The Church and Care Ministry: Understanding Its Importance for Church Growth in Our Generation

By

Emmanuel Chiweike Nheeme PhD
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Religious and Cultural Studies
Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt
Emmanuel.nheeme@ust.edu.ng

&

Chimela Meehoma Samuel D. Min
Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Port Harcourt

Abstract

Care ministry in the church is essential for the health and wellbeing of not only the people in your ministry but also your ministry as a whole. People face suffering and challenges every day. From health problems to coping with the death of a loved one to financial worries and mental health crises, there is not one person in your ministry who has not been touched by loss, stress, or heartache. Caring for hurting people can feel overwhelming. Even in small congregations, there can be a large need for care. So what does an effective care ministry in the church look like? Who should do care ministry? What resources are available for people needing care and for those doing the caring? Care ministry in the church is essential for the health and wellbeing of not only the people in your ministry but also your ministry as a whole. People face suffering and challenges every day. From health problems to coping with the death of a loved one to financial worries and mental health crises, there is not one person in your ministry who has not been touched by loss, stress, or heartache. Caring for hurting people can feel overwhelming. Even in small congregations, there can be a large need for care. So what does an effective care ministry in the church look like? Who should do care ministry? What resources are available for people needing care and for those doing the caring? These are the issues this paper attempted to address in view of the

early Christian Church did (Acts 2:41-47). The paper argued that a Church without an intentional welfare model is dead awaiting burial.

Key words: Church, Care, Ministry

Introduction

The nascent Church of the New Testament as a community of faith was not only a congregation of the called-out people of God who had been set apart to show forth His praises, she was also a community that was chiefly characterized by genuine love and compassion which was demonstrated for one another and for the world around. This, in turn, led to her extraordinary spiritual and numerical growth in the hostile Graeco-Roman world; as many disciples and not just converts were added to the church daily. When we peruse the pages of scriptures and church history, we will discover that all these happened because the gospel was proclaimed through her by word and also by acts of kindness as members had their physical and other needs met with no strings attached (see Acts 2:40-47). In other words, the nascent Church was a church that embarked on both preaching and care ministry that were informed and influenced by love and compassion. In fact, for her, these two (preaching and care ministry) were, and still is considered to be both sides of the same coin—They are inseparable parts of the mission of the church and they were taken seriously by the early apostolic church and should be taken seriously by the contemporary church.

In carrying out this ministry, the early church was intentionally following the example of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ who proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom of God by word and who at the same time cared for, and ministered to the spiritual, physical and other needs of those who came to Him. He made it clear that He did not come to be ministered to, but to minister to others, and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mk. 10:45). Thus, He went about doing good and bringing deliverance and succour to many (Acts 10:38). He accomplished these tasks because His eyes, ears, and heart were open enough to see, hear and know that the people He came to minister to, had spiritual needs, and were like sheep without shepherd (Matt. 9:35-38). His eyes, ears, and heart were also open enough to sometimes see, hear, and know that they were hungry, tired, and without food

and His hands were also ready to act. Thus, He responded positively by providing food and bringing deliverance and succour to many in addition to preaching when He saw their needs, thereby setting for the Church an example to follow in the execution of her mission which includes evangelism and loving service (Matt. 15:32 cf. Lk. 9:11-17).

Over the past two thousand years of her existence, the Church of Jesus Christ has continually been faced with the task of presenting the all-inclusive gospel, which is a gospel that by the power of the Holy Spirit attends to the spiritual, physical and other needs of man (1 Thess. 5:23). In underscoring this fact, Wayne Grudem opines that the ministry of the church is not limited to the work of proclaiming the gospel with a view to disciple-making but it also includes acts of loving and sacrificial service to the poor and needy in society whether they are Christians or not (see Acts 11:29; 2Cor. 8:4; 1 Jn.3:17; Lk.6:35-36).[i] Stanley Grenz, in addition, lends his voice to this when he notes: "our task, however, is not limited to the expansion of the church's boundaries. Rather, it includes sacrificial ministry to people in need."[ii] He says this against the backdrop of the opinion by some that there is no relationship between evangelism and social action or that social action is a distraction to evangelism.[iii] According to him, these people "argue that social action can only divert attention, energy and finances away from the true task of the church, which they see as 'saving souls.'"[iv] He makes it clear that "in embarking on a ministry of service, the church is simply continuing the mission of Jesus himself."[v] He buttresses this position about the inseparability of evangelism and social action, or what we may, in the context of our discussion, also refer to as care ministry, by stating:

> Our Lord did not describe his task as proclamation in isolation but as ***proclamation in the context of service***. He applied to himself the great prophecy of Isaiah: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and the recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Luke 4:18-19).

> 'True to his word, Jesus engaged in service to people in need. The sick, the outcasts, the demon-possessed, the sinful, and the sinned against found in him a friend and a healer. Through his acts of compassion, Jesus demonstrated the presence of the kingdom (Luke 11:20). Then prior to his death he promised the disciples that they would carry on his work, doing even greater things than they had observed (John 14:12).[vi] (Emphasis Mine)

From the above, Grenz makes it clear that the ministry which our Lord Jesus Christ carried out and bequeathed to His Church, is a ministry that carters for the spiritual, together with the other needs of man. He sees this ministry as one that arises from a holistic conception of the gospel.[vii] Hence he maintains that "those who deny a connection between evangelism and service articulate a gospel directed only to one dimension of the human predicament"[viii] which according to him is inadequate.

Again, writing in agreement with proponents of the inseparability of evangelism and social concerns, Millard J. Erickson who observed that during His earthly ministry, Jesus cared about the needy and suffering, also stresses that "cutting across the various functions of the Church is its responsibility to perform acts of Christian love and compassion for both believers and non-Christians.[ix] He, like others, believes that the Church is called to follow the example of her Lord and Master which is why he further maintains: "If the Church is to carry on his ministry, it will be engaged in some form of ministry to the needy and the suffering."[x] According to him, "that Jesus expects this of believers is evident in the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).[xi] From the parable, which underscores the need to love God and one's neighbour, and drawing still from Erickson, we see that "the good Samaritan, although he had nothing to do with the assault on the man going down to Jericho, took it upon himself to care for the victim's needs even at personal cost, inconvenience, and possible danger.[xii]

Based on the foregoing, Erickson concludes that, "since love of neighbor is closely linked by the law to love of God and involves actions like those of the good Samaritan, the Christian Church must be concerned about hurt and need in the world."[xiii] Similarly, and drawing from the same parable, Grenz maintains that the

Church should see herself as a community that is called not only to proclaim the gospel verbally but to emulate the good Samaritan by binding "the wounds of the injured and outcast of the world" and even to "move beyond binding wounds to become the advocates of the wounded by attempting to foster structural changes in society"[xiv] through advocacy that is informed and influenced by the love and compassion of Christ.

However, because of the spiritual dimension of accomplishing these tasks of evangelism and service and the fact that without the help of the Holy Spirit, God's kingdom cannot be made manifest in the affairs of men; and his will done on earth as in heaven, Grenz maintains that the Church resorts to prayers, asking for God's grace in order to effectively and efficiently carry out this mission (Matt. 6:10).[xv] This dependence on the help of the Holy Spirit in the fulfilment of this mission may perhaps be the reason why in the context of liturgical worship for morning prayer in the Anglican Church of Nigeria, we implore the grace of God by saying the prayer below:

> Almighty God, who has called Your Church out of all nations, hear us as we pray for the whole Church of God, and in particular for the church of which we are a part.
>
> Visit the company of Your people with Your grace, O God and fill us with the confidence that comes from Your presence, that in all things we may set the light of Your compassion before people. Grant that no one that is hungry may go without food at our hands, none who is naked without clothing, none who is tasty without water, none who is lonely without company, none who is oppressed without justice, none who is frightened without encouragement, none who is bereaved without comfort, none who walks in darkness apart from You without the kindly light of Your gospel. Let us never, O God, disgrace the name by which we are called.[xvi]

This prayer, we believe, is offered because as part of the universal Church of Christ, the Anglican church of Nigeria understands that proclaiming the good

news and taking care of those in need are inseparable parts of the all-inclusive mission of the Church. Thus, she prays to God to enable her with His grace so that she will, in all things, fulfil that obligation. Again, such prayers underscore the fact that in the Anglican spiritual tradition, everything goes back to, or rather hinges on the Latin phrase *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*. That expression gives us the overall idea that how a person prays is a reflection of that person's beliefs and it influences how he lives. Put differently it means that the law of prayer shapes the law of belief and the law of living. The principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi* suggests to us that there is a close connectedness of worship, belief and life in the Anglican tradition. Moreover, it suggests to us that our liturgical heritage is a catechetical marinating process.[xvii] So we say that prayer in our church because we believe that care ministry is an integral part of the mission of the Church and that we have been called to carry it out together with the ministry of preaching. Furthermore, the prayer is offered because we believe that without the grace of God, we will be unable to faithfully carry out that ministry for the expansion of the kingdom and to the glory of God.

Having by way of introduction laid a theological foundation for our discussion by establishing the fact that the ministry of taking care of the needy is an integral part of the mission of the Church together with the preaching of the word, we shall now proceed by discussing what the care ministry of the church is and entails. We shall also examine its place in the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, in the early New Testament and Post-New Testament Church, and conclude with the place it should also occupy for the growth of the church today.

What Do We Mean By The Care Ministry Of The Church?

When we talk about the care ministry of the church, we refer to all that the church does alongside the proclamation of the word, to provide love, support and freedom to those who may be going through physical, spiritual, financial, emotional, social, and/or other challenges within the local church and the wider community. In the event of these crises which often require additional support from the congregation or pastoral team, this ministry, is aimed at ensuring that individuals and families are cared for, supported, and encouraged[xviii] in the spirit of Christian charity and compassion.

It is a holistic ministry of compassion and action that, with the love of God in Christ, expresses genuine **C**oncern **A**bout **R**eaching **E**veryone (C-A-R-E)[xix] at their points of need. In carrying out this ministry in the lives of the needy, the Church may or may not solve all the problems that she is confronted with but she seeks to bring deliverance or succour to the needy or suffering. It is also important to note that this **C**oncern **A**bout **R**eaching **E**veryone (C-A-R-E), is not the exclusive preserve of a select few but the collective responsibility of every believer as well as that of the larger congregation (Acts 2:44-45; Rom. 14:19; 15:1-3, 7; Gal. 5:13; 6:2; Eph. 4:32; 6:18-19; Phil. 2:3 cf. Num. 11:16-17). Thus, looking at the pages of scriptures we will see that there are two biblical dimensions to carrying out this ministry within and outside the Church. They are:

I. The Individual Dimension—Jas. 1:26-27; 2:10-13 cf. Lk. 10:25-37 and,
II. The Congregational Dimension—Acts 2:43-47; 6:1-7; 11:27-30

We also see from various parts of scriptures that the called-out people of God, in fulfilment of their mission which includes evangelism and loving service, has carried out, or is enjoined to carry out care ministry in the following areas which includes but is not limited to:

I. Feeding the Hungry—Matt. 25:35
II. Taking care of the Stranger—Matt. 25:35 cf. Heb. 13:1-2
III. Clothing the Naked—Matt. 25:36; Isa. 58:7; Acts 9:39; Lk. 3:11
IV. Visiting the Sick—Matt. 25:36; Job 2:11; Jas. 5:14
V. Visiting the Prisoner—Matt. 25:36; Heb. 10:34; 13:3
VI. Helping the Poor—Acts 6:1-7; Lk. 14:12-14; Jas. 2:2-4; Gal. 2:10; Matt. 19:21
VII. Taking Care of Orphans and Widows—Jas. 1:26-27; Acts 9:36-39
VIII. Taking Care of the Elderly—1 Tim. 5:1-2, 4, 16-17 cf. Ps. 71:9; Lev. 19:32
IX. Taking Care of the Gospel Minister— Eph. 6:18-20;1 Cor. 16:9;1 Tim. 3:2-7; Col. 4:2-4;1 Kgs. 19:3-14; 2Kgs. 13:14; Jere. 15:10-21; 2 Pet. 3:18; Eph. 1:16-17; Col. 1:9;1 Kgs. 3:5-12; 1 Cor. 9:11-14; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 Thess. 5:12-13
X. Providing support for the Rich— 1 Tim. 6:17-19
XI. Providing Support for the Worker/Professional—Col. 3:23-24; Phil. 2:14-15; Gal. 6:9; 1 Cor. 10:31 cf. Prov. 16:3
XII. Bringing Comfort to the Bereaved—Rom. 12:15

Drawing from the scriptures, we also discover that in order to effectively carry out this ministry of care, the Church needs to ensure that processes and tools are created that help in the provision of support for her members.[xx] This is the kind of thing that happened in the early Church when they responded to the need of caring for neglected widows in the Church and sending relief materials to the poor and suffering saints in Jerusalem (see Acts 6:1-7; 11:27-30 I Cor. 16:1-4). They set up the modalities of how these believers would receive the needed assistance and ensured that the processes went on unhindered. They were indeed not only concerned about the spiritual welfare of the people but also concerned about their physical, emotional, social and other welfare and this contributed greatly to the growth of the Church. This will now lead us to look at the place of care ministry in the work of Christ here on earth as a way of buttressing the fact that we have an example to follow.

What Place Did Care Ministry Occupy In The Work Of Christ?

As we may have observed in our introductory statements where we laid the theological foundation for our discussion, the ministry of Jesus Christ was characterized by the proclamation of the word and by acts of loving service to men. This was made clear in his Nazareth manifesto or mission statement in Luke 4:18-19 where in reference to Isaiah 61:1-2, He said:

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because he has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (NKJV).

The above statement underscores the fact that Jesus understood His earthly ministry as one that was aimed at meeting human needs because when He finished reading, His statement was that

"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21, NKJV). Thus, during Jesus' earthly ministry,

I. He showed that He CARED about the spiritual and physical welfare of <u>people</u> that was why He went about by teaching and preaching the gospel

of the kingdom in the synagogues and at the same time healing all kinds of sicknesses and diseases among them—Matt. 4:23-24; 9:35-38; Lk. 13:10-13

II. He showed that He CARED about the welfare of the Hungry, Thirsty, Stranger, Naked, Sick and Prisoner that was why He taught that in addition to our salvation by grace, our eternal destiny is dependent on our service and help to the needy—Matt. 25:31-46

III. He showed that He CARED about the welfare of the Hungry that came for His preaching campaigns by observing that they had been without food for days and by providing food for them before sending them away—Matt. 15:32-39; Mk. 6:30-44; 8:1-10; Lk. 9:10-17; Jn. 6:1-14

IV. He showed that He CARED about the welfare of the Poor that was why He taught His disciples to include them in their communal meals and also why He hailed someone like Zacchaeus and told him that salvation had come into his house when he confessed that he was going to give half of his possession to them—Lk. 14:13-14; 19:1-10

V. He showed that He CARED about the welfare of the Stranger (outsiders) that was why He gave the parable of the good Samaritan where He taught on the need to love and take care of our neighbour—that is, anyone that stands in need of us; and also, to let His disciples know that loving and helping one's neighbour transcends distinctions between insiders and outsiders—Lk. 10:25-37[xxi]

VI. He showed that He CARED about the welfare of the Bereaved that was why He identified with, or went to the houses of those that mourned and sometimes wept with them— Mk. 5:35-43; Lk. 13:11-17; Jn. 11:1-44

VII. He showed that He CARED about the welfare of the Professional or Businessman/woman that was why He intervened in Peter's business and told him what to do after Peter and his team laboured all through the night without catching any fish—Lk. 5:1-11

VIII. He showed that He CARED about the welfare of the Widow that was why He raised the dead son of a widow, mentioned how Elijah helped a widow in Zarephath and commended the sacrifice of a poor widow in the temple—Lk. 13:11-17; Lk. 4:24-27; Lk. 21:1-4

IX. He showed that He CARED about the Oppressed that was why He spoke and acted against the social injustices in His day by standing for those who were marginalized either because of their conduct or condition in the society— Jn. 8:2-10; Mk. 10:12-14; Lk. 5:27-32; 14:12-14; Jn. 4:8-26

The foregoing reveals to us that in proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, Jesus responded to the spiritual, physical, emotional, socioeconomic and other needs of people. Thus, one can infer that care ministry occupied a crucial place in His earthly work and also leaves us with an example to follow. Again, when we, for example, look at His feeding of the five thousand men in Mark 6:34-44, we are taught from His ministry that:

- We need to be aware that people need more than preaching—they need food, shelter, clothing, transportation etc—Mk. 6:35-36
- We need to understand that God allows us to be confronted with the needs of others in order to see what we would do and whether we can trust Him for provision—Mk. 6:37 cf Jn. 6:6; Mk. 6:7; Matt. 10:8 cf. Lk. 10:25-37
- We need to use the resources at our disposal to respond to the needs before us—Mk. 6:38 cf. Jn. 6:8-9
- We need to be organized in our response to the needs of others—Mk. 6:39-40
- We need to understand the place of prayer and praying in our response to the needs of others—Mk. 6:41
- We need to understand that God works through people to meet the needs of others—Mk. 6:41
- We need to understand that the blessings of God bring satisfaction—Mk. 6:42-44 cf. Jn. 6:14-15

Again, a close look at the care ministry of Jesus will reveal to us that it was not without attendant challenges. At a particular time during the ministry of Jesus

after He had fed the people, they wanted to forcefully make Him king (Jn. 6:15). When that did not work, many persons started coming after Him not because they heard the words of eternal life or because they understood the miracles but because they had eaten from Him (Jn. 6:24-26). His care ministry was also faced with the challenge of working with men who did not fully understand His mission and which made them to sometimes ask Him to send people away (Mk. 6:35-36 cf. Matt. 15:21-23).

He however, overcame these and perhaps many other challenges because He understood His mission on earth and stuck to it (Lk. 4:18-19; Jn. 4:34; 10:10). He understood that He had come to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God both by word and deeds that addressed the spiritual, physical, and other needs of humanity; and He refused to be derailed or dissuaded. This ministry was so evident to His early disciples, that even after His ascension, Peter, in his sermon at the house of Cornelius described and affirmed His earthly ministry thus: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38, Emphasis Mine). The earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ was indeed holistic and it calls for emulation by the church who represents Him today on earth. This would now lead us to look at the place care ministry occupied in the New Testament and Post-New Testament Church.

What Place Did Care Ministry Occupy In The Early And Post New Testament Church?

As discussed above, Jesus had a ministry that cared for the whole man—spirit, soul and body; and it was attested to, and imitated by the early New Testament Church and those that followed afterwards. Thus, in this section, we shall look at Care Ministry in the early and post New Testament Church.

The believers of the early New Testament Church took care ministry very seriously. Like their Lord and Master, they ministered to the spiritual, physical and socioeconomic needs of the people. They made sure that the poor and all who had needs were well taken care of (Acts 2:42-47 cf. 4:34-35). In fact, it was as a result of the need to respond to the problems of poor members of the church that the office of deacon was instituted (Acts 6:1-7). Likewise, the ministry of Dorcas was

that of caring for the poor and for widows (Acts 9:36-42); and the church in Antioch sent relief materials to the saints in Jerusalem during a global food crisis (Acts 11:27-30).[xxii] They, of a truth did not only preach the gospel by words but also by deeds because, they, at the same time, responded to the needs of others within and outside the church. They executed a care ministry alongside the proclamation of the word because they believed in presenting the holistic gospel as their Lord and Master did during His earthly ministry. This was why in their various epistles, the likes of James, John, Paul and the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews emphasized the need for the Church to, in addition to proclamation, also respond or attend to the physical and other necessities of indigent members and non-members.

James, the brother of our Lord, for instance, made it clear to the believers of his day that pure religion is accompanied by acts of kindness to orphans and widows in their trouble (James 1:27). Drawing from the Old, he noted that the Church was to show love and mercy to the oppressed because of their specifically vulnerable state (Duet. 10:18; Isa. 1:17; Jere. 7:5-7). Still writing in protection of the poor and needy, Erickson notes that James "speaks out sharply against showing favoritism to the rich, an evil that occurred even within the church (2:1-11)."[xxiii] James also cautioned members of the Church about using pious wishes and prayers to mask their refusal to help poor and needy members. For him, those who live like that have dead faith because it is a faith that is without works and cannot save (James 2:14-16). So, for him, a pure religion or a living faith is the one that does not just profess Christ but one that expresses belief in Christ by helping those in need. James was in other words asserting that in Christianity, orthodoxy, that is, right belief, is completely useless unless it is combined with orthopraxis, right living. This is faith in action and it is the faith that saves.

Similarly, John, the beloved apostle, who, according to Erickson, had learned well what Jesus meant by "love your neighbour as yourself," also underscored the importance of care ministry in the church when he wrote: "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth" (1 John 3:17-18, NKJV).[xxiv] The apostle in this letter opines that Christian love must go beyond words to responding positively to the needs of those around us. In other words, Christians are not called to be mere preachers

of love but authentic love practitioners who, like their Master, respond to the needs of their brothers and sisters.

On his own part, the apostle Paul still underscored the important place of care ministry through his actions and his various letters to believers in the first century of the Christian Church. He did this by helping to mobilize the churches and actually sending relief materials more than once to needy Christians in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:1-4; Acts 11:27-30; 24:17; Rom. 15:25-28; 2 Cor. 8-9; Gal. 2:9-10). He urged the believers in Rome to share with those in need by practicing hospitality and to also mourn with those who mourned (Rom. 12:13, 15). He also urged the believers in Galatia to bear one another's burdens and to help others especially those that are of the household of faith (Gal. 6:2, 9-10 cf Rom. 15:1-3). He rebuked the rich of the church in Corinth who neglected the poor in their communion meals by introducing the practice of consuming their own contributions before the poor had arrived at the place of the meal (1 Cor. 11:21, 31). He spoke up for Onesimus who was a runaway by imploring Philemon to receive and treat him as a brother (Philemon1). Like his Master, Jesus Christ, he was indeed passionate about presenting the holistic gospel that ministers to the spiritual, physical, emotional, social and other needs of people.

Even the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews also underscores the importance of care ministry when he notes that believers should not forget to show hospitality to strangers and to do good, to remember those in prison as well as those who were maltreated (Heb. 13:1-3, 16).

The leaders and members of the early New Testament Church never undermined the important place of care ministry. They saw it as an inseparable part of the mission of the church. Hence, it was emphasized and faithfully implemented but not without some resultant challenges which were subsequently overcome (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Cor. 16:3).

Some of the challenges that the early Church encountered as they carried out the care ministry included but were not limited to:

- Insincerity in the lives of some members and the abuse of the ministry— Acts 5:1-12

- Inability to manage exponential church growth with adequate knowledge and to get honest and/or competent people for that ministry —Acts 6:1, 6:3 cf. 1 Cor. 16:3
- Inability to manage the various diversities of the church—Acts 6:1 cf. Jas. 2:1-11
- Inability to respond to the needs of people in an organized manner—Acts 6:1
- Intentional or unintentional neglect due to certain social barriers (language, tribal etc)—Acts 6:1

The church, however, overcame all these challenges through her unity, focus, pragmatism, prayer, and dependence on the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:2-6); and the resultant effect as recorded by Luke, the author of the first book of Church history was this: "**Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.**" (Acts 6:7 cf. 2:44-47; 5:12-14, NKJV, Emphasis Mine).

For us, the word "Then" in the above text should not be overlooked. This is because it is pregnant with so much meaning. It suggests to us that the preceding action was the game changer—and what was that—the Care Ministry. So, the word of God grew and disciples were added to the church because alongside the proclamation of the word, the Church emphasized the importance of caring for the needy and also implemented it in her daily life irrespective of the persecutions she was facing thereby setting a standard for the future Church of Jesus Christ and revealing to her that care ministry is a catalyst for church growth.

Similarly, in the Post-New Testament period and perhaps the periods that followed, the case was not different regardless of the various challenges that the Church continued to face. The believers of the centuries that followed after the first century of the Church continued to show love and concern for the poor and needy. In their book, *The Slow Church: Cultivating Community in the Patient Way of Jesus*, C. Christopher Smith and John Pattison, give insight as to how the importance that the Church continued to attached to care ministry when they said:

> Clement of Alexandria (ca 150-ca. 215) applied the standards of Christian hospitality to the relationships of slaves and masters. An anonymous writer urged Christians to offer hospitality to the image of God (the hungry, naked, thirsty, stranger and prisoner) as an extension of worship. Lactancius (ca. 240-320) said that proper hospitality to the poor and stranger extended even to the grave by offering them proper burial. St. Gregory of Nyssa (330-395) said, 'The stranger, those who are naked, without food, infirm and imprisoned are the ones the Gospel intends for you.' St. Benedict (480-550) said in his *Rule* for monks that all guests to the monastery must be received like Christ.[xxv]

These Church Fathers who lived between the second and sixth century of the Christian Church did not make light of care ministry because they saw it as integral to the gospel of salvation in Christ. Hence, they enjoined the believers of their time to see others are the image of God, as Christ and that they should show hospitality to the poor, hungry, naked, thirsty, stranger and prisoner. Still writing about the impact that Christian hospitality had on the Roman Society, Smith and Pattison quotes the Roman Emperor Julian, who, in his attempt to revive Roman values and Hellenist faith, told his high priest in 362 about the Christians, who he referred to as atheists:

> Why do we not observe that it is their benevolence to strangers, their care for the grace of the dead and the pretended holiness of their lives that has done most to increase atheism….For it is disgraceful that, when no Jew ever has to beg, and the impious Galileans [Christians] support not only their own poor but ours as well, all men see that our people lack aid from us.[xxvi]

The above reveals to us that even unbelievers and Roman Emperors attested to impact that the care ministry of the post-apostolic Church. They went beyond the four walls of the faith community and even attended to the poor in their society.

While it may be difficult for us to cover the entire Post-New Testament period, we would like to mention one more instance of the significant impact of care ministry

in the life and growth of the post New Testament Church in Africa. It is the impact of care ministry on the life of Saint Augustine of Hippo, one of the revered Fathers and Doctors of the Church before his conversion. In his *Confessions*, Augustine speaks of how the kindness that Bishop Ambrose of Milan showed him led to his salvation. Time will fail us to outline the various contributions of Saint Augustine, who after his conversion, eventually became the Bishop of Hippo (in present day Annaba, Algeria) from 396-430 AD and blessed the Church with his spiritual gifts and wisdom which we are still benefitting from today. He underscores the power of acts of kindness in the growth of the Church, when he spoke thus of Bishop Ambrose of Milan:

> This man of God welcomed me with fatherly kindness and showed the charitable concern for my pilgrimage that befitted a bishop. I began to feel affection for him, not at first as a teacher of truth, for that I had given up hope of finding in your church, but simply as a man who was kind to me.[xxvii]

The above statement of Augustine reveals to us the truth in the saying that kindness is a language which the deaf can hear, and the action which the blind can see. From his statement, one would see that he had given up hope of finding teachers of truth in the Church. In other words, for certain reasons, he was no longer interested in the teachings or teachers of the Church but Bishop Ambrose broke that barrier through the kindness that he showed him. Thus, we can say that Ambrose presented the holistic gospel of word and kindness to Augustine which led to Augustine's salvation and by extension to the growth of the Church in Africa and beyond through Augustine's many erudite contributions and classics.

Again, from the above statement, we may also observe that Augustine was revealing that in the catechetical process, Ambrose not only touched his mind with good content, he balanced it by touching his heart with Christian kindness. Ambrose actually first touched Augustine's heart before touching his mind. While he delivered good content to which Augustine bears witness in his *Confessions*, the manner in which he went about delivering it by his kindness to Augustine was what captivated Augustine, endeared Ambrose to him, and eventually made him to embrace the gospel. What can be garnered from the words of Augustine is that

Ambrose' ministry in his life was like that of our Lord Jesus Christ which was characterized by grace and truth. He was first gracious to Augustine before his catechetical content made sense to him.[xxviii] We could go on with more examples of the effect of care ministry in the life of the post New Testament Church but we believe that the example of the effect of the kindness of Bishop Ambrose of Milan on Augustine; and the impact of Augustine's ministry on the Christian world would suffice for now. The foregoing shows us that an act of kindness by the Church or her representatives to one individual can go a long way to bringing about the growth of the larger Church as kindness is one of the things that help to authenticate the message of the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ to the unbelieving world.

Having seen the role that compassion and loving action played in the ministry of Christ, the early and post New Testament Church, we are thus challenged to practice compassion because a compassionate Christ, demands a compassionate Church, and a compassionate Church becomes a growing Church. This will now lead us to look at the place that care ministry should occupy in the Church today.

What Place Should Care Ministry Occupy In The Contemporary Church?

In discussing the place that care ministry should in the contemporary Church, it is important to note that the contemporary Church is not called to do anything different from the example of her Master which the apostolic and post-apostolic Church followed. Thus, we would say that she is also called to carry out a holistic ministry by preaching and attending to the physical, emotional, financial, social and other needs of those she presents the gospel to and those who have received it and are within the bosom of the Church. Drawing from Erickson, we are made to know that in addition to preaching the word of God within and outside her four walls, "the Church is to show concern and take action wherever it sees need, hurt, or wrong."[xxix] Writing about the manner in which the Church will go about this ministry, he makes it clear that "there will be differences of opinion as to the strategies and tactics that should be employed."[xxx] He states further that "in some cases, the church will work simply to alleviate the hurt, that is, to treat the consequences of the problem. In others, it will act to change the circumstances that have produced the problem."[xxxi] Whichever ever way it goes, the fact remains that

the Church understands the inseparability of proclamation and care ministry and has continued to engage in it in the past two thousand years of her existence.

Thus, in answer to the question of what place care ministry should occupy in the present-day Church, we would opine that it should occupy the same place it occupied in the ministry of our Lord, in the early and post New Testament Church as well as the place it has occupied in the life of faithful churches in the last two thousand years. Based on the foregoing, we therefore make the following submissions as to how the Church should take her place in the fulfilment of her God-given mission:

I. The Church should ensure that she is faithfully following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and those of the early and post New Testament Church by preaching the good news of God's salvation in Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone.
II. The Church should ensure that she is faithfully following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and those of the early and post New Testament Church by responding to the needs of the poor and needy within and outside her four walls.
III. The Church should ensure that she is faithfully following the example of our Lord and those of the early and post New Testament Church by having a social justice agenda.

We shall now go ahead to discuss the above *ad seriatim*:

I. Following Christ And The Early And Post New Testament Church By Preaching The Good News Of Salvation

As long as the Church remains within her four walls, it will be difficult for her to successfully fulfil her mission. Thus, in order to effectively show **C**oncern **A**bout **R**eaching **E**veryone (**C-A-R-E**), the Church should take the proclamation of the gospel very seriously. She should show concern for the perishing souls of sinners within or outside the Church through aggressive evangelism; and not to be satisfied only with preaching on her pulpits on Sundays but should rather go out into the hinterlands to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him or those who have heard of Him but have not Him acknowledged Him as their Saviour and Lord.

As we had already noted in the course of this lecture, it was as Jesus went about preaching and teaching in the cities and villages that He saw the poor spiritual and physical conditions of men which made His heart to go out to them because they were scattered and were like sheep without shepherd; and He provided food for them (Matt. 9:35-36; Mk. 6:34-44). This was why Grenz noted that "our Lord did not describe his task as proclamation in isolation but as ***proclamation in the context of service***."[xxxii] So His care ministry came out of His preaching ministry because they are inseparable. This was the same with the early and post New Testament Church. Their care ministry flowed out of their preaching ministry. Thus, it is important for us to note that we cannot carry out care ministry in isolation or without it flowing from the ministry of preaching otherwise, what we will be doing will not be different from what the world calls philanthropy which anybody can do without genuine love for God or man but because of their narcissistic propensities. We are therefore charged today to examine ourselves and to draw some wisdom from the four lepers of Samaria who said to one another:

> We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king's household. So they went and called to the gatekeepers….(2 Kings 7:9-10, NKJV).

From the above, we see that the four lepers saw that they were not doing well in keeping silent in the day of good news. They realized the urgency of the task of proclaiming the good news and therefore went without hesitation to make the announcement in Samaria. We are also charged to go out without hesitation and out of love and compassion for our people, to proclaim, in our various towns and villages, the good news of God's salvation through Christ alone, by grace alone and through faith alone. Like the early apostles, we should resolve that "we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4, NKJV, Emphasis mine). For it is by so doing so that we, through the help of the Holy Spirit will expand the frontiers of the kingdom of God here on earth as they did (Acts 6:7). Let us now go ahead to discuss about following Christ and our spiritual ancestors of the early and post New Testament Churches by responding to the needs of the poor and needy.

II. Following Christ And The Early And Post New Testament Church By Responding To The Needs Of The Poor And Needy

As we already know, both Christ and the early and post New Testament Church responded positively to the needs of the poor and the needy by their teachings and loving actions. When we peruse the pages of the gospels and the epistles, we will see that the early church followed the teachings and example of their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ which was manifested in the following areas:

i. They provided for the hungry (Mk. 6:34-44; Acts 6:1-6; 11:27-30)
ii. They took in the stranger (Heb. 13:2)
iii. They clothed the naked (Acts 9:39)
iv. They visited the sick (Jas. 5:14)
v. They visited the prisoner (Heb.10:34; 13:3)
vi. They provided for the poor (Acts 6:1-6; 20:35; Gal. 2:10; Jas.2:2-4 cf.Lk.14:12-14; Matt. 19:21)
vii. They took care of orphans and widows (Acts 9:36-39; Jas. 1:27; 1 Tim. 5:3-16)
viii. They took care of the elderly (1 Tim. 5:1-2, 4, 16-17 cf. Ps. 71:9; Lev. 19:32)
ix. They took care of the gospel minister (Eph. 6:18-20;1 Cor. 16:9;1 Tim. 3:2-7; Col. 4:2-4;1 Kgs. 19:3-14; 2Kgs. 13:14; Jere. 15:10-21; 2 Pet. 3:18; Eph. 1:16-17; Col. 1:9;1 Kgs. 3:5-12; 1 Cor. 9:11-14; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 Thess. 5:12-13
x. They took care of the rich (1 Tim. 6:17-19)
xi. They took care of the worker/professional (Col. 3:22-4:1 cf.1 Cor. 10:31)
xii. They took care of the bereaved (Rom. 12:15)

The result of all these was that, irrespective of the intense persecution that the Church faced for the first three and a quarter century of her existence, she continued to grow and to turn the Graeco-Roman world upside down for Christ (Acts 17:6). Thus, in order to effectively show **C**oncern **A**bout **R**eaching **E**veryone (**C-A-R-E**) and to foster the growth of the Church in our time, the present-day Church should, in addition to preaching the word of God to saints and sinners, ensure that she attends to the needs of both saints and sinners by emulating our spiritual forebears in the way they showed care in the abovementioned and other areas that may call for loving action by the Church. These were the kind of things that the European missionaries who brought the gospel to us in Africa did. They

ministered the word of God to us and in the process saw the need to educate us so they set up schools and gave us free education also because they saw the level of our poverty. They saw the need to take care of the fatherless so they set up orphanages and charity homes to take care of the destitute. They saw the need to minister to the sick in addition to praying for them, so they set up hospitals to provide free or affordable medical care to keep the people in good health. All these contributed to the growth of the church in our land. They contributed to bringing us to where we are today. Thus, writing about the work of the European missionaries and the positive impact that medical care for instance had on the African missionary enterprise, Peter Falk notes:

> Christianity is interested in the here-and-now and in the physical and spiritual well-being of the people. Its expression of concern and love for them and its willingness to help wherever possible made a profound impression on them. In the early days the Africans questioned the missionaries' purpose for coming. The medical services helped to establish relations and confidence in addition to helping them."[xxxiii]

The above shows us that doors of ministry were opened to them because they showed love to the people in the process of sharing the gospel message. Thus, in order to respond to the needs of the poor and needy in our time, we therefore recommend that, in addition to what the Church may have done or is already doing, she church can do or improve on the following:

Provide For the Hungry

- By setting up food banks in our various local assemblies where both the local church and individual members will bring in food items to distributed to the hungry.
- By making annual budgetary provision to give financial assistance to the hungry.
- By organizing free feeding programmes in the host communities.
- By sending relief material to IDP camps.
- By looking out for hungry people in our towns and villages and providing food for them.

Take Care of the Stranger

- By building guestrooms in our church compounds and using them to accommodate strangers when the need arises.
- By building students or corpers lodges and giving them out free or at highly subsidized rates in order to help young graduates who are posted to serve in our communities.

Cloth the Naked

- By organizing free cloth shopping in our churches and host communities.
- By dedicating particular days or Sundays when the church will give out clothing to needy people.
- By creating church store houses where members are encouraged to bring in clothings and household items that may be useful for those in need.

Visit the Sick

- By establishing functional diocesan and parish hospital ministries and chaplaincies.
- By ensuring that priests faithfully discharge their pastoral duties of visitation to the sick and the confined and administer the sacrament of Holy Communion to them if they are communicants.
- By organizing free medical outreaches in our churches, host communities and areas where they are needed even without the people asking for it.
- By establishing Mission Hospital where people can get standard and affordable medical care.

Visiting the Prisoners

- By establishing functional prison or correctional service ministries and chaplaincies at diocesan and parish levels.
- By paying regular and organized visits to correctional service facilities in order to reach them with the gospel and with our kindness.
- By providing legal services for inmates who may not have anyone to defend them.

Providing For the Poor

- By working out an effective and efficient process of rendering assistance to the poor and needy in the local assembly.
- By instituting scholarship schemes for the indigent in the congregation and in the community.
- By making budgetary provision for giving financial assistance to petty traders and farmers in the church and community.
- By setting up skill acquisition centres at diocesan, archdeaconry and parish levels and helping graduates from such centres to either set up their own businesses or to get gainful employments.

Taking Care of the Orphans and Widows

- By setting up orphanages that will serve both the church and the community.
- By paying regular and organized visits to orphanages and charity homes outside the church.
- By having functional and organized widows fellowship at diocesan and parish levels.
- By protecting and rendering legal, financial and other assistance to widows in the fight against obnoxious widowhood practices in our communities.
- By encouraging members to establish advocacy groups to protect the interest of orphans and widows.

Taking Care of the Elderly

- By establishing homes for the elderly.
- By establishing fellowships for seniors in our churches that are aimed at helping them cope with the challenges of old age and their Christian lives.
- By providing special pastoral services for the aged and dying.

Taking Care of the Gospel Minister

- By having realistic diocesan and parish policies that address the welfare of the clergy during and after their active service.
- By helping in the training of needy clergy children through educational scholarships.

- By having annual clergy appreciation Sundays and ensuring that on such days, clergy men in the churches are financially appreciated by members of the congregation.
- By working out the modalities at diocesan or parish levels for clergy and their families to receive free or affordable medical care.
- By preparing clergy for retirement and helping them cope with life after active service.

Taking Care of the Rich/Nobility

- By creating avenues for the rich to be guided as to how they can serve God faithfully without necessarily focusing on their riches.
- By creating avenues for reaching out to traditional rulers, top government officials and the like.

Taking Care of the Worker/Professional

- By creating avenues for reaching out to Christian professional at the diocesan and parish level (e.g., Christian Teachers Conference).

Taking Care of the Bereaved

- By having local church policies for taking care of bereaved persons in the event of death of their loved ones or people in the community.

In addition to these, the church can also formulate policies that can help her reach out to those struggling with marital problems, addiction, cultism and some other social vices that disfigurement the soul. This is because many people we see in church are struggling and if the gospel will make sense to them, it must attend to the things they are struggling with. All these will however yield good fruit, if dioceses and parishes take the matter of care ministry seriously by having well-articulated welfare policies that have human faces and can address the needs of church members and people in our local communities. When we fail to complement our preaching with support for the poor and needy, we preach a weak gospel and by implication prepared to fail because as Martin Luther King, Jr puts it: "any religion which professes to be concerned about the souls of men and is not concerned about the social and economic conditions that scar the soul, is a spiritually moribund religion only waiting for the day to be buried."[xxxiv] Ours is

not a moribund religion but one that is full of power. Thus, we are charged to accompany or preaching with good works that advance the course of the needy. This was what our spiritual ancestors did "**then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith**" (Acts 6:7 cf. 2:44-47; 5:12-14, Emphasis Mine); and we cannot afford to do less. Let us now proceed to discuss about following Christ and our spiritual ancestors of the early and post New Testament Churches by having a social justice agenda.

III. Following Christ And The Early And Post New Testament Church By Having A Social Justice Agenda

When we go through the gospels and the epistles, we will also see that our Lord Jesus Christ and the early Church had social justice agenda as part of their proclamation of the good news of the kingdom of God. Moved by compassion, Jesus showed that He cared about the issues of justice for people (Lk. 11:42) by fighting against some of the social ills of His time such as gender based-discrimination (Jn. 8:2-10), social exclusion of children and outcast (Mk. 10:12-14; Lk. 5:27-32; 14:12-14), racism, sexism, and tribalism (Jn. 4:8-26). He fought social injustice primarily by condemning those who were responsible for oppressing—those insiders who were abusing their power. He unconditionally embraced and dignified all who were marginalized through no fault of theirs but due to culturally-defined conditions (blindness, leprosy, nationality, gender, widowhood etc.) and offered those who were marginalized due to their sin (prostitution, tax-collection, etc.) forgiveness in exchange for repentance (Lk. 5:32). He considered all of them worthy to hear the gospel and offered them the same.[xxxv] Even in the epistles Paul, one would also see the theme of social justice (Gal. 3:28; 5:14). In his epistle to Philemon, for instance, he spoke on behalf of Onesimus who had few rights in his society, but who he knew deserved to be treated as a human being and as a child of God.

Thus, as a way of following the example of her Lord and Master and the early church in showing care for people by having a social justice agenda, the present-day Church should use her influence to speak for the defenseless. She should look for ways to respectfully identify instances of oppression and boldly challenge

those who are using their positions of power to exploit others rather than serve them. And she can do this:

- By speaking up against obnoxious practices in the land that bring suffering upon the marginalized (widows, children, societal outcasts etc).
- By taking appropriate disciplinary action against church members who promote obnoxious practices in the land in order to deter others from continuing the evil.
- By denouncing racism, tribalism, and nepotisms in the Church and in the society (e.g. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the 1960s against Racism and Segregation).
- By refusing to have an unholy romance or alliance with evil governments but speaking against the evil they perpetrate against the people (e.g., Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah's Independence Day Sermon 2020).
- By speaking against gender-based discrimination and social exclusion.
- By sponsoring or encouraging members to sponsor bills in the legislative arms of government that address social injustices in the land (e.g., William Wilberforce introducing a bill in the British Parliament to abolish slavery in 1793 and persevered till 1807).
- By encouraging members of our church or even dioceses to establish faith-based advocacy groups (e.g., World Vision).

When the church's prophetic voice is a strong one in the land, as a result of her social justice agenda informed and influenced by love and compassion, she does not only become a force to be reckoned with but also a voice for the voiceless and a place of refuge for the defenceless. Thus, as part of her efforts in carrying out a holistic ministry, the Church should see social justice as an integral part of the all-inclusive gospel that she has been called to proclaim and should see to it that she does her best with the power of the Holy Spirit to not only speak for the voiceless and defenceless but do her best to bring about changes in the social structures that enable such evils in the land because it is also by so doing that the kingdom which we pray for in the Lord's prayer comes (Lk. 11:2) with organic spiritual growth. Thus, when the Church focuses on her mission by preaching the good news of salvation and complementing it with loving service that addresses the problems of the poor and needy, including fighting the social ills that scar the soul through prayer and by the power of the Holy Spirit, what we would see, which has always

been the case in the two thousand years of her history, is the growth of the word of God and the Church. In addition to the growth of the word of God and increase in the number of disciples, we can also infer that:

- The care ministry of the Church enhances her unity.
- The care ministry of the Church secures her future.
- The care ministry of the Church keeps her in the will of God.
- The care ministry of the Church enhances her discipleship process.
- The care ministry of the Church promotes her relationship with the outside world.
- The care ministry of the Church opens her door of evangelism to the outside world.
- The care ministry of the Church activates her social justice agenda to foster change.

Conclusion

As the community of the called-out people of God, if we are going to be a Church with an effective and efficient care ministry, we must have the kind of heart that our Master has. It is a heart that manifests genuine love for God and for our neighbor (Matt. 22:37-40). This love will be the propelling force that will bring about a compassionate heart. This compassionate heart will make us to see Jesus in every human being and our service to them would be seen by us as a service to God (Col. 3:22-23). For it was Mother Teresa of Calcutta who said: "I see Jesus in every human being. I say to myself, this is hungry Jesus, I must feed him. This is sick Jesus. This one has leprosy or gangrene; I must wash him and tend to him. I serve because I love Jesus."[xxxvi] As a people with a mission from God to proclaim the good news of salvation, everything we do should be informed and influenced by our love for Jesus. When we love Him, we will love the brethren and we will love all those in the world around us and go out of our way to reach out to them through our preaching and loving serving to the poor, needy and marginalized so that our gospel can attend to their spiritual, physical, emotional and social needs which is part of the will of God for them. And since the Church cannot accomplish this task without the help of the Holy Spirit, and without resorting to prayers, we would like to end this lecture by imploring the Church here gathered to join us in asking God for the grace to effectively and efficiently carry out a faithful care ministry as we say together:

> Almighty God, who has called Your Church out of all nations, hear us as we pray for the whole Church of God, and in particular for the church of which we are a part. Visit the company of Your people with Your grace, O God and fill us with the confidence that comes from Your presence, that in all things we may set the light of Your compassion before people. Grant that no one that is hungry may go without food at our hands, none who is naked without clothing, none who is tasty without water, none who is lonely without company, none who is oppressed without justice, none who is frightened without encouragement, none who is bereaved without comfort, none who walks in darkness apart from You without the kindly light of Your gospel. Let us never, O God, disgrace the name by which we are called.[xxxvii] Amen.

Prayer of Ascription by the Lecture

Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and Majesty, dominion and power both now and ever. Amen.

Endnotes

[i] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 867-868.

[ii] Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 505-6.

[iii] Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God,* 506.

[iv] Grenz, 506.

[v] Ibid, 507.

[vi] Ibid.

[vii] Ibid.

[viii] Ibid.

[ix] Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 1067

[x] Ibid.

[xi] Ibid.

[xii] Ibid.

[xiii] Ibid.

[xiv] Ibid, 508.

[xv] Ibid, 504-505, 509-510. Grenz underscores the importance of prayer in the process of bringing people to faith and reaching out to people through social action in society. He sees it as a spiritual struggle against the

evil powers of the world and acknowledges the need for the church to engage in prayer in order to tap God's power and that of his kingdom to pull down stronghold (Eph. 6:12, 18; 2Cor. 10:4).

[xvi] *Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacrament and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church According to the Use of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)*, 2007,13.

[xvii] Chimela Meehoma Samuel, *Treasures of the Anglican Witness* (Port Harcourt: Biz Pages, 2020), 43.

[xviii] Wynne Lankford, https://www.xpastor.org/strategy/pastoral-care/southside-nazarene-church-of-chesterfield-virginia/#:~:text=The purpose of Care Ministries, the congregation or pastoral staff (Accessed on 7th June 2023).

[xix] https://calvarydover.org/care-ministry (Accessed on 7th June 2023).

[xx] https://churchfuel.com/congregational-care-a-guide-to-building-a-caring-and-effective-ministry/ (Accessed on 11th June 2023).

[xxi] George Wood and George Paul Wood, https://ministry.journeyonline.org/compassionate-christ-compassionate-church/ (Accessed on 8th June 2023).

[xxii] Ibid.

[xxiii] Erickson, 1067.

[xxiv] Ibid, 1068.

[xxv] C. Christopher Smith and John Pattison, *The Slow Church: Cultivating Community in the Patient Way of Jesus* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 199.

[xxvi] Smith and Pattison, *The Slow Church*, 199.

[xxvii] Augustine, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, Vol. 1, ed. John E. Rotelle (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 2001) 5.13.23.

[xxviii] Chimela Meehoma Samuel, "*Intentional Catechesis: Balancing Content and Process for Spiritual Formation in an Anglican Parish,"* unpublished DMin Project, Nashotah House, 2017, 48-49.

[xxix] Erickson, 1068.

[xxx] Ibid.

[xxxi] Ibid.

[xxxii] Grenz, 507.

[xxxiii] Peter Falk, *The Growth of the Church in Africa* (Jos: ACTS, 1997), 447.

[xxxiv] https://theconversation.com/how-the-social-gospel-movement-explains-the-roots-of-todays-religious-left-78895 (Accessed on 13th June 2023).

[xxxv] Jeffrey E. Miller, *Jesus Among Luke's Marginalized,* unpublished DMin Project, Divinity School of Duke University, 2017, 181-182.

[xxxvi] Smith and Pattison, 198.

[xxxvii] *Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacrament and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church According to the Use of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)*, 2007,13.

Bibliography

Augustine. *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, Vol. 1, ed.
John E. Rotelle. Hyde Park, NY: New City, 2001.

Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacrament and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church According to the Use of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), 2007.

Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*, Second Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.

Falk, Peter. *The Growth of the Church in Africa*. Jos: ACTS, 1997.

Grenz, Stanley J. *Theology for the Community of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.

Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

Lankford, Wynne. https://www.xpastor.org/strategy/pastoral-care/southside-nazarene-church-of-chesterfield-virginia/#:~:text=The purpose of Care Ministries, the congregation or pastoral staff (Accessed on 7th June 2023).

Miller, Jeffrey E. *Jesus Among Luke's Marginalized*. unpublished DMin Project, Divinity School of Duke University, 2017.

Samuel, Chimela Meehoma. "*Intentional Catechesis: Balancing Content and Process for Spiritual Formation in an Anglican Parish,"* unpublished DMin Project, Nashotah House, 2017.

Samuel, Chimela Meehoma. *Treasures of the Anglican Witness*. Port Harcourt: Biz Pages, 2020.

Smith, C. Christopher and Pattison, John. *The Slow Church: Cultivating Community in the Patient Way of Jesus*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014.

https://calvarydover.org/care-ministry (Accessed on 7th June 2023).

https://churchfuel.com/congregational-care-a-guide-to-building-a-caring-and-effective-ministry/ (Accessed on 11th June 2023).

Wood, George and Wood, George Paul. https://ministry.journeyonline.org/compassionate-christ-compassionate-church/ (Accessed on 8th June 2023).

https://theconversation.com/how-the-social-gospel-movement-explains-the-roots-of-todays-religious-left-78895 (Accessed on 13th June 2023).