

A HISTORICAL ANTECEDENT OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN AFRICA FROM RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Homosexuality is one of the most debated issues in most contemporary societies. Such debate starts with its origin, whether or not homosexuality results from one's upbringing, socio-cultural environment (nurture) or biology and genetics (nature). Religions on the other hand have been used to regulate human conducts in society, including human sexuality. However, in contemporary times, religious narratives have been given diverse interpretations other than the traditional one-pronged analysis perspective. Sexuality and religion are two issues that have elicited strong reactions, dividing expressions and a series of contrasting claims that draw variously upon peoples' experience, sacred writings and traditions. The paper employed an analytically enhanced qualitative research design. In-depth interviews were conducted with adherents from the three major religions in Nigeria: Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religions (ATRs). It was observed that homosexuality is still largely unpopular in Africa with Gambia, Nigeria and Uganda proscribing it owing basically to religious and cultural viewpoints. African religious leaders tend to dissociate the phenomenon from the continent despite anthropological evidence pointing to its practice in history.

Keywords: African Traditional Religion, Christianity, Homosexuality, Islam, Religion