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## **Editorial**

One of the pressing questions that reverberates often in African Christianity is: What is an (African) Christian family? Family is very important to the traditional Africans. Raising a family is not just a social and cultural demand that has to be meant, but also a conditional for eschatological redemption or salvation. For the African Christian, the place of family cannot also be over-emphasised. Thus, prayers for the family in all its ramifications occupy the central stage in personal and intercession sessions. Although African Christians have for a long time contended with the notions of the Christian family in general, there is a progressive acceptance of its monogynous union based on heterosexuality. However, Western values and globalisation forces have continued to shape Christian family discourses and practices. Sex and sexuality issues have been escalated and mediated so much so that Christian 'theology' of family, sexuality, and sex has to contend with the throes of globalisation.

This volume, which is a product of the 2023 conference on the theme: Christian Family and Sexuality in Contemporary Society, critically reflects the tensions, challenges, and theological prospects of a Christian family. In the lead article, Professor Knoetze departs from the general conception of the Christian family based on Christ's salvation. Although he points out that family is a contested issue in Africa, he argues that a radical conception of the Christian family should centre around relationality, forging a missional relationship with the Trinitarian God. This is in contrast with the soteriological conception of family that has blurred the missional prospects that understanding family can birth for a long time.

Adu-Gyamfi's article also radically takes on the traditional conception of sex as a purely private issue, and attempts to strike a balance between it and the sexual revolution that theology of sexuality has to contend with. Coming from a heteronormative perspective, Adu-Gyamfi strongly maintains conservative theological stand on sexuality. He argues that the biblical

understanding of sexuality cannot be traded with the offering of the over-sexualised world.

On her own, Ayo-Oladayo explores the significance and nexus between language education and family development. She points out that effective communication in the family is a *sine qua non* for cohesion, unity, and progress. In addition to fostering cultural understanding, supporting cognitive growth, and fostering stronger family ties, it also improves communication abilities. Oladapo and Adererele examine the positive impacts of social change, particularly technological advancement, on the family. They opine that despite the advantages derived from modern communications devices, Christian theological understanding of the family should be countenanced and appropriated by Christian families.

Odesola and Odesola reflect on the significance of sex education in the church. Although sex education has not been a major interest in missional and catechetical teaching, they suggest that contemporary challenges make it imperative for the church to be interested in sex education. Otun's article introduces a philosophical dimension to sexuality discourse. Otun views the relegation of reason in choice- and decision-making processes as unacceptable and recommends a balanced deployment of both reason and faith in sexuality matters. Gombi re-examines the accounts of Genesis and contemporary sexual expressions. In the Genesis creation stories, an explanation of the nature of sexuality takes a central, climactic positioning and is given as a fundamental fact of creation. The excessive amount of material given to sexuality highlights its relevance in the Hebrew Bible within the cosmic context of the creation narratives. The foundation for the rest of the biblical narrative and discourse on human sexuality is provided by the profound depiction of God's original plan for human sexuality at the beginning of the canon, which also captures the core ideas of sexuality. Salifu enumerates the negative effects of street hawking, such as rape, unplanned pregnancies, and violence. He recommends that the state and social institutions should intervene to stem the corrosive tide of street hawking in Nigeria.

Biar explores the disagreement between 'pre-modernism' and postmodernism. He argues that the different positions these schools of thought hold have created serious tension in how to understand human sexuality. The recognition of feeling over reason and the relativistic contours that encircle the arguments of postmodernism, modernism, and premodernism all have impact on Christian notion of sexuality. He, however, maintains that the Bible still reserves the best model of sexual appreciation in contemporary society. For Kosoluware, the negative influences of postmodernism should be frontally addressed by contemporary African Christians. It is essential that the Church in Africa rise to the challenge through teaching, counseling and intentional preaching of the gospel. Atteh examines Christian moral victory, and points out the tensions that have characterised its different interpretations. He opines that the best approach to the theological issue is to insist that the victory believers have over the flesh nature is both positional and progressive, encompassing both the divine and the human responsibilities. Asaolu tackles the increasing cases of marital infidelity in society. Articulating the causes and effects of marital infidelity, Asaolu recommends that couples act in such a way that their actions could conform with Kantian categorical imperative. Finally, Ajao makes a case for sex education as a part of socialisation in the family. He notes that it is no longer possible to hold the view that sex talk is a taboo. Therefore, there should be a conscious approach to addressing sexuality issues.

This volume is a coterie of discourses on sex, sexuality and family. The burning issues raised from multidisciplinary perspectives enrich the volume and provide a critical resource for further engagement. However, the ideas are solely the responsibility of the authors rather than the editorial board of the journal.

**Benson Ohihon Igbion**  
Editor-in-Chief

## **DILEMMA OF FAITH AND REASON IN GENOTYPE INCOMPATIBILITY AMONG THE PROSPECTIVE CHRISTIAN COUPLES**

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### **Abstract**

The refusal to ignore genotype incompatibility during premarital counselling among prospective Christian couples has created a severe medical challenge with a high prevalence of infant deaths and pain in Africa. Research reveals that some future Christian couples do not consider sickle cell anaemia and genotype incompatibility as severe medical issues in marriage. Thus, based on their love for one another, they decide to proceed and get married using faith to the detriment of reason and common sense that God has the power to make their genotypes and blood group compatible. This dilemma has undoubtedly curtailed the World Health Organisation's (WHO) plan to eradicate sickle cell anaemia in Africa. Philosophers and theologians have argued and asked questions whether Christian couples who are genetically incompatible should be allowed to get married on the premise and confession of the Biblical statement that with God, all things are possible (Luke 1:37). This paper seeks to assess the dilemma of religion and science in the haemoglobin genotype status and the views of married Christians and prospective couples towards marriage in the face of genotype incompatibility. The methodology adopted in this work is an analytical approach to assess the dilemma of faith and reason in genotype incompatibility among intending Christian couples. The interview was also conducted with some married and prospective couples to get their understanding of the subject matter. The paper concludes with a

recommendation that prospective Christian couples must allow the dynamics of reason to find expression in their faith. Also, the proponents of faith-only in the face of genotype incompatibility must allow their faith to interface with reason.

**Keywords:** Dilemma, Faith, Reason, Genotype, Incompatibility

## **Introduction**

The pain that genotype incompatibility has created among prospective Christian couples has received attention from theologians, philosophers, and medical scientists. Many Christians believe in the power of God to change their genetic makeup with the confession of the Biblical statement that with God, nothing will be impossible (Luke 1:37). In some Christian homes; faith has often been used as an excuse to do many terrifying things. Some intending couples use their religious faith under the guise that God spoke to them to go into marriage with partners who are not medically compatible with them. Some also limit their knowledge strictly to the Bible and refuse to accept medical advice and prescriptions by rejecting the truth of science, logic, facts, experience, and the incredible wisdom of science. Experiences within our society have revealed that some prospective Christian couples still use faith to proceed into marriage despite knowing their genotype incompatibility.

Gbenle (2018, 17) asserts that before the advent of modern medicine, there was a high mortality and infant death rate due to genotype incompatibility. People often referred to the high mortality and infant death rate as "*abikus*" - born to die. All these happened because there was no knowledge of genotype among the couples. Couples that got married before the advent of modern medicine, irrespective of their genetic makeup, used to experience infant death as a result of genotype incompatibility and other pediatric infectious diseases. However, the advent of medicine and biological explanations has given every prospective couple a solution to infant death caused by genotype incompatibility.

Several philosophers, theologians, and medical scientists have viewed the subject differently. Gbenle (2018) opines that men and women with opposing genetic makeup should not be allowed to marry each other because of the pain and danger that genotype incompatibility will bring upon their marriage. This paper objectively assesses the various views of some Christian and intending couples regarding the dilemma of using faith (religion) and reason (science) in genotype incompatibility among prospective Christian couples.

### **Clarification of Terms**

**Genotype:** Genotype is a person's heritable genetic identity. Apart from how one looks (phenotype), talks, and blood group, genotype (haemoglobin/ red blood cell gene) is passed from parents. So, no human being had the power to choose his genotype from the womb, just as no one could choose how he looked when he was born. The cells are in pairs in the body, and a child can get one from his father and the other from his mother when he is born. Genotype can refer to an organism's entire genetic makeup, not just its alleles for a single genetic locus. Genotype can be explained as the genetic constitution of an individual organism locus (Gbenle, 2018, 1).

Typically, there are five distinct types of genotypes in humans, which are: A.A., AS., A.C., S.S. and S.C. While the first two pairs (A.A. and AS) are normal, A.C. is rare, and the latter two (S.S., SC) are irregular and anomalous, commonly causing sickle cell disease. Gbenle explains further that sickle cell disease occurs when an individual's blood cells are shaped, deformed, and abnormal, potentially blocking blood flow and causing pain and damage to vital organs. The red blood cells are in circular form, flexible, and can move quickly through blood vessels. However, in sickle cell disease, the red blood cells are shaped like sickles. This rigid, sticky sickle cell can get stuck in small blood vessels, slowing or blocking blood flow and oxygen supply to body parts. The A.A. genotype has the best

compatibility ratio. Individuals with the A.A. genotype can choose a life partner from virtually all other genotype categories with minimal risk of sickle-celled offspring.

American University of Nigeria (2022) submits that genotype differs from the phenotype, which describes human physical characteristics. Therefore, every prospective couple needs to know their genotypes before they get married to themselves because the problem to avoid with genotype incompatibility is sickle cell disease (a recessive disorder), a severe medical condition with high prevalent rates in Africa, south of the Sahara. Ashorobi and Bhatt (2023) argue that glutamic acid is converted to valine in sickle cell disease. The valine-formed haemoglobin (H.B.) causes polymerisation, the primary cause of sickle cell disease. The average haemoglobin A is found only in adults but allows haemoglobin S to develop when the mutation occurs. Looking at sickle cell disease, an autosomal recessive disorder requiring two carriers of Haemoglobin S to have full disease symptoms, a patient with only the haemoglobin S is known to have sickle cell trait.

The Counsellors (2023) also reveal that while the A.A. genotype is the best in compatibility, it is also the most susceptible to malarial among the five types of genotype. Similarly, pairing between AS and S.S. or the A.C. and S.S. is equally as risky and ill-advised, while pairing two sickle-celled individuals will almost certainly result in sickle-celled offspring. In response to the submission above, Ashorobi and Bhatt (2023) aver that AS genotype is the best compatible genotype with the A.A. Pairing the genotype of AS with AS or AS with A.C. poses an increased chance of sickle-celled offspring. The pairing of genotype is as follows:

AA+AA=AA,AA,AA,AA (Excellent)

AA+AS=AA,AS,AA,AS (Good)

AA+SS=AS,AS,AS,AS (Fair)

AA+AC=AA,AA,AA,AC. (Good)

AS + AS = A.A, AS, AS, SS. (Very Bad)

AS + SS = AS, S.S., S.S., SS. (Very Bad)

AS + AC = A.A, A.C., AS, SS. (Bad; Advice needed)

SS + SS = SS, S.S., S.S., SS. (Very Bad)

AC + SS = AS, AS, S.S., SS. (Very Bad)

AC + AC = A.A., A.C., A.C., SS. (Bad; Advice needed)

**Faith:** Nyabul (1991) opines that faith is a word that has several shades of meaning. Sometimes, it may be used to mean hope, optimism or expectation. According to Thomas (1974), the term 'faith' derives from the Latin word *fidere*, which means to trust. Ordinarily, it refers to the act of trusting in somebody or something. Thomas (1974, 188) explains further that anybody who has faith in any other person or anything else has a steadfast belief or confidence in the reliability, strength or goodness of that person or that thing.

Omomia (2021) posits that the word faith (as a noun in modern English) is derived etymologically from the Latin word *fides* and *fido* (meaning faith and to trust). The Latin word is derived from the Greek words *pistis* and *pisteuo*. Thus, faith is a belief in the truth of something that may not be provable empirically or rationally. It could therefore be considered as the kind of belief that does not require empirical proof; neither could it necessarily be subjected to the dynamics of reason. This position appears to be affirmed by the Bible. The Bible defines faith as "the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of things (we) hoped for, being the proof of things we do not see and the conviction of their reality (Hebrews 11:1). In other words, one can argue that faith perceives as indisputable fact what is not revealed to the senses.

From the Biblical definition of faith as elucidated above, it could be deduced that, for faith to be effective, there must be a genuine assurance, whose primary function is to confirm the things we hope for. With this assurance and confirmation of the things we

hope for, though not physical yet, there is an attendant proof that comes divinely to believers. Thus, convincing believers and bringing into existence what they are hoping for, based on such assurance Omomia (2021,184) articulates that a critical examination of the Biblical definition of faith appears to conclude that the senses and sensory perception, to some extent, are excluded from faith consideration. It is also tempting to assume that this dimension, to a reasonable extent, may have been the significant strength on which the "faith-only protagonists" hang their presuppositions and arguments. By extension, Omomia (2021) sees faith as involving a stance towards some claim that is not, at least, presently demonstrated by reason. Religious faith involves a belief that makes either an implicit or explicit reference to a transcendent source or things that cannot be empirically investigated. It shows that faith, in this instance, relates to confidence and trust and has its object as God.

**Reason:** Omomia (2021) submits that reason is commonly adjudged as the faculty of the mind through which we can logically come to a rational conclusion about a matter. In other words, reason employs fundamental principles in making inquiries concerning subjects from a methodological standpoint. These investigations may bother moral, intellectual, or religious phenomena. As soon as the dynamics of the reason are employed, any form of proposition, view, or claim is understood to be a justified or authoritative issue. Consequently, such a proposition or claim is accepted as authentic after it is supported by reason. The underlining point, therefore, is that reason is often accepted as the intellectual faculty by which inferences are reached. These inferences are often from available information, which is usually comprehended.

The reason should be understood as the principle for a methodological examination, whether intellectual, moral, aesthetic, or religious. Undoubtedly, whenever the term 'reasoning' is employed, it designates a mental process which is known as inference and activity using which the mind apprehends logical connections between facts or between statements, which are called premises, and a

different statement, which is known as the conclusion. Smith (1957, 37) asserts that reason is a habit of mind which aims at criticising before it accepts, proving before it acts. Instead of relying on its own unanalysed and instinctive intuition, it thinks out of the method and logic for itself.

### **Divergent Views on Faith and Reason in Genotype Incompatibility**

Ashorobi and Bhatt (2023, 1) assert that sickle cell disease is the most common haemoglobinopathy, mainly affecting people of African descent worldwide. It was first discovered in the 1900s, but its molecular and clinical manifestations were inconclusive. It was not until Dr Linus Pauling, a renowned scientist, who (S.C.D.) carried out a landmark study in 1949 where he concluded that sickle cell disease is created by abnormal haemoglobin that sickles once exposed to a low oxygen environment. This sickle-shaped haemoglobin is due to a single amino acid mutation that forms abnormal haemoglobin called haemoglobin S. Ashorobi and Bhatt (2023) explain further that sickle cell disease (S.C.D.) is an autosomal recessive genetic disorder that is caused by a mutation in the beta-globin chain genes leading to what we know as haemoglobin S. This mutation of the sixth amino acid in the haemoglobin Beta-chain induces polymerisation of the haemoglobin, causes deformation of red blood cells and ischemia leading to multiple organ damage.

Alao and Nwannadi (2013) argue that genotype differs from the phenotype, which describes actual human physical characteristics. Alao and Nwannadi articulate that it is necessary for an intending couple to know their genetic makeup before they finally get married. This will help them avoid genotype incompatibility that can create sickle cell disease (a recessive disorder), a severe medical condition with a high prevalent rate of infant death and various types of affliction among some affected couples in Africa. Sickle cell disease is the most typical genetic disease world over and

predominantly affects Africans and the generality of the black race. The issue of genotype incompatibility among the intending couples and the decision on marriage under such circumstances can have significant implications for controlling the dreaded disease called sickle cell anaemia in any country.

Alao and Nwannadi (2013) further assert that sickle cell anaemia is a significant disorder of the human blood system that afflicts many people in Nigeria and subjects them to unspeakable bouts of burden and torture, especially in their marriages. According to Alao and Nwannadi (2013), the available statistics revealed that Nigeria explicitly harbours many sufferers of this disease in the world. For example, it is estimated that out of 500 million sickle cell disease sufferers worldwide, Nigeria accounts for between 25 and 30 million.

### **Divergent Views on Incompatible Genetic Makeup**

Ashorobi and Bhatt (2013) submit that since 1949, medical scientists have understood molecular manifestations. However, there had been no cure for this genetic disorder until about two decades ago when the first bone marrow stems cell transplant was carried out. This procedure partially offered a cure for the disease. However, we still find Christian couples treating sickle cell disease that is easy to prevent if they had allowed reason to find expression in their faith before marriage. This section will present some divergent views on the application of faith and reason concerning genotype incompatibility among couples in Nigeria.

Concerning the assessment of the dilemma in the use of faith and reason about genotype incompatibility, Abiaziem (2018, 2) cited a marriage counsellor who logically argues that with the medical breakthrough in this modern age, it is not the desire of God for Christian couples to be trapped in the web concerning the possibility of having children with sickle cell anaemia by parents with incompatible genotypes. Abiaziem (2018) argues that it is dangerous and unreasonable to foresee a disaster and allow it to happen because of our professed faith and the confidence that God can do everything.

Abiazem argues that when Jesus Christ healed some people, He told them to go and show themselves to the priest for the confirmation of their healing. Thus, Abiazem (2018) opines that God expects Christian couples with incompatible genetic makeups to obey scientific rules because faith-only may be dangerous when the parameters of reason (science) to avoid having children with sickle cell anaemia are violated.

Some intending couples argued that the issue of genotype incompatibility should not be seen as a barrier in marriage because God has the power to change the blood group and genotype. The General Overseer of The Name of Jesus Ministries, Inc. avers that despite knowing that his wife and his genetic makeups are incompatible, both still went ahead to get married because God assured them that they would never give birth to a child with sickle cell disease (J. Idowu, Personal Communication, September 23, 2018). According to Idowu, none of their children has sickle cell disease because, with God, all things are possible.

From time immemorial, the affinity between faith and reason has consistently been contentious in philosophical and theological debates. Baham (2020, 1) argues that interacting with the divine is outside the normal human experience. The supernatural is, by definition, outside the limits of what can be quantified, measured, examined scientifically, or understood from cold academic foundations. Since science does not adequately know the paranormal, metaphysical, and supra phenomena realm of existence. Thus, anything that does not fall within the purview of science or cannot be subjected to an empirical investigation will be relegated to the realm of superstitious belief and mysticism. To a scientific mind, the use of faith by the intending couples with AS and AS or AS and S.S. genetic makeups is to foresee danger and allow it to engulf them. The idea of "I have revelation or convictions" that God is telling the intending couples whose genetic makeups are incompatible to proceed into marriage is a dangerous and ignorant belief.

Speaking of why it is dangerous and medically inadvisable for a prospective couple with genotype incompatibility to proceed into marriage, Baham (2020) opines that the Old Testament proclaims the same rational God who reveals Himself to the prophets also created the world as an orderly, understandable cosmos. The Old Testament assures us that God made our minds apt to gain knowledge and understanding to avoid foolish living and ignorant beliefs.

Baham (2020, 2) submits that structures and limits are essential to physical reality. In the same way, there are structures and limits in the world of understanding and learning, ways that things can be logically investigated and understood. The Bible says, "Let us come and reason together. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like white wool" (Isaiah 1:18, K.J.V). "For you created my innermost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well" (Psalms 139:13-14, NIV).

The God of order who created humans with different genotypes and phenotypes knows the type of genetic makeup that will agree with each other. To affirm the veracity of this statement, the scriptures in Amos Chapter 3 verse 3 says, 'can two walk together unless they agree'. On this premise, one can argue that if the genetic makeup of a prospective couple is incompatible, it suggests that God does not want them to go into marriage together. Just as the human eyes cannot do the work of the nose, God uniquely created individual human beings with different blood groups and genotypes that will match each other and not repel or contradict if they come together. Hence, if the intending couple with conflicting genetic makeups proceeds into marriage, scientific research has revealed that the decision will bring a calamitous experience upon the couple and inflict pain on their children.

Some laws govern the behaviour of matter in the real world, defining how things move and behave within creation; there are also

ways of knowing and understanding thoughts and ideas about reality. They give dimension and coherence to the world, establishing boundaries on the reality that make knowing something possible. If there were no boundaries on reality and no way to reliably and rationally measure or quantify the world, it would not be easy to understand the existence of human beings. Baham (2020) points out in its simple generic form that the application of reason in genotype incompatibility is the state of being rational to weigh and evaluate conditions surrounding the issue and reasons to believe or act according to one's overarching views of the world.

The question remains whether intending couples genetically incompatible for marriage should be allowed to proceed on the premise that God can make all things possible. Medically, this is a delicate issue that must be approached with caution. Christian theology believes God can do all things but does not want us to be fooled. Otun (2022), while addressing the issue of genotype incompatibility, shared the story of a couple who, despite their genotype incompatibility, still proceeded to marry themselves because they developed a faith mindset that they would not give birth to a child with sickle cell anaemia. Otun agrees that all things are possible with God but argues that prospective couples should apply common sense or allow rationality to find expression in their faith.

Otun (2022) agrees with Baham (2020), who postulates that some orders and laws control the universe and everything in it. Otun opines that the application of reason among the intending Christian couples with genotype incompatibility is needed to avoid giving birth to children with sickle cell anaemia. Also, the desire to go into the marriage with the knowledge of genotype incompatibility should be rationally weighed and critically evaluated to consider the reasons to believe or act according to one's faith in the face of imminent danger.

However, in an attempt to bridge the gap between faith and reason, Szantayo (1996, 1) opined that man is a composite of reason and faith. However, the most salient question is whether the

relationship between faith and reason is characterised by conflict or concord. Szantayo (1996) avers that two extremes must be avoided, whether in the study and presentation of Christian apologetics or a Christian's daily life. The two extremes are (1) the use of reason alone and (2) the use of faith alone. In practical terms, this is not a situation of "either/or" but "both/and". The proper relationship should be that of reason and faith.

Though, many religionists suggest some separation between faith and reason. It should be noted that reason helps faith raise its head to knowledge, while faith also answers questions that reason is incapable of understanding and answering. In this regard, Szantayo (1996, 3) further argues that faith and reason are to be distinguished but never separated. Szantayo also uses the relationship between mind and body to illustrate his argument by submitting that the body is not the mind, nor is the mind the body. However, they are inseparably joined in this current mode of existence. Therefore, the mind and the body can be and should be distinguished, but not separated. In a similar way, faith and reason are distinct but not separate. Both are essential to the Christian belief, though each must function within its proper sphere.

Chukwunyere and Chukwunyere (2018) share how their faith in God as an intending couple helped them to marry despite their incompatible genetic makeup. Chukwunyere and Chukwunyere (2018) submit that the application of faith has helped them not to have sickle cell children. Chukwunyere opined that based on their belief in God (faith) that, they shall live by faith (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:11). Chukwunyere opine that they believed that faith, and not reason is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. What this suggests is that, even though we have no direct evidence for something, we can still have faith that God is capable of doing what He has promised because throughout the scripture, wherever God spoke to His children, they acted on faith that God would fulfil His promises to them, and their faith was always rewarded. Chukwunyere and Chukwunyere argued

that God told them to marry themselves despite their genotype incompatibility, and God rewarded them with children without sickle cell anaemia. They proved that their faith in the face of genotype incompatibility is a living force drawn from the living word of God to produce living proofs. Chukwunyere and Chukwunyere (2018) articulate that with faith in the word of God and a clear understanding of His ways and acts, they went into marriage without giving birth to a child with sickle cell disease.

However, when it comes to whether a prospective couple with genotype incompatibility can get married, Bankole (2018, 1) asserts that among the different people of faith, especially the Christian faith, there have been different schools of thought and contentious discourses regarding the issue of genotype incompatibility among the intending couples who are deeply in love. Some intending couples believe that as much as God is leading them to get married, the potential couples should not bother about their genotype, whether it is medically compatible or not, because God who spoke to them has the power to perfect their incompatible genetic makeups. In some Christian denominations like Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries, Baptist, and Anglican, medical tests for Hepatitis B, Rhesus factor, Genotype compatibility, HIV/AIDS status, and other necessary tests are mandatory before the wedding is conducted, irrespective of divine conviction, revelation, and confirmation.

Bankole (2018) asserts that God is the creator of all things, including medical science and technological knowledge to overcome the medical problem. Hence, any intending couple who refuses to know their genotype status before going into marriage is trying to put God to the test. Those who did not know their genetic makeup in the past lost their children without knowing why. However, some couples were lucky because their genotypes were perfect matches despite the ignorance of their genotype status. Now that the knowledge and medium are readily available, it will be dangerous to jump into marriage without the requisite test or intentionally get married to a partner with an incompatible genotype because it is believed that God is leading you to marry each other. Bankole (2018) states that God is

not the author of confusion; God created man, including the genotype. If genotype does not matter, God will not place it in man; moreover, since God knows that genotype matters, He will not lead you into what will create a problem for you.

Ologunaiye (2023) does not differ in opinion; he notes that before this era, which is witnessing numerous breakthroughs in medical science, many sickle cell-related diseases were being interpreted as spiritual manipulations. This was in the days when people were still living in ignorance of genotype incompatibility. Before now, marriages were contracted merely on erotic love and, most times, with parental recommendations without recourse to ascertain the genotype of both lovers. However, with the advent of medical science and breakthrough, the continuous quest for knowledge and the cause and effect of specific ailments, people and religious leaders are gradually becoming aware. Some Christian organisations are putting stringent laws to verify the genotype content of the intending couples. Although the decision rests squarely on the intending couples, Ologunaiye cites three passages in the Bible as a guide for every prospective couple: Ecclesiastes 10:10 says, "If the axe is dull, and one does not sharpen the edge, then he must use more strength; but wisdom brings success." Hosea 4:6 says that my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Amos 3:3 says, "Can two persons walk together unless they agree." Based on these Biblical assertions, if your genotype cannot match each other as an intending couple, it is better to discontinue your relationship.

Ologunaiye (2023) is not different in his assertion. He disagrees with the use of faith in genotype incompatibility, and proves that science has made us understand that children with genotype S.S. are sickle cell and prone to sickle cell diseases that will kill them and also ruin the future joy in marriage. However, Afolabi (2012) disagrees with Ologunaiye and holds on to faith that if the lovers with incompatible genetic makeup are sure that God has spoken to them to get married, they can go ahead because Christians cannot rule out divine healing and God's interventions in human

affairs. God who spoke to His people in the Old Testament, can still speak today.

Afolabi (2012) opines that God has a reason for making us A.A. and AS. However, regarding genotype incompatibility between the intending couple, faith works, and God wants us to have faith. Afolabi submits that if God speaks to man to marry a woman and he refuses to marry her on the ground of genotype incompatibility, man does not have faith in God, who speaks to him. Afolabi (2012) asserts that God has a reason for making one A.A. or A.C. and another S.S. He argues that God wants those with genotype incompatibility to use faith without head knowledge because human beings are made in God's image that does not have a defect. Since no genetic condition is attached to the marriage of God's children in the Bible, prospective couples should depend on God to proceed to marriage despite the incompatible genotype.

In response to this, Afolabi (2012) expresses his worry about the dilemma of using faith and reason among couples who are not genetically compatible. Afolabi asserts that while he understands the place of faith in Christianity and testimonies of people whose genotypes were changed after prayer, he argues that the prospective couples should have put their faith on the line and sought a miracle to change their genetic makeups before going into marriage. Olorunpomi (2018) posits that intending couples should know that medical knowledge is available to prevent people from the agony of ignorance. God is the Creator of all things, and that includes medical science and technological advancement.

The oil mentioned in James 5 verse 14 alludes to the use of medicine. Therefore, if God has made all things for the use of man, genotype testing before wedding is for the benefits of man. Thus, going ahead without ascertaining genotype status is presumption and "putting God to test". Bankole (2023) avers that with the medical knowledge, it is believed that no one should be carried away by blind faith because it is medically disastrous for intending couples whose genetic makeups are incompatible. God gave human beings

knowledge and finesse so that they can use it to solve their problems. Those who didn't have the knowledge in the past were losing children without knowing why. Some were lucky to be perfect matches. Now that the knowledge and medium are readily available, jumping into marriage without the requisite tests will be dangerous. Do not be fooled by the lie that it is only that brother or sister you must marry. J.A. Abegunde, while narrating the ordeals of a Christian couple that he counselled 15 years ago and a Baptist cleric who has a child with sickle cell disease, argues that "the use of faith without the application of reason when it comes to getting married to a partner whose genotype is not compatible should be avoided" (Personal Communication, March 3, 2023).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Genetically, there are different schools of thought when choosing a life partner. Some people believe that as much as it is God leading a man to a woman, the potential couple should not bother about their genotype or whether they are compatible medically. This is because God is perfect in everything He does. Today, genotype and other necessary medical tests are mandated before wedding in most of the top denominations in Nigeria, irrespective of the divine confirmation or conviction of the intending couple. Halim (2023) opines that partners with genotype incompatibility should know that certain factors and circumstances can stop them from getting married. One such is the issue of the incompatible genetic makeup of intending couples. Therefore, love is not enough when choosing a life partner without checking for genotype compatibility.

However, Akinyanju (2023) argues that intending couples with genotype incompatibility can get married if it is their choice, but submits that potential couples who aspire to get married can do so regardless of their genotype incompatibility because there are better technologies to assist them not to give birth to children with sickle cell anaemia. The implantation of genetic diagnosis in the procedure of an IVF treatment used in selecting an embryo's genotype before it is inserted into the uterus of a woman makes it easy for a woman who

hitherto has a chance of giving birth to a child with S.S., to end up giving birth to a child with A.A. or A.C genotype. Another option is a prenatal diagnosis, which is used to help find genetic disorders, including genotype, before the baby's birth.

Akinyanju (2023) submits that the permanent cure for sickle cell anaemia is a bone marrow transplant, which is very expensive in Nigeria. Because of this, this paper recommends that intending couples who want to proceed into marriage despite their incompatible genetic makeup must allow reason to find expression in their faith because of the financial implication, danger, and pain that their genetic incompatibility can bring on them. Genotype compatibility tests for partners about to go into marriage are essential. This supports Halim (2023), who argues that genotype test will help evaluate whether or not the partners, based on their genetic makeup, run the risks of having children with sickle cell disorder.

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