

DANGERS OF PROLIFERATION OF CHURCHES, PRAYER HOUSES AND MINISTRIES IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

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Abstract

The unprecedented and unabated proliferation of churches, prayer houses and ministries in Contemporary Nigeria posed dangers to the Christian faith, which encouraged proliferation of fake miracles tycoons and high exploitation of the congregation. It also encourages laziness and begging culture among Christ' faithful which have remained a nagging concern today. The paper adopted historico- critical, descriptive, expository and analytic methods of research . Data were collected from participant observation and consultation of books. The paper discovered that, massive poverty, unemployment, lack of provision of basic human infrastructures by Government and meaningful individuals and insatiable also human desire to acquire more material things are responsible for the proliferation of churches, prayer houses and ministries, which have also contributed in crises of faith and rivalry among Christian sects in contemporary Nigeria today. The paper recommends that, Christians should be cautious in order not to fall preys to fake churches, prayer houses and ministries whose authenticity of power, signs and miracles, prophecies displays are fake and deceptive. Government and meaningful individuals should make provision of basic amenities like good roads, electricity, clinics or hospitals, schools, employment or job opportunities, skill acquisition and poverty alleviation programmes in order to curtail unabated rise of churches, prayer houses, ministries , where people are exploited and denominational rivalry and fake ministers, prophets, deacons, evangelists and bishops prevailed.

Keywords: churches ,danger, prayer houses , ministries and Nigeria

Introduction

Proliferation of churches, prayer houses and ministries are indeed the fastest growing enterprise in 21st Century Nigeria, which remained worrisome and need to be curtailed in order to avoid the dangers of destroying the Christian faith and exploiting the people by these pastors, founders, overseers, bishops or so called men of God. Sad reiterate also that, the current and prolonged economic crises in the country has left many youths visionless with a bleak future, and which prompts people to be desperate in order to get rich (Koko and Jamahh 71). However, the rise of churches, prayer house and ministries in Nigeria are really worrisome and alarming where they have become business ventures for material and financial aggrandizement today. Man is the only creature on earth that willed for its own sake, and for whom God has a plan, that is, a share in eternal salvation (Centesimus Annus 53). Hence, his search for material propensity should be genuine but it

is been abused today by miracle and sign charlatans.

Thus, Nigerian society is a unit with so many cultures which characterized every aspect of life. The church, too shares in these complexities which are signs men abused for their selfish aggrandizement (Onaiyekan 23). Proliferation of churches, prayer houses and ministries are considered by their founders as mark of progress in carrying out the divine mandate which Jesus gave “go out in the world and proclaim the goodness”. It is a well known fact to today that, these churches, prayer houses and ministries sprout up due to the demands to acquire fame, riches, prosperity and solutions from miracle crusade, instant healing, and promises for better fortunes for the people instigate the rise of these churches, prayer houses and ministries in contemporary Nigeria. Hence, these men of God resort to take advantage of the gullibility of the people by devising means and using the name of God to exploit in those so called churches, prayer houses and ministries.

So many funny things further happened in these churches, prayer houses and ministries which include un-chaste rituals, rapes, initiation into cultism, crises of faith and loss of psychological composure and wealth. These churches, prayer houses and ministries take advantage of the level of people suffering from high level of poverty, diseases, lack of job opportunities, ignorance, impoverished spirituality, and lack of provision of basic amenities amongst others to proliferate and exploit them. Furthermore, there are quest for power, rival competition, worldly influence and search for recognition are some of the remote causes of proliferation of these churches, prayer houses and ministries which have become business religious empires today. Thus, their effects include lack of sound faith, crises of faith, and lack of salvific existence as the case may be (National Catechetical Week 7).

There is also lack of deeper understanding of the scripture which has also hatched many effects in these churches, prayer houses and ministries. The divine mandate of Christ has also been abused, twisted to defraud people in the name of preaching the Gospel, sowing seeds and payment of tithes for promotion, success in business and number yield of crops and animals. It is against this syndrome that this paper is conceived to x-ray the remote causes of proliferation of churches, prayer houses and ministries in contemporary Nigeria.

Nature of the Church

The first church was the early Christian community which constitutes an organized structure and responsibility. They share things in common, pray together, eat together, help one another, advice one another. The word (Ekklesia) in the New Testament refers to the church in its much manifestation. It can refer to churches meeting in homes (1st Cori. 16:19; Acts 8:1; 20:17) corporately with churches in as specific Roman province (Acts 9:31). However the most common use of the term can mean either the Universal or Local Church (National Catechetical Week 19). Following in Jesus' footsteps, Christ faithful continued the mission assigned to them to proclaim the Good news to the poor. For example, in Jerusalem, the early Church stressed attention to the outcast of the society (Nebechuckwu271). Here, the

church is identical with the local churches and the denominations we have. It is not entirely visible to human beings and refers to the total of all believers from all places and all times (Catechetical Week Programme 19).

The Universal Church

The universal church here is referred to the unity of believers every where both living and death (Eph. 1:22; 3:20-22; 5:27). Here, the church is identical to the local churches and the denominations we have. It is not entirely visible to human beings and refers to the total of all believers from all places and all times (19). The growing and living signs of the various denominations existing in the world leaves no doubt to us to say that the church is not a universal phenomenon comprising the unity of of believers in the world despite proliferation of so many Christian denominations, we are are different branches but remain one body of the universal church.

The Local Church

The local church bears the sign of a Christian presence in the world and mankind; a group of faithful people around a leader (Furioli 173). Thus, the Local Church is concern primarily with the gathering of community of Gods' people who are covenanted together to worship the triune God, love one another, and witnesses to the word (Acts 14:23; 16:5). Even the Bible refers the Church as Local because it comprised of believers who are committed to Christ and each other, working to glory and serve God. This summed up why Paul planted churches, appoint leaders for them, sends delegate to them, and write letters to them.

The Church as Body of Christ

Here the church is seen as the body of Christ. Thus, what is presented in the New Testament is that which is joined to Christ in living union. This union is affected by the baptism of the spirit as stated in 1st Cor. 12:13 "for by one spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jew or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit". The body of Christ is a union of life which the church is his body. The body of Christ is divine, holy and Christians share in the spiritual benefits.

The Foundation of the Church

The people of God are first and foremost a people called into existence by God; Divine initiative is the foundation for the people of God. God is the sole person who calls people to Himself. The church is the people called by God, this people is to worship God, and live together in a community by norms of righteousness and steadfast love that characterized the nature of calling by God as outlined in the Torah. Hence, Israel's calling out is an ever that holistically defines the nature of the people of God as 'I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage (Exodus 20:2).

Jesus Messianic Renewal Figure

Jesus came preaching the kingdom of God. His proclamation of the kingdom of God announces that God is present to renew His people. The Gospel of Mark reiterates that all allegiances, family, homes land and a people called into existence must be surrendered (Mark 10:29-30). Jesus messianic renewal figure was to ensure that the kingdom of heaven belongs to all, and people no matter their backgrounds must renew and surrender themselves in order to obtain salvation. Jesus did not come only for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles. His sole mission was to establish the rule of God in visible form.

Furthermore, the Lord Jesus endowed his community with a structure that will remain until the kingdom is fully achieved. Before all else, there is the choice of the twelve with Peter as head. Representing the twelve tribes of Israel, they are the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem. As Eve was formed from the sleeping Adam's side, so the church was born from the pierced heart of Christ hanging dead on the cross (Catechism of the Catholic Church 765).

Danger (s)

The possibility of something happening that will injure, harm or kill somebody or damages or destroy something (Hornby 8th edition 367).

Proliferation: This is referred to rapid spread in the number of something. It is also considering as a rapid multiplication of part or increased in the number of something (National Catechetical Week 15).

Church

This refers to a building where Christians go to worship (Hornby 8th ed. 250). Etymologically, the term Church hails from the Greek word (House of the master). A kin to the term church is the Greek word, Ecclesia derive from the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Old Testament expression Gahal Yahweh (Schmaus 2).

Prayer-House(s)

This may be seen as any building, shade, and school ground or secluded arenas where people gather to say prayers for various purposes. In another definition, a prayer house is refers to any building where congregation gather for prayers or is any building where prayers are conducted for various people, for different purposes by someone, either male or female or by a group of persons in and on their own times and authority, outside the church will and authorization (National Catechetical Week 17).

Ministries

Ministries come from the ordinary Greek word for saving and attending to upon someone. Strictly speaking, in Christianity, ministry is an office of serves that a person is called by God. To minister means to serve "a minister is someone who serves the people with the gospel. Ministries are therefore, serves, kept within the life of the church, which God gives each individual Christian, for the edification of the church and the kingdom of God (1st Cor. 3:16, Romans 12:4). Further the words minister and ministry translated from the Latin

of the vulgate correspond to Greek diakonos and diakonia. Those two terms do not belong to the religious language of the Septuagint which uses them rarely in a profane sense. However, from the beginning of Acts of the Apostles is therefore envisaged as a ministry diakonia (Acts 17:25) which Matthias is called upon to fill with the eleven others after Judas Iscariot left the company of the twelve Apostles (Leon- Dufour 358-359).

Factors Responsible For the Proliferation of Churches, Prayer Houses and Ministries in Contemporary Nigeria

Below are some of the factors responsible for the proliferation of churches, prayer houses and ministries in contemporary Nigeria:

Socio-Economic Factors

The socio-economic problems of Nigeria, which include poverty and hunger which is the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possession (Kass et al 2), high level of unemployment, insecurity, nepotism ,corruption in various sectors of the country, bad policies, hunger, lack of essential basic amenities like health care, good pipe borne water, network roads and school, violence leading to lost of lives and property among others. Thus, the current and prolonged economic crises in the country has left many youths visionless with bleak future. People are desperate to get rich (Koko and Jamahh71).

It is the responsibility of the Government to tackle the aforementioned problems, but they are left unattended. Hence, people now see God as a paracetamol solution that can easily heal their headache if taken, and they begin to go to these pastors who now use the scripture, and memorize them to the conviction of the congregation into accepting that help would come from the master, who made heaven and earth. These innocent and desperate solution seekers are exploited by so-called pastors or men of God from the various churches, prayer houses and ministries.

Hence, many spiritually unguided centers are springing up daily just to make money using the name of God as surest convincing strategies to win more people. It is sad to say also that, poverty has led many people to exploit their fellow brothers in the name of God. Many churches, prayer houses and ministries are springing up daily in every nook and cranny of Nigeria, and there is high competition with one another in bid to find solutions to people' problems which later results to pay back for service rendered. This phenomenal rise in the quest for money has indeed continued to exploit the gullible Christians.

In recent report from the United Nations Development Program, Nigeria is ranked 71 on its index of National Development, with more than 70 percent of the population in extreme poverty (Kass et al 8). However this clearly shows that socio-economic factors are not well attended to, and rise in churches, prayer houses and ministries are due to poverty, which make those pastors to take advantage of the situation by going into the businesses in order

to survive. Hence, the unjust systems and structures which subject masses of people in a state of poverty and operation, has created a major obstacle to progress of the poor in the world continent today (Nebechuckwu 275).

Cultural Factors

Culture is the sum total of a people's way of life. Furthermore, culture is associated with intellectual works, articulation of action of ethical principles, religions, politics and trade (Dzurgba12). However, the African worldview explains his relation with the physical and spiritual world, which is seen to be interconnected. Anything that happens badly to an African, it is believed to have been caused by witches and wizards, and medicine men are bought immediately to unraveled and offer protective charms or solutions.

Amidst the rising crises man encountered, he is desperately searching for solutions, and some of these pastors acquired demonic powers, which they use to woo people to themselves as problem solvers. However, Christianity today has been reduced as a problem solving institution; people flock to miracle tycoons on displays on television, adverts on pamphlets and radio stations. African keeps searching for a strong man of God to reveal the remote causes of his poverty, lack of promotion, good health, success and progress in all businesses. He also sought for solutions to these problems either visiting fortune tellers and prophets. Thus, scammer emerged as overseers, ministers, prophets, pastors or healers who played over the intelligence of those seeking for solutions. Since it is a general belief in African culture that, anything that causes pains, the people seeks help from medicine men and pastors, who claimed to have powers to destroy evil, restore to normalcy. Thus this give rise in of healing and problem solving churches, prayer ministries and prayer houses to day.

Spiritual Factor

Arrogance, pride and un-Christian ambitions are responsible for the proliferation of churches, prayer houses and ministries in Nigeria today. There are many claims from people that they have received visions, revelations or give or the other to open a church, prayer houses or ministries where they can attend to people's needs at scheduled times. Many fake testimonies are given by these quack pastors who claimed that the Holy Spirit is the one who had send them on such a mission to open churches, prayers houses or ministries(National Catechetical Week24-25).

Hence, there are unwanted and fallacious claims being attributed to the Holy Spirit for being responsible for opening these churches, healing centers, ministries. These founders claimed they are fully charged with the Holy Spirit to open such a place of worship and healing centres. It is pathetic today, the rate of claims of being charged by the Holy Spirit to carry out the mission of evangelism is indeed very sad. Many of these founders as personal business, where people are exploited to give as directed by the Holy Spirit. Further more, since people are easily deluded by the search for spiritual healing, that prompts these pastors to rise to the challenge of offering spiritual food for the nourishment

of the souls. It is melancholic to say that, the Holy Spirit has suffered in the hands of these pastors, ministers and healers who claimed their gifts are from the Holy Spirits but selfishly use it for their self enrichment rather than for the glory of God.

Psychological Factors

Many Christians today are in the real sense of the word are not real Christians but fake ones. Thus, psychological instinct of opening churches, prayer houses and ministries has continued unabated in Nigeria(25). The man of God, minister plays over the psyches of the people by promising them that poverty, human joblessness, bareness, unemployment are not their positions as he declares in the Mighty name of Jesus. People are also made to reply with loud shouts of Amen when the so called man of God says that; poverty, hunger, disease, unemployment, lack of promotion, witches attacks; accidents shall not be their portion in the Jesus' mighty name. Thus, the reply that follows is a big AMEN.

People are persuaded to keep sowing seeds for fruit of the womb, job, good health and for promotion in working places, which these weak gullible Christians are brain washed into believing that they are not expected to suffer since Christ has suffered on their behalf, and they are made to donate whole heartedly for the assurances of prosperity, protection from enemies and blessings made by these pastors. Fallacious statements are responsible for psychologically making people to believe that, woes or misfortunes befalling them are caused by their family members, enemies, witches and wizards. It has been reiterated similarly that, some have refused going to their ancestral homes because the man of God said that, there are witches and wizards awaiting to destroy those persons concerned. Hence, fear of death fans more numbers to troop into these churches, prayer houses and ministries to escape from the aforementioned calamities (25).

Pastoral Factors

Christ founded the Church on Peter the apostle when He said: “you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church” (Mtt. 16:17 – 19). Many pastors, priests, bishops are not pastorally minded when it comes to attending to spiritual needs of their flocks, which are left to suffer spiritually, morally and even financially due to lackadaisical and incompetence of these fake pastors, bishops, overseers or men of God. Hence, Christian faithfuls are instigated to go in search for spiritual needs. Today, a natural reason has contributed in the proliferation of these churches, prayer houses and ministries. Non commitments of these pastors to their flocks necessitate many members to go in search of help from those who can give them, but are later given fake solutions in disguise.

It is lamentable to say that, the demand to preach the Gospel has indeed given birth to so many fake churches, prayer houses and ministries in order to address yearning demands of the mission of preaching the Gospel to the ends of the world in disguise for search for material propensity. Hence, evangelistic zeal cannot be separated from the proliferation of these churches, prayer houses and ministries, which are today been founded by prophets, bishops, reverends to address various intentions which are fake in deed(25).

Dangers of Proliferation of Churches, Prayer Houses and Ministries in Contemporary Nigeria

There are dangers associated with proliferation of churches, prayer houses and ministries in contemporary Nigeria which are below examined:

Disunity

The unfortunate situation today is that, anybody can wake up any day and claim to be "ordained or called" by the Holy Spirit in vision or in a sleep to become pastors, man of God (M.O.G) or prophet. Thus new churches, prayer houses and ministries keep flourishing and dividing the unity of Christianity due to distortion in false teachings for material quests. Hence, people see the founders of these churches, prayer houses and ministries as God's messengers who later divide the unity of Christian faith. Sad to reiterate also that, there are rivalry and divisions among these pastors, ministers, bishops and reverends, where the faithful are thrown into total confusion of whom to follow, and at the end, they formed their own churches, prayer houses and ministries on the first, second or third floor of the building as the case may be (Otonko 136). The division caused due to proliferation of these so called churches, prayer houses and ministries are purely subjective division in Christendom today (159). Thus, this has become contrary to the injunction of Christ in (Jh 17:11) that the church be "one" which is seen bearing hall marks of multiplication of rival churches, prayers houses and even ministries today.

There is also serious abuse of spiritual gifts in Christendom today due to proliferation of churches, prayer houses and ministries. Spiritual gifts, which are supposed to be used for the growth of the kingdom of God, but reverse is the case today, where they are used to exploit feeble minded Christians by these fake and spiritual charlatans called men of God or overseers. Hence, spiritual gifts strengthens the fellowship of believers in the church, as God wills that the Church be one (John 17:11) and that there may be no discord in the body, but that all members may have the same care for one another. Due to pride, these so called pastors or men of God have broken this long desired prayer of unity as ordained by Jesus (Otonko 135). It is regretting to say also that, the attitudes of these so called men of God today has contributed immensely in the abuse of spiritual gifts leading to proliferation of quack churches, prayer houses and ministries as personal belongings rather than genuine belongings for the proclamation of to God's kingdom here on earth (National Catechetical Week 25).

Loss of Genuine Faith Experience and Sense of Holiness

There has been incessant rise in the number of faithful who loss genuine faith experience and sense of holiness due to dangers being posed by proliferation of these churches, prayer houses and ministries, which gave a Fundamentalist interpretation of Biblical passages, which are unhealthy for Christian consumption. Crises of faith is also deepened by these so called men of God, who succeed in distorting the authenticity of "Biblical Texts" to suit their erroneous interpretations for worldly aggrandizement. Furthermore, these so

called men of God make material prosperity identical with being a true and faithful Christian especially through paying heavy tithes and mandatory sowing of seeds with assurance their followers will get double prosperity of what they had given or sowed. Worst still, as it is evidently observed today, many Christians have been deluded or carried away by the quest to acquire quick riches which later vanish in life(National Catechetical Week 25).

By and large, prosperity quest is considered top most priority than search for genuine spiritual food (Otonko 28). Many Christians today have loss sense of genuine faith in Christ, and even holiness due to wrong teachings been propagated by these so called pastors, ministers or prayer warriors which divert total search for authentic maintenance of sense of holiness in God. Hence, mechanical or paracetamol Christian message is preached which at the end succeed in uprooting the people from being attached to Christ as genuine faithful of a Holy God.

Laziness and Poverty

These two words above are being promoted as a result of proliferation of Churches, prayer houses and ministries, where people are convinced that God will grant their needs, and so the people become lazy and would not want to work which at the end they suffer poverty due to their cling on the promises of these so called men of God who assured them of manna from heaven without working for it, and at the end, their needs are not made but become even more poorer than before. It is indeed funny how people are convinced to wait on God to locate them in area of needs” what follows is a big Amen.

The amount of tithes and sowing of seeds done by these gullible Christians today is to secure the breakthrough in their predicaments rather than worked for it. Hence, these people carry the little they have and give it to these men of God with the surest assurances coming from these men of God, who instill fear in the people to believed whatever they pronounced will surely happened. Many Christians today, also fall victims to some of these churches, prayer houses and ministries have become lazy and embarked on begging in the streets, motor parks, and who enter commercial buses with the intention of praying for the people but are seeking for financial assistance for the growth of stomach infrastructures(National Catechetical Week24- 25).

Some of these pastors or men of God also abbreviated as (M.O.G) jumped from one motor park to the other, streets, commercializing the Gospel as the surest way to have food on the table, instead of working for it. It is pathetic to say that, many winnowed Christians are quick into believing these pastors, men of God, or so called anointed ministers who give them assurances that their blessings are double and they should support them and hope in God without waste of time. Hence, many Christians are lazy today and have remained impoverished because of adhering to wrong teachings from these fake pastors. Manipulation and Exploitation of People

It is a rising wave these days to hear these ministers, pastors operating reality sessions with the view of attracting crowd to testify miracles received. Adverts of miracles are showcased on the satellite dishes, You Tube, Face Books, radio stations, Twitter Handles and even on printed bill boards mounted at strategic places showing display of miracles by these miracle tycoons. It is interesting to note also the poverty level of this country has prompts these Pastors and ministers to seek for alternative ways of enriching themselves using miracle. Testimonies are cooked to make people believed they are real while they are fake(26). These are strategies of wooing more members to by these Pastors and ministers in order to increase their financial pose.

These fake pastors, ministers, men of God lie in order to convince the people that there are witches and wizards who are planning to destroy them. These men of God now asked them to submit themselves in order to be healed which they do gullibly with heavy demand of money for the procurement of sacrificial items or organizing fund raising for a crusade against those forces of evil. People are been asked to sell their houses, cars, land by these Pastors, Ministers or overseers, who demand that the money should be brought to them for prayer if not, the prosperity those owners wants to buy may be inhabited or destroyed by the evil spirits. Gullible people are exploited later where they give huge sum of money for the maintenance of men of God for saving them from the woes of agents of darkness.

Demonization of Every Experience

Every day experience is given a demonic coloration or interpretation, where these churches, prayer houses and ministries made huge emphasis on miracles, vision, deliverance from shackles of demons, evil ones, witches or wizards. These ministers, pastors or overseer as they are called take solace in announcing false visions, prophecies, and deceptive revelations to instilled respect and fear among these trailed christians. In fact, everything is connected to devil manipulations. Furthermore, things that are not true due to human negligence are falsely attributed to the devil by these men of God, ministers or prophets.

Demonology, which is the study of demons has gained momentum in these so called proliferated churches, prayer houses and ministries, where people are psychologically infused and confused to believe that, the devil is responsible for them not been promoted, or not having bumper harvest or good health. Every bad experience is attributed to the devil who is been demonized as a phenomenal experience imbedded in these churches, prayer houses and ministries. They can be considered real men of God. This scenario is indeed worrisome today among proliferated churches, prayer houses and ministries where emphasis are made daily on demonizing phenomenal experiences of unreal vision, dreams or spiritual calls(25-26).

Recommendations

Amidst the dangers of proliferation of churches, prayer houses and ministries in contemporary Nigeria, the research proffered the following recommendations:

- i. Christians should guard against unnecessary search for miracles. They should

always have faith, as the basis of their confession or Christian calling in baptism. They should have strong spiritual mind and genuine faith should be put in Christ and not to allow these fake men of God, ministers and general overseers to brainwash them by their false teachings and miracles.

- ii. Intending preachers should desist in causing division in Christendom in the name that they are carrying out the mandate of preaching the Gospel of Christ. They should desist from distorting the authenticity of the Gospel for their selfish aggrandizement. The Bible is the sacred word of God, and must be respected. Hence, the church should not be used as a tool for merchandising for material gains. Parents should also train their children morally, spiritually in the way it pleases God, so as not to fall victims of these quack churches, miseries or prayer houses with the promises of fake assurances of miracles.
- iii. Government should make adequate provision of basic amenities like schools, health care, good roads, electricity and initiate empowerment programmes with the view to curtailing wanton rise of Gospel merchants, who now see it as a means to lively hood by exploiting the masses .
- iv. The rise of churches, prayer houses and ministries should highly be scrutinized by the Government with the aim of salvaging authentic religion from being abused by these so called men of God. Fake miracle tycoons should be made to face the wrath of the law if found wanting.
- v. People should be aware of proliferation of fake churches, prayer houses and ministries by not accepting any fake teachings from these fake pastors. Hence, there is need to remain germane in accepting and professing Christ all the times.
- vi. Christians should be able to sift between mundane preachers and genuine spiritual preachers. There is need also for Christians to guard against being convinced and been engulfed by fake miracles tycoons, whose sources of miracles are questionable. Collectively, it is the duty of all to be able to safeguard the spirituality of the Gospel by not allowing fake men of God to gimmick the psyches of the people because, when proliferation of churches, ministries and are left unchecked, there is going to be abuse of missionary mandate and massive exploitation of the congregation and also crises of faith.

Conclusion

The proliferation of churches, prayer houses and ministries in contemporary Nigeria are indeed dangers to the Christian faith. However, these problems are being triggered by a lot of factors, which have succeeded in destroying the authentic faith of the people of God, thereby increasing high rate of rivalry among pastors, laziness and poverty, frustration and loss of faith in God. There has also been constant diminishing of Christian faith by these so called pastors today which has left many Christians exploited amidst denominational

rivalry among these pastors and their followers. In the fore going, the paper examined the foundation of the Church; it went further and discussed the nature of the church which comprised of; the universal Church, Local Church and the Church as Body of Christ. It further examined factors responsible for the proliferation of these churches, prayer houses and ministries in contemporary Nigeria, and dangers associated with such churches, prayer houses and ministries, and some recommendations made.

The church no matter her relative numerical strength has to make her presence felt in the constant exercise of other mission. Hence the church by her very nature is missionary, and pastors, priests; bishops must not abuse the mandate of sacred proclamation of the Gospel. Christians should resist completely by not looking up to these so called established churches, prayer houses and ministries in search of miracles, protection which are really fake. Christianity is under a siege in the hands of these quacks so called pastors, ministers and bishops, who confused the Christian faithfuls, exploit the masses and even aggravate in continual denominational rivalry need to have a rethink and desist from it. There is need for the people of God to be sensitized of rising number of fake churches, prayer houses and ministries, which constitute danger to profession of authentic Christian faith in a challenging world distorted by crave for signs , miracles and wonders and material aggrandizement. Hence, proliferation of these churches, prayer houses and ministries in contemporary Nigeria is not a sign of spiritual growth but need to be checkmated today in order to avoid abuse the mandate issued out by Christ "go out into world and proclaim the good news.

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