

DEATH, REINCARNATION AND ANCESTORHOOD: ISSUES IN AFTER-LIFE IN TRADITIONAL IGBO RELIGIOUS CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

The paper attempts to explore the belief of the Igbo in life after death in relation to time and space. Death in Igbo worldview is seen as a distortion in the rhythm of life; a temporary transition from one phase of existence to another and not the end of it. It is believed that an individual engages in a cycle of births and deaths up to seven times technically referred to as reincarnation before his final rest in the ancestral world. Though, this basic belief of the people has been rejected by forces of social change as fetish and superstitious, the average Igbo is being haunted by practical life experiences which support the reality of the phenomenon. Against this backdrop the paper emerged to prove to the world that the Igbos of Nigeria strongly believes in reincarnation. Phenomenological research method developed by Edmond Husserl which brackets off researcher's bias and assumptions, and concentrates on the detailed description of conscious experience, was used to examine these concepts from Igbo worldview, their attitude to life and death, to salvation and ancestorhood. It was discovered that correct judgment can only come through objective investigation.

KEYWORDS: Reincarnation, Death, Life, Igbo, Ancestor