DEATH IN IGBO-AFRICAN ONTOLOGY
KANU*; IKECHUKWU ANTHONY**; OSA
*Department of Religion and Human Relations
Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State

Abstract
The reality of death is known to everyone who is endowed with reason. In spite of the human person’s wisdom and technological know-how, death still defies prediction. Everyone dies, and that explains why the Hausa cultural group of Africa would say that ‘Mutuwa rigan kowa ne’ (death is everyone’s shirt). The religious die just as the non-religious; Christians die just as Jews, Muslims and ‘pagans’ die. The rich and poor, famed and unsung, no matter how powerful and celebrated we are, we cannot escape the power of death. This paper is concerned with exploring the Igbo-African concept of death. “Igbo” is a language and the name of an ethnic group or tribe in Nigeria. It is referred to as Igbo-African because it is an ethnic group in Africa and relates culturally to other ethnic groups in Africa. Although death is conceived by the Igbo as a transition to the world of the ancestors, it still does not change the fact that it is an enigma. It is thus not surprising that the Igbo would name their child: onwu di njo (death is bad). Onwubuche (death is my worry). Onwubiko (death I implore you). Onwu kam ike (death is more powerful that I am). Onwuasoanya (death is no respecter of persons). Onwuamaeze (death does not recognize a king or a great man). This paper studies the dimensions of the phenomenon of death from an Igbo-African perspective, which sees death not just as the end of life in the present world but the beginning of another in the world of the ancestors who are still living. The living of the dead brings consolation to those who are left behind by the dead.

Keywords: Death, Living-Dead, African, Nigeria, Igbo, Ontology, Ancestors, Life, World.