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**NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**PASTOR – CONGREGATION MORAL RELATIONSHIP AND ITS  
EFFECTS ON THE SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL LIFE OF SAPELE  
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, DELTA STATE.**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO**

**THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES NIGERIAN  
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
OGBOMOSO, NIGERIA**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE  
MASTER IN THEOLOGY (CHRISTIAN ETHICS)**

**BY**

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**JUNE, 2006**

## ABSTRACT

This thesis "Pastor – Congregation Moral Relationship and its effects on the Spiritual and Social Life of Sapele Baptist Association," addresses the obnoxious and unhealthy relationship that exists between Pastor and their parishioners in the above Association. From the study, the researcher identifies and treats the principles of good relationship, "dos and don't of relationship and how to maintain good relationship. Again, the researcher brings to bare the effects of relationship.

From the study, the positive effects of relationship are considered spiritually, physically, socially and economically. While the negative effects are crisis, unfaithfulness, lack of incentives to work and growth retardation. From the findings of this work the researcher offers the following for a better pastor-congregation relationship. They are: Follow after righteousness, show concern to the flock, be rightly related to people, and learn how to deal with individuals. Others are: investigate matter properly, maintain discipline, delegate responsibilities, defend the truth, and control your emotion.

Finally, there is a resume that weaves the entire discourse together. This is followed with suggestions for further studies. Thus student and others can work on the suggested areas.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### TOWARD A BETTER PASTOR – CONGREGATION MORAL RELATIONSHIP

In order for the pastor and the congregation to have a healthy relationship that will affect the spiritual and social life of Sapele Baptist Association, this researcher recommends the following: follow after righteousness, show concern to the flock, be rightly related to people, learn how to deal with individuals and investigate matters properly. Others are maintain discipline, elect church workers, defend the truth and control your emotions. These shall be discussed briefly one after the other.

#### **Follow After Righteousness**

The above command is binding on every minister and church member if good relationship is to be promoted and nurtured. It should be the first and basic principle of the pastor in his dealings and relationship with the congregation. Paul charged Timothy to follow after righteousness (I Tim. 6:11; II Tim. 2:23). When Jesus said “do good to them that hate you, love your enemies and pray for them, turn the other cheek, go the second mile, bless them that curse you (Matt. 6 and 7), he was emphasizing on the need for righteousness.

The pastor is “not only a preacher of righteousness, but also a follower of righteousness as taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup> It is the

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<sup>1</sup> Onwuka, 112.

following after righteousness that makes the pastor a good man whose life cannot be spoken against. This includes his being thoughtful and hard working, orderliness and good deeds, kindness to strangers and hospitality to those in need (1 Tim. 3:2). The pastor is to keep this command “follow after righteousness” without spot till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in order to maintain good relationship with this congregation. This is also true of the congregation.

### **Show Concern to the Flock**

Again, to have a better pastor-congregation relationship, the pastor must be diligent to know the state of his flock, and adequately take care of them (Prov. 27:23). The pastor does this by providing adequate spiritual food and reliable leadership. There are situations where the individual church members need special attention of their pastor in addition to his pulpit sermons. The pastor in such situation should show concern by identifying with the need of his people. Personal approach and contact should be made by the pastor to those whom he feels are lagging behind in spiritual things. The Church members will like to have and relate with a pastor who is genuinely interested in their spiritual welfare.

### **Be Rightly Related to People**

The pastor is expected by virtue of his office to be a man of good reputation, and must be rightly related to members of his congregation as well as to the outsiders. Poor relationship with people will certainly “hinder and undermine any hope of achieving success in the work of the local church.”<sup>2</sup> Again, the pastor must also be in good terms with his officers and/or church

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas C. Oden, *Pastoral Theology Essentials of Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1964), 42.

workers. He must be kind, sincere, and appreciative to his helpers in the ministry. The pastor must learn to encourage and praise them for their good efforts. Their shortcomings must be corrected by the pastor through teachings with fatherly love, rather than with abusive and offensive utterances from the pulpit.

### **Learn How to Deal with Individuals**

Another area that will enhance a healthy pastor-congregation relationship is the ability of the pastor to study and know his congregation not only by names but also by their characters. Since the church is a conglomeration of people from different backgrounds, it behooves the pastor to apply his mind to understand the behavioural constitution or "inherent patterns of behaviour in the lives of the church members."<sup>3</sup> This will enable the pastor to deal and relate with individuals according to their different level of temperaments.

The pastor must also show respect to various age groups in the church. The old men should be treated as fathers respectfully. The old women should be treated as mothers; while the young women, girls and boys be treated as brothers and sisters. The pastor must be "a friend of the rich and the poor."<sup>4</sup> As a shepherd, he must be balanced in his dealings and relationship with different categories of church members.

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<sup>3</sup> Victor Cole, "Concepts of Pastoral Leadership in Africa: A Case Study," *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, 1990, 25.

<sup>4</sup> Yemi Ladipo, "Shepherd Hallmark of a Christian Leader," *East Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 4, 1984, 101 – 114.

