

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

*AN ASSESSMENT ON THE IMPLICATION OF  
SPIRITUAL FATHERHOOD AND SPIRITUAL  
SONSHIP IN THE KENYAN PENTECOSTAL  
AND CHARISMATIC DENOMINATIONS*

BY  
KENNETH AMOLO OYOLA

*A Thesis Submitted To The Graduate School in Partial  
Fulfillment of The Requirements for The Degree of Master  
of Arts in Pastoral Studies*

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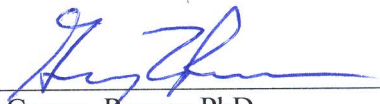
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Approved:


Supervisor:

  
George Renner PhD

Second Reader:

William Black PhD

External Reader:

  
Sammy Linge PhD

July, 2009


Student's Declaration

IMPLICATION OF SPIRITUAL FATHERHOOD AND SPIRITUAL SONSHIP  
AND ITS LACK IN THE KENYAN PENTECOSTAL  
AND CHARISMATIC CHURCHES:

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other  
College or University for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical  
Graduate School of Theology or of the Examiners.

(Signed)



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Kenneth Amolo Oyola

July, 2009

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to discover the implications, relevance and importance of the concept of Spiritual fatherhood and sonship to the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in Kenya. In order to achieve this purpose, research was carried out where by data was collected through discussions and structured face to face interviews with three denominational leaders, six spiritual sons/daughters, two local church pastors who don't ascribe to the concept.

The findings revealed that the concept is regarded as necessary and important by majority of the leaders and church leaders as well as those whom they regard as their sons/ daughters. However it has been misused by certain people to manipulate and dominate others whereas in certain occasions it has been used to kill the ministry of others. It has also revealed that it is one of the best way to disciple others into the ministry and prepare to hand over the baton o f the ministry to the next generation.

The research has revealed that though the church is so much involved in the concept of mentoring, it has to change its tact tic on how to bring up leaders for effective and efficient ministry and ensure smooth and seamless transitions as well as meaningful church growth.

Based on these findings recommendations are made on the Church leaders as well as the local church pastors of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches to embrace the concept of spiritual fatherhood and sonship. However it should be structured in a manner that it does not breed domination, manipulation and control of those being spiritually fathered. This can be done through holding seminars, conferences and even preachings and teachings in the local churches.

**To**

My dear parents and to all the bishops and pastors who take their time to mentor,  
disciple and father spiritual children.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship are terms that are beginning to “rock the Christian boat” of ministry in Kenya today. There is a lot that is being said concerning these particular topics in the field today and there are both positive and negative opinions. On the one hand there are those who are very much for the idea of enhancing spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship whereas there are those who think that it is a ploy to manipulate, control, and intimidate those who are coming up or are doing well in the ministry within the Pentecostal and charismatic circles in Kenya.

In many cases the terms spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship are likened to mentoring. There are those that say that the two are similar but there is a significant difference between them. On the other hand there are those that say that there is no difference at all for they mean one and the same thing.

There seems to be a lack of understanding of the whole concept of spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship. Therefore it is important to be able to define what it is and what difference there is between spiritual fatherhood and mentoring. Is spiritual fatherhood really necessary for the Church in Kenya or we can do without it? Is the lack of it contributing to some of the set backs the church is facing in the country today? What implications are there when spiritual fatherhood is engaged and which ones are there when it is ignored?

## A Case for and Against Spiritual Fatherhood and Sonship

The argument for those that oppose the idea is that the whole issue is used as a means of manipulation, control, and intimidation. They say that those that front the idea seek to keep down those that seem like potential replacements for them. They also state that there is no place in the Bible that we would say Jesus emphasized the idea and there are no specific teachings concerning the ideology. These people also state that the reason as to why we have very many churches that seem to have broken away from others is because of the so-called spiritual fathers who want to hold on to others and use them to their advantage, yet the individual is not able to come up and stand on their own. They are always kept in the dark side and all the praise and credit goes to the one who is seen as the spiritual father. Another case that they state is that looking at the history of the Kenyan Church, especially the Pentecostal and charismatic churches, there is no evidence that the fathers are willing to leave the work to the sons nor are they willing that their so called spiritual sons would be able to have a greater work than them. In light of that the fathers would always work for the downfall of the individual that they nurture. There will always be an undercutting from them and they would seek to see to it that the individual never succeeds.

On the other hand the proponents of the ideology have their case for the spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship. The argument that they state is also based on the Word of God and they use Scriptures with which they back up what they are fronting. They also say that a lot of what the church is experiencing in terms of internal conflict and splits and doctrinal heresy can be traced back to the lack of fatherhood. The reason as to why we have many churches coming up that are not well grounded and also the reason why we have very many doctrinal differences is because individuals who have not sat under well seasoned “fathers” in the ministry have set

out to do a work that they are not cut out for. This has bred a culture of a lack of accountability in the Christian circles especially in the Pentecostal and charismatic denominations in Kenya. This they say is like the days of the Judges in the Bible where everybody did what was right in their own eyes. Scripture is being interpreted to benefit and suit those who are able to use it for their advantage. They say that those who do not seek to be fathered tend to use the Scriptures to manipulate their followers and thus getting a hold on them. The lack of spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship has also led to the lack of spiritual covering and therefore ministers are not able to work to their potential since there are areas in the spiritual dynamics that they can not be able to penetrate because they can not be able to wage the warfare and they are not well covered for the task. This has led to the premature death of certain ministers and even ministries in the Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Kenya.

#### Problem Statement

This study will examine the performance of the church on the basis of the controversy that is splitting the Pentecostal and charismatic church in Kenya over the ideology and practice of spiritual fatherhood and sonship.

#### Research Questions

1. What is spiritual fatherhood and sonship?
2. What is the difference between spiritual fatherhood/ sonship and mentoring?
3. What are the implications of having spiritual fatherhood/ sonship and not having it?
4. What are the views of the church leaders on spiritual fatherhood/ sonship?

5. Are there other approaches that can be adopted and employed by the church and register continuity with similar results other than spiritual fatherhood/sonship?
6. What is a healthy and fruitful church?

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to seek to find the truth and see whether spiritual fatherhood/sonship are a viable ideology. My observations is that the Pentecostal and charismatic churches are having divisions amongst themselves and the church is not fruitful as expected. The study will be done with the view of helping the church to appreciate, reject, or find a common ground on the issue of spiritual fatherhood/sonship so as to have an effective and efficient church in Kenya.

#### Goal

The main goal of this study is to awaken the Pentecostal and charismatic church in Kenya that the ideology of spiritual fatherhood/sonship could be the make or break point for them. It is either they embrace it, reject it, or find common ground for the sake of unifying the church and having healthy and fruitful congregations to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### Proposition

At the end of this research I seek to prove that spiritual fatherhood/sonship is a viable ideology and practice for the Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Kenya

today. It is my belief that it would streamline the church and restore effectiveness and efficiency in how the church works and bears fruit in Kenya.

### Significance of the Study

In these last days the church is the instrument that the Lord our God has chosen to use for the advancement of His Kingdom here on earth. We therefore would say that the Church is a very important organ that God is using in this dispensation and therefore its ineffectiveness and inefficiency is a very great hindrance to the advancement of God's Kingdom.

It is important therefore that the church be healthy, effective and efficient, bearing fruit that lasts. This can not take place in an environment where there is division and acrimony against each other. The very core of Christianity which is "love" is threatened and unity which is based on our relationship with one another is also at risk if the contentious issue is not settled out once and for all.

This study seeks to recommend the way forward when it comes to the issue of spiritual fatherhood/ sonship. In doing so, this study will help the Pentecostal and charismatic church in Kenya to curb the divisions, ineffectiveness, inefficiency and a lack of fruit that last (unhealthy churches).

### Limitations and Delimitations

This study is limited to specifically the leadership of selected Pentecostal and charismatic denominations in the country of Kenya and those that they would call spiritual sons and/or mentors. This means that even though I may make references to the mainstream denominations I will limit my research to the Pentecostal and charismatic denominations. The use of the term church while referring to spiritual

fatherhood/ sonship will basically be referring to the Pentecostals and charismatic denominations.

### Assumptions

In this study, the following is assumed to be true concerning Pentecostal and charismatic church in Kenya:

1. Spiritual fatherhood/ sonship are a new ideology that is just beginning to come into the Pentecostal and charismatic church in Kenya.
2. The Pentecostal and charismatic denominations are not the only ones, there are other denominations of which some practice spiritual fatherhood/ sonship and others don't.
3. The ideology of spiritual fatherhood/ sonship is not well articulated and understood in the Pentecostal and charismatic circles in Kenya.

### Definition of Key Terms

1. Spiritual father- one who has been in the ministry for a longer time, they are older and are well seasoned in the ministry and takes responsibility to nurture an emerging leader.
2. Spiritual son- one who is nurtured by a older, well seasoned minister in the ministry.
3. Pentecostal- those individuals and groups which claim to experience those manifestations that are mentioned in Acts two and through the book of Acts, e.g. speaking in other tongues, and attribute them to the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. Charismatic-those that believe that the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit are still manifest in this age of the Church and prioritize tongues, prophecy healing among other signs.
5. Spiritual orphans- those who do not have someone to nurture them in the ministry.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

Fatherhood is a topic that is being greatly discussed in the world today. There are several studies that are showing that the lack of fathers in the home is a cause of some of the deviant behaviors and characteristics that are manifesting themselves in the world today. Research has proven that the presence of fathers in the society makes a major difference in the way that the children will grow up and be nurtured. As they say, “all truth is parallel”, I would like to say that “Spiritual fatherhood/ sonship” can not be ignored in the current state of affairs in the church. We are living in times when there are lots of changes and technological advancement is at its peak. The world has become one very small village.

#### Difference Between Spiritual Fatherhood/Sonship and Mentoring

As earlier stated there are those that say that there is no significant difference between spiritual fatherhood/ sonship and mentoring. We’ve often had statements such as “...who is a great mentor in my life”, made about someone who in many cases has been an inspiration in the development of another, probably a teacher talking about a principal whom they have worked under. This can be replicated in different professions and careers. However this is not the definition of mentoring. Eric Parsloe is the CEO of The Oxford Total Learning Group and the founder of the Oxford School of Coaching & Mentoring, one of the UK’s leading professional

qualification organizations. He is also an author. He describes mentoring as follows, "Mentoring is to support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximize their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be." (Eric Parsloe). "It is a relationship, not just a procedure or activity, where one person professionally assists the career development of another, outside the normal manager/subordinate relationship." (S. Mind). In both definitions we find that there is more of a professional relationship and that looks to be as far as it goes.

Spiritual fatherhood/sonship is said to be the same and more. It not only touches on the professional part of it, but gets more personal and more intimate. It is said that the spiritual father "pours his life" into the spiritual son. "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12 *The Holy Bible, New International Version*.) The picture that is drawn from this Scripture is that Jesus had a relationship with His disciples and poured His life into them such that they were able to do the works that He did and greater works than those that Jesus did. In relation to spiritual fatherhood/ sonship, the spiritual father has a relationship with the son, such that the works that the father has done the spiritual son is able to accomplish. Since the son is an entity of their own they go a level higher. In other words there is a preservation of the doctrine, the spiritually correct boundaries, character and there is a relevance to the times, because every son comes up in a different generation.

This relationship however is not only one sided, because in the case of Jesus and the disciples and probably the other earlier stated examples, it seems to be a one way affair where the father pours his life into the son. Timothy Ware (born 1934),

usually now known as Kallistos Ware, is a titular metropolitan bishop of the Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate. From 1966 to 2001, Ware was Spalding Lecturer of Eastern Orthodox Studies at the University of Oxford and has authored numerous books and articles pertaining to the Orthodox Christian faith. Ware writes:

“In the last resort, what the spiritual father gives to his disciple is not a code of written or oral regulations, not a set of techniques for meditation, but a personal relationship. Within this personal relationship the Abba grows and changes as well as the disciple, for God is constantly guiding them both.” (Ware 2000, 146)

We see that the relationship has mutual benefit and not just that the spiritual father pours themselves into the son but also grows as they continue to serve God. There is a personal relationship that is more than just learning techniques from the spiritual father. “Many things cannot be said in words, but can be conveyed through a direct personal encounter.” (2000, 146)

We can therefore say that spiritual fatherhood/ sonship is different because in mentoring the personal/ intimate relationship is not necessarily meant to be there whereas for spiritual fathering/ sonship it is vital.

### Understanding Spiritual Fatherhood/Sonship

Spiritual fatherhood/ sonship is a very controversial topic because we read in the Bible in Matthew 23:9 (N.I.V), Jesus says “Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father He who is in Heaven.” I believe that if we are to look at the context of the Scripture we will realize that Jesus was addressing the issue of the Pharisees and the Scribes who had twisted the Scriptures for their own benefit. The Pharisees and the Scribes had set out a misconception of the Scriptures and had set themselves very highly in the society and the community. This had given them the

privilege of demanding certain rights and respect and manipulating the Jewish people. When Jesus began His ministry in the “sermon on the mount”, He set the record straight by disputing the actions of the Pharisees and the Scribes but upheld the (the spirit of the law) teachings of the Law (Matthew 5:17-20). The Pharisees and the scribes had made it look like they were the ultimate and that it was not possible to do without them. They gave the impression that they were very correct in their scripture interpretation. Jesus comes in with a radical solution to the misconceptions that they had brought about. However earlier in the years before the period of these leaders, there were examples of relationships that resembled spiritual fatherhood such as that of Moses and Joshua as well as Elijah and Elisha.

We also realize that Jesus begins his ministry by proclaiming that the Kingdom of God has come. We can say that Jesus was proclaiming that a new way of life had come based on the law that was always being taught and twisted. As we seek further this Kingdom that Jesus preached, we realize that the concept of relationship is central which we can not ignore as we look into it.

Christianity is supposed to work through relationships like these.....but sadly it operates more like a company.....the pastor is like the manager and the people are like the employees (except they often don't do anything). Instead God is wanting his people to be like a family.....he wants believers to honour their leader and be a son or daughter to him or her. God also wants us to grow and mature in our love and relationships with each other so that we come to a point where we are able to be a caring spiritual father or mother to others in Christ.

“Spiritual fathering is the major leadership method for building the body of Christ.” (Jablonowski 2008)

Jablonowski is an intercessor with a calling as a marketplace apostle working in government and industry in the fields of science, engineering and multimedia. Jesus Himself talks of a relation with the Father and the Holy Spirit but we read more of His relationship with the Father. The Kingdom of God is based on relationship and it

flourishes on the same. As Don Williams says in his article *“Following Christ’s Example: A Biblical View of Discipleship.”*

“...He not only bore the message and ministry of the Kingdom, He also called the Twelve and other disciples to bear the same message and ministry on His behalf. In order to accomplish this, like any good teacher in antiquity, He called His followers into an intimate relationship with Himself (Mark3:14), taught them the message of the Kingdom orally (Mark 4:11), showed them the ministry of the Kingdom...” (Williams 1993, 182)

Jesus gives us the best example of how this relationship worked based on the Kingdom principles, teachings and life to be passed on in a manner that one would say is fruitful. Jesus had the twelve disciples whom he brought up and then commissioned to continue the Kingdom work. As Don Williams says,

In other words, Jesus reproduced His Kingdom ministry in His disciples and through them (and, at Pentecost, through the power of the Spirit as the risen Lord) reproduced His Kingdom ministry in the Church. (Williams 1993, 183)

We see that for the purpose of continuity there had to be a way by which the ministry was passed on from one generation to another in the Church. There was a relationship that went beyond mentoring only and it developed a people who actually acted like their teacher or in this case, father. Williams says,

When He ascended into heaven, He left behind ones “like himself” (Ben Sirach) who He then filled with Himself by His Spirit. They were like Him in doctrine, character, and ministry. They, in turn, discipled the next generation to be like themselves, as Jesus had done. (Williams 1993, 191)

If we take a look at the Old Testament we find the same model being exemplified. Moses nurturing Joshua before letting him continue with the work. Elijah and Elisha is another of the examples that we find in the Old Testament. Elisha also nurtured over one hundred men. Coming to the New Testament the best example that we have of this kind of nurturing is the relationship of Paul to Timothy and Titus. In this we find Paul referring to the Timothy and Titus as his “true sons” (1Timothy

1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4). We also get to realize that Paul did spend time with each of them and later left them in-charge of local congregations. He however continued to keep a close relationship with them even asking them to come to where he was. I would say Paul was seeking to catch up on the latest and also advise on the way forward where the individual finds difficulty (Titus 3:12; 2 Timothy 4:12). In His letters to both Timothy and Titus we find that he writes to them as one who gives a covering to them in-terms of accountability. I would want to say that it is in this sense of nurturing that the term spiritual father has come about. In many instances people would want to call it mentoring. I would say that looking at the life of those who we would want to refer to as sons, their ministry and work for the Lord bore fruit that was tangible and beneficial to the Kingdom of God. Those that were looked upon as their fathers seemed to have continued a legacy in them and the soundness of the doctrine and character was retained. There is a legacy that is passed on to those who are called sons and they are kept in check, for we see that they never get over board and always have some one to refer to and also be accountable to if they are still alive in certain cases.

#### Spiritual Fatherhood/Sonship Concept in Earlier Times

This concept of spiritual fatherhood/ sonship is one that existed even before the times of Jesus according to Don Williams.

Our answer to whether the Church should bear Jesus' "kingdom message and exercise his Kingdom ministry" is an emphatic yes! We fail to see this responsibility if we fail to place the discipling work of Jesus in its historical context and read the Gospels accordingly. How then did people teach and learn in the ancient world? What did discipleship mean? (Williams 1993, 175)

According to Williams we can say that by the time Jesus was discipling his disciples there was a system that they used and that Jesus must have used the same system to develop his disciples. Williams continues to say,

In Israel and her surrounding milieu, learning was based on an intimate relationship between a teacher and his or her pupils. Lindblom notes, “In the orient teachers have always gathered around themselves disciples... to receive their instruction and pass on their ideas.” Even the “writing prophets” of the Old Testament were no loners.... There are two reasons for this intimate personal relationship between the teacher and his student. First, teaching was largely transmitted orally. Secondly, this teaching was to be lived out by being with the teacher and imitating his life.” (Williams 1993, 176)

This shows that the mode of teaching was that, where one learnt through a relationship between the teacher and the student. Even in the Old Testament times we see that the prophets were not alone for they had their secretaries such as Jeremiah and Baruch. “The one mold that is not broken, however, is Jesus training His disciples to be like Himself in a way similar to other teachers in the ancient world” (Williams 1993,183)

Belleville, referring to Paul’s exhortation of the Corinthian brethren in 1Corinthians 11:1, says:

Paul’s request was by no means unique in the ancient world. Nor can it be called presumptuous on his part. Imitating some sort of moral exemplar was quite common in antiquity...In Greco-Roman society, fathers in particular were expected to model appropriate ethical behavior, thereby educating their children in the way of a virtuous life (e.g. Isocrates, *To Demonicus* 4.11: “Regard your father’s conduct as your law and strive to imitate and emulate your father’s virtue”). (Belleville 1996, 121)

This mode of training was from before the times of Jesus Christ and we can not say that Jesus was the one who came and introduced it. As a matter of fact He used this mode of teaching for His benefit and His purposes. “For the Jews, the basic unit of instruction was the family. In Exodus, the father teaches his son the meaning

of the mighty acts of God by answering his questions about Passover (Exod. 10:1,2; 12:26,27). (Williams 1993, 176)

A clear indication that the Jews too took keen interest in intimate teaching and learning and this was there before the time of Jesus. It was taken as a very effective and efficient way of teaching and training for it bore fruit and it was proven as Williams says,

Since learning takes place in a personal relationship, Ben Sirach exhorts the prospective student to find a wise man: "Take your stand in the throng of elders: which of them is wise? Attach yourself to Him....."

Since ancient culture was basically oral, the first vehicle of learning was the spoken word. Plato valued it over the written word because once speech was transcribed it had no life; it could not answer back (Phaedrus 275d). (Williams 1993, 176)

As we have seen this mode of teaching was there in ancient Israel as well as the surrounding cultures and nations it can be traced in Africa in those early years of Christianity too. As Ware says, "This figure of the *starets*, so prominent in the first generation of Egyptian monasticism, has retained its full significance up to the present day in Orthodox Christendom." (Ware 2000, 128)

We can therefore be sure to say that just as Christianity was in Africa in the beginning so was the concept of spiritual fathering and spiritual sonship. It can not be said to be a western culture that is being imposed in the Church and being fronted by western Christianity because it was there in Africa before it was in the Western countries.

#### Credibility of the Spiritual Father/Son Relationship

The spiritual father or *starets* is essentially a 'charismatic' and prophetic figure, accredited for his task by the direct action of the Holy Spirit. He is ordained, not by the hand of man, but by the hand of God. He is an expression of the

Church as "event" or "happening", rather than of the Church as institution.  
(Ware 2000, 129)

We can say that it is not the initiative of a man, such that one wouldn't say that it is a gimmick being used to manipulate others and keep them under control and intimidation. This shows that God gives the individual who is to be a spiritual father certain qualities that would make them stand out from the rest of the leaders and make them be examples that others would like to emulate. As Randy D. Reese (who is a vice president for advancement and instructor of leadership formation at North American Baptist Seminary in Sioux Falls South Dakota) and Keith R. Anderson (who is a campus pastor and associate professor at Bethel College and an author) put it,

...we may not be as movingly stirred by the life we see, but we will experience a movement of God's Spirit within that causes attraction to the heart or spirit or life of another. Attraction is the basic human response of curiosity, interest and appeal. It begins when you notice the integrity, skill or other attributes of someone whom you respect. (Anderson and Reese 1999, 62)

It will be noted that the initiative comes, as a rule, not from the master but from the disciples. It would be perilously presumptuous for someone to say in his own heart or to others, "Come and submit yourselves to me; I am a staret, I have the grace of the Spirit." What happens, rather, is that without any claims being made by the staret himself others approach him, seeking his advice or asking to live permanently under his care. (Ware 2000, 130)

We take note that the relationship is triggered from the spiritual son's initiative and not from the spiritual father's call. This goes to show that there is something that attracts the spiritual son to the spiritual father and it has to be something that God has put in the spiritual father that makes the spiritual son want a relationship whereby they are willing to submit to the spiritual fathers.

Prince Yinka Oyekan, head of the apostolic team of the Barnabas Fellowship (which has churches in Northern Ireland, England and Africa and has had training at

the Bible training Institute of Glasgow) says, “Any commitment to leadership that results from a conviction by the Holy Spirit, freedom of choice and the wish to help and motivate in the church is to be commended. Commitment obtained in any other way is dubious.” (Oyekan 2000, 31)

This clearly show that if there is to be any relationship in terms of spiritual fatherhood and sonship then it must be something that originates from the son and not that the father asks them to submit or be sons under Him. In certain cases we read that the father would even send the son away as a way of rejecting the request but the insistence of the son makes the father seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to be able to accept the request.

#### Counterfeit Fathering

A father does not even choose his own children, but they are given to him by God, and a child does not get to choose their father either. Much of the disarray in the Body of Christ is a result of fathers hand picking their children according to those who "fit their mold" instead of fathering the sons and daughters that God has chosen for them. (Jablonowski 2008)

The above statement clearly shows that there is a problem when it comes to spiritual fathering in the church today. The Bible clearly states that God’s ways and thoughts are not comparable to ours and there is no way we can be able to see as God sees. When one chooses to do the right thing without the consent of God then they have missed the whole point. In the case of a father choosing his sons in the ministry out of his own will and choice without the guidance of the Holy Spirit or involvement of God, then the whole relationship begins on the “wrong footing”. This goes to show that there is bound to be a point of failure in the process. This could probably be the reason as to why we have several pastors and preachers who say there is nothing like spiritual fatherhood or that it is a ploy to manipulate, dominate and control others.

The process of spiritual fathering and sonship is a kingdom concept because God is a relational God and hence it has to be initiated by God Himself through the disciples or the sons. This issue of spiritual fathers taking the liberty to choose who they want to be their spiritual son could have created an atmosphere where people would not be able to discern their spiritual fathers and sons hence causing disarray. As Jablonowski states in his article,

The reason for much of the weakness, sickness and premature death among believers is that we do not "*discern the Lord's body*" correctly. In other words, we are not discerning where in the body of Christ we should be joined or who are our spiritual fathers and children. This is partly due to the set-up of the current "church institutions" which do not promote family intimacy, but rather a spectator mentality. (Jablonowski 2008)

According to Jablonowski, we can say that the lack of spiritual fatherhood/sonship causes disarray in the church and leads to the church being misguided, divided inefficient and ineffective. It also goes to show that the church loses its power and struggles to become relevant because the membership is lacking in the values that are necessary for its vitality as the church of Jesus Christ.

### Manipulation, Control and Domination

The concept of spiritual fatherhood/sonship is believed by some to be a teaching that is being used by those who have been in the ministry for a while to keep the upcoming preachers of the future in control and always submitted to them. "If I have a need to be in control and to have people submit to me, I would emphasize the need for a spiritual father. If I am a rebel and want to justify my independence I will teach that we do not need to submit to anyone other than God." (Steve Hill 2008, 1).

Steve and his wife, Jeri are the founders and senior pastors of Heartland World Ministries Church, a thriving group of believers in the Dallas, Fort Worth Texas USA. He has also served as the evangelist of the Brownsville Revival in Pensacola,

Florida. According to Hill there is an imbalance in the teaching that we have when it comes to spiritual fatherhood / sonship. He states there is very shallow evidence that one can use to justify fatherhood and on the other side there is qualitative evidence that teaches on submission not one way but submission one to another. There is no biblical support for spiritual covering and submission to delegated authority.

If I mention Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha as well as Paul and Timothy, what do you think of? What would you teach? Most would teach the necessity of having a spiritual father or a spiritual mentor. And that would be half of the truth. However, neither Moses nor Elijah nor Paul had a spiritual father! Paul even uses that fact as part of the authentication of his message and apostleship! True! Read Galatians 1:15- 24! That is the other side of the truth. (Hill,1)

There is a submission that can be found in the Bible but there is no evidence that it is spiritual fatherhood and sonship being addressed in the Bible because there is no evidence that there was any sort of continuity or history of the examples that are used to advocate for spiritual fatherhood/ sonship. However the Bible talks of submission of one to another but not that any man should have dominion over another because Christ is the head of every man and that we should be submissive unto Christ. “In God’s original plan it is not stated that a human should have dominion over another human.” (Oyekan 2000, 13) Hence, insistence on the teachings on spiritual fatherhood/ sonship is seen as ploys to dominate. “Where there is an obsessive need to dominate, dominators will engineer circumstances seeking to ensure that their sphere of power is difficult to erode.” (Oyekan 2000, 16) Therefore the teaching on spiritual fatherhood/ sonship is seen as a way of domination and keeping others in check from arising to their full potential.

We find that there doesn’t seem to be any form of passing on the baton in terms of the leadership positions and also there is seemingly a fear of allowing the upcoming leaders to have the freedom and leadership positions that they seek. The

upcoming leaders are told that they are not ready or mature enough for the positions they are seeking. “God does not want pastors or leaders to dominate and control every aspect of the lives of church members. Heavy shepherding is wrong because it takes away the individual’s freedom to choose.” (Oyekan 2000, 45)

There are cases where the scenario that is set up in the spiritual father/ son relationship is such that the son gives up their ambitions and goals in life to serve the spiritual father. According to Oyekan this is a form of control that is not acceptable in the church of Jesus Christ. This is so because God has created us as individuals and therefore there are inner drives that cause us to seek to get satisfaction by serving God in a particular way. When one abandons their ambitions and purpose in life to serve another it means that they become robots and God made no robots on earth, neither did he create human beings without an ambition for those ambitions come from Him. This shows that one has just set them self up for a great disappointment in life for only God can give satisfaction and not any man. Ron DePriest clearly put the point in His book, “*The Spiritual Mentor*, as he says,

A true father’s heart will not rule you, but will serve you and your vision. He will labor to help you fulfill your destiny, not his own destiny. True fathers are concerned about the inheritance being transferred to the next generation. They are concerned about preparing that generation to receive all that the Father has for them. (DePriest 2005, 53)

The father makes investment for the purposes of enhancing the vision of the spiritual son. Therefore if they choose to do otherwise then there is bound to be hurt and frustration on those who are being nurtured.

Once one is wounded and there appears a scar it is very difficult to hide the scar and so it seems with our state here. There are several so called “spiritual orphans” and their conduct and way of carrying out the work of the ministry is very visible in as much as they would like to hide it. Most of these leaders are looking very

successful in what they are doing and it seems that they are the ones who are on the right track because those who seem to follow the other path are seemingly having smaller congregations. As it is written in the Bible “You shall know them by their fruits.” It is very evident that the fruit that is being produced in the Pentecostal and charismatic church is not what the Bible intended. There seems to be some deficit. The church is lacking the impact it ought to have and the power is not being seen as the Lord Jesus Christ promised. Some have fallen short of being called cults while others have turned to cults. This is an impediment to the course of the Gospel in Kenya.

### The Healthy Church

The terminology “Church” is one that in recent days has had many people confused and many do not have a right definition of it. Many times the majority of the people refer to the church as the building. However when looked at more clearly this is a very wrong definition of the church. The word church comes from the Greek word “ekklesia” which is translated “the assembly” or “the called out ones”. These called out ones are the ones that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and His teachings and obey them.

The Church is the community of all true believers for all times. This definition understands the Church to be made of all those who are truly saved. Paul says, “Christ loved the Church and gave himself for her” (Eph. 5:25). Here the term “the Church” is used to apply to all those whom Christ died to redeem, all those who are saved by the death of Christ. (Grudem 1994, 853)

As we read Wayne Grudem putting it the Church is a particular group of people who have a common foundation, the man Jesus Christ. These people have a particular belief and confession that puts them as the Church. As we read from the Bible,

Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:16-18, NKJV)

In other words upon the revelation that Jesus is the Christ, shall He build His Church and that means that those that have this revelation and believe in it shall be those that will be the church. Thus the church is not a building but an assembly of those that believe that Jesus is the Christ. These are the ones that Jesus commissioned in the book of Matthew 28: 16-20, commanding them to, "make disciples, baptize them, and to teach them." This was to replicate itself, those that had been turned into disciples, baptized and taught were to also go out and obey the command of Jesus. This is continuing until His return, and therefore a healthy church would be one that is fully obeying the command of Jesus Christ and bearing the expected fruit. The fruit being a people who believe in Jesus as the Christ and are willing to obey His command to preach the Gospel and disciple others to do the same.

In the book of John chapter 15 Jesus warns of those that are in Him and do not bear fruit, and He says such are good to be cut and thrown into the fire.

I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. (John 15: 5-6 NIV)

Jesus says in the scripture that those that abide in Him and His teachings are the ones that bear fruit. This means those that continue in belief in Him, obedience to Him and live by the principles of his teachings, which goes to show that there needs to be a preservation of the teachings and principles. For this preservation and passing on of the baton to take place we must agree that there have to be those who have experienced these principles and teachings and even the Character that is required to be passed on so that they can do it effectively. As Bishop Ware says,

One who climbs a mountain for the first time needs to follow a known route; and he needs to have with him, as companion and guide, someone who has been up before and is familiar with the way. To serve as such a companion and guide is precisely the role of the "Abba" or spiritual father whom the Greeks call "Geron" and the Russians "Starets", a title which in both languages means "old man" or "elder". (Ware 2000, 127.)

This shows that there needs to be a person who goes before others as a person that charts the way. Just as Jesus charted the way for the disciples and the disciples charted the way for the Church fathers also this tradition has been kept through the generations.

In the Roman Catholic Church we still find the fathers, same in the Orthodox denomination. In looking at their tradition we see that they have managed to keep their traditions and their belief system, passing it through the generations yet advancing with the times. Looking at the denominations today we can say, having kept the traditions and teachings through the generations, every generation is seen to make great advancement and we can say they have done greater works than their predecessors.

Having undertaken a course on Church Ministry and Mission I would want to state that after going through one assignment that required me to visit an ecclesia that was different from the one that I usually attend the above chapter is very true. Having visited the Roman Catholic Church in Parklands I found that they have kept the foundations and the training of the Fathers and the priests has passed on the beliefs and the traditions of the Catholic Church. The unity in the Roman Catholic doctrine and the oneness that they tend to portray is very strong and healthy for the advancement of their teachings unlike that of the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches here in Kenya. The Pentecostal and Charismatic churches tend to display a lot of division and various doctrines, and all that one needs to do to see this is just

walk to the churches and listen to their teachings and see the rivalry that they have amongst themselves.

A successful or fruitful church would therefore be described as one that upholds the belief in Jesus as the Christ, obeys His commands, and lives by His principles to fulfill its purpose. This means a fruitful church is one where reaching out, baptizing and teaching of sound doctrine is found. Other than just this sense of obedience is the idea of replication of the action, that is, those that come in are taught and they in turn reach a level where they too can go out and bring in others, baptize them, and teach them too, to be able to go out and reach out. This shows that for a church to be fruitful and one that is healthy it fulfills the purpose for which it was put here on earth to do. In other terms one would say that the church is able to bring in the new converts, “babies”, and nurture them to maturity.

It is important to state here that we have the universal Church and the Local Church and that we are concentrating on the local church at this particular moment that is a part of the denominations. Looking at the local churches then we realize that every church has to have certain teachings and beliefs that they uphold and are foundational. If the foundation of the church is then not strong then the church is bound to have issues. As Rick Warren say in His book *The Purpose Driven Church*,

A Church built on an inadequate or faulty foundation will never reach the height that God intends for it to reach .... If you want to build a healthy, strong, and growing church you must spend time laying a solid foundation. This is done by clarifying in the minds of everyone involved exactly why the church exists and what it is supposed to do. (Warren 2003, 86)

This brings the idea that the church has a particular purpose to accomplish and one that is clearly put across. Then there can be no unhealthy habits resulting in an unhealthy church. This purpose is based on the initiator of the Church and not on the bishops or pastors. Christ said He would build His Church in the book of Matthew

16:18, and therefore it is only He who can determine the purpose of the Church. We can therefore say that one of the foundations of the Church is a clear understanding of the purpose of the Church. As we read earlier in this chapter Jesus commissioned the disciples to preach, baptize, and reach-out among other things that they were to do.

All that the Church is to do here on earth is defined as the purpose of the Church. As Grudem puts it, “We can understand the purpose of the Church in terms of ministry to God, ministry to believers, and ministry to the world.” (Grudem 1994, 867)

In relationship to God the church’s purpose is to worship Him.... According to Scripture, the church has an obligation to nurture those who are already believers and build them up to maturity in the faith.... Jesus told his disciples that they should “make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19) ( Grudem 1994, 867-68)

According to Grudem if the above purposes were fulfilled then there would be a healthy Church, one that is being fruitful and accomplishing what it was put on earth to do. Rick Warren says, “A clear purpose not only defines what we do, it defines what we do not do.... The Secret of effectiveness is to know what really counts, then do what really counts, and not worry about all the rest.” (Warren 2003, 87)

The healthy church will know what is expected of them and do exactly that knowing that they are not able to do everything. They will not get involved in what is not part of their purpose and will not lose track because they have their purpose well defined and articulated. This is one way of looking at it however there are others who believe that the health of a church incorporates more than just having the purposes.

Donald J. MacNair and Esther L. Meek who are church consultants in their book *The Practices of a Healthy Church* says,

A church is healthy, I can see it two things are regularly going on: first individual members are growing in spiritual maturity; and second the church is actively seeking to help unbelievers come to Christ, with the confident anticipation that God will bring this about. I also look for a third evidence; the absence of any major divisions or strife in the Church. (MacNair and Meek 1999, 9)

According to MacNair and Meek these are vital signs that a Church is healthy, they are similar to the purposes that Grudem has actually put across in some ways.

MacNair goes on to state what are the practices of a healthy church which when put to practice will bear the fruit that the church is expected to bear.

I have come to call these practices characteristics or criteria of a healthy church. I do not mean to confuse them with that intangible wellness that is God's alone to give. I mean to say that this is what we need to be practicing in order to be healthy, and that, thanks to God's covenant faithfulness, we can confidently expect his work in us and through us. (MacNair and Meek 1999, 10)

He clearly shows that there are practices that could be passed on through the generations that would keep the Church healthy if they are maintained. These practices according to him are six and they are;

1. The church must retain its commitment to the Holy Scriptures without compromise.
2. The church must engage in regular, vibrant worship to God as the ultimate motivation for personal and corporate growth.
3. The church must continually train and implement shepherd leadership.
4. The Church must have a mechanism for utilizing gifted member initiative with ordained elder accountability;
5. The Church must have a continually modified vision and plan, unique to that church body at that time and in that community, which focuses and implements its purpose and mission.
6. The church must prayerfully seek the grace of God to build commitment to biblical health.

As we can read we see that to have a healthy Church we can not ignore the work that Christ did with the disciples in the period he was with them. As we have

read Don Williams showing that Jesus' ministry and doctrine had to be passed on to the disciples and they in-turn were to pass it on to others. We can therefore see that for the Church to be healthy then the character and doctrine and practices had to be retained and that means that they had to be passed on from one generation to another. This effectively happens when one is in a relationship where they can pass what they have to one who is coming up in the ministry.

### A Biblical Exegesis on Spiritual Fatherhood and Spiritual Sonship

Steve Hill, in his article on the above topic, refers to this concept as either Roman or pagan dogma. He uses Scripture to argue out his case.

Take the example of "spiritual fatherhood" or "ministry father". There is truth in tension here! Let us see what happens if we emphasize one side over the other. If I mention Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha as well as Paul and Timothy, what do you think of? What would you teach? Most would teach the necessity of having a spiritual father or a spiritual mentor. And that would be half of the truth. However, neither Moses nor Elijah nor Paul had a spiritual father! (Hill 2008, 1)

He actually raises a legitimate issue because it is important to be able to base our belief on a biblical foundation that is strong and can support what we claim. Hill continues to leave a blank portion in his article that is under the title "*Scriptures which teach spiritual covering by submission to delegated authority?*" According to Him there is none that actually supports the idea of covering by submission to delegated authority. However he goes on to detail scripture that show that Jesus as the only spiritual covering that we ought to have. He begins by stating in, "I Timothy 2:5, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." (NIV) The Reformation was fought on that one! Do you need a "priest" between you and God to mediate God for you? Doctrinally most present day Christians would say a resounding No!" to that question." (Hill, 2)

Hill continues to use Scripture for his case such as 1 John 2:24- 28 which refers to the anointing that we receive from the Lord teaching us all things. He also states John 16: 13 and 1 Peter 2:4-10 as other scriptures that would be used to denounce the concept of spiritual fatherhood and sonship. His argument is clearly that his understanding of the concept is that one who is a spiritual father takes the place of lord or source in the life of spiritual son.

There is no doubt that in the way that he presents his case there is absolutely no reason as to why we shouldn't be weary of the concept. However there is a difference between the way he puts his argument across and how we understand the concept. In our case the concept is basically based on nurturing and developing and not lording it over others and controlling them.

This brings up a very important issue because we have to prove that this is not just another gimmick from people who want to form a way of lording it over others in the Christian ministry. However I must say that as we have seen that Jesus used the same concept to train the twelve whom he later commissioned to continue the work and that they were very effective at it.

It will be agreed that Christianity was developed in a certain culture, the Jewish culture, for that matter. Therefore there are many things that would be attributed to the culture of the day that are found in Christianity but we have to say that the source of all things is God. It is important therefore to note that to agree with Steve Hill would be erroneous because a good look at the Word of God by those who front the concept suggests that it is actually a Biblical concept that can be supported from the Scriptures.

If we are to understand anything about spiritual fathers and fathering we must begin by looking carefully at God and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Fatherhood has its origin in God; scripture reveals that He is the "ground"

from which it springs. When we think upon God we are coming face to face with fatherhood at its source. (Newberry 2003, 19)

As we can see Newberry in his book "*Spiritual Fathers: A Biblical and Practical Perspective on Spiritual Fathers and Fathering*," says the source of this concept is actually God and therefore we can look at the Scriptures and find that it is derived from them. However he continues to say,

We must resist the thought that fatherhood is a minor idea supplying sidelights on a particular type of Christian ministry. In the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, His Father and His Father's business was all that He was about. We can not attach to our own father-relationships, either natural or spiritual, similar kind of consecration to that existing between the Lord Jesus Christ and His Father in Heaven; there were and are elements in that relationship beyond application to ourselves. (Newberry 2003, 24)

This we must agree that there are elements that are found in the relationship that our Lord Jesus Christ has with the Father that can not be applied to our relationships here on earth and especially when it comes to the spiritual fathering concept.

### Jesus Christ and the Father

As we have read that the best point to start with as we look at the scriptural foundation of this particular concept would be looking at God and that means first to His relationship with His Son Jesus Christ.

At an early stage in His life here on earth Jesus began to refer to the Heavenly Father as His Father, and we can read that in the Scriptures in the book of Luke, "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49, NIV) Jesus had remained behind at the temple debating with the Pharisees and the scribes while his parents were journeying back home only to realize he wasn't with them. On being found, that was the response that He gave to them. This begins to outline the kind of relationship that Jesus had with the Father.

Not only does Jesus testify of this relationship but we see the Father too laying claim to being Father of the Lord Jesus. At His baptism in the river Jordan by John the Baptist we read, “And a voice from heaven said, “This is my son, whom I love; with him am well pleased.’ ” (Matthew 3:17, NIV) At this point we have to remind ourselves that the Father makes this proclamation with the idea that Jesus was to accomplish a certain purpose. There was the Father’s business that had to be accomplished and it was dependant upon this relationship. The proclamations of Jesus about His relationship with the Father are found in the Scriptures in several places, (Matthew 10:32, 33; 12:50; 16:17; 18:35; 24:36; 26:53; 27:46; Mark 14:36; Luke 10:22; 22:29; 22:42; 23:34, 46; John 3:18; 5:17, 26, 30, 36, 37, 43; 6:27, 32, 57; 8:42; 12:50; 14: 2,7; 15:1, 8; 16:15, 28; 20:17, 21). Jesus refers to God as His Father and this is clearly seen through the Scriptures.

This relationship was such that what the Father desired to be done here on earth is what was being carried out. Jesus declared that He was in the Father and the Father was in Him. “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake.” (John 14:10, 11, ASV) We also read in the Scriptures Jesus stating that He has been sent of the Father to do a work here on earth. It would be right to say that the Father poured Himself in the Son to come and do the work that He (Jesus) did here on earth.

Jesus says in the Scriptures that whatever the Father does, that He does too. “Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.” (John 5:19, NKJV) This statement shows that the

relationship that Jesus had with the Father was very important for the work to be accomplished.

Jesus ministry here on earth was successful and at the cross He proclaimed that “it is finished.” However before His death He too commissioned others just as the Father had sent Him. “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” (John 20:21, NKJV) We know that Jesus spent time with the Twelve that He commissioned and they learnt from Him and were trained through a relationship that He developed with them. He called them to Himself and spent time with them as they learnt from Him. They did not read a book but learnt through a daily interaction with Him, such that the works that Jesus did they too did so that the purposes and mission of God may be completed.

These disciples in-turn trained others whom they walked with closely so that the work would be kept going and the Character and the doctrine would be passed on through the generations until the coming of the Lord. Jesus had commanded them, ““Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Amen. (Matthew 28:19, 20, NKJV) The disciples were to teach others what they had learnt from Him and as we can see this learning was not through written literature but through intimate relationship so were they to train others who would carry on with the work.

In the case of Paul the apostle which is where the New Testament Fatherhood is really derived from, in many cases we read him writing to the Corinthians, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1) Linda Belleville in her article writes,

Paul exhorts his converts to a life of imitation twice in 1 Corinthians. Once he invites them to imitate him (4:16); another time, he asks them to imitate Christ (somewhat indirectly) through imitating him (11:1). In so doing, he calls them to a life of discipleship that has as its exemplars himself immediately and Christ ultimately. (Belleville 1996, 120)

On the same scripture, Williams responds by saying, “To restrict this imitation to doctrine or ethics, is to do violence to the New Testament evidence and to miss the point of discipleship in the ancient world.” (Williams 1993, 185) That meant that they had to spend time together in a relationship where one could learn from the other, hence the training was more practical than theoretical. In the New Testament we see Paul referring to Timothy and Titus as his Sons in the ministry, (1Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4). These were people he served with before letting them continue with the work of the ministry, a sign that they would have been together for a period of time so that Timothy and Titus would learn in a practical way what was expected of them.

A look at the Bible as a whole, the Old Testament also has examples that we can compare to the fatherhood concept that we are addressing. The relationship between Elijah and Elisha is also considered as one of spiritual fatherhood/ spiritual sonship relationships. We also see the relationship between Moses and Joshua as of the same concept and the results of these relationships is actually what we expect of the spiritual fatherhood and sonship relationships.

### Conclusion

Having gone through the literature I would like to come to a conclusion that the concept of spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship is very much present with us today. As we see through the paper there are those that advocate for it and those that are against it. The case for the concept seems to out weigh the case against the

concept. Looking through the Scriptures tends to give it a stronger foundation and make it a viable idea for the Church and ministry today.

However I must state that there is something that clearly comes out as I read through the various articles and it is the fact that the terminology spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship is not used in referring to the concept in the earlier times. However the concept is the same and the expected results are the same therefore we can say that there is only a difference in the naming of the concept. Today majority of the people would refer to the concept as spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship, where as in the earlier days they referred to it as teacher student relationship. Those who see the concept as viable but do not want to refer to it as spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship would refer to it as spiritual mentoring, which is still different from mentoring but similar to spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship in their definition.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY, METHODS AND PROCEDURES

#### Assumptions in Qualitative Study

There are two principal approaches to social science research: qualitative and quantitative. I have chosen to use the qualitative approach in this study. By qualitative research we mean research procedures that produce their findings not based on statistical procedure or other means of quantification (Corbin and Strauss 1998, 10-11).

The qualitative method of research is usually inductive in nature and comports an emerging design. Data are collected and analyzed in various ways. Many qualitative researchers depend on observation and use of open ended interviews in the data collection. (Starcher 2003, 59)

#### Assumption of Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a term used by Strauss and Corbin to mean “theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through research process” (Corbin and Strauss 1998, 12). They further say, “Grounded theories, because they are drawn from data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaning guide to action” (1998, 12). In this study the researcher seeks to derive a general, abstract of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants in a study.

For successful and meaningful results to be realized, qualitative evaluation inquiry draws on both critical and creative thinking, both the science and the art of analysis. (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 12) In addition it requires using nonlinear forms of thinking such as viewing a subject from various angles to get a fresh perspective, trusting the process and not holding back, not taking shortcuts but rather putting energy and effort into the work. One should have it as a fun as he or she does the work. (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 13)

Analysis in qualitative study is an-interplay between the researcher and data. It is both science and art. The researcher must be able to maintain a reasonable degree of rigor and thus grounding the analysis in data. This is the scientific part of grounded theory. On the other hand to be artistic, the researcher must show ability to “aptly name categories, ask stimulating questions, make comparisons, and extract an innovative, integrated, realistic scheme from masses of unorganized raw data” The balance between the two should be struck when doing research analysis. (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 13)

### The Role of the Researcher

In this study, I undertook to discover the implications of Spiritual Fatherhood and Spiritual Sonship to the Kenyan Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations. This being a qualitative study, I was the primary data-collection agent as I conducted the interviews. The issue of building rapport with the participants was very important for the exercise to be successful. I also sought to analyze the data collected thus I was able to filter my data collection and prepared it for analysis.

## Methodological Assumptions

To carry out research in the natural setting is the best way to do qualitative research. Thus I tried as much as possible to meet with the respondents in such environments and sought to get information by use of study guide interview questions. Majority of them were in their working environments but there were a few of them who sought to meet with me in a different environment for they felt it was more relaxed and easier for them to open up and express their true feelings. I tried as much as possible to interact with the respondents to be able to get the information needed for the study.

It was therefore my responsibility to see to it that I went to the place where the respondent felt they were willing and free to give their information without feeling threatened or intimidated and especially in the case of the spiritual sons.

## Data Collection

I collected data using open-ended interview questions with several church leaders who are both spiritual fathers and some aren't and also with those who are spiritual sons and those who are not. The interviews were conducted on face-to-face level and the researcher visited the participants both in their natural settings for those who felt comfortable and in settings where others felt were more comfortable than their natural settings.

## Research Procedure

As the researcher I used open-ended questions to collect data. The questions had to be restructures on several occasions in order to get complete answers that I was

looking for from the respondents. Some questions generated more than one question in an attempt to get a clear message communicated by the participants.

## **Participants**

The participants in the research were church leaders and those working under them and with them, whom I would say some ascribed to spiritual fatherhood and sonship whereas others did not ascribe to it. They were able to tell how they came to ascribe to the topic and others why they felt that it wasn't a viable thing at all.

### Point of Entry

Being a member of one of the Pentecostal churches I was able to build a rapport much faster in particular areas whereas it was difficult to do the same because of the mistrust that some individuals had because of the differences that are there in certain Churches. In certain instances I had to use proxies to be able to get the particular individuals that I needed. I also had to use a letter from my supervisor in order to secure interviews with certain leaders. I did emphasize that the answers given by any of them will be kept confidential.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

This study research was undertaken with the purpose to explore the implications of Spiritual fatherhood and sonship and its lack in the Kenyan Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations. The data to this research was collected through interviews that involved some denominational leaders and senior pastors of local churches as well as some associate pastors and assistant pastors. There were six basic research questions used to collect data as listed below:

1. Do you believe in the concept of spiritual fatherhood and sonship and why do you do so?
2. What would you then say is the difference between this concept and mentoring?
3. According to your understanding of the concept, do you think it is a western ideology being introduced in the Kenyan Church or would you say it is a biblical concept?
4. According to you do you think that spiritual father chooses the spiritual son or would you say it's vice versa? If neither what is your opinion of how they get to be in this relationship?
5. Do you believe this concepts is a vital idea for the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Kenya and if embraced would create healthy churches?

6. In your opinion do you believe there are cases where this concept has been abused and what damage would you say that has done to the Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations in the Kenyan Church?

### Explanation of the Theory

In dealing with the church leaders and the pastors it came to my attention that the concept of spiritual fatherhood and sonship is well known to them but not well articulated in their understanding. Majority of the denominational leaders acknowledged that the concept was there in their denominations at least that they practiced it. However it was interesting to note that even those whom I thought were not for the idea had embraced it. There were those who were counted as being sons yet would object to the whole idea as being very viable but stated that it was there and would only work in certain circumstances but the ones that they are in.

### The Participants Understanding of the Concept

The concept of spiritual fatherhood and sonship was clearly defined by most of the participants as being different from mentoring. There were those who believed that there is no difference between the two terminologies and therefore there really isn't anything like spiritual fatherhood and sonship for that matter. However the principle of nurturing and developing others in the ministry was the common factor that came out of them and was fronted by them as being very important for the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Kenya.

All the participants in the research were people whom have served under others as spiritual sons and are still serving but also are spiritual fathers to others within their denominations. There were those who are not spiritual fathers but they are

spiritual sons and are under the care of spiritual fathers. However I must say that there are those whom I managed to interview but they were neither spiritual fathers nor are they spiritual sons but they supported the idea as though they were part of the concept at one point.

### Difference between Spiritual Fatherhood/ Sonship and Mentoring

The following were responds from various participants. They expressed the idea that there is definitely a difference between the two concepts. Majority sought to clarify that spiritual fatherhood and sonship was a higher level of mentoring and that is why there is a difference. The following sentiments were made by some of the Spiritual Fathers:

John: One of the denominational leaders said:

The main difference between spiritual fatherhood/ sonship and mentoring is in spiritual fatherhood it is like the father pours his life in to the spiritual son, whereas in mentoring it is more of inspiring someone to be better in what they are doing. In spiritual fatherhood there is a more intimate relationship as compared to mentoring which can be done even from a long distance, but in spiritual fatherhood there have to be moments when the two meet and deal with issues deeply.

There were similar sentiments expressed by another denominational leader:

Mark: also said:

In spiritual fatherhood there is birth involved and there is also adoption that takes place in certain cases where as in mentoring there isn't any form of begetting that really takes place one can just be mentored and the kind of a relationship that they may have will not be the same as that of a spiritual son. The relationship of the spiritual father and spiritual son is more solid because the father sees the son grow whereas the relationship in mentoring there is some developing of skills but the concern given quite different.

These same ideas were repeated by those whom I would call spiritual sons of whom some were actually ladies:

Rebecca: one of the spiritual sons gave similar sentiments but added something to her statement that would sound controversial:

The difference between the two is the degree of relationship that they have because the relationship with the spiritual father is more intimate with that of a mentor. One can be mentored from a long distance whereas one who is in a spiritual fatherhood relationship is meant to meet every so often with the spiritual father. In fact in the case of mentoring one can choose to ignore what they are told but in spiritual fatherhood one has to obey everything that the spiritual father tells them to do.

The last bit of the statement however was not expressed by the rest of the participants but there seemed to be an idea that the relationship of the spiritual father and the spiritual son went deeper to a point where the father could instill discipline whereas in the case of mentoring discipline was not really possible unless the mentored subjected themselves to it but that would be a case of spiritual fatherhood relationship.

#### The Origin of the Concept of Spiritual Fatherhood and Sonship

Each of the respondents was quick to refer to the Bible and more so the relationship of the God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son as the source of the this kind of relationship that is being fronted as the way to build the Church in Kenya today. Mark had the following to say:

Oh yes the origin is the relationship that we have in the Bible between God the Father and Jesus His son. Looking at the Scriptures you will realize that the Bible in several places talks of the Father and the Son's relationship. That is where I would base my argument for the fronting the concept.

John also referred to the same but went a step further to bring up other points:

The concept is biblical because looking at Paul and Timothy as well as Titus we see Paul referring to them as his sons. He trains them and sets them off to continue with the work of the ministry. He spent time with them and gave them advice and the works that he did they saw him doing and did not just hear of what he did. Look at Paul telling the Corinthians "you have many instructors

but one father” which is actually a clear indication also of what one would call the difference between fatherhood and mentoring in the Bible.

These same ideas were also used by the sons to support the concept of the spiritual fatherhood and sonship being a biblical one. In as much as others went as far as looking at the Old Testament and giving the relationship between Moses and Joshua as well as that of Elijah and Elisha. There was no further explanation or expansion on the same from the Bible. However Moses was a little different in his approach of the same:

Moses: Who is a son to one of the denominational leaders says:

Yes we see it in the Bible and the truth is that it only works one in thirteen times and that is because, of all the apostles we see only one modeled the concept and that was Paul. Who was Peter’s spiritual son, what about John’s spiritual son? People talk of Elijah being Elisha’s spiritual father but who was Elijah’s spiritual father?

Moses argument sounded legitimate and he was armed with biblical evidence that the concept is biblical but not to be applied to all who are in the ministry. In that case he said that some of the so called spiritual father and son relationships are illegitimate because they are forced and not inspired of God.

#### How Does One Become a Spiritual Father or Spiritual Son?

On this particular point there were different opinions that were put across but they all tended to lean on one side of the divide. There was a general feeling that spiritual fatherhood is natural when one leads an individual to Christ and disciples them into the ministry.

As Mark put it:

There is birth involved here, if I am the one that leads you to the Lord and disciple you in your Christian walk then I begin to see some signs in you that show potential in ministry I may choose to bring you into a closer relationship so that I develop that which I see in you. This I do so that I may develop the call that I may have seen in you, one doesn’t necessarily have to be a preacher

or pastor like me but they may be an evangelist or a missionary or any other ministry that the Lord could have called them into. There are those who I may have not led to the Lord but they come to me and ask me to nurture them in the ministry because they feel they have a call, these I will not accept very fast but would take time to pray and hear what the Lord would say to me before I accept them as sons in this case I will have adopted them.

These were the two ways that were expressed by both the spiritual fathers and the spiritual sons whom I interviewed. Even those who seemed to be not comfortable with the concept accepted that there is a way one becomes a mentor or one who is mentored. As Richard says,

Richard: who is a son to one of the denomination leaders says:

Am not comfortable to say that there is really something like spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship, but I am sure to say there is spiritual mentoring and one becomes a mentor by either leading one the Lord and discipling them into maturity and on into ministry. Let me also say one can adopt someone to mentor but that is after some mutual understanding not just anybody can come and say that you are their spiritual mentor if they do not have the a relationship with you that shows you have submitted to them.

I would say that it looked like in the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches the criteria for getting a spiritual father or spiritual son was more or less the same across the board.

How Important is this Concept to the Pentecostal and Charismatic Church in Kenya?

In this point of the study I got more than I asked for, as the participants sought to lay it bare that the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in Kenya were suffering and were unhealthy because of lack of spiritual fathering and spiritual sons. As Mark says:

The problem we have is that people plant churches and not sons. If we are to learn to plant sons then the competition and rivalry that we see in the church would not be there. The issue is that we get rid of people in the name of church planting. Once we have planted them wherever we wanted we forget about them and let them struggle, since we were getting rid of them. If they

survive then we get into competition but if they fail then good riddance. But if we are to plant sons we will be concerned about their well being and walk with them until we see them walk and for sure no one would be intimidated by the success of their own son to a point of competing with them.

According to Mark the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in Kenya were in competition with one another and a number of the churches had been started in bad faith. As one would say if you set off on the wrong footing then you are bound to get into trouble ahead. This seems to be the case with the Pentecostal and Charismatic church in Kenya according to Mark. Alfred who is not a son but an associate Pastor airs the same sentiments and says:

I am not a son but I lead a congregation. I have a senior pastor whom we relate to a certain level but this is my take. If he was a spiritual father to me I would be sure to confidently say that this church that I pastor would be better than what it is right now. I feel I need someone to father me and let me make it known to you that the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches would be doing much better than they are right now had we embraced this concept earlier in ministry.

Rebecca also said,

The church needs spiritual fathers and people must be willing to submit as sons if we want to see the Pentecostal and charismatic churches bear much fruit in these last days. One of the things I see that is being butchered is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, people are coming up with various doctrines that are quite controversial and very appealing to the human sufferings that people are facing everyday. I believe if the older generation of preachers had taken their time to nurture those who were under them in a spiritual father manner then we would have had a balanced doctrine being preached or at least we would have less of heresies being preached. There would be more accountability in the Church today and there would be less rivalry in the denominations.

An argument that Richard and also John expressed similar sentiments about, they felt that some of the issues the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches were struggling with especially in doctrine and character would have been reduced if not dealt with wholly. According to most of the participants the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Kenya are not healthy because of the lack of spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship which would develop leaders with credibility and

healthy ministry practices like those who went before us or those who were used by God to begin the churches here in Kenya.

#### Abuse of Spiritual Fatherhood and Spiritual Sonship Concept

There were different forms of abuse that the participants expressed were being used by different parties to exploit others for their personal benefit through the concept of spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship. Mark the denomination leader said,

There have been various forms of abuse of this concept and especially by those who are said to be sons because they now believe that they have found a solution for all their financial problems and therefore they put their dependence on the spiritual father and not on God.

John echoed the same frustration:

The abuse that I have found mainly being expressed is the idea that the spiritual son begins to see me as a cash cow. I suddenly become an ATM machine where he or she can come whenever they have a financial need. I believe they are to learn from the relationship that we have that I also trust God for all that I have therefore they should be learning from my actions and says that I believe in God for all that I have and they should do the same.

However the opposite was also being expressed by those who are spiritual sons but they went ahead and gave even more ways by which this abuse was taking place. Rebecca said,

In many cases we have had the spiritual sons taking advantage financially of their spiritual fathers by relying on them to meet these needs but let me make it known to you that there are also people who will want to become spiritual fathers so that they can be able to draw finances from their spiritual sons who are doing better financially than them. There are spiritual fathers who are always saying that since they are the ones who brought us up them we are obligated to give them a tithe of a monthly contribution.

Richard who is a spiritual son to a denomination leader and Alfred who is not a son also expressed the same feelings and they were very serious about this issue.

They felt that this concept is now being used to set up means of making more money.

Moses actually said it differently,

These people are setting up financial points for themselves so that they can be moving around preaching and asking for financial remuneration as spiritual fathers and the spiritual sons have no choice but to give the finances because they are made to believe that they are obligated to do so.

Moses continues to make his point and expresses the idea of intimidation and control as he says,

There is also another problem with this concept, I believe majority of the spiritual fatherhood and sonship relationships that we are seeing around are actually a means of intimidation, domination and control. Most of these leaders do not want us to enjoy the benefits of working hard in the ministry so they will say that we are not ready to be released and allowed to have our own churches or ministries. They will always keep us in check so that we can never get closer to where they are in-terms of leadership in the pretext that they want to develop us. Yet we can see for ourselves that there is some sort of favoritism and feeling threatened that we are coming up faster than they expected.

These were feelings that could be felt as the spiritual sons talked to me, some felt that in certain cases the spiritual fathers felt intimidated by the progress that the spiritual sons were making and therefore by telling them and making them sons they were able to have some control on the progress the spiritual sons made. As in some cases where the spiritual son is expected to do everything that the spiritual father asks them to do because they are in submission to them. As Moses had said it earlier,

This concept only works one out of every thirteen times that it is practiced, and majority of the cases we have are illegitimate because we have abused the idea and do not even know how to handle it. Are all those purporting to be fathers really having the calling to be spiritual father or is it that they have found an opportunity to exploit for financial gain and control those whom they see as a threat in the ministry.

### Summary

From the research there are ideas that have presented themselves concerning the concept of spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship that show the viability of the

concept and at the same time the implications of its lack. However we see that there are also some disadvantages to the concept if it is not well articulated in the hearts of those who are practicing it and more so having it grounded in the word of God.

From the research, there is a clear indication that the concept is widely accepted even by those who are not practicing it. This is so because all the participants responded positively to the concept even though others were positive with certain reservations. There is no doubt that the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches embrace the concept in as much there are hurdles that are erected on the way as they practice the concept. The biblical evidence that the participants gave, shows that they are not practicing what they saw in the western world or some doctrine that a new wind is blowing in their direction.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When the analysis was over and the interpretation was done, based on collected data, the researcher made conclusions and recommendations as indicated below.

#### Need for Spiritual Fatherhood and Spiritual Sonship

Most of the participants see the importance of the concept of spiritual fatherhood and spiritual sonship in the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Kenya. They have supported their arguments by giving Bible reference and also by giving and showing examples of what they believe are the results of the concept in use and when it is not being used. According to the research the Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations are embracing the concept. Even those who were purported to be not interested in the concept have spiritual sons. Actually this concept is more like the “fashion craze” of the ministry currently in these denominations. This means that there are people practicing this concept without understanding it fully, in as much as it is a very important for the church today. Mark in support for this concept said that he would be a very powerful tool that would be used to advance the church in a fruitful and stable manner to minimize on the rivalry and the divisions especially in the Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations. With the relationship being the mode of training, then the doctrine and the character of the ministers would

be very upright and there would be a balance in the way the church presents itself to the world here in Kenya.

### Confidence among Denominational Leaders

The denominational leaders play a great role in seeing to it that the concept bears much fruit and works. But they must be more confident in themselves and not feel intimidated to the point of getting rid off potential sons. They should be ready to develop the individual and pour as much as they can in the individual then plant them out, not plant a church out, as Mark would put it.

Moses and Richard recommended that the denominational leaders should know that God brings people their way so they can build and develop them like Jesus did with the twelve and He lost none except the son of perdition. They should be ready to send forth those whom God has placed under their care and expects them to nurture them in the best manner possible for He has given them the ministry to do so.

### Articulation of the Concept

The concept should be articulated well to all those who are practicing it. The fact that some people see it as the latest craze in the ministry where as others see it as a means of money minting, still yet others see it as a way to push down others so that they do not take their positions. It would be best if the concept is well articulated to the leaders and proper teachings are give so that the abuses that are seen my be eradicated. In my study I realized that most leaders believed that the concept was there after the coming of Jesus on earth but that is not true and there for a better understanding of it and its power of influence as well as training would be very beneficial to the church. There should therefore be conferences and seminars

especially for those who are spiritual fathers so that they can have a forum where they can exchange ideas as well as challenge one another. As the Bible says “Iron sharpens iron so does one man sharpen the countenance of another” (Proverbs 27:17 NKJV).

### A God Idea Not Man’s Idea

As Moses observed that not all relationships are actually God initiated. As we see the craze could have pushed others to create relationships that are actually illegitimate before God. It does not mean that everyone needs to be in a spiritual father and spiritual son relationship for even as we looked through the Bible there were those whom we can not be able to support the concept with their lives. It is therefore important not to force it and make everyone that you see potential in for the ministry that they become spiritual sons. It should be that God leads you to be a spiritual father or a spiritual son to a particular person and the relationship should be based on mutual understanding.

Peter who is a Spiritual son and also spiritual father says,

This concept is very difficult to understand because one has to be very sensitive to God so that they can actually accomplish it. He says he feels his relationship to his spiritual father is one based on the craze and not God initiated for I tend to feel more hurt than built through the relationship. I, on the other hand have a spiritual son whom I felt led to nurture by the guidance of God and I actually find that I have the best interests at heart for my spiritual son unlike my father who is just happy to have a successful spiritual son so that he can brag about it.

If Jesus used the same method to train and nurture twelve whom he later sent out and they did a tremendous work that has its effect to date, then I believe the concept can be used in the right manner for the benefit of the Church today too. Spiritual fatherhood and sonship is therefore a viable concept for the Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations in Kenya.

I will conclude by stating that the title that is given to this concept is what brings controversy because, as is commonly stated, the term “Father” is one that is looked at as meaning “source”. As we will all agree there is only one source for all of us and that is God the Father. I would therefore say that using the term spiritual mentoring in the case where the concept has not been understood would be a better idea. However the concept is basically based on the idea of nurturing and developing those who are coming up in the ministry and this we can not deny as not being very important to the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Kenya.

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## APPENDIX

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

Thank you for your willingness to answer these questions. I do wish to promise you that the answers you have given will be made confidential.

1. Do you believe in the concept of Spiritual Fatherhood and Spiritual Sonship and why?
2. What is the difference between Spiritual fatherhood and sonship with mentoring?
3. Do you believe that it is a western concept that is being brought to us or is it Biblical and can you support your answer from the Scriptures?
4. How does one become a spiritual father of son? Who approaches the other?
5. Do you believe the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in Kenya would be doing better if they practiced this concept correctly? What do you think would be different in the Church today?
6. Looking at the concept as it is where would you place the issue of material and financial dependence?
7. Do you believe that the concept can be abused and in what ways?