

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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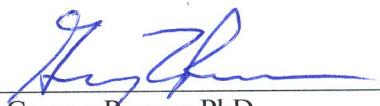
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Student's Declaration

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?

