

**ADULTERY, CHRISTIANITY AND SEXUALITY,
SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: A CASE STUDY OF EZZA
COMMUNITY OF EBONYI STATE**

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BENIN CITY**

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**A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
RELIGIONS, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF
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ARTS (B.A) DEGREE IN RELIGIONS**

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CERTIFICATION

We certify that this work was carried out by **NWOYE ANNASTESIA OGECHUKWU** with Matric Number: **ART1601402** in the Department of Religions, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin city, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts (B.A. Hons) degree in Religions.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for his love, for preserving my life during my years in school and for His assurance of a brighter future. It is also dedicated to my loving family for their care and support amidst the economic challenges.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover page-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	i
Title page-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ii
Certification-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iii
Dedication-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	iv
Acknowledgement -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	v-vi
Table of content-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	vii-ix
Abstract -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	x

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1-2
1.2 Statement of Problem -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2-4
1.3 Definition of Terms/Clarification of Concepts -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4-6
1.4 Aims and Objectives -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
1.5 Significance of the Study -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
1.6 Scope and Limitation of Study -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
1.7 Research Methodology -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7-8

1.8 Division of Work/Plan and Synopsis-	-	-	-	-	8
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CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Marriage: an Overview	-	-	-	-	9-13
2.2 The Geography and History of the Ezza People	-	-	-	-	13-16
2.3 Socio-Economic Life of the Ezza People	-	-	-	-	16-18
2.4 The Belief System of the Ezza People	-	-	-	-	18-21

CHAPTER THREE: ADULTERY IN MARRIAGE

3.0 Adultery in Marriage	-	-	-	-	22-23
3.1 Concept of Adultery	-	-	-	-	23-24
3.2 Types of Adultery	-	-	-	-	24-26
3.3 The Causes of Adultery	-	-	-	-	26-27
3.4 Consequences of Adultery	-	-	-	-	27-28
3.5 The Traditional Treatment on Adultery by the Ezza People	-	-	-	-	29-36

**CHAPTER FOUR: THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ON
ADULTERY AND EFFECTS OF CONFESSION IN THE CASE OF
ADULTERY**

4.1 Christian Worldview on Adultery - - - - 37-42

4.2 The Effects of Confession in the Case of Adultery - - 42-51

4.3 The Pastoral Implications - - - - - 51-58

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 Evaluation - - - - - 59-60

5.2 Conclusion - - - - - 60-61

5.3 Recommendations - - - - - 61-63

REFERENCES - - - - - 64-67

ABSTRACT

This work x-rays marriage as a mean through which the society is formed; it is the very core foundation of every human society. It also considers the dangers of the society as posed by marital instability cum infidelity. Hence a virile society breeds from a peaceful marriage, where married couples stick to their nuptial vows and pacts. All thorough the study of the people of Ezza of Ebonyi State shows how they react to the issues of adultery in their traditional society. Findings reveal that issues of adultery cannot be successfully established in Ezza without confessions – (or that the person is caught in the act). Much emphasis on confessions, as it is usually a matter of rarity to catch an adulterous man or woman in the act. The implications of the confessions are well discussed in the work. We draw our conclusion and further make some recommendations to help build our ideal society.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

It is an issue of grave concern, how the society is speedily drifting into sin. Adultery has been widely held as the worst marital damage across board- in Christianity, Islam and African belief system. It is from this social rejection of marital infidelity that this research work sprouts forth.

The society is inundated with social vices, many of which are traced to failed and failing marriages. The church has done credibly well in the area of brooding morality to the people. Sanctity of marriage is highly respected in Islam and African traditional belief system. In Africa, marriages go with huge respect, as married people are seen to be responsible.

Flowing from this background, it is unfortunate that the society is confronted daily with massive marital challenges. Married men deserting their wives, married women keeping secret affairs outside matrimony.

Among religious people, either of Christianity or Islam, the records of divorce cases are incessant. This is our major aim in delving into this research.

Enough has been written and said about the subject matter, hence much of our effort in this work would be nonetheless, reaffirming the opinion of many about adultery and the society.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Society at large is built from the family units or circles. The health living of the society is traced to healthy families. It is said that, the rate of marital failure and divorce is heightening. The society is torn into shreds from the harm suffered from marital infidelity, sexuality, emotional satisfaction, social context, attitude-norms, revenge-hostility and other risk factors such as personal disorder and childhood issues as well as opportunities such as social media and poor boundaries that can increase the chance that one of these will actually lead to some types of affair. The man wants more women around him, the women is not satisfied by one man. There is a high increase always sin companionship, more of social

satisfaction, more of marital gains, more and more. In a bid to get all that life demands, all these contribute significantly to why families are tearing apart. Married people are going berserks in giving more of life, despite what it takes.

Marriage is respected because it builds the society. What this means, is that out of different marriages, families are built from the thinnest unit of the society. The question that s perturb any sane mind is: If people are made from different marriages, which marriage produced the armed robbers, the hired assassins, the prostitutes and so on? This question does not in any way either expressly or by implication suggest that all failed marriages contribute to the ills of the society, as we are bereft of any parameter to gauge these hypotheses.

In the course of the research, more light shall be beamed remote causes of those aforementioned vices tearing society apart. There is a serious problem, which this research tends to solve. It is a compound problem, particularly as it affects marital infidelity. It is a foundational problem. We are poised to proffering solutions to the problem from our

recommendations, without which we face the doomed reality of life, striking deep to our root.

1.3 Definition of Terms/Clarification of Concepts

For ease of understanding the concept, we shall briefly define the following term. Adultery, society, marriage, culture.

Adultery: This is a consensual sexual intercourse between a married man and married woman. It can also be defined as the voluntary sexual intercourse by a married person with someone other than his or her spouse. The consent of both parties and penetration are required for adultery to exist. Under the common law, only married women could commit adultery but most states now apply the term to married men as well. Also, in the states where adultery is still a crime, most states now provide that the unmarried person sexual partner of a married person can also be charged with the offense.

Society: This is an extended group of people, larger than family. It can also be said to be a grouping of individuals, which is characterized by common interest and may have distinctive culture and institutions. A

society may also refer to a particular ethnic group, to a nation state, or to a broader cultural group. An organized group of people associated together for religious, benevolent, cultural, scientific, political, patriotic, or other purposes may be considered a society.

Culture: This is aptly, the people is way of life. It is also an umbrella term which encompasses the social behaviour and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge belief, arts, law, customs, capabilities and habit of the individuals in these groups.

Marriage: This is an agreement between a man and woman, to cohabit or living together as husband and wife. According to Encyclopedia Britannica (2021) marriage is a legally and socially sanctioned union usually between a man and a woman, that is regulated by laws, rules, customs, beliefs and attitudes that prescribe the rights and duties of the partners and accords status to their offspring (if any).The universality of marriage within different societies and cultures is attributed to many basic social and personal functions for which it provides structure, such as sexual gratification and regulation, division of labour between sexes,

economic production and consumption, and satisfaction of personal needs for affection, status and companionship. Perhaps its strongest function concerns procreation, the care of children and their education and socialization, and regulation of lines of descent. Through the ages, marriage has taken a great number of forms.

1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Study

On a broader scale, the work aims at relieving the society, particularly of Ezza of Social ills of adultery.

Our objectives are:

- i. To unravel the perils of infidelity in the society particularly among the Christians community of Ezza.
- ii. To consider the major causes of adultery in our society at large.
- iii. To harness the leverage on the efforts made by the people of Ezza vide their customs and the teachings of Christianity in curbing the rage of marital infidelity.
- iv. To make possible recommendation that will help to foster a relief from this social debauchery-orchestrated by infidelity.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This work will be of a great help to the society, particularly the people of Ezza of Ebonyi state, hence it desires on expose the ills of marriage, especially on adultery. To this effect, it targets and brings out solutions that would help in solving the identified problems. It will in no small means, contribute significantly in widening the horizon of learning, essentially as it connects to family life circle.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The work captures the entire human society with a particular reference to the Ezza people of Ebonyi state hence we shall be making references to other places to buttress some of our points. Thus, a detailed review of our case study is well captured in chapter two of this work.

1.7 Research Method

To do justice to this research, we adopt two ways research, primary and secondary sources. Primary sources wherein oral interviews were granted by native people of Ezza. Also secondary sources whereby tomes of literature like textbooks, articles, online materials and journals were

used in accessing relevant information to the research. These two distinct methods help us tremendously in giving us a balanced view on the subject.

1.8 Division of Work/Plan and Synopsis

This study is structured into five chapters. Chapter one gives a general introduction to the research topic, what the research stands to achieve and other issues the research will cover.

Chapter two will focus on the review of main literature, the history and the geography of the Ezza, their Socio-Economic life and belief system.

Chapter three will focus on the main work, Adultery in marriage, concept of adultery, types, causes, consequences of adultery and the traditional treatment on adultery by the Ezza people.

Chapter four deals with Christian world view on adultery, the effects of confession on adultery and pastoral implications. Chapter five, this chapter is the conclusion of the study. It contains the summary, conclusion, recommendations and the references.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Marriage: an Overview

According to Encyclopedia Britannica (2009) marriage is “a legally and socially sanctioned union, usually between a man and a woman, that is regulated by laws, rules, custom, beliefs and attitudes that prescribes the rights and duties of the partners and accords status to their off spring (if any)”. This definition of marriage does not capture same sex marriage as a form of marriage, as it harps only on a union between a man and a woman. Alluding to the fact that our customs and laws do not accommodate same-sex marriage, people seem to enjoy such marriage, as many crave for the legalization of gay marriage (Attah 306:87). This definition also conceives marriage to be a necessity for procreation. This offers those who contract marriage for companionship, friendship and intimacy (Ijayi, 2013:227).

The whole of marriage in Africa is essentially for child bearing, a very unpleasant notion, which put the couple on pressure when the hope of child bearing is dashed (Nwogugu 2014:388). It is safe to hold that nay

definition of marriage that does not reflect all kinds of marriages and broad purposes of marriage to capture the very ingredient of marriage such as friendship, intimacy and companionship is lopsided and controvertible (Attah2016:162).

Further, encyclopedia Britannica(2009) also considers “marriage as functional in terms of sexual gratification and regulation, division of labour between the sexes, economic production and consumption, and satisfaction of personal needs for affection, status and companionship; perhaps its strongest function concerns procreation, the care of children and their education and socialization and regulation of descents”. This definition appears broader than the former, in that it spreads around all facets and purports of marriage. It is more typical and purposeful. From this, one also learns that marriage is a universal institution that takes the forms of groups, exchange, polyandry, polygamy, etcetera and that, “in the biological evolutionary scale, the more complex the species, the longer the offspring is dependent on its mother for survival from the time of birth to maturity. Human beings, are at the top of the evolutionary scale, require the most time of all species to reach maturity (Nwugugu, 2014:97). This

imposes increased duties on human parents for the care of their children and marriage traditionally has been seen as the institution best suited to fulfill this parental duties and responsibilities” (Encyclopedia Britannica 2009).

Furthermore, some form of marriage has been found to exist in all human societies past and present. Accordingly, religion shapes marriages according to beliefs but legally every marriage functions to ensure the right of partners with respect to each other and to ensure the right and define the relationship of children within a community.

In the seven mysteries of life, Murchie discussing sex relationship wrote, “the general notion in Eastern Mediterranean region before the emergence of the Hebrews or the Greek was that sexual attraction is due to the two sexes having originally been one- and this was reiterated from Genesis, where in women were created from part of man.... This implies that marriage is fundamentally biological, universal and natural.

In *Man and Morals*, Bittle (1995) gave a wholesome rehearsal of a good marriage. According to him, in order that the contract of marriage is validated, therefore, a number of conditions must be antecedently present

and fulfilled. Because the marriage contract is based on free consent, error, force and fear must be absent. “There must be no error regarding some presently existing quality of the passion... physical force may not be used... grave fear, the result of unjust intimidation, would also invalidate the marriage ... finally, there must be no close blood relationship Since marriage affects the public welfare of the church and state, they can enact positive laws regulating the conditions, of a valid marriage not otherwise determined by the natural law” (Bittle, 1950:510). Furthermore, “in marriage the purpose of the sex of man and woman reaches its natural fulfillment in the procreation of a new human being similar to themselves – the child. The child is the concrete embodiment of their marital love”, (Bittle; 1950:511). This implies that marriage is a union of presumably normal man and woman duly established customarily and legally and in the main, for purpose of procreation and other mutual benefits secondarily attached.

The puritans viewed marriage as a very blessed relationship that gave marital partners an opportunity to love and forgive (Sheri 2019). This implies that marriage is a bond that gives marital partners whether

the opposite sex or the same sex an opportunity to love and forgive one another. Today, many people hold the view that regardless of how people enter into matrimony, marriage is a bond between two people that involves responsibility and legalities, as well as commitment and challenge. This concept of marriage has not change through this age.

2.2 The Geography and History of the Ezza People

According to Ogbalu (1988:67-78), Ezza people occupy the North Eastern of Igbo of Abakaliki. Ezza was under Ogoja province of Eastern Nigeria before the Nigeria civil war of 1967-1970. After the war, the provincial system was located in proper Ibo enclave of East Central State.

Later Ezza came under Anambra State when the East Central State was divided into Anambra and Imo States. Again Ezza came under Enugu State when Anambra State was further divided into Enugu and Anambra States. Then in 1996, Ezza community came under Ebonyi State of South Eastern Nigeria by the military government of General Sani. Abacha.

Ezza territory is approximately 528km² or 300 square miles in area. It shares boundaries with the Izzi and Ezzamgbo people to the North, the Ikwo and the Agbo clans to the East, the Akpoha, the Okposi, the

Ugwulangwu and the Oshiri to the South and the Agba, the Oni, the Ntezi and the Okpoto to the West. From available historical records, Ezekuna was the founder of the Ezza. His father was said to have been Ezekuna in Enyi. Ezekuna was said to have migrated from Afikpo. The following villages which has now grown into communities make up Ezza clan: Amana, Amezekwe, Amagu, Amudo, Ameka, Ezzama, Amuzu, Ezzaoriuzor, Umuezoeka, Umuumuezeukoha, Umuoghara, Ogboji, Nkomoro, Amuda, Amawula and Inyere.

Ezza had one local government area before the creation of Ebonyi State. When Ebonyi State came into existence, Ezza was divided into Ezza North and Ezza South local government areas. Under the leadership of governor Sam-Egwu, Ezza North was further divided into Ezza North, Ezza West and Imoha local government areas. While Ezza South are further divided into Ezza South and Ezza East local government areas. However, they have not received the blessings of the national assemblies. In other words, they are yet to be approved by the national legislatures.

Ezza people are constantly on the move in search of greener pastures. Nowadays Ezza people are found all over Nigeria and even

beyond. In particular, they are found in Onitsha, Nnewi, Enugu, Asaba, Benin, Ibadan, Lagos, Ondo, Ekiti, Cotonou, Benue, and Ogun State just to mention a few.

Ezza people are very hard-working; they are typically farmers. They produce rice, yams, and cassava in large quantities. They also produce coco-yams and rare animals such as cows, goats, sheep and pigs. These days, a good number of the people are teachers, medical doctors, police officers, lawyers, navy officers, soldiers, engineers, artisans, and many other occupations. Traditionally, Ezza people are traditional adherents. Their belief system could be said to be diffused monotheism hence they believe in one supreme Deity without a definite denial of other gods.

Nowadays, a good number of the people have been converted to Christianity. The Catholic Church was the first to be established in Ezza. Other denominations including Pentecostal Churches are not struggling to take roots in Ezza soil.

Right from the time of the founding father of Ezza, Ezza people have been polygamists. But, the advent of Christianity has brought about

monogamy, though polygamy is still in practice. The advent of Christianity has scattered Ezza custom, culture and traditions. The much cherished customs like ritual circumcision, “Ibu Uhu”, age grade system, just to mention a few are being practiced by a handful of traditional adherents to the chagrin of the so called Christians. The Church preaches against such customs and traditions. The new Christina converts no longer participate effectively in major feasts of Ezza community such as “Okeakun (new yam) festival”; “Onwa-Eke festival”; “Aji” festival, “Udenyi” festival; “Ekengwu Ezza” festival: and many others.

2.3 Socio-Economic Life of the Ezza People

This sub-topic will be considered in two periods- the ancient and modern times. In the ancient period dated from 1800-1930, the economy of the Ezza was wholly dependent on contact of war mercenary, farming and salt production. But the major occupation of the Ezza people are farming and salt production are seen to be agrarian, producing farm product which yam farming probably be accounted for, as the importance of their crops.

Salt production has also supplement Ezza economy since it is discovery. The people start long distance trade. The currencies is use apart from the trade by barter were string currency “Ego Agwara” cowries “ego Eyoro and brass “Ezza Ogonogo”, and this were also use before the coming of the European. Ezza also dependent on ‘contract of war mercenary’ the consideration of which was to exchange might for value of money is worth. Most of this transactions were used to acquire expansive land mass where the people live today. The concrete history of the Ezza people, chronicles through a period where their might was used against the colonization of the south eastern Nigeria by the colonial masters, hence they are endowed with the craft and art of war. Still in the pre-colonial era, they were also seen to be agrarian, producing farm products and rearing livestock (Uhuo, 2000:81)

In the modern time of advancement of knowledge, and technology, the Ezza’s have embraced modern life, by going into modern trades and vocation, adding to farming as people do not flex might in war (Uhuo, 2000:86). Scattered all over all walks of life, you will see a huge representation of Ezza spirit of survival instinct. In Ebony state, the

Ezza's have made significant contributions in politics and leadership, commerce and industry, education and all other facets of development (Uhuo, 2000:144)

2.4 The Belief System of the Ezza People

Culture is the sum total of people's way of life. The people of Ezza are known for their rich cultural background bequeathed on them from time immemorial. The cultural heritage is central to their norms, values, tradition and belief (Uhuo, 2000:11). Before the advent of Christianity in Igbo land, the Ezza's have started practicing their core beliefs that have transcend many generations. These beliefs are part of their existence, as the Ezza's are closely identified with their tradition (Uhuo, 2000:16).

There are many of these cultural beliefs, but for the purpose of this work; we shall consider the following below:

Reincarnation: Reincarnation is an ancient belief in Ezza, that life is a journey of circle. It holds that death is not the end of life, as death paves a way for the ultimate renewal. The belief is long held that, man passes through death to purge sell of earthly problems and challenges, so as to be renewed for a new life and new beginning (Uhuo 2000:19). With this

belief, the Ezza's believe that birth of a child is a return to life of any of the deceased relatives. This belief has never been jettisoned, even among the adherent Christians.

Karma: The Ezza's believe in the doctrine of repercussion. This doctrine holds that no one suffers any harm without a reason for the suffering. It is in sync with the Christian principle of reaping what you sow, hence whenever there is an evil occurrence in someone's life, he will be adjudged to have committed an atrocity, which he/she faces the repercussion (Uhuo 2000:24)

Calendar Year: The Ezza's run a separate calendar year, which starts at the eve of the annual oke-aku Ezza, usually celebrated at the ancestral home of the Ezzas Amuzu in Onueke being designated as a place where their progenitor, Ezekuna where he lived, died and was buried. The calendar year of the Ezza's ushers in new farming season, as it is often used to celebrate this celebration, it is a taboo for the Ezza's to eat yam. In Ezza custom, yam is the king of the farm produce, it is abhorrent to eat yam in secret before the new yam festival (Uhuo, 2000:31).

Social Status: The Ezza's believe that God never created man equally. Equality of a man is seen as mere human perception of social life. The Ezza society is egalitarian, whereby everyone is not subject to another. However, owing to self does not in any way suggest that everybody is equal. The Ezza society is stratified in grades known as 'Age-Grades'. This 'Age-Grade' are not of equal rank, as they come in the order of seniority, the senior age grades taking prior advantage over the junior age grades (Uhuo 2000:38).

.Their View on Adultery: It is widely believed that if a woman commits adultery and fails to confess it, both the husband and the children may be affected, for the husband may fall sick and the children may be dying one after the other. But as she confesses for her sin and appropriate rituals or sacrifices performed the sick husband will be made well and the children will cease to die.

Ezza People and their gods: The religion of Ezza people is the African traditional religion where the creator (Chiokike) or supreme-being (Chi Ukwu or Chukwu) is worshipped through intermediary spirits that operate through inanimate objects because no human being is believed to be good

enough to make direct supplication to the supreme-being. The creator answers the people's prayers through the intermediary spirits and receives their offering and sacrifices (as commanded) through the same spirit. Apart from the ancestor (dead parents) of the people who are believed to be part of the affairs of living off-spring, these spirit are acquired for communal and personal needs. Also they are communal gods for war peace, defense and protection of the land. Christianity together with colonialism reduced only the number of adherents of the traditional way but never in them. There are still many worshipers of the gods as well as practitioners of the inherited cultures of the people of Ezza especially among the elders.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 ADULTERY IN MARRIAGE

Nowadays, adultery is a most important reason of divorces. Based on research reports, 90% of all divorces involve marital infidelity. The most consistent data on adultery drives from the General Social Survey which sponsored by the National Science Foundation to track the opinions of Americans about social behaviors since 1972. The survey data shows that in any given year, about 10% of married couples (12% men and 7% of women) have engaged in sex outside their marriage. But detailed analysis of the data from 1991 to 2006 shows surprising shifts. University of Washington researchers have found that the rate of lifetime infidelity for men over 60 increased to 28% in 2006 from 20% in 1991. For women over 60, this rate increased from 5% in 1991 to 15% in 2006 (Barker, 2011: 64).

As a consequence, infidelity becomes an important issue in psychology literature which attracts lots of attention of researchers. Also infidelity has been investigated within a variety of perspective in the

literature like reasons, types, cues, education level, gender difference, treatment, personality of spouses and so on. The main purpose of this chapter is to summarize these studies in specific groups and provide the comprehensive and classifying of researches that have done about this topic.

3.1 Concept of Adultery

Adultery (colloquially known as cheating) most commonly refers to a breach of the expectation of sexual exclusivity in marriage. Marital infidelity can comprise a number of activities including: "Having an affair", "extramarital relationship", "cheating", "sexual intercourse", "oral sex" , "kissing", "fondling", "emotional connections that are beyond friendships", "friendships", "internet relationships", "pornography use", and others (Blow and Hartnett, 2005: 12).

In most cultures, during intimate relationships, there is usually an express or implied expectation of exclusivity, especially in sexual matters. Adultery is defined as unfaithfulness by virtue of being unreliable and the cheating on a relationship partner that takes place despite a commitment

to exclusiveness. Sexual infidelity by a marriage partner is commonly called philander, adultery or an affair. What constitutes an act of infidelity varies within cultures and depends on the type of relationship that exists between people. Even within an open relationship infidelity may arise if a partner in the relationship acts outside of the understood boundaries of that relationship.

3.2 Types of Adultery

One group of studies on adultery emphasizes on different types of adultery including: one night stands, emotional connections, long-term relationship and philandering, having an affair, extramarital relationship, cheating, sexual intercourse, oral sex, kissing, fondling, friendships, internet relationships and pornography use (Blow and Hartnett, 2005: 106). However, most of the literature divided marital infidelity to more specific categories including sexual infidelity, emotional infidelity, combined sexual and emotional infidelity and internet infidelity (Glass, 1985: 241). Moreover, within each general category there are different subgroups. For example emotional infidelity could consist of a work

relationship or a long-distance phone. Sexual infidelity could consist of visiting sex workers, same sex encounters and different types of sexual activities.

Beatriz (2007) investigated another type of infidelity; online infidelity which definite as a process whereby individuals involved in a long-term committed relationship seeks computer synchronous interactive contact with opposite sex member. Mackenzie (2011) classified infidelity into 3 types: sexual infidelity, emotional infidelity and full investment infidelity. According to Mackenzie (2011), sexual infidelity is a relationship with someone outside of the marriage that is purely or primarily sexual in nature (there is little or no emotional attachment). Actually, sexual infidelity in this study is not limited to intercourse and it contains any sexual activity that breaks the trust of sexual exclusivity within a marriage such as sexual kissing and heavy petting. It is also includes activities where there is no physical contact at all, such as telephone or online sex due to this fact that the offender is investing sexuality outside of the marriage.

3.3 The Causes of Adultery

There are littered pieces of literature showing the different reasons for being unfaithful such as education level, personality opportunity, attachment style, income level and employment, race, culture, religion and marital satisfaction. Drigotas et al (1999) divided these reasons of infidelity into five categories: sexuality-emotional satisfaction, social context, attitudes-norms and revenge-hostility. Researches related to sexuality issues have focused on need for sexual variety (Johnson, 1972: 57; Roscoe et al. 1988: 124) and on sexual income possibility with one's partner (Buunk, 1980: 165) as common reasons for engaging in marital infidelity. The emotional satisfaction studies have focused on marital satisfaction (Buss & Shackelford, 1997: 213; Roscoe et al. 1989: 56).

Social contextual factors often were related to education level, personality opportunity, attachment style, income level and employment, race and culture. Reviewing the literature demonstrates that the research about attitude toward infidelity (partners with liberal sexual attitudes) are

more likely to engage in adultery (Hansen, 1987: 211; Prins et al. 1993: 45).

Finally, adultery as a revenge is traditionally common reason for being unfaithful among married couples (Buss & Shackelford 1997: 85, Johnson 1972: 217, Greene, Lee & Lusting 1974: 98). Cheating husbands and wives periodically engage in adultery simply to get back at their spouse. Their urge to get revenge can be motivated by perceived wrongs or transgressions committed by their partner. A married woman or man who knows that their spouse had an affair with a co-worker may then respond by entering an extra-marital relationship of their own. Sometimes the unfaithful unmarried may view cheating as response to get back at their spouse who hurt them.

3.4 Consequences of Adultery

Some studies showed that only a small percentage of couples who experience marital infidelity can save their marriage after an affair (Charny & Parnass, 1995: 13; Hansen, 1987: 145) and all marriage with cases of adultery do not end with divorce (Charny & Parnass, 1995: 135).

Most of the studies about consequences of adultery showed negative outcomes like: rage, loss of trust, decreased personal and sexual confidence, damaged self-esteem, fear of abandonment and surge of justification to leave the spouse (Charny & Parnass, 1995: 109). Spanier and Margolis (1983) and Horwitz (2001) concluded that partners who divorce because of their spouse's marital infidelity experienced less depression than those who end their marriage for other reasons. The unfaithful spouse has initiated the divorce but the faithful spouse is more likely to develop depression.

When a person discovers a partner's infidelity, he should decide about forgiving the partner and remain together or end the relationship. Shackelford et al (2000) found that men and women who face different adaptive problems over evolutionary history related to various types of infidelity have different reaction to partner's infidelity. It is more difficult for men to forgive an adulterous wife than the women and they are more likely to end a current relationship following a partner's sexual infidelity (Shackelford et al, 2002: 101).

3.5 The Traditional Treatment on Adultery by the Ezza People

The Ezza's are known to be richly rooted in culture (Nwigwe, 2007: 12). Their culture permeates all facets of their lives as a people. One of these norms is that adultery is treated as a taboo in Ezza, whether it is committed by the man or the woman, as it comes with grave consequences. Marriage in Ezza is sacred (Nwigwe, 2007: 37). The sanctity of marriage is to the extent that a married man is prohibited by custom to have an extra-marital affair or sexual intercourse with another woman not being married to him (Nwigwe, 2007: 81). The implication is that in traditional Ezza society, a man is permitted to marry as many wives as he desires, but not allowed to have a spree of sexual intercourse with women as that offends the culture of Ezza people (Nwigwe, 2007: 92). Why is it not permissible for a man to commit adultery in Ezza? It is believed that when a man commits adultery in Ezza, it affects all the children of the marriage. In most cases, the children die without any trace of illness hence it is abnormal and sacrilegious for a man to cause the death of his children (Nwigwe, 2007: 102). Thus, when a man is alleged to have committed adultery in Ezza, he is persuaded to confess so as to

spare the lives of his children. Where such confession is made, the man undergoes series of rituals for cleansing and propitiation of the gods for the atrocious act (Nwigwe, 2007: 111). Where he fails to make any confession, causing the death of his children, he would be banished (Nwigwe, 2007: 119).

The Ezza's are keener on adulterous women than men. It is believed that women have larger roles to play in making a successful marriage (Nwigwe, 2007: 115). Whenever a woman commits adultery, it is greeted with serious infamy hence it is believed that an adulterous woman is a threat to her husband (Nwigwe, 2007: 117). The man whose wife commits adultery is at liberty to divorce the adulterous woman, by seeking to collect the dowry paid on the woman (Nwigwe, 2007: 120). What this means, is that the woman in Ezza customary society is more at risk if she commits adultery, as she does not only face social rejection, but also rejected by her husband while losing all her rights in the marriage (Nwigwe, 2007: 125).

Besides sin against chastity, adultery is also an offence against justice and fidelity” (Peschke, 2009: 85). In Ezza community, the adulteress is exposed to ridicule, dehumanization and ritual cleansing will be done according to the stipulations of the indigenous religion. She must first and foremost confess her sins as a necessary condition for her forgiveness and wholeness. This confession could be voluntary from self or induced metaphysically by the gods. It is voluntary when she willingly confesses her infidelity to her husband and asks for his forgiveness. However, it is induced when, according to the belief system, the spiritual powers like the earth goddess, the ancestors force her to confess her immoral acts through madness, sickness or some other affliction known by their definitive symptoms.

In all these, the male offenders enjoy the protection of the gods who are blind to their sexual sins against their families, wives, children, larger society and God. Once it is gravely suspected or factually established that one's wife committed adultery, the first antidote or measure by the husband against the wrath of the gods or ancestors is to stop eating the

food cooked by her. It is believed that if he eats her food, he dies immediately at its instance.

This culture shares some similar perceptions with other societies across Africa and beyond. On Urhobo traditional justice system concerning adultery, Ottuh (2014:61) wrote: “In the Urhobo traditional justice system in the issue and punishment of adultery, the married woman is at the mercy of the man in so many ways. For instance, when a woman's husband has one or more concubines like the Old Testament Solomon in the Bible, the woman has no right to complain to the elders of the man's family or that of the community. If she does, she is put away. As far as the Urhobo tradition is concerned, the husband of a woman has the right to marry as many wives as he liked whereas a married woman cannot allow her hand to be held by another man without her being accused of adultery”.

In the culture of male dominance, the woman is perceived most largely as a thing and not a person. But the truth is that the woman is a human person to be loved, cherished and celebrated because she is not a

thing or a commodity to be accommodated, used and discarded at will for even the most frivolous excuses, baseless suspicions and minutest provocations. As womanhood is a thing in this male perception, the men are therefore either the gods or the manufacturers of those gods who function as their patriarchy and give them protection. In other words, the gods could be social realities and not spiritual beings. In this sense, the gods are the ingenuity of male hands put in place to diminish the dignity of the female folk and dominate them in perpetuity.

Women in this cultural milieu due to their perceived status could not be recognized as offended nor can anyone explain enough why men could beget children outside of the wedlock or nuptial knot while the women cannot respond to a greeting or an announcement of a male visitor's arrival from her bathroom as it the norm among the people of Nssuka sharing same culture with the Ezza's. It is not because bathroom betrayed King David and Bathsheba, Uriah's wife (2 Samuel 11:2) but rather it is one more example of oppression and suppression. A woman is bound to inform her husband when another man gives her any gift, monetary or otherwise or touches her buttocks or breasts even if casually

or unintentionally. She cannot help her parents or paternal family from the wealth, money or any goods from her husband's house or family as she risks death if she does. Even the literate ones who got jobs or the women of great means by their enterprises cannot help their people who reared and educated them. If she does she would be punished by the gods with afflictions or death.

The dignity of womanhood is on trial in obnoxious cultures of male dominance. This support given to her family too is a sin she must confess and embrace the torture and weighty burden of ritual cleansing. In the wake of kidnappers menace, if a woman is raped in the process, she must confess to her husband as if it were voluntary sexual act on her part. This confession will lead to ritual cleansing as if culpable otherwise, she will be visited with spiritual or metaphysical punishment. This questions the place of the freedom of the will in the case of rape, in other words, the moral culpability of a rape victim in the case of forced sex. The woman in the culture of absolute patriarchy is understood as one of the husband's properties just like his piece of furniture is counted as part of his property. To buttress this point, the man in the situation of primary or secondary

impotence could hand over her wife to another man for sexual gratification or for procreation. The man could ask her to choose any man of her choice who must be unknown to him. This is in the case of sexual gratification and pleasure. However in the case of the need for procreation, it is restricted to the matrimonial family; that is the husband's relatives, nuclear or extended. In all these circumstances, the woman is subjected to the man's decisions and which are not choices borne of love for the wife but to avoid divorce in the former instance of sexual pleasure and to escape the social stigma of infertility or impotence in the latter example of procreation.

All were fashioned culturally to satisfy the ego of maleness. If the women were to be barren or infertile she would be divorced or made a non-entity if she would remain in her husband's home as wife. At the death of her spouse, the marriage continues as it is not nullified by the loss of the husband. She remains his wife who must still keep all the marriage laws, restrictions and prohibitions. She cannot have sex with another man unless she returns her dowry to her husband's family and becomes an unmarried person or she goes into levirate marriage and as the

third option, she performs a ritual that guarantees her freedom to remain in her late husband's house for her children's sake and gets nnaji-uwhu (a lover) who satisfies her emotional and other needs. Some widows get more than one nnaji-uwhu based on their libido and principles of life. In that ritual of “freedom”, she cooks for her children and announces to them that she has cut off from their late father; since he is dead, she says, she would not like to associate with him any longer. She goes further to tell her children that she no longer lives for her late husband but rather lives for her children.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ON ADULTERY AND EFFECTS OF CONFESSION IN THE CASE OF ADULTERY

4.1 Christian Worldview on Adultery

Christian worldview (also called biblical worldview) refers to the framework of ideas and beliefs through which a Christian individual, group or culture interpret the world, and interact with it. Various denominations of Christianity have differing worldview on some issues based on biblical interpretation but many thematic element are commonly agreed upon within the Christian worldview as such the Christian faith take the Christian bible as the foundation. The sin of adultery is mentioned in the bible but the way that the term adultery was used in the bible may not harbor the exact definition that comes to your mind. At face value, the bible has an unforgiving broad definition of adultery along with allegories that contains brutal punishment for adultery.

According to Tackett (2006), in the old-testament, adultery was understood as sexual relation between a married (or betrothed) woman

and a man other than her husband. It was also a sin against the husband. In the old-testament, God declared adultery to be a sin deserving death. When God set apart a nation to be his special people, he gave them a set of basic guideline for living. They were the basis for every other law he would give them. These laws were a written record of the way God expects his people to behave. In the ten commandment, the seventh law God gave his people was “*you shall not commit adultery*” (Exodus 20:14). God knows that the heart of mankind could naturally seek to fulfill every desire it experienced that is why God gave this law to make his holy standards clear.

Priskell (2021) explained that God’s views adultery as a sin is so terrible that, it was punishable by death. “*If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death*” (Leviticus 20:10; cf. Deuteronomy 22:2). If we ever think that God takes adultery or any other sin lightly, we should remember what penalty and punishment he assigned to them.

In the New Testament, Jesus extends the definition of adultery to include sexual relations between a married man and a woman other than his wife (Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18). According to the Lord Jesus, indulging in adulterous feelings is equally detrimental to the soul as a real act of infidelity and both bear the same credence. He said *“But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart”*. And we are also reminded that our eyes are the gateway to the soul (Mathew 5:27-30).

In Christendom, Adultery is firmly banned by Christianity and has been branded as impure, licentious, blasphemous, capricious and a vile lust by all prophets. It is acknowledged to be immoral and an offense by true Christians even today and there are few churches which construe adultery to include all sexual liaison outside of matrimony, regardless of the marital status of the people involved. Christianity also forbids all types of unnatural sexual co-relations, including homosexuality of men and women and the bible didn't consider such marriage valid,

Committing an adulterous act is considered equivalent to a murder and the adulterer becomes a transgressor to the law if he commits adultery. Marriage is regarded as highly sacred among Christians. *“Let the marriage bed held in honor among all and let the marriage be undefiled, for judge the immoral and the adulterous”* (Hebrews 13:4). “Any man who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her and if a woman divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery and the man that commits adultery with another man’s wife, the adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death”.

In the gospel of John, is an account of a woman caught in adultery. Leaders responsible for executing justice brought her to Jesus and asked for his judgment. Jesus stated “Let he who is without sin cast the first stone”. This bible verse is often quoted to preclude judgment of any kind. However Tackett (2006), points out that if the woman was caught in adultery, there should also have been a man standing trial. The law clearly stated that both parties were to receive the death penalty. But by not bringing the guilty man to justice, these leaders shared in the guilt and

were not fit to carry out the punishment. Not condoning her adultery, Jesus warns the woman in parting “Go now and leave your life of sin”. This statement clearly proves that adultery is considered sinful in Christianity too and both the individuals involved in an adulterous act must be punished by death. Marriage was intended to be a life time commitment between one man and woman. The bible begins its teachings on marriage with the first marriage of Adam and Eve, husband and wife, united by God (Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:7-9) and they are no longer two but one flesh.

Therefore what God has joined together, man must not separate. Jesus dismissed expedient provisions allowing for divorce for nearly any reason, and cited sexual immorality (a breaking of marriage covenant) as the only reason why a person may divorce and marry another without committing adultery (Mathew 15:32; 19:9) and if their partner has died (Romans 7:3). All this emphasize how serious this sin of adultery is viewed in Christianity and by God.

Biblically, adultery is willful, destructive and desecration of the prime eternalness and sincerity of marriage. When you commit adultery, you are literally tearing the bond of your marriage. The wise king Solomon even said “The adulterer destroys his own soul” (Proverbs 6:32). Adultery is a treacherous act and people must try to avoid it in all circumstances. God knows the devastating effects that adultery has on individuals and families and he wanted to protect us from that heartbreak. All relationships go through phases and if your marital partner is unable to satisfy your needs, you must try to talk it out

4.2 The Effects of Confession in the Case of Adultery

The consequence of having a carnal knowledge of another man after the death of one's husband without this ritual is loss of her children to death, one after the other or she dies herself. As women go through this long ritual, harsh process and ordeal, the men do not have a ritual of “freedom” when their wives die because they had neither taboos nor restrictions even when those wives were alive. Women are in the shackles of this culture which has vastly violated their dignity. At very many

instances, a disease such as meningitis, which turns the neck of a person and the head backward as if the neck is being strangled, has been attributed to adultery. When cerebral malaria makes one speak unintelligible and incoherent words, it is believed to be a sign of adultery. In the turbulence of complications during child birth, it is tied to adultery. These laughable suspicions, superstitions and unenlightened standpoints are associated with non-literate cultures all over the world. Women have lost their lives, unaided by neither medical science nor charity by their husbands and sons, all in the name of culture and tradition.

Confession of the sin of adultery in African Traditional Religion thrives because the women cannot speak out of fear of social opprobrium and stigma; the men are not ready to abolish the obnoxious culture because they are protected by it, the traditional rulers and institutions claim that the culture guarantees fidelity and mortality and the church in her pastoral practice has been betrayed by her children who are in the church but has not left the shrines and belief systems in the indigenous religion. There are some partiality and imbalances in the whole cultural structure and system. It is obvious that the punishments given by both

men and the gods go to the female offenders only; this is injustice against women. It is like a replication of the drama of the Gospel of John 8:1-11 where the woman caught in the very act of adultery was brought to Jesus Christ without the man as prescribed by law (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22-24). This is one more proof of gender discrimination in both biblical and extra-biblical cultures. It is on this note that Ifeyinwa (2013) asks whether this taboo is “a form of social control or an avenue for women's victimization?” The standard practice as recommended in an age old maxim is that “he who goes to equity should go with clean hands”.

African Traditional Religion, there are patterns and processes of confession of the sin of adultery. This confession leads to reconciliation and restitution. In Ezza culture, the adulteress confesses openly that she committed adultery and mentions with whom she committed the sexual sin. If it is more than one person, then she calls them by name or symbolically shows that her amorous partners are implicated in plurality raising some sand up. The husband does not stay at the scene of the public confession, “it is the husband's sister that conveys/relays one by one to

him the names of those mentioned by the unfaithful wife, the men who slept with her. Any single omission of names willfully or unintentionally renders the whole restitution exercise null and void. The sand is normally raised from the ground and thrown into the air by the confessor to signify that it is finished and to include both remembered and omitted names if not the madness may remain incurable” (Nairaland, 2011).

After the confession, certain rituals are performed by the eldest man with kola nut, tubers of yam, palm wine and goat. The husband is not allowed to partake of any of the items used to appease the gods in the ritual sacrifice. There is an ancient spirit that is seen only by the one who committed adultery. This spiritual entity is known as Ndu mmaah in Ezza. In Aji, Enugu Ezike for example those under the arrest of Ndi ishi confess their sins before Enokpa, a deity. It is after the public confession before Enokpa that the offender is taken to the house of the eldest man for the cleansing rituals. If a man “sleeps with a married Enugu-Ezike woman at home or outside the town, it is the woman who would be caught by the nso ala and she must openly confess in what is called ika oji or face repercussion. If she refuses to confess or hides the fact from her husband

and the husband eats from her pot or sleeps with her, the husband will be caught by the community's progenitors and he may lose his life.

For the woman whether Enugu-Ezike or non-Enugu-Ezike, or whether it is a man from her village in Enugu-Ezike that she sleeps with or with a man from Iceland, she must confess before the Umuada (elderly women and not so elderly) completely naked.... And usually, what remains of the honour or her husband is protect by not allowing her to name too many men she has slept with during the ika oji. In that case, she is simply asked to smash a block on the floor, signifying that they are too many to remember (The Authority, 2016).

In Itchi, Igbo Eze South, the confession and rituals are before Mkpume Itchi a deity in the town which is sieved to be enforcing morality and arresting women who engage in marital infidelity. One of the highlights of these rituals is that a woman forfeits all the clothes, bangles, ear rings, necklaces she wore on the day or days she committed adultery to the deity. All the hair on her body especially the hand, armpit and pubic are shaved completely as part of the rites of atonement, purification and

forgiveness. There are terrible mental torture and public shame associated with confession of adultery in Nsukka. The dignity of womanhood is compromised. The whole of Nsukka zone does not accept adultery for the fear of its hazardous consequences. But the debate is against the heavy burden pleased on women alone.

Confession of sin is found in all African Traditional Societies which frowns at such sins like adultery, incest, bestiality homosexuality, lesbianism, murder, stealing of yams, witchcraft, violation of taboos and wickedness. According to Nwangama, (2005) reporting his interview with elder Mbada, (2002) on culture of Ezza people of Ebonyi State. "If a woman commits adultery in Ezza, she quickly confesses her sin publicly by naming the lover or lovers (paramours) if they are so many that she could not remember all of them, she names those she could recollect and picks up few pebbles and cast them away to signify the unnamed lovers. Then the woman will be provided a kid by her lover if he is uncircumcised. The woman will cuddle the kid on her lap for some time. Then she takes the kid down and invokes the earth goddess and other spiritual beings telling them that it is a result of adultery that she

committed that she offers the kid to the spirits as propitiation and expiation sacrifice. Having said that, she takes the kid to a far-away bush and throws it there, after this, the elder man in the family will get Akpunto (silk cotton) leaved and Oboloto (Oboroto) and squeeze them in a bowel of water and sprinkle on the offenders (the woman and her lover). After the sacrifice the woman and her lover ask the husband to forgive them their sins and vow never to commit adultery again. The lover will also beg the relatives of the woman for forgiveness”. In the above case, both lovers participate in the purification rituals after the woman shall have confessed her sins.

In Njaba, Imo State the woman who commits adultery will appear almost naked except for underwear publicly in the full glare of family members drawn from her biological family, husband and his relatives, the oldest people, Nze n’ozo title holders of that hamlet, and their ancestors called the “Ogaranya”. “She will be required to mention the names of every man she slept with after marriage. Where she forgets a particular name or the elders assume she has called too many names already, she is told to “Kpofe aja na azu”, meaning just to collect and throw sand behind

you to make up for the others, as what applied to a woman that mentioned over 12 names.

After the confession, the elders will provide some leaves which is expected to be pounded in a small mortar. When it is adjudged okay, she is made to eat of it, her husband will eat, her people, and every other person in attendance there. Everyone will just take a pinch of the leaves. It is that act that is referred to as “Igba oriko” or a kind of communion feast. From that moment, both she and her husband become free from any repercussion as a result of her infidelity or “Igahie ukwu”. From that moment, the couple is free to resume cohabiting as husband and wife” (The Authority 2016). In some non-literate societies, confessions are made as a preparatory practice before fishing or hunting. According to Thomas Gale (2005), women must observe particular taboos while their husbands are away hunting in order not to compromise the success of the expedition. The husbands themselves during the days preceding departure must abstain from various activities, in particular from cohabitation with their wives.

Confession is another preparatory practice. Individual members of the hunting or fishing party must confess their sins prior to departure, since unacknowledged speaking of a taboo or a persistent condition of impurity and capability would endanger the success of the entire expedition. One who resisted making a required confession would be excluded from participating. Among the Lotuko of East Sudan, there is a public confession by warriors at the beginning of the great hunting season. Their confessions are made individually with lowered voice and then repeated by the priest serving the rain god”.

Among Idoma and Igalla tribes, North Central Nigeria, there is a strong belief in Alekwu spirit that kills a married woman who commits adultery. In the words of Chief Onoja, D.E (2016) in his interview with Daily Trust responded: “Yes. Alekwu is still in existence even though some people think that it is no longer in vogue. If it catches a woman, she must confess her atrocity. If she is lucky after the confession, Alekwu will leave her, but if she is not, Alekwu will continue to reduce her physically. She will shrink like an AIDS patient until she confesses and dies”. For Elder Amuta Onoja Simon of Orokam in his interview with Daily Trust

insisted that a married woman must stay clear of adultery or she would be killed by Alekwu, noting that the tradition could not be jettisoned because of the church”. (2016). In Yourba land, husbands plant Magun Juju on their wives to expose them and kill their lovers.

As Ojo, M.O.D (2013) wrote: “....., the husbands who have placed Magun on the body of their wives usually refrain from having sex with those wives until Magun eventually kills the men committing adultery with their wives”. The modern minds may have arguments in support of adultery ranging from psychology of variety, pathology of sexual deficiencies, sociology of extra-marital activities and the quest for robust economy, among others. The omniscient God knew all those possible reasons when He decreed fidelity and chastity in marriage.

4.3 The Pastoral Implications

Confession of the sin of adultery in African Traditional Religion in Ezza cultural zone and elsewhere by Christians has vast pastoral implications for the Church. The Christian gospel has not been able to bring out or convert a great number from the traditional world views into

which they were born and nurtured. The religiosity of the African as Homo Africanus Religiosus begins at birth and many find it very difficult to extricate themselves from its values even when they realize that they are opposed to the Christian Faith. The grip of superstition is firm on the people who are perpetually afraid of the gods or ancestors. The world view of the people which is deeply rooted in the indigenous religion is a big pastoral challenge. The priests are not without persecutions because they had fought this cultural aspect through proper catechesis. They were mischievously branded missionaries who support adultery.

Since adultery is prohibited in Christianity too, they were misunderstood and injuriously labeled preachers, who encouraged sexual immorality in the community. Some Christian husbands withdrew their wives' membership and fellowship in the Church. The pastoral space was turbulent as priests and other committed pastoral agents of evangelization received insults and all sorts of calumny, persecutions and violent attacks. However, the Church is on mission with the priests and trusted lay faithful who are resolute and unscarred by the trends of opposition.

The Catechesis and pastoral strategies that are both prudent and persuasive are on-going. The teeming population of Christians in the Church especially on Sundays should not impress the missionaries until the lay Christians live out their Christian responsibilities through the weekdays. The heavy population in the Church on Sundays is mathematical religiosity of quantity without quality faith and active witnessing.

The Church, by this pastoral challenge, is implicated in her methods of evangelization. As Onah, Sebastian (2014) observed: Popular among the traditional conventional methods of evangelization are: witnessing, preaching, homilies, sermons, catechetical instructions, the celebration of the sacraments, and popular religiosity. The import of these traditional methods can never be over emphasized. However, invaluable as they are, most of these methods seem ineffective in our times. This apparent inefficiency, in my opinion, does not come from the methods themselves but from the approach and the teaching aids and tools used in the application of methods.

The above view shows that one of the pastoral implications in this context is the adequate application of the principles and practice of new evangelization in Ezza cultural zone. New evangelization in St. Pope John Paul's conception is not an invention of a new gospel hence evangelization cannot be new in its content since its very message is always Christ, our salvation. On this note, he wrote: The New evangelization does not consist of a new gospel....Neither does it involve removing from the gospel whatever seems difficult for the modern mentality of accept.... The new evangelization has as its point of departure the certitude that in Christ there are "inexhaustible riches" (Eph 3:8) which no culture or era can exhaust.... These riches are first of all, Christ himself, his person, because he himself is our salvation" (Ralph, 2010). We have seen from the above citation that the message of New Evangelization is that of continuity from the past to the present. The simple theological reason is that Jesus Christ who is preached is "the same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb 13:8). The "newness" is therefore found in the agent of new evangelization whose heart has been made new by the power of the Holy Spirit and in the very nature of New

Evangelization which is new in its ardour, methods and expression (Ralph, 2010) .

The emphasis of the New Evangelization in context therefore, is that the Church in Abakaliki Diocese should channel the fresh ardour of her proper catechism in making all Christians keep God's commandments and eschew adultery. It is to the Glory of God when no Christian is found guilty of adultery in the first place instead of struggling with the idea of which religion the offender should confess his or her guilt. If every Christian keeps away from sexual immorality and infidelity in marriage, no deity can arrest, frighten or attack them. It is only in the situation of holiness and uprightness can the Christian say that “he who is in me is greater than he who is in the world” (1John 4:4).

There is greater need for both the Christians and non-Christians to appreciate within this pastoral circumstance the Jesus’ model of dealing with sinners. The Holy Bible is replete with evidences that Jesus loves the sinner but hates his/her sin. So, Jesus liberating the woman caught in the act of adultery (John 8:1-11) is “entirely in keeping with Jesus”

relationship to sinners. He called Matthew, the tax collector to be his disciple (Matthew 10:3, see also Luke 5). He accepted the sinful woman who anointed him at a Pharisee's house (Luke 7). He made a Samaritan the hero of one of his parables (Luke 10) and a tax collector the hero of another (Luke 18). He went to dinner with Zacharias a tax collector (Luke 19).

In John 8:1-11, those who dropped their stones and charges against the adulterous woman were the adherents of Jewish religion. They were not Christians, so to speak, but they listened to Jesus, understood his message and recognized his authority. In like manner, African Traditional Religious practitioners should listen to Jesus and respect his Will as he dispenses Mercy through his Church in the sacrament of confession. The Church should uphold the dignity of womanhood at all times.

All obnoxious cultures against women should be obliterated. St. Pope John 11 (1988) in his apostolic letter, *Mulieris Dignitatem* (on the dignity and vocation of women), reflecting on Genesis 2:18-25, teaches the Biblical text provides sufficient bases for recognizing the essential

equality of man and woman from the point of view of their humanity. From the very beginning, both are persons, unlike the other living beings in the world about them. The woman is another “I” in a common humanity. Thus in the same context as the creation of man and woman, the biblical account speaks of God’s instituting marriage as an indispensable condition for the transmission of life to new generations, the transmission of life to which marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordered: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it” (Gen 1:28).

The woman is not to be subdued nor reduced to a thing. She is rather to subdue and conquer the earth with the husband who has left his mother and father for her sake (Gen 1:28, 2:24).

Patriarchy has a lot of injustice to the woman and the girl child. As injustice is injustice everywhere and injustice to one is injustice to all, then the Church in her pastoral mission of Justice and Peace should teach at all times the need for just balances in the administration of justice in the case of adultery to touch the men culprits too. New Evangelization needs

to address every culture. As put by Bishop Onah of Nsukka Diocese (2014): “Our culture too needs to encounter Jesus. Every culture needs the same transmission that the encounter brings about in human beings”. It is therefore imperative that the Church focuses on the person of Christ as she permeates Ezza culture and contexts with the gospel.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 Evaluation

This research work basically looked at and studied Adultery, Christianity and Sexuality: A Sociological Approach, case study of Ezza Community.

A brief introduction and background as to how adultery has been wildly held as the worst marital damage in the society, was given in chapter one. It covers the background of the study, statement of problem, aims and objectives, significance of the study, research method, scope of the study and division of work.

Chapter two was on reviewed literatures concerning marriage, a detailed history and geography of the Ezza people of Ebonyi state was given. It also treated the socio-economic life of the people and their belief system.

Chapter three was adultery in marriage, the concept of adultery, types, causes, consequences and traditional treatment on adultery by the Ezza people were treated.

The Christian world view in adultery was treated in chapter four. By so doing, the effect of confession on adultery which emanated from when a person commits adultery which entails so many humiliation and dehumanization of women in several other places were laid out and how the church will help to take care of that.

Conclusively, chapter five which is the last chapter summarizes, concludes and makes recommendations based on the findings of the research.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that extramarital affair is on the high side globally. It also establishes that it threatens home stability. Hence most of the broken marriages produced children that threaten the peaceful coexistence in the society. It is our belief that marital infidelity encourages the spread of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV and AIDS among others. These infections predispose both husband and wife to untimely death. The implication is that an adulterous man or woman in a marriage threatens the life of the other spouse. The work further reveals

the grave injustice against the women in marital infidelity. Our major grouse is not that women should not be punished for adultery, but such punishment should also be meted against the men caught in the act, if we must have a virile society where marriages succeed. We contend also that the church should be very cautious in handling issues on adultery, especially when they conflict with the customs and values of the people. This is simply to protect the image of the church, as many churches have been caught in the web of discord trying to defend some adulterous church members.

5.3 Recommendations

Adultery is an ancient taboo in Ezza culture. Adultery is punished, according to the belief system, by the gods who are spiritual custodians of morality. The value of Christian marriage from Judeo – Christian tradition abhors marital infidelity which is promoted chiefly by adultery. A lot of hazards are caused by extramarital sex affairs in the individual, family and society at large. We therefore recommend as follows:

Firstly, there is need for all to embrace chastity and fidelity in marriage because the observance of chastity and fidelity in marriage helps to avoid heartbreaks and temptations to violence or divorce. Chastity is a life long journey of strength, self-control, mastery, virtue and love. Practicing chastity in marriage is a gift to God because it respects His Lordship over the proper ordering of His gift to us. Practicing chastity in marriage is a gift to your spouse because he or she has been gifted to one another to honour and cherish and also practicing chastity in marriage is a gift to yourselves, because it is a part of ordering your own life well.

Secondly, for Christians to live their lives in such a way that the adherents of African Traditional Religion do not ridicule them before their shrines and deities as they confess their sins which should not be mentioned among Christians. As such they should help to obliterate all obnoxious cultures against women.

Thirdly, there is the need to punish all, male and female, who commit the crime of adultery. The women is exposed to ridiculous, dehumanization and put to undergo many rituals cleaning why they men

offenders enjoy the protection of the Gods who are blind to their sexual sins against their families, wives, children and society at large.

Fourthly, the dignity of womanhood should be respected as women are human persons created by God. As such government should help to create a committee to observe more severe punishment of women and men that commit adultery. This committee will report the crime and communicate with the government or mandate holders to stop the action /inaction of undressing, stoning, flogging, dehumanizing and punishing of women.

Finally, there is an advocacy for the continued application of New evangelization by the Church on mission in the cultural zone for greater impacts and more harvests in the vineyard of God. The church can bring up a committee or set up missionaries that could evangelize the leaders and individuals in the cultural zones on the dangers of punishing and dehumanizing women. Even if there is need for punishment, punishment must be meted out on both men and women.

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