

THE CHALLENGE OF DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR AMONG TEENAGERS FOR THE
CONTEMPORARY PASTORS

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ABSTRACT

This project titled: "The Challenge of Deviant Behaviour among Teenagers for the Contemporary Pastor" was motivated by the researcher's passion and interest in looking at what role the contemporary Pastor, the Church as well as the Community can play in keeping promising teenagers from losing their way in life as a result of deviant behaviours. The research was carried out so as to identify some prevalent causes of deviance among teenagers in Bethel Association and how the Church can help in tackling the cause so as to reduce to the barest minimum or even eliminate if possible acts of deviance among teenagers in the area. This work was conducted as a field research and questionnaire was used as the instrument of the research. The questionnaire was administered among Churches in Bethel Association of Ogbomosho Baptist Conference. The findings revealed that factors such as psychological and individual risk factor (which comprise self-esteem, self-worth and personal character traits), family and socio-economic factors (comprising family relationship, and financial status), peer influence (comprising the influence of friends and playmates), and the societal factors (which comprise the environment a child lives in and the kind of media he/she interacts with), all contribute to the high rate of deviance among teenagers in Bethel Association. The researcher therefore recommends that the Church should wake up to her responsibility of educating both the parents and the teenagers through her various programmes as well as engaging these teenagers meaningfully after school through vocational training. The community should also see the need to serve as watchdogs to monitor the activities of these young ones and report any untoward activity of these teenagers. Finally, the Pastors, Church leaders and adults should live a life worthy of emulation and be a good role model for the younger generation.

Conclusion

Having been able to look at some of the causes of deviance among teenagers especially in Bethel Association which are based on certain factors such as need for self-recognition, need for freedom, peer influence as well as societal factors, it is important to know that all these factors put together are not enough to thwart the purpose of God for any child if every party that is involved in the growth and development of a child (that is, the child, parents, church, community, school, government) play their parts as expected. In fact if everyone does his/her part well, the world will be a better a place to live in and the future of our nation will no longer be in jeopardy.

The part of the church in ensuring that the future of these teenagers who represents the future of the nation is preserved cannot be overemphasized. It is interesting to note that apart from the fact that the population of the study is concentrated on Christian teenagers, the response of the teenagers in relation to whether they enjoy going to church revealed that 88.3 percent of these teenagers enjoyed attending church which is a prove that majority of them are not only attending the church because their parents are attending but rather they have passion for church themselves. This is a proof that the church can make positive impact in the lives of these children by preventing them from becoming deviant children.

Recommendations

As destructive as deviance can be in the lives of the teenager, his/her family, the church as well as the community, there are still measures that can be taken in order to correct this deadly act especially among the so called future of this nation .The Church as

a religious institution has her own role to play in stemming the tide of deviance in the schools and society.

1. Churches should be agents of inculcating moral values. They can do this through sermon, preaching, talk, scriptural studies, quiz and debate. What churches should do in all their meetings is to teach morality inherent in religion and as such, touch every aspect of human life.
2. Pastors should ensure that the Church through her youth organizations teach acceptable morals and worship leaders should be examples to the youths. Church leaders should promote Christian ethical values.
3. Pastors should also make sure that the educational responsibilities of the Church are taken seriously. Education is one of the areas where intervention of the Church is almost as old as Christianity in Nigeria. It is not an overstatement to say that education is the bedrock of development. It is worthy to note that the problem of deviance among the teenagers is as a result of lack of or improper education. It is therefore expected of the church to model an educational system (that can be adopted by other educational outfits) through the help of the Holy Spirit, built on the fear of God as foundation, and nurtured with the blessings of God.
4. Furthermore, Pastors can ensure that the church engages these youth in youth empowerment activities. This can be done either through provision of gainful employment for the youth or provision of various skills that will equip youth with additional qualifications that will empower such youths for gainful employments. The Church can set up vibrant social support schemes either as a collective body such as

- the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) or denominational bodies which will be aimed at providing training and possibly start them in choice vocations.
5. The Church can also set up agricultural training schemes.
 6. They could also set up endowment schemes, float her banks or go in partnership with existing Federal Government owned banks.
 7. The Church can introduce and implement some of these policies by gainfully engaging her teenagers or youths during holidays or after school hours. This would limit the negative influence of the environment on them.
 8. The parents should also be sensitized on the need to be closer to their wards, show them love and encouragement. Day's like Father's day and Mother's day can be taken advantage of to inform and educate parents on what should be their role in the development of their children. The Church should also throw challenges to the parents to further spur them towards ensuring that their children are adequately taken care of. All these will go a long way in helping our society curb the menace of deviant children.
 9. The school should be made conducive to enhance learning for the teenagers. Every activity such as bullying and gangsterism should be discouraged by the school authority. The students should be made to cultivate a positive attitude towards school. The curriculum of the school should be made in such a way that will make the students to develop mentally, physically, and psychologically thereby producing a complete child.
 10. The community also has an important role to play in preventing deviance among the teenagers most importantly by keeping a watch over the activities of these young

ones. Each member of the community should serve as watchdog monitoring their activities and escapade so that whenever any strange movement is noticed among these young ones they will quickly report and actions will be taken immediately to forestall the consequence. By so doing, they will be able to keep these teenagers at bay thereby reducing any anti-social activity that they might have been involved in.