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Editorial Note

In this issue, we continue to engage in how social and economic dynamics influence the family. The irrefutable point that the family is the basic unit of every society is made with the fervent belief that it nurtures its members and releases them to society. The failure or success of a society is intricately connected to how the family grooms its members. The inevitable conclusion is that the stronger the family in contemporary society, the better for all. In this light, Ayantayo blazed the trail by arguing that the traditional roles played by members of the family in the past have been affected by the ever-changing socio-economic factors in contemporary society. This dynamic and forward-looking social reality immediately suggests that members of the family must assume new roles that align with the demand and expectations of society. However, he argued that we must holistically develop a family based on blending treasured traditional values with contemporary dynamic values.

Alawode and Aderele examine the causes, effects, and solutions to substance abuse by members of the family. According to them, the rate at which the youth use or abuse substances has become so alarming that it requires deft musicological intervention. They argued that musicologists must take it as a point of duty to engage and minister to youth involved in substance use to restore them to fellowship with their families and Christ. Asaolu argued that although conflict is natural, marital conflict is complex and has serious implications for the family and society. Since conflict is human-made, Asaolu identified natural and potential causes of conflict in marriage and suggested that there are irreducible ethical prescriptions whose adoption and application can help to minimize conflict in the family. Salifu and Hammans's empirical exploration of drug abuse among the youth in the Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria, clearly shows that it has assumed a dangerous trend that requires urgent intervention by government institutions and the family. They suggest that ethical principles are required to address this trend through socialisation as well as the spiritual exercise of

faith. Adeola's article centers on how flexibility is a virtue that couples should cultivate to navigate traditional impositions that might negatively affect the family. He adopts a theological standpoint that argues that consistent and mutual fellowship together in the family helps prevent external infiltration into the family.

Odeleye and Adeyanju examine the necessity of resolving conflict among young couples. As part of the mandate of pastoral care ministry, pastors should ensure that their ministry intentionally cares about the health of young people's marriages. As a result of the potential consequences of failure in early marriages, the moral burden to guide and guard against unnecessary conflict in young homes must be borne by pastors by deploying their spiritual and moral training and authority. Oyedele specifically examines the roles of pastoral care in infidelity in Christian homes. He argues that one of the causes of conflict in the family is sexual infidelity by a spouse. This, he argues, can lead to the breakdown of marriage if pastoral care is not given in such a way as to ensure forgiveness. Still, on pastoral care, Adeyanju unfurls the complexities that COVID-19 imposed on communal coexistence. Social distancing affected the communal setting in that members of the community had to deliberately keep some reasonable distance to be safe. At such a moment, Adeyanju thinks that pastoral care ministry is critical in mitigating the consequences of social distancing and keeping healthy by all.

Kelechi and Oderinus's interest is in unhealthy rivalry among siblings in the family. The adverse effects rivalry has on the family call for critical attention to be paid to it. They suggest that parents must conduct themselves do not suggest that they love one child more than the other. Ogundipe returns to the role of the pastoral care unit in fostering unity and resolving marital conflict. To correctly resolve conflict, each issue that causes conflict must be examined on its own rather than deploy one solution fits all approach. This is where the dexterity of pastoral care comes in. Oluwaronke believes that Christian parenting is a critical means of mitigating social vices that

have continued to plague contemporary society. Oluwaronke itemizes and also proffers solutions to the causes of social vices that require good parenting and counseling to resolve. Victor re-examines the concept of one flesh marital bond as a quintessential measure couples need to take to resolve their conflict. The one flesh approach argues that conflict inflicts self-pain on the couples, and they should see each other as one. And finally, Ayinde explores the impacts of social media on Christian youth couples. She argues that time is essential in developing relationships in marriage. Consequently, when more time is spent on social media to neglect the spouse, conflict is bound to arise. Christian principles are thus recommended to ensure a balanced use of social media for the family's health.

I, therefore, welcome you to explore in detail the arguments and issues raised in this issue.

Prof. Benson Ohihon Igboin
Editor in Chief

CONFLICT IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY, CAUSES AND REMEDIES FOR HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIP: A PASTORAL COUNSELLING APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Studies have shown clearly that conflict in marriage spurs social, mental, relational and emotional instability by aggravating the body chemistry towards the abnormal reaction of restlessness, erratic thinking, misbehaviour, and insensitivity to the divine plan for marriage and family. Most times, the attitude and behaviour of the parties involved resembles that of uncultured and uneducated. The study aimed to investigate the conflict in marriage and family, looking at the causes and remedies for harmonious relationships through a pastoral counselling approach. A descriptive method is employed to carry out the research. At the same time, the finding reveals that through conflict, the damage hurts the harmonious relationship of some loving couples, a breakdown in communication sets in, and living and interaction turn tense. The paper, therefore, recommends that solace for revamping the wrong orientation that engulfs and generates conflict in marriage and family is the antidote of pastoral counselling to delve into re-orientating couples into appropriate lifestyles, propping understanding in living and the need for refraining from unconventional practices that trigger conflict. In contrast, the effect of a dignified lifestyle in the family proposes harmonious relationships.

Keywords: Conflict, Marriage and Family, Causes and Remedies, Harmonious Relationship, Pastoral Counselling

Introduction

No one can deny the submission of old that human beings are gregarious creatures. Where people gather to relate, the possibility of getting across each other's way or stepping on one another's toes may manifest and result in conflict. Conflict is a common phenomenon wherever people congregate for relationships, where people believe in one another and accept doing business together. Moreover, where more than one person decides on a common purpose to live and share life in common, and where people decide to coexist to run significant affairs that will enhance living for good. Conflict becomes inevitable amidst people who see issues differently, co-workers whose thinking differs on ideologies, and friends whose desires vary on principles and strategies. Therefore, relations are people whose plan and focus are not the same most times, and family members whose temperament and emotion are not identical in life.

Moreover, conflict in marriage and family suggests a relationship between husband and wife that lacks checks and balances or mindful living requiring decisive discipline. Partners in love affairs have significant issues that might bind and knit them together for genuine interaction, cordial conversation, and harmonious coordination in moving responsibly. That living or sharing things in common reveals a continuum of undiluted discipline within the duo in a marriage that signifies having close commonalities, which glued the attitude and behaviour for a meaningful relationship. That possibly informs the submission drawn from Lateju (2013, 33) that discipline is a method of training the mind or body or controlling peoples' attitude, cognition and or behaviour in an area of activity where this is necessary. Discipline in marriage, therefore, is a way of denying the personal self from an antagonistic state involving unhealthy matters. More than that, sometimes it entails instructing other people to obey laid down rules to achieve maximum results, which is to unite or harmonise relationships.

Conflict in Christian marriage and family is focused on in this paper and therefore considered a terrible problem, which causes

confusion, division, broiling, discord, emotional breakdown, unhealthy relationship, disagreement, distrust and the like. For any Christian marriage to scale through the scourge of conflict and its ravaging implications, a pastoral counselling measure must provide remedies to resolve the tension and work out modalities for harmonious relationships among affected couples. To achieve the purpose and goal setting for the study, issues that the paper discusses sequentially include: an overview of the conflict in marriage, biblical perspective of conflict in marriage; causes of conflict in marriage; remedies for conflict for harmonious relationship; and pastoral counselling measure to handle conflict in Christian marriage.

Overview of Conflict in Marriage and Family

Conflict in marriage and family is a tussle between two individuals and one of the social crises that have a terrible impact on disrupting couples' homes through rising and calming like sea waves. Ojo (2010) asserts that conflict contains disintegrative force and components that are highly destructive and dangerous, with the power to crush family members, relatives, materials and the environment. It is a terrible monster that hibernates within humans seeking an opportunity to disrupt peaceful coexistence and tranquillity in the lives and relationships of couples. Conflict is one of the inward, subtle, and invisible warlords, which role and impact sometimes beat imagination for the unquantifiable harm and havoc it unleashed on husbands and wives. People underrate the effect of conflict; hence, they feel unconcern or wear a nonchalant attitude about it. Conflict is a global phenomenon because insurgence happens wherever couples have no care. Conflict is a common problem wherever people associate and relate with each other as family, friends, neighbours, co-workers, or cohabits within a society.

In the marital journey, Tolorunleke (2008) asserted that couples experience tension or stress between their marital partners as they try to work out the nitty-gritty surrounding living together and straightening issues concerning marital roles or responsibilities. It is essential to note that husbands and wives in marriage and family have

different expectations and hopes desired to be achieved, while some may remain unachievable. As humans, it is natural to expect that there will be differences in opinions, values, needs, desires and habits that are the stuff of everyday living. However, no human relationship is immune to making mistakes, having friction, misunderstanding, and heated experiences in living once in a while. But that does not necessarily mean such humans are not compatible as social beings who are designated to associate and regroup to forge ahead despite difficulties experienced in the affairs.

The disposition of people in closer relationships, such as marital affairs, rather than friendship or co-workers, may be different because the affected individual may hold on to the contradiction as the basis for misbehaving, which sometimes leads to conflict. In light of that, it would be appropriate to examine some issues that scholars have advanced to prove the inevitability of marital disputes in couples' relationships. In the view of Al-Nabi, Poor and Hassan, the attitudes and behaviours that result in marital disputes (<http://docsdrive.com/pdfs/medwelljournals/ibm/2016/2514-2519.pdf>) within relationships of spouses are multiple; however, few are gleaned and discussed as relevant to enhance a better understanding of the possibility of marital conflict within a married relationship. That is not a hunch or does not predetermine separation or divorce between couples, as some people may think. However, some elements that reveal the unavailability of conflict when social living is beyond an individual are discuss below.

The perceptual difference in Practices

This element focuses on how individuals perceive the attitudes and actions put up within a given situation of the marital relationship. People believe that conflict emerges from the difference in perception and understanding of an issue which reflects itself behaviourally and physically. Ogungbile (2004, 129) asserts that a woman who dresses in white apparel with a flowing scarf, which according to her, expresses her purity of life without the husband's suspicion, may cause misunderstanding. Since perception is a

cognitive process, an attitude or behaviour that tells differently can be misunderstood and result in conflict, as attitude and behaviour serve as the fundamental principle governing conduct.

Equity on Gender Equality

Gender equality upholds that in relationships, every individual who participates in an unfair relationship will probably become dissatisfied. The truth is that marital roles and responsibilities within a relationship require equity to determine the meaningful result. In the case of marriage and family, Adeniran (1995, 181) believes that interpersonal relationships between spouses need to base on sharing roles and responsibilities in the home to achieve maximum satisfaction in the relationship of both spouses. If one of them feels that the relationship has become unequal, such an individual may experience psychological tension, resulting in conflict(s). Perhaps, every affected individual feels useless or unaccomplished; such individuals may feel dissatisfied about being together. Hence, the affected individual may strongly contemplate ending the relationship due to the tension that arises inwardly.

Exchange Social Behaviour in Relationship

Cherry cited sociologist Homans, who asserts that social behaviour results from an exchange process. This exchange aims to maximise benefits and minimise costs, but people weigh social relationships' potential benefits and risks. People will terminate or abandon any relationship when the risks outweigh the rewards (<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-social-exchange-theory-2795882>). The teaching therein is that people usually seek situations where tips are higher than expenses and strive to avoid problems requiring higher costs. In other words, one person can affect another person's behaviour either positively or negatively to the extent that such an individual can control or determine the rewards and expenses of the other person. Moreso, what that individual receives in a relationship should be almost equal to what the other person has spent. The imbalance between rewards and costs can cause conflict

and dissatisfaction with the partner who has received a lesser share of prizes. That can jeopardise the motive and intention of any lover in marital affairs, no matter the number of years such ones have lived together as a couple.

Attribution within Intimate Relationship

The term attribution means ascribing something to somebody, whereas psychology reveals that it is a process of making judgments about the causes of one's behaviour and that of others. Hence, attribution shows a cause and effect that influences how perceptions of specific behaviours modify beliefs about one's spouse (<https://www.encyclopedia.com>). In other words, in a particular situation, how an individual would respond to a problem depends on the causal inferences of that problem. In a marriage setup, when a spouse attributes the origin of a problem to the other partner, claiming to be without any fault can be responsible for producing misgiving and grievance. Therefore, the partner proving innocent on any course gives a better feeling about oneself without working out the conflict. In situations of the home where a spouse is desperate to attribute negative behaviour or fault to the other partner as one who is not cooperating, as shown in other observable grounds, seeks to spur provocation and tension that would hinder the harmonious relationship. Wisdom to avoid conflict in a relationship requires pointing at the strengths and weaknesses of both parties to strike a balance that would necessitate rewarding and positive behaviour of their partners in internal affairs.

Behavioural Disorder in Relationship

The element of behaviour disorder in relationships breeds conflict between couples who are trying to understand their partner's actions and behaviour. The observant partner may strategise new approaches to checkmate and control the dispute. Collins (2007, 646) avers that a person with faulty sensation, emotions, and thinking is likely to act in odd or socially inappropriate ways. Whatever prompts

a spouse to display a particular behaviour resulting in conflict within a relationship, also demands an alternative approach to resolve the cause and make it beneficial. To have meaningful control and management of disputes in a partnership requires steps to clarify an individual's responsibilities and commitments; then, determining interpersonal borders would allow taking part in decision-making and employing open relationships.

Reluctance to allow Negotiation in Relationship

A scholar submits that "positive negotiation relationships are important not because they engender warm, fuzzy feelings, but because they engender trust, which is a vital means of securing desired actions from others" (<https://www.pon.harvard.edu>). In other words, negotiation suggests discussion that does not preclude reaching an agreement on an issue. Therefore, any spouse that feels adamant about negotiating for peaceful coexistence will cause conflict to boomerang within relationships. Parameters for resolving the tension in a relationship call for negotiation between parties involved to work out the friction resulting from failure in negotiation strategy. In other words, a lack of negotiation methods and displaying proper behaviours can be the cause of conflict instead of actual needs.

Growth Principles Enhance Mutual Relationship

Divine intention for marriage and family, according to Ogundipe (2015, 66 – 67), was to make life easy, better, enjoyable, peaceful and lively for couples. For couples to achieve that, an instrument that spells out the nitty-gritty of approach, the procedural line of action, and the mode of relational application was not only an oral expression but a defined and well-structured principle for couples' growth and development. As the marriage team pass through a growth stage and enter the next step, family development is under maximum pressure. The stresses and challenges couples experience are required for the successful compatibility of their new structure in the family. Suppose the couple's effort to follow the correct principles fails. In that case, it will affect family health negatively with the

prosperity and the ability to oppose other kinds of stress and eventually, it will significantly protract mutual family relationships.

Given the factors presented, according to Adeogun (2006), it is glaring that conflict is just a contradiction arising from differences in interest, ideas, ideologies, prescriptions and tendencies. The inconsistencies between husbands and wives usually affect emotion, mental coordination, temperament and interpersonal relations. In other words, conflict manifests an invisible force that allows collision or contradiction within human coexistence and relationship, often resulting in misunderstanding or disagreement. While opposing views between couples, conflict may arise to dismember the unity within family diversity. That means conflict from a psychological perspective is a tussle which usually occurs when there is a struggle between two or more alternatives that may have characteristics of approach and avoidance.

Collins (1988, 81) elaborate further that during the conflict, "to approach is to tend to do something or to move in a direction that will be pleasurable and satisfying. However, to avoid is to resist doing something perhaps because it will not be pleasurable and satisfying." In a marital relationship, a clash of interests may develop or stem from incompatible goals, ideas, views or visions on pursuing two or more individuals over something considered important but scarce. According to Kohlberg, cited by Holme (1972, 138), Couples in conflict state apply a sense of conventional moralities developed during childhood to adjudge the knowledge of what is right or wrong as an individual perceives it. That means what brings conflict is the perception of evaluating a performance which, when it disagrees with anything considered suitable, brings shock, tussle, frowning, dislike and striving against the act purposely to challenge the inappropriateness of an amendment.

In the process of interaction or inter-relationship, Adeogun upheld Imobighe's (2003) views that conflict presents "a condition of disharmony within an interaction process usually as a result of a clash of interest between the parties involved in some form of relationship. Such a clash of interest could occur because either they are pursuing

incompatible goals or using incompatible means to pursue their chosen goals." Conflict is inevitable in marriage and family, where various interests, views and mentalities exist. Therefore, it is evident that discord is natural, normal and advantageous wherever growth, development and change will occur; and not a bad omen within the human community but a necessary 'evil' that possesses positive rewards and outcomes when adequately handled.

Biblical Perspective of Conflict in Marriage

The scripture documents the interpersonal relationship between the divine and humans and involves a relation between persons. In the stream of relationships, however, it is evident that natural human tendencies often break out to disrupt the smoothness and cordiality expected amidst coexistence. Experience validates that, sometimes, an individual has trouble with self and talks less about having interpersonal problems while relating with people. Manifesting issues within a relationship originates from misunderstanding one another's views, communication breakdown, attitudinal disparity and behavioural fallouts, which the mind and perception disagree with, struggle with, analyse briefly but critically based on morality and step up with reaction, which results in conflict at the end (James 4: 1 – 3).

The irony of life within Christian marriage stems from an assumption surrounding the personalities involved in the marital relationship as couples. The logic is that married lovers have Christ as their Lord and personal saviour; they have an assurance of an endowment of inner peace. That produces internal stability over tension and turmoil, and they have access to communicate with the thrown of mercy for peace to guide the heart free from anxiety (John 14: 27) in the view of Milne (1993, 209). Christian couples are suitable to seek intervention for divine peace on issues that bothers their mind and life, as Stagg (1971, 213) asserts in the light of Phil. 4: 7. Couples are expected to live together without hatred, hitch or deceit, confusion, troubles and tough argument as husbands and wives. Therefore, a conflict would not be a problem to dismember couples in marriage and family relationships.

Causes of Conflict in Marriage

It is expedient to find out the root cause(s) of conflict between lovers in marriage and family who promise to live harmoniously together till death comes. But when they reach a point in the relationship and discover possibilities, they are no longer on good terms and cannot go along again. In the view of Collins (2007, 319 – 324), some causes of marital conflict include Satan's influence, personal attributes, attitudes, and actions; group attitudes and beliefs; conflict patterns, communication failure; and social irritants. Other variables which are germane realities that could bring conflict amidst the relationship of husbands and wives who are not careful enough to restrict, retreat, or revert the vices when they rear heads in living are shared hereafter.

Satanic Manifestation and Manipulating Influence

The scripture declares Satan as an agent of confusion in any environment people gather to relate and socialise; the target for being present among people with various antics is to disrupt, disorganise, confuse and disintegrate established plans by causing conflict. Being a deceiver, a liar who throws about deception, and disguises himself as an angel of light, he appears amidst people tempting and trying to disrupt and devour their good structure (John 8: 44; 1 Peter 5: 8; 1 Thess. 3: 5). In marriage and family this schema is dubious and influential, that is the reason behind the instruction given to Christians to resist the devil (James 4: 7); Collins cites the submission of Huggett (1984, 14) on Satan that he "takes an informed interest in all Christian relationships and schemes either to bring about their downfall or to pollute them." Couples need to take cognisance of this terrible being whenever the peaceful water of a relationship is stirred and causes conflict.

Manifestation of Unfaithfulness in handling money

Unfaithfulness in handling money is the most common conflict between couples nowadays. It is no surprise that financial pressure can disable dreams, wreck relationships, and cripple team

communication (<https://www.centerstone.org>). As essential as money is in funding lives, if there is not enough to take care of what is needed, it creates an incredible amount of stress for everyone involved. Couples turn red eyes when unfaithfulness shows up on finances, or either spouse is shady about expending it, profound distrust shows up as an attended effect to shake the foundation of the marriage.

Manifestation of Unfaithfulness in Intimacy

Bioku (2021, 211 – 212), citing Frankle, asserts that the life of married couples may lead to a crisis of discomfort, which is loaded with pain, anguish and struggle with distorted integrity when unfaithfulness becomes the disrupting factor of intimacy. It spurs erratic feeling on cloudy sex relation that becomes overt and obvious. Such encounters would cause restlessness, high fever and emotional imbalance in-between the spouses, which will lead to feelings of inadequacy and doubt of security to continue in the relationship.

Moving along with Undesirable Friends

There is a common saying that birds of the same feather flocks together. Keeping undesirable friends can create bad blood, tension, discomfort and conflict between couples. Paul decries that bad company corrupts good character (1 Cor. 15: 33). When a spouse is associated with undesirable friends, the other partner will not get along, creating enormous friction within the spouse's family. More importantly, where the dubious friends dictate the movement of the spouse to take precedence over the relationship, rumblings will persist. A few others listed are manipulation in handling marital roles, unfaithfulness in parenting responsibilities, pseudo-faithfulness to moral discipline, and ineffective communication in relationships.

Effect of Conflict in Marriage and Family

The effect of conflict in marriage and family is similar to a volcanic eruption, which "spews hot, hazardous gases, ash, lava, and rock that

are sturdily destructive Health concerns after a volcanic eruption include infectious disease, burns, respiratory illness, injuries from falls, and vehicle accidents related to the slippery, hazy conditions caused by ash" (<https://www.cdc.gov>). Most times, the attitude and behaviour of parties involved in conflict Ogundipe (2015, 64) signify and depict uncultured and uneducated in the context of marriage and family. The reason is that either party's temperament tends to affect their intimacy. At the same time, the couple had damaged the harmonious relationship of some loving couples, a breakdown in communication sets in, living and interaction turn tense, and emotional disorder hacks down cordiality. At the same time, a flair for coexistence translates into indecency and a reactionary attitude leading to fomenting havoc within the social system of family life.

Remedies on Conflict for Harmonious Relationship

The word remedy suggests things to handle a problem, medication that can be applied to an ailment and healed, or treatment one can give to relieve or cure a problem. A few remedies to handle conflict among Christian couples are highlighted here. Christian couples should allow genuine love to saturate their minds, as Ogundipe (2009, 44) proposes, because it is the greatest virtue of all attributes. They can sustain relationships, see burning issues with a gentle disposition, develop a change of attitude when circumstance proves naughty and dicey, submit to the will of Christ at the point of wrongdoing or mistake and try to examine the situation from a divine perspective. Paul's teaching reveals that love is a way of life for Christian couples (1 Cor. 13). It is a compass that leads them to handle serious issues lightly and overlook faults, attitudes and behaviours that can cause anger and aggression, which can result in chaos.

In odd situations, Christian couples need to learn how to evaluate themselves when a critical problem arises and results in misunderstanding. Moments of tension are gaining momentum, and during this period, emotions become tense; the appropriate step in a Christian relationship is to calm down, take an inward stock, and check if all the struggle is worth it in marriage and family

relationships. A realistic valuation of the situation will lead to sympathy for one another out of mercy. Asha (2021, 60) avers that such is an essential spiritual gift between husband-wife relationships in marriage and family.

It would not be out of place for Christian couples to understand conflict stages of short and long terms as they situate in the same manner; hence, they tend to resolve amicably. The five stages of conflict Palmer (1990) identified are summarised by Collins (2007, 326 – 327). They include the tension development stage, which affects individuals' sense of something different, followed by the role confusion stage, where participants are doubtful about what is taking place. In the injustice collecting stage, affected individuals will gather evidence to support their position and opinion about what people observe. The parties would enter into a confrontation stage, where each member would try to justify themselves and pass bulk on the other; the volatile nature of that stage can lead to an unexpected inward crisis within marital partners. The last stage is the adjustment stage, where the parties desire adjustment to eliminate the tension leading to conflict.

Pastoral Counselling Measure to Handle Conflict in Marriage

The solace for revamping the wrong orientation that engulfs and generates conflict between couples in marriage and family, according to Ogundipe (2014, 78), is in the antidote of pastoral counselling measures. That will be part of the discussion below; it possesses the propensity to delve into re-orientating couples into appropriate lifestyles, propping understanding in living and the need for refraining from unconventional practices that trigger conflict.

Guide Couples to Develop Meaningful Rapport in Relationship

In traditional morality, it is expected of husbands and wives to adhere to fundamental principles of relationship. That encapsulates genuine love that states, "thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mat. 22: 39). Moreover, it should be the starting point of a

relationship; a neighbour, in this context, means the marital partner should be treated with dignity in a relationship. Couples should respect and regard each other as rational beings and disallow anything that would bridge intimacy, provoke annoyance, disrespect rules guiding socialising, and unruly elements that can trigger discord. Donagan (1985) asserted that it is impermissible for couples in marital affairs not to respect each other as rational creatures. Therefore, teams must imbibe whatever is right, appropriate and permissible for each other irrespective of differences and diversity.

Educate Couples to be Open-minded in Relationship

Pastoral counsellors can educate couples to be open-minded by accepting one another without minding their opposing views, feelings, desires and goals. Ayandokun and Ayandokun (2021, 261) asserted that pastoral counsellors might employ biblical resolutions to tackle whatever virus that brings about the conflict amidst their relationship through open-mindedness and exercise patience with perseverance to uproot the stem of relational conflict. Through open-mindedness, Christian couples may decide to be at peace to checkmate and restrain them from issues that will repress being at peace with one another in the marriage and family (Prov. 16: 7). The open-mindedness may help the couples to decide to do good, express love of Christ to each other, pray for each other to seek divine directive, and follow Christ process of settling dispute and conflict (Romans 12: 21; Psa. 119: 165).

Nurture Couples to Cultivate Endurance in Relationships

Endurance is a virtue cultivated towards stomaching insult, disagreement, discord and wrong acts without revenge or retaliation when pastoral caregivers teach couples (1 Cor. 4: 12; 2 Tim. 2: 3). Endurance is the necessitating enabler of tolerance at the exasperating time(s). Tolerance is another virtue that should not be lacking in marriage, family, or interpersonal relationships if the

uproar of crisis subsides. Tolerance is the ability to endure hardship, tolerate somebody or something maximally, accept divergent or differing views of others, and remain unaffected. The virtue suggests accommodation of ideas, opinions and people (differences. Factually); people are not the same in terms of trait, assertion, sentiment and thought; this is the beauty of nature. The pastoral counsellors promote tolerance among couples for harmony, cordial relationship and peaceful coexistence. The word tolerance does not mean compromise for anything harmful or can jeopardise life or whatever is ethically wrong. Therefore, pastoral counsellors are at the forefront of teaching and encouraging couples to exemplify the learning of tolerance.

Empower Couples to Cultivate Sincere Dialogue in Tough Times

Empowering couples towards cultivating sincere dialogue during tough times, feuds, misunderstandings, disagreements and conflicts have become essential to revert the cause that polarises togetherness. Discussion is necessary to iron out issues causing division and war in marriage and family relationships. Oladapo (2012, 80) posited that couples must develop a disposition to initiate talking the problem over to promote mutual friendship. When teams adopt dialogue in seeking simple solutions over sensitive matters in the family, it leads participants to a better understanding of reasons to shift ground, adjust views or purpose, to reflect positively on why other positions are valuable to resolve. Ayandokun (2021, 22) submitted that couples require godly and time-tested strategies that could provide the opportunity to talk realistically about the area of affectedness, no matter how serious it may be, and resolve it amicably to ensure peace in the marriage and family system.

Encourage Redemptive Reconciliation at Crossroads

Nwaura (2010, 136) succinctly declares that Christian couples are responsible for following a peaceful lifestyle that contains dynamic potency that could transform marriage and family through an act of reconciliation. Peaceful coexistence requires that

people develop creative and redemptive ways of mitigating scenarios that provoke anger, grievance and conflict. Those potentially prone to a dispute need reorientation into this new approach of reconciliation relationship that would benefit everybody; if judiciously and religiously followed, the conflict crisis may cease. Therefore, couples should cultivate a modest lifestyle, stimulate listening ears, desire to keep calm and be ready for redemptive reconciliation at every cross-road of relationships in marriage and family.

Conclusion

This paper has established that conflict is one of the social vices that usually leads to a crisis that affects husbands and wives within marriage and family relationships. It is a complex problem that requires wisdom to contain, curb, control, conquer and eradicate any time it manifests in marriage and family. The paper stresses that the menace of conflict in marriage is inevitable. Still, Christian couples need divine consciousness to tackle the phenomenon that always pounces on teams to divide, ensure complication, disrupt peace, cause unrest and tarnish Christ's image. From the standpoint of this work, it becomes clear that conflict is not an attaché to marriage and family. Therefore, when it rears its head within a relationship, pastoral counselling measure is a veritable tool to deface and solve the problem which is not divinely made or approved by God. Conflict is a social problem that appears within the relationship. Couples should not be too spiritual to claim to be immune against its manifestation or pretend they cannot experience its insurgence but be conscious of being armed to fight and eradicate the force for mutual coexistence.

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