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SIN IS A PERSON: SOME ONTOLOGICAL METAPHORS IN THE BIBLE

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the ontological metaphors relating to the personification of sin in the Bible. It aims to explore the metaphorical conceptualisation of sin as a person, as suggested in the sin expressions. Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory is used in analysing the data. The findings of the study indicate that sin is conceptualised as king, master, lord, paymaster, mother, and child. The use of these conceptual metaphors indicates that the writers of the selected biblical texts intended to project a deeper meaning of sin beyond the literal meaning of sin in daily language. The ontological metaphorical use of sin in the Bible seems to give a greater effect in comprehension to the reader of the texts.

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern discussions of metaphors by linguists have revealed a serious consideration of metaphors beyond simply a mere linguistic figure of speech. Cognitive metaphor theorists have moved the discussions from a simple linguistic discussion to a conceptual level of thinking about metaphors. While this shift has been popular in many disciplines, its application in biblical studies has not been fully explored.

Sin is a moral and religious concept that needs clarification in many ways. The concept of sin is at the very core of the Christian faith. However, it is not easy to explain such an abstract religious concept. There must be a way of comprehending



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such an abstract concept in concrete terms. Lakoff and Johnson (1980:40) opine that the conceptual systems of religions are metaphorical in nature.

Conceptual metaphor refers to understanding one idea in terms of another. It helps us understand complex ideas in simple terms. An example of this is the understanding of time in terms of money (“I have to spend a lot of time on this assignment.”) It is useful in giving insight to abstract theories. Conceptual metaphors shape our everyday communication. Besides their use in communication, we perceive and act in accordance with conceptual metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) identified three categories of conceptual metaphors, namely structural, orientational and ontological metaphors. This discussion focuses on the ontological metaphor, a type of figurative speech comparison, in which something concrete is projected on something abstract.

In their discussion of ontological metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) observe that the conceptualisation of our experience under the conceptual domain of tangible things (or material things) enables us to extract experiences and ideas and view them as concrete substances or objects. Nguyen (2015) is of the view that, once we are able to conceptualise experience into a specific material or object, we can then classify, quantify, group, and so on. Our human experience of physical substances and objects provides a basis for understanding. When we are able to understand our experiences in terms of objects and substances, we are able to pick parts of our experience and treat them as entities or objects. Thus, we ourselves are a great source domain, and personification makes use of this source domain.

Personification is not only common in everyday discourse, but it also abounds in biblical literature. In personification, we give human qualities to non-human entities. For example, sin is not human, yet it is given qualities of human beings such as growth and childbearing. In this article, I discuss the kind of personification that transfers human actions, behaviours, qualities, thoughts and feelings to abstract objects such as sin. For example, in the expression “sin is crouching at your door”, sin, as a kind of human condition that has no feet, is conceptualised as personified, because it is endowed with the human action of a predator lying in wait for its prey. Once a non-person experience (e.g. SIN) has been given the status of a person through an ontological metaphor, the experience conceptualised can be structured further by employing structural metaphors (e.g. SIN IS A PERSON).

From the point of view of ontological metaphors, personification can help us have an in-depth understanding of the metaphorical conceptualisation of abstract realities. The question is: What are the conceptual metaphors that personify sin in the Bible? The analysis is based on the Greek New Testament passages related to sin as a person and their translations into English.

This article aims to identify and analyse metaphorical concepts relating to the personification of sin in the Bible. The purpose of this study is to explore how these sin expressions instantiate the general metaphor SIN IS A PERSON. It is believed that the awareness of such metaphorical conceptualisations can help in the translation process. Therefore, the study explores the conceptual understanding of sin, approaching this from the point of view of ontological metaphors, to illustrate how they work in religious texts. This study argues that one way of understanding the biblical concept of sin beyond its simple dictionary definition is by extracting relevant conceptual metaphors from scriptural references to sin in the Bible.

It is obvious from the study that cognitive linguistics investigations into sin metaphors contribute a good deal to our understanding of the ways in which people conceptualise sin. Unfortunately, previous research has overlooked metaphorical patterns of sin conceptualisation in the Bible. The present study attempts to fill this gap.

The article begins with an introduction to the study and a brief discussion of the biblical concept of sin. Next, attention is given to the discussion of the conceptual metaphor, with the focus on the ontological metaphor. This is followed by a section on the material and methods for the study. Subsequent sections examine the ontological metaphorical conceptualisation of sin, specifically the personification of sin. The article ends with a discussion of the findings and conclusion.

1.1 The biblical concept of sin

Sin is defined as

an action or a type of behavior which is believed to break the laws of God ... any action or behaviour people disapprove of or consider morally wrong (Sinclair 2006:1350).

This study focuses on the meaning of sin in the New Testament Greek text. Among the Greek New Testament expressions of sin are παράβασις, *parabasis*, meaning “to step across the line”, ἀνομία, *anomia*, meaning “lawlessness”, ἀδικία, *adikia*, meaning “unrighteousness”, ἀπιστία, *apistia*, meaning “unbelief”, ἀκαθασία, *akathasia*, meaning “uncleanness”, and ἁμαρτία, *hamartia*, meaning “to miss the mark”.

The term chosen for this discussion is *hamartia*. In fact, this word derives from the verb *hamartano*, which involves the imagery of the work of an archer. This word means sin in the sense of missing the target, at which one should have shot and simultaneously hitting the region outside of that target, which one is not supposed to have hit. This has connotations of both committing

and omitting an action. The spectrum of meanings for the word *hamartano* include an act of “wrongdoing” in the sense of committing an act that should not be done; an error as a result of ignorance; the error of judgement, and a flaw in conduct. To simplify the meaning, *hamartia* in the New Testament can be understood as wrong action and tragic negligence that leads to a chain of unfortunate consequences causing destruction and, ultimately, death. Sin is, therefore, a defect in character, a punishable vice, a moral failing that brings disastrous results.

In the New Testament, *hamartia* also means lawlessness (1 John 3:4). In other words, it is the breaking of the divine law through action or inaction, speech and thought. Besides its meaning as falling short of God’s law, the term also includes the violation of society’s moral and ethical ideals. Such an understanding of *hamartia* is reflected in Sinclair’s (2006) definition of sin.

2. METAPHOR IN COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

This section presents definitions and various categories of conceptual metaphors analysed in this article. Metaphors are found in our everyday conversations and the literature we read, whether we are aware thereof or not. Though many have perceived metaphors as a mere figurative speech employed to embellish speeches and texts, we can extract more from metaphors in terms of how human beings structure their concepts and thoughts. Thus, metaphors are not merely linguistic ornaments that solely belong to literary and rhetorical discourse but, according to the Cognitive Metaphor Theory, they are experientially motivated (Aldokyayel 2014).

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory was first outlined by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), who opine that metaphors reveal how people perceive their world, structure their experience, and relate these to other people. They note that language abounds in concepts that reveal how speakers conceptualise and make sense of the world (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:3). For example, metaphors can help make an abstract experience such as love more concrete by describing love in terms of a journey, a disease, war, or as a physical force (Lakoff & Johnson 2003:49). Another cognitive linguistic view defines metaphor simply as “understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain” (Kövecses 2000:4). For example, in the metaphor DEATH IS A JOURNEY, one conceptual domain (death) is understood in the terms of another conceptual domain (journey). In this instance, the *source domain* refers to the conceptual domain from which the metaphorical expression is drawn (journey), and the *target domain* refers to the conceptual domain that is understood in this way (death). Kövecses (2000:4) observes that “the

target domain is the domain that we try to understand through the use of the source domain”.

The theory provides an important framework for explaining metaphors in language as well as cognition. In analysing the metaphors of sin in the Bible, this article employs the Conceptual Metaphor Theory as its framework.

This work mentions three of the subtypes of metaphors, according to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980:10-33) definition. Based on their cognitive functions, these categories include structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors (Kövecses 2002). The structural metaphor provides mappings between the source and target domains. For example, the metaphor SALVATION IS A JOURNEY maps a good deal of knowledge between the concept of journey and that of salvation. Such conceptual correspondences indicate that both concepts (salvation and journey) have a beginning (departure) and an end (destination). They have obstacles along the way, both have the spending of time, and so on. Thus, structural metaphors are detailed mapped knowledge.

The orientational metaphor is a coherent metaphor that helps make sense of concepts in a coherent manner, based on our image-schema knowledge of the world. Examples include SADNESS IS DOWN, HAPPINESS IS UP, and so on. We thus employ the image-schematic knowledge, which we acquire from our experiences through our interactions with the world, in order to evaluate our concepts. Some orientational concepts on which we base our evaluations include the concepts of ABOVE and BENEATH, UP and DOWN, FRONT and BEHIND, IN and OUT, and so on.

Cognitive linguists view the ontological metaphor as involving ways of viewing intangible concepts as entities. The concepts include feelings, activities, and ideas (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). When these experiences are identified as substances, they can be categorised, grouped, and quantified, and by this means, we can reason about them (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Therefore, ontological metaphors help people speak about their experiences in a concrete way, thus helping them identify, refer to, and quantify the non-physical aspects of their experiences (Aldokyayel 2014).

Through understanding our experience with physical objects and substances, we can view parts of these experiences as discrete entities. The ontological metaphor provides a way to view events, activities and ideas (target domain) as objects, and containers (source domain) that are commonly found in speeches to help the audience understand the abstract concept in terms of the entities (Kövecses 2002:34). The ontological metaphor considers our experiences as an object, a substance, an entity, or even human. This discussion focuses on the ontological subtype, which comprises personification, entity, and container metaphors. I will deal with personification.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980:33-34) define personification as an ontological metaphor, “where the physical object is further specified as being a person”. For Graesser *et al.* (1989:144), “personification occurs when animals, objects, social organisations and abstract notions are given qualities of people”. Personifying non-humans as human beings helps us understand non-humans better (Kövecses 2002). According to Zhu (1991), personification can be classified into the following kinds: non-living creature, living creature, and abstraction personification. The kind of personification relevant to this study is abstraction personification, “which attributes human speeches, actions, behaviours, etc. to abstract objects, such as time, opinions, diseases, hunger, and wars” (Deyin 2018:21).

3. METHOD

This study uses the Bible corpus. The Bible is a collection of sacred texts that the Christian faith considers to be a record of narratives, laws, poetry, prophecies, and letters divinely inspired to manage the relationship between God and human beings, and the remainder of creation. In this instance, the Bible corpus represents an appropriate resource for the linguistic analysis of sin, a core religious concept. Expressions of sin that are related to ontological metaphors, specifically personification, have been selected for discussion.

To translate the Bible, it is important to devise relevant strategies to help the translator handle the content and style of the text efficiently. The Bible abounds in idioms and figures of speech. The various metaphors in the texts need to be understood, in order to know what the author seeks to present. Some of these expressions could be understood in terms of ontological metaphors, as explored in this research.

The ontological metaphors relating to sin are categorised into containers and personification, according to their different cognitive functions. The functions that the ontological metaphors play in the selected text are also analysed. Throughout the article, capital letters are used for conceptual metaphors and metaphorical expressions are highlighted in bold.

The source domain selected for the analysis in this study is the domain of PERSON or HUMAN BEING. The human being source domain is rooted in basic human experiences such as rulership and human growth. The domain of container is rooted in the idea of containment, in which a living being, or an idea is located in a bounded space. The domain of animals is rooted in the encounter of human beings with dangerous animals. People employ their experiences and knowledge in such areas in an attempt to make sense of various abstract target concepts.

This article, therefore, investigates the conceptual mappings from the source domains listed above onto the domain of sin. The metaphorical expressions analysed are gathered from the Bible corpus. The linguistic data was collected, employing the following metaphor identification method, that is, the source-domain-oriented approach. Deignan (1999) originally developed this method for corpus texts. Stefanowitsch (2006) further describes the source-domain-oriented method and its application to corpus texts. In this study, the method is applied to the texts of the Bible. In this approach, I begin by selecting individual lexical items associated with the source domains, which I intend to investigate, as listed above. I then search for the selected lexical items in the Bible, often referring to a Bible concordance. Next, I retrieve relevant metaphorical expressions from the biblical text for the selected source-domain lexical items. I then classify these under their conceptual metaphors. The following example illustrates this method.

One source-domain expression selected to be analysed is “bring forth”, which is related to the domain of the CHILD. The following metaphorical expression of sin was found in the Bible by searching for the expression “bring forth”: “Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin” (James 1:15a). In this expression, sin is described in terms of a child. Hence, it is classified under the conceptual metaphor, SIN IS A CHILD. James 1:15b: “and sin, when it is mature, brings forth death”. Considering the same source-domain lexical item being “bring forth”, sin in this context is described in terms of motherhood. It is thus classified under the conceptual metaphor SIN IS A MOTHER. I will discuss this in a later section.

4. CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF SIN: PERSONIFICATION

Personification is a kind of ontological metaphor that projects human characters, actions, and behaviours to non-human entities, objects, or substances. For example, when SIN IS AN ENTITY is conceptualised as being a person, it leads to the metaphor of SIN IS A HUMAN. More specifically, we can have SIN IS AN ENEMY, SIN IS A BABY, and so on. Lakoff and Johnson (1980:26) suggest that viewing an experience as an entity allows us to refer, quantify, and identify a particular aspect thereof. For instance, in the metaphor SIN IS AN ENTITY, we view SIN (target domain) as ENTITY (source domain) via our experience of increase in sin and expressed in the passage, οὗ δὲ ἐπλεόνασεν ἡ ἁμαρτία ὑπερπερίσσευσεν ἡ χάρις, “and where sin abounds, grace increased all the more” (Rom. 5:20).

The following metaphorical expressions in examples [1]-[5] are linguistic manifestations of the metaphor SIN IS A PERSON. The person metaphors

identified in this study map the source domains of KING, MASTER, LORD, CHILD, and MOTHER onto the target domain of SIN.

4.1 Sin is a king

[1] GRK: ἵνα ὡσπερ ἐβασίλευσεν ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ, (Rom. 5:21).

ENG: that as sin has reigned unto death

Sin is understood “to be ruler over” (*basileusin*) people. The noun form *basileus* is Greek for “king”. Thus, sin is the ruler or king over people. SIN has the power to rule (Hebrew, *masha*). Cain is told to reign over sin or he will be a slave to sin. Note the words: “And unto you shall be his desire, and you will rule over him” (Gen. 4:7b). The Greek word ἄρχεις, is derived from ἄρχω, *árchō*, primarily meaning to be first (in political rank or power). By implication, it means to reign over. Thus, the Greek ἄρχεις, in Genesis 4:7, suggests the metaphor SIN IS A RULER, SIN IS A CHIEF and SIN IS A LEADER.

4.2 Sin is a master

[2] GRK: τοῦ μηκέτι **δουλεύειν** ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτία (Rom. 6:6).

ENG: that we should no longer **be slaves** to sin.

In this metaphorical expression, sin is characterised in terms of a master. The idea of sin as a master in this example can also be found in Romans 6:17, 20. Slavery is a state, in which one is subject to the absolute dominion of another person. This was the case of the slave (Greek *doulos*) in the days of Paul the Apostle and author of the epistle to the Romans. The *doulos* is a bond slave without his own will, except for his master’s. In the 1st-century Roman Empire, a slave was property under Roman law. The master’s command was the slave’s law. S/he had no legal personhood. To his/her master, a slave was like any of the master’s tools. The slave’s whole life was surrendered to his/her master. Slaves could be subjected to torture, corporal punishment and even summary execution. So is anyone who is a slave to sin, Paul seems to imply.

The antonym of *doulos* is *kurios*. The Greek term *kurios* means “lord” or “master”. The term also connotes ownership. Thus, to serve sin is to become its undisputable possessor. The metaphor instantiated, in this case, is obvious, that HUMANS ARE SLAVES TO SIN. This metaphor entails the inability to rule oneself as a result of being in the grip of a callous and brutal master (SIN) that holds its captive in bonds, stripping it of all rights and privileges. Hence, the conceptual metaphor of SIN IS A CRUEL MASTER.

4.3 Sin is a lord

[3] GRK: ἁμαρτία γὰρ ὑμῶν οὐ **κυριεύσει** (Rom. 6:14).

ENG: For sin shall not **have dominion over** you

The Greek word rendered “dominion” means lordship. Sin is said “to lord it over” (*kurieuein*) others. *Kurios* is the Greek word for “Lord”. The word has connotations of total “possession” or rule over people. Barclay (2000:120) observes that:

It is to be remembered that the power of the master over the slave was absolute. There was no part of life, no moment of time, no activity, which was the personal property of the slave. He belonged to his master in the most total way. So, man is totally under the dominion of sin.

This example suggests that PEOPLE ARE SLAVES and PEOPLE ARE PRISONERS to sin, needing to be set free (Rom. 6:18). This implies that RIGHTEOUSNESS IS A DELIVERER.

4.4 Sin is a paymaster

[4] GRK: Τὰ γὰρ ὀψώνια τῆς ἁμαρτίας θάνατος, τὸ δὲ χάρισμα τοῦ θεοῦ ζωὴ αἰώνιος (Rom. 6:23).

ENG: the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.

The Greek word used, in this instance, for wages is ὀψώνια (*opsonia*). The singular of the word, *opsonion*, is a combination of two words, ὄψων (*opson*), “meat” or “food” and ὠνέομαι (*oneomai*), “to buy”. Thus, the word literally refers to “the purchasing of meat”. The word *opsonia* refers to rations for a Roman soldier, that is, that part of the soldier’s pay or support given in place of salary. It appears from *opsonia* that Paul, the writer of the letter to the Romans, had in mind the soldier’s allowance or stipend. In Romans 6:23, *opsonia* refers to the wages for evil deeds, and sin is the rewarder. Having worked for sin, the worker’s pay is death; thus, DEATH IS A STIPEND. Hence, we have a personification of sin, not merely as a paymaster, but SIN AS A MORTIFEROUS PAYMASTER.

In this verse, the word “gift” is the Greek *charisma*, meaning gift of grace, gratuity, or endowment. God’s χάρισμα, *charisma*, is his gift given out of his unconquerable benevolence. This gift galvanises the charm, joy and thankfulness in the beneficiary. We see two persons bringing their rewards: sin paying people with death for working for it, and God endowing people with

eternal life. The opposites are “sin” and “God”; their respective rewards are “death” and “eternal life”. The *charisma* is life; the *opsonia* is death.

4.5 Sin is a mother

[5] GRK: εἴτα ἡ ἐπιθυμία συλλαβοῦσα τίκτει ἁμαρτίαν, ἡ δὲ ἁμαρτία ἀποτελεσθεῖσα ἀποκυεῖ θάνατον (James 1:15).

ENG: then when lust has conceived, it **brings forth** sin, and sin when it is fully grown, **brings forth** death.

It is assumed that this example refers to human growth rather than to other living things such as animals or plants. Motherhood is a fundamental human experience. People grow from infancy into adulthood. When they become mature, they have the reproductive ability. Childbearing is perhaps the most profound human experience, as that is how all human beings entered into this world, except Adam and Eve.

In the above example, James, in his epistle, conceptualises the genealogy of death, tracing its progenitor, through sin, to lust. This passage conceptualises sin as a mother. The metaphor presented is motivated by the natural feminine experience of reproductivity. It maps the source domain of MOTHER onto the target domain of SIN.

The following stages of human growth are mapped onto the various stages of sin: birth (baby), infancy, adulthood, pregnancy, and giving birth. The baby image characterises the initial stage of human growth. Sin is born at the beginning of this stage. The baby grows into an adult. We view adulthood as a very important stage of human development, because our associations of adulthood induce the expectation of reproduction on the part of the mature person. In the case of a woman, this induces the expectation of the potential to become pregnant and have a baby. This stage of fruition in a woman’s growth corresponds to the stage of the development of sin, when its pregnancy yields a concrete result, that is, the birth of death. Thus, in example [5], James conceptualises a cosmos in which sin’s transgenerational doom develops from ἐπιθυμία, *epithumia* (lust), through ἁμαρτία, *hamartia* (sin) to θάνατος, *thanatos* (death). It is significant to note that example [5], which maps the maturity stage of human growth onto death, conveys the image of death as a mortiferous child. Thus, the baby of sin is death. At the final stage, when death is born, sin’s dreadful mission is accomplished.

The Greek word *epithumia*, lust, is conceptualised as a living being possessing feminine attributes. It is capable of becoming pregnant and bearing a child. It has, in itself, the nature of *hamartia*, sin; hence, its capability of having sin as its progeny. In this instance, there is a family of three

generations, beginning with the grandmother *epithumia*, the mother *hamartia*, and the child *thanatos*. Lust, sin, and death are all personified.

The Greek word συλλαμβανω, *sullambano*, means “to become pregnant” or “to conceive”. Sin goes through, as it were, the stages of human development: from a zygote, to an embryo, and then a foetus; born as a baby, it grows into a mature adult female, ready to reproduce a fatal side of its nature. Thus, SIN IS A PREGNANT MOTHER who carries DEATH AS its FOETUS. When sin grows into a mature woman, it is delivered of a child called death. DEATH IS A CHILD of sin. SIN IS A CHILD, a deadly granddaughter of lust, also meaning SIN IS A SEED. The genealogy of death is, therefore, made manifest in James 1:15, that is, LUST begets SIN, and SIN begets DEATH. This yields two metaphors, namely LUST IS A MOTHER and LUST IS A GRANDMOTHER. Sin is a fertile person, from whom nature should expect nothing but the birth of death. Sin produces death to its habitat, the human being. Sin has absolutely nothing positive or pleasant about it. It is ugly and fatal. To entertain it is synonymous with having intercourse with it.

It is evident that the metaphor SIN IS A MOTHER describes sin in terms of a mother. In this instance, the conceptual correspondences are as follows. The source MOTHER maps onto the target SIN, and the source, CHILD maps onto the target DEATH as an offspring of sin.

It is important to note that example [5], which maps the fruition stage or delivery stage of a mother’s pregnancy onto death, conveys the image of a dangerous offspring, a mortiferous baby. Such an image symbolises the negative consequences of sin.

4.6 Sin is a child

To be born is a natural human experience. In example [5], we see lust as the mother of sin. It is thus evident from the passage that SIN IS A CHILD. This metaphor presents sin in terms of a child and a person’s lust as a person, to be precise, the mother of that child.

The source of sin is lust, which is conceptualised, in this instance, as a mother. In our human society, the mother is responsible for nursing her child. The lesson conveyed by the metaphor SIN IS A CHILD is that, just as the human child is sustained and survives and grows into maturity by the mother’s nourishment and up-bringing, so does sin survive and grow into maturity if we nurture and protect it as its parent. The consequences are that, when it is fully grown, it becomes a parent of death. Thus, sin is conceptualised as a person, because people have a life cycle and sin has a growth cycle. Therefore, for the metaphor SIN IS A PERSON, the mapping principle is perceived to have

to do with the life cycle of a person because of the occurrence of the lexical item “growth”.

Sin will not be born if we do not court lust, have intercourse with it by entertaining it in our hearts, and allow it to grow into adulthood and give birth to death. By implication, we are all responsible for our sin, if we permit lust to be impregnated.

5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

We have noted that, in the Bible, sin can be conceptualised as a person. Personification is an important ontological metaphor in the language of the Bible. This has been demonstrated in the discussion of the metaphorical expressions of sin in the New Testament. Considering sin as a person, we can conceptualise it as a king, a master, a lord, a paymaster, a mother, and a child.

The implication of this study confirms the strong relation between the abstract religious concepts and the concrete objects or persons in cognitive studies of languages. It reinforces an interdisciplinary relationship between linguistics and theology. Finally, the findings have demonstrated that the study of cognitive linguistics forms an important area in the study of biblical doctrines that is worth exploring in theological studies – an area that has not been given a great deal of attention. Thus, beside adding to the literature, the present study widens the path to further cognitive studies of the language(s) and texts of the Bible.

The aim of the article was to explore the ontological metaphors of sin, specifically, personification, in the Bible, drawing insight from the cognitive approach to metaphors. This article introduced the set of conceptual metaphors defined by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and focused on the ontological metaphors. Of the ontological metaphors, the focus was on personification. The ontological conceptual metaphor was examined, by taking the text of the Bible as a case in point. It is evident from the study that there is no positive metaphor for sin. It is a bad person. Christianity's effort is channelled towards ousting this notorious ruler, ruthless master, an uncompromising lord, a mortiferous mother, and a child as death itself.

It is evident, from this study, how biblical idioms relating to sin are motivated by conceptual metaphors in a systematic way. Therefore, other idioms relating to various doctrinal references such as salvation, repentance, righteousness, holiness, and so on, can also be analysed, using the conceptual metaphor theory. This lends support to the feasibility of using the conceptual metaphor theory, specifically ontological metaphors, in teaching and learning idioms in religious texts to complement the traditional teaching method. Moreover,

understanding how a speaker or author has used metaphors can be of great benefit to translators and interpreters, in order to better comprehend the speeches and the texts they encounter.

The article suggests that the understanding of metaphorical concepts of sin will assist both translators of the biblical texts and interpreters in understanding how the language and thought content of the texts are structured. In interpreting, translating, and teaching the doctrinal concepts in the Bible, scholars must reconsider their understanding and approaches to metaphorical expressions in the Bible. There is the need for translators to also consider a vital place of conceptual understanding of metaphor and metaphorical expressions in their work.

It is hoped that the insight gathered will inspire others to explore the application of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory in the study of ontological metaphors in theological studies.

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