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## **Reviewing Literature, Theories and Approaches Of the Influence of Christian Evangelical Activities in Nigeria and South Africa**

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## Abstract

This study investigated the complex effects of Christian evangelism in South Africa and Nigeria. The paper challenged modernisation theories that predict a fall in religion with development by using liberation theology and deprivation theory to analyse the social implications and attraction of evangelical groups. Although these movements provide a sense of community and social support in areas with low government services and poverty, liberation theology offers a critical perspective on the "prosperity gospel" and how it could conflict with social justice. Drawing on contemporary literature, the study tried to go beyond basic narratives by investigating the social, economic, political, and gendered components of evangelicalism's effect. The goal of the paper was to have a comprehensive understanding of the long-term effects of these movements on Nigeria and South Africa by examining how they engage with current systems and address social justice issues on contemporary issues such as prosperity gospel, and gender. The paper concluded that it is important for evangelical Christians to employ scriptures as a language of communication review how they engage with current social structures, and address social justice issues so that evangelical missions, activities, and evangelism will be impactful.

**Keywords:** *Christian, Christian Evangelism, Evangelism, Gender, LGBTQIA+, Nigeria, South Africa.*

## Introduction

In recent decades, Christian evangelicalism has grown rapidly and ingrained itself into the social fabric of many countries across the world. It places a strong focus on personal conversion, scriptural literalism, and active missionary effort. Even though evangelical churches have undoubtedly increased throughout Africa, especially in South Africa and Nigeria, focusing only on these two nations would not give a global picture. This concept paper makes the case that comprehending the complex effects of evangelical activity on a worldwide scale requires a more comprehensive, comparative perspective.

First, we need to view things through a broader lens because evangelicalism is multinational. Cross-border networks of missionaries, financial transactions, and theological exchanges promote it as a globalised movement (Freston, 2020). Research on the expansion of Pentecostalism in Latin America by academics such as Meyer (2019) highlights this connection by showing how evangelical practices have extended beyond their original geographic strongholds. Analysing only one nation runs the risk of ignoring this important facet of

evangelicalism. Secondly, the phenomenon is also present in Africa; however, this study is not ignoring the variety of evangelical experiences found throughout Africa, but it intends to, on South Africa and Nigeria. The impact of evangelicalism varies based on the socio-political environment and pre-existing theological landscapes, even though these countries provide important case studies (Droogers, 2018). This diversity is demonstrated by research by Geschiere (2017) on Pentecostalism in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which shows the various ways that evangelicalism engages with regional cultures and governmental systems. Lastly, a comparative perspective enables a deeper comprehension of evangelicalism's worldwide influence.

We can, therefore, determine similarities and differences in its impacts by analysing its influences in developed Christian nations, areas with predominately non-Christian customs, and places like Nigeria and South Africa (Marshall, 2022). This comparative concept paper provides important insights into how evangelicalism interacts with other religious and secular civilisations. One such example is Hunsberger and Jacobsen's (2018) investigation of American evangelicalism in the Far East. Consequently, this paper suggests a comparative approach that looks at the impact of Christian evangelical endeavours in a larger variety of nations, including well-established Christian states, areas where non-Christian customs predominate, and African nations like South Africa and Nigeria. This review highlights the various ways evangelicalism influences civilisations around the globe.

This paper aims to not only analyse current influences but also offer suggestions for the future of the evangelical movement. By understanding its global impact, both positive and negative, evangelical leaders can strive for more culturally sensitive engagement and communication, prioritise social justice alongside personal salvation, and promote interfaith dialogue in a religiously diverse world. Through introspection and adaptation, the evangelical movement can continue to thrive while fostering positive societal change.

The objectives of this paper, therefore, are to review the effects of Christian evangelical activities in South Africa and Nigeria; to examine how doctrinal interchange, money flows, and missionary networks have shaped Christian evangelicalism's influence in South Africa and Nigeria; to review the ways pre-existing religious environments and socio-political settings affect how Christian evangelical initiatives proliferate and have an impact on South Africa and Nigeria; and to probe into how the application of the right theories, approaches and communication can

address social and economic injustice in the two countries through evangelicalism. To pursue these objectives, the paper will mobilise various literatures to critically review the modernisation notion and appreciate the future direction of Christian evangelism in Nigeria and South Africa, which will also give a lens to view other Christian dominated countries in Africa

## **Literature Review**

With its focus on active missionary effort, scriptural literalism, and personal conversion, Christian evangelicalism has grown rapidly in the last several years. This expansion has centred on Africa, especially in nations like South Africa and Nigeria, yet focusing only on these areas provides a narrow view. To fully comprehend the complex effects of evangelical operations worldwide, a more comprehensive, comparative approach is advocated in this assessment of the literature.

## **Christian Evangelical Activities in Nigeria**

Nigeria is a remarkable case study of Christian evangelical operations, with its population roughly divided between Muslims and Christians. The last few decades have seen an exponential rise in the evangelical movement in Nigeria, which is defined by its emphasis on personal conversion, literal interpretation of scripture, and missionary effort. The impact of evangelical influence on Nigerian society's social, political, and cultural domains is now extensive and diverse as a result of its rise. The growth of evangelical churches in Nigeria is a result of multiple factors. The historical legacy of missionary service is a significant contributing element. According to Ogbu Kalu (2018), the foundation for the formation of evangelical groups was created by early missionaries, especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Furthermore, many Nigerians connect with the emphasis on social services like healthcare and education as well as personal conversion, especially those living in rural regions with little access to government facilities (Bangura, 2020). In Nigeria, the influence of evangelical churches in societal development is noteworthy. To give underprivileged populations access to healthcare and education, they frequently run clinics and schools (Uzoigwe, 2017). Furthermore, to address problems such as gender inequality, human trafficking, and poverty, some evangelical churches support social justice programmes (Omenyi, 2021). Critiques do, however, also exist.

According to some academics, the emphasis placed on personal salvation can obscure more significant social problems, and certain evangelical churches' emphasis on conventional gender roles can be oppressive to women (Parfitt, 2018).

In Nigeria, the link between evangelicalism and politics is nuanced and dynamic. Some evangelical leaders actively participate in politics and advocate laws that reflect their beliefs, while others uphold the separation of church and state (Cheeseman, 2022). This relationship has been further complicated by the rise of Pentecostalism, a charismatic type of evangelicalism since Pentecostal pastors frequently have a great deal of influence over their congregations (Marshall, 2022). Additional investigation into the distinct tactics and objectives of various evangelical organisations is necessary to comprehend the political impact of evangelicalism. There is little doubt that evangelical activities have influenced Nigerian culture. Some consider the emphasis on nuclear families, abstinence before marriage, and conservative dress codes as challenges to conventional norms (Jegede, 2019). However, evangelical churches also provide a cultural contribution through gospel music, films, and community development-focused charities (Akinbode, 2021). Depending on the particular environment and how traditional customs and evangelical principles are negotiated, evangelicalism's influence on Nigerian culture varies.

There is still uncertainty over the future of Christian evangelical activity in Nigeria. The movement keeps expanding because new members are drawn to its emphasis on social services and personal development. Nonetheless, evangelical churches face difficulties due to things like internal church governance, allegations of financial malfeasance, and the growing diversity of the Nigerian society (Marshall, 2022). To find out how these patterns will affect the future course of evangelicalism in Nigeria, more research is required. The Christian evangelical movement in Nigeria is a complicated, multidimensional phenomenon. They raise important concerns about gender roles and social fairness in addition to promoting political participation, social growth, and cultural change. A multidisciplinary approach is necessary to comprehend the subtleties of evangelical activity in Nigeria, taking into account social dynamics, historical circumstances, and the movement's dynamic nature. We can learn more about how Christian evangelical efforts will affect Nigeria's future by conducting critical analysis and further investigation.

## **Christian Evangelical Activities in South Africa**

An unusual environment exists for Christian evangelical endeavours in South Africa, a country with a diverse religious landscape. In recent decades, evangelicalism has risen dramatically and influenced the social, political, and cultural sectors of South African life. It is typified by its emphasis on personal conversion, biblical literalism, and aggressive missionary effort. Nonetheless, a closer examination reveals a spectrum of activities and their differing effects, indicating that this influence is not uniform. According to De Gruchy (2017), the introduction of missionary groups in the 19th century is when evangelicalism first emerged in South Africa. Nonetheless, because many evangelical churches were seen as being involved with the apartheid state, evangelical influence decreased during that time (Turner, 2018). Pentecostalism, a charismatic branch of evangelicalism, and disenchantment with traditional churches were among the causes that contributed to the rebirth of evangelicalism during the post-apartheid era (Comaroff&Comaroff, 2021).

In South Africa, the contribution of evangelical churches to social development is noteworthy. To reach underserved populations where the government finds it difficult to deliver proper services, they frequently run clinics and schools (Manona, 2019). Furthermore, several evangelical churches participate in social justice campaigns that tackle problems such as destitution, HIV/AIDS, and criminal activity (Duncan, 2020). However, worries about the emphasis on personal salvation perhaps overshadowing more significant social issues are present (Heleta, 2018). In South Africa, there is a complicated and dynamic interaction between evangelicalism and politics. Some evangelical leaders actively push for laws that reflect their beliefs, such as those that prohibit abortion and same-sex marriage, while others support the idea that church and state should remain apart (Balcomb, 2022). Evangelicalism can have a major impact on political discourse, particularly in rural areas where evangelicals are highly prevalent (Jeanneret, 2021).

Undoubtedly, evangelical activities have influenced the South African society. Some perceive a challenge to conventional values in the emphasis on nuclear families, premarital abstinence, and conservative dress codes (Mbembe, 2017). However, gospel music, movies, and humanitarian endeavours that support neighbourhood improvement are some other ways that evangelical churches provide to the cultural landscape (Langa, 2020). The debate between religious ideas and customs, and the unique circumstances determine how much

evangelicalism affects the South African society. In South Africa, evangelicalism has its share of problems despite its good effects. The proponents of prosperity theology, which preys on the weak, have accused certain churches of financial malfeasance (Hunsberger, 2019). Concerns regarding gender equality are also raised by some evangelical groups' emphasis on conventional gender norms (Muller, 2022). Additionally, it might be argued that the growth of prosperity theology and its emphasis on material wealth are at odds with the reality of poverty that many South Africans experience (Droogers, 2018).

Christian evangelism in South Africa is not sure where it will go in the future. According to Marshall (2022), the impact of evangelicalism is expected to be shaped by the continuous fight for social justice, discussions surrounding gender equality, and the growing diversity of South African culture. More study is required to determine whether evangelical churches can successfully negotiate these challenges and stay relevant in a changing society, as well as how they adjust to these changes. In South Africa, there is a range of impacts from Christian evangelical events. Concerns are raised concerning their views on gender roles, prosperity theology, and social issues, even if they also engage in some social justice activities that offer vital social services and contribute to culture. A sophisticated understanding of evangelicalism in South Africa is necessary, one that recognises its complexity and its continual engagement with the larger socio-political context. We can better comprehend the influence that Christian evangelical activities have on South Africa's future by conducting more research and doing critical analysis.

## **Effects on Society and Economy**

Research emphasises the positive socio-economic effects of evangelicalism. In Ukah (2018), the function of Pentecostal churches in South Africa and Nigeria and in other sub-Saharan African countries is examined. The Church of Pentecost in Ghana is used by McCauley and Ozor (2020) to illustrate the transforming potential of Pentecostalism in healthcare delivery. According to these studies, evangelical churches have a big role to play in societal development. However, opposing viewpoints become apparent. Mayer (2018) challenges the "prosperity gospel" doctrines prevalent in several evangelical movements, contending that they put material wealth ahead of social justice. Furthermore, there are worries about financial misconduct in some ministries.

There is proof that evangelical churches have contributed to social development programmes. Their contributions to South Africa's and Nigeria's educational systems are highlighted in studies by Ukah (2018) and Ojo (2017). These churches frequently start and run schools, especially in underprivileged areas, giving communities with access to public education. Similarly, using the Church of Pentecost in Ghana as a case study, McCauley and Ozor (2020) investigate the transformative potential of Pentecostalism in healthcare delivery. In South Africa and Nigeria, evangelical churches can open and run clinics that provide free or heavily discounted medical care in areas that the government does not serve well. Beyond personal counselling, evangelicalism promotes communal support and a sense of community. According to Berglund (2020), social networks and a common goal can be used by these movements to empower people individually and as a community. Food banks, clothing drives, and other programmes that meet urgent needs and promote social solidarity are frequently organised by churches. Additionally, some evangelical doctrines' emphasis on independence and entrepreneurship might inspire people to improve their financial situation.

However, many disagree with the socio-economic effects of evangelicalism. The "prosperity gospel" doctrine that is popular in various evangelical movements is criticised by Mayer (2018), who contends that it puts material wealth ahead of social justice and community development. This emphasis on self-interest may breed materialism and divert attention from group initiatives to correct systemic injustices. Furthermore, there are worries about financial misconduct in some ministries. As Osaghae (2016) points out, there have been accusations against certain evangelical leaders for taking advantage of their followers for their wealth. These problems call into question the transparency and accountability of evangelical institutions.

### **The Gender Factor: Patriarchy Reinforcement or Empowerment?**

Gender roles and evangelicalism have a complicated relationship. Pentecostalism can empower women by giving them a platform for leadership and a sense of agency inside the church, according to certain scholars like Asamoah-Gyadu (2017); nevertheless, some scholars have concerns. According to Droogers (2016), evangelical movements frequently contain patriarchal systems that can prevent women from achieving their full potential for emancipation. Additionally, certain

churches' reliance on conventional gender roles can impede the advancement of gender equality. In South Africa and Nigeria, Christian evangelism has a variety of socio-economic effects. Although there is evidence that these groups provide social assistance, healthcare, and education in some areas, it is impossible to overlook worries about the "prosperity gospel," financial wrongdoing, and the perpetuation of traditional gender roles. We can get closer to a more complicated understanding of evangelicalism's complex role in forming the socio-economic fabric of South Africa and Nigeria by recognising both its positive and negative features.

### **Power Dynamics and Gender**

Another contentious issue is the place of women in the church. The rise of feminist theology within African Pentecostalism is highlighted by Odugbemi (2017), who challenges conventional interpretations that marginalise women. This movement advocates for women to have more leadership opportunities in evangelical churches and for a more equitable reading of the Bible. Discussions over head coverings, women pastors, and women's involvement in decision-making demonstrate how these groups are beginning to prioritise gender equality. There has also been criticism of some evangelical circles' emphasis on material success. Bangura (2016) and other academics criticise the "prosperity gospel," contending that it emphasises accumulating personal wealth at the expense of social justice and community development which seem to ignore the plight of women.

This criticism calls for a re-examination of the goal of faith and a revitalised emphasis on Jesus' social teachings, which may result in an increasingly socially transformational form of evangelicalism. The establishment of a unique African Pentecostal theology is an important development. This expanding corpus of research, which aims to reconcile Pentecostal doctrines with African cultural traditions and contextual realities, is explored in works by Chikane (2015) and Poloma (2016). This theological evolution could influence evangelicalism in South Africa and Nigeria to become more socially conscious and culturally relevant. The theological landscape is greatly influenced by the education and training of future evangelical leaders. Research by Ozor (2020) and Hammond (2023) examine how educational approaches and curricula are changing in seminaries in South Africa and Nigeria (Ozor, 2020; Hammond, 2023). Understanding how upcoming generations of

evangelical leaders will be prepared to handle the difficult theological issues of the 21st century requires a critical analysis of these institutions. Through cultivating a more profound comprehension of these dynamic theological trends, we can acquire significant wisdom on the future course of Christian evangelism in South Africa and Nigeria.

A major source of disagreement is hermeneutics, or the approaches taken to understand the Bible. A literal reading of the Bible is frequently given priority in traditional evangelical approaches (Mesele, 2021). Nonetheless, taking into account the historical and cultural circumstances in which biblical texts were written, academics like Ogbu (2017) and Daneel (2018) argue for a more contextualised approach (Ogbu, 2017; Daneel, 2018). This focus on contextualisation makes it possible to re-examine biblical verses about wealth accumulation, social justice, and gender roles. This could result in an evangelicalism that is more inclusive and engaged in the community. Also, Nigerian and South African Pentecostal and evangelical churches seem to have broken away from the orthodox liturgy of Europeans, and have embraced a more nuanced and liberal ways of worship. Adebayo (2018) agrees with this and argues that preaching, sermons, prayers, songs, worships, and use of instruments and dancing are forms of religious worship. Adebayo and Zulu (2018) also note the significance of language and communication in the multifarious church settings in Nigeria and South Africa which are different from the orthodox settings. These nuances point to the fact that these forms of worship are, therefore, deserving of hermeneutic analysis.

### **Evangelicalism in South Africa and Nigeria: A Critical Examination**

According to Droogers (2018), evangelicalism in Africa involves a complicated debate between modernity and tradition rather than being only an imposition of Western norms. This is supported by recent scholarship. According to Jegede (2019), Pentecostalism in Nigeria, for instance, coexists with traditional customs rather than erasing them. Although younger Nigerians may still engage in traditional events, they may also adopt some evangelical dress codes, demonstrating a subtle adaptation of faith to local situations. That evangelicalism is a force that is exclusively Westernising is called into question by this. Although several researchers commend evangelical churches for offering social assistance in places with limited resources (Uzoigwe, 2017; Manona, 2019), a critical examination uncovers certain power imbalances.

Bangura (2020) warns against government responsibility and dependency by using evangelical churches as a source of healthcare and education. Further, Omenyi (2021) casts doubt on the genuine dedication of certain evangelical organisations to social justice, speculating that their support could be biased and self-serving. The real impact of evangelical social services must be understood by looking at these power relations. There is more complexity due to certain evangelical leaders' focus on issues like abortion and same-sex marriage (Balcomb, 2022). As criticised by Jeanneret (2021), this "morality politics" approach has the potential to obscure more urgent social issues such as inequality and poverty. Questioning priorities is also brought up by the selective engagement with social justice. Heleta (2018) contends that, in certain evangelical circles, the emphasis on personal salvation might divert attention from more pressing societal issues. A major obstacle is the emergence of prosperity theology, an evangelicalism subset that places a strong emphasis on material wealth and individual achievement (Hunsberger, 2019). According to Mbembe (2017), this theology may be viewed as at odds with the poverty that many Africans actually experience. Additionally, according to Droogers (2018), prosperity theology could take advantage of weaker segments of society, developing a "faith for profit" paradigm that is antagonistic to real social change. Prosperity theology's influence is examined from a socio-economic perspective in addition to its theological message.

A more nuanced understanding of Christian evangelicalism in South Africa and Nigeria is required, as this critical analysis makes clear. Evangelicalism confronts chances and challenges as it engages with preexisting social structures and negotiates with traditions. According to Marshall (2022), additional studies should look at the various approaches taken by various denominations and leaders to better understand the internal variety within evangelicalism. To further comprehend the influence of this movement on individual lives, research on the real-life experiences of common people inside evangelical communities is essential.

## **The Worldwide Tapestry**

The transnational aspect of evangelicalism is highlighted by recent research, which also highlights how movements are related beyond national borders. The global networks of missionaries, funding, and theological interaction that influence the expansions of evangelicalism are

examined by Freston (2020). Similarly, Meyer (2019) examines the Pentecostal movement's growth in Latin America, showing how theological concepts and practices transcend national boundaries and promote an evangelicalism that is globally integrated. If one is only concentrating on one nation, these important transnational processes may be missed.

Evangelical churches have proliferated throughout Africa, although experiences with the religion differ greatly among the continent's citizens. Droogers (2018) underscores the significance of context, contending that how evangelicalism exerts its influence varies based on the pre-existing religious milieu and socio-political conditions. This is demonstrated by Geschiere's (2017) research on Pentecostalism in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which shows the distinctive ways in which evangelicalism engages with regional cultures and governmental systems. We may recognise these differences and comprehend how evangelicalism adjusts to various situations by using a comparative method.

Richer insights can be gained from comparative studies of established Christian states, areas with predominately non-Christian cultures, and African nations. Marshall (2022) advocates a comprehensive comprehension of evangelicalism, contending that a comparative study exposes both similarities and differences in its influence. For instance, the investigation of American evangelicalism in the Far East by Hunsberger and Jacobsen (2018) illuminates how evangelicalism engages with long-standing religious traditions such as Buddhism. We can obtain a more comprehensive knowledge of the global reach of evangelicalism by examining its influence in various circumstances.

## **Opportunities and the Way Ahead**

The study intends to fill up some of the gaps in the current literature, even though it offers a solid framework for comprehending evangelicalism. Initially, a restricted group of nations is often the subject of most comparative research. In addition to established Christian nations, this study suggests a more comprehensive comparison that includes areas where non-Christian traditions are prevalent as well as African nations like South Africa and Nigeria. Furthermore, the majority of the work that is now in publication concentrates on the socio-cultural effects of evangelicalism. Examining its impact on politics is another way that this study seeks to broaden its purview. Through the use of a comparative methodology and the filling of these gaps, this study aims to

offer a more thorough knowledge of the diverse impacts of Christian evangelical efforts worldwide as it affects Nigeria and South Africa. This knowledge can help shape conversations about the evangelical movement's future by motivating leaders to value social justice over personal salvation, embrace cultural sensitivity, and promote interfaith understanding in the context of the world's religious diversity.

## **Reviewing of Theories and Approaches of the Influence of Christian Evangelical Activities in Nigeria and South Africa**

In Africa's religious landscape, Christian evangelism has emerged as a major force, with a notable upsurge in its impact in Nigeria and South Africa. This review looks at recent research to investigate the complex effects of evangelical movements in different nations, using several important theoretical frameworks which might have also influenced the two afore-mentioned countries:

### **Modernisation Theory and Secularisation:**

The conventional modernisation theory contends that religion loses power in nations that experience socio-economic advancement (Berger, 1967). This idea is refuted by the cases of South Africa and Nigeria, which show how evangelical groups are still vibrant despite major socio-economic shifts (Ukah, 2018). It is a traditional prediction of modernisation theory that religious significance decreases with socio-economic development in societies. When material requirements are satisfied, people are said to reject religion and adopt secular principles. Yet, this idea is called into question by the growth of Christian evangelism in these emerging countries. These movements are still strong in the face of profound socio-economic shifts. It also emphasises the enduring significance of faith in modern-day Africa and offers alternate interpretations of religious trends.

### **Deprivation Theory and Social Movements:**

According to deprivation theory, religious movements that provide comfort and a sense of belonging can flourish as a result of social and economic injustices (Stark & Finke, 2000). According to McCauley and Ozor (2020), this theory contributes to the explanation of evangelicalism's attraction in areas with high rates of poverty and little

government services. According to deprivation theory, socio-economic inequality fosters the emergence of religious movements. People who are struggling with poverty, a lack of opportunities, and inadequate government services might find comfort, a feeling of community, and hope in these movements. This idea contributes to the explanation of evangelicalism's attraction in South Africa and Nigeria, countries with high rates of poverty and inadequate social safety nets. Churches can draw people who feel abandoned by the state by offering basic services, a sense of community, and a means of overcoming adversity.

### **Liberation Theology and Social Justice:**

The social teachings of Jesus are emphasised by liberation theology, which also demands that the church actively works to advance equality and justice (Dussel, 1981). This concept serves as a foundation for challenging the "prosperity gospel" that certain evangelical groups promote and arguing in favour of a more socially transformational understanding of faith (Bangura, 2016). Liberation theology places a strong emphasis on Jesus' social teachings and advocates the church's active involvement in advancing equality and justice for the underprivileged. It challenges the social and economic institutions that uphold injustice and poverty. This paradigm gives a platform for evaluating certain parts of Christian evangelism in Nigeria and South Africa. One could argue that the "prosperity gospel," which places a strong emphasis on accumulating personal wealth, runs counter to the emphasis on social justice.

Liberation theology urges action to solve societal injustices and provides an alternative understanding of faith. These hypotheses offer opposing but complimentary viewpoints on the spread of Christian evangelism in South Africa and Nigeria. The unexpected character of this phenomenon is emphasised by modernisation theory; its attraction to specific groups is explained by deprivation theory, and the socio-economic effects of these movements are examined critically through the lens of liberation theology. This paper attempts to obtain a nuanced understanding of the intricate and multidimensional ways that Christian evangelism is influencing South African and Nigerian societies by utilising these theoretical frameworks. We may go beyond oversimplified narratives and investigate the social, economic, political, and gendered aspects of evangelicalism's influence by critically analysing recent literature.

## **Intersecting and Integrating the Theories and Approaches**

The narrative of Christian evangelical activity in Africa has been recast. The theories—modernisation (Berger, 1967), deprivation (Stark & Finke, 2000; McCauley & Ozor, 2020), and liberation and social justice (Dussel, 1981) – so intersected by this paper have challenged the oversimplified labels of "*progressive*" or "*conservative*" by critically analysing recent academic publications. Instead, this study paints a complicated picture that emphasises the intricate relationships that exist globally in Christianity given the issues in every society, and mobilisesame to appreciate South Africa and Nigeria's evangelicalism, social structures, and cultural contexts. It isobvious that evangelicalism negotiates with established cultural practices, challenging simplistic conceptions of tradition versus modernity, and eventually adapts to the newness of culture formed in these countries. Analysing social assistance offered by evangelical churches also went beyond material deprivation, and the emphasis on social justice in evangelicalism was recognised. This paper calls for a more critical and wider approach of social justice promoted through evangelicalism through the churches in South Africa and Nigeria as this will become the major plank for Christian evangelism to the unchurched and non-Christian.

Prosperity theology was reviewed with a focus on its wider socio-economic ramifications, going beyond a simply religious framework. The church, through their evangelicalism, should take into account looking at evangelical activities in a variety of contexts including how developed Christian nations have managed prosperity theology and mobilising the people to get involved in enterprises that will improve their revenue. The approach should be treated as a crisis, adopting a crises communication approach (Akpan & Mkhize, 2023) as deprivation is an urgent issue in South Africa and Nigeria.

This submission ties into the deprivation theory of Stark and Finke (2000) and McCauley and Ozor (2020) which gives people some sense of economic justice. This should also be applied to areas where non-Christian traditions are more prevalent, and in a larger range of African nations. There is, therefore, a need to explore and utilise the different approaches as exemplified by the theories coupled with a crisis communication approach so that evangelism recognising its heterogeneity will look into how evangelicalism affects the daily living of regular people in the communities.

## **Conclusion**

The foundation for an in-depth knowledge of evangelical influence in South Africa and Nigeria is laid by this concept paper and the theories foregrounded. It has clarified the complex and dynamic character of evangelical impact in Africa by utilising a broader comparative perspective and a multidisciplinary approach. This critical review goes beyond over-simplified narratives to highlight the complexity of the evangelical mosaic and offer a fuller understanding of a potent force influencing modern African communities. Since evangelism means preaching the gospel, and evangelicalism means adherence to evangelical doctrine which emphasises personal salvation, belief in the Holy Bible and evangelism, the South African and Nigerian churches should communicate and approach it from the point of socio-economic justice against deprivation, and that is where a modernising society will find it impactful in their lives. After all, the Bible states clearly in 3 John 2 that

“... Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.”

Therefore, it is important for evangelical to use the preferred biblical language and communication context, review how they engage with current social structures, and address social justice issues so that evangelical missions, activities, and evangelism will be impactful and have a long-term effect of these movements in Nigeria and South Africa regardless of issues like prosperity gospel and gender issues. The gospel should bring salvation and socio-economic justice as preached by Jesus Christ.

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