



PASTOR E.A.  
**ADEBOYE**  
His Life and Calling

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Editors

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## **The Impact of Pastor Adeboye's Ministry on the Society**

– Olufunke Adeboye –

**P**ASTOR ENOCH ADEJARE ADEBOYE HAS BEEN THE General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) since 1981. Within these thirty-five years, he has expanded the reach of the Church, instituted various innovative programmes and broadened its membership base. His visionary leadership has steered the ship of the Church through various courses without any major rupture. This has earned him respect from various quarters across the globe and made him a model for many young people. This chapter identifies some areas of influence where Pastor Adeboye's mark has remained indelible both within the local context of the Nigerian society and the wider global community. This also underscores the fact that the RCCG is no longer a local "brand" but a transnational church with parishes in over 190 nations of the world.

### **Impact on Individual Lives**

The first area where the ministry of Pastor Adeboye has impacted the society is in the multitudes of souls converted from their old ways to Christ. While many of these converts probably came from the background of mainline Christianity, a whole lot never had any

Christian encounter before. Many were involved in destructive, antisocial behaviour before they got converted. It is difficult to give a precise number of souls saved through Adeboye's ministrations because of the sheer spread of his activities at various fora. These include sermons given in various parishes of the RCCG at special programmes such as the "Go-A-Fishing" evangelistic outreaches, Holy Ghost services, annual convention, Holy Ghost Congress, open-air crusades in various communities and stadia, services held on the campuses of various Nigerian universities and Special Holy Ghost services held in various nations of the world such as the Festival of Life in the United Kingdom. Added to these are the programmes held outside the RCCG fold to which he is often invited as guest preacher.

In addition to the conversion experiences are testimonies of miracles that took place under Adeboye's ministrations. These testimonies range from healing of physical ailments, deliverance from barrenness, provision of jobs and breakthroughs to deliverance from the powers of darkness. A few examples of such testimonies would suffice here:

On 7 November 2014, I got a phone call from my son who was a heavy tractor driver with a construction company in Florida, that he just had an accident. I had thought it was a small thing but I almost passed out when he told me that as he spoke, the heavy tractor threw him out on impact and rolled upon him and rested on his feet, where he is trapped. The only thing I could do was shout Jesus! After this, I called my Pastor, who calmed me down and called upon the God of Daddy Adeboye to urgently intervene! After being trapped for 3 hours with a tractor weighing thousands of tons resting on my sons legs, God showed up, help came and he was flown by air ambulance to the hospital. At the hospital they were amazed that no major damage was done to both legs, after two weeks of treatment, he started using the same legs to walk unaided. This is what the God of RCCG, has done. He kept me and my family especially my son on the winning side. Praise Jesus! [Sister S.]

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In 2009, I was diagnosed with thyroid disorder (hyper thyroidism) and the doctors told me that I would have to live with the condition for the rest of my life. I attended a Holy Ghost Service where our father in the Lord, Pastor E.A. Adeboye prophesied and said our appointment with death had been terminated. To the glory of God I was healed of this terrible disease. Even my doctors were amazed. Praise the Lord. [Sister O]

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I want to give God the glory for saving me genuinely, I had been a Christian for a long time but living in sin though I was a worker in the Church I was worshipping at then. But in November 2015, the Almighty God saved my life. I became born again. Since then, I have been enjoying divine favour, peace, great joy, open doors, healings, breakthroughs and deliverance that I keep wondering how much I had missed in the past. The Lord is good. Trust him and give your life to him completely. You will never regret it. [Brother T.]

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I felt sick in January 2011 and I was rushed to the hospital. My wife was mandated to sign for me to do a brain surgery because of its terrible side effect such as stroke, blindness, hair-loss, impotence etc. I had the brain surgery and became blind. I cried unto God and the Lord restored my sight. Now I am not using glasses. The Doctor also told me that I would be on medication each day for the rest of my life. I cried unto God again and the Lord gave me a new brain. I am not using any medication now and the brain that was damaged then has produced many Mathematics books in UK. [Brother O.]

### **Impact of Foreign Missions**

The RCCG has established itself in more than 190 nations of the world. While some of the nations in Asia and the Middle East have a handful of parishes, others such as the United Kingdom, USA, Canada have hundreds of RCCG parishes as indicated in some of the chapters in this collection. The implication of this development is multiple. First, there is the creation of a global identity for the Church. The RCCG is no longer the local Church that it was in the early days in the 1950s and

1960s. Its membership is now spread across several continents. The Annual Convention of the Church now attracts delegates from places like Philippines, India, Japan, Germany, Australia, South Africa, Malawi and several other nations. This represents not just the unity of believers globally but also indicates the expansion of the frontiers of Christianity, preparatory to the expected Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, it is significant to note that some of the arrowheads for this global expansion are mostly Nigerians, migrant labour who had left the country in search of greener pastures abroad. The "push" factors responsible for this emigration thus indirectly favoured the cause of RCCG transnationalism. Many of the lay people who later pioneered RCCG churches abroad did not know they would become overseas church planters when they left the shores of Nigeria. RCCG foreign missions thus made pastors and "church planters" out of several laymen and women.

This is not to say that missionary activities in the RCCG are completely left in the hands of laymen. There are three institutions of the Church actively involved in mission work. First is the Redeemed Christian School of Missions (RESCOM), established in 1992 to train Christians for cross-cultural missions to both urban and rural contexts. Its entire programme is based on the vision of the RCCG to plant parishes in all the countries of the world. Second is the African Missions Organisation, established in 1996, which operates as a faithbased, not-for-profit outfit committed to addressing the plight of the less privileged in Africa through appropriate community development and empowerment initiatives and the propagation of the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Its various chapters in North America, Europe, Canada and Nigeria periodically raise funds to sponsor the training of missionaries at RESCOM and meet the needs identified in various mission fields in Africa. The third organ is the Central Missions Board, which has general oversight of all the mission fields of the RCCG: providing personnel, resources and spiritual guidance.

Another impact of the large scale overseas expansion of the RCCG is the repositioning of Nigeria as a sacred site of global consequence. Since the 1980s, the Nigerian nation has acquired a

negative reputation of being corrupt, of having inept leaders, and of having nationals involved in the international drug trade and human trafficking. But with the transnational activities of the RCCG, the nation is now having a positive reputation globally as the home of the RCCG, now constituted as a sacred site. This is already attracting religious tourists and other "seekers" from outside its shores.

### **Impacting Society through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**

The RCCG has always been concerned about the welfare of its members and of the wider society. In the early days of the mission under Pa Josiah Akindayomi, a maternity center had been established at Ebute-Metta to serve not just RCCG members but also the immediate community. However, it was under the leadership of Pastor E. A. Adeboye that the mission expanded the scope of its services to include more maternity centers, educational institutions such as primary, secondary and vocational institutions and a University called Redeemer's University. All these institutions, particularly the maternity centers, offers subsidised services to the public. The RCCG took another step forward when it institutionalised these services by creating corporate social responsibility departments in each of its administrative units called Provinces. This department, headed by an Assistant Provincial Pastor, has been responding to various needs in their immediate communities. Their activities range from provision of water through sinking of boreholes, road construction, donation of equipment to public institutions such as hospitals, schools, orphanages, police force, Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) to granting of scholarship to indigent students at all levels of education. With the inability of the Nigerian state to adequately provide essential services for its citizens, the CSR activities of the RCCG have helped to meet some of these needs. Given the vast needs in the country, these represent just a drop in the ocean, but when seen from the perspective of affected local communities, the RCCG has helped to make life easier for many people. The Gospel has not only been preached in words but also in deeds.

The involvement of the RCCG in humanitarian services also extends to the global level. Two examples would suffice here. First is the Israeli case. The RCCG till date has donated three ambulances to

Israel. The first two were donated in 2011 and 2013 respectively by Pastor E. A. Adeboye to Magen David Adom. This is Israel's national emergency medical, disaster, ambulance and blood bank service (officially recognised by the International Committee of the Red Cross). The third was donated in 2015 to the Jerusalem ZAKA organisation to be used in its disaster relief operations. The second example is the Community Relations Initiative of the RCCG in Canada. RCCG Churches in different parts of Canada are involved in the provision of various services to their communities. These include: feeding the homeless from their soup kitchens, donation of toiletries, household appliances and food to residents of temporary shelters; visitations to prisons, halfway houses and correctional centers and visitations to hospitals and nursing homes. Other activities include: provision of musical training and career counseling for the youth and organising English language classes for non-English speaking immigrants. Some of the parishes also have football and soccer clubs to entertain the community and promote a healthy lifestyle among the youth.

Perhaps, the most popular of these interventions are the feeding programmes. Many more people participate in them, first to meet the needs of the hungry and also to address food security issues in the various communities. CSR activities are not restricted to Canada but undertaken in other parts of the world where the RCCG can be found, viz, North America, South America, Carribean, Europe, Asia, Australia and Africa. The impetus for the programme was drawn from the teachings of Jesus Christ on reaching out to the poor and needy found in the Gospel of Matthew 25:34-40.

### **Contact with World Leaders**

Pastor E.A. Adeboye has had various opportunities, over the years, to interact with several world leaders and preach the Gospel to them. He has also been honoured by political leaders outside Nigeria for his visionary leadership and transformative role in the RCCG. For example, in 1999, he was given a Honourary citizenship and Key of Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. Similarly, in 2001, he was awarded the Liberty Bell and the Key to the City of Philadelphia. This was in "recognition of his position as the leader of a multinational religious

organisation and his role in transforming the RCCG from a local Church of a few hundreds to an international Church” with millions members within and outside Nigeria. Between 2002 and 2005, similar honours were conferred on him in Detroit, Michigan; Dallas, Texas and Baltimore, Maryland. In October 2015, he received a Certificate of Recognition from the US Congress for “being a compassionate leader, giving endlessly through community service, civic engagement and sincere altruism”. He was equally commended for his focus to create a unique worship experience for members of the RCCG. Above all, his spiritual guidance was said to have touched and enriched many lives. In November 2015, Adeboye visited President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya while he was in Kenya for the 20th anniversary of the RCCG in East Africa. Such visits were usually paid to various political leaders whenever he was in their country for any religious programme.

In April 2015, David Cameron, the then British Prime Minister attended the Festival of Life in London, where Pastor Adeboye ministered. Earlier in November 2007, Prince Charles had celebrated his 59th birthday at Jesus House, a Parish of the RCCG in London. The occasion attracted several mainline and Pentecostal Church leaders, and politicians in London. The comments of Prince Charles during the event reflect societal acknowledgement of the ministry of the RCCG in the United Kingdom:

In your Church, you are doing the things that Jesus would do if he walked the streets of London today. You are all a marvelous example of how many people whose families originate from the Commonwealth, have yourselves brought new life into the Christian Church in the United Kingdom thereby completing the cycle started by the missionaries from Britain so many years ago. So we have that to thank you for.

Over the years, several high profile guests have visited Jesus House, the central RCCG parish in London. These included Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa and Mr. Boris Johnson, former Mayor of London.

Back in Nigeria, Adeboye regularly hosts political leaders and other aspirants to public offices. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan have been to the Holy Ghost Service at the Redemption Camp. President Muhammadu Buhari has also visited

Adeboye during his presidential campaign. In 2008, Adeboye was awarded the Order of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (OFR), while in 2014, he got the Commander of the Order of the Niger (CON). These are national honours awarded to illustrious citizens who have contributed significantly to national development. All these are indicative of public acknowledgement of the influence of Adeboye both locally and globally.

### **International Press Endorsement**

In 2009, Adeboye was listed by the American Newsweek Magazine as one of the fifty most powerful persons in the world. Two things impressed the magazine editors about Adeboye. One was his reputation for honesty. According to the report, "behind Adeboye's extraordinary success is his reputation for honesty. While other Pentecostal pastors (including some Nigerians) have been accused of financial misdeeds or faking supernatural powers, Adeboye remains above the fray". The second quality is his commitment to the task of Church planting much like the way "Starbucks used to build coffee shops everywhere". This announcement gave Adeboye and the RCCG enhanced publicity within and outside Africa. He was further thrust into international limelight.

It was therefore not surprising that Adeboye was invited in September 2009 to lead the pre-summit inter-faith prayers for global peace at the 64th General Assembly of the United Nations in New York.

### **Participation at Global Summits and Involvement in International Politics**

The International Prayer Council of the United Nations in September 2009 organised a prayer session titled "Uniting in Prayers for the United Nations". This pre-summit inter-faith prayer attracted representatives of more than 68 nations. In attendance were leaders of various religions. Adeboye participated actively in this session. Again, in June 2011, Adeboye was at the UN for another event. This was a meeting of religious leaders calling on the UN to foster an alliance for the "Culture of Peace", which among other things was expected to enthrone peace in the Middle East and serve as a model for conflict resolution globally. The summit was sponsored by the Inter-

Parliamentary Coalition for Global Ethics and co-hosted by the mission of Bosnia-Herzegovina to the UN and the Christ Redeemers' Friends Trust (led by Adeboye) under the patronage of Frederic Mayor, a former Director General of UNESCO, who introduced the "Culture of Peace" at the UN, and King Mohammed VI of Morocco. The meeting was attended by leaders of the "Abrahamic Faith Groups", namely, Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Commenting on this summit, Sam Eyoboka and Olayinka Latona wrote:

For the first time, the Pastor has joined forces with the Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Global Ethics to bring together religious, academic and diplomatic leaders to the summit at the UN with the goal of agreeing to work together and individually implement the UN resolutions developing a Culture of Peace through education, communications and legislation as a milestone to achieve peace in the [Middle East] region and as a global model.

Again, on 21 June, 2016, Adeboye, in furtherance of his commitment to global peace, met with the UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki- Moon to discuss how the UN system could exploit the influence and goodwill of the RCCG to facilitate inter-faith harmony, thus creating a conducive environment for action towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. On the issue of global peace and development, he noted that the RCCG, through its provision of above-board leadership and promotion of Christian faith and values, will continue to impact the global community, especially the youthful population positively. From the RCCG model, it is expected that Christians worldwide will serve as "a strong moral compass and voice for the society, speaking for the marginalised and disadvantaged" while remaining accountable to the general population.

These UN meetings are very significant as they illustrate the growing recognition of Adeboye by the inter-faith world of international ecumenical engagement and the willingness of the RCCG to work with global institutions like the UN for the common good. They also represent the continuing expansion and globalisation of the RCCG brand.

A good illustration of Adeboye's involvement in international politics is the case of Jonathan Pollard. Pollard was an American (later

turned Israeli) agent convicted in the US in 1987 (though arrested in 1985) for passing classified information to Israel, which was an ally of the US. He was sentenced to life imprisonment. After spending more than two decades in American jails, his health began to fail and various groups started to plead for his release. The most consistent request for clemency for Jonathan Pollard came from Israeli authorities in 1995, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2014. Some American statesmen and politicians also began to speak on his behalf. In 2010, 39 members of Congress submitted a Plea for Clemency to the White House, while former Secretary of State, George Shultz wrote President Barack Obama in 2011 to commute his sentence. It was around this time that Pastor Adeboye wrote to President Obama, requesting that the remainder of Jonathan Pollard's sentence be commuted "in the interest of justice". Several other leaders pleaded on his behalf, and eventually he was released on parole in 2015, after spending thirty years in prison. Adeboye's involvement in this case is indicative of his cordial relations and influence with Israeli authorities. After all, Pollard was not the first political prisoner sentenced to life in US jails.

### **Conclusion**

It is clear from the foregoing that the impact of Pastor Adeboye transcends his immediate community and reaches out to the entire world, more like the charge of Jesus Christ to his disciples to be witnesses to Him in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8). Adeboye has not just witnessed Christ in Ifewara (his native home), in all Nigeria and Africa, and to the "end of earth"; the depth of his ministry has also affected and changed the lives of people profoundly through conversions, healings, deliverance and blessing of great magnitude. Physical needs of people have been met as food, water, education, good roads, modern health services and various infrastructure have been provided in many parts of the world where they were needed. His dialogue with other leaders in the interfaith community also shows his love for those outside his fold and commitment to world peace. Through his transformative leadership, the RCCG has metamorphosed from a local Church with just hundreds of members to a global movement with millions of members. These members have come from all walks of life: lower class

of artisans and manual labourers; middle class professionals in the health, legal, education, constructions, services and other sectors; and the upper class elite made up of high level entrepreneurs, political leaders and traditional rulers, global technocrats and other such leaders.

Pastor Adeboye has become a household name in Nigeria and a role model to several young people whether or not they aspire to be in the ministry. His simplicity has endeared him not just to members of his Church but also to the general populace irrespective of faith or creed. That he has been above all forms of scandals has also earned him global respect. It is hoped that his visionary leadership will continue to lead the RCCG to greater heights.