

THE PROBLEM OF MISDEMEANOUR AMONG PASTORS'
CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY OF OGBOMOSO SOUTHWEST
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

NBTS
06 4-p
M. DIV

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MATRIC NO. 06/0101

"A Thesis in the Department of Theology
Faculty of Theological Studies"

"Submitted to the Faculty of Theological Studies
Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, in
affiliation with University of Jos"

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Award of the degree of
MASTER OF DIVINITY

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UNIVERSITY OF JOS

JUNE 2009

09-0037

ABSTRACT

The researcher has witnessed a number of gross misconduct being perpetrated by pastors' children which has not only led to destabilization in some churches, but also has affected the ministry of many pastors. Out of a grave concern for the spate of allegations leveled against pastors' children which appear to be on the rise, the researcher has undertaken this onerous task of tracing the causes of these misdeeds with a view to proffer lasting solutions to the menace that has wrecked untold havoc on the pastoral ministry.

This study is important based on a strong burden of wanting to see pastors' children living lives that please God, as well as helping in making the ministry of their parents successful ones. The population of the study comprises pastors and members with pastors' children in Ogbomoso South west Baptist Association of the Ogbomoso Baptist Conference. The sample comprises fifty subjects from ten of the local Baptist churches in the Association which were randomly selected. Five questionnaires were distributed among the following people in each church: pastor, WMS member, MMU member, teenager and a pastor's kid. Altogether, ten questionnaires went to each group.

It was discovered that so many pastors do not give adequate attention to their children due to ministry pressure. There is a wide acceptance that pastors' messages are watered down and members begin to lose confidence in the pastors. Also, pastors are advised to make praying for their children a priority.

Finally, pastors should give serious attention to good and adequate parenting, part of which is giving time to be with the family. As a means of promoting "ministry families" the seminary should lay a strong emphasis on the family life of a pastor, especially as it relates to making the pastor an effective parent of his children. Also,

pastors should be able to censor what their children watch on the television as this will help them to cub their wards from accessing what will corrupt them.

5.2 Conclusion

Misdemeanour among pastors' children is a source of serious concern. It passes a vote of no confidence on pastoral authority and threatens the life of the church. From the foregoing research therefore, the following findings are evident:

a. Misdemeanour among pastors' children can be caused by one or a number of the following factors:

- i. Inattention and inadequate parenting. To take ministry pressure as a *alibi* for inadequate parenting is a contradiction of terms. It is common knowledge that pastors are very busy people, as such their children are starved of paternal parenting.
- ii. Doubtless, Satan seeks every avenue to ruin pastoral ministry, and it seems the best avenue is through the pastor's child. He ruins the pastor's child and by implication destroys pastor's ministry.

- iii. Church members doubtless spend more time criticizing their pastors and families rather than pray for them. This research reveals that church members do not pray for pastors' children.
 - iv. Peer pressure is admittedly a powerful agent of moral decadence. Pastors' children are negatively influenced, and dared to become devils by their peers. The high moral demand exerted on them by society becomes a heavy load under which they groan only for their peers to dare them to let off the weight. In most cases the response is a sharp drop in moral values. Pastors' children are exposed to these harsh realities most especially at public schools.
 - v. The problem of sin makes it impossible for the unregenerate soul to be righteous before God. Misdemeanour can be a manifestation of sin, because sin distorts moral judgment.
- b. There are various effects of misdemeanour among pastors' children and these include:
- i. Pastors' messages are watered down. This is especially true when the pastor tries to avoid confronting the scourge.
 - ii. It leads to a loss of confidence in the pastors' spiritual leadership being that his children are out of his control.
 - iii. The label "Sons of Bellial" seems to be put on many pastors' children. Often times these children are left to their fate under the pretext of leaving them to God's guidance. They thereby degenerate.
 - iv. Most church members do not confront their pastors with such issues, but instead, they generate and spread rumors as well as gossip around.
 - v. Church punitive disciplinary processes can become cumbersome because the pastors' child is involved and the pastor may want to protect the child.

- vi. Pastor's wife loses her respect among women in the church, especially when her daughter is caught in shameful acts.
 - vii. Other pastors' children, including the good ones, would not be spared. They are usually severely criticized as well.
 - viii. It is important to note that pastors' children's behaviour influence the behaviours of other children in the church. It may not be clearly established that there is a correlation, however, suffice it that other children model the lifestyle of the pastor's child to a certain extent, and in certain respects.
 - ix. It may not be ascertained that church crisis could result from pastor's child's misdeeds, but it behooves to assert that it generates tension that could be fueled through other extraneous factors.
- c. Pastors and church members do not differ significantly in their perception of the causes of misdemeanour among pastors' children. The implication is that they can forge a common cause in dealing decisively with this scourge, and the possibility of its causing a rift in the church is remote given their apparent expression of similarity of opinion.

5.3 Recommendations

1. The welfare of pastors' children should be taken very seriously. Pastors should give serious attention to good and adequate parenting, part of which is giving time to be with the family. Pastors should be disciplined in terms of time management and ensure that time is budgeted to be spent with their children and spouses. The susceptibility of pastors' children to satanic incursions should not be treated with levity. Pastors must rise to the occasion of ensuring that their children enjoy an air of spiritual freedom, and this battle must begin before the children are born.

2. The church should encourage pastors' children to be worthy ambassadors of Christ. Pastors' children should be taken for the human beings that they are, and allowed to live normal lives.
3. A common forum for pastors' children to share their experiences would be a welcome development. As a matter of urgency, churches, associations, conferences and the convention should form a fellowship where all pastors' children would rob minds together so that they can emerge as a powerful force in the dynamics of ushering in the kingdom of God through missions.
4. As a means of promoting "ministry families" the seminary should lay a strong emphasis on the family life of a pastor, especially as it relates to making the pastor an effective parent of his children. Courses on child bearing and home life should be incorporated in the seminary curriculum.
5. Scholarship schemes should be put in place for pastors' children in denominational institutions to enable them acquire qualitative education as well as sound moral discipline, which hitherto are lacking in public schools.
6. There is an increasing need for denominational bodies in general and the Nigerian Baptist Convention in particular to publish regularly a magazine that promotes good parenting, and discuss the issues involved. This will be a source of enlightenment and renewed insight for those involved in parenting as well as parents to be.
7. The church should improve her social and welfare ministry. Recreation centers and facilities should be put in place to meet the recreational, physical, social and emotional needs of the youths. Pastors' children will benefit a great deal from this, as it will reduce the risk of associating with the "bad eggs".

8. Pastors should be able to censor what their children watch on the television. This is because there are so many programmes on most of the television channels, which can easily corrupt them. And also, as a result of technological development, almost every household can afford a computer set. With the connection to the Internet, several sites can be accessed and this gives opportunity to anyone who wants to watch pornography. Pastors should try not to allow their wards to access such sites.
9. More studies are required in this field of research to ascertain in concrete terms, the needs of pastors' children and the responsibilities of the church and society toward pastors' children as well as the role of pastors in ministry and nation building.