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Perception of the Church in Lagos Mainland on Contemporary Family and Responsible Parenting in Lagos State, Nigeria

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I. INTRODUCTION

The entire concept of marriage and the family is well mirrored in the Christian scriptures: "Therefore shall the man leave his father and his mother; and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

The above scripture is aptly supported by the declaration by God, that "it is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him a helpmeet for him" (Genesis 2:18). This presupposes that the actual idea of marriage was divine. The first man, Adam, was oblivious of the fact that he was incomplete. It was entirely God's decision to provide a help meet (Eve) for him. This actually is the foundation of the family institution. God saw the incompleteness of both without each other. This is the fundamental aspect of marriage. It means that marriage is a necessity for man and woman to be complete and share in the creative process. Marriage is different from the family, even without children, the marriage is still complete. Kore (1995) argues that "marriage is a cohesive union binding a husband and a

wife together in a monogamous, not polygamous relationship? According to him, "God is the Author and Creator of the family unit. He created families for His own glory and praise" (Eph. 3:14-15) (Kore, 1995). This is aptly supported by Cutrer and Glahn (2001). They opined that "marriage isn't society's idea, its God's. It began in the Garden of Eden." The position of Shields (1996) throws further light on the marriage institution. He opines that "marriage is not a specifically Christian institution. It is God's gift to mankind, and, for the Christian, has its basis in what is called "Creation Ordinance" (Gen. 2:27). The sacred nature of marriage is highlighted by the way in which the scriptures uses it as an illustration of the relationship between God and his people." The above position puts the divine nature of marriage succinctly. Hence it must be clear to all: Christians, Muslims, African Religionists and others that God expects the same level of adherence to the demand and dictates of marriage from all. He will definitely use the same standards of assessment for all. However, it must be added that it is marriage that culminates in a family hence the aspect of the divine dimension has been briefly considered above.

II. COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

The period of courtship is very crucial for any marriage experience. "It is actually a period when - people have a romantic relationship with the intention of getting married" (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2004). Supporting the importance of courtship before marriage, Haselbarth (1976) submits that courtship and engagement as periods of preparation for marriage are of great relevance." He further argues that "questions of adolescence and courtship gain today importance as marriages are increasingly based on personal decision making, whereas arranged marriages become consequently less favoured" (Haselbarth, 1976). No doubt, the period of courtship carries with it some grave challenges. Hence, those involved are expected to appreciate this dimension so that they can enjoy "rich and right" courtship experiences. To achieve this, Kore (1995) submits that, "once couple has moved from the stage of initial attraction to courtship, they will face many temptations. To overcome these temptations they must

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set their minds on positive thoughts, actions and words towards each other." One of the ways of ensuring rich courtship is for both parties to embrace the process of premarital counselling. Haselbarth (1976) had argued that "In former times the age-group, the initiation-school and in general the moral sanctions of the tribe gave definite direction on courtship behaviour, many youths today feel that they are left alone with their problems". This calls for genuine and authentic pre-marital counselling for all during the period of courtship. Further to this, Adebayo (2004) opines that, "prevention is better than cure," premarital counseling has in no small measure helped some Christian homes because of the spiritual immunity the Almighty God has embedded in them even before they went to the marriage altar".

No doubt the courtship period may not allow those involved to see their individual weaknesses clearly. This may be due to the fact that they are "consumed" by love.

Hence there is the need for an experienced "third party" to be involved. This of course is achieved through pre-marital counseling. Adebayo (2004) points out the predicament that may befall those who during their courtship did not go through the experience of premarital counseling. He submits: "some men and women are biting fingers of regret the way their marriage partners behave. Regrettable questions are being raised by either of the couples such as "Is this the person I knew before marriage?" "Why have you allowed me, Lord, to fall into the hand of this terrible man or woman? For how long will I continue in this marriage headache"? Based on this argument, the courtship period should be ideal for pre-marital counseling.

To have an enriching courtship, Kore (1995) outlines areas that should be considered by both parties. According to him these include: "His or her personal relationship with God, his or her cultural background, his or her educational background, his or her economic background, his or her denominational ties, his or her marriage concept, his or her world views (includes goals and values). His or her attitude towards work, career and earning and spending money. His or her self-image and self esteem. His or her attitude towards children (number of children and parenting). His or her attitude towards sex and his or her attitude towards relatives, in-laws and friends? The above areas definitely form the "Kernel" of challenge in marriage. Hence, during courtship they should be well articulated by both partners - to - be, and those who may be involved in handling the pre-marital counseling sessions. It must be re-emphasized that the marriage institution is a divine one and should not be entered into carelessly. To avoid this, intending couples should go through period of courtship. This gives them a "chance to re-evaluate their relationship before finally committing themselves" (Kore, 1995).

III. MARRIAGE AND CONTEMPORARY FAMILY

In addition to the position of Kore (1995) that "Marriage is a cohesive union binding a husband and a wife together in a monogamous, not polygamous relationship," there has been a further argument that sees the family (the result of marriage), beyond the monolithic perspective. Taylor (2009) submits that, "today however, the idea of the 'family' as a monolithic notion has been replaced with the assumption that the structure of families is fluid and changeable. Contemporary families are inclusive of single parent families, step families and homosexual families to name a few." He further argues that, "the family is no longer a concept that can be contemplated within an essentialist notion, rather the concept of the contemporary family has evolved into a fluid ideology that is constantly shifting and changing throughout the society" (Taylor, 2010). However, the various definitions of a family could be seen as still expressing the impersonal dimension of the family relationship. In other words, the family is still a large impersonal organization (that is, monolithic). The family is described as "Basic social Unit consisting of persons united by ties of marriage (affinity), "blood" (consanguinity), or adoption and usually representing a single household. The essence of the family group is the parent-child relationship." (Britannica Concise Encyclopedia, 2010). On the other hand, the children's Health and Encyclopedia (2010), defined the family as "a group of two people or more related by marriage, blood relation, or adoption and who live together. The immediate family traditionally consists of parents and their offspring". In examining the functions of both the father and mother in the family, the Encyclopedia of Judaism (2010), posited that, "the head of the biblical family was the patriarch who exercised authority over his wife and children? This presupposed that the biblical family recognized the father, mother and children, as the case may be. This shows that the family takes its root from God's original design for the man not to be alone (Genesis 2:18). No wonder, Shields (1996) submits that "Marriage is not specifically Christian institution. It is God's gift to mankind."

With the various definitions of the family, it is clear to say that, there are some basic challenges. These challenges confront the contemporary family. For example, submission and love, managing finances, childlessness, divorce/re-marriage, all forms of conflict, and so on. These contemporary challenges and others are prominent in most families. Suffice one to say that these challenges are common with most contemporary marriages as they cut across different cultures of the world. For example, Taylor (2010) referring to the aspect of marriage and contemporary family in Australia, submits that "more people are also getting divorced," whilst others are journeying through cycles of marriage, divorce and re-marriage." This is a clear indication that

the issue of divorce and re-marriage presents a challenge to the contemporary family. "Divorce is the dissolution of the bond of marriage. It brings a marriage to an end and means that persons who were previously husband and wife are no longer so" (Shields, 1996). He however submits that, "Anyone with a knowledge of scripture will be aware that divorce is contrary to the will of God, who says, "I hate divorce" (Malachi, 2:16). On his part, Kore (1995) submits that "the verb "to marry" in the Greek tense is the perfect active participle, meaning "to marry and still remain married." From the position of Christ in Matthew 19:3-10, it is clear that He was not in support of divorce. He re-emphasized the fact that the argument they hinge their position on (that is the law of Moses) actually came about as a result of their hardness of heart. That was not the original plan of God. The implication is that, "if the husband or wife insists on separation, there is no re-marriage for him or her to a third party. Either they remain unmarried or they must reconcile to each other completely (1 Corin. 7:11), (Kore, 1995). On his part Haselbarth (1976) submits that where love is, no reasons will be seen as sufficient for a divorce. He opines that, "Frequently, childlessness, sickness or unfaithfulness are given as reasons for divorce - far too easily and quickly. A husband who can forgive and accept an unfaithful, sick or childless wife can give a beautiful testimony of what love can do" (Haselbarth, 1976). It must be mentioned that in Africa, the issue of childlessness is viewed with tremendous seriousness. Supporting this argument, Haselbarth (1976) posits that "in Africa more so than elsewhere this can bring about a serious crisis in a marriage. The question of divorce may then enter the minds."

The contemporary family tends to accept to some extent, the need to have children from the marriage relationship. Suffice to say that there are couples who deliberately desire not to have children from their marriage relationships. However, Ray (1988) surmises that "from childhood, little girls play with baby dolls and lavish their affection on them. It's natural and beautiful. Motherhood is one of those instincts that a woman feels compelled to fulfill. Denying a woman any hope of having a baby of her own brings tremendous hardship on her." No doubt we see in scriptures the sufferings and pains faced by some women who remained childless for sometime. For example, Elizabeth, Hannah, Rachel and Sarah. Ray (1988) further submits that "childbearing has a direct effect on a woman's worth and value as a person." This does not in any way support the fact that childlessness should lead to dissolution of any marriage.

The contemporary family also grapples with the issue of submission, love, conflict and finance. With regards to conflict in contemporary family, Omojola (1998) submits that once we identify the conflict-prone issues we have succeeded in nipping the conflict in the bud. He further list some common issues that could

lead to conflict in the family. They include, finance, sex, discussion on in-laws, social outings, neighbours, pressure of work, the use of car, Household properties, Real Estate, dressing, food, house cleaning, personal habits, television programmes, friends, busy schedules, church programmes, club activities, excessive travelling, House help etc. (Omojola, 1997).

When some of these issues play-out, either of the spouse may accuse the other of not submitting or showing love. The position of the scriptures is clear concerning the issue of love and submission, Ephesians 5:22 enjoin the woman to be submissive to her husband. While the husband in turn must love the wife (Eph.5:25). The effect of this will be for both of them to their "submit themselves one to another in the fear of God" (Ephesians 5:21). This will culminate in a blissful marriage. Omomia (2003) submits that "when couples learn the secret of mutual submission, their marriage will begin to enjoy unparalleled." Supporting this position, Kore (1995) submits that, the wife's "submission in no way automatically implies her inferiority, as some wrongly assure culturally. But she submits simply in obedience to the design of a sovereign God who has seen this position as the best for the wife's life". He further points out that, "a wife's submission "in everything", pertains to her husband's legitimate authority "in the Lord" (Colossians 3:18). She must not do anything which is contrary to God's commands. Submission is to be carried out within the limits of God's will."

The contemporary family is also faced with the issue of finance and career. Jakes (2002) surmises that, "with more and more opportunities opening up for women, and with the need for dual incomes to sustain a household, it is not uncommon now for women to be in the workforce. However, a new scenario is emerging in which women achieve a higher level of success than their husbands. They may be in fields where they advance rapidly, they may have a higher level of education, and they may make more money and receive more acclaim". He further counsels that any marriage can only remain stable and strong if both partners do not allow career advancement to have a negative impact on their relationship. He surmises, "I am aware that this increased success comes with an increased potential for marital discord. It is important that a man and woman complement each other and not compete with each other. If one or both partners in a marriage uses career advancement and level of income as a measuring stick of contribution and importance in the relationship, then sadly that marriage is bound to be troubled (Jakes, 2002).`

IV. RESPONSIBLE PARENTING

Parenthood is "the state of being a parent". And parenting which is the noun is "the raising of children

and all the responsibilities and activities that are involved in it." (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2003). Therefore, responsible parenthood, presupposes that you take good care of those under you, in this context, your children. No wonder, Owen (1985) compares child raising with gardening. "The amount of resource; you invest into the garden, in terms of money, time, labour, thinking etc. will determine your harvest." Owen states that "parenting involves the same God-given principle of sowing and reaping" (Owen, 1985). Supporting this position, Omojola (1999) opines that the lift of any child will only be balanced if the followings are met: "the need for a parent, the need for a friend, the need for a priest and the need for a teacher". In spite of these demands, parenting should be seen as a joyous task.

The admonition of the Christian Women Mirror (July, 2005) in Ajayi (2009) on "Raising Kids God's Way," puts the aspect of responsible parenthood succinctly. It submits that "children are actually gifts from God and we owe Him the responsibility of raising them for His glory." The following reasons for responsible parenthood were advanced: "A Holy Command (Deut. 6:4-7), A High calling (I Timothy 3:4-5), healthy conduct for the children (Jer. 35:1-19) and helpful character (Proverbs 23:24). The entire child training aspect can follow these guidelines: "Training must begin with the parent, training should be carried out diligently, train the child to love the Lord and training should flow naturally through all the activities of the family life" (Christian Women Mirror, July 2005 Edition). These guidelines hinge on the Biblical Admonition: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6, KJV 2003). It is important to add that the aspect of right training goes beyond the scriptures alone, as this has found expression in various cultures. "Among the Yoruba, a child is regarded as *Omoluabi* (well brought up) not because of his or her acquisition of Western education, but because of his or her moral upbringing?" (Oke, 2008). The Christian Women Mirror, (July, 2005) further lists the benefits of raising children God's way as: the children will become precious possessions, partners in progress, peaceful heritage, potential assets and possessors of heaven." Examining the task of parenting, Olayinka (2000) lists the followings: duty of discipline of the children, acquisition of the knowledge of home keeping, security, finance (spending on their needs), adequate and quality time spent with them, share your belief systems (Religion). These duties are not those of one of the spouse alone as both are expected to cooperate in inculcating such in the children.

On his part, Yu-Manila (2010) examines the aspect of responsible parenthood holistically. He surmises, "Responsible parenthood is the spirituality of the family (the spouses embraces a new heart), Responsible parenthood is guided by conscience, Responsible parenthood is the mission of the family. Responsible parenthood is the vocation of marriage.

Responsible parenthood is a service of love." He further submits that "through responsible parenthood, the family is indeed the future of humanity (Yu-Manila, 2010). In supporting this position, Aderounmu (2009) posits that "a generation that does not fear God is at high risk of destruction? One would say unequivocally that only the right generation, can consequently avert any calamity from God, as the society is built with godly offspring. The entire responsibility of achieving this lies with the husband and wife. It is not for either of them. But sincerely for both of them. Kore (1995) describes the experiences of the father and mother in terms of responsible parenthood as a kind of "Educational institution." And God's method of education provides closeness, relatedness and intimacy between fathers and children. It promotes trust, confidence and diligent obedience to God and also unity in the family, (Kore, 1995). To make the goals of this "institution" achievable, both husband and wife must be ready to make sacrifices. This could involve their leisure, resources, time, career, finances, and pleasure. It is only through this that they can achieve the demands of responsible parenting.

The aspect of responsible parenting will be incomplete if the issue of family size is not considered. Ikegulu (2009) submits that "the core messages for population/family life Education are better family welfare, improved quality of life, responsible parenthood, small family size; ..." In support of this, Reves (1985) in Ikegulu (2009), opines that "reduced family size could have led to reduced risk of childhood infections and, possibly, better nurturing of young children by parents. The quality of life of the children could be said to depend on the number the family can adequately cater for. This is very important for responsible parenthood. Since the extent to which resources are available to you will determine to a large extent how far you can care for the children you are blessed with. The contemporary economic situation in the world in general, makes this aspect worthy of consideration by the family.

V. TYPES OF MARRIAGE

In contemporary marriage situation we observe different types of marriage. This includes marriage from the same tribe (endogamous) or from a different tribe (exogamous). Before now, it was customary for marriages to be arranged by parents. This could be due to the fact that they consider such individuals as too young to make a good choice. On the other hand they may want to establish a consistent tribal relationship, without such individuals going outside their tribe. In the Bible, we discover that the various parents who encouraged endogamous marriage (especially the Jews) did this on the grounds of religion, inheritance, the belief about other people and sometimes due to unfriendly relationship with others. There are (however

exceptions to this), where some Jews married outside their tribe (Exogamous marriage). For example, Moses married a Cushite, Joseph married an Egyptian, Samson married a Philistine and Esau married a Hittite and a Canaanite. King Ahab also married a Phoenician. It is quite customary in our time to observe that some parents still object to their children marrying from outside their tribe or even villages/towns. Olayinka (2000) posits that there could be conflict between parents and their children concerning their choice of marriage partner. He argues: "occasionally there are conflicts between parents and their children in the choice of a marriage partner. Some parents sometimes object to their son or daughter marrying a particular boy or girl as a result of their tribe" (Olayinka, 2000). He further cautions that, "this does not mean that parents are always right or wrong in sticking to their points of view but they always have good intentions to ensure that their children avoid unnecessary mistakes in their choice of who to be their marriage partners (Olayinka, 2000).

Apart from the issue of marriage within or outside the same tribe, the aspect of polygamy is still prevalent today. Polygamy is "the rule, custom, or condition of marriage to more than one person at the same time" (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2003). Supporting the claim of the prevalence of polygamy, Haselbarth (1976) surmises, "polygamy is still a status-symbol. Even today men in business or administration who reach the upper levels become polygamists for other reason than this". The aspect of polygamy is distinguishable either for the woman (polyandry - more than one husband) as in the case of the Samaritan woman (John 4:18). It could be polygene (more than one wife) as in the case of Solomon (I Kings 11:3). It is also prevalent in some cultures that when a husband dies, the surviving wife may be willed to a brother or relative of the decease. This is referred to as levirate marriage. An example in the Bible is between Judah and Tamah, (his daughter in-law).

The aspect of same sex marriage relationship is equally receiving grave attention in our contemporary times, the controversies trailing it in some cultures notwithstanding. This is supported by Shields (1996). He opines that "anyone aware of life today knows that there are a considerable number of people who claim that their sexual orientation is towards a person of the same sex as themselves (Shields, 1996). In examining marriage and contemporary family, Taylor (2010), contests that the "contemporary families are inclusive of single parent families, step-families and homosexual families to name a few". (Taylor, 2010). The position and aggressiveness with which the same sex marriage is prevalent in some parts of the world is well mirrored by Shields (1996). He declares that "in the 1970s and early 1980s, homosexuals won a great deal of freedom in many parts of the world. They want still more concessions from the society and have recently

persuaded the United Kingdom parliament to reduce "the age of consent" for males from 21yrs to 18yrs (they wanted 16yrs). They want their partnerships to be recognized as legal marriages and for these marriages to be as acceptable in society as heterosexual ones. Homosexuals want total equality of opportunity in employment and are even claiming that right in ministry of many churches" (Shields, 1996). One will dare to say that they are gradually winning their last request in the ministry of some churches. We saw in the church in U.K where the first gay bishop was "consecrated." Although this was followed by deep controversies, the ordination "rite" still took place, and the Bishop is performing his responsibilities. Same sex marriage takes place in both male (Homosexuality) and females (Lesbianism). This is contrary to the position of the scriptures. In Genesis 19:1-11, the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, they faced the judgment of God.

In Leviticus 18:22, it states: "Do not lie with a man, as one who lies with a woman, that is detestable." The penalty for those who violate God's instruction is death (Lev. 20:13). The act of homosexuality is also condemned in Roman: 1:27. "/and likewise also the men, having the natural use of the woman, burn in their lust toward another..." The same condemnation applies to women (involved in Lesbianism).

a) *Rationale for the Study*

The purpose of this study is to analyze the contemporary family and responsible parenthood. Omojola (1999) submits that "task of parenting is enormous and highly demanding. And we are instruments in God's hand being used to fulfill His purpose." This certainly makes parenting joyous, though tasking. Supporting this position, Olayinka (2000), submits that, "After marriage, husband and wife look forward to becoming parents.... Children are the most precious gifts from God and parenthood is a position of responsibility which starts from the time the first child is born till the parents die." On his part, Osiki (1999) concludes that "marriage is a life-long decision, individuals should be more careful to know and understand each other intimately while marital relationship should not be rushed." The writer believes that marital relationship can be blissful and parenting can be beneficially enjoyable. This forms the fundamental impetus for the study.

b) *Research Questions*

1. What are the opinions of people about courtship?
2. What are the opinions of people about contemporary family?
3. What are the opinions of people about responsible parenthood?
4. What are the different types of marriages?

c) *Methodology*

The study employed a descriptive survey design. The population consists of people from eighteen (18) years and above selected from churches in Lagos Mainland area of Lagos State. The sample for the study was 200 randomly selected participants. One hundred (100) were males, while the other one hundred (100) were females.

d) *Instrumentation*

A self-developed survey questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection in this study. The survey instrument consists of five (5) sections. Section A deals with the bio-data of respondents, section B deals

with the opinions of people about courtship, Section C deals with opinion of people about contemporary marriage, Section D deals with the opinions of people on responsible parenting while section E deals with the views on different types of marriage.

i. *Data Collection*

The researcher personally administered and collected the questionnaire from the respondents.

ii. *Data Analysis*

Data collected was analyzed using frequency counts and percentages.

Section A. Bio-data

1.

Male	%	Female	%
100	50	100	50

2. Age:

18-25yrs	%	26-35yrs	%	36yrs & above	%
20	10	50	25	130	65

3.

Employed	%	Not employed	%
180	90	20	10

4. Education:

Primary	%	Secondary	%	Post Secondary	%
0	0	20	10	180	90

5. Marital Status:

Single	%	Married	%	Widow	%	Divorced	%
20	10	160	80	20	10	0	0

6. Type of Marriage:

Church	%	Mosque	%	Traditional	%	Registry	%
180	90	0	0	10	5	10	5

7. How long have you been married?

Less than 1 yr	%	2-5yrs	%	Above 5yrs	%
0	0	20	10	160	80

Research Question 1

What are the opinions of people about courtship?

Table 1 a: People's opinion on courtship

Responses

Questions	Yes	%	No	%
1. Do you consider courtship necessary before marriage	200	100	-	0

Table b

Questions	Length of courtship					
	Less than a year	%	2-5yrs	%	Above 5yrs	%
2. How long do you think courtship should last	-	0	170	85	30	15
3. How long was your courtship	20	10	90	45	90	45

As revealed in table 1a all the respondents (100%) consider courtship to be necessary before marriage. From table 1b it can be observed that no respondent believe that courtship should be less than

1year. 85% of the respondents are of the opinion that courtship should last between 2 and 5 years while 15% of the respondents believe that courtship should be as long as 5years and above.

Research Question 2

What are the opinions of people about the contemporary family?

Table 2 : Opinions on contemporary family

Statements	Strongly Agreed	%	Agree	%	Disagree	%	Strongly Disagree	%
1.The husband is the head of the family	190	95	10	5	-	-	-	-
2.Marriage is a form of bondage and oppression for women	-	-	-	-	70	35	130	65
3.Marriage institution should be abolished	-	-	-	-	7	35	12	60
4.A financially independent woman will be arrogant	10	5	30	15	110	55	50	25
5.The wife must depend on the husband for financial needs	-	-	30	15	12	60	5	25
6.Submission means the wife must accept everything her husband says	10	5	20	10	110	55	50	25
7.Submission means the husband is superiors to the wife	-	-	20	10	100	50	80	40
8. Submission implies that the wife submits her salary to the husband while he decides what to do with it.	-	-	10	5	110	55	80	40
9.The husband has the final say on all issues	20	10	80	40	80	40	20	10
10.The husband needs to submit to the wish f the wife occasionally	70	35	110	55	10	5	10	5
11.The husband needs to submit to the demands of the wife at all times	10	5	-	1	110	55	80	40
12.Submission is not really different from subordination	-	-	10	5	120	60	70	35
13.Obedience and love is required from the wife alone	-	-	10	5	80	40	110	35
14.Husbands must not be involved in household chores	-	-	-	-	110	55	90	45
15.A marriage without children should be dissolved	10	5	-	-	60	30	130	65
16.A man can take a second wife if the first is barren	10	5	10	5	40	20	140	70
17.Financial co-operation between the couple is necessary	190	95	10	5	-	-	-	-

From table 2 above 95% of the respondents strongly agreed that the husband is the head of family while 5% of the respondents also agreed to this statement, which means that 100% of the respondents support this statement. 35% of the respondents disagree that marriage is a form of bondage and oppression for women, while 65% strongly disagree with the statement. This shows that 100% of the respondents do not support this statement. 100% of the respondents are not support of the abolition of the marriage institution. While 20% of the respondents believe that a financially independent woman will be arrogant, 80% are of the contrary opinion. 15% of the respondents are of the opinion that the wife must depend on the husband for financial needs, but 85% of the respondents hold the opposite view, 85% of the respondents believe that submission means the wife must accept everything her husband says, while 15% have contrary opinion. 10% of the respondents believe that submission means the husband is superior to the wife, while 90% hold the

opposite view, 95% of the respondents do not believe that submission implies that the wife submits her salary to the husband while he decides what to do with it, while 5% hold contrary opinion. 50% hold a contrary opinion. 90% of the respondents believe that the husband needs to submit to the demands of the wife at all times. 95% of the respondents do not believe that submission is the same as sub-ordination. 5% of the respondents are of the opinion that obedience and love are required from wife alone, while 95% of the respondents disagreed with this statement. All the respondents (100%) believe that husbands must be involved in household chore. 95% of the respondents marriage should not be dissolved as a result of childlessness. Also 90% of the respondents believe that a man should not take a second wife if the first wife is barren. All the respondents (100%) believe that financial co-operation between wife and husband is necessary.

Research Question

What are the opinions of people about responsible parenthood?

Table 3 a : People's Opinion on Responsible Parenthood

Statements	Strongly Agreed	%	Agree	%	Disagree	%	Strongly Disagree	%
1.The husband's career is more important than the family	-	-	-	-	90	45	110	55
2.The family is more important than the wife's career	20	10	70	35	60	30	50	25
3.Parents must endeavor to meet the needs of their children	70	35	70	35	60	30	-	-
4.Parents can put their children in the boarding house to give them more time for their career	-	-	60	30	120	60	20	10
5.Child training is the responsibility of the mother	-	-	20	10	110	55	70	35

Table 3 b

Statements	No of children					
	1-3	%	4-6	%	Above 7	%
1.How many children do you consider adequate for a contemporary family	180	90	20	10	-	-

From table 3a above, all the respondents (100%) do not believe that the husband's career is more important than the family. 45% of the respondents believe that the family is more important than the wife's career while 55% hold a contrary opinion, 70% of the respondents believe that parents must endeavour to meet all the needs of their children; also 70% of the respondents do not support that parents can put their

children in the boarding house to give them more time for their career. 90% of the respondents believe that child training is not the responsibility of the mother alone.

From table 3b 90% of the respondents believe that parents should not have more than 3 children, while 10% believe that parents can have as many as 6 children.

Research Question 4

What are the different types of marriage?

Table 4 : Different types of Marriage

Statements	Respondents			
	Yes	%	No	%
1.Do you consider marriage within the same tribe as ideal	80	40	120	60
2.Did you marry outside your tribe	60	30	140	70
3. Did your parent allow you to marry outside your tribe	190	95	10	15
4.Will you allow your child to marry outside your tribe	180	90	20	70
5.Would you encourage levirate marriage? (Inherited wife)	-	-	200	100
6.Same sex marriage should be recognized and permitted	-	-	200	100

Table 4 shows that 60% of the respondents do not consider marriage within the same tribe as ideal, 70% of the respondents married people from the same tribe as them. 95% believe that their parent would allow them to marry outside their tribe and 90% of the respondents would allow their children to marry outside their tribe. All the respondents (100%) would not encourage levirate or same- sex marriage.

union binding a husband and wife together in a monogamous relationship. God is the Author and creator of the family unit "(Kore 1995). This position is shared by Cutrer and Glahn (2002) where they surmise that "Marriage isn't society's idea, its God's. It began in the Garden of Eden". They Holy Bible declares that it is not "god for the man to be alone, I will make him a helpmeet". (Genesis 2:18). It should also be noted that ensure a solid foundation for the survival of any marriage, there is the need for courtship. This research supports the view of Haselbarth (1976) that "courtship and engagement as periods of preparation for marriage are of great relevance". The respondents, (100%) agree that courtship is necessary before marriage. The family

VI. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of this study have some implications in the contemporary family and responsible parenthood. It is through the marriage institution that a family can be built. Marriage is therefore "a cohesive

of the study shows a higher percentage agreeing that the husband is the "head of family" (95%). This does not mean superiority or inferiority. This agrees with the position of Kore (1995) that "wife's submission in no way automatically implies her inferiority as some wrongly assume culturally." The findings of the study indicate that 40% disagree and strongly disagree respectively that submission means that the husband is superior to the wife.

The research supports the view of Jakes (2000), that there should be financial corporation between husband and wife. The research reveals that 90% agree with the position. According to Jake (2002), "It is important a man and woman complement each other and not compete with each other. If one or both partners in a marriage use career advancement and level of income as marriage stick of contribution and importance in the relationship, then sadly that marriage is bound to be troubled". The findings of the research also agree that both divorce on the basis of barrenness and childlessness are not acceptable. This is supported by Shield (1996). He pines, "anyone with the knowledge of scriptures will be aware that divorce is contrary t will of God, who says in the scriptures," I hate divorce" (Malachi 2:16). Kore (1995) submits that the verb "to marry" in the Greek tense is the perfect active participle, meaning "to marry and still remain married." With regards to the aspect of responsible parenthood, the opinion expresses by majority of the respondents is that the husband's career is not more important than the family. They also disagree that parents should put their children in the boarding house so as to find more time for their careers. The position of the research hers agrees with Omojola (1999), the "life of any child will only be balanced if the followings are met: the need for a parent, the need for a friend, the need for a priest and the need for a teacher". Owen (1985) compares child raising to gardening. "The amount of resources you invest into the garden, in terms of money, time, labour, thinking, etc, will determine your harvest." He says parenting involves the same principle of sowing and reaping (Owen, 1985). If both spouse bring up their children well as they corporate, the entire society will be at peace. This position is supported by Yu-manila (2010) "through responsible parenthood, the family is indeed the future of humanity." No doubt, the number of children per family will enhance adequate training and right parenting. The research findings reveals that 90% of the respondents will choose to have 1-3 children in a contemporary family. This finding agrees with the position of Ikegulu (2009): "the core message of population/family life Education is better family welfare, improved quality of life, responsible parenthood, small family size".

The findings indicate that exogamous marriages are becoming acceptable in the contemporary family. Most of the respondents agree that marriage within the

same tribe is not necessarily the ideal. And they would allow their children to marry outside their tribe. Apart from these findings, the researcher, like the various positions in the scriptures: (Leviticus 18:22, Lev. 20:13 and Romans 20:13), believes that same-sex marriage should not be recognized and permitted. 100% of the respondents share similar view. The findings also reveal that levirate marriage is not acceptable to the respondents. 100% of the respondents would not encourage levirate marriage is not acceptable to the respondents. 100% of the respondents would not encourage levirate marriage.

VII. CONCLUSION

The family institution is a divine one since it was established by God (Genesis 2:18). It is important for it to be held in high esteem. This can be achieved through co-operation between the husband and wife. The study attempted to examine the contemporary family and responsible parenthood. There is the need for the wife to be submissive as the husband reciprocates with love. The study emphasizes the need for both the husband and wife to place the family above their careers. The positions of Jakes (2002) are quite appropriate. He submits: "it is important that a man and woman complement each other and not compete with each other. If one or both partners in a marriage use level of income as measuring stick of contribution and importance in the relationship, then sadly that marriage is bound to be troubled".

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The sanctity of the marriage institution should be upheld, seeing that it is divine (instituted by God)
2. There is the need for adequate courtship before marriage is finally consummated. This calls for proper organization of premarital counseling for all intending couple.
3. For the complete well-being of` the family, the woman should be submissive to her husband and the husband should reciprocate with unflinching love. By this both of them will be submissive to Christ.
4. The total training of the children is the responsibility of both the husband and wife. They should not see their careers as more important than the family.
5. The success of any marriage goes beyond the tribal background of those involved in it. Whether endogamous or exogamous marriages, submission and love, is what can bring about bliss.
6. For adequate training and provision of necessary requirements for the children, the family size should be small.

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