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Prosperity mega-church business booming in Nigeria

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A report by the BBC says that a growing number of Nigeria's 70 million Christians are flocking after "prosperity megachurches" who teach church members that economic and material blessings in the present life are the primary benefits of the "Gospel." According to the report, most of the Nigeria's "prosperity churches" are led by multi-millionaire pastors who present their personal material success as models of the benefits of "following Christ."

Prosperity mega-churches are popular in the southwestern region of Nigeria, especially Lagos, a vast sprawling metropolis and financial center of Nigeria with a population estimated at over 10 million.

One of the most popular prosperity mega-churches in Nigeria is the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), led by the Pastor Enoch Adeboye, known to this followers as "Daddy G.O" (Daddy General Overseer). A few years ago, Enoch Adeboye made Newsweek's list of top 50 Global Elites. Adeboye was the only African on a list of the world's most influential leaders which included the Pope Benedict XVI. According to the Newsweek, Adeboye is "one of the world's most powerful people."

According to AfricanLoft, Pastor Enoch Adeboye, a former University mathematics teacher, leads a church with over 14,000 branches in 110 countries. The U.S. and the U.K. alone have over 700 branches of the Church. RCCG-UK organizes a religious gathering which is one of the largest religious gatherings in Europe while its North American counterpart ranks among the most popular immigrant religious groups in the U.S. and Canada. RCCG recently acquired 100 acres of land in Floyd, rural Texas, on which the church intends to set up a private university and convention facility.

RCCG in Nigeria recently completed a worship auditorium one mile long and half a mile wide and can take up to one million people at once.

But what explains RCCG's extraordinary success? Pastor Adeboye admits frankly:



Pentecostals have such an impact because they talk of the here and now, not just the by and by...We pray for the sick, but we pray for their prosperity, for their overcoming of evil forces and $so\ on$. While we have to worry about heaven, there are some things God could do for us in the here and now.



A shopping mall in Lagos: Prosperity

churches cash in the Lagosians' taste for

the good living

Adeboye's message to his five million strong Nigerian followers is not about reward in the afterlife or blissful repose in heaven after death. You seldom hear of "salvation of the soul" on his pulpit sermons but reward here and now in the most material terms possible. His sermons are dominated by prayers and promises of economic and material prosperity: new jobs, bigger salaries, new homes, new cars, business success, victory over enemies both spiritual and physical, babies for the barren, healing for the sick, victory at the polls for the politicians and presidents who patronize him.

And mammon hungry Nigerians just can't get enough of Adeboye's promises of the "blessings of Solomon" here and now. Adeboye's appetite for growth, even after he has amassed "gargantuan followership," is insatiable. His goal is to "plant churches the way Starbucks used to build coffee shops: everywhere." Adeboye says:

In the developing world we say we want churches to be within five minutes'

 $walk\ of\ every\ person.\ In\ the\ developed\ world,\ we\ say\ five\ minutes\ of\ driving.$

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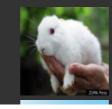
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