

# DOES GOD EXIST? THE LIMITED FREEDOM OF CHOICE ARGUMENT: A VOICE FROM AFRICA

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## **Abstract**

*The talk about God is as old as man himself and the discourse is almost always centered on whether God exist or not. The contention has always been between theist – those who believe in the existence of God and atheist – who do not believe in the existence of God. The former comprises Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; they held the view that God exists. In Africa the question of the existence of God has never been in contention because Africans are deeply religious people. Although they hold various conceptions or ideas of God which vary from one ethnic group to another, all believe in the existence of a supreme being worthy of worship who controls the universe. It is an embarrassment for African people to publicly declare a disbelief in the existence of God. For Africans the belief in the existence of God is not debatable and so it does not need any rational justification or proof. They just accept by faith the traditional opinion that there is God; who is the creator of mankind and they are responsible to Him. This paper seeks to first examine the classical rational argument for God's existence as postulated by western thinkers for the African community. The reason being that belief in God needs to be explicated and that demands rational process. Africans need rational justification for the belief in the existence of God. And the best place to start is to recast the classical traditional argument for the existence of God. Then the paper postulates a new version of argument for the existence of God based on CHOICE. This voice from African thinker makes a novel contribution to the global discussion on the question Does God Exist? The paper analytically describes the major arguments of God's existence, and analyses critically and logically the premises of their truth claims.*

## **1. Introduction**

The most critical and controversial theme in philosophy of Religion concerns whether God exists or not. Therefore, the question, Does God exist? The answer we give to this question will definitely affects how we view the world. If God exist, then we are probably accountable to this God and the world may have meaning and purpose. Also, our live may not end here with physical death. But, if God does not exist, then maybe we are here by accident or chance and are not responsible to any transcendent being. Therefore, everybody is free to live the way seem fit and enjoy it.

This particular question is a direct attack on the Christian faith, which believes that God exists and is the creator and sustainer of the universe. Since Christianity is not an irrational faith, therefore it becomes necessary to justify the truth claim of God's existence. Classical Christian thinkers have provided evidence for the existence of God in a more rational way. The paper examines these rational arguments for the existence of God for the African thinkers. And thereby add a voice to the debate or question of God's existence – the Choice argument: an African voice.

## **2. Conceptual Clarification**

### **2.1 The Notion of God**

The concept God is a very difficult one to explain, the reason is that He is invisible, outside time, and beyond the reach of humanity. God unlike other creatures in the world do not have a nature. Created beings present little or no problem to us because they have bodies, which we can study and know their nature. We can study rocks, water, grass, animals and a whole host of other creatures and know precisely what they are made of, but we cannot do so with God.

Thomas Aquinas claims we cannot know 'what' God is; we can only know 'who God is. It is very difficult to know 'what God is since we cannot hold in our hands the substantial essence for scrutiny to ascertain the constituents 'that make up' God. Aquinas says all of our talk about God, and what we say, can only be **via negative** i.e. we can only say what God is not, from seeing our evil nature or what we are i.e from the point of understanding who we are which shows who God is not, e.g. we have failures,

are evil, have limitations, powerless, ignorant, inconsistent, mutable, depraved etc. If we say God is good, what we are really saying is that he is not evil like we are, but it is not possible for us to understand goodness the way God understands good.<sup>1</sup>

There are only two people that have come up with an ingenious definition of God. First is a murderer, fugitive who was a learned in the arts of Egypt – Moses. He is, who brought this definition of God to Israel. Moses who introduces, and to whom God introduces himself as “I am who I am” YHWH.<sup>2</sup> Though Moses is said to have seen God he could only describe his feet, back and not his true essence.

This definition of Moses from C12 BC stayed on and prevailed until 9<sup>th</sup> AD when St. Anselm of Canterbury sought from God and got his own definition, “The most perfect being than which none greater can be conceived.”<sup>3</sup> i.e God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived.

The word perfect in a metaphysical sense means the way it is, has no faults i.e the way it is made and is doing what it’s supposed to do perfectly. Anything that is doing what it is supposed to do is perfect. Anything that is more perfect than God, that thing becomes God. It is however not possible since the human brain cannot conceive of anything greater than God.

### 3. The Classical Traditional Arguments for the Existence of God

Traditionally, there are four main arguments for God’s existence namely; Ontological, Cosmological, Teleological (Design) and Moral argument. Each shall be examined with the aim of setting the ground for understanding the long age debate on the question of God’s existence. And thereby providing the foundation upon which to postulate the argument the paper intends to make.

#### 3.1 The Ontological Argument

Many philosophers have developed several versions of the ontological argument, which has generated quite cogent criticisms and counter-criticisms. The paper shall not engage all of the contentions surrounding the arguments but shall rather state the version of St. Anselm of Canterbury, Gaunilo’s response and Anselm’s reply. Then recast the version of the argument by Norman Malcolm.

The term ‘Ontology’ is derived from two Greek words; *Ontos*, meaning ‘being’ or ‘existence’ and *logy* simply mean ‘reasoning or science.’ So, ontology is reasoning about being or the science of being or existence.<sup>4</sup> It is also the study of the nature of being or what exists. It is an argument or a set of arguments that tries to prove the existence of God from the very concept of God. The argument is a deductive and a priori; meaning that it relies solely on reason and conceptual analysis.

##### 3.1.1 St. Anselm of Canterbury (ca. 1033-1109)

The man Anselm is both a theologian and philosopher of the Catholic Church. At a time, he was prior of the Benedictine Abbey of Bec in Normandy then from 1093 an Archbishop of Canterbury. He formulated the argument from meditating or reflecting on the existence and nature of God – a perfect

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<sup>1</sup> Aquinas: *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, edited by Brian Davies and Brian Leftow (published in 2006 as part of the Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy series). It is not a complete bilingual edition of the entire Summa (which spans 60+ volumes in full scholarly treatments like the Blackfriars edition), but a focused excerpt covering most of Questions 1–26 of the Prima Pars (First Part). This includes Question 3 on “The Simplicity of God,” Available at <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/aquinas-summa-theologiae-questions-on-god/1A4D0A5A5B5E5E5E5E5E5E5E5E5E5E5E> Retrieved on 12th September, 2025 by 11:00am.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 3:14 NKJV

<sup>3</sup> Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion*, trans. M. J. Charlesworth (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), chapter 2.

<sup>4</sup> G. A. Oshitelu, *The Philosophy of Religion: An Introduction*, Revised Edition. (Ibadan: Hope Publications, 2008), p. 54

being. "I believe in order that I may understand" in *Proslogion* 1 and then comes the argument in *Proslogion* 2 and 3 in the year 1077-1078.<sup>5</sup>

Anselm begins his argument more of a 'proof from prayer' seeking understanding of the concept God. Then proceed to formulate his argument as a dialogue between him (Theist) and the fool (Atheist) from Psalm 14:1. The translation of the version runs as follows:

And so, Lord, do thou, who dost give understanding to faith, give me, so far as thou knowest it to be profitable, to understand that thou art as we believe; and that thou art that which we believe. And, indeed, we believe that thou art a being than which nothing greater can be conceived. And assuredly that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, cannot exist in the understanding alone. For, suppose it exists in the understanding alone: then it can be conceived to exist in reality; which is greater. If that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, exists in the understanding alone, the very being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, is one, than which a greater can be conceived. But obviously this is impossible. Hence, there is no doubt that there exists a being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, and it exists both in the understanding and in reality.<sup>6</sup>

### 3.1.2 The Simpler Approach to the argument

The first thing was; Anselm defines what God is as; "that than which nothing greater can be conceived." From this definition Anselm means; thus, the fact that God can be conceived (imagine, understood) it means that He must exist in actuality. The definition is understood by both Anselm (Theist) and the Fool (Atheist).

- i. Fool understands the definition of God (Maximal Perfect Being).
- ii. What the fool understands is in the mind (understanding) of the fool.
- iii. It is greater to exist both in the mind (understanding) and in actuality or reality.
- iv. If God exists only in the fool's mind (understanding), He wouldn't be the maximal perfect being.
- v. Therefore, God the maximal perfect being exist both in the mind (understanding) and in reality.

### 3.1.3 Gaunilo's Critique

Anselm's argument was objected by his contemporary named Gaunilo of Marmoutiers; a monk. He tilted his criticism as; "On Behalf of the Fool" in his famous "Lost Island" analogy as follows:

For example: they say that there is in the ocean somewhere an island which, owing to the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of finding that which does not exist, some have called the 'Lost Island.' And the story goes that it is blessed with all manner of priceless riches and delights in abundance, far more than the Happy Isles, and, having no owner or inhabitant, it is superior everywhere in abundance of riches to all those other lands that men inhabit. Now, if anyone tells me that it is like this, I shall easily understand what is said, since nothing is difficult about it. But if he should then go on to say, as though it were a logical consequence: You cannot any more doubt that this island, more excellent than all other lands, truly exists somewhere in reality, than you can doubt that it is in your mind; and since it is more excellent to exist not only in the mind

<sup>5</sup> Graham Oppy, "Anselm and the Ontological Argument" in *Philosophy of Religion: The Key Thinkers*, Edited by Jeffrey J. Jordan. (London: Continuum, 2011), p. 22.

<sup>6</sup> St. Anselm: Basic Writings, Translator/Editor Sidney Norton Deane. (La Salle: Open Court Publishing, 1962), pp. 7-8.

but also in reality, therefore it must needs be that it exists... I shall answer that this is not a valid inference.<sup>7</sup>

He does not try to show a fault in the argument but give a paradox – counter exemplary argument.

I have an idea of a perfect Island in my mind (understanding) but to be a perfect Island it must exist in reality.

Then it must exist both in my mind (understanding) and in actuality or reality.

Therefore, there is a perfect Island. But there is no perfect Island that can be conceived, which means Anselm's argument is built on slippery sand.

### 3.1.4 Anselm's Reply

He refuted the objection of Gaunilo with the following reply:

I am confident that I have perceived that there exists something than which a greater is inconceivable, and that it cannot be non-existent. But if anyone should object that it is not the same thing to say that a thing cannot be conceived not to exist, and that it is inconceivable that it should not exist, I reply: if anyone should say that there is not something than which a greater cannot be conceived, let him conceive, if he can, that it does not exist. For he cannot conceive it, unless he conceives it as existing; and this is a contradiction. Now, as to that island of yours, which you say is called the Lost Island, I reply that no one can in any way know that it exists, unless it be first conceived in his mind; and it is not true that, if it is conceived, it must exist in reality, as you seem to suppose. For I can conceive of an island than which no greater island can be conceived, but it does not follow that it exists.<sup>8</sup>

Anselm is saying that there is a problem with Gaunilo's criticism because; he has taken the idea of most perfect or maximal perfect being that is, built on necessary existence and used it on a thing depending on something to exist. He abrogates the distinction between a contingent being and a necessity being thereby failing to recognise that, God is a Necessary being while an Island is a contingent being (Possibility). You cannot compare the existence of a contingent being with a Necessary Being. The world cannot exist without God – necessary being; He cannot improve or decrease.

### 3.1.5 Norman Malcolm (1911-1990)

Malcolm's version of the argument was a paraphrase or interpretation or revision of Anselm's second formulation of the argument in *Proslogion* 3, he felt the first is weaker but the second is stronger. He used modern modal logic in his argument, which deals with analysis of logical consequences of necessity and possibility (Contingent). His version was an essay titled "Anselm's Ontological Arguments" published in *The Philosophical Review* Vol. 69, No. 1, January 1960, pp. 41–62. His formulation of the argument was reconstructed and summarized by Micheal Lacewings as follows:

1. Either God exists or does not exist.
2. God can neither come into existence nor go out of existence.
3. If God exists, then He cannot cease to exist.
4. Therefore, if God exists, He exists necessarily.
5. If God does not exist, then He cannot come into existence.

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<sup>7</sup> Deane, p. 149.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, pp153-154.

6. Therefore, if God does not exist, His existence is impossible.
7. Therefore, God's existence is either necessary or impossible.
8. However, God's existence is only impossible if the concept of God is self-contradictory.
9. The concept of God is not self-contradictory.
10. Therefore, God's existence is not impossible.
11. Therefore, from 7 and 10, God's existence is necessary.<sup>9</sup>

Malcolm's argument revived contemporary interest in the idea of Anselm's ontological argument among philosophers.

### 3.2 The Cosmological Argument

The term *cosmology* comes from the Greek word *cosmos*, meaning "world." It is an argument or a set of arguments that seeks to prove that God exists on the basis of the idea that there must have been a first cause or an ultimate reason for the existence of the universe (the Cosmos).<sup>10</sup> The argument is inductive and a posteriori. There are multiple versions of the argument postulated by different philosophers. But this paper shall focus on the St. Thomas Aquinas version and the kalam version of the argument.

#### 3.2.1 St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

Aquinas, author of the *Summa Theologica* or *Summa Theologiae*, was born at Roccasecca, near Aquino, in Italy. He studied at the great Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino and later entered the University of Naples. He became a pupil of St. Albert the great (Albertus Magnus, c1200-1280) at Cologne.<sup>11</sup> He developed five ways of proving the existence of God; the first three are cosmological arguments (unmoved mover, first cause, contingency). The other two are from degree (there are better and worse so there must be a best) and from design. While a theist, rejected Anselm's argument in his *Summa Theologica* (1265–1274), claiming humans cannot fully conceive God's essence due to our limited intellects.

So, for Aquinas, we have no actual knowledge of God's existence although we know by faith that God exist. Yet it is important that what we know by faith correspond to what we know by reason that is reason ought to certify that our beliefs are well founded on what is actual. To gain scientific knowledge, therefore, it is important to demonstrate the existence of God.

The first way that Aquinas proposes for demonstrating the existence of God commences from **Motion (Movement)**. We observe that something in the world is in motion. To move is to actualize the potential for being the other. But nothing can be reduced from potential to actuality by itself except another acts on it. Now therefore whatever moves is put in motion by another. Since it is impossible for a thing to be both mover and moved in the same respect and at the same time, we deposit that one thing moves by another and that by another. If that which puts it in motion is moved, then it must be moved by another and that by another. But the lit of agency for motion cannot proceed to infinity (ad infinitum), otherwise it would be a circle of movers without an end. In which case there would not be first or last mover and that is counter intuitive because we know that subsequent movers move only because they have been put in motion by a first mover. Thus, it is necessary for us to posit a first mover. And this first mover is who everyone calls God.

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Lacewing, "Malcolm's Ontological Argument," in *Philosophy for AS: Epistemology and Philosophy of Religion*. (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 190-193.

<sup>10</sup> Oshitelu, p. 61.

<sup>11</sup> Micheal B. Wilkinson with Hugh N. Campbell, *Philosophy of Religion: An Introduction*. (London: Continuum, 2010), pp. 125-126.

The second way that Aquinas proposes to demonstrate the existence of God is via **Efficient Cause**. Aquinas notes that in this world we observe an order of efficient causes. A thing is caused to be by another. Nothing efficiently causes its existence otherwise it would predate its existence. That is, it would both have to be and cause itself to be, which a contradiction is. Now therefore everything that exists is caused to be by another. But it is impossible for us to go in ad infinitum on the list of intermediate efficient causes; hence, we must posit a first efficient cause. This first efficient cause of all things is who everyone calls God.

The Third way that Aquinas proposes to demonstrate the existence of God via **Possibility (Contingency) and Necessity**. Aquinas argues that we observe in nature things that are possible to be and not to be. This is entailed by the fact that things are generated and they are corrupt (die). If they are generated and corrupt, then it is possible for them to be and not to be. Now that which is possible to be actually comes to be by that whose existence is necessary. Now therefore there is necessary being that causes the existence of possible beings. This necessary being is who everyone calls God.

The fourth way that Aquinas proposes to demonstrate the existence of God is via **Gradation (Perfection)**. Aquinas observes that things are not only the same grade; rather others are better, truer, and nobler than others. We predicate more or less to a thing as it participates in the genus. For instance, fire which is the maximum of all things being good and exhibiting other perfections. And this maximum or ultimate being is who everyone calls God.

The fifth way that Aquinas proposes to demonstrate the existence of God is via **Governance (End or Telos)**. Aquinas argues that, in the world, we see that things act towards an end. Even those natural bodies, such as planets and seasons, which lack intelligence, still act for an end. This is evident in their acting always or nearly always in the same way so as to obtain the best result. Evidently, they do not act randomly but out of design to achieve their end. Now whatever lacks intelligence cannot order its acts towards an end unless it is directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence. Therefore, some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God.<sup>12</sup>

Note that I have repeatedly used phrase Aquinas proposes to demonstrate the existence of God and this is because Aquinas does not maintain that he has, via the five ways, shown without doubt that God exists. Rather he maintains that these are five ways by which reason can verify what we know by faith, namely, that God actually exists.

### 3.2.2 The Kalam Cosmological Argument

**Al-Kindi (c. 801-73)**, born and brought up in Kufa, Iraq. The city became famous as the center of Arab civilization (culture and learning) in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. He was an Islamic Philosopher, Mathematician and Theologian.<sup>13</sup> **Avicenna, Abu Ali Al-Husayn (a.k.a Ibn Sina 980-1037)**, an Islamic philosopher and at the same time a physician from Persia (Iran).<sup>14</sup> **William Lane Craig (1949-)**, Craig was born at Peoria, Illinois, United States. An American analytic philosopher, Christian Apologist, a Theologian and a Research Professor Emeritus of philosophy at Talbot School of Theology of Biola University in La Miranda, California. And he is also the founder of Reasonable Faith, a web-based apologetics ministry.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1920), Vol. 1, Q. 2, Art. 3. Available at <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/summa.html>. Retrieved 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2025 by 11:45pm.

<sup>13</sup> J J O'Connor and E F Robertson, "Al-kindī" Available at <https://mathshistory.st-andrews.ac.uk>. Retrieved 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2025 by 12:15pm.

<sup>14</sup> "Avicenna" in A Dictionary of Philosophy of Religion, edited by Charles Taliaferro and Elsa J. Marty. (New York: Continuum, 2010), p. 25.

<sup>15</sup> William Lane Craig. Available at <https://www.reasonablefaith.org>. Retrieved 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2025 by 11:54am

Al-Kindi first set forth this version of the argument, which Avicenna took and run with it as a priori argument and then Craig as a posteriori argument. They all postulated that the universe as a contingent, it cannot not have a necessary cause. Here is a version of their arguments.

### 3.2.3 Al-Kindi first set out the *Kalam* argument as follows:

1. Whatever has a beginning of existence must have a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe must have been caused to exist.<sup>16</sup>

### 3.2.4 Avicenna set out the formulation of the argument as follows:

1. Everything must either have a reason or cause of its existence, or not.
2. If something does not [have such a cause], then there is at least one thing which exists of necessity.
3. If something does not exist of necessity, its existence derives from a reason or cause.
4. There cannot be an infinite series of causes for the existence of contingent beings.
5. So contingent beings ultimately derive from what exists of necessity.<sup>17</sup>

### 3.2.5 Craig postulated three premises as follows:

1. Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.<sup>18</sup>

### 3.2.6 The Summary of the argument is as follows:

1. Everything that has a beginning of its existence has a cause of its existence.
2. The universe has a beginning of its existence.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause of its existence.
4. If the universe has a cause of its existence, then that cause is a personal being.
5. That being would be God; therefore, God exists.

## 3.3 The Teleological Argument

The term *Teleology* comes from two Greek word *telos*, meaning “end or the goal of an action” and *logos*, which means ‘reasoning’ or ‘word.’ The argument may be defined thus: the order and useful arrangement in a system imply intelligence and purpose in the organizing cause. Also, is an argument that attempts to prove that God exist because of the intricacy and design of nature.<sup>19</sup> The basis of the argument is that; because the universe is so well designed, it must have a designer. The analogy often used is our inference from finding a complex machine on the beach or open field (for example a watch) that there must have been some intelligent being who produce it. The argument is an inductive and a posteriori.

### 3.3.1 William Paley (1743-1805)

William Paley was born and brought up in Peterborough, England. He studied at the Cambridge University and also became a lecturer at Cambridge then vicar in and around Carlisle. Wrote *Natural*

<sup>16</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *Approaching Philosophy of Religion: An Introduction to Key thinkers, concepts, methods and debates.* (London: SPCK, 2017), p. 13

<sup>17</sup> Brian Davis (ed.), *Philosophy of Religion: A Guide and Anthology.* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), p. 180.

<sup>18</sup> William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008), p. 111.

<sup>19</sup> Oshitelu, p. 70.



*Theology; or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity* (1802). It is in this work that he postulates his version of the intelligent design argument.<sup>20</sup> This in a broader sense is also a part of the cosmological argument; it begins with the existence of the cosmos, however focusing on the character of the cosmos, an orderly universe. The essence of the argument is the apparent or obvious design in the universe is evidence of an intelligent Architect of the world.

### 3.3.2 A Statement of the Argument

In crossing a heath, suppose I pitched my foot against a stone, and were asked how the stone came to be there; I might possibly answer, that, for anything I knew to the contrary, it had lain there forever; nor would it, perhaps, be very easy to shew the absurdity of this answer. But suppose I found a watch upon the ground, and it should be inquired how the watch happened to be in that place, I should hardly think of the answer which I had before given, that for anything I knew, the watch might have always been there. Yet why should not this answer serve for the watch as well as for the stone? Why is it not as admissible in the second case, as in the first? For this reason, and no other, viz. that, when we come to inspect the watch, we perceive (what we could not discover in the stone) that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose, e.g. that they are so formed and adjusted as to produce motion, and that motion so regulated as to point out the hour of the day; that, if the parts had been differently shaped from what they are, of a different size from what they are, or placed after any other manner, or in any other order, than that in which they are placed, either no motion at all would have been carried on in the machine, or none which would have answered the use that is now served by it . . . We take notice that the wheels are made of brass, in order to keep them from rust: the springs of steel, no other metal being so elastic; that over the face of the watch there is placed a glass, a material employed in no other part of the work, but in the room of which, if there had been any other than a transparent substance, the hour could not be seen without opening the case. This mechanism being observed . . . the inference, we think, is inevitable, that the watch must have had a maker: that there must have existed, at some time, and at some place or other, an artificer or artificers, who formed it for the purpose which we find it actually to answer; who comprehended its construction, and designed its use.<sup>21</sup>

### 3.3.3 A Simplify version of the argument:

1. A watch shows that it was put together for an intelligent purpose (to keep time).
  - a. It has a spring to give it motion
  - b. It has a series of wheels to transmit this motion
  - c. The wheels are made of brass so that they do not get rust
  - d. The spring is made of steel because of the resilience of that metal
  - e. The front cover is of glass so that one can see through it
2. The world shows even greater evidence of design than a watch.
  - a. The world is a greater work of art than a watch
  - b. The world has more subtle and complex design than a watch

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<sup>20</sup> Mark Wynn, "William Paley and the Argument from Design" in *Philosophy of Religion: The Key Thinkers*, Edited by Jeffrey J. Jordan. (London: Continuum, 2011), p. 55.

<sup>21</sup> William Paley, *Natural Theology: or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature*. (London: R. Faulder, 1802), Chap. 1, pp. 1–3. in *Philosophy of Religion: Key Thinkers* Edited by Jeffrey J. Jordan. (London: Continuum, 2011), p. 57.



c. The world has an endless variety of means adapted to ends

Therefore, if the existence of a watch implies a watchmaker, then the existence of the world implies an even greater intelligent designer (God).

### 3.4 The Moral Argument

This is also another basic argument for the existence of God. Initially this was not considered as a rational argument but as a practical postulate. It is probably more convincing to ordinary people (non-philosophers) but as time passed, later forms of this approach, were, however presented and accepted as bona fide claims to proof God's existence by reason. There are several versions of the argument with also criticisms. But the paper shall only consider the version of the argument postulated by William Ritchie Sorley.

#### 3.4.1 William Ritchie Sorley (1855-1935)

Sorley was a Scottish philosopher who became a lecturer of moral philosophy at the Cambridge University. His version of the argument first appears during the Gifford lectures in 1918 and was published as *Moral Values and the Idea of God*.<sup>22</sup> His statement of the argument was presented by Norman L. Geisler and Winfried Corduan as follows:

1. There is an objective moral law independent of humans' consciousness of it and despite their lack of conformity to it, as evidenced by the facts that
  - a. Persons are conscious of such a law.
  - b. Persons acknowledge its claim on them even while not yielding to it.
  - c. Persons admit its validity is prior to their recognition of it.
  - d. No finite mind completely grasps its fullness.
  - e. All finite minds together have not reached complete agreement on its meaning nor conformity to its ideal.
2. But ideas exist only in minds.
3. Therefore, there must be a supreme Mind (beyond all finite minds) in which this objective moral law exists.<sup>23</sup>

#### 3.4.2 A Summary of the Argument

In essence, Sorley is postulating that, as humans we are finite but at the same time we can recognise a moral law that is superior to us, prior to us, and also independent of us. So, where do they come from? Then, it is necessary to say; there must be a supreme Mind that exist from whom these objective moral laws came from.

### 4. The Limited Freedom of Choice Argument: A Voice from Africa

This is a new postulation now introduce into the debate or question; "Does God Exist?" It is an argument base on the limited freewill that humans are created with, which give them the capacity to freely make a choice of certain things they need. The ability to make a choice is what distinguish humans in the degree of existence. They make choices daily along their journey of life and this limited freedom to make a choice is an inalienable right for humans.

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<sup>22</sup> Craig, p. 104.

<sup>23</sup> Norman L. Geisler and Winfried Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), p. 111.

#### 4.1 Johnson Madi (1978-)<sup>24</sup>

He postulates his limited freedom of choice argument as follows:

1. All sane humans are creatures with a limited freewill and capacity to make a choice.
  - a. Humans are aware of this limited freewill and capacity to make a choice.
  - b. Humans make choices daily and always.
  - c. Humans are hold responsible for their choices in life.
2. But there is one thing that is obvious, humans did not make the choice by exercising their inalienable right – their RACE.
  - a. There is different race in the universe.
  - b. We recognise individuals by this race regardless of where they are found.
  - c. No individual human makes a choice of his race.
  - d. An individual can make a choice to change nationality but not race regardless of the desire.
3. Therefore, there must be a supreme being outside this universe who has determine the preappointed times and the boundaries of dwellings for the various races and make the choice for each group of humans. And that supreme being must be Omnipotent, Omnipresence, and Omniscience to be able to make this kind of choice for every group of humans in the universe.

#### 5. Conclusion

The question of the existence of God is important for Africans and will continue to be. Many Africans believe in the existence of God but tend to deny that is a question that rational argumentation can aid in justifying the claim. The conventional opinion is that if we are going to believe in the existence of God, we must rely on faith rather than reasoning. It is obvious from the paper that Africans can rationally justify their claim that God exists. By taking queue from the classical traditional debate and join the contention by contributing rationally. So, the question “Does God Exists?” can be justify rationally and this is what this paper demonstrated. The new argument, “The limited freedom of choice” has added a voice to the fact that God’s existences can be rationally justify. It has shown that human creatures have limited freedom of choice, especially regarding which race to belong. That choice was made for us by a supreme being outside of time and this being is what all people call God. Therefore, God exists.

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