

**PREAMBLE**

The fundamental issues of marriage, as taught by the church, are the issues of indissolubility, fidelity, and sacred union of love and of purity in the married state. The same issues are also fundamental in the wreckage of family life today; which thus constitutes the fundamental challenges of marriage or of the family in contemporary time. There is a redundant wreckage of the family today which borders round the trends that earmark a desecration of marriage. For marriage is a sacred union of a man and a woman as husband and wife. The family is founded on the principles of the married life, so the married state initiates the concept of the family. As such, whatever plagues marriage in society as a real menace to the application of those principles which serve as its pillars, consequently threatens the institution and preservation of the family. More so, the church; which secures the sanctity of the family, in contemporary times faces

the same challenges that confront the family; because, like the larger society, the family is the basic or domestic life of the church.

So, it WOULD have been to the interest of our audience if this work should dwell elaborately on and address the aforementioned fundamental issues of marriage in the light of how in recent times and with recent happenings the family institution suffers a threat of wreckage, but that would also be a deviation from the primary concern of this topic related to which we have chosen only to address one issue as a contemporary challenge of the family hence to show how negligence of the family educative and formative role poses serious threats to society, as the failure to apply the principles of marriage due to changing social behavior and negative social upheavals on ethical ground now constitute a catalyst to the loss of a sense of value for the family and of respect for the protective role of the church as wells

as for the family's sacredness authenticated by holy matrimony. The task of this work is to reawaken parents to their role as the trainers of the wills of individual members of the society from the family informal school unit.

**AN EXPONENTIAL OF THE FAMILY INSTITUTION IN THE SOCIETY**

The family is the nitty-gritty of social existence. Whether it is formed by nature or conventionally is not the issue here; but our concern is on the point at issue that no one disputes the fact that the family exists as the quintessence of social life. For the family is not simply the bed rock of society, it is the material cause of the society. Individuals who make up the society do not stand alone or in isolation so as to be upheld as the material cause of society, instead it is the family that stands out; because the picture of the society portrays a natural system of an integrated or complex interrelatedness of "organic beings", with rational capability,

instinct for interdependence and share inclination for affiliation, association, assimilation, cooperation, collaboration, solidarity, and leadership. So the family defines itself by way of its glamorous outlook of a basis and fundamental of humanity's sociability.

The family incorporates within itself a network of congenial relationships between husband and wife and an educational framework within the circles of parent-children relationship. So, does it not suggest that the family by its natural structure of relationships is nothing but an organized unit of sociality which serves as a model for larger social human existence?

If yes answers the above question and the answer to the foregoing is true, then emphasis in sociological researches today should not be on the individuals, as "structuralism" and "functionalism" sociological theories suggest. Rather, emphasis for understanding social life and social structures should go beyond

individualism that emphasizes the individual as value to the family, with a view of how the family shapes individuals and influences their personal aptitudes, attitudes and interests, hence more to be accepted is the holism social ideology.

### **UNDERSTANDING THE TIE OF THE FAMILY TO THE CHURCH**

The church is a community having a religious character, charismata and an existence that is defined in the sense of religion by the structural assemblage of amalgamated respective families with their own unique religious habits. Both church and family thus have ties of dependence on each other. The church derives the population of her membership from the family and the family derives her particular religious tendencies of sacred worship pending its taste and style from the church, so both church and family intermarry. One cannot say that church's need of the family is subordinate to the family's need of the

church such that, the church cannot dispense with the family whereas the family can dispense with the church, this will warrant arguing that the church as religion is dispensable from social life. Such an argument is only a one sided view which comes from the critical look of secular humanism.

### **CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES FOR THE CHURCH AND FAMILY**

The primary challenge we wish to emphasize is the unhealthy shift from family informal education to an emphasis on modern school curriculum which offers no asylum for grooming individuals to confront the demand for morality in society. This shift affects the church also because her members cannot live out their faith if they have no encouragement from the family. The society in general suffers more because everything is overturned from right to wrong once the indispensable role of the family in character formation of individuals is downplayed. Contemporary society

with its complexity, with modernization, technologization and globalization has placed both parents and children further apart from a margin of influential contact on one another, such that before parents teach their children anything, the children have already known the opposite through their exposure to the media. This has led to the erosion of traditional ethical values which the family remains a school and the hope for its enthronement in society. So we consider this the basic contemporary challenge on the church and the family, for the church and the state cannot cope with morally decadent and irresponsible individuals which the family produce if its educative and formative role as the first school of the child is neglected.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

As philosophy and science complement each other such that a philosophy that does not tend to the wing of science is fruitless, so also should knowledge

and virtue complement each other. Knowledge without virtue is useless, because virtue is like science that shows forth the truth that a principle rationally held is practically meaningful, so without virtue knowledge is un-demonstrable. Today our society is filled with men and women who excel in intellectual works while those who excel in virtue are lacking. The reason is because our society emphasizes the training of the individual intellectually and abandons the training of the will. So what this produces is a citizenry of vicious behavior. The intellect and the will should have been trained complementarily. For, as the intellect is the seat of knowledge, the will is the seat of virtue. The presence of enlightened men in society who are not virtuous will only tantamount in a society of ruthless cheats. Such is our kind of society where those who know more exploit those who do not know; and even sit on their heads. They use their knowledge as an opportunity to cheat others. They think they have crossed the base line

and so every other person should serve them, placing themselves within some form of hierarchy and in a level that makes them think others are not their equals. The western world and culture is guilty of such tendency of discrimination and notion of inequality in their attitude toward the African civilization, where Africans are considered to be what I choose to call “civilization-minorities”. Unfortunately, this is also the kind of discrimination that our educational system produces.

The family has lost its role of education as well. Wills are trained in the family for virtues to spring in the members of the society, as the intellect is trained in school for knowledge to be acquired by students. So, parents should not be content with catering for their children through all levels of education while neglecting playing their roles as parents to train their wills at home in order to make them virtuous and moral in society. Otherwise, that would be a grave negligence on the part of the family whereby

parents would fail to salvage the future society entrusted to them: from tyranny. Intellectual training without a corresponding training of the will produces morally bastardized fellows, who lack home training in the basic principle of morality, hence are not equipped with the values of the society. We all are products of our culture as our cultures are defined by traditional African ethical values. We must inculcate these values at home. This implies that in the family, there should be equal emphasis on both knowledge and virtue, as parents play their roles of training up their children in the way they will go so that when they are old they will not depart from it.

What's more, it must be noted that the family is indispensable in its socio-cultural educative and formative role of training individual wills of the members of society. The role of the family in character formation of children who are also the future hope of the society into which they come at adulthood to feature in all aspects of social organization cannot be

gainsaid. Needless mentioning that the failure of parents in performing their duty of training their children morally in order to equip them with the etiquette of social interactions and the traditional and cultural values of the society they find themselves, so as to prevent the continuation of the erosion of traditional values, is not without dire consequences.

Imperatively let it be taken to heart that knowledge is power but that is not sufficient for a child to play his role morally responsibly in society. Virtue is also necessary, hence virtue is wisdom. So as knowledge is important, virtue is much more an important factor for effective participation in social life, and so, it is a burden on parents to make the family a school of virtue, as educational institutions, to which they send their wards at all levels, are necessary for equipping them with knowledge that is power to lead in society. Moreover, as knowledge that is power is imperative for leaders, virtue that is wisdom is

indispensable for leadership. Hence virtue comes before knowledge even though without leaders there will be no leadership. But the family assures the society of a kind of leadership that will enhance social security and progress when citizens are schooled in the family and graduate with distinction, credit, or pass for their qualifying certificate or degree of virtue which will depict that they have undergone basic home training required of them; to be gainfully employed and respected in the society, where their service of uprightness and enthronement of peace, justice and unity is required, on high level of demand. This is what the family owes the society and this makes the family indispensable in society.

It is to this effect that we recommend that all families should go back to their self-assessment boards and be scored on how positively they have imparted rich cultural values to the society in which their role of training wills and forming the character of citizens is not to be downplayed or

overlooked. Because they give wise men to society by imparting virtues to their children as schools give powerful men to society by imparting them with knowledge.

Nonetheless, knowledgeable men who are lacking in virtue are like powerful men who are lacking in wisdom. The power of the foolish can only lead to self-destruction and the endangering of the other lives of the members of society. It cannot be debated that a powerful fool is always a tyrant. This is the picture used in decorating African politics. For all over Africa, we find leaders who are best describable as intellectuals without wisdom, hence lack political will to defend and protect their people, especially in times of crisis. They sell their honor to foreign exploitative powers, which advance to help manage the crises in Africa only with the ulterior motive of dominating the policies made by the leaders of the mal-governed countries of the African continent. If African leaders were wise men, in the order of King Solomon who was a

wise young leader of Israel, they would be able to resolve internal conflicts by themselves without allowing any foreign cohesive and exploitative interference.

The foregoing is only an illustration to prove that when the fools gain the power to lead, because they lack wisdom, they can only create conflicts in the society and they may never be able to resolve them until they abdicate their position of power for another fool to create more problems. This is what we see everywhere especially in corruption stricken African poor polities. In other words, a foolish leader can only endanger the lives and properties of those he leads or the society at large. Hence powerful men and women who are foolish or lack wisdom due to their wills not being trained at home or simply put, they lacked family cultivation in the values of society, are threats to their society. They cannot control their own desires; for they are ruled by their wills and caprices. They will fail as leaders and waste resources as managers. If so, it would be a grave

error to think them fit to manage public properties. For in their wastefulness, they cannot guarantee the growth of even their own private investments, if they have any, nor can they guarantee the progress of organizations run by them. In other words, even though intellectuals become leaders but lack wisdom, or will power, they will crash the carriage of social resources, public trust and community interests driven by them; they will hence cause the state to languish in misery and poverty.

This is evident in many African states and is enough to prove the background of those who lead such poverty stricken states and nations of Africa, without us taking the pain to do a case study of their collective backgrounds. Or at least, this point is disputable, if there is one among the many leaders of contemporary Africa who leads by a different momentum. Especially those of them who are cultist cannot prove us wrong here. So such leaders are not only themselves lacking in managerial skills as being

poor managers, but they are especially very bad managers of resources. They are wasteful in all sense of the word. They truly were not equipped with such skills right from their families. Otherwise, knowing the value of them, they would not have been so quick to throw them away earlier before becoming leaders.

Therefore, we must respond to these challenges: How can we commit the future security and prosperity of our society into the hands of foolish people? Foolishness is attributed to people who pass through the family without attaining the least qualification for progressive and secure leadership. What can foolish people contribute to the enhancement of sustainable economic development and political stability in society? Foolish people are especially those who fail as adults because they could not graduate from the family school into public life with a certificate of virtuosity; to attest to their might of will and strength of character; and qualify them to take up serious

leadership roles in society. Knowledge is power but the wisdom of the virtuous is mighty and outplays the initial aggressive display of strength by the powerful in a combat. So our future leaders, who are now still young and suitable for undergoing the school of character formation at home, must first be well formed and equipped with wisdom. We reap wisdom on the platter of virtue acquired from the family school that trains the will. As it is said, "charity begins at home, but does not end there". The achievement of wisdom makes anyone legible for leadership in society, even while still young, and the society will be secure even in the hands of the young.

So, it is pertinent to reiterate that knowledge alone is not enough, virtue is much more necessary: virtue is trained from the home not from schools, so parents should do their home training of their children well before giving them out to society.

In fact, the family or home school is the basic educational center

mandatory for all to pass through before they are given any social responsibility. And it is ordinarily presumed that all pass through this school because every individual member of society is a product of the family, but families that do not live up to expectation are a disappointment to the society that places the hope of its future in them. So virtue is trained from the home not from the school, and parents should do their jobs as the trainers of their children in virtue (charity) at home and be sure that at home their children manifest virtuosity in their intra-familial relations; so that they can show forth wisdom in the society at large. Teachers in the school are not responsible for transmitting morals and the cultural and traditional values to the citizens and people outside the family, this is strictly the responsibility of parents within the four walls of the family.

## **CONCLUSION**

Contemporary challenges that confront the church and the family are things we know so well about.

The society is undergoing a revolution of decency and decay of morals. The church and the family are culpable; because, it is consequent upon errors of negligence or omission on their part; toward the role they play in society, to uphold the decorum which conduces to the enthronement of morality and the sustenance of its thriving in society. Hence the erosion of social moral values in society today is the contemporary challenge confronting the church and family. Family and church are natural social institutions that exist to secure the morally initiated structure of traditional cum religious values in society. This structure of values, having been initiated, imposes on the family and society: a commitment towards their sustenance. So it worthy of emphasis to note that we cannot sacrifice the decency of our society upon the altar of negligence on the part of the family and church which play complementary roles in ensuring that we live in a healthy society.

Therefore the contemporary challenge

we identify in this work consist of those impediments to the ability of the family and church to positively play their role in the formation of minds and character in the society respectively; we experience them as challenges because they have revolutionalized the way we perceive morality and social responsibility in society today. People have wrong conceptions about handling public functions, and they abuse privileges and opportunities related to service in society because of their uncorrected misconceptions. The family and church has the onus to correct such anomalies which are trivial to being responsible for the debacle of morality in society.

Hence, a revolution leaves us in anxiety as we anticipate the impending aftermath, for there is no firewood which burns without emitting smoke. The indifference of many families to the indecent trends in contemporary society does not promise us any good future, so the family has a responsibility to carter for the need of upholding

decent moral and traditional values in society, for once they are eroded completely, the society will become “a desert of brutes”, the church too has similar role to play in promoting the adherence of the members of society to those religious norms whose values are necessary and required for a healthy human society. The church depicts positive influence of the presence of religion in every society, so the church is not expected to stay mute especially when it ought to contribute the largest quota to ensuring peace and harmonious order in society.