

PASTORAL CARE WITH THE SINGLE ADULTS.  
A CASE STUDY OF IGBO-ORA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

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## ABSTRACT

Singles experience different crises that weigh them down in their life journey. Their crises are due, to some factors such as society's attitude toward singleness, especially where marriage is seen as the norm of the society. This, however, is not peculiar to the society alone but the church of God, which has the same attitudes towards singleness. This is evident in their programmes, which are always family-oriented. In fact, some pastors are guilty of this, which is highly unfortunate. However, it cannot be said that others cause all the problems being faced by singles without singles also having their blames.

Singles go through many problems such as loneliness, sexual frustration, financial crises, inferiority complex, e.t.c. The concern here is to make pastors aware of these problems and help them and the church to understand what they can do to bail the never-married singles out of their predicament. In other words, this work aims at showing how church, pastors and individual believers can effectively care for the never-married singles.

This study was embarked upon to bring to afore the categories of singles that forms a good percentage of the church population to know how to handle them in a way to secure assurance for the future of the church and that of the nation. This is highly required especially in the areas of leadership, the singles need the attention of both the church and the nation at large.

Different categories of single adult were study ranging from: never married single, single by circumstance and single by choice. Opinion of different categories of people were sought for through the use of questionnaire and one on one interview.

The conclusion of these findings is that the church is the place where everyone is important, loved accepted and treated justly .The pastor should be committed to this ministry and make conscious effort for successful implementation of singles programmes.Separate department could be created for them, involving them in decision making and planning ,and not only in the execution of the planned programme.Seminars ,retreats and teaching should be frequently organize for them, thereby they will be well equipped for both marriage life or for single life ,perhaps that is the choice of the individual.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Observing the youth (single adults) in the church today, one would see that their pains and discomforts are many. Unemployment, marital struggles, distress, admission barrier among other things are the problems they are facing today. The researcher humbly submits the following recommendations based on findings from interviews and questionnaires administered.

On the part of the pastor, the seminary needs to review her curriculum to meet modern requirement for pastoral training .For example relevant courses like psychology, philosophy, interpersonal relationship, vocational guidance, ministerial ethic and some other counseling courses can be of importance for pastors. McCutcheon said: 'As to professional training, a pastor should have taken three or four seminary level courses in pastoral care and a short term internship, under professional supervisor, in a medical or psychotic facility.'<sup>20</sup>

Pastors must work hard to acquire more knowledge by reading wide to improve their skills in counseling. Since seminary training is an introduction to what pastors will meet on the field, pastors must endeavour to improve themselves. Because things

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with Pastor Emmanuel A. Adeniran Ogbomosho Unity Baptist Church 12th November, 2005.

change regularly and pastors also should study hard, read more to meet the world challenges.

Multi – staff ministry needs to be accepted by pastors and churches. The work of pastors in the church is enormous, and would need the assistance of trained pastors who can work effectively with them. A pastor can be called to be in charge of youths or those that never married in the church. Such pastor must be the one that has their love in mind, and creative in nature. Such pastor can easily detect youth, their problems and help the senior pastors in solving such problems in the church.

A pastor still needs an experienced pastor as his mentor. At this forum, experiences can be shared and advice may be given on how to improve youth and single adults care. Also, professional counselors may be invited from outside to give seminars on pastor – youth relationship and how to harness their potentials in the church. In order to be successful in the ministry.

The power of Prayer cannot be under estimated. Efficacy of prayer solves a lot of problems. The pastor needs to pray a lot and involve even the single adults in the prayer ministry. It is when we open up to the leadership of the Holy Spirit that we can succeed.

Proper care, recognition and respect should be given to never – married singles by the society, the church and they should be treated like any other adults in the church. The church and pastors should avoid judgmental attitude towards singles but should accept them as persons of worth without questioning their faith on the basis of being single.

There should be marriage seminars; and pre- marital counseling from time to time. There can also be single forum or singles ministry where issues peculiar to them

will be discussed. Singles should be involved at all levels of or church programmes from planning to implementation. The church can also provide never – married with single adult periodicals and Christian literatures where they can read about other singles and see how they managed their singleness. Singles also should learn how to, and develop healthy and right self- identity, self acceptance and close companionship

#### **RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY.**

At the beginning of this essay, Five (5) different types of single adults were highlighted – widow/widower, divorce, the separated unwed parents and the never married.

Each of these single adults has some peculiarities. Hence, this essay dealt with never – married singles. Therefore for further studies, it will be helpful if in-depth studies can be made about the remaining types of single adults.

Another area that needs in-depth study should be conducted on the causes of singleness. There are different causes for different types of single adults. It will be of help both to the church and the society to know these causes and how they can be curbed.