sciendo

Perichoresis
Volume 21. Issue 3 (2023): 119-131
DOI: 10.2478/perc-2023-0025

'PEACE, PEACE WHEN THERE IS NO PEACE': THE IMPACT OF PROSPERITY GOSPEL ON SUICIDE RATE AMONG NIGERIAN YOUTH

FAVOUR CHUKWUEMEKA UROKO*

University of Nigeria

ABSTRACT: This study examines how the prosperity gospel has led to an increase in suicide cases in Nigeria. Existing literature has established links between the prosperity gospel and exploitation of the poor, but finding literature that establishes links between the prosperity gospel and suicide is difficult to find. The prosperity gospel preys upon the poor and leads people into suicidal desires for lack of wealth. In Nigeria, the church has consistently continued to base its preaching on prosperity. When congregants see that the promise of provision that the church has been laying emphasis upon is not materializing, they resolve to find any means of ending the controversy. Findings reveal that some of the aphorisms of the Nigerian clergymen include "By next week, month, or year, you shall receive a miracle", "poverty is a curse", "I can never be poor", and "givers never lack." These aphorisms have made the church members expectant of God's blessing, and when their poor condition continues, they decide to take their life. In Nigeria, the majority of those who commit suicide have experienced a number of stressful life events in the three months prior to their suicide. This study adopted content and documentary analysis as its research methodology.

KEYWORDS: Religious commitment, Suicide, the Church, Prosperity Gospel, Nigeria

Introduction

The act of suicide is the final decision of a person who feels that there is no other option worth exploring in finding a solution to life challenges. According to the World Health Organization and the nations reporting to it, there are approximately 3,000 suicides per day and the suicide rate has increased 60% over the past 45 years (WHO 2007:1). Unfortunately, Nigeria contributes to this number as eighty-five people reportedly killed themselves in Nigeria in 2019, up from 79 in 2018 and 66 in 2017 (Ojoma, Nana, Idowu, Haruna, Risikat, and Olatunji 2021). In Nigeria, religion has contributed to the increasing suicide rate. Psychological manipulation through religious sermons on the premise of God's all-time goodness and provision has done

*FAVOUR CHUKWUEMEKA UROKO Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Email: Favour.uroko@unn.edu.ng

© EMANUEL UNIVERSITY *of* ORADEA

more harm than good to the church in Nigeria. Unfortunately, homilies in Nigerian churches are instilling greed and depression among Christians in Nigeria (Ukpong 2019:1). The church in Nigeria, in the bid to get more members, has devised a means of promising prospective members and congregants of the need to remain in the Church and to bring more offerings, donations, and tithes and receive God's blessings. This is different from the heroism of European missionaries who left the relative comforts of their homes to come to Nigeria. It is a known fact that some of them died on the high seas. Diseases like malaria endemic in the tropics decimated some of them. Some Nigerians who were wrongly indoctrinated killed these missionaries on the basis that they were strange and dangerous beings because the Europeans looked totally different from them. Nevertheless, the Christian missionaries persisted because of their immense love for God and humanity (Maduekwe 2010:1). They still went to the nooks and crannies of Nigeria, spreading the good news, building new schools and erasing obscene cultures and practices in the country.

Poverty is very high in Nigeria. The various Christian congregants, owing to the various challenges in Nigeria, and also looking at the post-pandemic traumatic disorders and economic downturn, are busy searching for solutions to their economic challenges. Onwuka (2022:1) explained, „it has become a tough job to be a Nigerian. . . there is an increase in inflation and unemployment. . . There is power outage amidst teething fuel scarcity. Insecurity has become rife". During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, congregants lost their jobs, their benefactors lost their jobs, and people were dispossessed of their personal sources of livelihood. Thus, the psychological state of the masses was strongly affected. They are looking for a soothing balm. Sokoya (2021) reveals that it is the wounded and the hurt that attend churches the most. The church, looking at this lacuna, decided to preach the gospel of liberation theology to its extreme level. They preach that God will remove all the sufferings of the congregants. They insist in their homilies that it is not the wish of God for any Christian to be poor. This is in tandem with the cry of the Prophet Jeremiah, when he said that the prophet preaches „peace, peace" when there is no peace. According to Jeremiah, „They dress the wounds of my people as though it were not serious saying 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace" (4:14). In Jeremiah's aphorism „almost every person would prefer to live in peace" (Morris 2014:1). This is what Nigerian preachers are doing. With their prosperity gospel, the congregation is greatly relieved that all their problems will be solved within the shortest possible time. Some of the challenges which congregants are being psychologically coerced to solve within the shortest possible time include the desire to find a husband or a wife; the desire to get employed; the desire to have a child; the desire to have sound health, and above all, the desire to surmount all financial issues. Hamermesh and Soss (1974) argue that

a person will commit suicide if their perceived happiness (discounted lifetime utility) falls below some threshold, which is the doorstep. In other words, there is some minimum level of happiness (current and future) that is necessary for individuals to willingly continue living. When congregants see that the promise of provision that the church has been laying emphasis upon is not materializing, they resolve to find a means of ending the controversy.

Also, worthy of mention is that the flamboyant lifestyle of pastors is causing Nigerians, especially the poor, to derail (Biola 2017:1). Most Nigerian pastors drive exotic cars and wear very costly clothes. The members begin to think that God loves their pastors and hates them. It stirs controversy in their minds. The controversy dwelt on the fact that 'life is unfair' and 'I cannot face the shame'. Congregants decide to take their lives through suicide. This suicide comes with long-term and short-term suicidal thoughts. Church members feel that they have been betrayed by the pastor and God; they feel that nothing is worth living because of the non-actualization of their needs and wants. In fact, they see death as the easiest way to leave the pain behind. They commit suicide as a means of euthanasia or a soft landing to escape their problems.

The rising cases of suicide cannot be underestimated. This is seen in the way Christians, especially the youths are committing suicide through the drinking of poisonous substances such as sniper insecticide and hanging themselves from the ceiling fans. Literature on suicide has been largely explored; and how economic challenges force many into suicide has been evenly dealt with by scholars (Onyemelukwe 2020; Oyetunji, Arafat, Famori, Akinboyewa, Afolami, Ajayi, and Kar 2021; Ajibola and Agunbiade 2021). Existing literature is yet to focus on the church's role in the increasing suicide rates among Christians in Nigeria. In this study, we extended literature to this area by examining the place of the church in the increasing suicidal thoughts and suicide cases in Nigeria. First, this study gives a prosodic analysis of church homilies. Second, this study examines the link between the church and suicide in Nigeria. Third, this essay defines the roadmap through a rereading of the church's role in liberation theology, especially as it concerns the poor and the oppressed. This study adopted content analysis as its research methodology.

The Church in Nigeria

Christians make up more than half the 200 million estimated population of Nigeria. Christians majorly reside in the southern part of Nigeria. This is the reason for the many churches found in different parts of southern Nigeria. The contribution of the Church to the educational development of Nigeria remains unparalleled. In historical parlance, the early Christian missionaries used their limited resources to build schools all over the place, and the products of these schools were competing favour-

ably with their counterparts anywhere in the world. It is also worthy of note that the best teachers, professors, lawyers, medical doctors, and other professionals were trained by these missionaries (Maduekwe 2010). They provided selfless service and also carried out many activities without expecting anything in return, just to propagate Christianity as a religion that cares about the physical and spiritual needs of man. So encouraging is it that „Early Christian missionaries believed and hoped for a reward in heaven if they successfully converted people. They also believed in saving souls from eternal damnation and winning souls for eternal glory „(Edeh 2021:1). Providing further insight, Iwunna (2006:1)

> The Christian Missionaries, no doubt considered literacy an essential factor, needed for a successful evangelisation of the people of Nigeria. They discovered that equipping the people with the ability to read and write, would make their primary target of converting the people to Christianity, more effective. This objective became more crucial in view of the urgent need for local clergy, evangelists, teachers, catechists, Sunday school teachers, and low-cadre personnel needed for recruitment into the colonial civil service.

Unfortunately, these local clergy, evangelists, and teachers that the missionaries trained in selfless service have metamorphosed into engaging in parasitic relationships with their converts and congregants. Although the missionaries' aim of having churches spread all over Nigeria has been realized, the intent of that spread has been compromised. Thus, the reasons for this increasing number of churches in Christian-dominated areas are crystal clear. First, many of these churches make millions from the tithes and offerings of their members. They insist that if their church members pay their tithe and offerings, God will bless them financially, physically, and health-wise, among others. They use these offerings and tithes for their personal aggrandizement. Many „people, even the so called *Men of God* want to ride a bullet-proof jeep, to build castles all over the world, to have a personal private jet, to own a treasury, and to be in possession of all the money in the church"(Olusegun 2020:61). This group of *men of God* even prays specifically for people who have bigger tithes and donations to the church. Thus, they open more branches, getting more church members, who have been promised God's million naira blessing.

Second, unemployment is forcing people to open churches as a means of survival. Many pastors and church ministers are not called by God. They only find themselves in the ministry so as to make a living. This is why they go into all kinds of diabolic rituals in order to perform miracles, to affirm and reciprocate the respect and support they are receiving from their congregants. It is sad to say that most Christian theological students, especially the jobless who graduated from Bible college, see it as

a license to plant/open a church after completion of the college without considering the necessity of God's calling(Olusegun 2020:61). Of course, they are sometimes lured into this kind of religious business by their peers in the ministry who have explored that approach and discovered the benefits of the prosperity gospel business. Third, the poverty in Nigeria is forcing many into opening churches so that they can have enough members as time goes on. This is because the poor people see how their friends who have gone into church planting drive in exotic cars. They see the opening of a church as a poverty escape mechanism.

A prosodic analysis of church homilies

Nigerian pastors use all forms of aphorisms to get money from their parishioners. They use all forms of rhetorical gimmicks to achieve their stated aims and objectives, which include extracting more tithes and offerings from the church. Some of these aphorisms are written below:

By next week, month, or year, you shall receive a miracle

Pastors tell their members that their miracle is very close. They tell their members that God is an all-sufficient God who will meet them at the point of their needs at the closest possible time. This is what the members want to hear. Members want their problems to be solved very fast, the pastors and priests capitalize on the impatience of congregants to perpetuate false poetic rhymes. According to Komolafe (2021:1) some of the pastors say „The year will not roll away with us but will roll away with every challenge that has kept us stagnant". Members are psychologically coerced to shout Amen and bring their money from their pockets and lay it at the feet of the pastors. Explaining further, Pastor Damina lamented that:

> Things are not working for many believers, and then the pastor is putting them under pressure – you must have a breakthrough. If you are not having a breakthrough, it means you are not serving God. You cannot serve God and be poor, you cannot serve God and lack (Ukpong 2019:1).

Most church members, when they reach their homes, ponder the axioms contained in the pastor's message, see themselves as rejected by God. This group of members sees the situation they are in as a pointer to the fact that God has abandoned them; hence there is no need to continue to live on earth. They take their lives by committing suicide due to the shame that people will see them as not righteous enough to get God's blessings.

Poverty is a Curse

Church ministers go as far as castigating congregants who are poor. They call them 'cursed' people. The issue is really disturbing; in fact, church ministers tell parishioners that the reason poverty shows that God does not recognized that person. This has really pushed parishioners into committing suicide when they realized what the pastor said meant God had forgotten them. Coincidentally, their poverty situation keeps escalating. After nursing suicidal thoughts, the congregant takes his or her life. SaharaReporters (2022:1) cited a renowned pastor, David Ibiyeomie, as saying that „failure To Pay Tithe Is Criminal, Punishable, Attracts Curses". Thus, congregants, in order to avoid God's curses, look for money to borrow to continue to pay offerings and tithes and also give donations so as to move the 'hand' of God into blessing them. Unfortunately, many of them are in terrible debt.

I can never be Poor

The clergy in Nigeria usually boast that they can never be poor. In fact, congregants see that their pastors are indeed not poor. These clergymen wear the most expensive shoes from Italy, and also wear expensive suits from the United States of America, with gold chains and wrist watches, and ride in bullet-proof cars. The members are seeing these developments. Psychologically, they are forced to believe that anyone serving God can never be poor. They are poised to give in all their money and even go as far as borrowing money to give to the pastor to tap into their pastor's anointing. According to Cooks (2014) one pastor was heard telling the members „From today, no evil spirit, no demon will survive the Almighty!" and the congregants shouted „Amen!". If tomorrow a congregant has not come out of his challenges, he concludes that God does not recognize him. The next thing is suicide. These clergy preach that congregants should be like children of „the kingdom by dressing like queens and kings, thinking positively, and believing it is your right as a child of the kingdom to be rich, and you should partner with God by faith to pursue riches"(Oyeleke 2014:1). Of course, congregants must do everything to dress like the queens and kings, collecting loans to buy clothes to please their pastor, and when those who cannot pay off the loans they collected to buy these clothes start seeing the people they are owing coming, in order to get peace of mind, they commit suicide.

Givers never lack

This is the most effective aphorism used by churches in Nigeria to milk their congregations. Pastors ensure that their churches give up to five offerings. You will hear about offering for marriage, offering for employment, offering for children, offering

for God to fight and kill your enemies, and a host of other funny rhetoric. They tell their members that when they give to God, God will multiply it ten times and give it to them. They have mastered this art of manipulating the Bible for their own selfish aims and caprices. For instance, Oyeleke (2014) lamented that those who did not reap from sowing are not given a refund; rather, they are encouraged to sow more and believe more. People will give their own money to feed their families because they have been told that God doubles money. Unfortunately, the more the parishioners give, the more their poverty level increases. That is why their pastors continue to buy cars on a monthly basis and their children attend costly schools with the money they fraudulently get from the congregants.

The Church and Suicide in Nigeria

The clergy has succeeded in raising the minds of the members to an immediate change of their situation. As stated *apriori*, the aphorisms of these ministers, such as 'God will change your condition b*y* next week, month, or year', 'you shall receive a miracle', 'poverty is a curse' and 'I can never be poor', and 'givers never lack', have been practiced by the congregants and their financial and health poverty continue to escalate. They get tired of the situation. The hope they had has been trampled upon. Congregants commit suicide when their hopes are no more. It proves that **„**there is no doubt that church business is very lucrative and the overwhelming number of churches in Nigeria is a testament of how profitable owning a church is and if that is not enough evidence" (Oyeleke 20141:1). The church is now the fastest way to make dishonest gains, and unfortunately, the government does not regulate church formation.

The shock to the parishioners is dependent on what they have involved themselves in. Some of them have gone as far as collecting loans from banks to give as donations because of the encouragement that the more you give, the more God blesses you. Thus, in a bid to please „God" and achieve the elusive breakthrough, parishioners squeeze themselves dry to contribute to various projects in the house of God (Jacobs, Onuegbu, Duru, Ebirim, Edukugho & Anibeze, 2014). The fact has always remained that the situation of the people continues to deteriorate. Ironically, the church's pulse increases when the congregants' pulse decreases.

The new rhetoric is for churches to build schools with the money they stylishly get from their members. It is also sad to note that most of the congregants cannot pay for the school fees of their children who attend the church school due to the very high school. These are schools built with the tithes, offerings, and donations of eager churchgoers. Further lamentation was provided by Jacobs et al. (2014:1) that „most of the private universities are owned by well-established churches who charge fees far beyond the means of ordinary members who contributed to the establishment of

these higher institutions. Fees in the region of N1.5 million to N3 million per session are charged, which can only be afforded by the wealthy. „ These congregants feel betrayed, seeing life as not worth living anymore. They declare life to be not worth living. This is the case of rich pastors and poor members, a case of 'monkey dey work, baboon dey chop'. Unfortunately, church owners and founders have defended their actions. Oritsejafor, the founder and senior pastor of Word of Life Bible Church, located in Warri, explained that the reason why pastors are richer than their members in Nigeria is that „the church is the greatest institution that has made the country today. If you look back, you will find out that the church brought education to Nigeria" (Orenuga 2014:1). Oritsejafor forgot to mention that it was the Europeans who painfully brought education to Nigeria at little or no cost, and the church today brings education to only members of the wealthy class with the money gotten from the poor in the church.

People who commit suicide have raised several questions, both internally and externally. Some of these rhetorical questions include: „I wish I were dead"; „I can't do anything", „I can't take it anymore", „I am a loser and a burden"; worthless „Others will be happier without me" (Adaku 2019). The congregants' situation, in the midst of the flamboyant display of wealth by church owners, necessitated Efuribe (2019:1) to lament thus:

> The majority of those who commit suicide have experienced a number of stressful life events in the three months prior to suicide, such as: Interpersonal problems - e.g. quarrels with spouses, family, friends, lovers; Rejection - e.g. separation from family and friends; Loss events - e.g. financial loss, bereavement; Work and financial problems - e.g. job loss, retirement, financial difficulties, among others.

So many cases abound. There was a case of a youth choir leader in the Redeemed Christian Church of God(RCCG) identified as Michael Arowosaiye, who allegedly committed suicide on May 14, 2019, by allegedly hanging himself with his belt. Further data revealed that he entered into depression over his accommodation issues before taking the drastic step (Odunsi 2019). The choir leader must have been strongly assured to be flamboyant to show how rich his God is. He may also have been assured that because he is giving his services to the Church God will bless him, and he will make it within the shortest possible time. This is the concept of „suffering and smiling." This is a situation where a person is passing through challenges and is being assured that they will be solved, and the person relaxes because he has been assured of a fast solution. When the solution fails to come, suicide becomes the closest option. This is an indication that the pastors or clergy men know how to solve the problems and even have solutions to the problems, especially the financial ones, but

they refuse to, only promising their followers supernatural manners and quail from heaven. Most people are going to church because of the gain and not necessarily what they want to do for God. They have heard that God gave millions in minutes, as contained in the homilies of these pastors, so they want to get their share as soon as possible.

There is the narrative of a 62-year old man, Moshood Lasisi who committed suicide at Ayede Ogbese, Akure North Local Government area of Ondo State. He was the husband of a pastor, Mrs. Victoria Lasisi, and the deceased was said to have been on crutches after an accident (Otabor 2021:1). This shows that even when the man has been assured before that he would never have an accident, if he is worshipping and bringing money to God, the accident finally came to him. Now that his expectations have been cut short, even though his wife is a pastor, he felt betrayed by the promises he has been assured of. Most Nigerian pastors want you to talk about testimonies; they have nothing to offer you during trials and temptations. This shows that pastors fail to intimate their congregants with the fact that trials and temptations must surely come, but God will deliver his children from them all. Corroborating further, Pastor Damina lamented that: „When all a church preaches is materialism. When the true world of a Christian is reflected by a car, house, money! If those things don't come, why won't he be depressed? Why won't he kill himself?". The concept of materialism can also be called „prosperity gospel" or „sugarcoated" preaching. Prosperity is equated with God's favour, while poverty is equated with God's curse. When one waits for the said blessing from God and it is not forthcoming, depression sets in, and suicide is contemplated and carried out by affected congregants.

"Peace, peace when there is no peace"—Jeremiah 6:14

Jeremiah, also known as the Weeping Prophet, was a Judean Prophet.He was around during and after the crumbling state of Judah. Jeremiah mentions that the prophets and priests always proclaim peace, in the midst of turmoil and conflicts to gain dishonestly. According to Hanch (2014:1) „It seems that the priests in Jeremiah claimed there was peace, because they lived in relative comfort and experienced no troubles. This peace, however, was at the expense of those with whom they dealt falsely". The pastor and his clergymen lived in better houses and ate better food at the expense of the poor and gullible. It seems that they equate poverty with cowardice.

Jeremiah, the prophet, was very bold in challenging the corruption of his day. Little wonder the hatred and persecution he encountered from individuals and the government. Jeremiah prophesied that Jerusalem would be captured by Nebuchadnezzar and his army. Pashur the priest, who served in the king's palace tried to convince King Zedekiah that Jeremiah should be put to death for disheartening the soldiers and the people. In an evil act, King Zedekiah allowed Jeremiah's enemies to cast

him into a cistern, where he sank down into the mud. The intent seemed to be to kill Jeremiah by starvation, while allowing the officials to claim to be innocent of his blood (Baker 1995). These sets of evil plotters who hate the true message are still around. There is an increased number of false prophets who prophesy peace and give fake promises of peace (Gotquestions 2022:1). Unlike Jeremiah, what today's preachers say is that when someone becomes a Christian, all his troubles, trials, and persecutions come to an end. This was what Jeremiah tried to warn the people in his day, insisting that following God is not all about prosperity and peace.

Today's society is full of false prophets, like misinformed weather forecasters, crying for peace when there is no peace. Emmaus (2015) is of the view that Christians fail to see things through God's eyes. It is most likely that pastors use this 'peace, peace' aphorism to silence the cry of those who are wallowing in abject poverty. They also use this aphorism to fill their greed and selfish desires.

Deconstructing Church Profiting from the Burdens of the Poor

Many people are in poverty and depression. The situation can only be improved with material and financial assistance from the church and her leaders, rather than the traditional verbal peace aphorisms.

There is a need for faith-based organizations to begin the sensitization of their members on the need to work hard with patience and also to speak out when they have a need. They should be told that most church ministers are shouting „peace, peace" while profiting from the burdens of poor church members. In the long run, this will aid in reducing the psychological and emotional trauma that may lead to suicide.

These pastors are so wise that they teach that 'bring more money, and God will bless you'. They collect the money and do not give it to God, and they want God to bless someone who gave them nothing. Due to the increasing poverty levels, it is high time that pastors learn to be soothing balms to their parishioners.

The church should have a counseling department where those with one challenge or the other can go to and get financial, psychological, and other assistance. This will help in stemming the tide of increasing suicide levels amongst Christians.

Christians should not be pressured by the successes of other church members. It is high time everyone understood that we are all different and with different grace and timing. Comparison with others puts us under unnecessary pressure and could lead to depression, suicidal thoughts and eventually suicide.

Church committees should start cautioning pastors and church ministers about preaching things that make people have no self-worth and make them develop feelings of inadequacy as full human beings. This will help curtail the growing greed amongst church members that eventually leads to suicide.

The church should start admonishing members that no matter the type of poverty, unemployment, family conflict, challenging work environment, sexual abuse, domestic violence, or late marriage they may be going through, they should not give in to suicidal thoughts. They should be encourage that there is still hope, rather than the traditional promise of peace and God's blessing without proclaiming the reality of challenging situations and problems, as far as man is still having flesh and blood.

Conclusion

Much emphasis on the prosperity gospel stigmatizes people based on financial, emotional, and physical predicaments. Too much emphasis on the prosperity gospel makes people feel that challenges and difficulties will never come their way. Pastors and clergymen are warned by the Prophet Jeremiah not to pronounce peace on the people when there is none. Nigerian pastors have been known to be reckless with their preaching with the traditional emphasis on 'poverty is a curse' which makes the poor ones see themselves as not worth living. It is past time for pastors and clergymen to focus on positively shaping people's minds rather than the unnecessary pressure that their preaching causes people to have less self-worth and self-esteem.

Bibliography

Ajibola AO and Agunbiade OM (2021) Suicide ideation and its correlates among university undergraduates in south western Nigeria. *International quarterly of community health education*, March 13, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1177/0272684X211004929.

Barker KL Youngblood RF Stek JH (1995) Commentary of Jeremiah. In *The NIV Study Bible.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Cooks T (2014) Nigeria's 'megachurches': a hidden pillar of Africa's top economy. October 12, 2014. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-megachurches-insight-idUSKCN0I104F20141012.

Edeh SC (2021) Positive and Negative Impact of Christianity in Africa. December 11, 2021. https://bscholarly.com/impact-of-christianity-in-africa/

Efuribe A (2019) Suicide Prevention in Nigeria – How to Manage low mood and Depression. July 19, 2019. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/suicide-prevention-nigeria-how-manage-low-mood-adaku-efuribe/.

Emmaus Group (2015) Peace Peace When There Is No Peace. March 3, 2015. https://emmaus-group.org/2015/03/peace-peace-when-there-is-no-peace/.

GotQuestions (2022) What does "peace, peace, when there is no peace" mean in Jeremiah 8:11?. May 26, 2022. https://www.gotquestions.org/when-there-is-no-peace.html

Hamermesh D and Soss N (1974) An economic theory of suicide. *Journal of Political Economy, 82*(1): 83–98.

Hanch K (2014) We shout 'Peace, Peace,' when there is no peace. November 26, 2014. https://baptistnews.com/article/we-shout-peace-peace-when-there-is-no-peace/

Iwunna P (2006) The impact of the Christian missionary education on the educational development of Nigeria. September 29, 2006. https://limo.libis.be/primo-explore/fulldisplay?vid=Lirias&search_scope=Lirias&tab=default_tab&docid=LIRIAS2782578&context=L

Jacobs N Onuegbu C Duru P Ebirim J Edukugho E and Anibeze O (2014) Rich Churches, Poor Members. Vanguard, October 25, 1.

Komolafe F (2021) Cry unto God; get a miracle. *Vanguard,* December5, 1.

Maduekwe C (2010) 125 years of Catholic Church in Eastern Nigeria. *TheVanguard,* December 30, 1.

Morris HM (2014) Peace, Peace, When There Is No Peace. November 11, 2014. https://www.icr.org/article/8310

Odunsi W (2019) Michael Arowosaiye: RCCG finally states position on death of singer who allegedly committed suicide. *DailyPost,* May 17, 1.

Ojoma A Nana Y Idowu I Haruna I Risikat R & Olatunji O (2021) Suicide On The Rise As Nigeria Records 51 Cases In 12 Months. Daily Trust, 10 September 2021.

Okonoboh R Azeez B and Asabor M (2017) "Rich Pastors, Poor Congregations: Between Prosperity And Piety," *Tribune,* December 10, 1.

Olusegun OA (2020) Proliferation of churches in Nigeria: Causes, impacts and likely solutions. *Journal of African Studies and Development* 12(3):61-76.

Onwuka E (2022) Nigeria's epidemic of suffering. *TheNation,* March 22, 1.

Onyemelukwe C (2020) Long Overdue: Decriminalisation of Attempted Suicide in Nigeria. *Criminal Law Forum* 31(2):225-249.

Orenuga A (2014) Why Pastors are richer than their members in Nigeria – Oritsejafor. *DailyPost,* 29 March, 1

Otabor O (2021) Pastor's husband commits suicide in Ondo. *TheNation,* August 18, 1.

Oyeleke V (2014) Millionaire Pastors and their Poor Members. May 12, 2014. https://www.nairaland.com/ 1971204/millionaire-pastors-poor-members

Oyetunji TP Arafat SY Famori SO, Akinboyewa TB Afolami M Ajayi MF & Kar SK 2021. Suicide in Nigeria: observations from the content analysis of newspapers. *General psychiatry*, *34*(1): 1-7.

Saharareporters (2022) Failure to pay tithes attracts curses. February 21, 2022. http://saharareporters.com/2022/02/21/failure-pay-tithe-criminal-punishable-attracts-curses-says-nigerian-pastor-ibiyeomie

Sokoya S (2021) Bishop tasks Church on Providing Solutions to Societal Challenges. *Nigerian Tribune,* 17 October, 1.

Ukpong C (2019) Why more Nigerians are committing suicide – Pastor. June 3, 2019. https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/south-south-regional/333157-why-more-nigerians-are-committing-suicide-pastor.html

World Health Organization (2007) World Suicide Prevention Day. March 12, 2022. http://www.who.int/mediacentre/ news/statements/20 07/s16/en/index.html