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*.... promoting the study of religions in the  
sociological and ethical contexts*

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## Contents (Volume 7, June 2020)

	Page
Conquering 'Enemies Within': A Moral Therapy for Healing Nigerian Entrepreneurship. <b>AYANTAYO, Jacob Kehinde PhD.</b>	1-24
Ethics and Entrepreneurship: Evidence from Nigeria. <b>Ik MUO, PhD.</b>	25-42
Advertisement Discourse Strategy and Critical Linguistic Role in Business Contexts. <b>ODUOLA, Lekan PhD &amp; ABEGUNDE, Kehinde Lois.</b>	43-72
Christians Active Participation in Politics and Governance: Implication for Sustainable National Entrepreneurship Development. <b>ADABEMBE Kehinde Oluwatoyin PhD.</b>	73-90
An Assessment of Baptist Pastors and Entrepreneurship Skills. <b>BOLAJI, Elizabeth Aderonke PhD.</b>	91-102
Ethics and Entrepreneurship in 21st Century Nigeria: A Christian Perspective. <b>OKORO, Pauline Chidinma.</b>	103-121
The Impact of Christian Religious Organisations on Women's Entrepreneurial Activities in Nigeria. <b>OJONE, Joseph, Esther.</b>	123-146
The Socio-Religious Perspective of Cultic Practices in Nigeria. <b>Otasowie, Matthew Omoruyi PhD.</b>	147-165
The Implications of Proverbs 31 for Entrepreneurship among Nigerian Women. <b>FATUNSIN Temitope Jacinta.</b>	167-185
The Stimulus of Christianity in Encouraging Entrepreneurship for Effective Governance on Society. <b>AJIBULU, Veronica Vou.</b>	187-200

# CONQUERING 'ENEMIES WITHIN': A MORAL THERAPY FOR HEALING NIGERIAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

\* \* \*

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## Abstract

*The paper posits that many scholars interrogated several challenges facing Nigerian Entrepreneurs from 'outside perspectives' ranging from economics, socio-economic, cultural, to psychology with insignificant attention paid to 'inside perspectives' that are practically inherent in the personalities and profiles of Nigerian Entrepreneurs. The 'inside perspectives', which this paper describes as 'enemies within' are spiritualisation of business, godly financial spending, substituting business time for religious programme, problem of trust, bad character and unhealthy competition among entrepreneurs. They were discussed thoroughly and methods of conquering them were suggested as moral therapy for healing Nigerian entrepreneurship.*

## Introduction

It is a reality that in recent past and even at present, the Nigerian economy is in a bad shape because among other things, it is characterised by unemployment and fall in the price of crude oil in the world market among other things which make it difficult

for salaries to be paid to the few employed citizens and making it more burdensome for the larger percentage of job seekers to get employment in the labour markets. This development calls for self-reliance in term of doing something capable of generating fund and for this reason, there is a growing desire for Entrepreneurship among Nigerians including those who are on salaries or stipend to earn a living and get out of the shackle of poverty. However, for some time, the new economic engagement – entrepreneurship has not been yielding the expected result because it is bedevilling with several economic related problems.

Attending to these problems has been the concern of many scholars who have discussed the challenges from different perspectives such as economics<sup>1</sup>, socio-economic<sup>2</sup>, cultural<sup>3</sup>, and psychology<sup>3</sup>. In all these, little attention is paid to religious activities and morality of entrepreneurs as part and parcels of challenges that need to be overcome for successful entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The work intends to proffer

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<sup>1</sup>M. I. Okeke, and E. O. Awka, "Challenges Facing Entrepreneurs in Nigeria", *Singaporean Journal of Business Economics and Management Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 5, 2014, p 8

<sup>2</sup>R. A. Isothovoja, "Socioeconomic Factors as Predictors of Entrepreneurial Behaviour in Poultry Farm" in *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 4 (1) January 2013, pp 511-517

<sup>3</sup>C. M. Clement Ajekwe, "Effect of Culture on Entrepreneurship in Nigeria", *International Journal of Business and Management Invention*, Volume 6 Issue 2, February, 2017, pp 1-6

<sup>4</sup>R. J. Dakung, "Entrepreneurial behaviour among Catholic Christians in Plateau State-Nigeria", *World Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development*, Vol. 12, 2016, pp. 176 – 192, and A.M. Okeke, E.O. Oraka, and C.C. Obasi, "Analysis of Factors Influencing Entrepreneurship Behaviour among Yam Agribusiness Entrepreneurs in Benue State, Nigeria" of *Business and Management*, Volume 17, Issue 10, Oct. 2015, pp 86-89

workable solutions to the internal malaise impeding the growth of entrepreneurship in Nigeria.

### **The concept of entrepreneurship**

It is difficult if not impossible to have a consensus regarding the definition of Entrepreneurship because it means many things to many people viewing it from different fields of economics, education and religion depending on the angle in which one is looking at it. For instance, the term *entrepreneurship* in the contemporary society has been extended to include elements not related necessarily to business formation activity such as conceptualizations of entrepreneurship as a specific mindset resulting in entrepreneurial initiatives e.g., in the form of social entrepreneurship, political entrepreneurship, or knowledge entrepreneurship have emerged<sup>5</sup>. For this work, we are looking at it from the angle of economics; thus, it can be described as a form of business which is done for the purpose of profit maximisation. Corroborating this, Carland defines an entrepreneur as: "an individual who establishes and manages a business for the principal purposes of profit and growth"<sup>6</sup>. Similarly, an economist views entrepreneurship in the context of the combination of resources, labour, materials, and other assets such that their value is greater together than individually<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> A.M. Okeke, E.O. Oraka, and C.C. Obasi, "Analysis of Factors Influencing Entrepreneurship Behaviour among Yam Agribusiness Entrepreneurs in Benue State, Nigeria". *Journal of Business and Management*, Volume 17, Issue 10, Oct. 2015, pp 86-89

<sup>6</sup> J.W. Carland, F. Hoy, W.R. Boulton, & J.C. Carland, "Differentiating Entrepreneurs from Small Business Owners: A Conceptualization" *Academy of Management Review*, 9 (2), 1984, p354 - 359

<sup>7</sup> A. Oteh "The Role of Entrepreneurship in Transforming the Nigerian Economy", a paper presented at the Seventh Convocation Lecture of Igbinedion University, Okada, Edo State, 4th December, 2009

Entrepreneurship is of different types as far as economists are concerned some of which are a sole-proprietor, a partnership, a shareholder in a joint-stock company, etc. Similarly, the Entrepreneurship could be labour-intensive, or capital intensive. Characteristically, Entrepreneurship goes with risk-taking, vision, passion, confidence, planning, managing, innovating, crafting, creating of ideas, reflection, and consciousness of what is going on in the world of business. In other words, Entrepreneurship is characterised by innovation and creativity because the entrepreneur takes decision as a responsibility on what to produce, for whom to produce and the quality and quantity to produce. The Entrepreneur also decides on the method and scale of production, decides on the form of business to undertake and where it should be located, decides on when to undertake production and what to do with the profits made. He/she also decides on how to distribute the produced goods coupled with the fact that he manages and controls the business regarding its day-to-day affairs. With this background, it is understandable to note that an entrepreneur is one who organizes and manages a business undertaking, assuming the risk, for the sake of profit. The entrepreneur evaluates perceived opportunities and strives to make the decisions that will enable the firm to realize sustained growth.

### **Entrepreneurship in Nigeria**

Nigeria is a country noted with entrepreneurship. The world of production, marketing distribution and service delivery at local, national, and international levels were occupied significantly with various types of entrepreneurship earlier mentioned. Many Nigerians are very enterprising because of necessity which led to invention. The white-collar jobs are no longer visible in Nigeria.

Those who are in government labour market are not well paid going by stories of unpaid salaries and pensions across the country. This development among others might have caused the Federal Government of Nigeria to direct the Nigeria Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in 2006 to include Entrepreneurship Education (EEed) as a compulsory course for all the students with effect from 2007/2008 academic session, which led to the inclusion of (EEed) in the curriculum of all Universities. This was aimed at making the students acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes that would enable them to become self-reliant and adapt to changing needs of the society due to globalisation and integration process.<sup>8</sup>

The objectives of entrepreneurship education among others are expected to be in tandem with what Aig-Imoukhuede listed as:

1. Positive attitudes, high aptitude for rational critical thinking and timely decision making.
2. Clear vision, generation of progressive ideals, drive, and passion for success.
3. Ability to convert vision in concrete reality.
4. Creativity, innovativeness, courageousness, and self-confidence.
4. Ability to assume reasonable risk.
5. Mercurial ingenuity, resourcefulness, patience and/or opportunities insight.
6. Confidence and good judgement, which involves taking decisions and making choices.

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<sup>8</sup>A. S. Olorundare and D. J. Kayode, *Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Universities: A Tool for National Transformation*, Asia Pacific Journal of Educators and Education, Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia, 2014, Vol. 29, 155-175, 2014

7. Prudence, which means due care in the management of resources especially financial.
8. Willingness to learn and develop a disposition to pick-up, store knowledge and use it.
9. Hard work an indispensable ingredient of success in business and other sectors<sup>9</sup>.

The tempo for Nigerians to be more entrepreneur apart from the drive for entrepreneurship from the angles of the Nigerian Universities became conspicuous because of the high rate of unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria. Records show that as of March 15, 2021, Nigeria's unemployment rate as of the end of 2020 rose to 33.3% from 27.1% recorded as Q2 2020, indicating that about 23, 187, 389(23.2 million) Nigerian remain unemployed<sup>10</sup>. Despite the efforts of Nigerians to overcome the hazard of economic hardship via entrepreneurship, things are very difficult for Nigerian entrepreneurs. They are faces with series of challenges.

### **General challenges of entrepreneurship in Nigeria**

Over time, there are so, many challenges facing entrepreneurship in Nigeria to which many have sought solutions. Some of the challenges are peculiar although a few are general. What is common to both categories as identified by many scholars and entrepreneurs themselves are poor electricity supply, inadequate access to finance, poor transportation, unfriendly tax regime, poor access to land, high cost of finance, crime rate, corruption, political environment, customs and trade regulations, inadequately trained workforce, and labour regulations. Others

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<sup>9</sup> I. I. Aig-Imoukhuede, *A word about entrepreneurship: A guide to self-employment*. Lagos, Nigeria: Academy Press Ltd, 1988

<sup>10</sup> This is obtained from information released by Labour force published by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS)

include: poor state of infrastructure, unstable Nigerian economy and politics, inconsistent government policies, poor knowledge on how to run a business, marketing strategy challenge, lack of patience<sup>11</sup>.

### **The 'Enemies within'**

The term 'Enemies within' is a working term used to refer to self-inflicted challenges created by entrepreneurs themselves consciously or unconsciously. The challenges are internal and are quite different from the general challenges mentioned above. In fact, people hardly mention the *enemies within* because they hardly think of it. Based on my background as ethicist and sociologist of religion, every salient issue matter to me. It is on this account that we consider the underlisted issues as the enemies within that must be conquered, which by implications will become a moral therapy for ailing Nigerian entrepreneurship.

**Spiritualisation of business:** Spiritualisation of business is a factor that physically manifests in poor knowledge on how to run a business, or better put, poor business skills and acumen. A close observation of many religious activities over time reveal to us instances in which the formation and running of business enterprise is trivialised and made a subject of spiritual business. We have instances of religious centres in Nigerian who would tell Entrepreneurs to bring to the church or mosque for special service samples of their business contacts like biro, shoe, cutlass, food items, production machines, equipment and many others

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<sup>11</sup>M. Rheault, and B. Tortora, "Nigeria: Drivers and Challenges of Entrepreneurship", 2008. Available at [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com). Retrieved on March 30, 2021

that are related to marketing, finance, accounting, customers service and human resources with the aim of blessing them towards successful entrepreneurship. A few of such books are *Breaking Financial Hardship* in 1995; the thrust of the book is that financial hardship is a common feature of life that many can identify with families, homes, business establishment, students and various categories of people ; *Anointing for Breakthrough* (emphasising dynamic force which exposes reads to how to use tested spiritual principles to combat failure, poverty and lack ), *Understanding financial prosperity*; *Winning war against poverty*; *The Hidden covenants of blessings*; *Understanding divine direction*, *Miracle seed*, *Understanding vision*, *Bible Sense for Financial Fortune*", *"Covenant Wealth"*, *Success Buttons*", *"Breaking Financial Hardship"*, *"Understanding Financial Prosperity"*, *"Exploring the Secrets of Success"*<sup>12</sup> and *the Unlimited power of faith*<sup>13</sup>. We are not saying that religious faith does not have its potency in business and overall life of believers, but what is obvious to us is that such faith is not absolute and cannot in any way replace the responsibilities expected of entrepreneurs.

The entrepreneur who spiritualises business in most cases have poor knowledge on how to run a business. Some of them are not skilful about the nitty gritty of how to run business but rather start on the note of taking risk that one can start a business by taking the risk and later commit such business to God for its growth. This type of religious mentality often reflects in some church chorus which goes thus: *Mo dá ohun òlá sí Ọlọrun lórùn*, I am engaging in a big business which I believe God will take control beyond my power to do so. Some even pray before they

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<sup>12</sup> D. O. Oyedepo, *Breaking financial Hardship*, Lagos: Dominion Publishing House, 1995, p. 181.

<sup>13</sup>[https:// www.thriftybooks .com](https://www.thriftybooks.com), Accessed April 2, 2021

start the business based on religious conviction at the expense of a having the skill and competence to run the business. Even, when such business is crumbling in the process of growing it, possibly because of stiff competition or technicalities the so-called Christians entrepreneur would still want to continue the business instead of diversifying to something more realistic as environment most times demands. This kind of development is what Dada describes as mere exploitation<sup>14</sup> and, which we describe elsewhere as a product of religious abuse associated with prosperity theology<sup>15</sup>.

#### Godly financial spending

Insufficient capital or lack of access to loan to fund business is one thing but managing the existing capital in growing a business is another salient problem facing Nigerian entrepreneurship to which less attention is paid. It is a common practice among many Nigerian entrepreneurs to spend their initial business profits recklessly instead of ploughing it back to business. There is always a mad rush to buy new cars, build new houses, marry more wives or engaging in extra marital affairs and in many cases spend money to sponsor religious programme having been wooed to do so by their religious leaders or out of their personal religious conviction. Such spending on religious programme is what I describe in this paper as *Godly financial spending*. Such sometimes come in the practice of 'Sowing of Seed' and 'Sowing of First fruit' as a means of demonstrating

<sup>14</sup> A. O. Dada, "A Millionaire Through Jesus: II Corinthians 8:9 from the Perspective of Some Nigerian Prosperity Preachers", in *African Journal of Biblical Studies*, Vol. XVI, No. 1, April 2001, pp. 82-92, p. 88.

<sup>15</sup> J.K. Ayantayo, "Prosperity Gospel and Social Morality: A Critique" in D.O. Ogunghile (ed) *Creativity and Change in Nigeria Christianity*. Lagos: Malthouse Press, 2009, pp 201-216

religiosity. The Sowing of First fruit as it relates to entrepreneurship implies entrepreneurship donating the totality of first profit made from their business to the coffer of the church.

Another one like it is the instances in which entrepreneurs spend either business capital or profit in sponsoring church programme with the expectation that God will replace such financial commitment in multiple folds. This practice is inimical to successful entrepreneurship because ploughing back profit to business would help in consolidating the business than otherwise. Many churches are fond of targeting businessmen and women members of their churches and lure that to finance church programme with the promise that God will multiply their business in many folds. We have cases of many entrepreneurs who have fallen victim of that religious gimmick and have their business run down even though they had access to huge initial capital while starting their business.

### **Substituting business time for religious programme**

Time is an important element of religious life. In the African setting, time is reckoned with in terms of the day, week, month, year, present, past and the future<sup>16</sup>. In the Nigerian religious space, apart from Fridays, Saturdays and Sunday's programme for the Muslims, Seven Day Adventist and Christians, there are so many other religious programmes. Some of them occur on daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, and bi-monthly, annually, and bi-annually basis; mostly there are for prayers, fasting, vigil, revival, faith clinic, bible study and evangelism. They are designed to take care of certain doctrinal and liturgical activities

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<sup>16</sup> J. K. Ayantayo, "Time in Yoruba Tradition Religious Context" in *Context: Journal of Social and Cultural Studies*, Vol. 2 No. 2. Ibadan: Department of English, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, 2000, pp44-55

such as prayer, fellowshiping, devotion, worshipping, fasting, festival, seclusion, rituals, and pilgrimage, to mention a few. For instance, regarding prayer, some of them have Morning Prayer that comes between 5: 30 – 6:30 a.m. and evening prayers between 6:30-7:30 p.m., Vigil programme comes between 12 midnight and 4: 30 am. In some churches, the vigil may be daily, once in a week or once in a month. There are some weekly programmes which some churches place at 10 am, 12 noon, 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm, and 5:00 pm – 8: 00pm. Some prayer mountains have programmes throughout the day, week, and month. Some Religious Programmes are associated with season of the day, some hour, week, and month. Notable among them are 72 hours (that is three days) before the Lord, 21 mornings, 21 afternoons, and 21 nights with God, First Monday, First Tuesday, First Wednesday, First Thursday, First Friday, and First Saturday of the month with God. In most cases, the religious programmes, are designed to meet the needs of different categories of classes of people in the church such as Civil servants, Artisans, Politicians, first born male or girl child, widows, widowers, those that are waiting upon the Lord for the fruit of the womb, Unemployed and underemployed graduates, contractors, those that are seeking travel visas, students that are about to write promotion examination, and so on and so forth.

We discover that many entrepreneurs who spiritualise business attend some of these programmes which come during office or business hours. Whereas time is very important in successful business entrepreneurship. This is echoed in the wise saying: Punctuality is the soul of business. Arising from the practice of business spiritualisation, many business entrepreneurs use their business time to attend religious programme which on the long run send them out of business. Such businessmen and women have all the capital required and business skills for

successful entrepreneurship but for the fact that they are not always at their business post cause their business to die a natural death. As we argued elsewhere, the hours of the day that the religious programmes take place is a subject matter of ethics because the hour has the tendency to affect many things. For example, a religious programme fixed for work hour which is between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm, and whose potential attendees are entrepreneurs would be seen or judged as bad because it will cause them to leave their places of businesses. Leaving one business to satisfy religious interest amounts to business negligence, which is inimical to business ethical values such as punctuality and dedication. As Ifemesia notes, dedication to duty is an aspect of discipline. He says:

A dedicated man is the kind of man who will work for others as eagerly as he works for himself. He is the kind of man, countless people will count on for advice, he is the kind of man who wants more out of his effort than money - yet he is too tough/fu/, too sensible, to underestimate his own value<sup>17</sup>.

### **Problem of trust**

Another *enemy within* the Nigerian entrepreneurship faces is the problem of trust on the part of entrepreneur on the one hand, and on the part of employers on the other hand. Trust is used in term of employee and employer believing one another in terms of the duties of each one of them as they relate in the business. The entrepreneurs, who is the employer is expected to pay salaries of workers (employees) as at when due, ensure their safety at work and to give them all their entitlements as agreed upon in letter of

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<sup>17</sup>B. Ifemesia, *Moral Revolution in Africa Stages 1& 2* Enugu Holmes Weber Publishing Co Ltd, 1985, p.101

appointment or any term of reference regarding the duties and responsibilities. It is a common thing in Nigeria for many employers not honouring the job agreement they reached with employees. In most cases their salaries are not paid, their emolument and other entitlements are not paid. At times the employee is fired without due process and those that were fired duly have their entitlements not paid. On some occasions, some of the taxes and contributory pension funds deducted from the employees' salaries are not remitted to appropriate quarters. These and more factors make employees end up without any' as entitlements. Under this situation, the presents and future of many employees are bleak. The employee in this case becomes used and dumb with the payment of their dues and entitlements left at the mercy of employee.

This situation raises the question of whether employer is trustworthy, which is a moral issue worthy of examination if one is to holistically address salient challenges facing Nigerian entrepreneurship. By trust, we mean the act of employees believing in the term of agreement he reaches with employers, that is believing the reaches employer will leave to labour expectation such as paying salaries as at when due among other terms of agreements with the employee expected to reciprocate the kind gestures from the employers. Trust is derived from Truthfulness, which simply refers to the act of giving true information or facts (in exact manner) about something. Therefore, true statement is based on fact and not imagination or invention. In a broader sense, truthfulness in the world of Hemesia "indicates a correspondence between one's exterior

conduct and internal convictions". That is, it is an agreement between a person's words or signs and his inner persuasion<sup>18</sup>.

Conversely, trust is also missing in the lives of many employees in Nigerian entrepreneurship and by extension in Africa entrepreneurship even when salaries and all entitlements are paid accordingly. To buttress this, we have some video clips of a woman-employee of a farm business who stole eggs and put them under her breasts and private part not knowing that she was seen by Circuit television. There is a video clip from Ghana<sup>19</sup> which, comprehensively reveals evidence of mistrust on the part of employees in Ghana as an example. I will quote some excerpts from it verbatim because it is germane to our discussion. He said, someone asked to know the reason rich men in Ghana and African countries are not establishing industries that provide job for the youth. All the rich men who spread across the country have seemingly similar answer to the question put in perspectives. One of them said:

... the people shouting no food, no job are all thieves. He went further, I ran a manufacturing business and trading business. He said the biggest challenges in my business is not problem of electricity or lack of infrastructural facilities but challenge of getting honest staff. Everyone we hire seems to be on a mission to steal as much as possible, they will inflate invoices, recording less than less than the units produced. the was part of it is that most of the fraud discovered was not done by a single staff but many staff who collude with one another from the production line to sales, to finance and to top management.

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<sup>18</sup>B. Ifemesia, *Moral Revolution in Africa Stages 1 & 2* Enugu Holmes Weber Publishing Co Ltd, 1985, p.207

<sup>19</sup> The video was released by Bishop Samuel N. Mensah, President, Full Gospel International, Ghana, copied April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021

He said further that there was a year he overhauled management three times and that he now uses Indian expatriates who are so competent, so honest, and so straight forward. I thought they were expensive at first with all the visa fees, accommodations, and all other protocols. But at the end, I discovered that all the losses due to staff theft have reduced drastically which show that Indian management is efficient, cheaper, and better than African management. Now all sensitive positions involving money go to Indian management while Africans are only allowed in non-sensitive positions. I used to criticise indigenous entrepreneurs like Dangote groups that hires so many Indians and many unemployed Africans and I can now understand their painful decision. I know how much I paid the security to escort the staff to deposit money in the bank not because the money could be hijacked by thieves or armed robbers but to ensure that the staff takes the money to the bank or to ensure they do not pocket the money or run away with the money. The money spent on CCTV, Biometric Scanning and other security logistic would not be needed if the staff do not have a mission to steal. It got to a point that my criteria for giving job was no longer on competence or certificate but pure honesty. I believe competence can be learnt in the process of working, but once you are dishonest, you are dishonest.

He said, "Start a small poultry farm, they will steal the egg, if they don't steal the egg, they will intentionally kill the chicken and ask the entrepreneurs if they can take home the dead chicken. Start entertainment centre, the profit will go to the pocket of the manager, a car for somebody to run as a Taxi, they will finish you. Start a Restaurant business, the manger will take home the raw food and run the place down. Start a small kiosk, they will still find a way of stealing there. He said they will

justify the stealing by saying everyone eats from where he/she works.

The thrust of this extract is that dishonesty is the bane of Nigerian entrepreneurship and by extension African entrepreneurship. These are what the paper recurses to as *enemies within*. This implies that honesty on the part of all stakeholder in entrepreneurship is very sacrosanct. Honesty means act of sincerity; that is, being sincere to oneself and to others during one form of interaction or the other.

### **Bad character**

Another enemy within an average Nigerian entrepreneur should watch is Character. The word character is used here in moral sense to stand for personality, nature, disposition, temperament, and general mentality<sup>20</sup>. Character manifests in positive and negative traits each of which has implications for successful and unsuccessful business enterprising. Based on observation, bad character among some Nigerian entrepreneurs are carelessness, self-centeredness, selfishness, fearfulness, procrastination, rudeness, short-sightedness, discouragement, apathy, stinginess, un-thankfulness, disrespect, corruption, unfaithfulness, anger, wastefulness, unreliability, anxiety, self-indulgence, hypocrisy, extravagance, prejudice, deception, impurity and foolishness. Others are favouritism, laziness, promise breaking, envy, jealousy, rivalry, dishonesty, lie, irresponsibility, disrespect for elders and constituted authority in business arena and injustice and so on and so forth.

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<sup>20</sup>J. K. Ayantayo, *Character Speaks*, Ibadan: Samprints and Graphic and Co. 2017

The appearance of negative trait on the part of anybody involved in entrepreneurship is always inimical. This is so as I argued somewhere no one wants to do business with entrepreneur is arrogant, pompous, unfriendly or display any of the negative traits even they have justification for doing so. The idiom that customer is the king or that customer is always right remain germane to successful entrepreneurship. When entrepreneurs are of good character, some of the obstacles in business could be surmounted. For instance, entrepreneurs' positive attitudes to people they interacted with during their business endeavour and how they act toward them often determine their degree of success in business dealing. Consumers want to buy from an honest salesman, employers want to hire reliable workers and people like friends they can count on and trust. Naturally, people like to associate with those they feel are reliable and responsible. In the same spirit, an employee who demonstrates sound character, credibility and consistency will be valued by employers and such employee will be able to always retain his/her job especially in times of economic downturn. A good character also enables entrepreneur to retain his customers mostly if he/she is fair and courteous in dealings with people.

### **Unhealthy competition among entrepreneurs**

Unhealthy Competition among entrepreneurs is another *enemy within* that cannot be taken for granted. This has a lot of implications for successful entrepreneurships in the Nigerian setting. Ordinarily, competition is part and parcel of entrepreneurship because the business itself gives a lot of room for innovation, creativity, and skilfulness. This keeps many entrepreneurs upon their toes. By so doing, each of them would try to outshine the other to remain in the business. From economic point of view, competition tends to produce efficiency

in production and marketing entrepreneurship as examples. By efficiency, we mean that each of the entrepreneurs will try as much as possible to make his/her products goods and attractive to customers. The process produces good results to their customers. Since variety is the spice of life, customers would by so doing have access to many products or services coming from multiple entrepreneurs in their remote and immediate business environments.

However, evidence abound that Nigerian entrepreneurship is much more characterized by unhealthy competition, bickering and warfare. One aspect of warfare is denigration of competitors. That is, telling lie about the products of rival entrepreneurs to give the impression that his/her wares are not good enough or that they are of poor quality. This act is wrong from ethical point of view because it connotes falsehood and deceit. The act has undesirable consequences not only for the entrepreneurs whose products are condemned but also for the buyers who will be discouraged from buying the product, which in most cases might be considered better than the one offered them. In addition, consumers are denied the opportunity to choose out of variety of goods available to them at market prices. With the view that someone's product is not good, therefore, the choice of consumers will be limited to a few ones, which they think is good for them. Thus, as the act of denigration affects the producer whose product is condemned, it also affects innocent consumers. Many entrepreneurs have resulted to the use of Juju against co-entrepreneurs in the same business either for him/her to die, fall into sickness upon which he/she would spend both his/her business capital and profits. At times, he/she might be cursed with the spirit of *Òkùtá*, that is making it impossible to have anybody patronising his/her products or services.

We need to acknowledge the fact that entrepreneurs could say something about the products or services of co-entrepreneurs in the following circumstances: to prevent a co-entrepreneur from cheating or harming consumers and to stop a co-entrepreneur from engaging unethical entrepreneurship practices. For example, it is not bad to warn prospective consumer about co-entrepreneurs' products and services that are injurious. This must be done in good spirit. Corroborating this fact, Paine remarkably observes as follows:

... a person may run as hard as he can and strain every nerve and every muscle to outstrip all his competitors but if he should jostle or thrown down any of them, it is violation of fair play.<sup>21</sup>

From the foregoing, we are saying in essence that competition should not be characterised by warfare, bickering and denigration. Rather it should be done to promote the welfare of both consumers and co-entrepreneurs. It is with this understanding that Garrett remarkably observes that:

A competitor is ordinary not an enemy but a rival. And, as a result relation should be governed by basic ethics and the rules of fair play rather than by ethics of self-defense and warfare.

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<sup>21</sup> L.A. Paine, "Corporate Policy and the Ethics of Competitions in Intelligence Gathering" in *Ethics in Marketing*, (ed.) J.S. Smith and O.R. Quelch, Homewood: Irwin, 1993, p. 22.

Garret further adds that:

If competition is viewed as a form of warfare in which the objective is not to serve the consumer, but to destroy the competitor, we can expect a steady disintegration of standards<sup>22</sup>.

Therefore, our submission is that it is immoral for Nigerian entrepreneurs to violate the principle of fair play in competition by turning competition to ruthless battle among co-entrepreneurs as found today among many Nigerian entrepreneurs today.

### **How to conquer the enemies**

We have general and specific recommendations as means of conquering the 'Enemies within'. Starting with the specific, it is important for entrepreneurs to know how to separate profit made from business which can be plough back to business from the Capital upon which entrepreneurship is established. This calls for good understanding of financial management and skill associated with it. This is not to say one could not spend money to advance God's project. On this, we are of the opinion that Nigerian Christian entrepreneurs can learn from the Bible which makes a line of demarcation between the profane and the secular as evident in the literal interpretation of Matthew 22: 21 which states: Render to Caesar ears what is Caesar's and to God what is God's. Attaining this height in entrepreneurship requires discipline not only in spending but also in time management. Time management goes with not allowing time for business to collude with time for private affairs such as attendance of religious programme. Since punctuality is popularly regarded as

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 159-160.

the soul of business, it becomes expedient for entrepreneurs to know when to be business duty post and time to be at religious programme. The two should not collide, hence the need for them to imbibe the Biblical template about time and its application for activities. For example, the Bible in the book of Ecclesiastes 3: 1-9 which reads as follow:

1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: 2 a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, 3 a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, 4 a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, 5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, 6 a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, 7 a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, 8 a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

The only weapon for overcoming the problem of trust in entrepreneurship is the wearing the garment of trust exemplified in honesty in all entrepreneurship dealing. As a matter of fact, in daily social interaction, what society regards as honest, anything that is substantially – or, categorically true; that is, a fact that is true to the letter and true to life. Honesty, therefore, goes with truthfulness, uprightness, sincerity, and straightforwardness indeed. It is not surprising that Aristotle says:

A man is truthful, both in speech and in the way he lives – because he is like indisposition. Such a person would seem to be a good type: For a lover of the truth, who speaks it when nothing depends upon it, will speak it more, when something does depend upon it, because since he is guards against falsehood as such, he will guard against it (all the more) as <sup>23</sup>something dishonourable. Such a man is to be commended.

In social setting which houses business, the popular dictum is that honesty is the best policy. It means absence of deceitfulness, and untruthfulness, which has long effect implications. For example, trustworthiness could also lead to confidence building among parties who have course to relate with one another like entrepreneurs and employees. The absence of trust on the part of entrepreneurs in his relationship with the employee always produces negative results for entrepreneurship because in most cases, the employee may result to cutting corners and engaging in shady dealing including stealing of what are at the disposal of employee not for any reason but to replace the unpaid salaries and other emoluments. The implication of our emphasis on the issues of trust, or honesty is that even all other ingredients such as capital, skill, personnel as examples needed for successful entrepreneurship are available and honesty is absent on the part of all the stakeholders in that business, little or not, success will be made.

The problem of bad character often exhibited in some exhibited in the dealings of some entrepreneurs is better dealt with

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<sup>23</sup>The Nicomachian Ethics, 112a pp16-640.

application of good character and display of positive traits that are essentials in overall entrepreneurs. A few of them are listed as Positive traits are manifested in alertness, attentiveness, availability, benevolence, boldness, cautiousness, compassion, contentment, creativity, decisiveness, reverence, dependability, determination, diligence, discretion, enthusiasm, faith, flexibility, forgiveness, generosity, gentleness, gratefulness, honour, hospitality, humility, initiative, joyfulness, justice, loyalty, meekness, obedience, orderliness, punctuality, responsibility, self-control, thoroughness, thriftiness, wisdom, love, cooperation, honesty, tolerance, respect, self-respect, mutual respect, patience and perseverance<sup>24</sup>. The problem of unhealthy competition among entrepreneurs needs to be handled by religion-based entrepreneurship like Christian Businessmen and Women association and Muslim Businessmen and Women association in different level of entrepreneurship activities in Nigeria. One of the duties expected of such association is teaching about love and cooperation among members as one body in faith on the one hand and colleagues in the business on the other hand. The teachings on love should also encompass respect, and mutual respect, tolerance and justice in all their relationships. This effort at the religious level should be complemented with rules and regulations put in place by the Nigerian government to checkmate sharp practices in entrepreneurship.

Moving to the general recommendation, we are of the opinion that there is no weapon needed for conquering the enemies than application of moral principles, which can be described as principal requirements for success entrepreneurship. These are

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<sup>24</sup> I. E. Ayantayo, *Character Speaks*, Ibadan: Samprints and Graphic and Co. 2012

paraphrased as follows: wise spending, honesty, boldness/ self-confidence, trustworthy business associate, qualitative education, good management of business fund, definite purpose in life, moderation, positive thinking, determination, love, hard-work, good initiative, the fear of god and co-operation with other entrepreneurs of like minds. Others include carefulness, self-discipline, punctuality, effective time management, quitting procrastination, taking calculative risk, humility, right connection, good information, truthfulness and tolerance. Added to the underlisted are: taking the right action, standing one's feet, not fearing failure, developing the success habit of being goal oriented, visualising one's goals and believing that one can attain success and planning one time objectively.

Finally, we expect the appropriate government and non-governmental agencies do their best in dealing with general challenges facing the Nigerian entrepreneurship such as: poor electricity supply, inadequate access to finance, poor transportation, unfriendly tax regime, poor access to land, high cost of finance, crime rate, corruption, political environment, customs and trade regulations, inadequately trained workforce, and labour regulations. Others include poor state of infrastructure, unstable Nigerian economy and politics, inconsistent government policies, poor knowledge on how to run a business, marketing strategy challenge, lack of patience.

While the appropriate agencies do their best, Nigerian enterprises are duty bound to conquer the enemies within. As a moral therapy for ailing Nigerian entrepreneurship, the first step to do this is to accept objectively that those issues we describe as *enemies within* are reality and from this point move to address them objectively. With this in place, the future of Nigerian entrepreneurship will be better than today.