
**An Assessment of Post COVID-19 Effects on
Some Church Practices by ECWA,
Oyo State, Nigeria.**

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted numerous societal practices, including church activities worldwide. This study examines the post-pandemic effects on ordinances and practices of the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) in Oyo State, Nigeria. Existing research has largely focused on the economic, psychological, and sociological impacts of COVID-19; however, limited attention has been given to the specific implications for church ordinances and practices. This study bridges that gap by assessing both the negative and positive effects of the pandemic on ECWA. Employing a descriptive survey design, data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to 300 purposively selected respondents, including pastors and members across three Local Church Councils (LCCs). The study explored changes in church practices such as worship, evangelism, sacraments, and social interactions. Results indicated significant disruptions, including reduced attendance, altered sacramental practices, and a decline in tithes and offerings. Positive outcomes included the adoption of social media for worship and a heightened sense of health consciousness among members. The findings underscore the pandemic's transformative impact on ECWA, revealing the necessity for adaptability in church practices. Recommendations include embracing technology for

evangelism, fostering financial resilience through diversified income streams, and prioritizing members' welfare. This study contributes to New Testament scholarship and offers practical insights for church leaders navigating post-pandemic realities.

Key words: Post-COVID-19 effects, Church ordinances and practices, Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Religious adaptation, Pandemic impact on worship

Introduction

In December 2019, a virus appeared as a strange disease ravaging nations throughout the world. This virus is called COVID-19, an acronym derived from the words 'coronavirus disease 2019'.⁶¹ It was first reported at the Human Seafood wet market located in Wuhan, Hubei, China from where it subsequently spread worldwide. The symptomatology of the patients, including Fever, Malaise, Dry cough, and Dyspnoea, was diagnosed as viral pneumonia which was initially called Wuhan pneumonia by the press because of the area and the pneumonia symptoms, but later, whole-genome sequencing results showed that the causative agent is a novel Corona virus.⁶² It became a public health emergency of international concern by 30 January 2020. It was temporarily termed the new virus 2019 novel Corona virus (2019-nCoV) on 12 January 2020 and then officially named this infectious disease Corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on 12 February 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO).⁶³ SARS-CoV-2 is believed to

⁶¹ B. M. Owojaye, *Evangelical Response to the Corona-virus Lockdown: Insights from the Evangelical Church Winning All*. (Lagos: Harmony Publishing, 2020):27.

⁶² Chaolin Huang, Yeming Wang, Xingwang Li, Lili Ren, Jiaping Zhao, Yi Hu, Li Zhang, 2020, Clinical Features of patients infected with 2019 novel Coronavirus in Wuhan, China. *Sciencedirect.com* 359, 479-506. Retrieved July 9, 2020, from <https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736>.

⁶³ Tim Jewell, "Everything You Should Know about the 2019 Coronavirus and COVID-19" in Healthline: <https://www.healthline.com/health/coronavirus-covid-19/> Posted on April 23, 2020. Assessed on April 25, 2020.

be a spillover of an animal virus and later adapted the ability of human-to-human transmission.⁶⁴ Currently, people all over the world have been affected by the virus because it is highly contagious, as it rapidly evolves and spread in the human population. By the end of March, 2020, it has spread to at least 177 countries with America being the hardest hit country.⁶⁵ Later, the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV) officially designated the virus as SARS-CoV-2 based on phylogeny, taxonomy and established practice.⁶⁶ The first corona-virus case was introduced in Lagos state, Nigeria when an Italian citizen flew from Milan, Italy to Lagos, Nigeria through the Murtala Muhammed International Airport on 24 February 2020, and travelled on to his company site in Ogun State the same day in a private vehicle.⁶⁷ The man was said to be working in Nigeria when he had returned on 25 February from Milan, Italy, fell ill on 26 February and was transferred COVID-19 cases in The Greater Lagos Metropolitan Area.”⁶⁸ Thus, having tested positive, according to Falaye, the first confirmed case of the pandemic of corona-virus disease 2019 in Nigeria was announced on 27 February 2020, when an Italian citizen in Lagos.⁶⁹ Eleven days later, an asymptomatic contact of the index case in Ogun State was confirmed as the nation’s

⁶⁴ Yen Liu, Rei Kuo and Shin Shih, 2020, COVID-19: The First Documented Coronavirus pandemic in History, *Biomedical Journal* 4: 43, 328-333. Retrieved April 17, 2020 from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bj2020.04.007>.

⁶⁵ B. M. Owojaye, *Evangelical Response to the Corona-virus Lockdown: Insights from the Evangelical Church Winning All*. (Lagos: Harmony Publishing, 2020): 28.

⁶⁶ World Health Organization, (2020)-China Joint Mission on Coronavirus Disease 2019 COVID-19, (WHO) Geneva, Switzerland. Google Scholar.

⁶⁷ T. A. Falaye. “Impact of COVID-19 on the Church of God in Nigeria.” *KIU Journal of Humanities*, [S.l.], v. 5, n. 2, 2020:321. ISSN 2522-2821. Available at: <<https://www.ijhumas.com/ojs/index.php/kiuhums/article/view/924>> . Date accessed: 07 March 2024.

⁶⁸ T. A. Falaye. “Impact of COVID-19 on the Church of God in Nigeria.” *KIU Journal of Humanities*, 321.

⁶⁹ Falaye, T. A. “Impact of COVID-19 on the Church of God in Nigeria.” *KIU Journal of Humanities*.

second case of corona virus pandemic.⁷⁰ Additional cases were gradually detected and confirmed in Ekiti, Oyo, Edo, Bauchi, Osun, Enugu, Kaduna, Benue, Akwa Ibom, Ondo states and Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory.⁷¹ Before long, the presence of corona-virus was felt in almost every state in Nigeria. This makes Nigeria the third country in Africa to recognise an imported corona-virus case after Egypt and Algeria. At first in Nigeria, some saw the disease as the disease of the elites as it was affecting only the wealthy and those in the corridor of power. This view was based on the fact that the disease was first affecting the Nigeria's high-ranking politicians who have been so wicked on the citizens. So, God has come to judge them with this pandemic. The fact that poor citizens were not dying seems to have given credence to this claim. Not only this, some church leaders in Nigeria also view this global pandemic as the work of the Devil to carry out an attack on the church. It is on this note that one of the renowned church leaders in Nigeria, Bishop David Oyedepo of the Living Faith Church, Nigeria says, "...There must be a Devil behind it. It is not a virus; it is a demon. There is a demon at work behind the scenes. I told you in the morning, I smell a rat."⁷² Whichever way one views it, the fact remains that the effect of the virus is still seen in the church and particularly the Evangelical Church Winning All.

At the national level, the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19 was established by the President Nigeria on 9 March 2020, with an overarching mandate to coordinate and oversee the country's multi-sectorial and inter-governmental efforts both to contain the outbreak and to mitigate the impact of the

⁷⁰ T. A. Falaye, (2020), Impact of COVID-19 on the Church of God in Nigeria, Kampala International University, *Journal of Humanities* 5: 2, 319-330.

⁷¹ B. M. Owojaye, *Evangelical Response to the Corona-virus Lockdown: Insights from the Evangelical Church Winning All*. (Lagos: Harmony Publishing, 2020): 22.

⁷² Christian Kripphl, "Nigerian Religious Leaders Demand Lifting of COVID-19 Lockdown" in DW:<https://m.dw.com/en/nigerian-religious-leaders-demand-lifting-of-covid-19-lockdown/a-53499533/> Posted on May 5, 2020. Assessed on June 2, 2020.

COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. The National COVID-19 Multi-Sectorial Pandemic Response Plan was adopted by the PTF in March and serves as a blueprint for a whole of Government response. On 30 March 2020, the President of Nigeria issued a series of stringent non-pharmaceutical interventions, including stay-at-home orders and cessation of non-essential movements and activities (collectively referred to as a “lockdown strategy”) in Lagos and Ogun State and FCT for an initial period of 14 days, extended for an additional 21 days in the same three states, and adding Kano State.⁷³ The states were selected based on a combination of the burden of disease and their risk: Lagos State was the initial epicentre of disease and had the highest number of cases; Ogun State borders, Lagos State, was the source of the index case, and has a highly urban population with a high rate of travel into Lagos State; the FCT had the second-highest number of cases at that time. After the initial two-week lockdown period, incidence in Kano increased rapidly, prompting inclusion in the lockdown. The lockdown included closure of schools and workplaces, ban on religious and social gatherings, cancellation of public events, curfews, restrictions on movement, and cessation of interstate and international travel. Alongside the federal lockdown in Lagos, Ogun States and the FCT, many states adopted measures as well, including school closure, movement restrictions, and curfews.⁷⁴ Due to the rising cases of COVID-19 in Nigeria, the Federal Government on Thursday 23 December 2021 shut bars, nightclubs; restricts guest at weddings and religious gathering to 50 percent with full compliance to public health measures; face masks and hand sanitizers were to be used at all times regardless of vaccination status while in public places.⁷⁵ In

⁷³Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (2020). COVID-19 Situation Report 82. (NCDC) Abuja, Nigeria.

⁷⁴World Health Organization (2019) Naming the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the virus that causes it (WHO), Abuja. Retrieved December 15, 2019, from <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus2019/technical>.

⁷⁵ Boss Mustapha, 2020, COVID-19: FG shuts bars, night clubs; restricts guests at wedding to 50, The Vanguard. Retrieved March 6, 2020, from

subjection to the above stated fact, it is of no doubt that the church culture and practices were interrupted due to the social distancing, stringent lockdown which was a means to curb the spread of the virus and because many were scared of contracting the virus. Social distancing was strictly observed and this disrupted the church practices and tenets. This paper discusses the post-corona-virus effect on the ordinances and practices of Evangelical Church Winning All, Oyo State.

Statement of the Problem

Okanlawon,⁷⁶ Olajide,⁷⁷ have sought to look at the impact of corona-virus pandemic economically. Similarly, Saladino, Algeri, and Auriemma⁷⁸ have painstakingly carried out psychological and sociological effect of the corona-virus pandemic. Indeed, coronavirus pandemic really affected every activity of the church including the finances of the church, decline in church population, spiritual setbacks to members and hindrances to several church programs and activities. Owojaye observed that “as it is the case with all other sectors of our living, the impact of coronavirus on public worship in ECWA was unprecedented.”⁷⁹ It cannot be overemphasized that several church ministers could not be paid their salaries due to economic effect of corona-virus pandemic which also affected

<http://www.vanguardnrg.com/2020/12/covid-19-fg-shuts-bars-nightclubs-restrict-guest-at-wedding-to-50>.

⁷⁶ Okanlawon, S. O. 2022. Grace in Pauline Theology and its Socio-Economic implication for Post-COVID-19 context in Nigeria. *Journal of Christian Studies* 5.1: 95-107.

⁷⁷ Olajide M. D and Olajide, G. O. 2020. COVID-19 pandemic and the economic effects on Churches in Nigeria Vis-à-Vis post pandemic Era. *Nigeria Journal of Christian studies* 5.1: 36-52.

⁷⁸ Valeria Saladino, Davide Algeri, and Vincenzo Auriemma, 2020. The Psychological and Social Impact of COVID-19: New Perspectives of Well-Being, *Journal Frontiers in Psychology*. Retrieved on September 6, 2022, from www.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389.

⁷⁹ B. M. Owojaye, *Evangelical Response to the Corona-virus Lockdown: Insights from the Evangelical Church Winning All*. (Lagos: Harmony Publishing, 2020):22.

many church programs including the mode of worship. Churches were locked due to the ban on social gatherings and little attention is being paid to the impact of the corona-virus pandemic as it affected church ordinances and practices. Rather there exists various research on its effect in Nigeria and some churches in Nigeria. Also, there is a dearth of work that has been carried out on the post-corona-virus effects on the ordinances and practices in Evangelical Church Winning all (ECWA), Oyo State. Existing literature have focused on how the church was made more flexible, (religion and violation of centre for disease control protocols from an ethical approach), and the ban of religious gatherings during corona-virus pandemic. However, little or no work has been carried out on the effect of corona-virus pandemic with careful attention paid to the ordinances and practices in the Evangelical Church Winning All, Oyo State. However, insufficient attention has been paid to the effects of church practices such as, thanksgiving service, Bible study and prayer meetings, evangelism, visitation, as all these were also suspended in the church during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this study empirically assessed the post-corona-virus effects on the ordinances and practices in the Evangelical Church Winning all (ECWA), Oyo State. This paper investigated how the church has been affected both positively and negatively.

Significance of the Study

It is believed, the study is going to be of great benefit to New Testament scholarship and the church community in the following ways. Firstly, the application of the findings of the investigation reveals the post-corona-virus effects of the pandemic on church ordinances and practices in Evangelical Church Winning All. Secondly, it will bring to the fore the possibility of changes on the Evangelical Church Winning All ordinances and practices, and proffer possible solutions, if any, to potentially negative ones. In conclusion, this work will also urge and motivate pastors, believers to be flexible in church practices and encourage them to adapt to the present situation

and any other unprepared circumstances that may possibly come in future.

Methodology

This paper adopted the descriptive survey research design that was used to empirically assess post-coronavirus effects of COVID-19 on the ordinances and practices in Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Oyo State. Primary data were collected from questionnaire designed and administered on 300 purposively selected respondents from the contexts, while secondary data were gathered from relevant books, and journal articles on the subject matter so we can have holistic understanding of the subject of discussion.

Participants

Pastors and members of Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) were purposively selected from the three Local Church Councils (LCCs) within Oyo State namely Bodija Local Church Council (130 respondents), Challenge Local Church Council (90 respondents) and Ode Olo Local Church Council (80 respondents) for this study due to proximity to the researcher. The population for this study which was drawn from pastors, elders, Men, Women and Youth fellowship members, consisted of 300 members of ECWA in Oyo State.

Measures

The research instrument employed for this study is a well-structured questionnaire, designed by the researcher to elicit responses from the respondents concerning the empirical assessment of the ordinances and practices in post-pandemic era in the context of Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Oyo State using likert 5-point scale to evaluate the variables. This scale has five ranges: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Undecided (UN), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA). The questionnaire was divided into three sections.

Section 'A' explored demographic characteristics of respondents such as age, educational background, occupation, marital status, local church council and responsibility in the church.

Section 'B' examined the negative post-coronavirus effects of the pandemic on the ordinances and practices in the Evangelical Church Winning all (ECWA), Oyo State.

Section 'C' examined the positive post-coronavirus effects of the pandemic on the ordinances and practices in the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Oyo State.

Procedures

The questionnaire was administered to church leaders and members in the selected churches. The population for this study is members in the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Oyo State, Nigeria. The instrument employed for this study was a well-structured questionnaire which was used to get the required information from the respondents. The primary sources of data were basically through the administration of questionnaires. A total of 300 copies of the questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher and all the 300 copies were retrieved back. The data collected was presented and quantitatively analyzed using simple frequency tables and percentages. Simple frequency tables were used in presenting the copies of questionnaire administered as well as those collected and utilized in the analysis. Items in the questionnaire were grouped appropriately based on the feedback given by the respondents.

Results

Section 'A': Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age (in years)	Frequency	Percentage
20-29	40	13.3
30-39	70	23.3
40-49	80	26.7
50 and above	110	36.7
Total	300	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 shows that majority (36.7%) of the respondents were between ages 50 and above years old. This implies that the population is predominantly made up of aged people who are not too active.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Educational Background

Educational background	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Primary-High School	65	48.1	65	39.4
ND/NCE-HND/First Degree	55	40.7	70	42.4
M.A/M.Sc-Ph.D.	15	11.1	30	18.2
Total	135	99.9	165	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 shows that 65 which represents 39.4% of the respondents (male) had primary or high school while 70 which represents 42.4% had National Diploma or first degree (College of Education, Polytechnic and University) certificates but only

30 which represents 18.2% of the respondents had Master or Ph.D degree. The female, on the other hand had lower literacy levels of 65 which represents 48.1% had primary or High School certificates while 55 which represents 40.7% were graduates of Colleges of Education, Polytechnics or Universities. Only 15 which represents 11.1% possessed postgraduate certificates (M.A/MSc or Ph.D). This shows that majority of the men were more literate than the women.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Occupation

Secondary Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Clergy	20	6.7
Civil servants	50	16.7
Traders	180	60.0
Others	50	16.7
Total	300	100.1

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3 shows that 50 which represents 16.7% of the total respondents were civil servants while only 20 representing 6.7% were clergy. It also indicates that the most of the respondents (180 or 60%) were engaged in trading activities but the rest (50 representing 16.7) engaged in other unspecified occupations.

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Marital Status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married and living with spouse	230	76.7
Divorced/single mother	15	5.0
Widowed	55	18.3
Total	300	100

Field Survey: 2023

In table 4 above, out of the total respondents of 300, majority of them which is 230 respondents representing 76.7% were married and still had their spouses alive. Only 15 (5.0%) were divorced/single mothers while 55 respondents which represents 18.3 were widows.

Table 5: Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Local Church Council (LCC)

Local Church Council	Frequency	Percentage
Bodija LCC	130	43.3
Challenge LCC	90	30.0
Ode Oolo LCC	80	26.7
Total	300	100

Field Survey: 2023

Table 6 shows the distribution of the respondents by their local church council where they belong. Bodija Local Church Council (BLCC), being the largest local church council had 230 respondents which represents 43.3%. 90 copies of the questionnaire went to Challenge Local Church Council (CLCC) which represents 30% while Ode Oolo Local Church Council, being the smallest LCC had only 80 copies which represents 26.7%.

Research question 1: What are the negative effects of the corona-virus pandemic on the ordinances and practices of Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Oyo State?

Table 6: Negative effects of the corona-virus pandemic on the ordinances and practices of Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Oyo State.

Variable	SD F	%	D F	%	UN F	%	A F	%	SA F	%
The fear of contracting the virus is still present with us as members of the church till date.	61	20.3	27	9.0	6	2.0	73	24.3	133	44.3
In my church, because of the lockdown and social distancing imposed during COVID-19 era, the pandemic had since posed a threat to Church growth and development as it affected evangelism.	78	26.0	49	16.3	1	0.3	85	28.3	87	29.0
Regular physical church meetings were restricted up till now.	107	35.7	65	21.7	10	3.3	53	17.7	65	21.7
Since the period of the pandemic, a few members of my church still keep to measures of social distancing because they believe COVID-19 is still very much around.	57	19.0	106	35.3	12	4.0	83	27.7	42	14.0
Since the period of the pandemic, many worshipers and communicants in my church had developed lukewarmness to spiritual activities generally.	34	11.3	59	19.7	39	3.0	117	39.0	51	17.0
After the COVID-19, few people now register for the baptismal class while few people were willing to	29	9.7	74	24.7	45	15.0	98	32.7	54	18.0

partake in the sacrament.										
COVID-19 has also caused mental illness to members of the church.	29	9.7	74	24.7	45	15.0	98	32.7	54	18.0
Since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, the income of my church informs of tithes and offerings reduced because most members were not familiar with online transfer of money.	91	30.3	21	7.0	0	0	38	12.7	150	50.0
Since the outbreak of the Pandemic, some church members lost their jobs.	44	14.7	72	24.0	22	7.3	98	32.7	64	21.3

Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 revealed that 29.3% disagreed with the statement that the fear of contracting the virus is still present with us as members of the church till date, 2.0% were undecided while 68.6% agreed with the statement. 42.3% disagreed that in their churches, because of the lockdown and social distancing imposed during COVID-19 era, the pandemic had since posed a threat to Church growth and development as it affected evangelism, 0.3% were undecided, while 57.3% agreed. 57.4% disagreed that regular physical church meetings were restricted up till now in their churches, 3.3% were undecided, while 39.4% agreed. 54.3% disagreed that since the period of the pandemic, members of their churches sill keep to measures of social distancing because they believe COVID-19 is still very much around, 4.0% were undecided, while 41.7% agreed. 31.0% disagreed with the statement that since the period of the pandemic, many worshipers and communicants in their churches had developed lukewarmness to spiritual activities generally. 13.0% were undecided, while 56.0% agreed. 34.4% of the total respondents disagreed that after the COVID-19, few people now register for the baptismal class and few people were willing to partake in the sacrament. Only 15% were undecided

while 50.7% agreed with the statement. From the statement whether the effect of Corona-virus also included mental health, 34.4% disagreed while 50.7% agreed but only 15.0% were undecided on it. 37.3% of the respondents disagreed that since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, the income of their churches informs of tithes and offerings reduced because most members were not familiar with online transfer of money. However, 62.7% agreed with the statement and no one was undecided. 38.7% disagreed that some church members lost their jobs as a result of the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic, only 7.3 were undecided while 54.0 agreed with the statement. Therefore, from the above table it can be deduced that the negative effects of the corona-virus pandemic on the ordinances and practices of Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Oyo State are still present four years after the pandemic broke out.

Research question 2: What are the positive effects of the corona-virus pandemic on the ordinances and practices of Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Oyo State?

Table 7: Positive effects of the corona-virus pandemic on the ordinances and practices of Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Oyo State

Variables	SD	%	D	%	UN	%	A	%	SA	%
	F		F		F		F		F	
There were opportunities to explore social media platform as a means to engage members and conduct online services and prayers for them.	74	24.7	68	22.7	2	0.7	41	13.7	115	38.3
There is high degree of orderliness in my church services as people composed ourselves in an orderly manner during service.	70	23.3	51	17.0	10	3.3	79	26.3	90	30.0
More prayer houses/units were created as a result of lockdown and social distancing.	88	29.3	48	16.0	4	1.3	70	23.3	90	30.0
Since the pandemic era, and with the effect of	38	12.7	60	20.0	14	4.7	92	30.7	96	32.0

COVID-19 my church has now learned the value of good time management as the church now now closes earlier than before.										
The pandemic has taught us to reverence God more than before and this attitude is still present with us in our church.	61	20.3	66	22.0	27	9.0	92	30.7	54	18.0
Considerable changes were noticed in the administration of the ordinances after the Corona-virus pandemic.	51	17.0	70	23.3	10	3.3	79	26.3	90	30.0
Since the epidemic broke out, people are now more concerned about their health and safety than before.	76	25.3	31	10.3	2	0,7	100	33.3	91	30.3

Field Survey, 2023

From table 2 above, 37.3% disagreed that since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, the income of their churches informs of tithes and offerings increased as members were encouraged to send their money via online transfer, while 62.7% agreed. 47.7% disagreed that there were opportunities to explore social media platform as a means to engage members and conduct online services and prayers for them, 0.7% were undecided while 52% agreed with the statement. 40.3% disagreed that there was high degree of orderliness in their church services as people composed themselves in an orderly manner during various church services, 3.3% were undecided while 56.3% agreed. 45.3% disagreed that more prayer houses/units were created as a result of lockdown and social distancing, 1.3% were undecided while 53.3% agreed with the statement. 32.7% disagreed that since the pandemic era, and with the effect of COVID-19 their churches have now learned the value of good time management as church services now close earlier than before. 42.3% of the respondents disagreed that the pandemic has taught them to reverence God more than before and this attitude is still present with them in their churches. Only 9.0 were undecided while 48.7% agreed with the statement. 40.3% disagreed that considerable changes were noticed in the administration of the ordinances after the Corona-virus

pandemic. 3.3% were undecided while 56.3% agreed with the statement. Finally, 35.6% disagreed that since the epidemic broke out, people are now more concerned about their health and safety than before. Only 0.7% were undecided while 63.6% agreed with the statement. From the above table it can be deduced that the positive effects of the corona-virus pandemic on the ordinances and practices of Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Oyo State are still present four years after the pandemic broke out.

Discussion of Findings

Corona-virus has caused a lot of havoc to humanity throughout the world. It is a period human beings will continue to remember. “The outbreak of corona-virus and its containment and preventive measures, such as social distancing and lockdowns, caught everyone unaware.”⁸⁰ The effects of this pandemic were so great and costly. Although, there were both negative and positive effects that have also benefited the church. According to research questions one on the negative effects of the corona-virus pandemic on the ordinances and practices in Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Oyo State, it was discovered that the fear of contracting the virus was still present with majority of the members of the church till date. This accounts for reason some were unwilling to respond to the questionnaire. It was discovered that because of the lockdown and social distancing imposed during COVID-19 era, majority of ECWA members like many other churches in Nigeria, could not physically attend church services which were considered obligatory for every believer in Christ (Hebrews 10:25). The corporate worship plays an indispensable role in the life of the church. It brings together God’s word, prayer, fellowship, and so makes for the greatest means of God’s ongoing grace in the

⁸⁰ B. M. Owojaye, *Evangelical Response to the Corona-virus Lockdown: Insights from the Evangelical Church Winning All*, (Lagos: Harmony Publishing, 2020):117.

Christian life.⁸¹ Not only this, the pandemic had since posed a threat to Church growth and development as it affected evangelism. Preaching of the gospel is a major assignment of the church, but since the year 2020 when COVID-19 came to Nigeria and up till now, the zeal for evangelism has drastically reduced. Although, during the pandemic in Nigeria, regular physical church meetings were restricted, this has since been relaxed by government authority. However, it was discovered that since the period of the pandemic, a few members of the church are still keeping to measures of social distancing because they believe COVID-19 is still very much around. Many of the church members developed lukewarm attitude towards spiritual activities in the church since the time of corona-virus. This has also affected socialization among members. Visiting members is no longer common as everyone is conscious of his/her security. Responses further shows that the changes that occurred at the administration of the two sacraments after the Corona-virus pandemic were social distancing, few people now register for the baptismal class while few people were willing to partake in the sacrament. Also, people were concerned about their safety, service conducted were very short, sacrament participant was reduced, people exercise caution and the local church engaged in the use of social media. Result reveals that all these were changes that affected the observation of the two sacrament during and after the Corona-virus pandemic. According to David Robertson, The mental harm caused by the fear of pandemic, and the constant 24/7 media and online hysteria should be factored in as well.⁸² Furthermore, it was discovered that the income of the church seriously dropped and many churches are yet to overcome this

⁸¹ David Mathis, "Five Benefits of Corporate Worship" in *Desiring God*:
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/five-benefits-of-corporate-worship/>

⁸² David Robertson, "What is the Impact of Churches Closing Because of Corona-virus" in *Christianity Today*:
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/article/what-is-the-impact-of-churches-closing-because-of-coronavirus/134477.htm>/posted on 18th March, 2020. Assessed on April 16, 2020.

challenge. As a result of this, many pastors in the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Oyo State are not being paid salaries for months. Finally, since the outbreak of the Pandemic, some church members lost their jobs and they are still struggling with joblessness. This has great consequence on the family finances and general well-being of the society.

According to research question two on the positive effects of the corona-virus pandemic on the ordinances and practices of Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), Oyo State, there were opportunities to explore social media platform as a means to engage members and conduct online services and prayers for them. Furthermore, there is high degree of orderliness in the church services as people composed themselves in an orderly manner during service. The lockdown and social distancing also brought about creation of more prayer houses/units. Since the pandemic era, and with the effect of COVID-19 the church has also learned the value of good time management as the church now closes earlier than before. Members of the church worship God with fear and trembling more than before since the pandemic. Considerable changes were noticed in the administration of the ordinances after the Corona-virus pandemic, and finally, since the epidemic broke out, people are now more concerned about their health and safety than before.

Conclusion

The research has brought to limelight the concept of Corona-virus, its effect on various walks of life and most especially on the church. It stands as a better guide for the church and the church leaders to effectively approach unforeseen situations and unplanned crisis. Also, this study shows that the Corona-virus pandemic severely affected the church ordinances and practices such as baptism, Holy Communion, evangelism, prayer meetings and bible study.

Recommendations

Having carried out a research work on the impact of the Corona-virus pandemic on Evangelical Church Winning All, and have come to realise that the corona-virus pandemic affected the ordinances and practices of the Church, it is imperative to state that the practices and the ordinances are so much important to her, they are laid down rules and obligations commanded by the lord Jesus Christ, who is taken to be the head of the church. Little did the church know that her practices would be interrupted and suspended for a while. Although, the directive of the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and all the federating states were binding on all the citizens of the country, and members of ECWA were not exempted from the rule,⁸³ the church should be open to change, can always look for a better way to carry out her obligation and practices without acting contrary to the scriptural injunction nor the church practices losing her worth or being carried out below the standard in any situation the church found herself. Also, the church can carry out her obligation without disobeying the government in authority and also vital to know that some of the leaders instruction is for our benefit. The church should be willing to create welfare and continuously see to

the need of her members. It is important for the church too look into the areas where welfare is lacking or much attention is yet to be paid to in order to cater for the need of her members. The church needs to be dynamic in all her activities by looking into several ways of carrying out her spiritual activities through various social media platform. Guidance and counselling should be part of every spiritual organisation so as to encourage members when the need arises especially in crisis so as to strengthen them in their place of worship and commitment towards God's service. The church is also encouraged to engage in multiple streams of income so as to remain financially strong

⁸³ B. M. Owojaye, *Evangelical Response to the Corona-virus Lockdown: Insights from the Evangelical Church Winning All*, (Lagos: Harmony Publishing, 2020): 118.

when tough times arise, and be able to sustain herself without depending on tithe or offering. They could delve into various establishments such as schools, factories, businesses and the likes. This will also create job opportunities for members and non-members who are qualified but presently jobless.

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A Reading of Genesis 41:46-49 in the Context of Economic Recovery for the 21st-Century Nigerian Nation

Samson Olugbemiga Dada

Abstract

This study posited that Nigeria nation is sufficiently endowed to sustain herself economically and hence has the edge to upturn the economic imbalance she is experiencing. In an exegetical study of Genesis 41:46-48, the paper argued that every natural endowment of a nation is of Yahweh's intentional means of prospering her citizenry when explored with prudence for sustainable living. In Genesis 41:46-48 Joseph's salvific economic and purpose-driven approach policy delivered Egypt from imminent famine. Dissimilarly, Nigerian national leaders hardly prioritized her abundant agricultural harvests for sustainability, except for the rich persons to despoil the poor. Consequently the common citizens continue to wallow in poverty with no one to rescue. This paper is of the view that leaders and by adequately engaging the right means, can drastically reduce poverty and ameliorate economic recession in the land. Nigerian leaders, like rulers in Egypt must therefore wake up to their responsibility so as to care for the entire citizenry. This research suggests that all citizens must become intentional at exploring and salvaging agricultural surpluses of the land for the sake of the addressing 'famine'. It further recommended that all sectoral leaders including the religious, must adopt and promote the 'gospel of intensive agricultural exploration and wise management of left-overs' for Nigeria nation not to go under.