

## **CHECKING OUT FOR GOOD! A CRITIQUE OF THE NIGERIAN ECONOMIC MIGRANTS TURNED MISSIONARIES IN LONDON**

**Babatunde Aderemi Adedibu**

Research Fellow, Department of Practical Theology and Missiology,  
University of Stellenbosch,  
Stellenbosch, South Africa.

+2348147689754; [tundedibu@gmail.com](mailto:tundedibu@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

Nigeria despite being one of the major oil producing nations in the World since the exploration, discovery and exportation of crude oil in the late 1960's is attracting a lot of global attention of late as Nigerian Pentecostalism seems to constitute a non-commodity export from the country to the West with its globalisation. This was accentuated by poor leadership ineptitude as well as moral corruption of Nigerian leaders over the years as many Nigerians are consistently seeking greener pastures in other African countries and the West. Interestingly despite the economic motivations of most of these migrants, it has been observed that some of these migrants travelled with their religious subscriptions particularly the Pentecostal adherents and some are now missionaries in the England and other urban cities in the West. The economic migrants turned missionaries claims of re-evangelising the host community seems increasingly suspect in the light of ostentatious living as well as poor accountability and probity. Using sociological analyses and historiographical approaches which also entails participant observations of the missionaries, this articles concludes that there is the urgent need for incarnational living and cultural sensitivity to the new context of the missionaries demonstrating more probity and accountability.

**Keywords:** Economic migrants, Missionaries, London, Nigerian Pentecostal Leaders, London

### **Introduction**

The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) which is owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria in the 1980's produced an advert that captivated the imagination of the entire country. The lead actor, Enebeli Elebuwa (real name) known as Andrew in the advert looked upwardly mobile, savvy, confident and self-assured that he held his future in his hands. Andrew's frustration, lack of self-actualisation necessitated the decision to emigrate from Nigeria to the West was due to dysfunctional infrastructural facilities as social amenities such as electricity, the telephone system, public water supply, the road networks were appalling. Andrew was tired of the near collapse of the social and infrastructural facilities and was determined to leave the shores of his mother country for the West for greener pastures. This was the orientation of many young professionals and most Nigerian youths whose worldview were gradually being shaped by the

impact of the media and improving telecommunication facilities across the globe that depict Europe as the landflowing with milk and honey. This perception was largely shaped by the effects of the deplorable state of the Nigerian economy and the inability of the State to meet her statutory responsibilities to its citizens. The TV advert was to sensitise the Nigerian populace to be patriotic and that sacrifice required to make the nation better as the country of their destination evolved to be what it is by collective sacrifices of its citizens. 'I am checking out' was more than a cliché in Nigeria in the 1980's as the advert spurred many young Nigerian graduates and professionals to evaluate whether Nigeria of the future would be a place they would want to live. Andrew became a hero of some sort. However, almost forty years after the advert was produced the migration of Nigerians for greener pastures in the West seems unabated.

The upsurge in the migration of Nigerians to the West particularly to Britain and United States coincided with the proliferation of Nigerian Pentecostal churches in urban cities across Nigeria. These two events occurred during the period in the Nigerian Church history when the African Independent Churches were a repository of hope and affirmation of Africans due to the high level of indigenisation and the understanding of the African worldview. These churches had Pentecostal orientation. In the next section of this article we shall attempt to historicise the emergence of Nigerian Pentecostalism and its motivations for a mission that has translated to the appearance of a transnational network of churches in urban cities in the West.

### **Historicising the Emergence of Nigerian Pentecostalism**

It is apt to submit that the antecedents of Nigerian Pentecostalism cannot be ascertained with a definite date of emergence as there are a number of factors and strands of ideas with its own pedigree<sup>1</sup>. Prior to the emergence of Nigerian Pentecostalism, the Christian faith in Nigeria seemed to wear a look that reminded the people of imperialism. The mainline churches established by the western missionaries were unable to foster Christian principles that are ethnically liberating and anthropologically enhancing, and religiously gratifying in many of the colonies. Ogbu Kalu<sup>2</sup> asserts that:

A significant aspect of the nineteenth century was that as missionaries sowed the seed of the gospel, Africans appropriated it from a primal, charismatic world-view and read the translated scriptures in that light. Indigenous agencies recovered the spiritual resources of the gospel and challenged missionary Christianity to be fully biblical. This set the stage for the decolonization process that followed the world wars. New forces such as the implosion of the state challenged the heritage of African Christianity, and the collapse of the dictatorial [totalitarian] states and attendant poverty probed the tensile strength of the church's stewardship. Inexplicably, charismatic and Pentecostal spirituality resurfaced to provide the energy for growth and sustainability in the midst of hostile circumstances.

These churches did not only present an intensive practice of prayer into Nigerian Christianity, but also sought to liberate Christianity from the western practices. They sought to indigenise Christian faith in the country through the religious parameters of African Traditional Religion. Harvey Cox in Kalu<sup>3</sup> observes:

African independent Christians seem proud that they had not forsaken the spiritual customs their ancestors passed on to them before the whites came, even though the first missionaries urged them to abandon these “remnants of superstition.” They believe that God was already present in Africa before the Europeans arrived and that many of the ways Africans worshipped then are better than the ways the missionaries taught them. The result is a thoroughly “Africanized” version of Christianity.”

Some of the liturgical, ritualisation and charismatic practices in African Initiated Churches such as speaking in tongues, baptism of the Holy Spirit, deliverance and prophetic utterances point to elements of Pentecostalism common within the two traditions. This constituted the first wave of Nigerian Pentecostalism associated with intentionality to dissociate from the aprons of western missionaries and their idiosyncrasies. This led to the emergence of African-initiated churches (AICs), collectively known as Aladura<sup>4</sup> (“praying” people) or “prophet-healing” noted for their strong emphasis on prayer, prophecy and healing. The second dispensation in the historiography of Nigerian Pentecostalism arose after the Nigerian civil war that took place between 1967 and 1970. Nigerian Pentecostalism was given impetus by the influx of American influences through their literature into the country. It was an era that some of the major Pentecostal players in America influence were appropriated by various indigenous Pentecostal groups. The 1960s had started well for both Nigerian evangelicalism and Nigerian Pentecostalism in the wake of Nigeria’s Independence declaration in 1960. At a church leadership level evangelical mission churches worked to hand over responsibility to local workers, with the consolidation of the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA) and of the Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN) in the Hausa speaking areas of central and northern Nigeria being examples. Scripture Union (SU) in Nigeria, a largely campus-based affiliate of the British-based evangelical Bible-reading organisation, also began to be Nigerian-led from 1960. Billy Graham, the American evangelical preacher, held a major campaign in Nigeria in 1960. Likewise Reggy Thomas of the Revival Fires and T.L. Osborn conducted crusades at Ibadan in 1973, while Brothers Argemiro of the Free Gospel Mission conducted a revival in Lagos. The year came to an end with a crusade carried out by Morris Cerullo on December 15th, 1973 at Ibadan.

The 1970s and 1980s ushered in the emergence and proliferation of interdenominational campus fellowships, intensification of the holiness message and a lot of emphasis on biblical inerrancy as well as evangelical passion. Some

of the Churches that emerged in this period are Deeper Life Christian Ministry established by WF Kumuyi, Church of God Mission established by late Archbishop Benson Idahosa and Living Faith International Ministries aka Winners Chapel founded by Bishop David Oyedepo. However, the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), was established in 1952 by late Rev Josiah Akindayomi but was relatively unknown by most Nigerians until the nomination of the incumbent General Overseer, Pastor E.A Adebayo on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 1981. The early 1990s the Nigerian church scene was revitalised by the proliferation of neo-Pentecostal churches. Most of the neo-Pentecostal churches emphasis on puritan teachings waned in comparison to the first wave of churches in the 1970s-1980s, prosperity gospel and faith teaching increased whilst some of the churches were noted to place a lot of emphasis on spiritual warfare themes. Ruth Marshall-Fratani<sup>5</sup> made a similar point from her research in the early 1990s: The wave of conversions to Pentecostalism, which has swept across central Nigeria in the past decade or so has brought a number of changes in doctrine, membership, organisation and transnational affiliation to the already existing Pentecostal churches which expanded or were established in the earlier revival of the 1970s... The gospel of prosperity offers a doctrine of morally controlled materialism, in which personal wealth and success are interpreted as the evidence of God's blessing on those that lead a 'true life in Christ.'

Several churches came into being in the 1990's which included Mountain of Fire and Miracles established in 1989 by Rev Dr Olukoya, Christ Embassy led by Pastor Chris Oyakhilome in 1991 which started off as a Campus fellowship at the Bendel State University now Ambrose Ali University, Benin, Nigeria, Fountain of Life Church by Pastor Taiwo Odukoya established in 1992, House on the Rock led by Rev Wale Adefarasin was set up in 1994, Daystar Christian Centre founded by Pastor Sam Adeyemi was inaugurated on the 18th of November 1995 to "teach success on radio, television, tapes, publications and seminars," according to the church website ([www.daystar.org/history](http://www.daystar.org/history)) and a host of other older churches. Some of the churches such as the Winners Chapel and RCCG shifted from a world rejecting to a world accommodating denominations embracing wealth and health ideologies. The theological re-engineering of the older churches was necessitated not only by a byproduct of the proliferation of neo-Pentecostal churches but also a response to the holistic nature of Pentecostalism to ameliorate the existential challenges of its adherents. In the face of the economy of the moral corruption of the ruling class in the 1980s and 1990s, the effects of the structural adjustment programmes of the International Monetary Fund fostered on Nigerians, Neo- Pentecostalism churches gave many Nigerians hope in the midst of hopeless economic situations. The systemic failure of the various facets of the economic and social services of the nation was assuaged by the Nigerian Neo-Pentecostal churches as they stepped in to provide some of the social, economic and infrastructural facilities through various corporate social responsibility initiatives. The Health and Wealth theologies of Nigerian Pentecostal churches seems to be tailored made to meet the social and

existential realities of their adherents leading to recruitment and sustenance of their membership. This is predicated on the continued social and economic deprivation dominant in Nigeria during this period. According to Kenneth Archer<sup>6</sup>

Pentecostalism began as and continues to be a complex, heterogeneous and liberal movement in both theological and social composition. During the period that ran roughly from the American Civil War to the Great Depression, American society was caught in the vortex of change as mass immigration, urbanization, and industrialization re-sculptured the North American landscape. As a result, societal problems became much more complicated and acute. Yet “most public-spirited Protestants still felt that the key to a better life together lay in personal moral reform.

Thus, the most prevalent evangelical Protestant attempts to reform urban life was based on principles of private action and personal responsibility. The political and social life in Nigeria in the 1970’s was just returning to normalcy after almost three years of civil war, the near collapse of the economy was almost inevitable coupled with rising cases of social and moral indiscretion amongst the citizens. I wish to posit that the social deprivation theory is true within the Nigerian context as Pentecostalism offered hope in the midst of these emingly hopeless situations. In the light of the declining fortunes of the Nigerian economy through leadership ineptitude, endemic corruption, political instability and systemic collapse of infrastructural facilities, many young upwardly mobile professionals migrated to various countries in Europe particularly the United Kingdom. However, some of these migrants travelled with their Pentecostal idiosyncrasies. Indeed, the portable practices of Pentecostals such as participatory worship, high sense of community experience and missionising ethos have which contribute to the ease of proliferation of these churches have been enhanced by the democratisation of Christianity through the use of laity. However, the mass exodus of skilled manpower from the Nigerian employment sector has led to loss of skilled manpower within the Nigerian sector which has been described as brain drain (Jacky Kaba 2009:109). Many people underestimate the magnitude of the loss of manpower within the Nigerian economic sector but this constitutes a compensatory gain to international network of Pentecostal Churches as the members of the laity provide the manpower required to re—evangelise the host communities. Thus, the brain drain phenomenon which is a loss to the Nigerian economic sector has a missiological dimension in the host communities. The concept of the brain drain phenomenon is interrogated in the next section of this article in relation to the ability of Nigerian Pentecostal churches to make use of the laity in accordance with their missionary ethos.

### **‘Checking out of Nigeria’ - An Overview of Brain Drain Phenomenon**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century heralded a distinctive phase in the history of emigration globally but particularly from Africa to the West. The emigration dynamics has greatly been influenced by the declining fortunes of the economic situation,

natural disasters, refugees fleeing from civil war, religiously motivated persecution, fratricidal wars in many countries in Africa and the moral and fiscal indiscipline of the ruling elites. Consequentially, a country like Nigeria has experienced massive emigration of educated and economic elites of the country and the African continent in general. Due to colonial antecedents, the most Anglophone immigrants likely destination is mostly to the United Kingdom or the United States. The city of London being one of the financial hubs of Europe as well as the stability of the English Pounds is an important source of attraction for most economic migrants as most migrants look forward to remittance of their earning to take care of their kith and kins in their home country. These migrants while still in England are very much connected to the economic activities of their home country. For instance, recent research findings indicate that UK-Nigeria remittance is estimated to be about the United States \$5 billion in remittances in cash and electrical goods are repatriated to the South East and South West of Nigeria<sup>7</sup>.

However, the depleting of qualified professionals through emigration is a major constraint to the development of the country concerned. According to Jacky Kaba<sup>8</sup>

Development in Africa cannot be achieved without the participation of an adequate contingent of human resources. African countries see their efforts on the way to a better health system stifled by professional migration... an important part of development aid to Africa is used for the medical personnel, who subsequently leave to apply their skills and qualifications in developed countries...

Immigration has led to the loss of a significant percentage of Nigerian professional and entrepreneurs to the United Kingdom and the United States. It has been observed that the new wave of migrants<sup>9</sup> arriving from 1980 and captured in the 1994 Labour Force Survey and from 1990 and captured in the 2004 Labour Force Survey added further layers to longer-settled Nigerians in London. The 2001 census recorded 88,378 Nigerian-born people resident in the UK with 78% resident in London. More recent estimates by the Office for National Statistics put the figure at 181,000 in 2013<sup>10</sup>. However; the numbers highlighted above exclude undocumented migrants and UK citizens of Nigerian descent. The United Kingdom particularly the city of London is the most favoured destination for Nigerian immigrants. Similarly, Nigeria has been noted to be the single largest source of African migration to the United States.<sup>11</sup>

The figures of professional migrating from Nigeria particularly the health sector might be on the increase in the future as the UK Government announces temporary changes to restrictions on nurse recruitment from outside European Economic Area (EEA) to ensure safe staffing levels across the National Health Service (NHS). From February 2016, nurses will be added to the government's shortage occupation list on an interim basis. This means that

nurses from outside the EEA that apply to work in the UK will have their applications for nursing posts prioritised<sup>12</sup>.

The upsurge in the numbers of Nigerians emigrating to the West in 1980's was accentuated by the collapse of crude oil prices alongside sustained political repression and violence appear to have exacerbated the exodus of Nigerians abroad. Despite Nigeria's colonial ties to Britain as part of the British Protectorate since 1894 before independence in 1960, Nigerians have immigrated to countries like Germany, France, Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Asia and West Indies. There are no doubt the changes in technologies and the ease of travel has contributed to the forces of migration across the globe. Nevertheless, the migration pattern is not unidirectional as many Nigerians emigrate within the African continent for economic and professional reasons to countries such as Ghana, South Africa, Ethiopia and a host of other states.

There is no doubt; the compensatory gain in terms of professionals and highly skilled migrants from Nigeria to various parts of the West including the United Kingdom has led to continued improvisation of the Nigerian state in terms of the magnitude of the skilled labour that are seeking economic and professional fulfilment outside the shores of Nigeria. Brain drain which first emerged during the 1960s utilised to describe the migration of British intellectuals and professionals to Britain. Although, brain drain is associated with a detrimental effect on the sending nations, Akinrinade and Olukoya<sup>13</sup> argue that this has a potential gain also to the sending nation. Their argument is predicated on the fact that the Nigerians in Diaspora are increasingly demonstrating deep sense of nationalism and remains connected to their home countries through joint collaborative initiatives. For instance "in the area of academic linkages, a number of Nigerian universities have started linking up with their alumni resident abroad in order to facilitate academic exchanges, manpower training, library development, and so on"<sup>14</sup>.

Despite the claim of Akinrinade and Olukoya, I submit that the laws of uneven development and that the high level of economic development attained by industrialized countries confer on their people and workers in particular a high level of per-capita income which attracts migrants (professionals and semi-skilled labour) from less developed countries. Therefore, international migration is a significant factor in globalisation; the notion of global demographic mobility has been "facilitated by the adverse concerns of globalisation as depicted in glaring differences in economic and political power between immigration and emigration countries" according to Castles<sup>15</sup>.

Immigration has been noted by various scholars (Ebaugh and J. Chafetz 2000; Vasquez and M. Marquardt 2003; Harris, 2006) that it is characterised by economic, social and cultural discontinuities<sup>16</sup>. In the light of the fact that most Nigerian Pentecostal migrants are faced with institutional and psychological challenges in the host community, the role of faith in the process of acculturation cannot be overemphasised. In the light of the associated stress of migration, Nigerian Pentecostal migrants are immediately integrated into a

network of transnational network of churches which have proliferated in urban cities like London. Ironically it has been observed that the migration narratives of these pentecostal migrants are not economic but most times from a missiological perspective. In the next section of this article is the critique of the migration narratives and modus operandi Nigerian economic migrants turned missionaries in London

### **Mapping of Nigerian Pentecostal Churches in London**

The globalisation of Nigerian Pentecostalism is an example of the deterritorialization of African Pentecostalism. To encounter Nigerian Pentecostalism all you might require is only a bus ticket. The City of London being Europe's financial capital is the destination of Nigerian emigrants with a significant percentage of Nigerians residents in the city. Hence, London is a super diverse city with pluralities of religious groups, ethnicities and cultural diversities<sup>17</sup>. The city of London in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is incomparable to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries Victorian age. In view of the pluralistic and cosmopolitan status of London, it has attracted its fair share of various faiths. The Nigerian Pentecostal churches in London are one out of several examples of several African Pentecostal churches in Diaspora. In fact Nigerian Pentecostalism is entrenched in different cities not only in London but also in places like Ukraine where Pastor Sunday Adelaja presides over the Embassy of God, Pastor Mathew Ashimolowo, a Nigerian is the Senior Pastor and founder of Kingsway International Christian Centre situated in Dartford, Kent, London with a strong membership of 12,000; Pastor Agulrukwu presides over Jesus House, the frontline parish of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in London with a membership of 3000<sup>18</sup>. Oyitso Brown, the Chairman of RCCG Mission Board Nigeria, describes the position of Nigeria on the map of Africa by likening it to the position of a trigger in a revolver. Oyitso said "Nigeria occupies the position of the trigger"<sup>19</sup> which is evident in the globalisation of African Pentecostalism. One of the indigenous Pentecostal denominations in Africa that has succeeded in establishing a transnational network of churches is the RCCG, which has over 700 parishes in the United Kingdom<sup>20</sup>

The first of Nigerian neo-Pentecostal church to send a church-planter to Britain was Deeper Life Bible Church, who sent Pastor Pre Ovia in 1985 at the Rockingham Estate Community Hall at Elephant and Castle according to Osgood (2006:94). Later that year, Four Square Church, a Pentecostal denomination with a rather different genesis, followed suit sending Matthew Ashimolowo. However, Matthew Ashimolowo subsequently left Four Square Church to pioneer another independent Pentecostal church named Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC) established in September 1992 when Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo and 300 members rented a hall at Holloway Boys School, North London according to the church website<sup>21</sup> New Covenant led by Rev Paul Jinadu registered its presence in London through late Bishop Titus David in 1986, but he left New Covenant Church in 1988 to pioneer Christ Family Church on the 16



October 1988. The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) started off as a House fellowship in 1988 with four students in Hones Road before it was moved to another property on Larch Road, Cricklewood, London<sup>22</sup>. Harmony Christian Ministries led by Adewale Olulana was started in 2000 under the umbrella of Rev George Adegboye of Rhema Chapel, Ilorin, Nigeria. Likewise is the Victorious Pentecostal Assembly founded and led by Pastor Alex Omokudu which has a membership of about 3,000.<sup>23</sup> The Nigerian Pentecostal scene in London is so diverse that it includes ethnic churches that are Pentecostal but are committed to maintaining the use of vernacular in their services; some of them include the likes of Apata Irapada, a parish of the Redeemed Christian Church of God situated at Peckham, London. Likewise, Mount Zion Ministries popularly referred to as Freedom Arena, located at Plumstead Area, London led by Pastor Debo Adegoke.

### **Reversal of Missionary Trends and Critique of Nigerian Pentecostal Churches in London**

The reversal in the missionary trends from the Global South now to the Global North has succeeded in the redefinition of World Christianities, not from a Eurocentric perception but pluralities of their expressions in various contexts. The change in the missionary direction is subtly captured below during an address to the leaders of Europe national and regional ecumenical councils:

Today.. the mainstream of the missionary movement goes from the South to the North, from the poor to the rich world: from the margins to the centre of power, from below upwards. Today, it is mainly due to the enormous streams of migration that the Gospel is being carried all over the globe. Much of the time it happens spontaneously in an unorganised and beyond the control of the headquarters of our mission agencies<sup>24</sup>

Despite the shift in the missionary sending trend from the Global North to the Global South acknowledged above, pejorative connotations are evident in this submission. The gospel as it were in Jesus' word is meant to be preached to the ends of the earth, but the proclamation is not the sole responsibility of a race, class or human classifications. Nevertheless, missionary agency of the ecumenical organisation quoted above were at a loss with the proliferation of churches a by-product of migration as many of these immigrants travel with their religious backpacks to the host country.

The disappointment and dissatisfaction with the current state of Christianity in Britain as a result of the forces of religious pluralism, changes in legislation to accommodate various notions that are antagonistic to the Christian faith as well as the desecralization of the Christian space for commercial and recreational purposes are signs of the declining fortunes of Christianity which has moved Christianity to the private space in Britain<sup>25</sup>.

The re-evangelisation claims have been catalysed by the rise in Christian activities among the immigrant population in urban cities in Britain including London. A typical example is a study on church growth in London, which observed that the future of churches and historic denominations outside the southeast of England is challenging, because the fastest growing churches are black [Africans] Pentecostal churches, which are projected to grow “from 11% in 1990 to 23% by 2020.” according to research findings of Peter Briere<sup>26</sup> A common theme that seems to be a transatlantic phenomenon among churches from the Global South is that the host countries in which the migrants are situated are usually classified as immoral, deficient, and in need of restoration to their old Christian ethos<sup>27</sup>. It has been observed that there exists a general perception of decline in the fortunes of European Christianity among indigenous European Christians and migrant Christians alike.

From the experiential perspective as researcher in England and participant observer at the churches highlighted below, I observed that the assemblage of young upwardly mobile Nigerians that migrated in the 1990s to Britain were mostly well educated, middle class and had privileged backgrounds from their home countries, but came with their religious “backpacks” to London. Other economic migrants that have since left their economic pursuits include Pastors David Sola-Oludoyi and Grace Sola-Oludoyi (of Royal Connections, an RCCG parish in London) who are Russian-trained medical doctors.

The list seems endless, as names like Pastors Sola Fola-Alade, a Nigerian trained Medical doctor and Bimbo Fola Alade both founders of Trinity Chapel London a parish of the RCCG before starting Liberty Church, London a Pentecostal denomination different from the RCCG , Jonathan Oloyede is also a Nigerian trained medical doctor turned missionary and now presides over the City Church, London, Albert Odulele also a medical doctor trained in Nigeria convicted by Woolwich Crown Court on March 11, 2011 for performing sex acts with a minor still presides over Glory House London<sup>28</sup>. Dipo Oluyomi serves as the Chief Executive Officer of KICC and he also is a medical doctor trained in Nigeria, late Tayo Adeyemi, was a Nigerian trained Medical doctor and was the founder and Senior Pastor of New Wine, Church, Woolwich, London, Sola Adeaga a medical consultant served for almost two decades as the Chief Executive Officer at Jesus House, London has also bid farewell to their medical vocation to be agents of soul renewal and transformation.

Despite the professional accomplishments of the Nigeria Pentecostal Pastors mentioned above none possesses validated theological degrees as preachers. However, many have been involved in denominational ministerial formation courses and training.

Nigerian Pentecostal Church leaders in urban cities like London and elsewhere have succeeded in creating a meaningful religious identity that is not just a cultural ghetto, but they have created sacred spaces where common experiences are articulated in familiar symbolic constructs which are often disconnected from the worldview of the outside community. These articulations

are based on a common worldview and religious praxis, which creates a community of people with high self-esteem, belief and pride in overcoming perceived social injustices or alienation.

In the light of the previous critique of Black Majority Churches in Britain which comprises of African Independent Churches, Caribbean Pentecostal Churches and African Pentecostal- led churches, I wish to posit that the missionary mantra as good as they were is far from being a reality as observed by Adedibu.<sup>29</sup> Whilst acknowledging the contributions of Nigerian Pentecostal Churches in London through various community initiatives, provision of social and educational space for the youths, if the claims of re-evangelisation are yet to be a reality, there is the need for a paradigm shift not only in terms of celebrity culture predicated on hyper-consumerism and worldliness as Gold is being traded for God, contextual knowledge of the British landscape but also in terms of fiscal accountability and being incarnational models which the British populace can identify with. The aforementioned have contributed to the myopic and poor missiological success of Nigerian Pentecostal Churches in the United Kingdom particularly.

What is also significant today is the increasingly varied roles that celebrities play in contemporary culture and the cultural authority that they are granted in those roles: we see celebrities serving as heroes, cultural commentators, charity spokespeople, role models, political candidates, to name just a few. We look to celebrities for their comments on anything that matters to us, as if they have some insight we lack. Surprisingly, some of the leaders of Nigerian Pentecostal Churches in London lead their churches by looking at the world for models of what the church should look like. Whilst acknowledging that there might be things to glean from the cultural trends around, it seems this amounts to a travesty of truth that Church leaders should say who are expected by the general public to be role models, and incarnational are looking up to the world for how to govern a spiritual entity. The success and affluence enjoyed by some of these church leaders are far from what most economic migrants can afford. There is no doubt about the celebrity culture that surrounds some 'successful' Nigerian Pentecostal Pastors. This has so much African cultural resonance that it tends to go unchallenged within the African culture. This apparent cult-like attitude is likely to militate against an emphasis on their claims of re-evangelisation of the host communities. The emphasis on power, cult-like disposition and high-handedness by some of the leaders of Nigerian Pentecostal churches are not only alien to the host context but militates against their missionary ethos. Brandon<sup>30</sup> (cit Akhazemea 2010:117), a Caucasian and missionary to India sums it up this way:

the senior executives of these churches are not prepared to implement the radical changes that will facilitate the evangelism of Britain's diverse ethnic population. Admittedly, they want the kudos associated with a multi-ethnic congregation but on their own cultural terms. I can empathise with their predicament. Why risk the

security and status of being a pastor of a large African [particularly Nigerian Pentecostal ministers] congregation for the more dangerous and uncertain vocation of pioneering a multi-cultural church? Why sacrifice success and a very generous wage agreement, for the precarious life of a missionary to post-Christian Britain? Christ renounced “success,” “power,” “glory” and “status” in order to redeem the world.

In the light of Brandon’s assertion, above, I want to question the rationale for the assumption of claims to being missionaries in the light of the lack of incarnational living even amongst their members who might not even be on the middle-class ladder. The witness of self-denial, lived in an authentic imitation of Christ, places these preachers at the very heart of the Gospel. However, their inability to live such a lifestyle leaves them in a position in which they cannot proclaim the goodnews in a credible manner.

It has been observed that some of these economic migrants turned preachers discover their resources, job security, perks of the office and Western lifestyle elevate them to the ranks of the rich in most of the communities. This is a stark contrast with those among whom they serve who are struggling and juggling two jobs to make ends meet. This is the reenactment of the power and class structure within these churches. Ironically, some failed to see Jesus, who became marginalised in order to reach those who are marginalised in the society. It is expedient that these supposedly missionaries ought to be acutely aware that their lives are reading epistles not only for their members but also those living in the margin in the society. For instance, Pastor Albert Odulele during his trial and conviction on sexual molestation at Woolwich Crown Court to 14 months incarceration, it was reported in the mass media that he earned over one hundred thousand pounds yearly excluding other benefits, not in the public domain<sup>31</sup> It seems some of these preachers arrived in England with the intention of taking a vacation from the hustle and bustle of life in their home countries. There is a general pursuit of social and economic ascendancy amongst Nigerian missionaries in the West characterised by social and economic superiority in comparison to Jesus, the itinerant missionary from the town Nazareth.

## **Conclusion**

The growth of Pentecostalism across the world has been facilitated by the use of laity coupled with various portable practices across various cultural frontiers. This has led to the proliferation of this Christian tradition across the globe. The Nigerian Pentecostal churches in London are one of several examples of the impact of African Pentecostal denominations and their missionary enterprise across the globe. However, some Nigerian Pentecostal preachers particularly in London ignore the incarnational model of Jesus Christ in terms of simplicity, integrity and aversion to the prevailing celebrity culture that pervades

the West. Some of these churches need to demonstrate astute leadership skills and commitment to live above board as it were.

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