

F.C. Uroko

Dr. F.C. Uroko, Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
E-mail: favour.uroko@unn.edu.ng
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1678-704X>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38140/at.v4i2.6092>

ISSN: 1015-8758 (Print)

ISSN: 2309-9089 (Online)

Acta Theologica 2023
43(2):246-261

Date received:
6 March 2022

Date accepted:
25 October 2023

Date published:
13 December 2023

Have we lost touch with the prophet Amos' warning? Church leaders and blood money rituals among youths in Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This article reviews the literature on how religious leaders in Nigeria have become complacent and conspire in the corrupt activities of members of their congregations. Church leaders, who are meant to be guardians of ethics and morality, have lost it and are now dining with and covering people of dubious character. Some of these young people who engage in money rituals give money to these pastors, who accept it without inquiry. These young people are revered in the church and receive special prayers and honours. Others, who aspire to the same honours, seek ways to generate quick cash. This study investigates the role of church leaders in the growing ritual activities among Nigerian youths. It concludes by admonishing church leaders to emulate the life of Jesus, who was not afraid to speak the truth to the people whom he was shepherding.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the church is meant to be the moral hope of Nigeria and the basis of people's ethics and morals. The church is supposed to provide a spiritual, psychological, and realist point of view to the teeming population. However, recent developments have cast doubt on the efficacy of these aphorisms. The church in Nigeria has spent much time on homilies on prosperity. A church minister mentions that it is a curse to be poor. A church minister drives expensive cars, flouts private



Published by the UFS
<http://journals.ufs.ac.za/index.php/at>

© Creative Commons
With Attribution (CC-BY)



jets, while the church members live in abject poverty. Corroborating this thesis, Okonkwo (2022:1) reveals that, in a country with over 100 million people living in poverty, and a small minority controlling all of the resources and living a lavish lifestyle with reckless abandon, the disenfranchised will seek any means to escape their precarious situation. They fail to recall that "Christianity is the only major religion to have as its central event the humiliation of its God" (Shelley 2013:1). This type of preaching and flamboyant environment sends negative signals to the youthful population of the church that they must do all it takes to escape poverty because, according to the church minister, poverty is a curse. In fact, the church pastors argue that, when Christians succeed, God is glorified, and Christians should not suffer (Golo 2013:368). These pastors also emphasise that poverty and illness are fundamentally bad, and those who find themselves in these situations are there because of their own sins or because the devil prevents them from prospering (Williams 2017:5).

The increasing rate of money ritual activities is cause for concern for the ecclesial community. Take the case of Favour Daley-Oladele, a final-year student at Lagos State University, who was murdered for blood money rituals by her boyfriend, Adeeko Owolabi, a pastor in Osun State. There are three different kinds of money rituals in Nigeria, namely human body parts (head, tongue, eyes, heart, and genitals) are used as sacred symbols and objects for ceremonial sacrifices; wild animals (along with roots and herbs) are used for ritual sacrifices, and the use of amulets and charms, as well as the incantation of phrases are thought to bring good fortune to the person who uses them. Increasingly more youths are beginning to find the route of blood money interesting (Salihu *et al.* 2019:34). Okonkwo (2022:1) reveals that they drive fancy cars and live in large homes, while people, who refuse to participate and who do not believe that they have other genuine options, wallow in abject poverty. Because so many Nigerians desire to become wealthy quickly, the number of individuals engaging in ritual killings is growing daily. Even teenagers are taking notice and are eager to join at a young age. Women are also starting to dabble with it.

The Old Testament prophets were clearly against ill-gotten wealth. The prophet Amos of the 8th century pronounced woes on both the church minister, who is silent in the midst of youth indulging in crimes, and the youth, who decide to view ill-gotten wealth as the surest and fastest way to prove that they are not under the curse of God. Amos spoke against those who use their ill-gotten wealth to intimidate others (Gunda 2009). Okunoye (2018:124) also reveals that Amos spoke against people who viewed wealth as the greatest thing in life and that only people with money were thought to be important.

Although progress has been made in investigating different aspects of the increasing ritual activities perpetrated by youths in Nigeria (Ani *et al.* 2018; Oyewole 2016; Saliyu *et al.* 2019; Smith 2001), literature has yet to focus on how Nigerian church leaders have contributed to money rituals among youths (Yagboyaju 2017; Faleye 2013). This article reviews the literature on how religious leaders in Nigeria have become complacent and conspire in the corrupt activities of members of their congregation.

The aim of this study is to examine how Nigerian church preachers have sustained the growing quest for quick money among the youths of Nigeria. First, this study discusses the church and the moral formation of the youth. Secondly, it examines the pitfalls of the church in the moral development of youths in Nigeria. Thirdly, it explores how Christian youths are indulging in blood money rituals in Nigeria. Fourthly, the homily of the Prophet is revisited and axioms drawn from it. The study adopted the phenomenological approach in arriving at these findings.

2. CHURCH AND MORAL FORMATION OF THE YOUTH

The church, as a religious community, has a strong influence on the moral generation or degeneration of members of society. Thus, the level of moral development is linked to the level of sanctity that exists among religious communities. Hence, religion and religious communities are frequently involved in a variety of social movements and advocacy initiatives, many of which have a significant impact on the lives of the poor (Nepstad & Williams 2007).

2.1 The religious roles of the church

The church is meant to instil the fear of God in people. It leads people to Jesus Christ with the hope of eternal life. Thus, man is taught to cast his religious expectations on God. This is the essence of the first four commandments, a vertical relationship that defines our relationship with God – you shall have no other god before me, you shall not make any graven image, and you shall not take the name of the Lord in vain. *Premium Times* (2022:1) recalls that people would tremble on their seats as the fiery British preacher, Jonathan Edwards, preached, clutching their chairs to keep from falling into hell, as they screamed out to God for forgiveness for their sins. *Premium Times* also reveals that Pastor Jonathan delivered the popular message “sinners in the hands of an angry God” during one of the sessions of his teachings. This message is regarded as the most popular message in Christian history. Those messages will not form greedy or covetous people who will bring blood money into the church as tithes and offerings.

The church questions the moral standing of its adherents due to its doctrine based on Christ's humility and contentment. As a religion and a way of life, Christianity insists on God's wrath on human arrogance, self-righteousness, and deception, as well as blind allegiance to the nation, political community, or state (Pope n.d.). The church is to teach that a life pleasing to God must be combined with love for God and love for one's neighbour, for if one aspect is relegated to the background, the other suffers.

2.2 Social roles of the church

The church is also expected to teach its members about how they should relate to their fellow members. This is the essence of the last six commandments concerning our relationship with our fellow human beings. They include: remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; honour your father and your mother; you shall not kill, commit adultery, steal, bear false testimony against your neighbour, or covet your neighbour's possessions. Human life is precious, according to the Catholic Church, and the dignity of the human person is the cornerstone of a moral vision for society. All of our social teaching principles are built on this belief (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2022). The social roles of the church also include counselling and providing for the needs of its members. It also explains how man can exist cordially with other members of society without necessarily trampling on the rights of other people in society. Church ministers are meant to be the epitome of morality, so that followers can emulate them. Church ministers are meant to emphasise justice, fairness, and respect for human dignity and life, among others. In fact,

the Magisterium of the Pastors of the Church in moral matters is ordinarily exercised in catechesis and preaching, with the help of the works of theologians and spiritual authors (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2006:n.p.).

3. THE CHURCH AND THE IMMORAL FORMATION OF YOUTH

The church is a moral community that provides moral formation, while an immoral community provides immoral formation (Rasmussen 1995). When the church's acts and disposition become immoral, society is at the receiving end. This immoral formation occurs when ministers' distinctive moral role and ethical responsibilities in their personal and professional lives collide and they are threatened by the quest for material gains and benefits (Carter & Trull 2004). When ministers of God decide to seek material benefit at the detriment of the moral development of their congregants, the prosperity gospel, on which ministers' homily dwells, is becoming a sustainer of the moral degeneration of society. The prosperity gospel is

bankrupt because it deviates from the 'True gospel' and proclaims 'false gospels', which usually focus on the same basic fallacies by not matching up with Scripture. Any 'gospel' which is inconsistent with or different from the clear teachings of the Bible is bankrupt – Gal. 1:6-10; 2 Cor. 11:3-4 (Sobonejo 2016:1).

The church in Nigeria is beefing up in the minds of their congregants' competitive spirit. When someone buys a Jeep today, the other church members want to buy a Lexus tomorrow because the minister of God states that prosperity is projected to symbolise God's blessing, not minding the way the blessing comes. Due to any perceived poverty situation, no one wants to be the cursed one. The youth do not want to be "poor" like their parents. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2022:1) lamented that

everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless

in Nigeria's society. Consequently, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalised: without work, without possibilities, and without any means of escape. Human beings are viewed as consumer goods to be used and then discarded. A "throw-away" culture has been created and is now spreading. It is no longer simply about exploitation and oppression.

The following are some of the ways in which the church in Nigeria has motivated youths into blood money rituals.

3.1 It is a curse to be poor

Church ministers preach that it is a curse for anyone to remain poor. They teach their members that anybody who is right with God will become rich. They also emphasise in their homily that anything that God cannot do does not exist. In fact, the researcher was in a church where the minister mentioned that, "after 6 months, if your condition does not change, leave this church". This shows the level of hopelessness that the church bestows on the youth. In fact, the youth are prepared to do anything to be rich, in order not to be viewed as cursed people in the church. *Premium Times* (2022:1) shares in this moral degeneration of Nigerian church ministers and adumbrates that the Nigerian church has produced not only many wonderful and God-fearing preachers, but also a multitude of preachers with large followings, whose lives and ministries have greatly contributed to the spread of greed, covetousness, materialism, pride, arrogance, and ego-centrism among Nigerian youths and throughout the country. *Premium Times* (2022:1) further reveals that,

[w]hen we preach sudden wealth transfer without responsibility and commitment to work, we are programming the youths to become ritualists in the future. When we tell them to expect a 24-hour miracle of money in every meeting and at all times, we are programming them to become future ritualists.

These preachers emphasise that God blesses a person instantly without delay. They also strengthen the minds of the adherents that God gave them a breakthrough without any hard work because God can do all things. Sobonejo (2016:1) lamented that, if one does not achieve a breakthrough, the reason is that one is not giving enough offerings, according to prosperity preachers. Prosperity preaching encourages one to deny oneself and follow Jesus, but Jesus calls one to deny oneself and not to follow one's worldly lusts. The impacts are observed in the increasing craze for money, which has migrated to blood money rituals and activities among youths, especially teenagers, in the name of "God has blessed me". They also claim that Jesus was one of the wealthiest people who ever lived. This, they argue, is because during Jesus' three years of ministry, he was able to survive and continue to minister despite not having a job (Jones 2014:35).

3.2 No questioning of sudden wealth

Churches do not question the unknown wealth of their congregants. They are afraid of losing the tithes and offerings of their members. When youths, with no known source of income, start driving expensive cars and moving with an entourage, the pastor is supposed to call the person or carry out private investigations to ascertain the source of the income. Of course, they are emulating their pastors, who live flamboyant lifestyles. Golo (2013:374) explains that the preacher's lifestyle epitomises the prosperity for which the followers crave for themselves, feeding their greed even further.

If the money is thought to be fraudulent, that is from blood rituals, the person should be removed from any position. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, that person is given a position in the church. He was made committee chairman of so many committees. He is given special prayers in the church. Other youths watch with dismay and shame on themselves for not being able to attain this high esteem. This motivates the other youths to do whatever it takes to make money, in order to be commended and have a position in the church. The church knows that the individual has engaged in blood money rituals but it still takes donations from the person (Olowolagba 2022:1).

3.3 How will I get respect among church members

Churches now measure spirituality by the individual's prosperity. The more spiritual a person is, according to the church ministers, the richer s/he will be. To show that they are more spiritual, the youth engage in money rituals to prove their closeness to God. They even do thanksgiving in the church, and the pastor blesses them in the church, telling the congregants that their blessing is as a result of their faithfulness to God. These preachers tell their followers that their spirituality is determined by their financial well-being, which is greed, taught from the pulpit, infecting God's house like a plague (Sobonejo 2016:1). The poor members of the church feel that they are not spiritually strong. That is the reason why God has not blessed them. In plain language,

if wealth and health are a result of the degree of faith a person has, this leads to the conclusion that the poor are poor because they are spiritually deficient (Spencer 2017:1).

3.4 Activities of the clergy

People do not view blood money ritual activities as condemnable because even their pastors have been caught in money rituals. According to Okonkwo (2022:1), there are allegations of bishops patronising ritualists who they do so in order to secure their place at the head of the church, fend off those who want them out, or promote their brand of prosperity preaching. This is no longer a secret in Nigerian churches as church ministers now flaunt expensive cars, live in exotic mansions, drive costly cars, and maintain private jets to the detriment of the so-called spiritual kindergarten members. The youths watch with commitment and emulation, and are poised to do anything to enjoy this blatant wealth and respect. Some pastors have been caught engaging in money rituals, and using the destinies of members of their churches for their riches and glory. For instance, pastor Okeke Eneokwor was arrested in Enugu for killing a seven-year old boy for money rituals (Ndukwe 2021). Pastor Sunday Egbo was arrested in Nsukka after his attempt to use a lady for rituals failed to materialise (Ede 2019). This sends a negative signal to the youth that all the wealth flaunted by the pastors is ill-gotten. Hence, there is no harm in their trying to obtain blood money. In general, this strong, obscene, and blatant desire for wealth has turned into an obsession that causes the typical Nigerian (young, adult, educated, and uneducated) to worry about money and a luxurious lifestyle (Bisong & Ekanem 2014). These pastors manipulate scriptures to suit their selfish aims. This is called eisegesis, "done by means of proof-texts taken out of context and used as prescriptive statements for their doctrines" (Young 1996:5).

3.5 The economic roles of the church

The church is responsible for teaching its members the need to get wealth the correct way. The church is supposed to insist that money obtained through fraudulent means such as yahoo-yahoo, bribery, corruption, and rituals is not acceptable by God and by the church. The church is not supposed to emphasise the prosperity gospel, which encourages people, particularly youths, to fly in private jets and live in multimillion-dollar mansions as proof of God's love (Bowler 2018:1), but rather contentment and patience. Thus, the dominant values of a nation and, in particular, the overriding values of youngsters are largely determined by the quality of teachings emerging from church pulpits (*Premium Times* 2022). The church is supposed to teach that religiosity and spirituality entail contentment. The issue of always teaching the congregants that God can provide all their needs has caused more damage to the psychological well-being of youths because when these are not fulfilled in their lives, they seek ways to fulfil them. Spencer (2019:1) is of the view that Christian life is a call to abandon materialism and greed in favour of a life of joyful satisfaction in Christ. Thus, there is a need to contextualise the scriptures for the Nigerian context. This demonstrates that, in order to do justice to the particularity and universality of Christian ethics, as well as the communality and individuality of biblical anthropology, and to pay attention to African contextual peculiarities, Christian character and conscience formation are important, especially in a society bedevilled with immoralities (Bafinamene 2016).

4. CHRISTIAN YOUTHS INDULGING IN BLOOD MONEY RITUALS IN NIGERIA

The increasing activity of blood money rituals among the youth is alarming. One would have thought that the crusades and evangelism would have instilled the fear of human lives in the hearts of the youth, but the reverse is the case. Blood rituals and money personalities are revered within and outside the church. Okonkwo (2022:1) reveals that one gains access to the inner circles of individuals who manage money in society when one kills a human being for a money ritual. Leaders reward one with opportunities once one has made it into the inner circles of the church or moneybags gang. When they are accepted into the inner circles, other youths are lured into it and it becomes a culture. In fact and theory, the practice of ritual killing for the purpose of profit is deeply established in a society of excessive greed and rapid fortune (*Premium Times* 2022:1). These youths are given a kind of false faith that anything they conceive they will receive. This makes them conceive, and when it is not forthcoming, they force it through blood money rituals and receive it, making everything rejoice that God has blessed the person.

The so-called law of faith that sees a direct correlation between positive thinking and material prosperity distracts individuals from understanding the natural laws that govern economic reality. Expecting a future supernatural blessing to make a balloon payment on a mortgage may tempt someone to ignore the financial realities of an excessively large loan-to-value-ratio on a house. This could result in real, naturally caused financial ruin (Spencer 2017:1).

God has been reduced to the place of an ancestor who blesses one when he is happy and curses one when he is sad.

[Within] the African context this reduces God to being almost like the ancestors who can be manipulated into fulfilling the desires of the living relatives who have performed the right sacrifices (Williams 2017:9).

The following are some of the reasons why increasingly more Christian youths are getting into blood money rituals.

4.1 What will I tell my mates?

The vast majority of youths go into money rituals because they do not want their mates to regard them as failures. Most of these youths into blood money rituals do so on the basis of peer and other societal pressures. Some may have left secondary school or university after a long time, and when they see that they have not made money and may be returning to the village to see their friends, they do these blood money rituals, so that their friends may respect them and also see them as prosperous. As a result of this unquenchable need for wealth, exacerbated by societal pressure, many Nigerians have turned to all kinds of (abnormal and criminal) behaviour, in order to get rich (Salihu *et al.* 2019:36).

4.2 What will I tell my parents?

Some parents are good at comparing their children with other prosperous children in the community. When they do so, the children grab any slightest opportunity they have to make fast wealth, in order to please their parents. In fact, some parents have been accused of taking their sons to native doctors for money ritual activities. Families do not ask their children how they make their money, and some do not care where the money comes from (Olowolagba 2022:1). Some youths want to make their parents proud. They feel that their family cannot continue in abject poverty. They go into blood money rituals to increase the financial status of their families and to improve their social rating and acceptance. However, nothing can be equated with human life.

[T]he case of parenting and the very bedrock of society – family and we begin to get our answers. Most families these days do not care how you have come about your money (Alabi 2022:1).

5. AXIOMS IN PROPHET AMOS' PREACHING

Amos lived during the government of

Uzziah, king of Judah (792-740 B.C.) and Jeroboam II, king of Israel (793-753 B.C.); during the long reigns of these two kings, both Judah and Israel enjoyed peace and prosperity. However, it was also a period marked by ungodliness and disobedience on the part of God's covenant people, especially in Israel. So God sent Amos to call the Israelites to repent before it was too late. Sadly, they did not heed Amos's message, and God's judgement fell upon Israel in 722 B.C. when the Assyrians conquered the land and sent the Israelites into exile (Hale 2007:1240).

Amos rebuked those who get money through dishonest gain. Four interrelated themes are of central importance in Amos:

- a. Judgement: Israel's fate – destruction – is certain, inescapable, and total.
- b. Social justice: The quality of one's relationship with God depends, to some extent, on how one relates to fellow members of the covenant community.
- c. The cult: Amos denounces those who take advantage of the poor and still come to worship God (Amos 4:4-5).
- d. The word: Israel turned a deaf ear to the prophets who reproached them for their disloyalty and even tried to silence them (Amos 2:12) (Barre 2007:209).

Amos made it clear to the congregants that God hates those who hide the truth because of personal gains. Amos also queries those who trample on the poor because of the poor conditions of the community. He urges

the Israelites to seek good, to look for any good they can do and then do it. Then Amos says, the Lord will be with you (5v.14). In 5v 21-24, the Lord expresses His displeasure at the false worship of the Israelites. Instead, the Lord wants to see justice roll like a river (v.24) (Hale 2007:1247).

Amos was not afraid of the people, notwithstanding how terrible the message sounded. According to Motyer (1984:10),

His message is relevant, humbling, and frightening. It rebukes the 'eleven and six-thirty' of our formalism; it offers the salutary reminder that a tradition of the church may have lasted two hundred years only to be a false at the end as it was at the beginning; it insists that the church loses the centrality of the Word of God to its eternal peril; it exposes the sin of religious self-pleasing; it describes a religion which is abhorrent to God and calls for its replacement by a resting upon divine grace in

faith and repentance, a commitment to God's law in obedience, and a ceaseless concern for the needy among men. Without these, there is nothing so effective as religion to separate us from God's love and to cement us to His wrath.

During the

time of Amos, there was also a social and moral decline. Temple prostitutes were made use of by young and old, with a father and a son using the same girl in total contravention of God's laws (2:7b-8). The people violated God's law and compassion and neglected the practice of true religion (Bitrus 2006:1061).

They were very interested in bringing tithes and offerings to the church, thinking that they could bribe God for their wickedness. In Amos 1:13-15,

those who by violence and fraud seek to enlarge their own border will justly be expelled and excluded [from] their own border; nor is it strange if those who make no conscience of invading the rights of others be able to make no resistance against those who invade theirs (Henry 2006:1504).

When Amos came to Bethel to speak the truth to the congregants, he was rebuked by a fellow prophet named Amaziah. Amaziah's opposition suggests that Amos' message was a powerful one that was attracting attention, but because of the gain Amaziah was getting from false preaching, he tried to stop Amos (Bitrus 2006:1064). According to Henry (2006:1502),

it appears by his contest with Amaziah the priest of Bethel that he met with opposition in his work, but [he] was a man of undaunted resolution in it, faithful and bold in reproofing sin and denouncing the judgments of God for it and pressing in his exhortations to repentance and reformation.

Amos seeks the empowerment of the poorest among the people (Rogers & Konieczny 2018).

6. DEFINING THE ROAD MAP

Nigeria has become enslaved not by colonial masters, as in 1960, but by the false teachings of prosperity preachers that have metamorphosed into blood money ritual activities among the youth. Biblical hermeneutics, which is meant to be exegesis, has now become a homily of the personal opinions of prosperity preachers. One must develop a Christian conscience. The formation of a Christian conscience takes place within the framework of a

communal faith that views Jesus Christ as the revelation of God's designs for the world and the ultimate significance of human existence. Conscience is formed through a constant conversion to what is true and to what is good (Onukwube 2019:267).

There is a need to rebrand worship and service to God. Church ministers should limit their closeness to politicians, as this has greatly affected the craving for the church ministers' flamboyant living. Church leaders should reposition the poor among them in positions of leadership in development projects where they can feel a sense of belonging. This is a way of empowering the poor among them.

Möller (2003:69) mentions that Amos uses persuasion to achieve his aim, bearing his audience in mind. Church ministers should use persuasion to spread the news of contentment and patience, rather than the false prosperity preaching born out of selfish gains and the quest for material benefits.

Amos slammed pastors who are afraid to speak the truth for fear of being insulted, and for financial gain. This should be the *modus operandi* of church ministers. They should not be afraid to say the truth, notwithstanding the threats from their enemies.

Church ministers should stop emphasising God's blessings all the time and in the homily that poverty is a curse. Beginning from the Old to the New Testament, one can be poor and still be right with God. The pulpit is not the place to present personal opinions or to preach what we want the Bible to mean.

7. CONCLUSION

There are so many poor people in Nigeria, despite the proliferation of the prosperity gospel and its fake assurance of wealth and blessings. Youths are no longer prepared to work because they are made to depend on faith, due to the prosperity pastors' error in African hermeneutics. It saddens Banda's heart (2016:169), through his write-up that "the work ethic is eroded away. Since we can claim wealth by means of faith and positive confession, there is no need to work." Youths should be told that nothing can be used to replace hard work. Like prophet Amos, church pastors should emphasise not only not only that the end justifies the means, but also that the means justifies the end.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALABI, D.

2022. Who is to be blamed for the rise in ritual killings in the country? *Nigerian Tribune*, 12 February, p. 1.

ANI, K.J., NNANWUBE, E.F. & OJAKOROTU, V.

2018. Sociological assessment of violent female ritual killings and “baby factories” in Nigeria. *African Journal of Gender, Society & Development* 7(1):9-25. <https://doi.org/10.31920/2050-4284/2018/S1n1a1>

BAFINAMENE, C.K.

2016. Church and moral formation in an African context: A critical appropriation of Stanley Hauerwas’ proposal. <https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/61208>

BANDA, C.

2016. Empowering hope? Jürgen Moltmann’s eschatological challenge to ecclesiological responses in the Zimbabwean context of poverty. Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch. [Online.] Available at: <https://scholar.sun.ac.za>.

BARRE, A.

2007. Amos. In: R. Brown, J. Fitzmyer & R. Murphy (eds.), *The New Jerome biblical commentary* (London: Burns and Oates), pp. 209-210.

BISONG, P.B. & EKANEM, S.A.

2014. The contemporary Nigerian *summum bonum* and its effect on the economy. *Sophia: An African Journal of Philosophy* 15(1):57-61.

BITRUS, D.

2006. Amos. In: T. Adeyemo (ed.), *Africa Bible commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), pp. 1061-1064.

BOWLER, K.

2018. I’m a scholar of the “prosperity gospel”. It took cancer to show me I was in its grip. What happens when faith and hard work aren’t enough? [Online.] Retrieved from: <https://www.vox.com/first-person/2018/3/12/17109306/prosperity-gospel-good-evil-cancer-fate-theology-theodicy> [12 March 2018].

CARTER, J. & TRULL, J.E.

2004. *Ministerial ethics: Moral formation for church leaders*. Second edition. Ada, MI: Baker Academic.

EDE, R.

2019. Police parade Enugu pastor for rape, money rituals. *The Punch*, 20 November.

FALEYE, O.A.

2013. Religious corruption: A dilemma of the Nigerian state. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* 15(1):170-185.

GOLO, B.K.

2013. Africa's poverty and its neo-pentecostal "liberators": An ecotheological assessment of Africa's prosperity gossellers. *Pneuma* 35(2013):366-384. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700747-12341366>

GUNDA, M.R.

2009. African theology of reconstruction: The painful realities and practical options! *Exchange* 38(1):84-102. <https://doi.org/10.1163/157254309X381174>

HALE, T.

2007. Amos. In: T. Hale & S. Thorson, *The applied Old Testament commentary* (Ontario: David C. Cook), pp.1240-1247.

HENRY, M.

2006. Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

JONES, D.W.

2014. Errors of the prosperity gospel. *9 marks journal*, Jan-Feb, 34-37.

MÖLLER, K.

2003. *A prophet in debate: The rhetoric of persuasion in the book of Amos* (Vol. 372). London: Sheffield Academic Press

MOTYER, J.A.

1984. *The message of Amos*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press.

NDUKWE, D.

2021. Police in Enugu arrest man and a pastor over ritual killing of man's son. *Vanguard*, 11 November.

NEPSTAD, S.E. & WILLIAMS, R.H.

2007. Religion in rebellion, resistance, and social movements. In: J.A. Beckford & N.J. Demerath (eds), *The Sage handbook of the sociology of religion* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications), pp. 419-437. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781848607965.n21>

OKONKWO, R.O.

2022. We are all ritual killers. [Online.] Retrieved from: <https://www.thecable.ng/we-are-all-ritual-killers> [3 March 2023].

OKUNOYE, J.O.

2018. The relevance of Amos' prophetic message in revamping contemporary Nigerian society. *International Journal of Integrative Humanism* 10(2):124-125.

OLOWOLAGBA, F.

2022. Money ritual: Churches, families never question sources of wealth – Noble Igwe. *Dailypost*, 30 January, p. 1.

ONUkWUBE, E.K.

2019. *Culture of death: A bioethical reflection*. Uwani-Enugu: Ebenezer Productions Nigeria Limited.

OYEWOLE, S.

2016. Kidnapping for rituals: Article of faith and insecurity in Nigeria. *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies* 9(9):35-52.

POPE, S.J.

n.d. Moral Formation as transformation: The contribution of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Retrieved from: [https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/cjll/texts/cjrelations/resources/articles/pope.htm__;!!LRJdiIM!FFpXRTXzEOdDBUfwxWIF5oBWwk95Skh_TuPoCk2GAgGGX3e7MHH_b2YVTKAvF-4fxHybs4ah0v-Ryx4N7-qSyLlrcB5\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/cjll/texts/cjrelations/resources/articles/pope.htm__;!!LRJdiIM!FFpXRTXzEOdDBUfwxWIF5oBWwk95Skh_TuPoCk2GAgGGX3e7MHH_b2YVTKAvF-4fxHybs4ah0v-Ryx4N7-qSyLlrcB5$) [12 June 2023].

PREMIUM TIMES

2022. Stemming the tide of money rituals: The role of the church. [Online.] Retrieved from: <https://www.premiumpages.com/opinion/512599-stemming-the-tide-of-money-rituals-the-role-of-the-church-by-ayo-akerere.html> [13 March 2023].

RASMUSSEN, L.

1995. Moral community and moral formation. *The Ecumenical Review* 47(2):181-187. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-6623.1995.tb03695.x>

ROGERS, M. & KONIECZNY, M.E.

2018. Does religion always help the poor? Variations in religion and social class in the West and societies in the Global South. *Palgrave Communications* 4 art. 73. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-018-0135-3>

SALIHU, H.A., ISIAKA, M. & ABDULAZIZ, I.

2019. The growing phenomenon of money rituals. Motivated killings in Nigeria: An empirical investigation into the factors responsible. *UKH Journal of Social Sciences* 3(2):32-44. <https://doi.org/10.25079/ukhjss.v3n2y2019.pp32-44>

SHELLEY, B.

2013. *Church history in plain language*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic.

SMITH, D. J.

2001. Ritual killing, 419, and fast wealth: Inequality and the popular imagination in south-eastern Nigeria. *American Ethnologist* 28(4):803-826. <https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.2001.28.4.803>

SOBOYEJO, J.O.

2016. Prosperity gospel and its religious impact on sustainable economic development of African nations. *Open Access Library Journal* 3(11), 1. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1103153>

SPENCER, A.

2017. Why the prosperity gospel is so harmful. [Online.] Retrieved from: <https://tifwe.org/prosperity-gospel-harmful/> [12 June 2023].

2019. Why we need a more positive vision of contentment. [Online.] Retrieved from: <https://rebrand.ly/r9p718j> [12 March 2023].

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

2006. What is the role of the church related to morality? [Online.] Retrieved from: <https://www.archspm.org/faith-and-discipleship/catholic-faith/what-is-the-role-of-the-church-related-to-morality/> [12 June 2023].

2022. Life and dignity of the human person. [Online.] Retrieved from: <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/life-and-dignity-of-the-human-person> [12 June 2023].

WILLIAMS, G.

2017. The prosperity gospel's effect in missions: An African perspective. [Online.] Retrieved from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351811344> [22 March 2023].

YAGBOYAJU, D.A.

2017. Religion, culture and political corruption in Nigeria. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review* 5(1):1-10. <https://doi.org/10.4102/apsdpr.v5i1.151>

YOUNG, P.R.

1996. Prosperity teaching in an African context. *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 15(1):3-18.

Keywords

Trefwoorde

Church leaders

Kerkleiers

Blood money rituals

Bloedgeld rituele

Youth

Jeug

Amos

Amos