VOL. 03 NO. 6,
FEBRUARY, 2024
E-ISSN 3027-1401
P-ISSN 3026-9148



African Scholar Publications & Research International
www.africanscholarpub.com

Journal of Arts and Sociological Research (JASR)

TWENTY FIRST (21ST) CENTURY "MEN OF GOD" AND THEIR IMPACT ON MORAL EDUCATION, CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

***Bullama Samuel Bulus PhD & **Dr. Yohanna Shaibu Mamza**
*Department of Religion and Philosophy, Karl Kumm University, Vom-Jos.
**Department of Arts Education, Religious Education Unit, Faculty of Education, University of Jos, Nigeria.
bulamasamuel@gmail.com

Abstract

Twenty first (21st) Century is a global age of science and technology that foster development of all kind. Theologically, the age is known as postmodern period that characterized with human freedom, liberalism and existentialistic philosophy. This paper delves into the influence of this age on the Church both positive and negative. The Church administrators are moral examples that are usually called "MEN OF GOD" whom mostly are highly influenced by this culture. The influence affects the Pastoral training, the output theology, the teachings and Christian life styles. The objective of the paper was to trace the accusations labeled against the Pastors in this century and how their actions and inactions affect the young men and women morally and spiritually. The method adopted for the research was the use of secondary data from reputable newspapers, journals and books. The findings revealed a tremendous problem associated with the non-trained Pastors in the age, immoral acts by some of these Pastors includes: fraud, sexual scandals, rape, deceit and misleading, false teachings to young men and women especially on social media and televisions. The impact of such behaviors by these Pastors who are celebrated by the public has heinous effects on society and the national development. The integrity of Christianity as a Religion is daily tarnishing. Five recommendation were stated which include government to check some activities of some founders accused of human sacrifice, Pastors to agree to have formal theological training and stop greediness and also Christian young men and women should be careful in choosing their pastors and mentors.

Keywords: 21st Century, Men of God, Impact, Moral Education, Integrity, National Development.

INTRODUCTION

Twenty first (21st) Centuries is a century of global village and high development in science and technology. Such developments foster easy learning, trade, transportation, healthcare and communication. Theologically, the age is termed as the period of post modernism, which characterized with liberalism, existentialism, and freedom agitation. This period also witnessed various cadres of "Men of God" who have through their influential role as religious leaders significantly impacted moral education, Christian integrity and national development. The Church is receiving both the negative and positive influences of the change that affects its Doctrinal and moral standard. These Pastors whom are called by their followers "Men of God" seems to be highly influenced by the wind of this change which affects their Biblical Exegesis, moral teachings and quest for power and riches.

Young men and women especially those who are studying Religious Studies and Religious Education are confused on what to believe. The life styles and the teachings of such "men of God" on televisions and social media are contradicting the Biblical standards and formal teachings in the theological institutions, Universities and Colleges of Education that trained Biblical teachers. The church and media are agency of moral Education, most of the 21st century "men of God" have become celebrities that youths immolate, some of their life styles and teachings are very dangerous and are putting Christianity into shame that affects the Church integrity in 21st century. The paper is aiming to investigate and analyze the impact of twenty first (21st) "Men of God" using first hand media reports and draw conclusions on its implication on national development.

DEFINITION ON KEY CONCEPTS

Men of God

"Men of God" is a term commonly used to refer to male religious leaders who are perceived as having a close or exemplary relationship with the divine, and are often recognized as spiritual guides within their respective religious communities. The term is often used within a Christian cycle but similar terms may exit in in other religious traditions well. In the Biblical term, it is a title of respect applied to Prophets and beloved Religious leaders. The term appears 78 times in 72 versus of the Bible, it was

applied to 13 individuals mostly in the Old Testament few in the New Testament (Balever, 2010).

Twenty First (21st) Centuries.

21st century is the current century of the Anno Domini era in accordance with the Gregorian calendar. It began on 1st January, 2001 and will end 31st December, 2100. It is the first century of the third millennium. It is termed also as an era of freedom and technological advancement, the period of digital world (Webster 2010).

Moral Education

Moral education refers to helping children acquire their virtues and moral habits that can help them individually to have good lives and at the same time became productive, contributing members of their community. It is from a latin word "mos or moris" meaning " a code of and customs and social glue" that defines individuals to live together in social cohesion of a community. Its agencies are: family, school, mass media and Religious institutions (Mamza, 2017).

Integrity

It is a quality of being honest and fair, also firm adherence to code of moral values that are incorruptible (Webster, 2013).

National Development

United Nations defines National development as "growth plus change" Change in turn is social and cultural as well as quantitative. Vaizey also added that "it is the total effects of all citizen forces and addiction to the stock of physical human resources, knowledge and skills (Bawa, 2020).

21ST CENTURY "MEN OF GOD", THEIR THEOLOGICAL TRAINING AND MINISTRY

Most of the 21st century "men of God" who are majority prosperity preachers did not go through formal theological training that are recognized by the government and the body of Seminaries globally. Lack of such training is evident in their teachings and life styles that bring shame to the whole body of Christ. The formal theological and Seminary institutions are generally affiliated to Universities and accredited by the National Universities Commission (NUC). Such institutions run almost the same Curriculum and Syllables with government Institutions that produce Religious teachers. The NUC check what kind of Education these Seminaries gave to their students and therefore, all their product have almost the same doctrinal and Religious

Education that is needed in Nigerian society. In order to justify the claims, these are some Theological Institutions and Seminaries that are affiliated across the country and their products can be known through their Religious teachings, life styles and integrity: Hopkins and Gaiya (2005) stated that Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN) was established in 1955, affiliated to University of Jos, owned by about 16 major denominations in Northern Nigeria that include: Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN), Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa A Nigeria (EYN), Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria (LCCN), Evangelical Reformed Church of Christ (ERCC), United Methodist Church of Nigeria (UMCN), United Reformed Church in Nigeria (NKST), United Church of Christ in Nigeria (HEKAN), Christ Reformed Church in Nigeria (CRCN), Evangelical Church of Christ in Nigeria (ECCN), Nigerian Reformed Church (NRC), Mambila Baptist Convention, Presbyterian Church, Anglican Communion. All these Churches also have their denominational theological institutions that are all affiliated to different Universities, eg; NKST Seminary affiliated to University of Calabar, EYN Seminary, COCIN Seminary, CRCN Seminary, ERCC Seminary, LCCN Seminary and others are affiliated to University of Jos. Also Anglican theological college Wusasa is affiliated to A.B.U Zaria.

Jos ECWA theological Seminary and Kagoro Seminary are both belonging to ECWA and are also affiliated to University of Jos. St. Augustine Major Seminary of the Roman Catholic Church and Catholic Institute of west Africa (CIWA) are affiliated to university of Jos and University of Calabar respectively. Assemblies of God Church Bible College Uyo are affiliated to University of Uyo. Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary Ogbomosho was established in 1896 and affiliated to University of Ibadan. Salvation College for Theological Studies Ngurore , Adamawa State is a private Seminary but affiliated to university of Jos.

There are many of such affiliated Theological and Seminary Colleges in Nigeria. The criteria for admission into Seminaries and Theological Colleges are strict and difficult. The process for admission is the same O-level requirement to University by JAMB and also a recommendation and commitment for sponsorship are required from the local Church and National body. The school fees are normally high and mostly paid by the Churches to curtail the candidate from breaking away from the main Church and from his own Church and doctrine later. Also the Church pays school fees to check the candidate morality.

Some 21st century Pastors ignore such processes and institutions, because of the cost of school fees, time of training, moral and spiritual accountability and subjecting self under constituted organized church authority. They follow shortcut by having few months training under an individual mentor by learning charisma and pulpit gesture. They give reasons that there is no Bible School in the Bible. They give themselves all

types of title like General Overseer worldwide, Apostle, and Bishop and award themselves Degrees up to Doctorate (Galem, 2020).

Such non training has implication if government ordered for the recruitment for Christian Knowledge teachers either in Primary or Secondary School or as chaplain into Military Services; they don't have University Certificates and National Youth Service Corps Certificate or exemptions. This creates confusion in Christian Association in Nigeria (CAN). Sometimes they maneuver to get the teaching job but cannot deliver (CAN, 2005).

The call for Pastoral Ministry both in preaching and teaching is Biblical and must be confirmed by organized Local Church. In Acts 13:1-13 vs 3 specifically said"

While they were serving the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them". The first Missionaries in the Church were commissioned by the organized Church. The Bible tells us that in Old Testament, there was a School for the Prophet (I Sam. 19:18-29). Jesus trained His Disciples in three (3) years (John 13:1-17), and Apostle Paul undergo a strict training for several years before graduating as Rabbi. This is Paul's testimony "I am a Jew born in Tarsus, grew in Jerusalem, I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors" (Acts 22:13) NIV.

The other reason for their refusal of formal theology is to form their personal Churches and ministries for money making ventures, and have a freedom to teach and do anything they want without restriction. They are identified by putting their Pictures and Wives as Logo or Trademark of their Churches. Gatery, (2020) called such Churches family empires where there is no financial and moral accountability. They cook their theological and Doctrinal terminologies and apply logic to their members. Sometimes they even organize jokes (comedy) into worship to attract people especially the young ones. Psalm 1:1 warns against staying in the midst of those that played with the name of God. They do such even on Holy pulpit. Apostle Paul describes them that "their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things" (Phil.3:9) NIV.

Since most of them use television and social media, which is very essential in the twenty first century, they have influenced many Christians and these affected even the Religious educators and theologians. Example of popular teachings that are faulty includes; publicizing and merchandizing miracles and healing, which Jesus and the Apostles did not do such style (Mamza, 2017). Commercializing holy water and anointing oil, it's not Biblical. Anointing oil was for specific functions both in Old Testament and New Testament (James 5:14, Mk. 6:13, Isaiah 61:1, I Sam. 16:13-ff). Taping of Holy Spirit and Blessings from the men of God, every Christian has access to the Holy Spirit and God's Blessings are available for those that obey the word of

God (Rev. 28:1-20, Matt. 5:17). Making Tithes to be legalistic, in New Testament, its giving according to how Holy Spirit led and cheerful. Tithing was silent New Testament, Jesus and Apostles were against forcing people to give (Matt. 27:15, I cor. 16:1-2, Gal. 2:1-, Acts 24:17, I Cor. 8:9, Acts 18:2). The blood of Jesus was not for covering or protection from danger, but to wash our sin and to sanctify. Angels of God protects believers. (I John1:17, Heb. 9:13-14, John 13) protection (Exo. 23:20, Psalm 91:11, Lk. 4:10, Matt. 18:10, Heb. 1:14).

Their teachings on modesty was very bad, they said God wants our heart not the dressing. Male and female young ones find such Churches conducive and consider those that are warning them uncivilized and unlearned. it is disheartening on social media where one Pastor was demonstrating sexual position on his female member and the congregation is cheering him. He called it "Holy Doggy Style" (the Heraid, 2020). Such video is very dangerous to young educators and ashamed to the Church and its integrity.

Theology of Prosperity and Its Implication on National Development.

The 21st century "Men of God" emphasize prosperity part of the gospel without emphasizing the condition attached to such blessings. The key verse they use is Deuteronomy 28;13, which says "the lord will make the head and not a tail, If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that I give you this day" NIV. Their normal term is "claim it!". Theologically, the text is called "Deuteronomic theology". The pre-requisite for Israel's blessing in the text is the obedience to the commandment of Yahweh. The word "if" in the text is a condition. The prosperity preachers ignore the "if" and assure their listeners riches and health without suffering. It is a cheap gospel that is dangerous to National development. It discourages young men and women from work to earn their living. They believe in cheap riches. This also affects educational development. Some WAEC and NECO centers are called "miracle centers" who rely on examination malpractice. Some preachers are preaching fake gospel to students that if they believe, God will not allow them to fail exams. In tertiary institutions, they will be busy and chocked with Church activities, refusing to study but expect God to perform miracle by passing them. One preacher said he wrote rubbish in exams, the examiner put "??" two question marks on his answer sheet, the secretary recorded it as "77" and he got "A" because of his prayers. What a dangerous preaching.

Femi Adeleye in his book titled "preachers of different Gospel (2011) call such preachers as "the men that use God" instead of "the men that God uses". The cross of Jesus is a stumbling block to their theology since they denied suffering to be part of Christian's experience. Adeleye (2011) added that their popular terminologies are

"name it and claim it, just have faith, give and you will get". The apostolic and early Church era celebrated virtue and suffering for Christ (I pet. 3:17). Bowler, (2016) said the prosperity preachers believe that faithful Christians will not suffer deadly diseases and poverty. The Neo-Pentecostal teaching on prosperity leads other public servants and politicians into stealing public money and ignores dignity of labor. To justify the claim, Banjo,(2020) reported that a female civil servant at level 14 in Abuja paid sixty (60) million tithes to one Pentecostal church and got arrested by EFCC. The thieve politicians and civil servants are conducive in such Churches. The moral implications are very dangerous to young men and women who take materialism as means of everything. This also gives room to celebrate corruption in the Church.

Impact of 21st Century "Men of God's" Negative Life Style on Moral Education

The Pastors and their families are called to be examples to the general public. The Church is one of the greatest agency of moral Education. Mass media, either Audio, Visual and print have become the major means of Evangelism and moral education as well. Apostle Paul admonished young Pastor Timothy to be an example for all believers in speech, love and general conduct (1Tim. 4:12). He challenged the Religious people in Romans 2:21-25 for not doing what they teach and preach. Because of such, Paul said non-believers insult the God of believers. This is exactly what is happening to the Church today. It is worrisome for the believers to see the materialistic lifestyles of the Pastors and their wives and children. Corruption and extortion is very high in the Church especially the new generation Churches. Pastors can go to extra miles to get money for competition, celebration and pride. There is power tussle in Church in case of succession because family empire Churches most be inherited by wives or children after the death of the General Overseer and founder (Galem, 2020).

The Church is failing in setting a standard to young men and women in modesty and contentment. Female members dressed to Church almost naked, so also some Pastor's wives. They have become celebrities and people follow them. Because of these, parents couldn't control their children as the head of their spirituality approves it. Schools and higher institutions fail victim. The level of sexual scandals among the Pastors and their female members are becoming higher every day. The Secondary School teachers and high Institution Lecturers are not safe from the loose and hyper sexual libido of the young girls who were not controlled at home and the Church. Almost all institutions, Churches, public sectors and even politics are sinking deep into sexual immorality. If the men of God have fail who will stand? (Moura, 2015). There are some reports and evidences of 21st century "men of God" messing up and the

integrity of the Church is losing on the face of the world because of their behaviors as analyzed below.

Financial Crimes and Fraudulent Activities

Many Pastors have been accused on National Papers and some were even arraigned by Economic and Financial Crime Commissions (EFCC) and Police for financial crime related offences. Echewodo in Vanguard newspaper on 25th November, 2019 reported that EFCC arraigned one Pentecostal Pastor for stealing 4.5 million Naira. In the same vein, Premium Times of 2nd April, 2020 reported that EFCC arrested a Pastor over an alleged contract scam of 1.8 Billion. The Pastor duped his rich member that he won a contract of almost 2 Billion, so he is inviting the man to co-finance the project. The man gave him 1.3 million but at last he did not pay the money back so EFCC have to intervene by arraigning the pastor.

Human Trafficking and Baby Factory

Human trafficking and baby factory are other vices that the new generation pastors are accused of, Adelakun (2016) reported in Punch Newspaper that Nigeria police raided a baby factory more than ten in Abia: Akwa-Ibom, Delta, Ogun and Anambra. The reporter added that the churches are willfully participating in baby harvesting and called it dramatic miracle. Such churches sold the children to Barren women who will claim that they have delivered the children miraculously and dedicate the children in the same churches.

Rape

Rape is one of the serious crimes that the 21st century pastors commit. The vanguard newspaper of the march, 2020 reported that a United Kingdom based Nigerian Pastor raped his members about 88 times and was jailed to 34years. The judge said the pastor claimed that God instructed him to do this which he called 'Holy Baths' He was supported by his wife who was also jailed for 11 years imprisonment. There are many of such shameful cases in the church these days.

Human Sacrifice and Murder

Human sacrifice and murder is the worse accusation of crimes humanly done by some 21st century pastors. They do this to get powers for fake miracles and fame. Okon (2017) reported to Daily post that federal Government must checkmate the activities of some churches before establishment. He accused the so called pastors for human sacrifice in order to get power and miracles. He gave evidence that a pastor was arrested in Calabar for killing an innocent child and buried the corpse in his church.

He advised that many of the churches owned by some questionable founders shall be closed down. In the same vien, Punch Newspaper of 16th August, 2017 reported that police in Ogun State arrested three pastor of white garment church in Ado-odo town in Ota Local Government. The police arrested a top children kidnapper who later confessed that a pastor is his customer. The police arrested the pastor and two other associates after digging a floor of their church, human parts were found. The accused pastors said they buried pigs alive in the church that the parts are not human.

Conclusion

After seeing the starting point of the 21st century Pastors rejecting training in formal theological and religious institutions, their theologies and life styles influence young learners through television and social media as the youths need freedom and cheap money. We have evaluated the reports of their criminal activities from national papers as original source to justify the claim against their bad actions. Those crimes mentioned above have painted the image of the church black. The church is ridiculed by the non-Christians. Pastors and religious educators are not trusted again. People hide behind the trust and title 'men of God' to do all kinds of crime. Young men and women have lost their vigor and the dignity of labour but rather depend on false promises and fake prophecies. Some ladies refuse to marry expecting rich husbands, prophesied families and marriages are broken, corruption are encouraged that which have bad implications for economy and national development of this Country.

Recommendations

Having investigated and analyzed the impact of the 21st century men of God on Education and National Development. These recommendations are suggested in order to reduce the problem.

i. To the Nigerian Government, all the churches should register with cooperate affairs using their theological certificate to establish churches. This is important to check and trace the evil people that hide behind religion.
ii. The local governments should only employ quality religious teacher to teach religious education to the primary and secondary schools.
iii. The Pastors are supposed to underwent Theological Education or Religious Education in Standards Institutions. They should be aware that their bad behaviors will be dealt with here on earth and later in Heaven.
iv. The Christian members especially students in Religious Studies should know the type of people to listen attend their churches and read their materials.

v. Nigerian Police should trace such fake preachers and teachers that spoil the image of Christianity and publically prosecute them to serve as a lesson to others.

Reference

Adekoya, O. (2005). Religious Background in Churches in Fellowship the story of TEKAN. Edited by Mark Hopkins and Musa Gaiya. Jos: Jos

Adelekan A. (2016). Nigeria Churches and the problems of 'Baby factories' *puchng.com/nigerianchurchesproblem*. Retrieved 2/4/2020.

Adeleye, B. (2011). *Preachers of Different Gospel America:* Zondervan Publishers.

Bakers Dictionary of Theology (2013). America: Baker Book House Company.

Bawa, B. (2020) National Development: Meaning and problems. www.Yourarticlelibrary.com> society. Retrieved 4/4/2020

Banjo T. (2019). EFCC Arrest Abuja Civil Servant who paid #60million tithe to a church. www.NigeriaMonitor.com Retrieved 1/4/2020

Bowler, K. (2016) Death, the prosperity Gospel and Me. https://www/mytimes.com>sunday. Retrieved 1/4/2020

Christian Association of Nigeria (2005). *Denmark Mayhem*. Maiduguri: CAN Publishers

Echewodo, J. (2019) Pastor in Living Faith Church dragged to court for allegedly stealing 90,000 USD (4.5million). *Vanguard news 25/11/2019 5:11pm* Retrieved 2/4/2010

Gatem, F. (2020) problems of leadership succession in the Pentecostal churches in Kenya. https://www.academia.edu>problems. Retrieved 4/4/2020

Mamza, Y. (2020) *History of Wamdeo: The people, culture and Religion.* Jos: Unijos Press Ltd.

……. (2017) *Compendium Guide to the study of Christian Religious Education and Theology*. Kaduna: NAF Publications.

Moura, M. (2015) *Prosperity? Seeking the true Gospel*. Bukuru: Acts Publishers

Okon, O. (2017) Many Churches are into ritual killings. *Daily post, August 28, 2017. Daily posting/2017/08/28/may*. Retrieval 1st April, 2020

Premium Times (2020) Pastor Arrested for Alleged #1.3million Fraud. www.premiumtimesng.com/news> Retrieved 1/4/2020

Punch (2017) Police uncovered human parts in the church, arrested pastor. *Punchng.com/police uncovered-human*. Retrieved 2/4/2020

The Herald (14/10/2019, 2:49pm) Video: Pastor demonstrates best doggy sex style to Church Congregation. www.herald.ng/pastor demostrate. Retrieved 4/4/2020

Vanguard (2020) UK Based Nigerian Pastor raped members 88 times jailed 34 year. www.vanguard.ng.com/2020/03. Retrieved 4/4/2020

Webster, M. (2010). *New Collegiate Dictionary*. Massachussets: G and C Merriam Publishers.