

**AN EXAMINATION OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY AMONG NIGERIAN
CHRISTIAN YOUTHS; MOUNTAIN OF FIRE AND MIRACLES
MINISTRIES(MFM), LAGOS AS A CASE STUDY.**

BY

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty who has bestowed on me the strength, wisdom, knowledge and understanding needed to carry out this research work. It also dedicated to my amazing parents and siblings for their unending prayers, counsel, love and support.

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing concern about the decline of morality in our society. The most vulnerable group of premarital sexual behaviour are youths and adolescents. The aim of the study is to assess factors affecting premarital sex behaviours among adolescent and its impact on their spiritual and physical life. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design that identified the causes, forms and consequences of immorality among the youths of MFM Lagos, Nigeria. Both secondary and primary data were used in this research work. The instrument for primary data was questionnaire. The sample was drawn from (4) four MFM regional headquarters. Two hundred and fifty (250) copies of questionnaire were given out while only one hundred and fifty (150) copies were retrieved and analyzed. The questionnaire was designed to obtain accurate information based on the objectives and research questions. Finding of the study revealed poor parental upbringing, peer group influence, unregulated media as some of the causes, prostitution, rape, masturbation as forms while teen parenting, drops out school, loosing fellowship with God, untimely death as consequences of immorality among the youths.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In the twenty-first century, sexual immorality has become a norm in the society today among members, particularly youths, even amongst Christians. According to the 6th edition of Oxford Advanced Learners, sex is a physical action involving two individuals in which they touch each other's sexual organ. Immorality is described as a deviant and socially unacceptable violation of a particular group's or institution's established written or spoken norms and values, which must be followed by suitable sanctions on culprits to act as a deterrence to others. Moral values, according to Quora (2014), are the criteria by which we define right and wrong¹. They can come from the self, family, community, religion, government, or any other entity that influences the thoughts of the individual's personality. Examples of moral values are honesty, loyalty, respect for others, responsibility for personal actions, generosity and kindness. Sexual Immorality is the act of not following the accepted standards of sexual behaviours. These standards are: sex for God's purpose, Avoidance of Adultery, Avoidance of premarital sex. In the New Testament, the word immorality is most often translated as "fornication", "adultery", "homosexuality" and "prostitution". It means "a surrendering of sexual and it is primarily used of premarital sexual relations"². Premarital sexual behaviour or sex before marriage is the sexual activity practiced by people before they are married. The Bible considers premarital sex as fornication. Fornication is the sexual intercourse between people who are not wedded. According to 1 Corinthians 6:8, which says, "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body"³. It has been observed that wherever we have a congregation of people of opposite sex, immorality in various forms is inevitable (Groups like Choir, Technical group, Ushering). Sexual problems in marriage, pre-marital and many other as plagued the church. In Dr. Budziszewski's book on the implication of sex, he talks about the

¹ENU, D. B The role of social studies in promotion of ethics and morals values for nation-building and leadership development among youths in a multi-ethnic Nigerian society: NIGERIA JOURNAL OF SOCIAL STUDIES AND CIVIC EDUCATION (NJSSCE), VOL. 10, NO. 2. August, 2019. ISSN: 2315-6813

² Sexual immorality in the church, sermon.

³ Sexual immorality in the church, sermon.

problem, “Errors about sex cause such terrible suffering, in our day more than in most”⁴. Premarital sexual behaviour is not accepted culturally and socially. The most defenseless group are the unmarried youths and adolescents.

According to Geffrey (2003) sexual immorality has come to be the order of the day. Sexual relations before marriage were there but not as high as at now. This is because today there is little that is been taught about sex education because many responsible people are too much committed to work. He gave some forms of sexual immorality as; fornication, prostitution, lesbianism, among others. Today many parents do not have time to educate their wards about sex, and other fears to talk about sexual issues hence the reason as to why today sexual immorality is becoming more common among the youths. Lacks of respect of religion by the youths cause them to indulge in sexual immorality. Biblical restrictions against sexual sin are frequently accompanied with warning against “uncleanness” (Romans 1:24; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:19). Individuals who do not repent of their immoral acts will not be able to come into the presence of God. Jesus declared, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God” (Mathew 5:8; Psalms 24:4-4). It is difficult to establish a healthy relationship with God when our bodies and spirits are contaminated in any manner. The church, as a religious organization, is to establish examples of moral standards in the society; yet, the church is not exempted from the claws and danger of sexual immorality that ravages the modern world. Theological ethics, particularly Christian ethics, are synonymous with moral theology. According to Manton he thus explains Moral Theology is defined as “the study of how people should act in the eyes of God “. The prevalence of immorality among the members of the church has gotten to a stage that creates fear and tension in the heart of those concerned about the church future growth. Jealousy, killing, Lying, adultery, fornication, and other immoral activities are all against the will of God according to the New Testament.

The lack of focus on the message on repentance in churches has encouraged immorality. Although the church is led by the word of God, which forbids all types of immorality although there are still some levels of immorality in churches. In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul warned the church against immoral act and not to associate with individuals who are sexually immoral, idolaters, revilers, drunkards,

⁴ Budziszewski’s, J.; On the meaning of Sex, ISI Books, Wilmington, Delaware;2012.

or robbers. Do not even dine with such a person. For in the church of Corinth, a Christian man was having a sexual affair with his father's wife, a woman who was apparently a nonbeliever⁵.

One of the leading Pentecostals churches in Nigeria is Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries (MFM, as it is popularly known), which was founded in the 1990s by Dr. Daniel Olukoya. MFM's brand of teaching has been tagged as 'security gospel'⁶, due to their teachings. The emphasis on security gospel is reflected in the church's teachings on sexuality. Two areas of sexuality that attracts MFM's attention are marriage and sexual behavior. The church believes that the decision to marry is a very crucial decision to take in one's life. Bad marriage is said to be the next thing after hellfire (Olukoya 2013). According to 'Dancers at the Gate of Death,' access to your body is a precious thing, and once you make it loose, you lose your destiny as well. (Olukoya 2008). MFM teaches that sex was ordained by God. God created sex for procreation and companionship in marriage which can be seen in Genesis 1:1-28. Sexual intercourse in marriage attracts God's blessing, but when done out of marriage it attracts God's curse to those involved (Shittu 2016). MFM, in agreement with orthodox Christians belief about marriage, teaches that marriage was ordained by God; so instructions for it must come from God. Premarital sexual behaviour or sex before marriage is the sexual activity practiced by individuals who are not married. The Bible considers premarital sex as fornication. Fornication is the sexual intercourse between individuals who are not wedded. Fornication comes from Latin "fornicari" that means vaulted, which become the nick name for brothel, because prostitutes operated in a vaulted underground cavern in Rome.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research will be great of influence to MFM youths to help raise their awareness of the repercussions of immoral behavior on both their physical, spiritual, and social well-being of all Christians, which may also result in outward misery or regret. The researcher's focus, however, is on the prevalence of sexual immorality among the developing youths in MFM. This study will enlighten the youth's awareness of the implications of this sinful deed that can lead to eternal pain.

⁵ Immorality in the church www.preaching.com

⁶ Adewale. A, "Understanding sexuality from the security gospel perspective: Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries as a case study," 73(3) No 3 (2017). Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i3.3453>.

Also, this research intends to bring to conclusions, and giving adequate and helpful solutions that that will help in the decrease, and if feasible, ultimate elimination, of immoral activities among youths in MFM and in the society at large.

1.3 PURPOSE/ OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study were to identify and determine the

- 1.Causes of sexual immorality among the youths in MFM.
- 2.Forms of sexual immorality among the youths of MFM.
- 3.Consequences of sexual immorality among the youths of MFM.

1.4 SCOPE/ LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study centers on examination of sexual immorality among Nigerian Christian youths with a view of finding a lasting solution to the problem using MFM as a case study.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design that identified the causes, forms and consequences of immorality among the youths of MFM Lagos, Nigeria. Both secondary and primary data were used in this research work. The instrument for primary data was questionnaire. The sample was drawn from (4) four MFM regional headquarters. Two hundred and fifty (250) copies of questionnaire were given out while only one hundred and fifty (150) copies were retrieved and analyzed. The questionnaire was designed to obtain accurate information based on the objectives and research questions. The questions were structured type as it restricts the response of the respondents. The youths were meant to respond to the statement in the questionnaire by ticking one of the alternatives; Yes, or No as each applied to the individual respondent.

Secondary data were obtained from journals, conference and seminar papers as well as review of various studies and literatures on moral decadence and MFM etc.

DATA PRESENTATION

A total of Two hundred and fifty (250) questionnaires were administered through questionnaire for this study. Out of the Two hundred and fifty (250) copies administered, one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were returned, amounting to a 60% percent response rate.

Demographic Data (Section A)

Below is the table showing the return rate of the copies of the questionnaires distributed among four regional youth headquarters of MFM.

Table 1: Return Rate of Questionnaires Distributed

Respondents	Number Distributed	Number Returned	Percentage
	250	150	60%
Total	250	150	60%

From the table above, one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were distributed and collected from among three youth's regional headquarters of MFM.

Table 2: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Questions	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Age	a) 18 - 21	23	15%
	b) 22 - 25	22	15%
	c) 26 - 30	37	25%
	d) 31- 50	47	31%
	e) 36-50	19	13%
	f) 51-70	2	1%
	Total	150	100%
Gender	Female	108	72%
	Male	42	28%
	Total	150	100%
Status	Married	18	12%
	Single	130	87%
	Engaged	2	1%
	Total	150	100%
Educational Qualification	Primary	1	1%
	Secondary	23	15%
	Diploma/NCE	86	58%
	Degree	29	19%
	Post graduate	11	7%
	TOTAL	150	100

Occupation	Student	33	22%
	Servant	1	1%
	Trader	36	24%
	Employee of PS	6	4%
	Clergy	2	1%
	Retiree	1	1%
	Applicant	45	29%
	Self employed	26	18%
	TOTAL	150	100%

Source: Field work, 2021

From the above table, it is evident that all demographic information of the respondents is captured. The age distribution table shows 23 (15%) are within the ages of 18-21, 22 (15%) are within the ages of 22-25, 37 (25%) are within the ages of 26-30 ,31 (47%) are within the ages of 31-36,19(13%) are within the age of 36-50 and 2(1%) are within the ages of 51-70.

The gender distribution table shows 108 (72%) are Females while 42 (28%) are Males.

The status distribution table shows 2 (1%) are Engaged, 18 (12%) are Married and 130 (86%) are Single.

The educational qualification table shows 1(1%) are primary, 29(19%) are degree, 86(58%) are diploma, 11(7%) are post graduate, 23(15%) are secondary.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE TO THE STUDY

Immorality could be a part of group pattern and it is a social situations and act of freedom. This research is however based on the level of moral decadence among the growing youths of Nigeria. This study, on the other hand, is based on the amount of moral degeneration among Nigeria's rising youngsters, with Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries serving as a case study. Youths now attend church on a regular basis, yet they engage in amorous encounters pretty openly. They don't seem to see how this undermines their moral and spiritual fabric. Some young people believe it is difficult to maintain moral purity until they marry. Some people believe that getting married is a costly endeavor. Peer pressure in schools and other social settings causes some of them to lose their moral purity. The strain that young people experience when they leave home to attend

boarding schools, and university is so immense that it makes some of them lose grip on their moral purity. The transition from pre-urban to urban communities puts pressure on young people to remain true to promoted clean relationships that lead to marriage. The goal of this initiative is to educate church leaders and people about the challenges of immorality in the church and the way ahead⁷.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is immorality?
2. What are the causes of immorality among the youths in MFM based on gender?
3. What are the forms of immorality among youths of MFM.
4. What are the consequences of immorality among the youths of MFM.
5. How does the immorality affect the growth of the Church?

1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS

MFM: Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries’.

ETHICS: Moral principles that control or influence a person’s behaviour.

MORALITY: The degree to which something is right or wrong, good or bad, etc. according to moral principles.

IMMORALITY: Not following accepted standards of sexual behaviour.

DECADENCE: Behaviour, attitudes, etc. Which shows a fall in standards, especially moral ones, and an interest in pleasure and enjoyment rather than more serious things.

SEXUAL: Associated with the physical act of sex.

CHURCH: The word church refers to a congregation of Christians. The term "church" refers to the structure where Christians meet to worship. It is also used to refer to a certain church or denomination. In the Bible, the term "church" can refer to either the global church or the local church. The term "global church" refers to all members of Christ's body in all locations and ages.

LESBIAN: A woman who has sexual feelings for other women.

GAY: Individuals who are sexually attracted to people of the same sex, especially males.

FAMILY: A group of small people living together which consist of father, mother and children.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter critically gives an examination of sexual immorality among Nigerian Christian youths using MFM as a case study.

2.1 CONCEPT OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY

Sexual immorality is understanding the causes of sexual immorality is a critical step in mitigating this societal evil. Find articles (2012) sexual desire is more prevalent in teens than in other ages. Sometimes sex becomes an uncontrolled pleasure for adolescents, and as a result, a lack of self-discipline may lead to rape and sexual misbehavior, as today's youths indulge in pre-marital sex and other sexual immoralities⁸. The Bible plainly teaches that we should not engage in fornication, adultery, or any other sexually immoral conduct. Despite all of these warnings, young people continue to engage in premarital sex for reasons as basic as drinking water or eating meals. (Barker, 2014)⁹. This social sickness has wasted many young and older men and women today. As a result of sexual immorality, most young men's ambitions have been dashed, denied, and misdirected. Sexual attitude is described as one's agreement or disagreement with specific sexual behaviors such as premarital, extramarital, and autonomous sexual acts (NHSLs). Empirical studies have found the relationship between sexual attitude and other variables. Levkowitz et al. (2004) argue that sexual attitude can predict future sexual behavior among teens that were not sexually active. According to Ndakwe (2004) he says that the price most people are paying for their irresponsible sexual behaviour is horrid. Over one million youth become pregnant every year; half aborted and the other half give birth to illegitimate children. Thousands of young people worldwide are infected with sexually transmitted diseases. Immorality is the breach of certain moral rules, norms, or standards. Youth immorality is a serious issue in the church and in society as a whole. Immorality may be mimicked in a variety of ways, however before focusing on the many forms of immorality. Immorality is often used to characterize a person or their conduct.

⁸Oyediran. A.O(2020) Causes and Effects of Sexual Immorality Among Secondary School Student in Afijio Local Government Area, Oyo State; *International Journal of Innovative Social Sciences & Humanities Research* 8(2):37-44, April-June, 2020. ISSN: 2354-2926.

⁹ Barker, K. (2014). The NIV Study Bible. USA Zondervan.

Immorality can be a component of a collective pattern, as well as a social condition and an act of freedom. To do as one pleases. A person seeking happiness by unethical means such as fraud, dishonesty, and embezzlement has taken the wrong path. Immoral behavior is defined as disobedient behavior to the ethical precepts of God's word. Immorality could be a part of group pattern and it is a social situations and act of freedom. To do as one pleases. A person seeking happiness along an immoral way of life, fraudulence, dishonesty, embezzlement etc. has missed the road¹⁰. Immorality is the behaviour that is disobedient to the ethical teachings of God's word. However, the topic of moral degeneration in our society has become a highly contentious issue since society appears to be unaware of the difference between what is morally proper and wrong. Ugwu (2010) defined morality as "the astuteness of one's conduct and behavior that improves good conduct and fair relationships"¹¹. According to Muraino and Ugwumba (2014), morality is the collective maintaining of particular beliefs, concepts, values, and behaviors, laws, and regulations that are regarded good, proper, and acceptable by society and to which members of society are obligated¹². Odeh (2013) defined moral decay as our society's failing to preserve good morals¹³. According to Muraino and Ugwumba (2014), moral decay is the process of behaving in a way that demonstrates low moral standards. It denotes a significant decrease in a society's moral ideals. Thus, moral decay appears to be a lowering of society's moral norm.

Thus, moral decadence appears to be a fall' in the moral standard of the society .It appears that our society values, beliefs, conventions, and ethical standards are eroding or collapsing¹⁴. According to the Bible, it's says "flee from sexual immorality."¹⁵.'Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality, sins against his own body'. The body of the believers

¹⁰ Causes of immorality among students <https://www.Iproject.com.ng/order-roject/prpq1T6okqhlb0R/order.html>.

¹¹Ugwu.C.I. I (2010) Folklore in Igbo Society: A panacea to the threat of home video. African Journal of Local Societies initiatives.

¹² Muraino, M. B., &Ugwumba, U. E. (2014). Moral misconduct among students of higher institutions in Nigeria: A case of elected higher institutions in Imo State, Nigeria. Owerri: Oasis Publishers.

¹³ Odeh, J. C. (2013). Moral decadence among catholic youths in Abakaliki Diocese. Unpublished M. ED Thesis of EBSU, Nigeria. xxi. Sherzer, A. & Stone P. (1996). Fundamental of guidance. New York: Educational Service Inc.

¹⁴ Nkechi C. N. Journal of Education and Practice www.iiste.org ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online)Vol.7, No.26, 2016.

¹⁵ 1Corinthians 6:18

are the temple of the holy spirit. Prohibitions against sexual immorality are usually preceded with cautions against ‘impurity’¹⁶.

FORMS OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY

- Bestiality- sexual intercourse between a person and an animal.
- Homosexuality/ Lesbianism.
- Bisexuals
- Asexuality.
- Masturbation.
- Rape.
- Transsexual.
- Incestuous.
- Sodomy.

2.2 BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF IMMORALITY

The Old Testament is thus filled with sexual practices that violates the original design of God that a man and woman shall be united and become one in marriage. It shows that since the fall of Adam and Eve, mankind has also fallen short of the sexual sanctity that God designed for the family. All the prophets in the Old and New Testament condemned sexual immorality, and whoredom. Israel was chastised by God for adulterous acts, which made the Lord say to Hosea, to take a wife of whoredom, and children of whoredom, because Israel departed from the Lord. (Hosea 1,2,3 and 4). In the New Testament, Christ upheld the sanctity of marriage and sexual purity. The Bible says that no fornicator, or whoremonger, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of God ¹⁷. Examples of sexual immorality in the Bible are:

- Eli and his sons: The sons of Prophet Eli did evil in the sight of Lord by committing adultery with the women that assembled at the doors of the tabernacle of God.
- Joseph in Potiphar house Gen39
- David defiled 2Sam 11: The great sin of King David, the beloved of God, and anointed King of Israel, was his adultery with Beersheba, Uriah’s wife, and his subsequent

¹⁶ Sexual immorality in the church teaching and sermon www.osc-tbs.org.

¹⁷ Ephesians 5:3-3

marriage to her after he had succeeded in getting Uriah killed in battle, which displeased God.

- Lot and his daughter
- Samson and Delilah Judges 16: Samson's parley with the harlot of Gaza, and later with Delilah, ended his life, in spite of the unusual strength that God endowed him with.
- Solomon 1 Kings 11:1-13; King Solomon incurred the wrath of God because he loved many strange women: Egyptians, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians and Hittites
- Sodom and Gomorrah Gen 18,19: The sexual immorality of man and the penalties arising there from were best epitomized in the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah which were destroyed by the angel of God. Sexual immorality between men and men (Sodomy) that were rampant in Sodom and Gomorrah and which God detested. The Angel of God had to smite with blindness the sodomists that attempted to invade Lot's house in Sodom and Gomorrah
- Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of his ungodly desire for Sarai, the wife of Abraham Genesis 12:14-17
- Abimelech Genesis 20:1-7

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians he addresses the issue of sexual immorality. 1 Corinthians 5:1 "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of any kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife, and you are arrogant! Ought you not to rather mourn?"¹⁸

When the 10 commandments were given to Moses one of the laws states that "thou shall not commit adultery, fornication" there was a penalty attached to the law "whoever commits adultery with another man's wife shall be put to death both the man and the woman shall be put to death because they have broken the bond of marriage". In the Bible,¹⁹ God commanded Moses to take all the leaders of the people, and hang the offenders openly before the Lord, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel. The Bible says keep your heart pure and

¹⁸ Sexual Immorality in the Church highpointealtoona.com

¹⁹ Numbers 25:4

clean from all evil thoughts and carnal lusts. Also, in the Bible²⁰, the matter is approached by denunciation to describe immoral behaviour. These are divided into two categories: those controlling carnal connections among individuals who are closely related by blood (Consanguinity) and those guiding the sexual behavior of those who are connected via marriage (affinity). Homosexuality is blamed. Everything banned has already resulted in the moral contamination of the nation's surrounding Israel, and for these perversions they will face divine retribution. In his teachings, Jesus strongly adheres to the traditions of Mosaic law and prophecy concerning adultery as a sin. However, he broadens the term to encompass any man who lusts for another woman, married or not. The Mosaic law punished adultery but was less strict about other sexual crimes. The New Testament commands Christians to abstain from physical and spiritual lusting for people and false gods, and to behave themselves in a moral and spiritual manner. Abstinence from premarital sex is not to deprive but to secure the happiness of a marriage in which there will be ample time to learn together.

2.3 NATURE OF IMMORALITY IN CHURCH

Immorality has been on the increase today in the church and society at large. Apostle Paul speaks on the act of immorality in 1cor 6:9" Don't you know that people who sin will not inherit God's kingdom? Don't deceive yourself. Those who commit sexual immorality, or are male prostitutes, practice homosexuality will not inherit God's kingdom". Also, it is written in the bible,²¹ It states, "There must be no sexual sin, impurity, or greed among you." Such acts have no place among God's people. Immorality and extramarital affairs attract weird spirits that migrate from one person to the next.(Olukoya 2012)²². Amongst Protestant denominations, marine spirits are seen as evil demons in charge of adultery, fornication, abortion, incest, homosexuality, lesbianism, pornography, polygamy, and other sexual perversions Olukoya (1999)²³.

In early Christianity, fornication, adultery, divorce and remarriage were strictly prohibited in the church. Christians in large number were getting married as virgins. The relationship was not only defined as for better for worse, it lasted till death separated one of the two parties from the union. In recent times the reverse is the case in most Pentecostal churches of today.

²⁰ Leviticus 18:6-23

²¹ Ephesians 5:3

²² Olukoya, D.K., 2012, Deliverance from multiple bondage, The Battle Cry Christian, Ministries, Lagos.

²³ Olukoya, D.K, 1999, Power against marine spirits, The Battle Cry Christian Ministries, Lagos.

The church today has decided to ignore the presence of immorality among the youths and decided to focus their message on prosperity. Most pastors are concerned about what they will eat rather than the lives of their members. Some scholars hold the view that the church has greatly contributed to the high rate of indecent dressing by their members, mostly ladies. Sexual sin dominates the discussion of Colossians 3:3-5. Even the subsequent verses center on the works of darkness. Impurity is clearly connected to the sin sexual immorality. When an individual fail to keep the heart pure from evil thoughts then impurity creeps in. When sensual greed overrides the moral values of an individual moral impurity takes over the priorities. One lacks the ability to reason beyond selfish motives and begins to imagine that all were created for his benefit. The lack of moral reason has the capacity to seer the consciousness of an individual to a level where morality is subdued to the peripherals²⁴. (Lincoln, 1990). It is also the moral responsibility of churches to help the youth within their reach to keep their moral purity than engage them in the blame game and condemning them²⁵. In order to preserve morality, the Church needs to take an interest in the affairs of young people. Suspicion does not seem to help the youth in their moral purity. It is better to let them know the leaders are interested in their relationships. (General Conference, 2002)²⁶.

According to Kumuyi (1988), Christian churches have a great distinction between values of the secular society and the conservative teachings of the Church. Sexual purity continues to be a major concern to many churches as he comments, “Whenever a young woman and man are together, their bodies must be properly covered and they should never be tempted to stay alone in the room particularly when the doors and windows are closed”. He upholds that sex before marriage spoils courtship. ‘Be careful how you go touching and handling one during courtship’. A sense of touch can lead to trouble if indulged in too freely and can arouse passions which may be difficult to control (Kumuyi, 1988).

The sore problems that confront the Church and the Society today are abortion, homosexuality(gay) and the degenerating family life.

²⁴ Namitondo.T.S. S "A Biblical Strategy to Promote Christian Morality Among Youth in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Zambia Union Conference" (2014). *Project Documents*. 272.

<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dmin/272>.

²⁵ Lincoln, A. T. (1990). *Ephesians*. In Word biblical commentary. Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson.

²⁶ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. (2002). *Seventh-day Adventist pastor’s and elder’s handbook for youth ministry*. Silver Spring, MD

2.4 CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY AMONG THE YOUTHS

Okafor-Udah (2006)²⁷ and Soucy (2006) identified the following as causes of Immorality among youths:

- Lack of relevant education for the youths.
- Peer group influence
- Poverty
- Increase in the sexual urge
- Unemployment
- Poor counselling services in church
- Frustration
- Environmental factors

Many people disregard the values and moral standards that have been in place for many years; norms and ethics. Teaching on sexual purity before and after marriage is no longer accessible for youngsters to strive for as God's ideal and aim. Sexual freedom is widely accepted as the norm among teens and adults, and we expect and encourage young people to keep their virginity and follow God's laws.

Sexual immorality according to Oyediran has negative impacts on both the person and the society²⁸. They include:

- Disappointment and remorse at losing one's virginity for first-timers (depression)
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Abortion and childless
- Teen parenting
- Rape
- Loosing fellowship with God
- Sexually transmitted infections/disease like starphlecareus areas, Gonorrhoea. Syphilis, HIV/AIDS etc.
- Unattained educational goal (school dropout)

²⁷ Okafor-Udah, S. C. (2006). *Moral Philosophy*. Onitsha, Comic.

²⁸ Oyediran. A.O *International Journal of Innovative Social Sciences & Humanities Research* 8(2):37-44, April-June, 2020 ISSN: 2354-2926

- Early marriage/ denial of a choice husband or wife.
- Looking for deliverance and counselling from ungodly and unrighteous pastors and prayer warriors.
- Desire to get rich quick or to keep your job or to get promotion.
- Desperation to get married.

Immorality causes bad influence on others, both Christian and infidel. The devastation of Sodom and Gomorrah in (Gen 19:1) happened as a result of sexual immorality. The atrocities and punishment were tremendous in the city and grief came to lot and his daughters, to Reuben, Tamar, Samson and David.

Without doubt, there is an increasingly low level of morality and ethical standard in the church. Some preachers had blame on perilous time which brought about modernization and developments, especially the advent of modern technology and the internet.

2.5 CONSEQUENCES OF SEXUALITY IMMORALITY AMONG THE YOUTH

Pastor D.K Olukoya of Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries pointed out the consequences of sexual sin, as this sin is becoming so common and taking away the virtues in human's life:²⁹:

- Feeling of guilt.
- Self-condemnation.
- Damaged self esteem
- Emptiness
- Disappointment
- Depression
- Anger
- Abortion
- Disobedience to God
- Damaged fellowship with God
- Damage to future
- Sin against the body
- Evil blood covenant

²⁹ <https://etv2015.wordpress.com/2016/04/01/50-consequences-of-sexual-sin-pst-d-k-olukoya/>

- Wrong marriage

In his message titled the 'Mystery and calamity of lust'³⁰ he said the lust the you yield yourself to, will definitely kill you. Lust is the passion gone wrong and he gave examples of types of lust:

- Power
- Sex
- Opposite sex
- Alcohol
- Clubbing, partying.

Lust is that seductive feelings in your emotions. That strange fire in your spiritual life. When lust is conceived, it will bring forth sin, and then death. Therefore, lust must not be seen.

According to Dr. D.K Olukoya's lecture on "Dancers at the Gate of Hell," adultery is a phenomenon of the heart, and there is always a punishment for every sexual transgression³¹. The sexual desire is a powerful one that must be tamed. Sexual sin progresses via three phases:

- The mind
- The imagination
- The practice.

He also spoke about the categories of sexual desire:

- Sexual purity
- Sexually polluted
- Lost virtues
- Future time bombs
- Chronic sexual deliverance
- High lineage pollution
- Sex in the heart
- Shaving Samson
- Self sex
- Evil negative charge

³⁰ <https://flatimes.com/mystery-and-calamity-of-lust-by-pastor-d-k-olukoya/>

³¹ Dancers at the gate of hell © 2009 DR. D. K. OLUKOYA eISBN-13: 978-978-84240-4-8 October 2009

- Altar prisoner's
- Hidden infirmity
- Lost glory
- Generational curses
- Baby polygamist
- Sexual day dreamers
- Soul ties
- Sexual addiction
- Fragmented soul
- Delivered to sin
- Untimely death
- Murder

What are the consequences of sexual immorality? (1) It ruins our connection with God as well as our relationship with our partner. (2) It renders you ineffective in God's kingdom. (3) It takes away God's grace and the Holy Spirit's anointing. (4) It takes your name out of the book of life. (5) It results in humiliation, guilt, and judgment. (6) It causes you to lose your worth, voice, and vigor. (7) It brings God's anger and punishment onto you. (8) It exposes you to the devil's onslaught and tyranny. (9) It binds you in servitude. (10) It will consign your soul to hellfire³².

When the pastors are noticing ungodly behaviours from any member, such persons could be advised, counseled and constantly prayed for. Far from the family, the church also plays a major role in moral upbringing of a child. Immorality has crept into the church, as seen in 1cor 6:18 which says "flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

According to Ademola Young he identifies some of the consequences of immorality among youths include:

- Anytime you indulge in sexual desire you are a living dead.
- Brings generational curses over your life.
- God's given gift will be buried in the grave of lust.

³² Dancers at the gate of hell© 2009 DR. D. K. OLUKOYA eISBN-13: 978-978-84240-4-8 October 2009

He also claims that when there is no discipline if success exist it will be short-lived, the best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today.

CHAPTER THREE

EXAMINATION OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY AMONG YOUTHS IN MOUNTAIN OF FIRE AND MIRACLES MINISTRIES, LAGOS

3.0 BRIEF HISTORY OF MFM CHURCH WORLD WIDE

Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries was founded by Dr. Daniel. K. Olukoya was born on July 15, 1956, in Ondo town, to Mr. and Mrs. Amos Olukoya, members of the Christ Apostolic Church. Olukoya attended the University of Lagos and majored in Microbiology. Olukoya also received his PhD in Molecular Genetics from the University of Reading in the United Kingdom in 1984³³. It was on a Wednesday in 1989, Dr. Daniel Kolawole Olukoya summoned a prayer meeting with only 24 brethren showed up for the meeting. The prayer meeting was held in the living room of Dr. Daniel K. Olukoya No. 3, Edmund Crescent, Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria. It was after the first meeting, a voice (Holy Spirit) kept yearning for more prayer meetings, in which the power of God was later experienced and great miracles began to happen which affected the lives of the brethren that were at the meeting. Through this prayer meetings, evangelism took place, people began to hear about the awesome manifestation of the holy spirit.

Hence, the prayer meeting was moved from Dr. D.K Olukoya's living room to 60 Old Yaba Road, Alagomeji, Lagos. It was there that the attendance became a great number which could be called 'crowd of believers'. Though there had been a change in location, yet another change was required, which was the final change of location.

The Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, which is well known as praying aggressive church, a place where members are taught against being physically violent since the battle is spiritual and the battle is of the Lord, just as it is written in Ephesians 6:12.³⁴ The church's emphasis on deliverance from demonic forces is classified under the heading of 'Deliverance churches' (Ojo 2010).³⁵ Consideration of African cultural origins as being accountable for difficulties in believers' lives; connection of evil with some traditional names; and focus on the need to break ancestral or generational curses are some characteristics of deliverance churches (Ojo 2010). MFM took the society by surprise, though the church started from a sitting room, but it was able to grow bigger

³³Adelakun, A., 2017, 'Understanding sexuality from the security gospel perspective: Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries as a case study', *HTS Theologese Studies/Theological Studies* 73(3), a3453. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i3.3453>

³⁴ <http://biblehub.com/ephesians/6-12.html>

³⁵ Ojo, M.A., 2010, *Of saints and sinners: Pentecostalism and the paradox of social transformation in modern Nigeria*, Inaugural Lecture Series 227, Obafemi Awolowo University Press, Ile-Ife.

to the point of national recognition when people began to experience Revival of Apostolic Signs, Holy Ghost fireworks and the outpour of the holy ghost for delivering the captive and ending long time yokes and battles. The church faced some doctrinal issues, which made the church unpopular among the people, but the criticism did not hinder the people from attending the church, the church attendance increased immensely because of the testimonies, signs and wonders the people heard about the church. MFM membership increased to the point that the sitting room could no longer take the members hence the need for a bigger place arose. The church got a bigger place located at 13 Olasimbo Street, Onike Yaba. Though the prayer meeting transformed into a church with a personal land, the increase of membership growth became a great challenge to the leadership and management of the church. Her first international church branches were in London before it was able to spread wings to United States, Canada, and Europe, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia. Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministry has made a great impact and influence on every continent. After the downpour of the holy ghost on the disciples of Christ, one thing became paramount, which was the ability of the Apostles to go around preaching the Gospel and establishing Churches. The core vision of the founder of MFM is winning souls for the Kingdom which involves bringing the church closer to the people. At the beginning of the church in 1989, the Church has been able to establish over 1,000 branches, zones, and regional headquarters across the country, Nigeria. The vision gave birth to many fruitful gospel campaigns across the world.

These countries include:

Angola, Australia, Belgium, Benin Republic, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, others are Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic, Republic of Congo, Denmark, Dominica, Egypt. Also included are Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece. Furthermore, there are Grenada, Guinea Conakry, Guyana, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica. So also are Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Luxemburg, Malawi, Malaysia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Portugal, Qatar.³⁶

3.1 BRIEF HISTORY OF MFM CHURCH, LAGOS.

The Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries began as a small prayer group of about twenty-five persons at the home of the General Overseer, Dr. Daniel K. Olukoya, in Yaba, Lagos. The church

³⁶ Global Directory. Accessed July 11,2021, from <http://mountainoffire.ipower.com/globalsite/directory/>

was founded in the year July 1989. The Dr. D.K Olukoya prayer group purchased an offered abandoned slum, which is located at 13 Olasimbo Street, Onike Yaba. It was quite a plot of land which was close to the second gate of the UNILAG (University of Lagos). It was this site that has now become the renowned International Headquarters of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries. The Church's name was revealed to Dr. Olukoya during prayer and the church's first service was on Sunday, April 24, 1994. The Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, which is well known as a praying aggressive church, a place where members are taught against being physically violent battles is spiritual and of the Lord, just as it is written in Ephesians 6;12.

It was then a gathering of people of like minds who were passionate about combative prayers considering the perceived prevalence of evil in the society. The fellowship metamorphosed into a full-fledged church in 1994 when Sunday services started. According Ayegboyin, the name Mountain of Fire and Miracle was chosen because the name implies that the church is considered to be a mountain higher than any problem that one may have or had³⁷. Fire is indicative of both the presence and power of God that can be invoked to consume, roast, and burn their stratagem to ashes. The church has grown immensely in the past twenty years and now has its presence in many nations of Africa, Europe and America and in other continents of the world. Mountain of and Miracles Ministries is a full gospel ministry dedicated to the revival of Apostolic Signs, Holy Ghost fireworks, and the unfathomable outpouring of God's power. The mission has led the establishment of 25 ministerial groups in of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries which are as follows. 'Prayer Warrior, Territorial Intercessors, God's Violent Army, Prophetic Group, Watchmen Group, Evangelism Team, Ministry to Drug Addicts, Ministry to Glorious Children, Ministry to School and Mission Outreach. Others are Drama Evangelical Group, Music Ministry, we care Ministry, Visitation Team, Christian Tent makers, Interpreters, Tracts and Publications, The Counselling Group, The Ushering Team, Ministry to French Speaking Countries. Also included are Ministry to other African Countries, Tapes and Testimonies, Praise and Worship Team, Technical crew, Hospital / Healing Ministry, Musical Group.³⁸

³⁷ Aigbadumah C. A (2011). *Jesus the Healer: A Theological Reflection on the Role of Christology in the Growth of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Church in Nigeria*.

³⁸ GVVA-Glorious Virtuous Victorious Army.12, Olasimbo Street, Onike, P.O, Box 2990, Sabo, Lagos: MFM PRESS.

The church programs are as follows:

Weekly program

Sunday Worship Service, Spiritual Hospital, Revival Hour

Monthly Program

Power Must Change Hands(PMCH)³⁹

Other Events are:

International Convention, Cross Over Night / Prosperity Night, Choir Concert, Women's

Deliverance ,70 Days Fasting and Prayer Program, Great Physician Night, First Fruit

Offering Service, Gen 218, G. O's Quiz Competition

The Mountain of Fire and Miracles church has its roots in the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) founded by one Apostle Joseph Babalola and others in the early 1930s.

3.2 THE DOCTRINE OF MFM AND DISCIPLINE AGAINST SEXUAL IMMORLITY

According to the bible, the church is the body of Christ, a group of those that believes in the lordship of Jesus Christ as their personal lord and savior. Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries was founded by Dr. Daniel Kolawole Olukoya, who was born to the family of a Nigerian police officer, Mr. and Mrs. Olukoya and a trader, He hails from Akure, Ondo State. MFM 's brand of gospel has been recently tagged as 'security gospel' due to the church teachings⁴⁰. MFM

³⁹ One attractive feature of the MFM church is the regular monthly „Power Must Change Hands programme. “ it holds on every first Saturday of each month in the sprawling prayer city along the Ibadan –Lagos Express road devoted to prayer, fasting and healing. This programme is akin to the pool of Bethesda experience in John 5, where the sick and impotent gather awaiting the turning of the pool by the angel of God. People gather at this venue from all over the nation to pray as led by the man of God, Dr. Daniel Olukoya, for deliverance from all their ailments and difficulties.

⁴⁰ Adelakun, A., 2017, 'Understanding sexuality from the security gospel perspective: Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries as a case study', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 73(3), a3453. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i3.3453>.

emphasizes on deliverance gospel which has been described as security gospel (Omotoye 2011)⁴¹. MFM attaches great importance to sex, sex is sacred because it is believed it symbolizes a bond between a man and a woman. Dr. D.K Olukoya, teaches emphatically that premarital sex or extramarital is a wide road to the grave.

Treating sex from deliverance or security gospels perspective, D.K Olukoya admits the problems that arises from wrong sexual affairs are difficult to deal with through deliverance even when deliverance is the only solution to them. Marriage and sexual behavior are two aspects of sexuality that MFMs are interested in. The church considers marriage to be a significant decision in one's life. According to Dr. D.K Olukoya's book 'Dancers at the Gate of Death,' "access to your body is a precious thing, and once you make it loose, you may lose your destiny as well". The church plays an essential role in the control of sexual immorality in the society by being at the forefront of providing the appropriate education on sex to the young in order to avoid it being taught to them incorrectly by others. According to the Bible, if I contemplate wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. Answers to prayer are determined by holiness as a lifestyle; if prayers are not answered, it may be difficult to achieve deliverance and breakthrough. The church should strike a balance between the message of prosperity and holiness. The message people hear more often that cannot determine a change of attitudes in their lives. Paul dealing with the early Christian church had a lot to say to the issue of moral purity not only among the youth but to the church as a whole. The situation during his time demanded that the church to take action on the moral impurity being reported in the churches.

However, the church should sanction erring members in love. The idea of condoning indiscipline in the favour of attendance should be discouraged. When the pastors are noticing ungodly behaviours from any member, such persons could be advised, counseled and constantly prayed for.

SThe church also plays a major role in moral upbringing of the youths. Immorality has crept into the church, as seen in the bible which says” flee fornication. Sexual sin dominates the discussion

⁴¹ Omotoye, R.W., 2011, ‘Pentecostalism and the Yoruba world view: The case of Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, Nigeria’, *The International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society* 2, 188. <https://doi.org/10.18848/2154-8633/cgp/v01i02/51147>

of Colossians 3:3-5 Even the subsequent verses center on the works of darkness. Impurity is clearly connected to the sin, sexual immorality. When an individual fail to keep the heart pure from evil thoughts then impurity creeps in. When sensual greed overrides the moral values of an individual moral impurity takes over the priorities. One lacks the ability to reason beyond selfish motives and begins to imagine that all were created for his benefit. The lack of moral reason has the capacity to seer the consciousness of an individual to a level where morality is subdued to the peripherals⁴². (Lincoln, 1990, pp. 321-322). It is also the moral responsibility of churches to help the youth within their reach to keep their moral purity than engaging them in the blame game and condemning them. In order to preserve morality, the church needs to take an interest in the affairs of young people. Suspicion does not seem to help the youth in their moral purity. It is better to let them know the leaders are interested in their relationships. (General Conference, 2002, p.51).

3.3 CHALLENGES OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY IN MFM LAGOS

According to the survey carried out making use of three youth regional headquarters which are MFM youth church Mowe, MFM youth church Prayer city and MFM youth church Ketu Ikosi. The result of the questionnaires sent to these regions are illustrated in the table below.

RESULTS

Research question one: what are the challenges of sexual immorality among the youths of MFM Lagos.

CONTRACING SEXUALLY INFECTED DISEASE

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	139	93%
NO	11	7%
TOTAL	150	100%

⁴² Namitondo. T.S (2014)"A Biblical Strategy to Promote Christian Morality Among Youth in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Zambia Union Conference". *Project Documents*. 272.

<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dmin/272>.

From the table above, we see that 139(93%) agreed that contracting sexually infected disease are one of the challenges of sexual immorality while 11(7%) says is not.

UNWANTED PREGANCY

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	136	90%
NO	14	10%
TOTAL	150	100%

From the table above, we see that 136 (90%) agreed that unwanted pregnancy is one of the challenges of sexual immorality while 14 (10%) says is not.

The implication of this response is that majority of the respondents agreed on the opinion that unwanted pregnancy is one of the challenges of sexual immorality among the youths of MFM.

EARLY MARRIAGE

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	78	52%
NO	72	48%
TOTAL	150	100%

From the table above, we see that 78(51%) agreed that early marriage is one of the challenges of sexual immorality while 72 (48%) say is not.

The implication of this response is that majority of the respondents agreed on the opinion that early marriage is one of the challenges of sexual immorality among Christian youths in MFM.

UNTIMELY DEATH THROUGH ABORTION

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	130	87%
NO	10	13%
TOTAL	150	100%

The table above indicates that the total of 87% of the respondents agreed that Untimely death is also one of the challenges of sexual immorality while 13% disagreed.

TEEN PARENTING

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	113	76%
NO	37	24%
TOTAL	150	100%

According to table a total of 76% of the respondents agreed that Teen parenting is also one of the challenges while 24% disagreed on the opinion.

ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	25	17%
NO	125	83%
TOTAL	150	100%

From the table above, 83% of the respondents strongly disagree that Illegitimate children are not one of the challenges of sexual immorality, while 25% also agree to this assertion that illegitimate children are results of challenges of sexual immorality.

DROPS OUT OF SCHOOL

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	128	86%
NO	22	14%
TOTAL	150	100%

The table above indicates that the total of 86% of the respondents agree that drops out of school are one of the challenges of sexual immorality among youths in MFM, while 14% disagree on the assertion that drops out aren't one of the challenges of sexual immorality.

LOOSING FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	150	100%
NO	0	0%
TOTAL	150	100%

From the table above, we see that 100(100%) agreed that losing fellowship with God are one of the challenges of sexual immorality while 0(0%) says is not.

3.4 EFFECTS OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY ON THE GROWTH OF MFM

The body of Christ has a responsibility to counter attack the schemes of the enemy. Maintaining sexual purity can be done. We must guide the gates at which we receive information: our hearts, mouth, ears, eyes. In the Bible ⁴³, through the prophet God instructed that the prophets “teach my people the difference between what is holy and what is common, what is ceremonially clean and unclean”. Immorality is an act that sins against the body. A body that is a temple of the holy spirit. This is an important warning about the risks of sexual immorality and its repercussions not only on your bodily and mental well-being, but also on your spiritual well-being. The Bible is brimming with knowledge and guidance. The issue is that many elderly Christians, as well as leaders, lack the scriptural understanding needed to properly teach spiritual realities about fornication and other types of sexual immorality. Scare tactics concerning damnation are employed to impose purity and abstinence in churches that lack scriptural strength. This young generation's daily life is "hell": they must deal with a deteriorating moral economy that leaves them idle, despondent, and facing a gloomy future. How

Christians deal with their sexuality will influence how far they advance in the future. MFM thinks that many people's challenges with their destinies may be linked back to their sexuality.

MFM further teaches that sex was designed by God. Just like every other thing God created, sex was very good and is still very good as long as one follows God's commandments on it. God created sex for procreation and companionship in a marriage. Sexual intercourse within the confines of marriage attracts God's blessings, but when done outside of marriage, it causes a slew of issues, miseries, tragedy, and even death for those involved (Olukoya 2008). Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries believes that by following scriptural teachings, Christians would be protect themselves against the activities of demonic spirits⁴⁴. The emphasis on security gospel is reflected in the church's teachings on sexuality.

⁴³ Ezekiel 44:23

⁴⁴ The term 'violent prayers' is derived from Matthew 11:12, which says that the violent take the kingdom of God with violence. MFM and other Pentecostals believe that Christians have to offer some prayers violently. This involves shouting and jerking of hands and legs.

The effects of sexual immorality on the church could lead to spiritual dullness, obstruction of the holy spirit. Sin separates us from God.

