

Why don't you ask the Orange Grove Conference Office?

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(1) I Do Not Understand

In the past seven months I have received calls from some church members – eight to be exact – from five districts - who asked me why the Conference office runs programmes for churches for which attendance fees are required. They regard this practice as new and strange. One even said that this is extortion. Three of them even asked why they return tithe if they must also be taxed for departmental events. I consistently asked them:

- Why don't you call the Conference office if this matter disturbs you?
- Why don't you run these programmes yourselves in your churches?
- Who told you that pastors have all knowledge in the world?
- What are the university graduates and other professionals in your churches doing?
- Why are your intellectual and institutional slaves of the church?

One person said to me, “Oh, usho njalo?” I responded, “**You are a church member and not a church slave!**” I told the person never to call me again. I have told others to raise the matter in business sessions. One boldly told me that pastors are fleecing the sheep. I kept my mouth shut.

(2) Another Side of the Matter

This whole practice that bothers these members also implies that pastors themselves are captives of the church. All they apparently know is to run special programmes for

churches in the absence of research surveys. One educated person asked me, “Who told pastors that we need the programme cohorts they invite us to.” I had no answer.

In my contemplation of this matter, I came to several considerations and questions that I shall not expose here. All that that I mused in my mind was that we live in different institutional times and realities. Men who hardly know where we live, depend on members and not God for their lives! All that I can say is this: Next time you have a problem, **“Don’t call me, I’ll call you.”** (Nelson Mandela when he left the presidential office).

End of Part One
