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DEVELOPING A MANUAL TO ADDRESS HURRIED  
COURTSHIP AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN  
GOSHEN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, OGBOMOSO

A PROJECT SUMMITTED TO THE  
FACULTY OF THE  
NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, OGBOMOSO  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
AWARD OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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09/0211

2013-0763

JUNE, 2013

## ABSTRACT

God ordained marriage to be an indissoluble lifelong covenant union between a man and a woman built upon total sacrificial Christ type love which is symbolic of the union of Christ and his church. While God is the author of marriage, separation or divorce is manmade and an aberration to the divine design, which design indicates that marriage is an important and serious institution which deserves or demands adequate understanding and preparation, thereto. However information has shown that though many Christian young adults have fanciful desire and look forward to a happy marriage without a clear understanding of what marriage is in accordance to God's design nor do they have the necessary preparation for same. The young adults have slipped from God's standard for marriage and preparation for same as they have adopted unchristian or worldly standard resulting in their non-appreciation of God's design for marriage and unhealthy preparation for marriage which have made them not to have time tested matured and virtuous courtship that would be a solid foundation for blissful, blessed and enduring marriage after God's own heart, thereby occasioning their marriage failures. As a means of curbing the incidences of lack of understanding of marriage as well as their ill-preparation for same which have found expression in the young adults' hurried or hasty courtship and thoughtless rush into marriage, the project examined hurried courtship among young adults in Goshen Baptist Association Ogbomosò as a case study; using biblical and theological resources to address the problem. The researcher carried out the project by way of designing a manual which contained five sections with the aim of educating the young adults and by extension possibly others about hurried courtship and its dangers as well as help the young adults to discover the values of matured and virtuous courtship as a preparatory stage for marriage. In order to achieve this, two sets of questionnaire were designed, the first was a survey of the understanding of the young adults about Christian courtship and marriage as well as the need for a matured, time tested courtship in preparation for marriage in order to prevent possible pitfalls in the marriage. A total of 130 questionnaires were distributed out of which 126 were returned, whereupon the researcher selected 120 questionnaires at random from the participants from fifteen churches of Goshen Baptist Association, Ogbomoso. This was immediately followed by the manual implementation, thereafter, the second set of questionnaire was administered to determine if there was improvement in the understanding of the young adults on the aforesaid subjects. During this stage of the project, 120 questionnaires were distributed out of which 110 were returned comprising of 6 deacons, 24 church officers and 80 church members. It was also meant to determine the readiness of the respondents to advance the cause of joy, peace and stability in marital life. The project revealed that biblical and theological teachings on Christian courtship and marriage could serve as deterrent to hurried courtship among the young adults as well as avert the problem of failed marriage associated with it. There was improvement in the understanding of the respondents after the manual implementation, which improvement cannot be said to be conclusive. It is therefore recommended that pastors or teachers of the word of God should take time to constantly teach their audience on christian courtship and Christian marriage as well as counsel particularly young adults who at times believe they know much through their exposure to secular literature and internet information but are grossly-deficient in the knowledge and practice of the biblical pattern of courtship and marriage. This will bring improvement in their members' understanding of the subjects and avert the doom of marriage failures.

dissoluble contract of which terms should only be respected and observed when it is convenient to do, giving the impression that marriage is only for better and not for worse or that it should only be enjoyed and not endured.

Inadequate understanding of biblical and theological concepts of courtship and marriage was discovered by the researcher during the pre-test stage of the project. The young adults of Goshen Baptist Association, Ogbomoso were the respondents for this it was revealed through post-test questionnaires that biblical and theological teachings on Christian courtship and marriage could serve as deterrents to hurried courtship among the respondents as well as avert the problem of failed marriage associated with it; as there was improvement in the understanding of Christian courtship and marriage by the respondents, which improvement would augur well for joyful peaceful and stable marriages.

## Conclusion

This researcher drew the following conclusions from this project:

From the review of related literature, it was concluded that God created marriage to be an holy and honourable estate, which should be permanent, indissoluble and heterosexual. That it is the husband that should take the initiative to leave, cleave and be joined as one flesh with his way in a lifelong covenant relationship that is symbolic of the relationship between God and Israel or Christ and his church. Therefore, marriage as ordained by God is a covenant and not a contract (Malachi 2:14-16), that any departure from the above divine pattern is humanistic and bound to bring attendant woes and doom.

Furthermore, it was concluded that with the above divine pattern for marriage, a clear understanding of serious preparation and commitment to it is necessary, which

should equally involve parents, pastors, counsellors as well as the church of intending partners, just as the intending partners must be prepared to live by God's standard of courtship and marriage and not imitate the unchristian world so that they will have joyful blessed and enduring marriages after God's own heart, it was equally discovered that evils of failed marriage are too terrible to be risked or toyed with, all concerned should therefore do all within their reach to prevent its evil wind to the partners, families, children, church and society.

The objectives of the project were to make the young adults and other Christians know the dangers of hurried courtship and help them appreciate the essence of Christian courtship and marriage and the need to have matured, time tested, virtuous courtship as a preparatory stage and foundation for a blissful, blessed and enduring marriage. From the analysis of the pre-test and post-test questionnaires, it was revealed that the objectives of this project were met as there was improvement in the understanding of the respondents on the above which would make for a better marriage and family.

For instance, on the respondents understanding of the Christian courtship, while 15.0 percent of them believed that Christian courtship does not determine success in marriage at pre-test stage, 7.3 percent of them maintained the same position at post-test stage which suggested an improvement of over 50 percent, while there was equally appreciable improvement on the issue of Christian courtship being to plan and pray about a future marriage by partners, 75.0 percent were in agreement with that at pre-test stage which rose to 90.0 percent at post-test stage. This then means that adequate biblical and theological teachings and counselling on Christian courtship and marriage will avert the increasing rate of failed marriages associated with hurried courtship.

## Recommendations

From this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. That pastors, teachers of God's word as well as counsellors should themselves improve their understanding of Christian courtship and marriage so that they can be better equipped to handle the subject.
2. That pastors, teachers of God's word, counsellors and other Christians concerned with the subjects of Christian courtship and marriage should have exemplary Christian homes that could offer examples to intending marriage partners and that any Christian that has not married or has encountered any form of failed marriage should not be assigned the responsibility concerning preaching, teaching or counselling on the subjects.
3. That pastors and their assistants should not assume that their preachings are taking sufficient care of the need of the young adults and other Christians to gather information on Christian courtship and marriage. They should engage in constant teaching on the subjects in form of seminars, workshops and through singles fellowship.
4. That the church should give sufficient room for pre-marital counselling so that the young adults could freely bear their mind which they may not be able to do during teaching or preaching.
5. The church should provide recreational facilities in the church which could include viewing of christian films on Christian courtship and marriage, which could also provide an opportunity for the young adults to interact together and develop intimacy which would not be associated with unchristian standard.

