



COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN NIGERIA: THE RESPONSE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Oluwasegun Peter Aluko, Ph.D.

Department of Religious Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: *The advent of the novel coronavirus pandemic in Nigeria on 27th February, 2020 evinces different responses from the Christian Church. As the nation began to witness regular increase in the number of confirmed cases of the virus, government both at the federal and state levels imposed a lockdown on the country. This study looks at the various responses of the Christian Church to the happenings in the country with the emergence of the virus and the subsequent lockdown of the whole country. The data collected for the study were analysed using socio-historical approach.*

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, Pandemic, Christian Church, WHO, Christian Church

INTRODUCTION

The virus initially titled 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) and subsequently named COVID-19 by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on 11th February, 2020, is according to Lin et al (2020), a series of pneumonia cases of unknown aetiology. It belongs to a family of viruses that may cause various symptoms such as pneumonia, fever, breathing difficulty and lung infection, but some variants have caused severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) (Adhikari et al, 2020; Gøtzsche, 2020). Thus, WHO (2020) defines COVID-19 as the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus, which is seen as a new virus and disease and unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

From its origin in Wuhan, China, COVID-19 is now a pandemic affecting many countries globally; it had spread rapidly to the rest of the world. Starting with each affected patient and their families to communities, socioeconomic systems to whole nations, not a single person on planet earth has been spared from the direct and indirect effects of the ensuing pandemic. As at Friday, 14th February, 2020, there were 49,053 confirmed cases and 1,381 deaths that have been reported globally (Harapan et al, 2020; Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020; Lin et al, 2020). These cases have increased exponentially as of Thursday, 21st May, 2020 (9:32:43am) with 5,011,467 confirmed cases and 328,368 deaths globally (TMC Library, 2020). With the increase in death rate, the perceived risk of acquiring the disease and with no effective treatments or vaccines till now, many governments have had to institute a variety of control measures. The same is not farfetched in Nigeria who recorded the existence of the disease on Thursday, 27th February, 2020 in Lagos State through an Italian resident in Ogun State.

In order to contain the spread of the disease in Nigeria, the Federal Government of Nigeria issued a ban on all international flights effective from the 23rd March, 2020, except for emergency and essential flights (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, NCDC 2020). On 30th

March, 2020, the Federal Government also imposed a lockdown of non-essential activities in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Lagos and Ogun States due to their confirmed positive cases (See NCDC, 2020; PM News, 2020; Emorinken, 2020; Owoseye, 2020). But before this time, these majorly affected states (including the FCT) had issued a ban on any gathering of more than 50 people (Onyeji, 2020; Ogundipe, 2020; Ade-Rufus, 2020; Ojerinde, 2020; Olatunji, 2020). As of 23rd May, 2020, there were 7526 confirmed cases, 2174 discharged cases and 221 confirmed deaths. Hence, this study looks at the responses of the Christian Church to the advent of this pandemic in the country amidst the lockdown thus far.

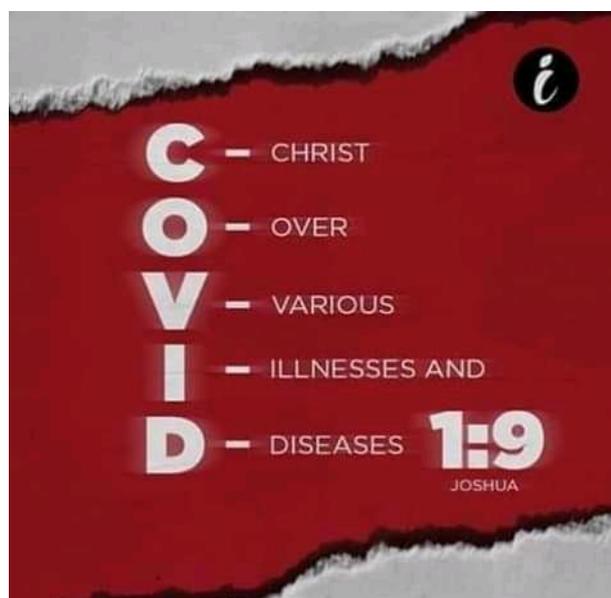
Response of the Christian Church

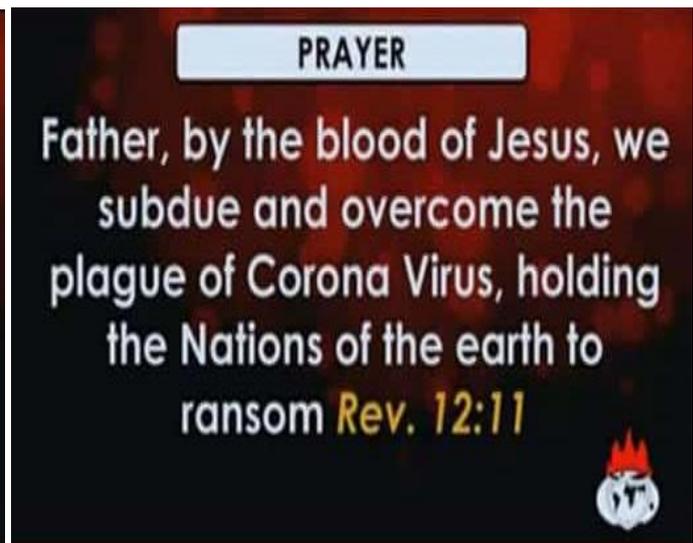
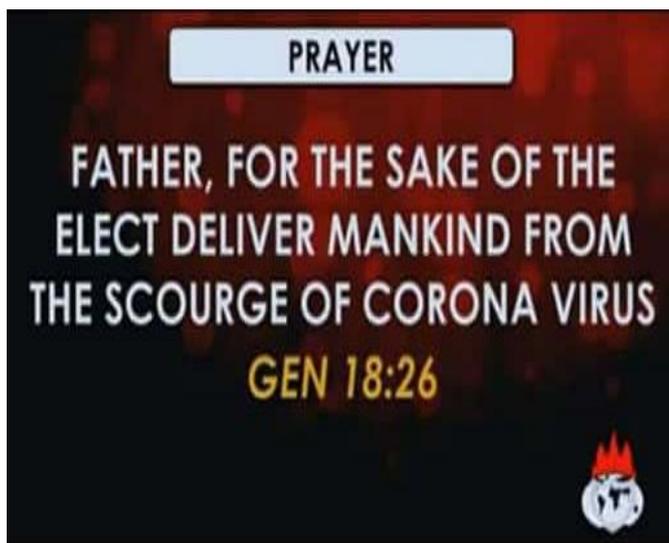
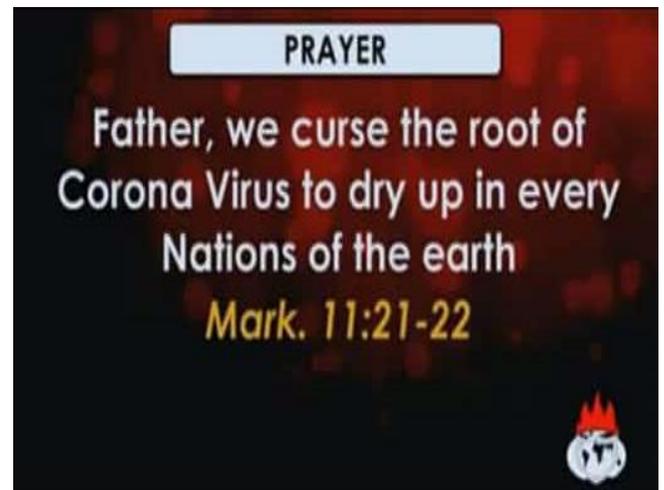
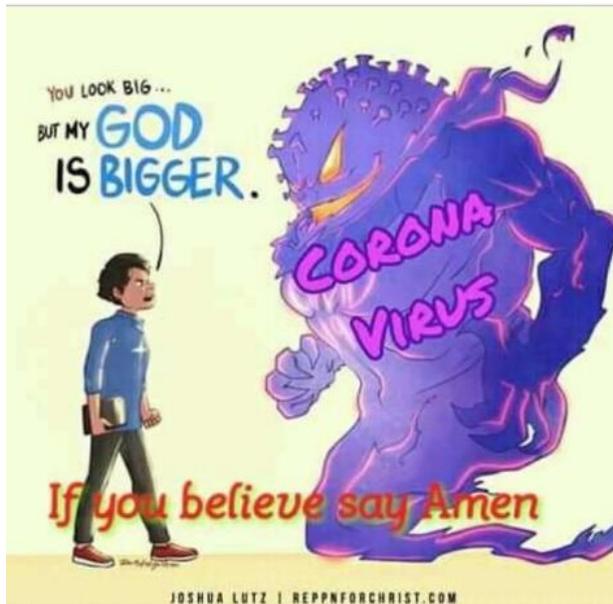
The emergence of COVID-19 in Nigeria was treated with different views by Christians in the country. Many Christians do not take the existence of the virus seriously as they believe God is able to heal them of any kind of diseases that comes their way. They believe so dearly the part of the Bible in Psalm 91:10 that says, “No evil shall be allowed to befall you.” Some have even abbreviated and personalised the meaning of the virus to be:

Christ Jesus defeated you (Coronavirus)
 On Calvary tree,
 Return to where you came from
 Our homes and bodies are untouchable,
 None of your weapons (virus) formed,
 Against us will succeed,
 Victory over you (Coronavirus),
 Is,
 Reassured through our,
 Undefeated,
 Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen (Inuwa, 2020).

The pictures below also depict the belief of many Christians on the coronavirus:

**The Blood of Jesus protects
 our family against
 COVID-19!
 Amen.**





Source: WhatsApp Social Media (2020)

The above are spurred by the fact many Christians and Nigerians at large are deeply religious and they exhibit this their belief in the supernatural being. This is why Afe Adogame (2010) notes that:

Religious ideas and world views continue to shape the ways that Nigerians explain, predict, and control the events and life circumstances that surround them. Religion or spirituality has served as a significant source through which many Nigerians seek understanding of their complex reality and existence, and it serves as a panacea for their various existential problems of day-to-day living.

This complex reality in this instance is the coronavirus which many Christians have interpreted as being under the control of God. According to Inuwa (2020), though coronavirus is unexplainable, Africans, especially Nigerians, believe that it is God alone that can bring an end to it. Supporting this assertion, a poll conducted by the World Values Survey in 2015 as quoted by Falade and Bauer (2018) shows that 88% of respondents in Nigeria agree that, “Whenever science and religion conflict, religion is always right”. With this, it is not surprising to see Christians in the country responding that God is worthy to save them and even rescue them if at all they are infected by the disease.

In another case in point, some Christians believe that the existence of the virus in the country and the world at large is as a result of the sins committed by people. They see it as the punishment for the world’s sins that God is melting out on sinners. Also, it is seen as a curse; this curse is punishment of the many sins of the world. Thus, for the virus to go away, Christians and the entire world must ask for the forgiveness of their sins and draw back to God. But if the virus is the punishment and a curse for sinners, why are the supposed righteous also affected by the scourge of the virus? Is God now interested in the death of a sinner than for such to repent?

Some Christians also responded to the presence of the virus by adhering to the directive of the government on the use of face mask. Starting with the Lagos State government on 25th April, 2020 mandating the use of face masks in public, many have adjusted to this new means of life. While some make use of the medical face masks, others make use of cloth face masks. Below are some of the different face masks being worn by some Christians:



Source: WhatsApp Social Media (2020)



Pictures from the above show different shades of face mask being worn by Christians. The first one appears to make use of the Gideon's New Testament & Psalms Bible while the second one portrays an Aladura church member who makes use of a self-sown face mask with a blue colour insignia as a cross. These mostly signify safety and protection in times of need, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Response of Some Church Leaders

Immediately after the announcement of the first case of COVID-19 in Lagos, Catholic Church authorities in Lagos State announced the suspension of handshakes or other personal contact at Mass (Lawal, 2020). It also gave a directive as a way to encourage members to observe 'Stations of the Cross' (the church's special programme) privately on Wednesdays while public celebrations would take place only on Fridays, in order to reduce the number of gatherings in church to the barest necessary. This was the immediate response of the church even before the public directives of the Government.

On the directive given by the Government on 18th March, 2020 banning large gatherings that led to the closure of religious centres and schools, the responses of the Christian churches differ. Taking a look at some of the megachurches in the country, one would see a divided response. While some complied with worship of less than 50 worshippers before it was later reduced to 20 worshippers (Lagos and Ogun states on 21st March), others flaunted the directive. One prominent church which flaunted this directive is the Living Faith Church Worldwide, otherwise known as Winners' Chapel. This church held a complete service with members filled to its full capacity to the chagrin neglect of government's directive, even without the provision of safety measures (See Ogundipe, 2020; Ade-Rufus, 2020). Other churches which followed suit includes: Commonwealth of Zion Assembly (COZA), Dunamis International Church in Abuja (See Ayado & Kwen, 2020) and so on. The leader of COZA, Pastor Biodun Fatoyinbo on his Twitter handle (@biodunfatoyibo) gave the following directives for his church members:

Following a directive from the FCT Administration, please be informed that service would hold tomorrow, 22nd March, 2020 by 7:30am @ Evelyn Centre and 9am at The COZA AUDITORIUM, Guzape Hills, Asokoro Extension, Abuja. 1) Electronic thermometers will be used (2) There will be alcohol-based sanitizers (3) There will (be) a considerable space between the worshippers. (4) The Air flow systems are effective. (5) The blood of Jesus puts the enemy (pestilence) at bay. #FearNot

The above shows a flagrant disregard of the directive given by the FCT Administration. Even with all that have been listed as safety/precautionary measures, the church was filled to an overflow on the 22nd March, 2020 (See Ayado & Kwen, 2020). This is also the case for some other churches which also violated the directive given by the government. However, it must be noted here that it only took the government to use force and arrests for some of the churches to later on adhere to the directive. Emphasising on this, Orjinmo (2020) notes that,

The auditoriums of Nigeria's mega churches are empty and their gates are shut as they are forced to observe a government ban on large gatherings to halt the spread of coronavirus. But it took not only threats, but force and arrests for the message to get across.

On the other hand, The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), led by Pastor E. A. Adeboye complied with this directive as his church directed all its branches to obey the directive. The service held on Dove Television (the church's owned cable television) on Sunday, 22nd March, 2020 showed Adeboye ministering to less than 20 people, in accordance to the directive.



Source: WhatsApp Social Media (2020)

The above picture shows a Celestial Church of Christ (Ibara Cathedral, Ogun State Area “A” Headquarters) which categorically asked both members and visitors to stay away from the church premises until further notice. This shows a good compliance with the government’s directive.

Church Online Services

In order to continue the spread of the gospel during the coronavirus pandemic and in compliance with the directive of the government banning various gatherings, many of the churches responded by conducting their services online. This means that many churches have devised a means of worshipping together howbeit through the services provided over the Internet. The churches that can afford the cost of streaming their services online have really adapted to the changes brought by the existence of the virus in the country. Those that are already used to online services, especially the megachurches only complemented their past efforts for adequate coverage, while others had no choice but to hold their services online during this period. The online services include the use of: Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Mixlr, Zoom, Vimeo and so on. Below are some of the pictures to show different adverts of churches on their transformation to online services from physical services in church buildings:



CHURCH JUST GOT CLOSER

SERVICES WILL HOLD ONLINE

Follow/Subscribe to our channels
 7am | 8:45am | 10:30am | 12:00noon & 4pm (WAT)

@harvestersng
 harvestersTV
<https://live.harvestersng.org>

HARVESTERS INTERNATIONAL CHURCH CENTRE

HARVESTERS INTERNATIONAL CHURCH CENTRE

Special ONLINE SERVICE
 With Pst Bolaji Idowu

Tune in on Facebook Instagram @harvestersng
 Youtube harvestersTV harvesterslekki
 Join us at <https://live.harvestersng.org>

7am | 8:45am | 10:30am | 12:00:noon & 4pm (WAT)

KC | PRITCH | ABBEY | NAOMI MAC | KEMISINGS | DAVID B | JOEL

Our Services will now be **Online!**

Members are to connect through DSA digital platforms as follows:

Sundays: 8.45 - 10am | **Tuesdays: 6.30 - 7.30pm**
Pastor E.A. Adeboye | **Pastor Brown Oyitso**

For enquiries: Prayer & Counseling
 Please Call
 08034433616, 99055259526, 08137133683, 09426887379

Members are to send their testimonials to:
testimonial@congregation19.org

<http://www.dsaadco.com>

Join us
 This Sunday (Online Service)
 with Rev. Olusola Areogun

22nd March 2020 | 8am (GMT+1)

website: lifeoasisinternationalchurch.org/streaming
 online radio: dciradio.org

vimeo | Youtube | zoom

8am prompt

ENTHRONEMENT ASSEMBLY

This Sunday, Our Service is Moving Online

GET IT ON Google Play | LIVE | Mixlr

Enthronement Assembly | Enthronement Lifestyle | fb.me/enthronementng | enthronementng.org

[f](https://www.facebook.com/enthronementng) [i](https://www.instagram.com/enthronementng) [y](https://www.youtube.com/enthronementng) | [enthronementng](https://www.facebook.com/enthronementng) // enthronementassembly.org

Source: WhatsApp Social Media (2020)



From the pictures above, one noticeable mantra is: “Online service”. For example, the Daystar Christian Centre issued out a circular which reads:

From the 21st of March, 2020, the church will not hold physical gathering for worshippers in the following branches Oregun, Lekki, Ikorodu and Badagry till further notice... henceforth services shall be conducted online on designated platforms on Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesdays (Oyero, 2020).

While many Christians have keyed into the online services of these churches, others have criticised the churches, hinging their claims on the continuous request for tithes and offerings by the churches even during the lockdown period where most people are not working. Also, there is no gainsaying that some churches and their leaders lack the technical know-how when it comes to the usage of online services. This in no small means have caused their inability to continue their various churches services during the pandemic lockdown in the country.

Response through Controversies

666 Controversy

Another response of the Christian church is in the area of “666” controversy. Some of the Christians believe COVID-19 is linked to 666, the number believed to be the “mark of the beast” recorded in the Book of Revelation 13:18. They believe the quarantine or a vaccine is linked to the supposed mark. Using gematria, they apportioned a numerical value to the name of the disease based on its letters. See the calculation below using the English alphabets:

A=1, B=2, C=3, D=4, E=5, F=6, G=7, H=8, I=9, J=10, K=11, L=12, M=13, N=14, O=15, P=16, Q=17, R=18, S=19, T=20, U=21, V=22, W=23, X=24, Y=25, Z=26

C	-	3
O	-	15
R	-	18
O	-	15
N	-	14
<u>A</u>	-	<u>1</u>
6		66
<div style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 2px 10px;">666</div>		

The word “corona” is a six-letter word amounting to 6, while the number equivalent is 66 in total. Joining the two together then gives the number 666.

But what must be noted here however is that, the calculation literally has been punctured as the use of just “corona” can depict different things (like Corona Group of Schools or even Toyota



Corona Car) without adding the “virus” to it. And once the virus is added, the calculation will be more than the supposed 666. That being said, another thing that must be noted is that, the “mark of the beast” as shown in the Scripture is expected to be linked to a man and not a virus (See Michael, 2010). Ordinarily, it implies an engraved mark or a seal impression, or inscription (Judge, 1991).

5G Controversy

During the lockdown, this controversy was propagated by Pastor Chris Oyakhilome, the founder and lead pastor of LoveWorld Incorporated or Believers’ Loveworld, otherwise known as Christ Embassy, who in a YouTube video post that went viral on April 8, 2020, linked the virus to 5G networks and alleged that it was part of a plot to create a “new world order” (Orjinmo, 2020). This “new world order” as claimed by Oyakhilome is where some figures of authority in the world were trying to build a religion, economy and government for the entire universe (Olowoyo, 2020). Also, he claimed that the lockdown was to enable the Federal Government to install 5G in Abuja and Lagos (Olowoyo, 2020). These views were more consolidated on the church-owned television network - LoveWorld Television Ministry, which aired some programmes in early April and claimed there was a “global cover-up” over 5G networks being the cause of the pandemic (Akinwotu, 2020). In one of those programmes aired by the same television network in South Africa titled, “Why is 5G linked to Covid-19?” it was further claimed that the technology was fuelling an outbreak of the virus. One of the presenters of the programme opined that,

With the classification of a weapon, 5G technology is very dangerous. When it comes into contact with a human body it can provide some poisons to the cells ... This shows that what’s killing people, it’s not coronavirus, but 5G (Akinwotu, 2020).

But how can a telecommunication technology of this nature be a weapon? This is one of the questions in the minds of many people and this view as expatiated by Oyakhilome and his supporters has spread so widely that many see it as a conspiracy theory, aimed at casting aspersion on the 5G network. Obviously, the 5G is a fifth-generation wireless communications technology supporting cellular data networks, an upgrade to the previous technologies from the 2G Global System for Mobile (GSM) to the 4G Long Term Evolution-Advanced (LTE-A) system (Mitra & Agrawal, 2015). The major advantage of this network is the greater bandwidth it has, which enables faster download speeds per second (See Bhalla & Bhalla, 2010; Jain, Jain, Kurup & Gawade, 2014; Kachhavay & Thakare, 2014; Mitra & Agrawal, 2015; Ezema, Okoye, & Okwori, 2019).

Many of Oyakhilome’s church members supported this spurious claim and also joined in its spread in the country. But the Nigerian government through the National Orientation Agency (NOA) on Sunday, 5th April, 2020 debunked the claims as not having scientifically-proved evidence. Earlier, on Saturday, 4th April, 2020, Nigeria’s ministry of Communications and Digital Technology also made a denial in a similar circumstance (Akinrujomu, 2020). In this wise, Oyakhilome later backtracked on his claim that the introduction of 5G network was responsible for the coronavirus pandemic, citing perceived health risks and the seeming silence of authorised regulators to address the advantages and disadvantages of the network (Olowoyo, 2020). However, Oyakhilome’s television service was sanctioned by Ofcom (United Kingdom’s communications regulator) for airing “potentially harmful statements” about the



Covid-19 pandemic, including a baseless conspiracy that the virus is linked to the rollout of 5G phone networks (Akinwotu, 2020).

Prediction

One of the most famous of this is Prophet Temitope B. Joshua – Founder of Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN), who in the month of February claimed to be divinely inspired, predicting that the coronavirus pandemic would be over by 27th March, 2020. In his words, he said: “By the end of this month, whether we like it or not, no matter the medicine they might have produced to cure whatever, it will go the way it came” (Orjinmo, 2020). Apparently, this was only a prediction that did not come to past, even though Joshua later on linked his prediction to the decline of the virus in China where it all started from.

Responses through Welfarism and Government’s Cause

Since welfarism is the belief/principle that social welfare depends (positively) only on individual welfare (or utility) levels (Ng, 2000), many of the Christian churches in Nigeria responded by giving out relief packages like foodstuffs, money and so on to their members and the less-privileged ones. This was to really cushion the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown on their members. Some of the churches also donated either money or various items to the government in order to support the government’s effort at containing the spread of the disease. As this is being done, some believed it is one of their civic responsibilities to do in times like this. Below is the list of some of Christian churches that donate to this cause:

S/N	Name of Christian Church	Items/Money Donated	Date
1.	Dunamis International Gospel Centre	Medical supplies to the Federal Capital Territory Administration, Abuja	25 th March, 2020
2.	The Redeemed Christian Church of God	11 ICU beds with ventilators to Lagos, Ogun and Plateau states	27 th March, 2020
3.	Living Faith Church Worldwide	Ambulances, test kits, and personal protective device (PPE) to the Lagos and Ogun state governments	30 th March, 2020
4.	The Redeemed Christian Church of God	Medical supplies to Lagos state government	31 st March, 2020
5.	The Redeemed Christian Church of God through its General overseer, Pastor Enoch Adeboye	Donation of 20 million Naira to support Osun state COVID-19 relief package	3 rd April, 2020
6.	Christ Apostolic Church	Donation of 5 million Naira to the Oyo state COVID-19 funds	5 th April, 2020
7.	All Saints’ Church	Donation of 250,000.00 Naira to the Oyo state COVID-19 funds	5 th April, 2020
8.	The Apostolic Church Nigeria Ibadan Metropolitan	Donation of 500,000.00 Naira to the Oyo state COVID-19 funds	5 th April, 2020
9.	Christ Miracle Church Mission	Donation of 250,000.00 Naira to the Oyo state COVID-19 funds	5 th April, 2020
10.	Cathedral of St. Peter	Donation of 200,000.00 Naira to the Oyo state COVID-19 funds	5 th April, 2020



11.	CDB People of Faith Gospel Church	Donation of 20,000.00 Naira to the Oyo state COVID-19 funds	5 th April, 2020
12.	Kingsway International Christian Centre	Donation of 10,000,000.00 Naira to the Lagos state government	5 th April, 2020
13.	Daystar Christian Centre	Launches feeding programme and donates protective equipment in response to COVID-19	6 th April, 2020
14.	Nigeria Baptist Convention	Donation of relief materials to the Oyo state government	6 th April, 2020
15.	Diocese of Lagos West, Anglican Communion	Donation of 5,000,000.00 Naira to the Lagos state government	6 th April, 2020
16.	Fountain of Life Church	Donation of 10,000,000.00 Naira to the Lagos state government	
17.	The Christ Miracle Mission	Donation of 2,000,000.00 Naira to the Lagos state government	9 th April, 2020
18.	Deeper Christian Life Ministry	Donation of 50,000,000.00 Naira to the federal government	9 th April, 2020
19.	God's Chamber Church	Donation of 100,000.00 Naira to the Lagos state government	
20.	The Foursquare Gospel Church Nigeria	Donation of foodstuffs to the Lagos state government	19 th April, 2020
21.	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	Donation of personal protective equipment and other basic necessities to the Lagos state government through the Ministry of Health	29 th April, 2020
22.	The Citadel Global Community Church, formerly known as Latter Rain Assembly	Donation of three church buildings to the Lagos and Ogun state governments as isolation centres	10 th May, 2020
23.	The Apostolic Church (LAWNA Territory)	Donation of 5,000,000.00 Naira to the Lagos state government	
24.	Catholic Church of Nigeria	425 health facilities across the country as isolation centres for COVID-19	11 th May, 2020

Source: *The Author*

With most churches rising up to help their members and the less privileged ones during the lockdown, many have seen them living up to the bidding of a called-out assembly of believers. But in another view, this move by the churches in making donations to the government and financially troubled members is likely to see them maintain popularity and portray them as helpers in times of need. Nonetheless, the churches have really shown that welfarism is centrally concerned with the welfare or well-being of individuals (Keller, 2009) and if they help the government, they are also helping both Christians and non-Christians alike.



Response through Agitation for the Opening of Churches

Several calls were made by some church leaders for the opening of closed down churches. Leaders like Bishop David Oyedepo and Pastor Chris Oyakhilome were at the fore front in this advocacy. Oyedepo believes that the continuing lockdown of churches is a move by the government in targeting churches. He is of the opinion that if markets could be opened, there is nothing stopping churches from being opened. But looking at it vividly, comparing church with markets is just out of it as the continuous closure of markets would spell doom for the country as hunger strikes are bound to take place. Oyakhilome on his own part believes ministers of God who do not advocate for the opening of churches are not genuine ministers of God. These pastors were however berated by their fellow pastor, Tunde Bakare of The Citadel Global Community Church, formerly known as Latter Rain Assembly. He said, “Instead of criticising the government, they should collaborate with them.... They must be prepared to offer some of their halls for the government to use as isolation centres” (Krippahl, 2020). This is also supported by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) through its leader, Rev. Samson Ayokunle, who notes that the continuous closure of the church is to the good of every citizen of the country. Ayokunle enjoins all churches to continue to adhere to the guidelines as laid down by the government. Notwithstanding, some Christians believe that it is only the physical church that has been shut down, but not the spiritual church. This spiritual church is seen as a personal thing, which is the communication with their God.

REFLECTION

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria has in no small measures brought about different perspectives to the church. This is because the continuous lockdown placed on the country to contain the spread of the virus has affected the church both positively and negatively. On the positive perspective, it has seemingly been used by the government in order to contain the spread of the disease, even though the number of infected people keeps on increasing day after day. Secondly, it has been able to make Christians know that the main church is the people and not the church building itself, which is to help them increase their personal relationship with God. Thirdly, it has helped to bring to fore the importance of social media and online services in the continuous spread of the Christian faith even in the face of lockdown. Those who do not give emphasis to information, communication and technology in churches have suddenly developed interest in it in order to continue to reach out to their members and non-members alike. Really, this is not surprising as many must do this to keep hold on their members in this 21st century and will further enhance leaders-members relationship. Fourthly, it has shown that the church can also give physical blessings (social welfarism) apart from the spiritual intervention it can render in a pandemic period like this.

On the negative perspective, the resultant effect of the continuous lockdown is seen in the reduction or extinction of the Christian faith from some of its adherents. With no adequate gathering together for worship, some Christians who are not deeply rooted in their faith might be turned aside from their faith. Even while there was constant worship together, many were not deeply rooted talk less of when they are not worshipping together. Also, many businesses have been gravely affected by the continuous close down of churches in the country with no adequate compensation from the government. Small scale businesses like the motorcycle (Okada) riders, bus drivers, confectionary sellers, and so on that normally boost their income



anytime there is worship in church centres are at a loss. With this, others too like the petrol stations and even banks would have counted their losses with little patronage and deposit of church money. Also, it has belittled the importance of churches that are to pray and maybe, bring about a possible solution to the pandemic that has proved too difficult for science to handle. In another instance, the Christian religion is getting a lot of misrepresentations by some of its adherents who believe the pandemic is caused by the 5G technology or even the quarantine and vaccine for treating it (which is not even known yet) as the “mark of the beast” (666). This shows nothing but the ignorance of the biblical text.

CONCLUSION

This paper gives an overview of the response of Christian Church on the advent of the novel coronavirus in Nigeria and the aftermath directives by the government. While some of the church leaders adhered strictly to the directives of the government to contain the spread of the virus, others disobeyed the directives. But despite this disobedience of the church leaders during this pandemic period, many of the churches were able to help their members and the government. One thing that is very important is that, many of the Christians believe it is only God that can really help them out of the pandemic, and at the same time, they are to take every precautionary measure as stated by the government in containing the spread of the virus. Be that as it may, a virus that has killed many in the country and the world at large should not be taken for granted. The fact that the belief in God to heal every kind of disease is very strong, so also should every citizen of the country be obedient to the government’s directive and make use of every precautionary practice that has been laid down for the containment of the disease in the country.

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