

**THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF OVIA SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA**

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that **THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF OVIA SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....

Signature

(D. OVBIEBO)

.....

Date

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIDS Aquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

HIV Human Immune Virus

ABSTRACT

The role of Christian churches in community development cannot be over-emphasised. In the past, Christian churches have played vital roles in community development, both in rural and urban areas. It is in light of this that the researcher views the current situation in Ovia South-West and seeks to determine whether or not this also applies to Ovia South-West. This study is an exploration of the role of Christian churches in community development, with particular reference to the Ovia South-West region of Nigeria. Planning the study:

Keywords: Christian, churches, role, development, community, community development, Ovia South-West

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Christian churches exert a profound influence on all societies and many of the world's people. Throughout history, they have proven to be the primary force for social progress, motivating individuals to develop spiritual qualities and empowering them to make sacrifices for their fellow human beings and to contribute to the betterment of their communities.

Those universal principals which lie at the heart of Christian churches – tolerance, compassion, love, justice, humility, sacrifice, trustworthiness, dedication to the well-being of others, and unity - are the foundations of progressive civilization.

It is thus obvious that Christian churches can help to meet the manifold challenges confronting the world community.

Based on what Christianity is all about, Christian churches have always preached that the spiritual accomplishments and well-being of the individual are linked to the collective advancement of the total community. As a result of tireless service and an active commitment to integrity and harmony, Christian churches have had a positive impact on issues related to social development.

Be that as it may, as a serious and conscious church member, the researcher has an obligation to explore the role of Christian churches in community development.

In the researcher's view, Christian faith is a personal and communal response to God's call to participate in the liberating life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and these faith responses have political, social and economic dimensions. According to Saayman (1991), this true political nature of God's liberating mission is

also revealed in the Exodus. Having been freed from slavery in Egypt, the Israelites did not say: 'we worship the God who has liberated our soul'. Rather, they said: 'we worship the God who has delivered us from bondage in Egypt'. In other words, God had liberated them for a new social, political and economic existence in the world- they were no longer slaves of Pharaoh.

Saayman (1991:13) further states that "On the contrary, the *missio politica* has everything to do with eternal reality which Christians call salvation. Furthermore, this choice for the other, this striving for justice, is related especially to the humanizing aim of mission, an act of proclaiming the good news and setting the captives free".

Jeanrond (2003) suggests that the communal Christian praxis has three dimensions:

*"The three dimensions of Christian faith praxis can be distinguished, but should never be separated. The entire Christian community live by proclaiming God's creative activity in history and especially in the story of Jesus Christ, by celebrating God's presence in this universe especially through but not only in the feast of the Eucharist and by actively participating in the transformation of this world according to God's **Salvific** plan. This threefold identity of the Christian community is an identity in process".*

The researcher shares this view with him, especially in terms of these three dimensions, as they inform and shape the ethical imperatives of the Christian churches in the Ovia South-West community context.

Against the backdrop of this basic view of the Christian churches, it is important to note that the Christian churches in Ovia South-West have, over the years, made

significant contributions to the moral renewal of the community. However, community development is one of the issues that these churches still need to address. The need for community development is due to the fact that it can contribute to economic growth, improved productivity and communication, as well as the physical and political life of the citizens in the community and other neighbouring communities. This study will investigate the role of Christian churches in community development, using the region of Ovia South-West in Nigeria as a case study.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Ovia South-West community is one of the eighteen local government areas in the Edo State of Nigeria. Its headquarters are situated in the town of Iguobazuwa, and it has an area of 2,803 km² and a population of 135,356, according to the 2006 census. [^"Post Offices- with map of LGA"](#). NIPOST. (Retrieved 2009-10-20. Accessed 2012-04-30.)The people living there come from the Beni clan. Ovia South-West is about 30 minutes' drive from Benin City, the capital of the Edo State.

Igoubazuwa is the headquarters of the Ovia South-West local government. It is situated about 25 kilometres from Udo, about 30 kilometres from Siluko and about the same distance from Benin City, the capital of Edo State. Igoubazuwa is one of the oldest local government headquarters in the old Midwest state, which later became Bendel state and is now Edo State, which has the worst level of development in the entire nation [^"Post Offices- with map of LGA"](#). NIPOST.(Retrieved 2009-10-20 Accessed 2012-04-30).Looking at the existing infrastructure, it is evident that the roads leading to the town are deplorable. There are no roads to the local government offices or the school and e general hospital, the latter of which is barely functional. Even if it is, the patients are either snakes or

lizards, and it is uncertain whether or not there are doctors there, due to the fact that the environment is bushy and there is no road to the hospital. To get there in an emergency, one would need to use the popular Okada (motor cycle). The popular and historical Edo National College, which is now the Igoubazuwa Grammar School and which has produced most of the eminent scholars in local government, has become the grazing ground for Hausa cows. The office of the Ministry of Education is falling apart, and it is not known where the administrative officers are housed. The local government office is the worst of all. The whole situation is completely out of order, inhabitable and unsuitable as offices for farmers, and there is therefore nothing to write about. Many local government chairpersons and councillors have come and gone, with no results to show for their stewardship and presence. Apart from the fact that they are hardly ever in the office to represent the people who voted for them, they are also seen in Benin City for different meetings that are not related to the local government, but are instead for sharing the loots of the local government treasury and personal business interests, among other things (<http://www.greatudo.com/ovialocalgovt.htm>. Accessed 2012-04-30).

Like many other rural areas where farming and trading are the major sources of livelihood, most of the permanent inhabitants of the Ovia South-West community are women and children, since most men have migrated to the cities in search of work. The majority of men who migrate to cities establish new families there and no longer support their families who have been left behind in the community (Tegborg, 1996:33). Although there are some literate and highly educated people in this community, the rate of illiteracy amongst them is still very high. The problem of illiteracy has a significant impact on the lives of the people in this community.

The Christian church, as a community of moral wisdom, plays an important role in the promotion of virtues and shaping of character through reclaiming the resources of its faith, e.g. the scriptures, worship, spiritual discipline and active social service. In this regard, the researcher's own views have been influenced by Stanley Havermas, John Yoder and especially by African traditional wisdom (African proverbs) (Goba, 2007).

Faith is caught rather than taught. This is why Christian faith has to be embedded in every society, including those in Africa. African proverbs, particularly in terms of their metaphorical nature, are useful tools for 'catching' the Christian faith (Saayman, 1997).

Christian churches, as a community of moral wisdom, particularly as accumulated wisdom, pose a hermeneutical challenge. The ill-at-ease issues that the mission mandate will need to revisit is the re-reading of the scriptures in context. The seminaries and universities do not prepare Christian churches adequately to engage in this type of work. As one comes to grips with these contemporary issues, critical biblical reflections as well as a deep understanding are needed.

The other critical issue confronting the community is to provide Christian leaders by focusing on pressing issues facing the community today. Some of these issues will now be mentioned. There is no doubt in the researcher's mind that despite the establishment of new Christian churches, the community continues to be confronted with poverty, HIV/AIDS, tribalism, domestic violence, crime, unemployment, consumption, avarice/greed and related issues, marital crises, land issues, poor housing, inadequate health care and a poor educational system. It is true that most of these issues are government responsibilities on the one hand, but on the other hand, they are the responsibilities of the community and the church. These issues

demand the attention of Christian churches as they strive to build a just and caring society, and require responses that are informed by the resources of the Christian faith.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

With the recent increase in and establishment of Christian churches in Ovia South-West, due to the high rate of unemployment and people's attempts to find greener pastures, all in the name of doing God's work (based on observation), the researcher is interested in determining the role that these churches can play in the development of the community. Due to problems such as the lack of a crèche, nursery, proper primary and secondary schools, hospitals and guidelines for managing and monitoring the spread of HIV/AIDS, as well as youth involvement in crime, it can be assumed that most of the churches are not successfully performing their role in developing a better community. The problem which is the focus of this study is the following:

- What is the role of Christian churches in community development?

As such, most research problems are too complex to be solved without being subdivided into smaller issues. In order to deal with the above research question, it becomes necessary to sub-divide it into the following sub-questions:

- What aspect of the community needs to be developed?
- How can Christian churches successfully develop their community?

1.3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Do the activities of Christian churches in Ovia South-West lead to the general development of the people in the community?
2. Do Christian churches in this area offer teachings that are capable of transforming the lives of the citizens in the community?
3. Do these teachings bring about gainful employment in the Ovia South-West community for citizens in particular?
4. Do these teachings meet the self-expressed needs of the citizens?

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Primary Objective

The main aim of this study is to determine whether or not the activities of Christian churches in the Ovia South-West community lead to the general development of its people.

1.4.2 Secondary Objectives

The secondary objectives of this study aim at determining whether or not Christian churches offer teachings that are capable of transforming the lives of the citizens in the community of Ovia South West in terms of the following:

- ❖ Providing them with opportunities for gainful employment ; and
- ❖ Meeting the needs of citizens, as expressed by them.

1.5 SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

It would be ideal to explore the role of Christian churches in the development of the whole of Edo State. However, constraints in terms of time, logistics and finances will make this impossible, and in view of this, this study will be limited to the Ovia South-

West municipality. The findings from this study can therefore be utilised by other municipalities and organisations facing similar problems.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Christian churches have already established their roots in the Ovia South-West community, and it is therefore necessary that they should be investigated to determine whether or not they provide or address the relevant needs of the community. This study will identify the needs of the community in order to help Christian churches to take the necessary steps to reduce the current problems faced by the community as much as possible. It is expected that the results of this study will benefit the community, Christian churches and neighbouring communities. It could also help them to re-examine their responsibility as a church. Finally, the result of this study will contribute to the existing body of national and international literature related to the role of Christian churches in community development.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following key terms have been widely used in this study, and can be defined as follows:

1.7.1 Role:

The usual or expected function of somebody or something, or the part that somebody or something plays in an action or event, or the part played by somebody in a given social context, with any characteristic or expected pattern of behaviour that it entails

(<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/role>. Accessed 2012-01-11).

1.7.2 Christian:

A religious person who believes that Jesus is the Christ, is a member of a Christian denomination, and follows the teachings or manifests the qualities or spirit of Jesus Christ. Christians are people who believe in Christ or can be viewed as followers of Christ. Christianity is the most widely distributed of all the world religions, having substantial representation on all the populated continents of the world(<http://www.audioenglish.net/dictionary/christian.htm>. Accessed 2012-04-30)

1.7.3 Church:

A building designed for worship for groups of Christians. It may be small and simple, just large enough to hold a neighbourhood congregation, or it may be huge and complicated, containing different spaces for various religious activities and observances, as in a grand cathedral (http://www.clickdavao.com/encyclopedia/view_content.php?contentid=Church%20%28building%29.Accessed 2012-01-11).

The Church of God is not found only in a beautiful and majestic temple or house built by human hands. It is not even just an assembly of people gathered together in one place. It is not just a physical assembly of people. It is a spiritual assembly. Remember that the church is the body of Christ, and the head of that body is Christ. The true church of God is a complete body composed of people who are united in the Spirit of God, and Christ, who is the head of that body (<http://amazingwisdom.com/what-is-a-church-according-to-the-bible/>. Accessed 3-11-2012).

1.7.4 Church as Community

This is a community of regenerated believers who confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. In obedience to Scripture, they organise themselves under qualified leadership, gather regularly for preaching and worship, observe the biblical sacraments of baptism and communion, are unified by the Spirit, and disciplined for holiness, and scatter to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission as missionaries in the world for God's glory and their joy (<http://marshill.com/2010/10/13/this-is-how-we-define-church>. Accessed 2012-05-08).

1.7.5 Community:

The term **community** has two distinct meanings:

- A group of interacting people, possibly living in close proximity, and often refers to a group that shares some common values and is attributed with social cohesion within a shared geographical location, generally in social units larger than a household. The term can also refer to the national or international community; and
- In the field of biology, a community is a group of interacting living organisms sharing a populated environment

(<http://www.myckaf.org/worship/rabbi/>. Accessed 2012-01-

11), (<http://www.thegreenindex.co.za/pg3/1314/community-publications>. Accessed 2012-01-11).

1.7.6 Development:

This refers to a recent event that has some relevance for the present situation, or process in which something passes by degrees to a different stage (especially a more advanced or mature stage

(<http://www.audioenglish.net/dictionary/development.htm>. Accessed 2012-01-11).

1.7.7 Community Development:

Community development encompasses all forms of developmental activities that touch the human life. It involves improving the social environment as a people who have identified themselves as a community and are ready to act in order to bring improvement to the area. This social environment does not only encompass physical circumstances and amenities, but also patterns of daily life and movement, as well as those social attitudes which can affect the opportunities that people find for creating personal life and group relationships (Zuofa, 2001).

1.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The tools which the researcher will be using in this study are the theoretical frameworks of functionalism, conflict theory and symbolic interactionism. The researcher would like to note here that he is not attempting to provide a comprehensive picture of the relationship between Christianity and community development, but rather to highlight what seem to be some major contributions that can be made by Christian churches in the Ovia South-West Municipality.

Conceptual Framework:

Functionalism is one of the oldest conceptual frameworks in sociology and similar fields of study (McBride and Giem, 2006). It primarily focuses on the social arrangements that facilitate the aspects of a society that make it function, survive and prosper. These arrangements generally focus on cultural values and institutional operations/activities that appear to contribute to a society that pragmatically works and is supported by a great number of its participants. Functionalism recognises that there can be dysfunctional values or institutional operations (e.g. the response to the hurricanes of 2005 in the U.S.), but primarily focuses on modifying values and institutional functions in order to reduce dysfunctions. Conflict theory, in many ways, takes the opposite view. Theorists in this tradition often suggest that societies are not so much based on some sort of functional consensus, but instead that a dominant, powerful group imposes its values and institutional arrangements upon the whole population.

Dissidents are imprisoned, expelled or simply killed. Revolutions start in attempts by those who are oppressed to overthrow the dominant power structure. Dealing with dysfunctions through slight modifications is not regarded as being possible - the focus is rather on radical social change. Finally, symbolic interactionism as a conceptual framework focuses on a kind of Hegelian dialectical process, whereby the functional thesis and conflict anti-thesis can, through dialogue and interaction at all levels, change society to move towards some type of transcendent synthesis that helps society to avoid conflict and bring the greatest good to the greatest number of its members (Henslin, 2004; Mill, 2002).

1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Strydom, Fouche & Delport (2002:76), a research design implies the plan, structure and strategies used to resolve the research problem at the level of collecting information and knowledge. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:31) define a research design as the procedures used for conducting the study, including the issues of when, where and how. It also has implications for internal and external validity in the application of these findings.

According to Wiersma & Jurs (2005:13-14), there are two main methods of research, namely quantitative and qualitative research, from which a researcher can choose when conducting research. The choice of method depends on the type of information to be collected. In this study, the researcher chose the quantitative research method for various reasons, among which are the following: to increase the sensitivity, reliability and validity of the findings, and to obtain valid results and to establish the relationships, if any, between the roles of Christian churches that would be most effective in enhancing community development in the area. In effect, the use of the quantitative method is aimed at facilitating the collection of relevant data.

Based on the above, the main tool for the collection of data in this study is the questionnaire. The use of the above research technique appears to have most value for this study.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:252), questionnaires are the most commonly used method for obtaining information from subjects. The advantages of using a questionnaire in this study are that questionnaires are relatively economical, contain the same questions for all subjects, can ensure anonymity, and contain statements written for specific purposes. Using questionnaires is also cheaper than

interviewing the same population, and avoids the problem of interviewer bias. Furthermore, the use of questionnaires can cover a large range of questions in a shorter time, compared to interview approaches. However, the research design and methodology used in this study will be discussed in more detail in chapter three.

1.10 CHAPTER DIVISION

This study is divided into six chapters as follows:

Chapter one is an introduction to the study. It provides a background to the research problem, and includes the significance of the study, theoretical framework, definition of key terms, aims and objectives of the study, and a brief description of the research setting.

Chapter two will examine the history of the role of the early Christian church in community development, ranging from the Middle Ages to the church mandate and Protestant Reformation.

In chapter three, the social role and responsibility of Christian churches will be explored with reference to international, national and local literature in order to establish what role Christian churches should play in community development and the provision of resources for communal benefit.

Chapter four focuses on the research design and methodology used in this study. This will include the various techniques used to collect data, and a discussion on the reliability and validity of the instruments.

In chapter five, the research findings will be presented based on data collected through the empirical investigation.

Chapter six will provide a summary of the study, and this will be based on an integration of the literature review and empirical research findings. This chapter will also present conclusions and recommendations for future research.

1.11 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, attention was given to the background to the study, statement of the research problem, aims and objectives of the study and clarification of concepts, as well as the research design that will be used. Christian churches have an important role to play in community development, and this study will focus specifically on the Ovia West Municipality in Edo State, Nigeria.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide, from a mainly sociological perspective, a broad overview of the historical and current interaction between Christian churches and communities, with an inclusion of the specific contributions made by Christian churches.

Christian churches have served as an agent of social control. The aim of this is to protect people by teaching them about the dangers and consequences of their involvement in social violence. In the past, the church was a powerful agent of social control for quite some time. Both the church and the priests were held in high esteem, and the authority of the church was recognised and accepted by the people. As a result, nobody could disobey its orders. The church had the power to dethrone kings who did not accept its authority during this period. They dispensed material resources in the form of money to assist victims affected as a result of social violence (Campton, 1980). According to Okafor in Malachy (2004:306), Christian churches have historically been one of the institutions that keep all forms of social life intact and have, over the years, contributed to positive social development.

2.2 The role of Christian Churches in community development

The role of the church has always been a significant one. Apart from the fact that all churches are involved in the spiritual development of the people within the community where they reside, it is important to note that the other aspects of development which these people need to achieve in order to create balance in their lives are not given attention. However, some churches, such as the Catholic and Anglican Church, have in the past been involved in areas like education, health and social development

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role_of_the_Catholic_Church_in_Western_civilization.A

ccessed 2012 -04-30). On the other hand, most of the Pentecostal churches are only involved and interested in the spiritual aspects more than social aspects. The Church was one of the two biggest powers in the medieval historical era, and stood alongside the empires and kingdoms. The Pope was as powerful as the kings of the past. The origins of the role of the Church in community development cannot be separated from the Church itself. The two are integrated parts of a whole. Christian churches have always been encouraging all-round development, in order to ensure that the lives of citizens are enriched (Smith, 2011).

With the advent of the Enlightenment and its consistent differentiation between the public world of facts and private world of ideas, politics and the state were assigned to the former, and religion and moral to the latter. The initial link between church and state had been severed, and the church could no longer appeal to the state on the basis of a shared faith commitment. The church ministry-outside its walls-was by and large limited to charity and development (Bosch, 1991).

Bosch (1991:407) states that “evil is not only in human heart but also in social structures.... The mission of the church includes both the proclamation of the Gospel

and its demonstration. We must therefore evangelize, respond to immediate human needs, and press for social transformation”. He also asserts that if the Church went back to its main task of proclaiming the gospel and converting people to Christ, it would have a far greater impact on the social, moral and psychological needs of people than anything else that it does. Some of the greatest social movements in history have come about as a result of people being converted to Christ.

However, both the congress and the covenant continued to operate in terms of the two –mandate approach and to uphold the priority of evangelism. It affirmed that “in the church’s mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary”. It was also explicitly stated that “reconciliation with man is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor political liberation salvation”.

2.3 THE CHURCH MANDATE

As part of its mandate, the Church has to emphasise the holistic meaning of the Gospel of salvation, and as a result, it proclaims that the Gospel message aims not only to change people’s lives, but also their relationships, as well as changing structures and ultimately the world, according to Koegelenberg (1992:3). Bloesch (2002:63) argues that the Church, as part of its mandate, needs to be a worshipping community as well as a nurturing community. The mission work done by the Rhenish Mission Society was directly motivated by the commission given by Christ to his disciples in Matthew 28:19-20, which, in the view of Strassberger (1969:89), included the economic development of the community. According to Bloesch (2002: 59), the Church is a teacher, as well as a mother, and at the same time has been given the responsibility of being a witness, herald and channel of God's grace. In accordance with Christ’s threefold office, the Church is called to a threefold task of proclamation,

as outlined in the document produced by the Dutch Reformed Church, namely *Church and Society* (1986:9):

- In its **prophetic task** the Church proclaims the Kingdom's saving message, summoning all to repent, believe the Gospel and so become partakers of eternal life.
- In its **priestly task**, by word and action, the Church proclaims God's love and reconciliation between man and his fellows.
- In its **kingly task** the church proclaims the demand for the sanctifying of our lives and for God's justice, which must and will triumph over all injustices and evil powers.

The implication of the views expressed by Koegelenberg (1992:3) and the Dutch Reformed Church, as indicated above, is that the Church should take development seriously, because development is ultimately concerned with a new vision for society and the experience of a full life provided by God. The church, according to Bloesch (2002:32), is not itself the kingdom of God, but is rather a poignant sign and witness of the incorporation of the Kingdom into human history. Croft (1987:109) emphasises the fact that the New Testament, when referring to the "church", never describes a building, but rather a particular group of people. He further argues that the Church is not simply a human organisation and society invented by early Christians, but that God called the church into being with a purpose and mandate in mind (Croft, 1987:110). The purpose of God's call, according to Croft (1987:110), is clearly not, from the very beginning, just for the blessing of Abraham's descendants, but in order for the called ones to be a community, so that all the people on earth will be blessed through them. In his study, Brown (1990:58) came to the conclusion that the church

is obliged to employ its resources and personnel to give preference to the poorest and those who are most in need. Scholars such as Boesak (1987:53) and Bloesch (2002:64) would argue that part of the mandate of the church is to seek justice for the victims, liberation for the oppressed, reconciliation as her Lord has done, and to be engaged in works of mercy. This is part of the reason that it can be understood, according to Koopman (2008:35), that the protest of the Confessing Church in Germany during the Nazi regime and the public involvement and witness of so-called struggle churches during the quest for inclusive democracy in the first decade of democracy in South Africa bear witness to the redemptive role of religion and theology.

According to James (1992: 81), the church, if properly functioning, should be a conveyer of information and values that will help stabilise and build the society in which it finds itself. In the words of Bloesch (2002:64), the church is basically “a life support system not only enabling its members to survive in a cruel and hostile world but also empowering them to prevail over the principalities and powers of this world”. Essentially, Villa-Vicencio (1992:31) views the church as playing the role of transcending seemingly impregnable barriers and enabling people to reach for what some regard as impossible dreams. De Gruchy mentions (1995:122) that the basis of the Barmen Declaration, adopted at a synod in October 1934, is that the Confessing Church in Germany regarded its task and mandate as a struggle for the gospel and freedom of the church from Nazi ideology. Rieger (2009:160) states that the fact is often overlooked that God is the one who locates God’s self-alongside the oppressed and against the oppressor.

The main mandate and obligation of the church, according to Kameeta (2007:3), is that of being there for the poor and marginalised in society, as Jesus taught: “*I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me*” (Mt. 25:45). In short, justice and dignity for the poor remains the yardstick for any system, and the church has to act according to God’s will and follow Jesus’ example in terms of how to bring about justice and dignity for God’s creation and within society. Sharing in God’s mission is an outworking of the commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves, as well as to be good stewards of the whole of creation, according to Croft (1987:138).

2.4 The Early Christian Church through the Middle Ages

2.4.1 Functional Contributions:

Stark (1997) conducted a comprehensive analysis of how early Christianity arose and triumphed in the Roman world. Among the contributions he first noted was the Christian redefinition of disease. Many non-Christian religions defined disease as a result of a curse from God. This view was exemplified by the words of Jesus’ disciples when they asked him what sin a blind man (or his parents) had committed (John 9:1-3). Jesus made it clear that disease was not necessarily the result of individual behaviour, but rather simply a part of life. His healing ministry had an enormous impact on how his followers behaved. Stark (1997) argues that Christians played a major role in changing how the Roman world not only defined illness but how the sick were treated.

Matthew 25:35-40 presents a final judgment motif, not in terms of doctrine but in terms of social justice. This judgment story provided a strong impetus for Christian social action in the Roman world. There is evidence that early Christians, rather than abandoning the sick during times of epidemics, stayed in the community and cared for the sick. They not only defined illness differently, but viewed caring for the sick as sacerdotal (making them holy) or at least following the example of Christ. This resulted in what was to become a religious order of hospitals (which cared for sick pilgrims), and ultimately led to the modern faith-based health care system. In fact, *hôpital-Dieu*, one of the old French terms for hospital, means "hostel of God" (Wikipedia, 2006). This attitude towards the sick and healing of the sick dramatically changed Western culture's fundamental attitude toward disease and how the sick were treated.

War is certainly one of the almost universal human conditions. In its earliest years, the Christian Church appears to have taken a fairly strong stand against war and violence. The words of Jesus in many places in Scripture suggest that peace makers are blessed (Matthew 5:9) and that one should turn the other cheek rather than strike back (Matthew 5:38-40). There is strong evidence that early Roman Christians were pacifists prior to the rule of Emperor Constantine (Hoekema, 1986). This pacifistic tradition, in future centuries, stimulated the creation of a strong Christian peace movement exemplified by the Quakers and Anabaptists, and to a lesser extent by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and which continues to be a part of foreign policy war debate.

Unfortunately, when the Roman world became Christian and was in need of defending itself, strict pacifism began to crumble. However, the Church Fathers did attempt to define appropriate or just war. St. Augustine of Hippo wrote a treatise on

just war in the *City of God* (1972), which informs Christian thought to this day. It essentially justifies war only as a last resort and for defensive reasons, emphasising the protection of non-combatants. To a significant extent, the Geneva Convention on war is a testament to the continued impact of St. Augustine. Many historians have highlighted the strong Christian contribution to learning. As the literate Roman world collapsed, it was in the monasteries that the written word of God was kept, as well as where the classics of the Greco-Roman world survived. It has been noted that much of this repository of written knowledge was hidden in Irish monasteries at the fringe of the conflict between the barbarians and Romans. It was often the Celtic monks who reintroduced literacy into the new post-Roman, Germanic world (Cahill, 1996).

While the early Church often supported major social change, as the church became institutionalised, it came to be strongly associated with power. The adoption of Christianity by Constantine, the Christianisation of the King of the Franks, and the strong Christian views of Charlemagne all resulted in a very close relationship between the church and secular power. The Christian Church provided strong theological and philosophical rationales for the justification of civil power. The unity of church and state resulted in strong and, for many centuries, effective policies that often prevented significant social change (Reardon, 2006). The peasants were expected to accept their position in society because it was ordained by God, and they were to look for their reward in a non-corporal paradise. Any opposition to the ruling class was seen as a rebellion against God. This alliance between the Pope (and other religious leaders) and emperors and kings was a key component of the cause of revolutionary movements, which began in the eighteenth century and continues to some extent to this day (Marx et al., 1998).

2.4.2 Some Interactions:

Sociologists who have focused on popular culture have noted that the early Christian Church attempted to transform carnivals into holy days, albeit with limited success. Festivals of the flesh were converted into days commemorating special events in the life of Christ or birthdays of saints. These days also provided work relief for an often oppressed working class. Sociologists and anthropologists at times use the term 'cultural levelling' to describe the process whereby adjacent cultural groups and values come to blend core beliefs, values and behaviours. The Medieval Church, to a large extent, came to be viewed as an organisation that combined the governmental structure, customs, titles and dress of both the Roman and Byzantine Empire (Vatican, 2006). In addition, there are those who argue that the veneration of Mary, the mother of Jesus, incorporated the traditional worship of a mother earth goddess, and that the veneration of saints incorporated the polytheism of traditional societies (Van Der Post, Cashford & Baring, 1993).

2.5 The Protestant Reformation

2.5.1 Some Functional Contributions:

Certainly, since the publication of the work by Max Weber, entitled *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930), sociologists have regarded the Protestant Reformation as a crucial event that contributed to redefining society. Weber argued that the capital formation, which facilitated industrial development, characterised Protestant culture, emerging within the context of a work ethic that defined salvation itself to be dependent upon hard, productive work, non-conspicuous consumption, and the production of goods and services that exceeded consumption. Weber further argued that the focus on an individual judgment before God provided a sense of

accountability that resulted in a strong civic attitude of contributing to the community and the needs of others (Shah & Woodberry, 2004).

A variety of scholars have concluded that the Protestant Reformation played a role in the development of democracy in Northern Europe, as well as in other parts of the world. The argument is that the idea of universal priesthood often (though not inevitably) results in universal suffrage in political democracies. In addition, if there is no pope or bishop, how can there be a king? (Hunt et al, 2000; Shah & Woodberry, 2004). Shah and Woodberry further argue that the Protestant belief that every Christian must be able to read scripture provided a powerful impetus for universal education. Literacy, while not historically wide-spread, is a fairly old cultural phenomenon. What is unique about the concept of universal literacy is inherent to the term 'universal'. The belief that not just an elite or specialised class needs to be literate, but that all people need to be literate, is a unique historical phenomenon that has changed how human beings think and live. While early Protestant movements were often as intolerant as the Medieval Church, after periods of war between Protestants and Catholics and between various Protestant groups, a more tolerant pluralistic religion emerged. Some scholars believe (e.g. Hunt et al., 2000) that religious tolerance and pluralism is related to a wider acceptance of ethnic and cultural pluralism in general.

Both the Protestant Reformers and Catholic theologians in the Counter Reformation can be argued to have played a major role in the abolition of slavery. Stark (2005) contends that such a perspective arises from a basic Christian view which is reflected in the U.S. Declaration of Independence: that human beings are endowed by the Creator with inalienable rights, one of which is liberty. As Stark notes (2005), by the 16th century, Pope Paul III issued a bill ex-communicating those who traded or

kept slaves. The Protestant countries of Northern Europe took similar civil action. In the United States, the first strong abolitionists were the Quakers, whose understanding of the New Testament and Pauline theology required equality. The influence of the Quakers moved many other religious groups, including the Puritan and Congregational traditions of New England, to provide a strong religious and moral base for the abolition of slavery (Ferrell, 2005).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter clearly demonstrated that theologians view the church as a valued contributor to the well-being of any community, with biblical examples of what Jesus Christ intended the “called people” to be and do. There are obviously many other views of what is understood as the role of the church, but the views mentioned in this chapter constitute a valid argument for this study, which scholars would clearly seem to imply through their interpretations of the role of the church in the development of the community in which it finds itself. When the church lacks the institutional strength to take its place in society, James (1992:82) argues that this will lead to the lack of credibility and ability to function effectively as a mediating institution. The church must therefore work diligently and with dedication on the religious life of its members, in order to send them not as career-Christians into the world, but as Christians into their various careers (Heyns, 1980:97).

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the context and aim of this study. This chapter reviews the literature on the role of Christian churches in community development. According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:2), a literature review will enable the researcher to synthesise the literature topic and engage critically with it. This chapter begins with the concept of development and provides a general overview of community development, as well as exploring the role of Christian churches in community development in general, as well as in the Ovia South-West community in particular. A review of different perspectives on Christian churches and their role in community development is also conducted.

In general, Christian community development realistically highlights, through community meetings and efforts, some of the areas that people in the community would like to see improved. The areas to be focused upon are not looked at by some outside group or through some demographic study that is imposed upon the community. Instead, it is the community members themselves who decide what area they would like to improve.

In reviewing the literature on economic development in its common and elementary form, one definition (Carmen, 1996: 5) states that it is a process of change mediated by some form of human intervention. Carmen (1996:206) further argues that development starts in people's minds, attitudes, value systems and judgments, to the point at which, he believes, people can develop themselves. The purpose of development should be to initiate growth and invoke ownership, according to

Carmen (1996:210). It is clear that if one takes the arguments of Carmen (1996:48) and Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2005:24) seriously, economic development is about putting people first, not last, or even ignoring them in the pursuit of economic growth. Economic development seems to be a process whereby countries or societies are transformed.

3.2 The concept of development

The term 'development' means different things to different people. Some view it as change, while others see it as 'advancement, improvement and progress'. Development is the process of changing or growing from one stage to another. The term is used in different ways, depending on the context (Okwueze, 2004). However, when this term is applied to a community, it refers to the process whereby a community modernises. Modernisation(<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/modernization>. Accessed 11th of June 2012) is the process of making something modern in appearance or behaviour, and bringing a community to the same level as other developed communities that have all basic amenities and infrastructures.

According to Bassey, Adam and Obong of Calabar (1985:3), "development is the maximization of the potentialities of the total environment of Nigeria-economical, physical, political and human - for the betterment of the majority of Nigerians". According to the Obong of Calabar, development must aim at creating an appropriate environment for the individual to live a happy, contented, spiritually satisfying and culturally meaningful life.

Meyer (2002:360) defines development as "it occurs when ongoing learning opportunities are created, so that employees can develop in order to maintain a high

level of performance". In this study, development is defined as the process of improving the life of the community through the role of the Christian church. In comparing the views of scholars on development, it seems that there is some agreement that development is about people, although as a concept, it has different meanings for different people, as stated by Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2005:3); Clark (2002:144) and Gutierrez (1986: 24). It seems that the literature on development wants to suggest that development is a process of social and economic change, transformation and evolution, as well as bringing humans to a more advanced state.

According to Malachy (2004:4), the term 'development' comes from the word 'develop'. Whenever the term 'development' is used, there is a general tendency to think about growth and increase, usually in terms of infrastructure. This implies that the concept of development must necessarily be related to concrete, material things. Many people are still holding this view, while others have discovered that it is not only erroneous, but also misleading. According to Simon Arthur as quoted in Solomons (2012:51), "development is the process of enhancing individual and collective quality of life in a manner that satisfies basic needs (as a minimum), is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, and is empowering in the sense that the people concerned have a substantial degree of control (because total control may be unrealistic) over the process through access to the means of accumulating social power".

3.3 General overview of community development

There is no single accepted definition of community development among scholars. Each person has tried to define the concept from his or her own perspective. The

term 'community development' is used to describe a developing concept, which embraces a number of distinct ideas. The common feature of these different definitions is that community development is aimed at improving the social environment as a people who have identified themselves as one community and are ready to act in order to bring about improvement to the area in question. Part of the confusion lies in the fact that community development is both a process and a product. According to Zuofa (2001:76), "community development encompasses all forms of developmental activities that touch the human life. Broadly speaking, community development touches various sectors which cover health, education, agriculture, economic and social field". According to the definition provided by the United Nations Organization (UNO), cited in Anyanwo (1981:165), it is the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are combined with those of governmental authorities, in order to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, integrate those communities into the life of the nation, and enable them to contribute fully to national development.

Jones and Silva (1991) consider an integrated model of community development that includes problem solving, community building, and systems interaction. In other words, they posit that a truly integrated approach assesses the problem, builds community capacity, and most importantly, addresses the problem.

Community development involves changing the relationships between ordinary people and people in positions of power, so that everyone can take responsibility for the issues that affect their lives. It starts with the principle that within any community, there is a wealth of knowledge and experience which, if used in creative ways, can be channeled into collective action, in order to achieve the community's identified goals.

Community development practitioners work alongside people in communities to help build relationships with key people and organizations, and to identify common concerns. They create opportunities for the community to learn new skills and, by enabling people to act together, community development practitioners help to foster social inclusion and equality.

After a community has decided where it wants to focus some of its attention, it is then directed to the means with which the objectives can be achieved. What qualities, talents, and abilities does the community have that can help solve these problems? The focus is on the community members seeing themselves as the solution to the problem, not on a government programme or outside group that is going to solve the problem.

3.4 Social development

Social development is the pattern or process of change exhibited by individuals as a result of their interaction with other individuals, social institutions, social customs, etc. (Morris, 2010:9). Morris states that:

Social development is the bundle of technological, subsistence, organizational, and cultural accomplishments through which people feed, clothe, house, and reproduce themselves, explain the world around them, resolve disputes within their communities, extend their power at the expense of other communities, and defend themselves against others' attempts to extend power.

Christian churches offer consolation to oppressed people by giving them hope and eternal happiness in an afterlife (Nwanunobi, 1992:194). Christian churches have been known to provide support and consolation and to help in the search for rational oppression, violence and strife within communities and groups. They have helped to

ensure that the social life of people in a community is balanced. Obiora (2007:112) indicates that Christian churches have had an impact on social development, as well as other religious groups. Hence, he notes that:

The churches – as well as other religious groups – have continued to play a part in the ongoing process of societal modernization and have contributed to the concurrent discourses on civil society. In some instances the churches have actually gained in importance and have reached a new level of significance. [...] Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that within the Christian Churches there are also a lot of different movements, and their influence on society cannot be fully evaluated at the present time.

3.5 Economic development

Economic development is the development of the economic wealth of countries or regions for the well-being of their inhabitants. This is the short definition of economic development (<http://www.economics4development.com/>. Accessed 13/6/2012).

“However, looked at it from another perspective, Christian churches contribute to the local economy in a variety of ways. Most churches employ at least one person, and many have upwards of 20 employees, especially if they operate a childcare facility or school. Since they generally operate a facility, churches are consumers of energy to heat and cool the often large, open spaces. They also use insurance, maintenance, landscaping and construction services (albeit sometimes as volunteer labour), and they consume office supplies, furniture, curriculum materials, and specialty church items” (Christine Hamilton-Pennell, 2009 <http://www.supportinglocalentrepreneurship.wordpress.com/> Accessed 13/6/2012).

The Black church in the U.S. has been aware of its important role in economic development since the time of slavery. In 1977, Lloyd wrote an article, entitled “The

Black Church and Economic Development,” in which he demonstrated that, historically, the Black church has played an important role in the social and economic life of the Black community. He argued that the Black church, often in partnership with the federal government, has provided both moral and economic impetus for the economic redevelopment of urban areas (<http://supportinglocalentrepreneurship.wordpress.com/> Accessed 13/6/201).

“Later, in 1993, when *Black Enterprise* featured a cover story entitled, “The New Agenda of the Black Church: Economic Development for Black America”, the author, Lloyd Gite, profiled the work done by Black churches in several urban areas, including Detroit’s Hartford Memorial Baptist Church, which invested heavily in local economic development projects, from building shopping centres to senior citizen housing, in order to create jobs and businesses”. <http://supportinglocalentrepreneurship.wordpress.com/> accessed on 30th April 2013

The presence of churches in the community brings direct economic benefits to the local area. Church organisations provide jobs for the community, and churches support a variety of local businesses. Churches bring individuals from surrounding areas to the community in which the church is located, and these individuals provide economic support to local establishments. Thus, churches aid in bringing additional revenue to communities.

Churches are also an attractive component of local communities. Much like strong school systems, many families and individuals consider the presence of local religious organisations when making decisions about moving to communities and purchasing property. The presence of churches aids families in choosing to establish their residence in a local community. This in turn helps support local businesses and

contributes to property tax payments. Therefore, churches provide direct economic benefits to the community. Churches encourage community growth, job creation and overall economic vitality (<http://erlc.com/article/some-positive-benefits-churches-bring-to-communities/>. Accessed 11th of June 2012).

3.6 Educational development

In the last decade or so, a number of researchers have sought to determine whether religion hampers or enhances educational achievement. Even though the development of a body of evidence is just beginning to emerge, some 84 percent of the studies reviewed found that Christian churches' activities are positively correlated with improved educational attainment (Byron, Ralph. and Derek, 2002).

“Students in Christian church-affiliated schools tend to exhibit a higher level of academic achievement than their peers in secular schools, particularly in low-income urban neighborhoods. For example, studies continue to find that inner-city students in public schools lag behind in educational achievement, compared with students in Catholic schools” (Neal in Fagan 2006). According to Agha in Fagan 2004, “the church encourages hard work and discourages laziness among converts, which has led to the economic emancipation and empowerment of Nigerian Christians, who in turn influence non-Christians”.

“The cultural values of Christian churches are also a significant pathway to academic success for adolescents. For example, to earn a high school diploma or take advanced math courses, children must plan for the future and structure their activities accordingly. Christian churches typically invest in establishing an ethic of such discipline and persistence. A recent study confirms both this indirect

contribution of Christian church values and the direct influence of the students' own Christian activities to the promotion of academic achievement". Muller and Ellison in Fagan, 2006.

Douglas in Fagan 2006: "found that youth who frequently attended religious services were five times less likely to skip school, compared with their peers who seldom or never attended these services".

Missionary activity, for the Christian Church, has always incorporated the education of evangelised people as part of its social ministry. History shows that in evangelised areas, the first people to establish schools were often Christian churches. In some countries, the church is the main provider of education or significantly supplements government forms of education. Presently, the church operates the world's largest non-governmental school system. Many of Western civilization's most influential universities were founded by Christian churches

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role_of_the_Catholic_Church_in_Western_civilization. Accessed 2012-04-30).

3.7 Health care

Research on Christian churches and health outcomes indicates that higher levels of religious involvement are associated with the following: reduced hypertension, longer survival, less depression, lower levels of drug and alcohol use and abuse, less promiscuity, reduced likelihood of suicide, lower rates of delinquency among youth, and reduced criminal activity among adults. This review provides overwhelming evidence that higher levels of religious involvement and practices provide an

important source of protection for individuals against deleterious outcomes (Johnson et al., 2002: 11).

According to Fabian (2004), one cannot discuss community development without mentioning the efforts and contributions made by Christian churches with regard to health care in Nigeria. According to him, “they educated people on modern use of drugs and its administration. They even built hospitals like Bishop Shanahan hospital, Nsuka ... Iyi- Enu hospital, Ogidi ... etc”. These hospitals were built with the aim of catering for believers and encouraging new converts.

There is no doubt that Christian churches bequeathed medical services and hospitals to Nigeria, Achunike (1995:57) indicates that a hospital was established in Onitsha in 1983. In September 1905, the Mary Slessor hospital was established in Itu by the Christian church. In 1913, another hospital was established in Unwana, which was known as the Presbyterian Joint Hospital. According to Heerey (1935), St. Luke’s Hospital in Anua was opened in March 1933, while six dispensaries and four orphanages were established in Igbo land (*Missionary Annals*, Vol.17, 1935) in the same year. Oziboh (1985) states that the Holy Rosary Maternity Hospital was opened in Onitsha in 1935, and Mt Carmel Hospital in Emekukwu was commissioned in 1935 (Falk, 1997:19).

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter discussed some of the literature that is available on the research topic. The reviewed literature highlights the fact that Christian churches have, over the years, contributed to the development of communities throughout the world, including Nigeria. This discussion has clearly shown that Christian churches have

always had the development of the communities in which they were established at heart. They have ensured that the conditions needed to enhance the lives of their adherents are put in place, in order to help achieve balance in the lives of people within communities.

The next chapter will discuss the research methodology and research design that were used in this study.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the methodology that was used in this study are discussed and explained. According to Babbie and Mouton (2002:72), research methodology focuses on the precise tasks and methods that are performed and used during research. The general perspectives of this study, as well as the time frame, are also included in this chapter. In addition, the instrument used in data collection and how data was analysed are also discussed here.

4.2. Research design

Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2002:137) define a research design as a specification of the most adequate operations to be performed in order to test a specific hypothesis under a given condition. According to Babbie and Mouton (2002:72), a research design is “a plan that was followed during the study in order to answer the research question”. The researcher needs to decide on the research strategy that should be adopted, and must follow two steps in terms of the research design. Firstly, the researcher must determine exactly what he or she wants to investigate, and, secondly, he or she must determine the best way to achieve this (Babbie and Mouton, 2002:72).

This study aimed to investigate the role of Christian churches in the Ovia South-West community of Edo State in Nigeria, in order to determine whether or not the Christian churches had really contributed to the development of the community.

The researcher selected the descriptive survey as the best method for exploring and answering the research question. Therefore, this study used a descriptive design, which is typically universal and generalisable.

4.2.1 Descriptive research

The main purpose of a descriptive research design is to give a complete account of what was observed from the research participants in response to the research question.

According to Leedy (1997:190), the term 'descriptive' comes from the word 'de' and 'scribere', which means to write. Therefore, in this study, a detailed record was written based on what members of the community indicated in the self-reporting tool (questionnaire) that was used to collect the data.

In order to obtain relevant information during descriptive social research, Babbie and Mouton (2002:80) and Leedy (1997:190) maintain that the survey method works well in this regard, adding that descriptive surveys are a commonly used method in social research.

4.2.2 Survey method

A survey is a system of collecting data through the use of self-reporting techniques. Leedy (1997:190) states that surveys aim "to look or see over or beyond". Therefore, a descriptive survey involves observing with scrutiny, writing down and keeping a record of what was observed, including all the steps involved in a typical survey. Leedy adds that observing, in a descriptive survey, is not based on the sense of sight but is about what was noted, based on the participants' responses. A questionnaire is one of the tools used in a survey for observing the area of interest in

research. Babbie and Mouton (2002:73) state that a survey is more appropriate for individual-based studies. Knowledge is a personal element, and a survey is therefore a suitable method for this study, as it focuses on acquiring knowledge.

Neuman (2000:247) points out that a survey is typically used when the objective of the study is to measure knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, opinions and behaviour. One of the characteristics of a survey is that it is based on a deductive approach (Neuman, 2000:250). In a typical deductive study, such as this one, a conceptual framework is described in the initial stages of the study and therefore directs it. The conceptual framework for this study was used to formulate the questionnaire.

4.3 Research methodology

According to Polit and Hungler (1999:656), research methodology includes the steps, procedures and strategies for gathering and analysing the data in a study. This study will use the quantitative research approach.

4.3.1 Research Approach

There are two main research approaches, namely quantitative and qualitative, from which a researcher can choose when embarking on a study (Wiersam and Jurs, 2005:13). The choice of method will depend on the kind of information that the researcher intends to collect. It is up to the researcher to choose which method will suit the study in question, or whether to use both methods in order to improve the study and obtain valid results. In this study, the researcher chose to use the quantitative method for various reasons, including the fact that he had observed the community in question from birth, as well as the time frame and inadequate security in the community.

4.3.1.1 Quantitative research

Quantitative research relies on the collection of numerical data. This numerical data is often used instead of words to measure and explain the trends in the researcher's findings. This type of approach is objective, formal and follows a systematic process in which numerical data is utilised in order to obtain information.

According to Burns and Grove (2005:23) and Wiersma and Jurs (2005:14), quantitative research is used to describe variables, examine their relationships and determine the effects and causes, as well as interactions between variables. De Vos (2005) points out that the main aims of quantitative research are to test hypotheses, measure the social world objectively and predict and control human behaviour. In the words of Babbie and Mouton (2001:49), the quantitative researcher believes that the best or only way of measuring properties of phenomena and the attitudes of individuals towards certain phenomena is through quantitative research. This means that once numbers are assigned, the perception is always quantitative.

4.4 Population and Sampling

4.4.1 Population

A population is a group of people who share common traits or attributes which are of interest to the researcher and the population to whom the findings can be generalised (Burn, 2000:83).

When deciding on the population of a study, it is important to bear in mind that it is impossible to conduct the study on the entire population, which in this case, is all the members of the Ovia South-West community.

4.4.2 Sampling

Pilot and Beck (2004:219) define sampling as the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population. Purposive sampling was used for this study. This sampling technique is based on the judgment of the researcher regarding the respondent. In this study, the researcher, having lived in this community for some time, therefore has a good knowledge of the attributes of the members of the community.

4.4.3 Sample Size

Sample size refers to the number of elements that are included in the sample (Burns and Grove, 2005:343). In this study, the number of the sample was one hundred (100). This was to enable the researcher to obtain more accurate results. The sample of this study included church leaders, community leaders and members of the community, as well as people who had lived in the community for the past month and those who had information regarding the development of the community. All participants had to be at least 18 years old.

4.5 Data collection

Data collection refers to the techniques that are employed to gather data. At this stage, research focuses on the approach pertaining to the actual fieldwork (Neuman, 2000:250).

4.5.1 Observation

The researcher has had the opportunity to live in this community and witness the poor rate of development, socially, economically educationally, and even in terms of health care. The government is doing little or nothing about this, and Christian

churches in the community also have to play a role in improving the lives of the citizens in this community. Up till now, many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have made promises, but have never kept them.

4.5.2 Questionnaire

The research instrument that was used in this study is the questionnaire. This questionnaire consisted of close-ended questions, and was distributed to the members of the community, regardless of their status, as long as they fulfilled the criteria indicated in 3.4.3. This will allow the study to be informed by a wide cross-sectional representation of members of the community. The questionnaire sought to determine attributes and beliefs. According to Salant and Dillman (1994:78), “attitudes and beliefs is what people say they want or what they think is true”.

4.6 Pilot Study

A pilot study is a pre-test in which a few subjects are used to check the feasibility of the questions which comprise the questionnaire. Neuman (2000:251) classifies a pilot study as the second step in conducting a survey. Although the test may not be administered to representatives who match the sample accurately, Babbie and Mouton (2002:245) advise that it should make use of subjects to whom the study is relevant.

In this study, the pilot test was performed using ten Nigerian citizens in Pretoria, who work in diverse vicinities and with different languages.

The purpose of a pilot study is to determine whether or not the questions asked are comprehensible. Therefore, the people used in the pilot study were asked to

scrutinise the questions and their wording. Ambiguous questions were clarified, and in this way, the reliability of the study was ensured (Rossouw, 2001:133).

Finally, this test helped to determine if the questionnaire was too long, which respondents could find tiring (Brink, 2001:156).

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics involves protecting the rights of the respondents and the community in which the research is conducted, as well as maintaining scientific integrity (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:531; Burns and Grove, 2005:181). Ethics concerns the system of moral principles by which individuals can judge their actions as right or wrong, good or bad (Denscombe, 2002:174). Polit and Beck (2006:499) support this view of ethics as a system of moral values that is cautious in terms of the degree to which research procedures adhere to professional, legal and social obligations towards participants in a study. In other words, research ethics involves the application of ethical principles to scientific research. According to Pera and Van Tonder (2005:4), it is a code of behaviour that is considered to be correct. This fundamental truth must be known and taken seriously by all researchers. These norms or standards are intended to guide the moral choices of the researcher in terms of his or her behaviour towards others, especially in relation to the participants in his\her research.

The main purpose of ethics in research is not to inflict harm on participants as a result of research activities. Ethical considerations are fundamental to the design of any research that involves human beings, in order to try and protect the rights and dignity of the research participants. On these bases, a study can be conducted with

fairness (Burns & Grove, 2005). During this study, the following ethical issues were observed: informed consent, right to anonymity, beneficence, and respect for people (Brink, 2006:32-35).

4.7.1 Informed consent

A fundamental ethical principle of social research, according to Polit and Beck (2006:328) and Neuman (2006), is to never force anyone to participate. Participation must be voluntary, without any intimidation or victimisation. Based on this principle, the purpose of the study, data collection method and participation criteria were made clear to the participants (Burns & Grove, 2005:193). This was done both verbally and in writing. The respondents had to show their understanding of this information by signing an individual consent form.

4.7.2 Permission to conduct the study

Permission was obtained from the traditional ruler, known as the Enogie of Ovia South-West, as well as from the Local Government Chairman and the Research and Ethics Committee of the Department of Theology at UNISA. The right to dignity and principles of beneficence were adhered to in this regard.

4.7.3 Confidentiality

According to Burns and Grove (2003:201), confidentiality refers to the researcher's management of personal information shared by an informant, which must not be shared with others without the permission of the informant. Anonymity exists if the informant's identity cannot be linked, even by the researcher, with his/her individual responses. In line with this, the respondent has the right to anonymity and the

assurance that the data collected will be kept confidential, and that information will be used purely for research purpose, with findings being made available as and when necessary. Polit et al. (2004:143) view confidentiality as secret, which means that no information that the participants divulge is made available to others, but is only made known to certain people, such as Christian churches or a research team (Griffiths, 2009:191).

4.7.4 Anonymity

This was made possible in this study because neither the names of the respondents nor those of the institutions involved were part of the questionnaires. This was done in order to protect the respondents and to make it impossible to link any aspect of the data to a specific person or institution. Burns and Grove (2002:188) state that anonymity is assured when even researchers cannot link a participant with the data pertaining to that person. Lobiondo-Wood and Haber (1990; 276) add that confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed by ensuring that the data obtained is used in such a way that no other researcher is aware of the source.

4.7.5 Beneficence

The right to protection from discomfort is based on the ethical principle of beneficence. This principle stresses that the researcher does no harm to the participants. It also imposes a duty on researchers to ensure that the individual participant and society in general benefit from the research and that harm is minimised. Polit and Beck (2006:87) support this view by stating that research related to humans should be intended to produce benefits for research subjects themselves, other individuals or society as a whole. There is no obvious risk or

anticipated negative effects, either physically, psychologically or economically, for the respondents in this study, as the study is non-experimental. Participants' rights to full disclosure were taken into account.

4.8 Validity of the Instrument

Validity of a data collection instrument refers to the extent to which it measures what it is intended to measure. In other words, a valid instrument actually measures the concept it is supposed to measure accurately (Stommel and Wills, 2004:222). De Vause (1998:55) explains that the validity of a tool is feasible if it is used in the relevant situation. Salkind (2003:115) emphasises that "the validity of an instrument is often defined within the context of how the test is being used".

4.8.1 Face Validity

This refers to whether or not the instrument looks as if it is measuring the appropriate construct. Face validity is a judgment that is based on the face value of an instrument. It serves to determine whether or not the items or questions contained in the instrument appear to measure the main concept of the study (Brinks, 2001:168).

4.8.2 Content Validity

This is concerned with ensuring that the instrument covers all the features of a particular concept in the study (Yegidis et al., 1999:204). In other words, the instrument should address the fact that all the concepts that are represented are measured. The instrument should be accurate in measuring what it is expected to measure (Uys and Basson, 2000:80). This type of validity is therefore concerned with the adequacy of coverage of the content area that is being measured –

something that is extremely important for testing knowledge (Burns and Grove, 2005:376).

Content validity is relevant in the development of effective measures. Researchers designing a new instrument should begin with a thorough conceptualisation of the construct, so that the instrument can capture the entire content domain.

4.8.3 Construct Validity

This is a test intended to measure the correlation between the basic concept, which formed the theoretical framework of the study, and the measuring instrument (Brink, 2001:170). The main aim is to determine if the instrument does measure what it is supposed to measure. Burns (2000:355) states that there are various methods of ensuring construct validity. One is factor analysis, which was used in this study and can accurately determine whether or not the test was testing the same concept in each and every question. Furthermore, factor analysis can determine if every rating used is feasible and accurate for that particular question. This is done during the data analysis phase.

One of the methods for ensuring construct validity is to test the current tool against another tool which was previously used for the same construct. In this study, no other test was found suitable for this purpose, and as a result, no correlation with another test was validated.

4.9 Reliability

According to Polit and Hungler (2004:205), reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which the research instruments measure a specific attribute. Stommel and Wills (2004:209) define reliability as the relative absence of

unsystematic, random measurement errors. This implies that if the researcher is using the same method of data collection and analysis, and should the test be repeated with the same respondents, the results of the study will be the same.

4.10 Data analysis

The information gathered from the participants was modified to suit the numerical order for analysis.

Uys and Basson (2000:48) state that “numerical values to non-numerical” factual data should be allocated so that the clear meaning of the information obtained from the respondents can be established. Therefore, the tool was pre-coded in preparation for numerical data analysis. The analysed data was then graphically presented in the form of tables and graphs. These graphs and tables were used to present the findings of the research in a visual format.

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research methodology that was used to collect data for the study. It described the research design, population, sampling procedures, data collection instrument and procedures used in this study. The chapter then went on to discuss measures to ensure validity and reliability, as well as ethical issues relating to data collection. The findings that were obtained in this study are presented and discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters in this study dealt with the background, literature review, research design and methodology of this study. This chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of the data collected in this study. The data analysis phase involved data cleaning, organisation of the data for analysis, the data analysis itself, a description of the data, and an interpretation of the findings (Trochim, 2006). Although the results of this study cannot be generalised to the whole of Nigeria, it has identified key features of the role of Christian churches in Ovia South-West. The findings therefore provide powerful benchmarks for exploring the role of Christian churches in community development in countries such as Nigeria.

The overall purpose of this study was therefore to explore the role of Christian churches in Ovia South-West, Nigeria. The focus of this study was on the Ovia South-West community, which is also referred to as the Ovia South-West Local Government Area.

From the introduction and background that were presented in chapter 1, the researcher formulated the following research questions:

1. Do the activities of Christian churches in Ovia South-West lead to the general development of the people in the community?
2. Do Christian churches in this community offer teachings that are capable of transforming the lives of the citizens?

3. Do these teachings bring about gainful employment for citizens in the Ovia South-West community?
4. Do these teaching meet the needs of citizens, as expressed by them?

5.2 DATA COLLECTION

The data for this study was collected by means of a structured questionnaire, consisting of the following sections:

Section 1: Respondents' demographical data

Section 2: Social Development

Section 3: Economic Development

Section 4: Healthcare Development

Section 5: Educational Development.

The population in this study consisted of male and female adults in the Ovia South-West community who were selected to participate in this study. A sample of 100 respondents was taken from various levels or categories of adults. Accordingly, data was collected from these 100 respondents, using a structured questionnaire.

The information collected was kept in a safe place and protected by a secret code which was only known to the researcher for access purposes.

5.3 DATA ANALYSIS

The completed questionnaire was submitted to a statistician at UNISA in order for the data to be processed and analysis using the computer program popularly known as SPSS Version 17.0, and was then converted into percentages and collated in the form of tables, graphs and figures, in order to make the data presentation

meaningful. The data was analysed according to the sections and items of the questionnaire. The questions contained in the questionnaire comprised categorical variables which were analysed in specific ways. As a measure of reliability, the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha was computed at 0.839, indicating a high measure of internal consistency of items in the questionnaire (Polit & Beck, 2006:11).

5.3.1 Section 1: Demographical data

This section covered the respondents' age, gender, highest level of education, marital status, and religion.

5.3.1.1 Age distribution

The respondents were asked to select their age from a list of age groups. Figure 5.1 below depicts the respondents' age distribution.

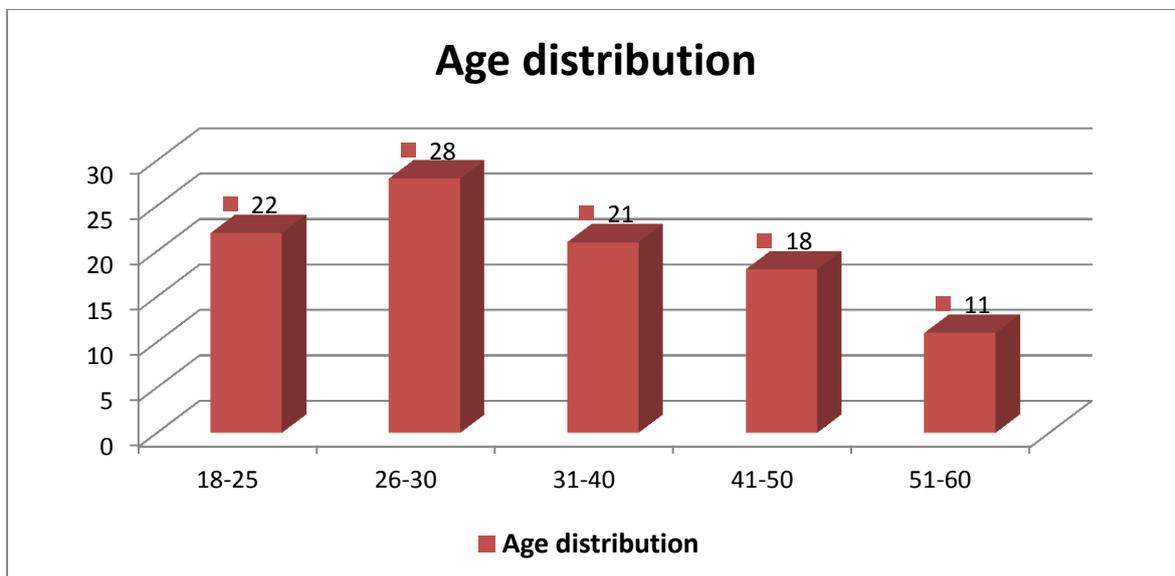


Figure 5.1 Age distribution of the respondents (n=100)

The above graph shows the age distribution across the test and control groups. A significant percentage of the respondents came from the 26-30 age group, as a result of the fact that when this study was conducted, many of the 18-25 year olds

were in school and most of those aged 31 and above were either working on a farm or at the market to enable them to fend for their families. The ages of the respondents were compiled for analysis in this study. In order to guide the analysis, the researcher grouped the ages into the following categories: less than 26, 26-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60 and above. The age and gender status of a participant were important factors in determining the participant's life experience, which in itself is generally considered to be an essential quality for a participant to possess. The great majority of the participants fell in the 26-40 age range, as can be seen in Figure 5.1 above.

5.3.1.2 Gender distribution

The respondents were asked to indicate their gender. Figure 5.2 below depicts the respondents' gender distribution.

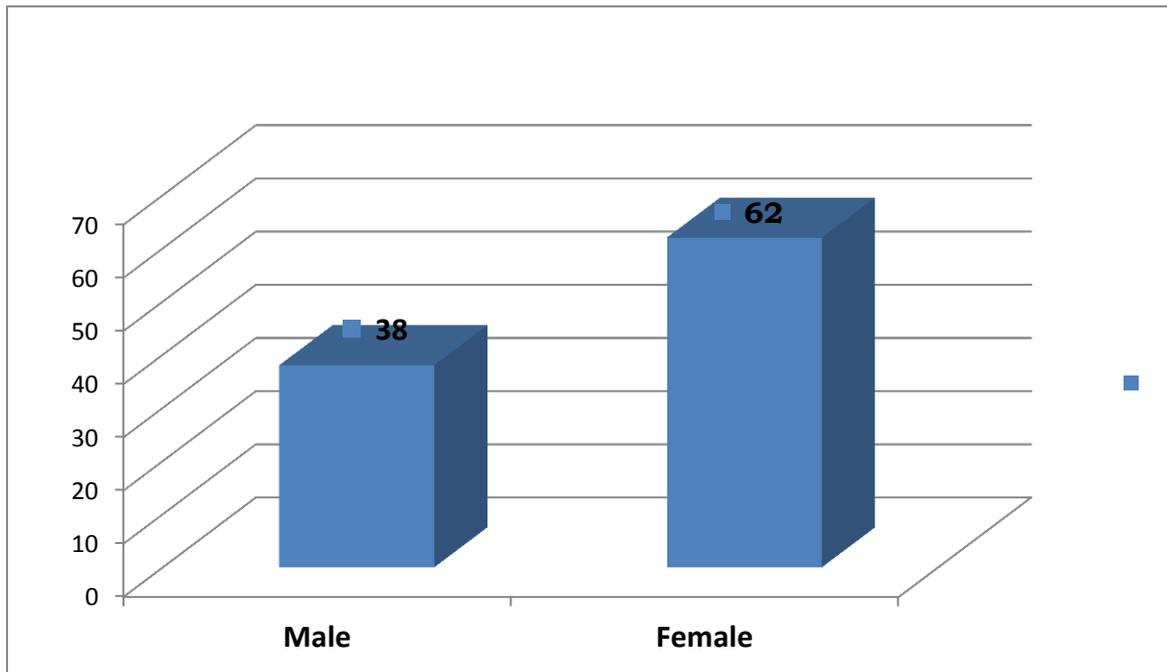


Figure 5.2 Gender distribution of the respondents (n=100)

There were more female participants in this study (62.0%) than male participants (38.0%). This is quite understandable given the fact that at the time of this study, most of the men were working on farms and the majority of the permanent inhabitants were women and children, since most men had migrated to the cities in search of work. Most of the men who migrated to cities established new families there and no longer supported their families who remained in the community (Tegborg, 1996:33).

4.3.1.3 Marital status

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they were living with their family or a partner (see Figure 5.3 below).

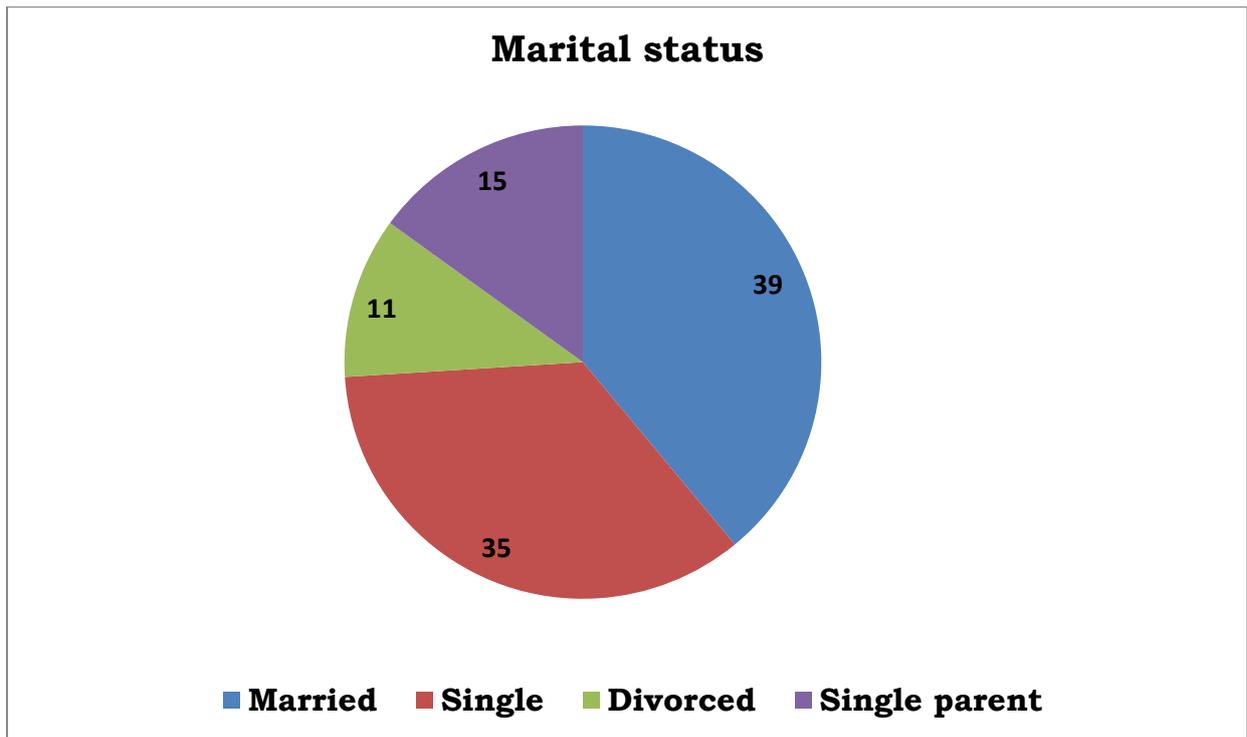


Figure 5.3 Respondents living with partner/family (N=100)

The questionnaire also asked for respondents' current marital status, with the assumption that this would influence their chances of knowing what role Christian churches played in the community. Of the respondents, the majority (39 =39.0%) were married or living with a partner or family, 35 (35.0%) were single, 11 (11.0%) were divorced, and 15 (15.0%) were single parents, which is consistent with the respondents' ages (see Figure 5.3 above).

5.3.1.4 Highest level of education

The respondents were asked to indicate their highest educational level (see Figure 5.4 below).

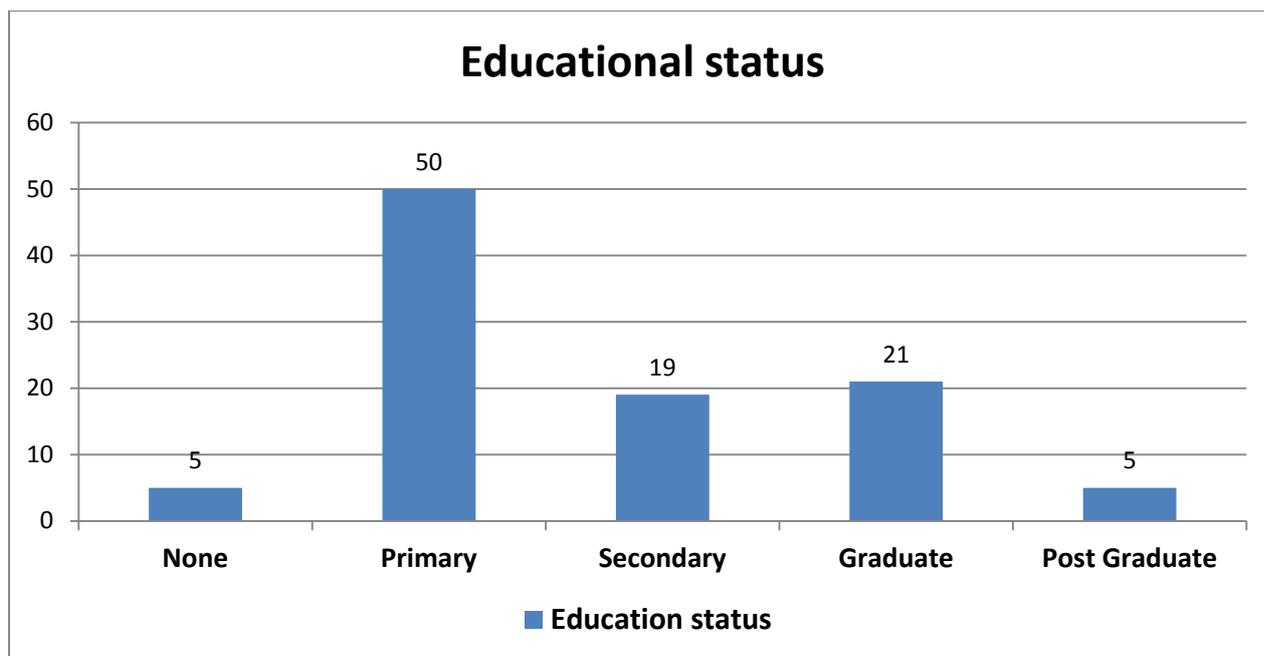


Figure 5.4 Highest educational level of the respondents (n=100)

According to Figure 5.4 above, the respondents varied according to their educational background. Of the 100 participants, 5 (5.0%) indicated that they had done post-graduate studies, 21 (21.0%) indicated that they had post-secondary school education, and 19 (19.0%) indicated that they had completed senior secondary school (SSCE), although some indicated that they did not complete their SSCE. A total of 52 (52.0%) either did not go to school at all or had dropped out of school at primary education level. Of the respondents, 21.0% had attained tertiary education; 35.00% had attained secondary education; and 52.0% had either attained primary education or were without some formal education. More respondents with secondary and tertiary education would indicate better pay and living conditions. In the developing world, those with a low level of education, according to Dennill et al. (1999:30), suffer persistent ill health, which is linked to extreme poverty and illiteracy, since illiterate people cannot depend on the written word to acquire knowledge, thereby influencing their ability to give informed consent.

5.3.1.5 Employment status

The respondents were also asked about their employment status, and Figure 5.5 below illustrates this aspect. This information was necessary because respondents' attitudes could be influenced by indirect factors such as a stable income, poverty, unemployment, and lack of food. More than half (61 =61%) of the respondents were unemployed, while 39 (39.0%) claimed that they were employed in some way or another.

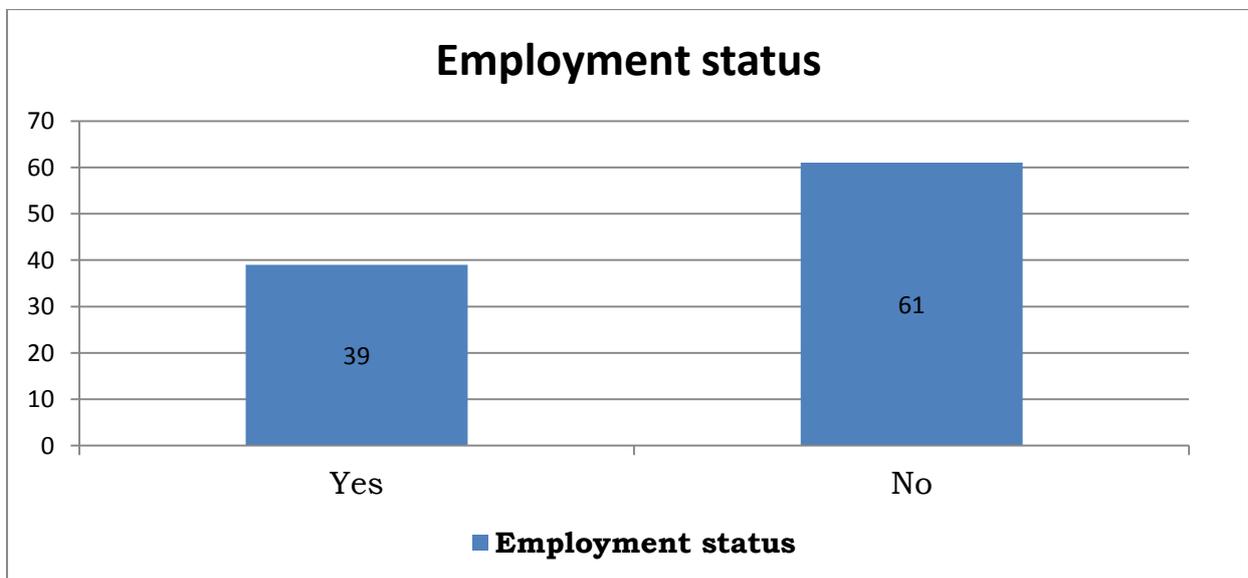


Figure 5.5 Employment status of respondents (n=100)

The unemployment rate was high because there is no factory, industry or any type of company within the community. The few respondents who were working were mainly civil servants.

5.3.1.6 Religious affiliation

Of the 100 respondents, 74 (74.0%) indicated that they were Christians. 20 (20.0%) belonged to traditional religions, while 6 (6.0%) were of the Islamic faith. The religious affiliations of the respondents are indicated in Figure 5.6 below.

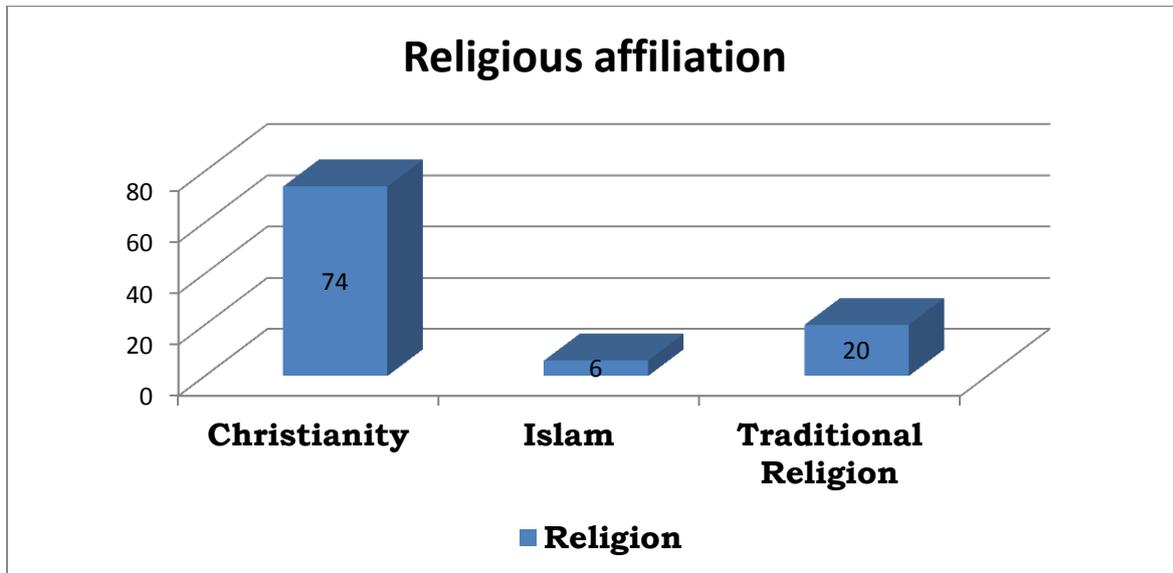


Figure 5.6 Religious affiliation (n=100)

The use of the Likert scale:

The second part of the questionnaire made use of the Likert scale. This was done to provide the respondents with the opportunity to share their opinions in response to a given statement. Polit and Hungler (2002) point out that a Likert scale consists of several declarative statements, which express a viewpoint about a topic. According to these authors, an equal numbers of positively and negatively worded statements should be chosen, in order to avoid bias in the responses. Different statements were presented to the respondents. The Likert scale provides four options, namely: strongly-agree, agree, strongly-disagree, disagree and neutral. An explanation of the acronyms is provided below:

SA – Strongly-Agree

A – Agree

SD – Strongly-Disagree

D - Disagree

N – Neutral

Question 1: *Christian churches have helped youth to become more sociable.*

It was necessary to find out whether or not the church is helping youth to develop good relationships among themselves. The results shown below indicate that of the 100 respondents, 31 (31.0%) strongly agreed, 66 (66.0) agreed with the statement that Christian churches help youth to be more sociable, while none (0%) strongly disagreed, 3 (3.%) disagreed, and none (0%) were neutral (see Figure 5.7).

Question 2: *Christian churches have brought out the talent in most of the youth.*

In response to this statement, 34 of the 100 respondents (34%) strongly agreed, 60 (60%) agreed, while 0 (0%) strongly disagreed, 6 (6%) disagreed, and none (0%) were neutral (see Figure 5.7 below).

Question 3: *Christian churches have contributed to the reduction of violence in the community.*

In response to this statement, 44 (44%) strongly agreed, 37 (37%) agreed, while 5 (5%) strongly disagreed, 14 (14%) disagreed, and none (0%) were neutral (see Figure 5.7 below).

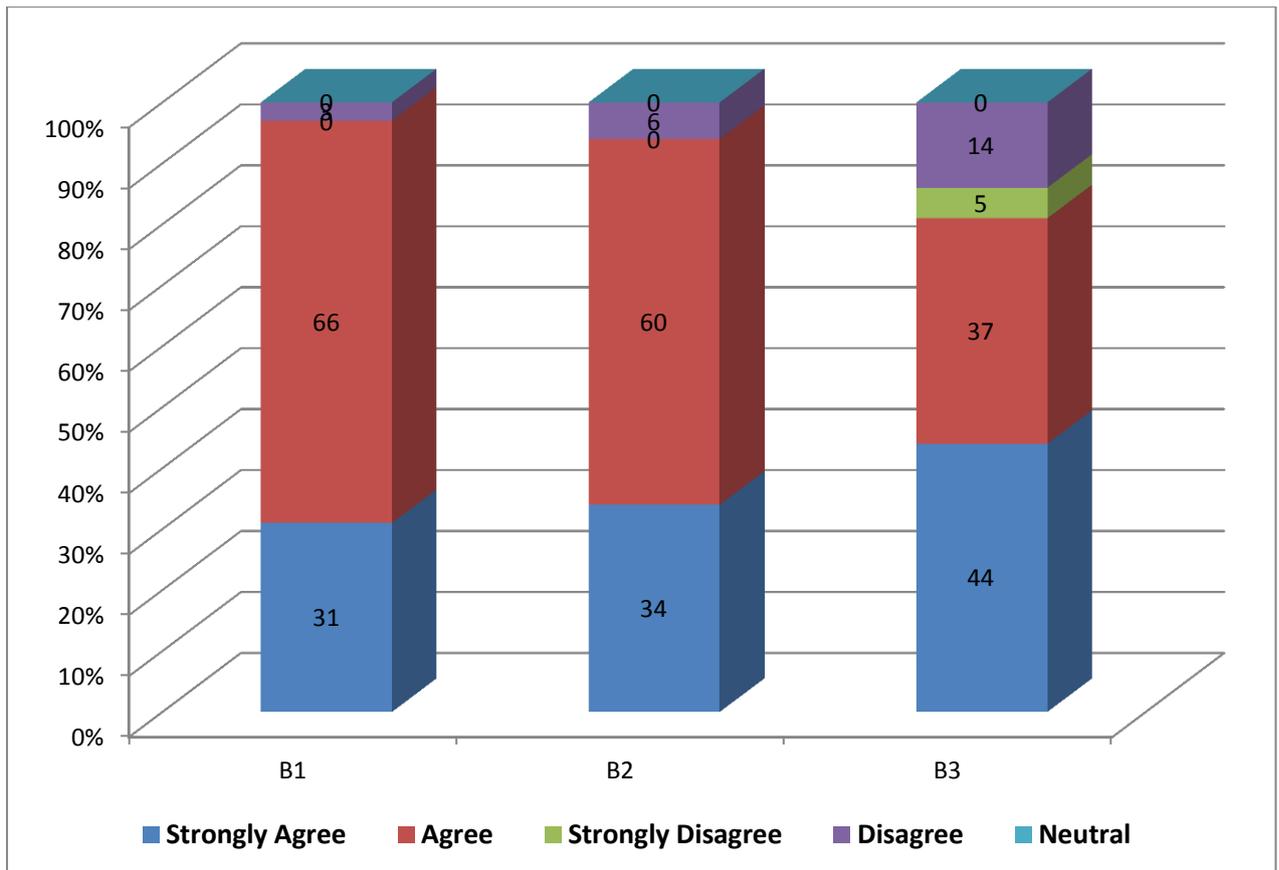


Figure 5.7: Respondents' views on social development

Question 4: *Christian churches have created more jobs.*

In response to this statement, 3 (3%) strongly agreed, 12 (12%) agreed, while 53 (53%) strongly disagreed, 28 (28%) disagreed and 4 (4%) were neutral (see Figure 5.8 below).

Question 5: *Christian churches help the poor by giving them food, clothes and money.*

In response to this statement, 5 (5%) strongly agreed, 24 (24%) agreed, while 21 (21%) strongly disagreed, 49 (49%) disagreed and 1 (1%) was neutral (see Figure 5.8 below).

Question 6: *Christian churches have increased the employment rate in the community.*

In response to this statement, 2 (2%) strongly agreed, 8 (8%) agreed, while 58 (58%) strongly disagreed, 22 (22%) disagreed and 10 (10%) were neutral (see Figure 5.8 below).



Figure 5.8: Respondents' views on economic development

Question 7: *The number of health care centres has increased*

Of the 100 respondents, 2 (2%) strongly agreed, 9 (9%) agreed, while 35 (35%) strongly disagreed, 51 (51%) disagreed and 3 (3%) were neutral (see Figure 5.9 below).

Question 8: *None of the health care centres are functioning.*

In response to this statement, 17 (17%) and 55 (55%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 4 (4%) strongly disagreed, 19 (19%) disagreed and 5 (5%) were neutral (see Figure 5.9 below).

Question 9: *Christian churches have not done anything for health care since they entered the community.*

As illustrated in Figure 5.9 below, the majority of the respondents (52 =52%) strongly agreed, 22 (22%) agreed, while 2 (2%) strongly disagreed, 18 (18%) disagreed and 6 (6%) were neutral.

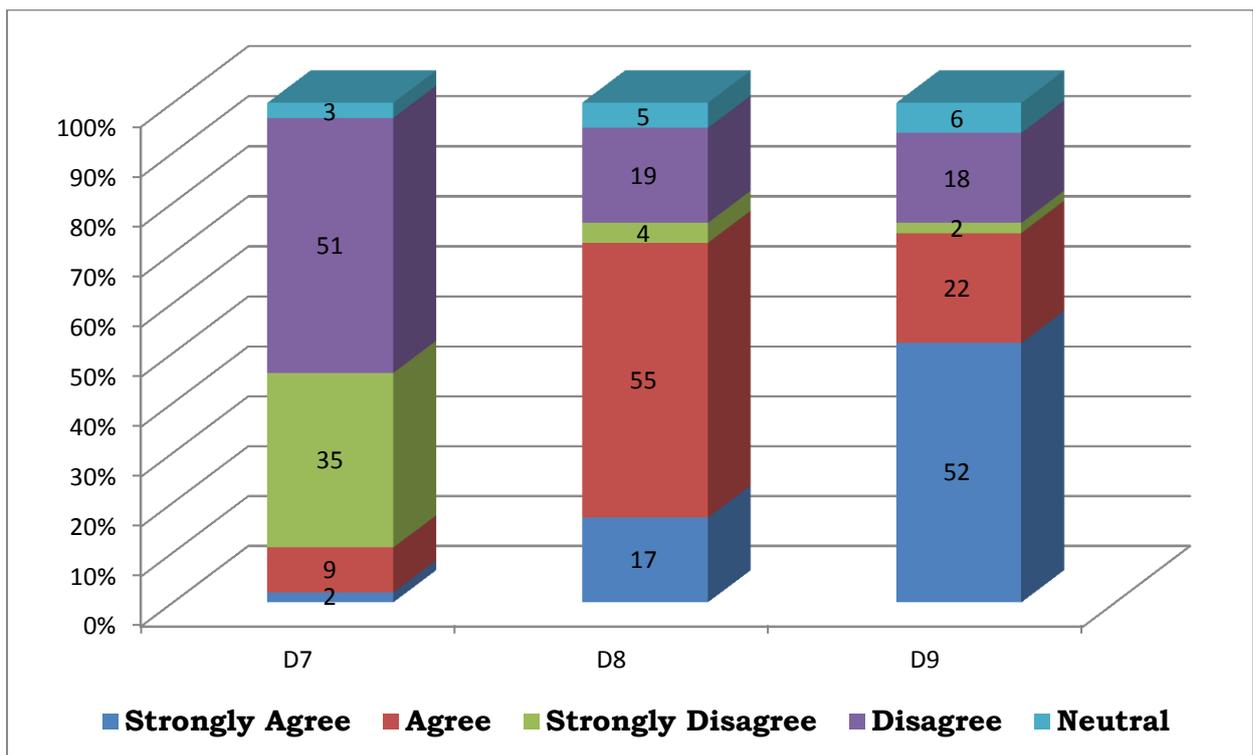


Figure 5.9: Respondents' views on health care development

Question 10: *Christian churches have contributed to the educational growth of the community.*

In response to this statement, 4 (4%) strongly agreed, 14 (14%) agreed, while 55 (55%) strongly disagreed, 19 (19%) disagreed, and 8 (8%) were neutral (see Figure 5.10 below).

Question 11: *Christian churches have built at least one primary school for the community.*

Of the 100 respondents, 1 (1%) and 2 (2%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively, while 66 (66%) and 25 (25%) strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively, and 6 (6%) were neutral (see Figure 5.10 below).

Question 12: *Christian churches fund or assist the community school by giving learning materials to the school and students.*

In response to this statement, 3 (3%) strongly agreed, 10 (10%) agreed, 55 (55%) strongly disagreed, 25 (25%) disagreed, and only 6 (6%) were neutral (see Figure 5.10 below).

Question 13: *Christian churches encourage students by giving them scholarships.*

In response to this statement, 7 (7%) strongly agreed, 12 (12%) agreed, while 26 (26%) strongly disagreed, 48 (48%) disagreed, and 7 (7%) were neutral (see Figure 5.10 below).

Question 14: *Christian churches contribute resources to ensure the eradication of illiteracy.*

Of the 100 respondents, 4 (4%) strongly agreed, 14 (14%) agreed, 14 (14%) strongly disagreed, 58 (58%) disagreed, and 10 (10%) were neutral (see Figure 5.10 below).

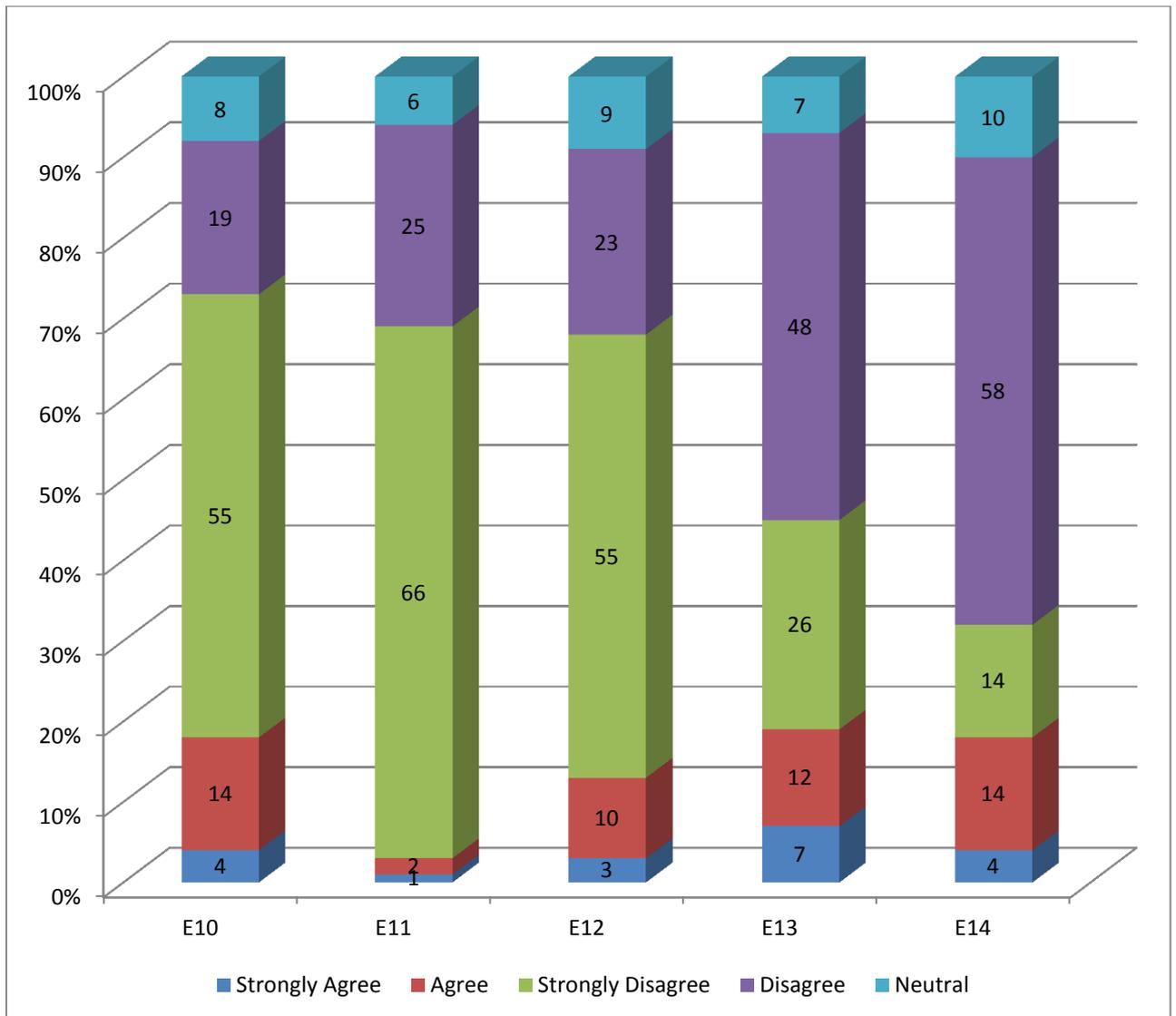


Figure 5.10: Respondents' views on educational development

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the data collected by means of the questionnaire and interviews was graphically presented and analysed. The interpretation and discussion of the findings of this study are focused on in the next and final chapter.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the findings of this study and looks specifically at the current and future role of Christian churches in community development. It also briefly describes the limitations of the study and makes recommendation for practice and future research.

6.2 THE RESPONDENTS

The respondents were described in terms of their demographic characteristics (age, gender, marital status, educational level, employment status and religious affiliation). This study found that of the respondents, 71% (n=71) were between the ages of 18-40 years old; 62% (n=62) were female; 35% (n=35) were single; 39% (n=39) were married and 26% (n=26) were either single parents or divorced; 50% (n=50) had at least primary education; 19% (n=19) had secondary education; 26% (n=26) had tertiary educational qualifications; 5% (n=5) did not have any formal education; 39% (n=39) were formally employed and 61% (n=61) were unemployed.

These findings suggest that the members of the Ovia South-West community are mostly of a young and productive age (18-40), have at least a primary education, are mostly females, and less than 40% have secure sources of income. However, the level of unemployment (61%) amongst the members of the community is a matter of concern. Unemployment translates into a lack of income and poverty. Zawaira (1999:26) found a high correlation between diseases and poverty, and maintains that the spread of diseases is strongly associated with poverty and unemployment. The Christian churches could use this as an opportunity to create gainful employment in

order to remunerate the members of the community in the form of monetary tokens, which would alleviate their penury.

This study also found that of the respondents, 74% (74) were members of one of the Christian churches in the community and the majority of them were very active and committed in the church to which they belonged, although they were still unemployed. All references to the statistics and figures in this chapter are based on those presented in chapter 4.

6.3 DO THE ACTIVITIES OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN OVIA SOUTH-WEST LEAD TO THE GENERAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY?

With regard to the respondents' perceptions of the activities of Christian churches and whether or not these lead to the general development of the people in the community, it was found that these activities only lead to the social development, and not the general development, of the people in the community, as seen in Figure 4.7. 97% of the respondents indicated that Christian churches have helped youth to become more sociable, 94% indicated that Christian churches have brought out the talent in most of the youth, while 81% indicated that Christian churches have contributed to the reduction of violence in the community. From this, it is evident that Christian churches have played a vital role in the social development of the community. The activities of the Christian churches do not lead to the development of other areas such as economic development (as seen in Figure 4.8), educational development (as seen in Figure 4.9) and health care (as seen in Figure 4.10). This shows that the activities of Christian churches in the Ovia South-West community do not lead to the general development of the community.

6.4 DO CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN THIS AREA OFFER TEACHINGS THAT ARE CAPABLE OF TRANSFORMING THE LIVES OF THE CITIZENS IN THE COMMUNITY?

This study supports Snidle and Yeoman's (1997:7) finding that the teachings and activities of Christian churches is vital to the equipping of members of the community with the basic knowledge and skills that will assist in reducing illiteracy in the community.

From Figure 4.10, it is clear that the majority of the respondents had at least completed primary education (grade 6), mainly because the government provided this at no cost. But what are the Christian churches doing from their side to help the members of the community to obtain a better education and to ensure that they do not just stop at primary level (grade 6) but go further? In terms of whether or not Christian churches have contributed to ensuring the educational growth of the community, 74% disagreed, while 91% disagreed that they had built at least one primary school for the community. 80% of the respondents disagreed that the Christian churches had funded or assisted the community by giving learning material to schools and students, while 74% disagreed that they encouraged students by giving them scholarships, and 72% disagreed that they contributed resources in order to help eradicate illiteracy.

From the answers provided by the respondents, it is clear that the teachings of the Christian churches are not transforming the lives of the citizens of the community.

The churches should therefore encourage students by giving them learning materials and scholarships, in order to ensure that the rate of literacy in the community increases, thereby not only caring for their spiritual lives, but also for their educational lives.

6.5 DO THESE TEACHINGS BRING ABOUT GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT FOR CITIZENS IN THE OVIA SOUTH-WEST COMMUNITY?

Of the respondents, 81% disagreed that Christian churches have created more jobs, 70% disagreed that they helped the poor by giving them food, clothes and money, and 80% disagreed that Christian churches have increased the employment rate in the community. These respondents' answers show that the teachings of the Christian churches are not helping to alleviate the problem of unemployment in the community, as it seems that unemployment is still one of the biggest problems that the community has faced and continues to face. It also shows that the Christian churches are only interested in enriching themselves, because they collect offerings and tithes every Sunday, and yet there is still no improvement in the economic life of the citizens in the community. Therefore, this study has found that Christian churches have not created jobs or helped the poor through their activities.

6.6 DO THESE TEACHINGS MEET THE NEEDS OF CITIZENS, AS EXPRESSED BY THEM?

From the previous paragraph, it is clear that the community has a lot of needs, since they do not have any source of income or sufficient food, and it is evident that illnesses and diseases are prevalent. If Christian churches cannot provide or create employment, they should at least be able to help the community in terms of healthcare issues, since the citizens do not really have the money to pay their medical bills. With regard to the perceptions of the respondents, this study found out that 86% disagreed that the number of healthcare centres has increased, 72% agreed that none of the health care centres are functioning, while 74% agreed that they have not done anything for health care since they entered the community.

Based on these findings, it is evident that the needs expressed by the citizens of the community are not being met by the teachings of the Christian churches in the community. It also shows that Christian churches are not doing anything to better the lives of the citizens in the community. Furthermore, over time, if nothing is done, people will die as a result of the lack of proper health care and disease will become even more prevalent, since most of the people will turn to prostitution just to survive.

6.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was restricted to one of the eighteen local government areas and 591 communities in Edo State, Nigeria. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to all the other communities in the state and country. The role of Christian churches in community development in the Ovia South-West community might have been influenced by the members' perceived needs in relation to Christian churches, hence their responses might differ from those of other communities.

6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of the study, the researcher can make the following recommendations:

1. Christian churches must play a holistic role that goes beyond holding church services, giving offerings, paying tithes, praying for the members and their families, and they should also offer the following teachings:

- Income generation: by acquiring these skills, members will be able to start their own businesses. In a community such as this, where unemployment is rife, this might present a solution for some people.
 - Business Skills: citizens need to know how to start and manage their own business. Those who need to start selling will then be able to expand their business.
 - Health Education: teaching people about health issues will allow members of the community to prevent illness, since they do not have the financial resources to pay for treatment in a suitable hospital.
2. The churches should be more active in the development of the community, rather than being passive, as if it is the role of the government to develop the community.
 3. Christian churches should focus on economic development in terms of creating jobs for people, rather than always asking them to 'give' whenever they attend church services.
 4. Christian churches should offer teachings that are capable of transforming the lives of the citizens in the community, so that they can be gainfully employed and take care of their families.
 5. Christian churches should not just base their development on social aspects, but try to balance this with other important areas, such as education and health.

6. Members of these churches are still remaining in these churches because of the spiritual hold that the church has over them. They believe that the prayers they say every time they go to church are what is still keeping them alive. Most of them believe that it is the responsibility of the state and federal government to assist them with the development of the community, not the responsibility of the churches. Until members of the community start believing that the churches have a role to play in the development of the community, these churches will not do anything about it. From the findings of this study, it is obvious that it is only the social development of the youth that concerns the churches. Churches should therefore form partnerships with the community, other churches and other role-players, in order to collectively and effectively address the problems faced by members of the community, with special reference to the findings of this study.

6.9 CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of the Christian churches in the development of the Ovia South-West community. It was conducted among the members of this community, and quantitative research methodology was used for data collection. The findings indicated that Christian churches in the community are not improving the quality of lives of its citizens. The Christian churches are not developing them economically, educationally and in terms of healthcare, which results in a high rate of unemployment and poverty. This study revealed the lack of support from Christian churches with regard to the development of the community, and showed that there is a need for Christian churches to contribute to the development of the community, not

only socially, but in other ways as well. The results of this study indicate that the Christian churches in this community are not living up to their calling as members of the body of Christ. There is a very clear need for further and more intensive research to be conducted on what can be done to empower churches to more fully meet the needs of the community.

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Appendix A

Letter of information for participants

Consent to be a research participant

Dear Participant,

My name is Ovbiebo David. I am a student of the University of South Africa, Department of Missiology pursuing my Master degree in Theology. I am carrying out a study on The Role of Christian Churches on Community Development.

I am requesting you to answer the following questions as honestly as possible. I assure you that the information given will be treated with confidentiality and your details will not be revealed. Your cooperation in this regard is most appreciated. Participation in this project is voluntary. You can stop any time you choose to leave. You do not have to answer questions you do not feel comfortable with.

Appendix B

QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: Personal Data

1. Age categories: 18-25[] 26-30[] 31-40[] 41-50[] 51-60[] (Please tick)
2. Sex:
3. Current marital status: Married [], Single [] Divorced [] Single Parent [] (Please tick)
4. Highest level of education attained:
5. Are you currently employed: Circle Y for Yes or N for No
6. Do you belong to a religion? Circle (Y) for Yes or (N) for No.
If yes, state religion:

Section B:

In this section I would like your comments on the level of awareness and understanding (√) the relevant box that mostly captures your views, based on the scale: SA for strongly agree, A for agree, D for disagree SD for strongly disagree and N for neutral:

Social development

| S/N | | SA | A | SD | D | N |
|-----|---|----|---|----|---|---|
| 1 | Christian churches have helped youth to be more friendly. | | | | | |
| 2 | Christian churches have brought out the talents in most of the youth. | | | | | |
| 3 | Christian churches have contributed to the reduction of violence in the community | | | | | |

Section C: Economic development

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 4 | They have created more jobs | | | | | |
| 5 | They help the poor by giving them food, clothes and money | | | | | |
| 6 | They have increased the employment rate in the community | | | | | |

Section D: Health care development

| | | | | | | |
|-----|--|----|---|----|---|---|
| 7 | The number of health care centres has increased | | | | | |
| S/N | | SA | A | SD | D | N |
| 8 | None of the health care centres are functioning | | | | | |
| 9 | They have not done anything for health care since they entered the community | | | | | |

Section E: To what extent are Christian churches helping to provide educational development to the community

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 10 | They have contributed to ensuring the educational growth of the community | | | | | |
| 11 | They have at least built one primary school in the community | | | | | |
| 12 | They fund or assist the community school by giving learning materials to the school and the student | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 13 | They encourage students by giving them scholarships | | | | | |
| 14 | They contribute resources to ensure the eradication of illiteracy | | | | | |

Appendix C

Statement of consent

I have read the information provided above. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and they have been answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study

Signature of participants

Date.....

Signature of interviewer

Date.....

THANK YOU FOR ACCEPTING TO PARTICIPATE

Appendix D

603 Capoleto Building
220 Mears Street Cnr.
Walker Pretoria
South Africa
9th July 2012

The Chairman,
Ovia South-West Local Government Area
P.M.B.1211
Iguobazuwa

Dear Sir,

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY

This letter serves to request permission to conduct a study entitled: THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT A CASE STUDY OVIA SOUTH-WEST; (NIGERIA).

I hereby formally request permission to carry out the above study in the Ovia south-west area for the master degree in Theology in the subject of Missiology at the University of South Africa.

The purpose of this study is to find out the role Christian churches play in developing Ovia South-West community area. This will involve the use of questionnaire.

This study is quite significant because the findings will not only be used for academic qualification but can also be used to develop interventions to improve or strengthen the the role Christian churches play not only in Ovia South-West but also in the entire country (Nigeria).

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Ovbiebo David.

Appendix E

Telegrams

Telephone



EDO STATE

OVIA SOUTH-WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT
P. M. B. 1211
IGUOBASUWA
EDO STATE OF NIGERIA



14th August, 20 12

Your Ref:

Our Ref: OSWLG/1680/13

Mr. Ovbiebo David
603 Capelet Building
220 Mears Street Cnr.
Walker Pretoria
South Africa.

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A
RESEARCH STUDY.

I am directed to refer to the above subject and to inform you that approval has been granted for you to conduct the Research study on the Role of christian churches in Community Development a Case study Ovia South West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria by MR. OVBIEBO DAVID, of Missiology Department at the University of South Africa, please.


(Kingsley Oronsaye)
for: Chairman
Transition Committee
Ovia South West Local Govt.,
Iguobazuwa.