

The Major Challenges Confronting Contemporary Nigerian Christian Ministers in Nation-Building

Apewen, Ande Utensati, Ph.D., Nuhu, Dantani., Ejue, Eneh Theresa

Department of Religious Studies, Federal University Wukari, P.M.B.1020Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The role of Christian ministers in building Nigeria's nation is very significant for moral foundation and development. In the bible Prophets and other ministers served as divine instruments, advocating for justice, confronting corruption, and guiding rulers and the people toward righteousness. This study examines the challenges confronting Christian ministers in nation-building and explores their relevance in Nigerian society. Using a qualitative research approach, the finding identifies financial constraints, political interference fear of persecution and Misinterpretation of biblical doctrines as some of the major challenges that hindered contemporary Christian ministers in addressing societal challenges. The study emphasize the need for contemporary ministers to adopt biblical leadership models that integrate moral teachings, social advocacy, and community engagement. By drawing insights from Old and New Testament ministers, contemporary ministers can strengthen their roles in fostering good governance, social cohesion, and nation building. The study concludes by proposing a framework for enhancing the effectiveness of contemporary ministers in nation-building.

Keywords: challenges, contemporary Christian ministers, nation building

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Contemporary Christian Ministers often refers to modern-day religious leaders and clergy, primarily within Christian contexts, who fulfill a variety of roles that extend beyond traditional pastoral duties. Nigerian society today is faced with a myriad of complex and interconnected social, political, and economic challenges. These challenges continue to hinder the nation's development and progress towards a more vibrant and prosperous future. One of the key issues plaguing the Nigerian society is corruption, which has permeated various sectors of the government and private institutions (Ilo 2020). Corruption has led to the mismanagement of public resources, the erosion of public trust, and the perpetuation of social and economic inequalities (Omotoso 2017).

In addition, the country has faced persistent ethnic and religious conflicts, which have contributed to instability, violence, and the displacement of populations (Ojo 2018). These conflicts are often rooted in historical grievances, competition for scarce resources, and the manipulation of identity politics by political and religious elites (Caleb and Danjuma 2018). Poverty is another significant challenge facing the Nigerian society, with a large portion of the population living below the poverty line and lacking access to basic social services (World Bank 2022 & Ojo 2018). This poverty is exacerbated by high levels of unemployment, underemployment, and a lack of economic opportunities, particularly in rural and marginalized communities.

Furthermore, Adedeji (2022) maintains that the issue of poor governance has been a persistent problem in Nigeria, with weak institutions, a lack of accountability, and the concentration of power in the hands of a few. This has led to the ineffective implementation of policies and the failure to address the pressing needs of the Nigerian people (Ojo 2019). In this context, the question arises: What are the challenges that prophets or contemporary Christian ministers face in addressing these challenges and contributing to the building of a vibrant

and prosperous nation? Religious leaders and institutions can potentially play a significant role in shaping social, political, and economic discourse, and in mobilizing communities to work towards positive change.

This study aims to examine the contribution and initiatives of contemporary Christian ministers to nation building, identify the major challenges that hinder contemporary ministers from fulfilling their roles in nation building and to suggest other ways contemporary Christian ministers can contribute effectively in nation building. Given the unique challenges facing Nigerian Christian ministers such as political interference, financial constraints, fear of persecution and Misinterpretation of biblical doctrines. Therefore, there is a need to explore ways in which contemporary ministers can effectively engage in the nation-building process, drawing inspiration from the Old and New Testament (Holy Scripture).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Nation Building

A nation may refer to a large group of people who share common language, culture, ethnicity, descent, or history. Moreno-Almendral (2021) noted that the word nation came to English from the Old French word *nacion*, which in turn originates from the Latin word *natio*, which literally means “that which has been born”. According to Wimmer (2023), a nation can refer to a set or group of people, race, or tribe; those having the same descent, language and history. A nation is much more impersonal, abstract and explicitly political than an ethnic group. It is a community that can be described as cultural-political which has grown conscious of its unity, coherence, and specific interests.

From the above, nation building can be defined as the development of behaviours, values, language, institutions and physical structures that elucidate history and culture concretize and protect the present and ensure the future identity and independence of the nation (Okeke et al., 2022). McCandless (2020) in an analogy understand nation building as: “dealing with the societal and political aftermath of conflicts and establishment of a new government and social compacts”. It has to do with the production of basic needs of the people, feeding, clothing, housing, and happy life.

According to Babalola and Okafor (2024) proposed that nation building should be viewed as a deliberate effort by people living in a geographical area like Nigeria, to identify values that promote commonness and unity. Such values could be normative principles or cross-cultural and religious matters that support and enhance an ordered or organized society where a good life is the objective for the members concerned. In this way, nation-building can be compared with issues of development towards the enhancement of better living condition for the citizenry (Penmetsa and Bruque-Camara, 2023).

A nation, could be made up of people of diverse backgrounds resulting from language, cultural practices but above all in this sense, religions. Thus, the potentiality of such diverse interests being harnessed in Christianity towards purposeful existence of Nigeria as a state or a geographical expression of common cultural, religious or political history is the understanding of nation-building in this paper.

RESEARCH METHODS

Study Design: This study adopt cross-sectional survey design, and employed a qualitative research approach, utilizing both primary and secondary sources.

- ii. **Population of the Study:** The population of this study consists 120 person selected from the three denominations in the six geo political zones in Nigeria; the Catholics, Protestants and Pentecostals church.
- iii. **Sources of Data:** Primary data were collected through structure questionnaire distributed to some Christian religious leaders, community members, and other relevant stakeholders of the three Christian

denominations in Nigeria. Secondary data were obtained from scholarly publications, biblical texts, and other relevant sources.

- iv. **Instrument for Data Collection:** The study make use of a structured research questionnaire “Questionnaire for the challenges that hinder contemporary Christian ministers to effectively participate in nation building in Nigeria”, to obtain the relevant information in answering the research questions. The work involve a set of questions which reflect the objectives of the study.
- v. **Sampling Strategy:** A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants with deep knowledge of the ministerial landscape of the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. Specifically, the study targeted clergy, church elders, and women leaders to ensure a diverse representation of voices within the Christian community.
- vi. **Demographic Breakdown:** The respondent pool included a cross-section of the Christian religious denominations, consisting of Clergy, Leaders, and lay members of different occupations. This breakdown allows for a nuanced understanding of how nation-building is perceived across different Christian denominations in Nigeria.
- vii. **Reliability Testing:** While the study is primarily qualitative, the content validity of the research instrument, titled “Questionnaire for the challenges confronting contemporary Nigerian Christian Ministers in Nation-Building”, was established through expert review to ensure the items accurately measured the intended constructs.
- viii. **Method of Data Analysis:** Primary data from the questionnaires were analyzed using content analysis, while responses from the semi-structured interviews underwent thematic analysis. This dual approach allowed for the triangulation of data, where interview insights enriched the quantitative frequencies derived from the surveys.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Contribution of Christian Ministers to Contemporary Challenges in Nigeria

The twenty-first century has ushered in a time of unprecedented changes in the world and in the Church. There is no doubt that enormous geopolitical reshaping of things is being witnessed all around us in the world today. Para-Malam posits that the world is witnessing interesting and quite shocking changes in the global economic order. According to the author, the questions that naturally arises are: where is the Church, especially in the Global South when it comes to its role in the area of nation-building today? Does the Church have a role to play or is theological ignorance allied with lack of understanding power dynamics in society blinding the Church? In what practical ways should the church contribute in the building of stable, peaceful, just and economically strong societies as part of her call to discipline nations? Unless the Church responds to these challenges creatively and effectively, the danger is real, that one day, the majority Church in the majority world of the global South could reject the gospel as being irrelevant to her contextual reality (Para-Mallam 2022).

Historically, missions have mostly been the foundation for the Church’s involvement in nation-building. The history of nations whether in Europe, Asia, Latin America and specially Africa will give credence to this fact. Integral missions has been a driving force in social involvement and activism on the part of the Church. The responsibility of the Church towards nation-building does not end with conversion of people to faith in Jesus Christ. If there is any time the Church needs to understand and grapple with issues of nation-building, that time is now. And for nations in Africa, the imperative of nation-building is even more urgent and compelling in view of the many challenges of the continent. Yes, indeed we live in a globalized and inter-connected world today. No nation or society can afford to advocate or practice an isolationist domestic or foreign policy approach from the rest of the world.

Christian ministers in Nigeria today play multifaceted roles in addressing the country’s diverse and complex challenges, which include poverty, insecurity, political corruption, and social inequality. These leaders within

faith communities have evolved to fulfill a variety of functions that go beyond traditional spiritual guidance. They serve as influential voices in the social, political, and economic spheres, actively engaging with critical national issues that affect the lives of their congregations and the broader society. As spiritual guides, contemporary ministers provide moral direction and inspiration, helping individuals navigate the complexities of life in a rapidly changing environment. Their sermons and teachings often emphasize values such as compassion, integrity, and community solidarity, which are essential in fostering a sense of collective responsibility among their followers. By instilling these values, they aim to build resilient communities capable of confronting the socio-economic challenges that Nigeria faces (Adeboye 2023).

In addition to their spiritual responsibilities, many ministers engage in advocacy efforts aimed at promoting social justice and accountability. They often speak out against political corruption, using their platforms to raise awareness about the detrimental effects of graft and mismanagement on the nation's development. By critiquing unethical practices and calling for transparency, ministers play a vital role in encouraging civic engagement and holding leaders accountable to the people they serve. Furthermore, Christian ministers are deeply involved in community service initiatives that address immediate needs within their localities. This may include organizing food drives, providing educational resources, or facilitating health care services for marginalized groups. Through these actions, they not only alleviate suffering but also demonstrate the church's commitment to social welfare, reinforcing the idea that faith must be accompanied by action (Okeke 2022).

Moreover, the role of contemporary ministers extends to fostering dialogue and reconciliation in a country often divided by ethnic and religious tensions. By promoting understanding and cooperation among different groups, they contribute to peacebuilding efforts and the creation of a more harmonious society. Their ability to mobilize communities for collective action can lead to significant change, encouraging individuals to work together for the common good. In this context, the influence of Christian ministers in Nigeria is profound. They endeavor to shape societal values, foster resilience, and advocate for justice, using their unique position to address the pressing issues of the day (Adeboye 2023 & Okeke 2022). As they navigate the complex landscape of contemporary Nigeria, these ministers exemplify the potential of faith-based leadership to effect positive change, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and just society for all.

A significant area where ministers contribute is in promoting social welfare and economic empowerment. Given Nigeria's high rates of unemployment and poverty, many churches and religious organizations have established programs aimed at skill acquisition, entrepreneurship training, and financial assistance for vulnerable populations. These initiatives are intended to help individuals achieve economic independence, thereby reducing poverty rates in communities (Emeka 2022). Some ministers have also taken the lead in creating microfinance programs, which assist individuals, particularly women and youth, to start small businesses and generate sustainable income (Ifeanyi 2021).

Ministers also play a crucial role in fostering peace and unity amidst Nigeria's ethnic and religious tensions. Nigeria's diversity, though a source of cultural richness, has also been a factor in communal conflicts and religious violence. Many ministers actively promote interfaith dialogue and emphasize the principles of love, tolerance, and forgiveness to mitigate these conflicts. For instance, Christian ministers collaborate with leaders of other faiths to facilitate dialogue aimed at reducing violence and fostering peaceful coexistence (Akande 2021 & Musa 2023). This role is essential in building a unified society, where religious diversity is respected, and differences are reconciled through constructive dialogue. In addition to their social and economic contributions, ministers have become key advocates for political accountability and anti-corruption. Given the extent of political corruption in Nigeria, many ministers have taken a prophetic stance, calling for integrity and accountability from political leaders. By using their platforms to highlight the ethical responsibilities of public office and denouncing corrupt practices, these ministers seek to inspire a governance ethos rooted in honesty and public service (Adesina 2022). This advocacy has created a sense of moral duty among followers, encouraging them to demand transparency and accountability from their leaders.

Moreover, ministers address Nigeria's contemporary challenges by emphasizing moral and spiritual renewal. Many believe that the underlying causes of social issues are moral in nature, and thus advocate for a return to values such as honesty, diligence, and compassion. By instilling these principles, ministers hope to foster a

society oriented toward collective well-being and ethical integrity, addressing challenges at their root level (Eze 2023). In so doing, they contribute not only to spiritual growth but to the broader moral transformation of Nigerian society.

The Effective Engagement of Contemporary Ministers in Nation-Building Process

It is gratifying to note that in the last two decades, the church has sought to engage the worldview and culture of the people and confront the ills of society while addressing the spiritual needs of its members. As Pentecostals debate globally whether social ministry may complement evangelism or undermine it, the church must wholeheartedly embrace an understanding of holistic ministry that combines evangelism and social action or intervention without apology (Preece 2024).

It has been observed that the church and the government can collaborate with the aim of promoting national unity, peace, security and social stability in Nigeria (Eze 2023). The church is reputed to have the capacity of educating the conscience of Christians, non-Christians and people of good will in our society. The nation will no doubt reap the dividend of a good synergy between the government and the church in tackling myriad social economic and political problems hampering general wellbeing of the citizens and national development efforts in Nigeria.

One of the major aspects of Jesus ministry was Humanitarian service (Cox 2019 and Afulike 2018). In fact, in Isaiah 61:1 the bible says through prophet Isaiah ...“to bring good tidings to the afflicted, he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives.” This was clearly demonstrated in the numerous miracles of healing, feeding of four and five thousand people who were hungry. The Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria has not failed the nation in this regard. At the annual Easter and December retreats of the Deeper Life Bible Church, the participants are given “free food and lodging (Okoroafor and Okereke 2019). Some years later, “free transport was also added”. As part of humanitarian services, many of the leaders of the Pentecostal Churches are involved in the campaign against HIV/AIDS. For instance, the Redeemed Christian Church of God is in partnership with the National Agency for the control of AIDS, NACA. Some of the churches also have scholarship programmers for indigent students. Oyedepo once said “All school age children not in school, due to the inability of parents, will be fully taken care of by the church” (Akpanika 2020).

Also, T.B Joshua of Synagogue Church of All Nations based in Lagos is known for his care of the poor and destitute (Ottuh & Idjesa 2021, Ukpe & Gbinde 2020). Several bags of rice and money are regularly provided for the poor in the society. in 1997, the Living Faith World Outreach provided food, clothing and other relief materials to indigenes of Koma Hills in Adamawa State, where natives had long been disconnected from civilization (Okoroafor & Okereke 2019). year before then, the church gave relief materials to victims of the Liberian Civil war. It has been argued elsewhere, that providing such palliatives may not solve the poverty being experienced in the Nigerian society and elsewhere. However, we believe that it is a way of alleviating the sufferings of the common man.

One of the banes of the nation is lack of political education among the leaders shown by rabid display of power. As Achebe rightly observed in his work *The trouble with Nigeria*, is simply and squarely a failure of leadership (Akpan & Udoette, 2023). There is nothing basically wrong with Nigerian climate or water, air or any other thing else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example, which is the hallmark of the true leadership. Before 2003 general elections, the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria encouraged all Nigerians especially Christians to vote, and its then national president, Mike Okonkwo, supported Obasanjo, as did the Christian Association of Nigeria’s president and primate of the Methodist Church of God, Sunday Mbang (Okoroafor & Okereke 2019). In another case, Pentecostal evangelist Uma Ukpai expressed dismay and disappointment over the absence of credible opposition to Obasanjo’s bid for a third term. However, Fellowship president Ayo Oritsejafor argued in May 2006 that a third term in office is not a crime and is a matter for all Nigerians to decide (Oluwanifise 2023).

Furthermore, in the political development of the country, some Pentecostal pastors are known to be active participants. Rev. Chris Okotie was a presidential candidate of the Fresh party in the 2007 general election. Even though, he lost the election, at least it is an indication that, he felt, that he was capable of providing good leadership in a sustainable democracy (Okoroafor & Okereke 2019). Similarly, in 2010, Pastor Bakare of Latter Rain Assembly, Lagos took part in “Save Nigeria Group” led by Nobel Laurel, Wole Soyinka to protest the absence of President Yar’Adua in Nigeria for over fifty days without allowing the Vice President, Good-luck Jonathan to act as the President and Commander in Chief of Armed Forces (Alabi, & Ajibola 2020).

In justifying his participation in the rally, Bakare said “We need to spearhead effective social mobilization, rebuild the spiritual streets and the walls of our nation and influence what is happening there. It is time for the true church to come out of the closet and rebuild ancient ruin” (Okoroafor & Okereke 2019). In the immediate past administration, the vice president of Nigeria professor Yemi Osinbajo is a known pastor with the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG). One of the factors that contributed to the victory of his political party All Progress Congress (APC) in the 2015 and 2019 elections in the Southern part of Nigeria is the personality of Osinbajo as a Christian and a member of RCCG (Afolabi, & Oderinde, 2024).

CURRENT REVIEW

Christian ministers play vital role in the development of nation. They are involves in moral and ethical teachings. Christian’s ministers engage in pastoral, prophetic, and community leadership roles, shaping the spiritual lives of their congregations while also addressing pressing social issues in the society (Maynard 2024).

Lloyd & Hutchinson examine the role of Contemporary ministers and maintains that they are recognized not only for their spiritual guidance but also for their active involvement in the community. They strive to adapt and transform traditional religious practices to meet the evolving needs and challenges of modern society. This includes addressing contemporary societal issues such as poverty, inequality, mental health, and the moral complexities of modern life (Lloyd 2022). As they navigate these challenges, contemporary ministers often find themselves at the intersection of faith and social justice, emphasizing the importance of moral leadership in a rapidly changing world (Brown 2019 & Johnson 2021).

Recent literature review delve into the dynamic and evolving role of contemporary ministers, highlighting how their responsibilities have expanded to include a strong focus on community service. This aspect of their work involves organizing outreach programs, advocating for marginalized groups, and fostering connections between the church and the broader community. Additionally, contemporary ministers often provide moral guidance, helping congregants navigate ethical dilemmas in a society marked by diverse values and beliefs (Herzog, et al 2020).

Moreover, the role of contemporary ministry encompasses socio-political engagement, where ministers actively participate in discussions and actions related to justice, equality, and human rights (Lon 2023). They often speak out on issues that affect their communities, working to influence public policy and encourage their congregations to take an active role in societal change. This engagement reflects a commitment to living out faith in practical ways, demonstrating that spirituality can be a powerful force for good in addressing contemporary challenges (Smith 2022).

In the context of the present study, contemporary ministers may find the prophetic example of nation-building in Israel particularly significant for their own ministry and community engagement. The prophets documented in the Hebrew Bible, such as Elijah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, served not only as spiritual leaders but also as active agents of societal reform. Their ministry was characterized by a passionate call for justice, a strong moral alignment with God’s laws, and an emphasis on social cohesion within the community (Taylor 2021). These prophets addressed the pressing issues of their time, speaking out against injustices and urging the people to return to ethical and righteous living. They were not merely conveying spiritual messages; rather, they were deeply involved in the socio-political landscape of Israel, advocating for the marginalized and challenging corrupt leadership. This multifaceted role underscores the importance of prophetic voices in shaping the moral

and ethical framework of a society, encouraging contemporary ministers to adopt similar approaches in their ministries.

Modern scholarship emphasizes the dual role of these biblical prophets as both divine messengers and societal advocates, which positions them as archetypes for effective religious leadership today. By embodying the principles of integrity, communal welfare, and ethical governance, contemporary ministers can draw inspiration from the prophetic tradition to engage meaningfully with their congregations and communities (Peterson 2020). This approach encourages ministers to be proactive in addressing social injustices, promoting moral values, and fostering a sense of community responsibility among their congregants. The lessons drawn from the lives and missions of these prophets can inform how contemporary ministers engage with local issues, such as poverty, education, and health care. By taking on the prophetic mantle, they can work to unite their communities, inspire collective action, and advocate for policies that promote justice and equity. This alignment with the prophetic example not only enhances their spiritual influence but also positions them as vital contributors to the socio-political fabric of their society.

An initial contribution towards a reappraisal of how the Christian religious leadership in Nigeria is beginning to chart a new course in social transformation that has the potential to engender sustainable transformational development in the country (Agbiji, & Swart 2015). This aim was met by first providing the necessary contextual orientation of how the two broad areas of political governance and economic development present themselves as prevailing major social challenges in present-day post-military Nigeria. This is followed by a discussion of the role of leadership as a primary causal and redeeming factor in meeting the challenge of sustainable transformational development both in Nigeria and African society at large. The authors proceed then towards the main focus of the article, namely to move – on the basis of a literature and empirical exploration – towards a reappraisal of how the Christian religious leadership in present-day Nigeria is beginning to exert itself as an emerging movement for sustainable transformational development through particular institutional arrangements and modes of social engagement. This reappraisal led the authors to end with a synthesising reflection on what they consider to be not only the most outstanding contribution to date by the Christian religious leadership in present-day Nigeria in advancing a sustainable transformational development agenda, but also the crucial challenges that this leadership still faces in meeting such an agenda.

For ministers in Nigeria, taking on this prophetic model can inspire a balanced approach where faith-based leadership involves actively promoting peace, addressing social inequalities, and engaging in dialogue that encourages societal progress. This includes challenging corruption, advocating for social justice, and offering moral leadership amid local conflicts (Adam 2022 & White 2022). These ministers are thus positioned as contemporary counterparts to the prophets of ancient Israel, tasked with fostering community resilience, ethical standards, and unity in the face of modern social challenges (Nguyen 2022).

Demographic Information of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Category		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	80	66.7
	Female	40	33.3
Age Range	18–30 years	2	1.7
	31–45 years	69	57.5
	46–60 years	26	21.7
	60+ years	23	19.2

Denominations	Catholics Church	40	33.3
	Protestants Church	50	41.6
	Pentecostals Church	30	25.0
Occupation	Civil Servant	10	8.3
	Business/Trader	10	8.3
	Farmer	8	6.7
	Clergy	80	66.7
	Student	12	10.0
Educational Level	No Formal Education	6	5.0
	Primary	14	11.7
	Secondary	30	25.0
	Tertiary	70	58.3

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The demographic characteristics of the respondents, as presented in Table 1, provide valuable insights into the composition of the study population. The gender distribution shows a significant disparity, with 66.7% of respondents identifying as male and only 33.3% as female. This imbalance may influence the perspectives and experiences shared regarding challenges face by Christian minister in nation building issues, potentially skewing the findings towards male viewpoints. Understanding this gender dynamic is crucial for interpreting the results and considering the need for inclusive approaches in future research and community engagement. The age distribution highlights that the majority of respondents (57.5%) fall within the 31–45 years age group, followed by 21.7% who are aged 46–60 years and 19.2% who are over 60. Only 1.7% are aged 18–30 years. This suggests that the participant pool is predominantly composed of middle-aged individuals, who often have more experience and knowledge about nation building issues. However, the low representation of younger respondents may indicate a lack of engagement or interest among youth, which could have implications for future nation building efforts and sustainability initiatives.

The Christian religious denominations of respondents indicate that Catholics have (33.3%), Protestants (41.6%) and Pentecostals (25.0%). This distribution can shape community values and practices related to nation building stewardship, as Christian religious beliefs often influence individuals' attitudes towards national development. Understanding the Christian religious context is essential for tailoring nation building messages and initiatives that resonate with the community. In terms of occupation, clergy carried (66.7%) constitute the largest group follow by students (10.0%). civil servants (8.3%) and farmers (6.7%). The presence of a significant number of clergy highlights the potential impact of Christian minister on national development. Engaging this demographic in nation building efforts is vital, as their roles are directly connected to preaching peace for nation building.

The educational background of the respondents shows that 53.3% have attained tertiary education, while 25.0% have completed secondary education. Only a small percentage (11.7%) primary education and 5.0% have no formal education or primary education. This relatively high level of education among respondents may facilitate better understanding and acceptance of nation building concepts. Educated individuals are often more likely to contribute in nation building initiatives and advocate for peaceful coexistence without discrimination.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research provide insights into contributions and initiatives of Christian ministers and major challenges confronting contemporary Christian ministers, as explored through qualitative descriptive methods. This section presents key findings derived from structure questionnaire with participants from Christian leaders and members in Nigeria.

Objectives 1. Contribution and initiatives of Contemporary Christian’s Ministers to nation building

Table 2: Contributions and initiatives by Christian’s ministers to nation building

Question/Response	Frequency	Percentage %
In what ways have ministers in Nigeria contributed to nation building?		
Preaching messages of peace and reconciliation to foster unity among different groups.	55	44
Actively engaging in advocacy against corruption and promoting ethical leadership.	36	28.8
Organizing skills acquisition and empowerment programs for unemployed youths.	34	27.2
What specific initiatives or programs have been implemented by Christian ministers for nation building?		
Establishing interfaith dialogue forums to encourage peaceful coexistence.	48	38.4
Launching community outreach programs to support vulnerable groups.	36	28.8
Partnering with local government and NGOs to implement development projects.	41	32.8

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 2 presents insights into the contributions of Christian ministers in Nigeria regarding contemporary challenges such as ethnic/religious conflicts, corruption, and youth unemployment. The respondents reported that the most significant contribution noted is preaching messages of peace (44%), which highlights the ministers' role in fostering unity among diverse groups. This emphasizes the importance of spiritual leadership in conflict resolution. The result shows that a notable portion of ministers (28.8%) engage in advocating against corruption and promoting ethical leadership. This suggests a proactive stance in addressing moral and ethical issues within the community. It was found that some ministers organize skills acquisition and empowerment programs (27.2%) for unemployed youths, which reflects a commitment to socio-economic improvement and tackling youth unemployment directly.

A respondent averred that: “Contemporary ministers have contributed positively by promoting peace and reconciliation initiatives, advocating against corruption, and organizing skills training programs for the youth, thus fostering a more cohesive and empowered community.” This emphasizes the positive contributions of contemporary ministers in addressing these challenges. Their advocacy against corruption reflects a commitment

to ethical leadership, which is vital for restoring trust within the community. The response illustrates the significant impact that contemporary ministers can have in Nigeria by addressing pressing social issues. Their efforts in promoting peace, ethical standards, and youth empowerment are essential for building a more cohesive and thriving community.

The result also shows that Christian ministers engage in the establishing of forums for interfaith dialogue (38.4%), which is crucial for promoting peaceful coexistence among different religious groups, indicating a strategic approach to mitigating religious conflicts. Community Outreach Programs (28.8%) is also reported as one of the contributions of the ministers in the study area. The launching of outreach programs to support vulnerable groups shows a tangible effort to uplift marginalized sections of the community. The respondents reported that some ministers are collaborating with local governments and NGOs (32.8%) to implement development projects. One respondent, a clergy, articulated the necessity of public engagements among Christian ministers by stating that: “It is time for the true church to come out of the closet and rebuild ancient ruin”. This highlights a collective approach to community development, leveraging resources and expertise from various stakeholders.

Objective 2. The major challenges that hinder contemporary Christian ministers from fulfilling their roles in nation building

Table 3. Challenges that hinder contemporary Christian ministers from fulfilling their roles in nation building

Question/Response	Frequency	Percentage %
What challenges hinder contemporary ministers from fulfilling their prophetic roles?		
Political interference	28	22.4
Lack of financial support	25	20.0
Fear of persecution	42	33.6
Misinterpretation of biblical doctrines	30	24.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The result further shows that a significant challenge identified is the fear of persecution (33.6%), which can severely limit ministers' effectiveness in their roles. This indicates a risky environment for leaders advocating for change. Political interference (22.4%) is another barrier, suggesting that the ministers' work is often complicated by external political pressures, which may undermine their efforts. Financial constraints (20%) are also a significant issue, indicating that without adequate resources, many initiatives may struggle to gain traction. The misinterpretation of religious teachings (24%) can also lead to confusion and conflict, hindering effective ministry. The finding reflects the findings of Adedeji (2022) and Ogidiolu (2020) which highlighted the challenges faced by contemporary ministers, such as political interference, financial constraints, and fear of persecution, which hinder their effectiveness (Adedeji 2022 & Ogidiolu 2020).

One respondent observed that “Nigeria faces challenges such as ethnic/religious conflicts, youth unemployment, and corruption,” noting that these issues necessitate “focused efforts to address them”. In line with this, another respondent, a women leader, observed that: “To engage effectively in nation-building, contemporary ministers should implement strategies such as forming coalitions with local organizations, advocating for policy changes that support social justice, and leveraging social media platforms to reach a broader audience and raise awareness about critical issues.” This response highlights the crucial role of contemporary ministers in nation-building, especially in the face of significant challenges faced by citizens. The finding illustrates that ministers in Nigeria

are actively engaged in addressing pressing social issues through various initiatives aimed at fostering peace, promoting ethical behavior, and empowering youth. However, they face significant challenges that could hinder their effectiveness, particularly fears related to safety and external political dynamics. Addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing their capacity to fulfill their roles as community leaders and agents of change.

CONCLUSION

The work has examined the major challenges confronting nowadays Christian ministers in nation building in Nigeria. Although Christian ministers in Nigeria are preaching messages of peace and reconciliation to foster unity among different groups, actively engaging in advocacy against corruption and promoting ethical leadership. Organizing skills acquisition and empowerment programs for unemployed youths. Findings reveals challenges faced by these ministers to include fears of persecution, political interference, financial constraints, and misinterpretation of religious teachings. The document emphasizes the importance of strategic engagement and collaboration among contemporary Christian ministers in Nigeria to effectively address societal issues and contribute to nation-building. Ministers should form coalitions with local NGOs, community groups, and other religious organizations. This collaboration can amplify their efforts in promoting social justice, peace, and community development, creating a united front to tackle pressing societal issues.

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