

CONTEMPORARY THREATS TO CHRISTIAN FAITH IN NIGERIA**Gonsur Peter Deshi**

Department of Christian Religious
Federal College of Education Pankshin, Plateau State
Mobile: 08065391597
Email: petergonsur@gmail.com
WhatsApp: 08133351793

Abstract

Contemporary Issues threatening Christian faith in Nigeria is a real concern facing the church today. When properly addressed it will help in no small measures to eliminate the tension and fears threatening Christian faith in Nigeria. This article presents various critical issues that are salient to Christian faith such as postmodernism, reproductive technology, terrorism, Homosexuality, Ethno-religious crisis, tribalism and the like. This write up discussed these current and disturbing issues especially as it affects Christian faith in Nigeria. Many Christians' faith are waxing cold and are be clouded with doubts and despairs. The unfortunate thing is that these challenges should have strengthened Christian faith but it turns to divide the church and creates a lot of frictions and antagonistic spirit among believers in Christ in this country call Nigeria. Sound teaching, preaching, unity among Christians may solve the problem to Christians' faith and may be the best solution to the terrible predicament of the church in Nigeria where it finds itself in this messed. The Biblical doctrines that serves as strongholds of Christianity are been gradually disappearing from the Centre-stage, or they are made to become either relative or subjective truth to make sense to the modern minds. Normative truth is fast drowning in the sea of humanity come of age". The Christian faith must be strengthened before Christianity may see the light of the day in Nigeria.

Introduction

The Christian religion which is God given by for his people who live in this planet earth is been faced with real challenge and also loss of faith in this contemporary time especially in Nigeria. Religious crisis is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of our economy, politic, educational system especially the Christian faith is injured. Every part in Nigeria has gotten its share of social evil

in the country. The effect of religious crisis has posed a great threat to Christian faith and all other facets of life. Imobighe and Eguavoen (2006) in their book war and its effect declared that 'The anxiety and concern for religious crisis today can only be compared with the anxiety and concern that gripped the international community in the immediate post second world war years over the possibility of a nuclear holocaust. Suffice me to say that religious crisis has become a household word and there is no Christian in Nigeria that is not faced with such deadly and ugly situation. The Christian faith in Nigeria has come under severe attack causing a lot of doubts and despair. Nigeria is usually characterized as deep divided state in which major political issues are vigorously and violently contested along the lines of the complex ethnic, religious faith and practice. Meanwhile Hornby (2006) defines religious crisis as a situation in which religious adherents are involved in a serious disagreement or argument with one religious group and another. It is a situation in which there are opposition in ideas, opinions, feelings, and wishes. In Nigeria today the challenges posed by religious crisis and claims to scarce resources have become a matter of national insecurity which have caused negative setback to Christian faith and belief.

Postmodernism is a twenty first (21st) century which has a lot to be desired on the Christian faith in Nigeria. It is a serious threat to Christian faith for its teachings and principles are contravening the biblical principle and Christian faith which is rooted in the teaching of Christ. Research has shown that there are strong desires for Nigerian women to have children at all cost so the answer is the issue of postmodernism is so worrisome. For it is God who decides and gives children and their sexes at his time to whomever he decides. Many women grow up emulating their mothers and planning for their own family: how many kids they want, what they will name them, how they will raise them. Then, once married, many couples desire to raise a family of their own to have their biological children. However, now more than ever, some couples find their desires and plans thwarted by infertility. As pressure mounts to have children (from society, family, and even church members), frustrations escalate within themselves and their marriage. This led many family abandon waiting upon God to give them but resolved to look for human solution. The goal of in vitro fertilization (IVF) consists of a straightforward process to take a woman's eggs and a man's sperm, fertilize them outside the body, and then implant them back into the woman's womb with the goal of pregnancy but the process has many complicated steps in between. The Christian teaching is to wait and trust God for the gift of children. Since man can determine when to have children and the sex of the children many people who are single may not get married but can raise children as they so wish. This is totally against the teaching of the Bible and this idea and practice destroys Christian faith.

This write up also discussed other issues such as religious conflict which raises a lot of tension to life of a Christian, Tribalism which has become so obvious and practiced in this country to the detriment of the unity of this country. Today Nigeria is passing through hell of terrorism causing a lot of havoc and doubt to Christian faith and belief. Another issue that is of real concern to Christian faithful is the issue of reproduction technology which poses a real challenge to the faith. These things have serious implication and are doing real damage to Christian faith in Nigeria which this writ up looked into.

Postmodernism and its Challenge to the Church

Postmodernism says, there is no absolute truth. This therefore means the Bible can be subjected to the reader's interpretation thereby condemning any long-held beliefs with a view of marketing Religious pluralism. In pursuance to this, in compromising the truth, the claim of Christo centrism (Christ centred) should be replaced by Theocentrism (God centred), i.e. making all religion salvific and not only Christianity is salvific since all believe in God (John Hick 2006). This is with an intention to puncture Christian believe on the supremacy of Christ (Col. 1: 15-20) as Christians believe in One Lord, One Baptism, One Faith (Ephesians 4:4-6). Only the transformed experience the truth both in Public and in Private life as God and judge of all flesh, as Christians humbly accept that ones we were dead in our transgression and sin and object of his wrath (Ephesians 2:1, 3). This argues for the exclusivism of Christ in the midst of other religions of the world beckoning for inclusiveness thereby promoting pluralism which the church must reject. If the church will not stand against it the faith of Christians and the future of the church is in shamble and jeopardy. Historically, Postmodernism argument is from just head knowledge in the present world of empirical observation juxtaposed Christian faith. Plato and Aristotle, though having a sense of the eternal, immutability and absoluteness of knowledge of God, Aristotle opined for distinguishing of true knowledge and wisdom from opinion and faith.

While Augustine was dealing with the issue of faith in God of knowledge, Aristotelians, like Thomas Aquinas maintain that reason precedes faith which gave rise to the enlightenment era (1685- 1730) age of reason. This relegates religious practice, Christian faith and belief to the backyard that man has come of age and can reason for himself. Kant stood aloof this by saying, human cannot know absolute truth. So he proposed, Phenomenal (human everyday life experience; see, touch, taste, hearing and quantify) and Nominal world which is metaphysics (theorizing) which can only be speculative than absolute. Ilori J. A (1997) says knowing God in this situation may be impossible. But Romanticism, using other languages instead of Latin alone

gave rise to its usage in all sphere of life of man; religion, philosophy, history, politics, poetry, architecture, music and art countered enlightenment giving rise to Modernism (late 19th - early 20th century) bringing about the death of God theology (Pokol, 2020). This left no chance to what is now known as postmodernism precursory by Soren Kierkegaard (Danish) [father of existentialism] (1813 -1855); philosopher, theologian, poet, social critic, and religious author have no option than to accept. While Friedrich Nietzsche (German) [perspectival appearance (1844 - 1900) declared that theologian, philosopher and cultural critic, propounds the theory of 'no right way exists' that God is Dead. Meaning that the death of God means the death of values which is reminiscent of spiritual darkness making objective truth becoming subjective truth. One William Benneth in his book, 'nYutb' (2010) claims it is Nietzsche who is dead and not God. But Jacques Derrida in his deconstructionism (there is no single meaning or interpretation of a text) says, there is no absolute truth. But Isaiah 65:16; John 1:17-18; 14:6; 15:26-27; Gal. 2:5 all talk about truth in reference to invoking blessing, oath must be by the God of truth, as John sees truth in the eyes of Christ and his spirit and the message of gospel is truth as well... (Dafer, 2021). These ideas and teachings are serious threat to Christian faith in Nigeria if care is not taken.

Conflict, Crisis and Terrorism in Nigeria

The usage of the term conflict in this write up is in line with what is threatening the life and faith of Christians in Nigeria. This conflict has resulted into serious crisis, fighting, hatred and resentment. This country has experienced a lot of conflicts and crisis causing deeper hatred threatening the coexistence of the country. Nigerian conflict is like a household name and synonymous to religious terrorism/persecution. As Conflict is here defined under the ambit of Peace, Peace is Shalom, which means completeness, soundness, tranquility, and well-being. It is the state of concord, harmony with God and others. **Conflict** is the opposite of Peace; which means a state of disharmony, dissonance; it could mean disagreement or quarrels between two parties or whatever never goes in tandem with the whims and caprices of the other. So, conflict is an inevitable part or phenomenon of human life. The advance level of Conflict is **Crisis**. That is when the conflict is not put under control and left to escalate to a worst case scenario which calls for an emergency response.

Ethno- Religious Factors

This concept as it is used here refers to ethnic group where one comes from in Nigeria. Like Osaghae and Suberu will say, '... the Yoruba were considerably

more prone to define themselves ethnicallythan the Hausa/Fulani who would rather opt for religious (Muslim) identity than tribal affiliation. Religious violence in Nigeria have proven to be the most catastrophic than any other form of crisis including ethnic problem. (Christianity, Muslim and African Traditionalist [ATR]; religious identity in Nigeria) are more aflame especially these days in Nigeria.

The Place of Tribalism in the Church

Ethnocentrism (Identity Politics) is also in the church. Tribal identity or identification is very obvious and serious in Nigerian politics. This has threatened the coexistence of Nigeria and caused a lot of setbacks. It has destroyed the faith Christians causing factions and divisions. It has brought lack trust in the church where the church is a mixed up of tribes in this country. This also calls for scrutiny:

- i. The authenticity of our Christian faith and conversion
- ii. The unity of the church
- iii. The biblical imagery of the church as the Holy body of Christ
- iv. The evangelistic drive of the church

The church should wake up to her responsibility and expunge greed from her by calling for sustainable development, social equity and justice and democratic governance (Read Luke 12:13-21). If this is not done with immediate effect the faith of many Christians are growing cold and ebbing away very fast.

Terrorism

Terrorism is from the word terror, which means, intense fear, perpetuated by an individual, or an organized group to intimidate, threaten, bully, terrorize or coerce an individual or a community into subjection. While terrorism according to Kofi Anan, is *“any action is terrorism if it is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians and non-combatants, with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from any act”*. The ideology of Terrorism includes Political, Religious, Socio-economic etc.

Terrorism in Nigeria

It began with the Usman Dan Fodio jihad of 1804. And since then Nigeria has had its own share of pockets and large scales of terrorism. And then, the declaration of Boko Haram as a terrorist organization in 2010. But since before

then there have been many other terrorists' movements during the military than Democratic eras.

Strategies for Combating Terrorism

Since terrorists don't take the path of conventional warfare, but adopt asymmetric strategy that is by manipulating the stronger ones vulnerability then in order to neutralize terrorism would include:

1. No negotiation according to world best practice
2. Accept reality that it is a war and go all out for them
3. Discredit its extremist ideology

Reproductive Technology

This concept deals with the couples who cannot bear children for obvious reasons and desperately looking for children at all cost using various means including this method of reproductive technology. In this process Semen is obtained from the husband most often through masturbation is used. Although aspiration of the testis with a needle or punctuation with an automatic biopsy gun are also methods of collecting sperm. Once this has been accomplished, the doctor combines the sperm with the newly harvested eggs in hopes of fertilization, though, in some cases, sperm is injected directly into the eggs. Once the fertilized egg divides, it becomes an embryo. Some embryos are frozen for further use or eventually discarded. Other "fitter" embryos will be transferred into the woman's womb. The number of embryos to be transferred is decided between the doctor and the couple. While two to three embryos are recommended, as few as one or as many as six can be transferred. The embryos are then placed in the womb by inserting a long, thin tube through the vagina and cervix while the woman is awake. If the embryos implant into the womb, pregnancy is achieved. At this point, the doctor will advise how many of the implanted embryos should remain and how many should be "selectively reduced" or aborted in favor of healthier embryos. The remaining embryos will then either come to term as infants or be lost in miscarriage.

Postmodernism Teaching and Beliefs that Affects Christian Faith in Nigeria

Of course, the following concepts or ideas in the teaching or practice of postmodernism below has a lot to be desired. Christian faith is seriously threatened as one ponders on these teachings of the postmodernism. Few examples are discussed below with an aim to make Christians in Nigeria sit up and constantly reflect on the teachings of the Bible to strengthen their faith or else ruin may be imminent in church.

- i. *Deconstructionism* upholder of "God is Dead" theology and strongly holds to absolute relativism and nothing like objective truth. It eliminates not only God, but truth, good and evil. It also says there is no universal agreed facts and shared values, that no text has independent meaning, that is, it is mirroring personal perspective. But will not like his texts to be misinterpreted. Such critical and vague opinions are fast taking over the church and the Christian belief and faith in Christ who is the life ware of Christianity.
- ii. *New hermeneutics* finds its interpretation elsewhere, that is, the reader. The challenge of hermeneutics is that that of god, Mark Taylor says the disappearance of the author who inscribed absolute truth and univocal meaning in world history and human experience is so complex that the church and Christian must contend. Worst is
- iii. *Radical hermeneutics* which sees meaning from the 'interpretive community'. Both New and Radical Hermeneutics sees themselves as life givers to dead texts. Yet God is self-disclosed, that is "objective knowledge. The challenge of knowing the truth is clearly identified. Postmodernism is notoriously self-conscious movement which has long tradition of skepticism. Postmodernism says man is the order of all things is so worrisome to the church of today and the Christian faith. Postmodernisms claims that because truth is personalized subjective, there is no aim for consensus, except where there is consensus

Challenges of Postmodernism to Christian faith

1. The uniqueness of Christianity
2. Rooted in Epicurean Philosophy i.e. sensual self-indulgence
3. Operates based on feelings
4. It brings about the challenge of Hermeneutics
5. It gives voice to the marginalized
6. It challenges knowing the truth and
- 7 It strips the Bible from its real meaning

Postmodernism is rooted on the philosophy of Epicureanism. What good for a man if he gains the whole world yet forfeit his soul or what can man give in return or exchange for his soul. (16.26).

Church or Christian's Response to Postmodernism

1. There is absolute truth
2. Jesus affirms the truth, heaven and earth will pass away... (Mat. 24:25)
3. Jesus is the truth (John 14:6) as Pilate asks, "What is truth"? (John 18:38)
4. But the Deconstructionist say, what they say is" the truth, acknowledging that there is truth yet deny absolute truth, thereby shooting themselves on the feet (Rom 1:21-22). Truth is defined by individual and community of which he or she is part or finds himself there. The challenge for the church is the claim this postmodern context for Christ.

On the other hand, Deconstructionists are crafty people, as you try to deconstruct them you keep going on endless pursuit (1 Cor. 3:19). Therefore, is incumbent on the side of Christians to be cautious less their faith is being jeopardized.

Another area that affect the faith of Nigerian Christians are obvious as seen below. These things discussed below have truly affected the belief and practice of ideal Christianity in Nigeria as taught in Christ. The problem is based on the following:

1. The historical background of conflicts in Nigeria
2. The Religious Crisis in Nigeria and
3. Factors Responsible for Religious Conflicts in Nigeria

Historical Background of Conflict in Nigeria

The nation is divided into ethnic groups such as Hausa (North), Igbo (East) and Yoruba (West). This division based on region or ethnicity has a lot negative effect on the unity and progress of this country. This too turns affect Christian unity and relationship. Christianity in Nigeria became factionalized based on tribal ethnic groups to the extent that churches or denominations are along tribal line affecting the unity of the church. This turn to weaken the faith and relationship of Christians in this country. Below are how the country is being grouped and divided.

Hausa (North): Ruled by the Islamic theocentric empire started by the Usman Danfodio jihad after the coming of Islam in 1000 to 1100 AD. Sokoto Caliphate was established by Usman Danfodio in 1804 to 1810 making the North covering North West, North East, and North Central States a one single Politico-Religious system. NPC- National People's Congress, playing the tune for politics due to their population.

Igbo (East): never had a defined centralized political government. But have their strong ethnic identity in resistance to political domination or colonialism. This is still why the state is still fragile. Igbo dominated NCNC- National council of Nigerian Citizens

Yoruba (West): has a very strong Religious-political structure embedded into their belief system of Mythical order of their hero, Oduduwa who is claimed to have descended from heaven to Ife. So they resist any dominance, even by the Europeans which gave rise to crisis in some quarters in Nigeria. They have Political parties such as the AG- Action Group

Middle Belt of Nigeria

This area is occupied by the minority tribes of the central Nigeria. The coming together of these minority tribes brought about tension and incessant tribal wars seeking release from domination by the Hausa/ Fulani was necessitated by the state of the nation when the Middle Belt live in abject poverty and Islamisation. They resolved to cut off from the core-Northern states and formed the Middle Belt championed by Chief Solomon D. Lar (A blessed memory) with their Party; United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC).

The South South militants

They are also minority tribes in the southern part of this country. They are force to reckon with. They are struggling for release from domination and from marginalization who would want to control their economy especially the oil flow in those areas. From the time of Saro Wiwa there has been high tension and demands for control of their assets. These and many more are disturbing and alarming to the corporate existence of this country call Nigeria. The researcher is deeply concern and if nothing is done quickly to save it the future of nation call Nigeria is bleak.

Religious Crisis in Nigeria

1. **Maitasine:** in the 1980s, An Islamic fundamentalist group claiming a superior Islam even more than Christianity, led by Muhammadu Marwa who killed and maimed people in their thousands in Kano, Yola, Maiduguri, Bauchi and Gombe. Despite government intervention, the crisis escalated. Christians and Muslims picked arms against each other in Kafanchang, and reprisal attack in Gusau, Kaduna, Zaria, Katsina and Funtua made a lot to be desired.
2. In the 1990s, one Yahaya Yakubu and his sect, *the Shi'ites*, unleashed

mayhem on the citizens in *Katsina and Bauchi* also soon erupted too with several lives lost, then, *Kano* had its share. This ugly scenario has cause pain and fears in the heart of Nigeria. One could ask question whether there is hope Nigerians of tomorrow

3. *Jos* soon erupted in violence between the Hausa/ Fulani settlers and the indigenous Christians in 1991 during *the creation of the Jos North Local Government Area*. The Crisis erupted when the inauguration of the new caretaker persons to oversee the affairs of the Council was cancelled with four people feared dead in the wake of the Hausa/ Fulani on 12 April 1994 violence. The aftermath of Jos crisis on September 7th 2001 early 2002 *Jos Main Market* was razed ablaze including *Gada Biyu* also was affected and some *Churches and Mosques and many places were also destroyed*. Soon *Kano* was in crisis in 1995, 1999, 2001 and 2004 to this date making it very unbearable to imagine how peaceful it used to be. There was no thought of whether this one is Muslim or Christian. All that matters was that we are Nigerians and so we must live together despite our differences. The differences in religion was immaterial non benefit to cause mayhem that thousands of precious lives who would have built and develop this nation are gone. What a tragic and pathetic situation.
4. **Kaduna** again in 2000 went ablaze: this was as a result of the **Shari'a law** enacted by the Zamfara state Governor, Sani Mohammed that led to death of thousands of lives in the protest of the enactment.

It is good to note the four Phases of Conflicts

1. **Latent stage:** people not aware yet deeply involved in it
2. **Escalation stage:** degeneration in trust, suspicion of one another and misunderstanding.
3. **Crisis Stage:** violent clashes resulting to attack and reprisal.
4. **Post-crisis stage:** tensions dropped and time to count losses

With all the above analysis the Christians who see human being as sacred and created by God for his purpose could just imagine. This has led Christians too to take arm against their fellow human being which is contrary to the teaching and professing faith of Christianity. God says you shall not kill for vengeance is mine. But in the process of defending with human emotional provoked anger can kill and eliminate life which is not supposed to be so. Many Christians have left their abode for fear of being killed. Many Christians have abandoned their faith to other

faiths for fear of harm or being killed. Places of worship, streetsfull of dead bodies in some cases, hospitals full to capacity with people injured during religious crisis threatening the belief and faith Christians in Nigeria.

Factors Responsible for Conflicts in Nigeria

Ethnocentrism also known as Identity Politics: Zweiri M Zhahid (2014) defines Identity Politics as claims to represent and seek to advance the interests of some particular groups in the society, the members of which often share and unite around common experiences of actual or perceived social and economic injustices relative to the wider society of which they form part and exist in. In this way, the identity of the oppressed group gives rise to a political basis around which they may unite and begin to assert themselves in society.

This identity is constructed, and it affects those who did it either by way of participation or neglect. Like the colonial masters who now see a crumbling nation under its own identity created by itself. This diversity is supposed to give rise to unity but it gives more division. Though it doesn't necessarily mean that diversity breeds division and conflict like in Switzerland, Belgium, Malaysia and Tanzania and the less diverse ones like Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi and perhaps, Sri Lanka are very unstable.

The regions in Nigeria have interconnectivity in terms of ethnic, regional and religious identities that is either ethno-regional or ethno-religious shaped by dominant groups like the Hausa/Fulani in the North, Igbo in the eastern region and Yoruba in the Western Region giving rise to *indigenship and settlers'hip* identity crisis. Some of the elements of Identity crisis include the issue of state of origin. UN like in the US, which state of residence is used and not state of origin. BUT in our context, one can only have one state of origin, it is also seen as the ancestral land and it is the only claim for a place in the world you call your own and ready to die for.

This too has affected the practice and belief of Christianity which teaches that where you find yourself you are citizen of that place and could contribute meaningfully to the development of the area and further the gospel of Christ. Many believers in Christ have suffered and prevented to share Christ just because they don't come from those areas in Nigeria. The lives of many Christians have been threatened because they are seen as foreigners in some places and it is no go area for them. This has adversely affected the faith and belief of many Christians.

Reproductive Technology

This deals with the opportunity for couples who cannot bear children for obvious reasons in this dispensation to have their children.

1. **Artificial inseminations** is a process where the sperm of the husband is harvested through masturbation, sexual intercourse and or condom. This sperm is inserted/ planted into the wife close to her ovulation period when conception is most likely to take place. Many have argued back and forth if this is adultery. Since no sexual intercourse took place it cannot be said to be adultery because it was a physician help, and with the consent of both spouse. Also worthy of note is that this scientific breakthrough is like medical help or correction just like wearing glasses to aid seeing. The child's paternity is questioned but that it is better than having the cousin or brother sleep with her which is purely adultery. Two kinds: AIH-Artificial Insemination by Husband and AID-Artificial Insemination by Donor, this practice is scripturally unclear but suggestive of natural and not artificial ways. According to Dafer (2021), that Abraham was encouraged by his wife Sarah to have Hagar her maid to give him the child to raise a family and fulfill the promise made to him by God (Gen. 16:2). And also of Onan who was instructed to sleep with his late brother's widow to have child for his brother (Gen. 38:8) are few examples of desperation of having and raising children by the families.
2. **Surrogate Motherhood:** this is simply the use of substitute mother to fertilize an artificially implanted sperm of another man and or the egg of the wife also taken from her in an event of complication and inserted into a chosen woman till she gives birth for the supposed parent, in either case the ethical thought is that the child may not biologically be of the one birthed for. This renting of womb can bring about exploitation of womanhood, prostitution, the issue of legality of who is the parent, and when there is any medical complication arising to defect, what happens?
3. **In Vitro Fertilization (IVF and its procedures):** this is the process of combining the egg and the sperm in a laboratory dish.

The goal of in vitro fertilization (IVF) consists of a straightforward process: to take a woman's eggs and a man's sperm, fertilize them outside the body, and then implant them back into the woman's womb with the goal of pregnancy. But the process has many complicated steps in between. Once a couple

has concluded that they want to experiment with IVF, the woman will be set up with hormone therapy—taking fertility drugs through injection. This can be done from home, and the purpose of injecting these hormones is to stimulate multiple eggs to be produced. Known as “hyperovulation,” a woman begins to produce the many eggs needed for multiple fertilizations. During this time she goes into the clinic for checkups to see how her fertility levels are progressing. Once the doctor is satisfied that more than one egg can be removed, a woman then goes in for minor surgery requiring anesthesia, and the eggs are removed from both ovaries by inserting a long, thin needle through the vagina. Suction on the needle allows the eggs and fluid to be removed.

The Implications of IVF

Medical clinics advertise IVF with the emotionally laden promises of taking home a new baby, but what they do not reveal are the long, painful procedures that lead to complete fertilization. Drug therapy, invasive and time-consuming treatments, the ethical considerations of masturbation, destroying fertilized embryos, aborting implanted embryos and a low success rate should all be considered while making this decision.

Emotional costs are great as well. For most women, IVF is the final attempt to conceive biologically and expectations can be inflated. While a lot of pressure for this costly and unpredictable service exists, stress can occur if spouses differ on how many rounds of in vitro to pursue, how many eggs should be implanted, how many should be frozen, and how many should be brought to term. In addition to stress, which negatively impacts libido, the focus taken off natural conception often results in sexual relations either subsiding or ceasing altogether. There are a few reasons for this. If fertility treatments involve injection of hormones into the body, then soreness in the abdomen can make intercourse painful or uncomfortable. Drugs taken to stimulate ovulation amplify emotions, causing mood swings, outbursts, and premenstrual syndrome like symptoms. Also, if progesterone suppositories are being inserted vaginally, one must wait both before and after insertion for sex to make the hormones most efficacious. Leaking suppositories during sex might also affect romance.

However, due to concerns over becoming pregnant “twice”—through IVF and natural sex—and thus carrying too many fetuses, doctors tell patients to avoid sex during IVF treatment. An interrupted sex life can destroy the much needed, and God-given, physical bond between husband and wife.

Artificial Sex Selection: in the Sperm, Y chromosome is for raising boys and X chromosome is for giving birth to baby girls, selected to determine which one is used to be fertilized. Danger here is that, selection of sexes may allow

people to choose one sex more than the other (sexual stereotyping). This is a failure to accept God's plan for couples on sex of a child. (Gen. 20:18; Acts 17:26)

Our Bodies are God's Temple (Holy) and the Concern of Christian Faith in Nigeria

IVF can wreak havoc on a woman's body and reproductive organs. The body was not made to endure hyper ovulation, multiple pregnancies at the same time, and hormonal drugs. In the case of twins or higher-order multiple pregnancies, the mother will more likely develop high blood pressure or anemia, as well as having a higher risk for miscarriage, induced high blood pressure, preeclampsia (protein in the uterus), or gestational diabetes during pregnancy. Women carrying multiple fetuses are also more likely to have hemorrhaging, anemia, or die in childbirth compared with women who are only pregnant with one child at a time. The Bible tells us that our "bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:19, NIV) and although in this specific context Paul addresses sexual union with someone outside of your spouse, this could be relevant to IVF, especially in the case of gamete donors. Even without donors, the Bible gives precedence for treating the body as a place worthy of God. Second Corinthians 6:16 says, "we are the temple of the living God" (NIV), and Jesus, too, refers to His body as a temple (John 2:19). Most Christians believe that taking care of their bodies reflects the image of God, but in vitro may compromise the physical body.

Despite these concerns, women, with their amazing sacrificial instincts, are willing to go through much suffering for the sake of love, and, therefore, even painful events like hormone shots, high blood pressure, fluctuating hormones, natural or caesarean birth, and the after-recovery of childbirth may seem worth the afflictions. These considerations must be weighed by the woman, for she owns her body, but the decision for IVF is not just for the wife to make.

The Bible tells us that in marriage, our bodies are not ours alone but our spouse's as well (1 Cor. 7:4). Through marriage God unites two different people and makes them "one flesh" (Gen. 2:24, NIV). In marriage, spouses put each other first, attend to physical, emotional, and sexual needs and always seek the best for each other. Husbands are admonished to "love their wives as their own bodies" (Eph. 5:28, NIV), ensuring that their wife honors her body. We take care of our own bodies through proper nutrition, getting enough sleep and exercise, taking time for relaxation and community, and not intentionally harming ourselves with drugs or unnecessary procedures. If the husband would not be willing to put his own body through suffering, biblically he would not want his wife to attempt the same physical suffering. IVF does not just affect the woman; husbands must also

determine how in vitro fits into their obligation to care for their wives as well. But beyond the matrimonial relationship, both spouses should be aware of additional risks to babies born through in vitro.

In the IVF process, embryos may be damaged through handling and exposure. Even if the baby comes to term, a strong likelihood exists that he or she will be born prematurely, with a low birth rate and complications. This is especially true of multiple births. Premature babies are usually characterized by slower development, a susceptibility to illness, and a higher chance of infant mortality. In addition to these medical complications, girl babies may have higher rates of infertility because of the use of fertility drugs during conception.

In the end, couples must come to a unified decision for each other, themselves, and their potential children. Both spouses need to determine if IVF and the results of the process are glorifying to God, and consider if the physical risks of IVF for the wife and the potential children seem appropriate and wise.

Biblical Stewardship

Fertility clinics are not quick to advertise the financial cost of IVF. These clinics subsist as for-profit organizations in an industry that can make a lot of money on the pain of couples wanting children. Each round of IVF treatments costs about millions of Naira. While not uncommon to undergo several cycles of in vitro, many couples simply cannot afford to invest millions of Naira for vitro demand in order to have a moderately successful chance of conceiving.

Couples may feel stress due to financial considerations. As more time and money goes into the quest for a biological baby, it is not unusual for couples to dip into savings accounts, retirement plans, or other funds to pay for treatment. Tithing, charitable giving, and support of extended family members can fall by the wayside.

Of course, one cannot put a price tag on love and family, but one can measure their spending against a biblical background. Christians might consider the biblical principle of stewardship and determine how their use of money stands up against Jesus' own words about giving to the needy and serving God above money (Matt. 6).

God's Will on Child bearing

Barrenness is never the will of God because God hates this; but that as he so wishes he blesses. And in an event his will was never sought if bearing children delays or fail to come will lead to more catastrophes. Like Dafer puts it, "anything outside God's will may result to more pains and sorrow when we try to push our way to having a child at all cost". Quoting Genesis 16:12; 25:18, he said "Sarah did and the result was the hostility that Israel continued

to-suffer till date". If this idea may not be properly guided and the church will not frown at looking for children by all means than trusting God for may weaken and destroys Christian faith and trust in God for his miracle. Christian faith in God may soon be replaced with science which will try to proof by analysis in the laboratory.

In response to natural Conception and Physical defect leading to infertility or sterility

In an event where either or both of the couple have lost any natural means to have a natural conception, though this is a matter of conscience, the couple may adopt than any of the scientific method as far as it does not lead to adultery (Dafer :190-191). But we do use eye glasses to cure or aid in reading?

Benefits of Reproduction Technology

1. Genetic Diseases are detected earlier so care can be taken
2. The child's sex is known before hand
3. It makes it possible to select which sex to have
4. It makes couples to have children when they find it difficult to.

The church's response to Reproductive Technology

1. It increases the rate of abortion
2. Single parents may increase
3. This technology may lead to more and more advancement, non-stop.
4. Excessive abuse may arise

God's Sovereignty

All this comes down to a fundamental question: *Do I believe that God's plan and purpose for my life can include infertility?* I think many times we try to force God's hand into a different path for ourselves by altering circumstances beyond our control. Our feeling of entitlement to better health, a different personality, a certain lifestyle blocks the potential that God has for us to utilize whatever He has given us, even if this potential goes beyond our understanding. The Bible reassures us that God does have a plan for our lives. Romans 8:28 says, "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him" (NIV). This does not mean that we will get everything we want, but it does mean that we are secure in the plans of God. When the pain and isolation involved in infertility comes into the lives of a Christian couple, an appropriate response can be found in the Scriptures.

The Bible tells many stories of infertile couples: Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 16; 18; 21), Rachel and Jacob (Gen. 29:31–30:24; 35:16–25), Hannah and Elkanah (1 Sam. 1), and Elizabeth and Zechariah (Luke 1), but the Bible also has beautiful promises for those who could not have children. The Lord will not shame women for being unable to produce biologically but will treat them as equals (see Isa. 54:4). At a time when a husband could divorce a woman for not giving him children, this passage demonstrates that God's love and acceptance transcends worldly values. Later in Isaiah, God says that it is better to receive an eternal heavenly status than have a worldly legacy that will pass away (Isa. 56:3b–5). For this reason, God promises those who cannot have children an eternal legacy in the Lord. God knows that the desire to leave a "name" after one dies is a goal for many people, and we are reassured that in heaven, we will have that legacy; the Lord magnificently provides for us in His eternal plan.

Homosexuality

This is same sex intercourse and or same sex marriage. It has been there since prehistoric times. In Africa and in tradition, it is a taboo to hear of it. But in modern times it is been promoted; heterogeneous or homosexual partner.

Biblical Prohibition of Homosexuality

1. Gen 19. In the city of Sodom
2. Judges 19. A Levite ended up in the same situation who was Lot's visitor
3. Lev. 18:22; 20:13 Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman etc
4. Rom 1:18-32

Causes of Homosexuality

Homosexuality is when an adult feels erotically attracted more to the same sex. Some say it is genetic or chromosomal factors, but no evidence to prove that. So this means it is a socially learned response and not an orientation fixed from the outset by genetic or hormonal factors.

Anyone who claims he was born a homosexual is not correct. Reading from Dafer (2021:215-217) has shown that homosexual cravings starts in the adult preferring erotic feelings towards the same sex and thereby debunking their claims of chromosome abnormality or imbalance in hormones that informs choice, there is no scientific research supporting their claim. It is biblically incorrect to claim to born a homosexual as it is recorded in the bible concerning Sodom and Gomorah, that this is a grievous sin (Gen. 18:20) and a departure from God's truth of refuse of men to virgin women (Gen. 19:6-9) by rejecting God (Rom. 1:18-32). Dafer :220-221 opined that homosexuality has been described as contrary to nature

asserting that Judaism and Christianity have never condoned it, quoting two church father's repudiation, John Chrysostom and Augustine. Arguing that if they have distant themselves from this practice, it should not be common place now.

Biblical Sexuality

In Gen 1 and 2, it is clear that Male and Female (man and woman) is the creation of God for intercourse and not the homosexual way. It's a sin against both God and our human nature (Gen 19). Gay and Lesbianism is a deeper level of depravity and is condemned by the Bible.

Homosexuality and the Postmodern Society

Question: Should the church send the homosexual out? The scriptures have condemned this act severally; Judges 19; Lev. 18:22 and 20:13; Rom. 1:18-32. It is a sign of God's judgment 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:8-10. The church should not send them out but like the Corinthian church that was trapped in this sin, let's consider that we too were ones lost in sin and that they can still repent since we all have been washed, sanctified and justified in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit of our God. (1 Cor. 6:11) But in Postmodern times, hear what the Bible says, in the period when Israel had no king, all did as they pleased (Judges 21:25). This is a reflection of the relativism tendencies of man who says there is no absolute truth, and that truth is a relative term.

Incidences of Homosexuality

- i. 1969; gay movement in US, New York. They were harassed
- ii. 1990s and 2000s; rights of gay and lesbians families pushed up
- iii. 2001; Netherlands legalized same sex marriage
- iv. 2003; Belgium legalized same sex marriage
- v. 2005; Spain and Canada legalized same sex marriage
- vi. 2006; South Africa followed suit
- vii. 2012; President Barrack Obama permitted same sex marriage
- viii. 2015; same sex marriage was legalized in the US
- ix. In the Church, 2003; AN Anglican Church Bishop of New Hampshire blessed same sex couples
- x. 2006 in Nigeria, Rev. Jide Rowland Macaulay opened the first gay
- xi. Church but fled to the UK after death threats was issued him.

Infact the analysis above may also include many ministers of God who claim to be pastoring church congregation. This has cause doubt and adverse effect on the Christians in Nigeria who turn to say or believe that Christianity is a deception since leaders who were supposed to guide the truth are found in this ugly

act. A number of Christian's faith have been destroyed and weakened. This is a great danger and threat to Christian faith.

For now only the society and the church has stood against this act of homosexuality. Chrysostom, in his homilies, in Romans 1:26-27, describes homosexuality as "a serious disease of the soul".

Augustine also said, "Those shameful acts against nature, such as were committed in Sodom, ought everywhere and always be detested and punished. If all nations were to do such things, they would be held guilty of the same crime by the law of God, which has not made men so that they should use one another in this way" This marks the conclusion of the matter to have a family, but all people couples and singles, male and female in the congregation and church body at large need to support the mission of Christ by not reducing a person's worth to if or how many children they can have biologically, but by supporting couples in producing many children spiritually. We are all called to make new disciples for Christ.

Conclusion

One has uphill task to conclude this work by looking at these various challenges and threats confronting Christian faith and practice in Nigeria. It is true that Christian in Nigeria are living in time bomb of losing their faith in Christ looking at all that has been discussed in this write up. In summary the church has to rise or wake up to have sound teaching to create awareness between Bible teaching and heresies or philosophical teachings by men especially the idea and principles of postmodernism that is sweeping very fast in the church. If this view cannot be explained to the young Christians of nowadays they may turn to look at science as the solution to their problem than God the maker of all things. This teaching has come to contest with Christian faith and trust in the word of God alone. In whatever paths Christians choose to take on the emotional road of infertility, they are not alone but with God. Not only should the couple sort out the issues and options surrounding the desire to have a family, but all people couples and singles, male and female in the congregation and church body at large need to support the mission of Christ by not reducing a person's worth to if or how many children they can have biologically, but by supporting couples in producing many children spiritually is the best. This article just simply x-ray some few contemporary issues confronting Christian faith especially in this last age. God has all the answers to give.

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