

PASTORAL CARE RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES OF NEMBE
TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE PRACTICES IN BAYELSA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study was on “Pastoral Care Response to the Challenges of Nembe traditional marriage practices in Bayelsa State”. The study examined the impact of Nembe traditional marriage practices through pastoral care response in accomplishing the purpose of marriage. The information for this research was collected through researcher-designed questionnaire. The population of the study consisted of all married men and women, Christians and non-christians in Nembe Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The samples were also all married people, Christians and non-christians in the two major towns in Nembe – Ogbolambiri and Bassambiri, who were selected through accidental sampling method. A pilot study was carried out and the split-half method was employed. Cronbach’s Alpha was used to correlate the pairs of scores which led to correlation coefficient (r) of 0.602. Six research questions were formulated for the study. The findings from the study showed that: there was high level of awareness of Nembe traditional marriage practices by Nembe people; there was no significant difference in the level of awareness of Nembe traditional marriage practices between the gender; all the problems associated with Nembe traditional marriage practices were common; there was no significant difference in the response of the gender on the problems; Nembe traditional marriage practices have great negative effects on the people; and there was also effective pastoral care response to the challenges of the Nembe traditional marriage practices. Based on these findings, recommendations were made. Since the Nembe people were very much aware of the types and contents of their traditional marriage practices, and were still practicing it keenly despite the numerous and high rate of challenges associated with them, steps should be taken by the pastoral care giver to inquire deep or closely into the motivation for their practicing them. Nembe Christians should be encouraged by the pastoral care giver to take the word of God seriously and above tradition. The pastoral care giver should intimate young people with the biblical perspective of marriage from their young age. Organized and structured pre-marital counseling should be made compulsory for any intending couple, no matter their status in church. The pastoral care giver should encourage Christians to be bold anywhere, any time and in any situation to defend their faith. The pastoral care giver should intensify his or her efforts in responding to the challenges of Nembe traditional marriage practices. He or she should also live out the ideal Christian marriage even in the midst of the tensed traditional marriage practices, in order to be an example to others. More research should be conducted in regard to the motivation towards the strong practices of Nembe traditional marriage practices despite the numerous challenges. In addition and for easier research, unpublished materials on important issues in Nembe like marriage practices should be formally published to help in work references, as this posed great difficulty in this study.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Nembe traditional marriage practices had brought many challenges to Nembe people including Christians. Having high level of awareness about Nembe traditional marriage practices and effective pastoral care responses to them had not yet solved the challenges posed by the traditional marriage practices. Marriages were still operated on the survival of the “endurest” not on mutual love, as desirable of an ideal marriage. The problems were affecting both the male and female thus, leading to instability in marriages.

The most affected victims were innocent children born into the culture-driven-crisis homes who were being psychologically, socially and academically affected, and maritally biased. It behooved on Nembe people especially Christians, to put into practice

the biblical guidelines and instructions concerning marriage relationship. The church also should expand its horizon of pastoral care response towards the challenges emanating from the Nembe traditional marriage practices.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Since the Nembe people were very much aware of the types and contents of their traditional marriage practices, and were still practicing them keenly despite the numerous and high rate of challenges associated with them, steps should be taken by the pastoral care giver to inquire deep or closely into the motivation for their practicing them.
2. Nembe Christians should be encouraged by the pastoral care giver to take the word of God seriously and above tradition.
3. The pastoral care giver should intimate young people of the biblical perspectives of marriage from their young age. Organized and structured pre-marital counseling should be made compulsory for any intending couple, no matter their status in church.
4. The pastoral care giver should encourage Christians to be bold anywhere, any time and in any situation to defend their faith and belief in the word of God.
5. Pastoral care giver should intensify his or her efforts in responding to the challenges of Nembe traditional marriage practices.

6. The pastoral care giver should also live out the ideal Christian marriage even in the midst of the tensed traditional marriage practices, in order to be an example to others.
7. More research should be conducted in regard to the motivation towards the strong practices of Nembe traditional marriage despite the numerous challenges.
8. In addition and for easier research, unpublished materials on important issues in Nembe like marriage practices should be formally published to help in work references, as this posed great difficulty in this study.