"Pentecostalism and e-Ministry: Changing Economy in the 21st Century".

By

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Abstract

The society is changing at a supersonic rate and means of doing things are changing too, even means of exercising ministry and media of evangelizing the world with the gospel of our Lord Christ has also embraced the digital or electronic realty in African in particular and the world in general. The main meal of this work on Pentecostalism and e-ministry is to chart a relationship course between the Christian Religious Movement that emphasizes on Holy Spirit experience as of the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-18) and the new paradigm shift in ministry that has embraced online or electronic ministry (e-ministry) using the world best practice and knowledge economy tool of the new media for encounter, advocacy and Pentecostalism solidarity via electronic reality via the electronic ministry (e-ministry). This study draws its theoretical frame work from the spring of Drucker, Peter's third wave revolution theory, using secondary and Internet sources. This work is historical using diachronic approach to x-ray the relationship between Pentecostalism and e-ministry, and it's found the synergy that works; hence, the Pentecostals should invest in e-ministry for global resource since it is apt, trendy and a first-century imperative in a twenty-first century mode.

Key Words: Pentecostalism, e-Ministry, Multi-Media and Changing Economy

Introduction

Throughout history, Christian Religious movements and ministers be it orthodox, mainline or Pentecostal churches have used many different media for effective administration of the Church, evangelism and exercising of ministry, in other words, the Christian Churches have employ various media as a means of evangelizing the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ, preaching, teaching and healing. The Christian church of the 21st century being in a phenomenon global village (e-community) courtesy the ubiquitous and omnibus information and communication technology is leveraging on the sound, signs and wonders orchestrated by the power of the Holy Spirit in the now as of the then in (Acts 2:6). All the sectors of the society has embraced the digital or electronic reality and the Pentecostal Churches will not be in limbo in the use and appropriation of the new media of this era (information or digital era) in the area of ministry, hence the crux of this piece on Pentecostalism and e-ministry. Buttressing this point (Schwartz, 1981:3) says "therefore media are both door to the mind and window on the world, they provide insight and

outsight: media is used to influence what we buy, who we vote for, and how we think." The society is changing at a supersonic rate and means of doing things are changing too, even means and medium of evangelizing the world with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ has also embraced the digital reality. The present era embodies a fundamental change in the disseminating of information through satellite networks and ministry is not left out. Information is power in every strata of the society which religion has witnessed a lot of positive impact through televangelism, cyber-evangelism and Pentecostalism advocacy and Holy Spirit encounter. The evolving technology is the inn thing and latest development is the phenomenon known as cyber ministry or e-ministry.

The main meal of this work is to x-ray the symbiosis and complimentary relationship existing between these two good bed fellows; and to chart a course between Pentecostalism and e-ministry in faith advocacy, encounter and solidarity in the 21st century spiritual economy.

Theoretical Frame Work

The foundation of this work is hinged on Drucker, Peter (1969) work "The Age of Discontinuity; Guidelines to Our Changing Society". A popular theory and explanation of the contemporary changes occurring around us, is simply suggesting that we are in the midst of a third major revolution in human civilization, i.e. a third wave. First there was the Agriculture Revolution, then the industrial Revolution, and now we are in the information Revolution. So the Pentecostalism spiritual economy has embraced the paradigm shift; that is the means of evangelizing the world and exercising ministry has taken a digital outlook; today we have the Pauline concept of ecclesiology becoming electronic format "Church without wall" or virtual Church, altar away from the physical altar or pulpit away from the Church. Ministering has taken an electronic reality (e-ministry).

In the 21st century it provides a medium of doing things; meeting people, preaching the gospel, doing business around the globe by simply clicking into the information superhighway, or lunching into satellite network or cable network otherwise known as cybernation.

> Cyberspace in the sense of being in the "same room is an experience, not wiring system. It is about people using the new technology to do what they are genetically be found in electronic mail exchange by lovers who have never met; it emerged from the endless debates on mailing lists and message bounds. It's that bond that knits together regulars in electronic chat rooms and new groups. It is, like Plato's plane of ideal forms, a metaphorical space, a virtual reality. (Gail, E. Hawisher 1997:1)

Cyberspace is a term used to refer to not only the online world and the Internet in particular but also the whole wired and wireless world of communication in general.

Definition of Terms

From Vine's complete Expository dictionary of old and new testaments words by W. E. Vine (2nd Edition), Pentecostalism is Christian religious Movement that emphasizes the Holy Spirit.

The Concept of e-Ministry

In Christian Ministry, Ministry is a vocation or activities carried out by the Church to express or spread their faith as in the great commission. while e-ministry is the concept of serving God and humanity through electronic reality by designing a ministry management solution (MMS) on-line or creating blog, It is all about exercising your ministry on line, creating website in the name of your ministry, professional e-mail that have the name of your ministry, hosting an interactive prayer line, creating avenues that keep ones ministry online. Using media as place for encounter, advocacy and solidarity, order wise known as the concept of the church without a wall or the virtual church where activities of normal ministry can be replicated on-line and using electronic media and social network for the fulfillment of your call to ministry hence electronic ministry. Ministry is carved out from a Germany word 'beruf' which means vocation; it is a noun form of the word 'berufen' meaning call which means that before one can take ministry as a vocation, he need a divine call from a God and God is spirit those that serve him will serve him in truth and spirit hence the Pentecostals and evangelical emphasis the gift of the Holy Spirit (Pentecostalism) for ministry. While according to Oxford Advance Learners English Dictionary 8th edition, ministry is as the work and duties of a minister in the Church; the period of time spent working as a minister in the Church. Therefore, ministry is an assignment hence, performing your God called assignment using electronic media expression in e-ministry.

The Concept of Multi-Media

For a scholarly, all embracing and holistic work to be done on the above topic, there are some germane concepts that will be introduced in order to bring this trendy topic to a logic conclusion. Multi-media is a complex coinage. According to (Mbadiwe, 2011) in his work "The role of Multi-media in the 21st century Church," it is the coming together of print, electronic and social media in an online platform, it may be electronic, social, print media, cyber-evangelism, televangelism, using internet facilities, computer aided programmes application systems, and communication technology. Gail quoting Kenneth J. Gergen who was trying to describe the factures of the media of 21st century (multi-media) in Africa, gave pictorial analysis of the incoming technology which to me is truly the satellite or cable televangelism through cable satellite and cable network of the era which he described as thus: "Plans are now afoot for the world system, to carry all electronic signals-including phone, television, recorded music, written text. This would enable a user to plug into the system anywhere from Alabama to Zaire and immediately transmit and receive sound

recordings, or videotapes. The process of social saturation is far from complete." (Gail, 1997:21). But today the future predicted by Gail Kenneth J. Gergen has come to be the mega tool for evangelism and performing ministers in the 21st century church: - (Michael Slaughter 2008:3) affirmed that the "effective congregation of the 21st century would be part of the church that makes use of multi media. The new reformation will speak the language of our culture and employ the communication technology that shapes the culture". The all-knowing God has a purpose for allowing the knowledge and growth of the communication technology, which gave birth to the conceptual e-ministry. The early church used network of roads in the old Roman Empire, chariots and letter writing as the media of the 1st century to spread Christianity as well, in the 21st century media are employed in e-entertainment, e-bay, e-shopping, e-learning and e-commerce and also for stirring up social, political and spiritual waters so, e-ministry will not be an exception especially the Pentecostal churches which demonstrates the transitional and transcendent power of Holy Spirit today by extending their altar to the radio set, telephone set, television box from where healing and anointing can be ministered on people by the touch or contact with the phone, television, radio set and others.

Conceptualization of Changing Economy

A key concept of the changing economy is the discontinuity in traditional economy and ways of doing things which occasioned a paradigm shift in market, political, education, religious and information economy as in Stephen Warner's "paradigm shift in progress theory". The present era embodies a fundamental change in every strata of the society. The society is not static but dynamic and the ground for our theological education should not be static but to embrace the change paradigm hence the creation theology has shifted from ontological argument to information theological argument. In the 21st century medium of doing things; meeting people, preaching the gospel, production, doing business and governance around has embraced the digital divide hence our theology. Theology (information Theology) has witnessed a lot of positive impact through multi-media, cyber-evangelism, televangelism, internet facilities, computer aided programmes, satellite communication and communication technology. The evolving technology is the inn thing and latest development is the phenomenon known as globalization."Other than the agricultural-intensive economies and labor-intensive economies, the global economy is in transition (changing) to a "knowledge economy",

Pentecostalism and e-Ministry

Pentecostal pastors using electronic platform for their vocation or exercising their ministry is implicitly or explicitly hobnobbing with e-ministry concept. It is all about lifting the altar or pulpit (the center of attraction and gravity) of the Church, and extending the power of Holy Spirit in the Church from the physical location to virtual locations, electronic reality is the essence of the e-ministry, otherwise known as Church without wall, Internet or virtual Church. Pentecostal Pastors in particular and other Pentecostal leaders in general should be appropriating and making use of this cutting edge tool of the now via the

ubiquitous and omnibus Internet, social media, radio, television satellite and cable communication network. Jesus said, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the entire world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14). Preaching the gospel to the entire world has historically been viewed as the main or core duty of ministry and the essence of the call to ministry, the first Pentecostalism Christian movement kicked off with preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit in the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-43) by Apostle Peter which marks the beginning of Christian Pentecostalism movement. The evangelical (Gospel spreading) movement among Christians in its current form of Pentecostalism step up the Holy Spirit fire in the 18th and 19th centuries in Britain and the US ably led by John Wesley (1703-1791), the founder of the Methodist Church, who used published monographs as the media of the time, which were used to draw followers to a new evangelical and Pentecostal cause. Methodist Movement (The Holy Club) in particular, gave birth to the Azuzu revival experience being the practical progenitor of Pentecostalism in a contemporary times save the 18th century England using Print media that later metamorphosed or snow balled into electronic media for evangelistic agenda in the 20s and what is today electronic ministry (e-ministry). (Luckman, 1967:5). Asserts "That God has not risen up this great communication technology to have the church ignore it or remain indifferent to its use. He has allowed the spread of a personal network that will soon link billions of people to each other for a reason. He is at work in providing the church a global communications platform". The Apostle Paul ministry and evangelism style of using letter writing as the media of his time should be a template for ministry style and evangelism of the African pastorates of today, hence the Church especially the Pentecostal Churches cannot afford to be in limbo or miss this platform that linked billions of people in the global village or e-continents. Today, in Nigeria for instance, Pentecostalism has taken the form of an organization known as "Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria" (PFN) which forms one of the five blocks of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and are fully linked to billions of people and community of faith in the electronic reality (e-community) through e-ministry.

It is our job, in obedience to Jesus' Great Commission, to grasp this mega tools at hand and continue the work of evangelism and the Apostles of old grasped []. Paul's response was to get in a boat and go any part of the world he could reach in person due one barrier or the other, he will use letter to dissimilate information and follow-up. The boat is his means of transport and letter writing, which is the cutting –edge technology then is his media. Had it been Apostle Paul is a pastor of the 21st century, he would have been an ardent user of television and social media for evangelism and ministry that implicitly or explicitly eliminated those threats and danger he suffered in 2nd Corinthian (11:23-27). (Walter, P. Wilson 2004:3) The World Wide Web seems, to be uprooting all of culture, as it crawls into the most remote area of civilization. He further asserts that

> This is just the beginning of a wrenching change that is racing throughout the World. The term used to describe this change is radical discontinuity-

> change so fast that we have no explanation for it. If you think that all of this comes out of Silicon Valley, you're on the wrong track. This is not about human inventions or creative schemes. These developments are about something much bigger and far more dramatic. In fact these events are about technology at all they are about the great commission. God, not by man, is orchestrating this big change. During the four hundred years of silence between Malachi and Matthew, Alexander the great army made Greek a common world language. The Romans followed behind, building a network of roads for their legions. They were worried about insurrection and wanted the capability to move loyal troops quickly. As it turned out, Christian missionaries traveled that network of roads, bringing the gospel to the known world. We may wish to label this period as four hundred years of silence, but God was not absent.

The development of Pentecostalism television evangelism in the 1950s ushered in a new era in evangelicalism and e-ministry; that of the self-proclaimed 'electronic church' (Boyd, 1957), (Hadden, 1980) defined the "electronic church as ministries". Unlike its electronic predecessor, television proved slightly more difficult for untrained evangelicals to break into, as costs were prohibitively high and the ministerial styles of many radio evangelists did not transfer well into the new medium, Nigerians are not left out in this 21st century in kick starting what is today an orgy of private owned Christian satellite television and radio stations, like Emmanuel Television, Love World, Dove Television, Love FM, Vision African and host of others. (Tony, 1983:9) quoting a publication, in the word of an article on television and the children in Newsweek (Feb. 21, 1977), say "In general, the children of TV enjoy a more sophisticated knowledge of far larger world at a much younger age… they are also likely to posses richer vocabularies". From the light of the above and personal experience, it is obvious that television is most suited as a teaching aid and tool for teaching children in the Sunday school classes by children minister hence the need for the Pentecostal Churches to lunch deeper in area of Children e-evangelism and e-ministry via television and cartoons.

Pentecostalism and e-Ministry in Africa

The wordings of John Wesley "that the world is his perish" is alive and more real in the 21st century Pentecostalism than ever in any Church age or history, now the global village or digital community which includes Africa is our perish and interconnectivity of Computers in a global network (Internet) is the vehicle that convey goods and services into digital global market through the information super high way. Through clicking the mouse into the information super highway, hooking into the international network or plugging into satellite communication, one can reach almost every part of African and world in micro seconds, hitherto, the advent of information communication technology (ICT) gave birth to the epi-phenomenon global village or digital community, hence, the need of exercising our global mandate ministerial assignment using this mega tool of the now (e-

ministry). Pentecostal Churches that invest on e-ministry through appropriating and using the products of ICT, social media, live streaming, zooming, video conferencing and other electronic platform like running a faith based television or radio station expand faster than the long established churches. Platforms should be created to carry ministry, in an easy and more robust manner. Today's pastors of the mainland Churches are looking onto aging faces and half-filled pews, the dilemma is real enough especially if just across the street a coffee house is humming with espresso-fueled conversation, tweets and face time calls. These generations are looking for praise concerts that rival the "Grammy award". They are hooked to watching and seeking knowledge of ways of life from movies, seeking fun and making friends through social media. They seek their faith mostly through Internet rather than through conventional Church and Mosques. According to (Brawner, 1997), if the church is to effectively reach this "sight and sound generation" for Christ, there is the need to utilize the same media roads that much of society is using every day. According to him, people spend many hour yearly watching television and movies, listening to the radio, reading newspaper, books, magazines etc. If any social, secular, fashion and fad or profane related issue is posted; we will be greeted with deluge of responses. But if it is a soul winning, spirit seeking or divine knowledge related issue is posted in the social media; youths will only responds in their hundreds. This is really the "sight and sound generation". The faith community need to meet them with message of "Just as I am" were they are as of the old where Jesus Christ and his disciples meet them in the market places and sea sides, also, Paul and his team meet them were they are. The Pentecostal Churches need meet young generation at Internet and social media platform. The Church should set up interactive web sites, Blog, Zoom, Facebook, whatsApp platforms, and group chats accounts in the name of their ministries; have trained youth ministers to get us on YouTube and Instagram as a way of fulfilling their call using e-ministry. Department of evangelism should expand its evangelism strategy to include media evangelism and a new roadmap for media evangelism should be marshaled out. A study by the Hartford Institute for Religious Research noted that churches that fail to embrace the technology may be viewed as out of touch with the modern era. We need to rejig our ministry to meet them where there are, today, there are in the social media.

Internet and e-Ministry

Today, clickianity has become one religion that is seriously contesting and contending for a space in the religious and cultural marketplace with Christianity and other religions. This clickianity is conceptualized as the addiction to the internet; report from "Awake" publication shows that more than fifty five (55) million people are searching for God on internet on monthly basis. People that would not ordinarily open their doors to be preached to, can easily open their phones and laptops in search of things and can stumble over printed publication that will eventually attract their attention. Due to a prevailing problem of Covid-19 Pandemic many unbelievers that are unreachable can simply open their phone and their attention caught by a story. Giving attention to such publication can make them to receive Christ at the comfort of their home or any place during this

lockdown. People hook on the Internet for exploration. People today do their private, personal, and controversial thinking online. For example if a Muslim or Christian verse versa wishing to find out about the other religion, is not likely to ask his or her family or clergy, rather he or she will look at that religion websites. Pew research had it that about one-quarter of all internet users, make regular queries about religious matters. Therefore, the Church needs to have an evangelistic, apologetic, and missionary presence in this global marketplace of ideas. They are exploring their own and other faiths on line hence the need. We have to ask, did Jesus Christ refer to the internet when He said in (Matthew 24:14) "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preach the whole world as a testimony to all nation" did He mean the event that the whole world witness on a borderless, timeless, all-encompassing technology that would be a testimony to every nation on earth as evidence in the Internet Church? Could He mean the World Wide Web (www)? We can't be certain, but as the creator and sustainer of all things, we can be confident that He foresaw the information age and internet being the mega tool of doing things, when He spoke of these events. God is doing something big, and we had best be clearheaded about what is going on around us as a church.. Presenting a united front of Pentecostal Christian belief is deemed necessary to convince a skeptical audience of the fundamental truths of Christianity using media. This unity is particularly vital in the context of the Internet, where a variety of viewpoints thrive side by side, and solidarity of opinion can create a dominant presence in a confusing and rapidly changing environment. Cross-denomination unity is also a way of distancing contemporary evangelism and exercising of ministry from the personality-based evangelical ministries that dominated the 1980s. Walter (2000:4) in his vision statement for the Internet church say "with the Internet, we have the opportunity to reach every man, woman, and child on the earth in the next decade". So, this point out clearly that using of Internet as media will be veritable ground and tool of encounter and faith advocacy on earth now. In furtherance, he sustained his claims by quoting the forecasts form Media Lab at Massachusetts Institute of Technology thus

> within the next several years there will be one billion people on the World Wide Web, that estimate represents one-sixth of the World's population. And it will continue to grow. The World Wide Web is the process of linking billions of people without requiring the approval of any world government or political authority. No one is in charge of the Internet.

Paul preached to every kind of person, from the synagogue to the cult or party of the Pharisees. He stood before business leaders, political leaders, and people from every walk of life. He conducted follow-up visits to build relationships, using media of his time 'letter writing': he provided written lesions to encourage spiritual growth, and preached to correct wrong thinking and behavior. We the Pentecostals can do same today using the cutting-edge technology of the day for encounter, advocacy and solidarity through e-ministry.

Conclusion

Pentecostalism being a parting gift from Jesus Christ to the Apostles of the olds ministry in the cosmopolitan Jerusalem has today embraced the paradigm shift of the 21st century electronic ministry (e-ministry), thereby expanding the frontier of ministry beyond those physical limits that ministry are generic wired to function before. Ministry has taken on-line reality like e-evangelism, worship and fellowship as evident during the Covid-19 pandemic. Hence, the urgent need for Church leaders especially the evangelical/Pentecostals (Methodist) should invest in e-ministry since it is the inn thing and a first-century imperative in a twenty-first century mode. Pentecostalism and e-ministry are mutual partners that work.

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