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**ETHICAL CHALLENGES OF HOMOSEXUALITY TO THE 21ST CENTURY
CHRISTIANS**

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ABSTRACT

This study, "Ethical Challenges of Homosexuality to 21st Century Christians" looked at the subject of homosexuality critically and brought out the challenges it poses to the contemporary Christians in the light of the arguments that have been raised to defend the practice of homosexuality. This is with a view to examine whether in the light of these arguments the Church can still maintain validly that homosexuality is not of God. In accomplishing this purpose, the work has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter gives an introduction of the whole study. This includes background to the study, thesis statement, significance of the study, methodology, scope and limitation of study, as well as definition of key terms. Chapter two focuses on the concepts of homosexuality for proper understanding of what scholars have said about the issue of homosexuality. The thrust of chapter three is primarily an evaluation of the Biblical concept of homosexuality. It was then seen that homosexuality is never part of God's intention for man. And all efforts at re-interpreting the Scriptures to accommodate homosexuality have not been successful. An honest evaluation of passages on homosexuality in both Old and New Testament clearly shows that homosexuality cannot be supported by the Bible. Chapter four consists generally of the implications of homosexuality. Chapter five summarizes the whole work and makes appropriate recommendations. These are recommendations for all Christians, the clergy and laity inclusive.

5.2 CONCLUSION

A deep reflection on all that has been discussed and considered in work so far points to one clear direction, and that direction is that homosexuality is condemnable. This position is without prejudice to various arguments, experiments and sentiments put forward by the pro- homosexual apologists as evaluated in this work. It is crystal clear from all that has been discussed so far in this work that homosexuality is not approved by God who revealed Himself in the Bible.

It will be accurate to say then, from all that has been discussed in this work, that there is no doubt that homosexuality is never in the original plan of God for man. It is important to note that God loves people and wants them to come to the wholeness and joy for which they were made. His prohibitions are not the house rules of a sadistic and capricious Deity who mocks mankind by tormenting him with desires and then forbidding him from doing anything about them (Ukleja 259-268).

Moreover, God's basic principles of righteousness have remained constant through out the Bible and up till now. Therefore, homosexuality is a grievous sin, an abomination and a shameful thing from the point of view of the Bible. Notwithstanding the brilliant attempts at re-interpreting the Bible to accommodate homosexuality, it has been seen in this work that an honest evaluation of the entire Bible points to the fact that the Bible does not support homosexuality.

Despite the fact that the Church is under intense pressure both from within and without to compromise her position on the issue of homosexuality, the 21st Century Christians must be bold enough to insist on the intention of God as revealed in the Bible. Since it has been seen in this work through a careful evaluation of the

Bible that homosexuality is a sinful practice. The position of the Church on this issue must be louder and clearer for all to hear.

In as much as the mind of God on any issue is not based on the views of the majority or the opinion polls, the Church must be careful not to yield to the pressure to change her stand on the issue of morality. This is because the Bible is supposed to be source of authority for Christians on the issue of faith and practice as well as ethics.

5.3 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The 21st Century Christians must not be complacent in upholding the message of the cross to the lost world and in the light of this the Church cannot afford to be indifferent to the cries all around her for the normalisation of homosexual practices. The 21st Century Christians must therefore brace up to the challenges around the Church and develop an adequate and comprehensive response to cries around the church on the issue of homosexuality. This will not only silence the pro-homosexual apologists within and out side the Christian community, but it will also equip the believers with the requisites tools needed to communicate in a logical and intelligible manner the biblical position on the issue of homosexuality. Also, developing an adequate comprehensive response will checkmate further attempts in the future aimed at foisting a secular agenda on the church. Therefore, the following recommendations are given to help the 21st Century Christians in dealing with the challenges posed by homosexuality to the Church:

1. The church must be adequately prepared to face the challenges raised by efforts of the pro- homosexual apologists in seeking to normalise homosexuality. Particularly in using the Bible to justify their demands.

2. In the light of the foregoing the Church must embark on comprehensive teachings on what the Bible says on the issue of homosexuality and this will eventually results into developing a comprehensive ministry towards reaching the homosexuals for Christ.
3. The Church must also be ready to reassert the Bible's moral high grounds through sound discipleship programme among its members so as plant in them the fact that it is public opinions that shapes the beliefs and doctrines of the Church.
4. The Church must be able to organise seminars and symposiums where passages of the Bible will be employed to convince the homosexuals that homosexual lifestyle is sinful but that homosexuality is not in any way greater than any other sin in the eyes of God.
5. The Church must be ready to go out where the homosexuals are and minister the love of Christ to them. Genuine love for the people trapped in homosexual lifestyle must be the foundation of the ministry aimed at reaching the homosexuals for Christ, not condemnation.
6. The Church must develop a robust rehabilitation programme towards assimilating the repentant homosexuals into normal lifestyle. In essence, repentant homosexuals must have equal participation in the Church life. And there must be a sound restorative programme that is tailored towards bringing back to faith her members who had fallen into the sin of homosexuality. This area should be looked into for further study.
7. The Church must withdraw fellowship from any member of the Church who publicly or secretly indulge in homosexuality, or sympathizes with the course of homosexuality, no matter his/her position in the Church.

8. Repentant homosexuals who had undergone discipleship and who have genuine testimony of sound Christian living should be integrated into the team entrusted with the responsibility of reaching the homosexuals for Christ, for greater effectiveness of the team.

Adeleke, Aderoju (Jagunmoba, Asoke of Ogbomosho) Interview conducted on 1/12/2009.

Adolf Deissmann, Paul, *A Study in Social and Religious History* New York.