

Marriage and Meaningful Existence: A Philosophic Response to the Polemics on Marriage

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Abstract

Marriage as a social institution and in its different forms serves different purposes fundamentally, it is argued to promote meaningful social existence. This position has been at the crux of academic debate between two scholars namely; Professor Segun Ogungbemi and Dr. Benson Igboin. This paper furthers the polemics on marriage by the duo by critically examining the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments on what precisely marriage is in contemporary age, its relationship with same-sex as a form of marriage, what constitutes meaningful existence as well as the possibility of same -sex practitioners having meaningful existence. The paper argued against the logical validity and soundness of the claims regarding incest by Adam and Eve. It also employed recent trends such as sologamy and sibling marriage to expand the frontiers of what should constitute marriage. In doing this, it adopts the analytical approach of the qualitative method of Philosophy.

Introduction

In his analysis in “Marriage and a Meaningful Existence”(Ogungbemi, 2016:1-16), Segun Ogungbemi maintained polemical stands that Benson Igboin, his colleague at the Faculty of Arts, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Nigeria, took seriously and responded to (Benson Igboin, 2016:1-16). In the said work, Ogungbemi claimed to have ruminated over the ideas he discussed for some time, having been encouraged by Igboin who later appraised some of his views stating his areas of agreement and difference. This work critically examines the two scholars’ arguments, with more emphasis on Ogungbemi’s work.

Ogungbemi and Igboin: The Core Ideas

At the start of his work, Ogungbemi argued that the “human institution of marriage” “defined the phenomenon of existence and its various forms of development.” Consequently, defining the aim of his work, he claims to be directing attention at examining “four different forms of marriage namely, monogamy, polygamy, companionate, and gay marriage and how each of them promotes a meaningful existence.” (Ogungbemi, 2016:2) He then raised some questions he thought are fundamental to meaningful marriage and existence as exemplified in the following words:

What is marriage? How did it begin and for what purpose? Is marriage a rite of passage between a male and female or an institution for gender partnership? Is marriage limited to a relationship between a male and female relationship alone? Why do people prefer one form of marriage to the other? What are the social, moral, religious and political implications for choosing any form of marriage? How do we make the institution of marriage conceptually and practically meaningful in the new generation?...Does any form of marriage provide necessary and sufficient condition (sic) for a meaningful existence?... what constitutes a meaningful existence in marriage? (Ogungbemi, 2016:6).

Having highlighted the questions bothering him, Ogungbemi indicated that he aimed to answer all the questions. In this regard, he highlighted things that are generally thought to account for the purposes of marriage. In what appears to be two broad categorisations of types of marriage, on preliminary grounds, he distinguished between marriage as “divine institution” and “human institution.” The former he examined from the traditional Christian perspective and the latter from the angle of social relations. As a divine/traditional institution anchored on Biblical perspective, a marriage has the purposes of “help meet, companionship and procreation so as to replenish the planet earth,” and quoting Joseph Allen, “restraint of sin” and satisfaction of “the sacrament,” among others things (Ogungbemi, 2016:4). As a “human institution,” marriage’s purpose is to foster human social relations, thus, enlivening human interaction, while serving as a means through which social problems emanating from interrelations are solved. After outlining these two types of marriage and their purposes, Ogungbemi narrowed down to examining, in turns, the other specific types of marriages under these broad umbrellas, which this work highlights in their simplified forms.

He first examined monogamy as that type in which there is a man to a woman and vice versa. In this type, love exchange is expected with consent to satisfy the demands of marriage which include child bearing, family development and sexual love (Ogungbemi, 2016: 5-8). Second, he discussed polygamy as that under which a man has multiple wives. He construes polygamy as “plural marriage” and “polygyny” as a practice where a man marries “two or more wives” (Ogungbemi, 2016: 8). He thinks these types of marriage are considered advantageous because they allow procreation, elimination of stigma attached to not being married to a man and having wives and children to cultivate farms (Ogungbemi, 2016:9). Third, Ogungbemi viewed companionate marriage as a trial marriage based on marital agreements and sexual satisfaction but lacking real moral commitment since each of the partners has the freedom to opt out anytime he/she wishes. This marriage type does not follow the normal patterns of marriage and promotes interests in personal rights to exercise of freedom. It is thus deducible that its purpose is more of companionship than procreation and other reasons. The last which Ogungbemi examined was “same sex”¹ marriage. It is that in which people of “same sex” enter into a marriage contracts. In its modern form, conceptual descriptions of marriage are altered and terms, such as “female husband (Ogungbemi, 2016: 10)” found their ways into the marriage vocabulary. In drawing conclusions, Ogungbemi discussed these issues in relation to “meaningful existence” (Ogungbemi, 2016: 11, 13). Responding to Ogungbemi, Igboin did not hesitate to point out that Ogungbemi failed to “consider the polycentric nature of the world in his ‘rational conscience’ assertion” and that he sided completely with “Euro-American philosophical thinking about conscience while deploying African religious and cultural resources, Christian theology and Euro-American philosophical categories in his work.” Thus, Igboin branded Ogungbemi as being of “Euro-American” (Igboin, 2016: 1) mind-set instead of being bothered about Africa as far as “same sex” marriage is concerned. He tried to justify the reason for the heterosexuality of African marriage outside “same sex” experience and maintained that communities in Africa are not agitated to embrace “same sex” marriage as its advocates expect. Igboin observed that Ogungbemi did not define the meaning of “meaningful existence” (Igboin, 2016: 7). This sketch of Igboin’s views will suffice at this stage while other ideas we think essential will be brought up as the discourse progresses. Our task in this work is to briefly examine some of Ogungbemi’s and Igboin’s claims about marriage as regard one or two of the questions Ogungbemi raised while we later narrow down to their discussions to the justification of “same sex” marriage, most especially in terms of what defines the purpose of marriage and to show that “same sex” marriage is not in the overall best interest of the inhabitants of the world.

Fallacious Philosophical Perspectives: A Brief Clarification

Many issues discussed by Ogungbemi depict some merit of his work, most especially in discussing the different types of marriage and pointing out their significance. We equally laud his efforts at capturing what he considers factors necessary for meaningful existence in the marriage setting and the essential clarification he made between the Western and African perspectives on marriage, which are instrumental in determining this work’s focus. These notwithstanding, we are surprised to understand that, in his analysis of marriage in the contemporary world, he omitted important trends such as sologamy (marriage to oneself) (<http://revelationreport.org/sologamy-the-latest-trend-of-people-marrying-themselves/>) and siblings marriage which are now legalized in Germany and South Africa)

¹The uncertainty of the description of the term “same sex” due to the complex nature of gender identity warrants our putting it in parenthesis across the work.

(<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/german-ethics-council-calls-for-incest-between-siblings-to-be-legalised-by-government-9753506.html>) even though they are part of moral issues currently generating debates across the world.

Besides this, Ogungbemi did not sufficiently address some of the questions he raised, particularly the questions on the meaning of marriage and same “sex marriage.” He obviously evaded some possible answers to questions about whether or not “same sex” marriage contributes to meaningful existence. Even though he maintained that it does not, he was hasty in his justification.

Also, the starting point of his arguments in the entire work misleads us into believing that he was interested in discussing marriage in the universal sense. He did not at any point indicate his intention to narrow down his views towards a bias for African marriage but, along the line, even though he supported his arguments with the views of western philosophers, he leaned towards African conception of marriage, showing a misleading oscillation between African marital views and western ideas. Unfortunately, in his justification of African perspectives on marriage, Igboin’s work almost suffered the same fate when he, without pointing out the same problem in Ogungbemi’s work, argued that:

Ferdinand Ezekwonna (2005:34) explains Bujo’s argument clearer and why it is important if not urgent to distinguish between the Euro-American methodologies and African concept of personality and conscience. He argues that rational conscience (ethics) is a western construct within the conceptual frames of ‘society’ rather than ‘community.’ Community consists of persons who are “intimately bound by common ends and natural forces” while society entails “a name given to a group of people or individuals whose intensity of personal relationship and interaction is less.” According to him, recourse to rational conscience fosters rugged individualism in the order of Rene Descartes’ “*cogito ergo sum* – ‘I think therefore I exist’” –which is diametrically opposed to African “*cognatus sum, ergo sumus*”...While the former relates intensively to the western society, the latter is much more a content of African community. In espousing the difference between society and community as pointed out above, Bujo adds that the African concept of relationality is opposed to Euro-American individualism (Igboin, 2016: 6). Furthermore, besides our observation on the misleading nature of research boundaries, Igboin also assumed that every reader understands the meaning of “*cognatus sum, ergo sumus*,” which he did not clarify in his work. Taking these positions as the starting point, we hence critically examine some of the issues raised by both scholars.

Confluence of Myth and Reality

As part of his analysis, Ogungbemi’s made a significant and vital clarification between marriage as a human institution and marriage as divine institution. However, his reference to traditional African marriage as that in which “nobody forgets to invoke the blessings of the departed ancestors because their joy is to have progenies who will remember them” (Ogungbemi, 2016: 4) depicts this distinction as a matter of variation in degrees, given that ancestral worship is included in events involving human institutions. In dealing with this distinction, most importantly in descriptions of events involved in human institutions, he failed to properly stress that Africans do not usually depersonalize between physical and spiritual realms and entities (Mbiti, 1971: 118-120, 116-178). Hence, the fact that Africans do not see any cleavage between these two realms occasion why they often give metaphysical explanations to problems emanating from physical weaknesses and failings. Thus, considering the fusion of physical and spiritual spheres to the African mind, to invoke divine or ancestral blessings as part of marital rites, an integral part of African way of doing things, depicts a meeting point between the spiritual and the physical realms. We aver that, since his ideas were not based on a non-theistic humanist viewpoint, Ogungbemi’s differentiation of the two broad forms of marriage should not be taken too strictly.

As part of his hermeneutic analysis of the Biblical account on marriage, Ogungbemi debated that the first two individuals created by God in the account married and committed incest. He said, the woman created out of the man could be said to be her daughter. We suspect that Ogungbemi was referring to cloning as the basis on which he adjudged that Eve, the first woman to be the daughter of the first man, Adam. Igboin did not consider Ogungbemi’s argument in this respect as a thing to gloss over. He queried how Ogungbemi arrived at such a conclusion. On our part, we are worried about the logical validity and soundness of Ogungbemi’s claim of incest concerning Adam and Eve, especially when he justified incest by ascription of truth condition to “a mythical” situation. This concern may be better illustrated with the following *sortes* to logically portray the implications of Ogungbemi’s position:

1. Any woman created from a man is his daughter
2. God created Eve who was Adam's wife from his body
Therefore, Eve who was Adam's wife created from his body by God was his daughter
3. Adam had sexual relations with Eve who was created from his body
Therefore, Adam committed incest with Eve his wife and daughter who was created from his body
4. The creation of Adam and Eve by God was a myth or a non-existent narrative
Therefore, the creation of Adam and Eve by God was a non-existent narrative

Obviously, a recourse to cloning in examining his argument makes it appear to be logically valid but, does the ascription of myth to it make it logically sound? An argument may only be logically sound if it satisfies both the conditions of being true and valid, simultaneously. Will Ogungbemi's stand not be said to be self-contradictory, considering his persuasion that the creation argument is mythical, hence not being true because it is not based on any observable or verifiable criterion? Does his claim that the creation type of marriage is incestuous and at the same time mythical not suggest that his stand is both true and untrue, hence self-contradictory? We will refrain from responding to these concerns, though nagging to intellectual minds, because their considerations exceed the purview of this work. However, considered at face value, we assume that Igboin sought to remedy the situation by arguing that human DNA history accounts for "inbreeding, and thus incest" and, since nobody may actually pinpoint the actual period that incestuous behaviours become morally iniquitous, one may not really affirm that the bible's account of first marriage is incestuous in nature. However, on a more critical note, he challenged and denied the ground on which Ogungbemi's argument and ascription of myth to the creation argument rests. After much regurgitation, based on other scholars arguments, he denied that individuals in the biblical account could have been "said not to have existed" at all, a view egregiously critical of creationism.

On the Definitional Difficulties of Marriage

By arguing that Ogungbemi "does not appreciate the definitional problematique of marriage even though he espouses four forms of it" (Igboin, 2016:2), Igboin already assumed that Ogungbemi clearly defined what marriage is. However, even though he rejected what he termed a "simplistic rendition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman or "one man, one wife,"" (Igboin, 2016: 2), Igboin failed to realize that Ogungbemi neither really defined marriage nor discuss what it ought to be. Thus, what he considered a "crispy" definition from Ogungbemi was really an attempt to shed some light on people's common views or account of monogamous marriage, either from considerations of divine or human institutions. We concluded that Ogungbemi did not define marriage on the ground that, despite not stating his own position, he appeared to have disagreed with the definition of the various forms of marriage even though he attempted analyzing them. His exposition was more from the angle of a neutral third party if we consider the following argument, comparative to other attempts at defining concepts:

The proposition of marriage as an institution ordained by the Supreme Being means in the religious and social context that it has a moral and legal authorization to cement conjugal relationships between a man and a woman for both of them to become husband and wife for the promotion of procreation, social values, happiness, identity, economic prosperity, and metaphysics of immortality etc which are the hallmarks of rational beings. Mbiti further explains, "For African peoples, marriage is the focus of existence. It is the point where all members of a given community meet: the departed, the living and those yet to be born... Therefore, marriage is a duty, a requirement from the corporate society, and a rhythm of life..." From the western world, Russell writes, "Marriage differs, of course, from other sex relations by the fact that it is a legal institution. It is also in most communities a religious institution, but it is the legal aspect which is essential." In western culture, it is Christianity that made marriage a religious institution using the Biblical narrative of how God acted in human history through the mythical story of Adam and Eve... From the foregoing, I have attempted to establish the origin of marriage from African and Western perspectives (Ogungbemi, 2016:3).

Arguments as above put us in doubt about how to place Ogungbemi's position. Thus, we are in doubt about what exactly his working definition of marriage is. However, one wonders how he would have arrived at a univocal definition of marriage given the asymmetry of views represented in the different forms of marriage he discussed.

Further Conceptual Investigative definition of Gay Rights, Love and Choice

According to Ogungbemi, people of the “same sex” marriage orientation think that marriage “ought to be based on love, rights and choice of the individuals whether it is between a man and woman or between the same-sex” (Ogungbemi, 2016: 10).

There are things to point out about Ogungbemi’s description, which Igboin did not point out in his work. First, to have included “between man and woman” in the description of “same sex” marriage is definitely out of place. In common man’s language, the reference is to heterosexual marriages, which may not be part of what classifies as gay or lesbian which are what Ogungbemi had in mind in his view on “same sex” marriage (Storms, 1980: 783-792).

Apart from the possibility of confusing heterosexual marriage with his idea on “same sex” marriage, the meaning of the term “same sex” is also in doubt or probably ambiguous if the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) debate is considered (Polikoff, 2008: 46-146; Samelius and Wågberg, 2005: 7-45). Ogungbemi’s definition seems to take for granted the LGBT debate which hinges more on deterministic assumptions than rational choice, even though those concerned appeal to rational choice in attempting to validate these assumptions. In this debate, lesbians are described as females with sexual attractions to females while gays are regarded as males with sexual attractions to males. This debate equally describes *bisexual* people and transgender people respectively as those with attractions to persons of any sex and those who feel that nature has assigned them wrong sex types (Blandford, 2003: 622-642). People who claim transgender identity are referred to as *transgender* when they have sought medical help in changing their sex types (Agius and Tobler, 2012:12-13). The description of transgender sometimes broadens to accommodate an assorted *genderqueer* or gender-comprehensive sexual identities or orientations such as *bigender* (conceiving of oneself as sharing two genders), *trigender* (perceiving of oneself as being androgynous or sharing three genders which may include the male and female genders and any other one which may as well as be to claim being *agender* or genderless, or non-binary gendered or non-gendered) (Kritz, 2014, 6-9), *polygender* (viewing oneself as possessing multiple gender types) and *pangender* or *omnigender* (thinking of oneself as belonging to all identifiable genders types) (Agius and Tobler, 2012:12). The list seems endless and somehow confusing that a reader may find himself lost in the maze of thoughts the gender discourse provokes.² With these descriptions, we even find it difficult to know what the expression “same sex” is. Is it a description between two *pangender* persons or *polygender* persons or *non-gendered* persons or what? In actual sense, what sort of marriage is “same sex” marriage? For instance, how do we make sense of types as *trigender* and *polygender* marrying and call that “same sex” marriage? Unfortunately, there is huge public ignorance about the gender classifications adopted in these groups and among trained psychologists, which does not help in their easily determining what accounts for “same sex” marriage. If we permit Ogungbemi’s usage of the term “same sex” as marriage between two persons of “same sex,” what do we make of instances in which three persons of “same sex” marry? Such same a marriage is becoming common such that common terms lose their meanings within a short period. In the instance of three persons of “same sex” marrying, with the word “couple” replaced with “throuple” (<http://www.cosmopolitan.com/sex-love/news/a11252/throuples-are-happening/>) how do we make sense of who the husband or wife is? Does it not appear that part of “same sex” agenda is for us to exist without knowing who we really are anymore? With this in mind, we may not be sure of Ogungbemi’s definition of “same sex” marriage.

Second, apart from leaving room for questions about the justification of “same sex” marriage in what seems a somehow hasty attempt at a description of it, what does Ogungbemi’s adoption of the terms “love,” “rights” and “choice” mean to a gay/lesbian or any of the other sexual identity types lumped up and classifiable under “same sex” orientation? (Ogungbemi, 2016:10). Does anyone in this category really respect the rights of others or do they not wish that everyone alive capable of expressing sexual desires towards others ought to practice “same sex” marriage? We may not be certain that they do not wish that everyone is gay or lesbian or any type of the sexual identities identifiable, since humans are complex and sometimes do not voice out their real intentions while they lure or use others to achieve their interests. If this is the situation, the whole idea of “same sex” marriage may, to some extent, appear to be a pursuit of selfish interest. If not, it may be out of lack of concerns for/disinterestedness in others interest as a people pursue their interests.

²Wikipedia encyclopedia was very helpful in understanding these gender clarifications.

This implies the ultimate consequence that the human society may go to extinction if it so desires so far their interest are realized, which aspect agrees with Ogungbemi's chiding of "same sex" practitioners for their disrespect for procreation which is the means of sustenance of the human race (Ogungbemi, 2016: 9-12; Schulman, 2005: 33-41).

Obviously, as claimed by Ogungbemi and Igboin, the subject of procreation is what the human race cannot do without even though the question of whether it is the only means of attaining happiness or meaningful existence is still open. The importance of this subject was reiterated by Aristotle several centuries ago.

According to him, there must be a union of those who cannot exist without each other; namely, of male and female, that the race may continue (and this is a union which is formed, not of deliberate purpose, but because, in common with other animals and with plants, mankind have a natural desire to leave behind them an image of themselves) (Aristotle, BK I:3)

To further comment on Ogungbemi's considerations of "love," "rights" and "choice," what constitutes the orientations of love for "same sex" marriage practitioners? What equally constitutes rights for them? What informs the choice of their getting married? What type of rights did Ogungbemi have in mind while conceptualizing "rights" as part of the properties necessary for defining "same sex" marital relations? These questions are equally important to ascertain what constitutes the bases of their activities to warrant the kind of definition Ogungbemi ascribed to them. To begin with the question of rights, the liberal ideas of moral rights, political rights and economic rights, which are the moral, political and economic cores of liberalism, are the fundamental issues underpinning the whole discourse on rights and may demand rigorous consideration (Nelson, 1989: 519-524, Dworkin, 1978: 198-199; Wainwright, 1967:79-84; Barcalow, 1994: 184-193; Haksar, 1998:21-43). Following liberal orientation, for the person of "same sex" orientation, political rights may be said to be violated if denied political opportunities or restrained from political pursuits, economic rights may be said to be denied if "same sex" people are not allowed to realize economic potentials or are hindered from disposing off or utilizing their resources as they deem fit, moral or human rights, which relates to social life and normatively acceptable standards of conduct guiding relationships, may be considered violated when not allowed to live life based on his/her sexual orientation. On second thought, one may conjecturally affirm that Ogungbemi meant moral rights if we consider emphasis on fundamental human rights in the activities of the various global institutions, especially the International Governmental Organisations (IGOS) and International Non-governmental Organisations, in giving all support to "same sex" agendas (Olanrewaju, Chidozie and Olanrewaju. 2015. 514-515). The idea of moral rights can be said to be crucial in "same sex" debates, since it receives more attention than other basic ideas on rights and directly underpins or impact these ideas. However, it is unclear whether Ogungbemi had these distinction on rights in mind.

To discuss the issue of love as the criteria for definition of "same sex" marriage, let us examine what love is. The Greeks seem to have one of the most clarified distinctions of love expressed in four verbs: *eros/erao*, *phileo*, *agapao* and *storge* (Thornton, Ryckman and Gold. 2011: 269). The first is erotic or romantic love, the second is friendship or philanthropic love, the third is unconditional or selfless love and the last is filial love or love between family or community members. In these senses, the individuals expressing love claim to be very affectionate towards one another. Besides the Greeks' views, there are definitions of love in other cultures of the world. Most common to them is that the individuals defining love often do so with respect to sexual affection and feelings they have for others (Post, et al, 2002: 9). Expression of love among family members is natural. It is also natural for two persons to fall in love for reasons of mutual sexual satisfaction or other reasons that ensure the guaranteed of their immediate or future interests. At the same time, it is easy for a person who loves giving gifts to bestow gifts on others even it is merely for satisfaction of his conscience or to gain public recognition. In these instances, love may not be selfless. This explains why a person who has expressed profound love may equally express profound hatred if his interest is not recognized or his love gesture is unreciprocated. In these instances, love becomes sour and possibilities of injuries exist/multiply. This shows us that love is not always *agapao* or selfless. For love to be *agapao* it must continue unabated and unchanging through all seasons because it is not motivated by gains. This kind of love is uneasy to come because it is based of uncommon preference and honour for others. To the Greeks, it is bestowed by a divine being who is capable of helping humans to lead righteously selfless lives (Pope, 2002: 168-181; Post, 2002: 51-68).

Given the above description, love seems to be a difficult word to define if not situated in a context or defined in relation to a given thing or situation. Thus, we find it really difficult to make sense of the actual sense in which Ogungbemi used the word “love.” In other words, given the sometimes ambiguous nature of the term, it is unclear the sense in which Ogungbemi used the term “love.” Consequently, we equally find it uneasy to determine how it constitutes part of the description that makes the claims of “same sex” marriage practitioners acceptable. Given this, what influences the choices of the people of “same sex” orientation to marry? If it is love, the nature of the love leaves us in dilemma. On another consideration, since the possibilities exist that their decisions may be based on feelings which they may count as erotic love, how is one sure this is not transitory such that they can opt out of the marriage and seek other partners thereby hurting members of their own group that will further hurt others who may even be neutral, thereby promoting disaffection or “harmful effects for society”? (Rydström, 2010: 30). This kind of situation may not augur well for the world. On these considerations, what constitutes the basis of “same sex” marriage is difficult to grapple or relate with.

Further Discussion of Rights and “Same Sex” People’s Activities

Since agitation for rights is taken seriously in “same sex” relations with the world, let us consider this. Essentially, as is the problem with the idea of exercise or pursuit of rights, a person of “same sex” marriage turn of mind may consider his/her rights violated when he/she is unable to impose his/her ideas on others. People of “same sex” orientation have been found to have taken advantage of legal loopholes to lure or coerce people to do their biddings (Rydström, 2010: 7-8, 30-36). For instance, an American florist who refused to sell her wares to persons of “same sex” orientation for the purpose of contracting “same sex” marriage was heavily prosecuted and forced to pay heavy fines by the law enforcers because of her persuasion concerning heterosexual marriage. Morally, she may be castigated for discrimination but she was justified concerning acting based on her volition to choose who she preferred to sell her wares to (<http://huffingpost.com/us/entry/7009156.html>). Also, in Charlotte, North Carolina, in the bid to appeal to the senses of gays and lesbians, legislators passed laws permitting “same sex” people to use any restroom they consider suitable for their gender identity despite the Governor’s warnings. In this situation, “same sex” people started using restroom they deemed fit without respect for sex. As the aftermath, there were cries of violation of privacies as some “same sex” persons stared defiantly at opposite sexes bent on keeping their privacies. In these instances, abrogating the laws and ending the practice may be perceived as rights violation by the gays and lesbians (<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/n-city-transgender-choice-public-bathroom-1.2540759>). What then are their rights? At the same time, one is left to wonder if those who made the obnoxious laws did not consider possible violation private lives of believers in heterosexuality, what they consider to be their rights and eventual possible violation of law and societal order.

From the look of things, one may adjudge that the rights of the gays and lesbians seem to be in contrast with what is in the best interest of the entire human race in the final analysis. Apart from the arguments earlier adduced, further justification for this position may not be farfetched. There are mounting pressures from global corridors of power to give “same sex” people undue advantage in the world. As such, pathetically though, the cultures of the poor nations of the world and their core values are undermined while their economies are equally under siege. It has become common place for western nations to negotiate aids and economic assistance through demanding compliance with procedures promoting “same sex” people’s rights. As facilitated by leaders like Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria, which Ogungbemi noted, such situations as these warranted promulgation of laws and stiff legal resistance from developing countries as they frowned at participation in “same sex” activities. As quoted by Ogungbemi, Museveni said, ‘Africans never seek to impose our view on others; if only they could let us alone’ while Jonathan was of the view that the promotion of “same sex” persons’ rights would deride and erode the cultures of Africans (Ogungbemi, 2016: 11-12; Olanrewaju, Chidozie and Olanrewaju. 2015. 504-520). Why are the advocates of “same sex” persons’ rights bent on hijacking every governmental apparatus in every nation of the world to achieve their intention if not to impose their views on the world while they deceitfully claim marginalization and being unjustly treated (Carpenter, 2005: 191-204). In this regard, does Ogungbemi think that his claim that it “is morally unreasonable to subject “same sex” people wherever they are to inhuman treatment” (Ogungbemi, 2016: 11) because they “have inalienable right to exist and not to be stigmatized anywhere in the world” (Ogungbemi, 2016: 11) justified given that their intention may be to override the intentions of others in the world and become global overlords? It is obvious that proponents of “same sex” marriage are aggressively agitating for promotion of their rights (which we are in doubt what it is anyway) at the expense of the global community. The issue of pursuit of rights make the people of “same sex” marriage think less of what others think about them.

The reality is that no one exists independent of others. According to MacIntyre (1994: 122-126), every person has an identity with his community that his memory assists him to realize which is his individual identity that relates him to others in the human society. Thus, each person in the world, based on an individualistic historical leaning, defines himself or is defined in relation to others in the society. This is why he has brothers, sisters, father, mother, etcetera, since his history cannot be told separate from these others. The obvious implication of this is that whatever decisions one makes directly or indirectly affects others.

Obviously, reflecting on this line of thought, “same sex” activities have impacts on people across the world. Yet, does it appear as if they are making decisions in the best interest of all? Is the human race not facing a great risk of total extinction like the dinosaurs if “same sex” marriage is allowed to override all our global marital structures?

Considering “Same sex” Marriage and the Question of Meaningful Existence

Ogungbemi and Igboin argued on what accounts for meaningful existence. Igboin said that Ogungbemi’s work agrees that “only fruitful marriage can lead to a meaningful life. But by his reference to whatever form of marriage also leading to a meaningful life, one begins to think whether marriage, which does not lead to reproduction, though may stimulate a momentary happiness, leads to a meaningful life” (Igboin, 2016: 2) Wondering about what constitutes real happiness, he then proceeded to raise a battery of complex questions about marriage and meaningful existence, such as why some couples refuse to produce children despite not being barren and why some chose celibacy over procreation. In these instances, the persons considered their choices as capable of guaranteeing happiness and meaningful existence. Obviously, what people term as happiness and what constitutes meaningful existence varies from person(s) to person(s). Ogungbemi’s definition of meaningful existence based on procreation took two things for granted. The first is that persons of “same sex” orientation differ in the conception of values they think are peculiar to them, in contrast to our general conception of values in the world. Consequently, our ignorance of what these values are may make it difficult to ascertain what they actually value. Procreation appears not to be a part of what many of them value. The second is that they may not consider procreation as what constitutes meaningful existence for them, especially since they care less of what people think about them. Following Wittgenstein’s (1974) (§7, §23 - §30), language game theory, which holds that languages are like tools in a tool box that people can use contextually, it is apparent that they may constitute an epistemic community of persons who determine what constitutes a context for them. In this regard, the people of “same sex” orientation contextualize what they perceive as happiness for them with their invented languages and concepts becoming tools of interaction among them, which an outsider to the group finds alien, shocking and unacceptable.³ In this regard, what if terminating human existence is what makes them happy or what they think constitutes meaningful existence? Granting this, the question, “What constitutes meaningful existence?” may itself be a complex question as far as “same sex” marriage is concerned.

While it may be true that purpose is the reason for a thing and hence the meaning of existence, Ogungbemi and Igboin discussed their ideas as if everyone is interested in meaningful existence. The question of meaningful/purposeful existence which shows the importance of the meaning of life is much debated across several centuries. To Aristotle (1994: 687-696), the purpose and function of a thing are synonymous. An object, a thing or a person fulfils its purpose when it functions according to its design. For instance, the purpose of legs is walking while that of the mouth is either talking or eating. In these instances, the things mentioned usually function fulfilling their intended purpose, thus ensuring meaningful existence. According to Sartre (1994: 927-932), humans have the duty of creating meanings and values which must be in consonance with or guide their behaviours. In other words, the values people set should be the motivation for their actions, guiding them to attain meaningful existence. While Aristotle and Sartre were concerned about the purpose of existence, a wide range of men are less concerned about meaningful existence. Such men live for what is ephemeral. One of the enduring things to be considered in discussion of meaningful existence is legacy. A legacy is that which one bequeaths that subsequent generations of men either refer to or build upon. A legacy may be what one gives to one’s offspring in terms of vital moral values such as integrity and fellow feeling and virtues such as kind-heartedness.

³An epistemic community is a knowledge community in which people of same interests combine to determine what constitutes knowledge for them. They may choose their terms based on an agreement among them and whatever language they adopt becomes a tool of discourse in the group.

One may also leave biological legacies which manifest in terms of inter-generational sustenance through successive procreation (Carpenter, 2005: 188). This latter as well as the others involves conscious and deliberate actions towards allowing future generations to make the world habitable and congenial for human existence. In these regards, one may be said to have lived purposefully or meaningfully. Unfortunately, in the marriage settings, the type of marriage notwithstanding, not everyone lives meaningfully. However, even though other types of marriage may be capable of meaningful existence, it is doubtful if practitioners of “same sex” marriage plan for meaningful existence if the position of values creation for attaining meaningful existence is concerned. It appears as if they fall into the category of those who are disinterested in our common future survival. If everyone practices “same sex” marriage, who then procreates to sustain the global community or human race in the future. For Ogungbemi and Igboin to talk about “same sex” marriage practitioners as if they are interested in meaningful existence is outrageous. The value they have chosen leave us in doubt as to whether life has meaning for them. As pointed out by Igboin, Ogungbemi’s claim that “same sex marriage cannot make life meaningful, particularly within African religio-sphere” (Igboin, 2016: 8) because it does not guarantee reproduction which makes life meaningful within confines of marriage “seems to have a liberal attitude towards it” (Igboin, 2016: 8). This liberal attitude which is the underpinning of justification of moral rights is taken too far by the practitioners of “same sex” marriage. According to Ogungbemi, in what seems to be the agitation of proponents of “same sex” marriage’s to exterminate the human race, one wonders the kind of moral values same-sex marriage is promoting and why they think in the 21st century it will contribute to a meaningful life? The only significant contribution to a purposeful life same-sex marriage attempts to propagate is that no matter what people say about your lifestyle as long as you know your rights, demand for it as long as it takes, perhaps someday people of rational conscience in your community will pause a moment and reason with you and fight on your behalf until the needful is done (Ogungbemi, 2016:12).

From its tone, Ogungbemi’s observation of “rational conscience,” to which Igboin argued vehemently, leaves a lot of room for concerns and leaves us with a question: is something right because people of “rational conscience” approve of it?

Conclusion

This work essentially examined Ogungbemi’s and Igboin’s views on marriage. It denied, among many things, that Ogungbemi addressed the question he raised on the meaning of marriage, having only described types of marriage without actually giving his own working definition on what he thought to be the meaning of marriage. We doubted the real meaning of the term “same sex” and discussed what “same sex” marriage is considered to be in relation to this. We also raised questions about the meanings of other concepts used by Ogungbemi in the work. Since Ogungbemi’s work provoked the thoughts in Igboin’s, we gave it more attention. Ogungbemi was concerned about how to live meaningful existence and examined how this is possible within “same sex” community. There was a debate on this between Ogungbemi and Igboin. Considering this debate, we, however, argued that it may be out of place to assume that “same sex” people have the same definition of meaningful life as believers in conventional marriage systems. Since they may differ in their conception on the fundamental issues of human existence, they may not consider as the meaning of meaningful existence what others think it to be. As such, Ogungbemi’s and Igboin’s concerns about “same sex” marriage might not be said to be real concerns since we might not really know the intentions of the practitioners of this kind of marriage, especially because of the capability and complexity of humans at hiding their real intentions while making people believe in deleterious ulterior motives. As such, it might be difficult to understand what “same sex” oriented people think about the sustenance of the human race since their intention might not actually be its continuity. In this light, we argued that “same sex” marriage is not in the overall best interest of the human race.

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