Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS), Vol.5 No.3 September, 2022; p.g. 34– 47; ISSN: 2695-2319 (Print); ISSN: 2695-2327 (Online)

AN INTEGRATED HERMENEUTIC OF REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY IN SELECTED BIBLICAL TEXT AND AFRICAN MARITAL VALUES IN CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANITY

OLADOSU, SAMSON BISI (PhD)
Department of Religions, History and Heritage Studies,
Faculty of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences,
Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria
Sambisidosu61@gmail.com +2348030645088

Abstract

Like its wave in the Western world, reproductive technology is fast becoming an unstoppable phenomenon in African societies. Its wide acceptance could probably be traced to African obsession for children, given its agrarian economy. In Africa, barrenness is a social problem that could lead to untold hardship especially for women. The phenomenon has however assumed a leading catalyst in the supremacy contest between naturalism and creationism. It has also become a serious threat to African value for morality, responsibility and accountability. Beyond the charge of Victorian morality, Christians are driven by the conviction based on biblical revelation concerning the nature of human origins and value for life. This paper studies the historical background of reproductive technology, its growth in contemporary age and its influence on African youths with regards to biblical revelations and hermeneutics through the exposition of Hebrew and Greek words. The aim is to ascertain whether reproductive technology can enhance African communalism or diminish it. The paper concludes that as lofty as the aims of reproductive technology are, with regards to the problems of human infertility, its derailment into socio–cultural issues, seems to have rendered God irrelevant given its assumed successes. The scenario is not considered helpful to African Christian religious and cultural values.

Keywords: **Reproductive Technology, Biblical Interpretation, Christian Teaching, African Family Values, Moral Responsibility**.

Introduction

Reproductive technology has brought about thought provoking, conflicting and contentious issues between Christian and Scientific world-views. The issues at stake comprise mainly of authority over human procreation, the attendant responsibility and accountability.

Authoritatively, the Bible makes a categorical claim to human reproduction, that, rather than being based on man's virility and fertility, it is a gift and blessing from God through his grace and sovereignty. The books of Genesis, particularly, chapters 1: 28; 17:6; 22:17 and Psalms 127:3-5 describe human reproduction as God's act of providence through the process of

creatio- ex nihilo (It means God's effortless, totally free and unbound creating from nothing but through his sovereign command, "let there be.").In support of this view, Sailhamer opines that as an expression of the immanent nature of God in human affairs, the human origin and its extension are tied to the blessing found in Genesis 1:28 (Sailhamer, 2011: 6). Cline observes that the posterity of creation as a thematic priority in Genesis is only fulfilled in God (Cline, 2001: 79). It thus means that the bible is categorical about who the creator is and why man is created. Contrary to the Stoic's mechanistic conception of nature, Gary Deason, while quoting John Calvin argues that,

> For we do not, with the stoics, imagine a necessity arising from a perpetual concatenation, and intricate series of causes, contained in nature, but we make God the Arbiter and Governor of all things who by his own power, executes what he has decreed, when we assert that (all things) are governed by his providence, as to be directed to the end appointed by it. (Lewis, 2014: 45).

Although, John Calvin's position seems to deny all natural causes including the existence of matter, the position here is that there is an inner matter, governed however by laws ordained by God's act of providence. This law is morally, ethically and spiritually inclined. Even if the natural order accounts for human desires and inclinations, the law supports its love for the morally good rather than for extraneous object of desire. Consequently, for any rightful moral choice, the object of desire requires dutiful responsibilities with respect for the dignity of everyone else and not mainly for personal advantage. According to Akpan, "The veneration in which marriage is held in the home is a reliable index of the moral quality of the home" (Akpan, 2009: 4).

> in his own view, Kyalo opines thus,
>
> …there is value especially in the traditional marriage system. Its values are understood in life. Marriage was geared towards the procreation and promotion of life…there exist the "kernel"essential properties that held traditional marriage systems…Kernel are the properties of marriage and what makes it valid (Kyalo, 2012: 212-219).

As observed in the cause of the research, reproductive technology is a bye product of scientific ideas of the 17th century age of enlightenments. And as responsibly observes by Richard Weaver, "ideas have consequences" (Weaver, 2013: 97).The Enlightenments guaranteed man's freedom from divine authority and celebrated humanism and individual autonomy through scientific discoveries. (Vahamian, 2009: 14).By its aims, modes and practices however, it appears less bothered with attendant responsibilities which could help control human actions and activities. The principle of accountability towards God and fellow humans also seems elusive in its concept.

It is based on the above that this research is undertaken. The aim is to review the various activities of reproductive technicians with a view to ascertaining the original intention of the

technology itself. This in turn would cause some restraints in the use of human wisdom which appears to be in conflict with parental responsibility and accountability in the contemporary world. Although, there are two aspects of reproductive technology namely assisted reproductive technology and birth control, this paper is dealing mainly with the former.

Historical Background of Reproductive Technology

Generally speaking, reproductive technology takes its root from the ancient Eugenic Theory. This is the science which deals with influences that improve unborn or hereditary qualities of a breed or race, most especially of the human race. As propounded by Plato in his republic, the eugenic utopia was aimed at guaranteeing the ideal state of governance.

The method propounded by Plato and developed by the eugenics to achieve these humanistic objectives was rooted in the Mesopotamian reproductive conquest as reveals in Genesis, chapters 30 and 31. Jacob in order to get his full wages engaged in prenatal conditioning of the flock by means of visual aids. According to Speiser,

> Mesopotamian economy always paid very close attention to distinctive breeds of sheep and goats… More significant is that country's preoccupation with biological sports among those species, to judge from the omen texts…" If a sheep has the appearance of goat, its wool being black, the position of the country will be secured." In other words, not only does the omen make note of this particular colouring, but it regards its occurrence as a favourite sign (Speiser, 2020: 238); taking a cue from the success recorded by Jacob and the subsequent ones that followed in the fourteenth century essentially on animal (Caterini, 2017: 231). Plato developed a blue print for his eugenic utopia by selecting the best specimen of humanity for the purpose of reproduction. The mating of such selected people would remain under the state's control.

For several years after Plato, the eugenic utopia went underground until Hermann Muller (Hermann Muller was a 1946 Nobel Prize winner who had wished that he uses his prize to contribute to man's development) advocated the storage of the sperm of brilliant men in order that carefully selected women might later have the opportunity of producing "superior children" (Davies, 2015: 53).Muller's project was so seriously embraced that a biologist, George Wald confessed that he regretted and in fact regarded himself as the second-best enemy of the then united states of American president, Nixon, because he had not contributed to the noble sperm bank established around 1967 by Robert K. Graham (Davies, 2015: 53). The success of this project eventually witnessed the birth of the study of reproductive sciences in the United States Universities and metamorphosed into Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART).

Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)

These techniques also apply to oocyte donation and gestational carriers. These are resorted to when intrauterine insemination (IUT) fails. IUT is used for women who have scaring or

defects of the cervix, men who have low sperm counts, men who have sperm with low mobility, men who cannot get erections and men who have retrograde ejaculation, a condition in which sperm are ejaculated into the bladder instead of out of the penis. Other aspects of ART are pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD) and Pre-implantation Genetic Screening (PGS). PGD involves an effort to avoid the transfer of affected embryos from couples who carried serious genetic disorders, such as hemophilia, cystic fibrosis (CF) or Chromosomal abnormalities, while PGS is carried out for infertile couples undergoing in-vitro fertilization (IVF) in order to restrict from transfer those embryos clearly seen to be having numerical chromosomal abnormalities.

ART was originally established to improve upon infertility treatments before been used later for genetic reasons. Infertility is a failure to conceive after at least one year of unprotected coitus (European Journal, 2006: 588-645). Its sub-division is sub-fertility arising from a general decreased fertility and sterility which is a total infertility. Various reasons could be deduced for the problems of infertility. These range from advanced maternal age to deteriorated quality of gametes owing to lifestyle habits and environmental factors. At the initial stage, the goal of ART was to render fertility services such as counseling, diagnostics and probable treatments mainly for people with fertility problems or genetic conditions so as not to only get a baby but even to avoid the creation of trans-generational infertility or other serious health problems.

ART later moves beyond the scope of health-related issues to social or cultural related issues in its acclaimed provisions of children even for fertile couples who either do not wish to go through the rigors of carrying and nursing pregnancy or who are afraid their children might inherit a serious genetic disease and even for those who wish to save a sibling's life. ART services are equally and readily made available to a man or a woman who does not wish to be married but love children and even to a man who wishes to have baby independent of any woman. People who wish to commercialize their sperm and oocytes are seriously encouraged under the *modus operandi* of assisted reproductive technology, while baby's sex is determined without recourse to the author of life who determines individual and corporate future. It is at least on record that close to one million babies have been born worldwide as the result of assisted reproductive technology since the birth of the first baby conceived using in-vitro fertilization (IVF) techniques in 1978 (European Journal, 2006: 588-645). Although, there are many modes of operation in ART, five of them are of particular interest in this research. These are artificial insemination, transgender pregnancy, surrogacy, sex selection and in-vitro fertilization (IVF).

Artificial Insemination (AI)- This device is aimed at solving problems associated with male infertility. The device is of two types (Shields, 2004: 229). They are artificial insemination by husband (AIH) and artificial insemination by donor (AID). Artificial insemination by husband (AIH) is resorted to when normal sexual intercourse on the part of a husband becomes impossible or ineffective. The problem could arise through outright impotency, malformed

penis, low sperm count or obesity (Caterini, 2017: 231). Some genetically related diseases such as hemophilia, cryptic fibrosis, huntington's chorea or muscular dystrophy, may also hinder a man's normal reproductive system (Caterini, 2017: 231). Vasectomy is usually the medical process for artificial insemination generally. It is described as a method of removing parts of the tubes in man's body that carry sperm through medical operation (Hopkins, 2017: 1). The obtained semen, if it must be used fresh, will be placed in a syringe, ready to be inserted into the vagina after being squirted in the direction of a woman's uterus during ovulation period. But a number of semen could be stored in case of failure of the first attempts and even for more needs in the future without necessarily going through another operation. The recovered sperm in such cases is treated with glycerol and placed in plastic straws after which it is immersed in liquid nitrogen at about one hundred and ninety-six (196^0) degree centigrade (Davies, 2015: 53). On the other hand, AID occurs when a husband is certified infertile by any or all of the mentioned causes. Semen, fresh or frozen, maybe collected from volunteers, freely but usually at an agreed price for needy couples or women who have made up their minds to live single parent lives. Another aspect of artificial insemination is that men may keep their semen in case of future accidental or premature death so that their wives or girlfriends may not lose out completely; especially those whose loved ones are in hazardous related occupations. Frozen semen is often stored in special sperm banks for future collection or for sale to fertility clinics and even to individual needy persons. It must be noted however, that in most of the artificial insemination processes, masturbation must be undertaken before vasectomy can take place.

Transgender Pregnancy-closely related to Artificial insemination is the concept of transgender pregnancy. Although, this could occur in both sexes, it is usually referred to as male pregnancy. Male pregnancy is said to be alien to mammals but the phenomenon is the reproductive mode of pipe fishes, sea horses and sea dragons (Beatie, 2008: 24). Robert Winston, a pioneer expert in in-vitro fertilization opines that,

> Male pregnancy would certainly be possible by having an embryo implanted in a man's abdomen with the placenta attached to an internal organ such as the bowel and later delivered by caesarean section. Ectopic implantation of the embryo along the abdominal wall and resulting placenta growth would however be very dangerous and potentially fatal for the host and is therefore unlikely to be studied in humans (Winston, 2007: 1).

However, in the year 2007, the world received into its mist the first male pregnancy. He is Thomas Beatie who lives in Arizona with his wife. He has since produced three children namely Susan, Austin, and Jansen. According to Fiona Roberts, Mr. Beatie was first born a female named Tracy from Lagondino, in Hawai in 1974 (Roberts, 2008: 24). At the age of twenty, he began the idea of changing her sex to male. He started by taking testosterones injections, giving him facial hair, a lower voice and altering his sexual organs. In 2002, he had a mastectomy (Mastectomy is a medical operation embarked upon for the purpose of removing a woman's breasts) and legally became a man. His wife Oprah had a hysterectomy

(Hysterectomy is another medical operation embarked upon for the purpose of removing a woman's womb) and could no longer give birth. Mr. Beatie goes through eight menstrual periods instead of twelve per year and could only get pregnant four days out of the year. The couple bought sperm from an anonymous donor and through artificial insemination, Mr. Beatie continues to rear children. To show how shocked the world was, Mr. Beatie became bankrupt as a result of prejudice from his act. The prejudice made him to lose lots of customers of his hitherto successful T-shirts printing business, so serious that the couples had to move from their original home in Bend, Oregon to Arizona. In March 2011, he filed for bankruptcy and announced he was desperately looking for a job to get his family off welfare hand-outs and pay his 5,000 dollars a month mortgage (Rothstein, 2005: 31). Matt Rice, a full male from birth had since joined Thomas Beatie with a son named Blake (Beatie, 2008: 24).

Surrogacy- This type of procreative process involves women who need help on various gynecological related problems. The problems could range from severe tubal pathology to vaginal tumors, scaring of the vagina and abnormal position of the uterus, small cervical opening and obesity. Depending on how severe the problems are, another healthy woman is engaged to rent out her ovum, womb and time in order to produce babies for the needy couple or single men and women who may wish to live single parent lives all through. Where the problems are less severe and the fertility of the needy wife is intact, the eggs are extracted through surgical operations and fertilized with the already harvested sperm of her husband in a specially prepared glass dish. The resultant embryo is then implanted in the womb of the volunteer. Surrogate motherhood is equally possible for outright infertile couples. The couples rely on donated or bought embryo to be implanted. More often than not, surrogacy is at an agreed cost though its relative value cannot be taken for granted.

Sex Selection- This idea develops from an age long desire of many parents to determine the sex of babies in need. Biologically, both men and women possess chromosomes that must be fused together before babies are produced. Women's chromosomes are symbolically X while that of men are X and Y. when male children are in need, the Y chromosomes are stimulated to swim faster through a pro-stimulated drug and the reverse becomes the case when female children are in serious demand.

In-Vitro Fertilization- This technique is designed to help those who are desperate to have children especially after some sort of delay. The woman is made to swallow stimulating drugs so that a number of eggs are produced and removed through surgical operation. The harvested eggs are then fertilized by the husband's extracted sperm through masturbation, stored in a glass receptacle. The resultant embryos are later returned to the woman's womb. The remaining embryos may be stored for future use by the same woman in case of more needs or failure, or may even be sold to other needy persons.

God's Authority in Creative Order

An important message being passed by the author of Genesis is the supreme role of God in human affairs. Genesis 1-11 which Cline observes as the first of the main divisions of the entire Pentateuch (Cline, 2001: 97).It is said to be an explanation of the origins of the earth and humankind, the nature and purpose of humanity created male and female, the intrusion of sin into God's good creation and the character of God who is the ultimate judge of humanity (Hill and Walton, 2000: 48).The entire nature of the bible therefore is theophanic and anthropomorphic.

The theophanic nature begins with a phrase in Hebrew language "**bereshith**" and its synonym in Greek **'en arche** "(Gen. 1: 1; Jn. 1: 1), to translate "in the beginning". Since the two phrases are not "particularized", misunderstanding arose and made some to advance contradictions in between Genesis 1 verses 1, 2, and 3 and Genesis chapters 1 and 2 (Wenham and Hubbard, 2017: 12-13). This paper agrees with traditional interpretations which permit the addition of articles describing the first act of all creation. The book of Genesis as it were is a book of origin (**geneos**) of all things. It presupposes the subject of the creation in the second Hebrew phrase "**Elohimbara**". Although "***Elohim***" is a plural form of "gods", an appellative that can be used of any deity, the Hebrew generally prefers the plural form of the noun with a singular verb to describe majestic power of God(Wenham and Hubbard, 2017: 14).And for the fact that "***Elohim***" is not a personal name like Yahweh, El Shaddai, Marduk or Chemosh, the implication is that the God in question is the sovereign creator of the whole universe and not just Israel's personal God. Closely related are the theophanic creation processes beginning from the Hebrew verbs for creation to the object of creation itself. There are three forms of Hebrew verb for creation. They are "***bara, yazarandasa***" (Harris and Archer Jr, 2003: 126, 396). ***Bara*** emphasizes the initiation of the object and as used in ***Qal*** perfect here, it ascribes the activities of creation only to God and presupposes an object through which the activities are perfected. The root from where "***Bara***" is taken makes the process of creation to fall outside the sphere of human ability while displaying the magnitude of God's power and majesty. "***Yazar***" on the other hand could be used both in theophanic and anthropomorphic sense. Its root meaning is to form or "to fashion". Its primary emphasis is on the shaping or forming of the object involved and as would be seen later, this verb is not used in the account of the original creation because the object is neither formed nor fashioned. The concept of fashioning could be seen in Isaiah 44:9-12:

כל מי שעושה אלילים אינו כלום, והדברים שהם אוצרים חסרי ערך. אלה שידברו בעדם הם עיוורים; הם בורים, לבושה של עצמם. מי מעצב אל ומטיל אליל, שלא יכול להועיל לכלום? אנשים שעושים את זה יתביישו; בעלי מלאכה כאלה הם רק בני אדם. הבה יתכנסו כולם ויעמדו בעמדתם; הם יופלו לאימה ולבושה. הנפח לוקח כלי ועובד איתו בגחלים; הוא מעצב אליל בפטישים, הוא מחשל אותו בעוצמת זרועו. הוא נהיה רעב ומאבד את כוחו; הוא לא שותה מים ומתעלף.

"All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless. Those who would speak up for them are blind; they are ignorant, to their own shame. Who shapes a god and casts an idol, which can profit nothing? People who do that will be put to shame; such craftsmen are only human beings. Let them all come together and take their stand; they will

be brought down to terror and shame. The blacksmith takes a tool and works with it in the coals; he shapes an idol with hammers, he forges it with the might of his arm. He gets hungry and loses his strength; he drinks no water and grows faint." where an idol is pictured as being shaped by hammers and Psalms 94:20:

האם כסא מושחת יכול להיות ברית איתך - כסא המביא עלוב על ידי גזירותיו?

"Can a corrupt throne be allied with you - a throne that brings on misery by its decrees?"where wicked rulers use the law to devise or frame means of wickedness.**לכן***"Asa"* which means "make" occurs in synonymous parallelism with **באר ויזאר***"bara* and *yazar"*. But a number of times, it is used to describe human creative ability in the secondary sense.

Ngewadescribes the overall objective of the gospel of John as projecting Jesus as the one who is behind the creation and who also ensures its harmonious continuity (Ngewa, 2003:10). Two different forms of the verb to be, namely**"είμι"και" γίνομαι***"eimi"* and "***ginomai***" are used to describe the concept of "***arche***"**αψίδα.**

in John 1:1-18:

1 Στην αρχή ήταν ο Λόγος, και ο Λόγος ήταν με τον Θεό, και ο Λόγος ήταν Θεός.2 Ήταν με τον Θεό στην αρχή.3 Μέσω αυτού έγιναν τα πάντα. χωρίς αυτόν δεν έγινε τίποτα από αυτό που έγινε.4 Μέσα του ήταν η ζωή, και αυτή η ζωή ήταν το φως όλης της ανθρωπότητας.5 Το φως λάμπει στο σκοτάδι, και το σκοτάδι δεν το έχει νικήσει.6 Υπήρχε ένας άνθρωπος που εστάλη από τον Θεό και το όνομα του ήταν Ιωάννης.7 Ήρθε ως μάρτυρας για να καταθέσει σχετικά με αυτό το φως, για να πιστέψουν όλοι μέσω αυτού.8 Ο ίδιος δεν ήταν το φως. ήρθε μόνο ως μάρτυρας στο φως.9 Το αληθινό φως που δίνει φως σε όλους ερχόταν στον κόσμο.10 Αυτός ήταν μέσα στον κόσμο, και παρόλο που ο κόσμος έγινε μέσω αυτού, ο κόσμος δεν τον αναγνώρισε.11 Ήρθε σε αυτό που ήταν δικό του, αλλά οι δικοί του δεν τον δέχτηκαν.12 Ωστόσο, σε όλους όσους τον δέχτηκαν, σε όσους πίστεψαν στο όνομά του, έδωσε το δικαίωμα να γίνουν παιδιά του Θεού - 13 παιδιά που δεν γεννήθηκαν από φυσική καταγωγή, ούτε από ανθρώπινη απόφαση ή θέλημα συζύγου, αλλά γεννημένα από τον Θεό.14 Ο Λόγος έγινε σάρκα και κατοικούσε ανάμεσά μας. Είδαμε τη δόξα του, τη δόξα του ενός και μοναδικού Υιού, που ήρθε από τον Πατέρα, γεμάτος χάρη και αλήθεια.15 (Ο Ιωάννης έδωσε μαρτυρία γι' αυτόν. Αυτός φώναξε, λέγοντας: «Αυτός είναι αυτός για τον οποίο μίλησα, όταν είπα: «Αυτός που έρχεται μετά από εμένα, με ξεπέρασε, επειδή ήταν πριν από εμένα».

16 Από την πληρότητά του όλοι λάβαμε χάρη στη θέση της χάριτος που έχει ήδη δοθεί.17 Διότι ο νόμος δόθηκε μέσω του Μωυσή. η χάρη και η αλήθεια ήρθαν μέσω του Ιησού Χριστού.18 Κανείς δεν είδε ποτέ τον Θεό, αλλά ο ένας και μοναδικός Υιός, που είναι ο ίδιος Θεός και έχει στενότερη σχέση με τον Πατέρα, τον έκανε γνωστό.

> 1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as

> a witness to the light. 9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God- 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the father, full of grace and truth. 15 (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") 16 Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

The forms here include imperfect "***en***" (1:1) and the aorist "***egeneto***" (1:3, 6 and 14). While the former (***eneimi)*** expresses an existence prior to the beginning in question, the latter (***enginomai***)expresses the beginning of a state within a historical framework and should be translated "came to be" or "became".

Here John is using "***en***" for the being of Jesus who had existed in the past and as noted in John 1:3 through whom all things were created (of 1 Cor. 1:24;" **αλλά σε όσους κάλεσε ο Θεός, Ιουδαίους και Έλληνες, ο Χριστός η δύναμη του Θεού και η σοφία του Θεού."** "But to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." And Col. 1:16-17;

16 Διότι σε αυτόν δημιουργήθηκαν τα πάντα: τα πράγματα στον ουρανό και στη γη, ορατά και αόρατα, είτε θρόνοι είτε εξουσίες είτε άρχοντες είτε εξουσίες. όλα ταπράγματα έχουν δημιουργηθεί μέσω αυτού και για αυτόν.17 Αυτός είναι πριν από όλα, και όλα τα πράγματα συγκρατούνται μέσα του.

[16]For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. [17]. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.).

This being so, Jesus had existed before the beginning of creation for the purpose of creating and later became flesh for the purpose of God's continue interest in shaping human related problems which include salvation, healings and reconciliation. The climax of God's creative activity is the creation of man, both male and female. Man's creation is very unique in what seems to be the two accounts of creation. In the first account, man seems to be product of "**creatio ex- nihilo.**" (Gen.1:26-27).

ויאמר אלוהים: הבה נעשה את הבריות בצלמנו בדמותנו למען ישלטו בדגים בים ובציפורים בשמים, בבהמה ובכל חיות הבר ובכל היצורים. שנעים לאורך הקרקע.אז ברא אלוהיםאת האנושות בצלמו, בצלם אלוהים ברא אותם; זכר ונקבה ברא אותם.

"Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So, God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

This should not be surprising to biblical scholars because the earth that was first created was "***tohuwabohu***" (**חסר צורה וריק**; formless and empty) There couldn't have been any raw material for the production. But the uniqueness here is that the popular formula "let there be" and "it was" is conspicuously missing just as it was in the creation of "earth and heaven". In the second account, however (Gen. 2:7), **ויצר יהוה אלהים אדם מעפר האדמה ונפח באפיו נשמת חיים, ויהיה האדם לאדם חי.** "Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

Man is said to be formed ***(Yazar)*****(נוצר)**from the dust of the ground with the gift of life. While this account appears to be a fuller explanation of the first, the super naturalness of ***creatio ex-nihilo*** is still very probable since the dust and the breath of life came through the process of ***creatio ex-nihilo***.

Implication of Reproductive Technology

Consequences of reproductive technology began from both the aims and methods of Plato eugenic utopia. As earlier stated, the overall aim was to improve upon the human race by removing deleterious elements and raising the characters and physique of human stock.

Perhaps, the best way to interpret this aim is to view God as lying about his claim that "everything created is good" and probably blame him for the appearance of evil in the world which eventually put a dent on the already good created order. As a Christian apologist, it is difficult for me to accept such in view of the fact that the result of evil in the world came as a result of man's agitation for self-rule, even right from the Garden of Eden. In fact, all the diseases that caused infertility or sterility were never part of the original creation. In Isaiah 45: 7 and Amos 3: 6 where different forms of Hebrew verbs for creation were used for light, darkness and evil in reference to GOD, the idea is actually not evil in creation but a punishment bestowed upon Israel for acts of insubordination. The choice of Cyprus, a pagan king, for Israelites' deliverance was a final challenge to paganism and the ultimate submission of the whole world to God's sovereign rule. Unfortunately, however, Cyprus was quoted (Cyprus Cylinder) to have attributed his exploits and success to Marduk, the god of Babylon. God needed to prove his sovereignty in the creation of peace and disaster (Grogan, 2017: 1122).

Secondly, the avalanche of evil in the contemporary world is an indication that the eugenic utopia is an unmitigated failure. Physically, politically, economically and even religiously, the

world has not known peace ever. Highly sophisticated weaponry from technological advancement is been used at various levels against humanity, to further dent the already bad situation all over the world. Can we then regard technology as intrinsically good through productions of weapons of mass destruction and destabilization?

The eugenic method as it were, is as suspect as the aim. Mating for procreation was to take place in a prescribed place under the watchful eyes of the state security. Inferior people will not be allowed to take part. Should they do so perhaps through the exercise of their God given sexual urge, the resultant offspring would be murdered. Parental responsibilities towards children were to be abolished, since the parent would not even know their children.

This could lead to incest in the future since children from the same parent could get married. The sanctity of marriage as instituted by God allows parental autonomy and responsibilities. Children are supposed to be born for their own sake and never for the purpose of gratifying any one's desire, either the state or even the parent. The expansive use of reproductive technology means that more and more children begin life with a single parenthood or a combination of genetic, gestational or social parents. This deprives them of the right to be conceived, carried in the womb, brought into the world and brought up within marriage. This is apart from encouraging social inequalities through sex selection without even taking into consideration the commercial implications and moral debacle to religious practices.

In an interview, Ayodele Aworinde, identifies two perspective issues as the cause of Christian interest in reproductive technology in the contemporary time. These are desperation and lack of faith. According to him, some challenges, be it physiological, psychological or social, that could militate against natural conception are treatable with time. As human beings however, lack of patience usually leads to desperation. Commenting particularly on transgender pregnancy, he said it is an act of putting God to test. God that creates man and woman with different reproductive organs and roles knows what he is doing and for anyone to engage in such a reproductive technology breeds discontentment. In her own contribution, Mrs Hope Ige observes what she describes as "opium of relieve" as the major cause of interest in reproductive technology. She opines that it is usually shameful for barren couples in African culture. There is always pressure from within and without. To get relieve, people, Christian inclusive, take to the root of reproductive technology which is a short cut. She however maintains that such couples are likely to live with the dilemma of moral and financial burdens involved for life.

Conclusion

The supremacy battle between supernaturalness and naturalness is highlighted through the use of reproductive technology particularly in a religious society. While it might be difficult to agree on a single definition of religion, the general consensus in all religions is the existence of a supreme God who interferes in the affairs of man. In Christianity, this God is not only

supreme but sovereign who acts authoritatively and unquestionably even in an atmosphere of love, justice and mercy.

Reproductive technology is an idea from human wisdom to solve fertility related problems and this idea is not bad in itself. It is a well- conceived medical discovery that has helped maintain some level of marital stability even in Africa with its deep religiosity. But whenever an operator fails to give due respect to life, unity of marriage and human procreation believes religiously to be under the authority of God appears an affront on the religious sensibility of Africa marital values. Its social and commercial misuse appears unethical and morally wrong. Moreover, the historical antecedent of reproductive technology particularly the origin of transgender pregnancy could be traced back to the animal kingdom just like the Eugenic Utopia. There is nowhere in the bible where man is instructed to follow the examples of animals, at least not on sensitive and important issue as procreation. If anything, man is to dominate and rule over all other creations, animals inclusive. Therefore, taking examples from animals in this sense leaves much more to be desired. Finally, that the reproductive technicians could not but depend on God's created human sperm and eggs for their operational manipulations without adequate acknowledgement of the creator also breeds nothing but reproductive plagiarism. It thus means that the acclaimed autonomy is a hoax since everything is still traced back to God the author of life despite the fact that the environment has been unfortunately corrupted by human depravity.

References

Akpan, F. "Values in Marriage, Sexuality and Family," Sophia: *An African Journal of Philosophy,*
Vol. ll, No. 2 (2009), 4.

Cline, D.J. A. "Introduction to Pentateuch", in F. F. Bruce (ed) *The International Bible Commentary*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, 2001, 79.

Davies, J. J.*Evangelical Ethics;Issues facing the Church.* Phillipsburg: P&R publishing, 2015, 53.

Lewis, C.S. *Christian Reflections,* Grand Rapids: HarperCollins,2014, 45.

European Journal of Human Genetics (2006) 14, 588-645 c/o http://www.gig.org.uk.

Grogan,G. W. " Isaiah ", in K. L. Barker, (ed),*The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Old Testament,* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994, 1122.

Hill, A. E. and Walton, J. H. *A Survey of The Old Testament* (2nd ed.), Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000, 48.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/transgenderpregnancy

http://tv.yahoo.com/blogs/upshots/pregnantman-thomas-beatie-splits-wife 222259218.html. (Also captured by Meryl Rothstein (2005-07-31),"Male Pregnancy: A Dangerous Proposition"*Popular Science.*

http://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/infertility/conditioninfo/.../art.aspx. Retrieved on 17 Oct. 2014).

http;//www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki//Transgender-Pregnancy, Retrieved on 13th Oct. 2014

Hughes, P. E. *Christian Ethics in Secular Society*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983, 129.

Kyalo, paul "A Reflection of African Traditional Values of Marriage and sexuality" in *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, Vol. 2 No. 2. (April 2012): 212- 219

MCComiskey, T. E. "Bara, yazar and Asa" in R.L Harvis, etal (ed), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Vol. 1) Chicago: Moody Press 1980, 127, 396.

Mcgee,D. B. "Issues of Life and Death" in W. M. Tillman (ed) *Understanding Christian Ethics*,. Nashville: Broadman press, 1988, 227.

Ngewa, S. M. *The Gospel of John*, Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 2003, 10.

Roberts, Fiona. "Labor of Love: Is Society Ready for This Pregnant Husband? ". T*he Advocate* (2008-04-08), 24.

Sailhamer, J. H. "Genesis" in K.L Barker and J. R. Kohlenberger III, (ed.) *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Abridged Edition), Grand Rapid: Zondervan 1994, 6.

Shaman, J. M. "Legal Aspects of Artificial Insemination", *Journal of Family law 18* (1979-80): 331.

Shields, Norman. *Christian Ethics*, Bukuru: African Christian Textbooks, 2004, 229.

Speiser, E. A. "Genesis" in *The Anchor Bible* (Vol. 1) New York: Doubleday, 1964, 238.

Vahamian, Gabriel. *The Death of God*, New York: George Braziller, 1961, XIV.

Weaver, R. M. *Ideas Have Consequence,* Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1984, 33.

Wenham, G. J.J. O. W. Watts, (ed) *Word Biblical Commentary*: Genesis 1-15, WACO; Word Books, 1987, 12-13.

Winston, Robert. Babies Born by Men Possible"*The Independent* (1999-12-06). Archived from the original on 2007-12-06.