and age. This is where the phrase is considered not in the sense of the localisation of the divine presence as place encounters, but rather in the sense of His presence wherever 'two or three are gathered in His name'. This makes the earth not just relevant to God but even more than that: it is his footstool and thus considered as a sacred or divine place to him.

Sprinkle's position that cleanliness and uncleanness in the OT metaphorically symbolised moral purity and impurity and that moral purity is a Christian idea is noteworthy. Dwelling further on Sprinkle's submissions, his examination of the connection between place holiness in the OT and NT is significant. According to him, God's presence was with His covenant community in both Testaments. This underscores the link between the divine presence indicated by the OT passage and that in the NT context. For, as I will show in some of the latter chapters, moral purity is a significant issue to be advocated for. Hence, I agree with Sprinkle's extension of the OT law to God's moral demand for holiness that committed the Israelites and Bible-believers to the earth as a whole.

Is God's Presence underpinned by His Name in Ghana?

In the light of how God is revealed in the sanitation law that He gave to the Israelites (Deut 23:12-14), one may wonder if the presence or association of 'God' or any of the 'Names' of God

with contemporary nations can be taken for granted. Definitely, not at all. Since the name of God is not to be taken or used in vain (Exod 20:7), the appearance of 'God' or any of the proper designations of the Living One have great significance. For example, the 'Name' is usually embossed in specific recognisable structures that are either connected with the seat of government or places of repute. It is often embossed on some national monuments, important artefacts or relics, and/or designed as part of their national emblems, flags, etc.

As part of everyday interaction of some people within certain cultures the world over, phrases underpinned by 'God' or titles related to His name are inscribed or embossed on a lot of articles. Most common are the signpost or doorpost of people's houses, doors to their rooms, and sometimes their stores, places of entertainment, some of the readable areas of vehicles, even clothing, and any available space, if possible. Such practice is the situation commonly observed in Ghana.

Though a high percentage of Ghana's populace claim to be or pose as believers in God, yet, not much can be argued to defend their position here. Of course, if the total number of church denominations as well as all the physical structures representing these denominations and the percentage that represents their followers is anything to go by (i.e., 69% profess to be Christians, according to GNA, Mar 2019; cf. Anonymous, 2010:§3), at least, a straight-forward conclusion could be drawn – that the land of Ghana is “a special destination of God” on earth. On the contrary, the above indicators alone cannot form the basis of any tangible arguments and conclusion.

The foregone, notwithstanding, there is no doubt that a number of this percentage of professing believers are people

who genuinely “think, talk, eat, wear, and walk” God. In other words, there are observable indications of divine relationship in the life of this number, no matter how small it might be. At least, the presence of this believing percentage alone is an indication of God’s Presence on the land, and is in line with the argument that God’s presence is usually underpinned by His Name among His people (Matt 18:20). It is on the basis of faith in the Divine Presence among the believing populace (whether genuinely committed followers of the True God or people that one may be tempted to consider as only “professing believers” or both) that they continue to portray Him in almost every aspect of their lives including their daily conversations with one another.

It is not only in terms of religion, but indeed, the name of God is so central in the culture of Ghanaians that even at national issues, it is often acknowledged. A typical example is when one considers the National Anthem of the country, as indicated below:

*God bless our homeland Ghana
and make our nation great and strong
Bold to defend for ever
the cost of freedom and of right
Fill our hearts with true humility
Make us cherish fearless honesty
And help us to resist oppressors rule
With all our will and might forever more*

Apparently, one is faced with the questions: is it just for a joke that ‘God’ is first to be mentioned in the? And the straightforward answer is: A big no! Absolutely, not at all. Apparently, the placement of His name in the anthem establishes some relationship. The mention of God’s name

underscores, first, the recognition that Ghana as a country accepts His presence, and second, the country acknowledges His supremacy over what it stands for.

Does God's Presence alone make Ghana a 'Divine Place'?

In Chapter 2, it was established that God's Presence in Ghana is underpinned by the Divine Name in her National Anthem. Once again, as the scope of discussion continues to narrow down on the country, other issues to strengthen the argument that the land of Ghana is a Divine place need to be established. So, the issue at stake is whether there is any additional thing that links God's Presence to Ghana and establishes the land as a 'Divine Place'. The answer is, a big Yes!. The constant cry of the people in prayer for divine blessing in the Anthem.

It has already been argued that the presence of, at least, a certain percentage of Bible believers in the country alone underpins God's Presence His people. It follows therefore that the call of these believers will always become another point of connection between Him and the place from which they call. And this is where the prayer of faith by the righteous at any place brings down the presence of God to be His people wherever they are. So, the continuous prayer of the righteous in Ghana makes the land a place of continuous dwelling of the Deity.

Moreover, there is no controversy in the argument that beyond the idea of recognising God's Presence in the country, which is indicated by placing His name first in the National Anthem, the whole Anthem is indeed a prayer that seeks His blessing upon the land. Definitely, singing the Anthem always brings the whole nation before the throne of God. And this idea

of total reliance on God through such a mode of prayer makes His Presence more significance. Therefore, God's Name in our Anthem does not only acknowledge His Presence in our land but also opens the land of Ghana to Him as a 'Divine Place'.

Chapter Conclusion

Following from the discussions so far, it can also be continued that in Israel's observation of His instructions, YHWH is present in their camp to protect them and deal with their enemies (cf. Lioy 2010:27). And if so, then the same can be said about Ghana which recognises God by name in its National Anthem. In the immediate subsequent chapters, attention is devoted to the relevance of the presence of the Lord on the earthly space with the land of Israel as pointer and Ghana in context. By this, it is expected that the significance of His Name to the land and the people will be underscored.

It needs to be indicated here that the call for responsible disposal of faeces is paramount. God did not want humanity to pollute the earth, which is his footstool, and the environment where He dwells and in the process make it 'defiled' (Num 35:33-34; cf. Jer 2:7). Therefore, He commanded humanity to keep it sacred; indeed, 'the land can be holy' (Seebass 2004:103-04). Against this background, the argument here is that the mandate for humanity to govern the world was a reflection of God's image in humanity (Gen 1:26-28; cf. 9:2). Humanity, originally endowed with the ability to succeed as God's vice-regents in the world, is expected to live responsibly in order to actualize the will of the Creator and testify to His presence and blessing in their lives.

Chapter 3

Why God's Presence Repulses Open Defecation

The practice of open defecation which was banned by the instructions of Deuteronomy 23:12-14 has great implications for the relation between people of Israel and the Lord their God. In agreement with Gaebalein (1992:140), Israel's national existence as a people has spiritual significance as a result of the bond between them and God. Once the earth is the LORD's (Psa 24:1) including all the land or space that the Israelites occupied at the time, He would not allow the people to desecrate it.

Against this background, there is the need for adequate consideration of issues like the theological, socio-cultural, and ethical/moral implications of sustaining an environment devoid of faeces. In unambiguous terms, it is imperative to find out why God's presence in Israel repulses open defecation. There is also the need to look at failure to obey His law against the practice.

In the subsequent sections, our attention is focused on how the practice of open defecation was not permitted by YHWH in the camp of His people. The objective is to determine how the practice infringes on the 'Divine Name' and the camp which had become a holy place as a result of the Divine Presence.

Theological implications: YHWH as 'Camp Inspector'

A description of YHWH in rhetorical terms gives meaning to the significance. By the stipulation, YHWH identified Israel's military camp as one of the sacred places: 'Your camp must be holy'. The holiness of the camp here is in the light of YHWH's presence with His army. It was to give meaning to the holiness

demanding by His presence that He spelt out the specific instructions for the upkeep of the place.

To maintain His holiness and avoid the minutest stain on the camp, there was the need for uninterrupted inspection of the camp in order to detect the least act of corruption within the community. What this means in metaphorical terms is that YHWH becomes the 'Camp Inspector', walking in it to ensure that instructions for its upkeep have been fully obeyed (Deut 23:14; Lev 26:12). Further, it means that the presence of the 'Camp Inspector' would kindle a sense of obedience to the laws concerning the camp with their overall emphasis on its purity/sanity.

To grasp how physical pollutants can be a challenge to YHWH, the Holy God, one should picture the deity in the midst of the battle camp in anthropomorphic terms. In this case, one might not fail to comprehend how YHWH would 'struggle' to 'walk in the midst of a camp' filled with excrement/filth lest He became dirty. In other words, the Holy One would have to act with great circumspection to maintain His purity, lest, as Christensen (2002:540) excellently portrayed anthropomorphically, 'YHWH might soil himself by stepping in your mess'.

Moreover, if deposits of excrement within the military camp could be very disgusting to sight, the continuous offensive smell in the environment would also be considerably unbearable. Anthropomorphically, it would not be pleasant for YHWH to inhabit any foul-smelling and/or desecrated environment. In such circumstance, God himself would be angry, not only at the nasty spectacle, but with the people's disregard of the divine command. In which case, not only would the people be dealt with

by way of a divine punishment, but God would eventually fail to fight for His people against their enemies.

Consequently, the promotion of a human waste pollution-free and a pleasantly-smelling environment was of upmost priority for the sake of YHWH's permanent presence in the community of His people. He was and has always been the "Inspector of the Camp" of His people.

Moral/Ethical implication: YHWH's nature as Israel's standard

One of the biggest issues raised in this book is the moral or ethical motivation for the law which the passage gives. There are indications that besides theological considerations, the basis for the directives on holiness in the text is the ethical (or moral) implications for the people. 'Theology and ethics' according to Wright 'are inseparable in the Bible' (2004:17). The laws of holiness are meant to promote ethical behaviour, since they cultivated some virtues in the people.

There are core issues of the text that are pertinent moral (or ethical) issues. These constitute just a fraction of the vast issues raised by the laws in the Pentateuch. Thus, some major issues for discussion are the moral (or ethical) underpinnings of the pericope in Deuteronomy, the Pentateuch, and to a larger extent, the OT, that will focus on the religious dimension of the text. Morally (or ethically), the stipulations of the text are not only meant to identify Israel with the Holy God, but to also strengthen their covenant relationship with Him and maintain their status as holy people.

Indeed, if the popular maxim: "Cleanliness is next to godliness" (Adler 1893:4) is worthy of consideration, then it is reasonable to say that restricting the soldiers to bury faeces

outside of the camp as the pericope demands could promote purity. This purity is in the sense of separating oneself from something that defiles the person ritually. It means the practice was to make meaningful the belief that life is lived well when one is conscious of the things that make a person chaste.

Biblical Israel was a nation that was set apart by God for himself to be like Him (Lev 20:26). Since the emphasis on holiness in the pericope is actually in relation to God, the fundamental approach to its interpretation is to take it as one of the cultic or ritual requirements, as also observed by Sprinkle (2000:637-46; cf. Klawans 2003:19-22; Lioy 2004:17-21). Holiness should not be considered as just one of the essential and identifiable attributes of God (Unger 1988:581); it is His 'quintessential nature', to borrow from Domeris (1986:35). He is the source and the standard of its measure (cf. Hartley 1992:IVII).

Holiness is so important a requirement that God himself had to iterate it to the people: 'You shall be holy for I the LORD your God am holy' (Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26). Thus, God was frank with His people about His very self: 'I am holy'. Ryrie's comment not only throws light on God's holy nature, but opens a window for our exploration:

God's holiness is a purity of being and nature as well as will and act...not only that He is separate from all that is unclean and evil but also that He is positively pure and thus distinct from all others...the absolute, innate holiness of God means that sinners have to be separated from Him unless a way can be found to constitute them holy (1999:42-43).

It can be inferred from Ryrie that there can be a way for people to relate to the Holy God or be in His holy presence. That is, the idea of Him being *holy* definitely becomes a requirement for anyone who enters into a covenant relationship with Him. The covenant binds the two in an inseparable union such that one is identified with the other: 'You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy' (Lev 20:26).

So, in the case of Israel, they became a holy people of God, and He their Holy God. Wright (1999:353; cf. Regev 2001:244-246) notes that 'Deuteronomy considers the people holy from the beginning, prior to any act of obedience, on account of their election by YHWH' (Deut 7:6; 14:2, 21). Therefore, God's laws in this passage of Deuteronomy gave Israel an expression of how He wanted them to live (Radmacher *et al* 1997:312).

For Asumang and Domeris (2006:22), the ritual laws of the pericope were designed to preserve the cultic separation of God's people from the other nations. That is, to maintain their continued relationship with God, and to prepare them for their final inheritance in the land of promise. Similarly, Bruce believes that the Law was not intended as a legislative code to cover all possible contingencies, but to serve as a guide to the life expected from a 'holy' people (1979:62-78). Their observation is in line with Gaebalein's (1992:140; cf. McConville 1986:18) view that Israel's national existence as the people of God – external, physical, and material means – had spiritual significance, and that the laws were used to teach lessons on the nature of their relationship to YHWH and the nature of the holiness required of them as a covenant community.

In a similar note, Radmacher *et al* (1997:312) submit that Israel's distinctive nature and characteristics in the ancient world

were clearly underpinned by the understanding that they were set apart for God's holy purposes, which demanded their absolute allegiance to Him. As a result, they were supposed to be distinct from other nations, because He, the God of Israel, was distinct. It is not surprising that while the nations that surrounded Israel practised polytheistic forms of worship, worshipping their gods at many different places, Israel was set apart from other nations to be holy to the Holy God (Lev 20:26), and was required to worship the One God at one place which He would choose.

Therefore, He asked the chosen people also to be different, such that any defect in them was considered less than acceptable to Him. Whether at the camp of the whole covenant community with the tabernacle or at the camp of the military, the Holy God was still with His people. That is, they were supposed to observe His presence and keep themselves clean and the precinct of the camp holy. This moral (or ethical) requirement with God Himself as a standard for His people was to be observed throughout all generations.

Socio-Cultural implication: The 'husband-wife' metaphor

The demand for holiness by Deuteronomy 23:12-14 raises an interesting dimension of the discussion: the 'husband-wife' and/or 'bridegroom-bride' metaphors or imageries which undergird the YHWH-Israel relationship. In many cultures all over the world, the ownership and authority of the father extends to his household, over the wife with or without children, servants, and all properties in their place of abode to the extent that all remain obedient to him and acknowledge him as 'lord' and/or master over them (cf. Gen 18:12). As is usually expected of any healthy marriage in many cultures, the husband, after providing

a habitation for the family, stays close and ensures the supervision of the home. Therefore, it is not uncommon for husbands to necessitate the observance of some basic requirements like cleanliness in their home environment.

Along the same tangent of argument, the demand for purity is to be guaranteed by the overriding theme of Deuteronomy, which is obedience. This theme symbolically indicates interesting metaphors like the 'husband-wife' and/or 'bridegroom-bride' relationships, which are arguably revealed in the pericope. If Sprinkle (2000:637-46) argues that some symbolisms are conveyed by the holiness laws in the Pentateuch, the concepts of the 'husband-wife' and/or 'bridegroom-bride' no doubt make a case for him.

Conceptualising the YHWH-Israel covenant relationship in any such metaphors is not strange. As a matter of fact, the root of this is in the Sinaitic covenant and thus finds spread in Deuteronomy and other parts of the Torah, though the idea is only prominently espoused in the prophetic books. The ideals of the marriage metaphors are observed in some of the prophets like Isaiah (54:4-8; 62:5), and Hosea (2:16), with Jeremiah (2:2) being explicit in the phrase, 'when we were first married' (GNB).

That such a 'husband-wife' metaphor is embedded in the covenant of God with Israel at Mount Sinai has received appreciable observations. Craigie, Kelly and Drinkard Jr (1991:24) comment as follows: 'The covenant, metaphorically speaking, has been the marriage of Israel and God, born and nourished in youthful love that could not be diminished or weakened by the experience of wilderness'. Their view that 'the essence of the Sinai covenant had been a 'marital relationship' between God and Israel' which is assured through *obedience* is

in line with Henry's (1961:937) notes on Jeremiah 2:2. That is, Israel is God's bride right from Sinai, 'when at the foot of Mount Sinai they promised, "All that the Lord shall say unto us we will do and will be obedient"'.

In support of the above argument Longman III (2013:251) notes: 'The "bride" metaphor communicates powerfully in these contexts, because of the duties that ancient marriages presupposed. Husbands were to lead, protect, and provide for their wives, and God does this perfectly for his people'. By this, Israel was considered a 'family property' of God and, as such, 'they share in YHWH's holiness' (cf. Christensen 2002:156). God was seen as their head by way of their covenant of Sinai, and His requirement for a chaste life had to be spelt out and strictly obeyed. Israel was married to God through covenant, so certain purity practices needed to be obeyed so that the covenant would remain healthy and enduring.

This reveals the attention that God, 'the husband', decided to give to purity, founded on basic issues. Thus, ethically, YHWH set the pursuit of purity as a significant socio-cultural feature for the Israelites before any enjoyment of protection and victory. So, Deuteronomy 23:14 had implications for marriage; the wife was expected to keep herself pure and her camp free from detestable things (cf. Deut 24:1) in order to enjoy continuous union with God instead of divorce (cf. Deut 24:2).

The 'husband-wife' metaphor also throws some light on the socio-cultural issues of God's presence in Israel's camp and the demand for no open defecation. If human husbands would see the necessity of a clean habitation and frown on any undesirable spectacle, how much more would the divine 'husband' of Israel?

As part of the marital stipulations, holiness, not only of the wife but also of her habitation is usually a fundamental requirement.

In terms of human habitation, then, it means that the house and its environs of the husband, YHWH, must have nothing offensive in them. No offensive smell would be tolerated. Even the latrine was to be located outside, as also argued by Christensen (2002:543-44) and Macdonald (2006:217). Thus, the laws were used to impress upon them the nature of their covenant relationship with YHWH, and the holiness that was required of such a relationship.

At this juncture, any directive that could help them conquer the occupants in order to possess the Promised Land was welcome. With the imagery of a 'Holy husband' in mind, the 'wife', Israel, would be compelled to act responsibly to ensure the purity of her camp; it was very necessary. It was the only guarantee that the Divine Warrior would protect and deliver their enemies to them, and ensure the continuous survival of the nation in the land (cf. Inge 2003:40).

The danger, in application to our discussion, is that God would see in the camp something indecent and turn away from His people. Everything ought to be holy when it involves YHWH, for He cannot be defiled. Anything that would keep Him away from the camp was also an enemy, including even the covenant community. They would appreciate the instructions as not only helping to shape their societal norms and maintaining the presence of their Covenant-keeping God, but also making them victorious in all their battles. From indications of their victories in battle, they obeyed the husband's instructions to the letter.

Do Ghanaians as a people value the Presence of God?

Considering all the metaphors discussed in the foregone sub-sections to show the extent of God's relationship with Israel, one may want to find out if Ghana value the Presence of God. That is, whether theologically, the country recognises YHWH as 'Camp Inspector'; morally or ethically, His nature is the standard of the nation's lifestyle; and socio-culturally, the country relates to Him in the light of the 'husband-wife' metaphor. As with Israel, it is expected that the same issues above will apply to all the lands of the earth, including Ghana.

Thus, attention is shifted from the Israelites context to that of Ghanaians by way of application of the text. This is where the main objectives of this book, that is, to call on Ghanaians to do all they can to stop open defecation, will be brought to bear. The rationale for this is to drum home the argument that open defecation will infringe on God's relationship with Ghana, if found wanting. And if not checked, it will incur the wrath of God leading to 'holy war'. Of course, one cannot be singing a prayerful National Anthem: 'God bless our homeland Ghana, and make our nation great and strong...', in one breath, while in the other he/she will be squatting at a certain corner and defecating openly.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has no doubt built on the earlier arguments that there are theological, socio-cultural and ethical dimensions or implications of these practices for Israel as a nation and their relationship with their God. These areas throw light on all the issues raised by the legislative instrument especially in relation to the need to prevent open defecation and help to establish the

significance of the motivations in undergirding the text. The emphasis on sanitation as a significant concept here is that the practice challenges the moral consciousness of the people.

Beginning with the next chapter, the context of Ghana by way of application of the text will engage our attention. This is the turning point of our discussion because the situation of Ghana with regards to dealing with open defecation takes the centre stage. If the country is found wanting, the consequences would be anybody's guess.

Chapter 4

Open Defecation in Ghana: Some Facts and Figures

A World Health Organization (WHO) report reveals how over the past decades, 'human activities have caused considerable hazards, especially due to the inadequate attention paid to environmental concerns' (Anonymous 2002:5). It is doubtful whether there is any culture the world over that is not concerned with open defecation and pollution by faeces. This is because this practice does not only constitute a displeasing spectacle, but is also disgusting and sometimes elicits feelings of nausea.

Open defecation is also an issue which infringes on environmental sanitation and hygiene and so not only regarded as fundamental but also dear to humanity to have gained international human right dimensions. Indeed, there are policy and legal as well as human rights documents to that effect. Surprisingly, the sanitation report in some countries of the world, especially Africa, is not peculiar to rural areas of the countries with such challenges; it is sometimes worse in the urban communities.

This is where, perhaps, it will be helpful to narrow the focus down to my country, Ghana, in order to provide specific references and emphases. My choice of Ghana, a developing country on the west coast of the continent, is informed by my familiarity with, and interest in my local context. Moreover, the sanitation situation in Ghana might not be much different from other developing countries, such that, a report here could be applicable to any such country, most especially, in Africa.

Worldwide statistics on Open Defecation

According to Blege (2016), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically mentions in Goals 3, 6 and 11 the essence of an environment that is safe for all. Unfortunately, this realization has not been met in the lives of some people because the environment has been greatly compromised by a lot of pollutants. One of them, being probably the worst is human excrement (i.e. faeces), as a result of improper disposal.

In terms of worldwide statistics, Ocampo (2007:4-5) reveals, 'Half the population of the developing world lack basic sanitation'. Estimates by United Nations reveal that close to 4.5 billion people live without safely managed sanitation and 892 million people still practice open defecation when nature calls (GNA, Dec 2018). The U.N report of 2017 reveals that near 2.5 billion people do not have access to toilet facilities and thus ease themselves in the open. In fact, a greater percentage of this number are in developing countries (myjoyonline.com, Sept 2018). Quoting WHO/UNICEF report 2015, Blege reveals: 'Globally, it's estimated that 2.4 billion people live without improved sanitation and one in ten people has no choice but to defecate in the open'.

In other words, this great number of people resort to open defecation. However, this figure is even better than the statistics earlier. For example, the report by Ebire and Al-Zubi (2008:Abstract §2, ¶2) which state: '18% of the world's population...continue to suffer the indignity of open defecation, mostly in rural areas' was about ten (10) years earlier. This notwithstanding, the practice is still a global challenging and needs all the attention it deserves if it must be eradicated.

In developing countries alone, it is reported that an estimated 1.1 billion people ease themselves outdoors, though

the practice is considered the greatest danger to human health (GNA, April 2016). Particularly in Africa, open defecation and pollution by faeces is a great socio-cultural challenge in a number of its countries, and as Aklikpe-Osei (2014:9) puts it: 'filth has taken over many communities'.

Statistics on Open Defecation cases in Ghana

Not only are there international human right laws/bye-laws that deal with open defecation. There are also local policy and legal as well as human rights instruments on the issue. In Ghana, one of them is the National Environmental Policy which states: 'Assemblies shall ban defecation and urination in places other than toilets and urinals...' (Blege, 2016). Another quote from the same reporter is contained in Section 56 of the Public Health Act 851 which also makes it clear that, 'the issue of open defecation is an offence and is punishable by a fine of not more than two hundred and fifty penalty units, or to a term of imprisonment of not more than three years or to both'. These legislative instruments with others not mentioned here are expected to be blueprints to guide and restrict us as a nation to stick to high moral and social standards.

Unfortunately, reports in Ghana indicate that open defecation is still alarming and common in all major cities and urban centres throughout the country, and reports indicate that it is even higher in rural communities. There is general breakdown in environmental sanitation; people are insensitive to where they defecate. Indeed, this practice has become an issue of greater concern in the country lately, especially as a result of recent revelations about outbreak of its related diseases in the country. Arku and Moeremans (2011:18) observe that basic

sanitation is currently non-existent in most Ghanaian communities. The canker is rife in most districts across the length and breadth of the country. This huge number of 1.1 billion people who practice OD in the developing countries include Ghanaians, as classfmonline.com (Feb 2017; cf. GNA Nov 2017) report indicates.

While becoming hygiene-conscious such that people are screened from faeces-related health practices like open defecation might not be a serious issue for many advanced nations, it is a real challenge in many developing countries. In Ghana, as an example, in spite of vigorous efforts to arrest this disease-related open defecation crisis are being pursued (cf. Nuamah and Markwei 2012:17; Anonymous 2012:53) recent reports on the efforts of the country to deal with it are not encouraging.

There are recent reports which give clear indications that 'Open defecation persists in Ghana and despite the creation of a Sanitation Ministry, it is widely believed Ghana's sanitation situation has not improved' (myjoyonline.com). For example, records over the past few years which Kwarteng (2017, cf. GNA, Dec 2017) notes, reveal that Ghana has been ranked the seventh dirtiest country in the world. That is, Ghana Demographic report of 2014 released in July 2015 shows that the country had slipped on its sanitation performance globally to become the 7th worst in World in the use of toilets. And on the continent of Africa, the same report says that Ghana is second in terms of open defecation. This report is supported by a couple others. For example, Daily Guide reports: 'Ghana has been ranked second after Sudan in Africa for open defecation, with 19% of its population resorting to the sanitation practice deemed the

riskiest of all' (Nov 2015; cf. mynewsgh.com, July 2017; GNA, Sept 2017).

The situation had not been better in previous years. A report on "Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water: 2015 Update and MDG Assessment", which is a collaborative effort between WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund, says: '...The challenge to access improved sanitation is starker in Ghana, which has slipped even further amongst the worst performing countries...' (citifmonline.com, Sept 2016). Buttressing this evaluation, a Daily Guide (2015) report notes that: 'The country has been performing abysmally with sanitation coverage of only 15 percent, making the practice of open defecation a key sanitation challenge because people do not have access to key basic facilities'. Ghana is classified among 34 countries in the world with the highest open defecation rates of 15% and above, with 19% of the total population practicing it daily, and this translates into one out of every five people in the country (myjoyonline.com, Sept 2018).

These percentages translate into an estimated number of not less than five million Ghanaians who practice open defecation every day. This figure is supported by records from the Multiple Indication Cluster Survey in 2010 which also states: 'Over five million Ghanaians defecate in the open every day' (ultimatefmonline.com, Oct 2017). Moreover, the Country Director of UNICEF has said that five million Ghanaians are engaged in defecating in the open (GNA, July 2016).

Assuming the report of UN is even set aside, there are local statistics that provide same results. For example, National Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2015 report reveals that 19% of the Ghanaian population practice OD; meaning that: 'one

out of six Ghanaians do not have a place of convenience and therefore defecate in the open' (dailyguideafrica.com, October 2017). Sadly, details from other sources provide even greater percentages. Indeed, there are current data which suggest that almost a quarter of the Ghanaian population do not use any latrine facility (GNA, Sept 2015).

While Addai (2015) writes that on the average, it is one out of every five people living in the country that defecates in the open, representing 20%, and Cobba (2015) notes that the figure is 22% of the population, a GNA (Sept 2015) report suggests that it is almost a quarter of the Ghanaian population, that is, 25%, who do not use any latrine facility and thus engage in this negative and shameful practice.

Region by Region statistics in Ghana

A GNA report states: 'Every region in the country practises open defecation and there is no district that is open defecation-free in the country' (GNA, Dec 2017). However, the three regions in the north are the places where open defecation has been a challenge. The Upper East Region is reported to have the highest open defecation rate with 89%, followed by Northern Region with 72% and then Upper West Region with 71% (Daily Guide, Nov 2015). Not even after two years of effort has drastically changed the situation in the three northern regions as the place where the practice is very common. An October 2017 Health news report testifies to this (dailyguideafrica.com, Oct 2017). These three regions are followed by Brong-Ahafo and Volta Regions (GNA, July 2015). A couple of reports from some of the regions will be sufficient to make a case for our discussions here.

From the Upper West region, the Environmental Health Service Department of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development has revealed that the dream of the region to attain its target of free from Open Defecation by December 2017, is not achievable. This is because the Region placed second with an alarming rate of 71.1% higher than the national rate of 19% (GNA, Dec 2015). Then also at the launch of the 10th anniversary and community durbar of a waste management company, Zoomlion Ghana Limited, the Upper West Regional Minister, in a speech read on his behalf by the Deputy Upper West Regional Minister, expressed great concern. He said that over 70% of the residents still engage in open defecation, despite efforts made in fighting the practice (myjoyonline.com, May 2016).

Moreover, there was a media training workshop on the “Menace of Open Defecation” held in Wa the Environmental Health Service Department of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development revealed that, ‘out of every 10 people in the region, seven are practicing Open Defecation (OD)’ (GNA, Dec 2015). Indeed, human excreta is a common site in most of the corners of the Wa Municipality. So, it is not surprising that the Municipality cannot pass for Open Defecation Free (ODF). Blege (2016) reports on a recent Open Defecation Free Rankings released by the Upper West Regional Environmental Health Directorate, which placed the Municipal 8th on the table, followed by Lambussie Karni, Sissala East, and Jirapa.

According to the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) of 2014, the Upper East Region recorded the highest open defecation in Ghana with 74.7% and that, ‘out of four people in the Upper East Region, three defecate outside due to lack of toilet facilities in many homes in the region’ (3news.com, Nov

2016). This is substantiated by another report which indicates that defecating openly so freely practiced in that region that it has a 75% score among the residents (starrfmonline.com, Dec 2017). In the light of the DHS report: 'In 2011, nine out of ten people in the Upper East region defecates openly but between 2011 and 2015 the rate has reduced by 15%, the 2014 figures are indications that this negative practice is not reducing as expected. It is rather on ascendancy' (3news.com, Nov 2016).

In the Northern Region, the practice is still very prevalent, though the drive towards reducing or eradicating the it still continues to be fuelled. So far, 'Tatale-Sanguli and Mion Districts have the least percentage of people who practice open defecation. They also have the highest number of people living in ODF communities and household toilet coverage', Northern Regional Coordinator of Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) revealed. (mynewsgh.com, July 2017).

While reports released by the Waste Management Department of the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly indicates that Kumasi, Ghana's second largest city, in the Ashanti Region, has 15% of its residents engaged in open defecation (GNA, Nov 2018), reports on sanitation from the Accra, the capital city of the country, is not better; in fact, it is even worse. As Aklikpe-Osei (2014:9) comments: 'Every nook and cranny of Accra, for instance, is dressed in golden filth'. Not even the beaches are spared this faeces-related filth, as people use such places for disposing of waste, 'freeing of bowels and other uncultured activities' (Aklikpe-Osei 2014:9). There are reports that many households in the capital city lack toilet facilities (cf. Arku and Moeremans 2011:18).

A Deputy Minister of Local Government and Rural Development revealed that, 'about 45% of Accra's population engages in open defecation' (GNA, July 2015). Specific examples abound. For instance, a GNA report indicates that the people living in Akweteyman and its surrounding area resort to the use of public places of convenience or engage in open defecation exposing residents to health risks (GNA, Jun 2018). At the commissioning of a new toilet facility, the Member of Parliament (MP) for Ablekuma West warned residents of Glefe, near Dansoman, Accra, against open defecation along the sea-defence wall, according to Safo Akyaa (2019).

It is against the background of the foregone nationwide statistics that, most probably, the UNICEF's Country Director of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene, David Duncan, has said that considering the current rate of incidence and the slow rate of progress in dealing with the menace, it will take Ghana 500 years to bring an end to 'free ranging' or open defecation (classfmonline.com, Feb 2017).

Chapter Conclusion

Beginning on a solid foundation that open defecation infringes of people's human rights, this chapter has focused on providing a couple of statistics germane to our discussion. From the national capital to key districts of almost every region of the country, the details of the statistics show the extent to which open defecation has not only permeated but has become entrenched in the Ghanaian soil.

It is against this background that the practice is regarded as a menace that demands great efforts of everyone in order to uproot it from the skin of the nation. This call will receive better

response when people are enlightened to some of the major factors that contribute to the practice, which will be the topic for the subsequent chapter.

Chapter 5

Major Factors that Contribute to Open Defecation in Ghana

Various reasons may be advanced as the causes of the open defecation challenge. A fundamental one is the issue of increasing size of the population. Over the years, Ghana is experiencing an abrupt rise in human population, though it is not the first country to experience any such high population growth. However, this rise in population has great repercussions, both positive and negative, on our major facilities, public latrines and household types inclusive.

As Baffo Gyasi (2017) also argues: ‘The increase in the country’s population has got to a level that the existing facilities, amenities, executed policies and agenda can no longer correspond to the citizenry despite the outstanding and assiduous efforts made by our patriotic political leaders’. Thus, the main issue responsible for open defecation, though ultimately, is the absence of sanitary facilities, yet other factors are also involved. But it’s better to focus attention on the main issue and then turn to consider the others.

Lack of suitable Toilets as main cause of Open Defecation

As a people, our lives revolve around toilets directly and indirectly and we have to take issues of toilets seriously. Without toilets, people suffer the fear and indignity of relieving themselves in the open or in unsafe or unhygienic toilets. Many people attribute open defecation to inadequate toilet facilities within various houses and in the community while other factors

like filth at toilet facilities, especially the public toilet, attitudes and distance as some of the motivations for which some others defecate in the bush or field. The lack of the facilities is a very worrying situation since it makes efforts at addressing challenges of open defecation difficult. Municipal, Metropolitan and District Assemblies are empowered by the laws of the land to sanction such home owners, unfortunately, such legislative instrument has been quite ineffective as a result of inactivity.

Public toilets in particular, by way of where they are situated, such as lorry parks and markets, were meant for the convenience of strangers, travellers and people who spend long hours engaging businesses in such places. Hence, local government bodies in Ghana over the years have been encouraging households to build their own toilet facilities in their homes through the provision of counterpart funding. While some landlords have adhered to the bye-laws of the assemblies by constructing household toilets, others have remained adamant.

Arku and Moeremans (2011:18) note that sanitary facilities are deemed to be a waste of money-earning space by many commercial property owners (i.e., landlords/landladies) in the country. In fact, in some cases, government has failed to build toilet facilities for public schools leaving children with no option but to use the bush or the beaches. Ironically, even some government-managed facilities have fewer toilet facilities. However, not until the challenges with provision of toilets are addressed, this goal of stopping OD will be hard to achieve.

General information on access to toilets

Everyone has the right to a safe and private place of convenience, and to live a healthy and productive life without the

threat of illness from poor sanitation and hygiene (GNA, Nov 2015). As Rukaya Mohammed, a pupil from Kotobabi Junior Secondary School (JHS), while extolling the importance of hygiene and sanitation to the lives of pupils, noted: 'the world should accept the fact that hygiene and sanitation were part of the rights that each child was entitled to and not a privilege'.

However, the fact on the ground is that access to toilets has become a huge challenge to many people, especially in the developed and under-developed countries, Ghana inclusive. In November 2015, UNICEF said access to toilets is endangering the lives of thousands of Ghana's most vulnerable children, pointing to emerging evidence of links between inadequate sanitation and malnutrition (citifmonline.com, Sept 2016). The lack of toilets in the Kensere and Kwadwo Adaekrom communities in the Asutifi North District Assembly, Brong-Ahafo Region, had resulted in open defecation, a situation which is exposing members of the community, especially school children, to health hazards and complications (GNA, Feb 2019). No doubt, OD is largely as a result of the failure of some households in both rural and urban centres to construct such facilities in addition to their residential facilities.

Global and Continental statistics on toilets/latrines

While it is estimated that over 4.5 billion people out of the world's total population of 7.2 billion representing 63% don't not have access to safe latrines in general (ghanaweb.com, Nov 2018; cf. GNA, Feb 2018), more than 2.3 billion of this figure, that is, one in three people, do not have household toilets to help them with the safe disposal of their faeces, in spite of all the benefits of having private toilets (GNA, Nov 2015; cf. GNA, Nov

2018). This figure represents a drastic increase because Ebire and Al-Zubi's (2008:Abstract) report, a couple of years earlier, had indicated that lack of toilet facilities was experienced by about 2.5 billion people. This obviously is an indication that the world is losing the fight against open defecation.

According to the Country Director of WaterAid Ghana, out of the more than 2.3 billion who do not have household toilets, nearly one billion of them have no choice but to defecate in the open such as in the bushes, fields or by the road side. This is an indication that quite a chunk of the world's population who do not have access to toilet facilities engage alternative means of responding the "nature's call", which unfortunately result in adverse health effects on people.

Unsurprisingly, most of the people who with limited or no access to toilets and thus engage in open defecation are in developing countries. In fact, all 10 of the world's worst countries for access to basic sanitation are in sub-Saharan Africa, with Djibouti, a major route for refugees from the Yemen war, having the worst figures for open defecation (GNA, Nov 2017). Faniran and Nihinlola (2007:49-50) comment on the challenges with environmental management in Nigeria, and point out the 'non-existence of functional public latrines', leading to the use of stream/river banks for what they describe as 'short-put human excreta'.

Statistics on Toilets in Ghana

In a 2017 state of the world's toilets report titled: "Out of Order", by WaterAid, an international non-governmental organisation, Ghana was named among the top 10 countries worldwide with the highest percentage of their populations

without decent toilet facilities (citinewsroom.com, May 2018; cf. GNA, Nov 2017). In terms of details, research by a Ghanaian consulting firm, CDC Consult and presented at the National Basic Sanitation Forum in July 2017 indicated that 1.21 million households, forming 19.3% of households in Ghana were without toilets (dailygraphiconline.com, Aug 2017).

By way of breakdown, one of the private local television stations in the country, TV3, mentions on April 17, 2015, in its 7:00pm News bulletin, '18.7 million Ghanaians will be without toilet facilities by the end of 2015'. Another report covering 2017, estimated that less than 15% of the over 27 million population have access to safe latrines. In other words, about 85.7% of Ghanaian representing about 23 million people have no access to decent toilets, out of which many find unapproved means, especially, any open spaces to ease themselves - a practice which promotes faeces-related diseases like cholera, diarrhoea and typhoid (GNA, Nov 2018; cf. myjoyonline.com, Sept 2018).

Though this figure is quite lower than another estimate released in the same year stating 85.1% representing 24.5 million of the populace who do not have access to safe toilets. Out of this, 19% representing nearly 5 million do not have access to any toilet facility, and thus defecate openly, a practice which is widespread but worse in rural areas than the cities (GNA, Nov 2015; cf. GNA, Nov 2018). Considering a UNICEF Press Release a couple of years back which estimated that access to household toilet facilities in the country remains limited to 18% in urban areas and 9% in rural areas, there clear indications that there's much work to be done in both urban and rural areas (Blege 2016).

The Education Management Information System (EMIS 2017) indicates that 35% of the 21,438 public basic schools in the country do not have toilet facilities, while 1,631 out of the 9,064 private basic schools in Ghana also have no toilet facilities (thebftonline.com, Dec 2018). About the same period, another statistics is released which buttressed the survey of EMIS 2017. It comes from the UNICEF Country Director who said that 43% of schools were not equipped with proper sanitation facilities like toilets (GNA, July 2016).

Probably challenged by the absence of toilet facilities, one can imagine where people will defecate, or drop collected human waste; anywhere. It is common to see some of the people defecating in the open and/or along the beaches or directly into the sea, streams, and open drains, as Yeboah (2014:40-41; cf. Andoh 2014:26) reports. Connected to this practice is a feature in the slums of Ghana, which Selormey (2012:33; cf. Issah 2014:20) describes as the “flying toilet”. This, the reports notes, is characterised by the use of plastic bags as containers for faeces which are thrown into the nearest open spaces. A typical example is where TV3 reported on November 19, 2012, in its 10:00pm News bulletin (Amfoh 2012; cf. Yeboah 2014:40-41) that about 20% of Ghanaians defecates in open places and/or by way of such “flying toilets”.

Regional Statistics on toilet/latrine in Ghana

Reports from the Department of Waste Management Department of the Metropolitan Assembly, reveals that only 50% of the more than two million people in the Kumasi Metropolis had access to household toilets (GNA, Nov 2018). Giving a situational report on sanitation at a meeting with the Minister of Sanitation

and Water Resources, the head of the Department of Waste Management Department of the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly indicated that the Metropolis currently has 35% of its required public toilets.

A survey reveals for instance that, in Accra alone, about 29,679 (i.e., 68.5%) out of 43,324 houses visited were without toilet facilities, despite a directive from the metropolitan authorities that all houses in the metropolis should have toilets by September 2011 (Selormey 2012:33). In terms of communities, a Sanitation Market Survey Report delivered at a sanitation entrepreneurial forum on the Ghana–Netherlands Wash Programme (GNWP) in Accra reveals that about 200,000 houses in five municipalities in the Greater Accra and Central regions are without toilets. They are Ga South, Ga West and Ga Central in the Greater Accra Region while the municipalities in the Central region are Cape Coast and Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem (graphiconline.com, May 2015).

Outside the capital, this socio-cultural challenge is no different, as shown by various reports; Ekufu (2012:7), Agbenu (2012:16), and that of Danso (2012:22). Zakaria (2012) in particular reports that open-defecation is common in Zabzugu in the Northern Region of Ghana as a result of inadequate or unavailability of public and private toilet facilities. According to one of the Environmental Assistant Health Officers at the Ho Municipal Assembly, about 5,000 households within the Municipality lacked toilet facilities (GNA, Nov 2018).

Sometimes, a whole government unit lacks the facility and this subjects people to explore many avenues whenever there is the need to respond to nature's call. During the commissioning of a new toilet facility, the Member of Parliament (MP) for

Ablekuma West admitted that the Dansoman Divisional Police Command, which serves the Dansoman, Mamprobi and Korle-Bu districts, had no toilet facility, Safo Akyaa (2019) reports.

Factors that prevent use of toilet facilities

Many factors actually dictate the patronage of toilets or latrines. Though they are referred to as place of convenience (restroom or washroom depending upon whether the user is American or English, respectively), yet, worried observers have said, ‘many of the structures called “places of convenience” are actually “places of thorough inconvenience”’ (starrfmonline.com, Aug 2017). In cases where toilets or latrines are available in schools and at public places, failure to repair any non-functioning parts especially water pipes connected to these facilities is also identified as one of the reasons why people defecate at unapproved places.

It’s in the early hours of the day. A young man squats a few steps away from his house. His neighbour suggests to him: “massa, go into the bush a little”. His response: “come and push me inside”. Later, he confronts his neighbour: “what do you think of yourself? Do you expect me to go into the bush at this time – gesturing, or should I come and use your toilet? So if our toilet is spoilt, what should I do?

Before this argument, the tenant had drawn the attention of the landlord to the negative attitudes of his children (Blege 2016).

The case of latrines which are in deplorable states such that patrons find it uncomfortable or in some cases dangerous to use is a major contributing factor to open defecation. A case

in point is what is happening at Atwedie, a town in the Ashanti Region, on the Accra-Kumasi road, a few kilometers to Konongo. Here, the high incidence of OD is because the dilapidated state of the only Public toilet facility in the community.

A GNA report indicates that the 25-seater facility has been in a poor state for about seven years thus making it difficult for residents to use it. Consequently, people find it better to resort to the open space in the bush. One of the patrons remarked after stepping out of the dilapidated toilet: 'I came out early because I couldn't defecate. The heat was too much. Now the concrete on it is weak and it is scary. I fear I might fall into it. Now I am going to the bush to defecate that is the only option available' (myjoyonline.com, Sept 2018). The report becomes vivid here:

About three hundred meters from the dilapidated toilet facility is the main refuse dump in the community, Kwaku Amoh went to do his business. Eight-year-old Kofi is spotted at the refuse dump not to dispose-off but to defecate. He looks for something he will use to tidy himself. Kofi takes off his pair of shorts, squats comfortably to also defecate. Kofi will not speak to us but his action and that of Kwaku Amoh confirms that open defecation has become a normal routine in the community of over 2,000 residents. The worrying and embarrassing trend is that both men and women share the same space on the refuse dump when defecating (myjoyonline.com, Sept 2018).

Sometimes, patrons of public toilets or latrines complain of the long distances they have to cover to get to the nearest public toilet facility, coupled with the fee they have to pay and the long

periods they have to wait to use toilet facilities (cf. graphiconline.com, May 2015). Sometimes, they are often very untidy and unhealthy. Besides, there is also the possibility of people avoiding public toilets as a result of the “heavy” stench that they have to endure and sometimes stay with. As Selormey reports: ‘they are characterised by obnoxious scents...as elimination of pathogens and organic degradation is not significant’. For example, some students of the Ngleshie-Amanfro Senior Secondary School (SHS) revealed that the old toilet facility they were using to a large extent affected them as teachers had to halt classes when the stench became unbearable (GNA, Feb 2018).

More often than not, while politicization of fundamental issues of life become advantageous to some of the players end up becoming a huge setback to progress and developing with negative consequences for other people. Some of such selfish and insensitive practices do not only lead suffering of the citizenry but also bring about financial loss to the nation as a whole. For example, a GNA report reveals that a newly constructed water closet toilet facility for Nadowli community in the Nadowli–Kaleo District of the Upper West Region which has been fully completed almost seven years ago still remains unused.

According to the report in question, the facility which was constructed by the MP to help improve sanitation situation of the area and boost environmental conditions of the District capital has been locked up and left to deteriorate without use because it has not been commissioned since the period of its completion (GNA, May 2018). Unfortunately, parts of the toilet facility have been gutted by fire. This situation, according to the report, has

forced members of the community to resort to opened defecation.

Other factors that contribute to Open Defecation

While unavailability of usable toilet facilities has been identified as the main cause of open defecation, there are possible twists to such a conclusion. This is in the light of the many other reasons that exist. These include the following:

Reliance on Communal and Public toilets: A Regional news report monitored by GNA rather reveals: ‘The provision of and over-reliance on communal and public toilets at the community level have been one of the biggest setbacks in our collective efforts at attaining Open Defecation Free (ODF) status’ (graphic.com.gh, Nov 2015). The point here is that such community provisions discourage people from taking steps to get their toilets and thus contributed to the lack of household toilets in our towns and cities.

This means that even when latrines are available, that is never a guarantee of stoppage of the negative practice. Addai (2015) argues that communal latrines, though has helped to some extent in dealing with open defecation, are widely believed to have also worsened the menace. This is because of factors such as distance from the house, the need to respond to nature’s call at night and the usual poor hygienic conditions of communal toilets.

One of the shameful scenarios of depending on community toilets is where people’s privacy is violated. A United Television (UTV) News (2019) report reveals that in certain communities in the Tain District of the newly created Bono East Region, their

toilets are in such a dilapidated state that both male and females share the toilets without any privacy. According to some of the patrons of the toilets who were interviewed, the situation is such that, more often than not, one sex group have to wait for some time before the other come. But in cases where some of the patrons are pressed, they break such unofficial protocols and patronize it even when the facility is engaged by those of the opposite sex. To avoid such unfortunate embarrassments, many of the residents resort to defecating in some open places where they feel secured or in the bush.

Lack of political will to deal with the challenge: Another key factor is the lack of political will to implement and enforce national policies on environmental sanitation and hygiene, especially, where reports to the government on total lack or inadequate facilities for such human waste do not elicit any response. According to Kwarteng (2017), the World Bank appears to be blaming the entrenched presence of open defecation in the Ghanaian body politic on a lack of political will on the ruling class to deal effectively with the problem. Consequently, the World Bank is threatening to pull out of an arrangement it has with the country to clean it up of open defecation which has been sinking the country for some time now.

Weak enforcement of laws and bye-laws: This has been cited as contributory factors to the problem of open defecation. Indeed, the poor sanitation in the country can be blamed squarely on the lack of enforcement of existing laws and bye-laws by those in authority. Thus, there is an urgent call on the authorities and commercial property owners involved to live up to their social responsibilities (cf. Andoh 2014:26) so as to prevent

indiscriminate disposal of faeces and the abuse of land. In fact, the only way to ensure that landlords obey the country's bye-laws to provide their households with toilet facilities was to prosecute recalcitrant law breakers.

Until sanitation offenders are arrested and prosecuted by law enforcement agencies, the nation may suffer communicable and airborne diseases. This development is a great source of worry to many, including a Member of the National Media Commission and Columnist for "The Watch-Woman", Dr. Doris Yaa Dartey, who has always wondered why the country should even 'be struggling with open defecation in the current era of development and globalisation' (GNA, Dec 2018).

Additional contributing factors: Factors such as ignorance and poor levels of education on the risks of the practice are paramount. In other words, lack of adequate programming to sensitize the citizenry coupled with ineffective coordination by appropriate state agencies is not helping the effort deal with menace. Moreover, there are a lot more fundamental contributing factors like lack of supervision or inspection of household latrines, low prioritisation of the sanitation sector by past governments, low private sector interest or weak involvement in exploring possible investment opportunities, negative cultural norms/lifestyle of the people and high poverty levels of the people among others which cannot be overlooked.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has considered in appreciable details, some of the fundamental factors that contribute to open defecation. The main one has been understood as the lack of usable toilet

facilities. Many reasons have been advanced as contributing to the challenge of inadequate quality toilets. While some of the challenges no doubt rest on the shoulders of the government of the nation, the populace also has a great role to play in order to arrest the situation.

Chapter 7

Effects of Open Defecation on Human Society

Open defecation does not only compromise the dignity of people. For women and girls, in particular, who are relatively vulnerable, this situation is enough grounds for some of them to be subjected to greater dangers. The stigma associated with sanitation issues in general, most especially open defecation, is enough to paint a negative image for any country or people greatly engaged in it. More than the shame is its effect on the health of the people. This is the situation that Ghana finds herself in. generated a lot of calls from very concerned citizen.

The disgraceful effect of OD on Ghana

It is shameful for a country like Ghana that pride itself as the Black Star of Africa and the first in sub-Sahara Africa to gain independence with accolades such as: “The Gateway to Africa” and other pompous credentials, the country could not afford to be ranked the seventh dirtiest in the world and the second dirtiest in Africa because of the inability to deal with open defecation. Indeed, after 57 years as a nation with its political standing in the scheme of affair in the world, it is not only a disgrace for Ghanaians to indulge in open defecation; in fact, the menace dehumanizes Ghanaians. This activity, no doubt, is due to high level of poverty and ignorance in the country.

Quite strangely, open defecation is so freely practiced by some residents and that the practice has become so ‘fashionable’. A GNA regional report indicates that the Upper East Regions which has been unanimously crowned the ‘stronghold of open defecation’ in the country, has some proud offenders even

taking selfies as they squat unhidden to expel waste (starrfmonline.com, Feb 2018; cf. GNA, Dec 2017). The shame associated with open defecation and sanitation issues in the country has generated a lot of calls from very concerned citizen. A Former Chairman at Graphic Communications Group argues that “‘Ghana is the dirtiest in Africa’ image must be brought to an end’, and that ‘it is time the bad image of the country as is being portrayed to the rest of the world changes’ (GNA, Dec 2018). Kwarteng (2016) remarks: ‘What Frantz Fanon called “dependency complex” cannot help us do away with open defecation, a millstone around our collective neck’.

Truth be told, ‘it is a disgrace for Ghanaians to indulge in open defecation....it is time Ghanaians stop joking with their lives and put an end to open defecation’ (GNA, Dec 2018). Speaking at a two-day capacity building programme for the parliamentary press corps organised by UNICEF, Mr. Duncan said: ‘We were confronted with the fact that one in five Ghanaians uses Ghana as a toilet – defecating daily in the bush, on the beach and in drains calling for an urgent response by governments to eradicate the practice’ (classfmonline.com, April 2016). Kwarteng (2017) believes that Ghanaians no longer even care for the proverbial wisdom that says, “godliness is next to cleanliness”.

In the words of Alhaji Mahamadu A. Azonko, an Acting Upper East Regional Chief Director, ‘Even the cat buries its faeces. So, why should a human display his own faeces?’ (starrfmonline.com, Dec 2017). At least, for once, let me agree with Kwarteng (2017) that, ‘a people caught in the vicious circle of open defecation are far removed from the political realism of independence’.

Statistic on rate of Infection from Open Defecation

According to Blege (2016), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) state explicitly in Goals 3, 6 and 11 the essence of an environment that is safe for all. Our interest here is on Goal 3 which specifically indicate the responsibility of nations to, 'ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages'. Blege also touches Article 12 (2) (b) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) ICESR which says: 'The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health'. Thus, the issue of good health for humanity is non-negotiable.

Unfortunately, this desire for highest physical and mental health is for some people, a mirage. Indeed, the problematic issues of open defecation, its environmental and health impacts, particularly on growing children cannot be quantified. And this is as a result of increasing insanitary practices in some parts of the world.

Statistically, an estimated 21 million Ghanaians use a drinking water source that can be contaminated with faeces (cf. GNA, Nov 2018). At a capacity building workshop organised by the Parliamentary Press Corps on the theme: "Open defecation – A menace in Ghana" and sponsored by UNICEF, it was reported that: 'Ghana placed second in the 2015 Cholera ranking in West Africa with 28,944 cases and 247 deaths' (kasapafmonline.com, April 2016). Again, in terms of statistics, Mr. Henry Bagah, the Upper West Regional Environmental Health Officer, reveals that one gram of faeces contains not less than one million germs and the human being gives not less than 12 grams per excreta (GNA, Dec 2015).

Risks and/or diseases associated with Open defecation

This section focuses on the implications of the hygiene-related issues of the text for the present day. Reports on hygiene and health challenges due particularly to practices related to improperly disposed excreta, and efforts to address them are becoming so challenging that they have necessitated a search for effective solutions. In the light of LeMarquand's (2012:199) expectation that African biblical scholarship may one day 'have some kind of small impact on a suffering world', I believe some of the impact is available presently. This is in the direction of contributing to the efforts aimed at resolving the hygiene-related health issue of open defecation, which no doubt pose huge challenges to many communities, especially in the developing world.

It may be recalled from the discussions of the previous chapters that our OT text, Deuteronomy 23:12-14, is implicitly motivated by hygiene and sanitation-related issues with implications for health. Our observation finds support in scholars including Hall (2000:348), Hart (1995:78-80), Adler (1893:4-5), Adeyemo (2006:240), Borowski (2003:78-80), Douglas (2003:54), Alexander and Rosner (2000:154-55), Barker and Kohlenberger III (1994:264), Bruce (1979:259), Zodhiates (1996:1526), and Craigie (1976:299-300). The connection between improper faeces disposal, unhygienic lifestyle, disease, and contagion is common knowledge in the area of public health (cf. Andoh 2014:26; Faniran and Nihinlola 2007:50), and underscores the socio-medical dimension of the OT text.

Consequently, the OT text or pericope doesn't only call for a responsible attitude and treatment of our environment particularly in respect of faeces, but provides enough platforms

to argue that burying faeces is the safest human waste disposal practice. This observation becomes significant to the current discussion in the light of the repercussions of open defecation for health. An even stronger argument as will be shown in the subsequent section is that burying such matter today still ensures hygiene and prevents the contracting and spreading of diseases.

Indeed, the link between improper faeces disposal and disease-contagion is shown in Nossig's (cf. Hart 1995:72) definition of social hygiene to include environmental issues which are fundamental to public sanitation campaigns, and also extended to matters of health. Hart believes that in the ancient world and even in the present, social hygiene's primary goal was 'the preservation and advancement of the physical well-being of the nations'. Care for the environment which, according to Newmyer (2001:427), is always pre-supposed in rabbinic pronouncements on the prevention of direct contact with pathogens from faeces, is also necessitated by the need for healthy flora and fauna of the ecosystem.

In recent years, UNICEF, USAID and the World Health Organization reports keep confirming the link between sanitation and diseases and malnutrition (citifmonline.com, Sept 2016). Often, improperly disposed human waste and 'flying toilet' that land in the nearest open spaces (cf. Selormey 2012:33) are spread by rainwater, currents or even animals, with the likelihood of contaminating water bodies which serve as sources for human consumption. Our rivers and water bodies, drains, open spaces, etc., continue to become receiving points of fresh human faeces which are dropped in the open which eventually end up as drinking water. In a TV3 10:00pm News report of March 24,

2019 (cf. Barimah 2019), some residents complained of how toilet is sometimes poured in the open at the outskirts of Oti New site in Kumasi, which eventually contaminates River Oda which serves as a source of drinking water for communities downstream.

No wonder, many faeces-related sicknesses continue to break out periodically. More often than not, cases of diarrhoea are as a result of somebody who has directly or indirectly “taken in” faecal matter, or what in an untypical Ghanaian culture, is commonly or sarcastically referred to as “shit”. In fact, health experts have said unsanitary acts increases diarrhoea besides exposing the environment to contamination and diseases. Open defecation has serious health implications. It could cause waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea, dysentery and typhoid among others. The Behavioural Change Communication Specialist at the MSWR, in an interview with the Ghana News Agency, said open defecation is the major cause of many diseases, especially cholera (GNA, Dec 2017). Kwarteng (2016) observes that OD adds to rising anthropogenic-driven disease burden.

Cholera is a typical example. Bokpe and Issah (2014:16) provide some statistics on the situation in Ghana, that ‘in 2011, 10,628 cholera cases with 105 deaths were reported and in 2012, 9,542 cholera cases were recorded with 100 deaths’. Available statistics from the Ghana Health Services on a cholera outbreak in the country in 2014, which was yet to be brought under control at the time of writing this report, also indicate that ‘about 22,300 people were affected’ (Tetteh 2014:13) ‘with more than 90 deaths’ (Boadu and Gobah 2014:16; cf. Quaicoe-Duho 2014:16) at the time.

The Greater Accra region alone recorded over 20,000 cases (Kale-Dery 2015:48). And considering the extent to which the country's health delivery systems had been stretched, there was a high probability that the death toll could rise. Such records on the situation in Ghana indicate that proper disposal of faeces is an issue that cannot be compromised, since failure to do so usually leads to devastating consequences.

Therefore, as long as people continue to defecate in the open, everyone is at risk of disease and other dangers. For example, the Team Leader of the UNICEF/Government of Ghana (GoG) Open Defecation Free (ODF) campaign, has pointed out that the practice of open defecation did not only carry the risk of insect and reptile bites, but also exposed people in secluded places to harassments (GNA, Jan 2019). Hon. Ebo Barton-Oduro, a former First Deputy Speaker of Parliament, says: 'Ghana can no longer tolerate open defecation under any excuse'. According to him, 'the country cannot win the fight against infectious diseases if it does not step up the pace to address problems associated with safe drinking water, sanitation, and basic health care' (kasapafmonline.com, April 2016).

Generally, one cannot agree more with Arku and Moeremans (2011:18) who admit that insanitary conditions do not only harm those who created them 'but all people who lived in the same environment', adding that, 'it is for the same reason that Ghana is lagging behind in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on environment and sanitation'.

Effects of OD on Children's health

Open defecation is one of the greatest dangers to human health. It is common knowledge that open defecation poses

health problems such as cholera and diarrhoea and stunted growth among children. The Chief Director of the Northern Region Coordinating Council has said that OD poses one of the greatest dangers to human health which has fatal consequences for the most vulnerable including children (3news.com, Jan 2017).

The practice of insanitary lifestyle, in this particular case, defecating in the open, impacts adversely on the healthy growth and well-being of children. Baffo Gyasi (2017) notes how it even stifles the ability of children to think and negatively impacts on learning in the early years of childhood. Open defecation contributes to the incidence of diarrhoea and to the spread of intestinal parasites, which in turn contributes to malnutrition (citifmonline.com, Sept 2016). This not only pose a great challenge to our health delivery systems, but also lead to high death rates.

As a pointer to some of the foregone observations, *The Millennium Development Goals Report* (Anonymous 2007:26) shows: 'The health, economic and social repercussions of open defecation, poor hygiene and lack of safe water...contribute to about 88 per cent of the death due to...diseases – more than 1.5 million – in children under five years'. As if to confirm this report, Ebire and Al-Zubi (2008:Abstract) note that lack of hygienic facilities experienced by many people is, as expected, 'a fundamental cause of disease which leads to 1.5 million deaths of children each year'. Unfortunately, the majority of such deaths are as a result of infections from human excreta (Selormey 2012:33; cf. Issah 2012).

One of the Ghanaian newspapers report: 'Approximately, 19,000 Ghanaians, including 5,100 children under five, die each year from diarrhoea, – nearly 90 per cent of which is directly

related to poor water, sanitation and hygiene' (Agbenu 2015:24; cf. Kennedy 2014:26).

Another report states that 3,600 children die annually in Ghana from sanitation related ailments (dailyguideafrica.com, Oct 2017). It is also reported by the same source that close to eight (8) in every ten (10) households had E-coli from faecal matter in their drinking water, while close to half of all water sources were affected. About 3,600 children die each year in Ghana from diarrhea and even more from pneumonia.

Almost 23% of children in Ghana suffer from stunting-chronic malnutrition linked to poor water and sanitation (thebftonline.com, Dec 2018). The report said that diarrhoea is one of the main causes of deaths of children under five years of age each year and is essentially a faecal-oral disease, where humans come in contact with germs-carrying faeces and ingest them. In Ghana where rates of toilet use are low, rates of diarrhoea tend to be high (citifmonline.com, Sept 2016). These reports confirm the correlation between open defecation and other forms of bad sewage disposal practices and the negative implications for people's health. The resultant effect is the high incidence of sickness, particularly in infants leading to several deaths amongst them.

High Cost involved in fighting Open Defecation

A World Bank report covering the year 2015 indicates that Ghana lost an estimated total of Gh¢1.440billion, equivalent to US\$369million, annually as a result of poor sanitation and the menace of open defecation (thebftonline.com, Dec 2018). Another report in 2017 from the same source and confirmed by UNICEF reveals that, not less than US\$79 million of the total

expenditure on sanitation goes into the yearly fight against open defecation alone (GNA, Nov 2017; cf. mynewsgh.com, Dec 2017; dailyguideafrica.com, Nov 2015). This report is substantiated by the Chief Director of the Northern Region Coordinating Council who quotes the same figure as the total amount Ghana loses annually due to the practice (GNA, Jan 2017; cf. starrfmonline.com, Nov 2017; dailyguideafrica.com, Oct 2017; myjoyonline.com, Sept 2018).

A more current report by Andoh (2019) which quotes the same annual figure of US\$79 million is given by the Institute of Environment and Sanitation at the University of Ghana. Moreover, the nation spends about US\$280 million on sanitation-related diseases (graphic.com.gh, Dec 2017). This amount covers the efforts to combat OD over the few years. Additionally, a campaign that was launched in November 2017 to eliminate open defecation by Ghana's President was made possible by Canada's financial contribution of about \$850,000 (graphic.com.gh, Aug 2018).

Open Defecation is Disincentive to Tourism

Open defecation results in a dip in tourism revenue. Open defecation turns away potential tourists and general visitors to these sites and the country, negatively affecting revenue generation in the process (Kwarteng 2017; cf. Andoh 2019). As a typical example, Ayiwia, a naturally gorgeous suburb of the Bongo District where towering clusters of rocks, which ought to have been attracting tourists to the poor village with their breathtaking forms, rather had been attracting houseflies as they were being used everywhere as toilets (starrfmonline.com, Feb 2018).

The practice of easing oneself in the open, especially along the country's beaches, is a major disincentive to the tourism sector, a Minister-designate of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts, once told Parliament's Appointments Committee (classfmonline.com, Feb 2017). In his appeal to Ghanaians to improve their sanitation habits in order to attract tourists into Ghana, during the delivery of his 2019 State of the Nation Address (SoNA), President Nana Akufo-Addo said: 'There are things that many of us do that would put off any visitor from visiting our country, no matter how attractive the geography or the history might be. I refer, especially, to some of our sanitation habits...It is unfortunate that in 2019, we will still have to revisit this topic'. Then the President also added: 'Open defecation cannot be a characteristic of the country that is working to be transformed economically and to be counted among the developed nations of the world' (myjoyonline.com, Feb 2019; cf. dailyguidenetwork.com, Feb 2019).

Mrs. Afeku indicated that the tourism sector is competitive, hence the need to arrest the development if Ghana is to see its tourism get a boost. 'You cannot aggressively bring people for tourism when you have open defecation at the beaches', she stated. She said that countries like Kenya, where tourism brings in so much foreign exchange, have a practical advantage over Ghana because of issues like sanitation. She was of the view that if sanitation was not addressed, tourism would continue to suffer (classfmonline.com, Feb 2017).

Chapter Conclusion

God's promise is not to protect His people only but also bring judgement on their enemies through a special kind of war,

usually called 'YHWH war' or 'holy war'. With this foundation laid, we now turn attention to consider in a little details the idea of 'holy war' and its implications for the NT believers and humanity as a whole. The question at this juncture is how does the idea of YHWH's presence in the bigger camp of his people, that is, the earth, trigger a 'holy war'? This is the subject of the next discussions where it will be argued that God will wage 'holy war' against destruction of earth which is regarded as a sacred place.

Chapter 8

All Ghanaians must arise to Fight against Open Defecation

Lots of attempts to find effective solutions to improper faeces disposal and its associated health challenges are still ongoing, though more efforts are needed. At the international front, there are clear indications of a concerted effort to deal with the canker. The United Nations, as part of its major sanitation objectives, have vowed to end open defecation by 2025 (myjoyonline.com, Sept 2018). This means that, on the global scene: ‘...solutions - technological, administrative, legislative, social and political - to a major worldwide sanitary crisis are needed’ (Black and Fawcett 2008:¶4).

Indeed, improper sanitation is a global challenge and inevitably demands a holistic approach to dealing with it, if it has to be given the attention it really deserves in fighting diseases. In this chapter, the discussion presents a two-fold prong to the fight against the menace. The first revolves around the need for all Ghanaians to be involved in the fight to arrest this fast increasing incidence of open defecation. The second is that to deal with the high incidence of faeces-related sickness and deaths, the world needs preventive and not only curative measures, though the latter are also important.

Progress on Ghana’s efforts towards eradication

Without doubt, it gladdens the heart of every concerned person to know that worldwide statistics reveal a decline in the number of people who defecate openly. In Ghana, the story is not

far from interesting. GNA reports that, 'Between 2000 and 2015, the number of people in the world defecating in the open dropped from 1.2 billion (20% of the global population) to 892 million (12%)' (GNA, Nov 2017). Generally, this is a welcome piece of information, howbeit on the ground, the situation varies slightly from place to place.

Both past and present governments have not relented on their effort to end the menace by seeking support to meet the needs of both public and households. In 2014, the government made a commitment to eradicate open defecation by 2020 as part of its effort to achieve the vision of health for all by 2025, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which seeks to achieve a 100% target by 2030 (graphic.com.gh, Nov 2015). Obviously: 'Improvements in sanitation mean children in Ghana will avoid becoming stunted due to diarrhoea', said the UNICEF Representative in Ghana (citifmonline.com, Sept 2016).

Available national statistics indicate that improved sanitation can reduce diarrhoea and its related deaths by 36% as well as prevent 20% diarrhoea-related stunting in children (dailyguideafrica.com, Nov 2015). Nevertheless, only 15% of the populace has access to improved sanitation (thebftonline.com, Dec 2018). A former Central Regional Minister is quoted thus: 'If countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso could surpass Ghana in terms of sanitation ranking, then Ghana needs to step up efforts to keep the country clean' (kasapafmonline.com, April 2016; cf. classfmonline.com, April 2016).

More than enough pressure was mounted on the government to double its efforts towards proper sanitation. Certainly, it is about time government prioritised efforts to end open defecation, as it perpetuates the vicious cycle of diseases

and entrenched poverty. This is evident in the cholera outbreak that claimed over 200 lives (dailyguideafrica.com, Nov 2015). Similarly, a UNICEF chief WASH officer has indicated that, to end open defecation, government must have a plan that is supported by the presidency to facilitate a change to a point where using toilet facilities will be socially acceptable (dailyguideafrica.com, Nov 2015).

WaterAid Ghana, undoubtedly one of the country's most active Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), appealed to the government of Ghana to direct efforts at the provision of sanitation facilities in every district of the country, and to ensure that, at least, one million new latrines are provided to the communities (cf. Agbenu 2015:24). And, though the pace towards the realization of this goal has been a bit slow relative to the extent of the incidence, there are still positive signs with regards to dealing with the challenge. This might be deduced from the determination so far demonstrated by the government of Nana Akufo-Addo. In other words, notwithstanding the statistics on OD in Ghana and the challenges involved, Nana Akufo-Addo has come up with a vision of making the capital of Greater Accra Region the cleanest city in Africa (GNA, Dec 2018).

It is also in this direction that the Co-founder and Deputy Managing Director of Fidelity Bank once asked that 'those who are resourced rise up and contribute to the improvement of sanitation in communities' (GNA, July 2015). So far, the response, is quite encouraging. A typical example comes from World Vision Ghana (WVG) which, in collaboration with District Assemblies in its operational areas, has over the years built the capacity of many communities to initiate Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), that helped to reduce open defecation in those

areas (GNA, Nov 2015). It is also added that WVG has provided many schools in the District with Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities including boreholes, toilets and urinals.

Along the same line, Abbey (2019) reports that about 4000 households in 100 communities in the Kpandai, Yendi and Tatale districts in the Northern Region, are to benefit from a two-year joint project by USAID, UNICEF and WASHPals (i.e., Water, Sanitation and Hygiene partnerships and learning for sustainability) which would have researches from these organisations to test the effectiveness of advancing subsidies to households to build and use functional and durable toilet facilities. If proven successful, the subsidies of between Gh¢500 and Gh¢600 as support to each household would spill over to the rest of the communities.

Attainment of Open Defecation Free (ODF) status

In his State of the Nation Address (SoNA), President Nana Akufo-Addo indicated that despite the sanitation challenges, ‘there had been some significant improvement as there had been an increase in the coverage of solid waste management, from 16.6 per cent to 53 per cent’ (myjoyonline.com, Feb 2019). Continuing, the President said: ‘Over the course of last year, 35,862 household toilets were built, as opposed to 1,698 in 2016’ he added. He, therefore noted that ‘it was imperative that every household gets a toilet’.

It is no doubt in line with this resolve that the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development through its Social Accountability Unit (SAU) with a grant of US\$150 million from the World Bank is embarking on a project dubbed the Greater Area Metropolitan Area – Sanitation and Water Project (GAMA-SWP)

“Get a Decent Toilet @ Half Price” initiative (GNA, June 2017). So far, the project has begun in some communities and it is going on successfully and encouraging. But there are reports that some residents were yet to take advantage of the project with the excuse of poverty. But, the excuses of ‘no money to pay was completely unacceptable because if the money used by individuals of a household to pay for usage of public toilet facilities are put together the total can fund the acquisition of a decent household toilet’.

In relation to developments leading to the attainment of Open Defecation Free (ODF) status, UNICEF is supporting the Ministry to implement an ODF campaign initiative called “the Community-led Total sanitation” (CLTS) in the three regions in the north, including, Central and Volta Region and Ashiaman District in the Greater Accra region (GNA, Dec 2015). So far, about one thousand communities out of 4,412 communities in the Northern Region have been verified and certified as open defecation free which represents 23% of coverage in the region from an earlier 11.4% in January 2017. This is a 50% jump of the previous coverage. Thus, if stakeholders remain committed and work assiduously they can achieve their goal of ending open defecation by December 2017 (mynewsgh.com, July 2017).

Moreover, the GNA Regional News desk has reported that the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in conjunction with Ghana’s Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development has launched a special programme. It is called a ‘far-reaching raid’ to ‘exorcise’ the endemic practice of OD from the Upper East region (starrfmonline.com, Feb 2018). According to the report, one of the beneficiary communities, the Ayiwia community of the Bongo District in the Upper East region, was certified and

declared “free from free range”. This certification was after a team of sanitation experts had conducted an in-depth inspection tour of the whole community. The report indicates that after observing the inspection of tour of this community with some Sanitation experts and government officials, the UNICEF’s Country Representative loudly remarked: ‘We’re very glad as UNICEF to congratulate you for this certification today, being open-defecation-free’.

During the inspection process, Sanitation experts, joined by the UNICEF and government contingent usually walk in groups as they inspected houses, bushes and rocky areas in the community in what they termed as a verification process. A report on one of such sanitation inspection tours narrates how, sometimes, they have some simple but decisive questions mainly targeted at children, who are usually the ‘chief culprits’ in every free-range community. According to the report, one of such questions to ask any child met on the way was to find out where they often answered to the call of nature and, if the child pointed at a latrine in reply, and also to demonstrate or explain how it was used (starrfmonline.com, Feb 2018). The report continues that during such times, some hearts beat rapidly and many swallowed saliva of despair among the elders of the community as experts engaged children at random on the way.

An end-line household survey conducted by the project in last quarter of 2017, showed the practice of open defecation had been reduced to about 6% from the baseline figure of 78% in 2014. Mr. Duker said: ‘This shows that an integrated approach to solving sanitation access in the rural areas is working’ (GNA, Feb 2018). On top of this, it is reported that thousands of homes in the same region have been “delivered” from the “iron grips” of

“free range” through a community-wide sensitisation exercise: “Community-Led Total Sanitation (CTLS)” (starrfmonline.com, Feb 2018).

Turning attention to the Upper West Region, it is reported that fifty communities in the Lawra District have been certified as Open Defecation Free (ODF) by the Regional Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee on Sanitation (RICCS). The certification means that members of the communities now have their own household latrines and no longer attend to the call of nature in the open (GNA, Feb 2018). The journey to achieving the feat began around August 2014 in a DFID-funded project dubbed “Sustainable Sanitation and Hygiene for All (SSH4A)”. The project is being implemented in eight districts in Ghana including the Lawra District by SNV-Ghana (GNA, Feb 2018).

According to a former First Deputy Speaker of Parliament, ‘No innovation in the past 200 years has done more to save lives and improves health than the sanitation revolution triggered by the invention of the toilet’ (kasapafmonline.com, April 2016). Indeed, the provision of proper toilets could save lives of so many people, especially children, in the world. No wonder, news about the construction of toilet facilities has always been a blessing and welcomed with great pleasure.

For example, students of Ngleshie-Amanfro SHS in the Ga South district expressed their joy and excitement as they await the commissioning of a new twelve seater toilet facility. It is reported that this facility ‘comes with a mechanized borehole, a solar power pump, water tank a disabled cubicle for the physically challenged for both male and female including a changing room as well as flowing taps’ (GNA, Feb 2018). The Headmistress of the school, in applauding the initiative,

indicated that the facility will help to deal with the situation where about 2,860 students had to make do with only a four-unit toilet facility.

Elsewhere, there are news of positive change. As a testimony, it is reported that at least ten communities in the Saboba District of the Northern Region have officially been declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) communities following their ability to build house hold toilets in all their homes (myjoyonline.com, Sept 2017). The success story of the Nandom District where there is Open Defecation Free as a result of the establishment of national sanitation authority, sanitation fund and the one toilet policy as well as a directive to local government authorities to ensure that each house has a toilet can be replicated at other places (cf. GNA, Nov 2018). There is also the report that 35 communities were declared ODF between January and May this year bringing up to a total of 379 ODF communities out of 1167 communities in the Upper West Region, according to GNA report (June 2017).

From the Volta Region, it is reported that home latrine coverage in the Volta region has increased from 7% to 14% from 2012 to 2017 (GNA, Feb 2019). Asare (2018) reports of how A Plan International Integrated Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (IWASH) Project in particular had intensified its sensitisation drive in some communities of the region for residents to own household latrines. According to the report, through a collective effort, 5 out of the 10 communities were able to eradicate open defecation and adopted measures to enhance improve sanitation in their jurisdictions. The report continues that the IWASH Project has seen 5 communities in the Afadzato South District of the Volta Region certified Open Defecation Free (ODF).

A similar project which was started in 2015 focused on inculcating hygienic lifestyles into residents of 10 beneficiary communities in Volta Region with the sole objective of improving sanitation and wellbeing of the residents has made a lot of progress. Asare (2018) reports that residents of these 10 communities which previously had a challenge of poor sanitation leading to frequent disease outbreak, were guided to follow a sanitation development roadmap laced with an intensive education on good hygiene. A general observation is that the attainment of open defecation free status contributes immensely to the decline in the cases of communicable diseases in all the beneficiary communities.

The improved efforts in the past few years

Yes, 'Our incapacity to take care of our sanitation has manifested itself in taking loans', as commented by a Member of Parliament for Tamale Central (citifmonline.com, Nov 2017). Nevertheless, we may not be able to do without it now. Though there appears to be intensified campaign aimed at addressing the poor sanitation in general, and especially with open defecation taking centre stage, there is the likelihood that without enough sustained financial assistance, all the efforts to fight the practice and its consequences on health and the economy may become futile.

Consequently, in terms of financial commitment to fuel the vehicle engaged in the fight against open defecation, the government is not leaving any stone unturned. To sustain the effort made so far, governments past and present have contracted funds and received grants to sustain the effort.

Indeed, the international community in particular has been of tremendous assistance to the country.

In terms of household needs, as high as 80% of the households are reported by a Ghanaian consulting firm, CDC Consult, to be unable to afford a toilet facility without financial support since the average annual income of these households was in the region of Gh¢3,787 (dailygraphiconline.com Aug 2017). The source continues that the government needs to mobilise Gh¢485 million to finance about 970,559 households who require some form of financing to own latrines. This is based on the assumption that a basic improved latrine will cost Gh¢500 per household, a Ghanaian consulting firm, CDC Consult, reveals.

To meet the required number of household toilets, the Netherlands government in partnership with Fidelity Bank launched a €6 million (six million euro) sanitation financing project that would serve as a revolving fund to address water and hygiene problems in the country (myjoyonline.com, May 2015). Accordingly, thousands of households, landlords, toilet pullers and citizens, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) could afford to take a loan at a reasonable rate that would allow them to have a toilet in their house. This has led to households taking enlightened steps to erect their own latrines. The payment arrangement is that AMA is prepared to pay 70% of the total cost involved in building household toilets and allow the households to pay the remaining 30% (GNA, Nov 2018).

In recent past, the World Bank, acting as administrator of the Global Partnership on Output-Based Aid (GPOBA), signed a US\$4.85 million grant agreement with the Government of Ghana. This agreement is to provide sustainable toilet facilities in low income areas of Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA)

(myjoyonline.com, April 2015). Then also, there is a US\$60 million World Bank facility which the government of Ex-President Mahama solicited to assist households throughout Ghana to build their own latrines (GNA, July 2015).

In a related development, the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development of the Mahama-led government reports that the World Bank has provided an amount of US\$100 million for some property owners within the metropolitan districts of the Greater Accra Region, namely; Accra, Tema, Ashiaman to request for toilet facilities to be provided according to the needs of the household (GNA, Nov 2015). This amount will also be disbursed in the form of a loan. The loan, which is under the Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) programme, would encourage individual households to build their own latrines while the bank later pays back the cost, a Deputy Minister of Local Government and Rural Development announced at Funi in the Wa East District (GNA, July 2015).

Moreover, Nana Akufo-Addo has said that the World Bank has provided a grant of US\$150 million to support the GAMA project to implement the provision of modern household toilets at a subsidised cost of Gh¢1,100.00 each in selected 11 assemblies in Accra to aid in the elimination of open defecation in the stated areas by the end of year 2020 (GNA, Dec 2017). The President has stated that the Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) programme was being implemented in 4,500 communities in 130 districts to achieve Open Defecation Free (ODF) Communities (myjoyonline.com, Feb 2019).

The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) says it is helping households to get more toilet facilities towards eradicating open defecation (GNA, Nov 2015). To this

effect, government says it will be providing one million toilet facilities across the country (starrfmonline.com, Nov 2017). This, no doubt, follows reports which indicate how the World Bank is unhappy that many Ghanaians still do not have access to household toilets and thus threatens to withdraw support to Ghana if measures are not taken to address this challenge (citifmonline.com, Nov 2017).

Furthermore, a report by Daily Guide, one of Ghana's local newspapers, indicates that the construction of modern toilet facilities across the country aimed at improving waste management and helping government's efforts to curb open defecation through a partnership agreement between the Ministry of Sanitation and Ghana First Company Limited is really gathering momentum, according to a Daily Guide report (Jan 2019). The construction work of biogas-toilet facility with other auxiliary and ancillary facilities to be replicated in other areas in the Metropolis had already commenced to end the menace along the coastline (GNA, Oct 2017). The report reveals that so far contract for the construction of about 1,800 of such modern toilet facilities across the country have been signed and about 500 are at various stages of completion (dailyguidenetwork.com, Jan 2019).

A GNA report revealed that the World Bank has provided funding to set up the GAMA project to help the capital of the Country as part of efforts to eradicate the menace of open defecation in the Greater Accra Region (GNA, Dec 2018). As part of the implementation of the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) - Sanitation and Water Project (SWP) Rapid Response Initiative (RRI) targeted at dealing with open defecation, TV3 network reports that the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) will

within the next 100 days commence construction of 200 toilets in some selected households in the metropolis (Tv3network.com, April 2016). The project dubbed 'A Toilet at Half Price' is reported at tackling open defecation, especially along the coastal areas of the country. According to the report, each household is expected to pay a sum of Gh¢2000.00 (two thousand Ghana cedis) to commence the project after which GAMA will then pay the remaining amount two months after completion of the facility (GNA, Dec 2018).

A report on a project by the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources in collaboration with the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA) has hinted, 'the provision of some 18,000 toilet facilities for low income communities and persons in Ghana by end of 2020' (GNA, Dec 2018). According to the report, 'Management of GAMA is confident that in addition to wiping out the practice of open defecation in the country, access to potable water will be provided'. Already, GAMA is excited at the number of toilet facilities that have been constructed for households in the Greater Accra Region within the past 12 months which stands at 15,400. The management of the Metropolitan Area has projected that more is likely to be developed with increase in demand, thus additional funding for the establishment of more of these affordable toilets will be required by 2019 (GNA, Dec 2018).

As part of its contribution, Fidelity Bank handed over a 12-seater bio-fill toilet facility which forms part of Fidelity Bank's corporate social responsibility initiative to help improve sanitation in Ghana, and expressed its commitment to continue supporting needy communities in Ghana (GNA, July 2015). In spite of the ongoing efforts, it is reported that Ghana will still

require not less than US\$147million to provide decent toilet facilities for only public basic schools across the country (thebftonline.com, Dec 2018). 'GAMA is scheduled to launch a leap table to help schools come up with ways of managing school toilets' with about 106 school toilets already completed out of a total of 406 under the project (GNA, Dec 2018).

The Effutu Municipal Assembly has also planned to radically increase access to toilet facilities in the municipality, particularly along the coastal stretch and other designated areas, all in a move to ensure that there will be no open defecation in the Municipality and also reach the regional target to end the menace by June 2019 (GNA, Oct 2017).

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has concentrated on the need for all Ghanaians to rise up and join the fight against open defecation. It is evident from the foregone discussions that a lot has gone on in Ghana as a country with regards to efforts to tackle the menace. Both the past government and the present one have demonstrated appreciable levels of commitment aimed at bringing this negative practice under control.

However, current reports which show increase in the incidence are obvious indications that efforts at the field are inconsistent with the huge investments done so far. It is becoming clear that there is a missing link in translating the investment into expected results. It appears like the efforts have not really been a concerted one. This is why in the next chapter; attempts will be made to harness all the needed strategies to win the fight against open defecation. Let's see how it goes.

Chapter 9

Strategies to Win the Fight against Open Defecation

Thorough discussions such as posted so far might not be completed without a couple of recommendations for consideration. This is what the submissions of this chapter seek to achieve. Though many such recommendations could be made considering the vast numbers of issues analysed in the arguments but only few which touch on the major indicators are outlined here. Clearly, emphasis is placed on what are argued as the key motivations for the OT pericope that have primarily engaged our attention throughout our discussions. The bottom-line is a clarion call towards preventing 'YHWH war' against humanity.

This, as argued in this book, is the likely consequence of our insensitivities to the way we are desecrating our environments and our engagement in insanitary and unhygienic practices in relation to disposal of human excrement. Therefore, the fundamental objectives outlined in this book are for interested parties: individuals, appropriate governmental and non-governmental bodies, all forms of organised groups, whether religious or not and the general populace to help in the adoption and implementation of strategies towards effective sanitation. However, special emphasis is placed on the need for the Church to play a frontal role because it is the main Bible-believing community,

Reports show that from 1990 to 2015 open defecation have been reduced to only 3% (GNA, July 2016). This does not

auger well for a country that has seen rise in her population 25 years on after independence. The report Ebire and Al-Zubi (2008:Abstract §2, ¶2) reveals a conclusion by experts that ‘current sanitation systems will not help in reaching the Millennium Development Goal’ (MDG) of the United Nations (UN). Moreover, there is unceasing calls by some residents of communities with little or no access to toilets for government’s intervention, especially in its implementation of the “One Household One Toilet Policy”. A typical example is what Antwi-Bosiako and Gyasi (UTV, Mar 2019) showed when they interviewed some residents at Chorkor in the Greater Accra region.

Thus, there should be increased efforts in all planned programmes or specific strategies being put in place to arrest the canker. This is the surest way to improve upon environmental sanitation so that the incidence of cholera and other diseases associated with poor environmental sanitation can be drastically reduced. Though in the past few years, headlines have talked of Ghana as one of the dirtiest countries in the world, we should be quick to address the situation so that we do not even go further backwards.

It is reported: ‘Under the past 25 years in Ghana, improvement was so slow that if we maintain this rate, it will take Ghana 500 years to be free from open defecation’ (classfmonline.com, April 2016; cf. kasapafmonline.com, April 2016). As one of the appropriate sayings go: ‘Desperate situations usually demand desperate measures’, we should become desperate in the evolvment of pragmatic measures to stop open defecation once for all. As the UNICEF’s Country Director of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene, has said: ‘In 15 years,

between now and 2030, we need to support over five million Ghanaians to stop defecating in the open...' (classfmonline.com, April 2016).

Therefore, there is no time to be wasted in tackling the menace full swing since there are great dangers in relaxing/losing the fight against it. This necessitates that every effort must be put in order to sustain the gains made so far.

The need for innovation in toilet structures

The call for innovation in toilet structures cannot have come at a more appropriate time. Addai (2015) provides information on a Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) survey which indicates that most households without toilets would like to have one at home while most of those that already have even wished they could improve on their physical conditions. On their part, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, have launched a joint project to develop low-cost and environmentally-friendly household toilets to assist end open defecation in the country. The goal is to radically increase access to household facilities across the nation, especially in the slums and rural communities (GNA, Sept 2017).

Additionally, a UTV 'Dawuro' announcer, Yaa Koramah (2019), reports that the Government has entered into agreement with Ghana First, a construction company, for the building of 20,000 modern toilets. According to the report, the modern facility will use automated sensors which will flush the toilets immediately after usage. Indeed, modern world must evolve best human waste disposal methods which, doubtless, guarantee

hygiene and environmental cleanliness, and in the process help in the prevention of diseases and contagion, a position also held by both Saxey (n.d:124) and Holman (2003:¶11).

However, modernity should not be seen to be relegating the construction of pit latrine to the background. This is not to say that there are no challenges to its use, as argued by Maugh II (2006:¶1-4) and Deirdre (2006:¶1-3). Obviously, a pit latrine is ultimately not sustainable environmentally, since it can affect underground water-bodies. In that case, some may opt for burning, which also has its advantages and disadvantages. Perhaps some will argue for a process where the faecal matter is taken through decomposing systems, but these also have their smell-pollution problems.

Against the backdrop of these challenges, the solution, by way of reiterating an earlier position, is 'a hole in the ground', as also argued by Black and Fawcett (2008:¶4-5). To be more direct to the point, my position is that disposal by way of innovative latrines and engagement in best practices of hygiene, is the solution for most of the communities in countries like Ghana that have faeces disposal challenges. While there can be curative measures for faeces related sicknesses, provision of more latrines is the foremost way forward. My argument is supported by the popular and undisputed adage that, 'Prevention is better than cure'. Thus, any advanced forms of toilets that will end up in burying the faeces will be a safer practice since it will prevent direct contact with potentially hazardous micro-organisms.

Generate income by converting faeces into usable products

Though there are a number of challenges connected with the drive towards reaching open defecation free status, the

hidden truth is that, there is also a great door to business opportunity that can be opened within. Thus, while many people have always associated negativity with anything which has to do with faeces, it's certainly not everyone. This door is by way of exploring the usability of faecal matter. This is where I join Addai (2015) to say thanks to modern discoveries and technological advancement, because faecal waste, which most people do not even want to be associated with, 'can be turned into a viable business venture just like the practice of alchemy through which baser elements were turned into gold in the middle ages and Renaissance'.

It is sad to note that only 1% of Ghana's liquid waste is treated (GNA, Dec 2015). This means that besides the faeces dropped by people in the open, about 99% of the human waste that pass as sewage also become a burden on the country. Therefore, the need for a way to convert this huge waste into a usable material is imperative. Barimah (2019) reports on two of such efforts. The first is the SaniFish project which is currently being undertaken through a collaboration between the KMA, International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and TriMark Aquaculture Centre, at Chirapatre, a suburb of Kumasi. In this sewerage treatment technology, treated liquid waste is used to rear catfish on a commercial scale in maturation ponds. The second is another project in Kumasi, the Oti Liquid Waste Treatment Pond, which produces organic fertiliser for commercial farming purposes.

It is also in line with the vision to convert faecal matter into usable products that the Columbia Embassy in Ghana is undertaking a "Composting Toilet Project" that sought to introduce a new toilet model in Ghana. A UTV 12:00-midday Live

broadcast reports of youth trained in construction of composite toilet facility by experts from Columbia. This is an effort to turn toilet into compost for agricultural purposes. The Columbia Ambassador explained that the model was such that the end products from the toilet would benefit the country immensely in the area of generating a cheaper means of fertilizer to boost agricultural ventures (graphic.com.gh, Jan 2019; cf. UTV, Mar 2019).

One cannot but accept that the challenges associated with disposal of faeces also serve as opportunities that some serious minded Ghanaian could turn into money-making ventures. A typical example comes from Addai (2015): 'To you it may be shit. To us it is MONEY', which is an inscription on a truck of a young man engaged in the business of faecal waste management. One cannot agree more with him that the inscription connotes some people's disgust at faeces 'generated by our honourable selves', due to its rather potently offensive odour. But to other people, the provision of household toilet facilities "is the future business for the next couple of decades in Ghana". He notes: 'It is gratifying to observe that, gradually, entrepreneurs like the man with that inscription on his truck have sensed the business prospects in faecal waste and, through their ingenuity, are developing and selling solutions'.

Generally, the two classes of toilet facilities in Ghana are the water-less and water-based systems. Selormey's (2012:33) report reveals that about 2,930 houses in Accra still use pan-latrines which are water-less, with their content usually emptied at unacceptable places. But the era of "bucket latrines" when the men who engaged in that business were shunned, because some of them were perpetually covered in an aroma of "faecal

perfume” is past. And in terms of usage, reports indicate that Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrine was the most commonly used toilet facility in the municipalities, in addition to flush toilets that were connected to septic tanks and pit latrines with slab covers (graphiconline.com, May 2015). Even with some of the water-based toilet systems which dominate well-planned homes, the regular supply of water is a challenge, as reported by Yeboah (2014:40-41). Thus, gradually, things are changing and innovative ways of dealing with faecal matter keep emerging by the day such that dealing with faecal matter should no longer be problematic.

Encouraging Local Individuals/Groups support

Old Students Association should be disappointed in the bad press their school receives over negative developments of their Alma mater so that they can find ways to help push the image of the school to the well-deserved standard befitting them. A typical demonstration is by Opoku Ware Senior High School (OWASS), an all-boys high school in Santasi, a suburb of Kumasi. Since its establishment in 1952 as one of the five Catholic schools in Ghana that year, OWASS has produced many influential persons in the country.

A GNA report reveals how the old students of OWASS have gone to the rescue of their alma mater. This was after an exclusive report by Kumasi-based Pure FM in collaboration with MyNewsGh.com on the use of locally constructed wooden-slabs place of convenience, mostly used in remote areas and usually referred to as ‘hweeeetim’ as toilet facility at the school (mynewsgh.com, Feb 2019; cf. GNA, Feb 2019).

Their response is contained in a letter that appeared in the report. The letter read in part:

NEC has taken careful stock of the issues arising from the state of toilet facilities at OWASS following a programme on Kumasi-based Pure FM radio station. Whilst we share in the general disappointment that the school has received bad press following this story, we also believe it presents an opportunity to us to address this and wider issues in the school, especially as far as alumni year group projects are concerned.

Thus the old boys through their National Executive Committee (NEC) and the AV/AQ year group left no stone unturned in order to ensure the speedy completion of an ultramodern 17-seater toilet facility. This new structure is meant to replace the dilapidated structure which poses a major threat to the lives and health of the thousands of students and help solve the lavatory issues in the school as students were seen defecating in the open. The Old Students Associations of all schools should be challenged to emulate this positive practice of OWASS.

Involvement of National figures in the fight against the menace

Ghanaians are people who generally respect their leaders or rulers. This makes such leaders wield a lot of influence such that their words are often considered as carrying a lot of weight. This is the more reason why such personalities cannot be left out in any effective effort to arrest such a menace. Indeed, national figures like our former presidents and envoys who are respected so much in society should be encouraged to

spearhead the campaign against such negative practices by offering them platforms where they can influence the minds of people through their appeals.

An outstanding figure in this aspect is the former Presidents of Ghana, Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings. He is one of the leading personalities in the country to have demonstrated extreme unhappiness about the bad attitude of Ghanaians towards waste management and environmental sanitation, and to have not hidden his desire for offenders to be punished. The Ex-President has been advocating unceasingly and passionately for the re-introduction of Sanitary Inspectors to check the present spate of indiscipline in waste disposal.

According to Ofori-Atta (2018; cf. graphic.com.gh, Dec 2018), while reminiscing what pertained years ago during the time of the sanitary inspectors, referred to as 'Tankas', Ex-President Rawlings said that the formation of community vigilantisms, when encouraged, will not only complement the efforts of the security agencies but will be able to deal with the insanitary canker that has engulfed the nation at the community level. Thus, when the efforts of such a high profile personality are complimented by that of other great personalities, there will definitely be a huge impact on the people that will bring the needed change in the country.

Involvement of Chiefs in condemning the practice

Moving forward, traditional rulers must be roped in to play active roles if the resolve to arrest the menace will yield the expected results. If there are any leaders that Ghanaians respect a lot, they are the traditional rulers. Thus, it makes a lot of sense to involve such leaders in any effective effort to arrest such a

menace. This is also the call of John Ndjoh, the Executive Director of Centre for Development Partnership and Innovations (CDPI).

The Executive Director admits that fighting the menace will be unsuccessful if our chiefs fail to actively involve themselves (GNA, Nov 2018). While re-echoing government's determination to curb this health and social canker, the Executive Director notes that the fight could be more successful if chiefs are involved. Speaking at a ceremony to observe this year's world toilet day at Atiwa in the Eastern Region, he said, 'chiefs are custodians of the land, they can enact rules and regulations that will ensure that people who put up buildings in their communities are made to build toilet'.

The above position is also the view of Ex-President Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawlings. In a report by Ofori-Atta (2018), the former President recently recollected what pertained years ago during the time of traditional leaders and chiefs also played active role in politics. He is reported to have remarked concerning those years: '...The social sense of responsibility of our communities was so high. If we misbehaved, the king, the queen mothers and the elders could discipline you'. Consequently, '...People didn't defecate along the beaches and all over the place, people didn't piss left and right. But...our chiefs, opinion leaders have now lost that traditional power they had to talk to us and hold us socially responsible because the government is there to do it', he said (cf. graphic.com.gh, Dec 2018).

It is clearly in the light of such observation that the Paramount Chief of the Bongo Traditional Area, who is also Vice President of the Upper East Regional House of Chiefs, has expressed his disappointment in the rejection of traditional rulers

in the fight against OD (GNA, Dec 2017). He said that what had contributed to wanton Open Defecation (OD) in the country is that some powers of chiefs to prescribe and punish deviants in society had been taken away. The Paramount Chief noted that Chiefs in general could no longer enact or institute common laws to punish offender in order to deter recalcitrant people in society.

Thus, according to the traditional ruler, Ghana has failed woefully to recognise Chiefs and empower them to utilize their offices in bringing discipline to society. Along similar trajectory, some chiefs have likened themselves to “toothless bulldogs” in the fight against open defecation (starrfmonline.com, Dec 2017). In a GNA Regional report, the disturbed-looking chiefs, backed by queen mothers, said, ‘they could have put a stop to people turning to a bush or an open drain to answer the call of nature had democracy not stripped them of their powers’.

Questioning what Ghanaians means by democracy which is seen as freedom of everything, the Traditional chief said: ‘Freedom to the extent that we have to [defecate] even in front of our homes and nobody can talk’ (starrfmonline.com, Dec 2017). The traditional head argues that ‘the chiefs had the power to deal with anybody for committing a crime like that’. But he claims the situation has changed now: ‘Today, let a chief sanction anybody for [open defecation]. He (the wrongdoer) would send you (the chief) to court and take a lawyer and the lawyer would begin “putting unto” the chief’.

Appealing for government to return power traditional heads, the Paramount chief insists: ‘if they had restored those powers to us, we [would not] need to sit here to pledge that nobody should defecate [openly]. I would make sure that if you

defecate and you are caught in Bongo I know what I would do to you’.

The disappointed Paramount Chief added: ‘I’m standing here on behalf of my colleagues to plead with the President that he should give the chiefs the legal backing so that if we get anybody committing such a crime, we can take sanctions’. He indicated that the failure to recognise Chiefs as instruments for discipline has ‘contributed to the persistence of problems as they could not punish or enact laws to compel people to build toilets in their homes’ (GNA, Dec 2017). Thus, he appealed to the government to give chiefs some powers to punish people who practiced open defecation within their jurisdictions to facilitate the eradication of the phenomenon.

In support of such a call, the Omanhen of the Oguuaa Traditional Area said chiefs were committed to ending the menace, as it had become a deeply worrying situation. Thus, together with other chiefs, he had set up a similar taskforce of young men from the Asafo companies in the communities to arrest people who were found defecating in the open (graphic.com.gh, April 2018).

Involvement of all in the National Sanitation Day exercise

The launch of a National Sanitation Day in Ghana on September 17, 2014 (cf. Issah 2015:23; Kennedy 2014:26; Tetteh 2014:13) to be observed every first Saturday of every month was a step that should not only be applauded but also to be emulated by other countries with no such sanitation policy. Such an awareness campaign policy which the government of Ghana contemplated presenting before its national Parliament to be enacted into a law (Dapatem and Issah 2014:32, 65) is

one of the key steps to ensuring proper sanitation. It was expected to challenge society to some important community values and practices and also inculcate a more positive hygiene and sanitation behaviours in the people (cf. Dapatem and Donkor 2015:32).

However, from Joy FM News report, there are clear indications that the interest in embarking on the National Sanitation Day exercise which is undertaken on the first Saturday of every month is waning because there is a significant drop in the number of people who take part in the exercise (myjoyonline.com, Dec 2015). To whip up interest in this all important exercise, there is need for a non-partisan approach to the monthly National Sanitation Day clean-up exercise which is aimed at ensuring environmental hygienic practice. Such an exercise must always involve legislators and politicians from all sides of the political divide and their followers, assemblymen, chiefs and the entire apolitical citizenry.

It requires that everyone gets actively involved since the diseases or sicknesses and death that result from all forms of improper sanitary practices do not differentiate between political party colours. Moreover, the flies that transmit the germs of diseases have no political barriers. This must be a regular exercise in order to reduce the amount of funds the country spends on sanitation related issues. More so, efforts should be doubled as the rainy season draws close since such period is often characterized by the outbreak of filth-related diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea, and dysentery in many communities.

Sadly, oftentimes, there is great apathy whenever it comes to its participation in recent times despite efforts in publicising the exercise. More often than not, while some residents spend

several hours cleaning gutters and surroundings along the principal streets of the town, others who feel that it is the responsibility of the Municipal or District Assemblies and/or cleaning companies like the Zoomlion Company or someone else engaged to clean up their surroundings usually choose to become onlookers, and are seen idling around during the exercise.

The sooner every citizen of Ghana realizes that the total development of their environment rested so much on their participation and not the Municipal Assembly alone as perceived by many the better. This is because issues that have to do with sanitation are among the very life-threatening ones which should not be taken for granted by anybody. Certainly, as a country, the citizenry does so at their own risk.

In this regard, the various fun clubs in the country should emulate the example of Abusua Nkosuo Club, an all men welfare club made of professionals, business men and intelligentsia and located in Haatso established in May 2011, in the monthly National Sanitation Day Clean-up campaign, as they embarked on at Haatso-Papao Community in the Ga East Municipal Assembly (GNA, Nov 2015).

Need for Political will in the fight against the menace

There has always been the need for the government of Ghana to demonstrate the political will to fight open defecation. And then backing such a wilful power with action bring the needed result. The Country Coordinator of UNICEF-Ghana, maintains that: 'It's indeed possible to attain nationwide open defecation free status with the requisite political will and resources' (classfmonline.com, Dec 2017). She notes that if the

country really takes the sanitation campaign serious, we should be able to 'meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) ahead of schedule, especially the component that talks about open defecation'.

It also comes as no surprise that the Founder and Chairman of the World-wide Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) Foundation, has asked government to demonstrate the political will towards eradicating open defecation in the country (GNA, May 2015). Speaking at a meeting with the political and administrative leaderships and technocrats to assess progress of open defecation campaign in the Volta Region launch in 2012, the Founder and Chairman said Madagascar and others, comparatively less endowed than Ghana, were able to eliminate the practice of open defecation totally because of the strong political will (GNA, May 2015).

This was in response to threats by the World Bank to withdraw support to Ghana if measures were not taken to address sanitation challenges (myjoyonline.com, Sept 2018). In fact, the columnist, Yaa Dartey, believes that within the next two years 'it is possible there should be no more open defecation in Ghana'. So she advises: 'We should be ready to stop everything we are doing in order to champion this course to make sure that Ghana solves this problem' (GNA, Dec 2018).

Consequently, the government has to sit up and back the lip service with really commitment in terms of provision of funds and other resources like trained sanitation personnel to get to the ground and do real business. Speaking at a review of Social Norms and Results Based Financing (RBF) in Ho, Mr. Duncan, UNICEF Chief of WASH has called for more government support for the anti-open defecation campaign towards achieving the

2030 nationwide Open Defecation Free (ODF) target (GNA, Feb 2019). Along the same line, the Central Regional Minister, Mr. Kwamena Duncan, has called on the central government to radicalise efforts at eradicating open defecation. He said that after 60 years of the nation's independence, the practice should be seen a huge indictment on the nation (graphic.com.gh, Dec 2017).

The good news is that both past and present Presidents of the country keep on expressing their willingness to fighting the defecation challenge. For example, at the Banquet Hall of the State House where he gave highlights of his party's manifesto for the 2016 polls in December, President Mahama said that the next National Democratic Congress (NDC) administration under his watch was going to work towards ending the age-old menace of open defecation by 2021. The President said: 'Our target is to end open defecation by the year 2021...In the next five years, we want to ensure that nobody has to go and do his business outside in the bush or on the beach or anywhere' (citifmonline.com, Sept 2016). This is a clear demonstration that he had clear interest in tackling the menace head-on.

Moving forward, Nana Akufo-Addo, has also shown by word and deed that he is prepared, not only in plans to transform Accra the cleanest city in Africa, but to deal with this stigma and bring the nation out of the shame. No wonder, the UNICEF Country Representative once remarked: 'As you know, we work very closely with the Government of Ghana to promote open-defecation-free communities. You know that your President is also very committed in relation to open-defecation-free Ghana. And, so, we will continue to contribute in this important endeavour' (starrfmonline.com, Feb 2018).

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, the discussions have centred on some of the strategies that can be employed in the fight against open defecation. The premises for the foregoing discussions is that though there have been appreciable investments and efforts by the country to arrest the situation, they appear not be concerted. So the chapter has outlined most of the strategies to be harnessed to tackle and halt the practice once for all. The next chapter will consider the role of MMDAs in the fight.

Chapter 10

MMDAs are Central to the Fight against Open Defecation

Though the challenge posed by this insanitary practice is common knowledge, as shown right from biblical days, attention devoted to dealing with this menace has not been total. Indeed, reports indicate that efforts from the technocrats in developing countries aimed at solving the sanitation problem have not proved very successful. Clearly, the failure of the local government and or the communities themselves to provide the necessary tools and facilities are some of the causes of irresponsible disposal of human waste in several communities of Ghana (cf. Alhassan 2012:22).

Therefore, in order for the grassroots to be responsible and help in reversing the spate of environmental degradation in the country, a greater weight of the responsibility must rest on the shoulders on the authorities who are in direct contact with the communities. To begin with, the foremost argument is that the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) and all other appropriate bodies or agencies should engage everyone in the fight against open defecation.

The Sanitation and Environmental Health Officers of the various Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), should be empowered to discharge their mandate without fear or favour. This will ensure improved waste management and cleanliness in the communities. In a Regional News report by GNA, these Officers were asked to be mindful of their job: 'Managing our waste and improving sanitation is not

the politicians job, those who have been given the mandate and are being paid to do that job must step up their effort by insisting that the right thing is done' (GNA, Dec 2015).

Stringent laws to deal with houses without toilets

Of course, in our main text (Deut 23:12-14), it was not the leadership of Israel performing its function as a government that was to take care of the faeces but rather the people. Moreover, the text does not make reference to any governmental (or leadership) structure in its promulgations. This is however not to excuse government from its responsibility. Following the Deuteronomic pattern, the government would need to enact laws and provide the enabling environment for citizens and community groups to pick up the challenge and take charge in cleaning and caring for the environment.

This means that the government alone cannot be tasked to do everything. There is the need to encourage the citizenry to learn about their responsibility to their nation and environment. The citizenry will need to realize that the President and leaders of the government are not God. Even God, didn't come into the camp to clean up the mess of His people: He held them accountable through his laws.

On the contrary, one of the problems of Ghana has arisen from the observation that some local governments have relaxed or reneged or relegated the enforcement of existing laws to the background, and have been issuing permits to some persons to construct structures without toilets. Thus, as a major step to eliminate the practice, government must ensure that agencies and institutions responsible for allocation of building permits to estate developers are strict in enforcing laws on the provision of

toilet facilities before granting landlords the rights to commence construction.

Enforcement of existing laws is one of strengths of the Ketu South Municipal Assembly which presides over an enclave known for open defecation. Here, the coastline has become a free-range place of convenience for many, despite several campaigns to make the Volta Region open defecation-free (GNA, Mar 2018). Consequently, the Municipal Assembly has reiterated to deny developers permit if their building plans are without toilet facilities. On the basis of what the Ketu South Municipal Assembly hopes to achieve by enforcing this law, all the laws on sanitation must be giving teeth to bite.

To this end, a call was made by the Head of the Disease Epidemic Department of the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO), for Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to sanction landlords who do not have toilets in their houses. The call added: 'If the MMDAs enforce their sanitation bye-laws and prosecute recalcitrant landlords, they would be compelled to build such facilities, thereby reducing the indiscriminate open defecation and pressure on public toilets, which often causes sanitation related diseases' (GNA, May 2015). To ensure compliance, all the District Assemblies should be able to embark on house-to-house inspection to ensure that all houses within their jurisdiction have toilets and impose sanctions on landlords whose houses do not have any.

Once again, Yaa Dartey, the media consultant and columnist, has this to say: 'If the state of Ghana and the assemblies add enforcement to it and insist that every household must have a toilet...and it is enforced and encouraged and there is persuasion, Ghana will get to that point where the news about

us on the international level would not be that they don't have toilets in their homes...' (GNA, Dec 2018). In this regard, landlords in the Upper East region who do not have toilet facilities have from now to December to provide those facilities or risk having their houses closed down, according to the Upper East Regional Minister (a1radioonline.com, Sept 2017).

Therefore, where courts on sanitation do not exist, they should be established by state authorities to deal with those who engage in insanitary practices (cf. Issah 2014:20; Kennedy 2014:26). And where they exist their laws should be enforced (cf. Yeboah 2011:33; Issah 2015:44; Dapatem and Issah 2014:32 and 65). As a practical example, a raid on houses without toilets which took place in the Upper East region led to 104 landlords being dragged to the Bolgatanga District Magistrate Court where they had to embrace fines among other conditions to avoid a six-month-jail term (starrfmonline.com, Aug 2017). Meanwhile, civil society organisations in the region, where unavailability of toilets or decent toilet facilities in many houses has emboldened open defecation in many places, have hailed the ongoing raid led by the Rent Control Department.

As a result of the activation of some of the bye-laws, the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA) is reported to be on course to meeting the Local Government Ministry's directive of ensuring that every household has toilet facility. By way of targets, the Assembly is to provide institutional latrines rather than public latrines since all the existing public facilities would be properly maintained and brought back to usage (GNA, Nov 2015).

In the light of the progress reports from the application of the laws/bye-laws, what might be needed is a reactivation of the

existing once in order to make it bite. Of course, once there are laws/bye-laws that ban open defecation, the sooner these laws are invoked to compel people to resort to the use of toilets, whether privately owned or provided for the public, the better for the country. Maybe, this is what Mr. Vanderpuye had in mind when he said that ‘the Local Government Ministry was preparing a bill, which parliament would pass into law to make open defecation an offence and punishable’ (GNA, July 2015).

Rewarding MMDAs/Organizations/Individuals for cleanliness

Programmes such the instituted National Sanitation Challenge Prize ‘which will involve a cash reward for the assemblies with the best sanitation plans and a house-to-house awareness creation of the importance of household toilets’ (graphic.com.gh, Nov 2015), must be encouraged. Besides, such a Challenge should be replicated in Basic and High schools. In doing so, not only a wider extent of awareness is created but the effort to deepen the awareness at the grassroots, especially, among children and teenagers, is also brought to bear.

The Challenge was launched in 2015 WTD to be competed for among some selected MMDAs (cf. Barimah 2019). This challenge is an innovation to improve liquid waste management, promote competition among them and motivate the Assemblies to design and implement liquid waste management strategies in order to transform and improve the lives of the poor in Ghana’s urban areas. The total prize value at the end of the project in 2018 was a whopping 1.43 million pounds sterling (GNA, Dec 2015).

Special awards can also be instituted for good performance on Ghana’s District League Table (DLT). This is a simple annual

ranking tool for measuring the level of development in each of Ghana's 216 MMDAs, is an initiative of the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (The Chronicle, Feb 2015). The aim of DLT, per the report, was not to name and shame any district, but to support government to better monitor development across the country and at the same time supporting citizens' access to information and knowledge on their rights to such developments in their districts.

In spite of huge budgetary allocations by Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies to fight against filth, a local newspaper in Ghana reports that none of these assemblies was certified Open Defecation Free in the 2014 DLT. The reason for this development is that the negative practice is still deeply established in all the assemblies (The Chronicle, Feb 2015). Nevertheless, there is still hope that with an attachment of special awards, the MMDAs will be challenged to perform creditably or better.

The need for a Monitoring Sanitation Task Force

A monitoring Sanitation Task Force which include the Police must be set in all the in 216 MMDAs in the country to arrest and prosecute anyone found in an open defecating or littering the streets in the metropolis. Such a task force must also be empowered to arrest and instantly fine people who refuses to take part in the National Sanitation Day within its jurisdiction. This is what happened during the Sanitation exercise organised by the La-Nkwantanang-Madina Municipal Assembly (LaNMMA) (GNA, Dec 2015).

The Upper East Regional Minister, who is so determined to deal with the menace has already initiated such a step. He has tasked all thirteen Municipal and District assemblies in the region to constitute such task-forces to arrest those who defecate openly and send them to court for prosecution (citifmonline.com, Sept 2017). It is believed that all the MMDAs will attach a lot of seriousness to such a step. Moreover, the patrol of the taskforce team should be more frequent at the beaches, where the 'free range' is usually at its best. This will give more meaning to the effort of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (graphic.com.gh, April 2018).

A typical example of such environmental sanitation taskforce comes from the Sekondi/Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA). Through its operations, it has arrested and fined six social deviants including two women, from Sekondi, Essipon, Nkotompo and Kojokrom for easing themselves in unapproved areas (GNA, Sept 2018). Another example is where fourteen people are arrested during an exercise by a task force of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) at the Jamestown and the Korle-Gonno beaches and arraigned before the La Sanitation and Motor Court for indulging in open urination and defecation (citinewsroom.com, May 2018).

The need for Sanitary Inspectors

In addition to the monitoring Sanitation Task Force under the MMDAs, there can also be responsible citizen vigilantes who should be community-based and can always patrol specific areas. This is one of the groups that our Former President Rawlings, has been advocating unceasingly and passionately, according to Ofori-Atta (2018; cf. graphic.com.gh, Dec 2018).

Moreover, the report has it that, while lauding Nana Akufo-Addo for setting up a ministry responsible for sanitation, Ex-President Rawlings advises the citizenry thus: ‘As we go into the New Year every Ghanaian must commit to keep the environment clean by employing good disposal habits, serving as good citizens by policing our community and standing up to errant ones who refuse to adhere to basic sanitary behaviour’.

Sustain the Sanitation Challenge among MMDAs

The Sanitation Challenge which was launched to help encourage Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to prioritise the dire sanitation situation in the country should be sustained. The reason is that the Challenge would continue to promote competition among the MMDAs to partner with their citizens, innovators and solvers, as well as academic institutions, among others, to improve liquid waste conditions in urban areas (GNA, Dec 2015). The MMDAs would be expected to come out with solutions to eliminate open defecation, reduce the sanitation gap between the rich and poor, and increase access to basic and hygienic sanitation for all – not only at home, but also in public buildings such as schools and hospitals.

It is reported that the Challenge has a total prize of 1.43 million pounds, which will be delivered after three and half years and multiple rounds. The first prize (Duapa award) will be given to MMDAs that have designed the best urban liquid waste management strategies. The award of the first prize will commence the implementation of a liquid waste management strategies until December 2018. At the end of the competition in December 2018, the MMDA, which has made the most progress

in implementing its strategies would receive the grand prize of the Most Dignified City Award (GNA, Dec 2015).

Besides, the concept of a 'Clean City Competition' which was developed by a consortium of NGO's must be sustained. With funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and overseen by Ghana's Ministry responsible for sanitation, this competition aims to stimulate local politicians to prioritise sanitation. IRC Ghana will be the leading national implementing agent, in partnership with Ghanaian consulting firm Water Health Solutions (WHS) (GNA, Dec 2015).

Celebration of World Toilet Day should be better organized

The World Toilet Day (WTD), a day set aside by the United Nations (since the year 2000), for countries to undertake various activities that would remind their citizens of the need to use hygienic toilets at home (graphic.com.gh, Nov 2015) should not be seen as just a yearly event to be celebrated. In this light, though the theme for the celebration of World Toilet Day in Ghana in the year 2012, *The health of your child begins in the toilet*, appears to be awkward, we agree with Selormey (2012:33) that the Day 'has joined the queue and has come to stay' as an important occasion.

The sad realisation, however, is that there are no signs that the biblical solutions to the hygiene-related health issues are adequately advocated for the benefit of our communities and larger modern society. So the sanitation crisis continues to deepen in the country, just like other developing countries. Therefore, WTD should be given deeper meaning through a nationwide celebration that will appeal to people's attention. Very attractive public programs like floats and competitive events

should be used to draw capture attention of people and set the stage for their education on the menace.

For example, prior to the celebration of the WTD at Talensi in the Upper East Region, school children from some selected basic schools in the District undertook a route march with placards which some read, Open Defecation can kill, Children are suffering from diseases related to open defecation and Stop Open Defecation among others (GNA, Nov 2015).

Being effective in the promotion of Preventive Medicine

Proper disposal of human waste is a preventive measure against outbreak of diseases related to it and keeps people healthy. In fact, many reports have already been presented that confirm the relationship between bad sanitary practices and health, and which place a high responsibility on the public health units of societies. In the light of numerous reports of such high incidence of sicknesses in many insanitary communities, and the outbreaks of diseases that arise from these insanitary environments, the correlation between improper waste disposal and diseases needs to be over-emphasised.

But the question then is: to what extent has this been discussed seriously in the hope of dealing with this sanitation-related disease challenge? Indications are that not much has been achieved from this angle. For instance, Black and Fawcett (2008:¶1) observe: 'More than 40% of the world's population lack access to proper sanitation facilities'. While one would expect that this would be a challenge of the rural communities, surprisingly, it is not. For, their report adds that 'about one-sixth of the world's population...live in urban areas that lack proper sanitation'. Consequently, my ultimate interest which is outlined

in this book is in addressing the major consequence of such lack of facility, which as Black and Fawcett (2008:¶3) also agree, 'manifests itself in overflowing toilets and open defecation'.

Along this line, then, any campaign or advocacy for change based on the examination of Deuteronomy 23:12-14 can be a positive ground towards preventive medicine. In other words, the government should use the findings here as grounds for further public health research that might satisfy a larger pluralistic context (cf. Saxey n.d:124).

Exploring other Pragmatic measures

As a result of the importance that people in authority now attaches to curb the menace of open defecation, all possible options are being explored. One of the interesting measures has come from the Akuapem North Municipal Assembly where as part of radical measures to tackle the open defecation the Assembly challenge has asked residents to 'take pictures of persons engaged in open defecation and other sanitation breaches for financial reward' (Ansah, 2018). 'Certainly if you see someone defecating in the open, take a picture of that person and bring it to the office, we will go and look for the person and take action', the Municipal Engineer is reported to have said to Starr News' Kojo Ansah.

An interesting but important measure comes from the Minister of Sanitation and Water, Mrs. Cecilia Dapaah, who has extended the call to become one of the fundamental requirements for accepting marriage proposal. Thus, she has challenged young women to marry men who had toilet facilities in their homes, adding that, 'If you are a woman and your fiancé doesn't have a toilet facility in his home, do not marry him'

(graphic.com.gh, Jan 2019; cf. Obiri-Yeboah, 2019). Besides, there can be other measures such as the following:

No toilet facilities no electricity metres policy: Then also we have a situation where the Municipal Chief Executive for Hohoe has asked the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG), not to give electricity metres to households without toilet facilities (GNA, Aug 2018). Indeed, no stone should be left unturned until the fight against open defecation is completely won.

Government and Private Sector Partnership needed: There is need for effective partnership between government and the private sector in dealing with challenges of sanitation. As Julius Debrah, Chief of staff of the Mahama-led government, said: 'We have been used to government-led activities for a very long time but where we are now all over the world it has become very necessary for government and the private sector to partner so as to ensure that the process moves faster in tackling the challenges of sanitation...', (citifmonline.com, Nov 2015).

Need to Cultivate a Maintenance Culture: What might be considered as one of the most important measures is the need to cultivate a maintenance culture. There is no doubt that a major underlying factor towards sustaining the gains made so far is to ensure that proper care is taken of what we already have. Ananpansah (2019) notes this advice by Gifty Atampugbire, a final year Public Health student of the University of Ghana, Legon: 'We must treat public built latrines like our own only then can we handle them well for sustainable usage'.

Formation of Sanitation Fun Clubs: The District Chief Executive (DCE) for the Talensi, called on School sanitation clubs formed by World Vision Ghana (WVG) to be ambassadors of good sanitation in their respective communities and help to promote behavioural change, particularly on open defecation (GNA, Nov 2015).

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted on some of existing pathways and proposed a couple new possible ones that will help in winning the fight against open defecation. However, there are strong indications from all the effort of past and present governments that encouraging an all-inclusive education campaign is the most effective way to fight the menace. In the next chapter, a thorough discussion on how to make education a great tool in the fight will engage our attention.

Chapter 11

Educational Campaign:

Main Weapon against Open Defecation

Beyond the practice of proper hygiene, we must focus on positive behavioural or attitudinal change towards our immediate environment. Dealing with unacceptable behaviours is one of the effective keys to overcoming challenges associated with hygiene and sanitation. The campaign against an environment polluted by faeces which are dropped openly or by some other means is expected to be responded to by everybody in this global village. Unfortunately, not all people are environmentally-aware, or more appropriately, sanitation-conscious.

While some who have been questioned about why they engage such a practice feel guilty but claim there is little they can do until provided with the appropriate means to ease themselves, others who appear to be very conscious of the consequences of their practice often retort sarcastically to any such queries. Answers such as: Is this your bedroom? Is this your father's house? I want to enjoy the breeze outside here, and the like, are often advanced (cf. UTV, Mar 2019). Others also think that if the government does not care about them, then they also care less about the consequences. Therefore, as the nation invests millions of dollars which in cedi equivalence is unquantifiable, many culprits of open defecation seem to care less about the menace.

A former Central Regional Minister has attributed the menace of open defecation to attitudes rather than a lack of government attention in solving the problem (classfmonline.com,

April 2016). To this end, the former Minister advised: 'We are providing the facilities, building new toilets and all that in all communities, but at the end of the day, it is also going to depend on our own behaviour and attitude, because there are places where you have the toilets, but the people are not using it'. In explaining further, the Minister said: 'Behaviour and attitudinal change is what we require...we must educate our people, we must create awareness...We do not want our tourists coming here and directing their cameras towards people defecating in the open...'

Education is the Key for Behavioural/Attitudinal Change

To do away with this shameful chronic problem of open defecation is a herculean challenge but not an unsurmountable one. Speaking at the "Follow-up training for WASH Journalists" at Aqua Safari in Ada, organised by the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources in collaboration with the GAMA Project, Yaa Dartey, the media expert, once again, made a profound remark. She said: 'I think for behavioural change to occur one would need to use several strategies, I see this as the beginning and I'm very confident that sooner or later we will reach that critical tipping point at which we would see definite changes...' (GNA, Dec 2018).

While most of the strategies enumerated are short or medium term, the way forward is for a strategy that will serve a long term purpose. Obviously, it is not just the provision of latrines that will end the fight against open defecation. Several opinion leaders agree that one of the major steps to deal with the sanitation menace is education that targets behavioural and or attitudinal change. For behavioural change to occur there is need

to engage education of the citizenry as one of the major available strategies. It requires a great deal of sustained education aimed at changing the attitude of people.

According to the Acting Central Regional Environmental Health and Sanitation officer, sanitation improvement works within three key parameters: the education component which is the behavioural change communication, law enforcement and some that need engineering solutions (ultimatefmonline.com, Oct 2017). Thus, going forward, the need for all stakeholders: Government, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), opinion leaders, culprits of the practice, concerned citizens, etc., to team up in the fight to change people's behaviour/attitude has been identified as one of the main ways to end open defecation.

In a related development, Gifty Atampugbire, is reported by Ananpansah (2019) to have launched a campaign to end open defecation in Second Cycle Institutions in the Upper East Region of the country. Gifty aims at using behaviour change practices among students to end what can be described as the biggest challenge of the region. Definitely, Ghanaians need to change their way of doing things; behavioural or attitudinal change is very important if we have to win the fight against open defecation.

An Environmental Health Service officer of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development argues that, the fight needed sustained education. He emphasises: 'without the change of mindset, people would not move away from the norm of Open Defecation to the use of toilets' (GNA, Dec 2015). Re-echoing the need for education that is directed at behavioural change, Kwarteng (2016) notes that the effort, 'requires radical revision of the public mindset, knowledge of public health, and strategic investments in educating the public'.

There is hope that with continuous education on attitudinal change that targets every group within the populace, the menace of open defecation could be overcome. However, to nip it in the bud the education should be intensified at early stages of formal education such as the Junior Secondary School level. This will inculcate the values of sanitation into our future generation at early stages of life.

Parents also have a great responsibility when it comes to education of the young ones. They need to inculcate into their children the importance of living in a clean environment and desist from defecating in the open. In his advice to the people of Aseewa in the Upper Manya Krobo District at the Regional Sanitation Day exercise, the Eastern Regional Minister, said: 'Our children need to grow up to make cleanliness and sanitation exercise a part of them; this will ensure that we always live in a clean environment' (GNA, Nov 2015). According to Ananpansah (2019), this call has also been made by Atampugbire who has advised parents to teach children to practice and adhere to using toilet facilities at homes.

Involving Groups/Individuals in the Education drive

There is need for all health professionals, especially, Public Health Nurses and Environmental Health and Sanitation Personnel in the country to take up the challenge and conduct massive public education and sensitisation to ensure the nation wins its fight against open defecation. Such special health teams can be sent out to sensitize the people on the significance of owning household toilet and also serve penalty for failure to do so as the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area – Sanitation and Water

Project (GAMA-SWP) of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) did (GNA, June 2017).

These teams can also take advantage of the interaction to educated people of the need for altitudinal change towards the practice of open defecation. The role of these practitioners in this fight and the advantages of their involvement cannot be over-emphasized. As professionals, they have better knowledge of the menace and so can make better impact when they spearhead the public education drive.

It is not only teams that can be involved in the campaign, individual too can take up the challenge. Once again, Ananpansah (2019) reports that Atampugbire is engaged in various health sensitisation outreaches that include personal hygiene campaign, public health nutrition and so on, on the grounds that: 'When people are given the right information relating to their health and the environment, it empowers them to make informed choices, live healthy lives and stop activities that endanger their health'.

Role of Artistes in Educating the public

A GNA report (July 2016) reveals that Alliance Française with support from UNICEF has launched a project to enable artistes in the country to come up with works that would help address the issue of open defecation. The project, according to a GNA report, is dubbed: "Let's Talk Shit," and 'would give artistes the opportunity to come up with artistic art works that would project the actual situation to effectively communicate with the people on the need to put a stop to open defecation'

The reason for involving Artistes in this sensitisation is not far-fetched, since the significant role of such a group is well

known. At least, we know that: 'Artistes help us see things that we would not see and we are hoping that their works when developed would generate a lot of conversations to change mind-sets', the report says. Undoubtedly, they would help to demonstrate that visual art could contribute to arouse critical thinking and place the issue in the public sphere to hopefully generate attention

Involvement of Journalists/Media in the fight

Apparently, the fight against OD cannot be won without the involvement of Journalists, and in fact, the media in general. The media should support the nation's objective of eradicating OD by setting the tone for discussion in our communities, schools, churches, workplaces, etc., on the need to prioritize sanitation in order to ensure best practices in our disposal of human waste. It is in this light that the Media Coalition against Open Defecation (M-CODE) has, as part of its objective to support the crusade against open defecation in the country, a well-coordinated and more aggressive policy influence and public sensitisation programmes (GNA, Nov 2018).

The coalition plans to challenge institutions connected to this fight to work harder, intensify its public sensitisation through community outreach programmes, and declared a target date to end open defecation in the country. A UTV 6:30pm News report by Adutwumwaah Morosa and Afia Kyere reveals how the Coalition has been touring certain communities to fulfil some of their objectives (May 2019)

In a related development, a forum for 20 media practitioners and journalists was organised by the Environmental Health Service Department of the Ministry of Local Government

and Rural Development to help create awareness and publicity on issues of Open Defecation via community radio stations. It was during the programme that the Upper West Regional Environmental Health Officer said Ghana, per statistics in the sub region, had made insignificant progress in her fight against poor sanitation issues especially in its cities with nationwide sanitation coverage of 15% (GNA, Dec 2015).

In an interview with Ananpansah (2019), Atampugbire disclosed: 'When people are given the right information relating to their health and the environment, it empowers them to make informed choices, live healthy lives and stop activities that endanger their health'. Moreover, at a Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (MSWR) organised workshop to improve the skills of journalists on sanitation reportage and to lead in the crusade against open defecation, Nana Dankwa, one of the Consultants at the MSWR, said the media has a significant role to play in supporting the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area – Sanitation and Water Project (GAMA-SWP) by educating the landlords of their responsibility to provide household toilet facilities (GNA, Dec 2017).

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) focal person on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), has asked journalists to 'break away from the normal way of reporting on open defecation issues' and concentrate on 'finding alternative interesting ways of packaging stories that would foster the elimination of open defecation by 2030' (dailyguideafrica.com, Oct 2017). The report notes her advised: 'While we look at the negative effects, we can also focus on the success stories instead of naming and shaming to show those people who think

it cannot be done that it is possible to have an open defecation free community’.

A meeting organised ahead of this year’s World Toilet Day which falls on November 19, gave editors a clear understanding of what is at stake if the nation fails to deal with open defecation effectively is also reported by Daily Guide (Nov 2015). It continues that the editors in turn called for the enforcement of sanitation by-laws in communities while asking for better courtship between government and media.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has argued that, if possible, all Ghanaians should be involved in the fight against open defecation. While this may not be an achievable goal, at least, from the standpoint of Scriptures, all God-fearing citizens must be appealed to. For a start, we should be able to campaign for the provision of disposal facilities at all strategic places of our communities in order to ensure cleanliness of our ‘sacred spaces’.

Perhaps, it is good to suggest that all concerned members of local communities with lack of or inadequate human waste disposal facilities can team up to support such projects. It should not come as a surprise for such a step to be spearheaded by Christians. They should be involved in advocating for the formulation and establishment of policies that relate to proper disposal of human waste. Whether as a corporate entity or as individuals serving in influential positions, they can play this advocacy role to serve the larger societal interest.

It is along this trajectory that all God-fearing Ghanaians, particularly the larger Christian community with support from state and community leaders as well as individuals can help not

only with the provision of adequate toilet disposal facilities but in becoming front-runners of the education campaign. In other words, the clarion call for Christians to be at the fore-front of this sensitisation/education campaign is not only obvious but, more appropriately, imperative. The emphasis on Christians will be understood as the issue is digested further in the next chapter.

Chapter 12

Christians Leaders as Front-runners of Educational Campaign

Godliness, usually defined by the inner purity of a person, is reflected in the person's attitude towards everything related to God, which certainly includes his/her relationship with the surroundings. Liroy argues that the mandate for humanity to govern the world was a reflection of God's image in humanity (Gen 1:26-28; cf. 9:2). That is, humanity was originally endowed with the ability to succeed in serving as God's vice-regents in the world. Thus, ruling over the rest of creation in a responsible fashion would not only be an indication of the divine likeness placed within humanity and an actualisation of the will of the Creator, but also a testimony to His abiding presence in and blessing on their lives.

This is where the life of true Christians is brought under the microscope. Osborn's (1993:12) argument is in line with this position. For him, 'Christians are not only called to be stewards of the natural environment but they cannot afford the repercussions of any neglect or insensitivity'. Of course, the impact that Christians can make through a campaign to ensure sanity in the environment, especially in relation to disposal of human waste, cannot be over-emphasised. The reason is not far-fetched when one considers the influence of contemporary Christianity.

If currently world statistics are anything to go by, interesting and significant deductions can be made. By the year 2010, Christians constituted about two billion of the world's population

(Weeks 2010:21) and, no doubt, the largest single religious group. Narrowing down on Ghana, the Statistical Survey department's records on the National Population and Housing Census projected the population of the country, as far back as 2009, to be around 22,000,000, with a high percentage of the number professing to be Christians. The breakdown was as follows: Christians, 69%; Muslims, 15.6%; Traditionalists, 8.5%; and others, 6.9%; with 49.9% of the adult population of 15 years or more totally illiterate (Anonymous 2010:§3; cf. GNA Mar 2019).

So how does the foregone statistics relate to our discussion? The answer is simple. As has been mentioned in the early chapters of the book during the discussion of Israel's response to the message of Deuteronomy 23:12-14 (ref. Chapter 1), there is a shift in the context from that of the Israelites to that of Ghanaians. And since the aim here is to let Ghanaians accept that God's instructions against open disposal of human excreta, found in Deuteronomy 23:12-14, also applies to us, the need to determine how the response of the citizenry will be, is very relevant at this point.

Why the "Stop Open Defecation" Campaign

There is the need to shift some of the focus on the open defecation fight from a government-driven one with much of the support from international development partners unto local bodies or organisation. This will not only compliment what government and these well-meaning donors are already involved in but will help their efforts to produce results with extra momentum. It is in line with this objective that I wish to champion

a crusade where Christians leaders will be at the forefront of the call for sustainable environment.

In the light of the undeniable observation that a larger community of Ghanaians are God-fearing (from the statistics in the previous paragraph), there are strong indications of goodwill towards this campaign. This details, of course, is never meant to underestimate the influence of other religious bodies. Rather, it is obvious that in a context deeply influenced by a high proportion of Christians with a good number of them being literates, the heuristic significance of all the foregone arguments cannot be underestimated.

Thus, the findings and discussions presented here are meant to challenge the Christian community in Ghana to their responsibilities towards the promotion of acceptable sanitary living. It is also the help improve our commitment to societal environmental ethics and ensuring an faeces-free environment. In other words, the significance of the over two-thirds of Ghana's population being Christians is that any campaign to champion the recommendations from our discussion here can have a huge impact on the country compared to countries with lower Christian populations.

As a church, one of the major responsibilities is the transformation of the congregations which also includes helping to change their attitudes towards the environment. Scripture makes believers to understand that they are responsible for managing God's creation. In other words, their beliefs cannot be divorced from our practices. Against this backdrop of the call for a responsible attitude towards our terrestrial environment, there is the need for all Christians to engage in vigorous educational

campaigns on the negative effects of indiscriminate faeces disposal.

This means that the Church in particular is being called upon to accept some of the responsibilities to influence the larger society in ensuring healthy hygienic and sanitary practices. As observed by Osborn (1993:12), one of the leading Christian crusaders: 'Christianity today cannot afford to ignore the natural environment'. In other words, there should be a positive campaign to sensitise society to sanitise our environment, if 'YHWH's war' against us because of the desecration of our 'sacred' environment is to be prevented.

Most religious leaders have a platform with opportunity to speak to people from all walks of life who are at various levels of maturity with different cultural, social, educational, professional, etc., backgrounds. Indeed, with the kind of followers that some of them have, they occupy advantageous positions when it comes to influencing the behaviours of people in society. Thus, the call on the Christian community to educate everyone to be sensitive to the sanity of our environment and to help arrest the menace will not be a great challenge if the church is deeply involved. In fact, it should be accepted as part of the mission of the Church.

This advocacy or campaign does not only align with the maxim: 'Cleanliness is next to godliness', which by application means, 'Outward cleanliness leads to inward purity' (Adler 1893:4), and attributed to the Bible by Aklikpe-Osei (2014:9), but it has its own theme of making people accept that cleanliness is part of godliness, with specific interest in fighting against all practices of open defecation. Such a campaign is meant to contribute to the ongoing discussions on 'care for creation' and

no doubt supports the efforts of environmentalists like Adetoye Faniran, Emiola Nihinlola, and Richter Sandra in dealing with the global sanitation challenge.

The campaign is meant to educate people on the concept of 'holiness of place', which is a prerequisite for 'YHWH's war' against His enemies in the everyday life circumstances. As agents of transformation, Christians can also play leading roles in a 'God is here - keep this place holy' campaign among the community of believers. Christians should not be the only target; efforts need to be made to sensitise the wider society too. Explaining this in practical terms can help throw further light on the issue. For instance, a recent survey in the United Kingdom showed the top three toilet-room/restroom habits of people to be reading (39%), texting (21%), and talking (21%), with other activities taking the rest (Selormey 2012:33). The overall significance of this process is that people can be educated even while they are in the 'restrooms', whether public or private.

Consequently, employing similar techniques at some of the strategic places of convenience in our local context will facilitate such education drive. In other words, posting materials that will educate the reading public on proper practices and implications of their failure to practice them on billboards and other convenient places can be an effective tool. Messages like: 'Wherever you are God is with you, so keep the place clean', 'This is God's place, keep it clean', and the like can be posted at appropriate places for the public to peruse. Encouraging people to text such messages to other people will also create greater awareness.

Certainly, every effort should be put into this campaign to in order to halt any negative attitude towards our environments.

What the church needs to do is to move from mere pulpit preaching to a more practical demonstration of accepting the God-given mandate and responsibility to sanitise the natural environment. As the Chairman of the Church of Pentecost, Apostle Nyamekye (ghanaweb.com, Mar 2019) admonishes: 'God created the earth and handed onto man and demanded care of it from man which must never be overlooked'.

The campaign for a positive behavioural attitude of Ghanaians towards sensitivity towards our environment being advocated here is also corroborated by similar campaigns such as: "My Environment My Responsibility", which was launched by the Church of Pentecost in 2018 (ghanaweb.com, Mar 2019). Then, there is a similar campaign towards the management of excrement which is reported by Ekufu (2012:7). It is most likely along this same issue of need for behavioural change that Aklikpe-Osei (2014:9) advises, 'the issue can be solved without the government awarding contracts to any institution. We should only look into our mind's eye and do what is right'.

Few years back, it was reported that many health challenges 'originate from illiteracy and ignorance of the adverse impact of certain lifestyles and behaviours' (WHO 2002:5). It is in this light that human communities the world over should rise and be at the forefront of intensively organised campaigns against faeces-related insanitary behaviours. As ambassadors of God's transformational agenda, churches and/or para-church organisations in particular should accept and facilitate education of the public.

This can be done by organising regular sensitisation lectures and seminars on the need for proper disposal of faeces and the implications of our failure to do so. If possible, regular

education of the public by organising such campaigns via electronic media such as television and radio, print, and other channels of communication should also be vigorously pursued.

All churches and other para-church organisations must rise up to organised community-based campaigns which are aimed at promoting faeces-related hygiene and health awareness crusades as well as environmental clean-up exercises. There should also be efforts by churches to organise periodic clean-up exercises as part of 'Sanitation Day' activities in support of the National Sanitation Day launched in Ghana on September 17, 2014. Though some churches are already involved in this practice, it is high time all churches in the country got involved. The "Stop Open Defecation" Campaign is likely to bring such a Church-based nationwide cleanliness awareness to bear. It will improve sanitation and ensure proper hygiene and improved health status.

Any education on sanitation should not leave out the important practice of hand-washing with soap after visiting the toilet, which is basic but, as Issah (2012:32-33) observes, is quite difficult to adopt. The importance of hand-washing (with soap) after visiting the toilet is such a strong personal hygiene practice that it is observed globally. Indeed, hand-washing under running water with soap helps to keep people from many diseases.

Consequently, hand-washing with soap is reported to be gradually gaining acceptance in many communities (GNA, Feb 2018). In some of the places, for example, some communities in Lawra District, this sensitisation on proper hand-washing with soap has been carried out in the entire district under the campaign dubbed: "One community, all hands clean". Such a

campaign needs to be accelerated in order for the practice to gain grounds in all corners of the country.

Campaign on 'YHWH war' against His enemies

One of the concepts this book is meant to explore is Mrx. From our discussions so far, this concept has been proven to be the ultimate motivation for the law that prohibits open defecation in Deuteronomy 23:12-14. Clearly, the discussions have established the link between improper disposal of excrement and the outbreak of disease, which is established in the field of Public Health. Beyond physical dimensions is also the link between such an improper practice and 'holiness of place', and 'YHWH's war' in the OT pericope.

But more importantly, it has been argued to an appreciable extent that "YHWH's war"/"holy war" against those who desecrate our 'sacred environment' is the major reason for projecting the "name" and "place" theologies which the findings presented in this book establish. In other words, in the war of YHWH against those who become His enemies by flouting His sanitary regulations, He inflicts them with diseases (Deut 23:12-14; cf. Gen 12:17; Exod 15:26), or allows their enemies to attack them with diseases (cf. Madeleine and Lane 1978:68-70; Scurlock and Anderson 2005:17).

Thus, I wish to posit here that the arguments presented so far that there is a link between 'YHWH's war' and some epidemics (cf. Borowski 2003:77; Newmyer 2001:429; Bruckner n. d.:7-8) also holds true for the contemporary world. The implication for us now is that we should let people understand that some of the outbreaks of diseases which the world

sometimes experiences might be explained in terms of 'YHWH's war' which is preventable.

It is in this light that the submission of Douglas (2003:2) on environmental cleanness is appropriate. She points out that the negative spectacle of improperly disposed faeces makes any positive campaign to address it by the general society 'a positive effort to organise the environment'. Underlying her argument is the promise of victory and the blessings that obedience to our sanitation pericope brings. That is, since God is the source of all blessings, any impurity in our 'earthly environment' which would cause a withdrawal of God, according to Douglas (2002:49-50), also means the withdrawal of His blessing and vice versa.

Chapter Conclusion

Christians as well as the larger society are assured of these promises when they fulfil the moral implications for our contemporary 'camp' which is our immediate environments. Such a "Stop Defecation Sensitisation Campaign" which must be engaged from all fronts of the Church is targeted at making Christians who constitute the greater percentage of the populace come to the realisation of their responsibility as stewards of creation. To achieve such an objective, Christians leaders must be seen to be at the fore-front of the campaign.

Chapter 13

Fellow Ghanaians,

Let's Stop Open Defecation Now, Else...

So far, the discussions in this book which is based on analysis of one of the sanitation laws to unearth all the possible concepts that underpin the text in order to integrate them meaningfully have been clear. The objective of the discussions is not only to present the extent of their meaning from the point of view of NT hermeneutics but also their application to contemporary audience. In other words, it is to find out how the outcome of the investigation of an OT law against open defecation addresses the issues of sanitation, hygiene and health in relation to the challenges of preventive medicine, and how the concept of 'holy war' becomes relevant in our world today.

Using Deuteronomy 23:12-14 as the pericope and based on the historical-grammatical model for exegetical analyses, the book has no doubt presented outcomes based on the discussions of its underpinning themes. All the chapters are believed to have done great justice to this expectation. The discussions have outlined specific applications of the passage to contemporary Christianity, focusing on the central idea in the exposition of the passage. The arguments have explained the meaning of the OT text in our contemporary context, specifying how the passage can help us to connect with God's expectation of humanity in His overall salvation plan.

Arguably, the discussions have answered the question of how the OT passage helps the Church and the global community

to address the challenges of sanitation as it relates to open defecation with its negative effect on environmental cleanliness, hygiene and health in the light of the call for preventive medicine, and the underlying consequence of 'holy war' in the world today. Through 'holy war' the people of God are redeemed to enjoy His eternal presence in the eschatological camp where no impurity can ever enter. The heuristic relevance of 'holy war' is in the sense that YHWH's wrath is against all His enemies, namely, any creature that flouts His commands; and judges them by way of war. Thus, humanity needs to be obedient to the dictates of Scripture so that we can enjoy the full benefit of His presence.

Fundamentally, the message conveyed by the passage has been proven to be theologically, morally, and socio-culturally relevant for today's reflections and praxis of the Christian, the believer of the HB *only*, and the larger society. All the major motivations of the pericope have been explained in terms of the issues connected with our earthly/terrestrial camp, which like the OT camp can prevent God from being in the midst of His people. So these issues are understood in the light of the moral disciplines with which believers have to engage in order to experience God's presence among His them.

Definitely, our arguments have proven the relevance, applicability and implications of the OT injunction for the immediate audience and subsequent generations beyond the OT period to the NT. This makes the Deuteronomy 23:12-14 relevant and applicable not only to the biblical but to the contemporary world as well. Thus, I have argued throughout the book that the fundamental message conveyed by the passage finds relevance not only to the NT believing community, but also to the contemporary church and the world at large. As Sprinkle

(2000:646-658) also admits, the evangelical church would benefit if it devoted attention to the issues underscored in the laws of clean and unclean.

From the discussions, the relevance of the OT laws to Christians and today's world, using situation in Ghana as a case in point, cannot be overemphasised. One only needs to consider the fact that Ghana like all other countries of Sub-Sahara Africa, and by extension, the global community now, can be likened to the camp community of Deuteronomy 23:12-14 where God is present with Israel, His people. In accordance with our pericope, if the 'camp', in a wider sense, corresponds to the earth, as has been argued, and 'the earth is the LORD's' (Psa 24:1), then YHWH still 'walks in the midst of the camp'.

If the camp, in the narrowest sense, refers to anywhere two or three have gathered in the name of the Lord; marketplaces, offices, and homes, then right there, 'He is in their midst'. Of greater relevance is the 'holy war' concept, the primary motivation for YHWH's presence 'in the midst of His people', which has been explained in terms of physical battles like those against terrorists, military adventurists such as those interested in coup d'états, armed robbers, and the like.

However, if the camp is the Church, then the saints constitute His army. In that case, 'holy war' can be discussed as a battle against spiritual enemies such as idols and gods, for similar reasons as in the period of the Exodus to the Promised Land. Thus, the relevance of 'holy war' lies in the applicability of the concept in the past, 'not only among the Israelites but among surrounding nations' (Unger 1988:1358), and is a confirmation of it as a motivation for biblical history, the present, and future. This fulfils God's initial plan for creation when he placed the first

couple in Eden to tend and protect it (Gen 2:15). There should be better awareness especially in this NT era when the creation itself is to be set free from 'its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God' (Rom 8:21).

Indeed, focusing on Ghana as a country with a culture deeply influenced by Scripture or with a high population of the country professing to be practising Christians, and widening such a focus to the larger global community, we should be able to create the needed awareness for people to engage in acceptable hygienic and sanitary practices. The world community as a whole and those who claim to be Christians in particular are expected not only to be environmentally sensitive, but to champion such a crusade. The link between improper disposal of human waste (improper sanitation), outbreak of diseases and 'holy war', as posited by the text, is no more in doubt. If God fought against some of the enemies of Israel by inflicting sickness on them, then He can also fight us through the outbreak of epidemics such as cholera, dysentery, malaria, and the like, if through our unhygienic practices, we fail to keep the environment as a "holy" camp for Him.

Without a shadow of doubt, the wonder of God is revealed in the observation that no person on the surface of the globe, whether in Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Norway, Cuba, New Zealand or anywhere, could be uncertain about the import of His law that was given more than 25 centuries ago. Ironically, whereas the rest of the world is improving dramatically, a country like Ghana is still struggling to deal with open defecation.

This has drawn great concern and unimpressive comments from international bodies like World Bank and UNICEF. The former comments: 'If this trend continues, it will

take the country another 150 years for all basic schools to have access to improved toilet facilities' (thebftonline.com, Dec 2018). The latter, while forecasting that between now and 2030: '...We need to support over five million Ghanaians to stop defecating in the open...' also adds that: '...Unless drastic changes are made now it will take Ghana many centuries to end open defecation' (Kwarteng, 2017; cf. starrfmonline.com, Nov 2017).

According to a GNA Regional report (Dec 2017), Ghana loses about US\$79 million annually because citizens fail to have toilets in their homes, according to the Demographic report. As expected, this is not a healthy development, and will definitely attract some bashing from concerned citizens. A notable comment comes from Yaa Dartey, the media champion, thus: 'It's unpardonable that we have kitchens in our homes to cook and eat and don't have toilet facilities. When we are to respond to nature's call, then we start having panic attacks and just find anywhere in the bushes and beaches to ease ourselves' (GNA, Nov 2018). Agreeably, the benefits of owning usable toilet facilities cannot be underestimated. Consequently, the leader of the UNICEF/Government of Ghana (GoG) Open Defecation Free (ODF) campaign has called for all to prioritize the construction of household toilets. The simplest reason he offers is that: 'they provide privacy and add value to oneself, the home and the community' (GNA, Jan 2019).

It stands to argue that for every amount of money invested in fighting open defecation or sanitation in general, there is a positive economic gain and benefits in many other ways as a result of reduced health care costs for individuals and society, and greater productivity and involvement in the workplace

through better access to facilities. Thus, we should be able to challenge ourselves and others to ensure that we get household latrines and as well practice good personal hygiene to keep us away from contracting diseases associated with faeces matter in our homes and our communities.

Not everybody is conscious of the devastating effects of certain practices such as spelt out in the pericope. But it is hoped that when the necessary awareness is created, in the light of God's readiness 'to punish every act of disobedience', when our obedience is complete (1 Cor 10:6), the blessings of His presence will be experienced in accordance with the findings of the investigation presented in this book.

Against the backdrop of the need for environmental care, the stipulations of the OT pericope, Deuteronomy 23:12-14, is significantly applicable. Scripture make direct calls for a responsible relationship with creation (Deut 20:19; cf. Gen 9:10-11; Job 39:5-27). For instance, the attitude of the OT Jews in response to Scriptures (Psa 104:10-11) is a positive response to the call for creation care. Based also on the invocation by the Talmudists, the attitude of the Jew 'has always been to treat the land with care' (Newmyer 2001:427-428).

It is not only important to emphasise the relevance of the OT law to today's situation, but to reiterate its call for best practices in the disposal of faeces in every corner of our environment. As directed by the law, burying faecal matter does not only fulfil the requirement of keeping our earthly camp or environment clean, but more importantly, by making it acceptable to YHWH, the Creator. Therefore, natural care through proper sanitary practices should be seen as one of the moral obligations, if not for all, at least, for Christians (cf. Wright

2004:87). They are the people who should be prepared to take care of the environment as a duty they owe to themselves, future generations, and above all, God.

As God's sacerdotal agents, exploring the rest of creation 'in a responsible fashion' not only compel us to 'bear witness to the divine likeness' placed in us, as Lioy (2010:33-34) puts it, but also helps us as His people to actualize His will on earth (cf. Matt 6:10; Hafemann 2001:25). If our physical bodies are the temples of the Divine Being, then it is not unreasonable to argue that the earth, where we live, and our immediate surroundings, and in fact wherever we may find ourselves in the country, serve as part of His 'universal sanctuary' (cf. Lioy 2010:29; 2005:27; Levenson 1994:86).

As a universal palace of God, the Heaven of heavens is where, in the words of Lioy (2010:29), 'God built the upper rooms of His palace' (Mic 1:2; cf. Amos 9:6), with Heaven as His throne and the earth, comprising all the countries of the world, including Ghana, as His footstool (Isa 66:1). All the remaining elements of creation, including everything on the earth, then become part of the decorations of the Universal King (cf. Lioy 2010:29). This kind of mind-set will definitely help us to recognise the pervasive presence of God, who has never lost contact with His creation.

In other words, if God dwells in the community of His people as Liu (2012:289) also argues, then we should always be mindful of His Divine presence. Definitely, any form of sanitary impropriety on the part of Christians and the larger society would be repudiated by God. This also implies that humanity, as custodians and/or stewards of YHWH's decorations, especially those who claim to be committed to His word as believers, are

rather required to maintain and not destroy any part of it, because there is accountability involved (Luke 16:2; 1 Cor 4:2).

Moreover, since the devil, our adversary, like the enemies that surrounded Israel in the Promised Land, prowls around 'seeking whom he may devour' (1 Pet 5:8), God is always moving around to defend His people. Thus, the prescription for maintaining His presence needs to be observed. This is achieved when we keep our environment tidy or free from filth, particularly, human waste.

The point of my argument here is that the requirements which were spelt out in Deuteronomy 23:12-14 almost 3,500 years ago were not only for ritual purposes, but were effective measures to protect Israel from contagious diseases and deadly plagues (cf. Faniran and Nihinlola 2007:52-53). According to Borowski (2003:79-80), the proper disposal of faeces that the text stipulated provided in the then known world the basis for the construction of latrines, even including the best known types today (cf. Bruckner n.d.:7-8; Crüsemann 2001:247; 2002:544; Saxey n.d.:125). As Holman (2003:¶9) also puts it: 'No race of people, before or since, has left us such a wealth of laws relative to hygiene and sanitation as the Hebrews'.

Indeed, not only the evangelical church but all Bible-believers should be able to derive full benefit from the HB especially in the areas of this sanitation law. For Christians in Ghana in particular, since our community life is where the Spirit of God dwells (cf. Liu 2012:289), the practice of good hygiene is paramount for the maintenance in good health of the believing community, which constitutes God's 'temple'. Sprinkle (2000:655-57) argues that Christ would not have abolished the distinction between clean and unclean foods, 'if hygiene were the

purpose of this distinction'. Of course, hygiene and health might not be the main purpose for such a law as specified in the pericope, yet their importance for Christians and the global community at large cannot be underestimated. This is the link we want to establish here; that it is not a ceremonial obedience to the stipulations of our OT pericope that is required, but rather a moral variety of it in the form of hygiene is expected to prevent diseases so that the people of God will enjoy the 'standard health wish' of 3 John 2.

Dwelling further on Christians in Ghana, every effort to uphold hygiene, particularly in relation to human excrement, must be seen as a divine requirement. Just as God was interested in the health of His people in the OT period (Deut 23:12-14; cf. Exod 15:26), it is His wish for His people in the NT to be healthy, as 3 John 2 clearly reveals: 'I pray that you may enjoy good health'. In the light of this NT text, there is a divine wish for good physical health for the community of believers in both testaments. Heather (2002:77-86) specifically notes a comment by a Jansenist priest who, in interpreting 3 John 2, asserts the validity of wishing prosperity and health to those who faithfully use it to honour God. He also referred to 3 John 2 as the passage which inspired Oral Roberts and Paul Yonggi Cho to pray for restoration of physical health for people in their day.

The foregoing admonition does not mean that physical health is being emphasised over spiritual well-being, as some may interpret it. While agreeing with Moo (1988:192, 209) that this does not mean that 'good health should characterise every believer' it does not also mean that suffering for the sake of the gospel is being sacrificed for physical health as he seems to

argue. On the contrary, it makes the description of this NT text as “a standard health wish” very appropriate.

Thus, a house-to-house campaign aimed at sensitisation and encouraging landlords to construct or improve on the number toilet facilities in their homes needs to be intensified. In other words, there should be regular sanitation sensitisation programmes where sanitation officers would visit homes to sensitize households on the need for and use of improved household toilet facilities. The government is aware of the problem and has indicated that it intends to construct toilet facilities in various homes across the country as an effective measure of addressing open defecation.

Since it is imperative for every household, institution, and in fact, every community to have usable toilet facilities in order to avoid open defecation and thus promote good health of the citizenry, government should be able to enforce all the laws that prosecute offenders. People should be committed to environmental cleanliness by ensuring that they check their neighbours who practice open defecation. There should be a taskforce at various points of the beaches who would continue with their rounds to arrest persons who practice open defecation.

Swift progress in the efforts to end open defecation is possible, if Government would prioritise and increase investment in improving Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services in the country. The 19th November of each year which is set aside for the celebrated of World Toilet Day should indeed be celebrated nation-wide and aimed at highlighting the worsening sanitation situation in Ghana. At least, the Day which is dedicated to sensitize community members on the relevance of WASH

interventions must involve much more than what we have witnessed so far.

Besides, as patriotic citizens, when we see our neighbours causing mess by defecating openly, it is our civic responsibility to bring such persons to order because their action could cause health problem to entire communities and the nation at large. All well-meaning Ghanaians should heed to popular advice to desist from defecating in black polythene bags and disposing them off indiscriminately. All educational institutions both public and private should make it an obligation to build accessible toilet facilities for students, staff and even visitors. It is time the country as a whole stopped joking with their lives and rather work hard to put an end to open defecation.

On this basis, it is my hope that doors will be opened to the education on the ultimate implication of God's instructions against open defecation in Deuteronomy 23:12-14 to reach the larger Christian and non-Christian communities of the world. The expectation is that through such an educational crusade, people engaged in open defecation and all other negative forms of disposal of human excrement will be sensitive to both the physical and spiritual implications of their practice and even become crusaders against the practice.

Overall, the details presented in this book serve as a heuristic device to ensure good hygienic practices in the hope of preventing diseases and promoting good health today. In effect, not only are Christians and the entire Ghanaian community expected to be healthy as being advocated by this book but the high death rate due to improper hygienic and sanitation practices is likely to reduce.

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In this Volume Three of the OD Series, ***Fellow Ghanaians, Let's Stop Open Defecation, else...'***, he discusses God's law on Open Defecation which is spelt out in Deuteronomy 23:12-14, to determine its implications for a contemporary community, with Ghana as its focus. The discussions are geared towards tackling the socio-cultural, ethical, and most importantly, the theological implications of this socio-cultural canker for the country, and then offers pragmatic suggestions to win the fight against this menace. Rev Dr JY has also authored other books including:

- ***Always Ready: Over 150 Messages to help You Study, Teach, Preach, & Live the Bible Systematically***
- ***Pacesetters of Divine Ministry: Let us learn from them!***
- ***Can You Be God's Transformational Leader? Yes You Can!***
- ***Amazing Grace: A Guide to Spiritual Formation & Disciplines***
- ***Suffer to Gain: How the Righteous should overcome Difficult Times***
- ***A Model for Hebrew - English Translation and Application: The Biblical Hebrew Student's Companion***
- ***Arise & Shine! Be a Youth with Vision and Mission***
- ***A model for Old Testament Exegetical Dissertation***
- ***Thus says the LORD: 'No Open Defecation, else...'***
- ***"Holy War": The Consequence of Open Defecation***

All ministries and agencies of government and other bodies be they state or NGOs, Religious groups, especially, Christians, and the larger society, will find application from the issues of Sanitation and Open Defecation discussed in this book. It is a must read; you need a copy!

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