

*The Mystery*

OF THE CROSS

# Revealed

OSCAR AMAECHINA

PAROUSIA

The Mystery of the Cross Revealed by **Oscar Amaechina**

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## F O R E W O R D

I want to appreciate my dear brother and fellow-labourer in God's Vineyard, Oscar Amaechina, for his contribution to the body of Christ globally by making known to us the mystery of the cross as revealed to him. It is a pneumatological blue ocean strategy framework that will bring people to the reality of the Christian faith and restore backsliding Christians. The principles in this book are deviations from normal Christianity to radical Christianity which is what Christ has demanded of anyone who wants to follow Him.

The content of this book is very bitter and yet it is the most saving truth that is suitable for this perverse generation. It is very timely due to the increase in ecclesiastical decadence, church quagmire, and theological rascality. Only the truth is capable of setting us free (John 8:32), yet, this has become very scarce in our Churches today. This book serves as a remedy to lies and deception which have taken over the church of God.

Christianity is beyond finding solutions to our earthly problems, it is a responsibility. It is more than going to church, it is about missionary work. According to Henry Martyn, "The spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions. The nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we become". A Christian who is not involved in missionary work is a fake Christian.

This book will help you to understand the work of Christian missions and guide you in carrying out missionary projects in any area of the 3-D missions.

I sincerely, in love call on pastors to study this book and look at the activities of the early apostles and borrow a leaf that will help us to do God's work in His way. Enough is enough to pastoral shenanigan and fraudulent activities in our Churches, let us accept the truth and shame the devil. I expect destructive criticism of this book but the confidence that I have is that there is nothing any human can do to stop biblical truth no matter the volume of conspiracy and the number of conspirators.

As you read through this most inspiring and truthful book, you will be stirred to look into your Christian Life and the church that you attend and carry out a comprehensive evaluation that will help you make amendments where necessary and move into an advanced level of spirituality in your Christian race.

Make Holy Spirit your senior partner and teacher as you pick this book; you cannot go far in reading this book without the Holy Spirit who is the invisible author of "The Mystery of the Cross Revealed. I picked my cross immediately I went through this book, yours is waiting for you with your name inscribed on it, and I know that you will not finish reading this book before you pick it.

Congratulations!

**Victoria O. Adekoya (Mrs.)  
Founder/President, The Jury Ministry  
Lagos, Nigeria**

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to the Holy Ghost for revealing the Mystery of the Cross to me, for inspiring me, and for moving my hand to write.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I want to passionately appreciate my wife (Josephine) and children (Daniel, David, Maranatha, Christabel and Manasseh) for creating enabling environment for me during the time of revelation and inspiration. In our morning devotions, I shared all that I received with you and we all prayed for God's direction. Today the revelation has crystalized to a life transforming book. Thank you so much for your love, understanding and prayers.

My heart-felt gratitude goes to 'My Anointed Cherubs' in the persons of Mr. and Mrs. Innocent Amaechina whose love, support and covering have helped me to advance tremendously in ministry. They have been there for me in season and out of season. I thank my God every time because of them.

Navy Commodore Hamis Okunbor (rtd) is a man whom God placed to lift my hands up whenever they become weak. The supports of Mr. Danjuma Jiyaba, Mr. Babatope Olomojibi, Mr. and Mrs. Sylvanus Chiedu, Mr. Emeka Nwangwu, Mrs. Vivian Odigure, Mr. Adeola, Mr. Samson Osarumwense, Mr. Chidi Omali and Mr. Abel Otori and other partners have wonderfully encouraged me in the mandate of reaching the unreached. I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. God bless you all.

A very big thank you to brother Tosin for proof reading the manuscript of this book. The indomitable teams of Afri-Mission and Evangelism Network and Antioch Christian Centre are highly appreciated for their dogged support and prayers. Thank you so much, your labour of love will be highly rewarded.

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## P R E F A C E

Oscar has always had a hunger for Biblical truth and had worked very hard searching for answers to some Christian doctrines and questions. On many occasions, he had talked about his doubts about some things done in Churches which he thinks are not in conformity with the Bible. When he resigned from the church, to pursue the mandate of preaching Christ where no one has ever preached Him, his anxiety over the plight of the unreached and why they have been abandoned without Gospel interventions became worrisome.

He always wants to make sure that whatever we do in church ministry and mission ministry is in accordance with the Scriptures and has severely warned me not to copy anything from anywhere until I am sure that it is biblical. One day in August 2015, he climbed the pulpit and announced to the church that the ministry is no longer collecting tithe because it is not a doctrine of Christ, but Judaism law and ordinance. I was shocked to my bone marrow and wondered why my husband could not consult me on a heavy decision like this before publicly pronouncing it. I confronted him after the service and he apologized and told me that he kept it to himself because he knew that I would object to the decision. He had told me countless times that the Christianity of today is a total aberration of the apostolic Christianity and that we must not deviate from what the apostles did.

During the lockdown of COVID-19, between March and June 2020, I noticed strange seclusion from my husband; he separated himself from me and my kids and came out after a while to share with us what the Holy Spirit had revealed to him about the cross and Christian suffering. It was the most glorious moment of his life as he exhibited a very high level of divine wisdom and calm disposition. He informed us that he was compiling all the revelation in a book which he called "The Mystery of the Cross Revealed" This book is not a product of human ingenuity but a manifestation of the work of the Holy Spirit.

In this book, Christianity was redefined and there is a paradigm shift from what we used to know about Christianity to what is the reality of the Christian faith. It is aimed at overhauling the Christian foundational architecture of believers, galvanize them to advance into Christian reality, and wire them to seek the real kingdom of God through pathways to Christian maturity. A revival is expected in the global Christendom through the application of the principles of this book, the sceptics of Christian faith will be convicted and converted by the bitter truths in this book and those who have gone down the road of apostasy will make a 360 degrees turn around.

Oscar's missionary experience and his strategy will be of immense assistance to missionaries who are working among the unreached or Christians who want to venture into conventional and diaspora missions. Many pastors will not be comfortable with the content of this book, but I am convinced that some of them will be redirected by the exposition to do the right thing in their ministries and callings.

I wholeheartedly urge every believer who comes in contact with this book to read in between the lines with utmost concentration while asking the Holy Spirit to help further in revealing the mystery of the cross.

***Josephine Amaechina,  
Senior Pastor, Antioch  
Christian Centre, Abuja,  
Nigeria.***

# INTRODUCTION

When the whole world was locked down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I had an encounter with the Holy Ghost that changed the course of my life; this spiritual experience gave birth to this book. I had a revelation of the mystery of the cross which was authenticated by empirical evidence of what I have gone through in life and confirmed by scriptural insightful revelation.

In this book, the secret that was hidden since the world began is revealed; Biblical bitter truths which many pastors are afraid to tell their members are divulged; the reality of the Christian suffering and mystery of the cross are elucidated; Christianity without the cross is uncovered; advanced Christianity and pathway to spiritual maturity are discovered; the abandoned fundamental project of the Christians is reconsidered; Babylonian kingdom and lies of prosperity preachers are exposed; early Christianity and perverted modern Christianity are juxtaposed; Christ's rejection of the rich flamboyant church and acceptance of the poor suffering church is demystified.

This book is expository, abnormal, unusual, controversial, and offensive to Babylonian pastors, false teachers, false prophets, and their enslaved followers; but it is a guide and inspiration to heavenly bound Christians. Lifelines to good-hearted Christians, who are confused, wounded, and are considering quitting Christianity as an option.

It is a resurgence tool for those who have abandoned their faith because of church abuse. This book gives answers to what has gone wrong with our churches and proffers solutions to many problems in Christianity. It functions as a strengthener, detoxifier, and sanitizer to the many hurt and poisoned hearts. It is also an antidote to false teachings and spiritual manipulations.

There are some biblical concepts that the church has deliberately or inadvertently silenced which are illuminated in this book. I ask that as you read this book, prayerfully tell the Holy Ghost to teach you. I sincerely pray that you have a revelation of the mystery of the cross and have the understanding of the dynamism of Christianity and the nitty-gritty of Christian Suffering Doctrine. An encounter with the cross will no doubt bring a transformation to your life that will galvanize you to shun false Gospels and cherish the old rugged cross; Jesus is waiting to say "Well done my faithful servant, enter into my rest". This book is written to help prepare you for Sonship through the pathway to maturity.

Before you read this book, please purge your conscience from all you have been fed with before now and pick your Bible for a comprehensive fresh study. You will be surprised at the level of exposition you will get into while studying this book. Use the Bible as a standard for biblical and literary criticism of all that is written in this book. It is my earnest desire that this book helps you to understand the truth about Christian faith, your responsibilities as a Christian, and your topmost priority in life.

## **Oscar Amaechina**



**ONE  
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UIU**

# Biblical Bitter Truth **THAT WE WERE NOT TOLD**

A friend of mine invited me for a program in their church - a megachurch in Nigeria. I heard the gospel and stepped out and surrendered my life to Christ. I was told that I have been saved by Jesus and would from that day forward enjoy the dividend of salvation - blessings, good health, good money, good car, enjoyment, connections, trouble and bondage-free life, etc. I rejoiced home and experienced spontaneous sanctification and I craved to serve God with everything within me.

I was surprised that all the rosy promises did not work for me. I sold out my life for the gospel and have preached Christ in 13 communities where no one has ever mentioned His name. Instead of a trouble-free life, my life was filled with sorrow, persecution, frustration, disappointments, deprivation, lack, reproaches, rejection, and pain, but I had a conviction that I was in the right course. I have escaped an assassination attempt, and have stayed in the bush without water and food for days. I have been arrested for preaching Christ where it is forbidden to mention His name. I returned sick after missionary journey. I wondered severally why God would allow me to go through all the troubles even when I was zealously working for Him. I contemplated many times quitting the calling but something stronger than me kept me going. I prayed and fasted but no result and one day I decided to search the Scriptures on the topic "The Suffering Christian."

## The Mystery Revealed

The eyes of my understanding became illuminated as I began to search the scriptures on the doctrine of suffering and I would like to share my discoveries with Christians who are going through one suffering or the other and are wondering why? I came to know that this is another side of Christianity which Pastors are afraid to discuss with their members and unfortunately in this side lays the epicentre, the cross which is the very essence of Christianity.

The doctrine of suffering has been completely ignored in our teachings and Bible study classes. I came to the knowledge that when we give our lives to Christ, we receive two gifts from Christ: These are the gifts of salvation and of suffering, (Philippians 1:29). The second is a gift because it is a privilege to suffer for the sake of Christ (Acts 5:41). Many Christians are not aware of this second gift because no one told them about it. We usually pick the first and leave the second, when we see Christians going through hardships and suffering, we usually attribute it to lack of God's love and favour. It is pertinent to note that no genuine believer is exempted from suffering because it is part of our calling (1 Peter 2:21).

I discovered that Christians are not only saved to experience the power of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus but also to have a realistic and empirical knowledge of His suffering (Philippians 3:10). The church preaches the former but the latter is thrown to the wastebasket. No one told me that there is a fellowship called suffering which I am supposed to partake in by my Christian belief.

Most Christians are not aware of this and when they are enlisted into this fellowship, they grumble, cry, hate, quarrel with God and apportion blames, just like I did. In the course of my research, the Holy Spirit gave me an insightful knowledge that the power of His resurrection is what gives us access to signs and wonders, healings, deliverance, prosperity, etc. Then the fellowship of His suffering is what prepares us to enter the kingdom of God.

The negligence of this fellowship is responsible for the penetration of the world into the church because we are no longer desirous of His kingdom. Paul in Acts 14:22 exhorted new believers to be ready to suffer because that is the only way to get access to the kingdom of God. How I wish someone had told me this before I embarked on my Christian journey, I would have gone very far by now. On a particular day, I was coming back from a missionary trip in one of our remote mission fields and I looked back at the terrain that I passed through, the water that I drank, the pain all over my body, the mosquito bites that I received, risks that I had taken, and the dust that covered me from head to toes. I could not say a word, I just picked my pen and wrote in my diary "The call to Christianity is the call to suffering; any contrary concept is an ideology from the pit of hell". Many Scriptural verses have confirmed my infamous quote.

Unlike Paul, I was not told when I was called by God in a revelation of the night that I was going to suffer. In Acts 9:16 Jesus called Paul and hinted him that he was going to suffer greatly for the sake of the gospel.

If I had known earlier, I would not have wasted my precious time asking God questions and comparing myself with those who have decided to escape the Calvary road by propagating the doctrine of "name it, claim it and have it". This concept is the doctrine of Shamanism and it is from the pit of hell. According to John Piper, "any Christian who runs away from suffering is on his way to hellfire." We need to embrace suffering with joy (James 1:2). If we suffer for Christ, then we will be qualified to reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12).

Now that I know that suffering is an essential part of my Christian life, I avoid it no more, rather, I rejoice in it so that I can enjoy the strength of God when suffering has weakened me (2 Corinthians 12:9). I am also waiting for the revelation of His glory which will come as a result of the present time suffering (Romans 8:18). I also have realized that I am unconsciously becoming obedient through what I have suffered (Hebrew 5:8). I have observed that there are certain things that I used to do before but I do them no more because suffering has humbled me and set me free from the power of sin (1 Peter 4:1). I am also waiting for the crown of life which Christ promised those who endured suffering for His sake (Rev 2: 10 ). I now know that through my suffering, Jesus who is the captain of my salvation will be perfected on the day that He will bring many sons to glory, (Hebrew 2: 10). This knowledge has encouraged me to count suffering for Christ a great honour and privilege.

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, let us be like the Berean Christians who searched the scriptures. Our lack of knowledge of the word of God is responsible for the manipulation experienced in our Churches.

Jesus did not promise us comfort and a problem-free life on earth. He categorically told us that anyone who wants to follow Him must be ready to carry his/her cross (Mathew 16:24). Apostle Paul specifically said that anyone who lives godly in Christ must suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). The negligence of this suffering portion of Christianity has only produced weak, selfish, arrogant, hellbound, deceptive, irresponsible, disobedient, and bread and butter Christians who are only seeking for Jesus because of what they will receive from Him. The Great Commission has been neglected and abandoned because no one wants to suffer to take the gospel to the unreached. The heathen are raging because we have gospel-starved them (Psalm 2:1), even when God has promised to give them and their lands to us as an inheritance (Psalm 2: 8). Insurgency and terrorism have ravaged our country because of our inability to endure suffering and take risks to evangelize in the North.

### **Perversion In Our Churches**

It is obvious that Christ has called believers to be partakers of His Suffering but most Pastors are working against Christ by teaching believers ways to avoid suffering. They will announce from the pulpit that no member of their church is permitted to suffer not minding the biblical bitter truth. God is proving to us that we are mere mortals and can never contend with Him. Every effort to run away from divinely ordained suffering has failed. Every effort by pastors to proffer solutions to the problems of their members has proved abortive. Coronavirus has closed down our worship centres, and all our prayers, prophesies, deliverance and healing powers have proved null and void.

Claims by some Christians that their church is the most powerful church and their pastor is omniscient and omnipotent has been undermined by the presence of a microscopic virus. It is high time we stopped deceiving our followers and start teaching them to be ready because as Christians, tribulation is inevitable (John 16:33).

Unfortunately, a high percentage of worshippers in our various churches have not been able to find solutions to their problems. The poor, the miserable, and the vulnerable that went to church in search of solutions usually leave the church poorer, more miserable, and more vulnerable. Instead of building them up with the word of God to face the challenges of life and the sufferings associated with Christianity, the pastors usually exploit them by making them part with their little resources all in the name of seeds sowing. We sow seeds to be healed, to get jobs, to marry, to pass exams without studying, to receive miracle money from heaven, to receive free cars, to receive miracle children, etc. Most often, these seeds never produce any fruit and the sowers now see Christianity as a scam. I searched the Scriptures on seed sowing and discovered that there was only one occasion where a man wanted to sow a seed to the ministries of Apostles Peter and John in Samaria, but Peter angrily rebuked the man saying "Thy money perish with thee because thou has thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money" (Acts 8:20).

Today, the gospel is for sale and every gift of God has a price tag. Can anyone tell me the difference between what Simon in the above biblical story did and what we are doing today in the name of seed sowing?

Why didn't Peter accept the seed? Why have we now decided to pervert the gospel? I strongly believe that the Christ which prosperity Pastors are proclaiming is different from the Christ which the apostles preached. The apostles preached Christ who suffered and was crucified on the cross of Calvary, who expects those who are desirous to be His disciples to come and carry their crosses, follow Him, and suffer (1 Peter 2:21). We cannot separate the cross from the person of Jesus. I suspect that the Jesus solution pastors are preaching today is the false Christ which Jesus talked about in *Mathew 24: 23-26* who also performs great signs and wonders.

It is obvious that many of the elect are already being deceived, otherwise, how can anyone explain this doctrine of Christ without the cross to me? Pastors are now teaching Christians to love Christ but to have nothing to do with the Cross; they do not want them to be associated with the cross, to be crucified on the cross with Him, suffer with Him and seek His kingdom. All they teach their members is to be loyal to the church, acquire money, get healed, enjoy marriage, live in prosperity, contribute to church projects, pay tithe, sow seeds, attend church services regularly and minister gifts to the Pastor and his family. Apostle Paul warned the Philippians church in tears to beware of the "enemies of the cross" whose god is their belly, who glory in their shame, whose minds are on the things of this earth and whose end is destruction (Philippians 3: 18-19).

## Cross-Less Pastors

Many Pastors are not preaching the cross because they are not carrying the cross. They cannot give what they do not have. The cross is foolishness to them and they make it look foolish to their followers (1 Corinthians 1:18). Worshippers who want to make heaven should as a matter of urgency run away from pastors who are only teaching, preaching, and prophesying about earthly riches and solutions to earthly problems. Heaven bound Christians seek heavenly things. They obey Christ's command of "go ye", they seek God's kingdom and His righteousness. They place their treasures in heaven, they press towards the mark of the high calling (sonship). They look forward to the crowns – the crown of glory, the crown of rejoicing, the crown of righteousness, incorruptible crown, and crown of life. They earnestly wait to be crowned after they are conformed to the image of Christ. In anticipation of the glory that will be revealed, they endure persecution, affliction, suffering, hunger, lack, shame, and all manner of degradation.

Suicide is now on the increase among Christians; many have gone down the road of apostasy and denied Christ because prophecies which they received from their churches did not work. Many Christians are frustrated today because they were told that if they become Christians, all their problems will be solved and they will enjoy life to the fullest; husbands will come, good job, exotic cars, children, good health, problem-free life, etc. I don't doubt the ability of Jesus to provide all these; however, they belong to the minor category.

The major is to seek the kingdom of God by carrying the cross and following Jesus, which entails self-denial and absolute sacrifice. If someone had told those who are abandoning the faith because of hardship that Christianity is not a bed of roses and suffering is inevitable, they would have been strengthened to face the challenges with joy, for the hope of the glory that will be revealed.

Apostle Paul was sick throughout his ministerial career. He left Trophimus sick; in Miletus, he was poor, he was sorrowful, yet rejoicing. He received a total of 195 stripes for preaching Jesus; three times he was beaten with a rod; he was stoned three times. His life was always in danger; often in cold and nakedness, hunger was his companion on his mission trips, he was put in prisons many times, and at last, he was beheaded. Where did we learn this luxury Christianity? Christianity started in the book of Acts of the Apostles and we must go back to the Acts if we must have an idea of what genuine Christianity is.

In conclusion, I would like to say that Christians are not expected to suffer as evildoers, murderers, busybodies, thieves, and other sinners. Yet, it is the portion of every Christian to pass through suffering for the sake of Christ, His name, His gospel, and His kingdom. The message of the cross has been replaced by prosperity message in our churches to distract and give us another gospel. The western Missionaries abandoned their houses, cars, husbands, wives, children, lands, and luxuries and came to us suffering and travailing to bring us to the saving power of Christ.

Today, we are celebrating all those things which they abandoned as evidence of God's goodness in our lives. What others sacrificed for the sake of the gospel is what we are concentrating all our Christian energies to search for. The same gospel which western missionaries died for is now what African Pastors are merchandising in our churches through tithes and prosperity gospel.

The chain reaction has been broken and the spread of the gospel has been halted because no one is ready to suffer and no one is ready to abandon anything for the sake of the gospel. The story of the rich man in Mark 10 who asked Jesus what he can do to inherit eternal life seems not to mean anything to us. Jesus told the man to sell all his properties and give the proceed to the poor, carry his cross and follow Him, but the man found the instruction hard and walked out on Jesus, and Jesus told the disciples that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. The lesson of this story is that accumulation of wealth and God's kingdom cannot go together and that was why Jesus told the man to sell his properties and come and carry the cross of suffering and follow Him.

The aim of prosperity and solution messages in our churches today is to divert our attention from the cross and focus on ourselves and our families. It was for the cross that Missionaries abandoned all to bring the gospel to us. Self-denial is a prerequisite for following Christ. With prosperity gospel, mammon takes over the place of Christ in our lives, comfort takes the place of suffering and ultimately, hell takes the place of heaven.

Apostle Paul stated it bluntly "If in this life only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Corinthians 15:19). If the reason we follow Jesus is for our earthly problems to be solved, then we are all in a sorry and pitiable state. A clear understanding of the doctrine of the Christian suffering will inevitably help us embrace it and majestically walk the road of Calvary with joy and ultimately experience glorification which Christ has promised to those who endure to the end.



**TIIIC**  
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**TUU**

The logo features the acronym "TIIIC" in large, bold, black capital letters at the top, with "CHAPTER" in smaller black capital letters centered between the first and second "I"s. Below "CHAPTER" is another "TUU" in large, bold, black capital letters. The logo is surrounded by a dynamic, swirling graphic composed of thick, curved lines in shades of gray and black, resembling stylized flames or smoke.

## THE POWER OF **THE CROSS**

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross-  
The emblem of suffering and shame.  
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best  
For a world of lost sinners was slain.  
So I'll cherish the old rugged cross  
Till my trophies at last I lay down;  
And I will cling to the old rugged cross  
And exchange it someday for a crown.  
To the old rugged cross I will ever be true;  
its shame and reproach gladly bear.  
Then he'll call me someday to my home far away  
Where his glory forever I'll share.  
And I'll cherish the old rugged cross-  
Till my trophies at last I lay down;  
And I will cling to the old rugged cross  
And exchange it someday for a crown.

**-George Bernard**

How I wish every believer will understand the mystery of the cross the way George Bernard did. Answers to all questions of life are gotten from the cross, all mysteries of life are hidden in the cross, and all purposes of life are attached to the cross. It is old and rugged yet the most precious treasury of life. The mystery of the cross is only revealed to the mature. I have decided to join the league of people like George Bernard to declare that the cross is the best thing that has ever happened to me, I cherish it more than all the world's diamonds and gold combined. No glory can be compared with the glory that will be revealed through the old rugged cross.

This is where divine justice and mercy met, and a useless sinner like me received forgiveness and entered into *sanctum-sanctorium* with boldness because I am now being treated just-as if (Justified) I had never sinned. I will forever cherish and cling to this old rugged cross.

I have gone to the base of the old cross to pick my customized cross, I kissed it the day I found it and since then I polish it every morning in readiness for the day's suffering, I do not know what could give me the joy which my cross gives me every day. I carry it in preparation to die the most shameful death for the sake of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I have all my ambitions and dreams forsaken to follow Christ with my cross as he has instructed. I understand very well that this cross attracts shame, dangers, troubles, persecution, and reproach, but I have chosen it as the best way of life. I know I will be worthless in the sight of men but I press on to the mark not minding people's opinions as long as I carry my cross to the end.

My only prayer every day is "Lord, if I get tired of carrying this cross, please compel me just like the soldiers compelled Simon the Cyrenean to carry your cross". I can afford to lose everything - family, friends, ministry, and even my life- but let my cross be by my side on my dying day so that I can exchange it with a crown when Christ returns.

*"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God". (1 Corinthians 1:18 NIV)*

The cross is the power of God: without the cross, the world would have perished; God would have lost in the battle for the souls of humans and the devil would have triumphed. On the cross, God demonstrated His supremacy over the devil and bought back all the children that have been alienated from Him by sin. When the cross is preached, the power of God is released to do the supernatural and empowers the hearer.

## Sin Is Defeated On The Cross

Through His son's death on the cross, God dealt with every person's sin. Jesus stood in the gap for every individual in the world on the cross and releases forgiveness to everyone who receives Him.

*"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him and by his wounds, we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all". (Isaiah 53:5-6NIV)*

Jesus took the punishment of our sins on the cross, we were all guilty as charged and the penalties were hanging upon our necks, we were all supposed to be crucified, for the soul that sin shall die and there is no remission of sin unless there is the shedding of the blood. The cross brought the medium of the death and the shedding of the blood in a collective dimension through the death of Christ. From the time of the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, an action plan was developed by God to use the cross to bring back the glory that was lost in the Garden of Eden.

The Jews tried some experiments to find solutions to sin through the shedding of the blood of animals but the errors due to spiritual parallax were much and the experiment could not be accepted as a universal hypothesis, theory, or principle. After about four thousand years, Jesus was sent as a man to come and die on the cross so that through accepting Him, mankind can be redeemed permanently from sin. Before Jesus gave up the ghost, he shouted "It is finished" indicating that sin has been permanently dealt with.

## **Barrier Between Man And God Broken On The Cross**

God is a holy and righteous God, iniquities separate man from Him. No sinner is qualified to appear in His presence, man was completely alienated from God because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). The fall of man in the Garden of Eden created a huge lacuna between God and man. There is a biblical account of God's visitation to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden regularly for fellowship. On the last visit, Adam heard the voice of God, and he and his wife hid from the presence of God among the trees in the garden.

*"And the Lord called unto Adam and  
said unto him where art thou?  
And he said I heard the voice in the garden and I  
was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself  
(Genesis 3:9-10 KJV).*

Since that day forward mankind became naked and *inhabodized*, (the glory and image of God disappeared from man); then God kick-started the cross agenda to bring man back to His image.

When the agenda of the cross was fulfilled as Christ gave up the ghost, the curtains in the temple got torn into pieces giving man access into the *sanctum-sanctorium* to take over from the temple as God's abode. Something great and remarkable happened as man does not have any need to look for God; man was sought by God and found him in Christ who now lives in the heart of anyone who accepts Him. Man comes to unite with God through spiritual vegetative propagation. He is the vine and we are the branches. Christ in man, the hope of glory. Before this great relationship, there was a spiritual trade by barter on the cross of Calvary. We exchanged sin with the righteousness of Christ and became justified while Christ carried the sin of all men and was declared guilty.

*"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in  
Him we might become the righteousness of God".(2  
Corinthians 5:21NIV)*

We that were sinners have become righteous and He that knew no sin became sinful to the extent that God had to turn His eyes off His beloved son who in agony cried "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" meaning, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?". God forsook Jesus to accept us, and since that day, we became friends of God. We were given the power to become the 'sons of God' so that there shall come a day that all of us will have the same image of Christ and He will become the first son of many brethren.

It is important to note that the cross did not only reconcile man with God, it also broke all racial barriers between man and man. In Christ, there is no difference between the Jews and the Gentiles, between the blacks and the whites.

Any man who racially segregates does not have Christ in him.

Unfortunately today, many Christians are guilty of the crime of social and racial discrimination. Many Christians in the western world do not believe that blacks are born again, neither do they trust that any good thing can come from a black man. The cross has broken the barrier and no mortal has the right to reintroduce it, no matter the reason. The contents of Melanin and Keratin is not a strong reason to divide what God has made one through the sacrifice of His only beloved son on the cross.

*"But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility" (Ephesians 2:13-16 NIV).*

If the western missionaries who brought the Gospel to Africa were like the present-day American and European pastors, the Gospel would not have gotten to Africa. Today, you see mission agencies with the vision to reach the world and reach the unreached without a mission field in Africa. You see Christian organizations working to evangelize to the world, with grants for missionaries working in California only.

These organizations should redefine their vision and produce parochial and narrow-minded vision and mission statements to suit their racial discriminatory agenda and foster their biased sentiments. The cross has broken the wall of partition and Christian racists should be very careful before they graduate into the enemies of the cross.

## **Liberty Through The Cross**

Jesus' death on the cross was a great victory for us, we were set free from sin and death, and we now live in freedom because of the battle which took place on the cross. Jesus came out a conqueror and all enemies were impotent and incapacitated.

*"Where, O death is your victory? Where, O death is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ". (1 Corinthians 15:55-57NIV).*

Through the death of Christ on the cross, the sting of death was neutralized and the power of the grave was rendered null and void and of no effect. The law that powers sin was also cancelled by the mercies of God. The meeting point of mercy and justice provides us with the liberty and victory which we enjoy in Christ Jesus. Satan lost his legal ground over our lives; the ransom that was paid by the blood of Jesus gave the devil no room for further accusations. The blood that was shed on the cross disarmed all principalities and powers and released the saints which were dead from the grave.

*"And the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people" (Mathew 27:5253NIV).*

*"Having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14NIV).*

All the forces against us were taken out of the way by the death of Christ, the laws and decrees which were made against us written or unwritten, rigid or flexible, legal or extra-legal were all cancelled and permanently nailed on the cross. Christ has set us free by the finished work of the cross and no power or human has the right to hold us in captivity including "the anointed men and women of God."

### **The Cross Answered It All.**

In this session, I would like to share some personal experiences which I believe can be of help to you. In my eighteen years of being a Christian, I had some confusion and doubts which became more complicated as I listened to preachers whom I believed were more exposed than me in the things of God. I searched for answers to many questions but could not get any. When the mystery of the cross was revealed to me, all answers to my questions were released along with it. I now understand why God allowed certain calamities to befall those who faithfully serve Him; I now know that martyrdom is the greatest privilege any believer can have in Christ; I now understand the role of suffering in the life of a believer and why Christ himself had to pass through suffering before he could fulfil His ministry on earth;

I received answers to why old things have refused to pass away even when one has been born again.

All confusion, all questions, all mysteries, all ignorance, and doubts were clarified by just understanding the mystery of the cross. I nearly denounced Christ because of many questions without answers in Christianity, I had quarrels with God regularly that one fateful day, I asked Him a question "Do you benefit anything by seeing me suffering?" and I heard the unmistakable voice of the Almighty answer me, saying "Yes, I do". His answer to my question threw me into a deeper frustration as I wondered what He stands to gain through my suffering. The mystery showed me that there are sufferings that are reserved for genuine believers to augment the affliction of Christ which has not been completed.

*"Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church." (Colossians 1:24NIV).*

Apostle Paul rejoiced because He understood the benefit of supplying in his body, the suffering which was lacking in Christ's affliction. What a privilege to be part of these supplies that will facilitate the reigning with Christ when He returns. I had persistently asked God why He cannot protect His servants. I wept profusely when I saw the video of how the chairman of Michika Local government area, Adamawa state chapter of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Lawan Andimi was beheaded, his killing discouraged me so much and I wondered if these risks were worth taking for a God who cannot protect His own.

I was bathing in the dysphoria of this killing when the Lord took me into a journey of scriptural insightful voyage that revealed to me the purpose of God for humanity.

I got this mystery through empirical, insightful, and revelation knowledge. I came to know that Lawan Andimi was one of the most privileged Christians whom God has prepared to officiate as king, priest, and judge in the millennium rule (Revelation 20:4). I had no option than to send to him a posthumous congratulation for qualifying to be martyred.

I came to know that Christians are not just supposed to believe in Christ, we are also to suffer for Him (Philippians 1:29). This gave me a lot of encouragement as I had wondered why I have to go through hell reaching the unreached. I was excited to know that the suffering of my present time is not any way to be compared with the glory that will be revealed through my suffering when Christ comes (Romans 8:18). I was also edified when I realized that every suffering that I go through as long as I am in God's will is a preparation for the entrance into the Kingdom of God (Acts 14:22).

My joy knew no bound when I realized that if I die in the course of preaching Christ, I will be qualified to reign as a king, minister as a priest, and adjudicate as a judge during the one thousand years reign of Christ on this earth when He returns (Revelation 20:4). My fear of being killed disappeared as I now know that to live is Christ and to die is gain.

I was glad when I understood that self-denial, cross-carrying, following Jesus, discipleship training, and missionary work were all arranged by Christ for my adoption into sonship which will culminate in glory and perfection of the captain of my salvation through suffering. (Hebrew 2:10). My knowledge that even Jesus learnt obedience through suffering helped me to accept suffering and watched how it shaped my life to obey God irrespective of the challenges (Hebrew 5:8).

There is another area of Christianity that gave me much concern, sincerely speaking; there was a time that I concluded that it is not all the old things that do pass away if one becomes a new creature. In my life, I struggled with some old things that refused to pass away and I wondered sincerely if born again really changes life. I saw some characters of other believers whom I knew were very much more spiritual than myself but there was nothing to write home about theirs either. The corporate characters of Christians were so discouraging that I found it difficult to identify myself as a Christian. The pastoral title has become a plague as unbelievers carefully avoid the bearers of such titles due to their fraudulent activities. The rate at which Christians pursue money and other mundane things of this world make this born again thing look like a charade and that made me conclude that to be born again is to pretend.

It was the mystery of the cross that gave me the reason why our lives are not reflecting Christ and how the cross is the solution to ungodly characters displayed by Christians. I came to know that confessing Jesus as Lord and Saviour does not change characters. What changes our characters is our walk with Christ after we have confessed Him as our Lord and Saviour.

We are to advance our walk with Christ by denying ourselves, carrying our cross, and following Christ. Daily, we are supposed to carry our crosses and be crucified in prayers. When the flesh is crucified, the Spirit takes over our lives and the manifestation of the flesh is completely eradicated. Hence, there is no condemnation for us as we walk after the Spirit in our daily endeavours.

Believers are supposed to be crucified to the world and the world to us daily, what is responsible for worldly characters in the lives of believers is cross-less Christianity. For us to live godly, cross-carrying is not negotiable as I explained on the pathway to spiritual growth. I have learnt from Apostle Paul to die daily on the cross, when we chose to follow Christ, what it means is that we have also chosen to crucify our flesh. This choice did not in any way remove the influence of the flesh over our body and the conflict of our flesh with the Spirit of God. The only antidote to the manifestation of the flesh is daily crucifixion which the cross has provided a platform for us. According to Apostle Paul, there is a daily battle between the flesh and the spirit, the soul needs to synergize with the spirit to defeat the flesh. Since I know this, old things have passed away and every other thing has become new.

## **Law And Grace Met At The Cross**

There is a legal side to our salvation which is related to our justification. Jesus is our advocate who defended and stood in for us on the cross of Calvary by accepting our punishment and paying a ransom for us. The Bible says that the soul that sins shall die (Ezekiel 18:20).

This law was never abrogated but still stands, God in His infinite mercy organized a meeting between His righteous judgement and His love so that the law will be fulfilled and His grace be made manifest.

Justice demands that there must be shedding of blood before any sin is remitted, and the love of God made room for anyone who believes in the Son, shall not die but have eternal life. The action of Jesus on the cross provides a defence for us whenever we are accused by the devil. We are made to understand that Satan visits heaven regularly to accuse the brethren (Revelation 12:10) He is the prosecutor who wants to make sure that we are sentenced for our sins but each time he raises a case, the blood of Jesus speaks.

In the court of heaven, God is the righteous judge, we are the defendants (accused), Jesus is the defender (Lawyer), and the devil is the prosecutor (accuser). Whenever the prosecutor presses his charges with enough evidence to nail us, Jesus arises and pleads before the righteous judge reminding Him of His death on the cross. Based on the cross and the blood which he shed on the cross, the legal requirements for our discharge were met and justice is not only done, it is seen to be done. The judge declares us innocent, discharged, and acquitted. On the cross, the prosecutor has lost all the cases and does not have any legal right to press further any case against us.

We overcame him by the blood of the lamb and with the word of our testimony. Justice was satisfied and unmerited favour was released. What a great meeting of a great attribute of our great God!

The law came from the vertical axis and grace overflowed from the horizontal axis to a meeting point where our salvation emerged as a result of Divinity crucifying Himself for humanity. The concept was originated by God Almighty, and God the Son took the responsibility to die while God the Holy Spirit leads us at the point of interception of the cross where we are justified and graciously acquitted.

What a great grace that was released on the cross for us, but if we do not allow the purpose of God's grace to be accomplished in us, we have wasted His grace. The saving grace gives birth to the enabling grace if allowed to accomplish God's purpose in our lives. The enabling grace if accommodated through self-denial, cross-carrying, following Jesus, discipleship, and missionary service, metabolizes into sufficient grace which every believer needs to finish strong.

### **The Cross Satisfied All Stakeholders**

Man was created by God in His image after His likeness (Genesis 1:26) and the devil was not happy with the position that God placed man, the devil wanted to be like God and God threw him down from heaven (Isaiah 14:14). Since then the devil picked offence and vowed to dispossess man of the image of God, he deceived man in the Garden of Eden and *habodized* him. God made an alternative agenda to restore His image to man through the death of Christ on the cross but the devil was ignorant of the fact that the death of Christ on the cross was to bring man back to glory; he masterminded the death of Christ on the cross and worked for what he has vowed to destroy. There are three stakeholders in the scramble for man's soul - God, devil, and man.

The cross satisfied the three stakeholders and provided a permanent solution to the image contest.

## **The Cross Is For God**

The eternal purpose of God for mankind was fulfilled on the cross, He created man in His image after His likeness but this status was short-lived as the devil striped man off the image. God then jump-started the redemption package that took four thousand years to manifest in the Word that was made flesh. Jesus' death on the cross was the realization of God's plan for mankind; His children were bought back for Him as sons through the blood that was shed on the cross. Anyone who comes to Christ by self-denial, cross-carrying, following Jesus, discipleship, and missionary services, is groomed into sonship satisfying God's ambition to restore the glory, the image, and the dignity that was lost in the Garden of Eden.

## **The Cross Is For Man**

Man has been kept under bondage by sin; the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden gave the devil the legal ground to oppress man. The Jewish nation tried all kinds of offerings but could not be free from sin, while the Gentile nations were perpetually yoked to sin without a solution. God sent His only begotten son to die on the cross; the death of Christ permanently dealt with sin, and anyone who believes in Him is set free from its yoke. Jesus took the punishment of man on the cross and man received forgiveness to become acceptable to God. The power to become the son of God was given to man by Jesus and he invites man to come and carry his cross and follow Him if he desires to be adopted as a son of God.

The cross restored man to God's image and built a father-and-son relationship.

## **The Cross Is For The Devil**

There is no remission of sin unless there is the shedding of blood. The devil is the architect, the originator, and the beneficiary of the dividends of sin, but the blood bought us back (redemption) from the kingdom of darkness where we hitherto belong and brought us into the Kingdom of light. It was the devil who received the ransom paid on behalf of mankind by Jesus on the cross. Justice was done by the death of one man so that all men can live and the blood that was shed neutralized the legal hold of the devil. His accusations were put to a stop and he has no case to present, his mission was to kill us all because we have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and the cross helped him to accomplish that by the blood that was shed on behalf of all of us on the cross. He would have continued to accuse man of sin and God of injustice if not for the blood that fulfilled the law and set us free. All his accusations now are baseless, ultra vires, null and void, of no effect. The cross satisfied him because his desire was met by the shedding of the blood.

## **A Shift From Altar Call To Cross Call**

When I received the mystery of the cross, I detected a costly mistake in the invitation process of sinners to come to Christ. We call this process Altar call. This has been the tradition in the Church- when people are called to embrace Jesus by publicly inviting them to come to the altar to confess Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

It is so-called because the supplicant is expected to come to the altar which is in front of the church. This is why everyone has been groomed for the altar and no one is interested in furthering the kingdom of God through the mandate of the Cross which is the Great Commission. A critical look at this shows a serious fundamental error in the Christian foundations of believers: the supplicants say the sinners' prayer and confess Jesus without responsibilities attached to their vows, they go home rejoicing that their sins have been forgiven without anyone telling them the requirements for coming to Jesus.

*"Then Jesus said to his disciples, If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me".(Mathew 16:24 NLT)*

I do not know of others but I know that when I came to Christ, no one told me that I have to deny myself, carry my cross before I can follow Him. Rather, I was told that my problems were over and Jesus was going to make life comfortable for me. Our inability to educate converts on what lies ahead when we come to Christ is responsible for spiritual stagnancy and lack of growth in the lives of believers. This is a subtle manipulation of the devil to weaken the foundation of Christians and he has succeeded to a very large extent.

I hereby recommend to all Christians all over the world to make a paradigm shift from Altar call to Cross call, converts should be called to embrace the cross of Calvary and carry theirs, instead of coming to the altar and going back without responsibilities. The name "Cross Call" will remind us to include responsibilities in the sinners' prayer.

I believe this will build a new crop of believers who will live a self-denied life and carry their cross as they follow Jesus. Enough is enough to this selfish, cross-less and Nimrodic Christianity that has become the order of the day, especially in Nigeria. I also want to use this medium to tell the Christians who have abandoned their cross for juicy messages to go back and pick them because there is no Christianity without the cross.

*If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine. (Mathew 10:38 NLT)*

This is the word of Jesus, how can anyone claim that he is a Christian without the cross unless he is a follower of the other christs in Mathew 24:24. Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, the heart of Christ bleeds because so many of us who came to Him genuinely have been diverted to follow false christs through Nimrodic and mammonized Gospels which are aimed at providing money, healing, deliverance, prophecy to blindfold believers from realizing that Christianity is bigger than solutions to our earthly problems. Christianity is deeper than what I thought it was, we did not come to Jesus for Him to solve our problems in this world, but we came to Him so that He can save our souls and give us His kingdom. Soul saving is a process that involves our commitment, determination, and obedience to the instructions of Christ.

The devil has blindfolded the teachers of the Bible to the extent that they no longer teach us the raw word of God; they now give us juicy sermons that will gladden our hearts, messages that look like solutions to our problems. If we refuse to carry the cross, we are not qualified to be His; there are no two ways about it, and you are either in or out.

It is not possible for us to love the blessings of Jesus but hate His cross. It is an error to love His name but hate His cross, and it is a complete aberration to love His miracles but hate His cross. If there is anything that we need to love and embrace, it is His cross. The cross is our identity and pride as Christians and should be given a priority in all our loving.

We must as a matter of urgency, find some things that we will do to prove our love for the cross through suffering for Christ, His gospel, and His kingdom. Preach Christ and Him crucified at all cost; sacrificially put yourself under financial pressure for the sake of the mandate of the Great Commission. Constantly suffer your flesh through fasting and agonizing prayers regularly for missionaries working among the unreached people's group. Deny yourself certain comforts to please Jesus: take risks for Him, be ready to lose all for Him, take insults and shames for His sake and be ready to die for Him just like He died for you. Please, if you are not carrying your cross presently, consider your ways, deny yourself, go back and carry your cross and start all over again.



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## *Christianity without* **THE CROSS**

"There is no Christianity without the cross " if anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23) This is the foundation upon which Christianity was built, any other concept is an ideology from the pit of hell. The conditions necessary for becoming a Christian are self-denial and cross-carrying. At the base of the cross of Calvary are over seven billion smaller crosses for anyone who wishes to go after Christ and many of them have been left untouched. The greatest challenge in Christianity is a faulty foundation; those who give their lives to Christ are not told that there are responsibilities and conditions necessary for following Jesus. If the foundation is destroyed, what can the righteous do?

Every believer is expected by Christ to deny himself; visit the cross of Calvary take up his cross and follow Christ on a journey to the kingdom of God through discipleship, obedience to the command of "Go ye", missionary services, attainment of sonship, conformation to His image and glorification. Unfortunately, many Christians who have said the sinners' prayer are not following Jesus because they are ignorant of what to do and some are not following Him because they do not like the conditions attached, which is mandatory for anyone who wants to go after Him. Self-denial and cross-carrying involve sacrifices and sufferings which no man wants, including Christ who prayed "Father if thou be willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheless not my will but Thine be done" (Luke 22:42).

We need to follow Jesus so that we can learn from Him. Jesus did not like the cup but He submitted to His father's will, drank the cup, and was glorified. The cup of Christianity is not palatable, but for the glory that lies ahead, we must submit to God's will. It is His good pleasure to give us the kingdom but it is also His will that we access it by drinking the cup which Jesus drank.

### **War Against The Cross**

The devil is aware of the weakness of the flesh to go through cross experiences and then decided to provide us with an escape route through "The other gospels" (Galatians1:6). Churches now embrace these gospels that celebrate Christ, his power and love but remove the cross completely from the scene. The prosperity gospel, eternal security, and solution Gospels which are the dominant messages in churches today are aimed at perverting the gospel of Christ and Him crucified. The purpose of this satanic innovation is to divert the attention of the flocks of God to themselves and the mundane things of this world while waiting for the Antichrist to come.

The devil has manipulated the church of God in such a way that almost every minister of the gospel is now an advocate of prosperity, signs, wonder, divinations nicknamed prophecy, etc. The multiplier effect of these earthly solution messages is the stereotyping of the mind of Christians to solely believe that Christ's mandate is to solve our problems. Believers are programmed to be preoccupied with earthly challenges and the search for solutions to the challenges of life, and the thought of eternity in our minds is gradually fizzling into oblivion. This mindset will facilitate the acceptance of the Antichrist among the cross-less Christians who will be happy to welcome him.

He will have solutions to all human problems; he will give people riches, perform notable miracles, provide the best kind of technologies, and make life enjoyable for all nations.

Many Christians will be willing to embrace the Antichrist as long as their problems are solved since they have been wired to only seek solutions by messages preached in churches today. The package of this deception is well-tailored that even the very elect of God have already been deceived. Many young ministers are initiated to work on this demonic mandate through mentorship without knowing that they are packaging their flocks for the Antichrist. They borrow templates from "successful" pastors who are directly commissioned by the devil, as a matter of fact, the template works.

Devil empowers them; they become rich, popular and influential, and attract followers whom they trade with their souls. At the end of this chapter, it is expected that readers of this book will be able to identify the gimmick of the devil and his manipulations on our churches and those who are among the elects who have been deceived will make a 360 degrees turn around and carry their crosses for an onward journey to eternity.

These are some observations that will aid you to identify these demonic manipulations in any church of your study:

- (1)    Churches under this manipulation preach messages on prosperity, deliverance, healing, self-development, marriage, etc. but no emphasis on the cross, Christian suffering, and eternity.

(2) They preach the elementary doctrine of Christ-repentance, baptism, faith, laying of hands, and brush slightly the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. Their hope in Christ ends in this world and no advanced Christian theology is touched.

(3) Almost all their messages are centered on man, how to meet the needs and agenda of the pastor and members while God's needs are completely neglected.

(4) Their church planting program ends in cities and towns where they convert other Christians to their churches while the mandate of "go ye" to the uttermost part where no one has heard about Jesus is placed in the deferred column of their prioritization package.

(5) Churches under manipulation usually abandon sound Biblical doctrine of advanced Christianity and Christian suffering but borrow Judaism and Shamanism ordinances, laws, and doctrines to dilute the gospel of the cross.

(6) They abandon the work of the kingdom of God and enslave their members and make them believe that their churches are the kingdom of God and everybody must work very hard to ensure that their church kingdom work is advanced.

### **No Cross, No Christianity**

The cross is the cynosure of the Christian faith. "*For the preaching of cross to them that perish foolishness but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God*" (1 Corinthians 1:18 KJV). The cross is the focal point of Christianity; our salvation is empowered by the cross. Apart from the cross, there is no reconciliation between man and God, no amendments for our sins, no right standing for man before God.

Justification is received on the cross and the prerogative of mercy pronounced.

On the cross, there is an intercession between justice and mercy, and the spirit of Christ was released to believers. Our sinful nature and devil's legal hold is neutralized on the cross. Sufficient grace to advance in the Christian journey is dispersed upon those who are willing to take up the cross. The spirit of adoption from the cross enables believers to go through the metamorphosis from '*teknion*' (child) to '*huios*' (son) "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (Isaiah 9:6).

Ignorance of the importance and role of the cross in our Christian journey is responsible for all the abuses in our churches today. Otherwise, how do we explain the fact that many Christians love Jesus, His blessings, His kindness, His prophetic words, His miracles, His signs and wonders but **HATE HIS CROSS?** It is obvious that without embracing the cross, no man can be saved and it will not be wrong if I deductively opine that there are millions of "unsaved Christians" in our churches today. Ignorance is the greatest opposition to our spiritual growth; many of the churches under subtle manipulations of the devil do not even know that they are under manipulations.

Their major challenge is that they have not received the revelation of the mystery of the cross because the god of this world has blinded their eyes (2 Corinthians 4:4). Apostle Paul had access to the mystery of the cross and I also through empirical, insightful and revelation knowledge received it.

He (Paul) categorically stated in his epistle to the Romans that the mystery of the cross has been kept secret since the world began. (Romans 16:25).

This book can only provide the reader with insightful knowledge, which is not enough for a holistic understanding of the mystery of the cross. I desire that all believers shall grow daily in the knowledge of this mystery. I, therefore, request that every Christian should pray from now on for a pneumatological revelation of the mystery of the cross.

## The Enemies Of The Cross

*"For many of whom, I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is their destruction, their god is their belly and they glory in their shame with mind set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven and from it, we await our saviour Jesus Christ. Who will transform our lowly bodies to be like His glorious body by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself" (Philippians 3:18-21)*

The operation of the enemies of the cross can be dated back to the Biblical era. Paul in his epistle to the church in Philippi tearfully warned the believers to beware of the enemies of the cross. According to Paul, they were many with an agenda to pervert the preaching of the cross to make a mockery of the Christian faith. It is important to note that those whom Paul referred to as enemies of the cross were officials of the church; they were fellow Christians who love Jesus but hate the cross of Christ and work against the preaching of the cross.

In our dispensation, the enemies of the cross are not ordinary officials of the church; they are the ones running churches today. They are general overseers, bishops, senior pastors, lead pastors, senior prophets, etc.

If Apostle Paul was to be alive today, he would have cried blood while warning the Nigerian church. The enemies of the cross have hijacked Christianity in Nigeria and have taken millions of ignorant Christians hostage. Their captives are like slaves who love their chains, one of their duties to their captors is to defend them with these words "Touch not my anointed" whenever anyone out of concern wants to point out the abuse and evil perpetrated by enemies of the cross.

Apostle Paul in his warning to the church in Philippi did not consider the anointing upon the ministers who were enemies of the cross. He addressed them by their name, their characters, and their destination. Any crime that remains unsolved constitutes a danger to the living. The effect of church abuse in Nigeria is worse than the effect of child and drug abuse put together and until people rise to say no to pastors' inhumanity to members many more vulnerable people will still be diverted to hellfire. Church leaders have turned themselves into principalities and powers working against the cross of Christ. They preach messages which take Christians away from the cross and focus their attention on material things of this world while waiting to hand them over to the Antichrist for the 666 mark.

Apostle Paul has described them for easy identification. Their names are enemies of the cross of Jesus Christ, their destiny is destruction, their gods are their bellies, their focuses

are material things of this world and they glory in their shame. Their end is destruction because the preaching of the cross is foolishness to them that are perishing.

They have chosen to mortgage their souls for worldly profits and have deceived their followers to do the same. I would like to state without an apology that any Christian who runs away from the cross and its suffering is a candidate of hell.

Salvation is by the cross, metamorphosis into sonship is by the cross, image transformation to be Christ-like is by the cross and glorification is by the cross. How would anyone access the kingdom of God without the cross? It is obvious that the enemies of the cross know exactly their destinations but I am afraid that a majority of their followers do not have a glimpse of what awaits them at the end of the journey. Many of them so much believe that their leaders are genuine; many of them are even ready to die in their defence. I sincerely pray that the elect of God among them will realize themselves and retrace their steps before it becomes too late.

The enemies of the cross love themselves so much that their passion and desire have become their gods. Their insatiable wants and inordinate ambitions for wealth control their actions and dictate the rhythm of their thoughts. They appreciate their flesh so much that they do not allow skin pain, stress, suffering or trouble for any reason. Their belly has become their gods. Their minds are set on earthly things - their sermons, programs and actions are geared towards the acquisition of wealth. They apply strategies and techniques to make money from their gullible followers. They rate themselves with the world's standard and work very hard for fame.

Enemies of the cross deliberately manipulate their followers' mind to know nothing about Christ except His ability to provide for them and solve their problems.

A materialistic mindset is a veritable tool used in programming the love of money into the lives of their followers. As soon as mammon's seed germinates, their minds are defocused from the cross and eternity. The quest for the acquisition of wealth is on the increase these days among Christians and this is attributed to the kind of messages that is preached in our churches. No one is interested in providing himself bags *which wax not old or treasures in heaven that faileth not* (Luke 12:33).

Pastors have indoctrinated many Christians to believe that the kingdom of God is in this world and once you become rich, you have migrated into God's kingdom. Jesus made it categorically clear that His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36), that is why Paul told the Philippians church that their citizenship is of heaven. The major function of the enemies of the cross is to pervert the word of God. Allow no man to twist the word to brainwash and hypnotize you into believing that the kingdom of God is already here on earth.

They glory in their shame - there are so many shameful things done in churches today and instead of the perpetrators of these shameful acts to hide their faces, they usually come out boldly and their followers come in large numbers to defend them. Is it not shameful that men of God are now lying to defend their failed prophesies? Men of God are now involved in fornication and adultery and parishioners encourage and defend them. Is it not shameful that the church which is

supposed to take people to heaven is now teaching them how to chase unrighteous mammon? Is it not shameful that 64,366,000 Nigerians have not heard about Jesus and all churches are building universities, Microfinance banks and other business consortiums?

What will be more shameful than that the western missionaries forsook luxury homes, exotic cars and comforts to bring the gospel to us but our pastors are now climbing pulpits to boast of how rich they are? Is it not shameful that pastors are now feasting on the ignorance of their followers to exploit them and get richer while the impoverished captives now defend their captors? The enemies of the cross glory in their shame because their conscience has been smeared by the god of this world.

There is another group of believers whom Apostle Paul mentioned in Philippians 3:20-21. These are friends of the crosses whose citizenships are in heaven and who are waiting for the second coming of Christ. These groups of believers hope to be transformed into the image of Christ with glorification to reign as kings, priests and judges with Christ in His kingdom. They were willing to pay their dues through cross-carrying and Christian suffering.

### **Bride Prepared For The Antichrist**

*"Dear children, this is the last hour and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming ..." (1John 2:18NIV)....*

We are living in the end time and all the signs which Christ predicted concerning the end of this world have come to pass except that the Gospel of the kingdom has not been preached

to all nations as a witness. Recent eschatological studies have proven that the Antichrist will come before the second coming of Christ (Post - tribulation rapture), the coming of the first beast (Antichrist) will be characterized by an emergence of new world order. All that live in this world whose names are not in the book of life of the lamb that was slain will congregate to worship the Antichrist (Revelation 13:8).

The most painful thing that will happen when the Antichrist comes is that millions of Christians whose names where hitherto in the book of Life of the lamb will be part of the willing worshippers of the Antichrist. Many Christians have been deceived to abandon the cross and embrace worldly prosperity and their inability to continue carrying the cross has made Jesus remove their names from the book of life of the lamb. Many will wonder if one's name can be removed from the book of Life of the Lamb. The reality is that Jesus has stated it clearly in his warning to the church in Sardis that it is only the overcomers that will have their names remained in the book of Life of the lamb (Revelation 3:5) What this means is that anyone who did not endure till the end will have his name blotted out.

This biblical truth calls for sober reflection; heaven-thirsty believers as a matter of routine should daily take up their crosses without fainting to ensure that their names remain intact in the book of life of the lamb. It is obvious that those who teach that the kingdom of God is here on earth and that once a man is born again, that all he needs to do is to access heaven by faith are employed by the devil. Many names that were before now in the book of life have been removed by Christ because the bearers of such names have departed from the cross and embraced false teachings.

The *heterodidaskalos* (false teachers) have deceived so many with prosperity teachings, solution messages and once-saved forever-saved doctrines and have drawn them to the devil. They are nurturing them for the Antichrist and preparing them for his worship.

The second beast (false prophet) will deceive the whole earth by the means of miracles and facilitate the acceptance of the Antichrist. The cross-less Christians will not see anything wrong in embracing the Antichrist because they are already deceived by the false christ, false prophets, and false teachers. Even the elects of God have been deceived.

In preparation for the coming of the Antichrist, many of his agents have gone out of the fold of Christ to establish Babylonian churches (1 John 2:18-19). The purpose of the quasi-church is to pervert the gospel of the cross. Their activities are dated back to the biblical era; they constitute themselves to enemies of the cross whose end is destruction. They gather people and preach another gospel to make gullible worshippers to mind the things of this earth and forget eternity. When the Antichrist comes, they will hand over their converts to him with the promise that he will give them solutions to all their problems.

Many Christians in the Babylonian churches will embrace the Antichrist without knowing because their pastors will invite him to their churches for prosperity and miracle programs. The Antichrist will call fire from above, perform great miracles and provide financial grants to people. All these will give him credibility among the kings of this world, the Babylonian church pastors and members and the entire world.

The tenure of the Antichrist will be short-lived and the war of Armageddon comes which will lead to his defeat.

Christ will come in His glory to establish His kingdom and judge the world. The devil, the Antichrist, the false prophet, and all those who have received the mark and bowed down to Him will be thrown into the lake of fire where they will be tormented forever and ever.

### **The Antichrist Comes Before The Second Coming Of Christ.**

At this juncture, I would like to bring to your cognizance that the *heterodidaskalos* have perverted the message of the end time to draw more people to themselves and fantasize them to believe that the Antichrist is not coming until believers are raptured. This will help their master take the victims unprepared and unaware, cross-carrying and suffering for Christ in this present time are the ways which God has planned for our preparation to resist the Antichrist. According to God's purpose, power has been given to the Antichrist to torture believers and prevail against us (Revelation 13:7). This was planned by God to prove our loyalty, our love for Him, and our overcoming prowess. Those who have abandoned their cross and embraced worldly Christianity will not put any effort to resist him; rather they will embrace him and receive the mark of condemnation.

Jesus in the book of Mathew 24 verse 22 said that the days of tribulation will be shortened for the sake of the elects. The elect must be prepared to face the Antichrist and resist the 666 mark. This preparation starts now!

We must be psychologically, physically, and spiritually wired to pass through the tribulation with much endurance before the days are shortened. When the Babylonian breeds are running to embrace the Antichrist, the rugged Christians who have embraced the old rugged cross will be ready to face the worst situation for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ knowing that when He comes in the cloud with the trumpet of God and with the voice of an archangel, that those who died in Him will rise first. Apostle Paul emphatically told the church in Thessalonica not to allow anyone to deceive them on when the rapture will occur, according to Paul, Christ will not come until the man of Sin, the son of perdition (Antichrist) is revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3).

Brothers and sisters in Christ say "NO" to the 666 mark and embrace the cross before it becomes too late. Any pastor who is telling you that the Antichrist will come after believers are raptured is either operating in deception or is an employee of Satan. They aim to deceive believers so that when the Antichrist comes, the church will accept him as another powerful man of God.

Ask the Holy Spirit to demystify the cross for you and say no to deception through the pulpit. No one has the right to ruin your salvation by going into satanic accord on your behalf. God will not accept excuses when we will all appear before Him on the white throne of judgement. Christianity without the cross is a suicidal mission for the Antichrist mark, let no one deceive you. Embrace the cross today so that you can reject the mark tomorrow.



**FOUR**  
CHAPTER  
**FOUR**

## *From Elementary Doctrine to* **ADVANCE CHRISTIANITY**

*"Therefore, let us leave elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God and instruction about washing or laying on of hands, the resurrection of dead and eternal judgement" (Hebrew 6:1-2 ESV)*

Christianity is dynamic; it is a process that has its starting and destination points. It is not passive, but active, and it is a metamorphosis with energy conversion which involves potential, kinetic and spiritual energies. Many Christians do not understand the dynamism of the Christian faith and the power which is given to them as believers are either wasted or underutilized. As soon as someone accepts Jesus as his Lord and Saviour, he receives the power to become a son (John 1:12) in the power to become lies the potential energy to do the work of self-denial, cross-carrying, following Jesus, discipleship, and missionary service. The work done is measured by effort multiplied by the distance covered in following Jesus. Unfortunately, many Christians do not know that Christians are in a spiritual motion which involves the utilization of the power to become.

From Apostle Paul's admonition to the Hebrew Christians, we can infer that there are two stages: at the baby stage, the elementary doctrine of Christ is emphasized but at the mature stage, a departure from the elementary doctrine to advanced doctrine (cross) is expected to take place. Apostle Paul thought that growth is long overdue in the lives of the Hebrew Christians and suggested a paradigm shift from elementary to maturity stage.

## **How Pastors Underdevelope Their Followers**

Most Christians believe that Christianity is an *El Dorado* and the pastors who are supposed to push people to the maturity level are either ignorant or are economical with the truth hence permanent babies in our churches. "Adult-baby Christians" who are chasing miracles, prophesies, prosperity, and *abracadabra* signs and wonders are now on the increase due to unbalanced spiritual diets that are dished from our pulpits every Sunday. Bible miracles were performed to attract unbelievers to Christ. Miracles are for babies; Paul was sick but received grace and not miraculous healing. Timothy had a gastric intestinal disease and Paul prescribed little wine for his medication and not the miracle of healing.

One hundred and twenty disciples in the upper room received the *Allosparacletos* and the responsibility to take the gospel to those who have not heard about Jesus starting from Jerusalem, in all Judea, Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. They also received attacks and persecution as a result of this responsibility. But no miracle was given to them. Rather God used them to work miracles among unbelievers and baby Christians.

Baby Christians cry for comfort, pursue selfish gains, seek miracles, takes no responsibility and feed on milk, but mature Christians take responsibilities to expand God's kingdom through missionary service.

*"For everyone who lives on milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have the power of discernment, trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil". (Hebrew 5:13-14 ESV).*

Apostle Paul made a comparative analysis of human physiological growth and Christian spiritual growth. The process of nutrition and growth is the same; it is appalling that solid food is introduced to the daily ration of a physical two-year-old baby, but a man of fifteen years in Christ is looking for milk to feed on! Baby Christians are not skillful in the word that teaches the right standing in Christ. They cannot take solid food (Christian suffering doctrine). They are deficient and cannot discern between good and evil because they have not received training through self-denial, cross-carrying, following Jesus, discipleship, missionary service, and sonship attainment. Immaturity and inability of Christians to distinguish good from evil is responsible for the manipulations and latent abuses in our churches today.

The captors keep the captives in perpetual captivity by disallowing them to know the truth about the kingdom of God which is not of eating and drinking but of righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17). It takes spiritual milk to bring us Christ but solid food is needed if we must advance into God's kingdom.

*"Strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. (Acts 14:22 NIV)...*

Apostle Paul and Barnabas encouraged their converts in their first missionary journey to continue in the elementary doctrine (faith) but must understand the bitter truth of what lies ahead as they proceed in their Christian journey. On their first meeting with the converts, Paul and Barnabas gave them milk but on a second visit, they decided to give them solid food without being afraid of how they will receive it. They did not lie to them to sow seeds which God will multiply, they did not tell them that by next week, they would all become millionaires, they did not tell them that Jesus has suffered for them and they need not suffer as Christians, they did not tell them that Jesus died poor to make them rich, they did not tell them that since they have received Christ that they are now qualified to enjoy the kingdom of God. They simply told them to prepare because a lot of suffering, persecution and troubles await them as they carry their crosses to follow Jesus. The word of God has not changed.

What has changed are the preachers due to the influx of wolves in sheep clothing who are commissioned by the devil to mammonize and modernize the gospel. Their major assignment is to make the gospel sweet to the flesh and distract the people from the truth and reality of the gospel.

## Metamorphosis from Teknion - Teknon - Huios

Christianity is a metamorphosis, everyone who receives Christ is given the power and the spirit of adoption to become what God has purposed for His children when he created Adam in His image and after His likeness. The word translated "adoption" is a Greek word *huiothesia* meaning "to place as a son". In Israel, when a young man grows up to full age and has demonstrated his ability to bear responsibilities, there comes a day that the father in a public ceremony presents the young man as a son. In Israel (Greek language), there are three words used for a son but in western culture, (English language) a male child is referred to as a son. The Greek words for son are:

1. *Teknion* - refers to a baby son.
2. *Teknon* - refers to a son who is maturing but not ready to take responsibility.
3. *Huios* - refers to a mature man who is ready to take responsibility, he is initiated into sonship by organizing an adoption ceremony.

The concept of this metamorphosis can be summarized this way *Teknion* (infant) - *Teknon* - (adolescent male child) - *Huios* (son). Similarly in biology, a complete metamorphosis of the phylum Insecta is an *egg - larvae - pupa - adult*. During this growth process, there are genetic developments, physiological and anatomical configurations that lead to the manifestation of an adult insect. This is the picture of the Christian who must likewise go through the growth process before he is placed in the position of a son of God.

The three stages of *Teknion - Teknon - Huios* have some spiritual processes that represent the stages; this is what I call the spiritual pathway to sonship. It is the purpose of God that every believer must pass through these processes before becoming a son which is a qualification for glorification and image transformation when Jesus appears in His glory. These are the stages of the pathway; Being born again - Denying self - Carrying the cross - Following Jesus - Becoming a disciple - Be a missionary - Become a son.

### **Born Again**

The first stage of the pathway to spiritual growth is to say the sinners' prayer. This concept is under serious abuse, there is an erroneous teaching that once a person says the sinners' prayer, he is qualified and he needs not to do any other thing to make heaven but to believe. It is important to note that believers are brought to the saving knowledge of Christ by grace and once we come to know Christ, He tells us what to do that will graduate us to sons of God and be conformed to His image. I wonder sometimes, why this born again prayer does not transform lives. Some people are born again in the "spirit" and there are those who are born again in the "flesh". Those that are born in the spirit climb the spiritual ladder to maturity while those born again in the flesh remain in one place unchanged.

*"Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit" (John 3:5-6KJV)*

Some are born again because someone told them that Christ can make them rich, some because their friends stood up for altar call and they followed while some even born again because they were targeting beautiful girls in a particular church. This is what I term "born again in the flesh"

Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans pointed out that there is no condemnation to the Christians who walk after the spirit. What it means that there are Christians who walk after the flesh. (Roman 8:1). Walking after the flesh means chasing after the things of this world to satisfy fleshy desires. Some churches lead people to Christ in the spirit and there are some who lead people to Christ in the flesh. By their fruits, you shall know them, those who are born again in the flesh mind fleshy things and those who are born again in the spirit mind spiritual things (Romans 8:5). Unfortunately, many Christians are taught and believe that once they have answered the altar call, they are already in heaven. For lack of knowledge, they go to church, pay their tithes, sow seeds and remain in this stage forever. Their baby statuses make them to not have an idea of spiritual growth and its pathway.

Such believers are slaves and under basic principles of the worldly manipulations of the devil, false teachers, and false prophets. Majority of Christians who are born again do not know that it is God's purpose for them to grow through the pathway and become sons by adoption. Jesus is coming to rapture the sons (not children) whom God has perfected the captain of their salvation through suffering (Hebrew 2:10). Christianity can be pictured as a journey and Christians as passengers on board. Being born again is the visa that qualifies a Christian for the journey to heaven.

The Christian who is the passenger needs to prepare for the journey, pack his luggage, pick a local cab to the airport and pass through immigration screening and finally board the flight. A spiritually-minded passenger prays for the safety of the flight until the plane lands. The same scenario applies to a believer who is on his way to heaven.

*"Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do. Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14 NIV).*

Apostle Paul made these statements concerning his journey to heaven, it is wrong to assume that you have arrived when the plane has not landed. Believers should emulate Paul and remain steadfast, avoid distractions and focus to win the crowns. Born again qualifies you to embark on the journey but self-denial and cross-carrying enables you to join the flight where Christ is the Pilot. In Christianity today, there are many pilots, some planes are piloted by Antichrists (1John 2:18), some by false Christs in collaboration with false teachers and prophets. (Mathew 24:24) These pilots do not require any qualification from the passengers, just come, no responsibilities except to pay the fare (tithe and seed) no self-denial, no cross-carrying, no discipleship, no missionary service, no sonship attainment, junketing and merrymaking on board all the way. Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, let us be careful of deceptive flights.

## Deny Self

This is the second stage of the pathway to sonship. Jesus made it categorically clear that anyone who wants to come after Him must deny himself. This is the stage that preachers, either by commission or omission have failed to communicate to the converts when they first come to Christ and this has affected negatively the spiritual growth of many believers. When someone is born again, it is expected that he climbs the ladder of growth through self-denial.

*"Then He said to them all: Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23 NIV)*

Self-denial is the act of collapsing one's will, ambition, aspiration and dream to God's will and purpose. Jesus expects believers to make adjustments in their lives to accommodate the perfect will of God, such adjustments could be inconveniencing but He expects us to endure and complain not, it is not about us but Him. Unfortunately, many believers are pursuing selfish goals and ambitions, yet they parade themselves as disciples of Jesus. If anyone believes in Christ and has not denied himself, such an individual is on his way to the road of apostasy. If you do not deny yourself, there is every tendency that in the nearest future you will deny Jesus.

The messages in our churches are not helping matters too: a majority of them are egocentric, self-edifying and raising the will of man above the will of God, the law of positive confession places the desire of man against the purpose of God.

A man who has denied himself to follow Jesus places God on the highest priority cadre and if there is any conflict of choice, the will of God prevails. It is a sign of spiritual growth and it is the second level in the pathway to sonship. Have you denied yourself? Or are you still living for yourself and your family? It might interest you to know that the visible evidence for identifying someone who has come in contact with Christ is self-denial.

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come, the old has gone, and the new is here!" (2Corinthians 5:17 NIV)...*

This is a very popular scriptural verse that has been interpreted to be the state of our new birth in Christ. The old man in us is selfish and seemed his own but the new man in us is supposed to be selfless. Jesus wants our old ambitions, aspirations, and dreams to give way to the agenda of God's kingdom and His righteousness. When there are manifestations of these changes, then spiritual metamorphosis has begun.

### **Carry Cross**

After self-denial, the next stage in the pathway to spiritual growth is cross-carrying. This is the stage where a crucial decision is taken by a believer to face diverse challenges for the sake of Christ. It is a stage of absolute vow to remain steadfast in following Jesus no matter the condition.

*"Then Jesus told his disciples if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*

*For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?" (Mathew 16:24-26 NIV).*

In Nigeria, death is a real possibility of becoming a Christian. The call of Christ to take up our cross daily is for us to be ready for crucifixion which is the most shameful death. It is a point of signing our death warrants willingly for the eternal reward which awaits those who are resolute to follow Him. We should be willing to suffer anything rather than deny Him. Many times, it is a very difficult decision to make but it is an unavoidable requirement for our Christian journey.

Taking up our cross to follow Christ means the commitment to forsake all. Our dreams, ambitions possessions, family, our lives must be disregarded for the sake of Jesus, His gospel and His kingdom. At this stage, the devil launches attack through persecutions, humiliations, reproaches, rejections, etc. to stop the believer because he knows that any Christian who picks his cross is a danger to the kingdom of darkness. The devil releases all weapons of warfare in his arsenal to stop a cross-carrying believer without knowing that every affliction adds stars to the crowns of reward for those who endure to the end.

Jesus knew that there is the death possibility but He encouraged us to remain faithful as losing life here on earth for His sake is gaining life in eternity. Our souls are jewels of inestimable values: Christ considered it as the most important treasure that any man can possess and He equates it with nothing. Unfortunately, many of us are busy trading our souls for filthy lucre.

Most Christians are not familiar with the cross concept, the Scriptures says that any Christian who has not carried his cross, is not worthy to be called a Christian.

*"Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me." (Mathew 10:38NIV)..*

What Christ is saying is that anyone who is not willing to bear difficulties, challenges, pains, shame, rejection, reproaches, afflictions and death for His sake, His Gospel and His Kingdom is not worthy of the name or reward of a Christian. With this standard, how many of us are Christians? This is food for thought, but we still have the opportunity to mend our ways, otherwise, we will not like what we will hear on the last day.

*"Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles. Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers". (Mathew 7:21-23)*

A lot of surprises await us when Christ will separate the wheat from the chaff. "Had I known" will resonate in the atmosphere. Many pastors who are popular, successful, and doing great exploit here on earth without the cross will be disappointed. Many who are calling the name of the Lord and giving forensic prophecies, driving demons in the name of Christ, performing notable miracles in His name but have rejected the cross of Christ will be shocked.

It will be worse than the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. If pastors are not recognized by Christ what will happen to their followers? Your guess is as good as mine!

## Follow Christ

This is the fourth stage in the pathway to sonship, self-denial and cross-carrying are prerequisites for following Jesus and is a very important stage in the spiritual growth of anyone who has come in contact with Christ. Believers are expected to walk after Jesus as He leads the way; He teaches us the steps to take in our spiritual life. Our Christian race starts by following after His pattern in moral and Evangelical duties. He called Peter and Andrew to follow Him and He would make them fishers of men, they did and their lives never remained the same. Whatever we shall be as believers depend on what He makes us and not what we desire to be, He takes us through the rough ways to prepare us for the great task ahead and He never tolerates any act of distraction as He leads.

*"He said to another man, Follow me. But he replied, Lord, first let me go and bury my father. Jesus said to him, Let the dead bury their dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God. Still, another said, I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family. Jesus replied, No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:59-62 NIV)..*

Following Christ is a serious commitment that should be prioritized by anyone who wants to be His disciple, even family, love and engagements are not expected to retard our motion.

No wonder, He advised the rich man in Mark chapter 10 to go and sell all his possessions and give the proceeds to the poor, and then come and carry his cross and follow Him. He did not want the rich man to have anything to remember as he follows Him, thereby causing distraction.

In His earthly ministry, He led his disciples to many mission fields and promised to lead them to areas that they have not reached while He was on earth. In His heavenly ministry today, He is now leading us to mission fields where He has not been named, to offices where He can use us, to countries, cities and villages where He has assignments for us, to markets where our lives will radiate light that will attract the gentiles. Following Him is in preparation for discipleship and missionary service which are compulsory for every believer.

When we are certified and have proven that we are now capable of taking responsibilities, He hands us over to the Holy Spirit for the preparation of the adoption ceremony. The essence of the cross is to beat us into shape and cause us to remain focused, obedient and submissive as He takes us to go where ordinarily we wouldn't have agreed to go. Following Jesus sheepishly is a sign of spiritual maturity, at this stage, He trains believers to recognize His voice, and He knows believers by name and calls us by name.

*"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27 NIV)...*

In your spiritual growth, have you gotten to the level of relationship with Christ to the extent of recognizing His voice when He speaks? If you have, congratulations!

But if you haven't, go back to self-denial, cross-carrying and then follow him and learn of Him for He is meek and gentle.

## Be ADisciple

This is another stage of the pathway to maturity in Christianity. It is a stage of preparation, training and equipping of believers for the fulfilment of their purpose on earth by our Lord Jesus Christ. He invites all for this training exercise but one must meet the criteria before enrollment is perfected.

*"Then Jesus said to his disciples, Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me". (Mathew 16:24 NIV)..*

Many Christians believe that they have become disciples of Jesus when they have said the sinners' prayer and have gotten the assurance that their sins have been forgiven but in reality, there are only a few Disciples of Christ. One of the duties of the church is to help connect believers to Christ's teachings for them to be like Christ but unfortunately, the church has derailed.

Most pastors have trained their members to be like themselves and work for their churches. Christ disciples should pattern after Him and their field is the world, not the church. Forgiveness and attending church services are not discipleship when we are reconciled with God; a new relationship is established that enables us to have access to Him. Jesus now instructs us on what next to do, He teaches us how to be like Him in deeds and actions. He prepares us on how to go about world evangelization and equips us with spiritual knowledge that will enable us to rely on Him absolutely for our provisions.

He sends us out on fieldwork with some unforeseen and unfavourable conditions to test our sagacity and resilience. He expects us to follow His instructions carefully and apply what we learnt cautiously. He gives us examples of what is expected of us to do and carefully evaluate our performances.

He does this through His written word (Logos) and spoken word (Rhema).

Believers need the power of discernment to enable them to distinguish between good and evil through constant training and practice, this is why other stages are very important before getting to this stage. Do not allow any man to disciple you outside the word of God and ask the Holy Spirit to help you with the gift of discernment. Growth in Christianity is personal and does not require any man to help you do. All you need is a good relationship with the Holy Spirit who grooms you. Relying on pastors cannot get you to this stage or any other stage of the pathway. Most pastors have their own goal to pursue and might not have time for your development, they tell you what to do that will benefit them and do not care whether you grow or not as long as you are faithfully labouring for the growth of their kingdoms. Please, walk out your salvation with fear and tremble by your own hands.

Your relationship with Christ is paramount at this stage as he teaches you how to go about your activities as you journey through life as a believer. Men have failed as far as discipleship is concerned, there are now so much church disciples who work very hard for the growth of human Babylonian kingdoms that are nicknamed churches while the gospel of the kingdom has been abandoned and the unreached are dying because they are malnourished of the gospel, with only a few kingdom disciples

trying to rescue them. Until we groom believers who will love Christ more than their pastors and the kingdom of God more than their churches, we will continue to wallow in ignorance, deception, and false worship.

As many as would want to be developed by Christ after going through this book, I advise you to leave men alone and embrace Christ. He is the only one who can train you to be like Him. Study His word and allow the anointing that you have received to teach you.

*"As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit--just as it has taught you, remain in him". (1John 2:27NIV)..*

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, our omniscient God knew that men would fail Him and has provided a way of escape for you by giving you the anointing that can teach you all things - discipleship training, business administration, marital solutions, science and arts etc. This anointing is not fake, He doesn't collect tithe, offering, and seeds but equips you with everything you need in life. All you need is to follow Jesus' instruction and grow to the level of receiving from the spirit.

Make sure no one deceives you again after the anointing has taught you, let your knowledge remains. As soon as you step into the next stage of the pathway, the Holy Spirit takes over you and becomes your life manager and administrator.

## **Be A Missionary**

This is the last stage before attaining sonship. It is a stage of practical display of all you have learnt as disciples, and it is the Commissioning stage. Many Christians believe that Missionary work is for some people who are called to be missionaries. I would like to state it categorically clear that missionary work is not only just for every Christian, it is also an essential stage in the growth process of every believer. Many are wondering if they are included in the call and some have exempted themselves because they have not gotten to the growth stage of recognizing their calling and purpose on earth.

Every believer is a missionary by calling but it is not every believer that is commissioned to do the work of a missionary. Before a Christian is commissioned to be involved in missions by Christ, he must have denied Himself, carried his cross, followed Jesus and have been trained. Missionaries are commissioned by Christ and not by man. Missionaries Commissioned by Christ are ready to die for the sake of the gospel but those Commissioned by man faint on the way and run back to the city. Giving and groaning missionaries Commissioned by Christ are dogged and radical but those that are commissioned by man find it difficult to continue giving or praying.

*"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Mathew 28:19-20 NIV)*

Jesus sent the disciples to go into all nations to replicate themselves; it is not an appeal to be considered, it is a command that must be obeyed. Churches and Christians have thrown this command to the dust bins and are now pursuing other agendas. Because of a faulty foundation, only a few Christians have gotten to this level of growth. Many do not even know that it is the responsibility of every Christian to carry out this instruction while many are not mature enough to handle the responsibilities.

In the metamorphosis from *Teknion - Teknon - Huios* most Christians are in *Teknion* stage of development (infants) while some are in *Teknon* stage (maturing but not ready enough for responsibilities) only a few who have shown that they are capable of taken missionary responsibilities are in *Huios* stage (sons). God desires to say to every believer "*This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased*" but unfortunately, only a few can pay the price of sonship. All disciples of Jesus in His earthly ministry were only initiated into sonship after they assumed responsibilities as missionaries through the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Must every Christian be deployed to mission fields? The answer is NO! There are three categories of missionaries - some are specifically called to go, some are called to give, while some are called to groan. Every mature Christian must be involved in at least one of these three categories. If you are not called to go, you must be involved in activities that will help those who are in the fields to succeed in bringing those who have not heard about Jesus to His saving knowledge; you can hold a lifeline through prayers and financial support.

Missionary service must be carried out by the individual Christian if you are called to go, let no man go on your behalf; if you are called to give, let no man give on your behalf, get in touch with missionaries directly and if you are called to groan, let no one pray for you. It is a personal service.

Every believer who seeks to grow to maturity and be raptured must as a matter of urgency be involved in missions, one can only prove that he loves the second appearing of Christ by becoming a facilitating agent of His coming. This is the responsibility and the purpose of every believer but the workforce is lost to the world because of mammonized and secularized gospel that works against the coming kingdom of Christ. Have you wondered why churches are not talking about the Great Commission? Have you wondered why churches are concentrated on cities and towns while there are millions of communities around the world without churches? These are the manipulations of the enemy through lack of maturity syndromes in our churches. When everyone is a baby, who will then take responsibility?

I encourage those who have gotten to this stage to faithfully pursue the agenda of the Great Commission because there is no time to waste, the end is near and Jesus will soon come. Every mission team needs radical goers, radical givers, and radical groaners; when we faithfully carry out this assignment, the reward is the adoption into the level of sonship by the Holy Spirit. The reason for the coming of the Holy Spirit is to empower the missionaries (Acts 1:8). I pity those who are sitting in the churches speaking in tongues because the work of the Holy Spirit is not ecclesiastical but evangelical.

Any believer who wants to have a relationship with the Holy Spirit must be involved in missions. The Holy Spirit comes in the life of a believer for one reason - "witnessing".

*"As many as are led by the spirit, they are the sons of God"*  
*(Romans 8:14 KJV)*

At the stage of becoming a missionary, the Holy Spirit takes over the life of a believer and leads and directs Him in everything that He does. It is the Holy Spirit that announces the sonship on the day of adoption.

### **Become A Son Of God**

This is the final stage in the spiritual growth process in the lives of believers. It is a fulfilment of God's desire towards man, to bring man to His image which he was originally made in but was perverted by the devil in the Garden of Eden. Jesus was primarily sent for this purpose and anything short of this is a complete aberration of God's plan for salvation.

*"But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"* (John 1:12 KJV)...

The power to become sons of God was given to believers to enable us to pass through the growth process. It is obvious that receiving Jesus does not place anybody in the status of a 'son of God' but what is released to a believer is the power to become a son. Anyone who judiciously utilizes the power will attain the status of sonship through self-denial, Cross carrying, following Jesus, discipleship, and missionary service; but many Christians are not aware of this pathway and remain as infants

all the days of their lives. What a divine wasted effort on seedlings that never grow to fruition! Power is the capacity and ability to do something, and in this case, spiritual energy is released on every believer to enable him to go through the growth rigours to attain this God-ordained level of sonship. When Jesus gives us the power to become sons of God, He has given us the ability to work out our salvation through the attainment of sonship.

*"For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering" (Hebrew 2:10 ESV)...*

Sons will be brought to glory when Jesus appears in His second coming. This is the moment that the whole creation is waiting for, to witness the manifestation of the sons of God in fulfilment of the eternal purpose of God. The sons whom God foreknew, predestinated, and called will be conformed to the likeness of Christ who is the captain of the sons of God. What a glorious phenomenon to see a man in the image and likeness of God after about seven thousand years of God's plan to restore the dignity of man that was lost in the Garden of Eden!

Please, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, anyone who misses this will spend his eternity in the lake of fire. Going to church and working in the church cannot develop you to sonship; the power has been given to you. Why not utilize this power and seek the kingdom of God through the pathway. False teachers have perverted this process of sonship attainment by giving believers alternative ways - pay your tithe, sow your seed, build the church, bless your pastor, work for the growth of the church, etc. All these cannot take you into the kingdom of God;

it is a distraction from the pit of hell to draw Christians away from heaven and hand them over to the Antichrist.

## **Jesus Metamorphosis**

Jesus passed through the spiritual and physical metamorphosis of *Teknion - Teknon -Huios*. The Bible recorded the activities in the infant stage of Jesus, His birth, and migration to Egypt (*Teknion* stage). Nothing was heard of Him until He was twelve years old when he was found brainstorming with the doctors in the temple (*Teknon* stage) and He went into obscurity until He was mature at the age of thirty (*Huios*).

*"Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph."*

*(Luke 3:23NIV)..*

*"As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased."(Mathew 3:16-17NIV)..*

We see these three stages of growth amazingly illustrated in the life of Jesus. The first stage is as a baby in the manger, the second stage is as an adolescent who is not ready to take responsibility, and the third stage is as a mature son ready for adoption at the age of thirty. The silent years as seen in the growth of Jesus are the spiritual development stages from self-denial - cross-carrying - following the father- Training by the father - grooming for missionary responsibilities and ultimately maturing into a son (*Huios*). The adoption ceremony was performed at the bank of river Jordan.

Following the tradition of the Jews, the heavenly father brought His son before the public to declare Him a Son "*This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased*". The heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in a bodily form of a dove to lead Him throughout His life and missionary career.

The events that transpired after Jesus' adoption ceremony were the glorious manifestation of what we have been predestinated to become. Jesus growth and metamorphosis was the pattern for our developmental process and final maturity to sonship. Believers who understand this pattern and follow the pathway will ultimately graduate to become God's sons, this should be the highest priority of every Christian whom Christ has given the power to become a son of God. This growth is personal and cannot be found in most presentday churches.

My advice to believers is to personally develop themselves through studying the word of God, practicing what is in this book, and constantly fellowshipping with the Holy Spirit. All growth stages and experiences are personal and can only be personally developed and evaluated.

## **Advance Christian Doctrines**

*"Therefore let us leave elementary doctrines of Christ and go to maturity ....."* (*Hebrew 6:1ESV*)

Apostle Paul in a letter to the Hebrew Christians believed that they have lingered so long in the elementary doctrine of Christ and should advance in their doctrinal knowledge of Christianity.

Elementary doctrines are for babies and advanced doctrines are for adults. Repentance from dead works, baptism, faith, laying of hands (miracles, healing and deliverance), knowledge of the resurrection and judgment are all elementary doctrines of Christ. It is quite unfortunate that most of our churches are all concentrating on elementary doctrine and this has resulted in a lack of growth of Christians all over the world. The pathway which I illustrated in this chapter is the course outline for advanced Christianity studies. They are self-denial, cross-carrying, following Jesus, discipleship and Missionary responsibilities, and ultimately maturing to sonship. I encourage every reader of this book to take a bold step and embrace the advance doctrines of Christ, in it lies our salvation and glorification.

The preaching of the cross is foolishness to them that hate growth but to the ones that aspire to mature, it is the power of God for the attainment of sonship. At times, I find it difficult to communicate the doctrines of advanced Christianity due to the damages that have been done by the false teachers in the lives of professed Christians. How do I tell Christians who believe that Christianity is all about enjoyment that they have to deny themselves for the sake of Christ? (Luke 9:23).

How do I convince a Christian who has been indoctrinated by prosperity preachers to pursue wealth and become the richest man in the world to forsake all and carry his cross and follow Jesus? (Luke 14:33) How do I explain to someone whom his pastor has told that "he is not born again to suffer again" that he must go through much suffering before he can access the kingdom of God? (Acts: 14:22) How do I break the news to Christians whose minds have been hypnotized to believe that

they are already in heaven that they need to pass through difficulties before they can mature to sons for eventual glorification? (Hebrew 2:10) Some people have been made to believe that all they need to do as Christians is to believe, how do I inform them that they are not only called to believe but they are also called to suffer for Jesus? (Philippians 1:29) How do I disabuse the mind of someone who has been trained to confess and demand whatever he wants from God, that the will of God should not be subservient to the will of man? (Mark 14:36)

We need a spiritual detoxifier and sanitizer to purify the minds of Christians from the poison of mammonized and shammanized messages and immunize them from further invasion. The solution lies in sound biblical doctrines; let us make the word of God a standard for our lives. For lack of knowledge of the word of God, Christians are perishing daily and the ways of God are perverted by the heterodidaskalos. We must seek the truth because in it lies our freedom. It does not matter how long lies have existed in our minds, when the light of the truth shines, the darkness of lies disappears. This is what **The Mystery Of The Cross Revealed** has come to accomplish in the lives of believers.



**FIVE**  
CHAPTER  
**ONE**

# *The Great Commission* **AN ABANDONED PROJECT**

The Great Commission is the instruction of resurrected Jesus Christ to His disciples that they spread His teachings to all nations of the world. The most famous version of The Great Commission is found in the Book of Matthew 28:16-20. The biblical disciples were commissioned on the day of Pentecost, after the power from on high was given to them by the Holy Ghost to be witnesses unto Jesus in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The Jerusalem church was reluctant to embark on this mandate and there came persecution that scattered them abroad and each of the disciples ran with the gospel as they sought asylum in Diaspora. Apostle Paul was later arrested by Christ to join the league of apostles for the evangelization of the gentile world. He worked in season and out of season to bring the gospel to the gentile nations. Evangelist Philip had an encounter with the Ethiopian Eunuch whom some theologians believed was the one who brought the gospel to Africa.

History has it that in the 15th century Christianity entered into SubSaharan Africa with the arrival of the Portuguese. In the South of the continent, the Dutch founded the beginnings of the Dutch Reform Church in 1652. In the hinterland of the continent, most people continued to practice African Traditional Religions uninterrupted until the 19th century. Christianity came into Nigeria in the 19th century through Yoruba land.

In 1842, Samuel Ajayi Crowther suffered so much to bring the gospel to the Yoruba Nation. In 1857, Reverend John Christopher Taylor-an Igbo slave, left Sierra Leone for Onitsha to kick start the first church in Igbo land amidst suffering, persecution, and frustration. After one of his visits to Nsugbe, Reverend Taylor made the following observation as a challenge to his followers

*"Ye enlightened sons of Africa that are accustomed to the climate; will you leave the 26,000 inhabitants of Nsugbe to perish for lack of bread of life? Ye sons of Africa in general whether born of Sierra Leone or West Indies, here are tracks marked out for your usefulness. If you have the African blood in you and if you wish to ameliorate your countrymen, seek the divine grace which is in Christ, learn of Him as He laboured for His countrymen and for our redemption, spend and be spent for Him as He has done for you. Come and rank yourself in this glorious enterprise"*

This call which Reverend Taylor made one hundred and forty-three years ago, as of the year of writing this book calls for sober reflection as over sixty four million Nigerians are perishing for lack of bread of life. The baton for the evangelization of entire Nigeria has been handed over to the church and unfortunately, the baton is missing from our churches and the chain has been broken and hence no reactions and no multiplier effects.

## The Present Day Nigerian Church And The Great Commission

Some western missionaries did their best and some died to establish Christianity in Nigeria. When they saw that Christianity was getting rooted in Nigeria, they handed over the baton to the Nigerian church to continue from where they stopped. Some 20th-century orthodox churches did their best to evangelize the Northern part of Nigeria but their best was not good enough due to challenges associated with reaching the North. Towards the end of the 20th century, there was the emergence of the new generation churches whose orientation has nothing do with fronting the gospel to areas where Christ has not been named. That was the beginning of the Babylonian empire building and all manner of fraud in churches.

Unfortunately, when orthodox worshippers started migrating to join the new generation churches, the orthodox churches in their bid to measure up with their competitors and meet the expectations of their worshippers abandoned the mandate of the Great Commission and concentrated on how to retain their members. Their core missionary values were eroded by the modernization of their ethics and norms which had hitherto aided the spread of the gospel to unreached and hard to reach places in Nigeria. They started preaching mammonized gospel and started making money and building empires like the new generation churches at the detriment of missionary work which they were very good at. This was the way the cookie crumbled and Jesus' command of "go ye" was thrown to the dustbins.

How long shall we as a church continue to live this way? We have been reluctant and stayed in our comfort zones for so long; we have pursued our selfish desires without concern for the last instructions which Jesus gave to His disciples; we have complained so much that the government wants to Islamize Nigeria; we have prayed severally for God to kill Boko Haram members and Fulani Herdsmen but we have failed to realize that our inaction is responsible for the tragedy in Nigeria. It is high time we woke up and become responsible Christians and pursue the agenda of the Great Commission. The mandate of the Great Commission has been abandoned by Nigerian Churches. We are no longer interested in advancing the kingdom of Christ to areas where Christ has not been preached. Western missionaries sacrificed their lives to give us the gospel but we are now merchandizing it and all our churches are concentrated in cities and towns where offerings and tithes are large. This empire-building and money-making agenda in our churches have hindered the spread of the gospel in Nigeria.

Our inability to reach the north with the gospel and love of Christ is responsible for insurgency and terrorism in our country. While we were busy with selfish and prosperity messages in our churches and fellowships, the enemy went ahead of us with AK-47 and Bombs and equipped our prospective target group with the instruction “wipe away Christianity from Nigeria”. The church today is now a sitting church instead of a going church. The true greatness of any church should not be measured by how many it seats but by how many it sends. We have abandoned the going agenda and now engrossed so much with increasing the seating capacity of our churches.

According to Roland Allen, “missionary zeal does not grow out of intellectual belief nor out of theological argument but out of love”. Lack of love is responsible for this criminal negligence. We have monopolized Jesus for so long, let us start sharing His love, mercy and saving power with others. He did not die to save us alone; He died to save all, including terrorists. In Matthew 24:14, Jesus said that He will not come to take the saints until the gospel is preached to all nations of the world. I strongly believe that no one has the right to hear the gospel twice while there remains someone who has not heard it once no matter the race, tribe or tongue.

The knowledge of Jesus has saturated the southern part of Nigeria while the northerners are Gospel-starved. The place of electronic media in evangelism cannot be denied but many churches and men of God have been deceived by the devil to replace the going agenda with the broadcasting agenda when the word of God is preached on television and radio, who do we want to reach out to? Who are our target groups? Majority of the unreached in Africa do not have access to electronic media and the few that do, do not have any business with Christian programs and networks. The only veritable tool to be utilized in reaching the unreached is “GO YE”. Until we start going or sending missionaries to reach the unreached, the Great Commission remains an abandoned project.

It might interest you to note that about 64 million Nigerians have not heard about Jesus and we are comfortably building human kingdoms and empires. Churches have gone commercial, gospels are now for sale, multibillion properties are developed for sale; banks, hotels, schools, and universities are

built to make money for the church and nothing is invested to reach the unreached. How many mission schools and hospitals do we still have in Nigeria? The bitter truth is that many of Nigerian Pastors went through Mission schools constructed and managed by white missionaries with minimal payment or no school fees at all. Why can't we extend this kind gesture to others and attract them to the saving power of Christ? The mission is not a ministry of choice for a few hyperactive Christians in the church, mission is the purpose of the church and the reason for the existence of every Christian.

According to Ted Engstram “A congregation that is not deeply and earnestly involved in mission does not understand the nature of salvation” and A.B. Simpson said, “The Christian is not obedient unless he is doing all in his power to send the Gospel to the heathen world”. Every Christian must contribute his quota for the fulfilment of the Great Commission and no excuse is justifiable. The command is not optional but a must! JD Greear in his speech said “Without the mission, a church is not a church. It is just a group of disobedient Christians hanging out”. We must stop hanging out and start evangelizing the unreached, delayed obedience is far better than absolute disobedience.

We have two options to the kingdom tension in Nigeria: to aggressively pursue the mandate of the Great Commission and push the gospel farther north or to remain in our comfort zones and show an indifferent attitude to the salvation of over 64 million Nigerians who are waiting for someone to tell them about Jesus. Whichever choice we make, there is a reward.

We are supposed to go back to the drawing board and bring out missiological strategies aimed at reaching the dying souls in the world for lack of the saving knowledge of Christ. Churches should go back to the old-time religion and act like the apostles in Acts of the Apostles.

I believe that many churches and pastors are not into missions because the brand of their religion is not worth propagating. How do we preach prosperity to impoverished naked people? Seed sowing will never work in such environments because they do not have any offering, seed or tithe to give. The gospel is only good news if it gets to the people in time; the harvests are not only ripe but decaying, reacting and raging. We are supposed to do God's business in a hurry; delay is dangerous. For how long will this project remain abandoned? According to Franz Fanon, "every generation, irrespective of its obscurity discovers its mission fulfil it or betray it".

As we discover the mission of the Great Commission, may we put all hands on deck to fulfil the mission by going, giving, groaning and sending. May we realize that it is not our choice to spread the gospel; it is our death if we do not. Let us also be reminded that God will hold us responsible for the blood of the unreached people's groups that we have refused to reach with the gospel and love of Christ if they die without Christ. According to Mendel Taylor, "The church must send or the church will end". Churches should realize that the target groups of the unreached nations should be given a priority. John Keith Falconer in his speech said: "I have one candle of life to burn and I will rather burn it out in a land filled with darkness than in a land flooded with light".

May we have a shift of candles to the villages of northern Nigeria where no one has ever preached and heard about Jesus.

## **Mission Awareness Survey**

Research and Strategy Development Unit of Afri-mission and Evangelism Network conducted a comprehensive study on the awareness level of the mandate of the Great Commission among Christians in Abuja in May 2019. The survey was conducted targeting clusters of residence by random sampling. Questionnaires were distributed and oral interviews were conducted among Christians. We made sure that non-Christians were excluded from the survey.

The first question was "if they had heard of Great Commission "58% of the 1250 respondent ticked "no" 36% ticked "yes" 6% ticked "cannot remember".

The second question was "if yes in question (1) which of these clearly describe the Great Commission?" 62% of 450 respondents who answered "yes" to question (1) answered, "It is the instruction that Jesus gave to his disciples to go into all nations and preach the Gospel". 25% of them answered that "it is the act of doing God's work in the church", 12% ticked "it is pastoral or priestly ordination" while 3% said that "it is baptism by immersion". For the scope and purpose of this report, we will narrow our analysis to the above mentioned data and descriptions.

It can be deduced that in a community of Christians with a population of 1250 people in Nigeria, 725 of them have not heard about the Great Commission and only 273 people have heard and know the meaning of The Great Commission. This survey has also proved that not all that claim that they have heard of the Great Commission know the meaning. A total of 177 in a population of 450 people who claimed that they have heard of the Great Commission do not know what it means. The current population of Nigeria is 206,074,234, as of Tuesday, June 30, 2020, based on Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data, and according to Joshua Project, the percentage population of Christians in Nigeria as at 2020 is 51.1%. Using the latest U.N data on Nigeria population, it can be estimated that the population of Christians in Nigeria is 105,303,934.

Based on Afri-Mission and Evangelism Network data on Great Commission awareness study even though not up to sample standard of 10% of the target population, about 58% of the randomized clustered respondents have not heard about the Great Commission and 14.16% who claimed that they have heard do not know the meaning of it. It will not be far from the truth if we deduce and generalized that 72.16% (75,987,319 out of 105,303,934) of the Christian population in Nigeria have not heard about the Great Commission or do not know what the Great Commission is. This shocking discovery calls for sober reflection. If we do not know about the Great Commission, on what basis is our Christian faith established?

It might interest you to know that Pastors were part of the sampled population and many of them do not know what the Great Commission means. That many have not heard about the Great Commission means that it is seldom mentioned or not mentioned at all in our churches. The focus on problem-solving messages in our churches has not allowed the message of the Great Commission to prevail. This situation calls for a declaration of a state of emergency in the Nigerian church.

Problems in our churches and the society at large are in one way or the other connected to this ignorance because we do not know what the Great Commission is, we do not know what our Christian responsibilities are, and have neglected and abandoned this mandate. The repercussions are insurgency and terrorism, if we had massively taken the gospel to Northern Nigeria earlier than now, some of them with AK-47 and bombs would have been carrying the Bible today.

If church leaders had grasped the meaning and keyed into the mandate of the Great Commission, they would have concentrated on fronting the gospel instead of building business empires called "churches". If Christians who go about seeking miracles, signs, wonders, prophesies, and prosperity had understood the meaning and mandate of the Great Commission, their priority would have changed. Efforts should be geared toward educating Christians on this mandate, churches should repent and obey the last instruction which Jesus gave to us and should stop building human Babylonian empires.

## The Error Called Mission

Every clergy's car has a "missionary" sticker on it, every church bus has an inscription "missionary", and many churches have missions department and missions team. The mission buses are used to convey worshippers from one metropolitan area of the city to another. Yet, it is a mission bus. The pastor who parades his car with missionary sticker has no mission field neither has he embarked on any missionary journey. The mission department and the mission team plants churches in metropolitan areas of Abuja, Lagos, and Port Harcourt.

We love to bear the name missionary but we do not want to take the risk which missionaries take, or is it that we do not know what Christian mission is? Maybe a concise definition of what mission is will help us understand and adjust our ways. Christian mission is an organized effort to spread Christianity to new converts. Missions involve sending individuals and groups, called missionaries, across culture and geographical boundaries, to carry on evangelism or other activities, such as educational or hospital work.

From this definition, it is obvious that the scenarios which I described above are not in any way related to missionary activities and should be seen as errors that must be corrected. When any effort is made to introduce missions to members of some churches, they will boldly tell you that their churches are into missions; their reactions are informed by the sticker, the inscription, and departmental nomenclature. These actions are deceptive and do not allow Christians to understand the full meaning of missions.

Some confuse Evangelism with Missions, some churches train missionaries who go to the street where the church is located to bring members including other Christians to their churches. This is an error!

Evangelism is the act of preaching the gospel, it is derived from the Greek word "*evangelion*", target persons could be friends, neighbours or even mother or father and the target area is anywhere. „Mission is derived from the Latin word "*missio*" which means to send out like a missile, target persons are those who do not have access to the gospel and the target area is where there is no church, usually, it involves crossing culture and geographical areas. A clear understanding of these will inevitably help us to know what we are doing and how we are supposed to do it.

There is another error called mission which I identified in the mission fields in Northern Nigeria: there are churches that have crossed culture and geographical boundaries and got the Gospel to the metropolitan areas in Northern Nigeria. I salute their courage because of their boldness to cross-culture and physical boundaries to propagate the gospel of Christ. Majority of the churches claim that they do not have the grace to move northwards, they need to explain better to Jesus when He returns.

The error that I identified is that the churches planted in major cities in northern Nigeria are attended by southern Christians who are in the north for business, schools, careers and other livelihood activities.

I held a conference in one of the capital cities in Northern Nigeria and I asked the pastors present at the meeting to tell me, how many of their members are indigenes of the town and nobody was able to mention even a name. This is an error! When planning for mission, we need to identify our target groups and develop an organized strategy to reach out to them. Do you know that if anything happens and the southerners are told to go back to their states of origin for a program, what it means is that many of our churches in the North will be locked down until we return. This is not mission but an error!

Many churches are collecting mission offerings and support from their members only to use the resources to plant churches in cities and towns where there is already a saturation of churches. Missionaries on this platform go to woo other Christians to leave their churches and join theirs. This is an error, not missions! How many of our churches have Fulani indigenous branch? How many of our churches have churches planted among the unreached people's groups? If we are not ready to do missions, we should stop deceiving others; peradventure someone in the congregation might wake up one morning with a divine inspiration to do the needful in fulfilment of the mandate of the Great Commission. Instead of relying on deceptive programs, such a person should have the opportunity to genuinely seek help from those that are really into missions.

## **The 3 Dimensional Mission**

I would like to share with every Christian who will come in contact with this book, what I call the 3-D mission.

For a holistic approach to missionary work in Nigeria in particular and the world in general, the 3-dimensional mission should be adopted to ensure that no one is left behind as we strategize to reach all that need to be reached. These concepts involve (a) Conventional mission (b) Diaspora Mission (c) Ecclesiastical Mission. The target groups of the three models differ and the approaches are not the same. I strongly believe that every Christian irrespective of his obscurity or denominational affiliation will find at least one of these models to fit in as we all aspire to obey our Lord Jesus' command of "go ye".

### **Conventional Mission**

This is the oldest model of mission, it was the model that the apostles in Acts of the Apostle adopted, and missionaries are sent to reach the target communities with the Gospel and love of Christ. In Afri-Mission and Evangelism Network, spiritual mapping is integrated into our conventional mission as we, first of all, discern forces and the invisible world which directly influence the people and carry out researches on the sociology, culture, religion, language, psychology, politics and geography of the target area. The research helps us to develop missiological strategies that suit each target area in a customized pack.

A prayer walk is also organized to pull down principalities and powers ruling the environments before the Gospel interventions are launched with gospel in one hand and humanitarian aid in the other.

Experience has taught us to adopt a one-on-one method of Evangelism in very high volatile areas while we use the mass Evangelism method in areas where we consider less volatile. Since all the unreached target communities need infrastructural development, the institutional method is a veritable tool to bring people to Christ. Schools and hospitals are constructed to attract the people using the services provided and introduce Christ to them as they come.

Another method that has worked very well in our conventional mission is the contextualization approach; we discovered that the unreached do not like anything western. Even the naked do not want to wear English styled clothes; this has necessitated the blending of Christianity to fit the culture of the people taking cognizance of idolatry practices and other practices that negates biblical principles. In our clothe the naked project, we make sure that all clothes that we supply to them are native styled and at times we go with tailors who measure them and sow according to their choices. In some of our churches, worshippers sit on mats during service to blend with what they already know.

To ensure the sustainability of churches planted, we have constructed some church buildings and some use under the tree as their worship centre. Indigenous missionaries are deployed to disciple the converts and we embark on missionary journey four times in a year with food and clothes to strengthen the young believers. Thousands of people who had not heard about Jesus have come to the saving knowledge of Christ through our conventional mission.

It is the model that satisfies the "go ye" command of Christ but it is associated with numerous challenges. It is financially intensive; the risk is enormous and the labourers are very few.

Every other missiological dimension is complementary to the conventional dimension. It is the main missionary model that was prescribed by Christ when He gave the command to His disciples to go into the world and make disciples of all nations. No other model should replace the conventional mission. It is cross-geographical and cross-cultural. The target group must be communities that do not have access to churches and where people have not heard about Jesus. In a conventional mission, church and worship are designed to meet the needs of the people, missionaries are sent to live with the target group and adjust to the lives of the people. We usually test our missionaries for spiritual, psychological and physical fitness before deploying them. Recently, we decided to use only indigenous missionaries for effective service delivery. In the conventional mission, friendship, Evangelism and contextualization methods are key tools.

### **Ecclesiastical Mission**

This is a model aimed at reaching the unsaved and the enslaved Christians in the churches, the wounded Christians at their homes, and the apostate Christians. So many believers are on their way to hell because of deception and manipulations in many churches and unfortunately, such people do not even know that there is something fundamentally wrong with their-

Christian lives. They do not have any iota of doubt about their Christian status because they have confidence in their churches and their pastors. The greatest mistake anyone can make in this Christian journey is to have the assurance that Jesus is with him when He has left.

There was a scenario in the book of Luke chapter 2 where Jesus went with the parents for a festival in Galilee and as they were coming back Jesus remained behind and the parents went a two day journey without realizing that Jesus was not with them. He was about twelve years old then. How possible was it for His mother and father to have left their precious child behind without knowing? This is the situation of so many Christians today; they have missed the way, no self-denial, no cross-carrying, no following Jesus, no discipleship, and no missionary service. Yet, they are bouncing in the Lord and pursuing their selfish ambitions and desires, this situation calls for sober reflection, drastic decision and total overhauling of the entire spiritual architecture of anyone who finds himself in this situation.

Other categories that are targeted through this model are the wounded Christians and the apostate Christians. We surveyed Abuja by moving around on Sunday morning to know whether every Christian attends church services and to our greatest surprise, we had mind-blowing responses from committed believers who have decided not to have anything to do with the church.

Some of them are still Christians but sit at home on Sunday mornings to watch movies instead of attending church services while some have abandoned faith completely and gone down the road of apostasy because they have lost confidence in the churches. We should not pretend that we do not know that good-spirited believers are abandoning churches and Christianity because of lies, frauds and manipulations in various churches all in the name of God. Ecclesiastical Mission is packaged to reach out to these people with the truth and liberate their minds through spiritual sanitization, detoxification, and immunization packages.

## **Diaspora Mission**

Diaspora missiology is a missiological framework for understanding and participating in God's redemptive mission among people living outside their place of origin. The package is aimed at reaching the unreached that have migrated to live outside their place of origin. It has been observed that there is a mass Exodus of unreached groups from northern to southern Nigeria. The missiological strategies for Diaspora Mission if applied can be used to reach them with the Gospel and Love of Christ. The Exodus of the unreached southwards is a great advantage to mission-minded Christians who wanted to reach them but could not because of distance, geographical barriers, fears, and cost implications.

I have these vital questions for local churches and Christians all over the world: Are there unreached people's groups and Diaspora people without a church in our

communities? If so who are they and what are the plans to reach them? Instead of dragging other Christians from their churches to ours, why don't we develop action plans on how to reach the unreached in our communities? The church has a responsibility to identify them, understand them and develop appropriate strategies to reach them with friendship evangelism. God in His power has sent these unreached to us for easy evangelization. Since we could not reach them through a conventional mission, we must as a matter of urgency reach them through Diaspora mission.

The strategies must be out of box and non-conventional in approach, emphasis must be placed on relationship building, holistic approaches to challenges and kingdom partnerships with like-minded organizations and individuals in order to achieve the goal of the Diaspora mission project. I envision a multitude of the unreached to come to the saving power of Christ, how is this to be accomplished? The following steps outlined by Lausanne's Cape Town commitment (2011) can be of immense help to us:

- (1) Recognize and respond to missionary opportunities presented by global migration and Diaspora communities, in strategic planning and in focused training and resourcing of those called to work among them.
- (2) Bear counter-cultural witness to the love of Christ in deed and word, by obeying the extensive biblical commands to love the stranger, defend the course of foreigners, visit prisoners, practice hospitality, build friendships, invite into our homes and provide helpful services.

(3) Discern the hand of God even in circumstances they may not have chosen and listen and learn from immigrants congregation and initiate cooperative efforts to reach all sections with the gospel and love of Christ.

Have you ever noticed how a lot of people you meet in your new neighbourhood ended up becoming your close friends? Can we as Christian Ambassadors be the first to reach out and greet the unreached in our neighborhood, markets, motor parks, streets and offices? Can we help them get accustomed to living in their new environment? Can we invite them for lunch or dinner to show them the love of Christ? Many of us will be scared to adopt this dimension because of the danger of allowing them get close to us but it is important to note that the risk taken to evangelize them is not any way compared with the risk of leaving them unevangelized. It is high time we realized that it is not our choice to preach the Gospel; it is our death if we do not.

## **Missiological Strategies**

Missiological strategies in this context, is the overall approaches, plans, or methods employed by Afri-Mission and Evangelism Network to reach the unreached, the unsaved, the enslaved Christians, the wounded and the apostate Christians. I have decided to share these with Christians to help upcoming missionaries to study and improve on them for the emergence of new high powered strategies in their missionary endeavours.

## **Gospel In One Hand And Humanitarian Aid In The Other Hand Strategy.**

This is a strategy that was developed out of necessity, I had a call to preach Christ where no one has ever preached Him and was confused about how to go about it. One fateful day in March 2007, I heard a knock on the door of my office and behold, someone came in and introduced himself as a missionary working among the unreached people's group. He was seeking support; I helped him and asked that he take me to an unreached community where no one has preached and no one has heard about Jesus. We scheduled a visit to Kambari village. On the day of our visitation, I drove for five hours and when we could not continue because of the dead-end of motorable road, we had to use a motorcycle for the remaining part of the journey which lasted for another two and half hours.

As we were approaching the village, I noticed a seizure of my breath; I was dehydrated because of the intense heat of the sun, and immediately I alighted from the bike, I fell and fainted. I was resuscitated by the water that was poured on me and when I opened my eyes, I requested to drink. They brought a bowl of dirty brown water with spirogyra and mucous swimming on top; I saw the swimmers on top of the water but could not resist the urge to drink because I needed it for my survival. I drank and emptied the bowl and told the missionary to mobilize the villagers so that I can preach Christ to them. To my greatest surprise, I saw women coming out from their huts with leaves and rags covering their pubic regions and all breasts exposed, children with protruding stomachs, naked and malnourished;

while the men were all dressed on dirty rags, famished and frustrated. I opened my Bible to the book of John chapter 3 verse 16, I wanted to tell them about the love of God but my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth as the vacant hopeless look on their faces kept on tormenting me as I gaze at their faces. I just noticed hot tears flowing down my cheek; there was no correlation between the love of God and the degraded status of my target persons. I ended up not introducing Christ to them, I did not know when I opened my mouth and promised them that I will come back to give them food, clothes, drugs, soap and detergent. I also promised them that I was coming to dig borehole for them. We left in a psychological and emotional mess with the vacant hopeless looks of the villagers constantly tormenting me.

As we returned, I was rushed to the hospital and was admitted for two weeks; I had typhoid, diarrhoea, and gastric intestinal infection because of the contaminated water that I drank in my mission field. When I recovered, I summoned all my team members for a strategy meeting. We developed seven forms of strategic interventions for the unreached - Gospel Intervention, Feed the hungry program, Clothe the naked program, Clean water program, Orphan and vulnerable children program, Medical mission, and Education program.

After about two months, we gathered enough resources and launched back to this village with eighteen motorcycles loaded with food, clothes, soaps, slippers and detergents. Immediately the villagers saw us ride into the village with all our load, the vacant hopeless looks on their faces disappeared and

broad smiles were resonating from their faces. We preached Christ crucified and told them that Jesus was coming to prepare them for His kingdom. They said that they would love Jesus to come and be their king but their challenge was that they do not have a good house for Him to live, good food for Him to eat, and no clean water for Him to drink. It was then that we realized that they thought that Jesus was a human being, we then took our time to explain to them the divinity of Christ and that His abode is in their hearts. We made an altar call and they all surrendered to Jesus.

This strategy has done tremendous and great wonders in our Gospel intervention to the unreached; we have used this strategy to access so many unreached communities where ordinarily, we would not have gained access. Thousands of women, children, and men have been clothed, hundreds of households have been fed four times annually since 2007, thousands of children have been rehabilitated and reunited with their families, drugs and mosquito nets have been distributed to hundreds of households, 3 boreholes have been sunk in three most vulnerable communities and a school is at present under construction in one of our mission fields. It might interest you to know that in all the thirteen communities where we have taken the gospel to, not a single person had preached or heard about Jesus before our intervention and not a single person has gone to school as of the year 2020.

The unreached do not just need the gospel, they also need civilization, the western missionaries utilized the 3-Cs strategy (Christianity, Civilization and Commerce) to conquer Africa for Jesus and we have borrowed this strategy.

This strategy was developed for the conventional model of mission and I recommend that people who would like to adopt the conventional mission should adopt this strategy. It catalyzes the preaching of the gospel and makes the target persons less hostile and friendly; it is a protective strategy for the Missionaries who are prone to attack. In one of our mission fields, some group of youths approached our team with their swords and machetes and we thought that it was all over. We had prayed "Unto your hands do we commit our spirits", but I said, "Before I die, let me show my last act of Christian kindness". I beckoned on them and gave them small packs of rice, Indomie noodles, soaps and detergents, they stepped back and held a brief meeting and came to us, we were surprised to hear them say, "We came to kill you but because of these gifts, we want to become Christians. Since we were born, no one has ever given us a gift and now that you gave us gifts, we want to serve the same God that you are serving" We could not believe what we heard but that was how God saved our lives through little act of kindness. This strategy if adopted by churches and mission-minded individuals and organizations will reap in abundance harvest among the unreached people's group in Nigeria particularly, and Africa in general. It is the most suitable strategy for our conventional mission for now.

## Spiritual Sanitization And Detoxification Strategy

As the name implies, this is a sanitization, detoxification and immunization package for total overhauling of the spiritual architecture of Christians who have missed it right from the foundation of their Christian faith.

The Bible in the book of Psalm 11:3 says "If the foundation is destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Many Christians are labouring under the yoke of ignorance and slavery because of a faulty foundation. Many have missed the track to eternity because no one grounded them on the knowledge of what Christianity is before they signed up to become one. Some have been fed with spiritual poison that is gradually killing them while they are happily enjoying more doses daily. This strategy will purify the minds of Christian and refocus them to do the needful and fulfil their purpose here on earth.

The spiritual viral disease which false prophets and teachers have introduced into the lives of believers is a pandemic worse than Covid19. The spiritual virus has the ability and capacity to destroy souls and body but Covid-19 can only destroy the body. Jesus warned us of the dangers of soul killers in the book of Mathew 10 verse 28 "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell". The secularized, mammonized and shamanized gospels in our churches are aimed at destroying our souls and body in hell.

This strategy will serve as a neutralizer to the effects of evil messages which have hampered our spiritual growth and perverted the ways of the Lord in our lives.

The spiritual sanitization and detoxification strategy is aimed at releasing a good dosage of healthy biblical theology that will engulf the disease-causing germs in false gospels through the process of spiritual phagocytosis. When the sound biblical doctrine shines its light, the darkness in the false teachings will automatically disappear. This book is one of the veritable tools for the implementation of Spiritual Sanitization and detoxification Strategy. Understanding and following the precepts and the spiritual insights of biblical doctrines in this book will inevitably emancipate the reader from psycho-spiritual slavery and immunize him from further invasions of false teachers and false prophets.

We plan to move from community to community to teach on the content of this book to liberate the captives of the mighty. As many as will key into advanced Christian doctrines, we will synergize to hold seminars, workshops, and conferences to educate Christians on the dangers of mammonized, secularized and shamanized gospels and equip them with sound biblical doctrines that will enable them to grow into maturity while waiting for the second coming of Christ. We also plan to run a School of Advanced Christian Theology (SACT) in many centres in Nigeria and around the world. This strategy is developed for Ecclesiastical Mission and will liberate enslaved and unsaved Christians and bring the wounded and the apostate Christians back to Christ. Missionaries can key into this strategy,

learn, and run with it; it will be very helpful in developing believers to maturity.

Seminars, workshops, conferences, fellowships, visitations and house church inaugurations are veritable tools to be used in driving this model. We anticipate that many of the wounded and apostate Christians would not like to join any institutionalized church; we plan to organize house churches with the Holy Spirit as the invisible overseer. The house church model will help those who are tired of what is happening in our institutionalized churches to serve their God and fulfil their purpose without getting contaminated or brainwashed by the false prophets and false teachers.

## **Operation Nicodemus**

Nicodemus was a great disciple of Jesus (John 3:1-2). He was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews who held nocturnal meetings with Christ. He knew that Jesus is the Lord but could not identify with Him in the open for fear of the Jews. He defended Jesus before the Pharisees (John 7:50-51). Joseph of Arimathea was another secret disciple of Jesus who collaborated with Nicodemus to bury Jesus after collecting His body from Pilate.

There were secret disciples of Jesus while He was on the earth and there are His secret disciples now in our midst. Operation Nicodemus is a strategy that we developed to reach out to those who love Jesus but could not openly identify with Him for one reason or the other.

This concept was born out of necessity. Some years ago, I came in contact with some converts who refused to come to church and I was furious with them and forced them severally to come to church but they refused and preferred to see me privately in the night.

I was about giving up on them when the Holy Spirit spoke to me and reminded me that Jesus did not force Nicodemus to come and see him in the day time. Since that day, I decided to disciple some people "nicodemously". In every tribe and nations, there are Christians who do not want to identify with the church, some of them are more righteous than some churchgoers, and they study the Bible and observe the teachings of Christ but do not like to go to church for one reason or the other. Operation Nicodemus is aimed at reaching out to such people and helping them to understand more about Christ and the Gospel of the cross.

We have developed personalized work plans for missionaries working under Operation Nicodemus platform for the follow-up of secret disciples. It is surprising to note that most often; these secret disciples love Jesus and His work more than those who parade themselves publicly as disciples of Jesus. The exemplary courage of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus is a case worthy of mention. When all the known public disciples including Apostle Peter went into hiding and disassociated themselves from Jesus, it was only the secret disciples that had the boldness to go to Pilate and demanded the body of Christ.

At Afri-Mission and Evangelism Network, we hold the secret disciples in high esteem and work very hard to develop them to maturity, most of them are veritable instruments in the hand of God. House church and referral systems are tools that have yielded tremendous results in our Operation Nicodemus platform. We establish house churches in the homes of the secret disciples and the Holy Spirit is the invisible overseer of such churches, He teaches and administers the House Church and we are only co-workers in His vineyard. The rate of growth in this system has been so wonderful because the secret disciples are not in any way under manipulations and false indoctrination of the heterodidaskalos.

The referral system works for those who want to go to church but do not have facilities for Home church and are afraid of their immediate environment. We usually send them to attend churches in neighbouring towns and cities where no one knows them, a referral letter is given to such individuals to some collaborating churches who welcome them and disciple them as special candidates. We provide all logistics like transportation, Bibles, books, and snack fare to some vulnerable ones. It is a strategy that works wonders and it is suitable for Diaspora and Conventional missions.

### **Ethiopian Christians Strategy**

In the course of researching Christianity in Africa, I came in contact with some mind-blowing strategies that the people of Ethiopia used to become the only African Nation that has been able to sustain Christianity despite the early movement

of Muslims to their country.

According to Najib Mohammed. "*History has shown that the first migration to Ethiopia and the second migration to Medina have indeed laid down the foundation on which Islam, as a universal religion, was built. Ever since that experience, the Muslim community, wherever they settled, shifted from the positive of minority to majority, from weakness to permanent strength, from tribalism to universal brotherhood that knows no defined political boundaries*"

Najib's statements are living realities; Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world as of today. They settle as a minority group and gradually shift to become the majority. They have achieved this task in almost all the countries in Africa where they have invaded except Ethiopia. There is something we need to learn from Ethiopian Christians on how they were able to sustain Christianity despite all odds; all countries bordering Ethiopia are Islamic nations except Kenya. How did they survive Islamic expansion? Historical records show that Islam got to Ethiopia before Medina and Mecca and Ethiopia is still maintaining 63.2 % of the population as Christians against 33.9% Muslims as of the year 2007. Their strategy must have been out of the box and is worthy of emulation.

The role of Ethiopia in the development of Christianity in Africa cannot be overemphasized. The formidable roles played by Ethiopian Christians are a task worthy of emulation by every mission-minded individuals and organizations. They have a legacy that will never be eroded in the history of Christianity in Africa.

Ethiopian Christianity can be traced back to the 1st century and they were able to sustain it up till today. All neighbouring countries of Ethiopia were conquered by Islamic Jihadists but the Ethiopian Christian resisted all forms of invasion. There is something unique about the modus operandi of the Ethiopian Church that made them stand firmly amidst heavyweight challenges. We adopted these strategies because we strongly believe that if we implement some of these strategies, we will record outstanding results. It will also aid us in missionary training and deployment of a workforce to reach the unreached in Nigeria and beyond.

A look at the various strategies by the Ethiopian church shows that the missionaries worked very hard and brought the Kings and community leaders to the saving power of Christ. These leaders served as persons of peace who facilitated the penetration of the gospel to many communities of their gospel interventions. They also brought some notable national leaders to Christ; this facilitated the planting of churches in many provinces in Ethiopia.

Zara Yakob and Lebna Dengel are examples of very important persons that were conquered for Christ and groomed for the evangelization of Ethiopia. This strategy has helped us so much in our conventional mission where many community leaders were converted and they played important roles in reaching out to their subjects with the gospel and love of Christ. It is quite challenging but it is a strategy that does not only aid conversion, it also protects Christians during attacks and persecutions.

The Syrian church also sent Missionaries regularly to Ethiopia without ceasing; there was no lack of workforce because of the regular supply of missionaries by churches that are concerned about the success of Christianity. The challenge of conventional mission projects is the scarcity of labourers, but in the case of Ethiopia, they excelled. If churches in Nigeria, will regularly supply missionaries to reach the unreached, Christianity will be speedily expanded and sustained.

The church in Ethiopia worked very hard to produce Bibles in their local languages and church services were conducted in indigenous dialects. This made the communication of the gospel easier. The story of the Bible land was more realistic to the people as they handled Bibles written in their mother tongues. It is quite unfortunate that there are so many unreached peoples groups in Nigeria without the Bible in their local languages. If Bibles written in the unreached people's group languages are provided, it will facilitate the spread of the gospel. It is a missiological error to plant a church in an unreached area and communicate to the people in the English Language as seen in many of our churches in metropolitan areas of northern Nigeria.

There was a strong synergy between the church and the state to protect Christianity and enhance the evangelization of the unreached. Christian government officials in Ethiopia defended their Christian faith with everything within their ability and this yielded wonderful results. The challenge in Nigeria is that most government officials are not ready to stick out their neck in defence of the Christian faith.

We need to intensify prayers to raise Christian men and women who will stand in the gap for the body of Christ in Nigeria.

The Ethiopian Christians did not hesitate to call on other Christians to come to their aid when they were persecuted and many Christians responded and joined forces with them to defend the Christian faith in Ethiopia. They made calls and there were responses. In Nigeria, the northern Christians who are under serious attack have severally cried for help from southern Christians but no reasonable response. This is a serious challenge as the northern Christians are abandoned in their difficulties and stiff persecution. The southern Christians as a matter of urgency should repent and show brotherly love to the northern Christians in time of their affliction.

Even amid persecution and attack of Christians in Ethiopia, the missionaries were busy advancing and pioneering the gospel among the unreached people groups in hard to reach places. As more Christians were persecuted, more virgin mission fields were discovered. Christians in Nigeria should resolve that for every Christian killed, five people who have not known Christ must be brought to the saving knowledge of Christ; for every village razed down, five unreached villages must be reached with the Gospel and love of Christ. We need to radicalize our souls, spirit and body to achieve the last mandate which Christ gave to us.

The Ethiopian Christian Strategy is a wonderful one and demands the concerted effort of all- pastors, laymen, government officials, governors, and members of the national assembly and everyone who call himself/herself a Christian. This is a Macedonian call to duty to protect our common heritage. Enough is enough to denominational barriers, narcissism, and clericalism. Let us speak one language to protect Christianity and further the gospel of Christ.

### **Personal Act Of Christian Kindness (PACK) Strategy**

PACK is a strategy developed by Afri-Mission and Evangelism Network for every Christian who is desirous to obey the command of Jesus to go into the world and make disciples of all nations. It is individualized to avoid bureaucratic protocols associated with an institutionalized system of intervention. An individual can single-handedly implement this model with great results.

Each Christian Kindness Ambassador should identify the unreached within his neighbourhood, target them and bring them to the saving knowledge of Christ by loving them, giving them gifts, rendering services to them, inviting them for a meal, showing kindness of any sort to them, and finally introducing Christ to them.

There are lots of unreached people who migrate to our communities daily and have remained unreached despite their closeness to Christian faithful; no one cares to tell them about Jesus.

Churches are busy targeting other Christians in other churches. This project to a large extent will address the challenge of no gospel intervention among the unreached in our communities; the house church model will provide the secrecy needed for their initial discipleship in Nicodemus pattern. The nuisance which they constitute will inevitably be reduced to its barest minimum because no one comes in contact with Christ and goes about attacking others.

The implementation of this project is in phases;

- (1) Training of volunteers which will be known as Christian Kindness Ambassadors through School of Advanced Christian Theology (SACT)
- (2) Identification of persons of peace (POP) among the target group and spiritual mapping of the target area by Christian Kindness Ambassadors
- (3) Practical demonstration of PACK by rendering services and handing out PACK packages
- (4) Introduction of Christ to the target persons
- (5) Discipleship Making Movement Implementation through the establishment of House Churches.

This project can be achieved through the following means:

- (a) First and foremost, intensive intercessory prayers
- (b) Capacity building of the workforce.
- (c) Survey and Spiritual Mapping of the neighbourhood with the aims to identify persons of peace and pull down anti-Gospel thrones and territorial powers.
- (d) Building of data bank of all prospective persons of peace identified by each Christian Kindness Ambassador

- (e) Procurement of PACKpackages.
- (f) Implementation stage

Christians need to key into this project; it is a strategy that will help us achieve God's purpose for our lives.

Self-denial, cross-carrying, following Jesus and becoming a disciple of Jesus are prerequisites for any missionary intervention and we must overhaul the very foundation of our belief to enable us to make the necessary sacrifices, take the risk and have the boldness to carry out this project.

There are five crowns which you stand to earn if you faithfully implement this project - Crown of Righteousness (2 Timothy 4:7) Crown of Glory (1 Peter 5:4) Crown of life (Rev. 2:10) Crown of Rejoicing (1 Thessalonians 2:19) and Incorruptible Crown (1 Corinthians 9:24)

Get in touch with us through the email at the back of this book if you need training and more information about the Personal Act of Christian Kindness.

### **Operation Catch Them Young.**

In the course of doing this work, we have realized that it is easier to groom a child than to mend a damaged adult. So many Christians are already damaged by self-centred messages in our churches; every effort to mobilize them to sacrificially get involved in missionary work has proved abortive.

Operation Catch Them Young is aimed at teaching children to go the missional way so that when they grow, they will not depart from it.

We have started moving from school to school to enlighten young Christians about missionary career, we have established young missionaries' Clubs in some schools. If we must sustain Christianity in Nigeria and the world at large, our children must be taught about the mandate of the Great Commission at the early stage of their lives. Schools owned by Christian proprietors should include the Great Commission mandate in their curriculum and establish young missionaries club in their schools. Willing churches should also teach their children about this mandate and organize programs that are missionary oriented for their children. We believe that this could be of help to this generation and generations yet unborn.

### **Whom Shall I Send?**

This question revealed to Prophet Isaiah that there was a work to be done for the Lord and nobody was willing to be sent. God needed an instrument for that work, it was implied that no angel out of the whole host, no man out of the whole nation, offered to undertake it. It was only Prophet Isaiah who volunteered and said: "Here I am, send me."

The scriptures says in Ezekiel 22 verse 30 "I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one".

In every generation, God looks for a man and there is always human resource scarcity even up till today. God needs a man or a woman who will stand in a gap for Christianity in Nigeria, who will hold lifelines for missionaries to ensure that the unreached in Nigeria who are dying for lack of bread of life are spared by gospel interventions. The survey by our Planning, Research and Statistics Directorate in April 2019 indicated that negligence and apathy of Nigerian Christians to the mandate of the Great Commission have contributed immensely to the rage, terrorism and insurgency in Northern Nigeria.

About 4/5 (78%) of clustered respondents population of 3,150 opinioned that there are no reasonable Gospel interventions in Northern Nigeria which have resulted in a negligible minority population of Christians, 67% affirmed that the inability of the Nigerian church to reach out to the unreached is to a large extent responsible for the insurgency in Nigeria while 59% strongly agreed that Southern Christians in Nigeria are not sensitive to the plight of persecuted Northern Christians. 83% strongly agreed that it is only the majority that persecutes the minority and an increase in the population of Christians in Northern Nigeria will drastically reduce the rate of attacks and persecution.

We have tried severally in the past to mobilize Christians and pastors to come together to reach the unreached in Northern Nigeria with the gospel and love of Christ but the apathy has been alarming.

The Christians in Nigeria have resorted to passing blames and raising alarms of the dangers that lie ahead without any corresponding strategy to checkmate the extinction agenda. In a conference in 2018 by Christian Elders Forum in Nigeria, the secretary - Pastor Emmanuel Bosun complained bitterly about the killings in Nigeria.

*“Realistically speaking Christianity is on the brink of extinction in Nigeria. The ascendancy of Sharia ideology in Nigeria rings the death toll for the Nigerian church. In 2018, we can say in 25 years from now, we are facing the risk of being the last Christians in Nigeria”.*

This is the reality and unfortunately, the church has been complicit to the problem. We only pray and most often wrong prayers that God should kill all Boko- Haram and Fulani Herdsmen without considering the fact that Jesus also died for their salvation and that it is our responsibility to take the Gospel to them.

Government legislation, the use of security apparatus, advocacy and community conflict resolution mechanism will no doubt minimize the killings of Nigerian Christians if the government is sincere, but the fact remains that this challenge is psycho-spiritually induced. It is only the love of Christ if shed abroad in the hearts of men who are used by the devil that can transform them and produce a lasting and enduring solution. In Acts of the Apostles, the Jerusalem church was persecuted because they refused to embrace the command of the Great Commission and they were forced to scatter abroad and each one preached Christ in his place of asylum.

Nigerian church has refused to learn from the Jerusalem church experience, we only sit down and complain that the government wants to Islamize Nigeria. Christians all over the world should understand that it is not our choice to preach the gospel; rather, it is our death if we do not. We are dying in Nigeria because of the negligence of the Great Commission, Nigeria would have been a peaceful nation if we had reached the North with the gospel and love of Christ earlier than now but we can still do something because delayed obedience is far better than absolute disobedience.

It has become imperative that we should radicalize our soul, spirit and body and borrow a leaf from Jim Elliot (An American Missionary) who was courageous and determined to reach out to the Huaroni of Ecuador with the gospel and love of Christ. His famous quote "*He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose*" should be our driving slogan. We need those who will radically evangelize the North with corresponding radical financial donors and radicalized prayer warriors.

There are only two options to the Kingdom tension in Nigeria, we either aggressively evangelize the North or allow the status quo ante to remain with constant bloodshed and a multiplier effect of total extinction of Christianity in Nigeria. Our fear which is also our motivation is that if the population of Christians continues to deplete without a counteracting increase through aggressive evangelization, there shall come a day when no Christian will exist in Nigeria.

We have vowed by the grace of God that for every Christian killed, five unreached should be brought into Christian fold and for every village razed down five villages must be reached for Christ. We are persuaded to reach out and experience has shown that the killers can be saved, after all, many of them have come to the saving power of Christ through our previous interventions and Paul who later became the chief of the apostles was once a killer. The book of Romans chapter 10 verses 13 to 15 says

*“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they are sent?*

There are few willing people to be sent to the mission fields but there are no senders, God is looking for those He can empower so that they will send others. Prayers should be intensified for the Lord of the harvest to send labourers (Goers, Givers and Groaners) into His vineyard. God is waiting to hear someone say “here I am! Send me”

## The Harvest Is Overripe

The harvest is plenteous but the harvesters are very few is a Biblical statement that has not changed up till today. There are many unreached who are eager to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour but unfortunately, only a few Christians are willing to reach out to them with the gospel and love of Christ.

Our inability to take the command of "go ye" seriously is responsible for the lack of labour force to reach out to the unreached.

An awareness campaign is a necessity if the labour force is to be increased: seminars, campaigns, workshops and conferences should be organized to sensitize the Christians on the need to volunteer for missions and support missionary works. Churches should teach about missions and raise support for missionaries who are working among the unreached people's group and hard to reach places. Mission-minded individuals can form non-denominational mission teams to take the gospel where Christ has not been preached. Let us shift focus from ourselves and seek to please Christ by obeying the last instructions which he gave to His disciples which has been passed down from generation to generation.

One of the greatest challenges in raising missionaries is the unwillingness of Christians to make sacrifices and take risks. We love ourselves so much that no one is willing to take risks for Jesus whom we claim that we love so much. Afri-Mission and Evangelism Network is ready to train willing Christians who want to be involved in missions but there are no genuine volunteers. As other religions are de-radicalizing their adherents, Christians are to be radicalized if we are to fulfil the mandate of the Great Commission. We need to radicalize the goers, the givers and the groaners so that we can have results.

Why not make yourself available to be used by God in this end-time harvest of souls for Jesus? Remember the command is not optional, it is a must for every Christian and we must give an account of our participation to God.

Do not allow any pastor to deceive you into building Babylonian empires at the detriment of the heartbeat of God which He has instructed every believer to be involved in. The command of "go ye" is not an appeal to be considered, it is a command that must be obeyed. Delayed obedience is far better than absolute disobedience; we can still right our wrongs.



**SIX**  
CHAPTER  
**UIII**

The logo features the word "SIX" in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. Below it, the word "CHAPTER" is written in a smaller, all-caps, black sans-serif font. At the bottom, the letters "UIII" are displayed in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a background of stylized, dynamic flame-like shapes. These shapes are composed of thick, curved lines in shades of gray and black, creating a sense of motion and energy. One shape is positioned to the left of the text, and another is to the right, both curving upwards and outwards.

# Babylonian Church **KINGDOM EXPOSED**

Whatever God creates, there is always a counterfeit creation by the devil, and most times it is difficult to distinguish between the real and the fake. The devil is an expert in branding and can make fake things look real. Before now there was a clear distinction between the kingdom of God and that of Satan, the kingdom of God symbolizes light while the kingdom of Satan stands for darkness. In this age, the devil has transformed himself into an angel of light and his kingdom is now very bright to the extent that even the very elect of God are being deceived. This calls for sober reflection as the devil has hijacked the church of God and his agents are now the custodians of the Gospel. The church has been perverted to the extent that the kingdom of darkness has saturated the church and the gullible worshippers have embraced it without knowing.

Subtlety is one of the greatest attributes of Satan and manipulation is his greatest tool, he has the technical and spiritual know how to make people fall prey to his schemes. He has perverted the word of God to suit the needs of the world and those who came genuinely to God have embraced the perverted gospel and the real thing has been abandoned. He relocated his kingdom to the church and the ministers of the gospel have been assigned to promote mammon and his doctrine all in the name of the prosperity gospel.

The proponents of this mammonized gospel have succeeded in merging the kingdom of darkness with the church and have succeeded in building empires which I call Babylonian Church Kingdom.

## **Historical Background Of Babylonian Kingdom**

The existence of this kingdom can be traced back to five thousand years ago when Nimrod the son of Cush and the grandson of Ham decided to pervert the way and purpose of God. The purpose of God was that Noah and the survivors of the flood should expand and scatter all over the earth so that the knowledge of the glory of God would cover the earth as water covered the sea.

Nimrod grew to become a mighty one in the earth (Genesis 10:8). He was a powerful tyrant warrior who hunted men to enslave them and equated himself with God and established religion for Hamitic people. He became their god and controlled everyone in the kingdom. He influenced all his followers to work against the purpose of God and one day, they held a meeting and agreed that they must build a kingdom and make name for themselves to avert the purpose of God to scatter them all over the earth unto His glory.

*"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower,*

*"whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth". (Genesis 11:1-4NIV).*

This was the beginning of Babylonian kingdom with Nimrod as the king; he established a counterfeit religion that promoted man instead of God that favoured the course of man instead of God that made the will of God to be subservient to the will of man. This religion advocated that man can do whatever he wanted to do and that God was to serve man. The language in this kingdom was "let us" there was no provision for God's purpose in this kingdom and no one cared to consult God even though they acknowledged that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob exists. They arrogated honour, fame and glory to themselves and carved a niche. Nimrod worked in collaboration with the devil and the demon called mammon to empower his people in all their empire buildings. God proved His omnipotence by taking counsel with the hosts of heaven to scatter them and frustrated their ambition of building a tower that will touch heaven. Nimrod's tower was called *Ziggurat* meaning "memorial". It was 600 feet (sixty storeys) high.

*"The Lord said, If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other. So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city". (Genesis 11:6-8NIV).*

God scattered them and they took their false religion along, I presume that many of them came to Africa and about seventy per cent of African Nimrodic immigrants found a place in Nigeria hence the presence of so many false teachers and prophets today in our midst. The Nimrodic religion found its root in many countries of the world with the purpose to thwart God's way and stop the expansion of the knowledge of God among the Gentile Nations. God decided to send His only begotten Son to the world to abolish the Babylonian system of worship and make a paradigm shift from the temple as His habitation to the heart of men and women. Jesus did not hesitate to tell the Jews that this Nimrod's structure which they appreciated so much will soon become rubbles because God does not live in temples built by men.

*"Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, as for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down." (Luke 21:5-6 NIV)..*

Jesus knew the source and purpose of the gigantic and state of the art edifice. Another *Ziggurat* that was constructed to hinder God's purpose but with things in it that were dedicated to God ceremoniously but with a different motive. The disciples of Christ were admiring and commending the beauty and architectural designs of the building but it was only Jesus who knew that it was constructed with ulterior motives. The temple was built for themselves to make name lest they be scattered according to the will and purpose of God.

Many church buildings today are *Ziggurat* and were constructed to keep believers in one place and stop them from getting involved in the mandate of the Great Commission. Jesus came to abolish the Babylonian temple system and to effect a paradigm shift from temple building to the heart of men as God's living place (2 Corinthians 6:16). The Scriptures made it clear that it is an error to believe that temples are built for God in the New Testament or New Covenant era.

*"Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? Saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?*

*Hath not my hand made all these things? Ye stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye". (Acts 7:48-51 KJV).*

*"What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." (2 Corinthians 6:16 NIV)..*

The earlier the Christians understand that the Bible is dispensational instruction to Abrahamic descendants the better for us. Biblical dispensations are associated with peculiarities which might be suitable for one and not for others. Solomon, an adherent of Judaism built a temple for God, but Christians are enjoined to pull down temples in form of buildings and construct temples in the heart of men who have not heard about Jesus by making them know and accept Him in their heart as their Lord and Saviour. He occupies such heart in joy and disciplines them to do His will.

All the raw materials which were used for the construction of *ziggurats* (cathedrals) by churches would have been channelled to world evangelization.

Stephen angrily rebuked the Jews for sticking to the Babylonian Kingdom system and he was murdered. Babylon system is a vampire, they construct buildings to deceive people and produce disobedient, arrogant selfish, wicked and babyish Christians. The essence of the Babylonian system is to resist the Holy Ghost and say no to the mandate of "Go Ye". I made the same mistake when I constructed the most beautiful church building in Kebbi state, Nigeria. if I had used the resources for the construction of the cathedral to reach the unreached, I would have constructed thousands of temples for Christ in the heart of those who have not heard about Him. My solace is that I have realized my error and have repented from pursuing the Babylonian agenda.

The coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was to empower the disciples to go into all the nations and build temples for God; the gift of tongues was to help them minister to Nimrods children who were then speaking diverse tongues. The church in Jerusalem was influenced by the Nimrod spirit and they stabilized themselves in Jerusalem to start building and making name for themselves. When God saw that they were not ready to move because they have been possessed by Nimrod spirit, He brought persecution that scattered them.

*"And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.*

*And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word". Acts 8:1-4 KJV)...*

The death of Stephen facilitated the movement of the disciples from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria to preach Christ in fulfilment of the purpose of God that all must hear about His saving power. This is obedience by force, God is desirous to accomplish His purpose which Nimrod descendants in the early church wanted to frustrate. Philip ran for safety to Samaria and preached Christ there and the whole city surrendered to the saving power of Christ.

## **Operations Of Nimrod Spirit In Our Churches Today**

Many church leaders are oblivious of the effect of the Nimrod spirit in their lives, the administration of the church, and in their priority decisions. It is a powerful demonic spirit that gradually perverts the purpose of God and makes man the cynosure of the Christian faith. It promotes clericalism and fuels pneumatological negligence and unfortunately, it is latent in its manifestation that victims of its manipulations never understand that they have been influenced by the spirit. Church leaders consciously or unconsciously pass this spirit to the members who now run their lives under the influence of the Nimrod spirit. God established the church to spread the Gospel, on the day of Pentecost the church was founded with a mission statement which was written by Christ Himself.

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8 NIV)..*

The church has only one cardinal objective- to spread the gospel until it reaches the uttermost parts of the earth, to scatter missionaries until all hear about the saving power of Christ. The subtle influence of the Babylonian system has defeated this objective and many of our churches are now building empires as patterned by Nimrod. No church does not have a building committee but only very few have a missions board. All resources of our churches are channeled towards building projects. Some churches have built so many cathedrals and have now resorted to building universities with outrageous and unaffordable fees. It will not surprise me if I hear that churches are now building cinema halls and stadiums, the devil has changed the mandate of the church from "go and make disciples of all nations" to "go and build empires for all nations"

We have embraced this devilish mandate at the expense of the purpose and mandate of God. This is what I call Babylonian Church Kingdom; this is the act of running the church of God on a mandate of Nimrod. It is the act of hindering God's purpose by those who are supposed to execute the divine mandate which has been handed down from generation to generation. The purpose of this system is to keep believers in big cathedrals and teach them how to solve their problems, make money for themselves and live comfortably.

Many good-hearted Christians whom God has empowered with finance to build hundreds of thousands of temples in human hearts through world evangelization have been hijacked by pastors and perverted them to invest their resources to expand the Nimrod's agenda. All these negate the purpose of God and Christians who are waiting for the soon-coming kingdom should be on red alert to detect this evil move and avoid it.

### **Identities of Babylonian Church**

The voice language of the Babylonian church is "let us build for God" and their body language is "let us make name for ourselves". A church that operates under Babylonian church mandate can be identified by the language she speaks; there are always meetings to discuss one building project or the other. Worshippers are encouraged to support or sponsor one project or the other as they feature them in series. The people are made to believe that they are building for God but deep inside the management, they want to make name for themselves. They want to be adjudged as the biggest church in Nigeria, the church that constructed the best University in Nigeria, and the church that has the highest building capacity in the world. They deceived their followers by introducing every project by saying "God told me to build for Him" a worship centre, a university, a bank, an estate, a market, a shopping mall, etc. How many of these buildings are really for God?

Even the temple which is closely related to God has been replaced by God in His choice of hearts of believers as His abode.

Babylonian church outwardly speaks “let us build for God” and inwardly says in their heart “let us make names for ourselves”.

The messages that are preached in Babylonian churches are homocentric and egocentric, human beings are at the centre of the messages; if a message is not trying to identify the problems of men, it is trying to address already diagnosed problems. Anywhere God is mentioned in such a message; it is an invitation for Him to help man. Messages in churches like this can be classified as prosperity, deliverance, healing, prophetic, signs and wonders, empowerment, etc. Summarily speaking every Babylonian church is a solution-seeking church, people troop into such churches to find answers to the problem of life. But is this the purpose of God's church? The answer is No.

The purpose has been perverted and those who are supposed to be spreading the Gospel are kept busy by Nimrod spirit with the mandate of building to make a name and solving problems to become comfortable. Just like in the time of the tower of Babel, it is about the people and not about God, the will of God is subservient to the will of the people and the only reason why God is remembered is to help them solve their problems. No more discipleship as in the early church, the mandate of "go ye" has been abandoned and no one speaks about it because of the new assignments which the church has received from the devil to remain in one place and build an empire under the control of Babylon the great, the mother of harlots.

The house of God was originally designed for prayers but Nimrod descendants have turned it to a den of thieves (Mathew 21:13). When Jesus saw the kind of commercial atrocities in the Jerusalem temple, He was compelled to use whips to drive the traders out of the temple. The house that was conceptualized for spiritual activities was converted to a business centre by biblical Babylonian church apologetics. In this age, the commercial activities have increased astronomically that volume of trade in the world market per annum cannot in any way be compared to the volume of trade of the Babylonian church transactions put together in one year.

There are no kinds of merchandise that are not found in the churches today ranging from physical to spiritual products. Oil, books, water, cream, compact disks, apron, handkerchief, T-shirts, waist and wristbands, food, drinks, etc. They make their real money through the merchandize of spiritual products, they sell the word of God through "seed sowing to key into the words" and merchandize the blessings of God through the "seed sowing to claim blessings". The highest merchandise with inestimable value is the souls of men. All the worshippers in Babylonian churches are under the yoke of slavery, knowingly or unknowingly the pastors hand over the souls of their followers to Queen Semiramis (Queen of Heaven). She is the mother of Nimrod and a legendary founder of the Babylonian empire who in turn compensate the pastors with riches and wealth in exchange for the souls of men (Revelation 18:13).

## Prosperity Gospel In Babylonian Churches

I chose to come up with this concept "mammonized gospel" to describe the prosperity theology because I do not subscribe to the idea that prosperity is only about money and wealth. Mammon is a Hebrew word for money, Jesus in the book of Mathew 6 verse 24 said to the disciples "you cannot serve God and mammon". One would have expected that the word "devil" would have been used by Christ instead of "mammon", but it is obvious that the devil cannot compete with God for believers' worship, but money can. In the same verse, Jesus gave us two choices, to love God and hate money or hate God and love money. This decision is a very difficult one, some smart devilish Babylonian workers of iniquities cleverly blended God and money, and subtly introduce the concept to believers whom they know will ordinarily choose God instead of mammon for their conscience sake. They expertly made God subservient to mammon and many are now serving mammon using God as a vehicle of service.

Unfortunately, Babylonian churches have monetized God's blessings to suit their deceptive agendas and divert the attention of worshippers from the cross to money. Prosperity is commonly thought by them to mean money, material wealth, or any entity that promises wealth. The doctrine states that material wealth and possessions are the right of every Christian and that universal law and principles have been set by God to be applied by Christians. If these laws and principles are correctly applied by the Christians, they will become rich beyond their imagination.

I do observe many Babylonian pastors preach their mammonized gospel, and I am shocked at their skillful and subtlety manipulation of the word of God to suit their concept and convince the listeners that they are communicating the inerrant purpose of God. Their intelligence, aura, eloquence and charisma are not disputable and their justification appears impregnable especially when it presumptuously sounds as if it is the perfect will of God for believers. They put up arguments that a loving and kind God will not allow His beloved children to suffer and that it is His will to make his children rich and wealthy. This sounds very logical and convincing but the problem is that the scriptures of the New Testament and the words of Christ conflict with these presumptions.

### **Lies Of Babylonian Church Pastors**

How long shall we continue to run away from the truth? Jesus never wanted rich people to be His disciples because He knew that riches would not allow them to carry their crosses and suffer with Him and that was why He was always bent on impoverishing them before allowing them to follow Him (Luke 12: 30-34, Mark 10:17-25). Did you know that Jesus did not come to preach the Gospel to the rich? He said that the Gospel is exclusively reserved for the poor (Luke 4:18), that the kingdom of God is for the poor (Luke 6:20), and woe is for the rich (Luke 6:24).

If these scriptural verses are the views of Jesus, where did we get this concept of worldly prosperity in Christianity? This must be another gospel from the heterodidaskalos (false teachers) (Galatians 1:6).

There is a great danger in prosperity and we know it not. Jesus never promised believers money and comfort here on earth. He only assured us of providing our needs (Luke12:22-30). Babylonian Pastors in their interpretation of the Scriptures have perverted and monetized spiritual riches and blessings to suit the secularized, mammonized and shammanized messages that are prevalent in churches today. This is a great error and if not corrected, is capable of sending all of us to hell.

The most famous biblical quote that is used to back up prosperity messages is "*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich*" (2 Corinthians 8:9 NKJV).

This scripture does not mean money when it talks about promised riches in the above context. Jesus died as a sinner (sin is a typology of poverty) so that through this sinful death we shall be justified (justification is a typology of true riches in Christ). Jesus was spiritually rich by His omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresence divine nature but poor in His Human nature.

The case of the Smyrna Church typically shows that riches in this context are not money and no man no matter how anointed, revered, highly placed and powerful in hermeneutics can dispute this fact. "I know thy works, and tribulation and poverty but thou art rich...." "(Revelation 2:9). The Smyrna church by this world standard was very poor but spiritually rich. Jesus after all analysis rated them rich. This shows that a poor person by man's standard could be truly rich by God's standard. Is this not enough to tell us what Apostle Paul meant when he said that Jesus was rich?

How can a man who did not have a place to lay His head, who borrowed a hall for Him and His disciples to have supper, who borrowed donkey to enter into Jerusalem and was buried in borrowed tomb be considered a rich man?

Why didn't he build a mansion here on earth? But in His father's house, there are many mansions. Why didn't He own drove of donkeys? Jesus was rich in true riches of God but poor in unrighteous mammon (He had no money). The Laodicea church which had all the whole money in this world was adjudged by Christ to be wretched and poor (Revelation 3:17). What the Babylonian Pastors interpret as riches is not money and wealth but spiritual riches in the heavenly kingdom. Jesus differentiated true riches from unrighteous riches in Luke 16 verse 11. Jesus used this two words to set apart the riches; one is unrighteous while the other is true.

If Christ was rich in unrighteous Mammon can anyone point to me where Jesus displayed wealth throughout His thirty-three and a half years on earth. He had the power to perform financial miracles (Mathew 17:27) Why didn't he multiply money the way he multiplied bread and fishes? Jesus should not be associated with money because His kingdom is not of this present world which is controlled by Mammon. He enjoined His disciples to be careful of money, to hate money and love and serve God. (Mathew 6:24) He never allowed rich people to be His disciples unless they get rid of their wealth (Mark 10:17-25) He informed us that God wishes to give us the kingdom but we have to sell our properties and give the proceeds to the poor to be qualified to seek the kingdom of God. (Luke 12:32-34)

The prosperity preachers do not want to separate true riches from unrighteous mammon; neither do they want to acknowledge the fact that the riches and wealth which they preach are unrighteous. Our God is righteous and cannot emphasize unrighteousness to His children as a priority. Unrighteous mammon is needed in everyday transactions but should not receive the kind of attention which the church is at present giving to it. It is a good servant but a terrible and evil master. Believers should be careful with worldly riches so that they can earn the true riches in Christ. We need to correct this error, Jesus died poor to give us the true riches, not the unrighteous riches.

Another popular scriptural verse quoted without the background and complete quotation is found in the book of Mark 10:29-30.

*"Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the Gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields along with persecutions and in the age to come eternallife".*

Jesus told the disciple nothing but the truth, whatever they have left for the sake of Him and the gospel will be recompensed to them a hundred folds. He enumerated the items that he expected believers to forsake and receive multiple rewards, but there was no mention of money, riches and wealth. The background story that led to this statement was found in Mark 10 verses 17 to 25.

It is a story of a rich young ruler who went to Jesus requesting eternal life; Jesus told him to sell all he had and give the proceeds to the poor. Knowing he had great possessions, he departed in sorrow. Jesus then told the disciples that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Realistically speaking, how many of all the people that are claiming these Scriptural verses as a biblical ground to amass wealth, have forsaken any of the items listed by Jesus for His sake and that of the gospel? Let me give you the real interpretation of these verses, this is a promise which Jesus made to those who have denied themselves and have forsaken all. The one hundred per cent reward of mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters are the family of Christ that are counted in billions, the houses are the homes that every genuine believer has access to by being brethren to many. The land or fields are the mission fields which the Lord has promised believers for their inheritance in Psalm 2 verse 8.

As disciples go into the uttermost part of the earth to preach the gospel, the fields are given to them by God to inherit. If these scriptures promised wealth, the Bible would have recorded the wealth of Peter, James, John, Paul and other apostles who were the first and second-generation disciples. This perversion is sponsored by Babylon the great, the mother of harlots.

It is also important to note that persecution was promised by Jesus to His disciples as part of the reward for forsaking all in verse 30 of the same Mark chapter 10, where they claim that wealth is a reward for those who forsake all.

I have observed that whenever the Babylonian preachers cite this verse, it is always incomplete, the word "persecution" is always missing. They do not want their followers to hear the truth even once. If they are sincere, why not read the entire verse to the people? This is a fraud and an agenda to take people away from God and hand them over to serve mammon.

Times without number, I have heard preachers say to their parishioners that God wishes above all things for them to prosper, they will quote this scripture and ascribed it to God.

*"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth". (3 John 1:2 KJV).*

I would like to bring to your cognizance that it was not God that made the statement above. It was John's wish to a man called Gaius whom John wrote a letter of appreciation to, for all his kindness to missionaries who went for outreach in the community where he lived. It has nothing to do with God or the worshippers of God. God has better wishes, He has given us the power to become sons of God and is waiting for that day when sons of God will manifest and be transformed into the image of Christ. God's wish for us is to be conformed to the image of Christ.

The prosperity gospel preachers have told their followers that their blessings lie in sowing and that God cannot bless people above what they sow and the volume of their seed. This Scriptural verse is usually used to back up the "Sowing and Reaping" concept.

*"Do not be deceived. God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap." (Galatians 6:7 ESV)*

The Babylonian preachers use this verse to encourage worshippers to sow the so-called seed. They will never read down to the next verse for a thorough understanding of what is sowed and what is reaped. They mammonize every scripture in favour of their master. The next verse makes it clearer,

*"For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up". (Galatians 6:8-9 ESV)*

Do these scriptural verses refer to money and wealth acquisition? To follow the instructions of the false teachers to sow money is inimical to the spiritual growth of believers, sowing money is fleshy and the end reward is corruption, no wonder corruption has eaten deep into the fabrics of the church. May God help the church from decay. Instead of teaching people how to sow for eternal rewards, the false teachers encourage believers to sow to reap in the flesh which will lead to damnation.

### **Tithing And Seed Sowing Are Not Doctrine Of Christ**

The most common financial frauds in Christianity are tithing and seed sowing, one is Scriptural but the other is not. Tithing was borrowed from Judaism while seed sowing was borrowed from Shamanism. It is important to note that the Bible is written for the three Abrahamic religions - Judaism,

Islam and Christianity, and the eschatology and the covenants of the three are not the same. An in-depth study of comparative religion will help us to know the portions of the Bible that belong to the Christians. It is wrong to pull out laws and ordinances for Judaism adherents and apply them on the Christian faith; otherwise, we make a wreck of our Christian belief through religious border effects. Let us stop pouring new wine into an old wineskin. (Mathew 9:17).

Any attempt to borrow ordinances and laws of Judaism to blend it with Christianity is fraudulent; it contradicts new covenant doctrines of Christ. Tithing was only mentioned by Christ when He rebuked the scribes, the law teachers and the Pharisees for the negligence of weightier matters of law, justice, mercy and faith to claim that they tithe. (Mathew 23:23, Luke11:42)

Jesus in the above passage did not tell Judaism worshippers not to pay tithe neither did He tell His disciples to pay tithe. The two Abrahamic religions have different principles and doctrines. Another mention of Tithe in the New Testament is seen in Hebrew chapter 7 verses 9 to 10. Apostle Paul in these passages was only asserting the superiority of Melchizedek priesthood over that of the Levitical priesthood, he was not in any way telling the Hebrew Christians to pay tithe.

I am not writing this to spark off an argument, but to communicate what the Holy Spirit inspired me to share with Christians. Last five years, I had a three-day program "Alone with God" and the Lord spoke to me to stop collecting tithe in the church which I founded in 2006 because tithing is not part of His doctrine of Christ.

I surveyed the Bible to understand what the Lord meant and to my greatest surprise, I discovered that Christians were not any way told to pay tithe.

If tithing is for Christians, Jesus would have told us in the gospels through instructions to His disciples, believers do not search whether the "go ye" command is for Christians, it was well spelt out in the four Gospels and Acts of Apostles that even a blind man can see it. Why are we now scouting for scriptural verses in the New Testament to back up tithing? If it is not there, no matter how pastors get involved with hermeneutical gymnastics, they can never manufacture it. There is no way apostles Peter, Paul, Luke, James, John and Jude would have forgotten to tell us about tithing in all their epistles.

Prophet Malachi was sent to the Judaism worshippers in the book of Malachi which is the last in the ten books of *Tanakh* which is a Bible book for Judaism worshippers, it beats my imagination how preachers on regular basis leave all biblical injunctions for Christians and go back five hundred years before Christ was born to pick the topic of "Can a man rob God?". This is a charade and a high level of fraud; do you know that the adherents of Judaism do not have anything to do with the New Testament Bible? They do not even believe in Christ but Christian preachers preach more from the *Torah* and *Tanakh* which are Judaism books of the Bible than from the gospels and epistles which are the Christian books of the Bible.

Comparative Religious Studies show that Islam is even more closely related to Christianity than Judaism. Islam believes in Jesus, there is a portion of the Koran that is devoted to Jesus "*Injil*" (The Gospel of Jesus).

Christian and Islam eschatologies are related but are completely different from Judaism eschatology. The Koran says that Jesus is coming again (*Sūrat az-Zukhruf*), this is the 43rd chapter of the Koran. The Koran talked extensively in *Sūrat Maryam* about the miraculous birth of Jesus by the Virgin Mary. It recorded that Jesus performed notable miracles; Jesus was named 93 times in the Koran. If there is any religion that Christian needs to borrow ordinances from, it is Islam and not Judaism.

I beg pastors in the name of Jesus; let us leave Judaism laws and ordinances alone, no matter how much amount of money that comes into the coffers of the church through the practice of Judaism laws. There is no spiritual or moral justification for Christians to embrace laws and ordinances of another religion. We are in the era of a New Covenant and must understand that Biblical laws are not for Christians. Christ has set us free from the law, why must we be bound because some people are benefiting from the dividends and proceeds of laws?

It is also important to bring to your cognizance that the Levitical priesthood that received tithe has been replaced by Melchizedek priesthood. This change has necessitated a change in the way of giving in the New Testament church. There is no Levite priests in our Churches today, what we have today are priests after the order of Melchizedek.

*If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood and indeed the law given to the people established that priesthood, why was there still need for another priest to come, one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? For when the priesthood is changed, the law must be changed also". (Hebrew 7:11-12 NIV).*

The obligatory law of tithing has passed away with the law of Levitical priesthood and has been replaced by non-compulsory, willing and cheerful giving. Our pastors have migrated from Levitical to Melchizedek priesthood but have refused to migrate from Malachi 3:10 to 2 Corinthians 9:7. Who is fooling who? Pastors know the truth but have refused to embrace it because of fear of losing large amount that comes in as tithes every month. We must either choose Levitical Priesthood which allows us to collect tithe but not to own properties or the Melchizedek priesthood with the triple anointing of the Leper, the priest and the king. The scripture in Ephesians 2 verse 15 says that all laws and its ordinances have been abolished by the death of Christ but Pastors have refused to agree that the law of tithing has been abolished. They preach that other laws are for the Israelites but have selected the law of tithing as a doctrine for the Christians.

This is fraudulent, exploitative, manipulative and evil. We cannot eat our cake and still have it. Enough is enough; say no to lies, manipulations and exploitation. Let us allow our followers to use their money to serve God as the spirit of God purposes in their hearts. (2 Corinthians 9:7) If we refuse to tell our followers the truth because of what we stand to gain, what are we going to tell Jesus when He comes? Deception and hermeneutical manipulations must end if we are desirous to enter into the kingdom; let us not after labouring in the word of God, become castaways when Christ comes. When we focus on the cross, money will not be able to distract us. Pastors should embrace the cross and avoid material distractions.

I want to use this medium to appeal to pastors to stop threatening worshippers to pay tithe. If you so much desire this tithe, why not convert to Judaism where you are biblically licensed to collect tithe. This is an insult to Christ and a heinous sin against humanity; we should not forget that we will all give an account of our stewardship here on earth. I have heard some pastors made statements like "if you don't pay your tithe you will go to hellfire", "If you do not pay your tithe you will die quickly", "prosperity is impossible without tithing", "if you don't tithe you end up a beggar" etc. This is broad day robbery in the name of God. Can any of the proponents of tithing show us where Christians are enjoined to pay tithe in the Bible? Or can they dispute the scriptural facts that I have presented in favour of voluntary Christian giving which should not be done out of compulsion or legalistic obligation?

Realistically speaking, I do not blame the pastors, I blame the false worshippers who have made themselves prey to the wolves in sheep clothing by not searching the scriptures. If there are no false worshippers, false prophets and false teachers would have ceased to exist a long time ago. I envision a global revival that will set all enslaved Christians free from demonic and occult manipulation; I pray that this revival will start with you that are reading this book in the name of Jesus. False worshippers and false pastors exist because of a faulty foundation, no self-denial, no cross-carrying and no one is following the footsteps of Christ. Rather, they are following the footstep of Nimrod, a pastor who is following Christ cannot threaten people to pay tithe because Jesus did not.

In the first chapter of this book, I wrote about my scriptural research on "seed sowing" and discovered that there was no Scriptural backing to what has gone viral in all our churches. I could not find any verse or where it was borrowed in the Bible. All scriptural verses about sowing and reaping were referring to the word of God, agricultural activities and Christian act of kindness. In Acts chapter 8, I saw a sower that wanted to sow to receive but the middle man between God and the sower rejected the seed and told the sower to perish with his money and that the gift of God cannot be purchased with money.

I posted an article on Facebook and some enslaved believers were agitating that what Simon the sorcerer did was not seed sowing but that he wanted to buy the gift of the Holy Ghost. I replied to some of them to tell me the difference between seed sowing and buying and got no response, what informed their opinion was the reaction of Apostle Peter, had it been that Peter accepted the money and prayed for Simon, it would have been a seed. Secondly, they argued that Simon wanted to get the gift of the Holy Spirit with money. What is the difference between the gift of Holy Ghost and every other gift that seeds are sown to receive?

The gift of God whether physical or spiritual cannot be bought for money and anyone who is collecting seed on behalf of God for the blessings of His children is operating in error. If this was Christian practice Peter would have collected the money. If their argument is based on the fact that the gift of the Holy Spirit is not to be purchased but other gifts like cars, children, houses, husbands, wives, healing, deliverance, etc. can be seeded, what are the differences between all these and the gift

of the Holy Ghost? One of the gifts of the Holy Ghost which is regularly seeded is "*Charismata iamaton*" this is the gifts of healing.

How much seed did we all sow before Jesus came and died for us? Who is deceiving who? Jesus in the book of Mathew 10 verses 8 commissioned His disciples and instructed them to "heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give". Why are Preachers receiving seeds before or after ministration? Preachers should be careful before Gehazi's punishment comes; the concept of seed sowing is borrowed from false religion known as Shamanism.

### **But It Works**

This is the argument of most Christians, they usually argue that seed sowing or tithing works. Christians' concern should not be whether it works or not, our concern should not even be whether it is biblical or not. Rather, our concern should be whether it is the doctrine of Christ. There are so many things that work, money ritual works. Should Christians embrace it because it works? Should we go into gambling because it works? Big Brother Naija works, should we all register for it?

### **Dangers of Prosperity Gospel**

I know that we need money for family upkeep, ministry projects and other personal projects but our approaches when looking for it call for concern. We are all guilty and should learn a lesson from the Laodicea church which was rich in the world but very poor in the spiritual realm and was rejected by Christ.

I worry that the kind of attention that we are giving to money is uncalled for. The churches know and preach nothing but money, and the ambition of every Christian is to become rich.

Pastors have sown seeds of covetousness and greed in the lives of believers through prosperity messages. Born again Christians are now kidnappers, armed robbers, internet fraudsters, street girls, etc. Christians now forge receipts and falsify financial figures; married women now commit adultery and come out boldly to testify how God has blessed them with contract awards and job opportunities. The Conscience of "Christian sinners" no longer pricks them when in the act of crime. After all, they have been taught that prosperity is the evidence of God's reward to those that serve Him and their Christian obligation is to pay their tithes. Please, let us learn from Christ's chastisement to the Laodicea church and seek the real riches in Christ.

Prosperity gospel promotes idolatry, many Christians have been enslaved to worship mammon. Through the messages preached in churches, money has become the object of worship and God is now the instrument of worship. The reason why some people are Christians today is that they were told that coming to Jesus will make them rich. When people come to Christ because of money, are they coming to worship God or the money which is the motive behind their coming to Jesus? This is a subtle perversion of the object of worship to become a means through which mammon is worshipped. In some churches, money is idolized to the extent that worshippers now talk to money, making their request known to mammon before dropping their offering. At times, it is the pastors that instruct the worshippers to lift their offering and speak to it, this is an

idolatry of the first-class order and should be discouraged among genuine believers who want to make heaven.

The prosperity gospel is contrary to the scriptures, the proponents only pervert the word of God to suit the concept. According to Gordon Fee "Prosperity gospel is an insidious disease which has little of the character of the gospel in it" and the only way to immunize the church from the disease according to Fee is with a good healthy dose of biblical theology. This book is aimed at immunizing, detoxifying and sanitizing the church from secularized, mammonized and shamanized teachings in our churches today. The central message of the gospel should be Christ and Him crucified, the apostles never preached prosperity gospel and I wonder where it was gotten from, the enemy has done this.

It is exploitative; this is a manipulation to impoverish already poor people who are attracted to the prosperity gospel because it seems to offer solutions to their problems. According to Philip Jenkins of Pennsylvania State University "Poor citizens of impoverished countries often find the doctrine appealing because of the economic powerlessness and doctrine emphasis on miracles" Many people who went to church in search of riches, returned poorer because pastors have collected the little they had as tithes and seeds; they gave them a prophetic word in return. Unfortunately, most of these promises never come to pass and many of God's worshippers have been driven away from God through the so-called prosperity message. Seed sowing is a big fraud and has been instrumental to the pastors getting richer and the worshippers getting poorer.

It defocuses Christians from the cross and shows them money as the centrepiece of their belief. It negates the doctrine of Christian suffering which is the gateway to eternity and makes believers concentrate all their spiritual strength on searching for wealth and comforts. It perverts the doctrine of eternity and makes people believe that the mundane things of this world should be prioritized. Money is placed above God and those who genuinely come to Christ are deceived to serve mammon and their salvation is truncated, thereby frustrating the purpose why Jesus died on the cross for us.

The law of compensation of prosperity gospel is deceptive: it teaches that when Christians give generously, God will give them back in return, but Jesus teaches that Christians should give hoping to get nothing in return. Jesus encourages believers to focus on spiritual reward (Mathew 6:19-20, Luke 14:13-14). Pastors always quote Luke 6:38 "Give and it shall be given to you" what they will not tell the listeners is who the Bible says that they should give to, they will pervert the scriptures and make the recipient either God or church but we know who the real recipients are. This is an injunction on how believers should relate with their neighbours. This verse is not talking about giving to the church or God.

*"Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." (Luke 6:36-38 NIV)...*

These scriptural verses are telling believers how to relate with other brethren: we should be merciful to one another, we should not judge one another, we should not condemn one another, we should forgive one another and we should share what we have by giving to others. Give and it shall be given to you in good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over is specified by Christ as a Golden rule. He never meant, that believers should give God so that God will measure, pressed down, shake wonderfully and powerfully run over blessing for the giver. King James Version specifically mentioned that it is men that will give the giver back a measure of what he has given.

The law of positive confessions of the prosperity gospel places man above God and the will of man above the will of God. Believers are encouraged to demand whatever they want from God and God must honour whatever their lips have uttered. If they have faith, they can claim whatever they have demanded. What the teachers of positive confessions do not consider is that the will of God is superior to the will of man and must prevail, no matter the volume and the length of positive confessions. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus had his will and asked God to take away the cup of suffering but concluded by surrendering to the will of His father "Let your will be done". Christians these days do not consider the will of God, they want their confessions to come to pass by fire by force. This is a product of corrupt Christianity by prosperity gospel and the Babylonian system.

Believers of the prosperity gospel are selfish and lack compassion for others. They believe that the predicament of the less privileged is attributed to their inability to follow the

formula of the law of prosperity, or that they are not loved by God to have attracted His blessings. In the so-called prosperity churches, members who face financial challenges and need counseling and prayers are first asked if they had been faithful in their tithing and seed sowing. The affluent believe that it is their fulfilment of the law of sowing and reaping that made them rich and do not want to waste their resources on the have-nots who do not want to follow the laid down rules as stipulated in the prosperity law. This is not what the Bible teaches about almsgiving.

## **Does God Prosper His People?**

It is important to note that biblical rich men did not follow any formula before they were blessed by God. They did not even anticipate any blessing before God prospered them, they served their God diligently and God decided on His own to bless them. God vowed to bless Abraham when He saw his faithfulness and determination to please Him.

*"And said, 'I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me".*

*(Genesis 22:16-18 NIV)...*

God swore to bless Abraham because Abraham was determined to sacrifice his son to God, he was not motivated by the fruits of many sons. He simply decided to give his son to God because God is God and nothing is too much to offer to

Him. There is a great difference between the blessings of God which comes to man by God's will and the prosperity which the church teaches. The prosperity which the church teaches is motivated by greed and the will of man while the blessing of God comes by God's will and not by man's will. We should note that no one taught Abraham about sowing and reaping, he just in obedience to God wanted to sacrifice his son without hope of having another son. The giving of Isaac by Abraham to God was not intended to be a seed but a sacrifice. God responds to sacrifice and not seed but it must not be motivated by self and greed but by love.

Solomon was the richest man in the Bible, he attracted God's blessing when he gave a thousand burnt offerings. When everyone was giving God just one burnt offering, he decided to go the extra mile. He did not sow a seed to receive a hundred folds, his offering was motivated by love, it was a sweet-smelling savour and it was accepted by God. How do I know that he was not expecting back what he gave in multiple of fruits as we are taught today? When God asked him what he wanted Him (God) to do for him, he requested for wisdom. He did not even ask for riches or wealth because that was not in his prayer agenda.

God searches the heart before He blesses, when believers seek the kingdom of God first with His righteousness, God adds "all these things". What will be added, the volume of the addition and how it will be added is exclusively God's decision. Man has no contribution to make in the additional program of God to those who seek the kingdom first. All we need to do is to receive what is added with thanks. We cannot influence the decision on the matter of what will be added to us because we are not even permitted to think about it. (Mathew 6:25).

Whatever God decides to add is His prerogative and must be accepted without protest. If he adds big or small, glory to His name. He knows our needs more than we do. This is practical Christianity; we are not expected to chase after unrighteous mammon as if our lives depend on it. This should differentiate us from the world.

If a believer seeks the kingdom of God first with His righteousness and God sees his heart and deemed it fit to give him trillions of dollars, to God be the glory! but he must not go out of God's will and way to get it. It is also important to note that whatever God has added to us should be used to advance His kingdom through gospel intervention especially to areas where no one has preached nor heard about Jesus. Believers resources should also be used in humanitarian projects that touch the lives of the less privileged. Believers are not to amass wealth here on earth for themselves or live in luxury. Our treasures should be invested in God's kingdom by keeping them in heaven where moths cannot corrupt and thieves cannot steal. We should be careful not to mistake human Babylonian empire for God's kingdom; this is the biggest perversion in the body of Christ today.

### **But Jesus Did Not Make Anyone Rich In The Bible**

It is surprising to note that Jesus did not give money or prophetically declared comfort to His followers here on earth. Rather, He prophesied that tribulation awaits them in this world (John 16:33) There are biblical accounts of the good work which Jesus did while on earth.

*"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him"(Acts 10:38 KJV).*

Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost and power and He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed. A comprehensive survey of the work done by Jesus shows that He preached the gospel of the kingdom to the poor, He gave bread and fish to the hungry, He promised and provided living water to the thirsty, He healed all manner of infirmities, He healed the lame, the eyes of the blinds were restored, the deaf heard, He defended the defenceless, He sanitized the Temple of God, He cast out demons and delivered many that were oppressed by the devil, He prayed for His disciples, He sent a comforter to His disciples, He raised the dead and promised to give the kingdom of God to His disciples, He forgave sins and He sacrificed His life for mankind. The good work of Christ is inexhaustible but nowhere in the Bible was it recorded that Jesus gave someone money.

Jesus encountered numerous poor people but never gave them money. Rather, he preached the gospel of the kingdom to them. Judas put up an argument that the woman, who broke the alabaster jar to pour expensive perfume on the feet of Jesus, would have sold the perfume and gave the proceeds to the poor. Jesus objected to Judas' suggestion and stated it categorically clear that there will always be poor people among the society but His stay with them was transient. It is pertinent to note that even when Jesus sent the disciples to go and preach the gospel in the book of Luke, chapter 9 verse 3, He did not give them anything including money "He told them, take nothing for the Journey, no staff, no bread, no bag, no money, no extra shirt."

But today all pastors want to do the work of ministry in luxury. This is a complete aberration that has made nonsense of God's work done in God's way.

Was Jesus indifferent to the plights of the poor? Not at all, He always advocated that the rich should sell their properties and give the proceeds to the poor. (Mark 10:21, Luke 18:22, Mathew 19:21). In His mission statement, He specifically said that He has come to preach the gospel to the poor. In Luke 6 verse 20, He promised to give the kingdom to the poor. Why didn't He give money to the poor? After all, He performed a financial miracle when the tax collector accosted Him to pay tax. (Mathew 17:27) He would have multiplied money the way he multiplied bread and fishes and distribute to the poor but He did not. All these indicated that Jesus did not lay emphasis on money in His earthly ministry and I do not think that He is at present emphasizing money in His heavenly ministry.

There was no record of any man who became rich through Christ's prophetic word in the entire Bible. This calls for sober reflection and reprioritization of emphasis in our ministerial and Christian living. I need money more than anyone on this planet earth because I have so much domestic, ministry and humanitarian needs to tackle but I am always constrained to look at what is Christ's view about money.

The truth is that many things have been said about Jesus which were not true. People robbed and claimed that it was Jesus who gave them money, civil servants stole and falsified figures and called it God's blessings, internet fraudsters obtained from people, bought exotic cars and posted "Thank you Jesus" on their Instagram page, pastors extorted poor worshippers and-

called it God's goodness and favour, businessmen cheated and testified about the wonderful provision of Jesus. The list is endless but the earlier we understand Christ's position about money and material things the clearer we will see how incongruous our claims are.

Jesus' financial blessings may be found among those things which He promised believers that will be added to them if they seek the kingdom first (Mathew 6:33) But Christ did not advocate that we chase the addition at the detriment of our souls, steal them, claim them with seeds or extort them from people. Our responsibility is to seek the kingdom first and if He finds us faithful, He adds whatever that is needed to be added. Believers are not in the position to say what will be added, how and when it will be added. It is His will alone that will be done not ours; after all, we are supposed to have denied ourselves. If Jesus did not emphasize money in His earthly ministry, it is absolutely wrong, if we now engross ourselves with money making in our ministries. We all need money, it answers all things and it is a defence but it is also a trap and has the power to dethrone God in our lives. Let us see money the way Jesus saw it when He called it "Unrighteous Mammon"

## **The Kingdom Of God Perverted**

Nimrod's effort to pervert the way of the Lord did not just end in his building an empire; he also through his descendants has bastardized the kingdom of God without changing the name. The substance and the principles were removed and replaced by a counterfeit substance and principles. The Babylonian churches are teaching believers of Christ about a kingdom other than God's kingdom and make references to the

Bible. Many Christians today are deceived to believe that the kingdom of God is here on earth and that it is their right to enjoy the kingdom to its fullest. The false teachers have turned the kingdom of darkness to become the kingdom of God, the Bible made it clear that the entire kingdom of this present world lies under the control of the devil.

Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of this world because he claimed to have authority over them; does he have authority over the kingdom of this earth? Yes, he does. While acknowledging Satan's defeat on the cross, I would like to state it categorically clear that the kingdom of God is not yet with us. The interval between Satan's defeat and return of Christ is under the control of Satan. All the tribulations, attacks on God's people, terrorism and rulership of demonic Kings and queens, etc. are all pieces of evidence that this present kingdom is of the Satan and his agents. Jesus made it clear on the day of His arrest that His kingdom is not of this world,

*"Jesus answered; My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36 NLT)..*

The perverted kingdom is here on earth but the real kingdom is not. Jesus referred to Satan as "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31), and Paul called him "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2) and "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4). John in his epistle stated it clearer "We know that we are of God, and the whole world is in the power of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). Preachers have refused to accept the truth about the kingdom just like they have rejected biblical

truth about Christian suffering. If the kingdom of God is in this world, where is the evidence? Where is the peace, righteousness and joy in the Holy Ghost? All that is termed the evidence of God's Kingdom in this world are pretence, compromise and hypocrisy.

We are on transit camp to God's kingdom; the camp is dominated by Satan and he fights and lay ambush to stop us from entering into the kingdom. Many have been deceived to believe that the transit camp is the destination and have unpacked their luggage in readiness to relax and enjoy the pseudo-kingdom. This is the greatest mistake that any believer can make; many have made the mistake already by following the teachings of the false teachers.

We do not need any hermeneutical insight to interpret the Biblical truths that the kingdom of God is yet to come. Anything representing the kingdom of God here on earth is a manipulation of Nimrod, Semiramis and Satan. The prosperity gospel is aimed at stopping believers from entering into the kingdom of God. It replaces Jesus with money and makes believers focus on money which is a defence and answers all things instead of focusing on Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith.

Jesus in the book of Mark 10 verse 25 was categorical about the dangers of riches as wealth acquisition hinders people from entering the kingdom of God.

*"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." (Mark 10:25 KJV)*

This statement of Christ needs to be critically examined by Christians who are aspiring to enter into the kingdom. We need to ask ourselves if the riches that we are acquiring are bringing us closer to God or taking us away from God. Honest answers to these questions could help us to avoid "Had I known cry" when the trumpet sounds. Frankly speaking, honest riches are not a bad idea but the spiritual challenge is that there are compromises associated with acquiring wealth. It is these little compromises and the influence which riches have on the lives of believers that makes riches obstacle to kingdom entrance. We need to soberly reflect on this to enable us to make the right choice of not gaining the whole world and losing our souls. No amount of riches is worth the soul of one of the poorest of the poor in the most obscure village in Africa.

What the prosperity gospel does is to blindfold believers about eternity and give them responsibilities to chase wealth, make money and give to the church. The act of giving to the church makes Christians believe that they are on the right course and will make heaven as long as they are faithful in tithing, seed sowing and "Pseudo-kingdom" investment. This is a high-level deceptive system that even God's elects are trapped and enslaved in it.

### **Principles of Babylonian Church Kingdom (Pseudo-Kingdom)**

Perversion of the substance and principles of God's kingdom has produced a pseudo-principle and substance that is shrouded in deceit to blend the ways of God with the ways of Babylon. The ultimate goal of this is to frustrate God's purpose in the lives of believers.

Every activity in Babylonian church kingdom is hypocritically orchestrated to look as if it is in favour of God. The prayers, prophesies, altar calls, messages, programs and praises are faked in such a way that money-making and soul-trading are fundamentally hidden under the motive of all activities.

The principle of "Let's build and make names for ourselves" is the order of the day in Babylonian church kingdom. Denominationalism is the greatest obstacle to the purpose of God for His church. Instead of spreading the gospel, every denomination is building an empire to make a name. Denomination means "*To have a name*" and once Christians gather together and denominate, the next thing that comes into their mind is to build and make their name known worldwide. It is the Nimrod spirit that is responsible for this. The problem in Christianity today is not that we are divided; the problem is that every division is building to make names. How I wish that all divisions are pursuing the same agenda of spreading the gospel starting from their Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Our unifying factor would have been the common goal to evangelize the world and we would have achieved God's purpose in diversity as constituent units of God's people.

This principle of "let's build and make name for ourselves" has made Christians build towers to heaven lest they are scattered all over the world as instituted by Nimrod. The devil knew that if we scatter, we would carry the gospel to wherever we are scattered to, just like Philip in the book of Acts 8. Human worship is a principle in Babylonian kingdom church. Just like in the days of Nimrod, every church fashioned after Babylon has a "man-made-god".

The Hamitic people worshipped Nimrod and almost all members of the Babylonian churches worship their pastors. Pastors are demi-gods and attract worship from their followers through the charisma, aura and affluence they command.

They are so rich that even the politicians and business moguls in their churches bow down to them because of their economic prowess. Worshippers physically bow down to worship them; many cannot take decisions about their lives without consulting them. People pray in the name of the God of their pastors, as if they are not qualified to approach the same God without their pastors' name. These pastors are untouchable and no one can question them, no matter what they do.

The worshippers are enslaved and cannot do things without permission from their pastors, even Jesus' command of "go ye" has been abandoned by many because their god-pastor has not permitted them to do so. The kingdom is administered by man and the Holy Spirit has been kicked out of the churches. Pastors are glorified at the expense of God and all worshippers believe that their blessings lie in the hand of their pastors and if you want to be blessed, you must worship them. Worshippers no longer make references to the word of God, rather, at the slightest opportunity, they will tell you "My G.O", "My Papa" "My Bishop", "My Pastor" or "My Prophet" said...

While writing this book, the spirit of God took me to watch a video sermon by one of the popular Megachurch pastors in Nigeria. I was attracted by the theme of the message "How to advance the kingdom of God". To my greatest amazement, the pastor made the congregants understand that their church is the kingdom of God and every member in

adherence to the kingdom policy of Mathew 11 verse 12 must forcefully bring people to the church. Christians are no longer taught how to bring sinners to Christ but how to bring Christians to church. This is the recruitment of believers into Babylonian kingdom to enslave them.

It is important to note that populating a church with people who are already Christians does not in any way advance the kingdom. Rather, it exposes the Babylonian inclination of the church. Believers should note this and should not be employed to promote this evil called evangelism. Kingdom advancement has nothing to do with church increase in the population of those who are already Christians; it is increasing the number of converts who have come to Christ and are enlisted to seek the kingdom of God through spiritual growth pathways.

Advancing the kingdom involves cross-cultural missions to reach those who have not heard about Jesus. Babylonian churches focus on numerical growth not minding the number of conversions. They do not care about the salvation of souls and make altar calls for deceptive formalities. I watched another video where another popular pastor in Nigeria boasted that his church is for Christians, Muslims and Pagans. It is surprising to note that the Pagans and the Muslims who attend the church go back as Pagans and Muslims and returns another day on the same religious status. Shouldn't a Muslim or a pagan who comes to church be led to Christ? This is advancing Babylonian pseudo-kingdom with plans to hand over worshippers to Antichrist. It has nothing to do with God and the kingdom of God.

## **The Kingdom Of God In Reality**

I would like to talk about the kingdom of God which has nothing to do with the present-day kingdoms. Several preachers have tried to mix the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God but this is a perversion from the pit of hell. Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God and established as "king." According to inaugurated eschatology on the return of Jesus, God's kingdom is not yet fully realized. However, in the meantime, the good news that forgiveness of sins is available through His name is to be preached to the entire world as a witness to all nations before this present kingdom ends. The church is not the kingdom of God as many Babylonian pastors have made their followers believe, they encourage them to invest their money in towers of Babel all in the name of investing in God's kingdom. This is an error! The kingdom of God comes when Jesus returns, commencing with the millennium rule. All that believers need to do is to work hard for the coming of this kingdom through aggressive missionary interventions and to prepare ourselves to be qualified for the kingdom through the growth pathway.

*"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well".  
(Mathew 6:33 NIV)...*

The primary responsibility of every believer is to seek the kingdom of God and the righteousness of Christ first. When we seek them right, every other need will be provided by God. Believers have one primary objective on earth, every other thing that we do must be geared towards achieving this primary objective.

The school that we go, the jobs that we do, the business that we do, etc. must complement the kingdom seeking project. For us to prioritize kingdom seeking project, our ambitions, goals, wills and aspirations must first of all be collapsed to accommodate the will of God.

### **The Principle Of The Real Kingdom Of God.**

Some attributes will help us to know what the real kingdom of God is, these will help us to discern and understand the differences between seeking the real kingdom of God and patronizing the pseudo-kingdom. It is important to note that the difference by ordinary perception is not clear to a spiritually uninformed person. The same scriptural verses are quoted when describing both but the hermeneutical insights are not the same. The number of proponents and followers of the real kingdom cannot in any way be compared with the advocates and followers of the pseudo-kingdom.

The mouth of the Babylonians is larger and their voice is louder and the purpose is to pervert God's way like their father Nimrod did and divert many to false religion. The following principles will help you to distinguish between the fake and the real. The way to the kingdom of God is constricted, it is not wide and attractive, it is a hard way. Paul made it clear to his converts that it is through many tribulations that they will get into the kingdom of God. There are so many difficulties on the way to the kingdom and a lot of spiritual sagacity is required to navigate through. Many aspire to enter into the kingdom but only a few will be qualified according to Christ.

*"You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow*

*gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it" (Mathew 7:13-14NLT)...*

Believers should be watchful and sensitive not to enter into the broad road that leads to destruction. It is obvious that the roads in question are the road to the kingdom of darkness embellished and polished to look like the way to the kingdom of God but it is not. Take a look at the way that you are at present treading on, is it deceptive or is the narrow way that leads to life? An honest answer could be of help to you. The kingdom which the churches are at present preaching and teaching members to sow seeds to claim kingdom blessings is the broad road that leads to destruction because it is not narrow and constricted. Please beware of dogs! (Philipians 3:2).

The kingdom of God allows radicalism, forceful and compelling moves by the seekers. Those who are not radicalized to take risks for Christ's name, His gospel and kingdom are not good candidates of the kingdom. The right candidates are men of eager, impetuous zeal, who grasp the kingdom of heaven and forcefully advance it through the spread of the gospel to areas where Christ has not been named. While other religions have exceeded the threshold of radicalism in their growth and expansion efforts, Christianity has been weakened by the activities of pseudo-kingdom proponents who have made Christians selfish and stagnantly relevant only to churches.

*"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (Mathew 11:12 KJV).*

Hell and the power of darkness will oppose every believer's move to enter into the kingdom. If we are not determined to give up our sins and anything that hinders us, we will make a wreck of the ship of our salvation. We must take up hazards for the sake of the gospel at every expense; this requires a violent earnestness and sagacity.

Looking back is not allowed for those who want to get into the real kingdom of God. The journey to the kingdom is forward ever, backward never. Anyone desirous to enter the kingdom must not look back for any reason. Family ties and other domestic engagements should not come between a seeker and the kingdom.

*"He said to another man, Follow me. But he replied, Lord, first let me go and bury my father. Jesus said to him, Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God. Still, another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family. Jesus replied, no one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:59-63 NIV)...*

Those who are determined to seek the kingdom must resolve to continue without looking back. Looking back leads to backsliding, and backsliding is to perdition. He that endures to the end shall be saved. The principle of steadfastness is not negotiable in the real kingdom of God and is a virtue for every kingdom seeker.

Those who are rich must get rid of their wealth before coming to join in seeking the real kingdom. This exposition was made known by Jesus in the book of Mark 10 verses 17 to 25, the rich young man came to Jesus and asked what he could do to

enter into the kingdom but Jesus told him to sell all his properties and come and carry his cross and follow Him. I believe that Jesus' instruction was based on the fact that riches and wealth could be a hindrance to the obedience of kingdom rules and regulations. Jesus did not want the rich man to look back after signing the decision slip to seek the kingdom. He wanted the man to be willing to deny himself, carry his cross and follow Him.

Suffering and cross-carrying are principles of the real kingdom. No one gets into God's kingdom without passing through many tribulations (Acts 14:22). No kingdom seeker is exempted from cross-carrying (Mathew 16:24). There are many hurdles to cross before anyone can access the kingdom of God. Once you confess Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, every other process to the entrance to the kingdom involves self-denial, forsaking all, carrying the cross, following Jesus, discipleship which means to be taught and disciplined to be like Christ and missionary service which involves hardship and sacrifice to reach the unreached with the gospel and love of Christ.

The kingdom when it comes will usher in a new dawn in the lives of those who endured to the end (overcomers). A careful survey of biblical eschatology reveals that the Kingdom of God is a world-ruling monarchy that God will establish on this earth through the second coming of Jesus Christ. Daniel prophesied about this.

*"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever" (Daniel 2:44 NIV).*

The coming kingdom which commences immediately after the battle of Armageddon, after the defeat of the world government will not allow any human government to exist on this earth. The millennium rule will usher in God's eternal kingdom that will endure forever. The peace, happiness and prosperity in the Millennium will be so great that the saints will see a clear difference between the kingdom of the world and the kingdom of Christ. After the thousand years, another beautiful phase will be ushered in, this present earth and heaven will pass away and a new earth and new heaven will be established as God's eternalkingdom.

*"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.*

*He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order of things has passed away.*

*He who was seated on the throne said, I am making everything new! Then he said, Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.*

*He said to me: It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty, I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children."*

*(Revelation 21:1-7 NIV).*

The eternal kingdom comes as a new heaven and a new earth. God will take over the governance of heaven and earth and all human challenges will come to an end.

This kingdom will be characterized by righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Sorrow, pains, death and mourning will no more be in the midst of God's people. Problem free-life will be enjoyed by all those who endure to the end. This is the actualization of the promise of God to all believers and anyone who aspires to inherit all this must be an overcomer through self-denial, cross-carrying, following Jesus, becoming a disciple, deliberately and calculative involving in missionary service and maturing to become a son. The journey into this kingdom starts by being born of water and spirit and culminates in eternal kingdom inheritance.

Belonging to a church does not qualify anyone but doing God's will is a prerequisite. Seeking the kingdom is a project that must be giving a priority by every believer; it is worth the persecutions, the sufferings, the insults, the shames, reproaches, etc., all these are the catalysts that usher believers into this kingdom. He, who laughs last, laughs best!

## **What Shall We Do?**

This will be the question in the heart of many whom the Lord will touch through this chapter, the Israelites asked the same question in the book of Luke 3:10 after John the Baptist preached a terrifying message to them about how the axe had been set to hewn down unproductive trees. The same question was asked by Jews who crucified Jesus after Peter preached heart-piercing message.

*"Now when they heard Peter's words, they were cut to the heart. They asked Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'" (Act 2:37NIV)*

Peter answered them and said to them "repent and be baptized"

## Come Out Of Her

The Answer to all those asking above question can be found in the book of Revelation 18 verse 14 "*Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "'Come out of her, my people,' so that you will not share in her sins so that you will not receive any of her plagues*". This is the voice of God as reported by Apostle John in the book of Revelation, God is calling His people to come out of Semiramis, the mother of Nimrod and the legendary founder of Babylon. She is Babylon the great, the mother of harlots who sits like a queen on top of many waters. She has made many Kings rich through her fornication and has a golden cup in her hands which contains sperms of sex partners and the blood of saints who were slain in this world, many merchants of the sea have been made rich through her merchandize and many pastors have been made rich by her through satanic trade by barter with the souls of men who are enslaved in churches.

The only way to escape from the wrath that will befall the Babylonian system is to come out of her. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes and reveal deep secret things about your place of worship and take the right decision. Come out of her that preaches prosperity and solution messages without pointing the cross and the doctrine of Christian suffering to you, they are employed to sell your soul to Semiramis. Come out of her that claim to love Jesus but hate His cross, they are the enemies of the gospel. Come out of her that mind the things of this world and never care to tell you about eternity, they are working for the Antichrist. Come out of her that gather Christians from other churches to sit in one place every Sunday in cities but do not

have missionaries among the unreached, they are running Babylonian empires. Come out of her where all you hear are healing, deliverance, signs, wonders, prophecies and there is no mention of self-denial and cross-carrying as prerequisites for following Christ, they are preparing you for destruction. Come out of her who teaches you that the church will be raptured before Antichrist comes, they have perfected plans to hand you over to Antichrist without you knowing.

Run to places where you will be nurtured to deny yourself, carry your cross, follow Jesus, become a disciple, become a missionary and take responsibilities for Christ and spread the gospel to areas where Christ has not been named. Run to where you will be groomed to become a son of God to take risks and suffer for the sake of Christ, His gospel and His kingdom in preparation for the second coming of Christ. If you cannot find a place to run into, run into your house and start a home church and allow the Holy Spirit to be your teacher. This is the only way to protect yourself and your family from the clampdown of innocent Christians by the power of Babylon.

### **Change Your Prayer Point**

Another thing that you must do is that your prayer point must change to accommodate God's will and pattern. We are to borrow a leaf from Agur the son of Jakeh in requesting from God

*"Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, Who is the Lord?"*

*"Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God" (Proverbs 30:8-9NIV)...*

The Bible does not extol poverty as a virtue and does not want believers to amass wealth because of the dangers associated with it. We must be able to strike a balance and trust God to provide our daily bread. He has already told us to take no thought about what we need because He is aware of our needs and will provide them for us. The prayer point above is worthy of emulation by every heavenly conscious person, riches can make us deny God and poverty can make us profane the name of our God. None of them is good and should be avoided through a divinely orchestrated package of absolute reliance on God. Falsehood and lies are attributes of the Babylonian system, we must ask God to help us remove hypocrisy, lies and falsehood because these are great hindrances to kingdom entrance.

### **Christianity Is Not About Us, It Is About God**

We are to pursue our lives ambitions which are in line with the will of Christ, strive to be the best in our academic pursuit, in our professions, in our businesses, in our marriages, in our ministry and every other endeavour; but we must make sure that as we move through life, anywhere a conflict arises between our ways and God's ways, our ways must give way to God's ways. The character of every believer must reflect a self-denied life. Christianity is not about us, it is about God. One terrible thing amongst others which the Babylonian pastors have done is that they have succeeded in making believers think that Christianity is about us, that Christ came to solve our problems and make us comfortable.

This is a complete perversion of the word of God, Jesus came to fulfil the purpose of God for humanity by giving us the power to become sons of God who will be transformed to His image and be restored to God's original purpose when He returns.

Our crosses must not just be carried; it must be seen to be carried daily. The footmark of our following Jesus must be conspicuous in all the routes that we pass through in our daily walks. Our characters must show that we have been with Christ and that He has discipled us. Our daily priority is to ensure that the glory of the knowledge of Christ covers the earth as water covers the sea by obeying the command of GO YE. Our developmental goal and greatest aspiration in life are to become sons of God as we await His second coming.

## **Overhaul Your Christian Foundation**

The foundation of our Christian lives need to be revisited and overhauled, most of us like myself did not understand what Christianity is all about. No one told me that there are prerequisites for following Jesus and this has influenced the way I acted and reasoned. If I had been educated properly, it would have been difficult for false teachers to deceive me; no one told me about forsaking all as a qualification for following Jesus. We need to go back to the basis if we must succeed in this race. Jesus was straight forward concerning what is expected of anyone who wants to become a Christian. In Luke 14:26-33, Jesus gave stern conditions for us to understand that becoming a Christian is not an easy task and potential candidates must, first of all, take stock before embarking on the difficult journey.

*"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, „this man began to build and was not able to finish or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples (Luke16:26-33 NIV).*

Forsaking all is a prerequisite for following Jesus and whoever that is desirous of becoming a Christian must hate all including himself before he can qualify to follow Him. The word of Jesus to Christian aspirants to hate mother, father, wife, children and self, threw me off balance and I was wondering what God meant by this when I had a pneumatological insight to the passage. What Christ means is that those who want to follow Him must love Him above all, place Him in their high priority list and demote everyone that has occupied the first position in their lives before an encounter with Him. He does not want to compete with anyone in our lives, He is a jealous lover.

Becoming a Christian is a very difficult thing but we seem not to understand it from a real perspective. Preachers in the bid of making it attractive to potential Christians usually embellish the process and make it appetizing. Jesus likened our following Him to building a tower and going to war, the two scenarios are

big tasks which require heavy sagacity, resilience and tenacity. This will give us ideas of what venturing into Christianity looks like. It is a project that needs planning, prioritization, implementation and evaluation.

If we must finish strong, we need to go back to the basics and understand what it takes to be a Christian; when we understand this, then we can now come out from the faulty foundation and start all over again. Most Christians will not be able to finish strong because no one told them of all that is involved. Most believers jumped into Christianity on wrong assumptions. Some who have little ideas of the conditions are not spiritually, emotionally and physically ready for the Christian task. How many of us have denied ourselves and forsaken all? How many of us have carried our crosses?

The only way out is to come out of the Babylonian system and start all over again. Christianity is a warfare and only the fittest of the fittest shall finish strong, it is not a race for the bread and butter breeds. Let us leave the pseudo-kingdom of God and pursue the real kingdom which is accessible through suffering (Acts 14:22). In this race, it is not all that started that will finish. Jesus in His message to the church in Sardis emphasized on the need for finishing strong.

*"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels". (Revelation 3:5KJV)..*

I was afraid the day the Lord opened my eyes to see the implication of the above scriptural verse.

I came to realize that a name in the book of Life can be blotted out if the bearer of such name faints in the days of adversity. I pity those who follow false teachers who preach the doctrine of eternal security (once saved forever saved). This is a perversion that takes people away from Christ and hand them over to the Antichrist. We are supposed to endure to the end if we want our names to remain in the book of Life. Overcoming is not negotiable in Christianity.

### **Seek The Kingdom Of God First**

We must as a matter of urgency, seek the kingdom of God first with His righteousness. Seeking the kingdom is not constructing church building; Jesus has abolished temple buildings (Luke 21:6) because it is a perversion of God's plan and purpose. He has decided to make the hearts of believers his abode. (Ephesians 3:17) Temple building keeps Christians in one place as advocated by Nimrod to ensure that God is not glorified. God desires that the knowledge of His glory shall cover the earth as water covers the sea (Habakkuk 2:14). The Babylonian buildings cannot accomplish this ambitions, it is only when believers scatter all over the world that God's glory will be radiated by the process of spiritual bioluminescence as more temples are erected in the heart of men and women through the mandate of the Great Commission.

The priority project of every Christian should be to seek the kingdom. There are two dimensions to seeking the kingdom; (a) To seek to enter into the kingdom and; (b) To seek to promote the kingdom. In seeking to enter into the kingdom, you must be born of the water and the Spirit, deny yourself, carry your cross, follow Jesus, be discipled, do

missionary service in any capacity of your grace and become a son who awaits the day of his manifestation. All these requires going through difficulties, challenges, sufferings and troubles for the sake of Christ, His kingdom and His name. (Acts 14:22).

For you to seek to promote the kingdom of God, you must move into the dimension of preaching the Gospel of the kingdom to the world as a witness to all nations. This is not giving an invitation to people to come to your church. It is cross geographical and cross-cultural movement to declare Christ to the unreached peoples groups. Our God is a missionary God and God's sons are supposed to be missionary sons. You do not seek God's kingdom by paying tithes or sowing seeds, you seek God's kingdom by deliberately and sacrificially getting involved in missionary work.

Going to church is not seeking God's kingdom but embarking on a missionary journey is. Jesus is not coming until the Gospel of the kingdom is preached to all the world as a witness to all nations (Mathew 24:14). All facilitators and catalysts of the second coming of Christ are kingdom seekers and will be rewarded with "all these things" here on earth and eternal life with the crown of righteousness, the crown of rejoicing, the crown of glory, imperishable crown and crown of life when Christ returns.

For sake of clarity, I would like to bring to your cognizance that there are erroneous teachings about kingdom seeking as a result of hermeneutical perversion by false teachers. Unfortunately, these teachings have gone viral because of the social status of the proponents and copy/paste methodology which has been adopted by many young preachers today.

You do not seek the kingdom by going to church, paying tithes, sowing seed, building churches or bringing Christian to church. You do not get the blessings of the kingdom by claiming them on this earth. Jesus has given us the principles of the kingdom which is completely different from the kingdom principles which are taught in our churches today.

We seek the kingdom by obedience to the word of Jesus concerning kingdom principles. The first thing that we need to do is to be born again, deny ourselves, carry our cross, follow Jesus and then learn how to take no thought of our needs but to focus on kingdom seeking (Mathew 6:25-33) We should always pray for the kingdom of God to come and let God's will be done on earth as it is done in heaven (Mathew 6:10). We seek the kingdom by keeping our treasures in heaven where moth cannot destroy and thieves cannot steal (Mathew 6:19-21).

We seek the kingdom by our readiness to suffer for Jesus, for His name and for His kingdom (Acts 14:22) We seek the kingdom by actively involving in preaching the gospel of the kingdom and whole heartedly involving in missionary work (Matthew 24:14, Matthew 28:18-20). We seek the kingdom through humanitarian interventions like feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and visiting the prisoner etc.(Mathew 25:34-40) We seek the kingdom through the growth pathway until we are matured to participate in the adoption ceremony into sonship for the glorification into the kingdom (Hebrew 2:10) We seek the kingdom through righteous living and holiness (Hebrew 12:14) We seek the kingdom through hard work (Luke 13:24).

We need to note that the kingdom of God has been prepared since the world began and it is not accessible until Christ returns. The theology of an earthly kingdom of this present age is a product of hermeneutical perversion and manipulations orchestrated by the *Heterodidaskalos* to defocus believers from pursuing the kingdom of God and cause them to focus on material things of this world. A biblical survey will help us understand who is fooling who.

*"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left Then the King will say to those on his right, „Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world" (Mathew 25:31-34 NIV).*

The above scripture is referring to the judgement of nations but my focus is to establish the fact that the kingdom can only be accessed when Christ returns in His glory. He has also promised us that He has gone to do some finishing touches on our mansion which the father has prepared for us. When He returns, He will take us to possess our inheritance which is the kingdom (John 14:1-3) The kingdom is an inheritance which Christ has promised to all those who sought the kingdom and found it through His kingdom principles which are not the same as the kingdom principles which are taught in our churches today. Let us not be ignorant of the devices of the devil who has manipulated or employed pastors whose duty is to work against God's kingdom by perverting His ways. Jesus said that it is only a few people that will have access to the kingdom

*“Work hard to enter the narrow door to God’s Kingdom, for many will try to enter but will fail. (Luke 13:24 NIV).*

The kingdom of God is accessible through hard work as Jesus has told the disciples. It is not by naming it, claiming it and having it. The false teachers have brought kingdom principles that oppose the principle of Christ. Believers must be careful and work hard to be part of the few that will inherit the kingdom. Many that are following earthly prosperity have already missed it without knowing it; they have joined the broad road that leads to destruction. If you belong to this group, why not make a turnaround and strive to enter into the kingdom of God through the narrow way. It is not late! And Christ will be happy that you realized your folly.

We can start from today to work hard to reach the unreached with the gospel and love of Christ, work hard to carry out humanitarian interventions among the less privileged and work hard to develop ourselves through the spiritual pathway to maturity. When we have become sons, then we can be glorified into the kingdom of God.



**SEVEN**  
CHAPTER  
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# *Back to Acts* **OF THE APOSTLES**

**A**cts of the Apostles was written by Luke and addressed to a man called Theophilus. It gave us a story of what Jesus began to do and teach (Acts 1:1). This book is a story of what Jesus continued to do in His heavenly ministry after His death and resurrection through His disciples. Christianity started in the book of Acts and it is important for us to retrospectively visit the book if we must understand where we have missed it. The foundation of Christianity was laid in this book and believers were first called Christians in Antioch in Syria as contained in the book of Acts 11 verse 26. We need to understand how the early church carried out their activities and compare and contrast with what we have today to see how we can go back and mend our ways to ensure that God's work is done in God's way and not in man's way. A survey through the book of Acts has revealed that this book of the Bible is more of the actions of the Holy Spirit than that of the Apostles and should have been named "The Act of the Holy Spirit". All the activities of the apostles were packaged and executed by the Holy Spirit and this should give us an idea of what has gone wrong in our time.

## **Pneumatological Empowerment of the Early Church**

Holy Ghost gave birth to the church on the day of Pentecost in the upper room where the disciples were waiting as instructed by Jesus. About one hundred and twenty of the disciples who were waiting were filled with the Holy Ghost to enable them to have the power as promised by Jesus.

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8 KJV)*

The early church started their operations with the Holy Spirit: they were filled, received the gift of diverse tongue and there were divided tongues as of fire which rested on each one of them as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The disciples experienced a supernatural encounter that released the unction to carry out the mandate which Jesus gave to the church. The power gave them the boldness to preach Christ. Peter who denied Jesus and was afraid to identify with Him, came out boldly and declare Christ to those who crucified Jesus and about three thousands of them surrendered to the saving power of Christ. From the day of the inauguration of the church, none of their activities was done without the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **Pneumatological Deficiency In Our Churches Today**

The Holy Spirit was the inaugurator of the early church through the disciples, but men are the founders and inaugurators of most churches today. The objective of the church of God is to spread the Gospel to areas where Christ has not been named and the Holy Spirit was sent to empower the disciples to carry out this assignment. The purpose of the church is completely perverted by men and another objective has emerged for the church through the inspiration of human and devilish machinations. Some churches have the objective to raise Kings and queens, some to make people rich, some to empower worshippers to live successful lives, and some to distinguish worshippers from the masses.

There are as many objectives as there are many churches and only a few of them tally with God's objective for His church. If the purpose is perverted, abuse is highly inevitable. There are lots of abuses in the church today due to a faulty foundation. When the purpose is perverted, the Holy Spirit will have no work to do and hence His absence in many churches. The church is characterized by pneumatological deficiency and men have taken the place of the Holy Spirit, Babylonian building has replaced the "go ye" agenda and worshippers have settled down in one place enjoying in fool's paradise.

The Holy Spirit gave the gift of diverse tongues to enable the church to reach out to all nations with different languages but churches are busy today speaking in tongues in their local assemblies. I would like to say the first evidence of the Holy Spirit is not speaking in tongues, but a burning desire to reach out to the lost. Speaking in tongues edifies the speaker to take the necessary risks and boldness to reach out to those who have not heard about Jesus with the gospel and love of Christ.

The reasons for pneumatological deficiency in our churches are:

- (a) Ignorance of who the Holy Spirit is, His ministry and His works. He is the least known of the trinity and many churches do not have knowledge about Him.
- (b) When the purpose of the church is perverted, the Holy Spirit will not have any reason to be in such churches. His major assignment is to empower Christians to carry out the mandate of the Great Commission and comfort Christians in their suffering, persecutions, reproaches etc. If a church has decided to reject the mandate of the Great Commission, what will the Holy Ghost do in such churches?
- c) Pneumatological abuse chases the Holy Spirit out of the church; many grieve the Spirit in their activities.

There are lots of "Thus says the Lord" that are not from the Lord, many decisions were taken in the church without Pneumatological consultation and lots of acrobatic display in the church, all in the name of the Holy Spirit. All these offend Him.

There are lots of claims by Christians on the leading of the Spirit, we need to be careful because at times the Holy Spirit has gone but we still claim that He is there for us, even when the manifestation is absolutely in the flesh. Going back to the Acts of the Apostles will help us see the operation of the Holy Spirit in the foundation of the church. Church leaders need to look at the work of the Holy Spirit in the definition of the purpose of the Church and note the discrepancy with that of their churches. A quick overhauling of the foundation and a redefinition of the mission and vision to suit that of the early church will be a step in the right direction in ameliorating already exacerbated spiritual decay in our churches. The purpose of every church as a matter of urgency must change to reflect the mandate of the Great Commission if we desire to have the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst. A missionary mindless church is "pneumatologically" deficient because the spirit of mission is the spirit of Christ and also the Holy Spirit.

### **Administration In The Early Church**

A look at the administration of the churches in Acts of the Apostle will help us to understand how the church of God should be managed according to biblical standard. Our inability to administer the church in God's way is responsible for all the abuses that are prevalent in our churches.

Church administrative policies and procedures are of God and should be geared towards glorifying, loving and worshipping Him. The church is established for God and the administration must be God-centred. In the early church, all policies originated from God and were pneumatologically reliant. Carnal administration of food, the appointment of officers, deployment of missionaries and decision making in Jerusalem and Antioch churches were all according to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 6, there was a dispute between the Grecians and Hebrew Christians over the negligence of Grecian widows in the daily ministration of food. This was a very big administrative challenge for a church that was trying to survive external aggression from the Jewish authority. A look at how the conflict was resolved and the administration of food was improved will help us to understand where we have missed it in our day to day running of our churches. The twelve apostles who were the leaders of the church held an emergency meeting and decision was reached that they need to relieve themselves of all Carnal administration to concentrate on spiritual administration of the church.

*"So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them" (Acts 6:2-3NIV)...*

The entire church was involved in the appointment of the members of the food committee and qualification for the selection included that candidates must be spirit-filled.

Does the sharing of food require Holy Spirit guidance? I think that this is the area that many church leaders are neglecting in the appointment of church workers. Most of our church leaders do not consider the manifestation of the spirit of God in the lives of appointees; rather, we appoint people based on relationship, loyalty, tribe and friendship. If the appointment of those who serve table requires that candidates must be filled with the Spirit, it then means that those who sweep the church, securities and ushers in the churches and every other worker must be filled with the Spirit before an appointment could be effected. This is an error and if corrected will help the church to achieve her purpose.

After seven men with an honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom were selected, they presented them to the apostles who prayed for them and handed the responsibilities of food administration to them. This intervention of the apostles saved the church from internal crises which would have had a devastating effect; their prompt decision helped the church immensely. In our churches today, some leaders would have ignored the Grecian people, some would have clamped them down and instruct that anyone heard murmuring must be sanctioned and some would have silently oppressed the Grecians until they are frustrated out of the church. Conflict resolution using the biblical model is a veritable tool in ensuring that peace is maintained in the church and among individual members of the church.

A look at another appointment process in the book of Acts will be of immense help to us if we want to get God involved in the appointment of church workers.

When the disciples replaced Judas with Mathias, there was a process which the disciples adopted and I think that this model is worthy of emulation as a standard for all appointments in our churches. The apostles first of all selected two, Joseph called Barsabas and Matthias and they prayed and said: "Thou Lord which knoweth the heart of all men, show whether of this two thou hast chosen, that they may take part of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he may go his own place". After prayer, they cast their lots and lots fell upon Matthias.

Two men were chosen by the disciples based on human calculation but were subjected to the omniscient God who is the searcher of the hearts of all men to choose between the two. They presented their will to God and asked God's will to prevail in total exclusion of the will of man. The prayer was to invite God to take an absolute decision which no man can dispute. It is important to note they cast lot not vote, the manner of the lot was not explained by the verse but today, lots can be cast by writing "Yes" and "No" in a paper, wrap the paper, shake thoroughly and invite the candidates to pick. We can rely on God to make His choice known to His people. This model is more reliable than human method of appointing based on whom we like and whom we think is most qualified.

It is shocking to note that this first generation Christians and apostles of the Lamb did not come up with the idea that God told them whom to appoint. Today's Peter (leader of the church) would not have had the time to go through this transparent and godly process, he would have woken up one morning and announced that God has revealed to him who shall replace Judas.

When the Jerusalem church wanted to communicate their resolutions to the Gentile churches in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia, they did not leave the Holy Spirit behind. He was adequately consulted and He vetoed the communiqué before a letter was written on the decision of the Jerusalem church.

*"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements" (Acts 15:28 NIV).*

From the tone of their letter, it is obvious that the Holy Spirit was the invisible overseer of the church; they recognized His leadership role in all they did and were proud to acknowledge Him in all their endeavours. The absence of Holy Spirit in the administration of today's church is responsible for Nimrodic and Babylonian principles in our churches. Our inability to yield to God's purpose has chased away the Holy Ghost from the church and administration of the church is now in the hand of men who are under the manipulation of Semiramis and the spirit of her evil son.

In Antioch church, the ministers did not choose the ministries but the Holy Spirit did, they were not elected by popular suffrage or appointed by a Human overseer but were given to the church by the Holy Spirit. In the selection of missionaries, He spoke to the church to separate for Him Saul and Barnabas unto the work which He had called them. (Acts 13:2) He was the one who deployed them to the fields, empowered them and directed them on where to go.

The Holy Ghost spoke in Antioch church because of His concern for missionary work, the church is more missional than any other church in the Bible.

It is important to note that the church had a relationship with the Holy Spirit, their spiritual antenna was positioned to receive sound waves at the frequency at which the Holy Ghost communicates to humans, otherwise they would not have heard Him. Apart from their sensitivity, they also obeyed and prayed for Paul and Barnabas before the Holy Ghost sent them. This scenario is possible in our churches today, all we need to do is to embrace the mandate of the Great Commission and the Holy Ghost will make Himself available for a consolidated and formidable partnership. Going back to the Acts is a necessity if we must get things right in our churches.

## **Prayer Pattern In Acts Of The Apostles**

After Peter and John were released by the council with a warning never to speak in the name of Jesus, they came back and gave the report to the church and they all lifted their voice to God with one accord and prayed. We are going to look at the prayer points and see whether it complies with the prayers in our churches today. And if there are deviations, there are needs that we restructure our prayers to comply with that of apostles if we are sure that it is the same Christ that they professed that we are professing today.

*“When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. Sovereign Lord, they said, you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.*

*Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus,*

*whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” (Acts 4:24:30 NIV).*

A critical analysis of the prayer points has revealed the hearts of the disciples who have denied themselves and carried their crosses to follow Jesus. They first extolled God and reminded Him of His wonderful creation, they equally referred to God's word as written in the book of Psalms. Then they presented their adversaries before God to see all the threats and persecutions but instead of asking God to kill the persecutors or take away the persecutions, they asked God to give them the boldness to continue doing the things which were attracting persecution to them. What a committed and determined people to the course of the gospel! They pleaded with God to stretch out His hand to heal and perform signs and wonders, as His presence in their ministration will inevitably strengthen them and give them boldness to continue speaking in the name of Christ.

Today's Nigeria church would have gone into spiritual warfare of binding and loosing to stop the elders, the high priests and the Sadducees from persecuting us. We would have prayed for all of them to die with their family members, we would have prophesized an end to the persecution. Our next prayer point if the rage continues will be that God should give us an escape route to run out of the country to where we will live peacefully. Every prayer point that comes out of a man's mouth is a product of who he is. A baby Christian in his prayer is selfish and runs away from responsibilities.

An "occultic Christian" prays for people to die and hold vigil for people to run mad but a mature Christian who has forsaken all to follow Christ presents his case to God, accepts the challenge and takes the risk for Christ's name, His Gospel and His kingdom.

The disciples in the Acts of the Apostles prayed according to the will of God and the venue of their meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost and they spoke the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31) God chooses to answer prayers according to His will, they did not ask for the Holy Spirit, they only prayed for the boldness to fulfil the mandate of the Great Commission. Holy Spirit is exclusively reserved for missionaries and any Christian who desires the Holy Spirit must be actively involved in mission by going, giving or groaning. Unfortunately, people gather in churches today to pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit; you need not pray for the Holy Spirit, all you need to do is to tarry while strategizing on how to go for missionary journey, support missionaries or pray for missionaries and the work of missions. When you wait to be endued with power from on high to carry out the assignment of the mandate of the Great Commission, the Holy Spirit comes on His own unannounced.

The prayer points of a church speak volume of the spiritual health of the church. The early church should be a standard for all Christian communities irrespective of denominational affiliation. Some selfish and occultic prayers are borrowed from the flesh and the pit of hell respectively. What many people do not consider is that it is the prerogative of God to answer prayers; when your prayer is motivated by self and wickedness, the chances of getting an answer from God is zero.

How do you expect God to kill another of His child because of you and how do you expect God who advocated that you deny yourself and carry your cross to follow Him to make you very comfortable and give you suffering-free life here on earth? Any time such prayer seemed to be answered, I bet you, there is a compromise somewhere. If you pray and someone dies, you have joined an occultic group without knowing, some believers in search of comfort have left Christ to serve mammon and false Christ while still believing that they are perfectly serving God. Beware of your prayer points! Learn from the Apostle in the book of Acts.

Had the disciples killed Paul with prayers, who would have evangelized the gentile nations? Who would have written the epistles of the New Testament? They had every moral ground to pray against Paul and others who conspired and killed Stephen but they did not. Even Stephen in his dying state did not pray against them. Rather, he prayed that God should forgive them because they did not know what they were doing. Jesus prayed the same kind of prayer for those who crucified Him. Where are we borrowing wicked prayer points which are prevalent in our Churches today?

### **Missionary Activities Of The Early Church**

The purpose of the early church was to carry out the mandate of the Great Commission as directed by our Lord Jesus Christ. The instruction to spread the gospel to all nations was given to the disciples in the book of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts of the Apostles.

Holy Ghost came to inaugurate the church in the book of Acts chapter 2 and empowered the disciples to start the spread of the Gospel in Jerusalem and move to Judea, Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Unfortunately, the disciples started in Jerusalem but could not take the Gospel beyond Jerusalem. I presume that the spirit of Babylon possessed them and they wanted to settle down in Jerusalem and build a Nimrodic Empire. The Jerusalem church was reluctant to obey the mandate of "go ye" and persecution came to scatter them so that they reach out to all nations and tongues with the good news of salvation.

*"And Saul approved of their killing him. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria".  
(Acts 8:1NIV).*

God allowed persecution to cause the disciples to obey the command of the Great Commission. The command is not optional, it is a must. Philip ran to Samaria and preached Christ crucified. All the disciples were dispersed to areas where the gospel has not reached. Surprisingly, all the disciples were dispersed to preach the gospel while the apostles who received the mandate directly from Christ remained in Jerusalem. It is unfortunate that even today, "the big men of God" are reluctant to leave their comfort zones but the faceless, the nameless and the nobodies are veritable instruments in the hand of God.

The church in Jerusalem was able to reach Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Joppa, Caesarea, Damascus, Phenice, Cyprus, Antioch, etc. with the gospel and love of Christ through the persecuted disciples who scattered abroad.

The Antioch church which was planted by the Jerusalem church became more missional than the parent church. The church in Antioch was the most sensitive as far as the mandate of the Great Commission was concerned. It was in the Antioch church that believers were first called "Christians". The Antioch church was pneumatologically reliant and obeyed the Holy Spirit without delay.

*"Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off". (Acts 13:1-4NIV).*

The entire Gentile nations were evangelized by the Church in Antioch after Paul and Barnabas were separated by the Holy Ghost unto the work that He had called them. It is important to note that the Holy Ghost was responsible for this separation and not man. The work of mission can only be done by the Holy Ghost and that was why Jesus told the disciples to wait until they are endued with power by the Holy Ghost. The church in Antioch was able to recognize the voice of the Holy Ghost and obeyed immediately. Unfortunately, our churches today have chased the Holy Ghost from the church with clericalism and Nimroodic spirit. We are too busy with programs that give us money and fame that we do not hear when the Holy Ghost is speaking. This is the reason why missionaries are no longer raised in churches today.

We need to borrow a leaf from the church in Antioch and become sensitive to the leading of the Holy Ghost. After Paul and Barnabas were separated, in their first missionary journey, they evangelized Seleucia, Cyprus, Salamis, Paphos, Perga in Pamphilia, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe cities of Lyconia. Paul's missiological strategy was to take the route of cities where there were good populations of Jewish people. Instead of taking the easier Roman routes, Paul and Barnabas deliberately opted to travel along the rugged Kestros Valley because of the hospitality of local Jewish communities. Today's missionaries should minimize risks by searching for persons of peace and nations of peace while carrying out their missionary activities; this will inevitably help in bringing more souls to Christ at lesser risk. The high-risk areas should not be avoided but this strategy could lessen the rate of attack.

Barnabas was not part of the second missionary journey, because of the sharp dispute between him and Paul over John Mark; he separated with Paul and went to Cyprus with John Mark while Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke formed another team for the second missionary journey.

*"They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, Come over to Macedonia and help us. When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them". (Acts 16:6-10 NIV)...*

Luke used a personal pronoun which indicated that he was a part of the team. The Holy Ghost was the one directing them on where to go and where not to. We need to learn about how to rely on the Holy Ghost for directions and instructions as we carry out missionary work. Our inability to allow the Holy Ghost to direct us is responsible for our failures in the works of missions. In the second missionary journey, they were able to evangelize Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, Troas, Samothrace, Niapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Cenchreae, Ephesus, Caesarea.

After reporting to their home church in Antioch in Syria of the things God had done during their second missionary journey, Paul and his team embarked again on a third journey to encourage the churches they had planted previously. This journey is recorded in Acts chapters 18 to 21. The churches in Acts of the Apostles had only one mandate and objective. Today, our churches have many mandates which do not even include the only mandate of the early church. The enemy has given us a counterfeit mandate which has dominated the Christian faith that even the few genuine ministers of the gospel are afraid to criticize. The counterfeit churches with the counterfeit mandate are very popular and command crowds to the extent that their activities have become accepted as the Christian ethos and norms.

Souls are perishing every day but the Babylonian Churches are only interested in money-making and solution provision. If the early church had followed the Babylonian model, we would not have heard the gospel. There was no record of any church construction in Acts of the Apostle, rather the disciples concentrated all their energy and resources in reaching out to-

areas where the Gospel has not reached. The house church model as practised in the early church helped them so much in building a formidable team for missionary work.

I honestly advocate that institutionalized churches should be collapsed into house churches to distance ourselves from Nimrodic empires, build strong church family ties and further the spread of the gospel to all unreached peoples group all over the world. The church as an institution has been demonized with mammon, politics and clericalism. A retrospective glance of how the church was modelled by the Holy Ghost in the book of Acts will give us ideas of how to mend our ways and pursue the original purpose of the church.

### **Ministerial Ethics Of The Biblical Apostles**

There are lots of errors in the body of Christ today which are associated with the behavioural pattern of pastors in this present age. A look at the characters and standards of behaviour of the apostles in particular and disciples, in general, will help us understand biblical ministerial ethics. There are many practices in churches that have been accepted as the church cultures because they see pastors exhibit such characters. An in-depth look at the early church ministers can give us ideas of biblical code of conduct that will help guide the ministers of the gospel and help Christians know when the ministers are deviating from biblical principles and rules of behaviour. If Christians identify the biblical standards, it will help us have an appraisal of our ministers and help us to mentally discern a true minister of the gospel from fake ones.

There was no record in Acts of the Apostles where the apostles boasted about their ability to perform miracles, Philip did notable miracles in Samaria, Peter's shadow healed many, Peter raised Dorcas from death and Apostle Paul performed many signs and wonders, he healed the cripple in Lystra, his apron healed so many people, etc. I searched the entire book of Acts and noticed that none of the apostles mentioned about the miracle he performed in his subsequent messages. People were not carried about to testify about their miraculous healing and deliverance. Signs and wonders were not advertised, rather Jesus and Him crucified was preached and more miracles were done by the hands of the apostles.

In our meetings today, we advertise miracles, signs and wonders, and the one who does the miracle is completely neglected. This has made people pursue miracles instead of seeking a relationship with the miracle worker. Miracle, signs and wonders are by-products of preaching Christ and Him crucified, and should not be our focus. Our focus should be to know Jesus, the power of His resurrection and to have the privilege to partake in the fellowship of His suffering. A study of the book of Acts will help us to manage miracles, signs and wonders when Christ begins to move in our midst.

The humility exhibited by the apostles in Acts of the Apostles is worthy of note, they vehemently rejected every attempt of worshippers to ascribe undue regard to them. In the house of Cornelius, Peter rejected the obeisance from the household of Cornelius and the people of Caesarea.

*"And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man."*  
*(Act 10:25-26KJV).*

Peter did not want to partake in sharing God's glory; he cautioned Cornelius to stop the worship to him and reminded him that he was a mere mortal. Apostles Paul and Barnabas demonstrated to the people of Lystra that they were not worthy of worship when the people decided to offer sacrifices to them after they healed a cripple.

*"And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein"*  
*(Acts 14:11-15 KJV).*

In the bid to stop the people in Lystra from worshipping them, Paul and Barnabas tore their clothes and raised their voices and rebuked the people. They stopped them because they knew the dangers of sharing God's glory. Today, pastors do not only share God's glory, but we also seize the glory of God and damn the consequences.

We now compel worshippers to place us above God through making references to how powerful we are and how we have done wondrous things. God is relegated to the background and man is lifted high, man builds to make name for himself - this is Babylonian and Nimroodic spirit at work.

If it is in this generation that Peter and Paul raised Dorcas and Eutchycus from death respectively, they would have paraded them all over the cities and media houses but these apostles never mentioned the miracles of raising the dead in their subsequent gospel interventions. This calls for sober reflection on testimonies and advertisement of power which are going on in our churches today. Borrowing a leaf from the biblical apostles will help us immensely in our ministerial ethics. Pastors are not gods, we are mere mortals and no matter the anointing of God upon our lives, we should not forget that God rules in the affairs of men.

The biblical apostles lived self-denied lives; they forgot themselves in the course of carrying out their ministerial assignment. They carried their crosses and risked their lives, and they embraced persecutions because they knew that it was inevitable. They were beaten and stoned, yet they continued to front the gospel to the unreached. They suffered so much for Christ, His name and His gospel.

*"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.  
Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I  
suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;  
In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers,  
in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in  
perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea,*

*in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? If I must need glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands." (2 Corinthians 11:24-33 KJV).*

Apostle Paul narrated his ministerial ordeals in the above verses, he went through hell propagating the gospel and nurturing churches, he spent and was spent for the gospel and all he could boast about was his ordeals. What a sacrificial life that he lived and what a challenge to our present-day preachers. He could not boast of anything else but his infirmities but we are today boasting about the capacity of our churches, our private Jets, the fatness of our naira, dollar and pound accounts, our fleets of exotic cars, our numerous tours abroad, and the miracles which we performed. Who is wrong? If there is a conflict in our report with that of the apostles, someone must be wrong. It is either that we are wrong and the apostles were right. Or that the apostles were wrong and we are right. Judge this yourself!

It is important to note that Apostle Paul continued on this ordeal until he was beheaded for the sake of Christ and His kingdom but he was convinced beyond every reasonable doubt-

that he had fought a good fight of faith. He had an assurance in his spirit that he had earned a crown which the righteous Lord will place on his head when He (Jesus) appears. Many ministers of the gospel started very well but when the ordeals became unbearable, they could not persevere and they compromised. To justify their compromised status, they resorted to another gospel with the backings that after suffering for a while that God has blessed and prospered them here on this earth. This concept of an earthly settlement of believers is an ideology from the pit of hell. Believers can only be settled when Christ comes to establish His kingdom here on earth which will translate to a new heaven and new earth. (Revelation 21:3-7)

The apostles never preached prosperity to the early Christians. Their focus was not on the things of this world; they were heavenly bound and were looking forward to the soon-coming kingdom. They did not collect tithe or seed from anyone and were contented with what God has given them. Apostle Paul learnt the secret of contentment and never went coaxing people to give him money. In Philippians 4:12 Apostle Paul stated this clearly;

*"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want!"*

One of the ethics of the early apostles that is seriously lacking in our lives today as ministers of the gospel is contentment. Paul has learnt the secret of being satisfied in every situation because the mystery of the cross which was kept secret since the world began was revealed to him.

Greed is the opposite of contentment and Jeremiah Burroughs described contentment as "a rare Jewel". Lack of it is responsible for all atrocities in our Churches today, pastors are not satisfied with what God has given them and are constantly manipulating to add to their possessions, pastors lie, extort, coax, manipulate, hallucinate, brainwash and pervert the word of God to gain more but are never satisfied.

Programs are fixed simply because of the money that will be generated. Comedians have taken over our pulpits because we want to attract crowds to collect offerings. Guest ministers now raise money from flocks to be shared in an agreed percentage with the host pastors. Divination and soothsaying have become the order of the day in our churches for filthy lucre. Miracles are now arranged and testimonies are exaggerated for financial aggrandizement. These were never the characters of the apostles! The demon of greed has entered the church of God and is seriously ravaging the ministers of the gospel. All these are happening because we have refused to deny ourselves and have rejected the cross. The flesh is now having a field day amongst the ministers and the congregation. We need to go back to the old religion and learn the secret of godliness and contentment, if not; the repercussions will be devastating when Christ returns.

### **Spirit Of One Accord In The Early Church**

The Greek word *Homothumadon* from homo = one and the same + thumos = temperament means one Accord. This was the character of the apostles in the early church which they passed to all the disciples and the entire church was organized in the atmosphere of one spirit.

There were numerous records of one accord which I presume was responsible for the progress recorded by the church irrespective of the persecutions and attacks. On the day of Pentecost, they were in one accord before the Holy Ghost came to them with empowerment and the gift of tongues.

*"When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1 KJV).*

The disciples were in one temperament, in one emotion of the mind, they were united. They had the same passion while waiting to be endued with power, their driving force was the same, their persuasions were knitted together, they had unanimous consent, and there were harmony of views among them and singleness of purpose. There was no division of interest, no schism, no quarrel, and no discordance. They were in one accord when the Holy Ghost came upon them.

*"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brethren". (Acts 1:14 KJV).*

This is a character worthy of emulation by every group of Christians irrespective of size. Two or three Christians who gather with one accord can move mountains because the spirit of God will be among them just like it happened on the day of Pentecost. The challenge with today's Christians is that Pastors are so much disunited that even those in the same denomination and branches are always at war with themselves. We are disintegrated to the extent that we use our pulpits as weapons of attacks onourselves.

These division has resulted in pneumatological deficiency and unanswered prayers in our churches today.

*"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:46 KJV).*

The one accord spirit did not end on the day of Pentecost and in temple prayers, it also transcends to continual breakage of bread from house to house and eating of meat. They were happy serving the Lord in singleness of heart. They spoke one language and one love which kept them together was their watchword. They prayed in one accord and there was an earthquake in the foundation of the venue of their prayer meeting. We can have the same experience if only we can have a singleness of heart amongst ourselves in our group, fellowship and churches.

### **Social Justice Program In The Early Church**

It is obvious that the sermons which the early believers heard that motivated them to practice radical communitarianism are completely different from the messages which make today's Christians continue to pile wealth for themselves and families. With great power, the apostles preached the resurrection of Christ and believers were convicted to sell their possessions for the common welfare of all members of the church. Today's pastors with much charisma and aura preach prosperity gospel which makes believers hoard what they have and only share with the pastors and the churches while the needy are left to wallow in their penury. A flashback to the era of the apostles can help us to have a rethink.

Is the doctrine of our churches in accordance with the doctrines of the apostles? Why are we not practising theocratic welfarism in our church administration? Why have the church and the Christians become so capitalistic and materialistic?

*"Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need" (Acts 4:32-35 ESV).*

While secular governments of all nations are trying to learn from the early church and apply what they learnt in their social justice administration, most churches are busy impoverishing the poor masses and widening the gap between the haves and the have-nots. The pastors are getting richer and the worshippers are getting poorer, every government works to improve the lives of its citizens and bridge the gap between the rich and the poor but churches work to create social strata and make the church custodians bourgeoisie at the expense of the poor worshippers who serve them as proletariats.

Until the theology that holds the clergy superior and the poor worshippers inferior in our churches is completely obliterated through theocratic welfarism, our Christianity will remain a charade in the eyes of the world. Until the exploitation of the poor parishioners by the ministers of the gospel is put to an abrupt end, Christianity will remain a scam in the eyes of the unbelievers whom we are supposed to bring to the saving-

knowledge of Christ. Until we go back to the Acts of the Apostles and act like the Apostles, we will continue to live in deception and mockery of our God. I foresee a day when poor worshippers will radically and riotously demand equitable distribution of the accumulated wealth of the churches that are at present in the hand of a few. I predict that there shall come a day when the hypnotisms and hallucinations programmed against vulnerable worshippers will expire and they will revolutionary demand for a return of all the funds that were fraudulently obtained from them by pastors. If we fail to learn from the book of Acts, these predictions are inevitable. Only time alone will tell!

## **Messages In Acts Of The Apostles**

A review of the messages preached by the Biblical apostles will help us a lot in finding where we have missed it. What informed the characters of worshippers in every religion is the messages which are preached at the worship places. Some people are violent today because of the doctrine of radicalism are preached to them by their leaders. Some worship mammon because of the kind of gospel they hear in their worship centres while some live upright and honest life due to the sermon preached to them. The foundation of Christianity is in the Act of the apostles, modernization of the Christian faith is one of the greatest errors that have led us astray as far as the doctrine of Christ is concerned. A survey of the messages of the biblical apostles will help us discover the deviations from Christian faith and the extent of the deviations. Navigation back to the Acts will help us walk in the will of God and attracts God's blessings as of the old.

The Bible made us understand that all those who believed in the early church were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. Does this sound utopic to you? It sounds impossible but it was the reality in the early church. I strongly believe that the teachings and sermons in the early church must have shaped their hearts and souls to blend and division and selfishness were eliminated among them. Is this scenario possible in our churches today? Yes! If we can go back to the Acts and teach what the apostles taught the disciples.

On the day of Pentecost Peter preached a message and about three thousand people surrendered after coming to the saving knowledge of Christ. What was the content of Peter's sermon? The content of Peter's message was Christ and Him crucified. When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter then told them to repent and be baptized. The people heard Peter's sermon and were cut to the heart. Why are messages in our churches today not cutting the hearts of the hearers? What are the contents of our messages? An honest answer to these questions can be of immense help to those who seek the truth. We are no longer preaching Biblical truth; our sermons are secularized, shamanized and mammonized.

The messages in most churches can only strengthen the ego and edify the flesh, they corrupt the soul and wound the spirit. Some of the messages are programmed to subtly lead the hearers away from the cross and get them closer to mammon. In most churches today, during messages, whistles are blown and shouts of "ride on pastor" are heard resonating all over the auditorium.

The hearers are excited by the entertainments on the altars and in euphoria; they feed the altar back with shouts of exclamations! How can the hearts of people be cut with these kinds of messages?

*"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city". (Acts 8:5-8KJV)...*

Philip went to Samaria and preached a message and the people embraced Jesus, notable miracles were seen by the Samaritans performed by Philip and there was great joy in the city of Samaria. What was the content of the message of Evangelist Philip? He preached Christ and the people were convicted and converted, the same message also produced miracles. The meeting was not titled "Healing, Signs and Wonders Crusade". The meeting was all about Christ, His death on the cross and His resurrection.

Unfortunately today, the messages in most Christian gatherings are not centred on Christ's death and resurrection and this has resulted in a lack of genuine conviction and conversion power which also produces the power of miracles. There are today many "born again believers" who are not convicted and converted because the real message was not preached to them. People gave their lives to Christ after hearing messages of prosperity and deliverance and ended up chasing money and demons all their Christian lives.

Pastors are now motivational speakers and career counsellors, most Christian meetings are centred on self-development and worldly success. How can all these cut the heart and produce the fruits of repentance?

Paul in all his messages went down the memory lane, drove his hearers back to God's promises in the Old Testament and introduced Jesus, His death on the cross, the resurrection and the hope for those who believe in Him. In the course of this message, miracles, signs and wonders happened and Christ was glorified. All messages in Acts of the Apostles were Christ and cross centred. Apostle Paul specifically made it clear that he wished to know nothing except Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2). The message of the cross is the message of Christ; any other message is a perversion from the pit of hell. The message of the cross is foolishness to them that are perishing but in it lies the power of God to us that are genuinely born again (1 Corinthians 1:18). Until the church and every believer return to the cross and the message of Christ crucified, there shall continue to exist fake church and fake Christians. I still want to make it categorically clear that prosperity gospel which is preached in our churches today is neither elementary nor advanced doctrine of Christ; it is a doctrine of Satan which has been programmed into the church of God to deceive believers and prepare them for the Antichrist. A visit to the Acts of the Apostles will illuminate our eyes of understanding and redirect us to the message of the Christian faith.

### **Giving In The Early Church**

There has been a lot of controversy over giving in our churches in Nigeria and a lot of arguments were put forward by-

several Schools of thought. If the church was founded in Acts of Apostles, why can't we carry out comprehensive research of the book of Acts on financial activities to know how giving was conducted in the early church? Every genuine truth-seeker should consult the scriptures whenever there is confusion. It will do us a lot of good if we borrow a leaf from the Berean Christians who searched the scriptures to know if what Apostle Paul told them were in line with the scriptures. The Bible said that they were nobler than the Thessalonians.

It is also important that I bring to your cognizance that Apostle Paul's epistles to all churches were written in the course of his activities in the book of Acts and our references will transcend Acts of the Apostles to some of his letters. The church in Acts of the Apostles began with a clear culture of giving, out of conviction; the Christians in the early church viewed their possessions differently from us. They lived self-denied life and no one claimed that what he had was his.

*"Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need." (Acts 4:32-35 ESV).*

I have commented on the above scriptural verses but we still need to look at it from the perspective of giving. The entire church operated under the anointing of one accord and every member exhibited generosity to a fault.

People sold their properties and brought the proceeds for everybody to share. They were radical givers and great grace was upon them all. Their giving eradicated poverty from the church, there was a record that no one lacked anything. Where they compelled to give? No, how do I know? After Ananias and Sapphira sold their possession and lied about the proceeds, Apostle Peter when rebuking Ananias asked him "while it remained, was it not in your power and after it was sold was it not in your own power?" This question shows that it was in the power of Ananias to determine what to do with the land or the money. The worshippers were not compelled by the apostles to donate to the common purse of the church. Every one gave as he purposed in his heart. The crime of Ananias and Sapphira was that they lied and not because they did not give all.

*"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."*  
(2 Corinthians 9:7KJV)...

Giving must not be done under compulsion and it must come from the heart of the giver. Legalistic giving like tithing is not a Christian doctrine and Apostle Paul made it explicitly clear in the passage above. People should not give out of compulsion, selfish motive or hypocrisy. The only way believers can be cheerful in giving is when their giving is motivated by love.

Another important thing that we need to consider is what was the motive of the early church for giving? Why did they give what they gave? In the early church, it was obvious that it was a sacrificial giving and no strings were attached to it. Their giving was motivated by love towards God and one another since their hearts and souls were one, they were not giving so that God will-

give them back. Their giving was buying bags in heaven that wax not old, they were keeping their treasures in an unfailing heavenly place where moth cannot corrupt and thieves cannot steal. (Mathew 12:33) They gave, not expecting anything in return.

There was an episode in Acts chapter 8, Simon gave money to Peter and John requesting that they give him the gifts of the Holy Spirit but Peter rejected the money and angrily rebuked Simon saying " Let your money perish with you". There was nothing wrong with Simon giving to the apostles, what was wrong was his motive. Peter asked him "Do you think that you can buy the gift of God with money?" Peter did not ask Simon whether he taught that he could buy the Holy Spirit with money, he asked him whether he taught that he could buy the gift of God with money. This is a clear indication that no gift of God can be purchased with money. Christians of today are involved in a serious error of giving to receive the blessings of God, they have been taught that it is only when they give that they can receive. I said it before and I am repeating it, pastors telling worshippers to sow seeds to claim God's blessings is a big fraud and it is unbiblical.

There are many Simons and many Quasi-Peters who buy and sell God's blessings all in the name of sowing and reaping in our churches. How I wish that there are real Peters who will rebuke all these sorcery worshippers who are looking for whom they will put in trouble with their corrupt money. Our pastors today would have collected the money from Simon with an applauded declaration "receive a double portion of the Holy Ghost in the name of Jesus", there would have been altar call for those who want the triple and double portions of the Holy-

Ghost to come out. The price tag for triple, double and single portions would not have been the same and those who did not have money to sow to receive the Holy Ghost would have gone home empty-handed. What a corrupt Christianity!

Prosperity teachings have placed many under bondage and defocused them from the cross and realigned their focus on mammon with the ultimate motive to hand them over to the Antichrist. It has twisted the scriptures and has dishonoured the cross. Perhaps we should all examine the hidden motives of our hearts as we give to the work of God. Are we giving because we love God and need to be responsive and responsible in carrying out His work or are we giving to attract God's blessings to ourselves or in response to legalistic bondage? Giving must be motivated by love but the purveyors of prosperity message have made giving to be motivated by self and greed. What did we give before Christ died for us?

Why should we give to get blessed by the same God who loved us so much that He gave His only begotten son to us to die for our sins? God blesses people as He wills, the book of Romans 9 verse 16 says "It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but God's mercy". Christians cannot bribe God for blessings, God blesses whom He wants to bless. All we need to do is to seek His kingdom first and He meets us at the point of our needs.

Giving if motivated by love is acceptable by God as a sweet-smelling savour but if motivated by self and greed is a response to fraud. The early church sacrificially gave, they did not give so that they can reap here on earth, they gave because the love of God has been shed abroad in their hearts.

Their giving was defined; they knew what they were giving for. The project was specified and the church management team was accountable. When the Grecian Christians noticed that their widows were short-changed, they protested because they felt marginalized. The Christians that sold their land and houses knew what they were donating for and the collections were not misappropriated, it was transparently distributed and when some people felt cheated, they voiced out their grievances. In today's church, you dare not raise a voice against any form of oppression, embezzlement or abuse, otherwise, you will be labelled a rebel and be reminded of the scriptural verse that says "touch not my anointed and do my Prophet no harm"

It is also important for us to look at what the collections in the early church were used for. It is obvious that the resources gathered by the church were used for the welfare of the members judiciously, that none of the parishioners had needs. The church was involved holistically in social intervention, poverty reduction and missionary work. The churches in Macedonia gave to support missionaries, for example, the church in Philippi wonderfully supported Paul's missionary work for over ten years, the church in Corinth also sent their support for missionary work regularly. The church in Antioch responded to the plight of the Jerusalem church during a famine and was the sending church of Apostle Paul. Offerings and contributions were collected but no tithe and seed.

What are we using the collections in our churches today for? Most of our churches are building human Babylonian empires, buying fleets of exotic cars and private jets, establishing chains of business conglomerates, building estates, building large auditoriums to accommodate stagnant baby Christians-

who are spiritually hypnotized, we are building universities and schools that are not affordable to the builders. A pastor friend of mine who is a branch pastor in one of the Megachurch in Nigeria constructed a school in his church but he could not afford to pay school fees of his children in the same school which he built. I enquired to know why the children were enrolled in another school other than that of his church, he pathetically told me that he could not afford the school fees and the authority of the church has persistently said that they were not running a charitable missions school and cannot afford to give anyone a discount. This is the level at which the church has been commercialized in Nigeria. A humble survey of the financial administration and accountability of the early church can bring us back on track if we desire to do the needful.

The early church in their bid to obey the command of Jesus went through difficulties preaching Christ and Him crucified, sacrificially gave for the welfare of their members and missionary support, and allowed the Holy Ghost to control their activities and administer the church. What is the motivating factor that made them to selflessly serve God without looking at what they will gain? The answer is that they love Jesus! Love does not seek its own. Their love for Jesus helped them to love one another with a multiplier effect which resulted in singleness of heart.

## **Do Today's Christians Really Love Jesus?**

A lot of Christians claim that they love Jesus, they praise Him and testify about His goodness but in reality, there is no evidence of the love for Him. Frankly speaking, today's Christians from all indications hate Jesus and love themselves

and mammon, otherwise, why have we decided not to obey His command of "Go ye" and to love our neighbours? Jesus said in John 14:15 "**If you love me obey my commandments**" Obedience to the command of Jesus is proof of our love for Him. How many Christians are ready to live a self-denied life? How many of us are ready to carry our crosses? How many of us are ready to follow Him and pass through the rough roads to Calvary?

How many believers can endure pains and sufferings to be discipled? How many are willing to go, give, and groan to ensure that the gospel reaches the unreached? If we are finding it difficult to have a reasonable number of people who are willing to obey Christ's command of "go ye", it will not be wrong if I conclude that today's Christians hate Jesus. Most Christians look for Jesus because of what they are gaining from Him, only a few love Him to the extent of taking risks for His name, His gospel and His kingdom. Many Christians are ready to die in defence of their Nimrodic pastors but only a few are ready to embark on missionary journeys to far places to propagate the gospel of Christ.

Research has proven that it will take about two hundred years to re-evangelize Borno state in Nigeria that has been devastated by the enemies of the gospel. How many of us will be willing to take only one week of our lifetime to visit Borno state to share the gospel to the people and love of Christ to our brothers and sisters who are persecuted for Christ's sake?

It is not enough to sing love songs to eulogize Jesus, it is not enough to give testimonies about His awesome power, it is not enough to give money to your church and pastor all in the name of serving Jesus with your substance; we need to move into a practical demonstration to prove our love for Him. If you say that you do not hate Christ, prove your love and take a little risk for Him, just like the early Christians did. If you do not have sufficient grace to go, your love can be expressed in giving to support those who are going or you can submit yourself to continuous agonizing intercession.

The less privileged in our societies need help and when you feed one of the least of them, you are expressing love to Christ. If their needs are communicated so that all will contribute and the proceeds shared among the needy, then, we are showing love to Christ. It will be great if pastors sell their estates; fleet of cars and private jets just like Barnabas did and distribute the proceeds to their members according to their needs.

It will be awesome if widows are remembered in the monthly budget of every church. Heaven will rejoice if every church embarks on missionary journeys to unreached villages once in a year or support missionaries who are already in the fields. Activities of the Apostles are the realities of the Christian faith and should be a standard for the present-day Christians.

Anything short of this is an aberration orchestrated from the pit of hell by the enemies of the cross. Let us not love Christ in word but deeds!

We are living in the last days and should be concerned about the preparation for the second coming of Christ.

If the biblical apostles were sensitive to eschatological issues two thousand years ago, why are we reckless about it now? Why are we pursuing material things as if they are the requirements for rapture? Who has bewitched us? We must say no to those things that are projected our ways to divert our attention from the cross. We must develop resistance to deception and manipulations of enemies of our souls. It is only when our flesh is crucified on the cross that we can say that we are indeed Christians. A voyage back to the book of Acts is navigation to the bitter truths which when accepted and practised gets us on track to seek the kingdom of God without compromise. We can do these only if we love Jesus.



**EIGHT**  
CHAPTER  
**EIGHT**

The logo features the word "EIGHT" in large, bold, black capital letters. Between the first and second "I"s of "EIGHT", the word "CHAPTER" is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. Below the second "I", there is another "EIGHT" composed of five vertical black bars of decreasing height.

## *Christ is Coming For* **THE SUFFERING CHURCH**

**J**esus left a suffering church and is coming back for the same suffering church. Before Jesus left He spoke to the disciples that they should be prepared to face tribulations in this world (John 16:33) He also told them to prepare for persecution and imprisonment for His namesake (Luke 21:12). There were some hard things that He wanted to tell them but He was afraid that they might not be able to bear them; He then decided that it would be better to allow the Spirit of Truth (Comforter) who will be available to comfort them as He releases the bitter truth to them. (John 16:12-13)

The biblical church was birthed on the day of Pentecost in the upper room where one hundred and twenty out of the five hundred disciples who received the instruction to tarry in Jerusalem were hiding because of persecution. I presume that the three hundred and eighty disciples who were not in the upper room had gone to join the other four thousand five hundred Jesus seekers (five thousand that were fed with bread minus five hundred disciples who met with Christ after the resurrection) to establish what I call "John 6:26 Church".

The Holy Ghost came and commissioned "Act 1:8 church" and gave the disciples the enabling power to start the suffering experience by taking their crosses starting from Jerusalem, Judea, all Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth. The Holy Spirit was to lead them and baptize them with fire. Jesus never told them about the baptism of fire, it was John the Baptist who hinted them that they were going to be baptized not only with the Holy Ghost but also with fire (Mathew 3:11).

Let me use this medium to correct an error in our teachings. Most Bible teachers believe and teach that the tongue of fire on the day of Pentecost was the baptism of fire, this is not true, the Holy Ghost appeared as tongues of fire and this was not the baptism of fire. Fire is a symbol of the Holy Ghost. The baptism of fire is not in any way related to the tongues of fire.

When the apostles were struggling for positions in heaven, Jesus asked them if they can drink of His cup and be baptized of His baptism (fire) ( Mark: 10:38) Jesus considered how the disciples would react at the news that they would be crucified, beheaded, thrown into boiling oil and crushed to death and decided to allow the eternal Spirit who led Him and comforted Him to the cross to reveal the tragic news and at the same time empower and comfort them to face the unavoidable agony for the sake of His name, His gospel and His kingdom. (John 16:12-13)

I christened the other church "John 6:26 Church" because the pastors and members of this church love Christ, adore, celebrate and eulogize Him for the bread only, they do not want to identify with His cross and Him in His suffering ministry. The story in the book of the gospel of John Chapter 6 says it all. After enjoying the bread and the fish which Jesus multiplied and gave to them, the following day, their representatives crossed over from Tiberias to Capernaum looking for Jesus and when they saw Him they shouted Rabbi, when did you come here? And Jesus told them that He knew that they were not looking for Him for their spiritual needs but for the bread which they ate the other day and were filled. (John 6:24-26).

I believe that there were two kinds of churches that were birthed in the Bible and have evolved to this day. The early churches, the seven churches in Asia Minor and the present-day churches can be classified under these two. The Church in Smyrna represents the group of churches in "Act 1: 8 Church" while the church in Laodecia represents the group of churches in "John 6:26 Church"

Let's go back to biblical churches using the Church in Jerusalem and the Church in Antioch as examples of the suffering church which Jesus left. Immediately the Holy Ghost came upon the disciples in the Church in Jerusalem, they received an unusual boldness to proclaim Christ and were ready to die for the gospel. This was followed by persecutions which resulted in the death of Stephen. The disciples, except the Apostles, ran for their lives but carried the gospel as they ran; Philip relocated to Samaria and preached Christ. Many miracles happened (Acts 8:5 -7) and the whole city surrendered to the saving power of Christ. Please take note, Philip preached Christ and not signs and wonders.

The Holy Ghost spoke in the Church in Antioch that Saul (Paul) and Barnabas should be separated for missionary work which He has called them to do (Act 13:2). Paul and Barnabas embarked on the first missionary journey and brought many to Christ amidst persecution, hunger, tribulation, stoning, beatings, etc. After the first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas went to strengthen and encourage the souls they won for Christ; saying to them "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

The seven churches of Asia Minor are representatives of the present-day churches. Just like I said earlier, the Church in Smyrna and that in Laodicea typify the two churches as I described them above. The Revelation of John in the Island of Patmos is a true representation of what Christ thinks of all the Churches in the whole world and that is why His message to every church ended thus: " he that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" note that the message is not for the church (singular) but the churches (plural)

### **The Apostate Rich Church**

Jesus' message to the church in Laodicea (John 6:26 Church): I know your works, you are neither cold nor hot, I will reject you. You think you are rich, you think you have plenty properties and you do not need anything but you do not know that you are the poorest of the poor, you are miserable, you are spiritually blind and do not understand simple spiritual arithmetic. Despite all your expensive clothing, you are naked and *ichabodized*. I advise you to come and buy gold tried in the fire (be baptized with fire and carry your cross), then you will become really rich. You need white raiment (Holiness and purity) for the glory of God to replace the shame of your nakedness and receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit for your sight to be restored. I still love you, that is why I am rebuking you, be zealous and repent. I am waiting and if you allow me I will come into your life and we will sup together. Anyone who will pass through what I passed and overcomes the way that I overcame, I will make such a person sit with me on my throne. He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Revelation 3:15-22 paraphrased).

## The Preferred Poor Church

Jesus' message to the church in Smyrna: I know your works and sufferings and poverty but you are very rich. I know the blasphemy of those who claim that they are Christians and they are not, but are agents of darkness. Fear not any of those things that you are going to suffer. Look, the devil shall cast some of you in prison that you may be tried and you will suffer for a while, you should remain faithful even if you are dying and I will give you the crown of life. He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Anyone that overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death. (Revelation 2:8-11 paraphrased)

A comprehensive analysis of the two churches above shows the opinions of Christ about them. It is obvious that Christ is monitoring the activities of all the churches "I know thy works". He monitors the messages preached in all the churches, the level of compliance to His last instruction to "go ye", charity works, commitment to God and humanity, righteousness and Holiness, etc. He has His key performance indicators which are completely different from ours. Laodicea church which the world sees as a rich, successful, popular and powerful church is adjudged by God, as wretchedly poor, blind, naked and miserable.

The church in Smyrna which looks poor, God-forsaking and miserable in the sight of men is a rich and prosperous church by God's standard. The Laodicea church has locked Jesus out and that was why He said that He was knocking at the door of their hearts. It was a deliberate attempt to stop Jesus from entering into the church; otherwise, He would have used whips on them because the house of prayer has been converted

to a den of thieves and business centre where the word of God is merchandized. He did it in His earthly ministry (Mathew 21:12-13) and will not hesitate to repeat it in His Heavenly ministry.

Laodicea Church was admonished by Christ to repent and become zealous if they must be qualified to see Him when He comes. What were their offences? They were lukewarm in serving God; they served God at their convenience and for themselves. They were not fanatical, radical, and were not ready to step out of their comfort zone. Risk-taking for Christ and His gospel was not on their agenda. The pastors concentrated on making money and acquiring wealth at the expense of their souls and that of their followers and have made so much money that they felt that they lacked nothing. They were just like some pastors in our churches today who stand on the pulpit and boast how God has made them rich. The Laodicea church's hope on Christ was in this world only, they believed that the kingdom of God was about making money and enjoying life here on earth, that was why Paul said that they were of all men most miserable (1 Corinthians 15:19). They were blind and ignorant of the mystery of the cross and Christian suffering doctrine. They thought that they were doing well and their wealth was evidence of God's goodness to them, but they did not know that they have missed God's purpose and agenda for their lives.

Christ advised the Laodicea church to become zealous and preach Christ crucified and be set on fire for the mandate of the Great Commission which is aimed at preaching the gospel of the kingdom as a witness to all nations. Jesus enjoined them to embrace the cross and suffer like He suffered so that when they overcome, they will be qualified to sit with Him on His throne.

There is still hope for the Laodicea church. All that the church needs to do is to make a 360 degrees turn around, stop earthly prosperity messages, embrace the cross, forsake all earthly riches and ambitions, develop their members to Christ-like maturity through Christian suffering doctrines and then pursue the agenda of God's kingdom with an understanding that the kingdom of Christ is not of this world (John 18:36)

## **Laodicea Initiation Called Mentorship**

Unfortunately, many young ministers of the Gospel are aspiring to be like the Laodicea church pastors. Some young ministers have dropped their crosses and the will of God for their ministry and have gone to embrace human and devilish ideologies all in the name of mentorship. They sow seeds to tap the Laodicea anointing instead of relying on God who called them to direct the course of their ministry. It beats my imagination how a man who is genuinely called by God will believe that his ministry will never succeed until he goes to pay homage to another man (mentor); this is a clear initiation into Laodicea bandwagon.

Let me use this opportunity to advice young ministers: if you do not want to suffer for Christ and His gospel, kindly leave ministry and Christianity alone and join the world and enjoy yourself. Christians must know that it is a privilege to be counted worthy to partake in Christ's suffering (Acts 5:41), and the greatest honour in Christianity is to be killed for the sake of Christ (martyrdom). Have you wondered why all the apostles except John were martyred? Martyr's crown is exclusively reserved for special servants of God (Revelation 2:10),

with this crown they will reign with Christ in His kingdom (2 Timothy 2:11-12). Those who have the singular honour and privilege to die for Christ will reign with Him and serve as king, Judges and Priests for a thousand years (millennium rule) (Revelation 20:4,6) Our lack of understanding of the mystery of the cross and the doctrine of advanced Christianity is responsible for our destructive decisions.

### **The Rapturable Church.**

The church in Smyrna which typifies the suffering church was closely monitored by Christ, they were humbled by what they suffered just like Christ (Hebrew 5:8). They counted it joy to suffer for Christ, His name and His kingdom sake. This is a missionary church that shook the kingdom of darkness and impacted the kingdom of heaven, no wonder the devil vowed to destroy them. The church was poor because their focus was on heaven and not on the mundane things of this world. Jesus told them that they were stupendously rich in the spirit even when they were physically poor. He appreciated them for their faithfulness and was proud of them.

Instead of putting a stop to their tribulations, Jesus went ahead to increase their sorrow by prophesying more difficult days ahead. He told them to prepare for many of them will be cast into prison and many of them shall die. Why didn't Jesus save them from the calamity? Is it that he was incapacitated? The answer is NO, He did them great honour by allowing them to suffer for His sake. He promised them the crown of life which will qualify them as kings, priest and judges during the millennium rule.

He also assured them that the second death will not have power over them, in other words, they will live and reign with Him forever. What a wonderful reward!

The position of Jesus on the two churches as seen above is food for thought for all Christians who believe that there is life after death. The church in Philadelphia is a rapturable church; Jesus assured the worshippers that He is coming for them

*"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown".  
(Revelation 3:7-11 KJV).*

The church in Philadelphia is unique among the seven Churches: they have little strength, they kept the word of God, they did not deny the name of Christ and they excelled in patience. Before Jesus could give these testimonies about this church, He must have monitored what they passed through and were still standing.

They have suffered for the sake of Christ and overcame; they endured all manner of persecution and passed the suffering test. Jesus promised them that He will shorten the days of the great tribulation for their sake because they kept His word of patience. Their numerical and financial strength was not anything to write home about yet they stood firm in declaring the name of Jesus.

Jesus enjoined them to remain steadfast and stand firm to maintain the gains that they have made in their Christian journey. He also intimated them that He was coming quickly and they should be careful lest the enemies of the cross confuse them and steal their crowns. The five crowns for believers in the Bible are exclusively reserved for those who pass through pains, difficulties, persecution for the sake of Christ, His gospel and His kingdom.

### **Believers Crowns**

There are crowns which are reserved as rewards for Christians when Christ returns. These crowns will qualify believers for positions of authority during Christ reign on earth. Christians are oblivious of these crowns and many are not mindful of them. Believers are busy acquiring material things while the enemies are busy reaping us off of our crowns. Jesus told the Philadelphia church to guard their crown so that no one steals it. Unfortunately, many of us do not even know anything about crowns that Jesus has prepared for us. What a tragedy for a generation of Christians who lose spiritual glory because of a plate of red stew just like Esau.

There are five crowns that every believer should aspire to have when Jesus returns:

- (a) Crown of Righteousness
- (b) Crown of Glory
- (c) Incomparable Crown
- (d) Crown of Life
- (e) Crown of Rejoicing

The Crown of Righteousness is mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:8 and is promised to those who love and anticipate the Second Coming of Christ. Paul had the assurance in his spirit that he had already earned this crown and made it categorically clear that anyone who loves the appearance of Christ's second coming will be qualified to earn the crown too. It is important to note that those who love Christ appearing are also those who are willing to facilitate Christ's second coming by preaching the Gospel of the kingdom to the entire world as a witness to all the nations (Matt. 24:14). Do you want to earn this crown? Become a missionary by going, giving or groaning.

The Crown of Glory is found in 1 Peter 5:4 and it is reserved for pastors, who shepherd the flock in unselfish love being a good example to others (1 Peter 5:2-4.) Pastors who denied themselves and sacrificially work in God's vineyards, not looking for what they will gain are qualified for this unfading crown of glory. House Churches are about to spring up everywhere and as many as are willing to shepherd sacrificially will be qualified for this crown.

The Incomparable Crown is also known as the Imperishable Crown and is cited in 1 Corinthians 9:25.

Paul termed this crown imperishable to show the durability of the crown when compared to things that are gained in this world that perishes. It is a crown packaged for the Christians who lived a self-denied life and endured the cross-carrying exercise.

When Jesus invited us to follow Him with instructions to deny ourselves and carry our cross, He had already packaged this crown for those who would be ready to obey Him.

The Crown of Life is referenced in James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10; it is given to those who persevere under trials. Jesus mentioned this crown when he told the Church in Smyrna to be strong in their trial and endure even unto death. He assured them of the crown of life. This is also known as the martyr's crown. Those who endured torture or killed for the sake of Christ, His gospel and His kingdom are given this crown to reign with Christ as kings, priest and judges during the one thousand yearrule.

The Crown of Rejoicing is also known as the Soul Winners' Crown, it can be found in 1Thessalonians 2:19 and Philippians 4:1, it is bestowed upon Christians who engage in aggressive evangelism. Apostle Paul earned this crown after evangelizing the Thessalonians. Anyone who desires this crown must become an ardent soul winner who is ready to go extra miles to bring people to Christ.

If there is anything that Christians should aspire and work to have, it is to earn these crowns. We seldom hear about these crowns in our Churches but I think that these crowns should be prioritized in the discussions of our meetings. Believers should be reminded of the importance of these crowns and encouraged to work hard here on earth for these crowns.

A crown-less raptured Christian will be a spectator in the millennium rule, why not be a prime mover in the kingdom of God? Work for your crowns today!

## Personal and Church Evaluation

Let us passionately evaluate ourselves and our churches and their impacts on our lives. Have you denied yourself and have carried your cross? Have you started following Christ? Is your church preaching cross or is she only teaching you how to solve financial and deliverance problems? How many times has your church pointed your attention to eternity and the second coming of Christ since this year? Has your Pastor ever told you that you must pass through suffering before you can access the kingdom of God? Have you ever been personally involved in missionary work since you became a Christian? Has your church made a paradigm shift from preaching elementary doctrines of Christ to Advance Christianity? (Hebrew 6:1-2) How many times have you been beaten or maltreated for the sake of Christ since you were saved?

Your candid answers to the questions above will help you make the right decision before it becomes too late. We are very close to the midnight hour and the trumpet might sound any moment from now. Apostle Paul said follow me as I follow Christ. Who are you following? Many Christians are on their way to the lake of fire because of blind leadership. Where is your leader leading you to? And what will it profit you after enjoying all the prosperity of this world and Christ will say get thee behind me I knew you not?

Ask God to open your eyes to see who you are following. Let no man deceive you again; face the reality of the Christian gospel. Cosmetic and bread and butter gospel cannot take you to heaven, why not make up your mind and embrace the cross and suffer yourself into overflowing glory (Romans 8:18). Jesus enjoined the rich man who asked for eternal life and has kept all the commandment to sell all his properties and give the proceeds to the poor and then come and carry his cross and follow Him (Mark 10: 17-21). This is my candid advice to rich Christians who are desirous to make heaven.

### **The Concept of Christian Suffering**

Christian Suffering can be defined as an unpleasant or even anguishing experience, severely affecting a Christian at a psycho-physical and existential level because of his resolution to deny himself, carry his cross and follow Jesus. It is a chance to follow the example of Christ and it is a part of God's plan. Those who suffer here on earth for Christ's sake are united in that suffering with Christ and will reign with Him (2Timothy 2:12). It is important to note that Christian suffering is all about Jesus and not because of our mistakes, our sin, our laziness, our recklessness, our faults, etc. So many people suffer for so many reasons but Christians suffer for Christ, His gospel and His kingdom.

*"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

*If you are insulted because of the name of Christ,*

*you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name" (1Peter4:12-16 NIV).*

Apostle Peter has advised us on how to react while suffering which we know is for Christ's sake. We should embrace it and rejoice in it because it is the spirit of glory. He also enjoined us to make sure that our suffering must not be for any other reason and should not be mixed up with worldly sufferings. Christians should count it an honour and a privilege to partake in Christ sufferings (Acts 5:41)

### **Why God packaged Suffering for Christians.**

(1) It is through suffering that the church will raise sons who will be conformed to the image of Christ so that when He comes we will be like Him to have the qualification to enter into His Kingdom. (Romans 8: 17-19, 1John 3:2, Acts 14:22)

(2) Through the suffering of the church, the lack in the affliction of Christ is supplied. There are remaining sufferings that Christ has reserved for the church and must be supplied individually and collectively to make His afflictions complete (Colossians 1:24).

(3) It will surprise you to know that Christ is not yet perfected and is waiting for every Christian that is heavenly bound to facilitate His perfection through suffering (Hebrew 2:10). He is at present standing as a slain lamb between the throne and the four living creatures (Revelation 5:6), He will be perfected when He comes in glory and all sons are transformed to His image with the manifestation of His glory.

(4) It is the good pleasure for the father to give us the kingdom and it is with suffering that we can access this kingdom (Acts 14:22). Jesus is establishing the kingdom through sufferings and all His followers must pass through the same route to possess the kingdom.

(5) Suffering produces obedience; naturally, man is resistant to spiritual command. Even Jesus as a man would not have obeyed the father, if not for what He suffered (Hebrew 5:8), God allows us to go through difficulties so that we can learn to obey His commands.

(6) Suffering is an antidote to sin; Apostle Peter made it clear in his epistle that whoever that suffers in the flesh ceases from sin. "Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin" (1 Peter 4:1).

(7) Suffering produces glory, the whole world is waiting for the manifestation of the glorious sons of God. The suffering in this world is not anyway compared to the glory that will be revealed (Romans 8:18).

(8) Jesus suffered and did good and has left a step for us to emulate. Christian means Christ-like, Christ is our role model whom we aspire to be like. "For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps". (1 Peter 2:21 NLT)

(9) We are not only called to believe in Christ but also to suffer for Him, He invited us to carry our Cross and follow Him. Suffering has been destined for Christians. "For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him" (Philippians 1:29 NLT)

(10) There is a fellowship of His suffering which is reserved only for the privileged mature Christians in preparation for the glorious appearing of Christ ( Philippians 3:10) Apostle Paul prayed for the knowledge and admission into this fellowship.

Many Christians are ignorant of this truth and that is why everyone prefers the Laodicea kind of church to that of the Smyrna. It is a mystery that was kept secret since the world began (Romans 16:25), Apostle Paul caught the revelation and I also did. I pray that everyone who reads this book will receive the revelation of the mystery of the cross, understand the dynamism of the Christian faith and the nitty-gritty of advance Christianity.

Jesus is coming for the "sons" in every church that has perfected the captain of their salvation through suffering (Hebrew 2:10) He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Christians and the churches.

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