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Editorial Note

In this issue, we continue to engage in how social and economic dynamics influence the family. The irrefutable point that the family is the basic unit of every society is made with the fervent belief that it nurtures its members and releases them to society. The failure or success of a society is intricately connected to how the family grooms its members. The inevitable conclusion is that the stronger the family in contemporary society, the better for all. In this light, Ayantayo blazed the trail by arguing that the traditional roles played by members of the family in the past have been affected by the ever-changing socio-economic factors in contemporary society. This dynamic and forward-looking social reality immediately suggests that members of the family must assume new roles that align with the demand and expectations of society. However, he argued that we must holistically develop a family based on blending treasured traditional values with contemporary dynamic values.

Alawode and Aderele examine the causes, effects, and solutions to substance abuse by members of the family. According to them, the rate at which the youth use or abuse substances has become so alarming that it requires deft musicological intervention. They argued that musicologists must take it as a point of duty to engage and minister to youth involved in substance use to restore them to fellowship with their families and Christ. Asaolu argued that although conflict is natural, marital conflict is complex and has serious implications for the family and society. Since conflict is human-made, Asaolu identified natural and potential causes of conflict in marriage and suggested that there are irreducible ethical prescriptions whose adoption and application can help to minimize conflict in the family. Salifu and Hammans's empirical exploration of drug abuse among the youth in the Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria, clearly shows that it has assumed a dangerous trend that requires urgent intervention by government institutions and the family. They suggest that ethical principles are required to address this trend through socialisation as well as the spiritual exercise of

faith. Adeola's article centers on how flexibility is a virtue that couples should cultivate to navigate traditional impositions that might negatively affect the family. He adopts a theological standpoint that argues that consistent and mutual fellowship together in the family helps prevent external infiltration into the family.

Odeleye and Adeyanju examine the necessity of resolving conflict among young couples. As part of the mandate of pastoral care ministry, pastors should ensure that their ministry intentionally cares about the health of young people's marriages. As a result of the potential consequences of failure in early marriages, the moral burden to guide and guard against unnecessary conflict in young homes must be borne by pastors by deploying their spiritual and moral training and authority. Oyedele specifically examines the roles of pastoral care in infidelity in Christian homes. He argues that one of the causes of conflict in the family is sexual infidelity by a spouse. This, he argues, can lead to the breakdown of marriage if pastoral care is not given in such a way as to ensure forgiveness. Still, on pastoral care, Adeyanju unfurls the complexities that COVID-19 imposed on communal coexistence. Social distancing affected the communal setting in that members of the community had to deliberately keep some reasonable distance to be safe. At such a moment, Adeyanju thinks that pastoral care ministry is critical in mitigating the consequences of social distancing and keeping healthy by all.

Kelechi and Oderinus's interest is in unhealthy rivalry among siblings in the family. The adverse effects rivalry has on the family call for critical attention to be paid to it. They suggest that parents must conduct themselves do not suggest that they love one child more than the other. Ogundipe returns to the role of the pastoral care unit in fostering unity and resolving marital conflict. To correctly resolve conflict, each issue that causes conflict must be examined on its own rather than deploy one solution fits all approach. This is where the dexterity of pastoral care comes in. Oluwaronke believes that Christian parenting is a critical means of mitigating social vices that

have continued to plague contemporary society. Oluwaronke itemizes and also proffers solutions to the causes of social vices that require good parenting and counseling to resolve. Victor re-examines the concept of one flesh marital bond as a quintessential measure couples need to take to resolve their conflict. The one flesh approach argues that conflict inflicts self-pain on the couples, and they should see each other as one. And finally, Ayinde explores the impacts of social media on Christian youth couples. She argues that time is essential in developing relationships in marriage. Consequently, when more time is spent on social media to neglect the spouse, conflict is bound to arise. Christian principles are thus recommended to ensure a balanced use of social media for the family's health.

I, therefore, welcome you to explore in detail the arguments and issues raised in this issue.

Prof. Benson Ohihon Igboin
Editor in Chief

CHRISTIAN PARENTING AS A TOOL FOR MITIGATING SOCIETAL VICES IN THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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Abstract

The article examined Christian parenting to mitigate societal vices in contemporary times. Prevalence social vices include sexual harassment/assaults and promiscuity, pornography, prostitution, cultism, gambling, drugs, kidnapping, examination malpractice, pocket-picking, bribery, corruption, hooliganism, character assassination, impersonation, financial fraud, and rape are mentioned. The paper considered possible causes for the rise of these problems in society. It also discussed the concept of Christian parenting and suggested some strategies that can be employed to lessen social vices confronting humanity in contemporary times. The paper concludes that if Christian parents are dedicated to fulfilling their responsibilities and try to train their wards in the Christian way, social vices might diminish. The writer, through this article recommends that parents should help their children love God and see things or situations from in God's perspectives; they should build confidence and trust in their children which will help them develop their self-esteem so that people around them will not easily influence them.

Keywords: Christian parenting, societal vices, young people, contemporary time

Introduction

The contemporary time has become so challenging that young people of school age are becoming a severe threat to society. Most parents do not have time to train their wards because of their professional or

vocational commitment. As a result, these have affected many children as they are faced with developmental crises. Yet, the development of human life requires emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual and physical abilities, every individual is expected to grow in these aspects as creatures that can mobilise their activities to achieve their goals.

Child upbringing and parenting have been an age-long issue in the society. In contemporary times some parents are not concerned about how their children live. They do not attach much importance to nurturing and watching children as they develop in all aspects of life. Some parents concentrate more on the child's educational and physical development and are less concerned about other aspects of life that make the child a complete being.

When a child is well brought up, parents and society will enjoy peace, and the child will become helpful to him or herself, his parents and the community. Nevertheless, this writer cannot overemphasise the degree of diminution experienced in children's internalised behaviour in society in the present world. Due to inadequate parenting, young people have become criminals, thugs and are involved in all sorts of bad behaviour that can be considered evil today.

However, it is accurate that people are better trained and equipped to do most things, such as driving a car and pursuing a career, than raising a child. Parents often stray away without direction and compromise natural and good parenting values with minor concessions. Nevertheless, the busyness of life should never get in the way of the business of parenting (Burns 2007: 21-28). The scripture clarified that God's plan at creation is that everyone should be His representation on earth, but this plan was thwarted when man ate from the fruit God forbade them to eat. This writer opines that most problems in society today are due to inadequate parenting.

Thus, this work will discuss Christian parenting as a tool to reduce societal vices in the present time. This writer has set three objectives to be achieved through this paper. The paper will discuss societal evils and their causative factors among young people in the

contemporary world, examine the concept of Christian parenting, and discuss Christian parenting as a tool to mitigate social vices in recent times.

Concept of Christian Parenting

When the work of creation was completed, in the first account of creation, God blessed Adam and Eve and said to them, “be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1: 28). By implication, God's blessing came along with some responsibilities for Adam and Eve because they must educate their children as parents. Child training or education is one of the most critical things in society (Ogunsola 2021: 130). Every community has a way of educating and training children for a good life. This act has been one of the persistent concerns of people throughout history (Fafunwa 1990: 15).

The task of parenting in the African context is enormous and often puts pressure on the mother, better still, parents, sometimes relatives and the rest of society (Simon and Edim 2013: 65). Parenting is a form of teaching. “Good teaching cannot be condensed to technique; good teaching comes from the integrity and identity of the teacher” (Palmer 1998: 10). Therefore, parenting has to be filled with tenderness and love when dealing with children to bring them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord (Ifeanyichukwu 2013). The above assertion implies that parents are stewards of young people who bear the image of God and whose lives will finally be directed by the choices they make before their creator (Seel 2000: 23).

Parenting seems simple, but indeed, it is demanding. It reveals the supreme case study of the state of parents' heart; no one knows it better than the children. The task of parenting is tells more about the parents' personality than what their children see them do. Human strengths or individual natural inclinations are not enough to accomplish. Unconditional love never originates in man but instead is channelled through relationships. Thus, as Christians, parenting begins with the transformation of parent's heart, who is an apprentice of Jesus. There is no other basis for influencing children than to live in the kingdom (Seel 2000: 92 citing Willard 1993).

Seel (2000: 37-38) assumes that Christian parenting is when parents themselves are living such a life that they desire their children to live. For example, parents who want their wards to learn humility will make their children cultivate humble attitudes through their relationship. This is important because no one can teach what they do not know, nor show what they do not live. Hence, godly parenting is all about who the parents are in their personality. Christian parenting must influence the source, the will, rather than impose the course and behaviour on young ones.

Subsequently, Christian parents are not to place children and family above God but are responsible for instructing their children in spiritual truth and discipline error (Seel 2000: 38). Christian parenting aims to train children to fulfil specific calling in the kingdom (Fleming 2006: 20), Christ-like parenting, therefore, involves treating the children as Jesus treats us. The truth is that authentic parenting cannot be accomplished through human wisdom or power, but it requires the grace and strength of God.

Parent's role in a child's upbringing is not just to mould but to unfold the child's potential. Parents should aim to find God-given purposes and train children to live them out. Christian parenting requires that parents recognise every child's uniqueness and help them fulfil it (Fleming 2006: 23). Strategic parenting is a kind of leadership that requires that parents become students of their children's world, especially when dealing with teenagers because to lead successfully demands that one becomes the student of those they seek to directly influence. Willard suggested that parents should study what their children believe in contrast to what they profess to believe. He stated, "what has to be done, instead of trying to drive people to do what we think they are supposed to do, is to be honest about what we and others believe" (Willard 1998: 308).

Parents must stop talking and start listening to their children to influence them effectively. Obviously, some parents are too busy to listen to their children in the modern world. They set rules telling them how to think and what they expect children to do. Sloan (1990:

155) asserts that listening is not the same as hearing; while hearing is physical, listening is more psychological. Nevertheless, talking and listening to children helps the child to speak and listen when parents are talking to him and encourages the child to talk to the parents. The child learns to discuss everything he sees, hears and thinks with the parents. Hence, Christian parenting demands that parents teach their children how to talk and listen by doing the same when they communicate (Ayanriola 2013: 117-122).

Parents should also enjoy what their children like, such as movies, music, magazines, and everything their children love. Practising this in love will help to control and guide children on the right path. If children are made to understand what parents mean to them, parents must try to understand their children's world (Ogunsola 2021: 133).

As identified by Smalley (1984: 49-57), there are four basic types of parenting. The dominant parent are parents who have a very high standard and expectations and tend to produce the most negative qualities in their children. Neglectful parents are those parents who lack loving support and control over their children. Permissive parents tend to be warm and supportive but weak in establishing and enforcing rules and limits for their children. Usually, loving and firm parents define clear directions and set boundaries and standards of living for their children. They also take time to train their children to understand these limits. The task of Christian parents is to love children as Jesus loves them. If parents can task their minds, they will stand out and be a good example to their children (Seel 2000: 100). Because of these discussions, the next topic explores some societal vices and their causes in contemporary time.

Societal Vices and their Causes in the Contemporary Time

Social vices are generally referred to as bad traits, unhealthy and negative conduct that are against the values and norms of society and frowned at by the people (Acquah, 2017: 1). According to Elujekwute, Danburam, Zakariah and James (2021: 218), the term

vices is derived from the Latin word *vitium*, meaning “defect or failing.” This word is defined as a bad habit or immoral activity. Social vices can also be considered anti-social acts and attitudes that breach a society's norms and values. Example of social vices, according to scholars, comprises indecent dressing, sexual harassment/assaults promiscuity, pornography, prostitution, cultism, and gambling. Other social vices include drug addiction, kidnapping, robbery, examination malpractice, pocket-picking, bribery, and corruption. Moreover, hooliganism, character assassination, impersonation, financial fraud, rape, and unhealthy lifestyle are inclusive (Acquah 2017: 1; Elujekwute et al., 2021: 218 and Umar 2020: 173).

According to Apase and Yawe (2019: 11-12), social vices are at the variance of social customs and values, which comprises beliefs, attitudes, honesty, hard work, and other businesses and traditions which society treasures passes on from one generation to another through the various forms of education; formal and informal. In the context of this paper, therefore, social vices stand to be misconduct, erroneous attitudes, and improper characters that have bedeviled contemporary society and are seen as a threat to people's well-being in the community.

Elujekwute et al. (2021: 218) discovered that young school-age people are more vulnerable to social vices. This implies that social evils are present in all centres of contemporary society, at home, school, work public places and so on (Elujekwute et al., 2021: 218). This writer believes that social vices have greatly contributed to issues of corruption experienced in Nigeria today. This claim is evident considering the increase in economic crisis, insecurity, kidnapping, robbery, internet fraud, ritual killings, and the likes. The recent escalation of youth's involvement in social vices calls for urgent attention. If the trend continues without a quick means of curbing it, social evils will seriously cause much damage to Nigeria, Africa, and the world at large. If youth who are supposed to be leaders of tomorrow are engaged in vices like this. Therefore, it is vital to find

a solution to these issues so as not to “produce a generation of vipers and corrupt society” (Elujekwute et al. 2021: 218).

Therefore, the above assertion poses a need to examine possible factors that necessitate societal vices among young people in the contemporary. Consequently, this section discusses some causative factors of societal wrongs. Many authors (George and Ukpon 2013; Acquah 2017; Umar 2020; Elujekwute et al. 2021; Oluwasanmi, Akande and Taiwo 2022) have identified that numerous factors are responsible for the rise of societal vices among youth. These factors include peer pressure, poverty, parental negligence, influence and home background, a quest for social identity, search for security, social media, and a quest for the satisfaction of personal aspirations and needs (Oluwasanmi, Akande, and Taiwo 2022: 338). These factors are discussed below.

Peer Influence/Pressure: Peer group can be referred to as a group comprising individuals who are equal in terms of age or have some things in common. Youths are sometimes involved in social vices because of peer pressure. Students at all levels of learning spend more time together. Due to the weak nature of young people, their friends easily influence them. For instance, being a virgin was once a thing of pride among women and has recently turned into object of ridicule to friends and students. As a result, innocent girls want to experience what their friends are doing, and such girls may end up being involved in sexual activities (Umar 2020: 173-174).

Poverty: George and Ukpho (2013: 169) describe poverty as “a state of complete lack of minimal means of livelihood.” The level of increase in poverty in contemporary times has given birth to the high involvement of young ones in criminal activities such as corruption, bribery and other forms of immorality. Those affected by poverty lack basic life needs and cannot afford three (3) square meals a day. The primary cause of poverty today may be unemployment. Amid poverty, some youth are frustrated and get involved in vices to survive.

Parental Negligence, Influence and Home Background:

Sometimes, young people are engaged in social vices due to parental failure or impact on the home background. Children who are from broken homes get themselves involved in sins. Lack of parental care, control, and responsiveness can make a child participate in social vices. For instance, children from homes where parents implement permissive and uninvolved parenting styles are primarily involved in societal evils. Similarly, parental negligence can make children look to their friends for affection and advice, which can lure them into deadly acts (Umar 2020: 174). Parents who leave out their responsibilities to people like a maid, neighbours, and others may mislead children into vices activities. Oluwasanmi et al. (2016: 338) add that uncondusive learning facilities, environment, and inadequate welfare programs for undergraduates can encourage students to engage in cultism, and vague religious and moral instructions and education can lure undergraduates to embrace cult groups and cult activities.

Search for Security: Young people searching for protection from a sinister gang, especially female students, sometimes join cult groups to protect themselves (Oluwasanmi et al. 2022: 338).

Social Media: One of the major contributing factors to societal vices in contemporary times is social media or information communication technology (ICT). Omonijo, Nnedum, Fadugba, Uche, and Biereenu-Nnabugwu (2013: 3080) observe that children's exposure to social media and ICT in Nigeria has become an instrument to the hovering of social vices. In many contemporary homes, parents can no longer train their wards because they engage in various businesses. As a consequence, children's activities are not checked. They, therefore, reproduce whatever is watched in television programmes, videos, and internet webpages. The implication is that if parents do not have time to bring up their children properly at home, those manners they watch affect their conduct at home, school, and society.

The Pursuit for the Satisfaction of Personal Aspirations and Needs: Some students today engage in cults group for self-satisfaction, aspirations and needs. An example of this is when a student belongs to a cult group to ensure the success of their members in academic examinations. Likewise, some individual students join a cult group for popularity, making names and being regarded as influential persons. Thus, belonging to a cult group is a way of achieving prestige and greatness (Oluwasanmi et al. 2022: 338).

Hence from the above discussions, one will agree that dequate parenting is an important tool that can help curb social vices. Based on this assertion, the next topic explores some strategies Christian parents can adopt to fulfil their parental responsibilities, which can help curb societal vices in contemporary time.

Christian Parenting as a Remedy for Societal Vices in the Contemporary Times

A call is extended to Christian parents In Deuteronomy 6: 4-7, this call is to educate Christian parents on how they should train their children. This passage summoned parents to acknowledge God by loving Him “with all their hearts, souls and might, and faithfully obey the command of God and teach their children to do the same. However, there is no way children can be raised in the Christian way if their parents themselves are not saved. Because children can see, hear and perceive whatever is happening around them, they can easily see contradictions between what they are taught and what they see practised (Lateju 2007: 6).

Parents who desire to raise godly children in this contemporary time must endeavour to do away with all traces of the works of flesh immorality, impurity, dissension, envy, enmity and the likes (Galatians 5: 19-21). The home is described as the first point of socialisation of any child, which usually creates lasting educative measures to curb misconduct in children (George and Ukpong 2013: 168). Because of this assertion, Christian parents need to examine themselves and be conscious of what they do that can affect their

wards' conduct in society. They must be on the lookout for the interest of their children. Therefore, to curb the problem of societal vices in contemporary times, Christian parents, in particular, have an essential role to play.

Thus, Amoran (2021: 95-97) suggested ATTENTION as the strategy that parents could explore to gain the hearts of their wards and then mitigate societal vices in the contemporary time. This strategy is discussed below.

A – Acceptability and Availability: The first obligation of a Christian parent is to accept and be available for their children. According to Amoran (2021: 95) “in acceptance, availability is possible and love becomes expressive.” This affirmation means that when parents accept their children no matter the child's behaviour, and are available for their child, that is when the child feels loved and is interested to obey his or her parents.

T – Tolerance: No child is without excesses. Part of children's characteristics is unusual and unnecessary activeness requiring parents to demonstrate patience and empathy. Some of children misbehaviour are caused by what they see other children doing in school. Parents are meant to tolerate their children with a wide heart of love and never withhold discipline from them (Amoran 2021: 95).

T – Teaching: In his words to the Israelites, Moses gave a mandate for parents to teach their children diligently (Deuteronomy 6: 7). This implies that God expects parents to train their children in every aspect of livelihood. Parents have to teach their children to inculcate in them social norms and values, biblical culture, acceptable cultural heritage, moral standards, good conduct and imbibing the consciousness of the sanctity of life in them.

E – Exploration: Christian parents are obliged to intentionally explore the abilities of their children's interests with consciousness of understanding individual differences. It is essential for parents to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their children and avoid comparing their personalities.

N – Nurture: Christian parents are to nurture self-worth and self-esteem in their children (Amaran 2021: 96). Some parents unconsciously kill children's morale in the home. If care is not taken, such a child can develop rebellious attitudes in the house and later become a terror to both their parents and siblings. Their parents need to give children the freedom to express their minds, feelings and emotions without fear to help them build confidence.

T – Togetherness: Children love to be treated equally especially without preferment. Quinn (1999: 111) asserts that children love collaboration, association and friendship. Thus, parents are to provide an atmosphere in which children can work and play together in the home.

I – Involvement: African philosophers hold that children are to be involved in what their parents want them to become. Involvement helps children to feel wanted in the home. Parents, therefore, need to learn to involve children in decision-making, and other important things done in the home.

O – Openness: Parents need to be open to wards so that children can understand their parents altogether. For instance, if parents have been openly and adequately meeting their children's needs, in times of financial crisis in the home, children will understand their parents' status for their period. Meanwhile, openness to children is paramount in the Christian home.

N – Needs: The demands of all children include physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual and social cravings (Amaran 2021: 97). Meeting these needs makes every child develop a feeling of being loved in the home and therefore, depend and trust parents for every of his or her needs. But when parents continuously fail to meet any this needs, the child may begin to feel inferior among his/her peer. An attempt to pursuit these needs him/herself may fall into wrong hands and get engaged in social vices.

As good as it is for parents to be available and accept their wards, tolerate, teach, nurture, be open and meet the needs of their children, it is imperative for Christian parents to understand that these things are not enough to help young people overcome the challenges in the contemporary time. Young people need to be raised so that they can make decisions not to be lured into being engaged in societal vices, no matter the tension.

A developed morally upright mind without godliness is not enough for young ones to stand in the face of challenges. Therefore, Christian parents need to be aware that it is only a godly mind that can help young ones not to compromise their faith in the face of challenges. Thus, young people must be helped to completely dedicate their lives to God by being safe and resisting all forms of temptation that may come to their ways. This writer recommends that parents should first love their children by making themselves available for them. As much as attention is paid to children's physical needs, parents should also help their children love God and see things or situations from in God's perspectives. Parents should also build confidence and trust in their children which will help them develop their self-esteem so that they will not be easily influenced by people around them.

Conclusion

The task of helping young ones not to be involved in societal vices is a challenging one. Still, Christian parents must understand that God has saddled them with the responsibility to guide young ones by leading them in decision-making. The challenges that societal vices have posed to the contemporary society as discussed in this paper cannot be easily eradicated, but Christian parents can help mitigate these challenges if they will rise up to fulfil their parental role as God has positioned them to. Therefore, Christian parents should understand the present time in which young people are into and how surrounded they are by these vices. Parents should help their children to love God and also see whatever situation in God's perspectives. They should build confidence and trust in their children which will help them

develop their self-esteem and not be easily influenced by people around them. Nevertheless, it is essential for parents to be sure about the salvation of their wards, which through God's grace, can help them stand in the face of temptations.

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