



ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF CHURCH COMMERCIALIZATION FOR SOCIETAL STABILITY IN NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

It's no news that the religious institution in Nigeria is fast becoming a venture. In fact one could be right to assert that among the easiest access to quick money and wealth in Nigeria, religion is ranked topmost with peculiarity to church ministry. This is obviously evident as there is an alarming rate at which individuals push their way into church ownership and ministry. Nowadays the population of clergy in Nigerian society has heightened as new religious groups and centres or church keep springing up every now and then, in every nook and cranny in the society. Moreso is the frequent paraded massive wealth allegedly acquired by church leaders and church founders in contemporary Nigerian society. The rampant and unbridled wealth show-off and competitions of prominent church leaders and founders has transcended into a conspicuous motive thereby creating loopholes that raise questions such as; is it appropriate that a pastor or church founder to own a massive possession of wealth?, should the preaching ministry be used as means to life sustenance?, these questions been asked however stir up controversies and criticisms and suspicions leading to a check on the integrity, mistrust and lack of followership from the congregation to the church leadership. Church commercialization has impacted immensely the Nigerian society in a positive way, particularly its economic development and sustenance. However, it is unfortunately transmuted into a controversial phenomenon consequently leading to spiritual backwardness or religious confusion, social chaos and economic decline. Therefore through a qualitative method, the paper examines reasons prompting church commercialization in Nigeria, particularly the emerging "mega churches" in contemporary Nigerian society. It will explore the economic implications of such act towards Nigerian societal stability. The religious market theory will be used as framework for the paper.

Keywords: Church commercialization, societal stability, economic implications and religion marketing theory

Introduction

Contemporarily, at global level, religious structure and purpose have been violated. This as regards to the push aside of spirituality for materialism. This is buttressed in (Ugwueye.2002) affirming that universally, religion is now handled like a business deal anchored on financial profits, with Nigeria being a notable example. In other words religion in Nigeria now lags in its original aim and purpose of salvation, healing, deliverance and love but it rather now embraced

Alaka-Osinowo B. O. S
Department of Religions and Peace Studies
College of Humanities Education
Lagos State University of Education,
Oto/Ijanikin
Lagos State, Nigeria.
08029094819

alakabolayemi@gmail.com

Harmona O.A (Ph.D)
Department of Religions and Peace Studies
College of Humanities Education
Lagos State University of Education,
Oto/Ijanikin
Lagos State, Nigeria.
08033974197

segunharmona@gmail.com

Onabajo, A. M
Department of Economics
College of Management Science Education
Lagos State University of Education,
Oto/Ijanikin
Lagos State, Nigeria.
08028973517

abisolamorenike1@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author:

Alaka-Osinowo B. O. S
Department of Religions and Peace Studies
College of Humanities Education
Lagos State University of Education,
Oto/Ijanikin
Lagos State, Nigeria.
08029094819

alakabolayemi@gmail.com

towards acquisition of material wealth and pleasures especially by religious leaders and religious group founders (Ogunlusi, 2019). As a universal phenomenon religion commercialization through the church is gradually becoming a normalcy in Nigerian Christendom. Moreso that (Ogunlusi, 2019) affirmed this, as she rated Nigeria to be one the notorious culprits in such act as Nigerian churches have increasingly adopted business-like practices, focusing on revenue generation through tithes, offerings, and the commercialization of religious goods and services. There have been frequent scenarios and allegations of church leaders and church founders violating and mismanaging the church finances and wealth by the virtue of their position, hierarchy and status. (Idnor, 2020) went further to label this category of church leaders and church founders as "Merchants of Christianity". He went ahead to affirm the fact that these people do not only sell Christianity, they sell at exorbitant prices to their ignorant church members.

However he admits that such act is credible to the church and to Nigerian society. Such persons use their status to manipulate and divert the church's communal funds to their own personal fund for personal pursuits which of course is usually secular pleasure, self-owned properties, business investments and for their family welfare. This they are able to achieve by using false teachings and deceits and being cunning to convince their members. However, this shift has sparked considerable debate about the implications of such practices on societal stability, particularly in a country like Nigeria, where religion plays a central role in the cultural and social landscape. The commercialization of churches in Nigeria is often attributed to the global trend of religious institutions engaging in entrepreneurial activities (Haynes, 2007), yet its unique socio-economic and political context warrants a closer examination.

From history, church roles in Nigerian society have been multifaceted (Ojo, 2012).

However, the rapid demands for spiritual services from congregants, has being the foremost reason prompting commercial strategies by churches (Adogame, 2013). More so, is the emergence of mega-churches, powerful economic entities, often featuring large-scale infrastructure, media outreach and international networks that generate substantial financial income. These developments have led to the commodification of faith, wherein religious experiences and services are increasingly becoming marketable goods. Commercialization has allowed churches to thrive greatly financially and meeting with the economic trends, however, it has also questioned the ethical efficiency of these churches. There are arguments that focus on profit-making undermines the spiritual and moral teachings of Christianity, turning the church into a profit-driven institution rather than a sacred space for worship and community support (Ukah, 2014). There are also indications that the growing commercialization of churches in Nigeria has been attributed to the escalating socio-economic disparities, as many adherents are pressured to make monetary contributions which sometimes at the expense of their own wellbeing (Falola, 2016).

Therefore the interest of this paper emphasizes on the socio-economic implications of church commercialization on societal stability in Nigeria. It will assess how this phenomenon contributes to the socio-economic situation and its effects on moral authority of the church and its impacts on Nigeria's society.

The Religious Market Theory

The religious market theory is a model indicator of the submission that human desire rewards but they detest costs. Insinuating that as individuals we opt for favourable and desirable choices, not for the necessitated efforts from us rather for the beneficial results for us. The theory pinpoints the reality of religious leaders and religious organizations or groups as competitors in a market space where religious beliefs and religious ideologies are the commodities for sales.

Moreso economic situations relatively predict results in such market (Young 1997). The above reality reflects on Nigerian societies as the religious leaders and their respective religious groups as observed have been busy advertising, selling and branding religious teachings to attract people that matters within the society; promoting their personal and religious ideologies, instead of building a unified audience with the appropriate religious teachings. Furthermore, the religious market theory pictures religion as commodity sold to the followers whom the theory pictures as consumers, therefore this study finds relevance of the theory as it gives an accurate scenario of church commercialization in Nigerian society. A situation in which religious figures and personnel trade instead of preach. They trade messages, prophecies, prayers, and other related elements of religion (Idnor 2020). They even go as far as attaching monetary values to religious services rendered to their followers when such services are meant to be inclusive in the religious purpose of guidance of the congregation.

Meanwhile some religious leaders engage in selling of books, recorded videos, stickers and some other irrelevant objects to their members, coercing them to purchase as part of the goodwill of the organization. The theory also algears toward the application of marketing principles to religious practices, it also relates religious organizations to a basic market place, indicating that just as it is the market places, there are factors that influence religions and religious organizations in Nigerian society. These factors range from morals, norms, choices and preferences of the religious consumer.

Church Commercialization.

Biblically, in the New Testament, "church" is regarded as "Ecclesia". It is a Greek adjective depicting the house of God and later the people of God. (Strong, 2001). Meanwhile the Old Testament indicates it as the "gathering of people for worship"(Anchor, 2007). In Nigerian society, a church is regarded as

the house of prayer, the power-house of Christians, a holy house (Idnor, 2020). However the church is uniquely described as "the body of Christ" as it is written in Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 4:7-16; and Colossians 1:18. Furthermore (Harrison, 2000) ascribed the word "church" to be supernatural and mystical while (Elwell, 2011) relates the church to the spiritual family of God. There are also distinguishing characteristics that differentiate the church from another organization also theologically the church is best described as One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.

Historically, (Nwanganga, 2017) ascribed the origin of the term "church" to the life time and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. One the other end, (Abioje, 2011) describes "commercialization" to be one the essential materialistic endeavors of individuals. (Nwanganga, 2017) citing (Fidelis, 1998) summarises the concept of church commercialization from two perspectives. The first perspective hinges on the application of business principles to the administration of the church, it is the handling of a church as a profit making venture instead of the spiritual and moral mound it was set to be. The second perspective hinges on manipulating the church, spiritual services provided by the church, as means to exploit congregants for financial gains or for profit making. (Idnor, 2020), would rather describe church commercialization has the actions or intentions of church leaders, Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Bishops, and church officials aiming to acquire wealth or monetary proceeds or for personal pleasure.

Biblically, the Old Testament indicates in the books of Amos, Micah, and Ezekiel that church commercialization is a contradiction to God's own standards and commandments to live a godly life. The Old Testament also reflects biblical criticisms of such; Amos describes it as an immoral act of sin, (Amos 2:8;4-6; 6:12). Micah condemns such act among the religious leaders and false teachers, (Micah 3:11; 6:11) and in the New Testament there records in Mathew (21:12-13), Mark (11:15-18) and Luke (19:43-46) as narrated in (Ogunkunle, 2006), Jesus poured out his anger discovering that the temple has been transformed to a place of trade, a purpose contrary to its sole purpose of worship to God, he condemned and rebuked the temple leaders for desecrating the house of God.

Church Commercialization in Nigerian Society.

Nwanganga, citing scholars such as :(Oyekunle, 2006), (Essien, 2010) indicates some the prominent factors leading to the unbridled establishment of churches especially in Nigerian society and these factors includes(i) divine revelations and callings, (ii) personal spiritual enlightenment, (iii) doctrinal differences and interpretations, (iv) political motive (Nwanganga, 2017). However Nwanganga expatiates further on the unison ultimate objective of the establishments is commerce. The use of churches as money and profit making ventures in Nigeria is not a recent innovation. It's been an historical issue, with particular reference to the missionary days (Abass, 2017) in (Ogunlusi, 2019). It is no news

that a large percentage of Christians keep falling prey to the exploitation and exhortation by the church leaders and church founders, who in turn cease opportunity to scavenge on them through their ignorance and sometimes innocence. Rich and poor, they became preys to wealth accumulation of their respective church leaders and founders as Odunayo posited that ignorance, laziness, and the attempt to replace hard work with prayers could also be included as a reason for the lingering of church commercialization particularly in Nigerian society.

On the other hand, Lizzy added rapid urbanization, the lack of regulatory, socioeconomic pressure, the media, and the cultural emphasis on prosperity and miracle by Christian believers to be leading factors that prompts the commercialization of churches within Nigerian society. In recent times there are a lot of media reports of allegations against "men of God". Allegations of ritual practices on their members, magic performances disguised as miracles, allegations of money extortion from members under disguise as prophet offerings, sacrificial giving, seed sowing and other related unbiblical practices. Many at times we hear of church leaders, church founders and preachers consulting metaphysical powers also referred to as "dark powers" or "territorial powers" to hypnotise and also intimidate their members so as to persuade thereby making them voluntary victims.

In other words, the members do every bidding of the pastor with will and zeal (SibongileMashaba, 2017). Moreover it has become a regular thing to see church leaders to put monetary value on religious objects and sell to their members. This even extends to the organising large gatherings such as; open air crusades, revivals, church retreats, conventions and other related public gatherings in which they sell objects like: oil, salt, candles, handkerchief (divine mantle), bottled water (holy water), latex bracelets and the likes. These objects are sold to their members persuading them to build their believe that such objects possess divine powers to solve whatever problems they encounter as buttressed by Odunayo, asserting that a substantial percentage of church congregational dependence on religious items and products, than engaging in prayers. It is so unfortunate that even the members eagerly and zealously succumb to this; they ignorantly push themselves into the nets making they prey to the culprits who then suck deep into them. It also includes demanding payment fee from members for spiritual services rendered by the church leaders and church founders. Spiritual services which frequently attracted payment of fees include: prayers, fasting exercises, rituals and rites, which is common with the orthodox Christians, (river bath - iweodo", "irapada- death deliverance", and likes) all these attract fees which the member pays. Another instance is the media preachers or pastors especially via Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp and Tiktok make pleas for monetary contributions using the excuse of propagating the gospel of Christ. Many at times they read or type the account details pleading to the audience for funds. It has also become normal for men of God to organize fund raising Programmes in their various churches even

some go to the extent of adding money values to church positions and offices. An example of this is when members have to pay certain amount to be qualified as deacons, elders, priests however neglecting the spiritual and liturgical criteria for such appointment. An act prominent in churches in Nigeria nowadays (Olawole, 2018).

Many of the churches in Nigeria practice what one can call "money bureaucracy", a process in which individual promotion or the elevation of the pastor is determined by his financial capability that is the higher the funds generated by a pastor, the higher his elevation. But the moment there is a decline; such Pastor is demoted, transferred or excommunicated by the constituted authority of the church. In addition these "men of God" manipulate and twist the gospel, sometimes they rephrase biblical texts to suit their own profit motive, they emphasis on selected bible verses or incidents that buttress their own personal interest to preach to their members. These selected bible verses usually include: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, which indulges generous giving, Proverbs 11:25 which teaches that a cheerful giver will prosper, Luke 6:38 which asserts that a generous giver will be given generously in return. These and many other bible verses are the working tools of such clergy found in this category.

In the words of Idnor (2020), church commercialization connotes the engagement in the Christ's ministry for salvation for money pursuits rather than heavenly pursuits, a scheme to wealth acquisition rather than the fulfillment of the soulwinning mission. However it is, it is certain that such intention or practice is an absolute aberration, unethical of the priesthood, an act that demean the credibility and image of the church as a Godly or Sacred place of worship. Moreso it is believed that a demeaning practice is attributed to Pentecostal churches only, but this is a contradicting position, as it is so obvious that church commercialization is a major problem across Christianity in Nigeria. No denomination is exempted or innocent of such rather they are all as guilty as ever. As indicated in (Nwadilor, 2015) in (Idnor, 2020), context of church commercialization in Nigeria is a reflection of the incident narrated in John 2:13-16, an incident that occurred in the Temple. Most if not all the churches in Nigerian society operates as business agency, business empires.

The Concept of Societal Stability; Is Nigeria a stable society?

The term society embraces a peculiar communal setting, made of groups or community of individuals with consensual goals, objectives and characterised lifestyle. As coined from French, "society", it depicts company of people similarly in Latin, "societas" it speaks of alliance; fellowship and association. Moreso, the wikipedia, puts it as groups of persons who persistently socialize and interact with one another, sharing common territory, political authority and cultural expectations. In this light, every human community is a subset of the society as it is characterised in Nigeria societies. To attest of a life-

long communality, stability must be enhanced in societies. Hence a simple definition of stability; "consistent continuity" the Webster Dictionary qualifies it as the "ability to withstand". Therefore as reported by (ESCWA, 2022) a stable society is described as an economic situation in which the cost of living is at an equilibrium, a balanced state such that resources are evenly available and accessible to citizens. Societal stability indicates consistency in societal growth and development, consistency in availability and accessibility of the basic and essential infrastructures; (be it social, educational, financial, health, economic as well as political) and geared towards maximal output and benefits by community of persons. That is growing at a regulated or steady pace with no internalized or externalized distractions.

Deducing from (Saravanakumar, 2024), when a society is stable, the needed life-long amenities are constantly readily available and within the reach of people with no or minimum interruption, pushing forward to state that a stable society is a disruption-free society. Therefore one could momentarily classify Nigerian society as "unstable", obviously with the concurrent recession, inflated cost of living, policy changes, political tussles, mismanagement and misappropriation of constituted authority alongside mass corruption in all national institutions. A stable society indicates a healthy economy however this is not the case in Nigerian society rather it has been infested with what can be labelled "societal pandemic" a situation obviously metamorphosing into a national phenomenon. (Adabeme, 2024), highlighted in a study the characteristics expected of a stable society, these include: minimal unemployment, regularized price, affordable cost of living, regularized income, foreign advantages, sustainability, and accountability. However, it's unfortunate that all the mentioned above is the opposite of the situation in Nigerian society; mass unemployment, periodically fluctuating price, secluded foreign advantages stemming from tariff barriers to trade and obstacles to investments, nontransparent and unaccountable handling of public funds and devaluation of the national currency at international monetary standard, poor sustainability which has resulted to mass emigration of people,. With these one could picture the Nigerian society as "unstable". The instability in Nigerian societies could also be linked to the ignorance and inadequacies of the people which has made them incapacitated to effectively engage constituted authorities and advocate for change (USAID).

Reasons That Prompts Church Commercialization.

A fundamental reason for the rampant practice of church commercialization particularly in Nigerian society, is the "get rich quickly syndrome" which stems from individual's quest to make fast wealth. However there are several other reasons for such in Nigeria's Christianity as (Nnadi, 2012) highlighted economic hardship, poverty, unemployment, mass media, proliferation of churches, and the popular prosperity preaching. Ogunkunle(2006) in agreement to the above highlighted reasons for church

commercialization, went ahead to explain that these causes have led to the deprivation and the inability to control and equip one's life adequately hence he indicates frequent problems that led to poverty in Nigeria to include: over population, poor health care facility, illiteracy, ethnic strife and corruption while he asserts that unemployment in Nigeria is responsible for the high number of pastors, church leaders and church founders that flocks Nigerian society today as the unemployed are observed to retreat into the priesthood and pastoral vocations even when they do not possess the required criteria. However, threading the line of (Adabeme, 2024), the following are some of the reasons for the practice of church commercialization in Nigerian society:-

1. Economic Pressures and Financial Sustainability.

As Nigerian churches grow larger and more complex, they face mounting financial demands for infrastructure development, staff salaries, and the maintenance of large congregations. With the expansion of mega-churches and their often expensive projects, churches turn to commercial activities to sustain their operations. Such activities include charging for prayer sessions, selling religious products, and hosting high-profile events to generate revenue (Ogunyemi, 2016). According to (Okonkwo, 2018), churches increasingly rely on income-generating services such as conferences, concerts, and premium prayer services to ensure their financial sustainability.

2. Prosperity Gospel and Wealth Evangelism

One prominent force of commercialization in Nigerian churches is the rise of the "prosperity gospel", which asserts that faith and financial contributions to the church will provoke material wealth and blessings. This theological ideology propagated by many prominent pastors, promotes the idea that material wealth is a sign of spiritual success, and congregants are encouraged to contribute financially to receive divine rewards (Adeyemi, 2015). Churches often organize certain special service sessions; "miracle Hours", "Faith Clinic", and other related services. Such service sessions are characterised with selling anointed products,(candles, handkerchiefs, holy water, perfumes, and others), charging monetary tokens for prayer services promising financial breakthroughs (Folarin, 2016).

3. Competition among Churches

The proliferation of churches in urban areas like Lagos, and Abuja has led to intense competition for congregants, with churches vying for the attention of the faithful. As such, the competition begat the commercialization of church services and events, with churches offering paid services or "VIP" seating to attract and retain membership (Akinpelu, 2019). (Oluwadare, 2020), indicated that churches have increasingly adopted business strategies in which worship is commodified, offering "exclusive" spiritual

experiences, such as special prayer sessions, events with high-profile speakers, or church-hosted business conferences.

4. Materialism and the Influence of Modernity

Nigerian urban areas, is heavily influenced by materialism and consumer culture and this has permeated into religious practices. The quest for financial success, wealth, and status has led many to turn to churches, where material prosperity is often promised through faith. Commercialization of churches is often reflected in the luxurious lifestyles of prominent pastors, and church leaders, through their display of private jets, expensive cars, and grandiose church buildings. As indicated in (Okonkwo, 2018), the situation mirrors the heightened materialism in broader Nigerian society, where economic success is celebrated, and church leaders are seen as gods to be adored for spiritual and material elevation.

5. Media and Technology Influence

The rise of digital media has been a significant factor in the commercialization of churches. Many churches in Nigeria have expanded their influence globally through television broadcasts, social media platforms, and YouTube. These media outlets serve as powerful tools for churches to attract a wider audience and generate revenue through advertisements, merchandise sales, and paid events (Ogunyemi, 2016). It is noted in (Akinyemi, 2015), that these media-savvy churches often treat their religious services as televised commodities, where congregants can "purchase" spiritual benefits by watching programmes or donating online.

6. Lack of Effective Regulation

The lack of regulatory frameworks for religious institutions in Nigeria has allowed the commercialization of churches to go largely unchecked. The Nigerian government does not regulate religious organizations strictly, and this has accorded liberty to many churches to engage in money-making ventures with little oversight. More so, (Adeyemi, 2015), posited that the absence of formal controls over church operations, in Nigeria has led to a rise in such unregulated financial activities, among others.

Real Life Illustrations of Church Commercialization in Nigerian Society.

The commercialization of churches in Nigerian society is a well-documented phenomenon which has evolved to be integral to modern-day church operations. Several high-profile churches and leaders have integrated business ventures, media outlets, and personal wealth accumulation into their religious practices. The following are some real life examples of commercialization of churches in Nigeria.

One of the most prominent examples of church commercialization in Nigeria is Living Faith Church led by Pastor David Oyedepo. The church is known for its substantial business operations, which include educational institutions, real estate ventures, publishing houses and more. The Covenant University, the Faith Tabernacle, which is ranked one of the largest buildings in the world, the Dominion Publishing House all operate under the church and the administration of the founder. These contribute to the church's income.

Another example is the Christ Embassy Church, led by Pastor Oyakhilome Chris. The church has diversified sources of revenue, these include; the Love World TV and Media Networks, a global Christian television network which generates its revenues through advertising, partnerships, and subscription-based platforms (Adedayo, 2020). The church is also into events and conferences, healing schools, where attendees often pay for registration, tickets, and the likes. Sales of books, DVDs, and other media products also feature in the revenue income of the church.

Another is the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), under the leadership of Pastor Enoch Adeboye, one of the largest and most influential churches in Nigeria. Like many others, RCCG has embraced commercialization through variety of income generating activities. These include, private schools at all the levels of education, infact each parish of the RCCG often establish schools attached to the church. The of praise which is often used for events and conferences, multiple housing estates across the country, the holy ghost congress, conventions and other related Programmes.(Adeboye, 2016).

Embracing commercialization of churches has been an evidence of the expansion of religious organizations within Nigerian society. However, questions are raised, particularly on the impact of such phenomenon on the faith of people and the prestige of religious institutions in the country.

The Economic Implications of Church Commercialization in Nigeria Society.

It is so unfortunate that Nigerian society has become bedrock for Christian merchants to thrive, while they inflict on the nation's economy. Citing (Egwu, 2007), church commercialization do not only affect the reputation or public image of the church but it also impact on Nigeria's national economy within and out. In this context, the public image of the church connotes its positive and attractive qualities, its public advantages, the interests, the acknowledgements within the community it occupies. One could regard church commercialization as anti-religious or anti-Christianity as it contends with the sacredness, purity, and the teachings of Jesus. Moreso, it transcends the neglect and diversion from ethical norms of Christianity and not conforming to the ecclesiastical standard attached to churches and clergy

particularity in Nigerian societies. Hence, the following are some of the several economic implications of church commercialization on Nigerian society:-

1. Fraud and corruption: -The commercialization of churches in Nigerian society has led to significant economic implications, including the rise of fraud and corruption within the church and broader society. Although church commercialization has elevated the economic status of many churches, forcing them into powerful socio-economic actors, it has also raised serious ethical concerns regarding the misuse of resources, exploitation of adherents, and lack of accountability.

2. Sorcery and Divination: - The commercialization of the church in Nigeria has led to a rise in practices like sorcery and divination, often intertwined with the prosperity gospel and the search for quick solutions to life's challenges. This commercialization, especially in the context of some prosperity churches, often emphasizes wealth, health, and success, sometimes to the detriment of spiritual teachings.

3. Materialism: - Materialism as an implication of church commercialization in Nigerian society is a complex and multifaceted issue. The commercialization of churches in Nigeria, particularly through the prosperity gospel and commercialization of spiritual services, has deeply influenced societal values, often leading to an emphasis on material wealth and success over spiritual fulfillment.

4. Universal discernibility of religious institutions: - The commercialization of churches in Nigerian society has contributed to a universal discernibility of religious institutions, both within the country and internationally. This discredit arises from the exploitation of faith for material gain, which undermines the original principles of spirituality and moral guidance that many religious institutions are meant to uphold. This is reflected in the position of Odunayo, that commercialization discredits churches in Nigeria, as they are turned into money-making companies, business ventures, income source for the Government instead of fulfilling its religious purposes. Also Lizzy agrees as she posited that church discernibility could also stem from the undermining of the core moral principles, alongside erosion of trust.

5. Religious distractions and frustrations: - The commercialization of churches in Nigerian society has led to widespread religious distraction and frustrations. The focus on material wealth, unrealistic promises of prosperity, pressure to give, and the hypocrisy of some church leaders has caused many followers to lose sight of the true spiritual essence of religion. Instead of fostering deeper faith and spiritual growth, the commercialization of religion has created a transactional and competitive environment that leads to disillusionment, financial strain, and a loss of trust in religious institutions. As a result, many individuals experience spiritual frustration, which may even lead them to abandon their

faith and seek alternative spiritual paths. The frustration is also reflected in the escalated rate of poverty and the social inequalities within the Christian community and the broader Nigerian society as posited by Olubunmi.

Conclusion

It is no dispute that the practice of church commercialization is becoming a phenomenon in Nigerian society, more so it has engraved a deep scar on Christianity and religious institution. Church commercialization is an outright deviation from the ethics of the ecclesiastical, an aberration doing more harm than good to the growth and dignity of churches in Nigeria. Therefore there is a need for reforms particularly of religious doctrines, practices and leadership. Culprits of such act should be subjected to punishment as directed in the book of Amos, chapter 5 verse 21 to 24. Such are described according to the teachings of Jesus as "deceptors"...Matthew, chapter 15 verse 8 to 9. Integrity, honesty, and contentment should be the prioritized pursuit of religious leaders and religious personnel's. They should live exemplary lifestyles, thereby restoring church reputation and image of Christianity as one of the major religions in Nigeria. In addition the reform should be extended to the society, such that when individuals are positively reformed, there is a positive change in perspective and ideology which in turn result in a better and more conducive society. This therefore calls for swift response of the constituted authorities to reach a consensus in strategizing possible ways to attain societal reforms as related to the situation in Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. There should a consistent regulation of the clergy at all levels of Nigerian government. Religious leaders and clergy must be licensed after been well scrutinized. There should also be provision of laws, adequately implemented and executed with strict compliance.
2. Christian organizations in Nigeria (CAN, PFN, and CCN) should endeavor to be up to the given tasks, they should do more of awareness, monitoring and mentoring particularly of the younger and new members of the religious bodies.
3. The emerging issue of the "mega" churches needs a quick check; the trend of these churches could be attached with the increase in church commercialization especially in Nigeria.

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