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# The conundrum of same-sex marriage: Issues in moral philosophy and its implications for the church in Nigeria

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## Abstract

There have been deep level controversies around the issue of same-sex marriage globally. This has pitched different people in two identifiable schools of thought. One believes that same sex marriage is a deep aberration to the customary concept of marriage, while the other argues that same-sex marriage should be legitimized, due to the fact that none acceptance depicts homophobic attitude. They see it as a gross violation of human rights. The paper applied historical and sociological methodology as its research design. The main objective of the paper was to examine the prevalence of same sex marriage and homosexual activities in Nigeria, with the view to discouraging it due to the common harms both to man and the society. The paper also examined the position of the Christian scriptures with respect to the practice of same sex marriage. It is recommended that same sex marriage should not be accepted since it negates the essence of heterosexual marriage. Same sex marriage gives a wrong understanding to the purpose for which marriage was established. That among others includes principally, procreation (“go and multiply”). In addition, “male and female were created for each other and not male for male or female for female”. The paper finally recommends that the church should be at the vanguard of condemning same sex marriage and homosexual activities, just like it has been sanctioned in the Nigerian Penal Code.

**Keywords:** Church; Homosexuality; Morality; Nigeria; Same-Sex Marriage

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## 1. Introduction

Same-sex marriage has gradually taken the front burner in most contemporary marriage discuss globally. This among other factors is based on the fact that the same-sex marriage proponents have regrouped into a formidable social and political force. This is evident in the series of legal contentions that has been initiated by them in several nations of the world. There appear to be a neat network of agitations spanning through the different strata of the developed nations. Although the clamour for legitimacy is not popular in most developing nations of the world, this cannot be seen as authentic evidence in the argument with respect to less preponderance of the fight to entrench same sex marriage in those nations. The ethical responsibility bestowed on the Church as the “guard fly” of the society, demands that she lends a formidable voice in the on-going debate on same-sex marriage.

The church should see herself as the harbinger of morality, and according to Oderinde (2014: 70) as the “salt and light” of the society (Matthew 5:13-16). The basic functions of salt and light include among others, savour, taste, preservation, healing and illumination. Suffice to say clearly that if these variables are present and adequately appropriated by anyone or any society, then that individual or society stands to gain tremendously. The church must be ready to confront the issue of same-sex marriage. This depth of zeal and passion on the part of the church to entrench legitimate ethical and moral values must be extended to other vices in the society. The issue of same-sex marriage, like others, appears to have generated unwholesome morbid debate, and sometimes, misconceptions, encapsulated in misinformation and immoral indulgence. It is the responsibility of the church to save the “gullible” from “swallowing” the seeming deadly “apple” dangling around him or her, no matter how beautiful it may appear.

This paper would attempt among other objectives to examine the history of same-sex marriage, a consideration of some countries where this has been legalized and the harm of same-sex marriage. It would consider the position of some developing nations in the sub-Saharan Africa with regards to same-sex marriage. The paper would also examine the negative impact of same sex-marriage and the position of the bible on same-sex marriage. It is important to note that terms like homosexuality, lesbianism and heterosexuality would be used interchangeably. The conclusion would advance the common perspective of the church with regards to same-sex marriage. The origin of the on-going debate about the legitimacy of the same-sex marriage can be well articulated as we examine the history of the gay rights movement. This would be discussed in one of the subsequent sections.

## 2. Conceptual framework

It would be apposite to briefly examine some of the terminologies by which same sex marriage has been called. This is done with the view to ascertaining the correct interpretation in both literary and contextual discourse. “Same sex marriage” means the coming together of persons of the same sex with the purpose of living together as husband and wife or for other purposes of same sexual relationship (Same Sex Marriage Prohibition Act,

2014). By implication, this presupposes a situation whereby a male marries a male or a female to a female. This is contrary to the original plan and purpose of God for humanity.

## 2.1. Common terms associated with same-sex marriage

The basic attempt in this section is to briefly define some common terms that are often used, sometimes interchangeably, within the context of same-sex marriage. The purpose is to articulate the common registers regularly used within the discourse of same sex marriage. Some of these terms would likely be used in this paper. The literary definitions are gleaned from Hornby, (2015). Some of the common terms are examined below:

*Same-sex marriage:* Involvement in same-sex relationship. That is relationship involving people of the same sex. That is either male to male or female to female.

*Homogeneous marriage:* This is the opposite of the type of marriage described earlier on. It refers to marriage between the same sexes.

*Lesbianism:* It refers to sexual attraction and sexual relationship between women. That is woman to woman.

*Homosexuals:* This has to do with someone who is sexually attracted to members of his or her own sex. It means sexual attraction or activity among members of the same sex. This could be among females or male to male. It is understood as one who in adult life is motivated by “a definite preferential erotic attraction to members of the same sex and who usually (but not necessarily engages in overt sexual relations with them” (Marmor, 1980:5).

*Homophobia attitude:* This refers to a strong disapproval or fear of homosexuality, gay and lesbians.

*Gay-marriage:* This is the type of marriage between members of the same sex, especially a man. This is also often used interchangeably to refer to same-sex marriage. This is between people of the same sex, usually conducted as a secular civil ceremony or in a religious setting.

*Sodomy:* This refers to an offensive term for anal intercourse. It is an offensive term for sexual intercourse with an animal.

*LGBT:* Means Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons.

*Bisexual:* It refers to sexual attraction or behaviour towards male and females, or sexual attraction towards people of any sex.

*Transgender:* This is a person whose gender identity differs from the sex the person had or was identified as having at birth.

## 2.2. Brief history of same-sex marriage

It is important to note, however, that various forms of same-sex marriage took place around the world. It will suffice to affirm that same-sex union existed in Ancient Greece (Karlen, 1980; Neill, 2009) and Rome (Lahey

and Kevin, 2000). Apart from this, similar occurrence was noted in ancient Mesopotamia (Dynes and Stephen, 1992) and regions of China, notably around the Fujian province and within ancient Europe (Hinsch, 1990).

According to Karlen (1980:93) between the years 1000 and 1500, "as Europe began to experience greater urbanization, evidence of homosexual activity increased. From the late sixteenth to the early nineteenth century, sexual deviation grew in England and France". This shows that the history of same sex marriage is a long one and it cuts across races, nations, religious and cultural affiliations.

However, in the history of Christianity, same sex marriage is decisively frowned at. The climax of the level to which the act of same sex marriage was abhorred within the then Roman Empire was observed by Eskridge (1993). According to him, same-sex marriage was outlawed by the Christian Emperors Constantius II and Constans on December 16, 342 AD. The law was quite explicit in its affirmation against same sex marriage among men. It stated clearly (Eskridge, 1993: 99-125):

*When a man "marries" in the manner of a woman, a "woman" about to renounce men, what does he wish, when sex has lost its significance, when the crime is one which it is not profitable to know, when Venus is changed into another form, when love is sought and not found? We order the statutes to arise, the laws to be armed with an avenging sword, that those infamous persons who now, or who hereafter may be, guilty, may be subject to exquisite punishment.*

The implication of the above position is encapsulated in the fact that the Christian emperors were opposed to same-sex marriage. Other Christian emperors that demonstrated grave disapproval with regards to same-sex marriage were Valentinian II, Theodoisus and Arcadius, who condemned those involved in same-sex marriage to be burned alive before the public (Young, 1994). On his part, Emperor Justinian used them as scapegoat for different problems that bedeviled the society like famines, pestilences and earthquakes (Tulchin, 2007).

According to Gay et al. (2015:1) attitudes toward same-sex marriage have changed dramatically over the last decade. U.S. adults are becoming more supportive of same-sex marriage, and there are a number of reasons for this increase. In the 1988 it is believed that about 12.5% of the American public agreed that same-sex marriages are acceptable (Smith et al., 2015). However, by 2003, one third of the American public supported same-sex marriage (Pew Research Center, 2013). Today, public opinion polls show that half or more of the public support same-sex marriage (Pew Research Center, 2013; Smith et al., 2015). These polls also demonstrate that support for same-sex marriage has received an astronomical increase across all different strata and groups over the last decade (e.g., Smith et al., 2015). In addition, a number of States now recognize same-sex marriage as legal. Currently, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that same-sex couples have a right to marry anywhere in the United States (Gay et al., 2015).

According to McCarthy (2015), on July 19, 2011, President Barack Obama announced that his administration would support a bill by Senator Feinstein to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). Finally, on May 9, 2012, President Obama became the first US president to declare his support for gay marriage. According to McCarthy (2015), Obama stated, "at a point, I have just concluded that for me personally it is important for me to go ahead and affirm that I think same-sex couples should be able to get married". This was

followed by the US Supreme Court declaration on June 26, 2013 that the Defense of Marriage Act section which defined marriage solely as a legal union between a man and a woman, as unconstitutional. This declaration, in the opinion of the writers, drew strength from the initial affirmation made by President Obama.

From the foregoing, the tendency is to assume that same sex marriage is only prevalent in the region referred to above. This should likely not be regarded as the absolute truth. Same sex marriage is equally prevalent in other parts of the world. This includes different parts of Europe and Africa. The following section would examine same-sex marriage in Africa.

### 2.3. Same-sex marriage in Africa

The prevalence of homosexual practices and same sex marriage is perceived as not quite as alarming in Africa as it is in Europe and America. Some hinge this on the strict position canvassed by the African culture, while another school of thought contends that there is some level of prevalence of the act in Africa, but perpetuated in secrecy due to the stringent laws. The argument of Kutsch (2013) indicates that homosexuality is still a crime in thirty eight African countries. The above position tends to exonerate most African countries from the present spread of homosexuality or same sex marriage. The authenticity of this claim appears to be debatable, due to the fact that some argue that same-sex marriage is on the increase in some African nations. This position is justified by US Amnesty International, which argued that despite the trend against gay rights, there is the prevalence of same-sex sexuality in sub-Saharan Africa. It further argued that, since 2004, countries like Cape Verde, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe and Seychelles have decriminalized homosexuality (Kutsch, 2013). On the other hand, she presents the argument that; many African leaders like those of Zimbabwe, Malawi and Liberia have attempted to paint homosexuality as alien to African culture. However, it is important to note that South Africa is the first African country and the fifth in the world to mandate marriage equality under the law.

**Table1.** Catalogue of some African nations and the laws on homosexuality or same sex marriage

S/N	COUNTRY	CRIMINAL PROVISIONS	RECOGNITION OF SAME-SEX MARRIGE
1	Algeria	Between two months and two years imprisonment and a fine of 500 and 2,000 Algeria Dinars	Not recognized.
2	Angola	Confinement in an asylum, confinement in a workhouse or Agricultural colony, pledge of good conduct and disqualification from the practice of a profession.	Same sex marriage is not recognized.
3	Benin	One to three years imprisonment and a fine of XOF 100,000-500,000, which is about US\$210-\$1,050	Not recognized
4	Botswana	Term not exceeding seven years. Attempt is punishable on conviction with up to five years imprisonment.	Not recognized.
5	Burkina Faso	No law against homosexual relations.	Not recognized

6	Burundi	Punishable by three months to two years imprisonment and/or by a fine of BIF50, 000-100,000, about US\$33-\$66.	Constitution prohibits same-sex marriage.
7	Cameroon	Six months to five years imprisonment and a fine of XAF20, 000-200,000.	Not recognized
8	Cape Verde	The penal code does not criminalize homosexual acts.	Same sex marriage is not recognized.
9	Central African Republic	Six months to two years imprisonment or a fine of XOF 150,000-600,000.	Not recognized.
10	Chad	No law on same sex marriage found.	Not recognized.
11	Comoros	Punishable by one to two years imprisonment and a fine of KMF 50,000-1,000,000.	Not recognized.
12	Democratic Republic of Congo	Not explicitly illegal, but the Penal Code prohibits violations of morality. This is used against gays and lesbians. Up to five years imprisonment.	Constitution prohibits same sex marriage.
13	Republic of Congo	No information found.	Not recognized
14	Cote d'Ivoire	No laws against homosexuals	Not recognized
15	Djibouti	Appears to be legal as there are no provisions in the Penal Code dealing with such.	Not recognized.
16	Egypt	Detention of up to one year and/or a fine of up to 300 EGP.	Not recognized.
17	Eritrea	When convicted the court has the discretion to impose sentence ranging from ten days to three years imprisonment.	Not recognized.
18	Ethiopia	Sentence ranges from ten days to three years.	Not recognized.
19	Gabon	Appears legal as there is no provision in the Penal Code.	Not recognized.
20	Gambia	Punishable by fourteen-year prison term.	Not recognized.
21	Ghana	Maximum of three years prison term.	Not recognized.
22	Guinea	Six months to three years imprisonment and a fine of CNF100, 000-1,000,000.	Not recognized.
23	Guinea Bissau	The Penal Code does not criminalize homosexual acts.	Same-sex marriage is not recognized.
24	Kenya	Punishable on conviction by fourteen-year prison term.	Not recognized.
25	Lesotho	Sodomy is one of the offenses in which someone may be arrested without a warrant.	No information located
26	Libya	Punishment is by imprisonment for up to five years.	Not recognized.
27	Madagascar	No law against homosexual.	Not recognized.
28	Malawi	Punishable by five years prison term.	Not recognized.

29	Mali	Punishes homosexual acts by Muslim men with death by stoning. A homosexual act by two women is punished with three months to two years imprisonment and a fine of MR05, 000-60,000.	Not recognized.
30	Mauritius	Penal servitude not exceeding five years.	No information available.
31	Morocco	Punished with a term of imprisonment of between six months and three years and a fine of 120-1,000 dirhams.	Not recognized.
32	Mozambique	Confinement in an insane asylum, confinement in a workhouse or agricultural colony, probation, pledge of good conduct, and/or disqualification from the practice of a profession.	Same sex marriage is not recognized in Mozambique.
33	Namibia	No information on penalties imposed was located.	No information available.
34	Niger	No provision of the Penal Code dealing with the issue.	Not recognized.
35	Nigeria	Offence is punishable with a fourteen years prison term. An attempt is punishable on conviction by a seven year prison term of seven years.	Same sex marriage and civil unions are prohibited and violation on conviction is punishable by fourteen years prison term.
36	Rwanda	No laws against homosexual relations.	Not recognized.
37	Sao Tome & Principe	New Penal Code enacted in 2012 does not criminalize homosexuality.	Not determined if same sex marriage is recognized.
38	Senegal	Punished with one to two years imprisonment and a fine of XOF100, 000-1,500,000.	Not recognized.
39	Seychelles	Punishable by fourteen years prison term.	No information available.
40	Sierra Leone	At the discretion of the Court, to be kept in Penal Servitude for Life or any Term not less than Ten Years.	No information available.
41	Somalia	Imprisonment from three months to three years.	Not recognized.
42	South Africa	Legalized same sex activity in 1998.	Recognizes same sex marriage.
43	South Sudan	Punishable on conviction by up to ten years in prison and a fine.	No information available.
44	Sudan	If the offence is committed the first time sodomy is punished with flogging by one hundred lashes and liable to five years imprisonment. Second time punished with flogging by one hundred lashes and imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years. The third time shall be punished with death or life imprisonment.	Not recognized
45	Swaziland	No information regarding penalties on offenders.	No information available.

46	Tanzania	Punishable by thirty years to life imprisonment. An attempt is punishable on conviction by a minimum of twenty years imprisonment.	Information not available.
47	Togo	Punished by one to three years imprisonment and a fine of TZS100, 000-500,000.	Not recognized.
48	Tunisia	Punished with imprisonment for three years.	Not recognized.
49	Uganda	Punishable on conviction by life imprisonment. Attempt on conviction is punishable by a seven-year prison term.	Same sex marriage is punishable on conviction by life imprisonment.
50	Zambia	Punishable by fourteen years life imprisonment. Attempt on conviction punishable by seven to fourteen years imprisonment.	No information available.
51	Zimbabwe	Punishable up to one year of imprisonment and/or a fine.	No information available.

Source: Law Library of Congress (2014)

Table 1 indicates several African nations where same sex marriage is not recognized. The immediate question would be whether the non-recognition of same sex marriage is enough justification for any claim of its non-existence in these African nations. The onus of proof might be a herculean attempt. However, the fact remains that the practice may be under grave cover due to the depth of sanctions and punishment that perpetrators would have to face on conviction. On the strength of this, it is logical to conclude that homosexual practices, and same sex marriages are likely to be prevalent in African nations, albeit, under grave “cover”. Could the same claim be made concerning Nigeria with regards to homosexuality and same sex marriage? The attempt in the next section is to consider the situation in Nigeria with regards to homosexual practice and same sex marriage.

#### 2.4. Same-sex marriage in Nigeria

It is commonly argued that very few people are open about their orientation towards gay and same sex marriage. It is believed that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons face severe and unique legal and social challenges in Nigeria. The basic reason for this is due to the fact that the Centre for Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (2014) criminalizes all types of same-sex unions and same-sex marriage in the country. The statutory strength for the decision to criminalize same-sex marriage emanated from the bill passed by the Nigerian Senate. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of November, 2011, the Senate passed the “Same-sex Marriage Prohibition Bill”. The same bill was passed by the House of Representatives on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May, 2013. The bill was eventually signed into law by the then President, Goodluck Jonathan on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January, 2014 (Radner and Goddard, 2017). They further argued that the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act consist of the following:

1. A marriage contract or civil union entered between persons of the same sex is invalid and illegal and not recognized as entitled to the benefits of a valid marriage.



2. A marriage contract or civil union entered into between persons of same sex by virtue of a certificate issued by a foreign country is void and unenforceable in Nigeria.
3. The solemnization of any marriage or civil union entered into between persons of the same sex in any place of worship either in Church or Mosque or any other place or what so ever called in Nigeria is prohibited.
4. The registration of gay clubs, societies and organizations, their sustenance, processions and meetings are prohibited.
5. The public show of same sex amorous relationship directly or indirectly is prohibited.
6. A person who enters into same sex marriage contract or union is liable to 14 years imprisonment.
7. A person who registers, operates or participates in gay clubs, societies and organizations or directly or indirectly makes public show of same sex amorous relationship is liable to 10 years imprisonment.
8. A person or group of persons that witness, abet and aids the solemnization of same sex marriage or civil union, or supports the registration, operation and sustenance of gay clubs, societies, organizations, processions or meetings is liable to 10 years imprisonment.
9. "Civil union" for the purpose of this law, means any arrangement between persons of the same sex who live together as sex partners, and include such descriptions as adult independent relationships, caring partnerships, civil solidarity pacts, domestic partnerships, reciprocal beneficiary relationships, registered partnerships, significant relationships, stable unions, etc. (Centre for Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2014).

The above bill makes both male and female same sex practices illegal in Nigeria. The punishment in the twelve Northern States where the Shari'a Law is practiced is more severe. The maximum punishment in these States is death by stoning (Ostien, 2007). This law however, applies to all Muslims and others who voluntarily accepted the application of the Shari'a courts.

It is important to note that in spite of the penalty, some are still involved in same sex marriage activities. In August 2007, the Bauchi State Police arrested eighteen men. They were charged with addressing each other as women and also dressing as women. This is illegal under the Shari'a Penal Code (United States Department of State, 2009). It was also reported that on 12<sup>th</sup> of September, 2008, the names, addresses and photographs of the members of the House of Rainbow Metropolitan Community Church in Lagos, were published. This gay friendly church had some of the members threatened, stoned and beaten (Macaulay, 2017). The Pastor of the Church, Reverend Olajide Rowland Macaulay, a gay Pastor, is said to be running the church at 36/38 Yakoyo Street, Ojodu Berger, Lagos. He was reported as openly declaring that he was gay, and was accused of initiating new members into the gay club, while also running the church secretly (Macaulay, 2017). It is suspected that due to the level of sanctions and rejection of same sex and homosexual activities in Nigeria, Reverend Olajide Macaulay, was said to have relocated to Europe.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2017, fifty three men were also arrested in Kaduna for conspiring to attend a same sex wedding. According to Lui (2017) the defense lawyer for the group argued that they were mostly students.

Other Attorneys for those arrested argued that the arrested people were attending a birthday party (Neal, 2017; Conor, 2017). The report by Inyang (2017) highlights the position of homosexuality in Nigeria. Quoting the Director General of the National Orientation Agency (NOA) who stated that “our youths are now publicly clamouring for the legislation of gay marriage ....” On this note, he opined that the Federal Government has said that “homosexuality is on the increase in the country, as Nigerian youths now have more tolerance towards it”. He condemned the wearing of tattoos, dreadlocks hairstyle, sagging trousers and the painting of hair among the youths, both males and females.

Another report on the prevalence of homosexual activities in Nigeria was the case of Michael Ighodaro, a gay activist who was violently attacked in his home city. He finally relocated to the U.S to seek asylum (Gander, 2017). The 30 year old, recounted how he has been a gay right from the age of 17, and was rejected by the parents. He presently serves as an Assistant Professor in Global LGBTI Studies at The new School University in New York. He is among activists fighting for laws and attitudes towards gay and other homosexuals’ activities in the world (Gander, 2017).

It is worth noting that there is the prevalence of same sex marriage and homosexual activities in Nigeria. This position is collaborated by Sessou (2012) who posited that most people who are involved in homosexual activities are not bold enough to openly declare their identities. However, he further opined that homosexuality is being practiced in some parts of the world including Nigeria. The account of a gay was also recounted by Bademosi (2015). Although the character was anonymous, he recounted how he had earlier on gone into a heterosexual relationship, which ended in marriage. The marriage lasted for six years but later led to divorce when the spouse discovered that he was gay. The prevalence of gay activities was also reported by Nwaubani (2017). Referring to the Thomson Reuters Foundation, this suggested that the growing acceptance of gay in Nigeria indicates some level of hope. This, it further argued would ensure human rights advocacy in Nigeria.

The prevalence of same sex marriage and homosexual activities has continued to generate different arguments. While some see it as a natural way these individuals were “wired”, that is their physiological make-up, others feel it is offensive to nature, therefore out rightly negates the plan of God for heterosexual relationship. On this note, Gadpaille (1980:354) opines that “from an evolutionary perspective, homosexuality as a preferential or obligatory mode must by definition be biological deviant”. This divide notwithstanding, the paper would examine some arguments for and against same sex marriage with the view to identifying some common reasons for its prohibition in Nigeria.

### **3. Reasons for the prohibition of same-sex marriage in Nigeria**

As stated earlier on, the Nigerian Penal Code spelt out deep sanctions for same sex and homosexual practices. These include 14 years imprisonment for those found guilty and 7 years for attempted homosexual activities. The argument by most homosexuals is that they were born “gay”. The challenge with this claim is that it gives them some false comfort, and therefore they do not feel any responsibility to desire a change. Davis (2004:115)

citing a poll conducted by the medical journal in 1977 surmised that homosexuality is a pathological rather than a normal condition.

Some of causes of homosexuality have been attributed to genetic or chromosomal factors however, this has been grossly repudiated by Money (1980:66) when he averred that “there is no evidence to support the hypothesis that “homosexual of any degree or type are chromosomally discrepant from heterosexuals”. Others have attributed it to imbalances in sex hormones while others attribute it to psychological factors (Tourney, 1980: 42). Other causes may include family psychopathology which suggests the combination of a domineering father or a hostile mother (Davis, 2004: 118). It is pertinent to note that an individual’s personal choices could contribute to his or her homosexual disposition.

Some of the reasons for sanctioning same-sex marriage may include but not limited to the following:

1. It is not often seen as ideal marriage. According to the TFP Student Action (2015), since it is a union between two men or two women, it denies “the self-evident biological, physiological and psychological differences between men and women which find their complementarity in marriage. It also denies the specific primary purpose of marriage: the perpetuation of the human race and raising of children”.
2. It is contrary to natural law. This is due to the fact that marriage is governed by natural law. Man can relate with what is morally good or bad, hence he could pursue what is good and avoid what is evil.
3. A child of same sex marriage is denied the clear meaning of either his natural father or mother. This could be seen as depriving the child of his or her best interest of being raised by natural mother or father.
4. If permitted, same sex marriage would give authenticity to homosexual activities. The implication is that some clear moral values within our culture would be affected while traditional marriage would be devalued.
5. One of the arguments of same sex marriage advocates is that their struggle is a human rights issue. This may not be tenable since most times two individuals of different races may never wish to be united in same sex marriage.
6. It is a sterile union that more often than not cannot create a family. The so called spouses cannot have children unless they employ other means, artificial or surrogates.
7. If accepted, it would likely indulge others who have been clamouring for freedom in other areas unacceptable to the society. For example, incest, pedophilia, and other unnatural sexual behaviours.
8. It is argued as contrary to the purpose and intent of God. God created male and female (Genesis 1:28-29, Mark 10:6-7). He was against the action of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24-25).

Apart from the above, Slick (2017) gave some reasons how gay marriage can harm others. They include but not limited to the following:

- a. It brings huge financial and emotional stress; since they can sue others for objecting to allow them have access to their property and others.
- b. It leads to high health risk. HIV/AIDS is high among them due to great number of sex partners.
- c. They attempt to force their minority moral views on majority. This is ethically unfair.
- d. It is a redefinition of sexual morality.
- e. Could drastically reduce the number of children born in the society.
- f. It intimidates and forces religious people to accept their position. They force their demands on others with the claim of human rights.
- g. It influences government to change laws in the society, especially those that are to their advantage, irrespective of others in the society.
- h. The children who are adopted into same sex homes are often exposed to psychological embarrassment and other forms of ridicule.

#### **4. Same sex marriage and the issue of moral philosophy**

There is no gainsaying the fact that same sex marriage or issues in homosexuality is a moral problem. This is borne out of the fact that there are inherent moral issues innate in the nature of man who apparently must heed these moral sensibilities in order to assuage the problematic nature arising from man's desire to harness his social obligations. In essence, therefore, morality simply addresses the value system and brings these not only to the benefit of man, but the society at large. What this presupposes is that same sex marriage is condemnable in as much as it fails to align with the structure put in place by God for the purpose of procreation and human development.

It is instructive to note that morality propels humans to a better ideal. This means that one must strive to maintain a balance in the ecosphere and a balance in all human relationships. It presupposes a longing for value in life and that life is not meaningless or accidental (Oderinde, 2014). In this sense, character formation and development, ethical and moral principles are the hallmarks of sane human relationships and it is expected that sex also falls within the framework of this discourse.

Sex is a moral issue and it is jealously guarded and cherished by people as a tool established by God for procreation. As such, it regarded as sacred (Kayode, 1986). In the same vein, the Scriptures both the Bible and the Qur'an are explicit on the sacrality of sex. The Biblical injunction "Do not commit adultery" (Exodus 20: ) and the Qur'anic injunction "And come not near unto adultery. Lo it is an abomination and an evil way" (Qur'an 17: 32) is a sacrosanct command. Also, among the Africans, two things are necessary before marriage. They are (1) abstinence from sexual intercourse and (2) some degree of sublimation of the instinct of sex (Rigby, 1966:61).

Traditionally, sex is only permitted within the ambit of marriage and all religions and cultures support this view through strict social sanctions which to a large extent discouraged premarital sexual gratification or any form of sex, especially, same sex marriage. Among the Africans, the principle of marriage as a holy estate and

an institution of God hold sway. Consequently, marriage to be done in line with the tradition of the forebears and has to receive the approbation of both families (Maciver and Page, 1964). This discourages any form of same sex within the African culture. Morality is of essence and this helps in safeguarding human relationships. Hence, moral philosophy, helps to regulate and harmonize human life by providing ideals to guide, inspire and challenge the character building and gives certainty and stability in a rapidly changing world (Oderinde, (2014: 70-71).

## **5. The role of the church**

According to Ayegboyin (2004:75) “there is hardly a more propitious time than at this moment for the church to be at war with the enigma militating against our common good. This will ensure restoration of the reputation and integrity of the nation and reshape hope”. The church should help in regulating human’s behavioural attitude in the society especially as it has to do with same sex marriage or any marriage that is not in compliance with the will of God. In fact the issue of same sex marriage or homosexuality is a cankerworm which need to be vigorously attacked and if need be annihilated. The church needs to develop a strong advocacy against this evil which is now tearing humanity apart in the name of expressing one’s fundamental human rights. The church should lead the war against this indecent act.

The church must emphasize justice, love for one another, peaceful coexistence unity, honesty truth e.t.c which are the crux of morality. The church should teach biblical ethics especially those that have to do with sexuality and human relationships. In this case, it will be possible to build a virile society which is devoid of human abuses.

Also, the church has to restore the consciousness. Thus According to Ayegboyin (2004: 76) the church has the sacred duty not only to provide the moral foundation but also has to be the conscience of the nation. There has to be an attitudinal change which will help in engendering a positive mental attitude as far as the issue of same sex marriage is concerned. It is in this perspective that Sirico (2003:3) opines that “the church must strive not only to instruct the mind but also must regulate by her precepts the life and morals of individuals. It is believed that “a house divided against itself cannot stand”, therefore, the church needs to close ranks and become an indivisible entity before it can win the war against same sex or gay marriages. The church should speak with one voice and eschew every form of division in her ranks. It is on this basis that the fight against same sex marriage could be won.

It is expedient on religious leaders to denounce the kind of religious practice that is not matched with high moral in private and public lives. The church should encourage people to find satisfaction and usher in a sense of ultimate meaning beyond material and physical gratification. Hence, the church should use the message of the cross to promote a modest and an austere lifestyle that negates the crass desire for same sex or gay marriage. In this regard, Davis (2004: 131) opines that the church should no compromise the fundamental teaching claiming that homosexuality or same sex marriage is contrary to the divine will for human sexuality. Therefore, to compromise at this stage abdicates the fundamental responsibility of the church, namely, to sound forth to the society a clear word from God, which transcends the shifting currents of human opinion and fashion.

More importantly, the church needs to sound forth the message of the power of divine grace to transform sinful attitudes. Hence, this transforming attitude according to Davis (2004: 132) “does not occur in a vacuum, rather, it requires the social transformation of a group of loving people who often support along the way”. In this sense, the church should not adopt a condemning posture towards people who have shown demonstrable remorse and are willing to abdicate sexual perversity.

The church should be the conscience of the people. Therefore, she should use her influence over people’s consciences to bridge the gap between religious ritualism and social morality. As such, the church should spear head a moral revolution and ethical re-orientation in the nation in order to bring about a sane society devoid of sexual perversity.

## 6. Conclusion

The position of the author is that when same sex marriage is juxtaposed with the moral intent of marriage, there appears to be an obvious disconnect. The implication is that the writer, drawing first and foremost from the Bible, safely concludes that it condemned same sex and homosexual activities. It is seen as immoral and unnatural, hence detestable (Leviticus 18:22). It is seen as shameful and indecent (Romans 1:26-27). Those involved in same sex marriage and homosexual activities are seen as unrighteous (1 Cor. 6:9).

The aspect of marriage is viewed basically from the perspective of male and female. The scripture is replete with various examples- Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, 1 Cor. 7:2-16, Ephesians 5:23-33. The implication from these scriptures is that same sex marriage is a perversion of the marriage institution, therefore should not be acceptable.

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