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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Morality today, it has been observed, is increasingly on a daily basis. Ethics as a way of ordered living which propagates ideal communal life and human relationship is speedily waning. There is concern in several quarters that at the rate immorality is making waves in the society; the likely tendency is that there might be serious breakdown of law and order which might lead to anarchy. It is said that a lawless and immoral society is prone to chaotic situation and anarchy. An ideal society is that which is devoid of violence, civil disorder, with minimal rate of crime and immoral practices cum unethical standards. This is why sound

morals and ethical standard have been the concern of many social institutions in recent years. Hence, many campaigns in the society today are geared towards curbing immorality and other such vices and drama is a major instrument used by various anti-immorality and anti-corruption campaign agencies. In Nigeria, the church has been taking one of the leading roles in the campaign against immorality (Etire, 2002).

Moral, according to Webster's Universal Dictionary and Thesaurus, is an adjectival word that is "of or related to character, particularly as regards to right from wrong. Morality has been defined as principles concerning right and wrong, good and bad behaviour. However, morality is to be seen as the right motive on which man is supposed to act, the good which one ought to follow or achieve, the discerning power or conscience with which one determines or knows right from wrong, the laws of mutual living able to yield positive action otherwise known as freedom of will. Ethics in theology, especially when referred to as Christian Ethics, is the same thing as Moral Theology. Manton (2001) thus explains Moral Theology as "the study of how people should act in the sight of God. The term is more frequently in Roman Catholic

The prevalence of immorality in churches among members in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. It has grown to a level that creates fear and tension in the heart of anyone who has concern for the future of Nigeria as a nation and that of the teeming Christian population of Nigeria. The society is grappling with many behavioral problems of the church members and clergy/pastors alike, which according to Ekundayo & Oyeniyi (2008) and Adebule (2012) include fraud, deception, intimidation, drug offences, smoking, flirting, stealing and armed robbery, violent conduct and demonstration, vandalism, examination malpractices, cultism and thuggery. In addition to the above listed widely publicized behavioral problems, Dotonu (2011) stated that heterosexual and homosexual activities are also viewed as part of the behavioral problems prevalent in some of the Nigerian churches.

They are coined in the literature as sex abuse, sex offences, sexual misconduct, immorality, promiscuity and maladjustment (Omoteso, Adeniyi & Bada, 2010 and Anise, 2011). However, Dotonu (2011) observed that sex abuse and fraudulent misappropriation of money appeared to be one of the most serious and most common immorality among the youths and leaders of the churches involved in this mess.

According to the new testament of the Holy Bible, jealousy, killing, lies, adultery, fornication, theft, heresies, pride and several immoral acts are against the will of God. However, the church is guided by the word of God which is against all forms of immorality, but there are still some level of immorality in churches.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Without doubt, there is an increasingly low level of morality and ethical standard in the society today especially in the church, many interest groups have laid blame on modernism and developments especially the advent of modern technology and the internet.

One of the outstanding remarkable virtues of a good society should be sexual purity which has received little or no attention from the society today. Also, sexual immorality has eaten deep into the fabric of the society. It has become the mainstay of the peoples' behaviour (Adebule, 2012). Fraudulent accumulation of wealth has also been the order of the day in churches

Researches have shown (Omoteso, Adeniyi & Bada, 2010; Anise, 2011 and Odebiyi, 2001) that sexual immorality and corruption has thousands of destructive effects on the society. However, the researcher is examining the issues of immorality in church with the hope of identifying the way forward.

## **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The following are the objectives of this study:

1. To examine the issues of immorality in churches.
2. To determine the way forward on the issue of church immorality.
3. To identify the factors encouraging immorality in churches.

## **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What is the level of immorality in churches?
2. What is the way forward on the issue of church immorality.
3. What are the factors encouraging immorality in churches?

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The following are the significance of this study:

1. Outcome of this study will educate the church leaders and the general public on the issues of immorality in the church and identifying the way forward on the issue of church immorality.

2. This research will also serve as a resource base to other scholars and researchers interested in carrying out further research in this field subsequently, if applied will go to an extent to provide new explanation to the topic.

### **1.7 SCOPE/LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study on immorality in churches will cover all forms of immoral activities that exist in churches today with a view of finding a lasting solution to the problem.

#### **Limitations of study**

**1. Financial constraint-** Insufficient fund tends to impede the efficiency of the researcher in sourcing for the relevant materials, literature or information and in the process of data collection (internet, questionnaire and interview).

**2. Time constraint-** The researcher will simultaneously engage in this study with other academic work. This consequently will cut down on the time devoted for the research work.

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