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HOMOSEXUALITY: REASSESSING THE AFRICAN-CHRISTIAN STAND

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ABSTRACT

The challenges of homosexuality is not a new thing to any society, African or otherwise. Homosexuality activity in various degrees has been a long companion of civilization; with varying degrees of tolerance and accommodation. But nowhere in the general history of Africa, except in few places recently, has a homosexuality lifestyle been advocated or encouraged. This later development has put African-Christian faith to a serious dilemma and as well challenged strongly African moral position. This research adopted phenomenological method and secondary sources of data collection to address the issues raised in this work. It was discovered that homosexuality is anti-Christian, anti-African and as well anti-cultural. It is a negation of God's command for man to replenish the earth and inimical to man's continual existence on earth. The work recommended that since homosexuality is not part of the original plan of God for humanity and consequently retrogressive, it should be discouraged. It equally advocated that homosexuals should not be discriminated against but be psychologically, sexually and spiritually re-orientated and accommodated.

Keywords: Homosexuality, African-Christians, Moral Values, Sexuality, Lesbianism, gay.

INTRODUCTION

Homosexuality is one of the major ethical issues facing the entire universe today, especially the Church. As a sexual perversity, it has enveloped the world and has become a canker worm eating into every fabric of the society and leaving in its trail tales of woes as it has negatively impacted the lives of not only those involved in the act, but has brought about a negative image for the Church who is suppose to be a harbinger of hope for the world. Interestingly, the Church is enmeshed in a series of contradicting controversies which has dented the image of the Church and as such, she is losing grip over the essential responsibility she has over the spiritual as well as the social wellbeing of the people whom she is to cater for.

Marriage institution has cracked in many cultures of mankind. Family values are seemingly eroded. A new set of morality is overtaking the entire universe. The crusade of many world leaders and self-anointed prefects of our time has been on the acceptance of the ‘neo-morality’ of gayism. They campaign and canvass from one country to another for the appropriation and appreciation of gay practices and why nations of the world should buy the idea. It is called a ‘new human rights.’ When Britain endorsed gay practice, David Cameron, the Prime minister said: "this is a step forward." When the American Supreme Court gave its verdict in favour of gayism, Obama said: "this is victory for the American people." Furthermore, Wommack observed that Obama while holding a reception at the White House for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender said:

There are unjust laws to overturn and unfair practices to stop. And though we’ve made progress, there are still fellow citizens, perhaps

neighbours or even family members and loved ones, who still hold fast to worn arguments and old attitudes; who fail to see your families like their families; and who would deny you the rights that most Americans take for granted... we must recognize that real progress depends not only on the laws we change but, as I said before, on the hearts we open (210).

It is the interest of this section of the paper to delve into this exercise comprehensively with special attention to the response of the African people on the issue of homosexuality. This practice to sound unequivocally is anti-Christian, un-African and culturally unacceptable.

This work aims among other things:

- i. To understand in clearer terms what homosexuality entails.
- ii. To consider various debates it has attracted over the years.
- iii. To consider homosexuality vis-a-vis African-Christian and African cultural standpoints.

HOMOSEXUALITY EXPLICATED?

Obasola asserted that the word “homosexuality” may be etymologically traced to the Greek and Latin hybrid with *homos* deriving from the Greek word for “same”; thus connoting sexual acts and affections between members of the same sex, including lesbianism” (79). Gay generally refers to male homosexuals, but is sometimes used in broader sense to refer to all homosexuals. In the context of sexuality, lesbianism denotes female homosexuals. Contrary to popular opinion, the word “homosexuality” was coined not by psychiatrists or scientist, but by a person who was fighting for the homosexual rights. It was first seen in

public print in 1869 when it appeared in two anonymous pamphlets. Those pamphlets were published as a method of fighting against the criminalization of homosexual sex in the newly formed Federation of the Northern German States. Journalists in the first part of the twentieth century readily adopted the term and made it available for use in everyday while psychiatry circles continued to use the term “sexual perversion”

According to Methodist Church Nigeria Document on Church and Society, “homosexuality is a term with two meanings. It may be applied to people who are sexually attracted to members of their own sex or to same sex genital acts” (47). On the other hand Kunhijop, said that “homosexuality involves sexual attraction to those of the same sex” (5).

One needs to point out that while the term “homosexual” was not created until the end of the nineteenth century; same sex love has been practiced since the beginning of civilization. In ancient Greece and Rome, the pairing of same sex partners during the act of love making was not considered out of the ordinary. The disapproving connotations attached to homosexuality began to enter into the thought patterns of Roman society just prior to the emergence of Christianity. But as Christianity flourished, the expression of sexuality for any reason other than procreation was considered very sinful, hence the initial persecution of homosexuals. During the Middle Ages, the term “sodomy” first came into use to describe homosexual love; it is an ancient phenomenon. It originated from Medieval Latin around 1180 as a designation for “crime against nature” (Marmor 6).

There were three methods by which this crime could be committed: first, by obtaining venereal pleasure with a member of the opposite sex; but “in

a wrong manner”; second, by having sex with an individual of the same sex; and third, by having sex with an animal. From Medieval Latin it passed into the languages of Western and Central Europe as the technical expression for a crime which was punishable by death until the second half of the eighteenth century. Thus, the terms “sodomy and “sodomite” embrace more than just homosexual sex, although most of the prosecutors were for either male homosexuality or bestiality. Ahmadu noted that, “the growth of sodomy has been so phenomenal that in the West today, about ten percent of the population is involved in gay and lesbianism.” Furthermore, he submitted that:

By the 1970s, the gay and lesbian culture had developed in America and Europe to the point that members could no longer hide their identities. So militant was their demand for acknowledgement that certain rights and privileges had to be conceded to them. Their self assertion was so aggressive and clamorous that the larger population came to doubt whether they were not after all the ones in the wrong regarding sexual matters (167).

Sodomy involves the act of lesbianism which is the erotic drive of female to female. This act has been condemned by various traditions and cultures even though, it is an act which still pervade various societies today.

THEORIES OF HOMOSEXUALITY

In this sub-heading, the concentration shall be on various theories that have been proposed to explain the genesis of homosexuality. A brief account of three theories shall be marshaled out here.

Within Family Determinants: Psychoanalysis and Beyond

Freud believed that all humans were born bisexual in nature, and from this state, as a result of restriction in one direction or the other, both heterosexuality and homosexuality developed. He also made the distinction between two types of homosexual (or 'invert', to use his terminology); those who are like women, seeking masculine men, and others who seek feminine qualities in their partners. Some individuals may display predominantly one type of inversion or the other, whereas others might display a certain amount of both types of inversion. Different causal factors were therefore suspected for the two. Freud realized that the aetiology of homosexuality was complex, and suspected that "the choice between 'innate' and 'acquired' is not an exclusive one, or . . . it does not cover all the issues involved" (vol.7 n.p).

Early psychoanalytic theory claimed that all homosexual men have unresolved pre-oedipal conflicts, that is, they did not successfully negotiate the separation-individuation phase of early childhood. In this way, early childhood stress leads to obligatory, exclusive homosexuality, whereas stress in the later oedipal phase leads to partial, non-obligatory homosexuality.

Freud's earlier work has since been criticized because, for example, he confounded gender-related behaviour and sexual behaviour in his writings. Much recent work in psychoanalytic theory has involved developing more sophisticated classification schemes for the different facets of homosexuality (Lewes, 1989 n.p). However, any such theory can

be criticized for being generalizable only to those members of a population who attend psychoanalytic clinics.

Genetic Theories: Socio-biology and Homosexuality

The last decade has seen a revival of interest in genetic theories of homosexuality (Ruse 5-34, Kirsch, Rodman 183-195), due largely to the development of human socio-biology.

Even before these recent theories, there was, of course, a suspicion that genetic factors were involved. Indeed, this is one of the fundamental questions addressed by twin studies. However, many previous reports (Rosenthal, Fuller, Thompson 1978 n.p) have presumed that homosexuality arises through the interaction of particular genetic propensities with specific rearing environments. The socio-biological theories of sexual orientation attempt to show that it is possible that homosexuality can be sustained in a population through purely genetically controlled processes which have been subject to the pressures of natural selection.

Socio-biology concerns itself with how behavioural traits have *evolved* and been *selected* from primitive societies to the present day. It has been suggested that, in primitive societies, homosexuals may have formed a 'sterile caste' which could devote itself to helping mothers to rear their young.

Sociobiological explanations of homosexuality are recent and very speculative, and are currently intended only to highlight the *possibility* of genetic transmission of such a trait. Much more research is required before these hypotheses can develop into credible scientific theories.

Neurohormonal Theories

Early studies of hormonal influences on sexual orientation concentrated on levels of circulating sex hormones in adults. Different investigations reported conflicting results (Ruse 10-15), and, in general, little evidence has been found for consistent differences in the levels of these hormones in homosexuals compared to heterosexuals.

Since the 1970s, hormonal theories emerged which concentrated on differences in prenatal hormone levels (Ellis, Ames, 233-258). Many studies have shown that abnormal levels of some prenatal hormones can lead to an increased chance of homosexuality in an individual (Dörner et al. 83-87, Money et al. 405-414, Ehrhardt et al. 57-77).

Ellis and Ames have proposed a very comprehensive gestational neurohormonal theory of human sexual orientation, which deals with the genesis of heterosexuality as well as homosexuality. They propose that sexual orientation is primarily determined by the degree to which the nervous system is exposed to testosterone, estradiol, and to certain other sex hormones while neuro-organization is taking place, predominantly between the middle of the second and the end of the fifth month of gestation. According to this theory, "complex combinations of genetic, hormonal, neurological, and environmental factors operating prior to birth

largely determine what an individual's (adult) sexual orientation will be" (57-77).

Objections

The many different theories of the origins of homosexuality are not all mutually exclusive. For example, psychoanalytic theories describe interfamily and intrapsychic factors leading to inversion, and it is perfectly possible that such environmental factors are largely governed by the genetic makeup of the members of the family. Sociobiological theories, on the other hand, concentrate on genetic mechanisms for the transmission of homosexuality, while accepting that such mechanisms may operate by influencing the environment which an individual experiences during development. The gestational neurohormonal theory allows for significant control from both genetic and environmental factors.

Psychoanalytic theories may be criticized for being largely descriptive rather than explanatory, and for being derived from a sample which is unrepresentative of the wider population. The socio-biology of homosexuality lies more in the realm of the hypothetical than the proven, and neurohormonal theories still require much corroboratory research. However, research in many areas of homosexuality is proceeding at an accelerating pace, so we can expect a much clearer understanding of the genesis of homosexuality within the next few decades.

THE CRUX OF THE MATTER

The homosexual debate has recently gained more intensity the world over. Even in Nigeria, strident voices are asserting their viewpoints either to affirm or debunk the morality behind the homosexual saga which now pervade the human race to the intent that man is now at the throes of this human epidemic. It is interesting to note that man has lost every sense of dignity and moralism and there is an open declaration by both men and women for homosexual desires. Umukoro reported that, “on March 11, 2009, hundreds of gays and lesbians were reported to have stormed the National Assembly apparently under foreign influence to protest against a Bill prohibiting same sex marriage by homosexuals in Nigeria. They did this under the guise of fundamental human rights” (5). Interestingly, Akinola who has been against legitimizing homosexuality in Nigeria in an interview noted that:

From the very beginning, we see in the word of God that God created the world and when He created the world, He also created man in His own image-male and female He created them... so going by the order of creation, that is, the divine arrangement- man and woman. In our African set up, when you talk of a man cohabiting with another man, it is an abomination, it is unheard of. When you go back to the Bible, you have specific directives, urging people of God to abhor such relationships. In fact, the word of God is so strong on this matter that whole city was destroyed. The Bible says this is an abomination before the Lord, don't do it (27).

In the Western part of the world, homosexuality as a form of sexual orientation has gradually become a reality, acceptable within the legal framework of many countries. It may be surprising to many to learn that the Obama concurs to the view that homosexuals have a legal right to contract marriages. He believes that to prohibit them will be tantamount to a denial of their fundamental human rights (222-223). It is no wonder that in Europe and in America today, many marriages are being contracted among homosexuals and they receive legal protection just like heterosexual marriages. Even though this development may be quite shocking to some, the pressure from the gay fraternity to recognize gay Bishops and Priests is equally making negative impacts. It appears all cultural, religious, ideological and social wall of partition against homosexuality are systematically being broken down, especially in the Western world.

In Nigeria and some other African countries, however, one may not say homosexuals have been able to remove all cultural and institutional barriers. Many are still in the closets, perhaps because of the strong cultural aversion towards the practice. But some are gradually coming out of their closet to assert what they perceive to be their constitutional rights. They want people to recognize them and respect their sexual orientation. They do not want to be regarded as weird and abnormal because of their sexual preference.

In the Christianized West, the homosexuals have gradually worked their way into public acceptance, at least, legally. What is it that can be said of Nigeria or Africa where traditional religion still holds sway? How do typical African-Christians and Africans generally, view homosexuality?

Amidst this debate of the morality of homosexuality, what should be the response of a typical African? The response of Africans shall be considered, but we shall first look at what the bible says about the issue.

THE BIBLE AND HOMOSEXUALITY

There is a plethora of passages in the Bible that dwell on issues bothering on homosexuality.

Probably, the first reference to homosexual practice is recorded in Genesis 19. Here is recorded what appears to be a homosexual encounter. The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah has been described as “legendary.” Among their numerous acts of debauchery was homosexual behaviour, clearly demonstrated in the incidence of Lot’s encounter with certain men of the city. They wanted to have carnal knowledge of the two visitors who had lodged in Lot’s house. They inquired from Lot, “where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we may know them, carnally” (*Revised Standard Version*, Gen. 19:5). It is instructive to note that Sodom became so depraved that the term “sodomy” (apparently derived from the word Sodom) was synonymous with all forms of moral aberrations. Scholars have noted that the sin of Sodom was not simply luxury or inhospitality but that of homosexuality. To try to interpret the passage otherwise is begging the issue and thus would do violence to the plain understanding of the incidence. It is clear from Lot’s vain attempt to appease the sensual appetite of these debased people with his virgin daughters that they were not just after any form of sexual encounter, but the homosexual type. No wonder God’s judgment was unsparing: “Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual

immorality and perversion...They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire” (*Revised Standard Version* Jude 7).

It is equally pertinent to note that homosexuality is strongly condemned in the Levitical Code. The divine disapproval for the act is expressed in judgmental terms:

“I am the Lord. Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable. Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it” (*Revised Standard Version* Lev. 18: 21-23).

Such immoral act is regarded as perversion and is totally abhorrent to God. The content of the passage reveals that it was because of such abominable acts of sodomy and bestiality that God judged the Canaanites (Lev. 18: 24-25).

Bearing in mind the strong language and the capital punishment meted out on homosexual offenders, it would be right to conclude that God considered homosexual acts a very serious sin and His wrath was not limited to Jews alone but extended to the Gentiles who practiced this act of perversion.

In another perspective, Paul’s extensive writing about love, grace and tolerance in personal and interpersonal relationships was critical in evaluating homosexual lifestyle. He employed the most condemnatory language when referring to homosexual practices among the Romans and the Corinthians. The Romans particularly, had abandoned God and given themselves to lewd practices. Therefore:

“God gave them up vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise, also men,

leaving the natural use of the women burned in their lust for one another, men committing what is shameful and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due... being filled with all unrighteous sexual immorality... who knowing the righteous judgment of God that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them” (*Revised Standard Version Rom 1: 26 – 32*).

Paul referred to homosexuality as an act which is “against nature”; that is, it is unnatural and it is on this parameter that it is condemned as unwholesome and unethical.

However, Bailey maintained an opinion which is somewhat different from that of the Bible. He maintained that there are two types of homosexuality, namely, homosexual condition or inversion and homosexual pervert. According to him, “the genuine homosexual condition or inversion, as it is often termed, is something for which the subject can in no way be held responsible. In itself, it is morally neutral like the normal condition of heterosexuality” (53). However, it may find expression in specific sexual acts and such acts are subject to moral judgment no less than those which may take place between man and woman...the pervert as the term suggests, is not a true homosexual, but a heterosexual who engages in homosexual practices. He may do so casually, from motives of curiosity or in exceptional circumstances; or habitually, as a prostitute or in pursuit of novel sensual experiences. Kubo however, insightfully pointed out that “the distinction between homosexual inversion and homosexual pervert as propounded by Bailey does not appear in scripture nor does the Bible

reflect the understanding of it as we have it today. The position of the Bible is that of condemnation whether the form of homosexuality is inversion or perversion” (75). Two other critical texts when evaluating the homosexual phenomenon are I Corinthians 6:9 and I Timothy 1:9-10. Scholars have argued over the true meaning of the Greek terms *arsenokoitai* and *malakoi*, translated respectively by some Bible versions as “them that defile themselves with mankind” and “effeminate”. The Revised Standard Version simply translates *arsenokoitai* as “homosexuals”. Kubo laments that the distinction earlier made of homosexual inverters who do not participate in homosexual practices (75). Koranteng-Pipim, sees the matter in an altogether different light. He argues that there is no hint in the two Greek terms that suggests that Paul was condemning only a certain kind of homosexual abuse, as in prostitution, rape, or pagan ceremonies. Rather, Paul condemns homosexuality as sin in its entirety. In other words, homosexuality is wrong regardless of the motive behind its practice (48).

In view of this brief survey of Biblical references to homosexual behaviour, it would be safe to conclude that the Bible is not morally neutral on homosexuality. One may deduce from a *prima facie* interpretation of Paul’s statement in Romans 1, Corinthians 6 and 1 Timothy 1 as well as other Bible passages like Leviticus 18 that homosexuality in all of its various forms is a sinful practice. It is not surprising therefore, that Paul lists homosexual offenders among those that will not inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9). As explained by Geisler, “although believers are capable of slipping into any sin, nonetheless, no one who continually practices homosexual life style is

incongruent with Bible morality. One may need to look elsewhere to justify its practice” (268).

DEBATES ON HOMOSEXUALITY

There are probably few issues that have evoked more debates and perhaps sentiments as the homosexual imbroglio. It is a volatile issue and people are entrenched in the position they espouse which they consider objective and humane. What are these views? Two views are clearly identifiable: namely, non-acceptance view, qualified-acceptance view or full acceptance view. These views will be briefly discussed and evaluated under ‘against homosexuality and in favour of homosexuality.’

i. Against Homosexuality

This position totally rejects the homosexual lifestyle and considers it sinful. Advocates of this view consider the homosexual behaviour as depraved— a form of sexual deviation that is contrary to nature and societal values. These debaters of Christian extraction hold that homosexuality is a post-fall distortion of human sexuality. They often use the popular argument that “if God intended homosexuality to be a legitimate expression of human sexuality, He would have created Adam and Steve and not Adam and Eve (Geisler 48). Thus, those who hold this view in the homosexual debate argue that like all other morally corrupt tendencies, homosexual orientation or disposition does not excuse the sin of homosexuality. The homosexual lifestyle is unnatural and socially unacceptable. It is even a threat to human lives because it is one of the

greatest purveyors of some of the most dreaded sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS.

ii. In Favour of Homosexuality

This view asserts that homosexuality is fully compatible with nature and societal norms. Proponents of this argument see homosexuality as part of the pre-fall natural order. They maintain that homosexuality is neither a distortion of human sexuality nor an aberration. Rather, homosexuality is an immutable sexual orientation given or created by God as a gift to some people just as heterosexuality. These advocates nevertheless concede that it is an eccentricity or a mark of one's individual identity, just like possessing a particular colour of skin, eye or hair. Pierson proposes that, "homosexuality and heterosexuality are two aspects of sexuality, neither being the counterfeit or the other, both being right or wrong depending on the context of their expression...(257).

Thus, fulltime apologists of homosexuality contend that homosexual behaviour may be eccentric but definitely not sinful or evil. It is the abuse of homosexuality for example promiscuity, rape or prostitution that is wrong, but not its legitimate expression in the form of loving, consensual, monogamous, homosexual relationship. That means homosexuals should be affirmed in their same-sex relationship be allowed to "marry" or to form "close-couple homosexual unions." Again, Larson writes, "Christians therefore, have reason to encourage homosexuals who are honestly convinced that they should neither attempt to perform heterosexually or remain celibate..." (16).

To the advocates in favour of homosexuality, there is nothing wrong with the homosexual lifestyle; it is all a matter of preference. The debates over

these viewpoints may not abate in the near future. Contenders of these differing positions feel that they have legitimate point to make. How would a typical African react to the debate?

THE AFRICAN-CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

Despite the moral bankruptcy that has generally characterized leadership in Africa, it is interesting to note that most African-Christian leaders have denounced homosexuality as evil, unnatural and incongruent to African culture, psyche and Christian tenets. A brief survey of some of their views is revealing like that of Mugabe of Zimbabwe who compared homosexuality to bestiality and has ordered the Police to raid the offices of Gays and Lesbians (Boykin, “Homosexuality in Africa” <http://www.keithboykin.com/author/africa.html>). In fact, Mugabe claimed that homosexuals were “worse than pigs and dogs”

Mugabe of Zimbabwe further spoke out during the UN General Assembly held in the USA. He said: “we reject the politicisation of this important issue and the application of double standards to victimize those who think and act independently of the self-anointed prefects of our time. We equally reject attempts to prescribe ‘new’ rights which are contrary to our values, norms, traditions and beliefs. We are not gays. We are Africans” (Robert Mugabe tells UN Gneral Assembly: “We are no Gay!” www.independent.co.uk/news/people/robert-mugabe-tell-un-general-assembly-we-are-nt-gays).

Uhuru Kenyatta, the president of Kenya told Obama openly during Obama’s visit to Kenya and his apologetic speech in favour of gay practices that “there are some things that we must admit we don’t share

(with the U.S) Our culture, our societies don't accept" (Bisi Alimi, the guardian www.if-you-say-being-gay-is-african-you-don't-know-your-history).

There are others beside those in the leadership cadre who feel that homosexuality is totally un-African and that it negates all the cherished values of a typical African. Thus the reactions of Africans may take the following forms: That homosexuality should not be accepted, it is not the plan of God...it is completely bad and it does not originate from Africa, it is satanic and controlled by the evil spirits.

Another African leader, now a religious leader, Pratt voiced out the stand of Methodists on homosexuality. As a Methodist Archbishop of Ghana, he noted that:

Methodist Church would never endorse the practice of homosexuality because it is inconsistent with biblical teachings. Homosexuality is alien to the cultural orientation of Africans in general and must be kicked out of the society (Pratt, T.K.

"Methodists Would Never Endorse

Homosexuality." www.nairaland.com/2725779/methodists-would-never-endorse-homosexuality-bishop).

This statement agrees with the Methodist Church Nigeria stand on homosexualism and by extension many other Christian denominations in Nigeria and Africa. Leaders of Methodist Church Nigeria in various fora have spoken against the incongruity of this practice with the biblical principles on sexuality generally. Methodist stand on homosexuality is that, "homosexual expression endangers the formation of sexual identity

in man and woman, the integrity of the family, and therefore the stability of the whole society” (Methodist Church Nigeria 47).

Though there has been a few dissenting voices, the general consensus in the African milieu is that homosexuality should not be allowed to take root in Africa. It is foreign to African culture, religion (especially, Christianity) and ethics. Thus, its manifestation should be treated as an aberration rather than a socially acceptable behavioural pattern.

The big question here before us as Africans is “do animals indulge in homosexual practice?” I think they do not. Animals do not practice this ignominious and inglorious act. If animals, who do not have morals, know that homosexual is unnatural and retrogressive and refuse to engage in it, why should humans who ought to know better seek for permission or rationalize over this practice.

Satan does not practice homosexual. When the fallen angels or better put heavenly beings (agents of Satan) came into the world, they went unto the daughters of men and not sons of men (Gen. 6:1-4). These beings knew that it is unnatural for man to have sexual intercourse with a fellow man and for woman to do so with a fellow woman; they decided to approach women. If Satan, who is morally debased, can abhor such unnatural practice, why do humans advocate the legalization of homosexuality and other forms of sexual perversions prevalent in the society today.

It is not in our interest to compare man with animals and Satan here, but to point out that these either do not have morals or are morally debased. If they are as such, human beings made in the image of God ought to not in their wildest imagination contemplate the practice not to talk of

engaging in it; but unfortunately these practices continue to challenge our morality.

FACTORS FACILITATING THE CONTINUITY OF HOMOSEXUALITY

Kunhiyop affirmed that there are some factors that give rise or support to homosexuality in the world today. Below are the five factors as he discussed them. We shall take these as he discussed them (5-15).

i. Demands for Freedom of Speech and Human Rights

Today everybody has right to express an opinion, even if their opinion is that of a minority or is ethically wrong. Taking a cue from their western counterparts, homosexual advocates have come out of their closets and gave their cases in terms of individual freedom and human rights, with the unflinching support of human rights organizations.

ii. Desire for Morality to be based on Empirical and Scientific Data

Psychological, social and empirical data have replaced authority and religious convictions as authoritative guides to ethics and morality. In particular, homosexual advocates parade any scientific evidence that suggests that being homosexual is not a matter of choice but of constitution, regardless of whether the evidence is conclusive. Their argument is that if something is innate, it must be acceptable.

iii. Erosion and abandonment of Traditional values and beliefs

Africa is experiencing a rapid erosion of the values and traditions that held the community together. A new generation of Africans are rejecting traditional beliefs and practices as backward and unacceptable in the

scientific and post-Christian age. The community, which used to be the arbiter of morality, is no longer seen as authoritative. Elders have lost their place in the education and training of the younger generation. Fathers cannot tell their sons what is right and wrong, and mothers cannot do the same for their daughters. The god of individualism has been promoted by the all powerful media and is the new source of authority and allegiance.

i. Rejection of Biblical revelation and Ecclesiastical faith and practice

People's world view is no longer shaped by the scriptures and the church. Instead, is shaped by secular, humanistic thinking. Such thinking singles out love as the most important factor in marriage and regards the question of whether those in love are heterosexual or homosexual as irrelevant. It is the presence of love that is decisive. Consequently, the very definition of love is being challenged. In South Africa, the marriage act originally defined marriage as "the union of one man with one woman", but after a legal challenge, it was changed to "the voluntary union of two persons". Such a change marks a clear rejection of the Biblical and Christian definition of marriage.

ii. Advance in Reproductive technology

In Africa, people got married in order to have children. However, these days "technology has broken the link between sexual intercourse and procreation; and this, in turn, has made the connection between intercourse and marriage unnecessary". Homosexuals can now use medical options to have children without committing themselves to heterosexual relationships.

CONCLUSION

Homosexuality, as a sexual relation between people of the same sex has attracted a lot concerns and debates both in the West and in Africa. African culture sees it as that which is incongruent with her morals. It is against the natural law which by extension is the divine law. It is against the ethics and tenets of Christianity as a religion. It is against the perfect design of God for humanity. While this work does not encourage that homosexuals be treated as a pariah, it does recommend that spiritual, moral, psychological and social assistance and reorientation be given to those already cut up in the web of homosexuality for full integration into the perfect plan of God for all humanity. The solution to this unnatural menace is a return to God. The Africans need to go back to their cherished values and eschew any form of modernism that threatens her religion, ethics and culture.

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