



The postmodern deconstruction of biblical sexuality: An ethical-theological response

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Abstract

This study discusses the cultural deconstruction of human sexuality in the postmodern society. It examines the problem of the influence and extent of the emerging cultural and moral crises on human sexuality: Sexual revolution, Gender disorientation, Gay marriage, Sex commercialization, New Morality, etc. These were evaluated from both the Old Testament and New Testament biblical sexuality and its moral absolutes with the view to point out the devastation and corrupting impacts of postmodern constructs on Christian sexuality and the moral teachings of the church. The sexual ethical values for Christian social relationships were highlighted from textual analysis of related scriptures. This is to provide helpful guidance for the church to clearly understand biblical boundaries/standards for sexual morality. This paper contends that the Christian community is under siege by the devastating incursion of the postmodern erosion of its traditional position on sexuality. There is an obvious and dire need for the church to be theologically empowered to provide a more pragmatic and adequate response to these cultural constructions of biblical sexuality and be able to preserve a wholesome biblical legacy of Christian sexuality for the up-and-coming generation of Christians who, perhaps, will face fiercer attack on biblical morality.

Key Words: Postmodern Society, Christian Sexuality, Cultural Crises, Gender Disorientation, Sexual Ethics

Introduction

Postmodernism, from its interrogation of Christian beliefs and practices, is an ideology that embraces a worldview that denies absolute morality and promotes the elevation of self and individual freedom above God's injunctions. This results in a lifestyle or society that brazenly rejects the fact of God's sovereign prerogative to determine what is good or bad, lawful or unlawful, right or wrong, as moral absolutes for his creation. Our post-modern society is

embattled and engulfed in the heat of cultural and moral crises regarding values on human sexuality. The emerging cultural deconstruction of biblical sexuality is manifesting in the sexual revolution, sexual anarchy, sexual perversion, and permissiveness, the culture of exhibitionism and nudity, gender disorientation, and anti-procreative culture. Homosexuality and same-sex marriage are the most pronounced, insulting, and insidious contemporary cultural crisis regarding human sexuality, most particularly, the biblical worldview of human sexuality. These sexuality perversions are not new faces; they are as old as recorded human history on earth (Genesis 1-40). However, the contemporary spate and level of sexual permissiveness, the depth and extent of moral degeneration, the total loss of self-control, and the unparalleled sexual revolution have no precedence in recorded human history. Not even the Ancient Roman Empire stands close to it (Mohler, A. 2005, 32).

The church, as an institution and member of the postmodern society, is witnessing the erosion of its traditional biblical foundation for sex, marriage, and family life. This has constituted a monumental and devastating challenge to the church's teachings on these issues, so much so that some Christian communities have shifted their ground. This study highlights the problem the church community has at hand and the urgency of the need for her to respond to this affront to her biblical morality effectively.

Conceptual Clarification ***Postmodernism***

Postmodernism, born under Western secular conditions, is characterized by an emphasis on pluralism and relativism and rejects any certain belief and absolute value. It treats values as relative things that differ from culture to culture. Postmodernists reject any constant, definite, and universal belief and instead consider knowledge to be relative, local, and fully influenced by special cultures and values. It equally rejects universal moral and spiritual values and accepts the relativity of all values in all areas, so no specific value preference exists (Nooshin *et al*, 2015, 8-20).

Sexuality:

God-ordained physical, mental, emotional, behavioral traits and spiritual expression that characterize individuals as distinctly male or female is much more than simply what men and women "do"-but an integral part of our being throughout our entire lifespan (Oladunjoye, J.A 2006; Focus, 2009, 45).

Sexuality Crisis:

This is the confusion that bothers conflicting views and dispositions toward a traditional understanding of sexuality. This has left society with as many options as possible in the expression of sexual identity, sexual acts, gender, or even marriage.

Theoretical Model

The theoretical model for this thesis is that religion as a cultural system is affected by a culture shaped by religion. Pargament and Exline (2002, 36) theorize that cultural influences do not just change religion's external 'shape.' Cultural messages can create tension, conflict, and confusion within individuals when they counter religious beliefs and teachings, making it harder to integrate religion into their lives. Specifically, these researchers posit that the preservation of spiritual revelation from assimilation to cultural constructions depends on a proper biblical understanding and effective contemporary theologizing, which is a major factor in the ability of Theologians/Christian educators to provide scripturally relevant meaning to everyday issues people grapple with.

Research Questions

Therefore, these research questions will be answered in this paper to provide a proper understanding of the postmodern society's construct of human sexuality and the contextual implications it holds for the Christian community. 1. What is the nature and dimension of the postmodern view of human sexuality? 2. What are the biblical values, injunction, and presentation of sexuality/Christian sexuality? 3. How does this deconstruction of human sexuality influence and impinge on the church's teachings on sexuality-its constructs, its context, its purpose, its sanctity, its spiritual dimension, its employment, and its boundaries? 4. How should the church community formulate relevant theological responses that can preserve biblical absolutes and Christian Sexuality?

The Postmodern Construction of Sexuality

The Postmodern construction of sexuality is encapsulated in the sexual revolution, new morality, and the emerging gender orientation in its trail. These are briefly clarified here.

Sexual Revolution, Sexual Anarchy, Sexual Libertinism: The sexual revolution of our postmodern culture has resulted in relaxed and new standards of sexual behavior and morality for males and females in particular. Sex between two unmarried adults is considered 'safe' with the precautionary use of a condom, and it can never be a case of adulterous or promiscuous affair since the duos are consenting adults. In the past, fear of pregnancy may be an inhibition for most females. Still, with readily available contraceptive pills, now more women are ready to comfortably say 'yes' than 'no' to casual sex with an uncommitted partner. On the electronic media and the World Wide Web, we are confronted by much freer and readily accessible sexually erotic scenes targeting young boys and girls. It is even possible to participate online on some pornographic websites. This is because the clandestineness, accessibility, and permissiveness of modern technology, such as the cell phone and internet facility, accords sexual activities today, creates a new context or emerging sexual issue, such as online sex, sex texts, dating websites, sex toys, sex dolly.

Sexual Perversion, Permissiveness, Sex Commercialization, and New Sexual Morality: Today's culture has reached the point where sex outside of marriage is expected. A key issue in dating is no longer *if* one should have sex but *when*. Many people feel that there is no reason to withhold the complete expression of sexual desires (Jacobs and Strubel, 1996, 46-65). Ours is a sex-suffused society with perhaps unprecedented sexual awareness and sexual promiscuity. Sex has lost its "mystery" and sanctity because it is obtainable cheaply, engaged in without any relationship or marital commitment with the other person. Nothing is as highly commercialized today as the sexual act, and nothing is equally trivialized in our contemporary times as it is. The permissiveness is such that sexual intimacy has been reduced to performance shows that are watched online or via other electronic media for public consumption as recreational purposes. The traditional concept of sex as sacred and not to be wantonly engaged in has been eroded away. The obvious fact is that this generation has no regard for biblical morality, according to Mohler. A (2005, 33) is regarded as antiquarian and repressive. Our society's moral tone is undeniably encoded in the slogan 'if it feels good, do it'. In other words, her standard of morality, sexual morality inclusive, is a matter of personal preference and relative morality. The result is a society plagued by sexual anarchy, promiscuity, and perversion, which is particularly characteristic of today's young people.

Emergence of New Morality: There is continued subversion of traditional socio-ethical values by new and emerging moral standards. This process is the emergence of a new morality in Postmodern Nigerian society. Some practical illustrative examples are appropriate here. These may include the following, viz:

i) *Baby Mama*: This is a relatively new term in the concept of human sexuality in society. It is an emerging sexual morality that has largely become a norm, especially among the upper class, celebrities, politicians, etc. and is described as the baby *mama* kind of partner. *Baby mama* is a woman who is a *mama* or mother because she has a baby (or babies) for a man who consents together with her to have sex and gives him a baby that bears his name even though the *baby mama* is fully aware of a legal spouse or other *baby mama* the man has. A *baby mama* is not addressed as 'Mrs' Jones, for example, but as a *baby mama* of Jones, and most often, the men involved are celebrities, so many more women are willing to become their *baby mama* and proudly so. As opposed to the stigma, frown looks, caustic comments, and social disapproval that ordinarily and expectedly should attend this *baby mama* lifestyle, it is gaining social acquiescence, tolerance, and popularity as demonstrated on social media.

ii) *Sugar Mummy*: *A well-entrenched new morality that celebrates Sugar mummy is similar to this*. This older woman seeks the sexual services of younger, energetic men whom she pays for their patronage. This is unlike what was obtained before. It is the woman here who pays the young man who is believed to have the sexual resources that the *Sugar mummy* needs. This is a reversal of sexual and economic theory, as we have observed in society. It equally plays out at the so-called 'baby factory' where the man is paid for his service to impregnate the girls so they can give birth to babies needed for 'ritual' money by their buyers. The movie industry has popularized this *sugar mummy* stuff

and successfully pushed it to society as a new norm. The present realities about the issue of sex reveal that sex is no longer a female resource alone but a dual resource for both males and females. Today, men are not only paying consensual female sexual partners, but more women too, or 'sugar mummies' in particular, are seeking out agile young men to pay for engaging them in sexual relationships.

iv) Sexual Innuendos: The use of traditional euphemism or modesty in describing issues of sex acts, sexual organs, or intimate bedroom affairs is no longer the norm. Almost everywhere you turn, one is inundated with sexually erotic slang and graphic jokes about sex organs and coitus. These are spread by the theatre industries and their actors or actresses who are role models for modern youths. Such public looseness about lewdness, vulgar sex jokes, sexually erotic images, sex icon are emerging ethical issues unknown and uncelebrated before.

iv) SEX as *S3X* and *S\$X*: On social media and news sources, sex is now written or seen as *s3x*. Although it was meant to be internet slang for sex, its usage encompasses sex in every way that it is known or practiced. This may be seen as a coded and new approach to the subject of preference or values in the acts of sexual intercourse. This accommodation makes it convenient to effortlessly navigate the current controversy surrounding the socio-religious debates over the accommodation of oral and anal sex as natural, healthy, alternate options for sexual acts. The number 3 replacement of the letter 'E' gives room to accommodate sex acts done via any of the three orifices of vaginal, anus, and mouth as sex, good sex, natural sex, and acceptable sex as against any argument to the contrary. 'Threesome' is a term attached to *S3X* acts which may also carry the above implication but is not limited to the involvement of three (3) sexual partners, which can be a woman and two men or two women and a man in sexual acts. 'Threesome', though a new sexual slang, is not new in the pornography industry as displayed in their media advertisement. It has, however, moved out of its previous domain in the pornography world into the larger society. 'Threesome' is now receiving social media acceptance and approval, gradually finding its way into societal norms, at least among the 'Aristotle' class. In the same dimension, SEX is also written as *S\$X* with a dollar or pound sterling icon in place of the letter 'E.' This connotes how widely sexual acts have become commercialized.

Gender Orientation, Sexual Attributes, Culture of Nudity, and Exhibitionism: The gender orientation crisis has produced the LGBT classification, which is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender.

Lesbian: This is a woman with sexual orientation or sexual feelings towards another woman;

Gay: This is a man who has a romantic, sexual, erotic, and emotional attraction to a male;

Bisexual: Refers to a person who experiences sexual or physical attraction to more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree;

Transgender: This person's view of self-identity or gender does not match his/her assigned sex at birth or does not conform to gender stereotypes (Ijasini, O 2021, 36).

For women to be scantily clad is the societal standard set by the movie industry. Flaunting of physical, bodily, and sexual attributes of the feminine gender is in vogue. Ladies who are 'busty' or have a peculiar backside are models of enviable sexual attributes. The media touts and celebrates the silent slogan, 'the bigger, the better', in its evaluation of sexual attributes. Everything is being done by many females to measure up to this social sexual construct.

Biblical Sexuality and Its Moral Absolutes

On sexual matters, the Bible does not pander to any prudishness. It has its own concept of sex and human sexuality spelt out. Brandstra and Verhey (1988, 57) alluded to this fact when they painted a holistic picture of biblical concern and pervasion with the subject of sex and human sexuality in their accurate assessment: The Torah regulates sexual activity and establishes sexual roles. Prophetic literature uses sexual metaphors in its announcement of God's judgement on covenant unfaithfulness. Wisdom literature distinguishes wise sexual conduct from foolish and uses sexual imagery to characterize wisdom. The Gospel uses the memory of Jesus' words and deeds to shape the sexual conduct and disposition of His followers. The Epistles deal with the concrete question of sexual conduct. Revelation contains sexual imagery and instruction

Abogunrin, S.O (2006, 26) equally commented that: Sex is the creation of God and a very big subject in the Bible. Many Christians are ignorant of the fact the Bible contains a wealth of information about sex and sexuality. The Bible is surprisingly frank, bold and clear in its detailed discussion about sex.

Biblical Understanding of Sexuality and Sex.

It is important for the spiritual and moral health of the Church, especially as it relates to human sexuality to answer the question 'what does the Bible really say about sex?' According to Mohler, A (2005, 36): The controversies over same-sex marriage, homosexuality, and gender-bending now raging in our culture, necessitates answering the question: "what is the biblical pattern for human sexuality? A clear picture of biblical position on the subject of sexuality and sex is what will enable Christian adolescents have a reference for what is right, appropriate and biblical in the expression of their sexuality.

The premise for establishing biblical conception of sexuality and sex is usually developed from the Yahwist (Genesis 1) and Priestly (Genesis 2) biblical creation narratives: So, God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created he him; male and female He created them (Genesis 1:27). And the

LORD God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper like him'...And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed (Genesis 2:18, 24). The creation story as found in the two biblical narratives of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 though clearly presents the creation of Adam and Eve in seemingly two different lights; Most Bible Scholars have treated both narratives as complementary rather than antagonistic. Several theological observations regarding human sexuality have been made taking these two accounts as the premise on which their theories or postulations are based.

Je'Adayibe, S.A (2006, 62) analyzing Genesis: 1:27, 2:18, noted that God created man and woman as sexual beings, as sex partners with different sex roles but having sexual needs. Stanley (1977, 19-23) cited by Ogundele (2006) wrote that sex is an expression of our existence as sexual beings. Abogunrin (2006, 68) observed that the word sex refers to different things in the Bible. According to him, it refers to human physical anatomy because the scripture says that 'God created man in His own image...male and female, He created them'; Secondly, according to him, sex in another sense refers to physical attraction and, in this sense, we speak of someone being physically attractive (Genesis 39:6). Sexuality however has been noted from a critical look into its creation in Genesis as multidimensional, while sex is considered as just an expression of it at its sexual/physical level. Sexuality is seen as having a physical dimension, that causes human being, just like Adam and Eve to seek for harmony and relationship with their physical environment; as having an emotional/relational dimension that causes one to yearn for relationship and understanding with others, resulting in friendship or at a deeper intimate level in marriage/sexual relationship, this is exemplified in the loneliness of Adam and his satisfaction when Eve came into his life ; and sexuality as having a spiritual dimension to it, stirring up an insatiable desire for fellowship and worship with the Divine, just as Adam and Eve enjoyed intimate fellowship with God in the cool of the day while in the garden of Eden (Doug, 2008).

God declares his creation as good (Genesis 1:31), and that includes human sexuality, thus sex, sex drive, or sexuality is God's own creation, idea and gift to mankind (Paulik,1996 and Igboin, B.O 2006, 69).God's charge to the first man and woman in their original state of innocence was procreation-to'be fruitful and replenish the earth'(Genesis1:28).This is a necessity that makes sex in marriage not a sin but rather, good (Genesis 1:31) and holy (Hebrew13:40).Speaking from the reproductive perspective, sex was also conceived as an instinct that produces the family institution (Chesterton, cited by biblcalsexuality.com).While Jackson (2004), on utility ground, explained that sex is a great thing, which God designed to benefit married men and women. According to Hostler *et al.* (1996) with the debut of the second sex (Eve), Adam's loneliness problem was solved and God's creation was good and complete. From these analyses these authors describe God as pro-sex, who creates sex and wants people (couple) to enjoy it to the fullest as a noble but not debase thing. Genesis narrative apart, other biblical writers also and further affirm the goodness of sexuality and sex as God's gift. The Song of Solomon is an extended love poem with explicit erotic imagery and language. In the book of

Proverbs, Sex is affirmed as a source of pleasure and shared intimacy between husband and wife. In the Prophetic books, the imagery of human sexuality and intimacy is used to describe the burning passion of God's love and relationship to his people. In the Gospel, Jesus referred to the Genesis narrative in his response to the sanctity and sacredness of human sexuality in marital homestead, thus affirming the 'good' pronounced on human sexuality at the beginning. He also by his lifestyle of lifting the feminine gender demonstrated positive examples to his followers and the 'anti-woman' culture/society of his days. Apostle Paul in the Epistles, and the Old Testament prophets in several places, celebrated the act of sex and sexual relationship in marriage as having divine approval (Songs 1-5; Proverbs 5:18ff; Ecclesiastes 9:9; Isaiah 43:4; Malachi 1:24; Hosea 1-3; Mathew 19: 4-6; I Corinthians 7:1-5). According to Mohler, A(2005, 40): Sexual pleasure is not an accident of human biology--it is one of the Creator's sweetest gifts to human beings. The promise of sexual pleasure and satisfaction is to draw us into the marital covenant, and then shared joy of physical union is a vital part of the marital bond. The biblical writers affirm sexuality as a part of our embodied existence. As human beings we are sexual creatures, and as sexual creatures we are called to honor God with our bodies. Within the context of the marital covenant, the husband and wife are free to express love for each other, experience pleasure, and join in the procreative act of sexual union. This is pleasing to God, and is not to be a source of shame.

The recurring theme about biblical sexuality presenting itself from all the above biblical assessments and inferences includes the nature of sex and sexuality, the purpose of sex, and the context for the expression of sex and sexuality.

Sexual perversion: The Bible repeatedly warns against sexual activities outside of the marriage covenant and thus emphasized the spiritual connotation embedded in sex. Scholars, from biblical submissions, give various evaluations of sex outside of marriage and the sacredness the scripture accords it. Mohler, A. (2005,45) observed that just as the biblical writers' present marital sex as holy and natural, all other forms of sexual activity are presented as condemned and sinful. He warned that in addition to adultery and fornication, the Bible expressly forbids homosexuality, bestiality, incest, prostitution, rape, pederasty, and all other forms of sexual deviance and perversity (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26-27; Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 18:23; Leviticus 18:6-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Exodus 2:16-17; Proverbs 7:1-27). Several specific sexual relationships are forbidden in the Bible. Among these are homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22,26,27, 20:13; Judges 19:22-24; I Corinthians 6:9; I Timothy 1:9-10; 2 Timothy 3:1-5); bestiality-sex with animals (Leviticus 18:23; 20:15-16; Exodus 22:19; Deuteronomy 27:21); and incest-sexual relations with close family members, including your mother, sister, niece, aunt, daughter-in-law, and sister-in-law (Leviticus 18:6-18, 20:10-21); fornication -sexual relations outside of marriage and adultery -sexual relations with another person's spouse (Leviticus 20:10ff, 18:19; Exodus 20:14, 5:18; Deuteronomy 22:22-24, I Corinthians 6:9-10, Ephesians 5:3-5; Galatians 5:19,21; Mathew 5:27), and rape -forced sex.

Deem (2010, 52), responding to these sexual perversions, commented that to emphasize the seriousness of these kinds of offenses, the Torah recommends death as the penalty. According to Deem, it is clear that pornography is not to be viewed by Christians, although not specifically mentioned in the Bible. Some other writers and scholars were more forthright in their opinion of pornography, declaring it as a sin, abominable practice, and unscriptural, 'setting evil things before one's eyes,' 'partaking in other men sin'; 'abuse of the body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit'; and a 'desecration of the sanctity the scripture accords sex": and as 'possessing addictive influence, especially on men' (Mohler, A 2005 and Donovan, 1995, 55). Heimbach et al. (2004, 35) comprehensively captured the whole picture: God's standard is purity in every thought about sex, as well as in every act of sex. Sexual purity is violated even in thoughts that never proceed to outward acts. Sex must never be used to oppress, wrong or take advantage of anyone. Rape, incest, sexual abuse, pedophilia, voyeurism, prostitution and pornography always exploit and corrupt. Sex outside of marriage is never moral. This includes all forms of intimate sexual stimulation that stir up sexual passion between unmarried partners. Such behavior offends God, and often causes physical and emotional pain and loss in this life. Refusal to repent of sexual sin may indicate that a person never has entered into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. The Old and New Testaments uniformly condemn sexual contact between persons of the same sex; and God has decreed that no one can ever excuse homosexual behavior by blaming his or her Creator.

The above points towards the fact that both Old and New Testament writers warned against the corrupting influence of sexual sin and enjoined the people of God to remain unspotted and uncorrupted by such sins. Therefore, it is clear from the various Scriptural references cited above that sexual deviance amounts to an intentional rejection of God's authority and sovereignty to tell His creation what is helpful or destructive as their Creator and Lord (Romans 1:18-25). This is one reason why Apostle Paul warned that those who practice such sins will not inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Pornography, which many Christians secretly enjoy, has destructive tendencies to a biblical and healthy sexuality. This can be justified by the experience of many who claimed to have been delivered from his addictive and corrupting grip and in the light of scriptural passages that demand not to set evil things before one's eye and to abstain from all appearance of the devil...(Job; 1 Thessalonica 5:27); and that ... 'the dogs...and sexually immoral...are to be put out of God's kingdom(Revelation 22:15); and finally, the warning from Jesus that adulterous or evil thoughts in the heart amount to the actual act and bring defilement to the individual (Mathew 15:18-20).

Biblical Understanding of Gender

The issue of gender is an integral aspect of human sexuality, and there can be no complete or thorough biblical evaluation of human sexuality without an examination of the divine purpose and plan for creating humanity as male and female. The creation account narrated that... 'male and female created He them...(Genesis 1: 27); ... 'And God blessed Adam and Eve'...(Genesis 2:28).

Later, Jesus would re-iterate and validate this scripture by referencing them: ... 'In the beginning ...He who made them made them male and female (Mathew19:4-6). Mohler, A. (2005,60), in his biblical evaluation of the creation narratives that God created human beings as male and female, both in His own image(Genesis 1:27), emphatically stated that gender is not a mere biological accident or social construction. According to him, the contrast and complement between the man and the woman reveal that gender is part of the goodness of God's creation. Mohler argued that modern efforts to redefine or redesign gender are directly contrary to the Bible's affirmation of maleness and femaleness as proper distinctions. According to him, God's glory is seen in the man's maleness and the woman's femaleness. Mohler concluded that this pattern of distinction is affirmed and enforced by liturgical orders and restrictions on dress, hair length, etc. And that any effort to confuse or deny gender differences is expressly forbidden and opposed by Scripture, especially as seen in Old Testament legal codes. Talking from the New Testament perspectives on gender difference, Jackson (2004) observed that there is a paradox: "The Bible teaches that God not only created us "male and female", but that in Christ, "there is neither male nor female"(Genesis 1:27; Galatians 3:28-29). Jackson deduced that, from the scriptures, God answers our dilemma with a delightful mystery, and within this paradox, God not only affirms the differences between men and women, assigning complementary roles for each, but He also points to the equality existing between the sexes. Relating gender differentiation to life purpose, FOCUS (2009) saw our God-given purpose as tied to our unique biological sex, such that sexuality, which the author described as the specific God-ordained physical, mental, and behavioral traits that characterize individuals as distinctly male or female, is much more than simply what men and women "do"-but an integral part of our being throughout our entire lifespan. Focus (2009) extrapolated that "God has made us as *differentiated* beings, equal in worth, to complement one another. While *individually* every human has inestimable value and shows forth God's image".

Postmodern Constructs on Sexuality and Its Consequences on Church Teachings on Sexual Values

The ongoing construction and reconstruction of Christian ethical and moral values on sexuality is the emerging fallout of postmodernism. The revelation of the scriptures on their absolutes for the expression of human sexuality is being subsumed in the present culture of sexual deviance and libertinism. Some Christian communities have succumbed to the invasion of the homosexual agenda. This is evidenced in their celebration of gay marriage and lifestyle as an acceptable 'alternate' lifestyle for members of the Christian community. The ordination of homosexuals to the Priesthood, the continued public self-declaration of church leaders as gay, and the emergence of gay churches are sad comments.

We observe that the culture of nudity and exhibitionism festers in the individual and corporate life of Christians and the church. In Christian gatherings, we are bombarded with overly body exposure of the feminine gender. The majority of Christian girls and women have taken Hollywood, Bollywood, and Nollywood

celebrities as their standard for comportment and carriage because that is what passes as fancy, fashion, and 'being cool.' All these contribute to increasing the already unfavourable conditions that hamper Christian youths' efforts to make sound and godly decisions on moral and sexual purity. For instance, in most groups or societies involving young people, such as voluntary organizations like youth clubs, school press clubs, students' unions, Boys Scouts, etc., not being sexually active as a single person may attract mockery, especially if such commitment to purity or abstinence is claimed to be based on religious consecration, respect for parental values and/or personal commitment to chastity. Many single young people on our higher institutions' campuses live 'a couple- life'. They pair up, live together in a rented apartment, and sometimes contest to be celebrated in their various campus publications as the best couple of the year. Christian young people on the side of abstinence and moral uprightness find themselves under tremendous peer and societal pressure to compromise their biblical stance.

The sexual permissiveness of the postmodern society is reflected in the church, among the household of faith, in the violation of biblical sexual boundaries. There is increasing premarital sexual activities of Christian youths, continued reports of clerical sexual abuse of the parishioner, and a high rate of church ministers' divorcing spouses. The perversion of sexuality in the church is, even so, offensive to the secular society that it often challenges and confronts the church to put her house in order before it can be justified in its various comments on what it thinks the Bible says in contradiction to the societal same-sex activities. The church seems to have lost the battle in championing God's design and demands for wholesome, fulfilling, joyful, and sanctified sexuality. Some communities of faith have found in the same Biblical revelation, some justification for tolerating or accommodating sodomy and all shades of 'gender disorientation' While some homosexual or transgender church members justify their sexual disposition as 'that is how God created or wired me sexually' or, as: 'am naturally attracted to someone of the other sex.' The biblical sexual values are being revisited and interpreted from a postmodern view as antiquarian and out of tune with modern realities of contraceptive pills, test tubes, designer babies, advanced medical discoveries, etc. Every day seems to be taking our sexually confused society further and farther, adrift away from the original intention and design of God for the gift of sex. The society stinks with a horrible stench from the endless abyss of moral decadence and inordinate affection for sexual disorientation it has entrapped itself.

Sexual perversion is such serious and powerful bondage that it reduces man to a helpless creature devoid of the glory, honor, and dignity the scriptures accord him/her. Some of the devastations of sexual bondage include guilt, shame, haunting memory, emotional and psychological effects, and sometimes suicide. A significant number of raped victims are murdered by their assailants to cover up their cruel acts, or their victims may die or commit suicide from the trauma. Sadly, no human history or existence had witnessed or recorded the deconstruction of biblical sexuality and the church's traditional teachings on human sexuality in general and consequently plagued with its devastating resultant effects in our postmodern world.

The Emerging Issues for the Development of Appropriate and Culturally Relevant Theological Response

1. The church's sympathy for same-sex orientation and activities has further confused the up-and-coming generation of Christians who could not find clear biblical standards, values, and norms even within the church that can inspire and challenge them to uphold wholesome sexuality.
2. This distortion and perversion of Christian marriage in the celebration of same-sex marriage, even in the church, presents contemporary Christians with a new context that beclouds the correct understanding of God's purpose in gender distinction within marriage. This is also an emerging sexual issue in the discourse of Christian family values.
3. Some people in the church are having a personal struggle with their sexual identity and/or orientation toward a homosexual lifestyle. Unfortunately, this usually generates moral censure rather than compassion and assistance when they try to open up seeking help.
4. There is not much public awareness and sensitization in our society on the problem of gender conflicts. Most parents, Christian counselors, Pastors, and other stakeholders face a dearth of helpful information and empowerment on how they can help their wards or clients maximize their tendency toward a heterosexual lifestyle.
5. Christian young people on the side of abstinence and moral uprightness find themselves under tremendous peer and societal pressure to compromise their biblical stance.
6. Same-sex sexual relationship, which many now consider as an alternate lifestyle, constitutes an emerging sexual issue and a new context for Christian sexuality that must be addressed by the church in particular. This is particularly necessary for the church because the issue of homosexual lifestyle has rocked her doctrinal comforts in the last decade, perhaps more than any other ethical issues that have confronted it in her historical existence.
7. Is the homosexual lifestyle a result of creation or choice?
8. A gleeful Satan has taken sex from the arms of the church and has used it effectively to merchandise his philosophy that self-gratification ensures a happy life (Paulk, A.S 2005, 33).

Role of the Church and Its Christian Education Agencies

The role of the church in providing empowerment for its members to avoid the evil and destructive outcomes of premarital sex, sexual promiscuity, rape, pornography, nudity and other immoral sexual behavior is strengthened by the graphic examples provided in the biblical account of Samson's tragedy (Judges

14-16); Prophet Eli and his two sons-Hophni and Phineas(I Samuel 2-4); King David life and family-Amnon, Tamar, and Absalom(II Samuel11:4-5,18;); Solomon (I Kings 11:1-8); Sodom and Gomorrah destruction (II Peter 1:6), etc., Church educators can draw resources, insights, and divine wisdom from this real life and family-based scriptures to motivate and guide the faith communities, the youths in particular, in living out God's design for biblical sexuality.

Another important emerging sexual issue is that of same-sex-related problems. Homosexual orientation has constituted a very serious challenge to Christian ethics and biblical sexual standards. Many churches or ecclesiastical leaders are now sympathetic to this gender disorientation (Asaju, 2005, 59-77). The church where the true standard of God in sex distinction of the female and male, especially in sex and marital relationship, is upheld, can help her community by preaching and teaching on the true and correct biblical view and expectation of gender distinction. The church should make it clear from the scripture God's displeasure against homosexual practice (Genesis 19:24; Leviticus 18:22 Romans 1:25-27) while the church must emphasize the love of God for the gay or homosexuals and His desire that they amend their ways (John 3:16; Roman 5:8; Roman 3:23). Dollar, C (2004,10) encouraged churches to develop an open and receiving attitude to homosexuals, not to compromise God's standard for their sake but to show the love of God to them. This is because, according to him, many homosexuals are confused and empty within in need of inner healing and restoration back to the true God. For Christians who are having sexual struggles in these areas, the church must be redemptive and restorative. Further, through sound teachings of biblical sexual values, as earlier noted, compassionate concern, and personal commitment, Church members in this struggle can be helped. As an important role of the church in dealing with same-sex issues within the church or in the secular society, Dollar, C (2004, 10-11) called the church attention to this often neglected fact that before dealing with what is going on in the natural, we must first bind the spirit (Mathew 12: 28-29; Ephesians 6:10-14) behind the homosexual activity that is going on in our nation and break the stronghold of homosexuality that seems to be infiltrating our land. The next step is to take action in the natural realm, which may include pressuring against legislation that seeks to support same-sex lifestyles; ministering salvation to those who are struggling with homosexuality by imparting God's love to them; not ostracizing young people in the church who have a problem in this area but to be a source of loving, firm support as these people in the church fight to obtain freedom. Further, from researchers' reports on possible causes of gender disorientation or homosexual tendencies, Christian parents must understand the imperative need to be available for their children, especially in their early years. The fathers, in particular, have been advised to ensure they bond well with their sons, while the mothers are warned not to be overbearing, especially with the boy. This role of parents in the early bonding with their children is informed by research findings that a common denominator to most male homosexuals is an absent father (www.cathmedphila.org).

Conclusion

The above establishes that there is, outside the church wall, an emerging global sexual issue that seeks to deconstruct and reconstruct biblical sexual morality. This constitutes growing challenges for the church, which seeks to destroy her moral obligation to biblical sexuality. However, the church seems to be ignorant of the spiritual battles raging in this arena of sexuality. The mind is the battleground in this sexual (spiritual) warfare and not even the sexual organ where the forces of hell capture and enslave its victims by its sexual snares. This understanding opens our eyes to the sinister goal of the kingdom of darkness to distort the Groom-Bride imagery of Christ and his Church, to desecrate the sanctity of believers' bodies as Christ's holy temple, and to infiltrate the marriage/family institution and rob Christ of his rightful headship and expected seeds that are to be trained and nurtured in the way of the Lord to perpetrate godly purposes on earth. It is most relevant to conclude with this challenge from Paulk, A. (2005, 53): The Church needs to wake up and get into the battle against Satan's kingdom of sex. Now is the time to challenge worldly concepts of sexuality with alternatives that offer people a choice, a solution to the emptiness of constant self-gratification which never really satisfies? Only God's people can witness to His goodness in even the most intimate aspects of His intentions in creations.

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