

African Pentecostalism and Millennium Development Goals: A Case for Viable Corporate Social Responsibility

Tunde Agara, and Emmanuel Adetunji

Abstract

Development has been the key concern of most governments, especially in Africa and other developing nations in Asia and Latin America. However, what constitutes development and its nature differ from society to society. However, experience has shown that government, on its own, may not be able to achieve the desired development without the assistance and valuable interactions with other civil societies and international organisations coming to their aid. In this vein, the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) saw the convergence of the development agendas of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and other development agencies. Recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reflect further strengthening convergence in the development agenda. The SDGs also strengthen equity, human rights, and non-discrimination. The focus of this paper is to interrogate the role and concern of the church in the state's agenda for development. This paper argues that the church and state must collaborate to achieve the state's developmental goals. As a living organism, the church exists within an environment (state) from which it takes in its input (worshippers and parishioners) and to which it is expected to release its outputs (better and well-developed citizens). The paper, therefore, contends that contemporary churches can assist in fulfilling the developmental aspirations of the state through viable corporate social responsibility programmes.

Keywords: CSR, MDG, Development; Pentecostalism, SDG, Civil Society; Synergy.

Dr. Tunde Agara, Department of Political Science, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State

Dr. Emmanuel Adetunji, Department of Religious Studies, Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria

adetunji.emmanuel@lcu.edu.ng <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-4862-5864>

Introduction

Pentecostalism, also known as the Pentecostal Movement, began with an event that profoundly impacted the modern world at that time. We can situate the origins of this historical narrative within the period that followed Christ's resurrection and preceded His ascension. Jesus Christ told His disciples, "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until you are endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49, NKJV). The manifestation of this promise and what has become known as the Day of Pentecost took place in Acts 2. Only 120 of the many people who had heard Christ preach, been healed by Him, and even been miraculously fed by Him truly understood what He had said and were present, waiting as He had instructed. Thus, it was through these 120 that God began His work, and Pentecostalism, as a religious movement, started. The event is described in Scripture as follows: Much like a living organism, the church operates within the broader environment of the state, drawing inputs from worshippers and parishioners while also being expected to produce morally upright and well-developed citizens. The Holy Ghost [Spirit] filled them all, causing them to speak in various tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1-4). With this miraculous and unique event, the Church was founded. It is fascinating to note that the DAY OF PENTECOST is one of God's annual HOLY DAYS, as listed in the book of Leviticus 23, and subsequently observed in the Old Testament.

Christ likely observed all of these holy days, which he passed on to his disciples. If the disciples had not kept the holy days, no one would have been in the upper room to receive God's Spirit in 31 A.D. Setting aside debates on the exact day of Pentecost, the movement, which began with roughly 120 adherents, has evolved into a global network of denominations, independent churches, and parachurch organisations centred around the activities of the Holy Spirit. Historically, the modern origins and explosion of Pentecostalism can be traced to the end of the 19th century, when there was a dramatic rise in religious fervour as various groups anticipated the end of history and the return of Christ. Revival meetings ignited this spiritual fervour, occasionally leading to reports of people speaking in tongues. The first widespread use of tongues occurred at a revival in Topeka, Kansas, in January 1900, led by Charles Parham, where a Methodist, Agnes Ozman, began to speak in tongues, and others in the meeting eventually followed suit. In 1906, a series of revival meetings on Azusa Street in Los Angeles led to a widespread experience of tongue speaking, which spread to many parts of the country. William Seymour, one of Charles Parham's students, led the meetings.

Although the Azusa Street mission was short-lived, it had a lasting influence on the Pentecostal movement, leading to the establishment of numerous churches and missions across America that emphasised "spirit baptism," as evidenced by speaking in tongues.

Based on their emphasis and doctrinal differences, we can identify three main divisions within the Pentecostal movement. The original group, with an emphasis on holiness, based their doctrines on three progressive steps

necessary in the life of a believer that indicate growth and blessing. The emergence of Pentecostalism in Nigeria can be traced to the early twentieth century. Around 1910, an Anglican deacon initiated an indigenous prophetic movement that later evolved into the Christ Army Church. Following the influenza outbreak of 1918, revival activities spread within mission churches and the Christ Army Church, leading to the rise of Spirit-filled groups such as the Aladura ('praying people' in Yoruba). Prominent among the early Aladura movements were the Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim, established in 1925, and the Church of the Lord (Aladura), founded in 1930. During the epidemic, a prayer group called the Precious Stone (Diamond) Society was also formed, later breaking away from the Anglican Church to affiliate with Faith Tabernacle in Philadelphia (Anderson, 2001, pp. 80–82; Gaiya 2002: 5). The Holiness revivals of the late nineteenth century significantly shaped Baptist traditions, leading to the emergence of a second branch. The Assemblies of God, founded in 1914 under the leadership of former Baptist minister Eudorus N. Bell, illustrates this orientation. This group differs doctrinally in asserting that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is available to all believers, regardless of prior sanctification. The third stream, Oneness Pentecostalism, arose from debates within the early Pentecostal movement, particularly surrounding the Trinitarian doctrine and baptismal practice. While many upheld the traditional Trinitarian formula, 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit', others insisted on the singular invocation of Jesus' name, as reflected in Acts 2:38. This division gave rise to groups affirming a modalistic perspective and emphasising baptism exclusively in the name of Jesus.

This controversy has to do with the "apostolic" baptismal formula. Some Pentecostals argued for the classic Trinitarian formula (that is, in the Name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit), while others opted for "in the Name of Jesus Christ" in accord with the record in Acts 2:38. While the majority of Holiness believers held to the traditional belief in the Trinity, there was a growing group that held to the modalist belief and affirmed that baptism should be done in Jesus' name only. The early twentieth century saw the emergence of Pentecostalism in Nigeria. Around 1910, an Anglican deacon initiated an indigenous prophetic movement that developed into the Christ Army Church. Following the influenza outbreak of 1918, revival activities spread within mission churches and the Christ Army Church, leading to the rise of Spirit-filled groups such as the Aladura ('praying people' in Yoruba). Prominent among the early Aladura movements were the Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim, established in 1925, and the Church of the Lord (Aladura), founded in 1930. During the epidemic, a prayer group called the Precious Stone (Diamond) Society was also formed, later breaking away from the Anglican Church to affiliate with Faith Tabernacle in Philadelphia (Anderson, 2001, pp. 80–82; Gaiya, 2002: 5). In the 1930s, Joseph Babalola from Faith Tabernacle spearheaded a revival that resulted in the conversion of thousands. In 1932, his movement initiated an alliance with the Pentecostal Apostolic Church of Great Britain after coming into conflict with colonial authorities.

However, this alliance did not last as a result of doctrinaire differences over the use of modern medicine. Babalola established the independent Christ Apostolic Church in 1941, and estimates place its membership at over a million by 1990 (Anderson 2001: 86-87). Foreign Pentecostal denominations such as the Welsh Apostolic Church (1931), the Assemblies of God (1939) and the Foursquare Gospel Church (1954) were also introduced to Nigeria during this period.

Joseph Babalola, associated with Faith Tabernacle, spearheaded a significant revival in the 1930s, drawing thousands of converts. His movement allied with the Pentecostal Apostolic Church of Great Britain in 1932, though doctrinal tension, particularly regarding the use of medicine, ended the partnership. In 1941, Babalola established the Christ Apostolic Church, which by 1990 had grown to over one million members (Anderson 2001: 86–87). During this period, foreign Pentecostal groups such as the Welsh Apostolic Church (1931), the Assemblies of God (1939), and the Foursquare Gospel Church (1954) also gained entry into Nigeria. (Anderson, 2001: p. 85; Murphy, 2006; Mahtani, 2005; Ojo, 2004: p. 4). The mid-twentieth century further expanded Pentecostalism. The Celestial Church of Christ, arriving from Benin in the 1950s, spread rapidly across western and northern Nigeria, becoming one of Africa's largest Aladura churches. In 1952, Josiah Akindayomi, formerly of the Cherubim and Seraphim, established the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG). Under the leadership of Enoch Adejare Adeboye, the RCCG adopted a more explicitly Pentecostal theology and experienced exponential growth, increasing from approximately 42 congregations in 1980 to around 7,000 by 2004, as noted in Ojo (2004: p. 3), Olupona (2003: p. 16), and Gaiya (2002: p. 15). Since then, new charismatic churches began to emerge and grow throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In 1986, Bishop David Oyedepo founded Living Faith Outreach Worldwide, popularly known as the "Winners' Chapel.". It opened a "Faith Tabernacle" in the suburbs of Lagos in 1999 that seats 50,000 people (Phillips, 1999; Ojo, 2004: p. 4).

In recent times, some classical Pentecostal groups have begun to downplay the role of speaking in tongues as evidence of baptism in the Spirit. However, they continue to value it as a legitimate charism of the Spirit. Other Pentecostal churches have embraced what is called "prosperity theology," which proclaims that God wills both the spiritual and physical (including material) well-being of His people. Pentecostal churches may have been effective in bringing people into a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit. Recently, some classical Pentecostal denominations have deemphasised glossolalia as the sole evidence of Spirit baptism, though they continue to affirm it as a valid charismatic gift.

Meanwhile, other Pentecostal movements have adopted prosperity theology, teaching that God intended the holistic well-being of believers—spiritually, physically, and materially. Pentecostalism has proved effective in fostering personal encounters with God through Christ the Spirit, encouraging testimony-sharing, the pursuit of holiness, engagement in charitable works, receptivity to charismatic manifestations, and faithful tithing. The critical question, however, is the

extent to which Pentecostalism has addressed the socio-economic realities of its adherents, particularly the poor and marginalised, and how effectively it has collaborated with the state, especially in Nigeria, to alleviate poverty and promote self-reliance. Development has been the key concern of most governments, especially in Africa and other developing nations in Asia and Latin America. However, experience has shown that government, on its own, may not be able to achieve the desired development without the assistance and valuable interactions with other civil societies and international organisations coming to their aid. It is in this vein that the Millennium Declaration and the subsequent Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) brought together the development priorities of key international agencies, including the UNDP, UNEP, WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, and others. The more recent adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reflects a deepened convergence of these agendas, while placing stronger emphasis on equity, human rights, and the elimination of discrimination.

The focus of this paper is to interrogate the role and concern of the church in the state's agenda for development. The view of this paper is that the church, functioning as a civil institution, must collaborate with the state to advance the developmental goals of society.

As a living organism, the church exists within an environment (state) from which it takes in its input (worshippers and parishioners) and to which it is expected to release its outputs (better and well-developed citizens). The paper, therefore, contends that contemporary churches can assist in fulfilling the developmental aspirations of the state through viable corporate social responsibility programmes.

The Concept of Development and National Development Plans

Nigeria's attempt at planning development predates its existence as an independent and sovereign state. Since the colonial era, a development plan has consistently guided the country's progress. According to Obioma (1999: p. 104),

A national development plan pertains to the country as a whole. It consists of a programme of actions for the utilisation of national resources. The programme is designed to achieve the national preference within a specific timeframe. It provides a basis. Through which the government can influence, direct, and control changes in the principal economic variables over time to achieve some set objectives. ...planning is a means of achieving some purpose, and is not an end in itself.

According to Zuvekas (1979), development planning refers to the government's application of a coordinated range of policy tools aimed at attaining economic goals at either the national or regional level. Put differently, planning entails the making of specific decisions in accordance with pre-set goals or objectives, policies, and strategies intended to influence the future course of events in a state. Planning, therefore, refers to the conscious coordination of economic policies and administrative interventions to achieve specific and agreed goals of economic, social and political development, usually as embodied in the development plan. In terms of scope, the planning could be comprehensive, sectoral, and regional or project planning, while in terms

of time, it could be short, medium, or long-term. Usually, the budget contains the economic aspect of the development plan. Thus, the budget acts as a tool of planning and includes within its framework the determination and proposal for the financial resources required to implement and bring the development plan into fruition. Thus, there is a close link between the budget and the development plan, and they both, therefore, share similar objectives.

To date, Nigeria has had over five decades of national development planning, which started during the colonial period and continued into the post-colonial period. Obioma (1999: p. 107) has grouped the spectrum of development planning in Nigeria into four distinct phases. The first phase is the pre-independence planning era (1946–1962); the second phase coincides with the fixed medium-term plans (1962–1985); the third phase is the structural adjustment programme period (July 1986–June 1988); and the last phase is the period starting from 1990 to date, when the rolling plan approach was introduced. However, development planning in Nigeria has always been reactive to market forces in its approach, although it may reflect some element of futurism in its content. Development planning in Nigeria, as noted by Ukpanah (1993), has been a response to the 'market failure argument' prevalent in most developing countries, where structural and institutional rigidities continue to inhibit the operation of the 'invisible hand' of the market.

One reason for creating development plans in Nigeria was to attract external aid and funding for specific programmes that the government aimed to implement. This form of inducement to draw up a plan can be traced to the first ten-year "Plan of Development and Welfare for Nigeria (1946-1956)," which was drawn up for Nigeria by the colonial government with hardly any input from Nigerians themselves. However, the work was done in response to the British Development and Welfare Act of 1940, which requested all British colonies to prepare development plans to assist in the disbursement of colonial Development and Welfare Funds (Obioma, 1999, p. 108). Since then, all of Nigeria's development plans have been drawn up more for the purpose of attracting external donors' sympathy than actually doing something worthwhile, such as developing the resource base of the country.

The post-independence First National Development Plan (1962–68) conforms to the definition of planning in that a national institution deliberately drew it up, set up for that purpose—the Economic Planning Unit of the Federal Ministry of Economic Development, in conjunction with the National Economic Council (Ebhoimhen, 2019). It was with the Second (1970–74), Third (1975–80), and Fourth (1981–85) National Development Plans that the country was able to lay an enduring institutional foundation by creating a Central Planning Office for Development Planning to coordinate the planning efforts of the federal and state governments. In 1986 and 1987, a policy plan took the place of the Development Plans, leading to the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). The three-year Rolling Plan strategy was instituted in 1990 to replace the previous five-year development plans. The rolling plan was adopted to enable quick reviews and adjustments to revenue projections and programmes on an annual basis. Since then, there

have been several rolling plans to date—1990-92, 1991-93, 1992-94, 1994-96 and 1995-97. In 1997, a fifteen-year Perspective Plan approach was adopted, together with a Vision 2010 document which mapped out a long-term trajectory for the economy. A significant factor in the success or failure of the plans was the nature of the leadership or the regime under whose authority they were initiated. The First and Second National Development Plans fell under the leadership tenure of Gen. Gowon. The First Plan aimed to establish a lasting foundation for national development, with the long-term goal of achieving a "take-off" towards sustainable economic growth by providing essential infrastructure and social facilities, which were believed to motivate private investors. The Second National Development Plan (1970-74) was launched shortly after the civil war, informed by the experiences acquired during the implementation of the First Plan, with the objectives to achieve and establish the following: (1) a united, strong, and self-reliant nation; (2) a great and dynamic economy; (3) a just and egalitarian society; (4) a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens; and (5) a free and democratic society.

In contrast to the First Plan, the Second and even the Third and Fourth Plans were significant in that the National Planning Office prepared them, and therefore projects that would use more local resources but with lower levels of commercial profitability and a longer gestation period were admitted. This plan was, therefore, in all seriousness, geared towards developing the productive forces of the economy without reliance on external financing. The Third National Development Plan (1975-80) fell into the leadership of Gen. Murtala and later, Gen. Obasanjo. The strategy was to rely on and utilise the expected enhanced revenues from oil to boost the standards of living of the populace and to provide for the much-needed expansion and improved services in the healthcare delivery sector, education, potable water, electricity, and telecommunication, among the essential ones. Thus, a massive capital investment of N30 billion, later increased to N43 billion, laid the foundation for the plan.

The Indigenisation Act, which began in 1972, was revised during this period and, along with the import liberalisation measures for consumer goods and the focus on national value-added industries—defined as those that utilise more local resources—determined the direction of the plan. Although the implementation of the plan was adversely affected by the collapse of the oil market and the subsequent economic depression of 1978, Murtala's administration was able to conclude several agricultural and public sector industrial projects, such as the World Bank-assisted Agricultural Development Programs (ADPs), the National Accelerated Food Production Program (NAFPP), the Ajaokuta and Aladja Steel Plants and the Oku-Iboku Paper Mills, among others. The Second Democratic Republic of Shagari adopted the Fourth National Development Plan (1981-85). Despite the ongoing depression in the world oil market, the plan allocated a capital expenditure of about N82 billion, most of which was anticipated to come from oil earnings.

Due to the sharp decline in oil prices and the resulting decrease in anticipated foreign exchange earnings from oil sales, most planned projects could not be implemented; consequently, the government

resorted to external borrowing to cover the shortfall. Babangida's administration opted for a policy plan known as the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), which was implemented in September 1986, instead of adopting a Fifth Development Plan that was expected to run from 1985 to 1990. It was geared towards redressing policy lapses from the past and, more importantly, meeting the conditions of international financial institutions for a review of the country's growing external debt burden. Given the benefit of hindsight, we can now conclude that virtually all expectations that influenced its adoption have failed to materialise. It failed to deliver a non-inflationary growth pattern, a prerequisite for macroeconomic stability. It failed to deliver enhanced efficiency in resource mobilisation, and the anticipated increase in non-oil exports and associated earnings did not materialise either.

The frustration stemming from the failure of various Development Plans, including SAP and the three-year Rolling Plans, to achieve objectives such as rapid but sustained development, equitable income distribution, technological advancement, and economic self-reliance resulted in the adoption of a new approach: the Perspective Plan Approach (1997-2010) and the Vision 2010 Document. The Vision 2010 Document was prepared in 1997 to enlist the collaboration and support of the private sector in mapping out an appropriate developmental vision and direction for the country. The Vision's broad objectives extend beyond traditional economic concerns, encompassing socio-cultural, ecological, and environmental aspects of development. We can now assert that the civilian government's policy directions did not prioritise the interests of the masses. The development oscillation from National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) to Vision 20:2020 articulated Nigeria's ambition to, by the year 2020, establish a robust, diversified, sustainable, and globally competitive economy. This vision emphasised the optimal use of human capacity and natural resources with the overarching goal of ensuring improved living standards and an enhanced quality of life for all citizens.

What is Corporate Social Responsibility?

In the extant literature, Corporate Social Responsibility is also known as 'Corporate Sustainability', 'Sustainable Business', 'Corporate Conscience', 'Corporate Citizenship', 'Conscious Capitalism', or 'Responsible Business.' It reflects an organisation's commitment to managing the social, environmental, and economic effects of its operations responsibly and in line with public organisations. It is also part of a company or organisation's approach to corporate governance. CSR is important to companies and organisations, as a viable CSR helps them to retain community approval and hence customers' allegiance to their products and services.

Concisely, businesses do engage in CSR for strategic or ethical purposes. From a strategic perspective, the goal is to increase long-term profits and build shareholder trust by fostering positive public relations and maintaining high ethical standards, which help reduce business and legal risks through accountability for corporate actions. CSR strategies encourage the company to make a positive impact on the environment and stakeholders, including consumers, employees, investors, communities,

and others. From an ethical perspective, some businesses adopt CSR policies and practices due to the ethical beliefs of senior management. For example, a CEO may believe that harming the environment is ethically objectionable.

As desirable as CSR has been for organisations and businesses since the 1960s, the concept has attracted attention from a range of businesses and stakeholders, giving birth to a wide variety of definitions with little consensus (Sheehy, 2015, pp. 625–648). Therefore, the varying interests represented by different stakeholders have triggered definition crises. For instance, a business-minded person might define CSR as a business strategy, while a government official may see it as voluntary regulation. Nevertheless, Sheehy (2015) has reviewed a wide range of disciplinary definitions, including the economic definition of "sacrificing profits", the management definition of "beyond compliance", the institutionalist view of CSR as a "socio-political movement", and the legal focus on directors' duties. Furthermore, Carroll (1991; pp. 39-48) has described CSR as a pyramid of responsibilities, namely, economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities. While Carroll has not defined CSR but argued for the classification of activities, Sheehy has developed a definition differently, following the philosophy of science, which is the branch of philosophy used for defining phenomena. He defined CSR as "international private business self-regulation".

The *Business Dictionary* has equally defined CSR as "a company's sense of responsibility towards the community and environment (both ecological and social) in which it operates. Companies express this citizenship (1) through their waste and pollution reduction processes, (2) by contributing educational and social programs; and (3) by earning adequate returns on their employed resources." However, Habisch et al. (2005) have pointed out a difference between the Canadian (Montreal School of CSR), the Continental European, and the Anglo-Saxon approaches to CSR. Thus, for Chinese consumers, a socially responsible company makes safe, high-quality products; for Germans, it provides secure employment; and in South Africa, it makes a positive contribution to social needs such as health care and education. Given all these facts, a more common approach to CSR is corporate philanthropy, which can take the form of monetary donations and aid given to nonprofit organisations and communities. Donations are made in areas such as the arts, education, housing, health, social welfare, and environment, among others, but they exclude political contributions and commercial event sponsorship.

CSR and Pentecostalism: The Interface

Churches are living organisms and organisations, similar to other entities such as businesses, whether public or private, profit-making or service-oriented. They take in inputs from their environment and are expected to return outputs that contribute to the spiritual and physical development of citizens. The primary resource that keeps churches in business is human beings whose souls they have a passion for leading to and maintaining in Christ. However, the church's responsibility extends beyond just their spiritual well-being; it also includes their physical well-being. The church must meet the challenges faced by those living in this age to remain

relevant. Scholars and the government have misconstrued the challenges facing this age. They believe that the significant challenge to overcome is achieving an increase in the national economies of the developing countries. This has also been the primary focus of various development plans in Nigeria, from colonial times to the present, as well as the different Millennium Development Goals.

Ironically, government and policymakers seem unaware that development is not just about national economic growth. If this is the case, then why is there a concentration on increasing national economic growth? The simple answer is that it is convenient, measurable, and quantifiable. The obsession with quantification has made us confuse development with economic growth. The supposition here is that an increase in economic growth and national income, if faster than population growth, may proffer solutions to other social and political problems. The reality and experience of the past decades in Nigeria have shown these assumptions to be a fallacy. Despite the development plans, social and political problems, unemployment, hunger, mortality rates, and crime have steadily increased. So then, what is the absolute necessity of man? Marxists say the answer is food, shelter, and clothing. Since social welfare is primarily tied to income, which itself depends on adequate employment and stable earnings, the assessment of a nation's development must go beyond economic growth.

Dudley Seers (1969) argued that the critical questions to ask are: What is happening to poverty? What is happening to unemployment? Moreover, what is happening to inequality? His position was that genuine development can only be affirmed when all three indicators show significant improvement. Conversely, if any or all worsened, then labelling such a context as "development," even amidst rising per capita income, would be misleading. Since social welfare is primarily tied to income, which itself depends on adequate employment and stable earnings, the assessment of a nation's development must go beyond economic growth. Dudley Seers (1969) argued that the critical questions to ask are: What is happening to poverty? What is happening to unemployment? Moreover, what is happening to inequality? His position was that genuine development can only be affirmed when all three indicators show significant improvement. Conversely, if any or all worsened, then labelling such a context as "development," even amidst rising per capita income, would be misleading. *This principle applies to the future, too. A 'plan' which conveys no targets for reducing poverty, unemployment, and Inequality can hardly be considered a 'development plan'.*

In essence, the focus of the church's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) should be on reducing poverty and inequality by providing employment and a steady source of income for its members. This was one of the focuses of the early church, for which Apostle Paul expressively praised and thanked the Corinthian church. Provisions to meet the needs of members of the church and missionaries had been a focus, which the early church consciously promoted and encouraged in its teaching. It was part of the doctrinaire teachings of the early church. The question is, why would it be different for the later church, like ours, given the fact that not

only has the population of unemployed people increased, but many of them looked to the church for support. A Harvard Business Review article (Rangan et al., n.d.) divides CSR into three practice theatres. The first theatre focuses on philanthropy.

Contributions in the form of financial support, equipment, community-based initiatives, and employee volunteerism represent a company's commitment to social responsibility. This dimension is often described as the "soul" of the organisation, reflecting its ethical, social, and environmental priorities. Scholars emphasise that corporate social responsibility (CSR) arises from recognising that businesses function as integral components of a broader society. While such activities may be advantageous for profit-making companies, the church should bypass any intermediary between them and the people and instead deal directly with them. Partnering with non-profit or civil society organisations may be desirable, but it can dilute the church's impact and may not directly benefit it. The church should utilise CSR activities to propagate its religious beliefs effectively. Conversely, the second sphere of CSR focuses on enhancing workplace efficiency and overall operational performance. Scholars observe that these initiatives aim to produce social or environmental advantages, concurrently enhancing the effectiveness of the organisation throughout the value chain. Sustainability practices, which aim to reduce resource consumption, minimise waste, and curb emissions, can also lower operating costs.

Furthermore, studies indicate that investments in employee welfare, like healthcare access and educational opportunities, enhance productivity and retention. Unlike philanthropic contributions, which are typically assessed in terms of social or environmental impact, activities in this second sphere are expected to yield both social value and measurable gains for the corporate bottom line. Within this framework, church-based CSR could focus on addressing social welfare needs, offering free educational programmes to support members in completing secondary schooling, and providing supplementary medical care and financial aid to bridge the gaps left by government health services. The third category of CSR initiatives focuses on reconfiguring the business model itself. Within this framework, companies develop innovative approaches that simultaneously tackle social or environmental challenges while ensuring long-term profitability. A notable illustration is Unilever's Project Shakti in India, where women in rural communities are provided with microfinance support and trained to distribute household products such as soaps, oils, and detergents. This programme not only generates income for over 65,000 female entrepreneurs, but it also improves hygiene and access to essential goods in remote villages. Similarly, IKEA's People and Planet strategy seeks to achieve full sustainability by 2020, which includes implementing systems for recycling used furniture. Such initiatives demonstrate how socially responsive models can merge community impact with sustainable business growth.

A CSR programme can be an aid to recruitment and retention (Bhattacharya et al., 2008, pp. 37–44). For the church, potential recruits could be new members who are often attracted to or won over by the church's CSR policy. CSR can also help improve the perception of a

company among its staff, that is, its membership, particularly when such members can become involved through giving (tithes, offerings, donations, and fundraising) to the church's CSR activities. CSR has been credited with encouraging member retention (Korschun et al., 2014, pp. 20-37). CSR can help build members' loyalty to the church based on distinctive ethical and doctrinal values. Conversely, highlighting one of the three CSR theatres can serve as a primary positioning tool, establishing an area or service for which the church will be known both locally and globally. Leveraging CSR methodologies as a strategic tactic can gain public support for a church presence even in hostile communities and help them sustain a competitive advantage by using their social contributions as another form of advertising.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper concludes by examining six key avenues through which the church may derive value from an actively pursued CSR agenda. In their 2012 *Journal of Management* article, industrial and organisational psychologists Herman Aguinis and Ante Glavas present a comprehensive review of CSR's impact on employees within organisations. Echoing this perspective, Bob Stiller, founder of Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, emphasised, "I have learnt that people are more motivated and willing to go the extra mile to make the company successful when there is a greater good associated with it." It is no longer just a job. Work becomes meaningful, and the result makes us more competitive." The same applies to churches participating in CSR activities.

CSR programs assist organisations in six ways, which churches and their members have adapted to.

1. **The church fosters better membership behaviours and improves relationships among its members.** This is interpreted to mean that when members (and even non-members) of the church perceive that a particular church in their locality is "doing the right thing", it seems they are more likely to "do it" themselves. In this respect, the church can mould the character of its membership in the sense that when churches implement CSR programmes, members are more likely to imitate such cooperative and helping behaviours towards others in their community. Similarly, CSR fosters higher quality and closer relationships among members and non-members, aiming to win them over and convert them to the faith and church.
2. **Enhanced Members' Identification with the Church.** There is the possibility that when members feel that their church is socially responsible, they are likely to experience a greater sense of identity and belongingness with it. In fact, this feeling can be more important than just attendance figures in determining the extent to which members identify with their place of worship.
3. **Improved Retention and Commitment.** A positive feeling about the church's CSR initiative has been shown to increase a member's intention to stay with the church and their overall commitment to it. Commitment encompasses a broad range of positive attitudes, including tithing, other financial contributions, and personal commitments and sacrifices, as individuals are likely to view their future and success as closely tied to the church's success.

4. **Make the Church More Attractive to Prospective Members.**

Coupled with increasing current members' commitment, CSR can also make churches look more attractive to prospective and would-be members. In today's era, where worshippers seek "high-impact" churches, engaging in CSR enables these churches to attract more people than other churches or denominations.

5. Enhance members' engagement and participation in church programs. CSR can make members more engaged and participate more fully in church programmes, particularly when they feel positive about their church's CSR involvement. By making members aware of the church's efforts to contribute back and celebrating these efforts, members become more actively engaged with the church programmes.

6. Increased Creativity. Finally, when members buy into the church's CSR, it can increase their creative involvement in terms of giving ideas and advice on what CSR activities the church can engage in. By generating ideas and advice, members become more physically, financially, and spiritually committed to the programmes.

Recommendations/Suggestions

A successful CSR requires significantly more financial and coordination resources than we currently have in RCCG. Presently, the financial arrangement is faulty, with all the money going to the National and nothing left for the Parishes to run their CSR programs effectively. CSR is a top-down approach, so it should not be given to parishes that cannot pay rent. At best, it should be Provincial-driven. Provinces should be asked to conduct a SWOT analysis and scan their environments to identify areas of CSR where they can specialise and have a higher impact. For instance, a province could choose to focus on health interventions and be encouraged to establish maternity centres, sick bays, and other related facilities that would serve the community and maximise the impact of CSR activities.

At the level of the Province, but with assistance from the nation, agricultural communes can be created along the lines of the Kibbutz system in Israel. Iyafin in Badagry is an example of a commune that was established but is now abandoned. For Provinces in the riverine areas, a fishing commune can be created where members are encouraged to engage in fish production, piggery, poultry, or other forms of animal rearing. The commune or Kibbutz system implies that all in that area will be engaged in the same production, making it easy for the Church to supply, monitor and help in selling the produce. This idea could also be extended to mechanised agriculture, where the province provides land and machines for the cultivation of specific cash crops, such as yams, corn, cassava, and even citrus fruits, particularly where the produce can be converted into juice and other drinks. If properly managed, the success of these small- and medium-scale agribusinesses can make Provinces financially sustained instead of relying solely on percentages of tithes and offerings.

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