

PAULINE THEOLOGY OF THE BODY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCH
ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract

The concept of the body of Christ, as articulated in Pauline theological thought serves as a foundational framework for church administration. The body metaphor in Paul's letters underpinned the nature, unity, diversity and organization of the church. It provides the internal dynamic and complexity that subsists between the church and the profound wisdom that governs church administration. The church is made of many parts within the same body. In the context of Nigeria, the church is polarized by various diversities such as the cultural, social, and theological dynamics therefore understanding and applying this concept becomes crucial. The purpose of this study is to explore Paul's theology of the Body and its implications for Church administration. The study employs the documentation method which involves the exploration of Pauline's letters such as 1 Corinthians, Romans and Ephesians. The study also includes critical analysis of data gathered from sources like articles, books, commentaries and digital publications. The findings of the study reveal that Pauline theology of the body underpins the diversity, unity and complexity of the church as one living organism. It underscores the relationship and the dynamics that subsist within the church such as interdependence, mutual respect and individual uniqueness as important to church administration. The study concludes that Pauline theology of the body explicates unity in diversity, interdependence, respect and mutual care which are vital to effective church administration and vital to solve administrative conflict in the church.

Keywords: Body, Church Administration, Pauline Theology, Unity and Nigerian Church

INTRODUCTION

The Church in Pauline thought is a mysterious living organism with different parts. Paul undoubtedly uses different images to present the Church in a contextual manner with which his audience can relate. Paul explains the Church as a living community by using the “body of Christ” metaphor an analogous comprehensive discourse that cuts across his letters especially, Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. The “body” concept in various Pauline letters presents the ecclesiastical community using an analogy of the human body which depicts diversity of parts, functions and roles with a higher purpose of united mission, goal, nature and unity. The analogy presents a borrowed term from the Greco-Roman world which Paul alluded to contextually as it is frequently used to foster collective ideology, identity and cause for social and political groups.

However, the central usage and import of the metaphor is that the ecclesiastical community is a collective body that requires different parts functioning uniquely for the greater good of the body. The body of Christ has been applied differently by scholars. For instance, Theissens reads the term sociologically from hierarchical order, patriarchalism and social cohesion. Mitchell sees the usage as a unity term for ecclesiastical organism. Horsely interprets the body as a liberative term that plays the role of anti-imperial movement and Neyrey reads it sociologically and anthropologically implying that the church is a bounded system of a symbolic world. While the metaphor in modern term is often concentrated on unity discourse across the spectrum of denominationalism, disputes, spiritual gifts and harmony the term is often limited to its original socio-political and administrative purpose of people management and social cohesion. This study, therefore, reads the text from an administrative construct.

Origin of the Body Metaphor

Before the time of Paul, the physical body had begun to be perceived as an entity opposite to that of the soul, the two were assumed to be in a dualistic relationship, where the body acted as a negative force against the soul. The usage of the metaphor of the body is not a

strange concept in ancient Greece. The idea was well used in ancient politics to illustrate the relation of the subject and the leaders. The Greek fabulist Aesop depicts this in his writing *The Belly and the Members*. The body metaphor is used in Greek politics to urge unity within the community when there is political uproar or rebellion.

Such unity is often described in terms of a body functioning at full capacity. Speeches which included the body politics imagery referred to as ‘*homonoiia*’ (‘concord’) speeches were commonly used in times of political turmoil to encourage members of the city-state, political, or civic group, to maintain unity by quashing discord and disturbance for the good of the group. In this respect, the image of the body was the most commonly employed (*topos*) for unity in the ancient world. The first *homonoiia* speech that illustrates the metaphor of the body according to Quintilian the Greek writer was in the Speech of Menenius Agrippa (5 B.C) when he tried to reconcile the Plebs to the Patricians through the fable of limbs quarrel with the belly. The fable was well documented in the fable of Aesop as follows:

In ancient times, the various parts of the human body had strong wills and often quarreled, particularly criticizing the belly for its perceived idleness. In a bid to punish it, they collectively decided to stop providing for the belly's needs. The hands refused to lift food, the mouth wouldn't eat, and the legs stopped moving. However, as they implemented their plan, the entire body began to weaken and suffer. This led to a realization that the belly, though seemingly useless, played a vital role in their overall health. Ultimately, they understood that cooperation was essential for the well-being of the entire body.

The fable's context shows that although some part of the body are working harder than the other yet every part of the body must contribute and play their parts so that the body will not suffer. The fable thus illustrates the interdependency that exists within the body and the need of the Plebs Patricians and the Patricians by the plebs. Ruth Isley Hicks underscores the fundamental idea behind the metaphor “as all parts of the human body have their own function and are mutually necessary for its proper performance, so all members of a corporate body are essential for its health and well-being”. There is a sense of responsibility and mutual togetherness between every part of the body. Each part adores its uniqueness and responsibility yet never discredits the responsibility of other parts.

Peterlin opines ‘the rationale of the ‘body politic’ imagery is thus clear: ‘If the political body is similar to the human physical body, then its members ought to act in harmony for the well-being of the political whole’. Therefore, just as the individual part of the body do not work independently but function corporately for the common good of the body, so also the body of the citizenry functions for the common good of the society. The *homonoia* speech which contains the body imagery aimed at encouraging concord and unity, the language of the body politic was often employed. While interdependence was vital to the functioning of the body, this by no means indicated equality between the members, but such speeches assumed a fixed hierarchy deemed ‘natural and necessary for the health and life of the body’

Given the extent to which physiognomic ideals were prevalent in the first century C.E., and the extent to which a whole and functioning physical body was used to represent the body politic in both literary and visual representations in the Roman Empire, it is reasonable to assume that a physiognomically aware audience would have expected Paul to use the image of a whole and fully-functioning human body as the basis for his metaphor of the body of Christ. Ancient audiences, knowing the link between character and physical body, would have expected the body of Christ to be the ideal Greco-Roman body: one that was perfectly balanced, physically whole, and without defect. But is this the kind of body to which Paul envisages the membership of the body of Christ?

The Body Metaphor in Pauline’s Writings

Paul’s undisputed letters contained detailed discourse on the concept of the body. The discourse of the body in Paul’s letters centres around two parameters: first, the individual body and social body. The idea of individual and social body appears in a theological discourse in 1 Corinthians first, in admonishing individual and social unity and purity. Therefore, three of Paul’s central themes regarding the perception of the body are unity, purity, and bodily control. Paul’s teaching on the body theologically intertwined these three elements together; unity, purity and bodily control. Paul indicates that when the physical body is controlled and kept pure, all aspects of the body, both material and immaterial, can then honour God.

Purity can be regarded as a form of protection and control; however, it does take on different forms when related to aspects of the body. Purity is concerned with maintaining the holiness of the body and thus producing a reflection of God. Control of the body is necessary for abstaining from sins that will negatively affect the body. Paul's teachings concerning the body affect the individual body, but have a greater purpose in maintaining the cohesiveness of the social body.

First Corinthians is filled with body imagery and Paul used the idea in a plethora of ways. The Corinthians church had a challenge with attaining an understanding of what it means to be a community. This may be because of the assemblage of people with different backgrounds and statuses. So, Paul uses the body as a tool to outline the necessity of unity in the community. Each member is important; however, impurities to the body need to be removed for the sake of the benefit of the whole. The number imprint created by Paul about the body is the purity. Segal conceived that Paul's idea of body purity stems from the Pharisees' understanding of the body from the Torah. Paul's purity concerns dictate that individuals keep their body as a whole and united entity, which can act as a temple of God for the Spirit. The body as both a social and individual entity needed to be free of impurities and 'dirt' in order to be a pure place for the Spirit to reside.

Paul's concept of the body explicates the Jewish tradition of the body where the ideal body is considered as a whole. That is, united through harmonious control of every part. Paul's understanding emphasizes the role of individual body on the social body. "The 'one flesh' (the marriage) must be destroyed, the individual must reestablish the holiness of his own body and guard its sexual orifice... The control of individual bodily orifices replicates the group's concern with its social boundaries". Paul encourages a high level of bodily control, even to the point where one individual must separate from the social body in order to preserve the body. Paul promotes the notion of a united body, where all parts are acknowledged as affecting one another.

Paul's use of the Greek word *sōma* ('body') reveals how he views the body as a unified entity. Bodily unity is only possible through body because it is linked to both the spiritual and physical body. In contrast, 'flesh' is related to a purely physical state, which contributes to bodily

unity. Body clearly comes from the Greek world but Paul uses it in three major discussions: the universality of sin, resurrection, and the Church. It is difficult to trace the specific Greek influence on Paul's view of body because of how complex and original Paul's discussion is. Paul's *sōma* often refers to a sinful body, a temple for God, and a united community. The difficulty with studying the word *sōma* is that much of what we know about *sōma* comes from Paul's works and, therefore, separating Paul's *sōma* from the isolated Greek word can present a challenge.

In his use of '*sōma*' Paul argues against the Greek notion of dividing the body between the positive soul and the negative body. Rather, I Corinthians 12:12–41 reveals Paul's belief that the unity of the individual body would create unity for the social body: the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.

Paul evokes both the Jewish Pharisaic and Greek concepts of the body so that one can have a life lived fully in the spirit because, as Paul claims, the crucifixion of Christ had made the body and the spirit remain as one whole body. Paul factorizes a mystical connotation to the body and places the body in a dual relationship mode: vertical and horizontal; the body is a temple of God and the body also has a social implication in human to human relationship. Paul set it firmly in place as a 'temple in the Holy Spirit. The physical *sōma* is not an inferior component in relation to the soul; rather, according to Paul it has the possibility to contain God within it and, therefore, is a sacred part of the whole being of an individual. Paul states that the human body has become a temple of the Holy Spirit; the Spirit of God exists within communities and now it lives within each individual 'in Christ'. Paul reveals the importance of each part of the *sōma* in reference to its useful contribution to the honour of God through both direct uses and allusions to the body.

Paul's *sōma* is not one-dimensional, nor does it just refer to his attitude about the human body. His understanding of *sōma* extends to the need for a control of the individual body to protect against temptation and sin; however, the way in which he uses 'body' also clearly affects the larger group that he is writing to. His influences from Judaism and Greek culture greatly affect his message because of his need to support and refute fundamental ideas of each. The body is portrayed as something that should remain united and the method of creating this unity comes from advocacy of purity, and control.

The Body Metaphor in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12

Paul's explicit use of the body imagery comes from three of his letters (Romans, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4) but a detailed theological imprint on the body metaphor can be found in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. In Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 like the *homonoia* speech as seen in the Greek body politic, Paul uses the physical body with its various members working for the greater good of the whole to explicate the nature of the church, its unity and the spiritual organogram that exist in the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians is saturated with imagery of the body in its various forms. Paul uses the body as a literal image to encourage the Corinthian church members to maintain the wholeness of their individual bodies, as well as the unity of the greater social body of the community. Two main ways in which Paul promotes this unity are by instructing individuals in the church to control their bodies and encouraging them to keep them pure. The notions of bodily unity, control, and purity arise from Paul's understanding and response to his background in Judaism and his current environment saturated with Greek culture.

Gundry observes that Paul uses descriptions of different parts of the body playing their particular roles, conversations between various members of the body, and in particular, the threat of schisms to the body, and the interdependence of each of the members for the good of the body. Therefore, the body metaphor helps the early church to address the question of identity and allegiance to Christ. It logically follows that a person is a follower of Christ because he belongs to the body and functions and contributes to the unity of the body even in the face of diversity

(race; Jew or Greek). Neyrey sees Paul describing and affirming a diversity of the members of the body, which is clearly hierarchical in nature affording power and honour to certain members over others:

The differentiated parts of the body are also ranked. The head is greater than the feet; the eye is more important than the ear; the hand is above the foot. Paul even admits that in the body there are honorable and less honorable parts, presentable and inferior parts, stronger and weaker members (I Cor 12:22–24). The ranking of the differentiated parts is related to the roles ascribed to the members of the church: ‘first there are apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then ... then ... then ...’ (12:28b). This, too, is God’s doing for “God has appointed” them (I Cor. 12:28b). God has also drawn the *map of the social body*. Even the charismatic gifts can be differentiated and ranked: prophecy over tongues, and charity over all (I Cor. 12:31; 13:13).

Neyrey, among other scholars, considers the enumerated list in 1 Corinthians 12:28 (and its parallels in Rom. 12:6–8; Eph. 4:11–12), as Paul’s presentation of a God-given ranking of spiritual gifts in respect to their importance and value in the early church. Leon Morris’ (1988:443) writing on the gift of prophecy listed in Romans 12 states that ‘If anyone is not given that great gift but is given the more humdrum gift of being able to serve in a lowly place, then he should not sigh for what he does not have but use the gift God has given him’.

In 1 Corinthians 4:1–13, Paul is clearly critical of the Corinthian elites who prized the gifts of ‘exultation and visible demonstrative “success” which prioritized individual edification over the building up of others. In ranking the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul provides a list which would have inverted the priority of gifts as understood by the members of the Corinthian church. The gifts which seemed unremarkable in the Corinthians church those of teaching and prophesying are ranked at the top of Paul’s list, while the gift prized most highly by the Corinthians *glossolalia* is ranked last.

This view is also promoted by Witherington who considers Paul’s listing as ‘relativizing the sense of importance and necessity of the weaker, lower status Corinthian Christians ... the “less presentable” members’. It is not that Paul considered the roles of apostles, prophets, and teachers as greater to any other role within the Body of Christ, but rather, treating such gifts with

greater honour is what would help bring about the balancing out required to redistribute honour to all the gifts within the Body. The fact that gifts are transposed in other lists elsewhere, also supports the view that Paul is not promoting a strict universal hierarchy of gifts, but rather, the order of the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12 was tailored to this particular community.

In 1 Corinthians 12 the crux of the body metaphor as an appeal to honour the seeming weak member of the body in respect to spiritual gifts has encounter major theological debate especially in response to the final verse. 1 Corinthians 12:31 has caused much debate among scholars and there is specific aspect which has a direct bearing on our interpretation of Paul's enumeration of gifts in this chapter: whether Paul's use of the word *zēloute* should be translated as an indicative or imperative. In general, English translations assume *zēloute* is an imperative and thus is to be considered an exhortation to seek, 'strive for', or 'earnestly desire the greater gifts'. But this translation is at odds with the rest of 1 Corinthians 12, in which Paul stresses that it is God alone who allocates gifts to each member of the body. How then can the Corinthians 'strive for' gifts that they do not possess and which have not been gifted to them by God? Instead, Thiselton argues that *zēloute* should be rendered as an indicative and proposes that Paul means something akin to '*do not stop being zealously concerned about the "greatest" gifts, provided that you follow me in transposing and subverting your understanding of what counts as "the greatest"*'. Paul exhorts the Corinthians to focus not on themselves and the betterment of their own gifts, but rather, to utilize their gifts in a way that edifies and glorifies the wider body of the church.

In Romans, Paul critiques the way in which the Gentile and Jewish Christians considered their own pathway into the church as superior to the other. The Jewish Christians thus lauded their heritage as the chosen people of God recorded in the Jewish scriptures, while the Gentile Christians considered their direct entrance into the Christian community through the message of Jesus as the superior way, with both groups considering the 'others' as the weaker members of the body. In respect to the Corinthian Christians, Paul describes a church which reflected the political and social structures consistent in the ancient world, focusing on people's social rank,

the demonstration of the so-called highly prized gifts, and overlooking the needs of the poor and marginalized.

In both cases, Paul encourages the church by reminding them that all members of the body of Christ are valued irrespective of the status-markers of the broader society around them. Issues such as ethnicity, socio-economic status, social status, and religious heritage were irrelevant within the diversely gifted body of Christ where all members are equipped with different but equally-valuable gifts to utilize in service to one another.

Paul's representation of the body of Christ, then, is markedly different from the body politic imagery expressed in the Stoic writers. Paul is not advocating for a unity of the body that merely accepted the *status quo* of the highly stratified hierarchy of the Empire. Instead, Paul's view of the body of Christ was as a new kind of corporate body being forged in the name of Jesus, emulating Jesus' servitude and humility.

Paul's call to unity in the body of Christ envisions a body where all the parts are valued equally for their contribution to the body. And uniquely to Paul, his image of all the various parts working together turns the Roman hierarchical body politic imagery on its head by declaring that in the body of Christ, those parts which 'seem weaker' are actually 'indispensable' and should be awarded due honour. If anything, Paul's image of the body of Christ in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 is anti-hierarchy, seeking to quash any other systems at play in the church that might defer to any status based on wealth or social rank. In this respect, the body of Christ is not whole in spite of its diversity but because of it. Paul uses the body as a tool to outline the necessity of unity in the community. Paul encourages a high level of bodily control, even to the point where one individual must separate from the social body in order to preserve the body. Paul promotes the notion of a united body, where all parts are acknowledged as affecting one another.

Paul Theology of the body in Ephesians

Paul uses the term *σῶμα* several times in Ephesians to refer to the body of Christ, the universal church. The universal church is described by Paul in Ephesians as "His body" (*τὸ σῶμα*

αὐτοῦ; 1:23), “one body” (ἐν σῶμα; 4:4), “the body of Christ” (τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; 4:12), “the whole body” (πᾶν τὸ σῶμα; 4:16), “the body” (τοῦ σώματος; 4:16; 5:23), and “his body” (σώματος αὐτοῦ; 5:30).

Paul emphasizes the importance of maintaining unity in the church in Ephesians 4:1–6. He lists seven major doctrines using the word “one.” Ephesians 4:4 says, “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling.” The one body is a reference to the universal church that is associated with the Holy Spirit. The word “one” shows that Paul is not discussing local bodies of believers but the one universal church. The only reference where the expression “the body of Christ” is found in Ephesians is Ephesians 4:12: “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” The ascended Christ gave the church gifted leaders to equip the saints for the work of ministry so that the body of Christ could be edified. “The whole body” (the church) is joined to the head (Christ) and is held together by individual members who are described as “every joint” and “every part” in Ephesians 4:16:

From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Paul uses the words “joint” (ἀφῆς) and “part” (μέρους) to describe each Christian in the body of Christ. Jesus Christ is the head of the church and the Savior of the body (Eph 5:23). The intimate connection between Christ and the church is seen as Paul describes Christians as being “members of His body” (μέλη ἐσμὲν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ; Eph 5:30).

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The Lord Jesus nourishes and cherishes believers because they are members of his body (Eph 5:29–30). Paul uses the word “members” (μέλη) to emphasize that the body of Christ is made up of different people. Paul tells Christians to put away lying and speak the truth “because we are members of one another” (ὅτι ἐσμὲν ἀλλήλων μέλη; Eph 4:25).

Best gives this analysis of how the phrase “the body of Christ” is used in Ephesians as compared to the other references in the New Testament:

The main differences are: (a) A special position in the body is given to the head and it is equated with Christ. (b) The body is envisaged as growing (4.15f). (c) The body has cosmic connections (3:9f; 1.22f). (d) Stress on diversity among members is missing, though Christians are still regarded as related to one another in the body (4.25; 5.30). (e) Jewish and Gentile Christians are united in the body (2.16); this aspect is absent from Colossians and only vaguely present in 1 Cor 12.13 where the Jew/Gentile contrast is only one among a number of contrasting alternatives. (f) The relation between the church as body and the Eucharist which is found in 1 Cor 10.16f does not appear in Ephesians.

Implications of Paul’s Body for Church Administration

The metaphor of the body as used by Paul in communicating the mystery of the Church communicates something deeper about the church. Theologically, the metaphor showcases the organic nature of the unity that existed in the Church both at local and universal levels. The metaphor helps communicate the mystery of the unity that is found in the Church.

Unity of the Church

Ridderbos is right when he says that Paul uses this metaphor with a clear paraenetic purpose. The unity of the Church is imperative as an indicative of Christ possession of the Church. The unity of the church signifies both the internal unity of a local church (the intra-unity of the church), as well as the unity between different local churches (the inter-unity of the church). Therefore, what is said on an intra-level of the unity of the church, applies also to the inter-level. On the intra-level the “parts of the body” are the different members of the church, and on inter-level the “parts of the body” are the different local churches. Both on intra as well as inter-level the church is - speaking in terms of the present metaphor - “the body of Christ”. On

the inter level this means that a local church is and stays part of the church, however small or insignificant its role and function in the church.

The metaphor points to the character of the unity; it excludes any idea of a mechanical unity. The body is an organism and implies that the unity is primary. It is not a result of the composition of different parts. It is a living unity which is more than the constituting parts. This character of the unity applies both to the local church (the unity of the members), as well as the universal church (the unity of the churches (or denominations)). The body of Christ is a living unity, and is not dependent for its existence on the different members; it exists as a living unity, because it exists in and because of Christ, and not *vice versa*.

Essential Diversity

Diversity exist within the Church because the nature of the church unity is not mechanical rather, it is organic. This can be seen in various units and subgroups that exist in the church, such as Women group, men ministry, choir and others. 1 Cor. 11: 16 and 19 shows that without different members performing different functions and having different abilities, the church cannot function properly. Just as one part of the body does not perform all the function within the human body, Paul used this idea to show that the whole function of the Church as a body does not rest on only one or selected part of the body. Within the local church this implies that a member does not perform the function of all. Also, from the spectrum of the universal church there are many functions of the Church that only one local church does not fulfill. The universal Church therefore functions within diversity of local churches with different functions and same is applicable at local church level where members of the church function within different capacities. Therefore, the nature of the diversity that exist in the body of Christ is not competitive but complementary.

Inter-Dependency

The members of the church are inter-dependent and in need of each other; the one member cannot function without the support of the others. This mutual support of the different members can only take place within the unity of the body, the church. Despite the diversity, the unity of the church therefore remains. No member can function properly without being part of

the one body. It is essential to recognize the interdependence and unity among its members. Just as emphasized in the text, the members of the church are interconnected and reliant on each other for effective functioning. Each member plays a vital role, and their contributions are crucial for the overall well-being of the church. This mutual support and collaboration among diverse members can only thrive within the unity of the body, which is the church.

Despite the diversity within the church unity remains a fundamental principle. Just as no individual member can operate effectively in isolation, the different churches within the denomination are also interdependent. Each church's support and cooperation are necessary for the collective success and growth of the entire body of believers. The unity of the church is not just a desirable aspect but a prerequisite for fostering mutual support and strength among its various components. In essence, the unity of the Church is foundational for promoting collaboration, mutual assistance, and a sense of belonging among its members and churches. This unity ensures that the diverse parts work together harmoniously towards a common goal, reflecting the interconnectedness and interdependence that characterize the body of Christ.

Solidarity between the head and the Body

The metaphor emphasizes the solidarity that exists between the body and the head. This was the major emphasis of the metaphor as used in Paul's writing to the Ephesians. The nature of solidarity here is dual, the vertical solidarity between the Church and Christ and the horizontal thrust of the solidarity which is solidarity of each part to the body as a whole. The horizontal solidarity depends on the maintenance of the vertical. The church (body) belongs to Christ (head) and Christ gave the church his life. Thus, both Gentiles and Jews belong to one body as fellow receiver of reconciliation that comes through the death of the head. The horizontal solidarity is non-accidental unity involving solidarity of a single life. The body concept points to the fact that there is mutual solidarity among each part.

Mutual Respect and Honour

Paul differentiates between various parts and the likelihood of hierarchy among parts. This hierarchy is not based on special make up of part but seemingly based on functions. The

Corinthians letter illustrates dissention, dishonour and disrespect among the body. The lousy parts accords honour and dignity to themselves because of the lousiness of their functions therefore disregard the lowly or silent part. The metaphor therefore repositions the nature of respect and honour among the body. Paul says that the small or most ignored parts of the body contributes to the wellbeing of the body and without them the body will not function optimally to it best. Honour and respect is to be mutual among the various parts; each part must recognize the contribution of other parts and must be respected for their contribution. Within the local body and universal body there must be a mutual respect based on the distinctive function and role of each to the whole body.

Conclusion

The body of Christ or the analogy of the body in Pauline writings Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 exemplifies the diversity and unity of the Church as one body, with one Lord, one baptism, one faith, one purpose, one mission and many parts. The complexity of the parts shows the complexity of the nature of unity that subsists in the church. In Corinthians, the analogy was used to awaken the consciousness of members on common unity. Using the body as a metaphor for the Church implies that the Church is Christ's body, composed of various parts that have different skills, gifts, roles, and contributions. The metaphor also emphasizes the need for collaboration and unity among the body parts. The body can only function well when there is harmony and balance among all the parts. This means that the Church must follow the will of Christ, the head, and respect the diversity and interdependence of its members, without any bias or conflict.

The potential of each part when harnessed in lieu of mutual interdependence, harmony, diversity and unity of the whole body is congruent to church administration. To manage different genders, tribes, gifts, talents and strengths the church must understand the area of interest and strength of all these in order to build a strong, collective and equal church where every part has a sense of belonging, feels needed, important and essential to the whole body. The body analogue

speaks to uniqueness and complexity of the body of Christ as a conglomerate of different part that make the church.

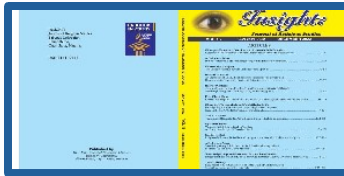
Recommendations

The study, on the basis of its conclusion recommends as follows:

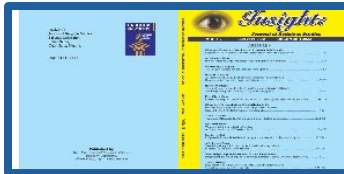
- i. Diversity of the various part of the body should be embraced as an essential part of the body.
- ii. Church leaders must foster a communal bond between the various members of the church.
- iii. Dividing elements such as tribalism, gender and class should be discouraged among Christians.
- iv. The leaders and church members need to understand the functional and communal role of spiritual gift in building a harmonious body that is mutually dependent and mutually equipped.

Endnotes

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