
The Proliferation of Churches and Moral Decadence in Nigeria: Socio-Economic and Religious Implications

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Abstract: This article examined the problem of the proliferation of Churches and moral decadence in Nigeria with a focus on Pentecostal ministries, from the humanistic point of view. The study also looks at the socio-economic and religious implications of this proliferation to national development in contemporary Nigeria. The study engaged majorly secondary data in an attempt to study this phenomenon and came out with factors responsible for the escalation of moral decadence in spite of the escalation of Churches. The study ends with concluding remarks and also proffers solutions and way forward.

Keywords: Proliferation, Churches, moral decadence.

INTRODUCTION

From the Bible (Proverbs 14:28; Acts 4: 13) it is lucid that God is interested in Church growth and at the same time piety of every member of the Church. Thus, Christians are supposed to showcase all the embodiment of godliness. The rise in the number of Churches in any society therefore, should correspond with developing interest in the fear of the Lord for a godly living in order to ensure societal development. Christians are supposed to live exemplary lives (Matthews 5:13; John 1:5) that should warrant a just society. That is why the above scriptures describe them as the light and the salt of the earth. From all indications, the reverse seems to be the case in Africa and this is increasingly becoming worrisome to scholars across the continent.

In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Mfumbusa [1] contends that there has been a remarkable increase in the number of Churches and also a commensurate rise in corruption and other social vices. It is assumed that if Churches are increasing, its positive impact in the lives of the people should be greater than when there were few Churches. Mfumbusa [1] therefore wondered if the Church growth and rise in corruption are coterminous in these societies.

Scholars and other agencies [2, 3, 4] who studied this phenomenon seem to agree that, initially, when Christianity was first introduced in Nigeria, it had the impact of leading people to holiness than

contemporarily when the reverse is the case. Additionally, other writers such as [5-11] also all seem to agree that little improvement has been recorded in attitude, behaviour and comportment of Nigerians though the number of Churches has risen exorbitantly. Consequently, this must have been responsible for corrupt activities that have caused the nation to be constantly ranked low in the corruption index [12, 13].

It is clear that so far the Nigerian government is either not doing anything about this problem or that efforts put in place to curtail it are weak and have failed to yield the requisite results. The following reasons could account for the seemingly unwillingness and inability of government to bring about solution to this problem:

- Most government officials attend pentecostal Churches.
- Most pentecostal Churches generate their income from donations, tithes and offering of top government functionaries [14].
- Nigerian top government officials seek divine protection, and other sundry solutions to their problems in pentecostal Churches

In spite of all the above cited literature, it must be admitted that enough scholarly attention has not been devoted to the understanding of the causes of high moral depravity in the face of rising number of Churches. However, the study of Adesanya [15] which dealt with the same topic was restricted to the

Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG). More importantly, the study was severely limited because it focused mainly on environmental factors.

It is on the basis of the flaws in knowledge identified in Adesanya [15] that this study was conceived. The study intends to: (i) examine the origin of pentecostal Churches, (ii) investigate the impacts of Pentecostalism, (iii) find out manifestations of moral decadence in pentecostal ministries, (iv) explore the causes of the rise in moral depravity in spite of the growth in the number of Churches, (v) find out factors responsible for this menace and (vi) x-rays the religious, economic and social implications of Church growth without piety and their negative effects on national development.

The study proceeds in numerical order as indicated in the body of the work from the introductory section to the concluding remarks.

The Concept of Pentecostalism

Gabriel [16] maintains that “Pentecostalism refers to certain elements of Christian life often associated with the experience of the power of the Holy Spirit which manifested strongly at the feast of Pentecost in the Bible and the consequent gifts of the Spirit by Christ” (p. 68). This author argues further that it means emphasis on the third person of the Trinity and his manifestations in the individual and corporate lives of Christians. In addition to the above perspective, Harvey, (1998) cited in [17] defined pentecostalism as an aspect of Christianity which is hinged on personal salvation through Jesus by the help of the Holy Spirit.

Dwelling on the above, pentecostalism has the following features: Holy Ghost baptism, Holy Spirit, Charisma etc. Gabriel [16]. However, some writers have tried to equate pentecostalism with extremism because of their uncompromising insistence in upholding to the letter the teachings of the Bible. This includes strong opposition against the consumption alcohol, smoking of cigarette and Indian hemp, fornication and adultery, indecent dressing, watching and listening to secular movies and music etc. While some orthodox Christian Churches may tolerate a measure of some of these ungodly behaviours, they are strongly condemned by pentecostal Churches. From their preaching and activities, the pentecostal ministries are different from the orthodox and independent African Churches

However, pentecostal Churches do not constitute a uniform body. There are those which could be described as hardliners and see the rapture, a time when Christ will come and take believers to heaven, as the ultimate. Since the emphasis of pentecostals is on rapture, their strong opposition to social vices is understandable. This is in contradiction to other

Churches where the emphasis on piety and self-denial are not strongly emphasized. The situation in the present day Nigeria shows that Churches in the category of holiness are relatively few, comparable with others that lay much emphasis on prosperity, healing, breakthroughs etc. This may have a strong root in the escalation of moral decadence in contemporary Nigeria.

Pentecostal Churches: The Origin in Nigeria

One of the instruments which the Colonial masters used to dominate and win the mind of people in the colonies was Christian religion. This is because Christianity preaches a message of hope, eternity, deliverance, salvation etc. as against some obnoxious African practices such as the killing of twin babies and persons of hunchbacks, human sacrifice, worshipping idols etc. It readily appealed to a broad segment of the African society and succeeded in terminating some of these terrible customs and traditions. These seem to have accounted for the dramatic rise of Churches in Nigeria.

After independence in 1960, the influence of pentecostal Churches in the United States of America began to permeate Africa. Such was the growth of pentecostal Churches that by the year 2001, there were 1018 of pentecostal ministries in Nigeria [18] categorized them into nine groups based on their teachings and indications. However, the line of demarcation between them is between fellowships and Churches on one hand and between holiness and prosperity groups on the other hand [12]. No matter the focus of each of these ministries, their impacts on the lives of many Nigerians should be positive and strong enough to ensure societal development. Although, this view seems to be contrary to the reality on development but some of the obvious positive impacts of these ministries are succinctly discussed below

Impact of Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria

It is evident in the literature that Christianity has contributed significantly to the progress of many Nigerians since its introduction Obiora [18]. Prior to colonialism which brought about its introduction, many obnoxious cultural practices were evident in African societies. It was after its introduction in the wake of colonialism that Christian religion began to counter and render several obnoxious and some age-long practices, customs and traditions useless for the salvation and deliverance of many people Wikipedia [19]. Some dehumanizing widowhood practices, wife inheritance and human sacrifice were condemned for the first time. People began to frown at the practice of interring living people with dead monarchs as a sign of respect. But the work of Owoeye, and Aluko [20] and Gabriel [15] shows that the impact of Christianity expanded, especially after 1960, and gave birth to and accelerated the growth of pentecostalism.

In retrospect, it would be recalled that orthodox Christianity was mainly spiritual. The goal was eternity and heaven was every Christian's focus. All that changed with pentecostalism, a new focus was introduced into the Church – the birth of prosperity. Besides, at its early stage, Christianity was characterized by abject poverty, as many Christians were blind to the reality of prosperity as rooted in the Bible. It was the commencement of pentecostal ministries that brought to the fore the reality of

prosperity in Church [21, 22] and it seems to have terminated abject poverty in the lives of many Nigerians to some extent

Pentecostal Churches have also been positively impacted on Nigerians in the area of education. Many of them have established schools at all level thus, contributing to the fight against ignorance. For the avoidance of doubt, the list of tertiary institutions established by the pentecostal Churches is stated below:

Table-1: Tertiary Institutions Established by the Pentecostal Churches

SN	Pentecostal Ministries	Universities
1	Four Square	McPherson
2	Assemblies of God	Evangel
3	Church of God mission	Ben Idahosa
4	Apostolic faith	Crawford
5	The Apostolic Church	Joseph Ayo Babalola
6	Mountain of Fire	Mountain Top
7	Deeper life Bible Church	Anchor
8	The Redeemed Christian Church of God	Redeemer University and Redeemer College of Technology
9	Living faith aka winners	Covenant and Landmark
10	Others	Others

Source: Compiled by the researchers, (2016)

Moreover, some programmes of study created by some pentecostal universities that were not in existence in tertiary institutions in the country in the past, such as entrepreneurial studies have been successfully introduced into the nations teaching curriculum. Apart from this, one of the private faith-based universities in Nigeria is often rated as the best university in Nigeria by the Global Ranking Web of Universities [23].

Further to the above, the above educational institutions provide employment opportunities for some persons in Nigeria. To some extent, this has reduced the rate of unemployment [24-27] responsible for the high level of abject poverty [28-31] and criminal activities such as smuggling, armed robbery, prostitution, stealing etc. among Nigerians

Apart from the above, missionaries from the west introduced formal education to Nigerians but it has not been established in the literature that any missionary in developed countries has ever established and run two universities or a university and a polytechnics like two Nigerian preachers. The aim of building these institutions is to raise a new generation of leaders to bail Nigerians out of illiteracy, ignorance, subjective thinking and prejudice and to also restore the dignity of the entire back race.

Although some scholars have argued that education in the private sector is too expensive in Nigeria and that it is meant for the children of the elite class, mostly those who siphoned the resources of the

state. But it is undisputable, except if empirically proved wrong; it is the only sector where quality education with modern learning facilities, effective state-of-the-art facilities can be obtained. Also, private mission institutions are far better than the public sector when it comes to students victimization, high level of corruption, sexual harassment, cultism. Moreover, the sector is noted for a stable academic calendar, which has greatly helped the present younger generation to build their careers early in life.

In addition to the above impacts, the greatest strive to include a Nigerian and an African university among the leading universities globally is currently being pursued by one of the private universities owned by a Nigerian preacher [32]. In term of spirituality, the presence of many pentecostal ministries in cities, towns and villages in Nigeria has drastically reduced idol worshipping that characterized African religion in the past to the barest minimum. Further to that, activities of evil forces such as witches, familiar spirits, demons, occult powers, mummy water spirits etc. have been greatly devastated with the awareness and light ushered into these locations by the pentecostal ministries.

Past studies show that many personalities have achieved great feats in many areas of human endeavours in developed nations Gao [33] and any great invention in the past and in recent times is traceable to them. Nevertheless, they are yet to beat the record of a Nigerian preacher who built the largest Church auditorium (50, 000 seat capacity) in the world [34, 35].

Internationally, in less than one century, Nigerian Pentecostal Churches have spread to different parts of the world, flourishing in countries whose missionaries came to introduce Christianity in Nigeria in the wake of colonialism. Moreover, it is a surprise to observe the rate at which Christianity is spreading in Nigeria and other African countries goes hand-in-hand with the shriveling of Churches in Western Europe and North America that introduced the same to Africa. Really, "It is not insignificant that Africa, a continent despised, deprived, trampled upon, marginalized, and shamed in many ways, has emerged as the beacon of Christian mission and evangelization in the global spread of the faith" Asamoah-Gyadu K [36].

With the above glaring impacts of Christianity in areas mentioned and the escalation of Churches, one would have expected that moral decadence would have reduced to the barest minimum in contemporary Nigeria. But it is quite unfortunate to observe the opposite across the nation. This could be regarded as paradox with casual factors. The present study intends to address this problem with the possibility of contributing to the existing knowledge.

Manifestations of Moral Decadence in Pentecostal Churches

The alarming rate of moral decadence in Nigeria has been associated with the failure of many social groups-family, school, Churches etc.

The issue of morality in pentecostal ministries is subject of orchestrated arguments. While on one hand preaching the message of the fear of the Lord, most of them (pentecostal) have not come out to strongly condemn immorality and some of these Churches are known to be permissive Eyoboka [37].

In recent time, the Church that is normally perceived as the custodian of morality has been seriously criticized and condemned for providing comfort zones for moral decadence in all ramifications [37]. This scholar believes that the Church has greatly contributed to the high rate of indecent dressing in Nigeria by allowing their members, mostly ladies to dress half naked. In fact it seems that indecent dressing is regarded as the normal way of worshipping God in many ministries.

Furthermore, some scholars such as [38, 39] have demonstrated that some unbiblical practices have been associated with some pentecostal ministries. These include fornication, adultery, divorce Farias [40] and remarriage. In early Christianity, fornication, adultery, divorce and remarriage were strictly prohibited in the Church. Christians in large number were getting married as virgins. The relationship was not only defined as for better and for worse, it lasted till death separated one of the two parties from the union. In

recent times, the reverse is the case in many Pentecostal Churches. The problem is not because such sins are no longer condemned Uwaegbute [41] the issue is that it seems they have been accepted as parts of Christian life because many Christian adulterers and divorcees are ordained as deacons, deaconess, pastors etc.

Kwon [42] and Raymond [43] even went to the extent of pointing out that some pentecostal Churches embrace deception, stealing, embezzlement, lies in an unusual manner. Actually, Raymond 2016 could be criticized on the grounds that such things are not totally absent in the orthodox Churches but their occurrences in Pentecostal Churches that claim to be different from the orthodox Churches could be regarded an aberration. The manifestation of social ills makes it difficult to find trustworthy Pentecostal Christians [44,45] in contemporary Nigeria.

Apart from the above, selfishness now supersedes the love for others [46]. In most institutions, non-Christians are more useful in assisting the needy than many Christians. Most workers in institutions established by some of the pentecostal ministries cannot adequately take care of themselves and their families due to poor remunerations and conditions of service.

Additionally, several cases of fraud and corruption are now synonymous with many pentecostals [47-49]. It is on these notes Anipupo [50] traces the origin and escalation of corruption in the society to the Church. According to him, the value system of a given culture influences people's faith and religion. Thus, people have imbibed the wrong and corrupt messages that most pentecostal pastors preach and they are largely associated with the escalation of corruption in the society [50].

Lastly, cases of disorderliness in several pentecostal Churches are evident. The scriptural injunction that things be done decently and orderly (1 Corinthians 14:40) is no longer applicable to many Christians in contemporary Nigeria to the extent that Christians are observing the sacred meal (Holy Communion) in a rowdy manner. Impatience, riot, abuse, cursing, fighting, eagerness, witch-hunting, wickedness, hatred are now trademarks of Christianity. Also, rowdiness characterized most activities in Church, where Christians are expected to be decent in their conducts.

Factors Responsible for the Escalation of Moral Decadence in spite of the proliferation of Churches

Increase in the number of Churches and corresponding rise in moral decay is a very curious paradox in Nigeria. Ordinarily, it would have been expected that a rise in the number of Churches would also facilitate a commensurate rise in holy living and life that is wholly dedicated to God but the reverse is

the case. This could probably be attributed to the following factors:

Previous studies have associated economic issues with high level of crime Maddah [51] in the society. One of such issues is unemployment Kilishi, *et al.* [52] and it is a correlate of moral decadence in modern society. In 2014, the rate of unemployment among the Nigerian youths was between 37.7 and 22.4 percentages for people in the age bracket of 15 to 24 and 25 to 44 respectively [52]. As the saying goes 'an idle hand is a devil workshop' several authors have linked the high level of unemployment in the countries with evil of all sorts. This include: Fornication mostly among young girls who lack: (i) paternal support, (ii) maternal support, (iii) employment. Preaching may not produce any meaningful effect in the lives of such persons; it has to be complemented with other means of survival. Where such is lacking, blind obedience to Christian faith may likely be an aberration. Besides, several studies have associated high level of local and international prostitutions to unemployment Aloba and Ndifor [53], The view becomes essential because "no woman has ever "chosen" to be a prostitute where she has had valid alternatives to prostitution" (p. 46). Among unemployed men, social ill such as stealing smuggling, armed robbery are evident in the literature Abanyam. etc.

"In contemporary Nigeria, moral integrity seems to have been replaced with laxity. Thus, scriptural doctrine or teaching seems to have been slaughtered in place of freedom. The moral cyphers in the recent past have been replaced with conditional principles and it makes many Christians to be at peace with a **one-sided message that tits to prosperity**. Messages of many Pentecostal Churches in contemporary Nigeria hinge on prosperity, healing and deliverance etc. Although, prosperity is necessary to live a successful life, but when it is been preached to the detriment of holiness, it becomes an issue of concern. If much emphasis is placed on prosperity, deliverance, signs and wonders, most Christians could simply forget about holiness and its importance in Christianity and it could be used to explain why some brethren do everything possible to get money, which includes stealing, prostitution, smuggling and still pay tithes and offerings. However, the poor emphasis on holiness could be regarded as one of the strategies of today pentecostal Churches to command large crowds. Any attempt to enforce holiness could prompt members to relocate to other Churches that provide comfort zone for unrighteous living (living the way they like).

Moreover, **preponderance of pastors who are not trained nor see pastoral work as a calling is increasing at an alarming dimension**. The high level of unemployment in Nigeria seems to have forced many people to priesthood. Such pastors are in ministries

because they were once jobless and needed any lucrative profession to earn a living. Since it has been realized that priesthood attracts money, they do everything possible to get power in order to perform signs and wonders. A pastor, who sees vision and predicts future events always enjoy the patronage of many Nigerians, More often than not; activities of such pastors are enmeshed in immorality and fake doctrines [54]. For instance, Kilishi et al, [53] revealed a pastor who claims to be obeying prophetic/spiritual injunction to do the will of God, which is to impregnate any one chosen and revealed by the Holy Spirit, irrespective of whether the woman is married or not. When the woman delivers the baby, the child remains in the ministry with the mother for life. Activities of these pastors undermined the word of God, and members of such Churches are not expected to behave differently.

The failure of many pastors to punish or correct erring members for wrongdoing. Most Pentecostal Churches today believe so much in attendance and it seems to be preventing their pastors from rebuking immorality. It is a common phenomenon that Churches that enforce discipline in all ramifications are no longer in the good book of Nigerians. They prefer Churches that provide 'comfort zone' for immorality. Probably, this could be used to explain why the spiritual heads of many Pentecostal ministries use to condone moral decadence of the elite class instead of rebuking them. It is a duty of every man of God to reprove and to correct erring members as evident in (1 King 21: 20; 1 King 21:21). If corrupt elites were not being treated like the way King Saul treated Agag in (1 Samuel 15: 8-9) probably, moral decadence might not be on the increase in Nigeria.

In the past, ancestors of Africans used to punish members of the society for wrongdoing and also reward them for their good deeds Nigeria News [55] which must have contributed significantly to moral decency among Africans prior colonialism.

In recent times, anybody who is trying to instill discipline is stigmatized wicked while other evil practices have been accepted as the normal way of life and it is on this note that *restitution* seems not to be reckoned with in the present day Christianity.

Restitution is a way of correcting ones bad behaviours, which includes returning back what was stolen or repairing what one damaged in the past [55]. This is a sign of a changed person and a crucial step for every believer. It is a picture of a clear conscience and good testimony as illustrated in (Luke 19:8). In most Pentecostal Churches, restitution is no longer relevant, as it does not appear in their teaching outlines. No wonder, many Christians today do not know the standard of God and that is why those who are still addicted to the dictate of the Bible are called old

schools while those who are trying to replace the standard with the modern way of life are called modern Christians.

Apart from the points raised above, **human beings are very difficult to correct and to control**. It takes prayers and the intervention of the Holy Spirit to change persons from evil ways of life to good in the Church and in the secular world. It is the Holy Spirit that has the power to convict any sinner through the prayers of the saints but the prayer of the saint for the ungodly is seem to be ineffective like in the recent past. Conviction goes with people realizing their evil ways and it leads them to confess their sins and also ask for forgiveness, which guarantee salvation that eventually leads to their establishment by the Holy Ghost. Having been established in Christ Jesus, the lust of the flesh is suppressed to the barest minimum and positive change will begin to manifest in the life of such a Christian. This process is not evident in the present time like the early years of Christian experience. People claim they have surrendered their lives to Jesus without any change of lifestyle. Therefore, it is one thing to preach the correct message; it is another thing for people to follow the preaching and retain the teaching for good conducts or interaction among mankind. This could be used to exonerate most pastors from the blame of moral decadence prevailing in many pentecostal Churches across Nigeria.

Besides, in Christianity, everyone will stand before God for judgment. Although, pastors could be role models, but the standard of God is evident and it has no respect for excuses. If pastors are no longer preaching on holiness, brethren are expected to use the Bible as their standard so as to ensure a godly living as much as possible. But the reverse is the case because the standard of God is not convenient for mankind and anything that is not convenient for humanity is not embraced and followed to letters by them. Hence, living a descent life could be practically impossible for persons who are not addicted to the Holy Spirit. This makes people to be attending Church programmes, listening to massages, etc. and still be living in moral decadence which is evident in all denominations.

Lastly, proliferation of moral decadence in Pentecostal Churches today goes to confirm the prediction of Paul the apostle (2 Timothy 2: 7), which says in the last days (present time), sins shall abound and the love of many people for God will be on the negative side.

In spite of the above, some people are still worshipping God in truth and in spirit. Although such persons could be few in number, it confirms scripture which says narrow is the way that leads to eternity and very few people are found there.

However, this paper does not rule out the possibility of Nigerians witnessing immense Church growth in the midst of more moral decadence, even with the evidence of more complex signs and wonders till rapture. This could be attributed to the fact that the issue of religion is beyond human understanding.

Proliferation of Pentecostal Churches Without moral Decency: Implications

Implications of the proliferation of churches without moral decency could be discussed in the following ways:

Religious Implication

The Bible says if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. This shows that holiness as a life style determines answers to prayers. Therefore, proliferation of Churches without holiness could hinder prayers and if prayers are hindered, there is tendency for escalation of wickedness and suffering of the people. This could badly affect the standing of persons concerned with God and also cause them to backslide from Christian race.

Apart from the above, the Bible says without holiness no one can see the Lord. This means the negative effect of the escalation of pentecostal Churches without moral decency could prevent many Christians from entering the kingdom of God, which is an indication of eternal destruction. This gives an understanding that church attendance is not equal to quality Christian life that guarantees eternity; it is living a godly life that does.

Economic Implication

The proliferation of Churches and moral decadence could also have economic effects. Although, Church growth has been identified as correlate of national development in western societies Blum and Dudley [56] cited in Gehman [57], but it has been argued otherwise in Nigeria. Mfumbusa [1] in particular wondered if Church growth and the rise in corruption are coterminous. The more Churches are spreading the higher Nigeria is being rated as one of the most corrupt nations [12].

This has a negative impact on the economic development of the country in the sense that business transaction that contributes significantly to economic development depends on trust and moral integrity. Where trust and integrity is lacking, the rate of investment could be very low. The high rate of criminal activities has become of a strong disincentive to business investment Eelke [58] as it could prevent foreign investors from investing in Nigeria and it has a great setback on industrialization and employment.

This corroborates Weber [59] who believes that corruption impedes national development. In a

situation where there are 40 criminals for every 100 Nigerians UN (1994) cited by Ighomereho and Akpor-Robaro [60], it could be very difficult to experience national development. Development is never achieved in a chaotic environment, which characterizes the Nigerian state Ejiofor [61]. It is peace and tranquility that ensure investment that leads to national development.

Sociological Implication

Religion is a social phenomenon that ought to affect people's life positively [62]. In the light of the recent development in contemporary Nigeria, however, it has also affected many people negatively. Apart from the problems emanating from religion rivalry, as evident in the literature, the proliferation of Churches without moral decency seems to have contributed to the escalation of diverse social ills in the country. These include:

- (i) Family problems relating to fornication, abortion, adultery, divorce Wikipedia [63], separation, 'baby mama' Aluko, (2016), teenage mothers, prostitution
- (ii) Organizational issues bordering on sexual harassment, enslavement of workers, denial of entitlements, corruption of different kinds, injustice etc
- (iii) Leadership scrimmage or tussle Wonsub [64], kidnapping, assassination, greed, fighting, witch hunting, hatred, discrimination
- (iv) Societal perception of good as evil and evil as good, high level of indiscipline,

When the above social problems are unusually high in a given society, it means many people in that society no longer have the fear of the Lord, which should have prompted them to embrace moral integrity.

Suggestion for Further Studies

Empirical studies on this subject are needed in order to accurately discover the position of Church growth and the escalation of moral decadence in Nigeria.

Concluding Remarks and Suggestions

In conclusion, it is generally assumed that the proliferation of Churches, mostly pentecostal ministries, ought to have produced attitudinal change in the life of many Christians. Also, based on the observed escalation of Churches in Nigeria, it is expected that attitudinal change of Christians would have been able to influence ungodly people who perpetrate evil to the Christian faith and equally result in the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria but the reverse seems to have been the case.

The situation of Christian religion in contemporary Nigeria therefore goes to show that attendance in church does not ensure moral integrity. Thus, being rated as the most religious nation may not have a meaningful impact in moral integrity of the people.

The foregoing could be attributed to the fact that a change in behaviour or attitude which should have prompted Christians to avoid immorality is yet to be fully experienced by many Christians.

Therefore, the leadership of some pentecostal Churches should not use signs and wonders occurring in their ministries to justify their right track with God. This is because the way of God cannot be explained by man. He gives rains, light, bread and butter to everybody irrespective of religious background.

It is very possible for signs and wonders to continue in the midst of the present moral decadence till rapture. Probably, God might be considering the faithful ones in the faith or extending His mercy to Nigerians (the mercy of God endures forever).

However, it is suggested that pentecostal Churches should strike a balance between the message of prosperity and holiness.

Similarly, The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and especially the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) should certify pastors before they can practice. This is the wake of the reality that so many pastors are not called by God and are not fit to go by the name.

Moreover, Christians of all folds, pentecostal or orthodox should be encouraged to sanction erring members in love.

Lastly, there should be a renewed emphasis on restitution.

The above will not be achieved at once, but a starting point should be the awareness of pentecostal Churches to recognize the need for them.

Leaders of each denomination should realize that they are watchmen over their congregations and it is necessary to give their sheep warning concerning missing the rapture. This may prompt members to be living a godly life.

Thirdly, it would be a good idea to put up a strong structure for screening members before their ordination into priesthood. If those who are called directly by God are left in the profession, the ethic of priesthood could be preserved to some extent. Thus,

moral decadence among pastors could be reduced to the barest minimum.

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