



# Mitochondrial Eve

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## A Healthy Christian Family as the Panacea for Nigeria Socio-Economic Woes: A Religious Perspective in Mbaise Area of Imo State

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### Abstract

A family is the bedrock of every given society such as Nigeria. A family is the coming together of two opposite sex individuals to make a union. The coming together will bear fruit such that the children will be produced from such union. The family will be saddled with the responsibility of training, directing, guiding and providing for the children who will grow into adulthood. The children will start their own family life hence the society is formed from the different unions created by the family. Getting it right from the family will amount to a better society. The socio-economic woes of Nigeria can be corrected if we go back to the family and get it right. A healthy family is a family that produced healthy or sound children who will feed the society with sound, and good, progressive and productive ideas that will encourage sound living in the given society like Nigeria. The dearth of morals in our society today is a function of the decline in the trainings in our various families. One cannot rule out environmental, influences and socio-economic influence in Nigeria. One can imagine a well trained child being faced with hunger, insecurity etc, how the child will cope with such moral burden to remain sound in the face of obvious treat to its existence as a human being. The data is gathered through primary sources and secondary sources. The primary sources include but not limited to oral interview, questionnaires, telephone conversations and group interviews. The secondary sources adopted in this research work is not confined only to journals, books internet family associations, minutes of meetings, unions, newspapers etc. the work adopts approaches such as sociological approach and historical approach. Sociological approach reviews the coming together of two opposite sex individual to produce a home known as a family. Two individuals relate together as one despite coming from different training grounds to form another training atmosphere for their children. Historical approach will have to review in the past how healthy families have helped to influence a healthy society. It will also throw more light on how a good family can help to handle the socio-economic woes of Nigeria. This research work presents that the healthy family can only be the solution to handle the socio-economic woes of Nigeria by positing that parents should go back to the family to train their children to shun cultism, armed robbery, kidnapping, stealing, cheating, telling of lies, child labour, child trafficking but encourage them to engage in hard work, productive adventures, moral values that should support the society, a health society should be encouraged.

**Key Words:** Healthy, Christian Family, Panacea, Nigeria, Socio-Economic Woes, Religious Perspective

## **Introduction**

Nigeria has been described as the most populous country in Africa and third country in the world with an estimated population of 120 million people and having 252 officially documented languages and dialects. In Africa, Nigeria is mostly endowed with abundant mineral resources to feed the whole continent and also known for the fertile soil which is a land flowing with milk and honey.

Despite the level of education in Nigeria. It is obvious that women are the ones at the disadvantage in many Nigerian families.

A healthy family values is a fusion of Christian values and traditional values which are not in conflict. Nigerian families display community ownership. It is silent in support of either monogamy or polygamy as a system rather welcome a child despite how the child comes to the family. It supports healthy social relationship among family members. Nigerian families do not play with gift of a child especially male children who contributes to the family lineage and the name of the family will not go into extinction. The celebration of fertility is another important aspect of the family life especially among Igbo people of Nigeria but narrowed more to the Mbaise people. Power

relationship and assertion of authority is mostly placed on the male members of the family.

An ideal family should be at home with values such as service, sacrifice, acceptance, forgiveness and love. The basic values such as respect, responsibility, self-control, honesty, compassion, thankfulness, perseverance, humility, loyalty and faith in God should be made our second nature. Also, we should not lose sight of values such as moderation, integrity, kindness, contentment, patience, peace and commitment are major values to give attention to.

In the family, we spend much time together such as have fun, play games, share experiences, just like an ideal and real family should be.

Are most values seen in the culture and tradition of Mbaise People? What is the culture and tradition of Mbaise? As regards to the family, Mbaise women are celebrated for their fertility. To be an Mbaise woman, in their culture of Igbo-ewu, a woman must bear at least 10 children; some women have given birth to as many as 15. Mbaise culture is rich in music and Igbo dance. Music is played on the wood xylophone, hand prior. Long short and slit drums past, gongs, bamboo horn and calabash.

Christian family values are not in conflict with African or traditional family values rather experience some variation in implementation of some concepts such as community life/ownership, polygamy, monogamy. Family relations that nuclear or extended family system, and value of children, Igbuewu ukwu ceremony, economic and political relationship. Issues of note will include that a court has ruled that female members of the family now can inherit from their father's property.

A central element of being a family is interdependence. All are needed and valued and each person is important to the entire body or important to the whole. Each member of the body shares the joys, sufferings of the other and each depends upon everyone else.

We demonstrate our value of the family through sharing things with the needy as seen in Acts 4:32; All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own but they shared everything they had.

I Corinthians 12:12-13 The body is a wire, though it is made one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one spirit into one body.

I Corinthians 12:24-26, But God has combined the members of the body so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it, if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. We need to celebrate the success of others in our family. Always say something encouraging to your family members such as "Well done". The need to look out for one another in the family. We also need to help those who are in need. We as family members should help those who are hurt physically or emotionally. We are advised to keep the family need and not to drop or litter in the family which the importance of sanitation. We should also learn to support charity work in our various family groups.

In the family, forgiveness is a major Christian value. We must explore the Christian value of forgiveness. Forgiveness is fundamentally the second nature of God. Forgiveness is the character of God. Throughout the Bible God is described as slow in anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin according to Numbers 14:18.

Matthew 18:21 tells us clearly about the positive aspect of Christ in the Christian value of forgiveness. Jesus was clear in his

command to forgive. Jesus said forgive seventy times seven, in other words, forgive and keep on forgiving without limit. Forgiveness was at the heart of everything Jesus did and is at the heart of the Lord's Prayer. When Jesus declared a person's sins to be forgiven, it most times arouse the anger of those who were not ready to forgive. Yet a prayer for the forgiveness of his persecutors was on Jesus lips as he died.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem here highlights if Christians have accepted forgiveness? Christian preaching was always put forgiveness as a Christian value at the centre. We forgive because we are forgiven. Paul says: be compassionate and kind to one another. Forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you Ephesians 4:32.

Do we really forgive others? The parable of the unjust steward tells of a servant who was forgiven his large debt only to be condemned because he refused to forgive a small debt owed to him. Forgiveness cannot be given or received unless is demanded for, the demand must be genuine and from the heart.

We genuinely forgiving other's wrong doing? All I need to do is say I am sorry and everything will be ok. Real repentance demands that we take what we have done

with the utmost seriousness and have deep desire not to do it again.

Do we repeat wrongs we have confessed over and over again? We demonstrate our value of forgiveness by forgiven someone if they say or do something you do not like, we try not to hold grudges, we help others to forgive if they are finding it hard. We give everyone a fresh start as you would like for yourself and finally try to forgive yourself if you make a mistake and offer an apology.

Are we taking the responsibility of raising children for God seriously? The belief system in the family are that children should be raised therefore we are accountable to God for raising, shaping and preparing our children for a life of service to his kingdom and to Humanity.

Christian Families, do they have the first of the spirit as stated? Jesus makes it clear in the scripture that the two most essential commandments are to love God and love others Galatians NIV 5: 22-26, But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace forbearance, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things, there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires, since we live by the spirit, let us keep in step with the spirit. Let us not become

concerted, provoking and envying each other's.

Do we really as parents accept these Christian values as most important? Christian values admonishes one show love, find joy in the world of chaos. A value or ethics is a principle or standard about what is important, in one's life, therefore Christian values are the principles that a follower of Jesus Christ holds as important the principles of life that Jesus taught in the scripture.

As Christian families, are we really generous? Some Christian values are Generosity which is the same Christian values of being kind and unselfish especially with our money and time. Prov. 22:9, Courage: The value is noted by boldness and confidence. It's the opposite of fear. Joshua 1:9. Love 1 John 4: 19, Respect- A Christian value is to be conscious that God has created all people in His image and we must show respect. I Peter 2:17. Hope as the value, hope is confident and expectation. It is a firm assurance in God. Prov. 23:18. Peace which is referred to rest and tranquility, peace is a gift from God. Live faithfully, be gentle and have self-control.

We may look at opposition or support of controversial social issues in the society like

abortion, polygamy, same sex marriage, gender inequality etc.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The cultural values of the Mbaise people can also be seen in the area of music through various native songs such as Ogele, agborogwu, etc.

Emphasis has always been put on male members of the family more because of their rights to both family inheritance and extension of family lineage and name. Social norms are embedded in the family system and such social norms are passed down from one generation to another.

In Nigeria, the family is extremely important, families are not the epitome of destruction but their exists family bond which is mostly described in the saying that blood is thicker than water. Family is fuelled by strong social traditional norms, community life is well established in Nigeria. This has become a very major and common norm in Nigeria because the task of training and looking after a child in Nigeria is more of a community work rather than a family or individual responsibility.

A common knowledge about Mbaise People is the love for children, families can go to any length to have children, the area they can go

to have children include visits to divination, shrines, white garment preachers, even the practice of polygamy. Your educational status does not matter just because of the bid to have children or in some cases male children. Polygamy is wearing out but illicit extra-marital affairs amongst the so called proclaimed monogamous people of the society is still a common sight.

A common value are seen in act of celebration such as flamboyant parties thrown to the family such as naming ceremonies, traditional and Christian marriages, funerals ceremony, celebration of fertility in Igbo land especially in Mbasie area usually called Igbeuwu-ukwu etc. Obligations such as marriages, meetings, naming ceremonies, chieftaincies titles, funerals, birthdays are made flamboyantly made in Mbasie. In the family norms as strongly adhered to in Mbasie areas. The women either as a daughter or sister has more value, authority and even in many cases right to inheritance. Immediately she marries, she is treated as one of the possessions of the husband, voiceless, without rights, with constrained freedom and without her own identity. The women has to drop her father's name and take up the husbands name. the woman becomes the wife who is left to do the house chores, against her position in her

fathers house, still go to paid job and as well fulfil her sexual role in the family.

Nigerian women are considered subordinate to men, considered as second place to men. Men are still dominant in private and public life. The ideology that men are naturally superior to women in essence and in all area affects the modern day origination of social structures. The ideology prolongs the attitude of negative decimation against women.

### **Conceptual Framework**

**Customs and Traditions:** These include the acceptable societal values, honesty, respect, morals team work, hard work etc.

#### **According to Obicheta et al, (7.1).**

These are acceptable societal behaviours like honesty, respect, hard work, morals, team work, tolerance, patriotism etc.

Societal behavior encourages people to have positive values for the development of the society.

**Moral Values:** Moral values should be taught in our families, churches and schools. This will enable the citizen to acquire and develop standard acceptable behaviours for the good of the society. This will help the citizen to know and understand what is good or wrong.

In traditional family values, we learn to be patriotic to be honest to respect authority, to show love to the people etc.

Values can be said to be principles and ideas we hold and cherish as important and worthwhile, and which have positive effects. Most of our decisions and actions are greatly influenced by our cherished values and so, values are moral principles and belief that directly influence and control our pattern of behavior, choices and the decisions we make. Some of these values are: respect for our elder, parents and authority, being law abiding students, showing seriousness in

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Functionalist Theory**

“Functionalism first emerged in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe. The Ferchs sociologist emile Durkheim (1856) was the most influential of the early functionalist, American sociologists such as Talcott Parsons developed the theory in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and it became the dominant theoretical perspective in sociology during the 1940sand 1950s, particularly in the USA”. Iherue (2019p, 179).

Though the theory experienced some decline for obvious negative criticism with competing perspectives which tenders higher explanation and also adopts change of

fashion in the evolving world of reason. It has more of biological comparison on how human body works. It may start with examination of the various part of the body such as the heart, brain, lungs and liver. In isolation of various parts may not give a vivid explanation of how life was maintained. The various parts, must be examined in relation to each other, hence the work hand in hand to maintain the organism.

Functionalism agrees with a similar perspective and approach. The different parts of society are seen to be interrelated and taken together to make a whole system. To understand or approach any part of society such as religion or family, the various groups must be seen in relation to society as a whole or complete entity.

“Thus where a biologist will examine a part of the body such as the heart, in terms of its contribution to the maintenance of the human organism, the functionalist will examine a point of society, such as the family, interims of its contribution to the maintenance of the social system Iherue (2019p 180)”.

Values provide general guidelines for behavior and worldview of a people that bring together the overall beliefs about what is right or wrong. It articulates what is good

or bad desirable or undesirable in a given society.

### **Healthy Family Approach**

A healthy family is that family that produces children with the fear of God and with standard beliefs principles, attitudes and norms which are acceptable to society and society expects to guide the conduct of its members at all times.

Societies promote dignity, growth, peace, development and encourage hard work, patriotism, honesty, discipline and cooperation. Values are important part of our lives, because they influence and determine what we believe, hold on and stand for. According to Ukegbu (9p18)

Some of the cherished positive values of our society are:

1. Honesty and transparency
2. Justice and equity
3. Hard work and diligence
4. Peace and unity in diversity
5. Good educational system
6. Good health care delivery
7. Progress and development
8. Good and responsible citizen

9. Discipline and self-control
10. Good moral life and fear of God
11. Modesty in behavior
12. Perseverance and courage

### **Panacea for Scio-economic woes in Nigeria**

The assimilation of the family positive values will produce a healthy society thereby shun other negative value therefore such positive values are panacea for socio-economic woes in Nigeria. Negative values are opposed to positive values.

Negative values as opposed to positive are

1. Bribery and corruption
2. Tribalism
3. Armed robbery
4. Kidnapping
5. Human trafficking
6. Drug addition
7. Prostitution
8. Indecent dressing
9. Vandalism of public properties
10. Ritual killings
11. Local and international advance fee fraud (419)



12. Electoral Malpractice
13. Examination Malpractice
14. Cultism
15. Embezzlement of Public/fund
16. Religious and ethnic conflict/riot militancy
17. Militancy

What are the 7 principles of Christianity values? Each principle is centred on the Lord bringing the glory to him alone and the fulfillment of each is essential to the healing of Christian life.

- a. Seek God, not sin
- b. Fear God, not men
- c. Love God, not world
- d. Believe God not the deceiver
- e. Obey God, not your appetites
- f. Serve God, not self
- g. Worship God, not comfort

What are the Christian values or morals? The Christian moral code is based primarily on the teachings of Jesus and two moral principles it is based on are to love God and to love people. More than two denominations and they interpret the bible differently.

What are the 7 pillars of religion? Understanding these pillars will help us to become more like Jesus and to fulfill God's purposes, both here and in eternity.

- a. The pillar of mystery
- b. The pillar of incarnation
- c. The pillar of vindication
- d. The pillar of revelation
- e. The pillar of proclamation
- f. The pillar of belief
- g. The pillar of Glorification

Morality: Just like ethics involves the idea of good or right conduct and it is utterly hostile to bad or wrong conduct. Morality involves a more or less clearly retaliated set of belief.

### **Evaluation**

The ideal family comes to the centre stage by internalizing the positive family values such as love, peace, patience, justice, hard work. Ikeme S. (2002) patriotism, honesty, humility, co-operation and joy as the only solution to the socio-economic woes of Nigeria. These positive values will eradicate or reduce to the minimal vices such as bribery, corruption, tribalism, Nepotism, armed robbery.

Drug abuse in our society has reached a point of great social concern. The effect of this drug abuse has created a very big developmental vacuum among our youths. Recent scientific research on the cause of mailgram and insanity shows that drug abuse has the highest point of influence. Drug abuse on the part of youths and adolescents is on the increase day by day. "This is very big social problem and as such needs an urgent solution. According to Ikeme (2002ill)."

### **Recommendations**

A healthy Christian family is the solution to Nigeria socio-economic woes. The religious perspective is the assimilation of the moral values inherent in the Christian teachings especially as was taught by Christ himself. It's teachings are summed up at the sermon in Matthew 5 which reflects the Christian character such as the beatitudes, Christian influence as the salt and light of the world, Christian righteousness to avoid anger and lust, avoid infidelity in marriage and be honest in speech. Christian should show non-retaliation to offenders and show active love. It admonishes a Christian religion not be hypocritical but real.

Christian prayer not to be mechanical but thoughtful. It demands that Christian ambition should not be materialistic or

material security but depends on God's rule. It recommends that a healthy Christian family relationship to his brothers and his father should be love undiluted especially the love Christ showed us that he gave his life so that we live life to the fullest. It also agrees that we should shun false teachers and false prophets who are teaching us the way that leads to destruction. And finally a Christian family's commitment should be radical choice to the only supreme God, it shows that when all these family values are made part and parcel of our daily life, it will adversely reduce the numerous social ill inherent in the Nigeria society but make a society of our dream.

### **Conclusion**

The need is for these healthy Christian family to proffer solution to the numerous social vices devilling Nigeria through the teaching and assimilation of these Christian values such as love, services patriotism, justice, moderation, trust, peace, unity and others to be made our focus in the Nigerian society.

Nigerians should see the spirit of service, concern for common good, discourage inordinate quest for material things, dispositions for collaborative efforts and patriotic spirit in the nation Nigeria. When all the various Christian values are captured

then the resultant effect becomes a healthy society where peace and justice reigns supreme. Okezue Ogbu alaa “equity drives envy and jealousy away”. When these values becomes our stock in trade without rancour, tribalism, nepotism etc will be a thing of the past in Nigeria.

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