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## **Abortion: The need for education**

By Seo Ogbonmwan

Abortion generally is the termination of an ongoing pregnancy mostly for social reasons. It is a very emotive subject from whatever angle one looks at it. Those who are against procurement of abortion are totally against it so also those who are pro-abortion are completely pro-abortion. There is no middle ground although you hear some say they are anti-abortion but pro-choice. This cannot be possible as one cannot serve God and mammoth simultaneously.

In the case of abortion which is illegal in over 70 nations of the world, one cannot be anti-abortion and pro-choice at the same time. There are those like myself who are conscientious objector to abortion and would not like to be associated with it or facilitate its procurement whether by counselling or assisting in the procurement of legal documents in its favour.

This stand is moral, religious, reasonable and straightforward. The concept of no abortion is based on the following premise: that one cannot take what is not yours to give; that one cannot destroy what one cannot create; that 99.9% of cases of abortion result from social pleasurable activities and not incest as some will make us believe; that there are very effective, long acting reversible, reliable, cheap and available methods of contraception; that menstrual regulation with a positive pregnancy test is a bourgeoisie but confusing term for abortion; that abortion or menstrual regulation as some call it is not a method of contraception; that the more than seventy countries of the world where abortion is illegal cannot be wrong.

Countries where abortion is said to be legal deceive; because when you critically analyse the premise under which abortion is mostly carried out, you will find out that the law is loose.

Abortion has ruined many women having contributed significantly to increased maternal mortality in places like India and Nigeria. Although maternal mortality rate is highest in India with Nigeria coming a close second, when one relates maternal mortality to the overall population, Nigeria becomes the nation with the highest maternal mortality rate in the world. The high maternal mortality rate is as a result of accumulated ills of corruption of our leaders over the years. The only good factor about this high rate is that it does not discriminate. Daughters of politicians, Emirs, Obas, and Obis as well as the daughters of peasant farmers are not spared.

When they bleed during childbirth or after an illegal abortion which is usually done in secret, they die before they can be flown abroad for treatment so the ills of a small percentage of corrupt and greedy politicians affect us all. No one is spared including those who fly abroad for treatment at public expense and those who cannot go. The difference is that, these 'big people' go abroad and die a lonely death unlike the poor who die at home in Nigeria surrounded by loved ones and close relatives.

A change in the law will have no effect on abortion rate and its associated maternal morbidity and mortality. We have seen and are aware of many Nigerian laws that are ineffective. In fact Nigerian laws are made for those who lack the means to bribe their way out whenever they are caught pants down.

I am not proposing new laws. There are too many laws already which unfortunately are never obeyed. In a nation where a single doctor terminates 70 pregnancies per day in a very small portion of a city like Lagos, tell me how many such pregnancies are terminated daily in the whole of Lagos and even more so in the whole of the Nigerian nation. The figure will be staggering.

The bitter truth is that only education can salvage the situation not laws. Our people are illiterate generally and those who are literate are uneducated. You can decode it in their argument, utterances, attitude, greed for foreign made goods, insatiable greed for more wives, many houses, and a knack for stealing money and putting it in foreign banks or in dug out wells in their garden. These attitudes smack of lack of general education.

We need education so as to accept the concept of being our brothers' keeper, that the wellbeing of our fellow men is also our wellbeing; that we cannot have a restful sleep when there is groaning next door; that we all belong to the same sea of souls where a hurt of one passes through all and where if one is glorified, it also passes through all that is, if you believe.

Coming back to abortion, we need to educate our teeming masses of female folks that there are effective, cheap, reliable, available, methods of contraception. The advances in the area of contraception in the last two decades are overwhelming. In the present day and age no one, I repeat, no one needs to procure an abortion as most methods of contraception have over 99.5% effectiveness if used correctly. Using an effective method of contraception correctly comes by way of education. It is education we need and not more laws.

There are pills and devices one can place below the skin, inject about four times annually, insert in the womb, insert in the vagina, wear on the phallus and above all, there's abstinence which is the greatest and safest method of preventing pregnancy and associated infections.

We need an effective educational system to teach our people that pregnancy is preventable and one needs not procure abortion in this day and age as effective methods of preventing pregnancies and therefore illegal abortion abound.

For those who ask what will happen in cases of incest, I would say they are rather very rare occurrences and what we have to contend with is social abortion.

My dear brothers, we do not need new laws but education: moral education, social education, religious education, sex education.