



Christian Sexuality and Postmodernism: The Emerging Issues

Rotimi Paul OLUWATOBA, PhD

Campus Linkages & Resources, Ibadan, Oyo State

paultobang@gmail.com, +2349047616647, <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-1413-9889>

Abel OGUNDEJI, PhD

Department of Christian Religious Studies & Philosophy, Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State

Abelogundeji69@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-2370-4501>

Gloria T. OLUWATOBA

Department of Philosophy, University of Ibadan

oluwatobagloria@gmail.com, +2349072652626, <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5647-2812>

Abstract

This study discusses the cultural deconstruction of human sexuality in the postmodern society. It examines the problem of the influence and extent of the emerging cultural and moral crises on human sexuality: Sexual revolution, Gender disorientation, Gay marriage, Sex commercialization, New Morality. The following research questions are therefore answered in this paper for a proper understanding of the postmodern society construct of human sexuality and the contextual implications it holds for the Christian community: What is the nature and dimension of post-modern view of human sexuality? ; What are the biblical values, injunction and presentation of sexuality/Christian sexuality?; How do this deconstruction of human sexuality influence and impinge on the church teachings on sexuality-its constructs, its context, its purpose, its sanctity, its spiritual dimension, its employment and its boundaries?; and what should guide the church community in formulating relevant theological response that can preserve biblical absolutes and Christian sexuality? These are evaluated from both the Old Testament and New Testament biblical sexuality and its moral absolutes. This is to provide helpful guidance for the church to understand biblical standard for sexual morality sexual morality standards clearly. This study points out the devastation and corrupting impact of postmodern constructs on Christian sexuality and the moral teachings of the church. This paper contends that the Christian community is under siege by this devastating incursion of the postmodern erosion of its traditional position on sexuality. There is obvious and dire need for the church, from its theological empowerments, to provide a more pragmatic and adequate response to these cultural constructions of biblical sexuality



and be able to preserve a wholesome biblical legacy of Christian sexuality for the up-and-coming generation of Christians, who, perhaps, will face fiercer attack on biblical morality.

Keywords: Postmodern Society, Sexuality, Christian Sexuality, Cultural Crises, Sexual Ethics

Introduction

Postmodernism, from its interrogation with Christian beliefs and practices, is an ideology that embraces a worldview that denies absolute morality and promotes the elevation of self and individual freedom above God's injunctions. This results into a lifestyle or society that brazenly rejects the fact of God's sovereign prerogative to determine what is good or bad, lawful or unlawful, right or wrong, as moral absolutes for his creation. Our post-modern society is embattled and engulfed in the heat of cultural and moral crises regarding values on human sexuality. The emerging cultural deconstruction of biblical sexuality are manifesting in sexual revolution, sexual anarchy, sexual perversion and permissiveness, culture of exhibitionism and nudity, gender disorientation, and anti-procreative culture. Homosexuality and same sex marriage are the most pronounced, insulting and insidious contemporary cultural crisis regarding human sexuality, most particularly, biblical worldview of human sexuality. These sexuality perversions are not new faces; they are as old as recorded human history on earth (Genesis 1-40). However, the contemporary spate and level of sexual permissiveness, the depth and extent of moral degeneration; the total loss of self- control and un-parallel sexual revolution has no precedence in recorded human history. Not even the Ancient Roman Empire stand close to it (Mohler, 2005).

The church as an institution and member of the postmodern society is witnessing the erosion of her traditional biblical foundation for sex, marriage and family life. This has constituted a monumental and devastating challenge to the teachings of the church on these issues so much so that some Christian community has shifted their ground. Opposition to biblical sexual morality in the culture is not just a matter of taste. It is driven by ideas changing how people think and behave. The surrounding culture is rejecting traditional-biblical sexual morality because more and more people are accepting ideas that redefine biblical



moral standards as 'evil', 'corrupt', or 'harmful' (Heimbag, 2004). This study therefore, highlights the problem the church community has at her hand and the urgency of the need for her to effectively respond to this affront on her biblical morality?

Conceptual Clarification

Postmodernism: Postmodernism, born under western secular conditions, is characterized by emphasis on pluralism and relativism and rejects any certain belief and absolute value. It treats values as relative things that differ from culture to culture. Postmodernist reject any constant, definite and universal belief and instead, consider knowledge to be relative, local and fully influenced by special cultures and values. It equally rejects universal moral and spiritual values and accepts the relativity of all values in all areas, so no specific value preference exists (Nooshin & Alireza, 2015). Postmodernism, according to Odunlami (2022) citing Bauman (2011), is developed in the mid-twentieth century as a rejection of modernism and was then extended across many disciplines. A Key postmodernist concern is *deconstruction*, which is a disillusioned response to the failed promise of modernism *construction* of a better humanity and a better world using human reason alone.

Sexuality: God-ordained physical, mental, emotional, behavioral traits and spiritual expression that characterize individuals as distinctly male or female (Oladunjoye, 2006). Sexuality is much more than simply what men and women "do"-but an integral part of our being throughout our entire lifespan (Focus, 2009).

Sexuality Crisis: This is the confusion that bothers on conflicting views and disposition toward traditional understanding of sexuality. This has left the society with as many options as possible in the expression of sexual identity, sexual acts, gender or even marriage.

The Postmodern Construction of Sexuality

The Postmodern construction of sexuality is encapsulated in the sexual revolution, new morality and the emerging gender orientation in its trail. These are briefly clarified here.

Sexual Revolution, Sexual Anarchy, Sexual libertinism: The sexual revolution of our postmodern culture has resulted in relaxed and new standards of sexual behavior and morality for male and female in particular. Sex between two unmarried adults is considered 'safe' with



the precautionary use of condom and it can never be a case of adulterous or promiscuous affair since the duos are consenting adults. In the past, fear of pregnancy may be an inhibition for most female but with readily available contraceptive pills, now more women are ready to comfortably say 'yes' than 'no' to casual sex with an uncommitted partner. On the electronic media and the World Wide Web, we are confronted by much freer and readily accessible sexually erotic scenes targeting young boys and girls. It is even possible to participate online on some pornographic websites. This is because the clandestineness, accessibility and permissiveness modern technology such as the cell phone and internet facility accord sexual activities today, creates a new context or emerging sexual issue, such as, online sex, sextexts, dating websites, sex toy, sex dolly.

Sexual Perversion, Permissiveness, Sex Commercialization, and New Sexual Morality: Today's culture has reached the point where sex outside of marriage is expected. A key issue in dating is no longer *if* one should have sex, but *when*. Many people feel that there is no reason to withhold the complete expression of sexual desires (Jacobs & Strubel, 1996). Ours is a sex-suffused society with perhaps unprecedented sexual awareness and sexual promiscuity. Sex has lost its "mystery" and sanctity because it is obtainable cheaply, engaged in without any relationship or marital commitment with the other person. Nothing is as highly commercialised today as the sexual act and nothing is equally trivialised in our contemporary times as it. The permissiveness is such that sexual intimacy has been reduced to performance show that is watched online or via other electronic media for public consumption as recreational purposes. The traditional concept of sex as sacred and not to be wantonly engaged in has been eroded away. More sadly is the obvious fact that this generation has no regard for biblical morality, which according to Mohler (2004), is regarded as antiquarian and repressive. Our society moral tone is obviously encoded in the slogan 'if it feels good, do it'. In other words, her standard of morality, sexual morality inclusive, is a matter of personal preference and relative morality. The result is a society plagued by sexual anarchy, promiscuity and perversion which is particularly characteristic of today's young people.

Emergence of New Morality: There is continued subversion of traditional socio-ethical values by new moral standard and its emerging



values. This process is seen in the emergence of new morality in the Post-modern Nigerian society. Some practical illustrative examples are definitely appropriate here. These may include the followings:

- i) *Baby Mama*: This is a relatively new terminology in human sexuality matter. It is an emerging sexual morality that has largely become a norm especially among the upper class, the celebrities, and the politicians. It is described as baby *mama* kind of partner. Baby *mama* is a woman who is a *mama* or mother because she has a baby (or babies) for a man who consents together with her to have sex and gave him a baby that bears his name even though the baby *mama* is fully aware of a legal spouse or other baby *mama* the man has. A baby *mama* is not addressed as 'Mrs' Jones for example, but as baby *mama* of Jones and most often, the men involved are celebrities so many more women are willing to become their baby *mama* and proudly so. As opposed to the stigma, frown look, caustic comment and social disapproval that ordinarily and expectedly should attend this baby *mama* lifestyle, it is rather gaining social acquiesce, tolerance and popularity as demonstrated on the social media in particular.
- ii) *'Sugar Mummy'*: This is a slang made popular by the movies industry. It encapsulates a well-entrenched new morality that celebrates an older woman, addressed as 'sugar mummy', who seeks the sexual services of younger energetic men whom she pays for their patronage. This is unlike what obtains before. It is the woman here, who pays the young man who is believed to have the sexual resources that the 'sugar mummy' needed. This is a reversal of sexual economic theory as initially observed in the society and it equally plays out at the so called 'baby factory' where the man is paid for his service to impregnate the abducted girls so they can give birth to babies needed for 'ritual' money by their buyers. The movie industry has popularized this 'sugar mummy' stuff and successfully pushed it to the society as a new norm. The present realities about the issue of sex reveal that sex is no longer a female resource alone but dual resources for both male and female. Today, men are not only paying consenting female sexual partners, more women too, or 'sugar mummy' in particular, are seeking out agile young men to pay for engaging them in sexual relationship.
- iii) *Sexual Innuendos*: The use of traditional euphemism or modesty in describing issues of sex acts, sexual organs, or bedroom intimate affairs is no longer the norms. Almost everywhere you turn, one is inundated with sexually erotic slangs, graphic jokes about sex organs and coitus.



These are spread by the theatre industries and their actors or actresses who are role models for modern youths in particular. Such public looseness about lewdness, vulgar sex jokes, sexually erotic images, sex icon are emerging ethical issues unknown and uncelebrated before.

- iv) *SEX as S3X and S\$X*: On the social media and news sources, sex is now written or seen as S3x. Although it was meant to be internet slang for sex but its usage encompasses sex in every way that it is known or practiced. This may be seen as a coded and new approach to the subject of preference or values in the acts of sexual intercourse. This accommodation makes it convenient to effortlessly navigate the current controversy surrounding the socio-religious debates over the accommodation of oral and anal sex as natural, healthy, alternate option for sexual acts. The number 3 replacement of the letter 'E' gives room to accommodate sex acts done via any of the three orifices of vaginal, anus and mouth as sex, good sex, natural sex, acceptable sex as against any argument to the contrary. 'Threesome' is a term attached to S3X acts which may also carry the above implication but is not limited to the involvement of three (3) sexual partners that can be a woman and two men or two women and a man in sexual acts. 'Threesome', though a new sexual slang, is not new in pornography industry as displayed in their media advertisement. It has however moved out of its previous domain in the pornography world into the larger society. 'Threesome' is now receiving social media acceptance and approval that is gradually finding its way into societal norm at least among the 'aristole' class. In the same dimension, SEX is also written as S\$X with dollar or pound sterling icon in place of the letter 'E'. This connotes how widely sexual acts has become commercialized.

Gender Orientation, Sexual Attributes, Culture of Nudity and Exhibitionism

The gender orientation crisis has produced the **LGBTQ** classification which is an acronym for: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer

Lesbian: This is a woman with sexual orientation or sexual feeling towards another woman;

Gay: This is a man who has a romantic: sexual, erotic and emotional attraction to a male;

Bisexual: Refers to a person who experiences sexual or physical attraction to more than one gender not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree;



Transgender: This person view of self-identity or gender does not match his/her assigned sex at birth, or does not conform to the gender stereotypes (Ijasini, 2021).

Queer: Queer is a term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

The human society all over the world is divided over how it should react or relate to the question of LGBTQ-Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer movement. The Western nations have been more favorably disposed to LGBT movement (Daniel, 2005) unlike in most African countries where stigma and more religious sentiments negatively trail such disposition (Okhuelabge, 2017).

On the issue of nudity and exhibitionism, the societal standard set by the movie industries is for women to be scantily clad. Flaunting of physical bodily and sexual attributes of the feminine gender is the vogue. Ladies who are 'busty' or have a peculiar backside are model of enviable sexual attributes. The media touts and celebrates the silent slogan, 'the bigger the better' in its evaluation of sexual attributes. Everything is being done by many females to measure up to this social sexual construct.

Biblical Sexuality and Its Moral Absolutes

On sexual matters the Bible does not pander to any prudishness. It has its own concept of sex and human sexuality clearly spelt out. Brandstra and Verhey (1988) allude to this fact when they paint a holistic picture of biblical concern and pervasion with the subject of sex and human sexuality in their accurate assessment that:

The Torah regulates sexual activity and establishes sexual roles. Prophetic literature uses sexual metaphors in its announcement of God's judgement on covenant unfaithfulness. Wisdom literature distinguishes wise sexual conduct from foolish and uses sexual imagery to characterize wisdom. The Gospel uses the memory of Jesus' words and deeds to shape the sexual conduct and disposition of His followers. The Epistles deal with concrete question of sexual conduct. Revelation contains sexual imagery and instruction

A biblical understanding of sexuality and sex is important for the spiritual and moral health of the Church, especially as it relates to human sexuality and to answer the question of 'what does the Bible really say about sex?' Mohler (2005) pontificates that:



The controversies over same-sex marriage, homosexuality, and gender-bending now raging in our culture, necessitates answering the question: “What is the biblical pattern for human sexuality?” A clear picture of biblical position on the subject of sexuality and sex is what will enable Christian adolescents have a reference for what is right, appropriate and biblical in the expression of their sexuality.

The premise for establishing biblical conception of sexuality and sex is usually developed from the Yahwist (Genesis 1) and Priestly (Genesis 2) biblical creation narratives: So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them (Genesis 1:27). And the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper like him’...And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed (Genesis 2:18, 24). The creation story as found in the two biblical narratives of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 though clearly presents the creation of Adam and Eve in seemingly two different lights; Most Bible Scholars have treated both narratives as complimentary rather than antagonistic. Several theological observations regarding human sexuality have been made taking these two accounts as the premise on which their theories or postulations are based.

Adayibe (2006) analyzing Genesis: 1:27, 2:18, notes that God created man and woman as sexual beings, as sex partners with different sex roles but having sexual needs. Stanley (1977) as cited in Ogundele (2006) submits that sex is an expression of our existence as sexual beings. Abogunrin (2006) observes that the word sex refers to different things in the Bible. According to him, it refers to human physical anatomy because the scripture says that ‘God created man in His own image...male and female, He created them’; Secondly, according to him, sex in another sense refers to physical attraction and in this sense we speak of someone being physically attractive (Genesis 39:6). Sexuality however has been noted from a critical look into its creation in Genesis as multidimensional, while sex is considered as just an expression of it at its sexual/physical level. Sexuality is seen as having a physical dimension, that causes human being, just like Adam and Eve to seek for harmony and relationship with their physical environment; as having an emotional/relational dimension that causes one to yearn for relationship and understanding with others, resulting in friendship or at a deeper



intimate level in marriage/sexual relationship, this is exemplified in the loneliness of Adam and his satisfaction when Eve came into his life (Doug, 2008). Sexuality can also be perceived as having a spiritual dimension to it, stirring up an insatiable desire for fellowship and worship with the Divine, just as Adam and Eve in the biblical account of Genesis 3:8 enjoyed intimate fellowship with God in the cool of the day while in the Garden of Eden (Oluwatoba, 2010).

God declares his creation as good (Genesis 1:31), and that includes human sexuality, thus sex, sex drive, or sexuality is God's own creation, idea and gift to mankind (Paulik, 1996 & Igboin, 2006). God's charge to the first man and woman in their original state of innocence was procreation-to 'be fruitful and replenish the earth' (Genesis 1:28). This is a necessity that makes sex in marriage not a sin but rather, good (Genesis 1:31) and holy (Hebrew 13:40). Speaking from the reproductive perspective, sex was also conceived as an instinct that produces the family institution (Chesterton, as cited in biblicalsexuality.com). While Jackson (2004), on utility ground, clarifies that sex is a great thing, which God designed to benefit married men and women. According to Hostler and McDowell (2007), with the debut of the second sex (Eve), Adam's loneliness problem was solved and God's creation was good and complete. From these analyses these authors describe God as pro-sex, who creates sex and wants people (couple) to enjoy it to the fullest as a noble but not debase thing. Genesis narrative apart, other biblical writers also and further affirm the goodness of sexuality and sex as God's gift. The Song of Solomon is an extended love poem with explicit erotic imagery and language. In the book of Proverbs, Sex is affirmed as a source of pleasure and shared intimacy between husband and wife. In the Prophetic books, the imagery of human sexuality and intimacy is used to describe burning passion of God's love and relationship to his people.

In the Gospel, Jesus refers to the Genesis narrative in his response to the sanctity and sacredness of human sexuality in marital homestead, thus affirming the 'good' pronounced on human sexuality at the beginning. He also by his lifestyle of lifting the feminine gender demonstrates positive examples to his followers and the 'anti-woman' culture/society of his days. Apostle Paul in the Epistles, and the Old Testament prophets in several places, celebrate the act of sex and sexual relationship in marriage as having divine approval (Songs 1-5; Proverbs 5:18ff;



Ecclesiastes 9:9; Isaiah 43:4; Malachi 1:24; Hosea 1-3; Mathew 19: 4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5).

According to Mohler (2005),

Sexual pleasure is not an accident of human biology--it is one of the Creator's sweetest gifts to human beings. The promise of sexual pleasure and satisfaction is to draw us into the marital covenant, and then shared joy of physical union is a vital part of the marital bond. The biblical writers affirm sexuality as a part of our embodied existence. As human beings we are sexual creatures, and as sexual creatures we are called to honor God with our bodies. Within the context of the marital covenant, the husband and wife are free to express love for each other, experience pleasure, and join in the procreative act of sexual union.

This is pleasing to God, and is not to be a source of shame.

The recurring theme about biblical sexuality presenting itself from all the above biblical assessments and inferences include: the nature of sex and sexuality; the purpose of sex; and context for the expression of sex and sexuality.

Sexual Perversion

The Bible repeatedly warns against sexual activities outside of the marriage covenant and thus emphasizes the spiritual connotation embedded in sex. Scholars, from biblical submissions give various evaluations of sex outside of marriage and the sacredness the scripture accords it. Mohler (2005) observes that just as the biblical writers present marital sex as holy and natural, all other forms of sexual activity are presented as condemned and sinful. He warns that in addition to adultery and fornication, the Bible expressly forbids homosexuality, bestiality, incest, prostitution, rape, pederasty, and all other forms of sexual deviance and perversity (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26-27; Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 18:23; Leviticus 18:6-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Exodus 2:16-17; Proverbs 7:1-27). Several specific sexual relationships are forbidden in the Bible. Among these are homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22, 26, 27, 20:13; Judges 19:22-24; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:9-10; 2 Timothy 3:1-5); bestiality-sex with animals (Leviticus 18:23; 20:15-16; Exodus 22:19; Deuteronomy 27:21); and incest-sexual relations with close family members, including your mother, sister, niece, aunt,



daughter-in-law, and sister-in-law (Leviticus 18:6-18, 20:10-21); fornication – sexual relations outside of marriage and adultery – sexual relations with another person's spouse (Leviticus 20:10ff, 18:19; Exodus 20:14, 5:18; Deuteronomy 22:22-24, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Ephesians 5:3-5; Galatians 5:19,21; Mathew 5:27), and rape – forced sex (Genesis 34; Deuteronomy 22:23-29).

Deem (2010) responding to these sexual perversions comments that to emphasize the seriousness of these kinds of offenses, the Torah recommends death as the penalty. According to Deem, it is clear that pornography is not to be viewed by Christians, although not specifically mentioned in the Bible. Some other writers and scholars are more forthright in their opinion of pornography, declaring it as: sin, abominable practices and unscriptural; 'setting evil things before one's eyes'; 'partaking in other men sin'; 'abuse of the body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit'; and a 'desecration of the sanctity the scripture accords sex': and as 'possessing addictive influence, especially on men' (Mohler, 2005 & Donovan, 1995). Heimbach (2004) comprehensively captures the whole picture:

God's standard is purity in every thought about sex, as well as in every act of sex. Sexual purity is violated even in thoughts that never proceed to outward acts. Sex must never be used to oppress, wrong or take advantage of anyone. Rape, incest, sexual abuse, pedophilia, voyeurism, prostitution and pornography always exploit and corrupt. Sex outside of marriage is never moral. This includes all forms of intimate sexual stimulation that stir up sexual passion between unmarried partners. Such behavior offends God, and often causes physical and emotional pain and loss in this life. Refusal to repent of sexual sin may indicate that a person never has entered into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. The Old and New Testaments uniformly condemn sexual contact between persons of the same sex; and God has decreed that no one can ever excuse homosexual behavior by blaming his or her Creator

The above point towards the fact that both the Old and New Testament writers warn against the corrupting influence of sexual sin, and they enjoined the people of God to remain unspotted and uncorrupted by such sins.



Therefore, it is clear from the various Scriptural references cited above that sexual deviance amount to an intentional rejection of God's authority and sovereignty to tell His creation what is helpful or destructive, as their Creator and Lord (Romans 1:18-25). This is one reason why Apostle Paul warns that those who practice such sins will not inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Biblical Understanding of Gender

The issue of gender is an integral aspect of human sexuality and there can be no complete or thorough biblical evaluation or understanding of human sexuality without an examination of divine purpose and plan in creating humanity as male and female (Genesis 1:27; 2:28). Mohler (2005) in his biblical evaluation of the creation narratives emphatically states that gender is not a mere biological accident or social construction. According to him, the contrast and complement between the man and the woman reveals that gender is part of the goodness of God's creation. Mohler argues that modern efforts to redefine or redesign gender are directly contrary to the Bible's affirmation of maleness and femaleness as proper distinctions. According to him, God's glory is seen in the maleness of the man and the femaleness of the woman. Mohler concludes that this pattern of distinction is affirmed and enforced by liturgical orders and restrictions on dress, hair length, etc. And that any effort to confuse or deny gender differences is expressly forbidden and opposed by Scripture, especially as seen in Old Testament legal codes. Talking from the New-Testament perspectives on gender difference, Jackson (2004) observes that there is a paradox: "The Bible teaches that God not only created us "male and female", but that in Christ, "there is neither male nor female"(Genesis 1:27; Galatians 3:28-29). Jackson deduced that, from those scriptures, God answers our dilemma with a delightful mystery and within this paradox, God not only affirms the differences between men and women, assigning complementary roles for each, but He also points to the equality existing between the sexes. Relating gender differentiation to life purpose, Focus (2009) sees our God-given purpose as tied to our unique biological sex; such that, sexuality, which the author described as the specific God-ordained physical, mental and behavioral traits that characterize individuals as distinctly male or female, is much more than simply what men and



women "do" – but an integral part of our being throughout our entire lifespan.

Postmodern Constructs on Sexuality and Its Consequences on Church Teachings on Sexual Values

The ongoing construction and reconstruction of Christian ethical and moral values on sexuality is emerging fallout of postmodernism. The revelation of the scriptures on its absolutes for the expression of human sexuality is being subsumed in the present culture of sexual deviance and libertinism. Some Christian communities have succumbed to the invasion of the homosexual agenda. This is evidence in their celebration of gay marriage and lifestyle as acceptable 'alternate' lifestyle for members of the Christian community. Ordination of homosexuals to the Priesthood, the continued public self-declaration of church leaders as gay, and the emergence of gay churches are sad commentary.

The culture of nudity and exhibitionism festers in the individual and corporate life of Christians and the church such that in many of our Christian gatherings we are bombarded with overly body exposure of the feminine gender. Christian girls and women have taken Hollywood, Bollywood, and Nollywood celebrities as their standard for comportment and carriage, because that is what passes as fancy, fashion and 'being cool'. All these contribute to increase the already unfavourable conditions that hamper Christian youths' efforts to make sound and godly decision on moral and sexual purity. For instance, in most groups or societies involving young people such as voluntary organisations like youth clubs, school press clubs, students' unions and others, not to be sexually active as a single person may attract mockery, especially if such commitment to purity or abstinence is claimed to be based on religious consecration, respect for parental values and/or personal commitment to chastity. Many single young people on our higher institution live 'a couple- life'. They pair up, live together in rented apartment and sometimes contest to be celebrated in their various campus publications as the best couple of the year. Christian young people on the side of abstinence and moral uprightness find themselves under tremendous peer and societal pressure to compromise their biblical stance.

The sexual permissiveness of the postmodern society is reflected in the church, among the household of faith, in the violation of the biblical



sexual boundaries. There is increasing premarital sexual activities of Christian youths, continue reports of clerical sexual abuse of the parishioner, high rate of church ministers divorce of spouses. The perversion of sexuality in the church is even so offensive to the secular society that it often challenges and confronts the church to put her house in order. To the secular society, the church has no moral justification for its various comments on what it thinks the Bible says in contradiction to the societal same sex activities. The church in certain areas seems to have lost the battle in championing God's design and demands for wholesome, fulfilling, joyful, and sanctified sexuality.

Some communities of faith have found in the same Biblical revelation, some justification to tolerate or accommodate sodomy and all shades of 'gender disorientation.' While some homosexual or transgender church members justify their sexual disposition as 'that is how God created or wired me sexually' or, as: 'am naturally attracted to someone of the other sex' (Bridge-Logos, 2004). The biblical sexual values are been revisited and interpreted from a postmodern view as 'weird', 'puritan', antiquarian and out of tune with modern realities of contraceptive pills, test tube and designer babies, sex reconstructive surgery and other advance medical discoveries.

The Emerging Issues and Their Implications

We shall now briefly outline and evaluate the emerging issues in the context of the church community and the on-going deconstruction of its theological and ethical standpoint on human sexuality.

- i) *Cultural assimilation of biblical values:* These researchers posit that the preservation of spiritual revelation from assimilation to cultural constructions depend on a proper biblical understanding and effective contemporary theologizing. This is a major factor in the ability of theologians/Christian educators to provide contextual and scripturally relevant meaning to everyday issues people grapple with.
- ii) *A compromise of biblical boundaries:* Where there is church sympathy to same sex orientation and activities, it has further confused the up-and-coming generation of Christians who could not find clear biblical standard, value and norms even within the church that can inspire and challenge them to uphold wholesome sexuality.
- iii) *A deconstruction of the marriage institution:* This distortion and perversion of Christian marriage in the celebration of same sex



marriage even in the church presents contemporary Christians with a new context that beclouds the correct understanding of God's purpose in gender distinction within marriage. This also is an abysmal emerging sexual issue in the discussion of Christian family values.

- iv) *The reality of personal struggles with sexual crises:* Some people in the church are having a personal struggle with their sexual identity and/or an orientation toward homosexual lifestyle. Unfortunately, this usually generates moral censure rather than compassion and assistance when they try to open up-seeking help.
- v) *Sexual empowerment:* There is not much public awareness and sensitization in our society on the problem of gender conflicts. Most parents, Christian counselors, Pastors and other stakeholders face a dearth of helpful information and empowerments on how they can help their ward or clients maximize tendency toward a heterosexual lifestyle. Christian youth on the side of abstinence and moral uprightness find themselves under tremendous peer and societal pressure to compromise their biblical stance.
- vi) *The Church is split over homosexual orientation, acts and gay marriage:* Same-sex sexual relationship which many now considered as an alternate lifestyle constitutes an emerging sexual issue and a new context for Christian sexuality that must be addressed by the church. This is particularly necessary for the church because the issue of homosexual lifestyle has rocked her doctrinal comforts in the last decade perhaps more than any other ethical issues that have confronted it in her historical existence. The Anglican Communion Church of Nigeria for instance has taken a biblical stand against the incursion of homosexual agenda in the church in Nigeria which is a clear departure from the Church of England (Lambert, 2017). Whereas two key leaders in the American Southern Baptist, JD Geerar and Andrew Walker, reportedly demonstrate a little measure of tolerance that does not see it as a compromise of truth to address LGBTQ with their preferred pronoun such as calling a man in a woman attire as 'transgendered woman' even when such preferred pronouns do not match their biological sex" (Dissenter, 2022). Other Evangelicals have criticized, as a capitulation, such adoption of LGBTQ language to appease the movement. The Roman Catholic Church Bishops in Nigeria have expressed their displeasure with the Pope public declaration of his blessing for the gay marriage.



vii) *Human defiance against divine demand*: “The problem is that some people do not like to hear what God has to say...they defiantly make up their own rules and go their own way. Sadly this only leads to more confusion and deeper deception” (Bridge-Logos, 2004). This has caused a gleeful Satan to hijack and distort the gift of sex to merchandise his philosophy that self-gratification insures a happy life.

Role of the Church and Its Christian Education Agencies

There is a compelling need to underscore the position of the church community and outline some line of action at its disposal to survive this frontal onslaught against its traditional or orthodox beliefs, practices, and values for sexuality. The role of the church in providing empowerment for its members to avoid the evil and destructive outcomes of premarital sex, sexual promiscuity, rape, pornography, nudity and other immoral sexual behavior is strengthened by the graphic examples provided in many of the biblical account of human sexual relationship, challenges and triumph. These include Samson’s tragedy (Judges 14-16); Prophet Eli and his two sons – Hophni and Phineas (1 Samuel 2-4); King David’s life and family; Amnon, Tamar, and Absalom (2 Samuel 11:4-5, 18;); Solomon (1 Kings 11:1-8); Sodom and Gomorrah destruction (2 Peter 1:6). Christian religious educators can draw resources, insights and divine wisdom from these real-life experiences and family-based scriptures (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18, 22-24, 9:1; Malachi 2: 15; Mathew 19: 1-9; Romans 1:18-28). These historical identities and biblical injunctions can motivate and guide the faith communities, the youths in particular, in living out God’s design for biblical sexuality.

The church is also called upon to address same sex related problem as another face of sexual anarchy and revolution. Homosexual orientation has constituted a very serious challenge for Christian ethics and biblical sexual standard. This is because there are many churches or ecclesiastical leaders that are now sympathetic with this gender disorientation (Asaju, 2005). The church where the true standard of God in sex distinction of the female and male, especially in sex and marital relationship, is upheld, can help her community by preaching and teaching on the true and correct biblical view and expectation of gender distinction. The church should make it clear from the scripture, God’s displeasure against homosexual practice (Genesis 19:24; Leviticus 18:22 Romans 1:25-27) and the church also must emphasize the love of God



for the gay or homosexuals and his desire that they amend their ways (John 3:16; Roman 5:8; Roman 3:23). Dollar (2004) encourages churches to develop an open and receiving attitude to homosexuals, not to compromise God's standard for their sake but to show the love of God to them. This is because, according to him, many homosexuals are confused and empty within in need of inner healing and restoration back to the true God.

For Christians who are having sexual struggles in these areas, the church must be redemptive and restorative. Stereotyping, scapegoating, stigmatizing and segregation of persons especially parishioners with gender orientation that do not qualify as 'straight' falls short of Jesus Christ's attitude of 'love for the sinner but displeasure at the sin.' Further, Church members in this struggle can be helped by church leadership sound teachings on biblical sexual values as earlier noted, compassionate concern and personal commitment to walk with such parishioners through their sexuality challenges. As an important role of the church in dealing with same-sex issues within the church or in the secular society, Dollar (2004) calls the church attention to this often neglected fact that before dealing with what is going on in the natural, we must first bind the spirit (Mathew 12: 28-29; Ephesians 6:10-14;) behind the homosexual activity that is going on in our nation and break the stronghold of homosexuality that seem to be infiltrating our land. And the next step is to take action in the natural realm which may include pressuring against legislation that seeks to support same-sex lifestyle; ministering salvation to those who are struggling with homosexuality by imparting God's love to them; not to ostracize young people in church who have problem in this area but to be a source of loving, firm support as these people in the church fight to obtain freedom.

Further, from researchers' reports on possible causes of gender disorientation or homosexual tendency, Christian parents must understand the imperative need of being available for their children especially in their early years. The fathers, in particular have been advised to ensure that he bonds well with their son, while the mothers are warned not to be overbearing especially with the boy. This role of parents in the early bonding with their children is informed by research finding that a common denominator to most male homosexuals is an absent father.



The assumption that biblical sexual morality is common knowledge for many Christians gives way in the face of the increasing capitulation to non-biblical sexual choices and its devastating consequences on the Church, its leadership, its theology of sexuality, the rich tradition of Christian moral teachings, on the family, on individuals and the culture. Christian approach to sexuality should continually be addressed in the light of the massive sexual revolution that is currently invading the human societies. In doing so the church must correct its failure in presenting Christian sexual ethics as essentially prohibitive, legalistic, and reprehensive, devoid of grace, joy and fulfillments. The goodness of God, his good purposes and his provisions for a positive and productive human sexuality should be the context for presenting Christian sexual morality.

Conclusion

The above establishes that there is, outside the church wall, an emerging global sexual issue that seeks to deconstruct and reconstruct biblical sexual morality. This constitutes growing challenges for the church which seek to destroy its moral obligation to biblical sexuality. However the church, for the most part, seems not to be cognizant of the spiritual battles raging in this arena of sexuality. The mind is the battle ground in this sexual (spiritual) warfare, not even the sexual organ, where the forces of hell capture and enslave its victims by its sexual snares. This understanding opens our eyes to the sinister goal of the kingdom of darkness to distort the Groom-Bride imagery of Christ and his Church, to desecrate the sanctity of believers' body as Christ holy temple, and to infiltrate the marriage/family institution and rob Christ of his rightful headship and expected seeds that are to be trained and nurtured in the way of the Lord to perpetrate godly purposes on earth (Paulk, 1985). It is most relevant to conclude with this challenge from Paulk (2005):

The Church needs to wake up and get into the battle against Satan's kingdom of sex. Now is the time to challenge worldly concepts of sexuality with alternatives that offer people a choice, a solution to the emptiness of constant self-gratification which never really satisfies? Only God's people can witness to His goodness in even the most intimate aspects of His intentions in creations.



Recommendations

1. Christian religious educators in the academia and in the wider faith community are to provide biblically and culturally relevant theological response and spiritual empowerment to effectively engage the invading forces of Postmodernism.
2. Christians who uphold biblical absolutes for human sexuality as presented in this study are to rise against the revisionism that gives religious connotation to deviant humanism or that deconstruct and erode the infrastructures of biblical sexuality.

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