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## THE RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS THAT LED TO SECESSIONS IN PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined the religious conflicts that led to secession in Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, which strike at the heart of the gospel message of love, peace and unity. Conflicts in these Pentecostal Churches also hindered good human relation, peaceful co-existence and led to secession and proliferation of churches. If conflicts continue in these churches, anarchy will reign supreme in them and will not augur well with the full establishment of the churches. This work involved two major areas of data collection namely primary and secondary sources. Historical method was employed in this work. Conflict and managerial theories were also used in this work. Conflicts and secessions led to the destruction of lives and properties and gave rise to false prophets and adulteration of the word of God. The researcher observed that conflicts and secessions in these churches hindered their steady growth and deprived unbelievers from coming to church and giving their lives to God. As their emphasis were shifted from holiness and evangelism to materialism such as crave for power and recognition, extortion of money from their members and church politics, the fire of revival was reduced. The pastors should preach the right sermon and live by it, so that they will produce good and disciplined Christians. Church leaders should be more concerned with harnessing the peace-making components and practice common virtues such as justice, compassion, kindness, and respect for religious tenets. Bizarre things should not be introduced into the liturgy. Government should create job opportunities to prevent unemployed youths from establishing churches when they are not called. The pastors should promote the campaign for the culture of hard work as well as deemphasize the mad craze for prosperity. The Pentecostal fathers should serve as moral watch dogs to other Pentecostal pastors to avoid evil practices in the churches.*

**Keywords:** religious, conflicts, secession and Pentecostal churches

## **Introduction**

Since, the early 1970s Pentecostal Christianity has become a growing force in Nigeria. The various manifestation of Pentecostal explosion in Nigeria is a glaring reality because many people witnessed it. The proliferation of churches is gradually becoming a social problem and this has been linked to a host of factors such as conflict situations in the churches, socio-economic/political factors associated with religious freedom and poor governance. Pentecostal churches are found in all manner of questionable places like cinema halls, night clubs, hotels and all such places previously described as abodes of sin as a result of secessions. Adeboye (2012) stated that one of the negative effects of conflict in some Pentecostal churches is secession.

The Pentecostal revival in Nigeria is a glaring reality, because many people witnessed Pentecostal fervor and activities everywhere. Christianity has existed in Nigeria since 19<sup>th</sup> century, and all the mainline churches such as Catholic, Anglican, Baptist and Methodist have tried to sustain the Christian message but none was to be committed in propagating the gospel of the kingdom like the Pentecostals.

It is unfortunate that Religion, which is the culture of living in harmony with other people as it binds them together to the supernatural through common beliefs and values of life, promotes the major social virtues like truth, honesty, non-violence, patience, love, fidelity to one's duty, discipline, self control, respect for human life and peaceful co-existence, which in turn will promote the spirit of oneness and strengthens social solidarity, has now become the major contributor to war, bloodshed, hatred and intolerance through Religious conflict which has been decimating the churches productivity, population and destruction of properties. The alarming rate of conflict in Pentecostal churches have become a source of concern hence the need for the entrenchment of conflict resolution to salvage the churches from destruction.

According to Ohwovorions (2013), a desire for an effective means of conflict resolution has become an issue of both serious and urgent concern to all rational minds in recent times. The concern for a sound moral virtue is occasioned by the alarming rate of decline in the moral consciousness among General overseers, Bishops, Regional Overseers, pastors and members of Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. Morality plays a very vital role in social lives of individuals and living in peace with others. This is because it deals with values, behavior and attitudes exhibited and encouraged by everybody which hinder conflict and enthrone peace. According to Raheem (2010) the problem of religious conflict in Pentecostal churches is one recurring feature that is shameful in the land. If one is not quarreling or complaining in the church another is seceding from the church.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **1. Religious**

The term religious refers to that which is connected to religion. Religion is one of those concepts that are difficult to define according to Nmah (2003), it is referred to as “a unified system of beliefs and practices which is related to sacred things set apart or forbidden, beliefs and practices that unite one single moral community called church and all those who adhere to them”. According to Madu (2006) religion is defined as follows: “an institutionalized system of symbols, beliefs, values and practices focused on questions of ultimate meaning”. Religion according to Gartz (2017) is an organized approach to human spirituality which usually encompasses a set of narratives, symbols, beliefs and practices, often with a supernatural or transcendent quality that consequently give meaning to the practitioner’s experience of life through references to higher power, God or gods or ultimate truth.

### **2. Conflict**

Akpuru (2009), states that conflict involves two or more parties that have perceived incompatibility in either interest and values, or in strategy of achieving the ends desired. Surely, conflict is a strain in a relationship that goes with emotion, the higher the emotion, the higher the tendency of evolving intensity of conflict. According to Sani (2004), conflict occurs even in the best of human societies. Conflict index includes mutual image of misunderstanding hostile utterances, actions and responses that seek to put the interest of the other party in a disadvantaged position.

### **3. Pentecostalism**

Syan (2007) says that Pentecostalism is a renewal movement with Christianity that places special emphasis on a direct personal experience of God through salvation and the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The term Pentecostal is derived from Pentecost, the Greek name for the Jewish Feast of Weeks. For Christians, this event commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the followers of Jesus Christ, as described in the second chapter of the Book of Acts. Like other forms of evangelical Protestantism, Pentecostalism adheres to the inerrancy of scripture and the necessity of accepting Christ as personal Lord and Saviour.

### **4. Church**

Church is a group of Christian gathered for religious purposes. Njoku (2008) stated that the church is the people of God when he asserts that “the Church is the whole body of Christian believers. The church therefore is all encompassing in the sense that it involves

both the priests, the laity and the religious men and women. Kukah (2007) asserts that the church is made up of people. The people according to him are not applicable only to the leadership of the church but also to the generality of her membership.

### **The Origin of Pentecostalism**

According to Robeck (2006) the first ‘Pentecostals’ in the modern sense appeared on the scene in 1901 in the city of Topeka, Kansas, with a handful of students conducted by Charles Parham, a holiness teacher and former Methodist pastor, with emphasis in the Pentecost’s Baptism with the Spirit and Glossalalia (speaking in tongues) of Acts 2. The first student who spoke in tongues was Agness Uzman, on January 1, 1901, the first lady of the twentieth century. Parham founded a church movement which he called “Apostolic Faith”, and begun a revival tour of the America Middle West to promote his existing new experience. He also said that it was not until 1906, however, that Pentecostalism achieved worldwide attention through the “Azusa Street Revival” in Los Angeles, California, by the African-American preacher William Joseph Seymour. He learned about the tongue-attested baptism from Parham, and opened the historic meeting in April 1906 in Black Holiness Church, a former African Methodist church building at 312 Azusa Street in downtown Los Angeles. What happened at Azusa Street has fascinated church historians. For over three years, the Azusa Street “Apostolic Faith Mission” conducted three services a day, seven days a week, where thousands of seekers received tongues “baptism. At that time of colour segregation in United States, the phenomenon of blacks and whites worshipping together under a Black Pastor seemed incredible to many observers. Indeed, the colour line was washed away in the blood of Christ, in Los Angeles, “the American Jerusalem, as it is called by Frank Bartleman, where the people from all ethnic minorities were represented at Azusa Street.

According to Chaddie (2007) besides the tongues-attested baptism there was joy and praises to the Lord, and service by the brethren at Azusa Street. The expressive worship and praise included shouting and dancing, with Black music created a new and indigenous form of Pentecostalism that was attractive to people, both in America and around the world. From Azusa Street Pentecostalism spread rapidly around the world and begun its advancement towards becoming a major force in Christendom. Seymour and Parham could be called the “cofounders’ of modern word Pentecostalism.

### **Pentecostalism in Nigeria**

Idowu (2007) asserts that Pentecostalism started in Nigeria in 1910, when an Anglican deacon launched an indigenous prophetic movement that later became the Christ

Army church as a result of an influenza epidemic. In 1919, revival took place within the mission as the precious Stone (Diamond society to heal influenza victims. The group left the Anglican Church in the early 1920s and affiliated with Faith Tabernacle, a church based in Philadelphia. He also noted that in 1930, Apostle Joseph Babalola of Faith Tabernacle led a revival that converted thousands. In 1932, his movement initiated ties with the Pentecostal Apostolic church of Great Britain after coming into conflict with colonial authorities, but the association dissolved over the use of modern medicine. In 1941, Babalola founded the Independent Christ Apostolic Church, which is estimated to have over a million members by 1990 as noted by Allen (2004). Idowu (2007) posits that, Babalola's revival came at a time when the African continent was deep into idolatry or at best, Christian orthodoxy. God used him to bring the reality of salvation, healing, deliverance and unspeakable joy to a population hitherto overwhelmed by darkness. His ministry ushered in a fundamental change in religion as understood by the people. Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola indeed changed the face of Christianity in Nigeria and planted what was today made Nigeria one of the world's most evangelized countries. According to Olukoya (2004) Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola was a minister of God who understood the power of prayer. He was the man mightily used by God to ignite the fire of the first Christian revival in this country in the nineteen thirties at Oke Ooye, illesha.

According to Adebayo (2000), a wave of Pentecostal expansion spawns new churches in the 1960s and 1970 as a result of evangelical students' revival. A leader of this expansion is Benson Idahosa, one of Africa's most influential Pentecostal preachers. Idahosa established the church of God Mission international in 1968. He went further to state that Arch Bishop was another father of Pentecostalism in Nigeria because he brought dignity and revival to Christianity in Nigeria. God, through him, demonstrated the awesome power of the Holy Spirit in that the dead were raised to life and the unsaved were saved. Soul winning was Idahosa's primary concern. With motto "evangelism our supreme Task", he worked towards this goal of reaching the unreached in Nigeria, Africa and the rest of the world with the gospel of the lord Jesus Christ.

## **The Theoretical Framework**

There are three theories to be discussed here, such as social conflict, human relations and managerial efficiency theories

### **1. The Social Conflict Theory**

Anuka (2008) stated that Simmel's social conflict theory argues that conflict is natural and unavoidable in human society. He also argued that conflict and peace are naturally complementary.

## **2. The Human Relation Theory**

Anuka (2008) states that the human relation theory started in 1926 by Mary Parker Follett who argued that the central problems of any organization are the building and maintenance of harmonious human relations. Furthermore she also argued that coordination is the underlying essence of effective administration of an organization.

## **3. The Managerial Efficiency Theory**

According to Anuka (2008) the managerial efficiency theory argues that the crisis in the church is a direct result of the prevalent mismanagement and corruption within the church such as outright looting of the church fund that fosters poverty and violent conflicts. This theory therefore postulates that church leadership operating through an atmosphere that fosters gross abuses or deprivation of the rights of others consequently promotes feelings or agitations that fuel conflict. From the foregoing managerial efficiency theory has to do with the process by which a group assembles material and non-material resources and places them under a collective control who manages same for their common interest. Collecting resources always accompanied by the distribution or allocation of same. In many cases as is common with the church those charged with the distribution of these resources do same with high level of inefficiency that promote injustice, inequity and all forms of marginalization. This inefficiency according to this theory provides the atmosphere that foster conflict that leads to secession.

The Causes of Conflicts that Lead to Secession in Pentecostal Churches in Niger according to Okobia (2014) are as follows

- Un-teachable spirit: some pastors will be unwilling to learn after gaining shallow knowledge which leads to disobedient to instruction and constituted authority.
- Lack of proper care for Pastors e.g. poor salary structure which makes the pastors to live in abject poverty. As a result of hardship he goes to found his own church.
- Lack of promotion which leads to discouragement and frustration
- Victimization by the church authority due to tribal sentiment and nepotism
- Wrong counseling from church members to some pastors to leave and found their own churches that they will follow and support them financially.
- Crave for power in order to be in charge or to be known
- Greediness: some junior pastors are too greedy that no matter what they are paid, they will not be satisfied. Some senior pastors are so selfish and greedy that they cannot pay pastors under them well irrespective of the financial strength of the church.

P. ugbekile (Personal communication March 28, 2020) said that the conflict that leads to secession in the Pentecostal churches are

- Power intoxication as a result of the gift the pastor or member is manifesting

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- Transfer to remote areas or constant transfer that will hinder one from settling down by affecting children schooling and wife's job or trade.
- Financial crisis: The General Overseer lives in affluence while the pastors under him are left to suffer lack and want.
- Sending a pastor to open a church instead of sending some evangelists to evangelize the place before sending a pastor to pastor the people that gave their lives to Christ during the period of evangelism and crusades. The church will not grow and the pastor will be asked to stay there to prove his ministry after much complain to the General Overseers and he failed to listen to the pastor's suggestion, that some evangelists should be sent to evangelize the land so that the church can grow will leave the church out of frustration.
- Some pastors or members leave to establish their churches when they are not giving the opportunity to function in their areas of call.
- Some leave when they cannot integrate their vision into the General Overseers vision
- Some pastors leave because of certain dogma that is not palatable to them
- Church politics that makes the pastors that give the Bishop gifts to permanently be in the big branches in the town while those that do not pay homage to the Bishop irrespective of their rank are left in the small branches in the villages.

According to E. Eboh (Personal communication April 18, 2020), the conflicts that lead to secession in the church are

- The General Overseer's communication gap with the pastors under him and the lack of care and good relationship.
- No salvation experience by some pastors and adequate training for one to be a pastor, you must be saved, called and have spiritual maturity before being a pastor. Inadequate training in the Bible School makes some pastors to take the ministerial work to be like the secular job where one can leave at any moment when there is no good salary. They forget that they are called to serve irrespective of hardship and poor salary.
- **Lack of patience and Spiritual maturity** make some pastors to quarrel and complain over everything and leave to found their own churches. When the churches refuse to grow because God did not send them to open any church, they acquire evil power from the native doctor or cultic or marine agents to run the churches in order to make them grow.
- **Poor or Mismanagement of The Church Fund** and lack of adequate record and accountability
- **Manner of Handling Issues**, taking side when two pastors or members are quarrelling and not giving people equal treatment lead to conflict and secession

- **The Pastor That Are Not Called,** entered the ministerial work as a result of biting economy and unemployment leave when there is no financial gain because they see the pastoral work as a ready employment.
- **By The Command of God:** According to S. Okoh (Personal Communication April 3, 2020) God called some pastors or members for fresh work and give them the blue print of the ministry he wants them to establish. This leads to conflict in the church because the General Overseer finds it difficult to release some of their pastors because of their usefulness in their churches. Some pastors are slow to leave when God ask them to leave and establish their churches. Therefore God uses quarrel to separate them.
- **Structural Defect:** D. Nweke (Personal Communication May 18, 2020) says that structural defect is one of the causes of conflict and secession in churches. Any pastor that speaks against the hereditary nature of the church will be frustrated out. The monopolistic nature of the church makes the pastors to work for the General Overseer and his family. They cannot be promoted to the post of a General overseer; there is no pension for them, no future just struggling in vain as a result some pastors leave to found their own so that they can enjoy the dividend or fruit of their labour at old age. Some pastors lack basic Christian foundation such as salvation, sanctification, patience, love, faith and holy living. They are committed to the work of God because of personal gain and if it is not there, they quit to found their own churches.
- **Different Stroke For Different People:** some General Overseer said any pastor sent to oversea or Abroad should declare the money gotten and give it to the church for development, but any time they come back from oversea trips they do not declare what they have gotten, that led to secession from such churches. Unfaithfulness of some General overseers also led to the conflict in the churches because they changed the constitution of the church without the knowledge of the key executive officers of the church. Courtesy demands that when changing the constitution of the churches they suppose to seek for their executive officers consent, because some of them single handedly built the churches.  
Olukoya (2013) states that the pastors with the spirit of Jezebel such as false prophecy, false teaching, seduction, intimidation and manipulation, domineering, absolute disregard for Godly authority, lying, hatred for the truth, rebellion, against all godliness, non-submission to constituted authority, chronic idolatry, sowing discord among brethren, too proud to admit wrong, always blaming others and finding fault, unrepentant, false humility deceptive, cruel, corrupt, immoral and haters of God. The Pastors with these characteristics will leave to found their churches because the authority will frown at their actions by disciplining them.



Olukoya (2013) went further to say that the commercial, greedy and money conscious pastors leave to found their own churches because the General overseer will not allow them to charge people money before praying for them, or to fill form with form with money before seeing them for counseling. The Pastors that want to be rich overnight through extortion of money from their members will not be able to stay because they will not be allowed to carry out their evil practices.

### **The Effects of Secession**

Conflict ruptures church's unity, it occurs over matters which but for human frailty could be settled amicably. Schism is the division of the whole church into two or more groups because of differences of opinion and disagreement about aims and beliefs. Schismatics are those who for ecclesiastical cause or personal interest diverge for reasons not incurable. Schism rarely involves doctrinal issues, consequently those who break away continues to retain essentially the same mode of worship as their parents' churches except the heretics who are altogether lost and strange to faith because their beliefs disagree with the principles of Christianity and they deviate from the right doctrine and basic tenets of Christianity. Secession has led to widespread of the gospel, a ready employment for the unemployed youth as a result of biting economy, untold hardship to families, destruction of lives and properties, adulterated word of God and false prophecy.

### **The Positive Effects of Secession**

#### **1. Members Have Sense of Belonging**

Achunike (2009) state that, the Pastors and members of these seceded churches seem to be more of their brother's keeper than those in their formal churches. They are more caring than their mother churches because they are few; they cooperate very well and do things in common. They render help to members that have problems and support one another materially and spiritually. Nmah (2003) posits that, members have sense of belonging and they are seen at their very best. The pastors and leaders interact with their members freely and are acquainted with one another as if within a family. The liturgy is less formal and participative, it engages the members. They wake up the sleeping giants in their members by making them to utilize their spiritual gifts and develop their potentials. They inculcate in their members that they are unique creatures of God and he has given them definite services to render to him which he has not given to another person. So, that spurs them to work for God with all zealously.

## **2. Their Religious Yearnings Are Met**

According to Atansuyi (2010) the religious yearnings of some people in the mother churches that were not adequately met by the sermon of those big churches were met in the seceded churches, because they are few and the Pastors know their religious yearning during the cause of their discussions and try to meet it through their sermon. The pastors also address the questions the African situation raised for them such as witchcraft, demon possession, haunting by evil spirits, the cult of ancestors, sorcery and the use of protective charms. The gospel the Pastors proclaim is related to their problems and relevant to life's totality and offers biblical deliverance from the real fear of evil, misfortune and affliction which are compelling and universal human needs.

## **3. Evangelism and Spiritual Revival**

Achunike (2004) posits that the enthusiasm with which they embark on preaching and personal soul winning exercise should be imitated. To be emulated also is their desire to bring the word of God to all through their style of evangelism. Their efforts in using the print media-books, magazines, newsletters and tracts are rewarding. Healing and evangelism is central to the doctrinal tenets of Pentecostal churches. Soul winning is their primary concern. They preach to people one on one and follow them up to be matured and fully established in faith.

## **4. Praise and Worship**

Praising God is one of the features of Pentecostalism. The seceded churches always give God high praises because Psalm 22:3 says that God inhabits in our praises. So they see praise as the food they give to God in order to invoke his presence in their midst for him to bless, heal, deliver give them breakthroughs and make their hearts to be turned to God. Okoroji (2006) also states that of positive values are their biblically based hymns, songs and choruses. Scripturally based hymns, when rendered in African rhythms, are always inviting and melodious. People usually do not need to learn it for long before they gain the mastery of those songs. They are simple and they touch the heart. They have beautiful music and well trained choir. We must take music seriously one more and employ the use of band and local musical instruments, not purely for entertainment purposes, but as an avenue of praising God because god inhabits in our praises. The seceded churches public address system is usually very beautiful and so superb that it allows for free movement on the altar.

## **5. Devotion to Duty**

According to Okafor (2013), the Pastors seriously and promptly embark on their priestly assignment with the aim of achieving success. They work tirelessly to see the progress of their churches. They sacrifice a lot in order for their churches to grow. They sensitize the Pastors to be more alert to their priestly duties in order to avoid sheep stealing. It forces the pastors not to be static in their sermon and wake up from their spiritual slumber. The seceded pastors and pastors from their formal churches increase their visitation and counseling hours and introduce new things that will enhance their spiritual revival to avoid losing their members. There is competition between them because they see the success of the seceded pastors as a threat to them. Their churches have beautiful curtains; the floors of the churches are rugged with colourful carpets. There is one chair to one worshipper. Short circuit television sets are well positioned in places. The churches are air conditioned. Achunike (2004) posits that these Pastors address issues of the moment. The applications of their homilies are in the now. They identify with the immediate problems and experiences of people and proffers solutions. They use local issues to support the illustrations of their sermons. Their approach is not intellectualistic. The choice of the topic is what the modern minds need to know: how to succeed in life, how to come out of hardship, breakthroughs in life, anointing service, etc. the homilies in the mainline churches must be made livelier and truly be a dialogue with the people. They appropriate biblical messages to meet various personal and social needs. Ample time should be given to the preparation of homilies. There is spiritual awareness to some extent in Nigeria today these Pastors understand spiritual truths by digging deep into the Bible. These spiritual truths are used to solve problems that may not ordinarily have solutions in orthodox medicine. Some to these pastors are endued with power from on high to do exploit for God by healing and delivering the oppressed from bondage. If a pastor is not problem solving in his ministry such as (healings, deliverance etc.) he is likely to fold up in the next ten years. Their seriousness in studying the scripture, their sense of perfection, strict personal ethics and holiness of life is highly encouraging.

## **The Negative Effects of Secession**

According to Chaddie (2007), there are many Pentecostal Pastors who seceded from other churches that are genuine and called sincere men of God, who made tremendous sacrifices for the kingdom of God. The problem really lies with the excesses of some of them. The negative effects of secessions are as follows:

### **1. More Anointing without Character**

Domigueze (2006), states that biblical truth is not enough for some of the seceded pastors. There must be more. As a result they are always looking for something new. They

care little about doctrine, proper exegesis or biblical integrity are not spiritual enough. They want anointing, power, visions, revelations or any semblance of such whether genuine or fake. According to Olukoya (2013), some of these Pastors cannot just say what they have to say without fanfare and commotion, because they feel that preaching must be done in an anointed manner. One could expound the word of God eloquently and would receive economic applause. Some Pentecostals don't even know the difference between the anointing and crowd control and the presence of God and carnal display. Chaddie (2007) states, that no one has a greater propensity for exaggeration than some of the seceded pastors. "we had a great time in God's presence. Thousands of people were healed". Even though only hundreds were present. So where is the evidence of all this healing? People are urged not to go back to doctors to confirm their healing since this would indicate doubt, and if they do, would lose their healing.

## **2. Extortion of Money From Their Members for their personal use**

They psyche their members with their sugar coated tongue by telling them close your eyes and put all you have in the offering box, give the widow's mite, God loves a cheerful giver. In a worship service, they can call for offering for ten times by giving it different names tithe, first fruit, breakthrough offering, evangelism offering, poverty offering, sickness averting offering, bondage destroying offering etc. Dim (2012) asserts that, many of them are carnal minded and not heavenly minded, they are very carnal or worldly. They are money conscious. Many of them are in a hurry to make wealth as such they extort money from their members through selling of fake anointing oil, anointed handkerchief, seed faith, launching, filling of form with money before seeing them for prayer and counseling. The money realized are used for their personal comfort, such as living in affluence, buying of expensive cars, building of magnificent edifices for themselves and the establishment of schools which will be inherited by their wives or children when they die. Some even send their children abroad for studies and travel abroad as they like at the expense of their poor members. Genuine love is lacking in some quarters. They do not love God and their members with all their hearts as such they disobey God at will and do not pray and visit their poor members because they will not be able to appreciate them with gifts.

## **3. Lack of Total Dependence on God**

Nyamiti (2007) asserts that, many of them are not prayerful. They lack total dependence on the Holy Spirit which made some to enter occult society in order to acquire more power. One of them imported evil powder from India so that whenever he is preaching people will be falling under the anointing. Many people became members of his church and the church was filled to capacity. One fateful day, his wife ignorantly rubbed the evil powder and went to market. As she was pricing fish she waved her hand and the fish seller fell

down, this attracted the attention of the traders who accused her of witchcraft practice. She said she was not responsible for the fish seller's fall as she waved her hands again the people around her fell down and she was arrested by two police men who interrogated her and she took them to her house and explained to them how she prepared for the market. She said the only thing she did before going to the market was the powder she rubbed which she never rubbed before. One of the police men took the powder and rubbed it and as he waved his hands, the people around him fell down. Then the attention of her husband who was the owner of the powder was needed as he came, he was arrested and given a serious beating before he confessed how he got the powder and the purpose of the powder, his secret was revealed and his church members scattered, today the church is closed down. Some of the seceded pastors do not preach sound doctrine so that their members will not run away. They always preach about the love, grace and mercy of God without emphasizing on salvation and holy living. They lost heavenly focus and try to lower the standard of the bible.

#### **4. Prosperity Preaching**

Onyebuagu (2007) posits that the rise of corruption in Nigeria is due to the impact of prosperity preaching, because this has given a religious coverage for the people craze for ill-gotten wealth. The flamboyant nature of the prosperity pastors have made the number of graduates who opt for the church ministry to be on the increase without been called by God. According to Dim (2012) some of these Pastors lay more emphasis on miracles and prosperity to the detriment of holiness and salvation. Their preaching has made people to look for miracles instead of looking for the salvation of their souls and the miracle worker. The man of God is looked upon as the source of the miracle and the members become highly possessive and materialistic. The mark of a pastor is humility and passion to glorify and exalt the name of Jesus Christ who is the miracle worker and no one should take credit for any miracle done by God through him. True Christians for prosperity preachers are those who have given more donations to the church. Irrespective of the source of wealth whether genuine or dubious the uncontrolled quest for money and fame, make prosperity preaching dubious and at the expense of hard work and righteousness. Groves (2002) states that, instead of them to listen to the preacher's sermon, they will be busy spraying him or her money which is a worldly act. And also causes distraction because they have been indoctrinated to believe that for what the pastor is preaching to manifest in their lives, they must give offering while he is preaching.

#### **5. Evil Spirit**

Achunike (2004), states that their rejection of the African past and relegating it paganism must be rejected outright. They demonize the African past which should not be.

Their concept of evil spirit is not clear enough. Evil spirit has gained currency among Christians as a result of the emphasis placed on it by these Pastors. Seeing unqualified evil spirit in human behavior is not good. Spirit appears to be multiplied the more and it makes people to be suspicious and not free with one another. People must be dissuaded from their bad habits, and no external agents will be appealed to such matters. For instance, there is the evil spirit of theft, the spirit of fornication, marine spirit etc. And people must be delivered from them in the views of these pastors. They introduce bizarre things into the liturgy in the name of practicing Pentecostalism.

#### **6. Scriptural Misinterpretation**

According to Dim (2012), there is a basic problem with the interpretation of the sacred scriptures. These pastors land into error in their biblical interpretation because are not properly acquainted with the basic tools of biblical exegesis. They make the scriptural passages to have any meaning they intend it to have. Some preachers are styled after prosperity preaching while some are styled after holiness or deliverance preaching. Their interpretation of scripture is according to their personal biases and ideas. They read into the text rather than the textural meaning being read out of it. They over emphasize their area of interest at the expense of other areas which make their members not to have balance teaching which made some of the members to worship and praise them instead of God. Some deviate from their areas of call because of ambition which made them to loose focus and lost the vision of God for their lives.

#### **7. Proliferation of Churches**

According to Ayegboyin (2000), the crisis of secession does not result only in the establishment of new churches but it also produces after-effects on the parent-church, the ministers as well as the relationship between members. The first notable result of secession is proliferation of churches. The proliferation nature of the Church has given rise to the emergence of many false prophets. Most of these prophets (about 90%) have no formal theological training and does not have prophetic gift. This has opened the flood-gates for false prophecy and increasing number of half-baked church leaders who are nothing but charlatans and a disgrace to the body of Christ. The second result of schism is increased expectation and apprehension of possible new crisis. The church therefore expends its energies on finding solutions to domestic rivalries and dissension rather than on the mission of the church. Another notable consequence of is more schism. Most of the splinter churches have experienced a period of decline. The reason for this seems obvious. Soon after the break most of the leaders come to the realization that they are actually incompatible with some of the sub-leaders who joined them to secede and so the leader begins to face the

problems of control and domination over his congregation. This makes the organization very difficult to control and eventually there is an outbreak of a number of new secessions. Concerning the relationship between the parent church and the splinter groups, it has been observed that in most cases they have lived side by side in mutual suspicion or hostility and are usually out of communion with one another. Ministers from different factions entertain the fear to eat or to drink in one another's homes for fear of being poisoned or harmed. This has hampered the solidarity of Pentecostalism.

### **Conclusion**

This study shows that as the churches were growing conflict that led to secession started and many other denominations started springing up, emphasis was shifted from Holiness to materialism and many heretical practices crept into the church which made the church to become worldly and the fire of revival quenched. In some churches the presence of God departed from them, because the Holy Spirit was grieved, as a result of their evil practices such as adultery, fornication, idolatry, extortion of money, seductive dressing, indiscipline, disobedience and lack of fear of God, in the high and low places or from the pulpit to the pew.

### **Recommendations**

This study is recommending that:

- Pastors should live by what they preach in order to produce good and disciplined Christians. They should carry their followers or church members along and work for the common good of humanity through selfless service like Paul. They should work on their area of call, train up a successor as a general overseer because the call of God is not hereditary. The Pentecostal Christians should have genuine conversion, have faith in God, pray without ceasing (1Thess. 5:17) and know the scriptures so that they will not be running from one false prophet to the other and to prevent the false prophets and false pastors from extorting money from them. Exaggerated healing or miracle working amounts to blatant deceit of the people and materialism in all its ramifications should be shunned.
- Using tricks to make money from the people of God should be stopped.
- Pentecostal pastors should stop living flamboyant lifestyles, because a life of flamboyancy is not synonymous with Christ.
- They should stop introducing bizarre things into the liturgy in the name of practicing Pentecostalism.
- They should emulate all the good qualities of Paul in order for them to fulfill their ministries.

- There should be job opportunities created by the government and there should be ecumenical dialogue among the Christian denominations.
- The Pentecostals should promote the campaign for the culture of hard work.

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