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Examination of Luke 18: 8b in the Light of the Prevalent Unscriptural Conducts in the Contemporary Church

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Abstract- This paper discusses Examination of Luke 18:8B in the Light of the Prevalent unscriptural conducts in the contemporary church. Theological cum historical and sociological methods are adopted for the research. The work has an exegesis of the text. The work also discusses the various misdemeanor in the church in the contemporary days. Very unscriptural conducts have grown phenomenally in the contemporary church. Christians now get themselves involved in those things hitherto regarded as ungodly. They can now keep malice, crave inordinately for pecuniary gains and mundane things of life. Thus, those things that were gains but considered as loss for the sake of Christ have been brought to the front burner of life and in corollary, Christianity. The priests are not abiding by the dictates of the religion. Some priests have taken their calling as an alibi to perpetuate very heinous crimes. Lewdness and lechery are common among Christian leaders. Some cannot live an ascetic, self-abnegating or Spartan life, rather ostentation is the order of the day. Success in the ministry is now measured by the type of car(s) the minister ride, the mansion he lives and the amount of money in the bank. Break-through is now the vogue. Salvation and the issue of eschatology had since been relegated to the background. All these ungodly tendencies can possibly be ascribed to the end-time. This is when Paul predicted will be characterized by various ineptitudes and unchristian acts. However, Christians should be mindful of God's recompense. It ended with the synopsis that the end-time is probably ultimately responsible for the misdeeds.

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I. Introduction

"…But when the son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

There is no gainsaying the fact that the old forms of religion, characterized by the absolute fear of God, are now effete. Believers are no longer desirous to adhere strictly to the original tenets of Christianity. Christians can now do what ordinarily should not be done. They can today do things that are considered to be amoral and, therefore, not religious. It is not uncommon in the contemporary days to see Christians getting involved shamelessly in very satanic dispositions. Some Christians now steal, lie, cheat, get involved in affray, keep malice, back-bite, oppress, suppress, prevaricate, etc. knowing fully well that the judgment of God is not instantaneous. It is true that God will eventually adjudicate, however, it is not momentary. Thus, every Tom, Dick and Harry can continue, probably ad infinitum, with his or her way of life, not minding whether such dispositions are in tandem with the dictate of the Lord. In the contemporary days, Christianity is practiced at the lowest ebb. As a Christian, you can do virtually everything hitherto enunciated above. This is because you know that you can subsequently go and recite the Lord's prayer – "Forgive us our trespasses just as we forgive those who trespass against us" (Matt. 6:12). This is further exacerbated by the ministers of God who have the strong conviction that, since they are called, they can use their calling to accomplish their own inordinate goal(s), and they believe that they are very much infallible and can, therefore, not be checked or called to order. As the intermediary between God and man, the clergy is accorded tremendous respect, and also seen as the one who cannot err. But this is incorrect. They are first and foremost human beings and can be influenced, just as the Jewish background had its influence on Christianity, even up till now.

It should be stated that there is nothing wrong with the tenets of Christianity up till today, but some of the practioners of Christianity had deviated from the good practice of Christianity in the yester-years[1]. This paper gives the exegesis of the text, goes on to examine some prevalent ungodly conducts in the contemporary church, and ends with the conclusion.

II. Exegesis of the Text

τλην ὁ υιος του ανθρωπου ελθων αρα ευρησει την πιστιν επι την γης

Translation

"…But when the son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

The Greek word τλην is translated *but*.According to Hornby, *but* is used to introduce a word or phrase that contrasts with what was said before… It can be used in the place of *however*. It is also used to introduce a statement that shows that you are surprised or annoyed, or that you disagree[2].

The Greek ὁ is translated *the*, which is a definite article. Again, according to Hornby, it is used to refer to somebody or something that has already been mentioned or is easily understood; used to refer to

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somebody or something that is the only, normal or obvious one of their kind, used when explaining which person or thing you mean[3].

Moreover, the Greek Phrase υιοστου ανθρωπου means *son of man*. Jesus often referred to himself by this expression (Mk. 2:10; 27-28; Mt. 12:31-32; 13:41; 25:31-32). Though it may sometimes mean just 'I' more often veiled reference as the Messiah, and influenced by Dan. 7:13-14, where "one like the son of man" is vindicated by God[4]. According to Dunnett, the title appears over 80 times in the New Testament, all but one in the Gospels (see Acts 7:56) the only place where it is not used by our Lord Himself. Some writers see three meanings of the phrase: (1) as descriptive of the coming one (eschatological, Mt. 24:27); (2) referring to Jesus's suffering and death (Mk. 8:31); and (3) as descriptive of His early ministry of teaching and healing (Mk. 2:10, 28)[5].

Dunnett goes on to assert quite pungently that: A recent study contends that Jesus used the title as a euphemism for the "Son of God", for in Palestine the latter would sound blasphemous to a semitic audience. Why did he use the title so enigmatic as this? Probably for at least two reasons (1) it was general enough to include all the aspects of His person and work, whether present or eschatological and (2) it caught His heavens by surprise, jolted them into attention and forced them to ask, who is this son of man (Jn. 12:34)[6].Dunnett is not done. He finally opines that: majority of writers today accept it as a genuine, in fact, the most outstanding self-designation of our Lord. "*Son of man*" is just about the most pretentious piece of self description that any man in the ancient East could possibly have used[7].

Furthermore, the Greek word ελθων has its English rendering as *come*. Horn by defines *come* as: to move to or towards a person or place; to arrive at or reach a place; to arrive somewhere in order to do something or get something[8]. The last definition will be the most ideal for our purpose. This is because of the eschatological expectation. It is strongly believed that Christ will be coming again (*parousia*) to take those that are his home, while those who are not rapturable will end up in utter perdition.

Then, the Greek word ευρησει has *find* as its meaning in English. Hornby defines *find* as: to discover somebody or something unexpectedly or by chance … to get back something or somebody that was lost after searching for it…[9]. In this context, Christ's position was, would he *discover* or *get* faith when he comes back again?

Similarly, the Greek wordπ ιστιν is translated as *faith* in English. Culbertson sees *faith* as the basis of things hoped for, the demonstration of objects not seen… It furnishes us with a foundation on which our hopes can securely rest, and with a conviction that those things exist which are not earthly or temporal, and which, therefore, we cannot see[10]. Faith … is a central element in prayer. Faith moves us to persevere, not desperately but with confidence. For faith lets us look beyond our circumstances and fixes our eyes on the father who cares[11]. According to Buttrick and Kepler *et al* , faith is man's Yes to the word of God. And when the word comes to a focus in Christ, faith also may be said to centre on this focus… faith is belief in something or trust in some person. In theology, it properly describes man's apprehension of the absolute or transcendent[12]. It is response to revelation as contracted with discovery of new knowledge. KNOWLEDGE is corrective with facts or information or truth and belongs to the sphere of epistemology. Faith is the more distinctively religious term ... faith may be decribed as a kind of knowledge and certainly reason involved in the act of faith[13]. According to Leslie Church:

> …Faith is the great thing that Jesus Christ looks for. He does not ask, is there innocency? But, is there faith? …It supposes that if there were faith, though ever so little, he would find it out … It is foretold that when Christ comes he will find but *little faith* … In general, he will find but *few good people*. Many that have the form and fashion of godliness, but few that have faith, that are sincere and honest … In particular, he will find few that have *faith* concerning his coming. It intimates that Christ may, and will, delay his coming so long as that, *first*, wicked people will begin to *defy it* and his delay will harden them in their wickedness. *Secondly*, even his own people will begin to despair of it. But this is our comfort that when the time appointed comes, it will appear that the unbelief of man has not made the promise of God of no effect[14].

It should be noted with utmost significance that the most important of the Hebrew terms for faith … signifies "firmness", "stability". The verb is used in the *Hiph'il* in the sense "believe", "trust"[15]. Essentially, according to Buttrick and kepler *et al* , faith means freedom (Gal. 4:1-5; 13) … freedom from wickedness ("former lusts"; Rom. 6:12-19; Eph. 2:1-5; Col. 3:5-10; I Thess. 4:3-9) and from other authorities which mankind acknowledges…[16]. Obviously, God will be faithful, but can the same be said about man? By the time of the *Parousia* … will all men have despaired so that no one still believes in the eventual triumph of the sovereign rule of a just God?[17] Undoubtedly, true believers who persistently wait with patient trust will seem few[18], at the eventual *Parousia*. Certainly, submits the Unger's Bible Handbook, in the dark apostate days of the Tribulation, faith will be found only in the faithful remnant of God's people[19].

It is pertinent to state quite clearly that the Greek word γης simply means *earth*. According to *The World Book Encyclopedia*, *earth* is small planet in the vastness of space. It is one of several planets that travel through space around the sun… The planet earth is only a tiny part of the universe, but it is the home of human beings and in fact, all known life in the universe. Animals, plants and other organisms live almost everywhere on Earth's surface[20]. Wenzel states that:

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The main Hebrew words translated earth are (a) *adama* which signifies the reddish soil or ground (cf. Heb. *adom*, "red") from which man's body was made, and so he was named *adam*, "man" or Adam (Gen. 2:7; 3:19) and (b) *eres* which is not only translated "earth" but land, thus denoting a country (Gen. 21:21). Since this word may mean either the whole earth or just part of it, some passages may read "earth" in one translation and "land" in another (cf. Isa. 10:23).

In the New Testament, the usual Greek word is *ge* translated either "earth" with its various meanings or "land" especially the land of Judea (Mt. 27:45). Another word *oikoumene*, denotes especially the whole inhabited earth (Lk. 21:26)[21].

In the final analysis, according to Pfeiffer and Harrison, the rhetorical question (*will the son of man meet faith or earth?*) implies that faith will be scarce. Our Lord's words do not predict a general improvement in the spiritual condition of the world before his coming[22], hence the somewhat obscene dispositions in the church in the contemporary days.

III. Some Perceived Unscriptural Conducts in the Contemporary Church

The Christian church, according to Fatokun, can be rightly described as an offshoot of Judaism. This is because, neither Jesus nor His peripatetic bunch of evangelical disciples were really Christians in the general usage of the word during their three and half years evangelical campaign in Palestine. To a good observer then they constituted nothing other than a reforming party within Judaism (as shown by most of their activities)[23]. Fatokun goes on to state that: But Jesus had at one point in time adumbrately gave the note: "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). Following the Greek text, Jesus did not speak of building a *Kuriakon*-that is, "a house of worship", but an *Ekklesia* – that is "a called out people of God" from the thralldom of sin unto holy living, or in a nutshell "a redeemed community"[24], brought out of the dungeon of sin unto repentance.

Over the years, Christianity appears to have faced some challenges in the way and manner the religion is being practiced. It is probable that those things that were regarded as gain but were conversely counted as loss hitherto for the sake of Christ, (Phil. 3:7), have been brought to the front burner of human existence, and in corollary, the practice of Christianity. According to Odumuyiwa, in the 19th and up to the later part of the 20th centuries, Christianity was a religion to reckon with in Nigeria, not that there were no shortcomings here and there; but the position of Christianity since the later part of the 20th century gives cause for concern[25]. Ostensibly, there is the general abuse of Christianity in all ramifications.

The moral decadence and corruption in the society today is a reflection of the condition of the church. Government officials, politicians and businessmen are mired in corrupt practices[26]. There is the prevalence of insincerity and dishonesty even among Christians. Thus, there is little that can possibly be accomplished in some offices without greasing palms. Virtually everybody is corrupt. Sad enough, some of those that are involved in these corrupt practices are those that profess the Christian faith. This is even when they have taken the oath of office with the Bible in their hands, only to perjure since perjury here has no instantaneous repercussion. That is why Ehioghae enthuse that … religious leaders and followership in Nigeria cannot exonerate themselves from the sorry state of things in the society[27]. Again, according to Odumuyiwa, … one can hardly differentiate the attitudes of some Christian politicians from those of other faiths; corruption, acts of inhumanity to man, lack of the fear of God, greed, dishonesty and all sorts of ungodly and unchristian attitudes are now common among Christian … politicians … bad governance is the order of the day[28]; whereas, Asaju states that, Christians in politics are simply acting in service and in the interest of their heavenly father's world[29]. Buttressing the position of Odumuyiwa as enunciated above, Folaranmi opines thus: mention anything negative: corruption, violation of human rights, fallen standard of education, electoral malpractices, epileptic power outage, incessant strikes, lack of security of lives and properties, unemployment, fraud, greed and the rest, Nigeria is in the fore-front[30] in spite of the magnitude of our religiousity. According to Odumuyiwa, Christians are many in the country so also the social vices and crimes committed are in the increase. Some Christians who constitute the membership of the church do not live above board. Thus, we have a "religious but criminal society"[31]. Also, supporting the position of Odumuyiwa as enunciated above, Adeosun disects the scenario thus: Although most Nigerians blame successive leaders of this country for the nation's inability to assume its developmental potential, very few have admitted also that the failure of all aspects of the national life is traceable to the colossal erosion of the people's core ethical or moral values[32].

The intellectual avant-garde[33]are beginning to query the very essence of the religion of some people. The argument is that the disposition of some Christians is absolutely not in tandem with what they profess. For instance, some contend that, it is disheartening for the serving president, who is a Christian anyway, to be campaigning all over the country even when over two hundred Chibok girls are still languishing in the very bondage of the insurgents called *Boko Haram*, that appears invincible. This is even as Christ says that if you have one hundred sheep and one is missing, will you not leave the ninety-nine in search of the missing one? (Matt. 18:12). Also, the Christian president is not bothered about the manner in which Nigerians are being massacred in the North Eastern part of Nigeria. His

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utmost interest is to win election and perpetuate himself in office, even in the face of trite insecurity and hunger. In parenthesis, Nigerians are no longer safe. This is because they can be killed, maimed or kidnapped at any time. The issue of insecurity is further compounded by the acute down-turn of the economy which arguably is a global phenomenon. Sad enough, salaries of workers are not paid as at when due, just as pensioners are dying in their scores of untimely and inglorious death because their pensions are not paid, which has made it difficult, if not impossible for them to settle hospital bills. And their children who are supposed to come to the aid of the aged parents are either unemployed or under-employed.

Furthermore, there are some Christians who albeit claim to have faith in God but do not rest or rely absolutely on Him. That is why some Christians still go about consulting herbalists to find solution(s) to their seemingly intractable predicaments. Prophet Jeremiah disects the above scenario thus: Thus says the Lord: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his arm, whose heart turns away from the Lord" (Jer. 17:5). Jeremiah goes on to state that: "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord" (Jer. 17:7). Of course, proverbs state that: The fear of man lays a snare, but he who trusts in the Lord is safe (Prov. 29:25). Faith entails praying fervently to the Lord and thereafter relinguish everything to Him for whatever action and inaction. No short cut or a form of trying to "help" God to accomplish a given goal. Hebrew states that: And without faith, it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek Him. By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, took heed and constructed an ark for the saving of his house-hold … (Heb. 11:6-7)

Moreover, that common saying among the Yoruba, *Ti o ba ni baba nigbejo, ti o ba rojo are, wa jebi* meaning if you have no god-father to support you, if you narrate a case in which you are suppose to be absolved of guilt, you will be adjudged guilty, is quite prevalent in the church in the contemporary days. In todays Christianity, there is no more objectivity, but trite subjectivity. Truth is no longer sacrosanct, rather absolute falsehood, utter prevarication is the order of the day. We can no longer call a spade a spade. Christians can not see white and call it white. In its stead, they will look for another colour with which they will refer to what is obviously white in order to conceal the truth. According to Alaba Olusola, ours is a nation where lies, lawlessness, greed, corruption and apathy have become acceptable style of life and instrument of governance; speaking the truth has become strange[34].

Malice probably constitute part of African cultural milieu. This is quite pronounced in this part of the country. If and when "A" offends "B", the resultant effect is malice even in the church. There are several cases of such in diverse churches across the country, especially where we are situated. This is happening even as the Bible states quite unequivocally thus: Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil (Eph. 4:26).

Besides, it has been observed and very painfully, too, that Christians now skive, leading to dereliction and or negligence in spite of the biblical injunction that states: "Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you are serving the Lord Christ (Col. 3:23-24). Today, it is not uncommon to see some supposed Christians skiving in their various places of work, in spite of the fact that they have not gone furlough. And even when they manage to come, their stock in trade is sniping and or denigrating those at the helm of affairs. But they have never bothered to assess themselves. Denominationalism is a dangerous and worrisome dimension to this malady. If and when a given denomination has an establishment, and a member of that denomination is employed there, he/she believes strongly that anything can be done by him/her. But this is obviously amiss. If anything, should one find himself/herself in an establishment owned by his/her denomination, he/she is supposed to work very assiduously to justify the confidence reposed in him/her. But alas!

Having succinctly examined some of the unscriptural conducts of Christians, it is apposite to look, in brevity, at the disposition of those charged with the onerous responsibility of anchoring the faith. Indeed, the church through the connivance of its leaders seems to have shirked her obligation of being the watchdog for the nation. Instead, she has joined in the multiplication of vices such as corruption, bribery and insincerity which thrive greatly in Nigeria[35]. According to Gbadero and Adeleye, many people who are perpetuating evil in Nigeria are members of one church or the other. They may be well known to the leaders of the churches. Their tithes and their huge contrbutions to the church development may apparently not give the church leaders the opportunity to challenge them[36]… The duo of Gbadero and Adeleye go on to state quite pungently that: Pastors don't often care where their people get the money. Just bring it and let life continue. How many pastors ask for the source of the money their followers give? Most of these treasury looters and robbers sit in front rows of our churches and donate the largest amounts and pastors don't care … The church has become a theatre, a place where people come to amuse themselves[36]. Instead of holding tenaciously to the teachings of Christ by teaching the truth about salvation of souls, some religious leaders have soiled their conscience for material gain[38]. Olubunmi Okogie has no room for priests that are after money. He admonished thus: "You are not there to acquire wealth, buy properties, build houses and amass wealth. If you

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do, you are an armed robber number one, and you will go to hell for stealing the money of God's people"[39]. Abogunrin is in agreement with Okogie as he postulates that:

> A true disciple of Jesus is one who has a true sense of value and recognizes that real life is not measured in terms of material possessions. The man who is not rich in regard to God is indeed poor, no matter how big his bank-balance. He is, therefore, in the last analysis a big fool, a godless, greedy and selfish individual and therefore a senseless man. He heaps up treasures for himself, and though he prepares for his own comfort and enjoyment, he has not prepared for his ultimate destiny[40].

Coverteousness, which is quite ungodly is common in the church, particularly among some ministers of God. Again, according to Abogunrin, coverteousness is folly, in other words, utter obduracy because no true joy, happiness, rest of mind and peace, nor true life are found in the abundance of earthly possession. Man cannot live by bread alone[41]. Abogunrin goes on to state quite unequivocally that "to make earthly possessions and worldly pleasures the main purpose of life is not only a fatal act of folly but deadly sin"[42]. According to Yahaya:

> There are a lot of people who are into ministries today because of their stomachs. People are into the ministry without a call. "God has never told you to go to the village and preach". Everybody wants to be in the city, nobody wants to be in the village. What some of them are presently doing contradicts the ways of Jesus Christ. There are churches you go to today that I believe are commercial ventures because they adopt all sorts of methods to collect money from you. …Those places, shop corners and business centres that go by the name churches, we have to tell them the truth and shut them down. Rather than praying for the people, some pastors always go as far as demanding monies from people before they can pray, forgetting that Jesus Christ admonished that freely have you received and freely shall you give (Matt. 10:8)[43].

Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye toed the path of righteousness when he said that: "I read in the newspaper this morning that one of the serving governors in Nigeria said that some pastors in Nigeria collected #6billion from politicians for the purpose of influencing their members to vote a certain candidate in the coming elections. May I humbly request that if there be any pastor or pastors who collected such money, they should please return such as quickly as possible before the fire of the Almighty consumes you"[44]. Paul in his letter to Timothy states: But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs. But as for you, man of God, shun all this; aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness… (I Tim. 6:9-11). According to Olurode, money is said to be the root of all evils. The concept of the money culture refers to the use of money in the public sphere in order to get things done or get people to behave in a particular way even though this may be contrary to expected behavioural standards. It refers to the frequent use of money[45] in all situations.

It should be noted with utmost significance that since some of the priests have 'cornered' some money, they are just like infidels in their conducts or at best mere proselytes. Instead of them to live an ascetic, self-abnegating and spartan life, as found hitherto, and which is a *sine qua non* of the calling, they have exposed themselves to enormous glamour, grandeur and opulence. In fact, ostentation is the order of the day, sometimes at the detriment of the toiling laity, some of whom are probably hirelings; only to console them with the biblical passage which states sympathetically, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (Lk. 6:20). This of course is an aberration. Christianity should be *factis non verbis* i.e., by deeds and not by words. That is why Jeremy Taylor spoke of "divine living rather than divine knowledge"[46], while Mahalma Gandhi says "you should live as if you were to die tomorrow"[47] which evidently portrays righteousness. Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways (Ps. 128:1).

Yet another dimension to the unchristian debacle among some ministers is ritual in the church. some ministers do embark on rituals in order to have large congregation. According to Erelu Agbaye, many minsters and prophets of God … had at one time or the other come to her in a forest during her sojourn in the occultic world for power, fame and other assistance in order to be successful in life[48]. A report which confirmed a gory sight of ritual in the church states thus: "We were shocked when my uncle noticed flies flying around a particular place where one of the pillars of the church building was to be erected. We began to dig up, we saw my brother's body buried upright. We brought out the corpse and the police later took it to the mortuary[49]. And in the same vein, again according to a report:

> A senior evangelist with a popular white garment church and leader of one of the parishes settled for the unexpected last Monday, when he allegedly organized the 'slaughtering' of his mother, like a goat, drained her blood and save it in a bucket … The blood was later shared into six bottles and taken away by persons believed to have been hired by him… The pastor… is yet to lead the police to where the bottles are. The deceased Adebisi, (60), was said to have been deceived by her evangelist son that she was going for a prayer retreat, when five strangemen allegedly hired by her son, pounced on her. The cleric was said to have supervised his mother's killing and personally drained her blood in a bucket which was said to have been placed under the deceased's neck[50].

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Furthermore, priests are supposed to preach very passionately against adultery and or fornication, and abstain absolutely from lewdness and lechery. Nevertheless, some of them are found of caressing their members and even having fun with some of the gullible ones, sometimes under the guise of spirituality, but occasionally for charm. According to a report:

> Thirty four-year-old pastor Adekunle Kayode has been arrested by the Ogun State police command for allegedly fingering a member of his church... to confirm her virginity. The incident was said to have occurred on Sunday within the premises of the Jesus is The Way Evangelical Ministry, Olorunsogo, Abeokuta… Oluwasegun who is Kayode's accomplice allegedly used a charm on the victim with the intention of raping her possibly for ritual purposes. The charm which has been recovered from Kayode, was said to have been hidden in the church premises[51].

Ditto is the story of yet another concupiscence pastor. Again, according to a report:

> Pastor Princewill Basil who is standing trial before an FCT High Court over allege rape of two girls was on Tuesday confronted by another victim who claimed he raped her countless times… Basil, the General Overseer, Mountain Movers Fire Ministry Church, Nyanya, was arraigned in 2012 for allegedly having unlawful carnal knowledge and impregnating two student-members of his church, aged 14 and 15.… The pastor raped her "to cleanse her of dirt". I cannot remember the number of times he raped me. *Papa* told me it was continuous deliverance, and he had to sleep with me to clean all the dirt inside me and also cleanse my future…[52]

Adultery and fornication – inclined tendencies are not limited to the shores of Nigeria. They are found elsewhere – in Africa. According to a report:

> At the Lord's Propeller Redemption Church, Dandora Phase II, Nairobi, Kenya, the "man of God" has instructed women not to come to church in their under pants and bras anymore! And they dutifully complied. Simply identified as Reverend Njohi, the church leader was said to have told female members of his congregation that the "Holy Spirit" is not only interested in their Sunday best attires but also what goes on under their skirts. He told them not to come to church with their bras and pants again because "those things hinder the move of the Holy Spirit". He claims that when people go to church, they need "to be free in body and spirit to receive Christ". And for women who may choose to ignore the instructions of the "man of God", he warns of dire consequences. He advised mothers to make sure that they not only come without their underwear, but to also ensure that they closely monitor their daughters and ensure compliance.Perhaps, what is more surprising is that this concept of "the less worn, the more the impact of the Holy Spirit", which is yet to be linked to any verse in the scriptures, applies to just the women in his congregation. The men are free to come to church fully kitted. It would seem like the "Holy Spirit" is not particularly interested in what happens to the men in the Lord's Propheller Redemption Church[53].

Indeed, according to Odumuyiwa, it seems Christianity is being tainted by the attitudes of some church leaders … which are now influencing adversely the integrity of Christianity and some Christians. The shortcomings of the (leaders) of Christianity today now calls for concern[54]. Undoubtedly, some ministers of God have taken their calling as an alibi to perpetuate very heinous crimes. Some believe, perhaps erroneously, that since they have the "calling", they are infallible, irrespective of the magnitude of misdemeanor. Of a truth, some of their conducts violate decorum and, therefore, reprehensible, as very unscriptural conducts have grown phenomenally amidst them in spite of Peter's injunction that states inter alia: Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as cover-up for evil; live as servants of God (I Pet. 2:16). It should be stated at this juncture that those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God (Rom. 8:8), therefore, there is need to be holy just as the father is holy (I Pet. 1:16).

Again, there is religious bigotry and or jingoism. According to Olurode,.. In Nigeria, religious externalities play virtually no role and we have no means of measuring the degree of religious internalization. There is greed and poverty of commitment to principles (ethical poverty) and desperation to copy others (peer group)[55]. But the truth is that everybody knows what is not anti-thetical, going by the intuitive conscience. According to Bolaji Idowu, "Every human being who is not clearly an imbecile has a knowledge of right and wrong … everyone knows that right is not the same thing as wrong … Even though moral philosophers cannot agree upon the explanation of what the difference is, they all perceive that there is a difference between right and wrong"[56]. It is sad to note according to Gbadero and Adeleye that "Church is springing up everywhere and everyone is claiming to be born-again even when committing the most heinous crime. The corrupt leaders are hiding behind the pulpit[57]… Buttressing this, Odumuyiwa opines thus: in spite of all the proliferation of churches, crimes still persist in our society[58], even as all wrongdoing is sin (I John 5:17). The church is growing with very few members who are responsible[59]. That is why Odumuyiwa states that "there are some criminally-oriented and religious individuals[60]. Odumuyiwa goes on to state that a religion that is worth its salt cannot relegate morality to the background[61]. Again, according to Odumuyiwa, Christians are warned not to commit social decadence. For example, Christianity abhors lack of respect for elders, killing, adultery, stealing, bearing false witness, which summarized what should be the way of life of christians[62]. However, all these are found freely exhibited by supposed Christians. There is, therefore, the need to … arrest the decline in spirituality in social value[63]… if Christians are to be so called and regarded.

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IV. Conclusion

It has been observed in the course of this work that unrighteousness has become so prevalent in Christianity. Oddities have become the vogue in the Christendom in spite of the multiplication of churches. According to Akaeze, just as the number of Nigerian churches … increase astronomically, so is the number of pastors …linked to crime appear to be on the rise[64]. Buttressing the position of Akaeze, Odumuyiwa dissects the scenario thus: …it is unfortunate to say that as proliferated as the church is in Nigeria so is the country engulfed in social and moral decadence and crime perpetuated by some followers of Christianity. Nigeria is as religiously inclined as it is criminal[65]. There are numerous diabolical and nauseating conducts. Success in the ministry is now measured by the type of car(s) you ride, the mansion you live in, the amount of money in the bank account, etc. It is no longer the number of souls you are able to win for Christ. The gospel of prosperity has taken over. Salvation and the issue of eschatology is now relegated to the background, which is a negation and glaringly a gross abuse of the sacerdotal duty. Break-through in all ramifications has become the vogue. The end now justifies the means. Every Christian wants to make it either by hook or crook, and thus swayed by pecuniary gains. Some can kill or maim essentially to get rich. Akaeze postulates that: for a country that is universally acknowledged as one of the most religious in the world, in view of the high number of churches … dotting its landscape, the trend is disturbing[66]. Ehioghae quoting Tinubu states that: …the churches that ought to lead the vanguard in the fight against social ills are sometimes found in these acts[67]… Obasanjo had indicted some religious bodies of aiding and abetting crimes and that the "rising tide of corruption could be dumped at the door-steps of these church leaders"[68]. Imagine the meddlesomeness of some ministers in shaddy deals in diverse stratagem! There are sleazy deals and crass commercialization of the gospel[69], even when Gaebelein enthuse that …the ministry has no place for those who make merchandise of it[70]. Could all these atrocities hitherto enumerated be linked with the end-time? Paul had, in his letter to his spiritual son, Timothy, predicted that:

> …In the last days there will come times of stress. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderous, profligates, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God… (II Tim. 3:1-4).

Corroborating the prediction of Paul, Thomas Hale postulates that: in the last days before Christ comes again, trouble and distress will come upon all men. At that time many will turn away from the faith[71]. However, adherents of the Christian faith should be wary of their conducts. This is because john pungently states very clearly that: …Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy. "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay everyone for what he has done" (Rev. 22:11-12). Therefore, the delay in the *parousia* (second coming) of Jesus must not engender any relaxation in the faithful vigilance of God's people[72]. Christians must necessarily rise and be watchful of their conducts. They should be like Ceaser's wife, above board[73], that is, living a meaningful and righteous life and not disingenuous or entangled in infraction(s) as presently found in many churches. Certainly, righteousness is a desideratum, as there is the absolute need for moral rectitude in Christianity.

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