

THE INFLUENCE OF TRADITIONAL MARKET ENVIRONMENT
ON CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY IN
OGBOMOSO BAPTIST CONFERENCE:
A CHALLENGE TO PASTORAL CARE

A Project Submitted to the School of Postgraduate Studies,
Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomosho.
The Department of THEOLOGY
Faculty of Theological Studies

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Award of the DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY:

KEHINDE, GABRIEL OLUFEMI
UJ/06/NB/0129

JUNE 2010.

J.C. POOL LIBRARY
BAPTIST SEMINARY
OGBOMOSO NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of traditional market environment on Christian marriage and family in Ogbomoso Baptist Conference. This is in terms of fidelity, monogamy, companionship, as well as economic and academic functions. The study also examined the impact of a corrective manual in the understanding of the couples in such environment.

The researcher carried out the project by way of designing a manual. The manual contained five lectures with the aim of educating pastors, deacons, church workers and church members on the negative influence of traditional market environment on Christian marriage and family, and how the pastors may come in to solving these negative influences. Two sets of questionnaire were designed. The first was a survey of the understanding of pastors, deacons, church workers, and church members on the influence of traditional market environment on Christian marriage and family, as well as how they expect pastors to address the problems that are militating against Christian marriage and family in traditional market environment. A total number of 180 questionnaires were distributed out of which 153 were returned comprising 4 pastors, 10 deacons, 72 church workers and 67 church members. This was immediately followed by teaching of the five lectures contained in the manual. Following this, the second questionnaire was administered, to determine the new understanding of pastors, deacons, church workers, and church members on the influence of traditional market environment on Christian marriage and family. Here, 150 questionnaires were distributed out of which 129 were returned which consisted of 4 pastors, 9 deacons, 65 church workers and 51 church

members. It was also meant to discover their expectations of what pastoral care methods to be employed to correct the negative influence of traditional market environment on Christian marriage and family.

The project revealed that traditional market environment is influencing Christian marriage and family. On the negative note, living in a traditional market environment promotes sexual promiscuity and concubinage. It encourages polygamous marriage and secret property acquisition. It also promotes loneliness, parental negligence, dropping out of school and low academic attainment. On the positive note, it boosts economic or financial strength of Christian couples. It also helps in discharging reasonable economic responsibilities of Christian couples. In the balance sense, it is discovered that there are more vices than virtues to Christian marriage and family. After the teachings, the participants showed better understanding of how traditional market environment is influencing Christian marriage and family.

It is therefore recommended that pastors ministering in traditional market environments could make good use of the contents of the manual to provide pastoral care for couples in their churches as a way of mitigating the bad influence of traditional market environment on Christian marriage and family.

Conclusions

From this project one can draw the following conclusions:

From the literature review, it was concluded that the well-being of marriage and family is important to the well-being of the society. Any attack on marriage and family is an attack on the society. Although, there are several facets of marriage and family today, the traditional Christian family pattern still remains the only way by which any society can remain peaceful and progressive. The way marriage and family is patterned will determine what and how that society will look like. There is, therefore, the need for all and sundry to do everything possible to go back to the traditional Christian family pattern if there is the desire to make the world a better place to live for all.

Furthermore, from the theological framework, it was concluded that marriage and family from Christian point of view is unique and different. Christian marriage is entered into honourably, and sex before marriage is against God's will for marriage. The husband in Christian marriage loves his wife, he is considerate in dealing with her, treats her with respect, and fulfils his marital duty to God's glory. The Christian wife also submits to her husband as unto the Lord, as well as giving him his due respect. Children in Christian family also are exemplary in their living. They obey their parents and live to the glory of God.

From the study, it is clear that Christians who are residing in traditional market environments are aware that many of them are not living up to God's expectations and standards as far as Christian marriage and family are concerned. It is also clear that traditional market environment is influencing Christian marriage and family both negatively and positively. However, the negative influence is more than the positive influence. In addition, a proper understanding of what Christian marriage and family stand for, the negative influence of traditional market environment on Christian marriage and family, and assurance of the possibility of having a joyful marriage, even in a traditional market environment can help Christian marriage and family live up to God's standard.

The objective of the project was to raise the awareness of pastors to see the need to provide pastoral care and counseling for couples in traditional market environment. This is necessary in order to provide an understanding of the influence of traditional market environment on Christian marriage and family. Pastors are also expected to see the negative influence as a challenge to pastoral care. It also meant to sensitize Christian couples in traditional market environments to the negative impacts of traditional market on Christian marriage and family. This knowledge is expected to create a relationship between the pastors and Christian couples to find a lasting solution to the negative influence on Christian marriage and family.

From the analysis of the pre-test and post-test questionnaires of the project, it was clear that the objectives of this project were met. For example, through the teaching of the manual, the pastors, deacons, church officers and church members become more knowledgeable about the extent to which living in a traditional market environment is influencing Christian marriage and family. After the teaching of the

manual, they decided to be committed to the virtues of Christian marriage and family. In addition, they agreed to make themselves available for family enrichment programmes as well as avail themselves the opportunity of pre-marital counselling as measures of strengthening Christian marriage and family in a traditional market environment.

Recommendations

From this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. This study revealed that traditional market environments have influence on Christian marriage and family. It is therefore recommended that Christian couples living in traditional market environments should face the fact that the environment where they are living can negatively influence Christian marriage and family.
2. This study also revealed that living in a traditional market environment promotes negative Christian values. It is therefore recommended that Christian couples living in a traditional market environment should be the light and the salt of the world by way of not being promiscuous, and thus become models to be emulated by others.
3. This study from another perspective revealed that living in a traditional market environment greatly encourages Christian men to engage in polygamy. It is therefore recommended that as a result of this knowledge, Christian men in traditional market environment should be careful not to join others in becoming polygamous.
4. The need to make good use of financial opportunities that exist in a traditional market environment demands that Christian couples should be involved in good investment that will allow them concentrate on their family and church.

5. Christian family members in traditional market environments should arrange and plan their time in a way that will provide for them the opportunity to be interacting together as Christian family.
6. Churches should link up with each other to provide accommodation for Christian men and women who are into trading which requires traveling outside of their matrimonial homes. This will help to prevent them from falling into the traps of promiscuous men and women that are common in traditional market environments.
7. Churches in traditional market environments are also enjoined to be involved in market evangelism. This will enable them to preach the gospel to market men and women, and thereby win some to the Lord if not many of them. When they are won to the Lord the negative influence of traditional market environment on Christian marriage and family will be reduced to barest minimum
8. Since living in a traditional market environment does not promote academic pursuit of children in Christian families, it is therefore recommended that Christian parents and children be encouraged to develop interest in academic pursuit.
9. Pastors ministering in traditional market environments could make good use of the contents of the manual of this project and other helpful available materials to provide pastoral care for couples in their churches as a way of solving/correcting the bad influence of traditional market environment on Christian marriage and family.
10. It is recommended that further studies be carried out on the influence of traditional market environment on church growth. This is to ascertain

whether the traditional market environment influences church growth or not, and to what extent if it does.