Christian Giving and Growth of Religious Institutions: Evidence from Port Harcourt, Rivers State

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Abstract
This research addressed the problem of understanding whether Christian giving led to the rapid growth of churches in Port Harcourt. The Church Growth theory, which explores the dynamics of church expansion and its implications for society, serves as the theoretical framework for this study. Secondary method of data collection was employed, drawing on existing literature, reports, and media content to provide a comprehensive analysis of the situation. Firstly, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of churches within the city during the study period, indicating a growth of religious institutions. Secondly, the study found a correlation between the Christian giving and the growth of religious institutions in Port Harcourt. Specifically, there was evidence to suggest that churches that involve in social responsibility grows in population and branches. Additionally, the study highlighted the role of churches in giving as contained in the Bible and promoting positive community development. The study conclude that Christian Giving has positive and significant relationship with growth of religious institutions in Port Harcourt. It recommends that churches should formulate strategies of reaching out to wider population in giving such as providing basic needs of life like food, shelter and clothing. This would help attract more members and cause expansion of religious institutions across the state and beyond. Churches should be encouraged to collaborate with Local and State governments to increase the level of Christian giving and members should be identified with a particular religious institution to motivate Christian giving.

Keywords: *Christian Giving, Growth, Religious Institutions, Port Harcourt, Rivers State*

Introduction

Religious institutions have emerged as a dominant force with presence and adherents from both urban and rural areas in Nigeria, captivating millions with its fervent worship, dynamic spirituality and promises of divine intervention. Through vibrant worship, charismatic preaching, and promises of divine intervention, Pentecostal churches in Nigeria have become powerful magnets drawing people seeking spiritual renewal, healing and solutions to their problems. God is interested in the growth of every church local, national or global, whatever the denominational label. Growth comes as a result of pastors and ministers developing the mind of Christ, who is not willing that any should perish. God's plan for His church is growth, Biblical growth. Church growth refers to the rapid expansion of churches, both in terms of numbers and diversity of denominations. Globally, the phenomenon of church growth has been observed across various continents and cultures. The rise of new Christian religious movements, charismatic leaders, and the spread of

evangelical Christianity in particular have led to an increase in the number of churches worldwide. This trend has been particularly pronounced not only in Rivers State but in Africa, where Christianity has seen remarkable growth in recent decades. Africa has witnessed a surge in church growth. Religious institutions have flourished, attracting large followings and contributing to the growth of churches. These churches often promise spiritual transformation, prosperity, and solutions to societal challenges, which resonate with the aspirations and needs of many Africans (Okon, 2020). The growth of religious institutions in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, has been a subject of growing concern due to its potential correlation with the rise of social vices within the community. This phenomenon has not only local but also regional and global implications, reflecting broader socio-cultural and economic trends. Globally, the proliferation of churches is part of a larger trend of religious diversification and decentralization, spurred by factors such as globalization, migration, and technological advancements. This trend has led to the emergence of various religious denominations and sects, each with its own interpretations of doctrines and modes of operation. Within the African context, the proliferation of churches is influenced by historical, cultural, and socio-economic factors.

Giving is a foundational virtue in Christian teaching, deeply ingrained in the fabric of church life and community. Across history, the willingness of believers to give, whether through financial resources, time, or talents has served as a catalyst for both spiritual and institutional growth within the church (Institute for Faith and Learning, 2015; First Baptist Church at The Villages, 2020; Abodunrin & Olatunbosun, 2022). In urban centers, the impact of Christian giving on church growth and development is particularly profound, reflecting its central role in fostering spiritual engagement and community cohesion. Scriptural references, such as Matthew 25:31-46 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, emphasize the importance of giving and sharing resources as expressions of faith. Generosity in the church context transcends financial contributions; it represents a commitment to the well-being of others and the transformative power of the gospel (Mayo, 2025). This ethos sustains church operations, supports missions, and fosters environment where spiritual and communal bonds are strengthened. Churches that cultivate a culture of giving often experience higher attendance, increased financial stability, and stronger community ties (Akanle & Olorunlana, 2014; Love, 2022; Grace Community Church, 2025).

Christian giving serves as both a theological principle and a practical catalyst for Christian framework. Rooted in scriptural mandates such as Matthew 25:31-46 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, WRFM emphasizes giving as an expression of faith and commitment to community wellbeing (Cruz, n.d.). This giving encompasses financial contributions, time, talents, and sacrificial service, fostering spiritual vitality and institutional stability. Giving drives key programs, including evangelism, discipleship, community outreach, and leadership training. These initiatives align with the Renewal Apostolate Cycle framework, which views renewed baptismal identity as motivating active participation in Christ's mission through stewardship and service (Gallagher, 1985; Abodunrin & Olatunbosun, 2022). By cultivating a culture of giving religious institutions removes barriers to growth and fosters organic church expansion, consistent with the all by itself principle of natural church development. In Nigeria, where the church plays a pivotal role in social and spiritual life, the attitude toward giving significantly shapes the trajectory of church growth. A positive, sacrificial approach to giving, rooted in worship and concern for others, has been shown to empower churches to fund essential programs, including community outreach, evangelism, and discipleship (Oyedepo, 2000).

The decline in financial contributions to churches today poses a significant challenge for congregations striving to fulfill their essential mission. These donations serve as essential facets of church operations, providing crucial support for vibrant worship services, compassionate pastoral care, engaging youth and educational programs, community outreach initiatives and mission efforts that extend both locally and internationally. As giving continues to wane, these foundational activities face increasing jeopardy, impairing the church's ability to sustain vital ministries, and diminishing their broader impact and witness in society. The ramifications of this financial downturn extend beyond mere numbers; they affect the heart of the community, threatening the resources necessary to nurture spiritual growth and outreach. This struggle to serve a diverse congregation, teeming with a multitude of wants, wishes, and needs, is only exacerbated by an acute lack of finances. Donations, most often taken from the benevolent gifts of committed members, are essential for these faith communities. In the absence of such support as is necessary, the ability to create connections, promote growth, and offer relevant resources is increasingly undermined, limiting the congregation's ability to thrive. Conversely, reluctance toward giving limits the church's capacity to fulfill its mission, hindering development. Despite the acknowledged importance of giving, empirical research into its specific mechanisms and practical dimensions within church contexts remains limited. This study examined Christian giving and growth of religious institutions in Rivers State.

Literature Review

Christian Giving

The history of Christian giving reflects the unfolding of biblical stewardship within changing theological, cultural, and ecclesial contexts. The early church inherited the Jewish ethic of generosity but reinterpreted it through the lens of Christ's self-giving love and the communal life empowered by the Holy Spirit. As Christianity expanded, the patterns of giving evolved from the sharing of goods in Acts to structured almsgiving, ecclesial support, and charitable institutions in the patristic and medieval periods. The earliest Christian writings emphasize free giving as an expression of love and unity rather than as an obligation. Cyprian of Carthage teaches that the true offering God accepts is not merely material or ritual, but the sacrificial act of unity, peace, and fellowship among believers. He explicitly connects sacrifice, offering, and unity, emphasizing that the church's visible oneness, sustained through mutual charity and reconciled relationships, is the "greater sacrifice" that pleases God. He shares, "The Lord's sacrifices are not celebrated with legitimate sanctification unless they who offer have peace with their brethren." For Cyprian, stewardship was never merely a matter of money but an ecclesial act of solidarity that kept the body of Christ and the church intact. He shares, "Such, then, was the abundance in labors, as was the agreement in love; they preserved the harmony of concord with the firmness of faith.

Giving as led by the Spirit: The importance of the Spirit-driven offering cannot be overemphasized because, with the Spirit leading the way, the offering is taken from the realm of obligatory generosity to be Spirit-driven. These offerings are given because the believer, with the help of the Holy Spirit, is able to give in the way that God gives, meaning that the offering is done with the attributes of love, freedom, generosity, and peace. The believer gives as directed by Scripture, "not begrudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:7). The cheerful giver is the one who gives by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is able to empower one to give effectually, freely, gladly, and voluntarily. It is through this leading that the act of giving is raised above the spirit of doubt and hesitance. The Holy Spirit is the one who creates within the

giver the quality of giving that is likened to the nature of God Himself. It is through this that those who were timid givers were enabled to give gifts with love, peace, generosity, and freedom.
The Spirit-led giving theme is set up throughout the Bible and proves this thesis directly in the way that it illustrates Christian giving an act of worship sanctioned by grace. It is written in 2 Cor 9:7, "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." This means that Christian giving should not be imposed by outside forces but by an inward reaction to the grace of God. Paul continues to ground stewardship on the activity of the Spirit, defining Macedonian church generosity as a "grace of God" that enabled them to exceed themselves in love for God (2 Cor 8:1–5). The biblical record shows that Christian stewardship is irrevocably bound up with the work of the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament described stewardship in terms of covenant faithfulness, but Jesus reoriented giving in terms of generosity and kingdom allegiance. The Apostles then rooted stewardship in grace, arguing that Christians need to give not because of compulsion but because of the power of the Spirit. God takes pleasure in a cheerful giver (2 Cor 9:7), writes Paul, and it is the ministry of the Spirit that causes such cheer and not an act of legalistic requirement. While the need for giving remains, it is the grace of God that inspires it. The Spirit stirred the experience of grace-funded financial stewardship. This evidence supports the thesis that the New Testament does not eliminate the law of giving but moves it into gracious, Spirit-filled, generous giving, which is evidence of true Christian discipleship.

Church Growth

Church growth is closely related to evangelism. In fact, church growth is actually caused by evangelism. Let us now look at the foundations of church growth. The nature of church growth can be seen from the following verse: Those who received his word were baptized, and on that day their number increased by about three thousand souls. They continued in the apostles' teaching and in fellowship. And were always gathered together to break bread and pray. And they were all afraid, and the apostles did many miracles and signs (Tarigan, 2022). And all those who had believed were united, and all their possessions were common. And there were always some of them who sold their possessions and distributed them to all according to their needs. Jesus manifested the Father's full and perfect presence in his ministry on earth (Tarigan, 2022). Persevering and with one accord they assembled daily in the temple. They broke bread in their homes by turns and ate together with gladness and sincerity of heart. Praising God. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2: 41-47).
It is clear that church growth is God's will. Church growth is not the work of man even though man is involved in it but man's involvement is only as a tool. The Holy Spirit is instrumental in church growth, where He equips, anoints and uses God's people in spreading the gospel. So it can be concluded that church growth is caused by the dynamics of the Holy Spirit. This is evidenced by the Holy Spirit filling the believers (Acts 1:8:2:4). The Holy Spirit prepared people to hear the gospel (Acts 2:5) and the Holy Spirit guided evangelism so that they responded positively (Acts 2:6-12). Another basis for the growth of the church is because of a great command from the Lord Jesus. This can be seen from Mt. 28:19-20, Mark. 16:15-18, Lk. 24: 44-49, Jn. 20:21 and Acts. 1:8. Thus, we can conclude that these verses are the Great Commandment and the foundation for the growth of the church, which is focused on bringing redemption and prosperity to sinful mankind (Marantika, 1988). The book of Acts has been used by the church as a primary source in the growth of the church. It convinces us as the most accurate and fitting source. The book of Acts is the showcase of a new religion. The new religion emerged in Jerusalem (Peters, 2002).

Types of Church Growth

There seems to be no agreement among theologians about the types of church growth. According to George Peters, church growth consists of only two types (Peters, 2002), namely quantitative growth and qualitative growth. Yakob Tomatala argued that the dimensions of church growth are internal growth and external growth (Tomatala, 2003). Sutarman believed that church growth must be seen from three aspects (Sutarman, 1988), the quantity aspect, the quality aspect and the spread aspect. Sularso Sopater argued that growth is extensive and intensive (Sopater, 1988). Joel Comiskey says that our church needs both quality and quantity. The book of Acts teaches us to fulfill both (Comiskey, 2002). From some of the views above, the author concludes that in essence the growth of the church is in quality and quantity. Chris Marantika said that a prominent feature in the first century church was the growth of the church both in quantity and quality (Marantika, 1988). The author also strongly agreed with what Chris Marantika has said. Church growth in quality is an increase in the quality of faith of church members while what is meant by church growth in quantity is the addition of people who believe in Jesus so that the number of church members increases.

Factors of Church Growth

Many people ask about how our church can grow. This question is certainly not wrong. However, it must also be asked about what factors make the church not grow. In church growth, there are factors that are empirical causes for the growth of a congregation. These empirical factors relate to socio-cultural elements and strategic actions that bring about actual church growth (Tomatala, 2003). Furthermore, Tomatala argues that: actual church growth occurs due to several factors. The factors in question are among others biological, social and cultural factors then: biological growth, displacement growth, conversion growth (Tomatala, 2003). What is meant by biological growth is: growth caused by the increase in the birth rate in the church. Based on research, it has been proven that biological growth can occur in a congregation 10% to 25% of the number of members (Tomatala, 2003). Displacement growth is defined as: the movement of members of a local church from far and near. It could also be that they move from one denomination to another. Tomatala says that this kind of growth is false growth because there are no new Christians (Tomatala, 2003). What is meant by conversion growth is that because of evangelism, they commit themselves to Jesus. This kind of conversion results in the addition of new souls. Furthermore, Yakob Tomatala said, Evangelism that produces new converts is the basis for real growth which shows growth in terms of quality (spiritual), quantity and function of the evangelized person where he / she can eventually become a growing and responsible member of the church (Tomatala, 2003).

First, it is emphasized that the decisive and most ideal factor in bringing about church growth is due to evangelism carried out by Christians themselves. So the main target of evangelism is people whose hearts do not yet have Jesus. In this case the author argues that this includes nominal Christians. Church growth is indeed the work of the Triune God, but humans are the tools. But not all servants of God are used by God in bringing about church growth. Only those who are pleasing to God are used to bring about church growth (Baskoro, 2022). Chris Marantika quoted what George Peters said in his book A Theology of Church Growth, the main characteristics of a servant of God to bring church growth: First, he has accepted the call of the Lord Jesus Christ and remains faithful to follow the Lord in any situation (John 6:68) (Sihombing, 2022). Second, He is a servant who voluntarily enters the ministry without ambition to seek material wealth and personal interests (Matthew 14: 25-33). Third, He is a servant who experiences ever-deepening fellowship with the Lord (1 Peter 2:9).

Fourth, he is a servant of God who lives and walks in the Spirit of God (Gal 5:25). Fifth, he is a servant of God who sets his priorities in both personal life and ministry (Mt 6:33). Sixth, He is a servant who accepts and practices shared ministry as a team (Acts 3:1,4;4:23-31). Seventh, He is a servant who has the gospel message of salvation burning in his life (Acts 4:19-20). Eighth, he was a servant who was willing to sacrifice and suffer and even die for Jesus (Acts 4:12-31). Ninth, He is a servant whose preaching comes from the Word of God (1 Timothy 4:2a) (Peters, 2002). Walter A. Henrichsen proposes nine requirements for servants used by God in Church Growth: First, he has taken the same purpose in life as God has set forth in the scriptures. Second, he is willing to sacrifice anything as long as God's will prevails in his life. Third, he loves the word of God. Fourth, he has a servant's heart. Fifth, he has no confidence in himself. Sixth, he had no independent spirit. Seventh, he loves his neighbor. Eighth, he did not allow himself to be trapped in the device of bitterness. Ninth, he has learned to discipline his life (Henrichsen, 1974).

Furthermore, loyalty of a servant of God is very necessary factor that impact church growth positively because only loyal servants of Christ are used by God in rendering acceptable and faithful service. The role of education cannot be overlooked as far as church growth is concerned. Then in what is meant by the factor of educational advancement is that as the educational level of a society becomes more advanced, the isolation of members disappears. So that Christian schools can emerge as a means of evangelization, deepening the penetration of the gospel and improving the number of converts. Meanwhile, what is meant by spiritual factors is that evangelization activities are increasingly being improved (Sukanto, 2006). John L. Nevius was a missionary in China and came to Korea to fulfill the invitation of seven Presbyterian missionaries. According to Nevius, there are 10 frameworks that need to be done on the mission field: First, how to start a mission works, second, how to handle new converts, third, how to handle financial responsibilities, fourth, Bible study, fifth, discipline, sixth, church organization and ecumenics, Seventh, Education and health care, Eighth, foreign missionaries, Ninth, trials in the mission field and tenth, attitude towards other beliefs. The method offered by Nevius above should also be of great concern to churches in Indonesia. As a messenger of the gospel, you must be an expert. As a believer, you must leave the world but be the best person in the midst of the world. This needs to be taught to new converts. Finances must be well organized. This should be adjusted according to needs and available funds. Bible study should be regularly given to the congregation. Then discipline must be maintained, so that the members of the congregation do not live according to their own will but according to the will of God.

Materials and Methods

The methodology used is qualitative design. The work used published works for the purpose of data collection. This is to say that the researcher relied on secondary sources of data domicile in libraries such as academic journals, magazines, newspapers, periodicals, manual, monographs and the internet. These help to shape and condition the analysis.

Discussion of Results: Christian Giving and Church Growth

There are over 6000 religious' institutions in Port Harcourt. It ranked the second out of 37 regions in growth of religious institutions. The first church in Port Harcourt came about in 1909, when some itinerant fishermen and traders came into contact with mission churches in outlying villages, and brought home what they had seen and heard. This new religion is known as "Christianity", but ancestral worship, animism and witchcraft still had a strong hold on some people, and are often considered to simply be a part of the traditional culture. Churches that are working together for

this campaign include a wide range of denominations that stand with us to preach the unaltered, pure Gospel of Jesus Christ. Table 1 below present's number of churches in Port Harcourt and rate of growth from 2010-2023.

Table 1: Number of Churches in Port Harcourt and Rate of Growth from 2010-2023

Year	Number of Churches	Expansion Rate (%)
2010	1,500	
2011	1,575	5.0%
2012	1,700	7.9%
2013	1,850	8.8%
2014	2,050	10.8%
2015	2,300	12.2%
2016	2,550	10.9%
2017	2,900	13.7%
2018	3,300	13.8%
2019	3,700	12.1%
2020	4,100	10.8%
2021	4,500	9.8%
2022	5,000	11.1%
2023	5,600	12.0%

Source: Kabee and Chigbo, (2024)

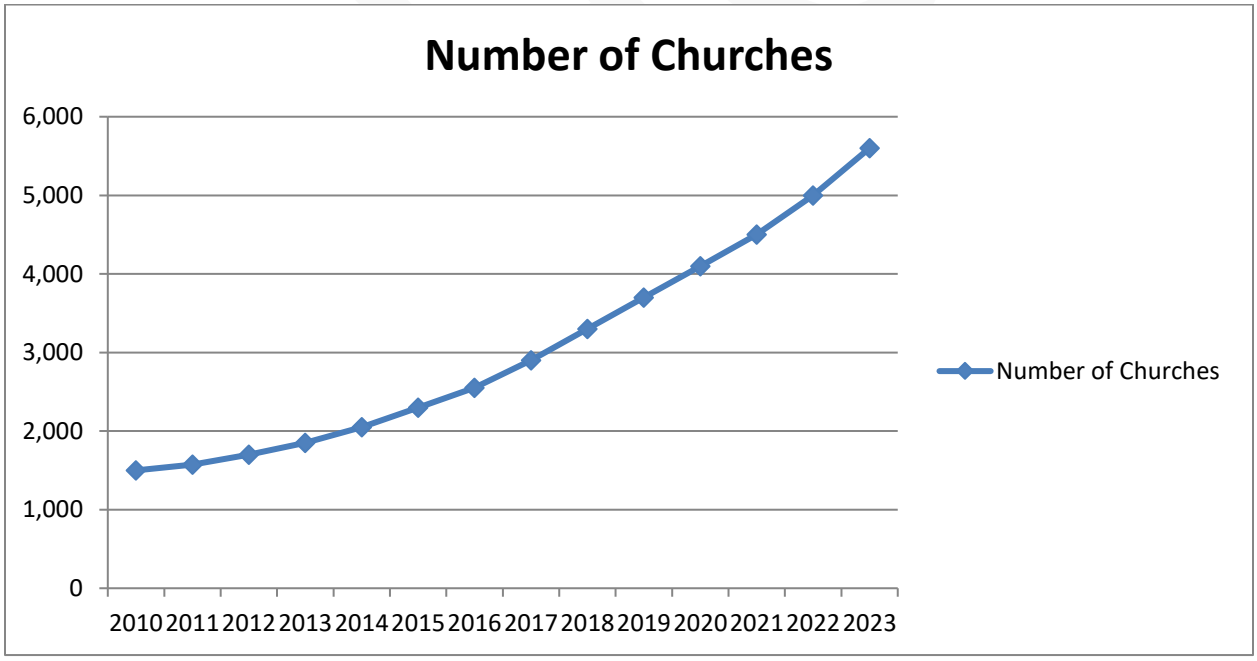

Figure 1: Increase in Number of Churches in Port Harcourt

The relationship between Christian giving and church growth is a complex and multifaceted issue that varies depending on cultural, social, and economic context. The trend shows steady increase in the number of churches in Port Harcourt. This could be traced to church donations and giving. For instance, the improvement and wellbeing of the people must be felt and seen. The basic needs of the people are provided both in macro measures. The means of achieving these must be visible

and observable working toward the upliftment of the society on daily basis. African Pentecostal churches in Port Harcourt city is visibly contributing to the economic development of the city dwellers. The number of the churches is growing on regular basis. However, for precision two prominent and current ones are used; Salvation Ministries led by Pastor David Ibiyeomie and Omega Power Ministries led by Apostle Chibuzor Chinyere. Omega Power Ministry (OPM) is located along PH Airport road and the Obiri Ikwere fly over in Aluu in the greater Port Harcourt city axis. It occupies over 50 hectares of land and attracts thousands of worshippers. On Sundays virtually every road lead to OPM. People come from within the city and outside it, even as far as Kogi and Kaduna States to seek for solution to their problems. A worshipper, Mr. Moses Ali said a group of people from Kaduna State thanked God on 11 March 2018 for the opportunity of seeing the General Overseer, Apostle Chibuzor Chinyere. Many people spent days on their journey to come to Port Harcourt to worship at OPM ((Israel N. Johnson, 2024). Ogunkunle (2006) opined that the practice of religion is the fact that it gives people a feeling of security by a divine power that watches over them and protects them from every form of evil. Similarly, Udofia (2006) observes that the African is twenty-four hours a day in grip of fear, he fears the world which he lives, he fears his fellow human being, he fears the threat of natural and supernatural forces, he fears the land in which he lives; he is afraid of the spirits hovering around him etc. Therefore, the essential point of this belief is that being a devotee to the new found faith in Christ Jesus will bring succor to their wellbeing in the family circle. Unfortunately, many of the devotees lack theoiwer to discern the genuine worship centers from the fake.

Moses Ali come from a nearby village at 10am and after the Sunday service stayed behind to see the General Overseer and he was there till 10pm virtually he spent the whole day at OPM. He must eat and refresh himself for his journey back home the next day. For his comfort and wellbeing, the church made provision for market, toilet, transport Omega Power Ministry headquarters is a hub of business both spiritual and physical. While the man of God takes care of the spiritual needs of the masses, his members and also interested members of the public engage in commercial activities. There is a mini market in the compound and a public car park that every major quarters of Port Harcourt and even cities in Aba and Owerri can get transport direct from OPM. Taxi drivers are making it big on Sundays because everyone seems to head to OPM. Food vendors are smiling to the bank every Monday and the Christian booksellers are happy that a crowd is always available for them to sell. Beside the worship on Sunday and healing service OPM has social responsibility towards the city dwellers and its environs. The ministry has both primary and secondary schools for indigent pupils and student. Once or more the General Overseer went out to gather prostitutes and cult boys from the streets to rehabilitate them. Every action on social responsibility are always televised on River State Television, African Independent Television with some knocks by critics but his social and spiritual contribution to the wellbeing of the people is also recognized. Salvation Ministry is another African Pentecostal church currently touching many lives in Port Harcourt. It is located in the heart of Port Harcourt, off Birabi Street in government reserved area (GRA) phase II (Israel N. Johnson, 2024). Iroegbu (1995) asserts that both external and internal factors impact the fragmentation and ongoing expansion of churches in African nations. Europe and America intentionally promote these divisions to maintain our fragmentation, rendering us incapable of presenting a unified front, voicing a singular perspective, and lacking a shared religious, social, and political unity. He said that there is equal manipulation of various factions inside the political and intellectual apparatus. The religious leaders seeking political legitimacy from state authorities use their influence over

their followers as tools for voting and negotiation to achieve their objectives. Overall, political factors have contributed to the proliferation of churches seen in recent years

The whole of Birabi Street is taken over on Sundays and some week days during fellowships. The cars here are exotic and attract young men and women who desire to make it big equally like the owners of the cars. Salvation ministry has been long in the city of Port Harcourt and therefore has branches virtually in every quarter of the city. These branches are not independent of the activities of the headquarters at Birabi Street. They are referred to as satellite churches. The church needs the modern equipment of information technology to function well. The services of young I.T graduates are sought for and they are equally available in the city. Members of the church are often engaged to grow in the field. The ministry also has secondary schools in Port Harcourt and currently building its tertiary institution in the city. These schools employ teachers and non-academic staff and equally provide education to the city dwellers. One of the biggest private construction sites in Port Harcourt belongs to salvation ministry. The engineers, builders, mason, welders etc are members of the Port Harcourt city dwellers ((Israel 2024). The church from all indication is contributing to the economic development of the city. The two African Pentecostal church mentioned above are touching the lives of people positively in Port Harcourt city therefore it could be said that African Pentecostalism is a stakeholder in the economic development of Nigerian society, bearing in mind their socio-economic activities in Port Harcourt city. Dauda and Gbule (2000) asserted that African churches arose from struggle for positions of leadership inside the church. The mission churches were unsuccessful in integrating African Christians into church governance. The missions were categorized into European administration and African labor. No European missionary was to be subjected to African authority. An English missionary endorsed this missionary approach in 1927, stating to the populace, “God desires all of you to be Christians, a select few to be priests; however, only white men are chosen as bishops. These external and internal factors have resulted in increased division and fragmentation among the people of God in Africa. Apart from Salvation Ministries and Omega Power Ministries that focus mostly on prosperity gospel or what is usually referred to as social gospel that concentrate on physical needs, there are other more balanced ministries that provide comprehensive solution to the spiritual, physical, psychological and social needs of the members. Deeper Christian Life Ministry is one such all-round ministry. They provide sound doctrinal teaching, train members on lots of entrepreneurial skills, empower them with provision of capital and also, assist to provide counselling services to those processing their marriage.

The Deeper Life Bible Church is so dedicated to giving back to society through empowering their members and guests that twice yearly they organize Christian retreats, in Easter and December periods respectively. During these days of the retreat, usually three to five days, they serve free meals, provide free accommodation and free transportation for majority that cannot afford to do so. In such programs, edifying messages are preached, converts won and believers are edified and prepared to live Christ-like lives. The ministry believes in the total human as revealed in 3 John 2; “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospers” (KJV).

Conclusion

The study on Christian giving and growth of religious institutions in Port Harcourt from 2010 to 2023 revealed several significant findings. Firstly, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of churches within the city during the study period, indicating a growth of religious institutions. This growth has led to heightened competition among churches for members,

resources, and influence within the community. Secondly, the study found a correlation between the Christian giving and the growth of religious institution in Port Harcourt. Specifically, there was evidence to suggest that churches that involve in social responsibility grows in population and branches. Additionally, the study highlighted the role of churches in giving as contain in the Bible and promoting positive community development. The study conclude that Christian Giving has positive and significant relationship with growth of religious institutions in Port Harcourt.

Recommendations

i. Churches should formulate strategies of reaching out to wider population in giving such as providing basic needs of life such as food, shelter and clothing. This would help attract more members and expansion of religious institutions across the state and beyond.

ii. Churches should be encouraged to collaborate with Local and State governments to increase the level of Christian giving and members should be identified with particular religious institutions to motivate Christian giving.

iii. There should be mandatory ethical and leadership training for religious leaders to ensure they promote moral standards and discourage practices that may contribute to decrease in number and membership of churches. This can be facilitated through collaboration between religious bodies and government agencies, ensuring that leaders are equipped to positively influence their congregations and wider society through giving to the less privileged

iv. Monitoring system should be established to periodically assess the activities of churches giving and their impact on growth of religious institutions in Port Harcourt. This mechanism can include stakeholder involvement from local authorities, religious organizations and community representatives to ensure accountability and transparency especially churches in the rural communities.

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