

## **Ruach in Gen 1:1-5 in The Contemporary View of Anglican Priests and Postulants of Enugu Diocese**

**Prof Luke E. Ugwueye**

Religion & Human Relations

Faculty of Arts NnamdiAzikiwe University Awka

le.ugwueye@unizik.edu.ng

&

**Venerable Ikenna C. Nwachukwu Ebenezer**

Anglican Church Independence Layout Phase 2 Enugu

canonikenna@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

This article considered ruach in Gen 1:1-5 in the contemporary view of Anglican priests and postulants of Enugu Diocese. In its aim and objectives, it paid particular attention to ascertaining the identity of ruach, first in the passage under review and in its interpretative variables in the view of Anglican priests and postulants of Enugu Diocese. An enquiry to obtain the opinion of priests and postulants of the Anglican Diocese of Enugu provided the data. The research methodology was essentially exegetical and interculturalHermeneutical. The research discovered that 80% of the Anglican priests and postulants of Enugu Diocese identified the spirit of ruach with life and functionality of the creation. It further discovered that 52.5% of the research population understood ruach in the passage as the spirit of God. In addition, 60% of the respondents agreed that ruach sustains the progress and viability of priests in the Anglican Diocese of Enugu. Finally, it was discovered that the position and function of ruach are not limited to the passage but also give spiritual impetus to the ordination of Anglican priesthood and the entire profession of Anglican faith. It is the recommendation of the research that the essence of ruach as enunciated in the research should be taught and included in the curriculum of theological education in all Anglican theological institutions.

**Keywords:** Ruach, Anglican, priest, postulant, diocese

### **Introduction**

The mysterious nature of *ruach* phenomenon in Gen 1:1-5 certainly requires some intricate and rigorous theological considerations to unravel as observed by Drazin (2016). There is the need to exegetically explore *ruach* in its contextual background and to update its understanding in a contemporary Christian view. This will help one to appreciate the dealing of God with his creation which is essential for healthy Christian faith. It is on this consideration that a study on the contemporary Anglican views about *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 obtained through the opinions of Anglican priests and postulants in the Diocese of Enugu is considered worthwhile.

The relevance of contemplating this topic is generally highlighted in the opinion of Williams (2014) who observes that *ruach* provides the underlying form and order necessary for every existence, and specifically for the dynamic interaction which is of the essence of life. Without appreciating the significance of *ruach* in the creation narrative, the risk of distorting its import in the passage under review and in appropriating its significance in contemporary Anglican Christian faith is inevitable. As such, the Genesis creation narrative will certainly lose its vital spirituality which is essential for a healthy faith even among the contemporary Christians of the Anglican Communion. In fact without giving primary consideration to *ruach*, the creation narrative is debased to one of the vague fables of various world views, though *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 is to be studied as a cosmological myth even as a biblical concept. It follows the truism that the earliest conceptions of the creation were expressed in myths, which Exposito, Fasching & Lewis (2006) consider a symbolic story about the origins and destiny of human beings in their world. Also, Ugwueye, Uzuegbunam&Umeanolue (2012) rightly observed that the pre-scientific human society interpreted the universe through a set of myths.

In the attempt to have a contemporary view of *ruach*, Snodderly (2006) traces *ruach* to the origin as one who fills the emptiness of *tohuwabohu*; which he identifies as anything that is the opposite of

creation and order; and that is a description of the root of human problems around the world, including the prevalent diseases and violence of today. Dwelling on this view, Tasker (2013) adds that the creation of *ruach* hovering over the deep places the spirit of God not only in the context of creation but of salvation also. *Ruach* whose action took effect from creation is still actively bringing the consciousness of God's presence and direction to humanity as opined by Harris (1997), so that the contemporary Anglican Christian faith should be seen as an outcome of such impact.

A random sample of opinions of priests of the Anglican Diocese of Enugu, and the Postulants of same Diocese who are students undergoing theological education in preparation for ordination into the priesthood shows that though they are aware of the literal meaning of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5, they lack the exegetical understanding of the passage under review. In effect, they appear to come short of the capacity to exhaustively explore the significance of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5. Consequently, they may be deficient in holding a balanced contemporary view of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 which is essential for building healthy faith among contemporary Anglican Christians of Enugu Diocese. The research adopts exegetical and intercultural hermeneutical methods to examine and do exegesis on *ruach* Gen 1:1-5 with a view to contextualize *ruach* in the contemporary Anglican Christian view. The inclusion of the essence of *ruach* as enunciated in this passage in the curriculum of Anglican theological training becomes germane and recommended.

### **Anglican Priests and Postulants of Enugu Diocese**

The Anglican priests of Enugu Diocese refers to the entire clergy of the said Diocese irrespective of rank and designation, while the Anglican postulants of Enugu Diocese refers to all the students undergoing theological training in various institutions of theology such as Institute of Theology Paul University Awka, Trinity Theological College Umuahia, and Institute of Theology and Missions Enugu (affiliate of Paul University Awka), all in preparation for ordination in the Anglican Diocese of Enugu. The numerical strength of the priests of Enugu Diocese at the time of this study is 172, while that of the postulants is 16. The research population was determined by a random sample of the two groups. 5 respondents were selected from each of the four cadres of the priesthood of the Anglican Diocese of Enugu namely: Archdeacons, Canons, Priests and Deacons bringing the total respondents from the priesthood to 20. In the case of the postulants, 2 respondents were selected from the Institute of Theology Paul University Awka out of the available 6 postulants from that institution. 2 respondents were also selected from Trinity Theological College Umuahia out of the six postulants from that institution. One respondent was selected from Institute of Theology and Missions Enugu out of the available 4 postulants from that institution bringing the total number of respondents among the postulants to 5. Thus, 25 respondents constitute 100% of the research population.

Enugu Diocese refers to one of the Dioceses of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) located in South-East, Nigeria. It is comprised of all the Anglican Churches in Enugu South and Nkanu West Local Government Areas, and of the churches which are in parts of Enugu North and Nkanu East Local Government Areas. This involves all the churches in Enugu metropolis which includes the entire Independence Layout, GRA, New haven, Ogui, Uwani, Achara layout, Ogbete, Asata and Awkunanaw. It also includes all the suburbs and villages of the local government areas earlier mentioned but excludes churches in Trans-ekulu, Abakpa Nike and Emene which constitute Nike Diocese of the Anglican Communion.

### **Ruach in Gen 1:1-5**

Could *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 mean wind, breath and spirit at the same time within the passage under review or does it refer to any of the above mentioned at a particular time? Neufeld (2011) is of the opinion that God involved both his spirit, wind and breath in his work of creation simultaneously. By this submission, Neufeld understands *ruach* to be a body of phenomenal features through which God made his presence obvious and announced at the creation. Another dimension to Neufeld's view is suggested by Ferguson (2014) who points out that *ruach* is an important bridge term between God and creation. *Ruach* is both spirit and wind of God just as human is both spirit and soul. On this view Coney (1999) infers that divine power and life constitute the forceful wind.

**Hebrew Text of the Passage (Gen1:1-5) and its English Translation**

הָאָרֶץ וְהַשָּׁמַיִם אֲתֵלֵם בְּרֵאשִׁית	1	
the earth and the heavens - God created	In the beginning	
פְּנֵי עַל- וְהוֹשֵׁךְ וְהוֹתֵהוּ וְהוֹתֵהוּ וְהוֹתֵהוּ	2	
the face was on and darkness and void without form was	And the earth	
הַמַּיִם פְּנֵי עַל- מְרַחֵף אֶת-הַיָּם וְהוֹתֵהוּ		
of the waters the face on moved of God	And the Spirit	of the deep
וַיֵּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֹרֶךְ וַיְהִי אֹרֶךְ	3	
light and there was light let there be	God	And said
אֶת-אֱלֹהֵי וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים	4	
God and divided (it was)good that the light - God	and saw	
וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים		
the darkness and between the light a space between		
וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאֹרֶךְ יוֹם	5	
Night he called and the darkness	Day	the light
וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְבֹקֶר יוֹם		
the first day the morning and	the evening	and were

**Exegesis of Verse Two**

Verse two starts with a noun feminine ‘earth’ (אָרֶץ) prefixed with a conjunctive ‘and’ (ו) translated ‘and the earth’. The conjunctive suggests a continuation of the discourse about the earth in verse one. *Hayeta* (הָיְתָה) is verb to be; come to pass, become; of the qal perfect *haya* (הָיָה) translated ‘was’. *Tohu* (תֹּהוּ) is a noun masculine meaning formless, confusion, unreality, emptiness; formless of the primeval earth (Gen 1:2 (p)); figurative of what is empty, unreal as idol. *Wabohu* (וְבֹהוּ) is noun masculine translated ‘emptiness’ prefixed with a conjunctive ‘and’ (ו). In this verse, it refers to primeval earth; in Jer 4:23 it refers to earth under judgment of Yahweh. The word especially with the conjunctive compliments the former, of the same verse. *Wehoshek* (וְהוֹשֵׁךְ) is noun masculine translated ‘darkness’, ‘obscurity’, prefixed with conjunctive ‘and’ (ו) translated ‘and darkness’. In this verse, it is used to describe the state of the primeval earth. It is also used to describe to darkness in the mines Job 28:3; and the extraordinary darkness in Egypt (Ex 10:21). It is expressed in pillar of cloud (Ex 14:20 (J)); at Mt Sinai (Deut 4:11, 5:20); of the clouds of theophany; and of darkness in death, or *sheol* (Job 10:21). The word connotes ‘secret place’ (Is 45:3; Job 12:22). Figuratively, it refers to ‘distress’ (Is 5:30); Blindness (Is 42:7). It is also used for ‘dread’, ‘terror’, ‘symbol of judgment’ (Eccl 5:16); Mourning (Is 47:5); Perplexity (Job 5:14; 12:25; 19:8); Confusion (Ps 35:6); Ignorance (Job 37:19, Eccl 2:14); evil, sin (Is 5:20, Prov 2:13); Obscurity (Eccl 6:14). Suffice it to say that darkness and all its connotations as considered in this verse is the resultant condition of the absence of God, that is prior to the manifestation of God’s Spirit (רוּחַ) and the subsequent creation by God. Darkness can also be used figuratively to describe godless situations in modern times.

*Al* (עַל) is a preposition ‘upon’, ‘and hence’, ‘on the ground of’, ‘according to’, ‘on account of’, ‘concerning’, ‘besides’, ‘in addition to’, ‘together with’, ‘beyond’, ‘above’, ‘over’, ‘by’, ‘onto’, ‘towards’, ‘to’, ‘against’. From the above denotations of על, various understanding can be drawn: ‘upon’ gives the fundamental idea that darkness was ‘on’ the face of the deep; as in ‘on the face of the earth’ (הָאָרֶץ וְהַשָּׁמַיִם אֲתֵלֵם עַל-פְּנֵי). על also denotes the cause or reason, ‘on account of’, ‘because of’. Darkness was on the face of the deep ‘because of’ the fact that God’s creation had not taken place; in which case darkness is an effect caused by the absence of God and his creative act. The godless situation of a modern time may not result in darkness in the literal sense but in the connotation of a society ridden with corruption and evil.

*Peney* (פְּנֵי) is the construct of the noun masculine ‘face’, plural- ‘faces,’ translated ‘face of’. In Gen 1:2, פְּנֵי is with preposition על, thus על-פְּנֵי ‘on the face of’ or ‘on the front of’.

*Thom* (תְּהוֹמָ) is a noun feminine translated ‘deep’, ‘sea or abyss’. It precisely refers to the primeval ocean or deep in Hebrew cosmology.

*Ruach* (רוּחַ) is a noun feminine translated ‘breath’, ‘wind’, ‘spirit’ with a prefix of the conjunctive (ו) ‘and’. As breath, Job 15:30, “breath of his mouth” suggesting breath of mouth or nostrils. Job 16:3

captures it as mere breath, *dibareyruach* (דִּבְרֵי רוּחַ) ‘windy word’. It is also captured as word of command:

- Of God: Ps 33:6, “made all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” (בְּרוּחַ פִּי כָל־צְבָאָם) (נִעֲשֶׂוּ)
- Of Messianic king: Is 11:4, “with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked” (רִשְׁעֵי־מִיתָה שְׁפָתַי יוֹבְרוּהָ)

It is also captured as hard breathing through the nostrils in anger:

- Of God: Job 4:9 “by the breath of his nostrils they are consumed”. (יִכְלֹא־פֹמְרוּהָ)
- Of man: Is 25:4 “the blast of terrible one”.

It is also considered as sign and symbol of life. Gen 6:17; 7:15 (P); “breath of life” (חַיִּים רוּחַ).

*ruach* is also translated as Wind:

- Wind of heaven: Gen 8:1 (P), Ex 15:10 (E), Num 11:31(J).
- East Wind (קְדִימוֹת): Ex 13:13; 14:21(J); Jer 18:17.
- North Wind (צְפוֹנוֹת): Prov 25:23
- Sea Wind/West Wind (יָם־רוּחַ) Ex 10:19(J)
- Day Wind/Evening Wind (הַיּוֹמוֹת): Gen 3:8(J)

Four winds (רוּחוֹת־אַרְבַּע) Jer 49:36; Ez 37:9 (quarters); Dan 8:8; 11:4 (Figurative quarters).

Storm wind (סְעָרָה־רוּחַ) Ps 107:25; Ez 1:4 (סְעָרֹת־רוּחַ), 13:11,13, rushing wind (סְעָה־רוּחַ); Is 11:15.

Wind Personified (רוּחַ־כְּפִי) Ps 18:10, 104:3; Hos 4:19.

- ❖ Quarter (of wind) Side: - East side (הַקְדִּימוֹת) Ez 42:16;
- North Side (הַצְפוֹנוֹת) Ez 42:17
- South Side (הַדְּרוֹמוֹת) Ez 42:18
- West Side (הַיָּם־רוּחַ) Ez 42:19
- Four Sides (רוּחוֹת־אַרְבַּע) Ez 42:20, 1 Chr 9:24.
- ❖ Breath of air (כַּתְּנֵי־מִרוּחַ־שָׁאֵפֹו) Jer 14:6
- Air, gas (רוּחַ־לְדוֹנִי־כֶמוֹ) Is 26:18;
- Breath (תֹּאֲכֵל־כְּמֵאֲשֵׁרוֹתֶיךָ) Is 33:11
- Vain, empty thing: My life is wind (Job 7:7); 15:2; Is 41:29: Striving for wind (רוֹחֵ־רֵעוֹת) Eccl 1:14; 2:11, 17 & 26.

(*Ruach*) is also translated ‘spirit’:

- Spirit, animation, vivacity, vigour:
- There was no spirit in her (רוּחַ־עוֹדֵבָה־הִנְהִילָא) 1 Kgs 10:5
- ❖ Courage:
- There was no spirit in them (רוּחַ־עוֹדֵבָם־הִנְהִילָא) Josh 5:1.
- ❖ Temper, especially anger:
- (sent) an evil spirit between (בֵּין־רָעָה־רוּחַ) Judg 9:23.
- ❖ Impatience or patience (רוּחַ־קֶצֶר) Ex 6:9(P);
- Impatience, hastiness of temper of YHWH (יְהוָה) Mic 2:7.
- ❖ Spirit, disposition, as troubled, bitter, or discontented:
- Spirit was troubled (רוּחַ־תִּפְעָעָם) Gen 41:8(E) Dan 2:3, cf 2:1;
- Bitterness of spirit (רוּחַ־מָרָת) Gen 26:35(P)
- ❖ Prophetic Spirit: ‘Joshua a man in whom is the Spirit’ (אֲשֶׁר־רוּחַ־אֱלֹהִים־בּוֹשָׁבֵי) Num 27:18
- ❖ Spirit of Living, breathing, dwelling in the body (בְּשָׂר) of men and animals.
- A gift and creation of God: ‘forms of the spirit of man within him’ (בְּקִרְבּוֹ־אֲנָדָם־רוּחַ־יִצְרָ) Zech 12:1.
- God preserves it Job 10:12, cf 12:10.
- It is therefore God’s Spirit Gen 6:3.
- It departs at death Ps 78:39.
- ❖ Spirit as seat of emotion (נֶפֶשׁ)
- Desire Is 26:9
- Sorrow, trouble Job 7:11
- ❖ Seat or organ of mental acts:
- Spirit of wisdom (חֵכְמָה־רוּחַ) Ex 28:3; Deut 34:9.
- ❖ Especially of moral character:

- New Spirit (קְדֻשָּׁהּ) Ez 11:19; 18:31; 36:26.
- Prophetic Spirit (רוּחַ יְבִרָיו) Is 59:21
- ❖ Spirit of God
- An inspiring ecstatic state of prophecy Num 11:17, 25, 26, 29 (J); 1 Sm 10:6, 10; 19:20,23.
- Spirit as impelling prophets to utter instruction or warning Num 24:2; 2 Sam 23:2; 1 Chr 12:18.
- Imparting war-like energy and executive and administrative power: Jdg 3:10; 11:29.
- As endowing men with various gifts: technical skill Ex 31:3, 35:1 (P); understanding Job 32:8; poured out by divine wisdom Prov 1:23.
- Resting upon Messianic King: Is 11:2; and upon servants of *ruach* Is 42:1.
- ❖ As energy of life: the Spirit of God moved on the face of the deep: (הַיָּם מְפַגְּעֵלֵי) (מְרַחֵם פְּתֵלֵי הַיָּם) Gen 1:2(P);
- The Spirit of God has made me (עָשָׂתָּנִי אֱלֹהִים) Job 33:4.
- As vital power, opposite of 'flesh' (בָּשָׂר); in Cherubic Chariot Ez 1:12, 20, 21.
- Reviving Israel Ez 39:29, Zech 12:10, Is 44:3
- Ancient angel of the presence and later *Shekina*: Holy Spirit (קְדֻשָּׁהּ) Is 63:10,11; angel of his presence (פְּנִימָלְאָה) Is 63:9; prophecy of restoration conceived of the divine spirit as standing in their midst and about to fulfill all divine promises (בְּהוֹכְמַתְּמֵרָהּ) Hag 2:5, Zech 4:6; this conception culminates in = divine presence, and as such omnipresent Ps 139:7.

*Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים) (See exegesis on verse one)

*Merachefet* (מְרַחֵף) Verb Pi translated 'hover'; *SyriacPashitta* translates it as 'move gently', also 'cherish' and 'brood'; Pi imperfect 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular – of vulture hovering over the young (עֲלִירָחַף), Deut 32:11; 'Spirit of God hovering over the face of waters' (הַיָּם מְפַגְּעֵלֵי) Gen 1:2(P), or perhaps in Syriac version, 'brooding' (and fertilizing).

*Al* (עַל): (See above).

*Paney* (פָּנֵי): Construct of the noun masculine *paneh* (פָּנֵה) meaning 'face', also plural *panim* (פָּנִים) meaning 'faces', so פָּנֵי means 'face of'. It describes the location of the action of *ruach* (רוּחַ) in the creation narrative.

*Hamayim* (הַיָּם): Noun masculine of the word מַי 'water' which occurs only in plural מַיִם 'waters', prefixed with the definite article 'the' (הַ) translated 'of the waters'. In this verse, it denotes the primeval deep. It also denotes waters of a spring or well and of streams and canals, especially as condition of fertility (Deut 8:7; 10:7; Is 1:30).

### The Contemporary View of Anglican Priests and Postulants on *Ruach* in Gen 1:1-5

On the identity of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5, 52.5% of the respondents identify *ruach* as the spirit of God. 9.6% of the respondents added that *ruach* in the passage under review is both spirit and breath of God. Another 9.6% of the respondents went further to explain that *ruach* in the said passage is spirit, wind and breath of God. 4.8% explain that *ruach* can be identified as wind, emotional and intellectual life. Another 4.8% of the respondents identify *ruach* as spirit, power and life of God. 4.8% of the respondents simply view *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 as a person of the Trinity. 14.3% of the respondents did not supply answer to the question.

On the function of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5, 43% of the respondents opinion show that the function of *ruach* is to give life to God's creation. 9.6% of the respondents add that *ruach* did not only give life to the creation but also provided the word that spoke the features of the cosmos into existence. 14.3% of the respondents posit that *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 is a revelation of God at creation through which the creation was illuminated. Illumination here is explained to be figurative, not the physical light. 9.6% of the respondents consider the function of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 as that of impartation of creative power which transformed the raw world into a functional and orderly one. 14.3% of the respondents did not respond to the question.

On the significance of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 in the Contemporary Anglican Christian view, 43% of the respondents maintain that the position and function of *ruach* is not limited to the event of the passage under review. According to this view, *ruach* is still actively brooding over and blowing upon Christians,

the sanctified life. 37% of the respondents believe that the use of ministerial and spiritual gifts for God's service holds their possibility to *ruach*. Furthermore, 16% of the respondents view the word of God or word of prophecy as issues of *ruach* which started at creation and continues to this modern Christian era. 4% of the respondents have no opinion on the significance of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 in the contemporary Anglican Christian view.

From the above results of interview, over 80% of the respondents could identify *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 as spirit of God, with a third of this percentage able to consider wind or breath or both in addition to the former. Perhaps the 52.5% of the respondents who insist on the spirit of God alone as the identity of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 agree with the school of thought that considers the fluttering activity of *ruach* in the passage to contemplate a personality. The 4.8% of the respondents, who identify *ruach* as impersonal, referring to it as wind seen to maintain the intangibility of *ruach* do that as they consider the emotional and intellectual life of its meaning. The 4.8% of the respondents who identify *ruach* as spirit, power and life of God seen to present a homogenous identity of *ruach*, viewing the identity from holy spirit, *agiospneuma* of the New Testament. It is worrisome that 14.3% of the respondents could not submit their opinion on the identity of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 so as to assess their view. However, the research can generally infer that the priests and postulants have an appreciable knowledge of the identity of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5.

While the priests and postulants appear to view the events of Gen 1:1-5 as remote, not having a wholesome view and authoritative standpoint on all that *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 offers, they appear to base their understanding on the holy spirit of the New Testament. This is to say that for their view of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 to be modern, it will naturally bear a coloration of that which constitutes the context of the viewer. In this sense, *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 can be appreciated in a contemporary view as apt and not abstract. It is on this premise that the priests and postulants, in their modern view of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 conceive the spirit of God who does not only give life to the creation but also delivers gifts to mankind to enable them carry out specific roles towards fulfilling divine purpose. Such gift as the power to dispense the word of God or prophecy is captured as rooted in the same that spoke the creation into existence in Gen 1:3ff. It is also in the same vein the priests and postulants conceive the power to do miracles among contemporary Anglican Christians as rooted in the creative power of God which *ruach* symbolizes.

The greater percentage of the priests and postulants by identifying *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 as the spirit of God alone seem to believe that attention should be paid to God in whom trust and faith is built, not in wind and breath which they may consider substances of the creation, though constitute the meaning of *ruach* also. Though the priests and postulants of Anglican Diocese of Enugu hold a good sense of intellectual inquiry about *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5, there is a projection of the spiritual essence of *ruach* in their contemporary Christian view as shown in the result of interview.

In essence, the Anglican priests and postulants of Enugu Diocese infer that *ruach* sustains the progress and viability of priests in the Anglican Communion. They consider that the position and function of *ruach* is not limited to the passage but also give spiritual impetus to the ordination of Anglican priesthood and the entire profession of the Anglican faith.

In the case of *ruach* in modern theological perspectives, Johnson (2021) submits that the view point is the Jewish point of view where it is evident that *ruach* is an existential term. At its heart is the experience of a mysterious awesome power, the mighty invisible force of wind, the mystery of vitality, and the supernatural power that brings into existence the creation and transforms all matter. Since this study is evaluating the view of priests and postulants on *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 in a modern era, it is in full conformity with theological perspectives which Kalu & Low (2008) explain as the study that focuses on the interpretation, analysis, critique, assessment, and constructive development of Christian thought in the past and present. Rational study of the theological concepts and texts such as *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 respectively is one of the core principles that give rise to the dynamics of modern theological perspectives.

Following the above considerations, one would see that the literal meaning of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 has, to a considerable extent, come to bear various connotations in the modern view of priests and postulants. The attempt to retain the relevance of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 in the contemporary Anglican Christian view necessitates the contextualization of the concept as observed by Dockery (2018) who notes that developing a Christian worldview is an ever advancing process for us in which Christian convictions more and more shape our participation in culture. Priests and Postulants, as theologians must provide answers to such questions as, who is *ruach* to the contemporary Anglican Christian? How does he contribute to his Christian faith and experience in his own world. For Priests and Postulants, as theologians and critical thinkers for that matter, rationalization is inevitable. Such rationalization will seek a common ground between a remote biblical text and the contemporary reality and expectations. The modern Anglican Christian is however very cautious not to allow experience and expectations overshadow the biblical text because he has a fundamental belief that the scripture is the basis for faith.

Modern theological perspectives provide basis for considering *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 in a contemporary view as to meet the intellectual and spiritual demands of the contemporary Anglican Christians. It is in such perspective that the identity and significance of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 can be considered as same with the Holy Spirit of the Christian Theology. Both are viewed to reveal divine presence, accomplish divine mission in any dispensation, conveys divine power and life. The modern theological perspectives therefore allow the contemporary Anglican priests and postulants to see *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 as the eternal presence of God in his creation through his spirit.

The contemporary Anglican priests and postulants do not only see the relevance of *ruach* in the creation, being the life giver, but also consider that the relevance of *ruach* for the church cannot be over emphasized. Without the presence of *ruach* in the church all activities and programmes of the church will become routine and uninspired. *Ruach* is acknowledged as the life giver and the one by whose power the work of God is done. In the church, *ruachadonai* endows Christians with diverse spiritual gifts with which to function in God's service. These gifts when put into practice will make the work of God easier and interesting, making Christian service worthwhile. In the modern Anglican Christian view, the fascinating work of God did not end with the creation but continues in the manifestation of *ruach* even in the contemporary Christian church. The presence of *ruach* is seen as a tool for Christian ministry. The work of God cannot be done through human manipulation or worldly wisdom but by the power of *ruach* through his enabling grace. *Ruach* is the enabler, energizer and motivator.

In the contemporary Anglican priests and postulants, *ruach* is generally acknowledged as responsible for providing guidance towards the election of church leaders, particularly during the election of bishops and archbishops. He is the one that empowers leaders in the congregation to build up God's people and express God's love to one another. He calls particular people out for specific purpose, provides direction and the gifting for the service of God and humanity.

Therefore, for Christians to be relevant, they have to recognize the presence of *ruach* and identify their gifting and their area of service, to which God has called them, and function therein accordingly. In which case, Christians are to see themselves as mere vessels or instruments through which *ruachelohim* continues the work of giving life to the creation. The manifestation of spiritual gifts and ministry gifts for service to God is neither a show of human ability or might but a proof of the active presence of *ruach* in the place of God's worship and service. This calls for humility and not pomposity on the side of Christians.

It is even more serious to consider that the function of *ruach* grants Christians the privilege of being co-labourers with God. It can be considered privilege because during the creation in Gen 1:1-5, God did the creation alone. *Ruach* functioned without co-working with humanity. So God is capable of working out what he wants without involving humans. However, God created mankind and trusted him with a mandate to take charge of the creation (Gen 1:28), giving mankind the grace and capacity to be involved with him in the divine task.

Unfortunately, disobedience and sin made mankind to lose his sense of responsibility to God. As a result, mankind progressively declined in his capacity to handle divine task and to satisfy God's requirement of him. Human race degenerated to moral bankruptcy, facing the fierce consequence of coming under God's judgment. As act of mercy, God intervened to redeem mankind by his Son, Jesus Christ. The redeemed are to uphold Christ and the continuous work of redemption by constituting the church who are described as Christians in this study. To be enabled to get back to the divine task, the church or Christians must be empowered by God through his *ruach*.

The moral implication of the contemporary Anglican priests and postulants' view of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 hinges on the fact that the life of the creation is only possible because of the presence of *ruach-ehohim* over the creation, apparently positioned as the source of life as noted by Ellington (2009). The contemporary Anglican priests and postulants do not hold life here as mere existence but the godly, resourceful and the purposeful essence of the human being already intended by God the creator. The loss of this essence is indicative of the absence of the active presence of *ruach*. No wonder why Jesus Christ had to breathe on his disciples to reissue them with the *agiospneuma* (Holy Spirit John 20:22). By doing so, Jesus ensured the restoration of his disciples to the functional control of *ruach-ehohim*, who sanctifies, guides and empowers Christians to work out God's plan and purpose in their daily living. The word sanctification is the process of making holy. The contemporary Anglican priests and postulants have the fundamental understanding that the Christians, being the constituents of the *ecclesia*, the church, are the people called out to be holy in a sinful world. Again, the absence of holiness on the side of Christians is an indication of non-submission to *ruach* which can be catastrophic on the creation. Sin grows and destroys the word because humans do not yield to God and his *ruach*. How then can life giving be sustained in the creation by *ruach*?

The contemporary Anglican priests and postulants seem to understand that the primeval world which Gen 1:1-5 describes appears to be a symbol of the catastrophic situation of any world that is not under the control of God's *ruach*. The expression, symbol of catastrophic situation, implies that it will not be the literal replication of a world without form and is void, but world that is morally bankrupt, lacking the essence of life by God's standards. It is a reality today that in various human societies where people chose to live permissive and ungodly lives, people tend to present themselves as formless, being neither male nor of female gender. They openly declare their emptiness of the essence of life to the extent that human beings obtain the right to marry animals and have sexual affairs with them which is called bestiality. These are just few examples of the signs of depravity, marking the moral decadence that plague the world that does not yield to the control of God's *ruach*.

The contemporary Anglican priests and postulants have come to be sufficiently aware of the need to sustain the fellowship between God's people and God's *ruach*. They have come to know that no impact can be made in terms of sustaining and developing life in God's creation without submitting to the holistic influence of *ruach-ehohim*. This necessitates the sense of urgency with which the contemporary Anglican Christians of Enugu Diocese propagate the gospel of Jesus Christ to ensure the rapid and effective conversion of sinners, and if possible bring everyone to the Christian fold where everyone is opportune to be under the grace of God's *ruach*.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion therefore, this study on *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 in the contemporary view of Anglican priests and postulants has provided basis for finding the relevance of *ruach* not only in Gen 1:1-5 but also in the world of the contemporary Anglican Christians. The attempt to find a common ground through the interplay of the concept of *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 and the concept of the holy spirit, *agiospneuma* of the Christian theology produces the result that can be of great value to the contemporary Anglican Christians faith. Thus the whole essence of this study may be regarded as invaluable, considering that it will not only enhance knowledge about *ruach* in Gen 1:1-5 but also faith among contemporary Anglican Christians and moral sanity of our world.



## References

- Coney, J. (1999). Ruach: *Hebrew word for God*. Retrieved 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2016 from [http://www.adishakti.org/ruach\\_the\\_breath\\_of\\_god\\_experienced\\_daily\\_as\\_cool\\_breeze\\_wind\\_by\\_syst\\_i.htm](http://www.adishakti.org/ruach_the_breath_of_god_experienced_daily_as_cool_breeze_wind_by_syst_i.htm).
- Dockery, D. (2018). *Shaping a Christian World View: An Introduction*. Memphis: Union University.
- Drazin, I. (2016). *Hidden Secrets About Creation*. Retrieved 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2016 from <http://booksnthoghts.com/hidden-secrets-about-creation/>
- Ellington, S. (2009). *The Face of God as His Creating Spirit: The Interplay of Yahweh's Panin and ruach in Psalm 104:29-30*. Grand Rapids: Pickwick.
- Exposito, J., Fasching, D. and Lewis, T. (2006). *World Religions Today*. New York: Oxford University.
- Fergusson, D. (2014). *Creation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Harris (1997). *God the Creator and Lord of All*. New York: Zondervan.
- Johnson, S. (2021). *What is Modern Theology*. Retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021 from <https://www.wise-geek.com/what-is-modern-theology.htm>.
- Kalu O. & Low, A (Eds.). (2008). *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Process and Local Identities*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans.
- Neufeld, T. (2011). The Spirit/Wind/breath of God's creation. Retrieved 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2016 from <http://timneufeld.blogs.com/occasio/2011/06/the-spiritwindbreath-of-gods-creation.html>.
- Snodderly, B. (2006). An Exegetical Perspective on the Origin of Violence in the Context of Missions with Comparisons to the Missiology of Ralph Winter. Retrieved 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021 from <https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=Ruach+in+Genesis+1%3A2+in+modern+christian>
- Tasker, D. R. (2013). *Ruach Elohim: The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*. Retrieved 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2016 from [http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2013/01/ruqach\\_elohim-the-holy-spirit-in-the-old-testament](http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2013/01/ruqach_elohim-the-holy-spirit-in-the-old-testament).
- Ugwueye, L.E., Uzuegbunam, E. N. and Umeanolue, I.L. (2012). *Contemporary African Relevance of the Genesis Creation Myth*. Retrieved 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2016 from <http://www.afrevjo.net/afrevijah>
- Williams, D. T. (2014). *The Spirit in Creation*. Cambridge: University Press.