

## CHAPTER ONE

# A CONGREGANT'S VOICE

## 1.1 GREETINGS

### WARNING:

**This chapter details many actual events, allowing readers to understand the relevancy of the author's words; names and titles, including ministries and business entities, are listed to reflect relevancy. This information is not intended to cause harm or diminish any particular ministry, business or individual, but is listed as factual documentation for publication relevancy. Please view all information as educational and informative, usable within a group, classroom setting, church or other assembly!**

**G**race and peace be unto you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, I greet all my brothers and sisters from the Most High God who gives us His grace, mercy and peace. I believe this to be a great privilege, having the opportunity to communicate with you through this literary forum, discussing many crucial situations affecting the Christian community!

I should begin by telling you that I am not a theologian or a pastor, nor am I ordained with a recognizable title within the Christian community. I'm just a congregant like many of you reading this book; over the past twenty-five years of my life I have been part of a few ministries in which I've been exposed to several doctrines and practices, from Baptist to Church of God in Christ (COGIC), from non-denominational to Pentecostal.

My experiences and exposure have set a course in my life that will be addressed in this book. From sanctuary worship services to outreach ministries, a community choir to having my own singing group, gospel stage plays to promoting events and more, I've become knowledgeable about the establishment and operations of what we call ministry in today's society. As a congregant, many times I suppressed anger, fear and frustration, not knowing to whom or where to turn. Most times during these experiences, it caused me to pull away from what I believed should have been maintained, in order to protect my feelings. I know millions have done the same thing; therefore, I'm earnest to communicate with you, making sure those who will come after us can choose a better way to handle the many crucial situations now affecting the Christian community!

Before we begin I think it's relevant to give honor where honor is due, as there is a profession that we often seem to forget. It's one of the most important and most needed occupations today. Have you forgotten your pastor, priest, bishop, elder, minister, evangelist or missionary? These men and women commit themselves to the services of millions through sanctuary worship services, outreach/missions and even broadcasted ministries. They teach our children as well as us, giving advice with spiritual guidance and biblical structures for a moral way of living! They counsel our families in times of need, baptize, join our loved ones in holy matrimony, and even speak encouraging and comforting words in times of bereavement. These powerful and most reverent individuals are instrumental in our lives, which we often forget to acknowledge.

Have you stopped to think about who takes the time to comfort and encourage our clergy in their time of need? Who do they call when in distress? Yes, we know clergy probably spend more time in

prayer than most, but they are human as well. I'm sure they become weak, discouraged, lonely, sentimental, greedy, aroused, selfish, and angry just as we all do; sharing the same emotions we face daily. They're confronted with making right decisions and have to refrain from the wrong ones in order to avoid the consequences and effects of making the incorrect ones. *We all know clergy aren't perfect people!* Many have criminal histories, daily temptations, addictions, and more. So tell me, how do they handle their lives as human beings, while simultaneously continuing the service they offer to others?

It must be challenging to humble oneself to face individuals with similar problems and recognize their needs. It's mind-blowing to evaluate the circumstances they face in their own homes, communities, and the workplace and guess what, right in their own congregations. I'm certain there are those in their congregations who are having problems too. Congregations are made up of the same types of individuals from the surrounding communities we live in and faced with similar circumstances relating to sex, money, love, infidelity and other challenges.

Okay, let's be honest. Have you truly honored your clergyman or clergywoman's time rendered to your family week after week? It's a strenuous task to be of service to hundreds, possibly thousands, within a congregation, to maintain a functioning ministry solely dependent upon tax-deductible gifts and donations. It can most definitely become a bit troublesome when congregational members aren't supporting the ministry they use week after week. But I guarantee congregants still expect the ministry to render service when needed!

It's my belief that congregants have taken advantage of our clergy for too long. We've become spoiled, expecting many things in our lives, expecting to be treated with dignity and respect. But what

about those men and women who dedicated their lives in service to us? It begins to make our challenges look small, if at all even worthy! I am convinced that *clergy have the most important careers in the world!*