

1 COMMERCIALIZATION OF RELIGIOUS OBJECTS AMONGST PENTECOSTAL 2 CHURCHES IN NIGERIA: A CRITIQUE

3 4 5 **Abstract**

6 This study examined the commercialization of religious objects among Pentecostal churches in
7 Nigeria, offering a critical assessment of its theological, ethical, and socio-economic
8 implications. Pentecostal Christianity in Nigeria emphasizes vibrant spirituality, faith expression,
9 healing, and deliverance. However, in recent times, these spiritual practices have increasingly
10 been accompanied by the sale and promotion of religious objects such as anointing oil, holy
11 water, prayer garments, handkerchiefs, wristbands, and other symbolic items. These practices
12 have extended beyond spiritual symbolism and now raise serious concerns about the intersection
13 of faith and commercial interests. The study identified major areas of concern, including the
14 distortion of core Christian teachings, the commodification of spiritual experiences, and the
15 exploitation of vulnerable worshippers who are often encouraged to associate spiritual
16 effectiveness with financial capacity. Economic hardship, unemployment, poverty, and weak
17 regulatory oversight within the religious space are identified as factors sustaining this trend. The
18 commercialization of religious objects also places psychological pressure on believers and risks
19 shifting emphasis from genuine faith, repentance, and obedience to transactional spirituality.
20 Furthermore, the study explored possible measures for addressing this growing challenge. These
21 include sound biblical teaching, ethical accountability among church leaders, theological re-
22 orientation of congregants, and greater emphasis on faith-based practices that do not depend on
23 material exchange. The research also underscored the need for self-regulation within Pentecostal
24 movements and the role of Christian bodies in promoting doctrinal integrity. The study
25 concluded that unchecked commercialization undermines the credibility of Pentecostal churches
26 and threatens the essence of Christian worship. It therefore recommends intentional efforts by
27 church leadership to discourage exploitative practices, promote transparent ministry operations,
28 and refocus Christian faith on spiritual authenticity rather than material transactions.

29 **Keywords:** Commercialization, Religious, Pentecostal, Churches, Nigeria, Critique

30 **Introduction**

31 Commercialization of religious objects is a phenomenon in the Nigerian Pentecostal
32 Ministry. It has made the institution to deviate from its original tenets; sacredness, purity,
33 holiness and promotion of truth, but rooted itself in the pursuit of materialism and mundane
34 pleasures. A friend narrated what he passed through in hands of pastors and prophets when the
35 mother was sick. I. Okoye (personal Communication April 20th, 2024), in my struggle to give

36 better life to my mother and younger siblings, she got sick. Considering my low income status as
37 a petty worker, I could not afford the high fee charged with the well-equipped hospital to
38 diagnose the actual cause of the sickness and its cure. We turned to alternative sources for
39 healing, which include Africa traditional herbs and prayers. We were then informed about
40 numerous prophets, Pastors and great men of God who have supernatural powers to heal
41 incurable disease and break evil curses. In our predicament, we found nothing more intriguing
42 than the constant demand for the purchase of holy water, holy oil, holy bathe, holy towel and a
43 faithful seed by these men of God from whom we sought help. They claim that, the faithful seed
44 would be to serve as a contact point between my mother and God and thus earn her healing.
45 However, despite the faithful seeds donated, coupled with the purchase of the holy items my
46 mother's illness was never healed and God eventually decided her fate. Another dimension of
47 this Pentecostal Ministry is the act of leveling allegation on their Clients during prayer session.
48 In trying to understand the beliefs and ideal about this Pentecostal Ministry, I. Okoye (personal
49 Communication April 20th, 2024), stated that affluence gospels in Nigeria have a tendency of
50 incorporating Christian values, African custom or traditions to sensitize its audiences. It is a
51 tradition that links every phenomenon in Nigeria to spirituality. It is from this backdrop that the
52 work is inspired to conduct a research that investigates the threat this theology may pose on the
53 Christian faith in Nigeria. There are many Christians in Nigeria who are made to believe that
54 their offerings can earn them healing or God's blessing. I found nothing more inspirational in our
55 time than to study the beliefs and culture of these Pentecostal Ministry that claimed to have
56 solutions for all human problems.

57 The problem that prompted this research work is the act of pastors turning the gospel of
58 Christ that was offered freely to mankind as a means of making money. Pentecostal Pastors tends

59 to take advantage of the ignorance of her congregations in order make unnecessary profit. This is
60 similar to what existed during the middle ages when the early Church engages in the sale of
61 Indulgence and relics in order to construct edifice at the expense of their poor members. These
62 pastors do not account to anybody but the soul aim of their ministry and their pocket (Pot-belly
63 Ministers). This research will critically examine some of the preaching and attitudes of
64 Pentecostal Ministries and its effects in Nigerian society. Also this research tries to stimulate
65 some consciousness in Christendom of the urgent demand to emphatically dissuade the modern
66 day Pentecostals from temptation of pursuing earthly treasure to the detriment of their own
67 eternal destinies and that of others. It raises alarm on the indifferent attitudes of some Nigerians
68 to their Personal Christian life who in turn place their faith on these objects rather than God
69 himself. The study serves as an eye opener that over emphasizes on materialism as a recent
70 development in the Nigeria Pentecostalism. It therefore sounds the alarm that most of the neo-
71 Pentecostal churches in Nigeria probably exist to hypnotize, defraud and swindle unsuspecting
72 worshippers of their hard earned resources in the name of seed of faith and other named offertory
73 for prosperity. The study focuses on the history, origin, development, religious objects, effects
74 and solutions of Commercialization of religious objects in Nigeria. The work will additionally
75 study every aspect of prosperity within the Nigeria religious environment that could illuminate
76 and broaden more comprehension on the subject matter. The researcher put to use both
77 documentary and oral sources. There were two forms of available existing materials namely; the
78 printed and the electronic source of information. The printed source, much of which falls under
79 Primary source include books written by the precursors and all the protagonist of
80 commercialization of religious objects in Pentecostal Ministry Included in this category are

81 News Bulletin or Newsletters, Tithes cards/ledgers among others. Other secondary sources
82 include: journal articles, internet materials, and newspaper and non-Church magazines.

83 **Origin of Commercialization of Religious Objects**

84 The origin of commercialization of religious objects could be traced back to the middle
85 ages. K. Nwadior (personal communication April 17th, 2024) submitted that the Church
86 developed several concept practices to pay for this extravagant lifestyle. Christian tradition
87 taught that pilgrimages to site of relics (objects used by important religious figure) and holy
88 place were acceptable ways of repenting from one's sin. During the late middle Ages, some
89 clergy took advantages of this tradition and charged people who want to see holy relics. History
90 proves that Fredrick I, a prince in northern Germany, kept a collection of over 17,000 relics that
91 allegedly included a piece of Moses' burning bush, 33 fragments of Jesus cross and some straw
92 from Jesus manger. The money collected from pilgrimages to these relics paid for the building of
93 a Cathedral, a castle and a University in Fredrick's kingdom. Simony the practice of selling
94 church positions to the highest bidder regardless of the buyer's religious background or training
95 was another practice that earned money for the Church. The most profitable and controversial of
96 the concept practices used to raise money for the Church was the selling of indulgence. At first,
97 an indulgence consisted of a certificate issued by the pope to a person whose sins had been
98 forgiven. The certificate was designed to cancel some or all of the punishment a person would
99 suffer death for his or her sins. In time, however, a person seeking indulgences could buy what
100 amounted to form letter from any member of Church officials. Other corrupt Churchmen
101 introduced the idea that indulgences could be purchase for family members who had already died
102 and whose salvation might be in doubt. Though it was never officially stated by the Church,

103 many members of the clergy taught that salvation was attainable simple through the purchase of
104 enough indulgences (Arnold, 1999).

105 Arnold (1999) stated that indulgences were a system of exchange whereby the priests
106 employed their special rapport with God to perform certain religious acts for laymen. For a price,
107 clergy would pray, fast and read scripture for a person. In other worlds, pastoral services were
108 bought. This was later developed into buying up time one might have to spend in purgatory.
109 Trueman (2018) observed that most of the abuse identified by Henry's advisors involved money.
110 The church was a very wealthy organization and owned vast amounts of land throughout
111 England and Wales. Despite this wealth, the church still charged the general public for its
112 services; be it baptism, wedding or burial, all Christian ceremonies that took place on a very
113 regular basis. Though the individual amount for each 'service' was small, to the poor it was
114 money they could ill afford to pay.

115 **Identifying Religious Objects in Pentecostal Churches**

116 There are various religious objects that could be identified among Pentecostal ministries
117 but with this research work will explore the following:

118 **Anointing Oil**

119 The holy anointing oil formed an integral part of the ordination of the priesthood and the
120 High Priest as well as the consecration of the articles of the Tabernacle (Exodus 30:26) and
121 subsequent temple in Jerusalem. The Primary purpose of anointing with the holy anointing oil
122 was to sanctify, to set the anointed person or object apart or most holy (Exodus 30:29). Anointed
123 oil is used in Christianity and also among Pentecostal Ministries. A passage in the New
124 Testament says:

125 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is
126 any among you sick? Let him call for the elders the church, and let them pray over him,
127 anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, (James 5:13-14 RSV.)

128 Some Pentecostal Ministry makes use of anointing oil like the living faith. (Omotoye and
129 Opoola, 2012) stated that the application of the anointing oil blessed by Pastor Oyedepo have the
130 power of healing poverty. Any member of the Church who is looking for a job is expected to
131 apply anointing oil before the interview in order to receive employment.

132 **Salt**

133 Biblically, salt is associated as a perseverative which stem off corruption and rottenness,
134 bringing salvation and healing. The English transliteration of the Greek word for salt is “*Sozo*”
135 which means whole healing, wholeness, salvation etc. Our English translations separate healing
136 from salvation which actually is foreign to Biblical Christianity. Salt has a crystalline structure.
137 Crystal apparently is able to receive an imprint that affects both physical and the spirit world.
138 The symbol of salt refers to cleansing, the removal of what is corrupt and is in itself an agents for
139 addressing what is toxic (2 kings 2:19-22) and Jesus made reference of salt in Luke 14:34-35.

140 **Water**

141 Water is associated with baptism, washing evil away, rebirth and Spiritual Warfare. Also
142 water is the symbol of satisfying thirst (Mark 9:41) and also used in cleansing. It is even used as
143 a metaphor of Jesus Himself when referring to the living water in His conversation with the
144 Samaritan woman in John 4:9-14. Water satisfies refreshes and can symbolize the release of
145 new life. Bro. Joshua Iginla of Champions Royal Assembly healed a soldier of his HIV-Positive
146 status after drinking water given to him by the wife that she collected after one of the services.

147 **Handkerchief**

148 Simpson (2010) opines that there is a new phenomenon especially among some island
149 Churches where handkerchiefs are being handed around a congregation claiming that they have an
150 anointing that can cause people to be healed and other miraculous things happen to them. The
151 researcher witnessed the general overseer of the living Church distributing handkerchief to his
152 members after one his services as a symbol of the perfection of their prayer request. This idea of
153 passing handkerchiefs around seems to be taken from the following verses in Acts: Acts 19:11-
154 12.

155 **Seed Sowing**

156 Nigerian Pentecostal theology of prosperity has always been built around seed sowing.
157 Many Pentecostal Pastors encourage their members to engage in these seed sowing with the aid of
158 Luke 8:1-11 (The Parable of the sower). They usually conclude that the only place (best land) to
159 sow is in their Ministry or Church and they neglect the Widow and Orphan etc. In as much there
160 are tremendous blessings in giving and especially giving to the almighty God, but there are other
161 ways to attract divine blessing and equally give to God which these commercial pastors fail to
162 expound to their members.

163 **African World View on Religious Objects**

164 Ezenweke and Ogada (2012) submitted that religious objects and symbols are therefore, a
165 way of saying or expressing abstract ideas, values or notions which would be difficult or even
166 impossible to say or express directly. The traditional African meaning of religious objects
167 transcends the physical intrinsic properties of the objects and can only be understood in terms of
168 the meaning which the people of that culture invest in them. The 'ofo' and 'oji' symbols would
169 qualify as a dominant Igbo ritual symbol (Ezenweke and Ogada, 2012). The importance of these
170 religious objects to an African man is that, is the only way through which communication and

171 interaction are possible. Also these objects enable man to have interaction with the supernatural
172 beings in effort to find answers to his numerous problems. Man is a composite of material (body)
173 and spiritual (Soul). The Spiritual aspect of man links him with other spiritual forces, often
174 times, through rituals. Thus rituals are the vehicles through which man can enter into intimate
175 relationship with the spiritual forces. The communication with these immortals cannot be
176 possible without the use and application of religious objects or symbol. Therefore, one could see
177 clearly that Pentecostal Ministries which make use of religious objects share the same belief with
178 African Tradition Religion. As these objects connects and aid communication between man and
179 divinities so do the religious objects used by the Pentecostal Ministry contribute to facilities and
180 enhance their relationship their God that they claim attract blessing and elevation to them.

181 **Reasons for Commercializing Religious Objects**

182 There are various reasons one could imagine that lead some Pentecostal ministries into
183 commercializing religious objects that ought to be free avenue for humanity encountering
184 divinity. But for the purpose of this research work, the following will be discussed as some of the
185 reasons; finance, competition, fame, to have more congregations etc.

186 **Finance**

187 Appiah, Dwomoh and Kyire (2013) submitted that salvation is not cheap to get, it must
188 be paid for and using advertising and other communication tools play a significant role for
189 churches to communicate to the outside world that they can excellently provide this service. The
190 level of economic hardship in Nigeria had led unemployed youth to engage in opening
191 Pentecostal ministry with the aim of maximizing profit. Apostle Paul in Philippians 3:19 “their
192 end is destruction, their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly
193 things”. These so called ministers take advantage of the predicament of their congregation for

194 merchandize. It is in our contemporary world that the pastor will drive latest model of jeep to
195 church while the congregations either trek or enter motorcycles. Many pastors own private jet to
196 the detriment of their ignorant and poor faithful members.

197 **Competition**

198 Hornby (2015) averred that, competition is the act of seeking what another is seeking to
199 gain at the same time; common strife for the same thing, strife for superiority, emulous contest,
200 rivalry as where two or more persons are engaged in the same business and each seeking
201 patronage. The above definition clearly explains the level of competition that exist among
202 Pentecostal pastors. It seems as if they imitate each other, engaging in what the other is doing
203 that commands followership. Opening almost all the channels of the television will reveal
204 multitude of people waiting to be told the cause of their problem and these pastors tends to
205 emulate from their colleagues the best way to command crowd. It is obvious in our generation
206 today that most of the Pentecostal pastors engage in material and wealth competition as a result
207 of proceed being acquired from the seed and tithe collected from their members. The level of
208 anointing upon the life of a pastor is now calculated based on his economic affluence. Kitause
209 (2012) opines that it is clear that there is a great deal of competition going on among Pentecostal
210 pastors within the Nigeria religious space

211 **Drive for Members**

212 Being a founder of a Pentecostal church remains the surest and fastest way of making it
213 in life. The founding of churches is usually followed by the expansion of same into very big
214 cathedral in order to accommodate larger followers (Adewale, 1985). The next step is to
215 familiarize and link up with the government officials and those that mattered in the society to be
216 able to raise money to enrich oneself. So whether it is through printed posters, bill-boards, radio

217 or television stations, the target is the same; to arouse or stir up the appetite of people to attend
218 their program where perhaps they can use psychological words diplomatically on people to part
219 with their money. In this regards, a lot of propaganda is put in place to attract people to
220 Pentecostal revival programs and crusades for divine healing (Omotoye, 2010).

221 **Means of Commercializing Religious Objects Today**

222 **Selling of Recorded Miracle or Healing Cassette**

223 Kitause (2015) stated that combining the advantages of media preaching and big title,
224 some of the Pentecostal Ministers start producing mass recording of prosperity and Miracles into
225 tapes, VCDs, CD and DVD_S plates. No sooner had they finished preaching, teaching and praying
226 than they also turn them into prayer bulletins and books in order to sell to their members. These
227 members are after sensitized to buy in big quantity and share to their friends as gift. These
228 materials often replace the value of the Bible in their life. As one will not attend Church service
229 but depend in the cassette he will buy for Spiritual enrichment. This is against the biblical
230 standard at Heb. 10:25. Pastors engage in production of Stickers that will be sold to their
231 congregation in order they will place them in their vehicles, gates and doors. According to
232 Kitause (2012) Chris Oyakhilome of Christ Embassy produce over 500,000 copies of Rhapsody
233 of Realities every month in 92 languages, Enoch Adeboye of RCCG publishes more than
234 500,000 copies of open Heaven. These no doubt yield no small amount of proceeds to these
235 pastors in Nigeria.

236 **Sowing Seed to have Miracle**

237 According to Gbile (2011) in Kituase (2015):

238 In many Churches today, since pastor are used to raising offering every Sunday, the
239 congregation has also come to understand that offering are raised, not necessarily because

240 God has asked for them but because it has become a custom. So, the people have also
241 become very 'wise' now. They know that in every service, the pastor would raise two or
242 more offering. Therefore, they would determine that no matter what he says, they would
243 not give beyond a certain amount. They change their high denomination currencies to
244 smaller ones. When the pastor calls them to dance forward and drop their offerings, the
245 people would dance forward and drop a small amount of money. All the young men and
246 ladies who desire to go for disco dance but have not been able now grab that opportunity
247 and dance to their hearts content. As they dance forward and drop their little money, they
248 go back, sit down, waiting for next round. (p. 81).

249 Kituase (2015) agrees that this lengthy quotation seems to clarify that not the numerous offerings
250 raised by Pastors during every service are voluntary. The Pastor brainwash their members into
251 sowing seed in order to contact miracle but the members recently find out that those collections
252 are going into the Pastor personal pocket.

253 **Selling of the Pastors Handkerchief**

254 Pentecostal Pastors engage in blessing and marketing handkerchief as a contact point and
255 transmitter of the healing power of the Lord. The price of the religious symbol is not negotiable
256 but will be stated by the Pastor and the congregation will rush and purchase. The General
257 overseer of RCCG engages in this Merchandize after his 2017 Holy Ghost congress. Although he
258 ordered the people to come with three handkerchiefs but it was alleged that he indirectly sold the
259 object (handkerchief) to the people before the commencement of the congress. This research
260 work finds out that these Pastors are emulating the action of St. Paul in Acts 19:11-12 but could
261 not notice things:

262 i. Paul never carefully arrange the act rather it was the people who thought it wise to touch
263 Paul with their apron and handkerchief in faith in order that their people that is sick
264 could be revived.

265 ii. Also there was no commercial involvement in the one found in the scripture. But
266 Pentecostal Pastor today engages in commercializing these handkerchiefs not to extend
267 healing but to make profit.

268 Kituase (2015) opined that handkerchief too are usually prayed over by “anointed men of God”
269 in Nigeria and are sold as mantle to teeming Miracle seekers. This practice is premised on the
270 incident that occurred in Acts 19:11-12 where Handkerchiefs or aprons were taken away from
271 Paul to heal sick people.

272 **Effects of Commercializing Religious Objects**

273 **Belief in Ministers than God**

274 One of the effects of commercializing religious objects is that the congregation of these
275 Pastors will trust and believe in him or her. The congregations see any instruction coming from
276 the pastor or General Overseer as the ultimate and will do everything to adhere to such
277 instruction. They trust in them to the extent of doing all they said. The research heard story from
278 an Anglican Priest that explain this trust. According to N. Obiejemba (personal communication
279 December 8, 2022) a Pastor (Church name withheld) instructed a married woman to bring as an
280 offering her husband’s newly bought Prado Jeep. This vehicle is parked in the car park and don’t
281 come out except if the husband is attending a big occasion with the wife. This Pentecostal Pastor
282 demanded the Vehicle from the woman; she rushed home and carried the vehicle to the pastor.
283 When the husband came back and realized what the Wife have done, hurried to see the Pastor
284 and could not find him anymore both in the Church and the house. The news he heard was that

285 they have relocated. That is how the woman was deceived into handing over her husbands'
286 vehicle and that fetch her packing from her husband house. Trust that some congregations have
287 in their Pastors has led them into doing foolish thing. The researcher witnessed where a pregnant
288 woman because of fear and quest for safe delivery agreed to drink a full bottle of Goya Olive oil
289 given to her by the Pastor. People these days do nasty things that ordinarily they will not engage
290 themselves in it.

291 **Idolization**

292 According to Hornby (2015) demigod is a half god, or an inferior deity; a fabulous hero,
293 the offering of a deity and a mortal. Another effect of some Pentecostal Pastors engaging in
294 commercialization of religious object is that it leads to people respecting, honouring and even to
295 the point of venerating them. Some of their adherents don't pray again with the Name of Jesus
296 rather with the name of the General overseer, Pastor, prophet, amongst others.

297

298

299 **Distortion of Christian Doctrine and Spiritual Understanding**

300 One of the most significant effects of commercializing religious objects is the distortion
301 of core Christian doctrines. Christianity teaches salvation by grace through faith, emphasizing
302 repentance, obedience, and a personal relationship with God. However, when religious objects
303 are marketed as sources of divine power in exchange for money, faith is gradually transformed
304 into a transactional process. Believers may begin to assume that spiritual breakthroughs are
305 determined by the ability to purchase certain items rather than by sincere faith and righteous
306 living. This distortion undermines biblical teachings that stress God's sovereignty and the free
307 nature of His grace. The danger lies in the subtle replacement of Christ-centered faith with

308 object-centered spirituality. As a result, prayer, scripture reading, moral discipline, and spiritual
309 maturity may receive less emphasis, while material items are elevated to positions they were
310 never meant to occupy. Over time, this creates a shallow form of Christianity that prioritizes
311 outward rituals over inward transformation.

312 Furthermore, commercialization encourages selective interpretation of biblical texts.
313 Scriptures are sometimes used out of context to justify the sale of religious objects, leading to
314 doctrinal confusion among congregants.

315 **Exploitation of Vulnerable Worshippers**

316 Another major effect of commercializing religious objects is the exploitation of
317 vulnerable members of society. Many worshippers turn to religion during periods of hardship
318 such as illness, unemployment, infertility, or family crises. In such moments, they are
319 emotionally and psychologically fragile, making them susceptible to persuasive religious
320 messaging. The promise that purchasing a specific religious item will guarantee healing, success,
321 or deliverance often exploits this vulnerability. In a country like Nigeria, where poverty levels are
322 high and social welfare systems are weak, commercialization places additional financial strain on
323 already struggling individuals. Worshippers may feel pressured to give beyond their means,
324 sometimes borrowing money or neglecting essential family needs in the hope of receiving divine
325 intervention. When expected miracles do not occur, disappointment, guilt, and loss of faith may
326 follow, leading to emotional trauma and spiritual disillusionment. This practice also creates
327 inequality within the church community. Those who can afford religious objects may be
328 perceived as more faithful or spiritually favored, while poorer members feel marginalized. Such
329 divisions contradict the Christian principle of equality before God and weaken the sense of
330 fellowship and communal support that the church is meant to provide.

331 **Erosion of Church Credibility and Moral Authority**

332 The commercialization of religious objects significantly affects the credibility and moral
333 authority of the church. When religious institutions increasingly resemble business enterprises,
334 public perception of the church changes. The church risks being viewed as profit-driven rather
335 than spiritually motivated, leading to skepticism and criticism from both believers and non-
336 believers. This erosion of trust has long-term consequences. The church's prophetic voice in
337 addressing social injustice, corruption, and moral decay is weakened when it is perceived as
338 complicit in exploitative practices. Religious leaders who engage excessively in
339 commercialization may be accused of prioritizing personal wealth over pastoral responsibility,
340 thereby diminishing respect for clergy and church leadership. Additionally, the younger
341 generation, which is already skeptical of institutional religion, may become further alienated.
342 When faith appears commercialized, young people may question its authenticity and relevance,
343 resulting in declining commitment to church life and spiritual values.

344

345 **Psychological and Spiritual Dependency**

346 Commercialization can also foster unhealthy psychological and spiritual dependency
347 among worshippers. When believers are taught to rely on religious objects for protection or
348 success, they may develop fear and anxiety about life without these items. This dependency
349 discourages spiritual growth and personal responsibility, as individuals rely on external objects
350 rather than developing inner faith, resilience, and moral discipline. Such dependency can limit
351 believers' capacity to cope with life's challenges independently. Instead of cultivating prayerful
352 discernment and trust in God, worshippers may feel helpless without constant access to new
353 religious items, reinforcing a cycle of consumption rather than spiritual maturity.

354 **Transformation of Worship into Consumer Culture**

355 Another notable effect is the transformation of worship into a consumer-oriented
356 experience. Religious services may be structured around the promotion of objects, testimonies
357 linked to purchased items, and fundraising strategies rather than genuine worship and teaching.
358 This commercialization shifts the church's focus from spiritual formation to revenue
359 generation. As a result, worshippers may approach church activities with a consumer mindset,
360 evaluating services based on what they can gain materially rather than what they can learn or
361 contribute spiritually. This weakens the communal and sacrificial nature of Christian worship.

362 **Conclusion**

363 Pentecostal Church commercialization of religious objects is deviation from ethical code
364 of the institution of Church. After this deviation portrays deceitful practices or twisting of the
365 scriptures for economic gains, the Church is faced with image and reputation problems
366 (Princewill, 2017). Images refer to the overall reputation that the public of that organization have
367 of it. Egwu (2007) is of the view that reputation refers to a good image, character, identity, a
368 good name, respectability, honour, superiority, majesty and grandeur (Egwu, 2007). Therefore
369 commercialization of religious objects by these Pentecostal Pastors runs counter to Church's
370 tenets of sacredness, purity, holiness and even Jesus admonition of 'freely you have received,
371 freely you must give', Commercializing religious objects is an aberration and dints the image
372 and reputation of the Church in general (Nwosu, 1996). The era of false hood and negative
373 propaganda has gone, so Church Leaders and Church workers should rise to stop and tame any
374 trace of commercialization of these religious objects in order to avoid future damages.

375 **Recommendations**

376 Based on the research and findings made so far, the following recommendations are made;

- 377 i. The Church leaders (clergy, prophets etc) should see themselves as the mirror through
378 which the congregation or the immediate society sees the Church. They are like front
379 office staff of organizations and Chief public relations executive of their respective
380 Churches. So whatever they do in the name of promoting God's work has their moral,
381 ethical and image considerations and implications.
- 382 ii. To stem the tide of religious objects commercialization, there must be moral and ethical
383 re-orientation for both old and new Ministers of God. The ethical behaviour of Ministers
384 of God must maintain high standard of professionalism. Professionalism must include a
385 moral philosophy that governs behaviour in a formal and systematic way leaving no room
386 for ambiguity or confusion and that focuses on fairness, honesty, integrity, safety and
387 authenticity as well as moral and legal propriety.
- 388 iii. There should be public relations training on image and reputation management for
389 Church leaders, Church workers and other stake holders in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

390

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