

PASTORAL CARE WITH SINGLE PARENTS

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**A THESIS**

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## CONCLUSION

This essay has helped to throw light into the plight and agony of single parents because, death, divorce, and desertion carry grief along. Children too, respond by becoming angry, depressed or lonely, but an ordinary man who does not care to take closer look may not know the cause. The writer has in mind the desire to bring such agony and discomfort for healing.

It has also been stressed in the course of this study that although death, divorce or desertion may occur, life must continue. There is hope with God in a world shrouded with hopelessness. Therefore, various adjustment mechanisms that a single parent can use to overcome emotional problems were also discussed. Every single parent needs to develop a clear sense of identity which will promote a feeling of wholeness despite the loss of a partner. Thus it was clearly stressed that adjustment is necessary in the areas of finance, role performance, sex life, and relationship.

This study also affords the opportunity to discover that single parents are liable to behavioural problems. This is because the single parent has much added responsibilities to cope with alone. Thus a single parent may treat a child of the opposite sex as a missing partner. For instance a single father may expect a daughter to fill the role his wife formerly held and find himself putting too much pressure on her regarding house hold responsibility.

✓ Anger is another common emotional problem that may be directed toward children, the former spouse, toward oneself or against God. We have therefore discovered

in addition, single parent should be allowed to express their anger, for a "bottled anger" can kill, but it needs to be directed into appropriate channels.

From the data collected, it is true that majority of the single parents are from broken homes. Naturally when two lives are joined together in marriage, there is bound to be occasional problems but solution must be sought. However, many couples go into marriage with very little preparation for it. Sometimes they lack sufficient emotional maturity, stability, or flexibility which a successful union must have" <sup>1</sup>The result is always chaos and separation which eventually may lead to becoming single again.

Also from the data collected it was observed that single parents were usually not being adequately catered for by their relatives and friends. Above all, the church herself, has failed in this regard. Pastors, youth workers, and counselors should be in contact with single parents to help them overcome the trauma of separation.

This research establishes that children with single parents are likely to become emotionally disturbed because anyone who has lost one of his parents as a child is three times more likely to experience some form of emotional break-down in later life than one who has kept them both"<sup>2</sup>. It is therefore, the duty of the surviving parent, the church and the society at large to show love to such children. Lastly, this essay throws light to trust in God for divine healing. Of Abraham it was said; who against hope believed in hope. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory of God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform"<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Billy Graham, Christian Worker's Handbook (Minnesota, World Wide Publication, 1984), p 174

<sup>2</sup> Romans, 4:18, 20, 21.

<sup>3</sup> Wieiand, Marriage In Today's World, P.17

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the detailed information collected during the course of this project and practical knowledge acquired when writing this essay, the need for following recommendations are necessary. First, the teaching of basic Biblical principles of marriage should be encouraged. It needs to be taught clearly at home and church. biblical view of sex should be made available to the youths. They should be made to understand that sexual union is a gift from God and it is allowed only in marriage. Dangers of pre-marital sex should be uncovered. Teaching the youths about the dangers of sex will open the youth to dangers in pre-marital sex. The torture and shame that a pregnant, unmarried girls will encounter before family and friends that may dwarf her pershood should be taught to young girls".<sup>4</sup> This will help to reduce teenage pre-marital sex which may result in unwarranted pregnancy.

Second, the importance of marriage and marital commitment should be taught in the church. This could be done through the organization of marriage seminars, Bible study and Sunday school classes. People should be encouraged to make marriage a high priority in term of the expenditure of time and efforts".<sup>5</sup> In addition to this, couples should be encouraged to seek counseling on marital crisis before it goes out of hands. The sooner one goes for help, the better for such an individual to make positive amendments with life.

Third, people should have a change of mind towards single parents no matter the cause of singlehood. People aróund should know that single parent are already down,

<sup>4</sup> Wieiand, Marriage In Today's World, p17

<sup>5</sup> Adekunle, O. Adisa, Christian Home Building : A Ministry of the Church, (Ogbomoso, Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary).

thus they need someone to motivate them to rise up. They should not be ignored in their predicament. But be helped to find their way in what has been a "two-parent" world".<sup>6</sup>

Fourth, the church should realise her roles towards the single parents. As Henry W. Beecher has said;

The church is not a gallery for the exhibition of eminent Christian, but a school for the education of imperfect ones, a nursery for the care of weak ones, a hospital for the healing of those who need assiduous care".<sup>7</sup>

Ministry with and to the single parent is the church greatest task towards their healing. God himself is concerned with those who have suffered the trauma of divorce, desertion or death of a spouse. The church should therefore take it as a challenge and be concerned to minister to the broken lives. Programmes of activities such as Single Parents' Seminars, Single Parent Sunday, Solo Parents Workshops, Bible Classes for Single Parents are some of the activities to be planned for single parent.

Also the pastor should be involved in the re-orientation of the lives of single parents. As Jay Adams says, grief offers an important opportunity for a pastor to reorient lives according to Biblical patterns. When viewed positively, disintegration of the past may be considered an advantage. If the situation is handled properly, when one's life is disintegrated it can be altered along Biblical lines than at any other time. Moving closer and readiness to assist will offer opportunity to remould broken lives.

Lastly, the single parents themselves should seek ways to improve their own situation. They must build bridges, and not walls. Isolation is not the best thing to do but

<sup>6</sup> Watts Virginal, The single Parent. P. 128

<sup>7</sup> Watts, p. 127

association with other Christians and people who have passed through similar experience. Thinking positively is another thing that a single parent should cultivate. Through your partner has left you, your children are around. Above all God is by your side. They should take God's hand and allow Him to them into the future. God is waiting for all that can come."<sup>8</sup>