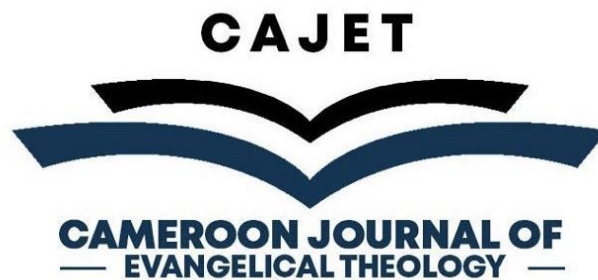


Cameroon Journal of Evangelical Theology - CAJET -

ISSN Pending



Number: 01

Issue: 1

Date: December 2023

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Yaoundé, Cameroon
www.cajet.org

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An Analysis of Homosexuality in the Postmodern World from an African Christian Perspective

Une analyse de l'homosexualité dans le monde postmoderne dans une perspective Chrétienne Africaine

Samson A. Iliya, Ph.D.¹

Abstract

Postmodernism has influenced the drive for homosexual practices by advocating for absolute freedom for living in society. Homosexuality threatens the life of the Church in African society, where such practices are considered taboo to their social relations and moral value systems. This paper analyses how postmodernism influences homosexuality using an analytical approach. The article affirms that homosexuality is an obnoxious practice, a human deviation in society, and a sin against God because homosexuals reject biblical principles and metanarratives of marriage and sex between men and women. The homosexual practice affects the theological, social, and logical order of human relations with God, fellow humans, and the holy nature of the church in Africa and globally. Therefore, profound and apologetic use of scripture can provide a sound Christian rebuttal of homosexual practices in order to save perpetrators of such practices and uphold the holy nature of the church, especially in Africa, where homosexuality is foreign and unacceptable even in their traditional religion.

Keywords: homosexuality, postmodern, Africa, Christian perspectives

Résumé

Le postmodernisme a influencé les pratiques homosexuelles en prônant la liberté absolue de vivre en société. L'homosexualité menace la vie de l'église dans la société africaine, où de telles pratiques sont considérées comme taboues dans leurs relations sociales et leurs systèmes de valeurs morales. Cet article analyse l'influence du postmodernisme sur l'homosexualité à l'aide d'une approche analytique. L'article affirme que l'homosexualité est une pratique odieuse, une déviation humaine dans la société et un péché contre Dieu parce que les homosexuels rejettent les principes bibliques et les métarécits du mariage et de la sexualité entre hommes et femmes. La pratique homosexuelle affecte l'ordre théologique, social et logique des relations humaines avec Dieu, les autres humains et la nature sacrée de l'Église en Afrique et dans le monde. Par conséquent, l'utilisation profonde et apologétique des Écritures peut fournir une réfutation chrétienne solide des pratiques homosexuelles afin de sauver les auteurs de ces pratiques et de maintenir la nature sacrée de l'église, en particulier en Afrique, où l'homosexualité est étrangère et inacceptable, même dans leur religion traditionnelle.

Mots-clés : homosexualité, postmoderne, Afrique, perspectives chrétiennes

Introduction

Christian faith in Africa is gradually taking deep root as well as becoming the hope of global Christianity. Phillip Jenkins' declaration that the centre of global Christianity had shifted

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fundamentally from Europe to Africa² corroborates the above assertion. While this is good news, postmodern ideas portend several unhealthy practices to the African moral value system and the healthy growth of Christianity in Africa. Homosexuality is among such unhealthy postmodern ideas blowing hot to sabotage the biblical and traditional marriage setup, sex life and the holy nature of the church in Africa. Hence, homosexuality is a huge problem bedeviling the world, including the African community. Cases of homosexual practices are being reported in the African community. I have heard a report of a homosexual who had almost been wedded in the church, thinking that he was a woman. Providentially, he died in the process due to an accident and was discovered to be a man in the morgue. Transgender people like Bobrisky and others influenced by postmodern relativism and hedonistic profligacy have insisted that homosexuality is a natural order of sex life and that its social acceptability is relative to every community and individual. In this work, it is argued that homosexuality is not naturally bequeathed – it is instead a socio-cultural deviation from the godly standard of sex life, and only adherence to the authority of the scripture and correct interpretation will provide a veritable solution to such practice. The historical antecedent of the homosexual idea is explored in the next section.

The Historical Antecedent of Homosexuality

Homosexuality is a Greek term meaning “of one sex,” as in “homogeneous” or “of one kind.” It is a relationship or sexual act involving two parties “of one sex.”³ Thus, homosexuality refers to “the general phenomenon of same-sex eroticism and is the broadest of the categories employed; it comprises all sexual phenomena between persons of the same gender, whether by the result of conscious preference, subliminal desire, or circumstantial exigency.”⁴

The cultural understanding of homosexual attraction is a socio-cultural, theological and philosophical-related concern. The term seems new, but discussion about same-sex has appeared from Plato’s symposium to contemporary queer theory.⁵ The idea of homosexuality is traceable to ancient times because their social context tolerated and practised it.⁶ However, there is practically no data about the number of gay people in the past. The Kinsey research of 1942 in the United States that determined the number of gay people affirms the above assertion.⁷ The term “homosexuality” was coined by German psychologists Karoly Maria Benkert and John Addington, who refer to “homosexual instinct” in “A Problem in Modern Ethics” in the late nineteenth century.⁸

The critical category of this practice in the Bible and history was called ‘sodomy’ (having to do with acts), which differs from the contemporary idea of homosexuality as an identity and norm. “Sodomy was a category of forbidden acts.” Even as an act in the medieval period, some theologians singled out same-sex sodomy as the worst sexual crime and seriously

² Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1-17.

³ John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago: The University Press, 1981), 41.

⁴ Boswell, 44

⁵ “Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy” revised edition (2015) <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/homosexuality/?ref=driverlayer.com>. Accessed 1/11/2018. Also see Katherine D. Harris, “Queer theory” <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/harris/Eng10>. Accessed 24/11/18.

⁶ Kenneth Brownell, “Learning from the Past” in *Homosexuality: Christian Truth and Love* edited by Paul E. Brown, (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2007), 52.

⁷ Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, 53.

⁸ Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, 42.

condemned it.⁹ Arguing for the contemporary practice of homosexuality, Michel Foucault states:

Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species.¹⁰

Homosexuality as an identity is unarguably a modern construction¹¹ that has taken a more dangerous dimension of seeking the right to identity in the postmodern age. In the past, homosexuality was an issue that concerned only a minute percentage of people vis-à-vis the entire population. It was shameful to accept or relate with those practising it. However, today, homosexuality is legalised in most parts of the world.¹² For instance, Richard Swinburne delivered a lecture on homosexuality at the Conference of Christian Philosophers in Oxford titled “Christian Moral Teaching on Sex, Family, and Life.” In his presentation, homosexuality was regarded as a “disability.”¹³ Swinburne was seen as a social and religious bigot by the Society of Christian Philosophers for taking the side against homosexual practice. Unhappy with Swinburne’s position, the chairman of the association, Michael Rea, apologised to the philosophical community thus:

I want to express my regret regarding the hurt caused by the recent Midwest meeting of the Society of Christian Philosophers. The views expressed in Professor Swinburne’s keynote are not those of the society of Christian philosophers itself. Though our membership is broadly united by way of religious faith, the views of our members are otherwise diverse. As president of the Society of Christian Philosophers, I am committed to promoting the intellectual life of our philosophical community. Consequently, (among other reasons), I am committed to the values of diversity and inclusion. As an organisation, we have fallen short of those ideals.¹⁴

The position of such a society that bears a Christian name shows that homosexuality is a threat to the Christian faith. This view of the Society of Christian philosophers exemplifies postmodern ideology that encourages homosexuality rather than Christian commitment in the name of intellectual freedom. This has resulted in instability in various disciplines, cultures, ideologies, ethics, religious beliefs, societal practices, and traditional understanding of anthropology. Existential human experiences of need and satisfaction, the pursuit of human rights and the quest for freedom outside of God’s purpose and divine organization of marriage and sex life have influenced the practice of homosexuality globally. In 2006, South Africa became the first and remained the only African country to legalize same-sex marriage in its constitution. In 2020, South Africa’s President Cyril Ramaphosa passed into law the conduct of same-sex marriage without any civil prohibition. Other African nations decriminalizing it

⁹Michel Foucault, “1870 – The Birth of Homosexuality” *The History of Sexuality*, Volume I: An Introduction, trans. Robert Hurley, (New York: Random House, 1980), 42-44. <http://timothyquigley.net/vcs/foucault-homosexual.pdf>. accessed 21/11/2018.

¹⁰Foucault, “1870 – The Birth of Homosexuality”, 42.

¹¹ Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery: An Encyclopedic of the Images, Symbols Motifs, Metaphors, Figures of Speech and Literary Patterns of the Bible* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1998), 396.

¹² “Gay Marriage around the World” <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/08/08/gay-marriage-around-the-world-2013/>. “Same-Sex Relationships and Marriage in Nigeria” <https://lawpadi.com/same-sex-relationships-and-marriage-in-nigeria>. Accessed 8/11/2018.

¹³ Berny Belvedere, “Christian Organization Apologizes for Featuring Christian View On Homosexuality” thefederalist.com/2016/11/0105/christian-organization-apologizes-featuring-viewhomosexuality. Accessed 31/10/2018.

¹⁴ Berny Belyedere, Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *Christian Philosophy: A Systematic and Narrative Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 199.

include Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Lesotho, Seychelles, and Mauritius.¹⁵ The force for more countries to follow this path is high. In Nigeria, the effort to legalize homosexuality was truncated and prohibited by the Nigerian National Assembly in 2013, reaffirmed in 2015, and made punishable by law for ten years imprisonment. That notwithstanding, the clandestine practice of homosexuality in Nigeria and other parts of Africa is undisputed. Since there are homosexuals even in the church, reaching out to them becomes necessary. The subsequent section considers the postmodern ideas that influence homosexuality.

The Postmodern Ideas that Influence Homosexuality

This section presents postmodern principles that engender homosexual practice in the contemporary world, after which it will be evaluated from an African Christian perspective.

Absolute freedom: The practice of homosexuality is premised upon postmodern advocacy for absolute freedom. Freedom is not bad. Freedom is a gift of God to humans. However, God does not give humans absolute freedom. Humans claim absolute freedom as having a license to pursue human pleasure and gain any desire that makes them feel good. This view of freedom has greatly influenced the practice of homosexuality.¹⁶ Today, people seek freedom in absolute terms from traditional, cultural, and religious boundaries to achieve what they want. Postmodernists believe authentic freedom is freedom from the total control of others and God.¹⁷ Freedom to them is doing what one wishes, and “when one’s action gratifies a wish, even if the having of the wish was determined by a set of causes, one is free on this view.”¹⁸ Michael Foucault put it thus: “The greatest good is an individual’s freedom to maximise pleasure.” He adds that society constitutes “a conspiracy to stifle one’s longings for self-expression.” Accordingly, for him, “law is equal to repression and decriminalisation is equal to freedom.”¹⁹ Homosexuals premised on this postmodern thought of freedom for the legalisation of homosexuality.

Freedom, from this perspective, emphasises human determinism in choice-making. William affirms the need to return to a theological view of freedom as Jonathan Edward advocates: “Man does what he pleases, but God determines his will.”²⁰ God’s purpose for humanity must control our freedom as humans strive to make intelligent and discernible choices, never to contradict God’s purpose for humanity, which homosexuals have despised greatly.

Homosexuality as a socio-cultural construct: homosexuals have argued, over time, that the idea of morality has changed toward many practices. They hold that there are ancient practices (such as premarital sex and abortion) that are not restricted by law and that homosexuality should not be an exception. Postmodern thought has wrecked the cultural and social structures of society. In affirmation of the reality and effect of cultural changes, James Sire opines that:

Culture cannot lose its philosophic centre without the most serious of consequences, not just to the philosophy on which it was based but to the whole superstructure of

¹⁵ Aaron Rakhetsi, “6 Countries in Africa that have legalized same-sex relationships in the past 10 ten years” <https://www.globalcitizen.org>. Accessed 6/11/2023.

¹⁶ Dan Gallagher, “A Christian Response to Homosexuality” <http://thesowermagazine.com/a-christian-response-to-homosexuality/> 2015. Accessed 31/10/2018.

¹⁷ Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 283.

¹⁸ William L. Reese Ed. “Freedom” in *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion (Eastern and Western Thought)* (New York: Humanities Press Inc., 1980), 180.

¹⁹ James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, Third Edition (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1997), 183

²⁰ Reese, “Freedom” in *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, 180.

culture and even each person's notion of who he or she is. Everything changes. When God dies, both the substance and value of everything else die with it. The acknowledgement of the death of God is the beginning of postmodern wisdom.²¹

The idea that God is dead as postulated by Friedrich Nietzsche portend a risky theology that undermines the sovereignty of God. This idea projects that God is irrelevant in human enterprise, that man has now come of age, and do not need God. This theology rejects the relevance of the biblical overarching message as metanarrative and superstructure that establish and affirm the value of Christian faith and culture of living. The shift of Christian culture from theocentric to an anthropocentric framework is due to postmodern influence. No wonder Jean-Francois Lyotard claimed that postmodernity signals a "shift in cultural legitimation."²² That is why postmodernism projects a very distorted view of universal truth. They believe that public identification with the postmodern system of thought gives them respectability.²³ They hold that structures are social constructs and, therefore, cannot be absolute structures for societal patterns. Some of these social constructs are gender binary, class, etcetera.

One of the constructs postmodernism wants to break is between good and evil and male and female. As a reaction to modernity and rationalism, postmodern philosophers claim that nothing is purely objective; hence, homosexuality is reasonable and not evil. Postmodernism challenges the deconstruction of norms, ideas, structures, rationalism, or binary ideas that bound and view homosexual practice as evil.²⁴ The challenge of postmodernism is that it pulls down moral structures and boundaries without building. Baumann refers to postmodernism as a hunter whose aim is to kill the game for his satisfaction, not minding the adverse effect on the universe and humanity.²⁵ To preserve the Christian faith in Africa, we must not be like hunters but gamekeepers and the keepers of apostolic faith from its social and religious life. The church must contend against the homosexual practice to preserve godly values that will engender the spread of Christianity and family values that corroborate Africa's.

Homosexuality as a natural instinct. The instinct here refers to the fact that homosexual tendency is a naturally bequeathed heritage according to homosexuals. They believe that the victim has no choice but to identify himself with its practice. They claim that since other mammals are homosexual, there should be no reason to outlaw the human species from its practice because it is a natural endowment.²⁶

Postmodern thoughts judge specific human situations and values in relation to animals' situations. In this sense, a postmodernist who advocates for homosexuality argues that since homosexuality "is practised by animals, it must be normal for a human being."²⁷ They justify their claims about homosexuality from what renowned philosophers have affirmed. For instance, they hold that Aristotle spoke of homosexual disposition as perfectly "natural" because, to him, "men loving men is an acceptable and honourable form of affection."²⁸ Aristophanes avowed that homosexual desire is a natural necessity like heterosexual desire, eating, drinking, and laughing. Xenophon, a Greek philosopher, corroborates that homosexuality was inherently part of "human nature" and that even Plato, in his love discourse,

²¹ Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, 175.

²² Sire, 175.

²³ Lynne Harné, and Elaine Miller, Eds. *All The Rage: Reasserting Radical Lesbian Feminism* (London: The Woman's Press Ltd, 1996), Vii.

²⁴ Martin Gumpert, "The Kinsey Report" *thenation.com/article/kinsey-report* Accessed 2/11/2018.

²⁵ Zygmunt Bauman, "Educational Challenges of the Liquid-Modern Era" <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/039219210305000103>. Accessed on 5/6/2019.

²⁶ Geisler, *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*, 283.

²⁷ Gumpert, "The Kinsey Report" *thenation.com/article/kinsey-report* Accessed 2/11/2018

²⁸ Dan Holliday, "What do Plato and Aristotle have to say about Homosexual?" *Quora.com/whatdo-plato-and-aristotle-have-to-say-abouthomosexuality*. Accessed 1/11.2018.

places affection for homosexuality over heterosexuality. By implication, since nature is responsible for homosexual acts, no one should address such persons as immoral because it is not a moral issue but a natural endowment. Therefore, failure to respond to homosexual affection is in opposition to the command of nature.²⁹

Therefore, they conclude that if homosexuality is natural, criminalising it becomes unfair to homosexuals. They also claim that even if homosexuality is not a natural endowment, there should not be any claim of the metanarrative of human nature because “any narrative of human nature used as a metanarrative is oppressive” because “human beings make themselves who they are by the languages they construct about themselves.”³⁰ They believe that:

The notion of sexuality is a construct with social and cultural origins. This was to refute essentialists’ views of sexuality, in which sexual desire was exclusively deemed to be a naturally or biologically driven phenomenon. Foucault noted that although to some extent, sexuality is based on biology and desire, Foucault stresses that, ultimately, these biological drives are shaped and influenced by institutions and discourses, thus creating the phenomenon of sexuality. The notion of sexuality as a construct inspired Foucault’s contemporaries and successors to focus their attention not on what produces sexuality but rather on what *sexuality* produces.³¹

The ultimate concern of postmodern man is to gain pleasure and satisfaction as the highest good by maximising sexual pleasure. They misjudge human situations and characteristics with other animals: the irrational animals. Thus, if philosophers believe that physical natural beauty should be upheld, why should they destroy natural human beauty by distorting and destroying gender boundaries created by God for our good?

Homosexuals Use Postmodern Hermeneutics to Their Favour: Paul E. Brown has explained how Boswell entirely sought to revise the historical understanding of homosexuality. He contends that “since the fourteenth century, the church has misunderstood the New Testament teaching and has turned away from an earlier, more tolerant view of homosexuality.” He accused the contemporary church of imposing what the early church did not prohibit. He advocates that “the church must return to a more open and tolerant attitude to homosexuality and even recognise same-sex marriage.”³² To him, the Scripture did not entirely prohibit homosexuality, and the contemporary church must not make it illegitimate.

To allow an open door for homosexuality, they advocate for a hermeneutical method that favours homosexual activities. They replace theological hermeneutics with philosophically existential hermeneutics. The root of philosophical hermeneutics is traced to Schleiermacher and the hermeneutical work of Rudolf Bultmann, who advocated for a rethink of classical theological formulations and the entire narrative of the Bible. Philosophical hermeneutics offers a paradigm shift from a dogmatic task to descriptive, particular, and localised one.³³ This hermeneutics is anthropocentric and reader-centred. True, hermeneutical theology interprets the Bible with the context and humanity in mind, but the meaning of the Bible is not determined by hermeneutics. The postmodern mind sways the affirmative statements which form the core of theology for Christian living to fit their purpose.

²⁹ Boswell, Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality, 49-50.

³⁰ Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, 181.

³¹ Angel Daniel Matos, “Foucault and the History of Sexuality: A “Queer” Overview” <https://angelmatos.net/2013/11/16/foucault-and-the-history-of-sexuality/> 21/11/2018.

³² Paul B. Brown, *Homosexuality: Christian Truth and Love* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2007), 13.

³³ Myles Werntz, “Hermeneutical Theology” in *The Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization* Vol. II.E-L. Ed. by George Thomas Kurian (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2011), 1125.

Some passages in the Scripture cannot be reinterpreted because of their timeless nature and value effect on all generations. Bultmann's philosophical hermeneutic of demythologisation exemplifies the postmodern mind that destroyed biblical metanarratives. Following this approach, more significant consideration is given to particularities of gender, race, class, power, and philosophical presupposition to promote their homosexual agenda. The Bible, philosophical presupposition, and culture are regarded as mutually interpretive endeavours rather than dogmatic ones.³⁴ That is why they interpret the Bible to favour their homosexual activities.

Examples of deconstruction of the Bible to fit their homosexual activity are: they claim that lack of hospitality and selfishness was the sin of Sodom and not homosexuality (Gen. 19:8; Ezekiel 16:49). They claim that since the levitical law is no longer applicable today, same should also apply to the prohibition of homosexuality in the Old Testament (Leviticus 18:22; Mark 7:19; Acts 10:15). They further claim that the outlaw of homosexuality had cultural undertone in the Old Testament because barrenness was a curse to a Jewish woman. So, homosexuality was frowned upon in the Old Testament due to the Jewish culture of procreation (Gen. 16:1; 1 Samuel 1:3-8). They further maintain that since Paul was only teaching his opinions from the cultural relativity viewpoint, there is no need to consider his statements against homosexuality to be absolute moral prohibitions (1Cor.7:25; 6:9). Homosexuals interpret Roman 1:26 from a sociological sense and context rather than biological. They project the practice of homosexuality as a natural.³⁵ Hence, such a phenomenological interpretation of the Bible is unacceptable because the authority of the Bible would be at stake.

Homosexuality as a Civil Right: Civil rights is the advocacy for values of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Civil rights consciousness has made the world more sensitive to "property ownership, self-defence, privacy justice, and the liberty to pursue their own lifestyle choices and personal interests based upon these values"³⁶ even outside communal or religious boundaries. Homosexuals pursue a value system, the right to life, and liberty outside the boundary of the Christian standard of holiness.³⁷ Homosexuals argue for their right to privacy, which protects homosexuality without restriction.³⁸ They compare homosexuality with political oppression and discrimination against the powerless and the minority in the nation's affairs. Just like feminism, it is a fight to gain freedom from heterosexuality.³⁹ "The abandoning of traditional morality and values, the rejection of the established authority and institutions, the emergence of the hippie culture," which introduces "the age of human freedom and humanism,"⁴⁰ has facilitated the exhibition of homosexuality as an ethical value.

Defining what is right in a moral sense has been a serious concern in the postmodern world. The postmodern world has relativised what is right or wrong to the worldview of a given context. They believed "one's worldview determines whether homosexuality is perceived as right or wrong."⁴¹ This means that the biblical revelation, truth, and ethics guiding marriage, family institution and sex life that are authoritative to all Christians are today questioned by the postmodern ideology in favour of homosexuality.

³⁴ Werntz, "Hermeneutical Theology" in *The Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization* Vol. II, 1125.

³⁵ James B. Deyoung, *Contemporary claims examined Homosexuality in Light of the Bible and other Ancient Literature and Law* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2000), 13. See Geisler, 281.

³⁶ Gumpet, "The Kinsey Report" thenation.com/article/kinsey-report Accessed 2/11/2018.

³⁷ Dan Gallagher, "A Christian Response to Homosexuality."

³⁸ Geisler, Geisler, *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*, 283.

³⁹ Harne and Miller, *All The Rage: Reasserting Radical Lesbian Feminism*, Vii.

⁴⁰ Yusuf Turaki, *The Unique Christ for Salvation: The Challenge of the Non-Christian Religions and Cultures* (Nairobi: International Bible Society Africa, 2001), 54.

⁴¹ Deyoung, *Contemporary Claims examined Homosexuality in Light of the Bible and other Ancient Literature and Law*, 13.

Analysis of Homosexuality from an African Christian Perspective

Postmodern opposition to religious bigotry, oppressive structures, and tyrannical and draconian leadership in any given society is commendable. However, postmodernism remains an unwanted child in African society due to its ungodly principles that spur homosexuality as an identity and right. Postmodernism pulls down established traditional authority, institutions (such as marriage and family setup), and norms that guide and guard the moral values of African society. Homosexuality as a postmodern idea has affected traditional, social and religious structures on relationships fundamental to Christian faith and life. It has destroyed the divine-instituted-and-instructed structure of marriage and the divine order of sex as ordained from creation. The biblical idea of human sexuality had its basis in the fact that a wise creator designed sexuality for procreation. Genesis 1:28 justifies this claim thus, "...Be fruitful and increase in number..." The prohibition of homosexuality in the Old Testament was not to avoid barrenness but because it contradicted the natural order of sex ordained by God and was (and still) a sin against God.

Empirical studies and observations have shown that homosexuality is a learned behaviour. Homosexuality is not a natural bequeathed practice but a learned human social construct. Boswell affirmed that homosexual practice is learned through cross-cultural contact.⁴² Wright Churchill, in his study of homosexual behaviour from several cultural perspectives, including Greek, Roman, ancient tribal and modern primitive, Northern and Southern, European and American as well as nonhuman species, shows that the origin of homosexuality is not natural. He states:

It is more correct to say that humans and other mammals have a capacity for heterosexual response and a capacity for homosexual response at birth but that they do not have an inborn tendency toward either heterosexuality or homosexuality....The tendency is acquired and is a product of learning rather than a part of the individual's biological inheritance. Therefore, to speak of a tendency toward heterosexuality or homosexuality that is independent of learning is to invent a new vocabulary for the old concept of instinct.⁴³

It is worth noting that some learning takes place wittingly while others are unwitting. However, most occur unwittingly without the individuals' awareness that anything is happening. Some people learn it by being conditioned. Conditioning a learner is an effort to mould a person into a particular pattern. In this, the learner does not know what is happening.⁴⁴ This is how many people learn the homosexual practice. The church must preach and teach against homosexuality by helping those caught on its web discover that their real identity is heterosexual. The discipleship, which is the church's primary task, must be intensified to build believers' spirituality and not fall into postmodern teachings easily.

Environment and background influence the attitude and practice of homosexuality.⁴⁵ Some situations have forced some people to practice homosexuality. For instance, women who have had unpalatable experiences with men may tend to learn and enjoy lesbianism. If a teenager has homosexual experience before heterosexual experience, he is likely to be marked and controlled by it. By this, it will not be out of place to establish that homosexual experience precedes homosexual desires. By implication, before being conscious of homosexual desire, experience precedes it, especially at a young age – homosexual desire and behaviour develop

⁴² Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, 52.

⁴³ John W. Drakeford, *A Christian view of Homosexuality* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1977), 48.

⁴⁴ Harne and Miller, 49.

⁴⁵ See, Noretta Koerte, ed., "Philosophy and Homosexuality" *Journal of Homosexuality* Vol. 6. No. 4 (2011).

simultaneously after the experience.⁴⁶ It is a fallacy to claim that homosexuality is naturally innate in humans.

Rationality is a divine image that helps in godly choice-making. Animals do not share this image with humans. Animals do not have a sense of reasoning and yet choose their opposite partner for sex. If, in any case, some animals do this, it is not to the author. Still, human beings have no justification for practising homosexuality on that ground because God has blessed humans with a hyper sense of reasoning for right behaviour. Thus, the practice of homosexuality is purely an act of irrationality that is worse than animals.

Homosexuals need to know that human beings are different from other creatures because they possess God's image (Gen. 1:27). Human beings are different from animals. Emiola Nihinlola explained that the "human being is the being that is human" because "the human being is not the only being there is, but the human being (existence, life) is unique. The being is different from the Supreme Being (of God), the being of spirits (angelic and evil), and the being of nature objects (animals and plants)."⁴⁷ This implies that humans are uniquely different from animals; humans should not make animals their living model; if not, human habitation will become worse than an animal kingdom. No society uses the sex life of animals as a norm for humans because such can lead to a disordered and chaotic society.

Scriptural moral norms remain a constant code for Christian living. It does not change by time, situations and individual experiences. Scripture condemns homosexuality strenuously. God condemned the Canaanites and Sodomites for homosexual sin (Gen. 9:22; 19:5; Jude 7), and the Law of Moses does not favour it (Lev. 18:21-23). Judges 19:22-26 provides the reminiscent of the wicked Sodomites in the time of Lot, which was condemned and referred to as a vile and outrageous thing. Homosexuality was the crime of Gibeah that led to their destruction by God (Judges 20:35). Homosexual practice is not a natural desire but a pervasion against the holy God, and those who do such things deserve to die (Romans 1:26-32). The biblical portrayal of how God detest homosexuality is evidence that it is purely a human construct.

Contextually, African people detest the practice of homosexuality. It is a taboo to them, and those who practised it were excommunicated from the society. Homosexuality does not engender an African socio-cultural value system for life relationships, marriage and sex life. Not only that homosexuality is taboo in Africa, but it is also a threat to their economic and communal life. Africans give birth to many children to build family community and undertake farming activities for economic purpose. Today, many Africans give birth to fewer children due to urbanisation, globalisation and industrialisation, population density, and control. In the changing commercialised system of farming, machines and chemicals are now used rather than manual farming. Parents' desire to provide their children with adequate education and training also limits the number of childbearing in Africa. Poverty rate, disease and suffering in Africa due to the growing population justify the need for birth control, but homosexuality is not the way to go.

Africans love community life. The survival of any community must continue to procreate. Procreation is a divine mandate that God has ordained between man and woman as a means to build a human society. Therefore, the practice of homosexuality as an act or identity violates biblical procreative injunction capable of destroying the survival of the human community and human relationship with one another and God. African Christians must continue to contend with homosexual practice to uphold biblical authority and traditional institutions that promote good culture and faith. No matter the argument of homosexuals,

⁴⁶ Drakeford, *A Christian view of Homosexuality*, 47.

⁴⁷ Emiola Nihinlola, "Human Being, Being Human: Theological Anthropology in the African Context" (Osogbo: Hirise Celebrity Publishers, 2018), 12.

Christian “teaching of the Bible should remain decisive on all matters of morality and...that, on this matter, its teaching is unequivocally straightforward.”⁴⁸

Instil the spiritual value of God-ordained monogamous heterosexual relationships. Nature is what God has made. God’s creation is perfect. God created heterosexuality; it is natural, and it is good. This is clear in Genesis 1:31, “God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.” The rejection of heterosexuality for homosexuality is a repeat of what happened during the fall when humans chose to put themselves first over and against God and His purpose. They seek to satisfy their will and not God’s will on earth.⁴⁹

Homosexuality affects human life. Homosexual effects cover the relational problem, logical problem, and theological problem. The relational problem points out how same-sex marriage has affected God’s ordained relationships between man and man and man and God. Marriage between a man and a woman is our most sacred relationship. Within the constituency of marriage, *agape* love (God’s love), *phileo* love (friendship or brotherly love), *storge* (protective and parental love), and *eros* love (romantic love) are put together. Homosexuals defile this composite by concentrating on *eros* love alone. Thus, when *agape* love is removed from the component, the sacredness of marriage becomes defiled, and the sacred union between Christ and His Church becomes defiled also.⁵⁰ Homosexual love is a forbidden love because God hates it.

The logical problem is a sociological issue that centres on tolerance in society. It is categorised into three cultures: *theonomous* culture (a culture that operates by the law of God). Heteronomous culture (a culture that operates by the dictates of a few leaders at the top, e.g. Islam and Marxism). Autonomous culture (is a postmodern culture in which each person determines their social life by self-enacted law). The logical problem with homosexuals is that they reject *theonomous* and heteronomous cultures, claiming that they repressed people, yet they do not abide by the principles of autonomous culture. They insist that society must believe homosexuality to be an identity. They disregard other people’s views to the extent that they become heteronomous and then begin to dictate life for others in society.

Lastly, homosexuality presents a theological problem. Homosexuals ask why Christians oppose racism and yet discriminate against homosexuality. They argue that race and ethnicity are sacred, and sexuality is also sacred. Thus, it is wrong to treat race and ethnicity as sacred yet de-sacralised homosexuality.⁵¹ From their argument, they believe that homosexuality is like the racial identity of people who should not be discriminated against. This argument is theologically and relationally deficient because race is a natural identity but homosexuals create their own identity from a postmodern subjective thinking. In other words, the phenotypical identity of race is naturally bequeathed but homosexual identity is nurtured because they have no common phenotypical identity. Race and sexuality are gifts from God, but racism and homosexuality are indeed spiritual disabilities. Homosexuality and racism portend distortion in human relationship and loyalty to God, and this the church must contend.

African Christians must not view the prevalent homosexual activity in society as “liberation but as a symptom of the moral malaise: an alert church will not ostracise but befriend those whose constitution and circumstances make Christian living harder for them than for most.”⁵² In Africa, postmodern philosophy is in tension with African philosophical

⁴⁸ Brown, *Homosexuality: Christian Truth and Love*, 4.

⁴⁹ Robert S. White, “Unnatural Disaster” in *Creation Care and the Gospel: Reconsidering the Mission of the Church*, Colin Bell and Robert S. White Eds., (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, LLC), 200.

⁵⁰ Zacharias Ravi, “The Christian view of homosexuality# Apologetic” YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=ravi+zacharias+on+the+christian+view+of+homosexuality+%23apologetics+. Accessed 21/11/2018.

⁵¹ Ravi, “The Christian view of homosexuality# Apologetic” YouTube.

⁵² R.E.O. White, “Homosexuality” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* edited by Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapid: Baker Books, 1999), 530.

realities: freedom, culture, and moral values. In every turn, postmodern culture contradicts African culture even as it relates to homosexuality in Africa. To fight homosexuality, Africa must contend with postmodern ideas to “establish the existence of supreme being values which should form the ideal aim of human life and education and lead the way in determining how issues on the continent can be handled.”⁵³

The communal living structures that maintain a sound value system must be sustained against the postmodern ideology of individuality. Thus, to combat the postmodern menace of homosexuality, African Christians must demonstrate more autonomy and independence by utilising their worldview/philosophies that negate homosexuality differently from the rest of the philosophical world that engenders it. The reason is that the Christian community has concerns that Christian philosophers must address. Christians must display more integrality and wholeness in their work to enable them not to compromise or trivialise the claims of Christian theism. Lastly, African Christians need to be bold and unashamed about their Christian convictions and values system that does not contradict their faith. The Christian has as much right to his Christian philosophical opinions as others have to theirs.⁵⁴ In Africa, the right to privacy is not the right to immorality. Homosexuals enjoy civic rights as citizens but should not, in the name of sexual rights, continue in homosexuality.

Conclusion

This paper emphasised that homosexuality is a postmodern social-cultural construct learned through experience and cultural influences and not an inborn identity. Theologically, homosexuality is a perversion against the holy nature of God. It contradicts God’s ordained pattern of sex, destroys boundaries of nature, purity, shame, decency, and spiritual sanctity of the society and, therefore, a sinful act. Socially, it is taboo and unacceptable in many cultures. Homosexuals are not accorded equal social status in Africa and elsewhere. Thus, the church should engage in discipleship and use sound biblical hermeneutics to be able to restore homosexuals and those who intend to practice it. Also, the church should seek to understand postmodernity to be able to respond to its menace appropriately. Lastly, beyond the apologetic approach to this malady, the church in Africa should demonstrate love toward homosexuals but condemn the act.

⁵³ Maurice M. Makumba, *Introduction to African Philosophy* (Nairobi: Publications Africa, 2007), 195.

⁵⁴ Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *Christian Philosophy: A Systematic and Narrative Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 200.

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