

The Establishment and Growth of Doulos Ministry in Ondo City, Nigeria

TIWATOLA ABIDEMI FALAYE
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria

Abstract. The Church is a place people meet in order to worship God in a given time at a particular place. The study examines how the Church was founded and the impact it has made so far and was the Church established according to Biblical injunction or just a business center for commercial purposes. The study also gave an insight into what is being practiced in the Church and how it has affected society positively and negatively. The study also x-rays an in-depth knowledge of what is happening to our local churches today and how we can be able to make an amendment into what is being practiced and how it should be practiced according to the biblical pattern.

Keywords: Growth, Doulos, Ministry, Establishment

1. Introduction

Establishment of a new Church planting is a process that results in a new (local) Christian Church being established. The Purpose of the Church was to respond faithfully to the Great Commission in Matt 28, “Go and make disciples,” remains central to the mission of the Church. The new Church should be distinguished from Church development where new service, new worship center, or fresh expression is created that is integrated into an already established congregation. According to Witness Lee (Lesson Book, Level 5), why is there a need to establish churches? Said, the universal Church has already been formed by the Triune God, but where can people see it? The glorious Church must be practical and real to people. Local churches are needed so that people may see God’s glory. Before Christ ascended into heaven, He said in Acts 1:8, “But you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the remotest part of the earth.” Local Churches are His practical expression and His

testimony. Therefore local churches must be established all over the inhabited earth for the sake of His testimony, the Apostle obeyed the commandment, and we are to continue this process until the Lord’s return. The Church is under the umbrella of P.F.N. (Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria) is the umbrella which coordinates the activities of Pentecostal, Evangelical and Charismatic Ministries, Churches and Associations for the purpose of unity as underline by the prayer of the Lord Jesus in John 17.

2. Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria

This is an affiliate of the Christian Association of Nigeria in the group of PFN/CPFN. Her motto is “we ought to love one another” (1Jn 4:11). It operates at the National, state, and local levels. It organizes seminars and lectures for ministerial empowerment. It organizes crusade and prayer rallies. It organizes Press conference to address issues which bother on the interest of the Church and the general well being of the nation. She acts as a rallying platform to foreign Evangelists and Preachers towards carrying out their kingdom missions in Nigeria. Where necessary case rises, it protests by peaceful demonstration any act that is deemed to persecute the course of the preaching of the gospel in any part of Nigeria. Rises to defend the gospel against any foreign government policies which run contrary to the tenets and promotion of the gospel and general world peace, e.g., the homosexual views of the western nations and their stand on Anti Gay Law in the Developing Countries.

3. Pentecostals And the Belief in the Supernatural

Much of Western Christianity has been heavily influenced by an anti-supernatural bias, which has tended to lower if not remove the emphasis on the supernatural in western churches. However, the supernatural is a very basic part of the traditional African worldview. Therefore, when Pentecostalism came along, offering a Biblical version of the supernatural, it was very appealing and quickly adopted by many African Christians. According to B. Hearne, quoted by Nwanaju (2005), “the insecurity and uncertainty of life today means that many people crave for security and certainty.

3.1 Belief in Demons and Evil Spirits

According to Nwanaju (2005), quoting F. Oborji, “In African Traditional Religion misfortune is generally interpreted as the work of the evil spirit, witches, sorcerers, the evil eye, broken taboos, perjured oaths, or even of the deities or ancestors.” Nearly all African Traditional Religions have believed strongly in the existence of various kinds of evil spirits.

3.2 Belief In Divine Healing

Traditionalists use herbs and other remedies in their healing process, use spiritual or supernatural practices as well. Pentecostalism stresses that we can expect and experience miracles today of the same nature as the miracles of the biblical days.

3.3 Emotional And Physical Expressions Of Worship

Nwanaju said, “Pentecostalists express their worship through singing and dancing, encouraged people to express their worship and praise to God in whatever they felt would be meaningful.” Pentecostals claimed that dancing and praising as a way of expressing their joy and devotion. They speak in tongues as an expression of the influence of the Holy Spirit.

4. History of the Founder

Doulos ministry in Nigeria was founded by Pastor Achonwa Charles Chukwuedum born on Saturday, February 2, 1952, in Mamfe, Cameroon, male, has B.Sc, M.B.A., married to Shade Owo-Odusi, 1980(deceased); Ngozi Nwadiogo Okoye,1991, has 5children(3males and 2females), his profession is Pastor; Administrator.

4.1 His Previous Appointments

He was the traveling secretary fellowship, Christian students, 1978-1981; traveling secretary and

Assistant General Secretary, Nigeria Fellowship of Evangelical students, 1981-87, crusade director, Redeemed Christian Church of God, 1990-92; General Overseer and Founder Doulos Ministries, 1993. Basel Mission, Bena Cameroon, 1958-60; salvation army, surulere, 1960-65; Government secondary school, Afikpo, 1966-72; University of Nigeria Nsukka, 1973-77, University of Ilorin 1987-92. International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, 1973-87. He held many positions in the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (P.F.N.) in Ilorin between 1987-96 and Lagos in 1997. He anointed his successor in 2012 to carry on the assignment as the General overseer whose name is Pastor Bamidele Oluwatomisin an assembly Pastor in-charge of Ondo parish before becoming the General overseer, the founder became the Grand Patron of the Ministries, Pastor Bamidele Oluwatomisin is a University graduate and a specialist in Agriculture, when he graduated from university and finished his N.Y.S.C. (National Youth Service Corps) he came to Ondo where he was working with Lebanese as a representative of the company in charge of Cocoa, Cashew and Palm Kernel products, he was busy doing this job when he had the call of God into the Ministry and he joined Shepherd Intercessory Ministry and was with this Ministry before God told him He did not send him to that Ministry and he was confused and went to Redemption camp to join their intercessory group and God now told him to go back to Ondo and join Doulos Ministries, he met the assembly with less than 10 members and the Church grew within 10 years that was in-charge to around 850 members before he left to become the General overseer. According to Living stream ministry internet message,

“One of the greatest threats to successful church planting is the attempt to bring outdated and strict models to bear the which may have been successful in previous generations, but are hindrances to our or cultural dynamics, Regardless of the unique change of the cultural dynamics of a targeted people group, any methodology should seek Biblical warrant. There always seems to be some ‘new’ way to plant churches but many are a gimmick and shallow, and will not sustain through time for lack of giving converts a foundation of sound doctrine or intimacy with Christ, the Church which works outwardly

from a scripturally patterned core of dynamics offers a greater potential of establishing a lasting presence.’’

During the time of his staying with the Church, the Ministry became a force to be reckoned with in Ondo city and his environs

5. History of the Church

The Church under Doulos ministry started in Ondo around 1995, but the Church did not grow until the present General overseer joined them and became their Pastor and the Church grew because of the charisma of the Pastor, he was endowed with the Ministry of deliverance, and people use to fall under his ministration and this help to give solution to their problems. Supernatural manifestation means the demonstration of the power of God through deliverance and the working of miracles. According to Ogunewu (2015), some argued that members of the Aladura churches are not committed Christians; rather, they are only after having their needs met through prayers and deliverance. In other words that they sustain a worldly orientation and are only out to use Christianity as an avenue for worldly acquisitions. But scholars like Clarke denied such assertions that it is not true.

Ogunewu continued, the issue of miracle is a controversial one, in many cultures of the world. While some belief in its reality and there are those who generally dismiss claims to miracles as false, and contend that miracles are impossible. Hume defines miracles as a violation of the law of nature, rules out its possibility, and contends that religious people use false claims of miracles to propagate their religions. The antagonists of Christianity today claim miracles as untenable.

5.1 Evangelism

One of the factors that affect the growth of the Church when there was a change of leadership in the assembly in Ondo is evangelism; it added value with the gift of the Minister of God in-charge of the Church. The Church conducts open-air crusades in order to promote the gospel and make it accessible to people; this has been helping the growth of the Church. Focus is given to the sequential flow of Biblical history and the Ministry of Jesus Christ to offer redemption to all who surrender to Him through faith.

5.2 Bible study

The church use to Bible study as one of the weekly activities, this help to bring people into the knowledge of the truth where people are privilege to learn and ask questions on some areas where they are confused.

5.3 Counseling Time

Counseling time always meant for personal matters with pastors whenever people need advice on any issue when necessary, this serves as avenue to get clear directive of what to do and how to do it.

6. Doctrine of the Church

6.1 Using of Anointing Oil

The Church believes in the teaching of the scripture as well as the application of the words of the scripture according to the writers' intentions. The Church believes in the use of anointing oil for healing. They also believe in making use of it for safety while leaving for any destination or travelling. They conduct deliverance which has also serve as avenue for bringing people into the fold, when people are delivered from their problems they become members of the Church, according to Matt 16:15.

6.2 Speaking in Tongues

They also believe in speaking in tongues according to what happened on the day of Pentecost when the disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit and they all spoke in tongues. There are controversial about speaking in tongues, some believe that it has stopped while some say speaking in tongues still exist till today.

Covering of Head for women in the Church

The emphasis is not laid on this it is an optional which is decided by an individual, is just depend on individual discretion.

6.3 Fasting

It on individual interest not make compulsory for members even when the need be, they do have it occasionally.

7. Administration

Church administration and management positions guide, direct and oversee the critical functions that help churches meet their long term goals. Church administrators also play a role in helping the community, given the nature of today's churches.

Church administration is spiritual service to the Body of Christ which involves the wise stewardship of God's resources for the accomplishment of the work of Ministry. Church administration or management has to do with the organization of Church ministry, and with the operations that govern that organization. With regard to organization, affairs of the Church are to be guided by Biblical qualified elders who are nominated by the congregation especially where they practice congregational administration. The church practice Presbyterian type of administration in which leaders and executives meet to decide on the needs of the Church, they involve in important decisions like finances, facilities, equipment and Church programmes. Apart from the decision made by the Minister and the executives, we cannot rule out the possibility of God speaking through the Minister's in-charge, and that one is non- negotiable, no committee can decide on that because it is divine instruction. A Church may be a place you go on Sundays to attend service, but the Church is much more, including a fully functioning business and /or organization. The business nature of today's Churches makes administration a vital function.

7.1 Mission Statement

The mission of any Church should be to follow God. The Church administration must establish a mission statement that clarifies what it believes (according to its denomination or theology) and what it follows (such as the Bible).

7.2 Purpose

The purpose of a Church administration is to manage the organization. The Church administration must plan and make all decisions, both large and small, for the day- to day consistency. Since this administration is religion, it must stay true to the morals and practices of the Church.

7.3 Finances –Income and Expenditure

Money matters can be a point of contention for Churches, be it tithing, poor fiscal management, or outright fraudulent practices (intentional or otherwise). According to the General overseer, the Church was built by Late Oba of Ondo Kingdom- Oba Festus Ibidapo Adedisewo Adesanoye (Osungbedelola 11). The work had not finished when Oba was demised, and immediately God raised a 40years old young man to finish the project. The Church gets her income through tithes, offering, voluntary donations, pledges, and special anniversary. The tithe is used to pay Pastors' salary.

Offerings and other income are used to cater for other needs of the Church.

Dennis McCallum said in his New Testament Principles of Church finance:

- Should pay its own elders (ministers) and workers at the offices (1Tim 5:17,18, Gal6:6, Lk10:7-10)
- Should pay for evangelistic and missionary work including logistic expenses for meeting and training (Acts 18:5, Phil 4:15,16, 1Cor 9:4-11)
- Should give to the needs of the Christian poor (Gal 6:10, Jn 12:8, Lk 10:30-37, Matt 19:21)
- Should give to the needs of non-Christians' poor (Gal 6:10, Jn 12:8, Lk 10:30-37, Matt 19:21)

He further emphasizes on how the Church should handle its Money:

- Those who lead in Spiritual matters should also lead to financial matters. (Acts 4:35-37; 11:29-30; 1Tim 3:3,8)
- Money should be handled in such a way that is defensible against any accusation (2Cor 8:21)
- Money stewards should be trustworthy people. More than one person should perform every function so that we have accountability (2Cor 8:18-24, Acts 6:3-6)

7.4 How to Collect Money in the Church

The collection should be done in a regular and orderly manner. We should facilitate consistent individual giving by reminding members in a variety of ways, including taking collections on a regular basis.

The Church should teach Christians the many Biblical reasons for giving.

7.5 Accountability

A recent article by Michael Messher on the Assemblies of God website says it is important for a Church to maintain its accountability. The article quoted a sermon by Southern California college President Wayne Kraiss, which presented ten danger signals that point to an erosion of integrity, including a Church administration becoming more issue-oriented than Christ-centered, vulnerability to outside

forces and Church goals that are too materialistic or financially motivated.

7.6 Pay Roll

The number of paid individuals on the administration varies based on a budget of the Church. At a small Church, only the Pastor and one or two people may be paid. However, very large Churches may have hundreds of paid positions.

8. Problems of the Church

When the present General overseer was anointed for the position, he handed over to another Pastor and moved to Lagos, which is the seat of the General overseer in order to oversee the Churches under the Ministry from the central, according to the present General overseer he handed over 850 members to the Pastor who took over from him when he was about to leave for Lagos, and under 5 years the new divided the Church and took 828 members away to start his own Ministry and leave 22 members in the Church who could not follow him. This situation now forced the General overseer to relocate his administrative seat to Ondo, so as to monitor the Church himself. Another problem the Church has is that they depend much on prophecy for anything they do, and since they could not see someone who could continue, the new Pastor takes advantage of the distance to cave away his own empire.

8.1 Preferred Solution

The solution to this problem is to start a discipleship program in the Church that will make every member a disciple of Christ, and this will guide against future occurrences. This will allow individuals to know their God and whom to depend upon and not an individual Pastor.

9. Recommendations

- It is recommended through this study that what people called Church today is not yet understood by people; people think gathering people alone is what is meant to be a Church. The Church is more than that, people of Christ minded that will follow Christ in Character, heavenly minded, focusing on heaven first than on this earthly things, people that will think about what to acquire for than to what to acquire for ourselves, until people are able to see that such occurrence will still continue, teaching

that will let people see this must start from our new convert class.

- Bible study for all members should take priority than prayer and deliverance, and through the teaching, it will help them to know how to pray.
- Mature to be soul-winning oriented, this will help them to grow into adulthood in Christ.
- To make members focus on Christ for a solution to their problems and not to put ourselves in the position of Christ who has a solution to their problems, Heb 12:1 says look unto Christ, the author and the finisher of our faith.

10. Conclusion

When will our society leave the stage of the present predicament to another stage where we will stop breaking heart? The Pastor that broke the heart of another Pastor to start his own Ministry, how would he be able to relate with him after his departure? God called us to follow peace with all men and holiness without this; no man shall see the Lord –Heb 12:14. We should know that we can only manage what is given to us, talents are given to an individual, based on the ability, and we shall give an account of the one given to us as an individual. Let us begin to do God's work and not human's work because of our belly; our reward will not be based on the numbers of our congregation but on the means and faithfulness that is involved in gathering them.

References

- Clarke, B. Peter (1996) West African and Christianity. London: Edward Amild
- Demis McCallum (2019) Principle of Church Finance (Internet) accessed on 15/3/19
- Hume, D. (1966) An inquiry concerning human understanding, Illinois: Open court Classics.
- Nwanaju, Isidore (2005) Christian- Muslim Relations in Nigeria. Ikeja: Free enterprise publishers.
- Ogunewu, Michael A. (2015) Travail and Triumphs of Aladura Christianity in Nigeria, Ikeja: The Amen Inc.
- Witness, Lee. (2019)The Vision and Building up of the Church, Lesson book, level 5 (Internet)
- Interview with the General Overseer (Doulos Ministry in Nigeria) on 14/3/19