

APPRAISAL OF THE EFFECTS OF REMARRIAGE OF YOUNG WIDOWS
IN EKPON LAND, EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES
NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OGBOMOSO, NIGERIA

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE
MASTER OF ARTS IN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

2013—0492

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MATRIC. NO. 08/0012
JUNE, 2011.

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ABSTRACT

This study “Appraisal of the effects of remarriage of young widows in Ekpon land, Edo State, Nigeria” is aimed at appraising the impacts on the families when young widows remarry so as to find ways and means of reducing the negative effects. One hundred and ten questionnaires were drawn up. With the help of ten pastors, one hundred questionnaires were administered among selected remarried widows, singles widows, their relations, and selected Pastors in each of the ten churches. The other ten questionnaires were also administered among remarried widows who married under the levirate law, their relations and community leaders. The questionnaires were faithfully filled and returned. Two ladies who were widows but now remarried and one community leader were interviewed to give their personal experiences which are very useful.

The data collected was analyzed by using simple percentages based on the findings. It was discovered that the young widows, when they remarried had not much negative effects, their children, the church, the community had minimal negative effects. However, the children who were left behind with their relatives when their mothers as young widows got remarried had some negative effects. The young widows who refused to remarry also had negative effects. The results of the study brought about the recommendation that young widows should be encouraged to remarry. The churches and their pastors, the community leaders are also encouraged to endeavour to teach and counsel young widows and widowers, youths, married or unmarried to exercise serious caution about marriage before getting to marry or when they are married. Those who remarry, to carry their children along into their new

homes to become blended families, made up of the children from the previous couples and new ones to be born. The churches, community and their relations to help these young widows when they remarry, during the marriage preparations, ceremonies and after the marriage too.

The churches should uphold them in prayers for spiritual upliftments. This study on Ekpon land is an epitome of what is happening in other communities, therefore all and sundry should learn from this research.

Conclusion

This research has exposed the effects of remarriage of young widows in Ekpon land on the family, the church and the community. Therefore, it is very important to take action. The people have to see marriage as a divine institution of God, to bring down his glory on his people. Marriage is good whether it is remarriage after the death of a spouse or first marriage. The Scripture states that “He who finds a wife finds a good thing and God’s favour” (Prov. 18:22). The teaching of God’s Word has to be thorough for the married, remarried and youths (unmarried). It is better for everyone to be thought so as not to be ignorant of what God intends for mankind by instituting marriage even after widowhood. God has them more at heart including their children. Paul summed up Moses and

Jesus Christ's teachings on marriage and remarriage, except for the few who have chosen to remain single for the purpose of serving God.

The church in particular has been given the ministry of reconciliation to bring all to God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Every member of the country whether Traditional African Religion adherents or Muslims. By this teaching the society will change for good. This research though is carried out in Ekpon town is for all mankind, anywhere in the world; Christians or heathens in the churches and communities. It is necessary to formulate some guidelines as recommendations in this research.

Recommendations

The churches should educate families and the society concerning the origin, meaning, functions and importance of durable and happy homes through Bible teaching. Community leaders too are concerned to educate those who are culturally inclined. These recommendations are necessary. If heeded the people affected will live happily in their marriage whether remarriage after widowhood or fresh contracted marriage. The recommendations are:

1. Teaching

God's Word should be taught to the people to understand what God desires from man and woman before entering into marriage no matter the type, whether levirate or ordinand. Love, finance creation, and responsibility, sex responsibility, tolerance and care for one another in the family and community must be taught too. Above all, they must be taught the love and care of God;

salvation for their souls must be the principal of the teaching because if they are saved the Holy Spirit will lead them into the truth of all things meaningful.

2. Counselling

Proverbs 15:22 states that “With many counsel there is safety.” There should be marital counseling to all and sundry in the church because a bachelor or spinster today would be the bride and bridegroom of tomorrow. Widows too, must be counseled during their widowhood and as they think of getting remarried and after remarrying they need to be counselled. The community leaders should endeavour to appoint elderly women in the community to counsel with young widows so that they may not go astray. They have avenues for this. It must be utilized properly. The church should organize widows’ programmes occasionally.

3. The church or community should have financial empowerment activities like ‘osusu’ or ‘thrift’ as it is called in Ekpon land. A number of people help themselves in turn financially. The government closer to them should be attracted to come to their aid through any of the NGOs, Empowerment bodies of the government. They should be advised that they must be honest to one another as regards money.