

THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A CRITICAL THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF

NBTS
M. DIV
P. 81-c

POLYGyny

AS PRACTISED IN IWERELAND

OF DELTA STATE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF

THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF DIVINITY

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

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JUNE, 2004

07-0280

ABSTRACT

This study investigated two important marriage systems – POLYGYNY and MONOGAMY – as practised by Itsekiri (sekiri) in Iwereland of Delta State. It examined the two with the intention of discovering a system of marriage that is better. The thesis is that the better marriage system which should be preferred would produce the much needed peace unity, love, development, progress and prosperity in Iwereland and for its people, and the worse would promote disunity, hatred, discord, problems, evils and vices which aid retrogression.

It, also, examined POLYGAMY as a misnomer used for POLYGYNY and urged the correct use and application of POLYGYNY as the apposite name. The study answered all the following research questions: (1) What informed the choice of this critical theological analysis of polygyny? (2) What is the biblical basis for the study of polygyny? (3) What are the African/Isekiri views of the problem of polygyny? (4) What is the Church tradition on polygyny? (5) What are the theological responses to the problem of polygyny? (6) What are the implications of the theological responses to the Family, the Church, and the Society? (7) Is Polygyny God's will for man? If not, what is?

FINDINGS: Data analysis gave fourteen findings including the rejection of a "NULL" hypothesis. All of the findings variously lent round and positive supports to the need to use the correct term "POLYGYNY" in discussions involving one man and his multiple wives. Also, the overwhelming percentage of the respondents accepted "monogamy" as a "Marriage System for Progress and Prosperity" (M.S.P.P.). They thoroughly and severely rejected Polygyny,

describing it as a "Marriage System for Retrogression and Poverty"

(M.S.R.P.).

A. Recommendations

To the Families in Iwereland (In Particular)

That,

- a. They may read through this study with an eye on how the study had affected them positively or negatively by the choice of their marriage system and see how they can remedy the resulting effects from their choice.
- b. Though the researcher realizes that they (the families) are the products of the traditional and unregenerate society that had produced them, they should realize that the abstract society will always remain in the influence of the moral and spiritual developments they (families), as living entities can evolve and bring to bear upon it (society/community). In other words, they can change the society whose offsprings they are to become dynamic in the process of change for a better and progressive living by a deliberately moving away from the traditional marriage system of polygyny into which they were born, to God's divinely ordered system of marriage which is monogamy.
- c. They should see and appreciate the stand of the Church on marriage which is strictly and correctly monogamous by first deciding to accept the Jesus Christ preached by the Church through their listening to and believing in the gospel of that Christ of God. They should be serious

enough to get saved, baptised and become communicants and thus become full members of the Church of the Orthodox Christian faith. With this they can easily have a clean and final break with the polygynous marriage system and will be able to prevent nearly all, if not all the problems and evils that come in the train of POLYGYNY.

- d. We must, of necessity come to grips with the problem of poor literary education among us in Iwereland. It is this that will open our physical, mental, moral, spiritual, economic eyes to the good and worthy things of this life. Therefore, every family must endeavour to help every member of it in Iwereland to receive the basic education the governments of our country are providing for the citizens of this nation. In fact, this education is basic and essential to our positive understanding of all we have written in this study.

To the Churches in Iwereland (In Particular)

- a. God gave the Best of heaven and earth, His Beloved So, and His Beloved, Jesus Christ, paid the highest price – the price of His own life to buy her (the Church – Acts 20:28). It will therefore, amount to trampling His blood underfeet, if the Church fails to respond theologically to the issue of polygyny in a way God will be pleased with her. She is to maintain unequivocally her erect and unyielding or uncompromising posture on marriage –Marriage – which we church members know the Church is doing relentlessly.
- b. There are churches treating God's directives and decrees (so to say) on marriage with levity, because some support other forms or systems

of marriage outside monogamy. This is disobeying Genesis 2:18, 24 . . . a "helper" not "helpers". . . and the two shall become "one flesh" . . . not 3 (three) becoming "one flesh". Polygyny is, therefore, a gross disobedience of God's commandment when He solemnized the first marriage in the Garden of Eden.

- c. But all churches must understand that though God's directives and decrees were given in love, they are eternal laws that altereth not because, He, God does not change (Malachi 3:6)./ So His laws and promises cannot change Therefore, churches must continue to respond theologically, upholding monogamy.
- d. Church members are called 'salt' (Matthew 6:13) and 'Light' (Matt. 5:14). They are salt and the light; by their obedience to God, their light will and must shine to the glory of God.
- e. Sanctions are good but "Rewards will be better." Church leaders and authorities may consider some of these suggestions:
 - (i) Monogamous families in the Church, on an occasion, can be called out and prayed for.
 - (ii) Monogamous families in the Church, on an occasion, can have party which they can be encouraged to sponsor.
 - (iii) Have the ten best monogamous families in the Church at the end of the year.
 - (iv) Have the best monogamists in the Church recommended by their wives. The church may ask the wives to write out some

