

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF PARENTING IN THE CHURCH

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ALBERT ADENIYI DOSUMU

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ABSTRACT

The research examined the problems and challenges of parenting in the church. The researcher observed that parents can make positive impact in the training of children in the church. In order to achieve the purpose of this thesis and produce a solid academic work, the researcher interviewed parents in Shalom Baptist Association and parents from two other churches in Lagos Central Baptist Conference: First Baptist Church, Lagos and Araromi Baptist Church, Moloney to give account of their experiences as it concerns the problems and challenges of parenting in the church. Findings revealed that most Christian parents became Christians at the age of twelve years and they also got converted at the age of twelve years and above. The result of the respondents of those parents who became Christians revealed that a child can be serious for kingdom business; children can also cause problem in the church if they were not well trained in the way of the Lord. The following major recommendations were made: That Christian parents must not neglect their God-given role of teaching, training, and disciplining their children; that Christian parents must plan in such a way that they have enough time for their children. That Christian parents should lead their children to do evangelism by following Mission and Evangelism team of the church. Christian parents should positively relate to their children in order to instill Christian values and virtues in them.

5.2 CONCLUSION

This study aimed at finding out what Christian parents do to solve the problems and challenges of parenting in the church. The findings revealed that most Christian parents have been performing their duties in this regard. The results also shows that a larger percentage of respondents confirm that Christian parents more than any other person, are responsible to play vital roles in solving the problems and challenges of parenting in the church.

This could only be possible if there is cordial parent-child relationship. A child who is loved by his parent (s) would easily understand what the love of God to every body means. The scripture as recorded in the Gospel of John 3:16 expresses that God loves everybody.

The whole duty of parents rests on the child's physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs to make him or her fit well into the society and also build him or her to be responsible positively to himself or herself, parents, the church and the society at large. Parents carry out these responsibilities by nurturing, caring, training, clothing, proper feeding, providing for guidance and focusing a child constructively.

Parents not only influence children in school achievement, but they also make decision about children's out of school activities. Whether children participate in such activities as sports, music and other activities is heavily influenced by the extent to which parents sign up children for such activities and encourage their participation.

It should be noted that God designed the home so that children could learn by example. Their value system is to emerge in the context of dynamic Christian living, where the father loves the mother as "Christ loved the church" and as children see their mother submitting to the father as "the church is to subject to Christ," they are learning biblical truths by direct experience. This is far more meaningful than mere verbalization.

The greatest psychological need of a child during his first years of life is security and love. An environment that is filled with uncertainties, adult disagreements and impatience, creates insecurity for a child. Children in the first years of life need exposure to parents who are truly manifesting the fruits of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23).

When parents manifest these characteristics, it makes the child's environment a secure place for him to grow in and to develop.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommended based on the findings and literature review. That Christian parents must not neglect their God-given responsibility of teaching, training and discipline their children. That Christian parent (s) must plan in such a way that they will have enough time for their children. That Christian parent(s) should lead their children to witnessing by following the evangelism team of their churches.

That Christian parent (s) should not compel their children to accept Christ, but to diligently teach and nurture them in God's word through teaching in the Bible and other activities in the church. That Christian parent (s) should positively relate to their children in order to instill Christian value and virtues in them.

The church should put in place effective family ministry and family must contend with yet other problems facing them from outside and still train and disciple their children in biblical truth. In the same vein, Christian parents and the church must be ready to disciple, equip and train their children early in the way of the Lord so that they can be used by the Holy Spirit for the work of evangelism.

Parents are to mentor and nurture their children and make them true disciples of Jesus Christ. This will make them (children) join in the crusade of the great commission and make positive impact in the society. Also Christian parents need to move closer in relationship with God so that He can guide and lead them on their role of training their children according to God's will and the church and society become a living and happy place today.

The need for cooperation and cordial relationship between father and mother,, which brought about the support that parents provide one another in jointly training a child can be very germane as far as parenting is concerned. As poor coordination between parents, undermining of the parent, lack of cooperation and warm and disconnection by one parents, are conditions that place children at risk.

When parents have known Christ, it becomes a great challenge. However, one cannot give what he has not; parents must have the ability to communicate the gospel and faith to children in clear and understandable terms.

That a child needs to be allowed to develop his own initiative in exploring new situations and in broadening his horizon by contact with a variety of people, he is eager to enter the next stage of development. It is often a difficult time for parents when their wisdom is challenged, and they must show their position of authority with the teacher who now seems to become the real source of authority for the child. This gives parents clue of area where they need to work in guiding and training of the child.

Children under the influence of Satan and bad company need the support and serious Bible teaching and prayer of the parents. They need to be taken to the church pastor for special counselling and prayer of deliverance in order to prevent them from becoming bad reference point in the church to other children.

The church needs to work with the home because of the significant irreplaceable role in nurturing their children in the things of God. The church should provide training for parents on how to understand and rear their children.

As parents, we must not be afraid in giving children direction through our experience. One of the major responsibilities of adults is to give children freedom to learn from their own experiences and to shoulder the consequences of their choices. We

need to realize that freedom and responsibility are inseparable, and that one cannot be learned without the other.

Parents must see themselves as the teachers of their children in much the same capacity as school teachers. A comparison is made between the strategies, methods and materials we use as well as the content usually associated with the role of the school teacher and those used by the mother in her daily interaction with the child.