

ABSTRACT

CULTURAL PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE PRE-MARITAL SEX
AMONG THE YOUTH OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH,
LAFIA DISTRICT, NORTH EAST NIGERIA CONFERENCE

by

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Master of Arts in Leadership Project

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

CULTURAL PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE PRE-MARITAL SEX AMONG THE YOUTH OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH, LAFIA DISTRICT, NORTH EAST NIGERIA CONFERENCE

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To some people virginity is viewed as sacred and honorable, while to others it is not and cannot be. There is little to doubt that culture has a role to play in the sexual behaviors of young people. The high percentage of pregnancy in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Lafia, due to premarital activities is quite disturbing. These cases of unwanted pregnancies constitute serious problems for the youth, the family, the church and the society at large.

To make a proper investigation of the problem, 65 questionnaires were administered and personal interviews were conducted. All interviews were undertaken in a private environment and in the language of choice of the respondents. The interview guide had earlier been translated into Hausa, a language that dominates the Northern part of Nigeria.

Findings revealed that the predominant sources of sexual knowledge that negatively influenced the youths were media and friends. Cultural matters, like very high bride price and the inclusion of prohibited items, such as alcohol and pig, as bride price, encouraged the youths to engage in sexual immorality. It is, therefore, recommended that the home school be strengthened. Parents that are members of the church should not succumb to the cultural and pagan practices of demanding forbidden items as bride price. The leadership of the church should lay emphasis on youth's fellowship that puts a living relationship with God as top priority.

Adventist University of Africa

Babcock University Extension Campus

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A project
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To God be the glory, this work is humbly dedicated to God who has given me the strength and opportunity to achieve success in this work.

I also dedicate this to my dear wife Shepherdess Asneth Ezekiel Luka and our four lovely children: Nathaniel Luka, Alanza Luka, Jethro Luka and Tisere Luka. Their prayers and counseling gave me comfort during the four years of my studies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BAD	Barikin Abdullahi
GC	General Conference
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NENC	North East Nigeria Conference
SDA	Seventh- day Adventist
STDS	Sexually Transmitted Diseases Syndrome

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Finally, I thank God for having given me an opportunity to study the culture of Lafia people that is seen as a contributing factor to premarital activities in our churches. I believe this is where our young people need practical assistance. It may very well be the most difficult area for most people to overcome. Perhaps with the knowledge of the underlying factors, this study may help someone or the church.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

History has made it clear that the world is being engulfed by premarital activities. Young people are receiving from their culture the understanding that sex before marriage is perfectly acceptable. Very few are remaining virgins until marriage. George Barna of the Barna Research Group reveals that only 23 percent of the post baby boomer generation claims to be virgins. More than three-quarter admitted to having had sexual intercourse with another single person¹.

It is pertinent to note that entertainment and media are also playing a greater role in youth, bombarding youth with the messages that everyone should be sexually active and that sexual activity is essential. Enormous numbers of products are marketed, featuring scantily clad seductive women and men in romantic, not to say, explicit sexual pose. For example, pornography became a multibillion-dollar industry that includes pornographic magazines and novels, X-rated movie theaters and video stores “phone sex” and “computer sex.” Annual revenues from such products are estimated to be exceeding eight to twelve billion dollars a year and they are growing². The young people are exposed to this dangerous game.

The young people adopt the general world lifestyle of free sex and this could result easily in pre-marital sex, undermines and distorts the family institution as given in the Bible. God commands against pre-marital sex were given in order to protect

¹Josh McDowell and Bob Hosetler, *Handbook on Counseling Youth: A Comprehensive Guide for Equipping Youth Workers, Pastors, Teachers, and Parents* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 271.

²Ibid., 272.

unmarried people from unwanted pregnancies; from children born to parents who do not want them and to protect children from parents who are not prepared for them.

The greatest challenge to the youth here at Lafia in Nasarawa State is the cultural and traditional beliefs held by people in Northern part of Nigeria. Though it is common to find a young man who is a Christian, yet his parents are idol worshipers. And the surprising thing is that, Christian families would prefer to do certain things the cultural way. For example, items as alcohol, cigarettes and unclean animals like pigs are added to items required by the parents of a girl a young man wishes to marry plus huge bride-price.

In another development, when one walks on the street at night, you will witness some adult young unmarried ladies roaming the street with their short skim skirts. Such kind of dressing is often associated with prostitutes. This may explain why young men find it difficult to marry these young ladies that are perceived to have loose morals. The question still remains, why should a girl wear clothes that expose her underwear? Underwear's are private clothes that are not supposed to be seen in public. They make themselves objects of sex by dressing half naked.

Mathies added by saying that, when the boys see a girl half-naked they would think that the girl is advertising herself for sex. They feel the girl is an easy lady and she could easily be taken to bed.³ Commenting on indecent dressing Ellen White stated that Satan is constantly devising some new style of dress that shall prove an injury to physical and moral health.⁴ And she further stated against that Satan is the

³Mathias A. Kutai, *Challengers of Today's Youth: A Christian Perspective* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Oasis International, 2006), 85.

⁴E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1948), 4: 634-635.

designer of women fashions but God stepped in with a better plan for people simple, neat, practical, modest, healthful and convenient.⁵

Imagine, for a moment, a world without premarital sex. There would be no unwed mothers, there would be no unwanted pregnancies, and there would be no abortions. It is in the light of the above, that this dissertation sought to find out the factors that make young people fall prey to sex and suggest ways in which we can help young leaders “stand” or wait until they engage themselves in marriage.

Apparently there is high case of sexual immorality in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is believed that the high percentage of cases of pregnancy due to premarital activities is affecting the spirituality of the youths. The minutes of the church board indicate that more than fifty-five percent of cases of sexual immorality between the years 2008 to 2011 were as a result of pre-marital sex.⁶ This scenario could be replicated in many of the churches in the District. Added to the tendency among the youths to be involved in sexuality is the high bride price that sometimes make it almost impossible for genuine suitors to marry.⁷ In a way this has also led many of the youths to engage in unwholesome sexual relationships.

There is however the need for the parents and the youths to hear and to come to the understanding of Christian perception of sexuality. There is much to contend in terms of disciplining of the flesh. This study attempt to look at the factors that are responsible for promoting sexual activities before marriage and the strategy that can help to reduce this pre-marital sex to the barest minimum.

⁵Ibid., 345.

⁶Seventh-day Adventist Church, Lafia, *Record Book* No. 7.

⁷Chimezie A. Omeonu, *Marrying or a True Marriage* (Accra, Ghana: Advent Press, 2004), 67.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of pre-marital sex has negatively impacted the church and society. As a result of this, unwanted pregnancy has become rampant. At the church in Lafia District, the board was able to notice these developments as a result of cases handled related to fornication and out of wedlock pregnancies. Such have serious adverse impacts for the youth, the family, the image of the church and the society at large. These sexual activities that have occupied the minds of our youths, no doubt contribute to the weakening of spiritual standard of the church members. It has made the church to be looked with disdain by the society.

It is true that pre-marital sex has always been with us. What seems to be new is the swelling number of young girls who are engaged in this behavior. For instance, Brooks-Gunn and Furstenberg report an increase in the percentage of young people involved in pre-marital sex in one country from 7 percent in 1950 to 44 percent in 1982⁸. In view of this, it may be pertinent to ask: what is it that promotes pre-marital sex among the youth of Seventh-day Adventist Church, Lafia district? What cultural values, be it foreign or local, are informing this recent attitude? Answers to these questions will provide better insights as the church grapples with this disturbing phenomenon.

The Aim of Study

The aim of this study is to study the cultural practices that promote pre-marital sex among the youths of Seventh-day Adventist church, Lafia, Lafia District.

The study will pursue the following objectives of the study as follows:

⁸Susan Moore and Doreen Rosenthal, *Sexuality in Adolescence* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 1.

1. To examine the various cultural practices related to marriage among the people of Lafia.
2. To identify the various ways those cultural practices affect young people of marriageable age.
3. To identify the sources of knowledge among the young people on pre-marital sex.
4. To investigate the degree of pre-marital sex among the youths.
5. To develop an enlightenment programme that will provide the youths with additional knowledge on the dangers of pre-marital sex.
6. To recommend ways and means to helping the youth leaders, parents and the church leaders to deal with this cultural practices that are contributing to this problem.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions for this study:

1. What are the various cultural practices related to marriage among the young people of Lafia District?
2. To what extent has cultural practice contributed to pre-marital sex among the young people of Lafia District?
3. Why is there a large degree of pre-marital sex among young people of Lafia District?
4. In what way the youth are enlightened on the danger of pre-marital sex?

Significance of the Study

After identifying the cultural factors, and other related factors that have contributed to the high percentage of sexual activities at Lafia Church, and proffered solutions, this study will benefit the following:

The Parents: Those Christian parents that since the purpose of this study is to discourage cultural practices which will lessen the delinquency of the youths in the area of sexual immorality, the study will help the church to have fewer cases of pre-marital sex and abortions today. are doing certain things in the cultural way asking a young man to bring alcohol, cigarettes, pigs added to items required by parents of a girl, if he wishes to marry will also benefit. This study will make parents to think and to know that Godly way of responding to a young man asking to marry their daughter.

This will serve as additional resource materials to other scholars and pastors who might want to investigate the concern or issues that will be raised in this study. Other scholars may want to explore the state of those youths that have had babies out of wed- lock and to find ways to restore their faith and dignity. They will be aware of the extent of the social problem that is prevalent in many homes, schools and in the community.

The Youth: It is also good for the youth to understand the spiritual value and responsibility of abstinence, not just for the sake of avoiding consequences that the youth will face but as a divine mandate as well. Therefore the research will also benefit them.

Delimitation of the Study

This is a peculiar problem to Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Lafia District, North-East Nigeria Conference, from 2009 to 2012. However, this study will only be

limited to cultural practices that promote pre-marital sex among the youth of Seventh day Adventist church, Lafia District.

Methodology of the Study

The research is a program development type of project and the research design is descriptive which involves the use of primary and secondary sources. It surveys cultural practices that promote pre-marital sex among the youths of Seventh-day Adventist Church, Lafia District of North East Nigeria Conference, Bukuru in Northern Nigeria. Being quantitative research it made use of questionnaire administration and interviews. Interviewers were young boys and girls with minimum of secondary school education, previously trained to administer the interview guide.

All interviews were undertaken in a private environment as possible and they were conducted in the language of choice of the respondents. The interview guide had earlier been translated into one of the three major languages (Hausa) which dominates the Northern part of Nigeria.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF PRE-MARITAL SEX

Introduction

Adolescence is considered as one of the most critical stages in an individual life, during which biological and psychosocial changes, together with many eventful transitions occur. And the changes may lead to a deleterious situation in the society. For this reason, adolescent health has become a growing worldwide concern, in which books have been written down by various writers concerning pre-marital sex. Why it becomes world concern, is because of some cultural practices and also one of the factors which this study focuses on.

This chapter is mainly the review of this related literature such as culture and sexuality, youth and sexuality, youth and premarital sex. Although other sources and background will be cited in this chapter, most prominently, the biblical view will be emphasized because it is the background to the whole issue. That is, the research is done as a result of concern over the erosion of the biblical ideal of abstinence until marriage no matter how cultural practice may lead one to premarital sex.

Pre-marital Sexual Behaviors

From about 2000BC to as late as the 1950s, some world religions, as well as science, believed that a loss of semen and female vaginal fluids was the cause of unexplainable pathologies among individuals.⁹As a result, any type of sexual activity outside of marital intercourse for the purpose of procreation was considered evil and

⁹McDowell and Hosetler, 271.

was discouraged. As important as the scientific and medical advances concerning sexuality are, they are not commonly thought to be the driving force behind the increased acceptance of premarital sex. It not until the middle of the sexual revolution that spanned from 1948 to 1999 that there was an increase in the prevalence of premarital sex.¹⁰

In 1967, the large majority of America (85 percent) still considered premarital sex as morally wrong. This figure plummeted to 39 percent about a decade later. The changing moralistic views of our society that are associated with the sexual revolution are thought to have influenced the changes in premarital sexual behavior.

In the 1970s, 28.6 percent of female adolescents aged 15-19 had experienced sexual intercourse prior to marriage. Conversely 42.9 percent of female high school students in 2001 reported having had premarital sexual intercourse at least once, with 14 percent of male and female students having had experienced intercourse with four or more partners in their lifetime.¹¹ These data indicated that individuals are entering into marriage with more premarital sexual experience than in times past.

Although the social acceptance of premarital sex may be increasing, the feelings of guilt and regret for past sexual behaviors may be increasing as well. This appears to be case particularly for women. Greeley found that for women under age 35 about 51 percent reported feeling guilt for their past premarital sexual encounters. With 20 percent reporting strong regret, for women over the age of 35, only 30 percent reported regret for their premarital sexual encounters. Arnett found that among the emerging adults in his study, over 70 percent expressed regret for their

¹⁰Ibid., 272.

¹¹Ibid., 273.

experience with premarital sex in adolescence.¹² With more women experiencing premarital sexual behaviors in adolescence, the feelings of regret may be more likely regardless of the overall social acceptance of premarital sexual behaviors. What role does culture play in this study?

Culture and Sexuality

Young boys and girls of the various tribes enter full sexual life through initiation. However, a youth is expected to satisfy his sexual desires before marriage with no restrictions other than those imposed by his particular tribe. There are special settlements for the young youths, where they may have intercourse with any unmarried girl.

The Bantu boys have sexual experience while still very youthful and the girls also have usually had experience before marriage.¹³ The Babwa, Fan, Kuku practice intercourse as soon as they are capable of it. Among all the Senegambia tribes, unmarried girls are allowed plenty of sexual liberty.¹⁴ In some tribes, girls also have considerable sex before marriage license, once married. It seem as a joyful thing to the youths in this generation since premarital sex is permitted in some cultures and they are using such factors to be involved in premarital sex believing that it is not wrong. Though, it is believed that human sexuality is an integral part of life from birth until death. People from all cultures have actually believed that a relationship is part of the basis of both physical and emotional feelings of sexual alteration. Therefore sexual behaviors are also influenced by cultural tradition and laws about sex.

¹²Ibid.,275.

¹³Boris De Rachewitz, *Black Eros: The Sexual Customs of Africa from Prehistoric Times to the Present Day* (London: George Allen and Unwill, 1963), 229.

¹⁴Ibid., 230.

The term culture, because of its complexity and perhaps some times ethnocentric connotations is often left on the sidelines. However, cross culture research points to culture as shaping individual sexuality through rules, norms and attitudes within particular social grouping, or institutions and at the same time it contributes to the reproducing of the collective or community¹⁵

For example, sexual activity as a youth is strongly discouraged and engaging in it often results in punishment in some society, but some encouraged it. Kore maintained that some in Africa cultures, for instance, sexual activity is a way of proving the manhood of a young man and the womanhood of a young lady; they also consider sexual activity as an attempt to know whether the girl is a woman or not.¹⁶ Kore added that, some cultures require their daughter not only to have premarital sex, but also give birth to children while with their parents then she can freely marry any person of her choice, and any girl that does not do that, shows that to the family she is not capable of conceiving.¹⁷ Consequently, for parents to avoid such shame, they would force their daughter to have first a child at home. And the worst part of it all, some cultures demand their daughters to give birth to two (2) or three (3) children to their parents' home before giving them in marriage, most especially when the parents only give birth to females.¹⁸

Socio-Cultural and Economic Factors and Sexuality

Many of our youth have been driven into transactional or commercial sex for economics. Tnushi, however, commented that some girls from poor background have

¹⁵Ibid., 233.

¹⁶KoreDanfulani, *Culture and the Christian Home* (Lagos, Nigeria: Jos University, 1995),15.

¹⁷Ibid, 16.

¹⁸Ibid, 21.

sex with men for the sake of money, and one reasons behind this is because they want to wear nice dresses just like their friends who came from well-to-do families.¹⁹

Tnushi further added that since their parents are unable to provide such a dress, then they go their 'boyfriend' those who befriends her for a sexual purpose or to whoever would meet their needs by offering their bodies in exchange.²⁰ Adegoke comments that some parents too look the other way and pretend that sex is nothing as their children make money for the family use from illicit sexual transaction.²¹

Due to their cultural beliefs they will not discourage their daughters. Rather they would sing praises of how resourceful their daughters are. Thiroux was not silent concerning the issue; he stated that liberalizing sexuality is one of the greatest problems created by encouraging or even allowing premarital sex which tends to undermine traditional western morality and family values.²² A girl was led to use her body raise funds to buy clothes. She went to Kano, in the Northern part of Nigeria raising money to buy clothes and be fashionable. She contacted HIV and AIDS.

The story goes that some Good Samaritan brought her to her village from Kano at the point of death. She wanted to talk, but she could not. After three days, she died.²³ Therefore, a good Christian should learn from others' past mistakes and be contented with what he or she has. Your purity is more than all the clothes you need; she died of AIDS and nobody was ready to use her property.

¹⁹Bitnus B. Tnushi, *Youth and Sex: A Challenge of Today Youth* (Kaduna, Nigeria: Baptist Theological Seminary, 1997), 29.

²⁰Ibid., 29.

²¹Alfred A Adegoke, *Adolescence in Africa: Revealing the Problems of Teenagers in a Contemporary African Society* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Hadassah Publishing, 2003), 80.

²²Jacques Thiroux, *Ethics Theory and Practices* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998), 3.

²³Kutai, 87.

Culture and Virginity

Sex has been defined by each and every culture. Culture, in the 21st century has changed the views of sexuality and virginity dramatically. In the early 1930s, many people held strong religious beliefs that sex was sacred and only to be active within the realms of marriage.²⁴ Virginity was special and people were looked down upon for having lost it before marriage.

According to Akpa, “for practical purposes, this appears to be the greatest problem, which confronts young people of this generation. Today, virginity is considered an abnormality among most young people.”²⁵ To him, most girls see no reason why they should remain virgins until marriage. What used to be a taboo in the traditional Africa societies has become the order of the day in the contemporary African youth. Ehioghae posits that, the prevalence of premarital sex among young people poses a moral challenge, and the idea seems to be that “everybody does it²⁶.” To them, there is probably nothing wrong with it.

He stresses for by quoting Davis statistical reports of survey carried out by Aaron Hass which reveals that 43% of boys and 31% of girls in the United States loses their virginity at the age 16.²⁷ Jones acknowledgement of the tension of feeling sexual desire while also affirming a commitment to abstinence revealed important dynamic in the vow of purity; it is not easy. There will be temptation and desire while

²⁴Sex and Culture, Retrieved from http://www.megaessays.com/view_paper/26392.htm, October 14, 2010.

²⁵Michael O. Akpa, *The African Youth Today: A practical approach to working effectively with the contemporary Africa young people* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Trust House, 2001), 84.

²⁶Efe M. Ehioghae, “Premarital sex: Implication for Marriage and Morality,” in S.O Abogunrin (ed), *Biblical view of Sex and Sexuality from African Perspective* (Ibadan, Nigeria: M. Alope Enterprise, 2006), 18.

²⁷Ibid., 186.

waiting. But as believers we endure the struggle because we know that the testing of our faith always produces perseverance leading to Godly character.²⁸

On the flipside, there can be joyful anticipation while waiting. One of the best examples in recent years of this bombshell was actress Meagan Good, who has long since been a movie vixen playing sexy roles in *Jumping the Broom*. She publicly shared her commitment to abstain from sex until she wed with Seventh - Day Adventist Pastor.²⁹

Therefore, virginity is to be given to the most important person in your life, the person you committed yourself to stay with forever in marriage. Your virginity is the most precious thing you have to give to your spouse. Once you lost it nothing in the world can bring it back. Youths do not lose something so precious in a thoughtless way.

Youth and Sexuality

As the threat of reproductive health hazards confronting the youths, the problems associated with youth's sexuality, such as unprotected sexual activities and clandestine abortion become readily apparent in our generation. Moreover, HIV/AIDS is lifting youth hand. Studies in Africa show that about 7 in every 10 new HIV infections occur among females within the age bracket 15 to 24 years.³⁰

Okebunor cited a Global Health Awareness Research Foundation (G H A R F), that works with youths in the past ten years in schools and hospitals, urban and rural communities which revealed the stark realities of the various reproductive

²⁸Chanel Graham, *Why Unmarried Christians are Having Sex*, retrieved from reliionblogs.com, September 27, 2011.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Joseph Okeibunor, *Youth and Sexuality*. Retrieved from <http://www.gharf-nigeria.com>, July 5, 2012.

health hazards threatening the youths in this generation.³¹ To him, this is particularly worse for the young.

Many young girls in our communities are today victims of unwanted pregnancies, health complications associated with illegally induced abortions, sexually transmitted diseases, including currently incurable HIV/AIDS. The question is that who are the youths?

The *Oxford Dictionary* of current English defines “youth” as being young.³² Here, youth is seen as a period of development that comes between childhood and adulthood. It is a period that is characterized with vigor, enthusiasm and inexperience. This is a critical stage in the development of gender roles in the perceptions of the self and others. The biological and social growth, which occurs on this life cycle stage, forms the foundations for a healthy and productive adult life of a generation. In Adventist Youths Ministry Department understanding, it includes persons from 10 up to 30 years, as a youth³³. This understanding may be a little different from the conventional understanding in which somebody who is 30 years will be considered a young adult. However for purpose of study in an Adventist context, persons of this age bracket were picked.

Sexuality on the other hand refers to the entire range of attitudes thought and behaviors concerning sexual activity. Clint and Jerrold defines “sexuality” as “the totality of being a person. It includes all of those “aspects of the human being that

³¹Ibid.

³²*Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 81.

³³Youth Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church, *Youth Ministry Handbook*, 2000, 5.

relate specifically to being a boy or girl, woman or man’’³⁴ It seems very simple when we see definition of sexuality such as this one, yet sexuality is far from simple.

Giddenas makes this apparent in indicating that sexuality is a significant feature in one’s identity, connecting the body identity and norms of society.³⁵

Padging elaborate by saying that the interrelations and activities which exist at any moment in a specific society create sexual and other categories which ultimately determine the broad range of modes of behavior available to individuals who are born within that society.³⁶

Here, sexuality is seen as a comprehensive concept that encompasses the physical capacity for sexual arousal and pleasure as well as that is a representational interpretation of nature functions in categorized social relationships. What is considered most critical in youth sexuality is a girl’s ability to choose whether when to have sex and whom to have sex with. Monetary forces rather than any elements of voluntarism, often drive young girls into sexuality.

Okebunor again cited a survey of school girls facing adverse circumstances who are increasingly engaging in sexual networking in exchange for economic or personal support. Many girls traded sexual favors for some form of assistance withheld by their parents. On the other hand, the school boys boast of the number of girls they keep in school as a mark of achievement and being a ‘’ happening guy.³⁷

³⁴Clint E. Bruess and Jerrold S. Greenberg, *Sexuality Education: Theory and Practice* (London: Macmillan publishers, 1988), 271.

³⁵A. Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1992), 20.

³⁶R. A. Padging, *Sexual Matters: Conceptualizing Sexuality in History* (London: Taylor & Francis 1998), 15-27.

³⁷Joseph Okeibunor, “Youth and Sexuality.” Retrieved from, <http://www.gharf-nigeria.com.org>. July18, 2012.

Youth and Pre-Marital Sex

Premarital sex is intercourse engaged in by persons who are unmarried. It is generally used in individuals who are presumed not yet of age or between adults who will presumably marry eventually, but who are engaging in sexual act prior to marriage.

The discussions about premarital sex have become more and more tolerated as a normal part of life. This is especially true in developed countries, but it is fast becoming the case here in developing countries as well. Following the concept of Klusaw that ‘premarital sex is a huge problem in the society today teenagers are not waiting to get married to have sex. As result of that many young people have tremendous regret after sex, which leads them into depression.’³⁸ So also Oldouner comment that “the kind of lifestyle of today’s world has drastically changed and that liberal thinking enforced in notion of being free from everything.”³⁹ Many people have tremendous regret after involvement in premarital sex, which leads them into depression. One youth explain the effects of her sexual involvement in this word:

Having premarital sex was the most horrifying experience of my life. It was not at all the emotionally satisfying experience the world deceived me into believing. I felt as I my insides was being exposed and my heart left unattended...I know God has forgiven me of this haunting sin, but I also know I can never have my virginity back. I dread the day that I have to tell the man I truly love and wish to marry that he is not the only one, though I wish he were... I have stained my life, a stain that will never come out.⁴⁰

The most severe consequence of premarital sex is psychological; the guilt that occurs is so acute that many youths look to drugs and suicide for relief. John G. Shall

³⁸“Teenage Sex,” Retrieved from [http:// www. Megaessays. Com/view paper /36695, html](http://www.Megaessays.Com/view%20paper/36695.html) , October 23, 2011.

³⁹M. Oldouner, The Culture of Premarital Sex and Abortion, *Ground Report*, September 20, 2007.

⁴⁰McDowell and Hosetler, 285.

states that youths who engaged in premarital sex are more likely to suffer negatively from long-term physical, emotional, social and moral effects than youths who choose to wait⁴¹ Another girl described her experience this way:

“After you’ve done it you are really attached to the guy. It is as if it is your life. You are really vulnerable. When the relationship ended, I felt really awful. I cannot describe it. About a week after we had sex, we broke up because I found out he was dating other girls. It really hurts.”

Another article by Jenet Smith asks, “Why are youths so prone to engage in premarital sex?” Considered these statistics: in the 1960s, 25 percent of young men 45 percent of young women were virgins at age 19; by the 1980s, fewer than 20 percent of males and females were. In the 1950s roughly 9 in 10 young women got married without living with their partner, compared with 1 in 3 in the early 1990s. The percentage of white women married from 1960-65 who were virgins was 43; from 1980-85 it were 14.⁴²

Certainly, the human condition, original sin, and concupiscence explain a great deal, but then is also much evident that we are doing little to combat the effects on original sin and much worsen them. It is uncontroversial to note that our cultural practice, entertainment and media bombard our young people with the message that everyone should be sexually active.

And that sexual activity is essential to happiness. It also bombards youth with sexual stimulants, enormous numbers of products are marketed with ads featuring scantily clad seductive women or with men and women in romantic, not to say,

⁴¹Ibid., 286.

⁴²Smith Janeth, Premarital Sex. Sacerdos Retrieved from www.Catholiceducation.Org. March 15, 2012.

explicitly sexual poses. With this, Alfred, comments that premature and irresponsible decisions are encouraged by the glamorous while sexuality is being portrayed in the media that is saturated with sexual materials.⁴³ This influences our youths and also present a distorted view of sexual activity. Mouris posits that our youths are facing a culture that is unabatedly obsessed with sex, sexual attractiveness and sexual gratification.⁴⁴

For this reason, Ejenobo states that, the truth of the matter is that most of the brides who come to the church in white flowing gowns are not virgins...many of them would have committed several abortions before coming to the alter in flowing and immorally sewn white wedding gowns in our generation.⁴⁵ This hypocrisy must stop.

The Bible and Pre-Marital Sex

Young people are bombarded with the world's (Satan's) standards of morality or immorality. Teaching on sexual purity before marriage is no longer held before young people as a law of God, nor even an ideal goal to strive for. According to Oduyoye, the Bible is the most common heritage of Christians all over the world. The Bible is used for teaching. Most Christians communities in Africa now recognize the need for "the church" to guide believers through the Bible.

It speaks about God, His dealings with the world and his involvement in human realities. It is the written source of theology, and it challenges, conforms, corrects, modifies and reshapes the belief in God. In it is found metaphors, sacrifices

⁴³Alfred, 81.

⁴⁴Normon S. Mouris, *Television Child* (Ontario, Canada: Brouha & company, 1971), 3.

⁴⁵Kooverjee I, "An exploratory field study into school girl pregnancies, with Emphasis on the role the school can play in their prevention," Master of Education Dissertation, Rhodes University, SA: 24.1991.

and healing.⁴⁶ The question is that- what does the Bible say about sex before marriage/ premarital sex?

The Bible stated that marriage between one man and one woman originated with God at Eden. It is only in this context that sex is allowed (Gen 2:23, 24), and when sex takes place before marriage you have broken the seventh commandment in the Ten s commandments that constitute the foundation of God's government (James 2:20).

Jesus said in Matthew 5:17, 18 that He has not come to destroy the Law but only to fulfill it and that until heaven and earth pass, not one jot or tittle will pass from the law. He came to expand the adultery law to even include lust. There is no Hebrew or Greek word used in the Bible that precisely refers to sex before marriage. The Bible undeniably condemns adultery and sexual immorality, but is sex before marriage considered sexually immoral? According to the New Testament in 1 Corinthians chapter 7 verse two, the answer is 'yes' because it provides the clear answer: "But since there is much immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband."

In this verse Apostle Paul states that marriage is the "cure" for sexual immorality. In addition to that, because people cannot control themselves and so many are having immoral sex outside the context of marriage, people should get married. Then they can fulfill their passions in a moral way.

The Bible refers to premarital sex as fornication which is a sexual intercourse between people who are not married to each other. The only distinction the Bible

⁴⁶Martina Oguntoyinbo-Atere, "Sex and Marriage: A Biblical Metaphor," in S.O Abogunrin (ed.), *Biblical View of Sex and Sexuality from African Perspective* (Ibadan, Nigeria: M. Alope Enterprise, 2006), 100.

makes between premarital sex and adultery is that adultery involves married persons while fornication involves those who are unmarried. Premarital sex is just as much of sin as adultery and all other forms of sexual immoralities. They all involved having sexual relationship with someone you are not married to. Though there is no secular law against fornication in the country, there are spiritual and physical consequences.

God's law is plain: "flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committed fornication sinned against his own body" (1 Corinthians 6:18). Christians are under obligation to preserve their body undefiled, that it may be a fittings offering to present to the Lord... , the body was not made for the gratification of sexual desires, but for the Lord."

God, our creator knows our needs and what is best for us, his creation. He is not a cosmic killjoy. Behind each negation in the Bible commands are two positive principles. One is to protect us; the other is to provide for us. God has good plan for us and does not want us to do something that will bring pain to ourselves and to others. To illustrate this:

Consider an owner's manual that comes with an automobile I may want to change the oil once a year. That takes less time, and would seem to cost less. But the owner's Manual says to change the oil every five thousand miles. Now, if I have good sense, I understand that the manufacturer knows better how to care for it then I do. Following their advice will save me much grief and expense. And we have also come with an Owner's Manual-the Bible.⁴⁷

The manual is the Bible and the owner is God. It may seem good to enjoy the pleasure of sex before marriage, but the "owner's manual" disagrees. So whose judgment should we consider: ours or God's? God is not anti -sex. He created sex and said it was good, but he gave rules with it to protect us and give freedom to enjoy the

⁴⁷David and Flora Tant, *Dealing with the Effects of Premarital Sex*. Retrieved from <http://lavista.Church of Christ.Org>, May 21,2011.

activity we are engaged in. Can you imagine a ball game without rules, where everyone does what he wants to do? We have one basic rule from God with reference to sexual activity. That is, wait until marriage.

Conclusion

The theoretical framework of premarital sex firmly establishes that there are varied and different opinions and positions upon this subject matter. Some cultures are in support while others are not. Pre-marital sex is, however, incongruent with the biblical ideal; thus the case of premarital sex should not be overlooked. Therefore, from the broad view from many writers on the subject of pre-marital sex, we now narrow down to the Seventh-day Adventist context and its understanding of the situation as it is happening among the youth in Lafia District.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL SETTING

Brief History of the People of Lafia Region

The Lafia Region comprises of three local government councils, namely: Lafia, Nasarawa-Eggon, Doma and three development areas which are: Lafia-East, Lafia-North, Assakiyo and Agidi. The major ethnic groups that cover this local government councils and development areas are the Eggon people. There are also smaller tribes that have their own tongues such as- Alago, Kambari, Koro, Tiv, Arum, Kanta, Hausa etc. The present population of these three local government councils and development areas is estimated at 694,606 people according to 2006 provisional census.⁴⁸

Pre-Christianity in Lafia Region

The pre-Christianity era in Lafia Region can also be linked with the pre-colonial period. Before the colonial period, the typical Lafia man was almost naked, except for a girdle of string round the waist, one of the loose ends of the string being passed between the legs and fastened to the girdle at the back.⁴⁹

Therefore, the great majority of the tribe in the present Lafia Region before the colonial period wears natural clothing. Aprons of goatskin were commonly used by

⁴⁸N. D. Marcus and N. L. Binbol, *Geographical Perspective on Nasarawa State* (Keffi, Nigeria: Onaivi Printing and Publishing., 2007), 6.

⁴⁹C. M. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria: An Ethnographical Account of the Northern Nigeria* (London: Frank Cass and company, 1925), 40, 41.

men such as, Eggon, Mada, Arum, Kantan. In these goatskins, knives and pipes were sometimes stuck. The leather aprons have usually a tail which can be passed between the legs and caught up. The women of these primitive tribes, if they were not totally unclothed wore aprons of leaves. And most of these people practiced circumcision right from the primitive era like the other tribes in the Northern part of Nigeria.⁵⁰

These people practiced their pagan religion which is known as Africa Traditional Religion. Most especially among the Eggon people they consult an oracle known as *Ezhili* (ancestral god) and are done in rituals and different kinds of processes and functions which indicates the presence of the religious in their life. This religion provides the basis of understanding the Eggon society like it does in most African societies.

As John Mbiti posits: Is religion, more than anything else, which change their understanding of the universe and their empirical participation in that universe,, making like profoundly a religious phenomenon. To be is to be religious in a religious universe.⁵¹ The Eggon people believe in the existence of one Omnipotent and Omniscient God *Ahogbren* who is a divine judge of man.

The high priest who offers the sacrifice on behalf of the people is called *Ada Ashum*. It is under his leadership the rituals are performed. The *Ashum* cult is the elitist group which determines and is itself, the organ of political leadership. They believe that ancestors who are presumed to have assumed eternal nature assert authority through elders in the communities.

⁵⁰Meek, 40, 41.

⁵¹Victor S. Dugga, *The Eggon of Central Nigeria* (Nigeria: Centre for Research on Eggon Culture and Development, 1996), 58.

These ancestors are related to as guardian spirits and they are represented in communal activities like funerals by masquerades called *Ashum*.⁵² Women are forbidden from close interaction with the masquerades for it is believed that touching masquerades could make women barren. The next is the political life of Eggon people and the others tribe in Lafia Region.

Political Life of Lafia Region

The Eggon may not be as well-known as the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria; namely, Hausa, Ibo, and Yoruba. They are mentioned among leading minority groups in the central part of the country. Their political life is one of interest to contemporary studies. It used to be argued that there are stateless societies in West Africa.⁵³

And to justify this claim, one of the sponsors, *Robin Horton*, contended that such stateless societies are those societies that have little concentration of authority as it is difficult to point to any individual or limited groups of men as the ruler or rulers of the society.

However, Eggon, prior to 1922, had no central chief that controlled the affairs of the community but that does not in anywhere suggest that the Eggon people did not have their own measure of political authority. Every clan constituting itself into a semi-independent unit had its own administrative machinery with political authority revolving round the *AdanAshim* who set in council with the elders of the *Ashim* cult.

Apart from the *AdanAshim* and the council members the final authority in any political unit in Eggon land lay within the office of the *Adanubin* (father of the land). He was regarded to be the custodian of every member of the clan as the number one

⁵²Dugga, 49.

⁵³Ibid.

man whose powers and functions superseded that of the *Ada Ashim*. *Ada Ashim* receives instruction from *AdanUbin*.⁵⁴

Marriage as a social aspect of the Lafia people, in Lafia region people like other African culture, the number of man's wives was an indication of how rich he was. Among the Alago and Gwandara, the marriage custom is simple and consists of payment of presents, working on the fiancée's or the parents' farm and finally the payment of bride-price which was a pig or its equivalent. The Koro people will demand money equivalent of the level of education of the fiancée.⁵⁵

The Eggon and Massenge marriages in Lafia region are very expensive and a long process. The money, the items, demanded and the process is very high to the young boy or man who intended to get married. Could it be one of the factors that are making our youths to engage in pre-marital sex?

Economic Activities

Lafia, is the capital city of Nasarawa state, where 80 percent of the people are farmers. They farm yam, cassava, guinea corn, egusi, beans and other grains in large quantities for both consumption and for trade. Substantial numbers of nomads who resides are main suppliers of milk, eggs, butter, hides and skin.⁵⁶

The most interesting aspect of farming activities in this District is that the Eggon people both male and female participating in farming while the Tiv people, the women are seen to be seriously more engaged in farming than the men.

Because of the large production of food items, crafts which constitute the numerous markets in the State they are patronized by the neighboring State. Fishing

⁵⁴Dugga, 28.

⁵⁵LamiOgah, Eggon Woman, Interview by Researcher, Lafia, 16/03/2012.

⁵⁶Marcus and Binbol, 5.

and hunting go on in the riverine and forest areas. Apart from agricultural crops, the area is known as business center, due to some ethnic groups that are known with particular professions. For instance, the Ibo and Yoruba are mainly traders in utensils, automobiles and building materials.⁵⁷ They also own the big shops in the Lafia city.

Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lafia District

The Seventh-day Adventist (abbreviated Adventist) Church is a Christian denomination which is distinguished mainly by its observance of Saturday as their worshipping day⁵⁸. Jesus said: “The harvest truly is plentiful but the laborers are few, pray therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke10:2).

Mission is the English form of Latin word meaning to send missionaries, men and the women, in religious service. The Adventist pioneers missionaries had world views of the church to proclaim the message according to Revelation 14:6-12. Upon this Adventist world endeavored, Pastor J. J. Hyde a British missionary, arrived Nigeria from Sierra-Leone in 1930 to start a new mission field in the Northern part of Nigeria.⁵⁹

However, the missionaries face turbulent challenges from the British Colonial administration, the Muslims and other Christian missionaries. J. Hyde finally chooses Jengre, Jos, Plateau State in the Northern part of Nigerian, as mission station in 1931, where the Amo community welcomed him and his family.⁶⁰

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸James A. Cress, *You Can Keep Them If You Care: Helping New Members Stay on Board* (Ontario, Canada: Miracle Press, 2000), 8.

⁵⁹David Babalola, *Sweet Memories of our Pioneers* (Lagos, Nigeria: Emaphine Reprographics), 62.

⁶⁰Ibid., 64.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church came to Lafia as far back as 1970. This was as a result of a group of Amo farmers from Jengre that migrated to a village near Lafia called Akuni Amawa meaning Amo village. The Church had been in Akuni Amawa for about one decade, without making a serious impact on the indigenous people. But around 1982 people like Danladi Maisamari, Mrs Kalu, Mrs Ananaba, Bulus Auta, Daniel Auta and Mr. Udu family came to Lafia on transfer and some for business. Then the Seventh-day Adventist Church was established in Lafia region.⁶¹ Transferring Pastor Arome James from Gombe to Lafia region by the Northern Eastern Nigeria Mission in August 1985 made a vital contribution. However, it was not easy for the Pastor because it was entirely a virgin land, neither bicycle nor motor-cycle to help him in the ministry.

About a year later some Seventh-day Adventist members from Arum and Massenge in Wamba local government area also joined the brethren in Lafia Town and the church increased to 20 members. All these were worshipping in a member's house until when the house could no longer take them; they later moved to a nearby primary school owned by non-Adventist which he freely gave to the church for worship.

Lafia region became a District in North East Nigeria Conference, in the year 1986, according to organizational setting of Seventh-day Adventist Church, with few indigenes but many non-indigenes. The total membership of Lafia church then was 20 people.⁶² But today Lafia district has a total of 536 members, with two organized Churches, and seven companies and branch Sabbath schools and more of the

⁶¹Seventh-day Adventist Church, Lafia, *Record Book*.No.8.

⁶²Joshua Umaru, lecturer with college of Agriculture, Lafia, interviewed by researcher in Lafia, Nasarawa State. 11/06/2012.

indigenous people.⁶³ From the above it means in every 2,060 people in Lafia Region, only one is a Seventh-day Adventist.

Lafia Region and Pre-Marital Sex

CNN recently ran a story which talked about sexuality in single Christians. The article noted that a study conducted by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned pregnancy in 2009 showed that an alarmingly high 80% of unmarried evangelical young adults between 18-19 years have had sex, compared with 85% of unmarried adults without the evangelical label.⁶² Several reasons were offered by CNN to try to explain this high mark among Christians, and researchers believe they are absolutely correct when they say it may be an issue of culture.⁶⁴

The Seventh - day Adventist Church, like all fundamentalist Christian denominations, believes that sex before marriage (or sex outside marriage) is a sin and, according to the Bible, they are right.⁶⁵ They also believe that AIDS is not the problem facing the world, but the major problem is adultery or fornication. Thus, even if there were no AIDS, sex outside marriage would still be wrong. The message Seventh-day Adventist wants to bear to the world is not condemnation but obedience God and abstinence

As a denomination, regardless of culture or time, the action of premarital sex is a sin and will be a sin tomorrow (interesting side to note is fornication which comes from the Greek root word *porneia*, but there is an apparently mini controversy as to whether or not *porneia* was intended to include pre-marital sex at all. Regardless,

⁶³The North-east Nigeria Conference Secretary's *Record book*, 2012.

⁶⁴John Black, Why young Christians aren't waiting any more. Retrieved from Religionblogs .cnn.com. September 27,2011

⁶⁵Ibid.

Adventist views this as a biblical principle, not a cultural phenomenon. With this stand of the church, the Seventh - day Adventist church Lafia, seeks to follow exactly what the Bible says hence, abstinence until marriage. And, the Youths, Women and Men Departments of the church support this position.

One of its main objectives is to occupy and guide the youth according to the Bible standard. Activities which are done include preaching on cultural practices. Lesson on Christian education, however, shows a large number of young people still fall prey to premarital sex. It is the aim of this research to get to understand the reasons why?

Leading Factors that Promote Pre-marital Sex

Evidence on factors associated with sexual relations among unmarried youths is sparse. Indeed, a global review concludes that the identification of factors that inhibit or facilitate safe sexual behavior among young men and women is an urgent issue for research. The literature suggests, however, that although individual attributes are important in preventing negative outcome, a supportive environment particularly a young person's family, school and peer network are equally important. Youth behaviors are also known to be influenced by peer- related factors, such as the norms and behaviors of their friends.

Although peer norms and peer pressure may be important factors underlying early sexual initiation, it is also likely that larger peer groups and higher levels of social interaction lead to greater opportunities for youths to form romantic partnerships. Finally, among family and household factors, poverty clearly worsens the risks that youths face. It constrains their ability to engage in safe sexual relationships and is associated with advance sexual reproductive health outcomes. The

following factors can be considered as the leading challenges that contributed to young people in Lafia to engage themselves in premarital sex.

Traditional Items as Part of Dowry

A vivid example of items required by the Eggon people in the payment of a lady's dowry is illustrated below. This is explained because they are considered as the major ethnic group in Lafia District. The items required by the parents of the lady, the young man wishes to marry, are much and some of the items which are not good for Christian's believers to eat are added as part of dowry, particularly in Nigeria.

For example, marriage in Eggon land is considered a respectable institution. The young man and the young lady must be attracted to each other which in the long run will lead into what is described as "Eshya" courtship.

However, in Eggon marriage, "Wana clans" process is the most difficult and highly demanding in terms of time and resources. Because of this reason, young men and women do engage themselves in premarital sex to avoid all this processes. A typical list prepared by the Uncles of a bride-to-be at Akuya village in Barikin Abdullahi (B.A.D), Lafia local government area of Nasarawa state. Before the list could be released by the uncles of the bride to be, the groom-to-be would pay (N10,000.00) tenthousand naira as "information money" and small basin of cooked traditional beans (Ebekpen) to the mother of the bride as sign of in-lawship.⁶⁶

The stage one-introduction. Other items that the groom is expected to provide include: fourteen thousand five hundred Naira, six cartons of beer, and four crates of minerals, for the father and the in-law of the bride, four cartons of beer, two crates of minerals and thirteen thousand five hundred naira for the mother and the brothers of

⁶⁶E. A. Ebuga, Head of Department of the Estate Management of Nasarawa State Polytechnic. Interview by researcher, Lafia 26/4/ 2012.

the bride. Two cartons of beer and crate of mineral each for the bride. As a follow-up to this, the traditional food which took two days. See appendix C. 2.

The first day (Discussion day). The requirements include: one carton of beer, one crate of minerals, one cooked chicken and one basin of big local beans known as (Ebekpyen). See appendix C.5

The second day (Dowry day). The young man provides traditional cloths to the bride, which she will wear at the dowry day. Six (6) cartons of beer, four(4) cooked goats, two(2) life goats, six (6) basins of cooked local beans (Ebekpyen), two (2) bags of guinea-corn, one bag of maize, one bag of millet, 25 liters of palm oil, dadawa (local Maggi). Finally, these items will be attached with a life pig, ranging from N25,000 - N40,000.⁶⁷ (See appendix C.7). When the groom-to-be follows these processes and items had been provided, now the bride can be given to the young man who is demanding her hand in marriage.

Although, at the completion of this traditional rites it is expected that the wedding has taken place (See appendix C.2), it is now left for the groom to either seek for church blessing or to take his bride home according to the tradition.

Cost of the Bride Price

In some places in Nigeria, the female is considered an economic asset that contributes to the family's income. By you coming to marry her, you are taking away a source of revenue for the family. Therefore you replace that revenue in exchange for theirs through the bride price which now functions as compensation.

In some cultures in the eastern Nigeria, the bride price ranges from N50, 000.00-N100, 000.00 to marry a lady. Among most of the Yorubas in the western

⁶⁷Magaji A. Ossan, Nasarawa State Planning commission, Lafia. Interview by researcher, 15/01/2012.

Nigeria and Hausa with some minor tribes in the northern Nigeria, the bride price is not as high and in many places almost non-existent. Some only present some goods to the in-laws. Some only spend mainly for the marriage ceremony.

Some cultures charge very high, thinking that high bride prices will help to stabilize the marriage as the woman will think twice before misbehaving and the man will equally think twice before maltreating the wife. What will be the result of the youth that do not have money?

Omeonu responds to that, many singles that have reached and passed the age of marriage are seen roaming about They cannot afford it. In another place, what the family is demanding for their daughter is beyond the reach of the intending bridegroom, creating a situation where James, a 29- year old factory worker in a textile company from eastern Nigeria could not get married. Apart from the high bride price and all sorts of goods to be bought for the mother and the father-in-law, he was asked to get a white horse bicycle for the mother in-law. James has not been able to buy a bicycle for himself! This demands alone caused the end of the marriage plan as James could not afford it.⁶⁸

With this, some singles practice what is now popularly called “short hand” – you impregnate a lady, put the family into shame and pay little or nothing as bride price. Premarital sex has become common and Christian religious values are accorded less respect amongst the religious adherents. Omeonu further stated that, bride price is therefore a marital transaction, not a fitting price.⁶⁹ Several cultures have not succeeded in fixing the bride price in a way that makes it acceptable to all. But the attitude of making it outrageous is a manifestation of ignorance.

⁶⁸Chimezie A. Omeonu, *Marrying or a True Marriage* (Accra, Ghana: Advent Press, 2004), 68.

⁶⁹Ibid., 69.

However, in view of the very high cost of bride price, many of the young men and women are not able to have what is demanded from them, because of their poor financial position. Invariably, they indulged in sexual activities before the formal consummation of their relationship. It is the researcher's argument that the high cost has in no small measure increased the rate of sexual immorality in the African society; particularly, Nigeria.

Availability of Sexual Materials (Pornography)

The research that is available, which comes largely from developed countries, has identified a number of factors associated with premarital sex. Key factors relating to the individual that appear protective against unsafe sex include skills in problem solving, decision making and negotiation, and feelings of self-worth, on the other hand, substance use and exposure to pornographic materials have been found to be inversely associated with safe sex.

Social attitudes to pornography vary from the view that exposure to explicit sexual materials at virtually any age is almost inevitably beneficial to the one that such exposure is inevitably harmful. Edgar Hoover, stated in a weekly magazine stated pornography is a major cause of vulnerable school-age children are indulged in. And 40 and 60 percent believe that sexual materials provide information about sex, provide entertainment, lead to moral breakdown, improve the sexual relationships of married couples, lead people to commit rape, produce world-weariness with sexual materials, encourage innovation in marital sexual techniques and lead people to lose respect from women.⁷⁰

What is the current state of the evidence on the social effects of pornographic material? The Oxford English Dictionary defines pornography as the expression or suggestion of indecent or immoral objects literature or art.⁷¹ 'Indecent' means offensive to modesty or decency, expressing or suggesting lustful thought which in turn means desire for indulgence

⁷⁰Philip Feldmal and Malcolm Macculloch, *Human Sexuality* (New York: John Willey and Sons,1980), 3.

⁷¹Ibid., 5.

of sex. Some (but mainly all) specific erotic stimuli (Picture, writing,) are labeled as pornographic by some people, thus, when we apply the label pornographic to a picture or a piece of writing we are assenting: the effect of exposure to this will wish to engage in the sexual activity portrayed in the picture or described in the writing.

Youths who have been exposed to pornography are susceptible to sexual pathology. In the study by Dr. Jennings Bryant cited: Two thirds of the males and 40 percent of the females reported wanting to try out some of the sexual behaviors they had witnessed in the pornographic materials. And 25 percent of the males and 15 percent of the females admitted to actually doing some of the things sexually they had seen in the pornography within a few days after exposure.⁷²

Data Analysis

The Seventh - day Adventist church in Lafia has a membership of 536 according to 2012 statistic report. Close to three quarters of this membership are youths. The youths are divided into two groups: junior youths (10-15years) and senior youths (16-30 years).⁷³ Some were born in Seventh-day Adventist families but the majority of the senior youths were converted into the church and their parents are still in paganism.⁷⁴ Lafia District has two organized churches; namely, Lafia and Akuni and four companies; namely, Nasarawa, Eggon, Agyaragu and Tsamiya.

⁷²McDowell and Hosetler, 271.

⁷³Youth Ministry *Handbooks*, 5.

⁷⁴This shows itself in the youth reports that seek to know how many youth progressive “classes” somebody has gone through. Most seniors do not have the elementary classes like Busy Bee, Sunbeam, Builder, Explore et cetera, which are taught at an earlier age.

⁷⁵Philip Babcock Gove ed. *The New Webster's third New International Dictionary of the English Language* unabridged (Boston, MA: G & S Merriam Company, 1976).

Questionnaires

In order to facilitate this study, questionnaire was used in collecting data.

Questionnaire: *The New Website's Dictionary of the English Language* defines a questionnaire to be “a set of questions draw up to be answered by a number of independent people usually to provide statistical information from an individual.”⁷⁵

Therefore, a questionnaire was used and is attached at the end. The researcher adopted a pattern and the questioning format from Dr. David Chitate of Solusi University, Bulawayo.⁷⁶

We all have it in our mind that the area of one's sexuality is a personal area of one's life that he or she cannot easily share. Therefore, a questionnaire suited to the sensitive nature of the subject was adopted because it allows the respondents to express themselves more freely.

Moreover, it is my opinion that a questionnaire used for a sensitive subject like somebody's private life, is more likely to give more valid answers than other methods like interview. Susan Moone and Doreen Rosenthal observe that “education about sexual values and sexual health is likely to be more effective if educators take into account the current (emphasis supplied) beliefs and practices of their target audience.”⁷⁷

Lastly, a questionnaire is likely to get the precise information in a short time. It leads toward highlighting some tentative empirical trends and lends itself toward model development for further studies. The questionnaire was divided into three (3) sections:

⁷⁶Galenakgosi M. Orapeleng, “Pre-marital sex among Seventh-day Adventist Youth in Botswana and possibilities for preventative action” (M.A. Project, Adventist University of Africa, Kenya: 2002), 69.

⁷⁷Susan and Rosenthal, 1.

Biographical information: This section seeks to find out about their parents, home environment and where they come from. The motive behind this is to see what influence the background of someone's sexual life has on the person.

Sources of Sexual knowledge: How much do they know about sex and where did they find out about it? Does knowing or not knowing predispose somebody to pre-marital sex. What role and influence do different sources of sexual knowledge have on somebody's choice of sexual practice later? These are some of the intentions of this section.

Cultural Practices: This section seeks to find out what role cultural plays in pre-marital sex among the young people? Can high bride price and prohibited items attached to bride price encourage pre-marital sex? With these three (3) sections, it is hoped enough of the probing for information has been done. The information will help us to know and theorize about the youth's sexual problem.

The researchers organized two groups' discussions before the questionnaire was developed. This gave rise to the type of questions that would help to bring out facts, feelings and attitudes. In the two sessions, the youths were given pieces of papers to just answer "Yes" or "No". By the time the 20-item questionnaire was used, the researcher had a fairly good idea on how to ask for information and the possible outcome.

The techniques used to gather information for this research were from different sources. These include Literature Review which gave the researchers relevant information about the topic, and the study of the Holy Scripture.

Another technique used was questionnaire. All the youths from 12-30 years who totaled 65 were asked to remain after a major church occasion.

Only ten people were above 30 years, and were married. In the questionnaire, instructions and other words that were thought to be a bit uncommon to some youths were explained. They were asked to spread out in the vast church to allow no one to see what the other had written; thus absolute confidentiality was assured. At the end of completing the questionnaire by themselves, one of them gathered the questionnaire to the researcher, so that researcher will not ever guess the answer of one another. In this way, it encouraged disclosure and honesty with the facts of their private lives. All the questions were adequately answered.

The questionnaire was distributed to the married and unmarried people of Lafia District. The questionnaire consists of three sections. Ten copies of this questionnaire were given to married people. Fifty five were completed and returned by unmarried people and ten married people total 100% returned

Table 1 shows that 65 questionnaires were collected, shows the ethnic group that worshipped at Lafia District, the numbers of churches that worshipped at Lafia district, the marital status, the gender status, age and the religious commitment of the youth in Lafia district with their responses to the questions.

The percentage given in the table on religious commitment and family worship shows that the strength of the family in young people' lives is closely related to their religion participation. Thought the people indicated religious but such religiously does not necessary translate into religious observance. Table 2 shows sources of sexual knowledge.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Adventist Youth in Lafia District

S/No	Demographic Variation		Response	%
1	Ethnic Group	Eggon	18	27.69
		Mada	5	7.69
		Massenge	11	19.38
		Arum	14	21.54
		Amo	12	20.00
		Igbo	5	7.69
2	Churches	Lafia	30	46.15
		Nassarawa Eggon	6	9.23
		Agyaragu	5	7.69
		Akuni	20	30.77
		Tsamiya	4	6.15
3	Marital Status	Single	55	84.62
		Married	10	15.38
4	Gender Status	Male	33	50.77
		Female	32	49.23
5	Age	0-20	5	7.69
		11-15	15	23.08
		16-20	20	30.77
		21-25	8	12.31
		26-30	7	10.77
		31 – above	10	15.38
6	Religious Commitment	No Interest	8	12.31
		Low Interest	12	18.46
		High Interest	15	23.08
		Very High	30	46.15
7	Family Worship	Never	8	12.31
		One – two in a week	12	18.46
		Three-four in a week	20	30.77
		Six-seven in a week	25	38.46

Table 2 shows the sources of sexual knowledge among the young people are primarily information obtained from watching television and reading books on sex. This buttress the assertion of what Monris stated in one of his books - “television has the capacity to serve young people or to harm their future.”⁷⁸ Consequently, media present a distorted view of sexual activity that draw the attention of young people in the society. They could have chosen a program that is not offensive to Christian

⁷⁸ Monris, 4

ethics. Though Olis once stated that “every person is molded by the life he lives from infancy.”⁷⁹ Without doubt, television is the most powerful communication force ever created by human beings.

Table 2. Sources of Sexual Knowledge

S/No	Sources Variation		Response	%
1	Time Spend on TV	One – two hrs	6	9.23
		Two – three hrs	14	21.54
		Four-five hrs	20	30.77
		5 – above hrs	25	38.46
2	Number of books been read	One – two hrs	5	7.69
		Three – four hrs	22	33.85
		Five – six hrs	28	43.08
		Never	10	15.38
3	Time spend on videos or films	One – two hrs	10	15.38
		Three – four hrs	15	23.08
		Five – Six hrs	15	23.08
		Uncountable	20	30.77
		Never	5	7.69
4	Knowledge about sex	From friends	15	23.08
		From school	7	10.77
		Watching TV & Films	15	23.08
		From church	20	30.77
		From parents	8	12.31
5	Pulling Factors	Friends	13	20.00
		Watching TV & Films	13	20.00
		Lack of knowledge	20	30.77
		To show love	13	20.00
		Raped	6	9.23
6	Number of being engaged	Once	16	24.62
		Two – three	20	30.77
		Uncountable	24	36.92
		Never engaged	5	7.69
7	Average of age being engaged	Ten years	3	4.62
		Twelve years	6	9.23
		Fourteen years	10	15.38
		Sixteen years	20	30.77
		Eighteen years	13	20.00
		Twenty years	10	15.38
		No response	3	4.62

⁷⁹ Marguerite Malm and Olis G. Jamison, *Adolescence* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982), 26.

Table 3 shows the cultural practices and items used as part of the bride price.

Table 3 shows that certain culture are not seriously discouraging sexual activities among the young people. However, due to high demand of resources from the bridegroom and the herculean tasks involved in the processes, this has encourage premarital sex among the young people.

Table 3: Cultural Practices and Items as Part of the Bride Price

S/No	Cultural Variation		Response	%
1	Certain culture support pre-marital sex	Yes	36	55.38
		No	22	33.85
		No response	7	10.77
2	Does your culture support pre-marital sex?	Yes	26	40
		No	30	46.15
		No response	9	13.85
3	Can huge Bride-Price encourage pre-marital sex?	Yes	39	60
		No	19	29.23
		No response	7	10.77
4	High demands on a young Man's resource encourage Pre-marital sex?	Yes	36	55.38
		No	20	30.77
		No response	9	13.85
5	Do prohibited items such as: Alcohol, pigs, costly beans (traditional beans) encourage pre-marital sex?	Yes	33	50.77
		No	23	35.38
		No response	9	13.85
6	What factors mostly contribute to pre-marital sex?	To experience sex	7	10.77
		High level of poverty	7	10.77
		Cost of wedding	32	49.23
		Long process	10	15.39
		Prohibited items attached on bride-price	9	13.84

These demands make weddings to be very expensive to the young men in the society, according to the responses of the respondents. This finding, however does not suggest that such vices as fornication are not prevalent among young people that are not even of marriageable age, but it was a major concern among those who are ready for marriage but could not afford it due to high bride-price.

Discussion of Findings

For you to evaluate the outcomes of the questionnaire, it will be necessary to compare the outcomes of the questionnaire with the conception on which the questions are based. It was discovered from the respondents that their parents did not taught them about sex. This shows that the young people lack sexual education from their parents. Considering question 4 on table 2, 23.08% of the respondents got their sexual knowledge from friends, 10.77% got their own through school, 30.77% of the respondents indicated they got their own sexual knowledge through church. Lastly 12.31% got from parents. The church is commended for having a large share in teaching the youth about sex. It is a responsibility of the parent to connect with their children so that sexual education becomes easy and natural at home.

Another area that was discovered from the literature reviews was the issue of high bride-price and cultural items. Corresponding with question number 5 on table 3 and question number 6 in table 3 support the idea that high bride-price and cultural items may lead young people into sexual practices, since they cannot afford the demands of the bride parents. It will be better for the parents reduce the bride-price to the level of a common man as pay and cultural items should not attached as dowry since the parents are Christians. It was discovered that young people becomes

sexuality active and are involved at early stages in which the individuals and authorities concern (parents, guardian, teachers and church).⁸⁰

Considering question 5 on table 2 of shows that, 4.62% involves in sex at the age 10, 9.23% involve in sex at the age of 12, 15.38% involve at the age of 14, 30.77% involve at the age of 16, 20% involve at the age of 18, 15.38% involve at the age of 20, 4.62% No response. This shows that from the age of 16 (with 18 being the highest) most young people begin to be more interest in sex. This is the adolescent stage.

Naidoo describes adolescent as a stage that is characterized by rapid physical development: heightened sexual interest and often confusion. . For example youth department can give counseling and support to the youths in certain areas where the parents may not be able to deal with. Such as sexuality, women ministries department have special support and guidance to young women in the area of sexuality.

The education department also has a role to demonstrate by seeking to provide Adventist school that will keep the youths “close” and within the Adventist teaching on area of premarital sex.⁸¹ Therefore, the remaining discussion of finding are in Chapter Five of this study.

⁸⁰Quoted in M. Galenakgosi, 2002, M.A dissertation on “Premarital Sex”.University of South Africa, 78.

⁸¹Ibid., 79.

CHAPTER 4

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

Based on the theoretical background of premarital sex in the previous chapter, the researcher deemed it necessary to develop a program “Zip Up till Marriage” in the two (2) organized churches and three (3) companies of Lafia district which was done. The programme helped in preventing future occurrence or at least reduced the premarital activities problem amongst the Seventh-day Adventist youths in Lafia District, North East Nigeria conference (NENC).

Program Design

In order to have a quality programme, materials rich in this area of study were gathered by the researcher and presented to the young people and their parents in the Lafia District.

The following were the source of the materials

1. Materials from books:

A book written by Josh McDowell: Hand Book on Counseling Youth: A Comprehensive Guide for Equipping Youth Workers, Pastors, Teachers, and Parents.

A book written by Bill Perkins: A Frank and Realistic: Strategy for Men to Regain Purity in the Midst of a Culture Fraught with Sexual Temptation.

A book written by Bimbo Odukoya, Sex and the Single Lie.

A book written by Henry J. Rogers, A Lifeline in a World in Love with Evil: Offers Hope to Thousands of People Trapped in Secret Sin.

Another book written by Henry J. Rogers, *The Silent War: Ministering to those Trapped in the Deception of Pornography*.

A book written by Pam Stenzel, *Sex, Love and Relationship: Straight Talk*. This book tells young people the whole truth about the consequences of sexual activity, experimentation and permissiveness.

2. Materials from Adventist News “A publication of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, North East Nigeria Conference No. 1 September – December 2005.

3. Materials from Shepherdess “official publication of the shepherdess International, Babcock University chapter vol. 5 No. 4 2005.

4. Materials from the Holy Scripture.

Objectives of the Program

The high percentage of pregnancy cases as a result of pre-marital activities among the young people in Lafia District which have become a serious problem of the family, the church and the society at large. Could it be the custom of the ethnic tribes of the people of Lafia that has contributed to this high percentage?

Therefore, the objectives of this programme are as follows:

Activity1: Premarital sex and youths

The objective of this activity is to make the young people understand properly why abstinence from premarital sex is vital.

Activity: 2 Premarital Sex and the world view

The objective of this programme is to let the young people know the teaching of the liberals and what they say about premarital sex. This will make the youths to take a rightful. The liberal idea opined that sex is a way of life in a liberal society. This is considered as routine social life that everyone is supposed to know. They are of the idea that premarital sex is not a sin.

Activity 3: Seventh-day Adventists and premarital sex

The objective of this activity will make the young people to know the stand of seventh-day Adventists. As a denomination, regardless of culture, time, and world view, premarital sex is wrong.

Activity 4: Premarital sex and the Bible

The activity will let the young people understand what really premarital sex is against the Bible. It will also help the young people acquaint themselves with the reality and the truth of pre-marital sex. The Bible categorically states that sex outside marriage is a sin. Purity should be maintained up to the time of marriage. It has helped to clear those erroneous ideas of indulging in pre-marital sex as some do that in ignorance.

Activity 5: Cultural view of pre-marital sex

This activity help the young people know other cultures about premarital sex. In some cultures, premarital sex is allowed while some cultures prohibit the act. Based on the some cultural practices, as Adventist youths, biblical teaching or view should be adhered to, as it teaches purity and spirituality in observing the rules of engaging in marriage.

Activity 6: A symposium on cultural items and high bride-price amongst the Adventist family

The objective of this symposium is to create an avenue for the young people to express their feelings and opinions on cultural practices before marriage and also to make sure parents and guidance understand the implication of cultural items and high bride price to the young people.

The activity will also help young people become even closer to their parents. The objective is that, to effectively make the young people more comfortable with their parents, this focused group discussion is the right medium to brainstorm about

premarital sex, cultural items and high bride price, its causes, implications and some measures of trying to curb these practices.

The forum also provides the opportunity to establish mutual agreements and terms of requirements that can be placed on young people who are planning to get married. It was emphasized that heavy cultural expenses be stepped down by the church and prohibitive bride price should not be imposed on young men who are intending to marry.

Activity 7: Dangers of premarital sex

This activity will let the young people know about the dangers of premarital sex to their body and future. Its objective is to talk about its ill effects, emotionally, mentally, physically and psychologically.

Performance Objectives

At the end of the program, the participants both youths and the parents had a clear understanding of the biblical implications of these cultural practices, premarital sex and its effect on the young people. So also, the youths and parents were acquainted with the knowledge of prohibited items such as pig, alcohol, etc. attached to dowry. They were educated on the need to reduce high bride-price to the level that a poor family can afford to pay.

Time-table for two days seminar on youths and premarital sex in each of the two organized churches with her companies in Lafia District, North East Nigeria Conference (N.E.N.C).

Table 4: Attendance of Seminars

Church	Date
Lafia	7 – 8 October, 2011
Nasarawa Eggon	14 – 15 October, 2011
Agyaragu	21 – 22 October, 2011
Akuni	28 – 29 October, 2011
Tsamiya	4 – 5 November, 2011

Program Implementation

When every necessary planning and proper announcement was made to parents and young people in the church to be part of the seminar, it commenced on October, 7th 2011 at Seventh-day Adventist Church, Lafia. The time and the activities presented were as follows:-

Table 5: Program implementation

Day 1	
8:00 – 8:30am	Registration
8:30 – 8:45am	Welcome address – Elder J. Umaru
8:45 – 9:00am	Song service/opening prayer
9:00 – 10:00am	Youth and sex
10:00 – 11:00am	Pre-marital sex and world-view
11:00 – 12noon	Talk about marital sex in Seventh-day Adventist Church
12noon- 12:30pm	Lunch break
12:30 – 1:30pm	Pre-marital sex and the bible
1:30 – 2:00pm	Question and answers
2:00 – 2:15pm	Closing prayer

Day 2	
8:00 – 8:30am	Song service/opening prayer
8:30 – 9:30am	Pre-marital sex and cultural views
9:30 – 11:00am	Symposium on cultural items and its implications
11:00 – 12:00noon	Pre-marital sex and its consequences
12:00 – 12:30pm	Lunch break
12:30 – 12noon	Talk about marital sex in Seventh-day Adventist Church
12noon- 12:30pm	Lunch break
12:30 – 1:30pm	Talk about family values and the roles of parents
1:30 – 2:00pm	Question and answers
2:00 – 2:15pm	Closing prayer

During the implementation of the programme, the following questions were asked.

1. What are the consequences of sexual immorality?
2. How far is too far? What are the guidelines on dating relationships?
3. What is true love and how do you know when you have found it?

My boyfriend wants to have sex. I don't want to lose him, what should I do?

4. When the family of my fiancée wants me to provide their cultural beans which is very costly, what should I do when I don't have the money?

The program in every church ended with prayer session or spiritual revival which touched the heart of the youths and families.

Evaluation

The purpose of this study is to look at the cultural practices that promote pre-marital sex among the youths of Seventh - day Adventist church Lafia in Lafia District. The researcher believes that abstinence from sexual activities is the best option to the unmarried people, advising the parents to bring down the bride-price of their daughters to the level of the less privileged man that can afford to pay and to remove the prohibited items or traditional items as part of the dowry.

For this reason the implementation of the programs was necessary to the people of Lafia District. However, the difference between the time before the program was conducted and the time after it was conducted, were ignorance of the cultural practices. The programs were done between, October 7 to November 4, 2011 in all of the two (2) organized churches and the three (3) companies of the Lafia district to bring universal change within the district.

Therefore, from table 11 and 12 that indicated that high percentage of sexual activities among the youths before the program, but after the program, there was a positive change among the youths in terms of cultural practices and premarital sex. Both the male and the female stand according to what the Bible says. This is because the youth development continues to emphasize on the following points which the researcher stated during the implementation of the program. These points include:

5. The youth should abstain from casual sex.
6. The youth should refrain from any acts that could expose them to unhealthy sexual activities.
7. Read the Bible daily and encourage one another in the Lord.
8. Be aware of sexually transmitted diseases, the emotional fall-out of sex outside of marriage.

9. Parents to have a sense of trust for their children which can result in a much more open relationship with each other.
10. Parents to consider the less privilege in matters of dowry.
11. Parents to consider Christ teachings not tribal or cultural teachings.
12. Our culture is about physical things while God is about spiritual things.
13. Parents should do things like believers and not like pagans.
 - We must return to view ourselves as the church and part of a body.
When one part of the body suffers the whole body suffers.

In conclusion, individual Christians, Christian families and churches should do all within their power to maintain God's ideal for sex and marriage, so that the impact could be felt in the society. The youth would learn about God's ideals on sexuality for themselves as well. In Lafia district, through their message of abstinence which shows after the implementation program the whole conference will learn and there will be a tremendous progress among the youths, the church and the society.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The aim of this study is to look at the cultural practices that promote pre-marital sex among the youths of Seventh-day Adventist church; Lafia in Lafia District. The study work is borne out of the researcher's idea to discourage premarital sex among the youth in Seventh-day Adventist Church, Lafia District of North East Nigeria conference. Therefore this chapter is the summary of findings and the recommendation by the researcher.

Summary

After the theoretical background of premarital sex: what the writers had to say about premarital sex and what the Bible says about it, and the description of local setting, the research looked into the problems and the leading factors that have affected the church in the aspect of high level of pregnancy in the church. After that, the researcher formulated some research questions as an instrument used for the collection of data consisting of questionnaire, personal observation and oral interview of the youths as well as the parents of the youths. Some of the major findings are:

Firstly, it was discovered that the overall knowledge about sex among the youths is high. This is evident by the fact that ninety percent (90%) of the youths had sex before, and that the majority had it by the ages of 16-25 years. This statistic shows that there is a great extent of pre-marital sex among the Seventh-day Adventist

youths in Lafia, raising the cases of pregnancy in the church. Thus the hypothesis has been verified.

Secondly, besides the church and school, the predominant sources of sexual knowledge for the youths, which usually influence negatively, are media and friends. For example young women watch an average of more than two hours of TV a day. It is said that with these electronic devices, the world, has become a global village. A youth sees and gets to know what youths in other parts of the world, especially America and European, are doing. No wonder, then, we see youths dressed half naked or suggestively walking the streets in the name of “latest” fashion viewed on cable. These sources are prevalent, as noted before, that sex is saturating the society and the young people, in the general, adopt an attitude of “free sex”.

Thirdly, it was discovered that, on average, parents very seldom talk to their children about sex. Perhaps, this is because it is not easy within most African cultures to talk to children about sex. However, the other reason that might be contributing is that, some culture support premarital sex before marriage, they are seeing it as welcome ideas for a young man to engage in sex with a young woman.

Fourthly, Most young people blame their parents for making the bride price very high to them and prohibited items such as alcohol, pig, traditional beans (very costly) attached as part of bride- price. It was discovered that sixty-five (65%) of the young people indicated that high bride-price are making them to stay single and engage in sex, since they cannot pay what the family of the fiancée are demanding. So also, in another development, sixty-two percent (62%) indicated that being mandated to provide items such as traditional beans, alcohol, pigs are making them not to go into marriage; rather they stay single and engage in premarital sex among themselves.

As the researcher stated before, those immoral activities of the youths will not spoil them or the church only, but they will be a hindrance to the Adventist message to non-Adventist people, though it is a universal problem. This, again, leads us to “the urgency of studying how to help the young people live up to their conviction.

Lastly, the most vulnerable age range for sex begins at sixteen (16). This is more or less the beginning of the adolescence stage where young people are experiencing drastic changes in their physiology. Authorities are greatly needed to come to their rescue at this stage

Conclusion

Avoidance of pre-marital sex as established in this research includes a broad spectrum of factors that can all work together like a chain in the church. It is hoped that this research is only a beginning in Lafia District; an eye-opener into what needs to be strengthened and what needs to be discouraged in our society, the church and more especially in our families and the individuals’ progress in the sinful universe.

The sex enthusiasm of the present generation is but a misrepresentation of what God created to be enjoyed in marriage. Apart from being against God’s will, sex outside marriage has grave consequences. Though condoms, pills and various types of birth control measures are available, unwanted pregnancies occur daily, sexually transmitted diseases (STDS) are rampant, and abortions are the order of the day. Some are known to have committed over three abortions before marriage.

Sexual freedom is a force and will only lead to destruction for the young people. But the question is that: How does a youth handle himself to avoid pre-marital sex? He must be pure, a virgin to God’s glory. For most of the times those youth that sleep together do so because they believe that they will marry later. This is

not permissible because God wants us to be holy. It is God's will that we should be holy and that we should avoid sexual immorality.

Recommendations

After the analysis of the data collected, some conclusions were drawn. The research looked into the problems that have affected the Seventh-day Adventist church, Lafia District, in North East Nigerian Conference, Bukuru, Jos Plateau state. According to the research findings the following are the leading factors or hindrance to the young people:

1. Cultural belief
2. Socio-Cultural and Economic
3. Availability of Sexual materials
4. High bride-price
5. Lack of sex education
6. Wired to the world (media)
7. Prohibited items as part of Dowry

Therefore, the following recommendations are made to the leaders of the churches in order to solve or minimize the problems of premarital sex among the young people in our society.

1. The church should create "Adolescent friendly forums and counselors." This forum will help in counseling the youths within them, for better living in this sinful generation. The youths counselors' forum will help the youth to think through how he or she wishes to act on a date and what he or she hopes to achieve on a date (possible goals may include – "make my date feel appreciated". But they should cultivate healthy friendships with members of the opposite sex that allow them to see them as people to be respected, not as objects to be used.

2. It is recommended that the home school be strengthened. The parents should be the first teacher of their children by investing more time to teach and nurture their children, especially when they are still young. Those who have grown up children need to “connect” with their adolescence. The “connecting” could be done through activities like, discussing together, listening to their feelings, surprises, assigning leadership roles in the home.

3. Those parents that are members of the church and they still practice things like pagans by expecting the young man to bring alcohol, goats, chickens to make sacrifices to appease the gods of the clan of the bride, or asked to bring guinea-corns for brewing the local liquor (burukutu), cartons of bear, pigs; the church should question their faith and bring them back in love by constantly reminding them on the need to adhere to the doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist church by teaching them what the Bible says concerning marriage in general. As the researcher stated in this study that these customs could deter a young man from marrying honorably – most of the young people take the short cut by impregnating the girl and her parents would beg the young man to take her without dowry or items because, it is a shameful and disgraceful act to some families. See appendix C

4. It is recommended that at the beginning of every year, as new leaders are elected, we should hold planning and consultative meetings with the youths to get their suggestions. Programs that could also keep the young people involved and thus lessen chances of them getting tempted with sex, as it is said, “An idle mind is the devil’s work shop.” And the youth’s programs need to be “packed.” No matter the challenges, they should endure to the end.

5. This recommendation concerns the training of the youth leaders of the churches, from the higher level of the church organization, for them to get knowledge

of developing some programs that will meet the needs and aspirations of youths and to involve them in planning, implementing and have a direct impact on their daily lives. This is especially important with respect to information, education, communication activities and lessons concerning premarital sex.

6. The leadership of the church should lay emphasis on youth's fellowship with God as top priority for the youths. A consistent devotional habit is the first line of defense against sin, no matter the high bride-price and prohibited items that the parents may demand from the young man, God will find a way out for him (Col 2:6-15). Be transformed by the renewing of your mind (Rom12:1-2). The high school chemistry taught us that a liquid forces gas out of a test tube; similarly, pure thoughts can force impure thoughts out of your mind. When your mind begins to wander, immediately replace your impure thoughts with pure thoughts (Phil 4:8).

But perhaps, there are three significant areas that need thorough and urgent research:

1. The challenging of the "integrated sexuality education" model. It is the researcher's conviction that this model brings together a number of important areas that are necessary for the prevention of pre-marital sex among Seventh - day Adventist youth in Lafia. Therefore, some could test it and prove it for all churches and entities in the Seventh-day Adventist church in Lafia and beyond. By picking a certain church, with its given department, and follow the model for five years or so, as Orapeleng stated in his dissertation.⁸²

2. Secondly, another important area, which has not been addressed at all in this study, is the restoration and counseling of the victims of pre-marital sex. According to the study ninety percent (90%) of the youth have had sex before

⁸²Ibid., 91.

marriage at some point in their lives. Some trauma of guilt remorse, loss of self-respect, etc. ensue after the experience or at conversions.

This current study has only identified that there is a problem, but has not gone into whether or not it is being addressed and if so, how? It will be very helpful to know the extent of the damage which will serve as guide to the young generation.

APPENDIX A

PERMISSION LETTER



APPENDIX B

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire has been designed to elicit pertinent information that will enable the research work fulfill M.A requirement in Leadership. This research work is focused on the cultural practices that promote premarital sex among the youth. Your timely response to the issue outlined below will contribute immensely to meeting the set objective of the research. Consider the following instruction:

- Provide your own responses not of another
- Please be factual and honest in your information
- Do not write your name
- All information supplied will be treated with confidentiality

Thank you.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Tribe

1. Church.....
2. Gender.....
3. Age.....
4. Marital Status: Unmarried () Married ()
5. Who has contributed the most in your discipline in life? a. Father () b. Mother () c. Grandparents () d. Sister/Brother () e. Church () f. Others, specify.....
6. Based on your interest and participation in church activities, how would you classify your religious status? a. No interest () b. Low interest () c. High interest () d. Very high interest () e. None of the above ()
7. As a family, how frequently do you have family worship? a. Never () b. 1-2 times a week () c. 3-4 times a week () d. 6-7 times a week ()
8. Approximately, how many hours a day do you spend watching television?
a. 1 hour () b. 2-3 () c. 4-5 () d. more than 5 hrs. ()

SECTION B: SOURCES OF SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE

- 9. How many books and magazines on sex or sexuality have you browsed through so far? a.1-2 () b. 3-4 () c. 5-6 () d. None () e. More than 6 ()
- 10. How many videos or films on sex or sexuality have you watched so far? a.1-2 () b. 3-4 () c. 5-6 d. None () e. More than 6 ()
- 11. My present sexual knowledge was received from: a. Friends () b. School () c. Television/magazines () d. Church () e. Others, specify.....
- 12. Have you ever engaged in pre-marital sex? a. yes () b. No ()
- 13. This is what pulled me into my FIRST sexual experience a. Too much from friends () b. Curiosity to experiment after watching TV, reading a book () c. Lack of knowledge () d. I wanted to show love () e. I was forced (raped) () f. Others, specify.....
- 14. I engaged only..... before I married a. Once in my life () b. 2-3 times in my life () c. I cannot tell () d. I never engage ()
- 15. At what age you involve in sexual practices? a. 10 years() 12 years () b.14 years () c.16 years () d 18 years () e. 20 years () d. None of the above ()

SECTION C: CULTURAL PRACTICES

- 16. Certain Culture supports Pre-marital Sex: a Yes () b. No ()
- 17. Does your cultures supports pre-marital sex: a. Yes () b. No ()
- 18. Can huge bride price encourage pre-marital sex? a. Yes () b. No
- 19. High demands on a young man’s resources cause pre-marital sex: a. Yes () b. No ()
- 20. Can prohibited items such as alcohol, pigs, cigarettes as part of the bride price, encourage pre-marital sex? a. Yes () b. No ()
- 21. What factors at most contributed in engaging pre-marital sex? a. The couple want to learn everything about each other before marry () b. High poverty levels () c. Expensive nature of wedding () d. others. Specify

APPENDIX C

PICTURES OF COOKED FOOD /ALCOHOL PROVIDED BEFORE THE
CHURCH WEDDING

C.1



Picture above show already prepared traditional beans (with assorted unclean meats) that is cooked by the Groom-to-be that will be taken to the Bride-to-be as introduction No 1.

C.2



Picture above show already prepared traditional beans (with assorted unclean meats) that is cooked by the Groom-to-be and that will be taken to the uncles of the Bride-to-be, First day

C.3



The above picture show already prepared traditional beans (with assorted unclean meats) that is cooked by the Groom-to-be and that will be taken to the uncles of the Bride-to-be, Second day

C.4



The above picture show already prepared traditional beans (with assorted unclean meats) that is cooked by the Groom-to-be and that will be taken to the uncles of the Bride-to-be on the last day of the event

C.5



The above picture show already prepared traditional beans (with assorted unclean meats) that is cooked by the Groom-to-be and that will be taken to the Father of the Bride-to-be on the last day of the event

C.6



The above picture show already prepared basins of big beans (Ebekpen) (with assorted unclean meats) that will be taking to family members of the Bride-to-be.

C.7



The above picture shows the last stage of the bride price payment at the traditional wedding.

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