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**MARRIAGE AND FAMILY IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA: A
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON INSECURITY, ECONOMIC
HARDSHIP, AND FAMILY STABILITY**

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Abstract

Nigeria's contemporary security and socio-economic crises have profoundly affected marriage and family life, threatening the stability of the institution that serves as the foundation of both society and the Church. This article explores the impact of these challenges on marriage and family life within the Nigerian context from a biblical and theological perspective. This study employs a conceptual-theological methodology with a critical review of contemporary theological literature and recent Nigerian studies on insecurity, economic hardship, and family life. It further draws on selected contemporary reports of insecurity to illustrate the practical realities confronting Nigerian families. The study argues that insecurity and economic hardship have contributed to marital conflict, family separation, and grief, emotional and psychological distress, parenting challenges, and weakened family cohesion. Beyond identifying these challenges, the article demonstrates that Scripture presents marriage and family as covenantal institutions sustained by mutual love, faithfulness, resilience, and dependence on God even in times of adversity. It further contends that the Church has a theological responsibility to provide pastoral care, trauma support, and practical assistance to vulnerable families, while government bears a moral responsibility before God to protect human life and uphold justice. The article contends that strengthening marriage and family life in Nigeria requires collaborative efforts involving Christian families, churches, theological institutions, civil society, and government. By integrating biblical theology with contemporary Nigerian realities, this study contributes to ongoing theological discourse on family resilience and offers practical insights for sustaining Christian families amid insecurity and socio-economic hardship.

Keywords: Marriage; Family; Insecurity; Terrorism; Kidnapping; Economic Hardship; Family Stability; Theology; Nigeria.

Introduction

Marriage and family remain among the most important social and theological institutions in human society. Within the Christian tradition, the family is understood as a divine institution established by God for companionship, procreation, nurture, and the transmission of faith and moral values across generations (Gen. 2:18–24; Deut. 6:6–7). As the foundational unit of society, the family plays a critical role in shaping personal identity, social stability, emotional wellbeing, and communal development. Consequently, factors that threaten family life inevitably affect both individual households and the wider society.

Contemporary Nigeria is confronted with unprecedented security and socio-economic challenges that continue to affect the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and families. Over the past decade, terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, insecurity, violence, and other forms of insecurity have resulted in loss of lives, displacement of populations, destruction of property, and widespread psychological trauma. At the same time, economic hardship characterized by inflation, unemployment, rising costs of living, and declining purchasing power has intensified the struggles of many households. These realities have created significant pressures on marriages and families, forcing many Nigerians to navigate uncertainty, fear, and economic instability in their daily lives.

The effects of these challenges extend beyond the political and economic spheres into the intimate spaces of marriage and family life. Financial hardship often generate marital tension and conflict, while insecurity and forced displacement can disrupt family stability, weaken parental responsibilities, and expose family members to emotional and psychological distress. The cumulative impact of these conditions has raised concerns about family stability, marital satisfaction, children's holistic development, and the overall wellbeing of households across the country.

Although numerous studies have examined insecurity, poverty, unemployment, and economic crises in Nigeria from political, economic, and sociological perspectives, comparatively less attention has been devoted to exploring their implications for marriage and family life from a theological standpoint (Olanma (2024)). Yet the Christian faith offers important resources for understanding suffering, resilience, hope, covenant commitment, and communal responsibility in times of adversity. A theological reflection on these realities is therefore necessary to provide biblical and pastoral insights that can assist families in responding to contemporary challenges.

Biblically, marriage and family are not merely social arrangements but covenantal relationships designed to reflect God's purposes for human flourishing. Scripture portrays the family as a primary context for love, support, spiritual formation, and mutual care, while also presenting God as a refuge and source of strength in times of trouble (Ps. 46:1). The biblical vision of marriage emphasizes faithfulness, sacrificial love, perseverance, and shared responsibility, values that become especially important during periods of social instability and economic hardship.

This article therefore examines the impact of insecurity and socio-economic challenges on marriage and family life in contemporary Nigeria. Particular attention is given to terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, displacement, inflation, unemployment, and economic hardship, and their implications for family stability and wellbeing. Through theological reflection and engagement with relevant literature, the study seeks to contribute to discussions on family resilience, pastoral care, and the role of the church in supporting families facing the realities of contemporary Nigerian society.

Conceptual Clarifications

Marriage

Marriage is one of the oldest and most fundamental institutions in human society. From a biblical perspective, marriage is a divine institution established by God to provide companionship, mutual support, procreation, and the nurturing of family life (Gen. 2:18–24). It represents a covenantal relationship between a man and a woman characterized by commitment, faithfulness, love, and shared responsibility. Within Christian theology, marriage is understood as more than a social institution and is understood as a sacred union that reflects God's design for human relationships and flourishing.

In Nigeria, marriage is not only a union between two individuals but also a relationship that often involves extended families and broader communal obligations. Consequently, marital relationships are influenced by cultural expectations, economic realities, religious beliefs, and social responsibilities. While these factors can strengthen family bonds, they may also create tensions that affect marital harmony and family stability.

Ademiluka argues that certain patriarchal assumptions within some Nigerian communities have contributed to marital disharmony by fostering attitudes of ownership and domination within marriage. According to him, practices such as the interpretation of bride price may lead some husbands to perceive their wives as property rather than equal partners in a covenant relationship (Ademiluka 2021). Drawing from Ephesians 5:22–33, he contends that Christian marriage should instead be understood through the framework of mutual responsibility, sacrificial love, and Christ-centered leadership, where authority is exercised in love rather than domination (Ademiluka 2021). This understanding presents marriage as a relationship built on mutual respect, commitment, and shared responsibility for family wellbeing.

From this perspective, marriage may be defined as a divinely ordained covenantal union between a man and a woman established for companionship, mutual support, procreation, and the nurturing of family life, grounded in love, faithfulness, and shared responsibility before God and society.

Family

The family is generally regarded as the basic unit of society and the primary environment in which individuals experience socialization, care, identity formation, and moral development. Biblically, the family occupies a central place in God's plan for humanity, serving as the primary context for nurturing faith, transmitting values, and cultivating relationships that promote human flourishing (Deut. 6:6–7).

Within African societies, including Nigeria, the concept of family extends beyond the nuclear unit of husband, wife, and children to include members of the extended family and wider kinship network. Family relationships are therefore characterized by interconnectedness, communal responsibility, and mutual support. The wellbeing of individuals is often closely linked to the wellbeing of the family as a whole.

The family performs several critical functions, including emotional support, economic cooperation, child upbringing, moral instruction, and spiritual formation. It also serves as a buffer against social and economic uncertainties by providing care and support during times of crisis. Consequently, when families are disrupted by insecurity, economic hardship, or social instability, the effects are often felt not only by individual family members but also by communities and society at large.

This study defines family as the social and relational unit consisting primarily of spouses, children, and, within the Nigerian context, the wider network of relatives who share responsibilities, resources, values, and emotional bonds.

Insecurity

Insecurity refers to a condition characterized by the absence of safety, protection, stability, and freedom from threats to life and property. It encompasses situations in which individuals, families, and communities experience fear, uncertainty, violence, or vulnerability arising from criminal activities, armed conflict, terrorism, kidnapping, banditry, and other forms of social disorder.

In contemporary Nigeria, insecurity has become a major national concern due to the increasing prevalence of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, communal conflicts, and violent crimes. These challenges have resulted in loss of lives, displacement of populations, destruction of property, disruption of livelihoods, and widespread psychological trauma. Onuoha observes that the activities of violent groups have significantly undermined human security and social stability in various parts of Nigeria (Onuoha 41). Albert states that kidnapping and other forms of violent crime have created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty that affects both individuals and communities (Albert 2020).

For the purpose of this study, insecurity refers to conditions of violence, fear, instability, and threats to human wellbeing arising from terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, communal conflicts, and related security challenges that affect individuals, families, and communities in Nigeria.

Family Stability

Family stability refers to the ability of a family to maintain cohesion, healthy relationships, effective functioning, and mutual support despite internal and external challenges. Stable families are characterized by emotional connectedness, effective communication, commitment, trust, shared responsibilities, and the capacity to adapt to changing circumstances while preserving relational wellbeing.

Ademiluka identifies communication breakdown, emotional withdrawal, and persistent marital conflict as significant indicators of marital disharmony that can threaten family wellbeing (Ademiluka 2021). His analysis suggests that healthy family relationships depend on mutual respect, effective communication, and sacrificial commitment among family members. In the context of contemporary Nigeria, family stability is increasingly challenged by insecurity, economic hardship, displacement, unemployment, and other socio-economic pressures that place considerable strain on marital and family relationships.

Family stability in this study refers to the capacity of families to sustain healthy relationships, maintain cohesion, fulfill their social and spiritual responsibilities, and adapt effectively to external pressures while preserving the wellbeing of family members.

Economic Hardship

Economic hardship is a condition in which individuals and households experience difficulties in meeting their basic needs due to inadequate income, unemployment, inflation, rising living costs, poverty, or declining purchasing power. It often manifests in reduced access to food, healthcare, education, housing, and other necessities required for a decent standard of living.

In contemporary Nigeria, economic hardship has become a major social concern as many households struggle with inflation, unemployment, and increasing costs of living. Recent studies indicate that rising inflation and unemployment have contributed significantly to poverty and declining living standards across the country. Onwuemeka argues that persistent inflation and unemployment have worsened poverty levels and reduced the economic wellbeing of many Nigerians (Onwuemeka 4). In the same vein, Musa, Zoramawa, and Shember argue that inflation and unemployment negatively affect human development and household welfare, thereby increasing socio-economic vulnerability (Musa et al. al 2024). Oniore, Aigbedion, and Amadi further observe that economic instability,

inflationary pressures, and unemployment continue to constrain economic wellbeing and livelihood opportunities in Nigeria (Oniore, Aigbedion, and Amadi 2023).

Methodology

This study adopts a conceptual-theological approach to examine the impact of insecurity and economic hardship on marriage and family stability in contemporary Nigeria. Rather than employing empirical methods such as surveys, interviews, or questionnaires, the study relies on the critical analysis of biblical, theological, and contextual literature relevant to marriage, family life, insecurity, and socio-economic challenges.

The study engages selected biblical texts that provide theological foundations for understanding marriage, family relationships, resilience, and communal responsibility. Particular attention is given to passages such as Genesis 2:18–24, Deuteronomy 6:6–7, Psalm 46:1–3, Ecclesiastes 4:9–12, and Ephesians 5:22–33, which collectively offer a biblical framework for reflecting on family life in times of adversity.

In addition, the study reviews relevant scholarly literature on insecurity, terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, displacement, inflation, unemployment, and economic hardship within the Nigerian context. These sources are examined to understand how contemporary socio-economic and security challenges affect family relationships, marital stability, parenting, and household well-being.

The conceptual-theological approach is appropriate because the issues under consideration involve not only social and economic realities but also theological questions concerning human relationships, suffering, resilience, hope, and the role of faith communities in supporting families during times of crisis.

The study is limited to a theological examination of marriage and family life within the Nigerian context, with particular emphasis on the effects of insecurity and economic hardship on family stability and wellbeing.

This study is informed by a biblical-theological understanding of marriage and family, which views the family as a covenantal institution established by God for companionship, nurture, stewardship, and human flourishing. The study further draws on themes of resilience, communal responsibility, and divine providence in interpreting contemporary Nigerian realities.

Biblical and Theological Foundations of Marriage and Family

Marriage as a Divine Institution

The biblical understanding of marriage begins in the creation account where God established marriage as part of His design for human existence. In Genesis 2:18, God declared, “It is not good that the man should be alone,” and subsequently created the woman as a suitable companion for him. The institution of marriage was therefore established before the emergence of social, political, and economic structures, underscoring its divine origin and enduring significance. Genesis 2:24 further states that a man shall leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This passage presents marriage as a covenantal union characterized by companionship, intimacy, commitment, and mutual support.

Within Christian theology, marriage is not merely a social arrangement but a sacred relationship ordained by God for human flourishing. It provides a framework for emotional support, procreation, mutual care, and the nurturing of future generations. Consequently, marriage serves as one of the primary means through which individuals experience relational fulfillment and communal belonging.

Family as a Covenant Community

The family occupies a central place in biblical revelation as the primary context for spiritual formation, moral instruction, and the transmission of faith. In Deuteronomy 6:6–7, parents are instructed to teach God's commandments diligently to their children and to integrate divine instruction into daily family life. This passage highlights the family's role as a covenant community where faith is nurtured, values are transmitted, and relationships are shaped according to God's purposes.

The biblical concept of family extends beyond biological relationships to include responsibilities of care, stewardship, and accountability. Families are called to provide emotional, spiritual, and material support for their members while cultivating environments that promote growth, security, and well-being. As such, the family functions as a foundational institution through which God's purposes for individuals and communities are advanced.

Marriage and Mutual Support

Scripture consistently portrays marriage as a relationship of partnership and mutual support. Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 emphasizes the strength that comes from companionship, declaring that “two are better than one” because they can support one another in times of difficulty. The passage further illustrates the value of mutual assistance, protection, and resilience that emerge from committed relationships.

This principle is particularly significant in contexts characterized by uncertainty, hardship, and adversity. The biblical vision of marriage recognizes that spouses are called to share burdens, encourage one another, and work together in navigating life's challenges. Such mutual support strengthens both the marital relationship and the broader family unit, enabling families to remain resilient during difficult circumstances.

Marriage as a Reflection of Christ and the Church

The New Testament presents marriage as a profound theological symbol of the relationship between Christ and the Church. In Ephesians 5:22–33, Paul describes marital relationships using the imagery of Christ's sacrificial love for His people. Husbands are instructed to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, while wives are called to respond in respect and partnership.

Ademiluka argues that this passage redefines marital relationships by grounding authority and submission in Christlike love rather than domination or patriarchal privilege (Ademiluka 2021). The emphasis on sacrificial love, mutual commitment, and relational responsibility provides a theological framework for healthy family relationships. Marriage therefore serves not only a social function but also a spiritual and symbolic role, reflecting divine love and covenant faithfulness.

Family Resilience in Times of Adversity

A recurring theme throughout Scripture is God's sustaining presence amid suffering and adversity. Psalm 46:1 declares that “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble,” affirming divine support during periods of uncertainty and distress. Also, Romans 8:35–39 emphasizes that believers remain secure in God's love despite tribulation, hardship, persecution, or danger.

These passages offer valuable theological resources for understanding family life in contexts marked by insecurity and economic hardship. They affirm that while families may encounter significant challenges, resilience is strengthened through faith, hope, mutual support, and dependence upon God. Biblical resilience does not imply the absence of suffering but rather the capacity to endure adversity while remaining grounded in God's presence and promises.

Together, these biblical and theological themes present marriage and family as divine institutions established for companionship, nurture, covenant faithfulness, and mutual support. They further demonstrate that family stability is not merely a social concern but a theological priority, particularly in contexts where insecurity, economic hardship, and social instability threaten the well-being of individuals and households. These foundations provide an important framework for examining the contemporary challenges confronting families in Nigeria.

Insecurity and Economic Hardship in Contemporary Nigeria

Contemporary Nigeria faces significant security and socio-economic challenges that continue to affect individuals, communities, and families. These challenges have manifested in various forms, including terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, displacement, inflation, and unemployment. Beyond their economic and political consequences, these realities have profound implications for family stability, marital relationships, and household well-being. Understanding these challenges is therefore essential for a theological reflection on marriage and family life within the Nigerian context.

Terrorism

Terrorism remains one of the most serious security challenges confronting Nigeria. The activities of insurgent groups, particularly in the northeastern region of the country, have resulted in loss of lives, destruction of property, disruption of livelihoods, and large-scale displacement of populations. According to Onuoha, terrorism has significantly undermined human security and social stability in Nigeria by creating an atmosphere of fear, uncertainty, and vulnerability among affected populations (Onuoha 2021). The effects of terrorism extend beyond immediate physical destruction to include psychological trauma, economic disruption, and the weakening of social institutions, including the family.

The prolonged nature of terrorist violence has placed considerable pressure on families as many households have experienced bereavement, forced migration, and the loss of economic resources necessary for survival. As a result, terrorism constitutes not only a national security challenge but also a significant threat to family wellbeing and stability.

Banditry

Banditry has emerged as another major security concern, particularly in northern Nigeria. Armed groups have engaged in attacks on rural communities, destruction of farms, cattle rustling, and violent assaults on civilians. This has contributed to widespread insecurity, displacement, and disruption of agricultural activities, thereby affecting household livelihoods and food security.

The resulting fear and instability have forced many families to abandon their homes and sources of income. Such displacement often weakens family structures and exposes households to additional economic and social vulnerabilities. The consequences of banditry therefore extend beyond security concerns to affect the overall stability and functioning of family life.

Kidnapping

Kidnapping has become one of the most pervasive security threats in contemporary Nigeria. What was once largely concentrated in certain regions has increasingly

spread across different parts of the country, affecting students, teachers, religious leaders, professionals, and ordinary citizens. Albert argues that kidnapping has fostered an atmosphere of fear and insecurity that undermines social wellbeing and public confidence in security institutions (Albert 2020). Families often experience severe emotional distress when loved ones are abducted, while ransom demands impose substantial financial burdens on already struggling households.

Recent events illustrate the growing severity of this challenge. In May 2026, armed kidnappers attacked schools in Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State and abducted 39 pupils and seven teachers from multiple schools. Reports indicated that the victims included children as young as two years old, while one abducted teacher was later killed in captivity. The incident generated national concern and highlighted the increasing vulnerability of schools, children, and educators to criminal violence (The Guardian 2026)

These kidnappings can create long-term psychological and economic consequences for families. Victims and their relatives may experience anxiety, fear, emotional instability, and financial hardship long after the incident has ended. Such experiences can strain marital relationships and disrupt family functioning.

Displacement

This is one of the most severe consequences of insecurity in Nigeria is the displacement of individuals and families. Terrorist attacks, banditry, communal violence, and other forms of armed conflict have forced many Nigerians to flee their homes in search of safety. Such displacement often results in the loss of livelihoods, interruption of education, separation of family members, and deterioration of living conditions.

Reports from parts of Plateau State, Kaduna State, and other conflict-prone regions reveal cases where entire households have been destroyed through violent attacks, leaving surviving family members to cope with bereavement, displacement, and economic uncertainty. These experiences demonstrate that insecurity affects not only physical safety but also the social and relational structures upon which family life depends.

Inflation

Inflation is another pressing economic challenge facing Nigerian households. Rising prices of food, transportation, housing, healthcare, and other essential commodities have significantly reduced the purchasing power of many families. Onwuemeka argues that persistent inflation has contributed substantially to poverty and declining standards of living in Nigeria by reducing the capacity of households to meet their basic needs (Onwuemeka 4).

The impact of inflation is particularly severe for low-income families, a lot of whom struggle to provide adequate food, education, and healthcare for their children.

Unemployment

Unemployment remains a major factor in economic hardship in Nigeria, especially among young adults. Unemployment negatively affects household welfare and human development by reducing access to resources necessary for a decent quality of life (Musa, Zoramawa, and Shember 2). It affects not only individual economic wellbeing but also family relationships and stability.

Together, terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, displacement, inflation, and unemployment have created an environment of insecurity and economic hardship that affects millions of Nigerians. These challenges extend beyond political and economic spheres to influence the quality of family relationships, marital stability, and household well-being.

Effects on Marriage and Family Stability

Marital Conflict and Relationship Strain

Rising inflation and unemployment often generate frustration, anxiety, and disagreements in the home. Persistent inflation and unemployment have significantly reduced household welfare and living standards in Nigeria (Onwuemeka 4). Such financial pressures frequently contribute to marital tension, communication breakdown, and relationship dissatisfaction.

Family Separation, Bereavement, and Trauma

The increasing incidence of terrorism, banditry, and kidnapping has contributed significantly to family separation and bereavement in Nigeria. This generates emotional and psychological trauma that may persist for many years. Insecurity not only threatens physical safety but also undermines social cohesion, family wellbeing, and human security (Onuoha 2021; Albert 2020).

Recent attacks in various parts of the country, such as the abduction of schoolchildren and teachers in Oyo State in 2026, together with recurring violent attacks in communities across Plateau and Kaduna States, demonstrate how insecurity can suddenly alter the lives of entire families (Reuters). In June 2026, more than twenty persons were killed during an attack on Kawel village in Mushere District of Bokkos Local Government Area, Plateau State. Such incidents leave surviving spouses, children, and relatives to cope with grief, displacement, and economic uncertainty while attempting to rebuild their lives. This often weakens emotional support systems and places considerable strain on family stability. (AP News 2026)

The consequences of such experiences extend beyond individual suffering. They affect marital relationships, parenting practices, emotional well-being, and the overall stability of family life (Albert 2020).

Emotional and Psychological Trauma

Insecurity has also generated serious emotional and psychological trauma among Nigerian families. Survivors of violent attacks often experience grief, anxiety, fear, and emotional distress arising from the loss of loved ones and the uncertainty associated with insecurity. The May 2026 abduction of 39 pupils and seven teachers in Oyo State created widespread fear among parents, communities, and educational institutions, while the killing of one of the abducted teachers further intensified public anxiety and grief (Eboh 2026).

Parenting Challenges and Child Development

Insecurity and economic hardship can adversely affect parenting practices and child development. Reports of school abductions and the recruitment of minors by armed groups in conflict-affected regions further demonstrate the vulnerability of children within unstable environments (Reuters; Onuoha 2021). Such conditions may disrupt educational attainment, emotional development, and long-term family wellbeing.

Weakening of Family Stability

Family stability is sustained by healthy relationships, effective communication, emotional support, and economic security. However, the combined effects of terrorism, kidnapping, displacement, inflation, and unemployment often undermine these foundations. Families facing persistent hardship may experience increased conflict, weakened social support systems, reduced participation in communal life, and difficulties fulfilling parental responsibilities. As a result, insecurity and economic hardship pose major threats to the stability and wellbeing of Nigerian families.

Theological Reflection

God as Refuge and Sustainer in Times of Crisis

One of the recurring themes in Scripture is God's presence with His people amid suffering and adversity. Psalm 46:1 describes God as "our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble," emphasizing divine protection and sustenance during periods of uncertainty. For many Nigerian families confronted by violence, displacement, and economic hardship, this theological truth provides a source of hope and resilience.

The realities of terrorism, kidnapping, and economic instability may threaten physical security and material well-being, but they do not negate God's covenantal presence. Christian theology affirms that faith communities and families can draw strength from God while navigating difficult circumstances. The biblical witness consistently portrays God as attentive to the suffering of His people and actively involved in their preservation and restoration.

Marriage and Family as Communities of Resilience

Christian theology presents marriage and family as covenantal relationships designed to provide mutual support, encouragement, and care. Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 emphasizes the strength derived from companionship and shared burdens, while Ephesians 5:22–33 highlights sacrificial love and mutual commitment within marriage.

In contexts of insecurity and economic hardship, families become important spaces of resilience where emotional, spiritual, and material support can be shared. The capacity of spouses and family members to support one another during adversity contributes significantly to family stability and well-being. Consequently, strengthening family relationships is not merely a social necessity but also a theological responsibility.

The Church as a Community of Care and Restoration

The challenges confronting Nigerian families call for a renewed pastoral response from the church. The New Testament portrays the church as a community of mutual care in which believers bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2). This responsibility becomes especially important in contexts where families have experienced violence, displacement, bereavement, or economic hardship.

The church must therefore move beyond spiritual instruction alone to provide practical support through counseling, trauma care, family ministries, economic assistance, and community-based interventions. Such responses embody the compassionate ministry of Christ and demonstrate the church's commitment to the well-being of families affected by adversity.

Hope, Restoration, and Human Dignity

The experiences of violence, kidnapping, displacement, and poverty often undermine human dignity and create feelings of hopelessness. Yet Christian theology affirms the inherent worth of every human person as created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26–27). This conviction challenges all forms of violence, exploitation, and dehumanization.

Furthermore, the biblical narrative is ultimately one of hope and restoration. Despite present suffering, God remains committed to the healing and renewal of individuals, families, and communities. This theological vision encourages both perseverance and active engagement in efforts that promote peace, justice, reconciliation, and family wellbeing within Nigerian society.

Sustaining Family Life through Faith in Times of Adversity Christian Responses to Insecurity and Economic Hardship

The realities of terrorism, kidnapping, displacement, inflation, and unemployment have left many Nigerian families burdened by fear, grief, uncertainty, and economic distress. While these challenges are real and often overwhelming, Christian theology offers spiritual resources that enable families to persevere in difficult circumstances. Faith does not eliminate suffering, but it provides a framework through which suffering can be understood, endured, and transformed.

First, Christian families are called to place their trust in God's providential care. Scripture repeatedly reminds believers that God remains present even in times of crisis and uncertainty. Proverbs 3:5–6 exhorts believers to trust in the Lord with all their hearts, while Psalm 46:1 presents God as a refuge and strength in times of trouble. As for households facing insecurity and economic hardship, trusting

God involves maintaining confidence in His faithfulness despite circumstances that may appear hopeless.

Second, prayer remains the source of strength and resilience. In the bible, God's people responded to adversity through prayer, because it not only strengthens spiritual dependence upon God but also promotes unity, encouragement, and emotional support among family members.

Third, Families affected by insecurity and economic hardship should not suffer in isolation but should seek support through fellowship, pastoral care, and communal solidarity. Christian communities should rather be a source of support during times of adversity. The New Testament portrays the church as a fellowship in which believers bear one another's burdens and provide mutual encouragement (Gal. 6:2).

Recommendations

1. Families should cultivate effective communication, emotional support, and mutual commitment during periods of economic and social uncertainty.
2. Churches should establish counseling and trauma-healing ministries for victims of violence, kidnapping, and displacement.
3. Seminaries and Bible colleges should incorporate courses on family resilience, trauma care, pastoral counseling, and crisis ministry.
4. Government should strengthen security measures to protect communities, schools, places of worship, and other vulnerable populations affected by terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and communal violence. From a theological perspective, governing authorities are understood as institutions permitted by God for the maintenance of justice, order, and the protection of human life (Rom. 13:1–4). Consequently, public officials bear a moral responsibility to pursue policies that safeguard citizens and restrain violence. Greater support should therefore be provided for internally displaced persons, victims of violence, widows, orphans, and other vulnerable groups affected by insecurity.

Conclusion

Marriage and family remain foundational institutions for both society and the Christian faith. However, contemporary Nigeria faces significant challenges arising from terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, displacement, inflation, and unemployment, all of which exert considerable pressure on family life and stability. These realities have contributed to bereavement, family separation, emotional trauma, financial stress, parenting difficulties, and weakened family cohesion.

This study has demonstrated that insecurity and economic hardship are not merely political or economic concerns but also profound family and theological concerns. By undermining the well-being of individuals and households, these challenges threaten the stability of the institution that serves as the basic unit of society and a primary context for spiritual formation.

The study therefore concludes that strengthening marriage and family life in Nigeria requires a collaborative effort involving families, churches, theological institutions, civil society, and government. By addressing both the spiritual and socio-economic dimensions of these challenges, it is possible to foster greater resilience, stability, and hope among Nigerian families despite the uncertainties of the contemporary environment.

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