

SINGLE PARENTING IN OGBOMOSO SOUTH-EAST BAPTIST  
ASSOCIATION AND ITS CHALLENGES TO THE CHURCH

NBTS  
AL H-S  
M. DIV

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NBTS/06/0050

A thesis Submitted to the Department of THEOLOGY  
Submitted to the Faculty of Theological Studies  
THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, OGBOMOSO  
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of  
The Degree of MASTER OF DIVINITY in Theology  
UNIVERSITY OF JOS

JUNE, 2009

001-0016

## ABSTRACT

The researcher set out in this study to examine the challenges that single parenting poses to the church and in Ogbomosho South-East Baptist Association. One hundred respondents members from single parenting family were sampled. The study considered the perception of people and their attitude towards the biblical principle of marriage and the causes of single parenting. Towards this end, the study investigated the influence of single parenting on the children, church and community as a whole. Analytical method was employed with the use of questionnaire. In analyzing the problem, the researcher established the fact that there are causes of single parenting. As such single parenting has many harmful effects on the children and family, therefore he established that church should make up to their neglected roles and responsibilities of promoting ideal Christian home. Also literature written by religious scholars, which deal with family matters and parenting was examined to obtain a composite picture as regard to this predicament and solutions. The conclusion highlights the fact that all these findings exist. However, the study implies the idea that Gospel Ministers have challenges to face. This has to do with their roles and responsibilities in counseling the church members before and when the above problems exist.

analytical design method was adopted and simple percentage to interpret the data collected through questionnaire.

Chapter four dealt with the analysis and discussion of data collected through questionnaire on the awareness, causes and effects of single parenting on both the family and church in Ogbomoso South-East Baptist Association. The finding shows that single parenting is a problem as at present, even common among the Christians. Beside this, many respondents were of the opinion that church has a crucial role to play in reducing the problem of single parenting.

Finally, chapter five gives the summary, conclusion and recommendations to the problems of single parenting.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The family is important to God because He is the Maker and sustainer of the whole universe, most importantly the family. It is the smallest unit of the society, from where the larger society is developed. However, the family is usually a kinship group linked by blood and marriage and occupying a common household. As a social group is made up of a man, his wife and children living under a common roof, interacting and influencing the behaviour of each other in a more intimate manner than with others who do not belong. If anything is wrong with the family, the whole society is in problem. Therefore, family must be in accordance with God's original plan and purpose.

However, the outgrowing number of people in single parenting even within the Christendom is becoming more and more than in secular as the years go by. This poses the need for the church to find way to offer help and possible solutions, the solutions will not be easy as such,

much work will be required. So, the researcher if of the following opinion:

The perceptions of Christians about family and parenting, loss of respect to the elders of virginity before marriage, separation and divorce, polygamy and living like singles who are yet to marry, even after several years of marriage are not good. Many do not see single parenting as a stigma to the church and so they are not ready to abide by the Biblical injunctions and principles of marriage in accordance with God's purpose, due to the hardness of their heart (Matt. 19:8).

In addition, there are many causes of single parenting, such as polygamous, premarital sex, teenage pregnancy, job location, separation, divorce and so on. Polygamous is liable to be the causative agent of all other causes of single parenting. Polygamy promotes favourism in homes, thereby promoting disunity and domestic violence among father, step-mothers and step-children. As a result, frequent trouble brews amongst family members at the slightest provocation. The husband is deprived from having a unique and unbiased love for a particular wife and children.

Polygamist loves for his family much or is always general and diffused. Polygamous husband and woman break the marriage vows ... "to forsake all other women and men respectively till death do them part."

Finally, findings in this study have made us to realize that single parenting is found in church for many reasons. There is a need to recognize and help them as such require help from church, minister and member so that they can cope with the situation around them.

Most churches have been a giant sleeping dog in rendering assistance to these sets of people. The church is expected to live up to the task in helping to alleviate the pains of single parenting. Having come to understand the causes, effects and challenges of single parenting and its existence within the church, each church needs organize programmes in ministering to their needs financially, materially, physically and spiritually as the case may be.

### 5.3 Recommendations

Based on findings of this work, it has been realized that many church members lack adequate understanding of Biblical concept of marriage. This could be the reason why many of them cherish economy, education, ministry, and money more than living with their spouses. Followings are recommended:

1. That the church and pastor should have correct perception about single parenting, even as a stigma to a local congregation which needs prompt action.
2. That the church and pastor should launch aggressive educational campaign against the causes of single parenting and single parenthood by encouraging young widows and widowers to have second marriage since they are still sexually active. This will help them to maintain their spiritual wholeness and reduce emotional and psychological stress. In addition, separation, divorce and polygamy should be discouraged in the church.
3. That the church should organize marriage seminar and pastoral counseling frequently for the members. This could help enlighten and educate our members on how to believe and abide with the practical

Biblical principles of marriage. They should be taught about the mind of God, concerning divorce and remarriage, concerning rules for Christian households and should be taught danger of leaving their spouses in a particular city and go to another place for whatever reasons (Gen. 2:18, Malachi 2:10-16, Matt. 19:1-14, I Corinthians 7, Ephesians 5:22 – 6:9).

4. That quarrelling and settlement of quarrelling should no longer be delayed nor postponed immediately the Pastor or members realize its existence between the couple. Reconciliation and redemption are the major purposes of the coming of Jesus Christ to the world. Also, reconciliation should be the role of an individual Christian to the couple. Christians as individuals must not yield themselves as an instrument of quarrelling or separation between the couples in the way they relate with them (Matt. 19: 5-6, Col. 3:12-17).

5. That the parents should be more diligent, loving and alert in the rearing and upbringing of their children, so as to produce godly children in such a way to prevent teenage pregnancy and unmarried adult from premarital sex. Parents should not be too rigid, too flexible, absolute and unnecessarily conservative in their responsibilities. Also, couples should be ready to sacrifice and pay the price of whatever it may cost them to be able to stay together and nurse their children. How to stay with one's spouse and children should be seriously put into consideration, if not first priority, before taking up a job in far places from one's home. It is usual saying that, "family that prays together stays together" (Prov. 22:6, I Sam. 3:13).

6. That the pastor should realize that pastoral care and counselling with the single parents are not for himself alone. The wider the ministry spreads within or over a congregation the better and the more effective the ministry becomes. The pastor should therefore select group of individuals who will carry on with him. The most important thing is that these individuals must be knowledgeable, they should know at least the rudiments of pastoral care and counselling with the single parents. This is a ministry on its own especially for follow up.

7. That the church should see the importance of pastoral care and counselling and the need for the church to support single parents. This should be done through the organization of marriage seminars and Bible study, addition to this, church must be involved in one way or the other in caring for the single parents.

8. That the church needs to identify single parents in the church or their pastoral and divide them into groups for vocational training or school or where they could be exposed to various money making trade or petty-trading. This would also create opportunity for healthy interactions with follow single parents.