Theology and Philosophy of Child Adoption in Relation to Infertility: A Case Study of Christian Couples in Warri Diocese of Anglican Communion, Delta State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the theology and philosophy of child adoption in relation to infertility, taking the case of Christian couples in Warri Diocese of Anglican Communion, Delta State. The absence of children in the family especially when it is due to biological cause rather than a choice to remain childless threatens the peace of most marriages. This study adopts survey research design. Exegetical, historical and sociological approaches were employed to source for data. The historical and exegetical approaches look at the issue of child adoption in the Old Testament and New Testament as well as the Jewish tradition. It also uses both the quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain information. The population of the study comprises all Christian couples in Warri Diocese. Three hundred participants were randomly selected for the study and administered questionnaire. Data gathered for the study were presented in tables and analysed using simple percentage and frequency counts. Major findings from the study reveal that childlessness among Christian couples in some holy matrimonies has led many men to indulge in the practice of polygamy. Some married women have suffered victimization from the hands of the relatives of their husbands while some are branded witches and some are made to pass through all kinds of rituals and trauma to get pregnant. Factors militating against child adoption as a viable option for the management of the crisis of infertility among Christian couples include ignorance and a hostile cultural value system. The work conclusively remarks among other things that the church should engage in dialogue with custodians of various cultures within the Diocese with the view of coming to compromise in favour of child adoption.
Keywords: Theology, practice, child adoption, infertility, Christian Couple

INTRODUCTION

Infertility is a common health problem with grave psychological consequences on the affected couples especially in Africa. Thus, the ability to give birth to a child after marriage is considered by many as the true consummation of the marriage. Mosline (2011) stresses that child birth is the ultimate goal of every African marriage considering also that most cultures within the African context are likely to be uncomfortable with a woman who fails to conceive within the first few years of marriage. To the African woman, the anticipation of motherhood beckons at every stage of her marriage rite, when she walks down the aisle or go through the traditional marriage ceremony. Any signs of barrenness bring so much

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pressure to bear on the couple. Similarly, Denga (1982) posits that the absence of children in the family especially when it is due to biological cause rather than a choice to remain childless threatens marital adjustment among Africans. The challenge of infertility among Christian couples in Anglican Diocese of Warri has adverse effect on the Holy matrimony. Christian couples with this challenge suffer from the conflux of personal, interpersonal, social and religious expectations thus bringing a sense of failure to them.

Infertility therefore creates a very distressing life crisis that a couple will ever experience. The long term inability to conceive a child can evoke significant feelings of loss. Dealing with the multitude of medical decisions and the uncertainties that infertility brings tends to create great emotional upheaval in the Diocese coupled with the feelings of anxiety, depression, loss of control and isolation. Husbands and wives find themselves blindsided by the enormous impact infertility present in their tender union, which can place even the strongest relationships at risk (Lombardo, Marina, 2011). There are some factors responsible for infertility which could be from either of the partners or both. "The factors in women sometimes could be blocked fallopian tube as a result of infection. Another factor is hormone imbalance in women which poses a challenge to achieving conception. The other situation is when there is no sperm cell which makes it impossible for the eggs to be fertilized.

In the Diocese of Warri, there are abundant evidences that despite the fact that infertility is one of the gynecological challenges, the outcome of treatment is usually marred by poor facility and poverty which has deprived some couples access to good medical treatment. Whereas considering adoption as a viable option to infertility has the prevailing culture of the people to contend with. Furthermore, some men deliberately refuse to get married while others refuse to get their marriages blessed in church pending when the women will conceive. Such men, under pressure from their families and relatives have either abandoned their wives out rightly or married second wives, or worse still maintained concubines. This has in turn affected the role of most men in church activities. Warri Diocese Anglican Communion is not an exception to the chronicles of agonies experienced by barren women within the African context. Some women with the challenge of childlessness within the Diocese have been subjected to ridicule; branded witches and some went as far as consulting spirit mediums, witch-doctors and faith healers in a bid to have the curse of barrenness removed. Some others under this category were compelled to drink fetish and unhealthy herbs as palliative to cushion the effect of their predicament. According to a member of a Parish who attest to this claim during a counseling session with her gives a brief narrative of her ordeal and the intimidations she suffered from her In-laws.

Consequently, most women got their cases complicated after taking concoctions of unknown ingredients, both bitter and sweet all in an effort to treat and clean blocked fallopian tubes. Another member, who also shared his personal experience during a counseling section, maintain that, erroneously, the problem of infertility in matrimonial homes is usually attributed to women alone without cause to considering the possibility of the man or husband being sterile. Some men do not take kindly to what seems to be a delay in producing a child especially a son as an heir of the family name. Such men, under pressure

from their families and relatives have either abandoned their wives out rightly or married second wives or worse still maintained a concubine on the outside. In some cases, couples unanimously surrogate. These concubines are referred to as "*Osen otafe*" by the Urhobos a major tribe that constitute the members of Warri Diocese. *Osen otafe* is an Urhobo nomenclature designating a concubine outside the matrimonial home for the purpose of bearing children, most times this is done without the knowledge of the house wife. These "*Osen otafe*" do not hesitate to produce the needed child for these men although some have the full knowledge that the men are married. Doing this seems to seal the fate of the woman who could not reproduce on time. She has to put up with sharing her husband with another woman and loses her place of respect and a voice in the home. In the light of this, this work investigates the possibility of considering child adoption as a viable option for the management of infertility among Christian couples, bearing that childlessness could be a potential cause of marital instability among Christian couples in Warri Diocese more so that it is used within the African context as a parameter for marital success. Child adoption is fast gaining grounds among Christian couples with the challenge of infertility in some States in Nigeria. There seems to be an enormous surge of interest by couples in child adoption due to its acceptability in recent times. This is also with the influence of Western Civilization which has led to rapid changes in all spheres of African life including the marriage institution (Obasa, 1990).

Among the several factors militate against child adoption as a viable strategy for the management of infertility among Christian couples in the Diocese of Warri is ignorance and the cultural value system. Christian couples in the Diocese with the challenge of infertility are therefore left to suffer from the agony of childbearing failure and this is evident in emotional disturbances, depressive illness and marital disharmony. Hence, this work is positioned to provide an alternative strategy in the management of infertility among Christian couples. It is obvious that this strategy has gained wide acceptance in developed countries although with different motives which include political and other selfish interest (Brodzinsky and Schecter, 1990), ancient adoption practices for instance, put emphasis on the political and economic interests of the adopter providing a legal tool that strengthened political ties between wealthy families and creating male heirs to manage estates (Kirk, 1985). However, the main reason child adoption gains momentum in the contemporary society is to manage the crisis of infertility among couples. In the light of this, this work aims at unveiling the biblical basis for child adoption alongside other vital secular information about the concept with necessary recommendations to establish the need for child adoption to be considered as a viable option to barrenness in Warri Diocese without distorting the place of Divine Intervention as regards to miracle babies.

Scriptural View and Secular View of Child Adoption

The Scriptures give the context for the institution of adoption in the world God has created. There are solid scriptural foundations for child adoption. Just as we find our foundation for the sanctity of life in the Scriptures, we find also our foundation for a biblical view of

sexuality and the family including adoption in the Scriptures. Some of this instances include; Moses (Exod. 2:10) as a son of Pharaoh's daughter, Abraham adopting Eliezer of Damascus (Gen. 15:2), Esther who was adopted by her uncle Mordecai and few others that will be discussed in the course of this work.

In the New Testament, we find the instance of Joseph adopting Jesus as found in the genealogy account that culminates with Jesus. Further, deepest and strongest foundation of adoption is located not in the act of humans adopting humans, but in God adopting humans. This act is not part of his ordinary providence in the world; it is at the heart of the gospel (Galatians 4:4-5). It is a foundational scripture that will be considered in the course of this work: "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." God did not have to use the concept of adoption to explain how he saved us, or even how we become part of his family. He could have stayed with the language of new birth so that all his children were described as children by nature only (John 1:12-13) "But to all who did receive him, who believes in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God". But he chose to speak of us as adopted as well as being children by new birth. This is the most essential foundation of the practice of adoption.

There are legal realities that God had to deal with. Considering the fact that his own justice and law demanded that human race be judged and condemn as a result of sin He rather chose to satisfy His justice and His law in order to adopt sinners into His family. This He did by the life, death, and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. This means that the status of being a son legally preceded the experience of the Spirit coming to give us the affections of sons. We are legally sons before we experience the joy of sonship. The object of man's salvation precedes and grounds the subjective experience of our salvation by the Spirit today. Although this thesis emphasizes on child adoption as a viable option for barren Christian couples, Marvin and Olasky (1990) opine that it is a viable alternative because it upholds God's original intent for two parents.

Child adoption has a long history with dynamic views arising from various scholars and schools of thought. Ancient adoption practices for instance put emphasis on the political and economic interests of the adopter. As posited by Brodzinsky and Schecter (1990) providing a legal tool that strengthened political ties between wealthy families and creating male heirs to manage estates (Kirk, 1985).

A modern definition of the concept sees adoption as a process whereby a person assumes the parenting for another and, in so doing, permanently transfers all rights and responsibilities from the original parents (Foli and Thompson, 2004). They emphasize how wonderful adoptive parenting can be and how when the child enters their lives every joy of parenting will be fulfilled. Further, the place of the Judiciary is buttress by another school of thought. It considers adoption as a legal proceeding that creates a parent-child relation between persons not related by blood; the adopted child is entitled to all privileges belonging to a natural child of the adoptive parents including the right to inherit. In case of fostering a child, Collins (2007) argues that the consent of the parents should take a place

of prominence. According to Marvin and Olasky (1990), child adoption is not an easy choice to make. Unlike guardianship or other systems designed for the care of the young, adoption is intended to effect a permanent change in status and as such requires societal recognition, either through legal or religious sanction. Child adoption no doubt has its own risk. Chasnoff, Schwartz, Pratt and Neuberger (2006) investigate into the history of the child and the age of the child at the time of adoption, growth patterns, child development, and problems with attachment and emotional development. They further explain what issues are at risk to the child, what information the adoptive parents need to explore more fully, and what information they can ignore. Also, they provide growth charts, parent observations sheets to be used during visits with the child, questions for orphanage staff, and checklists on development. Furthermore, Joanne (2007) an adoptee, stresses that adoption affects the entire family, not just the child. The child is not just an adopted child anymore but part of the new family. Another excellent point that stands out is that the child existed before adoption. There was a birth, family, history, birth parents, extended family, and a great loss for all members involved.

Theology and Philosophy of Child Adoption with reference to the Holy Bible

The theological concept of child adoption has appealed to some scholars who wrote from their different perspectives, their views of the concept with biblical references to back up the practice from the biblical point of view. Easton (2006) attempting a theological investigation into biblical theology of child adoption posits that adoption is giving to any one the name and place and privileges of a son who is not a son by birth. In his work, he categorizes adoption into three groups; the first group according to his view is the natural adoption. Under this group, he cites instances of Pharaoh's daughter who adopted Moses in Exodus chapter two verses ten, he also places Mordecai's adoption of Esther under this group. The second group is the National adoption. Under this group, he cites the instance of God adopting Israel as found in Ex. 4:22; Deut. 7:6, Rom. 9:4. The final group according to Easton is the spiritual adoption which according to him is an act of bringing people into the kingdom of God through the act of adoption through faith and by grace. He continued that Abraham speaks of Eliezer (Gen 15:3), a house-born slave, as his heir, having probably adopted him as his son.

Jacob adopted his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh, and counted them as his sons (48:5-6), thus enabling him to bestow through them a double portion upon his favourite son Joseph. He further emphasizes the scriptural fact that, sometimes, a man without a son would marry his daughter to a freed slave, the children then being accounted her father's; or the husband himself would be adopted as a son as the case in (1 Chron 2:34). This also align with the fact that most of the early instances of adoption mentioned in the Bible were the acts of women who, because of barrenness, gave their female slaves to their husbands with the intention of adopting any child they might have (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary, 1988). Thus, Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham, and the son (Ishmael) was considered the child of Abraham and Sarah (Gen 16:1-15). The childless Rachel gave her maid, Bilhah,

to her husband (30:1-7) and was imitated by Leah (30:9-13). In such cases the sons were regarded as fully equal in the right of heritage with those by the legitimate wife. Closely related to this, is the view of Nelson (1987) with some variations. According to Nelson, child adoption is the act of taking voluntarily a child of other parents as one's child. In a theological sense, the act of God's grace by which sinful people are brought into his redeemed family. He added that in the Old Testament, adoption was never common among the Israelites. Adoption in the Old Testament according to Nelson (1987) was done by foreigners or by Jews influenced by foreign customs. Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses (Ex 2:10) and another pharaoh adopted Genubath (1 Kings 11:20). Furthermore, there is no Hebrew word to describe the process of adoption. When Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses, the text says, "And he became her son" (Ex 2:10) (Nelson, 1987).

The Biblical theology of adoption in relation to the New Testament is a corollary of justification in the Reformed doctrine of the *ordo salutis*, or order of salvation. The concept does not appear as a formal element in the orthodox Lutheran *ordo salutis*. In the Reformed *ordo*, adoption of the believer as a child of God occurs as the immediate corollary and result of the forensic declaration of righteousness on account of faith (Dictionary of Latin and Greek, 1985). Those justified by the grace of Christ are also made co-heirs with him of the kingdom and are declared sons with Christ, because of their union with him. The concept of *adoptio*, therefore, also rests upon the Reformed teaching of the *unio mystica*, or mystical union with Christ: graciously united with Christ, who is Son of God by nature; believers are made sons of God by grace (Dictionary of Latin and Greek, 1985). Hawthrone (1993) argues that Paul's concept of adoption is a legal metaphor which Paul constructed adhoc from his Greco-Roman background. The apostle Paul used this legal concept of adoption as an analogy to show the believer's relationship to God. Although similar ideas are found throughout the New Testament, the word adoption, used in a theological sense, is found only in the writings of Paul (Rom 8:15,23; 9:4). In Ephesians, Paul's emphasis was that our adoption rests with God, who "predestined us for adoption as sons" (Eph 1:5). In his letter to the Romans, Paul used the term to describe Israel's place of honor in God's plan (Rom 9:4). However, Gentile believers have also been given the "Spirit of adoption," which allows them to cry, "Abba, Father" (Gal 4:6).

God's adoption of the believer also has a future dimension, the assurance that the believer's body will be resurrected (Rom 8:23). Frederick (2002) quickly ascribes the term adoption to Paul. According to Smith (2006), the term is an expression used by St. Paul in reference to the present and prospective privileges of Christians. Rom 8:15, 23; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5. He further argues that Paul probably alludes to the Roman custom by which a person not having children of his own might adopt as his son, one born of other parents. The relationship was to all intents and purposes the same as existed between a natural father and son. He also adds that the term is used figuratively to show the close relationship between God and Christians (Gal 4:4, 5; Rom 8:14-17). He is received into God's family from the world, and becomes a child and heir of God. In the theology of Paul as regards to adoption, Paul emphasized on grace. Grace in relation to adoption as emphasized in the New Testament theology is the gracious or benevolent disposition of

God toward sinful mankind therefore, the divine operation by which the sinful heart and mind are regenerated and the continuing divine power or operation that cleanses, strengthens, and sanctifies the regeneration (Dictionary of Latin and Greek, 1985). This view was also upheld by Fausset (2006), who asserts that the theology of Paul on adoption is an act of God's sovereign grace, originating in God's eternal counsel of love actually imparted by God uniting His people by faith to Christ. In which sense, the slave once forbidden to say "father" to the master, being adopted, can use that endearing appellation as a free man. God is their Father, because He is Christ's Father. The adopted son is sealed by the Holy Spirit, the earnest of the future inheritance which represent the resurrection of the believer with a body like Christ's glorious body (Rom 8:23).

By implication, this view stress that the final adoption of the believer is still waited for, in the sense of its open manifestation. It is now a reality, but a hidden reality until the appearing of the Lord (Fausset, 2006). Easton (2006) also asserts that in explaining the term adoption, Paul used other theological terms like justification and others to buttress his argument. Taking justification as an instance in Paul ideology, Easton describes this as a forensic term, opposed to condemnation. As regards its nature, it is the judicial act of God, by which he pardons all the sins of those who believe in Christ and accounts, accepts, and treats them as righteous in the eye of the law, as conformed to all its demands. In addition to the pardon of sin, justification declares that all the claims of the law are satisfied in respect of the justified (Easton, 2006).

Justification by grace means the divine acceptance of unacceptable people. In buttressing this, Spurgeon (1981) stresses that if at any time we could stand acceptable before God because of faith, obedience or moral excellence, it would no longer be justification by grace. Hutson (1979) opines that the implication of Pauline concept of adoption ranges from the nature of the adoption the believer received in Christ Jesus which also includes the benefits and privileges that will accrue to the believer consequent upon the act of adoption. The greatest privilege of adoption is to have God as Father. A renowned scholar Noel Due in attempt to harmonize the concept of adoption in both the Old and New Testament states that adoption is to be brought into relationship with the Father, in a manner which bestows full rights of sonship and full paternal intimacy.

Types of Child Adoption

There are many variations in types of adoption. The various types of child adoption are domestic adoption, international adoption, agency versus private adoption, close adoption, open adoption, relative (kinship) adoption and adult adoption. Domestic adoption involves adopting from within a particular country. In the context of Nigeria it will mean adopting within the thirty-six States of the country. In most jurisdictions, domestic adoption begins with the decision of the birth parents to place their unborn baby or child with another family. Birth parents may play an active role in the adoption process and may be involved in selecting an adoptive family (Hopkins, 2012). Among the various types of adoption, couples affected with infertility practice among other types, the domestic type of adoption. This is the adoption of a child who resides in the vicinity or country. For instance adopting

a child who resides in the area where the adoptee parents also lives.

International adoption refers to a situation in which a child is born outside of the country but brought to live in another country. It is a type of adoption in which an individual or couple becomes the legal and permanent parents of a child that is a national of a different country. In general, prospective adoptive parents must meet the legal adoption requirements of their country of residence and those of the country whose nationality the child holds.

The next major distinction is an agency adoption versus a private adoption. An agency adoption is one that is arranged by a public or private adoption agency. This is as opposed to a private adoption which is arranged through an intermediary such as a lawyer, physician, or other facilitator, rather than through a licensed adoption agency. Usually independent adoptions involve infants who are healthy or believed to be healthy. They often do not include counseling for the birthparents or parent preparation for the adoptive parents, and are not legal in all States. Children adopted through private adoptions are not usually eligible for adoption assistance for special needs that may not have been noticeable at birth. Such adoptions can be open adoptions, but this is not always the case. Private adoptions should not be confused with private agency adoptions.

A closed adoption is an adoption in which no identifying information about the birth family or the adoptive family is shared between the two. Additionally, there is no contact between birthparents and adoptive parents. The adoptive family usually receives non-identifying information about the child and the birth family before placement. In a closed adoption, after finalization, the records are sealed. Depending on local law and what paperwork was signed and filed at the finalization, these records may or may not be available to the adopted child upon their 18th birthday. Non-identifying information is shared between the parties involved, such as medical history and social background, up to the point of placement. After the adoption is legalized, no further information is shared between the adoptive parents and the birth parents (Hopkins, 2012). The closed adoption experience is different for each person; however, here is a list of potential advantages with a closed adoption:

Sense of closure: Some birthmothers and birth families report that having a closed adoption provides a sense of closure and enables them to move on with life.

Privacy: Placing a child for adoption is an extremely sensitive and vulnerable choice. Having a closed adoption creates an opportunity for a stronger sense of privacy.

Reduced fear: Some birthmothers are concerned about explaining their choice, and a closed adoption serves as a way to prevent them from a confrontation with a child placed for adoption.

Family Freedom: If the birth families are not involved, the adoptive family is free to have their family time without restraints of visitations and on-going communication.

Absence of fuzzy boundaries: There is no danger or risk of birth parent interference or co-parenting concerns.

Protection from unstable birth families: A closed adoption protects the adopted child from an unstable or emotionally disturbed birth parent or birth family member.

The closed adoption is a different experience for each adoption. The most important thing for all parties involved in the adoption process is communication. The more communication about wishes, desires, expectations, etc., the more comfortable each party will be in the adoption process. In a closed adoption, this communication takes place through the adoption agency or adoption attorney.

An open adoption allows for some form of association between the birth family, adoptees, and adoptive parents. This can range from picture and letter sharing, to phone calls, contact through an intermediary, or open contact between the parties themselves. Many adoptions of older children and teens are at least partially open, since the children may know identifying or contact information about members of their birth families, or may want to stay in touch with siblings placed separately. Open adoption involves a degree of ongoing personal contact between the parties to an adoption (the birth parents, adoptive family and the child). Identifying information is shared between the parties such as names, addresses, and phone numbers. The parties will determine the nature and extent of contact and this is often communicated and managed directly without the assistance of an intermediary. Even after an adoption is finalized, the relationship between the parties will continue, and may include yearly pictures, visits, phone calls, letters, or e-mails. While all adoption plans are unique, in an open adoption the adopted child may meet his/her birth family and/or a degree of ongoing communication will exist (Johnston, 1994). The open adoption experience is different for each person. Here is a list of potential advantages with open adoption:

Sense of control: Having the ability to review, interview and select the parents to place your baby with, usually provides birth parents with a sense of empowerment and control.

Reduced Uncertainties: Most birth parents experience a sense of comfort knowing about the child's well-being through interactions and updates with the adoptive family.

Improved Mourning: Being able to visit and talk with the adoptive family and the adopted child often provides an increased ability to deal with the grief and loss.

Reduced Fear: When there is on-going communication with the adoptive family before the birth and following the adoption, it usually helps reduce the fear about what is going to happen to the child.

Relationship with the Child: With an open adoption, there is a potential to develop a healthy relationship with the child as he or she grows.

Relationship with the Adoptive Family: There is an opportunity for you to develop a relationship with the adoptive family. For some birth families, the adoptive family becomes like part of their own extended family.

Reduced Guilt: With an on-going relationship and communication about the well-being of the child, you may experience less guilt about making a decision to place for adoption.

Identity and self-confidence: Open adoption provides adopted children with direct access to birth families for information about family history and family trees. This often makes it easier to answer the questions: "Who am I?" and "Where did I come from?"

Protection against a sense of abandonment: Having the opportunity to communicate with the birth families and receive the reasons behind the adoption can help prevent the child from experiencing a sense of abandonment.

Absence of the need to search: The potential need to search to find the birth families is removed.

Medically informed: A medical history is provided prior to the adoption; however, with an open adoption there is an ability to seek additional medical information that may become necessary with the onset of medical symptoms in adulthood or questions about genetics with future family planning.

Relationship with the birth families: There is an opportunity for the adopted child to develop a relationship with the birthmother or birth families. For some adopted children, the birthmother or birth families become like part of their own extended family.

Support Network: The birthmother and birth families have a genuine concern for the well-being of the child which often makes them advocates for the child and serves as additional support to the child.

In a relative adoption, also called a kinship adoption, a member of the child's family steps forward to adopt. Grandparents often adopt their grandchildren if the parents die while the children are minors, or if the parents are unable to take care of the children for other reasons (such as being in jail or on drugs). In most States, these adoptions are easier than non-relative adoptions. If the adopted child has siblings who are not adopted at the same time, kinship adoption procedures usually provide for contact between the siblings after the adoption (Brodzinsky and Schecter, 1990).

In some States, adult adoption is practiced. It is legal for one adult to adopt another as long as there is at least a ten-year age difference and the parties can show that the adoption is in the interests of both the parties involved and the public good. Often, adult adoptions are stepparent adoptions that the family did not get around when the younger person was a minor, but wants to complete in order to assure inheritance rights. Sometimes, older adults who do not have children of their own meet younger persons who they wish to treat as their children for inheritance purposes (Brodzinsky and Schecter, 1990). All types of adoption can be through agency or private. An agency for adoption is one that is arranged by a public or private adoption agency. This is as opposed to a private adoption which is arranged through an intermediary such as a lawyer, physician, or other facilitator, rather than through a licensed adoption agency. Although child adoption presently seems to be a widespread practice in Nigeria, this study becomes imperative because very few researchers focus on considering child adoption as a viable option for Christian couples with the challenge of infertility will be abated.

METHOD

This study is a survey that focuses on the theology and philosophy of child adoption in relation to infertility taking the case of Christian couples in Warri Diocese of Anglican Communion, Delta State. The study employs exegetical, historical and sociological approaches to source for data. The historical and exegetical approaches look at the issue of child adoption in both the Old Testament and New Testament. The study also made use of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain information for the study. The population of the study comprises all Christian couples in Warri Diocese. Three hundred participants were randomly selected for the study. Questionnaire was the major instrument for data collection. Data gathered for the study were presented in tables and analysed using simple percentage and frequency counts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 gives a crystal view of the knowledge of the respondents about infertility, Almost all respondents have knowledge of infertility, this represent 93% of the total respondent, from the table only twenty respondent representing 7% says they have no knowledge of infertility however, most respondents that falls into this category came from the rural parts of the Diocese. Opinions of respondents were sought on their knowledge of child adoption. From the data gathered 67% claimed to have knowledge of child adoption and 33% of the total respondent claimed no knowledge (table 2). Table 3 indicates that among some Christian couples in Warri Diocese infertility is seen as a challenge by two hundred and fifty respondents representing 84% of the total respondents while 10% respondents said No and 40 respondents representing 13% were not sure if infertility was a challenge to some Christians in Warri Diocese.

Opinion of respondents were sought to have an idea of members of Christian couples with the challenge of infertility in their local congregations and 210 respondents representing 70% of the three hundred falls within the category of 1 to 5%, 50% respondents falls within the category of 5 to 10% and 5 respondents representing 2% of the total respondents said there is none in their local congregation while thirty respondent said they were not sure if there are couples with such a challenge in their local congregation (Table 4). Child adoption was considered a biblical practice by 190 respondents represent 64% of the total respondents, 60 respondent representing 20% did not consider it a biblical practice while 50 respondents representing 16% were not sure if it was a biblical practice or not (Table 5).

Table 6 reveals that among the 300 respondents 180 representing 60% considers child adoption as a viable option for Christian couples with infertility challenge, 70 respondent representing 24% do not consider it as such, further investigation for the low percentage shows that requirements for prospective adoptive parents was one of the factors responsible for the low percentage of those who do not want to consider child

adoption as a viable option to the challenge of infertility. Requirements for prospective adoptive parents vary considerably among countries. In many countries, laws have been amended to allow older persons or single persons to adopt. However, in some cases, the criteria that potential adoptive parents must meet have become more stringent. Adoption by step-parents, for instance, is currently discouraged in several countries because of the potentially detrimental effects that such adoptions are deemed to have on the child's relationship to his or her non-custodial biological parent. The requirements for inter country adoptions have also been tightened in several countries of origin. Under this question, 50 respondents representing 16% were not sure. This group of persons no doubt needs some enlightenment. Several factors militate against child adoption as a viable strategy for the management of the crisis of infertility among Christian couples; ranging from ignorance to a hostile cultural value system among the major tribes in Warri Diocese. However the study opines that for exploring some cultural practices that encourage fostering a child will consequently pave way for the practice of child adoption with due observance of all its legal procedures.

Table 1: Knowledge about Infertility in Warri Diocese

Options	No of Respondents	% of Respondents	Remark
Yes	280	93	High
No	20	7	Low
Total	**300**	**100**	

Source: Survey, 2011 - 2014

Table 2: Knowledge of Child Adoption in Warri Diocese

Options	No of Respondents	% of Respondents	Remark
Yes	200	67	High
No	100	33	Low
Total	**300**	**100**	

Source: Survey, 2011 - 2014

Table 3: Infertility as a Challenge to Some Christian Couples in Warri Diocese

Options	No of Respondents	% of Respondents	Remark
Yes	250	84	High
No	10	3	Very low
Not sure	40	13	Fair
Total	**300**	**100**	

Source: Survey, 2011 - 2014

Table 4: Percentage of Christian Couples with Infertility Challenge in Some Local Congregations in Warri Diocese

Options	No of Respondents	% of Respondents	Remark
1-5%	210	70	High
5-10%	50	16	Low
0%	5	2	Very low
Not sure	35	12	**Low**
Total	**300**	**100**	

Source: Survey, 2011 - 2014

Table 5: Is Child Adoption a Scriptural Practice

Options	No of Respondents	% of Respondents	Remark
Yes	190	64	High
No	60	20	Fair
Not sure	50	16	Fair
Total	**300**	**100**	

Source: Survey, 2011 - 2014

Table 6: Child Adoption as a viable option to Christian Couple with Infertility Challenges

Options	No of Respondents	% of Respondents	Remark
Yes	180	60	High
No	70	24	Fair
Not sure	50	16	Fair
Total	**300**	**100**	

Source: Survey, 2011 - 2014

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is of utmost necessity that the benefit of child adoption cannot be over emphasized. Therefore, there is the need to disabuse the wrong ideology of man over adoption. It is good that investing in a human being is the greatest investment one should embark on. From every possible indication, the need for orientation on child adoption and the values inherent in it cannot be played down on. The emphasis on child adoption as contained in the Report from the five years vision committee of the Diocese of Warri (Anglican Communion) submitted to the Diocesan Board confirmed the observation of the researcher that Infertility is a contemporary health challenge of some Christian couples in Warri Diocese, it is therefore apt and imperative to engage in a permanent solution to checkmate this monster with devastating psychological consequences on the affected couples in some matrimonial homes in the Diocese. The absence of children in the family especially when it is due to biological cause rather than a choice to remain childless threatens the peace of most marriages in the Diocese of Warri.

Sequel to the trauma and emotional distress of Christian couples with the challenge of infertility and a critical evaluation of the relevance of child adoption in Warri Diocese as a viable means to manage this crisis, seminar and symposium should be organized for barren Christian couples in order to create awareness for them to consider child adoption as a variable option. The Diocese should establish an effective counseling unit in order to facilitate a grass root one on one sensitization. A general pulpit awareness campaign programme should be embarked upon by the clergymen to educate and disabuse the mentality of members about child adoption. Finally, those with infertility problem and those without infertility problem should see child adoption from the God's point of view of love one another as you love yourself.

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