

## **PASTORPRENEURSHIP: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PROLIFERATION OF CHURCHES IN NIGERIA**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

The continuous proliferation of churches in Nigeria has stirred up concerns among adherents of religious faiths, onlookers and scholars alike. Nigerian society today is experiencing significant constant proliferation of churches which has brought not only changing values, but also source of solutions to people's problems. The origin of this phenomenon could be traced to Martin Luther's 95 theses which sparked off religious revolution in 16th century Europe. This reform gave rise to the formation of the Lutherans, the Anglicans, Methodist and the Presbyterians. The Pentecostals and the independent churches which proliferated at last also joined. In Nigeria some of them started to show up towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Proliferation of churches means multiplicity of Christian religious groups with each founder claiming divine origin of his or her ministry. However, this paper has established other factors rather than divine call for church proliferation. The paper also tried to explore church proliferation in Nigeria pointing out its negative effects and solutions were suggested on how to curtail the trend to avoid it being blown out of proportion.

**Keywords:** Pastorpreneurship, church proliferation, pastorpreneur,

### **Introduction**

Religion is a necessary phenomenon in the life of human beings because by nature man has a dual nature; he is spiritual yet immanent. As a result, it has been observed by many that it is not possible for man not to yearn for the supra-sensible for this will amount to his acting against his own nature. Therefore, some philosophers argue that if there is no God, it will be necessary for man to invent God. However, the most recent emergence in the world, Africa and most especially Nigeria of a religious growth characterized by an unprecedented proliferation of churches is an

issue in itself very serious and indeed disturbing. This trend comes with a new wave of Christian message sweeping through the Country like a wildfire. This new message glorifies wealth rather than poverty, treasures rather than good deeds, prosperity and earthly comfort rather than patience in tribulations.

Nigeria has a very rich religious environment full of diverse religious groups, movements and denominations with a market of current and potential adherents. Hence, it is not an overstatement to state that Nigerians are deeply religious people (Iheanacho and Ughaerumba 289). It is religion everywhere and the Nigerian space is animated with

varieties of religious programmes, multiplicity of religious affiliations, faith systems, mosques, churches and houses of prayer and different categories of religious ministers (Iheanacho and Ughaerumba 288). Obiora observes that churches in Nigeria are breeding, brooding and hatching, and springing up like maggots on daily basis (1). All nooks and crannies of the country, especially, in the Southern part are punctuated with countless number of churches. This paper sets out to critically examine the phenomenon of the proliferation of churches with a view to discovering what exactly it is, its immediate and remote cause(s), its effect on Christian unity and adulteration of the gospel; as well as highlight its product – pastorpreneurship – in the Nigerian society.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The question why the proliferation of churches in Nigeria at this point becomes very paramount especially in the face of Christ's prayer: "Holy Father, keep them in your name which you have given to me, so that they may be one even as we are one" (John 17.11). Does it imply that the world, especially Nigeria is beginning to see the importance of religion? How do we reconcile this with the ills that accompany this trend? What are the possible factors responsible for the proliferation of churches? Is the proliferation of churches a response to economic depression, human religiosity or psychological relief from the battering of global suffering? What factors make this possible for the perpetuation of this trend in Nigeria? What does this practice portend for the prayer of Christ?

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

**Pastorpreneur-** A pastorpreneur, according to yourdictionary.com, is an entrepreneur who sets up churches as a business venture. These are men and women who have steadily won over the hearts of people, and built a cult-like following around themselves. These are men and women whose words are considered more important than what the Bible says. You will sometimes hear their followers say "my pastor said." These are the pastorpreneurs. They are very strategic and crafty, so much that a lot of people are yet to find out that these "shepherds" are actually marauding wolves. A lot of people have actually left some churches with a big sense of disappointment (Edohopara.2). According to Ughaerumba,

Pastorpreneurs practice evangeconomics, which is the act of turning evangelism into business. Evangeconomics consists of inventing/creating, increasing and turning religious programmes or activities into opportunities/avenues of making money and maximizing profit. To achieve this end, the pastorpreneurs saturate the Nigerian social space with multiplicity of religious programmes such as crusades, market outreaches, rivals, Sundays and week days services, prayer ministries and prayer camping, among others. (1934)

**Pastorpreneurship** – According to Shakan Global Occultians, pastorpreneurship is a system whereby you use the word of God to extort money from the unsuspecting church members. Pastorpreneurship works by forming a church and preaching the good news to the congregants in return for them to pay as more tithes as possible to the coffers of the church. Congregants are taught that in order to prosper

they must make offerings to the house of God (church) so that God can open the flood gates of heaven and bless them with luck and good fortune while in reality the Pastor is the one who pockets all the proceeds from tithing.

**Proliferation of churches:** This term is used to define the practice by which new and hitherto unknown churches crop up and begin to practice the new brand of Christianity which is characterized by ‘proclamations of salvation, revivals and crusades where people are promised everything (including solutions to all problems under and above the sun), except one thing – *Fulfilment*’ (Obiora 15). This brand of Christianity in most cases has a peculiar characteristic that its members have the Bible as their ever present companions.

**Human religiosity:** This is a quite difficult term to define since it is a merger of two terms ‘human’ and ‘religiosity’. This phrase as used in this paper means the state of belief in the teachings of a particular religion which in turn, affects the way and manner in which the adherent of this belief lives out his everyday life. In this paper, the term is used to imply the point where belief in the tenets of a particular religion are so part of a person that it begins to exhibit itself in the person’s way of living.

### Typology of Church Proliferation in Nigeria

The task of grouping these proliferated churches in Nigeria is not an easy one as authors very often differ in their categorization of new religious movements in Africa, more so that these movements differ in origin, belief, size, behavioural patterns and tenets. Obiefuna, Nwadior and Umeanolue (24-29) grouped these proliferated churches as follows:

1. *The Evangelical/Pentecostal Group* - This is the largest of the new religious movements, comprising both the so-called indigenous and the foreign influenced. There are generally of Protestant origin and some of them can readily be identified by their aggressive proselytism and attack on the main-line churches. Some have expansionist programmes and their use of mass media in a way that looks like commercialization of religion provokes diverse reactions from both the orthodox Christian bodies and non-Christians. Often mass healing and miracle witnessing rallies are advertised in the mass media, as evangelists and preachers of both national and international reputes are invited to grace the rallies. Many people attend such rallies, after which some claim they have been physically and spiritually regenerated and born again. Many Christians respond to the appeals and attend these rallies because they find in them answers to their thirst for scripture reading, for singing and dancing, emotional satisfaction and their need for concrete and clear answers.
2. *The healing ministries* - The emphasis of this group is on healing, but there is equally stress on faith. Absolute faith in God is demanded for healing to take place, the view is that God heals sicknesses, but He could not be forced to. Ailments that linger on for long may be attributed to lack of faith on the part of the sufferer. In some cases, sicknesses and diseases are results of sin and guilt, in which case the sufferer is demanded to confess his/her sin and repent before healing could take place. Many sick people, especially those who cannot afford the exorbitant conventional hospital bills,

visit these healing ministries (Obiefuna, Nwadiolor and Umeanolue 24), even though some are asked to sow seed of faith to show their trust in God.

3. *Thaumaturgical Movements*—According to Obiefuna, Nwadiolor and Umeanolue, this group emanates from humanistic, pagan, occult or Gnostic backgrounds. There is a meeting point between the old and the new where the prophet healer has come to replace the old traditional diviner and fortune teller. This church group is syncretistic in form, borrowing from Christianity, traditional religion, occultism and from oriental religion. This group placed emphasis on wonder-working, magical manifestations, spirit mediumship, interpretation of dreams, protection against evil forces, and assurance in wide range of mundane practices (25).
4. *Sabbatarian Movements* - This group has been blooming in Nigeria from the early 1970s with their main creed as belief and acceptance of the Jewish Sabbath observances, manifesting outwardly in their white flowing gowns. They conduct massive healing activities and occult practices thrive with reckless abandon. In most cases, this group appears to be anti-Christian and should be lumped together with the revivalist forms such as Godianism, Ogboni Fraternity and other secret cults (Ndiokwere in Obiefuna, Nwadiolor and Umeanolue 24). They are built upon some eccentric messianic figures, who command wealth and influence. These include: Godian Onyioha, founder of the Godian religion or Godianism; Hyde Onuaguluchi of God's Sabbath Mission, Olumba Olumba Obu,

leader of The Brotherhood of The Cross and Star. These neo-pagan religious movements resemble church movement, but in fact they have retained so many features of the traditional religions. Their leaders have little understanding of what the true church can be and these leaders are nothing less than Shamans and diviners. Crosses, Bibles and other Christian ornaments are visible, but these are paraphernalia of the healing or divining art.

5. *The End of Time Crusader* - This group is from the Jehovah's Witness Watch Tower International. Manipulating mankind's feelings and fears they predict doom on account of social evils, including corruption in the high places. Most often, they claim that they have resigned from the world because the world's problems, wars and politics are so complex and pervasive that this sect no longer concern themselves with them, thus they claim to be citizens of a better society.

### **Reasons for Proliferation of Churches in Nigeria**

The reality of the phenomenon of church proliferation in Nigeria is tremendous and as such, a proper investigation into the reasons (real and possible) responsible for the rapid growth of this recurring decimal is the focus of this section. Although the founders of these new Christian denominations may advance one reason or the other to disguise their undeclared intention, this paper is of the view that a more in-depth study of these churches will prove that their founders could have been motivated by certain extraneous factors other than divine call which they often claim.

### *Socio-Economic Factor*

It seems that possessing of the “Holy Spirit” is the major factor that brings about the proliferation of churches in the society. And this can also be seen as an open door for disunity, discrimination and twisting of scripture among the Christians. However, Amucheazi is of the opinion that, one of the major causes of the proliferation of churches in the present day society is the people’s excessive quest for material wealth. Materialism, coupled with status consciousness and value orientations that have increased in the modern living, have made jobless young men seek means of economic survival through the establishment of churches (22). In Nigeria, there is always a relationship between proliferation of churches and the contemporary teething economic situation in the country. Many people see church founding as the easiest way to beating down the biting economic crunch. Unemployment and youths restiveness often lead to the formation and establishment of churches which is the quickest way to get rich and be employed.

It appears that, the rate of unemployment in Nigeria is one of the main factors that create room for the rapid multiplication of new religious movement. Some lazy ones and those who are not comfortable with their mother churches and even those been sacked from their places of work see opportunities to open to themselves churches. Thus, this has been a means to deal with poverty and also means of one choosing himself, claiming to have a divine call, just for them to balance their economic gain and to be self-employed without any other person’s control. A.M. Essien (85) notes that this growth of proliferation of churches is not

unconnected with economic bases; religion has become a top bracket business in Nigeria and the key players in this situation do not accept the economic reasons as the basis of their action. Rather they argue that their action is purely based on a spiritual dimension, which has proved not to be such. F.K. Obiora (205) describes commercial tendencies of these religious founders as “Holy Deceit”; the art of trading in God’s name. The mad craze for money has made some people willing to commercialize religion for their own benefit and interest. Many vulnerable people have fallen into the trap of this unholy merchandize.

According to N.S.S. Iwe, “In Nigeria the spirit of materialism is fast invading and shadowing our traditional values and Christian ethics; traditionally our society laid more emphasis on spiritual and social dimension of human nature and value” (28). The truth is that the quest to accumulate wealth and right of liberty has thrown away some Christians’ faith; values and norms that guide Christians most especially these founders of new independent churches in our society. Instead of laying more emphasis on the spiritual growth of the people, some of them emphasize more on material needs. Therefore, the quest for property ownership has been one of the main key factors for proliferation of churches in contemporary Nigeria. However, materialism connects with status consciousness and some other notable factors to heighten the tendency for church proliferation in Nigeria.

### *Status Consciousness*

Status consciousness has been identified as one of the major causes of proliferation of churches in Nigeria. This is an ingredient of African culture that the Europeans called “African

disease.” It is the general expectation that individuals earn respect and recognition through their performance and what they are in the society. In Nigeria, this urge for recognition may have reached its peak. Many of the churches forbid their members to take traditional titles, but church members consider themselves alienated from their rightful positions in their society without such traditional titles. Many churches have tried to find parallel titles as dynamic equivalent. Energy has been spent to resurrect for Africans the medieval knighthoods that marked the age of chivalry and the crusades, but the craving has refused to assuage (Mbefo, 102). People point to the Apostles and Patriarchs, to the Archbishops and Cardinals, to the Senior Apostles, the Vicar Generals, most reverends and the senior prophets. Hence evidence abounds to show that some churches have arisen out of the desire of some to be Founders and General Overseers and through it to command a congregation of followers.

#### *Quest for Cultural Identity*

Many of the first generation Christians had a strong allegiance to the culture which had formed them before they encountered Christianity. Although they accepted the Christian faith, they nonetheless were not convinced that their new faith should alienate them from their original cultural settings. It was evident that not many European missionaries understood or even tried to understand and appreciate African cultures. According to L.N. Mbefo, “Many of them shared the sentiments packed into the imperial mandate namely, “the Whiteman’s burden” which entailed the task of civilizing the

natives; although the white missionaries may have experienced the Africans’ hospitality and friendship, nevertheless their prejudice remains that Africans were noble savages (104).

But Africans never understood themselves in light of savagery, neither did their experience with the white man, whether as missionary or imperial agents, disposed them to see the Europeans as nobles. The experience of cultural pride and the urge to retain the black man’s identity urged the more courageous Christian to affirm their Africanness together with their Christianity. If the retention of this two-fold heritage meant expulsion from European form of Christianity, then they were ready and willing to found African Christianity. Hence the road to the multiplication of Christian denominations in Nigerian can be traced to identity consciousness.

#### *Prosperity Preaching*

In the recent past, a new breed of prophets has sprung up whose message is to realize the hopes of heaven here on earth. “Their God is not a poor God,” nor is he a God of the poor.” The sign of God’s blessing is the flashy cars, the impressive mansions and the expensive clothes they wear.

They promise to make their followers millionaires. It is to this that Nwadiakor and Umeanolue aver that:

In this world that dominated by the godless and the greedy, and populated largely by the ignorant and the destitute, it is easy to see how the materialistic gospel can very quickly become the gospel of the majority. This is particularly so because we live in a society that is flamboyant, a society that

worships wealth or money or possession. The increasing worldliness of our society today is such that a focused preacher—one of a rare breed today—who devotes more than a few sentences talking about heaven and hell, and less about God's readiness to give us unlimited prosperity, is probably unlikely today to be able to retain a viable congregation for long (31).

This is an evidence to show that prosperity and new belief about faith had led many church founders into adaptation of new preaching of the gospel as a means of religion. These new churches, however, are supported by an interest group located in the so-called Bible belt in the United States of America. Their spread in Nigeria is so palpable that it needs no commentary. Their appeal to the youthful seekers of fortune is thereby understandable. However, it is ironical that some Nigerian men of God have gallantly deviated from the path and only pay lip service to the true essence of Christianity. The million dollar question remains, how does one accommodate the cross within the frame work of this religion?

### *Search for Security*

Search for security is a phenomenon pushing people around in the quest for healing and solutions to mysterious problems such as freedom from sinister forces that threaten life in African society. N.I. Ndiokwere (31) believes that as long as one is not in the position to control certain spiritual forces one describes as diabolical, one is bound to feel insecure. Surrounded by hostile forces, seen and unseen, menacing him and often the entire household, the African will cross rivers and mountains in search for answers to his

problems. In this type of religious vagrancy, he rarely discriminates. He does not worry about the type of religion he joins. His main preoccupation is to achieve success, get a reasonable solution to his problem. Misfortune often pushes him to an extreme corner. Thus, search for security has contributed to a large extent to growing number of the healing churches in Nigeria.

However, C.K. Emesowum remarks that "the Jehovah's witnesses will say that it is well known—that the world is in its end time, people should heed to the warning by Christ concerning the end time, miracles are being advertised everywhere to trap man" (159). In Nigeria today, many people most especially the new religious founders have become prophets and prophetesses, claiming to see beyond the future and predict the past and present situation of people in the society. Clamor for miracles, signs and wonders in our society have become a notice board of many new generation churches as a means of imitating Christ, doing what Christ urged His apostles to do before He gave up. Many pastors, evangelists and prophets have acquired many radio stations, television, social media, magazines and newspapers for the advert of their miracles, signs and wonders that they are performing in the churches, some of them now device modern way of preaching the gospel using the media at the market squares and making emphasis on the things that concerns family problems because they know that these problems are the weak point of most of the families who are their audience.

### *Socio-Religious Factor*

Religious factor is strictly theological in nature which had contributed immensely to the global Pentecostal movement in the society. These

religious drives are geared towards the attainment of satisfying religion. However, these new religious sects are characterized with new scriptural doctrines and also new liturgy which they often claim had been overlooked by the older churches. This religious grouping of Africa shows the understanding of Africans about God which may largely have originated as a result of the publication of the scriptures in African languages. Madu's (18) assertion that religion is an enigma is a truism, and this significant feature of religion cannot be divorced from the spectrum of the magnetic field which religion claims to be its operational base. This is the realm of the extra-mundane, the transcendental, nay the supernatural beings. According to P.E. Nmah, "This religious factors denotes a new movement and the attainment of a satisfying religion; it is characterized by new doctrine, liturgy and new political structure" (8). These observations show that the founders of these new Christian denominations often tend to give new and sometime bizarre interpretations to the scripture as new revelations from God often to suit particular situations that they may wish to highlight.

### **The Impact of the Proliferation of Churches in Nigeria**

#### ***Commercialization of the Gospel***

The most profound impact that the proliferation of churches has had is that it has led to the commercialization of religion by the sale of religious items and even such things which Christ himself did for free. The practice of commercialization is evident everywhere around us with the same articles (sometimes such articles are not spiritual) costing less outside religious and worship centres and more

in such places. The height of this practice is seen in the sale of religious articles and materials at very exorbitant and escalating prices. Among the proliferating churches, this practice has been taken to its logical conclusion with the sale of perfumes and incenses of various smells and fragrance with the claim that they have the potency to perform miracles. This trend has reached an unprecedented height with the commercialization of miracles by charging people who ask for special prayers, healing or miracles very high prices. Another means of this evange-conomics is the collection of exorbitant consultation fees. All these are in flagrant disregard of the divine injunction by Christ 'you received without charge, give without charge' (Matt. 10.8). Obiora has described the commercial tendencies of these new religious groups as "Holy Deceit", the art of trading in God's name, willing to commercialize religion for their own benefits and interests (88), yet some are still using religion as a lucrative business avenue to maximize profits.

#### ***Environmental Pollution***

Proliferation of churches in Nigeria is not only a social embarrassment but has constituted a source of serious worry through its religious activities. Most often, members of these new religious groups tend to practice their religion without considering its impacts on the immediate environment. They often embark on noisy religious activities with the loudest public address systems even when the church is in one room apartment. More worrisome is their night vigils which some of them hold almost every day as if God hear prayers only at nights. In some areas in the society where there are many of such churches, the experience of the people



within the Neighbourhood can only be imagined and any attempt to persuade the pastors to consider the feelings of the people is often interpreted as the devil's intervention that must be matched with fiercer and nosier prayers to combat the enemy.

### ***Denominational Rivalry and Intolerance***

More worrisome is the fact that the Christian society is now polarized along denominational lines. There is no gainsaying the fact that Christians are now against fellow Christians in any political or even socio-economic contest. What one gets in the society today is largely determined by his or her religious cum denominational affiliation irrespective of his or her qualification. Denominational divide even in the dominant Christian regions of the country is only second to ethnicity such that the issue of ecumenism has degenerated to mere lip service, and this demands the urgent attention of theologians and religious scholars especially now that the Christians are expected to be united in the face of the current ethno-religious extremism in the country.

### ***Widening Economic Divide***

Pastorpreneurship has succeeded in widening the economic divide between the haves and have-nots. This is made possible by the means whereby the pastors/priests appeal to the gullible spirit of their congregation with promises of business breakthroughs and prosperity if they would sow a seed, contribute to the upkeep of the 'prophet or man of God'. This in turn, leads the congregation to spend huge amounts of money in a bid to be beneficiaries of this spiritual bonanza. Another method is the imposition of special tithes on selected rich men. These men are mostly millionaires and are made to accept to surrender

one-third of their total monthly or weekly income to the Lord's vineyard. These men are so brainwashed that they believe their businesses would suffer setbacks if they failed to remit such money to the church coffers with the resultant effect that most of them are unable to meet up with their responsibilities to their extended and sometimes, even immediate families. In defense of their nefarious activities, these so called men of God hide under such sweeping statements like 'I am serving a God of wealth and not a God of poverty or "the Lord will supply all my needs according to his riches in glory" (Phil 4.19). In other instances, observed Obiora (126) "the congregation is reminded that the whole world is owned by God and God is the God of riches. Christ is a king and Christ is God. We are the sons of God, princes and only the best is good enough for the children of God''. Sunny Obadan the founding pastor of Christian Reach out Church Inc Lagos is credited by Weekend Concord of May 28, 1994 as having said the following in defense of prosperity:

Preachers of the past had what I can call poverty mentality...when Jesus was on earth, I believe He wore clothes made by designers of the time that was why soldiers had to cast lots on who will keep his cloth after He was crucified. God is not a poor God and does not expect His children to be poor....The gospel are business but it is spiritual business. (5)

These so called men of God proceed to flaunt this ill-gotten wealth before their members whose money they have used to feather their own nets by living ostentatiously driving flashy cars, owning private jets and state of the art mansions furnished with the latest gadgets and

equipment to make life easy. Unfortunately, most of these poor flocks have yet to reap the fruits of the seeds they have sown. In fact, they are being expected to sow more seeds with the injunction that perhaps, they have not sowed the right seed. However, we know that whatever seed is sown should bear fruits the rightness or wrongness of the seed notwithstanding.

### ***Increased Crime and Fraud***

Another impact of these pastorpreneurship is the modification of crime and fraud for how else can one explain the recent belief in the principle of the end justifies the means which has led some pastors to declare that “it does not matter how the wealth is acquired provided it is used to start a church. You can dupe. You can commit any atrocity, and some of them after duping will present themselves as “those who put their trust in the Lord that lack no blessings” (Obiora 157). The number of pastors who started churches by committing various crimes and atrocities, by one means or the other in order to guzzle out money from the masses is, as yet, known to God alone. Today, a lot of ‘419’ ministers exist who use their organisations to defraud foreign ministries and tarnish the country’s image by travelling abroad often to seek financial assistance from individuals, churches, organisation etc. by the means of one lie or the other only for them to return to the country and buy flashy cars and build exotic mansions. Others use this money solicited for to engage in business by acquiring goods such as clippers, baby wears, computers and other merchandise which they come to sell at inflated prices in the country.

### **Spiritual Implication of Proliferation of churches**

Church proliferation engenders denominationalism, which is divisive. A denomination, by nature, distinguishes itself from another by name, by peculiar doctrine (like the Nicolaitans, divided by name and doctrine in Rev. 2.6 and the Gnostics). One cannot become a member of a denomination without accepting that denomination’s doctrine and taking the denomination’s name – thus dividing from others. For much of the history of denominations they were exclusive. Today, most denominations claim that they are not divisive because they “fellowship” all others that “believe in Jesus.” This only serves to divide them from those who will not fellowship on these terms.

Denominationalism distracts the world from the truth. By definition, denominationalism departs from the Scripture. No departure – no denomination. While the denomination is teaching its peculiar doctrine the people want for the truth. The creation of a denomination in Israel was for the purpose of distracting the people from true worship (1 Kings 12.25ff). The spread of another had indeed distracted the Galatian brethren from the truth (Gal. 1.6-9). There are many that are hell-bound this hour trusting in their denominational conversions. The Galatian brethren trusted in their denominational righteousness (Gal. 5.4). Many teach that “faith only” is sufficient – that baptism adds one to the denomination but Hebrews 5.8-9; Mark 16.15-16; and 1 Peter 3.21 seems not to agree with that teaching. Many teach that the works of their church save. 1 Timothy 4.1-4 sounds eerily familiar; however, Jesus taught the uselessness of the commandments of men in Matthew 15.9;

21.25. This question will assist us in cutting through the distraction. Is it from heaven (true, authorized) or from men (vain, distracting, and denominational)? A warning from the Old Testament (Prov. 14.12; Jer. 10.23) will suffice. Many will be lost because of the distraction of denominationalism.

There is so much confusion in the world today concerning denominational doctrines and beliefs. The hundreds of different religious denominations teach different doctrines, practice different forms of worship and have different plans of salvation. Because of all of the different and conflicting denominational unsound doctrines which are not reliable, false, dangerous, man-made (creeds) and destructive in nature, adherents of these denominations are destined to hell for believing and practicing falsehood. For instance, consider all of the mutually exclusive and conflicting doctrines held by the more than 600 different denominational churches and how they believe all their conflicting doctrines to be true. But the Bible says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Prov. 14.12). This is spiritual death in eternity. Indeed, Satan has many workers in the world today. "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ? And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11.13-15). Satan's deceitful workers appear to be ministers of Christ but we must be careful. What will Jesus tell these people on Judgment Day? Jesus says, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who

does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matt. 7.21-23). These people called Jesus their Lord. Why are the many people going to be told on the Judgment Day by the Lord "I never knew you, depart from me"? It is because in their denominations they did the will of men and not "the will of My Father in heaven. The worst thing that will ever be said to an individual is when the Lord says to those who are lost, "I never knew you, depart from me." This is going to be sad and shocking to the many people who have done the will of men and not the will of God when they are sent away into eternal torment. However, they chose not to follow God's will but to follow the will of men. Surprises will greet many on Judgment Day as they strive to argue with the Lord in trying to point to their many different denominational works in which they have engaged but to no avail because they chose to follow the doctrines and commandments of men and not the will of God.

## **Conclusion**

The phenomenon of pastorpreneurship is the consequence of the proliferation of churches and has made religion appear to be a form of trade with a lot of traders. This lucrative business of soul winning is spreading to the nooks and crannies of the capitalist world where money worship is a form of religion. But this is business of the absurd, by the absurd and for the absurd. Without the accompanying social status, comfortable living and unbridled acquisition of wealth and choice properties by

pastors, these unending floodgates of new churches and ministries would crumble and fold up. This is because this trend is built specially on deceit. This trend of the proliferation of churches which has divided Christendom is a misnomer, a gross scandal and misguided missile; a high water mark of unqualified calamity. Thus the trend when one establishes his own church today only to go to the media the next day and call on Christians to stop the incessant sprouting of churches is tantamount to the kettle calling the pot black. This phenomenon can be summarized in these words, the proliferation of churches – the further splintering, disintegrating and shattering of the church into mushrooming and pseudo-churches is scandalous. It works against the fulfilment of Christ's prayer for the coming together of one flock under one shepherd. This submission is an indisputable truth depicted to posterity and which will always stand the test of time.

The most painful aspect of the proliferation of churches is the fact that it fail to yield fruit. It takes the individual to that state where the teachings and belief of his faith fails to permeate his lifestyle and as a result, we have houses of worship without true worship, sermons without a true message and 'belief' without 'faith'. Little wonder it is often said that Nigeria is the most religious country in the world with a lot of churches and worship centres but this same entity called Nigeria also happens to be among the most corrupt in the world. What an irony!

However, there is no gainsaying the fact that Church proliferation in Nigeria could be a blessing if properly managed and guided. What is required now from the founders of new Independent Churches is to attend Bible school

or schools of theology before they can carry out any preaching or teachings of the Church. This is because a situation, where by Bible teaching is used to emphasize material wealth as some of the founders do today, can easily abolish the Christian values or interest in the Bible. However, sound teaching of the Bible can promote faith, hope to the members and both spiritual and physical sound doctrine.

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