

New churches, old problems

By Million Kibret

It has become a recent phenomenon in this country these days that cheaply smart, (careful demeanor, seeming Mr. softy) guys are spawning everywhere in the nation who promise to bring us bright days through the Grace of God via their 'teaching and messiahship'. Fortunately or unfortunately many of our fellows, who dream these promises are flocking, and not in few numbers. The majority of these people satisfy either of the following two cases. Those who couldn't compete in the physical world and they are in fantasy. Or, those, (this category contains lesser proportion), who could amass easy money in some illicit way and they want their case to be mitigated by going to some 'new time' church opting to think that they will be forgiven, now that they are the true children of God.

Mind you, even then after, disposing the fortune collected through the evil trip is naïve and not an option. Ruther, they do it the smart way: they donate some thousands to the church. Then it will be a win-win situation. They feel so much better, the rest of the congregation respects their generosity, the leaders of the church treat them as special members. And their fortune is even to be 'blessed' further. This is purely a money laundering exercise.

I think building a nation is too serious an issue to be left to these kinds of individuals to dictate the significant proportion in the population (the young disproportionately make up the majority segment) on the how's and why's of personal and national growth and development at the whim of their shallow thinking. In most of the cases their teaching contravenes the basic principles of realistic pragmatism and accountability and paves every way for us to dream the interference of some third party to deal with and surmount those immense problems of ours so that we will rest in peace. Only to aggravate the toll of lack of hard work and perseverance that we are being accused of.

I remember an article on an Ethiopian local newspaper, how this 'church business' is becoming viable with supernormal profits to its

leaders. Last time the world-class magazine, *The Economist* also narrated on this issue under the title, “New churches, Faith and fraud”. (*The Economist, September 11- 17,2004*).

The Economist indicated that even in Europe and America, the pious followers of these churches are immigrant blacks from Africa and the Caribbean [who flocked from the ‘cursed’ to the ‘promised’ lands?] Guess why! The kind of people who would rather dream than move their hands and mind.

As a case in point, I know longtime neighbors of my family. They claim to be ‘born-again’ since a decade ago. The parents have six children, now all but one above the age of 18. Each of them serves a church in the locality, either in the choir or in preaching. Servants of the “church of God” for many years, to your surprise, not a single one managed to pass the ESLCE and join a higher education institution. A unique case in our neighborhood. They kept pretending that it was okay with them ‘because they are not worldly’.

However, they couldn’t survive with that condition and tried the shortest path. The elder daughter married some one and fled to Europe. The bigger son managed to migrate to the Middle East by ‘arranging’ Jewish blood ties, non-existent in the family. The next one flew overseas using forged identity. An other son used similar means on his way to Europe. The younger sister, who is still serving in the church, tried to use a high earning young professional as her way to wealth ladder but failed to succeed. The remaining son recently backed from the church and is now a regular customer of a chat (kat, addicting stimulant leaf) chewing house in one of the shanty areas in Addis.

You don’t need to be a professional sociologist to determine the loss a nation to be evolved from the wreckage of families.

Believe it or not this physical world cannot deliver us the simplest thing that we need with out involving our hands and mind the very hard way. As the old saying goes, “destiny is a claim on hand”. One can be corrupt seeking the shortest path. Even then, it necessarily backfires. Quote worthy is the following note, which I remember from my business

studies. “Companies that have grown at a meteoric rate have fallen down as fast”.