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RESEARCH ARTICLE

PASTORPRENEURSHIP IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA AND WEBER'S PROTESTANT ETHIC: INSIGHTS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

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Abstract

For over four decades now, some people in Nigeria have taken advantage of the Pentecostal Christianity as a survival option through which they navigate through the socio-economic crises in Nigeria. The churches flourish as vibrant business enterprises with church founders and ministers (pastorpreneurs) operating in the praxis of entrepreneurs. The number of people operating in the frame of pastorpreneurship is so numerous that investigation into the phenomenon is necessary. A descriptive research approach with ninety (90) participants drawn from six (6) states in Southern Nigeria was used for the study. The finding is that pastorpreneurship in Nigeria thrives on the exploitation of the poor. Its operational strategies revolve around tithing, offering, fund raising, donations, and thanksgiving and these have adverse implications for national development. But to stop this development, this study recommends the creation of job employment for Nigerians and provision of enlightenment to ordinary Nigerians who in their religiosity are subjected to all forms of organised exploitation via pastorpreneurship.

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Introduction:-

The growing poverty rate, unemployment and harsh socio-economic conditions in Nigeria, combined with the desperation to survive, get out of poverty and make a living have led some people to invent and create possible survival options. Some people find in Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria one of the crucial survival and lucrative options through which they seek to navigate out of the prevailing socio-economic crises in the country, particularly, the rising menace of unemployment and poverty. This option is found in Pastorpreneurship. Pastorpreneurship is the business of using the word of God or God's name to make money and/or earn a living. Seen as a survival and business investment option, some people in Southern Nigeria have enterprisingly commercialized religion in diverse ways. Hence, it is pertinent to examine the impact that pastorpreneurship brings to Nigerians in the light of national development. National development is a development that starts from the grassroots of a nation and encompasses the qualitative and quantitative transformation that cut across the social, economic, scientific, technological, political, religious and cultural dimensions of a nation's life.

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Background to Pastorpreneurship in Southern Nigeria:-

Unemployment in Nigeria:-

The International Labour Organization (ILO) sees the unemployed as “Consisting of the economically active members of a population who are without work but who are fit (mentally, physically), available and willing to work but are not yet employed” (ILO, 2013). This category includes people who involuntarily lost their jobs as well as those that willingly left work. The ILO report illustrates that more than one hundred and ninety-seven (197) million people globally, which is about 6% of the world’s workforce was without a job in 2006.

Coming to Nigeria, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) estimated that fifty-four (54) percent of Nigerian youths were unemployed in 2012 (NBS, 2012). An earlier report by NBS in 2005 indicates that Nigeria annually generates about 4.5 million new entrants into the labour market. This figure consists of people who are out of the school system (1 million); primary school leavers that would not proceed to secondary school (2.2 million); secondary school leavers not progressing to the tertiary level (1 million); and graduates of tertiary institutions (300,000). Year by year, over one hundred and twenty (120) Nigerian universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and other institutes of higher learning produce thousands of graduates to add to the labour market. Unfortunately, neither the Nigerian government nor the private sectors (multinationals and local) create commensurate or corresponding jobs/employment opportunities to accommodate these numbers. Business Day 2014 online report puts Nigeria’s unemployment rate at sixty (60) percent of the country’s population. Among this population, youth unemployment rate is over fifty (50) percent. Saturday 15th March, 2014 Nigerian Immigration Service Commission (NISC) job recruitment exercise showed the glimpse of the unemployment situation in Nigeria. The recruitment exercise that was said to be only for 4,556 vacancies regrettably, met over 600,000 graduate applicants.

Often the Nigeria labour market absorbs only about five (5) percent of the new entrants into the labour market and leaving out about four million (4 million) people; thereby compounding the unemployment index in the country. Indeed, unemployment in Nigeria has left millions of youth idle. The youth is the most active and populous segment of the Nigerian population. They ought to be the powerhouse of the country’s workforce who could have been used to drive the economy to prosperity and commendable increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross Domestic Income (GDI) rates. Unfortunately, they are left wasting away due to lack of employment. They roam the streets endlessly in search of jobs but without success.

Of course, one of the biggest disadvantages of unemployment is that it throws people into poverty, leaves them without the purchasing power to acquire and enjoy the basic needs of life such as food, clothing, shelter, education, healthcare and so on. Consequently, the majority of the population is miserably trapped in the net of poverty. These categories of Nigerians remain frustrated, isolated and alienated. They suffer economic, social as well as political isolation and these lead to further impoverishment.

Poverty Situations in Nigeria:-

There is a relationship between unemployment and poverty. Unemployment and lack of access to regular means of livelihood in many households exacerbates the conditions of poor people. It contributes substantially to the high poverty incidence in Nigeria. In fact, poverty is one of the products of unemployment. In itself, poverty is a plague afflicting people all over the world and it is considered as one of the symptoms or manifestation of underdevelopment. For Chambers (1983:78), poverty is a multidimensional concept reflecting clusters of disadvantages affecting people and make them vulnerable and powerlessness. Blanco (2002:18) notes that poverty is the total absence of opportunities, accompanied by hunger, high levels of undernourishment, lack of education, illiteracy, physical and mental ailment, social and emotional instability, sorrow and hopelessness for the future. In 2014, Nigeria was acclaimed as the largest economy in Africa and the 26th largest economy in the world (BBC News, 2014) due to its rising Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which was regarded as the best in Africa. That same year, the World Bank assessment appraised Nigeria as the country with the world’s highest economic growth rates with an average of 7.4% (World Bank, 2014). Ironically, in spite of this, so to speak wonderful credential, the poverty level in Nigeria is embarrassing. The country has a high poverty rate, with about 63% of its population living below \$1 (USA) per day. The so to speak rise in the GDP rate did not translate into any tangible socio-economic gains with reference to employment opportunity or financial empowerment for the teeming population of the citizens. It did not also reflect in poverty reduction in Nigeria, and neither was there an improvement in the general living conditions of the citizens and which has continued to worsen.

No doubt, an overwhelming proportion of Nigerians are living in poverty. Available statistics shows that poverty is prevalent in Nigeria and has continued to be on the increase since the 1980s (CBN, 2005). The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2006) reveals that poverty rate in Nigeria rose from 28.1% in 1980 to 46.3% in 1985 and to 65.6% in 1996 and was put at 68.70 in 2004 (NBS, 2006). The UNDP (2010) report between 1980 and 1996 shows that the percentage of those in extreme poverty in Nigeria rose from 6.2 percent to 29.3 percent, but declined to 22.0 percent in 2004. The 2010 NBS survey of poverty level in Nigeria reveal that relative poverty measurement in the country stood at 54.4% in 2004 and increased to 69% in 2010. Similarly, absolute poverty level stood at 54.7% in 2004 and rose to 93.9% in 2010. The report also shows that the percentage of those living on less than \$1 (USA) per day standing at 51.6% in 2004 rose to 61.2% in 2010. In fact, it is estimated that about 112million Nigerians (about 67.1 percent of the country's total population of estimated 170million people) are living below poverty level, according to statistics from NBS in 2014. Again, the report shows that the percentage of those living in extreme poverty in Nigeria increased from 51.6% in 2004 to 61.2% in 2010. The World Bank in its 'May 2013 Nigeria Economic Report' said the number of Nigerians living in poverty was increasing too rapidly. Its 2013 annual Report, places Nigeria among the world's five 'extremely poor' countries. Again, a report from the World Bank in April 2014, listed Nigeria among the five (5) poorest countries in the world, with the largest number of people living on less than \$1.25 (USA) a day (Vanguardng.com, 2014). The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) 2014 report puts the percentage of Nigerians living in poverty at 43.3 percent. Also, Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI, 2014) in its Country Briefing, released on its website, asserts that 19.3 percent of Nigerian population is vulnerable to poverty while 25.3 percent of Nigerians live in severe poverty. It also notes that 84.5 percent of the Nigerian population lives below \$1.25 (USA) per day.

Pastorpreneurship as a Survival Strategy in Nigeria:-

In spite of intimidations arising from unemployment and poverty, it is in human tendency to find a means of survival and overcome poverty which challenges people to develop or adopt diverse survival methods and strategies and seizing opportunities that seem promising or suggesting success. While some people in Nigeria take to all forms of crime such as armed robbery, prostitution, terrorism, kidnapping, drug abuse, human trafficking, cultism, pipeline vandalism, fraudulent activities and so on to overcome the challenges of unemployment and its consequent poverty; others take to pastorpreneurship. Pastorpreneurship is the business of using the word of God or God's name to make money and/or earn a living, especially, in Christianity and this involves the invention of strategies and means of extorting money and other material goods from unsuspecting admirers and adherents. Hence, doing God's work in Nigeria has become a lucrative career option for many unemployed and poor people who are locked out of the classical networks and itineraries of social mobility and success (Marshall, 2009:181). For Ayantayo (2010:208), carrying the bible is one of the quickest and easiest means of making money, earning a living, getting access to power as well as become influential in Nigeria and this consequently, seduced countless number of Nigerians into the business of pastorpreneurship. Accordingly, founding a church and doing God's work, Marshall (2009:181) notes, have become a means of access not only to a new form of personal accumulation, but also of access to a world of transnational connections. As a business enterprise, the Christian religion becomes commodified and commercialized. Essien (2010:649-657) outlined various categories of the commercialization of the Christian religion and ministry and these include the commercialization of prosperity, fertility, salvation, prophecy, healing and deliverance, among others. In this scenario, every Christian activity is attached a monetary value and this turn Christianity into a big industry. Dancing, clapping of hands, prayers, devotions, and other religious activities in some Christian circles have been turned into avenues of making money. Consequently, Christianity in Nigerian has become an attractive industry. The absence of hierarchical structure or regulation controlling and outlining a rigorous pathway of access into the pastoral ministries in Pentecostal religious circle/space aided the thriving of pastorpreneurship. Also, the freedom of religion enshrined in the Nigerian constitution and the lack of regulation regarding the practice of religion encourage pastorpreneurship. These led to the emergence of pastorpreneurs of various shades and ranks in Nigeria, especially in the Southern region. Obiora (1998:15), thus, notes:

Self-appointed super priests, hanky-panky pastors, arch-deacons, spurious prophets, obnoxious and nefarious prophetesses, self-styled senior apostles, rag-tag supreme evangelists, unschooled rabbis, mercenary and sham preachers, self-proclaimed messiahs, self-declared archbishops, self-ordained patriarchs, self-consecrated men of God, overnight venerable and Levites, bob-tail saviours and redeemers, quack messiahs, unqualified and untutored Rev. Drs., social drop-outs, social misfits, societal leftovers, quid-pro-quo spiritual healers, veritable devil's advocates and Kangaroo Christs' arise, invoking and claiming to be mandated and sent.

These pastorpreneurs practice evangeconomics, which is the act of turning evangelism into business. Evangeconomics consists of inventing/creating, increasing and turning religious programmes or activities into opportunities/avenues of making money and maximizing profit. To achieve this end, the pastorpreneurs saturate the Nigerian social space with multiplicity of religious programmes such as crusades, market outreaches, rivals, Sundays and week days services, prayer ministries and prayer camping, among others.

To make people and persuade them to part with their money and resources, they introduce series of pranks which are manifested in manipulation and playing upon the intelligence or ignorance of their audience (Ayantayo, 2010:206). The prosperity gospel doctrine was invented and deployed to serve this purpose and sustain it. The prosperity gospel doctrine propagates the indispensability of seed sowing as a condition for unlocking and enjoying divine blessings and personal prosperity. In fact, seed sowing is considered as a human investment in heavenly treasures, which in return has the guarantee of bountiful supernatural harvests. The intensity with which the prosperity ideology is package and propagated makes it overwhelmingly attractive. The preachers (pastorpreneurs) are more concerned with getting people or followers to give money in the name of 'sowing seed' in exchange for prosperity. Here, "Branding and rebranding are constantly done to make the prosperity gospel message acceptable to members and to persuade members to make financial commitments out of their insufficient earnings" (Ogungbile, 2014:143). According to Osunbor (2016),

At times, they instruct and persuade people to give or donate money and other material goods in order to be beneficiaries of supernatural harvest which could come in the form of cars, visa to travel overseas, houses, securing employment or new contract, promotion in job or winning a lottery, among others.

Neither the rich nor the poor who is deep in debt, struggling to survive or make ends meet, and who is without food in the house, has no work, no money to go to school or attend to educational demands, no money to buy medicine, and/or is at risk of eviction is exempted from such divine obligation and commitment. People are, therefore, urged to tithe, give offering and donations lavishly to the church and her ministers before expecting a harvest of blessings. Data available to this study from the ninety (90) participants interviewed in Southern Nigeria in the course of this work reveal that the pastorpreneurs in Southern Nigeria create numerous structures of exploitation through which their hapless victims are drained of their financial resources and leaving them in financial drought or comatose. The majority of the participants reveal that most of the pastors (pastorpreneurs) designed multiple means of increasing their financial base, in addition to the payment of tithes and offerings. Some of respondents identify various ways through which the pastorpreneurs in Southern Nigeria drained people of their financial resources and these include tithing, offerings, donations/fundraising and thanksgiving, among others.

Tithe and Tithing:-

Traditionally, tithe is a ten percent (10%) of one's harvest. Tithe owes its origin to Leviticus 27:30-33 where it is regarded as an offering Holy to the Lord. In this passage, the scripture identifies tithe as herd and flock, fruit and grain. Tithe is paid in food products. Originally, tithe proceeds were used to feed and cater for the Levite priests (and their families) who were mandated to work in the temple day in and day out ministering to God on behalf of God's people (1 Chronicles 9:33). Here, tithing was instituted by God to provide means of sustenance to the Levites who were chosen to serve him as priests in the tabernacles and the temple. The Levites were denied of inheritance among the twelve tribes of Jacob. The remaining eleven tribes were duty-bound to provide the Levites with food and other material needs since no land was allotted to them on which to cultivate their own food. Hence, without the tithe, the Levites would have been obligated to get their own inheritance and grow their own food but which definitely, will take them away from ministering devotedly before God. Hence, the reference in Malachi 3:10, "...that there may be food in my house" is significant. Lack of commitment as well as inconsistency in the payment of tithes on the part of the people has negative impacts on the Levites' dedication and efficiency in the service of God and his people. A time was (Nehemiah 13:10-13) when the Levites were not receiving the tithe and so they abandoned their day to day temple responsibilities to work and feed their families. This informs the reference to 'robbing God' in Malachi 3:8. It is robbing God for the reason that the failure to pay the tithe keeps the Levites out of their religious and pastoral responsibilities. This amounts to robbing God of worship as well as the ministry in his temple arising from the people's negligence in taking care of the Levites through the payment tithe.

In the Old Testament (OT), tithe was divided into three (3) categories. The first year, it was given to the Levites. The second year, it was given to widows, orphans and the poor. The third year, it was eaten in the company of the faithful before the Lord as thanksgiving for his faithfulness (Deuteronomy 14:22-28). However, instead of the OT's

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse” (Malachi 3:10), Jesus in the New Testament (NT) instructed the rich man to sell all his possessions and give the proceeds to the poor (Matthew 19:21). Jesus ministry was more of the empowerment of the poor. Most certainly, he knows that poverty entrapment is one of the fundamental problems in the society. For him empowering the poor is more liberating than storing in God’s temple. His ministry was characterized by feeding the poor and the hungry and helping the needy. In Matthew 14:15-21, when the disciples of Jesus asked him to send the crowd away in order to find something to eat; he rather, asked his disciples to give them something to eat.

In contrast to the example of Christ and those of early Christians, the pastorpreneurs, especially, in most Pentecostal circles, threaten people with the wrath of God if they steal from him. Failure to pay tithe is regarded as stealing from God. Pastors of today demand of members to give 10% of their gross income, before expenses, not their profit after expenses. Nowadays, Bupanda (2013:173) tells us, “The biggest controversy about tithing arises due to the nature of the appeal used to encourage people to pay tithe. In this day, emphasis is more on the tithe in money form than in their original form. Tithe is redefined from flocks, herds, fruit and grain to money”. Perhaps, this arises from the fact that we are living in a money society and a money culture. As such, emphasis is placed on money and monetary contributions. Thus, messages of repentance and good behaviour are abandoned or overshadowed by treatises on tithing and prosperity. As a result, people have been left poorer both spiritually and financially than they were while these religious leaders have prospered from their own ministries (Bupanda, 2013:173). To make the matter worse, instead of just demanding tithes from people who owned property and had a harvest, “Prosperity fraudsters” as one respondent, Ihedioha (2016) calls them, demands tithes from widows/widowers, students, the sick and even people with disability. Instead of feeding the poor, they are taxing the poor. The genuine ones are financially struggling while the fake ones are flourishing (Bupanda, 2013:173). Some of the pastorpreneurs even have the nerve to encourage people who do not have a job yet or any meaningful thing doing (the poor) to pay tithe. In one of the Pentecostal churches visited during the field work, to the surprise of this researcher, a pastor was praising a member who, though, has no job or means of income, yet, was proving his faith by regularly tithing. One wonders where such money comes from.

Tithing is associated with promises of blessings. It is assumed to bring prosperity and financial blessings. The principle advanced in the process is ‘the more you tithe, the more you receive back’. It is called a “Cash-back system” (Bupanda, 2013:175). As a result, many people have been misled into believing that tithing brings blessings. But does it really liberate from poverty or usher economic growth? To this, Renee (2012:1) contends that “Despite the propaganda of prosperity gospel proponents, poor people cannot tithe their way out of poverty. The pastorpreneurs in Southern Nigeria offer people a pie-in-the-sky doctrine that preys on the desperation of poor people. Hence, it is a form of financial abuse because it takes the so-called tithes or money from poor people under false pretences”. Indeed, tithing makes the poor victims of financial abuse. Originally, poor people were exempt from payment of tithes. In fact, the Old Covenant/Mosaic Law required the priests to take care of poor. There was a tithe meant for the poor (see Deuteronomy 14:28-29; 26: 12). Deuteronomy 26:12 makes it clear, “When you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, you shall give it to the Levite, the widow, the fatherless and alien, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied”. In contrast to this tradition, tithe, nowadays, is tightly tied to the ‘house of God’ and thus, limits the beneficiaries to those within that house and, at worst, to only those who have control over it (Bupanda, 2013:175). The sense and belief attached to tithing is that you are giving to God. The pastorpreneurs frown on the giver keeping some part of the tithe for one’s use or needs such as buying food simply because tithes belong to God and not to the giver. Hence, tampering with the tithe is considered robbing God. Some of the participants remark that the pastorpreneurs are using Malachi 3:10 to exploit and extort money from their members and adherents. Malachi 3:10 reads, “Bring the full amount of your tithe to the Temple, so that there will be plenty food there. Put me to the test and you will see that I will open the windows of heaven and pour out on you blessings in abundance”. Accordingly, Adewale (2016) notes, “Malachi 3:10 has created a basis for the exploitation of the poor by which fraudsters hide under the cloak of religion to hoodwink others and are thriving because of the gullibility of the people”. Another respondent, Azeez (2016) calls tithing “A fund extracting treasure” and argues that due to economic reasons, many people claim they are called by God to preach the gospel and they use the prosperity gospel to service their greed and inordinate materialistic quests. This is significantly evident in the manner and energy with which they expound and promote the prosperity gospel doctrine.

Offerings:-

The pastorpreneurs in Nigeria also deploy every strategy within their arsenal to get people to part with their hard-earned money with the slogan that ‘God loves a cheerful giver’. Fundamentally, they teach that it is a necessity for an

individual to give part of himself or herself to God by offering his material goods. One's material goods represent the gifts of oneself to God. Founded on this conviction, the pastorpreneurs introduce quite a number of offerings in their religious circles and worship services. In some cases, they determine and set the limit of what one can offer depending on the financial capability of each individual member (Ayantayo, 2010:206). Indeed, Ayantayo (2010:206-207) argues,

They design countless numbers of offerings such as 'open offering' (the one that opens the heaven for blessings), 'poverty-eradication offering' (the one that removes poverty from one's life completely), and 'success offering' (the one that brings abundant and unlimited success in all earthly endeavours) and what have you. To achieve optimum result, prosperity preachers employ falsehood, lie and exaggeration as instruments of impressing their adherents about the need to live a prosperous life. In most cases, they tell lie about what they don't have as material possession just to manipulate their adherents to donate generously or to sow plentifully.

Almost all the respondents acknowledge that Pentecostal gatherings, programmes or worship services are filled with series of offerings ranging from two to five times as the case may be. Each attendee is encouraged to give generously since God loves a cheerful and generous giver and opens the door of prosperity in return. None of the attendees is exempt from participating in the offerings including the miserable poor who have not even food to eat. Neither the poor nor the sick is exempt from monetary contributions. The necessity of their unconditional participation is built on the fact that such offering commonly tagged 'sowing of seed' is unavoidably the foundation or key to prosperity. Since greater majority of people desire prosperity, especially, from among the poor, they are entrapped in the calculated falsehood of financial exploitation. Faniran (2016) notes that all sorts of people including slum dwellers, the sick, the crippled, the epileptic, the blind, the dumb, the deaf, and so on must dip their hands into their pockets to offer something. They do so in the false hope of unlocking prosperity. Ose (2016) calls them (pastorpreneurs) 'con-men' who use religion to grow fat on the desperation of the sick and the poor as each preacher laughs his way to the bank after each day of expect-a-miracles crusade. Regrettably, such prosperity never materializes, observes one of the respondents. Consequently, prosperity seekers or adherents are, therefore, left more impoverished.

Fundraising and donations:-

Fundraising is the process of soliciting and gathering voluntary contributions of money or other resources, by requesting donations from individuals, businesses, charitable foundations or governmental agencies. Traditionally, fundraising consists mostly of asking monetary donations from people's doors, at public gatherings and worship places. This was originally done in form of face-to-face fundraising. In modern times, new forms of fundraising such as online fundraising have also emerged. In its turn, donations are usually regarded as sacrificial acts. It is understood as a sacrificial giving of material gifts especially money.

In contemporary times, donations and fundraising are usually used to raise money for church project/s, to pay salaries or outstanding debts, finance pastors' expenses, among others. In some churches, request for donations and fundraising is a regular occurrence. Like tithe and offering, fundraising and donations offer individuals an opportunity to form a bond with God and nourish his/her relationship with him. God on his part is expected to guarantee the individual the blessing for which he/she seeks and for which he/she makes a financial commitment. The mutual exchange between an individual and God is similar to what obtains in contractual bargain.

Thanksgiving:-

Thanksgiving consists of the expression of appreciation or gratitude, especially, to God. Arising from recounting one's blessings, favours, privileges and opportunities, people focus on what they are most thankful of, such as the gift of life, of husband or wife, of children, of positions of privileges and successes in life, of recovery from sickness, of completion of events, of anniversaries and so on. Thanksgiving is celebrated by people of every religious and cultural background. In the Christian context, thanksgiving reminds people to praise God; to give thanks to him for his goodness and benevolence, for his mercy and love (cf Psalms 106:1). Indeed, thanksgiving offers people opportunity to express their faith by showing appreciation or gratitude to God in concrete terms. It offers people opportunity to appreciate what God has done or is doing in their lives. Such an appreciation is done not just verbally in praise to God but also through concrete expressions by way of material gifts and money to the church and 'God's representatives'. The story of the ten lepers in Luke 17:11-19 is always drawn on to drive home the need for Christians to give thanks always. In the text, Jesus was pleased with one of the lepers who returned to give thanks for being healed. Capitalizing on this text, new generation preachers (pastorpreneurs) challenge people to develop the culture of showing appreciation through giving of gifts.

Admittedly, some pastorpreneurs have capitalized on the above Scriptural episode to exploit and defraud people of their hard-earned money. Some of the interviewees (Adewale, 2016; Azeez, 2016; Faniran, 2016; Obong, 2016) identify categories of thanksgiving types celebrated in modern Christian churches. They including wedding thanksgiving, marriage anniversary thanksgiving, birthday thanksgiving, child dedication thanksgiving, end-of-the-month thanksgiving, end of the year thanksgiving, beginning of the year thanking, harvest thanksgiving and bazaar, death anniversary thanksgiving, special thanksgiving, family thanksgiving, children of favour thanksgiving, academic success thanksgiving (passing exams, gaining admission, graduation, matriculation, promotion and so on), recovery from sickness (successful surgeries, successful child delivery), deliverance and safety thanksgiving, and career success thanksgiving, among others. Indeed, there is multiplicity of categories of thanksgiving in different Christian churches, especially, in the new generation Pentecostal churches. In some of the churches, taking the harvest of thanksgiving, for instance, the programme runs through every Sunday for a period of three to four months. People continue to give money in each of the Sundays and other days. For Faniran (2015), thanksgiving rituals serve as systematized and organized machine designed to extort money from the innocent and unsuspecting religious adherents without physical violence.

Weber's Protestant Ethic and Pastorpreneurship:-

In *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism* (PESC), Weber argues that man has the obligation to save and invest his wealth to produce more goods, which creates more profits, and which in turn represents more capital for investment and ad infinitum. Consequently, profit maximization is not just a prudent recommendation but also a moral duty. This entails that anything that diminishes one's wealth, and by extension, anything that reduces the possibility of investment and creation of more profits, is absolutely abhorred. Besides living frugally, avoiding ostentation and spontaneous enjoyment, almsgiving and any form of charity was to be avoided. Indeed, the option of giving away wealth in philanthropic activity was not recommended since it not only depletes resources but also distracts the poor from working and saving. Donations to churches/congregations or to ministers were totally abrogated. Monetary or material donations to the poor or to charity were frowned at and looked upon as perpetuating beggary (Abrahamson, 2010:114). Charity or donations for any purpose was considered as burdening the donor and dissipating his resources and thus, hindering future chances of investment (Greenfeld, 2003:15). Weber drew up the creed of profit maximization from the writing of Benjamin Franklin. The creed notes;

Remember, that credit is money... Remember, that money is of the prolific, generating nature. Money can beget money, and its offspring can beget more, and so on. Five shilling turned is six, turned again it is seven and threepence, and so on, till it becomes a hundred pounds. The more there is of it, the more it produces every turning, so that the profits rise quicker and quicker. He that kills a breeding-sow, destroys all her offspring to the thousand generation. He that murders a crown, destroys all that might have produced, even scores of pounds (Franklin in Weber, 2012:11).

Indeed, the primacy of profit maximization entails the pursuit of ever-renewed profit through saving and maximum investment of available resources above modest and customary levels of consumption. Weber's Calvinist Protestants tended to regard the consumption and dissipation of capital or resources as morally reprehensible (Weber, 2012:81). Here, economic acquisition is not subordinated to man for the gratification of his material needs (Andreski, 1984:114; Weber, 2012:13). Prudent usage of resources and careful calculation of costs in relation to returns is essential. Money spent on luxuries was lost many times over, Franklin said, because once spent, it could not be reinvested and thus, multiplied (Weber, 2012:11). Hence, continuous rational and optimal use of resources is essential for the maximization of profit. They lived in an ascetic way and did not waste time or dissipate the profits of their labour (Cipriani, 2000:78). Accordingly, this attitude produced tremendous effect on economic development in the West. The systematic and ceaseless pursuit of profit and wealth, and the stress on abstinence and restriction on spending naturally led to surpluses which could only be reinvested (Pals, 2006:164; Haralambos & Holborn, 2008:407). Delayed gratification translated into much greater savings and availability of improved capital for reinvestment. As Hamilton (2001:170) points out, "...capital accumulation, deferred consumption and reinvestment of profit were key to the enormous dynamism of modern capitalism". Hence, Weber reasoned,

When the limitation of consumption is combined with this release of acquisitive activity, the inevitable practical result is obvious: accumulation of capital through ascetic compulsion to save. The restraints which were imposed upon the consumption of wealth naturally served to increase it by making possible the productive investment of capital" (Weber, 2012:81).

Here, the fundamental orientation driving religious life is the obligation to earn money with the intent to save and increase it, not to spend it under any guise. He acts with the conviction that “God calls him to a serious, restrained life of self-denial, so he has no interest in luxury or expensive personal pleasures” (Pals, 2006:164). The focus of every Calvinist Protestant is that of making a profit which is regarded as a duty of his calling. Weber concludes,

As far as the influence of the Puritan outlook extended, under all circumstances... it favoured the development of a rational economic life; it was the most important, and above all the only consistent influence in the development of that life. It stood at the cradle of modern economic man (Weber, 2012:82).

It was this obligation of achieving wealth through diligent labour accompanied with the habit of saving and reinvestment that led to the birth of modern capitalism. Hence, “Weber believed that ascetic Protestantism was an indispensable catalyst for the new form of society, which he called modern capitalism” (Bellah, 2002:256). Thus reasoned, it implies that if the desire to make money were to be divorced from such an ethic of saving, among other factors, it would correlate with an absence of rational capitalist development.

Weber’s Protestant Ethic and Pastorpreneurship in Nigeria:-

Against the backdrop of Weber’s perspective, pastorpreneurs in Nigeria found a goldmine in pastorpreneurship through which they make money, service their needs and finance their projects. However, this is achieved through the exploitation of other people. Tithing, offering, thanksgiving, fundraising and donations serve their purposes. It creates opportunities for monetary contributions and continual cash flow, through which ministers (pastorpreneurs) continually enrich themselves but through which other people are also continually exploited. As one of the interviewees, Faniran (2016) states;

The pastorpreneurs in Nigeria employ the prosperity gospel doctrine to persuade people to part with their money and material goods to enable them to satisfy their needs, meet their expenses as well as raise money for their projects. To the pastors, church proprietors and their families, the gospel is imperative because it provides and sustains the continual cash flow and revenue that help them to survive economic hardships or melt down.

Nevertheless, seed sowing in all of its dimensions are done in the context of an oppressive exploitative socio-religious system ruled by greedy and smart pastorpreneurs. Tithing, offerings and donations are especially scandalous within a system that exploits the poor while the pastorpreneurs greedily devour the accumulated ‘sacred donations’ of the poor. One of the interviewees, Ajaniran (2016) remarks;

The practice of religion has created two classes of people: exploiters and the exploited. The exploiters gain from religion through the formulation and promotion of structures and means of exploitation. In so doing, they enrich themselves and ridiculously live in affluence and extravagance. They buy private jets and other irreconcilable material properties to the dislike and condemnation of the Nigerian public. The exploited (characterized mainly by the poor and the vulnerable) are defrauded of what they have. Consequently, they are left poorer and more vulnerable.

Indeed, pastorpreneurship helps the pastorpreneurs to continually amass wealth and become exceedingly wealthy. They accumulate wealth to the detriment of the people they feed on. To this end, Nigeria has five out of the ten richest pastorpreneurs in the world according to Forbes Magazine, 2015 and all of them are from Southern Nigerian extraction. Bishop David Oyedepo of Living Faith Church in Forbes’s assessment is the second richest pastor in the world with an estimated net worth of \$150 million. Enoch Adeboye of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) is the third richest pastor in the world with an estimated worth of \$80-100 million. Chris Oyakilome of Believers’ Loveworld Ministries is the fifth richest pastor in the world with an estimated net worth of \$30-50 million. T. B. Joshua of the Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCAN) is the ninth richest pastor in the world with an estimated net worth of \$10-15 million. Matthew Ashimolowo of KICC is the tenth richest pastor in the world with an estimated net worth of \$6-10 million. There are many other pastorpreneurs in Nigeria not mentioned in Forbes Magazine’s list but who are also overwhelmingly rich. Their pastorpreneurship paid off. Hence, while a few people (pastorpreneurs) grow richer, the vast majority (consisting of their followers) grow poorer each passing day and the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen in Nigerian society.

As a result of such massive accumulation of wealth, most of the pastorpreneurs in Southern Nigeria indulge in unnecessary acquisition of material goods and luxuries manifest in exotic cars and/or aircraft/s, expensive houses and jewelleryes, among others. Encomium magazine identify eight (8) pastorpreneurs that own private aircraft/s in

Nigeria. Bishop Oyedepo of Living Faith Church has five private jets namely Gulfstream G550, Gulfstream IV, VG450, Bombardier Challenger 604 (N664D) and Lear Jet 19000D (5N-WCI) and a Rolls-Royce Phantom. Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor of World of Life Bible Church (WLBC), Warri, owns a Bombardier Challenger 601 (N431CB) aircraft. Enoch Adeboye of RCCG has two private jets: Gulfstream GIV (N707EA) and Gulfstream G550 (N730EA). T. B. Joshua of SCOAN owns a Gulfstream G550 (Registered as 'Synagogue of Nations'). Pastor Chris Oyakilome of Christ Embassy, Pastor Sam Adeyemi of Daystar Christian Center (DCC), Lagos, Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo of KICC and Bishop Mike Okonkwo of The Redeemed Evangelical Mission (TREM), among others, also own private jets.

But against the backdrop of Weber's perspective, dissipation of resources on the part of the exploited as a consequence of the practice of religious faith and of the exploiter in enjoyment of the proceeds of exploitation must be avoided. Moberg (in Johnstone, 2007:209) asserts that religiosity affects economic attitudes and behaviours to the extent that it takes undue consumption of resources (assets and liquid cash). The practice of religion or religiosity that encourages, guarantees, motivates or induces the expenditure or consumption of resources (by way of tithing, offerings, donations, gifts, self-gratification and so on) contrasts with Weber's perspective. Similarly, the practice of religion or religiosity that deploys or engages resources including land, buildings, time and other capital to the religious sector differ from Weber's outlook. Again, religiosity, while observing religious holidays, feasts and celebrations (wedding ceremonies, anniversaries, etc.), that encourages not just consumption of time but also of resources (Moberg in Johnstone, 2007:209) is unacceptable to Weber. Resources spent disproportionately on eating and drinking, on gifts and religious articles and products like candles, among others, disagree with Weber's work.

Implications of Pastorpreneurship to (Nigeria) National Development:-

Financial capability and availability of resources are indispensable for business or economic investments. Financial resources refer to money available to build and grow a business, manage a household or take care of human needs. It is money available in the form of cash, liquid securities and credit lines. Financial resources are essential for human/societal well-being, improvement of human living standard or condition, human productivity, and so on. Lack of financial resources is one of the criteria that define and identify individuals, groups or nations as poor. Before going into business or starting up a business, an entrepreneur needs to secure sufficient financial resources in order to be able to operate efficiently and sufficiently. To have access to and enjoy the basic necessities of life, people must at least have some reasonable financial base. To have a voice and access to education, health care, societal privileges and power, especially, in a capitalist society, people must possess some financial backup; otherwise, these possibilities would elude them or be denied them and poverty would be entrenched.

Traditionally, people work to secure financial resources. For greater majority of people, securing a good financial base is something born out of consistent hard work, savings and reinvestment of one's savings. Ayantayo (2010:212) opines that wealthy men are not born but are made through dedication to duty, hard work, saving and investment. In Weber's analysis, Western capitalism flowered due partly because of the saving and reinvestment of wealth accumulated. Hard work, saving and reinvestment were important to Calvinist Protestants so much so that all forms of charity were discouraged. Here, "Money is of the prolific, generating nature; money begets money and its offspring begets more" (Weber, 2012:11). Indeed, Calvinism adopted an attitude that encourages hard work, saving and investment. The ethic was ascetic. It encourages abstinence from life's pleasures; that is, it creates an austere lifestyle and of rigorous self-discipline (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008:407). It produced individuals who were able to save lots of money and resources. In fact, restriction on spending encourages savings, accumulation of capital and subsequent reinvestment thereof. This produced the early businesses that were instrumental to the development of Western capitalism and economic growth (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008:408). Western capitalism was possible because Calvinist Protestantism initiated grassroots development model that started with the common people through hard work, saving and investment. On the contrary, the practice of Pentecostalism in Southern Nigeria from the data gathered in the fieldwork reveals that the pastorpreneurs in Nigeria do not encourage saving, and thus, prevents people from possible chances of investment whatsoever. The pastorpreneurs boast of having the capacity to make people rich but instead of doing this; they impoverish the people but succeed in making themselves rich through manipulation, deception and exploitation. In the process, the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen. Few people become rich at the expense of the great majority of others such that pastorpreneurs like Bishop Oyedepo of Living Faith Church and Pastor Chris Okotie can afford to own five (5) private aircrafts and over \$2 (USA) million worth of private cars, respectively, when the majority of their members live below \$1 (USA) per day. Their inability to save so as to secure financial resources to invest in education, improvement of quality of life or living standard and business ventures, etc, as a result of the practice of religion continues to frustrate their chances of

social mobility and socio-economic wellbeing. Hence, pastorpreneurship is counterproductive to national development since national development involves grassroots development models that empower the majority rather than a privileged or smart few. If the few rather than the majority was empowered, national development is undermined. But if the majority rather than the few were to be empowered, national development is enhanced.

Recommendations:-

- a. Government at all levels in Nigeria should provide a means of enlightenment for the hapless Pentecostal adherents and other Nigerians who in their religiosity are often led astray, manipulated and subjected to all forms of organized exploitation in the name of religion.
- b. Government at all levels in Nigeria should endeavour to create employment opportunities as well as give private sectors the enabling environment to create jobs so as to meet the rising demand of employment in Nigeria. When job opportunities are available, the number of people who engage in religious activities as a substitute for idleness will reduce or stop entirely. Similarly, those who take to pastorpreneurship as a survival option will find an alternative in the available job opportunities.

Conclusion:-

For a country to achieve sustainable national development, the gap between the rich and the poor must be reduced or completely eradicated. One of the strategies to achieve this end via the practice of religion is when the practice of religion encourages and inculcates on its adherents the discipline of work ethic in addition to the orientation to save and invest. In so doing, the practice of religion will not only support but also initiates and activates the emergence of grassroots development. However, if the practice of religion exploited the people rather than encouraged them to save and invest, it empowers a few people, impoverishes the majority and widens that gap between the rich and the poor. Its impact on national development is akin to Karl Marx's analysis of religion which for him favours the bourgeoisie over the proletariat.

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