



## THE PREVALENCE OF SUICIDE CASES IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA: THE VIEWPOINT OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

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### Abstract

This paper discusses the prevalence of suicide cases in contemporary Nigeria from the viewpoint of Christian Ethics. This study was necessitated by the frequency at which some Nigerians opted for suicide as a permanent means to solving their transient economic difficulties which are harshly dealing with Nigerians presently. This work strives to know what the Christian attitude should be in the face of sufferings in the light of the teachings of Jesus Christ and his ideals as inspired by both the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Scriptures. Suicide as a human act has ethical values. Therefore, this study investigates its culpability or justifiability, permissibility or impermissibility from the viewpoint of Christian Ethics. The findings of this paper reveal that the greatest percentage of suicide notes blamed the poverty and deprivations that informed their suicide decisions on the ineptitude of the Nigerian government to fix the economy. Again, the study discovered that the suicide ideation, plan and execution cut across the multi-strata of the Nigerian population: rich and poor, theists and atheists, male and female, literate and illiterates, young and old, students and educators, et cetera. Another finding is the gradual erosion and disappearance of our cultural values of the extended family system which hitherto provided suitable helps in moments of crises. The current individualistic choices are sources of unquantifiable volumes of hopelessness as the needy in the families are left in the cold grips of lacks and miseries. Based on multiple findings of this work, it therefore recommends persuasively, among others, that the Nigerian government should urgently provide happiness and hope for Nigerians in order to keep their mental operations free from contemplating and committing suicide. The methodology employed in this study is descriptive-observational which means that the prevalence of suicide cases in contemporary Nigerian society were observed and investigated over time.

**Keywords:** Prevalence, Suicide, Contemporary Nigeria, Christianity and Christian Ethics

### Introduction

The contemporary Nigerian history has multiple apprehensive issues in the realities of political deceptions, economic recession, religious intolerance, ethnic bigotry, social Quagmire, cultural erosions and all other negative indices that work against the psychological balances and cognitive sanity of her citizens. Nigeria has all it takes, both in her abundant natural resources and huge human capital, to keep her citizens happy from generation to generation. History attests to the happiness of Nigerians as a *datum* that belongs to the past. Nigerians were adjudged the happiest people in a 2003 report of the World Values Survey (Muanya, C, and Ezea, S (2017) p.1). This year 2017, she has degenerated and declined to 103<sup>rd</sup> position out of 155 countries that were assessed by the *Sustainable Development Solutions Network* (SDSN) as part of the United Nation (UN)'s International Day of Happiness on March 20 (Helliwell, J. et al) (2017:1). Aruya, T. (2017:2) wrote that "Nigeria always ranks well in the World Happiness Reports. It ranked 78<sup>th</sup> in the world and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Africa on the World Happiness Report for the year 2016. Curiously, the country dropped to 103<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> position in the 2017 World Happiness Report. In the first quarter of 2017, Nigeria recorded bothersome suicide cases..."

According to Jerry Sachs, the Director of SDSN and a special advisor to the UN Secretary- General in an interview said that,

Happy countries are the ones that have a healthy balance of prosperity as conventionally measured, and social capital, low inequality and confidence in government. The World Happiness Report, an initiative of the UN, is a landmark survey of the state of global happiness, aimed at influencing government policy. The report reviews the state of happiness in the world and shows how the new science of happiness explains personal and national variations in happiness. It reflects a new worldwide demand for more attention to happiness a criteria for government policy. The rankings are based on six factors- per capital gross domestic product, healthy life expectancy, freedom, generosity, social support and absence of corruption in government or business. The lowest countries are typically marked by low values in all six variables” (Helliwell, J. et al 2017: 1).

The prevalence of suicide cases in Nigeria today is one more evidence too many on how the happiness of Nigerians are compromised by the stewards of her political, economic, religious, social and cultural spaces. The suicide cases are wide spread and cut across the strata of Nigerian social fabric: the poor and the rich, the theists and the atheists, the literates and the illiterates, the famous and the unpopular, the male and the female, the worker and the unemployed, the students and the educators, and so on. Suicide in contemporary Nigeria is blamed chiefly on the economic recession, material deprivations and social discomforts whose rates are high in the country. Experts, therefore, see a correlation between these lacks and a huge increase in the number of patients in the psychiatrist hospitals across the nation. As aptly put by Aruya, T. (2017: 2):

A host of factors have been attributed to the growing suicide trend in the country. The first on the list is current economic hardship facing the country. The country’s debt profile is on the high, inflation is on the increase, companies are folding up while there is a high rate of unemployment coupled with the escalation cost of living. It is, therefore, not unusual that economic recession is resulting into depression for compatriots who are increasingly being overwhelmed by its negative impacts. Indeed the times are hard, tough and more difficult than it used to be. Recent media reports from several Neuro- Psychiatric hospitals across the country reveal that the incidence of mental illness including depressive disorders is on the rise.

Earlier on Kalu V. (2016:1-2) had written on the subject matter, thus:

Some Nigerians are now embracing suicide which is considered a taboo or anathema in African societies as short cut to end their supposed life of hardship and economic nightmares. With this, their supposed misery and suffering brought about by the prevailing economic hardship are buried with them. The nation’s economy is in the abyss.... The cost of living is rising astronomically, such that citizens are bemoaning that they have never had it so rough. Some Nigerians, who have therefore resigned themselves to fate, believing there was no straw to hold on to, to keep afloat, had to succumb to the ignoble way of ending their lives through suicide. In the last few months, there have been reports cases of about six Nigerians that have committed suicide, in addition to two attempts. They all cited the economic hardship in the country that has made live difficult for them, noting that they had never had it so tough and rough.

The reported suicide cases in the medical facilities, in the media, in the police diary of crimes or those made public by other means are far less than the suicide cases committed or attempted across the country. The constraints to announce them and with promptness to hide the news are based on the cultural norms of the Nigerian people whose social norms and religious belief systems see every activity around suicide as taboo, stigma, shame and ritual cleansing and therefore are not matters for the public domain. In Nigeria, suicide has remained a taboo and a controversial subject from antiquities in the socio- cultural spheres of her constituent ethnic nationalities up till this contemporary era of federation, civilization and westernization. This agonizing phenomenon called self- murder is prevalent in the nation more than ever inspite of the strong religious prohibitions and cultural disapprovals of it as a way of death. Some still choose it as an exit route out of earthly life and therefore the permanent way to end their terrestrial, transient problems.

Suicide is a complex issue which has gained vast researches and deep interests in multi- disciplinary scholarship such as Psychology and Medicine (Pathology, Epidemiology, Neurology and Genetics, Psychiatry, Pharmacy, Health and Physical Education and Nursing), Suicidology and Sociology, Theology and Religion, Cultural Studies and Philosophy, (Ethics) , Happiness Studies and Economy, *et cetera*. Self- killing is a truly human act which means that, without prejudices to intervening variables of mental disorders and modifiers of human act that might diminish or

vacate its nature for examples, it is a rational activity of the human person carried out in his or her status as *homo qua homo* (man as man).

This paper discusses the prevalence of suicide cases in contemporary Nigeria from the viewpoint of Christian Ethics. It therefore strives to discuss the moral culpability or justifiability, permissibility or impermissibility of suicide as a human act from the bias of Christian Ethics. The findings of this paper reveal that suicide is prevalent in Nigeria and has become, in the contemporary times, one of the leading causes of premature deaths in the country. As the suicide notes indicates, suicide cases in Nigeria are blamed largely on the economy that has been hard, harsh and bad. This study discovered too that suicide options are wide spread among males than females in Nigeria. The disintegration and steady disappearance of the cultural values of extended family system that cushioned the adverse effects of austerity and hardships in the past, gave hope to the poor and formed the bastion of solidarity and morality contribute to isolation and firm grips of adversities on its victims who ideate and execute suicide. Again, the African sense of superstition and spiritual attacks by witches and wizards, native doctors and enemies were understood in the course of this study as possible indicements to suicide. One other discovery is that most Nigerians do not have access to mental health personnel and facilities that are grossly inadequate in the country. This lack in the medical sector is fertile to and supportive of suicide cases multiplication.

This paper insists that the positive ethical value of an activity or a sound phenomenon is not predicated on its prevalence but rather on its rightness. On this note, therefore, the work urges Nigerians to value life as sacred and as God's gift so that no matter the situations in Nigeria, difficult and ugly as they are, suicide is not the viable choice. It is a betrayal of freedom, usurpation of divine authority over life, a compromise of the futuristic gains of hope, a shirk of responsibility in the family and society, total loss of faith in God, self and in one's ability, denial of charity to family and friends and a gargantuan risk of eternal bliss. The work persuades all to hang on in hope instead of hanging to end one's life.

### **Suicide: Conceptual Clarifications**

Etymologically speaking, *Suicide* is derived from two Latin words; namely *Sui* and *occidere*. *Sui* is the genitive case of the noun *se* (self) hence it means *of self* while *occidere*, a verb in the present active infinitive of *occido* (I kill, I perish) means *to kill*. Therefore, *Suicide* from this Latin philological roots means in simple terms to *kill oneself*. Scholars have conceptualized suicide variously, for examples: Edwin S. Schneidman, the father of Suicidology saw Suicide as "a conscious act of self- induced annihilation, best understood as a multidimensional malaise in a needful individual who defines an issue for which suicide is perceived as the best solution" According to Schneidman:

Suicide is not a disease (although there are those who think so); it is not, in view of the most detached observers, an immorality (although as noted below, it has often been so treated in Western and other cultures); and finally, it is unlikely any one theory will ever explain phenomenon as varied and a complicated as human self- destructive behaviours. In general, it is probably accurate to say that suicide always involves an individual's tortured and tunneled logic in a state of inner- felt, intolerable emotion. In addition, this mixture of constricted thinking and unbearable anguish with that individual's conscious and unconscious psychodynamics (of hate, dependency, hope, etc.) playing themselves out within a social and cultural context, which itself imposes various degrees of restraint on, or facilitations of, the suicidal act. (Leenaars, A.A. 2010:8).

Schneidman distinguished between *Direct Suicide* and *Indirect Suicide*. Direct Suicide is an overt intention and execution of self murder while in Indirect suicide "there is no immediate and clearly identifiable intentionality." And for him, orientations, "toward cessation" that is "toward death" are grouped into four; they are: intentioned, un-intentioned, contra-intentioned and sub-intentioned. Suicide is by nature an intentioned act, accidental deaths are un-intentioned while contra-intentioned orientation toward death is when people "feign or threaten death." Sub-intentioned orientations are expressed by four groups of people who are death- chancers, death- hasteners, death capitulators and death- experimenters ( Mishara, B. L. n.d,pp. 2-3). Schneidman who vastly studied suicide notes, toward the end of him life "believed that suicide notes were one *golden* source to the suicidal mind" (Leenaars, A.A, 2010:10).

Emile Durkheim, the sociologist after his extensive research on the rates of suicide developed his theory of suicide which identifies four kinds of suicide; namely: Egoistic suicide, Altruistic suicide, Anomic suicide and Fatalistic suicide. Egoistic suicide occurs as "a consequence of the deterioration of social and familial bonds". Altruistic suicide is linked with death "in group's defence". Anomic suicide is triggered of by "disillusionment and disappointment" and fatalistic suicide could be chosen so that he/she would "not be a burden." Durkheim's theory of suicide is based on social integration and moral regulation which determine the general feelings in a society. As social integration means "the degree to which collective sentiments are shared," the moral regulation "refers to the degree of external constraints

on people “(actforlibraries.org, 2017, 1-5; *studypoints.blogspot.com.ng* (2014:2). Nock, M.K (etal 2008: 5) defined “*Suicide* as the act of intentionally ending one’s own life. They classified *Suicidal behaviours* into three categories: *Suicide ideation*, which refers to thoughts of engaging in behaviour intended to end one’s life; *Suicide plan*, which refers of the formulation of a specific method through which one intends to die; and *Suicide attempt*, which refers to engagement in potentially self- injurious behaviour in which there is at least some intent to die”.

For Durkheim the concept suicide is “applied to all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result. According to Jean Baechler, suicide “denotes all behaviour that seeks and finds the solution to an existential problem by making an attempt on the life of the subject.” David J. Mayo’s conceptualization of suicide has four elements as follows. “The first element: A suicide has taken place only if a death has occurred. The second element: The death must be of one’s own doing. The third element: The agency of suicide can be active or passive, and lastly, it implies intentionally ending one’s own life.” Sigmund Freud and Karl Menninger see suicide from similar perspectives as a concept that has three different aspects: “ One was a murder involving hatred or the wish to kill. The second one was a murder by the self often involving guilt or the wish to be killed. The last one is the wish to die. They thought of suicide being murderous death wish that was turned back upon one’s own self.” ( *Wikipedia, Suicidology*, n.d 3-4). Suicide is a *choice* that rests on intentionality to die. Along this view, Fairbairn (1995: 58) understands suicide as an attempt to *inflict* death upon oneself and is “intentional rather than consequential in nature” (Stanford *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Suicide, Plato. Stanford.edu 2016 p.4).

Albert Camus, (1913-1960) in his famous philosophical Discourse on Suicide, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, wrote that “there is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy “(cited by Eke, E.O, *nigeriaworld.com*. p.4). Eke agrees with Albert Camus that one of the difficulties in understanding suicide is that suicide is an act that is prepared within the silence of the heart... The society has but little connection with the beginning of suicide... the cause is in the heart and that is where we must look for it. This conclusion by Camus is very interesting and could offer some insight into why religion may appear to protect against self destruction. For a man who has truly given his heart to God, is a man who is protected from the affairs of the heart.” He equally holds that “psychiatry has found a relationship between suicide and the state of one’s mind. The real difficulty in suicide is that it is impossible to ask those who killed themselves why they did it.” He disagrees with Schneidman on the insight which suicide notes could give, thus: “Even when they leave suicide notes, it is difficult to know whether what they said is the honest reason, or the excuse they wish to leave for their loved ones” (Eke, E.O., 2012. *nigeriaworld.com*., p .4). Every suicide case has antecedent behaviours and utterances. The most popular methods of suicide in Nigeria are firearms, drowning, hanging, poisoning or the use of pesticides. There are factors that contribute to suicide. We shall discuss them in the next subsection.

### **The risk factors of suicide in Nigeria**

A good number of factors have been identified in Nigeria which explain why people commit suicide. They include:

- **Psychological Factor:** These factors include mental disorder, insanity, depression and irreconcilable troubles within the psychical operations of the human mind.
- **Social Factor:** In Nigeria many have committed suicide as a way to escape from unfulfilled social expectations or social stigma and responsibilities. In this understanding, loneliness associated with disappointments in marriage or, by lovers, lack of achievements or controversies concerning birth, divorce and health such as epilepsy or Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) increase the risks of suicide. Social isolation and helplessness without assistance from family and friends are suicide risk found in the social sphere.
- **Economic Factor:** Economic hardship, material poverty and general financial troubles have increased the suicide rates in the country. Some, who could not pay their children’s school fees, feed their families or pay their house rent or medical bills took the way of suicide. Others whose business ventures crumbled and some who could not pay back their loans from banks committed suicide.
- **Political Factor:** In some communities, the evil of slave (*Osu/ Ohu*) caste system is still in operation. They are discriminated against and not allowed to occupy the traditional stools of rulership either as the eldest person or the traditional ruler. In the face of this social- political discrimination, and the denial of their merited or deserved traditional political influences, some take their lives. Again, the space of mega political struggles, some politicians who lost elections settled their shocks through suicide. Such media reports come in the news like “He died in his sleep” or “He died in his hotel room”.



- **Religious Factor:** The practitioners of African Traditional Religion in Nigeria believe in the efficacy of oath-taking or covenant making in the settlement of disputes or establishment of agreements for their different political, economic, social, cultural and even religion concerns. The violation of some of these oaths or covenants end by suicide brought about by the powerful deities as punishment to offenders or defaulters. So, suicides are traced to some deities as punishments to those who violated their norms or who swore by them falsely.

Dr. Piwuna Christopher, a consultant psychologist and Chairman, committee on Mental Health of the Nigeria Medical Association (NMA) in his *Interview* with Hassan Zaggi blamed religion as one of the reasons why suicide is increasing in Nigeria. He was asked by the aforementioned correspondent: “Some people blame those who commit suicide for not going to the church or the mosque to get words of hope and comfort. Do you buy the idea?” He answered:

In fact, I don’t buy the idea. If you ask me, I will tell you that churches and mosques have also contributed to the suicide. This is because most of the churches and mosques that we have today will give you the impression that things are going to work in a day or two, at worst by the end of the year. We have stickers boldly written. ‘This is my year of success’, ‘This is my year of advancement’ ‘This is my year of favour’. Churches create all these things and at the end of the year the person looks at his life and sees that there hasn’t been any favour, no advancement and in fact, he is even deeper into the problems that he started with at the beginning of the year. I think churches should take responsibility. The religious groups have a role to play, but my thinking is that they do not help people out. They must come clean and tell people that, look, we are not magicians.

What Piwuna said above needs to be moderated so that his universal negative could assume some particular affirmative and recognize the role the churches have played to cushion the harsh effects of the economy on Nigerians through her works of charity. The *Caritas Desk* of the Roman Catholic Church in Nigeria, for instance, has done a lot in poverty alleviation, charity and proper Catechesis against despair in the face of troubles. Many are alive today, who would have committed suicide but for the pastoral endeavors of Christianity in the country. Islamic religion has weapons of mass destruction through the *Boko Haram* suicide bombers. They have killed thousands of Nigerians both males and females as suicide bombers.

### ***Suicide from the viewpoint of christian ethics***

Christian Ethics’ other name is Moral Theology. According to Peschke K.H. (2009:3), “Christian ethics or moral theology is commonly defined as part of theology which studies the guidelines a person must follow to attain his or her final goal in the light of Christian faith and reason”. This definition brings out the essential tasks of Moral Theology as “ethics of doing” and “ethics of being”. It is expected that every good Christian bears good fruits like the proverbial good tree in the Bible (Matthew 7: 17-20). The viewpoint of Christian Ethics implies that “the ideals and norms presented and inspired by sacred books of the old and New Testaments and related what Christians believe about the world, God and each other. Above all it implies a permanent inspiration by the ideas, values and concerns of Jesus Christ” (Peschke, K.H. 2009:4).

The Holy Bible recorded six instances of suicide: they are:

- Saul, the first king of Israel committed suicide by falling on his sword (1 Sam 31:1-6, 1Chronicles 10:4-5). 1 Chronicles 10:14 says that the lord killed Saul, 2 Samuel 1:10 notes that an Amalekite killed Saul, 2 Samuel 21:12 recorded that the philistine killed Saul. King Saul’s armor-bearer was terrified to kill Saul, then Saul himself fell by his own sword.
- Ahithophel (2 Samuel 17: 23), a counselor to David and Absalom committed suicide by hanging when his advice was not followed.
- Zimri, the Fifth king of Isreal (1 Kings 16:15 -19), regined in Tirzah for seven (7) days. When he saw that the city has been overtaken, he commiteed suicide by setting the royal palace in which he was on fire.
- Samson the strongest man (Judges 16:23-31), the thirteenth and final Judge of Israel. He committed suicide by collapsing a building. In Hebrews 11: 32, he is cited as a hero of faith. He is also given as an example of altruistic suicide.
- Abimelech (Judges 9:52-54) was killed by his armor-bearer on his request: “And a certain woman threw an upper millstone on Abimelech’s head and crushed his skull. Then he called quickly to the young man and said to him, “Draw your sword and kill me, lest they say of me, ‘A woman killed him. And his young man thrust

him through, and he died. Abimelech or written as Abimelek was the son of Gideon and sixth judge of Israel. His type of suicide could be called assisted suicide.

- Judas Iscariot (Matthew 27:3-5; Acts 1: 15-19), one of the twelve apostles who was the treasurer, the procurator, the greedy one and a thief (John 12:6; 13:29). He betrayed Jesus Christ, and died afterwards by hanging.

The Bible says “Thou shall not kill” (Exodus 20: 13; 5:17). The fourth Century Bishop Augustine of Hippo taught that at no point does the Bible make it lawful to take one’s life. The command “Thou shall not kill” implies that one’s own life as well as other people’s lives should be preserved. For him, Samson’s suicide was a rare exception to this rule, for he received special permission from God. He said about Samson. “He who knows it is unlawful to kill himself may nevertheless do so if he is ordered by God” (City of God, Book 1, Sections 18- 26; *religion- online.org*, n.d. P.3). In early Christianity, suicide was sometimes regarded as a heroic, virtuous act like the cases of martyrdom and the woman who committed suicide with her two beautiful unmarried daughters in order to escape rape from their captors, a band of lustful soldiers. They requested to be excused for a minute and they committed suicide by drowning in nearby rivers. Augustine maintained that sex by rape does not damage the purity of the mind. He said this at the instance of the Christian women who committed suicide rather than leave their bodies to be violated by the unscrupulous sex meniacs. Christian Ethics presents Job in the Bible to Nigerians and others as a good example of steadfastness in times of suffering, troubles and adversity. He did not commit suicide.

St. Thomas Aquinas, one of the great Catholic Theologians gave arguments against Suicide on three points: First, suicide is contrary to nature: it is against the instinct of life preservation. Second, it is contrary to one’s social responsibility, the human family needs every person’s services and thirdly, it contradicts one’s religious rights. Human beings may be free but not to usurp divine powers over life and death. Among the protestants and Pentecostals suicide is also prohibited. In the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran pastor and theologian, who expressed his indebtedness to Augustine, wrote: “God has reserved to himself the right to determine the end of life, because he alone know the goal to which it is his will to lead it” (*religion- online.org*, P. 3). According Hill in Danaher (2014), four different ethical frameworks for thinking about suicide were proposed. They are: the theological framework, the libertarian framework, the consequentialist framework and the Kantian framework. These ethical frameworks are summarized as follows: The theological ethics of suicide makes one consider the effect of God and one’s relationship which ought not be violated or damaged through suicide. The libertarian thinks of the rights of others and the responsibilities he owes his family, friends and society; this makes him/her drop the idea of suicide. The consequentialist framework allows one to take into account the whole range of impacts on others and one’s prospective quality of life. Even though one may see the end of life through suicide as positive or negative, the sound thoughts of the negative consequences might help one to reason why suicide is impermissible. The Kantian view is that suicide is impermissible because “killing of oneself is incompatible with respect for one’s dignity: it denies the unconditional and incomparable worth of your life. It may also require treating your life as a mere means to an end” (*ieet.org*, PP.7-12).

Suicide is ethically wrong from the viewpoint of Christian ethics because:

- Suicide is a sin against God as the creator and sustainer of life. It rejects God’s sovereignty and usurps his prerogative in regard to life and death (Job 12: 10)
- Suicide is a violation of the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17)
- Suicide disregards the image of God and the sanctity of human life (Genesis 1:26-27; 9:5-6)
- Suicide demonstrates misdirected love and is injurious to others (Matthew 22: 23-39; Ephesians 5:29)
- Suicide overlooks the value of human suffering (Romans 5: 3-5; 8:28; 2 Corinthians 4: 17- 18; 12: 10). (Believers are called to suffer with Christ (Roman 8:17). The present life is not one of earthly glory and conquest. Believers are called to have joy and hope in the midst of current trials, looking forward to the age to come).
- Suicide fails to recognize the unnatural nature of death (Romans 5:12; 1Corinthians 15:26; 1 Thessalonians 4:13 -18)
- Jesus refused to commit suicide and Paul prevented it (Matthew 4: 5-6; Luke 4:9-11; Acts 16: 27- 28) (ERLC, 2014 :4).

The sin of suicide is a sin committed by refusing the gift of life and rejecting the grace of God to live. This sin is committed once and the person is no more alive in the earthly sojourn to ask for forgiveness. Bilkes, L.W. (1988:5) agree with Velena, W.H, that “it doesn’t say anywhere in the Bible or in our creedal statements that self- murder equals the blasphemy against the Holy spirit which according to Matthew 12 : 31 “shall not be forgiven. Nevertheless, we

may not conclude from these words of the Lord Jesus that therefore the sin of suicide is pardonable. Those who commit suicide cannot ask for forgiveness after the act, unless in the very final moment there is still a cry for mercy for Christ's sake." The writer agrees with Smedes, L.B (200:3) whose preoccupation is to ensure that those who commit suicide stop and find joy in living. In this words. "I believe that, as Christians, we should worry less about whether Christians who have killed themselves go to heavenly, and worry more about how we can help people like them find hope and joy in living. Our most urgent problem is not the morality of suicide but the spiritual and mental despair that drag people down to it".

God created the world and saw that it was good (Genesis 1:28-31). He gave it to us to live in it happily, age gracefully, die at a ripe old age and go back to dwell with him for all eternity in heaven (Revelations 14:13, John 14:1-2; 11:25). We are to avoid suicide and never to commit it.

## Recommendations

In order to live happily here on earth, long and full without the premature death induced by suicide, we recommend the following.

- The Nigerian government should fix the economy and urgently too in order to prevent her citizens from death by suicide.
- There is need to go back to our cultural value of extended family system which provides suitable helps during times of hardship and poverty situations.
- Christian Churches should continue to engage in charity work, helping the poor and less privileged in the society as the best gospel given to the needy is giving him or her help. (Matthew 25: 35 – 40).
- Non- governmental organizations and faith based organizations should engage in poverty alleviations in order to assist in this harsh moment of deprivations. This will curb the increase in suicide rate in the country.
- Nigerian legal system should come to full force on suicide attempts or its abetment.
- Mental health of Nigerians should be taken seriously by the government's provision of health facilities and personnel to care for her citizens.
- Nigeria government should provide employment for the citizens, salaries for her workers and social welfare for the unemployed and the aged.
- The social media and religious bodies to campaign and preach against suicide respectively in order to bring its evil nature to the consciousness of citizens.

## Conclusion

Suicide is a human act which is freely engaged in with the intentionality to bring about one's own extinction of life. Life is a precious gift from God and self- murder is an evidence of ingratitude and usurpation of Divine authority who has the sole rulership over life and death.

There are some other human acts which are suggestive of one's hatred for life. Such habits include cigarette smoking, drug abuse, dangerous sporting activities and contraceptives, driving without seat belt and alcoholism. These also lead to premature deaths. Human life has enormous ethical and eternal values and, therefore, should be preserved in its proper dignity as a precious gift from God.

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