

## **Marriage and Procreation in the Light of Genesis 1:27-28: A Face off Towards Homoerotic Marriage in Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Homoerotic marriage or affairs in Nigeria is foreign to our socio-religious, socio-political and socio-cultural milieus. It has never been in the characteristics of any ethnic, cultural and religious group in Nigeria to marry persons of the same sex. Therefore, the methodology explored in this work is the Inculturation Hermeneutics Model. Using the lesson of marriage and procreation as seen in Genesis 1:27-28, the paper aimed at educating the public on the cultural and religious immorality of same sex marriage in Nigeria and to call on the church and state to condemn same sex marriage in all its entirety. This work showed that the agitations for same sex marriage in Nigeria are a concrete situation, not a rumour as some people supposed. The bible passage in view (Genesis 1:27-28) gave the theological understanding that God ordained marriage for man and woman, homosexuality is an abomination before God and man. Moreover, same sex marriage is anti-procreation as projected by God and as such, the church and state are expected to work together in bringing the idea of same sex marriage to a halt for now and posterity. This work was concluded on the presupposition that if same sex marriage is allowed in Nigeria, it will undermine our cultural and God's mandate of marriage and procreation.*

### **1. Introduction**

The concept of marriage and sex between a man and a woman has been known by all nations from time immemorial. This is so because men and women of every society of all ages have involved in the work of procreation. Before Islam and Christianity came to Nigeria, the activities of procreation between man and woman have been on. In fact, sex and procreation is an instinct in man and woman. Marriage in Nigeria and indeed Africa transcends mere sexual pleasure. So it is expected that whenever a marriage takes place, procreation takes place. Even in some communities in Nigeria, some families prefer the prospective wife to be pregnant before the marriage. This is not acceptable by Christians. Marriage and family is an institution in Nigeria.

The issue of homoerotic (same sex marriage) is very foreign to Nigeria. Being that Nigeria believe and accept marriage and procreation, can same sex marriage bring procreation? Same sex marriage is an indirect way of stopping procreation and if possible wiping away humans from the earth. This is the propelling factor that aroused this paper. We cannot separate procreation from marriage and as such same sex marriage is seen as religiously, ethically and culturally unacceptable in Nigeria. Genesis 1: 27-28 confronts the idea of same sex marriage which cannot make reproduction and produce children.

Using the Inculturation Hermeneutics Model, Genesis 1:27-28 is explored to sensitize Christians in Nigeria against this new wave of crazy thought that intends to go against the word of God and our cultural heritage. The inculturation as it is used here treats both the secular and cultural aspect of our society as interconnected (Ukpong, 2006:120).

## **II. DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS**

**2.1 Homoerotic:** Homoerotic according to the Encarta Dictionary is something relating to or characterized by eroticism that is focused on or inspired by people of the same sex. In simple understanding, homoerotic is love relationship between two people of the same sex (man and man or woman and woman). This relationship can lead to marriage between the homosexuals.

**2.2 Marriage:** There are different ideas about the subject of marriage. Is it a romantic alliance between a man and woman, which they can drop when they like? Or is it a legal and social institutions: society's way of regulating sexual behaviour? According to Atkinson (1982:302) marriage is a covenant in a life relationship based on a public undertaking involving promises and obligations. One weakness in Atkinson's definition of marriage is the exclusion of who and who should be involved in marriage. This definition is open ended, in the sense that it can fit into any type of marriage provided it is legally and publicly recognized. In the opinion of

Humphreys and Wise (1983:70) marriage is the life long commitment of a man and a woman to live together in the establishment of a family. It has to do with life long commitment, in other words marriage could only be separated by death. Marriage between a man and a woman was the first institution established by God (Gen. 2:21-24).

**2.3 Progeny and Procreation:** Progeny is the generation of children or descendants, offspring (Morris, 1971:1044). Procreation according to Gove (1965:679) means to reproduce offspring. It also means to produce offspring by generations.

### III. AGITATIONS FOR SAME SEX MARRIAGE IN NIGERIA: A SITUATION

Recently, there was the proposal to the National House of Assembly in Nigeria (NASS) to accept same sex marriage in Nigeria. This phenomenon is a practice that has been imported from some foreign lands. The National House of Assembly was able to stop the move. Now that we have succeeded in stopping the proposal of same sex marriage in Nigeria can we say we have been able to erase the idea from the minds of the proponents? Who are these proponents of homoerotic gamy? They are our children who were probably sent abroad to school or for some other purposes by Nigeria parents. Probably these people who stood at the front of public television cameras agitating for homosexual marriage are from rich families. Although, homosexuality is condemned in Nigeria by all, some of our Nigerian retrospective and present, missionaries, parents and the government cannot be exonerated from some kinds of blames in this matter. It is possible that some Nigerians believe more in the foreign land than our land. Of course, the missionaries juxtaposed their cultures with Christianity and brain washed us to believe that everything the white man does is better and superior to our culture. This idea is still bubbling in our psychic today.

Today, the English language and the white man's way of expressing it is greatly emphasized in every Nigerian home and school and it has become imperative to have a credit in it in ordinary level as a pre-requisite for Nigerian University Admission instead of alternating it with our local languages. Being that most public schools including universities in Nigeria has not been properly built to international standard, some rich parents send their children to foreign lands for quality education. Also, many of our political leaders who should have been the first people to patronize our public schools still send their children abroad to school. What the children do over there is not under our control unlike when the children are in a Nigerian University. Some of these foreign lands make the children to believe that by age 18 you are no more under the full control of your parents or anyone provided you do not break the state's laws. Some times when some of these children return to Nigeria, they are out of the full control of their parents. It would have been wiser to repair our home, Nigeria and make others to learn from some of our good cultural heritages. Same sex marriage is anti-Nigerian culture and it should be dealt with, with all sense of seriousness both at home, church, school and by political institutions.

Same sex marriage proposal was so foreign to the faiths and cultures we profess and practice in Nigeria. The proponents of same sex marriage are not proposing this new type of marriage on the basis of religion or culture but on the basis of human right. To them, human right is something that allows a citizen to do what he or she feels is convenient and good for the private and public life of such citizens. If human right is all about what a citizen wants for his or her own pleasure without regard for God, ethical and cultural values, then such human right is indeed an infringement on God's sovereign rights and socio-cultural right of the society as a whole.

On the above basis, the Senates, through its president, David Mark, pronounced rejection of same sex marriage and the proportional punishment that follows. This did not go down well with the proponents of same sex marriage but the Nigerian Society had deep breath of relief. Although, the Nigerian law makers have rejected it on behalf of Nigerians, those who are interested in homosexual activities have refused to rest because they feel it is their rights. Secretly, people are still practicing homosexuality in Nigeria. The generality of Nigerians frown against this move yet they find it difficult to stop it. Homosexuality and even rape have been in Nigeria for long before the ideas of legalizing it in recent times under human right law. This seems to be an idea that Nigeria will struggle with for almost eternity. This is possible because we are very good at making laws in Nigeria but we lack the will-power to implement laws with all the seriousness it deserves.

Moreover, the issue of homosexuality do happen in many of our single sex schools in Nigeria. The question that comes to mind here is: what have we done to check this moral decadence in our school hostels in Nigeria? Of course, the proponents of same sex marriage are Nigerians but how did they came to this idea? Some of them got it from schools in Nigeria, America and Europe. This group of persons do not like sex between the opposite gender and as such, they do not like marriage between the opposite sex.

#### IV. MARRIAGE AND PROCREATION IN NIGERIAN CULTURAL MILIEU

Every society in the world has its own ways of cooking, dressing, eating, worship, marriage etc. in Nigeria, three major tribes have been given national recognition. They include: the Yoruba, Hausa and Ibo. While the Yorubas are found in the Western part of Nigeria, the Hausas and Ibos are found in the Northern and Eastern parts of Nigeria respectively. There are some other tribes being referred to as minor tribes. They include the Urhobo, Ibibio, Anang, Ijaw, Edo, Tiv, Jukun, Fulani, Igala, Itsekiri, Nupe, Bata, Iladje, etc. The heterogeneous nature of Nigeria's National entity makes Nigeria to have over 250 indigenous ethnic groups (Etemike, Mordi, Ojeh and Akinwumi, 2000:6).

All of these ethnic groups in Nigeria believe and practice marriage between man and woman and in this marriage children are expected to be born. Among these cultures, marriage between a man and man or between a woman and a woman is unheard of and it is called a taboo as well as an abomination. Among the Urhobo for instance, an abomination is called *egua* (*egha*-taboo), among the Ibos it is called *aru* and among the Yorubas it is called *ewo*. In Nigeria's culture, it is even regarded as an immoral thing to casually make mention of sex or sex organs in the public not to talk of same sex marriage (Mijah, 2006: 49-58). In Yorubaland according to Faborebo (2006: 364-374), sexual morality is highly upheld and that marriage is between a man and a virgin girl and in order for the virginity to be further preserved before marriage, the virgins clog-clitoris that could have thwarted the desired objective of bridal purity is quickly trimmed at youth so that the girl can remain a virgin. Fabarebo states further that among the Yoruba of Nigeria, homosexuality, lesbianism and Felatio termed as unnatural sexual relationship is regarded as sexual taboos. Among the Hausa, Ibo, Urhobo, etc, of Nigeria, marriage between a man and woman is upheld with all sense of responsibility (Okumagba, Arisi, and Nwaezeapu, 2000:35 -36).

Among the Africans including Nigerians, polygyny is acceptable but polyandry is unacceptable in Nigeria. Although, polygyny is acceptable in African culture, Christians are admonished to practice monogamy as an idea biblical marriage (O' Donovan, 1996:16-298). Among the Yoruba, Urhobo, Edo, Hausa, Ibo, Ibibio, Efik, Ijaw, etc, polygyny is acceptable culturally and children are seen as the crown or glory of the marriage. Among these ethnic groups, children especially male children are highly cherished. All of these backgrounds cannot allow homoerotic-gamy to take place in Nigeria.

#### V. THE BIBLE TEXT

##### 5.1 The Bible Text (Genesis 1:27-28) in Old Testament Hebrew

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם  
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וּכְבֹּשׁוּהָ וּרְדוּ בְּדָגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ עַל-הָאָרֶץ:<sup>27</sup>  
<sup>28</sup>

(TTW Ldargnine Hebrew O.T)

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##### 5.2 The Bible Text (Genesis 1:27-28) in English Translation

- 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
- 28 And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth (RSV).

#### VI. CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS

##### 6.1 Socio-Cultural Context of Genesis 1:27-28

The book of Genesis is regarded by scholars as the book of beginning may be due to the word beresit which introduced the creation of all the things by God incending man and woman (Assohoto and Ngewa, 2006:9). It tells us of the creation of languages (tower of babel) and a chosen nation (Israel). It also gave us the generations before and after the flood, together with specific details about image (5:1-32, 10:1-32). This book also told us about how God instituted marriage for man and woman in the society (1:27-28; 2:18-25). Although, the book of Genesis is anonymous, scholars argue that the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) were ascribed to Moses as the author (Ndjereou, 2006:7, McCain, 2010:28). These book of Genesis may have been written to show the Hebrew slaves in Egypt their history end to help unit them to hope, pray and plan for deliverance (Geisler, 1977: 40). Moreover, it could have been written by Moses either in Midian while he was there or during the wilderness journey for his fellow Hebrews to least guide them historically and religiously (Church and Peterman, 1992: 1; McCain, 2010:31). In whatever way Genesis was written, the fact remains that God's word was passed out to a people living in a community and people who have cultural background and practices. In Hebrew culture, marriage between man and woman was recognized and seen as a institution by Yahweh. According to Millar and Millar (1961: 422), marriage among the Hebrews in the Old Testament required no state or religious sanction but was seen as a private affair with the good of the

total family group paramount. It was not seen as a contract but as *kiddushin* (Sanctification) often based on lofty ideals and regulations. In the earliest times in Jewish society, the engagement of marriage began when the groom paid the dowry (*Mohar*) to the bride's father in the presence of witness or began to serve for some stipulated duration of time for the virgin but in the post-exilic era the marriage settlement supplanted the Old Testament Aice (Ibid). In the Hebrew culture, the woman was seen as the possession of the husband (Davies, 1956: 863).

In early Jewish culture, betrothal (*erusin*) of a young virgin to a man was practiced and such betrothal can only be broken through a Jewish process of divorce and childlessness especially the void of a male child was a serious dilemma indeed (Baab, 1962: 859; O'Brien 1990:248). In the Hebrew culture, child bearing in marriage especially male children were seen as an obligation for procreation and family posterity. This was why the practice of kin-man-redeemer was taken seriously among the Jews, so as to continue the lineage and name of the late brother and failure to redress one's brother's name and lineage by taking the wife of the late brother attract serious consequences (Wilson and Stek 1995: 365-66).

In Hebrew culture, homosexuality is seen as an abomination before God and the Jewish society. This was one of the reasons why God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah in the time Abraham and Lot. These are the socio-cultural situations where Genesis 1:27-28 could be located and it resonates with the cultural stand against same sex marriage in Nigeria and can be used as a master piece for such a fight in the Church and state life of our nation.

### 6.2 Analysis of Genesis 1: 27-28

The analysis shall be done thematically to reflect the following themes:

- i. **Man and Woman (Male and Female Verse 27).** On the sixth day God created man and subsequently God made a woman out of the rib of the man (2:21-22). The passage in view (1:27-28) states clearly that man and woman were created in the image (*tselem*) of God (*elohiym*). The Hebrew word for man is *adam* and it means clay, red earth and humanity. Adam was also the personal name of the first human being. The name is derived from a word meaning "to be red," and thus the first man was called Adam because he was formed from the red earth. It is also the generic name of the human race (Ge 1:26,27 5:2 8:21 De 8:3). Its equivalents are the Latin *homo* and the Greek *anthropos* (Mt 5:13,16). It denotes also man in opposition to woman (Ge 3:12 Mt 19:10). Another Hebrew word for man is *ish* and it carries within it the idea of a person with masculine features (McCain, 2010:37). *Ish*, like the Latin *vir* and Greek *aner*, denotes properly a man in opposition to a woman (1Sa 17:33 Mt 14:21), a husband (Ge 3:16 Ho 2:16), man with reference to excellent mental qualities. Another Hebrew word for man is *'enosh*, and it refers to man as mortal, transient, perishable (2Ch 14:11 Isa 8:1 Job 15:14 Ps 8:4 9:19,20 103:15). Also, the Hebrew word *geber* means man with reference to his strength, as distinguished from women (De 22:5). In Genesis 1:27, the Hebrew word for male is *zakar* meaning humans and animals and that of female is *neqebah* and *isha* meaning opposite of man.
- ii. **Be fruitful and multiply.** To be fruitful is called *para* which means to bear fruits, branches. This refers to reproduction of offsprings emanating from sexual union between man and woman. The Hebrew word *rabah* means to multiply, great, many, numerous, shoot, surplus, and much. This gives the idea of making offsprings numerous, much, surplus, many or great.
- iii. **Fill the Earth and Subdue it.** The Hebrew word to fill is *male* or *mala*. It gives the ideal of replenishing the earth with children to populate the earth through reproduction. The word subdue in Hebrew is *kabash*, a verb which literally means to bring into bondage. Another word which has similar meaning in Hebrew is *radah* and it means dominion, rule, dominate, to tread down, subjugate, etc (Oguntoye, 2010:68). Both the man and the woman were given power by God to have dominion over other creatures of God.
- iv. **Rib (2:21).** Rib here, is literally seen as a part of the side. Being that the woman was formed from the man himself, the woman carries the same flesh and blood making the duo co-image of God (Criswell, 1979:8).
- v. **Garden of Eden.** The place where the *ish ne ha isha* (man and woman) were placed by God in the Garden of Eden. The Garden of Eden has four rivers: Euphrates which flows through Mesopotamia, Hiddekel-Tigris which flows parallel with the Euphrates, Pison and Gihon which were known to be irrigating canals in Mesopotamia (Purkiser, 1955:74). This represented the world of man and woman in which they were to replenish the earth. God blessed them and gave them their world (Garden of Eden). The physical world of humanity is the earth. God blessed the marriage of man and woman and ordained them to bear children that will fill the earth.

## VII. THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF GENESIS 1:27-28: A FACE OFF WITH SAME SEX MARRIAGE

- i. **God Ordained Marriage for Man and Woman:** God instituted marriage so that men and women might complement one another and share in His creative work through the procreation of children (Granberg, 2004:334).
- ii. **Homosexuality is An Abomination Before God.** The idea of marriage in the passage (1:27-28) is carrying within it sex between man and woman with the outcome of children. Marriage between man and man or woman and woman cannot produce children. Elsewhere in the Old Testament, homosexuality is regarded as an abomination before God. Two verses in Leviticus (18:23 and 20:13) express unequivocal condemnation of male homosexual sex (although it is not clear whether what is referred to is intercourse or all sexual acts between men). According to Leviticus 20:13: "If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them."
- iii. **Same Sex Marriage is Anti-procreation.** Being that marriage between man and man or woman and woman cannot reproduce and produce children it could be seen as a systematic way of whipping out human race from the face of the earth. If same sex marriage is accepted in Nigeria and elsewhere and every individual is involved in every society, at the long run in many years to come human race will be totally extinct. Same sex marriage is a pervasion of marriage and as such, the Church must fight against it in Nigeria.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

As a point of emphasis, if the concept of marriage and procreation is properly put in perspective by those who are proposing same sex marriage in Nigeria and even those having some soft sport for this agitation, will appreciate and prefer the wisdom of God in the issue marriage between man and woman. Moreover, we must not forget that we are Africans and as Africans, the expectation of children in marriage is part of our cherished culture in Nigeria.

Genesis 2:27-28 has been studied here to boost a more biblical basis for the practice of marriage between and man and woman. The theology of marriage and procreation is not just an issue of state and human right but a divine mandate from God to fill the earth with mankind. By implication, God did not institute same sex marriage in the Bible and as such same sex marriage is a sin against God and the society. It is on this premise that the church and the government of Nigeria, should reject and impose more stiffer punishment for same sex marriage proponents and practitioners. The church in Nigeria should not treat it with lousiness. Same sex marriage must be given, all the rejection it requires.

## IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

- [1]. The church and the state should raise up counseling unit with a special interest in the counseling of those who believe in same sex marriage.
- [2]. The church and State should frequently organize seminars through live and visual media in town halls of our local communities in Nigeria.
- [3]. The church should not only reject the idea of same sex marriage but should also discipline those involved.
- [4]. Nigerian parents should be proactive by giving their children sex education during their young age.
- [5]. All those sending their children to foreign lands either for schooling or other purpose, should first of all give their children enough of our cultural trainings. Moreover, if possible, parents should try as much as possible to monitor the activities of their children at home and abroad.
- [6]. In a situation where parents notice abnormal behaviours in their children, such parents should avail such children for spiritual and psychological counseling.

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