

*“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God”* (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Sexual abuse is considered to be a kind of sexual molestation, which is induced by forcing of undesired sexual behavior by one person upon another. In some cases, we can investigate the non-consensual behavior in the form of sexual assault and rape, in other ones it can be displayed through exposing the child to pornography or sexual kissing and different forms of sexual harassment. The theological interpretation of sexual abuse rests totally upon the Bible and the teachings of Jesus Christ. We all know that sexually abused people are frequently observed as the threat to society, but on the other hand, we understand that God loves us all. And the role of Church in terms of sexual abuse tends to be more than fundamental. People should always stay conscious enough to talk about their problems and get rid of them if possible. The pastoral care to sexually abused people is the only true response, because it treats all the people spiritually and truly as once Jesus Christ taught us how to live. Reading the Bible, we notice the God's vision of sexual abuse on earth, “If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. If a man lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them. If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed perversion; their blood is upon them. If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them. If a man takes a woman and her mother also, it is depravity; he and they shall be burned with fire, that there may be no depravity among you” (Leviticus 20:10-16).

Most of us realize that God's original intention is to save humanity. When having the powerful rival, the Devil, our Creator calls all people to be strong enough to keep away from sins, which seduce a lot of people, turning them into evil. But, although many sexually abused people rejected the significant words of the biblical community to follow the foundational element of paradise and maintain sexual innocence in community, none of us has the right to ignore the sexually broken and devastated people. The pastoral care to sexually abused people is the major element that can lead all the broken people to the normal and religious way of life, the life with God. Once the God said, "no one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the Lord...Everyone who does any of these detestable things - such persons must be cut off from their people" (Leviticus 18:6, 29). The constant struggle between God and Devil is obvious. We can notice that sexuality and sex abuse have a lot in common. In ancient times beautiful women attracted courageous warriors. But the sexual abuse in any manifestation was always treated like a sin. In his message to I Corinthians 5:1, 5, Jesus Christ said, "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife...hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord." So, we can see that God refuses to accept and protect people who are consciously involved in sexual abuse and gives them to the Satan's possession in order to save humanity from the rapid spreading of the destroyed spirit.

The homosexuality cases are referred to sexual abuse as well, because it is against the will of our God and our humanity. Reading the Bible, we notice that "if a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them" (Leviticus 20:13). Moreover, "The sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine" (1 Timothy 1:10). There are a lot of cases in the Bible, where homosexual cases with Romans were depicted. In ancient times, Roman soldiers were always engaged in war and had not time to create their own families. Respectively, they began to act against the will of Jesus

Christ and began to practice homosexual relationships. Once, Jesus Christ said to them, “Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature” (Romans 13:14). Thus, very few of them strived to recognize the significant power of God’s words. Moreover, in Romans I verse 27 we read, “Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.” When handling such cases, the pastors need to rest totally upon the Bible, because only this powerful religious source can change the minds of people. Males and females who are involved in homosexuality have to realize that they act against the will of God and are destined to hell. They need to take some time, probably years, to accommodate themselves to a normal life. Pastors and counselors also need to make them strong and motivated enough on their way to healing. For example, they could describe the case from the Bible when the female homosexuality was illustrated as the unnatural relations between women in the Epistle to the Romans. Theologically, it rests upon more powerful concept and ideology, the God’s intention to establish the family as the union of two separate sexes. Both abusers and abused, have to understand that God served us the example and epitome of love and piece. Respectively, the abused people have to learn to forgive their abusers and accept their case in the light of patience and confession. God was silent about his cruel treatment. He never wanted the sympathy. He wanted to become the example for the entire humanity. This way, pastors need to promote the idea that abusers have to recover their moral disorders after forgiveness, because they have to perceive their case as the example of how not to act in order to be saved.

The problem of rape is the burning issue of the twenty-first century. In the Bible we can investigate some cases with rape. The most well-known tends to be the case with the rape of Tamar who was the sister of Absalom and daughter of David. Basically, the Bible describes the

relationships between brother and the sister as the sweetest appeal of life relationships. But when the male seeks to become dominant, the relationships are changed into family relationships, which is the “consummation devoutly to be wished.” Reading the Samuel 2, Chapter 13, Verses 1-14, we find out that “Absalom fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her.” For us, the humanity, it is extremely important to consider such a moral lesson. Although the story about Tamar tends to be the only one in the Bible that is linked to the problem of rape, we can find many references to human temptation that forces humans to rape. In I Corinthians 10:13, God shows his disciples that he is ready to fight for the salvation of every soul, although he is deprived of the opportunity to influence the personal choice. And this is frequently understood as the life test, where we have to be strong to overcome our problems in order not to sin. The precise words of Jesus prove this, “no temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” In other words, God left us seduction in nature and spiritual love and in case we are involved in the case with sexual abuse, he will definitely suggest the possible way out, because “God is love” (Budrionis & Jongsma 2003, 18).

The sexual abuse can also be manifested in marriage between husband and wife. The spousal sexual abuse is the form of domestic violence. The forced sex in Bible is compared to the rape of the spouse. In the Bible we read, “Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery“ (Luke 16:18). The pastoral care should also be given to the husbands in order to revise their family positions as the leaders. They should understand the God’s will was to create men and women equally. “For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels” (1 Corinthians 11:8-10). The sexual harassment within families takes its part from the original sin of Adam and Eve. Sexuality is viewed as the

biblical prescription for marriage, thus nowadays most of people view it as the tricky sign of hostility, standing in the middle of God and Devil. Perhaps, this is because sexuality is often the key subject that leads to violence and sexual abuse as well as admiration. Incest destroys families, because it disregards the established boundaries. The pastoral care as the response to sexual abuse within family should be mostly targeted to parents, because they are the most conscious people. Apart from that, they should understand that their weird and stupid actions possess the dysfunctional model. If children are forced to have sexual affairs, they are deprived of their own freedom to become mature in that sense.

The child sexual abuse has become the burning issue of the twenty-first century. It is the case when children are abused for the sexual gratification of adults. It is considered to be the most dangerous kind of sexual abuse, because the consciousness of children is not fully formed. Respectively, they can easily become the victims of self-esteem issues, flashbacks, nightmares, depressions and insomnia. Patrick Parkinson distinguishes guilt to be one of the major consequences of sexual abuse in the childhood. Young victims feel guilty of their actions, because they always wrongly state that they were responsible for their cases (Davis 1958, 47). One more area where the sexual misconduct can happen is work with its positions of power. It happens very often that the student submits to the sexual advance of the person in authority or that the sexual harassment in the workplace involves the employee being forced to the sexual affair under the fear of being dismissed. In such a case, the pastor usually has to provide enough care for those who abuse others, explaining the nonsense of their actions. Those who were sexually abused should be provided with the alternative to attend church when comfortable. This will enhance the atmosphere of trust between abused and pastor. In such cases, pastors should act in accordance with biblical vision of the world and ground all their discussions upon the teachings of Jesus Christ, which can only aid broken people to preserve trust and hope for the future.

Basically, the pastor is called to carry the word of Jesus Christ throughout his life. In the Bible we find, “A pastor is not just a man. He is appointed by God to stand in Christ’s stead to His people” (2 Cor 5:20). Everybody knows that the pastor possesses the sacred authority. Pastors are usually appointed by the church with the purpose of healing the morally devastated people. The pastoral relationships should always possess the sacred trust and intimacy so that the parishioner can feel safe when coming to the priest or pastor with his deepest wounds and vulnerabilities (Gula 1996, 4-9). The important role of pastors in healing abused people can be understood from another verse of the Bible, “And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes” (Eph 4:1-14). In chapter three of Timothy, the necessary criteria for being a pastor are discussed. He must be a highly respected spiritual person, must have only one wife. Additionally, he needs to be self-controlled, wise and sincere towards others so that they are no way the subject to human criticism. When dealing with sexual abusers and sexually abused people, pastors have to keep us to five basic components of meeting. These are sharing and validation of feelings, truth telling, education, spiritual reflection and answering the question, ‘What is the way out?’ Due to the fact that clergy carry spiritual and moral authority, it tends to be their responsibility to maintain the appropriate boundary between the congregant and the pastor (Schmutzer 2008, 802). The good pastors never express hesitation in their actions and this is because they are blessed by God. Knowing and following the desires and commandments of God, they are prone to have only positive influence on the abused and abusers despite the difficulty of the case.

The pastoral care practices display that the priests are open to both abusers and abused people. All of them rest upon the words of God and use the power of Bible to help people get rid

of moral and emotional sufferings induced by sexual abuse. The first element of self-confession is the prayer, because it opens the personal soul and lets the God in. In the Bible John 3:16 explains that Jesus arrived on Earth not to condemn us, but to forgive us and he expects us to find the way for such apology. Most of the Christian pastors encourage that abused forgive the abusers the act of sexual abuse, resting completely upon the Bible and the words “love yourself as you neighbor.” Secondly, it tends to be extremely important to accept God’s peace and cleanse your mind by means of Holy Spirit, which lives inside of us, and that has enough power for healing. The abusers, for their part, should show their true spiritual excuse for their evil actions. Modern pastors follow the idea of spiritual re-birth, which can set the abusers free from their further temptation. The Christian priests usually refer to I John 1:8, 9; Romans 10:13; John 1:12, where the abuser has to feel sorry for his case and ask the Lord to save, forgive and cleanse him and come into his heart. The start of the new spiritual life for abuser can only start if he follows II Corinthians 5:17, where the spiritual confession is necessary to be done truly and honestly.

Currently, there is the dire need in Christian leaders and educators to normalize the crisis of sexual abuse, to create the overall understanding, which promotes healing for the sexually broken, and foster the biblical reflection among biblical pastors and educators. In some cases, the pastors fail to recognize the spiritual values to rest upon when offering their help if needed. All the pastors have to pray before taking any action, because they do not know the probable circumstances that surround the abuse (Schmutzer 2008, 808). Next, modern pastors should revise their approaches towards abusers and abused in terms they treat them. For example, assuming the full responsibility over their actions, they have to be able to treat all the cases with the only purpose of aid, but not vengeance. There is also a need in spiritual formation programs that can be beneficial to both abused and abusers. Such programs should be based upon the religious issues that can explain every phenomenon and indicate the right direction in life. Such programs have to observe the reality of embodiment to spiritual maturity, holistic view of

sexuality and the patterns of abuse within believing communities. Basically, the spiritual formation programs will shape the moral community, emphasizing the vital integrated skills of holistic life, which are very necessary to them. There is a great idea of having the wounded healers in the highest places of leadership, which will become the key step in solving basic misunderstandings. The wounded healers as a rule can take the empathy and insight to deeper levels, because they have experienced the similar cases in their lives. If to follow Genesis 38; 2 Samuel 13, “public reading of Lament psalms and sensitively communicated sermons on texts of exploitation and incest can help change the vision on life among the broken people.”

One more point is that pastors and religious educators have to be adequately equipped. They have to be able to recognize trauma, disassociation disorder and narcissism as well as fully understand the nature of relationships to the victim. In addition, pastors and priests have to be aware of the fact that they engage in prophetic ministry in order to aid to cleanse lives and mend relationships, they should get prepared for the questions God would ask them in their souls. Thus, such prophetic conscious-raising teaching needs some retooling. Talking about the family ministry, we should say that it needs to touch the darkest sides of the problem as well as employ some necessary insights of survivors. We do understand that the pain of victims cannot fit any family gospel ministry.

When dealing with healing the broke person, it tends to be necessary to teach on maturity and sin supported by the powerful and effective retooling. Generally, healing of the sexually abused people requires enacted and textual theology. Churches can have the fundamental influence on broken through different rituals, ceremonies, symbols and, most importantly, prayers. Some other problems with ministries need to be properly revised. Ministries still confuse social information with moral obligation. The lack of adequate discussions can mean the lack of appropriate results. The evil that is discussed when counseling, is not properly addressed socially. From the biblical point of view, pastors tend to always find the proper reason and ground, but they often fail to collect social information, which could induce the incest or

molestation. So, we suppose that religious ministries need to consider and address the facts of sexual offence. The modern practices of religious counseling reveal the tendency when Christian ministries use the purity talks to heal teenagers. Pastor and counselors tend to apply such purity talk practice to adults who were sexually betrayed.

We all know that modern religious tendencies fail to adequately respond to the sexually abused people and their problems. Every church and every priest has to be aware of the emotional pain, which can cost somebody a fortune. The identification and re-evaluation of needs by churches and pastors is to be taken into account when dealing with cases of sexual abuse (Schmutzer 2008, 788). Most theologians state that there is a dire need in interdisciplinary research and dialogue. It is needed to guide the church and foster maturity. Pastors should be responsible for providing the general dialogues with the broken people, because they can be effective for the direct confession and sincere prayer. Currently, the pastoral care fails to be integrative. And this greatly hinders the development of powerful ethical platform as the effective means for help to sexually abused people. Moreover, the pastoral care is devoid of robust theology of personhood in general and in the reality of embodiment, in particular. The theology of embodiment can aid the pastor to be more open towards patients and they, for their part, will be more likely to tell all the truth about their harsh cases. We know precisely that victims of sexual abuse often somatize trauma. They are required to communicate the significant message, which cannot be verbalized by their mouth. In order to face the complete confession the pastor needs to use the sophisticated and intimate approach towards every patient. Victims of sexual abuse should be encouraged to speak profoundly about both their moral and physical devastation in order to uproot this harsh reality out of their lives. The theology of embodiment is the representation of the whole of body, mind and spirit. That is why, the religious experience has to be interpreted through different means, such as feelings, institutions, experiences and sensations. The victims should use any medium through which they are able to enact the

presence of the divine within them. In sexual abuse, forgiveness may be granted, but reconciliation is usually stymied due to deep erosion of trust and respect.

Nowadays, many pastors and Christian counselors practice the everyday prayers for abused and abusers. As usual, most of the broken people ask the pastor to pray with them in order to gain confidence and new interest in life. Numerous churches regularly organize the group meetings and lay some counseling ministries (Schmutzer 2008, 792). Some of the churches have the professional counseling centers that aid the Christians to fight their moral devastation. The introduction of the religious therapies headed by pastors can help the sexual abuse survivors be isolated from the causes of anger. Additionally, pastors have to understand that healing demands of three basic elements: spiritual support, safe time and moral affirmation.

One more important pastoral help can be found in psychological support that is manifested in the form of encouragement. Pastors need to reflect the spiritual strength, which will allow the victims following their examples of such robustness. Apart from that, pastoral care needs to be shaped by various statements that can encourage the broken person as well. For example, “Move on to victory”, “All things are new in Christ Jesus” and “All things work together for good” can enhance the level of personal trust and lead the person to spiritual welfare. We all know that the Holy Spirit is given by God to everyone in order to follow the will of God and in order to live in accordance with his desires. So, in order to overcome even the most difficult problem, the person has to build strong spiritual platform within his or her soul that can protect himself or herself from similar actions in the future. The sense of self-respect is the powerful moral platform that can keep us away from sexual abuse. In the Bible, “if you are a Christian, you have authority and influence with God concerning remittance of sin or retention of sin (John 20:23)”. The prayer is the necessary thing to consider on the level of self-respect, consciousness and self-compassion.

The pastors and religious counselors try to rest their care upon the Holy Spirit and the Bible. If the interaction between God and human is established, then the victim is on the right

direction. In order to notice such relation of God teachings and Holy Spirit, all the pastors have to be aware of the nature of human beings. First of all, they need to understand that the image of humans is theomorphic. The organism of the humans has the form of God and is driven by the Holy Spirit. So, this way, people are references only to God, but not to themselves. Secondly, image inculcates the plurality of genders, male and female one. With reference to the Bible and Gen 1:26n28 in particular, we find out that God speaks to humans, addressing them as persons and not genders. In case the religious dualism is destroyed, then there exists the distinction between spirit and body, which often leads to sexual abuse (Fortune 1987, 16).

Most pastors have to be patient enough to hear their patients. The sexually abused people always need someone to listen to them, reassuring them that the abuse was not their responsibility and fault. The basic element of reconciliation is the forgiveness. Resting upon the Bible, we notice that the biblical background can justify even the abuser. The texts of Colossians 3:13 and Matthew 6:15 are needed to be discussed by pastors, abused and abusers to reach the unanimous decision. In some cases, they can urge the offended person to forgive. In Luke 17:3 Jesus Christ speaks that the repentance must precede forgiveness. Pastors should understand that general repentance usually includes not only remorse and confession, but also the full responsibility for the abuse, long-term changes in beliefs and behavioral patterns and naming the injustice.

All in all, we have to follow the way of Christ, showing love and respect to everyone and care for the suffering. The Jesus Christ said, "Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and need." The sexually abused people are the victims who suffer from physical and emotional pain. So, they need to be provided with reasonable and adequate pastoral care, which can turn them to a normal life. Although, science leaves us hundred of approaches for handling even the most difficult cases of sexual abuse, we have to be true to theological principles that rest upon the

Bible and teachings of Jesus Christ. Only God can save our souls by means of Holy Spirit. So, let us value him for what he gave to us.

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