

AN EVALUATION OF THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE
IN NIGERIA TODAY

NBTS
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MATS

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

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE COURSE REQUIREMENT
MASTER OF ARTS IN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES (M.A.T.S.)

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JUNE 2007

07-0739

ABSTRACT

This thesis is on the Evaluation of the concept of marriage and divorce in Nigeria today. The study aimed at examining the rate of divorce in this country, knowing the root cause of divorce and seeking for Biblical solution.

Under this topic effort has been made to observe biblical view of Marriage both in the old and New Testament, the view of Christian forefathers as regards marriage and divorce, types of marriage in Nigeria and particularly emphasis has been laid on Christian marriage, the concept of marriage especially the general concept and the essential features of marriage has been put in to consideration, the process of marriage, causes of divorce in marriage and its effects have not been left behind. The method used in carrying out this research work is questionnaire. The questionnaire is draft and being sent out to various people in a particular Nigerian Baptist Church in Nigeria to bring about their opinion regards marriage, and divorce. Evaluation are being made on the response to the questionnaire through percentage, statistics e.g. bar chart and relevant tables. The result is not far fetched, it goes thus: about 86.7% responded that Christian marriage should be permanent for life time. The greater percentage of 81.3% agreed that childlessness should not be a reason in terminating marriage relationship. 72% of the respondents said No, to the idea of a

necessary divorce in Christians marriage. To sum it up, according to the saying by our forefathers that as it is in the beginning, it is now and so shall it be till the ages past. Marriage has been design right from the creation and it has been continued like that and it will never cease till Christ come, but remember when the Pharisee were arguing with Christ on the issue as to give their wife certificate of divorce. Jesus told them but in the beginning it is not like that "For what God has joined together let no one put asunder (Matthew 19:6)."

Conclusion

The institution of marriage has been a life-long in the history of creation. Marriage is not a man made but it was established by God in the garden of Eden for a purpose of companionship, procreation and sexual fulfillment that supposed to be carried out by man in this world. Marriage as known through God's word is a life time contract which supposed not to be carried out with frivolity and unseriousness. Marriage is a commitment between two parties in which each must struggle to fulfill day in day out. Marriage according to this write up, is not to be seen as give and take or as trial and error. God design marriage so that couple will be together for life time and till death do them part. But it is quite unfortunate today that things are turning upside down, the institution of marriage, has become a man damaged experience. Each individual should make effort to see that their home becomes what God wants it to be, each home should be well rooted and firm in the Lord. Home supposed not to be a battlefield between husband and wife.

Even though there may be disagreement between both parties it must be solved amicably or going to the Lord in prayer who is the author of the home. He did not have interest in a broken home because it was not design like that. God who instituted home wants home where peace would reign, and where children would be taught in the way of the Lord. Thus reflect a Christian writer and composer of congregational songs B.H 377 56 edition: "God give us Christian homes!

"Homes where the Bible is loved and taught, Homes where the Master's will is sought, Homes crowned with beauty thy love hath wrought: God give us Christian homes; God, give us Christian homes!"¹

A broken home does not left without its own peculiar scar. Divorce affects a lots of things in marriage, it destroys home, its effects on the couple, children, extended families, church and society can not be overemphasized. Divorce has cause a lot of damage to many home in this country, and particularly to the children. The effects of divorce on the children is not a thing to write about.

If marriage is a spiritual affair then the death of it calls for renewal from God who can save, heal, forgive and restore. Divorce is a painful experience, that brings loneliness. The pain can be equated with the thorn in the flesh and only the grace of God can heal and renew.²

Recommendations

In view of the fact that marriage and divorce is a reality in this country, I strongly recommend that different teaching, seminar, symposium be offered on marriage in our various churches and our society at least once in a quarter as this will minimize the rate of divorce. Also, a good counselling section be conducted by our church leaders e.g. Clergy, Bishop, Apostle etc at pre-marital and marital level that will enhance drastic change in marital relationship. That the

¹Walter Hines Sims Baptist Hymnal (Nashville, Tennessee: Convention Press 1956), 377.

² Lateju, 3.

clergyman in collaboration with the government should make their effort to work together and resolve that termination of marriage relationship by our law court is not the lasting solution to marriage problem. That emphasis should be laid by court personnel and clergy man on marriage bond during marriage ceremony so as to create more fear in the heart of people concerning divorce. That each individual should take his/her marriage seriously, work together, pray together and to see that peace is being maintained in their family. That Christ be seen at the center of our family.

Also forgiveness should be seen as a means to resolve conflict between couples in the home. For the fact that divorce is an abuse and shame to our contemporary society, the government should look critically about the issue and make instant change. Because of known and unknown factors that cause divorce in some homes, prayer could not be left behind.

Therefore, I strongly recommends that each couple should take his/her prayer life very seriously and they should have room for family altar in their respective home. That the individual should handle his/her marriage, with care and be serious about it. And finally whenever the problems crept into the family we should consult God in prayer who is the author of the home.