

AN ASSESSMENT OF BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

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Abstract

Social media's benefits on christian worship are enormous in this dispensation because social media has contributed to meaningful worship practices in the various denominations. Yet, some are looking at the disadvantages of social media rather than the benefits; therefore, such did not want to introduce partial or complete social media into their worship. Some are not using various types of social media for their worship practices. This paper looked into an assessment of the benefits of social media on Christian worship in this contemporary age and recommended the use of social media for various worship services.

Keywords: Social media, christian worship.

Introduction

In the time past, worship is done or observed without the use of social media. Thereby, making worshippers to physically present themselves for worship. For now, social media have made it easier for worshippers to worship their God easily and without physically being present. One contemporary slogan is the saying that the world is now a global village through the use of social media. Through social media, people from every part of the world now have access and connect easily without stress. Nigeria nation not left out of the influence and the benefits of social media, especially in the worship of the modern church. Ellyson (2007) observed that social media are contemporary communication means through which people can connect, share ideas, experiences, pictures, messages, and information of interest. Many people benefit from the Christian worship in the church via Zoom, Facebook, WhatsApp, Google, and many others. Many are still scared of using social media for their worship. People are negatively affected by the use of social media, especially when some lack concentration on what is happening in the worship service and playing with their phones. This paper examined the benefits of social media on Christian Worship.

Brief Historical Development of Worship in Christianity

Christian Worship in the patristic

Clement, the third Bishop of Rome, wrote a personal letter around A.D. 96 to the church at Corinth. It contains exhortations concerning various elements of prayer of the worship services. The people were encouraged to revere and read the word of God to show humility before God's majesty, confess their sins, and acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit. Their salvation in Jesus as the high priest, proclaim the word of God and present offering to support those who serve them (Baillie 1953). He further explains that the apostolic successions lead the worship and have the right to offer sacrifices in innocence and holiness. The letter reflects a movement from the Pauline faith to Christianity predominantly by ethical interests and concerns for law and order.

While in the second century, Irenaeus, in a conscious reaction to the heretic, gathered together the main ideas concerning Baptism as the only acceptable manner of participation in

worship. He saw coherence between the sacramental worship and catholic doctrines. Tertullian presented the major influence of the third century while confronting heresy. He made a significant contribution to "regular Fidel," the sacrament and liturgical context in Baptism, catechism, and preaching. Regular Fidel is a summary statement of the Christian faith and acted as a hermeneutical key to interpreting scripture.

In the fourth century, there were considerable changes concerning the idea of consecration, where the prayer at the worship had the original intent of thanksgiving. It was seen as having more of an intention of consecration.

Similarly, around the fifth century, Augustine (1957) made a significant contribution to the development of worship. The Jewish law foreshadows sacrifice is linked to the participation in the worship as a sacrificial act of the will in establishing holy union with God and in memorial to Christ's offering of redemption on Calvary and in anticipation of what is to come. While in the opinion of Justin Martyr, Kelly, in his first apology written around AD 140, is the first broad outline of worship. The method consists of the reading of the memos of the apostles and writings of the prophets (Kelly 1978)

Christian Worship in the Reformation Period

In this period, Worship also passed different contributions of scholars who contributed to the progressive development of worship; among many are these John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, and Luther, who stresses the importance of prayer in worship. Although Ulrich Zwingli's approach to the reformation of worship was more radical than that of Luther, they made their intention known in their time as the contribution to worship. Their convictions influence the practice of the Free Church to worship. (Friedman 1973)

Christian Worship in the Nineteen century

Immigration carried the influence of the reformers to England and North America. They brought their dislike of a prepared form of worship and their dislike of the elaborate liturgy. It was observed in 1879 AD that the recitation in worship service reflects little of the recollection of the controversies of six centuries (Stanfield 1965) then. Public worship declined from 1650-1850 A.D. The factors that affected the decline included an exaggerated hostility toward the liturgical worship, primitive circumstances of American colonies and cultural disability of England, and over-emphasis on revivalism among the Baptists. While the westward migration in the nineteenth century led to the disintegration of worship in favour of the interests of revivalism, prayer, praise, and reading of the scripture became preliminary exercises in the claims of experiences (Nichols 1951)

James White submitted that by the 1830s, third of the population of America was interested in worship. This particular circumstance led to the development of a new tradition of worship. It was characterized by pragmatism and free uninhabited worship. The worship service was to make a convert. Unrepentant sinners would be won by persistent singing, praying, and preaching. The worship was to build up the body of Christ by bringing in a new convert. The circumstance of conversion led to two separate rites of Baptism upon conversion into the universal church and reception into a specific local congregation of believers (White 1989).

In the opinion of Davidson, he was considered one of the most influential reformers of worship in American church history. His 1835 lectures on revivals of religion departed from the free church tradition by stating that the Bible does not prescribe any specific form for worship, but only that it should be decency and in order (2002).

Christian Worship in the twentieth century

Worship service has experienced an unprecedented renewal in the twentieth century. The new age movement challenges Christian faith in an atmosphere of the supernatural and personal spirituality. World view changes began with the rise of holiness. Pentecostal movement was published in 1982. Worship is characterized by freedom, spontaneity, and individual expression and joy. The purpose of their corporate gathering was for the simultaneous particular praise and worship, and prophecy is a unique feature to their worship during the 1960s and 1970s. The charismatic movement spread into the catholic church, Mainline protestant churches, and independent churches. Their emphasis includes reliance upon music in praise and worship, congregation singing with appraise leader, use of drama, and the prophetic role of the anointing of the musicians. Its widespread acceptance suggests that the needs of the subjective side of humankind are being met by the charismatic approach to worship.

Webber Robert declares that the praise and worship movement has early expressions in the testimonial music of Bill Gaither. In the early 1960s and Jesus movement on the west coast. Likewise, in the late 1960s. The origin of this movement seeks to recapture biblical praise and the tradition of the Talmud. Humankind "should always utter praises and then pray" (Webber 1998). Idea Christian worship is dynamic, after various discussions by the scholars on Christian worship, the following have been accepted with its elements; morning and evening worship services on Sunday, mid-week worship, all night, funeral, naming, Lord's Supper, Baptism, House warm, Birthday, Wedding, Ordination, and so on.

Types of social media

Many types of social media are beneficial in the church for worship and meeting in preparation for worship service. They are Twitter 2go, Facebook, zoom, WhatsApp among these and many others few are discussed below:

Twitter:

This is an online social networking service that enables its users to send and read text-based posts of up to 140 characters known as tweets (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/twitter>) Sorav reported that Twitter users could also follow the updates of friends they follow, send them direct messages, reply publicly to friends, or post questions or comments on their current status. Jonah's position buttresses Sourav's view in many ways; Twitter creates a platform for people of all ages, the users of social networking social sites. Communication is sending and receiving information from one place or person to another. Thus, Twitter plays a role in contact throughout the world, and the social network provides online services to share information with others and connect with them by creating a profile that may include a personal web page and a blog. On the other hand, Jonah (2013) observed that Twitter affects behaviour by causing disorder through addiction to access social media.

Facebook:

Facebook is another popular social media networking site, and according to Roblyer (2010), Facebook allows people of age 13 upward to become registered users of the website. Accordingly, users will have to register before using the site. After which, they create a personal profile, add other users as friends, exchange messages, and receive automatic notifications when they update their profile. Rapacki (2007) further stated that users may join common-interest user groups organized by workplace church society and committees in the church.

WhatsApp

Krant (1998), in his article posted in the Nigerian Technology Guide site, stated that Sapp messenger is a networking site that can be run by individuals and is an instant messaging subscription service for smartphones and selected feature phones that use the internet for communication. In addition to text messaging, users can send images, video, and audio media messages as well as their location using integrated mapping features (<http://www.naijatechguide.com/whatsapp.messenge-chat-fee-on-mobile.html>)

Benefits of Social Media on Christian Worship

Generally, the benefits of using social media, according to Wart et al. (2011), Conolly, Rosen (2011) include: encouraging more significant social interaction through electronic media, providing greater access to information and information sources, encouraging creativities among individuals and groups, creating a sense of belonging among users of traditional social media, providing more choice to promote encouraging among different individuals and groups, reducing barriers to group interaction and communication such as distance and socio-economic status: and increasing the technological level of the users of social media. All these benefits apply to Christian worship and can be expanded as follows

Connectivity to friends and co-cordial relationships among members

Social media sites are a place to connect with friends quickly and conveniently. Many can relate with their friends after the worship service without stress, and it also allows greeting and sharing of social relationships such as a birth day. Social media provide the opportunity to connect with people and build better relations that are co-cordial within the members of the same worship center and keep them abreast with happenings around them.

Reducing communication barriers in church worship

With social media sites, thoughts and perceptions over different issues and topics are shared with a large audience. The sharing feature available on the social media sites makes an opinion about problems reach many people at a time, including those not in the church worship on that particular worship day. Likewise, it provides opportunities to make a group of people of like minds share opinions and input about the coming church worship program easily.

Business opportunities

Social media sites have become a crucial part of many worship centers. Thereby, they share different options for business progress easily among themselves. This is more obvious when laptops and many confiscated phones are open, and some good businesses are found to be shared that will be useful for other members of the same worship center. This can be an unconscious business update. This shows that businesses value social media sites to human life and worship. Also, several customized applications are made on social media to promote products and services, which will enhance the member's contribution financially to the development of church and worship when they are linked up through social media. This includes social marketing

Zoom meeting

Social media is another excellent benefit to church worship. This has helped in the planning of the worship program. The participant meets to discuss the adoration, especially in multi-staff pastoral ministry. Likewise, there are ministry meetings that involve groups in the church which can be carried out through social media. This has reduced the stress of pastors in passing information to the members. in the same way, social media has helped the pastors monitor

various home worship which the pastor cannot naturally cover in a day with the schedule time of worship in different geographical areas.

Aims and Objective of the study

The aim of this study was to assess the extent to which social media has really benefited members concerning christian worship and services.

Research Question

1. Does the knowledge of social media help in Christian worship in churches?
2. Is it necessary to put in place strategies to improve on the use of social media for effective congregational worship in churches?
3. Does the church need full administration of social media for effective day to day running of Christian worship and other activities?

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised 20 churches in Oyo West Area in Oyo Town. The pastors who were the administrators in these churches were given the questionnaire which was the instrument chosen for this research. 100 copies of the instruments were administered to 100 pastors. Results were of simple percentage. The decisions were taken along a five-point rating scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Strongly Disagree and Disagree

Result

Research Question One:

The knowledge of social media helps in Christian worship in churches.

Item	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
No of people	80	10	10	-	-	100
Percentage	100%	10%	10%	-	-	100%

The findings in the table above shows that 80%, 10% and 10% respectively are respondent with 90 Pastors strongly agreed that the knowledge of social media has helped in Christian worship while 10 Pastors were undecided. Therefore this result validated the research question that there is need for adequate knowledge of social media to help churches .

Research Question Two: 2 It is necessary to put in place strategies to improve on the use of social media for effective congregational worship in churches.

Item	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
No of people	75	15	-	10	-	100
Percentage	75%	15%	-	10%	-	100%

Table 2 above shows that 90 Pastors agreed which is 90% of the respondents agreed that, it is very important to put on strategies for improvement of social media for effective congregational worship in churches. Therefore, this result validated that, strategies are needed for improvement on the use of social media for effective congregational church worship and other activities.

Research Question Three: Pastors need full administration of social media for effective day to day running of their churches services and activities.

Item	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
No of people	50	25	20	5		100
Percentage	50%	25%	5%	20%		100%

Table 3 above shows the respondents on, Pastors need full administration of social media for effective day to day running of their churches. Ten (75) of the respondents agreed, (20) were undecided on whether the pastors need full administration of social media for effective day to day running of their churches. And five pastors disagreed to the full application of social media for day to day running of their churches. The result therefore validated that Pastors need full administration of social media for effective day to day running of their churches and for effective congregational worship and other services.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The benefits of social media on Christian worship, services and activities cannot be overemphasized in the present time because it encourages more significant social interaction through electronic media, providing greater access to information and information sources, encouraging creativities among individuals and groups, creating a sense of belongingness among users of standard social media, providing more choice to promote encouraging among different individuals and groups, interaction and communication in such as distance and socio-economic status and it also increases the technological level of the users of social media in the church for Christian worship and the likes.

Therefore, this paper recommends using social media for Christian worship, services, activities and so on because of its benefits to the church in the contemporary period. However, pastors are to acquire full knowledge of its use so that it will be of great benefits for the worship and their administrative work.

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