

IMMORALITIES AMONG CHRISTIANS: CHRISTIAN CUM TRADITIONAL VALUES AND MORAL EDUCATION AS THE PANACEA

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Abstract

Immoralities have taken the order of the day globally. There are so many levels and facets of immoral actions into the world today. These unpleasant phenomena have transcended beyond several realms, to the spiritual axis. This paper observes that the secular problem of immorality has permeated not just into spiritual anchor of man generally, but to the church in particular. The church witnesses a lot of immoralities challenging her mission and vision. Such immoral acts include: fornication, adultery, simony, illegal and immoral acquisition of wealth, other criminality, violence and so on. This research aims at devising ways of tackling the menace of immorality among Christians. Pragmatic moral education and enormous adherence to good traditional values are advocated as the major ways forward. When this is done the church will hopefully overcome at a reasonable degree, many negative trends of modernity, science and technology, Western civilization etc. The study employs phenomenological method of research. It collected information from both primary and secondary sources. Information gathered was analyzed with descriptive method of analysis. It also recommends for inclusion of good cultural practices in sensitive programmes of the church, advise Christian families to have a special daily time-table for moral instructions to the children, among others.

Keywords: Immorality, Christians, Values, Moral Education, Tradition

Introduction

Religion has its integrative and divisive forces. When these divisive functions of religion come in, a lot of immoral intensions and actions come into play. This affects the basic essence of religion. Ezeaku in Okafor and Ani-Amaechi (2019:311) states that; "Religion sometimes causes large social and political crisis in our society. Yet it is only religion that can lead mankind to appreciate the purpose of life and value of man and society". The point here

is that religion is so important and effective in influencing the welfare of man and society. Therefore, there is need to frown at any form of principle in life that deters any form of positive influence of religion. The church itself is a fundamental integral in Christendom, while Christianity is one of the world-renowned religions. It is the church that remains the arbiter of morality among Christians. Uwalaka in Obiefuna and Kanu (2014:374) point thus: "The church is the bearer of moral conscience of the society. It is bearer of moral vision and moral force by bringing into the public arena the revealed truth of Christ. The church according to Obiefuna and Kanu (2014) sets the standards and preaches the essence of sound morality as contained in the gospel. The church preaches the virtues of honesty, integrity, hard work, etc.

It is worthy to note that the contents of the church's assignments and responsibilities are built on the "Great Commission" where Christ in the New Testament authorize His apostles to preach, teach and baptize. In the Old Testament, the pivotal background of morality is lucidly spelt out in the Decalogue that is the Ten Commandments (EX. 20:1-17). Ezeme (2011:36) affirms the Decalogue as God's guide in man's relationship with God, and his fellow man when the posits that;

The known will of God are the set of laws which God gave to the Israelites through Moses at Mount Sinai. These laws or commandments are also called the Decalogue meaning ten words or precept. They constitute the ways of love; love of God on one hand and love to our neighbors on the other hand.

These laws are Old Testament bases of Christian morality. In the New Testament, its continued, the efficacy is affirmed in the Great Commission. Any deviation from the contents of these laws and assignments consequently is immorality and sin. Nonetheless, it is on this background that this study tries to identify from the inception of church, how immorality took hold of the house of God. Haute (2008) has acknowledged the fact when he protests against the irregularities in the church. The attack from Martin Luther (Jnr) contributed to the division of the mother church or Christianity. Luther himself as a priest took, some immoral actions against the church to actualize his interest. Within this period, there were obvious immoral observances. Presently other dimensions of immoralities are observed in the church. Leaders of various churches convert the church wealth for personal possessions, both the leader and the led are involved, so many sinful acts like; drug trafficking, sex with under-age, adultery, false preaching for personal gains, abortion, business malpractices, breach of contract, and other criminalities and violent offences are done by Christians.

This paper discovers that immoralities among Christians increase on daily basis. Based on this, it aims at suggesting ways to address this issue. It also aims at returning the church to the major essence for which it was inaugurated and so on. To that effect, it recommends that moral education or instruction should be practically improved, good traditional and cultural values should be extended to the young church, etc. When this is done,

Christians will restore their dignity as the life wire of morality in the society, prepare an emulating future generation, among other things. The study adopts phenomenological approach. Data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Data was analysed with descriptive method of data analysis.

Clarification of Terms

The terms that demand for clarification in the paper are: Immorality and the church. According to Achunike (1996:17), he stresses that; "The adjective church takes its origin from the word Ekklesia. In Hebrew church is translated 'Kehal Yahweh';: the community of God... But the corresponding Greek word which later assumed the name of the community was Ekklesia of God, today simply known as church". Obiefuna and Kanu (2014:368) emphasize on the church thus: "The church has had a dynamic image. In Latin, the early Fathers of the church referred to it as the Ecclesia- "the called out ones: From this perspective it is understood why the Church is spoken of as 'the elect', 'the saints' and why Jesus asked Peter thus; "build my Church" (Matt16:18). In the wake of Greek Neo-Platonism, the church was seen as the school of truth and the fellowship of adepts (Kung, 1981). To Roman Stoicism, the church is principally seen as a well-ordered community governed by laws referred to as 'the people of God' or 'the Church of God '. On the other hand, Summers (2001) perceives Church as a building where Christians go to worship, and as the institution of Christian religion. It has been presented here that according to Summers that there is a difference between church and the church. The Church on the other side of the coin is presented as the institution of Christian religion. These two identifications are the bodies of the church. The church as an institution of Christian religion performs several functions as a Church.

The Christians undergo their major doctrinal activities in their various church buildings. Whether it is called 'Church' or the Church the interest of this paper is on the background or original and etymological foundation of the Church. Achunike, Obiefuna and Kanu have traced divergent origins and stratum of the church. The church members are seen as the people of God, the Assembly for God, the elect, the saints, the called-out ones, etc. These personalities and qualities ascribed to the church are what this study stands out to investigate why the reverse has become the case. In order to understand clearly the deviation of the church from its expected character, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of Morality.

Morality to lay man can mean just being religious or being a Christian religious adherent. But to scholars of relevant discipline, it has a deeper interpretation. According to Titus in Agha (2003:35), he asserts that; "In the general sense the word right implies conformity to custom, law, conscience and some extended authority". Morality is connected to the principles of the right and wrong, good and bad. When an action complies to accepted standards of the laid down rules, it is deemed morally acceptable. It agrees to the compliance of concerns and conscience of the individuals. Moral according to Shorter in Okwueze (2004:242), comes from the Latin word-mores which means customs. Custom on the other hand means usages, practices, standards of norms and codes, which are common to certain

groups, or classes of people...” He went further to define morality as;” a specific form of social consciousness, of awareness of your relatedness to others without which societal life would be impossible. Morality is not a sole property of Christianity, rather it is a quality or attribute expected of every society. In the other way round, Summers, (2001) views immorality as behavior or action that is morally wrong. It is pertinent to emphasize here that immorality will be very difficult to understand clearly if efforts were not made to explain what morality means. This is why morality was given attention first in this paper to prepare a formidable ground for a better comprehension of the term immorality.

Areas of Immoral Behavior Among Christians

It was the Hebrew scripture that is the Old Testament that prepared the attention for the advent of Christ and Christianity. In the words of Ituma (2001) he avers thus: " This Scripture said so much about Christ. The prophets predicated Christianity as they foresaw the church ". The church's faith according to Ituma (2001) is fortified by three actions which include: the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the assurance of the ever-abiding presence, and the Pentecost experience. Based on this background, the paper looks at the arbitrary perception and applications of the Old Testament and New Testament mission and vision of the Messiahship of Jesus Christ.

The areas of perversion against the Old Testament and New Testament foundation of Christ in the church include: heresy/ false prophecy, baptism and re-baptism, embezzlement even in the church Litigation outside the church authority, nepotism (as seen among the sons of Eli), favoritism, ethnicity, family ownership of churches, adultery/fornication, homosexuality and lesbianism, Syncretism, secular political influence, drug abuse, secret sorcery, inter- denominational criticisms, Priesthood malpractices, simony and other church illegitimate commercial enterprise, indecent dressing, prostitution, polygamy, abortion, profiteering, suicide et cetera. Let us take them one after the other.

Heresy is an immoral act against the church as far as immorality entails deviation from standards of norms and codes. Heresy is a belief that disagrees with the official principles of a particular religion (Summer, 2001). Heresy has remained a threat to the church as early as the time of the formation of the nascent church. This Bible raised a lot of warnings against heresy in 1 Jn 2:18 the actors are called anti - Christ. In second Peter and second John there are a lot of warnings against heresy. Heresy is very dangerous to the wellbeing of the church because it exists within the church, and in many forms. Therefore, tackling the cankerworm is always very difficult and sensitive, moreover, it is very difficult to notice. Heresy is therefore a false doctrine in display (Ituma, 2005:32). Ituma (2005:58) adds that: “the danger of heresy is stronger than any other threat to the existence of the church. The church was not passive therefore to such a horrifying threat”. The church from inception fought against the heretics, but the truth is that heresy is at its increase with the proliferation of independent churches. The miraculous sprout of independent churches would have been for good if there were order and compliance to the standards of the early Christian faith and

doctrine as laid down by Christ and the accredited by apostolic fathers. But this shift on the orthodox doctrine is highly catastrophic to the church up till today. Around Enugu metropolis now posters are pasted for crusade with the title "You must be rich". These churches make references to the biblical messages that God promised Abraham richness and made Solomon the richest King. According to Eboh (1999:7) the captures this falsehood or adumbration thus:

Their total investments are a copy of the bible, a signboard announcing their arrival and either in a shed or a dilapidated room. And soon, miracles begin to happen—beginning with their own transformation. Money rolls in. no one can accuse them of promising their followers what is not in the bible. Did God not promise Abraham that he would make his descendants rich? Did he not make Solomon the richest king in the biblical history?

This is one of the forms of heresy in the church nowadays. Eboh continues on the immorality of these false preaching and teaching when he laments that: "the miraculous multiplicity of independent churches, some of whose leaders are self-confessed ex-criminals, has done irreparable damage to the moral authority of the church". False teaching and preaching among modern churches are serious immoral behaviors against the expectations of the church. Next to doctrinal heresy is false prophecy. There had been predictions among Christians on the message of the three days darkness. Eboh (1999) emphasizes that what is disturbing is the fact that the fear of the doomsday is affecting the lives of many Christians. Paul Andrews in eboh (1999) stresses that: "You may have met pious people who fear the year 2000 as a time of doom; or younger people who feel it is not worth planning anything or marrying now because the world has no future". Eboh continues thus:

It might be good to remind ourselves of the fact that many prophets... predicted the end of the world for one particular time or the other. For instance, there were predictions by Irish Prophet Malachy (1095-1118), American Edgar Cayce (1877-1945), Mrs. Jeane Dixon, a devout American catholic, Rev. moon of Korea and hundreds of our Nigerian prophets, prophetesses, evangelists... Perhaps the most celebrated of them all is the French, Michel de Nostradamus (1503-1566) who made so many predictions, some of which have come to pass. Mrs. Dixon has even told the world that the notorious anti-Christ was born in 1962... What is important to note is that so many of the predicted times have come and gone but the world still remains.

If we can go through the prophecy of the real prophets of God in Old Testament, their predictions came to pass. False prophecy in the church today is tormenting the moral status of the church. Even when Christ promised to come soon, He gave no date. He maintained that no man can decide or know when the son of God will come again. The bible states that no eye has seen, no ear has heard... what God has prepared for those who love Him. All these prophets and prophetesses from various churches are aware of these biblical messages yet they prophesize falsely.

Another area of immoralities among Christians is on issue of baptism and re-baptism (endless baptism). Baptism of particular individual from one church denomination to another has projected a soft ground for encouragement of immoral indulgence. One, who pollutes the sacrament of baptism in one church, runs to another church for a new baptism to become a member. Christ had only but one baptism and never preached or taught multiple baptism. Nichodemus was not asked to be born again more than once. After baptism there is no need for another baptism. Additional baptism especially among adults is a change from the standard norms and codes of the early church, and invariably immoral. If the church is holistically one body in Christ, where lies the need for more than one baptism for a Christian? Baptism should be one in the body of Christ. Cullmann in Agha (1999) maintains that the gospels are in agreement that John's baptism is the prototype but the new baptismal gift of the Holy Spirit is imparted neither by Jewish proselyte baptism nor by Johannine baptism. It is bound up with the person and work of Christ. For the fact that every Christian baptism is bound up with the personality and worked of Christ, further baptism after a firsthand baptism is immoral and encourages immoralities in the church.

Embezzlement of church or public funds, litigation outside the church authority, nepotism (favouritism, ethnicity) and a set of other immoralities in the church are immoral actions. Mr. Edwin Nworgu (personal communication, 11 November, 2018) stressed that in his parish in Enugu state, a lot of funds have been raised for the building of their church, but the parish council committee has embezzled the whole money, between 2007 till date they were unable to present any financial report to that regard. Rev. Fr. Obinna Ozor (personal communication, 20 February, 2017) shared a similar view, when he lamented on such action in his former parish, but he added that as the parish priest, he expunged the dubious persons' names as signatories to the parish's accounts and finances. Such behavior hinders the progress and reliability of the Christian moral standards. Litigation outside the church authority is an immoral act practiced in the church today. The church handles its matters internally. Church matters are presently taken to the secular court. Imagine the secular determining the fate of the regular. An example is the recently concluded court case on the issue that bothered on the leadership of Assemblies of God Church, in Nigeria. It is against the traditional conduct of the church in settling internal dispute. Acts of Apostles chapter 15 (the Jerusalem Conference) offers a model of the measures that should be adopted in resolving church's matters. Nepotism (favoritism and ethnicity), and family ownership of the church is also an area of immorality among Christians. Some churches are organized in such a manner that the leaders delegate other powers of the church administration to the members of their family, personal friends or ethnic members of the church. Ethnicity as a life wire of nepotism has been discussed by Igbo and Anugwom in Okafor and Adama (2018) as collectivity within a large society, having real or punitive ancestry memories of shared historical past and a cultural focus that hold them as a people. Ethnic groups are formed from relative ancestral family structure. The interest to assign sentimentally principal offices in a church or public office to one's ancestral traceable persons is immoral. It is similar to Jewish

claim of the sole membership or ownership of the church, excluding the gentiles. The church is for all believers and members. Administration and authority should not be decided with lay mind. The administration must be considered through authentic spiritual directives and merit. Favor or assignments that attract gains should not be lopsided by Christians. Church affairs should be devoid of friendship ethnicity or family influence. The art of a family owning a church is immensely immoral. The church abinitio is not owned by Jesus' family relations or the Jews as a tribe or even by St Peter the head of the disciples, why are people taking possession of a church may be as a founder or founder's family members. This act is completely out of place, considering the foundation of Christianity as prescribed by Christ. Such case has persuaded the 7th and 8th assembly to promulgate laws guiding the tenure, headship, rotation of churches' leadership out from a particular family or genealogical trace.

Adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, incest, prostitution, indecent dressing, polygamy, abortion are another set of immoralities observed among Christians. Ex. 20:14 commands thus: "thou shall not commit adultery". Today, Christians involve themselves in indiscriminate sexual relationship. It is a common place even among the clergy. In the month of August, 2019 there was a repeated news on radio Nigeria 92.9 about a pastor who used to engage a fourteen-year-old girl who is also a member of his church on consisted sexual intercourse until he was caught and testified by the young girl. The girl's father who is also a Nigerian soldier arrested the pastor and handed him over to the police. Though this could be understood as fornication yet a sinful act. Mrs. Felicia Okwor (personal communication, 2 March, 2019) narrated her experience when she was in dare need of the fruit of the womb. According to her, she was directed to a church at Onitsha for the blessing of the womb. The chief priest prayed for her for one week with fasting and hourly prayers. At the end of the prayer, the priest told her that the Holy Spirit has delivered to him the message on how to solve her problem of bareness. He (the pastor) made reference to the book of Genesis where God ordered Onan to have sex with his sister in law, the wife of Ur to enable her have a child for his dead brother Ur. By that the pastor meant that he will be having sex with her (Felicia) for just a few months, and she will be pregnant. Without wasting time, the priest started romancing her. Stories of this nature are told about Christians.

We might not doubt this experience because we see married women and young girls converting parish house to be their homes. Among the congregation or parishioners, the use brother sister trick impregnant themselves and move to hospitals for abortion happens every day. Dr. Martin Ekeoma (personal communication, 14 April, 2019) expressed surprise when he saw an ardent member of his church that came to abort a three-month-old pregnancy in a hospital where he worked. Ekwutosi (2008) conceives abortion as the termination of pregnancy or to expulse the fetus from the womb before it becomes viable. The explanation of the meaning of abortion here in all ramifications shows that abortion in most cases is immoral. Adultery and fornication trigger abortion. In some cases, married couple can resort to abortion as a source of birth control, but the church says it is sinful, yet worshiping members of the church, do it. Homosexuals and lesbians litter our churches. Mr. Omega

Chukwuma (personal communication, 5 May, 2019) expressed his worries as a migrant labourer over his landlord that allows him to sleep in his parlor, and comes at midnight to sex him via his anus. According to Mr. Chukwuma, the man is a member to the St. Peter's station of the Catholic Church in that village. He said that he complained to the village head, his landlord by name Mr. Celestine was warned, but he continued with the same action to an extent that he (Chukwuma) parked out from the apartment. A student at Institute of Management and Technology, Miss Nwankwo Nwamaka (personal communication, 2 September, 2018) stated how her fellow student who works as a steward in her church wanted to initiate her into lesbianism.

Prostitution, incest, indecent dressing etc are observed among Christians. The church building has become a contact channel for prostitutes. Most of them meet their partners in the church especially during occasions of high special services. Mr. Stanley Uwaoma (personal communication, 4 November, 2018) narrated how he attended a child dedication service, and girl seated very close to him collected a pamphlet from him for a glance, after which she collected his phone number, and kept calling him until he invited her to his office where she told him that it is through prostitution that she earns living. In addition, she gets better patronage among members of various churches. In decent dressing is seen in so many churches among girls, boys and even married women. Some Christians dress abnormally to the church and other occasions, exposing certain parts of their bodies to seduce the opposite sex. Some churches sound warnings against it, paste posters on the walls against it, while others appear indifferent on the act. Indecent dressing is irreligious, immoral and in conflict with the Christian doctrine.

Syncretism, secular political influence in the church, drug abuse, secret sorcery, inter-denominational criticisms, priesthood malpractices, simony and other illegitimate commercial enterprise in the church are among threats to the moral standards of the Christians. Syncretism is simply the belief and practice of more than one religion. Prof S. Onyeidu (personal communication, 2 August, 2018) stressed on syncretism as a practice among African Christians. Some pastors are being accused of driving their religious charisma from other religions or spiritual forces. There are Christians who after church services go for other negative occult worships contrarily to their Christian faith in such worship they indulge on secret sorcery against their neighbors. Secular political influence affects some Christians. Many dubious politicians are accorded exalted recognition in many churches. Some are exalted to a magnitude that one will begin to wonder if they have turned to become God. These churches are aware of these politicians mal-administration to the governed, instead of devising a way of warning them, they are exalted. In the Old Testament such persons received warnings from prophets like Amos and so on. Drug abuse is suspected to be a menace to the church. Some clergy and other Christians have been accused by the populace for taking drugs to high themselves as they make speeches on delivering sermon in the church and other gatherings. This is a suspicion but possibly, always truth because in some rumors there is always truth. The way some people preach or present speeches makes

one wonder if they speak in accordance with their normal human nature though some claim to have been carried by the Holy Spirit as they speak.

Inter-denominational criticisms are heavy immoral slaps on the Christians cheeks. Some Christians criticize fellow Christians even on general practices of the entire Christendom. Issues of our lord's prayer, Saturday/Sunday as the Sabbath day etc are acts of dividing the body of Christ. It is an equivalent of St. Paul's warnings to the Corinthians on the division among them, occurring from controversies on the belief in Christ, Paul, Peter, Cephas and Apollos. It is immoral critics to continue creating divisions in the church. Priesthood mal-practices counter the original priesthood assumption of the church. Priests of the church are called, or trained, and officiate ordained by higher priesthood order to official at the altar of God. People wake up in the morning construct signboards, pick a bible and establish their own self-centered churches. This is a total disorder, moreover an immoral behavior. Simony and other illegitimate commercial enterprise are absolutely immoral. Prof Agha Uka (personal communication, 14 June, 2005) defines simony as unauthorized sell purchase or dispose of sacramentals

. It was fought in the early church government and doctrine. There are similar illegitimate dealings in the church. Some church servants presently abuse the use and exchange of some sacred items of the church. These behaviors are arts of falsehood. People present themselves as sound moral and religious persons while they know they are (deceivers). Agha (2004) discusses the effect of deception while referring to Nigeria when he points that: "Deception seems to have become the generally accepted way of life in Nigeria. We therefore, claim that it is the major cause of emotional, social and economic instability in Nigeria. It has also caused insubordination and deviance in children and young adults". We shall see more of the implications of deception as one of the basis of immoralities among Christians in the subsequent part of this paper.

Causes of Immoralities Among Christians

The following factors are seen in this research as causes of immoralities among Christians. They include: personal selfish interest and pleasure, economic factor, political factor, social factor, modern trends of change, lack of moral educational background, and low interest on worthy traditional values. Ordinarily, morality is expected to regulate our conduct both as individuals and as a group. But even on personal grounds, it has become virtually impossible. The expectation of the regulatory function of morality on individual's behavior is responded to by Chukwu (2016:93) thus: "Morality regulates the conduct of the individual in his or her privacy. Law is said to regulate conduct through enacted rules while for morality, it is argued, regulates conduct through the individual's conscience." The church is one of the most reliable avenues through which human conscience would restore morality, but it is quite unfortunate that reasonable number of members of the church called Christians are losing their conscience to their personal and selfish interest and pleasure. Some individuals in the church place priority to their personal favor and pleasure above any other thing in life. Such people contribute to the breakdown of the Christian norms and codes. Prof S. Onyeidu

(personal communication, 2 August, 2005) states that Christianity originally condemned polygamy among members no matter the marriage difficulty. But because Emperor Henry de VIII's wife could not give birth to a boy, he requested from the Pope to allow him marry a second wife. The then Pope refused, emperor Henry left the mother church and went to England where he established Anglican communion and declared it the church of England. Such quest to achieve personal interest and pleasure is among the major factors that challenge the moral standard among Christians.

The morality of Christian religion is again impeded by economic factors. The missionaries themselves came to attain some economic interests even though they were interested in planting Christianity. At home, Christianity served some economic needs for the missionaries even before the sojourn to other parts of the world. Agha (1997:13) responds that: "Later missionary agents embarked upon the project of sending missionaries for purely economic reasons. Mission was in some cases followed with trade and mission trading posts or stations were established". Money, they say is the root of all evil. As converts emulate this money-making strategy, some began to abuse it as it affects the message of the church. People began to introduce with deception other ways of achieving some economic feats. In Nigeria for example, there had been economic meltdown, people earnestly want to be liberated from economic hardships and they became preys to those wearing Christian garments in disguise to solve their own economic problems. The hunger to lead contributes to moral decadence in Christianity. Agha (1997:12) states that:

Some of the missionaries were sent out as the agents of the home governments and so played double role political role secretly by furnishing their home government with secret information from that country e.g. the C.I.A. from U.S.A. and mission role of proclaiming the Gospel. Some came to help their country strengthen their political tie or relationship with their home country. Political motivation adversely affected the nineteenth and twentieth missions.

Mixing politics up with religion is always dangerous. With political interest in any religious undertaking a lot of moral weaknesses are obvious. When the church leaders and agents negotiate for political reasons, interest, and relationship it strongly affects their moral standards as Christians. This type of influence is noticed in some church and it introduces band wagon of immoralities to the church.

The world is changing with different trends of modernity Igbo and Anugwom (2002:72) states that: "Today new and improved materials, devices, techniques and products (local and foreign) have had tremendous impact on change in Nigeria." As it is in Nigeria, so it occurs in other places. Higher technologies, higher thinking, and their products affect both the Christians, and the larger society. Advanced thinking has made some members of the church to argue some contents of the bible. Some technological devices and products are immoral in nature. The type of movies people watch, pornographies on papers and social media, and so on affect the spiritual life of some Christians. More so, they give rise to immoralities in the church, and the entire human society.

Children nowadays lack moral education from birth. Children are dedicated to God in the church few months after their birth, afterwards, they are dedicated back to the sinful society. Most parents are very busy with economic activities from morning till night. Adequate attention is not paid to the spiritual life of their children. Every child in a Christian family needs religious education. Onah and Ola (2019:223) see religious education as “to gain religious knowledge through the study of the basic principles of religions for the promotion of moral development, inculcation of right values and to make good moral decision”. At least Christian religious education is lacking in most Christian youth. They in some cases, indulge in immoral behaviour because they lack sound moral education even as Christians.

People listen to traditional values just for formalities. Good traditional values are not given attention by some parents. Some perceive it a sin to God. There are areas of the tradition that are very good for a Christian child. For example, the acts of making every child know fundamental domestic works, the hunger to know one's relations and so on. The culture of communalism among other things will help the child in maintaining a good moral conduct. Many Christians condemn every facet of tradition and culture meanwhile encouraging fanaticism in the church, and to their offspring. Even though children and adult should not emulate obnoxious traditions and culture good traditional values are lacking in them, thereby increasing immoralities in their behavior which they invariably infuse into the church as future leaders of the church. Okafor and Ani-Amaechi (2019) have observed that in African traditional religion, a brother's problem is every body's problem no matter one's religious affiliation. This is an equivalent of the Christian moral principle that says “be your brother's keeper”. Therefore, low attention to traditional values causes moral decay in the Christendom.

Implications of Immoralities to Christianity and the Society

This study has considered immoralities in the lives of Christians with references to the Old and New Testament contents of the Bible. Emphasizing on the importance of the church as contained in the Gospel according to Mathew, Onwu (2002:111) postulates thus: “The gospel of Mathew has been regarded as the church's book and when the New Testament was collected as a unit this gospel was placed first, and it has exercised a normative influence in the later church”. The interest of this work here is that apart from Mathew, there are fragments of normative order in other books of the New Testament, but immoralities have dented the strength of church's norms, ethics, codes and conducts. The implications of this normative failure runs throughout the mainstream of the social, economic, emotional, psychological and even the religious dimensions of the church and the society. Deception among church members has contributed to total distrust of virtually every member of the modern society especially in Nigeria. Following the norms of the Old and New Testaments, the church should be reliable as a role model institution to other institutions.

On the realm of religion, some Christians presently do not see attending church services as an important duty to them. In Ex 20: 11 it says that the Sabbath day should be kept

holy. Many Christians do not bother attending church services. Some no longer view the church as being fully spiritual. Echeta (2011:42) has seen the church as a source of transformation of lives, when she points that: “The church is apostolically empowerment to bring about the transformation of lives”. The problem now is that this apostolic empowerment is lacking in many churches. Immoralities have given way to materialism, and worldliness as against spirituality.

Psychologically, people are seriously confused on which way or person to follow. Falsehood had become a central culture. There are too much contradictory interpretations of the bible. The issue of the three days darkness (the doom day), anti-Christ and its number 666 and so on have thrown some Christians psychological imbalance. Some who have fallen victims of several cheatings from fellow Christians are left with dangerous psychological trauma. Mrs. Felicia Okwor (personal communication, 2 march, 2019) states that trauma she sustained when a pastor insisted that he is the one holy spirit has directed to be responsible for impregnating her troubles her every day.

Emotionally wrong feelings have entered both Christians and the society. The tradition of the Jews for example, was not condemned totally by Christ. Some Christians have condemned completely the traditions of the soils where the churches are planted. Feeling of this nature is wrong. Some of these condemnations are based on the fact that some traditions will deter their immoral intention. This group of people do not preach and pray for transformation of tradition, they always declare condemnation. This wrong feeling transcends to hatred on some religious and cultural practitioners of a given society, which in some cases it metamorphoses in crises into communities, families etc.

Economically, the Christians with the intrusion of immoral minds have been affected with the inability to encourage civic economic development in the church and the society. In some churches, prayers are continuous activities every day, every hour, etc. no time is given to economic endeavours. St Paul advised that evangelism should not be taken as an occupation. Evangelism gives space for other economic activities. Most of the pastors that encourage fanatic prayers are suspected to be looking for steady offering for their personal upkeep. They say, “You must all be rich”, yet the book of John 12:8 says, “The poor you always have with you”. People should understand that poverty is both natural and artificial. These preachers are aware that everybody cannot be rich once. Even in richness, some who are richest perceive lower ones as poor. Akukwe (1996) is of the notion that it is not so certain that poverty means the same thing to everybody. Poverty among people has made the deceived to loose their wealth to the hands of dubious prophets, evangelists, preachers, intercessors etc and had remained poorer.

Socially, immoralities among Christians have contributed to a social problem for example, assumption of leadership offices by wrong people would have been managed by the church without fear or favor. The church that has the highest number of the electorate yet in a given society can see these electorate vote against the conscience probably because the real message of the gospel has not really occupied their psyche. Onyiloha and Obielois (2017:3)

Point that: “The church has been influenced with sentiments and other irregularities in choosing regular and secular leaders”. Other disobedience like polygamy, incest, drug abuse experienced in among Christians, have encouraged the increase of other social vices, criminalities and violence.

Solutions to the Challenge

Moral education has been proposed in this paper as one of the ways through which immoralities will be curbed in among Christians. Anyacho (2005:123) speaks about the church thus: “This is basically a religious institution concerned with the moral and development of the child. Every programme of the church should be geared towards, reproving, correcting or teaching on how to serve God and humanity with love. These are complementary to the school's Christian religious studies. This paper advocates that moral education to children in the church should supervise other activities of the society. It is always better to catch them young. If the wards are corrected now, generations to come, will be morally sound.

In addition, Christians should pay pragmatic attention to good traditional values. Some of these traditional values are custodians of moral education. Echeta (2007:156) has posed that: “Other methods of moral education in the pre-contemporary Igbo society are the “Age grade... the “kindred” (Umunna). These established structures are backed up with constituent authority and can enforce morality on societal members”. The church should make assiduous insight to the qualities and benefits of the traditional values make amends where there is need and begin to imbibe them as far as they negatively affect the fate and doctrine of the church, considering the affairs of the state or civil society.

Recommendations

1. Moral education should be encouraged by parents and guidance.
2. Schools should build moral education as part of their curriculum from nursery to secondary.
3. Good training on cultural values should also be built in the curriculum from nursery to secondary education.
4. Parents and guidance should always monitor the children's peer relationships.
5. Parents and guidance should regulate their children's accessibilities to modern technological and societal trends of development and advancements.
6. The Church itself no matter the denomination should drastically and pragmatically address its problems of immorality through its ecumenical bodies like Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) etcetera.

Conclusion

In this research work, it has been observed that the level of immoralities in the church is extremely unbelievable. In order to address this catastrophic incident in the Christendom, the study traces the causes of immoralities among Christians to selfish interest and pleasure, political, social and economic factors, areas where immoralities were discovered in the Church include: heresy, embezzlement, adultery etc. The implications run through even

garment of the people's emotions, psychology, social, economic and the religions themselves.

Two major measures have been suggested as the way out of this menace. They include: Firstly serious attention to be given moral education with special reference as gotten from the Holy Bible, Lastly, serious attention is needed to be given to good traditional African values. There are other recommendations built on this these two solutions. This paper is of the notion that earnest attention to its contents and other relevant services will eradicate immoralities in to the lives of Christians and society to a barest minimum.

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INTERVIEW

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