

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES OF GALATIANS 6:2: THE ANGLICAN CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO SUFFERING IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

Galatians 6:2, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ,” embodies a central Christian ethic of mutual care, compassion, and communal responsibility. This study examines the historical and theological significance of the text as a framework for understanding the response of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) to human suffering in contemporary Nigerian contexts. Against the backdrop of poverty, insecurity, displacement, unemployment, public health challenges, and social inequality, the study explores how the Anglican Church has interpreted and applied the principle of burden-bearing from the missionary era to the present. Employing historical, archival, and qualitative methodologies, the research draws on biblical exegesis, church historical sources, and contemporary ecclesiastical practices. The findings reveal that Galatians 6:2 has served as a significant theological foundation for Anglican engagement in healthcare, education, social welfare, humanitarian relief, and advocacy for vulnerable populations. The study further demonstrates a remarkable continuity between missionary-era social interventions and contemporary Anglican responses to suffering. However, it also finds that the magnitude of present-day socio-economic and security challenges often exceeds the institutional capacity of the Church, creating a gap between theological ideals and practical outcomes. The paper argues that African communal values and contextual theological reflection provide important resources for strengthening the Church’s ministry of burden-bearing. It concludes that a historically informed and contextually grounded application of Galatians 6:2 remains essential for enhancing the Anglican Church’s contribution to human flourishing and social transformation in contemporary Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: Galatians 6:2, Burden-bearing, Anglican Communion, Suffering, and Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The Pauline epistle to the Galatians 6:2 serves as a scriptural cornerstone for Christian social ethics and ecclesial praxis: “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (KJV). The verse succinctly encapsulates a profound theological principle and mutual care within the body of Christ. Historically, the Church of Nigeria, as part of the global Anglican Communion, has long held social responsibility and pastoral care as key components of its mission. Rooted in the incarnational theology of the Church of England, Anglicanism in Nigeria inherited a tradition of social

engagement, evident from the 19th century when the Church Missionary Society (CMS) introduced healthcare, education, infrastructural development, and agricultural initiatives.

From its early years in Badagry and Abeokuta, the Anglican Church positioned itself not merely as a religious body but also as a community bearer of burdens, responding to both physical and spiritual needs. As Nigeria confronted colonial hardship, war, post-independence crises, and modern social ills, the Church, through dioceses, parishes, and organisations such as the Mothers' Union and Anglican Youth Fellowship, emerged as a consistent voice and agent of support to the suffering through acts of charity, solidarity, and justice. From the shared resources of the early Church to the structured compassion of medieval monastic orders, and into modern mission and advocacy movements, the Anglican Church's actions reflect its ongoing engagement with the sufferings of the world.

This paper arises from a concern that in the current era of unprecedented human suffering in Nigeria, marked by economic hardship, insecurity, displacement, unemployment, inflation, public health crises, and widening social inequalities, the Church's response is increasingly fragmented or insufficient. These realities present a compelling context for the application of Galatians 6:2, which enjoins believers to "bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ." The passage underscores the Christian responsibility of shared suffering, mutual support, and communal care, values that are particularly relevant in contemporary Nigeria, where many citizens face daily socio-economic and existential challenges. By exploring the historical expressions of Galatians 6:2 and their implications, the study aims to inspire a more coherent and committed response from contemporary Christian communities.

Although Nigeria has witnessed increasing levels of suffering due to socio-economic instability, insecurity, forced migration, and public health emergencies, and despite the prominent presence of the Anglican Church in the country, the extent to which Galatians 6:2 has shaped ecclesiastical responses to these challenges remains insufficiently explored in scholarly literature. There is therefore a need to examine how this theological imperative has been translated into concrete acts of compassion, social intervention, and community development, and to assess the efficacy and consistency of such responses within the contemporary Nigerian context.

To further strengthen the argument, the historical and contemporary relevance of Galatians 6:2 may be understood through the Church's long-standing tradition of burden-bearing in society. The principle of mutual care embodied in the text found practical expression in the activities of early Christian missionaries who established schools, hospitals, leprosy centres, orphanages, and various welfare institutions aimed at alleviating human suffering and improving social well-being. In Nigeria, particularly within the Anglican tradition, these initiatives reflected the Church's commitment to sharing the burdens of vulnerable populations through education, healthcare, and social services. Furthermore, during periods of national crisis such as the Nigerian Civil War, economic downturns, epidemics, and more recently insurgency and communal conflicts, churches frequently functioned as centres of refuge, relief distribution, counselling, and humanitarian assistance, demonstrating the practical outworking of the biblical mandate to bear one another's burdens.

Contemporary Nigeria presents even greater opportunities and challenges for the application of Galatians 6:2, as issues such as kidnapping, terrorism, forced displacement, youth unemployment, food insecurity, and rising poverty continue to affect millions of citizens. These conditions call for a renewed ecclesiastical commitment that moves beyond spiritual consolation to tangible interventions that address both immediate and structural causes of suffering. Consequently, this study seeks to evaluate whether the responses of the Anglican Church in contemporary Nigeria represent a continuation of the historic Christian tradition of compassionate burden-sharing or a departure from it, thereby assessing the extent to which the theological imperatives of Galatians 6:2 are being faithfully translated into practical ministry and social engagement in the modern Nigerian context.

While the biblical injunction to bear one another's burdens is clear, its consistent and holistic implementation in contemporary Church practice is lacking. The fragmentation of Christian denominations, the overspiritualisation of suffering, and bureaucratic ecclesial structures often hinder timely and compassionate responses to crises. Furthermore, the historical memory of the Church's burden-bearing ethos is fading, diminishing the richness of inherited wisdom in guiding present action. Despite the prominence of Galatians 6:2 in Christian ethics, there exists a gap between theological affirmation and practical application in many contemporary church contexts. Churches often struggle to respond effectively to the multifaceted nature of suffering. Some offer spiritual comfort without material aid; others engage in social action devoid of theological grounding. Moreover, historical memory of how the Church has embodied this verse is fading, limiting the Church's ability to draw from its own tradition. This study investigates the historical expressions of Galatians 6:2 and assesses the Church's current responses to suffering, aiming to bridge the gap between scripture, tradition, and contemporary praxis.

Although considerable scholarship exists on the interpretation of Galatians 6:2, the history of Anglicanism in Nigeria, and the broader role of the Church in social welfare, there remains a paucity of studies that integrate these three areas into a coherent historical analysis. Existing literature has largely neglected the extent to which the Pauline injunction to "bear one another's burdens" has informed the Anglican Church's responses to suffering across different periods of Nigerian history. Furthermore, little attention has been given to evaluating the continuity, effectiveness, and contemporary relevance of Anglican interventions in addressing the challenges of poverty, insecurity, displacement, unemployment, and other forms of human suffering. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing a historical and theological examination of Galatians 6:2 as a framework for understanding and assessing the Anglican Church's response to suffering in contemporary Nigerian contexts.

This paper aims to critically examine the historical and theological application of Galatians 6:2 in the Anglican Church's response to suffering in Nigeria, with a view to articulating how the Anglican Church can meaningfully respond to suffering in contemporary Nigeria. The objectives are to explore the theological foundations of Galatians 6:2, especially as they relate to Christian ethics, community, and pastoral care, trace the historical response of the Anglican Church in Nigeria to societal suffering and burden-bearing in different epochs of Church history, including the Early Church,

medieval monasticism, the Reformation, and global missionary movements, analyse the Anglican Church's contemporary initiatives aimed at alleviating suffering and assess the impact and challenges of the Church's social outreach.

The paper employs a qualitative, historical-theological approach. Data were collected through archival research on the history of Anglican missionary and ecclesiastical work in Nigeria, review of Anglican Communion documents, synod reports, and social outreach records, interviews with clergy and laity in selected parishes, and content analysis of sermons, publications, and public statements addressing national issues (e.g., during the Biafran War, Boko Haram insurgency, and COVID-19 pandemic). The study draws from both primary sources, such as biblical texts, writings of Church Fathers, theological treatises, and ecclesiastical records, and secondary sources, which comprise scholarly commentaries, church history texts, and contemporary theological reflections.

LITERATURE REVIEW

From the 19th century, Anglican missionaries established schools, hospitals, and social centres in Nigeria. These actions embodied the burden-bearing mandate. According to Ayegboyin and Ishola, "the Anglican mission addressed both spiritual and social burdens, especially through education and medical missions."³⁶ The Anglican understanding of Galatians 6:2 is deeply influenced by its theology of community, pastoral care, and the middle way approach to social issues. Scholars like John Mbiti and Bolaji Idowu have observed that the CMS and early Anglican missionaries placed a high value on education and welfare as a form of Christian witness, interpreting burden-sharing in both spiritual and socio-political terms.

Anglican bishops in Nigeria, including Seth Irunsewe Kale and Leslie Gordon Vining, promoted holistic ministry and emphasised pastoral presence during national struggles and colonial changes. Anglican burden-sharing was made possible by the CMS's creation of schools (like Christ's School, Ado-Ekiti), hospitals (like Ilesa and Awka), and leprosaria. Hospitals at Ilesa and Awka are historical examples of the Church's social involvement. Despite not being Anglican, Mercy Amba Oduyoye's theology supports the community work of Anglican women. Through prayer and action, Anglican liturgy supports Galatians 6:2, particularly during Lent and national intercessions. In opposition to the growth of the prosperity gospel in mainline churches, contemporary Nigerian Anglican theologians have also advocated for a revitalised theology of suffering.

In *The Rise of Western Christendom*, Peter Brown describes how early Christian communities used almsgiving, communal ownership, and care for the weak to establish burden-sharing. According to Brown, leaders such as Cyprian and Augustine stressed that being a Christian meant performing outward acts of charity and compassion, which were frequently carried out through the Church's episcopal structures. These historical patterns demonstrate how the early ecclesial framework organised burden-bearing.

³⁶ Deji Ayegboyin, and S. Ademola Ishola, *African Indigenous Churches: An Historical Perspective* (Greater Scholars Publications, 1997), pp 134.

According to recent research, the Nigerian Anglican Church has maintained a public theology that addresses the suffering of the country. For instance, Alokwu claims that the Church's "Oikothology" is influenced by how it views stewardship and civic duty. Okwor, however, criticises inconsistent Church-State cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the literature's strong affirmation of Galatians 6:2's theological requirement, there are still a few gaps. There is little discussion of non-Western historical manifestations of burden-bearing, especially those from Asia and Africa. Furthermore, nothing is known about the practical aspects of burden-sharing in hybrid and digital ecclesial communities. By focusing on intercultural viewpoints, interfaith collaboration, and novel approaches to community care in the digital world, emerging scholarship is starting to close these gaps.

HISTORICAL CONSISTENCY OF ANGLICAN CHURCH COMPASSIONATE ENGAGEMENT

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, mission societies, particularly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, extended burden-bearing across cultural and continental boundaries. Missionaries established schools, clinics, and orphanages, embodying Galatians 6:2 through educational and medical ministry. From the early missionary era in the 19th century, the Anglican Church in Nigeria has demonstrated a consistent commitment to bearing the burdens of society through holistic ministry. Missionaries from the Church Missionary Society (CMS) offered not only the gospel but also established schools, healthcare centres, orphanages, and leper colonies, interpreting the Christian gospel as a call to alleviate both spiritual and physical suffering. For instance, in regions such as Ekiti and Akoko land, Anglican missions-built health centres, provided material support for farmers, offered literacy programmes, and advocated for the local communities as part of their evangelistic work.

This pattern of engagement continues today, signifying a theological tradition deeply rooted in compassionate praxis. These actions often emerged from a deep conviction that Christian love must engage with the totality of human experience – spiritual, emotional, and physical³⁷. Nevertheless, missionary burden-bearing was sometimes undermined by colonial entanglements, paternalistic attitudes, and cultural insensitivity. The reciprocity implied in Galatians 6:2 was often compromised by power imbalances between missionaries and local populations. This raises questions about how burden-bearing must also respect the agency and dignity of those being served.

MISSION-ERA EXPRESSIONS OF BURDEN-BEARING: THE CMS MODEL

A convincing historical foundation for comprehending how the Anglican Church formerly fulfilled the requirement of Galatians 6:2, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," is provided by the early missionary endeavours in Nigeria,

³⁷ Bengt Sundkler, and Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge UP, 2000), pp. 321.

especially those of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). The CMS combined social change with spiritual evangelism, taking a holistic approach to its objective. Their pioneering work in healthcare and education was a conscious reaction to the problems local communities faced, particularly in the areas of social marginalisation, illness, and illiteracy. The CMS offered venues for both individual and group upliftment by establishing schools, vocational schools, and dispensaries at different mission posts. These initiatives were seen as essential manifestations of Christian testimony rather than just philanthropic extras.

The CMS model was a theological example of the Pauline ethic of solidarity and reciprocal care. The missionaries expanded their idea of ministry into classrooms, clinics, and village squares rather than just the pulpit or altar. The CMS implemented a lived theology in which compassion and faith were inextricably linked by solving the socioeconomic challenges of the populace. The church's early reaction to suffering, a burden-sharing strategy based on Christ's love, is reflected in this praxis-oriented ministry. This historical model encourages introspection and retrieval in Nigeria today, when comparable difficulties still exist. It challenges the contemporary church to reevaluate its involvement in society and to rediscover how Galatians 6:2 may continue to motivate holistic mission in a divided society.

CIVIL WAR ERA (1967-1970): BURDEN-BEARING AMIDST CONFLICT

One of the worst humanitarian disasters in Nigerian history occurred during the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), sometimes referred to as the Biafran War. Anglican dioceses, especially those in the former Eastern Region, became vital sources of hope and relief amid the bloodshed, malnutrition, and displacement of the people in the warring region. Clergy frequently served as first responders, offering food, shelter, and medical support, and Anglican Church parishes turned into havens for the displaced. To assist refugees, many of whom had lost their homes and families, diocesan bishops like Rt. Rev. Nwosu of the Niger Diocese organised both domestic and global Anglican networks.

Some of the mission hospitals and Anglican schools that had been badly damaged during the fighting were converted to meet the needs of those escaping the turmoil. The Church continued to shoulder the responsibilities of the suffering populace despite its meagre resources, providing not only material assistance but also spiritual and emotional support. According to Galatians 6:2, these endeavours represented a profound manifestation of Christ's law in action. Beyond providing humanitarian relief, the Church's burden-bearing throughout the civil war included purposeful reconciliation work following the battle. Anglican clergy organised community reconstruction projects and led healing conversations, and preached forgiveness rather than retribution.

A theology of hope was frequently reflected in post-war diocesan reports and synod resolutions, highlighting the necessity of re-establishing communal harmony and trust across racial and geographic barriers. The Church's response during this time is still a potent illustration of its historical function as a haven during times of crisis and a driving force behind national reconciliation. It serves as an example of how supporting

one another can promote social healing and spiritual resilience, particularly during times of armed conflict.

POST-WAR CONTINUITY AND TRANSFORMATION (1970-2024)

The Anglican Church in Nigeria switched from providing emergency aid to long-term rehabilitation and peacebuilding programmes in the immediate aftermath of the civil war. Dioceses in the war-torn East, including Owerri, Onitsha, and Enugu, took the lead in rebuilding parishes, schools, and medical facilities that had been damaged. As bishops and clergy struggled to mend broken interethnic ties and rebuild communal trust, the Church's dedication to holistic mission persisted. In line with Paul's command in Galatians 6:2 to bear one another's burdens in the spirit of Christ's love, synodical pronouncements and theological reflections from the 1970s onwards increasingly stressed reconciliation as a divine duty. This vision broadened the Church's definition of mission to include healing memories, repairing damaged societies, and fostering inclusive growth in addition to rescuing souls. In order to prepare leaders to serve as agents of justice and unity in a post-war Nigeria, clergy training started to include peace and conflict resolution. The Anglican Church has upheld this burden-sharing ethic from the 1980s to 2024 in the face of a variety of national difficulties, from economic instability and military authority to the Boko Haram insurgency, herder-farmer conflicts, and pervasive poverty. Anglicans have continued their tradition of offering vulnerable communities nutritional assistance, education, shelter, and psychosocial care through diocesan outreach, women's organisations, and youth ministries.

Anglican dioceses in Abuja, Jos, and Maiduguri have once again taken on humanitarian tasks like their response during the civil war due to the increase in internally displaced people (IDPs), particularly in the North-East. Furthermore, the Church has assumed a more prophetic role, using public theological pronouncements and communiqués to promote social justice, good governance, and peace. The Church's burden-bearing stance, which is based on Galatians 6:2, has changed in each of these situations from a crisis response to a long-term theology of solidarity. This continuity shows that amid Nigeria's stormy path toward nationhood, the Church's historical experience of struggle has not resulted in apathy but rather in a stronger dedication to the common good.

CONTEMPORARY CRISES: BURDEN-BEARING IN TIMES OF NATIONAL DISTRESS

The Anglican Church has remained unwavering in its burden-bearing duty in the face of Nigeria's current difficulties, which range from terrorist insurgencies to environmental disasters and growing economic inequalities. Millions of people have been displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East since 2009, which has led to an abundance of humanitarian aid from Anglican dioceses throughout the nation. In particular, the Dioceses of Maiduguri, Jos, and Abuja have been instrumental in helping internally displaced people (IDPs), many of whom lost their homes, means of

subsistence, and loved ones. While diocesan relief organisations provided food, clothing, medical assistance, and school materials, churches served as makeshift shelters.

To assist victims in processing their experiences and reintegrating into society, Anglican clergy provided pastoral care, trauma counselling, and reconciliation programs in addition to material aid. The Pauline admonition in Galatians 6:2, which emphasises the Church's obligation to exemplify Christ's compassion by bearing others' burdens, particularly in the face of national distress, is directly aligned with these deeds. Significant burden-bearing responses have also been triggered by environmental catastrophes. Thousands have been relocated, homes have been wrecked, and livelihoods have been affected by frequent floods, especially in states like Bayelsa, Kogi, Anambra, and Delta. In response, Anglican dioceses in several areas have organised appeals for national and international aid, sent relief packages, and provided temporary shelter.

Similarly, through diocesan outreach arms and women's organizations, the Church continues to provide feeding programs, vocational training, microfinance projects, and education scholarships in underprivileged rural and urban populations experiencing long-term unemployment and food insecurity. As a result, the Church of Nigeria's social action is sustained rather than episodic, grounded in its historical mission ethos and directed by a theology of justice and compassion. The Anglican Church has upheld its prophetic testimony through these practical applications of Galatians 6:2, proving that the exhortation to share one another's burdens is still fundamental to Christian identity in modern-day Nigeria.

ANGLICAN WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS: EMBODYING COMPASSION THROUGH SERVICE

In the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), Anglican women's organisations have long been essential tools for social outreach and Christian compassion. These organisations, which have their roots in biblical teachings on love, service, and mutual responsibility, have transformed the theological precepts of Galatians 6:2 into useful deeds of compassion for society's most vulnerable people. Through charity contributions, visitation ministries, and welfare programs, organisations like the Women's Guild, Mothers' Union, Girls' Guild, and Anglican Women Fellowship have significantly contributed to the support of widows, orphans, the sick, and economically disadvantaged families. Their actions show how burden-bearing encompasses concrete solutions that alleviate societal necessities and human suffering in addition to spiritual support.

Historically, Anglican women have contributed immensely to community development through initiatives in education, healthcare, and family welfare. During the missionary era and subsequent periods of church growth, women organised fundraising efforts for schools, hospitals, maternity centres, and scholarship schemes for underprivileged children. They also promoted maternal and child health through health awareness campaigns and support services for pregnant women and nursing mothers. In times of national crisis, including economic hardship and social instability, Anglican

women mobilised resources to provide food assistance, clothing, and financial support to affected families. Such interventions illustrate the practical embodiment of Christ's law of love through organised acts of compassion and solidarity.

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EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: FORMING BURDEN-BEARERS THROUGH PASTORAL TRAINING

The theology of burden-sharing has been continuously included in pastoral training curricula at Anglican theological institutions in Nigeria, including Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary (Abeokuta), Immanuel College of Theology (Ibadan), and Archbishop Vining College of Theology (Akure). These seminaries highlight that Christian ministry entails taking on the social, emotional, and spiritual responsibilities of others, drawing inspiration from Galatians 6:2. Students are taught that pastoral leadership is a profession based on empathy, service, and selfless love rather than a quest for prestige. Seminarians who take courses in pastoral theology, ethics, and diakonia (Christian ministry) gain skills in crisis management, counselling, and conflict resolution. Fieldwork placements in hospitals, prisons, and impoverished communities provide experiential learning, enabling future clergy to embody the law of Christ through direct engagement with human suffering.³⁸

Beyond the classroom, the seminaries' community life upholds the principles of reciprocity and group accountability. A spirituality of compassion and unity is fostered by chapel services, small-group devotions, and volunteer work. Students at institutions like St. Francis of Assisi Theological College (Wusasa) frequently take part in outreach programs that give priority to serving the underprivileged, widows, orphans, rural poor, and displaced people.³⁹ These experiences instil in emerging clergy a deep commitment to walk with people through their struggles, reflecting the model of Christ who bore humanity's burdens. The ethos of burden-sharing, therefore, is not only taught but lived within these institutions, shaping a generation of ministers who perceive social concern as intrinsic to the gospel.⁴⁰ This theological and practical formation contributes to the Church's continuing relevance in a nation where spiritual leadership must also respond to complex socio-economic realities.

CHALLENGES: FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS, BUREAUCRACY, AND YOUTH DISENGAGEMENT

Despite the Anglican Church's crucial role in burden-bearing ministries throughout Nigeria, several obstacles prevent it from being fully effective. The scope and viability of social outreach activities are limited by ongoing financial restrictions. Congregational voluntary contributions are a major source of funding for many dioceses, and they might vary depending on conflicting priorities or economic

³⁸ Archbishop Vining College of Theology, *Curriculum and Field Education Handbook*, Akure: AVCT Publications, 2022.

³⁹ St. Francis of Assisi Theological College, *Chapel Records and Mission Reports*, 2015-2023. Wusasa: College Archives, 2023.

⁴⁰ Joshua T. Adebayo, "Pastoral Formation and Social Witness in Nigerian Anglicanism." *West African Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2021, pp. 89-104.

downturns. The capacity to sustain orphanages, offer sufficient assistance during emergencies, and continuously assist widows and displaced people is impacted by this financial instability.⁴¹

Additionally, bureaucratic roadblocks in church administration can make it more difficult for diocesan bodies and partner organisations to coordinate and occasionally postpone the timely distribution of resources. Even though the intricate approval and reporting processes are meant to guarantee accountability, they frequently impede critical humanitarian efforts and lessen their impact when prompt action is needed. The problem of young people's disengagement from the social mission of the Anglican Church exacerbates these structural and budgetary issues. Many young Nigerians are under pressure from secular influences and financial difficulties, which makes them less likely to serve and participate in church activities. Because younger generations are essential to maintaining long-term outreach and advocacy efforts, this tendency jeopardises the survival of burden-bearing organisations.⁴²

Innovative approaches to ministry that can appeal to younger demographics are also limited by the divide between youth ambitions and established church leadership, which occasionally results in disconnects in vision and practice. Deliberate tactics to effectively mobilise resources, expedite administrative procedures, and actively engage adolescents through contextualised programmes and leadership development are necessary to address these issues. In a time of growing social complexity, the Church's ability to carry out the mandate of Galatians 6:2 runs the risk of being compromised in the absence of such actions.

POSITIVE INNOVATIONS

Positive innovations have greatly aided community development in numerous rural Anglican parishes by encouraging self-help groups to promote social solidarity and economic empowerment. These organisations give parishioners, particularly women, the chance to combine resources, participate in group savings, and start small-scale revenue-generating ventures. In addition to improving financial stability, this strategy fortifies ties within the church community and promotes support among members. Self-help organisations, which represent a paradigm of sustainable development firmly anchored in the parish's spiritual and social life, have emerged as an effective grassroots technique for tackling poverty and dependency by utilising local skills and indigenous knowledge.

To address the changing needs of their congregations, rural Anglican parishes have made investments in counselling ministries and youth skill training programs in addition to self-help initiatives. Youth skill training facilities increase young people's employability and lower unemployment in rural areas by providing them with practical vocational skills like carpentry, tailoring, and ICT. This proactive involvement gives the younger generation a sense of purpose and hope while also reducing societal vices.

⁴¹ Akinyemi, Samuel, "Financial Sustainability in Nigerian Anglican Dioceses." *African Journal of Church Management*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (2021), pp. 112-128.

⁴² Chinedu Eze, "Youth Disengagement and the Future of the Nigerian Church." *Journal of African Christian Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (2022), pp. 33-48.

Concurrently, counselling ministries provide pastoral care that supports mental health and overall well-being while addressing psychological, emotional, and social issues in the community. When taken as a whole, these innovations show how the Anglican Church in rural areas modifies its ministry to be both transformative and relevant, empowering people while fostering community resilience.⁴³

CONCLUSION

For the Nigerian Church, especially Anglicanism, Galatians 6:2 continues to be a crucial doctrinal exhortation. The Anglican Church has participated in several types of burden-sharing, from compassion during the CMS era to current interventions during pandemics and insurgencies. However, there is a pressing need to build parish and diocesan institutions, engage in greater prophetic responses, and deepen theological study considering the increasing challenges. In Nigerian society, the Anglican Church must accept its historical identity and its future role as a burden carrier. In Nigerian society, the Anglican Church is still regarded as one of the most reliable organisations. It has a moral voice because of its lengthy history in both rural and urban areas.

Regardless of their religious membership, many Nigerians perceive the Church as an essential source of support during difficult times, according to interviews done for the study. Recipients of Anglican programmes often referred to the Church as "a second family" and "a place of refuge." The Church has been able to sustain its influence in public policy lobbying and social discourse thanks to this favourable view.

Examining Galatians 6:2 and its historical and modern interpretations uncovers important gaps in the Church's response to suffering as well as a rich legacy. The following suggestions are put out for church leaders, theologians, practitioners, and Christian communities to proceed with increased theological fidelity, practical relevance, and social effectiveness: boost contextual biblical engagement and theological education.

Clergy and lay leaders should be taught not only the theological significance of writings such as Galatians 6:2, but also how to apply them in the context of modern-day Nigeria by theological institutions and diocesan training centres. It is important to prioritise courses on community building, liberation theology, public theology, and pastoral care in times of crisis. Sermons and liturgical materials should intentionally integrate burden-bearing as a missional ethic, reinforcing that Christian compassion is both spiritual and structural.

Enhance Policy Advocacy and Prophetic Witness: Although the Anglican Church has taken part in crisis advocacy, this should be strengthened and organised. To interact with local and national governments on issues of poverty reduction, insecurity, education, and healthcare, the Church should establish diocesan and provincial advocacy desks. Increase your involvement in national policy discussions about justice, corruption, and governance. Educate clergy and lay leaders in strategic advocacy so they can speak for Christian principles in public policy settings.

⁴³ O. Adeyemi, *Faith and Development in Rural Nigeria* (Lagos: Anglican Press, 2020), pp. 45-58.

Foster Ecumenical and Interfaith Collaboration: The Church should strengthen its relationships with other Christian faiths (such as Catholic, Methodist, and Pentecostal churches) in coordinated social interventions to prevent duplication and increase reach. Islamic and traditional leaders in humanitarian relief and interfaith peacebuilding, particularly in conflict-prone areas like the Northeast and Middle Belt. Such partnerships strengthen the Christian testimony of burden-sharing, foster togetherness, and lessen religious conflict.

Develop Sustainable Social Ministries through Institutional Capacity Building: The Church's social interventions must move from ad-hoc responses to institutional sustainability. This can be achieved by establishing professionally run Social Action Departments in every diocese, with trained personnel and budgetary allocations. Partnering with NGOs and international development agencies to access grants and technical support. Strengthening the work of ARDI (Anglican Relief and Development Initiative) and ensuring its strategies are contextual and adaptive. Parishes can also initiate community-based development committees to identify local needs and implement solutions.

Mobilise and Empower Youth and Women for Social Action: Despite making up a sizable segment of the Church, women and young people are frequently underrepresented in outreach and decision-making. In addition to encouraging the Mothers' Union, Women's Guild, and Anglican Youth Fellowship to start burden-bearing initiatives in local areas, the Church should offer focused leadership development for young people and women in social ministry.

Practice Holistic Pastoral Care: Nigerians suffer from psychological and spiritual issues in addition to physical and economic ones. To provide trauma-informed care, establish safe spaces for mental health awareness, grief support, and healing ministries within parishes, and strengthen the ministry of presence, just being with those who suffer as a witness to hope and solidarity, the Church should fund pastoral counselling training for clergy and lay leaders.

Reimagine the Church's Public Identity as a 'Burden-Bearer': Finally, the Anglican Church in Nigeria ought to consciously mould its public identity around its role of bearing burdens. This entails conducting yearly "Burden-Bearers Conferences" or "Galatians 6:2 Weeks" with an emphasis on practical compassion and branding church events with themes of hope, solidarity, and social justice.

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