

THREAT TO MORALITY IN SOCIETY: A CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH

ABIODUN OLATUNJI OLATIDE
06 / 0091

A Thesis in the Department of Theology,
Faculty of Theological Studies
Submitted to
The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso
in partial fulfilment of requirements for the award of the degree of
MASTER of DIVINITY (THEOLOGY), UNIVERSITY OF JOS

June, 2009.

ABSTRACT

The church is supposed to be an example to the society beaming her light and seasoning the world, but the fact that moral degeneracy is prevalent in the society at large is a common knowledge too. More worrisome is the perception that this has crept into the church which is the body of Christ in the world. Such situation should a cause for concern. This trend poses great danger to its very existence and future, as a result of negligence and failures of the church to play its role over the society which has led to a wide spread of worldly vices thriving in the church. A substantial number of church members are unwittingly lured into moral decadence without careful understanding.

This study therefore, set to find out and explores the causes and the extent to which sexual immorality in the society has crept into church, especially through pornography and what solution can be proffered to curtail it. In order to achieve this aim, this research employs the method of literature review, empirical investigation, questionnaire and direct interviews with adults, youths and teenagers of Nigerian Baptist Convection churches in Kwara Conference.

Among the findings were that: Pornography is prevalent among the youth-the church; the church has failed to disciple and teach properly sexual education to the youth; parents have shirked their responsibilities to properly supervise and monitor the activity of their children and give corrective measures; and social environment has been providing negative enforcement through mass media, television, periodicals as well as the internet.

The study consequently offers some recommendations to address the problem. It is hoped that if the recommendations are addressed, the pollutions will be significantly ameliorated.

5.2 Conclusion.

This study shows that pornography is a major root of the common moral excesses of our time. The African traditional society, Islamic religion and Christianity are totally against it. It is a rampant menace, which must be curbed urgently. The negative effects, which it unleashes on the individual victims and the society in general is enormous. The study shows proofs to the general suspicion that even ministers are not totally immune to this sexual perversion.

This study can then draw the following conclusion:

1. The society is changing rapidly; moral laxity, financial pressure and unhealthy exposure to pornography are making young people to be involved in sex, not minding the negative risks and dangers involved.
2. The pressure of peer group influence, media influence and boy-friend and girl-friend affairs have great effect in luring young people who neither are nor fully rooted in Christ to sin.
3. Nominal Christianity is not sufficed to keep Christian away from sexual sin.
4. Only intensive evangelism and meaningful discipleship can help Christian develop into spiritually maturity.
5. To maintain spiritual maturity the church should be more involved in serious evangelism among the youths in the secondary schools and universities and influence the society through active participation in youth affairs especially at different stages of choice and decision. The church must as a matter of urgency aid in the development of the economy of the young ones, guiding and teaching them the mind and purpose of God for everyone because Jesus is coming for a church without spot or

wrinkle "... to present her (the church) to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless" (Eph. 5:27 NIV).

5.3 Recommendation

(1) To Young Ones

- Be Born Again: Moral corruption is part of the list as manifestation of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19 – 21. II Corinthians 5:17 says that whoever accepts Jesus as his/her personal Lord and Saviour is a new person capable of separating self from sinful past and starting anew. Be transformed by the renewal of your behaviour. Accepting Christ personally does great things in one's life other than the final salvation. The peace enjoyed and the high morally living that is provided and the promises of the one that never fails that will be fulfilled.

- Do not be deceived: 'Birds of the same feather flock together'. Do not keep company with unbelieving male or female friends, do not be enticed with sweet words or by the scenes. The Bible warns that "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers... therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord" (II Cor. 6:14 – 17 NIV). Mind what you watch and read. Seductive materials should be totally avoided. Watch out for what you hear and listen to. Set goals for relationship with the opposite sex, the end of a matter is better than its beginning (Ecc. 7:8). Youths should always ask themselves, relevant questions like, is what am doing now going to help my future? What will this thing add to my personality? Have intimacy in God's way. The quest for intimacy must be a godly one.

- Attend Christian Seminars and Talks on Pre-marital, Marital and Post-marital issues. Seek counsel from more matured Christians if you are prone to sexual abuses. Read materials that speak against moral indiscipline. Read and understand what the

Bible says about morality and put them into action. Be determined to be morally disciplined knowing fully that where there is a will, there is a way.

- Pray for inner strength and courage to stand against any immoral act even among your peer. Such prayer should be said with all seriousness and sincerity, not lip service.

(2) To the Parents and the Church

- Sex Education: The need for the parents and church to teach the teenagers and young adults sex education cannot be over stressed. They need to be taught early in life that human sexuality is meant for the enrichment of our lives, not for destruction, for prepared adult and not for even prepared young teenagers. Hence, single males and females need to seriously be taught the discipline of sublimation, harnessing their sexual energy and channelling it towards constructive directions.

- The Parents should be watchful and caring: Young people who have been involved in most of the moral vices will, unlikely be willing to talk freely, certainly not at first. The parent should as a matter of care probe into their children's life and privacy with a view to helping them. The parents should be careful and diligent to communicate an attitude of acceptance, understanding and willingness to listen trying to lead the wards to discuss the reason for some moral depravity will go a long way in helping them. The parents and church should help break unhealthy relationships. Breaking all friendships and relationships with anyone who is still involved in moral failure will help shape the young moral attitude (II Thess. 3:13 – 15). Church library and morally sound Christian literatures that can help the youth should be provided. Be personal accountability mentor (Jas. 5:15 – 18). Freedom from moral decadency cannot be complete unless the church, her leadership and the parents make themselves

available as an accountability mentor who is also trustworthy. Christians who were truly matured should be ready and serve as youth advisers, councillors, co-ordinators and senior friends.

- The church and Parents should stand tall and firm on moral standards and shoe it. Advice, encouragement, information, adequate and balanced teachings should be put in place. Godly counsel, recreation facilities and church censors team to guide the young ones should also be made use of. Parents should give more attention to their children and a righteous relationship between Adults, youth, pastors, members and even teenagers should be worked on.

- Dressing, clothing and moral codes can be put in place and jealously guided by the church and parents. Seminars, workshop programmes and discipleship teachings on Christian virtues should be embraced and made to be a normal, frequent feature.

- Christian's organisations (ministries, churches, denominations) must initiate, sponsor, sustain and intensify a more vigorous campaign and promotion of sexual purity, train and equipped the youths to resist and reject the attractive enticement of the immoral, sinful, secular world. The churches can see that their members are informed concerning current sexual morality. The pulpit provides the best opportunities. Other rich resources are in the field of counselling, and helping members meet their problems. Church's position on premarital and extramarital intercourse should be clearly and affirmatively stated.

- Parents must be encouraged to train their children concerning the divine purpose of sex and not left for someone else to do. Church library provided with rich, adequate literature prepared by professionals could render real service.

- The youth themselves should flee every appearance of evil, read and watch morally sound books and movies. Avoidance of wrong relationship and friendship is

also a point to note. Seek godly counsel, avoiding idleness, undefined visitation and staying together behind a closed door with any opposite sex cannot help out.

- Writing down of visions and working towards a better future may not allow 'derailing' too. (Hab. 2:1-5)