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PASTORAL CARE WITH ADOLESCENCE: A CASE STUDY OF OGBOMOSO WEST BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

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ABSTRACT

The essay discusses the place of the Pastoral care with adolescence. Among the Yorubas, it is often affirmed that "the path of the youth is slippery" hence, they usually pray that God might provide for the youth a solid ground that can prevent them against fallen. As the adolescent period is a time of all-around development, the Pastor must be ready to guide an adolescent to maturity and make them to be practical Christians.

Chapter Two is the Literature Review. It spell-out clearly the stages of the adolescents, general characteristics of the adolescents.

The third chapter presents four cases of adolescents, which shows that there is an urgent need for Pastoral Counselling for the care.

The final chapter was the conclusion and the recommendations that will make our adolescents to be effective and efficient in all-round developments.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In chapter three, analysis of the problems of the adolescent were identified for the purpose of this study. Then in the last chapter, we also outlined the basics of pastoral care approach for handling problems of adolescents generally. This chapter will help provide adequate pastoral care for Christian adolescents in our churches who we often take for granted

A. Tope's Case

The reaction of Tope's father conforms to what Parsons has described as typifying parents' reactions. He argues that it is: "...an event which is accompanied by much confusion, concern and anxiety; and a period which demands a number of personal value-based decision."¹ Both Tope and her father certainly need support and guidance.

The father's position was stated in very few but definite expression. He couldn't possibly live with an unwedded pregnant daughter. There is no accomodation for such daughter in his home. She had defied all decency and had brought shame on the family. In the words of Philip F. Rice, "Unmarried motherhood of a teenage girl is a tragedy."²

If Tope decides to keep her baby, she may become entrapped in a self-destructive cycle consisting of failure to continue her education, repeated pregnancies, failure to establish a stable family life and dependence upon others for support. If she marries, the chances of her remaining married are only about one in five. The chances of completing her secondary education and probability of her getting a good job to support herself and her family is equally negligible.³

Faced with this kind of situation, the pastoral counsellor have a responsibility of seeking to assuage the fuming anger of Tope's father. He seemed to have been consumed by his anger which gave him no room to think about the future consequences of the pregnancy on Tope. Pertient questions that arise include: who takes care of her during pregnancy and

¹Richard D. Parsons, Adolescents in Turmoil, parents Under Strees: A Pastoral Ministry, Primer, Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1987, p.66

²F. Philip Rice, The Adolescent: Development Relationships and culture (Boston: Allyn and Bacon Inc., 1987), p. 444.

³_____. Contemporary Marriage (Newton: Mass: Allyn and Bacon, 1983), p. 514.

chil-delivery bearing in mind the boy's age and family background? What happens to Tope's education and what does the future hold in store for her? Is the daughter of a deacon going to be given in marriage to a non-believer? The last question in particular, needs to be properly addressed given what has become known to many Christian leaders in the town because of the notion that there is a deliberate and calculated attempt to lure Christian girls into marriage. The speed with which the boy's mother had gone ahead to procure marriage gift "for Tope overnight seems suggestive of what one may describe as an apparent big haul of a big time well known Christian girl by a relatively obscure Muslim boy. The boy's mother seems to be happy about her son's achievement.

While Tope's father may need support and counsel in dealing with issues raised above, there is a need to see what could be done about Tope's own rebellious attitude. Tope's kind of rebellion is what Olson describes as 'delinquent'. Here, the rebellious adolescent actively pushes others away through illegal and antisocial behaviour.⁴

Tope's case is a trauma for the family. She is ill - prepared for the labour market, and will have special needs to cater for herself and her baby for a long time to come, she will continue to depend on welfare. Her parents together with whatever little assistance they would be able to receive from the boy's mother will continue to fend for her. After delivery, she may need to find a way of finishing her secondary education.

Tope's pregnancy is equally a crisis for the church too. One of her promising adolescent "warriors" has been wounded on the battle field. She must be cared for. Unfortunately, only few churches address the issue of adolescent pregnancies. People often deliver strong moral; admonitions against them.⁵

Several issues are critical for counselling unmarried pregnant adolescents. Ministers however tend to focus first on the guilt issue. Parsons has cautioned that a counsellor should

⁴G. Kenneth Olson, *Why Teenagers Act The Way They do* (Loveland Group Books, 1987), p. 218.

⁵Parsons, *Adolescents in Turmoil*, p. 93

not project guilt from a personal value system unto an adolescent. Some girls view their pregnancy as a badge of honour and do not begin counselling by discussing guilt.⁶ Others begin with anger at the issue. The Pastoral Counsellor dealing with adolescent pregnancies needs to address several pragmatic issues. These include questions like Does the adolescent have a comfortable place to live? Is there a need for reconciliation and healing with her family? Does she have medical, legal and financial care? What provisions are made for her education?

Preaching at them in general has been less effective than sitting down with them and seeking to understand their value system. They should be encouraged to look at the situation in light of their knowledge of the Scripture and their personal understanding of theology.⁷

After all, these other issues are still to be dealt with. The adolescent girl will have to deal with grief over the loss of the relationship to the father of her child; with the change of her self-image or with the loss of her child.⁸ There is also the issue of adjusting to life after having delivered a child like continuing with education, being able to limit births of subsequent children and achieving a stable marriage at a later point in life.⁹ In situation like Tope's, what is needed is forgiveness, not judgemental, condemnation, and anger.

B. Gbade's Case

There is a real need to assist adolescents to see that 'independence' is something which comes not from saying 'no' to everything and everyone, but from learning how to say 'yes' to one's own sense of self-reliance and one's own ability to make responsible and thus consequential decision.¹⁰ Real independence is the result of ability to make mature and reasonable decision. It is not the ability to stay out late as one wants or to do whatever one pleases without anyone asking questions.

Gbade, like most other adolescents are faced with many situations that calls for decision making, and whatever values they hold are likely to affect such decisions. Their

⁶Parsons.

⁷Parsons, p. 94.

⁸Parsons.

⁹Parsons, p.95.

¹⁰Parsons, p. 55.

