



The Impacts of the Proliferation of Churches on the Socio-Cultural Development and Economy of Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined the history and spread of Christianity in Nigeria, the factors responsible for the proliferation of churches in Nigeria, and its impact on the socio-cultural development and economy of Nigeria. The theory adapted was church growth theory formulated by Donald McGavran, which investigates the planting, multiplication, function, and health of the churches as they relate to God's great commission to make disciples of all nations as in Matthew 28:19-20. The study used a quantitative research design. Self-administered questionnaire of 40 copies was used for data collection. The findings revealed that the impacts were both positive and negative. The positive impacts of church proliferation apart from the spreading of the gospel as commanded by Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19-20 include education from nursery to tertiary levels (90%), job creation (82.5%) health (80%), spiritual solution and healings (80%) and religious transformation (75%) among others. The findings also through respondents identified some negative impacts being made by church proliferation which include: commercialization of the gospel (82.5%), low-quality Christian teaching (75%), denominational undue competition (85%), low moral standard of people (72.5%) and family disintegration (70%). In controlling the proliferation, the majority of respondents strongly agreed that the government should enforce discipline on misbehaved ministers (82.5%). Gospel ministers to preach more on holiness (80%), Christian bodies like CAN



and PFN should checkmate their members (80%) and ready Christian leaders and ministers should be helped (75%). In conclusion, the positive impacts of the proliferation of churches have been adding value and good growth to the socio-cultural and economy of Nigeria while the negative impacts have been counselling great pain to the society in Nigeria. Therefore, efforts should be made to control the negative impact both by the government and Christian bodies like CAN and PFN, refocusing ministers to pure teaching and preaching of holiness messages instead of the gospel of prosperity.

Keywords: Proliferation of Churches, Socio-Cultural Development, Economy, Nigeria

Introduction

The continuous springing up of churches in Nigeria is highly alarming. Almost every street in the major cities of the country is hosting nothing less than two churches. Many houses have been converted to worship centres. Even some denominations like the Redeemed Christian Church of God have made it a rule to have worship centres at a five-minute workable distance from each other across the nation (Olusegun, 2020:61). However, as the number of churches increases, so, the impact is being felt positively and negatively on the socio-cultural development and economy of Nigeria.

Christianity makes up about 56% of the population of Nigeria, a country regarded as a secular state by the constitution (Akanbi & Bayers, 2017:1). However, it is grossly noted that one of the challenges facing Christianity in the country presently is the issues of the proliferation of churches. It has been observed that beside the established denominations founded by the missionaries such as Anglicans, Catholics, Baptists, Methodists and the likes, Nigeria has a large number of Africa instituted, independent and Pentecostal churches that are very active in evangelism and church planting even in other countries in Europe, North America and other parts of the world (WCC; 2019).



History and Spread of Christianity in Nigeria

Historically the Augustinian and capuchin monks from Portugal brought Christianity to Nigeria in 15th century (Haruna 2018:175). Although slave trade activities of the time limited the missionary activity (Lekin 2012:2), the religious revival amongst the Europeans and Americans after the abolition of slave trade ignited a fresh resuscitation (Adamolekun 2012:4). Different missionary groups began their Christian missions in Nigeria in the 19th Century (Nwadiakor 2015:16). The first of such missionaries was Henry Townsend of the Church of England who arrived at Badagry in 1842. (Haruna 2018:175). This was followed by other protestant denominations from the United States, Canada and Britain followed by Roman Catholic religious order in the 1860s (Metz, 1991).

The colonial masters used Christianity as one of the instruments to win the hearts of the people in their colonies. The Christian missionaries preached messages of eternity through holiness, condemning worshipping of idols, detestable African custom practices like killing of twins, killing of people with hunchbacks and human sacrifice (Omojinjo, et al, 2016: 637). Some of the freed slaves in Africa also helped in the propagation of Christianity in the 19th century. Some of these African freed slaves traced their root back home. Freed Nigeria slaves were brought back to places like Lagos and Badagry from Sierra Leone while some settled in Abeokuta and other Western Nigeria cities (Olulana, 2015: n.p). Prominent among these freed slaves was Samuel Ajayi Crowther who later became the first African to be ordained as a bishop by the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) (Olulana, 2015: n.p). On the spread of Christianity in Nigeria, St. Peter's Church was founded in Lagos in 1853 by Catechist James White, Reverends Charles Gollmer and Ajayi Crowther (Olulana 2015: n.p). The Christian Missionary Society established churches in many towns like Abeokuta (1846), Lagos (1851), Ibadan (1853) and Oyo (1856). Then CMS churches began to spring up in South-Eastern Nigeria of Bonny and Brass as main centres (WASSCE 2018:100). From this time forward, churches began to spread across the country of Nigeria.



Notwithstanding, the indigenous people felt that religious needs were not met by the missionaries which led to the emergence of growth of independent church movements (Obiefuna, Nwadiolor & Umeamolu, 2016). Not only that, the members' expectation from the mainline churches were not met. The missionaries failed to address the type of questions the indigenous raised for them on witchcraft, demon possession, hunting by evil spirits, the cult of ancestors, the use of protective charms, talisman, sorcery and traditional dancing at the shrines (Mbanefo, 2002:29).

Presently in Nigeria, Christianity is undergoing transformation with the rapid proliferation of churches. Many Pentecostal churches are springing up. Pentecostalism having been influenced by Acts 2:1-13 and Joel 2:28-30 that talk of God pouring out His Spirit upon all the people in the last days, now develop around the world (Metton, 2020). Thousands of Pentecostal churches have sprang up in Nigeria since 1970 which made it the fast proliferating independent churches (Diara and Onah, 2014). It is observed that there are over 300,000 early Pentecostal churches in Nigeria with 4.2 million members of denominations like Christ Apostolic Church, the Apostolic Church, Celestial Church of Christ, and the Cherubim and Seraphim Church. New Apostolic Christians in Nigeria include The Redeem Christian Church of God, Deeper Life Church, Foursquare Gospel Church and other new spring-up churches (Haruna 2018:175-192). There are, at the same time about 380,000 new Apostolic church parishes constituting about 6.5 million believers. A scholar is of the opinion that some of these churches started as Christian fellowship centres before metamorphosing into churches. For example, Deeper Life Church, the Redeem Christian Church of God, Living Faith Church, Rhema Church and many others started as Christian fellowship centres (Fatokun, 2016). All these happened for them to fulfill the commandment of Jesus Christ in Matthew 29:19-20 and Mark 16:25-18.



Theoretical Framework

The appropriate theory adopted is church growth theory formulated by Donald McGavran which defines as that science which investigates the planting, multiplication, function and health of the churches as they relate specifically to the effective implementation of God's commission to make disciples of all nations as in Matthew 28:19-20. The theory strives to combine theological principles of the Bible concerning insights of contemporary social and behaviour sciences (Wagner, 1980:509).

The polity of church growth theory designed for success in outreach and growth while centralized pastoral leadership is seen as the key vision and motivation in the assignment (Wagner, 1976:65). This theory further provided a military approached definition of leadership that would be effective for growth. Jesus Christ as the Commander-in-chief. The local church is like a company with one company commander, the pastor, who gets order from the commander-in-chief. The company commander has lieutenants and sergeants under him for consultation and implementation, but the final responsibility for the decision is that of the company commander, and he must answer to the commander-in-chief. "If you believe God has called me to pastor this church, then you follow me". (Wagner, 1976:65).

This leadership model is clearly highly centralized and autocratic. The pastoral role is defined as the chief executive officer (CEO) of a corporation or commander of an army. The autocratic model of leadership places an important emphasizes on motivating and training lay leadership to reach people for church and the church. This centralized leadership of many local churches is highly effective and have led to phenomenal numerical growth (McGavran & Hunter III 1980). The formulation and teachings of this theory since late 1970s brought about the recorded explosive church growth from the 1980s till date.

Findings

Selection A: Personal Data

Majority of the respondents are worker of churches, follow by pastors/priest while few are founders. Their age range between 30-39



years, 40-49 years mostly. Majority of them are also civil servants by profession.

Selection B: Opinion Questions

Observing part A of the table on factors responsible for the proliferation of churches, it could be observed that 25 respondents which is 62.5% strongly agreed that God's calling leads to proliferation of churches, 28 respondents which is 70% strongly agreed that hard economics condition causes proliferation, 20 respondents, that is 50% strongly agreed that church persecution leads to proliferation of churches, 26 respondents which is 65% strongly agreed that Jealousy and unhealthy rivalry leads to church proliferation, 23 of the respondents 57.5% strongly agreed that illiteracy leads to church proliferation and 18 respondents which is 45% strongly agreed that religion doctrinal differences leads to proliferation of churches.

From part B of the table, on the impacts of proliferation of churches on socio-cultural and economy of Nigeria. Those who favour that church's proliferation is making positive impacts are the followings: 36 respondent, which is 90% consented that it is making positive impact on education, 32 respondents that is 80% agreed that its making positive impact on health, 33 respondents 82.5% consented that it is making positive impact on job creation/opportunities, 32 respondents which is 80% agreed that it is making positive impact on spiritual solutions/healings, 30 respondents, that is 75% that it is making positive impacts on both religiously and rapid evangelization.

However, majority of respondents agreed that proliferation of churches is making negative impact on the following areas: 33 respondents, which is 82.5% agreed that its making negative impact on Gospel commercialization, 30 respondents, which is 75% agreed that its making negative impact of the quality of Christian teachings, 34 respondents that 85% agreed that its making negative impact on denominational competition, while 28 respondents that is 70% agreed that its having negative impact on family, its making negative impact on moral standard of the people.



On part C: Controlling the proliferation of churches in Nigeria, majority of the respondents strongly agreed on the followings measures, 32 respondent which is 80% strongly agreed on balancing messages between holiness and prosperity is needed, 32 respondents which is 80% also strongly agreed that involvement of Christian bodies like CAN and PFN is needed to curb its negative impact, 30 respondents, that is 75% strongly agreed that helping of needy Christian leaders and ministers would help to control its negative impact, and 33 respondents 82.5% strongly agreed that government's enforcement of discipline on misbehaved ministers would help to curb its negative impact.

Discussion of Findings

This study has made it clear that proliferation of churches has both positive and negative impacts on the socio-cultural and economy of Nigeria. On the positive impacts, apart from the primary assignment of spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the fulfilment of great commission in Matthew 28:19-20 through planting of churches. The church proliferation, from the responses of respondents identified such areas like: education (90%), job creation (82.5%), health (80%) and religious transformation (75%) spiritual solution /healings (80%) amongst others. However, the respondents also identified the areas of where church proliferation is making negative impact which are commercialization of gospel (82.5%) low quality Christian teaching (75%), denominational undue competition (85%) low moral standard of people (72.5%) and family disintegration (70%).

Although, with the rapid spread and growth of the churches in almost every street of Ado Ekiti in particular and Nigeria, generally, people have been living together with understanding. Church proliferation is expected to be the fulfilment great commission in Matthew 28:19-20, for spiritual growth economic development, and social improvement of the church members and people in the area. Pastors are expected to stand for the truth and preach it is order to enjoy the expected confidence of their people.



Factors Responsible for the Proliferation of Churches in Nigeria

These are some factors responsible for the proliferation of churches in Nigeria. The most prominent factors are:

1. *God's Callings:* Divine calling could be traced to be one of the factors. Many founders and the general overseers of churches claim that God called them or have been directly mandated to spread the gospel. This led to many of them going ahead to establish churches in response to the call. Paul affirms that God gives supernatural ability to certain members of the body of Christianity. But to each one of us grace has been given by God to every individual for teaching, prophecy, healing and so on. Jesus Christ gave some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:7-11). One of the researchers personally experienced it in 1996 when he received this kind of divine call that made him to leave Lagos in 1999 to obey the call of the work of ministry to Ogbomoso. One thing that people normally use as a prove is that God would always allow signs and wonders to back up the ministry of the person who is divine called.
2. *Hard Economic Condition:* The economic hardship of the civil war was noted to be a factor to proliferation of churches. Many lost their daily livelihood, properties, jobs and other viable resources. This made many people to turn to God. There is economic undertone for closure of many business warehouses and they are turned to places of worship. Many turned churches to a way of daily living. This is notable in many cities and communities. Some churches have become business ventures where the innocent and ignorant people are exploited (Ikeazota, 2013)
3. *Persecution:* Persecution is seen as one of the influences of proliferation of churches. The overzealous and arrogant amongst and uncontrollable members, when they are not tolerated and unacceptable end up breaking out into new churches (Emeronys,



2011:48). Not only that, the quest for salvation, utilization of spiritual gifts, miracles and desire to improve on practices through prophecy also cause the proliferation of churches (Okeke 2007:9)

4. *High Political Ambition in Church System:* Some church members' desire for leadership position at all cost end up forming their own churches. This has led many churches especially Pentecostal churches ending up in Episcopal formation. Title and affluence with political aspiration are now major motivators for church formation (Ituma, 2009:10).
5. *Disagreement Between Leaders and Members:* Disagreement between leaders and members do end up into breakage and formation of new churches (Chukwubuikem 2008:18). In this case, it is paramount that when church split occurs, the leader of the rebellious group would go away to start new church with his own supporters (Ikeazota 2013).
6. *Excessive Desire for Wealth and Greed:* The "quick money" syndrome has entered all facets of the society including the church. Establishing churches or ministries in Nigerian society has been considered as a solution to poverty and gateway to wealth. Majority focuses on materialism and wealth acquisition instead of emphasizing spiritual growth, moral sanctity and anticipation of eternal life (Thearacho, 2009). In addition, some of these pastors have developed ostentation, celebrities, superheroes and business executives' lifestyles (Ojo 2018:92). They lay emphasis on prophecies, visions, healing, miracles and preach a prosperity gospel. They commonly convince their members that the more they sow the more blessings will come their way. These leaders go against the injunction in Matthew 10:8 that freely you have received, so freely give. Majority of these general overseers sell things like anointing oil, stickers, and handkerchiefs to their followers. All those who want quick money or success do patronize them.



7. *Jealousy and Unhealthy Rivalry*: This has caused proliferation of churches and happens in two ways (Haywood, 2009:9). Firstly, a subordinate may become jealous of the leaders which may cause him to start his own ministry. Secondly, it may be the leader that is jealous of his junior worker all because of his growing popularity through his charismatic gifts, anointing and grace of God upon his life and ministry (Ikeazota, 2013)
8. *Protection/Security*: Searching for spiritual security, protection and powers has led to the establishment of churches that cause proliferation of churches. Too many diabolical experiences in Nigeria make many people to be seeking and searching for churches and individuals that can offer them protection. So, such individuals may be empowered to go and start the daughter churches of the same pattern for the same purpose (Ikeazota 2013).
9. *Illiteracy*: Illiteracy is found everywhere. The high level of illiteracy among members leads so many of them to be brainwashed by their leaders through erroneous teaching without members having the knowledge to examine the preaching of the leaders. This makes proliferation of churches to thrive more among illiterates in Nigeria.
10. *Religious Doctrinal Differences*: This has been a serious factor in the proliferation of churches in Nigeria. Doctrine is the major backbone of every denominational teaching, belief and mode of worship. Any moment someone or group of people feel uncomfortable with a doctrinal teaching or a mode of worship, they pull out to go and start their own church or gathering. This forms the major reason for the establishment of many church denominations in Nigeria (Ruth, 1993:9)



Positive Impacts on Socio-Cultural Development and Economy of Nigeria

There are both positive and negative effects of the proliferation of churches on the society and economy of Nigeria (Olusegun, 2020). The positive ones can be analyzed as follows:

1. *Education:* The positive aspect of the proliferation of churches on education in Nigeria could be seen through the establishment of nursery and primary schools, secondary schools and universities which are equipping the younger generation the needed knowledge to excel.
2. *Health:* Many of these church denominations established teaching hospitals, mission hospitals, maternity homes and other health institutions to take care of people's health challenges apart from prayers they offer for people.
3. *Job Opportunities:* All aspects of the proliferation of churches are sources of job creation. More people are making their livelihood through the churches they founded and in employing many others, they pay salaries. The schools and hospitals they established are sources of income to their employees and indirectly to many other people around them including the tax they pay to the government.
4. *Spiritual Solutions:* People with different kind of spiritual and physical attacks or problem used to get solutions to their problems through many church programmes like revivals and crusades organized by these churches. Healings, deliverances and breakthroughs are undeniable blessings many people have enjoyed through their programmes.
5. *Religiosity:* Having so many churches founded and planted everywhere in Nigeria, religion make people to realize that Nigeria is a highly religious nation and that many Christian churches abound in Nigeria (Adamolekun, 2023).
6. *Formation of Christian Bodies:* Another blessing of proliferation of churches is the formation of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and its blocks which stands as a pressure group and



umbrella used by Christians as mouthpiece to fight any injustices or government policies that are against the interest of the Christians in the nation.

7. *Rapid Evangelization:* It is worth saying that the proliferation of churches brought great growth to Christianity in Nigeria. Many have left their paganism to embrace Jesus Christ as their Lord.

Other benefits include development of new leaders, promotion of specialization in ministry, provision of spiritual environment for solving human problem

Socio-Cultural impact on the positive side shows that the church proliferation has contributed the following to the society: through numerous prayer programmes, the church is interceding for the society thereby causing people lives to transform, many who used to be involved in bad behaviours are being morally transformed and become gentle and well behaved members of the society. So the church discharges its responsibility to God for society in carrying out its pastoral assignment to the society at large (Niebuhr, nd). Many Christians believe that it is part of their duties to help others around them by providing food, cloth and shelter for the poor and needies. Socially non-Christians benefit from the education, hospitals and job opportunities of the church (BBC Bitesize, 2024). It is therefore not all the activities of church proliferation that is bad.

Negative Impacts

The negative impacts brought by the proliferation of the churches in Nigeria are numerous but few of them are the followings:

1. *Commercialization of the Gospel:* Most of the churches under this umbrella have been discovered through their practices to commercialize the gospel by the sale of religious materials of which Jesus Christ Himself gave to people free. These materials cost less outside of the church than in the churches where they practice it. They sell things like perfumes, incense, etc. with the claim and ability to perform miracles. Even these churches have commercialized miracles, healings, and deliverance by charging



high prices and the collection of consultation fees. This is against Matthew 10:8 that says “freely you receive, freely you must give.”

2. *Lack of Quality Christian Teachings:* The teachings, preaching’s and ministrations of some pastors, founders and priests of churches have reduced the standard and quality of Christianity to ordinary messages on materialism, self or personal projection. These teachings cannot produce the quality of Christians expected by Jesus Christ (Nkechi & Agbo, 2021). For instance, more emphasis is laid on prosperity and not on the biblical injunction to seek first the kingdom of God and every other thing shall be added to you (Matthew 6:33). They base their preaching and teaching on earthly treasures instead of preaching on holiness, righteousness and Christian virtues.
3. *Unhealthy Competition:* The gross unhealthy rivalry and competition has been brought to the Christian faith by the proliferation of churches. With the arrival of Pentecostalism, every church struggles for popularity and miraculous power coupled with unhealthy competition. They believe that any Christian who does not belong to their church is not a genuine Christian (Nkechi & Agbo, 2021). This has motivated many church leaders erecting church buildings close to each other to win their converts. The members go around inviting others to their churches. Likewise, two or three churches are found in the same building. Crusades and conventions are stages of making more money and no longer for the wining of converts for Christ. The unhealthy competition leads to fight and strife among church pastors and turn them away from genuine evangelism.
4. *Family Disintegration:* As a result of proliferation of churches, some of the Pentecostal churches believe that problems, mishaps and misfortunes could be caused by the operation of witches and wizards. Many families have suffered disintegration because of fake prophecies of the prophets and founders of these ministries. There are several cases where these prophets accuse women of been the cause of their husbands’ and children’s misfortune.



Likewise, they accuse children of using witchcraft to destroy their parents' fortune. Many are accused as using their witchcraft spirits to cause sickness and bad luck like sudden death, accident, poverty cancer, miscarriages and the likes. These fake prophets use this medium to exploit and take advantage of the ignorant members (Nkechi & Agbo, 2021). In a situation where members of the same family attend different churches, there is bound to be disagreements because everyone would receive different prophecies from their prophets and each will be protecting the uniqueness and faith of the denominations.

5. *Moral Decadence*: The springing up of churches in thousands is becoming more worrisome in Nigeria. The moral standard of Christianity in the time past is now very low. The moral worth of pastors before the law enforcement agents is now zero. Some pastors have been accused of sexual abuse of women and girls. The news of this always attracts readers in the daily newspapers. Many of these pastors and founders are in prison because of it. For example, a pastor was arrested for impregnating married women and young girls in his church (Nkech & Agbo, 2021). Another pastor was arrested for repeatedly raping his biological daughter since 2015. He impregnated and aborted the pregnancies for her three times. Some churches were also shut down by the government (Daily Champion 18, June, 2009). Indecent dressing of "come as you like" are acceptable in these churches. Many ladies go to church half nude. Some wear tight dresses. They based their point on God looks at the heart and not at the outward appearance.

Negatively, socio-culturally, some of these churches do cause several forms to pollution to the society like noise pollution, congestion of both traffic and buildings, immoralities of all forms among the unregenerated members and leaders. It also part of socio-cultural negativities for church people to be duping and stealing, with tricks, the people fund in the name of prosperity and prophecy.



Controlling the Proliferation of Churches in Nigeria

Although, certain benefits have been pointed out as the advantages of proliferation of churches in Nigeria. However, the excessive rate at which churches are springing up couple with all disadvantages attached should be put under controls. The followings are, therefore, some of the points to note (Omonijo, et al, 2016):

Strike the balance between messages on prosperity and holiness. One of the major characteristics of Pentecostal churches is their quest for wealth and prosperity. This makes them to be known as prosperity preaching churches. Therefore, the main message on holiness, righteousness and kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33) should be given a priority above that of prosperity in order to redirect their followers' attention to Jesus Christ.

Ministers of the gospel should stop protecting corrupt and dubious people either from public or private sectors, in their churches. Being the watchmen of the flock, they should know that it is their duties to leads their members aright. This may encourage members to live a God-fearing and holy life. Just like Elijah, the prophet to king Ahab (1 Kings 21:20-24), it is the duty of the pastor to tell their members nothing but the truth. If the Pentecostal ministers can do their best to call politicians to order by leading them to swear that God should discipline them if they embezzle public fund or cheat people, this would cause some of them to fear God.

Another way of controlling the evil done through proliferation of churches is by involving the Christian bodies. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) should get all pastors and their churches registered before they could be allowed to practice. There should be registration committee that would be made up of highly experienced ministers who would ascertain the genuine calling of such ministers by God. Likewise, disciplinary committee should be set up to handle every activity of misconduct and misbehavior among the existing ministers and churches.

Helping of needy ministers is another way of controlling the proliferation of churches. A Christian or minister who is passing through



hard time or financial difficulty should be helped and assisted as Jesus did on many occasions (Acts 10:38; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 19:5-6; 2 Kings 4:1-4). This would help them reduce the thought of starting their own ministries to make money.

There should be a publicized renewal with great emphasis on restitution in Pentecostal churches as found in Luke 19:8 on Zacchaeus so that all their pastors would be giving opportunity to repent, restore and realign their relationship with people they have offended and God. Majority of stolen properties would be restored through this arrangement.

Conclusion

This research has shown that proliferation of churches in Nigeria has gone beyond establishment of churches for the sake of eternity alone. Unlike when Christianity newly arrived Nigeria through the efforts of missionaries. The mission churches popularly known as mainline churches continued with the vision of the missionaries. However, independent founders majorly from the Pentecostal circle came to make great deal of the church and turn it to religious business purely to enrich themselves. This is the major reason for the proliferation of churches throughout the country except the fanatical Islamic areas. It is noted that many factors led to the proliferation of these churches that include God's calling, hard economic condition, persecution, high political ambition in church system, disagreement between leaders and members, excessive desire for wealth and greed, jealousy and rivalry, protection and security, illiteracy, religious doctrinal differences among many others. The impacts which are both positive and negative on Nigeria socio-cultural and economy are numerous. The positive impacts include, establishment of many schools from nursery to tertiary institutions by these churches. Likewise, the establishment of hospitals and various health centres have positive impacts on the people, other positive impacts of proliferation of churches are creation of job opportunities for people, finding spiritual solutions to problems, formation of Christian bodies to curb the system and rapid evangelization of the country to fulfill the biblical great commission in Matthew 28:19-20.



The negative impacts caused by the proliferation of churches include the commercialization of the gospel, lack of quality Christian teachings, unhealthy and unethical competition, family disintegration, moral decadence and many others. With the mixture of both, positive impacts want to make its control to be difficult. However, many steps should be taken in curbing the effect of church proliferation since it is now very rear not to hear evil done by many of these churches' ministers every week, either on raping, embezzlement, robbery, ritual of the gospel.

The impacts of proliferation churches in the socio-cultural and economy of Nigeria shows that the spreading of churches fulfils the great commission of Jesus Christ. It is also making positive impacts on education, health, employment creation, spiritual solutions and healing. The negative impacts include: commercialization of the gospel, lack of quality Christian teachings, unhealthy competition, family disintegration and moral decadence. However, the negative impacts could be controlled by the government, Christian bodies and through helping those ministers and leaders who are having financial challenges.

Recommendations

The followings are the recommendations to stop or curb the negative effects of proliferation of churches in Nigeria:

Christian Association of Nigeria and all its blocks that make up the Christian body should be overhauling together with its constitution and mode of operations. For instance, the Pentecostal churches that are major victims of proliferation and having the largest units of churches are just sharing a block in CAN with the CPFN known as CPFN/PFN. Christ Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (CPFN) and Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria should have different blocks at CAN. These two bodies should be saddled with the responsibility of monitoring and watching their members in a godly way.

Adequate discipline should be given to the unregenerate founders or ministers who bring worldliness and sinful approach to the operation of their churches like dupe, rape and fake prophecies.



Any church noticed to open purely for business or any other purpose apart from preaching and evangelism should be closed and sealed up. Security operative should monitor all these churches.

Every proliferated church minister or founder should enforce discipline on undisciplined members who commit adultery, fornication, robbery and hooliganism. Like a church in Kawangware, Kenya where the founder enforces strict discipline to maintain moral standards among its worshippers (Davidic, 2024)

Federal government should enforce law and order, and strictly discipline any church leader who break the law and order the land.

All founders and senior ministers should endeavor to take good care of the welfare of those under them. This would curb going to establish ministry for prosperity's sake.

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