



A Godly Passion for Young Generation

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Bunmi Awoyinfa's book titled, *Child Evangelism As Important as Ever*, is irresistible. It is a Christian book that is so much full of social relevance. The author draws her inspiration from the sufferings, agonies, dereliction and other grievous social menaces that children and women all over the world, particularly in Africa, are facing. The urge to write the book also springs from an additional fact that she has spent a considerable part of her life engaging in herself in childhood-related activities.

Her book evokes the degree of passion that a Samaritan like her would have for children - especially the abandoned ones. And as she asserted, she not only wants her readers to learn but also to practise so many things she is offering in the book.

The 144-paged book is divided into six parts, under each of which different issues are treated. And the 40 chapters it features are brief and lucid, such that even young readers can enjoy them. It is to her credit that her book is not only well proof-read, but also it is written in simple language.

Yet, many readers may wish to restrain themselves from showering her with accolades. This is because of her use of tiresome and oddly sounding words, such as "damaged youths" in page 66. Of course, her intention might be good. Perhaps, she is driven by her zeal to express her thought at all cost. This is besides the fact that nobody is perfect.

A perusal of the book will give readers much insight into the bane of juvenile delinquency. There is no doubt that it rages among the younger generation of people. The writer attributes this absurdity to the lackadaisical attitudes of family during child rearing. She bases her criticism on the fact that it is the first learning institution for any child. She opens the first chapter by explaining the role of the family in a child's upbringing. She concedes the fact that a child needs both the guidance of the father and the mother before a proper training can be guaranteed.

But the problem of broken homes comes into question here. This is obviously a problem that has torn homes apart while the children bear the consequences. It is one of the major causes of juvenile delinquency that Awoyinfa cites in her book. But thankfully, she provides her readers with tips on training children who are mired in that situation.

Awoyinfa scorns the idea of inflicting corporal punishment on a child. For the latter is, in this part of the world, never spared of his father's whip, all in the name of child discipline. Beating up a child in order to correct his mistakes, to Awoyinfa, may translate to nothing. She said: "Naturally, parents must not ignore stubbornness but it is not necessary to beat in order to correct a child. A stubborn child can become more difficult simply to prove to his parents that all the punishments and beatings have no effect on him."

She offers love as an alternative way to correct an erring child. She expresses this argument among other views on training a child in all the chapters under the Part One of the book. And they are supported with biblical references. In fact, those biblical references are part of the writer's inspiration.

Besides the parents' faults, Awoyinka blames the evil activities of the younger generation on their lack of understanding of God's word. She writes that the appropriate place where the word of God can sufficiently be imprinted in them, is the Sunday School. This is not only probably because she is a Sunday School teacher, but the school, according to her in Chapter Ten, was designed in the 18th century, by one Robert Raikes, to meet the needs of unchurched children. "Often, these children were impoverished children of factory workers whose home was a street," she writes.

Awoyinfa in the second part of her book defines the role of the Church in child's evangelism. Evangelism? Indeed, the Church comes into the mind. But it is one thing the writer is much bothered about, indeed it is a great commandment to all Christians. "Although, Evangelism is linked to the local

church in some ways, not all evangelism should be centered on the local church," she argues. From her standpoint, it is an exercise that should involve churches, youths and a host of others showing love and care to abandoned children on the streets and orphanages. This, as a result, will touch the hearts of those children to know God.

Awoyinfa asserts that the training of a child is a biblical injunction to the parents and not primarily to the Church. "Scripture does not place the responsibility of bringing up a child in the hands of religious institutions. It is firmly in the hands of the parents."

Her views on child upbringing related issues, in some of the chapters, implies that she is one of those who believe that almost everything a child learns, is through the sight. And those around him, especially the parents are his role models. She however advises that parents and teachers should lead by example. Moreso, "...Christian leaders and elders of the church should provide parents with example of godly child-rearing in their households." Readers are taken through a multi-national sojourn, in chapter 31 and 32. That is, the writer's tale about the abandoned women and children in noticeable war-ravaged countries, will likely evoke the brutal experiences that the latter are facing. Her dismay is hinged on the fact that children are usually among the first casualties of any armed conflict. Little wonder the cases of child soldiers, refugees and displaced children are common. And the women are often the victims of rape and face all sorts of sexual harassments during war or other forms of conflicts. "In time of conflict, women and children are the most affected. In these violent circumstances, girls in particular suffer the added trauma of abuse," she writes. Awoyinfa further makes her readers see that "Many of these wars go unreported, often due to political expediency or lack of interest." The France-based writer highlights the role of Christian women in child evangelism. She sees the latter as much in the position to help children who are exposed to all manners of exploitation. "Today, a considerable number of children all over the world, suffer from the scourge of sexual exploitation through intra-familial sex and juvenile prostitution, as victims of economic exploitation, through drug addiction; and as casualties of political exploitation through mass abortion and female infanticide." All these children, she writes, need the help of the Christian women. Awoyinfa seems to anchor her hope on the godly approach to addressing the plight of children. Otherwise, she would not have condemned the legal backing on abortion in some parts of the world. "Some political leaders defend abortion on the ground that population must be regulated. Killing certain segment of the population is an immoral way of dealing with the population problem." Raised from a respectable home, she trained at the University of Lagos as well as in Boston and France. She has also served actively in the children's church of the Akoka branch of TREM, SOS Children Village in Isolo. She was also involved in outreaches for local Bible clubs for children in Nigeria and abroad. These definitely combine to make her a credible instructor. Her book speaks volumes of her ingenuity and the efforts she has invested in it. It will however be a useful material for churches, homes, schools, NGOs and the society at large.